

FFWTM

A Guide to Drupal eCommerce



When it comes to eCommerce for Drupal, there is no single, one-size-fits-all solution. Nor should there be. While the array of eCommerce options that work with a Drupal site can seem overwhelming, in truth there are options for organizations of any size, on any budget.

This whitepaper will discuss the value of Drupal as a platform that hooks into an eCommerce solution, will identify some of the different eCommerce solutions available to organizations that use Drupal sites, and will share information about how Drupal and eCommerce tools can integrate seamlessly into a larger stack of tools and services.



FFWTM

About Us

FFW is a digital agency focused on creating digital experience platforms that ensure our clients' success, always moving forward at the speed of digital innovation.

For over 15 years, the world's largest brands have relied on us to build accessible, creative, and user-friendly digital solutions that deliver results. We are more than 420 people across 11 countries, with a track record of over 1,000 digital solutions delivered since 2000.

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Choosing Drupal for eCommerce

One of Drupal's main strengths is how customizable it is, and how well it works with a variety of tools and systems. A good eCommerce solution goes far beyond just a CMS talking to an eCommerce software: it can share information with a CRM such as Salesforce, can integrate with marketing tools, and can offer a variety of payment processing options.

For example, a small nonprofit's Drupal eCommerce ecosystem might look like the following:

- Drupal CMS running the website
- Integration with Shopify for memberships and small purchases
- Square payment system
- Integration with CRM
- Optimizely integration for A/B testing
- An atomic design library



With a solution like what's listed above, that nonprofit could share information between Drupal, its eCommerce shop, and its CRM, updating membership transactions and purchases in real-time. Marketing tool integrations like Optimizely would allow the nonprofit's small team to leverage the platform well, and an atomic design library integrated with both the site and the shop would ensure that everything looks visually cohesive and is easier to maintain.

For a larger organization running a multi-million dollar online shop, a solution like Magento might be a better fit, with Drupal sharing information between the commerce system, a CRM like Salesforce, a marketing automation system like Marketo, and marketing and analytics tools like Hotjar, which provide heat maps of user behaviors across the site.

Ultimately, there are a number of eCommerce options available. With Drupal, organizations have the opportunity to customize their eCommerce ecosystems from a holistic standpoint and build systems that reduce costs, scale with their business, and don't need highly technical people to manage on a daily basis. Marketers and content editors can update content and manage inventory, freeing up technical staff for when they're truly needed.

An overview of eCommerce solutions for Drupal

Using a Drupal 8 site as a centerpiece allows an organization to combine a number of different services to create an eCommerce ecosystem that's ideal for its needs. With Drupal 8, different systems can talk to each other and send information back and forth as users view items, interact with their shopping cart, make purchases, check order statuses, and more.

Drupal's flexibility means that a holistic ecosystem is available to organizations regardless of their size. While the level of integrations may vary depending on the scale of eCommerce operations, the variety of different offerings available to Drupal users means that a solution is within reach for any budget.

Smaller and mid-market solutions

One of the solutions that the FFW team has used for smaller and mid-market offerings is Shopify, a commerce-as-a-service provider. Its low subscription and use charges, paired with its easy templating, means that it's an ideal fit for organizations with smaller eCommerce operations.

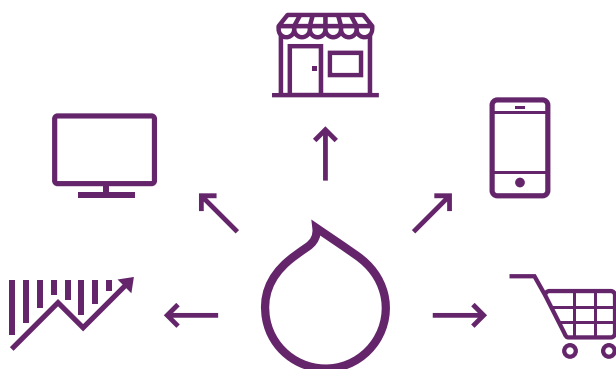
Shopify allows for excellent segmentation, and integrates with numerous tools. Additionally, Shopify's liquid templating means that making sure the eCommerce shop looks and feels like the wider organizational site is relatively simple.

Large and enterprise solutions

There are a variety of solutions for large-scale eCommerce sites. Recently, Acquia partnered with Magento to create a system that pairs content personalization with eCommerce. This has been a very popular solution for larger Drupal sites, and one which has gained a lot of traction.

However, Magento is not the only eCommerce offering for large Drupal sites. Drupal Commerce is another system that offers the kind of flexibility that organizations can benefit from. Both Drupal Commerce and Magento are good choices for large-scale eCommerce shops that bring in hundreds-of-thousands or even low-millions of dollars in revenue each year.

For truly massive shops, such as those that bring in \$100 million or more, several behemoth solutions exist, including Amazon. However, for the vast majority of organizations looking to integrate eCommerce capabilities on their Drupal sites, such a massive software will not be necessary.



Building a holistic eCommerce ecosystem

While eCommerce might be growing in popularity, few organizations have opted for truly holistic ecosystems. This means they're missing out: Drupal's flexibility and ease of integration make it an ideal hub for a variety of different tools that allow organizations to get the very most out of their eCommerce offerings.

Integrating tools allows for a platform to function at a level greater than the sum of its parts. A fully integrated eCommerce ecosystem can offer visitors beautiful, personalized experiences that set the standard for how a digital experience platform ought to perform.

Some of the tool integrations that FFW generally recommends or provides for our clients include:

- CRM
- Optimization solutions, including heat-mapping, A/B testing, or SEO tools.
- A 'headless' content repository that delivers your site content to any number of portals or apps.
- Analytics solutions.
- Marketing platforms, including a marketing automation tool.

Personalizing the shopping experience

With Drupal, it's possible to build an eCommerce experience that is personalized, beautiful, and easy to optimize. This is done by building an atomic design library, which is a structured system of design elements that maintains consistency across a digital platform's various touch points. **(To learn more about Atomic Design, look for our whitepaper at [FFWAgency.com/resources](https://ffwagency.com/resources))**

Using an atomic design library means that a site is built of branded components that can be laid out in numerous, flexible ways using a drag-and-drop editor. Marketers can try different layouts, move calls to action around, and play with different ways of presenting content to different user types.

Additionally, integration with optimization and measurement tools (such as Google Optimize or Hotjar) allows marketers to see which version of a page performs better, and to map what points of a page users are looking at and clicking on. With this information, marketers can easily update forms, drag-and-drop content, or address conversion issues with minimal assistance from technical staff.





Success story: LUSH

For an example of a holistic approach to eCommerce, look no further than LUSH, a vegetarian and vegan beauty and cosmetics company based out of England. FFW recently worked with LUSH to create the largest eCommerce platform built on top of Drupal Commerce. The new platform addresses several problems that LUSH was having with site performance, scaling, and flexibility.

LUSH's primary concern was to have a site that would be able to handle the heavy traffic loads that come with its large annual sale. And, because LUSH is a global company, it needed the ability to spin up local country shops so that each country could make adjustments and translations to its content.

The platform was broken down into several specific problems:

1. LUSH needed consistent data flow and business intelligence reporting throughout all instances.

To solve this problem, a high-availability queue system was implemented for synchronization of orders and data between systems, making it easy for users to file and track transactions across devices. Additionally, FFW planned and built a cloud-based digital experience platform to allow users to easily and securely make purchases and payments, across web and mobile devices.

2. The site should be able to serve up to 100 different markets, which would operate independently from each other.

To facilitate this, FFW expanded LUSH's Mobile API to have multilingual functionality; to support multiple markets' shipping, currencies, and transactions; and to be in compliance with each market's laws and regulations. Additionally, measures were taken so that traffic surges in one part of the world would not affect the site elsewhere.

3. The site needed to be able to handle large surges of traffic.

A Cloudflare caching layer was implemented to reduce demands on the servers, which helped handle users' frequent page refreshing for price changes during the sale.

Once the new eCommerce ecosystem was implemented, LUSH's website sessions increased by 75%, digital orders increased by a whopping 64%, and shopping cart abandonment decreased by 16%.

How to get started with an eCommerce ecosystem

As evidenced by LUSH, organizations with holistic eCommerce ecosystems have a clear advantage over the competition. The ability to use data to intelligently make improvements to your eCommerce stack is critical to running a successful online shop, and it all begins with identifying the correct foundation.

Choosing the right eCommerce solution and tools for your organization can seem like a daunting task. There are numerous different options, and it can be difficult to know what you need in your stack.

Fortunately, FFW has extensive expertise in helping organizations understand their needs and identify which tools they need. To get help choosing the right eCommerce platform and marketing tools for your site, or to learn more about designing a holistic eCommerce solution, contact us. Our digital experts are here to help you make the most of your digital experience platform.

