BUILDING A FURNITURE WEBSITE

Process, Notes & Case study

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PROLOGUE

As the quality of life continues to improve, the demand for home decoration and furniture shopping of consumers is also significantly increasing. Most consumers still maintain the habit of visiting stores and showrooms to choose and purchase products. However, the trend of online furniture shopping is gradually becoming popular.

Furthermore, the change in consumer shopping behaviour based on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has strongly driven the growth of the online furniture eCommerce sector.

According to BusinessWire, the size of the furniture eCommerce market in 2021 was valued at $27.74 billion and is projected to reach $40.74 billion in 2030 with an estimated Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4.4% for the period from 2022 to 2030.

With over 9 years of experience in implementing complex projects domestically and internationally, SECOMM has created the eBook **"Building a furniture website: Process, Notes & Case study"** With the desire to provide businesses with essential information for developing furniture eCommerce. It includes:
- The role of eCommerce in the furniture industry
- The basic process of building a furniture eCommerce website
- In-depth process of building a furniture eCommerce website
- Special considerations when implementing furniture eCommerce websites
- Successful lessons from furniture brands

All the data in this eBook is collected from various reliable sources such as Forbes, Statista, Morgan Stanley, Maddyness, etc.

1 | OVERVIEW OF ECOMMERCE FOR FURNITURE

eCommerce is becoming an effective gateway for Vietnamese furniture businesses to join the global digital transformation arena.

Simultaneously, it is an urgent solution for furniture products to be easily consumed and accessible to a larger customer base amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, often likened to a 'roadblock' for most businesses' operations.

Therefore, building an eCommerce website is the right and crucial first step furniture brands have been and are hastily taking to penetrate the market quickly. However, this journey is not easy, requiring much effort and serious investment.

1. Insights into the eCommerce Market

SThe global explosion of eCommerce initially arose out of necessity and urgency due to the complex developments of the COVID-19 pandemic, making travel challenging. At that time, in-person transactions were replaced by a more practical solution – online buying and selling.

According to data from Morgan Stanley, the total global eCommerce sales increased from 15% in 2019 to 21% in 2021 and continued to rise to 22% in 2022.

In the long run, eCommerce still has plenty of room for development, and the growth rate could increase from the current $3.3 trillion to $5.6 trillion by 2026 as the market witnesses significant penetration by businesses from various sectors worldwide.

In Vietnam, many service industries experienced negative growth amid the COVID-19 pandemic, but the eCommerce market remained stable. Specifically, the wholesale and retail sector decreased by 0.21%; the warehouse and transportation sector decreased by 5.02%; and the accommodation and food services sector saw the sharpest decline of 20.81% compared to 2020.
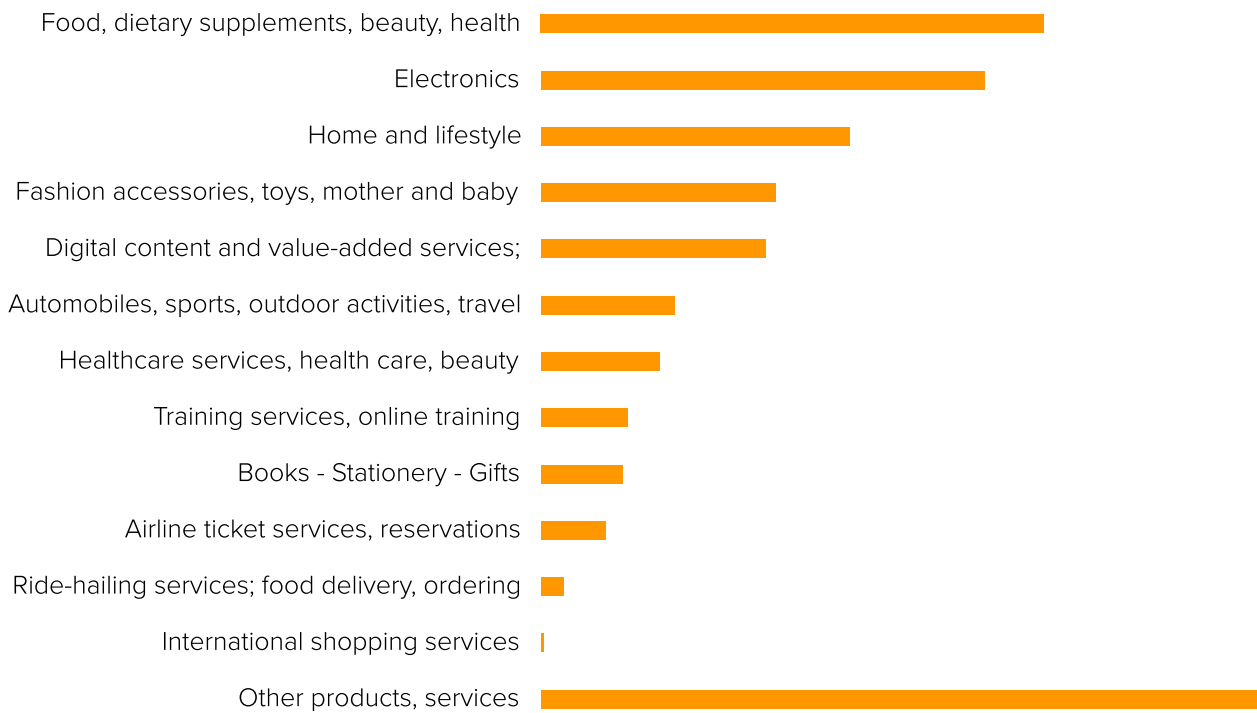
In contrast to this downturn, the eCommerce growth rate has consistently remained at 16%, with retail revenue reaching $13.7 billion in 2021. The proportion of eCommerce retail revenue in the total retail of goods and consumer services nationwide reached 7%, a 27% increase compared to the same period in 2020 (Vietnam eCommerce Whitepaper 2022).

Therefore, despite the current control of the pandemic and consumers returning to physical stores for shopping, the potential and robust development of the post-Covid eCommerce market are reasonable expectations. Hence, many sectors, not only the furniture industry, will be driven to incredible growth.

2. The Role of eCommerce in the Furniture Industry

According to Forbes, updated in 2021, the category with the fastest eCommerce sales growth in the past two years of the pandemic is furniture and construction materials, with a cumulative growth rate of over 200% compared to 2019, before the pandemic. Following closely, the furniture and home goods category also achieved an impressive cumulative growth of over 66% compared to the same period in 2019.

For the Vietnamese market, according to the Vietnam eCommerce Report 2023, furniture, or more broadly, the home-living sector, ranks in the top 3 in terms of buying and selling in 2022.

Food, dietary supplements, beauty, health	
Electronics	
Home and lifestyle	
Fashion accessories, toys, mother and baby	
Digital content and value-added services;	
Automobiles, sports, outdoor activities, travel	
Healthcare services, health care, beauty	
Training services, online training	
Books - Stationery - Gifts	
Airline ticket services, reservations	
Ride-hailing services; food delivery, ordering	
International shopping services	
Other products, services	

The most purchased and used goods and services on eCommerce websites and applications

Some interesting and notable information recently recorded by Maddyness:

- The global eCommerce furniture industry is valued at over 200 billion USD
- Over 90% of the growth in the furniture industry is attributed to online sales
- It is estimated that out of 10 furniture buyers, about 8 make at least one online purchase
- Every 3 customers, there is 1 person who prefers to shop for furniture online
- 16% of furniture and home decor sales come from online channels
- 53% of customers say they will buy a sofa online, while 80% say they will buy a mattress online

2 | BUILDING A BASIC FURNITURE ECOMMERCE WEBSITE

1. Setting goals

The first crucial step for furniture businesses is to establish and prioritise short-term and long-term goals before developing an eCommerce website.

In the short term, businesses should prioritise expanding brand presence in the market, monitoring and analysing customer behaviour, attracting more users and potential customers, increasing revenue, and supporting eCommerce marketing strategies. Additionally, user experience is a vital factor that furniture businesses need to focus on when advancing in eCommerce.

In the long term, businesses can aim to build a loyal customer base, expand customer segments and business models, establish an ecosystem, etc. These goals lay the foundation for sustainable development and prosperity in the future.

At this stage, when businesses do not have much data to analyse, they can seek advice from specialised eCommerce implementation consulting firms with extensive experience. These consultants can provide guidance on a long-term roadmap, offering a suitable list and prioritisation of goals for both this stage and beyond.

2. Choosing the platform

Currently, there are two types of platforms widely used for building professional eCommerce websites in the market: SaaS (Service as a Software) and open-source platforms. These two types of platforms have their own advantages and disadvantages when applied to implementing eCommerce for the furniture industry, as follows:

Platform	SaaS	Open Source
Advantages	• Rapid deployment of eCommerce • User-friendly • Good security • Excellent customer support services	• Ownership of source code and data • Flexible customization • Diverse additional features and utilities
Disadvantages	• Building costs increase over time • No ownership of source code and data • Limited functionality and customization	• Long deployment time • High development costs • Less user-friendly
Examples	Haravan, Shopify, BigCommerce	Haravan, Shopify, BigCommerce

Comparison table of pros and cons between SaaS and Open Source platforms

2.1. SaaS Platform

The SaaS platform is simply defined as a software distribution model as a service to serve the purpose of eCommerce business. In other words, the provider creates and maintains software to build eCommerce websites, and businesses pay a certain fee to use this service.

With SaaS platforms, the entire website system of a business is hosted on the provider's server, so ownership and control of the source code and data belong to the provider.

This means the service provider handles and resolves any technical issues arising during the business's eCommerce implementation.

Popular SaaS platforms that businesses particularly favor nowadays include: Haravan, Shopify, BigCommerce, etc.

Some advantages of the SaaS platform include:

Rapid deployment of eCommerce: Typically, a business only takes a few minutes or a few days to own an eCommerce website with all the necessary features for the furniture industry at a very reasonable initial construction cost.

User-friendly: SaaS platforms are designed to be user-friendly, allowing businesses without advantages in IT or a skilled technical workforce to build and operate eCommerce websites efficiently.

Good security: SaaS providers provide and maintain platforms for building eCommerce websites, so they will be responsible for security. Therefore, general eCommerce businesses and specifically furniture eCommerce businesses will not have to worry too much about complying with PCI (Peripheral Component Interconnect), SSL, or the risk of website hacking.

Excellent customer support services: During the implementation of eCommerce, if the website encounters any issues, businesses can quickly contact the provider through email, hotline, live chat because support is always available 24/7.

However, SaaS still has some unavoidable disadvantages that need to be considered:

Building costs increase over time: In addition to paying for the monthly and yearly usage fees for the platform, businesses will also have to pay other fees such as interfaces, applications, extension utilities, marketing, and SEO regularly instead of paying once and owning it in the long term. This poses challenges for managing cash flow with too many monthly costs.

No ownership of source code and data: As mentioned earlier, businesses will not own and control the source code or data of the website, as these rights belong to the provider. Therefore, when wanting to switch platforms, businesses will not be able to keep and transfer the entire source code and data to a new platform due to the characteristics of SaaS.

Limited functionality and customization: When using the SaaS platform, businesses will not have many choices for functions and customisation according to the specific needs of each eCommerce website. As the business model grows, the website system also needs to be adjusted to fit that growth, with the characteristics of the industry and products, to optimise the online shopping experience for customers. However, this limitation of SaaS makes it challenging to meet the expectations of businesses.

Leading furniture businesses in Vietnam use SaaS platforms to build eCommerce websites, including:

Noi That Hoa Phat – a giant in the Vietnamese furniture industry, has implemented eCommerce with the BigCommerce platform to maintain its position in the market.
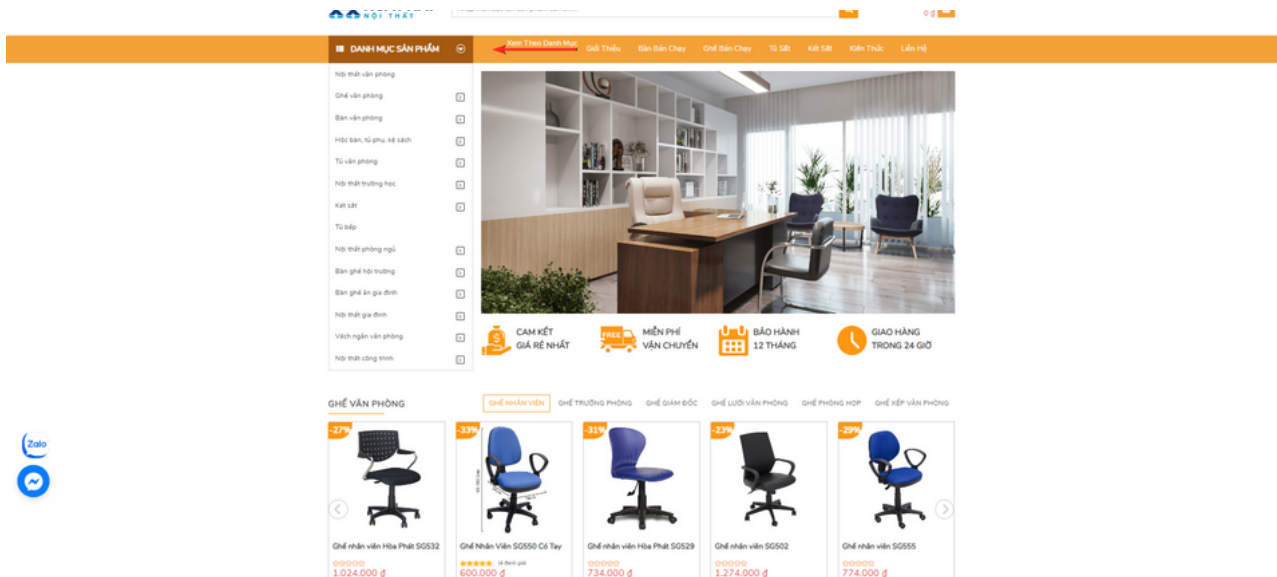
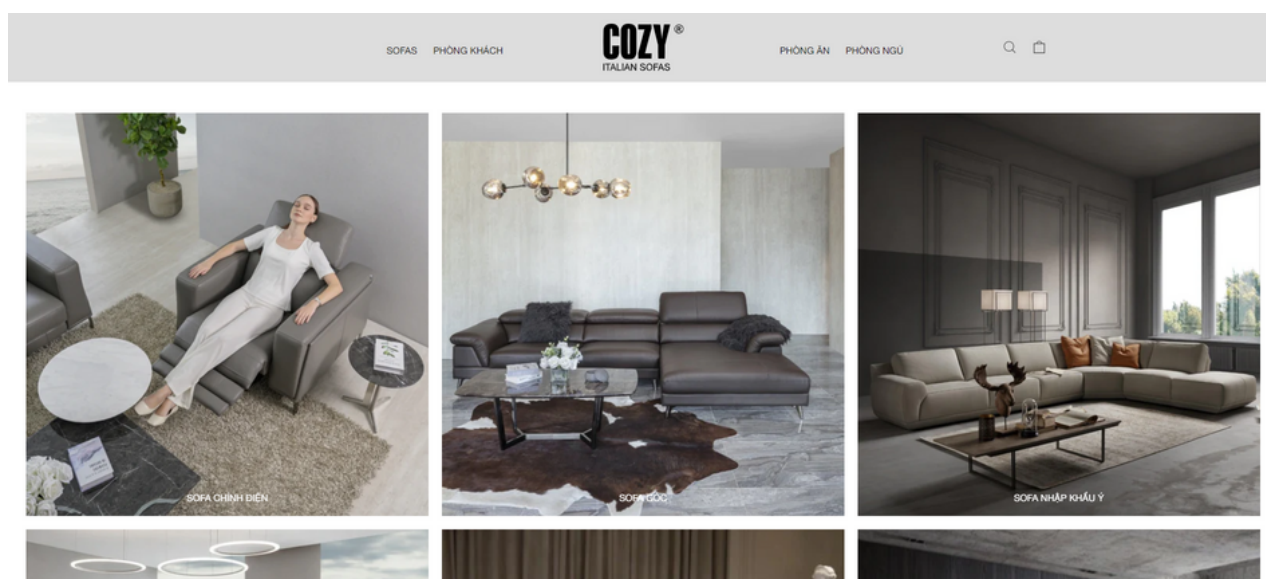

Furniture eCommerce website of Noi That Hoa Phat

Moho - the newcomer in the furniture industry, uses the Haravan platform to build their website as the first step on their journey to conquer eCommerce.
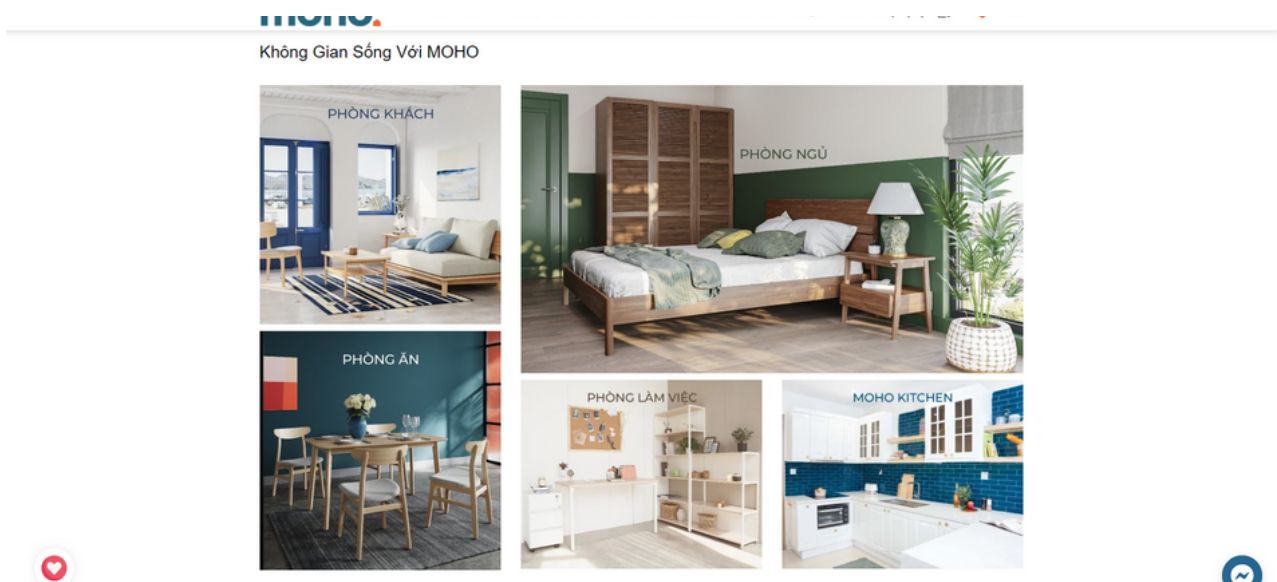
Furniture eCommerce website of Moho

Cozy – the leading importer and distributor of European furniture, has chosen Shopify as its partner to design a website to expand its sales channel in the online environment.

Furniture eCommerce website of Cozy

2.2. Open Source Platform

The Open Source Platform, also known as open-source platform, is software with source code widely distributed for users to download, modify, and enhance with additional features to serve the purpose of eCommerce business.

Open Source platforms are often developed by a community of developers rather than a single company. Moreover, it is an ideal platform for deploying complex eCommerce systems, suitable for various fields, including furniture, due to its deep customization capabilities.

This means that businesses need to collaborate with professional eCommerce website development agencies or develop highly skilled in-house teams to efficiently operate the website and handle any technical issues.

In Vietnam, the most popular Open Source platforms include Magento, OpenCart, WooCommerce (a WordPress plugin), etc.

Những ưu điểm nổi bật của nền tảng Open Source:

Ownership of source code and data: In contrast to SaaS platforms, businesses have full ownership of the source code and data of the entire system. Therefore, when switching to another platform, businesses can carry all data and reuse the old source code.

Flexible customization: With Open Source platforms, businesses can easily change or expand system functions and develop new functions to adapt to the continuous changes in the market. Therefore, businesses can easily integrate with third-party systems and services to operate eCommerce websites more effectively. Moreover, the flexible customization capability of Open Source platforms allows businesses to customize eCommerce website interface designs with three popular options: using available themes, customizing based on available interfaces, and designing interfaces suitable for the specific needs of the industry.

Diverse additional features and utilities: In addition to basic eCommerce deployment support features, Open Source platforms provide many advanced features such as advanced search, product recommendations, abandoned cart recovery, etc. Thanks to the popularity of Open Source platforms, the global community of developers and experts is vast, so the supplementary utilities are also diverse and superior compared to those of SaaS platforms.

Significant drawbacks to note when deploying eCommerce with Open Source platforms:

Long deployment time: Compared to SaaS platforms, the average time to complete an eCommerce website on open-source platforms ranges from 3 months to 1 year, depending on the complexity of the functionality system.

High development costs: Although businesses can use the platform for free, the investment cost to own a comprehensive eCommerce website with all functions is quite high, averaging from $10,000 to $50,000 per project.

Less user-friendly: The system of features of open-source eCommerce is very diverse, designed and fine-tuned for each business model of each business, so building an eCommerce system is more complex than SaaS platforms. This becomes a significant obstacle for businesses where IT is not really a strength, so support from highly skilled units at this time is essential.

Popular furniture businesses in Vietnam building eCommerce on Open Source platforms are:

Baya - a reliable furniture shopping destination for many Vietnamese families, has built a professional eCommerce website using the Magento platform to quickly dominate the market.
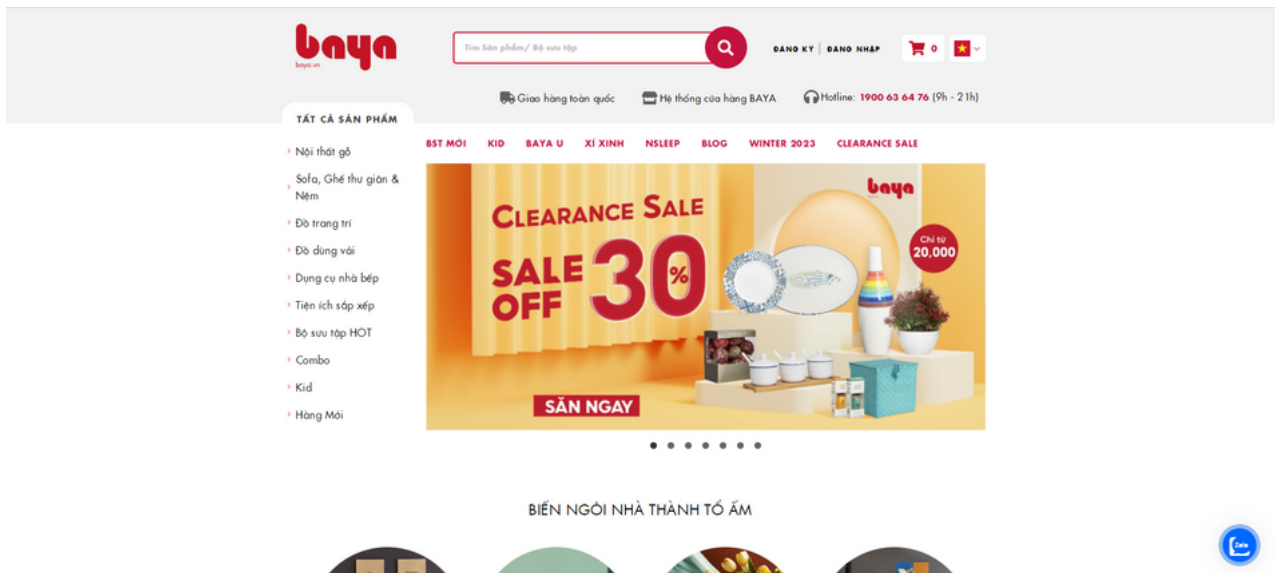
Furniture eCommerce website of Baya

Nha Xinh – a manufacturer and supplier of furniture products with a strong Eastern style, uses the WooCommerce platform for the easy and effective deployment of their eCommerce website.
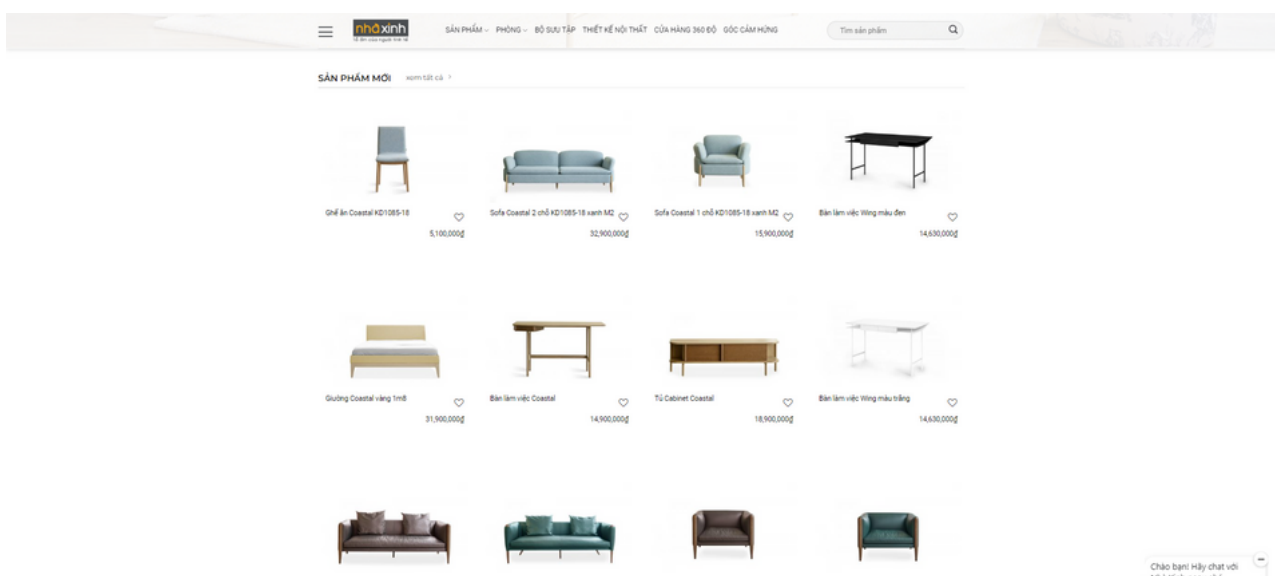
Furniture eCommerce website of Nha Xinh

3. Website interface design

During the process of designing an eCommerce website interface, there are important criteria that businesses need to focus on to ensure that the website interface meets standards of UI/UX, reflects the unique characteristics of the brand and the furniture industry, and maintains consistency in layout and product presentation on the website, etc.

Accordingly, businesses can choose one of the following three methods to design the website interface:

Use pre-designed templates: This is the most cost-effective way for businesses compared to the other two methods. Both SaaS and Open Source platforms provide a variety of pre-designed interfaces with UI/UX standards, ranging in price from $300 to $500 per template.

Customize based on pre-designed templates: Similar to the first method, businesses will use pre-designed templates but can customize the interface according to the brand's needs. This allows businesses to save costs while partially showcasing the brand's unique characteristics.
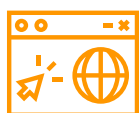
Design the eCommerce website interface from scratch: To build a brand image that is different and more creative than competitors, businesses may consider creating a unique website interface from the outset. Although this approach may incur higher costs compared to using pre-designed templates, a custom-designed interface will meet the specific requirements of the furniture industry and the brand's identity expectations during the eCommerce deployment process.

Usually, at this stage, businesses should only use method 1 or 2 as the functionality is still basic, and most themes already cover these aspects.

4. Building essential functionality system

At this stage, businesses can prioritize developing the necessary basic functions for a complete interior eCommerce website, including:

Category management: Manage and control product categories, functions, prices, and images/videos for each product to optimize operations and achieve high efficiency in interior eCommerce.

Sales management: Manage all order information including order status and order completion process to understand and analyze customer shopping behavior while establishing and controlling payment and delivery processes effectively.

Marketing management: Integrate basic SEO optimization features such as URL, meta tags, internal links, etc., while deploying effective marketing campaigns to boost sales.

Content management: Develop and optimize content for CMS pages including text, images, pagination, blocks, banners, widgets, templates, and various types of content related to the brand, blog, etc.

Customer management: Manage and control all customer information and customer groups to enhance the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, thereby providing a better shopping experience for customers.

System management: Manage and assign permissions for administrators to control and operate, secure, and maintain the interior eCommerce website system.

Store management: Use tools to manage inventory levels at various branches, stores, and warehouses to ensure continuous supply of goods throughout the system.

Shopping cart & checkout management: Manage and control shopping carts and customer payment information.

Analysis and reporting: Support analysis and measurement of the performance of the eCommerce website system to develop effective business strategies for the future.

Note that to build these features completely and efficiently, the feature development process should include at least the following steps: analysis, planning, programming, testing, and go live.

5. Complete Legal Procedures

After completing the features, testing, and successfully going live with the website, businesses need to complete the legal procedures for eCommerce.

According to Decree 52/2013/ND-CP issued by the Government of Vietnam, individuals or organizations owning ecommerce websites for selling goods must notify or register with the Ministry of Industry and Trade through the Ministry of Industry and Trade's public service portal.

Note: Websites that continue operating without registration/notification to the competent authority within the specified period will be subject to administrative fines according to regulations.

3 | BUILDING SPECIALIZED FURNITURE ECOMMERCE WEBSITE

1. Re-establishing goals

Along the journey of business development, which is accompanied by constant changes in consumer needs, business goals and strategies need to be adjusted and redefined to fit the current business landscape.

Furthermore, businesses already have emerging issues, data, and insights into their online user base at this stage, making goal setting more accessible.

In the short term, businesses can aim to search for and reach a large number of potential new customers on the Internet and increase online sales through effective marketing methods.
In the long term, expanding market segments and cultivating loyal customers may be goals that eCommerce furniture businesses should consider.

By identifying target market segments in the long term, businesses will easily develop and implement marketing strategies suitable for the unique characteristics of each business's products and direction in the second stage of building an eCommerce furniture website journey.

In addition to short-term and long-term goals, businesses need to focus on considering the time and cost investment in the eCommerce furniture website system because, at this stage, the investment costs and budgets are often much more significant than those in the primary construction stage mentioned above.

2. Platform migration

If in the initial stage, the business chose to use a SaaS platform to build the furniture eCommerce website, then with the goal of growth and expansion in the second stage, the limitations of SaaS in terms of customization and functionality will not meet those expectations.

At this point, the business should transition to an Open Source platform with well-known names worth considering such as Magento, WooCommerce, Ziel Commerce, etc. to develop a more specialized furniture eCommerce website.

Here are some suggested criteria that furniture businesses may consider when choosing an Open Source platform:
- Support for standard UI/UX website design with high-quality and visually appealing images, videos, showcasing the unique characteristics of the brand and the furniture eCommerce industry.
- Providing a range of basic to advanced functionalities specific to the furniture industry.
- High flexibility and scalability, allowing the development of specific features and integration of various third-party utilities and services, supporting expanded administration from a single website to multiple websites, multilingual support, multi-currency support, etc.
- Strong security capabilities to help businesses mitigate risks of unauthorized data breaches and support data recovery for the eCommerce website system when necessary.

During the transition from a SaaS platform to an Open Source platform, businesses should pay attention to the conversion costs, training time for staff to adapt to the new platform, as well as the risks of data loss and errors during the transition process.

3. Resource selection

Unlike the basic system building phase, selecting resources to implement an advanced system is a meticulous and cautious process. Businesses can choose to build an internal team or seek support from specialized website development firms.

For building an internal team, the business will recruit and train experienced and skilled IT personnel on the chosen platform. This will take more time and budget from the business, but it will help manage and control resources better and adjust them proactively to develop the eCommerce website system according to the initial intentions.

For collaborating with eCommerce website development firms, businesses need to work with many firms to find the right fit. Thus, the business's requirements for an eCommerce website will be met as expected, and the collaboration process will proceed smoothly.

At the same time, businesses will learn additional specialized knowledge and website development experience from partners, thereby having suitable directions for the development trends of the furniture eCommerce industry.

These are the criteria that businesses should consider when choosing partners: Deep knowledge and experience in eCommerce and the furniture industry; a professional working team; clear and detailed working processes; the ability to quickly handle any issues arising during the website development process.

4. Redesigning website interface

Switching platforms does not necessarily require businesses to change the website interface. However, with the new business development strategy accompanying the implementation of eCommerce websites at a deeper level, redesigning the website interface to align with the Open Source platform becomes a valuable recommendation.

Similar to the previous stage, businesses have three options for designing the interface of eCommerce websites: using pre-made interfaces, customizing based on pre-made interfaces, and designing a unique interface from scratch.

At this stage, businesses should typically choose option 2 or 3 for interface design to ensure the unique characteristics of the brand and the specific nature of the furniture eCommerce industry are properly represented.

5. Upgrading system functionality with advanced and specialized features

In addition to the basic functions built for the eCommerce system in the initial stage, businesses should focus on developing advanced and specialized system functionalities for the furniture eCommerce industry to align with the new development stage. This is the most crucial step of this stage.

Advanced and specialized functionalities help businesses overcome the challenges of implementing deep furniture eCommerce while providing solutions to address these challenges and meet the increasingly high expectations of the market.

Therefore, businesses can apply AR technology to enhance the customer experience. Augmented Reality (AR) technology is developed based on virtual reality (VR) technology but focuses on combining the real world with virtual information, allowing users to experience virtual information right in real space.

This technology is widely used in the furniture eCommerce industry.

Instead of customers having to physically visit locations to see and try out items to see if they fit and match the space of their homes, now customers only need to download the furniture company's available AR app, open the camera, and try out the product's fit with their home space.

AR applications provide unprecedented shopping experiences, transforming traditional marketing methods into interactive marketing, thereby enhancing and personalizing the shopping experience for customers.

A prime example is the IKEA Place App – the furniture placement app from the retail giant IKEA, providing customers with a new and exciting shopping experience.

With a catalog of over 2,000 tables, chairs, sofas, cabinets, and other household items, customers can use their smartphones to browse and virtually try out these products in their actual rooms, adjusting angles, and moving closer or farther away. The application will also automatically scale the objects to real-life size with up to 98% accuracy.

6. Maintain eCommerce website system

Operating and maintaining an eCommerce website system effectively requires a lot of experience and effort. This is because it involves ongoing maintenance, updates, and upgrades to help businesses address emerging issues and anticipate potential challenges (such as sudden spikes in traffic from promotional campaigns).

This helps both general eCommerce businesses and specifically interior design eCommerce businesses maintain stable and resilient online sales growth in the competitive market, which, though lucrative, can be challenging to navigate.

7. eCommerce growth

By implementing effective business and marketing strategies, interior design eCommerce businesses can easily achieve growth beyond expectations.

Therefore, the deployment process from planning to execution must be well-organized with practical solutions that demonstrate effectiveness when applied.

Some suggested solutions for eCommerce businesses to accelerate growth include implementing Omnichannel, practical eCommerce Marketing strategies, and optimizing SEO search tools.

8. Optimizing eCommerce operations

The journey of building an eCommerce website is continued by measuring, analyzing, and optimizing eCommerce operations.

Businesses can use analytics tools such as Google Analytics, Google Tag Manager, Facebook Pixel, etc., to track, update, and measure website activity metrics as well as the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

Thus, the eCommerce business strategy for the next development phase will be carefully planned and structured thanks to clear and detailed reporting and analysis.

4 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEPLOYING AN ECOMMERCE WEBSITE

The journey of building an eCommerce website for the furniture industry is divided into two stages with detailed outlined steps. However, depending on the platform chosen in stage one, businesses will have two different directions, each with its own pros and cons that are worth noting.

1. Direction one

Implementing eCommerce with a SaaS platform in the initial stage and transitioning to an Open Source platform in the later stage.

1.1. Advantages

One of the advantages of the SaaS platform is rapid deployment. Therefore, in the initial stage, businesses can choose SaaS to build a basic website and quickly penetrate the market.

Here, businesses will gauge the market's demand for furniture products and their impact on future consumer trends.

After a sufficient period for businesses to familiarize themselves and adapt to market trends, transitioning to an Open Source platform becomes more reasonable to expand and develop a deeper eCommerce website aiming to increase brand recognition and boost online sales.

Using the SaaS platform in the initial stage of eCommerce deployment, businesses will save a considerable amount compared to building a website with an Open Source platform.

Because the initial costs for SaaS platforms are usually not significant, businesses can allocate that capital to other activities, specifically marketing strategies - a key factor for the success of any eCommerce business, not just in the furniture industry.

Another benefit of this approach in the eCommerce website development journey is the opportunity to both operate and learn about technology and effective eCommerce deployment practices.

Business is already challenging, and eCommerce is even more so as market demands constantly change and technology trends continue to diversify and evolve. Therefore, acquiring practical knowledge and experience is essential for businesses to make significant breakthroughs.

Choosing the SaaS platform for deployment in the initial stage helps businesses become familiar with eCommerce concepts, terms, and basic website construction as its user-friendly nature requires less technical expertise.

By the second stage, transitioning to an Open Source platform, businesses will need support from skilled IT teams due to the complex requirements of a deep eCommerce website system. At this point, collaborators and partners will contribute knowledge and experience to each other.

1.2. Disadvantages

As mentioned in the platform introduction section, the basic functionality of SaaS platforms will not suffice to meet the eCommerce business needs in the growth and expansion stage.

Therefore, whether desired or not, businesses will have to transition to an Open Source platform to effectively continue the growth and expansion of the eCommerce system.

This is the first disadvantage that eCommerce businesses, in general, and furniture businesses, in particular, should pay special attention to when choosing this direction for the website development journey.

With this approach, businesses will save a significant amount of initial construction costs. However, in the long run, the initial convenience turns into a disadvantage. Alongside the platform usage fees that businesses must pay regularly for SaaS platforms, the costs of using accompanying services monthly or annually are enough to make cash flow management complex and difficult to control.

Next, in the transition to the Open Source platform stage, businesses once again incur initial construction costs because the nature of SaaS platforms does not allow users to retain source code and data when they want to switch platforms.

Additionally, the costs involved in transitioning platforms can cause headaches for businesses.

Some sunk costs include the cost and time to train staff to become familiar with the new system, especially at a time when the economy is expected to recover post-Covid-19. Training costs for staff are seen as additional costs rather than actual investments.

Furthermore, during the platform transition process, errors leading to the loss of critical company data can easily occur, such as data related to financial matters.

With all the risks listed, cash flow management continues to be a challenging issue directly affecting the eCommerce business strategy of furniture companies.

Given the advantages and disadvantages outlined, the first direction will be suitable for startup businesses or SMEs seeking to understand eCommerce and gradually enter the market safely.

2. Direction two

Implementing eCommerce with Open Source right from stage one and continuing to use it for stage two.

2.1. Advantages

With the second direction, businesses build an eCommerce website from the basic stage on the Open Source platform. This helps make the website development process seamless from start to finish, meaning businesses do not need to switch platforms but only need to upgrade system functionalities gradually according to business growth and expansion.

This seamlessness helps businesses save costs in the long term. Apart from not having to pay for rebuilding costs from scratch when switching platforms like direction one, businesses also save additional costs and time for training personnel to use the new platform as well as avoid the risk of data loss.

Moreover, direction two helps businesses establish a strong foundation from the beginning with a professionally developed eCommerce website, seamlessly integrated with a core technical team with abundant experience and systematic training at the outset.

2.2. Disadvantages

Similar to direction one, alongside the notable advantages, direction two still has certain limitations that businesses need to consider when choosing to deploy eCommerce in the furniture industry.

In particular, choosing Open Source for the initial stage of deployment will require more time investment in learning and deployment, which is the most significant point to note.

The process of researching and selecting platforms as well as development teams will take a lot of time because businesses need to work with multiple parties, compare multiple platforms, and specify detailed requirements before deployment to ensure project success.

Moreover, since the website will be developed on an open-source platform, every website function will need to be built from scratch. This is a lengthy process, costing a significant investment of funds, time, and intellectual resources from the staff, averaging about 3 months to 1 year to complete.

As a result, the lengthy time is a disadvantage that may cause the market entry process to be delayed, with a high risk of falling behind in the fierce eCommerce race if businesses are not properly advised and supported by reliable deployment partners.

Furthermore, the initial construction costs with open-source platforms are much higher than with SaaS platforms, and typically, businesses will have to pay those costs in one lump sum as a project.

This poses a risk as businesses have to invest a considerable amount upfront in a platform that is not yet proven in terms of effectiveness and feasibility for eCommerce deployment on that platform.

However, from a business perspective, this disadvantage is seen as an opportunity cost. That is, this direction brings significant long-term benefits to businesses but comes with challenges in the short term.

To ensure a seamless eCommerce deployment journey, efficiency, or achieve growth and expansion goals while minimizing unnecessary risks from platform transitions as listed above, investing budget and time to deploy from scratch with Open Source is entirely reasonable.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages mentioned and meticulously analyzed, direction two will be more suitable for businesses with long-term eCommerce strategies and high investment budgets.

With Vietnam's high economic growth compared to other countries in the region in recent years, eCommerce contributes significantly to promoting the flow of goods and services, supporting businesses, especially furniture businesses, in seeking effective business opportunities in the context of deep integration and the spread of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Above all, a professional eCommerce website is a 'bridge' helping furniture businesses realize those integration goals. However, developing a comprehensive, modern, and professional eCommerce website has never been easy; it is a journey that requires a lot of effort and a large investment budget.

The above is the complete and detailed eCommerce website development journey outlined by SECOMM with some special considerations that furniture businesses can refer to in order to shorten the planning time and outline their own plan.

5 | CASE STUDY

1. IKEA

IKEA (abbreviation for Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd) is an international company specializing in providing assembly furniture, appliances, and home accessories in a minimalist style, and above all, it is the world's largest furniture retail group.

Founded in 1943 in Sweden by Ingvar Kamprad – an entrepreneurial businessman at the age of 17, IKEA quickly dominated the globe with 392 stores in 48 countries worldwide.

- **Website**: https://www.ikea.com/
- **Programming Language**: React
- **Traffic**: 190.4M/month
- **Ranking**: 238 (US), 142 (Global)
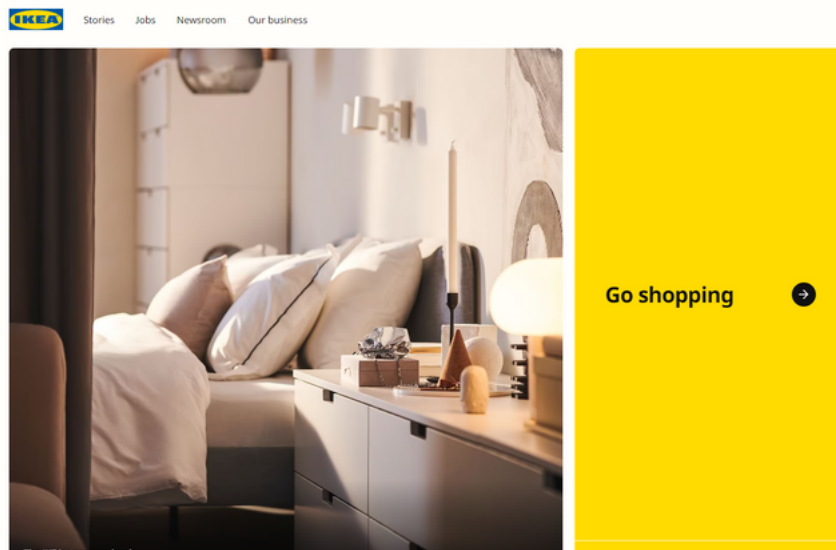
IKEA's eCommerce website

Known as the world's leading furniture retailer, however, IKEA has been relatively slow to catch up with the eCommerce trend, according to the Financial Times. This renowned retailer only started to "revamp" its sales strategy when facing many online competitors.

The biggest challenge that has made it difficult for IKEA to adjust its already successful business model is the layout of its stores like a maze to create an attractive furniture shopping and browsing experience, or the requirement for customers to drive to the store and assemble the furniture themselves.

However, IKEA has successfully launched its eCommerce website beyond imagination by combining modern technology with meticulous marketing strategies.

Specifically, IKEA has implemented VR/AR technology, which is considered a new trend in eCommerce and favored by many businesses to enhance users' online shopping experience.
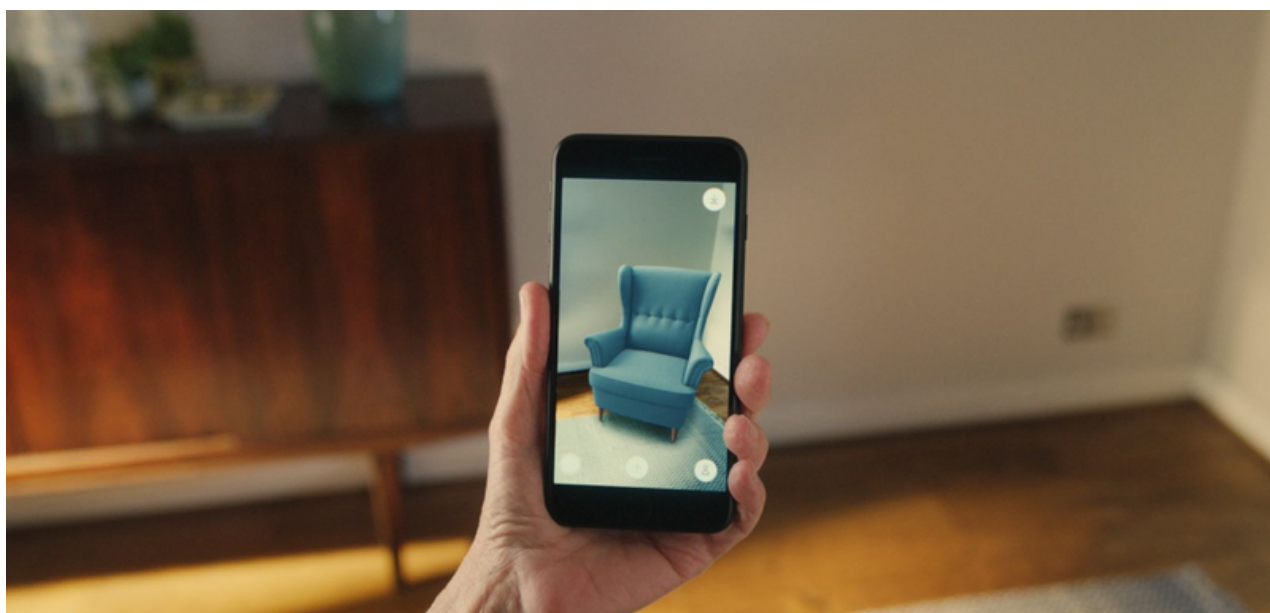
As a result, IKEA filled the sales gap of its traditional furniture retailing model that was only truly revealed during the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing regulations. From there, IKEA reached more customers both online and offline, and its sales gradually saw strong growth.

Furthermore, IKEA's eCommerce website integrates Instagram posts featuring images of IKEA furniture decorated by customers, posted with hashtags #IKEA.

This not only helps the brand connect intimately with Instagram users, increase credibility, and reinforce the loyalty of current customers but also enables quick access to a large and diverse customer base from the Internet in general and Instagram in particular, thanks to the popularity and influence of this social media platform on young consumers.

2. Nha Xinh

Nha Xinh is a well-established furniture brand in Vietnam, founded in 1999 with two large stores located in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Nha Xinh specializes in manufacturing and supplying furniture for households such as living room furniture, bedroom furniture, dining room furniture, and kitchen furniture with a design style deeply rooted in Asian culture, emphasizing closeness, friendliness, and simplicity rather than complexity and luxury. Nha Xinh's website is among the pioneers in the Vietnamese eCommerce scene, developed and launched in 2007 - a time when Vietnam was getting acquainted with using the Internet to gradually integrate into the world.

- **Website**: https://nhaxinh.com/
- **eCommerce platform:** WooCommerce
- **Traffic:** 52.2K/month
- **Ranking:** 35,609 (Vietnam), 1,423,357 (Global)
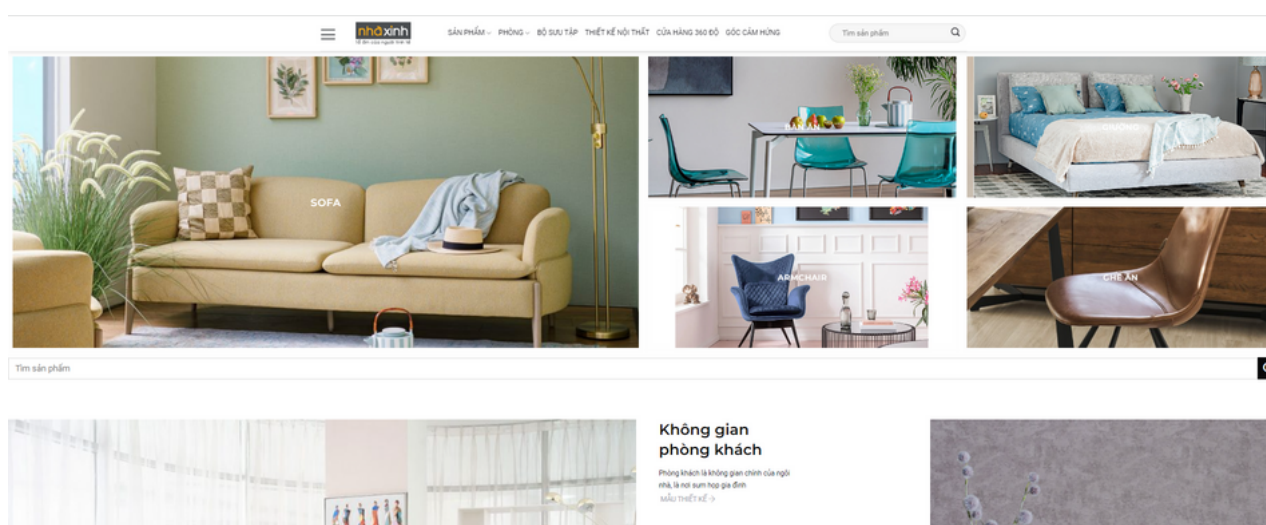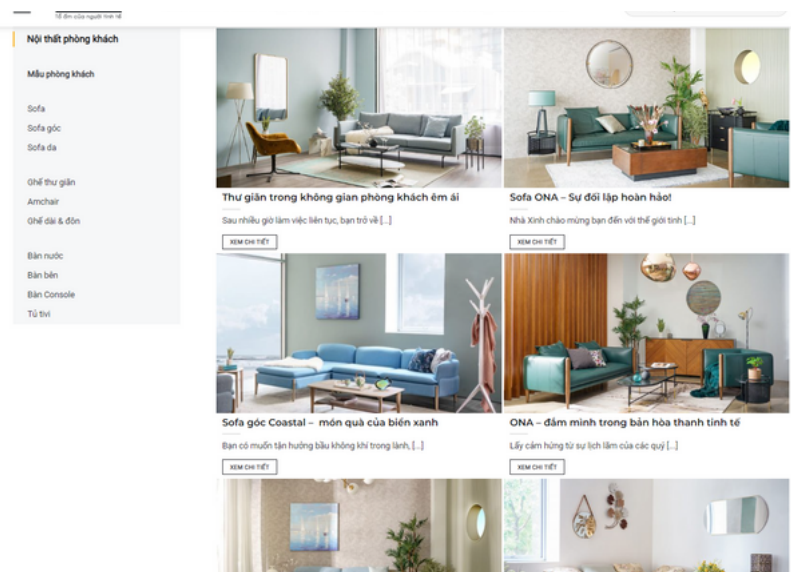

Nha Xinh's eCommerce website

Through many years of market fluctuations, the eCommerce website of Nha Xinh has maintained its simple, cozy, and elegant charm, with product categories neatly arranged and harmonized by room, making it easy for customers to search, choose products according to their needs, and visualize the overall space of the room.

With pre-arranged room layouts accompanied by detailed pricing, customers can easily make choices. Even if they prefer, they can select entire room decor combos without spending much time thinking or trying to coordinate individual items, as Nha Xinh has already done this work.

Moreover, Nha Xinh's website has a special category called "360-degree Store," which utilizes 360-degree technology to allow customers to experience the company's furniture products from afar in a realistic manner, exploring every nook and cranny of the room and every angle of the product, along with detailed information and pricing for each item.
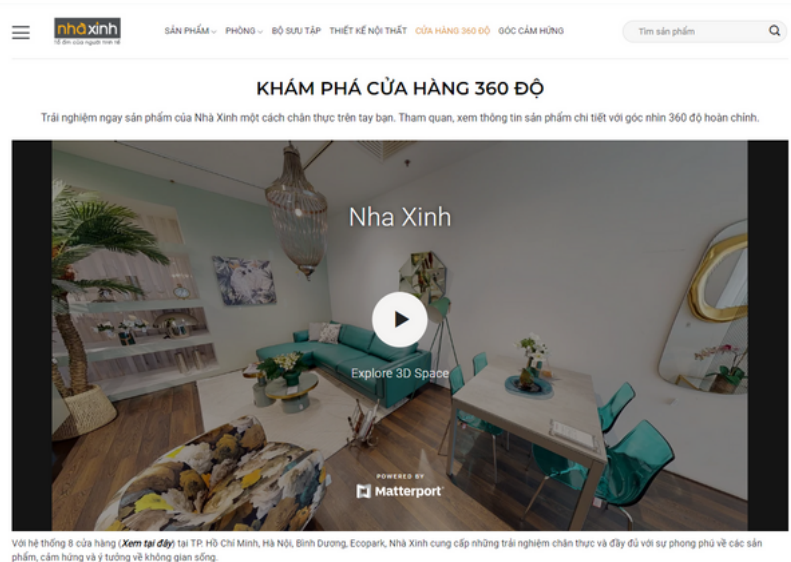
Along with that, the 'Inspiration Corner' category of Nha Xinh provides many inspirations and ideas to help customers design their ideal living space. Depending on each person's taste, Nhà Xinh offers design suggestions for homes in various styles ranging from elegant and gentle to strong and personality-driven.


Therefore, at Nha Xinh, it's not just a specialized eCommerce website for selling furniture, but above all, it's a guidebook that provides endless design inspiration for consumers.

3. Noi that Hoa Phat

Established in 1995, over nearly three decades, Noi That Hoa Phat has left many good impressions on Vietnamese consumers with high-quality products, sophisticated designs, and diverse services catering to various needs from office furniture, household items, to furniture specifically designed for hospitals.

The brand has grown stronger over the years and affirmed its position as a leading furniture manufacturer and supplier in Vietnam, maintaining a stable growth rate of 20-25% per year.

- **Website:** http://noithathoaphat.com.vn/
- **eCommerce platform:** WooCommerce
- **Traffic:** 55.5K/month
- **Ranking:** 17,993 (Vietnam), 744,939 (Global)
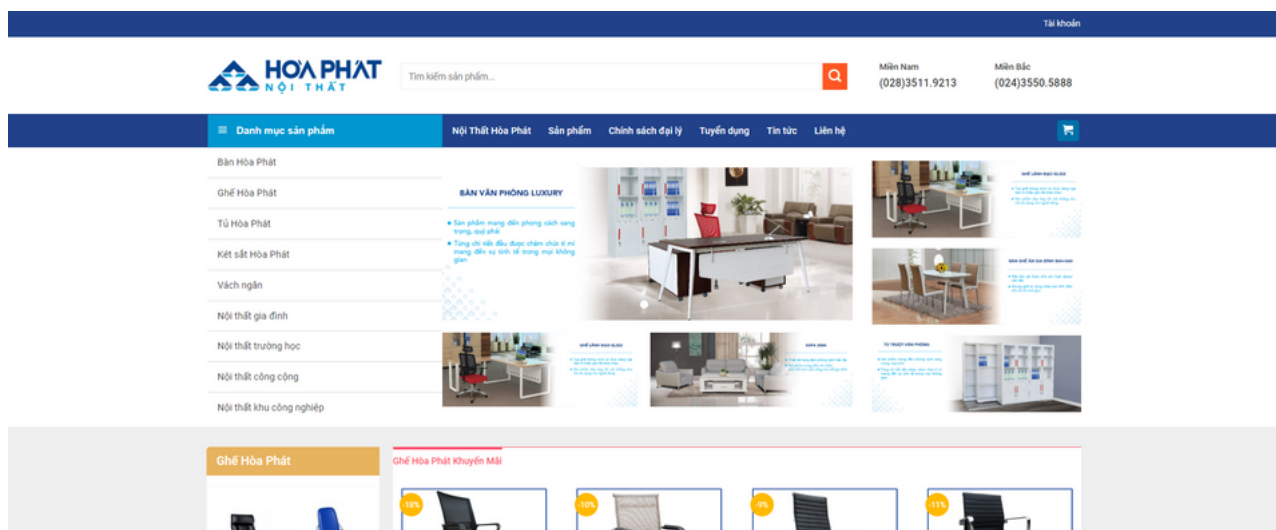

Website thương mại điện tử nội thất Hòa Phát

In 2022, there was a remarkable milestone for this company as Hoa Phat Furniture was rebranded as Noi That The One. The rebranding is closely associated with flexible changes in strategy. The company focuses on developing its image, appearance, and stature linked to the country's development, contributing significantly to society.

Furthermore, with the ambition to expand regionally and globally, Noi That The One (formerly Noi That Hoa Phat) particularly invests heavily in technology infrastructure to optimize production and supply processes. It can be said that Noi That The One has inherited and continued the good core values of the brand but in a better, fresher, more modern version that is in line with market trends.

One of the notable achievements of Noi That Hoa Phat to date is the successful application of 3D printing technology in production, reducing the time to create prototypes, increasing the accuracy of design products, saving production costs, and meeting the growing demands of customers and the market.

In this regard, the company has developed many new products such as Smart Safe, Italian-style sofas and folding chairs, etc. In addition to flexible and timely changes in strategy, Noi That The One also focuses on developing eCommerce websites to reach more potential customers who have habits or preferences for online shopping.

The company builds its website on the WooCommerce platform, a famous and reliable open-source platform worldwide preferred by many businesses for eCommerce deployment. The new website of Noi That The One (noithattheone.com.vn) has a sleeker, more attractive, and modern interface compared to the old version of Hoa Phat Furniture (noithathoaphat.com.vn).
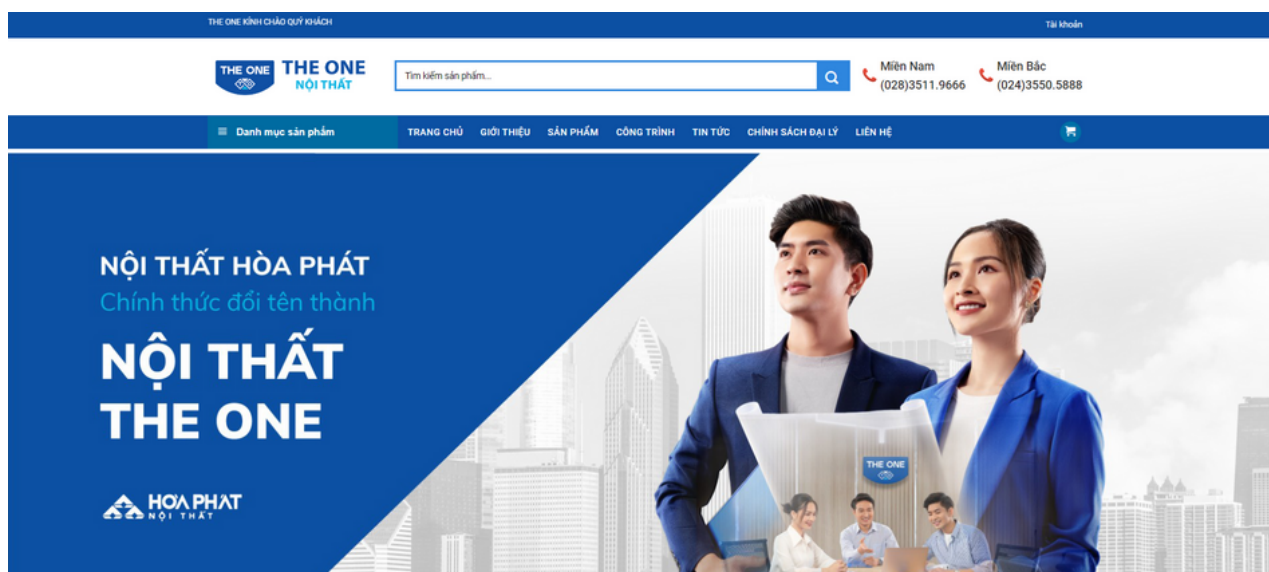
Additionally, the company is also actively developing famous social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, TikTok to increase brand coverage and recognition, reaching out to more new customers.

In conjunction with this, the company provides various payment options and shipping methods to meet the diverse needs of customers, creating the utmost convenience for the online shopping process on the Noi That Hoa Phat or Noi That The One website.

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Thực hiện phân tích chuyên sâu mọi vấn đề trong doanh nghiệp, từ thách thức kinh doanh, đặc thù ngành đến các vấn đề vĩ mô hơn của thị trường để đánh giá đầy đủ nhu cầu doanh nghiệp

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Phát triển và xây dựng giải pháp riêng biệt phù hợp cho từng mô hình kinh doanh, từng doanh nghiệp, từng ngành hàng và sản phẩm

TỐI ƯU CHẤT LƯỢNG

Chất lượng luôn được đặt lên hàng đầu nhằm đảm bảo hiệu quả kinh doanh trong ngắn hạn và sự tăng trưởng bền vững trong dài hạn của doanh nghiệp

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We leverage our diverse experience across various cutting-edge technology platforms to create robust and stable eCommerce systems.
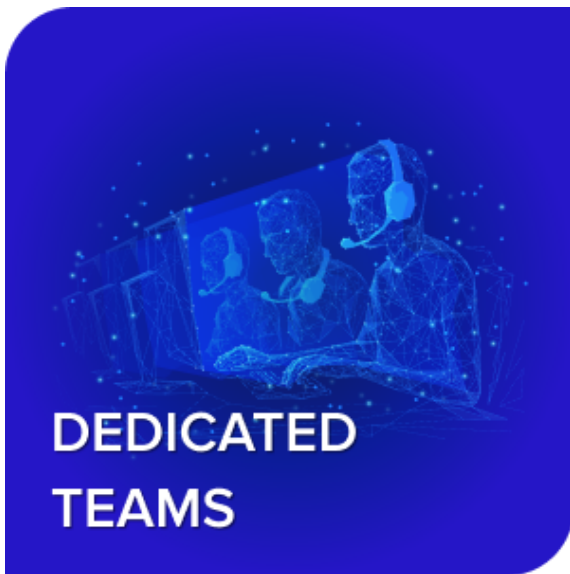

ECOMMERCE OPERATIONS
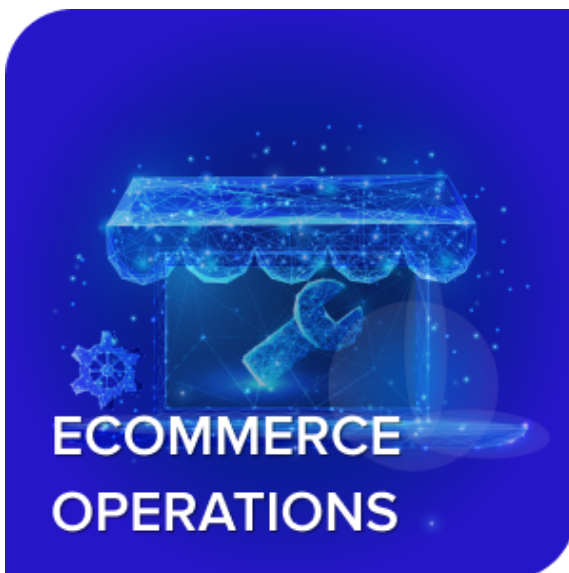
As your dedicated partner, we strive to provide ongoing maintenance and updates for your systems.

ECOMMERCE MARKETING

Provide Marketing solutions to help businesses increase visibility, attract customers, and boost conversion rates.

●━━ OTHER SERVICES

DEDICATED TEAMS

Build and provide a dedicated team to support businesses in successfully deploying and developing projects.

O2O SOLUTION

Implement business systems from Offline to Online to help businesses quickly catch up with the continuous development of the market.

CMS DEVELOPMENT

Implementing websites with content management support to position the brand in the online market.

DATA

Suggesting, integrating, and deploying tracking and analytics solutions to comprehensively monitor the business system.

FEATURED PROJECTS

laybyland
the smart way to buy
From B2C to a sustainable e-commerce platform with the 'Buy Now Pay Later' model using Magento
📍 Australia, USA, New Zealand

CHANGI airport group
Developing a high-end wine shopping website for iShop Changi Wines with a focus on handling high traffic
📍 Singapore

JASNOR
Upgrading the system of two B2B toy e-commerce websites from Magento 1 to Magento 2
📍 Australia

TRENTHAM ESTATE
Platform migration and setting up an e-commerce website for a leading Australian wine manufacturer
📍 Australia

MY MARKET
mymarket.com.hk
Rebuilding a grocery e-commerce website in a D2C model using the Magento 2 platform
📍 Hong Kong

theWarehouse
Developing an online wine retail website in the first collaboration project with Annam Group
📍 Vietnam

Vinamilk EST 1976
A Remarkable Transformation of the Dairy Giant with Shopify Plus and Headless Commerce Architecture
📍 Vietnam

CASTLEMAINE ROD SHOP
Upgrading the Magento 1 system to Magento 2 to meet the expanding business scale of Rodshop
📍 Australia

ANNAM GOURMET
The next project with Annam Group - Developing a retail website for the Annam Gourmet Market grocery store chain.
📍 Vietnam

eureka skydeck 88 MELBOURNE
Developing an online ticket booking system for tours at the 88-story Eureka Tower in Melbourne
📍 Australia

Building and optimizing the performance of BCP - a business connectivity and trade promotion platform for B2B
📍 Vietnam

KUEHNE+NAGEL
Developing successful application solutions for Kuehne+Nagel
📍 Global

SUZUVERSE
How Shopify Plus Catapulted Suzuverse Into The Big League?
📍 Vietnam

Seconds DEALS
Building an eCommerce platform in Australia with Magento 2 (now Adobe Commerce)
📍 Australia

Optergy
Building an eCommerce system for the B2B model
📍 USA

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