

How To Build a Shopify Store The Right Way [Step by Step Blueprint]

www.bharaji.com

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Chapter 1: The Basics

What Is Shopify?

<u>Shopify</u> is an all-in-one ecommerce platform that allows you to create your own online store. It provides you with several themes that can be customized to meet individual users' branding requirements.

One of the key selling point of Shopify is that users without technical or design experience can create beautiful online websites.

As stated on their website, Shopify powers ambitious entrepreneurs all over the world with more than 600,000 stores, 1,000,000+ active users and \$72B+ sold on Shopify.

I can tell from my own experience that it is one of the most user friendly ecommerce platform out there.

How To Use Shopify

This section is not a fully-fledged tutorial on Shopify. There are many great free videos on YouTube doing a fantastic job in teaching how to use Shopify. You can also find free training materials on Shopify at https://www.shopify.com/academy

I will share with you how most entrepreneurs use Shopify to earn an income online.

The widely business model used is called Dropshipping although people also use Shopify to sell their own line of products or services.

People will often mention print-on-demand as a separate business model, although I see it as a form of dropshipping as well. For argument sake, I will briefly explain dropshipping, print-on-demand and selling your own products or services.

Dropshipping

I have noticed that most entrepreneurs involved with dropshipping use Aliexpress for selling physical goods.

Dropshipping in a nutshell is when you play the middle man between the supplier and the customer. You buy a product at a certain price and resell it with a margin to cover your costs and profits.



Image credit: Entrepreneur Hub

You don't invest in inventory or whatsoever. You only buy the product when you have an order on your store. The supplier sends it to your customer without you seeing it or touching it. This is inventory arbitrage. Your risk is almost nil.

This is not a new concept. Many fortune 100 companies such as Amazon, Walmart use a similar business model.

The most popular suppliers for droshipping with Shopify are:

- Aliexpress
- Etsy
- Ebay
- Amazon

Print-On-Demand

With print-on-demand you put up a design on a product through a printing partner. Generally t-shirts, hoodies, coffee mugs and so forth. The products are unique and customized based on your design. The dropshipping principle still applies here.

When someone orders the product on your store, the printing partner gets it, prints the said product and ships directly to your customer without you seeing it or touching it.

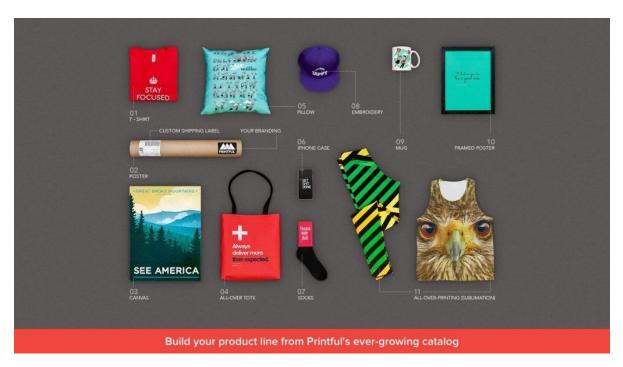


Image credit: Printful

There is a bit of time and money to be invested in design research and you may have to pay a monthly fee to some partners.

The most popular Print-on-demand partners are:

- Teespring
- Teelaunch (I have used)
- Printful (the one I am currently using)
- Pillowprofits
- Custom cat
- Gearlaunch

Selling Your Own Products Or Services

Shopify facilitates the selling of your own brand of products or services.

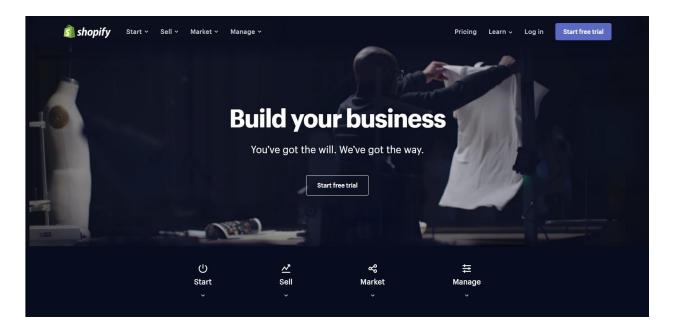
You can create and develop your brand from scratch and take it to the world!

Some good branded stores on Shopify are:

- Colourpop.com
- jeffreestarcosmetics.com
- fashionnova.com
- kyliecosmetics.com

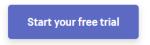
How Much Is Shopify And How To Start Your First Store For Free

You can start selling on Shopify free for 14 days, no credit card required.



But you will have to pick a plan later for you to unlock Shopify's potential.

They have several plans to accommodate a wide range of entrepreneurs with their most popular ones being basic shopify, shopify and advanced shopify.



	Basic Shopify All the basics for starting a new business	Shopify Everything you need for a growing business	Advanced Shopify Advanced features for scaling your business
Monthly price	USD \$ 29 /mo	USD \$ 79 /mo	USD \$ 299 /mo

They do have a starter plan called Shopify lite as well as an enterprise-grade solution (shopifyplus) for high volume merchants.

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Based on my experience here is an indication of budget you will need to get started:

- -Shopify Online Store: \$29 USD per month after the 14 day free trial
- -Oberlo Application (if using Aliexpress): \$29.90 USD per month if selling more than 50 items per month. If you are selling less than 50 items per month then Oberlo is free.
- -Domain Name: \$14 USD per year for a domain name registration
- -Professional Email address: \$5 USD per month
- -Marketing budget (Facebook or other): \$500 minimum, I recommend \$1,000 USD per month if marketing on Facebook.

Budget required to start:

- On the low end (less than 50 items per month and less aggressive marketing):\$548 USD
- On the high end (more than 50 items per month and more aggressive marketing):\$1,077.9 USD

Once you start generating more revenues, you can re-invest some of your profits into your business. Additional shopify some paid applications would be required to increase your store's conversion and profitability.

Pro Tips

Before jumping headfirst into building a Shopify Store, I highly recommend you immerse yourself with some of the free training materials on the subject. You have YouTube Videos, Facebook Groups and even Shopify own free materials.

Most importantly I would advise against buying a Shopify Course right away without you doing some due diligence.

I have a list of recommended resources at the end of this article to get you going in your learning journey.

Where to start: Niche store or Generic store?

There are two schools of thought out there about what type of store to build when dropshipping: some strongly believe in starting a niche store while other recommend a more generic store (or superstore).

Each type of store has its pros and cons.

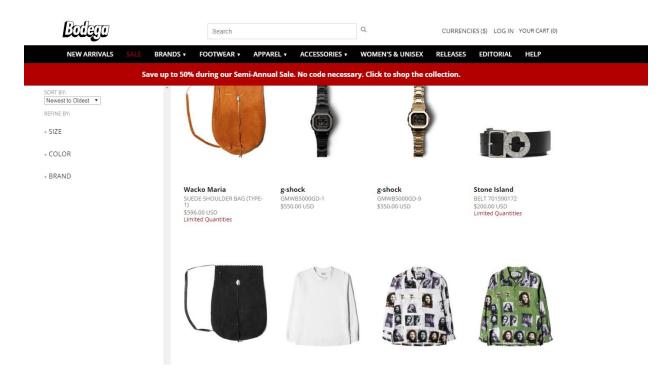
Generic or General Store:

There is more opportunity with generic stores. You are not confined to a specific niche. You can test different products from various niches. This gives you an edge to quickly adapt and scale easily.

One major downside is the lower conversion rates (not always though).

Example of General Shopify Store

https://bdgastore.com/



They sell clothing, accessories, footwear and so forth.

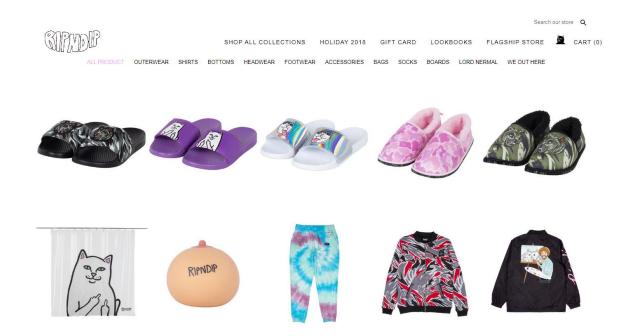
Niche Store:

You build your store around one particular theme or niche market. All the products on your store would be in that market. With niche stores, you have higher conversion rates. One major downside is that it can fizzle out easily if it's a trend.

One variation of the niche store is the single product store. You build you store around one single product. All your marketing effort will be driving traffic to this single product.

Example of Shopify Niche Store

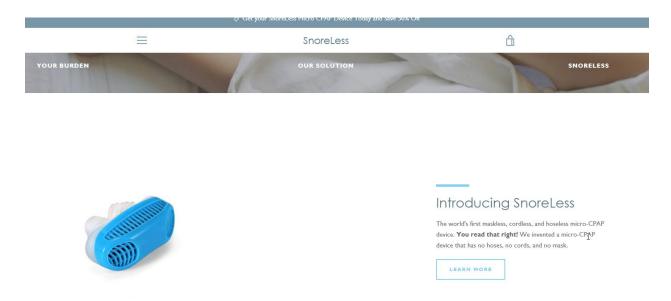
https://www.ripndipclothing.com



All the products on this store are centered around the cat niche.

Example of one product store

https://getsnoreless.com



They sell one product only: a snoreless device.

Pick a Niche: Top 3 Shopify Steady Niches

Finding the right niche is a crucial step in any successful online venture. It's no different with Shopify and dropshipping with Aliexpress.

If you happen to believe that Dropshipping is dead then think again. People are making a killing everyday using this business model with Shopify. Do a simple search on YouTube and you will see successful dropshippers showing you the back end of their stores with live proof of earnings.

Back to the topic at hand, there are two schools of thought on what niche to get into for an online business: follow the trend or start with an evergreen market.

I would say try both and see what works for you. From my own experience evergreen niches seem to be the best markets to start with because of their steadiness. It's not a fad that will eventually pass.

David Vranicar at Oberlo, the leading marketplace in dropshipped products found on Aliexpress.com, wrote a blog post on the same topic. He used data from Oberlo to highlight some of the most popular niches, in the most popular categories, over the longest period of time.

His analysis covered 2016, 2017 and part of 2018. He concluded that the categories that get the most sales year after year are:

- Women's Clothing & Accessories
- Jewelry
- Home & Garden

Within those popular categories, the niches that had the most orders were:

Women's Clothing & Accessories

- Intimates
- Accessories
- Dresses

Jewelry

- Necklaces & Pendants
- Bracelets & Bangles
- Rings

Home & Garden

- Home Decor
- Kitchen, Dining & Bar
- Home Textile

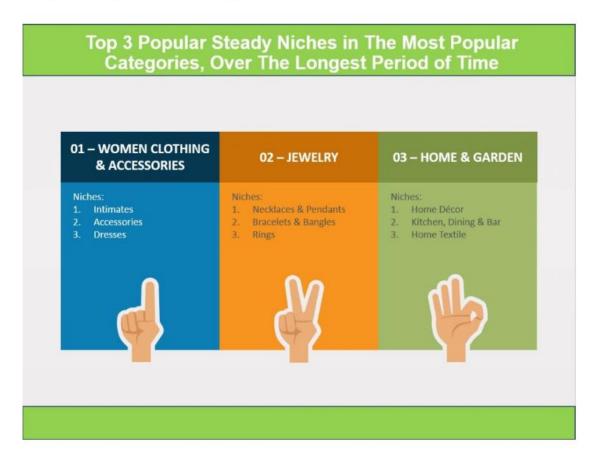
Aliexpress has a dropshipping center a resource to help dropshippers sell more of their products.

It shows hot dropshipping items, trusted suppliers and some insights on products (also know as product analysis).

You can find out more at the following link https://home.aliexpress.com/dropshipper/ds_center.htm

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Top 3 Popular Steady Niches



One premise in business you might be familiar with is to sell what is already selling. Why re-invent the wheel? If the previous niches have been proven to work why not start there and expand once you have learned the ins and outs of online business with Shopify. It's the path of less resistance.

You could take additional steps in validating your niche idea – where required.

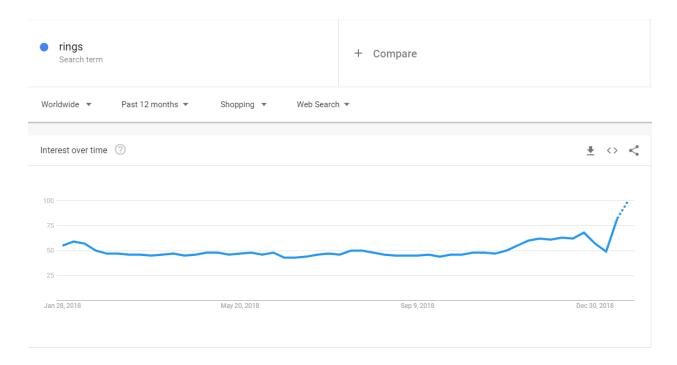
For that, use google trends, plug in your niche idea and analyze the trend.

Here is an example with the rings niche idea.

Head over to

https://trends.google.com/trends/

Type in the term "rings". Pick "worldwide", past 12 months, shopping category



In this case you can see that the trend is upwards. You can make an informed decision based on this trend, should you require more convincing that is.

Chapter 2: Shopify Store Creation

In Chapter 1, I explained what Shopify is and how most online entrepreneurs use it to build successful businesses. I also shared with you the minimum budget required to start your very own Shopify Store.

I ended up advising on some popular steady niches used by Shopify store owners.

At this stage I assume that you have picked a niche and done some basic research on what type of products you could sell in the said niche. Now is the time to build your online store and it starts with picking a name for your store.

Pick a Name For Your Store

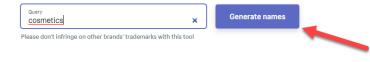
If you are unsure about what name to use for your store, then Shopify has a business name generator tool that can help you.

Go to https://www.shopify.com/tools/business-name-generator

Enter a word that you want your business name to include then click on "Generate names".

Shopify will spit out a list of possible business names you could use for your store. Don't overthink this step, simply pick a name and move on to the next step.

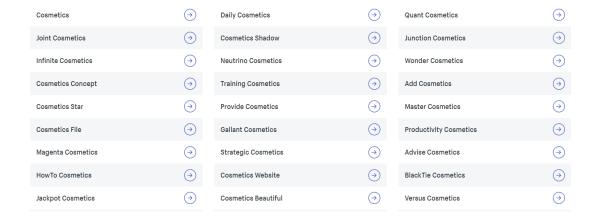
Enter a word that you want your business name to include



Looking to get a head start? Buy an established online store on Exchange Marketplace.

We found 100 business names containing Cosmetics

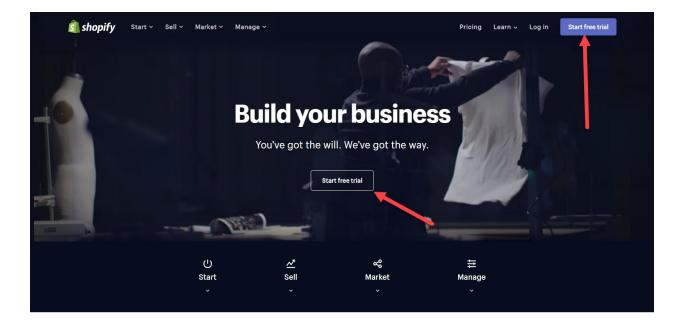
Click the business name to open your store. Can't find what you are looking for? Buy a store on Exchange Marketplace and get a head start.



Sign up for Shopify in less than 5mns

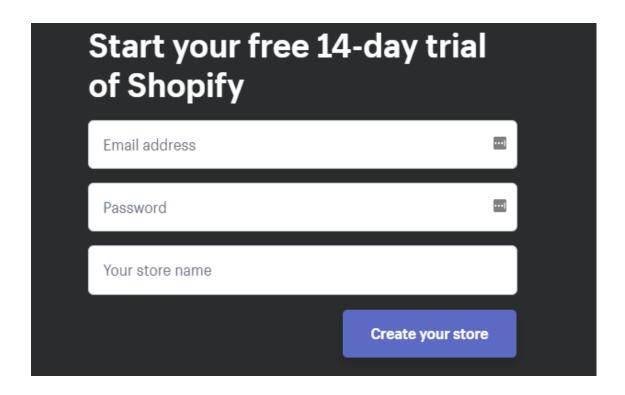
Visit **Shopify.com**

You will get to the following page or something similar with a different image (depending on when you are reading this guide)



Click on "Start free trial" in the top right corner or the middle of the page

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Enter the required details and click the 'Create your store now' button.

Your store name needs to be unique or Shopify will ask you to choose something else.

After this initial screen, you'll be asked for a few more details, including your name, address, country and a contact number.

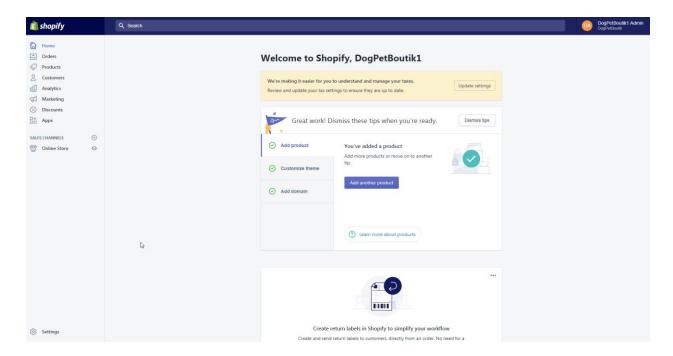
You will also be asked if you have products and, if so, what you aim to sell. If you're just trying out Shopify to see if it works for you, you can select 'I'm just playing around' in the 'Do you have products?' dropdown, and 'I'm not sure' in the 'What will you sell?' section.

Once completed, click 'I'm done'.

Done For You Shopify Store Setup

https://bharaji.com/shopifysetup

After you've signed up you'll be directed straight to your store admin screen. Now you are ready to start customizing your store, uploading products and setting up payments and shipping.



Setting up a domain for your store

This step is optional but highly recommended. Shopify gives you a free domain name that looks like this dogpetboutik1.myshopify.com.

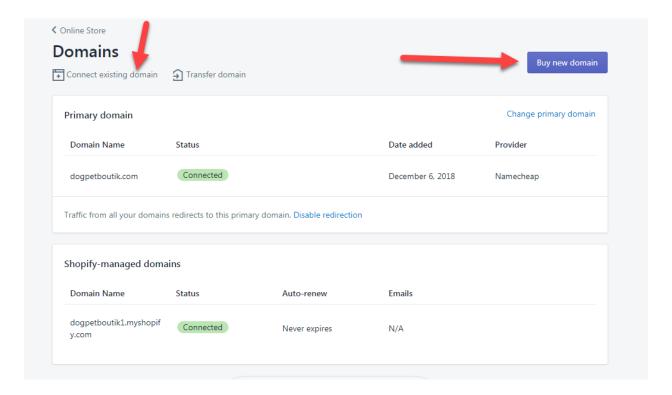
For branding purposes it is advisable to have a shorter domain name, preferably a .com that people can easily remember. In this case it would be dogpeboutik.com

Customers can reach your store by typing in dogpetboutik.com or dogpetboutik1.myshopify.com.

You have two options. Firstly you can buy a domain from Shopify and it will be added to your store automatically. This is the easiest option and it saves you time.

Your second option is to buy a domain from a third party such as NameCheap but you will have to redirect the DNS records yourself. In that case you click on "connect existing domain" and follow the instructions.

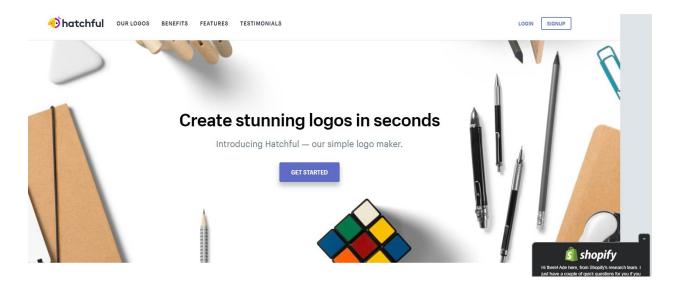
I recommend buying a domain from Shopify for convenience sake.



Branding: Free logo creation

Shopify has a tool for free logo creation. This will help you with branding without spending tons of money for a designer.

Head over to https://hatchful.shopify.com/



Click get started to create stunning logos in seconds.

Follow the straightforward instructions and provide an email address where your designs will be sent. Download the files and save them in a safe place for later user.

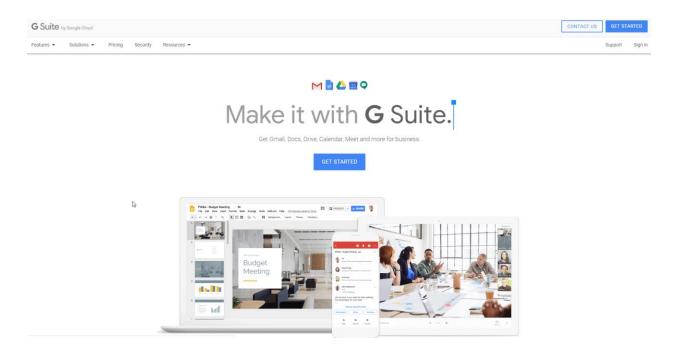
Setting up a business email address the easy way

If you are serious about building a legitimate online business then I highly recommend having a professional email address.

The easiest way of achieving this is to create a Google Gsuite account.

Go to https://gsuite.google.com/

You get a 14-day free trial then it's \$5 per month per user/email address. You don't need more than 1 email address to begin with. I suggest creating info@yourbusiness.com or support@yourbusiness.com email.



Theme Installation and Customization

Shopify comes loaded with a default theme and you have the option of installing a free or paid theme of your choice.

I recommend using the free shopify theme called Brooklyn. It's mobile responsive, fully supported by Shopify technical team and used by many online stores.

You can also upload a third party theme, should you choose to.

Here is shopify's official help in adding a new theme of your choice:

https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/using-themes/adding-themes

Here is the specific theme documentation for Brooklyn

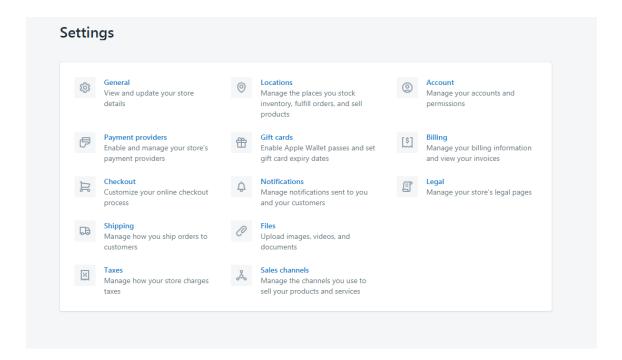
https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/using-themes/themes-by-shopify/brooklyn

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Chapter 3 – Store Settings

Before your site can go live you need to add a few more details about your company and how you plan to make deliveries and pay tax. This section is all about the store settings you need to adjust.

In the left-hand sidebar of your admin panel you will see the menu to all your settings in Shopify. Start by clicking on the menu link the lower left called **Settings**.



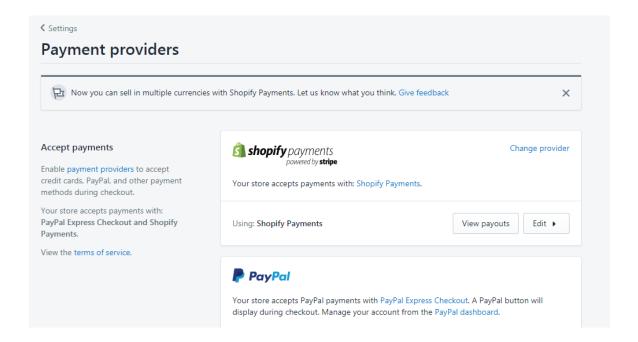
General

Enter your business information. Store title, business address, unit and currency settings.

Payment Providers

An ecommerce payment gateway is a service that allows you to accept credit card payments securely online through your Shopify store. Shopify connects to over 70 different payment gateways across the world.

I recommend using Shopify Payments powered by Stripe and/or Paypal.



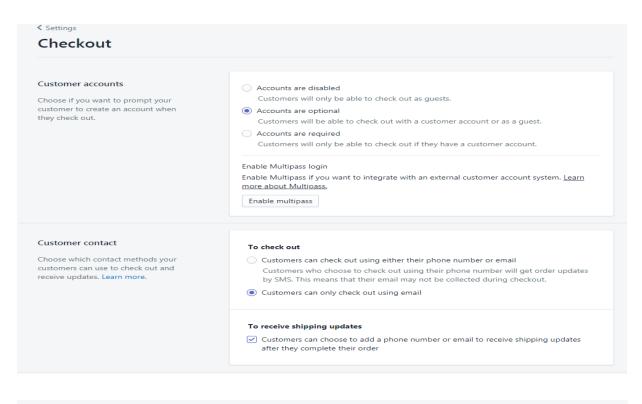
You can find additional information on payments setup here:

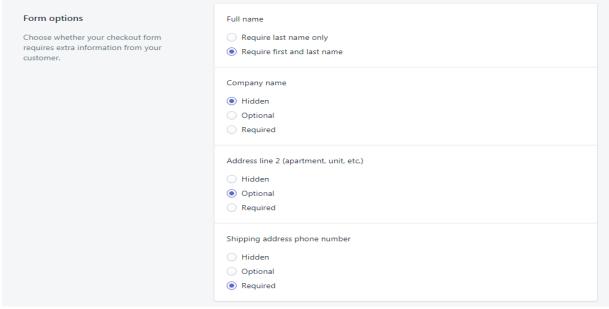
https://help.shopify.com/manual/payments/third-party-providers

Checkout Settings

Set what customer information is collected during checkout, how the order is processed, and your return / terms and conditions.

Use the following settings:





Order processing	While the customer is checking out				
Change how your store responds to	✓ Use the shipping address as the billing address by default				
checkout and order events. Learn about order processing.	Reduces the number of fields required to check out. The billing address can still be edited.				
	✓ Enable address autocompletion				
	Gives customers address suggestions when they enter their shipping and billing address.				
	After an order has been paid				
	Automatically fulfill the order's line items				
	Automatically fulfill only the gift cards of the order Do not automatically fulfill any of the order's line items				
	Automatically archive the order				
	Fulfilled orders will be automatically removed from the open orders list.				
		Additional scripts			
	Any customizations you'd like to appear on the order status page of the checkout. Learn more at the Shopify Help Center.				
Email marketing	Show a sign-up option at checkout				
-	✓ Preselect the sign-up option				
Let customers sign up for marketing emails at checkout. Customers who sign up are added to the accepts marketing group.					
Abandoned checkouts	Automatically cond abandoned checkent are all-				
	Automatically send abandoned checkout emails				
Send an email to customers who left products in their cart but didn't	Condition				
complete their order. Learn more.	Send to				
Customize email	Anyone who abandons checkout				
Customize email	Email subscribers who abandon checkout				
	Send after				

Your store's checkout page is displayed in English

1 hour
6 hours

24 hours

Checkout language

10 hours (recommended)

Manage checkout language

Shipping

Your Shopify Admin helps you manage the delivery of your goods to your customers – a very important aspect of your business! You configure all your shipping settings, including features like free delivery or customer pickup, from your Shipping page.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/shipping

I suggest using two shipping zones only: one domestic USA (assuming you are based in the USA). Set it at \$2.95 flat rate (price based shipping)

One international zone set at \$4.95 flat rate (price based shipping).

Taxes

When your shop is first created, Shopify sets up some default tax rates for your own country (and its provinces, states, or territories, if applicable).

They do their best to keep the default tax rates up to date, but you should double-check to make sure that they are current and correct.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/taxes

Gift Cards

Gift cards provide a flexible way for your customers to purchase a gift for someone from your store, making it easy for them to share their love for your brand while also maintaining full freedom of choice. With Shopify, customers purchase gift cards the same way they purchase any other product.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/products/gift-card-products

I usually don't touch this setting when starting out.

Notifications

Choose what notifications are sent to you and your customers.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/sell-online/notifications/edit-template

I don't change anything here.

Files

In this section you can upload and manage all your images in one area.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/sell-online/online-store/file-uploads

Sales Channels

You can use Shopify to sell your products using one or more online sales channels. Each place where you are selling is like a channel that flows into your business, helping customers from a variety of audiences find your products.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/sell-online/online-sales-channels

I don't touch this section when building a new store.

Account

Manage your user account settings and add new staff accounts to help you run your store.

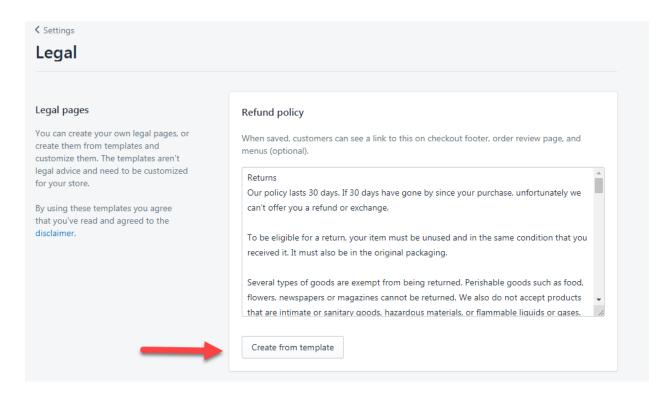
Billing

Manage your billing information and update or upgrade your plan settings.

Legal

This is where you can generate some legal pages required for your store such as Refund Policy, Privacy Policy, Terms Of Services and Shipping Policy

I seldom use the Shipping Policy as I usually indicate clearly the shipping times on the product pages.



Creating Required Pages

As briefly mentioned above, you will need some legal/required pages on your store before opening for business.

Luckily Shopify makes it easier for you to create those pages using some templates.

Pages are meant to be used for static content. They're great for adding "About us" sections, Terms of Service policies, shipping and refund information.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/sell-online/online-store/pages

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Navigation

In order to give your customers access to all the pages, collections and blogs within your online store, you must link to each page in a central place. Your store's most prominently featured navigation is the main menu.

This is often referred to as your store's "main navigation," as this is how visitors to your store will be able to navigate to all the areas of your website.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/sell-online/online-store/menus-and-links

Create Collections

A collection is any group of products (chosen by you) with some feature in common that customers might look for when visiting your store.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/products/collections

Ideally you want to create collections before your start importing products to your store.

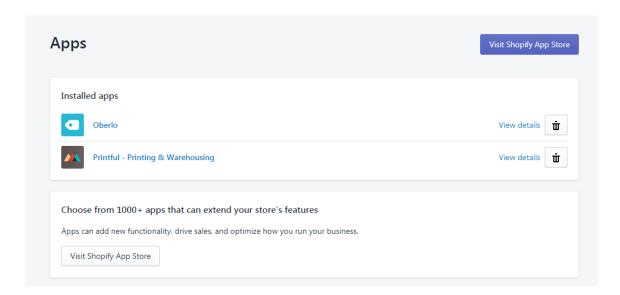
Basic Applications to Install

Shopify has a large selection of apps that extend the functionality of your store. There are both free and paid apps in the marketplace.

https://apps.shopify.com/

To get started you will need to install Oberlo and its related Google Chrome Extension. This application will help you import products automatically from Aliexpress.

You can also install Printful which will help with Print On Demand products import into your store.



Adding Products to your Store

Products are the meat and potatoes of your store. Without products to sell, you can't make any money! Products are often physical goods, but they can also be a digital download (such as a movie, music or ebook file), or a service (an extended warranty, equipment rental, customization of another product or work for hire). Shopify keeps track of all of your products and their inventory on your products page.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/products/add-update-products

Product Variants

A product variant is a variation of a product in your store, with differences based on elements such as size, color, material, etc. Let's say you have a store that sells t-shirts. You create your original product called "t-shirt," and product variants allow you to advertise the different colors and sizes.

https://help.shopify.com/manual/products/variants

Oberlo helps automate the import of products from aliexpress to shopify

You can read more here

https://help.shopify.com/en/manual/dropshipping/oberlo/products-and-pricing/adding-and-importing-products

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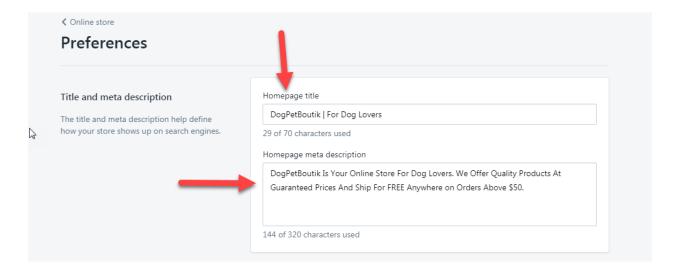
Chapter 4 – Opening For Business. Going "Live"

Here are some final tweaks to make before going live with your store.

Setting up preferences

Click on "Online Store" and select Preferences

You need to capture your homepage title and meta description. This is what shows when your store appears in search engine results.



Google Analytics

Google Analytics lets you track visitors to your store, and generates reports that will help you with your marketing.

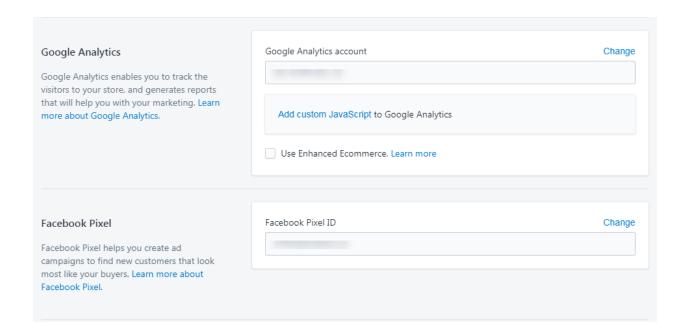
https://help.shopify.com/manual/reports-and-analytics/google-analytics

Facebook Pixel

Facebook Pixels allow you to connect your Shopify store to your Facebook Ads account.

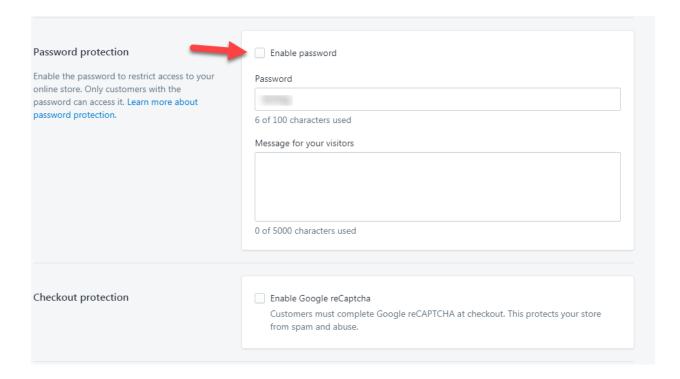
https://help.shopify.com/manual/promoting-marketing/facebook-pixel/facebook-pixel-for-shopify

Done For You Shopify Store Setup visit https://bharaji.com/shopifysetup or email iamb@bharaji.com



Storefront Password

The last step is to remove your storefront password. This makes your store public to everyone on the internet.



You don't need to enable the Google reCaptcha feature.

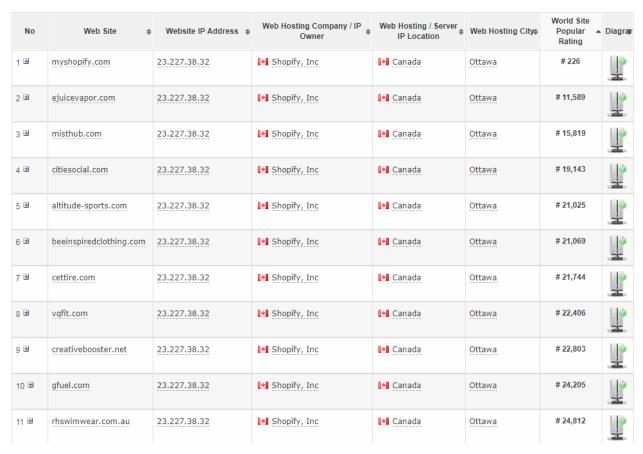
Chapter 5: Your First Sale and Beyond

Top 10 Shopify Stores

Does this business model work? You bet it does! Here is list of top 10 Shopify store classified by popularity and the amount of traffic they get. Go check them out to see how they look like and study for your own project.

You can ignore the first one on the list as it's shopify's own domain which host all the stores.

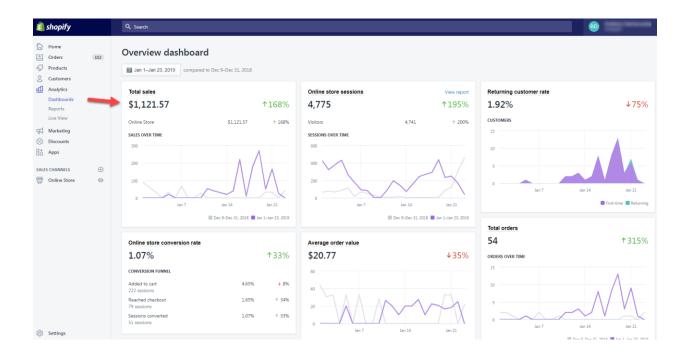
You can get the same list by visiting the site myip.ms and looking up the site or domain myshopify.com



My 22 Days Experiment - \$1,121.57 In Revenue

Here is a screenshot of my one my stores during a 22 day experiment I run for 1 product. This was from January 1 - 23, 2019 (not much happened on the 23^{rd}).

I made \$1,121.57 in 22 days. My sales were still going strong but I had to stop the advertisement because of the Chinese new year fast approaching. I did not want to deal with angry customers with delayed parcels deliveries. Indeed Chinese suppliers tend to close for 2-3 weeks during the Chinese New Year.



Note that this was a General store for which I ran a specific campaign for 1 product. No major optimization as you can notice by the conversion rate and I did not even scale the campaign.

My main traffic source was Facebook.

Next Steps

Build your first store and start running some traffic to it. I recommend either Instagram Marketing or Facebook. If you need help with your Facebook Marketing and or building you store, contact me at iamb@bharaji.com and I will be happy to assist.

About The Author

The Author is Brahima but he goes by the name of B. He lives in Canada and loves sharing knowledge and helping others on the topic of ecommerce and Internet Marketing.

He started online in 2005 with his first Ecommerce store but really got serious about building a profitable online business in 2012.

Since then, he has built several online properties and has a good sense of what works in the internet marketing industry.

How B can help you start or grow your Shopify business.

If you are anything like him when he was starting out, he used to jump around from one thing to another not really knowing what to do.

He thrives to publish good quality content that is actionable and designed to help you start and grow your own eCommerce Store, generate more traffic and acquire more customers.

If you would like to get a personal coaching tailored to your needs, then send him an email at iamb@bharaji.com

To Your Success.

Resources

Done For You Shopify Store Setup

Shopify Store Setup

Shopify Docs

Help articles for all the options in Shopify https://help.shopify.com/?utm_source=Docs

Shopify Blog

Daily posts with ecommerce expertise https://help.shopify.com/manual/sell-online/online-store/blogs

Ecommerce University

Free tools and resources to accelerate your skills and success. https://ecommerce.shopify.com/

Shopify Dropshipping: Top 3 Steady Niches Revealed

https://bharaji.com/shopify-dropshipping-top-3-steady-niches-revealed/

Done For You Shopify Store Setup

https://bharaji.com/shopifysetup