

**DOOFINDER®**

**MARKETING GUIDE  
FOR YOUR ONLINE  
PHARMACY**



Discover how to increase your  
**pharmacy's online sales**

# Introduction

## **The pharmacy world has gone through a digital explosion.**

For years, this sector has headed up the increase in online sales. **But growth is not equal for all.**

While some pharmacies have been able to take advantage of this situation, there are many others that don't know the rules of the online world and think, wrongly, that selling things online "is not for them."

The aim of this ebook is to analyze the e-commerce opportunities for pharmacies, as well as the challenges inherent thereto.

And, above all, to **show you the way to develop a solid sales strategy** with practical tips that you can apply no matter what your invoicing figures and the size of your product catalog are like.

But first, let's see why this is really a great opportunity for the pharmaceutical sector.



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# 01. How the e-pharmacy sector has evolved

Sales online in the pharmaceutical sector have grown between 30% and 40% since March of 2020

This is according to [a study on e-pharmacies by Market Data Forecast](#).

And no, this is not a one-off phenomenon stemming from the coronavirus crisis, as you could be tempted to think. Quite the contrary.

Over the last few years, online sales in the pharmaceutical sector [have seen sustained growth](#).

Among other factors, [the comfort of being able to make a purchase from home regardless of the time of day or night](#) has been one of the main reasons for this surge.

But additionally, having an online presence provides a series of advantages for any pharmacy, because:

- **Your customers are already online:** 78% of those aged between 16 and 55 make purchases online. [In the 55 to 75 age range, that figure reaches almost 60%](#).
- **You're open 24 hours a day:** a website is like a salesman who never takes a break.
- **No geographical limits:** with good logistics, you can sell to anywhere in the world.
- **You stop competing by price:** online strategies allow you to create a community of users who are loyal to your brand.
- **You diversify your income:** online sales can complement (and even surpass) those of your physical shop.

Of course, having an e-commerce site also means facing a series of new obstacles, including:

- **Fierce competition:** in addition to other pharmacies, large e-commerce sites like Amazon also sell the same products that you are selling.
- **It is more difficult to offer good customer service:** in a physical business, a lot of the success depends on how you treat your customers. But online that same customer hasn't got you there to guide them in choosing the product they need.
- **You have to "relearn" to sell:** online sale strategies change almost entirely.
- **The average ticket value continues to be low:** on e-commerce you can't rely on prescription medicines to increase your income.

If you want to be successful in this new context and take advantage of all the possibilities it offers you, you need to understand and master the rules of the e-commerce world.



02.

# THE 5 ELEMENTS OF A PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING STRATEGY

## 03. Study your market

Just creating a website is not enough to sell online.

You need to know all about your initial position – where you're starting from and what your main obstacles will be – in order to develop an appropriate strategy.

### A. Think about who your ideal customer is

The axis of any business strategy.

Understanding who your ideal customer is and what their needs are can help you to know:

- What products you should be promoting.
- How to draft product categories and pages on your site to grab the customer's attention and sell more.
- The contents that will allow you to attract more [qualified traffic](#) (visits that match the profile of your ideal customer and, therefore, could end in sales).
- The channels (social networks, etc.) where you should be present (because they are used by your target).

A good way to define that customer's profile is by creating a [buyer persona](#).

This is a fictitious representation of your ideal shopper that reflects his/her concerns and needs.

The minimum information that your **buyer persona** should include is:

- **Demographic profile:** age, socioeconomic level, etc.
- **What their needs are:** or why they could be interested in buying your products.
- **How you can help them to meet those needs:** and what makes your solution different from that of other online pharmacies.

This information can be completed with data like the **informational media that they consume, their lifestyle, etc.**

In addition, it is recommendable for this profile to be assigned a name and picture.

This will make it easier for you to get into the mindset that you are selling your products to real people in the flesh, not to an abstract, intangible public.



#### **An example of a buyer persona for a pharmacy that sells nutrition products:**

*John is a young thirty year old with a high level of studies and middle-to-high income. He takes care of his health and tries to do regular exercise and eat a balanced diet. Nevertheless, **because of his lifestyle, he cannot always eat healthy and varied foods**, so sometimes he seeks the support of food supplements.*

*In my pharmacy, I offer him different supplement options and vitamin complexes. Also, as I know that he consumes health-related contents, **I publish guides about supplements on my website's blog to help him to choose the ones that are best for him**, as well as articles with general recommendations for a healthier life.*

The idea is to come up with some information like this for each customer profile that you are targeting.



# B. **Spy on your competition**

Remember that in the online world, borders melt away.

If your pharmacy is in Boston, for example, but you ship to all of the United States, **your main competitor could easily be a pharmacy in Phoenix** that is well positioned in Google.

That's why the first thing you have to do is to identify the businesses you are competing against and analyze their strategy to figure out how to surpass them.

**This process has two phases:**

- **Identify your competition**

- **Look for terms related with your sector in google:** try things like “online pharmacy” or the names of your best selling products.
- **Note the 5 or 10 websites that appear most often:** if they are there, it's because they have a good digital marketing strategy and, therefore, they are the ones with the most visits (and, consequently, the most sales).

- **Analyze their strategy**

- **How they talk:** Do they use a formal or informal tone? Do they publish contents on their blog? Can you subscribe to their email list?
- **Their product catalog:** What products stand out most on their homepage? What brands do they distribute? What is their price strategy?
- **Their sales strategy:** Do they offer special promotions or discounts? Product packs? Complementary products? Do they have ads on Google?

# 04. **Attract visits** (and turn them into leads)

## Traffic is the bloodstream of e-commerce

But to get sales, you first need to get users to your site.

We have several ways to get people there.

### A. **SEO**

Imagine someone connects to Google and searches for “Nivea hand cream”. Among the first results that pop up, that person finds your site.

He clicks on your site, reads the product page for the cream, and decides to buy.

This is what we would call SEO positioning: the strategy **that we use to optimize a website for it to appear first on Google.**

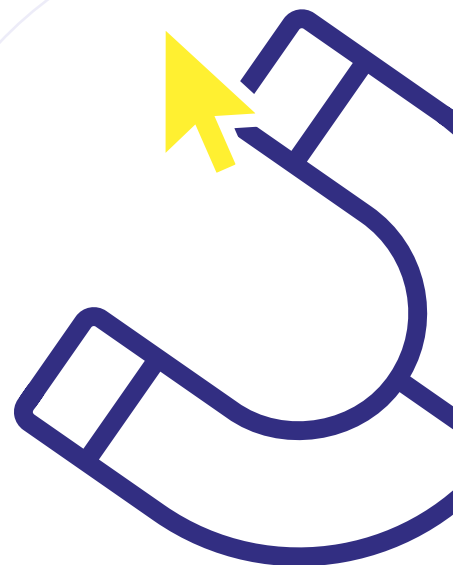
A complete SEO strategy has a lot going on, but the most important things for an online shop are:

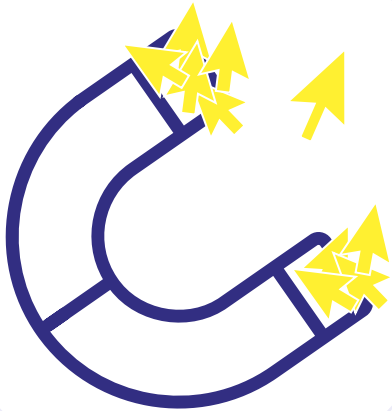
- **To undertake keyword research:**

Make a list of the terms that your ideal customer could use in Google (name of your products, brands, etc.). Then use an SEO tool to know how many people search for those keywords each month.

[Here are some of the most common ones.](#)

- **Design a site structure to hone in on those keywords:** the more generic keywords (like “hand cream,” “bandages,” etc.) can be emphasized in categories and subcategories, and keywords for specific products (“NIVEA Repair Care Hand Cream”) can be emphasized on product pages.





• **Avoid duplicate content and keyword cannibalization:** a very common error is to have two pages trying to gain positioning with the same keyword ([keyword cannibalization](#)). That would be the case of the same product page appearing in two different categories at the same time. Or it can happen that several different product pages have the same exact description ([duplicate content](#)). Both mistakes can make your page be worse positioned in Google.

To find out more, we recommend you take a look at this [SEO guide for e-commerce sites](#).

## B. **Online advertising**

When we speak of online advertising, we refer to ads that you publish to attract paid traffic towards your pharmacy website, whether through:

- [Google Ads](#) (formerly Google Adwords).
- [Google Shopping](#)
- Social networks (mainly [Facebook Ads](#) and [Instagram Ads](#)).

The typical thing to do in these campaigns is for you to pay a set price per click on the ad ([CPC, or Cost per Click](#)).

If your ad doesn't get clicks, you don't pay anything.

**The key to success in an ad campaign online lies in:**

- **Using attractive text:** a headline with a hook that catches a user's eye as soon as they see it and then a description that mentions their specific needs. For example, if you sell an ointment for rashes, explain how your ointment will alleviate the client's irritation.
- **Take care of the visual aspect:** for adds that have an important graphic component (like on Facebook and Instagram), be sure that you have an image that attracts attention.
- **Monitor the CPC:** Check how much you're paying per click and how many sales you're getting with the campaign to ensure that your investment is turning out to be profitable.



**Note:** all platforms have strict advertising policies that you should be familiar with, especially in terms of health-related subject matter. What's more, online pharmacies need a license to be able to put that type of ad on Google. Without a license, the ad will be rejected automatically.

## C. **Content marketing**

This strategy consists of [publishing content on your e-commerce blog](#) that is useful for your target audience.

For example:

- The best remedies for dry hands.
- How to know if you need a multivitamin.
- Foods to avoid if I have digestive problems.
- When is paracetamol better than ibuprofen?

These types of content will allow you to attract more qualified traffic and increase your online sales.

In addition, this content is also quite **useful to gain your customers' loyalty** (if you answer their questions in addition to selling them products, they will continue to buy from you in the future), **and it can help you become a leading online pharmacy.**

## D. **Social Network**

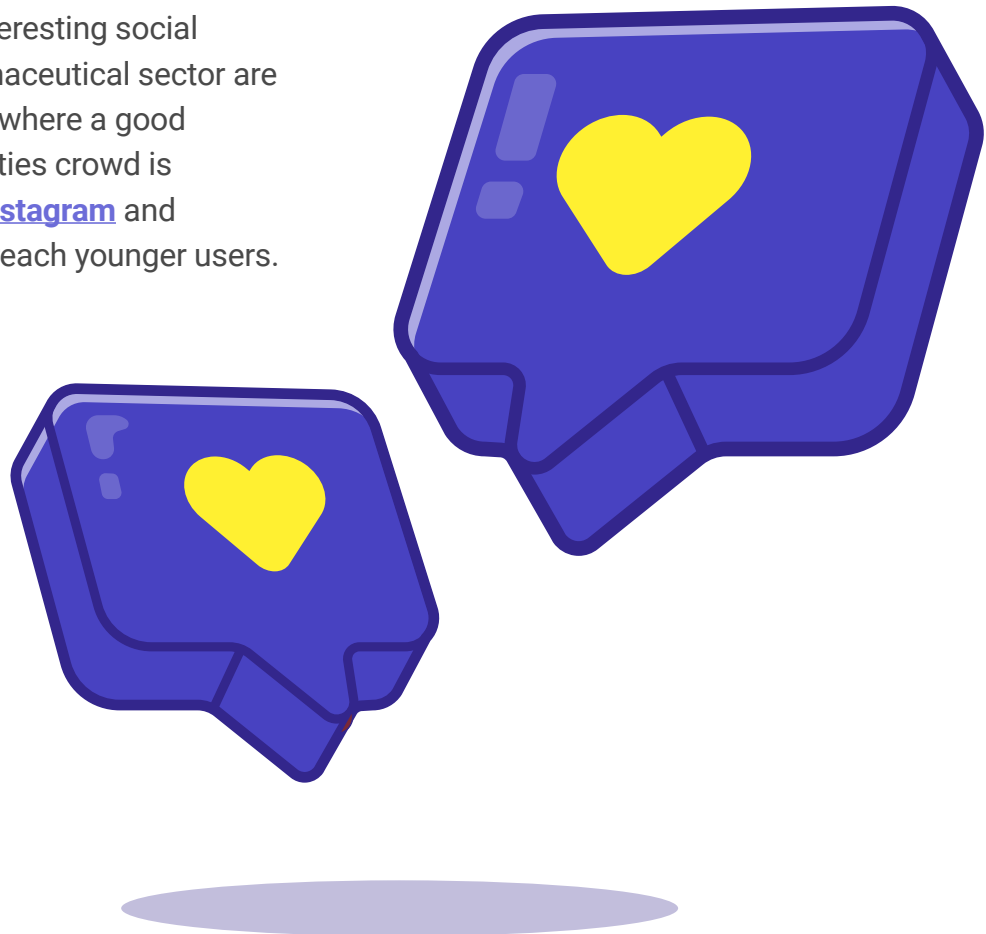
The social networks allow you to interact more directly with your followers and create a stronger connection with them.

That's why they are a **very powerful tool to create a community of loyal users around your brand** (in addition to being useful to get potential customers).

But for your social networks strategy to work, you should be clear on the following:

- **The networks that are of the most interest for you to be on:** those that your ideal customers usually use.
- **The aims you are seeking:** you may be looking to create a community or get your followers to comment on your product to have **more social proof**, etc.
- **The type of content that you will launch:** depending on your goals. Remember that **entertaining and educational content should be first and foremost** (although you can also create some **content geared towards sales**).

In general, the most interesting social networks for the pharmaceutical sector are **Facebook** and Twitter (where a good number of the over-thirties crowd is present). In contrast, **Instagram** and **YouTube** will help you reach younger users.



# E. **Email Marketing**

A user gets to your site in search of a vitamin supplement.

He spends a while reading different product pages to see what brand is best for him... and then he leaves because he still is thinking about whether he really needs to take vitamins or not.

And when he does make his decision, **who is to say that he will find your site again and not that of a competitor?**

This is a common problem for all e-commerce sites (especially when you sell high ticket items that the customer can [take a while to decide whether to buy or not](#)).

And a way to solve that problem is to get the user to [subscribe to your email list](#).

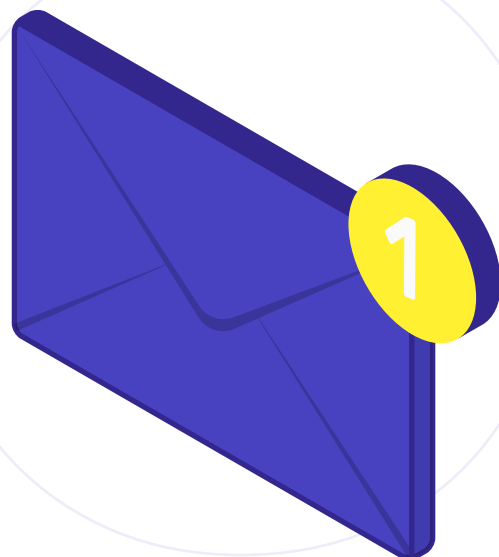
This will allow you to keep in touch with him, create a relationship based on trust, and ensure that he buys from you.

For an email list, you need:

- **A “hook” to bring the user to subscribe:** what we know as a [lead magnet](#). Free content (for example, an ebook) that can be downloaded in exchange for subscribing.
- **A series of welcome emails:** because even though the user may have downloaded your lead magnet, he still doesn't know you. You need to gain his trust and take him to the sale. For example, an [autoresponder sequence](#) in which you introduce yourself, tell the user about yourself, and share some of your best posts.

If after subscribing you offer the user a discount, you may get him to buy from you at that very instant (many e-commerce sites also offer a discount as a lead magnet straight away).

And if the user is happy with his purchase, he will turn to you in the future when he needs something that you sell.



# 05. Take care of your customer experience

Even when the user has arrived at your website, there are no guarantees. We need him to find the product he wants, put it into his shopping cart, and go through with the purchase. When offering a [good customer experience](#), there are several factors that come into play.

## A. Start with the user experience

[The user experience](#) is the perception (whether positive or negative) that someone has about your e-commerce site after browsing it.

For example, if a user gets to your site but it loads very slowly, or if a user tries to enter into several product pages but finds a [404 error](#) (broken link), the experience will be negative and the user will end up leaving

**Thus, you'll have lost a possible sale (in addition to this being horrible for SEO).**

That's why it's so important for your e-commerce site to:

- [Load quickly.](#)
- Have a clear navigation menu to help the user to get around.
- Follow a logical category and subcategory order to guide the user towards the desired product.
- Include a search function that helps the user find products (we'll talk more about this point later on, as it is so important).
- Have a pleasant design (avoid flashy colors, fonts that are hard to read, etc.).
- For mobiles, eliminate popups and any other element that makes browsing less streamlined.

Remember that if the first impression a user has is a poor one, they probably won't end up buying anything.

## B. **Don't leave any questions unanswered**

There will always be times when your customer has questions and will need you to answer them. **You have to give your customers all the possible means to make it easy to get in touch with you.**

**This includes:**

- A chat function on the website (you can use a [chatbot](#) to attend users outside of business hours).
- Customer service channels on social networks.
- Customer service chats via [WhatsApp](#) and/or [Telegram](#).
- A contact number for telephone calls.

There is no difference when speaking about an online shop or a physical store: [customer service](#) is a key pillar of the experience.

## C. **Simple checkout = happy customers**

The time when customers are about to finalize their purchase is a critical moment.

Any little distraction or question could make them change their mind and leave the shop without making the purchase (in fact, **this is the phase when a lot of abandoned shopping carts** turn up on online shops).





## That's why you should [design a checkout](#) that is:

- **Flexible:** it should allow people to make purchases as a guest or with a social network account, offer [different payment gateways](#), etc.
- **Free of distractions:** it should avoid flashy colors and any other element like popups that could take away from the user's attention.
- **Solutions for last-minute queries:** if your customer has a question during the payment process, make sure that it can be answered in the moment. To accomplish this, you can add a chat, a contact telephone, and even a section on frequently asked questions.
- **Security:** your checkout should not only be secure but also appear secure so that users will enter their banking data without fear. In addition to having the SSL protocol activated for your website, you can include security-related icons (like a lock icon) near the purchase button to make it clear to the user that all data is protected.

**By doing all of this, the number of abandoned carts will go down** (although you'll always have some – and that's why later we'll see how to get those customers back).

## D. **Hire a good logistics company**

Everything has gone off without a hitch.

The customer has gotten to your site, they have liked what they saw, they've purchased a product... but when the package arrives and it is opened, it turns out that the product was damaged during shipping.

So, the customer takes a photo and uploads it to the social networks.

Now not only do you have an angry customer but also an image floating around on the social networks that will affect the reputation of your pharmacy.

That's why it's so important for you to work with a [quality shipping company](#).

To be sure, you can even have contracts with several shipping companies at the same time (this is quite important during critical times like sales). In this way, if one fails you, you can get by with the others.

# How to improve the customer's experience with a smart search engine

Did you know that [72% of internal search engines don't meet users' expectations](#)?

Common problems like **searches that don't yield results and slow load times** can bring about a bad user experience and make potential customers abandon your site.

And that's a serious problem because it is calculated that visits using an [internal search engine have 50% better chances of ending in a sale](#).

Of course this also works the other way around and those don't use a search have fewer chances of ending in a sale.

The fact of the matter is that a good search experience can improve your sales. For example, **among customers who use the Doofinder smart search**, conversions grow around 20%

But, what is understood by the term "smart search?"

Let us explain that to you.

## A. **Artificial intelligence** for a personalized search experience.

A person (let's call her Susana) **was on your e-commerce site two days ago and searched for "anti-wrinkle face cream."**

She clicked on some product pages and was comparing products. In the end, she bought one of the creams.

Now Susana is back on your site, she goes to the search engine, and she writes "masks."

And just with that one word, **the first results that appear are beauty masks for the face.**

This is because the search engine remembered Susana, the products that she was looking at, and the ones she bought. So, it realized that when she wrote "masks," what she was interested in were beauty masks (and not medical face masks, for example).

Thus, in less than a minute Susana was able to find the product she wanted, put it in her cart, and pay for it.

## B. It foresees what the user wants

After writing a couple letters, a smart search already starts to show autofill suggestions.

In addition, it includes product images so that users can find what they're interested in quickly.

Thus, there is no risk of users getting lost amongst categories and ending up leaving without making a purchase. **In just a couple clicks and without even having left the homepage, the user has the product they want in their cart.**



### Did you know that...?

With Doofinder, it is easy to know that the most searched for products in the e-pharmacy sector right now are:

1. Masks
2. Moisturizing creams
3. Anti-aging creams, products for the eyes
4. Vitamins
5. Oximeters
6. Paracetamol
7. Dietary supplements
8. Magnesium
9. Lactic ferments
10. Ecological foods for babies

This will help you to decide what new products to include in your catalog and what products should be promoted.



## C. **It speaks your customers' language (and forgives them for spelling mistakes)**

Because everyone can have a memory lapse.

For example, maybe a user wanted to buy contacts but instead of writing that they wrote "vontacts."

**A basic search engine would be unable to understand what the user is talking about** and it would tell them that there are no related products; however, a search engine with artificial intelligence would show the user contact lens product pages without delay.

And what if instead of writing "contacts" the user writes "contact lenses?"

There is also no problem, as the search engine understands the two terms as synonyms.

## D. **It tells you about the sales you are losing**

A smart search engine like Doofinder keeps a **log of all the searches done by your users... including those which yield no results.**

Imagine, for example, that each day there are two or three people who search for "eyeglass cleaning wipes" on your site but you don't sell that product.

It would be a good idea to include those wipes in your product catalog, wouldn't it?

And you would end up expanding your catalog knowing that the product is going to sell. Could it get any easier than that? ;)

## E. **If an item is out of stock, it brings you alternatives**

A customer arrives at your online shop searching for baby food by Nestlé, but it turns out that you happen to be out of stock for that brand.

What does a smart search engine do?

**It suggests other babies food brands that are in stock.**

And, thus, that customer doesn't leave without making a purchase.

## F. **Searchandising:** it promotes your special offers in the search results.

Imagine that you just happen to have a special sale on bibs and other baby accessories.

Don't you think that customer who was looking for baby food could be interested in knowing that?

As the internal search engine knows that this could be so, **it will show the customer the promotion inside the search results... and your conversion rate will go up.**

And that is only one of the ways that a smart search engine will help you to increase your sales.

What's more, a search engine like Doofinder prioritizes products in the results that you are more interested in selling (because they have a higher margin, for example).

# 06. **Increase your invoice value**

One of the main challenges for an online pharmacy.

The majority of pharmaceutical products have a pretty low price; **therefore, getting stable income and a high average ticket is complicated.**

The strategy is to increase the value of the products in the customer's shopping cart and to seek customer loyalty.

## A. **Increase your catalog**

There is life beyond over the counter medicines.

**Drugstore products can be an interesting option** to increase the average total amount of shopping carts and boost your monthly income.

For example, many pharmacies sell cosmetics or orthopedic items.

## B. **Use cross selling**

Another way to increase your average sale total is to suggest related products. There are several ways to do that:

- [Cross selling \(complementary products\) and up selling \(a similar product that costs more\).](#)
- [Bundles or product packs.](#)

These suggestions are usually shown during the checkout process or even in an email after the sale.

# C. **Lower the shopping cart abandonment rate**

Abandoned shopping carts are a great problem for e-commerce sites.

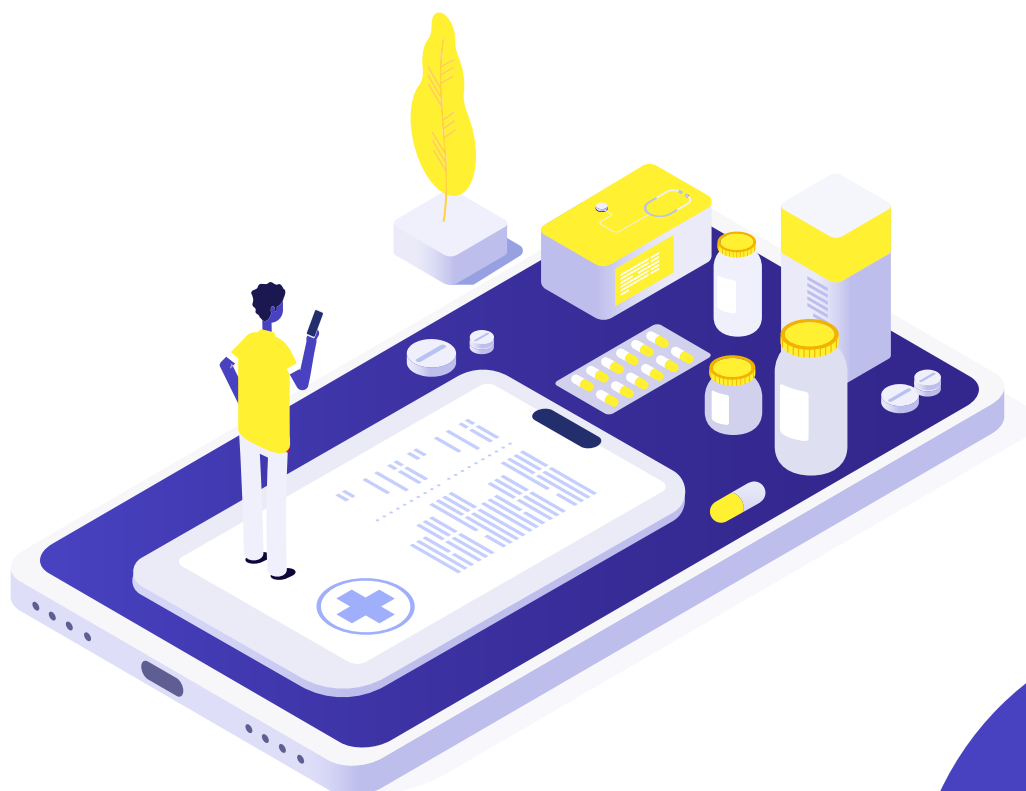
On average, [it is calculated that up to 7 of every 10 people abandon the purchase process halfway through.](#)

**This means that just by reducing that figure you can increase the conversion of your online shop and your income** (without having to invest in securing more traffic).

There are several strategies for this:

- [Send a reminder email.](#)
- [Activate push notifications.](#)
- Make shipping costs clear from the very start (don't wait for the customer to get to the last step of the checkout process to say how much shipping will cost).
- [Use remarketing.](#)

If you add to this **the tips for simplifying the payment process that we gave to you before**, you'll get your shopping cart abandonment rate to plummet.



## D. **Make your customers loyal regulars**

According to calculations, gaining a customer's loyalty is 5 to 10 times cheaper than getting a new customer.

That's why one of your priorities should be retaining those users who have already bought something from your online pharmacy – and getting them to come back time and time again.

Some very effective methods are:

- Offering discounts to the most loyal customers (for example, to those who reach a certain purchase transaction volume).
- Coupons for special dates, like a customer's birthday.
- [Allow subscription-based purchases](#) for products that are consumed on an ongoing basis.
- Establish a [points program](#).
- Give a discount for bringing a new customer.

These techniques are useful, but remember that the best way to gain customers' loyalty is by offering them a quality shopping experience.



# 07. Measure and optimize

Because if you don't measure it, you can't improve it.

That's why analytics should be a given in your online strategy.

## Basic metrics to measure the health of your e-commerce site

There are many indicators that you can take into account, but these are the most important:

- **Conversion rate:** the percent of people who get to your e-pharmacy and end up becoming customers.
- **Average ticket price:** how much each customer spend son average for their purchases.
- **Shopping cart abandonment rate:** it is fundamental for you to identify where most abandonment happens in the purchase process.
- **CAC and CLV:** the CAC (customer acquisition cost) measures how much you have to invest to gain a single customer. The CLV (customer lifetime value) tells you for how long a customer continues to shop on your e-commerce site. The more customer loyalty there is, the greater the CLV will be and, therefore, the more you will recover the cost of your investment to get that customer.
- **Exit pages:** those URLs of your site where users normally close the page (a sign that there is a user experience problem).
- **Return on investment:** how profitable your marketing actions are turning out to be.

These are the general metrics, but keep in mind that depending on the age of your e-commerce site, you'll have to pay more or less attention to certain ones.

# What if you had a tool that...?



Takes care of your customers 24 hours a day and helps them to find the products they need



Offers them custom suggestions to increase their average ticket price



Improves the user experience on your website  
(and SEO positioning)



Takes care of promoting the products that you are most interested in promoting



Increases your invoicing



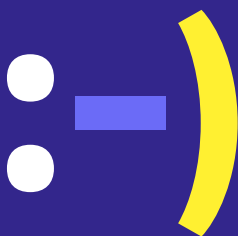
Gives you useful statistics to optimize your strategy

# DOOFINDER<sup>®</sup>

is the smart search engine  
that helps you to increase  
your sales by 20%

And it does that thanks to:

- **Smart search:** autofill function, synonym and typo management, search filters, etc.
- **Results personalization:** Doofinder's AI analyzes the behavior of each user to offer more relevant results.
- **Searchandising:** this shows the products you are most interested in selling first and makes your promotions make visible.
- **Mobile Search:** the mobile device layer adapts to any device. In addition, it allows for voice searches.
- **Real-time statistics:** so that you know what's happening on your e-commerce site and how to improve things.



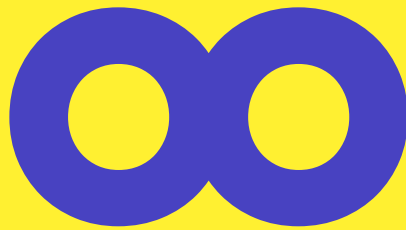
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