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ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATING E-COMMERCE WEBSITE (TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIGITAL BRAND MANAGEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce as we know today has flourished with the advent of the World Wide Web and the subsequent mass acceptance and usage of it. Its huge potential for commercial and transactional purposes has not yet been fully tapped, specifically in Small & Medium Enterprises segment because of some technical lacking.

E-commerce Websites of more and more businesses come into their own as significant revenue drivers; major retailers are now recognizing their online stores as mission-critical businesses. And as they pay more attention to the online channel, many old and young web entrepreneurs are finding that the current e-commerce platform can no longer support their growth or evolving business needs. Post analysis of technical parameters reveals different technical considerations to help & guide the selection criteria for the upcoming e- commerce platform.

KEYWORDS: E-Commerce, World Wide Web, Web Entrepreneurs, Technical Considerations.

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, the Internet has opened up an effective new medium for conducting business electronically. E-commerce executives and their IT counterparts are starting to look for more-sophisticated web applications that can best meet their current and future needs.

Selecting the right e-commerce web application for the long term can be a difficult exercise. It's not easy to base a decision on both current requirements and a vague, undetermined set of future needs that have not yet even hit the planning stages. Plus, at first glance, e-commerce Website functionality seems pretty straight forward and almost commoditized.

All e-commerce Websites have product catalogs and offer ways to search for and navigate to desired items, they all have shopping carts, they all offer special promotions like free shipping, and they all offer secure transactions. But those common, expected features belie a complex set of capabilities required to keep best-in-class Web stores appealing, responsive, and performing well at high transaction volumes over the long term. The difference between e-commerce application capabilities can spell the difference between an e-commerce site's success and failure.

This research paper offers various considerations to help guide the selection criteria for your next e-commerce platform.

OBJECTIVES/AIM OF THE STUDY

To study different technical evaluation parameters of e-commerce based web application.

METHODOLOGY

1) Setting research objective,
2) Collection data from various sources
   - Primary sources : Observation,
   - Secondary Sources : literature review,
3) Interpretation and Analysis of collected data,
4) Findings Formulation

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

CONSIDERATION 1: SEARCH
External Search: (Search Engine Optimisation)
In today's era SEO has become very important for an e-commerce business in order to drive more customers to business as many people use search engine like Google, Yahoo, Bing etc. to get appropriate results of their queries. SEO can drive much traffic to any e-commerce business and can help business in creating potential customers, generating profit and revenue by placing the e-commerce site on the top (5 to 10 links) of SERPs (Search Engine Result Pages).

Internal Search:

The search box is often the first tool an e-commerce customer uses. Having a clear and well-positioned search option is crucial to an e-commerce site. The ability to search an e-commerce website is very important because many online buyers have a specific item that they are looking for. A search box is a powerful site feature that will improve findability and navigability. Users expect search to not only find but also guide them to the products they're looking for

CONSIDERATION 2: SCALABILITY (HIGH SPEED)
Most prospective customers can decide in just a few seconds whether they wish to continue browsing on your e-commerce website. Customers determine whether they will purchase something based largely on their user experience and the user interface design, and if a page – or an entire site – loads slowly, you may lose the customer before they even begin browsing.
Another important consideration for building a high-speed website is an e-commerce website should have ability to handle its peak traffic.

CONSIDERATION 3: THE PRODUCT CATALOGUE
Product catalogue is the online repository for every item entrepreneur sell. It has to effectively promote the items, and simultaneously help customers find the items they are looking for. But poorly constructed product catalogue can be rigid and uncompromising; especially if the product attributes entrepreneur want to store don't naturally align with the definitions set in e-commerce application.
The combination of a standard application and lone term business planning results in potentially flexibility Product catalogue which can display offers and promotions etc. to continually adapt to changing e-commerce business needs.

CONSIDERATION 4: CONTENT
Marketing material content should be influence customer to visit e-portal and motivate customer to purchase product or service. Unique content written by the entrepreneurs will encourage the website to be indexed by search engines such as Google, as well as giving him the ability to target keyword phrases and topics that are most relevant to your website.
Content would be a signal sentence, latest offers, pictures, news, videos, latest scandals which is responsible to increase hits of the e-commerce web site or influence customer to purchase service. All the way create space for brand in customer's mind which will help word of mouth public

CONSIDERATION 5: USER FRIENDLY
The functionality of a site is a significant part of the website - which enables the user to react in some way, thus changing the user into a customer. The visual nature of the Internet influences consumer behaviour companies are now clicking their own product images, instead of relying on vendor provided images. In fact, some websites are using such proprietary images as a source of competitive advantage. A pleasing webpage layout, An easily accessible action button to help the user move ahead with the purchase process, Colours, images, and icons that are in sync with the psychographic make up of the target customer.

Navigation of the type that the user prefers it is best to have multiple navigation options: menus, sidebars,

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dropdowns, and the like, so that each customer can use their preferred option.

CONSIDERATION 6: PAYMENT OPTIONS
In technical Consideration payment is important aspect of e-commerce website, once customer choose select product for purchase their should all legal information about payment, different add-on charges like proper tax calculations shipping charges has to be shown before payment.

Online stores commonly use credit and debit cards, gift vouchers, cash on delivery, PayPal, etc as their main payment system. You can easily find these payment icons at the footer or on the top right corner of sites.

Now day in India online users payment made through the Credit cards, Debit cards as well as online payment also popular so entrepreneur should provide all king of payment option for user's feasibility.

CONSIDERATION 7: TRUSTED MARK
Trustmarks are small images or logos that show a security guarantee by an external party indicating that it is safe to shop on the site. Some of these trustmarks come from Network solutions, McAfee, Verisign, BBB, TRUSTe, GeoTrust, etc. Such accreditation certificates give customers a sense of security and gives them confidence in sharing their private information. Visitors would be more inclined to make a purchase if they know that their payment details are safe from prying eyes.

It should also be noted that trustmarks don't matter for big brand stores. They don't need to pass security and privacy tests to confirm their reliability because they already have a good reputation.

Apart from trustmarks, a clear design, convenient menus, detailed product descriptions and user reviews are also important for creating better online reputation. Just note that trust plays an important role in a customer's willingness to part with their money.

CONSIDERATION 8: SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS
It's said that almost 20% of online purchases are accomplished after surfing through social media sites.

People are inclined to take in public opinion. Social media websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are the best, if not fastest, source to get the info you need on just about everything.

Moreover, social media accounts bring excellent opportunities for self-promotion: online communities can help to identify the most active and influential customers, or find new ones who are not familiar with the web store yet. For online shops, it's a good channel to keep customers abreast of the latest news, or special deals which are oriented towards Facebook or Twitter followers only.

CONSIDERATION 9: EMAIL INTEGRATION
Email is weapon of the e-commerce application to Promote online product and promotional material email integration with e-commerce platform is most important, through the email customer may get alert of their registration as well as payment options quickly which will ultimately help to get customers loyalty.

CONSIDERATION 10: CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK

With online shopping, buyers interact with sellers via computer networks making transactions that aer no longer geographically bound. When there is a problem however, customers would more likely prefer to have someone they can talk with. This is the core of the need for a store support team; 24/7 hotlines and live chats are highly appreciated forms of value-added customer service.

If online purchases can be done all day and all night long, there is a need to provide 24-hours customer services to solve the majority of pre-sale and after-sale questions. Moreover, people can go online from their working places or from home, so a purchase — and any accompanying enquiry — may come at any time of the day.

CONSIDERATION 11: SMS GATEWAY INTEGRATION
SMS is another weapon of the e-commerce application to Promote online product coupons and promotional material, So SMS integration with e-commerce platform is most important, through the email customer may get alert

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of their registration as well as payment options quickly which will ultimately help to get customers loyalty.

CONSIDERATION 12: BUSINESS USER CONTROL

Many IT managers long for a world where there are no demanding business users. They long for the end of business requests that seemingly come from left field, or arrive urgently at the last minute. They crave a way to offload day-to-day updates and edits back to the business. Many e-commerce applications require IT resources for daily maintenance, let alone major projects. As a result, your business users are totally disconnected from the daily workings of your e-commerce site. They send their change requests to IT, and IT has no choice but to react. IT has difficulty planning and prioritizing, as they deal with a continual barrage of urgent high-priority updates.

But business users like to take control, and every task that they can safely do themselves means one less task that IT will have to do.

When evaluating e-commerce applications, you must make sure that the application you choose will be technically and architecturally sound with proven capabilities. It should be communicate with all functions of the organisation like store, supply chain, purchase, marketing etc.

CONSIDERATION 13: REPORTING AND ANALYTICS

E-commerce Website stores a treasure trove of information about customers, their behaviour, and their preferences. But businesses typically struggle to figure out how to leverage the business value this data holds. Configuring site to capture and log all the available information can be an arduous job, especially when the data is coming from a large variety of sources. Furthermore, entrepreneur may be using the data in different ways over time, and may need new information to drive specific campaigns. Or, may want to base campaigns on different behaviour from what he has been tracking.

CONSIDERATION 14: STANDARDS

E-commerce is no longer a renegade outpost of IT. It's a fundamental, mission-critical organization within a business' systems portfolio. It must run on a standards-based platform that can be supported by standard skill sets across the organization and in the wider marketplace.

We probably seen some nice applications that solve all sorts of business problems, only to later discover that they were coded in a language, database, or framework not supported by the skills of our people. If we adopt the application and train our staff to support it, they'll be concerned about career limitations by tying themselves too closely to this esoteric solution.

We'll want the flexibility to go to a broad selection of agencies and systems integrators for development. In today's enterprise applications, the technology playing field has narrowed to either a Java/J2EE or

Microsoft .NET architecture. Furthermore, industry analysts such as Gartner strongly recommend that businesses adopt a ―buy‖ rather than a ―build‖ approach when looking for e-commerce applications.

CONSIDERATION 15: INTEGRATION

The e-commerce Website, once a standalone silo, is now a highly integrated application that touches many other systems and processes. The team that develops and supports it contains a mix of technical and business professionals who drive an important part of the corporate strategy. As businesses become more imaginative about how they mix their Web channel with other customer touch points, clean and easy integration is mandatory. Just about every element of an e-commerce application may be either self-contained or driven by other systems.

When evaluating e-commerce applications, look for modularity, which will let we customize or tweak each individual aspect of the application to meet our unique business requirements. In addition, with a modular solution, we won't compromise the integrity of the rest of our site in the process.

As per the changing market scenario it should be integrate with various mobile technologies to get maximise target market area.

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CONCLUSION

When so many e-commerce applications appear to share the same set of functions and features at the checkbox level,‖ the real differences don't become apparent until we examine the fine print. With a heritage of powering the e-commerce sites of some of the largest businesses in the world, and with best-in-class ratings from leading analysts, The above 15 considerations can expertly guide anyone through the key consideration to ask and criteria to consider as entrepreneur prepare to invest in an e-commerce platform that will help his business succeed in a competitive market.

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TABLES : 1 : TOP 15 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN ALL PROSPECTIVE

Sr. No.	Technical Consideration for E- commerce	Importance		
		Consumers Prospective	Users Prospective	Owners Prospective
1	Search (Outbound / Inbound)	Easy Found Product	Easily Manage the Customer	To maximize Hits
	Scalability (High Speed)	To save time		
3	Product Booklet / Catalogue	Easy Shopping	Promote Product	To Increases Visibility
4	Content	Get More information about product	To get More attention	To Increases Visibility
5	User Friendly (Web Guide)	To save time	Easily Manage the Customer	To Increases Visibility
6	Payment Option	Easy Shopping	Monitor User behavior	For Revenue collection
7	Trusted Mark	Feeling Trustworthy	Increase Trust	Increase Trust
8	Social Media Links	Easy to become social	Promotion	Brand Development
9	Email Integration	To get information	Promotional Schemes	Increase revenue
10	SMS Gateway Integration	Quick updated information	Quick Service	Increase Trust
11	Customer Service Desk	To get more information	Quick Service	Increase Trust
12	Business User Control	NA	Easily Manage Inbound Partners	Easily Manage Inbound Partners
13	Reporting and Analytics	NA	To provide better customer service	Decision Making
14	Standards	NA	NA	To serve Tomorrow Business Need
15	Integration with other Application Platform	NA	Monitor User behavior & Make Changes	To increase target market Area