

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)	Isolated (Serverless)
Maintenance	Weekly Updates Required	Managed by Shopify	Zero-Ops Infrastructure
Stability	"White Screen of Death"	Very Stable	99.99% Edge Uptime
Data Privacy	Plugin Risks	Shared with Shopify	You Own 100% of Data

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.