

ThoughtShift presents

30 Proven eCommerce Marketing Hacks



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Introduction

If increasing your eCommerce website's visibility, revenue and conversions as quickly as this month would make you happy, then this guide is for you.

The 30 eCommerce marketing hacks contained in the pages of this guide have been carefully selected from the very best strategies that we've seen increase the results of over 300 websites. We've included website, SEO, PPC, social media and email marketing hacks you can implement 1 day at a time to ramp up your brand visibility, eCommerce revenue and conversions in a matter of weeks.

Just make sure you've got your analytics set up to measure the difference and may digital marketing happiness abound ☺

Helen Trendell
Managing Director & Co-Founder
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Website

1. Put your brand value proposition on your homepage

Now of course, you know who your most loyal customers are and why they buy your products. But can you honestly say whether a first time visitor would be able to understand your unique value proposition upon their first arrival on your website?

As you increase your online visibility and attract more new customers to your site, particularly through SEO & PPC investment, the greater the chance you'll have less than a second to convince that inquisitive first time visitor that you *are* the shop for them.

So think about your ideal customer and how *they* would describe the benefits to their friends of exactly what you do and *that's* the best strap line or welcome message to have on your homepage.

2. Check delivery information is viewable from every page

Adding delivery timings and cost information to every product page is the quickest way to increase your conversion rate. Especially, if right now it's not obvious what your delivery charges are until you checkout.

Imagine a customer was in a high street shop and they wondered if the shop would deliver the item for them but the shop assistant refused to tell them until they had paid for the item? It's unthinkable.

If you have a separate delivery page as well, that's great as then people can find this information no matter where they are on your site. Put it in the footer and optimise this for next day delivery + the main category with a text link to the main category to drive additional SEO traffic for people looking for "next day delivery dresses" or "next day delivery gifts".

3. Promote free delivery on orders over your current average order

Free delivery is the most often cited reason for online purchases across numerous online surveys. If you offer free delivery for orders over a certain amount, emblazon this in the header of your website.

If you don't offer this right now, test adding free delivery for just above your existing average order amount and this could immediately increase conversions and boost your average order. Double win.

4. Check returns information is viewable from every page

Make sure that your returns information is also available from every product page. Don't ask people to go to a new page to find this information from a product page either. That's like asking a high street customer to go to your shop in the next town to get an answer to their question.

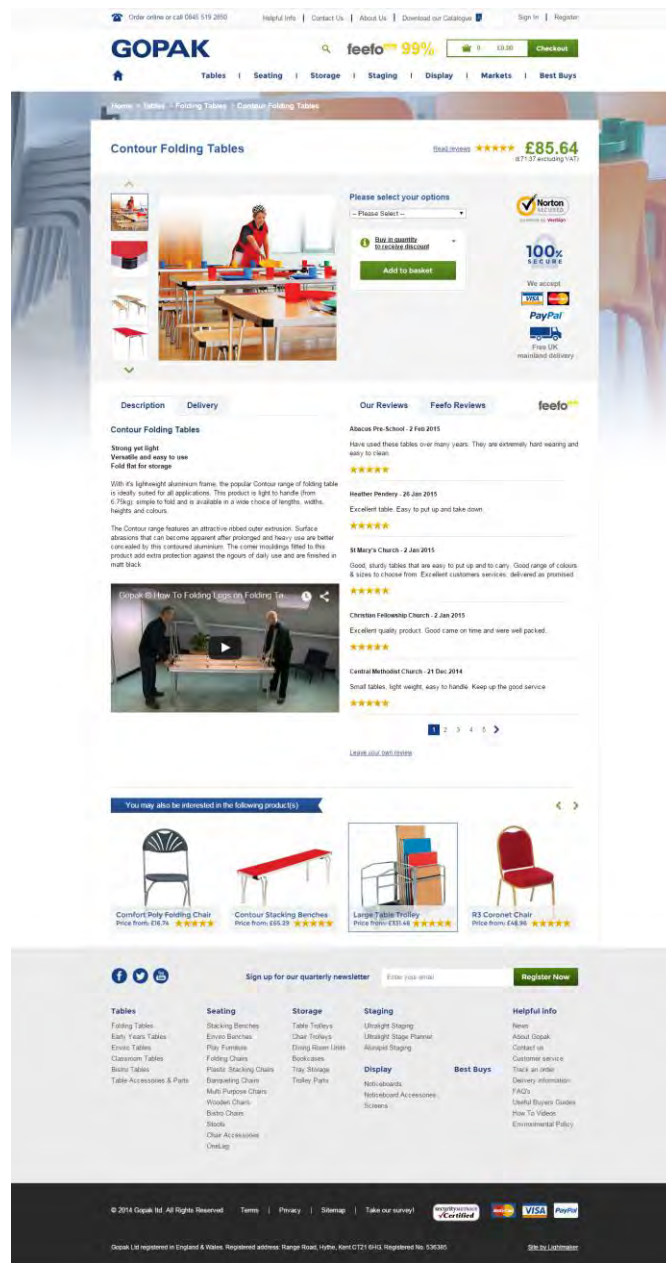
Don't make dealing with you before they have even bought difficult.

5. Check buy buttons are prominent on product pages

This sounds so obvious but when you and your design team get caught up in the moment of a fabulous clean and modern design, we've seen it all too often that the poor buy buttons get relegated to an insipid colour that gets lost.

Make buy buttons stand out by positioning them consistently in the top third of the page

Making buy buttons large and use a colour that makes them stand out from the rest of the site.



Use show and hide functionality or tabs if you have long product descriptions and reviews so that essential copy for SEO/PPC doesn't push these babies down the page so no-one can find them! Buy buttons are like your tills in a high street shop, don't tuck them away down the end. Let people buy easily.

6. Check symbols of trust are viewable from every page

We've all done it, got carried away online and found something we are eager to buy. Then the fear sets in, "who runs this site?", "will I get my stuff, if I order?", "where are they based, in case I need to go and get my money back?".

Make sure you have symbols of trust in the footer or sidebars of your site:

- Visa
- Paypal
- 3D secure
- Padlocks
- Established 20 years
- Reviews
- Awards logos
- Logos of press/TV coverage e.g. As seen in the Guardian / Grazia

7. Make a purchase from your website and process a refund

When was the last time you bought something from your own website?

This is a great exercise to complete at least once a year. Also go through your returns procedure to refund your spend back to yourself. You will quickly see gaps in the user experience that make the site clunky to use rather than slick. It will also provide you with opportunities to improve email subject lines and copy.

You might even want to add in some cross-sell campaigns or let people know you've added them to your email newsletter, as well as the benefits to them of receiving it.

Once you've made a purchase and got a refund. Ask a colleague to do the same and watch what they do over their shoulder (as if you're not there). You'll see where people struggle and this kind of low cost user experience (UX) research will quickly highlight how easy it is to forget what it's like for a brand new customer who doesn't know what you do from Adam.

SEO

8. Run a Google speed test and implement the red flags

The speed of your website is a hugely important factor in being on page 1 of Google. The more popular a keyword, the more important your site being faster than your competitors is.

Drop your site in to the Google speed test tool and fix any red flags as a top priority:

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

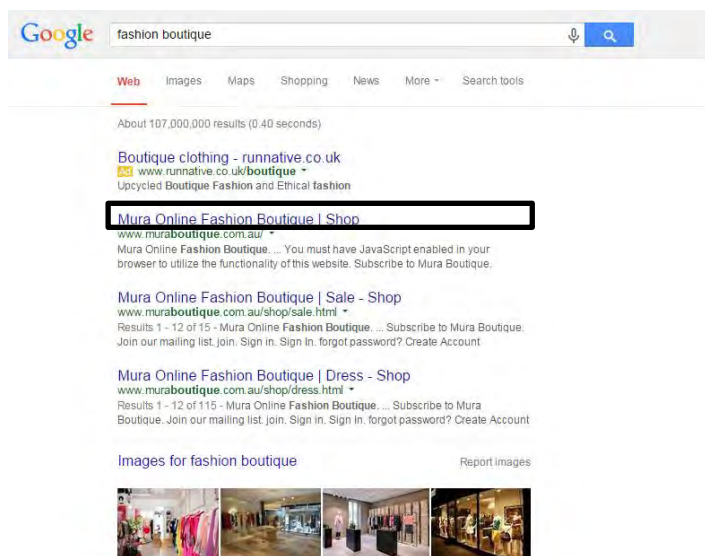
Then run the Google speed test for your competitors ahead of you on page 1 for your choicest keywords and move to fixing any amber flags if you want to outrank them.

We've seen new websites with super-awesome new code go straight in top the top spot so if you are redesigning your site, include minifying your code as an essential web build requirement for improved SEO.

Plus, since the [Google Mobile Algorithm Update](#), it is now a given that your site uses a responsive web design for mobiles, tablets and desktops to stand a chance of ranking across all devices.

9. Ensure your homepage title tag isn't harming your revenue potential

Your title tags are displayed in your Google search results for each of your website's pages ranking in the index.



Including relevant keywords in your title tags is the most impactful places you can place your keywords for SEO.

Added to that, your homepage is the main entry point for search engine spiders and therefore they place the utmost importance of the keywords in your homepage.

So putting the best keywords that describe your overall brand category such as "fashion boutique" rather than products like "red flat shoes" or section categories like "flats & pumps" is what should be added here.

The mistake eCommerce websites often make is to put popular categories in their homepage title tag and that just confuses search engines.

You ideally want one page alone optimised for each keyword, otherwise you have duplicated optimisation efforts and split the authority of those pages between 2 pages diluting the effect.

10. Ensure every category title tag is maximising it's 60 character limit

The amount of characters that are displayed in the titles of your Google search results does vary and has been slyly cut back by Google over the years to around 60 characters.

However many characters there are, another mistake website marketing teams often make is to underutilise this allowance.

But it's not about keyword stuffing, it's about carefully analysing the most relevant keywords that have previously driven purchases and identifying keyword gaps you haven't previously used to describe those categories and adding them in the right order.

The order should be a combination of your customers' search behaviour with the most lucrative, high revenue driving keywords as near to the left as possible as Google places more relevance for words in this position.

11. Ensure every product title uses highly specific language your customers would use

If you pack your category terms with range describing category keywords like luxury... or quirky... dresses or furniture, then your product pages are where to describe in detail what wouldn't be relevant to all products at a category level.

So for example, along with the product type, such as "chair", product pages should include keywords such as colour, style, material and size keywords. Where possible, use widely accepted naming conventions for colours like "brown" rather than "caramel", or "caramel brown" if changing the brand colour options isn't possible.

Putting the words in the language your customers would use to search will dramatically increase traffic and conversions, as that greatly increases the likelihood of an exact match search and winning the click.

12. Include calls to action in all your meta descriptions

For many years now, meta descriptions have been dropped as a Google ranking factor. However, from our experience in increasing the SEO results for over 300 websites we have seen that including keyword variations, unique selling points, free delivery and a call to action significantly increases click through rates from the search result to your website.

If you're #1 organically, your click through rate may be as high as 100%!!!

In more exciting news, a current Google ranking factor that pushes your site up above the rest is click through rate, so spend the time on optimising your meta descriptions for clicks and the increased rankings will send more relevant traffic, conversions and revenue your way.

13. Add text links to deeper category pages

Search engine spiders crawl text links, so if you add 100-200 words of copy or so to each category page with text links though to deeper sub-category pages this will help search engines crawl *and index* your deeper level pages.

The more pages that are indexed in Google the more potential doorways to your shop you create for potential customers.

14. Add keyword variations to product pages

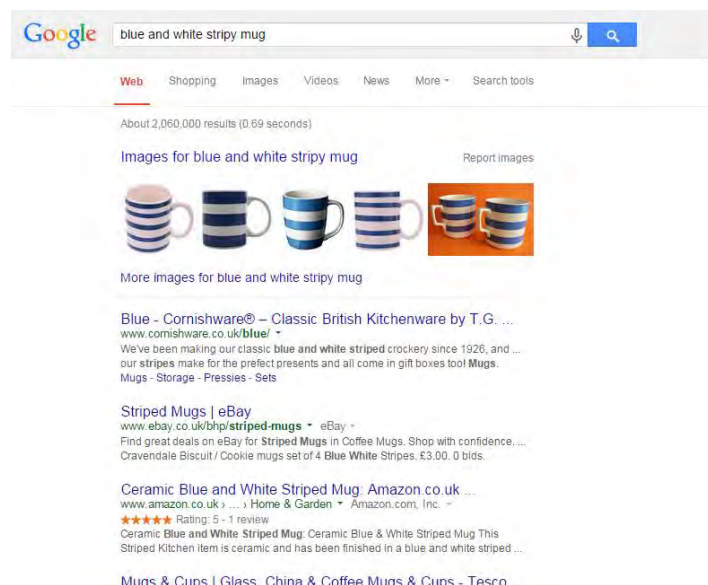
So you've added specifics like colour, size and style to your product title tags. Now you can really go mad and include as many ways of describing that particular product as possible.

Of course, always thinking about the different ways *your customers* would describe the product and getting hyper-specific including:

- Alternative ways of describing the product type
- Colours (red coffee pot with white stripe)
- Size (chunky or large)
- Style (vintage or retro)
- Material (high gloss ceramic)
- Unique selling points (thermostat controlled or next day delivery)

15. Add product reviews to your product pages

If you already have great product reviews on your site then you don't need to wait for people to visit you to find this out, you can code these product reviews using Google Rich Snippets to pull through into your search result listings.



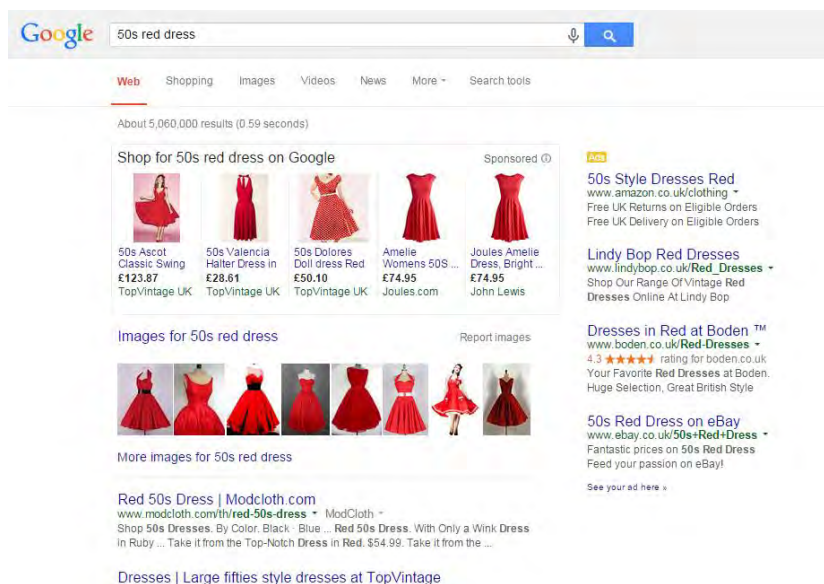
Remember when we covered that search result click through rate is an important Google ranking factor? Imagine if when your potential customers search for that “emerald green wiggle dress” or “blue and white striped mug” that the results that are returned include a product with 5 gold stars next to the result?

It not only increases the click through rate - which we’ve already outlined is a self-fulfilling prophecy for better rankings on its own. But in addition to that, product reviews increase your conversion rate as product reviews are a major influence on purchase, further increasing your conversions and revenue. Hooray.

PPC

16. Set up a PLA campaign

Google has recently reported that for the first time ever, [product listing ads \(PLAs\) now drive more non-brand clicks for retailers than text ads.](#)



PLAs are a no-brainer. You get an image of the product and the price which removes ambiguity for the potential customer especially if you’re more of a luxury priced retailer. Therefore, you only pay for the click if the searcher is interested and no matter what, you get your brand under their noses and pay nothing for this exposure.

Plus the conversion rate is higher and the cost per click is cheaper than text ads. So even if you've tried pay per click before, the current Google Shopping could be for you now.

17. Set up custom columns in your product feed

Google Shopping has gone through many changes and without being eCommerce PPC specialists, AdWords campaign managers are often unaware that the best way to reduce their cost per click is to develop a customised product feed.

Google allows you to add a range of custom columns which you can use to ensure your budget is working as hard as possible and you don't have irrelevant products being shown.

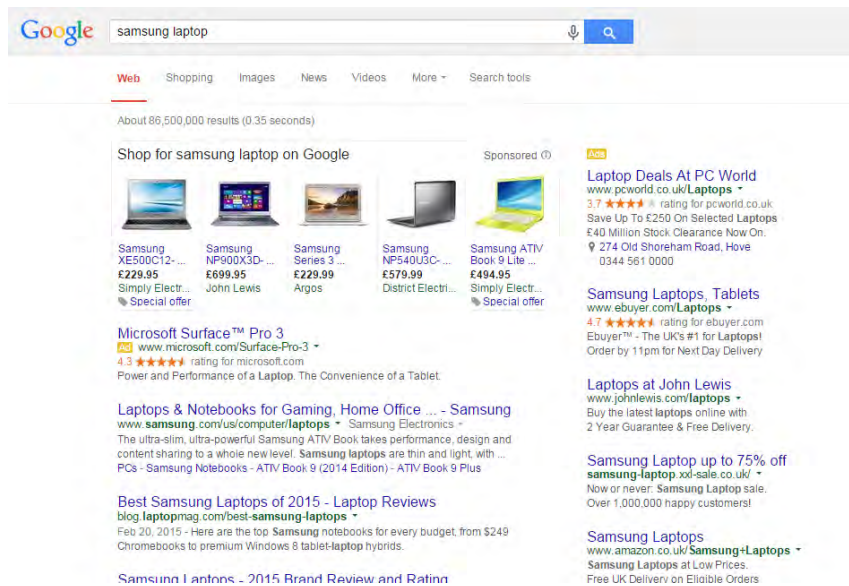
The most critical custom column to add for the majority of retailers is a "season" column.

Hey presto, you can safely bid away, content that your Christmas range isn't going to be turning up in the height of summer because of a gift keyword match in your product title!

18. Set up Ad Seller Ratings

Now we learned earlier that product review star ratings can be pulled into your organic search results. If you're running text based pay per click campaigns on Google AdWords, you can also pull those reviews through into your ads.

For a recent campaign for one of our retail clients, like for like we found ads with the [Ad Seller Ratings had a 28% higher click through rate than those without.](#)



You do need 30 product reviews before they pull through, so the sooner you get product reviews the better.

19. Segment your AdWords campaigns by keyword match type

The very first piece of analysis our eCommerce PPC experts analyse when taking over an existing AdWords account is to see how the campaigns are segmented.

If you've currently got a mix of broad match, broad match modified, phrase match and exact match keywords in the same campaign, you will likely see a major uplift in return on investment from separating these into their own campaigns.

This is because Google only enables you to set budgets at a campaign level. So you can adjust spend into the top converting campaigns by keyword match type, driving up your Google AdWords Quality Score and bringing down your cost per click. So your existing budget is free to go so much further and you multiply your return on investment.

20. Replicate your AdWords campaign on Bing Ads

One of our favourite quick wins, is to get a Google AdWords campaign up to scratch and then replicate this on Bing Ads.

Bing has a much smaller market share than Google at around 15:85%. But whilst Bing will drive 80% less volume in terms of traffic and conversions, that could be as much as a 20% increase in traffic and conversions.

Bing is especially good if you target an older or corporate audience who are more likely to use the Microsoft default settings including Internet Explorer with the Bing search engine.

Social Media

21. Add your best keywords to your Facebook profile description

As simple as it sounds, many retailers don't think about Facebook as a search engine but that doesn't stop millions of searches being made within it every day.

Include your brand and category keywords on your About page and check you get found in the search results on Facebook for all your brand search variations or you could be missing out on your customers sharing their love for your brand with their friends.

Then rinse and repeat for all your branded social media profiles to maximise your brand visibility. The worst scenario would be someone searching for your brand in a social network and you not coming up in the results!

22. Post products on social media

Whilst social media isn't just about selling, if you sell products, your customers do want to see them! So don't be shy, set a posting schedule, starting small and practical, whether that's daily or weekly for you, but start posting images of your products with links through to each of your product pages on a regular basis.

If you've got thousands of products, there won't be enough days in the week to promote everything. If you've got a smaller range, show different ways of wearing or using the product through different situations and settings. If you have editorial shots, look books or video assets weave these in sparingly too (there's probably far fewer of this type of content so you don't want to bore your audience by repeating yourself).

Really engage customers around your products by asking for them to share their opinions, advice (or even photos if relevant) on how they wear or use particular products to keep things interesting.

This is a critically important factor in driving new orders. Think of your social feeds as your shop window. You don't want to *only* be touting your wares, but you are a shop after all.

Brand advocates who are following you, are interested in your products. Don't forget to mention them – pay it forward 😊

23. Set up RSS to automatically post your blogs on social media

You're super-busy and just getting the latest blogs on the site is hard enough without consistently remembering or having the time to post that blog to all of your social networks (you're on so many now)!

Give yourself a break by setting up Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds to automatically distribute your blogs on Facebook and Twitter as you publish them online.

24. Share influencers' posts on social media regularly

After publishing content regularly and engaging with your own followers, giving props to third party influencers is next on the list.

Go and retweet, post or pin a different influencer's post on a regular basis. The gift of reciprocity will pay dividends in a matter of weeks, as a portion of those same influencers won't be able to help themselves but share your content right back. People are kinda nice like that.

25. Ensure your blog titles are not competing against your product titles

In a bid to optimise an eCommerce site for those traffic driving category level keywords, blog posts often get written to include those keywords.

This can lead to your blog post outranking your category page in the search results which can be devastating for your conversion rate.

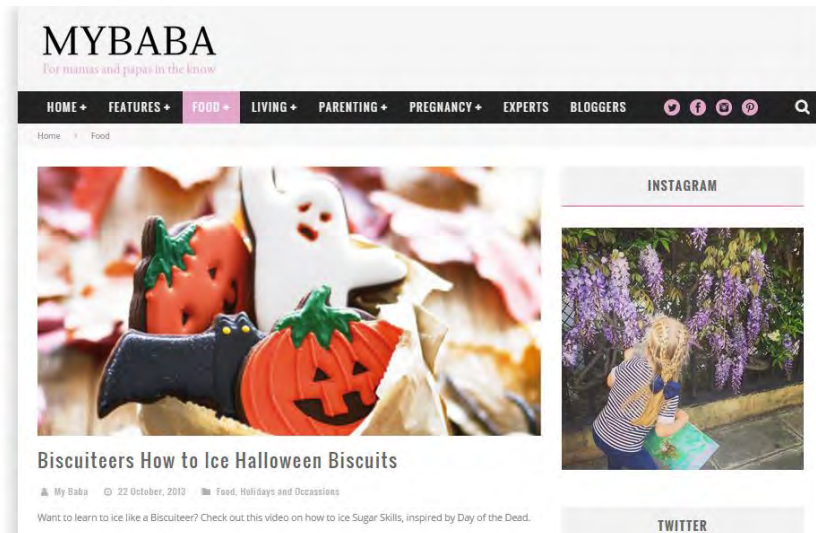
If you're trying to increase your visibility for people ready to buy "large oak coffee tables" send them directly to your shop.

Instead use your blog to create editorial for topics that don't necessarily have their own category such as trends and audiences. Start thinking like a publisher and create content marketing plans to suit your customers, using formats like style guides, look books, designer/maker interviews and gift guides.

26. Ask bloggers to review your products

Bloggers can be a great way to increase your online visibility and traffic from third party sources.

Research bloggers whose audience reflects your target customers and invite them to share your content or review your products.



If you're in the luxury market this may not be feasible so a more creative approach might be required, such as inviting bloggers behind the scenes at your next photo shoot or to get VIP seats at your events.

Email Marketing

27. Add an email signup box with a signup special offer

You probably have an email sign up box, but do you give your prospective customers a reason to add their email?

How about adding a nice "10% off your 1st order" with a trackable promo code so you can measure the effectiveness? Or if discounts are right for your brand, entice customers to share their email address with exclusives, such as style advice, tips or sneak peeks.

28. Create a dedicated landing page for your email offer

Optimise this page for your “[brand] discount and voucher code” to cover off anyone searching for promo codes.

This way you get the sales-hungry to your site first rather than paying affiliates when they’re already looking for *your* brand.

Plus you capture their email address so *you* can continue to market to them.

29. Promote your products by email at least monthly

Email is the [#1 most effective marketing method](#) because you’re marketing to existing customers who have already bought from you or have opted in to hear from you.

They want to know about your new products. If you’re not emailing your list with a product offer at least once a month, you’re really missing out on the easiest possible revenue.



Once you've mastered monthly, it's time to go to fortnightly or weekly.

30. Make your emails easy to share by all methods

As email is the quickest way to increase your visibility, conversions and revenue right this second, don't waste the opportunity to increase the reach by making sharing easy:

- a. By email – include forward to a friend feature
- b. By social media – include Tweet / Like / Pin buttons
- c. By the website – link to your new customer offer of get 10% off your 1st order when you signup for this email newsletter

Let your customers shout about your brand, after all *you are awesome* 😊

About ThoughtShift

ThoughtShift is the award-winning digital marketing agency increasing eCommerce revenues for multi-channel brands including Oliver Bonas, RED5, Biscuiteers and Anna Scholz.

Specialising in the retail, furniture, fashion and travel sectors, ThoughtShift's Agile Digital Methodology™ identifies the most valuable online buyer segments to create new customer acquisition strategies integrating SEO, PPC and social media marketing.

Winners of the Chartered Institute of Marketing's Marketing Excellence Award 2015 for Marketing Performance Measurement, ThoughtShift's digital marketing campaigns increase brand visibility across Google, Facebook and Amazon to grow incremental online sales by millions of pounds each year.

Pick the low hanging fruit

Get your free revenue gap analysis

