

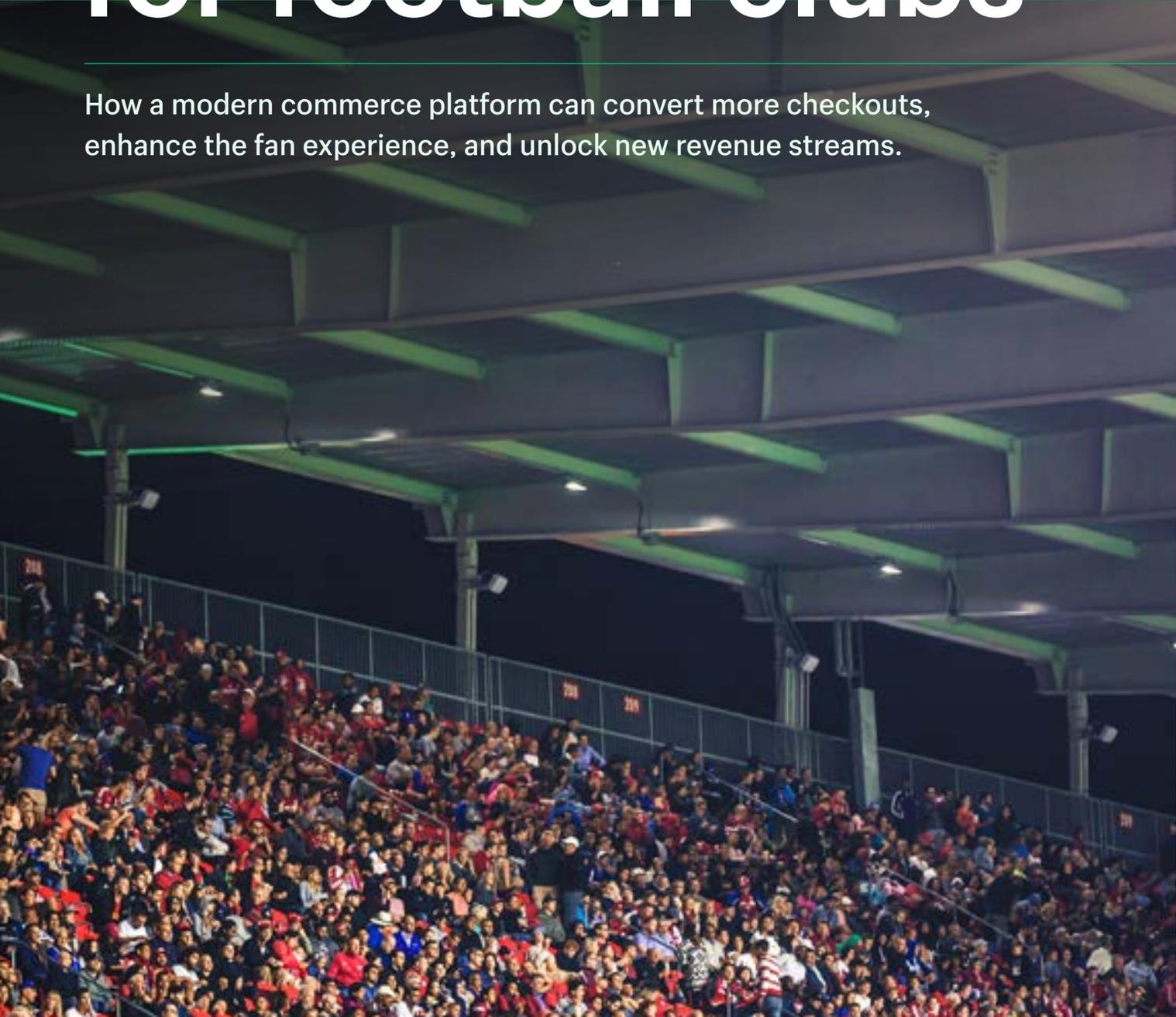


The commerce playbook

Winning strategies

for football clubs

How a modern commerce platform can convert more checkouts, enhance the fan experience, and unlock new revenue streams.



Contents

01

Football and ecommerce
The current landscape
page 4

02

Shopify in football
Transforming retail
page 6

03

Social commerce
How to meet fans where they are
page 10

04

Omnichannel
How to sell everywhere
page 16

05

Sales, drops, and events
How to plan, schedule, or
react instantly
page 22

06

Football club retail
Future trends
page 28

07

Team up with Shopify
Talk to us
page 32



Football is a highly competitive and combative sport on the pitch, where smart decision-making under pressure is fundamental to success. It's the same story behind the scenes. Clubs have to make clear-sighted commercial decisions every day to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals and give their fans a memorable experience.

This includes retail. Whether online, in-store, or on social platforms, modern fans demand an omnichannel experience that matches the buyer-centered, frictionless customer journey they expect from mainstream retail brands.

Initially, these ambitions might seem out of reach. At many clubs, retail is commonly led by a very small team, often using outdated commerce systems. The reality is that retail, an increasingly critical revenue driver, is painfully under-resourced at clubs when it comes to technology.

Today, however, there is an alternative: clubs can benefit from exactly the same tools used by modern retailers. Without any technological expertise or support from a tech team, they are able to build a modern commerce platform, maximise sales opportunities, and give fans the seamless experience they crave.

Through insight, case studies, and thought leadership, this whitepaper sets out how, with the support of Shopify, a football club can:

Easily build and customise your online storefront, product pages, and checkout

Sell seamlessly on your social channels, website, and in-store

Maximise retail opportunities during high-traffic events, such as player signings

Fully engage fans around product drops and flash sales

Leverage real-time analytics and react quickly to trends

Reward fan loyalty

Implement a cross-border selling strategy

Football and ecommerce: The current landscape

Football is the most popular sport in the world. Whether it's Barcelona vs. Real Madrid at Camp Nou in front of 100,000 fans, caged football between teenagers in south London, or futsal on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro, football's global reach dwarfs all other sports.

Fifa estimates the number of football fans at 5 billion. At the same time, Uefa reports that the television audience for the 2023 Champions League final reached 450 million—an even more impressive figure when set against the 2022 Super Bowl's audience of 115.1 million.

5 Billion

estimated number of football fans

€29B

estimated value of the European football market

This, of course, will be no surprise to anyone who works in football. The beautiful game is adored worldwide and continues to grow in both new and old territories.

In Europe, the football market is valued at over €29 billion—a rise from €16.9 billion in 2010–11—and is expected to grow by 4.5% annually. With a forecast value of €6.6 billion in 2023–24, English football leads the way, powered by one of the most financially successful sports leagues in the world: the Premier League.

Outside of England, the football markets in Germany, Spain, Italy, and France are all valued at over €2 billion each. It isn't all about the big five leagues, though: over 1,000 professional clubs are represented in 39 European leagues across 33 countries.

That, right there, is a lot of football fans. And where there are a lot of fans, there is a passionate, engaged, and captive audience wanting to demonstrate their love for their team or favourite player by purchasing shirts, merchandise, tickets, tokens, streams, and much more.



Football fans are product-hungry

The licensed sports merchandise market value globally grew from \$26.47 billion to \$33.99 billion between 2018 and 2023, and football across Europe has followed this trend.

The rise in shirt sales across Europe reflects the crucial role commerce plays in commercial operations. While figures from 2021 show that the likes of Bayern Munich (3.25 million), Real Madrid (3.05 million), and Liverpool (2.45 million) enjoy staggering shirt sales, it is big business at all levels of the football pyramid. For example, Coventry City, in the second tier of English football, sold over 40,000 shirts in the 2022–23 season, while Bradford City, in the fourth tier, sold 15,000 in the 2021–22 season.

It also goes far beyond kits: clothing ranges, memorabilia, accessories, books, games, and much more all contribute to revenue growth in football retail businesses. Best-selling products on Manchester United's online store include a bespoke football, a lunch bag, a wallet in collaboration with Paul Smith, a training drills set, a print of Old Trafford, and a Remington quick-cut clipper, among thousands of items.

The product possibilities are endless, and football fans are hungry for more.



\$33.99 Billion

global licensed sports merchandise market in 2023

Shopify in football: Transforming retail

Football clubs are among the biggest brands on the planet. As many of the world's best retail brands work with Shopify, it's unsurprising that some of the most iconic clubs are also turning to Shopify to reach fans where they are, convert more checkouts, and deliver an enhanced fan experience.

Football clubs x Shopify

In recent years, Shopify has been busy adding to its portfolio of football clubs across Europe. Together, clubs on Shopify have won several major European trophies, hundreds of top-flight domestic titles, and have a combined social media presence totalling hundreds of millions of fans. Not only that, but Lionel Messi's and Cristiano Ronaldo's global stores are on Shopify.

Having Real Madrid, one of the world's biggest and most famous football clubs, using Shopify shows how ambitious we are. It also demonstrates how trusted we are, and shows we deliver within football.

Marc Lerma,
Senior Solutions Engineer, Spain, Shopify

Shopify isn't shy about its ambitions in football. Powering millions of commerce businesses globally, in industries as wide-ranging as fashion and apparel, media and entertainment, food and beverage, and fitness and nutrition, Shopify aims to grow its presence in football—and football clubs can grow with Shopify.

Armed with the right tools, clubs can enjoy the same ecommerce success as mainstream retailers. This whitepaper will demonstrate this using insights from Shopify experts and industry thought leaders, testimony from football clubs, and case studies from brands that have elevated their businesses with Shopify, including:

These clubs and retailers are already leveraging Shopify for growth



Club Brugge

How Shopify brought the Club Brugge fan experience to life and boosted printed shirt sales by 25%



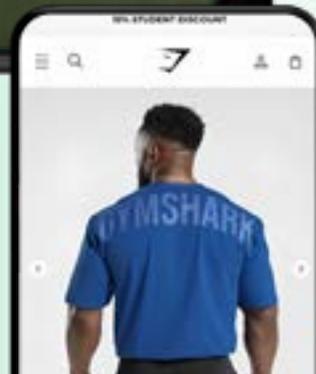
T1TAN

How goalkeeper gloves brand T1TAN increased its conversion rate by 25% after migrating



Gymshark

How Gymshark outgrew Magento and replatformed to scale internationally



Why Shopify?

The global licensed football merchandise market is [forecast](#) to rise from \$11.4 billion in 2022 to \$20 billion in 2031. This makes it very attractive—and increasingly competitive. The availability of cheaper bootleg and unofficial products, and merchandise from external sports retail sites, means football clubs have growing commerce competition.

Clubs enjoy captive and engaged audiences but converting that into growth isn't the open goal for retail teams that many assume.

\$20B

projected global football merchandise market in 2031

This is where Shopify comes in.

Think of Shopify as a ball-playing central midfielder, mixing creativity, innovation, and hard work to streamline ecommerce operations and bring scale, simplicity, adaptability, and results to a football club's retail division.

Shopify is an all-in-one commerce platform with a dynamic and always-growing suite of features, products, and apps that can take football commerce to a new level. These include:



Sales channels

Market wherever a club's fans are and create shoppable posts and ads across high-value social media channels such as TikTok and Instagram, as well as high-traffic Google surfaces including Search and YouTube.



Shopify Checkout

Turn fans into buyers with [the best-converting checkout in the world](#).



Headless commerce

Unlock the creative freedom to build unique storefront experiences for different fan touchpoints.



Shopify Launchpad

Clubs can capitalise on major events or announcements with hassle-free product drops and flash sales



Shopify POS

Connect your club's online store to its retail store so products, discounts, and sales are integrated across all surfaces and fully customisable.



Shopify B2B

Manage and grow your B2B sales with tools optimised for customisation and flexibility, all on the same intuitive Shopify platform.



Shopify Flow

Automate your store with hundreds of example templates for popular use cases, saving your small team time.



Shopify Marketplace Connect

Connect a club's Shopify product catalog to the world's top marketplaces like Amazon, Walmart, and eBay.



Shopify Markets

A cross-border management tool that helps a club identify, set up, launch, optimise, and manage its international fanbase from a single store.



Shopify benefits

Other ecommerce platforms exist. But here are **10 quick reasons why the Shopify Plus plan is the best fit for a football club:**

01 Fast time to market

Migration takes around 90 days, and launching in new countries or on new channels can be done in minutes

02 Better long-term value

Lower total cost of ownership than other ecommerce platforms

03 Easy maintenance

No full-time technical staff required to maintain servers or security

04 Extended support

Access to strategic partnerships and ongoing 24/7 technical support

05 Unparalleled scale, stability, and flex

Dedicated infrastructure that scales with a club's site globally, with the ability to flex and expand where needed

06 Continuous improvement

Automatic software and security updates, with built-in fraud analysis and bot protection

07 Safety and security

Fully PCI DSS compliant out of the box

09 Extendable and customisable

Access to extensive integrations, third-party apps, and a dedicated agency ecosystem

10 Unmatched pace of innovation

Regular new feature launches and hundreds of product updates yearly to drive growth at scale

Over the following four sections, this whitepaper will explore how football clubs can use Shopify to:

- Leverage social commerce
- Grow the omnichannel experience
- Drive flash sales and product drops
- Empower small retail teams



Having big European clubs like Real Madrid is massive, and our goal in Germany is for every club to be running on Shopify. We are ambitious to widen our portfolio in the Premier League, and we've shown at the clubs we work with—from some of the world's biggest clubs to smaller, historic clubs—we are a great fit for football.

Gianluca Pollicino

Senior Solutions Engineer, Spain, Shopify

Social commerce: How to meet your fans where they are

Social commerce is the primary growth lever for ecommerce in football. Research by [CIES Football Observatory](#) found that the hundred clubs in the world with the most combined followers on social media each had at least 4 million followers across X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

It's not all about the big clubs. The 72 teams in the English Football League have a combined social presence of over 82 million followers across X, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube.

While Instagram still dominates the football social landscape, TikTok has seen staggering growth since the start of 2022, Facebook's numbers remain eye-watering, X continues to drive conversation among football fans, and YouTube remains the go-to platform for football club video content.

Ultimately, fans spend far more time absorbing content from a football club's social channels than visiting that club's website. And with social commerce already the primary customer acquisition strategy for mainstream ecommerce businesses according to Shopify's Commerce Trends 2023 report, being able to sell across social in football is critical.

Football clubs have a significant head start here over most brands: They have existing customer bases that follow them through thick and thin, with an increasing majority active on social media. Here's how Shopify can help maximise this opportunity.



82 Million

combined social media followers of clubs
in the English Football League

The opportunity

With the time football fans dedicate to following their team's every move on social media, it is no surprise that social commerce can be a game changer for clubs.

A 2023 Deloitte report shows that 64% of digital buyers discover brands and/or products via social media. In the US, social commerce sales have risen from \$27 million in 2020 to \$45.7 million in 2022, with [McKinsey](#) forecasting another sharp rise to \$79.6 million in 2025.

64%

of digital buyers discover brands and/or products via social media

When brands sell on more than one channel through Shopify, the results are impressive: a 190% increase in revenue.

Here are three steps to meet fans where they are:

Social commerce has changed where, how, and when consumers shop.

This is good news for football clubs. But clubs can only reap the rewards of social commerce if their strategy is executed correctly. Football must catch up to other brands in embracing and implementing social commerce strategies. For example:

- Too often, a fan cannot purchase from a club's social channels, and when the option is available, the user experience is unwieldy.
- A lack of analytics tools means retail teams are often left in the dark about performance and ROI.

“Often, clubs know that what they offer fans doesn't meet the standards of what fans and consumers expect now. Social commerce is one of the most important sales channels and should be a key part of giving the fan the true end-to-end journey.”

Gianluca Pollicino
Senior Solutions Engineer, DACH, Shopify

01

Integrate social media

Being able to sell merchandise where most football fans are—on social media—must be a priority for all clubs.

A club might have a slick, highly functioning online store, but the reality is that fans don't visit or browse in large numbers. Instead, they're on social media. And a club might have vast numbers of followers on social, but if fans can't buy simply and directly from these channels, that creates a poor user experience.

Providing a fun, shoppable experience across all social channels is essential to drive growth in overall retail sales.

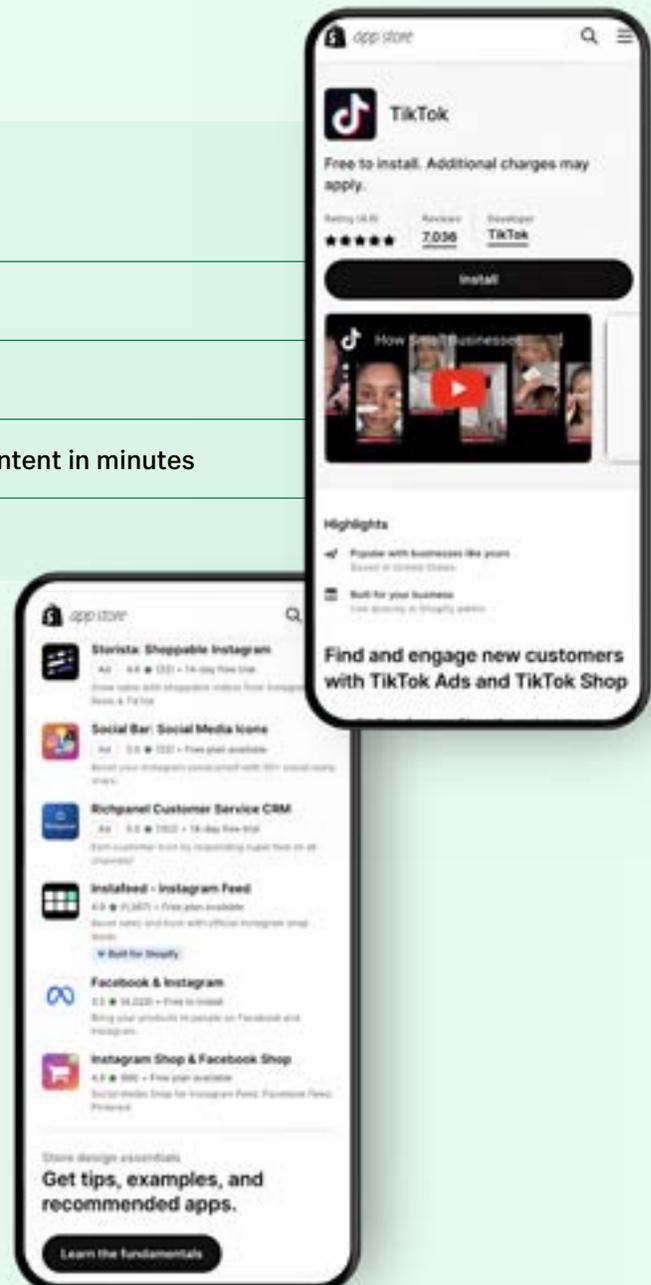
Shopify offers TikTok Shop integration and well-established and robust relationships with Meta and Google, making integration with Instagram and Facebook seamless.

The setup is simple:

- 01 Search for the app in your Shopify admin
- 02 Hit Install and integrate using your account details
- 03 Start syncing products, collections, and generating content in minutes

Because the partnership between Shopify and, say, Meta is super strong, they invest in developments alongside us, so we are always scaling. It's very flexible in choosing which products you want to sell, and customers always tell us what a game changer it is and how much stress on their team it relieves.

Gianluca Pollicino
Senior Solutions Engineer, DACH, Shopify

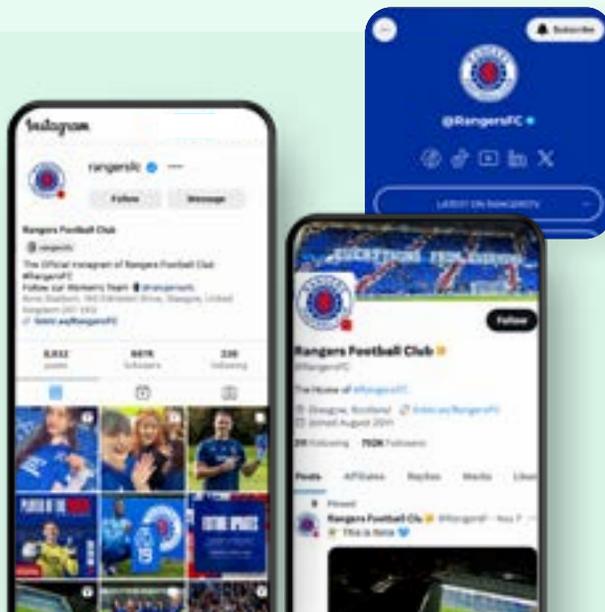


Among many examples, Shopify has enabled:



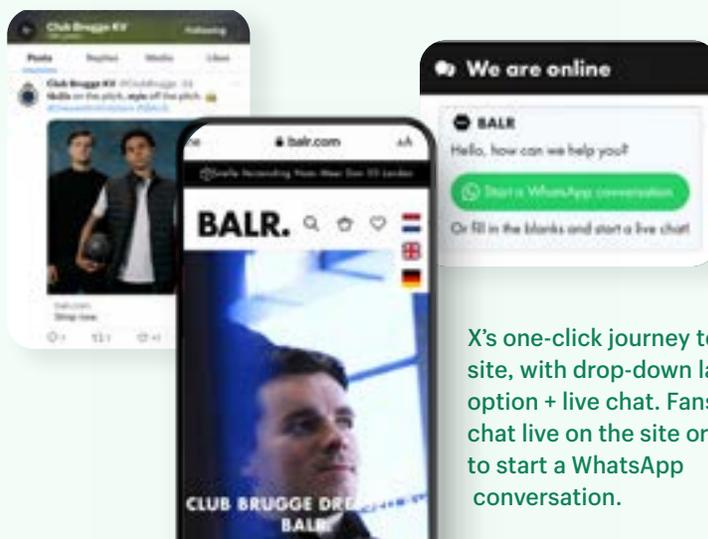
Rangers

Rangers to link from each of its social media accounts to a customisable Linktree site in a single click, via the [Linktree](#) app on the Shopify App Store. This can be adapted to push flash sales or new products.



Club Brugge

Club Brugge to link to upcoming ticket sales on Instagram Stories following the full-time whistle. Fans also enjoy a simple one-click journey from social to the retail site with dedicated customer support options.

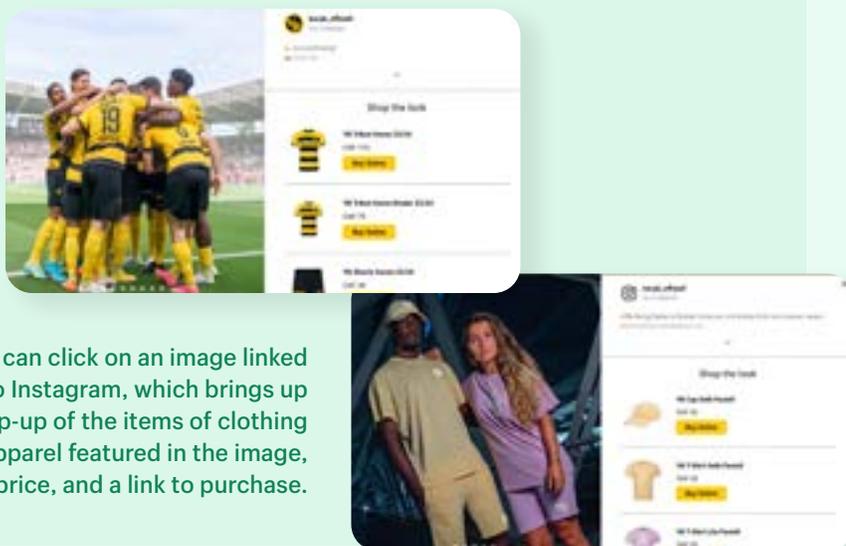


X's one-click journey to retail site, with drop-down language option + live chat. Fans can chat live on the site or choose to start a WhatsApp conversation.



BCS Young Boys

BCS Young Boys to integrate its online store with Instagram to allow fans to shop the look from Instagram photos—whether it's kit, fashion items, or training wear.



Users can click on an image linked to Instagram, which brings up a pop-up of the items of clothing or apparel featured in the image, with price, and a link to purchase.



One of the greatest benefits of Shopify is the App Store. When you want to do something new, you just install an app, and it works within a few hours. That's the freedom we really wanted, and it's a big contrast for us compared to how we used to be set up.

Gauthier Vervaeke
Merchandise & Ecommerce Manager, Club Brugge

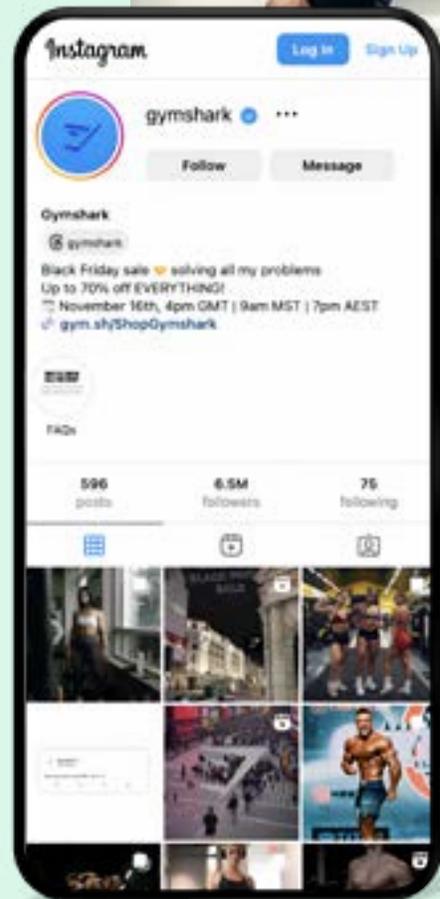


In focus

Gymshark

While having a wealth of social media followers is an opportunity for all football clubs, it also presents challenges. Sometimes, the sheer amount of traffic from social can overwhelm retail sites and platforms. This doesn't happen with Shopify.

In 2017, when [Gymshark](#) had 5.1 million Instagram followers, the traffic from Black Friday demand led to its site crashing, costing the brand an estimated £100,000 in lost sales. Gymshark immediately replatformed from Magento to Shopify, significantly improving its bottom line and helping the brand's yearly sales rise from £41 million in 2017 to £349 million in 2022.



02

Use real-time marketing and combined analytics

Club retail teams are often unable to analyse the effectiveness of social campaigns. Even successful campaigns are only useful in the short term if there is no way of gaining insights into why—and on what channels—they were successful.

An example: if a club offers fans the chance to purchase a personalised shirt of a new signing across its social channels, traditionally clubs haven't been able to track the leading acquisition channel. Similarly, clubs are rarely able to track where customer journeys start when releasing a new kit.

Having the ability to analyse in real-time where customer journeys start, which channels convert best, and where the pain points are means clubs can better understand their fans. The result? Increasingly sophisticated and targeted strategies, a better experience for fans, and more sales from future campaigns.

Shopify's engineers work with Meta and Google to deliver real-time analytics, easily installed through the Shopify App Store. No coding is needed for this—it is all done through the integration.

03

Deliver a superior user experience

There's no use having a fanatical following on social media if the sales journey from those channels is clunky and slow. A great user experience for fans means less friction, more value.

Now we have a very nice looking online store on desktop, but also on mobile. Football team branding is very important, and you want to recreate the atmosphere of a game at every step of the customer journey.

Gauthier Vervaeke

Merchandise & Ecommerce Manager, Club Brugge

Simplicity is the key. For example, one club, a German Bundesliga Shopify user, can sell shirts directly with one click when fans watch match highlights on YouTube, while Nottingham Forest of the Premier League has created a shopping experience on Instagram that integrates smoothly with its retail site:

As well as offering a simple and smooth front-end experience, Shopify's platform is easy for retail teams to navigate. Shopify makes customisation simple and cost-effective. The Shopify editor doesn't require coding and is user-friendly for people with very little technical knowledge. Users can quickly and easily customise the site's design, as well as products, discounts, checkout, and payments.

Happy fans, happy retail team.

Omnichannel: How to sell everywhere

Offering consumers an omnichannel shopping experience was once seen as going above and beyond; the preserve of the most prominent brands. Today, it's an expectation.

Seamlessly connecting physical club stores, mobile and desktop sites, social platforms, apps, and marketing channels should be a priority for football clubs. Why? To create a fan experience that delivers value everywhere.

73%

of shoppers use multiple channels during their shopping journey

The opportunity

A 2023 Harvard Business Review [study](#) of 46,000 shoppers found that 73% used multiple channels during their shopping journey. Most significantly, it showed that omnichannel customers are more valuable than online-only or in-store-only shoppers: these buyers spend 4% more on every in-store shop than single-channel customers, and 10% more online.

Not only that but the more channels a shopper uses, the more they will spend: for example, customers who shopped on four or more channels spent 9% more in-store than single-channel shoppers.

So, more channels equals more shoppers, which equals more sales. Right?

Unfortunately, it's not quite that easy. An Aberdeen Group [report](#) revealed that companies with solid omnichannel customer engagement retain 89% of their buyers, while businesses with a weaker omnichannel customer experience retain only 33%.

Offering an omnichannel experience isn't enough on its own. It has to be an excellent omnichannel experience. Shopify can help football clubs own their fan journeys across every touchpoint, all through a single admin.

Here are five steps to selling everywhere with excellence:

01

Enable in-store integration

Selling across multiple locations can be difficult. When locations aren't integrated, inventory management becomes a juggling act, customers can struggle to make returns, and stock levels are hard to track.

The solution? Using tools to integrate all locations and channels, and sell everywhere fans shop. Through Shopify POS, retail teams can connect their ecommerce and point-of-sale systems under one umbrella, requiring no custom work.

Online and in-store integrate seamlessly so products need to be uploaded only once, and discounts are applied uniformly.

Shopify POS also enables:

Attracting click-and-collect fans to the store with in-store pickup.

Reminding fans of their in-store favourites with email carts.

Buying in-store but shipping to fans when in-store inventory is limited.

Online returns and exchanges no matter where fans buy from.

Syncing and transferring inventory across locations, channels, and warehouses, and purchasing inventory based on forecast and performance reports.

Building a robust CRM, or integrating an existing ERP or CRM.

02

Sell cross-border

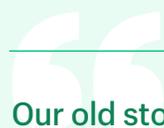
Consumers are increasingly happy to ignore borders: 57% of online shoppers [surveyed by PayPal](#) report shopping internationally, with two in five purchasing on overseas websites in the previous three months.

This is good news for football, a truly global game where allegiances cross continents. The world's biggest clubs have millions of supporters across hundreds of countries, while many Premier League, La Liga, Bundesliga, and Serie A teams benefit from lucrative overseas shirt sales.

57%

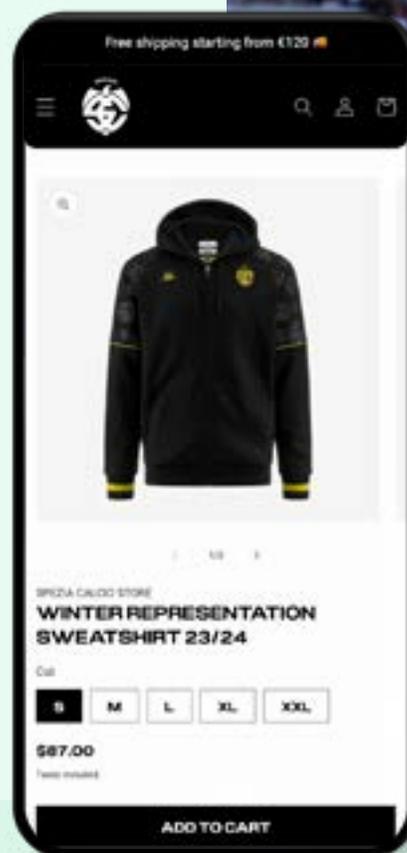
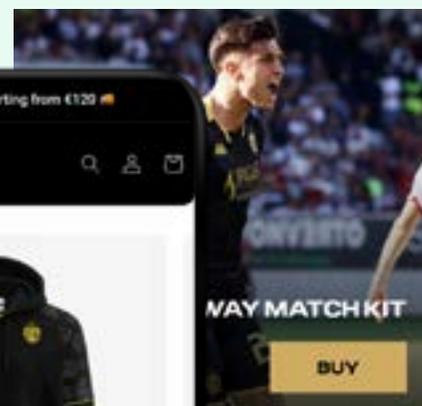
of online shopper surveyed by PayPal shop internationally

This trend isn't limited to the very biggest clubs. For example, the social channels of Serie B's Spezia Calcio have English versions, while its retail site—built with Shopify—has an English-language version



Our old store was based on WooCommerce, and we lost a lot of sales—particularly international sales—due to usability and a lot of software problems. Last year, we sold products for a week without users paying for shipping due to an updated plugin software problem. We chose to go to SaaS [software-as-a-service], and Shopify is a great platform from this point of view; you don't have to take care of server hardware or server configuration

Christian Faillace
IT Specialist, Spezia Calcio



Opening up cross-border revenue streams can drive global sales, and building a native-language site transforms the customer experience.

“Expanding the reach of a football club’s retail site to international markets can present challenges related to language barriers, currency conversion, shipping logistics, and cultural considerations,” says Roberta Maira, merchant success manager at Shopify. “Adapting the site to cater to diverse markets and customer preferences requires careful planning and execution.”

Shopify Markets unlocks multilingual, multi-currency, multi-market capabilities. This product allows clubs to:

- Manage overseas sales by simplifying traditionally complex areas like tariffs, shipping, compliance, and conversions.
- Easily localise storefronts and offer unique selling experiences to fans and customers in different territories
- Show prices in multiple currencies and local languages, and customise content by market.

For example, if a club signs a player from Japan for the first time, the retail team can react quickly and create a Japanese version of the store to maximise merchandise sales. With Shopify Payments, all primary payment methods in over 100 countries are automatically set up.



The checkout process is very simple and fast thanks to the numerous payment methods accepted.

Marco Mancinelli
Marketing Manager, Spezia Calcio

03

Manage B2B sales

Shopify B2B allows retail teams to manage direct-to-consumer and B2B business from a single platform or store.

Clubs can increase their retail reach by selling merchandise through third-party retailers. For example, selling shirts in nationwide—or even global—stores can help to reach a wider audience that may not be fans of a club, but fans of football keen to purchase shirts as a fashion item.

B2B retail can often be manual, time-consuming, and require expensive third-party solutions. However, B2B on Shopify streamlines the process, allowing retail teams to manage it from the same intuitive platform with no coding required.

Through flexible customisation, including product and pricing publishing, quantity rules, and payment terms, Shopify gives B2B buyers the same positive user experience direct-to-consumer buyers are used to.

04

Enable in-store integration

Data must not exist in silos if clubs are to reap the benefits of omnichannel.

“Clubs face issues syncing data between different modules and locations, which can lead to missing data and a user journey that is far from seamless,” says Gianluca Pollicino, senior solutions engineer, DACH at Shopify. “For example, a fan buys a shirt in a store at full price, but a day later, because the data isn’t joined up, they might receive a newsletter with an offer that includes 20% off that shirt. This leads to an unsatisfied customer.”

As an all-in-one platform, Shopify ensures that all data and insights are unified in one view, from across in-store and online sales.

These insights give a clear picture of buying behaviour across channels, including customer profiles with past orders, lifetime spend, and notes across locations. This can inform targeted and personalised shopping experiences and marketing campaigns.

“With Shopify, you have one data record of each customer across all sales channels,” says Pollicino. “If a club wants to push out a campaign with a discounted product, anyone who has already bought that product is automatically removed from the campaign. This unifies both the front-end and the back-end of the business.”

In focus

Hertha Berlin

Hertha Berlin, one of the best-supported clubs in Germany with crowds of over 50,000 on matchdays, wanted to provide its fans with a complete omnichannel solution. Ahead of the 2023–24 season, it chose Shopify to integrate online and in-store offerings into one platform with a single sign-on solution.

The biggest challenge in building an omnichannel experience was different data silos not communicating. To solve this, data from different channels such as ticketing, the online store, and the retail store were merged, while automated marketing measures ensured a joined-up experience.



“Making communications with end customers as smooth as possible—from the initial decision to the stadium experience to the post-purchase—is game changing to turn a customer into a fan. It quickly becomes clear that when you talk about time to market and cost of ownership, the choice was obviously Shopify.”

Samii Selant
Head of Sales, Hertha Berlin

05

Reward loyalty

Membership is a significant part of the fan experience at football clubs. From season ticket holders to junior members, fans are loyal to clubs in a way that most brands can only dream of from their customers.

There are several ways to reward the loyalty of members, including:

Special discounts on tickets and merchandising

Entry to youth team games

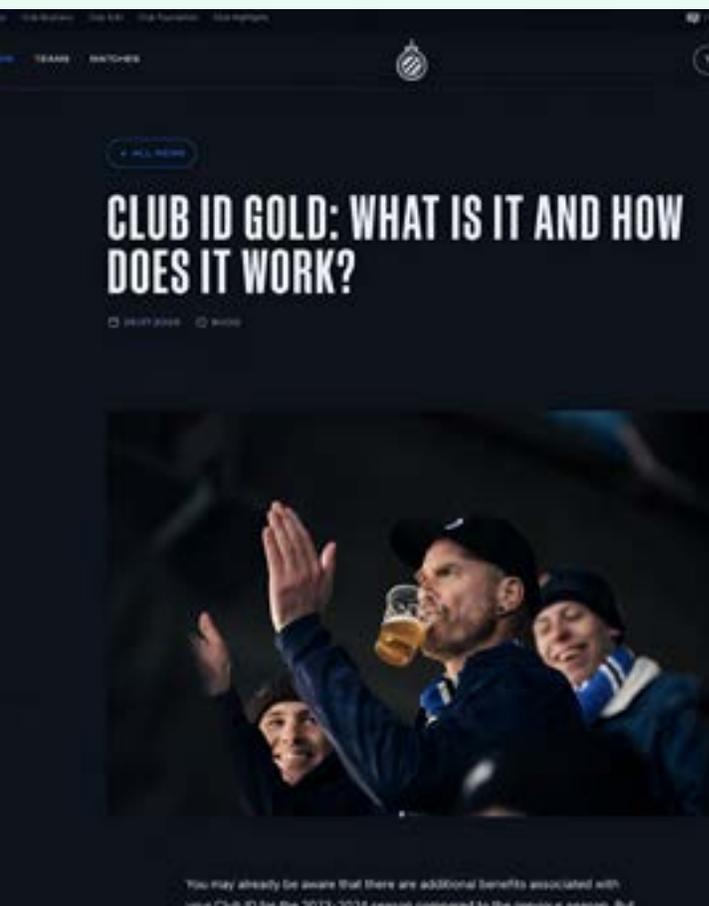
Early access to community events

Access to exclusive content

Free stadium tours

Ticket priority

Membership packs



Club Brugge's loyalty program—Club ID Gold—rewards fans who attend 90% of home league matches, or sell their seat within 48 hours of not being able to attend a match. The rewards include an exclusive golden card, treats on a fan's birthday, and 5% cash back on a season's subscription, worth between €20 and €50.

A loyalty program that works across all stores, as well as websites, social channels, and community sites, is a must. Doing this requires a single sign-on across all locations, easily done through Shopify Multipass API.

The Shopify App Store also has a selection of loyalty program solutions to fit clubs' needs, whatever the size of its fan base.

Sales, drops, and events: How to plan, schedule, or react instantly

Even with a captive fan base, cutting through the football noise to drive sales can be challenging for busy retail teams. It can also be demanding to spot and then leverage trends before the opportunity has passed.

A club's retail team therefore needs a platform to build a buzz for upcoming launches and react quickly in response to events or trends.

The opportunity

The football calendar can be the retail team's friend. Kit launches, fixture releases, and international breaks are firmly established in the calendar and create selling windows that can be planned in advance.

Alongside these settled dates are unforeseen selling opportunities: new signings during a transfer window, the appointment of a manager, an unexpected cup run, a charity or community drive, a stadium concert, a national team calling up a club's player for the first time, Hollywood owners (we're looking at you, Wrexham). The list is endless.

Having the flexibility to be both proactive and reactive is critical for retail teams to fuel sales across these big moments. Also vital is delivering a fast, convenient, and faultless checkout experience to maximise conversions and reduce cart abandonment. After all, a strategy that falls at the final hurdle is no strategy at all.

The next few pages outline five steps to plan, schedule, and be prepared to react instantly.

01

Optimise product drops and flash sales

Sales and product drops are increasingly big business. In 2022, sales on Shopify across Black Friday and Cyber Monday hit a staggering [\\$7.5 billion worldwide](#)—a 19% increase on 2021.

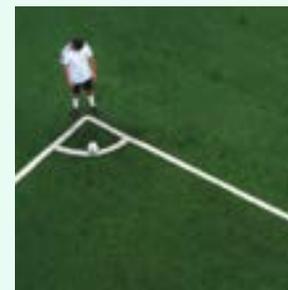
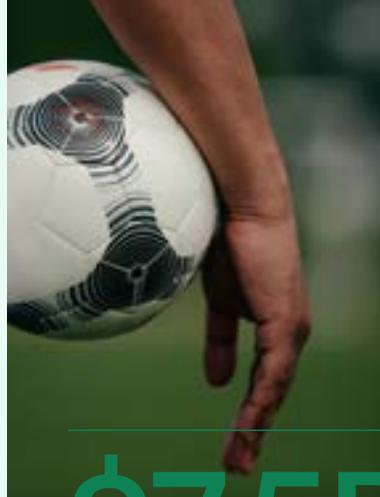
Whether a football club is creating a product drop for limited-edition merchandise or launching a flash sale of a new kit, Shopify has tools and features that enable teams to take full advantage of these big, sellable moments:

- Create product listings in advance and set up pre-orders. This is designed for product launches, limited-edition releases, or brand or influencer collaborations where fans can reserve or purchase products before they are officially available.
- Set up time-limited discounts, offer percentage or fixed-amount discounts, and apply them to specific products or collections.
- Keeping track of what's being sold and where it's being sold is crucial. Shopify POS comes with tools to help control and manage inventory across multiple store locations, as well as warehouses. Retail teams can forecast demand, set low-stock alerts, create purchase orders, know which items are selling or sitting on shelves, count inventory, and more.
- Shopify Flow makes it easy to run workflows and trigger emerging alerts around low inventory across multiple stores. This helps to avoid over-selling and can also trigger automated re-ordering when stocks need replenishing.

In focus

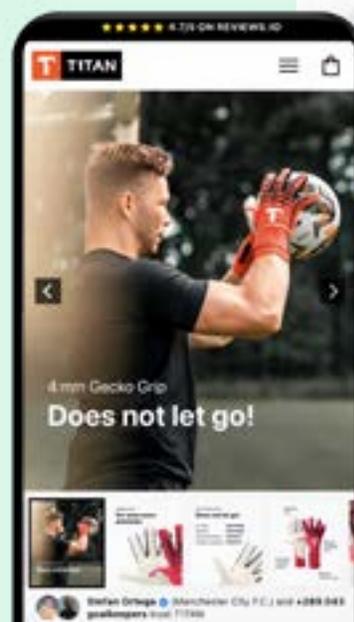
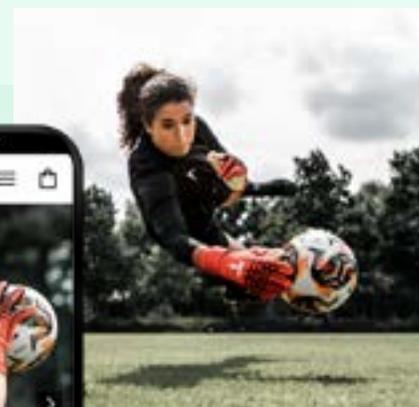
T1TAN

Leading goalkeeper gloves brand T1TAN lived the nightmare scenario of its legacy ecommerce site crashing during a limited-edition product drop. Burned by those lost sales, in 2018 T1TAN decided to move to a stable, reliable, and fast platform: Shopify.



\$7.5 Billion

worldwide sales on Shopify across Black Friday and Cyber Monday in 2022



Since migrating, T1TAN has enjoyed zero downtime, including during key product launches, as well as a 25% increase in its conversion rate. It has also seen significant growth, with six new regions launched in just one year.

“

Whenever we did a launch, we had to pray the site wouldn't crash. The stability of Shopify has given us peace of mind. We have a global community of football fans, and we needed a platform that could keep up with high traffic and large volumes of orders being placed at the same time—especially when we launch new products.

Matthias Leibitz
Cofounder and CEO, T1TAN

02

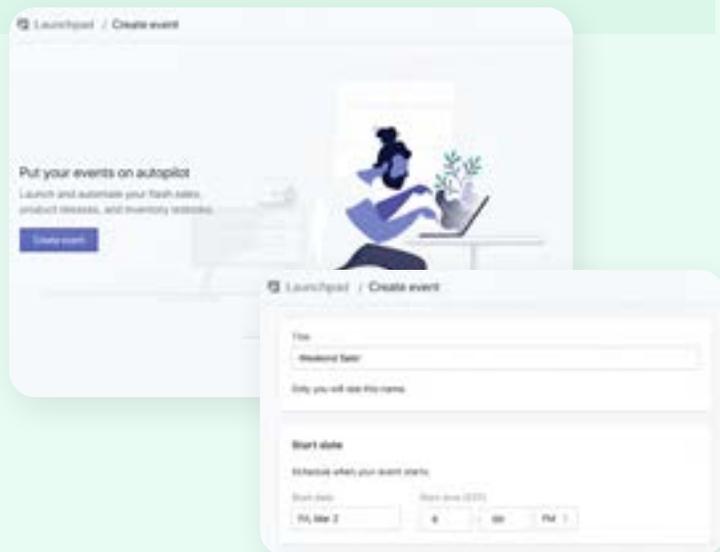
Get scheduling

A key component of reactive retail at football clubs is simply being there to truly maximise an opportunity.

If a club has a striker on a hot scoring streak and wants to sell merchandise attached to that player, it requires careful planning across all sites. However, the reality for clubs is this is often done in real-time and requires coding. Changing product costs, adding new images, and writing new CTAs under time pressure is fraught with risk, particularly when putting multiple links live at once.

[Shopify Launchpad](#) helps clubs plan, automate, and schedule this process. Imagine a club, for example, has a player-signing announcement planned for a specific time. In that case, the retail team can use Launchpad to coordinate key retail changes with the announcement.

Product visibility, image themes, discounts, and special offers such as shirt personalisation can be planned, tested, signed off, and scheduled with confidence—all with no coding.



“

For a football team, customisation is very important. Customisation and personalisation allow fans to buy a jersey with their name on it, or other products such as phone covers. Shopify helped this with custom objects, and we can add customisation to every product in only a few minutes now.

Christian Faillace
IT Specialist, Spezia Calcio

In focus

Club Brugge

Club Brugge, which has won the Belgian title 18 times, turned to Shopify to achieve three main objectives: improve the branding of the retail site, deliver a better user experience for fans, and sell more shirts in the essential hours following shirt launches or player signings.

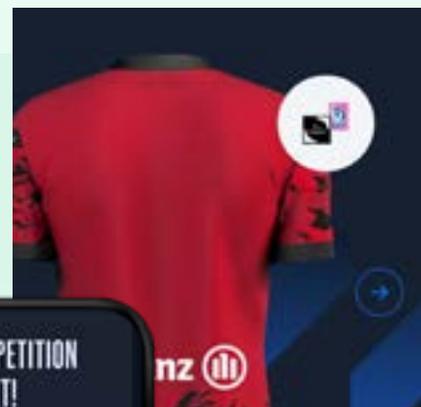
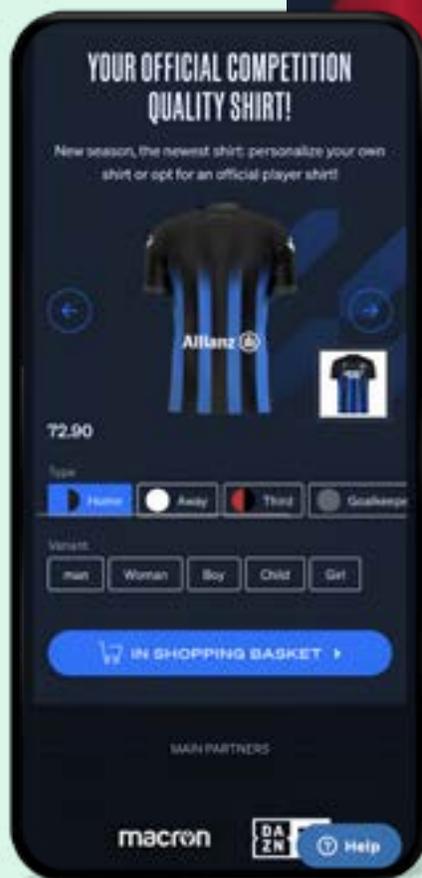
With 72% of all traffic to Brugge's store coming from mobile, Shopify teamed up with UX specialists HumanEyes to design a shopping experience that was user-friendly and mobile-first.

This move resulted in a 15% increase in the club's mobile conversion rate, with an average checkout conversion rate of 77% across all devices. And the shirts? Well, that's been an enormous success, with the custom shirt builder increasing personalised shirt sales by 25%.

25% 77%

increase in personalised shirt sales

average checkout conversion rate across all devices



“The custom shirt builder is on every possible touchpoint throughout the game shirt journey. It's on the homepage, has a separate landing page, and is also included on the product detail page of every game kit. This way, the fan can personalise their shirt wherever they want, and it works really well. It's very easy and very fast on mobile and desktop.

Gauthier Vervaeke
Merchandise & Ecommerce Manager, Club Brugge

03

Explore tokengated commerce

Social channels, in-stadium match-day experiences, and club-generated content have brought fans closer to their teams than ever before. With that has come an expectation that clubs must constantly deliver innovative solutions to improve fan engagement.

Tokengated commerce is one such solution, offering a new avenue for clubs to reward fans through exclusive access to product drops, flash sales, tickets, experiences, and more.

Offering custom non-fungible tokens (NFTs) to reward fans emerged as a trend at the start of the decade and has risen sharply since. At the [end of 2022](#), Serie A's Lazio's market capitalisation of NFTs was over \$43 million, FC Porto's in Liga Portugal was just under \$30 million, and Arsenal's in the Premier League was \$8.2 million.

Shopify allows clubs to mint custom NFTs on blockchains like Flow, Ethereum, Polygon, and Solana and list and sell from their retail store. Tokengating apps on the Shopify App Store enable clubs to gate their store and open collections exclusive to token holders.

04

Embrace checkout customisation

A successful checkout will achieve three main objectives: reduce cart abandonment, upsell to increase average order value, and improve customer experience. All three are guaranteed with Shopify.

“

I'm a software engineer, so normally I don't like no-code software because there can be a lot of limitations. However, Shopify has the right mix. I could write my own code while also customising many things with Shopify's theme editor. The UI code is wonderful.

Christian Faillace
IT Specialist, Spezia Calcio

“Shopify Checkout's overall conversion rate outpaces the competition by up to 36% and converts on average 15% more than others,” says Roberta Maira, merchant success manager at Shopify. “Shop Pay is our accelerated checkout, and its mere presence on checkout drives a 5% lift in lower funnel conversion. When Shop Pay is used, conversion was lifted by as much as 50%, outpacing other accelerated checkouts by approximately 10%.”

Cart abandonment remains [frustratingly high](#) across ecommerce. In response, Shopify enables retail teams to customise the checkout experience to simplify the user journey and set it up for major selling events.

A drag-and-drop editor with no coding allows unique designs to drive upselling opportunities, while retail teams can easily run A/B tests to see which images and CTAs result in higher conversion rates.

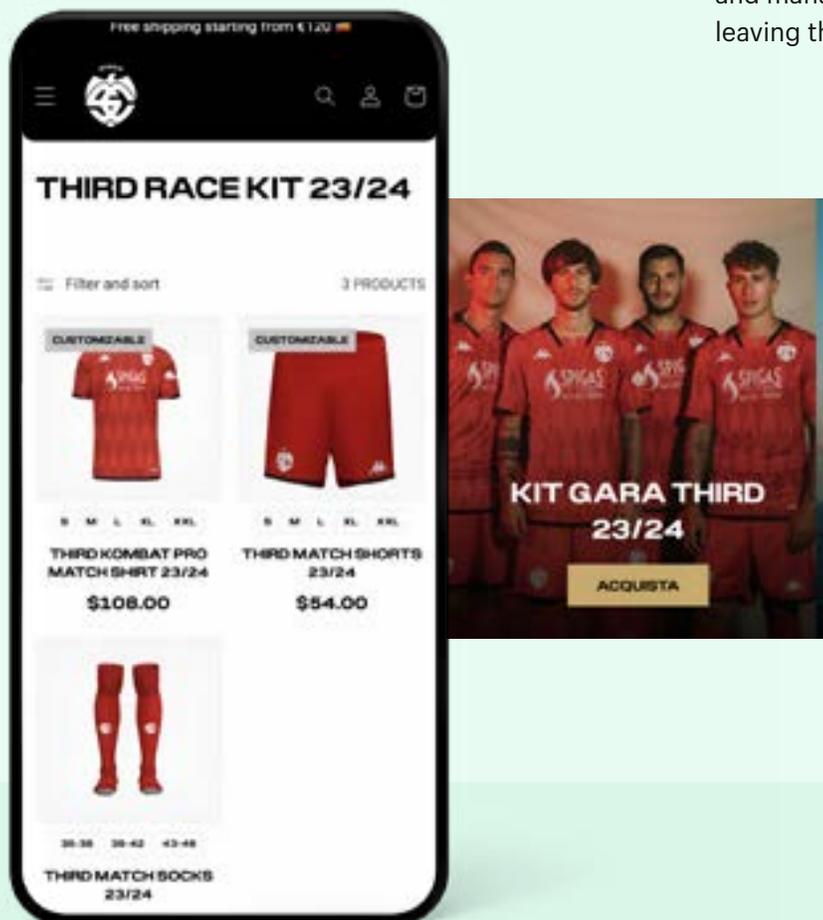
05

Get ready to bundle

Bundling has long been a critical commerce strategy. It helps retailers to increase average order value, decrease distribution costs, and reduce inventory waste. For football clubs, selling items together—for example, a full kit of shirt, shorts, and socks—is a simple way to increase sales and offer something fans want.

However, setting up bundles can often be time-consuming and, in many cases, expensive. “One football club in Germany wasn’t able to create bundles on their own, and they always had to ask an agency to do sprints to develop a bundle, which is costly and time-consuming,” says Gianluca Pollicino, senior solutions engineer, DACH at Shopify.

Shopify offers several options to bundle products and includes product and cart APIs to support a wide range of bundle use cases. Retail teams can create and manage bundles from their product page without leaving the Shopify admin.



Football club retail: Future trends

So, what's next?

This white paper has outlined the tools needed to transform a club's commerce offering and enhance the fan experience.

However, maintaining excellence, driving higher revenue, and keeping fans engaged requires more. Retail team leaders need to stay abreast of emerging technologies and trends in the ecommerce space.

Ahead, get exclusive insights from industry thought leaders on where the commerce market is headed, including guidance on:

- Personalisation
- Artificial intelligence
- Experiences
- Pop-up commerce
- Augmented and virtual reality

Take personalisation to the next level

Research by [McKinsey](#) found that 71% of consumers expect companies to deliver personalised interactions, while 76% get frustrated when this doesn't happen.

“There's an opportunity to personalise tickets and create digital assets and experiences unique to each user,” says Adam Mingay, business director at Unit9, an innovation studio that has created interactive experiences for sports clubs and brands, including Southampton FC and Nike. “Clubs can look to gamify elements of the journey and harness innovative tech that will lengthen brand engagement and ultimately build loyalty by remaining front of mind.”

71%

of consumers expect companies to deliver personalised interactions

However, it's essential not to go overboard with personalisation.

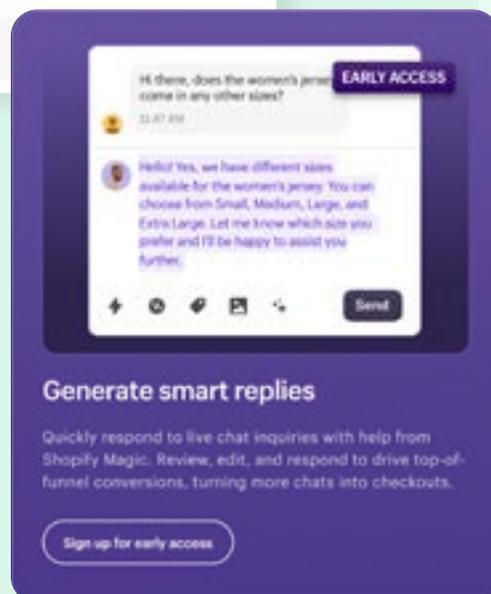
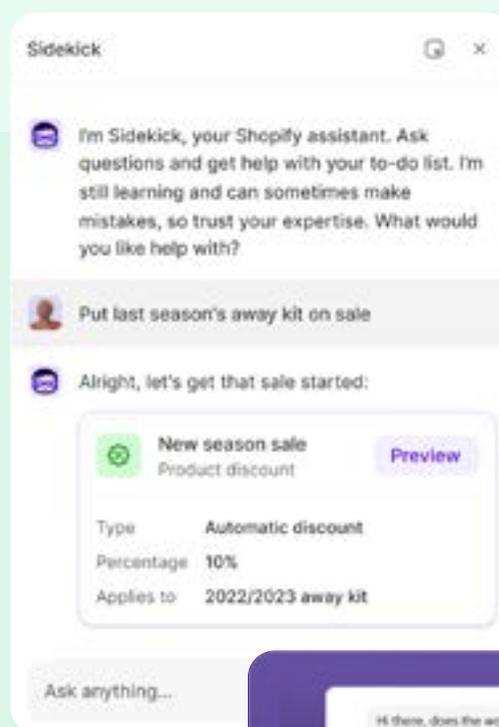
“Savvy ecommerce players are asking how personalisation can be baked into every aspect of the customer journey—from storefront to product selection and shipment,” says Paul Dodd, CIO and cofounder of Huboo, which integrates with Shopify and is the official logistics and fulfillment partner of West Ham United and Bristol City.

“However, it's easy to overdo personalisation, at which point the customer will just ignore the engagements.”

Use AI to enhance operational efficiency

Retail teams can integrate AI and sophisticated product catalogs to automate inventory management. The result? The risk of stockouts and overstocks is minimised, improving customer satisfaction and positively impacting the bottom line.

“AI-driven automation will also revolutionise supply chain management, enhancing inventory optimisation and demand forecasting,” says Sophie Seaton, commercial director at leading Shopify agency Underwaterpistol. “Customer service will continue to evolve and improve, as AI-powered assistants—such as Shopify’s Sidekick—provide more effective and personalised assistance, resolving queries in real-time.”



Get creative with online experiences

The rise of fandom—highly engaged and passionate fans of a product, franchise, or brand—can be significant for football. After all, not much can touch football when it comes to an engaged and passionate fan base.

“Today’s fans want to become active participants in experiences that help them feel like part of a club’s community,” says Mingay. “They also want to feel connected to the talent and engage with content that entertains and appeals to them personally. These three things— offering active participation, connection to the players, and options for personalisation—are key avenues that football clubs should explore to sell successfully to today’s audience.”

Incentivising purchases through entertainment is increasingly expected by consumers. Clubs can look to add gamification elements to the shopping experience, such as:

- Contests
- Interactive quizzes
- Loyalty programs
- Building a community around products

Fredrik Ademar is VP of product at Spiideo, which works with major sports leagues and teams such as Inter Milan and Brentford to deliver automated sports video production and player stats. He believes data can be turned into a monetised experience.

“Today, fans look for insightful analytics and detailed information about their favourite teams and players,” says Ademar. “Retail teams can capitalise on this demand by offering premium data-driven packages. Imagine subscriptions that provide in-depth player performance stats, game analysis, and behind-the-scenes insights.”

Pop-up commerce

A recent Research Insights report [found that 72%](#) of consumers still rely on physical stores as their primary buying method, so it’s important that fans receive a memorable experience in the club store.

Player signing events are a traditional way to create a memorable in-store moment, but clubs can now get more creative:

- Host virtual [penalty shoot-outs in a simulator](#)
- Allow customers to play virtually alongside club stars with an AR headset
- Include club signage or a selfie wall that drives user-generated content



Bricks-and-mortar experiences have to move beyond the point of purchase and instead embrace the point of experience. Build team loyalty, organic shareability, and ultimately sales by harnessing creative technology and giving back to fans.

Adam Mingay
Business Director at Unit9

Embrace augmented and virtual reality

Social commerce is a key driver of ecommerce in football, and AR-led shoppable experiences are rising across social media. In 2021, Southampton [launched the world's first AR kit](#), which helped to drive a 24% uplift in sales from the previous season.

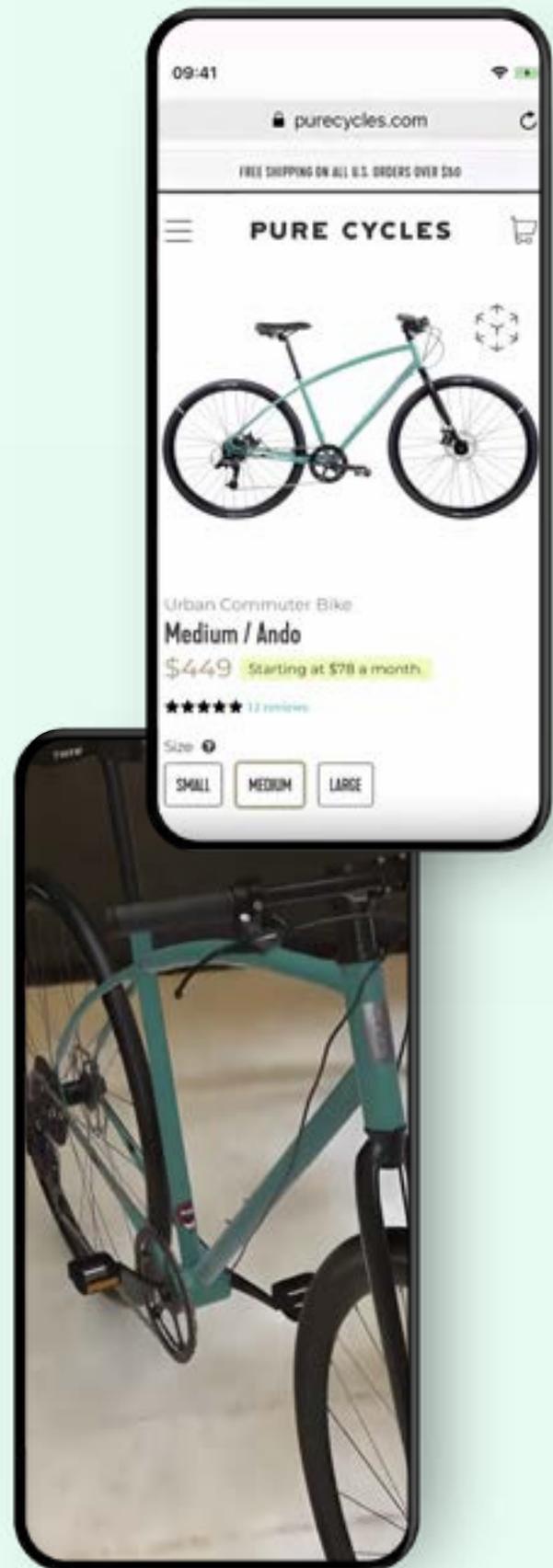
“By enabling customers to visualise items in their own environment or providing virtual store visits, retail teams can create interactive and engaging experiences that build stronger connections to products and brands. AR and VR can revolutionise the way consumers interact with products

Adam Mingay
Business Director at Unit9

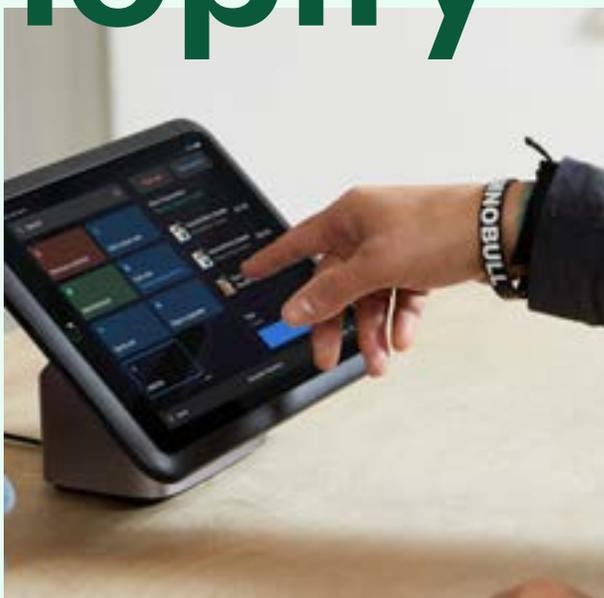
[Shopify AR](#) enables brands to create immersive shopping experiences by adding augmented reality to an online store.

“AR is a no-brainer for teams wanting to build deeper connections and supercharge sales,” says Mingay. “AR experiences, whether browser or app-based, lend themselves perfectly to monetisation, with shoppable features easily integrated.”

Trends emerge regularly. Shopify’s how-to guides and expert blogs are an excellent resource for staying informed.



Team up with Shopify



Want to deliver the seamless omnichannel experience your fans demand, maximise sales opportunities, and convert your captive audience into revenue growth?

Shopify will help you do that and more.

**Connect with a football commerce expert
today and start converting more checkouts.**
