

# Online Shopping Carts Explained

The world of business has taken a new path. No longer are enterprising individuals restricted to marketing their products and services in traditional landlocked venues like malls. Through the use of shopping cart e-commerce software, today's merchandisers literally have a world of opportunities available to them.

Secure online shopping carts make it incredibly easy for consumers to buy products from the comfort of home. For a modern business to succeed in the worldwide marketplace, the ability to choose efficient shopping cart e-commerce software is essential. The software must be easy for you and your customers to use, and it must maintain the professional appearance that your business needs.

## What is an Online Shopping Cart?

A virtual shopping cart on a website is not entirely different from a traditional shopping cart found in a retail store or supermarket. It gathers and keeps track of the products accumulated in the online store, and holds them until you are ready to pay at the "check out counter". When the consumer is ready make a purchase, he or she will be taken to another page, and given the choice of how to pay.

## How Do You Choose an Online Shopping Cart?

There are more than 130 different types of e-commerce software available on the market. So, how do you choose the one that's best for your business? Different software packages offer specific features and benefits.

Here are some basic points to keep in mind:

- \* Pay Pal is a well-known software package offering free e-commerce solutions. Marketers can use the Paypal shopping cart and paying point features without paying a user fee. Instead, Paypal acts as the financial institution, collecting money from your customers, and taking a small percentage per payment. The major drawback to using Paypal as your e-commerce online shopping cart provider is that consumers must have a Paypal account in order to use the service.
- \* Many online purchases are based on the concept of "impulse buying". That is, a consumer will purchase an item on sight, without a great deal of thought. For this reason, you might want to choose e-commerce software that offers selling and cross-selling functions. Much like the shoe store clerk who encourages you to buy the matching belt, this feature suggests items that will enhance or add to their enjoyment of the initial item purchased.
- \* Discount or quantity coupons provide another level of consumer satisfaction. Everyone loves a bargain, and most people are willing to spend a buck if they'll get a few in return. Offering discounts for secondary purchases can help to ensure return customers.
- \* Auto responders are features that you shouldn't pass by. Customer service is key to building a successful business. With an auto responder you can reply immediately to thank your customers for their business and to offer follow-up service.
- \* Be wary of software packages that offer free or premium shopping carts. Remember that nothing is ever really free.

## The Hard Costs of Shopping Cart Software

A good software package, one that covers all the basics of a shopping cart e-commerce software setup for beginners, will cost you about \$500. After you've purchased the initial software package, you can add more features as your business develops.

Browse online to research the many software packages that are available to you. You can compare features and price before you commit to any one shopping cart software package. The most important issue is that your business will run smoothly, with secure transactions and reliable customer service.

As a progressive e-commerce retailer using online shopping carts, you can combine modern technology with traditional good service to stay on the cutting edge of the worldwide market.