

Facebook transitioning online businesses



Taking the cyber-business world by storm, Facebook is making major progress in the world of e-commerce. Behind such leaps lie online pages on the social media giant, aiming to sell their unique merchandise and capture a proportion of customers with their original business ideas.

And at the root of it all stands an ambitious and aspiring entrepreneur who is given the liberty to call all the shots and a customer addicted to online shopping.



But let's back up a little. How do you even start your journey as a young aspiring entrepreneur? Well, for starters, you would need a lightning bolt of inspiration and a day-dream.

A will to commit and a fierce spark within you will drive you to success if you decide to set up an online business via Facebook. But more realistically, an assertive friend pushing you to tap into that immense potential encased within would work just as well.

As far as following guidebooks goes the owner and designer of the successful online retail store, The Sassy St., Farheen Afsana laughs off. "I didn't follow any. I started designing clothes for myself and then I started doing it for people," she further adds.

Humairah Shams over at Musings of a Wildflower and Made With Love, two artistic pages offering skilfully mastered arts-and-crafts goodies shines light on how to really establish an online store. She advises, "Just take the first leap."

To put it more practically, however, a beginner's guide would be to exploit a

enthusiastic smile at such events. Send out e-vites to all your friends on Facebook, request them to share the page on their personal profiles and groups and you will have spread the word of mouth. Make sure to write to fashion and lifestyle magazines requesting store reviews.

If you can, create exclusive events promoting the first day of operation. Frequent updates and inviting online friends to raise popularity are ultimately key here.

Opening an online store does not mean basking in the immediate success and glory. Profits take time. And overcoming obstacles standing in your way. Lack of storage space and finding reliable employees are difficult.

Other problems are trusting dealers for authentic supplies, and seeing the basic rule of economics for start-ups to keep prices low to attract consumers backfire. Although its economics 101, low prices mean low profits and low reinvestments which lead to low stocks. Conversely, bulk production may lead to unsold inventory, especially in the first month of operation.

tip the scales in your favour.

However, if you are an avid online shopper, your work is rather easy. An array of online services and innumerable ventures awaits you and your sole labour is to sit back and place an order.

Availing online services is fairly simple. Inbox a page whose offers are too good to pass up on and a reply would get back to you asking for confirmation.

If custom-designed arts and crafts artefacts intrigue you, Humairah Shams of Musings of a Wildflower has got your back. Combining the spectacular art of calligraphy and scribbled quotes on desired goods, all she aims for is a pop of inspiration and colours to brighten up your day. You can even check out non-customised arts and crafts goodies at her second venture, Made with Love.

If you are interested in ordering desserts for special celebrations at home, Cake Corner with its online catering service is your rescuer. With a pickup point, say at Dhanmondi, advanced orders have to be placed, that is, after a decadent dessert has been finalised from a host of options discussed on messenger.

Similarly with entrepreneurs specialising in makeup and cosmetics, advanced bookings and a prior discussion of the final look has to be made for a glamorous makeover. As for retail clothing, Farheen Afsana of The Sassy St. along with other such ventures, takes a delivery time of 7-8 days to present their original designs stitched to perfection to suit your personal preferences, making you stand out in the crowd.

But online shopping goes well beyond basking in the joy of a new good delivered. While cash on delivery and ordering products sitting at home are definite luxuries, you are not able to see and judge the actual goods in person.

All that glitters is not gold and expectation in Facebook pictures versus reality is not a comparison to look forward to. Putting up with incessant ringing of the phone when delivery has almost arrived but you are at a meeting and insolent deliverymen are not very pleasant. Moreover, it is hard to come by a savvy deliveryman with a proper understanding of navigation and the streets of Dhaka.

Whether you are a naive seller aspiring for the greatest heights in the world of online entrepreneurship or an addicted buyer who fails to escape the rush of an online order confirmation; the universe of ecommerce strives with its primary wings. Online trade is on a fast-paced rise and there seems to be no stop to it. Not anytime soon anyway.

By Ramisa Haque

Photo: Collected

Log onto-

The Sassy St. www.facebook.com/TheSassySt

Musings of a Wildflower. www.facebook.com/MusingsofaWildflower

Made with Love.

www.facebook.com/MadewithLoveBD

Cake Corner.

www.facebook.com/CakeCornerBD



hobby you excel at. For Humairah Shams, it was her love for calligraphy that prompted her to start an arts and crafts store.

Next, pick out a suitable name for your page and pay attention to details such as graphics and the page description. Take note from Farheen Afsana who is always sure to use attention-grabbing graphics. But most importantly, as both these young entrepreneurs advise, stay true to yourself.

Second, be sure to launch your online store with maximum exposure. Align the launch with seasonal events like 'meet-ups' hosted at studios. Hand out a card with an

How can you find the right balance in this scale? Trial and error; that's your answer.

Humairah Shams has converted her own bedroom into a store-room for incoming inventory while Farheen Afsana overcame some rocky patches to finally find the delivery team she can trust with profits. As for leftover inventory, a sweet perk of owning your very own business is you can always claim unsold stock for yourself.

Online ventures are in constant need of promotion. Adopt strategies that set your page apart from the millions out there. Exclusive groups for regular members, special discounts and giveaways or affiliations with sponsorship campaigns on Facebook will indefinitely attract digital traffic. Exposures at exhibitions, galleries or something as simple as packaging a handwritten note to the consumers will always