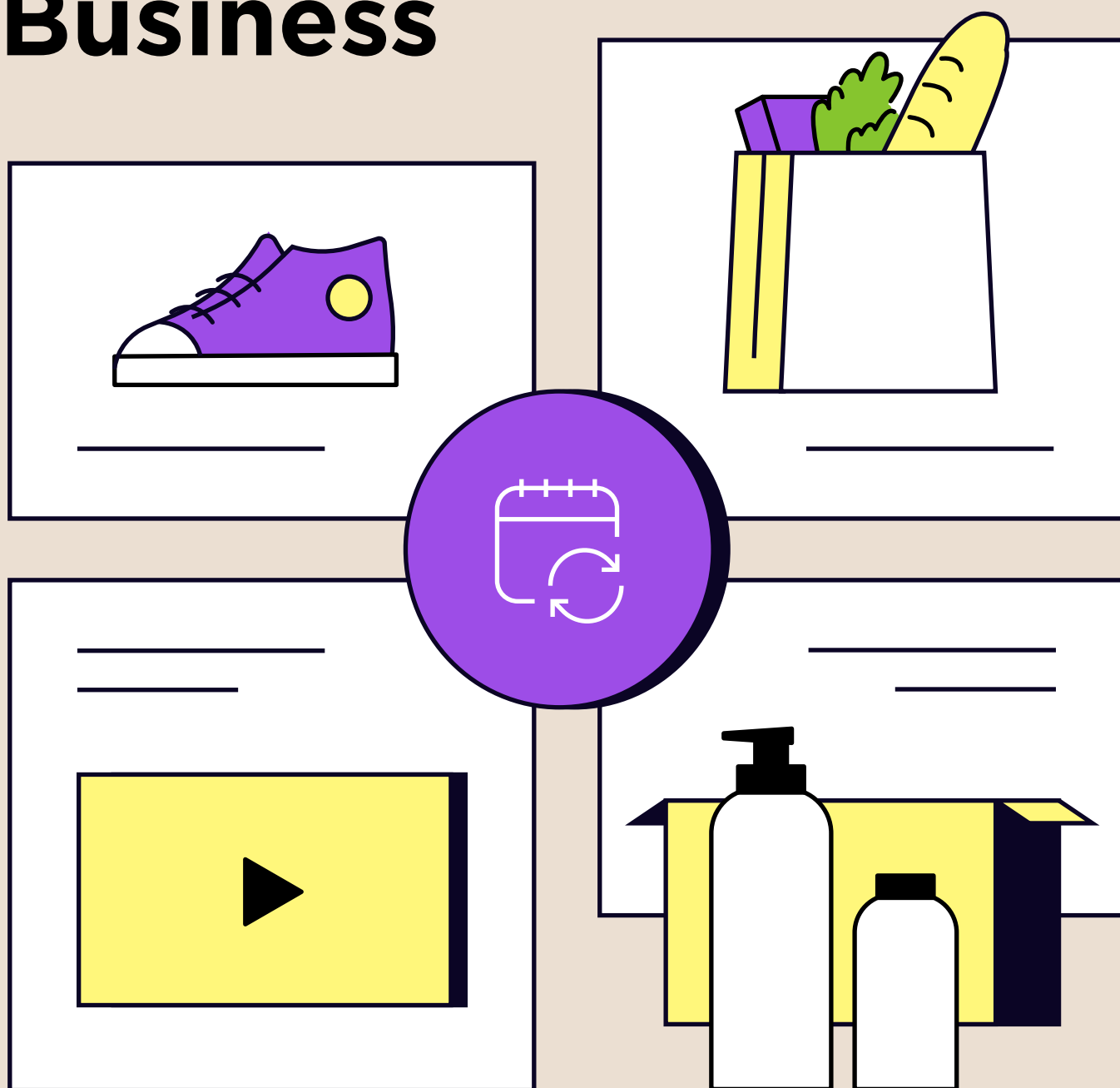


How to Help Your Customers

Launch a Subscription Business



Get your merchants in on this hot trend

With more and more customers starting their shopping experiences online — or doing more of their overall shopping online — retailers and merchants of all sizes have expanded their goods, services and offerings to match customer demand. And as more of the world works to move past the COVID-19 pandemic, many shoppers have grown accustomed to the convenience of having nearly everything they purchase online delivered right to their doorstep.

Part of this trend toward making shopping as convenient for customers as possible is the rise of subscription businesses. Large retailers like Amazon and Target as well as many online boutiques offer subscription-based services — from groceries and home-based products like laundry detergent and razors to more niche products like curated fashion boxes.

So what is a subscription business? In a sense, subscription businesses sell predictability and repetition. Put more bluntly, a subscription business typically either sells access to something, like a content library or a physical storefront, or duplicates a service a customer likes, such as regular product refills or repeated grocery orders.



There are subscriptions for every kind of business and product imaginable — even ones that'll keep your furry friends happy!

To get a better understanding, let's review some of the types of subscription models out there. Then we'll look at some reasons why your merchants might want to start their own subscription business and how they can get going.

Types of subscription models

There are essentially two types of subscriptions: those that provide access to something, and those that duplicate a service.

Access-based subscriptions allow you entry into something: a physical storefront, an online content library, an instructional service, etc. These types of businesses are typically focused on providing instructional, informational, or entertainment-based content.



Subscription businesses have moved beyond just selling physical goods to now include digital experiences like music lessons.

Examples of access-based subscription businesses include:

- [Costco](#), a big-box retailer which offers wholesale products at substantial discounts, including groceries, home goods and personal electronics.

- [Netflix](#), an online video entertainment content streaming platform offering both new and licensed content.
- [Fender Play](#), an offshoot of the guitar production company which offers 1:1 instrument lessons, user-driven instructional content, sample lessons and guitar tabs, and more.

On a smaller scale, these types of subscriptions can also include access to things like a gym or personal trainer's website where they offer sample workout routines, nutritional guides, or courses in weight training safety. Or it could be access to the premium side of a craft maker's website and blog, where they offer how-to videos of the crafts they produce and walkthroughs to basic craft-related questions.

On the other hand, there are also subscriptions that duplicate a service. These types of subscriptions merely repeat the experience of getting something you like or want regularly, such as automated refills or replenishment shipments. They're usually focused on providing and shipping physical goods to a customer's doorstep that they'll regularly need, like sundries or cosmetic items.

Examples of subscriptions that duplicate a service include:

- [Athena Club](#), which creates self-care and grooming products designed for women that can be purchased as a regular subscription: customers pick a set of products and when to have them delivered, and then a box containing those products is delivered every month until the customer cancels or changes the subscription.

[SHOP ALL](#)
[SHOP SETS](#)
[ABOUT US](#)
[OUR INGREDIENTS](#)

Athena Club

[REFERRALS](#)
[SIGN IN](#)
[CART \(0\)](#)

They're Better Together

Set it and forget it. Subscribe and save with our sets.

Pick the set you want

Tell us when to deliver it

Always have what you need

Skip, change or cancel whenever

- [Stitch Fix](#), which quizzes customers on their preferred fashion style and price range, and then has “expert stylists” pick and send clothing pieces in regular box shipments. Customers keep and pay for what they want and send the other items back, and can change their subscription at any time.

[STITCH FIX](#)
[Women](#)
[Men](#)
[Kids](#)

[Style Guide](#)
[Social Impact](#)
[FAQ](#)
[Gift Cards](#)
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Get style that's 100% inspired by you

Tell us about your one-of-a-kind style, fit & price range in your quiz. We'll curate pieces for you and listen to your feedback—so you always look and feel your best. No subscription required.

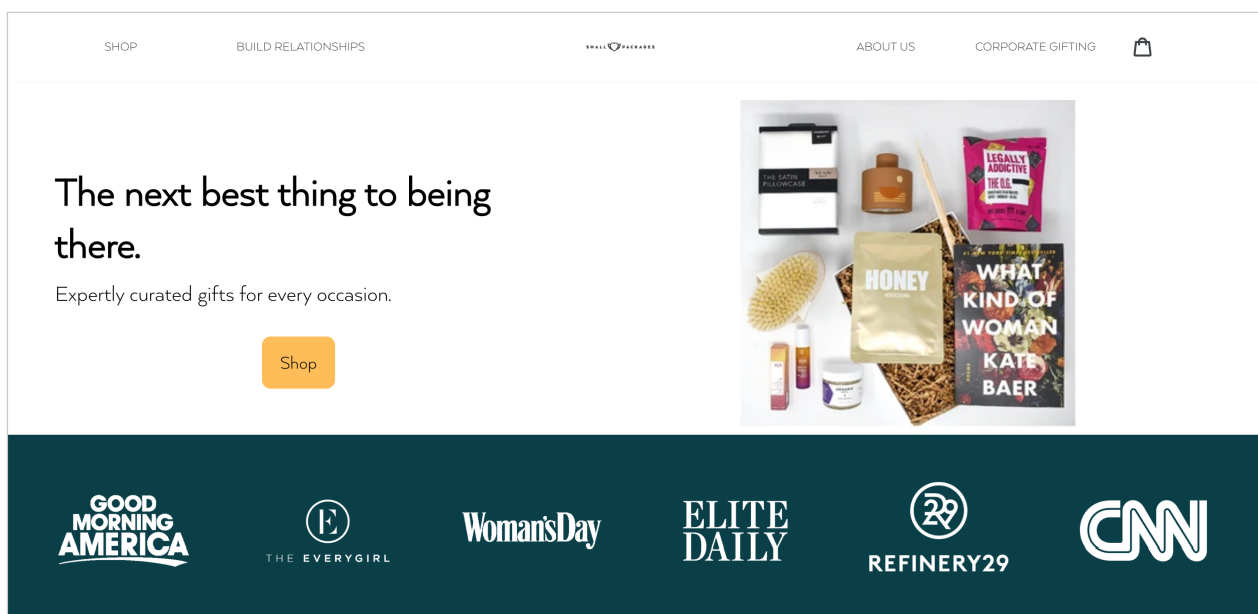
[Women →](#)

[Men →](#)

[Kids →](#)

- [Amazon's Subscribe & Save service](#), which allows customers to pick singular products, select a quantity and shipment schedule for those products, and then create a subscription in which those goods are regularly delivered. Amazon offers discounts between 15% and 20% on these subscribed items, and customers can alter their subscriptions when need be.

A popular subset of this model is the curated subscription box, a good example of which is [Small Packages Company](#). Like Stitch Fix, this company asks customers a few questions to drill down to what would be the best or most appropriate curated box for them. Unlike Stitch Fix, however, customers merely sign up for a box size with Small Packages Co. and don't have control over the individual items being sent. Instead, the company curates what goes into the box along the same lines as an old friend sending along gifts they think you'd like.



Why merchants should launch a subscription business

Launching a subscription-based business boils down to two things: reaching more customers and making more sales. It's just that simple. In a marketplace that's constantly growing more crowded and competitive with more and more merchants offering slightly different versions of the same product, businesses need to look at new strategies to make their company stand out from the rest. Anyone can sell a product, but customers are increasingly looking for things that make a business unique — a subtle product variation, the company's experience and expertise, etc. — as well as products that are convenient for them to get.

This trend isn't going away, either. [Subscription businesses grew nearly six times faster](#) than businesses in the S&P 500 from 2012 to 2021. And that's because customers love the convenience of these types of products as well as the products their favorite brands offer through these subscriptions.



Subscription businesses continue to grow in popularity and revenue, thanks in part to how convenient they are for customers.

But your merchants will also likely love this model, too, depending on their business. Subscriptions provide your merchants with regular, dependable revenue that they can use to reinvest in their business, such as in upgrading their technology or stocking more or new inventory.

Subscriptions also build customer loyalty as they get familiar with and come to depend on your merchants' goods and services each month. They provide an easy source of customer feedback for your merchants, too, which can help them decide what to offer their customers in the future and how to improve their current offerings.

Subscriptions also set up additional sales opportunities for your merchants. Once a customer is a few months into a subscription with a merchant, they'll be much more likely to trust the merchant and purchase other products or add-ons from them. And they'll want to be among the first to hear about new products and services from the merchant.

Benefits to Launching a Subscription Business for Merchants

1. Regular, reliable revenue
2. Increased customer loyalty
3. Direct source of customer feedback
4. Additional sales opportunities

With that in mind, let's look at how Ecwid can help your merchants start a subscription business.

How your merchants can launch a subscription business with Ecwid

When your merchants are ready to start their own subscription-based business, there are a handful of steps they'll need to follow in order to make subscriptions available on their online store. Check out the four steps below so that you'll be able to assist your merchants as they go through the process.

How to Launch a Subscription Business with Ecwid in 4 Steps

1. Determine subscription frequency and pricing
2. Connect the Stripe payment method
3. Add subscription rules to the store's Terms & Conditions
4. Turn on the subscription option in the store

Determine subscription frequency and pricing

The first thing your merchant will want to do is settle on the frequency as well as the pricing of the subscriptions they want to offer. Subscriptions can be set to sell products on a range of schedules: daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.

Connect the Stripe payment method

Next, your merchant will need to [connect the Stripe payment method](#) to their online store. This can be done from their store's Admin page, which will direct the merchant to log into or create a new Stripe account.

Add subscription rules to the store's Terms & Conditions

Once the merchant's store is ready to accept payments via Stripe, they'll need to update their store's [Terms & Conditions page](#) to include rules governing recurring subscriptions and payments. To learn more, check out [this blog post about Terms & Conditions](#) for subscription services from TermsFeed.

Turn on the subscription option in the store

With these steps completed, your merchant is ready to begin offering subscription options. In their store's admin panel, the merchant can turn on the "Product subscriptions" toggle to enable the ability to sell products with subscription prices. Then, in either new products or existing products, they can select "Sell by subscription" in the "Pricing" section of their store. More options will pop up that will allow the merchant to fine-tune how they want to sell subscription-based products. You can direct merchants to [this Help Center document on recurring subscriptions](#) for more information.

Now that you know the process for adding the ability to sell subscriptions through an Ecwid store, be sure your merchants are aware of this popular option, too. And with this handy ebook, you'll be ready and able to help them set up and start selling subscriptions today.

Good luck!

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