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Shopify Server-Side Tracking Checklist

For: whoever owns GA4, GTM and Google Ads on a Shopify or headless Shopify store. **What:** every check from our migration guide, in the order we do them. **How:** tick the box, write the value, sign each section off before the next.

Where Shopify stores lose data

Two GTM loaders doubling events. Shopify apps sending their own server events alongside yours. Purchases created in a sandboxed checkout the theme cannot see. Click IDs that never reach the order, or that Safari strips before the page loads. Safari capping cookies at seven days because the storefront and the server container sit on different IP ranges. Consent pushed after the first events.

We run server-side alongside the existing client-side tracking until the two agree, so nothing is lost while these are found and fixed. On the stores we have migrated, the server container then captured 8% to 11% more conversions than the setup it replaced.

1. Inventory and baseline

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Every mechanism that loads GA4, GTM or Google Ads listed	Theme code, Customer Events pixels, Shopify apps, third-party scripts	Mechanisms found:
☐	Shopify apps sending their own data checked	Google & YouTube app (and the Google Ads conversion actions it creates), Facebook & Instagram app data sharing level, TikTok and Pinterest apps	Apps found:
☐	One GTM loader only	Live page source and network requests, not the app settings screen	Loader kept:
☐	Legacy and custom tracking identified	Shopify.analytics click tracking, old checkout scripts, custom events such as purchase_addl_scripts. Additional Scripts on the Thank you page stopped running on 28/08/2025 (Plus) and 26/08/2026 (all other stores)	Removed / kept until:
☐	Baseline recorded	GA4 users, sessions, source/medium, purchases, revenue for the same period. Back-end: Online Store channel orders only (no POS, draft, subscription renewal or B2B orders)	Period:
☐	Comparison basis agreed	Same timezone, revenue definition (tax, shipping, discounts) and currency. Shopify Markets: pixel sends the customer currency, Shopify reports the shop currency	Revenue definition:
☐	nslookup run on every domain	Storefront, checkout subdomain, server container, Custom Loader; compare first half of each IP	Storefront IP: Container IP:
☐	Signed off		Signed off by / date:

2. Parallel run in GTM, Stape app and Custom Pixel

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Server container created in Google Tag Manager first	Stape needs its manual configuration key, so the GTM container comes before the Stape one	Container ID:
☐	Stape container created with that key	Custom tagging domain added; server container URL responds; EU zone for UK and EU stores	Domain:

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Stape plan checked for the parallel run	Duplicated tags roughly double requests; request limit and overage behaviour confirmed	Plan:
☐	GA4 event tags duplicated in the web container	Export the GA4 event tags, import back into the same container with Merge and Rename conflicting	Tags duplicated:
☐	New Google Tag, new Config Settings variable, new Event Settings variable	Both carry server_container_url as a constant; duplicated events point at the new ones, originals untouched	Constant name:
☐	GA4 client kept on JavaScript Managed	Server Managed swaps the client ID for FPID, so visitors get new IDs unless "Migrate from JavaScript Managed Client ID" is ticked. On standard Shopify, FPID is capped at seven days in Safari too	
☐	New GA4 property created for the parallel run	Server GA4 event tag sends here, not to the reporting property; trigger Client Name = GA4	Test property ID:
☐	New property configured like the reporting one	Timezone, currency, unwanted referrals, cross-domain, 14-month retention, key events, custom dimensions, internal traffic filters, Google Ads link. New-user counts run high for the first weeks	
☐	Marketing pixels created in the server container	Google Ads, Meta and the rest; Event Data variables for UTMs, click IDs, client_id, session_id; URL parser on page_location	Pixels:
☐	Meta purchases deduplicated	Browser pixel and CAPI send the same event_id, or the Facebook & Instagram app server events are switched off; deduplicated counts checked in Events Manager	Event ID source:
☐	Stape Shopify app configured	Web GTM ID, custom tagging domain, Custom Loader identifier, ecommerce data layer	GTM ID: Domain:
☐	Theme data layer values set before the loader runs	Anything GTM needs from the theme is in place first	Variables:
☐	Custom Pixel installed, generated fetch() left as is	Do not replace Stape code with script injection	
☐	Checkout events reach the new property in the same session	Pixel events fire the duplicated GA4 tags as well as the originals; no new session starts at checkout	
☐	page_location fixed for checkout	event.context.window.location.href sent from the pixel, passed through in the server GA4 tag	Variable name:
☐	Cookies read inside checkout	browser.cookie.get in the pixel; client ID and click IDs arrive with the purchase in sGTM Preview	Cookies checked:
☐	Event schema mapped from what reaches sGTM	value / TotalValue, transaction_id / OrderId, email	Fields:
☐	UTMs and click IDs persisted to begin_checkout	gclid, wbraid, gbraid, fbclid, msclkid	
☐	Product IDs match the feeds	item_id in the Merchant Center format (e.g. shopify_GB_productID_variantID); Meta content_ids match the catalogue	Format:
☐	User-provided data sent with the purchase	Hashed email and phone from checkout_completed to enhanced conversions and Meta advanced matching, gated on ad_user_data	

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Upsells and express checkouts understood	checkout_completed fires on the first post-purchase upsell page; Shop Pay, Apple Pay, Google Pay and PayPal buttons can skip begin_checkout and payment steps	Upsell app:
☐	Webhook purchase backup considered	Order webhooks from the Stape app; client ID and click IDs stored as cart attributes; deduplicated on transaction_id; refunds sent to GA4	Decision:
☐	Signed off		Signed off by / date:

3. Parallel run and Google Ads

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Client-side and server-side running in parallel	Original tags to the reporting property; server container to the new test property	Reporting property ID:
☐	sGTM Ads conversions created as secondary actions	Purchases value > 0; samples value = 0, as separate actions	Action names:
☐	Shopify app conversion actions demoted	Google & YouTube app actions set to secondary or removed once sGTM conversions are live	
☐	Every journey tested as a new visitor	Paid, organic, email, affiliate, through checkout, in incognito	
☐	Each conversion validated, not just fired	Transaction ID, value, currency, click IDs, outgoing Google Ads request	Test order IDs:
☐	Server-side vs client-side compared	Purchases, revenue, and sample orders as the control group; investigate either direction; rule out bot traffic before accepting an uplift	Difference: purchases % revenue % samples %
☐	Attribution checked by channel	Source/medium, sessions, transactions, revenue, conversion rate; watch for Direct revenue rising with flat traffic, and purchases credited to payment providers	
☐	Switch-over	Server GA4 tag repointed to the reporting property; client-side GA4 tags paused; reporting property checked; then sGTM Ads conversions primary and client-side Ads tags paused	Switch dates:
☐	Legacy pixel logic removed last		Removed on:
☐	Signed off		Signed off by / date:

4. Cookie lifetime in Safari

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Store type and route decided	Standard: Cookie Keeper via the Stape app (Pro; custom cookies need Business). Confirm the master cookie with Stape: Shopify's developer changelog says it stopped setting _shopify_y from 01/01/2026. Hydrogen: same-origin proxy route, e.g. /metrics. No code change: Cookie Keeper only, limits stated plainly	Route: Master cookie:
☐	Loader and server_container_url on the same-origin path	Hostname matches the page exactly; www and bare domain differ	URL:

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Cookie Monster reads and writes the same names	e.g. _gclid in, _gclid out	Cookies:
☐	Both sides gated on consent	Web tag needs ad_storage, fires on Initialization and consent update. Server: analytics tag on gcs ^G1.1, marketing tag on ^G11	
☐	Expiries consistent	Click IDs 90 days, UTMs 30 days, _ga two years	
☐	Cookies set on the root domain	e.g. .store.com so checkout can read them	Domain:
☐	Click ID loss planned for	Safari strips gclid, fbclid and msclkid in Private Browsing, Mail and Messages: persist wbraid, gbraid and UTMs, use enhanced conversions as the fallback, send Microsoft Ads and LinkedIn conversions server-side	
☐	Tested on real Safari, Mac and iPhone	Land with gclid, fbclid, ttclid and UTMs; consent accepted, rejected, unanswered; expiry checked on the next page	Expiry seen:
☐	Signed off		Signed off by / date:

5. Consent, headless and multi-store

	Check	What to look at	Your value / notes
☐	Consent default pushed before any event	Check data layer order on the first page	
☐	Banner connected to the Customer Privacy API	window.Shopify.customerPrivacy.currentVisitorConsent() matches the banner choice; each Customer events pixel's permission matches your consent approach ("Not required" only if the pixel passes consent into Consent Mode)	
☐	App embeds and Customer events pixels don't fire before consent	Checked with only strictly necessary granted, including affiliate and other app tags	
☐	Consent update fires on decline and withdrawal	Every time consent changes, not once per page	
☐	ad_user_data and ad_personalization mapped to marketing consent	Not statistics	
☐	Hydrogen: route-change events fire once with real values	No literal "undefined"; CSP allows the server-side subdomain; repository access agreed	
☐	Multi-store: storefronts mapped, pixel lookup tested, test orders flagged	One full test per store; cancellation window agreed	Stores:
☐	Signed off		Signed off by / date:

Troubleshooting by symptom

What you see	Where to look first
Server-side property shows fewer users than client-side	New visitors not getting GTM in the new setup. Page source and network requests.
Every event doubled	Two GTM loaders. Remove one.
Meta purchases roughly doubled	Facebook & Instagram app and Stape both sending CAPI without a shared event_id.
Purchases dropped around 28/08/2025 or 26/08/2026	Additional Scripts on the Thank you page stopped running. Move the tags to a Custom Pixel or sGTM.
Purchases in GA4 Realtime but not the data layer	Expected: sandboxed pixel. Validate in sGTM Preview.

What you see	Where to look first
Page location shows /web-pixels@	Send event.context.window.location.href as page_location.
Upsell revenue missing from purchases	checkout_completed fires on the first upsell page, before the upsell.
Ads conversions missing click IDs	Read cookies in the pixel with browser.cookie.get.
Dynamic remarketing or cart data empty in Google Ads	item_id does not match the Merchant Center feed format.
More "Other" traffic in the server-side property	UTMs and click IDs not persisted to begin_checkout.
Direct revenue up in the server-side property, traffic flat	Attribution broke at checkout. Check the pixel fires the duplicated tags, and compare by channel before switching.
Purchases credited to paypal.com or klarna.com	Payment providers missing from unwanted referrals.
Revenue gap on a multi-currency store	Pixel sends the customer currency; Shopify reports the shop currency.
Returning Safari customers appear new	Seven-day cap. nslookup and compare IP ranges.
Click IDs not extended but _ga is	Cookie Monster writes a different name from the one it reads.
ad_user_data granted after marketing declined	Mapped to statistics instead of marketing.

Go-live

All five sections signed off. Baseline and post-migration figures for users, purchases, revenue and conversion rate by channel recorded side by side, against Online Store channel orders in the back-end. Client-side tags paused, legacy pixel logic removed, and the date noted below.

Go-live date: _____ Signed off by: _____

> **Not sure what your Shopify store is losing?**
>
> Send us the store URL. We will run a free read-only check of how GTM loads, what reaches checkout and how long your cookies last in Safari, and tell you what it is worth to fix. No access needed, no pitch.
>
> **Get your free audit:** conversion-uplift.co.uk/contact-us

Full guide: conversion-uplift.co.uk/post/shopify-server-side-tracking-lessons/ · Neal Cole, Conversion Uplift Ltd. Author of the official GA4 and GTM audit course for CXL. Percentages come from our own projects; check them against your own store before quoting them. Updated 08/10/2026.