Online Store Playbook

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Online Store Playbook | #StartSMART

Introduction

We are blessed to live in the internet age where starting a business is literally just a few clicks away. Sites like Shopify, Amazon, and Etsy make is possible for you to list your product for sale and get it seen by thousands of people. #WhooHooo

Before you start counting your cash, I need to tell you that being successful in launching an online business is not as simple as creating a site and listing your product and sitting back waiting for the ka-ching sound. #WhatchuTalkinBoutWillis

Twenty years ago when there were only a few places to shop online and before digital marketing became a thing, you could probably build it and they would come - but not today. There are over 8 million online stores in the world and over 2 million of these are in the US alone. For you this means that you'll have competition for shopper's eyeballs and wallets. You can do it, but you've got to be smart about it. You've got to #StartSMART!

First Things First

Yes it's true that Shopify is the bomb.com of online store platforms providing you everything but the kitchen sink for $29 a month. But most likely your real goal is not to launch an online store, it's to launch a sustainable business. To do that the fundamentals of a sound business need to be in place. Shopify is just a tool that will allow you to connect with customers and facilitate a sales transaction. It will not tell you what to sell, how much to charge for it, or which customers you should target. #ThatsAllYouBoo

The four P's of any business are People, Product, Price, and Promotion. All four of these elements must be sound for your business to have a chance at success.

Before you create your Shopify account, ask yourself the following questions:

- **People.** Who is your target customer is? Age, Sex, Income, Type of Job. What do they do in their spare time? Do they live in the city, suburbs, or country? Where do they shop? What social media platforms do your customers use? Where do they shop online? *Note: Your target customers cannot be everybody.*

- **Price.** What price should you charge for your products? Will you sell to other businesses (wholesale) or just direct to customers? Have you included all your overhead expenses? Will you have enough profit to pay yourself and invest in your business? Are your prices expensive than your competition?

- **Promotion.** How will you let customers know about your store? Can you target them with paid ads? Will you use influencers? If so, which ones? What keywords should you use? Should you use video?

- **Product.** How does your product compare to similar products of your competitors? If your product is similar to others on the market, how will you distinguish it to customers? If you're using a third-party to produce your product, do you have a backup source?

The Tech Stack

Rewards Program
Social Media Mktg.
Personalization
Channel Management
Fulfillment
Marketing & Social Media
Store Platform/Marketplace

Just like a house is made up of many different systems such as structural, electrical, and plumbing - online retail businesses typically use many 'systems' which are technologies (apps) to manage each of the activities needed to run the business.

This group of technologies is called a Tech Stack.

The number and type of apps you use will depend on your business strategy and they will likely change over time.

Getting Started

Step 1 > Choose a name for your store and buy a domain

Before you settle on a name you need to check if you can buy a suitable domain name and if the social profiles are available. You may have to get creative here and use names that are similar to your desired name. Below is an example:

Business/Brand Name = Happy+Kind Life
Domain Name = LiveHappyKindLife.com
IG = @HappyKindLiving

You can purchase your domain right through Shopify or you can purchase it from a third-party like GoDaddy. I used to recommend using a third-party like GoDaddy to prevent any issues should you decide to change platforms, but I don't think you'll have to worry about that with Shopify. Also, Shopify has an automated domain setup tool for domains purchased thru GoDaddy.

Step 2 > Setup your Shopify account

Option #1
The first step is to get a Shopify account and you have two options. If you're going to build it yourself, you can go to shopify.com and sign-up for the 14-day free trial which will give you two weeks to build the store before you must start paying for it.

Shopify has different levels of accounts. I suggest going with $29 per month plan to begin with. You can always upgrade if you need additional features.

Option #2
As a Shopify Partner, I can offer you another option for getting started if you prefer to work with me to setup your store. I can create a development store which gives you more time to create the store before you start incurring fees. Development stores are created on my partner account and when they are ready to launch, I transfer ownership to you, and you begin paying your fees at that time.

NOTE: As a partner, Shopify pays me 20% of your monthly fees for as long as your store is open. If you're interested in this option email me to check my availability and get a fee estimate. 🙂

**Step 3 > Enter your settings** | SETTINGS
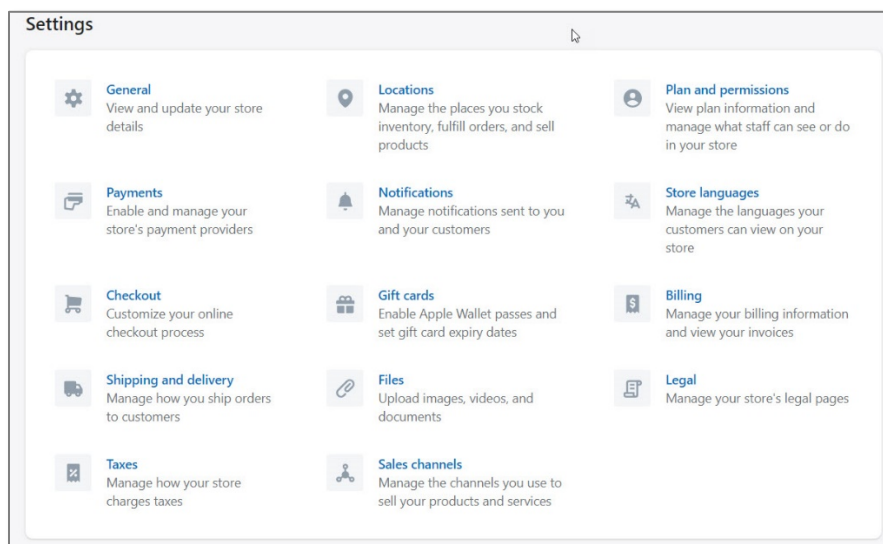
To setup your store you'll need to enter your information into the various store settings. Shopify may default some of these settings, but you want to review and make changes where needed. Below are the key settings you need to work through:

- General > Store Details & Address
- Payments > Setup Shopify Payments & enable other methods as desired
- Checkout > Review/setup all these sections
- Shipping and Delivery > Setup destination countries, enable Local pickup/delivery, and setup Shopify Shipping which allows you to buy discounted shipping labels from USPS and UPS, and DHL for international shipments.
- Taxes > Review settings
- Legal > Here is where you can create your privacy, terms of service, shipping policy, and refund policy pages. Many customers look for these to know if your business is legit.

Step 4 > Create your product listings | PRODUCTS > ADD PRODUCT
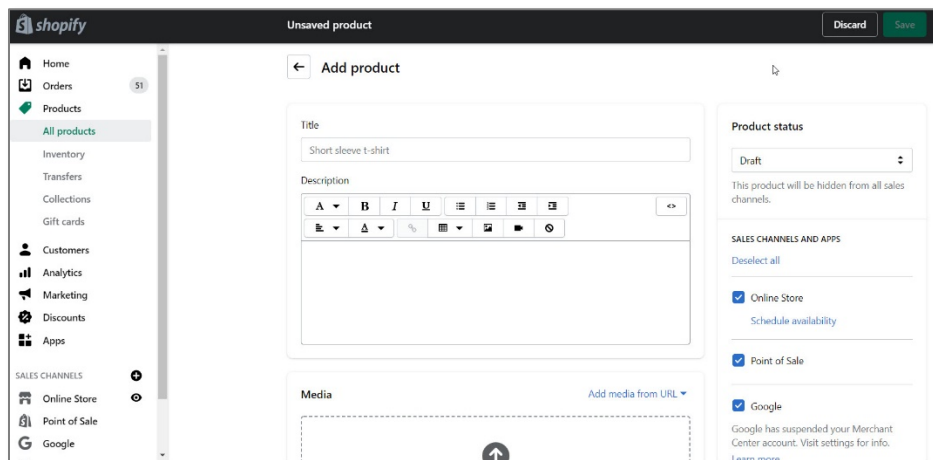
To help you visualize the design of your store you'll need to have some products listed so you can see how they will look. You can create or upload all your products now or just a few of them.

Step 5 > Create your product listings | PRODUCTS > ADD PRODUCT

To help you visualize the design of your store you'll need to have some products listed so you can see how they will look. You can create or upload all your products now or just a few of them. Product listings are a combination of descriptions + specifications (weigh, color, etc.) + photos.

In addition to your logo and branding, the quality of the product photos will have a major impact on how your site looks. They MUST be great – no other option. You can do them yourself with a $20 ring-light from Amazon and a new iPhone. Products on white backgrounds are the standard but you'll also need lifestyle images.

The photos below were taken on my iPhone11.

White Background	Lifestyle

Step 6 > Create your collections | PRODUCTS > COLLECTIONS

Collections allow you to group products together by categories. After you create your product listings you can organize these listings into collections and create customized collections pages for each one.

## Step 7 > Choose your theme | ONLINE STORE > THEMES

Just like WordPress, Shopify uses themes to control the look and feel of the store. There are nine free themes that you can choose from and I suggest using one of those to get started unless you have some specific things that are not included in any of them. Shopify also has a theme store where you can buy themes if the free ones don't work for you.

Step 8 > Customize your store | THEMES > CUSTOMIZE

Now it's time for the fun part – designing your store! The customize section shows all the options you have to change colors, add your photos, videos, logos, text, and other content.
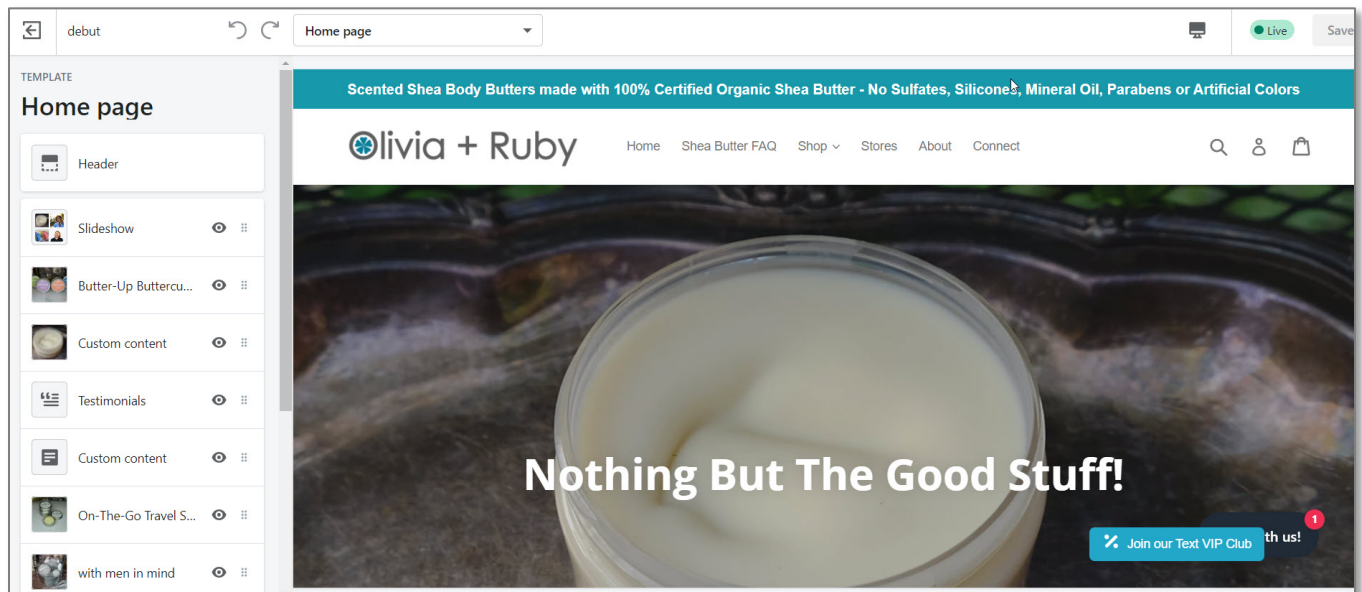
Step 9 > Add functionality with apps | APPS > VISIT SHOPIFY APP STORE

Now you can build-out your tech stack and add functionality useful for your online business. Below are some of the most commonly used apps:

- Klayvio – email marketing app
- SMS Bump – text messaging app
- Shopify Ping (free) – mobile chat app
- Digital Downloads (free) – allows you to sell digital content
- Product Reviews (free)

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or if you would like to work with me on creating your store, please email me at gigmemphis@gmail.com.

May your business grow and be a blessing to you and others!

Tonya