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Important 2012 E-commerce Trends Businesses should be Aware of

In November of 2011, at the PubCon Vegas show, Matt Cutts, a highly respected, distinguished engineer at Google, suggested marketers focus on social, local and mobile. They were [hot e-commerce areas in 2011](#) and data indicates they're going to get even hotter in 2012. Here are a few of the important trends to watch for 2012.

Mobile Shopping

Consumers are increasingly using mobile phones for shopping, especially for local products and services. Research shows more than 63 percent of people use their mobile phone before purchasing offline or through a catalog. In 2012, videos are expected to become even more popular in mobile marketing; businesses need to look beyond YouTube. Mobile shopping will also increase due to the use of near-field communication and other wireless payment technologies.

Businesses can attract potential customers with a merchant platform at the increasingly popular social platform/social games websites popular with mobile device users, such as Foursquare.

Social Media

A study performed by NM Incite shows 63 percent of social media users state "Consumer ratings" are their preferred source of information regarding a business, product or service. Data provided by Gregg Stewart, at the SMX West event, shows 32 percent of all searchers expect to find ratings and review information. No review information may lead visitors to wonder if shoppers trust the company. Without the information many visitors will likely leave the website and search for online businesses providing ratings and review information. Businesses need to develop strategies for soliciting online reviews, managing them and responding to negative reviews.

Some SEO experts believe Google sees reviews as a social signal of accountability and has added it to its algorithm. Search engines are increasingly focused on social signals as a way to provide users the best possible experience. With Google+, the popular search engine has merged social media with search. Google+ is expected to be an important e-commerce SEO strategy in 2012.

Website Live Chat

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The advances made in Website Live Chat have made it an excellent online marketing tool for e-businesses. Features offered by the top providers of live chat software include:

- Pro-actively begin a chat with a visitor or react to a visitors request to chat
- Tracking all visitors entering and leaving a website in real time
- Providing information about all visitors such as referral source, their location, time on pages and keywords entered to find a website and more.

This information can be used to increase website sales conversions. Businesses can target selling opportunities to every visitor.

Email

Increasingly, consumers are signing up to receive emails. The biggest impact on privacy and deliverability in 2011 came from laws regarding consumer permission and protection. In 2012, businesses need to show their subscribers they're trustworthy. Companies need to meet all legal requirements for every country they send email to. Also, businesses should make sure email campaigns look good on mobile screens.

Local Shopping

Local search and especially Google Local is forecasted to become even more important in 2012. Google is expected to make local search results an even more vital component of its search algorithm. Research show 61 percent of all local searches result in a purchase. Also, point and rewards/membership programs will evolve for local shopping with more businesses attempting to convert high-value buyers to members.

Tablets

Businesses should audit their website for the most popular tablets including iPad and Kindle Fire to determine which features and functionality need to be addressed. Also, buttons should be made bigger on websites. Predictive search reduces keypad strokes, allowing shoppers to easily get to products and specific areas of the website. Businesses should streamline product pages for tablet users and make it easier for customers to quickly select products and begin the checkout process.

QR Codes

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According to comScore, 20.1 million mobile phone owners in the United States used their mobile devices to scan a QR code in a three month period ending in October of 2011; the number is expected to grow in 2012. Besides QR codes some companies are looking at Microsoft Tags and EZcodes.

Scanning a QR code connects the user to a mobile-optimized web page, photographs or video or activates functions such as email, IM and SMS. Savvy marketers use QR codes to drive customers to a specific web page. The top placement choices for QR codes are magazines/newspapers, direct mail and product packaging. Companies can link a QR code to a desirable coupon.

In 2012, its highly likely leads will increasingly come from mobile devices, social media networks and mobile apps. Some experts predict online marketing will be a major force in the rebuilding of the American economy. Don't be left out, keep up with the current [e-commerce marketing trends](#).

About the Author

Jan Stewart writes exclusively for [Medallion Fulfillment & Logistics](#), a family owned fulfillment service business located in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. When you need simple or comprehensive assistance with warehousing, order processing, and shipping for your store or e-commerce business, consider Medallion first. Visit them at www.MedallionEnterprises.com.