

# **Strategic Analysis: Digital Platform Evolution**

**Comparing WordPress vs. Shopify vs. Custom Next.js Stack**

# 1. The Comparison Matrix: Flexibility & UX

Aspect	WordPress (Current)	Shopify (Planned)	Custom (Vercel/Supabase)
Core Purpose	Content / Blogs	Pure E-commerce	Any Digital Product
Design	Theme-dependent	Locked "Liquid" Templates	100% Brand Freedom
Custom Logic	Plugin-based (Messy)	App-based (Restricted)	Native Implementation
User Experience	Often Bloated/Slow	Standardized / "Generic"	Optimized Conversion

*Custom allows us to build unique restaurant workflows (e.g., dynamic catering forms) that Shopify apps cannot easily handle.*

## 2. The Comparison Matrix: Performance & SEO

Metric	WordPress	Shopify	Custom (Proposed)
Page Speed	Slow (Server Rendered)	Moderate (SaaS Overhead)	Instant (Static Edge)
Image Opt.	Requires Plugins	Automatic (Basic)	AI-Driven (Next/Image)
Core Web Vitals	Hard to Optimize	Limited Control	Built-in Excellence
SEO Control	High (via Plugins)	Rigid URL Structures	Total Technical Control

*Google ranks faster sites higher. A custom stack ensures 95+ Lighthouse scores out of the box.*

### 3. Security & Maintenance Comparison

Aspect	WordPress	Shopify	Custom Stack
Security	Vulnerable (Plugins)	Closed-source (Safe)	<b>Isolated (Serverless)</b>
Maintenance	Weekly Updates Required	Managed by Shopify	<b>Zero-Ops Infrastructure</b>
Stability	"White Screen of Death"	Very Stable	<b>99.99% Edge Uptime</b>
Data Privacy	Plugin Risks	Shared with Shopify	<b>You Own 100% of Data</b>

## 4. Cost Analysis: Recurring Monthly Fees

Fee Type	WordPress	Shopify	Custom Stack
Base Hosting	\$30 - \$100	\$39 - \$399	\$0 - \$20
Transaction Fees	0% (but gateway fees)	0.5% - 2.0% (Tax)	0%
Apps/Plugins	\$50+ (Premium)	\$100+ (App Hell)	\$0 (Native Features)
Total Monthly	~\$100+	~\$200 - \$500+	~\$20 - \$45

*Shopify costs scale with your success. The Custom Stack costs remain flat.*

## 5. Cost Analysis: One-Time Investment

Item	WordPress	Shopify	Custom Stack
Development	Low to Mid	Moderate	Premium Investment
Setup Time	Fast	Fast	Strategic Build
Asset Value	Low (Template)	Low (Rented)	High (Owned IP)

### The Business Logic:

- **WordPress:** You pay for constant maintenance.
- **Shopify:** You pay a "success tax" on every order.
- **Custom:** You invest upfront to own a high-performance machine that generates more revenue with lower overhead.

## 6. Recommendation: Why Skip Shopify?

While Shopify is easy to start, it is a "**Golden Cage**" for growing restaurants:

1. **The Success Tax:** As your revenue grows, Shopify takes a larger cut of every transaction.
2. **Limited Catering/Custom Flow:** Restaurant operations are more than just "adding to cart." Custom stacks handle complex scheduling and multi-location logic natively.
3. **Performance Ceiling:** You can never make Shopify as fast as a Next.js site on Vercel.

**Final Verdict:** Transitioning directly from WordPress to a **Custom Next.js/Supabase Stack** avoids the Shopify "middle-man" phase and builds a permanent digital asset.