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Founder and Director, Dawn Scranton, will help point you in the right direction.

**Dawn Scranton** • Feb. 17, 2017



If you're interested in starting or growing a niche service for eCommerce clients, these concepts, ideas, tips, and quips from eCommerce expert and QBPluggedIn Founder and Director, Dawn Scranton, will help point you in the right direction.

It starts with data. With an eCommerce client, there is data coming from all directions. You, who are accustomed to working with many different clients and all of their issues, are comfortable with the chaos. You can parse it and compartmentalize, and make sense of it all.

Your eCommerce clients are dealing with data silos originating in and moving

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skills continue to grow. I got my start by asking questions. I questioned computer people, consultants, and even my clients. I asked, I learned, I asked again, even when I felt ignorant or frustrated. I wondered about how we could get customer, financial, and transactional data from one place to the next, from a website to the shopping cart to the financial software. How do we update everyone during the process, how do we avoid paying two or three times? How do we maintain our integrity while figuring this out?

It wasn't about my knowledge of computers or software, coding, or my special skills, my clients would tell me – leave that part to the developers and software experts. What I learned was to identify the data that we needed to collect. Know what information is important, just as important is to know what's not important, and know where you want all the data to land. Knowing how the final picture should look will help you figure out how to make it happen. Oh, and by the way, each client is different, has different goals, and needs a different roadmap.

To specialize in this area, you need to log some hours. I've probably spent over 300 hours online, googling my questions, learning the terminology, reviewing the technologies that cover different aspects of the eCommerce business: inventory, logistics, order fulfillment, packing & shipping, email auto-responders, list management, prospects, multiple sources of payment, flat-rate, interchange and gateway merchant fees, postage options including click-n-ship, order tracking, customer and vendor portals, download and import. All of these are terms of endearment in the eCommerce world.

In addition to mastering all of the above, you need to develop excellent people and management skills. Being able to work well with others is key. Together you can explore challenging questions, seek solutions, create alternatives. Be ready to lead by example, and be encouraging and positive even when presented with new

challenges, even when you feel beaten and exhausted. Don't let road blocks get you

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*Dawn Scranton, founder & director of QBPluggedin, a resource center for business owners seeking solutions. Dawn has been a QuickBooks guru, add-on advisor and reporting ninja since 1993. She is also a member of the Intuit Developer Network, Intuit Trainer/Writer Network and Sleeter Certified Consultant.*

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