

FRICTION

The Untapped Force That Can Be Your Most Powerful Advantage

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MAIN IDEA

In 2016, e-commerce sales hit nearly \$2 trillion. However, it is estimated there was around \$4.6 trillion of merchandise left in abandoned e-commerce shopping carts that same year. On average, more than two out of every three e-commerce shopping carts are abandoned without consumers ever completing the checkout process.

Why? Studies have shown almost all the abandonments are due to "friction" – which can be defined as "the unnecessary expenditure of time, effort, or money in performing a task". If you can come up with practical and long-lasting ways to reduce or ideally eliminate friction, it can lead to a substantial boost in your company's revenues.

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This is definitely not news to Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon.com who said: "When you reduce friction, make something easy, people do more of it". Amazon's longstanding focus on reducing friction for customers has been a key driver in the company's stellar trajectory to become the biggest, fastest growing retailer in the world.

Of course friction doesn't just exist in the online world. When you look for it, you'll find friction everywhere the length and breadth of your organization. Finding friction and reducing or ideally eliminating it altogether should be the focus of every business owner, manager and employee. After all, if reducing friction has helped Amazon get to where it is now, what can this same focus do for you?

"Nobody likes wasted time and effort. Nobody enjoys pointless meetings. Everybody hates burdensome red tape. The more you point out friction to the people around you, the more they will see themselves. And, the more likely they will try to become part of the solution."

– Roger Dooley

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1. Amazon and Friction Page 2

Amazon has built its business around the ideal of fighting consumer friction. This ethos has been one of the driving factors behind the company's stellar growth and will continue to be so in the future.

2. A brief history of friction Page 3

It's tempting to think reducing friction is a high-tech idea, but the reality is this approach has driven disruption in the retail, transportation and many other industries as well. The progress of commerce always comes down to making things simpler for customers.

3. The science of friction Page 4

The fundamental law of friction is simple to state but profound in its application. It is: Decreasing friction always increases action. Or put slightly more formally: The level of action is inversely proportional to the level of friction.

4. The "Big 4" types of friction Page 5

The "Big 4" when it comes to friction are:

1. Decision friction
2. Customer experience friction
3. Technical friction
4. Internal friction

5. Friction in the broader world Page 6

Friction doesn't just affect businesses. When you start looking for it, you'll find friction everywhere, especially in laws and regulations. Be aware of that friction and find practical ways to reduce or eliminate it as far as it is humanly feasible.

6. How to minimize friction Pages 7 - 8

In just the same way as adding or reducing friction can guide the behavior of others, you can also use friction to good effect in your own life and career as well. To change your own behaviors for the better, reduce friction. Add friction to bad habits and reduce friction for the good habits which will propel you in the right direction. This is a smart thing to do.