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**GoodGuide:**  
You Made It.  
Now Scale It.

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# You Made It. Now Scale It.

*You made it. Now scale it.*

*Sustainably scaling your mission-led ecommerce brand for maximum impact.*

As a mission-led brand focused on having real social impact, you've got your work cut out for you. The pressure is on — you're looking to scale (as any brand would wish to do) but beyond simple profit, the motivating factor is spreading the reach and impact of your cause.

Grow too fast and you risk overstretching. Fail to scale quickly enough, and you might run out of steam....

The guide exists to help “for good” brands like yours start thinking tactically and strategically about sustainable ways to scale as your business grows. We understand that growth, while exhilarating, can also feel slightly unsettling. Your business is going through a transformation, and changes and challenges to the status quo will always carry a degree of risk.

As a founder, you'll have gone from “Chief Everything Officer” to leading a team. This comes with a number of challenges. Chances are that when you started a social enterprise, top of your agenda was making a positive impact on society and our planet. In fact, we'd be willing to bet that the chance to head up board meetings or learn the finer points of tactical recruitment weren't your key motivators in those early days!

As a result, you may feel like you're not inclined (or even suited) to leading a larger organization. But see this as just another step in the path to bigger, better impact. Get excited about decoding the best ways to scale sustainably and you can reframe this challenge as a chance to kick things up a gear in terms of the positive contribution you can make.

The good news? At this point in your business journey, your foundations to scale are set. You've secured a loyal customer base, your product is well developed and your market fit established. Not only that, but as an ethically-minded business, you're perfectly poised to scale in the current climate of conscious consumerism.

So, how can you best capitalize on your success, and not overstretch? With more reach and more impact at stake, failure is simply not an option.

Values-driven businesses have a responsibility to grow in an efficient, considered and sustainable way. Read on to learn more about how you can grow your business in the best way possible.

## **1. Chain of Command: Stepping Up & Owning Your Supply Chain and Operations**

If you're looking to develop as a business, it's important that you take a good, hard look at your operations, from the very roots of your enterprise. For most ecommerce businesses, this means digging deep into your supply chain.

As you grow, so does your business's footprint — and if all your products aren't yet sustainable, this issue will be compounded. For this reason, it's important to make sure that your products are ethically sourced today, and that you have the capacity to maintain these standards as you scale.

However you source your products, be it wholesale, dropshipping or working directly with local artisans, you should ensure that your supply chain can be assessed, mapped (and if possible, improved).

The longevity of your business rides on having a stable and ethically watertight source of supply. So investing some careful research into this area of your enterprise before you really start to accelerate will pay dividends.

This can be a great time to think about introducing new product lines. You already have a good understanding of your target market and their desires. If you're looking to grow, then leveraging your established brand to expand to new collections can be a great way to gain more stability as you scale.

Assessing your supply chain is also a chance to look at how you can scale your impact as you grow. Consider working with non-profit social enterprises that do workforce development for new product lines. By doing this, the impact you have on the communities benefiting will scale alongside your business.

Beyond your product sourcing, when addressing the baseline operations of your business, you should also investigate your use of third-party logistics, specifically relating to

distribution, shipping and packaging. Again, as you grow, so does your impact in all of these areas. By putting best practices into place at an early stage, you increase your chance to mitigate the damage.

It's also important to remember [your digital footprint](#) as an ecommerce business. Show your customers that you've thought deeply about all the ways your business has an impact and have taken steps to reduce it.

### **Why is this so important for your growth?**

There's an increasing need for operational transparency. Consumer expectations are growing, which bodes well for the progression of sustainable retail. People are generally becoming much better informed and educated about supply chain and sourcing sustainability and they'll be looking for clarity.

As you grow, you're thrown into the public eye. There's more scrutiny, and you will be held to a higher standard if you're positioned as a "For Good" brand. With high levels of skepticism surrounding brands that fall foul of greenwashing claims, it's essential to build your business on the most reliable "mission-focused" foundations.

Again, fix any supply chain and sourcing issues before you start experiencing significant growth. Address any problems as they develop, before you've scaled beyond the point when you can act with maximum impact.

### **Key considerations & resources**

- Map your supply chain and identify key areas of improvement at the earliest opportunity. Scale your impact alongside your business.
- Consider new product lines that have a more sustainable or ethical source – build out your business by bolting on new ways of making a positive impact.
- Look into the help and support that already exists when it comes to third-party logistics – we recommend the excellent [IndieDoGood](#) as a resource.
- Explore ethical wholesale opportunities within your vertical. [Fair Anita](#) is a great example within the jewelry sector, working with artisans across the world and ensuring fair wages are paid.

## 2. What the Tech: Levelling Up Your Ecommerce Stack

As your business grows, so must its capacity to deal with growing audiences. It's important to understand the need to scale your tech alongside your business. This is the case for any ecommerce enterprise, but feels especially important when it comes to "for good" brands.

The relationship you have with your customers is incredibly important. It's vital that you have a way to communicate effectively with them, as well as telling the story of your brand in a compelling and convincing fashion.

As you've experienced some success, you may have a little more budget to sink into tech now. But it's still vital that it's well-allocated if you're going to have the biggest impact on your mission. You shouldn't waste a penny when it comes to investing in the technology to help you grow your business, so excellent ROI needs to be top of your agenda when vetting solutions you think might help you on the path to success.

The benefits of getting your tech stack right are huge. Make the right choices and you'll be able to easily automate huge swaths of your daily grind and let go of many mundane tasks and responsibilities. Before making a decision to hire, always ask yourself if a third-party application could step in and take some of the load.

If you've been a solo or very small operation up until this point, then automating elements of your store's functionality can also be a good exercise in helping you loosen your grip on the reins — helping you prepare to start to grow your human team!

With the right selection of apps doing the heavy lifting for you, you're freed up to focus on the more creative and altruistic part of your business — the things that got you to this point in the first place.

Of course, you'll want to consider more than just the apps you leverage. You should also take a quick stock check of your platform, to make sure you haven't outgrown it. Migration to a new platform can feel intimidating and seem costly, but making the leap at the right time — to enable growth rather than scrambling to keep pace with it — can be very empowering and proactive.

Your choice of platform should also be influenced by its alignment with your values and ultimate mission. If you've scaled to the point where Shopify Plus looks like a viable option (typically when you reach \$1M annual revenue) then the planet will certainly thank you.

[Shopify are doing some really laudable work when it comes to sustainability](#), including a significant fund and carbon negative commitment.

### Why is this so important for your growth?

As your brand grows, so do people's expectations. Leverage third-party solutions to help bring this level of finesse to your offering, so you're able to meet rising expectations of customer service, experience, personalization and more.

You should also consider the need for all your systems to play nicely together – there will be too many moving parts to simply hope for the best, especially as you continue to scale. By building your tech stack out in a considered and joined up way, you can factor in integrations that can help your store, operations, marketing and communications all run together as one well-oiled machine.

The right tech can also have a big impact on your sustainability. We're not just talking carbon offsetting apps here (although we are still big fans of those!). Have you ever considered the idea of reducing returns through AI-fitting services (apparel) or reviewing apps? As your business grows, these third-party solutions can be a great way of mitigating the increased impact that more sales will have on your footprint. Fewer returns, lower emissions.

Similarly, consider the lifecycle of your products and how tech can help to extend them. Younger generations are increasingly used to using apps and online marketplaces such as Depop to sell and purchase pre-owned products. Harness this trend by incorporating your own capacity for resale [with apps such as the excellent Recurate](#) – better for the planet and your bottom line!

Again, make these decisions proactively rather than reactively. Plan for your growth and use third-party assistance to help you to scale in a way that sees you ready and prepared. Be it customer service, better-targeted marketing or simply a better way of handling reviews, work out where you think you'd like to be upping your game as a brand and start to book a few demos to get a feel for the best fit.

### Key considerations & resources

- We've done some of the leg work for you! If you're looking to see a real impact on your conversion rate, explore our guide to the [13 Shopify Apps to Boost Sales](#)
- Remember that the ROI of third-party solutions as you scale will be key. It's crucial for everything you use to pay its way, in the short or long term. Remember that [GoodCarts offers a completely free way to get your brand in front of perfectly targeted customers.](#)
- Audit your current store and customer experience. Where are the gaps, how can your stack help solve these issues?

### 3. Leading From the Front: Developing the Right Growth Mindset

As your brand scales, don't forget the need for a real mindset of leadership in a For Good brand. Your commitment and conviction got you this far, but when success means you start to scale, you need to be able to adapt and shift.

Take a close look at what got you to your current level of success. It may feel scary to change approach now, but you can't lead a large business in the same way that you led a small one.

As a passionate and deeply driven person that's determined to make a change in the world, sheer determination and guts may have got you to this stage of business. But this simply won't be sustainable at scale — in fact, it's a one-way ticket to burn out. And beyond any personal impact, that's a surefire way to end your business's impact on the communities and organizations that you wish to help.

At this stage of growth, step back and put your faith in others — but as with so many of the other considerations we've examined in this guide, there's another twist in the tale for you here.

When hiring, you need to consistently ask yourself what kind of balance you're looking for in a candidate. Which will you value most — technical qualifications and relevant experience, or ethical alignment with your mission and motivation to make an impact beyond sales and profit?

You'll need to consider how you can structure your hiring process to make shared values a core component of your decision-making. Dig deep into candidates' motivations and values and ensure these values can be lived out within your organization's culture.

A big part of growing the desired kind of company culture is the need for ethical leadership. The way you treat your own staff is just as important as the conditions of the workers creating your products. Remember that the attitude you demonstrate as you grow your team sets the tone for how your business and its culture develops. Make sure you're sowing the right seeds at this essential stage of scaling.

As a founding member of your brand, you also have the capacity to act as a personal "influencer" in your growing business. Being present and visible as an advocate for the ethical/sustainability movement in retail and commerce isn't just important for your own brand. Actively inspire others to make similar improvements to their own businesses, and be seen helping them to reach their aspirations.

Mentorship, if you have the bandwidth to offer it, is one way to support the next generation of ethical businesses, moving us closer towards our collective goal of a more sustainable retail industry.

### **Why is this so important for your growth?**

When it comes to scaling at any significant level, it's so important to realize that you can't carry a brand on your own. Most business owners find this difficult to accept, but it can be especially hard for the founders who have built their business on an ethical cause they care deeply about.

Don't let your pride and need for control become an impediment to the business you love. Hire a team you truly trust to do the job as well as you. Better yet, hire a team with the confidence (and good humor) to gently step in and call you out when you fall into micromanaging.

If it feels tough, reframe the challenge — you're freeing yourself up to get back to the strategic elements of your company. By leading confidently but collaboratively, you can amplify your impact.

Remember that your reputation as an ethical leader will help attract the right kind of talent to your business. It has the potential to enhance your reputation both as an



employer and as a brand. Pay attention to the image you portray as you put yourself out into the public eye — offer support to the aspiring brands coming up behind you.

### Key considerations & resources

- Be honest with yourself about growing your team — think about the aspects you'll find hard in advance so you can counter them effectively.
- Address your hiring process — what measures will you put in place to ensure the very best fit in terms of your values? Perhaps write a vision statement.
- Pay close attention to your role as the figurehead for your business. The way that you lead matters not only to the operational and managerial side of your business, but also to its wider reputation in the business community.

## 4. Team Up & Win: Finding Your Support & Community

A trap that many ethical, mission-led businesses fall into is the desire to “go it alone.” When we're so passionate about advancing our causes, we can get tunnel vision — blind to how others might be able to help us. It's all too easy to try to be a hero and go the distance alone.

But with the rise of conscious consumerism, there's simply no need for this mindset anymore. Many other brands are trying to do the same things in the same way that you are. Does this sound threatening? It shouldn't. Ethical, sustainable brands are all singing from the same song sheet. Unlike many other competitor brands in the ecommerce industry, we share a common goal — the greater good!

When you're scaling, it's important to lean on the assistance of this community and camaraderie in any way possible. Recognize when you're making life harder for yourself — it's likely hard enough already! Be humble enough to recognize when someone else got there first (and is willing to pull you up behind them!). And if you're the first one to break through, congratulations — now, share your knowledge.

The need to find good collaborators as you look to scale goes beyond sharing tips and tricks with your fellow retailers. To have maximum impact, look for value alignment within the consultant and third-party services that your ecommerce store uses. By working with

these kinds of suppliers and solutions, you'll benefit from their experience gained working with brands on a similar mission to you.

[The MindfulCommerce Directory is a helpful resource here](#). It connects ethical brands to third-party solutions (experienced apps, agencies, freelancers and more) that are also committed to sustainable ecommerce.

Finally, remember that mentoring works both ways. Could you find a mentor at an ethical brand that expanded similarly to yours? There are so many good reasons to actively reach out to those that you admire – from advice, solidarity and even some well-timed warnings. Get inspired by [these examples from the GoodCarts](#) community – just some of the entrepreneurs having major success in collaboration with our platform.

### **Why is this so important for your growth?**

Community is vital for continued momentum – there will be bumps in the road ahead as you scale. Having a support network to fall back on is invaluable, especially one that shares your values and understands the challenges you face.

When it comes to mission-led commerce, we really are greater than the sum of our parts. As our collective mission starts to gather pace, we can all benefit together, as a community.

Paying attention to values alignment in your third-party suppliers as you scale means you have the opportunity to be even greater than the sum of your parts. Don't underestimate the importance of working with solutions that understand the ethical, sustainable niche. The advice and guidance they can provide will prove invaluable as you scale.

[GoodCarts is a great example of how the power of community can help propel your brand to a much wider audience](#). By putting your brand in front of the paying customers of other similar businesses, you have access to a perfectly targeted audience, committed to buying more ethical, sustainable products and supporting businesses just like yours.

### **Key considerations & resources**

- Think about how you could benefit from the support of like-minded communities — especially those who have experience in the areas you will be navigating for the first time.
- Leverage resources such as the MindfulCommerce Directory to get third-party experts involved with your brand, and benefit from their wealth of knowledge and niche expertise.
- Get started with GoodCarts! Free access to a new audience, enabled via the power of community. And by getting involved, you're also helping other ethical brands succeed and scale.

## 5. Goal Setting, Succession & Selling Up

Scaling your ecommerce business can be a real adventure, but you need to have a clear idea of the direction you're headed in. What's required is a game plan. Don't just let things expand and firefight as you go. The idea is to set yourself up for managed, predictable success. It sounds a bit less thrilling, but by refusing to mushroom in an unchecked manner, you can make the very best use of your time and resources.

This applies to so many areas of your business. By better understanding how your product demand is likely to increase over time, you'll be able to predict stock requirements and have more careful control of your supply chain. This means no compromising on quality or ethics to meet a sudden spike of orders.

Hiring will also be a less frantic affair. Growing your team steadily to match the predictable increase in your operation means you'll be able to take your time when it comes to filling roles. You won't rush to hire the first steady pair of hands that ticks the box.

When setting out this road map, goal setting is key. Ask yourself — what will your markers of success look like to you, personally? Getting to 10,000 customers a year? 10,000 a *month*? Your millionth customer? The ability to move up to an enterprise-level platform such as Shopify Plus?

Think now about what kind of impact you'd like your business to have over the scaling brands of the future. Just as you've had assistance from those who've gone before you, could you consider mentoring the next generation (and not pulling up the ladder behind you)? What would that look like and how can you prepare to make the most of this opportunity?

This is more than a game plan for the way up — you also need a game plan for the way out. When you reach a point where you might want to sell, how can that be done in an ethical way? It can be helpful to spend some time considering the questions you'd want to ask when finding a buyer. For mission-led, social entrepreneurs selling up shouldn't mean selling out. For this reason, many founders choose to sell the business to their existing workers who share the same ethos and emotional investment.

### **Why is this so important for your growth?**

Thinking this far in advance about your company's success can give you a clear view of your intended trajectory. By having a better understanding of what you want success to look like, you empower yourself to make the right decisions at the right time.

A lot of passion goes into a business that's been founded as a values-led brand — and it can be hard to imagine passing the baton to someone else. By putting some thought into what this might look or feel like in advance — before the pressure is on — you can approach the idea in a calmer space.

Make better decisions and mentally prepare yourself to make good calls about the eventual sale of your business.

It can be helpful to remind yourself that by selling your business, you're free to move on to new projects which will benefit from your past experience. This will help you start making a difference in a new way, all over again.

### **Key considerations & resources**

- Get comfortable with the idea of having an exit strategy — think about how you can set your business up to continue its positive impact after you've handed over the reins.
- Set some clear growth goals and consider how these move you towards ultimate "success" — what does that look like? How will you know when you're ready to move on to the next challenge, or start helping even more people with a brand new enterprise?

## Ready to Scale the Sustainable Way?

Mission-driven brands need to have a plan when it comes to growth. Any ecommerce company can scale, but it takes careful planning to do so in a way that is ethical, sustainable and impact-focused.

As with so many areas of social enterprise, it's worth the extra effort. Why? Because we need brands like yours to win. The bigger your brand, the bigger your reach. And the bigger your reach, the bigger your impact.

As a community, we share a collective responsibility to help others in the social entrepreneurship space to succeed. A win for an ethical brand is a win for the whole sector, so let's grow and win together

If you're looking to connect your brand to the wider social enterprise community and form some alliances of co-promotion as you scale your brand, [GoodCarts](#) is on hand to enable all of this and more.

[Ready to share traffic and grow sales and social impact for free?](#)



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