

Guide to Using Shopify

Online shopping is a popular activity of online users. In fact, ecommerce has grown at a phenomenal rate. According to [emarketer.com](https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-ecommerce-2019), online shopping accounts for 14.1% of all retail sales.(source: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-ecommerce-2019>) Despite the global economy slowdown, ecommerce is at an all-time high: a 27 trillion-dollar industry. And it's not expected to slow down any time soon. Now more than ever, is the perfect time to sell your products online. And one of the fastest and easiest ways to open your ecommerce store is through Shopify.

What is Shopify

Shopify is an all-inclusive platform that allows businesses to run an online store. It includes a variety of tools to help you set up and run your business. These include the point of sale features you need to start, run and grow your product business. Depending on which plan you choose, you'll find everything you need to showcase and manage your products, easily change, and update items, process payments and get statistics about your sales all in one place.

How Shopify Works

Shopify is Software as a Service (SaaS) model you access through a subscription plan. Since it's a cloud-based solution, you don't have the worry of upgrading or maintaining software or web servers. You have the flexibility to access and run your business from anywhere. And with the customizable look and feel you can create using the online store builder and themes, you'll quickly have your own Shopify store in as little as 15 minutes.

Shopify's system allows you to create a website and use the built-in shopping cart to sell digital or tangible products or services. You can create and customize you online store with its built-in themes, both free and paid. Businesses can sell their products in multiple places around the web, through mobile, via social media, from your brick-and-mortar location, via a pop-up and through online marketplaces. You will also be able to manage your products and inventory, keep track of payments and shipping and view analytics.

You don't need to be a designer or developer to use Shopify. You can customize the look and feel of your store using Shopify's online store builder and themes.

Shopify enables a connection to autoresponder systems so you can stay in touch with your customers, offer sales and keep them informed on new products. Shopify's key features include:

- Free or paid themes from their theme store allowing you to make your store stand out and look professional.
- Free or paid apps from Shopify's app store allows you to expand on an already value packed system. Apps available include connecting to print on demand providers, marketing apps, Facebook connection, autoresponders and much more.

- Shopify's built-in payment provider for accepting credit card payments. You keep payment info and business data safe through Shopify Payments. It is PCI compliant and supports secure checkouts.
- Full support team available 24/7 to help answer your questions.
- You can use your own domain name with your Shopify plan. Using your domain name builds your branding.

Shopify's comprehensive commerce platform helps anyone interested in selling online launch and begin selling across the globe. It's designed to quickly set up shop but versatile enough to grow with you.

Costs

Shopify is a subscription platform. It offers competitive rates and pricing plans for most needs and budgets. With a variety of pricing plans, billing cycles, credit card rates and other features, there is a plan that will fit your business. Each plan has a variety of features since no one plan will work for all businesses.

One way to try out Shopify before committing to a specific plan is to register for a 14-day free trial to test the features and see how they can help you sell your products. There are no setup fees for any of the plans.

The pricing plans, at this time, are:

Basic Shopify:

Priced at \$29 USD per month. Good for new ecommerce businesses.

Features:

- Online store ecommerce website and blog
- Unlimited products
- 2 staff accounts for staff members to access the admin and Point of Sale
- 24/7 support
- Sales channels for selling on social media and online marketplaces
- Up to 4 inventory locations such as retail stores, warehouses or pop-ups
- Manual order creation
- Discount code
- Online credit card rates/in-person card rates
- Point of Sale lite for accepting in-person payments
- Global selling in up to 133 currencies

Shopify:

Priced at \$79 USD per month. Good for growing online businesses or in person sales.

Features:

- Everything in the Basic Shopify plan plus:
- Up to 5 staff accounts
- Up to 5 inventory locations
- Standard reports
- Up to 88% Shipping discounts
- USPS Priority Mail pricing
- International Domains and Pricing

Advanced Shopify:

Priced at \$299 USD per month. Best for businesses who need advanced reporting as they scale up.

Features:

- Everything in the Shopify plan plus:
- Up to 15 staff accounts
- Advanced reports
- Third-party calculated shipping rates with your own- or third-party apps at checkout.
- Ability to set individual prices for products for different countries or regions.

Other options include the Shopify lite plan. For \$9 USD a month, Shopify Lite allows merchants to sell in-person via the POS lite or to add a buy button to their website. You can view reports, issue gift cards and product management among other things. You can not build an online store however with Shopify Lite.

With the different plans offered by Shopify, there is a plan for every business with features that help you grow and maintain your business.

Who Needs a Shopify Store?

Like any business, Shopify supports many different types of eCommerce businesses. Businesses can sell digital products, physical products, drop-shipped products. They can sell services, events, and consultations as well.

Some of the products might include:

- Beauty supplies
- Home goods
- Handcrafted goods
- Clothing

- Hobby gear
- Outdoor gear
- Digital products like planner pages, digital art or guides
- Online classes or courses
- Service appointments
- memberships
- Events
- eBooks
- Gift cards
- Coaching
- Consultations
- Rentals
- Quotes, estimates or assessments
- Car parts
- Live streams

The list of items to sell on Shopify is endless. The only thing not allowed are illegal or prohibited items like alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes, fireworks, drugs, video game currency or credits, weapons, and firearms.

Brick and Mortar Businesses

Shopify is a great way to add an online element to your brick-and-mortar business. There are many ways you can utilize Shopify with your brick-and-mortar business even if you don't want to open an online store.

For example, you can use Shopify as a way to collect payments at the point of sale. Maybe you offer local delivery and curbside pickup. Many people simply want a way to go online and place their order. A simple Shopify store is the solution to this problem for the brick-and-mortar business.

If you don't want to put all your inventory online, one option is to set up a simple Shopify store to showcase specific products or run sales on specific products. A Shopify store allows brick-and-mortar businesses to cross-sell and upsell to their current in store customers by pointing the buyer to their online store.

The Shopify Lite plan lets you sell products without the need for an online store. You can embed a Buy Button on your personal website. Or if you sell products in person such as a trade show, farmers' market or pop-up store, the Shopify Lite plan lets you use their point-of-sale app and a card reader for customer purchases.

After a customer buys at a retail store, they can be encouraged to use your Shopify store website to leave a review or to access after the sale services, customer service and getting more information.

You're already a business owner with a range of products you sell. You know what your best and worst sellers are. This is an advantage when adding a Shopify store to the mix. You'll want to promote the best sellers on your Shopify site.

Of course, underperforming items might work better online as you are able to reach a new audience.

Offering unique products such as ones handmade by you can be highlighted as unique in your online store.

A Shopify site allows you to niche down especially if you have a large offering in your retail store. You can focus on one category. This can make it easier to market and attract the aficionados and experts who are looking for that specific category.

Customers are looking for engaging and consistent brand experiences from their brick-and-mortar stores. They want to be kept up to date on sales, new products, and services. One way to do this is by connecting retail with a Shopify store.

A Shopify store allows you the freedom to experiment and make mistakes without the stress of the fixed expenses that a physical store requires.

Shopify Store Set-up

Now that you know why and what you are selling, it's time to set up your Shopify store. Setting up your store takes just a few minutes, but you'll want to prepare a few things ahead of time as well.

Step 1: Before you set up your store, you'll need to have a business idea, a possible name, and your logo if you'll be using one. You'll want to research and determine what you will be selling.

Picking a niche is important and usually works better than trying to sell everything to everyone. You will want to have your product(s) lined up. (If you don't have any products yet, check out Shopify's how to find products page (<https://www.shopify.com/blog/product-ideas>)). Finally, you'll want to have good quality images of your products/services.

Step 2: Sign up. Start building your store by signing up for Shopify's free trial. This 14-day trial gives you time for building your online store, adding products, picking a theme and all the things you need to do to be ready to go when you launch.

Create your Shopify account by entering a valid email address, a secure password, and the name of your store.

This will be your primary or myshopify URL (my-store-name.myshopify.com), used to log in to your store. You won't be able to change this. You can change the name of your store as it

appears on every page of your website. You will be able to buy a custom domain later on (www.yourstore.com) if you like, so don't stress about the name. Check to make sure your name isn't being used.

Set your business address, contact information, time zone, store currency, set your default weight unit in the settings tab. Fill in any other sections that pertain to your business.

After answering a few questions you'll be in your Shopify Account.

Step 3: Add products to your store. In your new Shopify store admin page, click on the Products tab on the left of the screen. Then click on Add products to create your first listing.

Give your product a title. It should be clear what the product is so keep it short and use description or variants such as color or sizes.

Add a product description. This is where you will describe and sell your product. Here are a few tips for compelling descriptions:

- Know who you are speaking, who is buying your product.
- Highlight incentives such as eco-friendly, the features, benefits and what really matters.
- Anticipate any common objections or questions the buy might have.
- Make your description scannable using short paragraphs, bullet points, subheadings, bold, etc.
- Help customers see themselves using it. Paint a picture of the materials you use, size charts or the story of how they are made.

Upload product images or other media. In the media section, under products, upload photos, GIFs, videos, or 3D models of your products. Help your customers see the product in action, how they can proudly display it in their space. Use high-quality images.

Now it's time to set your price. Your price will be determined by several factors: raw goods cost, time, markup as well as marketing and costs. Remember you can always adjust your prices as you learn more through your marketing.

Click the box for collecting taxes. You can configure your tax settings later.

The Compare at price will show the customer what the product would typically cost, especially if you are having a sale. The Cost per item field is optional. It used to track your profit margin on individual products.

Inventory tracking. If you are drop-shipping or using a print-on-demand service, you can skip this section.

Fill in the fields with your information. Tick the track quantity or continue selling when out of stock buttons if wanted or turn off to mark items sold out if you have limited inventory.

Be sure to click Save product after each product listing.

Step 4: Choosing a Theme. Your Shopify store comes preloaded with a default theme when you open an account. To change or add a theme, you need to choose either a free theme from within the admin or buy a paid theme from the Shopify Theme Store.

Step 5: Add Contact and About pages. It's a good idea to create an about you page and a page with contact information for your store. From your Shopify Admin page, go to Online Store, then Pages. Click Add page to be taken to the new webpage editor. Once there, enter a Title and the content in the boxes provided. You'll want to be descriptive and clear with your webpage title since it will be displayed in the tab or title bar of browsers,

In the Visibility field choose the option for publishing your webpage or keeping it hidden. Click save. You will still need to add a link to the page in your menu in order for it to appear in the store navigation.

Add a menu and links to your store to help people explore your store. Go to Online Store, then Navigation. Click the name of the menu you want to edit. Click on the Add menu item. In the Name field enter the link you want to add. A drop-down menu opens with link types. Choose the ones you want and click Save menu.

Marketing Your Store

Now that your store is filled with products and ready to launch, to get shoppers to it you'll want to implement ways to market it.

1. Optimize your website for the search engines. Optimize it using relevant keywords on your page. Do keyword research to help you find relevant terms for your product pages. Optimize the title tag and meta description to help your Shopify store rank in the search results. You can do this within your Shopify admin system.
2. Use email marketing to send tailored content to people interested in your business. Add an email sign-up bar or form to your shop. Capture your leads with a free gift that is pertinent with what you sell.
3. Use social media, either paid ads or free posts to draw attention to your store. Share helpful information in your posts on how to use your products or ways your product helps them.
4. Use referral marketing. One of the best ways to get customers is to encourage your current customers to refer your store to their friends and family. Offer a benefit for both

the current customer and the referral by offering an incentive such as 30% off any order for both of them.

5. Use discount codes and sales.
6. Customize your abandoned cart emails.

Templates and Tools

We've included a set of checklists, templates, and worksheets to help you quickly get started setting up your Shopify store. These include:

- A checklist for preparing for launch you can use to check off the steps as you do them.
- A quick reference guide to setting up your store that includes the steps you need to take, things to remember and what you should do to set up your store.
- A handy worksheet to plan out your Shopify store including the business idea, your target audience and product ideas.
- A handy worksheet for planning out your first product from the title to the description, from the pricing to shipping.
- A checklist to keep you on track while setting up and managing subscriptions.

Use these to keep you on track and to get your Shopify store launched right.

What to Do Next

Ecommerce is one of the fastest growing industries right now. People are looking for ways to shop without having to physically go to a store. Setting up a Shopify store for your business is one way to begin getting your share of the customers. Begin by signing up for the free trial and start setting up your store, adding products, choosing a name, niche, and theme, and marketing your store. Whether you sell digital products like printables, print on demand products, offer services or consulting or you currently have a brick-and-mortar business, using Shopify as the platform for your store saves you time and money.