



smartosc



Scaling at Speed with Automation



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Introduction



As businesses worldwide grapple with finding the “new normal” during 2020, digital sales have been leading the commerce experience.

Among various practices to boost digital selling efficiency, ecommerce automation stands out as a fundamental tool that business leaders should be making use of. The most notable benefits of automation are:

- **Efficiency** - spend less time sweating the small stuff and more time focusing on the bigger picture
- **Speed** - get more done quicker
- **Convenience** - let the technology take care of the tedious tasks for you

We'll take a look at how you can reap all the benefits of growing your business while also saving time and money.

Studies show that, globally, customers are making purchases almost exclusively online, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic period, which has caused limitations to the ways in which consumers can make purchases. Many businesses have taken advantage of this new normal and have opened up ecommerce stores.

It is a well-known fact that ecommerce businesses are inundated with high volumes of customer data. This data requires processing and managing. It varies, from information that is derived from customers who give your business frequent positive engagement (purchases, feedback and reviews, joining loyalty programmes etc.), to the data of those customers that interact less frequently with your brand. All of this information is essential, but near-impossible to keep a manual track of.

Enter eCommerce Automation.

Get to know Commerce Automation

So, what exactly is ecommerce automation?

It is a revolutionary software that has grown exponentially and changed the way ecommerce businesses operate over the past few years.

According to Kurt Heinrich, founder of HubLogix (formerly eCommHub), it used to be the case that simply having an online presence in a niche market was enough to give a business a competitive advantage, because the barrier to entry was higher and setting up an ecommerce business was not easy.

Some of the only available solutions required extensive knowledge and a college degree in computer science.

However, in recent years, with frontrunners such as BigCommerce, Shopify and Magento, having seen and taken advantage of the benefits of ecommerce automation, it is now easier and less expensive than ever before to set up an ecommerce business.

With ecommerce automation, there is a unification of the correct software with the appropriate operations. The purpose of which is to automate the customer's purchasing process, beginning at the point when the consumer places an order, right up until the point at which the product is received by the customer.

This whole process, from beginning to end, is referred to as the order lifecycle, and can often involve manually inputting data, which is not only time consuming, but often inefficient.

Ecommerce automation software is created to accomplish repetitive tasks that would ordinarily take up valuable time, requiring no human interaction or interference.

The selected tasks and processes are executed precisely how and when they are required to be, ensuring that your business operations run smoothly and efficiently, with little to no time spent on tedious tasks.

For this reason, ecommerce automation has proven to be the advantage that ecommerce businesses were missing. The time-saving benefits are numerous and undeniable..

How workflow automation software benefits your business?

Every business must optimize its processes to improve efficiency, minimize costs, and increase revenue, implementing a workflow automation software can help you achieve this

Why does a business need workflow automation software? Let's take the example of a B2B or wholesale business, with an in-house and/or field sales team and customer support team:

- Poor lead management costs companies at least **1 trillion USD** every year
- **More than 50% of sales time** is wasted on unproductive prospecting
- **Employees spend 20% to 40% of their time** searching for documents manually
- **73% of Customer Support professionals** believe managing time and workload is the biggest issue
- **CEOs spend nearly 20% of their time** on work that can be automated

Benefits of workflow automation software:

1. FEWER ERRORS, LESS RISK

The right workflow automation software can significantly reduce human errors that cost companies a lot of time and resources.

2. SAVES TIME

Automated workflows help your employees save time on repetitive tasks. The patient triage system in a Hospital Accident and Emergency Department is a great example of how workflow automation saves time.

3. IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY

Eliminating repetitive tasks allows your employees to focus on more critical business activities which in turn increases productivity.

4. IMPROVED TEAMWORK

Workflow automation provides your employees with a convenient platform where they can communicate and collaborate efficiently.

5. SCALABILITY

The right business automation software allows you to eliminate the bottlenecks and reach a higher potential.

Let's Automate Your Business Workflow

Want to automate your business and have a legacy application that needs to be redeveloped? Get in touch with us.

How can you be sure that the tasks are being completed successfully?

Part of owning a business is wanting to ensure that all the hard work, time and money that has been invested in the building of your business from the ground up is not jeopardised. Naturally, this means wanting to oversee the processes that keep the business running.

Therefore, incorporating new software and trusting it to execute all the small but important tasks can be disconcerting at first. For this reason, automation testing of ecommerce websites is conducted. This is done for the purposes of running tests to assess the ways in which the programme functions under various conditions and circumstances.

If any problems and complications arise, solutions are tested and implemented, ensuring that you can have peace of mind when it comes to automating the smaller tasks and operations of your ecommerce business.

Why you need automation

If your current methods of updating inventories and systems, and moving information between systems and platforms are inefficient and time-consuming, then automation could be the solution you need.

Sales and marketing teams spending most of their time on fixing order and shipping mistakes, or struggle to keep up with sales volumes due to inefficient systems, often suffer from low morale. This can affect productivity and, as a result, overall business operations.

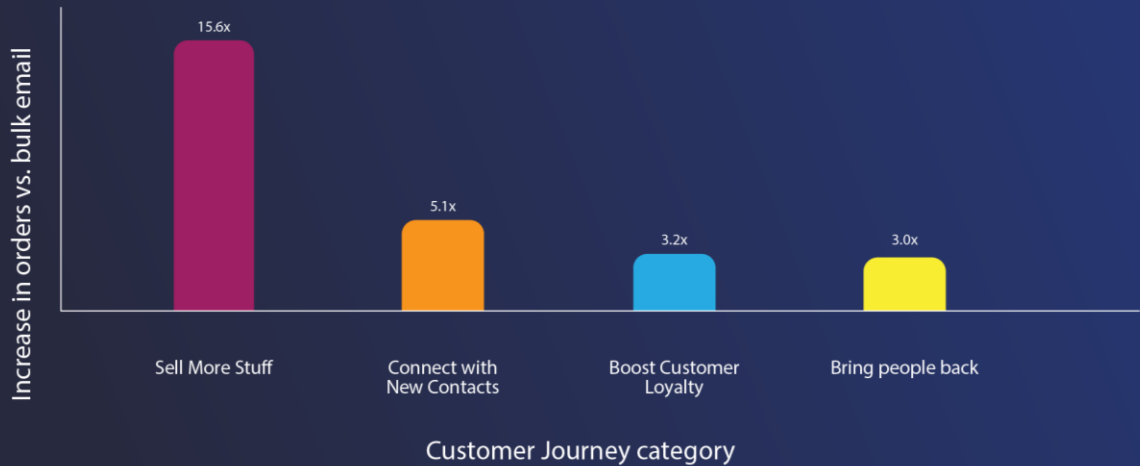
Essentially, ecommerce automation increases the quality of the customer experience, while simultaneously allowing business owners to prioritise and make time for more important tasks which require strategising and social skills.

Additionally, when businesses scale up, the demands, workflow and complexities start to add up, causing systems that were once efficient to become inadequate and break down. Automation will scale up with your business.

Being able to identify the various stages of customer journeys and categorising customers based on their data and behaviours is essential. There are automations that are specific to each stage of the customer's journey, such as the pre-purchase stage or the post-purchase stage, for example.

The automations must, therefore, be created to suit each separate stage. A good example of how this works can be seen in the difference between messaging that is targeted towards different shoppers. Cart abandoners, for instance, would receive targeted, automated messages reminding them to return to the website to continue with the process of purchasing, perhaps with an incentive; while customers who have just made purchases will receive a cross-sell or upsell campaign.

Automations Can Lead to Nearly 16x More Orders

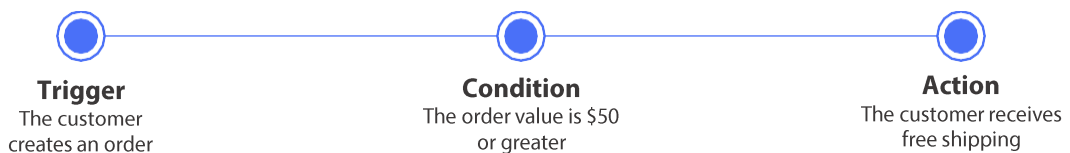


How does ecommerce automation actually work?

Essentially, ecommerce automation does away with vigorous workloads and tedious tasks, making complex processes easier to tackle.

The algorithm is simple: TCA (trigger - condition - action).

Example A: A customer who spends over \$50 on your website on one order receives free shipping.



Is it worth the cost and effort?

Business leaders have three options when dealing with the scaling of their businesses:

1. Tire out and swap out employees, wasting their precious time on boring and tedious tasks that contribute to a flawed system, or
2. Hire more employees or freelancers, spending more money than necessary, or
3. Automate processes, which is not only a smart investment but an act that contributes towards securing the future success of the business

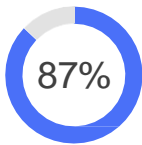
The third option is **the best, safest, very cost effective and can easily** be accomplished.

What areas of an ecommerce business can be automated and why?

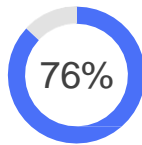
Automation can be used to improve the overall operational efficiency of your business by achieving a number of different outcomes. Let's take a look at some of the ways each business unit within your company can experience the key benefits offered by automation tools:

B2B Automation

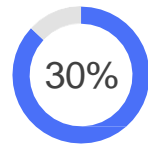
Your organization may be further away than you think...
How "automated" are your B2B processes with customers, partners and suppliers?



believe their business community is very to extremely critical to their success



do not believe they collaborate with their business community very effectively



believe they have full end-to-end integration with everyone they need

Senior IT executives identified using for transactions (invoices, PO's, etc) with customers, suppliers, and other 3rd parties:

78% Email

53% Fax & Postal mail

50% Phone

Chances are, you are still relying on manual processing

... and your partner community is not getting easier to manage

5 is the average number of disparate B2C, B2B systems an organization has installed and operational globally

10 is the average number of data formats an organization uses for B2B integration with suppliers, customers and partners (e.g: EDIFACT, X12, SWIFT, HIPPA, etc...)

11 is the average number of B2B Protocols an organization must support with partners in their B2B community

574 is the average number of partners, customers and suppliers in an organization B2B global community

$$\#B2B \text{ Partners} \times \#Manual \text{ Transactions} \times \$10 \text{ (Average manual transaction cost/document)} =$$

It all adds up to costing you ... **margin**

Automation = Improved cost saving & profitability

67% Reduce Costs | 46% Improve strategic relationships | 45% Compliance with customer requirements

These are the top benefits received from EDI/ B2B initiatives, as identified by Senior IT Executives.

Executives

Employee productivity is critical to the success of everyday business operations and overall growth, which is why automation is such an important time-saver. By using automation to set up workflows, executives can increase productivity and save employees' time for high-impact activities that require their focus.



ENHANCED COLLABORATION

Securely share documents with colleagues, clients and vendors



IMPROVED SYNCHRONIZATION

Automate functions across departments and previously disparate systems



UPGRADED ACCESSIBILITY

Cloud-based software delivers reliable access & functionality on mobile devices



INCREASED EFFICIENCY

Streamline processes with customizable automated workflows



ADVANCED COMPLIANCE

Improved security with data encryption at all levels

Workflow automation can be used to flag high-value returns and prevent chargebacks before they happen. Using automation tools, you can track and identify the most popular items in your store and, based on the most searched products, you can align your customer demand with your inventory supply and allocate resources accordingly.

For example, using real-time customer data, you can trigger a daily alert with each day's top searches in order to align inventory supply with demand and stay on top of sales performances.

The ability to identify the sales channels that are actually effective and allocate money to them, instead of wasting money on the ones that aren't generating any income, is an undeniable time and money saver. Ecommerce automation allows you to place your focus on the important things such as growing your brand and making decisions that affect your business in the long-term.

Management

Customer feedback is essential in business. Customers want to be heard and business leaders rely on feedback to know what is benefiting their companies and what is hurting them. This information be obtained through reviews and testimonials, which automation can elicit from customers after each purchase.

Managing a business using automation allows you to streamline your business operations and increase customer satisfaction by providing you with data based on your customers' experiences. That way, you can predict their demand and behaviour and customise your online store accordingly. This can be used alongside other data detailing customers' total lifetime spending, product preferences, gender, etc., in order to group customers. Customer segmentation allows brands to personalise their customers' experiences and interactions with the company.

Automation is also useful for inventory management, shipping, and other product-related workflows. It gives you the ability to stimulate product demand by alerting you to low inventory items and so that you can place an order with a vendor, and allows customers to sign up for back-in-stock notifications when items are available again. Additionally, with the use of tagging, you can make products more easily discoverable, based on their titles, SKU and type.

When it comes to order fulfilment, the speed at which this process happens can greatly affect sales. Customers want a speedy and efficient shopping experience, and one of the leading reasons for cart abandonment is delay. A good automation system should help your business by ensuring that the customer experience is smooth, quick and seamless.

Another important factor to take into consideration is the risk of online fraud, which can lead to redundant processes. Ecommerce automation can assist in the detection of high-risk orders, track unusually large orders and discounts, and tag suspicious orders as high risk, putting your mind at ease.

Marketing & customer service

Marketing teams can use automation for advertisements and promotions, as well as deploying marketing campaigns at specific times.

Automation software gives marketing teams the ability to use data to automatically recognise various customer behaviours and offer rewards and discounts to customers who, for example, reach a minimum spend threshold or achieve VIP status.

Customers can be targeted for specific products and promotions and tagged based on their past purchases and browsing history, and marketers have the ability to use that data to send customers personalised messages and emails, giving them the option to track and reward the brand's most loyal customers.

Personalized Experience

CONSUMER PREFERENCE

43% of customers prefer companies that personalize their experience. - Accenture Research report

GOING PERSONAL

41% of consumers switched companies over poor personalization

The benefits of giving customers a personalised shopping experience include being able to increase customer lifetime value and drive sales.

With automation tools, you can increase the amount customers spend with each order by using incentives such as free gifts added to their carts upon reaching a certain threshold.

When you optimise your marketing spend, reduce churn, and increase the ROI of your campaigns, you also spend less on customer acquisition.

Post-purchase, you don't have to deal with constantly requesting payments from your customers because automation allows your customers to have receipts sent to them by email, which is quick and convenient.

Some of the best emerging commerce automation platforms provide businesses with not only one or two, but several of the aforementioned benefits.

An example of this is BigCommerce's automation platform, [Atom8](#), which provides an all-inclusive automated solution that has the ability to review high-risk orders, manage products in real-time, schedule marketing campaigns, and employ customer segmentation. By using Atom8, merchants have the ability to create various automated workflows so that their online stores can be self-running.

Atom8 is easy to use, as automation software should be, and it takes less than 5 minutes to set up workflows with it. It provides you with 50+ pre-built automations to choose from and apply directly, reducing your operational costs by at least 30%, and increasing the conversion rate by 50%.

All in all, ecommerce automation is the efficient solution for saving you and your customers time and money, allowing you to focus on the bigger picture.

What do the numbers say?

By 2021, retail revenues are predicted to reach \$4.88 trillion, making automation methods an important step for businesses to implement in order to keep up with evolving customer expectations and marketing strategies. Using SMS, for example, which reaches all demographics, is a great tool. Other useful tools include pop-up ads, bright imagery and a compelling CTA.

- **75% of marketers** use at least one type of marketing automation tool. *Social Media Today*
- The best automation tools can reduce the number of negative customer service due to human error by as much as **65%**. *BigCommerce*
- **Nearly half (over 49%)** of all businesses utilise email automation in some form or another, as it is considered the best way to communicate with customers regarding important information about your business or brand.
- **81% of businesses** claim that email drives customer acquisition, and 80% for retention. *Emarsys*
- In 2019, Black Friday shoppers **spent \$7.4 billion online**, the second-largest Internet shopping day ever. *Adobe Analytics*
- By 2022, **80% of all advertising processes** will be automated. *Adobe*

Sunglass LA

Combining automated growth with empowered self-expression



From its conception until now, Sunglass LA (SGLA) has sought to provide quality eyewear that inspires and empowers customers who desire timeless fashion at an affordable price.

A vision of style and creativity, SGLA makes sunglasses for the perfectly imperfect, the fashion-forward, and everyone in between. The goal is to inspire and be a lens of self-expression through a curated collection of eyewear. SGLA sees the world in a positive light and aims to do good, because caring and giving is what drives the team. They are adventure seekers. They live for the moment and believe that fun times with good people and a great pair of sunglasses are all anyone needs, that's why their slogan is "We don't hide behind our shades - we shine through them."

A look at Sunglass LA's Black Friday in 2019

Over the week of Black Friday's big sales campaign, Sunglass LA had their eyes set on multiple discount programs for each group of customers based on their total lifetime spending. This required the team to execute quite a few challenging and arduous tasks, including:

- Continually publishing & switching banner ads on the website every hour for many different discount programs
- Reorganising and grouping each order that a customer had ever purchased in the store, and then calculating the total lifetime spending for each customer
- Segmenting the customer base into three main groups based on their total spending: Platinum (>\$5000) | Gold (>\$2000 and < \$5000) | Silver (< \$2000)
- Applying different discount percentages (30% - 50% - 70%) for multiple product categories

"We truly had a painful time of manually executing all the tedious and repetitive tasks over and over again"
- Viet Tran (CEO)

For the 2020 Summer Sales campaign, the team didn't take any chances

What Sunglass LA needed for their biggest sales campaign yet was an automation tool that helped reorganise the store's data and automate repetitive tasks, and they found exactly what they needed in Atom8 - The Commerce Automation Platform. With less than 10 minutes of workflow setup, the team was able to automate all the tedious tasks of the whole Summer Sales campaign.

The Solution Atom8 provided

- **Content Automation: Auto-publish/unpublish content on the website (themes, blog posts, banners, etc.)**

Pre-schedule switches between 12 website banners for 12 different offers & deals, once every 2 hours throughout the whole campaign.

- **Customer Management & Segmentation: Auto-segment customers based on different criteria**

Accumulate all orders purchased, then calculate the total lifetime spending for each customer. Auto-tag customers with different attributes based on the total lifetime spending: Platinum (> \$5000) - Gold (> \$2000 and < \$5000) - Silver (< \$2000).

- **Email Marketing Trigger: Automated email via email marketing integration**

Auto-segment customers & send automated "thank-you" emails via Mailchimp after each Summer Sales campaign purchase on the store, then, schedule sending after-sales emails with more relevant content and promotion for the following campaign.

- **eCommerce Merchandising: Auto-publish & promote products (product information, category, price, etc.)**

Auto-publish product category "Summer Sales campaign" on the website. Then, apply two discount types of either 50% or 70% for different product SKUs.

- **Order management: Auto-export order data to a Google Spreadsheet**

Export order metrics (products, quantity, customer's address, etc.) to categorise orders and optimise the fulfilment process.

The result

Viet Tran and his team at Sunglass LA reduced many hours of manual work and reduced operating costs by 30% during the sales period. By applying Atom8 for the Summer Sales campaign, the company achieved:

- \$24,200 in additional revenue
- \$2,000 saved for human resource over-time expense

Let automation do the hard work with Atom8. Get started for free

"Business scale & operational costs are parallel"
- Viet Tran (CEO)

SHOULD YOU AUTOMATE YOUR ONLINE STORE?

Check all that apply!

SALES VOLUME = TOO MUCH

Your operational team can't keep up with the sales volume, because the systems you have in place are inefficient

ONE ORDER > ONE HOUR

Your sales team spends hours getting together and shipping out one order, because they have to deal with multiple systems and platforms

MOVING INFO = HEADACHE

Moving information from one system to the other takes up around (or more) than one hour per day per employee.

UPDATE = DOWNDATE

The inventory briefs are slow, full of mistakes and you find your store running low on stock due to these inefficiencies.

INFORMATION = LOST

Employee and system updates to platforms often lead to lost information or mistakes in critical data.

CUSTOMER SERVICE = BUSY

Your sales team is more concentrated in talking to customers to fix order or shipping mistakes than ever.

CUSTOMERS = UNHAPPY

Customers are returning their orders because of the process or shipping inefficiencies.

If you checked at least 4/7, it is time for you to try ecommerce automation!