



eCommerce: From launch to ongoing success





Hello!

Let's talk eCommerce.

I've worked extensively for WooCommerce, Shopify, and Easy Digital Downloads for over 5 years, and love working to level the playing field for eCommerce stores of all sizes.

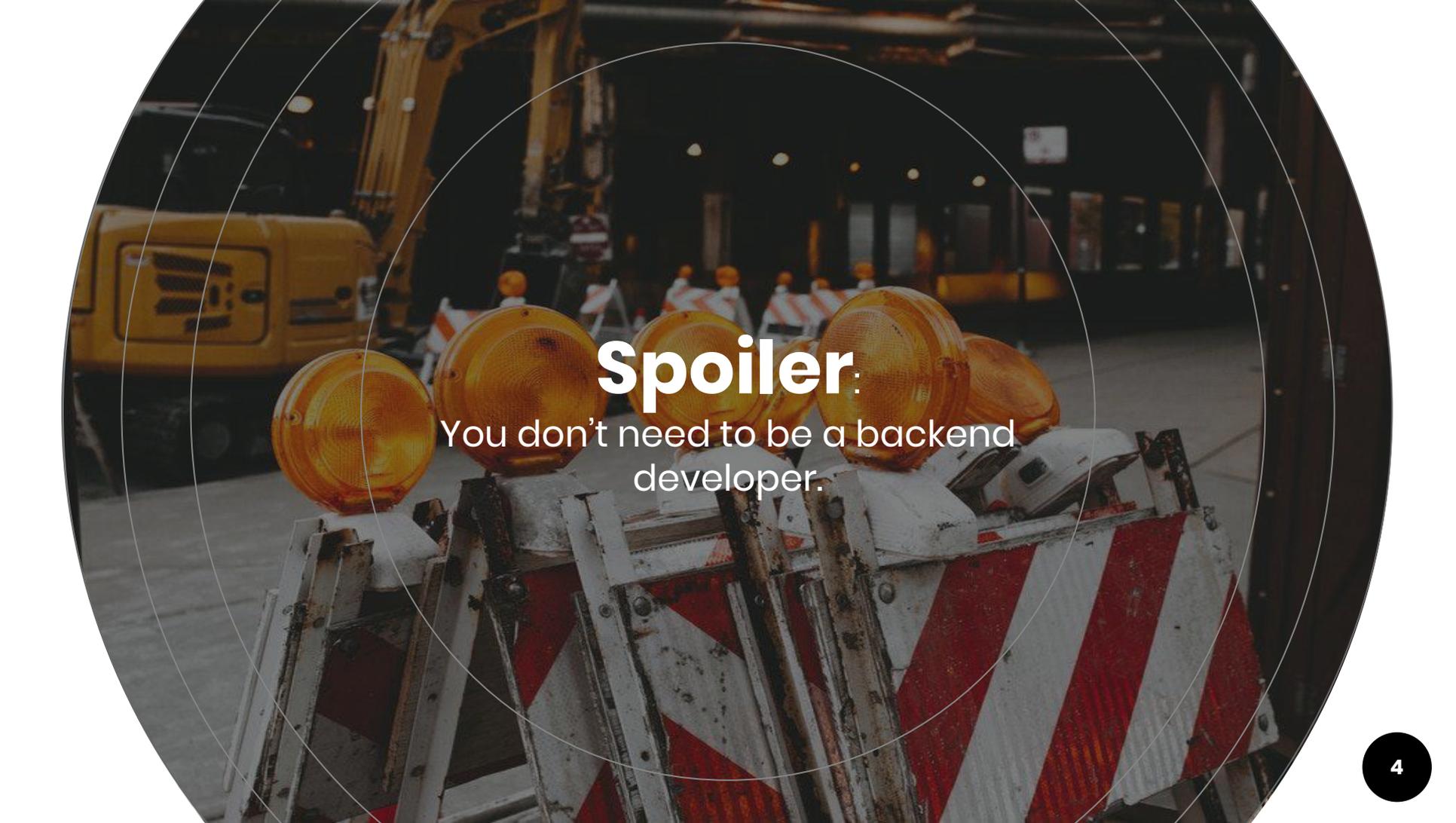
@Beka_Rice | @Jilt | @SkyVerge



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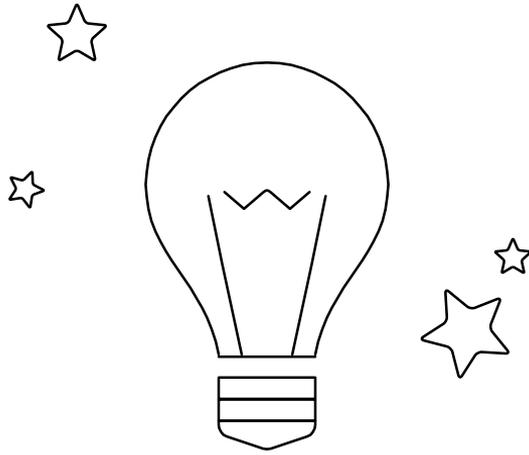
Skills for the job

What should you know? What should you
be able to do?

A circular image showing a construction site at night. In the foreground, there are several bright orange traffic lights mounted on a metal structure with red and white diagonal stripes. In the background, a yellow excavator is visible, and several workers wearing orange safety vests and hard hats are standing near other construction equipment. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the orange traffic lights.

Spoiler:

You don't need to be a backend developer.



What to know

What should you know or start learning?

WordPress + Hosting

- Learn settings configuration deeply, especially product and shipping setup
- Have a set of go-to plugins + WP tools (user profiles, social integrations, etc)
- Caching for eCommerce is **very** different than for content-based sites

If you're not an expert in performance or caching config, partner with a great host.



Recommended hosts

For WooCommerce (in my experience):

- Liquid Web
- Pantheon
- Kinsta



Payment processing

Important concepts

- *Merchant account vs Payment gateway*
- Processing fees (flat rate vs cost-plus)
- PCI Compliance (self assessment vs full certification process)
- How gateway types affect security
- Tokenization
- Authorization vs charge / capture
- Refunding + voiding transactions



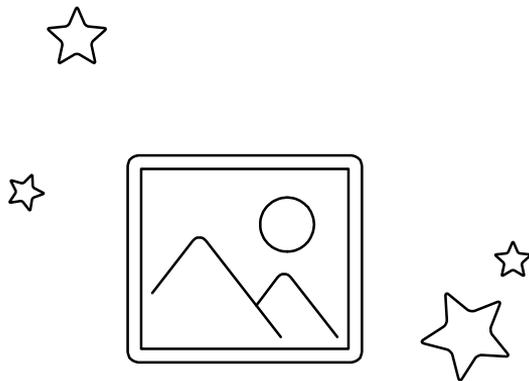
Order fulfillment & shipping

Become familiar with common workflows

Concepts to know

- Inventory management
- Live rates
- Box packing
- Label printing
- Drop-shipping vs outsourced fulfillment
- Fulfilled by Amazon





Frontend

Design and frontend development

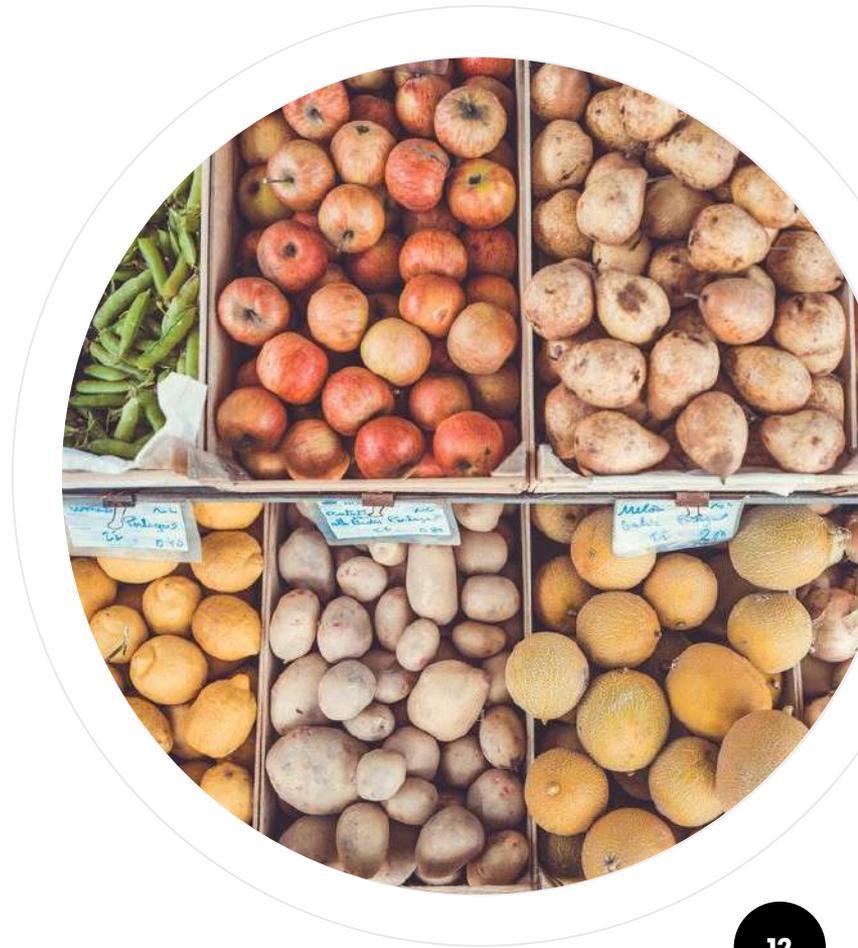
Theming WooCommerce

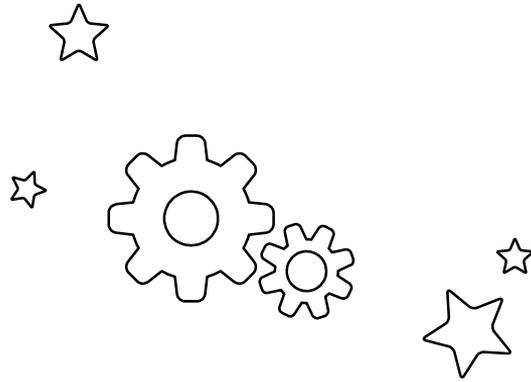
- DO NOT override WooCommerce core templates unless you really need to, and are committed to maintenance
- Instead, look to use hooks everywhere you can, or to unhook things as needed
- Storefront is a great base (free) to start from (built on Underscores)



Shopping UX

- Capture customer information while browsing (better marketing + segments)
- Good filtering and sorting in product catalog (discoverability, browsing experience)
- Consistent branding + customer delight
- Checkout flow: single-page vs multi-step
- Customer communication: content, site messages, email, chat





Backend

User experience & development

Plugin development

- Both frontend and backend dev experience
- Good knowledge of WP_Query
- Read the source code! Follow conventions.
- Familiarity with building against external APIs (payments, shipping, CRMs, etc)

You're usually better off trying to find a solid starting point rather than building from scratch for integrations

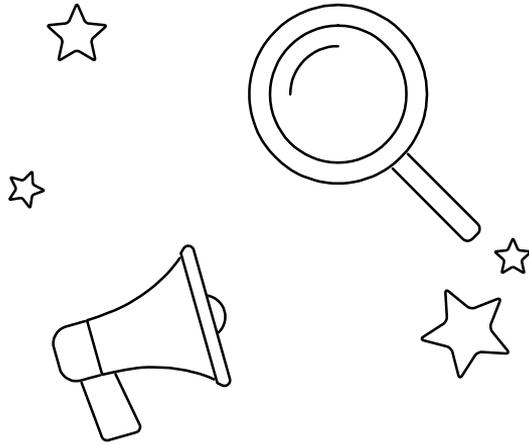




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Getting to launch

What should you ask? What should you
focus on?



Questions to ask

General questions

- What is the main goal for the site?
(Is it a catalog / mirroring orders from elsewhere?)
- Should items be available to every visitor?
- Who gives final approval on design or changes?
- Who will do maintenance? (Updates, periodic tests, small changes or improvements)
- Do you need to offer multiple currencies or languages?
- Where else do you sell items?
(Are there other sales channels?)



Product management

Get a sense of how products are managed from day-to-day, and month-to-month.

- How many products are available on-site?
- Are descriptions and photos ready?
- How often are product images or descriptions updated?
- How often does inventory get replenished? For all products, or only best sellers?
- Should product information be “synced” with anywhere else, like Google Ads or Amazon?



Payment processing

- Do you accept payments now?
 - Do you have a merchant account / where?
- Do you need to change payment amount after taking an order?
- Do you want to process payment right away, or when an order ships?
- Do you need or want to allow customers to save payment methods for future use?
- Do you need or want recurring billing or installment payments?



Customer relationships

How does your client communicate with customers?
Do customers have any “role” on the site other than purchasing?

- Does your product require you to communicate with customers before the order is final?
- Do you wholesale products for discounted prices?
- Should customers have any other benefits or “perks” on the site?



Order fulfillment

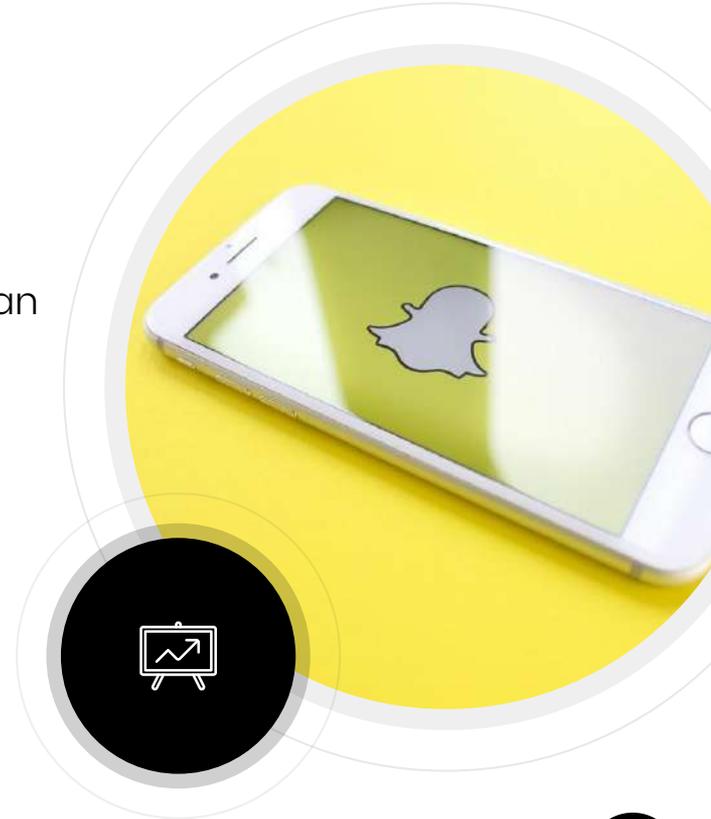
- Are you shipping anything already? What carrier do you use for this?
- Where are the closest USPS, FedEx, and UPS drop points to you or your store?
- Do you ship items internationally?
- What's the average size and weight of packages you'll send?
- What are your profit margins per order or average mark-up per item? (see if free shipping is feasible)



Marketing & growth

Another area clients may not be ready for, but you can ask some leading questions to build this into the project, or offer it as an upsell:

- Do you use email marketing? What service?
- How do customers learn about you? Do you advertise right now?
- Do you use social media already?





**“ How are you going
to drive traffic to
your store?”**

Key components

What am I selling?

What's the product and what is the unique value proposition?

How do we sell to them?

What sales channels do we use to sell to our target customers?

Who do I sell to?

Who is my target customer?
What do I know about them?

How do I promote my store?

How do I make my target customer aware of the product?



Site analytics

Clients may not think about this yet, especially if coming from a retail world.

- Educate them on how analytics provides crucial business intelligence
- Get them at least set up with basic Google Analytics tracking + eCommerce tracking
- For more advanced usage, Mixpanel is a good option



Delivering value at launch





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After launch

Where can you deliver value following the site launch or on an ongoing basis?

Site maintenance

What does “maintenance” mean with respect to eCommerce sites?

- Plugin and theme updates, especially for compatibility checks
- Consistent performance and checkout testing
- Backups and security checks





Maintenance toolkit

Some of my preferred tools:

- Robot Ninja: Automated WooCommerce checkout testing
- VaultPress: Additional layer of backups (can even do “real time” backups instead of daily)
- GTMetrix: For initial site performance overview
- Pingdom: Site response times and downtime
- New Relic: When you get to advanced site performance + benchmark testing

Site analytics

For a media site, this likely means things like bounce rate, time on page, and more.

For an eCommerce store, you'll want to track these items, but also look at funnels and purchase analytics:

- Browsing behavior
- Checkout funnel
- Conversion rate
- Cart abandonment rate
- Average order value
- Average order profit





Analytics toolkit

Some of my preferred tools:

- Google Analytics: free plugin or Google Analytics Pro plugin (automatic funnel tracking);
- Mixpanel: Great for tracking user journey in more detail + subscription sites
- Core reports: platforms have core reporting for purchase behavior that can be useful
- Cost of Goods: WC extension to track profit
- Jilt: track abandonment, abandonment rate, abandoned revenue

Marketing

One of the biggest areas you can impact is revenue: helping your clients grow their business.

- Email marketing
- SEO and content
- Advertising
- Social media + brand awareness





Marketing toolkit

- Jilt: automated lifecycle emails (e.g., abandonment recovery, post-purchase, winback emails)
- Postmark: SMTP service to improve deliverability for transactional emails
- MailChimp: Great for content emails / newsletters
- Yoast SEO: Product SEO, social sharing + WooCommerce add-on
- Google Product Feed: WC extension, helps with AdWords setup
- Buffer: Scheduling social media posts

Integrations & automation

Deep knowledge of tools and analysis of automation areas delivers value here.

- Integrations with other services like CRM systems, email, or others
- Using general tools like Zapier to connect or automate all the things
- Custom automations geared towards streamlining store management





Automations toolkit

- Zapier: Automate and connect tons of services to WooCommerce
- WC Customer / Order CSV Export: automated exports for dropshipping, customer list, & more
- WooCommerce services: Live rates and label printing
- WC Amazon FBA: extension to sync orders with Fulfilled by Amazon
- Shipwire: Automate order fulfillment + shipping



Thanks!

Any questions?

You can find me at

- @Beka_Rice
- SkyVerge.com
- Jilt.com

Resources

Tools

- [FacetWP](#)
- [Robot Ninja](#)
- [VaultPress](#)
- [GTMetrix](#)
- [Pingdom](#)
- [New Relic](#)
- [Google Analytics](#)
 - [Free](#) or [Pro](#) plugins
- [Mixpanel](#)
- [WC Cost of Goods](#)
- [Jilt](#)
- [Postmark \(plugin\)](#)
- [WC Google Product Feed](#)
- [Buffer](#)
- [WC Customer / Order CSV Export](#)
- [WC Amazon FBA](#)

Learning

- SkyVerge: [WooCommerce PCI Compliance](#)
- Sell with WP: [Value metrics for small stores](#)
- Sell with WP: [8 ways to increase average order value](#)
- WooCommerce (still me): [Understanding automation for eCommerce stores](#)
- MaRS Discovery District: [Go-to-market strategy](#)

Hosting

- [Liquid Web](#)
- [Kinsta](#)
- [Pantheon](#)
- [SiteGround](#)
- [Pressidium](#)



Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- Photographs by [Unsplash](#)

