

# Ecommerce build: 16 questions to ask before you pay

Not every question applies to every project: the right questions depend on what you are aiming for as an end result. Pick the ones that directly relate to the final product or the goal you want to achieve. Asking all of them without relevant judgement is more likely to confuse the person on the other side.

## E1

### How do the products get in, and who maintains their data afterwards?

#### WHY YOU ASK

The import is a one-off task. Maintenance is daily, forever, and it is almost never in the offer.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Asks how many products you have, where the data comes from, and whether it changes automatically. Proposes a link to the system you already keep them in.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"You will upload them through the admin panel." For 40 products that is fine. For 4 000 it is months of work handed to you.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask them to load ten of your real products before you sign. You will see how long one takes and can multiply it yourself.

## E2

### Which payment and delivery methods will be connected, and who negotiates them?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Every courier or payment integration is separate work, a separate contract and sometimes a separate fee. A missing popular method is a real loss of orders.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Names which methods are in the price, which cost extra, and states clearly that the contracts with the courier and the bank are yours.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"We support all methods." Platform support and a configured connection to your account are different things.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Place one real order with a real card after launch, then refund it. If refunds do not work, you will find out from a customer.

## E3

### If I have an existing shop, what happens to the product URLs?

#### WHY YOU ASK

This is the most expensive mistake on this entire site. A shop migrated without redirects loses its accumulated traffic overnight, and recovery takes months.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Uses the word "redirects" without prompting, explains that every old URL gets a new one, and plans a check after go-live.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"The new shop will be better, Google will find it." It will. It will also be starting from zero.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Save ten URLs of your popular products before the migration. After launch, open each one. Every one should land on the same product.

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## E4

### How will I see where each sale came from?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Without it you cannot judge advertising, SEO or social. You will pay for channels without knowing which ones work.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Talks about order tracking with value and cart contents, not just visit counts, and says who verifies it works.

#### A BAD ANSWER

Silence on the topic, or "the platform has built-in stats". Built-in stats do not know where the customer came from.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Place a test order and check it appears with its value. Compare the order count in analytics with the admin panel over one week. A gap over 10% means broken tracking.

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## E5

### What is the plan when the catalogue triples?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Category structure is set at the start and is the hardest thing to change later. A shop built for 200 items falls apart at 2 000.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Asks about your plans before proposing a structure. Talks about filters, subcategories, and which pages will be generated automatically.

#### A BAD ANSWER

Copies the structure from the old site or the template without asking anything about the catalogue.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask them to show what navigation looks like if you add two new categories. If the answer is "we will redo the menu", the structure is flat.

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## E6

### Who prepares the mandatory pages: terms, returns, privacy?

#### WHY YOU ASK

For an online shop these texts are a legal obligation with specific requirements and fines, not a formality.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Says the texts come from a lawyer familiar with e-commerce, and that the shop technically supports the right of return.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"We will copy from another shop and change the name." A copied text describes someone else's terms and fails at the first complaint.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Read the returns page in three of their shops. Identical text everywhere means nobody wrote it for the specific business.

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## E7

### How will the shop connect to accounting and invoicing?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Every order creates a document, and without a connection someone will type invoices by hand every day, probably you.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Asks how you invoice now and proposes a specific link to your system or automatic issuing, with a price for the integration.

#### A BAD ANSWER

The topic never comes up. You will discover it at the end of month one, on a pile of unissued invoices.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask your accountant what they need from the shop and bring the list to the meeting. The provider's reaction says a lot.

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## E8

### Who provides the product photos and descriptions, and are the descriptions unique?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Descriptions copied from the manufacturer sit on fifty other shops, and the search engine has no reason to show yours.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Separates the two: photos come from you or the manufacturer, descriptions are written fresh, with a price per item and priority for bestsellers.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"We will take everything from the importer's site." Fast. And it makes your shop indistinguishable from all the rest.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Copy a sentence from one of your product descriptions and search it in quotes. The number of results is the answer.

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## E9

### How many steps does checkout have, and can a customer buy without registering?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Every extra step and every mandatory field sends part of your customers to a competitor with a shorter checkout.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Shows the process step by step, allows guest checkout, and asks only for the data without which delivery is impossible.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"We need the registration for the customer database." The database is valuable. The lost orders cost more.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Place a test order and count: how many screens, how many fields, and how many of them are truly needed for a parcel to reach you.

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## E10

### How are delivery prices calculated, and who maintains the courier tariffs?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Couriers change their tariffs, and a shop with frozen delivery prices quietly loses on every order or repels customers with high ones.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Explains where the prices come from: a live courier integration that calculates them, or a clear rule, and says who reviews them on change.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"We will set a flat delivery fee and be done." It may be the right choice, but only if someone calculated it rather than defaulted to it.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask what happens to the shop's prices when the courier raises its tariff. You are looking for a name, not a shrug.

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## E11

### What transaction fees will I pay, and to whom?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Between the bank, the payment provider and the platform, every sale carries a percentage of costs that nobody collects in one place in the offer.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Lists the fees line by line with percentages, and says whether there are monthly minimums, refund fees and declined-card fees.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"The standard fees." There is no standard. There is your specific contract, which you have not seen yet.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Calculate the fees on your average order and multiply by the expected monthly volume. That number must enter your pricing.

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## E12

### What happens when two customers order the last unit at the same time?

#### WHY YOU ASK

A twice-sold item means a cancelled order, an angry customer and a bad review, and it happens most often exactly during a promotion.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Explains how stock is tracked, when the unit is reserved, and what the customer sees when an item runs out.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"That almost never happens." It happens exactly when the shop finally takes off.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask what customer number two receives: a message at checkout, or an apology email the next day.

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## E13

### Which automatic emails will the customer receive, and who writes them?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Confirmation, shipped, refunded: these messages are half of your communication with the customer, and by default they sound like a machine.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Lists the emails, shows what they look like, and says who will write the texts in language that does not sound translated.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"The platform sends them by itself." It does. In English, or in broken language, from a no-reply address.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Place a test order and read the email you receive. Every one of your customers reads that.

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## E14

### What happens to the shop during a promotion or an advertising peak?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Exactly when you have paid for traffic, a slow or crashed shop turns the ad budget into a loss.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Says what hosting the shop runs on, what load it handles, and what is done before a planned campaign.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"You will not have that much traffic." Maybe true. But it is said by the person who will not be paying for the lost orders.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask: if I run ads and five hundred people arrive at once, what happens. The answer should contain a number, not reassurance.

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## E15

### How are orders and customer data backed up, and who is responsible in a crash?

#### WHY YOU ASK

The shop holds money and personal data, and losing them is a commercial and a legal problem at the same time.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Says how far back backups go, where they live, and when a restore was last tested, with a named person responsible.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"The hosting does backups." Probably it does. The question is whether anyone has verified a shop can be restored from them.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Ask to be shown a test version restored from yesterday's backup. An hour of work that tells the truth.

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## E16

### What does ordering from a phone look like, and who tested it?

#### WHY YOU ASK

Most orders come from phones, and a checkout built on a large screen breaks exactly there.

#### A GOOD ANSWER

Says the full path to payment is tested on real phones, and shows what checkout looks like on a small screen.

#### A BAD ANSWER

"The theme is mobile-first." The theme may be. Your products, filters and checkout become mobile-first only after work and a test.

#### HOW TO CHECK

Order something from your own shop from your phone, one-handed, on the move. Every place you stop and squint is a place a customer gives up.



















