JULIAN DELPHIKI

Thinking School

UPDATED EDITION

ECOMMERCE 360°

START YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS
BUILD YOUR STORE
SELL ON MARKETPLACES



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360°

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Sell on marketplaces

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PART I

Building Your eCommerce

1 *State of eCommerce*

2 *Introduction*

3 *Customer Experience*

4 *Optimizing Your eCommerce*

CHAPTER 1

State of eCommerce

Social Commerce

Social commerce, a blend of social media and eCommerce, is reshaping how consumers shop and interact with brands. Its importance in the modern business landscape cannot be overstated. At its core, social commerce leverages the massive user base of social media platforms to drive sales, create engaging shopping experiences, and foster deeper connections between brands and consumers.

> KEY CONCEPT
>
> ### Social commerce
>
> The blend of social media and eCommerce: using the reach, trust and interactivity of social platforms so that people can discover and buy products without ever leaving the app.

Social commerce taps into the power of **social proof**. People tend to trust recommendations from friends, family, and influencers over traditional advertisements. By integrating shopping experiences directly into social media, brands can harness this trust. Customers can see products in real-life settings, read reviews, and even ask questions

directly to the community or influencers who use these products. This builds confidence and reduces the hesitation often associated with online shopping.

The convenience factor is paramount. Social commerce reduces the friction between discovery and purchase. Instead of seeing an ad and then navigating to a separate website, consumers can complete their purchases within the social media app itself. This seamless experience is crucial in an age where attention spans are short, and the ease of transaction can significantly impact sales conversions.

Moreover, social commerce provides businesses with invaluable data insights. Social media platforms offer robust analytics that reveal user preferences, behaviors, and trends. Brands can use this data to tailor their marketing strategies, develop personalized shopping experiences, and target their audience more effectively. This targeted approach not only improves the efficiency of marketing campaigns but also enhances customer satisfaction by presenting them with products that genuinely interest them.

Furthermore, the interactive nature of social media allows for real-time engagement. Brands can host **live shopping events**, where they showcase products, answer questions, and offer exclusive deals. This creates a sense of urgency and excitement, encouraging immediate purchases. Additionally, the community aspect of social media fosters brand loyalty. When customers feel part of a brand's community, they are more likely to become repeat buyers and advocates.

In addition, social commerce can significantly boost brand visibility. With billions of active users on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, the potential reach is enormous. Brands can leverage social media algorithms and paid advertisements to ensure their products are seen by a wider audience. This visibility is crucial for new and emerging brands looking to establish a foothold in a competitive market.

Social commerce is adaptable and scalable. Whether a brand is a small business or a large enterprise, it can tailor its social commerce strategy to fit its specific needs and goals. The scalability of social

media platforms allows businesses to start small and expand their efforts as they grow, making social commerce an accessible and versatile tool.

CHECKOUT INSIDE THE FEED

Social media platforms have evolved beyond mere communication tools; they've become bustling marketplaces where consumers not only engage with content but also discover and purchase products seamlessly. The integration of checkout features directly within these platforms marks a significant shift in how businesses approach eCommerce. Instead of relying solely on traditional calls-to-action (CTAs) like "buy now" buttons that redirect users to external websites, social media platforms now offer a streamlined checkout experience, right within the app or site interface.

This integration aims to eliminate friction points in the purchasing process. In the past, when users clicked on a product link in a social media post, they were often directed to a separate website where they had to re-enter payment and shipping information—a process that could deter potential buyers due to its inconvenience and time-consuming nature. However, with checkout functionality directly within social media platforms, users can now complete their purchases with just a few taps or clicks, without ever leaving the app they're browsing.

This seamless experience is beneficial for both consumers and businesses. For consumers, it means a more convenient and efficient shopping experience. They can browse products, read reviews, and make purchases—all within the familiar interface of their favorite social media platform. There's no need to switch between multiple apps or websites, reducing the likelihood of abandonment during the checkout process.

For businesses, integrating checkout within social media platforms opens up new opportunities to drive sales and increase conversion rates. By reducing the steps required for a purchase, businesses can capitalize on impulse buying behaviors and take advantage of the immediacy of social media engagement. Moreover, with the ability to

track and analyze purchase data directly within the platform, businesses can gain valuable insights into their audience's preferences and behaviors, enabling them to refine their marketing strategies and product offerings for better performance.

However, while social media checkout offers numerous benefits, it also poses challenges for businesses. Chief among these is the issue of data ownership and privacy. When transactions occur within a social media platform, businesses may have limited access to customer data, making it difficult to build comprehensive customer profiles or implement targeted marketing campaigns. Additionally, businesses must navigate the potential risks associated with relying too heavily on a single platform for their eCommerce efforts, such as changes to algorithms or policies that could impact visibility or accessibility.

WHERE ENTERTAINMENT MEETS COMMERCE

As observers, we often focus on the transformations occurring in the digital landscape, particularly within social media platforms. One notable evolution is the shift of these platforms from mere spaces for connection and communication to multifaceted hubs for entertainment and commerce. While social media initially emerged as a means to connect individuals and foster community, it has rapidly expanded its role to encompass a wide array of functions, including entertainment and eCommerce.

This transition is evident in the strategies employed by platforms themselves, as well as the behaviors of users and businesses within these spaces. Platforms are continuously introducing features that blur the lines between social interaction, entertainment, and shopping. From live streaming events and interactive storytelling to in-app shopping experiences and personalized content recommendations, social media channels are becoming increasingly intertwined with entertainment and commerce.

From a critical standpoint, this transformation raises questions about the nature of social media and its impact on society. As these platforms prioritize engagement metrics and monetization strategies,

the user experience often becomes fragmented, with content shifting from authentic connections to curated feeds and sponsored posts. The line between genuine interaction and commercial promotion can blur, leading to concerns about authenticity and transparency.

Moreover, the convergence of entertainment and commerce within social media channels has implications for how we consume content and make purchasing decisions. As users, we are constantly bombarded with advertisements and sponsored content, blurring the boundaries between entertainment and commercial messaging. This saturation of marketing material can erode trust and authenticity, making it difficult to discern between genuine recommendations and paid promotions.

From a business perspective, the integration of entertainment and commerce within social media channels presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, businesses can leverage the power of social media to reach a vast audience and drive sales through targeted advertising and in-app shopping experiences. On the other hand, they must navigate the complexities of engaging with consumers in a crowded and competitive digital landscape, where attention spans are short, and user expectations are high.

The importance of social commerce lies in its ability to integrate the social aspects of shopping with the convenience and efficiency of eCommerce. It builds trust through social proof, enhances convenience, provides valuable data insights, enables real-time engagement, boosts brand visibility, and is adaptable to businesses of all sizes. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, social commerce is set to play an increasingly vital role in the success of modern retail strategies.

Temu and Shein vs the World

The rise of eCommerce platforms and marketplaces such as Temu and Shein has been marked by their aggressive pricing strategies and fierce competitiveness. These platforms have capitalized on the growing trend of online shopping, leveraging technology to offer a wide range