

VIREXO MEDIA

FREE PLAYBOOK

The Pricing Psychology Playbook

7 ethical price tweaks that make ecommerce shoppers buy more
— without spending a cent more on ads.

For D2C & Shopify founders • virexomedia.com • 2026 edition

An orange price tag with rounded corners, tilted slightly to the right. It contains the text "\$49.99" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

\$49.⁹⁹

Before you dive in

Virexo Media is an ecommerce growth agency for D2C & Shopify brands — we build stores, run Meta ads, and optimize the tiny details that quietly move revenue. This playbook is for founders and marketers who want more sales from the traffic they already have. Every tactic here is one you can test this week.

The big idea: Price is not just a number — it is a message. The same product at the same price sells very differently depending on how the price is framed, anchored, and presented. Psychology-based pricing can lift ecommerce revenue by 10–25% (HBR, 2025) with zero extra ad spend. That is the cheapest growth lever most stores ignore.

The 7 tricks

1 Charm pricing (the .99 that isn't silly)

Shoppers read prices left to right and anchor on the first digit — the left-digit bias. \$49.99 feels closer to \$40 than \$50. Across the research, 9-ending prices lift unit sales ~24% on average, and charm pricing adds 8–12% conversion on items under \$100 (Univ. of Chicago, 2025).

Do: use .99 / .95 on impulse and mid-priced products, especially on collection pages and sale tags where prices sit side by side.

Don't: use it on premium/luxury items — round prices (\$200) signal quality and confidence there.

2 Anchoring (show the reference first)

The first number a shopper sees becomes the yardstick for everything after. Anchoring raised perceived value by ~32% in testing. A crossed-out “compare at” price, a premium tier shown first, or an MSRP next to your price all make your price feel like a deal.

Do: show the higher original beside the sale price.

Don't: invent fake “was” prices — it kills trust and breaks ad policy.

3 The decoy (make the middle look obvious)

Add a third option that exists mainly to make your target option look like the smart buy. Classic: Small \$5, Large \$9, and a Medium \$8.50 that nobody picks — but it pushes buyers to Large.

Do: use 3 tiers and design the middle/top as the “best value”.

Don't: offer 6+ tiers — choice overload freezes buyers.

4 Bundling & “complete the set”

Bundles hide the price of individual items and raise average order value. A \$60 bundle feels simpler than deciding on four \$18 items separately, and the perceived saving does the selling.

Do: frame the bundle as a saving vs buying separately (“\$74 value for \$60”).

Don't: bundle unrelated products — relevance is what makes it feel like a deal.

5 Per-unit & time framing (shrink the number)

Big numbers feel smaller when you break them down. “\$1.30 per serving” or “less than \$0.50 a day” reframes a \$39 tub as trivial. Subscriptions especially benefit from per-week framing.

Do: add the smallest honest unit next to the total.

Don't: bury the real total — show both.

6 Precision & visual size cues

Two quiet levers: (a) rounded prices (\$200) feel emotional/premium while precise ones (\$198.50) feel reasoned — match the number to the product. (b) Make the price physically smaller and lighter in weight on the page so it feels smaller, and drop the currency clutter where your platform allows.

Do: de-emphasize price size on premium products; keep the value/benefit larger.

Don't: shout the price in huge bold red unless you're competing purely on discount.

7 Honest urgency & free-shipping thresholds

Scarcity and thresholds nudge action: “Only 4 left”, real low-stock counters, and “Add \$12 for free shipping” all lift conversion and AOV. Free-shipping thresholds are one of the most reliable AOV boosters in ecommerce.

Do: set the free-shipping bar ~20-30% above your average order.

Don't: fake scarcity or countdown timers — shoppers notice, and it's a policy risk.

QUICK-SETUP CHECKLIST

- ✓ Switch impulse/mid-price items to .99 endings on collection & sale pages.
- ✓ Add a crossed-out compare-at price wherever a genuine discount exists.
- ✓ Restructure your offers into 3 tiers with a clear “best value” middle/top.
- ✓ Build 1-2 relevant bundles framed as a saving vs buying separately.
- ✓ Add per-unit or per-day framing to any product over ~\$30.
- ✓ Set a free-shipping threshold ~20-30% above your average order value.
- ✓ Test one change at a time — measure conversion + AOV for 2 weeks.

Common mistakes

- **Charm pricing everything.** On premium products, .99 cheapens the brand. Match the tactic to the price point.
- **Fake anchors and fake scarcity.** Invented “was” prices and permanent “ends tonight” timers destroy trust and can get ads rejected.
- **Too many choices.** More than ~3-4 tiers or 6+ bundles causes decision paralysis — buyers leave.
- **Changing five things at once.** You'll never know what worked. Isolate one variable and give it two weeks.
- **Ignoring mobile.** Most Shopify traffic is mobile — if the anchor price or tier layout breaks on a phone, the psychology is lost.

What good looks like

Illustrative example (hypothetical — for illustration only):

A skincare store sells a serum at a flat \$40. They make three changes: reprice to \$39.99 with a \$54 compare-at anchor, add a 3-tier bundle (1 / 2 / 3 bottles, with “2 bottles – most popular” highlighted), and set a \$60 free-shipping threshold. Same traffic, same ad spend. The middle bundle lifts average order value, the anchor makes the single feel like a deal, and the threshold nudges one-bottle buyers to two. The only new cost was an afternoon of setup.

Every number in this guide is a labeled industry benchmark from published research (Univ. of Chicago 2025; HBR 2025; charm-pricing literature) or a clearly-marked hypothetical. We never imply results we can't back.

Want this done for you?

Pricing is one lever. Virexo Media builds and optimizes the whole conversion path — store design, CRO, and the Meta ads that fill it — for D2C & Shopify brands. If you'd rather have experts test pricing, layout, and offers for you, let's talk.

50+ Shopify stores built • 5.2x average ROAS across ecommerce Meta campaigns • \$2.4M+ in client revenue generated • 6x average organic traffic growth in 6 months.

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