Can your customer's AI get the right product into the cart on your Shopify store?

We followed a shopper's path with an AI agent in 8 US stores, from finding a product to adding it to the cart. Here are six findings.

Sergei Ponomarev · AI Business · aibusiness.vc · 11 November 2026 · consumer research, not a ranking

1. The AI reached the cart in only half of the stores.

In 4 of the 8 stores, the agent found a suitable product and added it to the cart. The other 4 had no product that met the shopper's requirements.

2. The AI's price or shipping answer can change in the cart.

The AI said shipping would be free. A 15% store discount then brought the order below the free-shipping threshold, so shipping was no longer free. In another store, the product page showed $66.31, but the cart price was $56.99.

3. The machine-readable catalog and the shopper-facing page do not match.

The store's machine-readable catalog listed a product at $45.49 and marked it in stock. On the shopper-facing page, there was no price or option to add it to the cart.

4. The product page does not answer simple shopper questions.

The product pages did not say how much to feed the dog, where the store delivers, or whether an opened bag can be returned. The AI had to tell the shopper when it could not find an answer.

5. Store prompts did not steer the AI agent.

It ignored subscription defaults, preselected add-ons and pop-ups in every store.

6. Many stores' terms restrict automated access.

We reviewed the terms of 82 stores. For 62, we stopped because the terms restricted automated access or data collection: 57 stated this explicitly, and 5 used wording we treated as a restriction under our rule.

These gaps only become clear when an AI agent follows a real shopper's task. A product page may look normal, while a mismatch appears in the agent's answer or in the cart. We did not measure lost sales. We show what an AI agent can find, tell the shopper and do on your site.

Request an AI Test Purchase for your store: aibusiness.vc/service-check

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1. What we checked

A shopper can ask an AI assistant to find a product, check the terms and add it to a cart. We tested this path in eight US Shopify stores: three brand stores, four pet stores and one general online store.

The AI agent received a shopper's task with several conditions: the product, ingredients to avoid, package size, maximum price and a one-time purchase rather than a subscription. In each store, the shopper asked six questions, one at a time:

1. Find a suitable product and give me the link.
2. Check the ingredients: is there anything I asked to avoid?
3. How much should I feed my dog each day, and how long will one bag last?
4. Is it in stock? What is the price, shipping cost and estimated delivery date?
5. Can I return the bag if it has been opened?
6. Put it in the cart and stop there.

Separately, before visiting any store, we asked the AI an open question: where to buy this product. We also read each store's terms first. If they explicitly restricted automated access or used wording we treated as restrictive, we did not visit the site.

We stopped at the cart. We did not test checkout or payment, and we did not enter a street address or personal information.

2. What this study is and what it is not

- **This is consumer research.** We look at a store's site the way an ordinary shopper would when they arrive with their own AI assistant. The goal is to help stores make that shopper's path easier. It is not written to criticise anyone.
- **It is not a ranking.** We did not pick best or worst stores, we gave no scores or places, and we did not compare the stores with each other. The stores are listed alphabetically everywhere.
- **It is not a recommendation for or against any store.** The report does not advise anyone to buy or not to buy from these stores, and it does not assess their products. The decision to buy always stays with the shopper.
- **We do not assess the stores or brands themselves:** product quality and safety, staff and customer support, how the sites are built, or compliance with laws and regulations. The report gives no advice on pet feeding or pet health.
- **The report describes what an AI agent saw on public pages on 11 November 2026** while carrying out one shopper's task. The pages may have changed since then. If we did not find something, that does not mean it is missing from another page of the site.
- **"Test purchase" here means a check of the shopper's path on a public site.** We did not place orders, sign up, enter personal data or pay for anything.
- **We do not judge causes or intent.** When the AI's answer or the cart differs from the page, that is an observation about the site on the day of the visit. It says nothing about the store's intentions. "What could be clearer" in the store section lists our suggestions, not a list of errors.

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- **The AI agent's answers and choices are not an assessment of the store.** Another AI assistant might have answered differently.
- **The study is independent.** No store or technology vendor commissioned or paid for it. We have no ties to them.
- **Corrections are free.** Write to info@aibusiness.vc: we publish confirmed corrections with a date and can add a store's comment to the study.

All trademarks belong to their owners. Store names are used only to identify which public site we checked and do not imply any cooperation with them or endorsement of the study on their part.

3. What problems we found

1. The price the AI quoted did not match what the cart showed. In one store, shipping is free on orders of $49 or more, and the product was listed at $49.99. The AI told the shopper shipping would be free. In the cart, the store applied a 15% discount, bringing the product total to $42.50. The cart then showed that the order was $6.50 short of the free-shipping threshold. The AI noticed this in the cart and corrected its answer. In another store, the product page showed $66.31 with the message "View sale price at checkout"; the cart price was $56.99. In both cases, the final product price was only clear in the cart. We did not test shipping charges or tax at checkout.

2. The machine-readable catalog and the shopper-facing page did not match. In one store, a machine-readable catalog file listed a product option at $45.49 and marked it in stock. The shopper-facing page showed no price or add-to-cart button for that option. We saw a related gap in a second store. We do not claim that all AI assistants read these files. But if an assistant relies on one, it could tell a shopper about an option and price they cannot see or buy on the product page.

3. On some brand sites, the shopper is sent to another seller. In 2 of the 3 brand stores, the product page linked to other retailers instead of offering an add-to-cart option. That may be the brand's deliberate sales model. But when asked to buy from that brand's own site, the AI told the shopper it could not complete the purchase there.

4. Delivery coverage was unclear until late in the journey. Of the 4 stores where a suitable product was found, one clearly stated that it delivered to the shopper's city. Two limited delivery to their own city or area. For the fourth, coverage could not be confirmed without an address. These limits appeared in the shipping policy or cart, not on the product page.

5. Product pages left basic questions unanswered. None of the 4 pages stated how much food to give the dog each day or how long a bag would last. Only 1 of the 4 stores clearly stated whether an opened bag could be returned; its answer was no. The AI did not guess when the information was missing.

6. The product name did not reveal every ingredient the shopper wanted to avoid. In 9 products named for a different main ingredient, the full ingredient list also included chicken or a chicken-derived ingredient. The AI checked the full list on each page. A shopper choosing by product name alone could miss it.

7. Some product pages gave conflicting signals. In one listing, some photos showed a different product. On another page, a label did not match the ingredient list. At a third store, a customer review said the recipe had changed, while the page still showed the previous ingredients.

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8. Some stores' terms restricted automated access. We reviewed the terms of 82 stores found through search. At 57 stores, the terms explicitly restricted automated access or data collection. Another 5 used wording we treated as a restriction under our rule. The terms at 5 of the 62 stores named AI agents directly. This is the result of our search, not a share of all Shopify stores. Two other large stores blocked access with a bot check or an access denial.

One visibility observation. In response to the open question "Where can I buy this?", the AI named three large chains. None of the 8 stores we later visited appeared in its answer. This was one answer from one assistant, not a market-wide result.

4. What already works

All 8 stores we tested opened without an "are you a robot" check. In the 4 stores with a suitable product, the agent could add it to the cart without signing up. These are the features that helped along the way.

1. **One-time purchase is selected by default.** The shopper gets the purchase type they asked for.
2. **The cart says how much is needed for free shipping.** This helped the AI correct its answer.
3. **The cart states delivery limits.** A shopper can learn this before checkout.
4. **The return rule is clear.** The AI repeated the rule without guessing.
5. **The full ingredient list is text, not just a photo.** The AI used it to check the shopper's requirements.

5. Store prompts the AI did not follow

- **A subscription selected by default.** In two stores the product page opened with a subscription already selected. Each time the AI switched to a one-time purchase, because that is what the shopper asked for.
- **Add-ons ticked in advance.** In one store two extra products were already ticked under the "Add to cart" button. The AI pressed the main button and warned the shopper.
- **The "discount for your email" pop-up.** The AI closed such pop-ups and entered nothing.

A shopper may overlook a preselected option or pop-up. The AI agent read the page and followed the shopper's instructions. Store prompts did not change what it was asked to buy.

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6. Eight stores: what helped the AI and what can be improved

In our scenario, the shopper lives in Columbus, Ohio, and is looking for dry food for an adult dog with no chicken in any form: one 20–30 lb bag, under $80, with no subscription. The stores are listed alphabetically. This is not a ranking and not a recommendation for or against any store.

Store	How the visit ended
Betr Bowl	product found, 1 bag in the cart, $72.99
Feeders Pet Supply	product found, 1 bag in the cart, $56.99
Kinetic	no suitable product on the site
Only Natural Pet	product found, 1 bag in the cart, $42.50
Pet Market NYC	product found, 1 bag in the cart, $68.99
Solid Gold	no suitable product on the site
StockUpExpress (general store)	no suitable product on the site
Wysong	no suitable product on the site

Betr Bowl.

- **What helped.** One-time purchase is selected by default. The full ingredient list is given as text. The catalog has a filter by food type.
- **What could be clearer.** In the listing for an adult dog food, some photos show a puppy recipe ("PUPPY FORMULA"). The food has a "Grain-free" label, while the ingredient list includes "Brown Rice, Brewers Rice, Rice Bran". The store delivers within 10 miles of its Phoenix-area stores; that limit was not stated on the product page.

Feeders Pet Supply.

- **What helped.** The site search worked, the full ingredient list was text, and the FAQ stated the return period and delivery fee.
- **What could be clearer.** The page showed $66.31 and "View sale price at checkout"; the cart showed $56.99. The page had no feeding guide. A customer review said the maker had changed the recipe, while the page still showed its ingredients. The return rule said "Some exclusions may apply" without listing them.

Kinetic.

- **What helped.** The ingredients are on every product page, and the bag weight is visible in the photo. The AI quickly understood that the only food without chicken comes in a 35 lb bag.
- **What could be clearer.** The brand's site did not offer a direct cart option for a single bag; its button led to another seller. The machine-readable catalog nevertheless listed products with prices.

Only Natural Pet.

- **What helped.** The full ingredient list was text, the cart showed how much was needed for free shipping, and the return rule was clear: "Return any product for any reason within 60 days of your order." The store delivers to 48 states.
- **What could be clearer.** The product page opened with a subscription selected ("Auto Delivery"). After the 15% discount, the order fell below the $49 free-shipping threshold. The page did not explain whether the threshold is calculated before or after discounts. It also had no feeding guide.

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Pet Market NYC.

- **What helped.** The cart stated, "we currently only deliver to Manhattan zip codes." The return rule was clear: unopened products only, within 14 days, for store credit.
- **What could be clearer.** Two extra products were preselected under the "Add to cart" button. The ingredients appeared mainly in a photo of the label. The product image showed a 4 lb bag next to a price for a 26 lb bag.

Solid Gold.

- **What helped.** Every product page showed the full ingredient list as text. The AI found "Chicken Fat" in all 8 foods in 22–24 lb bags, although each was named for a different main ingredient.
- **What could be clearer.** The product pages could make it easier to see that the ingredients include chicken fat. Some pages opened with a subscription selected ("Subscribe & Save").

StockUpExpress (general store).

- **What helped.** The ingredients are on the product page. The weight and the number of packs are in the product name.
- **What could be clearer.** The dog-food section had no filter by bag weight, so the agent reviewed all 84 products. The "Lamb & Rice" food listed "Chicken By-Product Meal" in its ingredients; this was not apparent from the product name.

Wysong.

- **What helped.** The full ingredient list and the feeding guide are on every product page.
- **What could be clearer.** Most dry-food pages had no size, price or add-to-cart option, only "Buy from Chewy" and "Buy from Amazon" buttons. The machine-readable catalog listed options for some of those foods with prices and an in-stock status (for example, "20 lb. Box" at $45.49).

7. How we checked it

How the visit went. On 11 November 2026, Claude Code by Anthropic navigated the sites in a browser under the researcher's supervision. A separate clean session was used for each store: it had no prior access to our store-specific notes and received the shopper's questions one at a time, as in a live chat.

What the findings are based on. We checked the shopper-facing pages, including prices, buttons and the cart, and saved them on the day of the visit. We reviewed the machine-readable catalog file (products.json) separately; only finding 2 relies on it. The AI corrected itself twice: once about free shipping after checking the cart, and once about the life stage the product was intended for.

Limits. Eight stores, one day, one AI agent. These are examples, not statistics about Shopify stores and not a ranking. Another AI assistant or another day may produce different results. We worked from Europe; all prices shown were in US dollars. We did not test checkout, payment, final shipping charges, taxes or an actual return. We did not assess product quality. None of the stores commissioned or paid for this study.

If your store is on the list. Found an inaccuracy? Write to info@aibusiness.vc: we publish confirmed corrections with a date.

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Want to know what will happen in your store?

Order an AI Test Purchase. We give an AI agent a task your shopper might have and follow it through your site, from finding a product to the cart. We do not place or pay for an order. You receive:

- what the AI told the shopper about the product, price, delivery and returns, and any differences from the information on your site;
- where the AI stopped and why;
- saved pages and screenshots for every step;
- what to fix first.

Request a check: aibusiness.vc/service-check

About the author. Sergei Ponomarev, PhD in Political Science, methodologist and founder of AI Business. For 7 years, he led public-service quality assessment, developing standards and conducting independent reviews and hundreds of test purchases. He now applies the same test-purchase approach to AI agents on company websites.

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