

# HOW TO AVOID THE DREADED CART ABANDONMENT

8 REASONS YOUR CUSTOMERS ARE  
ABANDONING THEIR PURCHASES – AND  
WHAT YOU CAN DO





In shopping malls and city centers, abandoned shopping carts are an eyesore. But in the world of e-commerce, they're an expensive headache...

We're sure you've experienced the frustration. Your marketing and social media presence have done their job in attracting customers to your online store. They browse for a while, add a product – or maybe several if you're lucky – into their carts and then...abandon their purchases suddenly.

According to research by the Baymard Institute<sup>1</sup>, the average cart abandonment rate for e-commerce is 70.19%. We don't need to tell you that's a huge number. It means that over 7 out of 10 sales opportunities are being lost – think of the impact that has on your profits.

The good news is that many of the website frictions which cause customers to abandon their shopping carts are fixable – you just need to know exactly what they are and then invest to reduce them. Thankfully, we at DHL know a thing or two about e-commerce and have rounded up the 8 most common reasons for online cart abandonment, along with the steps you can take to fix them. Read on...

# 8

## REASONS CUSTOMERS WILL QUIT YOUR ONLINE STORE – AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

# 1 HIGH SHIPPING CHARGES

According to the Baymard Institute<sup>2</sup>, high “extra costs” – including shipping, tax and fees – is the number one reason (US) online shoppers abandon their carts during the checkout process. If shoppers see a shipping charge that’s almost as much as the cost of the product itself, they’ll look elsewhere.

Perhaps Amazon Prime has spoiled people into thinking that shipping should always be free, but the reality is only companies with huge economies of scale can offer this comfortably.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Look at where you can absorb the cost of free shipping elsewhere in your business, such as raising the prices of your products. Alternatively, you could offer customers free shipping for orders over a certain value, which has the bonus of incentivizing them to spend more.

These options might not always be possible – for example, if you’re shipping overseas – but it’s still worth weighing up whether the costs to your business are worth it for the extra sales generated. Why not trial free shipping for a limited time and find out?



## 2 HIDDEN CHARGES

The crucial word here is “hidden”. Shoppers don’t like to be sprung with surprise extra charges at checkout – whether that’s taxes, handling fees or something else. Suddenly

they feel cheated, and that good-value-for-money product in their cart now seems less so. Many will simply abandon their carts altogether, and never return to your store.



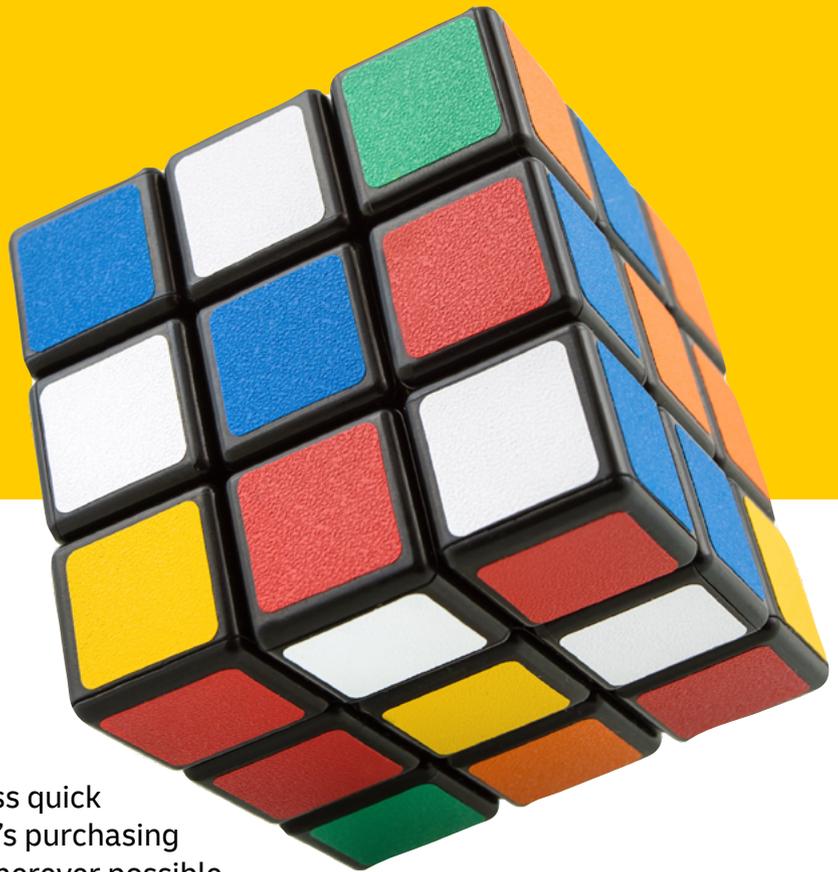
## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Be transparent and upfront about additional fees all the way through the customer’s purchasing journey. Always display the full price and use reassuring copy like “this is the total amount you’ll pay”.

# 3 A COMPLICATED CHECKOUT PROCESS

Too many information fields, check boxes, pop-ups and “are you sure?” messages are sure to dissuade all but the most determined shoppers. The problem becomes even more

pronounced on mobile, where a smaller screen makes the above frictions even more annoying.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

The key is to keep the checkout process quick and simple. So, take a look at your site’s purchasing journey and streamline the process wherever possible. Get rid of clutter and unnecessary pages; ensure navigation is clear and intuitive; add a progress indicator bar so customers can see where they are in the buying process; offer autofill and the option to save details for future purchases. Perhaps most importantly, ensure your site is [optimized for mobile](#).

# 4 HAVING TO REGISTER

Following on from point number 3 is another feature which lengthens the checkout process: requiring customers to register for an account. We all know the feeling of visiting an online store and choosing products (the exciting bit), but then being faced with a long page of registration details

to fill in to complete the purchase. It's no surprise that the Statista research found nearly a quarter of shoppers have abandoned their carts after being asked to create an account. The problem for e-commerce businesses is the attractive lure of obtaining that valuable customer data...

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Data capture is an important part of e-commerce, but it's a question of timing. Your priority is to make the sale; other stuff can come later. One way to achieve this is to offer 'Guest Checkout', allowing customers to check out with basic details like name and address. When they're done, you can ask them to share a few extra details to create an account. They might still decline, but at least you've already made the sale.

If you need any more proof of how phraseology can affect behavior, [this example](#) tells how one online brand renamed the 'Register' button as 'Continue' and brought in an extra US\$300 million in revenue.





# 5 DELIVERY TOO SLOW

Consumers have come to expect speedy delivery. First there was next-day delivery, then same-day, and now a wave of inner-city start-ups have sprung up promising customers their groceries

delivered in as little as 30 minutes. A whopping 23% of online consumers will abandon their orders due to slow shipping<sup>3</sup>, so it's a crucial aspect you should be paying attention to.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Partner with a leading express logistics expert – like DHL – to guarantee your customers get their orders quickly and on time. They'll even have the option to track their shipments. As fast delivery is such a sales incentive to customers, be sure to flag that you offer it on your site's homepage.



# 6 LACK OF PAYMENT OPTIONS

According to a PYMNTS report<sup>4</sup>, 70% of consumers consider the availability of their preferred payment method to be very or extremely influential when choosing an online store. You may already be offering the well-known services – credit card,

PayPal, Apple Pay – but how about the new payment trends such as “buy now, pay later” or payment via WhatsApp? There’s a lot to keep up with – and that’s before you consider how preferences differ per country.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Firstly, remember that the more options you offer, the better. Secondly, check out [DHL's exclusive guide to the new ways to pay](#), where we'll talk you through the different

payment methods you should be considering for your e-commerce checkout, and the benefits of each one.

# 7 SECURITY CONCERNS

If there's no trust, there's no trade. Cybercrime is a big concern for online shoppers, so coming across an e-commerce website with questionable security features

or which asks for too much personal information can deter them from completing the sale.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Get an SSL certificate for your website – this shows your domain is legitimate and running a secure, encrypted connection. It will also help protect important customer details like login credentials and payment information.

People tend to trust their peers more than brands so including customer testimonials on your website (or linking to a third-party review platform such as Trustpilot) is a

must. Make sure you respond politely to reviews, good or bad, to help build trust.

Provide clear contact details on your site. There's no need to include your address, especially if you're working out of a garage, but names, faces and a customer service email address all help.



# 8 CUSTOMERS COMPARING YOUR PRODUCTS WITH OTHER BRANDS'

It's no secret that e-commerce is fiercely competitive. No matter how great your product is, you're still in competition with countless other brands selling something similar. Customers will often browse several

brands' websites at the same time, and if one of them is cheaper than you or has an extra incentive such as free shipping, you can say goodbye to the sale.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

It's time to jump online and do some serious research into your competitors. Our free [Competitor Analysis template](#) will guide you through the things you should be looking for, including their price points, social media

presence, strengths, weaknesses and so on. This will help you learn best practices to market and sell more effectively, and identify gaps in the market which you can pivot your business to meet.



# I'M READY TO START MY E-COMMERCE JOURNEY. WHAT NEXT?

As experts in international shipping, we can help you grow your business – [click here](#) to get started with a DHL Express Account.

And, for some extra insights, don't forget to check out our [22 Golden Rules of E-commerce Success](#).

Happy selling!



## REFERENCES

1 & 2 - [Baymard Institute, 2025](#)

3 - [Digital Commerce 360, 2024](#)

4 - [PYMNTS, 2024](#)