

2022 Whitepaper

Expert Strategies to Boost Checkout Conversion



A brief introduction

Are you losing too many sales at the checkout?

If so, you're not alone. The average cart abandonment rate in 2021 was 87.4%. That's nine out of every ten customers deciding against a purchase at the last moment, so what is going on here?

The bottom line is, while retailers invest a great deal of time and money in optimising the customer journey, the checkout needs a level of specialist attention that is all too often overlooked – or worse, made impossible by inflexible, templated checkouts.

This is no secret for business leaders and marketing teams, who know that checkout pages outstrip all other pages when it comes to abandonment rates – getting the checkout experience right is crucial to driving sales, but what are the right strategies for checkout optimisation?

As an eCommerce platform provider that retailers rely on for extensive developer and optimisation skills, Remarkable Commerce has been tweaking and tailoring checkout journeys for 23 years. Our clients enjoy true agility, including the flexibility to curate bespoke checkout journeys shaped by tailored checkout strategies.

This guide draws on our work with those clients. We've hand-picked the checkout strategies and optimisations that are proven in the wild – read on to find out how they could help you reduce checkout abandonment rates and deliver more sales.

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Platform comparison

Before we go any further, it is very important to recognise that your ecommerce platform may be the single most important limiting factor when it comes to optimising the checkout experience.

If your platform forces you to rely on a templated, inflexible checkout, or requires expensive, time-consuming developer expertise to customise your checkout, some of the strategies here may be out of reach.

While platforms are waking up to the impact rigid and complex checkout flows can have on conversion, problems remain – few offer the endless flexibility required to deal effectively with basket abandonment rates. We can easily demonstrate that with a side-by-side review of the native checkout functions that retailers often compare.

	 shopifyplus	 BIGCOMMERCE	 Magento Commerce	 Remarkable COMMERCE
Add new payment types within days	✗	✗	✗	✓
Custom journey (headless, SDK or custom flow)	✗	✓	✗	✓
Innovate with new functionality within days	✗	✗	✗	✓
Custom Click & collect functionality	✗	✗	✓	✓
Shared basket across multiple sites	✗	✗	✗	✓
Custom checkout fields	✗	✓	✓	✓
Auto-add items based on basket contents	✗	✗	✓	✓
Transaction fee or GMV (either % of sales, or tiered license)	✓	✓	✓	✗

It is clear that headless platforms, like the Remarkable Commerce Platform, offer more agile, feature rich and cost-effective solutions – and, by extension, greater scope to create tailored, high-converting checkout experiences.

Setting the scene...

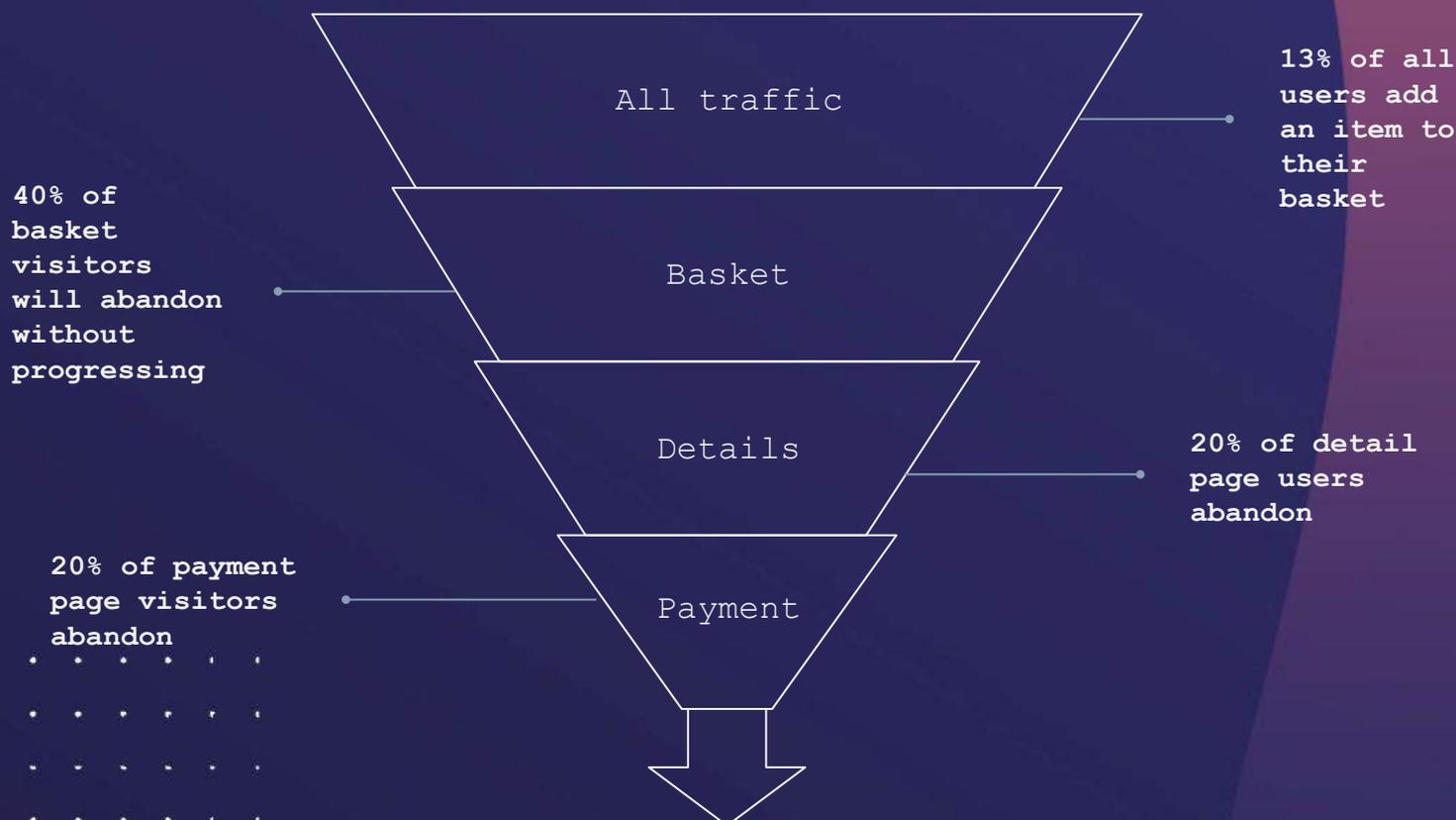
It all starts at the top!

It all starts at the top. Encouraging more customers to add to basket will naturally deliver higher checkout volumes, so the best place to start when looking at boosting your checkout conversion rate, is here, at the top of the purchase funnel.

On average, 87.4% of all website users will visit a website without adding any products to their basket. This rate will fluctuate daily and can be higher or lower for many reasons - for example, the quality and relevancy of your traffic, the price point of your product or even a technical issue which prevents them from progressing.

A largely misunderstood (and often forgotten) part is, even if a consumer adds an item to their basket, there are many different reasons why they abandon.

Taking the collective data from our platform clients, and adjusting to include industry benchmarks, the average abandonment rates for a standard checkout flow is shown below.



Boost ATB behaviour

Add-to-basket rate is a pivotal indicator of your ability to efficiently monetise your website. But are you doing everything you can to optimise your add-to-basket (ATB) rate? When a visitor adds items to the basket (or cart), they are revealing a high level of buying intent. As such it is a critical step in the purchase process and is something that you should try to optimise.

If we put the product / pricing / people challenges to one side, we can focus on some important on-site areas to address – and the following five tactics have proven highly effective in improving add-to basket rates among our clients:

1

Sticky ATB button

Keeping your main CTA (call-to-action) button on the customer's screen at all times can serve as a constant reminder of the action you are encouraging them towards. When the user scrolls past the button, add a sticky area to the bottom of the page which remains on screen

2

Use urgency messaging

Overlay messages which display performance stats such as "This item is in 25 people's baskets" or "This item was viewed 130 times in the last 24 hours" to create a sense of urgency in the customer. But do so sparingly, as overuse of this tactic can be off-putting for customers. Low-stock and sale items are a good place to start, as well as high-margin products.

3

Encourage User Generated Content (UGC)

UGC includes ratings and reviews, as well as visual content like photos and videos posted online or submitted to your website by customers, fans, and visitors. In a study of five main eCommerce industries, conversion rates increased by an average of 161% when shoppers saw or interacted with UGC on their paths to purchase.

4

Add micro-copy to promote value

Tweaking the small stuff, like the tiny bit of copy next to the credit card field or the wording of a specific link could transform your hesitant visitors into confident leads & buyers. Promoting the value of your unique selling points will give your customers confidence you are a reputable retailer and have been already trusted by many other customers.

5

Display at least three product images

This tactic is a relatively obvious point, yet has a bigger impact than you might think. Incorporating colourful, high resolution & appealing images and placing them on a neutral background will help users visualise the products - ideally, an additional lifestyle image will help convey how a product would look when worn or used.

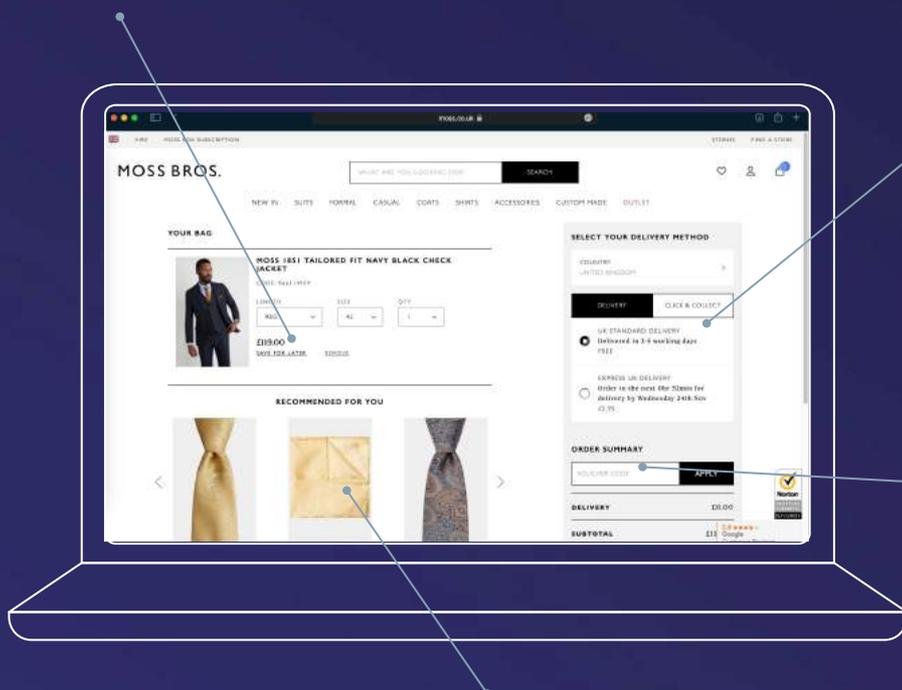


Basket optimisations

On the basket page, the key is to keep things as simple as possible. Summarise what the user has added to cart and provide an obvious next step (as well as clear options around making changes to the order).

Only include custom fields that are absolutely necessary, since these often add friction to the customer journey. Remove unnecessary clutter and make the call to actions on the page obvious and clear. Here are optimisations which we recommend actioning on your basket template:

Allow line items to be saved for later or moved to wishlist



Ensure all delivery options are shown, with country selection if you ship internationally

Do not hide your voucher code entry field

Show relevant products to boost up-selling, with items of a lower value than the products within the basket

Show a count of the number of items within the basket, to help the user remain conscious of their behaviour

Allow for item sizes/variations to be changed at basket and save the customer from travelling back to the PDP

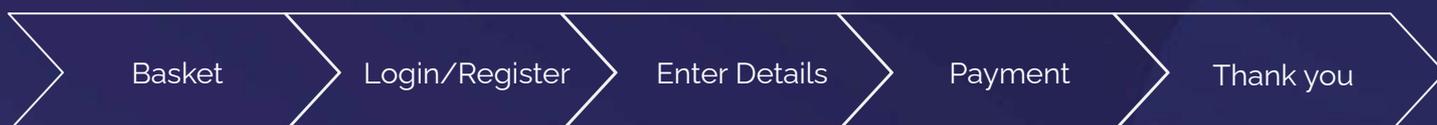


One-page vs Multi-page vs One-click

Customers want a simple, clear and easy checkout experience. A long and complicated checkout hampers the shopping experience and commonly results in heightened cart abandonment.

For a convenient checkout process, retailers are shifting towards one-page checkout, leaving the traditional multi-step checkout flow behind. The debate revolving around a One-page checkout vs multi-page checkout is never-ending but there is now a new kid on the block - the one-click checkout. Read on to understand the differences.

Multi-page...



One-page...



One-click...

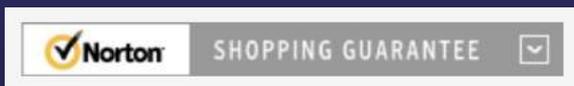


	One-page Checkout	Multi-page Checkout
 Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid checkout completion • Ability to review basket contents at all times. • Good for repeat/returning customers as the journey is smoother than a multi-step if details are already known. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email collection is easier when a customer is invited to enter their email as a step. • Analytics is more comprehensive as tracking scripts do not conflict. • Multi-page checkouts are more secure as all information is not being collected on one page.
 Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single pager displaying multiple checkout fields can intimidate customers, though this can be avoided by grouping fields into panels. • Typically, slower to load, due to chunkier pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer experience can be poor, especially when the same details are requested multiple times. • It can be difficult to edit previously entered details like delivery address once a customer is on the final page.

UX top tips

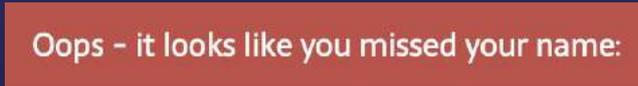
Customers want to feel confident and secure, trusting your checkout process before parting with payment details, so it is vital that your checkout works hard to allay fears, but is also easy to navigate and provides a low-friction user experience.

It takes just a second for a potential customer to abandon their cart and buy elsewhere, so here are some top tips for improving your checkout UX.



Give constant reassurance

Customers want to buy with confidence, so give them the reassurance they need. There are many trust/safe shopping guarantee solutions such as Norton, Trusted Site, Safer Shopping, and ClearSale.



Avoid negative language

Words like 'error, broken, failed, problem, invalid, wrong, prohibited' discourage your customers from completing their purchases and erode trust. Replace basic error messages with friendly, instructional messages to guide and inspire confidence.

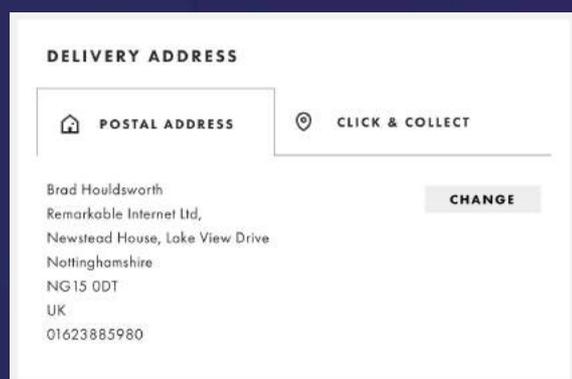
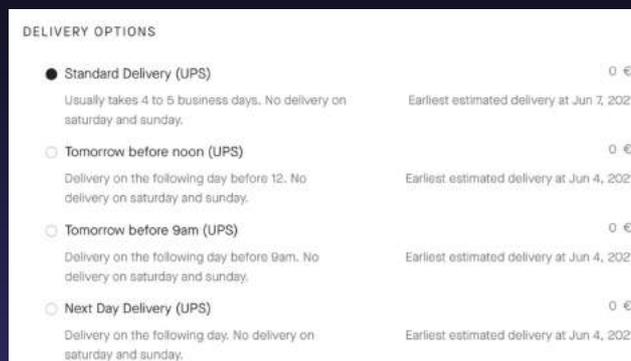


Display progress breadcrumb throughout the checkout process

A breadcrumb can help show the customer where they are in the checkout flow and what's next – and can really simplify the overall experience, for instance by enabling customers to easily navigate back to previous steps in the process.

Display dynamic delivery dates

Remove another purchase barrier by offering real clarity around delivery – for instance by displaying an exact date they can expect their order to be delivered, instead of just a generic “4 day delivery”.

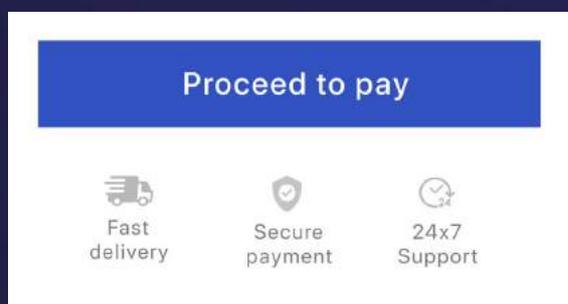


Allow direct edit at the review step

80% of stores do not have functionality allowing customers to update their information on the review/final stage of the checkout journey. Instead they force customers to start again – a frustrating experience is among the top reasons for basket abandonment.

Use the correct type of mobile input interface

81% of worldwide checkouts do not use the correct mobile input interface - so consumers are focused to select numbers from their full-size keyboard interface instead.



Add supportive messages around key CTAs

Payment and delivery support seals should be placed below the order summary, to reassure customers with security concerns.

Field validation

Un-optimised fields in your checkout create unnecessary friction which your customers will find difficult to use and engage with – particularly those preferring to enter details manually, rather than use autofill.

Here are several tactics that can improve the validation of checkout fields, with the aim of reducing page abandonment.

1

In-line validation

As a customer begins to enter their details into a field, style the entry field with a different colour border and micro-message to support them in completing the form correctly. This is best used on fields like a password field, or a phone number field.

2

Do not be picky

Exactly how, for instance, a postcode is entered into a form – whether 'NG15 0DT' or 'NG150DT' – means very little to a customer, so being inflexible about format can again add friction. If you really need a specific format to suit your backend systems, create logic which does this automatically in the background.

3

Use 'Did you mean?' as much as possible

Spelling mistakes happen to the best of us and a retailer can often run into issues with taking payment or delivering an item, if details are entered incorrectly. Use 'did you mean' functionality to help the user correct their mistakes, this is best used on address finders and email address fields.

4

Luhn validation

Luhn validation checks to see if a payment card number entered by a user is plausible. All credit card numbers follow a pattern that will allow a simple Luhn/Modulus 10 checksum validation. Note that the check doesn't submit and verify the card data with the payment processor – it merely checks the form input.

5

Avoid in-field labels

Labels inside form fields can look like pre-filled answers – and, particularly in common fields that users are familiar with, interrupts the checkout flow. If the labels disappears as soon as the field receives focus, then screen readers can't read the label.

Tracking strategies

Other than measuring website checkout rate and overall conversion rate, many retailers are blind to how well their website is actually performing and where it can be improved. This is why tracking is incredibly important and can help shine a light on the areas that are ripe for optimisation.

Below is a selection of suggestions from industry experts - sharing their insight on checkout tracking strategies.

James Gurd 🧑‍💻 Replatforming & Other Stuff
@JamesGurd

A report that tracks sessions that interact with the discount code field and then exit checkout is quite useful. You can then look at basket size and traffic sources for more insights.

#EcomChat

Set up a script in your Tag Management solution which tracks each time a discount code field is engaged with and the code that is entered - report this data alongside a count of users completing the checkout after using the field.

David Rekuc
@DaveRekuc

GA Event tags on any error message shown in checkout. Some of the best custom tagging you can do in checkout.

Unique events - how many "errored" sessions exist in checkout

Event segment vs non-event segment shows impact of errors.

Total events / unique shows repeat rate.

Many customers experience error messages when completing the checkout, but just how many? And what is the most common message being shown?

Set up event tags that record the message being displayed, the page it is being shown on and the reason it is showing.

Dipesh Shah
@mrdipeshashah

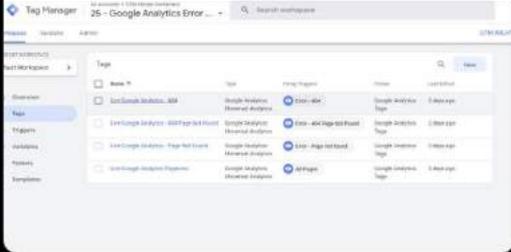
The silent assassin of KPI's. GTM container for error page tracking

#EcomChat #Analytics #gtmrecipecontainers #gtmtips

GTM Recipe Containers @gtmcontainers · 9 Aug
25 #GoogleTagManager container based on Google Analytics error page tracking. It's primary built on 2 variables - JS picking up the page title and CJ picking up the H1

github.com/mrdipeshashah/...

#EcomChat #Analytics #gtmrecipecontainers #gtmtips
Show this thread



Variable	Tag	Trigger	Event	Version	Last Modified
Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	GA	1	2023-08-09 10:00
Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	GA	1	2023-08-09 10:00
Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	GA	1	2023-08-09 10:00
Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	GA	1	2023-08-09 10:00
Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	Google Analytics: GA	GA	1	2023-08-09 10:00

If you use Google Tag Manager, you can use this free resource for installing container templates that include many pre-configured tags and triggers.



Conclusion

The best practices detailed here offer a great starting point, but it is important to accept that optimising your checkout is an ongoing process of experimentation, testing and measurement - aiming to deliver repeated, incremental gains in term of checkout conversion.

Even for the most sophisticated retailers, this is a job that is never finished, and which is not always about obvious answers. A/B and multi-variant testing can help you to uncover optimisations that deliver transformative improvements, but which you might not have even considered at the outset.

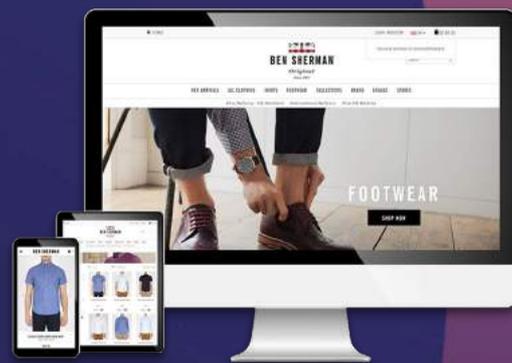
However, to do this you need a platform offering real flexibility in the every aspect of the checkout experience - so, if your current platform is too rigid or offers too little scope to customise the checkout, it might be time to consider replatforming.

Introducing Remarkable Commerce

Innovations including high-converting, optimised checkouts, are now in easy reach for ambitious mid-size retailers. You can draw on the power of a cloud-based, headless+ commerce platform built for digital retail, to make your vision a reality.

Trusted by leading retailers and paired with an accelerated, low risk re-platforming process, the Remarkable Commerce Platform is an endlessly customisable, high performance eCommerce platform that makes it easy to put unique digital solutions and services at the heart of the retail customer experience.

Find out how we could help fast-track your digital commerce innovation and growth strategy. Visit remarkable.net to explore our business, platform and services in detail or call us on 0800 885980 to find out how we can help deliver your digital vision, fast.



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