



SAP Customer Experience | PUBLIC
SAP Commerce Cloud

Winning in B2B Commerce

Preparing Your Business for a Bright Digital Future

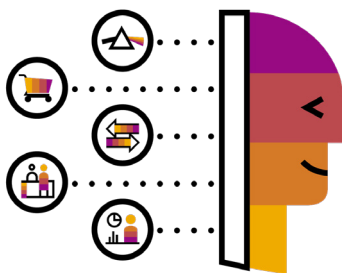
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No one would say that the last two years have been “business as usual”. And it’s looking more and more like “usual” may never return.

Buyers and sellers have adapted to more online and less in-person commerce, knowing that the ideal situation is a combination of both. How do you optimize presenting and delivering your offerings to customers – current and potential? How do you quickly capitalize on new opportunities?

In this white paper you’ll discover how businesses like yours are **preparing for the future of commerce.**



Laying the Groundwork for **Business Transformation Through E-Commerce**

HOW TO LEAD IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD ECONOMY

Tremendous upheaval. Once-in-a-century opportunity. The pandemic has B2B businesses facing both. Businesses typically respond in one of three ways: accelerate their digital transformation to become a leader by outpacing the competition and capitalizing on new opportunities; stay with the status quo and run the business as usual; or, become a laggard and lose market share by failing to adapt to the rapidly changing marketplace.

What have we seen so far? When the pandemic was first declared in early 2020, many B2B businesses struggled to react, with a large percentage of offices, factories, and warehouses closing in response to public health requirements. Predictably, order volume plummeted, then somewhat stabilized by year end.

When vaccines began rolling out in early 2021 and the economy began to recover – albeit in fits and starts – order volume followed suit and rebounded impressively. However, the size of those orders remained repressed, as a largely online workforce meant businesses were placing smaller orders overall. Also, supply chain woes continued to restrict companies' abilities to fulfill larger orders.

Not only do these overall pandemic-driven trends remain, but the overall societal shift towards online interactions will forever alter the future of B2B buying and selling, making digital transformation essential.

As the crisis continues, one important lesson we've learned is that while in-person sales are not an absolute necessity – maintaining individualized, high-touch relationships with customers definitely is. This reality is changing the nature of customer relationships and driving new revenue-generating opportunities.

DID YOU KNOW?

over 30%

of B2B technology buyers already make their initial purchases through a digital channel¹

24%

of all global B2B purchases are rep-assisted e-commerce – even when preferring online channels, buyers value a live helper¹

1: [Forrester, Future-Proof Your B2B Commerce Strategy to Meet Customers Where They Buy, March 8th 2021 by Joe Cicman](#)

OPPORTUNITY AWAITS. HOW WILL YOU LEAD? WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD YOU TAKE?

The specific answers for every enterprise will be different, but the key principles to consider are similar. Here are three principles to guide your leadership journey:



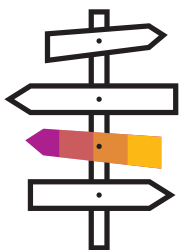
Consider your end goals

One key goal is often to interact with and respond to each customer like you know them well. And do it quickly with accurate commitments you can keep. But what that means for a consumer products company will likely be quite different for a high-tech manufacturer. Your journey will be easier if you have a single platform that can grow and scale with your business through this decade and well beyond – to enable not just digital transformation, but also digital differentiation.



Evaluate the end-to-end commerce picture

Ensure freedom of choice both in front-end flexibility and back-end functionality. Think resilient solutions that can grow and adapt as the world, and your business, change, no matter what the next year, or decade, brings. Remember the complete customer experience – providing a simple and connected journey to every visitor from initial discovery, to purchase, to a complete, on-time delivery as promised – goes way beyond your User Interface and requires a unified commerce strategy.



Embrace the commerce journey

To begin, ensure the KPIs your organization prioritizes are focused on customer satisfaction. On your commerce journey, continuously measure, learn, and refine. Just as opportunities and challenges evolve, customer preferences change: expect and plan to continuously improve. Agility – underpinned by a unified vision and CX platform – is key to thriving in an ever-changing world. In other words: Be the disruptor, not the disrupted.

THE WAY FORWARD STARTS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Both business evolution and market trends demonstrate the benefit of building better relationships with customers, and working with them in their preferred manner. That will require providing a seamless customer experience across touch points from initial interest to delivery and service, promoting repeat business through personalized marketing and sales engagements, and perhaps even adopting a subscription model. To accomplish this, you'll need to not only get all your internal

departments on the same page, but you'll need transparent and comprehensive visibility of suppliers' and vendors' information to ensure you can quote accurately, bundle, cross-sell, and upsell effectively, and deliver-to-promise.

Businesses leading in this changing environment are capitalizing on direct-to-consumer omnichannel experiences, combining end-to-end supply chain visibility with excellent customer service, and driving enhanced value throughout their ecosystem by strengthening customer and partner relationships.

Future of Commerce: Direct-to-Consumer

Delight Customers with a Unified, Omnichannel Experience

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER (D2C)

Your e-commerce goal today cannot be to simply provide good customer experience in individual channels — it should be to provide an excellent, unified, omnichannel customer experience at all touchpoints in the customer journey.

You want your customers to feel they are dealing with the same company, having the same experience, and getting the same information whether they're using a mobile app, a commerce solution, or placing a phone call to a sales agent.

That's especially true in today's global marketplace, where many people prefer to

purchase online directly from the OEM or manufacturer, with the option to engage with a person as needed.

There are several tantalizing competitive advantages to consider, including everything from managing the process and the purchasing experience to getting products and services to market faster. D2C also offers a wealth of insight about consumers — trends and preferences, as well as positioning.

The key questions are: What steps can you take to put an effective D2C model in place? How can you implement new technology and processes without alienating distributors and other channel partners, while providing a unified, satisfying customer experience?



Understanding customers and their wants and needs is at the heart of any D2C evolution. Get insights into their online shopping habits and all the touchpoints in their buying journeys before you start designing your solution.



A successful D2C channel requires visibility of the end-to-end customer lifecycle. Operationally, this new line of business requires new infrastructure and data-driven capabilities for the right UX, easy checkout, the ability to deliver-to-promise, and for managing direct customer data.



You must balance your D2C channel with existing business through distributors, dealers, or other intermediaries. You might offer different products/services directly, or provide separate bulk pricing to distributors. Or you might rely on distributors for implementation and support of D2C sales.

Case Study: Defining a D2C Model for Digital Success

CHALLENGE

A global engineering partner for technology leaders needed to improve the way it connected with its small- and mid-sized customers. The business wanted to create an improved, frictionless buying experience directly to the end customer.

SOLUTION

Capgemini helped bring the client's transformational vision to life and created a unique digital business model that enabled direct contact between the company and small- to mid-sized customers. Capgemini's SAP delivery team built a robust digital experience on SAP Commerce Cloud and the UI on Adobe Experience Manager to enable customers to buy products directly from the manufacturer, allowing the company to create and own the customer relationship. The solution provided value to B2B partners by showing pricing and inventory.

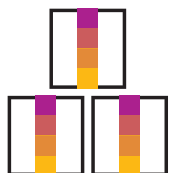
IMPACT

>65%

of online customers
new to the brand



Enhanced customer and
distributor engagement
with profitable penetration
of new markets and
geographies



Doubled conversion rate
with free shipping options

70%

drop in abandoned-cart
rates with redesigned
checkout process



Future of Commerce: End-to-End Supply Chain Visibility

Transparently Deliver to Promise ... Every Time

END-TO-END SUPPLY CHAIN VISIBILITY

B2B commerce continues to evolve. Customers today want answers – and they don't want to wait. Are the items in stock? If not, what's the lead time? Is anything backordered? For this order, what's my price? Can I start the order on the web and easily finish it with an agent or on a mobile app? And soon, the sustainability question will come up.

To answer such questions, you need an end-to-end view of your business from front to back office, and one that also supports a world-class

customer experience (CX). That means more than just a great user interface, but a convenient and relevant end-to-end experience – from presales and purchasing to delivery and support – driven by a tightly integrated enterprise ecosystem.

How do you deliver seamless and frictionless experiences across all touchpoints throughout the customer journey? It's not as simple as just deploying new technology. True transformation requires a radical change in both process and culture to conquer business and technology silos, and to drive and grow commerce.

FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS



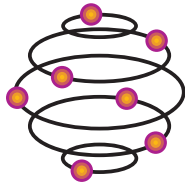
Embrace Digital Commerce

Create a seamless online shopping and ordering experience based on journey optimization. Because B2B commerce is frequently more complex than B2C commerce, you'll need to map out the customer journey for each buyer persona: identify pain points and bottlenecks and create optimized paths that result in seamless, successful transactions.



Personalize Order Management

Order management should be transparent to your customers, allowing them to manage every aspect of their order from the shopping cart to delivery. How the product is packaged, how it is shipped, and how it's billed and financed should be customer-configurable – giving them control over their entire experience.



Deploy a Modernized Architecture for Today – and the Future

“Digital transformation” once meant simply stitching disparate legacy applications together through custom integrations. Now, however, it demands a more modern approach. Whether in the form of a headless or composable commerce architecture, or a microservices-enhanced platform environment, you need to enable a “commerce everywhere” model that allows you to easily add or replace capabilities on your platform to fuel new channels, business models, and selling strategies. The goal? No matter how a customer engages – through desktop, call center, mobile device, in-store kiosk, or in-person – they’ll receive a consistent, relevant, and frictionless experience.



Build Sustainability into Your Design

Can you use IoT sensors and artificial intelligence to monitor products to optimize performance, and recommend repairs before costly failures? Can you build products with modularity so that repairs are easier? Or when a product reaches the end of its usefulness, can costly components be reused/remanufactured? Can you track carbon with data on logistics, operations, and packaging, and use the data to monitor, measure, and reduce carbon emissions? The better your answers to these questions, the better for your customers – and the environment.

Case Study: Expanding Market Presence and Improving Responsiveness

CHALLENGE

A leading material handling company in Asia-Pacific sought a digital transformation of its business selling equipment such as industrial cranes, hoists, and lift hoists, as well as supporting spare parts – a total of over 13,000 products. A sophisticated ERP user, it wanted to extend automation to allow 24/7 e-commerce that integrates with other systems so as to maximize responsiveness, and further reduce the time between purchase and delivery. It also wanted to support the burgeoning market for rentals.

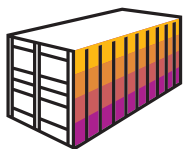
SOLUTION

By adding SAP Commerce Cloud to its infrastructure, with full integration to its ERP (inventory and finance) systems, it was able to reduce cost-per-sale, reach new customers, and serve existing customers faster and better. Its webshop is now available 24/7 for purchase or rental of equipment and parts, including the entire range of products and services, along with technical configurations.

IMPACT

96%

reduction in time
to create quotations
and process orders



Faster delivery, with
webshop backed by an
integrated supply chain in
a regional distribution
network

60%

faster forecasting



Immediate updates to
catalog pricing and
configurations through
advanced Product
Information Management
(PIM) capabilities



Future of Commerce: Lead Your Market Through Value-Driven Customer and Partner Relationships

Profit by Managing the End-to-End Customer and Partner Lifecycle

Business buyers today have higher expectations than their forebearers – primarily because they're accustomed to the convenient, channel-agnostic, and personally relevant experiences they enjoy as digital consumers. As more Millennial and Gen Z professionals gain buying authority in the workplace, their collective preference for simple, self-served, and personalized buying experiences today is increasingly defining the megatrends of tomorrow.

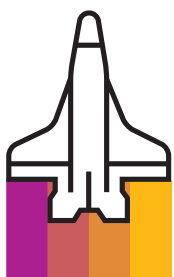
In addition to that, nobody would describe today's average B2B enterprise as simple. Beyond attracting and serving a complex customer base, a large B2B company must also manage large global networks of supply, channel, and distribution partners. Far more than product, logistics, and delivery service providers, this "value network" enables the business to deliver a

better customer experience, go to market quickly with new products and services, reduce costs, and gain shared insights that help optimize the brand's evolving strategy.

These two overarching factors mean B2B brands need a way to effectively manage multiple types of business relationships. Unfortunately, many enterprises struggle to engage early-stage prospects, meet aggressive pipeline goals, quickly and efficiently onboard users, and effectively manage partner and customer relationships across their lifecycle. What, then, is needed to deliver better business outcomes for prospects, customers, and partners?

DELIVERING BETTER BUSINESS OUTCOMES

Here are three core elements for fostering trusted, valued, and data-driven B2B customer and partner relationships:



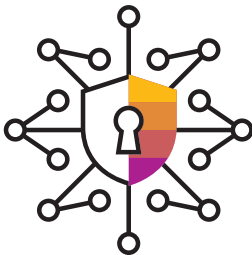
Accelerate Time-to-Market

Get to value faster through frictionless, personalized, self-service customer and partner onboarding and administration. Offer frictionless, self-service registration options to prospects and customers to make it easier to engage and convert in the moment. Provide comprehensive delegated administration to partners that allows even the largest and most complex organizations to manage their own users and accelerate time-to-value. Then, build rich, permission-based customer profiles that help you deliver personalized experiences based on trust and transparency.



Simplify End-to-End Customer and Partner Lifecycle Management

Reduce IT complexities and increase revenue while lowering costs across every aspect of the value chain. Ensure your solution has policy-based access management capabilities and can manage complex administration at scale through flexible, system-wide single sign-on (SSO) capabilities for every user, as well as self-service administration for partners. Also, ensure a wide variety of out-of-the-box integrations are available so you get the most from your customer data across the enterprise – up front and over the long haul.



Protect Your Business from Risk

As a B2B enterprise, you likely share sensitive data and valuable intellectual property with partners. And changes are inevitable: mergers and acquisitions, new applications, the addition and deletion of contract resources, and so on. To establish and maintain trust across your value network, limit access to sensitive data to authorized stakeholders only – no matter their channel of access – and ensure the data itself is secured at the highest level and according to regional standards. To manage global regulatory requirements, honor your users' rights as data subjects by giving them full visibility and control of their personal data. Also, ensure all customer profile, consent, and preference data is always aligned, hygienic, and audit ready.

ACCELERATE, SIMPLIFY, AND PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS TO DELIVER ON YOUR PROMISE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERS

The old adage “time is money” has never rung truer than in today’s complex B2B selling environment. If the future of business buying is effortless, self-served, and mobile, make sure you have the tools to deliver an experience your customers expect, while running a streamlined environment that empowers partners to get the most value out of their relationship with your brand.

See this [Futurum report](#) to learn how your organization can streamline and increase the value of both your customer and partner relationships.

IN CONCLUSION

We’ve seen how shifting market trends are incentivizing B2B brands to innovate new direct-to-consumer business models, gain better visibility and real-time control of demand signals and supply chains, and build stronger, value-driven relationships with customers and partners. Of course, the ability to achieve these outcomes depends on establishing a strong technological footprint and building a customer-centric organizational structure and culture.

To learn more about the technical and organizational elements needed to drive more agile e-commerce strategy and build a sustainably profitable digital business, access our latest report:

[**“Winning in B2B Commerce: Technology, Architecture, People, and Processes”**](#)

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responsible and diverse organization of 325,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong 55-year heritage and deep industry expertise, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to address the entire breadth of their business needs, from strategy and design to operations.

Fueled by the fast evolving and innovative world of cloud, data, AI, connectivity, software, digital engineering and platforms, The Group reported in 2021 global revenues of €18 billion.

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