



**SUBTA**  
Subscription Trade Association

PICKING THE PERFECT  
**SUBSCRIPTION  
E-COMMERCE  
PLATFORM**

by The Subscription Trade Association



## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Key Subscription Terms	5
The Subscription Platforms	7
SUBTA's Guide to Selection	15
Subscription Platform Directory	20
Final Words	21

## Introduction

Launching, growing or scaling a subscription business is a difficult task in itself, but it can be even tougher without the right tools or partners. Between the day-to-day hiccups and the big picture, business owners can't do it all, which is when subscription platforms come into play.

A subscription platform's purpose is to connect the consumer with the business and the product they are trying to purchase in the most organic way possible, according to Applico. Think of it as a vessel that is there to take the consumer from Point A: Landing on your website; to Point B: Making a transaction.

The platforms featured in this e-book are among the top platforms of choice in direct-to-consumer (DTC) subscriptions. We asked each of the brand representatives we spoke with a series of questions to help you in your quest to find the perfect match. Your needs and expectations might vary depending on a few factors, which are listed in a comprehensive way throughout this e-book.

You might be wondering why Shopify, BigCommerce or Amazon aren't on this list. E-commerce platforms such as Shopify and BigCommerce give you the foundation for your e-commerce business that these subscription platforms layer into for the added functionality that is needed. Amazon, while it could be considered a platform itself, should really be looked at as an additional sales channel for your subscription above all else.

If you're new to the subscription industry, we'll walk you through everything. If you've been involved in this business for a while, you will find new insights that could help you scale your business at an unprecedented pace.

Note: The information presented throughout this e-book has been gathered objectively through independent research and interviews with each platform. Some of this content contains affiliate links and may generate a commission for SUBTA.

Thank you for downloading this e-book; we're so glad to have you in our subscription community!

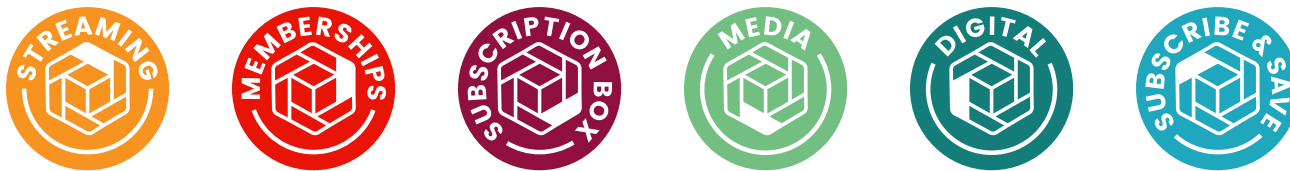


## About SUBTA

We are a growing community of innovators, entrepreneurs, thought leaders and dedicated teams eager to scale their businesses and catalyze the subscription industry.

The mission of the Subscription Trade Association (SUBTA) is to provide a comprehensive and reputable library of news, knowledge, and resources. SUBTA cultivates a supportive community through both virtual and in-person experiences.

We're dedicated to supporting each of the six segments within the subscription industry, including:



Our goal is to help you become a leader in one of the fastest growing industries.

# Key Subscription Terms

## APIs

### Application Programming Interfaces

- Enables interactions between different software resources and components.

### Different type of APIs:

**Open:** for anyone to access and use within their program

**Internal:** for employees only

**Partner:** Similar to open APIs but with restrictions controlled by a third party

**Composite:** Combination of several data sources to perform one task. Not a single entity

### API Architecture and protocol

**REST:** for anyone to access and use within their program

**JSON-RPC and XML-RPC:** Remote Procedural Call

**SOAP:** Simple Object Access Protocol

## Churn Rate

- Business metric used to find out the number of subscribers who pause or cancel a subscription/service within a set timeframe, divided by the total number of subscribers.
- Annual Churn Rate =  $(\text{Number of Customers at Start of Year} - \text{Number of Customers at End of Year}) / \text{Number of Customers at Start of Year}$ .

## CAC

### Customer Acquisition Cost - Can also be known as Cost Per Acquisition (CPA)

- A calculation used to determine the cost it takes to attract a new customer. This metric empowers companies to begin making cost projections and identify their most effective acquisition channel.
- Marketing expenses/number of customers acquired in the period= CAC.

## Integrations

- A technological process to connect multiple applications and/or softwares together. Integrations have a wide range of uses and can be used to connect a variety of subscription-supporting tools such as payment processing, website hosting, social networks, data collection, inventory management and much more.

## LTV

### Lifetime Value

- Lifetime Value (LTV) is an estimate of the revenue that a customer will generate during their lifetime with your subscription.
- $LTV = \text{Lifetime Customer Revenue} - \text{Lifetime Customer Costs}$ .

## Order Frequency

- Helps to define how often customers purchase from your subscription business in a given period of time.
- $\text{Order Frequency} = \frac{\text{Total number of orders (365 days)}}{\text{total number of unique customers (365 day)}}$ .

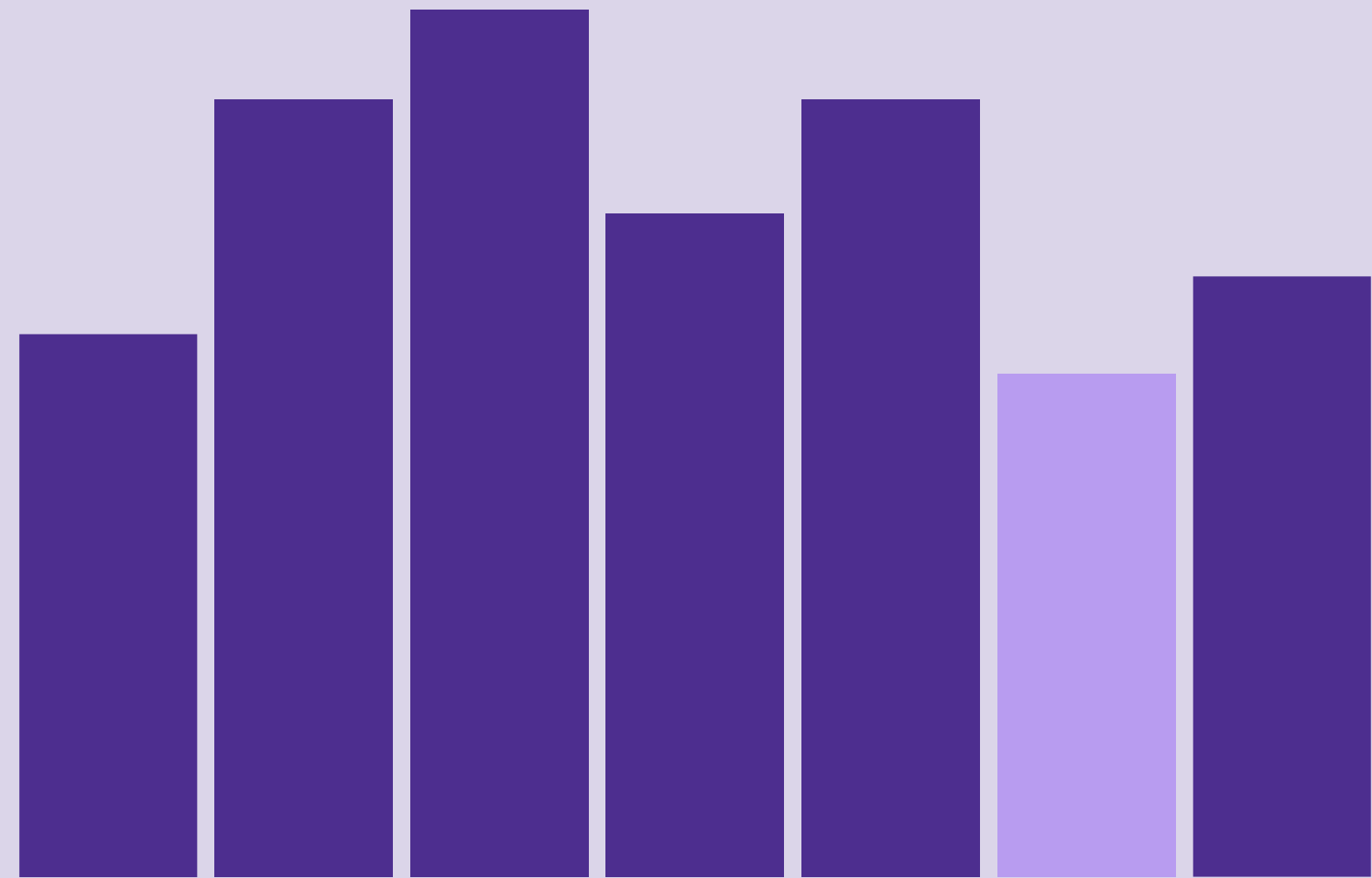
## Retention Rate

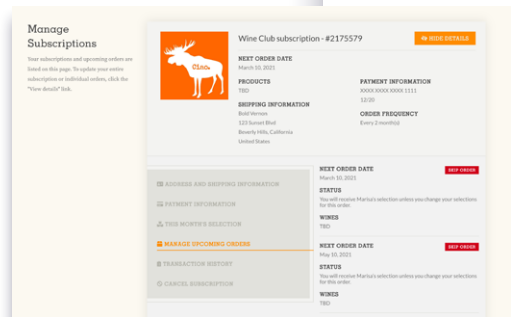
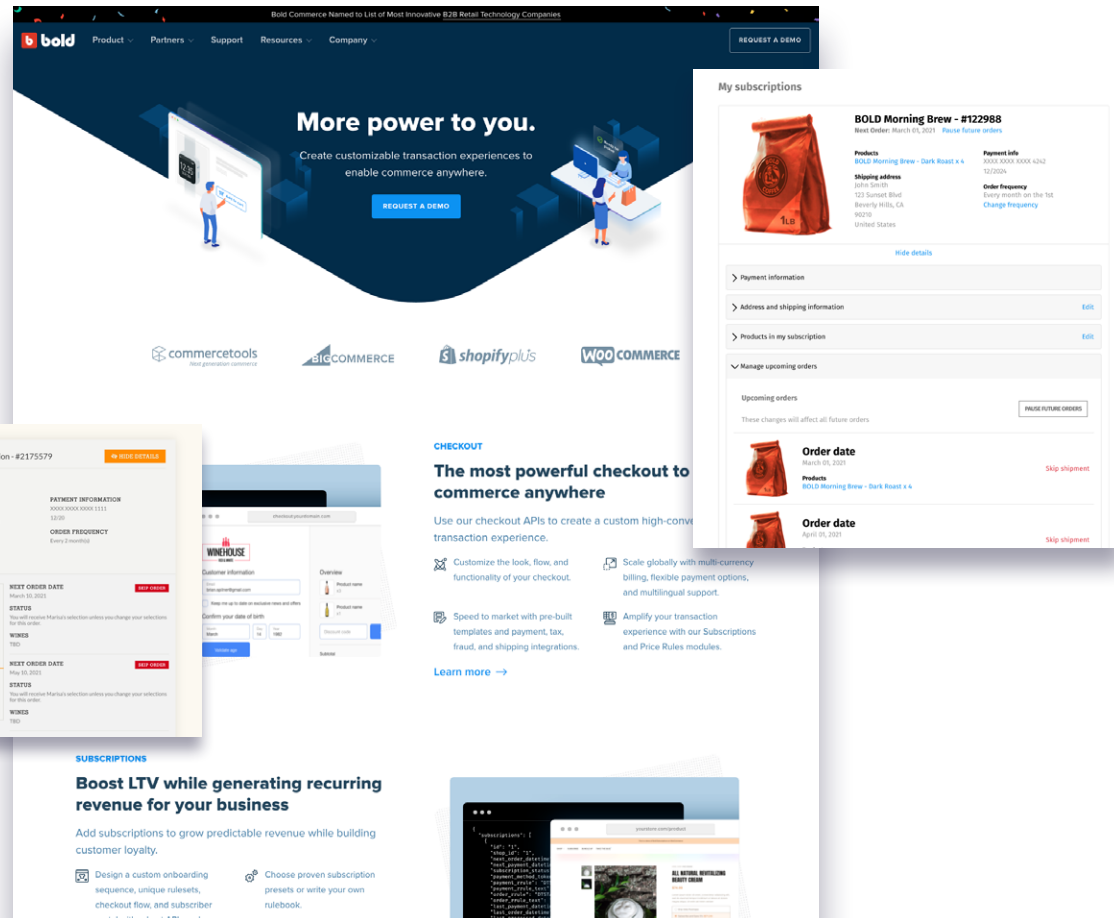
- A subscription's ability to attract customers as a return purchaser. By definition, a subscription's goal is to maintain its buyers on a recurring basis. This measure looks at the percentage customers continue their subscription within a set timeframe.

## Subscription Platforms

- An application, software or website used to provide your subscription with various tools it will need to manage and sell orders, process payments, collect data, and/or support customers. All subscription platforms are unique, providing specific features that will support the launch, promotions and scaling of your subscription.

# THE SUBSCRIPTION PLATFORMS



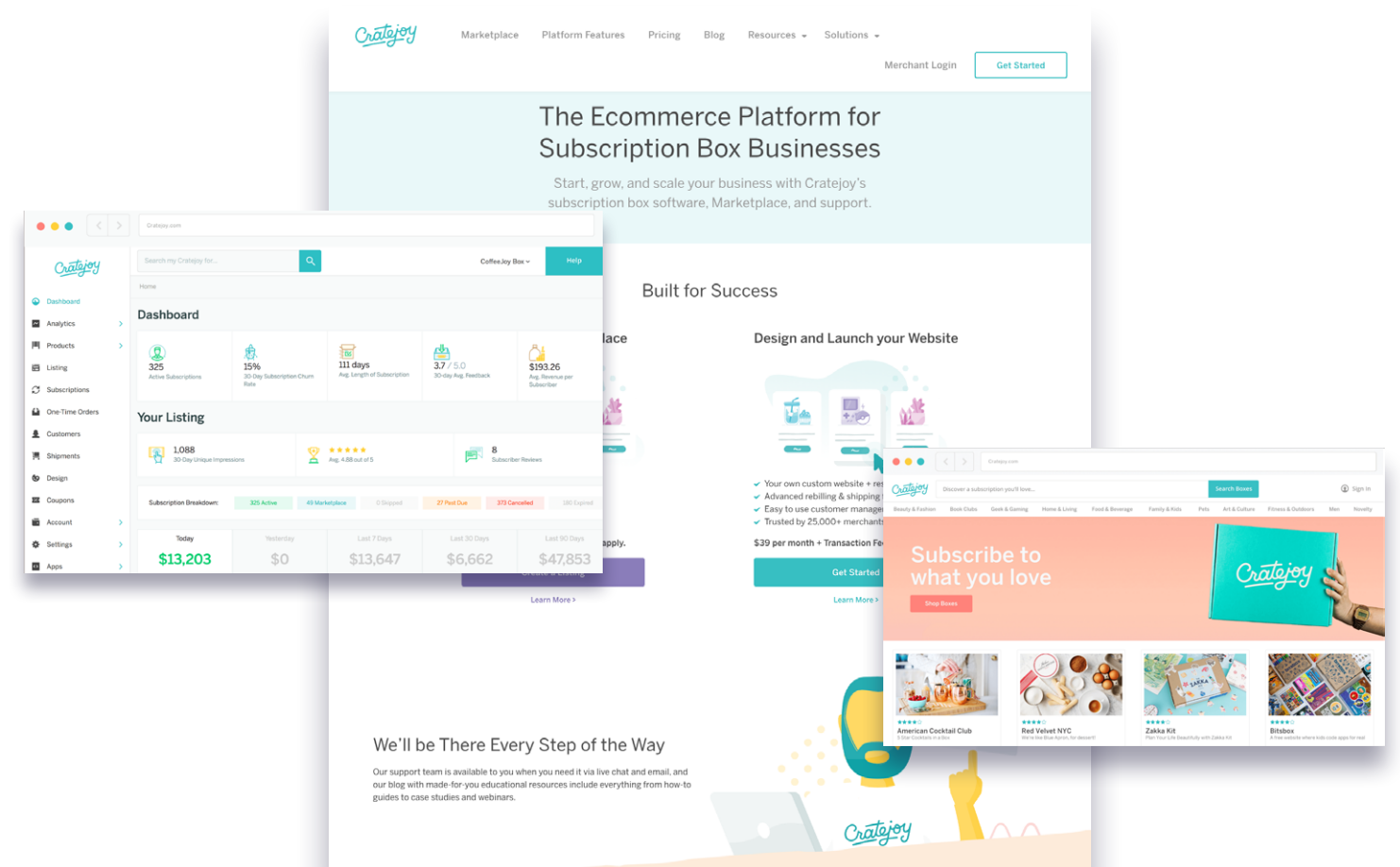


## Bold Commerce

Founded: 2012 | Funding: \$54 Million | Employees: 251-500

Founded in 2012 by four friends with a passion for e-commerce that wanted to make their own stores better, subscriptions being a big focus of that. Nine years later, Bold is over 400 people spread across Canada and the US and growing faster than ever. Bold initially developed applications for brands to innovate and sell products, but is now focused on what it refers to as the “Transaction Experience.”

Works closely with Shopify, BigCommerce, WooCommerce & commerce tools.



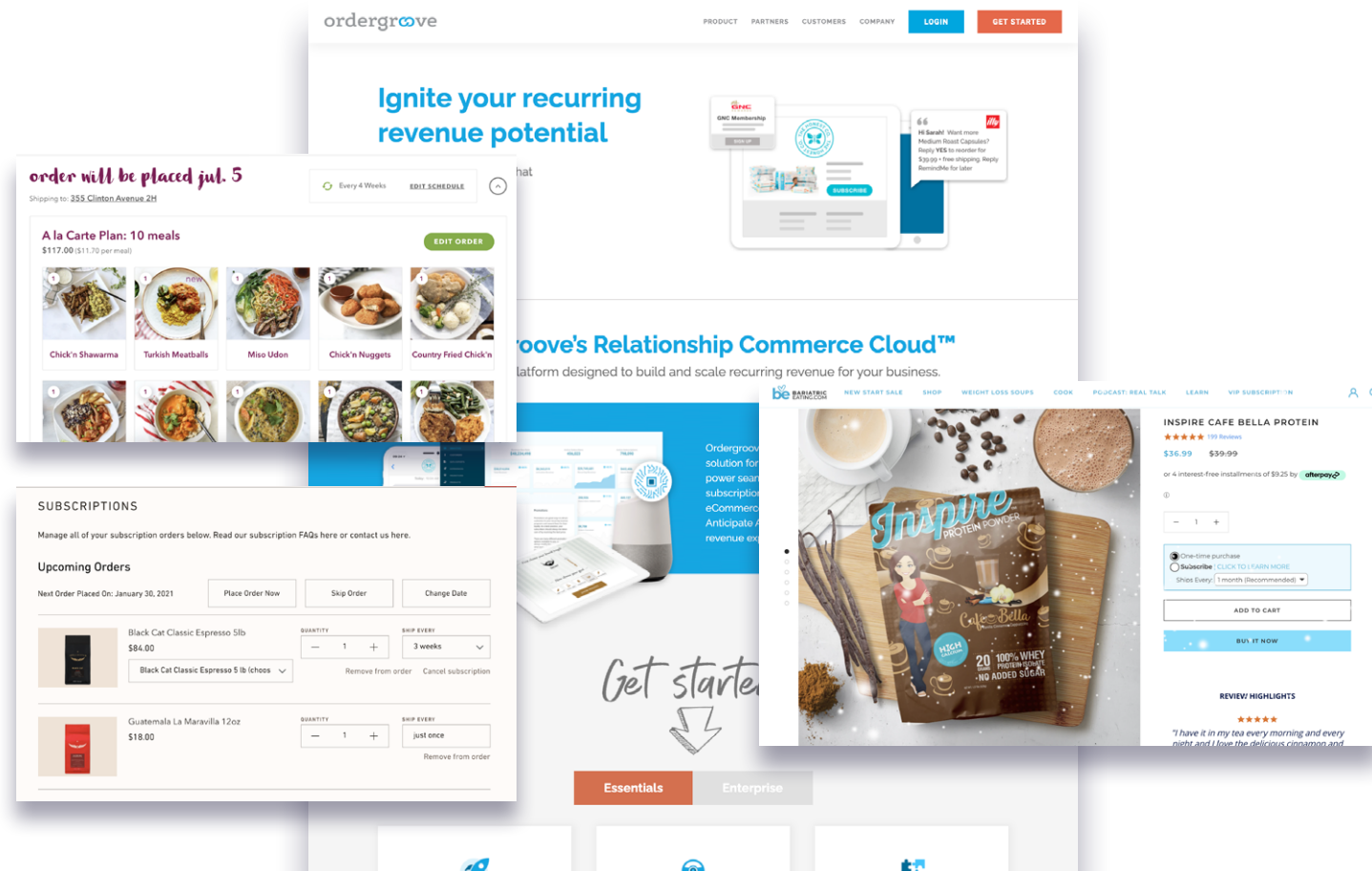
## CrateJoy

Founded: 2014 | Funding: \$10.8 Million | Employees: 51-100

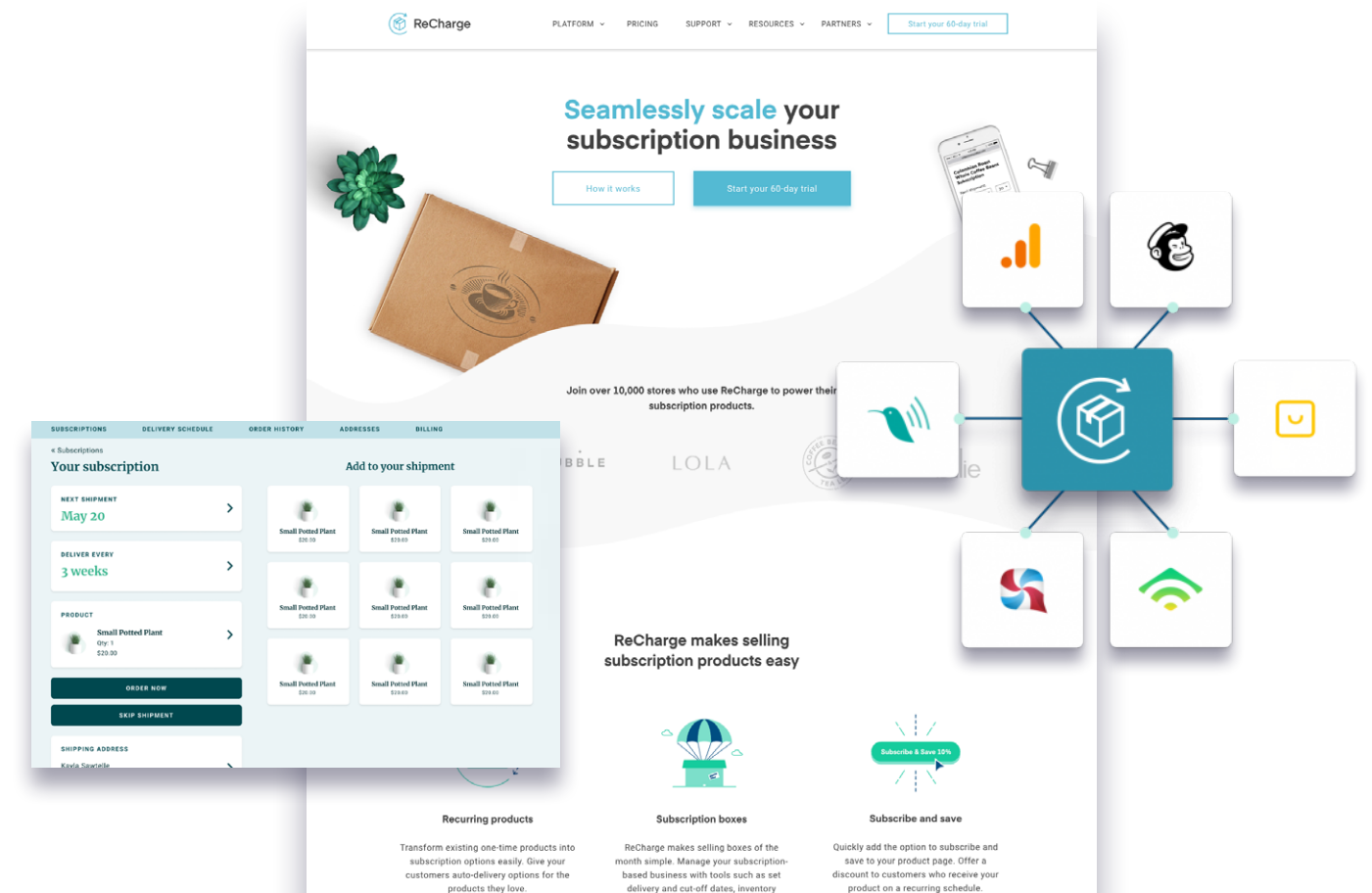
Founded in 2014 by Amir Elaguzy and Alex Morse, Cratejoy is now supporting more than 2,500 subscription companies on its platform, with over a million users on its marketplace. This platform is mainly focused on subscription-box companies and operates out of Austin, TX.



# ordergroove



# ReCharge



## Ordergroove

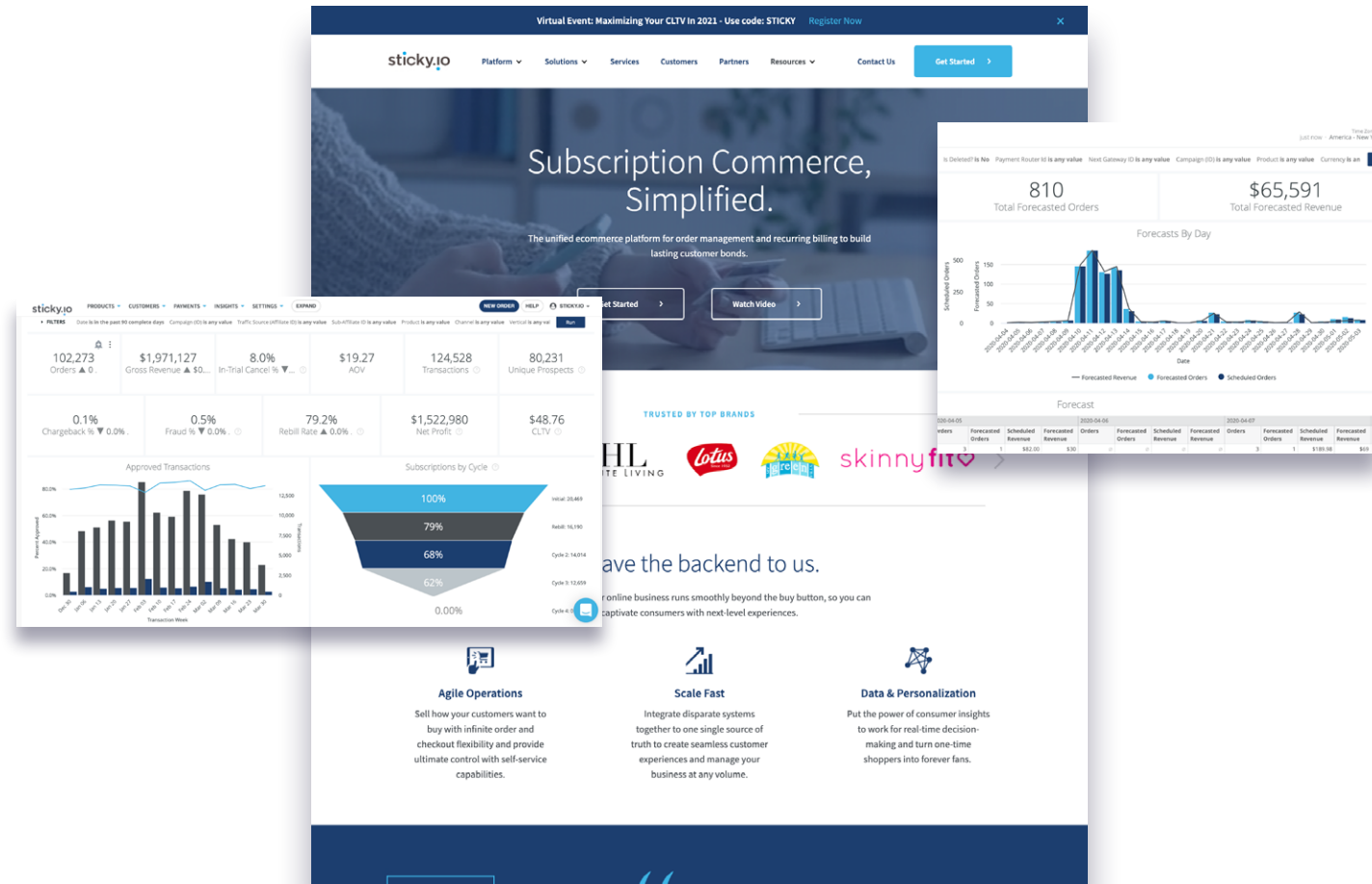
Founded: 2010 | Funding: \$30 Million | Employees: 51-100

Founded in 2010 by Greg Alvo, Ordergroove offers superior subscription performance for emerging and established brands, including The Honest Company, L’Oreal, KIND Snacks, and Compass Coffee. The company’s subscription platform utilizes tools like AI-powered personalization that make it easy for brands to maximize subscriber enrollment, optimize subscriber retention, and boost average order value. The end result is an increase in reliable, recurring revenue.

## ReCharge

Founded: 2014 | Funding: N/A | Employees: 100-250

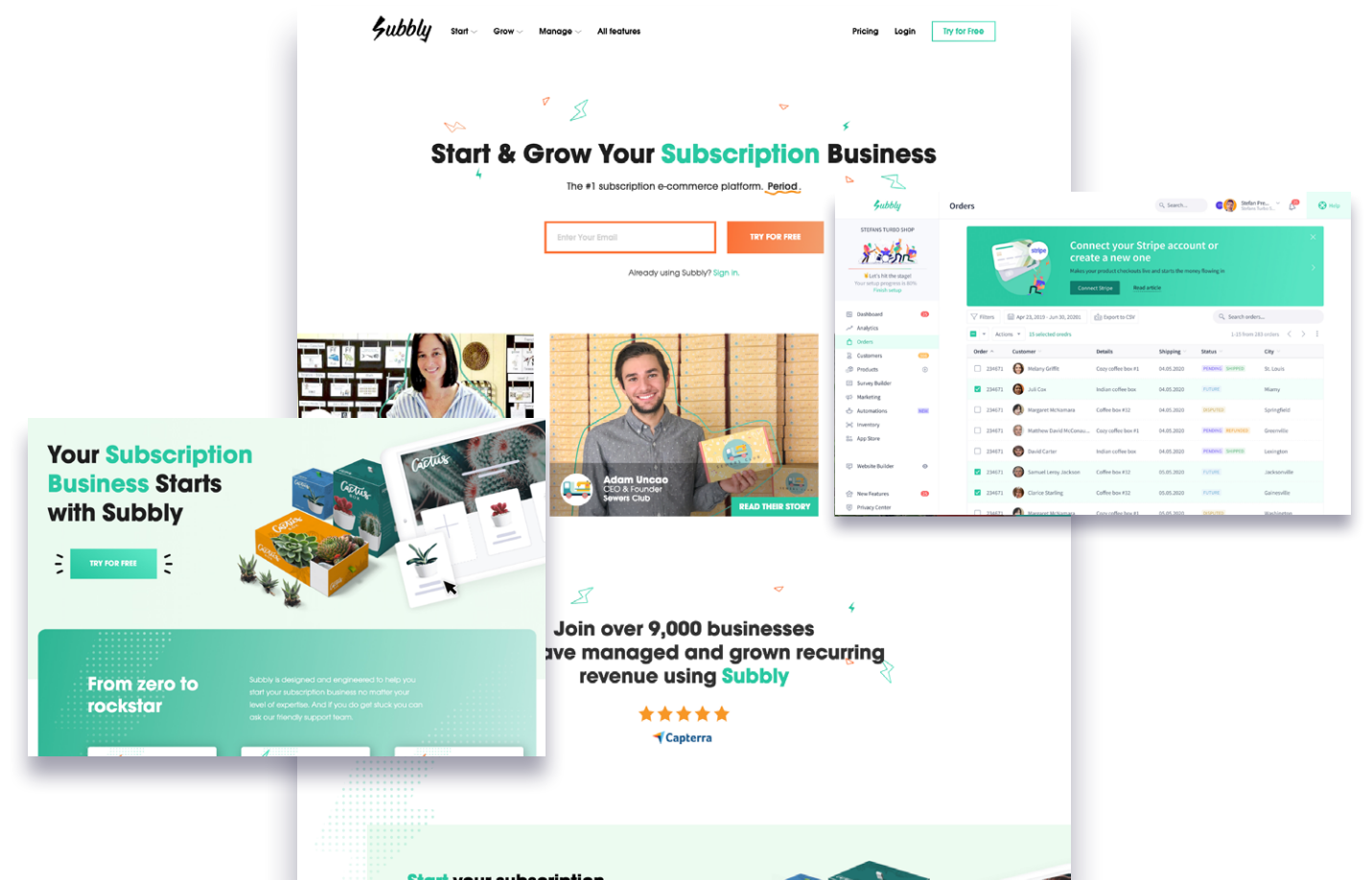
ReCharge is guided by the mission to connect and empower the world through payments. The Santa Monica-based company has created the leading subscriptions payments platform designed for merchants to set up and manage dynamic recurring billing across web and mobile. ReCharge is used by over 10,000 businesses and is trusted by brands including Native Deodorant, Hubble Contacts, Lola, Soylent and Billie.



**sticky.io**

Founded: 2008 | Funding: N/A | Employees: 50-100

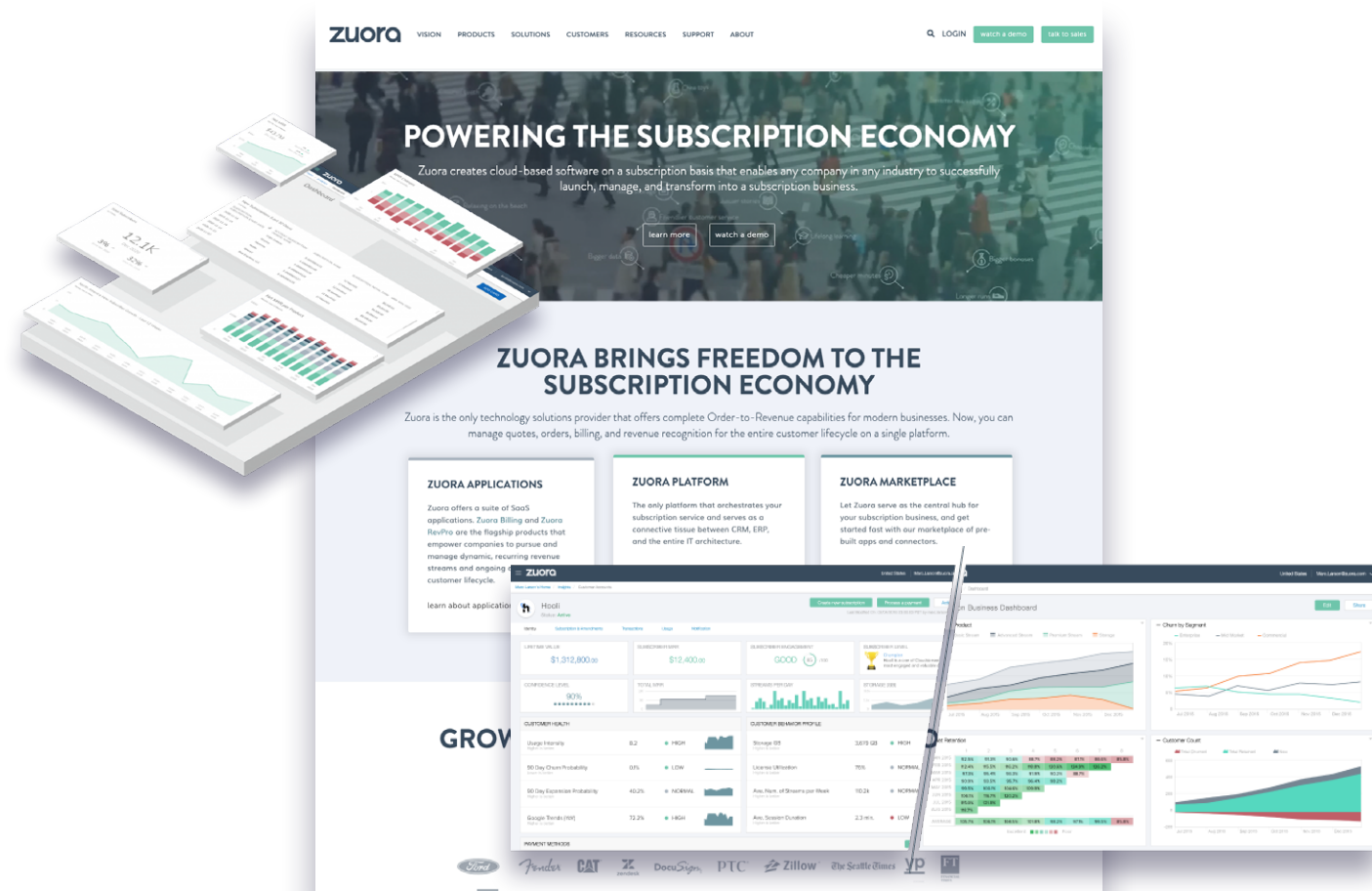
Founded in 2008, sticky.io is the second oldest subscription platform we've talked to. It operates as a fully integrated subscription management and a recurring billing platform. Its purpose is to be the "go-to e-commerce solution for lasting relationships between brands and people." Based in San Francisco, CA, sticky.io helps more than 10,000 merchants process over \$4 billion in annual transactions.



**Subbly**

Founded: 2014 | Funding: 100% Bootstrapped (Self-Funded) | Employees: 51-100

Founded in 2014 by Stefan Pretty, the Los Angeles-based company is community driven and uses its customers' feedback to bring in new tools and evolve. Initially built to support subscription boxes, Subbly now powers any subscription-first business. A subscription-first business is any business that depends on recurring revenue.



# SUBTA'S GUIDE TO PLATFORM SELECTION

Zuora

Founded: 2007 | Funding: \$247.5 Million | Employees: 501-1,000

Zuora is the oldest featured platform in this e-boom. Founded in 2007, the company has now hired more than a thousand people to help subscription businesses grow and scale. Zuora operated on six core engines:

- Pricing Engine
- Subscription Orders Engine
- Rating Engine
- Global Payments Engine
- Subscription Metrics
- Subscription Accounting Engine

It is primarily focused on enterprise companies like Ford, Zillow and even The Seattle Times.





**Year Founded** | Founded 2012

**Year Founded** | Founded 2014

**Year Founded** | Founded 2010

**Year Founded** | Founded 2014

**Clientele** | For all size companies

**Clientele** | For startups, growth & mid companies

**Clientele** | For all size companies

**Clientele** | For growth, mid & enterprise companies

**Users** | 20,000+ businesses on platform

**Users** | 2,500+ businesses on platform

**Users** | 70+ businesses on platform

**Users** | 10,000+ businesses on platform

**Knowledge Needed** | No web design skills required

**Knowledge Needed** | No web design skills required

**Knowledge Needed** | No web design skills required

**Knowledge Needed** | Web design skills required

**APIs** | API to help modify, cancel and report on subscriptions

**APIs** | Store & merchant API

**APIs** | APIs to help with customization, selling processes, membership programs & more

**APIs** | APIs to help with customization, analysis and repeat-order management & more

**Integrations** | 50+ integrations

**Integrations** | 14 integrations

**Integrations** | 22 integrations

**Integrations** | 33 integrations

**Customer Support** | 24/7  
Full support via phone, email or chat at no extra cost

**Customer Support** | Livechat or support ticket

**Customer Support** | Implementation & technical support  
Knowledge center  
Consulting available at cost

**Customer Support** | Standard: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm  
Add ons: \$49/month-\$189/month for 24/7 services  
Offer Account Management Program

**Pricing** | Custom Pricing

**Pricing** | Checkout: \$19/month  
All-in-one: \$39/month

**Pricing** | Custom pricing

**Pricing** | Standard: \$60/month  
Pro: \$300/month

**Future Plans:**

- Add more partners and integrations
- Create a seamless experience
- Build tools for merchants to get more value out of their customers

**Future Plans:**

- Maximize the Shopify Integration

**Future Plans:**

- More investment in AI
- Global growth
- Enhance integration tools for merchants

**Future Plans:**

- More robust APIs
- Enabling support regardless of technology by merchants
- Foster and improve customer relationship

[Learn More](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Learn More](#)

# sticky.io

# Subbly

# zuora



Year Founded	Founded 2008
Clientele	For growth, mid & enterprise companies
Users	10,000+ businesses on platform
Knowledge Needed	Web design skills required
APIs	APIs to help with product management, billing models and offers, campaigns, fulfillment & more
Integrations	450+ integrations
Customer Support	Customer success manager Email + live chats available No additional costs Not 24/7 but emergency hotline available
Pricing	Custom pricing

Year Founded	Founded 2014
Clientele	For all size companies
Users	14,000+ businesses on platform
Knowledge Needed	No web design skills required
APIs	Full public API in development as of 2021 Orders API already available to allow 3PL (Third-Party Logistics) and shopping integrations.
Integrations	15 integrations
Customer Support	Free 24/7 live chat and email support Vast help center (articles and videos) Responsive customer success team Account managers for enterprise customers
Pricing	Checkout: \$14/month Website + Checkout: \$29/month

Year Founded	Founded 2013
Clientele	For all size companies
Users	1,000+ businesses on platform
Knowledge Needed	No web design skills required
APIs	Product, subscription and payments APIs help with product details, registration and payment processes & more
Integrations	135+ integrations
Customer Support	24/7 365 days/year ticket response with time commitment Can help from anywhere in the world
Pricing	Custom Pricing

### Future Plans:

- User interface/experience enhanced
- Focus on personalization via AI.
- Mobile app for merchants

### Future Plans:

- More payment gateways to give merchants more choice and freedom
- Increased flexibility of shipping methods and settings to allow for even further customization
- Deeper analytics and insights
- Further customizability of the checkout
- And more...

### Future Plans:

- Develop Zuora Solution
- Expand order-revenue suite operations
- Develop Zuora analytics for more data to show merchants so that they know what to improve on

Learn More

Learn More

Learn More

# Subscription Platform Directory



[Support](#)

1-204-808-8095



[Support](#)



[Support](#)

(866) 253-1261



[Support](#)



[Support](#)

(800) 455-9645



[Support](#)



[Support](#)

(888) 976-9056

## Final Words

Finding the best subscription e-commerce platform for your business isn't easy. Each subscription has a unique set of needs, priorities, and objectives. Therefore, you may need a completely different platform than your biggest competitor in the subscription space.

We gathered seven of the best subscription platforms in the industry, ones that help startups launch their businesses and monitor their progress; ones that are focused on the growth or scalability of a subscription business; even ones that are solely focused on enterprise-level companies.

The goal of this e-book is to ultimately help you realize your hopes and dreams within the subscription industry. Each of these platforms can help you in some way, shape or form, so take your time studying them.

Keep in mind, while the material in this e-book is valuable and insightful, the subscription landscape is constantly evolving and changing, meaning the platforms we have introduced you to may have shifted or expanded their focus based on their own needs. This is the most up-to-date information as of Q1 2021.

Tell us about your journey navigating between the different platforms and eventually picking the one you want! We would love to hear how the process went for you and incorporate any feedback you have into a blog post designed to help the rest of the subscription community. Email us at [letstalk@subta.com](mailto:letstalk@subta.com).





# SUBTA

Subscription Trade Association

[subta.com](http://subta.com)



**Want even more content?**

Click the thumbnail to watch the Picking the Perfect Platform video series.