REPLATFORMING GUIDE

A **5 Step Roadmap** for Migrating Your Ecommerce Store

BIGCOMMERCE

Content.

Step into your ecommerce future.

Retailers with a growth mindset will come to a point where their legacy ecommerce platform is no longer viable. Typically it will lack the scale needed to open new markets or the flexibility to offer the features needed to deliver exemplary customer experience.

It is not only the front-end the customer sees that is slow and cumbersome. A retailer's ecommerce team will find itself grappling with ageing technology that costs more to patch up than replacing it with a modern platform. Opting for technology that delivers lightning fast web and mobile customer experiences not only wins new customers and builds more profitable businesses, it avoids legacy platform's deadly sins — including:

⊿ Slower time to market

⊿ Slow page-load times

⊿ Poor customer experience

⊿ Outdated website experiences

⊿ Lack of efficiency and scalability

⊿ Increased security threats

Of course, migrating away from a legacy commerce system is not to be taken lightly. However, it doesn't have to be an expensive, disruptive and time-consuming process.

Our team at BigCommerce understands the replatforming process, having worked with numerous enterprises to migrate their stores, and we're here to help you every step of the way.

Every case is different but here are five steps the typical journey takes.

Five steps to migrating for growth.

While every enterprise is different, the steps outlined in this guide will provide a framework you can adapt to your specific needs. At BigCommerce, our teams — from sales and solutioning to implementation and customer success — work closely with you every step of the way to ensure each project goes as smoothly as possible.

Step 1:
Establish a launch timeline

It may sound too simplistic a point to make, but the first step is to set a go-live date. This gives a clear date so the entire team and stakeholders can work backwards from that day. If a date is not decided on, it is very easy to allow a project to be delayed.

Launch dates are often built around a real-life ticking clock. It might be a legacy platform reaching the end of its life, or getting ready in time for a key ecommerce period, such as Black Friday or Valentine's day. Be realistic with the lead-in time, and remember to leave space for full end-to-end

testing that includes any back-office systems, such as order management systems, ERPs, PIMs and accounting suites. If there is no external pressure driving the move to a new platform, there are still going to be expectations among key stakeholders. You'll need to surface them in order to derive a workable timeline.

For high volume sites, it may be worthwhile to direct only a percentage of web traffic to the new site and then gradually increase the proportion over time.

Step 2:
Identify key goals and set expectations

Beyond the launch date, it's essential to establish expectations for what daily business processes will look like once the money and time have been spent on the new platform. Start by providing parity with existing features and experience, and negotiate from there.

If there are new services that must be integrated, also capture them at this stage. These could include new MarTech solutions like personalisation, A/B test suites or affiliate management software. If there are new websites serving new markets that are expected to be live in a particular order, make sure that timeline is noted.

Speak with all the stakeholders in your business about their expectations from the new platform. These usually include, but are not limited to:

⊿ Customer service

⊿ Fulfilment (shipping/warehouse)

⊿ Channel owners (could be franchise managers, store management, marketplace management, inside sales or any number of people who will use the new website to drive traffic to a non-web channel or as a sales assistance tool)

⊿ Digital marketing

⊿ Sales

⊿ IT

⊿ Brand management (extra critical in a house of brands or multi-region structure)

⊿ Accounting or finance

Think of this phase as one where objectives and key results (OKRs) or KPIs are agreed upon as metrics for the success of the project. As the ecommerce leader, you'll need to understand the implications of these metrics.

For instance, if digital marketing expects the new site to improve mobile conversion rates by 50%, that will have an immediate impact on shipping and warehouse teams. Can they manage the extra volume with the tools they have?

Review systems diagrams

At this phase of the project, it's also common to have systems diagrams — both enterprise architecture diagrams that show systems and how they relate (WMS, POS, ecommerce, data lake) as well as data flow diagrams that reveal how transactions flow between those systems (WMS pulls orders from the ecommerce platform via a GET call every 5 minutes).

Have a draft version of this for editing, and have an idea of what the future state will look like after the replatform, so you can note changes. Visualising these changes will help to map out the scope of the project with internal and third parties.

Step 3:
Rank requirements

From goals come requirements. You'll likely start with a set of requirements that are carried over from your current ecommerce platform — key integrations, specific web properties, support for specific payment gateways, sales tax providers and marketing tools.

These requirements will be critical to informing a developer team or agency/systems integrator exactly what to build, and also letting internal stakeholders know what to expect once they have begun end-to-end testing.

If you're engaging in an RFP process for a platform or for an agency, these requirements will be submitted to validate both the fitness of the platform and the cost estimate from the agency.

It is very common to rank requirements as:

◿ **Must-Have**   ◿ **Nice-to-Have**   ◿ **Wishlist**
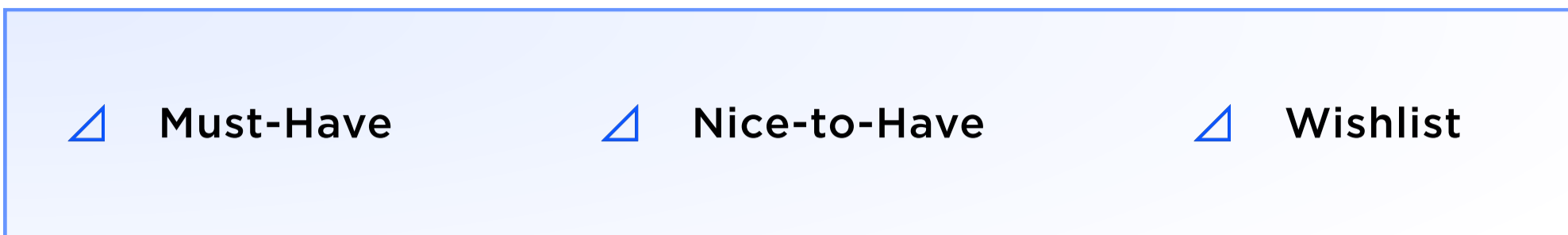
… or a similar formulation.

This process can be confusing if you are working with multiple brand teams or regions, each of which have different opinions about what is a must-have. It's critical to have senior leadership help resolve differences of opinions clearly and unambiguously.

Develop a plan for migrating data and content

Make sure to have an internally agreed point of view on how data migration will work, and be sure to include URL structure and SEO fields in that discussion.

> **"The BigCommerce Data Migration Services team has performed hundreds of successful migrations to our platform. Our internal experts are able to advise on best practices throughout all phases of the migration process, and our service is designed to bring order to the chaos during even the most complex enterprise data migrations."**
>
> Ericka Barnes Senior Manager, Data Migration Services, BigCommerce

Broadly speaking, there are four critical sets of data that get migrated during a replatform:

1. Product data

This includes text (product names, descriptions, technical specifications, ratings and reviews) and media (photos, videos and PDF attachments). It will also include merchandising, pricing, categorisation and other metadata, such as SEO meta descriptions.

Before exporting data, get a copy of the product import template from BigCommerce and compare the fields to what you have today. If there are gaps in either direction (you have custom fields today that aren't explicitly in our template, or you see fields in our template that you don't have discrete values for in production), their remediation should be a requirement.

2. Customer data

At minimum, this usually includes email address, name and potentially passwords. Sometimes there will be more robust data to migrate, such as custom fields, address books, store credit balances and customer group assignments. All of these can be migrated into BigCommerce and can also be handled by our Data Migration Services team.

If you have recurring subscription data and saved credit card information, BigCommerce does not natively have a way to import these. Most third-party subscription management apps do have some ability to import, however, and if you're not changing vendors that transition should be managed by them. If you need to import subscriptions, speak with your vendor or service provider about the impact and any special handling needed to migrate PII in order to maintain PCI compliance.

3. Order data

Order history migrations can be challenging because they are a combination of customer and product data along with invoice and shipping information. The business value of migrating historical orders varies widely depending on the business model. For example, a B2B merchant with recurring orders, this is likely to be more essential than a B2C business whose customers rarely order more than once.

Determine early on whether this is a must-have, nice-to-have or wishlist item, because it can be time-intensive to map order fields from one system to another, given the complexity and links to other entities such as customers and products.

4. Content

Here we are referring to articles, blog posts, knowledge base content, landing pages, ebooks, and any other content that's not directly surfaced on a product detail page (PDP) or as part of the catalogue itself.

Generally, content migration is accomplished manually because a design refresh is part of the overall replatform, and you don't want the new site to be a copy of the current site. New assets won't yet exist at this phase of the project, and the new design direction may be extremely vague. One exception to this is article or blog content, because while the presentation may change with the new platform, the information probably will not.

Consider SEO implications

If there are expectations that the new site will perform better organically, it is important to know that improvements in ranking will not happen automatically just by being on a new platform. SEO improvements are the result of deliberate effort in optimisation. Measure your current performance and create the benchmarks based on those, and use those requirements to create SEO goals.

Basic SEO administrative tools like 301 redirects, sitemap management, meta keywords and tag management are all core features of BigCommerce, but they must be correctly used in order to yield results.

Trace the lifecycle of an order

Data pieces together the customer journey and so it is worthwhile, while replatforming, to track the lifecycle of an order to ensure all aspects are considered. This includes delivery options and shipping rates, as well as tax calculations if selling cross border. With payments, it is important to ask which card gateway and payment methods need to be supported, and what integrations are required. For post-payment flow, be sure to note down fulfilment, returns and invoicing requirements.

Associated with the lifecycle of an order is the background work, such as pricing, inventory management as well as content and product detail creation, coupled with any requirements to use that content on your website as well as social channels and marketplaces.

Identify security and performance requirements

You should have requirements around stability, uptime and security. Depending on location and industry, you may have to comply with statutory requirements on privacy and data retention. Aspects such as user permission management, password rotation and resets, and anything in scope for SOC or PCI compliance, should be listed to ensure they are taken into consideration.

Step 4:
Select an ecommerce platform and agency partner

At this point, your team should have an extremely thorough understanding of the entire commerce operational cycle and a firm idea of what's required, including what you want and any additional goals requested from various stakeholders. This is the point where all of the artefacts you've created — timeline, goals, diagrams and requirements — are collated into a **Request for Proposal (RFP)**.

An RFP process often takes 8-12 weeks to complete from the initial submission to verbal selection, with contractual and legal approvals sometimes extending further depending on the structure and speed of your procurement process.

It's typical to submit requirements to multiple vendors and ask them to honestly evaluate their platform against them, calling out native solutions, third-party solutions and customisations.

> "Our Sales Engineers have extensive industry knowledge and hands-on experience with the platform, with a focus on practical solutions. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, we take the time to listen carefully to each business's unique needs and challenges. This enables us to determine whether our solution is genuinely the right fit to help them overcome those challenges. When it is, we offer guidance on the best architecture and tech stack to support their business goals or even create a proof of concept."
>
> Manojan Panchalingam, Director, Sales Engineering, BigCommerce

Evaluate ecommerce platforms

Finding the right ecommerce platform is integral to success. A platform must offer the required features and functionality, but the vendor must also share your vision of the future to help deliver your goals. We recommend three key points in selecting a platform:

1. Assess their flexibility

A flexible approach – coupled with a composable, open architecture – means that when a requirement isn't precisely met by the platform, it might be something a third party vendor can add. Also, should other commerce components need to be replaced down the line, you're not locked into a system or a way of doing things — in essence, it's how you build for the future.

You should expect to see robust API documentation, user guides and an ecosystem of partners with prebuilt apps and integrations. If any of these are missing, you should question the platform on that topic. This will be especially key when considering how the platform will integrate into your existing stack. Look for proof points where possible that the platform can work with your ERP, OMS, PIM and DXP. A small business may be able to operate with a turnkey out-of-the-box platform, but your enterprise will not.

2. Get demos

Invite multiple key stakeholders from your business and get them on demos with the platforms you're sending the RFP to. If you have technical stakeholders with specific questions, be sure each platform supplies an engineer or technical specialist for their demo or call — there are few things more frustrating than having a valuable engineer from your team on a call with a non-technical account executive who can't answer their questions.

BigCommerce's Sales Engineers engage with you right from the beginning, and are experts in solving problems for complex enterprises because they have an established knowledge of our technology and the entire commerce ecosystem.

3. Get pricing early

There is a tremendous amount of variation in how commerce platforms are priced — both in monetary terms and structure. Some platforms charge a percentage of GMV, some use a tiered pricing structure, some do it by number of orders, some have a flat fee.

If any of the platforms you're considering have fees for services, payment processing or hosting, make sure they are shared in their response and prospective pricing. It can be frustrating to get budgetary clearance for your project, only to find out the platform didn't disclose a key detail.

4. Evaluate the platform's total cost of ownership

When evaluating the cost of ecommerce replatforming, it's important to consider the total cost of ownership (TCO), which encompasses more than just development and licensing costs. Focusing solely on basic build, support, and maintenance can lead to unexpected costs down the road. Involving your finance team early on and building contingency into the plan is essential, as real costs often exceed initial budgets for valid reasons. A **structured approach to calculating TCO** can help minimise financial surprises.

But there is something intuitively incomplete about a TCO figure. To get the full picture, you need to factor in what you get back for that investment. To ascertain this, you need to know where your business was in revenue before the ecommerce platform was installed.

Then, finding out the value added — which at BigCommerce, we named the Total Value Indicator (TVI) figure — is as "simple" as dividing the boost in growth by the overall cost of the ecommerce platform. This gives a far better idea of what a package has delivered, rather than concentrating on what it has cost.

To better understand BigCommerce's TCO, check out our guide **Unlock Revenue Growth and Profitability: Explore how BigCommerce lowers your ecommerce total cost of ownership.**

Pick the right partner

This is also the time where you may be selecting third-party technology partners — agencies, solution integrators or consulting firms who will actually do the heavy-lifting of the replatform. Most of the same RFP can be shared with the agencies — after all, they'll be the ones doing the implementation — but you should look for a few other items as you evaluate partners:

1. Expertise in the platform

If you've identified that an <u>agency</u> is needed, make sure to select one that has a proven and current track record with the platform of choice. Look for certifications and designations — Elite, Gold and Premium partners typically designate some level of focus and achievement.

For **third-party solutions,** check if they can integrate already with the platforms you are considering or if an integration must be built, define what efforts and timeline are to be expected.

2. Experience with your type of business

Some firms specialise in particular verticals or industries. If you're a multinational B2B firm, a boutique creative agency specialising in luxury brand DTC websites may not be the best fit. Likewise, if you have high expectations for creative and design capabilities, look for partners who lead with that as a value proposition — and not the firm of IT generalists who subcontract design to freelancers.

3. Ease of doing business

This can be tricky to evaluate, but try to find firms you want to do business with. Time zones matter, regional knowledge matters, as well as honesty and transparency. You need to trust whomever you work with, and any relationship that is managed at arms length is unlikely to be a successful experience.

Implement

This is where the magic happens. There will be challenges along the way but there are some things that you, as the chief stakeholder of success and mediator between different parties, can do to make life easier and secure better outcomes.

One critical piece is project management. To ensure your project runs as smoothly as possible, BigCommerce Implementation Project Managers are here to help.

> "As your trusted partner, we collaborate with varied brands and retailers to guide your project from concept to launch, and help you navigate the complexities of project management. We provide expert advice and strategic direction at every stage, helping you ensure a seamless and timely delivery. By working closely with your team and aligning on clear goals and expectations, we can proactively identify and mitigate potential risks. Our deep industry knowledge and strong relationships with third parties, agencies, and internal teams enable us to efficiently coordinate and support the delivery of on-time store launches without compromising on quality."
>
> Roxana Bolobita, Manager, Enterprise Implementation, BigCommerce

Embrace agility

Agile versus waterfall development is a long-argued topic. But, in general, by "agility" we mean lots of ongoing communication and adaptability. Have scheduled weekly meetings with implementation teams. If something isn't working in the project, stop doing it! If something is working well, keep doing it! But in order to know what is and what is not productive, you must be collaborating as a cross-functional team and be willing to change how you work in service of better results.

Set internal expectations

One of the most common pitfalls we see during replatforms is inadequate planning for internal resources. It's easy to believe that once you've hired an agency, or tasked a team with the work, it's their job to simply get it done without bothering you or other leaders within the organisation.

Your IT team will have to grant access to internal systems for integration purposes, a finance team will need to approve the purchase of a licence for a tool, and a merchandising team will need to provide product data to the developers for migration and import. So, check holiday schedules and calendars to be sure that key approvers are not absent for weeks at a time when their input will be critical.

Review early and often

You should be able to see the work in progress as the project matures. Don't let developers (internal or external) disappear for months at a time without showing work. Reluctance to demonstrate progress is often a sign of a lack of confidence or fear that the client will evaluate a work in progress as a finished product. While you shouldn't feed into that fear, you also can't let it cloud the project progress.

Your stakeholders who spent so much time pouring detail into requirements, unlocking budget and supporting the RFP process will expect to see updates on progress — so don't say that a project is "going well" unless you can see that it is. You should be able to see and interact with the work in progress on at least a biweekly basis — whether that's a formal agile demo or a link in a Jira ticket to a specific page that's been built.

BigCommerce migration success stories.

If replatforming seems like too big a feat to manage on your own, take it from our merchants – BigCommerce has you covered. Find out why our enterprise merchants decided on BigCommerce and successfully made the switch.

"Retailers' and brands' ecommerce journeys don't end when they choose a solution. So their relationship with the people behind that technology shouldn't end either. From the migration process to long after the store goes live, the team you work with plays a crucial role in your success — both in terms of sales performance and human experience. Our services team loves collaborating with our customers, and it shows. With years of experience specialising in complex ecommerce projects, we are always ready to support our customers' vision and expansion."

Kevin Abbott, Director, Professional Services & Customer Success Management, BigCommerce

Brompton

Foldable bikes need a flexible ecommerce partner

The famous foldable bicycle company has ambitious growth plans but was being held back by its previous platform which was not built to be composable. It also lacked support for the in-store touchpoints that are an integral part of its omnichannel customer journey. This meant it was held back from allowing customers to arrange trials of a **Brompton** and it also made it difficult to offer a click and collect service for purchasers. Its site also lacked the flexibility to support its dealers while also offering a D2C operation which accounts for around a half of all sales.

A migration project was begun and the flexibility of BigCommerce, built from the outset to offer full composability, made it the natural choice. The fact it came with the promise of following an industry-wide agreed MACH blueprint offered valuable reassurance, as Oliver Boardman, IT and digital director at Brompton recalls.

"Our previous system had a variety of pieces that didn't work well together, so the idea of taking a composable commerce approach required careful assessment," he explains.

"We took our time confirming the various components would work well, and knowing that BigCommerce was a member of the MACH Alliance gave us a lot of confidence. Knowing we were following the MACH blueprint and that the components were compatible was a huge factor, and BigCommerce and its partners all came to the table early in the process to identify potential barriers and explain how they would work together to do what we needed."

Results

⊿ MACH Alliance blueprint

⊿ New site able to support D2C as well as dealership network

⊿ Click and collect service now supported
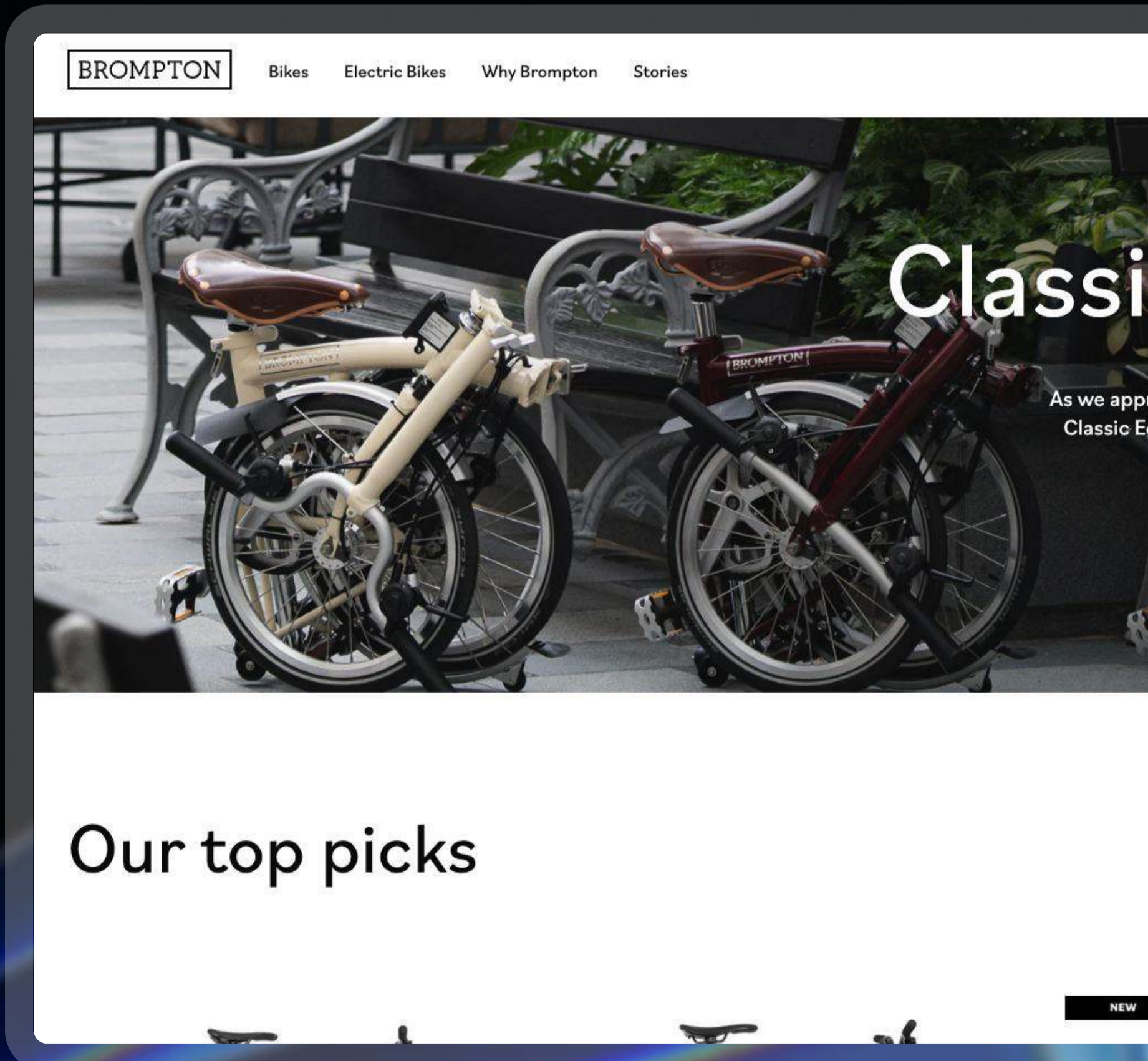
White Stuff

Small team delivers big results with the right partners

White Stuff found its ambition to grow in a tough, fast-moving market was being hampered by a slow, poor-performing ecommerce platform which offered little flexibility or opportunity to scale.

It knew it needed to go headless to give customers the speed they needed and so BigCommerce was chosen primarily for performance. However, White Stuff reveals the **switch brought with it significant gains in revenue and conversions**. Click and collect, for example, has gone from a small proportion of sales to reach 20% of revenue.

For its migration journey the business realised that partnership with multiple third parties was essential

to implement a successful MACH strategy, explains Steve Borg, Technology and Transformation Director at White Stuff.

"We have a relatively small team, and therefore we look for good partners," Steve explains. "We've gone with a partner-first approach. Running a proof of concept with Amplience, Vue Storefront, and Constructor gave us the confidence that these solutions would work really well together, would give us the headless solution we were looking for to keep things lightweight, and would give us the ability to innovate quickly."

Results

37% conversion rate increase

26% per session value increase in orders

100% mobile speed improvement
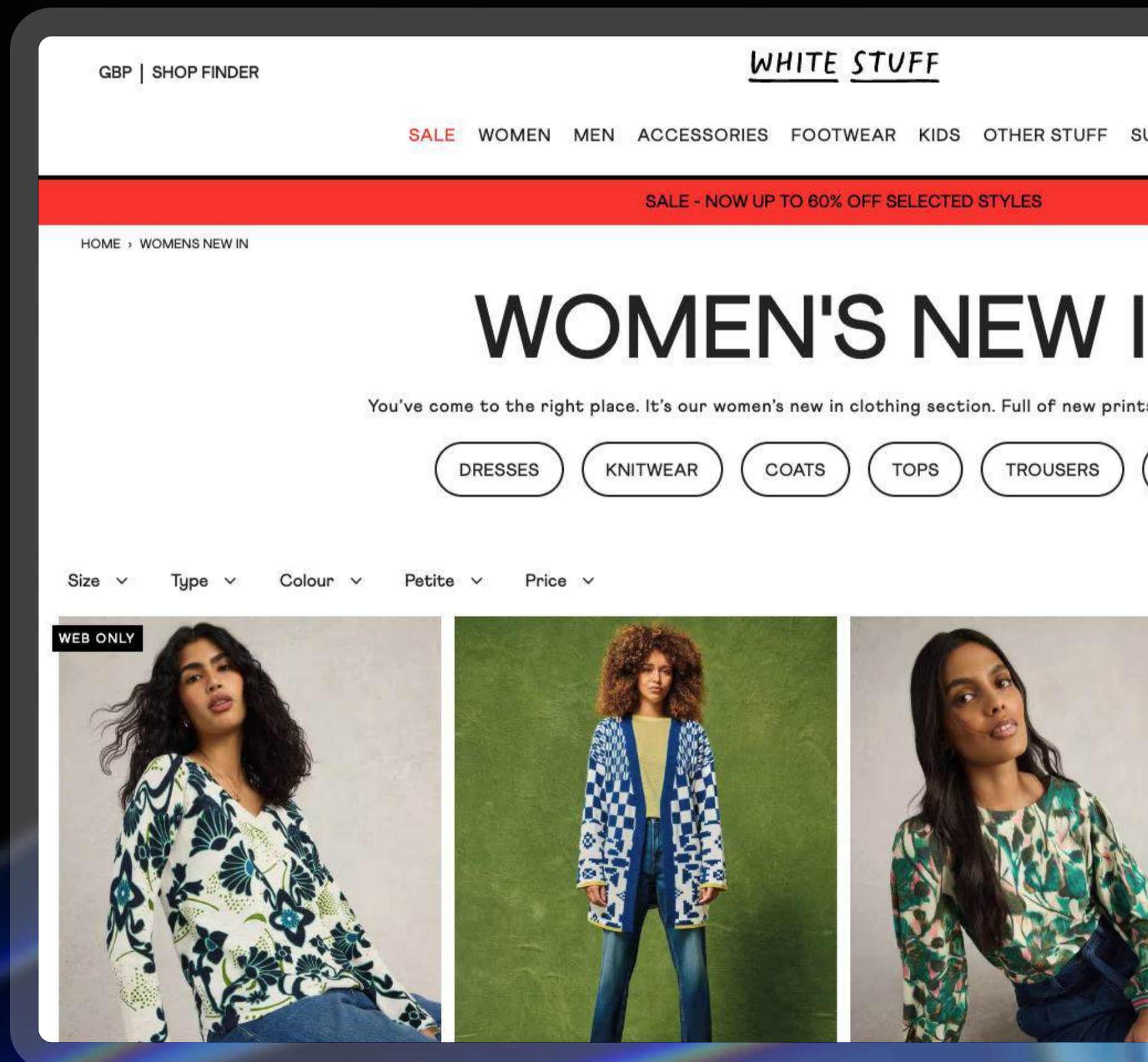
London Tile Company

Doubling down on customer experience with BigCommerce support

Running from a bespoke platform and requiring a highly skilled developer to do nearly everything on its site was constraining **London Tile's Company** drive to offer exceptional customer experience.

To grow the business it needed the flexibility to offer its full range of tiles in every shape, colour and size, but with individual pricing for each customer. This empowers customers to first select samples and then, when they are ready to convert, buy everything they need for a tiling project in just one click. The results have been staggering, explains Jon Lett, Ecommerce Manager at Hampshire Tile Warehouse (the company's owner).

"We saw conversion rates shoot up from the free tile samples. There's a lot more interest, not just for tiles but for sales in general, the whole thing kind of lifted," he says.

"BigCommerce saved us so much time and allowed me to put so much more time into developing new ideas to improve the customer experience."

In addition to enhancing the customer experience and improving team efficiency, London Tile Company was named a winner of the **Make it Big Customer Awards**. Due to unique features like the free tile samples and its aesthetically pleasing design, the brand received the Innovation Award.

Results

62% increase in visitors

30% uplift in customers

15% boost in average orders
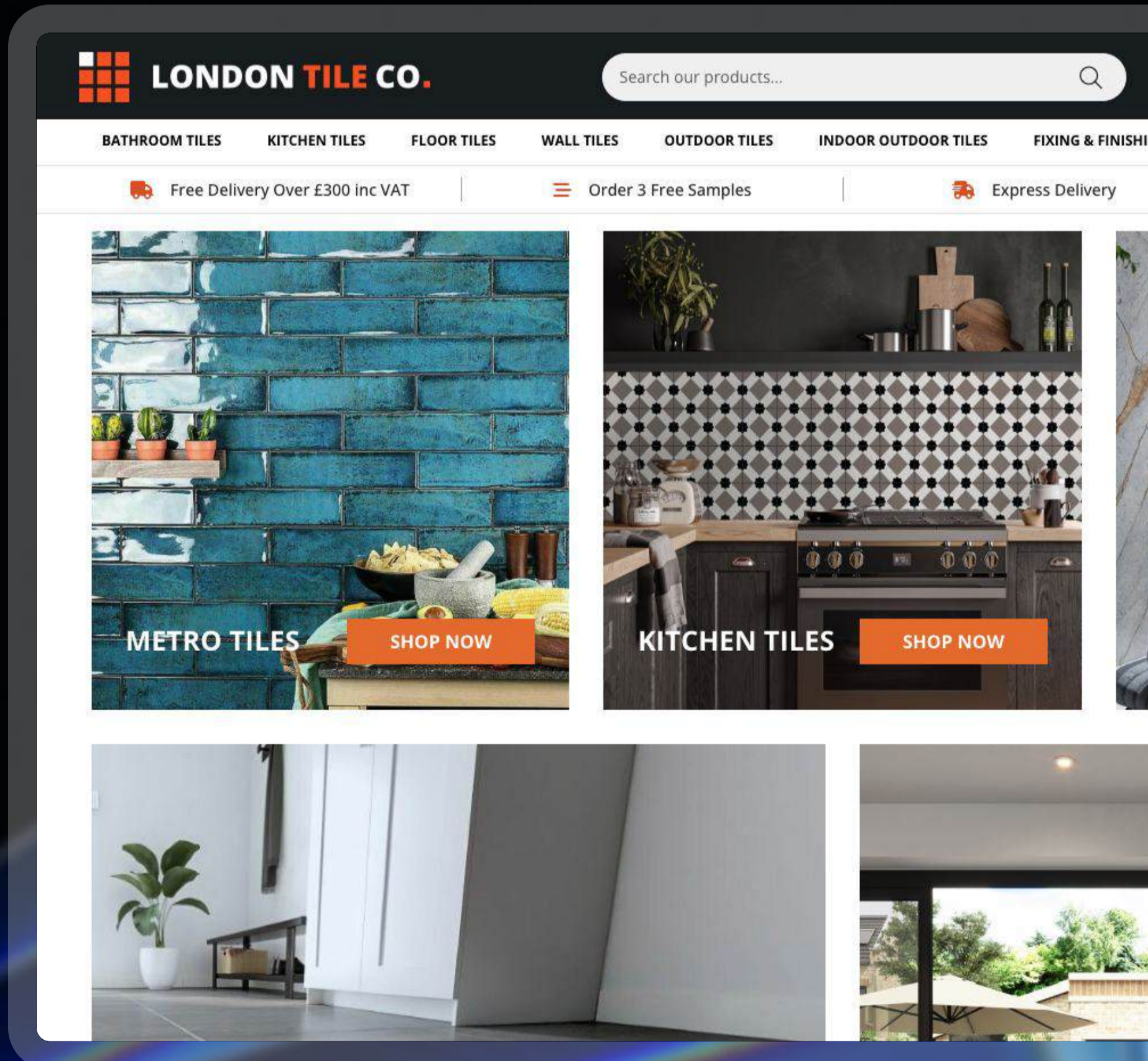
HMD Global

Strong support builds scale across 15 key markets in just three months

HMD Global is the official licensee of the Nokia brand. Its ambitious growth strategy was held back by having to go through a third party every time it wanted to do something new on its site. With global expansion on the table, it knew it needed to manage its own ecommerce sites, and **BigCommerce was chosen** as the platform to help deliver scale and flexibility.

This means it has been able to roll out localised versions of its site in key markets and yet still keep the simplicity of a single payment gateway which is also localised for each region. A one page checkout has also been rolled out to these key countries and has played a huge role in reducing friction and driving up sales, at speed.

Jenni Schneider, HMD's Director of Sales and Marketing Capabilities, reveals the key to success was finding the right ecommerce partner who could work closely with its in-house executives.

"It was key that we had assigned individuals to support us in our journey, because BigCommerce is the centre of our ecommerce architecture," she says.

"In the ramp up phase, our Solution Architect was really great at giving us insights to help us design our implementation while our Implementation Manager made sure we were in touch with the right people and had access to the information we needed in a timely manner."

The importance of this close partnership continues to be vital as the company is kept up to date with new features and made aware of iterative steps it could consider taking to continue its drive to offer exceptional customer experiences across multiple geographies.

"Now that we are up and running, our Technical Account Manager provides support and offers solutions when we have new requirements or want to implement development initiatives," adds Schneider. "Our Customer Success Manager is key for helping us with the bigger picture, keeping us informed on roadmap updates, advocating for us, and bringing forward initiatives that we may not have thought of ourselves."

Results

⊿ 3 months to scale globally

⊿ 10 localised sites

⊿ 15 markets covered
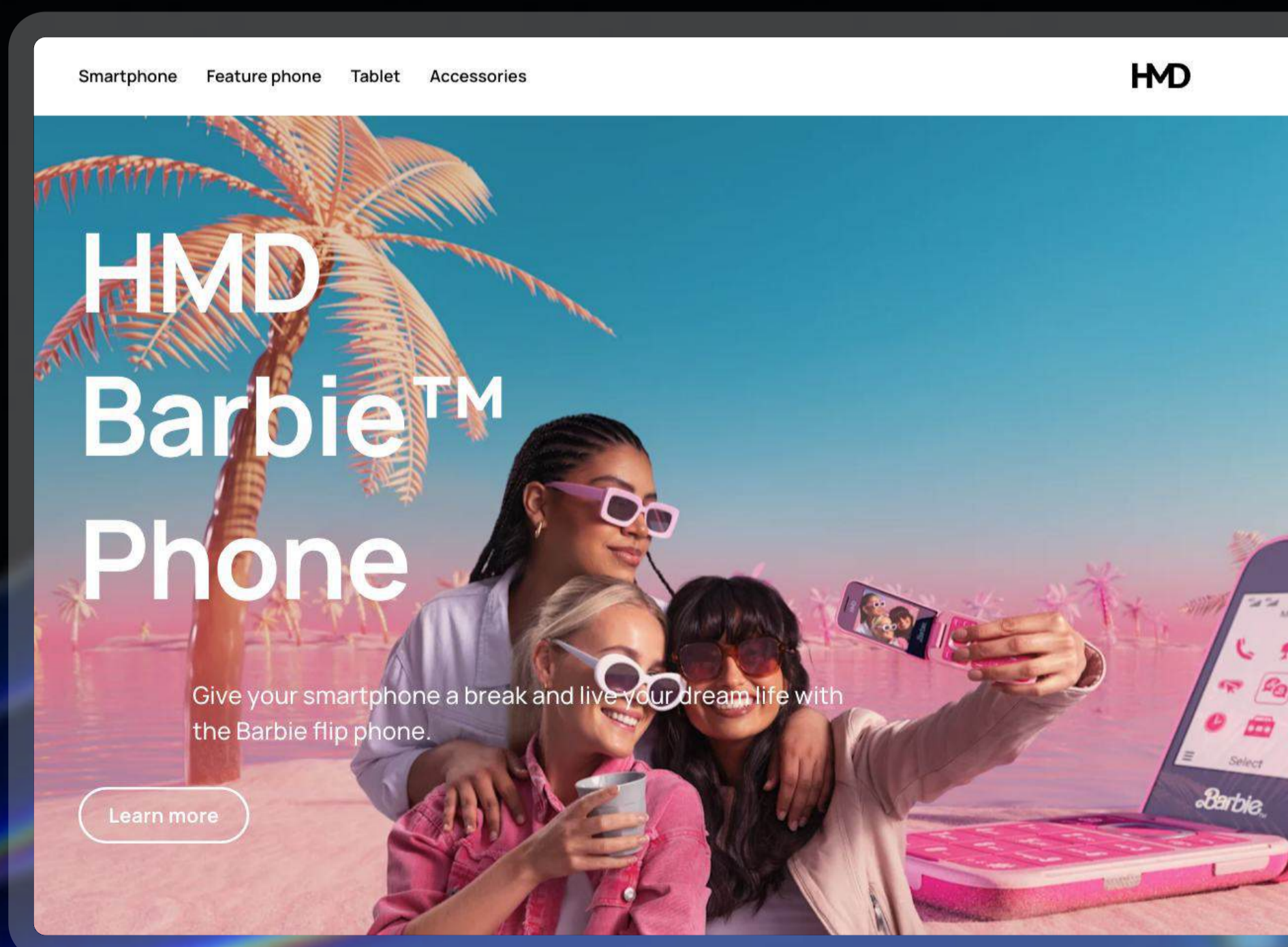
Toolsaver

Seamless integrations power B2B growth

When **Toolsaver** wanted to launch a dedicated B2B site for wholesale and trade customers, it knew it could no longer rely on the legacy platform it had previously used in B2C. It was way too cumbersome and time-consuming to operate and so, encouraged by customer recommendations, it **opted for BigCommerce's B2B Edition** and has never looked back.

From processing trade orders manually, it now has a full-featured site that not only handles customer orders automatically but also offers a seamless integration with Feedonomics. The tool allows sites to export detailed product information, typically for advertising, marketing and marketplace listings, as Neil Bruce, Toolsaver's ecommerce manager, explains.
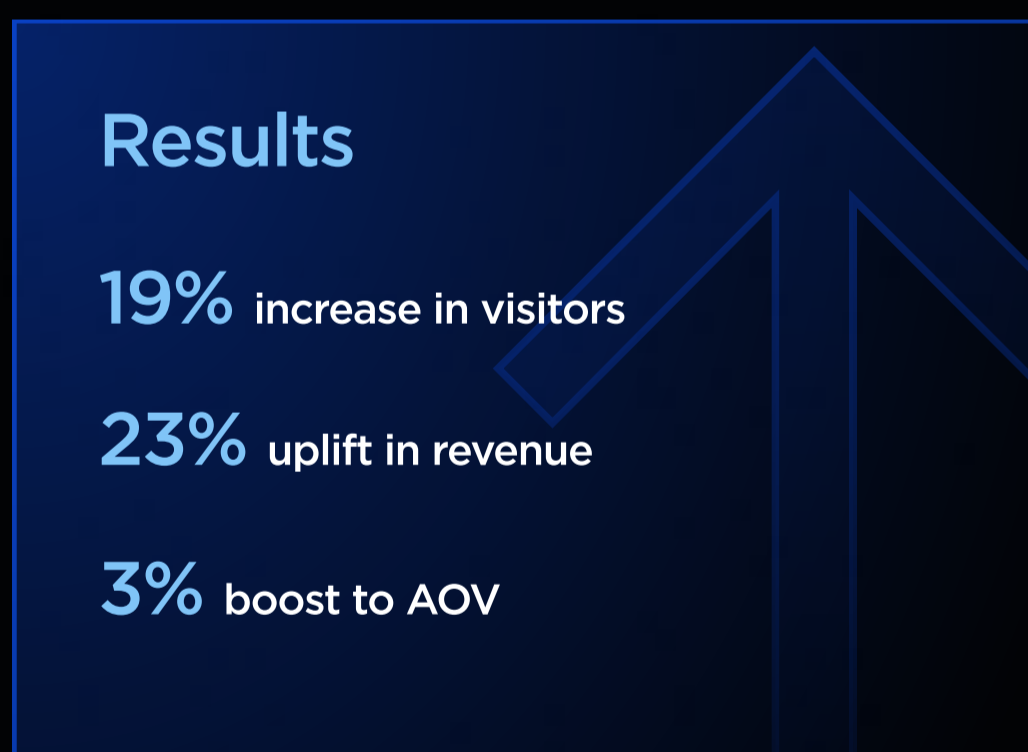
"Feedonomics has been a great tool for us in terms of feeding out product information to the likes of Google Shopping and Facebook," explained Bruce.

"It's far more joined up and connected, so it's a lot easier to pull the data out of your commerce site and then transform that data for whatever needs you have."

For Bruce the major factor in opting for BigCommerce is that, unlike its previous platform, its API approach makes integrating new features simple.

"As soon as we started building the site, we realised that it was such an easy platform to use," he says.

"One of the big factors was that BigCommerce had such an open API architecture. It allowed us to bring people in-house that would be able to develop systems that would integrate seamlessly with the BigCommerce platform."

Results

19% increase in visitors

23% uplift in revenue

3% boost to AOV

SportsShoes.com

"Best in class" platform fuels growth at speed

SportsShoes wants to help people lead more active, healthier lives. However, its ambition was being thwarted by a cumbersome platform that failed to offer the flexibility or scalability its bold mission requires.

It **opted for BigCommerce** for its ability to offer a headless, composable architecture that empowers the brand to launch new products at speed, as well as localise its service in the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, Italy, France - both on the web and its mobile app. This applies to dynamic content that appears on each page in the form of training guides and reviews, as well as the results of a questionnaire each user is encouraged to fill out to determine which running shoe suits their requirements.

"We knew there was an opportunity to unlock more revenue from our website, and we took advantage of this project to set a new standard in online sports retail," said Jon Cleaver, chief technology officer at SportsShoes. "Replatforming to BigCommerce enabled us to build a best-in-class composable digital experience that is delivering exceptional results and transforming our business."

Results

19% increase in conversion rate

10% boost to AOV

Business "transformed" by new site
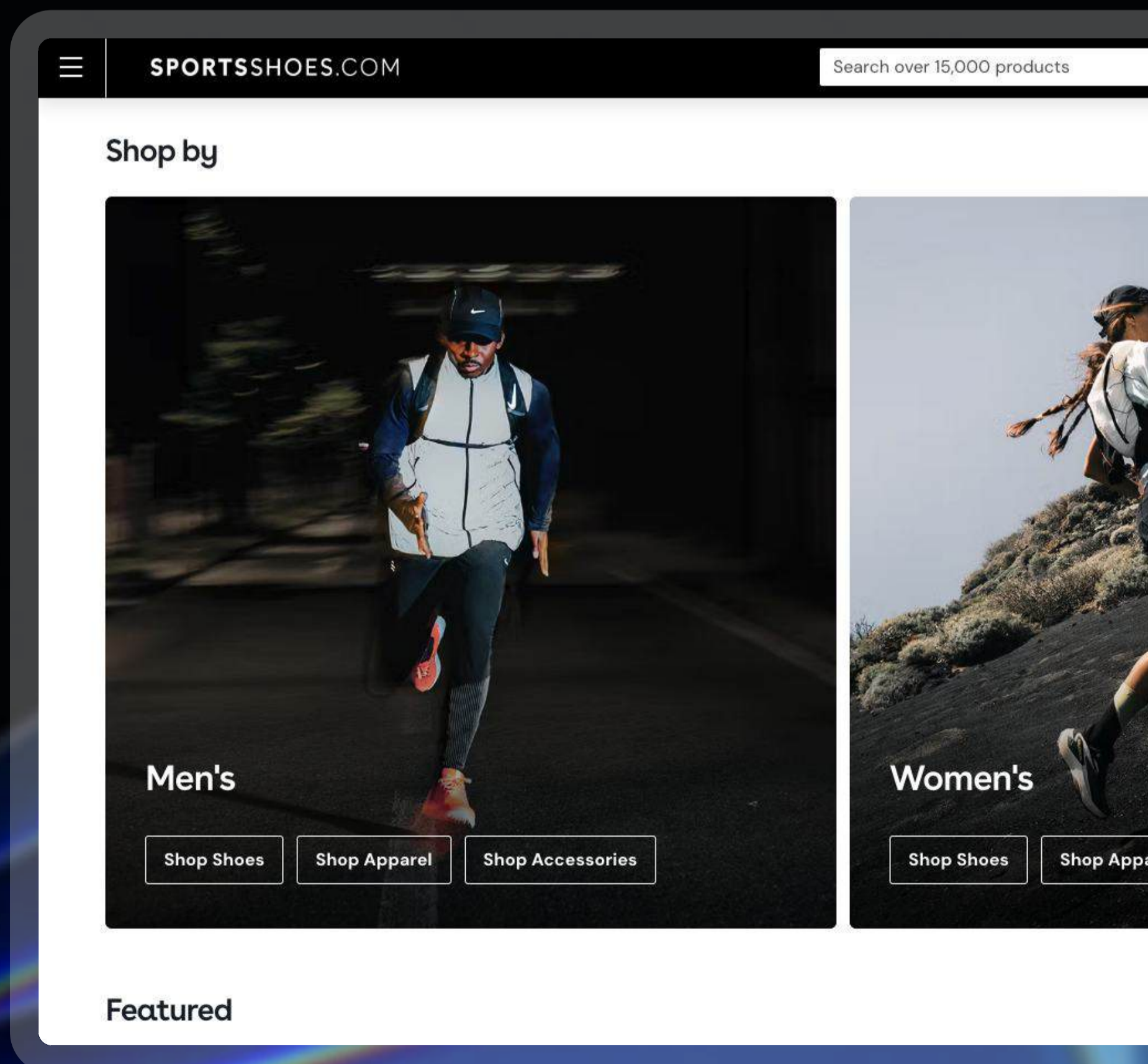
Last words.

Replatforming is not simply about giving your website a makeover — it's about having the right tech stack to future-proof your business in the face of change. Amid economic headwinds and evolving consumer behaviours, adopting a future-fit strategy is crucial to remaining relevant in a competitive landscape.

However, we'd be naive to say that replatforming doesn't come with its own challenges. In many cases, migrating away from a legacy platform can be time-consuming and expensive. But with the help of this comprehensive guide, you and your team will be well on the way to replatforming success.

From establishing a timeline and identifying key goals, to ranking requirements and selecting the right ecommerce platform, all the way to implementation, BigCommerce and our team will work with you every step of the way. With a trusted team of ecommerce experts, BigCommerce is here to assist in providing the safest, fastest and most efficient transition possible.

Ready to take the next step? Schedule time with our team to explore the advantages of migrating your store to BigCommerce.