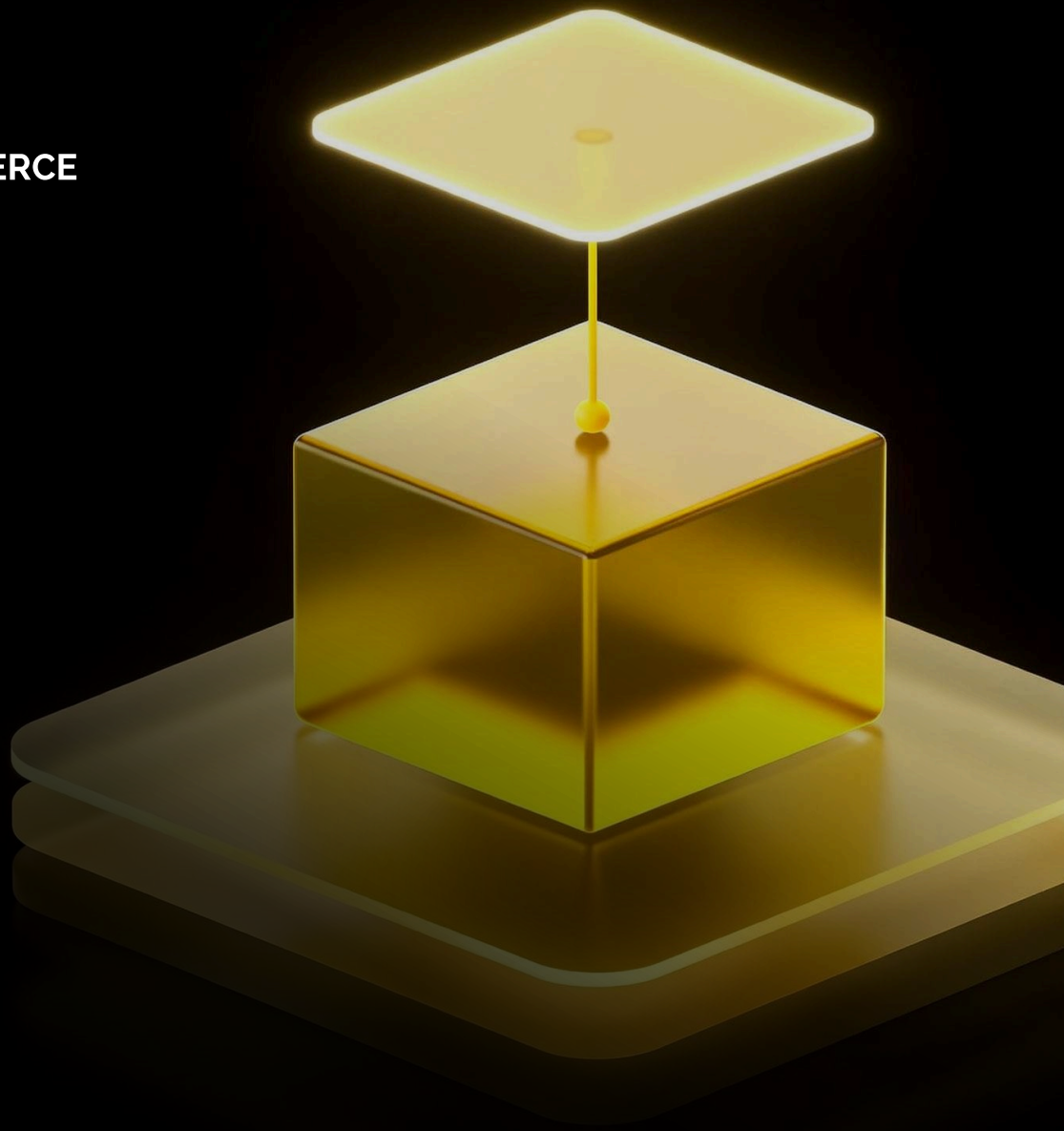




BEECOMMERCE



EBOOK · 2026

Headless Commerce Platforms in 2026

How to choose a technology you won't regret in a few years?

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TL;DR. The key points in a nutshell

Google Core Update — March 10, 2026

The March update has significantly increased the weighting of Core Web Vitals in search rankings — websites with poor LCP/INP metrics in a competitive sector are seeing a noticeable drop in organic traffic.

Magento 2.4.6 hits end of support

Magento 2.4.6 will reach end-of-support on 11 August 2026, and 2.4.9 GA is due to be released in May 2026 — a potential upgrade is a good opportunity to discuss implementing a headless solution.

Real-world Headless rollouts in Poland

PLN 150K–700K and 8–28 weeks, depending on the path (Shopify Hydrogen, Magento Open Source, Medusa.js)

Open source cuts out licensing fees and revenue share

Magento Open Source, Medusa.js cuts out licensing fees and revenue share, that's a PLN 100K–500K annual swing at PLN 30M–100M GMV

Key takeaway: Picking a platform is less about the tech and more about who owns the code and the costs three years from now.

Context – what March 2026 quietly changed

March 2026 quietly shifted the playing field, though most Polish stores haven't felt it yet. Google rolled out a core update with markedly heavier weight on Core Web Vitals signals — and per industry analyses (DebugBear, Search Engine Land, among others), stores with LCP in the red zone slid 2–4 spots in competitive segments.

+8%

Deloitte's report

Google i Deloitte w raporcie „Milliseconds Make Millions” wyliczyli, że każde 0,1 sekundy poprawy ładowania zwiększa konwersję w retailu o około 8%.

A question that cannot be put off

If you have to optimise the front end anyway, should you do so within the old monolithic architecture, or separate the presentation layer from the back end? In other words, is 2026 a good time to adopt headless commerce, and if so, which platform should you choose?

We're trying to give an honest answer: which platforms will actually survive the three-year period, and how much you'll pay for each one.

What has changed in 2026, and why is this not the same choice as in 2023?

Three things over the last twelve months have tipped the balance.

1

Google's March core update

The 'good' threshold for LCP (2.5 s) and INP (200 ms) has not changed, but the increasing weighting of CWV signals means that the difference between 'good' and 'needs improvement' has a greater impact on visibility. A classic Magento 2 (monolithic) site achieves an LCP of 3–4 s; a shop built on Hydrogen, Alokai or Next.js with Medusa achieves 1.2–1.8 s even with 200,000 SKUs.

2

The Magento lifecycle

Magento 2.4.9-beta1 dropped March 10, 2026, with GA expected in May. Magento 2.4.6 loses support August 11, 2026; 2.4.7 on April 9, 2027; 2.4.8 on April 11, 2028. If you're running 2.4.6, you'll have to touch the code in the next few months either way. That makes now a good time to ask: patch the monolith, or start gradually building a Headless front end on the same backend?

3

The maturing of open-source alternatives

Medusa 2.0 hit a production-grade release on October 23, 2024, and it's now on 2.x with an active community and live production deployments. That reshuffles the math for stores that a year ago wouldn't even entertain backends outside Magento or Shopify.

Four Archetypes of Headless Platforms in 2026

The seven platforms on the market boil down to four archetypes. That simplifies the call and keeps you from getting lost in vendor marketing.

CODE OWNERSHIP

Open Source with code ownership

Magento Open Source — two decades of maturity and thousands of Polish developers; the natural choice for the standard model. Medusa.js — a modern JS stack (Node + Next.js), well-suited to subscriptions, B2B and marketplaces.

SAAS + REACT

SaaS backend with a React front end

Shopify Hydrogen — the Shopify Plus backend remains unchanged, whilst the frontend uses React + Oxygen. Pros: 24/7 support and an SLA. Cons: once the monthly GMV threshold is exceeded, a fee of 0.25–0.40% of GMV applies.

ENTERPRISE

Composable commerce for enterprise

Commerce tools: Spryker, Saleor. Licence fee: ~40,000–300,000 USD + front-end development: 50,000–250,000 USD. Suitable for multiple markets, B2B and B2C, with a proprietary PIM/OMS. For smaller businesses, this is overkill.

PEŁNY SAAS

Full SaaS with a Headless option

BigCommerce, Adobe Commerce Cloud — easy to get started and predictable costs, but limited flexibility and vendor lock-in. For those who value simplicity over code control.

■ COMPARISON

One Comparison Table Worth Printing

The seven platforms most frequently considered in the segment of medium-sized and larger Polish shops, summarised in six columns.

Platform	Model	Annual Licensing	Implementation In PL (Time / Cost)	Best Fit	Main Pitfall
Magento Open Source	Open source, self-hosted	0 PLN	12–20 wks / PLN 250K–700K	B2B and stores with complex catalogs; firms that value code ownership	Requires an experienced team or partner
Adobe Commerce (Cloud)	SaaS/PaaS, GMV-based	~160–800 tys. PLN	16–28 wks / PLN 400K–1.5M	Enterprise B2B with a PLN 1M+ annual budget	Cost scales with GMV; vendor lock-in
Shopify Hydrogen	SaaS + React + revenue share	~110 tys. PLN bazowo	8–14 wks / PLN 150K–450K	D2C brands, fast time-to-market	Revenue share once the monthly GMV threshold is crossed
Medusa.js	Open source, Node.js	0 PLN	12–20 wks / PLN 150K–600K	Non-standard models (subscriptions, marketplace, custom B2B)	Smaller pool of Polish developers
commercetools	SaaS enterprise, API-first	~160 tys.–1,2 mln PLN	6–12 mos / PLN 500K–3M	Multi-brand, multi-market, 100M+ PLN GMV	High entry and exit cost
BigCommerce	SaaS z opcją Headless	~30–120 tys. PLN	10–16 wks / PLN 200K–500K	Mid-size B2B/B2C with 1 market	Limited customization flexibility
Saleor	Open source (Python/GraphQL)	0 PLN	16–28 wks / PLN 200K–600K	Teams with Python/GraphQL in their stack	Smaller community than Magento/Medusa

Cost estimates for the Polish market in 2026 based on real mid-market projects—an average, not a best-case scenario. The first year doesn't represent the total cost: over a 3-year period, open source and SaaS often even out. The difference lies in whose code remains when you switch agencies.

When Headless makes sense and when you're better off sticking with the monolith

Headless isn't for everyone. The threshold at which it makes business sense is between 15 and 30 million PLN in GMV per year — provided the company is planning to expand.

Headless will likely pay off if:

- you're planning to enter a second or third market within 24 months
- you've got a B2B with non-standard pricing or a product configurator
- your mobile store's Lighthouse Test is in the red zone and you're bleeding organic traffic
- your marketing team waits weeks for every front-end creative change
- you're on plan to grow GMV by 30%+ year over year

You're better off staying with the monolith, if:

- your GMV is steady below PLN 10M and you're not planning to expand
- you don't have a dev team or budget for a technology partner
- your current store converts above category average and Core Web Vitals are in the green

Between those extremes sits a huge middle

a mid-sized store running an old Magento 2.4.5/2.4.6, weak front end, but solid logistics and ERP integration. For that store, the partial play often makes the most sense: keep the backend, swap out only the presentation layer. On Magento Open Source you can pull this off without paying for Adobe Commerce — which, let's be honest, is the option most often left out of vendor pitches.

BUDGET

What does it cost in Poland

In Western markets, the cost of implementing a headless solution starts at between 80,000 and 120,000 euros and can easily exceed one million. In Poland, developers' rates are 30–40 per cent lower, so the actual price range looks more favourable.

Path	Implementation (PL, Gross)	Time	First Measurable Result
Magento Headless (Storyblok + Alokai/Next.js)	250–700 tys. PLN	12–20 wks	6–8 wks (LCP < 1.5s)
Shopify Hydrogen (custom storefront)	150–450 tys. PLN	8–14 wks	4–6 wks (MVP on 1 market)
Medusa.js (greenfield)	150–600 tys. PLN	12–20 wks	10–14 wks (core purchase flow)
Composable commerce (enterprise)	500 tys.–3 mln PLN	6–12 mo	12–16 wks (first module)

Every one of these projects can be broken into phases

01

Discovery

4–8 weeks · 30,000–60,000 PLN. Scope analysis and planning.

02

MVP

2–4 months · ~200,000 PLN. The key customer journey in a single market.

03

Full implementation

Further features, markets and integrations. A phased rollout.

Key takeaway: 50,000 for discovery and 200,000 for an MVP—that's a conversation you can start in March and have a working storefront by September. You don't have to go all-in right away.

What This Means for Your Store

Back to the opening question: is 2026 the right time to go Headless? Short answer: if you've got to touch the code anyway (Magento 2.4.6 EOL, weak Web Vitals after the March update, expansion to a second market) — then yes. If your monolith is humming along, converting, and not blocking growth — not necessarily.



Whose code do you want to have in three years?

Open source with Magento or Medusa — when you want to keep costs under control and have the option to switch partners without losing your technological assets.



How much are you willing to hand over in revenue share?

Shopify Hydrogen — when time-to-market is more important than TCO in the third year. As GMV grows, the revenue share becomes increasingly visible on the balance sheet.



Will your team be able to keep up with the technology?

Adobe Commerce and commercetools — when B2B and multi-market requirements go beyond what can be built using open source. This requires a seasoned team or a long-term partner.

Key takeaway: The worst decision is to make a choice without having that conversation. And that is precisely what will cost the most over the next two years.

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to the questions most commonly raised during consultations with clients in Poland in 2026.

1 What's the difference between Magento Open Source and Adobe Commerce in 2026?

Magento Open Source is free (PLN 0 licensing) and self-hosted. Adobe Commerce runs an estimated \$22K–\$125K annually on-premise and \$40K–\$190K on Adobe Commerce Cloud (official pricing isn't published), and it comes with a native B2B Suite and Adobe Sensei AI. For most stores up to PLN 50M GMV, Open Source with a good partner is enough — the missing skills are filled in by the agency, not the license.

2 How long does migrating from a monolith to Headless take?

Realistically 8–28 weeks. Shopify Hydrogen is the fastest (8–14 wks), Magento Headless sits in the middle (12–20 wks), Medusa.js and composable commerce take the longest (16 wks–12 months). Migration is worth phasing — the first purchase path typically goes live after 4–8 weeks.

FAQ

3 Can I start with an MVP instead of a full rollout?

Yes, and it's often the smart play. The typical setup: discovery (4–8 wks, PLN 30K–60K) → MVP on one market (2–4 months, PLN 150K–250K) → full rollout. Lets you verify the return before further investment.

4 Should a small company even think about Headless?

If GMV is steady below PLN 10M with no expansion plans — a classic SaaS platform will be cheaper. Headless makes sense from around PLN 15M–30M GMV, or when there's a concrete business reason: multi-market, custom B2B, weak CWV blocking SEO.

5 What about Magento 2.4.6 ? Do I need to migrate in 2026?

Yes. Support for Magento 2.4.6 ends on 11 August 2026. By the second quarter of 2026 at the latest, you must have a plan in place to upgrade to a newer version (2.4.7, 2.4.8 or 2.4.9, released in May 2026). This is a critical moment to consider: do you stay with the monolithic architecture, or do you take the opportunity to gradually migrate to a headless front-end — which will modernise the UX and increase flexibility.

Are you considering implementing a headless solution for your online shop?

Let's discuss the approach, costs and a realistic timeline for your GMV. beecommerce.pl

About the authors

This report was created by Beecommerce, based on our practical experience implementing headless commerce in Poland and our day-to-day work with the platforms we discuss.



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Jarosław shares practical expertise in headless e-commerce, PWA, and Business Intelligence, focusing on scalable digital solutions.



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Frontend Lead

Builds online stores using custom frontends and modern frameworks, including Alokai, Medusa, and Hydrogen. He shares his expertise through industry and educational content and is one of the few Storyblok CMS experts in Poland.

■ YOUR NEXT STEP

Ready to start your project?

Honne (本音) is a Japanese term meaning one's true feelings—the opposite of tatemae (建前), the polite public façade. At Beecommerce, we start with your P&L, not our price list. We talk about ROI, not hourly rates. And sometimes we simply say: it's not worth doing.

30 days

Discovery Phase +
Prototype

from -30%

Lower implementation
costs

90%

of clients value results-
based pricing

Three phases of collaboration

01

Discovery

30 days, fixed price.
Business Case and
several prototype
concepts.

02

Delivery

Specification-driven,
AI-augmented
development.
Predictable costs.

03

Care & Growth

Hypercare, 24/7
monitoring, Revenue
Intelligence.

Book a Discovery Call

The first consultation is always free. No presentation or pitch deck required. →