

# Subject: Online Sales Platforms Overview Provided by Heyer Performance, Inc.

This document outlines the main capabilities and limitations of four e-commerce-enabled web platforms: **Shopify**, **SquareSpace**, **Wix**, and **Weebly**. Each of these platforms meet the following criteria:

- Speedy and easy setup and basic function
- Approachable pricing

Other factors were considered:

- Features
- Community, marketing and partnership opportunities
- Scalability – ability to handle volumes of products
- Customer support system
- SEO
- Customer experience including factors like load time and the mobile user experience

Platform	Ease of Setup	Entry Barriers	Pricing	Support
<b>Shopify</b>	Moderate/Easy	Free trials available*. No technical skills required for setup or use. *Currently offering a free 90-day trial.	\$29-\$299/month depending on plan*. *Charges on a pertransaction basis if you opt out of Shopify payments.	24-7 live support offered, plus access to developers and experts, as needed.
<b>Squarespace</b>	Moderate	14-day free trials available. No technical skills required for setup or use.	\$18-\$40/month*. *\$18/month plan charges a 3% transaction fee.	Support through Twitter and email; live chat during normal business hours.
<b>Wix</b>	Easy	No trial, but includes 30-day money back guarantee. No technical skills required for setup or use.	\$23-\$49/month	Setup guides are helpful. Support provided through email and call back.
<b>Weebly</b>	Easy	No technical skills required for setup or use; however, easy updates can be made with a little knowledge of code.	Plans start at \$0/month; tiers increase to \$6-\$29/month.	Live chat or email during normal business.

*\*Pricing is for base plans. Plugins and add-ons not included*

Below is an overview of each platform highlighting main strengths, weaknesses, advantages, and risks of use. This list is not comprehensive; below is a list of excluded competitors you may come across along with the reason they are not on the list.

**Bigcommerce:** Complex terminology makes for a more cumbersome setup and user experience.

**Magento:** Cost-prohibitive for these purposes

**Woocommerce:** Requires that your website be powered by WordPress for use.

## Shopify

Shopify is one of the most popular ecommerce sites, and for good reason. Setup can take under an hour for a simple store, but with over 170 themes to choose from (or you can create your own), you have the option to spend a bit of time to make your shop look the way you want it to look. It is easy to customize (even for new users) and Shopify's support team is available 24 hours. Their features are extensive (more become available as you tier up from Shopify Basic – Advanced). Further, there is no end to the add-ons that become available to you via Shopify Apps as a shop owner (both free and paid). Examples include an Instagram channel (to sell on Instagram by tagging items in a posts/stories), a search bar/field, and “chat with Us” or “email Us” widgets. Mobile sites are responsive and work great. The main drawback is that Shopify charges fees of 2.4-2.9% + \$0.30/transaction if you don't use Shopify payments.

*Shopify is best for farmers looking to get set up quickly and thinking long term about the potential of online sales.*

## SquareSpace

Squarespace is a website builder with an online sales platform. It produces beautiful sites with simple, sleek, uncluttered content. Each template is more handsome than the next. It is ideal for the aesthetically-inclined – but keep in mind if you don't have high res images or need to relay a lot of text on your site, SquareSpace may not be for you. It has a fairly low barrier to entry cost-wise, but the setup experience is slightly less intuitive and more labor intensive than competitors. However, once you are set up, the clean look of the site makes things easier to navigate and update – which you can even do on the SquareSpace shop owner app. SquareSpace offers basic features like payment processing and inventory management, but there is no app store (like Shopify), so what they have is what you get. The mobile versions work well.

*SquareSpace is best for farmers that value aesthetics in their digital presence and do not foresee any expanded needs beyond buying/selling their product via the platform.*

## Wix

Like SquareSpace, Wix is a website builder with an ecommerce option. Wix touts that it is free – which is true for a basic website, but for online sales, plans start at \$23/month. Wix is extremely user-friendly and built with small businesses (read: easy setup, few needed features) in mind. Wix has the best (easiest) setup experience – it is extremely visual and there is ample customer support right there in the beginning moments. Wix even has Wix ADI (Artificial Design Intelligence), which functions as a site creator using information from a battery of questions. Additionally, Wix's aesthetic rivals SquareSpace. They have even more templates to choose from; however, they are not quite as tight visually and operationally as those offered by SquareSpace. While they have app add-ons to meet additional needs, please note: you cannot change the template you choose at setup, so be sure you like it! Drawbacks include limited storage (20GB) and a less responsive mobile experience (read: you will likely need to tweak the template to look ok on devices).

*Wix is best for farmers seeking a painless, intuitive setup experience.*

### **Weebly**

Like SquareSpace and Wix, Weebly is a site builder that offers online sales; unlike the others, they offer online sales for free. However, your customers will have to see ads and you can't use your own domain (read: youraccount.weebly.com). Functionally, the setup for Weebly is almost as quick and easy as Wix, but with fewer themes to choose from. The sites are not as sleek or impressive as Wix or Squarespace, but the function and speed are high and the mobile versions work well. Weebly seems to fare better than SquareSpace and Wix with volume of content on the site, fitting for those planning on selling a glut of products (50+). One customer hiccup: Weebly does not allow you to checkout as a guest, which may deter some from order completion.

*Weebly is a great option for farmers wanting to get into the online stratosphere without much (or any) of a cost commitment.*