

Shopify Launch Checklist

If you are just getting started, you probably will be using Shopify for your ecommerce store. Getting it set up properly at the start can be a daunting task, but with my experience launching over 200+ Shopify stores, I have compiled a list of the key tasks you need to do before you start selling online.

Please be aware, I predominantly work with New Zealand stores, so there may be important tasks for your specific location that are not covered here such as tax, privacy, or disclosure requirements.

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The Basics

Before you get started launching your Shopify store, there are some basic tasks that every business should do.

Create your Shopify account

You can't start your Shopify store until you have a Shopify account! Shopify usually also has some form of free trial or promotion to help you save cost when starting out. Go with the "Basic" plan until you need the features from the more expensive plans.

<https://www.shopify.com/nz/pricing>

Easy

Critical

Register your domain

Your domain determines your website URL, this can be registered on Shopify or through an alternative domain registrar such as Crazy Domains or GoDaddy. Avoid complicated or lengthy domain names.

Easy

Critical

Set up a mailbox using your custom domain

Using a gmail address for your official customer support email looks less trustworthy to customers. Instead, use Google Workspace or another mail hosting solution to set up an email inbox that uses your own domain.

Intermediate

Critical

Design your logo and branding

A good logo and brand will make the shopping experience more memorable for your customers. Your branding is also used across a lot of other important channels including social media, email marketing, and packaging. There are free options available if you want to do this yourself, such as [Canva](#) and [Hatchful](#), but you may want to consider engaging a professional for this if you have the budget.

Expert

Critical

Secure your account with 2FA

Don't let your store get hijacked, two factor authentication protects your store by requiring both a password and a second layer of authentication to access your account. Consider doing this for other critical accounts as well, such as your mailbox and domain registrar.

Intermediate

Critical



Set up social media channels

Having an active social media profile helps build trust with prospective customers that you are a real store. Most stores have a Facebook and Instagram, but you could also consider TikTok, Pinterest, or YouTube if it's a good fit for your business. Post at least once weekly on each social media channel to show you are active.

Intermediate

Critical

Theme Setup

Your Shopify Theme determines what your website looks like. There are plenty of paid or free themes to choose from, make sure to use an official theme from themes.shopify.com to make sure you are covered for long-term support and quality assurance.



Pick the right theme

Make sure that you pick a Shopify theme that will support your unique business model and goals. When deciding on a theme, look at the features available, other stores that use the theme, and reviews from other store owners.

Intermediate

Critical



Add a favicon

A favicon, also known as a shortcut or website icon, is what people see in the website tab and search results to identify your website. Usually, this is a square version of your logo.

Easy

Medium Impact



Add your homepage metadata

Your homepage metadata is used to show your website in search results. To set that up, from the Shopify admin go to Sales Channels → Online Store → Preferences. Your homepage title and description should reflect the focus of your store and what you sell.

Easy

Medium Impact



Set up your header and footer menu

Your header and footer menus are used by customers to navigate through your website. Common links to include are links to collections, links to customer support and policy pages, a link to your informational pages, a link to customer reviews or other social proof, and a link to your contact page.

Intermediate

Critical



Show accepted payment methods in the website footer

Customers check the website footer to see if you accept the payment method they want to use, and showing your payment methods available helps build trust with customers. Most Shopify themes let you enable this in the theme settings under "Footer" → "Payment Icons".

Easy

Critical



Show your contact details in the website footer

Displaying contact details in your website footer is crucial and often over-looked. It helps customers reach you easier, shows customers that you are a real business, helps your local SEO, and is required by Google if you want to run Google Ads. An email address, phone number, and physical address is ideal; include store hours if you have a physical store.

Easy

Critical



Add your social media links

As discussed in an earlier recommendation, showing customers you have active social media accounts builds trust that you are an authentic store, and linking to your social media can help drive engagement.

Easy

Low Impact



Customise your checkout

Make your store look more professional by adding your logo, brand colours, and font to the checkout. You can also install apps that customise the checkout further, such as adding cross-sells or post-purchase surveys. To customise this, go to Settings → Checkout → Customise Checkout.

Easy

Low Impact



Customise your homepage

Your homepage is often the first impression you will make on customers, and is absolutely crucial to get right. Read my detailed guide to learn more about how to customise your homepage.

Intermediate

Critical



Customise your product pages

Customise your product pages to include important information about your products, such as a size guide, specifications, or nutrition. Make sure the features of the product, and why customers should buy it from you, are clear.

Intermediate

Medium Impact



Customise your collection pages & filters

If you are selling a lot of different products, set up product filters to make it easier for customers to find the right product for them, such as filtering by brand, product type, availability, or price.

Intermediate

Medium Impact



Make your key selling points obvious

Your key selling points should be clearly seen on every page. For most stores, these may be your generous returns policy, free shipping offer, great customer service, loyalty program, quality of your products, or payment methods you support. Think about what you can provide to customer's shopping experience that makes you different from similar stores.

Easy

Medium Impact



Add an about page

An about page will make your store more authentic and increase trust with customers. On the about page, you can talk about points such as your team, how you started your store, or your mission and values.

Easy

Medium Impact



Add a contact form page

Many customers will look for a contact form to get in touch about returns, product questions, or other customer support enquiries. Create a contact form page, add your contact details to it, and link it in your main menu and/or footer.

Easy

Low Impact



Add a FAQ page

A page for frequently asked questions will reduce the amount of repeated questions and enquiries you get from customers. Most Shopify themes now come with a template for FAQ pages that you can use, or you can use a Shopify app.

Easy

Low Impact



Add a blog

Blogs can be great for increasing your SEO, engaging with your customers, and building up a mailing list; but only if you have the time to post at least once a month.

Intermediate

Low Impact



Customise your cart page

Your cart page should upsell or cross-sell some recommended products, and restate your key selling point. Make sure order notes are also enabled to collect customer instructions for delivery.

Easy

Low Impact



Customise your 404 page

Hopefully most people won't be visiting your 404 page, as customers only see it when they have visited a broken link, but you should at least show some recommended products on this page and make sure the language and branding is consistent with the rest of your website.

Easy

Low Impact



Customise your search page

Most shopify themes allow you to customise the filtering options for searches, or you can use a Shopify app for more advanced customisation options.

Intermediate

Low Impact



Enable quick view

Quick view is where customers can view the product details in a popup and purchase the product without navigating to a different page. Most Shopify themes provide this as an option that can be enabled.

Easy

Low Impact



Show that you accept pickups (if applicable)

If you accept pickups, add your pickup information to the product pages and shipping policy page. Most Shopify themes will have a prebuilt block you can add to product pages which will automatically show the pickup availability, address, and processing times.

Easy

Low Impact



Enable a cart drawer or dropdown

Enabling a cart drawer or dropdown will let customers see the contents of their cart without navigating away from their current page, which can increase average order value and conversion rate.

Easy

Medium Impact



Show navigation breadcrumbs

Navigation breadcrumbs help customers navigate through your website, such as going from a product page to the overarching product category. Most Shopify themes will have a setting to enable this.

Easy

Low Impact



Enable dynamic checkout buttons

Dynamic checkout buttons let customers skip the cart and go straight to the checkout from the product page, which helps increase conversion rate.

Easy

Medium Impact



Use high quality images, avoid stock images

Using blurry, low quality, or obvious stock images on your website will make it seem less authentic and trustworthy. Good photography is one of the most important aspects of the shopping experience, so consider engaging a local photography to take photos for your website.

Intermediate

Critical



Show social proof

Another important factor of turning website visitors into paying customers is social proof. This can be in the form of product reviews, written testimonials, video testimonials, user generated content, awards you won, or good press. You should have at least one section featuring social proof on every page, and a standalone page linked in the main menu that aggregates all of your social proof.

Intermediate

Critical



Show your shipping, returns, and privacy policy

Your shipping, returns, and privacy policy should be featured in either your main menu and/or footer menu. This is required by some advertising platforms, and will also make it easier for customers to find.

Easy

Medium Impact

Products & Categories

It should go without saying that you need products to be able to sell online, but also make sure that you load all information correctly and nicely formatted, with ideally 3-7 product photos or videos.



Set up your product collections

Collections help organise your products for customers. Stores commonly will group products based on their brand, product type, season, or use-case. You should also consider having a sale collection for when you run promotions, and a new arrivals collection if your stock is seasonal/short-lived. Link to your most important collections in your main menu.

Intermediate

Critical



Use high quality product photos

High quality product photos are one of the most important factors in conversion rate for product pages. If you don't have good product photos available, consider investing in a professional product photographer, or a lightbox to take good quality photos yourself.

Intermediate

Critical



Write a description for every product and collection page

A detailed and well-written description will improve the SEO and conversion rate for the products. Shopify offers native A.I copywriting to help you get started, but I recommend always rewriting what you get out of A.I in your own words to keep your tone consistent and avoid SEO penalties.

Expert

Medium Impact



Add product vendor, type, and unit cost

Even if you do not intend to use them straight away, adding the correct vendor, product type, and unit cost for all of your products from the beginning will simplify reporting and product segmentation in the future.

Easy

Medium Impact



Set up gift cards

If you plan to offer gift cards, enable them in Shopify under Products → Gift Cards. Make sure to add a custom gift card image and description.

Easy

Low Impact

Apps & Integrations

With thousands of apps and possible integrations to choose from, it can be difficult to know what you should start with. My recommendations below focus on what you may need at the very beginning, but you can read more of my app recommendations for established stores in my [Shopify Success Checklist](#).



Add a product reviews app

Product reviews are valuable to help you build up social proof for your store. Use an app that automates collecting reviews for you and supports photo reviews, such as [JudgeMe](#) or [Loox](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Add a social feed app

Displaying a social feed on your home page or social pages can be a good way to feature user generated content and improve the authenticity of your store. The app I always use is [InstaFeed](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Automatically hide out of stock products

If your store has seasonal products or product drops, such as a clothing store, consider installing a Shopify app that will either automatically hide out of stock products or push them to the bottom of collection pages. For this, I use [Knockout](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Use a back in stock app

If instead your products are evergreen, meaning that you will restock them often, consider installing a Shopify app that will let customers enter their email address to be notified when the product is back in stock. For this, I use [Back in Stock](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Add a wishlist app

Wishlist apps improve customer retention, and provide you with a valuable touchpoint for marketing. I recommend using [Wishlist Plus](#).

Easy

Low Impact



Add an app for product upsells and cross-sells

Upsells and cross-sells can be used to increase your average order value. There are a lot of different apps available depending on where you want to show your upsell, but I personally use [Frequently Bought Together](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Add an app for post-purchase feedback

Collecting feedback from customers is invaluable to know where you can improve and what to work on next. I use [Zigpoll](#) because it has a generous free plan.

Easy

Medium Impact



Connect an email marketing app

Email marketing is a crucial part of almost every store's marketing strategy. Shopify has its own email marketing app, [Shopify Email](#), but I recommend using [Klaviyo](#) instead because it has a lot of useful features for email automations and smart sending.

Easy

Critical



Add an app to promote email signups

Building an email marketing list can be difficult at first. You can increase your signups by offering a small incentive for subscribing, such as 10% off their first order, and by installing a Shopify app that will show a subscriber popup such as [Klaviyo](#) or [Shopify Forms](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Consider installing a product filter and searching app

Out of the box, Shopify's built-in searching and collection filtering options are fine for most stores, but some industries such as clothing use Shopify apps such as [this app](#) to get better control over customising their filtering and search functionality.

Expert

Medium Impact



Connect Google's suite of apps

Connect Google Analytics, Google Merchants, Google Ads, and Google Search Console. Most of these can be automatically set up and connected by using the [Google app](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Connect Facebook & Instagram

Like Google, this can be easily connected by using the [official app](#). Connecting Facebook & Instagram will allow you to advertise and display your products on these social channels.

Easy

Medium Impact



Connect other social media platforms

If you are active or planning to advertise on other social media platforms, such as Snapchat, Pinterest, or TikTok, search for and install the official apps to connect them to your store.

Easy

Medium Impact



Install Shopify Inbox

[Shopify Inbox](#) is a free messaging tool by Shopify that allows customers to talk to you through a live chat interface, which you can respond to from the Shopify admin or the Shopify mobile app on your phone.

Easy

Medium Impact



Add the Shop channel

The Shop app is a mobile app marketplace set up by Shopify. Adding the Shop channel is easy, and is becoming increasingly popular with customers.

Easy

Medium Impact



Install a fulfillment app

Most New Zealand stores use a fulfillment app such as GoSweetSpot or StarShipt to simplify their fulfillment. These fulfillment apps typically can't be installed from the Shopify app store directly, but after signing up with a fulfillment provider they will give you instructions to install their app onto your Shopify store.

Easy

Medium Impact



Install an app for rural shipping rates (if applicable)

If you charge more for rural shipping, I recommend installing an app that makes sure that rural shoppers only see the rural shipping rate to select at checkout. For this, I use the [Postcode Shipping app](#).

Easy

Medium Impact



Add your other sales channels (if applicable)

If you plan to sell on other marketplaces, such as Amazon, TradeMe, or The Market, download their official Shopify apps to automatically sync your products from your Shopify store into these marketplaces.

Easy

Medium Impact

Store Settings

There are a lot of settings you need to update when you first create your Shopify store, and this is where I see most people miss an important step in launching their website. Review the recommendations below to make sure your store is configured properly.



Add your branding

From the Shopify admin, go to Settings → Brand → Fill out all of the fields on this page. These assets are used to apply your brand logo and colours across your store and other channels.

Easy

Medium Impact



Set up your shipping rates

To set your shipping rates, go to Settings → Shipping and delivery → General shipping rates. Make sure to delete the global shipping rate if you do not want to accept international orders.

Intermediate

Critical



Collect tax

To set up your tax collection, go to Settings → Tax and duties → Select New Zealand from the list (assuming you are a New Zealand business) → Press "Collect GST" → Enter your GST number. Make sure "Include tax in prices" and "Charge tax on shipping rates" are ticked.

Easy

Critical



Add your IRD number (NZ only)

Go to Settings → Billing → Tax Registration → Tick "Yes, I'm GST registered" → enter your IRD number.

Easy

Critical



Set your inventory location

Your inventory location will be shown for pickup orders and calculating delivery rates if applicable. To set your inventory location, go to Settings → Location → Select the default location from the list → Update the address.

Easy

Medium Impact



Enable pickup and local delivery

If you want to accept pick up or local delivery orders, go to Settings → Shipping and Delivery → click a location under local delivery or pickup and enable.

Easy

Medium Impact



Review your store details

Go to Settings, then Store Details, and make sure the following is correct: Your store name, your store phone, your store email, your legal business name, your business address, your currency, your time zone, and your metric system.

Easy

Expert



Add Shopify Payments

Shopify Payments is Shopify's card processor for accepting Visa and Mastercard. Other card payment gateways such as WindCave can also be installed if desired instead. Go to Settings → Payments → Set up Shopify Payments → fill out the form to activate Shopify Payments.

Intermediate

Critical



Accept Google Pay, Apple Pay, and Shop Pay

Once you have set up Shopify Payments, make sure you have Google Pay, Apple Pay, and Shop Pay enabled. These payment methods are popular with customers that like to use the express checkout.

Easy

Medium Impact



Add your other payment methods

If you need to add other payment methods, such as Afterpay, Laybuy, or Klarna, go to Settings → Payment Methods → Additional payment methods → add them from here. Instructions are also usually on the payment gateway's website as well.

Easy

Medium Impact



Enable customer accounts

Enabling customer accounts increases customer retention and provides more opportunities for customer engagement. To enable this, go to Settings → Customer accounts → enable customer accounts.

Easy

Medium Impact

Edit your email templates

Make your store's email communications more professional by adding your logo and brand colours. To do this, go to Settings → Notifications → Customise email templates → Add your logo and accent colour.

Easy

Medium Impact

Add your store policies

Adding your policy pages is important to communicate with customers how you will handle shipping, returns, and their privacy. It's also required for many advertising platforms, and linking to these in the website header or footer makes your store more trustworthy. Go to Settings then Policies to add your policies, you can start with Shopify's templates, but make sure to replace any placeholder text from the templates.

Easy

Critical

Invite your team

If you need to give other people access to your store, to add them go to Settings → Users and permissions → Add staff. Each person that logs into your Shopify admin should do so with their own account (do not account share, it is a security risk), and get every staff member to use 2FA.

Easy

Low Impact

Enable email notifications

To be notified when you receive an order, go to Settings → Notifications → then under "Staff order notifications" press "Add recipient" to add a new email.

Intermediate

Critical

Add your domain

If you didn't purchase your domain from Shopify, you will need to update some DNS records to point your domain to your Shopify website.

Intermediate

Critical

Verify your sending email

This is similar to the previous recommendation, but this authenticates the email address you use to send email to customers through Shopify. To set that up, go to Settings → Notifications → under "Sender email" click on "authenticate your domain".

Intermediate

Medium Impact

Enable Shopify Markets (as required)

If you are selling in multiple countries, go to Settings → Markets → press "Add market" to add your new country. If you're enabling Shopify Markets, also install the [Geolocation](#) app to automatically redirect customers to the right version of your website, and enable the currency converter on your Shopify theme.

If you are selling in Europe or USA, install Shopify's Privacy & Compliance app.

Easy

Medium Impact

Launch Strategy

You're nearly there! Here are the last few steps I recommend taking before and after you launch your Shopify store.



Test purchasing on your store

Starting from your website homepage, run through the entire buying experience as a customer and make sure that it all works as you expect, including that: the correct products are in stock, the products are priced correctly, you can add to the cart, your shipping rates are correct, and your payment methods are correct.

Easy

Critical



Check your website links

Click every link on every page of your website, and make sure that they all navigate to the right page. There are online tools that can do this automatically for you, but personally I think it's best for your launch to do this manually so you can also make sure every link goes to where you expect it to.

Intermediate

Medium Impact



Check your grammar and replace placeholder content

Poor spelling or grammar can give a poor impression to customers, as it makes your site look less trustworthy. Similarly, placeholder images or text also make your website look unfinished, which will make customers concerned about purchasing anything off the store.

Intermediate

Medium Impact



Remove your storefront password

Once the storefront password is removed, anyone will be able to visit your website by going to it's URL. To remove the storefront password, go to Online Store → Preferences → Untick "Restrict access to visitors with the password". Once this is done, your website is officially live, congratulations!

Easy

Critical



Announce your launch on all channels

Once your store is live, make sure that you announce that to your customers on every platform that you engage with them on, including your newsletter, social media accounts, and anywhere/anyone else you can share it to.

Expert

Critical



Consider running a launch promotion

A launch promotion is a great way to get those first few sales rolling. A common approach to this is offering between 10% to 30% off your customer's first order, but requiring them to sign up to your newsletter to get this discount, so that you can start building up your mailing list. Run this promotion for as long as you see fit, and make sure you communicate your promotion through your social media, advertising, and website.

Intermediate

Medium Impact



Submit your sitemap to Google Search Console

Submitting your sitemap to Google Search Console helps expedite your website appearing in Google. To do this, log into Google Search Console, click on "Sitemaps", then "Add Sitemap", and paste in your URL followed by "/sitemap.xml", e.g. "https://example.com/sitemap.xml".

Intermediate

Low Impact



Read my Shopify Success checklist

My Shopify Launch Checklist covered everything you need to do to launch your Shopify store, but once you are up and running there are other activities you should consider doing to help grow sales. This free checklist covers everything I have learnt over 10 years of helping Shopify stores ranging from \$0 to \$50M+ in sales improve their shopping experience and grow their conversions.

<https://mitchjohn.nz/shopify-success-checklist>

Intermediate

Medium Impact

Do you need help implementing these recommendations?

For one flat monthly fee, I help Shopify businesses with custom development, ecommerce strategy, growth consulting, and more.

<https://mitchjohn.nz/shopify>