

# Taking Advantage of E-Commerce Tools in Uncertain Times

## *The Pandemic Survival Guide*



Presented by StoreCat, the E-Commerce Simplifier

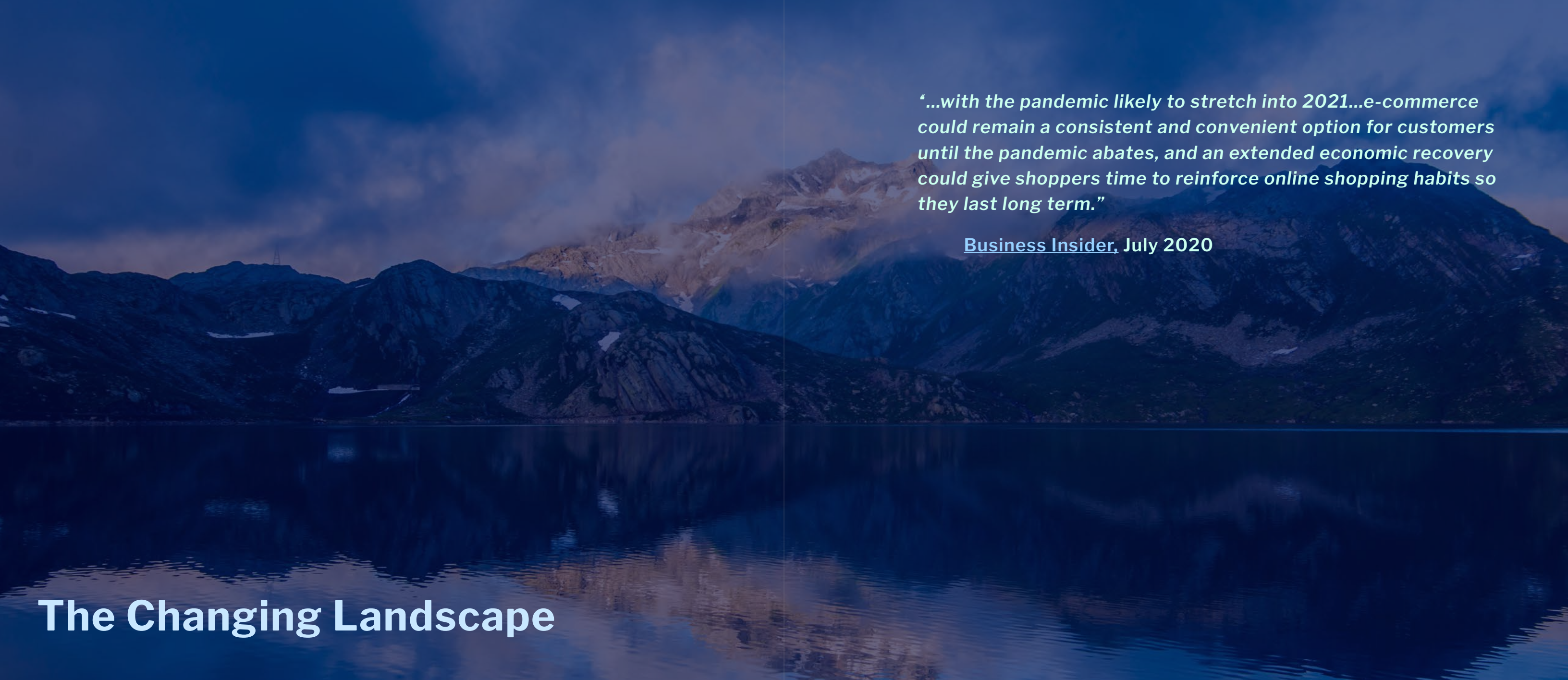


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*“...with the pandemic likely to stretch into 2021...e-commerce could remain a consistent and convenient option for customers until the pandemic abates, and an extended economic recovery could give shoppers time to reinforce online shopping habits so they last long term.”*

Business Insider, July 2020

# The Changing Landscape

Since lockdown measures were implemented in early 2020, it has been harder and harder for businesses to operate. While the sudden shift to online, delivery-based business has been a difficult road for many, it will ultimately be a major opportunity for most businesses.

In this free e-book, it is our goal to explain and explore some of the options available, and to help provide a framework for growth in this challenging time.

## Who should read this book?

We all buy almost everything online, so if you're simply interested in knowing more, it can't hurt.

On the other hand, if you operate a business that isn't solely focused on online retail, this book will provide you with a brief overview of the space, and some suggestions to take advantage of the tools available. Use it as a resource to capitalize on the changing marketplace.



# Staying Competitive

Now that most commerce is digital, it's more important than ever to take advantage of the tools available. The online marketplace is built for efficiency, so competing with old methods can be a recipe for disaster.

On the bright side, once you know what you're looking for most of these tools are easy to find, and easier to start using!



## Shared Calendars

Whether you use Google calendar or a more sophisticated tool, shared schedules make a world of difference. From customer service flexibility to easy video conferencing, most of these tools make it impossible not to be on the same page.

## Customer Relationship Management

CRM tools have made it easier than ever to keep up with the needs of clients. Salesforce, Hubspot, and many others offer easy to use systems and can integrate with phones and other systems to track sales team progress, and even offer rewards!



## Close-Contact Online Stores

While it used to be normal to outsource your webstore to a third party, tools like Shopify and Wordpress make it easy to manage one hands on. Managing your website means a major difference in flexibility to customer feedback, and make it simple to test new products and other features.

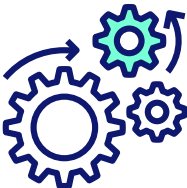
## Webinars & Product Demonstrations

It used to be that only car dealerships that could offer test drives. Now, everyone can easily share a live video chat and answer customer questions. Need to address a larger audience? Video platforms like JetWebinar and Zoom offer easy conferencing with hundreds of attendees.



## Automated Tools

Now that everything is digital, it's easier than ever to implement simple automations that save you time in the back office. Whether you're updating your product pricing or compiling margin reports, a small amount of automation with StoreCat can remove up to 30% of tedious daily tasks.





# Customer Service Wins

Most products are now sold by upwards of a dozen suppliers, so responsiveness, communication, and reliability are the most important qualities when it comes to retaining customers.

Return traffic is a major determinant of SEO and PageRank, so be sure to prioritize relationships with your customers.

## Communication

Amazon doesn't answer the phone, so you should.

## Transparency

The web is full of scams and tricks. Being upfront about your product offering is one of the most important steps. It starts with reliable website information, and ends when you deliver the order.

Most people don't mind paying for customer service, but they will find somewhere else to shop if you charge unfair markups.

## Consistency

One-day delivery and instant supply availability are now the status quo. Be sure to always try to:

- Stick to delivery estimates
- Know your pricing & supply availability
- Answer the phone

## Know When to Compete

While you can drop-ship some items, it's important to remember that not all customers are good customers.

Amazon and others will always win on basics, so it can help to focus on niche knowledge and service quality.

## Deliver

Quality is king, and service is queen. Don't forget to tip your waiter or waitress, but also don't forget to cover the last mile.

As we'll discuss in the coming sections, there are tools that can make it easy - the trick is caring enough to set them up.





## The Three A's

The web is a numbers game— just ask anyone who's used online dating tools. It's important to make as many impressions as possible, and to keep them coming. If your brand is well-defined, your customers will return.

The larger your visibility, the more chances you have to hit on strong confirmations and make real connections, instead of just selling to the highest bidder.

*Nike used to be the only company who could pay athletes to sell their products.*

*Now anyone can pay people to drive traffic and acquire brand placement.*

## Affiliates

Performance Marketing used to carry a rebrand of the somewhat-sleazy game of selling products on commission, but now they're quickly becoming the best way to create brand recognition.

High-profile social media personalities will seek out products that fit their personality and the interests of their followers, and accept commission for purchases generated.

## Ads & Remarketing

Online ads, specifically social media, can be targeted at a never-before-seen level. If a user visits your store in person, you may never see them again, but online, you can send them follow-ups once a week, and you can ensure they see ads for the products that they looked at in your store.

## Access Pipelines

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. The Amazon Marketplace and others like it accept third-party product sales. Find the markets your customers are using, then upload your products so you're still front of mind.

When they get sick of the lack of customer support, they'll call you to get back to normal.



A woman is shown in profile, eating a French fry from a red McDonald's container. The image is faded and serves as a background for the text on the left page.

## Growth has Never been Easier

Lean e-commerce businesses can enter new markets easily, allowing them to test ideas in the marketplace before significant investment. For supply businesses, the online ecosystem provides the perfect opportunity to experiment in this way.

With dropshipping companies popping up every day, it's now possible to acquire nearly any product on a consignment basis, allowing retailers to test new product lines, establish new markets, and more, at little or no upfront cost.

## Variety is the Spice of Life

With someone else providing the product, you can focus on keeping your customers happy.

If a product is successful, add a custom label and order more units. If not, try something new and forget about it.

## McDonald's French Fries have Piri Piri in India

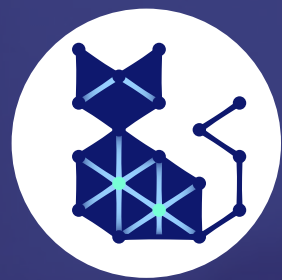
Depending where you sell, there might be a different price point, different product lines, or different customers.

As you expand into new markets, be sure to find the right products for those markets.

## Send it Downstream

Just because you've always been a retailer doesn't mean you have to be forever. As you move online, you can consider other options.

This can mean allowing third parties to resell your products, or configuring affiliate programs to act as a direct retailer.



**StoreCat**  
getStoreCat.com

# Simplify your E-Commerce



## Import your Products

Keep all your products & images in one place. Our unique system allows you to manage your entire market from a central location.



## Connect to Suppliers

Automatically import your inventory and pricing, and immediately add them to your web store.



## Build your Catalog

Whether you want to manage a web store or build a supply chain, we've got the tools you need to succeed.



## Sell Anywhere

Once your catalog is under control, we'll help you export it to any online marketplace or your own custom web stores.