Key Concepts ⌄
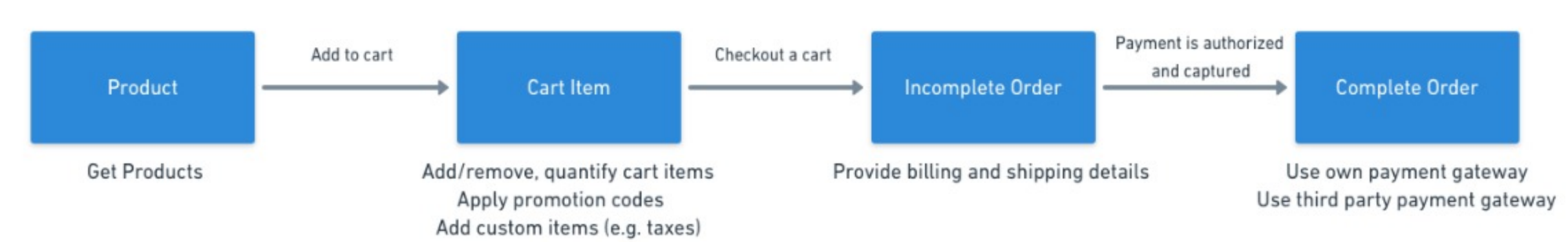
Checkout workflow

The checkout workflow ties together many of the key concepts covered in this section. When a customer initiates the checkout process, an order is created from the cart. The order is incomplete until after a successful payment is made. A complete order can be shipped and the product deducted from inventory counts.

Summary of the checkout workflow

1. Add a product to a cart. A cart and its reference number is generated.
2. Manage the cart items. For example, you might add items, remove items, and change quantities.
3. Check out the cart. An **incomplete order** is created.
4. Pay for an order: provide billing and shipping details, if you're a new customer. The order is now in the **processing** status.
5. If using a manual gateway, after you authorize and capture it, Commerce Cloud considers the order **complete**. If you use a third-party integration supported by Commerce Cloud (such as Stripe), after the third-party gateway authorizes and captures the payment, the order becomes **complete**.
6. After the order is shipped, you can manually flag it as **fulfilled**.

Carts

When a product is added to a cart, a cart is generated together with its unique reference ID that on checkout becomes a part of the order ID. If you're using our JavaScript software development kit, generating a cart reference ID is done for you; otherwise, add a cart reference generator to your functionality.

Promotions and custom items

Optionally, apply a promotion `code` on a cart, or add `custom_items` to modify the product price (typically to handle taxes, customs, or shipping). Custom cart items are only available through [implicit authentication](#).

Checkout

You can checkout a cart with an associated customer name and email (`customer` object). Typically, this would be used for new customers or ones that prefer to shop as guests. Use the `customer.id` checkout option to checkout an existing customer. After a successful checkout is completed, the response will contain an order.

Payment

On checkout, an **incomplete order** is created. You can then use a third-party integration to handle your payment gateway. If the payment gateway is supported by Commerce Cloud (such as Stripe), the payment is processed externally but handled internally. When a successful validation is returned, Commerce Cloud flags the order as **complete**.

If you are using a payment method not officially supported by Commerce Cloud (such as PayPal), the gateway needs to be implemented and handled manually. After the payment has been authorized and captured either through the Dashboard or API, the status of an order becomes **complete**.

Shipping

The status of an order and the status of shipping are handled separately, and so an order can be complete but not shipped. Orders that have not been shipped yet have a status of **unfulfilled**. This flag is generated automatically by Commerce Cloud when an order is created. Currently, you can only update the shipping status manually, through the API. After the order is shipped, flag its shipping status as **fulfilled**.

Inventory

If enabled, you can manage your stock. As such, your stock will be automatically updated as soon as a product is checked out.

Related concepts

- [Carts](#)
- [Promotions](#)
- [Orders](#)
- [Payment](#)
- [Inventory](#)

APIs

- [API reference](#)

← INVENTORY   CUSTOM DATA (FLOWS) →

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