



EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL FOR HANDICRAFTS

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EPCH ORGANIZED AN AWARENESS SEMINAR ON “E- COMMERCE” AT MORADABAD REGION (U.P.) AT EPCH OFFICE, MORADABAD ON 23rd JANUARY, 2014 (THURSDAY)

The EPCH organized an awareness seminar on E- “Commerce” at EPCH Moradabad regional office on 23rd January, 2014. The following key officials were present during above seminar:-

- 1. Shri Arvind Vadhera** **COA Member-EPCH**
- 2. Shri Paritosh Sharma** **Associate Professor (TMIMT) TMU.**

The seminar was chaired by Mr. Arvind Vadhera, COA Member-EPCH. Mr. Paritosh Sharma (TMIMT) TMU, Moradabad, a prominent speaker deliberated on e-commerce led exports with a detailed presentation.

During opening remarks, Mr. Arvind Vadhera, COA-EPCH stressed on the importance of E-commerce in present scenario. He further emphasized the need for E-Commerce to provide safe and secure business to the exporters. He was of the view that since India is amongst youngest countries in the world having 3rd largest population of internet users in the world; business through web portals offers huge opportunity to the exporters to widen their scope of business.

Mr. Paritosh Sharma from (TMIMT) TMU, Moradabad said on the occasion that the trend in the world trade is now electronic and based on internet, emails and similar system, e-commerce led exports have acquired added importance as these are not only found to be speedy but also less cumbersome. E-Commerce is referred as to buying and selling using the internet. It ranges from businesses receiving orders via their website through automated systems to control the supply chain from the initial customer contact right through to management of suppliers.

The seminar on ecommerce led exports was found to be of great benefit to the exporting community and most of the participants expressed keen interest in this system of business. Many questions were raised about the subject and were answered by the experts present in the seminar.

After detailed deliberations, the following major questions were raised by the participants:

QUESTION-ANSWER SESSION:

Q: What do I Need to Start an E-Commerce Site?

First of all, identify a product or service to sell. Then you need a Web site. This can either be an existing Website to which you can add E-Commerce capabilities, or you can build the site from scratch. Next you need some way of accepting on-line payments. This normally means credit cards, although there are other options for very small or low-volume sites. Lastly, but most importantly, you need to have a strategy for marketing your site and attracting customers. This is far harder than you might think.

Q: Can I do it by myself?

Yes of course you can, especially if your requirements are straightforward or you are on a limited budget. However, if you are planning a large site or have no previous experience, hiring a professional may well save you a lot of time and money. If you do build the site yourself, the trick is to know your limitations, keep things simple and concentrate on the priorities i.e. keeping the site easy to use, secure and reliable.

Q: How do I accept payments by credit card?

Firstly you need some secure method of collecting credit card details from your customer. Most storefront services or shopping cart software offers this facility. You then have the option of processing these details manually, or using an online credit card authorisation system to process the payments. This is obviously preferable, but there is an additional cost. Finally, you normally will require a Merchant Account with a bank or other financial institutions in which your payments can be deposited. Note that not all Merchant Accounts are suitable for Internet payments. It is possible to find payment processors who do not require a Merchant Account, however these companies inevitably have higher charges.

Q: How do I get customers to visit my site?

You have to work at it. Don't expect customers to come flocking to your Web-store once you set it up. Marketing is the hardest, but most important, part of selling on-line. You can use search engines, banner ads or advertising mailshots to attract customers. You can add content or community features to your site to try and increase traffic, and therefore increase the chance of making a sale. You can use off-line advertising. If you do decide to open up an E-Commerce operation, nine times out of ten it will be the effectiveness of your marketing that will make the difference between success and failure.

Q: Hasn't E-Commerce been a failure?

Not at all. Many on-line businesses are doing very well. It's true that many of the business that went on line at the height of the dotcom boom have either failed or have found things very difficult. In retrospect, these businesses owed their existence to hype and the easy availability of investment capital and were never really viable. Doing business on the Web isn't the easy option it's made out to be, but with planning, a certain amount of care, and a lot of hard work, it can be made to succeed.

Q: What will it cost?

Pretty much whatever you want to pay. The actual site can cost from nothing up to several hundred dollars per month. You'll probably like the sound of nothing, but the free e-commerce sites tend to be a risky bet in today's economic climate. Many have gone bust, and some of the others have started charging for their services.

As well as the cost of running the site, there is the additional cost of processing payments. If you intend to accept credit cards you will pay transaction fees to your bank and credit card-processing companies as well as fixed monthly fees. The transaction fees mean that you may end up paying from 2-5% of the sale plus up to \$1 for each transaction. If you don't qualify for a Merchant Account, the payment processing services can charge anywhere from 10% upwards depending on how much of a risk they consider you to be.