

Online Store Quick Start Guide: The Steps to Success with Shift4Shop

Getting started with Shift4Shop is easy. Naturally, learning any new software can be a bit of a challenge, but Shift4Shop offers plenty of resources to help you out.

As you follow this guide, keep in mind that you can refer to these resources if you have any questions:

- ✔ The Shift4Shop dashboard itself includes helpful tooltips you can view by putting the mouse over any question mark symbol you see.
- ✔ The Shift4Shop Knowledgebase offers written tutorials and guides for every feature within the platform.
- ✔ The Shift4Shop YouTube channel offers visual guides to many of the features, including setup instructions.
- ✔ Shift4Shop's eCommerce University offers detailed written guides to help you with the various aspects of running a successful online business.

Support

If you'd rather speak to someone directly, Shift4Shop support representatives can be reached via the following methods:

By email: support@shift4shop.com

By phone: 1-800-828-6650

Through live chat: on the Shift4Shop.com website

Now that you know where to find help if you need it, let's begin! The rest of this guide will lead you through creating your Shift4Shop store and getting it ready for launch.

Step 1: Choose a Product and Niche

If you haven't chosen a product yet, that's fine! Maybe the idea of eCommerce appeals to you but you haven't put much planning into your business yet. Take some time now to decide what you want to sell. Ask yourself what you're passionate about, and what type of customer you want to serve. Remember that the smaller the niche, the easier it will be to create a competitive business. For example, stores that start out trying to sell "everything" rarely succeed — but a store that puts all its focus onto a specific type of product can much more easily build a reputation as the place to go for that product.

Step 2: Choose a Business Name and Domain Name

If you don't already have a business name, it's a good idea to name your business and choose your website's domain name at the same time. This is because having a domain name that's the same as your business name will make it easier for customers to find and remember your website, and many domain names are already taken. Your business name should be easy to remember and should reflect what you do, and what makes you unique. Domain names should be short and easy to say out loud. Put some time into it and you'll be able to come up with one that's just perfect!

Step 3: Create Your Shift4Shop Account

This step is the easiest of all. Simply visit Shift4Shop.com and you'll be able to get started with a few clicks. There's nothing to install on your own computer — you just need a modern web browser and an internet connection.

Step 4: Familiarize Yourself with the Software

Log into your new Shift4Shop account and start exploring! Now is a good time to check out the support resources from the beginning of this guide. Take all the time you need to get accustomed to your Shift4Shop Online Store Manager dashboard, visit each section, and learn all you can. It may be daunting at first simply because there's so much you can do, but take it one step at a time and remember Shift4Shop's support team is always available to help.

Step 5: Choose a Theme

Shift4Shop has dozens of beautiful, modern, responsive templates available, and they're all free! Head over to the Shift4Shop Theme Store to see the full selection, complete with preview websites that let you explore every theme in depth. You can install your favorite theme right from the Theme Store or by locating it in your dashboard under Settings > Design > Themes & Styles.

Step 6: Add Your Products

It's time to start adding products! We recommend you add at least one product manually first, just to get an idea of how it works. This will help you familiarize yourself with all the settings you can create for a product, including product options, categories, pricing, and more. If you're interested in faster ways to add products (like uploading a large number of them at once), this Knowledgebase article is a hub for all methods for adding products to your store.

Step 7: Set Up Payment, Shipping, and Tax

Setting up payments is fast and simple. Navigate to Settings > Payment and follow the instructions in the dashboard.

For shipping, visit Settings > Shipping and you can connect your account with a supported major shipping carrier (like FedEx or UPS) for real-time rates. For more information on shipping, this Knowledgebase article is a great resource.

And now, taxes! Shift4Shop's built-in sales tax calculation will help you collect the right amount of tax so you can avoid paying it out of pocket (or worse: having to pay a fine or penalty). You can find the Tax Manager in Settings > Payment within the dashboard. More information is available here in the Knowledgebase. Make sure you're familiar with the amount of tax you need to charge — if you have any doubts, speak to an expert!

Step 8: Test Your Store

Now, everything is set up! It's time to take your store for a test drive. There are a few ways you can do this. The simplest is to pretend you're a customer and visit your store. Get a feel for how easy it is to navigate, and look for any possible mistakes you've made (even as small as a typo). You might also want to get others to take a look, as the more pairs of "fresh eyes," the better! If you contact Shift4Shop, they can visit your store as well, and even assist you by placing a test order to make sure everything is running smoothly.

Step 9: Go Live!

If you've decided your Shift4Shop store is ready for launch, go for it! The process here depends on how you registered your domain name. If you had Shift4Shop register it for you, contact Shift4Shop support and tell them you're ready to go live. They'll connect the domain to the store for you. If you registered your domain yourself, you'll need to connect it in your domain registrar account — see this Knowledgebase article for more information. One thing to remember is that no matter which method you use, it can take up to 48 hours for a domain name to "propagate," which essentially means fully connected. So if your site isn't accessible instantly, don't worry!

Step 10: Marketing and Growth

Whew! Your online store is live, so now it's time to start bringing in the customers! The first step in marketing, of course, is to tell family and friends that you've just launched an online store. Make an announcement on your social media, add the domain name to your profile, and so on. But once you've reached out to friends and family, you have more work to do. Start working on SEO as soon as possible (here's Shift4Shop's Beginner's Guide to SEO) before you invest in paid advertising. Use Shift4Shop's built-in blog module to add valuable content to your site. Create your first coupon code for new customers (perhaps 20% off their first order) and share it freely. Above all, remember that growing an audience takes time, and the Shift4Shop staff is ready to help!