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## **E-Commerce Tutorial: The E-Commerce Package**

### The E-Commerce Package

Once you have the necessary requirements such as taxes, payment processing, ssl security, shipping and costs out of the way, you are By now, you should have an idea of what products you want to sell, what type of shopping cart needs to be built, and what software you will need to be efficient. Ideally, you should find software that is compatible with all of the features you want to encompass from credit card merchant account services to logo design.

At this point, you should make a list ranking which features are most important so you can choose the best e-commerce solution. In a perfect world, you will find a program that can meet all of your business needs. Planning ahead and being flexible will make finding the right ecommerce package a breeze, and should make for a successful future.

You have three simple options to choose from when selecting an e-commerce shopping cart software:

1. Buy a ready made solution (turnkey shopping cart software)
2. Rent space on a network
3. Build an online store system from scratch

### **Turnkey Shopping Cart Software**

Buying a ready made solution that matches your specifications and requirements will give you a standardized set of features while supplying you with additional plug ins. If you find a model that closely matches what you need, buy it. Keep in mind though, that it may be a good solution for you now, but if you plan to expand, it may not fit your needs in the future. Trying to add new features to an existing pre bought package could mean custom programming and software training that can be time consuming and very inefficient. Be sure to keep this in mind when researching this type of ecommerce solution. Also, plug-ins mean more money. Be aware that adding additional software features can mean additional work, time and money. Rank your priorities and see if this type of shopping cart will be the best avenue to take.

Renting space on an e-commerce based network is usually inexpensive and can include many common and needed features. This solution is usually one of the quicker options because they are all web based and you do not have to install anything yourself. You basically just sign up, configure some settings, and upload your product information. It is an instant storefront solution. With this in mind, you may not get all of the features you are looking for and you may be limited as to how you run your operations. If there is a perfect match in what you need and what is provided, the solution will be great. Otherwise, you will end up searching for a new provider in the near future.

Building a solution to exactly fit your specifications will obviously meet you requirements to a tee. It will, however, require expertise, time, and a hefty budget, to create exactly what you are looking for. The advantage of this system is that you can custom build your shopping cart program to give you a competitive edge and unique place in the market. This is beneficial if you plan to make changes frequently and want to offer specials to customers on your own time. Usually, you can create these types of storefronts and databases in any programming language, including Perl, PHP, ASP, C++ and ColdFusion developing environments. When taking this approach, the database will have to be designed from scratch and integrated into the store along with modules to support tax, shipping and payment processing software. If you are not comfortable creating applications on this level, this solution might not be the best for you. Again, analyze your business model as a whole and choose a solution that is right for you and your company.