

Chapter 25

Analysing Critical Success Factors for Supporting Online Shopping

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ABSTRACT

Online shopping is nowadays a highly frequent action but there are several critical factors that have to be considered for enabling websites and platforms to be able to offer all necessary requisites for guaranteeing user friendly, secure and also enjoyable shopping experiences to clients, offering them exactly what they expect to buy, and quickly find, among a huge offer available online. In this paper, a set of considered critical success factors are analysed on a set of top ranked websites, about luxurious furniture, to understand to what extent these critical factors are satisfied. The results can be taken into consideration for implementing a successful business through e-commerce from herein analysed perspectives.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-8957-1.ch025

1. INTRODUCTION

Online shopping is growing fast as an interesting alternative way of buying experience, which has emphasized the relevance of the growing instrumentalization usefulness of the web through websites and platforms for supporting e-commerce (Alturas, Santos & Brites, 2006). Essentially, e-commerce is a type of e-business involving goods, services and information in which the parties involved do not always meet physically but interact electronically. The benefit of e-commerce is of course evident. For example, the potential of placing orders, transferring sales data and inventory information, and conducting the transactions online can significantly reduce business operations cost and increase the speed of business activities.

Given the existing competitiveness in the nowadays global market context, there is an increasing need to reach the maximum number of customers within particular niche markets (Abdallah & Jaleel, 2014). E-commerce provides many opportunities for business to reach markets that have never been possible to reach before the Internet age. Therefore, e-commerce can create significant value and generate extra sales through the virtual marketplace. Although e-commerce is already being widely explored, there is still considerable margin of growth to its maturity (Ascensão, 2011). Furthermore, there is no guarantee that companies selling their products and services through Internet channels will be successful. Many businesses have now realized that installing computer networks inside the company and creating a web-site may appear easy. But building a profitable business to fulfil customer's orders online is actually a lot harder. A major challenge for e-commerce success lies in the question of how to use e-commerce to help create a sustainable competitive advantage (Bandyopadhyay, 2010).

There are a vast number of studies demonstrating the successful implementation of e-commerce, in many industrial sectors (Ascensão, 2011), which led to a strong motivation for this work, in order to further the study of the critical success factors for implementing successful businesses through e-commerce from multiple perspectives.

Thus, in this paper, a study of the whole process of online shopping, with special focus on critical success factors analysis is presented and discussed. The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, a brief description of the market behind e-commerce is presented. In section 3 an extensive review on the state of the art is included, with the research gap identified. Section 4 proposes a multi-perspective critical success factor analysis and discusses, in detail, each of the critical success factors to be considered when putting forward an online shop. In section 5 are presented and briefly discussed some results obtained regarding the main critical success factors studied through a questionnaire carried out in this work. Finally, section 6 puts forward some main conclusions and planned further work.

2. MARKET DESCRIPTION

The competitive global market of today requires companies to be in all parts of the world at the same time. E-commerce is a sophisticated tool for opening new business opportunities with a considerable competitive advantage over local markets (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011). Although there is already a great adherence and growth of e-commerce, it is expected that this still has a high degree of progression.

The demand for niche markets and marketing allies could revolutionize the new e-commerce. Recent technological changes allow cementing online business by providing payment procedures in a safer way up to highly effective logistic companies. The whole process of creating online stores involves many

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