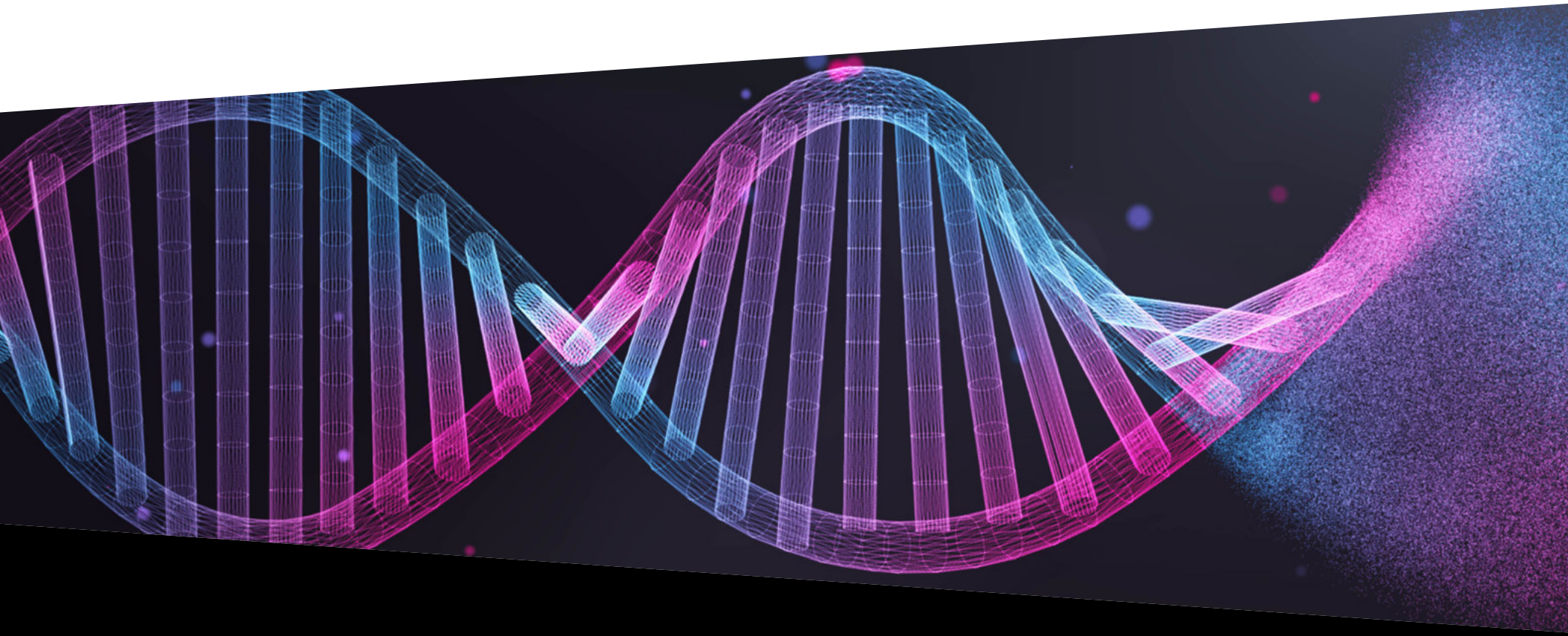Magento
An Adobe Company

Ready to Go Hybrid?

How to choose the best eCommerce platform when you're adding B2B to B2C (or the other way around)

It's time.

You're ready to explore new channels and grow your business. That might mean adding a wholesale business to your B2C company—or maybe you're a B2B business ready to sell direct to consumers. Either way, you need a new set of eCommerce functionality.

If you're already running an eCommerce platform designed for only B2B or B2C, 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 B2B and B2C 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.

B2B and B2C 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.

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 B2B and B2C buyers are increasingly using mobile to research your products and make purchases. **50 percent of B2B search queries** today are made on smartphones, and mobile drives or influences more than **40 percent of revenue** in leading B2B organizations.[1] Mobile commerce already accounts for 58.9 percent of digital retail sales worldwide.[2]

50%

of B2B search queries are made on mobile devices

40%

of revenue is influenced by mobile queries

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.

[1] "Mobile Marketing and the New B2B Buyer," The Boston Consulting Group in partnership with Google, October 2017.
[2] "Mobile Is Driving Retail Ecommerce Sales Worldwide," eMarketer.com, January 2018.

Opt for content-powered commerce.

Content, especially personalized content, is critical for both B2B and B2C sales. **87 percent of consumers** rate product content very highly when deciding to buy,[3] and **40 percent of B2B sites** are currently using some form of personalization.[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.

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 provide solutions for rapid content creation and deliver a personalized, content-powered customer journey for both B2B and B2C buyers.

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.

Magento Page Builder 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 also supports customer segmentation, so content is served only when it's relevant.

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

[3] Cracking the Consumer Code 2017, Salsify. [4] "Critical Capabilities for Digital Commerce," Gartner, June 2016.

Make multichannel a priority.

Most B2C companies are selling in multiple marketplaces. 49 percent of retail eCommerce happens on Amazon.[5] And the same is true for B2B. Amazon Business is a growing force with millions of business customers around the world, including 55 of the Fortune 100 companies.[5] In addition, businesses of all kinds are blending online and in-store sales into a single, unified customer experience. Both B2C and B2B companies can have retail or branch locations that can support "buy online/pick up in store" and endless aisle strategies.

49%
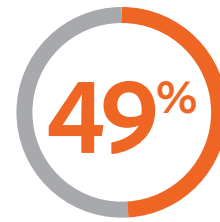
of retail eCommerce happens on Amazon.

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. Multichannel capabilities to look for in a hybrid platform include:

- 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

[5] "Amazon Business connects millions of business customers and sellers worldwide," Amazon Business Blog, September 11, 2018.

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[6] 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 including solution partners and developers.

[6] Forrester, "What It Takes To Be A Leader In B2B eCommerce," June 2018.

Don't forget about performance and security.
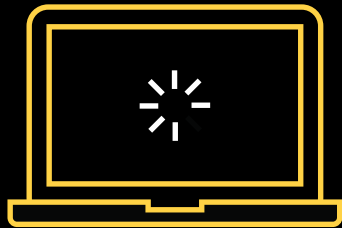
7%

decrease in conversions can result from a page load delay of 0.1 second

36.4%

of shoppers abandon online carts due to payment security concerns

Performance is essential for both B2B and B2C eCommerce. Why? Everyone gets frustrated by slow load times. For B2C, a 100-millisecond delay in page load times can decrease conversions by seven percent.[7] And B2B buyers may interpret your slow web pages as a sign that your infrastructure isn't reliable.

Security is another top consideration. eCommerce losses to fraud from Q2 2016 through Q2 2017 approached $57.8 billion.[8] 36.4 percent of shoppers cite "concerns about payment security" as a main reason they abandon shopping carts.[9] 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.

[7] "Akamai Online Retail Performance Report: Milliseconds Are Critical," Akamai, April 2017. [8] "E-Commerce Fraud Loss Reaches $57.8 Billion," Security Magazine, October 2017. [9] Magneto IT Solutions, 2018.

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.

ABOUT MAGENTO

Magento, an Adobe company, is a leading provider of cloud commerce innovation to merchants and brands across B2C and B2B industries and was recently named a leader in the 2018 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce. In addition to its flagship digital commerce platform, Magento boasts a strong portfolio of cloud-based omnichannel solutions that empower merchants to successfully integrate digital and physical shopping experiences. Magento is the #1 provider to the Internet Retailer Top 1000, the B2B 300, and the Top 500 Guides for Europe and Latin America. Magento is supported by a vast global network of solution and technology partners, a highly active global developer community, and the largest eCommerce marketplace for extensions, all available for download on the Magento Marketplace.

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