

Problem Identification and Stakeholder Management

Case Study

An eCommerce company, Northwind Trading, has been operating successfully for the past four years. Sales have been steady through this time, with some small seasonal fluctuations. However, last month's sales figures showed a downward trend for the first time, and the company also noticed that several customers posted negative comments on social media about the online store.

Ali, the Northwind Trading website administrator, reported that the eCommerce website was redesigned a month ago. The redesign included implementing a new checkout process that now requires the customers to register before completing the sale. The registration was implemented because the marketing team needed to collect customer data for promotional purposes and to track purchase history. Ali has not noticed any technical issues with the website. Pages are loading slower than he would wish, however he expects that the performance will be dramatically improved once he has completed the optimization of all the product images.

According to the report completed by Sua, the sales manager, there aren't any obvious problems with the sales. However, Northwind Trading management believes that "it is better to be safe than to be sorry" and decide to investigate the situation before the sales problem gets any worse.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis and Recommendations

	Feb-24	Mar-24	Difference	
Sales Statistics	TOTAL	TOTAL	Value	%
Total Sales Value:	\$71,626.00	40620	-31006	-43.29
Total Number of Transactions:	477	197	-280	-58.70
Average Daily Sales Value:	\$2,558.07	5926	3367	131.66
Average Number of Transactions per Day:	17	43	26	152.94
Average Transaction Value	\$150.16	570	419	279.60

Most common complaints:

Ref	Complaint type	Quantity	%
	Website's new design	5	33.33
	Checkout process	8	53.33
	Website loading speed	1	6.67
	Less payment options	1	6.67

Conclusion:

This report provides a comparative analysis of key sales performance metrics between February and March. The data highlights the overall decline in sales activity and website engagement observed in March compared to February.

1. Total Sales Value

- February: 71,626
- March: 40,620
- Difference: -31,006 (-43%)
- The total sales value in March saw a significant reduction of 43% compared to February. This decline suggests a notable decrease in revenue generation for the month.

2. Total Number of Website Visits

- February: 3,136
- March: 2,811
- Difference: -325 (-10%)
- Website visits dropped by 10% in March, indicating reduced online traffic, which may have contributed to lower overall sales.

3. Total Number of Sales Transactions

- February: 477
- March: 302
- Difference: -175 (-37%)

- The total number of sales transactions decreased by 37% from February to March. This reduction aligns with the observed decrease in both website visits and total sales value.

4. Average Daily Sales Value

- February: 2,558.07
- March: 1,450.71
- Difference: -1,107.36 (-43%)
- Average daily sales value also declined by 43% in March, reflecting the overall downward trend in sales revenue for the month.

5. Average Number of Transactions per Day

- February: 17
- March: 10.79
- Difference: -6.21 (-37%)
- The average number of transactions per day decreased by 37%, consistent with the drop in total transactions.

6. Average Transaction Value

- February: 150.16
- March: 138.45
- Difference: -11.71 (-8%)
- The average transaction value saw a modest decrease of 8%, suggesting slightly lower spending per transaction in March.

The qualitative analysis of customer complaints reveals that

- The majority of issues (53.33%) relate to the checkout process, indicating this as the most significant pain point for users.
- Complaints about the website's new design account for 33.33% of the total, suggesting some user dissatisfaction with recent changes.
- Additionally, website loading speed and the limited payment options each received 6.67% of complaints.

Root Cause Analysis Questions

	Questions
1.	Why are the sales declining?
2.	Why are customers not happy with design?
3.	Why are people unhappy with the checkout process?
4.	What is the need of the registration before the checkout process?
5.	Why does the marketing team need customer data?

Root Cause Diagnosis:

Answer to question 1 – Because people are not happy with the website design.

Answer to question 2 – Because they prefer the older design, new one is complex and it's not user friendly and has less payment options.

Answer to question 3 – Before the checkout process the user have to register and put their personal data.

Answer to question 4 – Because the marketing requires customer data for marketing purposes.

Answer to question 5 – Marketing team believes having customer data can later on result in creating personalised marketing campaigns and increase customer engagement.

Root Cause -

The primary root cause of declining sales and user frustration is the marketing team's requirement for customer data to support personalized campaigns. This need for data has led to a mandatory registration process before checkout, which frustrates users and interrupts their purchasing flow. The added step of providing personal information before completing a purchase is a significant friction point, causing many users to abandon the website. Streamlining the checkout process by minimizing or delaying data collection could help retain users and improve sales outcomes.

User Role Analysis

User role	Role description
Customer	Visiting the website for purchasing a particular product.
Website Admin	Managing and maintaining the website.
Marketing team	Managing content and SEO
Sales Team	Monitoring sales and sales planning & execution
Customer Service Team	Handling customer related queries
Development Team	Developing and Designing the complete software solution
Business Analyst	Delivering and managing the project by meeting multiple stakeholders' expectations.

Stakeholders Analysis and Mapping.

Stakeholder	Project Responsibility	Interest	Influence
Customer	Visits the website and purchases products.	High Interest as they are the end users of the product	Low Influence
Marketing Team	Responsible for the marketing campaigns & promotions, design and SEO.	High Interest as they are responsible for the marketing of the products, website and increasing the overall reach	High Influence over the design, content, SEO and overall promotion activities
Sales Team	Responsible for managing sales on the website.	High Interest as they are directly dealing with product sales	Low Influence on the website since their main focus is on sales development
Development team	Responsible for developing, maintenance and troubleshooting of the website.	High interest since they are accountable for the development of the website	High influence since they're the core for developing the technical software
Business Analyst	Bridge between all the stakeholders and managing the project's process.	High Interest since they're the one leading the project and gathering all the requirements and putting them into one place.	High influence, delivering the project by managing all the stakeholders' requirements and meeting their expectations
Website Administrator	Management of the website, updating and maintaining the updates.	High Interest since they're the one managing and getting all the changes and updates done.	Low influence since they just control the website's front end content management
Customer Service Team	Responsible for handling customer related queries.	High Interest, since they deal with the customer queries, online customer feedback is required for them to deal with customer related queries.	Low influence but they are responsible for making the website according to the customer need and preferences by analysing their requirements.

POWER - INTEREST GRID

Low Interest – High Influence	High Interest- High Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Customers- Business Analyst- Development team- Sales Team- Marketing team
Low Interest – Low Influence	High Interest – Low Influence <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Website administrator- Customer Service

Conclusion

In this case study, Northwind Trading, a successful eCommerce company, experienced a decline in sales for the first time after four years. This decline coincided with a recent website redesign that introduced a new checkout process, requiring customers to register before completing their purchases. The redesign, intended to gather customer data for personalized marketing by the marketing team, unintentionally frustrated users, leading to increased abandonment rates. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses supported this conclusion, revealing a 43% drop in sales value, a 10% decrease in website visits, and a 37% reduction in the number of transactions from February to March. Customer complaints mainly centered around the complex checkout process and the new website design, with 53.33% of complaints directed at the checkout experience.

The root cause analysis pinpointed the primary issue as the marketing team's data collection requirement, which added friction to the user experience. Stakeholder analysis highlighted that while the marketing and development teams had high influence, end users (customers) had low influence despite being directly affected. The recommendation is to streamline the checkout process by minimizing or delaying mandatory data collection, thereby reducing user frustration and potentially reversing the downward trend in sales.

