

store zippy

The Ultimate Guide to
Choosing your
E-commerce Platform



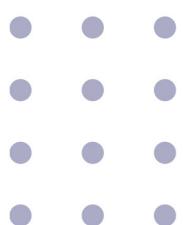


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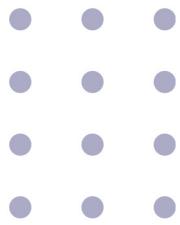
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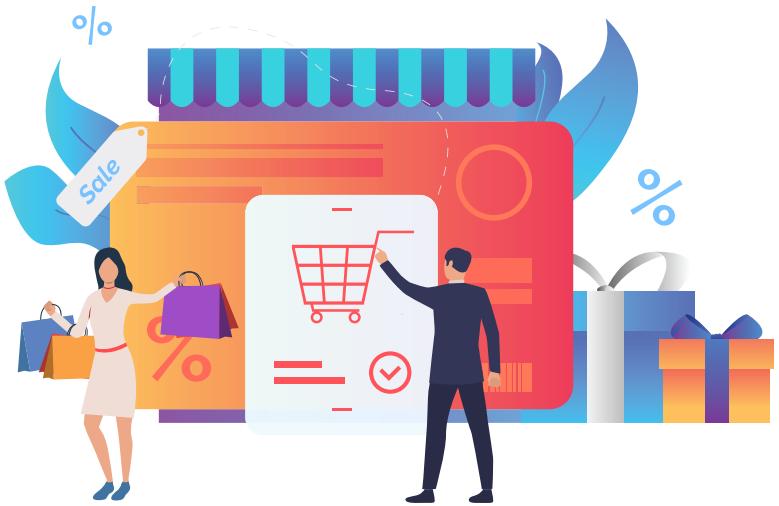
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Introduction

There are currently over hundred ecommerce platforms on the market worldwide, serving the needs of one billion online shoppers who spend \$1.9 trillion per year in 20 million online stores. Different sales and management tools, levels of customization, and pricing structures are available on each of these portals. To take advantage of such features, they each require a different level of technical competence. When you're looking for the right fit for your online store, this vast array of options can be intimidating.

As a result, we've put up this useful guide to help you choose the best ecommerce platform for your online store. We'll walk you through the most critical factors to consider when choosing an ecommerce platform, whether you're a seasoned brick-and-mortar merchant trying to launch your first online store or a seasoned ecommerce pro looking to upgrade your current platform.

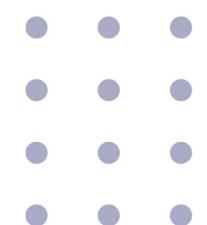


| Proofing your online store for the future



We've put this to begin with, since we think it's a key concept that you must remember each time you're making commerce choices, counting right presently, when you're perusing this guide.

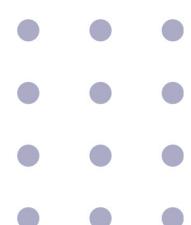
You want your ecommerce business to be a huge hit. Right? We want it too. And because it develops and changes with time, so will your customers' needs and desires. Your ecommerce platform must stay up if you want to keep delivering.



As a result, we advise selecting a platform that is -

- **Scalable** - both in terms of handling control and pricing
- **Flexible** - so that you can adjust your store to meet your customers requirements
- **Innovative** - built by a brand that can stay up with technological advancements

With nearly all the other focuses we talk about in this guide, there are no right or off-base answers. The choice comes down to what's the leading fit for your business—you might choose a few highlights that aren't worth paying additional for. But we believe that scalability, adaptability, and innovation are must-have highlights for your store's long term success.



Setting up shop



Most online stores, in our experience, want to get things up and running as soon as possible and don't have an infinite budget to do so. Does this sound familiar? Then you'll love some of these ecommerce store design ideas.

Hosting Options

On the off chance if you are blessed to have your own in-house IT division, you'll discover it is cost-effective to oversee your eCommerce website hosting. Your team will need to stay updated with your chosen eCommerce platform's most recent developments and ensure that your physical or virtual infrastructure fulfils the minimum standards.

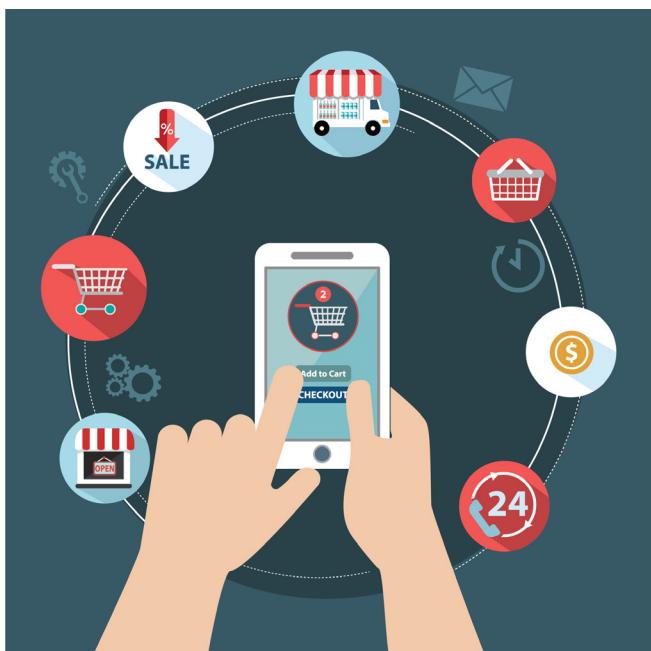
HOSTING
SERVICE



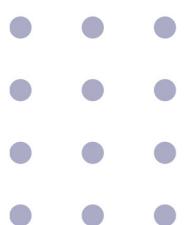
However, because it can be time-consuming and daunting, many ecommerce business owners choose managed services, with bandwidth, storage, security, and backups all optimised by the ecommerce platform provider. Another benefit of using Software as a Service (SaaS) for your ecommerce shop is the cost savings: you may save up to 50% on setup and up to 90% on annual maintenance costs by using SaaS.

Design and Customisation

Your online store is a grandstand of your business, and providing the greatest possible experience for your clients from the minute they arrive on your site is critical for conversion. Whether you choose to manage your own services or buy a fully managed solution (or something in between), you'll need to consider the design elements of your website—not just its appearance, but also its functionality such as browsing and search navigation, categories and filters, and the checkout process.



While many ecommerce platforms allow for some level of branding, the level of customization and technical expertise necessary to achieve it varies. While using a simple, mobile-responsive theme is a quick way to get started, it won't provide your customers with the distinctive brand experience you want them to have.



Look for a platform that allows you to do the following :

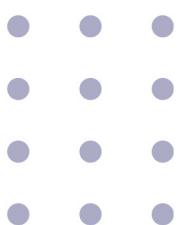
- Choose from a variety of web store themes that are free, editable, and fully responsive.
- Purchase premium themes with more features and updates, built to increase conversions in specific sectors
- Customise every component of your website and shopping cart with complete access to your store's HTML, CSS, and JS.

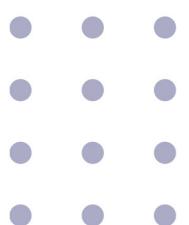
Utilize bespoke design services—the fastest method to construct the right, full-featured ecommerce site design without the need to customise code yourself.

Building your product listings from scratch

The more product lines you plan to sell online, the more crucial it is to have an easy way to create product listings. (It's no big thing to change a few lines of HTML code on one page, but no one wants to do it a hundred times!)

That's why most ecommerce platforms segregate style from content; your product listings are stored in a database of nicely formatted data that the front-end can show in a uniform way behind the scenes of your online store.



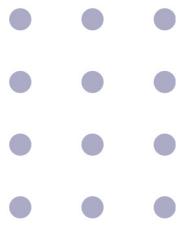


If you already have a product catalogue file or database, you'll want to go with a platform that has an easy import procedure, as this will help you prevent errors caused by manual entry or data manipulation. If you're starting from scratch, search for a platform that has simple product listing templates or import wizards.

Migrating from another platform

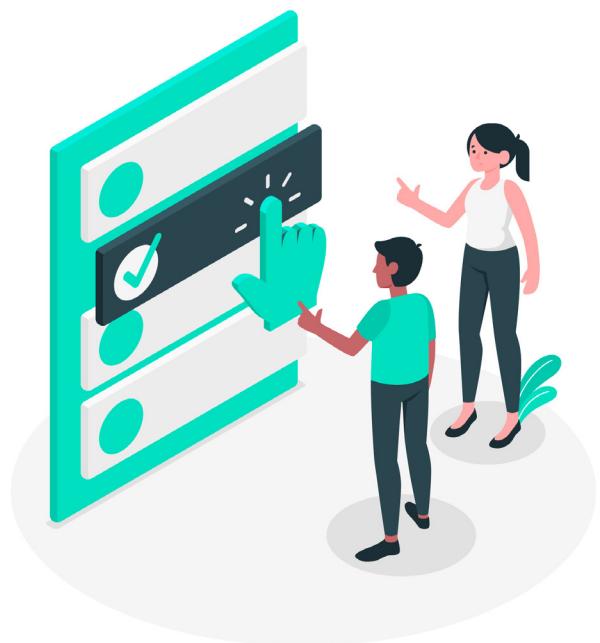
If you're transferring to a new ecommerce platform to expand your online business and reach new customers, you'll need to migrate your data from the old one. Examine how your existing platform handles data exports, including product listings, customer information, and order history. Will it be simple to convert and load them into a new system without a lot of manual intervention?

Data migration is an important part of your online store's success. It can take some time to get things right and avoid downtime, so test the process thoroughly before committing to the new platform.

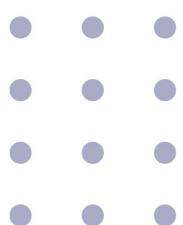


Choose the features you need

One of the most crucial aspects of choosing your new ecommerce platform is getting this part right. It's tempting to go for the most flashy system available, but there's no use of paying for features you won't use—that money could be better spent elsewhere in your company.



We recommend looking for a platform that lets you design your ecommerce website in a modular approach, so you're not bound into a specific number of sales channels and can turn them on and off as needed, ensuring you only pay for what you need.

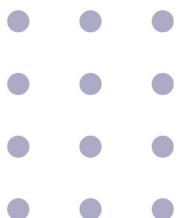


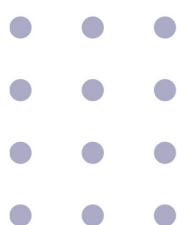
Integrations

Integrations provide one-way or two-way sync services to others, allowing you to get more out of your ecommerce platform, specialty platforms you use for customer care, marketing, and reporting . You'll want to look into which ecommerce systems offer the integrations you require to reduce manual handling and streamline your procedures.

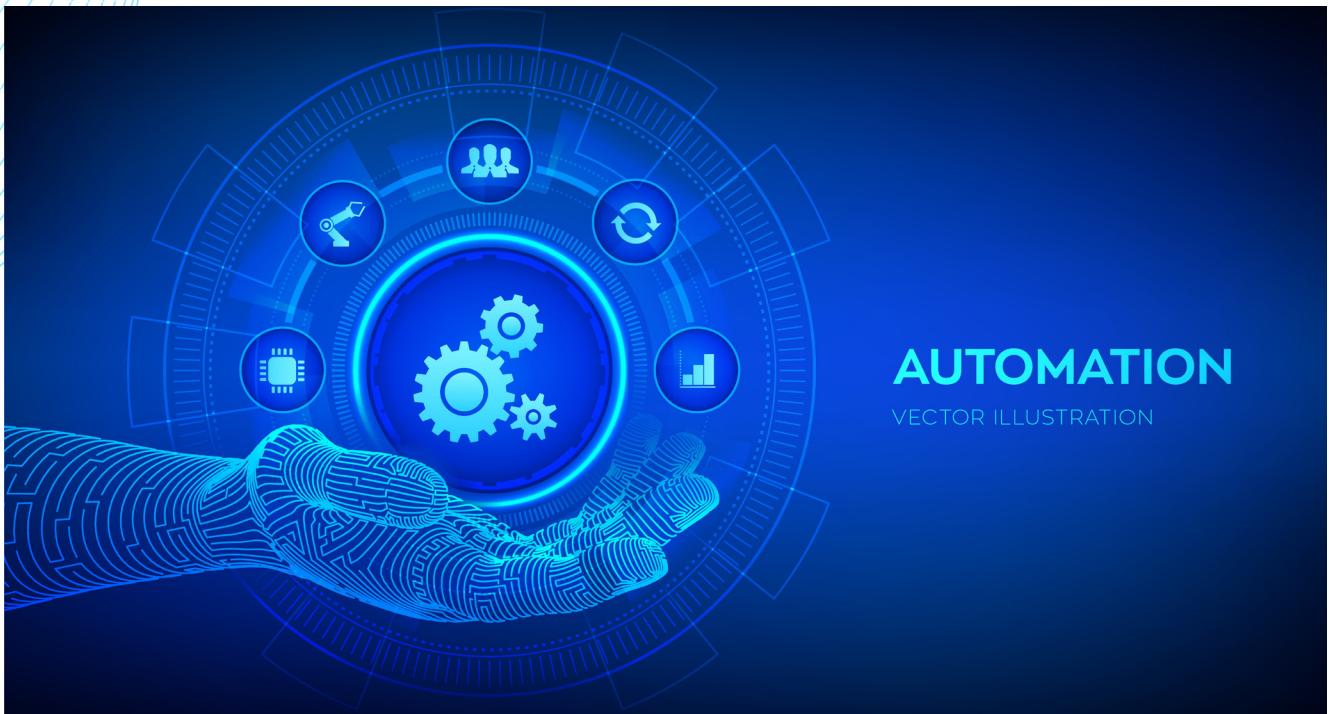


Your accounting platform, for example, may be specifically built to assist you in meeting your reporting and tax duties and is the best place to maintain your books, but it is likely to only provide rudimentary invoicing and inventory management skills. In this case, choose a strategy which can give you the best of both worlds by integrating directly with major accounting softwares guaranteeing that all of your ecommerce transactions are synchronised to your accounting platform without the need for manual entry.





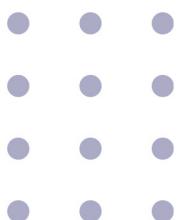
Automation



AUTOMATION
VECTOR ILLUSTRATION

Another great way to save time and money is automation of your processes. It can be helpful in following ways -

- For more effective fulfilment, batch processing of orders, bulk printing of pick lists and consignment labels.
- Sending notification when it's time to get more stock from the supplier.
- emailing specific consumers to offer discounts on items on their wish lists or abandoned shopping carts, or to let them know an item is back in stock.
- Understanding your customers, what leads them to your site, and what they're looking for may be done by tracking visitor clicks and running analytics.
- Using email list segmentation to target specific customers and demographics.



Support services



Even if you're tech-savvy, learning a new ecommerce platform can be frustrating. As a result, we believe that support services deserve its own part in this book. When looking into ecommerce systems, see if they can provide -

- Support or training you will require amid setup and continuous operations
- a quick response to your questions and a solution to your concerns within business hours (so that you can get help when you need it)
- Various modes of communication support such as email, phone or online chat

Fully managed ecommerce services typically provide a higher degree of support than the alternatives, with a single point of contact for all of your questions. Keep in mind that if you're encountering issues with third-party add-ons, you'll likely need to contact both your platform provider and the add-on vendor for assistance. It's sometimes great to be able to pick up the phone and chat with a real person.

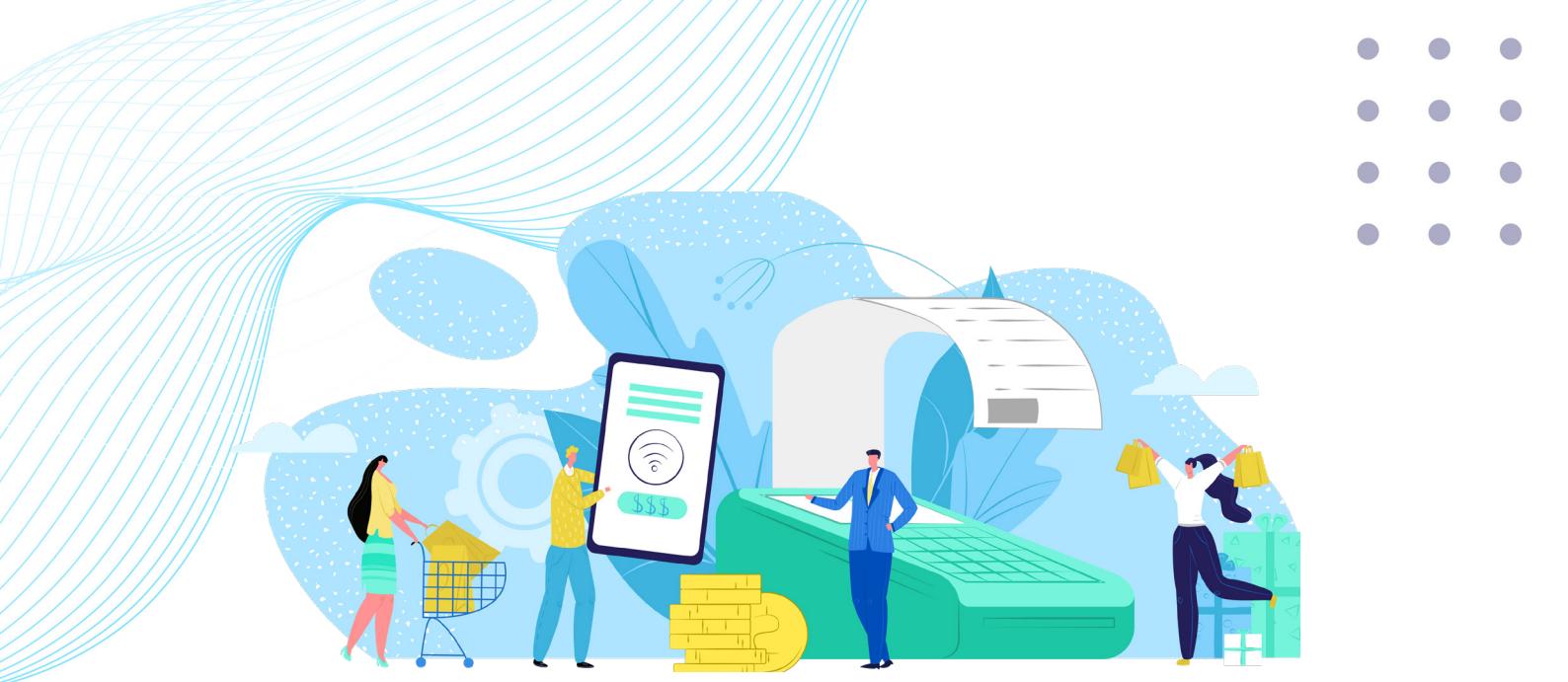
Omni-Channel platform



Consumers want to be able to purchase anywhere they choose, whether it's online, on their mobile devices, or in stores, and they demand a consistent experience across all channels. By logging in online, they want to examine their in-store order history. If you use an omni-channel ecommerce platform, you'll be able to manage all of your channels in one place and provide your customers with the smooth experience they expect.

POS System (Point of Sale)

A physical storefront allows you to spend valuable face-to-face time with your consumers, learning about their needs, providing support, processing returns, and providing after-sales care.

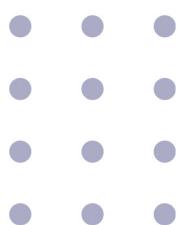


Choosing an ecommerce platform with an inbuilt point of sale (POS) system will simplify your business processes and reduce the time and labour cost of manually consolidating your different sales channels, whether you already have a physical store, are considering opening one, or simply want to keep your options open for the future.

Online Marketplaces

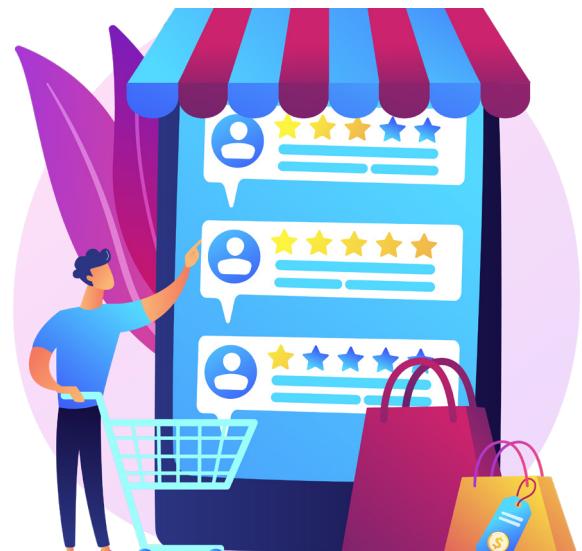
According to a recent market survey, 39 percent of online buyers exclusively use marketplaces, while 22 percent use marketplaces in conjunction with a branded website. What does this mean? It means that by selling on both your website and an eCommerce platform, you could simply double your customers and increase sales ultimately.

Choose an ecommerce platform that allows you to manage your marketplace consumers, items, sales, and stock alongside your other sales channels. Automated and scheduled listings, standard and custom templates, and synchronised order and inventory management are all things to look for.



Mobile Shopping Experience

By utilising the device's complete feature set, with a branded mobile application, you can provide your clients with the ultimate mobile shopping experience. You'll get a captive audience for your products in RETURN, free from the distractions of other businesses' marketplace apps or web searches.

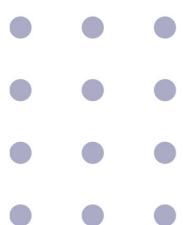


Managing Supply Chain



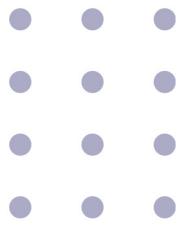
Effective inventory management may lower costs, enhance cash flow, and free up working capital for additional investments while improving your capacity to meet demand. It's one of the top 10 things a retailer can do to improve profit margins and customer satisfaction.

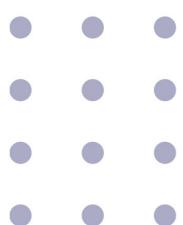
If you track your inventory, you'll be able to better manage stock replenishment. Due to the limited inventory monitoring capabilities of accounting systems, specialised inventory management softwares have been developed. These platforms keep track of your inventory from the time you order it from a supplier to



the time it arrives at your warehouse and finally to the time it is allocated to orders and shipped.

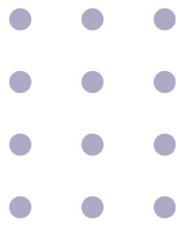
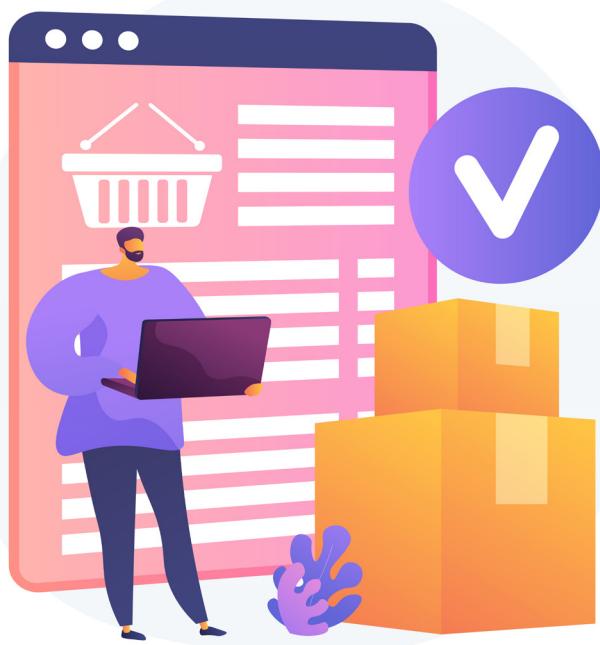
The next level is Inventory management, with all of these tools embedded right into your ecommerce platform. Giving your consumers online access to current stock availability and ensuring that your personnel has visibility into stock levels across all of your sites and distribution routes. This avoids overselling, which leads to dissatisfied consumers and additional work for your team in tracking and correcting errors.





Order Fulfillment

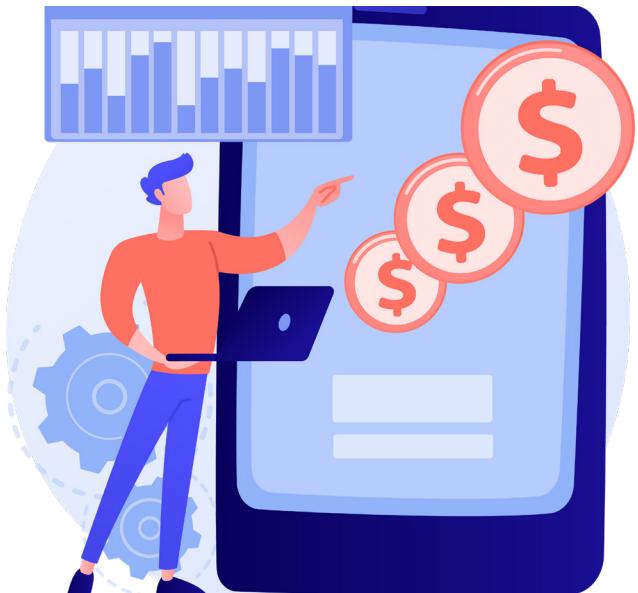
Customers expect their orders to be delivered as quickly as feasible and at the lowest possible cost. If your ecommerce platform has built-in fulfilment tools and add-on connectors with the shipping providers you choose to work with, you'll be better able to satisfy customer expectations. Ensure that your chosen platform has integration with all popular shipping carriers.



Pricing

This will inevitably be a big decision element for ecommerce site owners, but it should never be considered in isolation, which is why we've saved it for last.

It's not just the price that differs from platform to platform; it's the complete pricing structure. Plans can be based on a set of features, maximum number of allowed transactions, number of product listings, sales volume, or anything else.



Even free, open source ecommerce platforms have a cost. You'll be responsible for your own hosting and deployment, and they usually don't include phone or email assistance, so you'll have to spend time figuring out how to solve problems on your own.

Many suppliers provide tempting plans for small businesses, but as your business grows, you'll be charged more and more, either by pressuring you to upgrade or by charging based on your sales volume. So, choose a platform which is transparent and fair when it comes to pricing.

GET IN TOUCH



+91 73031 15557



www.storezippy.com



info@storezippy.com