

# The Complete 6-Step Guide to Ecommerce Replatforming

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Change is the only constant in eCommerce. If you don't pivot your business toward the emerging trends in the current digital shopping industry, then you open up the opportunity for your competitors to outpace you and steal your business.

So, how do you keep up with what's next?

One best practice for staying on top of the new trends as they arise is replatforming. No matter how good your original shopping cart platform was when you purchased it, if it's more than a few years old or your business has gone through extensive growth since you updated, it might be time for a change.

**FACT:** It takes around 50 milliseconds (about 0.05 seconds) for users to form an opinion about your website that determines whether they'll stay or navigate away.

[Source](#)

## Here's why you should think about eCommerce replatforming:

- ✓ If your current platform is not performing to its best abilities,
- ✓ No longer has the functionality and features you know your business desperately needs,
- ✓ Or continues to be a liability due to the time-consuming work it requires to maintain.

However, even the most influential eCommerce players are facing a full spectrum of fears that hold them away from growth. Especially now, when the COVID-19 outbreak spells an uncertain future for many online sellers, making a significant change can be daunting.

To help mitigate some of the stressors of replatforming, we put together the best practices and top tips for eCommerce website migration to ensure your project goes smoothly. *We're here to help you understand how eCommerce replatforming works, why you need it, what you have to take into account to get started, and whether you want to trust the replatforming task to a team.*

Ready to get started?

# I. What eCommerce Replatforming Is and Why It Matters

**eCommerce site migration** refers to a process of transferring your entire store from one eCommerce platform to another.

The eCommerce replatforming is commonly done to improve performance and overall customer experience, enrich functionality, and fill security gaps. Reducing future expenses is also among the main reasons to migrate to a new shopping cart.

(You'll discover more reasons to migrate in Chapter 2)

This process is falsely considered to be tough. Why? Probably because of the considerable amount of steps you have to take along the line.

It's true: All your product data, attributes, shipping and payment settings, features, and other things you've been compiling and setting up need to be transferred. (And that's in addition to everything you need to do in pre- and post-launch activities.)

But in reality, there's no need to dramatize the process. If you have strategic priorities confirmed well in advance, every piece of the replatforming process will run smoothly.

Read on to find out some of the common reasons why it may be time for you to migrate your online business to a new, better home.

## II. Reasons to Set the Replatforming Project in Motion

No matter how involved you are in your business processes, you may not be aware that it's time to upgrade your shopping cart platform.

Below are a few counter-intuitive signals that indicate it's time to move on and change your outdated eCommerce solution.

- ✓ **You have sudden spikes in website traffic that cause outages.**  
According to [Gartner's study](#), the average cost of website downtime is \$5600K per minute and up to \$300,000 per hour. You can't afford to let revenue like that go out of the door — especially because your traffic is high.
- ✓ **Your store's speed is slower during the high season** when the traffic is higher than usual, which results in an increased number of unhappy customers and abandoned carts.
- ✓ **To get access to new features, you regularly have to pass through an over-complicated upgrade process** that costs you a fortune. That's why you prefer to stick with an outdated software version.



Another point is upgrades. X-Cart 5 makes it extremely easy to migrate whereas in Magento the costs are extremely high since a 3rd party developer has to get involved.

Gary Pettigrew at WeBuyBlack

- ✓ **Platform developers are too slow to implement new features** (usually because it requires a lot of coding), so you have to wait or put your ideas aside until the time is right.
- ✓ **Your eCommerce platform lacks some basic features**, or they show up later than expected. As a result, **your team spends extra time and money** customizing the tools that should be, as you think, naturally built-in to the Commerce platform.



Before moving to X-Cart 5, we investigated a few other options with other companies. However, we found that X-Cart was the most flexible and customizable shopping cart compared to the others.

Yuho Yamamoto at Fumoto Online Store

- ✓ The lack of default functionality causes you to spend more money connecting **third-party services** to deliver a better experience.
- ✓ **The cost of ownership grows day by day** as the default functionality is no longer enough for your growing needs.
- ✓ Your **competition is already a step ahead**, rolling out state-of-the-art features and offering a better user experience.
- ✓ **Your store is still not responsive**, so you observe low traffic from mobile along with sustainable traffic from desktops.
- ✓ **Your store's design looks a bit outdated**, and platform developers do not offer well-designed, streamlined eCommerce templates that are ready for the mobile era.



**From the front end the tool shines as well. It's fast, responsive and intuitive. Its checkout process is clean and simple.**

Adam Halem at Arcamedia Corp.

- ✓ Your platform provider fails to ensure [adequate eCommerce website security](#) leaving the doors open for hackers and security breaches.
- ✓ **Your customers keep complaining** about the usability of your storefront. Your team members keep complaining, too, as the admin experience is also not performing well enough.

- ✓ **You observe complex issues with indexing.** This may also be the sign that your eCommerce platform is not ready for SEO.

If you experience at least three of the problems above, it may be the right time to consider replatforming.

## III. What You Need to Know Before Moving on to Another eCommerce Platform

While eCommerce replatforming is a serious process, that should not deter you from continuing with your mission to update your platform. Now that you know WHY it's time to replatform, let's consider the HOW of replatforming.

First things first: Assessing the technical and non-technical aspects of replatforming. If you can answer the below questions, you're ready for the logistical aspects of transferring your website.

1. Have you got a dedicated team of replatforming experts who will execute the technical part?
2. Is every member of your team aware of the scope of works and ready to jump on a new task?

3. Do you have an extra sum of money just in case of an emergency? (You should be prepared for the unexpected.)
4. Have you got a detailed picture of the eCommerce software you are going to use?

Next: It's important to dive deeper into the considerations for getting started with the right eCommerce platform. Here's what you need to know about discovering the correct milestones for replatforming.

## 1. Pick the right eCommerce platform

When it comes to eCommerce platforms, they typically fall into four categories:

**Homegrown:** A homegrown platform is a custom-built software, the origins of which you may not know. They are pretty customizable but expensive to maintain. It's usually too risky to use them.

**Example:** Bridgevine

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**On-Premise:** An on-premise platform is a downloadable eCommerce platform that is installed locally on clients' servers and managed by the IT staff. Ultimate scalability is what differentiates it from other platforms.

**Example:** X-Cart

**Cloud:** A cloud eCommerce platform hosts and manages clients' online stores, just like SaaS. However, clients still have to do security patches, perform upgrades, and other tech stuff on their own.

**Example:** Ecwid

**SaaS (Software as a Service):** A SaaS platform is a cloud-based system that is accessible on any web browser. And though such systems usually offer many apps to choose from, customers are still tied to the default functionality.

**Example:** Shopify

## Why People Choose to Migrate to X-Cart On-Premise eCommerce Software

A couple of years ago, I personally [interviewed 16 customers](#) to find out the reasons why they migrated to X-Cart, one of the most developer-friendly platforms.

The common theme: All of them started on the X-Cart classic edition before upgrading to X-Cart to grow their eCommerce power.

**Below is a summary of what they shared with me:**

- ✓ With 45+ high-converting templates and responsive layout, X-Cart is fully ready for the mobile era.



## **We migrated to have a mobile-friendly store.**

Randy Meppelink at [BlindShadeMotors.com](https://www.BlindShadeMotors.com)

- ✓ X-Cart has an arsenal of helpful apps to choose from and the shopping cart gives merchants the ability to grow and continuously upgrade their marketing process.
- ✓ Due to its modular architecture, customizing X-Cart is simple and makes it easy to upgrade, freshen up your online store, and be competitive. Plus, there's no chance to harm the current site when customizations are made.
- ✓ The layout is built with all the latest design trends in mind, like vertical rhythm and the Bootstrap Grid System, which allows for intuitive, customer-first design and navigation.



## **The new version is more graphically pleasing, and can be modified easily with different look and feel.**

Lewis Schucart, editor of AOAI magazine

- ✓ Surprisingly enough, replatforming can result in significant improvements to your website's SEO, and adding AMP pages, rich snippets, and short URLs increases your overall software potential.
- ✓ Our eCommerce solution keeps your online business safe from new threats, regularly applying security and bug fixes, and allows merchants to be fully compliant with international laws like GDPR and SCA.



**X-Cart 5 is PCI-DSS compliant using Authorize.Net with the Accept.js module. The new version will save us money on credit card processing.**

Lewis Schucart, editor of AOAI magazine

With the high cost of managing Magento websites and the increasing need for extensive technical assistance, we often get [requests from Magento 1 store owners](#) about how to transition to X-Cart.



**Not only is Magento support ridiculously expensive, but I've dealt with them, and they are terrible at coming to a solution. This means if you're on Community Edition, you'll have to rely on 3rd party developers to resolve a problem.**

Gary Pettigew at WeBuyBlack

Another reason why Magento customers choose to transition to X-Cart is because of the organized code structure of X-Cart software.

Developers – familiar with the underlying Symphony and Doctrine frameworks – find X-Cart quite easy to tweak and extend with new custom-built add-ons.

Another pro of using X-Cart solution is that it offers [everything B2B eCommerce company may need](#) to sell successfully online, and its multi-vendor solution allows for creating a store with many vendors on board similar to Amazon's best-selling structure.

Plus, our support engineers are second to none. Instead of going by the book, our customer service team is interested in listening to our clients first and then tackling the challenges they feel are most important.

***All in all, online sellers prefer moving their businesses to X-Cart because other shopping cart platforms, including the one mentioned above, restrict store owners' ability to grow and extend default functionality. It either takes too much time and brings more pain than goodness, or it costs them a kidney.***

## 2. Assess the overall impact and get an RFP

Replatforming will only benefit you if the new eCommerce software brings significant improvements to your online business. It should NOT inhibit your growth, slow performance, and let nasty bugs slip through the cracks.

Before you start the transition, you should initiate an [RFP](#) (Request For Proposal) process with a few of the platforms you're considering. In addition to helping alleviate your concerns as you evaluate the eCommerce providers, an RFP can also map out the list of required customizations and integrations that you hope to implement in your new eCommerce presence.

This request for a proposal will serve you as the basis for your replatforming project as it will provide a detailed picture of what is planned.

In an RFP, it's essential to make the slides well-structured and clear so that every member of your team and, what's more important, the key stakeholders could quickly scan and make an informed decision.



## **A proper RFP includes the following:**

- ✓ The suggested roadmap
- ✓ Time schedule and deliverables
- ✓ Budgeting details
- ✓ The list of team members responsible for the transition
- ✓ Other details

### **3. Trust your platform providers and the migration team**

Familiarize yourself with the tools your platform providers are going to use to transfer the data but try not to interfere much with their activities.

Find the ones whom you trust. And let the professionals do their job!

### **4. Stick to your website migration checklist**

Keeping tabs on your migration checklist is the best plan for ensuring that you're systematically improving, rather than chaotically multitasking, during the replatforming process.

Need help putting a checklist together? Check out our website migration plan [Template] [here](#) to get started.

### **5. Evaluate the skills and abilities of your team**

Having all hands on deck for your replatforming is one of the most critical parts of getting your replatforming to go smoothly. Every

department has stakes in your new digital presence, and therefore should be engaged throughout the replatforming process.

To ensure everyone is on the same page before pressing the “Go” button, stop for a moment and make sure that:

- ✓ Your technical specialists are skilled enough;
- ✓ Every department has got at least one person who would be responsible for replatforming;
- ✓ Every member of your team is aware of your goals and priorities;
- ✓ Top managers have a backup plan (just in case).

If you're interested in a more in-depth understanding of how different departments can coordinate on this project, or would like a blueprint plan of onboarding your team for replatforming, [contact our team today](#).

## 6. Post-launch testing and debugging

If the critical part of the replatforming process is over, it does not mean you can sit back and relax.

You'd better prepare for the unexpected and extend your technical support subscription for at least a few weeks to make sure your fresh website fully meets your expectations.

Here at X-Cart, we offer a free three-month onboarding period to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## 7. Challenge your inner fears

One last thing: If you haven't completed the replatforming process, it means one of the following statements is true:

- a) You are an extra cautious person;
- b) Or there's something still standing in your way.

If you answered "A," you might still have a few questions about the process that need to be answered. That's ok! Keep reading, we've got a lot more tips (and answers) below.

If you answered "B," you're most likely letting uncertainty, fear, or over-caution be a roadblock in your decision to move forward.

Both of those feelings are valid and are essential in helping you decide on a quality platform that's right for your business. So let's get the ball rolling on how to solve both in the next chapter.

# IV. Fears and Misconceptions About Replatforming

Let's look at [each of these fears](#) more closely and dispel the misconception that replatforming your online business has to be painful:

**Myth #1: Replatforming is a never-ending process, risky, and not worth the results.** Not true. We can't be responsible for other shopping cart platforms, but X-Cart's replatforming process is pretty straightforward. There's an add-on that allows you to migrate yourself. And, just in case you have any roadblocks, we've created a dedicated team of replatforming specialists who will happily give you a hand.

**Myth #2: Migration to another platform is prohibitively expensive.** I would agree with you here as the eCommerce migration services typically cost a fortune. Again, not with X-Cart. You can migrate your data yourself using our migration tools. It's free. Absolutely. Or, if you'd prefer, let the pros handle the data migration service for you. It will cost you \$989. And, as a bonus, you'll get three months of free post-launch support.

**Myth #3: It's safer to stretch what you have.** Sticking to the outdated software and tools is a horrible idea, but not impossible. You surely can avoid new marketing tools, but for a little while, until your customers fleet away to your competitors.

**Myth #4: The new software may still be flawed. That's true.** But it's up to you to decide which eCommerce platform is best for your business, isn't it? There are many tools that limit the buyer's ability to grow; Shopify and BigCommerce, offering SaaS (=non-customisable) solutions, are in the first category. Even though both have large app libraries, they don't offer any customizations for unique business needs.

There are over 1K apps in the X-Cart App Store, and if you can't find the features you are looking for, our developers are happy to create it for you. Your developer will be able to do it as well as the shopping cart is open-source.

**Myth #5: The new eCommerce software is harder to customize.**

Wrong. X-Cart software is super flexible, and due to its modular architecture, coding is a little like playing Mario. The SaaS platforms mentioned above just won't allow you to code at all.

**Myth #6: You are likely to overshoot the budget and get zero ROI.** The fear of unexpected new costs or no return on investment is very legitimate. To avoid excessive money spends, you might need to share your concerns with your new platform provider and try to address all the concepts upfront. With X-Cart, the whole process is as transparent as it can be. We provide you with the specs and guarantee that you will not exceed the estimated budget.

**Myth #7: The new shopping cart will slow down your eCommerce website and make it more vulnerable to cyber-attacks.** That depends on the software you choose. None of the open-source shopping cart solutions, like OpenCart or PrestaShop, even come closer to X-Cart in

terms of speed and security. Hosted on specially designed X-Cart servers, X-Cart 5 eCommerce stores load in just 0.2-0.4 seconds. Also, X-Cart is fully compliant with the latest PCI-DSS standards and provides a vast number of tools to secure your store from fraud.

**Myth #8: If you are an employee, you may be afraid of being fined (or fired).** It's natural to fear making the wrong decision, but anxiety isn't necessarily a bad thing. Replatforming is a big commitment. And if you take responsibility for certain decisions, it's normal to feel a bit stressed. However, nearly every online business has switched over to a new platform at least once if they have been in eCommerce for more than five years.

**Myth #9: You're going to lose traffic, SEO positioning, sales.** You won't — replatforming doesn't mean you're going to kill your business, so don't let the gibberish stress you out. Our team of replatforming experts will make sure that you are completely protected from the adverse effects of data migration.

# V. eCommerce Replatforming Checklist

Replatforming can actually be a wonderful thing as long as you do it properly and make sure nothing flips through the cracks. Below is the ultimate eCommerce platform migration checklist that should help you pick the eCommerce platform that will match your unique business needs and safely handle the data migration process.

1. **Start with the list of things your shopping cart platform lacks.** You should not limit yourself to the list of features. A robust [eCommerce shopping cart](#) is not all about apps and beautiful layout. Try to think out of the box and assess the overall stability of your current platform. Has your store's security failed at critical moments? What about upgradability? Is it time-consuming? It's best to get every member of your team involved. They may give you a hint of where your platform fails to serve you.
2. Now get a new angle on your eCommerce software — **put down the list of desirable features** you are seeking in the new eCommerce platform. Just a couple of ideas for you:
  - ✓ Product management capabilities;
  - ✓ Various marketing apps to choose from, such as coupons and discounts;
  - ✓ Options for email marketing;

- ✓ Reporting tools to track sales and revenue; Intuitive interface and checkout;
- ✓ High-level security;
- ✓ Speedy page loads;
- ✓ Options for customization;
- ✓ Shipping and payment options;
- ✓ Opportunities for multi-channel sales;
- ✓ Plus, other abilities to help you scale up your business and compete.

3. Gather feedback from every member of your team, including the key stakeholders, upper management, and their subordinates. Don't shut down. Share your thoughts with your team and listen to what other people think.

**Hint:** *People who work tightly with clients have the best insight into whether it's time to re-platform or not as they are the ones who get customer feedback straight from the horse's mouth.*

4. When you feel like you are ready to make the final decision, **communicate your plan to stakeholders and team** as it may (and will) affect all the departments and each employee.

5. **Elaborate a detailed plan.** (This eCommerce migration checklist is created right for that.) Do your best to stick to it and urge your team members to take it seriously, too. Remember that a rookie mistake can

ruin a near-perfect plan.

6. **Be ready to cooperate with platform developers** as they are the ones who know the ropes of the software. Confide in people you are working with. Here at X-Cart, we've got a [web dev department](#) that consists of 100+ skilled developers trained to tackle even the most sophisticated issues.

7. **Evaluate your budget** for the replatforming project as a whole. Have you got a rainy-day fund? You should.

8. Keep it in mind that your **eCommerce replatforming comes with the redesign**. (Yes, you'll have to think about your website's branding before you start moving your data to a new platform.) Our advice: Hire a designer or pick one of the pre-built [design templates](#) your eCommerce platform offers.

9. When the orchestration process is over, and it looks like everyone is ready to roll, **backup all the eCommerce store data** you may need in case of an error. The replatforming process usually goes without a hitch if you migrate your online store to X-Cart, but we also do backups. It's a good practice, and it's wise to be on the safe side.

10. **Find and hire eCommerce shopping cart migration experts who will migrate all your data safely**. But before you choose to go for a third-party service, make sure that the platform does not offer migration as a free (or paid) service. If so, get a move on and let trusted eCommerce platform developers manage that for you.

11. Once the preparation part is over, **it's time to execute the migration itself**. Just as a recap, the X-Cart migration team offers assistance to make sure your site will stay up throughout the migration process. It also means that you won't lose a sale and will be able to carry out your business processes while our tech specialists do some coding magic in the background.

12. Your goal is to provide your customers with a fast, high-quality, and secure checkout experience. **Make sure your payment gateway works flawlessly** and is protected against fraudulent behavior. Verify that your checkout page has got everything you need to sell products to customers effectively.

13. **Send the draft copy of your updated website to the design team.** Getting their team to proofread your work will help decrease the opportunities for error.

14. **SEO** should be one of the crucial parts of your eCommerce replatforming project. Meta tags, titles, descriptions, links, page structure, redirects, page load times – all these things directly affect your Google ranking. Check them all out thoroughly or let some SEO guru do it for you.

15. Have you ever customized the default functionality of your current platform? Bad news. It's likely that you (or your replatforming provider) will have to **transfer all the custom features manually or code them from scratch** on a new eCommerce platform. With X-Cart, you won't find yourself left without resources; we can either provide you with the necessary app, or we'll code a solution just for you. There's always an

alternative.

**16. Test it from the ground up. And then test it once again.** You must be 110% sure that your storefront and admin backend work perfectly together and do not affect site performance. Try to predict the future buyer's scenario and walk the customer's path to purchase.

**17. Launch your refreshed (or completely refurbished!) online store.** Be brave!

**18. Make an announcement.** Train your team to use the backend to avoid time lags. Communicate the changes to your customer base. They are likely to spot the changes, so be aware and show them the benefits of working with a new platform.

## **VI. What Not to Do During the eCommerce Site Migration Process**

There are many factors, such as indecisiveness, inconsistent roadmap, unfortunate timing, budgeting mistakes, and others that can kill your replatforming process entirely. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that.

I'm here to point out the two things that look less evident to me:

# Overengineering your solution

The replatforming process may seem complicated to you – and it can be, if you don't have the right amount of resources and support during the transition.

But don't get caught in the misconception that an overly complicated plan (that may still look amazing in PowerPoint) will have you covered. Instead, ditch perfectionism and be realistic about your plans, this will get you to your end goal faster and more efficiently.

*(Or just entrust the task to experts who will migrate your eCommerce store. They know how to do it right.)*

Take a closer look at what REALLY matters for your customers and what will help you provide excellent service throughout their journey. Focus on the essential things that will be integrated properly, won't cost you a fortune, and cover your customers' basic needs.

Replatforming is not a big deal if you keep things easy.

## Chaotic communication

Unproductive chaotic communication between the teams is the sneaky villain that may ruin your eCommerce platform migration process.

Define the key decision-makers and give them the free will executing

the task. Even if anything goes wrong, there will always be the one who makes the final decision.

### **Want to learn more?**

Our most-detailed guide will walk you through the entire eCommerce replatforming process from start to finish. And if there's still anything that you find complicated, it's OK – IT things aren't always easy. Our replatforming experts are just one call or email away.

Happy replatforming. Stay safe. And keep it in mind: switching eCommerce platforms should not scare the daylights out of you.

At X-Cart, we've spent years finding the best, most efficient way for you to see a return on your eCommerce investment. Whether you're looking for customizations to build your brand or just need more power to handle all of your online business, we're here to help you organize, ideate, and grow your business with a strategic replatforming process that delivers real results.

[Contact us today to learn more about how you can get started with X-Cart.](#)