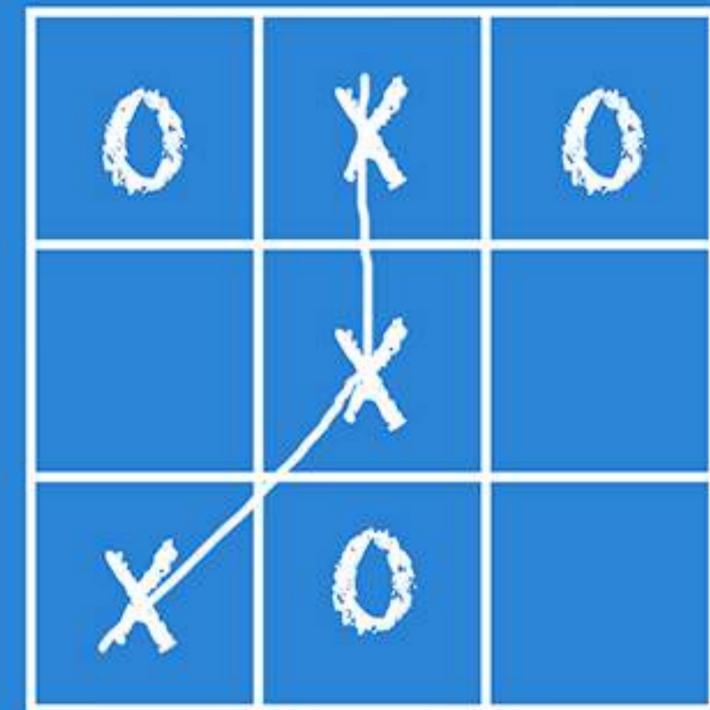


E-COMMERCE STRATEGY

Best Practices & Basic Concepts

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unSTRATEGIC



DIGITAL STRATEGY

What is Ecommerce?

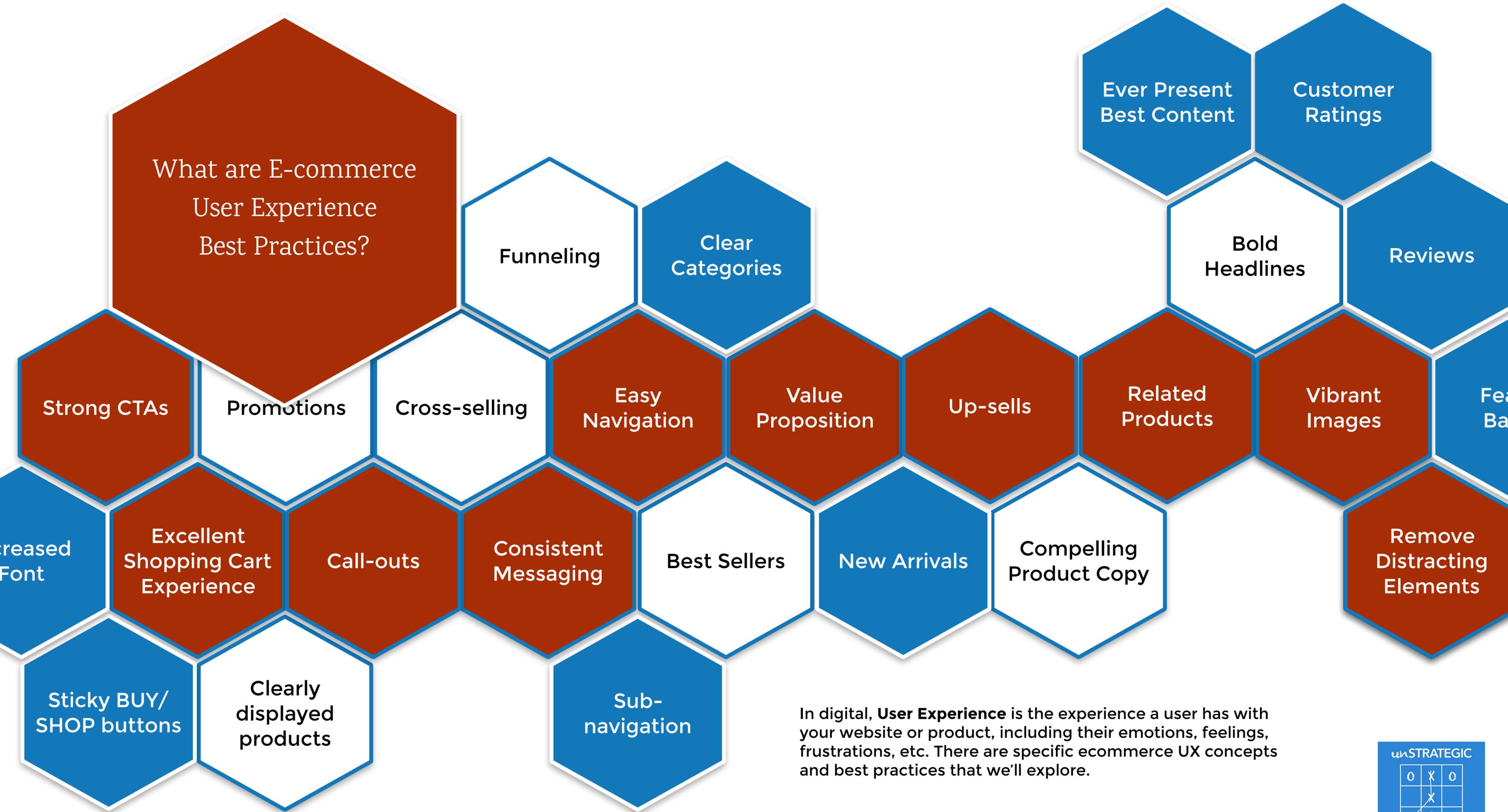
Ecommerce is when commercial transactions are conducted electronically on the Internet, so simply put it's Electronic Commerce. Commerce is the buying and selling of goods and/or services. Ecommerce is the buying and selling of goods and/or services online.

Now, just like regular business, there are different models to ecommerce like B2B (business to business), B2C (business to consumer), C2C (consumer to consumer), and finally C2B (consumer to business).

There are also many ways to sell products and services online including retail, wholesale, through digital products or subscription-based platforms, paywalls, and much more. We're going to do a series on Ecommerce Strategy. This resource (and podcast episode) will focus on the UX of Ecommerce - Best Practices & Basic Concepts.



What are E-commerce User Experience Best Practices?



In digital, **User Experience** is the experience a user has with your website or product, including their emotions, feelings, frustrations, etc. There are specific ecommerce UX concepts and best practices that we'll explore.



E-COMMERCE FUNDAMENTALS

Setting Your Ecommerce Site Up For Success

SECTION

1

Ecommerce Basic Concepts

When it comes to your ecommerce website, you'll want to follow a few fundamental guidelines that will help your site be more user-friendly and offer a good user experience.

Many ecommerce sites will have certain elements to cater to user behavior and will implement similar concepts to support user experience. All these elements / concepts can be found on the biggest (and best) ecommerce sites on the web today including Amazon, eBay, Groupon, and more.

It's important to note that these are basic concepts. We want to lay down a good foundation before getting into advanced concepts.



Strong & Concise Value Proposition

Users will want to know what separates you (or your products/services) from the competition. Clearly stated and boldly implemented value propositions should be one of the first things that users see.



Clear (understandable) Navigation

The information architecture of your site should be easy to use and follow for users. The navigation is considered the "map" of your site so make sure to use proper nomenclature / language that users will understand so they can easily find what they are looking for.



Good Search Functionality

It's crucial to have a present search bar (usually at the top of the page) so users can easily search for products and/or services. Search filtering can be another good option when you have lots of products or items for sale.

Ecommerce Basic Concepts

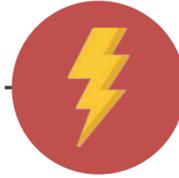
Conversion Funnels

Funnels push users into specific sections of your website. You'll want to have Category or Listings pages that lead to Product or Details pages to funnel users to buy. Use bold and clear calls-to-action to help funnel users.



Consistent Messaging

You need to be consistent with your messaging to not confuse or frustrate your users. Consistency in product names, titles, short descriptions to long descriptions from page to page is imperative for ecommerce.



Speed (and Responsiveness)

Speed is one of the biggest factors in ecommerce. Users who shop online want to be able to find things quickly and check out smoothly. Making sure that page times load in under a couple of seconds is important. Also, all sites should be responsive in 2020.



Descriptive Copy / Quality Imagery

Users need good information to make purchasing decisions. They also want to see high-quality imagery of products from different angles or different shots. To make your copy compelling and drive users to act you'll need to ask yourself what information will users absolutely need to make this purchase.

Ecommerce Basic Concepts

Promotions & Cross-sells

Having a banner, box, or callout that specifically draws users' attention to promotions or 'deals of the day/week' are great for pushing certain products or services. Cross-sell sections are also essential for ecommerce to provide variety for the user.



Business Information

Users need to be able to contact you easily, whether that's by phone, email, or live chat. Add your business information (Name, Address, Phone Number, Email) to the footer of your ecommerce site.



User Reviews & Ratings

Every good ecommerce site will have user-generated reviews and/or ratings to let other users know which ones are the most popular (or least popular). This helps with credibility of your products/services.



Easy to Use Shopping Cart

The check out experience or shopping cart is one of the most important pieces to an commerce website. Many users will abandon the shopping cart if it's too complicated. You'll need to make it easy for users to actually buy your products or services. Make sure users can add or remove products when using the shopping cart. Avoid unnecessary steps during check out (feel free to tell your users how many steps it will take). And keep this process easy and smooth.

E-COMMERCE UX
Breaking down ecommerce funnels

SECTION

2

Conversion Funnels

Conversion funnels are intended to drive users deeper into ecommerce sites with the goal of getting them to purchase. It's important to understand the following concepts of conversion funnels.



The End Goal

The end-goal for your ecommerce site could be to purchase a service/product, download an ebook, sign up for an email newsletter, etc. Whatever the end-goal, we need to keep this in mind to make our conversion funnels more effective.



De-linearity

One user's path to buy a product might be different than another user's path to buy the same product. Allow users to take a purchasing path that is most comfortable for them.



Funneling

The act of funneling starts with Category or Listings pages and leads users to Product or Details pages. This is designed to get as many products in front of as many users as possible, individual users will then drill down to specific products/items/services/etc.



Variety and/or Options

This goes hand and hand with De-linearity, but having variety and options on the last page before users purchase greatly help tip the on-the-fence buyers into purchasing.

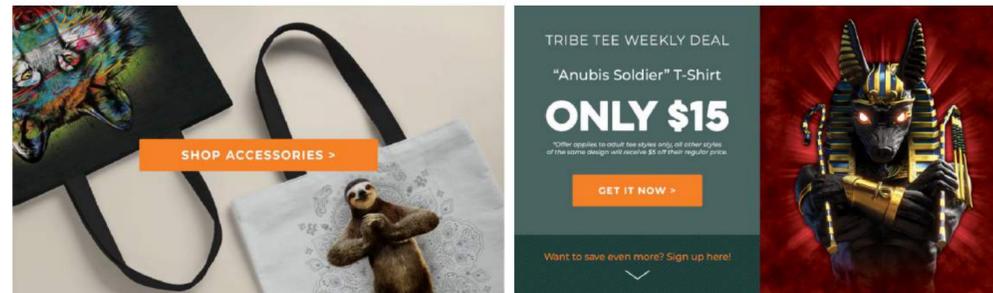
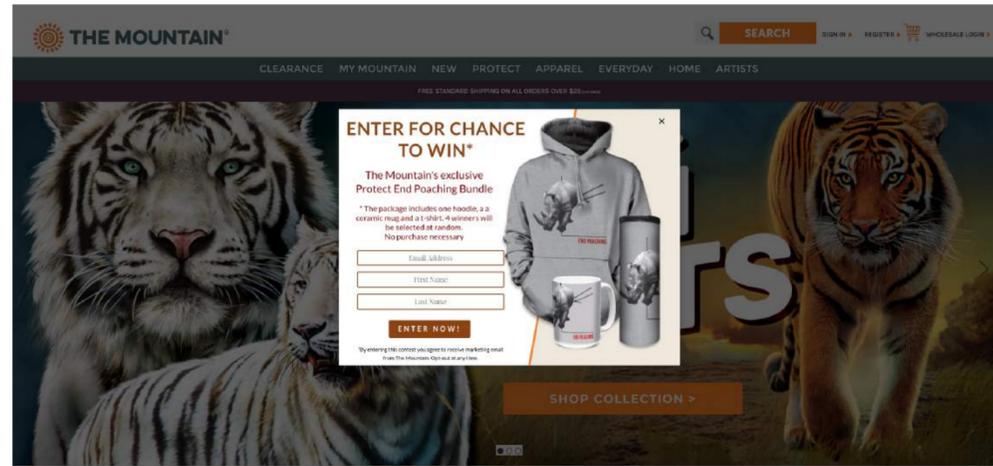


Credibility and/or Trust

This is where customer reviews, ratings, and testimonials will come in handy. Users need validation or reinforcement that their decision to purchase is the right one to make.

CONVERSION FUNNEL: HOMEPAGE

themountain.com



What makes for a good ecommerce homepage?

Oftentimes, the homepage is a combination or blend of what users can expect to see on your site which typically flows in accordance with a buyer's journey.

Above the Fold:

- Sticky, clean navigation; bold SHOP/BUY button; search bar (site-wide)
- Value proposition front and center (possibly overlaid on hero image), clearly stated and visible by users.
 - DO NOT USE IMAGE CAROUSELS FOR HERO SECTIONS ANYMORE!!
- Potentially have a flyin/overlay/pop-up that offers something valuable.

Subsequent sections and features of the homepage:

- Intro section introducing the company/brand/products.
- Deals of the day/week/month/year.
- Categories section (with the top categories).
- Products section (with the top products).
- Testimonials or Customer Reviews section.
- Cross-sells for secondary / tertiary goals (sign up for email newsletter, download a free ebook, etc.).
- Stay connected section (social media, community, etc.).
- Footer section with business information, menu for certain pages (Privacy Policy, T&C's, Accessibility, etc.).
- Make sure to have highlighted or bold contrast CTAs for users to dive deeper into their area of interest.

GOAL

Entice users to explore the site further by offering them something of value (this can come in many forms depending on the user).

Article: <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/best-ecommerce-website-design/>

CONVERSION FUNNEL: CATEGORY (LISTINGS) PAGE

[blissworld.com](https://www.blissworld.com)

What makes for a good ecommerce category page?

The category page will usually list out all the items/products in a particular category with overviews of the products: images, names, and short descriptions along with CTAs or avenues to purchase and/or learn more.

Above the Fold:

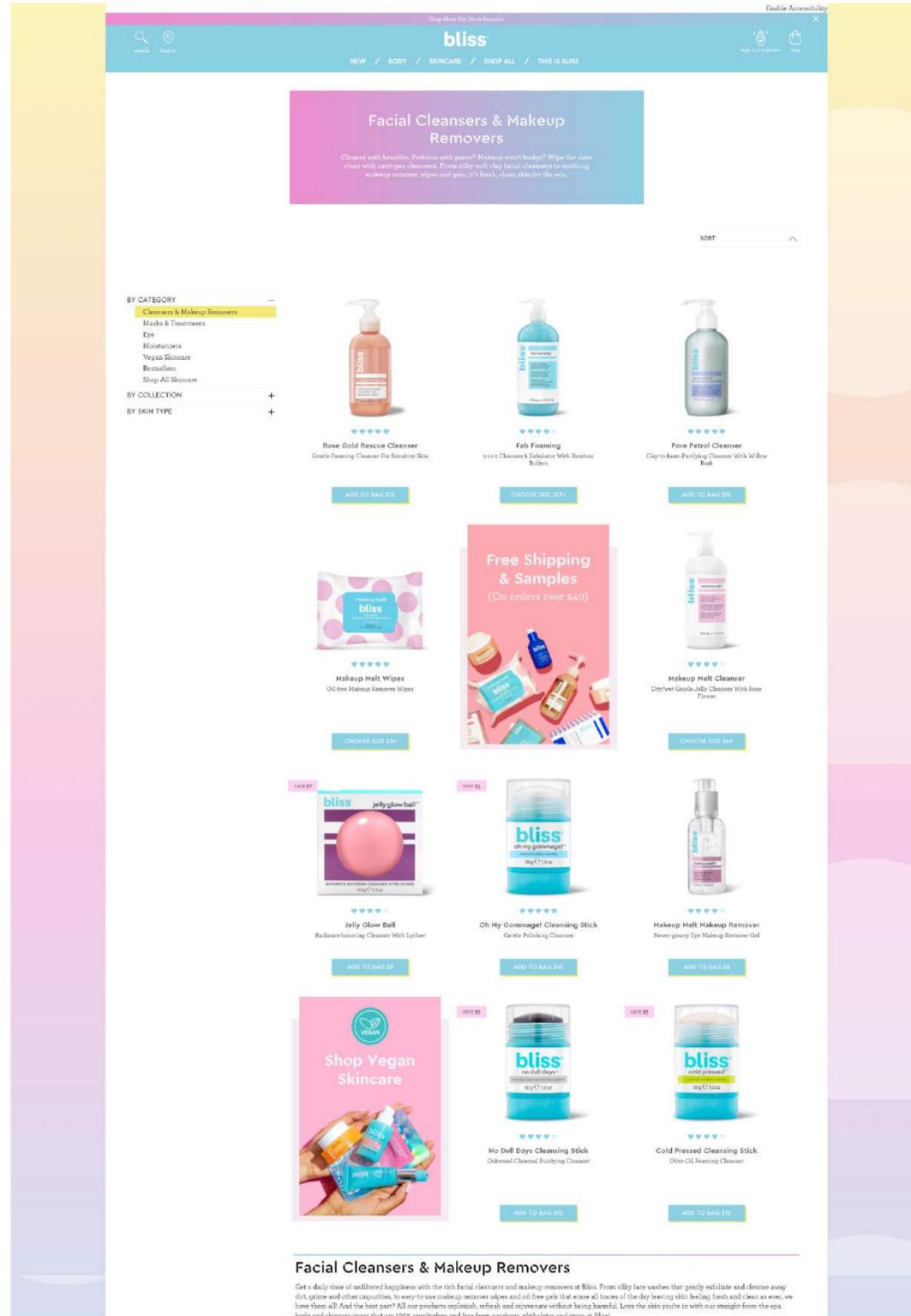
- Page Title (i.e. Category Product) with a blurb or value prop about the category.
- Submenu or filtering functionality to sort category products in more detail.
- Potentially have the first row of products visible (or the best sellers in that category).

Subsequent sections & features of the category page:

- This section is going to house category products, some things that you'll want to incorporate are the following:
 - For optimum viewing and scanning, products are usually displayed in rows (2,3,4,5 columns depending on amount).
 - High resolution, quality product images from the front view.
 - Product names with short descriptions and calls-to-action (or avenues) to buy/learn more.
 - Product prices and/or deals.
 - Rating system (i.e. star rating), if applicable.
 - Visual cues that denote “new arrivals” or “popular products” etc.
 - Related categories or subcategories that allow users to navigate to other pages.

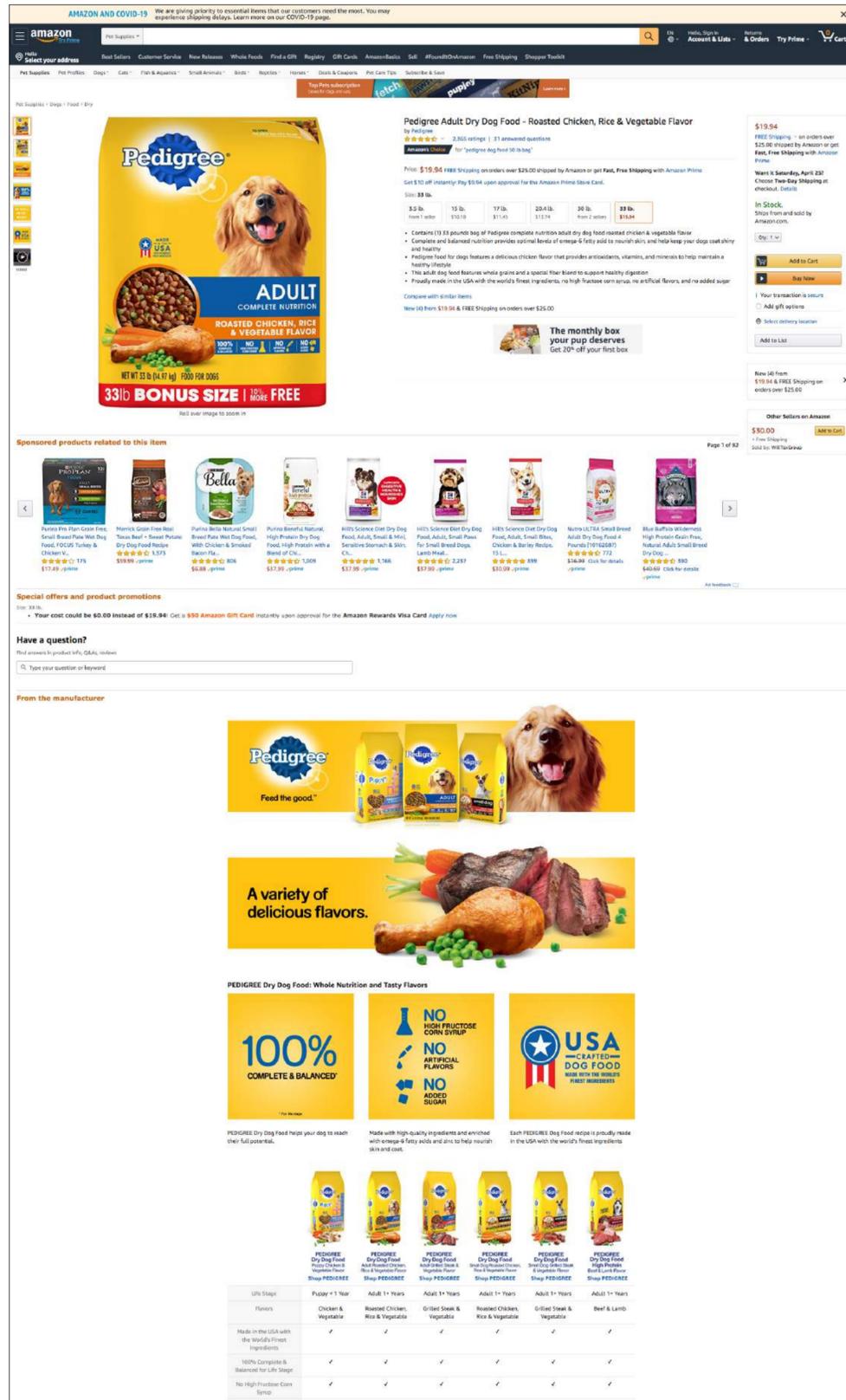
GOAL

Make it easy for users to shop by merchandising products in a simple and understandable way. Give users the opportunity to purchase products, learn more about them, and validate their assumptions/decisions.



CONVERSION FUNNEL: PRODUCT (DETAILS) PAGE

amazon.com



What makes for a good ecommerce product page?

The product page is where you'll want to give users all the information they would need to purchase a product, including more images, more detailed descriptions, more reviews, etc.

Above the Fold:

- Product name, image, price and “Add to Cart” or “Buy” CTA.
- Detailed description (consisting of different types of content, see below)
- Anchor links to reviews or testimonials.
- Different varieties (i.e. sizes, colors), if applicable.

Subsequent sections & features of the product page:

- Special offers or promotions
- Related products or items
- Answered questions
- Reviews, ratings, testimonials in full
- Avenues/Paths to different pages that push secondary/tertiary goals, if applicable.

Note: Different users will consume information in different ways. Therefore, it's important to have varying types of content (images, text) to help the user consume the information. You can also use icons, animation, videos, and more to help users make better buying decisions about the products or services you're selling.

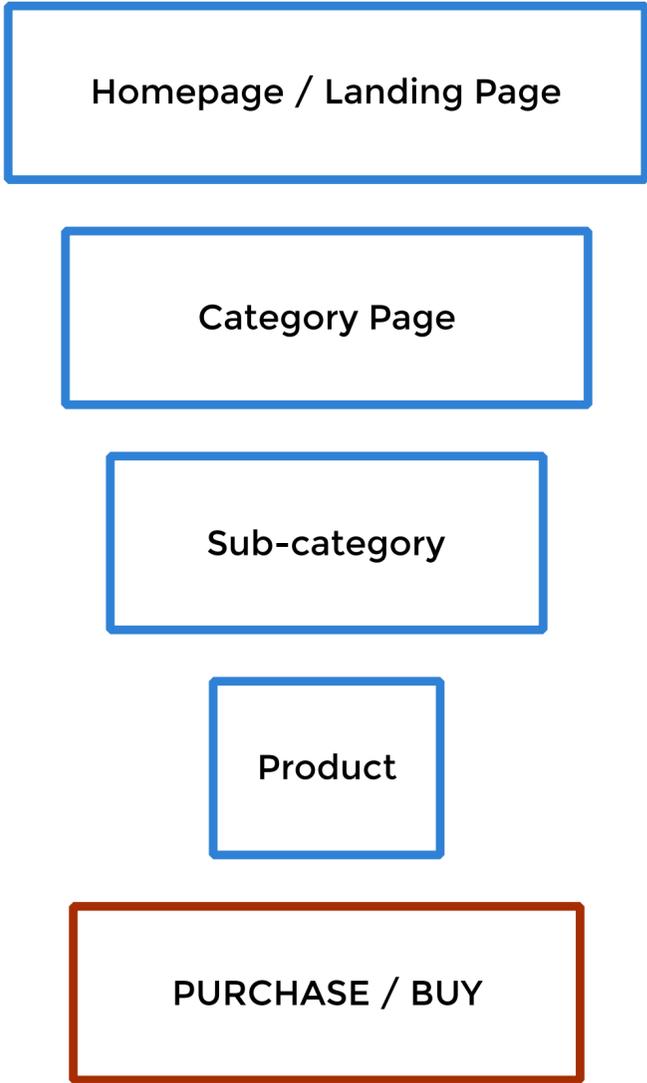
GOAL

Get users to buy, plain and simple. This is the page that can make or break the sale. So give users the information they'll need to make a sound purchasing decision.



CONVERSION FUNNEL: OVERVIEW

What makes for a good ecommerce funnel?



Homepage (or Landing Page)

Where ever the user lands (oftentimes the homepage or other landing page like a blog post) you want to show value to the user and give them plenty of opportunities for exploration. Certain users will gravitate toward certain types of content.

Category Page

Category pages should have all the products listed in a single category or have all the subcategories listed. This page acts as an overview for the the products or subcategories and should be used for scanning and shopping purposes so users can easily find the product or subcategory they're looking for.

Subcategory Page

Similar to Category pages, subcategory pages should list out all the products in a single subcategory and act as an overview for users to drill down into their desired product. This page should also allow users to go directly to the checkout experience if they choose to do so (if the user has made up their mind).

Product Page

The Product page should house all the necessary details about a product including name, images, pricing, customer reviews, related products, and more. Since different users consume information differently, leverage different types of content (images, text, testimonials, videos, animation, etc.) to see which types might be the best for your ecommerce site and driving users to act on it.

BUYING THE PRODUCT/SERVICE

The ultimate goal is to get users to buy the product or service or good that you're selling. A smartly created conversion funnel should help in doing just that!

Continuing Ecommerce

Ecommerce is such a broad subject that there is so much to cover. Once you understand the basic best practices and concepts of ecommerce user experience, we can then get into more advanced techniques including the shopping cart or check out experience, personalization, promotions strategy, and more. This resource should help you lay a good foundation.

As unSTRATEGIC Podcast continues, we will record a number of episodes dedicated to **Ecommerce Strategy** that could potentially include the following topics:

1. Best Practices & Advanced Concepts
2. Best Practices for Mobile
3. Ecommerce Marketing Strategies
4. SEO for Ecommerce

Reach out and let us know which ones you are interested in the most.

