

commercetools vs. Shopify

Enterprise commerce decision guide

Selecting the right commerce technology is a strategic decision that shapes your company's growth today and into the future. Are you evaluating options? Take a closer look at the key differences between **commercetools** and **Shopify**.



3 key advantages commercetools has over Shopify

Discover why fast-growing brands and enterprise businesses often outgrow Shopify — and how commercetools delivers the versatility and innovation enterprises need to stay ahead.

#1 Flexibility



Shopify is built for small and medium-sized retail and D2C brands, but offers limited customization for enterprise and B2B needs — all within a closed, restrictive ecosystem.

commercetools delivers true flexibility with an open, tech-agnostic architecture, ready to support complex use cases across any industry or business model.

#2 Scalability



Shopify struggles with scalability for enterprise businesses due to its legacy architecture, limited cloud infrastructure and fragmented integrations.

commercetools is built cloud-agnostic with a microservices architecture, delivering high availability, robust SLAs and seamless B2B/B2C integration — all on one platform.

#3 Business value











Shopify offers a fast start, but its rigid structure, limited scalability and high hidden costs can restrict innovation and stall enterprise growth over time.

commercetools drives growth with a unified platform that ensures the best pay-off for your business. The result: Rapid innovation and lower total cost of ownership (TCO) at enterprise scale.

The commercetools benefits at a glance



- ✓ Unlimited extensibility and customization.
- ✓ Scalability to grow across brands, markets and manage customer surges.
- ✓ Open, tech-agnostic ecosystem with no vendor lock-in.
- ✓ Unified commerce across digital and in-store experiences.
- ✓ Accelerated time-to-market and operational efficiency.
- ✓ Lower total cost of ownership with long-term flexibility.

Detailed side-by-side analysis

		
Use case breadth	 commercetools Composable Commerce has a flexible data model that caters to a wide range of commerce use cases.	 Shopify is best suited for retail and D2C brands. The company offers limited B2B and B2B2X functionality and a rigid approach to customization.
Tech-agnostic	 commercetools provides tech-agnostic developer tooling with flexible and extensible options to support complex use cases.	 Shopify relies on a proprietary scripting language (Liquid) and specialized developer skills (Ruby on Rails).
Extensibility	 commercetools has a better ability to continuously expand from out-of-the-box features to build on top of the platform and tailor functionalities. Being tech-agnostic and offering multiple types of extensibility (data model, APIs, events/subscriptions and Merchant Center), commercetools is exceptionally flexible.	 Shopify's "closed box" approach and limited customization options, like Shopify Scripts, force businesses into predefined workflows, hindering those with unique needs or complex processes, especially beyond checkout and for advanced promotion management.



No vendor lock-in	 No vendor lock-in.	 There is high vendor lock-in as Shopify is the center of its ecosystem. For example, as Shopify Payments and Shop Pay adoption grows, so does Shopify's restrictive ecosystem, which limits merchant control and penalizes those who opt out.
Cloud-agnostic infrastructure and multi-cloud	 commercetools operates across leading cloud providers like Google Cloud and AWS, offering accompanying flexibility and scalability. The cloud-native architecture supports additional security aspects.	 Despite leveraging Google Cloud, Shopify's infrastructure remains rooted in its original monolithic design, limiting its cloud-native capabilities.
Maintainability	 commercetools APIs (both REST and GraphQL) are modular and versionless, meaning they are designed to evolve. This allows both API types to coexist and remain compatible with the platform's core functionality.	 Shopify's versioned APIs, including recent REST API deprecations in favor of GraphQL, can cause significant integration challenges for customers due to occasional breaking changes.
Reliability and resilience	 commercetools' microservices architecture and cloud-native design prioritize reliability and resilience, ensuring high availability and performance. SLAs offer an absolute minimum of 99.9% uptime.	 Major issues with downtime.

Unified commerce	 <p>commercetools' unified catalog, flexible store and channel management, as well as composable architecture, enable seamless B2B and B2C operations from a single platform, supporting complex omnichannel scenarios with real-time data exchange and a robust InStore solution.</p>	 <p>While Shopify supports both B2B and B2C operations, its limited B2B functionality often requires separate stores. Its POS system struggles with data synchronization between online and physical locations, hindering unified commerce.</p>
Fast time to market/ value	 <p>commercetools accelerates time-to-market by offering pre-composed, opinionated solutions for quick launches. It also provides the flexibility of composable commerce and streamlined frontend development.</p>	 <p>Projects can be created within weeks due to limited customization options and a predefined, linear deployment path. This is a poor experience for enterprises that are complex and require true customizability.</p>
Lower TCO	 <p>commercetools offers the lowest total cost of ownership (TCO) through a flexible, modular pricing model, faster implementations and the avoidance of specialized developer requirements.</p>	 <p>Shopify's enterprise pricing model, which includes a fixed subscription and revenue share, can lead to higher costs, especially for online orders. Complex customizations can further inflate the total cost of ownership.</p>
Industry leadership	 <p>commercetools is recognized as a Leader in Gartner's 2024 Magic Quadrant for the fifth consecutive year, having progressed even further in the completeness of vision and ability to execute on it.</p>	 <p>Recognized as a Leader in Gartner's 2024 Magic Quadrant. It has, however, been slipping in the completeness of vision, as well as its ability to execute on it.</p>

Forward-thinking businesses that made the switch



Purple began its eCommerce journey on Shopify for its out-of-the-box simplicity. However, as demand surged, Shopify couldn't scale with the company's rapid growth. Less than two years in, Purple moved to a composable commerce approach with commercetools, gaining the scalability and flexibility needed for long-term success.



Wild Fork Foods transitioned from Shopify to commercetools to address challenges in managing variable-weight products. By leveraging commercetools' composable architecture, they implemented dynamic pricing and integrated inventory systems, effectively minimizing revenue loss and operational inefficiencies. This move not only enhanced internal processes but also improved the customer experience, leading to a 58% increase in daily orders upon launching their Canadian site.

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About commercetools

commercetools is the leading composable commerce platform, allowing companies to dynamically tailor and scale shopping experiences across markets. We equip some of the world's largest businesses with tools to future-proof digital offerings, reduce risks and costs, and build outstanding experiences that drive revenue growth. Headquartered in Munich, commercetools has led a global renaissance in digital commerce by combining cloud-native, technology-agnostic, independent components into a unique system that addresses specific business needs. We empower brands – including Audi, Danone, Eurorail, NBCUniversal, Sephora and Volkswagen Group – to stay ahead of changing consumer and buyer behavior.

