

One click purchase

[Kamal Hossain, Sanjana Rahman](#)

Facebook entrepreneurs are changing the game

Facebook has become the platform for Bangladeshi female entrepreneurs to conduct business with over 20 million users in Bangladesh.

F-commerce --Facebook commerce -- refers to online business activities through a Facebook page or application. In simple words, F-commerce is about buying and selling goods on Facebook, which has become a new mode of

shopping that facilitates many to become entrepreneurs.

In Bangladesh, according to Facebook advertising platform, there are 300 thousand online retailers, out of which presumably half are women, meaning there are around 150,000 women entrepreneurs who choose this platform for a number of reasons.

One reason is that the biggest social media platform connects with all three types of socioeconomic classes of users. Another major reason is that low or no investment is needed to establish an online business on Facebook. The third reason is the simplicity of developing a Facebook business page by anyone who can log in and operate the basics of Facebook.

As a result, a minimum investment is required to open and operate a business page on Facebook, like the data package cost. Many female students choose this platform to start a business to earn and attain financial support and independence while also gaining entrepreneurial experience and knowledge.

Through this venture, they not only contribute to their own earning, but also contribute to the overall employment in the economy by increasing the demand for other businesses in the e-commerce ecosystem, such as product sourcing, operations management, digital marketing, and delivering jobs.

The authors interviewed six female entrepreneurs who have established themselves through F-commerce. The entrepreneurs in general have stated that there are many opportunities in F-commerce, since it is a great source of earning by avoiding the unnecessary cost of establishing a physical store.

Facebook helps many entrepreneurs promote and advertise their products while networking with other businesses, thus developing the existing e-commerce ecosystem resulting in better business operations.

However, there are four major challenges, one of which is to gain the trust of customers because of the absence of face-to-face interactions and personal touch of the seller as stated by the owner of “Bookyourstyle” Iffrite Hossain. She also stated that it is challenging for the sellers to identify genuine customers in social media; fraud customers who order through Facebook reject the product sent to them, for trivial or illogical reasons, resulting in unnecessary hassle for both the seller and the delivery company while also adding operational costs.

The owner of “Thailand haul” Maymuna Akter Binty added: “I do not want too many members in my business page, but a few who are genuine members and buyers.” According to the statement of entrepreneurs, only 25% of the active members of a business page are regular customers.

The second major challenge is to reach customers and establish a unique relationship by suggesting the right product at a reasonable price and delivering it at the right time.

The third challenge is dealing with the delivery companies, who are often unable to send the product within the promised or expected time, sometimes misplacing or damaging customers’ products. On top of that, some delivery companies take time to hand over the accumulated money earned from the customers, resulting in delays for the entrepreneurs to pay off many bills.

Lastly, the fourth challenge is to satisfy customers on their purchases by delivering the exact look, feel, and quality of the products. Our interviewed micro-entrepreneurs face these challenges, and have found ways to resolve them.

To be sure about a new customer's true intention to order, first check the details of the order. Next, check the Facebook profile of the new customer to get a sense of the true identity of the customer. Profiles with very little information could mean the entrepreneur should call the new customer over the phone to clarify the order.

Iffrite Hossain said that she builds the customer relationship through top-grade behavioural customer care. Customers will not buy products from people they do not trust. Caring for buyers professionally, consistently demonstrating integrity, being honest can help gain trust.

Word-of-mouth of positive reviews and recommendations from previous customers either in the form of a family, friend, or colleague helps gain new customer trust.

Entrepreneurs sometimes fail to satisfy customers in terms of delivery service due to traffic, for example. However, constantly keeping track of the delivery man and asking for more than the required time from customers can minimize this problem.

If the seller provides a faulty product, they can compensate the customer with another better product. However, one entrepreneur stated that, to provide the exact look and quality, and meet the expectation of customers, she provides real pictures of the products to their customers and also clarifies all the details of the product before taking orders.

While there are so many opportunities for female entrepreneurship on Facebook, there are challenges within the whole e-commerce ecosystem that impact the reputation and growth of Facebook business pages.

Kamal Hossain is Senior Lecturer of e-commerce and MIS at BRAC Business School, BRAC University. Sanjana Rahman studies BBA at BRAC University.