

18 WooCommerce Plugins

Today's to-do list

Today we are going to look at some of the optional extras you can add to your site to add extra functionality. We are also going to look at some of the essentials for creating a good online shop.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this session, you will

- Identify additional plugins to add value
- Know how to install and set up WooCommerce
- Understand what pages and policies should be on our site

Features and essentials

We are going to start by looking at some important elements and useful features that you should include in your online shop. These are things to help you increase your sales, sell in multiple places and some key essentials for anyone selling anything online.

Let's start with Abandoned Carts.

A really useful little feature for two reasons. Firstly, it helps you recover abandoned baskets by sending a link to the customer an hour/day/week (it's up to you how long you leave it) with a link to go back and recover their basket. There are lots of reasons people abandon a cart and don't checkout. Maybe it's a price thing, maybe they are out and left their wallet at home, bad signal, or their phone rings. Whatever it is, having the ability to go back and retrieve that basket without having to trawl through the site and add everything again is very useful.

Some companies offer discounts to complete the purchase as a sweetener, other people offer free postage. It's not essential to offer any discounts but it can be enough to change someone's mind about a purchase and encourage them to finish the sale.

The other useful thing about abandoned cart is **it allows you to see what products people are buying and abandoning**. You will get a full list of the products in the basket and can build up a trend for why the carts break down. If it's someone that buys from you a lot then a quick phone call or email to check if there's a problem might be a way to resolve it. If you notice the same products over and over again then it might be that there's an issue with that particular product. Mosney Mill had exactly that. She launched her seed cards and expected them to fly out of the door. The sales were underwhelming. We noticed that cards were selling as part of a larger order but not as single items as we had expected. When we started to look at the abandoned cart stats we could see dozens of orders that had been started and not completed all with the same thing. A single or pair of seeds cards at £3 each. The problem was that the postage was £3.95. People were dropping out at checkout because the postage was clocking up more than the product and was putting people off. A bit of a rework on the prices for the seed cards and we included a lower postal charge to the cards, a 2nd class stamp for an A5 envelope and made them free postage. The cards were now £3.50 but with free postage. The sales we had originally expected to get started to

come through. Being able to see that data was as useful to us as being able to retrieve a basket for the customer.

Coupons and discounts

Everyone loves a discount; the key thing is to make it work for you too. You don't want to discount everything all the time, you just end up like DFS with their perpetual sales and that just gets annoying. **You need to use the discounts to encourage repeat spending, increase footfall in your shop and bring people back.** You get a lot of people doing a "sign up to our newsletter and get 10% off" It's a great idea but with a fundamental flaw. The problem is you just get people signing up, using the code on their first purchase and then unsubscribing. You've lost 10% and you never get to send them the newsletter. A better idea would be to send a discount code out after they have purchased. A confirmation email when their purchase has been dispatched, asks them to sign up for the newsletter and then offers them 10% off their next purchase...

Make it work for you, these are all things to increase sales and basket value. Return customers are gold, it's easier to sell to someone that's bought from you before than look for new customers.

In a similar vein, we have loyalty schemes. It's all about those repeat customers. We all have at least one loyalty card in our wallets I'm sure. Tesco Club Card, Boots Advantage Card, Macdonald's, Amazon Prime? Yes, Prime is a loyalty scheme, you pay for it, but it is a very clever loyalty scheme. That free, next-day delivery is a huge draw for return customers and almost guarantees Amazon will be the first place you try for a large chunk of your shopping.

There are multiple plugins to run loyalty schemes and you can configure them however you like. You can decide how much per point is worth and how they get to redeem them. Just bearing in mind you don't want them saving hundreds of points and redeeming them for a free £250 product. Yes, they have bought off you to get that many, but you don't want to be giving away £250 worth of product. Small discounts every time they check out are often a better idea. As a little gift back each time they spend, it will encourage them to come back without shopping around first and stop them from running up big discounts that can impact your bottom line. Every little helps as they say.

Wholesale and bulk products can be good options. There are different ways of going about it. You can have wholesale-only products, minimum orders and discounts available just for particular customers. The site would show your retail pricing with the wholesale options available to those with the appropriate login access using plugins like Wholesale Suite. You can use private password-protected areas can do the same kind of thing with particular customers only getting access to certain areas. They might have bulk buy products, professional grade or special discounts that you don't want your everyday retail customers to have access to.

Bundles and packs are always a good way to increase that cart value. Think about Amazon with its related products. "People that bought this also bought these" It might be a diary plus a calendar or it might be other books by the same author. Putting items together or cross-selling is a good way to encourage extra sales. Good old-fashioned chocolate bars at

the checkout at Asda or the petrol station. You stand in that cue, “I just take one of those too”. It's the same principle.

You can use the related items and cross-sell settings in your product listing to select the products you want to promote.

Bundling products together for a small discount has always been a popular and effective way of increasing spend. Upselling products - Buy 250 business cards for X or 500 for XX. Giving them just a little bit more adds perceived value for them and cart value for you.

Personalisation is a great premium price option. No matter what the product, if you can personalise it, you can demand a much higher price and all of a sudden, your product becomes unique. Even if it's as simple as getting a name embroidered on an apron or a babygro.

These extras and features are all ways to increase spending, encourage repeat customers and get people to check out. Now let's have a look at some of the essentials you need to have for a successful shop.

Navigation - making sure products are easy to find is essential. With WordPress, you can decide where you want everything and how you navigate the site. You can signpost people off to different areas of your site and create landing pages with more detail and information. Great for your SEO too.

People look for products in different ways. Some people will know exactly what they want and just want to get to it as quickly and as easily as possible. Others might want to browse. For the easiest-to-use site, you need to think about how people look for your products when they get on your site and how to make it as intuitive as possible for them. Think back to that Instagram session, shop the link in the bio. So they go to the bio, then they use the link, then it takes them to a page but they really want something else, then they get bored because they can't find what they want and go and get it off Amazon instead...

Think about where people are coming from, and where they need to land. Your homepage - and this is true for any website, not just a shop - should be a huge signpost. It should feature snippets of all your best bits and send people off to the right page. Your online shop should show specials, featured, best sellers, and new ranges. Show your categories and those things that you are promoting on your social media so when they land on your first page they can see where to go straight away.

Bamber's site has multiple navigation options, the normal menu and landing pages for each section where the categories are represented more visually. There's a bit of blurb about each bit and a link to each section. It's a great SEO tool for us as well.

Mosney Mill uses four different navigation options to find your way to the product, searching by product like china or textiles or by design collection. Popular categories link from the homepage and a traditional search function.

Shipping - It doesn't matter who you are, retailer or customer, everyone hates it. It's a hard fact that no one likes shipping. **No one likes charging it and no one likes paying for it. Sadly, it's an expensive essential. You have some options, free, standard rate, weight or cost-based.** Weight and cost-based are never ideal. Partly because you have to weigh every product and create multiple shipping classes. A flat rate is always a good option. A good average cost, you might win a couple and lose a couple, but as a general rule, you will break even. The ideal option is free shipping but that's not always practical. If you have a high-value item that you can easily hide £10 worth of delivery in then I would always recommend you do that. Nothing turns a customer off like paying for postage on a high-value item. If it's lower-value products then you need to come at it from a different angle. Try and use it as an upsell, free shipping over £x amount. It increases your cart value and offers customers a free shipping option. You can even your postage costs out over multiple products. You don't want to swallow the cost, you still need to be able to charge it. The idea here is not to lose money but to try and include it as best you can. If your Free over postage option equates to three products and your flat rate postage is £3.50 then add £1.20 to each product. It's not a huge leap and the postage will be covered if they buy those ideal three or more items. If they don't want to spend that much then they can choose to pay the postage. The key here is the choice. People are happier to pay an extra £10 for a product but not £10 postage. It's just dead money. Whichever option you choose, make sure it's obvious how much your delivery is. Again, nothing creates more abandoned carts than being hit with a £4.95 delivery charge you weren't expecting.

Payment gateways - **Making sure you choose the right payment gateway to suit your business is important.** Old-school merchants like Sage, World Pay, Barclays and First Data generally charge a monthly fee plus transaction fees and can quite often have a minimum charge. If you don't take enough transactions through the system each month there is a minimum fee that you will have to pay regardless. Stand-alone options like PayPal, Stripe, Mollie and Klarna offer online sign-ups without monthly fixed costs. They can be set up quickly and easily so you can be trading straight away. Paypal gives you quick access to your money but the charges reflect it and are always higher than the others. Some people love PayPal, some hate it, and some don't understand that they can just pay with a card and don't have to have a PayPal account. Klarna offers you to try it before you buy it, which is perfect for clothing and items that need to be tried out first. Stripe includes Apple Pay so where your shop is mainly going to be used by mobile shoppers that's a huge benefit. I would always recommend you have at least two ways to check out. Sometimes cards just don't work, some people don't like particular merchants and occasionally there is actually an issue with the provider. A couple of years ago PayPal had a massive European outage, It lasted for days. Anyone with just a PayPal checkout was left high and dry with no way of taking payments.

Security – Protect yourself. Scams and hackers are out there and go to great lengths to get money for nothing. **Make sure you protect yourself the best you can by using secure merchants with all the up-to-date security measures, 2-factor authentication and 3D secure processing.** If you have lower-value products keep yourself safe from card testing. Card testing is the latest popular e-commerce fraud. The tester will have a huge bank of card numbers and run multiple transactions on sites with low-value items that they think the card owner won't notice and that won't need additional verification. They can run

thousands of transactions in a matter of minutes. Most will bounce but she will go through making you liable for the money. You can keep yourself safer by putting mitigations in place. It won't stamp it out completely but will certainly slow them down. Make customers create an account to check out don't use a guest login. It means they will have to create an account for every transaction. Use Google Captcha to help block bots and non-human interactions. Use a plugin like Wordfence to help you manage and block Bad IPs and make sure you use a good gateway with 3D secure protocols and full security matching - address match, CVC match, expiry and name.

Terms and Policies

The pages people love to forget, the boring ones that we don't care about until we get issues and then we wish we had done something about it earlier.

Returns, refunds and delivery information.

Important information to give any customer anyway. You should make sure you include a returns and refunds policy and a delivery information page on your website no matter what you are selling. If you are going to use Google Shopping/Merchant Centre it's compulsory to supply them with a link and you won't be able to list without them. Some of the Payment Gateways like WorldPay and Sage also insist on approving those pages before they will give you an account. You need to make sure you set out your criteria for returns, what condition the item is in, the packaging, how long they have to return it and what sort of refund they will get. The magic words to always remember are *"resalable condition"*

Example: A retailer I used to work with sold ladies' clothes. A big chunk of those were dresses and club wear. They started to get a lot of returns, trickling in at first but then getting more and more. The items either came straight back within a couple of days or several months afterwards but always with the tag on, always worn.

It all came to a head when a pink sequin dress came back to the shop, you could smell it when you opened the envelope. It still had the tag on but had obviously been worn to a very hot and sweaty club on Saturday night and then returned on Sunday. The retailer contacted the customer and had 'words'. The customer simply stated, *"Your website says I can return any unwanted garment. I wore it on Saturday and now I don't want it"*.

It turned out that a group of students had noticed this loophole and started using the retailer like a dress hire shop. Ordering an outfit, wearing it and then sending it straight back for a full refund.

Needless to say, the returns policy was rewritten including statements that the garment should be unworn and in a re-saleable condition or refunds would not be made.

The customer has statutory rights as dictated by the law as regards how many days they have to return an item, cooling off periods and what happens to faulty items. You need to make sure your policies adhere to these regulations but anything else you offer is then at your discretion.

The Gov.UK website states *“You must offer a full refund if an item is faulty, not as described or does not do what it’s supposed to.”*

Online sales, the Gov.uk site tells us we *“must offer a refund to customers if they’ve told you within 14 days of receiving their goods that they want to cancel. They have another 14 days to return the goods once they’ve told you.”*

There is a link in your useful link downloads to the Gov.uk website with the statutory regulations for returns and refunds. It's worth taking a read and making sure you are meeting those criteria. If you want to offer any other terms then you are free to do so at your discretion as long as the statutory requirement is met. Rules are different for online selling as they are for in-store with a 14-day cooling-off period.

Another example was Atom Scooters again, they sent out a product via Amazon. The guy who bought it fancied himself as an engineer and took it all apart. Needless to say, he couldn’t work out how to put it back together. He went back to Amazon and told them that it was faulty and a price had come off. The returns policy said all returns were accepted and so he got his money back and they got a jiffy bag full of pieces that had once been a £179 scooter. Once again, the returns policy was updated to say that all returns should be in the original packaging and a resalable condition. Faulty items would be fixed and returned.

Don’t underestimate the lengths people will go to and how stupid they can be. Make sure your policies are all in place and you cover yourself for all eventualities, no matter how bizarre.

Task One

Let’s create a delivery and returns policy for our furniture store. There are some links in your Useful Link Download or you might want to Google similar websites and companies and take a look at what they have.

Think about what we have just talked about, how the product is going to be sent out, how it should be returned, and how long they have to do it.

Create the page on your site and title it Delivery and Returns.

You have 30 minutes for this task

Plugins

Now we are going to take a look at some of the extra functionality we can add to our shops. **There are hundreds of plugins available that allow you to add all sorts of clever features to your shops.** From plugins that allow you to create extra product information tabs and FAQ in your product descriptions to ones that allow you to create bundles while managing stock.

We can use multiple currencies, change the language, add wishlists or add plugins that will help with our admin like adding invoices and packing slips, minimum and maximum quantities and custom status in our dashboard.

There is a huge range of independent plugins that add lots of cool functions and most of them are free with Pro versions available. Some are WooCommerce's brand and built by them for them. They are usually paid for with annual renewals.

Custom Product Tabs & FAQ

Two really great plugins for adding extra content to your product page are Custom Product Tabs and XPlainer - WooCommerce Product FAQ. Both allow you to add extra content to your products in either an accordion or tab format. **These custom tabs allow you to add delivery info, materials, ingredients, allergy information or technical specifications.** You can create saved tabs that you can use across whole categories, or you can create individual ones that are specific to that product.

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/faq-for-woocommerce/>

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/yikes-inc-easy-custom-woocommerce-product-tabs/>

Bundles and packs

You can create a manual bundle as a normal product, or you might want to let the customer create their own. WPC Product Bundles allows you to manage the bundle price, and quantity of items in it and because it utilises existing products in your shop you can manage your stock quantities without having to manually change them every time someone buys a bundle.

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/woo-product-bundle/>

Images and Sliders

Want to add a product sale slider to your category page? Try Product Slider, it does exactly what it says on the tin! **You can add a slider of products to any page or post on your site. Perfect for promoting sale items on the home page or a specific range on a blog post.** It is fully responsive and mobile-friendly so perfect for engaging mobile shoppers. It has lots of built-in themes and customisation features so you can really make it your own.

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/woocommerce-products-slider/>

Booster

Add all sorts of functionality with one powerful plugin. **Booster has over 100 function modules that can apply global discounts, add wholesale prices, customise your cart and checkout process and add admin features like custom emails, reports and invoices.** A brilliant free tool that combines a dozen plugins all in one so you can add all those functions without the need for dozens of plugins.

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/woocommerce-jetpack/>

Facebook

Facebook shops are a great way to get in front of your Facebook and Instagram audience but it can be time-consuming to add all your products manually if you have a large inventory. **Using the Facebook for WooCommerce plugin you can stream your inventory directly to your Facebook shop, set up targeted ads and utilise the all-powerful Pixel.**

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/facebook-for-woocommerce/>

These are just a selection of some of the best, there are thousands out there. The key is not to get carried away and add too many. We don't want the site to become so overloaded with gadgets that the customer can't use it or make the site so slow that they give up and go somewhere else.

Task 2

Let's add some functionality. We are going to install two of the plugins we have just looked at, I'm going to walk you through the setup and then you can go off and explore. If you get time feel free to explore the <https://wordpress.org/plugins> section and see what else is out there. We don't want to install them all, just research and keep a reading list of what you can use and why.

Coming up soon to extend these skills

On Thursday we will be doing a mini WooCommerce project so you will be able to use your plugin knowledge to add to the products

Don't forget

Today's session page in your learner dashboard has a useful links document that will cover all the tools, resources and articles we have discussed in the session and some useful guides and articles to take you further.

Make sure you revisit your FABs and set yourself some goals specific to today's session.

Extra help

If you need any help with anything from today's session feel free to message me in the WhatsApp group. If you have any other issues or problems related to the course or the tools speak to Andrew and Irfana, they are here to help you.

Up next

See you tomorrow for Marketplaces and Feeds.