Magento Commerce

Adobe

Finding the Best of Both Worlds

How to choose the best eCommerce platform when you're adding D2C to B2B (or the other way around)

It's time.

You're ready to explore new channels and grow your business. That might mean adding direct-to-consumer (D2C) to your B2B company—or maybe you're a B2C business ready to start selling to retailers. Either way, you need a new set of eCommerce functionality.

If you're already running an eCommerce platform designed for only B2C or B2B, you'll have some tough choices to make. Your options are making extensive customizations to your existing platform or migrating to a new hybrid platform that combines full B2C and B2B feature sets. (If you don't have a digital business, you're in luck. You can choose a hybrid platform at the beginning of your eCommerce journey.)

Selecting the right hybrid platform for your business can feel like a lot of work, because you'll be evaluating two sets of features. But it's worthwhile in the long run. You can reduce costs, improve efficiency, simplify product management, and more. **This eBook highlights some best practices for choosing a platform for your hybrid B2B-and-B2C business model.**

Check for a comprehensive feature set—especially for B2B

B2C and B2B are two different flavors of eCommerce, each with different requirements. Your hybrid platform should be strong in both areas. It should have features designed for both types of selling while also providing a unified product catalog and back end. Because B2B is more complex, you'll want to take a close look at B2B features. If a platform doesn't have a lot of the features on the checklist, it will probably need many customizations to support B2B.

B2B feature checklist

A solid hybrid eCommerce platform should have most of these B2B features.

- **Customer-specific catalogs and pricing:** You should be able to customize catalogs and pricing for different customers.

- **Volume discounts:** You should be able to create special discounts for large purchases.

- **Special taxation status for B2B buyers:** You should be able to configure virtually any tax rules, or easily integrate with a third-party tax service in complex cases.

- **Easy reordering:** You should be able to let customers reorder based on previous orders, and send reminders via text or email.

- **Flexible payment and checkout:** You should be able to offer fast and flexible payment and checkout options, including multiple payment gateways and mobile-optimized checkout.

- **Flexible shipping:** You should be able to offer shipping through many carriers and automate your fulfillment processes.

- **Quote support:** You should be able to automate price quote requests and negotiations with buyers.

- **Purchase approval workflows:** You should be able to automatically route purchases to each customer's designated approvers.

- **Automated up-selling and cross-selling:** You should be able to integrate marketing automation tools that drive up-sells, cross-sells, and repeat purchases.

- **Company account management:** You should be able to give your B2B customers an account management dashboard where they can see everything—including active quotes and orders, order history, credit status, and more—in one place.

- **B2B-specific reporting:** You should be able to analyze your business with reports that blend data from your eCommerce platform as well as ERP, CRM, and other critical systems of record.

Remember that mobile is mandatory

Both consumers and business buyers are increasingly using mobile to research your products and make purchases. More than half of consumers used a mobile device to help them complete their most recent purchase.[1] And, as business buyers skew ever younger, mobile will play an increasingly critical role in B2B commerce, too.[2]
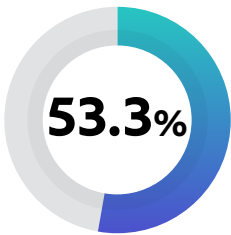
53.3% of consumers used their mobile devices to help them complete their most recent purchases[1]
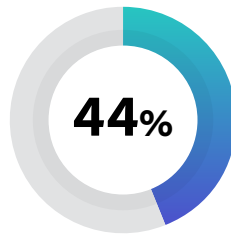
**44%** of B2B buyers will be millennials by 2025[2]

Progressive Web Apps

A new approach to mobile design

Most businesses rely on either responsive web design or native apps to deliver mobile commerce. Responsive designs can be accessed by anyone with a browser, but they can't access smartphone features like the camera and push notifications. Native apps provide a richer experience, but must be developed and maintained for all mobile operating environments.

Progressive Web Apps are a new approach to mobile design. They provide a rich, app-like experience inside a mobile web browser. **Read more about PWAs here.**

Opt for content-powered commerce

Content, especially personalized content, is critical for both consumer and business sales. **90 percent of consumers** find marketing content personalization very or somewhat appealing.[3] And three-fourths of B2B sales and marketing professionals believe personalized experiences make for better customer relationships.[4] However, most businesses struggle to quickly add new content and make content updates. Often, they have to tap IT to make even seemingly simple updates.
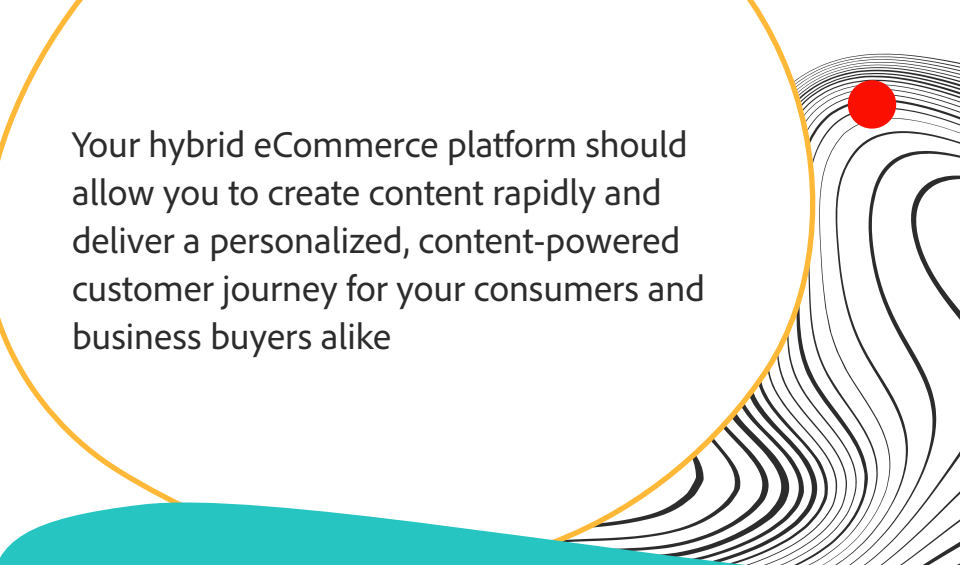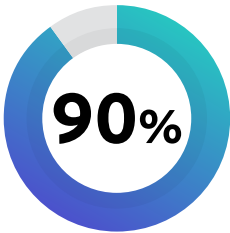
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77%
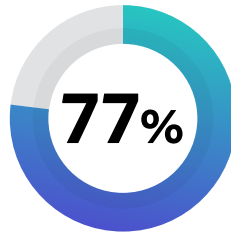
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Personalization can be even more challenging. Content—such as specifications, product recommendations, and targeted promotions—must be served at the right stage of the customer journey and tailored for different customer profiles. B2B buyers in particular will want easy access to more detailed information, including supporting documentation (manuals, certifications, how-to videos) and product ratings and reviews.

Your hybrid eCommerce platform should allow you to create content rapidly and deliver a personalized, content-powered customer journey for your consumers and business buyers alike

Page Builder

Fast, personalized content to go

Content updates are a headache for B2B and B2C companies alike. When new content is available, you may have to contact IT and add your request to the development queue.

Page Builder, only available with Magento Commerce, is designed to accelerate content creation. It lets non-technical users create new pages and preview their designs without a single line of code. It's also integrated with Adobe Stock, so you can quickly find contextually appropriate images to make your pages stand out.

To learn more about Page Builder, watch this short video.

Make multi-channel a priority

Almost everyone is selling in multiple marketplaces. Amazon accounts for 38 percent of U.S. retail eCommerce.[5] Likewise, Amazon Business is a growing force with millions of business customers around the world, including 55 of the Fortune 100 companies.[6] In addition, both B2B and B2C companies are blending online and in-store sales into a single, unified customer experience. This typically involves giving customers flexible fulfillment options—like buy online, pick up and return in store—and allowing customers in store to browse "endless aisles" on their phones or other devices.
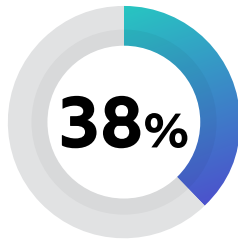
38% of retail eCommerce happens on Amazon[5]

A hybrid eCommerce platform should provide strong multichannel functionality for both B2B and B2C sales. It should allow you to create a consistent experience across all the touchpoints in the customer journey.

Multi-channel capabilities in a hybrid platform include the following:

- Comprehensive listing and inventory management across marketplaces

- Support for integrated digital and physical shopping experiences, such as "buy online/pick up in store" and digital kiosks in stores and warehouses

- Smart, flexible fulfillment that minimizes wait times and shipping costs

- Account management options that allow B2B sales reps to place orders on behalf of their customers

Investigate partner and developer ecosystems

Solution partners can help you navigate new markets and tailor your new B2B or B2C store for your target customers. But finding the right partners isn't easy, and it's especially difficult for B2B companies. Research suggests that nearly half of B2B organizations struggle to find the right solution partners. Ideally, your hybrid eCommerce platform should have an ecosystem of solution partners that's both broad and deep. In other words, more is better.

The same is true for your platform's developer community. A large community of developers means extensions and plug-ins exist for thousands of different use cases—which just might include yours.

The bottom line? Your hybrid eCommerce platform should be the hub for a wider ecosystem that includes both solution partners and developers.

Don't forget about performance and security

Performance is essential for all kinds of commerce. Even modest delays in page load times can have significant effects on conversions. And B2B buyers may interpret your slow web pages as a sign that your infrastructure isn't reliable.

Security is another top consideration. A typical medium- to large-scale retailer serving web traffic of roughly 3 billion requests per month experiences approximately 206,000 web attacks monthly.[7] It's understandable, then, that concerns about security are a major reason why online shoppers abandon their carts. When B2B companies start selling direct to consumers, they must secure the checkout experience for their customers while guarding against fraud—which often isn't as big an issue when you're selling to businesses.

Both performance and security are must-haves for your hybrid eCommerce platform.

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Look towards the future

By supporting both B2C and B2B eCommerce, your hybrid platform lets you quickly support new business models like subscription services or Internet of Things-based services as they emerge. In today's fast-changing marketplace, this is a competitive advantage. There are also other ways your eCommerce platform can set you up for future success:

International commerce: Your hybrid eCommerce platform should make it simple to add new country- and region-specific stores, whether they're B2B or B2C. It should support local languages, payment and shipping methods, tax rules, etc.

Unified analytics: Your hybrid eCommerce platform should give you a holistic view of your entire business. It should let you analyze trends and "drill down" into specific KPIs across sites and customer segments, like return rates, repeat purchases, and lifetime spending, as well as B2B-oriented metrics like quote to order conversion rates.

When evaluating hybrid eCommerce solutions, think about what your business will be doing two, three, and five or more years in the future.

Did you know? Magento Business Intelligence Pro comes with 100 pre-built performance reports, including 25 for B2B businesses. Learn more.

Sources

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ADOBE EXPERIENCE CLOUD

Leveraging deep customer intelligence, **Adobe Experience Cloud** gives you everything you need to deliver a well-designed, personal, and consistent experience that delights your customers every time you interact with them.

Built on the Adobe Experience Platform, leveraging Adobe Sensei machine learning and artificial intelligence, Adobe Experience Cloud gives you access to the world's most comprehensive suite of solutions across three clouds—Adobe Analytics Cloud, Adobe Marketing Cloud, and Adobe Advertising Cloud. And because it's from Adobe, it's integrated with Adobe Creative Cloud and Document Cloud so that the design of a great experience is inextricably linked to its delivery.

ADOBE COMMERCE CLOUD

Adobe Commerce Cloud combines Magento Commerce with Adobe Experience Cloud, providing an end-to-end platform to manage, personalize, and optimize the commerce experience across every touch point.

MAGENTO COMMERCE

Magento Commerce is a flexible, scalable commerce solution with integrated tools for managing, measuring, and optimizing every aspect of the commerce experience.