

Building an Ecommerce Web Site

GreensboroNet is happy to offer this general guide to building a new Ecommerce Web site on GreensboroNet servers. No matter what your business, there are steps that everyone must complete to build a Web site. [Please review the Web Site Build document here](#) [PDF].

Step 1 – Set Up Secure Hosting

An ecommerce site should be hosted on its own IP address, that is, hosted securely. This enables “https” in the URL and is often required to perform ecommerce. Your site very often can be on a shared server using a static IP address. This adds a small monthly cost to your Web hosting.

Step 2 – Site Design Templates

We encourage ecommerce vendors to purchase templates from a variety of template providers. Although we are happy to build custom templates for your site, you will discover that pre-packaged templates can be significantly less expensive for your entire site launch costs.

Step 3 – Your Inventory Spreadsheet

Depending upon the nature of your product and options required by your store, you must provide a spreadsheet of your product inventory. This spreadsheet is critical to the site build and a good spreadsheet will keep your launch costs down.

We do not encourage you to pre-build your product inventory spreadsheet until we confer and look at your templates to determine what format the spreadsheet must be in for easy import into your online store. GreensboroNet will often provide a blank spreadsheet (with column headers so you know what goes into each column) for you to complete. This insures that your data is compatible with the database of your store’s inventory. We work hard to do it right the first time!

Step 4 – Merchant Account

Taking credit cards online requires an *online merchant account*. Even if you accept credit cards now, you might not have an online merchant account yet. GreensboroNet can help set that up for your business with a merchant account system that works perfectly with reputable online ecommerce.

You must choose if you want to accept VISA and MasterCard only, or if you also want to accept other cards, such as Discover, American Express, or even online checks. There are fees charged by the merchant account you select and they can be monthly fees as well as percentages of online sales. Please read the documentation carefully.

Step 5 – Authorizing Agent

Ecommerce requires that an online source verify that each credit card is valid. Not only does this protect your business, but also it reduces chargebacks on returned items and services and prevents fraud.

Most ecommerce templates are set up to work with only certain longstanding and reputable authorizing agents. GreensboroNet can connect your site to a secure authorizing agent.

There is a setup fee and a monthly fee that is charged by the authorizing agent. The setup fee is approximately \$100 and the monthly charge is approximately \$20. These charges are billed to your business' credit card.

Other Ecommerce

You can choose to use PayPal for ecommerce. PayPal acts as the merchant account and the credit card verifying agency all in one. You can log into PayPal, set up an account and read the rules and policies. Most ecommerce templates work with PayPal.

Choice for Authorizing Agent

The choice as to which sort of authorizing agent you want to use is up to you. We urge you to read the fine print and understand how much each one will cost.

Contact GreensboroNet

Once you have read all the material, you become a “better” client for GreensboroNet because you understand the terminology and the costs involved in an ecommerce site. Please contact us when you are ready to build your site and we'll be happy to work with you on the project.