WELCOME!

Today's Topic:

Master Your Website for Business Success

January 28, 2025

T.I.P.S.
SMALL BUSINESS WEBINAR SERIES

TRAINING & INSIGHTS FOR PROCUREMENT SUCCESS

- 2 WEBINARS MONTHLY
- 9AM-12PM
- CLASSES LED BY SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

TO REGISTER VISIT:
GOMDSMALLBIZ.MARYLAND.GOV

Maryland
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF SMALL, MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS AFFAIRS
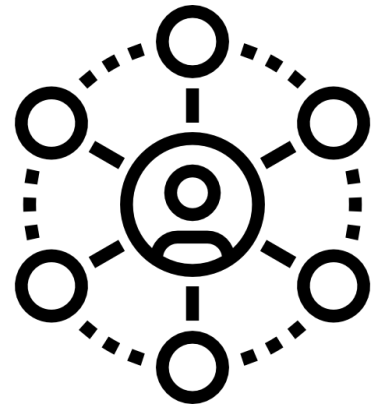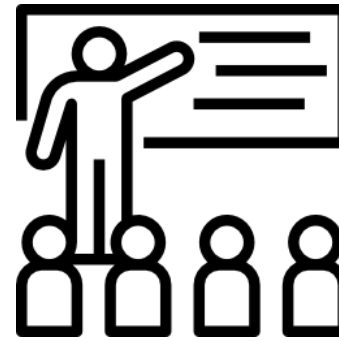goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov

Maryland

**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF SMALL, MINORITY & WOMEN BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

Implement Maryland's 3 socioeconomic procurement programs across 70+ agencies and departments

Connect small, minority, women, & veteran business owners to opportunities in the state contracting arena

Conduct free small business webinars, hosts stakeholder engagement events, and participates in outreach programs statewide
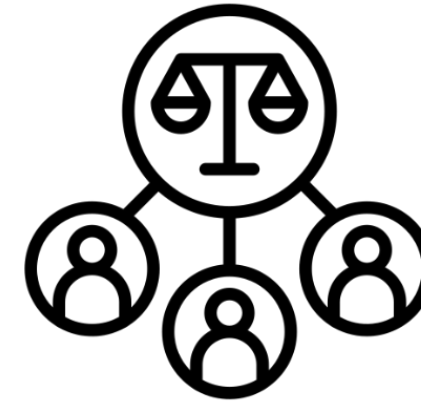
Work with MBEs to address issues that may arise during contract performance through the MBE Ombudsman unit

Curate online resources at the federal, state, and local levels for small business growth and development

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Maryland's Socioeconomic Procurement Programs

MBE — MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

- Prime & subcontracting opportunities
- 70+ participating state agencies & departments
- Race & gender specific
- Application-based certification process with MDOT's Office of Minority Business Enterprise

VSBE — VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

- Prime & subcontracting opportunities
- 50+ participating state agencies & departments
- Veteran specific
- Online certification process in eMaryland Marketplace Advantage

SBR — SMALL BUSINESS RESERVE PROGRAM

- Prime contracting opportunities
- 60+ participating state agencies & departments
- Race and gender neutral
- Online certification process in eMaryland Marketplace Advantage

No cost to obtain or maintain certification. Annual renewal requirements apply.

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Doing Business with the State of Maryland

The State's online public bid board is eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA)

All solicitations over $15,000 must be published on eMMA

All awards over $50,000 must be published on eMMA

All vendors receiving a contract award from the State must be in good standing with the Department of Assessments and Taxation

The Board of Public Works approves all contracts $200,000 and above before final "Notice to Proceed" can be awarded

MBE, VSBE, and SBR Liaisons are positioned within each state purchasing unit

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GUEST INSTRUCTOR

NATHAN GARCIA

CLIENT SUCCESS MANAGER
USABAL SOLUTIONS

usabal
SOLUTIONS

https://www.usabalsolutions.com/

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Mastering Your Website Presence
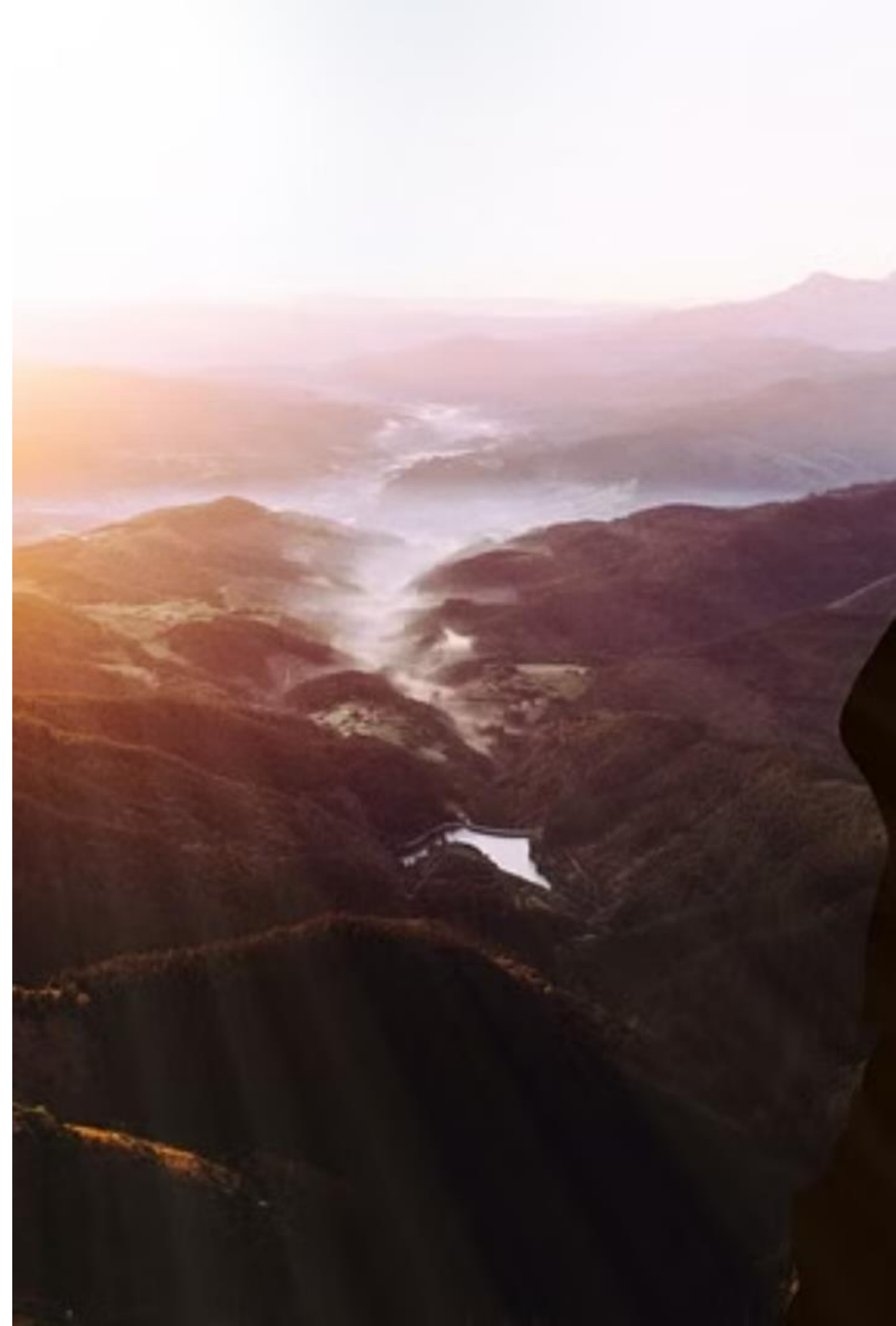
For Business Success

by Nathan Garcia

usabal
SOLUTIONS

Introduction

This presentation will explore the key ingredients for a successful online presence.

Gain a solid understanding of website design, marketing strategies, and e-commerce options.

Win a Website Assessment

Domain, SSL, and Hosting

A foundation for your website's success.

Software, Framework, and Security

Ensuring a robust and reliable online presence.

Performance and SEO

Boosting visibility and driving traffic to your website.

User Experience, Design, and Content

Creating an engaging and memorable experience for visitors.

Website Best Practices Overview

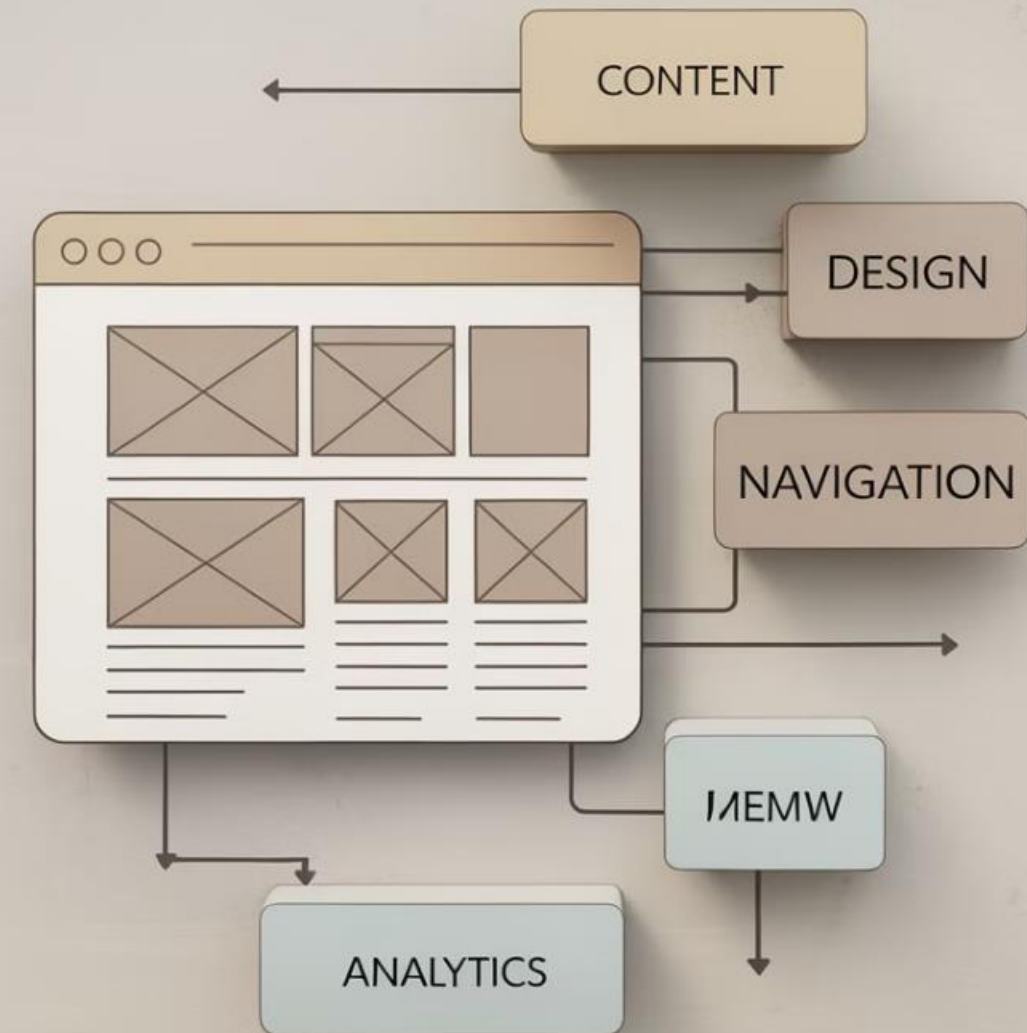**1** **Website Basics**

Structure, design, usability.

2 **Website Analytics**

Track site performance and user behavior.
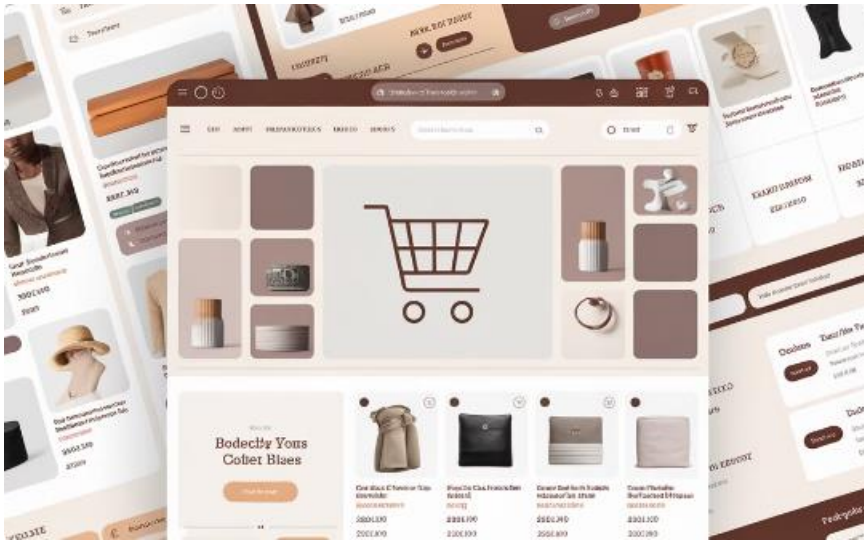
3 **Digital Marketing**

Reach target audience through online channels.

4 **SEO**

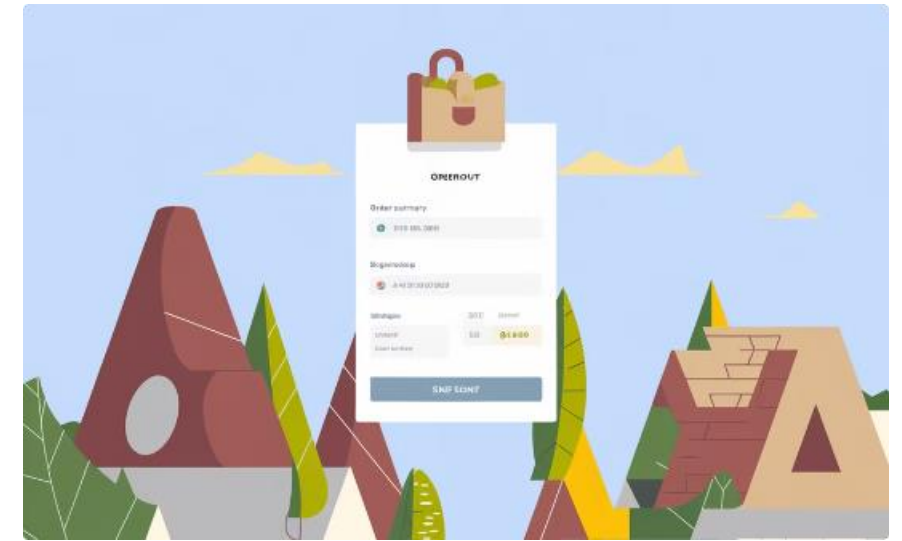Improve search engine visibility.

E-Commerce Essentials

Building an E-commerce Site

Create a user-friendly online store.

E-commerce Platform Selection

Choose a platform that aligns with your needs.

First E-Commerce Transaction

Process your first order smoothly and securely.

Poll: How Do You Manage Your Website?

a. We don't have a website, we are looking to build one

b. Our website is having some issues, I am looking for help

c. We update our website once in a while so it has the correct information

d. We update our website on a regular basis to improve user experience, content, and SEO

e. We review our website analytics data and use it to make data-driven decisions and our website is well-integrated with our digital marketing efforts

f. Not sure

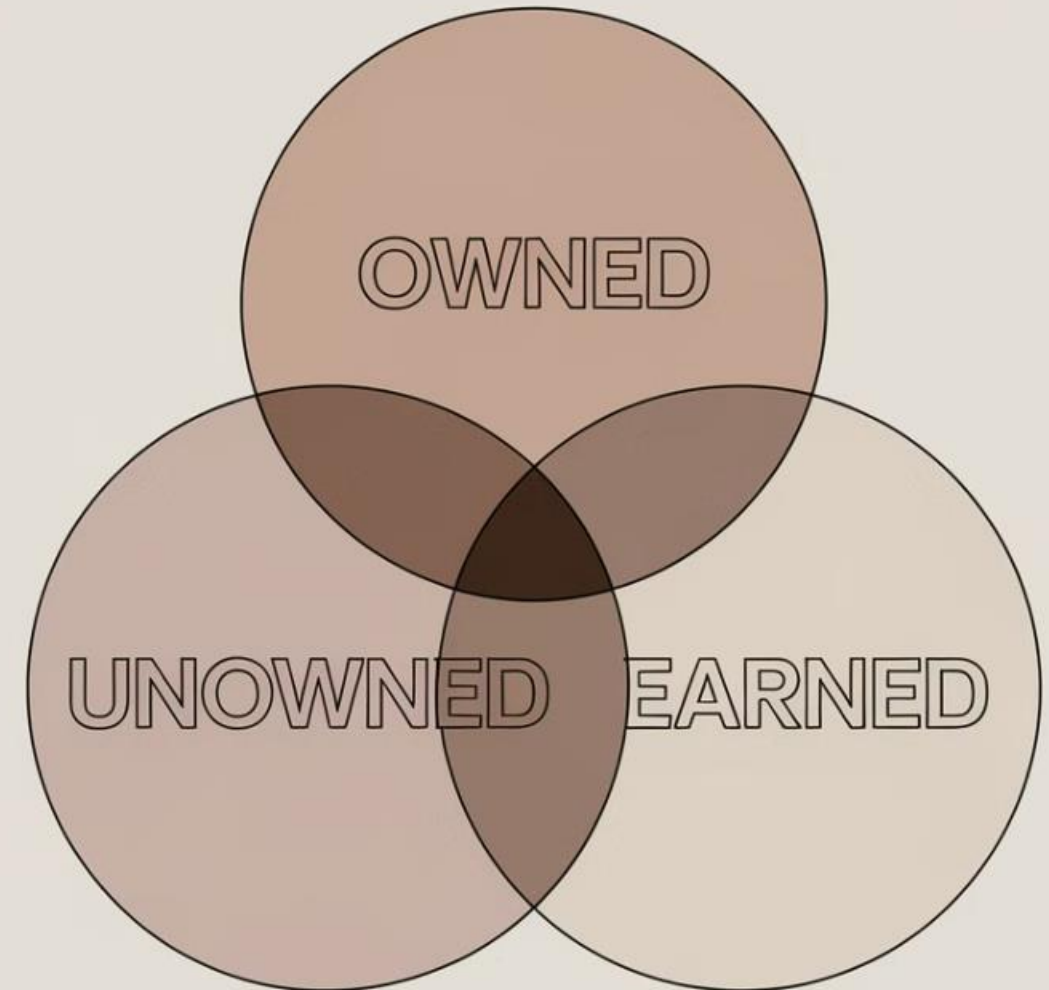# Understanding Web Presence

🌐

Owned

Directly controlled by you.

🌐

Unowned

No direct control.

♡

Earned

Social media engagement and reviews.

Online Marketing Pyramid

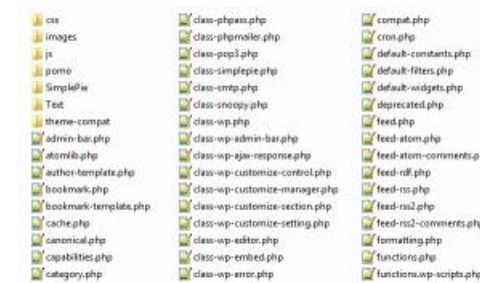Visual representation of marketing activities.

- Brand awareness

- Website traffic

- Lead generation

- Sales conversions

Website Components Explained

Essential website elements:

- Homepage: Main entry point

- About Us: Company information

- Products/Services: Offerings

- Contact: Information for reach

- Blog: Content and updates

Choosing a Domain Name

Short & Simple

Easy to remember and spell, less typos.

Brandable & Unique

Reflects your brand identity, helps stand out.

Keyword Relevance

Improves search engine rankings.

Scalability

Allows for growth as your business expands.

Content Management Systems (CMS)
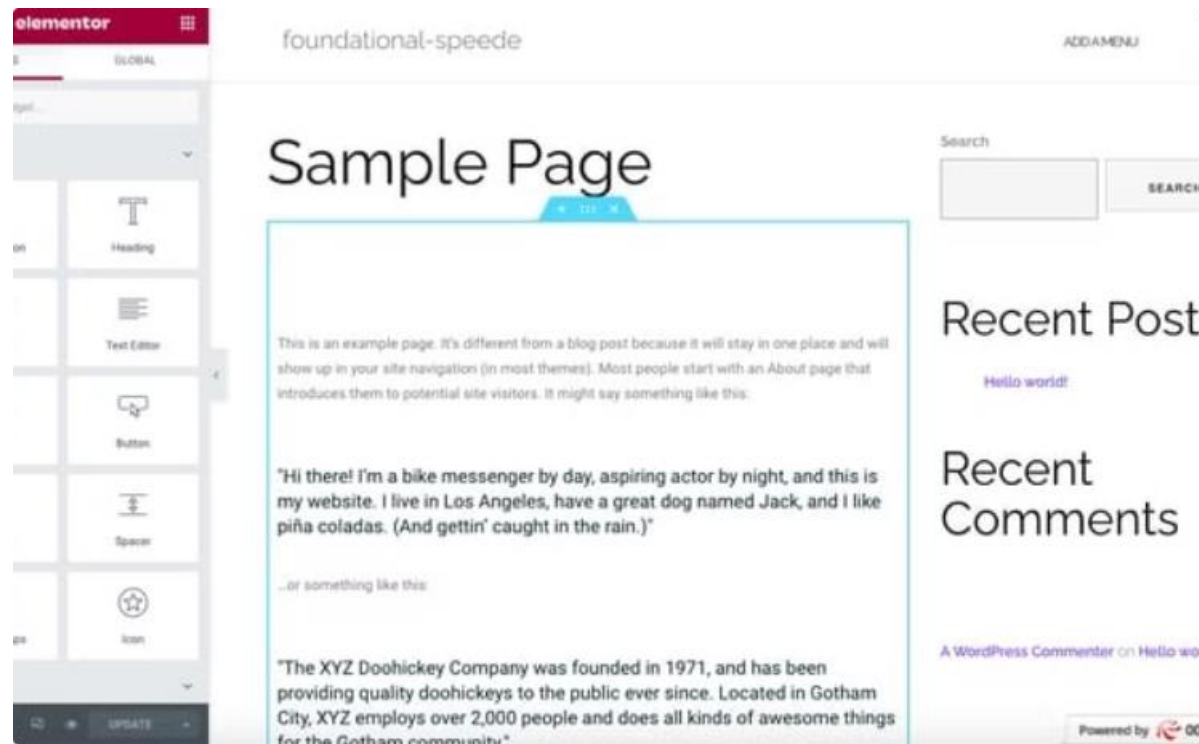
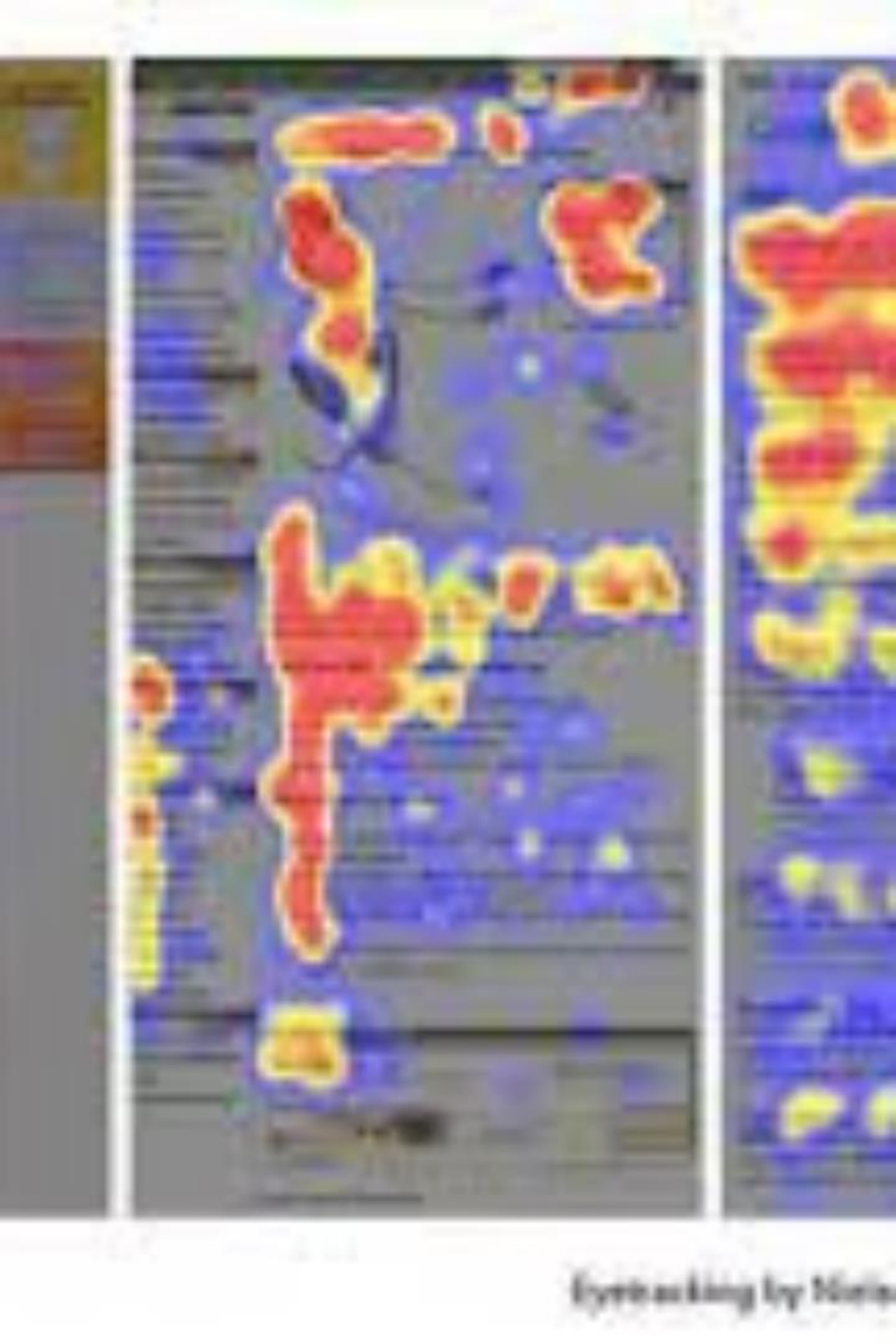Largest market share

Shopify (ecommerce)

Wix, Squarespace, Drupal

Content Management Systems (CMS)

Website Updates Made Easy

Manage content, design, and functionality with minimal technical expertise.

Eyetracking by Niels...

Website Design Considerations

Readability

Plain language, scannable, "F" shape.

Usability

Easy to use, minimal steps.

Navigability

Clear and logical Information Architecture.

Responsive

Optimized for all devices.

Website Design Components

Domain Name

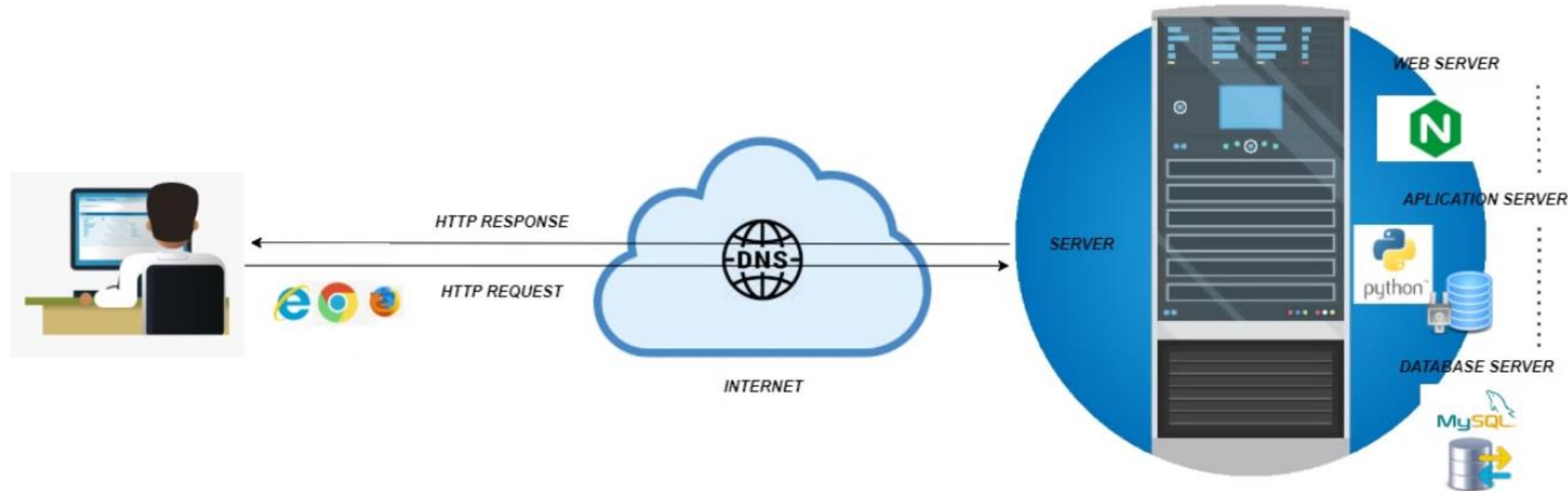Your website's address on the web.

Hosting

Where your website files are stored.

Platform/CMS

Software that powers your website.

Design

Visual appearance and layout.

Building a Website Like a House

1	**Location**
	Where site will be hosted.

2	**Foundation**
	What supports the site.

3	**Blueprint**
	Structure, layout, materials.

4	**Design**
	Style, colors, features.

5	**Content**
	Text, images, media.

Template/Theme Features

1 **HTML/CSS Code**

Works with your CMS

2 **Visual Skin**

Fonts, colors, backgrounds

3 **Navigation Design**

Layout of menus and elements

4 **Responsive Design**

Adapts to various screen sizes

Website Design Terms

Theme/Template

Pre-designed framework for site.

Custom Design

Unique and tailored to your brand.

Wireframe and Mockup

Planning tools for design and functionality.

Information Architecture

Site structure for navigation and user experience.

Content Strategy Basics

Purposeful Content

Created for a specific audience.

Planning is Key

Define what, who, how, when, and where.

Digital Marketing Objectives

Brand Awareness

More people know about your brand.
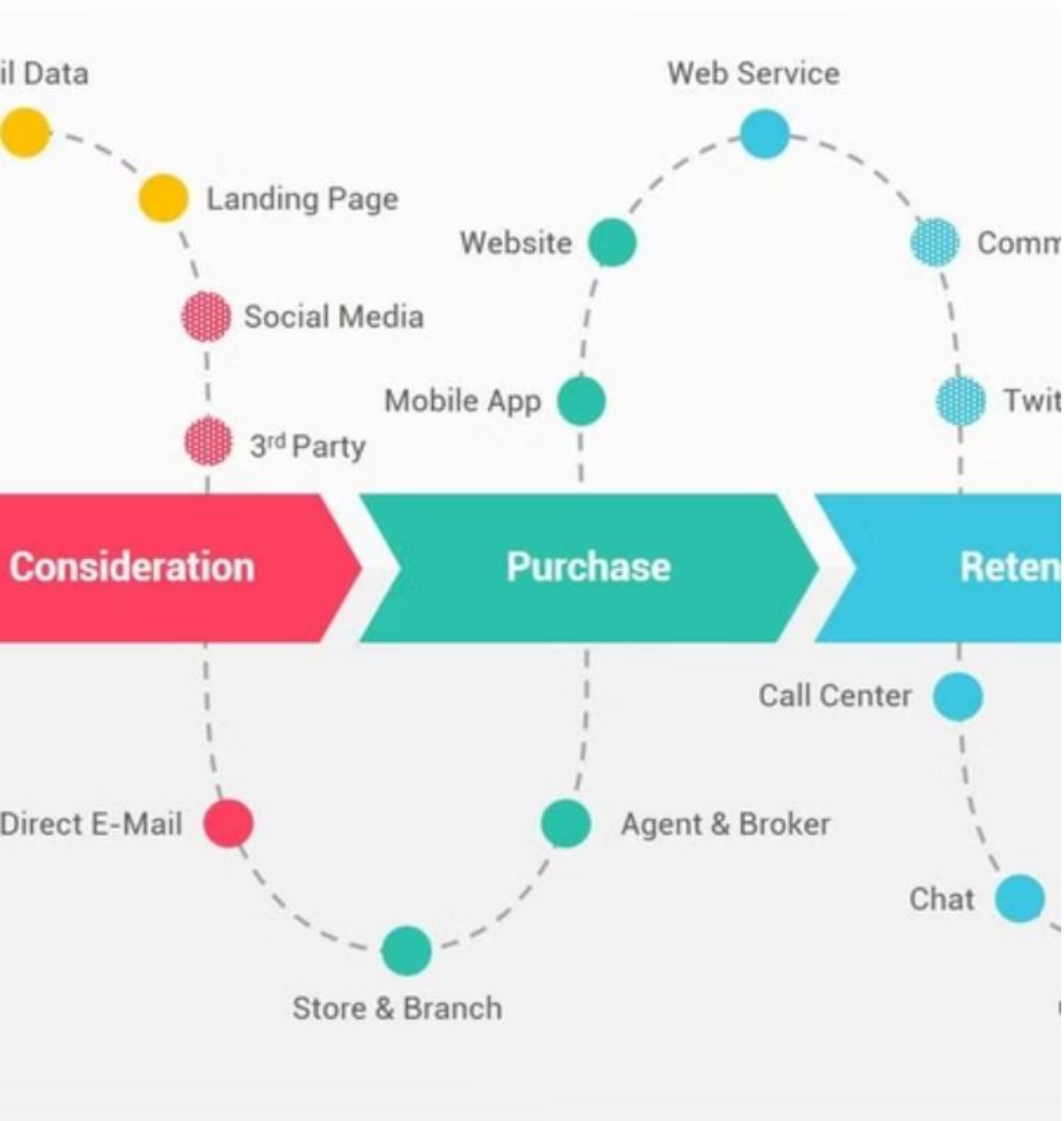
Lead Generation

More potential customers contact you.

Sales Growth

More people buy your products or services.

Customer Loyalty

Existing customers keep coming back.

ney Maps

il Data
Landing Page
Web Service
Website
Comm
Social Media
Mobile App
Twit
3rd Party

Consideration **Purchase** **Reten**

Call Center
Direct E-Mail
Agent & Broker
Chat
Store & Branch

Customer Journey

Mapping the customer's experience, from awareness to conversion, can help you identify opportunities for improvement.

Key steps in a typical journey:

- Awareness
- Consideration
- Decision
- Action
- Retention

Marketing and Advertising Channels

Content Marketing

Blog posts, articles, and infographics

Social Media

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Paid ads on search engines like Google

Display Advertising

Ads on websites and apps

The Digital Marketing Funnel
(how companies attract and retain customers via the web)

Exposure

Inbound: organic search, social media, content, community, press, blogosphere, forums, referring links, email, direct, word-of-mouth, etc.

Ads: search, display, affiliate, video, social, etc.

Discovery

The first few visits to the website are often focused on consuming content and learning more about the company and products/services.

Consideration

At some point, a visitor becomes a potential customer as they consider whether the product offered is a match for their needs.

Conversion

The completion of an action on the site converts visitors to customers.

Customer Relationship

Customer service, fulfillment, communication, and happiness with the product all play into the post-conversion experience

Retention

Personas Overview

A buyer persona is a fictional character created by business and marketing professionals to aid in making informed business decisions.

If you have multiple target audiences (as most businesses do), then you can create multiple buyer personas.

The benefit of buyer personas is that they help you understand your customers better so that you can target them more effectively.
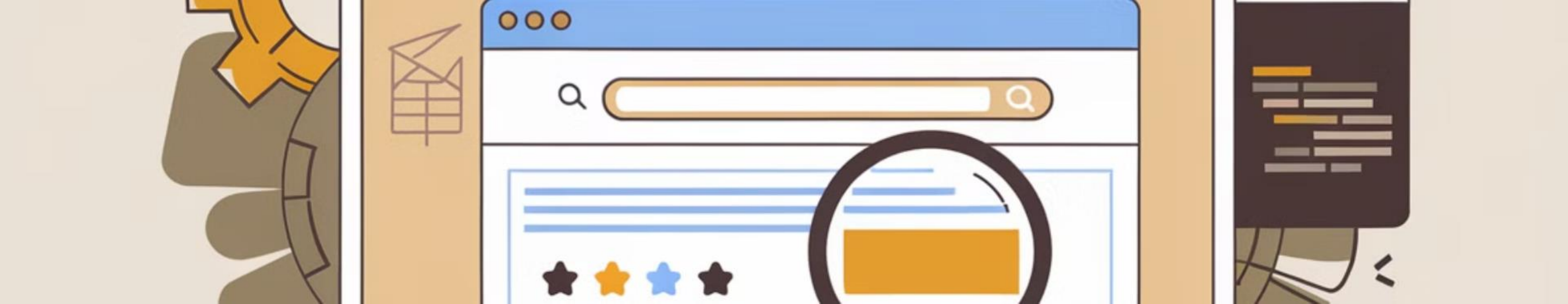
Persona Tool

Free tool for workshop:

https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona

Skip walkthrough mode, but it's recommended if this is the first time building a persona.

SEO for Small Businesses

Optimize for search engines

Target relevant keywords

Data-driven optimization
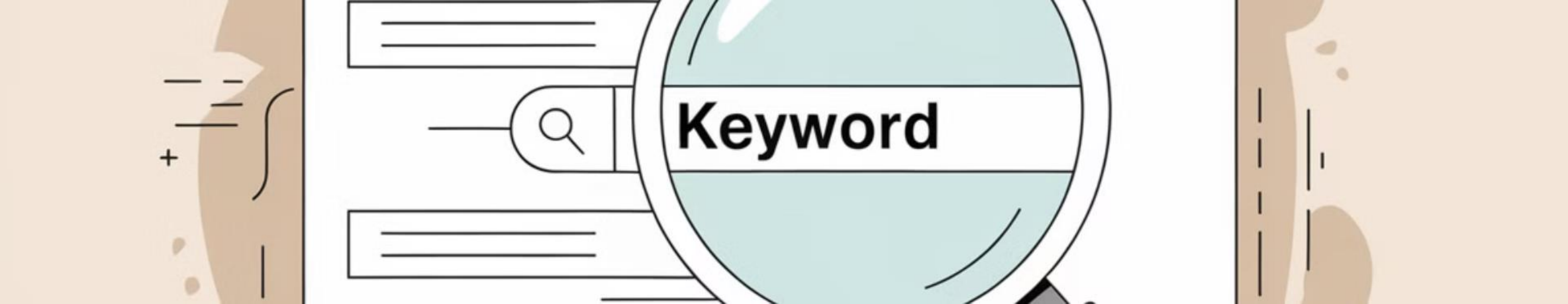
SEO Best Practices

Identify relevant search terms.

Ensure mobile responsiveness.

Create valuable content for users.

Build high-quality backlinks.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

User Engagement

Engaged sessions: duration, conversion events, page views

Average Engagement Time per Session

Traffic Sources

User Acquisition: organic search, paid search, social media, direct traffic

Campaigns: track marketing performance

Conversions

Conversion Rate: Percentage of visits resulting in the desired action

Total Conversions: Number of completed goals

Provider Selection Types

Freelancer

Sole contributor, limited resources, more flexible, less expensive.

Agencies

Has a team of dedicated specialists, less flexible, more expensive.

Working with a Provider

Developer means more than just writing code - IT infrastructure, e-commerce design, UX/design, information architecture, content strategy, SEO, and analytics are all critical capabilities.

Know your budget and timeline, be realistic.

Do your homework, and document your design and functional requirements.

- Front-end/back-end/Full-stack

Project Requirements

1 **Project Scope**

Define the purpose and boundaries.

2 **Deliverables and Timeline**

Outline what you'll create and when.

3 **User Requirements**

Design features and user interactions.

Balancing Quality, Cost, and Time

Ideal

Maximize quality.

Avoid

Compromise on quality.

Realistic

Set realistic budgets and timelines.

Helpful Tools for Website Management

Wix.com

Build a website on your own.

Google PageSpeed Insights

Page load speed analysis.

Google Keywords Planner

Keyword research and trend analysis. Visit Google Trends

Broken Links Checker

Identify and fix website broken links. Check Your Links

Usability.gov

Website usability best practices.

GTmetrix

Website performance testing.

Google Search Console

SEO and website performance monitoring. Explore SEO Tools

Poll: E-Commerce Readiness

Which of the following best describe your e-commerce business?

1

Not Ready

2

Exploring

3

Small Part

4

Established
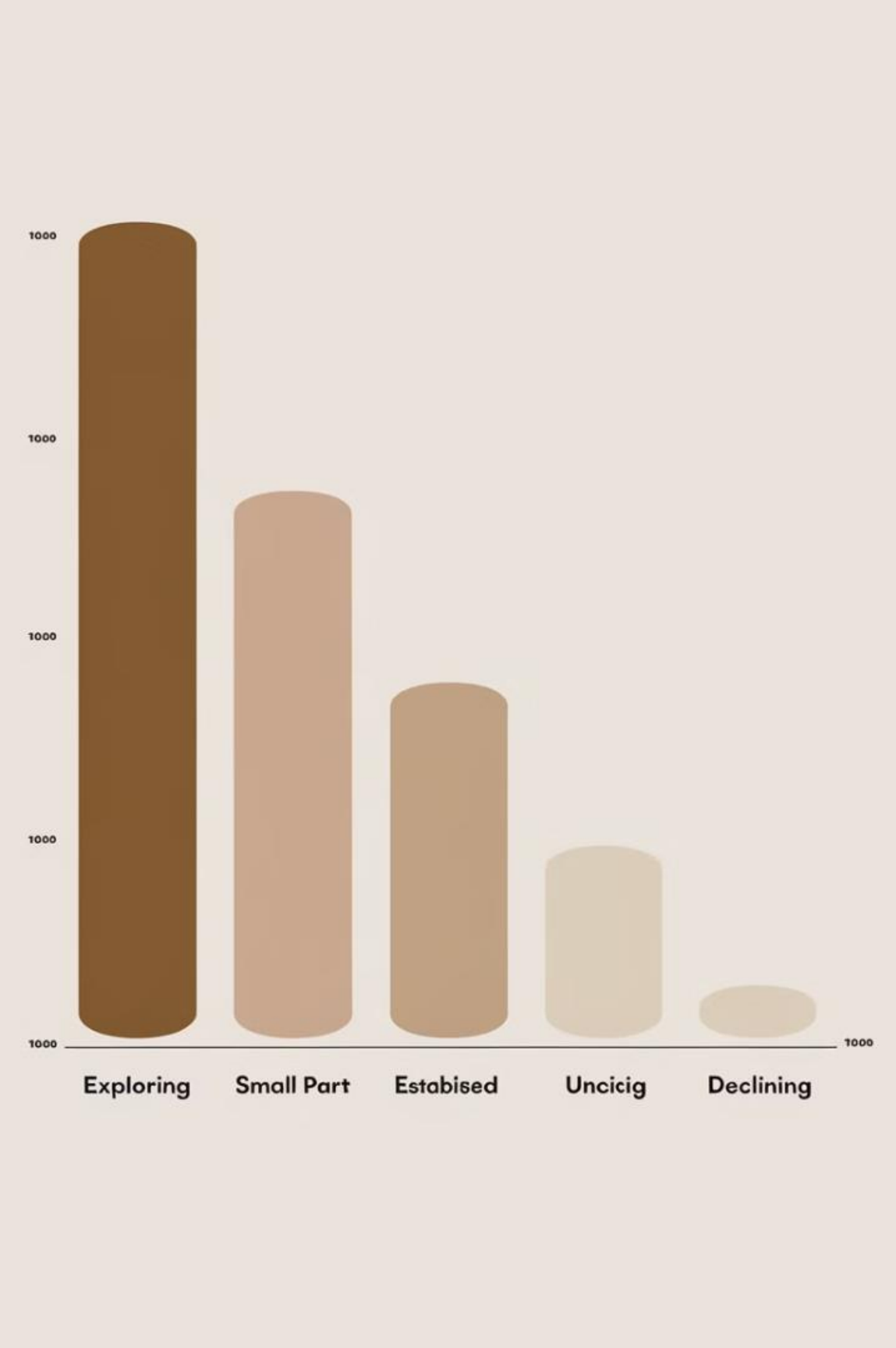
What is E-Commerce?

Electronic Commerce

Selling goods and services online.

Examples

Online retail, marketplaces, digital downloads.

Unique Landscape

Challenges and opportunities in design, marketing, and logistics.
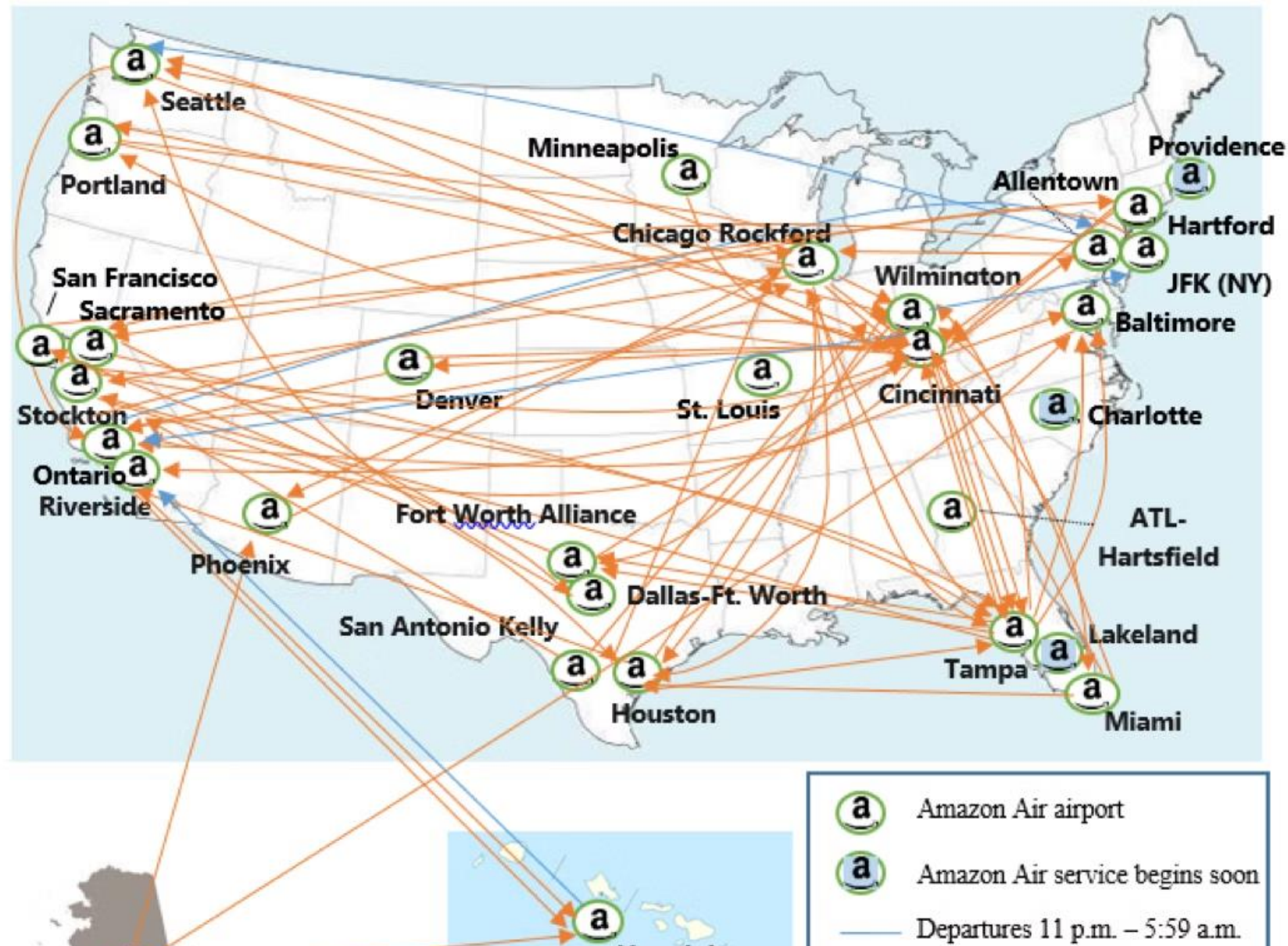
Building Your E-Commerce Site

1 **Plan and Research**

Market research, niche, business plan.

2 **Platform & Setup**

Domain name, hosting, and SSL certificate.

3 **Design & Development**

Website design, content marketing strategy, e-commerce functionality development.

4 **Product Organization**

Product groups, categories, and high-quality listings.

First E-Commerce Transaction

August 11, 1994 - Dan Kohn, founder of Netmarket, sold a copy of the Sting album Ten Summoner's Tales for **$12.48** plus shipping.

The sale was completed via an encrypted credit card and delivered via the United States Postal Service.
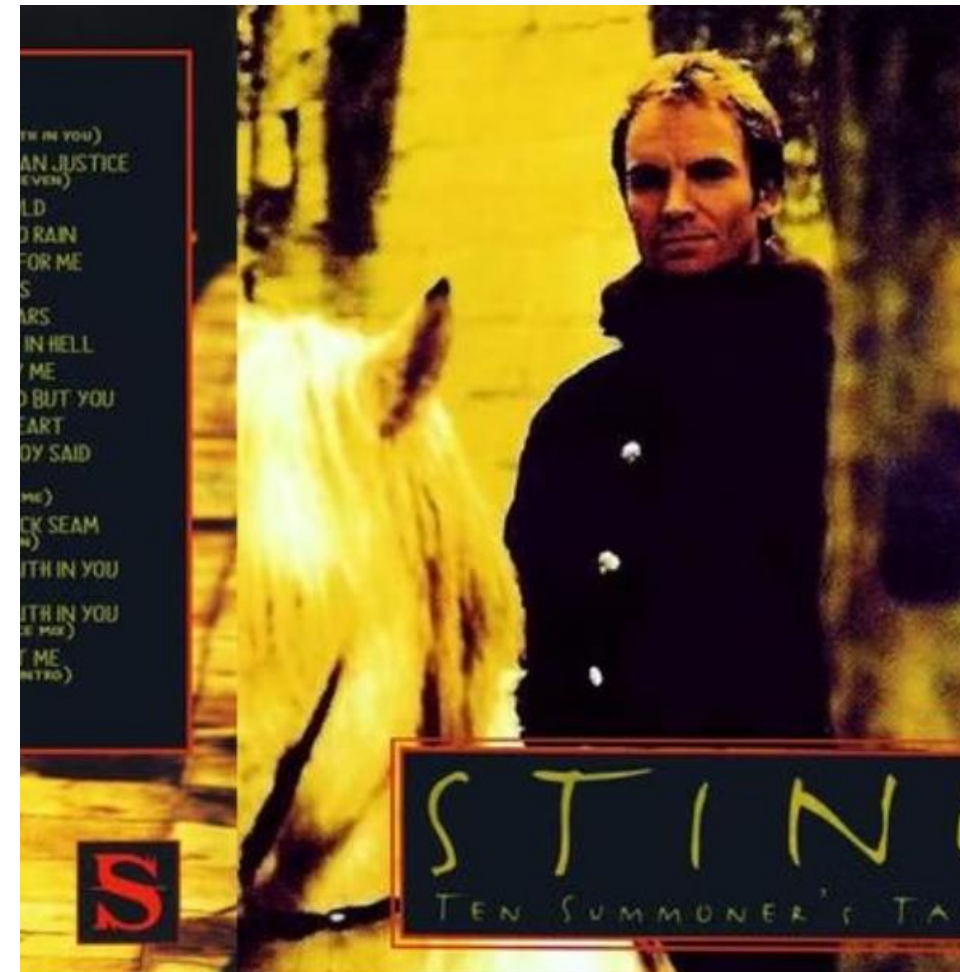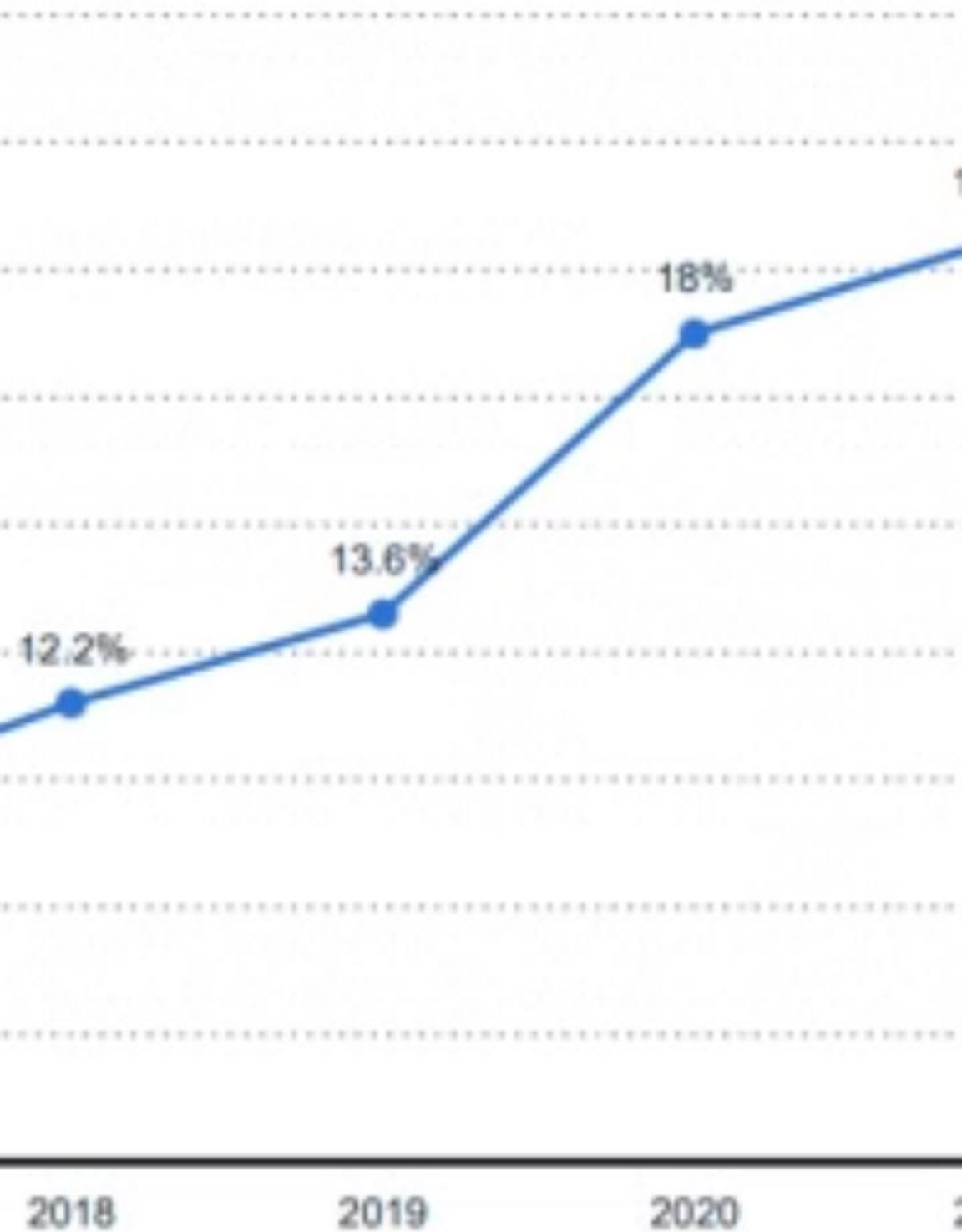
E-Commerce Today

Pre-Covid	Post-Covid
Steady Growth	Exponential Growth
Convenience-focused	Necessity-driven

E-Commerce Website Features

Digital storefront.

Facilitate transactions.

Product showcase.

E-Commerce Business Components

Key Elements

- Online Presence

- Digital Marketing

- E-Transactions

Essential Operations

- Payment Processing

- Product Fulfillment

- Customer Support

Case Study: Sunday Morning Roast

1 **Premium Coffee**

On-demand roast using 100% Arabica beans.

2 **Founded in 2020**

Home-based business in Anne Arundel County.

3 **Minority and Women-Owned**

Supported by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC).
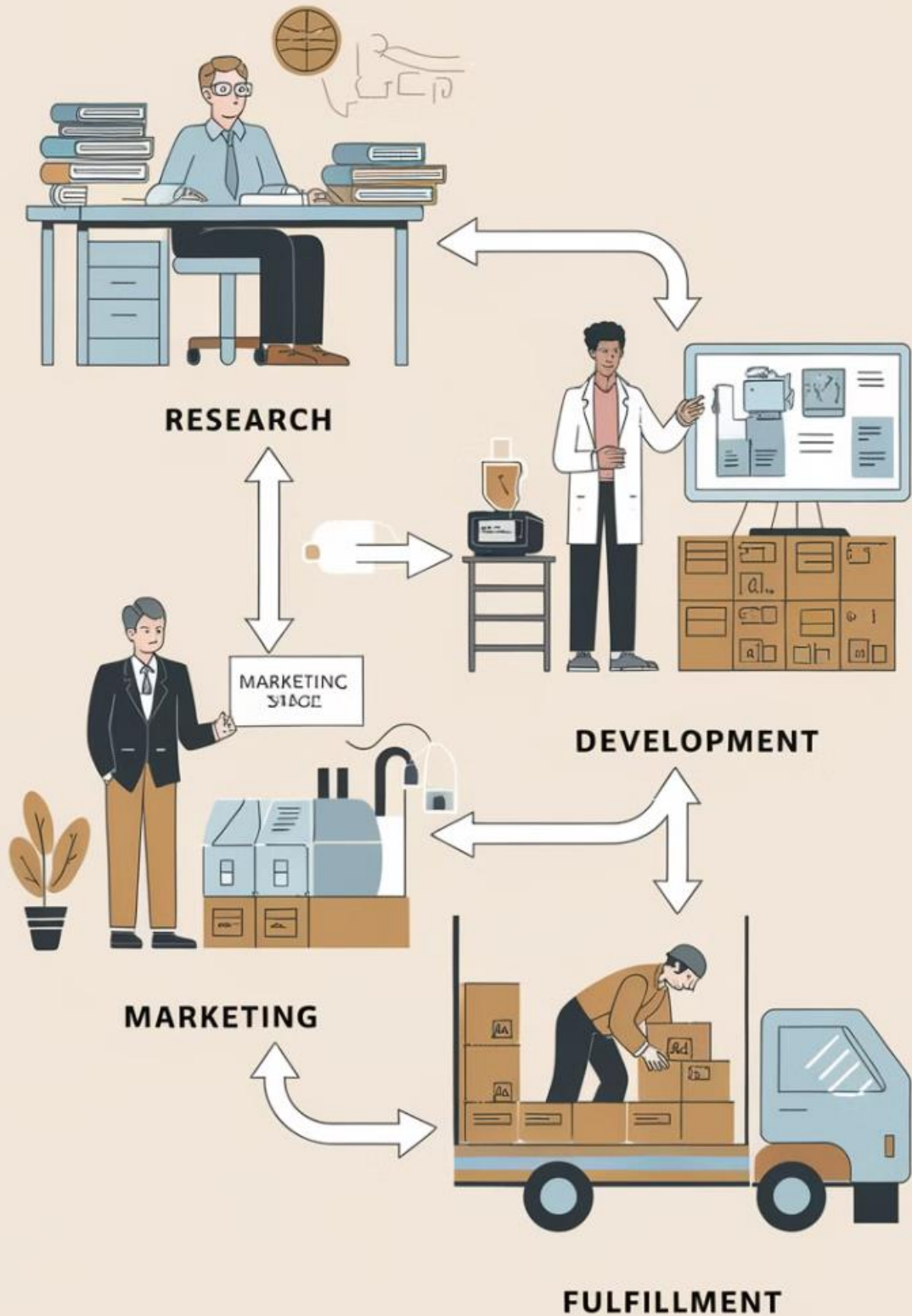
Essential E-Commerce Steps

Market research & business plan.

Production & sourcing.
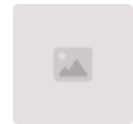
Website development & design.

Fulfillment & shipping.

Types of E-Commerce

B2C

Business to Consumer

- Amazon

B2B

Business to Business

- Alibaba

C2C

Consumer to Consumer

- Craigslist

C2B

Consumer to Business

- Freelancer

E-Commerce Business Models

Direct-to-Consumer

Manufacture and sell directly to consumers.

White Label

Contract supplier to make the product.

Dropshipping

Use 3rd party to handle inventory and fulfillment.

Subscription

Product/service offered on a subscription basis.
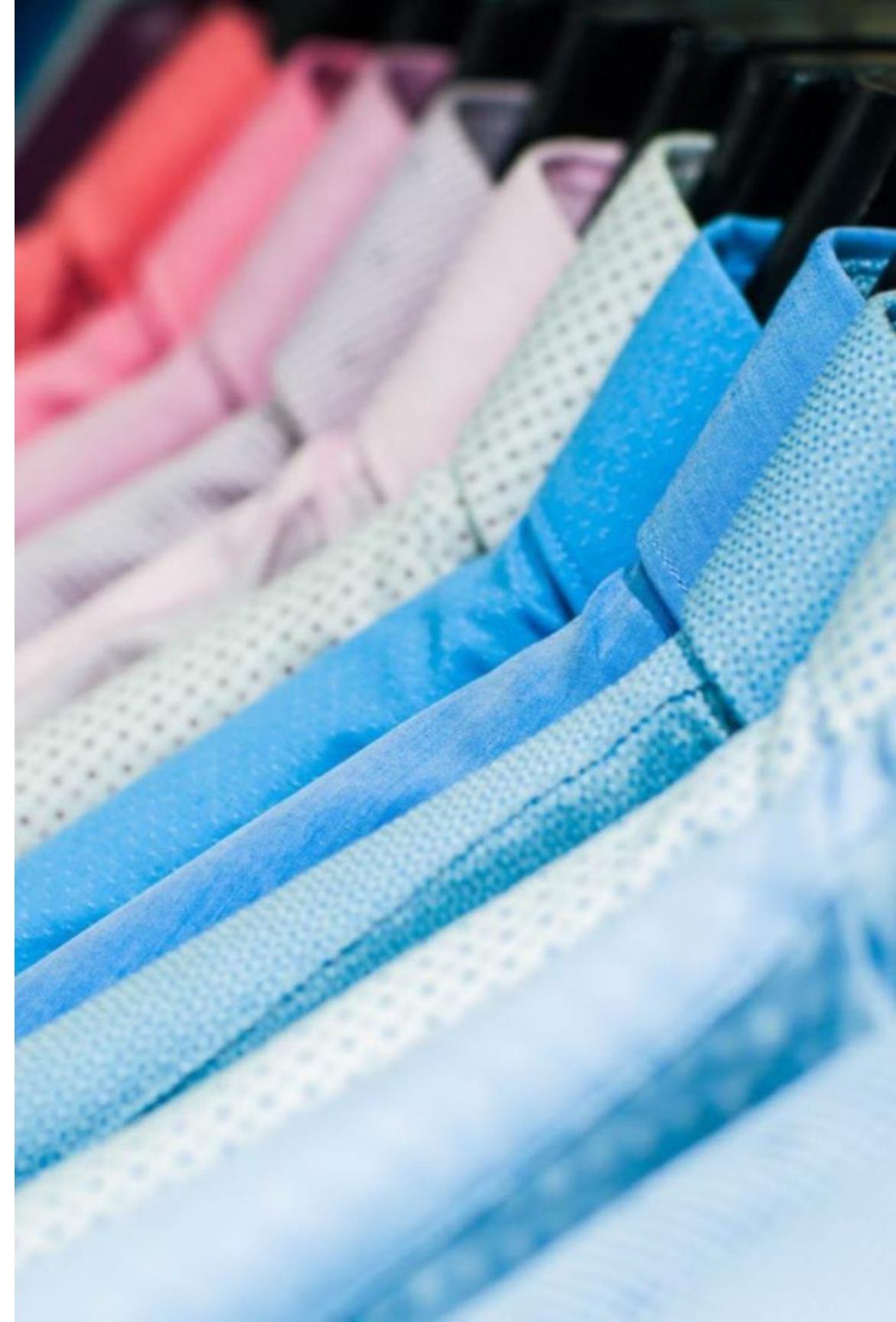
Choosing the Right Model

Business Type

Products, services, or both?

Customer Needs

What do they want or need?

Available Resources

What can you leverage?

E-Commerce Readiness Questions

Industry Digitization

Is your industry shifting to online sales?

Demand Fulfillment

Can you handle increased online orders?

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Will online sales outweigh expenses?

Customer Experience

Can e-commerce improve customer satisfaction?

Common Resources for E-Commerce

Market Research

Understand your target market

Updated Business Plan

Define your goals and strategy

Product/Service Readiness

Ready for online sales

The Most Important Resource: You

Vision

Define your goals.

Teamwork

Leverage your existing resources.

Flexibility

Be adaptable and willing to change.

Open Mind

Embrace new ideas and perspectives.

Supplier
Inbound goods are delivered to your warehouse.

Fulfillment Center
Goods are moved to a fulfillment center for picking and packing.

Customer
Customers may request return of the goods (reverse logistics).

SMR's Business Model

Sourcing

Jamaica and South America sourced

Roasting and Processing

Roasted, processed at home, then 3rd party roaster in Maryland

Warehousing

Home and 3rd party roaster provided

SMR's Business Model

1 **Direct to Consumer**

Manufacture and sell directly to consumers.

2 **White Label & Private Label**

Contract supplier for product manufacturing.

3 **Dropshipping**

Third party manages inventory and fulfillment.

4 **Subscription**

Offer products/services on a recurring basis.

Logistics and Operations Plan

Delivery Process

Inventory Management

Customer Support

BigCommerce	⌄
OpenCart	⌄
PrestaShop	⌄
OsCommerce	⌄
Weebly	⌄
Zen Cart	⌄
CS-Cart	⌄
Pinnacle Cart, Inc	⌄

E-Commerce Platform Selection

Open Source

Free software, but requires technical expertise.

SaaS

Subscription-based, user-friendly, hosted by provider.

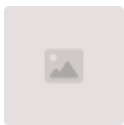# Platform Options by Business Size

Small Business

Shopify, WooCommerce
(WordPress)

Medium Business

BigCommerce, Magento

Enterprise

Oracle Commerce, Salesforce Commerce Cloud

Platform Selection Considerations

Current Website

Existing platform (WordPress, Wix, etc.)

Support Team

Internal website expertise.

Budget

Limited or flexible financial resources.

Customization Needs

Level of customization required.

E-Commerce Project Team

E-commerce Manager

Oversees online operations.

Fulfillment Team

Handles packaging, shipping, returns, and inventory.

Business Analyst

Liaison between business and IT.

UX/Website Designer

Creates a user-friendly shopping experience.

Common Mistakes in E-Commerce

DIY Approach

Overestimating skills or underestimating complexity.

Cheap Provider

Choosing based on price, not quality or expertise.

One-Size-Fits-All

Expecting a single provider to handle all aspects.

Product Organization Tips

Customer Preferences

Group products based on customer needs.

Subcategories

Create detailed subcategories within main groups.

Organization Tools

Use tools like "best sellers" and "price low to high."

Product Search

Implement a robust search function.

E-Commerce Site Configuration

Payment Gateway

Secure online transactions.
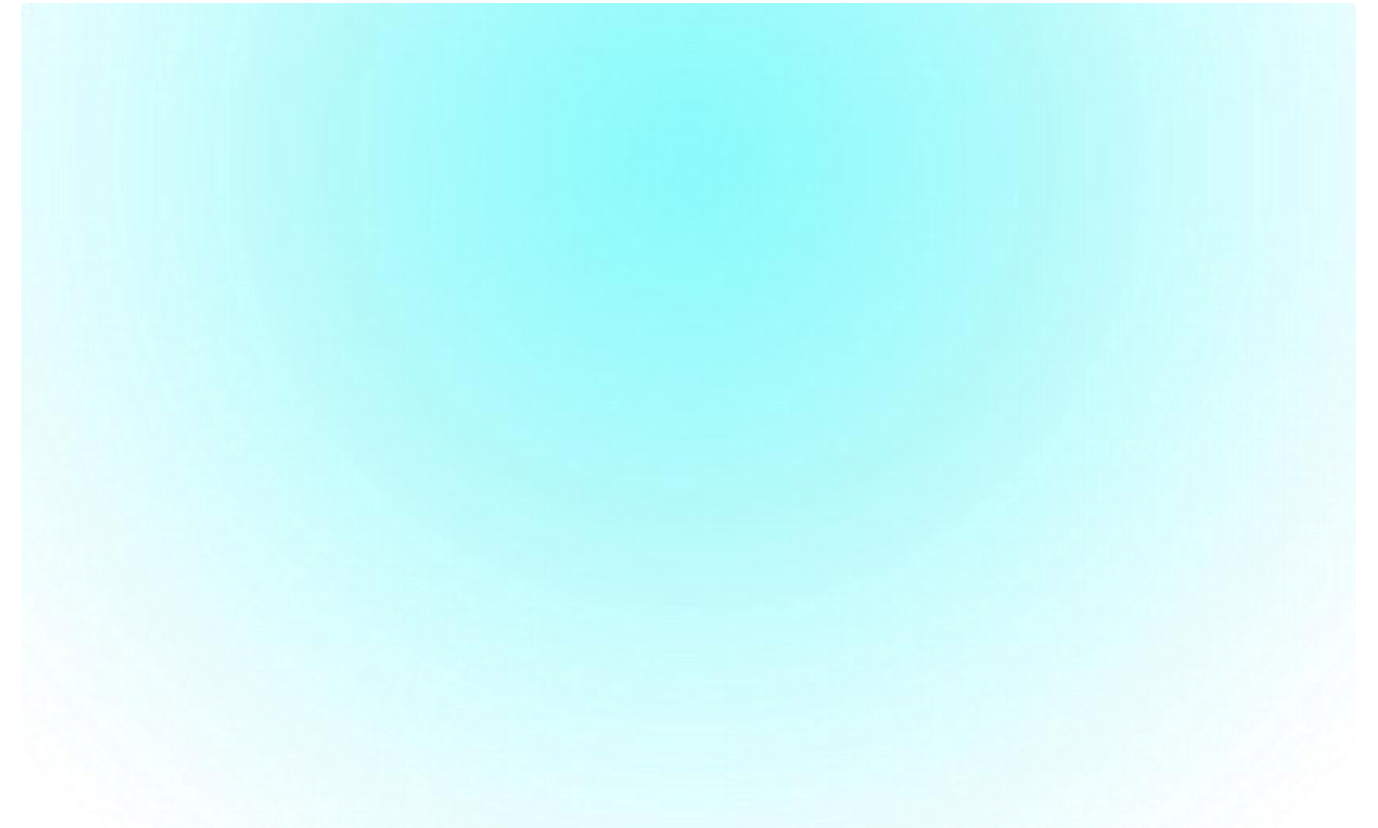
Shipping and Logistics

Rates, carriers, and integrations.

E-Commerce Design Best Practices

Branding Consistency

Maintain brand identity across the site.

Mobile Optimization

Responsive design for all devices.

Customer Focus

Design tailored to your audience.

Build Trust

High-quality content, images, certifications.

Image Requirements for E-Commerce

SD

High resolution for detail.

T T

Optimized for web loading.

H

JPEG or PNG, depending on need.

600px
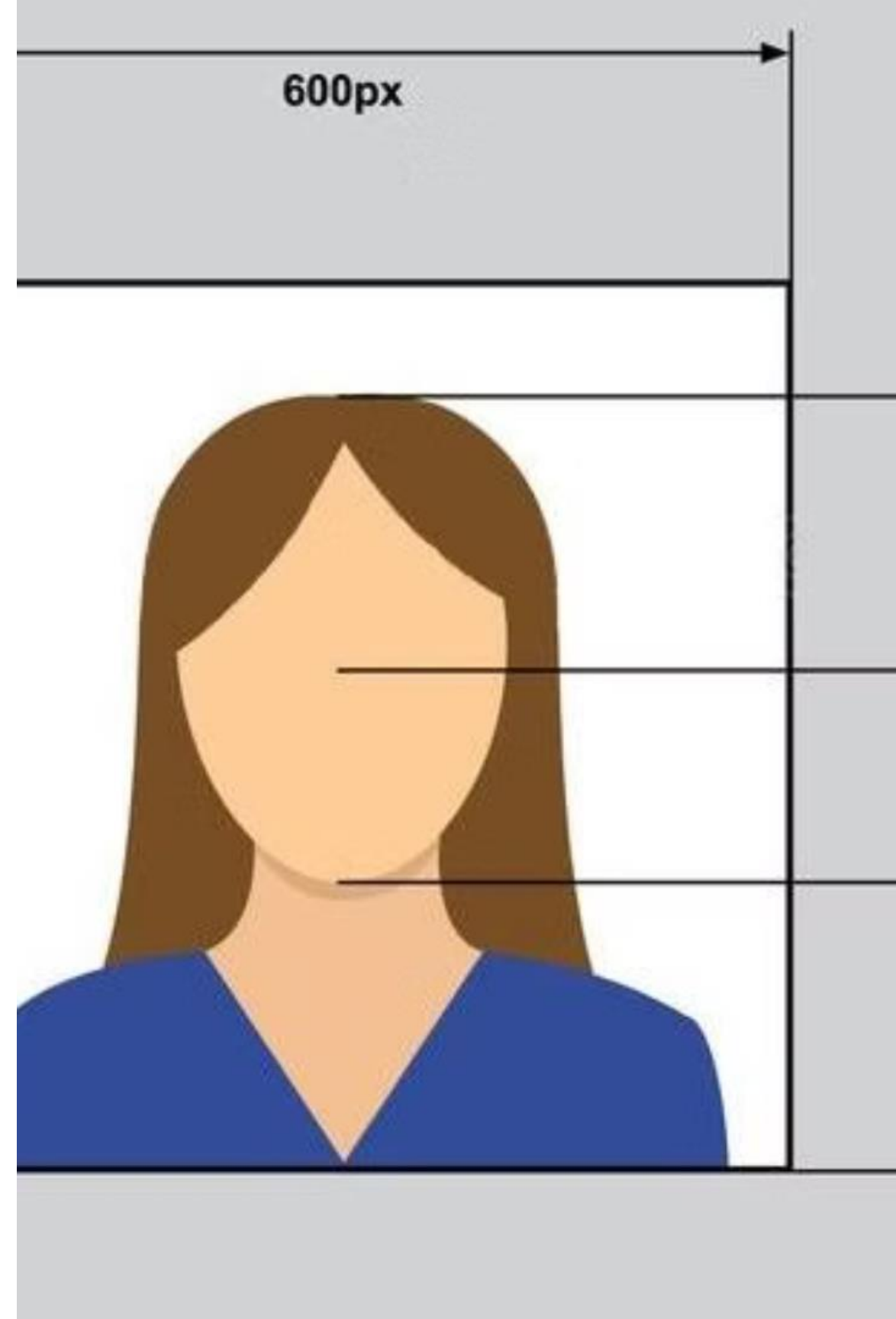
Building Your Own Studio

Dedicated Space

Choose a well-lit room with a white backdrop.

Essential Equipment

Invest in a tripod and camera or a smartphone with good photo quality.

Image Consistency

Maintain consistent lighting, background, and camera settings.

Analytics - Test and Learn

Why Abandonment?

Shipping costs, unexpected fees, etc.

Where Do They Drop Off?

During checkout, after adding to cart

Contact Us

https://www.usabalsolutions.com/
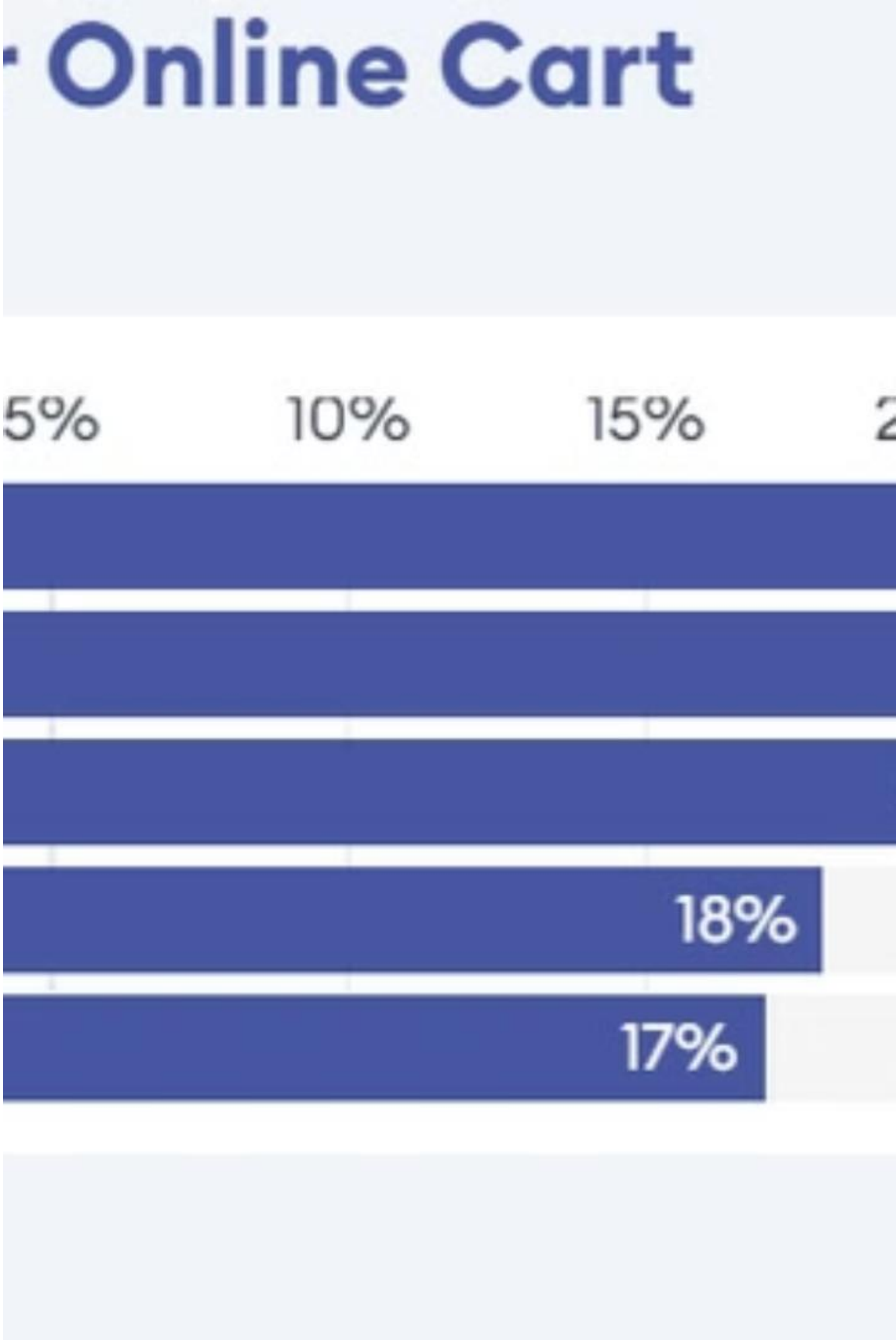
Phone: 443-832-3858

Email: contact@usabalsolutions.com

TOOLS AND RESOURCES DISCUSSED

https://clarity.microsoft.com/
https://framerstore.com/?page=1
https://www.canva.com/
https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona
https://answerthepublic.com/
https://www.midjourney.com/explore?tab=top
https://v0.dev/
https://prompthero.com/

Program Seals:

Please visit our website to download

goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov

Mining Public Data Techniques

goMDsmallbiz.maryland.gov

Videos & Slide Decks

eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA)

Procurement Forecast

Board of Public Works

Communicating with Confidence

Keep Learning

- 2 free webinars every month

- No cost to attend

- Register in advance to receive the participation link

- Download the presenter's slide deck

- Access video recordings of all classes on our YouTube playlist

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T.I.P.S. Webinar Series Playlist

1. **Doing Business with the State of Maryland - July 25, 2024**
StateMaryland · 2 views · 1 day ago
2:03:45

2. **Crafting A Compelling Capability Statement - July 23, 2024**
StateMaryland · No views · 1 day ago
2:04:30

3. **Anatomy of a Bid - June 27, 2024**
StateMaryland · No views · 1 day ago
1:48:57

4. **Strategies for Digital Marketing - June 25, 2024**
StateMaryland · No views · 1 day ago
1:38:22

5. **Maryland's Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE) Program**
StateMaryland · 76 views · 2 months ago
2:00:24

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIgoHh4Po1J0W63akD6aGAU8JmT0qzOrX

Upcoming

SAVE THE DATE

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Wednesday February 5 , 2025

12:00 p.m.

A.I. in Marketing – 2 Part Series: Part 1 Using A.I. Tools

Tuesday February 11 , 2025

10:00 a.m.

Prime Contracting in Maryland's Small Business Reserve (SBR) Program

Friday February 7, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Small Biz Resource Connections: Building Performance Experience in the Private Sector

Friday February 14 , 2025

9:30 a.m.

VSBE/SBR Certification Workshop in Montgomery County

Partners

Maryland APEX Accelerators (formerly PTAC)
https://www.marylandapex.org/

Greater Baltimore SCORE
https://greaterbaltimore.score.org/

Maryland Women's Business Center (MWBC)
https://marylandwbc.org/

Baltimore-Metro Women's Business Center (Balt-Metro WBC)
https://www.baltmetrowbc.org/

Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
https://www.marylandsbdc.org/

Resources

Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs
https://gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx

Maryland's Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE)
https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=90

Maryland Department of Commerce Maryland Financial Incentives for Business
https://commerce.knack.com/maryland-funding-incentives

Maryland Entrepreneur HUB
https://marylandentrepreneurhub.com/

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Follow Us!

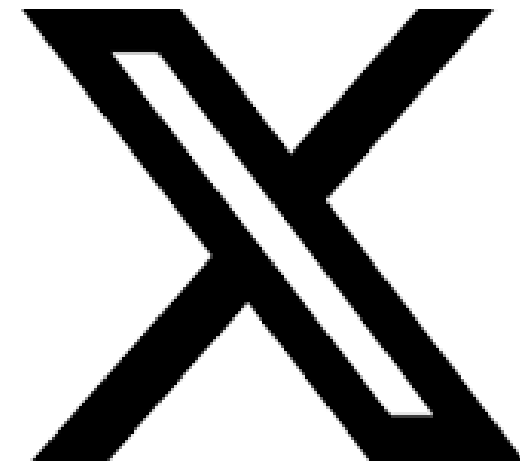Governor's Office of
Small, Minority & Women
Business Affairs

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https://gomdsmallbiz.maryland.gov

Thank You!