



Planning your first online store



Hi, I'm
Meg



I create beautiful, user-friendly and conversion-focused websites for small businesses. This helps them grow stronger, with confidence.

I built my first Shopify store in 2015 - for a sports retailer selling MTB and road bikes. This store went on to appear on the first page of Google (alongside big and established retailers) due to the search engine optimisation work I did - resulting in significant organic sales for the business.

I loved eCommerce from that moment...

I've since helped many product-based businesses design their ecommerce websites.

One of my favourite clients is Maven. Their shop was one of the top-performing new websites on Shopify in its first few weeks.

They've since gone from strength to strength and are an inspiration for all start-ups.

In this guide, you'll discover exactly what you need when planning an online shop for your business.

It's tough out there and you need to plan for success from the get go.



1. Visual Brand Identity

A professional brand identity helps you communicate the value of your business and product range. It also helps you build trust and connection with your target customers.

What branding assets you need for your online store design:

- High resolution logo in various formats, including a light and dark version and one's with transparent backgrounds.

- Brand Style Guide. Or, at the very least, names of your brand fonts/web fonts and your brand's colour palette.

2. Imagery

- High resolution styled and/or lifestyle images of your products to use on the homepage, as banners and on social media.

- High-quality images of your individual products - deep etched on a light background or styled (great for high-end/luxury/beauty/skincare brands).





Photography is an investment that will help you get more sales

If you don't have high-quality, beautiful imagery on your online store, it's unlikely you'll get many sales. Imagery builds trust and sells your products. It is an important investment you need to factor in as part of your planning/budgeting process.

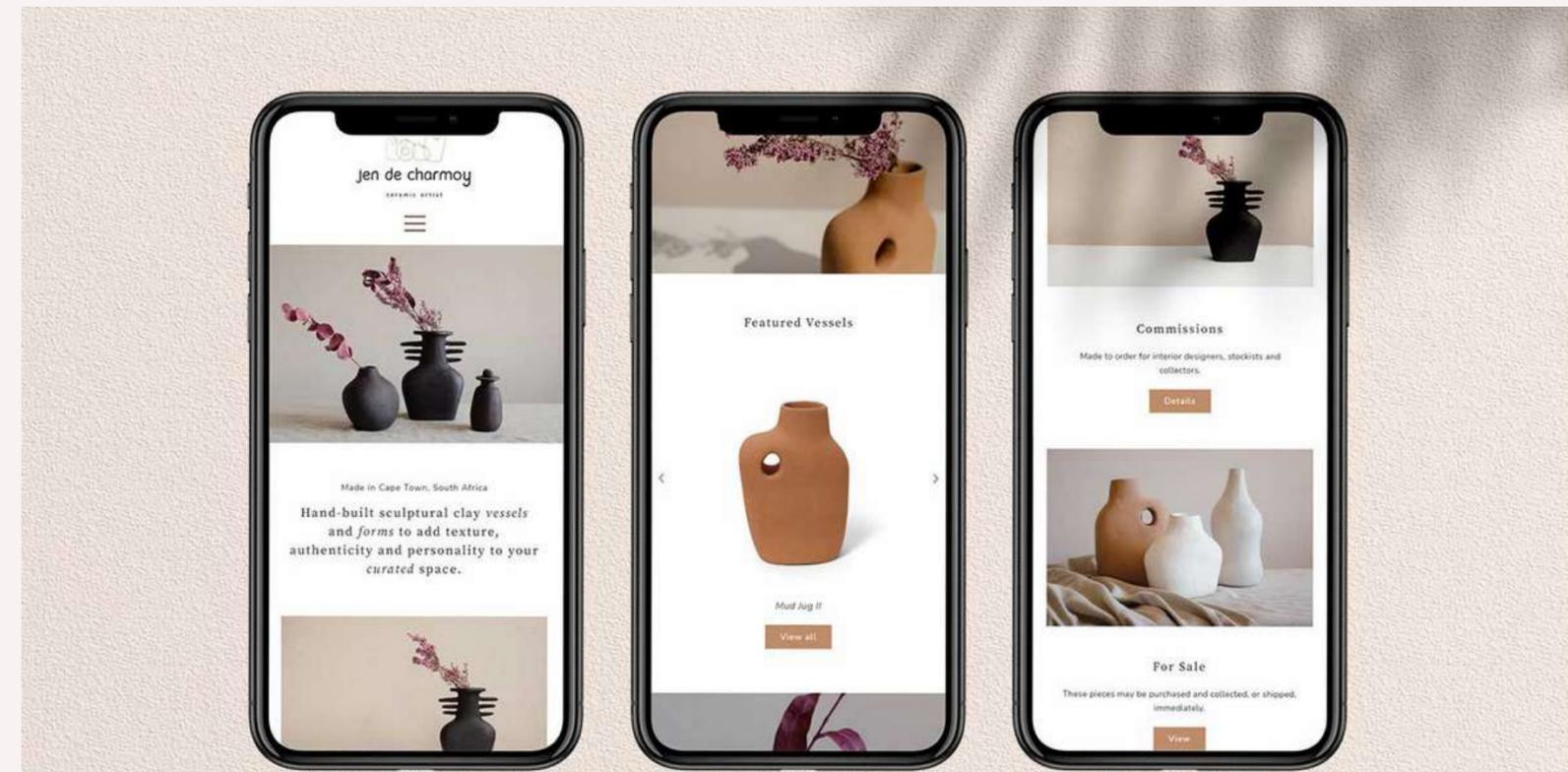


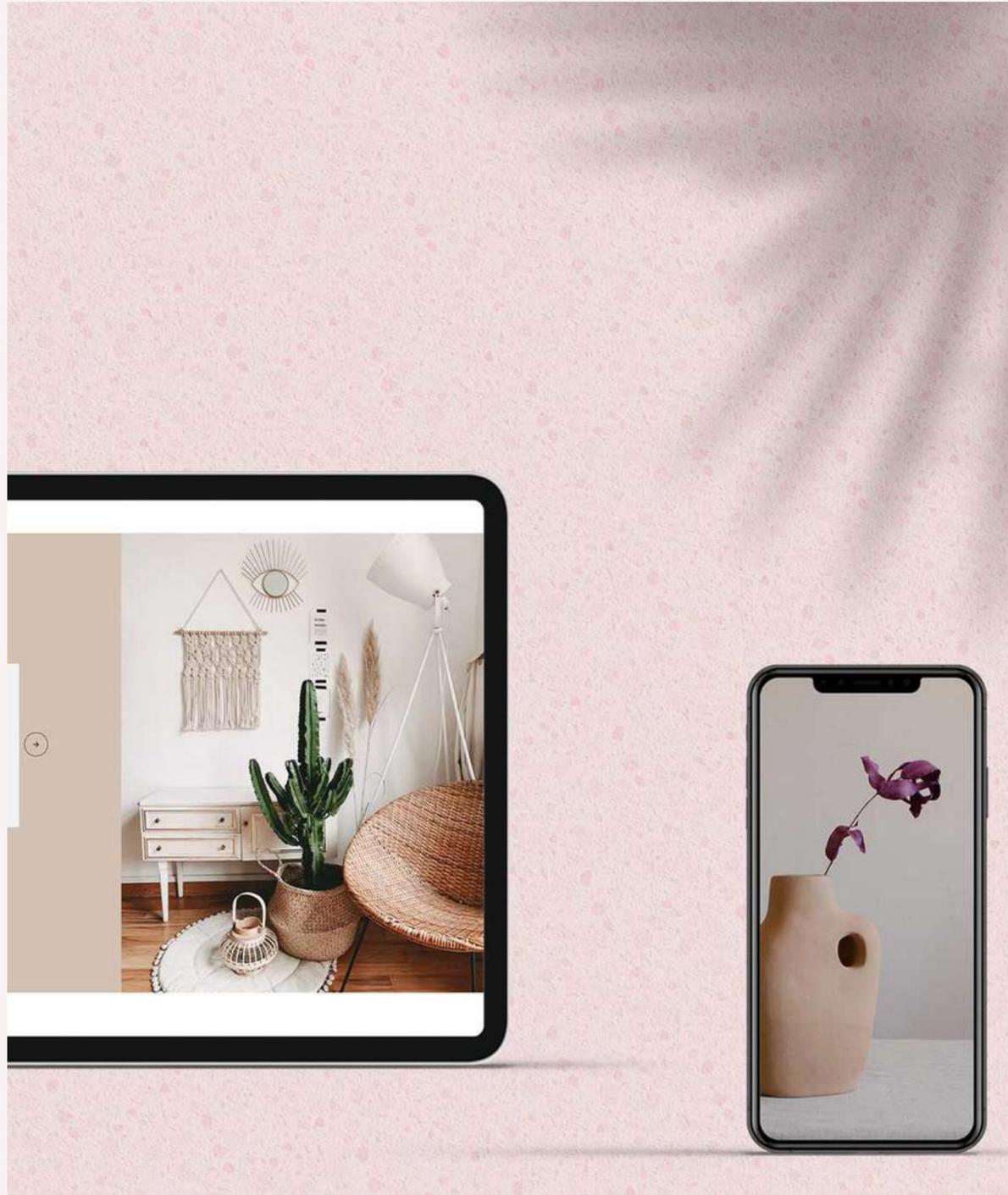
3. Categories / Collections

Think about how you will group your products in a way that makes sense to the people who visit your website.

Categorise your products according to what makes most sense for your customer (ie - what terms and groupings are familiar to them). Do your research to learn what other similar stores do (including physical stores).

This helps you to create an intuitive and easy online shopping experience, which is an important part of conversion rate optimisation.





4. Product Data

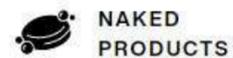
You'll need to gather your product information, such as:

- Product price.
- Product options (different size, style or colour options).
- Product description. This should include technical details such as size specifications, materials, washing instructions, as well as a captivating product write-up to encourage sales.

5. Your Brand Highlights

These are 4 - 6 captivating features / benefits / highlights related to your brand, products, mission, values, story, incentives or processes that you want people to know about.

Here's Lush's highlights:



NAKED
PRODUCTS



FIGHTING
ANIMAL TESTING



FRESH
COSMETICS



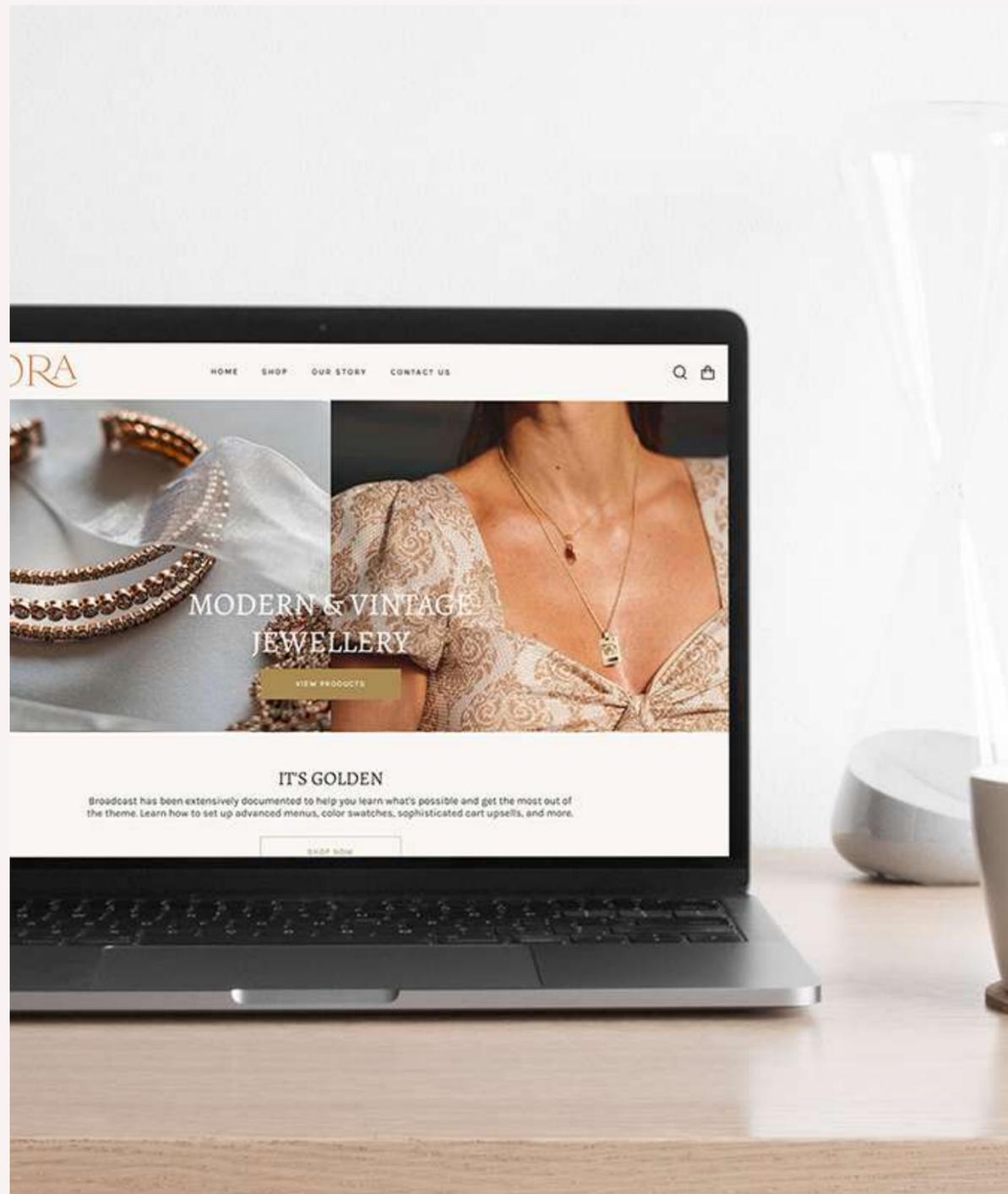
100%
VEGETARIAN



ETHICAL
BUYING



HANDMADE
WITH LOVE



6. Copy for pages

With guidance from your web designer or copywriter, you'll need to gather copy for all of your website's content pages:

- Homepage (a designer will often create a simple mockup using placeholder copy first. You can then easily see what copy needs to be written for which section).
- Other important content pages your eCommerce website needs include your about page, contact page and FAQs page.



7. Shipping Rates

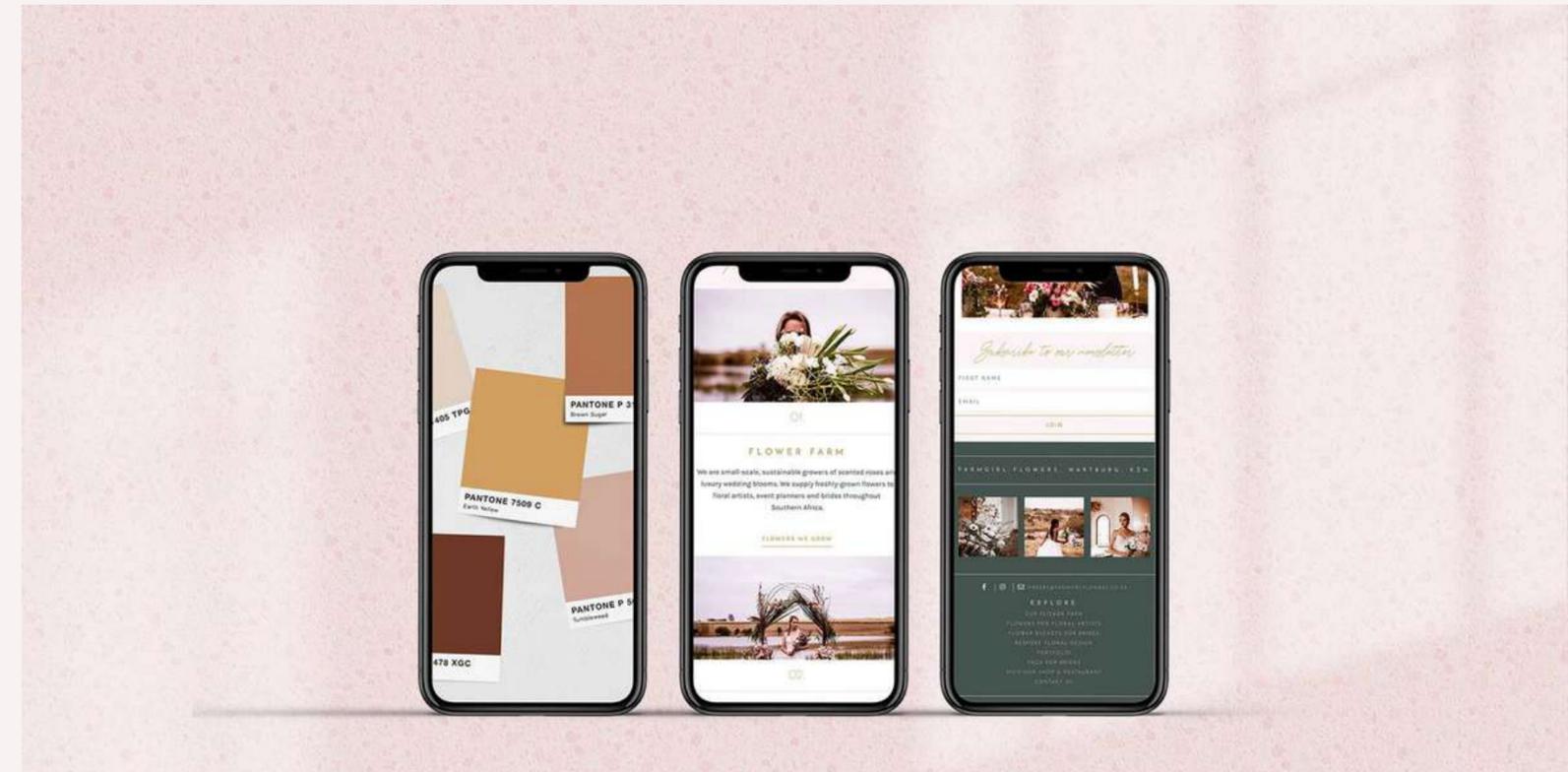
For those businesses new to eCommerce, getting shipping rates right will be trial and error. Always try to offer the lowest rates without hurting your profit margins. Shop around for the best courier rates and service.



8. Online Payments

Your store will need to be connected to payment gateways in order to process online credit card, debit card and virtual wallet payments. There are lots of options to choose from depending on which country you operate in and which website platform you use. All have different fee structures - so do your research first.

Pay by installment - these are becoming popular with merchants and online shoppers. They allow customers to pay off purchases over a number of months. The great thing is that you get the full payment upfront; the payment processor takes on all consumer credit risk.



9. Store Policies

Be transparent about your store policies. Make them easy to find by including them on your product page and in your website's footer. Policies you need:

- **Shipping Policy** - Include information such as shipping options, locations you ship to, delivery timeframes and shipping rates.
- **Returns & Refunds Policy** - Clearly state your terms, conditions and processes for returns and refunds.
- **Payment Policy** - Include details about the various payment options your store offers, as well as the security in place to protect customer data.



10. Gather Inspiration

Gather a list of ecommerce websites you love and make a note of what you like about them. Pay attention to:

- **Colours** - Do you like the bold and modern palette? Refined and soft? Bright and happy? Minimal?
- **Layout** - Notice what layouts/sections/features you like.
- **Typography** - Observe what fonts you like and which one's you don't.

Commerce Cream is a wonderful place to find inspiration.

Connect with me



Connect with me on Instagram for more ecommerce tips and guides.

 [@nutmeg_design](https://www.instagram.com/nutmeg_design)