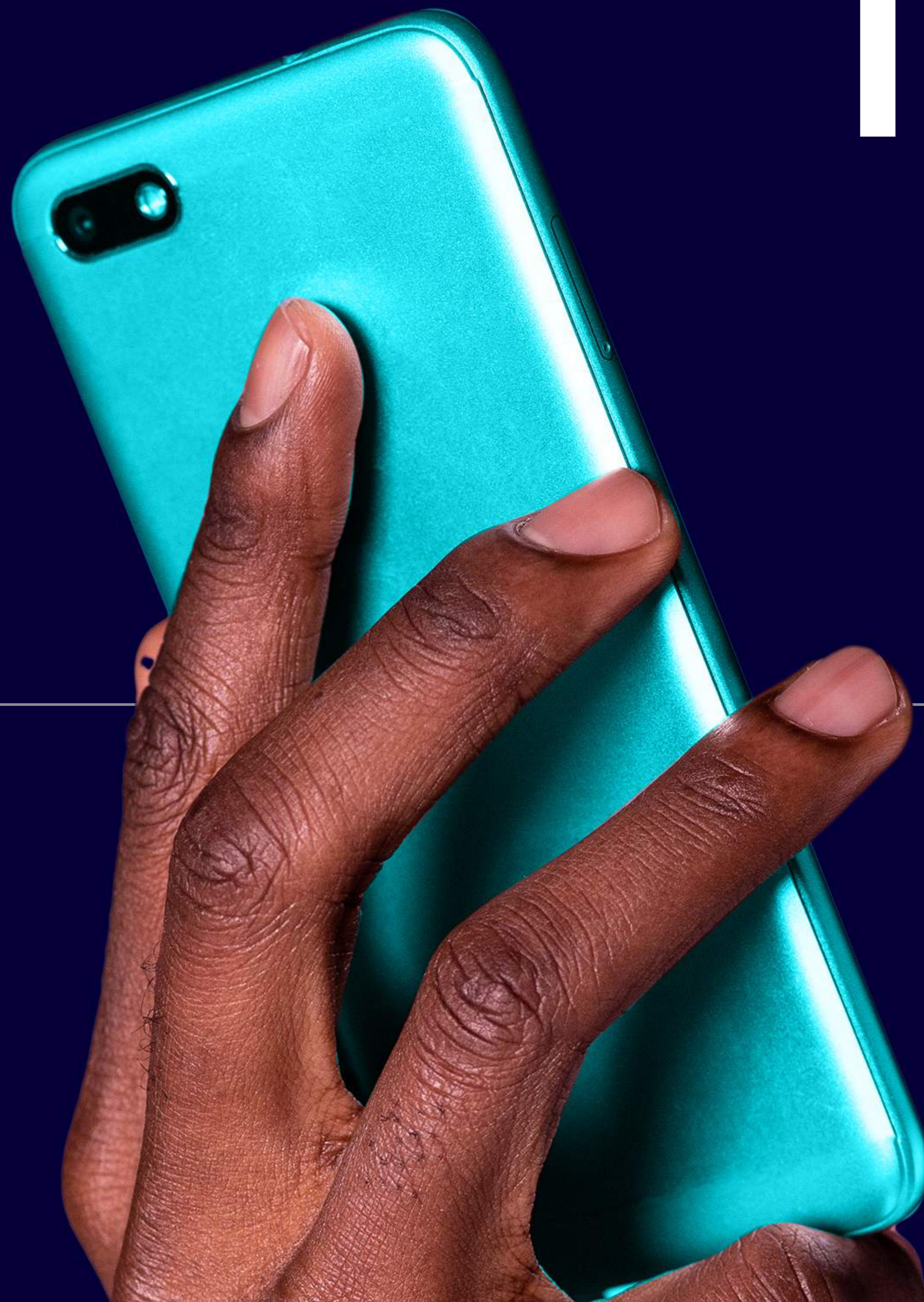


MEASURING THE TRUE COST OF YOUR ONLINE STORE.

# eCommerce TCO.



[visualsoft.co.uk](https://visualsoft.co.uk)

**Visualsoft**

The challenge is real – you’re trying to implement a sustainable long-term eCommerce solution that’s built for growth, cost effective, feature-rich, easy to manage, and doesn’t lumber you with a bunch of hidden charges. We’re here to help by unpicking all of the elements you need to consider, and providing a straightforward framework to work from.

Many online retailers work on a 3-5 year platform cycle with an initial capex investment and ongoing costs, so you don’t want to be locked into a platform that isn’t a good fit for your business.

Retailers are also rightly wary of ‘too good to be true’ platform offers, discounts and promotions that ultimately deliver poor return on investment, but what are the key challenges our clients face before moving across to our eCommerce platform?

3



### Promotional problems

Vendors promise the earth when it comes to digital marketing and advertising with results often lacking (with wasted ad spend).

4



### Hidden costs

Existing systems seem affordable on paper but start to look less attractive when you add up all the plugins, integrations, subscriptions and other hidden fees lurking in the background.

5



### Lack of transparency

The ability to accurately forecast and predict eCommerce spend is critical for budget planning, forecasting and calculating cost per transaction.

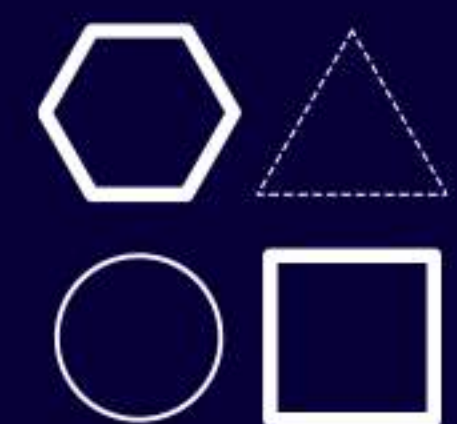
1



### People overheads

Their existing system is time-consuming and complex to manage, requiring expensive team overheads, onboarding and training.

2



### Hassle factor

Those unspoken hours and days trying to technically problem solve glitches and bugs, which can become costly in itself.

### eCommerce TCO

Use our handy framework to calculate the true cost of your online store.

Our total cost of ownership (TCO) model looks at all of these factors for a three-year period - from the initial build of your online store, right through to the real running costs including transaction fees, security updates, and order management, and looks like this...

Need help calculating your eCommerce TCO? We can help!

#### One-off costs

Design and build	£
Data migration	£
Customisation	£
Integration (EPOS/ERP/etc)	£
One-off licence fees/add-ons	£
Onboarding/training	£
<b>Initial investment</b>	<b>£ (A)</b>

#### Ongoing costs

Hosting and support	£
Monthly licence/service fees	£
Management and fulfilment	£
Updates and maintenance	£
Transaction/commission fees	£
Digital marketing	£
<b>Year 1-3 investment</b>	<b>£ (B)</b>

#### Year 1

£
£
£
£
£
£
<b>£ (B)</b>

#### Year 2

£
£
£
£
£
£
<b>£ (C)</b>

#### Year 3

£
£
£
£
£
£
<b>£ (D)</b>

**Total cost of ownership (A+B+C+D) = £**

[Talk to a platform specialist](#)

# One-off & ongoing costs to consider



## Design & build

Upfront charges for the initial development of an online store can vary significantly depending on the type of solution you choose. For example, the setup fees for a bespoke online store built on an open source platform are likely to be much higher than a SaaS solution created using a storefront template.

It's also worth noting that while hundreds of our eCommerce features are included within our initial design and build fee, this isn't the case with many other eCommerce solutions, so be sure to get a breakdown of all charges.



## Data migration

We've helped thousands of retailers to switch over to our eCommerce platform, and we provide a full migration service as standard, however if you're considering alternative providers you'll need to identify the costs involved in moving your store's valuable data.

If you're unsure on what's involved in the process, take a look at our [step-by-step migration guide](#).



## Customisation

As well as standard features, consider any bespoke functionality that your business needs in place either when your site first goes live, or later down the line.

The cost of custom work varies considerably depending on your specific requirements and your provider's development fees. To help you more easily plan out your eCommerce costs, we're more than happy to give you a custom quote.



## Integrations

The integrations that are vital for your day-to-day operations may be unique to your business, however as well as an essential payment gateway, the list usually includes email services, stock management, CRM, reviews, and courier systems.

Each of these services come with their own cost, however our feature-rich platform can also reduce your reliance on third-parties to reduce your overheads.



## One-off license fees/add ons

On top of the initial costs of linking your store with third-party software, there may also be monthly licence fees and occasional update charges to consider, as well as expensive development fees if your provider isn't already connected with a huge number of [best in class systems](#).



## Onboarding/training

Although there may be commonalities, every eCommerce management interface is notably different, which means you and your team will need adequate training before you're able to confidently use a new system.

Unlike Visualsoft, many providers will issue hefty charges for bringing retailers up to speed, so make sure you're clear on how much this could cost your business across the lifetime of your online store.



## Hosting & support

We have extensive experience in hosting huge online stores with millions of visitors, so as well as offering 99.99% uptime, we give you clear cost breakdowns for a hosting service that can scale with your business.

We also provide full technical support - complete with rapid response SLAs - within our monthly service charge, which means you don't need to worry about nasty surprises, and can be assured that any issues will be handled as quickly as possible.



## Monthly license/service fees

On top of the design and build fees for your store, it's common for providers to charge a regular software or service fee for the duration of your eCommerce agreement. This can also apply to third-party plugins and integrations, including customer review tools, 360 degree imaging, and integrated marketplaces such as Amazon and eBay.

To help you get the best deal, at Visualsoft we've negotiated preferential rates with a wide number of industry leading solutions.



## Management & fulfilment

Calculate spend for the number of staff members needed to run your online store, covering everything from handling customer enquiries and fulfilling orders to creating content and performance reporting.

The size and specialisms of your team is largely dictated by the type of solution you choose, and often highlights differences between eCommerce platforms. The store management system we provide has been developed in close collaboration with many leading online brands, which means it's not only feature-rich, but is also a much more intuitive system for retailers.



## Transaction/commission fees

As well as integration or ongoing licensing fees, some eCommerce providers and third-party payment gateways will charge you for every transaction made on your store. This is a fairly standard practice, however, it's important to understand the exact costs and whether there are thresholds in place that could see charges increased/decreased depending on site performance metrics such as total revenue.

For transaction-based pricing models, it's also recommended that you forecast costs in line with the growth of your business, as what's affordable now could become an issue as your business scales.



## Digital marketing

Although marketing services aren't always included within the TCO for an asset such as an online store, understanding how much your spend may differ between eCommerce solutions can be useful when comparing purchase price and return on investment. As well as looking at charges for service delivery across relevant channels, factor in costs for bidding budgets, advertising charges and commission fees.

Also keep in mind that while some eCommerce providers offer general tools and tips, we go the extra mile. With Visualsoft, your store not only comes with effective marketing features as standard - including an advanced newsletter system, email campaign builder, and SEO tools - you also have access to a wide range of specialist marketing services delivered by our award-winning teams, making it much easier to manage costs.



## Updates & maintenance

On top of the cost of general maintenance, factor in charges for store or back office features that you don't need right now, but would like to incorporate in the future as your business grows. Also look at the cost of additional storefronts if your business strategy includes longer term plans to trade internationally or specifically target other B2B or B2C markets.

Although it can be tricky to anticipate what lies ahead, you should also consider the potential hidden costs of keeping your store up to date with new legislation and industry changes - think GDPR, PCI compliance, EU import/export regulations, and Google algorithm updates.

While some providers will charge you additional fees for even mandatory updates, at Visualsoft we take a proactive approach to ensure your store stays ahead of the curve as part of our standard service. That's why our sites collectively score higher than other eCommerce platforms - including Shopify Plus, Big Commerce, Aero Commerce and Magento Enterprise - in terms of Google's Lighthouse performance metric.

MAKING SURE IT ALL ADDS UP.

Measuring the TCO for your eCommerce solution is a critical undertaking for any online retailer, as it not only gives you a more accurate view of return on investment, it also helps you to make a more informed decision when choosing a new platform. Although some options may initially seem more attractive than others due to low set-up costs, over the lifecycle of your online store, hidden charges can soon mount up, leaving you to pay much more than expected across the longer term.

Understanding TCO can help you avoid this issue, protecting your bottom line and the future of your business, which is why we're committed to making the calculation process as simple as possible. If you need any further advice or support in identifying eCommerce costs, or you're looking to understand how much you could save over the longer term by switching to Visualsoft, our expert team is on hand to help.

**Call 01642 633 604 or send us your details via our online form.**

**Get in touch today**

**Visualsoft**