



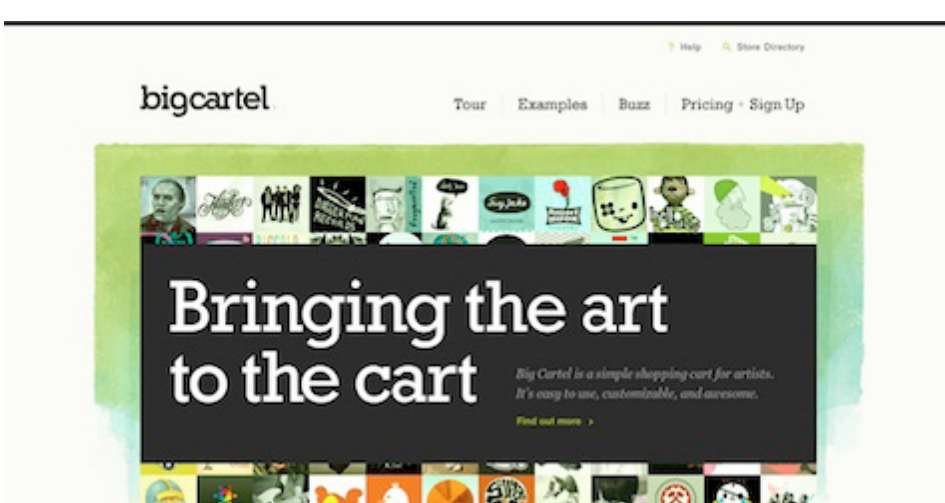
Kelli Shaver (Mashable) | 28 June, 2011.

## 5 DIY E-Commerce Solutions For Small Business



Small business often have small budgets, and many times having a custom e-commerce solution developed simply isn't feasible or practical (or, let's be honest, necessary). For the small retailer who wants to get online and start selling quickly, there are several great options available in the form of hosted services and subscription-based Web applications.

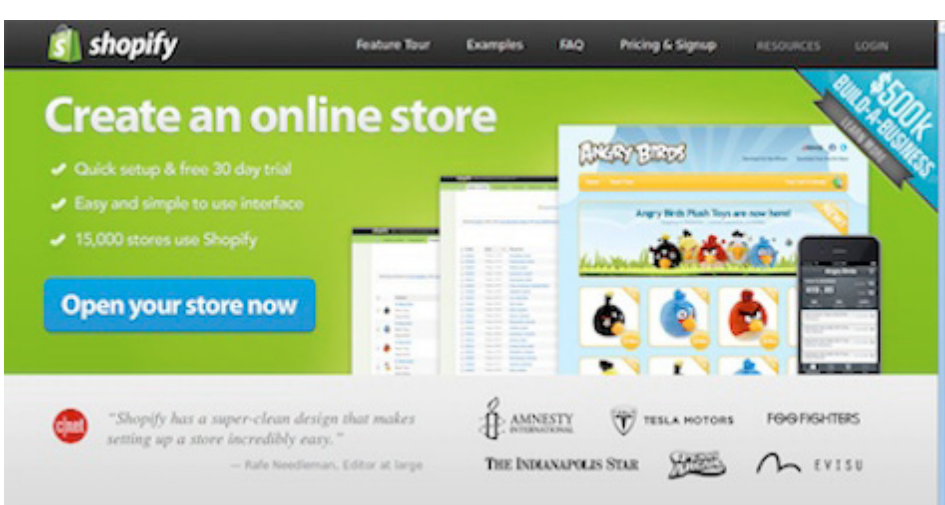
Below, we'll take a look at five of those options, their average cost, basic requirements and what sets them apart. Our list is by no means exhaustive. There are many great services out there and we urge you to consider them all to find the one that's just right for your business. Let us know which one you use in the comments.



### 1. Big Cartel

Big Cartel, in its own words, "provides you with your own independent store to sell your stuff online." Prices range from \$9.99 per month for 25 products, to \$29.99 per month for up to 300 products, with varying levels of customization with each plan. Big Cartel has a few nice perks—it only charges a monthly fee and doesn't take a percentage of your sales revenues, and it can link in

directly with any PayPal or bank account, meaning you won't need an expensive merchant account or have to deal with gateway fees. For individuals and small vendors who sell a limited product inventory, this is a great option.



### 2. Shopify

Shopify was one of the first hosted e-commerce SAAS applications and a popular solution among merchants who may be selling a larger variety of products. Prices range from \$29 per month all the way to \$699 per month, depending largely on the number of products in your inventory (100 for the smallest plan, 50,000 for the largest, with disk space and bandwidth scaling accordingly).

Shopify charges a transaction fee between 0.5 and 2 percent in addition to the monthly rates for all but its largest plan. You'll need a merchant account to use Shopify, and it supports a large number of gateway services.

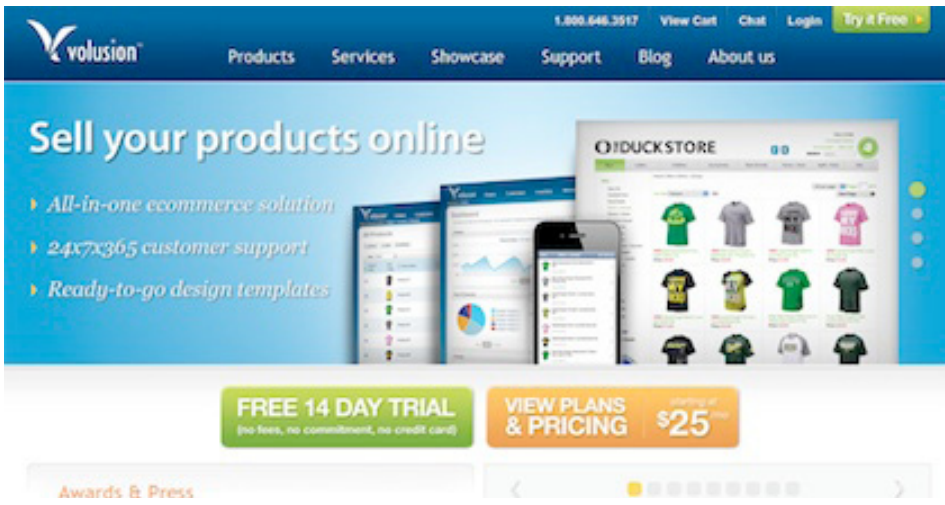
Though the cost of a Shopify store can be a bit expensive, you'll get a lot of bang for your buck from a proven, reliable service provider who's been around a bit longer than many of its competitors.



### 3. Big Commerce

Big Commerce is another option for high-volume, large inventory online sales that's slightly less expensive than Shopify, with plans that range from \$49.95 per month to \$299.95 per month. The top two plans give you unlimited products, and the bottom three allow 100, 500 and 1000, respectively. Big Commerce also includes tools for selling on eBay and Facebook, a returns system, and it can even

assist with marketing and drop-shipping. There's also a whole host of reporting tools, SEO services and inventory and content management capabilities, as well as a few other handy features.

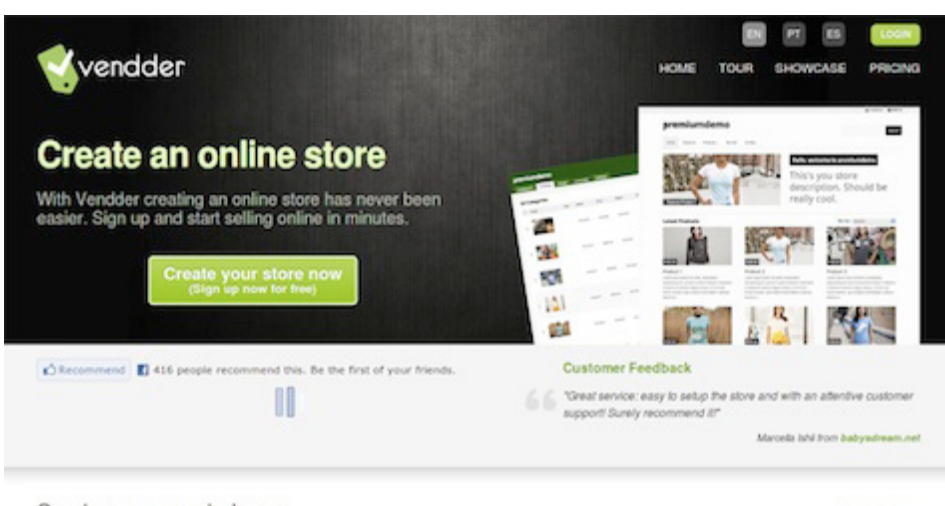


### 4. Volusion

Volusion is an all-in-one hosted e-commerce provider that will have you up and running in no time. Plans range from \$25 per month to \$149 per month and scale similarly to Big Commerce's options. All Volusion merchants receive 24/7/365 customer support and access to free design templates for customizing your storefront. There is an additional application process to allow you to accept

credit card payments online, for a processing fee of 2.17 percent per transaction, with payments deposited directly into your bank account by Volusion, bypassing any additional gateway fees.

In addition to providing great software, the Volusion team also offers design and marketing services for an additional fee, so if you're looking to get your feet wet with e-commerce but would like a bit of help from skilled professionals, the Volusion staff has you covered.



### 5. Vendder

Vendder lets you set up a storefront and start selling products online in just minutes. Unlike many of its competitors, Vendder even offers a free plan that allows you to sell up to 15 products (customization and theme options are of course limited). Vendder's two other plans, Plus and Pro, cost \$24 per month (for 150 products) and \$49 per month (for 500 products). Vendder offers a nice

set of customization tools and both premium and basic templates are available. Despite the low monthly fees and free plans, according to the Vendder support staff, there are no additional transaction fees. This makes the service a great option for small businesses on a tight budget. Custom plans are also available.