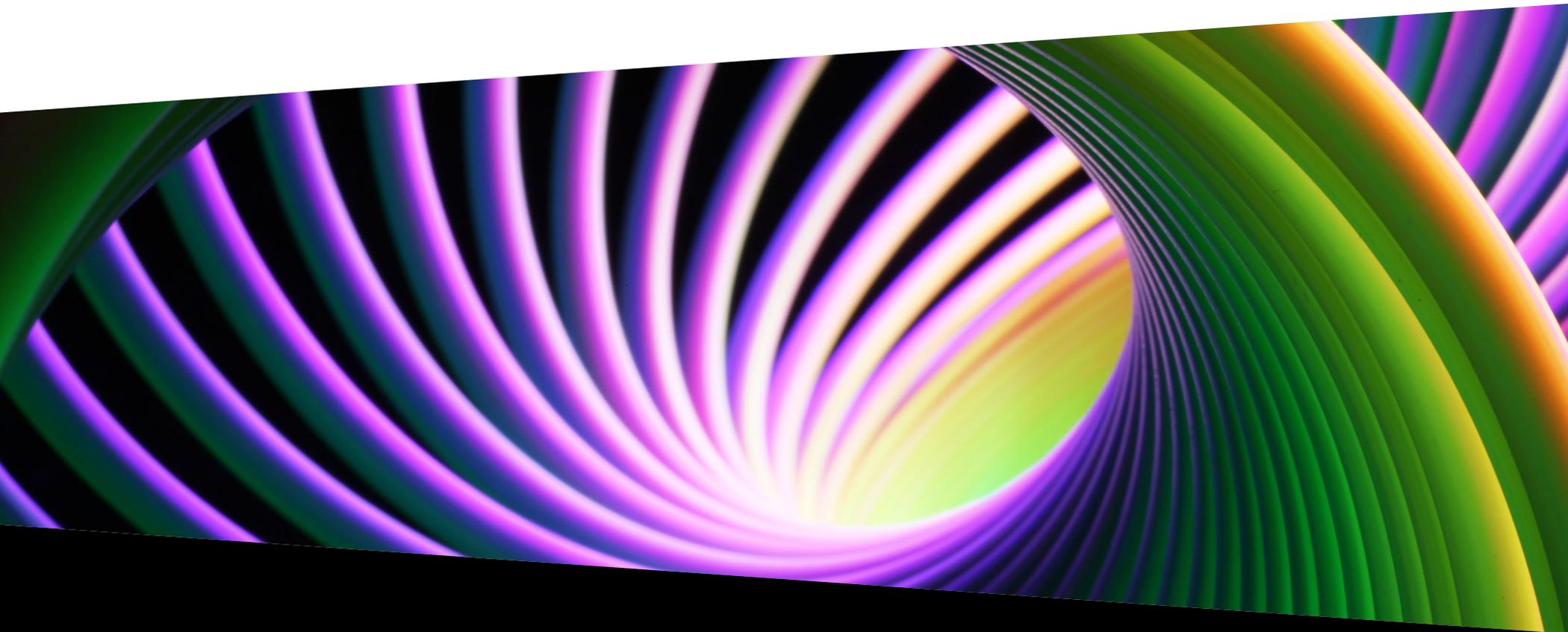


6 Must-Haves for a Fast, Flexible eCommerce Platform.

See which features you need to grow fast and keep going.



Now is the perfect time to get started with eCommerce.

eCommerce is on track to reach 25 percent of the U.S. retail market by 2030,¹ and it's projected to become the world's biggest single retail channel by 2021.² Of course, succeeding with eCommerce means finding an eCommerce platform that will support long-term, sustainable growth. A fast and flexible platform can make launching your business faster and easier. It can help you reach more customers across multiple geographies and deliver a truly unique customer experience.

But the wrong platform can slow you down. Rigid templates can limit your creativity and leave you with a store that looks like everyone else's. A lack of solution partners often means doing everything yourself. And an inflexible design can make it almost impossible to add new functionality as your business evolves and grows.

How can you get it right? **This eBook highlights six questions to help you pick an eCommerce platform that's fast and flexible enough to grow on.**



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¹ FTI Consulting, September 2018. ² Michelle Grant, "E-commerce Set For Global Domination — But At Different Speeds," Forbes, August 14, 2018.

1 Is it in the cloud?



Cloud-based platforms often cost less and can easily scale to your needs. Rather than pay for all your costly hardware and software licenses up front, you typically pay a subscription fee based on usage. You can quickly scale up

or down based on your business needs. Plus, cloud-based platform vendors manage the underlying IT infrastructure for you so you don't have to deal with multiple vendors and service agreements.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Whether you are just starting out or already have an eCommerce presence, choose an eCommerce platform that runs in the cloud.

2 Are you locked into rigid templates?

Your eCommerce platform should work for your business now and years from now. In other words, you need a platform that can evolve as your business grows in size and complexity. “Plug-and-play” platforms that come with canned templates and purchase flows can be easy to set up—but they may not have the flexibility or breadth of functionality you’ll need over the long haul.

When you outgrow these templates, you’ll have two choices: pay for customizations that are costly and difficult to implement, or pick a new platform. Unfortunately, many template-based platforms will not let you modify their code. That means you’ll have to rip out your eCommerce platform and start over just as you’re taking off.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Don’t force-fit your business needs to the capabilities of your technology vendor. Choose a vendor that provides enough flexibility to create an original customer experience.

Your eCommerce platform should work for your business now and years from now.

3 Does it support multiple channels, markets, and countries?

Today's eCommerce is often part of a larger customer experience spanning multiple touchpoints. Brick-and-mortar stores are going digital. Digital brands are partnering with retailers. 82 percent of smartphone users check their phones before they buy in-store.³ And businesses of all sizes are rushing to sell on Amazon and reach new, international markets.

Even if you're small now, it's important to look ahead. If your eCommerce platform doesn't support multiple channels, sites, and languages, you could find yourself having to set up a new environment to support each new market segment and audience. Running multiple independent instances adds costly overhead. It also makes it difficult to track inventory, manage logistics, synchronize content, and deliver a consistent customer experience across your sites.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Think about what your business will look like two, three, and five years from now. Think about how your platform can support your growth plans from Day One.



of smartphone users check their phones before they buy in-store.³

³John Ellet, "New Research Shows Growing Impact Of Online Research On In-Store Purchases," Forbes, February 8, 2018.

4 Does it play nicely with others?

eCommerce doesn't happen in isolation. For maximum efficiency, your eCommerce platform will need to communicate with any or all of the following business systems: CMS, CRM, ERP, PIM, and more. This means it should connect easily to most commonly used

business systems through proven APIs and without the need for tons of custom code. Otherwise, you may have to spend more—even a lot more—time and money on systems integration or risk critical data getting out of sync.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Your eCommerce platform should be a team player. Choose one that connects and integrates easily with your other business systems.

5 How big is the ecosystem of partners and developers supporting the platform?

Most fast-growing businesses are investing in their core product (and in selling it), not in IT. As your business evolves, you'll need to quickly extend your eCommerce experience, and you may need some help. That help could take the form of a solution partner

who knows your industry, or the installation of new modules written by third-party developers. As a rule of thumb, the more solution partners and developers who know and support your chosen platform, the better.

KEY TAKEAWAY

More is better. Choose a platform from a vendor that fosters a large and geographically diverse community of solution partners and developers.



6 Can it support different business models?

The line between retail and wholesale is blurring. Many direct-to-consumer businesses are adding wholesale stores and partnering with retailers, and a growing number of wholesalers are selling direct to consumers online. However, these models are definitely not the same. Selling to businesses and distributors (B2B) can be more complicated; B2B merchants may require

customized product catalogs, alternative payment options, and other special features.

For maximum flexibility, you need an eCommerce platform that offers native functionality for retail and wholesale business models. Running two separate eCommerce systems is both time-consuming and expensive.

MAGENTO: FAST, FLEXIBLE, AND BUILT FOR GROWTH

Magento understands that high-growth businesses care about time to market. We offer quick-start solutions for all budgets. They help you get going quickly without sacrificing your potential to grow and scale.

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<https://magento.com/products>

KEY TAKEAWAY

If there's even a modest chance your business will adopt multiple business models, choose a platform that supports them.



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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