

Fast-Track Business Planning

Learn how to update your eCommerce business goals—
and what you'll need to realize them.



No eCommerce business plans to fail.

But owners may be so busy handling day-to-day issues that they put off thinking about the future. Sometimes you get lucky and your business takes off organically. More often, you miss opportunities if you don't plan for the people, processes, and platform necessary for rapid growth.

What is the best way to plan for the future if you don't have endless time for strategizing? It may be time to write a new business plan. When you started your business, you

may have created one to help you secure investments or loans. And it was probably a long, time-consuming process.

Now that you're running a business, you may not have time to write a formal business plan. But sketching out a fast-track business plan that focuses on how you're going to sustain growth can set you up for success.

Use this guide to update your eCommerce business goals and discover what you'll need to make them a reality.



Learn the business planning basics.

A business plan should include the following:

- A company description
- A market analysis
- An overview of the company's people, organization, and management
- Detailed product and service descriptions
- An overview of marketing and sales strategies
- Financial projections
- Funding requests

The primary purpose of a traditional business plan is to secure funding. It's typically written for bankers or investors. Your fast-track business plan is a little different. Its main purpose is to clarify your business's long-term goals and help you map out how you're going to get there. It should be written for you and your team—though it may also provide a foundation for a formal business plan if reaching your goals will require more funding.

Businesses that completed business plans were nearly 2x as likely to successfully grow or obtain capital as those who didn't write a plan.¹

¹A survey of 2,877 Business Plan Pro users conducted by Palo Alto Software. Reported in "A Business Plan Doubles Your Chances for Success, Says a New Survey," [Small Biz Trends, January 2016](#).

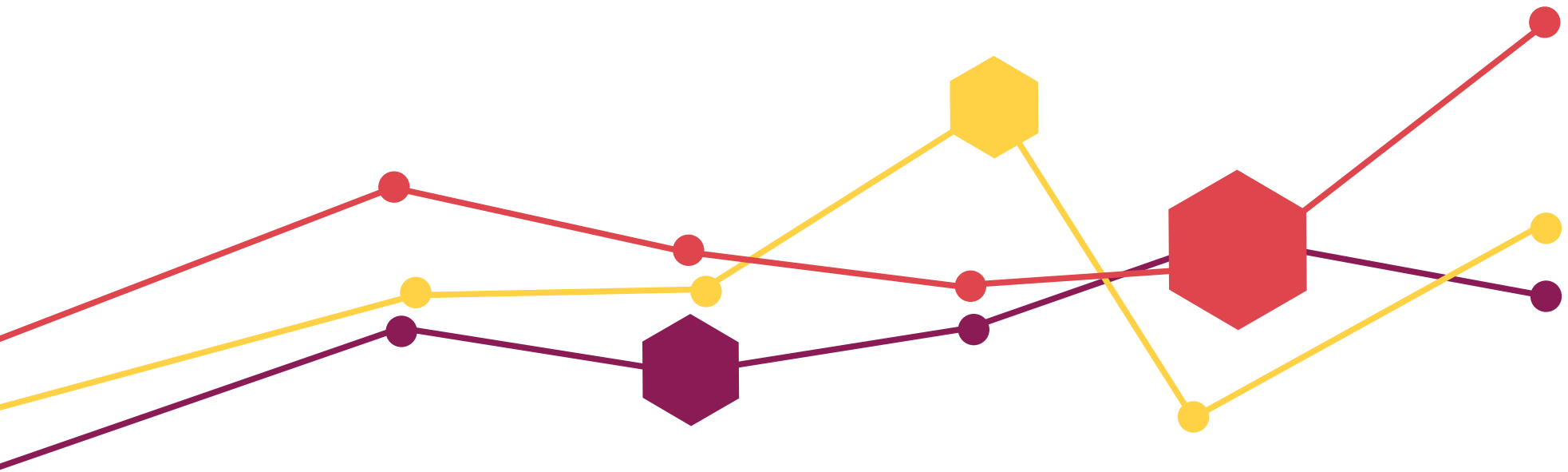
To get started, ask yourself and your team these questions inspired by traditional business planning. (Be sure to look one, two, and five years ahead.) They will likely spark new questions, allow you and

your team to share a vision of your company's future, and help to align expectations as you start bridging the gap between where you are now and where you want to go.

Any “I don’t know” answer may mean it’s time to research and define new goals.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS FOR 1-, 2-, AND 5-YEAR TIME HORIZONS.

Business Planning Questions	+1 Year	+2 Years	+5 Years
Who are or biggest competitors? And what does our market look like?			
What should our annual revenues be?			
How many customers will we have?			
What percentage of our customers will be repeat customers?			
How will we support our customers?			
What products will we sell, and where will we operate?			
What will our marketing and sales strategies look like?			
What skills will we need? And does our current team have them?			
What will operating, marketing, and sales costs look like?			



Dig into the data.

As an eCommerce business, you already possess an incredibly useful strategic resource: your data. Part of your fast-track business planning exercise is to run some reports and take a closer look at how your current business is performing. You can do this by analyzing the two groups that interact with your web store: customers who buy and browsers who don't.

Your eCommerce platform should let you track metrics like visitor and buyer demographics, conversion rates, margins, and profits as well as drill down into shopping and browsing behavior.

YOUR ANALYSIS CAN HELP YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.

- Who are my most profitable customers?
- Who are my most loyal customers?
- What kinds of website visitors convert the best?
- What kinds of website visitors convert the worst?
- How are customers finding my web store?

The answers to these questions can uncover new opportunities. For example, if you have a lot of poorly converting mobile traffic, you might consider refreshing your mobile experience. If you have a lot of customers but they rarely come back, consider a loyalty program.

Define your growth strategies.

Once you have a rough idea of where you want your business to go and whom you're going to target, it's time to look at potential strategies that can help growth. These

strategies can support growth in many different ways, from attracting new customers to boosting repeat purchases to increasing conversion rates across the board.

THE MANY WAYS TO GROW

Growth strategy

How it works

Traffic boost

All things being equal, more traffic means more sales. You can boost traffic with SEO, SEM, and social media strategies that get your content in front of customers who are searching for your product.

Hybrid business models

Hybrid models include combining retail and wholesale outlets or a network of retail partners with an eCommerce presence.

Differentiated user experience

A differentiated user experience stands out from competitors and is typically highly personalized with mobile-friendly design and automated selling features, like also-boughts and individualized recommendations.

Multichannel sales

Multichannel sales means selling through marketplaces like Amazon, social media, and even physical stores with endless aisles as well as your eCommerce site.

Localized commerce

Localized commerce lets you give customers in different countries a contextually relevant shopping experience.

Multiple brand identities

Multiple brand identities help you sell to distinct demographic groups.

Customer loyalty

Loyalty programs incentivize customers to become repeat customers and buy more over time.

Think about people, process, and platform.

Once you've identified your eCommerce growth strategies, you'll need to think about how you're going to make them happen. In most cases, you'll need some combination of people, processes, and eCommerce platform features.

People

Many small businesses are run by a handful of people with generalized skills. As you adopt more advanced eCommerce growth strategies, you may need more focused expertise. For example, expanding your business into new countries will require knowledge of local customers, laws, and tax rules. Your fast-track business plan should spell out how you'll get this expertise, whether it means making a new hire or finding a consultant or agency.

Process

As you grow, you'll need more defined processes to handle bigger and more complex operations. For example, you may consider how you will support more customers in more locations, tiered loyalty programs, affiliate sales, and more. Your fast-track business plan should sketch out some of these processes—or simply include some “how” questions for the new experts on your extended team.

Platform

The final piece of the puzzle is an eCommerce platform that can support your business as it grows. The following table maps platform requirements to different growth strategies. We recommend you prioritize them for your organization's needs and include them in your fast-track business plan.



GROWTH STRATEGY	PLATFORM REQUIREMENTS	PRIORITY
Traffic boost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid content creation (including staging and preview) to support SEO and SEM• Scalable cloud infrastructure with CDN and full-stack SLA to easily handle traffic surges	
Customer loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-click checkout for repeat purchases• Personalized offers based on customer history• Support for membership programs	
Hybrid business models	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Native B2B and B2C functionality• Easy integration with B2B2C marketplaces• The flexibility to define different partnership relationships and manage inventory across channels	
Differentiated user experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progressive Web Apps (PWAs) that access smartphone features through mobile web browsers• A wide choice of responsive, pre-built themes• Integration with AI-based personalization engines• Omnichannel solutions for a consistent experience online and in store	
Multichannel sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to connect with marketplaces like Amazon• Integrated order management for multiple channels	
Localized commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible shipping and payment options• Tax and compliance technology from Vertex that makes it easy to comply with local, sales, and value-added taxes	
Multiple brand identities	Support for multiple stores with one unified backend and admin dashboard	



Take the next steps.

Your fast-track business plan can provide a glimpse into the future—and a plan for getting there. As you begin planning for what's next, you may also want to consider migrating from Magento 1.x to Magento 2. Making the switch can

position your growing business for future success. Magento is committed to helping our customers plan proactively and grow fast.

HOW COX & COX TURNED MOBILE TRAFFIC INTO SALES

A UK-based furniture company, Cox & Cox has a thriving eCommerce business with annual revenues of more than \$15 million. But web metrics revealed a worrying trend. Most of their web traffic was coming from mobile devices, but mobile conversion rates were low.

The answer? Migration from the Magento Community Edition 1 to Magento Commerce 2. After the migration, Q4 mobile revenues jumped 45.6% YoY and mobile conversions increased by 20.1%.

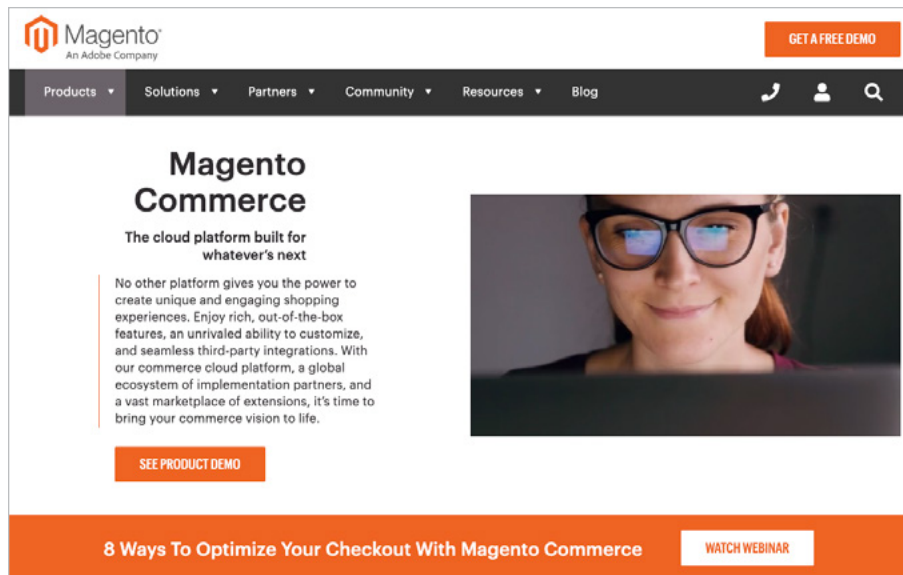
Post-migration mobile revenues (Q4)

45.6%

more revenue YoY

20.1%

more mobile conversions



The screenshot shows the Magento Commerce website homepage. At the top left is the Magento logo with the tagline "An Adobe Company". To the right is a "GET A FREE DEMO" button. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for Products, Solutions, Partners, Community, Resources, and Blog. The main content area features the heading "Magento Commerce" and the sub-heading "The cloud platform built for whatever's next". A paragraph of text describes the platform's capabilities: "No other platform gives you the power to create unique and engaging shopping experiences. Enjoy rich, out-of-the-box features, an unrivaled ability to customize, and seamless third-party integrations. With our commerce cloud platform, a global ecosystem of implementation partners, and a vast marketplace of extensions, it's time to bring your commerce vision to life." Below this text is a "SEE PRODUCT DEMO" button. To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman wearing glasses, looking at a laptop. At the bottom of the page, there is an orange banner with the text "8 Ways To Optimize Your Checkout With Magento Commerce" and a "WATCH WEBINAR" button.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

[Talk to a BlueSky rep today](#)



ABOUT MAGENTO

Magento, an Adobe company, is a leading provider of cloud commerce innovation to merchants and brands across B2C and B2B industries and was recently named a leader in the 2018 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce. In addition to its flagship digital commerce platform, Magento boasts a strong portfolio of cloud-based omnichannel solutions that empower merchants to successfully integrate digital and physical shopping experiences. Magento is the #1 provider to the Internet Retailer Top 1000, the B2B 300, and the Top 500 Guides for Europe and Latin America. Magento is supported by a vast global network of solution and technology partners, a highly active global developer community, and the largest eCommerce marketplace for extensions, all available for download on the Magento Marketplace.

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