



# E-commerce Related Items and Similar Items

By Matthew A. Perosi



In the world of e-commerce there are those that dabble with selling online to supplement their income, those who hope to make a living from it, and those that are actually making a living from it. The success and failure rates of e-commerce websites are tied to an infinite number of variables ranging from merchandising the right product, marketing, website design, pricing, and following the rules of the game that the search engines set forth.

Large e-tailer websites like Amazon and Blue Nile spend a lot of time and money fine tuning all those factors mentioned above, but they also use more advanced e-commerce techniques that mimic two sales methods you might be using in your store: add-on sales and up-selling.

Some jewelers use the add-on and up-sell techniques in their stores, and some don't. Even if you don't use these techniques in-person, the online shopper has come to expect this type of functionality on an e-commerce website.



In the online world you would not use the phrase "up-sell." From the customer's point of view they don't want to be up-sold, but they might be interested in a slightly better item if you present it to them. Online we call this a "similar item."

Someone interested in an eternity ring with 0.50 ctw diamonds might be interested in the 0.75 ctw version of the same ring listed as a "similar item." Inversely, if someone finds the 0.75 ctw ring first they might only be able to afford the 0.50 ctw version shown as a "similar item." The first example would be an up-sell, but the second example illustrates how not to lose a sale.

Users could search your website for the 0.50 or 0.75 ctw ring, but many don't. Additionally, Google may lead people directly to the ring's product detail page. In those few short seconds while a Google visitor glances at 0.75 ctw ring, they might actually want the 0.50 ctw ring shown in that list of similar items. Giving your customers this extra option nurtures deeper user interest and they will stay on your site a little longer.

The idea of add-on sales works slightly differently, and in e-commerce we call it "related items." Items are related if they have similar styles, or are part of a jewelry suite. For example, an entire matching set containing earrings, necklace, pendant, and the bracelet would all be considered related items. Each item would appear in a box labeled "related items" on the product detail page for each of the other items. In this case, the person looking specifically for a bracelet would not think to browse through the earrings or necklaces, but when they see those related items you are creating the opportunity for the add-on sale.

Most website content management systems do not have these features built in, but they are available as extra installable modules for software such as Magento, Joomla, and WordPress. Ask your programmer for more details and for them to set this up for you.

You will need to analyze your products to figure out which items look similar to other items. This process is time consuming since you will have to compare photographs or the items in person. Setting up related items might be easier since you can start with matching earrings, bracelets, and necklaces from the same designer.

These features are more advanced e-commerce techniques, and they will take extra time to set up on your website. The good news is that after all that hard work your customer will perceive this as a better level of online customer service, when in reality you are simply trying to increase the value of each online sale.



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