

Implement B2B eCommerce through Magento

Overview

‘Make to Order’ or ‘Order to Make’ you can be in any business mode while doing your Retail Business using eCommerce website, but in parallel to your standard B2C (Business to Consumer) business, requirement of B2B (Business to Business) is essential. The importance of which you will know in this article ‘B2B Enterprise eCommerce through Magento’

In any retail micro vertical whether it is Gift Items, Pet Foods or Cosmetic Goods, presence of Wholesalers/Distributors/Resellers/Retail Stores/Sales Employees are equally important to continue growth with sustainable revenue from these Trusted Business Partners. A revenue which you might use to boost your B2C Business Marketing Campaigns for more sales.

So I think we all agree that B2B Enterprise eCommerce are common to the eCommerce Marketplace which definitely Co-Exist with B2C Business. ‘B2B Enterprise eCommerce through Magento’ will make it more clear to you.

As we understand almost all available Open Source or SaaS based eCommerce Platforms like Magento supports **B2C** (Business to Consumer) model of Online Business through default features, but many B2B eCommerce Business Requirements can also be configured in Magento eCommerce. Let’s have a detailed look in this blog article – B2B Enterprise eCommerce through Magento, what B2B requirements can be served through the As Is features of Magento and apart from that what other unique B2B features are often required in any eRetail Business.

B2C equivalent B2B Features in Magento

It’s a fact that B2B Portals are mostly used by Business Partners, Retailers, Resellers, etc. and mainly by their employees which we can term as ‘Contact Person’ for my business. But in this era most of the B2B Portal requirements are also the basic B2C requirements like:

- Order and Invoice History
- Order Status and Shipment Information
- Live Help for the Customers to interact with Customer care and order properly
- Favorite Items, Wish lists, Product Recommendations
- Volume and Period Discounts
- Multiple Product Images, Detailed Specs, Download Data Sheets & Manuals, Video Tutorials
- Partial Shipments and Invoicing
- Quick Reordering Feature

So as we can easily understand, most of these features required, are supported through As Is Magento Installation with might be smaller changes.

General B2B Features customization needed in eCommerce

B2B Business Requirements are basically enormous, even to the best of our experience we can only predict 25% general features for any Business. The most generalized features identified by us are listed below:

Organization instead of Customer:

Biggest difference in B2C and B2B is, B2C eCommerce websites are browsed through by Consumers, while B2B eCommerce websites are accessed by Partner Organizations, or more precisely Contact Persons. So there need to be a Company Account, under which 2-3 Contact Persons will be listed and all have access to place Order. But the Sales Order will be placed against the Company Name, not against the Contact Person name.

Financial Information

B2B is meant for closed set of business with Bulk Order of smaller items, or Order against items which are mostly 'Order to Make'. After the initial Order, discussions are started between Business Partner and Business Organization on pricing, delivery etc. So in some cases Disabling/Hiding Financial Information from Product Details, Catalog, Shopping Cart, Order Details and Order History Pages are often required, means this will not be shown to the Contact Persons is general.

B2B Payment Methods

Unlike B2C Payment Gateways (PayPal, Authorize.Net, etc.), B2B mostly relies on Conventional and Offline Payment Methods like, Purchase Order, Credit Limit, etc. However few organizations used both Payment Gateways as well as Offline Methods.

Purchase Order is available by default in Magento, but in addition for B2B, Customer Organization must like to attach the PDF Copy of Purchase Order.

Credit Limit is a new term, often at the starting of Financial Year, each Business sets a 'Credit Limit' against Business Partners based on certain factors (Frequency of Order, Average Order Total, Average Payment Period, etc.). This Credit Limit can be used to place order and Orders can be placed till the Order Total is less that Credit Limit.

Order Approval Process

Business Partners in case of B2B can have an Order approval process before the Order placed in your storefront for processing. There might be a Financial Manager out of all Contact Person listed against a Business Partner in Magento, now the main role of Financial Manager can be:

1. Ability to see the Financial Information in Front Panel
2. Ability to approve the Sales Order placed by any Organizational Contact, in this case Financial Manager will receive an email for Order Approval
3. Ability to add or disable Contact Person from that Organization Account in Magento

Also Orders can be approved automatically and placed in Magento eCommerce based on certain Criteria, for an example, based on Order Quantity, Order Total, etc. and these Criteria will be unique against each organization, like:

Company	Minimum Order Quantity	Minimum Order Total
A	10	10000 USD
B	20	10000 USD
C	15	30000 USD

So there need to be a rule engine through which this kind of Order Criteria for approval can be set against each Organization Account individually.

Sales Employees

Sales Employees are the key in many B2B Businesses today. Sales Employees in many organizations are closely associated with the end customers and managing the customer Accounts. Core operation of a Sales Employee managing customer accounts can be:

1. Add and Update Customer Accounts in Magento (Organization and Contacts in case of B2B, Consumers in case of B2C)
2. Place Orders on behalf of End Customer
3. Check Order Status and update end customer
4. Search feature to quickly find out a Customer Account in Magento
5. Customer Specific Product Catalog
6. Customer Specific Pricing (By Default Magento generally Supports Customer Group Specific Pricing)
7. Place Quotations in Magento

Some other Unique B2B Features which can be achieved through Extensions

1. Customer Specific Product Catalog
2. Customer Specific Pricing (By Default Magento generally Supports Customer Group Specific Pricing)
3. Place Quotations in Magento

B2B requirements are most of the time very much business specific and unique for the Organization. Here we have arranged just a glimpse of the probable features which are in general applicable in B2B model and can be configured in Magento eCommerce.