# Dropshipping Checklist: 24 Steps to Start

Understand the work, costs, and risks before you launch.

Still deciding whether dropshipping is right for you? Start with the early steps before paying for a platform, supplier, or tool. If dropshipping still makes sense for you, continue in order and tick off each step as you go.

PHASE 1

## Plan your store

### ☐ 1. Learning the basics

Before you build anything, learn how dropshipping works and set realistic expectations.

- How Much Does It Cost to Start Dropshipping?
- Pros and Cons of Dropshipping: Is It Still Good?
- What Is Dropshipping? How It Works & How to Start
- Dropshipping Mindset: 6 Things to Know Before You Start

### ☐ 2. Legal, tax, and financial risks

Understand the legal, tax, and financial responsibilities before you spend money or start selling.

- Is Dropshipping Legal? Rules, Risks & Store Setup
- Do You Need a Business License to Sell on Shopify?
- Dropshipping Taxes: Everything You Need to Know as Beginner
- Product Liability in Dropshipping: What You're Responsible For

### ☐ 3. Where are you going to sell?

Choose where you want to sell before you build your store. Compare ecommerce platforms with marketplaces and website-free options to find the route that fits you best.

- Can You Start Dropshipping Without a Website?
- Facebook Marketplace Dropshipping: How to Start
- The 5 Best Ecommerce Platforms for Dropshipping
- 17 Best Platforms to Sell Products Online (Free & Paid)

### ☐ 4. What kind of store are you going to open?

Now that you know where you're going to sell, let's figure out what kind of online store you're going to open. Prefer to explore products before choosing a store type? Complete Step 5 first, then return here.

- How to Start an Online Niche Store (7 Tips)
- How to Start a General Online Store (8 Tips)
- How to Start an Online One-Product Store (Guide)
- 25 Best Dropshipping Niches for Your Store (Ideas)

## 5. Product research

Now research products that fit your store type and target market. Stay flexible: a strong product opportunity may lead you to adjust your niche.

- 67 Best Dropshipping Products to Sell in Your Store
- How to Choose a Dropshipping Product + Free Checker
- The Best Fit: Low, Medium, or High-Ticket Dropshipping?
- The 17 Best Winning Dropshipping Product Research Tools
- 5 Easy Ways to Find Any Dropshipping Store's Sales Volume
- How to Find Winning Dropshipping Products (14 Research Methods)

## 6. Target audience research

It's important to know who your target audience is going to be. For example, where is your target audience located? If you know this, it will be easier to pick suppliers later on.

- 20 Best Countries for Dropshipping (& 8 to Avoid)
- Can You Do Dropshipping Worldwide? (Know This First)
- Dropshipping Target Audience Guide: How to Find Yours
- How Do You Create an Ecommerce Customer Journey Map?

PHASE 2

# Build your store

## 7. The basics of your store

Before you build your store, choose a name and secure the basics that make it feel professional.

- How to Get a Domain Name for Your Dropshipping Store
- How To Get a Free Business Email Address for Ecommerce?
- How to Get a Logo for Your Dropshipping Store? (5 Options)
- 10 Tips to Choose the Best Name for Your Dropshipping Store

## 8. Using AI for your dropshipping store

By now, you've probably heard about all those AI tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney, but how can they help run your dropshipping store? Check out the articles below to learn more!

- 20 Best AI Tools for Dropshipping (Tested)
- How to Create a Dropshipping Store With AI
- 13 Best Custom GPTs for Shopify (Hand-Picked)
- Dropshipping With ChatGPT: 18 Ways It Can Help Your Store

## 9. Getting a dropshipping supplier

Next, find a supplier that fits your products and target market. It also needs to work with your budget. Not sure where to look? Use our free supplier directory to filter suppliers by location, niche, and budget.

- The 12 Best Dropshipping Suppliers (Free & Paid)
- Can You Do Dropshipping With Suppliers Outside China?
- What Is a Dropshipping Supplier? (+ 10 Supplier Examples)
- How to Choose the Best Dropshipping Supplier (8 Indicators)

## 10. Sourcing your products differently

Not everyone wants to source their products the same way. Here are a few great options for you!

- How to Get Started With a Dropshipping Agent
- Alibaba Dropshipping: Suppliers, Risks & Setup
- How to Start a Print on Demand Business (8 Steps)
- How to Get Started With Private Label Dropshipping (5 Steps)

## 11. Working with a dropshipping supplier

Before placing customer orders, test the supplier and confirm how payments, communication, and order handling will work.

- Product Samples for Dropshipping: The Complete Guide
- How Do You Pay a Dropshipping Supplier for Their Products?
- 14 Questions to Ask Dropshipping Suppliers (Don't Skip This)
- Should You Do Dropshipping With One or Multiple Suppliers?

## 12. Branding your store

Let's continue making your store better! Remember that branding is an ongoing process. It's not something you do for a few hours in the beginning and forget about it.

- 12 Branded Dropshipping Store Examples (Inspiration)
- Branded Dropshipping: What Is It & How to Start (6 Tips)
- 10 Ecommerce Brand Store Examples to Inspire Your Store
- How to Get Custom Packaging on AliExpress (For Dropshipping)

## 13. Setting up your store pages and policies

Next up is doing things like setting up your standard pages (for example, a refund policy and a shipping policy).

- How to Build Trust in a Dropshipping Store? (Increase Sales)
- How to Create a Dropshipping Shipping Policy? (+ Template)
- 10 Standard Pages for a Shopify Store & How to Create Them
- How Do You Create a Dropshipping Return Policy? (+Template)

## 14. Preparing your first products

If you're just beginning, focus on a small number of products. Improve the pages and pricing first. Then strengthen the descriptions and images before adding more.

- Dropshipping Pricing Strategy (+ Free Price Calculator)
- How to Get Awesome Product Images When Dropshipping?
- How to Write Product Descriptions for Dropshipping Stores?
- 10 Product Page Examples From Ecommerce Stores | Inspiration

PHASE 3

# Launch and sell

## 15. Setting up payments and checkout

Before you launch, set up checkout and choose payment methods that fit your market. Also understand why providers may place holds or restrict an account.

- Dropshipping Payments: Methods, Risks & Setup
- Using PayPal for Dropshipping: Avoid Holds & Bans
- The 7 Best Payment Gateways for Dropshipping Stores
- Dropshipping With Stripe: Everything You Need to Know

## 16. Marketing

Next comes one of the most important parts: marketing your store and products. If you're not sure how to start, read our beginner's guide to marketing for dropshipping.

- Free Traffic for Dropshipping: 9 Tactics That Work
- Marketing for Dropshipping: How to Pick the Right Method
- Meta Pixel: How to Set It up (& 7 Tips to Boost Conversions)
- 10 Dropshipping Marketing Strategy Tips to Grow Your Business

## 17. Getting your first sales

Getting your first sale can take time. The guides below will help you find and fix the most common problems.

- 14 Awesome Tips To Get Your First Dropshipping Sale
- 24 Most Common Shopify Store Mistakes to Avoid & Tips
- Shopify Dropshipping: Traffic, but No Sales? What to Change?
- Why Is No One Buying From My Online Store? (14 Things To Check)

## 18. Setting up customer service

Set up a system to deal with customer questions, complaints, and returns quickly and effectively. This keeps your customers satisfied and builds trust in your business.

- The 10 Best Shopify Apps for Customer Service
- Customer Service for Dropshipping Stores - Complete Guide!
- How Do You Handle Returns When Dropshipping From China?
- Dropshipping Returns & Refunds: Everything You Need to Know

## 19. Learning from real store examples

Real examples can show you what strong stores do well and where weaker stores go wrong. Use the guides below for ideas, then explore our Inspiration Hub for more.

- 12 Branded Dropshipping Store Examples (Inspiration)
- My €300 Dropship Experience (A Dropshipping Beginner Story)
- 23 Most Successful Shopify Dropshipping Store Examples | Inspiration
- 5 Bad Dropshipping Store Examples & What They Can Improve | Inspiration

## 20. Managing your business

Once orders start coming in, you need reliable systems. Use these guides to manage quality and inventory while reducing manual work.

- How to Master Quality Control When Dropshipping
- How to Manage Dropshipping Orders: Workflow Tips
- Dropshipping Inventory Management: The Definitive Guide
- Automated Dropshipping: Optimize Your Business Correctly

PHASE 4

# Grow what works

## 21. Optimizing your store

Let's continue by optimizing your store even more. Use this step to find the problems that make visitors leave without buying. Check your store experience, product pages, speed, and conversion flow.

- 12 Tips to Increase Dropshipping Sales (Quick Wins)
- Shopify Dropshipping Conversion Rate Optimization: 13 Tips
- Shopify Speed Optimization: 7 Ways to Make Your Store Faster
- Dropshipping Store Review Checklist: 68+ Proven Improvements

## 22. Email marketing

Set up email capture before you start driving serious traffic, so you can follow up with visitors who leave without buying. Our beginner's guide to email marketing shows you how to get started.

- 8 Best Email Marketing Services for Dropshipping
- The 10 Best Email Marketing Tools For Dropshipping
- Email Marketing for Dropshipping: A Beginner's Guide
- Abandoned Cart Emails for Dropshipping: A Beginner's Guide

## 23. Feeling stuck? Start here

If you still feel stuck after working through the steps above, start with the guides below.

- How Long Should I Dropship a Product if It Does Not Sell?
- How Fast Can You Make Money With a Dropshipping Store?
- What to Do if You Can't Start Dropshipping? (Overwhelmed)
- 10 Most Common Dropshipping Mistakes & How to Avoid Them

## 24. Growing beyond your first sales

Once you have consistent sales, use these guides to improve what is working and decide how to expand.

- Eco-Friendly Dropshipping: Guide to Going Green
- How Do You Do Dropshipping With Multiple Suppliers?
- What to Do After You Find a Dropshipping Product That Sells?
- Can You Run Multiple Dropshipping Stores? (And Should You?)