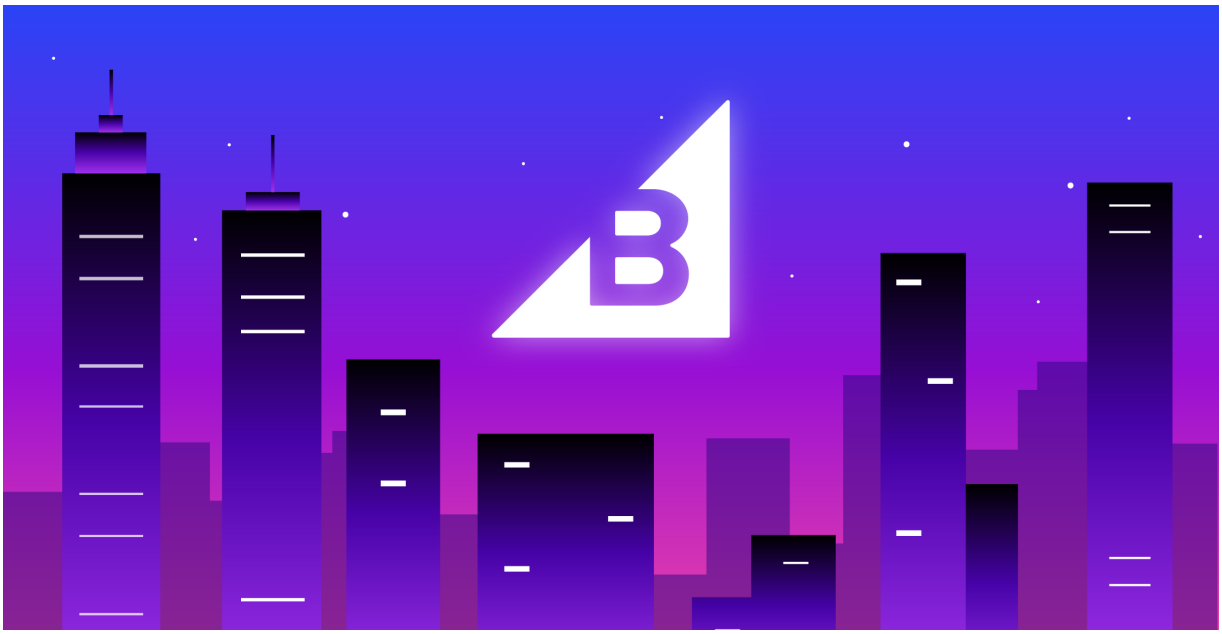
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Choosing the Best B2B Ecommerce Platform to Meet Today's Buyers



For as much as the business-to-business landscape has changed over the years, so have B2B buyers.

Expectations have skyrocketed for all parties as well. Sellers crave a modern B2B platform that's easy to use and meets demand, while buyers desire an ideal user experience on an online store that includes a frictionless checkout process and supreme customer service.

"Ecommerce will become even more central to the B2B buying journey," Lance Olwide, B2B General Manager at BigCommerce, predicted to start 2024. "B2B businesses selling in-warehouse, through EDI, and through sales teams on the phone, over email, and at trade shows, will use ecommerce as the central portal where buyers can view, manage, and update all of their interactions, including placing quote requests, re-ordering, and paying invoices."

Considering B2B ecommerce is estimated to reach over $2 trillion in 2024, and with 74% of B2B buyers using ecommerce sites to purchase products, it's safe to assume the shift online will only

continue to grow.

That means having a strong ecommerce platform — the place B2B companies can sell goods or services through online transactions between businesses — is paramount to success.

B2B ecommerce platform selection factors

There is no shortage of options to find the best ecommerce platform to fit your business, but reviewing these factors can help narrow down specific needs and potential impacts.

Type of B2B business.

Different types of B2B companies will have different needs. When researching a solution, organizations must first understand the differences between them:

- **Wholesale**: Wholesale ecommerce is a business-to-business (B2B ecommerce) model where, instead of selling your products individually to consumers, you sell them in bulk and at a discount to other businesses.
- **Manufacturers**: Manufacturers produce finished goods on a large scale by utilizing parts and raw materials in combination with manual labor and machines. In a B2B model, the finished goods are sold to other manufacturers, suppliers, or wholesalers.
- **Distributors**: Distributors work closely with manufacturers to bring visibility to the goods they are producing, to increase sales and move their products along the distribution channel.
- **B2B2C**: Business-to-business-to-consumer (B2B2C) ecommerce takes out the middleman, usually between the B2B organization and the B2C, putting the businesses directly in contact with the consumer.

Business software integrations.

If you're an organization that uses many different, essential business software — such as ERP integrations, PIM, CRM, and more — then finding an ecommerce platform that can integrate with them is crucial.

No company wants to find itself in a situation where it has spent money and time investing in an ecommerce platform, only to find out that it doesn't work with the software you currently have in real-time. That's more than just a waste of time and effort — it's a loss of potential revenue.

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The most highly-rated commerce platforms provide a solution that connects all of your B2B ecommerce software in one easy package without holding you back.

Security.

Security is the number one priority for many customers when selecting a platform. Ensuring that their data is safe is critical to their implementation of your service and its ultimate success.

An ecommerce platform dedicated to B2B needs to be able to provide security when it comes to credit card and customer data, fraud protection, SSL certificates, and more.

If that wasn't enough, dedicated security programs can help prevent your site from cyber attacks and ultimately, help to increase your SEO ranking. It pays to be secure.

Cost.

This isn't only about the cost of the ecommerce platform. There are also internal costs of getting the website up and running, maintaining it, and so much more.

From various sales channels and marketplaces like Amazon to payment gateways and product catalogs to streamline workflows and automation, B2B sellers have a lot to focus on, and the cost of it all must be considered.

Customization.

Providing a customizable, flexible solution is a must for B2B ecommerce platforms. Long gone are the days when companies could simply release a ready-made, all-in-one solution and have it work for every company and individual. Technology has grown rapidly — specificity is king.

Ecommerce platforms that provide extensive customization are more likely to attract merchants and customers. The main reason for this? Scalability. Organizations that experience extreme growth or are preparing for it need a solution that can grow alongside them.

Businesses across the world have realized this and are offering solutions with increased functionality and designs — without the additional costs. With methods like headless commerce becoming increasingly popular, the desirability of customization appears only to be growing as well.

Essential B2B ecommerce platform features

Let's take a closer look at some of the most essential features to look for in B2B ecommerce websites and platforms:

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Access restriction options.

B2B ecommerce businesses are often more complex than B2C ecommerce businesses. Due to the nuances and rules often associated with selling to other companies, you need to be able to manipulate your ecommerce platform to solve for differing buyer experiences, depending on the user.

Because of this, your B2B ecommerce software of choice should give you the option to allow or restrict access to certain parts of your site on an individual basis.

Pricing, payment, and ordering customization.

B2B businesses have many moving parts. Between customer management tools, fulfillment centers, and punchout catalogs, several different systems need to work together to create a unified order management and customization system.

Ensure your B2B commerce platform allows for transactional options in one unified solution since having several tools that don't work together will result in disorganization, confusion, and potential problems with inventory management and order fulfillment.

This is particularly relevant if you are a hybrid business offering both B2C and wholesale channels since reducing channel conflict and management are pivotal to your business.

B2B buyers are also keen on custom pricing and discounts, so finding a B2B platform that helps set up pricing and discounts for customer groups can be beneficial.

Heavy focus on customer experience.

Whenever brands look to create an ecommerce site, one thing is the most important: the user experience.

B2B customers need to resonate with your brand and your site's user experience and user interface (UX/UI) to make their experience more satisfying and enjoyable.

As more and more B2B businesses move toward an enhanced UX/UI with optimization options, your best bet is to identify a platform with the personalization option you need.

Integrating customer reviews and having strong customer support goes a long way, too.

Frictionless, secure checkout.

A website can have all of the bells and whistles, beautiful templates, and plug-ins to help navigate the site better, but none of that truly matters without a good checkout experience.

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While B2B-specific functions are needed — such as PO invoicing, ACH, and bulk ordering — buyers are looking for a frictionless, secure checkout process.

In fact, according to a BigCommerce survey of B2B buyers, checkout security was a major concern in the UK (30%), AU (21%), and the U.S. (20%).

Without it, businesses could look elsewhere.

Easy to add new channels.

The omnichannel experience has changed modern ecommerce, allowing businesses to operate in a multi-channel approach, from physical storefronts to online platforms and social media. A unified experience across all channels helps to increase sales and bring about a more pleasant customer experience.

When researching platform features, finding one that prioritizes omnichannel must be an essential part of the process. With how much the shopping experience has changed in the last decade, being able to sell to customers in every channel they operate in is one of the keys to business success.

Why BigCommerce is a top option

BigCommerce is one of the leading open SaaS ecommerce platforms, internationally known for its low total cost of ownership and highly flexible APIs.

BigCommerce offers its customers a variety of B2B features and add-ons not found in competing for software solutions to deliver a modern, frictionless ecommerce experience.

The BigCommerce platform also makes it easy for hybrid businesses with both B2B and B2C customers to offer different price lists or catalogs to customer groups In other words, you can provide for both B2B and B2C in one unified solution.

“BigCommerce gives us the scalability, flexibility, and openness we need to be able to go in, make changes, and implement them right at the moment we need to,” Jed Simpson, General Manager at TYGRIS, said.

What BigCommerce brings to the table.

What separates BigCommerce from other B2B solutions? Features.

BigCommerce B2B Edition’s next-level features make the buying process more manageable and less complex for your customers by providing the following features:

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- **Price lists and customer groups**: Provide custom pricing down to the SKU level, bulk buying discounts, and promotions.
- **Buy again**: Let users view and quickly reorder all previously purchased products.
- **Payment method visibility control:**Add, edit, show, or hide approved payment options for customers.
- **Set buyer roles and permissions**: Enable customers to create a complete corporate account profile and set up multiple tiers of buyers.
- **Buyer portal**: Help reduce operational burden and enhance the buyer/customer relationship with a system to efficiently manage orders, quotes, and workflows.
- **Invoice portal**: Allow customers to easily manage and pay invoices online with multiple payment options.
- **Customer requested quotes:** Let customers add items to their cart and automatically request a quote for their order.

Furthermore, BigCommerce offers business the ability to combine the front-end and back-end of their ecommerce store with headless commerce, which offers additional benefits including:

- **Accelerated growth**: No limitations or boundaries. Your business growth is determined simply by your ability to scale into multi-territory, multi-language and multi-currency.
- **Future-proof online shopping experiences**: Get the flexibility to adapt to technological disruptions and developments.
- **Greater personalization**: Create highly customized, modern and personalized front-end experiences on multiple channels.

No other ecommerce platform offers the multitude and variety of features, modules, and marketing tools available at BigCommerce, which was named a “Leader” in the IDC MarketScape: Worldwide B2B Digital Commerce Applications for Midmarket Growth 2023-2024 Vendor Assessment.

Other B2B ecommerce platform options include: Adobe Commerce (formerly Magento), NetSuite SuiteCommerce, OpenCart, OroCommerce, Salesforce Commerce Cloud, Shift4Shop, Shopify Plus, and WooCommerce.

The final word

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As B2B buyer demands continue to increase and evolve, B2B companies will need to live up to those expectations in order to remain competitive.

That all starts with the right ecommerce platform that will help your business thrive and deliver a great customer experience.

Understanding the essential features and functionalities to meet your business needs right now is a great first step to success on a new B2B platform.

FAQs about B2B ecommerce solutions

What is the difference between B2B and B2C ecommerce platforms?

B2B and B2C ecommerce platforms are tailored to meet the distinct needs of their audiences. B2B platforms focus on business buyers, offering features like bulk ordering, custom pricing, account management, and ERP/CRM integration. These tools support complex purchasing workflows and foster long-term business relationships. On the other hand, B2C platforms prioritize a simple, user-friendly experience with quick checkout, personalized recommendations, and easy navigation—all designed for individual consumers seeking convenient, one-time purchases.

How do I select the right B2B ecommerce platform for my business?

The complexity and size of your company will influence what ecommerce platform is the best fit for your business needs. One business may need to ensure your ecommerce platform provider can integrate all digital and physical customer touchpoints. In contrast, another might need a B2B ecommerce solution that provides self-service or has significant reordering or SEO capabilities. It ultimately depends on your business model and what you are trying to accomplish. There are many B2B ecommerce software options out there that offer partner ecosystems that can meet your online shops' needs.

What are the benefits of selling on a B2B platform?

With the help of a B2B ecommerce platform, you can achieve the following items: New business opportunities Improve B2B sales Lower your overall costs Reach new markets

How does a B2B ecommerce platform integrate with ERP and CRM systems?

Integrating a B2B ecommerce platform with ERP and CRM systems is crucial for streamlining operations and delivering a unified experience across all business functions. Here are the key ways to make this happen: API Integrations: APIs allow real-time data flow between the

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ecommerce platform and ERP/CRM systems, so inventory, orders, and customer information stay accurate and up-to-date. Middleware Solutions: Middleware serves as a bridge, facilitating data exchange and compatibility between systems that may not naturally connect. Built-in Connectors: Many B2B ecommerce platforms offer pre-built connectors for popular ERP and CRM systems, making integration easier and faster. Batch Data Syncing: For companies that don't require real-time updates, scheduled data syncing ensures information is refreshed at regular intervals, balancing accuracy with system performance. These integration methods provide a seamless flow of information, enabling businesses to manage complex transactions more efficiently and maintain strong customer relationships.

What's the best B2B ecommerce platform?

The best B2B ecommerce platform is likely determined by the needs of each business, but there are several options, including BigCommerce. BigCommerce has next-level features and was named a "Leader" in the IDC MarketScape: Worldwide B2B Digital Commerce Applications for Midmarket Growth 2023-2024 Vendor Assessment.

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