YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO ECOMMERCE INTEGRATION

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Red Stag
FULFILLMENT

Red Stag Fulfillment makes it easy to integrate multiple eCommerce tools directly via API and webhooks or through partner services like DropStream and Shopify. You can maintain the tech stack needed to run your business, while we help to keep inventory properly connected. Linking to our warehouse tools can allow you to automate many features and functions. These help you avoid issues like stockouts while improving order fulfillment speeds and reducing customer service burdens.

Our experts are always available to help with your unique integration needs. However, many companies aren't sure where to start or what integration options are available to them. We designed this eBook to help you learn more about integrations, what types of integrations Red Stag Fulfillment supports, and how to get started.

WHAT ARE ECOMMERCE INTEGRATIONS?

ECommerce integrations are the ways you connect your store with customers and partners, focusing on automatically sharing information. Integrations automatically make updates so that every system works with the same information, such as how many products you have in stock. Traditionally, integrations focus on back-end systems like order management (OMS), warehouse management (WMS), and enterprise resource planning (ERP) tools to use the most relevant, accurate information. However, in eCommerce, you'll typically need more integrations for sales tools to track inventory, set sales rules, and give customers correct shipping cost and time estimates.

A Shopify integration with your WMS, for example, can tell your website which products are in stock so that it displays these to customers. All others are listed as out-of-stock. Going the other direction, integrating your shopping cart with your WMS can automatically, and in near-real-time, deliver an order's details after a customer pays. That'll speed up the pick, pack, and shipping process.

WHY ARE INTEGRATIONS IMPORTANT?

Integrations make it easy for you to continually update information to have an accurate understanding of your business. Using the integrations above, after the shopping cart tells the WMS to create a new order, the WMS could then tell your website that only 9 products remain in stock. Your site automatically updates, preventing someone from buying an out-of-stock product. It protects your business and helps you offer more reliable service.

Other benefits of eCommerce integrations include:

- ✅ Eliminating manual data entry in many cases, reducing the risk of errors and delays.

- ✅ Ensuring accurate inventory counts and information at any given moment, instead of waiting for updates at the end of a day or week.

- ✅ Enabling automatic notifications such as telling customers when an order has been shipped or letting your team know it's time to restock a specific SKU.

- ✅ Simplifying business management. Some integrations provide data to multiple tools and sales channels, so you only need to change or update one location.

- ✅ Improving reports and analysis. For example, integrations can bring all sales data into one location, allowing you to understand company revenues in total or by channel.

RSF TECH TIP

"Red Stag Fulfillment offers a robust integration system and team that will connect perfectly with the vast majority of system integrations."

Kaleb Sileno
Business Development
Red Stag Fulfillment

shopify

BIGCOMMERCE

NETSUITE

WOOCOMMERCE

SHIFT④SHOP

Magento®

RSF TECH TIP

"We already can connect with most cart systems. And, if your team or provider chooses to build out an API, we can typically work with that tech team to connect to a specific or custom service."

Mike Haynes
Business Development
Red Stag Fulfillment

WHAT IS SHIPSTREAM?

When speaking about integrations, your Red Stag Fulfillment account manager or representative will likely mention ShipStream. This is our in-house warehouse management system (WMS). We created it to keep an accurate track of customer inventory across all locations and provide access to shipping, rate shopping, order, deliver, and product detail views.

Red Stag uses ShipStream to manage our warehouses and fill orders. You connect with it to provide order details, update shipping method preferences, establish deliveries of inbound goods, monitor existing inventory, and review business data.

ShipStream is built to integrate directly with some services, especially pricing and shipping options from FedEx, UPS, USPS, DHL, and Stamps.com. Our WMS has a native plugin for Shopify, and ShipStream also offers greater support for Magento and CartRover. For other tools and platforms, you'll need additional integration support. Thankfully, by working with many data and information standards, there are multiple ways for you to connect your existing technology with Red Stag Fulfillment.

Red Stag FULFILLMENT

4 TYPES OF DATA INTEGRATION

Like most platforms in your technology stack, Red Stag Fulfillment's WMS supports four ways to integrate and share information. The options available to you may differ based on the technology you use for your sales and inventory delivery to our warehouses. Companies with in-house programmers or reliable developer partners may have more flexibility by creating their own integrations and plugins directly with us.

1. Direct Integration via API

An API, or application programming interface, is a way for software to exchange data easily and securely. In many cases, data can be shared as soon as it is created. Software providers offer an API to set rules around what information is shared and how it moves. This ensures that data stays readable, and that people or platforms only get the information they should.
Developers take an API and its rules to create applications, tools, and plugins that provide or request relevant information.

Red Stag Fulfillment offers [APIs](#) and [Webhooks](#) via ShipStream that allow you integrate directly with our warehouse management software. If you are a programmer or have developers on your team, you can use the API to automate how you send us information. In this case, your team could write a program that automatically informs Red Stag Fulfillment of product changes or scheduled deliveries when you make those updates in your own platform. The API also impacts how you receive data, such as requesting and displaying the status of orders whenever you turn on a program or feature your team creates.

Developers can use the [ShipStream Middleware GitHub branch](#) as a launchpad to create plugins that integrate directly with our platform or that can operate on their own. These plugins have full access to your data after the connection is validated and make it easy to access advanced functionality, like receiving internal event notifications or utilizing third-party data without the need for manual entry. **Please note that we review and test all plugins in a simplified environment before they go live to help ensure safety and security.**

Everyday API example

While APIs can seem confusing, you're likely already familiar with how they work. One API many people use regularly is the ability to sign in or create an account using your Facebook information. Instead of the new store or service logging into your social media account, it instead uses Facebook's

API to authenticate your information. It's just passing that data back and forth to verify your account and limit the need for you to create a new account. The site also can use the API to see if you're currently logged into Facebook and, if you are, connect directly instead of making you re-enter those credentials.

2. Shopify Plugins

Red Stag Fulfillment provides significant support for Shopify stores. Currently, they're our only partner with direct plugin support. Presently, you can use ShipStream's Shopify plugin to integrate your store with our WMS and give your customers the most up-to-date information.

Using plugins makes it quite easy for you to automate information sharing. Plugins are tested and verified by both Red Stag Fulfillment and Shopify to protect you and our operations. In many cases, you'll simply install the plugin within your Shopify dashboard and then provide the required authentication or user login credentials when connecting it with our system.

The plugin allows you to display accurate shipping estimates, for example, directly within your Shopify shopping cart. The Shopify integration also sends order information directly to Red Stag Fulfillment when a customer buys from you. Their order details are sent to us and can begin being processed with a complete, accurate picture or products, shipping destination, and proper carrier selection.

ShipStream recently added support for "Private" Shopify apps, which are those you create or have a developer create exclusively for your store.

RSF TECH TIP

"Many large and growing eCommerce companies use Shopify, and we already have that integration built. If that's you, just let us know, and it's good to go."

Brady Evans
Business Development
Red Stag Fulfillment

3. 3rd Party Middleware Providers

If you don't have a Shopify store, you'll need to use middleware providers to link your preferred tools and data with our ShipStream WMS. These service providers sit in the middle, connecting to your store and our software to move data back and forth, update the status of orders and events, and verify information or documents.

Third-party providers such as DropStream are often used because they can integrate across many platforms. Sometimes, this minimizes the work you need to do to organize your business. For example, DropStream integrates with Amazon and eBay marketplaces and shopping cart plugins from BigCommerce, Shift4Shop, and more. Integrating with those carts and marketplaces as well as Red Stag's system will help get all of your order information to us and update you as orders are filled for customers across your many channels.

DropStream has many standard integrations available immediately. If you require more complex capabilities, you may need to work with DropStream or an outside developer to create a custom integration or directly use our API. Red Stag Fulfillment can also help you enable FTP via DropStream with a custom setup just for your business.

We recommend you tell us about any third-party middleware solutions you use. That way, your Onboarding Specialist can help with the setup and testing processes to verify that inventory and other data is accurate. Vetting of services and providers may be required.

4. Manual File Uploads

Some companies opt to import order data into our WMS manually. We also provide manual ways to export reports and notifications for inventory updates. We use the CSV and JSON file formats for importing to ensure that our system can understand the data you provide.Manual uploads minimize what automation is available and won't utilize your integration capabilities. However, they provide a reliable backup and testing options to protect your business.

WHY DOES IT GET COMPLEX?

One of the most common concerns we hear about is that integrating eCommerce platforms with order and warehouse data is complicated to set up. Integrations become complex because you're capable of doing many different things. The more you want to automate, the more likely you are to need additional tools, permissions, or integrations.

If you sell a product on Home Depot, Wayfair, Chewy, and your own site, you're getting orders from four different channels. Each channel will need to be integrated with us to pass on your data because channels will keep their sales and order data separate. You can also rely on a more complex order management tool that collects this information and sends it all to us at once — but in this case, you're still integrating each channel with that larger tool.

The good news is that these integrations can happen quickly and become reliable solutions, even if you need several tools.

An Integration Example

Let's say your store uses WooCommerce for sales. You may turn to DropStream's integration to send order information from your online store to our warehouses. This automates the process and allows us to start filling orders faster. DropStream speaks our WMS's language, so SKUs, order quantities, and more are kept accurate.

However, your customers tell you they want to know their order's tracking data as soon as they finish paying. They don't care if that's at 1 a.m. or 1 p.m. And you want to offer that capability to keep people happy and minimize how much they contact customer service.

You can meet their demands by adding WooCommerce's Shipping Tracking extension and connecting through DropStream. That way, as soon as we get the order and create that tracking information with your preferred carrier, it gets sent back to you via DropStream. You can automatically provide it to customers if your store uses email or other notification plugins.

In that specific example, you need multiple tools and connections because you're moving around different types of information. The information is also moving between your store and our system at distinct points. Different tools may be required to address each step. In this case, you need the separate Shipment Tracking plugin from WooCommerce because it requires you to buy a license from WooCommerce.

One useful way of thinking about different plugins and tools is that each may request a different piece of information to answer a different question. These can automatically share and update the most relevant business data you have. Common questions these systems will answer include:

- ✅ What did the customer order?

- ✅ What is your available stock after we fill that order?

- ✅ What is the tracking information for that order?

- ✅ When is it expected to arrive?

- ✅ When has it shipped?

- ✅ Is the order complete?

A Note on Custom Rules for Inventory

Most Red Stag Fulfillment customers have detailed, custom needs for their inventory. In some cases, these may require a custom script — a special action for the software to follow — or an inventory API integration. RSF and your team will undertake advanced coding and testing to ensure everything works properly in these cases.

Your company may have a certain SKU or shipping instance that requires custom rules. The scripts that set out these rules must be in place before we can pick, pack, or ship your order. Rules may limit what carriers can be used, mandate a specific packaging material, or apply industry practices like "first in, first out" picking. Each custom rule is tested and verified before being put into action. The best way to keep this process moving quickly is to discuss custom inventory syncing and custom scripts with your Sales Representative before onboarding and system integration.

"We want to team with you to support what you're doing from A to Z, and that definitely includes integrations. Our goal is to support the tools that you're already using."

Ben Walls
Business Development
Red Stag Fulfillment

ONGOING TESTING AND MAINTENANCE

vMost integrations and third-party connections have a regular fee schedule. These costs allow companies to review and work on integrations continually. Integration testing happens regularly because an update to any involved system has the potential to create issues.

Consider your existing store, shopping cart, and order management tool. Say the shopping cart updates to move where the total cost is displayed because it makes your customers more likely to complete the purchase. That's great news for your business.

Your store and order management tools, however, will want to test that update. They want to know if the new layout changes how the cart shares information. If, for example, the cart flipped the way it delivers SKUs and quantity data, the order management tool could tell pickers to grab the wrong SKUs or incorrect amounts of each product.

Monthly integration fees allow companies to have teams to continually check for issues and verify each new update to mitigate risks to your business.

5 STEPS TO INTEGRATE WITH RED STAG FULFILLMENT

When working with Red Stag Fulfillment, there are five standard steps to getting your business integrated with us. These phases focus predominantly on testing to ensure everything is working, the connection is secure, and the data is reliable. Testing requires a mix of your professionals and Red Stag Fulfillment experts to review the code, check environments, and give you the green light.

Step 1: Create Your Integration List

During the sales and onboarding process, you'll work with your Red Stag Fulfillment Sales Representative to create a list of the tools you use and integrations you'll need. Our team will walk you through inventory and supplier connections, sales channels, customer service needs, payment support, imports and delivery, shipping and carrier instructions, packaging, and more. Our API documentation can help you start thinking about these categories and connection partners.

During that process, you may realize that you want a custom integration or connection. For that, you or your team will need to code the integration to work directly with the ShipStream API or a partner platform. In some cases, you'll need to submit this code to the integration partner. ShipStream allows this through its Plugin Fostering Program when a third party is the plugin developer.

Step 2: Testing in our Sandbox WMS

Integrations are then tested in a sandbox environment. We set up the connections to a testing environment of our WMS that supports a wide range of feature and order checks. Integration capabilities are verified and can be stress-tested to ensure reliability as your business grows.

"For complex or custom integration requests, such as advanced returns platforms, our integration support can provide guidance and help to get started. We may point your team in the right direction or help connect you with a middleware provider that can offer a solution."

Chris Mortl
Business Development
Red Stag Fulfillment

"Whether your integration needs are as simple as plugging into an existing Shopify website or as complex as omnichannel fulfillment from multiple marketplaces, Red Stag is here to provide a seamless solution that keeps your orders flowing and your customers happy."

Cole Sweetser
Business Development
Red Stag Fulfillment

Step 3: Testing in the Production WMS

Once the connections have passed Sandbox testing, and any customizations have been vetted, we move into production testing. This step looks for possible bugs in connections and features continuous monitoring to help weed out any issues. Work in the production WMS is designed to mimic real-world operations, including tests for users to learn the product and tests involving real web traffic.

At this stage, you'll also be sending physical inventory to at least one Red Stag Fulfillment warehouse. It will be entered into the system to verify inventory accuracy.

Step 4: Enabling the Production WMS

At this stage, the production WMS has been tested and your inventory is ready to begin fulfilling orders. Red Stag Fulfillment enables a live connection and helps with any final adjustments. Then, you begin sending us real orders and our teams fill them, relying on data transmitted through our integrations.

Step 5: 30-day steady state checkup

Your Red Stag Fulfillment team will perform an initial follow-up after 30 days to ensure everything is flowing as expected and we have exceeded your expectations. Regular check-ins will follow with your Account Representative, throughout your relationship with Red Stag.

Our mission is to help you run your business more effectively by providing reliable access to inventory and order data. That's on top of our inventory, order accuracy, and other guarantees.

LET RED STAG FULFILLMENT HELP YOU FIND YOURFULFILLMENT HAPPY PLACE

To grow your eCommerce company, you need two things in a logistics provider:

    a) A good match with your business model, and

    b) An excellent fulfillment company.

Red Stag Fulfillment isn't the right match for every eCommerce business. However, if you are a good fit for our 3PL services, **Red Stag provides industry-leading fulfillment that can help your business thrive.**

If you're looking for a new fulfillment provider or if you just have questions about onboarding, we'd love to talk with you. We're here to help.

GET STARTED TODAY

📱 *866-706-2533*   ✉ *5501 Island River Dr. Knoxville, TN 37914*   🌐 *www.redstagfulfillment.com*

Red Stag FULFILLMENT