Thinking of going into e-tailing? No one doubts that Internet shopping offers a plethora of opportunities, as well as pitfalls for the unprepared. Joel Collier and Carol Bienstock in "How do customers judge quality in an e-tailer?" summarized their survey results on customer satisfaction with on-line shopping in the Fall 2006 issue of the *MIT-Sloan Management Review*. Their main points in the customer quality ratings below should help e-tail entrepreneurs to operate productive and profitable Web sales sites.

1) Ease of use/simple design/privacy. Online shopping requires customers to "learn by doing." Make your site easy to use with the fewest clicks possible. Design prompts for information and alerts for errors. Avoid extraneous bells and whistles; make font and text easy to read. Show thumbnail images of each product. Assure customers that their personal information is secure and not shared.

2) Consistency and flexibility. Your site's availability, applications, and links must be perfect at all times. Information must be current and accurate. Displaying sold-out products only frustrates potential buyers. Make the site flexible enough to accommodate all ages, levels of technological sophistication, and delivery and payment preferences.

3) The timeliness of the order. Busy customers may pay premium prices for speedy delivery, but making anyone wait past a promised date destroys the quality of the e-tail experience.

4) The accuracy of the order. Customers expect to receive orders at the correct address and be billed for the right amount. Contacting an e-tailer to resolve problems is an experience shoppers don't want.

5) The condition of the order. Just like people in stores, e-tail buyers shy away from damaged products and packaging. Online merchants must make delivery carriers understand how important it is for packages to arrive at customers' doors in perfect condition.

6) Addressing problems when they occur. Three "service recovery" points are important: the opportunity to speak with a person to solve a problem; fair policies and procedures, such as free return shipping for defective items and rapid refunds; and follow-up with delivery or other third-party services if the problem occurred there. Although an apology for a service failure may suffice, customer compensation leads to trust in an e-tail site.