

# Boosting Online Conversion Rates

Shirley Tan, Founder of AmericanBridal.com now TheKnot.com



55 2nd Street, 2nd Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
415 520 3491 tel  
415 520 3420 fax  
privacyseals@truste.com  
www.truste.com

## MINIMIZING PURCHASE DELAY

### Purchase Delay Defined

Purchase delay is defined as, the number of days or hours it takes for your customer to return to your website to actually make the purchase. There are no industry standards for this metric , it can take minutes, hours, or even months.

Understanding your customer’s shopping patterns and buying cycle is crucial to reducing purchasing delay.

### Natural Flow

To minimize purchase delay and pause, your website should be well structured. It should be intuitive, logical, and natural for your customer on what actions you want them to take on your site. For example, first click a category, then a product, then “add to cart”, next click check out button, and finally confirm purchase. This flow should be seamless.

### Complete Product Info

Another important piece is having complete information on product pages such as sizes, color options, shipping availability, shipping charges, are the items in or out of stock,

### Appropriate Imagery

Clean, clear photographs of your products always help the sales process, especially when shoppers can zoom, rotate, and even change color options and trim. Use graphics or drawings only as a last resort as it can cause shoppers to question, pause, and abandon the purchase flow.

To ensure satisfaction beyond the initial purchase, also try to keep the pictures appropriately and clearly scaled so shoppers who do make the “Add to Cart” purchase decision actually get what they think they are getting.

### Trust

Payment options, and ample, easy to find contact info are simple ways to build trust. Professional site design as discussed above is another way. Consider FAQs, user reviews, feedback mechanisms, and other “deeper” methods for shoppers to investigate your site and products.

Consider again third-party trust seals that accelerate shopper interaction and transaction times with your site.

## INCREASING CART CONVERSIONS

### Shipping Rates

Unknown, unclear, or unusually high shipping rates are one of the biggest culprits causing high shopping cart abandonment. Ideally, you want to display your shipping rates on the product page before the user even adds items to your cart. Your customer wants to know how much shipping will cost, what their delivery options are, and when they can expect their order to show up. Your goal here is to prevent “shipping rate sticker shock” when your customers enters your shopping cart.

#### *Tactical Tip:*

Study your data or log files. For those of you using Google Analytics, you can review your current goal funnel visualization data and compare it to historical data to see if your site funnel is improving or getting worse. If it's worse, one question to ask yourself is “Have you recently increased your shipping rates?”.

### Shopping Cart “Editability”

Make it easy to change out shopping cart items and ensuing pricing, discount, and shipping information. The key to reducing shopping cart frustration is to make it easy for the customer to swap out quantity, add more items or take out items out of the basket, change out their personal information like billing address or shipping address.

Ensure entered information in carts is preserved when the “submit” button is clicked. Users who click and discover that they have missed information and lost their entry will likely not start all over again - ever. Reprogram submit buttons to avoid this. Also avoid the use of reset buttons unless necessary. Lastly, ask for information that you really need.

### Use of Promotions

Make sure that if you are running a promotion on your site that you are consistent on promoting the coupon codes as well on your checkout page. Nothing is worse than having your customers stop in the shopping while looking for a current coupon code to use on your site. Where it makes sense, consider pre-populating your cart with a coupon code to avoid further distraction from the check out process.

Don't make your customer enter a free shipping code, if their order qualifies for free shipping, automate this step. Then you won't get customer service calls saying that they couldn't find the free shipping coupon but know that it exists and that you should credit them back the shipping charges. By making it easy on your customer, you're making it easy on yourself.

Evaluate your shopping cart cross-sell, many guru are touting that cross sells on the shopping cart pages helps increases AOV. But test this on your site, as it is different for each site, brand, and product set.

Average abandonment cart emails are sent within 6 days of the customer leaving. There is no specific industry standard, I would recommend that you don't do it too soon and don't always offer a coupon to return, perhaps the email can ask a question on why the customer didn't buy or take them to a short/quick survey.

On the "About page", consider a photo of your employees standing in front of your office or warehouse. This helps put a face to a name and to remind customers that they're dealing with real people.

**Why abandonment is down:**

	Ranking	
	Analysts	Marketers
Usability – making the cart work more easily	1	1
Optimizing product pages	2	4
Reducing price “surprises”	3	2
Identifying volume/time-based discounts/special offers	4	3
Perpetual shopping carts	5	6
Offering alternative payment options	6	7
Moving registration/offers to after the purchase	7	5

If you've done everything else, you can always try to create a sense of urgency using promotions like limited quantity or availability or gift with purchase are always enticing.

Finally, many shoppers use the cart as a placeholder for thinking about what they want to buy, so don't fret over your abandonment rates too much.

*Special thanks to the author of this section on Boosting Online Conversions, Shirley Tan, founder of AmericanBridal.com, now TheKnot.com.*

