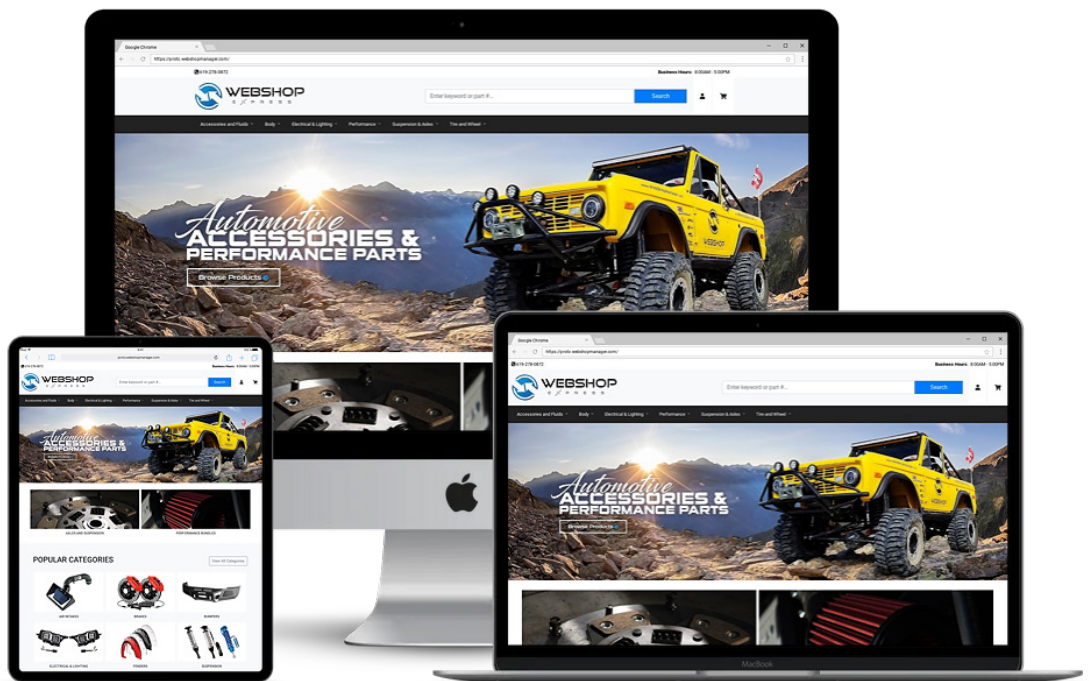




How to Accelerate Your Brand Value with eCommerce Success

By: Dana Nevins
CEO Web Shop Manager





I'm Dana Nevins from Web Shop Manager.

Today, I want to talk to you about:

**How To Accelerate Your Brand Value
with eCommerce Success.**

To provide a little clarity, brand value is more than who you are today, it's who you want to be in the long run and the legacy you want to leave behind.

I've put together a road map that anyone can follow to become successful in eCommerce with a crawl-walk-run approach.

Together, we will cover common eCommerce myths and discover how to find your sweet spot by creating an ecosystem where you're not competing with the big guys.

This will explain how to participate at the local, niche, and manufacturer levels. Finally, we will wrap up with three actionable steps to get you started on your path to brand value acceleration.

I'd like to start by shattering four eCommerce myths. I talk to hundreds of people every year that are getting started by selling on eBay or brick and mortar and want to sell online or just want to showcase their products.

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Myth #1 Be Everything for Everybody

One of the common myths that I hear is that you have to be everything to everybody. How many of you have heard of AutoAnything? AutoAnything was one of the largest aftermarket parts and accessories websites that was purchased by Autozone. They're doing a couple hundred million dollars a year in sales and they have over a million and a half SKUs.



When people come to Web Shop Manager, they think they want to be just like AutoAnything. They want to sell seat covers, tonneau covers, and every other part under the sun. We've seen time and again that this is a recipe for disaster when you're starting out because it is very difficult to pivot and make changes down the line. When you start leaner, you're more adaptable and can find what works and what doesn't with less risk.

Myth #2 Build It and They Will Come

The next myth is "build it and they will come". You have to be committed to marketing your website, but marketing does not have to be pay-per-click and SEO. Marketing can be as simple as training your sales team on how to use this new tool and how to promote it to their customers and your dealers.

Myth #3 Everything Has to Be Perfect

Some think that "everything has to be perfect". We worked with a start-up that spent \$30,000 to buy a domain name because that wanted a very particular two-word domain name. It's important to consider what \$30,000 could do for a marketing budget over the course of a year.

We've also seen companies burn an entire year pulling together the perfect data set across hundreds of thousands of SKUs when they could have built it layer by layer instead and started collecting their ROI much sooner. The last thing you want is to be obsolete by the time you launch.

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Myth #4 eCommerce Has to Be National

The reality of it is that a local store, a local business, is a niche. You have a geographical niche that is based on part type such as selling radiators. A niche can also be a vehicle type where you sell parts for one particular manufacturer. This can lead people to think that if they start in a niche that will limit their long-term potential.

To go back to the story about AutoAnything, before they built the eCommerce side of their business, they were originally known for manufacturing sheepskin seat covers as Blue Ribbon Motoring.



If you get on the Way Back Machine (which is an archive website), you can see in the year 2000 they had a website specializing in seat covers and just a few interior parts. **That was the foundation for the empire we know and love today.**

But Why a Niche?

So you might be asking, “why a niche”? At the end of the day, products have been commoditized, so you have to provide real tangible value in order to separate yourself from the competition. Each aftermarket auto parts and accessory retailer provides that value to their customers in different ways.

Picture an oil filter, it's the perfect product to sell on Amazon because the part number is right there on the product. Unscrew it from the engine, cross reference the part number, and with a little help from Google, you don't need an expert to find a suitable replacement. Whereas there are other products, like a transmission, that are very complex, and you most likely want advice about the specs to make sure you order the right parts the first time around.

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The key to competing in eCommerce is to solve pre-purchase problems with content and information for your target market. You'll want to provide these answers on your website so that next time a customer Googles "how do i..." or "what part fits..." YOUR website is what pops up with the answer. The information they find turns into a phone call, then a sale, then a referral. This is how you build life-long loyal customers for your brand over time.

Find Your Sweet Spot

Passion is a unique area because it's always revealed in different ways for different people. You don't want to focus on passion alone though because then you could end up as a



"starving artist" so to speak. What you want to find is your true interest and where that intersects with your core expertise. Combine that with market needs that are not currently being met. Invest in the time to define your ideal customer. How can you solve their problems better than anyone else? By focusing on that definition and serving them better than anyone else, you'll grow a different kind of business and relationships.

To give an example that might be somewhat off-the-wall, but still quite relevant based on research and experience, someone out there reading this may be a distributor from a relatively remote part of the United States who supplies parts to the oil and gas industry. Although there are ups and downs, the industry is strong and growing dramatically. What's great about that customer is that they most likely need parts, they've got the budget, and they're growing fast. If you've identified that they are your best customer, you can discover several new opportunities by asking the right

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questions. Questions like, “what could I do to serve you better”? Maybe their biggest pain is they need someone they can talk to at three in the morning. Perhaps they need someone who can put that part on an airplane and fly it out to keep a crew from standing around dead in the water.

When you explore opportunities, you will discover intelligent solutions to increase your customer’s revenue. In this example, providing a service that includes charter flights and helicopters; you might also find opportunities with the forest service and other emergency responders. You become the truck-parts life-flight of the entire market. This is just one example of how you can think creatively to uncover new opportunities and markets from clients you already serve. When you aim for the “bullseye” mark, you’ll find that you start hitting other areas around it as well.

How to Participate in Local eCommerce

Local eCommerce is a great place to start. If you’re a local distributor, you already have a shop with a customer base. Expand on what already works well for you today.

You’ve got a knowledgeable staff, you’re probably stocking your top sellers, you know what products give you the best margins, so leverage that knowledge and make it easy for your customers to choose you. For example - if someone needs a brake job or an emergency repair, they aren’t going to wait around for parts to ship from Amazon when you’ve already got them in stock or can have them delivered locally.

Find a Niche Where You Can Add Value

You might specialize in drive-trains, transmissions, and unique complicated parts like air-brake conversion kits for agriculture machinery. There is endless opportunity when you have a great team of people that are specialized in a certain area who can become the go-to experts for complicated products that require more pre-sale research.

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Consider that while most of us are DIY oriented people, nearly everyone still leans on an expert to cover our blind spots such as:

- Pre-sales research
- Multiple components
- Complex installations
- Post-sales support

If people buy a complicated product from Amazon and tear-apart their engine or transmission in the garage but hit a problem during installation, there's no-one to call. But if they buy a product from your website and they call you for post-purchase support, that is huge for your reputation and word-of-mouth



sales. Your goal should be to leverage that into an opportunity where customers become advocates and then recommend you to their friends and family.

When Considering The Right Type of Customer

The ideal customer has a problem that you can solve. Businesses like service shops or fleets are going to order more frequently. The government is another unique opportunity as a customer. Banks Power, a long-standing client of Web Shop Manager, landed a huge contract to build all the crate motors for Oshkosh light tactical vehicles. You can imagine how great that felt. Enthusiasts are perhaps the biggest market with individual niches such as diesel performance. The enthusiast market is growing quickly, especially with the younger generation demographic, the opportunities for customization and accessorizing are limitless. Evidence of their passion for individuality and creativity can be found everywhere you look on social media.

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Real-World Example: Dales Super Store

Derrik Dobson started out as Dale's Billet but he's now known as Dales Super Store. He had private labeled someone else's billet grills and branded them as his own.

Dale noticed that he was selling the most grilles to diesel performance customers and they were asking for other parts like exhaust systems and other accessories. Realizing there was a huge opportunity, he decided to build an eCommerce site, re-brand and sell exclusively to the diesel performance market. After reaching out and starting the process with a few other web companies that stuttered and stalled over the course of a year, he reached out to Web Shop after a meeting at SEMA.

Within 90 days Web Shop had the new site up and within a year he had done 1.3 million in sales with only 1500 SKUs. The growth has continued to accelerate and after outsourcing the website maintenance he's now able to run the whole company with just himself and one other employee.



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When Considering The Right Type of Products

Product complexity is a barrier to selling efficiently and therefore product descriptions are an awesome tool for clarity. Not only do they explain to customers the “what” and “how”, they double as a sales and training tool for your own labor force.

Product descriptions are also where much of the SEO battle takes place. Google no longer values and ranks pages stuffed with keywords and descriptions. Google focuses on real content that answers your customer’s questions. Hone in on conversions where customers were led to your site from a Google search and create more content to improve your ranking for that type of search. A happy customer purchase improves your rank for that cycle of search.

Pricing is another factor in your eCommerce strategy. It’s no secret that we can’t all compete with Amazon’s buying power. Not everyone

can afford to sell a \$15 bearing and then pay someone to package and ship it each time. So you focus on the middle-of-the-road price point with great margins. Think transmissions and turbos. With expertise and a great cornerstone product, you can start to layer over that with other products, components and accessories. Your customer base will think “I already buy turbos here, why not see if I can cover the rest of my list”?

Sell products that won’t become obsolete or irrelevant. Likewise products that are difficult to find locally and online due to the level of specialization. Choose your first 500 SKUs with care, based on this information and you will see success.



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Validate Your Market Potential

Before you fully dive-in, you need to quantify the market demand and analyze the competition.

Brands That Get it Right Win

Successful brands invest in quality websites and tie everything together with a strong brand image. Equip your sales team with reliable information and thoughtful content to drive more revenue. A good website can become or replace “a traditional print catalog”. In today’s mobile environment, mechanics rely more heavily on their cell phones to browse catalogs. Your catalog needs to be easily searchable from any mobile device. Brand authority is more crucial than ever to win buyer confidence. It’s the foundation the rest of your business stands on.

Quick Recap:

- Products are commodities, you must provide real value
- Find your sweet spot / niche then nurture your ideal customer

- Solve pre-purchase problems to build high converting brand loyalty
- Build an army of loyal customers that trust your brand and maximize lifetime value (LTV)

Now Visualize your Future:

- Imagine 1 year from now, a new website generating 100 orders per month or more
- You can go on vacation without worrying about things “blowing up”
- Your new team members can use the website as a sales support tool
- Younger generations choose you over the competition because you “get it”

Actionable Next Steps

- Find a viable niche with legitimate revenue potential
- Evaluate the competition and identify room for improvement.
- Contact sales@webshopmanager.com

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Dana Nevins, Founder & CEO of Web Shop Manager, has 20 years of direct eCommerce experience and a unique vision when it comes to the management and operation of Web Shop Manager and its staff.

He truly puts his clients and employees above even himself with the philosophy that "The key to success is to help others succeed". He works hard every day to ensure that all of his employees are happy and therefore produce the highest quality of work, the level of quality clients have come to expect from Web Shop Manager.

The reason behind this is simple: "The goal for Web Shop Manager is not just about building a successful and profitable company: it's about building something special, something that people want to be a part of".

Happy employees equal happy clients, and at Web Shop Manager, we always know that our committed and brilliant staff are ready to do whatever it takes for our clients to ensure they receive the best customer care and service.

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