Magento to Shopify migration:
A practical guide

Why this guide matters

Running a Magento store used to make sense. The platform offered power, flexibility and control that few alternatives could match. But for many ecommerce teams, what once felt like an asset has slowly become a burden.

Maintenance costs creep up. Developer tickets pile up. Peak season becomes a nervous wait to see if the site holds together. And every conversation about growth turns into a conversation about technical constraints.

This guide is designed to help you decide whether moving to Shopify makes sense for your business. We won't fill these pages with platform hype or feature lists. Instead, we'll focus on the areas that actually affect your bottom line: cost, speed, team efficiency, scalability and return on investment.

At Ascensor, we've helped ecommerce businesses navigate this decision many times. The aim here is simple: give you the insight you need to decide if, when and how a migration would work for your store.

The true cost of running a Magento store

Magento rarely looks expensive on day one. The open-source version is free to download, which can make it seem like a sensible choice. But the real cost of ownership reveals itself over time.

Most Magento stores carry ongoing expenses across several areas:

Hosting and infrastructure

Magento demands robust server resources to perform well. Many stores require specialist hosting setups, managed services or cloud infrastructure that costs significantly more than standard web hosting.

Security and compliance

PCI compliance, SSL certificates, security patches and vulnerability fixes all require attention. Each security update needs testing to ensure it doesn't break existing functionality, which means more developer time.

Developer maintenance

Plugin updates, compatibility fixes, performance tweaks and bug repairs all require skilled developers. Magento specialists typically command higher rates than developers working with other platforms.

Emergency support

When something breaks during a sale or over a weekend, emergency fixes don't come cheap. Many Magento merchants have experienced the frustration of paying premium rates just to get their store back online.

> **Industry research suggests that businesses operating on Magento face operational costs that are, on average, 24% higher than those using Shopify.**

A Forrester Total Economic Impact study found that businesses migrating from Magento to Shopify reported up to 66% reduction in operational costs related to IT resources, plugin maintenance and security upgrades.

How Shopify changes the cost equation

Shopify takes a fundamentally different approach. Your monthly subscription includes hosting, SSL certificates, security, PCI compliance and automatic platform updates. There's no separate hosting bill, no patching schedule to manage and no emergency server fixes to pay for.

This predictability transforms budgeting. You know what your platform will cost month to month, which makes planning and investment decisions far easier.

A study commissioned by Shopify from a leading independent consulting firm found that Shopify's total cost of ownership is, on average, **29% better than Adobe Commerce (Magento)**. For growing businesses, that difference compounds year after year.

How site speed affects your revenue

Site speed directly affects how much money your store makes. Every millisecond counts.

8.4%
Conversion increase

Per 0.1 second improvement in site speed (Deloitte research)

10%
Higher AOV

Average order value increase from faster-loading sessions

2.5x
Better conversion

Sites loading in 1 second vs 5 seconds (Portent research)

Why Magento performance is difficult to sustain

Magento performance typically depends on multiple layers of caching, careful server configuration and ongoing optimisation work. Each improvement can be undone by the next plugin update, promotional campaign or integration. Over time, performance becomes something you constantly manage rather than something you can rely on.

Many Magento teams find themselves in a cycle: pay for performance optimisation, see improvements, then watch those gains erode as the site grows more complex.

Shopify's approach to speed

Shopify is built with performance as a default. The platform runs on a global content delivery network that serves pages quickly to customers wherever they are. The infrastructure is optimised specifically for ecommerce workloads, and the theming system encourages lean, fast-loading designs.

The performance difference translates directly to **more completed purchases and higher revenue per visitor.**

What scaling looks like without technical constraints

Growth should feel exciting. On Magento, scaling often means more servers, more complexity and more opportunities for things to break.

Common scaling challenges on Magento

As Magento stores grow, teams frequently encounter server complexity increasing alongside revenue, performance degradation during traffic spikes, longer development cycles for new features or markets, and growth initiatives delayed by technical discussions.

Scaling becomes something to plan carefully around constraints.

Scaling on Shopify

Shopify removes many of these pressures. The platform's infrastructure automatically handles traffic increases. You don't need to upgrade servers before a big sale or worry about whether your site can cope with a successful marketing campaign.

Large product catalogues, international expansion and multi-channel selling are all supported natively. Want to launch in a new market? That's a configuration task that your team can handle directly.

During Black Friday and Cyber Monday 2024, Shopify merchants processed **£11.5 billion in sales.** The platform handled peak loads without the kind of downtime or slowdowns that plague other systems during high-traffic events.

Moving faster without constant development tickets

One of the most overlooked benefits of migrating is what it does for your team's daily efficiency.

Day-to-day life on Magento

On Magento, even straightforward changes often require developer input. Updating a banner, changing a price, running a promotion – each task can mean raising a ticket, waiting for prioritisation, then waiting again for testing and deployment.

This slows down campaigns, merchandising and experimentation. Your marketing calendar ends up constrained by development capacity.

How Shopify changes team workflows

Shopify's admin interface is designed for people who aren't developers. Your team can manage content, update products, configure promotions and make site changes directly. Marketing campaigns can launch when they're ready, on your timeline.

At Ascensor, we build Shopify stores so that marketing and ecommerce teams can work independently and confidently.

The result is **less waiting, faster iteration and more momentum for commercial initiatives.**
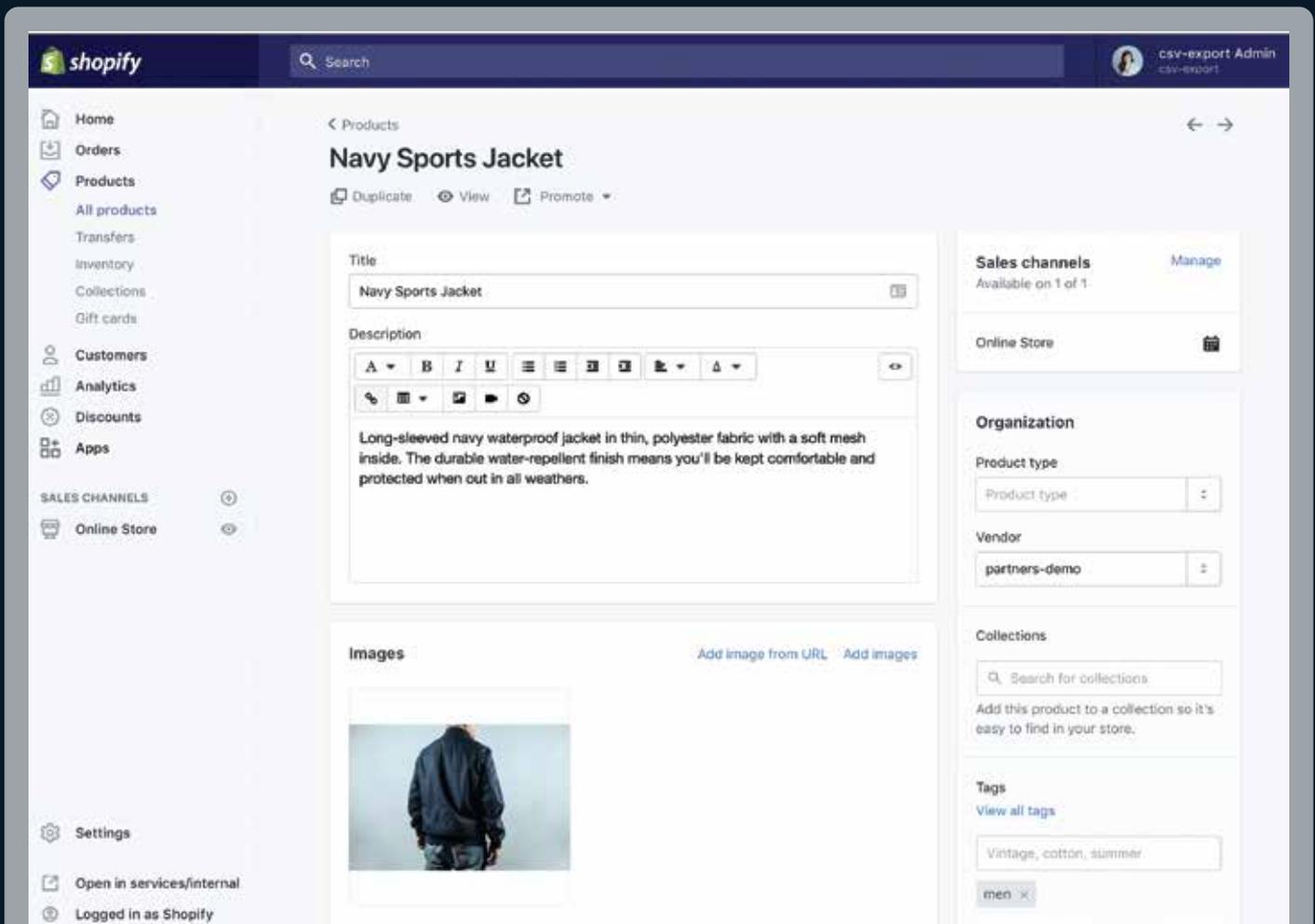
Can Shopify actually handle what you need?

A common concern we hear is that Shopify can't support complex requirements. This often comes from outdated perceptions of the platform or from teams who haven't explored what modern Shopify can do.

What Shopify handles natively

Many features that require custom development on Magento are standard functionality or mature apps on Shopify. This includes subscriptions and recurring payments, B2B pricing and customer-specific catalogues, advanced inventory and fulfilment management, multi-channel selling across marketplaces and social platforms, and complex discount and promotion rules.

Subscriptions
Recurring payments and subscription management built in

B2B pricing
Customer-specific catalogues and pricing structures

Inventory management
Advanced fulfilment and stock control

Multi-channel
Selling across marketplaces and social platforms

Promotions
Complex discount and promotion rules

When custom development is needed

For genuinely unique requirements, Shopify offers private apps, custom integrations and robust APIs that support bespoke workflows. Custom work happens on top of a stable, maintained foundation where changes can be made safely and predictably.

Between 2022 and 2024, over 100,000 websites migrated from Magento to Shopify. Major brands including Gymshark, Rebecca Minkoff and Kylie Cosmetics run on the platform. These migrations happened because Shopify can handle sophisticated ecommerce operations at scale.
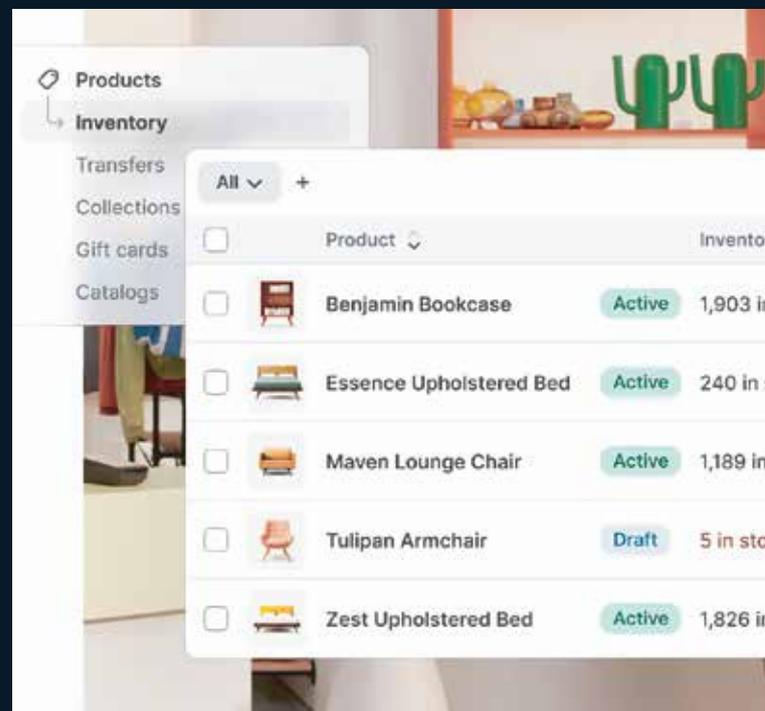
Protecting your SEO and revenue during migration

Platform migrations carry real risks. Done poorly, a migration can damage search rankings, break customer journeys and disrupt revenue for months. Done well, it can preserve your existing performance while opening up new opportunities.

Where migrations go wrong

Broken URL structures

Loss of search engine equity

Missing redirects

Dead ends for customers and search engines

Lost tracking

Analytics continuity breaks down

Rushed timelines

Insufficient testing before launch

How a controlled migration protects what you've built

A well-planned migration focuses on mapping every important URL from your existing site to its equivalent on Shopify, implementing comprehensive 301 redirects that preserve search engine rankings, maintaining analytics and conversion tracking continuity, and testing thoroughly before going live.

Research indicates that websites implementing proper 301 redirects during migration retained up to 80% of their SEO performance within the first three months.

At Ascensor, we treat SEO and data integrity as core migration requirements from day one.

Understanding your migration ROI

The return from migration extends beyond reducing costs. The real value lies in what becomes possible when your platform stops holding you back.

Where Shopify ROI typically comes from

Most businesses see returns through several channels: reduced infrastructure, hosting and maintenance spending; improved conversion rates driven by faster pages and better user experience; less reliance on expensive specialist developers; and faster campaign execution that generates more revenue.

Lower costs
Reduced infrastructure and maintenance spending

Better conversions
Faster pages drive more completed purchases

Team efficiency
Less reliance on expensive specialists

Faster execution
Campaigns launch when ready

The bigger picture

he most valuable returns often come from what your team can do with the time and budget that migration frees up. More testing, better campaigns, stronger optimisation over time. When your platform isn't consuming resources just to stay functional, those resources can drive growth.

Character.com, a children's clothing retailer, migrated from Magento to Shopify and increased conversions by **40%**. Many other businesses have seen significant performance improvements after moving platforms.

Is now the right time to migrate?

Migration timing matters. Moving at the wrong moment can create unnecessary stress, while waiting too long can mean more time spent managing problems rather than building your business.

Signs that migration makes sense

Consider migration if your maintenance costs keep rising year after year, performance issues resurface despite repeated optimisation work, your marketing velocity is constrained by development bottlenecks, growth plans feel limited by platform capabilities, or your team spends more time managing technical problems than commercial opportunities.

When waiting might be sensible

A major rebrand or business restructure is already underway, key integrations or dependencies are mid-transition, or you're approaching a critical trading period with insufficient time to migrate safely.

Making a confident decision

A Magento to Shopify migration represents a significant decision that should align your ecommerce platform with your commercial goals. The businesses that benefit most are those who approach the decision with clear eyes and realistic expectations.

This guide is designed to help you understand the trade-offs clearly. The next step is applying this thinking to your specific situation.

Ready to explore what migration could mean for your business?

If you'd like a tailored view of costs, risks and ROI for your business, complete the form on our migration page and we'll map this framework directly to your store. We'll show you what a migration would look like, what it would cost and what you could expect in return.

Get in touch

About Ascensor

Ascensor is a Leeds-based digital agency with deep expertise in ecommerce development, conversion optimisation and platform migration. We've helped businesses across multiple sectors move from Magento to Shopify while protecting their SEO, improving their performance and setting up stores that their teams can actually manage.

Our team combines migration expertise with conversion rate optimisation, so every project focuses on commercial outcomes as well as technical execution.

Ready to explore your options?
Get in touch for a personalised assessment. We'll review your current setup and show you exactly what a migration could mean for your business.

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