BOOSTing cross-border online sales of SHOES

Deliverable title: O1/A3 Training Methodology and Online Sales Strategies Definition

1. Contents

2. Purpose

The SME target group has certain characteristics which necessitate an SME oriented training methodology. In this case the training methodology will be action driven so that SMEs will be immediately able to see the relevance of each action to their workplace and understand the benefits from their implementation. The design of the training methodology will support a set of elaborated winning e-Commerce strategies for the footwear sector SMEs to increase online revenues from cross-border sales. Based on the winning practices, different e-Commerce strategies will be designed in response to the needs of the target groups and their implementation will be supported by the training methodology.

The purpose of the present document is:

- To describe the components of training programme addressed to SMEs

- To propose a training methodology on the subject of e-Commerce for online sales of shoes.

- To define the online sales strategies to be served by the BOOST4Shoes training.

The current report will set out the structure, content, methodology, delivery approach and all relevant aspects of the BOOST4Shoes vocational training system. The training methodology will describe the complete process facilitated by BOOST4Shoes

3. Training Methodology for SMEs

The current report will set out the structure, content, methodology, delivery approach and all relevant aspects of the BOOST4Shoes vocational training system. The training methodology will describe the complete process facilitated by BOOST4Shoes.

The training process for the SME will begin by accessing the platform which will visually introduce the SME to the basic concepts of e-Commerce and the potential of cross-border e-Commerce while depicting the most important pre-requisites to succeed in cross-border e-Commerce.

The SME will then invoke the online strategy Genie will guide the SME to the data entry process for the provision of the necessary data for the SME as a person (examples of input data may well comprise: age, languages, skills, ICT competence level, etc.) but also for its business (examples of input data may well comprise: type of footwear business, location, infrastructure, current practices, etc.)

The process will start by an evaluation of the SMEs current practices with regards to e-Commerce and the provision of what the SMEs e-Commerce practices could have been. Then, a detailed report will follow comprising all the actions that the SME can implement in order to realise its e-Commerce potential.

3.1 Relevant Stakeholders

Table 1: Relevant Stakeholders

Role	Responsibilities
Training Department Director	• Identify skills, knowledge and trainings needed by footwear SMEs in e-Commerce; • Consolidate training needs; • Create training plan for the organisation; • Create annual training plan; • Continuously evaluate and adjust the annual training plan.
Training Delivery Director	• Identify skills, knowledge and trainings needed by the footwear SMEs in e-Commerce; • Create training plan for the Delivery Group; • Update training plan for the Delivery Group.

Role	Responsibilities
Quality Manager	• Review in terms of quality of all deliverables and activities to ensure that all quality criteria are respected and the objectives of the training service are achieved; • Maintain and update the library that includes the training deliverables (i.e. Trainer's Guide, Trainee's Guide, Training Course Evaluation Assessment Form, Training Evaluation Report); • Monitoring the results gained from the trainee's and applying any corrections or improvements in the process.
Trainer	• Respect and follow predefined standards and procedures • Maintain your content expertise by being knowledgeable about the research, current practices, and future trends regarding the topic(s) you train • Know how to find, critically evaluate, and incorporate research into your workshop as appropriate • Be aware of copyright law and do not use materials in workshops that violate copyright law • Be actively involved in the process of becoming culturally competent and develop the knowledge and skills to include relevant cultural concepts in their training workshops

3.2 Phases of BOOST4Shoes Training System

A training strategy should leverage a blended approach for optimal results. Blended learning means a mix of different learning environments where methods, techniques and/or resources are combined. A blended learning can combine ILT, video conferencing or virtual classroom and/or any other methodology. An appealing teaser with video, animation and/or sound to invite and motivate users, followed by any combination of ILT, e-learning is an example of blended learning.

Practical access to resources: Training and documentation usually consist in planning, implementing and evaluating.

User documentation usage normally foresees self-help / peer assistance (online manuals, FAQs, IVR and forums) on Portals.

Elaboration of the support materials: Documentation and training, take fully part in the digitalisation process supported by the business. Writers can therefore draft documentation alongside developers to integrate as much information into the interface as possible (embedded user assistance). In order to improve quality, ISO/IEC 26514:2008 specifies the structure, content, and format for documentation, and

Erasmus+

also provides informative guidance for documentation style. It is independent of the tools that may be used to produce documentation, and applies to both printed documentation and on-screen documentation.

As in every training methodology we can identify the following distinct steps:

a) Identification of Training Requirements
Upon the commencement of the training process, the first task that will be performed will be a definition of the training requirements by analysing the scope of training and the target audience profile. It should be noted that training requirements will be usually defined in the context of skills management or continuous improvements activities.

b) Production of a Training Plan
Based on the requirements that will be identified in the context of the aforementioned task, a training plan will be produced that will comprise:

- The training courses will be conducted in accordance to the training plan. Training programs will be conducted allowing the trainees to participate actively in the programme, express their questions, express their preferences in the topics that they would like to be trained, etc. Hands-on training or tests to the reference environment may be also performed.
- A description of the training programme.
- A description of the training material and associated documentation that will have to be produced.
- The specification of scenarios that will be used in the BOOST4Shoes tool.
- A time-schedule for training.
- Training evaluation form(s) to be used in the context of training evaluation activities.

c) Training Execution
The training will be conducted in accordance to the training plan. Training will be conducted allowing the trainees to participate actively in the programme, express their questions, express their preferences in the topics that they would like to be trained, etc. Hands-on training or tests to the reference environment may be also performed. Additional, each trainee will execute the pre-defined scenarios in the Online Strategies Genie of the BOOST4Shoes.

d) Training Evaluation
At the end of each training, each trainee will be asked to complete the evaluation form, aiming at the elicitation of information regarding the confidence that trainees have in their skills obtained through the programme. The answers provided in the evaluation forms when processed, along with the evaluation

results of the training environment, may result in the determination of further training requirements that will have to be satisfied by organising additional training sessions.

3.3 Structure of the BOOST4Shoes Training Programme

Delivery platform details

The delivery platform will comprise 2 layers facilitated inside the BOOST4Shoes platform. The SMEs will need to provide certain input in layer 1 to be used by the Online Sales Strategies Genie to personalise the training programme. Layer 1 will contain situational and behavioural questions such as the ones below:

1. In which type of footwear business does your (future) webshop belong?
2. Do you have your target group defined well?
3. If yes, does this target group constitute one solid group or does it encompass mutually exclusive subgroups?
4. If one solid group, does this apply cross-border too?
5. How would you/ do you conduct your marketing: rather bottom-up or rather top-down?
6. Does your product range present one solid whole or does it encompass mutually exclusive products?

All questions will be multiple choice questions and based on the responses the second layer will be customizable to the SME's needs.

Layer 2 will display the e-Commerce modules of BOOST4Shoes as filtered by sector (Q1) and ranked in importance through the answers to the other Layer 1 questions.

The modules will be presented with the names of the actions that can be chosen. Each action will be accompanied by indicators (in symbols) of multiple categories:

- Technical skills needed (low-medium-high)
- Webshop level (starting-established-well-developed)
- (Optionally) Language skills needed (low-medium-high)
- Action type (quick win-simple action-simple action requiring investment-action with prerequisite- action with prerequisite requiring investment)

All these action names, grouped under a module, will be clickable. When clicked an individual action will be opened. For certain actions, additional content may be necessary in which case the SME can consult a dedicated tab of the action card.

Online Sales Strategies Genie Functions

The Online Strategies Genie will be built around the "hardcoded" strategies for online sales. In other words the Genie's purpose is to gather input from the SMEs, process the input in relation to the requirements for the implementation of the online strategies to be elaborated and produce as output a personalized training plan for SMEs to achieve these strategies in a step-wise approach.

To this end, data from layer 1 questions will be used to depict the "AS-IS" situation regarding the footwear SME's strategies and its cross border e-Commerce aspirations in order to rank the e-Commerce modules of layer 2 and present them in order of importance to each footwear SME. Then, SMEs start an interactive learning process by selecting modules and actions to implement. All actions comprise certain features, such as:

- Technical skills needed (low-medium-high)
- Webshop level (starting-established-well-developed)
- (Optionally) Language skills needed (low-medium-high)
- Action type (quick win-simple action-simple action requiring investment-action with prerequisite- action with prerequisite requiring investment)

3.4 Delivery Approach

Trainees' interaction with the platform

Initially, the interaction of the footwear SMEs' with the platform is guided. Through layer 1 questions, they are guided on how to provide the needed information to the tool in a structured manner.

It is worth considering to accompany the questions with additional information (for example the "I" icon could be next to each questions providing more information about what is required on mouse over).

Then, in layer 2, the interaction is initiated by the SME who will see the e-Commerce modules presented in order of importance and accept it by selecting actions from the first module or start selecting actions from other modules. Again the SME may provide input to the tool regarding actions already implemented in which case the SME marks them as completed and they disappear from the list of pending actions.

Invoking an action which is accompanied by additional content for its implementation may lead the SME to access a specific tab of the action card (e.g. tab titled "Additional Resources").

As said, the training programme will be an action based or else goal based training programme and its structure will address the main objective of delivering personalised training materialising through actions belonging to the following categories:

➢ Simple actions that can be implemented immediately without an investment.

➢ Simple actions that can be implemented immediately but require an investment.

➢ Actions that have prerequisites (other actions need to be implemented first), but require no investment.

➢ Actions that have prerequisites and require an investment

So by "content" we will refer to content, in any form, which will support the implementation of each of the identified actions in support of the personalised online strategy by footwear SMEs. Therefore, the content serves the purpose of guiding the SMEs for the successful implementation of chosen actions. As such, the first step in the content development process is the description of the actions. For this purpose, it is proposed that a properly structured excel file is used where each action is described in a separate worksheet and associated to one or more questions asked by the Genie when the SME initiates the flow (see delivery approach below)

The information captured at the level of each action may well comprise the following fields:

- **Abstract**: A very brief description of the action and a link to the supporting training content for the implementation of the action ("Read more about")

- **General description of the specific action**: A more extended description of the action and the activities it comprises but still no actual implementation info which should be part of the supporting training content

- **Action Type**: The categorisation of the action (used for filtering) according 4 categories (simple actions that can be implemented immediately without an investment, etc.)

- **Connected Actions:** If the Action Type indicates that this action has prerequisites then it is very likely that there are connected actions that need to be implemented first.

- **The time required to implement a solution**: An estimation of the time required to implement a solution

- **Positive and negative part of the solution**: Potential benefits and drawbacks from implementing the action

- **Estimated exploitation** (e.g. operation cost reduction, shortening of delivery times): Information about tangible benefits

- **ICT Competence**: Low, Medium, High

- **English language skills**: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced

- **Web shop level**: Starting, Established, Well-developed

- **Informative text** to be used by the Genie to provide additional information to the SME about the action (probably in the form of a tooltip).
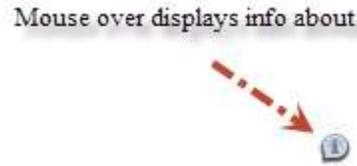
Figure 1: Envisaged outlook of the Online Strategies Genie-Question Example

An excel template will be designed for this purpose and provided for consideration and commenting to the partners so that it will be clear to all content authors how to document actions.

Supporting Content Structure (Read More About)

Most of the actions will require additional information for the SME user to be able to implement the action. This information will be in the form of training content specific to the action and it will be delivered in various formats ranging from PDF to videos, interactive content, animations, etc.

Even though there is not going to be one unique structure for each "Read More About" item, it is important to define a range of different options so that the most efficient format can be selected depending on the actual action. So, following the description of all the actions in the excel file a table will be created listing the "Read More About" elements of the supporting content for each action.

3.5 Inputs and Outputs

As input are considered:

- Planned/Unplanned needs for footwear SME trainings;
- Training subject provided.

As outputs are considered:

- Provision of training to footwear SMEs
- Training documentation (including training lesson plan, guide etc.);
- Feedback received by the trainees though the evaluation forms
- Feedback received by the trainers of footwear SMEs for the assessment of value gained from the trainings.

4. Online Sales Strategies

4.1 Context

21st century challenges require new approaches for VET. VET in Europe is constantly evolving, as modern skills are required and new vocational profiles emerge. The footwear sector makes a significant contribution to EU economy. In EU, it provides 290.000 jobs through approximately 20.000 enterprises, mainly SME (about 95%), with a turnover of €26 billion and an annual production of almost 590.000 shoes. Leather footwear, in particular, accounts for 72% of EU production. Spain, Portugal, Italy, Romania and Poland together represent now about 85% of the total number of EU footwear companies.

In 2015, the annual Turnover from retail sale of footwear and leather goods in EU-28 was almost €46 billion, increased by 15% compared to 2008 (almost €40 billion for EU-27). Consumption in the 28 EU countries increased to € 23,5 billion in 2014, representing a compound annual growth rate of 2.9% between 2010 and 2014. The 5 leading countries (Germany, Italy, France, UK, and Spain) account for 75% of EU footwear consumption (sources: CBI & Eurostat).

In Europe, consumers buy more footwear (and clothing) than anything else online. Almost every footwear brand has a web shop or uses existing online sales channels. Retailers are forced to keep up with e-commerce and their physical shops are losing traffic. In Turkey, online sales tripled, from a mere 0,8% in 2009 to 2,5% in 2014.

During recent years, shoe retailing stakeholders have identified those changes which reflect to both the existence of crucial skills gaps within their market and the emergence of new skills, competencies and qualifications that create modern professional profiles.

At the same time customers are ever more demanding, especially when it comes to e-Commerce [consumers from Northern Europe shop primarily online, e.g. 87% of Internet users in IE. Source: http://bit.ly/1SZOW3i], while the regulatory framework setup by the EC [Small Business Act, Electronic Invoicing - http://bit.ly/1ma6Kuv] has made online cross-border sales of shoes so simple that it is now even practiced by small SMEs, but there are important challenges when it comes to customer satisfaction and the efficient and cost effective challenges of product returns.

The environment for e-Commerce is very positive with help from the EC [Small Business Act, Electronic Invoicing, Mini1SS, VoeS, Alternative Dispute Resolution and the Digital Contract Rules under the Digital Single Market Strategy - http://bit.ly/1ma6Kuv] to the benefit of businesses that can use e-Commerce to boost cross-border sales. However, the 2015 edition of the Consumer Scoreboard [http://bit.ly/1iIewur] shows that cross-border e-Commerce is still an under-developed market in Europe: 61% of consumers feel more confident buying online from their own country (61%) than from another EU country (38%).

There is a need to identify the skills gaps and modernise the professional profiles of the footwear sector and this is where BOOST4Shoes aims.

In order to boost cross-border sales by footwear SMEs it is necessary to help them understand how to attract foreign consumers. The digital marketplace is highly competitive with businesses in different countries competing for the same customers. As a result, businesses may find their margins reduced in the digital environment. However, there are several examples of businesses differentiating themselves through brand promotion, advertising strategies, and social networking, and maintaining profits in a highly competitive digital environment.

Use of the Internet as a sales channel to increase revenues from cross-border sales both within the EU and outside, thus improving the exporting performance of the sector is to the benefit of footwear SMEs and thus EU economy. This requires changing sales and marketing strategies and new types of organisation and knowledge about e-Commerce technologies.

BOOST4Shoes will develop the European Footwear Sector through development of the Online Sales Manager Profile, a professional capable of devising e-Commerce strategies to uncover the potential from a range of services available to a virtual, "border-less" online community with customers in different locations. In order to achieve its goals the project will develop a training path and related tools aiming to equip footwear professionals with the right skills to start doing business online, especially cross-border, increase revenues and reduce costs. The project contributes to the use of learning outcomes in the creation of curricula and educational programmes.

The distribution channels and the retail of shoes have evolved greatly over the last decade and significant differences exist across countries. Although, directly managing Internet sales is not the most important retailing activity, online sales have been increasing in the last decade. In particular, larger assortments, generally at better prices than traditional retailers, were really appealing in the weak economic situation. The main actors engaged in online shoe sales are e-retailers with a web store who may or may not be manufacturers themselves.

The advent of the Internet and e-commerce has also added another dimension to distribution. It is a fact now that the proportion of Internet shoppers has risen significantly. Although currently consumers are more likely to purchase online from national sellers/providers, this habit is expected to change as distance shopping is steadily growing since.

According to data received from national ecommerce associations, Ecommerce Europe estimates the number of B2C websites to have grown at a pace of 15 to 20% per year and set to grow even more given the growth foreseen in the upcoming markets in the South and the East, where B2C ecommerce is rapidly closing the gap with the more mature markets in North, West, and Central Europe.

Postal and private operators have reaped the fruits of the impressive growth over the past years of (B2C) ecommerce. Ecommerce Europe estimates the annual number of B2C parcels sent to customers domestically and across borders to other (European) countries at 3.5 billion, a number that will certainly continue to grow with the increase forecasted for B2C ecommerce in Europe.

2017-1-UK01-KA202-036733

4.2 Online Sales Strategies

The need analysis of the project concluded that the project should be focus on three skills to be mastered by e-commerce professionals of the footwear sector. These skills are presented on Figure 2.

Figure 2. Skills required to close the gap between the desired and current situation

Erasmus+

The strategies presented here below follow the needs analysis study and have as main target to close the different gaps between the desired situation and the current situation analysed in the footwear sector regarding e-commerce.

Figure 3. Online Sales Strategies

Figure 3 briefly presents seven main strategies for running a successful e-Commerce business. The strategies are descripted below:

Go Mobile!

According to research of Eurostat[1], the degree of Internet access varies among EU Member States, ranging from more than 90% of households in Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden, to less than 55% in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. In 2012 there were still significant disparities in broadband take-up by households, with a rate of only around 50% of households in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania.

However, Bulgaria and Romania showed impressive recent growth. The proportion of households with broadband connections in these countries doubled between 2010 and 2012.

---

[1] Source: Ecommerce Europe, 2013

Erasmus+

Between 2008 and 2012, the highest growth – more than 30% – was recorded in the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia.

Top 5 European countries in terms of Internet access as a percentage of the population in 2012:

1. Iceland (95%)
2. Netherlands (94%)
3. Norway (93%)
4. Luxembourg (93%)
5. Denmark (92%)

For the European Union (EU28) the number of Internet-users is estimated at 378 million, or 75% of the population of the European Union. According to Ecommerce Europe estimates, in 2012 the number of European e-shoppers reached 250 million for the whole of Europe and 195 million in the European Union. This means around 47% of the total number of all Internet-users in Europe and 52% of all Internet-users within the European Union.

According to Ecommerce Europe, m-commerce in Europe grew to €17 bn or 5.5% of total e-sales in 2012 and is set to explode in 2013. Year 2012 can be seen as the first year of confirmation of the important place m-commerce will take in total ecommerce sales.

Ecommerce Europe expects that 2013 will be the year of the definitive break-through of mobile and m-commerce. The fast pace of mobile commerce growth is helping to drive overall ecommerce growth by converting potential bricks-and-mortar sales to digital sales for consumers using their smartphones and tablets while shopping in-store.

In regards to footwear manufacturers they all face increasing competition. The marketplace is evolving, and with-it sales professionals must adapt quickly by identifying and seizing opportunities. Many have either replaced or are in the process of replacing their basic order-taking tools with sophisticated sales tools to improve sales. New innovative technologies are being deployed to improve sales efficiency and on the same time enhance customer experience. Virtual showroom mobile applications are now available and can free sales teams from their reliance on paper catalogs and lift the sales experience to a new level of sophistication.

The current strategy "Go Mobile" targets to enhance the overall buying service. New mobile technologies can be used to provide additional benefits and address different needs (Communications and media, Marketing tools, Payment tools, Customer and personal service, Data analysis etc). Therefore, it is important to understand the principals of m-commerce and start making necessary plans for adopting mobile technologies to footwear businesses.

Promote!

If an e-Commerce website is not promoted, customers won't be able to find it. A variety of free and paid advertising methods are available online for this purpose.

The approach could be step-wise, as follows:

Step 1: Apply Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to an e-Commerce website. This technique makes it easier for search engines, such as Google and Bing, to find the website. Sprinkle relevant keywords throughout your website to attract search engines. For example, if you sell second-hand shoes, use keywords and phrases like "online thrift store" and "buy used shoes." Don't overuse Flash or Javascript. Search engines have difficulty "seeing" this type of content.

Step 2: Start and maintain a blog that relates to your e-Commerce website. For instance, if you sell shoes on your website, write articles about new shoe technologies, brands and models on your blog. Link the blog and the e-Commerce website together. If a reader likes your blog, he may visit your website.

Step 3: Find forums related to your e-commerce website. Use your website's URL as your forum signature, if allowed to do so. Participate regularly in forum discussions. Get to know other posters and tell them about your website.

Step 4: Add your website to Google Places and other directories if your business has a physical location. Google Places works best if you're trying to attract local customers.

Step 5: Look for other websites related to your e-Commerce site. Ask the site owner if they would like to link to your website. If they agree, return the favour by putting a link to their site on yours.

Step 6: Use the power of social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, to share your e-Commerce website with others. Make a Facebook page dedicated to your e-commerce site and encourage customers to become your fans. Use Twitter to tweet about your sales, special offers and news related to your site.

Step 7: Create business cards and pamphlets with your e-Commerce URL printed on them. Hand them out whenever appropriate.

Step 8: Ask existing customers to tell their friends about your website. In exchange, offer a discount on a future purchase.

Step 9: Buy Pay-Per-Click (PPC) ads. These targeted ads appear in search results. If someone clicks on the ads, they visit your site and you pay a fee. This type of advertising is quite effective, but often expensive.

The current strategy "Promote" addresses the "Marketing tools" need identified in O1/A2. The execution of various promotion activities according to a proper plan can direct and significantly increase the rate of visits to the company website and online store.

Achieve "C"-Commerce!

This refers to customer oriented e-Commerce and can be achieved via 4 Steps, based on a recent Accenture study

1. Adopt a customer viewpoint: The only way to properly deliver to a customer is to know their motivations and expectations, and then making business decisions based on this heightened customer viewpoint to meet or better yet exceed their needs and ultimately benefit sales. When following this rule,

companies can take a huge step toward ensuring all the B2B, B2C, and multichannel marketing strategies work toward this same goal.

2. Create a new organizational framework: Extinguish silos and create the framework for an integrated channel experience by establishing a new organizational blueprint with inputs from across the business. A variety of members should be seated at this new collaborative roundtable – CMO, CIO, CSO, etc. – to create a well-rounded and seamless c-commerce approach for the customer. This strategy will also help stop each channel from cannibalizing each other or competing for the same customers. This new approach can be challenging and may require a cultural shift within the business, but it is vital for everyone who has a stake in this approach to be heard.

3. Tap technology: Companies should focus on developing an integrated digital platform that is well understood and used by the entire organization, across brand and geographies. The platform should also be scalable and adaptable that will grow with a company as technology evolves and allows for continuous testing to drive innovation.

Analytics is also a key ingredient when it comes to developing an IT and commerce strategy as the insights garnered from consumer data can help multiple departments, from sales and marketing to supply chain, to make educated decisions that could positively impact future business and the bottom line.

4. Nurture external relationships for your customers: Engage with external channels (partners, affiliates and franchises) that sell your products or services for yet another way to provide the customer with a seamless, easy and positive shopping experience. This can be done in a number of ways and a few examples include sharing product information with key retail partners to use on their sites where most customers shop, enhance websites with information that makes buying easier even if customers don't purchase from that website directly, and include trade promotions or digital coupons redeemable at retailers. If a company's commerce roadmap isn't up to par with a customer's expectations, the brand could encounter a drop in loyalty, a loss in sales, or negative comments on social media that could domino to other customers and impact further purchasing decisions. To gain a competitive advantage by creating greater value for the customer, companies need to develop a commerce strategy focused on customer behaviour across channels that can be implemented at scale.

The current strategy "Achieve "C"-Commerce!" addresses the "Customer and personal service" need identified in O1/A2. The strategy targets to add the customer viewpoint in the company's business plan and provide all necessary knowledge for the proper client management.

Attitude to deliver!

International deliveries opening up markets outside of the country is now viewed by many as the holy grail due to the fact that, in a recession, this initiative has generated significant revenue to retailers from a standing start. The majority of retailers, large and small, offer some kind of international despatch. As e-tailers become more sophisticated and new 'hybrid' international delivery services become available (low cost, but fully tracked), then we should see inter-continental commerce rise significantly.

In summary, the growth and sophistication of delivery offered by e-tailers is still advancing significantly. We can see a theme of e-tailers tailoring their offers to their customers' habits, routines and tastes. The introduction of locker boxes is encouraging. Customers can now order much later than previously to receive a next day delivery. There is even an uptake of same day services.

Retailers are recognising the importance of delivery as part of the overall ecommerce experience and the need to provide a range of delivery options. A missed delivery is annoying for the consumer and costly to the retailer. The convenience of knowing when a delivery can be expected is shown to be increasingly valuable with nominated day and Saturday delivery options offered by more sites.

Next day delivery is now offered by the majority of sites in acknowledgment of the demand for swift gratification.

Meanwhile retailers, are continuing to test the market appetite for same day immediate demand for their products.

Setting expectations and maximising the chances of a successful delivery is a win-win for both customer and retailer.

Some key points to be aware of regarding delivery:

- Offer international delivery
- Make the delivery charges affordable
- Provide a better guide to customs charges
- Ensure payment works
- Be flexible
- Be clear about where you deliver
- Ensure delivery promise is kept
- Think about returns and refunds
- Enhance your customer service
- Support address capture

The current strategy "Attitude to deliver!" addresses the "Customer and personal service" need identified in O1/2. The current strategy aims to increase the customer satisfaction and on the same time to increase customer's trust and build a stable client base.

Serve and Protect!

The EU's 'cyber security' Agency ENISA, (the European Network and Information Security Agency) has issued a white paper on Safe Online Shopping. The paper analyses the anatomy of 'Online Shopping', and warns on the risks and threats. It provides different countermeasures and guidelines to consumers in the form of 5 'golden rules' on how to shop safely online. The paper also provides a comprehensive checklist

for the online seller on how to operate secure online business. As many citizens lack trust in online purchases, this report increases awareness of the real risks and how to tackle them.

The paper concludes that online shopping will continue to be an increasing global trend. Yet, the biggest barrier is the fear of potential fraud or identity theft. This fear still keeps millions of consumers from buying goods or services online. This survey shows that 1/3 of those not having used the Internet for e-Commerce had concerns about payment security. Another 30 % had privacy and trust concerns. As 'Trust and security' is one of the six major themes of the Digital Agenda for Europe, this fear underlines the last barrier for a bigger online economy.

The paper gives a comprehensive overview of the definition, history, the main drivers and trends in online shopping. It also looks into e.g. banks payment services, the underlying Internet Infrastructure Services and online/fee fraud.

The 5 'golden rules' for consumers cover the following points:

- Tips on avoiding fraudulent sites

- How to protect your data when shopping online

- Tips for safe transactions when paying online

- Overview of legislation that protects online customers

- How to deal with completion of the sale issues

It is essential for cross-border retailers to be up-to-date regarding the various laws that regulate consumer transactions and to provide facts to their customers regarding their adherence to regulations and commitment to data protection.

The current strategy "Serve and Protect!" addresses the "Payment tools" need identified in O1/A2. This strategy will help customers gain trust on the online payment systems by integrating secure and innovating payment methods.

Attention to detail!

Attention to detail refers to the overall service provision and may comprise specific delivery options, communication, etc.

Delivery flexibility

Many retailers are still testing the price sensitivity of delivery options in the market with significant differences developing between sectors as competitors follow each other's initiatives. Standard delivery is alive and well and on the whole recognised as having a value which can be discounted for promotional activity to drive an immediacy to purchase or to increase the basket size.

Consumers can expect to pay for the convenience of knowing when their purchased product will arrive, particularly if a Saturday delivery is required but many standard delivery orders arrived within a couple of days.

Communication

There is a reduction in the overall publishing of contact email addresses and phone numbers for customers to enquire about products and services. As consumers become more familiar and comfortable with e-Commerce it may be less necessary however, more alarmingly, responses to consumer emails typically take more than 24 hours and many enquiries are not answered at all.

SMEs should pay attention to:

- Customer service phone lines

- Twitter monitoring and responses to enquiries directed to the @tag

- Text messages with details to remind the customer when to expect their delivery and offer the ability to reschedule if required.

The current strategy "Attention to detail!" addresses the needs "Communications and media", "Marketing tools" and the "Customer and personal service" identified in O1/A2. "Attention to detail!" should be considered in order to enhance the quality of service provided to the customer. This strategy can be applied in practically all situations thus providing the company with a competitive edge.

Mine your data!

This refers to employing business analytics for extracting useful information from all data available in order to increase sales and grow. The first step in the process is to establish KPIs for e-Commerce which need to be monitored.

Exemplary KPI's comprise:

- Unique visitors

- Total visits

- Page views

- New visitors

- New customers

- Total orders per day, week, month

- Time on site per visit

- Page views per visit

- Checkout abandonment

- Cart abandonment

- Return rate
- Gross margin
- Customer service open cases
- Pay-per-click cost per acquisition
- Pay-per-click total conversions
- Average order value
- Facebook —talking about this‖ and new Likes
- Twitter retweets and new followers
- Amazon ratings, response and order turnaround time, and open cases
- Email open, click, and conversion rates
- Referral sources: percent from search, direct, email, pay-per-click, other

Monitoring

If a dashboard that is capable of displaying most of the chosen KPIs is not available — this usually requires a higher-end, highly integrated system — then KPIs can be pulled from all monitoring tools and dashboards into a spreadsheet on a weekly or monthly basis. This will provide a snapshot of the historical performance that identifies seasonal trends and necessary troubleshooting if KPIs deviate from their normal ranges.

Peaks and Valleys

KPIs are also useful to check normal cycles. In a simplified example, if suddenly there is a bump of new customers without obvious explanation, it is useful to look at the social media activity or referral KPIs to identify new traffic sources. Perhaps the "talking about you" KPI in Facebook is high because of a new product someone is talking up. Likewise, if gross margins are suddenly much lower, it may be because cost of goods sold has increased or because more customers are taking advantage of free shipping. In short, use of dashboards or any other tools that can be used to monitor KPIs on a daily basis if possible, is important.

The current strategy "Mine your data!" addresses the needs "Marketing tools", "Data analysis", "Sales management" and ""Product Strategy" identified in O1/A2. A proper analysis of the available data can reveal useful information that can be used to develop successful marketing strategies and thus increase sales.

2017-1-UK01-KA202-036733

4.3 e-Commerce Lifecycle Elements

The online sales strategies identified will be materialised through the identification and documentation (OSM course) of a series of action pertinent to the elements of the shoe retail e-Commerce lifecycle, namely: Ordering, Payment, Delivery, Communication, Overall Service, Promotion.

Main points considered for materialising each strategy through actions:

- Utilisation of social media through engagement, influencing of user opinions, blogging, etc.

- Online product reviews by consumers affect sales.

- Experienced online shoppers select online retailers who do not charge delivery, have a good online reputation and a fast and reliable delivery.

- Retailers investing in omnichannel strategies will reap the benefits.

Ordering
1. Consumer reviews
2. Online reputation
3. Powerful search
4. Product suggestions

Payment
1. Popular payment methods
2. Security considerations

Delivery
1. Detailed delivery tracking
2. Multiple delivery options
3. Prompt response to delivery queries
4. Flexibility in returns
5. Information about customs charges

Communication
1. Customer service phone lines
2. Live Chat
3. Delivery details via SMS
4. Responding to direct messages in social media

Overall Service
1. Discounted/free delivery
2. M-Commerce integration
3. Rich online experience
4. Gift wrapping

Promotion
1. Utilising analytics
2. Social media monitoring and engagement
3. Customer profiling
4. Paid placements
5. SEO
6. Newsletter