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Shopify Startup Checklist

Launch Your First Shopify Store
With Confidence

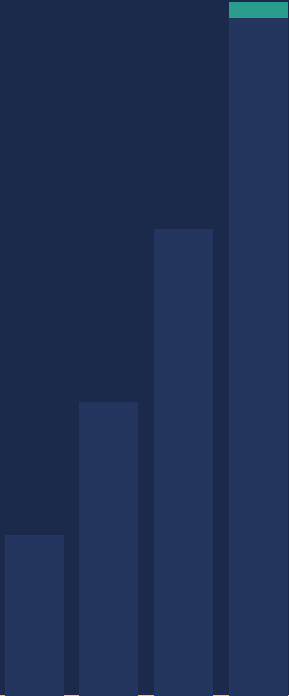
Designed for:

- ✓ First-time Shopify store owners getting ready to launch
- ✓ Entrepreneurs who want to set up their store correctly from day one
- ✓ Sellers moving from another platform and starting fresh on Shopify

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Free Resource · Print-Friendly · No Tech Experience Required

A decorative bar chart graphic in the bottom right corner, consisting of four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, rendered in a dark blue color.

Store Setup Checklist

Complete these steps first — everything else in Shopify builds on top of this foundation.

■ Create Your Shopify Account

Sign up with a professional email address — not a personal Gmail. This email is tied to your store forever.

■ Choose and Confirm Your Store Name

Your store name appears in your default URL and checkout. Pick something clean, memorable, and on-brand.

■ Connect a Custom Domain

A custom domain (yourstore.com) builds trust. Purchase one through Shopify or connect one you already own.

■ Select and Install a Theme

Start with a free Shopify theme. Pick one that matches your product type. You can customize it without coding.

■ Upload Your Logo

A simple, clean logo goes in your header. PNG with transparent background works best. Minimum 512×512px.

■ Set Your Brand Colors

Define 1–2 primary brand colors in your theme settings. Consistent color builds recognizable brand identity.

■ Choose Your Store Currency and Language

Set these in Settings before adding products. Changing currency after products are priced creates extra work.

■ Add a Favicon

The small icon that appears in browser tabs. Use a simplified version of your logo — square format, minimum 32×32px.

■ Domain Tips

- Buying your domain through Shopify connects it automatically — no DNS setup required.
- Aim for a .com if available — customers trust it most.
- Keep it short: under 20 characters, easy to spell, easy to say aloud.
- Avoid hyphens and numbers — they create confusion when sharing verbally.

■ Branding Basics

- Pick 1 primary font and stick to it throughout your store.
- Your logo, colors, and fonts should match your product feel — rustic, modern, playful, or premium.
- Canva (free tier) is sufficient for a first logo if you don't have a designer.
- Consistent branding across your store and social media builds faster trust.

Store Configuration Checklist

These settings control how money moves and how orders ship — get them right before you launch.

■ Set Up a Payment Gateway

Enable Shopify Payments if available in your country. Also add PayPal as a secondary option — many buyers prefer it.

■ Configure Payout Schedule

Set your bank account for payouts in Shopify Payments settings. Verify the account with a test transaction.

■ Set Up Shipping Zones and Rates

Define which countries or regions you ship to, and what you charge. Start simple: one flat rate per zone.

■ Enable Free Shipping Threshold (Optional)

A free shipping offer over a minimum order amount increases average order value. Set it in Shipping settings.

■ Configure Tax Settings

Enable automatic tax calculation for your region. In most countries, Shopify handles this — verify it's turned on.

■ Add Your Legal Policies

Shopify auto-generates Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, and Refund Policy. Review, customize, and publish all three.

■ Set Up Contact Information

Add a customer-facing email address and phone number in Settings. Buyers need a way to reach you.

■ Enable Email Notifications

Review the default order confirmation, shipping, and refund emails. Customize the sender name to match your brand.

■ Quick Win

- Go to Settings → Policies right now and click 'Generate from templates' — Shopify writes your Privacy Policy, Terms of Service, and Refund Policy for you.
- Review each policy, add your store name and contact details, then save. This takes under 10 minutes and is legally required in most countries.
- Without published policies, Shopify may restrict your ability to run ads or accept payments through certain gateways.
- Pin this task to the top of your setup list — it's one of the most skipped steps and one of the most important.

■ Payment Gateway Notes

- Shopify Payments has the lowest transaction fees — use it if available in your country.
- If Shopify Payments isn't available, Stripe or PayPal are reliable alternatives.
- Always add a backup payment method — if one gateway goes down, buyers need another option.
- Test checkout with a real card before launch to confirm payments process correctly.

■ Shipping Setup Tips

- Start with flat-rate shipping rather than calculated rates — simpler to manage.
- Offer free shipping on orders over a threshold to increase cart size.
- Set shipping zones before adding products — rates appear at checkout based on zones.
- Print test shipping labels from Shopify before your first real order.

Product Launch Checklist

Every product page is a sales page — these details directly affect whether buyers click Add to Cart.

■ Write a Clear Product Title

Lead with what the product is, then add key descriptors. 'Handmade Soy Candle – Lavender 8oz' beats 'Serenity.'

■ Write a Benefit-Focused Description

First paragraph: what it does for the buyer. Second: what it's made of. Third: specs and dimensions.

■ Upload High-Quality Product Photos

Minimum 3 images per product: hero shot, detail shot, lifestyle or in-use shot. Square format works across all themes.

■ Set Pricing Strategically

Price covers product cost + shipping supplies + Shopify fees + your time + profit margin. Calculate before you list.

■ Configure Product Variants

Add size, color, or style variants using Shopify's built-in variant system. Each variant can have its own price and photo.

■ Set Inventory Tracking

Enable 'Track Quantity' per product. Enter accurate stock counts before launch to avoid overselling.

■ Add Products to Collections

Collections are your store's navigation categories. Every product should belong to at least one collection.

■ Preview Each Product Page on Mobile

Over 70% of shoppers browse on phones. Preview every product page in mobile view before publishing.

■ Common Mistakes

- Using the product manufacturer's description — duplicate content hurts search visibility.
- Uploading blurry or dark product photos — the #1 reason buyers don't convert.
- No collections set up — buyers land on your store and can't navigate to find products.
- Forgetting to set inventory quantity — products show as in-stock even when they're not.
- Pricing without accounting for Shopify fees — profit margins disappear at checkout.

■ Product Description Formula

- **Line 1:** What does this product do for the buyer? (benefit, not feature)
- **Line 2–3:** What makes it special? Material, process, origin, or story.
- **Line 4–5:** Specifications — size, weight, dimensions, materials list.
- **Line 6:** What's included in the package / what to expect on delivery.
- Keep paragraphs short — 2–3 sentences each. Buyers skim, not read.

Launch Day Checklist

Run through every item below before removing your password page and going live.

- Place a real test order and complete checkout — confirm order confirmation email arrives.
- View your entire store on a mobile phone, not just in desktop preview mode.
- Check that all navigation menus link to the correct pages and collections.
- Confirm your domain is connected and loads correctly without 'www' issues.
- Verify your store password page is removed — your store is live and accessible to the public.
- Check that all product images load quickly and appear correctly on mobile.
- Confirm your refund and shipping policies are published and linked in the footer.
- Send yourself a test email using the store contact form — confirm it arrives.
- Verify at least one payment method processes correctly with a real transaction.
- Check that sold-out or unavailable products are either hidden or show as out of stock.

■ Top 10 Shopify Launch Mistakes

1. Going live without placing a test order first — checkout errors cost real sales.
2. Forgetting to remove the Shopify password page — store is 'live' but no one can see it.
3. No mobile check — over 70% of traffic is mobile; desktop-only testing is not enough.
4. Missing footer links to policies — required for payment processing and customer trust.
5. Launching with only one product — buyers need options to feel they're in a real store.
6. Using placeholder or stock images as permanent product photos.
7. No About page or brand story — anonymous stores convert poorly on first visits.
8. Setting incorrect tax settings — causes compliance issues and manual corrections later.
9. Forgetting to set up order notification emails — you may miss incoming orders.
10. Launching before confirming payout bank account — first sales may be held or delayed.

■ Final Quick Reference

- Shopify account created with business email
- Custom domain connected and verified
- Logo and brand colors applied to theme
- Payment gateway live and tested
- Shipping zones and rates configured
- Tax settings enabled and verified
- All three legal policies published
- All products in at least one collection
- Every product has 3+ photos
- Inventory quantities entered and tracking on
- Test order placed and confirmed
- Password page removed — store is live