

Migrating Your eCommerce Platform to ZiftrShop:

How to Plan, Perform and Grow

Presented by ZiftrShop

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Intro

In 2019, eCommerce was responsible for 14.1 percent of all retail sales worldwide. By 2023 that market share is expected to reach 22%.¹

If the Wild West economy of this new decade has made one thing clear, it's that the future of eCommerce is limitless...unless your platform is holding you back.

The good news is, your enterprise is positioned to be a leader in that rapidly accelerating growth and profitability. The somewhat daunting news—it will take a more versatile, sophisticated platform than your current one to get there.

While the mere mention of replatforming may sound overwhelming and be anxiety inducing, when done thoughtfully it doesn't have to be difficult.

The decision to migrate can be the game-changing moment you leave behind the hang-ups plaguing your old platform and look toward the endless possibilities of your new one.

The key is in the planning. When you know the common pitfalls to avoid and have a clear strategy in place, you can remove risk and make your migration a smooth success.

Leveraging ZiftrShop's cutting-edge platform and exceptional Integration Partners, here's what migration looked like for three eCommerce enterprises.



1

- Complex checkout with rapid flow changes
- Four-week timeline
- On-time launch
- Unprecedented agility
- Ability to measure & optimize like never before

2

- Health-products retailer with six-week timeline
- Created resilient, HIPAA-compliant data storage
- Customers gained hassle-free access to records at checkout

3

- WooCommerce storefront couldn't scale
- Migration multiplied daily transactions
- Drop-off in cart abandonment thanks to meaningful A/B testing
- Substantial traffic increase and business growth

The next success story could be yours. This comprehensive whitepaper is designed for you to revisit as needed as you set the stage for your business' platform migration and ultimately, its future.



Why move?

If you're reading this, you've already asked yourself whether your current platform is holding you back. It's likely you already know the answer. Do any of these sound familiar?

- Not seeing returns on those high maintenance or upgrade fees?
- Frustrated by poor performance affecting your site's speed, reliability, or user experience?
- Poor conversions due to frustrated users leaving your site because of slow loading or long checkout times?
- Limited by disjointed automation and analytics?
- Hands tied by customization overload with nowhere left to go?

- A combination of all these?
- If you're nodding your head, then you're in the right place.

For instance, isolate just the issue of load time. 47% of consumers expect a web page to load in 2 seconds or less (Google's recommended speed). 40% are likely to abandon a page after 3 seconds. Based on those stats, a recent survey revealed:

“If an e-commerce site is making \$100,000 per day, a 1 second page delay could potentially cost you \$2.5 million in lost sales per year. ” ²

Even a seemingly minimal flaw in a site's performance can have staggering effects on conversions.



If you're not willing to forfeit that kind of revenue, it's time to invest in an enhanced iteration of your enterprise eCommerce business. With unparalleled capabilities, ZiftrShop is the tool to get you there seamlessly.

As SEO guru, Rand Fishkin put it, "There is no black magic to successfully attracting customers via the web." You need a platform that engages users and seeds their return visit. Here is the step-by-step guide to a migration that will take your customer experience to the next level and leave competitors jealous.



Planning Your Move

Content Round-Up

Taking an inventory of your content is the initial step in developing a solid migration plan, and you probably have more than you realize.

Key Content Elements

- Static pages / landing pages
- Blog posts
- Products
- Tags and categories
- Taxes
- Shipping methods
- Coupons
- Assets (images, videos, PDFs, etc.)

Additional Considerations

- Store locations
- Subscriptions
- Orders
- Users
- User roles and passwords
- Inventory



Content Pitfalls

Ensuring that your new platform's content guidelines align with your needs and goals is critical. Different eCommerce platforms have varying formats and rules. Here are three important questions to ask before selecting a home for your new site:

- Does the potential platform support the type of content you want to import? For example: If you're migrating coupons, will the new site have the functionality to implement your promotions?
- What about taxes? Platforms handle this in a range of ways, particularly within the U.S. What structure are you working with now, and what is your best option going forward?
- Are there any features missing? Try to closely match features you rely on to those within the new system. Different platforms often use alternate names for the same thing, so it's about making sure you will have equivalent (or hopefully better!) tools at your disposal.

Whichever platform you choose should have eCommerce at the forefront of its design.

ZiftrShop does this by taking an API-first approach, making it possible to implement any type of content in an intuitive and captivating way. Users increasingly expect a superior, personalized experience. With the right platform, you'll be more than ready to deliver.

Themes

Unless you are looking to give your site a visual makeover, the best strategy is to find the theme closest to what you have now and customize from there.

One of your early decisions in migration planning will be a big one: What theme to choose? All platforms are different, and they don't support the same themes. But there are a few essentials to look for; be sure whichever theme you opt for:

- Is responsive across devices and browsers
- Has a look and feel that will resonate with your customers and brand
- Supports nuanced SEO
- Can be readily customized
- Offers technical support

How involved that process will be depends on the platform. Some offer dozens of themes with pre-built layouts, including checkout flow. However, they may be lacking in appearance. Dated templates from some eCommerce builders, such as Volusion and 3dcart, have even been flagged in platform comparisons.



With other platforms, the look might be just fine but might come with a hefty price tag. Some are also not easy to customize, and the costs of tweaking to match your needs can add up quickly. In a worst-case scenario, you might even discover too late that it's not possible to customize at all.

Other platforms, like ZiftrShop, have a more refined library of themes, which can be surprisingly advantageous. Not only does this simplify the selection process, but with a concise series of themes comes more robust capabilities. This makes modifications (even to the checkout process) easier and allows for a higher level of control. These are important factors to consider before making your move.



Plugins and Apps

Any savvy eCommerce business is likely to have a short-list of plugins and apps they can't live without. Whether they enhance customer experience or deliver powerful analytics, make sure you'll have access to the same or similar resources for your new site.

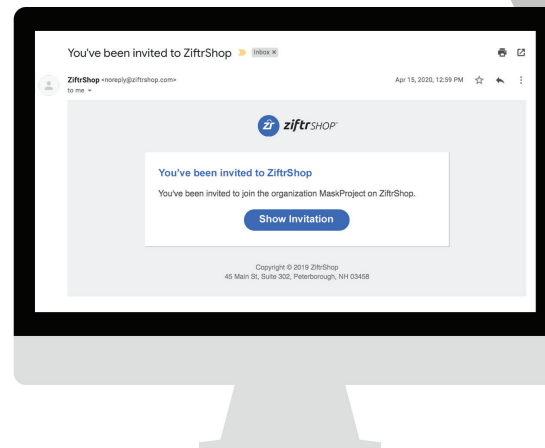
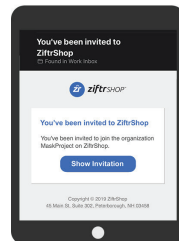
Not all platforms and plugins play nicely together. So what happens if the platform you're migrating to doesn't have a corresponding app? Don't panic. You may find the solution is right in front of you.

For instance, next-gen platforms, like ZiftrShop, have impressive new capabilities built right in. Fortunately, the functionality you're looking for is likely streamlined within the system, instead of requiring the complex app you once needed. This can be a big cost-save if you're coming from a platform, like Shopify, where apps are known to become a weighty expense.



Pro Tip: While you're at it, seek additional ways to simplify. Perhaps you've been hosting apps on your own servers, as some platforms require. Alternatively, a solution like ZiftrShop will take care of app hosting for you. This can be a bonus, eliminating your need to run apps in-house altogether.

Emails



Despite impressive advances in technology, email remains one of the most effective ways for businesses to reach their audience. With this marketing goldmine in mind, explore your new platform to see if it's configured to send emails that are as good or better than those from your old platform.

This is another area where customization is key. You definitely want to confirm your ability to tailor communication, as some platforms don't allow any modifications. Mobile responsiveness should also be at the top of your list.

In 2018, almost 50% of all marketing emails were opened on a mobile device. Emails that display incorrectly are often deleted in as little as three seconds.³

In addition, it's important to ensure your emails will appear correctly and consistently across inboxes, from Outlook to Gmail. Search for built-in tools, like the suite of options ZiftrShop provides, to make your email communication both easy and effective.

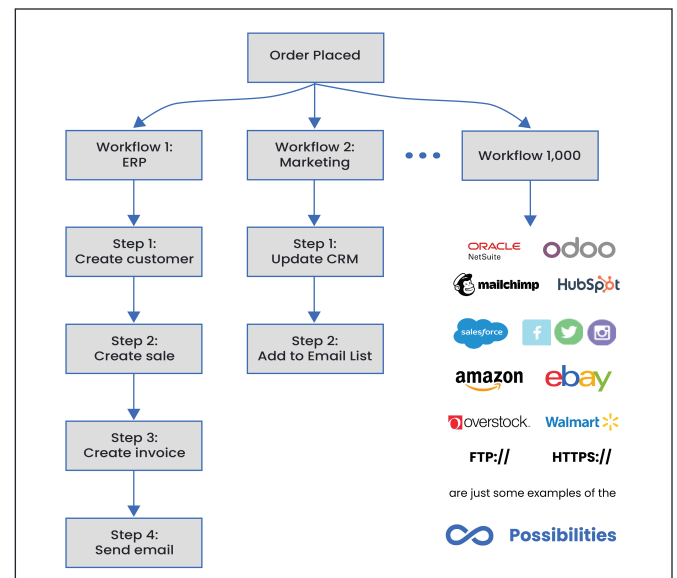
Integrations

Check any platform you're interested in to vet their integration protocols.

If you integrate with other systems, like ERPs (Enterprise Resource Planning systems), you'll need a way to update those integrations at the time of migration.

This is done by mapping the data from your brand-new platform and adding it to your ERP. If your platform relies on pre-built integrations, this can be challenging and time consuming.

In some cases, you can also incur additional costs as certain platforms require a third-party service to handle ERP integrations. This is unnecessary and an added expense you can avoid by researching ahead of time.





Payments

Any eCommerce platform should offer the payment options you need, right? Not necessarily. This can actually be more challenging than expected. At first glance, you might see a potential platform supports PayPal. But how about PayPal Express, Stripe, or Apple? And what about:

- International payment methods?
- Strong Customer Authentication (SCA)?
- PCI (your responsibility vs the platform)???

You don't want to be left holding the bill, so do your due diligence and narrow your list of options down to those that support your payment needs. This will automatically exclude platforms like SquareSpace, which offer limited payment gateways.

In contrast ZiftrShop enables users to work with diverse payment methods and even allows you to route requests to those methods at the lowest cost possible. In addition, ZiftrShop handles much of the PCI burden, so you can check that concern right off your list.



Analytics and Reporting

Data-driven decisions around customer experience lead to increased conversions. But to accomplish this, you need sophisticated tools for analytics and reporting that provide meaningful insights.

For instance, built from the ground up for eCommerce, ZiftrShop provides advanced order management tools and analytics,

including highly refined search and filtering capabilities. With any quality platform, those kinds of resources should always be at your fingertips.

This is not a place to compromise. The data available to you must be as robust as that of your old platform (though it should be even better). This will also allow you to track performance during your migration and determine your ROI.



SEO

This can be an area of great concern for eCommerce teams that have invested significant time and energy into elevating their SEO and online rankings. However, there are clear steps you can take to maintain (and increase) your competitive advantage with migration.

“When migrating to a new platform...it’s important to ensure that the new ‘environment’ mirrors the SEO qualities of the previous at a minimum.”⁴

First, know your basic benchmarks, including organic traffic, landing-page data, keywords, and rankings. Secondly, try to reduce changes to the structure and content of your site, including URLs, as much as possible. The last thing you want is for Google to identify your successfully replatformed site as an entirely new entity.

To avoid this, choose a new platform that demonstrates a discerning ability to preserve your optimization efforts. ZiftrShop does this with rich, built-in SEO support, meta information, independent page titles and URLs, and automatic redirects.



“Redirects are extremely important because they help both search engines and users find pages that may no longer exist, have been renamed, or moved to another location.”⁵

If any URLs change during migration, confirm there is a 301 redirect in place, and follow standard protocols to avoid creating duplicate content or redirect loops. Set up custom 404 pages strategically and only if needed. Be sure to test each of these links/pages thoroughly before going live.



Pro Tip: Prior to migration, record your current analytics and keep them at the ready so you can make quick one-to-one comparisons after the move. This way you can identify any unusual drops in traffic. If you have established several popular pages through backlinks, pay particular attention to these.

Translations and Internationalization

65% of consumers purchase products online from outside their own country.⁶

If enhancing your multinational presence is part of your motivation to migrate, you require a platform with a unified approach to global eCommerce.

Now is absolutely the time to make global expansion your focus. But some platforms perform better at this than others. Unfortunately, there are many that simply don't take an international approach.

For instance, they might require an app for translations or only allow one language. Do your research, and don't let this hinder your business' evolution. At a minimum, what you're looking for to make your

transition a success are these must-have features:

- Ability to carry over any current translations
- Multi-channel sales capabilities
- Multiple languages ready to go
- Multi-currency payments and taxation right out of the box
- PCI compliance for secure card transactions

Finding this combination of essential features can be difficult unless you look for a powerful tool like ZiftrShop, that has been designed from inception to catalyze the growth of your business internationally.

Other Considerations

Training

When you're ready to make your move official (don't worry—we'll discuss timing), your administrators also need to be equipped. In preparation, your team should be thoroughly trained on the new system. Choose a point person to take this on, and create accountability measures to certify that everyone has completed training.

You'll also want to have plans in place with your migration team and support staff to handle any hiccups that occur after the move. By following the steps in this guide and preparing methodically, issues should be minimal. But it's always smart to have your best people on deck during times of important transition.





Upgrades

Tackling fixes at the time of migration can add cost and risk.

With the prospect of platform migration in mind, you may also be brainstorming a list of issues you would like to fix simultaneously. This all-at-once approach can be tempting since you're faced with a major undertaking anyway. However, it's important to weigh the pros and cons.

It can also affect your conversation rate, making it impossible to compare before and after. In an extreme case, Google might even deem the two versions of your site so different that you lose your ranking and have to start fresh with SEO. To avoid this and other messy scenarios, prioritizing the migration and saving other adjustments for later is the safest approach.



Investment

Let's be transparent about the financial investment involved in platform migration. The one-time cost to make it happen can be significant. But there is a silver lining.

If you follow the steps outlined in this guide, you can help reduce those costs in the long run. Advanced planning will mitigate risk, avoid unexpected add-ons, and ensure a smooth transition once you're up and running.

Perhaps even more importantly, if you choose the right platform, you will recuperate your costs many times over.

For some, this effect may occur quite quickly. That was the case for one seller who recently migrated to ZiftrShop. Just weeks later, the business experienced:

- More than 800 shoppers conducting transactions simultaneously
- An enormous increase in sales demand overall
- Zero site degradation even during periods of maximum traffic

The business never would have seen this kind of influx with their old platform, nor would the previous site have been able to handle it. The company's leaders were immediately reassured that migration was the right choice and that they had chosen the perfect platform to take their eCommerce enterprise to a new level of growth.



Domain

Sometimes it's easy to overlook one of your most important assets—your domain. A key part of your company's identity, your domain must be ready for migration, as well. If you purchased yours through your original platform, you will need to transfer it before you move. However, if you purchased your domain through a separate registrar, you'll manage the changeover directly with them.

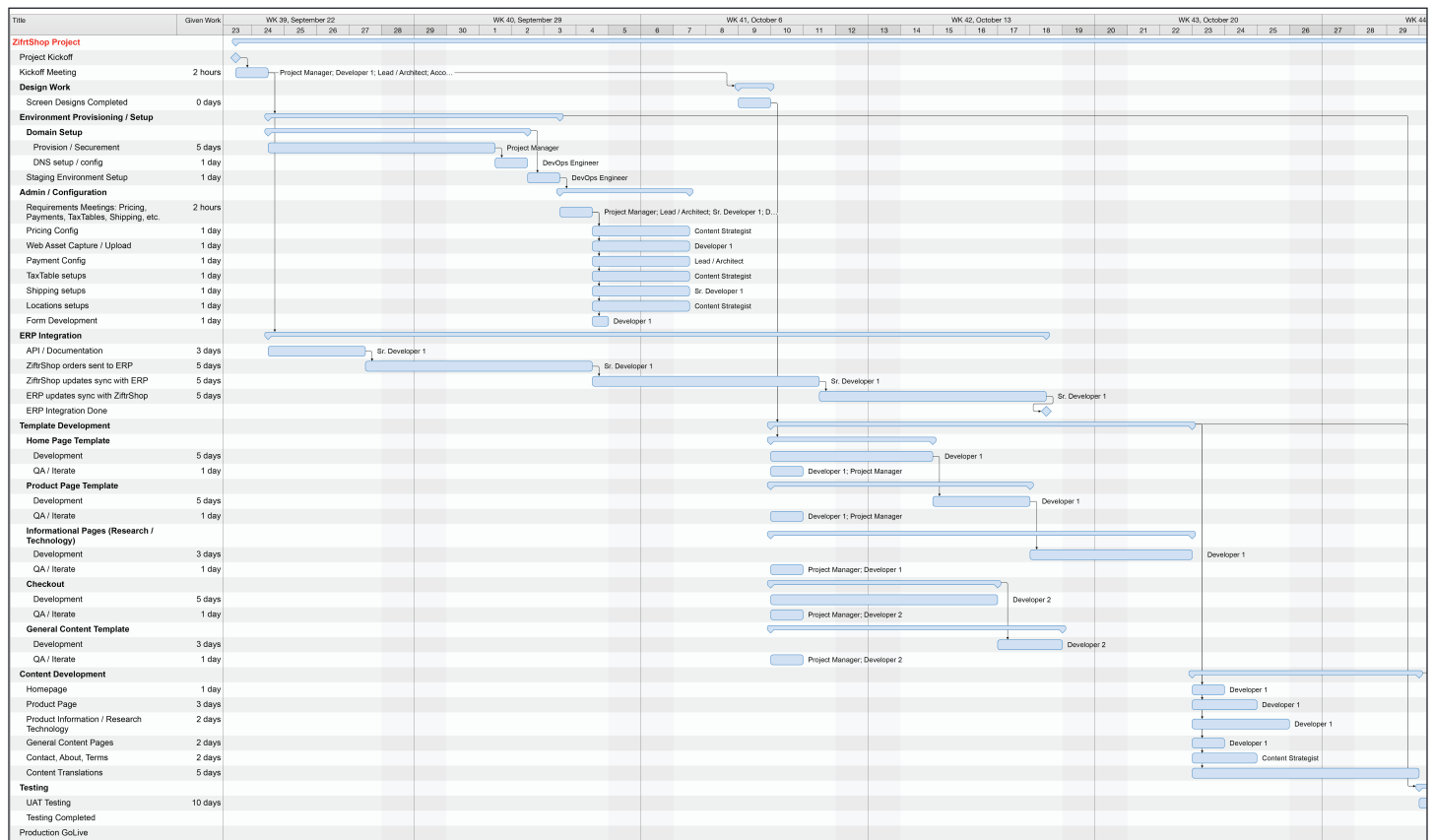
Timeline

The process of preparing for and executing a successful migration can take anywhere from a month to six months depending on the complexity of your existing site and how well-established it is. Below is a sample of the workflow an effective migration entails.

It is always worthwhile to begin the process well in advance. But if you are fixed with a tight timeline, there may be ways to expedite things (with some potential sacrifices). For example, migration can take place much more rapidly by tearing down and reconstructing a site than by trying to move everything intact.



However, this means you cannot accurately track conversion rates and may lose some hard-won SEO benchmarks. If faced with an inflexible timeline, you'll need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of a short-cut approach. Otherwise, like most things in life, it's worth investing a little more time to reach an optimal outcome.





Conversion Rates

Let's talk more about conversion rates. When switching platforms, as much as you want all the stars to align, sometimes it takes time for conversion rates to level off. For example, a cohort of users may have started their purchases on one platform and later finished their orders on another.

Despite intricate scenarios like these created in the crossover, with the right platform it is reasonable to set these two goals:

- 1** Slight reduction in conversion rates during the first month to six weeks following migration
- 2** Increased growth and profitability after that adjustment period

To ensure your replatforming leads to enhanced visibility and expansion of your enterprise, remember to revisit your benchmarks and closely track priority analytics. By being consistent in observing these data points, you can quickly catch and address any outlying issues post-migration.



Migration Tools

The goal is to automate as much as possible, so you want your destination platform to support the process.

As you investigate potential platforms, look for options that can ease the migration process with ready-made tools. ZiftrShop's pre-built migration paths do just this, carrying over content with far less effort. And when customization is needed, this platform also allows for adjustment of the migration flow.

Look out for limited tools that will only move some of your content. Many companies who have replatformed can recount frustrating hang-ups, like the inability to migrate seemingly simple pieces, such as user passwords or page layouts. Automation equals fewer headaches.



Trusted Partners

“Migrations are naturally occurring events in the life cycle of digital businesses as both technology and business objectives advance.”⁷

Migrations are naturally occurring events, however, a migration is not a venture to be undertaken lightly. And since it is a procedure that requires such meticulous planning, Moz notes that calling on an experienced partner is a vital move.

“Seeking professional support late is very risky because crucial steps may have been missed.”⁸

Joining forces with a team that has been there and done that may be the best business decision you’ve ever made. While some firms support eCommerce migrations to

and from a range of eCommerce interfaces, it’s ideal to find one that specializes in the platform you’ve chosen.

For ZiftrShop, one of the newest, leading platforms on the market, high levels of interest have already created the opportunity to establish strong relationships with Integrations Teams, like AirTank.

This Diamond-Level Preferred Partner has become masterful at efficiently managing the ins and outs of migration to ZiftrShop. Finding a trusted partner like AirTank can drastically cut time, cost, and risk during a crucial moment of investment and growth.

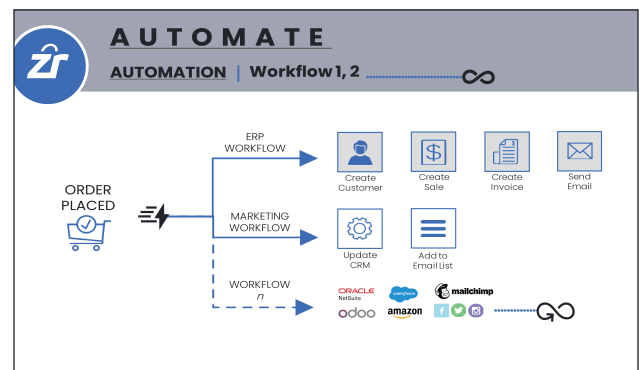


Transition Day

Timing

Migration day has finally arrived, and you are flipping the switch. This is a big switch. Is it the right time? When looking at your calendar to choose the big day, think about:

- When most of your customers are online and buying
- When they are sleeping or offline
- Natural dips in your weekly, monthly, or annual sales
- When your team can be most present to respond as needed



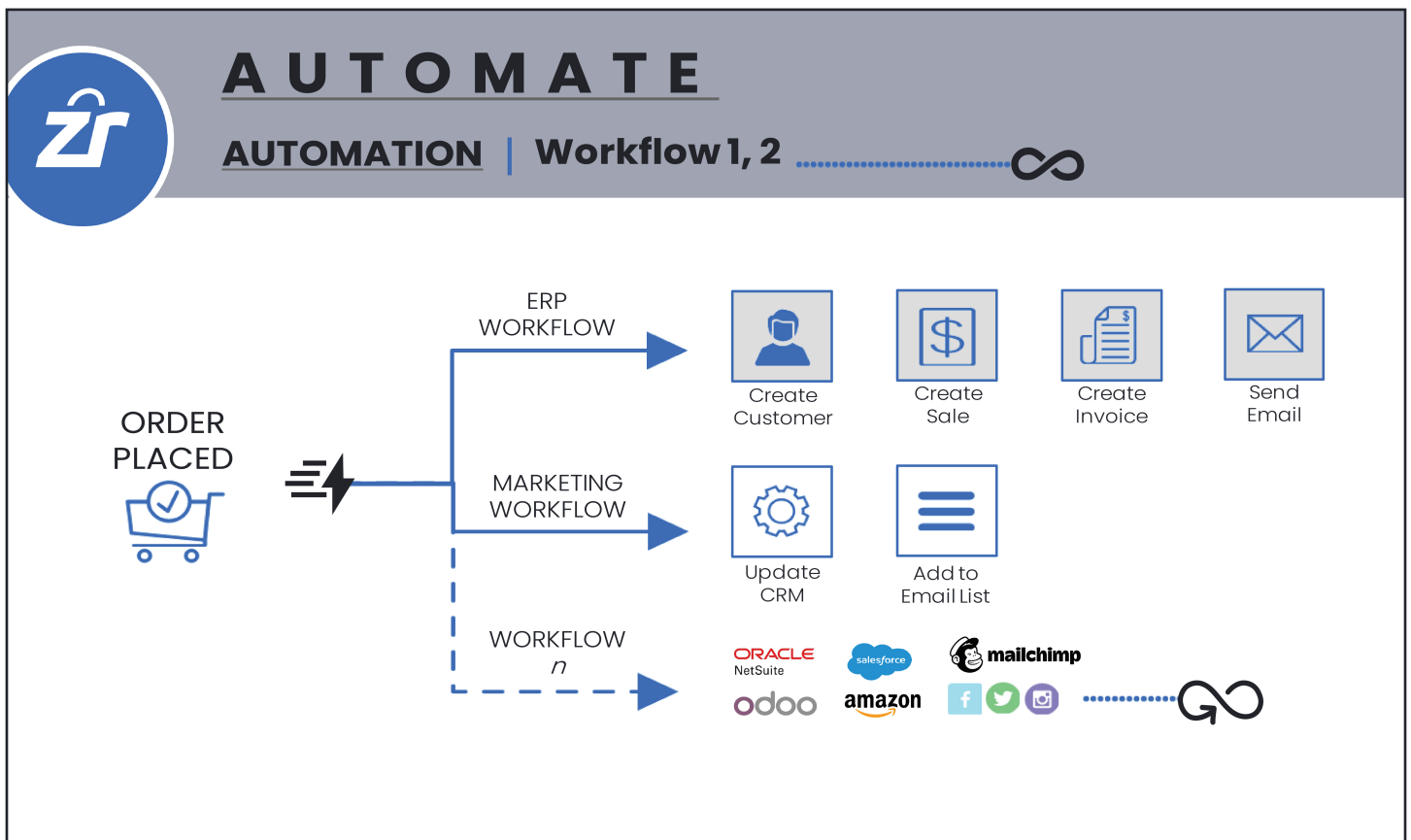
Pro Tip: Of course, with extremely high-volume, international sites, no time is a good time. Enterprises of this size might consider geo-routing, determining the content a user receives based on geographic location at the time of migration. This can be complex to perform but may be an option to explore if you are concerned about real-time sales losses.



Existing Carts

It's inevitable. Some people may be actively shopping your site as the migration takes place. And it is very unlikely they will be able to keep their cart in the transition. Worst-case scenario—some may even be mid-checkout.

For high-volume sites, a valuable workaround is a proxy server that will send users who already have a cart to your old site so they can complete their order without interruption. While this creates an additional step in the process, capturing those real-time sales may be worth it.



Splitting Traffic

If you decide to split traffic, carefully assess the orders and users created. To uphold order fulfillment and customer satisfaction, make sure information generated during transition time appears in the updated version of the site.

Considering a cookie or A/B-split rollout? This is another opportunity for orders to be misplaced, so track closely to fulfill orders coming from both platforms.



Pro Tip: Once a user is on one platform, make sure they remain there until all the data is moved. If they try to view their order and are unable to, this leads to poor customer experience. Of course, split sessions can't be avoided 100%, as cookies can be cleared and people shift between devices. The goal is to keep these instances as minimal as possible.

Content created since you first migrated

There may have been content, users, orders, etc created since your original migration. You'll probably want to make sure the new site doesn't lose those.





Conclusion

Congratulations, you now have a clear picture of what it will take to migrate your eCommerce site. While this commitment will propel you toward exciting growth, it also comes with many moving pieces. The first and most important decision—choosing the right platform.

But with the unrivaled performance available today, you can establish yourself as a leader on the cutting-edge of eCommerce. ZiftrShop's limitless capabilities can take you there and even make it look easy. Imagine where your business could go with highly advanced speed, scalability, and flexibility.

If you have been faced with repeated constraints caused by your current site, it may take more effort to envision how a solution-centric platform should look and feel.





Are you ready to join the next generation of eCommerce enterprise?

Contact us for a FREE consultation and discover how ZiftrShop can position you for limitless growth and profitability.



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