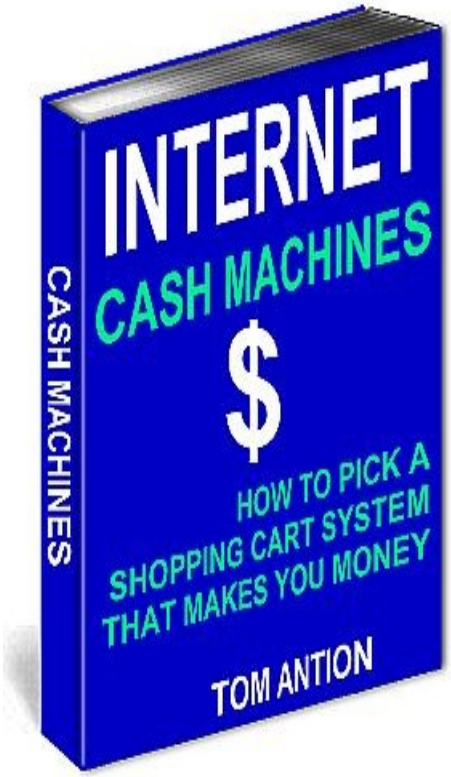

How to Pick a Shopping Cart System that Makes You Money

By Tom Antion

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About the Author

Tom Antion is professional speaker and well-known Internet Marketing specialist. Tom's claim to fame is that he actually makes money on the Internet . . . he doesn't just read about it from a book. He was the chief spokesperson for CBS Switchboard.com in their small business educational outreach program *Main Streets Online.* Tom is also the founder of the infamous *Butt Camp Seminars* where you learn to make money while sitting home on your rear end.

Tom is also the owner of the only facility of its kind in the world the

Great Internet Marketing Retreat Center in Virginia Beach, VA. Serious Internet marketers come from all over the world to study with Tom, live in his estate home, and profit from a total immersion learning experience.

See the video and download the learning brochure at:

Great Internet Marketing Training

To reach Tom orders@antion.com or call 757-431-1366.

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Introduction

Picking a shopping cart system is a very serious decision that you will likely have to live with for some time. It is simply too important a decision to make without knowing the right questions to ask.

So many systems are frustrating to install and once installed are incomprehensible and extremely difficult to use which means lost sales for you. If your customer is sitting in front of their computer with an open wallet, you better not make it hard for them to buy or they will be gone in a flash.

You really want to automate every part of the system so it's less work for you and extremely easy for your customer. Today's smart shopping system technology can make this happen at a price that any small business can afford.

In addition, smart shopping systems will dramatically increase sales because they manage the entire shopping process including upselling the customer, making special offers, handling special sales and discounts and completely managing your extremely valuable database of prospects and actual customers.

There are thousands of simple shopping carts on the market either for free or for a low price. Basically they just take the order like the cashier at a grocery store. They do nothing to help you sell in the first place.

Custom Carts

You will have webmasters all the time trying to sell you a custom shopping cart that can cost you anywhere from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. They tell you that what you want to do with your site will require lots of expensive programming and custom adaptations. There are very few small business people (and I've coached hundreds) that need anything so sophisticated. Keep your wallet in your pocket when you get around these people.

You may already have a ton of money invested in your shopping system and you may not have the sales you think you should. It might be time to consider scraping the old system in favor of a new less expensive system that has sales tools built in. Sticking with an antiquated system just because you have lots of money invested makes no sense and it will continue to hurt your sales in the future . . . what's that saying about pound foolish and penny wise?

What is a shopping cart?

A "shopping cart" is actually a piece of software. The metaphor is, . . . you guessed it, . . . shopping. You push your cart through the "cyber store." When you see something you want to buy, you put it in your cart by clicking on it. Then when you are ready to leave, you "check out" of the store. This is where the shopping cart totals up your purchases and adds the tax and shipping for you.

At any time along the way you can take an item out of your cart. It's just like at a real store when you see a toaster in the men's clothing section. . . . Someone decided they didn't want it and just left it wherever they happened to be in the store. In cyberspace you don't have to feel bad about throwing something out of your cart. At this point you're only moving electrons around.

You then fill in your name, address, phone and shipping info along with your credit card and expiration date. Most carts still give you a chance to make changes, or back out of the deal altogether. Once you hit the final submit button, all the mechanisms kick into gear to send that money hurtling toward your checking account . . . minus the credit card company percentage, of course.

Real Time Credit Card Processing

The credit card processing is not actually done by the shopping cart. Many people don't realize this. You still have to have a credit card merchant account to process credit cards. If you don't have the real time processing capability, your shopping cart will simply email you notice of the sale. You log in to your cart to get the credit card number for manual processing later.

When you do have "real time credit card processing" capability (which you must if you want to totally automate your system) the customer puts their credit card in your shopping cart and about 15 to 20 seconds later gets a notification that the sale went through. Sometime later that day the money is deposited in your bank account automatically.

The credit card number is encrypted as it flies through cyberspace so no bad boys and girls can intercept it along the way. This is a process called PGP, or **Pretty Good Privacy**. Hahaha That term always cracks me up. I think I'd rather have Darn Good Privacy, or Invincible Privacy, but PGP is all we have at our level and it has shown to be Darn Good Enough.

After the transaction is complete, in sometimes as little as five

seconds, you either get an email regarding shipping the product, or the customer gets a link to download the product directly. And that's all there is to it. I've simplified it considerably, but believe me, you don't want to know all the details. You just want it to work!

AGAIN I WANT TO EMPHASIZE -- Your shopping cart system is separate from your merchant account and from your real time processing mechanism. The shopping cart must connect to the credit card system, but it is a separate system. If you need a merchant account I will tell you later how to get one in about ten minutes for $99.00

How to Pick a Shopping Cart System

Here are some criteria that are important when it comes to picking a shopping cart:

✔ Calculate Shipping & Tax

This is one of the reasons why you have a shopping cart. It's a basic function, but some do it better than others. Make sure you have several options on how to calculate basic shipping charges. Don't forget, some customers will want fast shipping like Fed Ex. Can the cart handle this?

✔ Soft & Hard Goods

This is extremely important for anyone who wants to sell informational products. A hard good is a physical product that has to be shipped to the customer. A soft good is a downloadable product or software type of product. You want the shopping cart to be able to handle both types of products in the same transaction so the customer

doesn't have to go through the ordering process twice if ordering one of your widgets and a downloadable E-book at the same time. Also, when the cart is delivering a downloadable product it should generate a webpage for the download that disappears automatically after a short time so that customer can't give the link to all his/her friends.

✔ Featured Products

These are products that you can add to the bottom of the shopping cart checkout page that your customers may also be interested in purchasing. A powerful shopping cart will let you add additional items you may want to push to your customers. Adding text such as "people who bought this item also bought these products" or "you may also be interested in . . . " will give customers additional choices that they may be interested in. This can mean a lot more money for you.

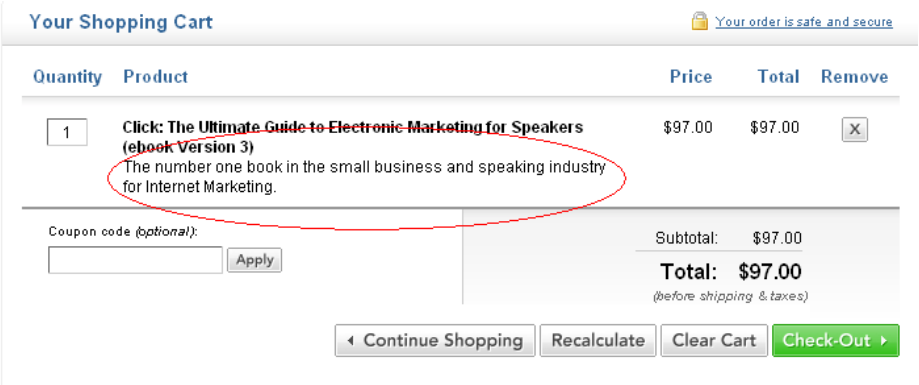
✔ Related Products

A sophisticated shopping cart will automatically make additional product suggestions based on the item they are purchasing. Related products are similar in nature to the main items the customer is purchasing and gives your customer choices that they can quickly add to the cart at check out for a powerful upselling feature.

Just like the graphic above your "related products" would be listed right below the cart.

✔ Product Descriptions

Make sure your choice of shopping cart will give you the options of making long and short descriptions of your products at checkout. A short description is a title of your product and a long description will give additional details to your customers to influence their buying decision. Make the long description "salesy" to push your products and convince your customers to buy.



These descriptions also help to combat "shopping cart abandonment" because they help keep the customer excited about their purchase i.e. they complete the transaction instead of loading up the cart and leaving.

✔ Inventory

A great feature every shopping cart should have is the ability to alert you when your product inventory is getting low. If you happen to run out of a certain product, the cart will give the customer an option to "backorder" the item and gives you a chance to keep selling while restocking your inventory.

✔ Customizable "Continue Shopping" Pages

Where you send your customers after they add a particular item to their shopping cart can mean a big difference in the amount of money they spend with you. Sophisticated shopping carts allow you to customize the "Continue Shopping" button so it takes the customer to a related product of your choice. This one feature can dramatically influence whether the customer simply checks out because it's too difficult to find related items, or purchases something else because you made it easy.

You should also be able to eliminate the continue shopping button. Why would you want to do that? If you have an expensive item in the cart you may not want people to get distracted by searching around your other less expensive products. They may find something cheaper and delete the expensive product or they may take so long looking at other stuff that they never get around to completing the sale in the cart. THAT HURTS!

✔ Offer Management

Most lower end shopping carts don't have the capability to offer discounts for multiple purchases, or to offer "one free when you buy three" or similar special offers. Having this capability can really increase the average amount that someone spends when they shop with you.

✔ Receipt and Confirmation Emails

The shopping cart should be able to send an email confirmation automatically to the customer and also generate a receipt for you to

put in the package if you are shipping a product.

✔ Multiple Order and Dropship Email Capability

The shopping cart should be able to email suppliers who ship directly to your customer (dropship). The email sent to the supplier would not have the customer's credit card info.

✔ Web-Based Admin Page

If your shopping cart has a web-based managers' administration page, then you can work on your shopping cart, i.e., add products, change prices, etc., anywhere in the world. You are not stuck at your home base to make these changes.

✔ Encryption

This is the PGP stuff I talked about earlier. Just make sure you have it.

✔ Back End-Output to Your Accounting Software

This is a very handy feature that allows you to export the sales data directly from your shopping cart to popular accounting packages like ***Quickbooks***, ***Quicken*** and ***Peachtree***.

✔ Associate Program Compatible

An associate program means that someone else (your associate/affiliate) can put a link to your products on their website. When someone clicks on the link and visits your website, associate program software tracks the person to your website. If they buy something, you pay your associate a commission for sending them.

This basic premise made Amazon.com a billion dollar company. Now millions of small businesses are taking advantage of the same concept. It's like having an army of commissioned salespeople working for you AND you don't pay anyone a nickel unless they sell something.

This one point caused me enormous nightmares. If you plan on having other people sell your products by means of an associate program, try to get a compatible or integrated system right from the start. Otherwise, it could be difficult or impossible to add one later. A really good system will have an associate program built in so everything is compatible.

✔ Upsell Modules

Good shopping cart systems will have the capability of suggesting related products to the shopper based on what they have already bought. This is what I call the "Do you want fries with that?" method of selling.

HERE'S A REAL LIFE SAMPLE OF THE POWER OF HAVING UPSELL CAPABILITY IN YOUR SHOPPING CART SYSTEM

Many years ago around Thanksgiving I conducted a teleseminar called "How to Make Money Speaking at Fundraisers." 60 people signed up at $30.00 each. $1800.00 -- Not too bad for a holiday seminar unless you compare it to the final figures:

When people clicked on "checkout" so they could pay for their seminar, the cart offered them several deals. This is called "upselling" and is normally only offered in the most sophisticated AND expensive shopping carts.

One of the deals offered them 11 other recordings of previous TeleSeminars for $97.00 which was a big savings over buying them one-by-one.

LISTEN TO THIS -- 21 people went for the upsell of $97.00 which gave me an extra $2037.00 for the promotion for a total of $3837.00 for my one hour on the phone. This more than doubled the revenue from just one promotion.

I'm sure you can see this is real power and something you absolutely want in the shopping cart system that helps you run your business! -- and you can have it at your fingertips at a fraction of the cost of custom programmed systems.

✔ Database Handling

Customer data coming into a shopping system should never have to be retyped and it should be able to be manipulated to increase sales. High end systems will have this built in.

HERE'S ANOTHER REAL LIFE EXAMPLE:

Before I had a modern shopping system, we would have to print out the orders and have them typed into ACT database program by an administrative person (complete with all the mistakes, typos and hourly fees I might add).

If I wanted to email these customers, I would have to be a genius to export the data from ACT in comma delimited format and then also be a genius to import the data into an email program so that I could send

out the email a half hour later – if I was lucky.

Now, at the touch of a few keys, I can instantly email everyone that buys a particular product and even put their name in it (this is called mail merge) with no administrative help whatsoever. This is a massive cost savings and errors have been reduced by 90%.

✔ Broadcast Capability

Most shopping carts require you to export your data to another unrelated system where you have to massage the data in order to send emails back to the customer. You just about have to be a database expert to do the manipulations. Good shopping carts have integrated mailing capabilities that can allow customers to be sorted and broadcast to immediately. You should be able to email to all customers or only to ones that bought certain items. You should also be able to broadcast an email to your affiliates right from the system.

Sales tip: Don't make every contact with a customer a sales pitch. They will most likely ask to be removed from your mailings. Alternate a helpful hint based on what they bought, and a product offering. Just to be on the safe side so they don't alienate customers, some people do two separate helpful hints to each product offering

✔ Email List Management

If you are starting an electronic newsletter/magazine, a good shopping cart system can manage all the subscribers for you automatically. It will automate the process and give you a form for your website that lets people subscribe and unsubscribe themselves which is a tremendous time and money saver.

✔ Mail Merge Capability

Text Message Body:

```
Dear %$firstname$%,
```

Emails that are personalized normally get a much higher response than generic emails. Most of the time you must do sophisticated export and formatting manipulations on your database and send the results to a separate and expensive mail merge program. Good shopping cart systems integrate the database with an included mail merge program so that reaching your customers in a personalized fashion means only pushing a few buttons.

In the little graphic above you can see the variable %$firstname$%. I can send out 10 or 10,000 emails and anywhere that variable appears in my message, the person's first name will be substituted.

Not only can you add the person's first name whenever you want, you can add all kinds of other variables. If you look at the graphics just below you can see variables for email address, last name, company name, home phone, work phone, address, city, state, zip, fax number, today's date, tomorrow's date, affiliate ID and Passwords and all kinds of other stuff. You even have custom variables you can use. All you have to do when writing your email is click on whatever variable you want to include and the cart does the rest.

Merge Insert Menu 1
(click or just type them)
%$email$%
%$firstname$%
%$lastname$%
%$name$%
%$company$%
%$homephone$%
%$workphone$%
%$address1$%
%$address2$%
%$city$%
%$state$% (province)
%zip% (postal code)
%$country$%
%fax%
%$today$%
%$tomorrow$%
%$today + X$%
%$Merchantname$%
%$Merchanturl$%
%$Merchantemail$%
%$Merchantcompany$%
%$merchantworkphone$%
%$merchantaddress$%
%$adname$%
%$optinlink$%
%$signature$%

Merge Insert Menu 2
(click or just type them)
%$field1$%
%$field2$%
%$field3$%
%$field4$%
%$field5$%
%$field6$%
%$field7$%
%$field8$%
%$field9$%
%$field10$%
%$referrerid$%
%$referrer$%
%$client_referrer$%
%$afid$%
%$afusername$%
%$afpassword$%

✔ Coupons and Discounts

Only the finest most high-end shopping carts are able to do percentage and fixed amount discounts when selling your products. You should be able to create any kind of coupon code you desire. These coupons and discounts can mean a tremendous boost in sales. Having this option can mean a big difference in gross and net income.

✔ Multiple Website Capability

Most shopping carts are only good for one website. You are required to buy a completely separate system for each website you want to develop. This can be ENORMOUSLY EXPENSIVE, time consuming and frustrating. Shopping cart systems that can handle products from multiple websites save tons of money and development time. A side benefit is that completely different product lines can be sold with the customers from one website never even knowing about the products sold on the other website unless you want them to.

✔ Integrated Autoresponders

Sequential autoresponders are one of the most powerful sales tools on the Internet today. They send follow-up emails to customers and prospects to keep your sales messages going out automatically. This service is virtually never seen integrated with a shopping cart system. You usually have to contract out with a separate company and somehow get the shopping cart and autoresponder company to work together. Only the most advanced carts would have this function integrated.

Autoresponders can be used to train the customer in the use of your product and/or suggest other products that would likely be of interest. The best part is that after they are set up, the entire process goes on autopilot totally unattended which saves you time and money. A recent survey on ZDNet found that 98 percent of customers would repurchase from a company if they were asked. Autoresponders make sure they get asked when you are too busy to do it yourself.

Another big benefit of autoresponders is that they tend to decrease returns especially on big ticket products. Buyer's remorse can really increase your return rate. A simple automated series of follow-up emails will let the customer know you aren't going to disappear now that you have their money. It can also reassure them they made a wise decision in purchasing your product.

✔ Ad Tracking

Again this is one of the most powerful cost saving and money saving tools available to people selling products and services on the Internet. Again it is rarely found as part of an integrated system. You usually have to contract for this service separately or buy additional software. Integrated ad tracking allows you to tell which of your on line links, or banners is paying off.

Old style non-integrated systems only tell how many people clicked on the link or ad. The most advanced integrated systems not only tell how many people clicked, but also tell how many of those people bought. This keeps you from making tremendous mistakes.

You might think an ad is great because it got many click throughs, so you keep buying the ad over and over. You might also think that another ad is not worth it because it only has half as many click throughs, so you cancel it. Integrated ad tracking could tell you that the ad that is getting all the click throughs is producing only a tiny number of sales and that the ad that got less click throughs is producing a very high percentage of sales. Without this information you would keep the bad ad and cancel the good one. . . . which is not a great way to make money.

✔ Conversion Ratio

This term is the number of website visitors as compared to the number of buyers. To figure it out, simply divide the total number of visitors to your site by the total number of people who bought something. So if 100 people visited your site (or sales page) and one person bought, you would have a conversion ratio of 100:1 or more commonly called 1 Percent.

If you can use your shopping system to raise that figure of people that buy to only 2 people out of 100 or 2 Percent then you have DOUBLED YOUR SALES without even increasing your traffic and the technology did all the work. Simple shopping carts do not have the capability to do this for you, but shopping systems do.

Example:

Let's say you have a $97.00 product and you have 5000 visitors a month to the sales page for this product and you have a 1Percent conversion ratio like we talked about just above.

5000 Visitors x .01 = 50 Sales x $97.00 / sale = $4850.00

You then use the tools a good shopping cart system has to increase your conversion ratio to 2 Percent. Now let's look at the math.

5000 Visitors x .02 = 100 Sales x $97.00 / sale = $9700.00

Which would you rather have $4850.00 or $9700.00? Maybe $4850 just covers your monthly bills with nothing left over. You didn't really make any money for all your efforts. Using good tools is how savvy marketers get rich and people who cheap out on free shopping carts stay poor.

✔ Ad Rotation

This is a tremendous feature found only in the most expensive high end custom programmed systems. It will really make you a ton of money and keep you from losing a ton of money which you will do if you continue to run ads that aren't selling for you. This feature allows you to have several advertising pages running at once. The shopping system alternates the ads automatically for you. When you combine this feature with the ad tracking and conversion ratio features you will get instant feedback on which ad is making you the most money.

Ad 1

Learn how to get paid to speak. Home study course reveals how you can make $5500.00 per speech. Visit
Wake 'em Up Speaking System

Ad 2

You can get paid for your knowledge. Companies and other organizations will pay you for expert advice. Visit
Wake 'em Up Speaker System for details.

Which ad above makes the most money? You are just guessing if you don't have the proper tools to track it. Guess wrong and you are paying for an ad that isn't producing a maximum number of sales. Solid businesses aren't built on "guessing". A good shopping cart system will tell you exactly which ad is making you the most money.

✔ Order Form Sell Through

This feature helps you overcome the biggest problem Internet marketers face – people quitting the sale just as they get to the order form page. This is called "Shopping Cart Abandonment". They either get cold feet, are afraid to put their credit card in the Internet or who knows what else might be stopping them from completing the sale. A good shopping cart lets you put customized text right on the order form page that recaps all the good reasons the customer should complete the sale. Of course, this sell through information is customized depending on what the customer ordered. This is an awesome feature to have and it will get more people to complete the sale which means more money in your pocket. See the example on the next page.

Yes! **Rush me Tom Antion's *Wake 'em Up Video Professional Speaking System*** I want to increase my speaking skills to the top professional level AND I want to get paid when I speak. I want more high-fee speaking engagements, more prestige, and more financial freedom than I've ever had before … even if I'm starting out part time and with a small budget. And

Yes! I understand that this is not some get rich quick scheme. I understand that I'm going to have to get good on stage and I'm also going to have to learn about the 'Business' of speaking and the ***Wake 'em Up Video Professional Speaking System will help me do it.***

I also understand that I get a whopping $300 discount off the original $1297 price, along with five FREE bonus gifts worth over $1918.75 if I pay cash with order by the deadline:

1. **FREE - Six-CD Audio Album *Make 'em Laugh: How To Use Humor in Business Presentations* ($89.95 Value)**
2. **FREE - Speak and Grow Rich book by Dottie and Lilly Walters, this book is the icon of the speaking industry ($16.95 Value)**
3. **FREE - Three phone consultations with Tom Antion. One before I start, one while I'm studying and one after I complete the course ($1500.00 Value)**
4. **FREE - $150.00 discount coupon towards long range coaching or it can be applied to Tom's mentor program.**.
5. **FREE - BONUS CD-ROM 'Click: The Ultimate Guide to Electronic Marketing for Speakers' ($112.00 Value)**
6. **FREE - Bonus CD set "How to Sell a Ton at the Back of the Room" ($49.95 Value)**

(After your order is confirmed, you'll get an electronic receipt within 15 minutes. Be assured that your on-line transaction is 100% secure .)

Cavett Robert, the founder of the prestigious National Speakers Association said, 'Tom's educational materials will cut five years off a speaker's learning curve'

Bobby Bowden, Head Coach Florida State University said, *'Wake 'em Up* will teach you how to create excitement when you speak to any size group. I use Tom's tips in my own speaking engagements.'

Mark Victor Hansen, Co-Author of the #1 New York Times Best-selling series, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* said, *'Wake 'em Up* teaches you to be irresistible as a presenter.'

Don't forget to call 757-431-1366 to set your appointment for your first consultation. Or, you can email orders@antion.com with three different days and times you can be available and he'll confirm one via return email.

✔ Recurring Billing

This is another awesome feature you must have to make big money and to get residual income (income that comes in automatically every month). This feature allows you to offer packages that are billed to your customer every month. You could do a "CD of the Month" promotion, or a monthly coaching package, or monthly vitamins, or just about anything you can think of that you sell on a regular basis. It doesn't have to me month to month. It could be a larger billing every 90 days or whatever you want to set it at.

This feature is also tremendous for offering finance options on your more expensive products. I use this for my "Wake 'em Up Video Professional Speaking System" . If someone doesn't buy it and pay the full price, they get a chance to buy it and make payments. The shopping cart handles all the billing. I make a lot of extra sales this way.

✔ Sales Reports

A good shopping cart system will give you sales reports in a number of different ways so you can choose the one that gives you the information you want. You should be able to switch between reports instantly and have many to choose from. Some common reports are:

Sales by Date – This, of course tells you how much you sold on a certain day.

Sales by Item – This tells you how much of a particular product you sold and you should be able to put in a date range, i.e. You sold 22 widgets for $418.00 in the five day period from November 20 – 25.

Sales by Client – This report is listing of your clients and how much money they spent. This is handy for identifying big spenders and rewarding them or giving them special thanks and/or incentives.

Sales by Card Type – This report breaks out the amounts of money that come in from different credit cards. This is handy for reconciling your credit card fees each month.

Sales by Ad Campaign – This report tells you exactly how one of your promotions performed.

Sales by Affiliate – This report tells you how well your affiliates are selling for you.

If the shopping cart you are considering doesn't have these kinds of reports, I'd be very reluctant to use it. You will never know how well you are doing or if your promotions are working or not.

✔ Analytics

A powerful shopping cart will keep track of how many customers back out before they buy. This is called "shopping cart abandonment." By knowing this information you can adjust your related products and descriptions to keep the customer interested in buying.

✔ Questionnaires

It's imperative that you know what your customers are thinking. Asking them is the simplest way to find out . . . well . . . it's simple if you can get a questionnaire form on your website or in your ezine without three months of trouble figuring out how to do it. A good

shopping cart system will make it easy for you to survey your customers. The hardest part really is just figuring what are the main questions you want to ask.

✔ Pop Up Boxes

In a tiny number of super markets pop up boxes (those little boxes that pop up when you visit or leave a webpage) are annoying and frowned upon. In most other markets, used judiciously, they can tremendously increase sales by recommending other offers if the shopper decided not to purchase the offer on the page they are looking at. Making pop up boxes used to be only for the programmer types. Now, sophisticated shopping systems have wizards that lead you through simple pop up box creation questions with no programming required on your part.

✔ Help with Off Line Shopping

Make sure the shopping cart gives the customer an option to print out the order form so the customer can fax or mail it to you. You should also post your 800 number for customers who want to call in an order. Do whatever it takes to make it easy for them to order.

It will be extremely difficult to get everything on the above list in an inexpensive shopping cart. Go through the list anyway when you are considering a shopping cart system. Pick the cart that has as many features as possible that are important to you.

Build Your Store from Scratch

This is the most complicated of the store building methods because five different entities (or six if you have an associate program) have to interact to make the transaction work. You better be prepared for some frustration and delays making it all work. Believe me, I know. This is the way I built my first ***Speaker Shop*** and I'll never do it again. It was a total nightmare.

I was already a Visa/MasterCard/AMEX merchant, so at least I didn't have to fight with that from the start. The first thing I had to do was find out from my bank what credit card processing company they used and what Internet "real time" (see box) credit card facility would be compatible with the processing company. Whew! It was already getting complicated. I found out that the credit card processing company was compatible with a "real time" company called ***Cybercash*** cybercash.com Fortunately ***Cybercash*** is one of the biggest and best known "real time" credit card companies. They were recently bought by Verisign.

Remember "real time credit card processing" is the method by which a customer puts their credit card information into your website and within about 15 seconds the money is heading toward your bank account with a confirmation of the order going to both you and the customer.

Here are the 5 or 6 elements that must work together:

1. Your Bank
2. Your Bank's Credit Card Processing Company
3. The “Real Time” Credit Card Company
4. Your Shopping Cart
5. Your Web Host
6. Your associate program, if you have one

Although you could do it much quicker now, it took me several months to get the basic shopping cart and credit card system working, and a full six months to get the associate program working with the rest of the system. This down time equated to a tremendous loss of revenue and massive amounts of frustration because when things didn’t work, each of the above entities blamed the other. No one would take any responsibility to get things running smoothly. That’s why I will never put a system together piece by piece ever again. Too much money and time was wasted arguing back and forth with five different companies about why things wouldn’t work.

If you are technically oriented (which I'm not) and thick-skinned (which I am), you could tackle this yourself. I don't really recommend it though. It was just too tough. A little later I’ll tell you about a new system I found that cuts out all this work and frustration.

Secure Servers

There is still quite a bit of concern about security on the Internet. Even

if there were no real threat of people having their credit cards lifted while purchasing on the net, they are still worried about it and many are reluctant to order unless they are on a “secure server.”

To add to their worry, browsers have security information boxes that pop up when someone tries to submit information to an unsecured site.

Whichever browser you use will most likely show the URL in the address box near the top of the screen beginning with “https:” instead of “http:” . The “s” indicates Secure Server.

So how do you get one of these things?

You can go buy one, which you would be crazy to do because good shopping cart systems provide them for you.

It's one of those things that's important, but just like with your car engine, you don't have to be able to explain internal combustion to be able to drive to the grocery store.

If you have a secure server, make sure you brag about it. Tell your customers that they can easily order at your “secure” online store. Post this at prominent areas of your shopping cart.

Checklist for Evaluating a Shopping Cart System

(Remember… most pieces of software are simply shopping carts and not complete and integrated sales systems)

Instructions to use this checklist

Whenever considering any shopping cart or shopping cart system ask the questions in the list below. Most have either "yes" or "no" answers. If you start getting answers like, "Well, if you wanted it to do that, we could custom program it for you," or "Yes, it will do that if you buy another module from a third party vendor," or "I think we could get it to do that, but we've never had anyone ask before," then you may be on pretty shaky ground by going with the system or shopping cart in question.

- ✔ **Will it calculate shipping & tax?**

- ✔ **Does it handle specialized shipping like FedEx and UPS?**

- ✔ **Will it deliver soft & hard goods in the same transaction?**

- ✔ **Does it offer customizable "Return to Shopping" pages without needing custom programming?**

- ✔ **Does it allow you to make special offers?**

- ✔ **Does it deliver receipt and confirmation emails?**

- ✔ **Does it allow multiple order and dropship emails?**

- ✔ **Does it have a Web-Based administration page?**

- ✔ **Does it use encryption technology?**

- ✔ **Does it deliver easy output to your accounting software?**

- ✔ **Does it have its own associate program or is it easily compatible with other major brands of associate software?**

- ✔ **Does it have integrated upsell modules including standard and advanced product bundle choices?**

- ✔ **Does it have an integrated sales and prospect database?**

✔ **Does it have broadcast email capability?**

✔ **Does it have mail merge capability?**

✔ **Will it deliver your ezine/enewsletter and automate the subscription process?**

✔ **Can it handle coupons and other discounts?**

✔ **Does it have the ability to add featured and related products to the checkout page?**

✔ **Can it give you analytical information about your customers buying habits?**

✔ **Can it work for multiple websites with no extra fees?**

✔ **Does it have unlimited and fully integrated autoresponders?**

✔ **Does it have Ad Tracking tied into actual sales?**

✔ **Will it rotate ads for you and tell you which one makes the most money?**

✔ **Can the order form page be customized?**

✔ **Will it do automatic recurring billing?**

✔ **Does it give you a variety of sales reports?**

✔ **Will it allow you to easily make questionnaires and surveys?**

✔ **Does it have a pop up box builder?**

✔ **Does it have a printable off line order form?**

Cost to Build the Old Style Shopping System Piece by Piece (Note: do not do this. You'll be sorry.)

(Rough estimates)

Basic Shopping Cart

Free to $7000.00

Downloadable Module to Deliver Ebooks, Programs, etc.

$500.00 to $1500.00 (Custom Programming**)**

Customizable "Return to Shopping" Pages

$500 to $1500 (Custom Programming)

Offer Management Module

$500 to $1500 (Custom Programming)

Upsell Module

$500 to $1500 (Custom Programming)

Featured Product Module

$500 to $1500 (Custom Programming)

Database

$500 to $3500 (Custom Programming)

Broadcast Email

$500 to $1500 (Custom Programming)

Mail Merge

$500 to $1500 (Custom Programming)

Email newsletter list management

$240 to $3600 per year

Coupon and Discount Module

$1500 to $3500 (Custom Programming)

Multiple Website Capability

Most systems won't allow this. You must purchase a cart or additional license for each website.

Associate Program

$500 to $2500 (Custom Programming)

Sequential Autoresponder

$300.00 per year each

Basic Ad Tracking

$60.00 per year per ad

Conversion Ratio Module

$1000 to $5000 (Custom Programming)

Ad Rotator

Generally not available in a shopping system

$500 to $2500 (Custom Programming)

Customizable Order Form

$500 to $2500 (Custom Programming)

Recurring Billing Module

$500 to $2500 (Custom Programming)

Sales Reports Module

$500 to $2500 (Custom Programming)

Questionnaire Module

Generally not available in a shopping system

$150 to $750 (Custom Programming)

Pop Up Boxes

Generally not available in a shopping system

$50.00 to $250.00 each (Custom Programming)

So, to build a bare bones system that includes the above features you would pay at least $9300.00 and get one sequential autoresponder, one ad tracker, one pop up box, and a really cheap associate program. It's most likely that you can only use the shopping cart on one website. **(This is crazy. You don't have to spend that kind of money.)**

For a good quality usable system, with 10 sequential autoresponders, 10 ad tracks, ad rotation, recurring billing, quality sales reports, Tell a Friend Module, Questionnaire / Survey Module, Email list management, Order Form Sell Through, 3 pop up boxes and a good associate program that you can still only use on one website at the high end you could pay nearly $49,700 . . .and I have heard quotes this high from people that probably don't have the skill to even put together an extremely complicated system like this. **(This is more than crazy. You shouldn't be allowed to cross the street on your own if you would even consider spending a crazy amount of money like this. Who do you think you are? Paris Hilton? hahaha)**

If you doubt any of the figures above, call a reputable programming firm and go down the list step by step. Reputable means they actually have professionals with the skills to build the above features and make them work. It does not mean a smart high school or college kid that will quote you a pie in the sky price and then never be able to make it all work if they finish it at all.

I must also warn you about the technical people saying to you things like, "You don't really need sequential autoresponders." Remember they are techies who don't think like marketers and never made a dime on the Internet. The real story is that it is most likely very difficult to program the autoresponders or whatever item they are trying to talk you out of.

I personally will never attempt to build a system from the ground up again and I can't in good conscience recommend it to you or any of my clients. You are asking only for time delays, large amounts of wasted money, and an infinite amount of frustration.

See my recommendation below for a way to get the sales generating

system you need for a minimum cost and very little frustration and lost time.

My Recommendation

People in my seminars have been bugging me to death to recommend a system that is both easy to use and install AND has sophisticated features like an expensive custom designed cart.

I have resisted giving my recommendation because there was really nothing on the market that satisfied those requirements. (I also didn't want to be responsible because I know what a supreme hassle building a shopping system usually is.)

Now, that has all changed. I can confidently recommend a system that has all the features listed in the checklist above. I'm using the system myself and I've never seen anything as powerful and as easy to use in all the years I have been marketing on the Internet.

I was so impressed that I dumped my extremely expensive old system, switched to this new system, and even got the owners of the new system to allow me to resell it. . . . It's a really inexpensive shopping and cash generating system. (I'm a guerilla marketer and I don't throw my money around.) I believe in the product and most folks that know me know that I don't promote anything that I don't wholeheartedly believe in.

I run at least 70 websites through this new system and using all the upsell modules, discount modules, autoresponders, ad tracking and affiliate program to really sell lots more products to my customer and prospect base.

The name of this system is ***Kick Start Cart*** and you can check it out for free for 30 days Kick Start Cart

The ***Kick Start Cart*** ***Integrated Shopping System*** Includes:

Hosting on their server . . . This means no expensive and time consuming installation on your server. Their technicians maintain the entire system and you never have to worry if it has problems. They fix it immediately and for free AND they know what they're doing. My webhost treats me like a dog and never knew how to fix my old system because they didn't develop it.

Free upgrades . . . This company is aggressively upgrading the system and adding new features constantly. The company is not only technically able, it is run by people who think like marketers so they are always developing new ways for the system to help you make more money.

Ease of Use . . . You can literally have your ***Kick Start System*** working in about an hour with no technical experience whatsoever AND they have a video tutorials and complete manual online to help you really maximize the sales features of your system. I've even created additional videos to help you. You'll get the link to them via email after you sign up for your free trial.

Multiple Websites . . . Run sales from as many websites as you want through the ***Kick Start System***. This alone could save you many thousands of dollars per year. The other neat thing about this is that you could be selling bibles on one site and lingerie on another site. Website visitors from one site would never even know about the other

site unless you want them to.

Autoresponders . . . This is one of my favorite features. The ***Kick Start System*** has unlimited autoresponders. This means that each product can have it's own set of follow-up emails. What a powerful tool. When someone buys a particular product the autoresponder follows up with additional offers based on what the customer already purchased. . . . Now that's a smart shopping system which can increase your sales easily by 300 percent with no increase in the number of shoppers.

Discount and Coupon Capability . . . What an extremely advanced feature and it's included in the ***Kick Start System***. You can offer coupon banners and other percentage discounts to certain groups of people and the system handles all the details. This used to be a big nightmare for me because I had to take discounted orders by phone, fax or email. My old shopping cart couldn't do it.

Offer Management . . . Want to encourage people to purchase multiple units of your products? The ***Kick Start System*** will handle just about any deal you can make up. Offer one free for every three purchased, or buy 10 and get a discount. This is yet another advanced feature usually only found in extremely high-end shopping carts.

Integrated Upsell . . . Want fries with that? You can't be there 24 hours a day 7 days a week to suggestively sell your shoppers additional products and services, but the ***Kick Start System*** can. Every savvy company on the face of the earth knows that the easiest customer to sell to is the one that has their wallet already out. Let your cash generating tools do the upselling for you.

Soft and Hard Goods . . . Information is the highest profit product

you can sell. All you are really selling is electrons. It's all pure profit! The ***Kick Start Shopping System*** makes it easy for your customer to buy an ebook or computer program and have it instantly. We live in a society that wants instant gratification. Without your ability to deliver the products instantly you will definitely lose sales.

Customizable "Return to Shopping" Button . . . Send your customers directly where they can find additional products that specifically interest them. This is a totally overlooked sales technique in virtually all small business shopping systems except ***Kick Start Cart***. This one feature will make you lots more money.

Database . . . All top marketers know the value of their databases. Many businesses end up selling their business and getting paid only on the value of their customer list. Who cares about computers and furniture when you can get $100.00 to $1000.00 per customer? (A conservative example for a really tiny business: 3000 customers valued at $400.00 each means you sell out for $1,200,000.00 NOTE: This is not all that hard to do.)

Your database of customers is also very easy to sell to when you have a new product or offer. They have already bought before and are much more likely to buy again from you. The ***Kick Start Integrated Database*** keeps track of prospects and customers and totally eliminates retyping, labor costs and database mistakes. Having a good database is literally a license to print money.

Broadcast Email . . . How would you like to reach your customers with no advertising costs, no printing, no stuffing envelopes and no postage? That's what responsible permission based email marketing allows you to do. When it's integrated into your shopping system, you have nothing more than a few keystrokes to reach all your customers

at once, or only the ones who bought blue widgets. I've made a fortune with broadcast email doing it the hard way which means exporting data and manipulating other email programs to get the mailing out. Now with the ***Kick Start System*** it's just a matter of seconds to reach thousands of people that have asked to hear from you.

Mail Merge . . . Broadcast email is great, but "Email Merge" is the greatest! This feature of the ***Kick Start System*** lets you personalize each email that goes out. This gets you a much higher response. Think about it. Don't you pay more attention to an email that has your name on it than one that says "Dear Friend?" I used to have to export my data from my database, specially format it and put it in to a $400.00 email program to do just one mail merge. This used to take me hours. Now, with the ***Kick Start Cart*** it's just a couple keystrokes.

Email List Management . . . You can also use this system to handle an unlimited number of electronic magazines / newsletters (Ezines) and be up and running in no time at all. This means you could have separate newsletters on many different topics and control them all in one place. I have made a fortune on my ezine because I can send good information (and offers, of course) to my subscribers who then buy my products and services. You need this function.

Ad Tracking, Conversion, and Rotation . . . When you use an outside company or software to track your ads, you have to do link tricks and jump through hoops to get it to work. Most only give you the number of clicks an ad received and have no way of tracking who actually bought. Only the high end expensive systems can do that and it's still a hassle. When ad tracking is built right into your shopping system you can immediately maximize the value of your paid ads because your conversion module tells how much money actually came from the ad and the rotation module tells you which ad was the best.

You can also do tons of testing on your own site to find out which ads pull in the most number of sales and which parts of your website attract the most buying customers. Without something like this you are doing target practice in the dark with very expensive bullets. The extra earnings and savings from the ***Kick Start Integrated Ad Tracking System*** pays for the entire system all by itself.

Order Form Sell Through and much more . . . ***Kick Start Cart*** has many customizable areas that help you sell. Having this capability separates the ho hum Internet merchants from the ones that really make the cash register ring.

Recurring Billing . . . You want to do whatever you can to get money coming in regularly and automatically from your customers. ***Kick Start Cart's*** recurring billing module gives you total flexibility to give finance options to close big ticket sales and to regularly charge your customer's credit card for ongoing programs you have. The money goes right to your bank account automatically.

Sales Reports . . . ***Kick Start Cart*** gives you seven different sales report options. This is three times more than systems costing ten times as much. You'll always know just how well you're doing with this kind of reporting.

Questionnaires . . . Ya gotta know what they're thinking. ***Kick Start Cart*** will have your customers pouring strategic information into your head in no time. You'll use this info to sell targeted products back to your customers who have just told you what they want.

Pop Up Wizard . . . I've never seen this included before in a shopping system. This really tells me that the innovators of the ***Kick Start System*** are really marketing savvy. I used to pay high school

kids to search out scripts for basic pop up windows, now in a few seconds I can generate simple pop ups that, when used judiciously, massively increase sales and visitor subscriptions to my Ezine.

Affiliate / Associate Program . . . Want thousands of websites all over the world selling your products and services for you? That's what an affiliate program is all about. Other websites link to yours and you only pay them if someone clicks from their site and buys something from you. Amazon.com built a multi-billion dollar business with this exact same model. I paid nearly $1000.00 for my affiliate software and I'm "kicking myself" because the ***Kick Start System*** includes it in the deal.

All the Rest . . . The ***Kick Start Cart Integrated Shopping System*** does all the things needed to have a really potent small business marketing machine and cash generator. AND it does it an extremely low price that any small business can afford.

I encourage you to compare and go through the checklist above with any shopping system you can find on the Internet, at your webhost, or anywhere else you can come up with one. Then visit the ***Kick Start Cart*** and see what you think. You get a 30-day free test drive. If you really want to sell your products and services on the Internet, the ***Kick Start System*** will make it happen immediately.

In fact, you can be putting your products into the system five minutes after you sign up.

I sincerely hope this e-book has shed some light on the things you need to know before investing in a shopping system. Let me know how I can help you really sell on the Internet. -- Tom Antion

Oh. I almost forgot that I promised to tell you how to get a merchant account in about 10 minutes. Visit

http://www.powerpay.biz/new_ecommerce_app_382.htm

Tom Antion

Great Internet Marketing Training

P.S. The cart just added a brand new feature

You can now have different permission levels for the cart so that you can have employees and interns work on the cart without giving them the keys to the vault.

You could earn nearly $2 Million over the next couple years just by promoting this shopping cart and you don't even have to own the cart to do it.

Sign up for your FREE trial and get a link to the video that proves it.