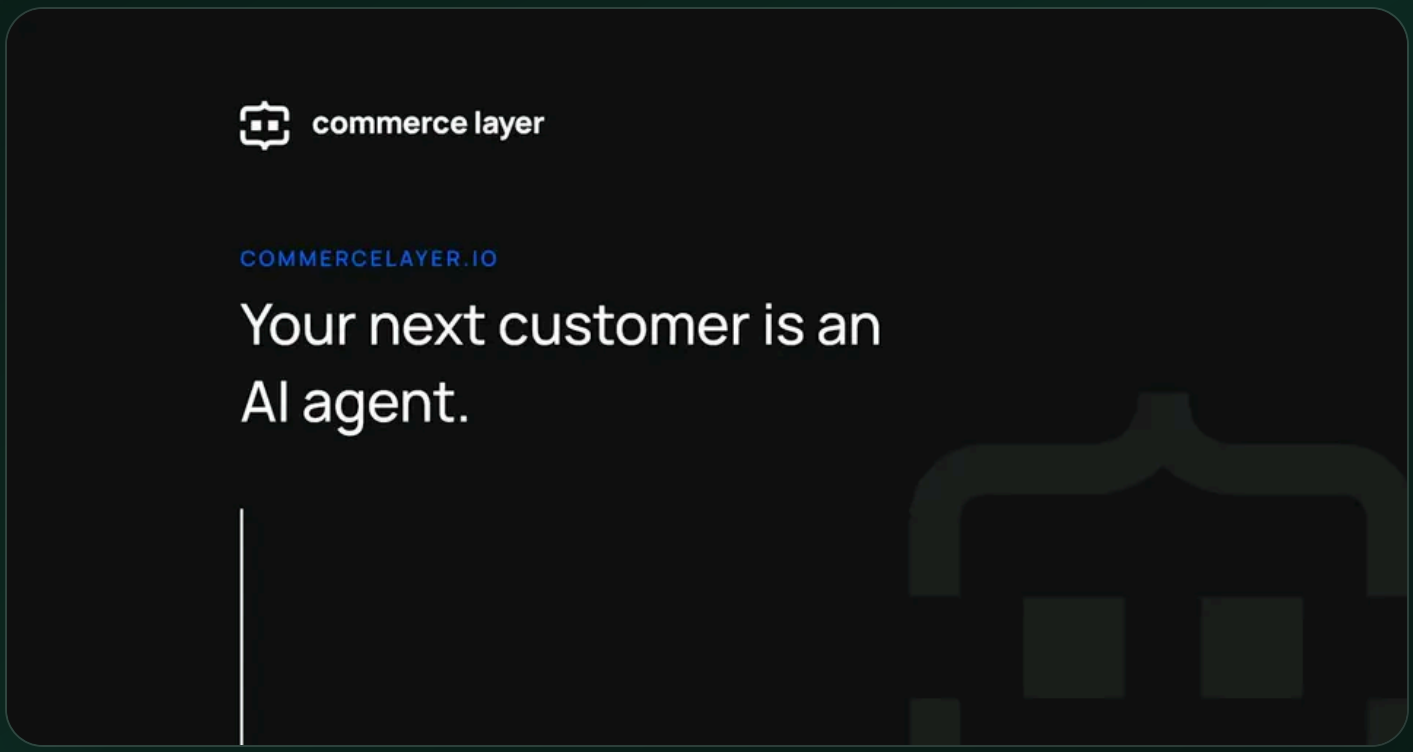
ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Commerce Layer

The Insider’s Guide

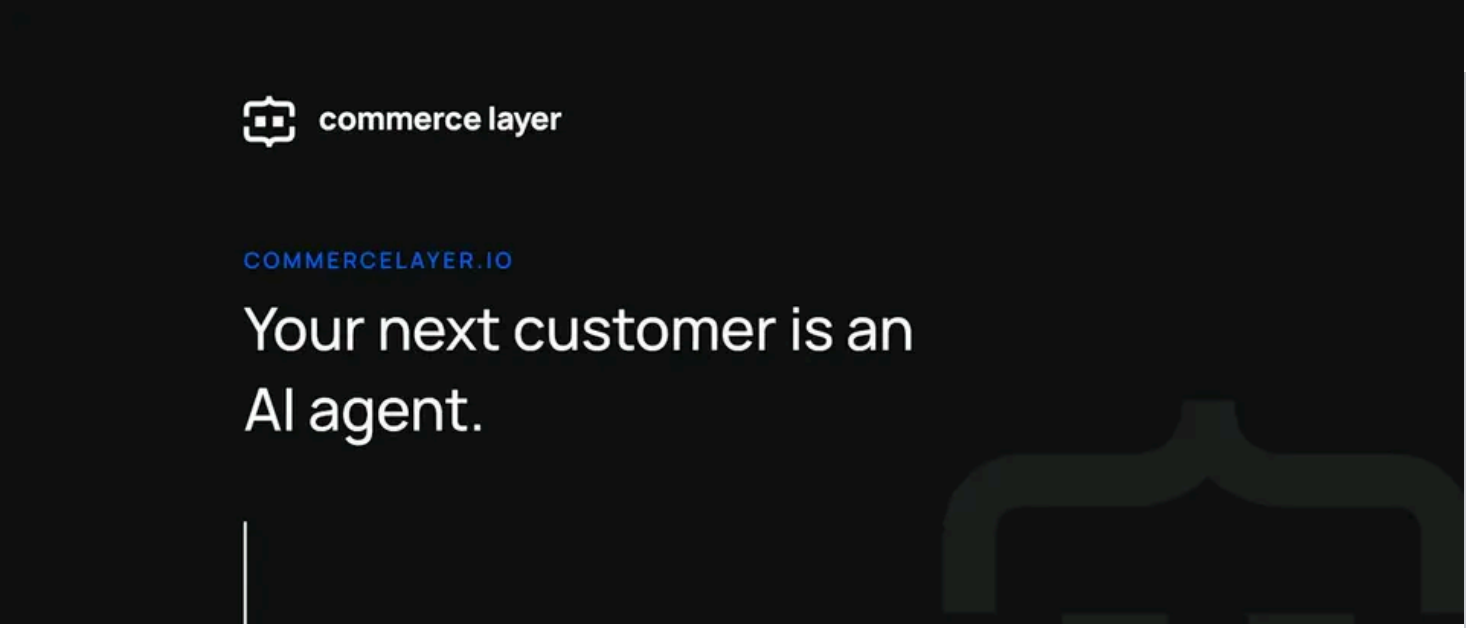
API-first checkout and order management for headless commerce



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among online store builders, read from Commerce Layer’s own pages.

Made by Commerce Layer, Inc. · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.2
GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Commerce Layer's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Commerce Layer's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.2

GPA, above 43 of the 80 other online store builders we grade

Commerce Layer is a headless commerce platform that supplies checkout, order management, pricing and promotion APIs rather than a ready-made storefront. Teams build their own front end, mobile app or in-store tool on top of it. A free Developer plan covers prototypes and small live stores, and an Enterprise plan is priced through sales.

> "
>
> **It is an API platform that developers must build on.**
>
> From our grade for ease of use

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Commerce Layer**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

1 **Best for developers building their own storefront**

But there is no storefront, so you build or buy the front end, and past the plan's limits the price is by quote.

2 **There is a free plan**

Developer plan: 1 organization, 2 users, 2 markets, 1,000 SKUs, unlimited test orders and 100 free live orders a month.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **Universal checkout API**

A stateless checkout that handles multiple markets and currencies and connects to the payment gateway and tax calculator a team picks.

5 **Distributed order management**

Tracks inventory across locations and covers the order lifecycle from reservation to shipment. Sold as an add-on to the Enterprise plan.

6 **Promotion engine**

Market-specific promotion rules set in a visual editor or a JSON-based rule language. Also an Enterprise add-on.

7 **A 2.2 GPA, above 43 of 80**

That is against the other online store builders we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Keep it**

To replace Commerce Layer you would be making checkout, card payments and sales tax handled for you. That is not a weekend's work, with an AI app builder or without one.

Commerce Layer at a glance

PRICING Free plan	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY Commerce Layer, Inc.	CATEGORY Online Store Builders
OUR GRADE 2.2 GPA, fair	

The report card

Best for developers building their own storefront

Commerce Layer supplies checkout, orders, pricing and promotion APIs, with a free Developer plan for 1,000 SKUs and 100 live orders a month. But there is no storefront, so you build or buy the front end, and past the plan's limits the price is by quote.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD

Commerce Layer

Graded Nov 13, 2026

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	B	The Developer plan is $0 with 1,000 SKUs and 100 free live orders a month, and Enterprise is a quote. Free but capped, with no published price in between.
Free plan and trial	B	Developer plan: 1 organization, 2 users, 2 markets, 1,000 SKUs, unlimited test orders and 100 live orders a month, which a small project could live on.
Features	C	Checkout, order management, markets, price lists and promotions through APIs. The listing shows a gap: no built-in storefront, so a front end has to be built or bought.
Ease of use	D	No store rating on record. It is an API platform that developers must build on.
Platforms and integrations	C	Web platform with a core API and MCP access. No desktop or phone app, and no integrations listed.

Grade point average Fair, out of 4.0 **2.2**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Commerce Layer is for

- ✓ Fits if you are a developer who wants checkout and order APIs behind your own front end
- ✓ Works for prototypes and small live stores under 100 orders a month

Who it is not for

- ✗ Skip it if you want a ready-made storefront, as there isn't one
- ✗ Tight if you outgrow 2 users, 2 markets or 1,000 SKUs, since the next step is a sales quote
- ✗ Not for you if you want a published price above the free plan
- ✗ Watch out: payment gateway fees are not included in Commerce Layer's per-order cost, and there is no on-premise version

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Developer teams building a custom storefront or app front end
- ✓ Brands selling in several countries and currencies from one account
- ✓ Retailers adding checkout to an existing marketing site

Worth knowing

- ⓘ It is an API platform with no built-in storefront, so a front end has to be built or bought separately.
- ⓘ The Developer plan is capped at 2 users, 2 markets and 1,000 SKUs; above that, pricing is custom through sales.
- ⓘ Payment gateway fees are not included in Commerce Layer's per-order cost.
- ⓘ There is no on-premise version, and no trial period outside the free Developer plan.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

2

plans to choose from

Commerce Layer has a free plan.

> **Free but capped, with no published price in between.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

DEVELOPER

$0

1 organization, 2 users, 2 markets, 1,000 SKUs, unlimited test orders, 100 free live orders a month, core API and MCP access.

ENTERPRISE

Custom

Unlimited organizations, users, markets and SKUs, a custom yearly order volume, dedicated support and SLAs. Quoted through sales.

The free plan

Developer plan: 1 organization, 2 users, 2 markets, 1,000 SKUs, unlimited test orders and 100 free live orders a month.

Read from commercelayer.io on Nov 13, 2026.

Ways to pay less

NONPROFIT

Pro bono plan for nonprofits

Commerce Layer says it offers pro bono plans to nonprofit organizations that apply and tell their story.

Stated on commercelayer.io

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

API-first checkout and order management for headless commerce. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: public API, inventory, online store.

> "Checkout, order management, markets, price lists and promotions through APIs.

From our grade for features

Universal checkout API

A stateless checkout that handles multiple markets and currencies and connects to the payment gateway and tax calculator a team picks.

Distributed order management

Tracks inventory across locations and covers the order lifecycle from reservation to shipment. Sold as an add-on to the Enterprise plan.

Promotion engine

Market-specific promotion rules set in a visual editor or a JSON-based rule language. Also an Enterprise add-on.

Markets and price lists

A market ties together a merchant, an inventory model and a price list, so one organization can sell in several regions or business models.

Shoppable links

Links turn a SKU or set of SKUs into a small storefront that can be shared by email, SMS or messaging apps without building a full site.

Metrics and provisioning APIs

The Metrics API pulls order, return and cart history for custom reports; the Provisioning API automates account and credential setup.

Where it runs

Web

What it works with

Its own pages name no integrations.

Commerce Layer is made by Commerce Layer, Inc.

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

43/80

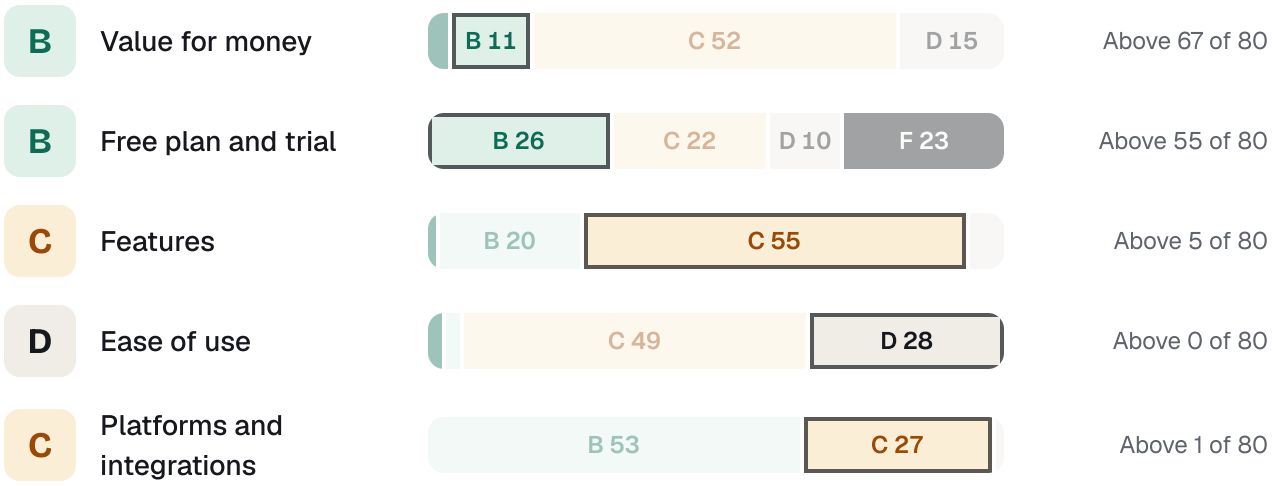
Other online store builders it is graded above

Commerce Layer's GPA of 2.2 is higher than 43 of the 80 other online store builders we grade, and level with 16.

It stands best on value for money (B, above 67 of 80) and worst on ease of use (D, above 0).

Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 81 online store builders we grade, cut by the letter each got. Commerce Layer's own letter is outlined.



Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Keep it

To replace Commerce Layer you would be making checkout, card payments and sales tax handled for you. That is not a weekend's work, with an AI app builder or without one.

What you could make

- Inventory: an app builder makes this well.

What you could not

- Checkout, card payments and sales tax handled for you.
- An API that other software can build on.

What this rests on. Commerce Layer's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



commercetools, Medusa, Saleor, Vendure and Elastic Path

The 5 tools Commerce Layer is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

2.0 GPA

commercetools

Free trial

API-first headless commerce platform for large retailers.

- Commerce Layer has a free plan. commercetools does not, though it has a free trial.
- Commerce Layer also covers inventory.

Commerce Layer and commercetools compared in full

2.4 GPA

Medusa

Free plan · from $29/mo

Open-source commerce framework for developers.

- Medusa is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Commerce Layer also covers inventory.

Commerce Layer and Medusa compared in full



1.6
GPA

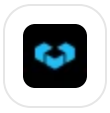
Saleor

Free plan · from $1599/mo

Open-source headless commerce with managed Cloud hosting.

- Saleor is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Commerce Layer also covers inventory.

Commerce Layer and Saleor compared in full



1.8
GPA

Vendure

Free plan · from €199/mo

Open-source B2B commerce framework with paid plans.

- Vendure is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Commerce Layer also covers inventory.
- Vendure also covers quotes and estimates.

Commerce Layer and Vendure compared in full



Elastic Path

Free trial

API-first composable commerce platform for enterprise teams.

- Commerce Layer has a free plan. Elastic Path does not, though it has a free trial.

Commerce Layer and Elastic Path compared in full

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

12

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Commerce Layer free?

Commerce Layer has a free plan. Developer plan: 1 organization, 2 users, 2 markets, 1,000 SKUs, unlimited test orders and 100 free live orders a month.

How much does Commerce Layer cost?

Commerce Layer lists 2 plans. Developer: $0.

What platforms does Commerce Layer work on?

Commerce Layer is available on Web.

Does Commerce Layer offer any discounts?

Commerce Layer publicly lists the following: Pro bono plan for nonprofits.

Does Commerce Layer have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Commerce Layer is listed for Web.

Does Commerce Layer have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Commerce Layer is listed for Web.

Is Commerce Layer open source?

Commerce Layer is not described as open source on its own site, as read on Nov 13, 2026.

Does Commerce Layer have an API?

Yes. Commerce Layer offers a public API, according to its own site.

Who makes Commerce Layer?

Commerce Layer is made by Commerce Layer, Inc.

What are the alternatives to Commerce Layer?

The closest alternatives to Commerce Layer in our directory are commercetools, Medusa, Saleor, Vendure and Elastic Path.

How does Commerce Layer compare with other online store builders?

Commerce Layer's GPA of 2.2 is higher than 43 of the 80 other online store builders we grade, and level with 16.

Could I make my own version of Commerce Layer?

To replace Commerce Layer you would be making checkout, card payments and sales tax handled for you.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Commerce Layer's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from Commerce Layer, Inc.'s own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Commerce Layer, Inc. Prices change, so check commercelayer.io before you buy.

commercelayer.io/pricing

commercelayer.io/

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Commerce Layer, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/commerce-layer

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "Commerce Layer: The Insider's
Guide", checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/commerce-layer
```

Know someone choosing between online store builders?

Send them this guide: toolgpa.com/tools/commerce-layer/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded online store builders after Commerce Layer, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Online Store Builders Insider's Guide

Every one of the 84 online store builders we grade, compared

Big Cartel Insider's Guide

Simple online store for artists, makers and independent sellers

2.8 GPA

Shopify Insider's Guide

Hosted commerce platform for online, in-person and social selling

2.8 GPA

BigCommerce Insider's Guide

Hosted ecommerce platform with plans set by yearly sales

2.6 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Commerce Layer's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Commerce Layer is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Commerce Layer, Inc. Prices and plans change: check commercelayer.io before you buy.