The Checkout Leak Checklist

The CPG DTC Playbook | Prepared by Dumo Digital Strategies

For specialty CPG brands

Why people who already decided to buy still leave, how to price shipping so it sells instead of scares, and the friction points we fix, in order.

They Didn't Change Their Mind. They Got Tired.

Someone who adds to cart has already said yes. You paid for the click, you won them over on the product page, and they picked a size. If they leave now, it is almost never because they stopped wanting the product. Something between the cart and the confirmation page made buying feel like work, or felt like a trick.

That makes the cart and checkout **the cheapest money in your store to get back.** No new traffic and no new ad spend. Just fewer reasons to leave.

Number	What it tells you
About 70%	Of online carts are abandoned before purchase, across ecommerce (Baymard Institute).
About half	Of people who abandon say extra costs like shipping, taxes and fees were the reason. It is the number one reason, by a wide margin.
Under 4 in 10	If fewer than 4 in 10 people who reach checkout finish it, checkout is your leak. Find it in Shopify under Analytics, Conversion rate breakdown.

Checkout Is a Different Brain

On your homepage and product page, shoppers are in fast, emotional mode. Big photos, bold colors and your brand's personality are doing their job there. At checkout the brain flips to slow, careful mode. They are checking the total and typing in a card number.

Amazon, Apple and Shopify's own checkout have trained people that a clean white or off-white page means it is safe to pay. Loud colors and busy layouts at checkout feel off-pattern, and that adds a flicker of doubt right when you want certainty. **Keep checkout neutral: a white or off-white background, your logo, and nothing else competing for attention.**

Shipping: Turn the Surprise Into an Offer

The $9 shipping charge is rarely the problem. The surprise is. A $34 order that becomes $43 on the last step feels like a bait and switch. They would have paid $43 if they had known from the start.

So shipping should never show up for the first time at checkout. And it is more than a cost to hide. Used well, shipping is one of the strongest offers you have, because it can push people to a bigger pack or to subscribe. The question is where you can afford to cover it, and that comes down to your margins.

Do the Math Before You Offer Free Shipping

Start with what each order really costs you to fill: the product, pick and pack, postage and payment fees. Then look at what is left on each pack size and on a subscription shipment. Here is an example for a brand selling jars:

	Single jar	3-pack	3-pack on subscription, 15% off
Price	$14.00	$38.00	$32.30
Product cost	$4.00	$12.00	$12.00
Pick, pack and postage	$9.00	$11.00	$11.00

	Single jar	3-pack	3-pack on subscription, 15% off
Payment fees, about 3%	$0.42	$1.14	$0.97
Left over if you cover shipping	$0.58	$13.86	$8.33
What it means	You cannot cover shipping here. Charge it, or set a threshold above it.	Covering shipping works and pushes people to the bigger pack.	Covering shipping works, and every reorder comes with no ad cost.

Example numbers. Plug in your own with the Free Shipping Threshold and Subscription Offer calculators at dumodigital.com/playbook.

Notice that postage barely moves between one jar and three. That is why covering shipping on bigger orders is usually affordable and covering it on a single unit usually is not. It also gives you three ways to use shipping as an offer:

Free shipping above a threshold	Set it just above your average order. If your average is $42, try $48 to $55. Show a progress bar in the cart that fills as they shop. Nobody likes leaving a bar at 85%, so many people add one more item to finish it.
Free shipping on bigger packs	Build it into the Best Value size. It gives the biggest pack a clear reason to exist and makes the price per serving even better.
Free shipping on subscriptions	Make it part of your subscribe and save offer: "Save 15% and get free shipping on every order." It turns a small discount into a much stronger reason to subscribe, and you only pay for that customer once.

Whichever you choose, **say it early.** On the product page, near the price, and in the cart. The shipping cost should never be news at checkout.

Your Cart Drawer Is Your Highest-Intent Moment

Someone who opens the cart already wants to buy. Most brands treat the cart as a list of items and a checkout button. It should be where you sell the most, not the least, and adding more should never mean leaving the cart.

Free shipping progress bar	Shows how close they are, so they add more to get there.
Subscribe and save upgrade	A one-tap switch to subscription on the item already in their cart, with the savings shown.
One-tap add-ons	Products that go with what is in the cart, added without leaving. A second flavor or a smaller item that gets them over the threshold.
Trust	Reviews, a guarantee and how fast it ships, right above the button.
Savings	Show what they are saving, so the order feels like a win.

Upsells and custom blocks inside Shopify checkout itself need Shopify Plus. The product page and the cart drawer, where most of this happens, work on any plan.

Make Paying Effortless

Every field and every tap is a chance to stop. Shop Pay remembers shoppers across millions of Shopify stores, so for a lot of your customers the card and address are already filled in. Shopify reports Shop Pay can lift checkout conversion by up to 50%. Put Shop Pay, Apple Pay and Google Pay at the very top of checkout, turn on address autocomplete, and ask only for what you need to ship the order.

Then Win Them Back by Email and SMS

Some people will still leave. That is what abandoned cart and abandoned checkout flows are for. Send the first message within the hour, while they still remember. Show the exact product they left, the reviews and the answer to the question that most likely stopped them. Lead with the product, not a discount. The full setup is in the Klaviyo Flow Map.

Buy From Your Own Store

Do this on your phone before you change anything. Then hand your phone to a friend who has never seen your store and watch them buy without helping.

Taps from product page to order confirmed	
Where shipping cost first showed up	
Fields you had to fill in	
Where you or your friend slowed down	
Anything that felt like a surprise	

The Checklist, in the Order We Fix It

	Check off what your store already does
☐	Shipping cost or the free shipping threshold shows on the product page, before the cart.
☐	You know your cost to fill an order on each pack size and on a subscription shipment.
☐	Shipping is used as an offer: a threshold, the Best Value size, or the subscription, wherever your margin allows.
☐	The most popular size is preselected, so nobody faces 3 to 5 decisions before add to cart.
☐	The cart is a drawer, not a separate page, with a free shipping progress bar.
☐	The cart drawer has a one-tap subscribe and save upgrade and one-tap add-ons.
☐	Reviews, a guarantee and shipping speed sit right above the checkout button.
☐	Shop Pay, Apple Pay and Google Pay are at the top of checkout.
☐	Address autocomplete is on, and checkout asks only for what you need.
☐	Checkout is clean and neutral: white or off-white, with your logo.
☐	Abandoned cart and abandoned checkout flows are live, and the first message sends within the hour.

Checked	**What it means**
9 to 11	Strong. Watch session recordings to find the last small leaks.
5 to 8	Fix shipping and the cart drawer first. That is where most of the money is.
0 to 4	This is your leak. Fix it before you spend another dollar on ads.

Fix one thing at a time and give each change about two weeks before the next, so you know what worked.

Want us to find your checkout leaks? Book a strategy call at dumodigital.com.

Sources: cart abandonment and reasons (Baymard Institute), Shop Pay conversion (Shopify).