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PEOPLE**



E-Commerce

Automation



#nomoreboring



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Learn the Benefits and Get Started in 4 Easy Steps

E-commerce has become an essential part of many businesses. Even though it makes it possible to reach more potential buyers and sell more goods and services, it comes with an entire dominion of business processes that businesses need to establish to ensure maximum functionality and customer satisfaction. That's where e-commerce automation comes in to save the day. In this article, we'll explain what automation is and how it can help you streamline all processes related to your online store. Read on.

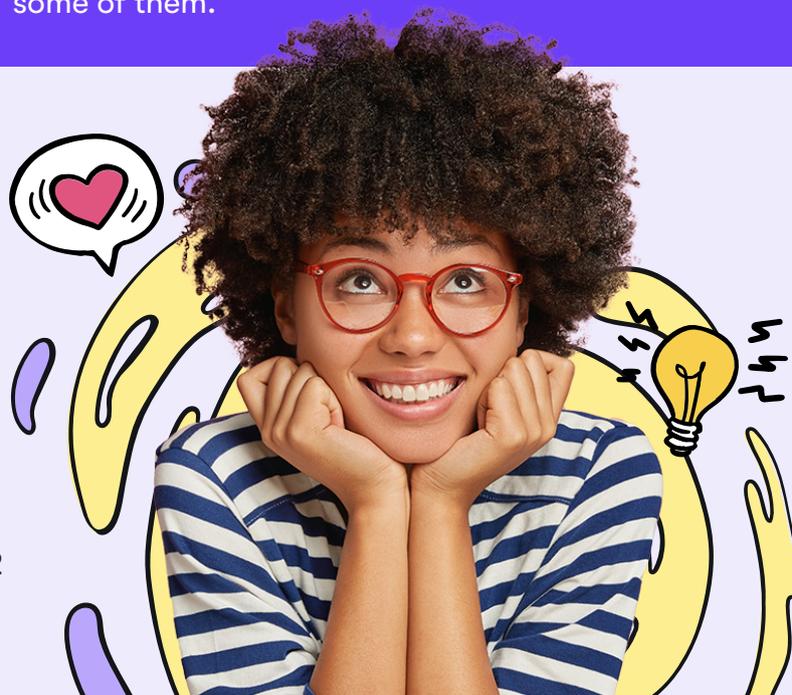


What's E-Commerce Automation?

Automation, in general, is an effort to facilitate and streamline business processes by letting computers do the grunt work. In the case of e-commerce, automation can help you with a wide array of processes, so let's check out some of them.

The Onboarding Process for Vendors and Suppliers

Many e-commerce companies have a list of different vendors and suppliers that keeps growing with time. Collaborating with new ones often requires sending emails, adjusting spreadsheets, and more, making it difficult for both sides.



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Some of the challenges in this process include inconsistent data across spreadsheets, slow communication, and more.

By breaking the entire onboarding process into a few steps, you'll gain a better understanding of how automation can help you. For example, when a new vendor fills in the onboarding form, the person(s) overseeing the process will get notified, and the vendor will receive an introductory email.



Approving and Tracking Purchase Orders

Automation can help you with approvals of different purchases based on their category, vendor credit rating, and more. Overall, it can facilitate the purchasing process and makes tracking easier than ever, as it puts an end to

constant flipping between spreadsheets and emails. Bots and People actually worked on one such case, helping SAP Ariba with processing customer orders. You'll find it in the Knowledge Hub.



Making Refund Review and Approval Faster

Perhaps one of the main reasons customers aren't happy with e-commerce is that they don't get their refund right away. Many new companies need time to review each refund and process it manually, but that can sometimes take days. If a company starts to grow and the number of refunds increases, you'll have to automate some processes to avoid creating a negative sentiment around your brand.



Processing Complaints Automatically

Customers can have a wide array of complaints that aren't related to refunds per se but rather to another aspect of your product or service. Processing any type of feedback manually could be a tiresome task, especially once you have a substantial number of customers.

It means such complaints will change several hands before they are answered, but automation can assist with that as well by sorting complaints, sending them to the right people, or even responding to the recurring ones.

Other Examples of E-Commerce Automation

Here's a quick overview of some of the things that can be automated if you're an ecommerce owner



Product price adaptation — You'll sometimes have to show different prices for the same product based on the potential customer's location, the frequency of their visits, and more.

Empty stocks — Notify the marketing staff to stop promoting a product if the stocks for that product are empty.

Procurement — When there are B2B purchases involved, things can get quite complex, as there are many things to consider. Bots and People actually worked on a platform called Aumass eVergabe (eProcurement), making a hybrid automation solution that can be

applied to many similar platforms.

Checkouts — Checkouts can be quite complex, and that's one of the reasons why some people might not return to the shop on your e-commerce. Making the process easy with automation can help you retain customers.

Customer categorization — Some customers are more active than others, and automation can help you by automatically sending special offers to loyal customers, for example. By separating customers, automation can help you come up with various incentives to promote your e-commerce.

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How to Start with E-Commerce Automation?

Automation isn't a single tool. Instead, it's a set of tools, practices, and techniques that can help you eliminate repetitive work and upgrade your e-commerce. But where does one start? What's the first step towards having an automated online shop?



1. Identify — The first step is to identify what you can automate. We already mentioned some of the examples, but generally anything that's repetitive and takes time should be taken into account for possible automation. It's important to start with the business processes that are essential to providing the basic service to your customers, such as order processing, order tracking, pricing, product information, payment automation, and more.

3. Implement — The third step is to get automation experts to do their job. You can either hire an external company or train somebody in-house to focus on automation. We'll get to that later.

2. Define — Next, it's crucial to understand how each business process that's part of your e-commerce works and which steps you need to take to keep the process in motion. Once you have a process laid out, you can have a better overview of the steps that can be automated.

4. Monitor — Finally, you need to monitor our automated processes, gather data, and improve them further if possible to provide an even better customer experience on your online store.

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The Main Benefits of Using E-Commerce Automation

E-commerce automation makes everyone's life easier. Even though your goal is to make the online shop optimized for customers, you'll also save plenty of time for every person working on your platform. Let's explore this in more detail.



Save time — The first benefit is that you'll save up a lot of time your employees would otherwise spend on sending emails, editing spreadsheets, and more. This way, they can focus on more meaningful work and leave the routine tasks up to automation.

Grow your e-commerce faster — After freeing up time for your employees, you'll give them more room to think about various ideas to upgrade your business. More importantly, they'll be able to test and implement new ideas and strategies that will help your ecommerce business.



Reduce human error — All humans make mistakes. However, it's better to make them while doing meaningful work and exploring possibilities than doing petty and repetitive tasks. The slightest error while doing an unimportant job can cause significant disruptions and even completely stall your ecommerce. That cannot happen with automation.



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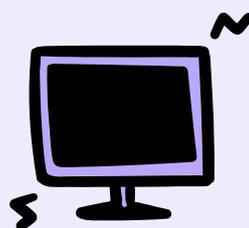
Improve the effectiveness of marketing and increase sales — Marketing teams can use automation in many ways to provide a personalized experience for customers, apply customer segmentation, improve engagement, and ultimately increase the number of conversions. Automation can help you execute complex marketing campaigns that weren't possible before.



Help managers make better decisions — Automating business processes means being able to collect more valuable data related to customers and your entire e-commerce in general. When such data is presented to the management using a well-ordered and straightforward format, it will be easy for them to make the right decision.



Boost satisfaction — Both customers and employees will feel happier not having to deal with complex checkouts or monotonous tasks.



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The Largest Challenge to Setting E-Commerce Automation

One of the largest barriers that e-commerce have to overcome is choosing the right people for automation. Essentially, you're presented with two choices.

You can contact a team of automation professionals who will help you identify, optimize, and automate all relevant processes for your e-commerce—in other words, partnering with an external team to deal with your automation for you.



Alternatively, you can train an internal team to do the same thing. This may take longer initially, but at least you'll have someone already familiar with your e-commerce and all of its processes. Establishing a Center of Excellence can also be a great idea.

Ideally, combining the two approaches might be the best method, as you'll get the benefits of both. Platforms offering Automation as a Service (AaaS) often cover each step in automation, including employee training.

Final Thoughts

To sum up, e-commerce has been booming for more than a decade, and without proper tools and techniques, your online shop might not be able to stay competitive. The essential set of tools and technologies you need to apply to

stay in the race is referred to as automation, which can help you forget about repetitive work, reduce errors, improve customer satisfaction, and, ultimately, increase profits.

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