



eCommerce and The Law
www.ecommercewebsite.co.uk

Section 1

Distance Selling

When looking to sell online via an ecommerce website it is essential that you consider the law and all of its attributes within your website and online business.

The Office of Fair Trading (www.offt.gov.uk) is the governing organisation that provides guidance and the Distance Selling Regulations.

If you sell goods or services to consumers via the internet, by mail order, including catalogue shopping, telephone or fax: then you need to adhere to the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations of 2000.

The key features of the regulations are:

- You must give consumers clear information including details of the goods or services offered, delivery arrangements and payment, the supplier's details and the consumer's cancellation right before they buy (known as prior information)
- You must provide this information in writing
- The consumer has a cooling-off period of seven working days
- After a customer has made a purchase, you must send them details of their order.
- Delivery should ideally be made within 30 days unless you specifically state otherwise.

You should make sure that you clearly state your trading terms and conditions on your website and also detail your shipping and refund policies.

These should be easily available and should certainly be presented during the checkout process.

Give your online customers a reason to trust you not a reason to buy from someone else.

If you have any questions about Distance Selling or selling online please just get in touch...

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Section 2

Terms & Conditions

Presenting your terms and conditions of online trading is vital to each and every customer. You need to state “the small print”, but just don’t make it too small. If you try to hide your terms of sale, all you will end up doing is creating problems for your business and people will take their custom elsewhere.

Online customers are savvy about where they spend their hard earned cash. They need to feel safe and secure that when doing business with you, they will be looked after. They don’t want to get tied down in legal jargon, so make your terms and conditions clear, readable, understandable and unambiguous.

It’s not that things won’t go wrong, they will. What matters most here is how you deal with the problems. Make sure that you have a refund and returns policy. Explain this to your customers and it will help build trust with them before they purchase, helping them have faith that if something does go wrong, that they will be able to exchange or refund their purchase.

- Explain who is responsible for postage and packing of returned items.
- How long do your customers have to return items to you?
- Are some items exempt from returns? Pierced earrings, opened cosmetics?
- Will you give 100% of the refund or do you charge a restocking fee?

Create and publish a Privacy Policy that explains how you will manage the personal customer data that you will collect as part of your ordering process. You are required to state what you will do with this data and to detail your obligations to your customers.

Whatever you do with your policies, just make sure that you cover every possible situation and be as clear and fair as you can. Your customers will appreciate it.

Need help and advice with your
eCommerce policies...

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