

# Response to Dale - October 31, 2025

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**To:** Dale Guenter [dguenter@gmail.com](mailto:dguenter@gmail.com)

**From:** Greg Kowalczyk

**Subject:** Re: E-commerce Platform and WordPress Updates

**Date:** October 31, 2025

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Hi Dale,

Sorry it took me so long to get back to you. I got buried in research work for you guys and honestly just missed checking my email regularly - totally my bad. If I don't respond within a day or two going forward, feel free to shoot me a text and I'll jump on it right away.

Great to hear about the e-giftcards and Square stuff! That's solid progress. Let me tackle your questions:

## WordPress Updates

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I can definitely take a look at what needs updating on your WordPress site. Just to set expectations though - WordPress can be tricky depending on how it was originally built, so some changes might need more digging than others. If you can send me a list of what you want changed, I'll check out the site structure and let you know what's quick vs. what might take more time.

The easy stuff: hours, contact info, swapping out photos (just send me the new ones), cleaning up outdated content. I can also do some basic SEO tweaks if you want. Basically, let's figure out exactly what you need so we're not doing unnecessary work.

Since it's already Friday, we could start on this over the weekend or early next week. Want to hop on a call Saturday or early next week to go through what needs changing? I can walk you through it or just handle it myself - whatever works better for you.

## About E-commerce - Let's Be Real

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I need to level with you on something: good e-commerce takes time to do right. Rushing it before Christmas could end up causing more headaches than it solves.

So I looked into Pavement, and here's what I found:

## **What Pavement Actually Is**

First thing - Pavement isn't really a platform like Shopify or Square Online. It's more like a service where they build and manage your website for you. You're not managing a platform yourself - they're managing it for you.

They do focus on food businesses (restaurants, cafes, bakeries), which is relevant for you. They handle local delivery, pre-ordering, local marketplace stuff - all the things you mentioned wanting.

## **My Concern About Services Like This**

I gotta be honest with you here. When you hand over full management to a service like Pavement, you're basically giving them control of your online presence. And from 11 years in this space, I've seen this pattern play out over and over:

The account gets managed by someone who doesn't really know your business. Changes take forever because everything has to go through them. You lose the ability to make quick tweaks or jump on opportunities. And honestly? Most businesses end up leaving these arrangements feeling frustrated and burned.

They control your website, your customer data, everything. You're stuck waiting on their timeline, paying extra for changes, and if you want to leave? Good luck - it's messy.

I'm not saying this to scare you, but I've watched too many businesses go down this road and regret it. If Pavement interests you, just be really careful. Ask them the tough questions: What happens when you want to make changes? Who owns your customer data? What if you want to leave? How responsive are they really?

My take? You'd be better off starting with something you manage yourself (I can guide you through it). Then you own it, control it, and can make it work for YOUR business - not someone else's cookie-cutter approach.

## **Square Online**

You mentioned Square Online. Just want you to know upfront - once you build a Square Online site, you're probably going to stick with it for a while. It's not really a "try it and switch later" kind of thing. You'll invest time getting it set up, and migrating later is a pain.

The big upside is it integrates natively with Square POS, which you're already using. The downside is it's pretty basic compared to Shopify, and you're looking at staying with it for at least a year or two.

## Shopify

For what it's worth, Shopify is what I'd recommend for the long run. But here's the thing - it takes 4-6 weeks minimum to do it right. You need good product photos (1-2 weeks), solid descriptions (1-2 weeks), proper setup and testing (2-3 weeks). That timeline isn't me being pessimistic - it's just what good e-commerce requires.

Why it takes time: people don't buy without great photos, you need good content, payment processing needs testing, your staff needs to learn how to handle orders, marketing needs to be set up. Rush any of this and you get broken checkouts, inventory messes, bad reviews - basically a disaster during your busiest season.

## What We Can Actually Do Before Christmas

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Here's where we're at: Christmas is like 7-8 weeks away. To do e-commerce properly, you need 4-6 weeks minimum. That puts us right at the deadline with zero room for error, testing, or fixing issues. Not ideal.

So let's talk about what will actually help you scale for Christmas without the risk:

### Option 1: Simple Pre-Order System

Instead of full e-commerce, we could set up a basic pre-order system - Google Forms for orders, Square for payments (you already have this), email confirmations, track everything in a spreadsheet. It's not fancy, but it'll capture Christmas demand without the complexity. Takes 2-3 weeks, costs almost nothing, and you learn what customers actually want to order.

### Option 2: Focus on What Actually Moves the Needle

While we plan proper e-commerce for Q1 2026, let's focus on stuff that helps NOW:

- WordPress updates (this weekend/early next week) - better info means better customer experience

- Corporate gifting outreach - I have templates ready, you can start today, this generates real revenue
- Social media - you've got 14K Instagram followers sitting there! Let's activate them
- Email list building - start collecting emails now, you'll need this for e-commerce later anyway

These things will actually help your business right now, without the risk of rushed e-commerce.

### **Option 3: Pavement (if you're still interested)**

If they can deliver in 2-3 weeks, it could work. But I have serious concerns. You're handing over control to people who don't know your business. You'll be dependent on their timeline and priorities. If it doesn't work out, leaving is messy and expensive.

In 11 years, I've rarely seen businesses stay happy with full-service arrangements long-term. Just... be really careful if you go this route. Ask all the tough questions.

### **Option 4: Square Online**

If you're ready to commit to Square for the long haul (1-2 years minimum), and you can mostly manage it yourself (I can guide you but can't do a hands-on build right now), this could work. Just know it's not a temporary solution.

## **The Honest Truth About Capacity**

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I need to be straight with you: I don't have the bandwidth right now to properly build out full e-commerce before Christmas. This is my busiest time of year (same as yours - everyone wants stuff done before year-end), and a proper e-commerce build needs weeks of dedicated focus.

Even if we hired someone external, it would take weeks just to find the right person, get them up to speed on your business, coordinate photography, and actually build and test everything. There's just no way to do this right before Christmas.

What that means: Even if you wanted to push forward with e-commerce now, I can't give it the support it would need. And honestly, hiring externally at this point would be tough and probably wouldn't deliver great results in time anyway.

The good news? This actually makes the decision easier. Instead of rushing something that can't be done well anyway, let's focus on what will actually help you scale for Christmas with the resources we have.

## A Few Things You Should Know

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I totally get wanting to get e-commerce live - I really do. But here's what I've learned the hard way: bad e-commerce hurts your business way more than no e-commerce.

Rush it and you get: bad photos (no sales), broken checkout (lost customers, bad reviews), inventory disasters (overselling, angry customers), fulfillment nightmares (reputation damage). It's a mess.

The reality is your busiest season is coming up - you'll be managing inventory, production, store traffic. My busiest season is here too. Adding rushed e-commerce to that mix? That's chaos waiting to happen.

What actually helps? Better in-store experience (WordPress updates), corporate gifting (I have templates - this makes real money), social media (you've got 14K followers ready to go!), building your email list (you'll need this anyway).

## How I Work

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Just so we're on the same page: I'm not here to manage your website or business like an agency would. My goal is different.

I help you set things up so YOU can manage them. I'll give you advice on best practices. I'll build things so you can customize them later without huge costs. When you're ready to expand to new marketplaces, you can. I'm here for guidance and support, not ongoing management.

What I don't do: take over and make you dependent on me, lock you into expensive ongoing contracts, build things you can't understand or change.

The goal? Put you in the driver's seat. I set you up with a solid foundation, teach you what you need to know, and then you run your business. You own it, control it, scale it on your timeline - not someone else's.

This is why I'm cautious about services like Pavement - they create the opposite of what I'm trying to help you build (dependence vs. empowerment).

## Let's Talk

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Quick question - did you get a chance to look at that Shopify marketing course I sent you about a week and a half ago? It's a really solid course that covers everything about setting up and running an e-commerce business. It explains a lot of the questions you're probably having, and honestly, I'd highly recommend watching it. Once you've gone through it, we can use it as our guide and I can explain or expand on any of the questions that come up. It'll give you a much better foundation for thinking through all this e-commerce stuff.

Given where we both are resource-wise, I think we should chat this weekend or early next week. We can go through:

- What we can actually tackle now (WordPress updates, corporate gifting, social media)
- Talk through Pavement if you want (just... be careful)
- Look at Square Online if you're serious about long-term commitment
- Plan out proper e-commerce for Q1 2026 when I have the time to do it right

I can do a virtual meeting Saturday if that works, or we can schedule for early next week (Monday/Tuesday). However long we need - let's just figure out what actually makes sense vs. what sounds good but isn't realistic.

## Bottom Line

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Here's where I'm at with everything:

1. WordPress updates - Yes, I can help. Real impact, low risk, fits my schedule.
2. E-commerce for Christmas - Not realistic. I don't have capacity, you're busy, hiring someone takes weeks. Can't be done right.
3. Pavement - Honestly? Proceed with extreme caution. Based on what I've seen, managed services rarely work out long-term. You're giving up control to people who don't know your business. If you go this route, ask the tough questions and be ready for potential frustration.
4. Square Online - If you're ready to commit long-term and can mostly run it yourself (I can guide you but can't do hands-on build right now).
5. Focus on scaling stuff now - Corporate gifting (templates ready), social media (14K followers waiting), email building. This stuff moves the needle and I can actually support it.
6. Proper e-commerce - Let's plan for Q1 2026 when I have capacity and we can do it right together.

The reality: I can't properly build e-commerce before Christmas. Even hiring externally probably won't work in time. Pavement could work IF they handle everything, but you lose control. Everything else should probably wait for Q1 when we both have more bandwidth.

The question isn't "Can we launch e-commerce before Christmas?" - it's "What will actually help scale your business for Christmas with what we have available?"

Want to schedule a call Saturday or early next week? Let's just be real about what's possible and focus on what will actually move the needle. I want to help you make smart decisions that work for both of us.

Looking forward to talking,

Greg

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**P.S.** I know this probably isn't what you wanted to hear, but I'd rather be honest now than watch you invest time and money into something that ends up causing problems. There are real things we can do right now that will help you scale - let's focus on those.