

Kaizen Dojo

Scaling Plan: 100 / 500 / 5,000 / 25,000 Stores

What we need to build, the systems we will run on, and what it costs each month.

September 27, 2026

The 500- and 5,000-store numbers come from a detailed study of our live system, using current vendor prices. The 100-store column is estimated between measured points, and the 25,000-store column scales the 5,000-store numbers up.

1. The Plan at a Glance

Kaizen Dojo grows in four steps. The design stays the same the whole way: every big chain gets its own database, all background work runs on a cloud queue, one adapter connects any point-of-sale system, and company-wide dashboards read pre-built summaries instead of crunching numbers while you wait. Because the shape never changes, growing means adding capacity — not rebuilding.

	100 stores	500 stores	5,000 stores	25,000 stores*
What it looks like	Our current chains plus the first new ones, on one database	Several mid-size chains, or the first districts of a big chain	2–3 big chains (1,000–3,000 stores each), each on its own database	8–12 big chains, each on its own database
Main systems	Current setup, with background jobs moving to the cloud	All background work in the cloud; any chain can sign up and everything just works	A database per chain; instant dashboards; corporate sign-on; security audits	Same design with more copies; enterprise vendor contracts; 24/7 on-call team
Monthly cost (plan for)	~\$800	~\$2,800	~\$23,000	~\$110,000
Per store, per month	~\$8.00	\$5.60	\$4.60	~\$4.40

* The 25,000-store column is scaled up from the measured 5,000-store study, not separately measured.

The number to remember: from 500 stores up, running the platform costs about **\$4–5 per store per month**. The cost per store goes down as we grow, because the fixed pieces (test environment, monitoring, plans) get spread over more stores.

Not included in these numbers: point-of-sale partner fees (at thousands of stores, a per-location fee could cost more than everything else here combined — we price these before connecting any new POS), payroll-provider fees, security-audit costs (roughly \$35–100k the first year), and people.

2. What We Still Need to Build

Six pieces of work take us from where we are today to chain-ready. They are listed in the order they build on each other.

- **A safety net for speed.** A test environment with a fake 3,000-store chain. Every release runs against it first, and any release that would slow the app down gets blocked automatically.
- **Move background work to the cloud.** Forecasts, sales syncing, and reports run on a cloud queue with workers sitting right next to the database. Each store's work runs on its own local clock, so every store's forecast is ready before it opens — East Coast and West Coast alike.
- **Make every feature work for every chain.** A new chain signs up and automatically gets forecasts, weather, email reports, and its own settings — with each company's data fully walled off from every other company's.
- **A database for each big chain.** Chains of 1,000+ stores each get their own database. Chains can never slow each other down, each one's data is completely separate, and a security review gets the isolation answer it expects. A small directory service routes each company to its database.
- **Instant dashboards.** Company-wide screens (overview, weekly review, tickets, payroll) read summaries that are kept up to date in the background, so a 3,000-store dashboard loads in about a second instead of making you wait.
- **Connect more point-of-sale systems.** One adapter that any POS can plug into. Toast is first; Square, Clover, Oracle, and others get added when a chain that uses them signs. Big-company features ship with it: corporate single sign-on, automatic account setup, and a completed security audit (SOC 2).

3. The Four Steps

100 stores

Close to what we run today: one database, current hosting, with background jobs beginning to move to the cloud. The database gets a size bump as data grows, and the speed-safety-net test environment comes online here so everything after it is protected.

500 stores

Real multi-chain scale. All background work runs in the cloud — nothing depends on any one computer. Any chain can sign up and every feature works for it automatically. Payroll and company screens handle large rosters without slowing down.

5,000 stores

The big-chain tier: two or three chains of 1,000–3,000 stores each. Every big chain runs on its own database. Dashboards read pre-built summaries and stay fast at any size. Chains sign in with their own corporate accounts, and the security audit big companies ask for is done. Store pages stay as fast as they are today, sales data stays no more than about 3 minutes old, and every store's forecast is ready before 5:00 AM local time.

25,000 stores

Eight to twelve big chains, each on its own database. Nothing about the design changes — that is the point. Growth means: setting up a new chain's database becomes push-button, vendor contracts move to negotiated enterprise pricing, and a round-the-clock on-call team keeps the fleet healthy. Each new chain brings its own POS connection, payroll provider, and labor-model setup, which repeat the same playbook.

4. Systems at Each Step

	100	500	5,000	25,000*
App hosting	Vercel	Vercel	Vercel (scaled up)	Vercel (enterprise contract)
Database	One Supabase database	One database, sized up; test environment live	One database per big chain + a routing directory	8–12 chain databases, set up push-button
Background jobs	Moving to the cloud (AWS queue + workers)	Fully on AWS, next to the database	Worker fleet per chain, on store-local time	Same, automated across the fleet
Point of sale	Toast	Toast through the adapter	Adapter + each signed chain's POS	Full portfolio as chains require
Dashboards	Live queries	Live queries	Pre-built summaries	Pre-built summaries
Sign-in	Email codes	Email codes; MFA available	Corporate single sign-on + auto account setup	Same, more identity providers
AI assistant	Anthropic	Anthropic, usage-tracked	Anthropic, budget set from real usage	Anthropic, volume pricing
Monitoring	Error tracking + independent uptime checks	Same + per-chain accounting	Same + per-chain freshness alarms	Same + 24/7 on-call
Compliance	—	Security-audit groundwork	SOC 2 audit + outside penetration test	Audits kept current; per-chain security reviews

* scaled-up estimate.

5. Monthly Costs in Detail

Monthly cost	100	500	5,000	25,000*
Database (Supabase)	\$60–260	\$340–1,270	\$4,500–8,100	\$20,000–38,000
Test environment	\$0–230	\$230–450	\$1,000–1,900	\$1,000–2,000
App hosting (Vercel)	\$40–150	\$110–450	\$1,350–5,850	\$6,500–25,000
Cloud workers + queue (AWS)	\$10–60	\$35–120	\$400–900	\$2,000–4,500
Email	\$5–40	\$20–160	\$350–855	\$1,700–4,300
Monitoring	\$10–40	\$26–95	\$200–950	\$1,000–4,800
Weather + events feeds	\$29	\$29+	\$29–99+	\$99–299+
File archive	\$0–15	\$0–40	\$40–90	\$200–450
Subtotal, before AI	~\$250–850	\$790–2,600	\$7,900–18,700	~\$32,000–79,000
AI assistant (planning case)	~\$220	~\$1,100	~\$10,400	~\$52,000
Total to plan for	~\$800	~\$2,800	~\$23,000	~\$110,000
Per store, per month	~\$8.00	\$5.60	\$4.60	~\$4.40

* 25,000-store column is scaled up from the measured 5,000-store study at close to list prices; enterprise contracts should come in lower. Re-quote it from real per-chain data before committing.

The AI assistant line is the biggest swing at every step — it depends on how much managers actually use it. Usage is tracked, and the budget gets reset from 30 days of real numbers.

6. What Could Change These Numbers

- **POS partner fees.** Point-of-sale companies charge integration partners per location, and the fees are mostly negotiated, not published. At thousands of stores this is potentially the single biggest cost in the whole plan — bigger than the infrastructure bill. We get the terms in writing before a big chain signs and before building any new POS connection.
- **AI usage.** The assistant's cost swings with real use. Tracking is in place; the budget firms up after the first month of real data at each step.
- **Traffic assumptions.** Today's numbers come from a small group of daily users. After the first big chain goes live, we re-measure and re-baseline.
- **Labor laws.** New states and cities bring new scheduling and pay rules. Rules live in tables with citations and review dates, checked with counsel as chains sign.
- **Vendor pricing.** Everything here uses list prices. At the bigger steps every vendor negotiates, so the large columns should be conservative.

Where these numbers come from

A detailed study of the live system in September 2026: how fast every screen is today, what each background job costs per store, where the current setup runs out of headroom, and current vendor list prices. The 500- and 5,000-store columns come straight from that study. The 100-store column is estimated between measured points; the 25,000-store column scales the 5,000-store numbers up and gets re-quoted from real data before any commitment.

Bottom line: one design carries Kaizen Dojo from 100 stores to 25,000 without changing shape — a database per big chain, background work on a cloud queue, one POS adapter, and dashboards that read pre-built summaries. From 500 stores up, the platform costs about \$4–5 per store per month to run.