

Must-Haves vs. Nice-to-Haves

How to identify the most critical requirements for your next B2B eCommerce platform



Ready for a new B2B eCommerce platform? It can seem like you have too many choices.

More vendors have entered the B2B eCommerce market. And they're actively promoting their B2B-specific features. However, all this choice isn't easy to navigate. Choosing the right eCommerce platform is getting complicated.

According to 44 percent of B2B companies surveyed by Forrester, "developing decision criteria" is very or extremely challenging.¹ These companies also said that they're

counting on their eCommerce platform to help them increase revenue, attract new customers, and boost customer retention. In other words, choosing the right platform is more important than ever.

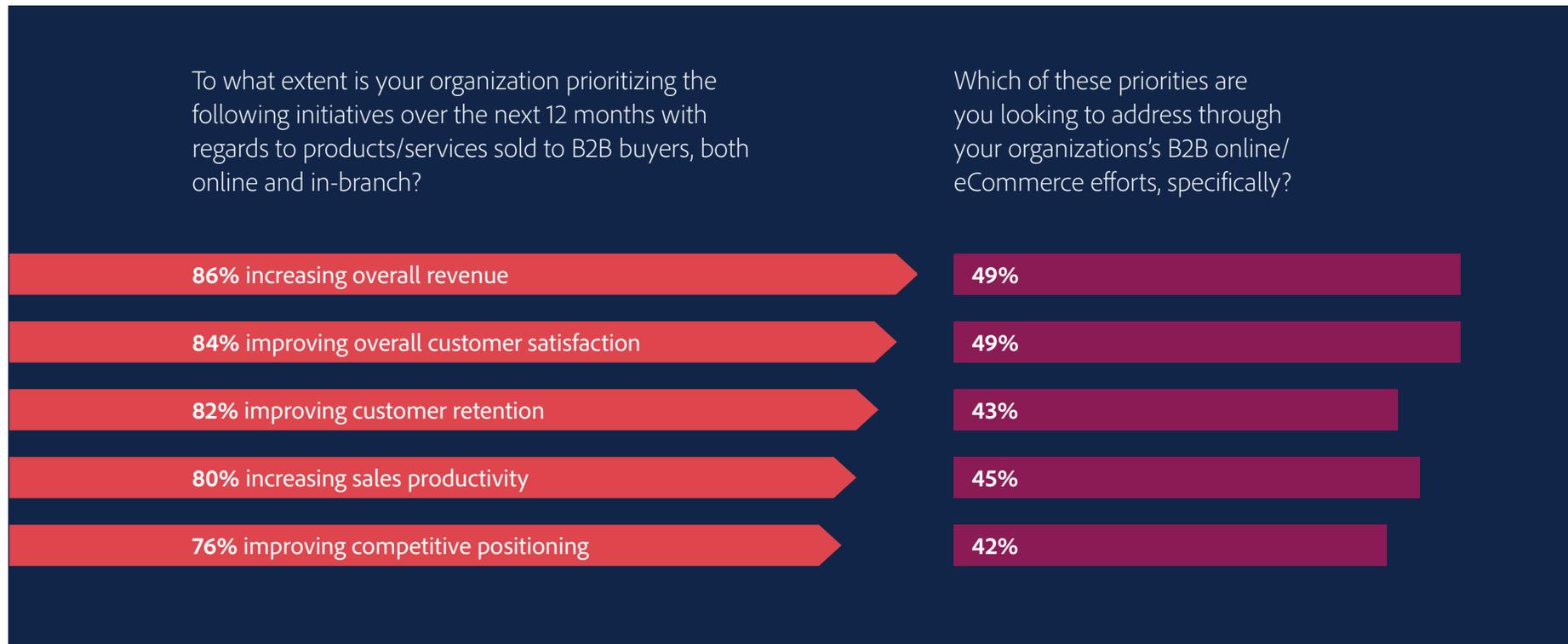
If you're beginning the search for a new B2B eCommerce platform, assembling a solid list of your requirements is the first step.

This eBook can help you separate the must-haves from the nice-to-haves.

¹ Base: 320 IT, eCommerce, sales, and line-of-business (LOB) decision-makers at firms in the US, APAC, and EMEA. Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Magento, March 2018.



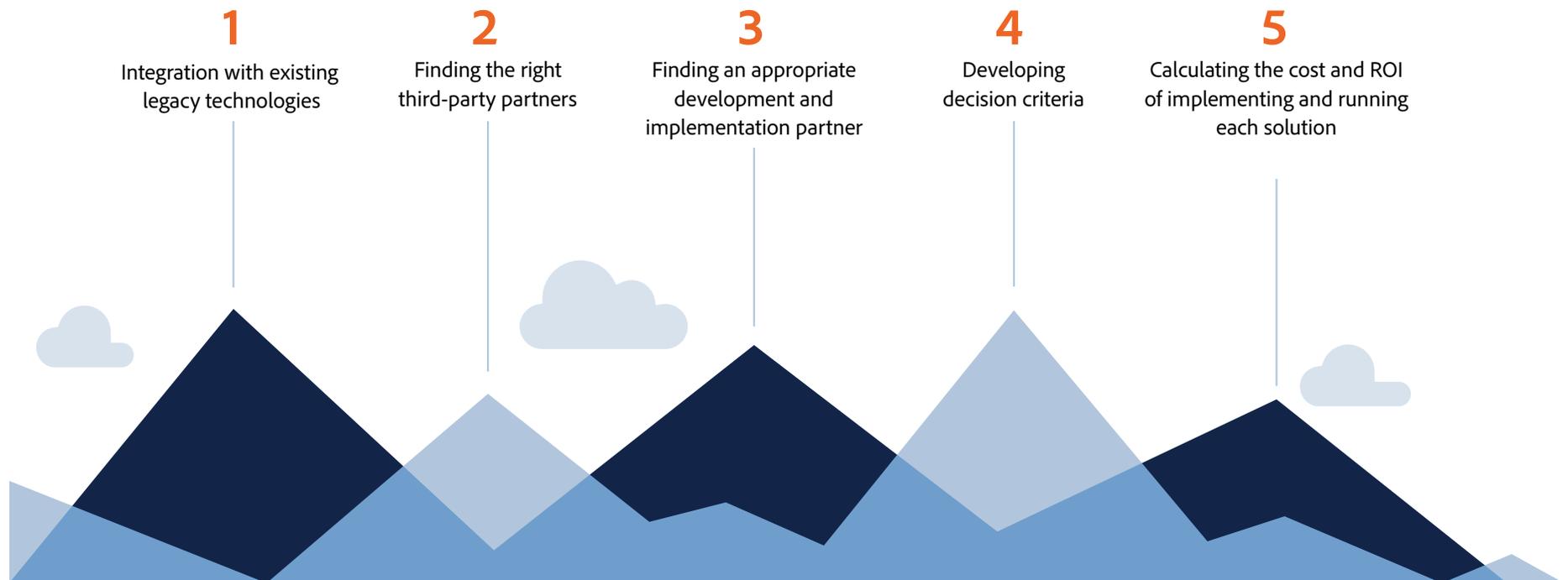
Companies are looking to eCommerce as an important way to achieve their top business goals.



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Top 5 biggest obstacles to adopting a new eCommerce platform

Getting started with a new eCommerce system can sometimes be challenging. And the biggest obstacles just might surprise you. According to research by Forrester, the top 5 challenges cited by eCommerce decision-makers are:



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The answers are out there.

Your eCommerce platform will have a big impact on multiple stakeholders. And that includes sales, customer service, merchandising, and IT as well as your customers. They will all have insights and opinions—and you should take advantage of them.

Interviewing your stakeholders is a great way to begin developing requirements for your next eCommerce platform. These conversations can help you understand, from multiple perspectives, what is and isn't working with your existing

eCommerce platform. And they can identify where more automation is—and isn't—urgently needed.

Interviewing your stakeholders is a great way to begin developing requirements for your next eCommerce platform—and separate the must-haves from the nice-to-haves.

Talk to sales.

eCommerce and sales teams should work seamlessly together, and sales teams often have valuable insights on eCommerce requirements. For example, sales teams may use the eCommerce platform to place orders on customers' behalf. Or they may direct customers with simple orders to the eCommerce site.

Here are some questions you can ask your sales teams:

- What is the purchase process like? Do customers start by requesting a quote? Are multiple approvals necessary?
- How do customers prefer to order? Do their preferences vary by the type of purchasing they do?
- How complex are most orders? How many steps are required? Are complex configurations common?
- Do customers frequently reorder products?
- Where do customers have issues when purchasing online?
- What capabilities do you need to achieve your sales goals and support customers?
- How user friendly is the current solution for sales reps? What would make it easier?
- Is it difficult to get support for the current solution?
- Which sales platforms should eCommerce work with (e.g., Salesforce, Oracle Siebel, SAP, etc.)?

eCommerce and sales teams should work seamlessly together.

Talk to customers.

Nearly half of B2B businesses hope their eCommerce platform will increase customer satisfaction. And it's widely recognized that self-service options are a win-win. Customers get service on demand, and you get lower costs. But different customers and industries can vary a lot. The best way to understand what kinds of eCommerce features your customers would like is to...well, ask them.

Here are some questions you can ask your customers:

- Can you always find the information you need, when you need it? If not, what can we do better? (More information, better navigation, better search, more personalized information, etc.)
- How easy is it to buy from us? What would make it easier?
- What do you find most frustrating about our existing website?
- How is our mobile site experience? Are there certain features that are difficult to use or content that is hard to consume?
- What do you think about our billing and payments processes? Could they be easier, more automated?
- What do you think of our account management tools? Are there other tasks you'd like to be able to manage or information you want to have at your fingertips?
- What other capabilities would help make your experience easier?
- What other sites do you think are better?

The best way to understand what kinds of eCommerce features your customers would like is to...well, ask them.

Talk to customer service.

Customer service picks up the slack when something goes wrong with eCommerce. They handle returns, refunds, exceptions, errors, and other problems. A conversation with customer service can help illuminate what may be going wrong with your current eCommerce process—and what you may need to do to fix it.

Here are some questions you can ask your customer service team:

- When do customers call you to place an order vs. using the online solution?
- What are the most common errors customers make when ordering online or managing their online account?
- Where do customers get confused when using the site?
- What important capabilities are missing from our current solution (i.e., What use cases are not served)?
- What questions (product/process) are not adequately answered through the current commerce experience?
- Is there anything you'd change about our eCommerce platform?
- Do customers mention other sites as being better or great places to buy from?

Customer service can tell you what may be going wrong with your current eCommerce process—and what you might do to fix it.

Talk to marketing and merchandising.

Marketing and merchandising teams are content creators. They serve customers during the all-important research phase and help them find the information they need. They may do it through advanced site navigation, search tools, promotions, and personalized content. Talking with marketing and merchandising teams can reveal how well your eCommerce platform helps move customers from consideration to purchase.

Here are some questions you can ask your marketing and merchandising teams:

- What tools do you currently use to create content, landing pages, promotions, etc.?
- Can you add new or update existing products without IT? If so, how much time does it take? How many steps are involved?
- How quickly can you create and update content? Can you launch new content without IT?

- Does your site support rich content like documents, videos, multiple images, and user-generated content?
- What challenges do you face when managing sites for different regions and brands?

- Can you easily access analytics that tell you how your content and promotions are performing?
- Which aspects of your site are hardest to manage? How often do you find yourself calling IT?

Talking with marketing and merchandising teams can reveal how well your eCommerce platform helps move customers from consideration to purchase.

Talk to IT.

IT can help you nail down technical requirements for your system. They can also let you know what they can do to implement eCommerce—and what you may need a solution or development partner to handle.

Here are some questions you can ask IT:

- What are minimum requirements for the following: Performance? Uptime? Security? Compatibility with existing infrastructure? Integration with CRM, ERP, and other systems?
- How long did it take to build the current platform? What challenges did you face?
- What are your biggest problems with the current platform? Is it slow? Prone to downtime? Expensive and/or time-consuming to maintain? Are features limited or difficult to customize?
- How much time do you spend supporting internal teams who use the platform? What are users' biggest pain points?
- What would you like to change most about the current platform?
- Where do you think we may need help from a solution provider?

IT can help you nail down technical requirements for your system.

Talk to your solution partner.

One of the advantages of working with a solution partner is their wealth of experience from working with eCommerce businesses like yours. They can help you identify which platforms will best fit your business and requirements. This means you can move straight to your shortlist without a lengthy research phase.

Here are some questions you can ask your solution partner:

- Do you think we've outgrown our eCommerce platform? Why or why not?
- What will happen if we don't choose a new platform? How urgent is our selection process?
- Which platforms do you think are the best fit for our requirements? Is there one you'd recommend the most?

- How many platforms should we include on our shortlist?
- What are must-have capabilities or characteristics to look for in commerce platforms?

- How should we approach the platform review process? How much time does it take, and who should be involved?

Your solution partner can help you go straight to a shortlist of platforms without a lengthy research phase.

Pulling it all together

After you've gotten information from sales teams, customers, customer service, and IT, you should have a lot of good ideas. The notes from your conversations can be a starting point for building your list of requirements.

If you're really pressed for time, consider enlisting your solution partner to suggest requirements and vendors, or even manage the entire selection process.

Most popular criteria for B2B platforms

According to a Forrester survey of midsized B2B companies, the top 5 most popular criteria for choosing an eCommerce platform are:

- 1 Performance and reliability
- 2 Solution completeness
- 3 Support for both B2B and B2C requirements
- 4 Integration with existing systems
- 5 Ease of customization to meet my needs



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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