

WooCommerce to Shopify: the real costs, benefits and business case for switching

PIXEL KICKS / ECOMMERCE INSIGHTS / OCTOBER 2026

A practical guide for UK ecommerce businesses considering whether to move platforms.

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Has your business outgrown WooCommerce?

More established ecommerce businesses are making the move to Shopify. If you've been considering switching platforms, now could be a good time to evaluate whether WooCommerce is still the right fit for your business.

WooCommerce remains a popular and flexible ecommerce platform, giving businesses plenty of freedom to build and customise their websites. However, keeping everything running smoothly can require ongoing attention, from managing hosting and updating plugins to fixing technical issues and maintaining security. All of this can take up valuable time and money.

The recent global PHP security issues in October 2026 are a good example of these challenges. Businesses running WordPress and WooCommerce may have needed urgent updates and additional technical support to keep their websites secure. While the issues weren't limited to WooCommerce, they highlight how unexpected problems can create extra work, additional costs and potential disruption.

Shopify takes a different approach. It provides a managed commerce platform with hosting, core infrastructure and checkout included, reducing much of the responsibility for underlying server maintenance and security updates. The commercial question is not simply which platform has a lower monthly fee; it is which one provides the best combination of reliability, cost, agility and growth potential for a particular business.

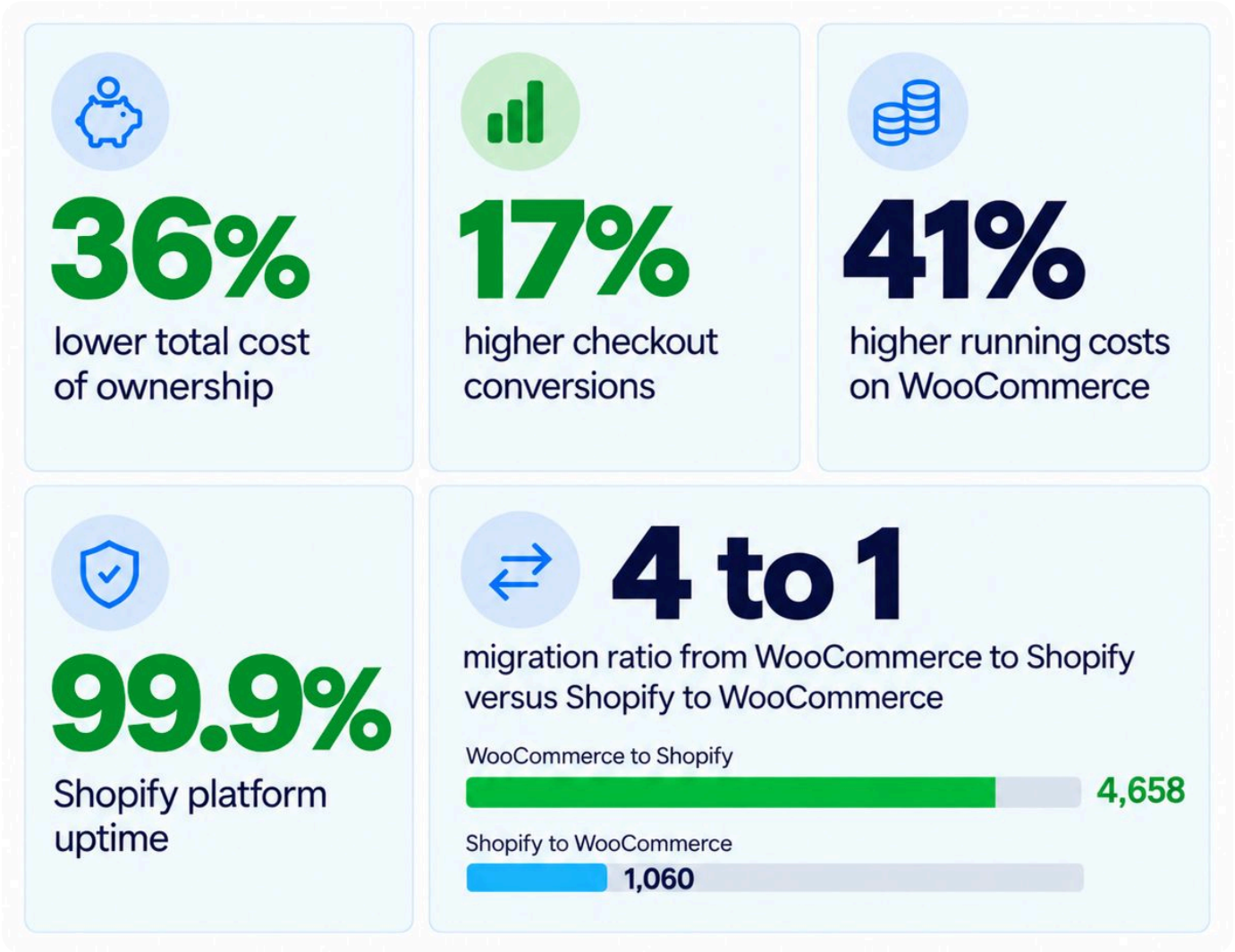
This report brings together Shopify-published research, real WooCommerce-to-Shopify case studies and evidence-based UK cost comparisons. It examines the potential financial and operational benefits of migrating, including examples from businesses such as Sofa Club and Fire Mech Fixings. Published averages and individual merchant outcomes should not, however, be viewed as a forecast for your own business.

The numbers behind the move to Shopify

More businesses are choosing to move from WooCommerce to Shopify, with lower running costs, better performance and less ongoing maintenance among the potential benefits.

But what do the numbers actually tell us? Here are five key statistics that help explain why businesses are making the switch.

Five statistics worth considering:



Sources: Shopify-commissioned total cost and checkout studies, Shopify platform uptime claim, and StoreLeads migration counts (top one million ranked websites, 1 Jan 2023–31 Mar 2024). The 36%, 41% and 17% figures are comparative research findings, not promises of merchant-specific savings or revenue. The StoreLeads counts describe a historic sample. [see appendix].

Why are retailers considering the move?

The decision to move ecommerce platforms isn't always driven by a single problem. For some businesses, it's rising maintenance costs or the complexity of managing plugins and integrations. For others, it's the need for greater reliability, faster development or a platform that can support international growth.

Both WooCommerce and Shopify can power successful ecommerce businesses, but they take different approaches to how the underlying technology is managed.

Common triggers for reviewing the platform

- Recurring developer involvement for updates, bugs or routine merchandising requests.
- Rising plugin and hosting costs, or complexity from multiple providers.
- Concern about stability during major promotions or sudden traffic spikes.
- A need to launch products, campaigns or new markets more quickly.
- A desire to move budget from reactive maintenance into customer experience and growth.

What actually changes when you move?

Both WooCommerce and Shopify are capable of powering successful ecommerce businesses, but there are some important differences in how they operate.

WooCommerce gives businesses greater control over their website, hosting and technical setup, while Shopify provides a more streamlined, fully managed platform designed specifically for ecommerce.

With Shopify, hosting, security updates and much of the technical maintenance are taken care of, allowing businesses to spend less time managing their website and more time improving it.

Shopify also offers a wide range of built-in features, apps and integrations, making it easier to manage products, launch promotions and support business growth.

The table below highlights some of the key differences between the two platforms, from hosting and security through to flexibility, running costs and day-to-day management.

AREA	WOOCOMMERCE	SHOPIFY
Hosting and core updates	Hosting selected and maintained by the merchant or its partner; WordPress/plugin updates need management.	Managed hosting and underlying platform infrastructure; themes, apps and integrations still need attention.
Flexibility	Extensive control over code, plugins and architecture.	Managed architecture with themes, apps, APIs and platform-defined constraints.
Security	Shared responsibility across merchant, host, developer and extensions.	Core platform infrastructure managed by Shopify; merchant still owns permissions, data practices and app governance.
Ongoing costs	Hosting, plugins, support, development and payment costs vary.	Plan, apps, payments, support and ongoing enhancements vary.
Daily administration	Can be streamlined, but varies with the build and plugins.	Standardised commerce administration; custom workflows may still require apps or development.

Hosting, performance and reliability - what's included with Shopify?

One of the biggest differences between WooCommerce and Shopify is how website hosting and the underlying infrastructure are managed.

With WooCommerce, businesses need to arrange their own hosting, either directly or through an agency or managed WordPress provider. Depending on the complexity of the website, this can involve managing server resources, performance, software updates, security patches, backups and additional hosting services.

Shopify takes a different approach. As a fully hosted ecommerce platform, the infrastructure required to run an online store is included within the subscription, removing the need for businesses to purchase and manage separate website hosting.

Shopify's hosting infrastructure includes:

- **99.9% average platform uptime** – Shopify reports 99.9% uptime across its major services, helping businesses maintain a reliable online presence.
- **Unlimited bandwidth** – No additional hosting bandwidth charges as website traffic increases, including during busy promotional periods.
- **Global content delivery network (CDN)** – Shopify uses Cloudflare's global network to deliver website content efficiently to customers in different locations.
- **Automatic infrastructure updates** – Shopify manages its underlying platform and server infrastructure, including core security updates, without merchants needing to coordinate PHP or server software upgrades.
- **SSL certificates included** – Encrypted HTTPS connections are provided and certificates are managed automatically.
- **Built-in image optimisation** – Shopify's image delivery system automatically resizes and optimises images to help improve loading performance.

For growing retailers, this can simplify day-to-day operations considerably. Businesses no longer need to worry about upgrading their hosting package to accommodate higher traffic volumes or coordinating routine server maintenance.

The true cost of running WooCommerce

WooCommerce's core software is free, but the overall cost of running an ecommerce store goes far beyond the platform itself.

Hosting, premium plugins, payment processing, technical support, security and ongoing development all contribute to the total cost of ownership. For more complex websites, these costs can increase considerably as the business grows.

The hidden cost of maintenance

WooCommerce stores often rely on multiple WordPress plugins, extensions and third-party integrations. These components require ongoing attention, including software updates, compatibility testing, troubleshooting and developer support.

For relatively simple websites, these responsibilities may be manageable and inexpensive. However, heavily customised stores with multiple integrations can require substantially more technical involvement.

Shopify websites still require ongoing development and support, but businesses may be able to reduce the time spent on routine technical maintenance. For businesses spending significant amounts on routine technical support, this creates an opportunity to reconsider how their ecommerce budget is allocated.

Could maintenance budgets be better spent?

Reducing routine technical maintenance could free up resources for improvements that directly support sales and customer experience, including:

- Actively developing and improving the website
- Increasing conversion rates and average order values.
- Developing merchandising and promotional functionality.
- Improving customer retention and email automation.
- Integrating ecommerce operations with other business systems.

The potential savings will vary, and additional Shopify subscription, app and transaction costs must be considered.

However, for retailers with substantial ongoing technical overhead, **moving from reactive maintenance towards proactive development could be one of the most valuable benefits of switching platforms.**

How to calculate your potential savings

The financial case for migrating from WooCommerce to Shopify will be different for every business. Before making a decision, retailers should review their existing expenditure and compare it against the costs of running Shopify, including the initial migration investment.

A meaningful comparison should include:

1. Existing WooCommerce costs

Hosting, premium extensions, software licences, backups and other infrastructure services.

2. Technical maintenance

Developer hours spent on software updates, compatibility testing, troubleshooting, security monitoring and general upkeep.

3. Agency support

The proportion of an existing support retainer spent on routine maintenance, compared with proactive improvements and development work.

4. Shopify costs

Platform subscription, required apps, payment processing, third-party integrations and continued technical support.

5. Migration investment

Discovery, design, development, product and customer data migration, SEO redirects, testing and staff training.

Look at the longer-term picture

A proper cost comparison **should ideally cover at least three years**, accounting for both the initial migration investment and the differences in ongoing expenditure.

It's also worth considering the less obvious costs, such as internal staff time, the impact of unexpected technical issues and opportunities to improve conversion rates or operational efficiency.

For some businesses, WooCommerce will remain the more economical option. For others, particularly those with substantial technical overhead, Shopify may deliver meaningful financial and operational benefits.

The important thing is to base the decision on actual business costs, rather than assumptions about either platform.

A real-world example: The global PHP security crisis of October 2026

The critical PHP security vulnerabilities disclosed in October 2026 provide a timely reminder of the responsibilities associated with maintaining PHP-based websites.

On 21 October, emergency security updates were released to address two critical vulnerabilities, both carrying severity scores of 9.2 out of 10. The UK's National Cyber Security Centre issued urgent guidance recommending that affected organisations identify vulnerable systems and apply security updates.

Although the vulnerabilities were not specific to WordPress or WooCommerce, they highlighted the wider challenges of maintaining secure ecommerce infrastructure.

For affected retailers, responding to incidents like this can involve coordinating with hosting providers, installing and testing emergency updates, reviewing website security and investigating potential compromises.

These activities can involve additional developer hours, unexpected expenditure and potential disruption to business operations.

Shopify takes a different approach by managing the underlying hosting and platform infrastructure, including core security updates. While merchants remain responsible for managing accounts, permissions, apps and integrations, much of the responsibility for server-level maintenance is removed.

For ecommerce businesses, the benefit isn't simply avoiding technical problems. It's reducing the time and resources spent dealing with them, allowing more attention to be focused on improving the website and growing sales.

Could a better checkout improve revenue?

Shopify's checkout is designed to make buying online as quick and straightforward as possible, helping businesses turn more visitors into paying customers.

Research commissioned by Shopify found that its checkout converted up to 17% better than WooCommerce in a comparison of similar ecommerce stores.

For retailers, even a relatively small improvement in checkout conversion could translate into significant additional revenue, particularly for businesses processing large numbers of orders.

While results will vary depending on the store, its customers and existing checkout performance, Shopify's streamlined buying experience offers a compelling opportunity to increase sales and reduce abandoned checkouts.

Worked conversion scenario – hypothetical, not predicted

Suppose a store has 100,000 checkout starts per year, a 40% checkout completion rate, and a £60 average order value. It currently completes 40,000 orders, worth £2.4 million. A 5% relative improvement in checkout completion would raise the rate from 40% to 42%, producing 2,000 additional orders and £120,000 of additional gross sales, assuming everything else remains constant.

This is an illustration of the sensitivity of revenue to checkout performance, not evidence that Shopify would achieve the uplift. Gross sales should never be conflated with contribution margin or profit, and any conversion gain would need to be measured in the new store.

What should a retailer measure?

- Product-page to basket and basket to checkout progression.
- Checkout completion by device, market and traffic source.
- Payment failures, delivery-option friction and abandoned checkout reasons.
- Average order value, repeat customer rate and contribution margin.
- Before-and-after changes with seasonality, campaigns and traffic mix accounted for.

Case study: Sofa Club - From WooCommerce to Shopify Plus



Founded in 2012, British furniture retailer Sofa Club has grown from a small business selling affordable sofas into a major direct-to-consumer brand. In 2018, the company migrated from WooCommerce to Shopify Plus, seeking a more scalable ecommerce platform capable of supporting its expansion.

As the business grew, Sofa Club continued investing in its ecommerce operations, bringing together inventory management, logistics, returns, customer service and marketing within a more connected Shopify ecosystem.

The result has been substantial business growth, improved operational efficiency and a significantly better customer experience.

Published results

METRIC	PUBLISHED OUTCOME
YoY sales growth	40%
Reduction in cancellations	75%
Increase in average order value	55%

**Reported by Shopify in its Sofa Club case study. Results reflect the wider business transformation following migration, including rebranding, systems integration and operational improvements.*

Summary and conclusion

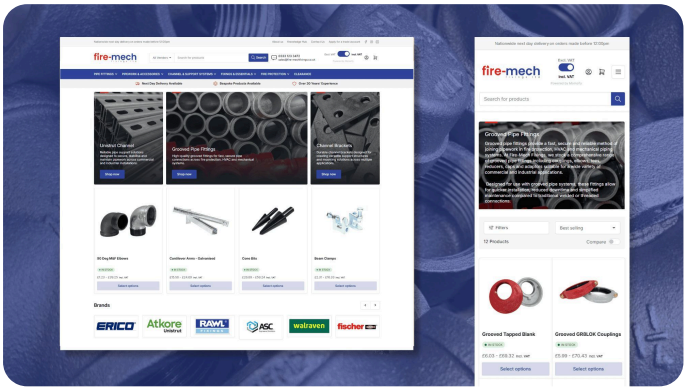
Sofa Club's move from WooCommerce to Shopify Plus helped establish a more scalable ecommerce operation, bringing stock management, fulfilment, customer service and marketing together within a connected platform.

Alongside wider improvements to its customer experience, including real-time stock information, delivery options and augmented reality product visualisation, the business reported substantial sales growth and fewer cancellations.

The key takeaway: Sofa Club demonstrates how migrating to Shopify can support broader business improvements, rather than simply replacing one ecommerce platform with another. Although specific maintenance cost savings haven't been published, the operational benefits illustrate the potential value of a more integrated ecommerce platform.

Source: **Shopify – How Sofa Club and Shopify are disrupting the furniture industry with speed and style**.

Case study: Fire Mech Fixings - A B2B Shopify platform for a specialist trade supplier



Fire Mech Fixings is one of the UK's leading suppliers of specialist fixings, fasteners and fire protection products for the construction industry. Supplying contractors, installers and trade professionals nationwide, the company stocks thousands of products across a wide range of specialist categories.

As the business continued to grow, its existing WooCommerce website was becoming increasingly difficult to manage. With an extensive product catalogue, specialist customer requirements and ambitious plans for future ecommerce growth, Fire Mech needed a platform that could provide greater performance, scalability and flexibility.

The migration challenge

Fire Mech's catalogue consists of approximately 6,500 specialist products, each containing a large amount of technical information, downloadable documentation, product attributes and imagery. Preserving this data whilst significantly improving the customer experience formed one of the biggest technical challenges of the project.

Following a series of discovery workshops and technical planning sessions, we recommended Shopify Advanced as the ideal platform. Its reliability, scalability and extensive ecosystem of specialist apps provided the perfect foundation for Fire Mech's long-term ecommerce strategy, whilst giving the business a significantly more robust platform than WooCommerce.

Built for B2B ecommerce

Beyond the product migration, a major focus was creating a more effective purchasing experience for Fire Mech's trade customers.

The new Shopify platform supports approved trade accounts, customer-specific pricing and discounts, invoice payments, quotation requests and access to previous orders and invoices.

These capabilities give professional customers greater flexibility when purchasing, while helping Fire Mech manage its trade relationships and complex ordering requirements through a more connected ecommerce platform.

METRIC	PUBLISHED OUTCOME
Products migrated	6500
Website traffic	90% increase
Top 3 keyword rankings	45% increase
B2B trade purchasing	Customer-specific pricing, account approvals and invoice payments.

Source: Pixel Kicks case study “Fire Mech Fixings: A B2B Shopify platform for a specialist trade supplier”. **https://www.pixelkicks.co.uk/work/fire-mech-fixings/**

Is Shopify right for your business?

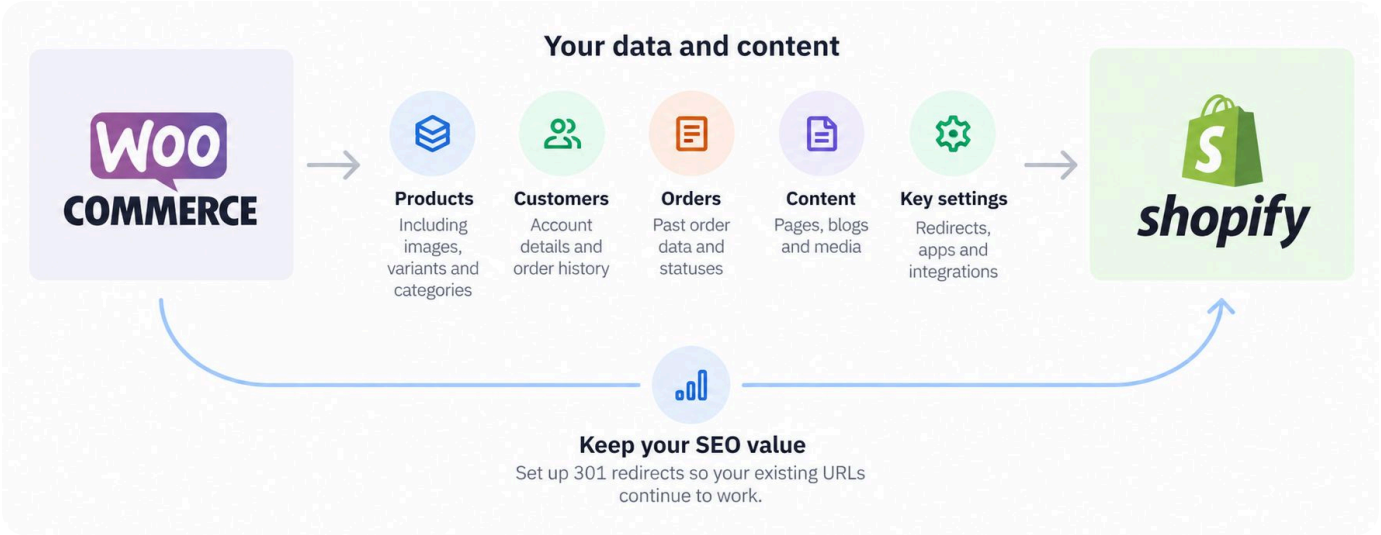
A balanced recommendation should recognise that Shopify is not the obvious answer for every business. WooCommerce may remain appropriate where a retailer benefits from highly bespoke WordPress content, unusual workflows or full control over hosting and code; where the present stack is performing well at a low cost; or where moving would create material integration or SEO risk.

A sensible migration assessment therefore needs to test more than platform features: product and customer data, order history, subscriptions, B2B pricing, customer accounts, multi-market requirements, checkout customisation, tax and shipping rules, analytics, SEO redirects, integrations, privacy practices and internal training.

Five questions to ask before moving

- What does the current platform really cost over three years, including staff and agency time?
- Which existing features would need replacing, redesigning or rebuilding?
- What are the risks to search visibility, customer data and trading continuity?
- What practical improvements could the business make faster on Shopify?
- What would constitute success six and twelve months after launch?

What happens during a WooCommerce-to-Shopify migration?



A well-run migration begins with discovery, not development. The first task is to catalogue the existing store: products and variants, customers, orders, subscriptions, discounts, taxes, shipping rules, B2B workflows, content, integrations and critical SEO pages. The team then identifies what Shopify can handle natively, what needs an app and what requires custom development.

Next comes design and build, followed by structured data transfer, URL redirect mapping, payment and shipping configuration, integration testing and staff training. Before launch, the merchant should test real customer journeys, including mobile checkout, refunds, returns, email notifications and analytics. A controlled cutover and post-launch monitoring plan reduce disruption, but no responsible agency should promise that migration is risk-free.

Where appropriate, the business can retain its current WooCommerce site until the replacement is tested and ready. The actual timetable and investment depend on catalogue size, integrations, content and custom functionality.

How Pixel Kicks can help

Pixel Kicks is a Manchester-based ecommerce agency with experience building and supporting WordPress/WooCommerce and Shopify websites. We are a Shopify Partner agency and part of the PushON Group. That experience across both ecosystems means we can discuss the commercial case for moving without assuming migration is right for every business.

Our first step is to understand how your current store is working: the costs, frustrations, integrations and growth ambitions. From there we can advise whether improving WooCommerce or planning a Shopify migration offers the better return.



A free 30-minute ecommerce review

If you are considering Shopify, we would be happy to arrange a no-obligation Microsoft Teams call. We can discuss the current store, the likely migration scope, what should be assessed, and whether a more detailed cost and feasibility review would be worthwhile.

Get in touch with our team at **hello@pixelkicks.co.uk** or **0161 820 7628.**

Pixel Kicks | **www.pixelkicks.co.uk**

Sources, methods and publication notes

This report is built from Shopify's WooCommerce-to-Shopify partner sales collateral, plus Shopify's publicly available comparison, cost-of-ownership research and customer case studies. The merchant examples featured are a combination of third-party Shopify case studies along with Pixel Kicks's work.

Shopify, checkout comparative research as summarised in Shopify's WooCommerce comparison - **https://www.shopify.com/compare/shopify-vs-woocommerce**

How Sofa Club and Shopify are disrupting the furniture industry with speed and style:**https://www.shopify.com/case-studies/sofa-club**

Fire Mech Fixings: A B2B Shopify platform for a specialist trade supplier:**https://www.pixelkicks.co.uk/work/fire-mech-fixings/**

Shopify, "Ecommerce total cost of ownership" - **https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/blog/ecommerce-total-cost-of-ownership**

UK National Cyber Security Centre, PHP security alert (21 Oct 2026), **https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/news/critical-security-issue-affecting-php**

Shopify-supplied partner presentation: "WooCommerce to Shopify", pp. 4, 7–19 — Provided source document; StoreLeads migration snapshot dated Jan 2023–Mar 2024

Methodology cautions: Claims about 36% better WooCommerce-specific TCO, 41% higher operating/support costs and checkout differences come from Shopify-commissioned or Shopify-published studies; results depend on sampling, business scale, platform configuration and study date. The cost model and checkout example in this report are arithmetic scenarios for explanation only.