B2B ECOMMERCE EMPOWERMENT GUIDE

4 strategies proven to increase sales by 4x

Key Considerations and Questions for B2B Ecommerce Success

B2B ECOMMERCE IS THE FASTEST GROWING ECOMMERCE CHANNEL IN TODAY'S ONLINE MARKETPLACE. IN 2018, MORE THAN $1 TRILLION IN B2B ECOMMERCE SALES OCCURRED – A NUMBER THAT IS EXPECTED TO QUINTUPLE BY 2022.

Only a small fraction of manufacturers, distributors and brand owners offer their partners a B2B ecommerce portal or electronic means to quickly and easily conduct business. Is your business positioned to compete with your current B2B ecommerce strategy?

1

Be easy to work with

Many manufacturers and brand owners do not yet embrace the concept of making it easier to do business with them. Traditionally, B2B ecommerce has been conducted via a stream of emails, faxes, complex EDI integrations, or phone calls. To some, B2B commerce has been conducted the same way for decades, why change anything now? While the personal touch of placing a B2B order on the phone is still important, the current generation and trends point to offering tools and portals instead of 1-800 numbers.

EBIZPLATFORM™

STRATEGY 1

ASK YOURSELF THESE KEY QUESTIONS THAT MAY AFFECT HOW EASILY A PARTNER CAN SELL YOUR PRODUCTS.
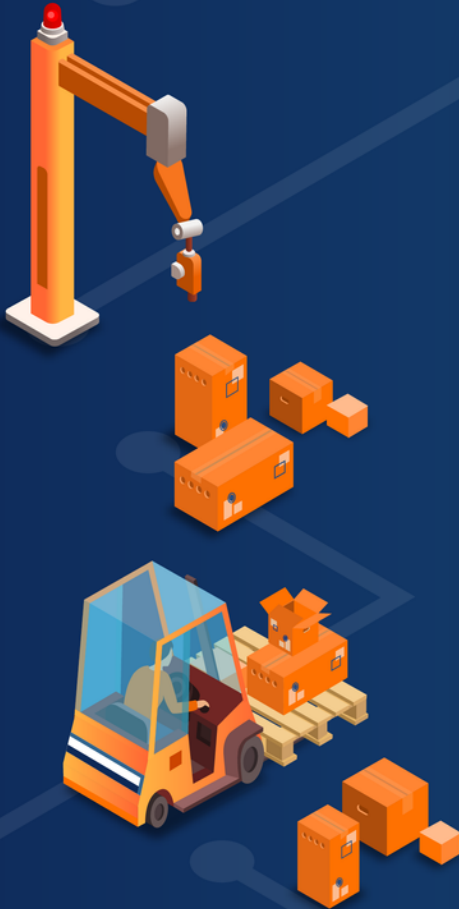
1. Can my partners see real time pricing and availability of my products without costly integrations? Can they build their own quotes and place orders anytime from anywhere?

2. Can my partners get product data, images and documentation necessary to successfully sell my products without excessive returns or confusion? Can I push my product data to reseller sites without involving a team of developers?

3. When I have a new product or sku, how long does it take to get the product data to market so people can purchase?

4. Are my partners spending more time deciphering my product data than selling the actual product?

5. Are my sales reps, account managers and B2B customers/partners all playing from the same sheet of music? Are all transactions going through a single workflow?

Put yourself in your partner's position – If there are several options to carry and sell various product lines, which line will they pick? The answer should be obvious, the brand that is easiest to work with, minimizes returns, and provides maximum profit. All of these performance indicators can be accomplished with a solid and comprehensive platform provider.

2

Focus on function

With just a few simple keyword searches on Google, you can find a myriad of platforms and software providers offering a "B2B Ecommerce Platform". But are they really? Most are simple B2C (business to consumer) shopping cart providers trying to cash in on the new growth trend in B2B ecommerce. The solutions are not designed to handle complex products or workflows that require configuration, may fit certain applications or even have documentation and regulatory requirements. These "B2C conversions" are more focused on form (making it pretty) than function. B2B ecommerce is driven by function. B2B customers and partners want quick, easy and workflow-oriented tools to perform tasks quickly and without the hassle.

STRATEGY 2

ALL THAT SAID, B2B ECOMMERCE IS MORE THAN JUST PLACING ITEMS IN A SHOPPING CART AND ENTERING A PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER.   YOUR PARTNERS WILL DEMAND MORE FUNCTIONALITY IN ORDER TO MOVE MORE PRODUCT, INCLUDING:

1. The ability to create quotes, save them, and return to complete them later according to their pricing and terms. Similarly, the ability to take quotes created on their behalf by your sales reps and account managers and turn them into orders with a few clicks.

2. Access to documentation, digital assets and compliance information in a single solution. Even more, when this data changes receive alerts, so they are always up to date.

3. Quickly and easily see the current price and stock position of any product. If it is not currently in stock, see when it will be back and plan accordingly.

4. Manage account contacts, shipping preferences and address books.

When priority is given to function, your B2B ecommerce strategy also gets to market faster by eliminating costly and time consuming design cycles – your products can act as the creative assets of the B2B portal and speak for themselves without all the razzle dazzle.

✖ **EBIZ**PLATFORM™

3

Invest in your product data

In today's digital marketplace, your product data is your greatest asset. Being able to monetize your product data by getting it to market faster through your B2B ecommerce channel will pay massive dividends. More importantly, when you remove the burden of chasing product data by your partners, they are free to focus on sales and customer service.

EBIZPLATFORM™

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. How much work do I place on my trading partners to onboard new product data in order to sell? Can this be streamlined?

2. Do I have a "single source of truth" for all of my product data inclusive of all images, documentation, attributes and application/fitment data or do I rely on legacy data sources such as spreadsheets and back-office servers?

3. What happens if key employees leave the organization? Do I have my product data in a secure and redundant location that can withstand sudden organizational changes or disruptions?

4. Is my product data accessible programmatically so developers and partners can use it to build new apps, web sites and integrations without my team involved?

EBIZPLATFORM™

4

Go with a unified approach

We've all heard buzz words like "omni-channel" and "multi-channel" now for nearly two decades. But what exactly does this mean in the realm of B2B ecommerce? Securing sales through multiple channels is really just a function of how accessible the key data and workflows are to other systems. Whether you have a consumer-facing B2C shopping cart or a slick mobile app, they are all just pulling from data and functionality conveniently extended through an API (application programming interface). These days, everything runs on APIs. APIs are everywhere and whether you realize it or not everything you do online is likely running through an API, or several APIs talking to each other.

These days, rather than talk about an "omni-channel" strategy which may create disparate silos of data each containing certain elements and aspects important for a specific channel, it is better to think of unification instead where all channels are fed through a single source – even future channels that may not be in your current strategy. APIs give the flexibility and standards based approach to remove the barriers of single purpose "point solutions" such as most shopping cart platforms or product information management systems. Without unification, strategies become fragmented, have unnecessary steps and become bloated with time and resources.

✕ EBIZPLATFORM™

CONSIDER THIS

- In recent years, EDI integrations have slowed in pace in favor of more flexible API integrations. We're finally getting away from the massive and expensive EDI integrations that excluded many small to medium sized businesses from participating in favor of a more flexible API-centric approach.

- Classic systems integrations involve creating direct connections to ERP systems such as SAP, Infor, Great Plains and more. Problem is, what happens when those systems change? Most likely, your integration is broken and requires developers to write a new version of the integration which takes time and money. By extending your business through an API you create a layer of abstraction that is more flexible and future(version)-proof.

- An API-centric approach allows for the unlimited creativity and innovation of new applications using your product data and ecommerce workflow. Need to let a customer integrate their back office to pull your inventory in real-time? Use an API.

- If you change or update import product information, does the whole world see it instantly, or do you have to contact hundreds of partners and resellers and ask them to make an update?

EBIZPLATFORM™

Conclusion

A single source of truth for ecommerce

When you consider that more than half of manufacturers and distributors do not currently have a B2B ecommerce strategy, let alone a portal or solution in place, you can see the opportunity. Those who can shorten the sales cycle and differentiate their brands through technology will come out on top. Those who do not will likely be forced out of the market.

See A Demo Of EBIZPLATFORM