THE ONLINE - BOUTIQUE - MILLIONAIRE

A Beginners Guide to Starting & Growing
A Profitable Online Boutique Business
in 10 Simple Steps



DENISE ULASI

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~ *Dedication* ~

This book is dedicated to everyone reading the book right now and either looking to start an online clothing boutique from scratch, or looking for tips and strategies to help grow and move their existing online clothing boutique forward. I hope you enjoy reading this book and find value in it as much as I've enjoyed writing it.

Denise.xx

~ *Table of Contents* ~

INTRODUCTION

STEP 1 - YOUR NICHE/BUSINESS IDEA

STEP 2 - YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

STEP 3 - YOUR BRAND MESSAGE

STEP 4 - CHOOSING A BUSINESS NAME

STEP 6 - FINDING VENDORS & SOURCING INVENTORY

STEP 7 - PRICING YOUR PRODUCTS

STEP 8 - BUSINESS REGISTRATION & LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

STEP 9 - GETTING CUSTOMERS & DRIVING SALES

STEP 10 - BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST

IMPORTANT NEXT STEPS & GETTING MORE HELP

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the next big step towards finally launching and growing your online boutique business. Gone are the days where you had to invest so much money on premises, buy tens of thousands of dollars of inventory and limit your customer base to the people in your local city.

Thanks to the emergence of the internet, anyone can launch their online boutique from the comfort of their home, start with little to no inventory, attract billions of people on the world wide web and make millions. In fact your money making potential is unlimited and the power is honestly in your hands to take action and get it up and running. In fact with less than $500, you could have your own boutique business up and running (*I will share an incredible strategy that can help you with this, later in this book*).

Some people say the boutique business is saturated. One of the reasons for this is because people are trying to sell the same products to the same people and competing with similar prices. This is exactly why you must find your unique niche in the market. And one thing you must also realize is that more and more people are also now shopping online thereby presenting a great opportunity for you.

Secondly, competition is actually a good thing, it means something is working hence why more and more people are tapping into it. Moreover, how many fast food restaurants can you spot around your area? Let me guess hundreds right. However there’s a reason why somebody will shop from Pizza hut vs Dominoes. This is down to how well they've positioned themselves in the market. So instead of saying the industry is saturated, why not ask yourself the question

"*how can I position myself in a way that people would love to shop from me*"

With this Online Boutique Millionaire guide, you will learn; how to find a niche and stand out from all the fishes in the sea, how to identify your ideal target customers, crafting a brand message that will differentiate you from others, choosing a business name, creating your website and logo, finding suppliers for your products, pricing your products, the legal requirements of your boutique, getting customers and finally building your email list.

This book provides you with actionable steps to help you implement and put all the pieces together yourself. I strongly recommend that you complete all the tasks as you go along, before you move on to the next step. The goal of this book is not only to bore you with more information (there is already enough of it out there), but to ensure that you take actionable steps and consequently have your boutique up and running by the time you finish this book.

At the end of this book I will also be introducing you to a powerful done-for-you boutique business kit that can help you out all the pieces in one place. So if after going through this book, you still need additional help putting all the pieces together and need myself and my team to help you get started as quickly as possible, then be sure to check out our done-for-you boutique business kit and book a call with us to help you by visiting:
www.runboutique.com/kit

Here's to your Business Success
Denise Ulasi.

STEP 1 - YOUR NICHE/BUSINESS IDEA

Like any new boutique owner, I was super excited about launching my boutique back in 2015. In-fact I could already picture myself sipping on margaritas and chilling by the beach whilst money rolled into my account passively. You know that life of financial freedom everyone talks about right? Wrong..

The first month went past with zero sales..

Second month past – started receiving traffic to my website but zero sales

Third, fourth, fifth month zero sales..

Then it wasn't until the 6th month that I landed my first sale.

Looking back I now realize that this was largely due to the lack of a niche and strategy. Not only was my store all over the place with all sorts of products from hair, shoes, makeup, dresses etc. I had no niche, no brand message and no idea who my target market was.

I was selling to everyone and hoping for the best. And as the say goes, when you sell to everyone, you sell to no one. I wish there was a guide back then like this one to help me avoid this mistake in the first place. But I'm also glad I went through that mistake because now you can learn from my mistakes too.

So how do you find a niche?

The first step to finding your niche is diving deep into your passions and interests. What type of products, things are you passionate about? Do you love hair? Do you love makeup? Do you love shopping for bags? What do people compliment you the most for? What are you skilled and experienced in? What are your hobbies? What do you enjoy/love most? Note these down in a pen and paper.

Overall the best inspirations and motivations should come from things you love and personally enjoy, from personal experience, and most of all something you have a passion for.

There are a few niches you could look into such as;

- Women clothing (plus size clothing, professional clothing, business clothing, casual clothing, loungewear, sexy/club wear, fitness clothing) etc
- Men clothing only (casual clothing, corporate clothing, fitness clothing)etc
- Kid Clothing
- Shoes
- Swimwear
- Lingerie
- Handbags
- Fashion Jewelry
- Hair Products
- Cosmetics
- Beauty Products

To help determine which niche or areas you can focus on, below are a few questions to ask yourself. Please note the answers down on a piece of paper.

- *What inspired you to want to start your own online boutique?*
- *Do you have some fantastic new designs you have that you think people will love?*
- *Are you a fashion blogger looking to make more money from your blog?*
- *Have you seen other boutiques and thought you could start one better than that?*
- *Or maybe you are just passionate about fashion and would love to become your own boss?*
- *Do people compliment your shoes all the time? Maybe you could open your own shoe boutique. You would already have some potential clients.*
- *Or maybe it's your handbags people love? Again you could start a handbag boutique.*
- *Perhaps it's your jewelry people always compliment you on? Why not start your own fashion jewelry boutique.*
- *Do people love your dress sense? Then perhaps think about selling dresses online.*
- *Which type of products from the list above do you tend to spend MOST of your money on, on a weekly, monthly basis? Now that might just be the niche you should focus on. Something you already enjoy doing and have a passion for right?*

Do not try to sell everything in your online store because not only will your customers find this confusing, but it will also be difficult for you to identify your target market. **After all, you are not a shopping mall**!

For example when I started my boutique it was just an online boutique selling all sorts of products from women's dresses, tops, jeans, handbags, shoes, waist trainers, hair, etc.

The business was just all over the place which made it very difficult for me to sell my products as people stumbling on my website were presented with confusing data. For example, if I came to a website looking for a plus size dress, I would expect to find similar products on the website and not pet clothing or car accessories or hair extensions.

Eventually I learnt from this experience and today, my boutique specifically targets new moms looking for comfy easy going clothes they can wear everyday. This makes it easier for me to sell, invest my time and resources only marketing my brand to those who need it the most.

So don’t feel like you are missing out on anything by not selling everything out there in your boutique. Trust me, focusing on a target group will help a great deal with the launching of your online boutique which you will discover later on in this book.

LET'S GET TO ACTION

What type of Boutique do you want to start e.g womens, kids, plus size, formal, mens, handbags, shoes, jewelry, etc?

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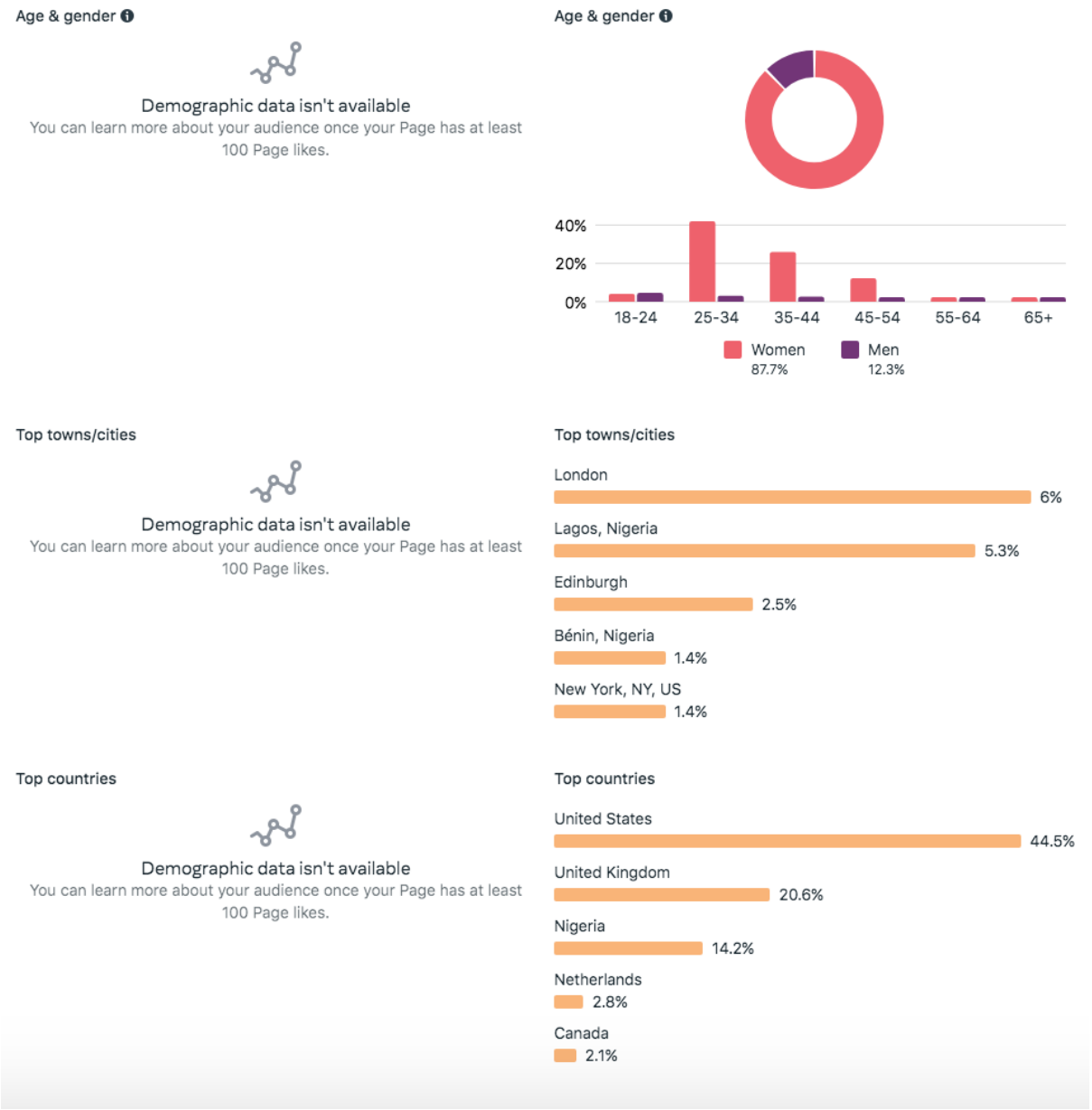
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☐ I **CONFIRM** that I have now decided on a niche for my boutique.

STEP 2 - YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Now you have a niche, the next question to ask yourself is who exactly is your ideal customer? Who exactly do you visualize wearing or using your products? Who do you envisage as the perfect ideal customer you would love to work with? Who do you think would ideally love the products you aim to sell? Is it the mom next door looking for comfortable lounge wear to relax at home, or the mompreneur looking for something elegant for a branding photoshoot? And don't worry if you aren't sure just yet because these things do take time to fall in place.

If you already have a boutique or are already selling some products, then a great way to identify your target audience is to see the type of customers currently purchasing from your brand. Facebook has an **Insights tool** that tells you exactly who your followers are, their age, gender, location, interest etc. Because Facebook owns Instagram, it also pulls out the data from your Instagram account. Here's an example of some target audience data pulled from the Facebook Insights tool.



PLEASE NOTE: You will need to have a Facebook and Instagram Business page to access this information.

You can checkout the tool by **CLICKING HERE** or just Google search "**Facebook Audience Insights Tool**"

You can also manually spy on followers' personal pages to see what type of things they love, their hobbies, age, what their interests are, their age, location, etc.

Another great way to identify your target audience by looking at competitor pages on social media. Look at their followers and people who comment under their posts. Not just the random comments, but people who leave comments showing interest in the product. Again go to their profiles and do your research again on their likes, hobbies, age, demographic. etc

This will give you a good indication of the types of people to consider your target audience. For example with my brand, my target audience is predominantly new moms who are looking for comfy, easy going clothes they can wear at home, go on school runs, do the chores at home without stressing over what to wear daily.

LET'S GET TO ACTION

Note down who your ideal target customer is. What do they look like? How old are they? Where do they live? What are their interests? Please complete this exercise before moving to the next step.

Gender:

Age Group:

What are their Interests e.g what magazines do they read, what tv shows do they watch, what big brands do they already shop from, what other things could they be interested in? :

What are their current pain points/problems and how would your boutique solve it?

☐ I **CONFIRM** that I have now identified my target audience

STEP 3 – YOUR BRAND MESSAGE

Branding is all about what the customers perceive of your company. Your brand is the promise that you intend to make to the customers. The ultimate goal is to spark an emotional connection in order to create a positive feeling resulting from loyalty to a specific product from the customers.

Most customers hold true to products they enjoy. It is very common for a customer to be impressed with a brand and continue to buy a product based on that brand. You want to create these feelings of loyalty to bring the customers back for more. This should be the ultimate goal.

Once you have your niche, and target audience all ready to go, the next step is collating all that information together in one sentence called - **the brand message.** This is the message you want to present to customers and visitors to your website. This is the message you will have on your social media pages. This essentially is the message you want embedded in the minds of your customers and how you want to be known and remembered for. This brand message will help you attract the right people to your brand. This is sometimes referred to as a mission statement.

This is the "*core message of your brand*". What do you want to be known as? What do you want your brand to represent? What do you want people to remember your online boutique as? Remember it doesn't have to be perfect at this stage as you can always revisit this and change as you progress with your business.

As a rule of thumb, you should be able to explain what you do in a sentence if someone were to ask you what you do. Tackle this message from the angle of the ***problem you are solving*** *vs what your product/service actually is.*

People only care about how your products are going to help them. So your brand message should consist of three key things; **your niche, your target customer and the problem your brand solves for them.**

Here are some examples of brand messages;

A CLOTHING BRAND for WOMEN IN BUSINESS looking for clothing to LEVEL UP THEIR PERSONAL BRANDING

A CLOTHING BRAND for NEW MOMS looking for COMFORTABLE STRESS FREE EVERYDAY WEAR

A CLOTHING BRAND for 18-28 YEAR OLDS looking for CLUBWEAR THAT WILL LEAVE YOU LOOKING & FEELING SEXY ALL NIGHT LONG

A LINGERIE BRAND for MILLENNIAL WOMEN looking to FEEL MORE SEXY AND CONFIDENT

A KIDS CLOTHING BRAND for 0-3 YEAR OLDS that will LEAVE YOUR LITTLE ONES FEELING ON TOP OF THEIR GAME

A LEGGINGS BRAND for GYM LOVERS that will HELP LEVEL UP YOUR FITNESS GAME

LET'S GET TO ACTION

My Brand message is;

A (Insert Niche) brand for (Insert Target Customer) looking for/to (Insert Problem Your Brand Solves for Them)

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☐ I **CONFIRM** that I have now created a brand message for my boutique.

STEP 4 - CHOOSING A BUSINESS NAME

Now we finally have an idea, a niche and brand message ready to go, the next step is coming up with a business name. At this stage you might want to start thinking about what to call your business. It should be something straight to the point that immediately tells people what it is you do. It should also reflect on who you are especially if selling services.

The business name is the first thing that any potential buyer is going to notice and in this respect is what is likely to draw people's attention and get them curious. You might have the best idea in the world but if people are looking elsewhere because your competitor's name 'looks' more attractive then no-one will ever know.

Therefore, it's essential that you strike the right tone with your business' name. Get creative; ask people around you what they think of it. Note down a list of different names and pick which one suits you best. Don't make it too long or too short. Keep it memorable and straight to the point! For example if your name is Sandra and you have decided to start your own fashion boutique.

You could call it something like; sandrasboutique, sandraswears, sandrasstore, etc. Or you could come up with something that doesn't have your name linked to it such as; fabboutique.com, plus size boutique etc.

Here are some tips to guide you with picking the right business name for your boutique.

- Make it simple and easy to remember
- Think long term - if the brand goes big you want to keep using it?
- Does it sound right?
- Does it represent your brand?
- Reflect your brand message
- Make it catchy and captivating
- Non offensive or sensitive words
- Make sure it isn't registered anywhere else

Once you come up with a name, you also want to make sure that the name isn't already registered or trademarked by someone else, the domain name isn't already registered, and it isn't already being used on other social media pages. The last thing you want is your customers landing on other people's businesses or investing on a name that is already taken by someone else.

- Do a quick Google Search to ensure the name isn't coming up elsewhere
- Check Domain Name isn't registered at https://www.name.com/
- Check Social Media to ensure name isn't taken - Facebook,Instagram,Twitter
- Check Companies House and Government websites
- Check Trademark Databases

LET'S GET TO ACTION

My Business Name is:

_____

_____

_____

_____

☐ I **CONFIRM** that I have decided on a business name and researched on all platforms to ensure that it isn't being used anywhere else by another company or trademarked by someone else.

STEP 5 - YOUR WEBSITE & LOGO

Now we know what we want to sell, the next step is finding a platform to sell your products – **your website**. Your website is the next most important thing to consider for your new online boutique – after all you are running an online based store so what better place to sell your products than on your own website.

A business without a website should be prepared to lose out on over 99% of its customers. Nowadays, people go on the internet 24/7 searching for all types of information. With technology practically taking over the world, it is vital that you have a business website.

A business without a website is like building a house without a foundation. Without the internet, there is no way you would have stumbled on this book in the first place. So you can imagine how many customers you could lose if you don't have a website for your business.

Secondly, owning a website will save you so much time, money and energy in your day to day activities. Gone are the days where you had to open 100 boutiques in 100 different cities, just to appeal to customers worldwide. With a website, your laptop and access to the internet, you are on the ''World Wide Web'' and customers can access and purchase your products from just that one little website.

Thirdly, before you purchase inventory from a majority of wholesale vendors/suppliers, they usually request for your website or some proof that you are a legitimate business.

Having a website shows them you are a serious and credible business owner, which can ease the process of you getting approved as a wholesale customer. So be sure to get your website up and running (even if it has no products yet) prior to going out there to buy inventory. This is exactly why I decided to talk about getting your website set up first before talking about where to buy wholesale inventory (more about this in later section).

To get your website up and running you will need 3 key things; **a domain name**, **a hosting platform** and **some design skills** (if you plan to do it on your own) or hire someone to do it for you.

Your Domain Name

Your domain name is the name of your website (usually your business name). It is best to name your domain after your business name. So assuming your business name is called Sandra's Boutique, then your domain name could be something in the lines of www.sandrasboutique.com, or, co.uk, .net, etc. You can get a domain name registered for less than $10 per year from **Namecheap**. However if you have another domain provider in mind, you can still use them. If you want to focus on for example UK based customers only, then you could look into a .co.uk domain name. Although a .com name is highly recommended as this is great especially for attracting a global audience.

If your particular domain name isn't available, you should usually get a few suggestions on different names you could use. Make sure you choose a good and catchy name and remember not to make it too long. If your domain name is too long, people will lose patience trying to type it all out in their browsers and could even misspell it. So come up with something short, sweet and easy to remember. Once

you purchase your domain name, this should usually be LIVE instantly and available for a year.

Web Hosting

Once your domain name is registered, you need to think about some web hosting options in-order to start creating your website. A domain name without a host is like building a house without a roof. There are several platforms out there which you can use to host your website. However, below are a few I will recommend.

One of the best platforms to look into when setting up your new online store is Shopify. Shopify is not only great for ecommerce online stores, but is also very beginner friendly. **Shopify** starts at **$29** per month with a 14 Day FREE trial giving you the opportunity to try them out before you make a purchase decision. You can get started with Shopify by **CLICKING HERE** or visiting **www.shopify.com**

Another great ecommerce and cost effective platform to use for your online store is WooCommerce which is available FREE with Wordpress.org. Wordpress.org is a premium version of the free Wordpress.com so don't get them mixed up. Wordpress.com only allows you to create blogs and not ecommerce websites.

To get started with Wordpress.org, you will need to purchase web hosting which usually covers this. A great platform to look into for affordable web hosting is at **Bluehost** where you can get web hosting at only **$15** per month. Bluehosts is also a cheaper alternative especially in comparison to Shopify as you are saving yourself around $200 per year on web hosting fees. Purchasing your own web hosting also

means you are not limited or restricted in terms of what themes and templates you can use, website ownership, flexibility and site functionalities.

Creating Your Website

You can find so many videos on Youtube that teach you step by step how to create an ecommerce website on WordPress and Shopify. So I'm not going to be writing a full tutorial on how to create a website here. This is a great way to get your website up and running (if you are looking to create your website yourself).

However if you don't want to go through the complexities of building your website especially as a beginner (it can be confusing trust me), then I recommend you hire a web designer to save you the stress.

You can also get my team to design your website for you by visiting:

www.runboutique.com/boutique-website/

At the Run Boutique Academy, you also get **FREE Web hosting** covered as part of the membership, meaning there's no need to go out there and purchase additional hosting and pay monthly for anything thereby saving you so much money. Plus you get a FREE LOGO included with this package.

Payment Processors

To sell online, you will need a payment processor that allows customers to pay you instantly. When setting up your ecommerce website, there are a few payment options you could look into to ensure your customers can quickly and easily pay for their transactions online. A few recommended payment processors that are great for your online store are;

PayPal: This is one of the best and safest payment processors to use. It is FREE to register for an account, you can then link your bank account to your PayPal account easily and transfer any payments received from customers directly into your bank account when ready. You can also pay for transactions online quickly using your PayPal account instead of having to key in your bank details all the time. You can register for a FREE Business Account with PayPal at www.paypal.com. PayPal charges you a small percentage of 3.4% and **20p ($0.30)** on every payment made into your PayPal account. However this isn't substantial considering your transactions are safe and secure.

Stripe: Similar to PayPal is another payment processor known as “Stripe”. Stripe is equally great for collecting and processing online transactions directly from your website. All funds paid into your stripe account however are only automatically cleared and deposited directly into your bank account after 7 days. This means unlike PayPal, you cannot instantly deposit money into your bank account as and when you please, but rather have to wait for their timelines for payments to automatically clear. Stripe is great in that it allows customers to pay you quickly via your website using their debit or credit card details with no requirement to register for an account prior to payment, as with the case of PayPal. Stripe also charges a

transaction fee of 1.4% + 20p for all European cards and **2.9%** for all non-European cards.

Of course there are many more payment processors you could look into such as **Square** which is great for accepting all major credit cards and allows you to collect offline payments.

Important Website Pages

When setting up your ecommerce website, there are a few key pages that are essential you have on your website to make information easily accessible to your website visitors and make their browsing experience as smooth and easy as possible. The last thing you want is a website set up with too many irrelevant pages that could confuse your customers and send them to your competitor websites.

Home: Your homepage is the first page customers will see when they first visit your website. So it is essential that the information on your homepage immediately tells customers what your niche is, and what type of products you are selling. If possible, have a welcome message on your homepage summarizing what you do, but try not to have too much jargon on that first page as it could send people away. After all you are running an ecommerce website and not a blog, so less content and more products.

About Us: This is another great page to have so your customers can get a little personal and easily find out more about your brand and what it stands for. Remember when people stumble on your website, they don't know who you are, where you are based, etc. Hence an about us page builds that trust with customers. It is also a great page to outline your vision, mission and values as a brand.

Product Page: Your website is an ecommerce store which sells products, hence it is important to have a product page or Shop page where people can quickly and easily browse for the products they are interested in.

Shipping & Delivery: Another vital part of an online store is making it clear to your customers how long shipping will take as this will greatly influence their buying decision. Therefore having a page with clear information on shipping times is extremely useful to have on your online store. This will save you a lot of headaches in the future too.

Contact Us: Another vital part of an online store is having a contact page with your contact details where customers can easily reach out to you and communicate in case of any problems or in case they need more information.

Refund Policy: Having a refund policy on your website is another great way to clarify your processes to your customers and avoid any future disappointments. Whether you offer a 14 day, 28 day or no refund policy, remember to make this clear on your website so customers are aware of it prior to purchasing.

Shopping Cart: Pages such as My Account, Cart and Checkout are also extremely useful to have on your website Menu. This means customers can easily navigate between browsing products, adding them to their carts and checking out without any difficulties.

Other useful pages to have on your website include, **Terms & Conditions and Privacy Policy pages**.

Your LOGO

A Logo is extremely vital in building your image and key to branding your business. Your Logo will make you appear a lot more professional, bigger and more established to your audience. This is what differentiates you from competitors and helps you stand out from the crowd. When you combine a brand with a business name and a logo you have three of the most powerful marketing pieces of a business. When a customer, employee, vendor, lender sees either one of them and they recognize it, you evoke an emotional response, be it good or bad. Deciding on a business logo may not be a quick process. Additionally, you may welcome professional help. My suggestion is to not rush into this piece if you don't have the time or can't find exactly what you want (Rogerson, 2011).

Although having so many different colors to make your logo stand out could sound tempting, it could also end up looking tacky.

Simplicity is key when it comes to designing a logo and it is strongly recommended that you hire a professional to help you decide on the best way to design your logo.

You can get a logo created yourself for free on platforms like **Canva.com**. However if you are not so good at design it is highly recommended to get a professional to do it for you on platforms such as www.fiverr.com and www.upwork.com

Alternatively my team can get you a professional logo done for FREE together with our web design package. Or you could get this done as a stand-alone service by visiting: https://runboutique.com/logo-design/

LET'S GET TO ACTION

My Domain Name is;

I will be hosting my website on?

How do you plan to design your website (do it yourself or hire someone)

The colors, fonts, I plan to use for my LOGO are;

☐ I **CONFIRM** that I have my domain name, web hosting ready and started the process of getting my website set up.

☐ I **CONFIRM** that I have a logo OR have now begun making arrangements towards designing my LOGO.

STEP 6 - FINDING VENDORS & SOURCING INVENTORY

One of the biggest issues boutique owners encounter is figuring out where to source inventory. But before we talk about where to find vendors, it is important to explore the different options available to you when it comes to sourcing inventory. So here are a number of ways you can source inventory for your online boutique.

1. **BUY WHOLESALE**

This is a very popular way of sourcing products which usually involves buying products in bulk at a low price from a supplier, then reselling it at a higher price to your customers. You are responsible for all the inventory management, packaging, shipping, branding, etc. This is usually pretty expensive especially considering how much stock you need to purchase in advance and upfront financial commitments.

2. **DROPSHIPPING**

This involves selling products on your website with no need to purchase any inventory in advance. Simply find a drop shipping supplier, start selling their products on your website (at a higher retail price), when a customer buys from you, you pass their shipping details to the supplier (keeping the profit) and the supplier deals with the packaging and shipping of products directly to them. This is the strategy I personally used to launch my boutique with less than $500.

I have a **Facebook Group** with almost 9000 boutique owners. And the number of people who come there every single day trying to get rid of inventory because they are struggling to sell it is crazy.

I mean anyone with some money can buy inventory, but if you don't know how to sell, then you honestly have no business.

This is why I usually advise my clients to test out more cost effective ways of launching their boutiques, use that to study the market, build their following, and then when those sales start coming in, only then should you start buying inventory in bulk. Buying inventory in bulk does not automatically equate to more sales - especially if you have no idea what you are doing. It's best to use some of that money you would have spent on inventory in bulk to invest in a course, book, coach to learn how to sell and market your business effectively. And whilst learning, you can use dropshipping to get things started.

(*more on dropshipping is discussed later in the book*).

3. **AFFILIATE MARKETING**

This strategy involves promoting other companies' products and earning commissions from sales. Affiliate marketing is the easiest and cheapest way to launch a boutique especially if you have little to no money and want to test the waters before you invest on inventory.

Amazon for example has an affiliate program you could join for free and promote any products being sold on Amazon.The only problem with amazon is the fact that their commissions are super low which means you need to sell volumes to see any results. Each time someone purchases via your affiliate link, you earn commissions.

Boucommerce also has an amazing affiliate program specifically for boutique owners looking to sell clothing, bags, lingerie, shoes, kids clothing online. One great thing about Boucommerce is the fact that commissions are as high as 25%. You can get started with the Boucommerce affiliate program at: www.boucommerce.com

4. **CREATING YOUR OWN PRODUCTS**

This usually involves hand making or factory manufacturing your own products from scratch. This could involve either doing it yourself using a sewing machine or sub-contracting the task to third parties to do it for you.

In the next sections however we will be focusing more in-depth on sourcing products through wholesale and dropshipping.

Where to Find Wholesale Suppliers

Wholesale involves buying products at a low cost from wholesale suppliers, and then reselling them at a higher mark-up price to your customers. This is a great option for those who have capital to invest upfront on inventory. However be aware that most wholesale suppliers expect you to buy products in bulk which could be extremely costly.

Wholesale products can either be sourced locally or internationally. Sourcing internationally usually tends to be cheaper for certain products whilst sourcing locally works out best for bulky items. However, where you source your inventory will vastly depend on what type of products you plan on selling.

For example, if you plan to sell less bulky items, it might work out cheaper buying internationally since the cost of imports tends to be lower.

If selling bulky or heavier products, then probably best to look into sourcing locally. Although sourcing locally will save you time, some risks and the cost of importing products from overseas, it may also be a more expensive option. All in all, it is best to check what the best options and costs of sourcing locally versus internationally are for you, before you decide on a supplier.

In-order to purchase wholesale inventory, most vendors require that you have your business registered, have a sellers permit or VAT Number to prove your business is legitimate and sometimes have an EIN Number set up too.

Some great platforms you could look into for wholesale suppliers and vendors especially for those in the USA are; Fashiongo, Orangeshine, LA Showroom.

Another great wholesale directory where you can find 900+ wholesale vendors for your boutique from the USA, UK, Europe and China is at www.sellpire.com.

Another great way to find wholesale vendors is to either attend trade shows around your local area which can be found by a quick Google search. e.g If based in London, you could google “tradeshows in London” etc.

You can also find wholesale vendors through doing a Google search on your country, plus your respective niche .e.g. if you are based in the USA and selling clothing, then you could google “**clothing wholesale suppliers in the USA**” and a number of options should appear.

A bonus list of some wholesale clothing vendors can be found below;

Orange Shine

Wholesale Fashion Square

Mikaree wholesale

https://alibaba.com/

https://www.trendsgal.com

https://www.ktoousa.com

https://www.rosewholesale.com

http://www.dearlover.net

https://www.girlmerry.com

https://www.gitiwholesale.com

Zenana Wholesale

http://www.only-lover.com

Yelete Wholesale

https://www.capellausa.com

https://www.emmacloth.com

https://heracollection.com

http://trendystylewholesale.com

Matterhorn Wholesale

Catwalk Wholesale

https://bloomwholesale.com

https://www.fashiongo.net

http://wholesalefashionyetts.com

https://www.blvapparel.com

https://www.lashowroom.com/

https://www.ccwholesaleclothing.com

https://www.nywholesale.com

Looking for more vendors? I have a Youtube Channel where I do weekly video reviews on different wholesale vendors. You can checkout the wholesale vendor review video series by: **CLICKING HERE**. Be sure to subscribe to my Youtube channel so you don't miss out on new videos.

Dropshipping

For those who aren't familiar with the term, drop shipping is a technique in which the retailer (you) does not keep goods in stock, but instead transfers customer orders and shipment details to either the manufacturer or a supplier, who then ships the goods directly to the customer. With dropshipping you do not need to handle any inventory whatsoever and hence no need to buy stock in advance. Is like selling stock you don't even own. That's how dropshipping works.

In retail businesses, the majority of retailers make their profit on the difference between the wholesale and retail price but some retailers earn an agreed percentage of the sales in commission, paid by the wholesaler to the retailer.

With dropshipping you sell a product on behalf of the wholesaler, send the customer information to the wholesaler who then distributes the product directly to the customer while you keep the profits. So you are like the bridge between the supplier and customer.

If you are interested in starting an online boutique, but don't have a lot of money to invest in wholesale stock in advance, then dropshipping is the answer. Other benefits of sourcing products through dropshipping include;

The start-up costs are small: In order to set up a traditional offline boutique, a good chunk of capital is usually required to buy your inventory of products that you wish to sell from your shop. This is most commonly guess work, there's no saying how much stock you'll sell for that month/year so this eliminates having to risk your money in unsold stock.

You can offer items almost instantly: Usually when a retailer wants to start selling a product, they'll have to wait until all of their stock has been shipped prior to selling them on their website. Using drop shipping means that when you decide you want a product on your site, you can start advertising and selling almost immediately.

You can offer a wider range of products: Having the ability to offer a wider range of products is always something a company can aspire to and with drop shipping, it's possible. You don't have to worry about different colors or sizes and where they're all going to be stored, you simply list them on your site and your supplier can deal with the rest.

Testing new products without a risk: When adding new products to your range, the risk of not selling is always an underlying risk. Having to guess what your customers want to buy is a tricky feat for anyone, so being able to test the water without making any true investment is always an advantage for your site.

Time saving is key: Organizing your stock and preparing it for delivery can often be a time-consuming nightmare. Using a third party to ship items saves handling, labeling, packing, shipping etc, leaving you time to focus on growing your business in different areas.

How Dropshipping Works

So assuming you are interested in selling clothing for example but have no money to purchase stock beforehand then dropshipping is the perfect solution. Here's an example on how it works;

1. You find a wholesaler who sells clothing you are interested in.
2. Find out if they offer dropshipping services.
3. The dress is currently being sold at $10.00 on the wholesaler's website; however the retail price in the market is about $35.
4. You then copy the product details and description from the wholesalers' website and paste in on your own website.
5. Set it at a higher retail price of say $35 plus shipping costs similar to that of wholesaler
6. A customer visits your website and purchases the dress from you and the money goes straight into your bank account.
7. You then go back to the wholesalers' site and place an order but this time using the customers' details as the shipping address, and only paying for the wholesale price of $10.

8. The wholesaler then ships the dress directly to your customer whilst you gain a profit of $25. So your job is essentially to promote these products on your own website and pass your customers' details to the supplier after they purchase from you.

Imagine you sell about 10 of this single product in one week, then you have just made yourself $250 (25 X 10) for one product in a week. That's an extra $1000 per month for just one product. And guess what, you did not have to risk any money buying inventory, handling any stock or delivery. All you did was send customers to a wholesaler who handled all the hard work.

Ok now think of all the different products you could be selling and do the same calculations and see just how much you can make. The earnings are endless. It's just up to you how many products you will love to sell and how much money you want to make.

You can find dropshipping suppliers on platforms like; **Dropshipville, Salehoo, Worldwide Brands.** The **Sellpire** supplier directory also includes dropshipping suppliers.

However, if you are looking for an all-in-one dropshipping platform that comes with everything you need to get started with dropshipping, then a great dropshipping platform to look into is **DropshipFinds**. **Dropshipfinds** offers you a web design service where your online store gets designed for you preloaded with inventory you can start selling right away.

Plus you receive training on running your business and access to dropshipping suppliers all-inclusive in the membership. So I will highly recommend you look into that option to save yourself the time and money if you are seriously considering dropshipping.

Of course one of the biggest problems with dropshipping is not having physical access to your products, which can get you questioning the quality of the products your customers are receiving. A great way to get around this is to order some samples for yourself first, try them and test the quality yourself. And if they pass the test, you can start selling these on your website too.

LET'S GET TO ACTION

Note down the vendors you plan on working on. If you haven't found any vendors on the list, be sure to check out the platforms mentioned. Alternatively you can do a Google Search.

_____

_____

INVENTORY SOURCING OPTION

☐ I have now decided on what inventory sourcing option I want to use.

WHOLESALE SUPPLIERS *(if applicable)*

☐ I have decided on what wholesale suppliers to work with/or have already started communicating with some of them and making the necessary arrangements.

DROPSHIPPING *(if applicable)*

☐ I have decided on what dropshipping suppliers to work with/or have already started communicating with them.

STEP 7 - PRICING YOUR PRODUCTS

Now we've found some vendors, it's time to decide on the pricing of our products. Pricing refers to how much you charge for your products and/or services. How much you price your products will usually depend on the market, your brand, competition, target audience and other factors.

Assuming you want to sell a Bodycon dress at $47, it will be wise to first of all see what competitors are pricing for a similar product in order to determine the right price point. You do not want to end up too cheap or too expensive as you could end up making so many sales but no profits to boast of (if too cheap), or no sales at all (if too expensive).

So try and find the right fit in alignment with your market and industry. As a rule of thumb, you should be able to make at least a minimum of double and a half (2.5) the wholesale price (what you paid for the product).

For example, if you purchased a Bodycon dress from your wholesale supplier for $7 cost price, then you want to charge at-least $17.5 ($7 X 2.5) and above for that product. Remember you have to take into account the cost of other expenses such as packaging, shipping, etc so you don't end up under cutting yourself. Such a simple pricing strategy will work well for mass produced type products which are bought in bulk and readily available in the market.

If dropshipping, you can price your products from cost price X at least 2. This is because inventory is more expensive when purchasing individually vs buying in bulk. So for example, a dress that cost $7 per unit because you bought 6 pieces in bulk could cost $10 per item when dropshipping.

This means if you were to price that dress for $10 X 2.5 then it would be $25 in comparison to 17.5 if buying wholesale. So a sweet spot is to double the price when dropshipping (afterall you aren't risking any of your money on inventory beforehand).

Premium pricing is another great approach which works best for certain products. For example, products which are in high demand but not vastly available in the market, very high quality products, handmade or custom made products, or locally produced products. Bear in mind that some people are happy to pay $30 more on a product knowing that it was made in the USA (or locally) as this is usually associated with better or premium quality, whilst others will pay a little extra for products that are scarce and rare to find anywhere else and custom made products.

Finally, pricing will depend vastly on your brand, the type of products you plan to sell, the competition out there and how you intend to source them. So make sure you research market prices, plan your pricing strategy prior to purchasing any wholesale products so you don't end up at a financial loss.

LET'S GET TO ACTION

On the table below, list the products you plan to sell, the **cost price** (how much your vendor is selling it for), your **selling price** (how much you plan to sell the product) and how much profit you would make (**selling price - cost price**)

PRODUCT NAME	COST PRICE	SELLING PRICE	PROFIT (SP-CP)

PRICING YOUR PRODUCTS

☐ I have decided on a pricing strategy for my online boutique

STEP 8 - BUSINESS REGISTRATION & LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Choosing a Business Structure

Now we have a business name, it is time to start looking into the different business structures. When it comes to selecting a business structure, there are a variety of options you can choose from, all dependent on how you plan to operate.

Sole Proprietorship/Sole Trader – This is the easiest way to register your business and is ideal if you plan to run your business alone. There is less paperwork involved in getting registered, all the profits earned are yours, however you are also liable for any debts - meaning if you took a loan from the bank and your business went bankrupt, then your personal assets could be liable for repossession by the bank. You are also required to register for VAT (if based in the UK) depending on whether or not your annual sales are expected to reach a threshold of £85,000 (HMRC, 2018).

So if you believe your sales for the first year will be less than £85,000, then there's no need to register for VAT, however you still have the option to voluntarily register.

Partnership **-** This is ideal for a business being run by two people**.** In a partnership, you and your partner (or partners) personally share responsibility for your business and are both liable for any debts. This includes: any losses your business makes, bills for things you buy for your business, like stock or equipment. Partners share the

business's profits, and each partner pays tax on their share. (HMRC, 2018). The VAT rules again are similar to the above.

Private Limited Company or LLC- This is ideal for those who plan on not just running the business themselves but having other shareholders and stakeholders involved. For example if you are thinking about obtaining funding from investors or lenders (who usually require a percentage of your company in return), or plan to hire employees in the future, then it's probably best to register as a limited company.

As a company you can also pay yourself dividends which are usually not taxed. You must appoint people to run the company (called 'directors') and register (or 'incorporate') it with Companies House (UK) or the IRS (USA).

As a director of the company, you can also become an employee. This means that personal income and business income are separate when it comes to paying tax. You will also be required to pay Corporation tax every year at the end of the year and VAT quarterly if you register for it and PAYE if you plan to hire an employee.

As a limited company you are separate from your business, meaning any debts incurred by the business do not directly affect your own personal assets. You can either register your company yourself, or hire an accountant or solicitor to help.

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are based outside the UK, then check with your relevant local government on the company registration process. For US based readers please check with https://www.irs.gov*

Registering Your Business

Now you are getting close to your big launch, it probably is a good idea to start looking into getting your business registered. You can register your business either as a sole proprietorship, partnership or Ltd company (LLC). Below are the different platforms you can look into registering with for different countries.

FOR UNITED STATES

SOLE TRADER OR PARTNERSHIP

If you are using your REAL name as your business name, then there is no need to register. However if using a fictitious business name or anything other than your real name as your business name, then you need to file a DBA (Doing Business As) at:

https://www.legalzoom.com/business/business-formation/dba-overview.html

ALL OTHER COMPANY TYPES - If registering as an LLC or Corp, you MUST register your business. More information on getting started can be found at: https://www.legalzoom.com/business/business-formation/llc-overview.html

FOR UNITED KINGDOM

SOLE TRADER OR PARTNERSHIP

Register as Self Employed, whether using a fictitious name or your REAL name at: https://www.gov.uk/log-in-file-self-assessment-tax-return/register-if-youre-self-employed

ALL OTHER COMPANY TYPES

If registering as an Ltd or Plc you MUST register your business with Companies House at:

https://www.gov.uk/topic/company-registration-filing/starting-company

FOR OTHER COUNTRIES, PLEASE CONSULT YOUR RELEVANT STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR MORE INFORMATION.

PLEASE NOTE: This information is valid at the time of publication and may be subject to changes moving forward. Always double check with your relevant governmental websites or legal adviser for any latest changes.

Sellers' Permits

A sellers' permit is also known as a sales tax license, wholesale license, resale license, sales tax certification and retail license. There appears to be a little confusion around obtaining a seller's permit and whether or not you need one for your online boutique.

As a rule of thumb, if you plan on buying products wholesale and reselling or are physically handling products you sell (e.g. through making your own products) then a seller's permit is required. A sellers permit is also required if you plan on charging or collecting sales tax on your products. In the UK this is equivalent to a VAT registration number.

If you plan on dropshipping, then obtaining a seller's permit may be optional especially given the fact that you are not physically buying, reselling and handling any shipment yourself. However, bear in mind that sellers' permits laws tend to differ for each country and state and it's best to check with your local state or government to establish what each process involves in more detail.

So essentially, if you plan on buying and reselling, physically handling products or plan on charging sales tax on your products, then a sellers permit or VAT registration number is required by law.

You can check with the IRS (USA) or Gov.uk (UK) to find out more information on registering for a sellers permit or a VAT number.

Your EIN Number

An EIN number also refers to an **Employer Identification Number**. This is the terminology commonly used in the United States of America. In the UK this is similar to the **PAYE (Pay as You Earn)** Reference number.

An EIN number is usually required for businesses that plan on hiring and paying staff. So if you are a sole trader working alone with no employee, then an EIN number is usually not required, instead you can use your social security number.
If you plan on registering your business as an LLC or hiring staff, then you can register for an EIN at:

https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/do-you-need-an-ein

Please note that, sometimes wholesalers may request for an EIN number in addition to a sellers permit before you can buy from them, so endeavor to check this with your wholesalers. The same rule applies to those in the United Kingdom. So if you are a sole trader working alone with no employee, then usually a PAYE Reference is not required. However if you plan on hiring staff, then you can register for a PAYE Reference at: https://www.gov.uk/register-employer

DISCLAIMER: Always double check with your relevant governmental websites or legal adviser for any latest changes to these rules.

LET'S GET TO ACTION

Please go through the relevant platforms to get your business registered and any other paperwork applicable to you. If in doubt please seek the help of an accountant or legal professional.

☐ I **CONFIRM** that I am now working on the legal requirements for my boutique.

STEP 9 - GETTING CUSTOMERS & DRIVING SALES

Congratulations! You have just launched an online boutique that can help generate you money on autopilot, and potentially scale to millions or more. Your job moving forward is to fuel your business with as many leads of hungry buyers as you possibly can.

One of the biggest problems every business owner faces out there is how to get customers and convert them to sales. Now there are a countless number of ways to get customers to your boutique business, but here are a few of them;

Wear Your Brand

This is a great marketing strategy for promoting and advertising your online boutique. The truth is, people are ten times likely to buy from you if you personally use the products you sell. After all, why should they trust buying the product from you, if they've never seen you use that product before? This is not to say you should use or wear every single product you sell in your store, but if you can carry at least a piece of your brand with you in some form, this could be extremely beneficial to your business.

Wearing your brand is a pull marketing strategy in that it pulls customers to you rather than you constantly pushing products out to their faces. Now assuming you have an online store selling women's clothing, and then decide to wear one of your dresses for an event. Whilst at the event, someone suddenly walks to you and compliments your dress, asking you where you got it from?

You can then refer them to your website, hand them your business card to go purchase theirs too. Now you've just won yourself a customer who was pulled to your product through you merely wearing your brand - and this happened with no extra marketing effort. Imagine if 3 other people fell in love with your dress, that's even more money in your pocket. So always find a way to wear or try and incorporate your brand everywhere you go with you!

Collaborate with Inflencers

In this new digital era, collaborating with social media influencers is now becoming a part of every company's digital marketing strategy. Social media influencers are typically people with a huge social media following or fans, be it on Facebook, Instagram, Youtube etc. Think of them as social media celebrities! Because influencers already have a large following of fans who trust them, companies benefit greatly from working with them through getting quick and fast exposure. The goal however is to work with influencers who are relevant to your niche.

So assuming that you have an online clothing store targeting plus size women, then ideally you want to work with plus size influencers since they are most relevant to your niche. If your niche is weight loss, you want to work with health and fitness influencers, etc.

To get started working with influencers around your niche, you can visit a popular social media platform such as **Instagram**. If selling plus size clothing, do a search on: #plussizeblogger #plussizemodel #plussizeinfluencer etc or other keywords around your niche. This should bring up different images. Click on the images, then visit the relevant pages to see how popular they are and what engagement their

profile is getting through comments, likes and views. Next check their instagram bio to see what they do and how you can get in touch with them.

You can also check to see if they already promote other brands on their page and this will give you a good indication on whether they work with brands or not.

Next, get in touch with a number of them either via direct instant-messaging or if they have a contact email on their bio, drop them an email introducing your business and find out if they will be happy to promote your business in return for a FREE product?

Chances are they will always say YES. After all, who doesn't want a freebie right? Once they receive the product, all they have to do is take some pictures and post on their page, referring all their fans to your business to purchase the products. Do bear in mind that some of the larger and more established influencers may charge you a fixed fee to promote your company to their audience - but this could be a powerful way to gain brand exposure quickly. I would advise against using very very large influencers and to stick to micro influencers with 10K - 100K followers especially when just getting started. The reason for this is because their audience is likely to be more focused and engaged in comparison to a celebrity like Kim Kardashian who may have a very mixed audience of male, female and even children following her for different reasons. Using her to promote your lingerie boutique for example may not appeal to a percentage of her audience. Plus can you begin to imagine the number of larger brands reaching out to her every single day to promote their products?

You can also do a Youtube search on your relevant niche and you should find a few different Youtube channels that produce content around your business area. Use search terms such as your niche then the term **reviews** after your key term, e.g. Plus size clothing haul, plus size clothing reviews, etc.

This will bring up Youtube channels of influencers currently reviewing other products around your niche. Next get in touch with them and see how you can equally work with them.

Other places to find influencers around different sectors are;

https://www.tribegroup.co/, https://www.socialbakers.com.

Using Brand Ambassadors

With this strategy you can turn your ideal customers into your marketing tool. This is a strategy I've personally used for several of my brands. Unlike using popular influencers, you can find a group of people who are your "**ideal target customer**". Send them some products for free or at a huge discounted value > 60% OFF (*not available to others*). Then get them to wear or use your products, take pictures and share on their social media platforms.

What I realized was that so many of my brand ambassadors eventually became customers because they loved the products so much they wanted to come back for more. You can then use their content to promote your brand, use it as testimonials, post on your social media feeds and websites as social proof.

Now imagine you were selling a skincare product aimed at helping people get rid of acne. You send a sample out to 10 different acne sufferers for FREE in exchange for their post on social media, feedback and testimonials. They then try your product and get some amazing results. Would you agree with me that they will come back wanting to purchase even more? Now this is the power of giving out FREE or discounted products to your ideal target customer, they not only rave about your brand but become your die hard customers.

Optimize your Social Media Pages

Remember your brand message I asked you to note down earlier? Yes this is where you will be needing it. Now go to your Instagram, Facebook or social media platform you are using to promote your products.

In the description section, make sure you key in your brand message together with a link to your website to get people to purchase. When you do this, your social media profile will start doing the selling for you and only attracting the right people who are likely to become your customers.

Say for example your brand message was:

"*a women's clothing brand providing easy going outfits that will help new moms feel more comfortable in their bodies*".

This means a new mom visiting your profile is likely to follow you because that is exactly what they need and where they belong. This is the power of attraction marketing. At the end of the day you don't want dead followers or uninterested people following your account if they would never engage or purchase from you. It is better to have 1000 followers who are your ideal audience vs 1M followers filled with random people who may never purchase from your brand.

Share Valuable Content on Social Media

Don't be like that guy at the mall people run away from, or the door to door marketers people ignore every time because they already know that they are there for one reason - to try and sell something.

People love to shop but hate sleazy people looking to sell all the time. Focus on the 80/20 rule, 80% value and 20% selling. Build trust and people would naturally buy from you. So be sure to create valuable content on social media educating, inspiring and nurturing your audience.

Here are some content ideas;

- How to Style/Use your product
- Post a product picture/video and ask your followers to TAG someone who would love it
- This and That - A picture collage comparing two different products and asking people which one they would love
- Remind them to sign up to your email list
- Do a short video showing them the material of the product
- Behind the scenes of you making the product
- Behind the scenes of you packaging the product

If you are struggling with content ideas or looking for more content ideas for your online boutique or product based business, then you can checkout our 12 Month Social Media Content Planner for boutiques and product based businesses at:

www.runboutique.com/content

It tells you what to post every single day for 365 days a year - so you can be rest assured you will never run out of ideas.

Video Marketing

This is one of the most trusted methods of marketing because you get to connect with people easily - it's like speaking to people directly except it's virtual. You can use that opportunity to share more information about your products and offers.

Infact Instagram announced recently that they are heading more towards video content, especially pushing Reel content. This means if you invest more on video content, you have the potential to get your content seen by way more people than you will just posting regular pictures.

You can go live, create Instagram Reels, create youtube videos all offering value. Video content ranks better than any other form of content meaning you have the potential to attract a huge audience. If pictures speak a thousand words, then just imagine the power of videos. Would you trust someone more from posting a picture or video?

Tik Tok is also a great video marketing platform and can vastly increase your sales. You can create short value based videos educating your audience on your offers and getting them to sign up to your email list to learn more. You can learn more about **Tik Tok Marketing** here.

Networking is Key

In order to build an audience out there, you have to go out there to speak to people. Remember it's called "Social Media **Network**" for a reason. Now unlike the traditional way of going to networking events and shying away from people, the good thing about online networking is the fact that you can reach out to the masses worldwide. So find Facebook groups, and pages where your target customer congregates and start engaging with them - in a non spammy way of course.

Facebook Marketing

You can also use Facebook groups to build your email list. The goal is to find large groups in your niche and engage with members there (in a non-salesy way of course), then ultimately send them to your landing/sales page to grab their freebies or low ticket offers. You can also invest some money on Facebook ads to attract new customers even faster. It saves you all the stress and time trying to manually find new customers. Instead you pay Facebook something like $5 a day, they go out there and start bringing you hundreds of highly targeted customers daily.

Warning: Do not use paid Facebook ads without trying the organic (FREE) methods first because you will end up losing so much money with little to no return on investment. When running ads remember you are targeting complete strangers meaning you may get lots of traffic but no sales. If you want to see better results in your business, only run ads to scale what's already generating results and working in your business - not to make sales fast.

(**YOU CAN LEARN MORE IN-DEPTH ABOUT FACEBOOK MARKETING HERE**) or visit: www.runboutique.com/boutique-marketing/

Sell on Poshmark & Depop

Platforms such as Poshmark and Depop allow you to sell products easily to customers. These are also two of the largest social marketing platforms for fashion. However, using these platforms will only work well if you already have some products in stock i.e. through buying wholesale or making your own products.

If using drop shipping, then what you could do is get some samples (e.g. one piece of each item so you have variation) from your dropship suppliers of the products you intend to sell on your website. Because you are purchasing these products at a very low price, chances are they won't cost you an arm and leg.

When a customer buys the product from you, simply ship it out with your flyers or business cards attached to it. You can then leave them a thank you note with a discount code to shop for more great deals on your website. Below is a good example;

"*Hey thanks so much for purchasing from me. If you are interested in more fabulous items like this, then feel free to checkout my website at* ***wyz.cm*** *where you can get 15% off your next order*"

This means next time the customer wants some products from you, they will go directly to your website to benefit from that fabulous discount. Chances are, they will then most likely check out your website for more products and keep coming over and over again for more in the future. You can join poshmark and Depop absolutely FREE at: **https://poshmark.com** and **https://www.depop.com**

Referrals

Referrals are a method of spreading the word by telling a friend to tell a friend. Let people know about your new business and let your friends tell others about your business. Referral marketing is a structured and systematic process to maximize word of mouth potential. Referral marketing does this by encouraging, informing, promoting and rewarding customers and contacts to think and talk as much as possible about their supplier, their company, product and service and the value and benefit the supplier brings to them and people they know.

Word of mouth is potentially the best form of marketing for a business and best of all, is probably the most cost effective! Also known as viral marketing, word of mouth lets your customers do the promotion for you which is the best recommendation that anyone can get. The BEST way to get people talking about your services is to GIVE them value first. The best sources for your referrals are your existing customers – these are the people who are loyal to you and have trusted you well enough to purchase from you.

A few ways to get them to refer to your brand is to offer them customers' discounts and rewards each time they refer a new friend to your boutique. Alternatively get them to leave reviews in exchange for an incentive.

That is how you get word of mouth going and get the attention of potential clients. Thereafter, it's just a matter of building a friendly relationship (not hard selling) with the people you meet and/or already know.

You'll be amazed at how easy it is and what great connections you'll make, along with the opportunities that will open up and bring you more clients!

Pop up Shops

Pop Up shops are another powerful way to promote and market your new online store. Pop-up retail is the temporary use of physical space to create a long term, lasting impression with potential customers. A pop-up shop allows you to communicate your brand's promise to your customers through the use of a unique and engaging physical environment while creating an immersive shopping experience (Shopify, 2018).

Truth is there are a lot of people that still want to see, feel, and touch products prior to purchasing them. And having a pop up shop offers just that. To set up a pop up shop you need to start by researching pop ups happening in your local area, then get in touch with the venues to secure a space. Alternatively if there are no pop ups in your area, why not set up your own pop up? Simply rent some space and invite other businesses to come promote themselves - at a small fee of course. Then promote your event as much as you can and get the ball rolling.

Pinterest

Pinterest is another powerful way of reaching out to thousands of customers online easily. People go on Pinterest every single day looking for inspiration and ideas on different things, from fashion ideas to weight loss recipes. Content is usually shared in the form of **pins** and **boards.** You can think of your board as an "Album" and your pins as the "Images" within that album.

So how is this beneficial to your business? Now assuming your online boutique was centered on "plus size clothing", then what you could do is register for a free Pinterest account and upload product images from your website.

This means if someone went on Pinterest (or even google) searching for ideas around plus size clothing, then your pins or boards are likely to show up, thereby linking them back to your website and consequently winning you a new customer. This works just like search engine optimization and can generate ongoing FREE website traffic for your business every single day. To get started with Pinterest, register for a FREE account at: https://www.pinterest.com.

Once registered, you can begin creating boards and pins with your images and relevant content. You can upload product images directly from your website into your Pinterest boards.

Remember to use the right titles and descriptions on your products in order to attract your target audience who are likely to find you easily not only through Pinterest, but also from doing Google searches. Each time you have some new products on your online store, remember to upload some product pins in your account to link them back to your online store.

(**YOU CAN LEARN MORE IN-DEPTH ABOUT PINTEREST MARKETING HERE**) or visit: www.runboutique.com/boutique-marketing/

STEP 10 - BUILD YOUR EMAIL LIST

When was the last time you went to a completely new website you've never heard about, or saw an ad on social media and immediately purchased a product from that company? And even if you did, it was probably because the product was super cheap or the company did a good job at selling to you (which happens very rarely)

Now this is one of the biggest problems most boutique and business owners face. They spend time creating amazing content on social media, going live, sharing videos, dancing on Tik Tok, running paid advertisements, getting so much traffic to your website but yet - little to no conversions to sales.

Why? Because you are targeting complete strangers who simply don't know about your brand well enough to purchase from you.

The best way to convert complete strangers to buyers is by nurturing them, building relationships with them and consequently getting them to buy from you. And this can be achieved through "**building an email list**".

Email marketing is a **solid form** of marketing and one that will bring you recurring customers over and over and over again. You obtain their emails and send deals, offers, discounts, promotions to keep them up to date with everything going on.

The beauty about offering incentives is the fact that not only do you build your email list, you also have the opportunity to give people a little taste of your product. And if they love your products, they will soon become recurring customers.

List building is vital for every online business. It is the most effective way of building loyalty and trust with your visitors in the long term. Truth is, most people will come to your website and when they leave, you will never hear back from them ever again or even know they ever visited your website in the first place. However, with list building you can capture their email addresses and get to keep these customers for GOOD.

The list building process is used by a lot of multi-million dollar companies to get customers and definitely a marketing strategy I highly recommend.

But how do you get these customers to subscribe? One easy way of getting them is offering them an incentive to subscribe on your website for updates. Here are some examples of incentives you could offer people to sign up to your email list;

- An free ebook guide on how to style/dress up
- A challenge running for a few days e.g. weight loss challenge
- A discount code on your products - > 30% is an irresistible one
- FREE Product samples/testers giveaways
- A competition/product giveaway
- Offer Free shipping on a product
- For monthly subscriptions - offer the first month FREE

Once you have an incentive, the next step is getting an autoresponder. An autoresponder will help you automatically deliver your incentive via email marketing to your subscribers as soon as they subscribe. A great autoresponder software I will highly recommend is **Aweber.**

Aweber allows you to create pop ups and opt in forms, and automates the email marketing process for you. Once you have an autoresponder, it's time to create your pop up or sign up form on your website. This is simply a little box asking users for their name and email address in exchange for your free incentive above.

Once they confirm their subscription, they will then become stored in your list and you can send them regular emails, new product releases, courses, updates and other useful information. This is also used to build strong relationships with your subscribers.

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IMPORTANT NEXT STEPS & GETTING MORE HELP

I hope you've found this book useful so far in starting your boutique and driving sales to your new business. If you've been following through the actionable steps, you should have 90% of your boutique business covered and ready to go.

The goal of this book is to have you up and running in 10 simple steps. However if you don't want to go through the stress of putting things together or still need additional help with anything, then myself and my team will be happy to help you out. The Run Boutique Business Kit contains everything you need to launch and grow your boutique business. Here's just what you will gain access to;

- We design your own website and logo for you
- One Year Domain name and Web Hosting provided
- Access to our Supplier directory with 900+ vendors to choose from
- Access to Training Courses that help you market your boutique
- 12 Month Social Media Marketing Calendar
- We design an Instagram Content Marketing Strategy suited to your business
- 30 Days Instagram Marketing to help you build your following
- We create your email marketing follow up messages to help you nurture and build relationships with your audience
- Accounting and Bookkeeping template to help you keep track of your finances
- Access to one-on-one coaching to help you get started and drive sales
- Access to our private community where you can get support and connect with other members.

You can learn more about our done for you services and how we can help you at:

www.runboutique.com/kit/

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Denise Ulasi is an online entrepreneur and business coach. She started her first ever online business in 2010 selling information products online, but has since personally founded several online businesses including the **Run Boutique Academy** - an online platform that offers video courses for people looking into starting their own online clothing boutiques from scratch.

She has over 10 years' of combined experience working within the digital, financial, retail and banking sectors – with 6 years working within the online and digital sectors. Additionally she holds a first class honors degree in Accounting with Entrepreneurship as well as an Msc in Business Management with Entrepreneurship, a Diploma in Digital Marketing, AAT Qualified, and a wide range of experience working with entrepreneurs and start-ups as a digital consultant.

With close to 1 million views on her Youtube channel - the Startup Reine, and so much success in the digital space, her aim is now to build a community, inspire and empower others (especially women like her) into starting their own online businesses, creating success in their life and making their money work for them.