



Insider Secrets to B2B Ecommerce Success



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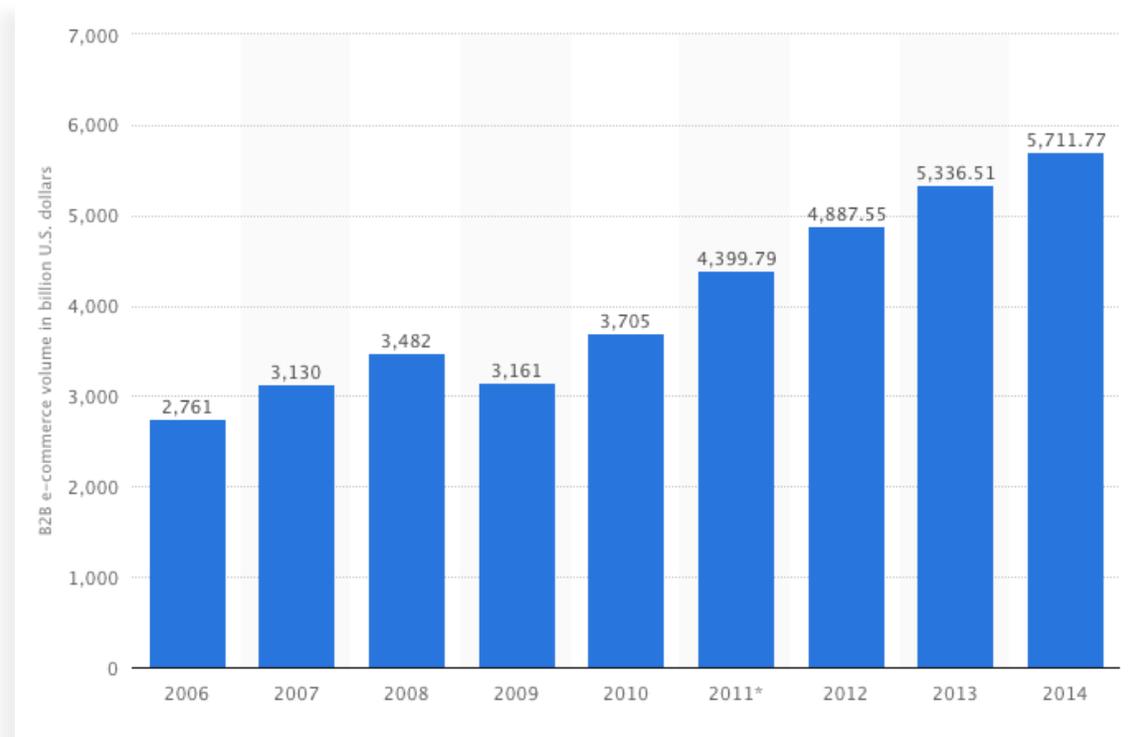
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What is B2B ecommerce and why should I sell online?

B2B ecommerce, or business-to-business electronic commerce, describes online order transactions between businesses. Because orders are processed digitally, buying efficiency is improved for wholesalers, manufacturers, distributors and other types of B2B sellers.

The B2B ecommerce space is growing rapidly. By all the most recent reports, analysts have forecasted that global B2B ecommerce revenue [will top \\$6.7 trillion by 2020](#). As of 2014, U.S. B2B ecommerce alone had already surpassed \$5 trillion in revenue.



Source: [Statista](#)

And yet, as of 2014, only 22% of B2B businesses in the U.S. were selling online.



Source: Statista

That’s a lot of revenue for less than a quarter of the businesses in the market for it. So, what’s holding B2B businesses up? Well, a few misconceptions might be the culprit to begin with.

B2B ecommerce misconceptions

1. The belief they don't sell "B2B." i.e. What is B2B ecommerce?

The number one reason many brands say they aren't [selling B2B](#) is because they don't realize they are already doing it. Selling B2B is a variety of things, including:

- Wholesale
- Distribution relationships with large or chain retailers
- Selling to organizations (schools, businesses, non-profits)
- Supplier selling to resellers

You do not have to be a supplier in order to sell B2B. Many online brands [are both B2B and B2C](#) — one such brand is Flexfire LEDs, which [receives 80% of its revenue from B2B sales](#) — and many of these brands even use their same homepage for each audience, segmenting into customer groups for individual merchant accounts.

Assurant's MyWit site is a great example. [Assurant launched a business-to-employee ecommerce website with BigCommerce](#), saw incredible growth and then used that same site to sell B2B and B2C.

Now, through customer groups, the site is segmented for Assurant employees, wholesalers and regular retail customers.

Register to receive exclusive MyWIT discounts and savings!

mywitSM Sign in or Create an account 0 Items in Cart

Shop Employees Partners About Contact Us

Search

We understand the value of quality and reliability.

Always free shipping

SHOP NOW

Phones Tablets Accessories All

Why we're different

- Camera function
- Battery test
- Volume buttons
- Wear & tear
- Touch Screen sensitivity
- Speaker test
- Home button test
- Rate cosmetic condition
- Check for 100% functionality

Why we're different

- 65 Point inspection
- 30 Day Money back promise
- USA Sourced & repaired

Purchases shipped within 24 hours (Sunday - Thursday)

That said, many B2B sellers are indeed suppliers – but that isn't the only type of B2B business out there.

2. The belief B2B customers don't want to order online.

As the new generation comes to managerial and purchasing power age, their preferred method of purchasing (ecommerce) will surpass older processes.

In general, [B2B customers want to see their B2C conveniences transfer over.](#)

- 72% of B2B customers want self-service access to accounts and orders
- 64% of B2B customers want scheduled deliveries

3. The belief ecommerce requires price transparency.

With low margins and fierce competitors looking to underbid a B2B business, many brands don't want their prices available to the public.

This safeguarding of the supply chain is understandable — and it's why many ecommerce solutions offer price availability only after a customer logs in.

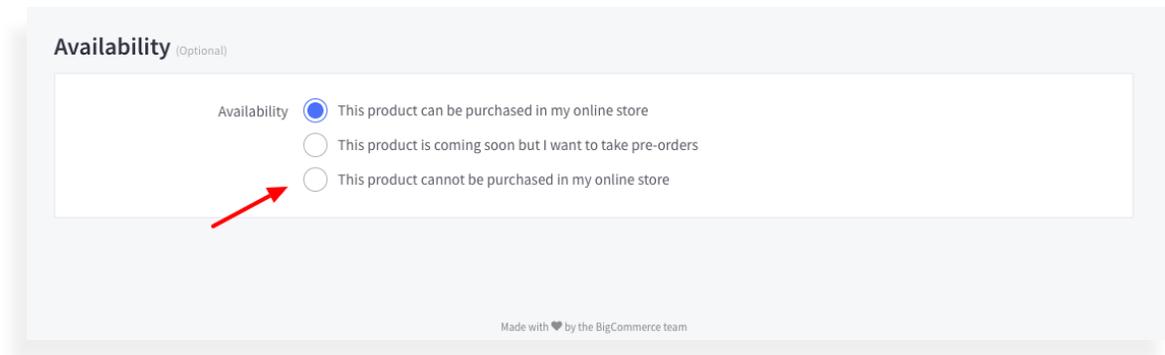
This means only your customers see the prices — and that prices can be presented exactly as negotiated for individual customers.

Customer Groups **Wholesale and partner groups get unique prices.**
You can set these up for each individual customer as needed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Group Name	Discount	Customer Group Discounts	Customers in Group	Action
<input type="checkbox"/>	Design or Marketing Firm	10.00% Discount	30	9 (View)	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Retail (default)	\$0.00 Discount	0	4132 (View)	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tax Exempt	\$0.00 Discount	0	29 (View)	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wholesale	15.00% Discount	33	38 (View)	...

Made with ❤️ by the BigCommerce team

You can also use your site to enable product visibility, but require customers who are not logged in to their customer groups (likely a prospect) to call in to get prices.



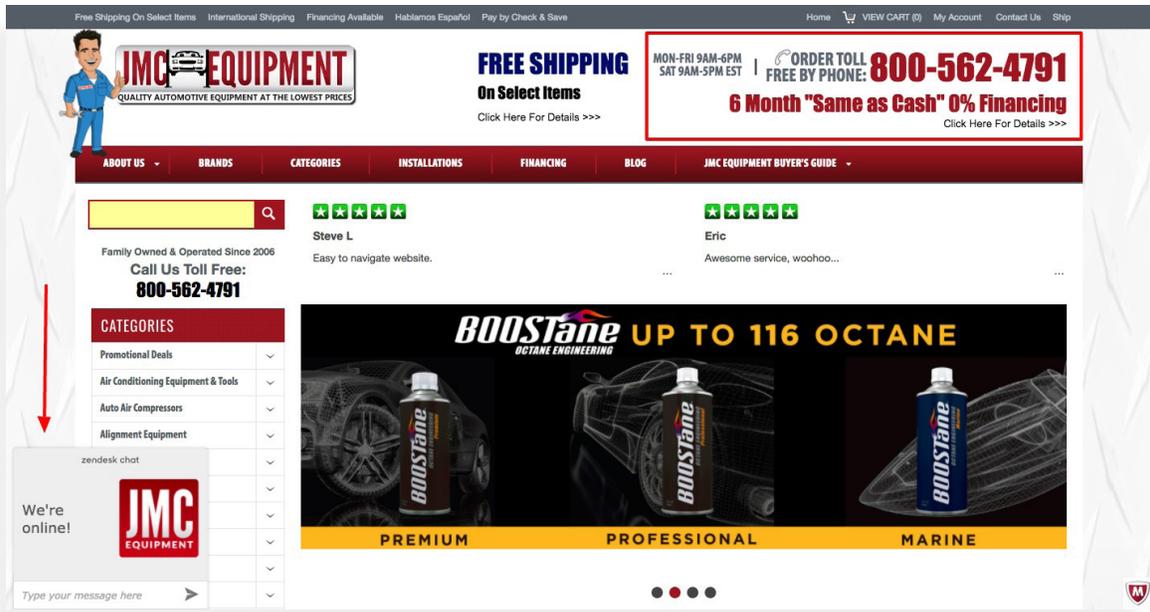
4. The belief online ordering is cold.

One of the best ways to make sure a customer doesn't go to a competitor is by building a long-term, personal relationship with them. This is why so many B2B businesses are family-owned and operated. There's a personal touch to being one of the family: phone calls, dinners, visits and trips.

An online store can seem cold in comparison, but it doesn't have to be. With 24/7 chat technology that can turn an online chat on your store into a text on your phone, the new generation can communicate efficiently and effectively in their preferred communication channel: text, Facebook messenger or a variety of other options.

In fact, this type of customer service is not only easy to set up, it is highly desired by customers across the board.

See how [JMC Automotive Equipment](#) uses chat as well as a highly visible phone number to drive conversions on their site.

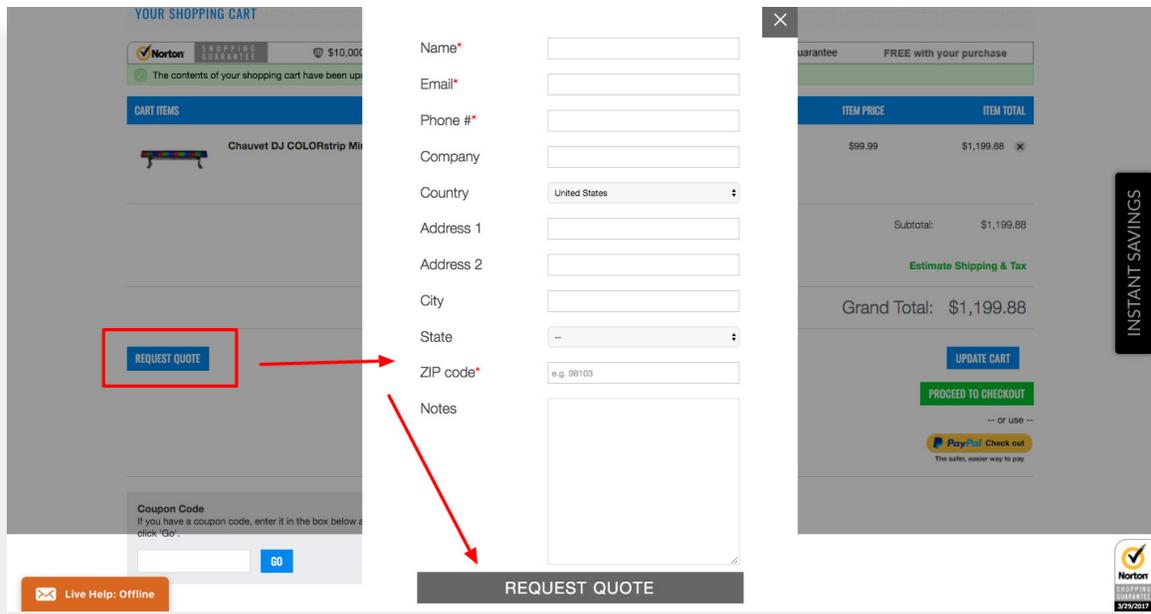


5. The belief an online store negates custom ordering.

With B2B customers and wholesalers, the possibility for custom orders is much higher than for a B2C site. And for many B2B businesses, they want to provide for the custom order (which helps with that personal relationship). But custom orders aren't often an ecommerce norm — or so many people think.

Thanks to custom quoting tools, unique variants and segmented customer groups, B2B businesses can allow customers to send in a PDF quote 24/7, then evaluate the quote and get back within regular business hours on if the unique order can be filled. If it can, the business can place that customer in their own unique customer group so that next time they order, they won't have to go through the quote engine. They can just click and checkout the item that is made specially for them.

Here is how Spectrum Audio has set up their quoting tool using [Quote Ninja](#).



No matter what your hesitation is to [launching your B2B ecommerce store](#), know this: nothing needed for a B2B business to prosper online cannot be done.

- Have customers who need bulk ordering? Done.
- Have customers who need specific sizes or materials? Check.
- Have customers with on-going accounts or pre-negotiated rates? Taken care of.

It's time for your business to take a pie of the \$6.7 trillion dollar pie. Here's how to market to your B2B customers to grow your online sales, streamline your business and focus on what you do best: getting product into the hands of your customers.

B2B ecommerce marketing 101

1. Educate customers on products, features, and promotions.

The concept of an online strategy interweaving content and commerce has a very practical application. If a user is not presented with all of the information — from sizing charts, to ingredient lists, to how-to guides — they will seek it elsewhere.

That exploration often results in the consumer entering another purchasing funnel outside your organization's digital commerce channel. B2B user experiences have transformed from green screen-like portals with limited information into educational avenues that push product and promotions to your buyers.

Why? Because this is the way the online value ladder works.

You prove your value to customers for free through educational content, and then you close the deal once they trust you. Companies using a B2B business model have long done this with conversations over phone or drinks. Now, you need to do it to drive traffic and close sales online.

A great example of how this can be done is over on Bright Agrotech's site. Bright Agrotech sells to both established and aspiring farmers — and they provide all possible education to help customers at each stage of their farming business to succeed.



Prepare your farm for success. Get ahead on financial planning.

FINANCIAL PACKAGES

CATEGORIES

- On Sale Now
- ZipGrow Towers
 - 3 Foot Towers
 - 5 Foot Towers
 - 7 Foot Towers
- Commercial Bundles
- Growing Systems
 - Dutch Buckets
 - Pilot system add-ons
 - Rafts and DWC
- ZipFarms
- ZipGrow Farm Walls
- Digital Resources
 - Farm as a Business
 - Financial Packages
 - Free
 - System Design and Maintenance
 - Upstart University
 - Video Tutorials
- Components and Parts
 - Pumps
 - Grow Lights
 - Environmental & Water Quality
 - Irrigation Components
- Growing Supplies
 - Nutrients
 - Seeds
 - Seedling Systems
 - Plugs and Seed Starting
- Microgreens
 - Produce Packaging
 - Container Farm Consumables
- Tools & Replacements
 - Apparel
 - ZipGrow Equipment
 - Seedling Kits

SHOP BY PRICE

- \$0.00 - \$100.00
- \$100.00 - \$200.00
- \$200.00 - \$300.00
- \$300.00 - \$400.00
- \$400.00 - \$500.00

BRANDS

- ZipGrow
- Bright Agrotech
- Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds
- Active Aqua

Home | Digital Resources

Digital Resources

Bright Agrotech's Comprehensive Library of Digital Resources Downloads to Ensure Your Vertical Growing Success!



Farm as a Business



Financial Packages



Free



System Design and Maintenance



Upstart University



Video Tutorials

Sort by: Featured Items

1 2 Next >

ELITE



FINANCIAL PLAN

Financial Elite Package
\$200.00
 Compare

PRO



FINANCIAL PLAN

Financial Pro Package
\$500.00
 Compare

STARTER



FINANCIAL PLAN

Financial Starter Package
\$100.00
 Compare



How to Sell Microgreens: The Local Farmer's Guide to Pitching Microgreens
\$3.99
 Compare



The Grower's Guide to Local Food Markets
\$7.00
 Compare



The Small Farmer's Guide to Post-Harvest Care
\$3.99
 Compare

This is only a small subset of all the educational material Bright Agrotech offers. For any offers that are free, of which they have many, the team puts the content behind a gate to drive email leads which they can nurture into customers.

THE FIVE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL HYDROPONIC GROWERS

Learn the tricks of the trade in this free ebook

Shhhhh... It's a secret

When you've been in the industry as long as we have, you get to talk with a lot of successful growers.

These growers didn't just learn their skills and techniques overnight. No, they've spent thousands of hours making mistakes, learning from failure, and ultimately perfecting their craft.

Now, we want to help you learn what it means to be a successful grower by sharing a few of their secrets.

In this free ebook you'll learn:

- ✔ What successful local farmers look like
- ✔ How successful growers view technology
- ✔ What successful growers focus on
- ✔ How successful growers approach business

We can't wait to share these secrets with you and help you build your own successful farm!



Help me learn how to grow on my walls now!

First Name*

Email*

Country*

- Please Select -

What is your growing style?*

- Please Select -

Future Farm Size*

- Less than 500 ft2
- 501 - 2,000 ft2
- 2001-5000 ft2
- 5001 - 10,000 ft2
- More than 10,000 ft2
- N/A

2. Migrate customers from offline to online channels.

The number of B2B customers that prefer to speak to a sales rep in person or using phone, fax, or even email will continue to decrease at a rapid pace as Millennial buyers gain more decision-making and purchasing power within their organizations.

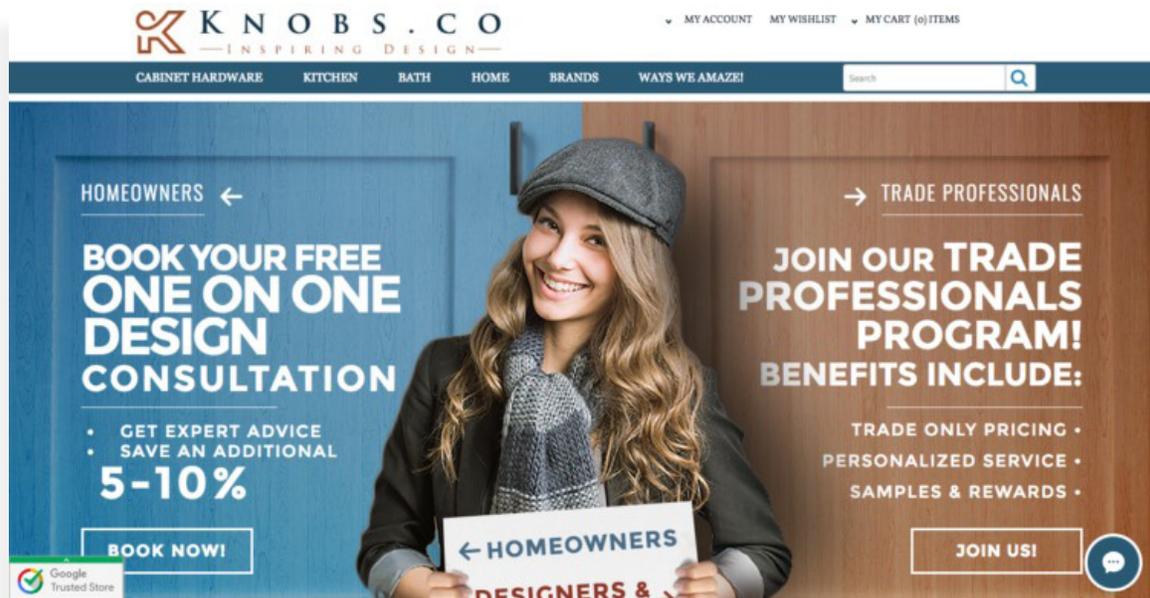
Forrester Research estimates that [93% of B2B buyers prefer to buy online](#) when they've already decided what to buy.

If your team is implementing a new ecommerce channel, be sure to communicate early and often with your customers. Some companies have been successful in inviting their core customers into beta testing to train, educate, and gain valuable feedback.

Regardless of how you introduce the digital channel, anticipate questions and concerns, and, most importantly, highlight the benefits of migrating to the new platform.

Create FAQs, how-to guides, and interactive navigations to ensure customers can use the platform efficiently.

The Knobs Co does this well by pointing B2B customers to a dedicated landing page from the homepage and clearly stating the benefits of their online purchasing program.



Once you land on the Trade Professionals page, you get further information on why you might want to join the program and purchase from them.

Home ▾ Trade Professionals

Trade Professionals

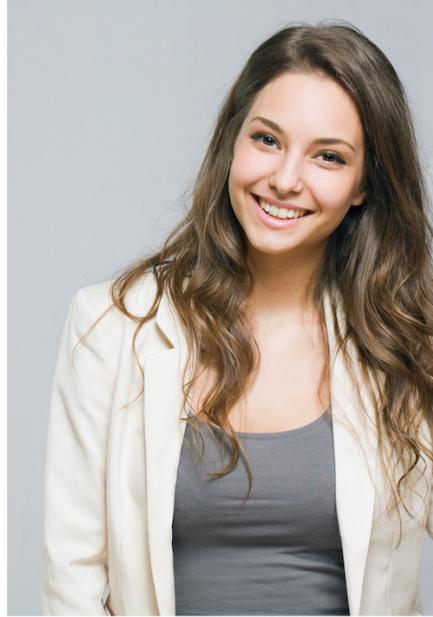
While Knobs.co is happy to extend service to consumers, our services to Trade Professionals is where we really shine.

We have built a customer service staff entirely made up of Interior Designers or those who have demonstrated an exceptional eye for Design. Coupled with our expertise on our catalog, these design skills allow us to work with designers, cabinet makers, builders, and others to suggest a range of items ideal for your clients or projects.

All members of our Trade Professionals Program enjoy:

- A Dedicated Account Manager
- Instant Promotion to our Gold Rewards Tier, with the chance to move up to Platinum
- Double the number of qualifying Samples under our Samples Program.
- A VisualizerApp that allows you to match our products to your client's home or project, before you purchase.

To apply for the program, fill out our form below, or just drop an email to Trade@Knobs.co. The Director of the Trade Professionals Program will personally be in touch to discuss your application.



Trade Professionals Application

Name *

Business Name

Email *

Phone *

Your Profession Interior Designer
 Cabinet Maker
 Architect
 Contractor
 Other

To serve you better, please describe your current business needs:

How Did You Hear About Us?

Free Shippings on orders over \$100

100% Rebate on Samples

About us

Complimentary 1-on-1 design consultations

Stellar Rewards

Price Match Policy

Shipping & Returns



Get Design Inspiration!

Trade Professionals Portal

Connect with Us

1-800-530-8245
Mon-Fri 8AM - 6PM EST



A few things The Knobs Co does really well:

- Information describing what those who fill out the form can expect, from customer service to quality of the product.
- A dedicated form to drive leads so they can immediately contact anyone interested.
- Additional resources at the end of the page so customers can browse other areas if they aren't yet ready to buy.

3. Use technology to solve ongoing customer challenges.

One very large B2B Manufacturer in the Food & Beverage industry used ecommerce to [migrate](#) to customer self-service, and was able to decrease error rates by more than 80%.

B2B fulfillment errors are typically exponentially greater than those associated with B2C or direct-to-consumer shopping, due to the nature of the type and quantities of product ordered.

Mistakes can result in truck or trainloads of product being impacted. In addition to the obvious bottom line impacts, the Food & Beverage company was able to consistently deliver the right products on time while meeting expectations.

Instead of dealing with customer service challenges, refunds, and apologies, the company has been able to develop new relationships and introduce ancillary services.

So, how did they do it? It's about visibility.

Automatic inventory management from a customer viewpoint

Setup rules to alert customers to [inventory counts](#) and show out of stock without having to do a single thing.

Inventory settings

General settings

When a product is out of stock: Don't do anything

When an option is out of stock: Don't do anything

Update stock levels: When an order is successfully placed

- Automatically adjust stock levels when editing an order
- Automatically adjust stock levels when I refund or cancel an order

Stock level

Stock level display: Don't show stock levels

Out-of-stock message: Out of stock

Show out of stock message on product listing pages

Order dashboard visibility for the fulfillment team

A clear order dashboard is available for your fulfillment teams. You can also use APIs to send order information to an ERP for a real-time sync.

From this view, you can also clearly see the fulfillment process — what has been sent out, what is pending and why.

Orders View more >

Recent Pending Completed Refunded

Manual Verification Required	View Order Details	\$82.68	41 minutes ago
Awaiting Shipment	View Order Details	\$516.70	41 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$71.99	41 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$31.99	41 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$551.88	41 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$119.97	41 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$381.28	45 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$365.84	59 minutes ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$610.59	one hour ago
Shipped	View Order Details	\$47.98	one hour ago

Further, beyond an orders dashboard, you can drill into each individual order to see fulfillment stage, order details, PO numbers and more.

View Orders

All Orders Awaiting Fulfillment Awaiting Payment Awaiting Shipment High Risk Pre-Orders More Custom Views

Click to see order details
Choose from 13 fulfillment steps to include here

	Date	Order ID	Customer	Status	Total	Action
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Awaiting Shipment	\$159.09	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Verification Required	\$82.68	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Shipped	\$516.70	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Shipped	\$71.99	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Shipped	\$31.99	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Shipped	\$551.88	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	28th Mar 2017	10000	Michael Taylor	Shipped	\$119.97	...

Custom notes often include PO numbers

To see how all of that looks on the front end, visit [Restaurantware's website](#).

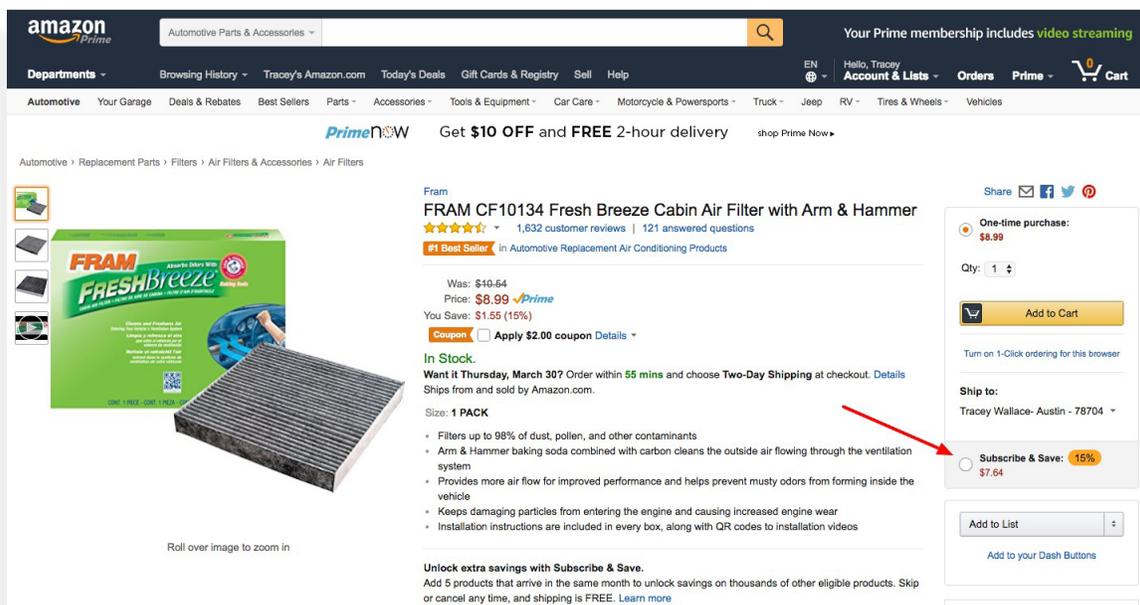
4. Roll out programs that spur loyalty, higher order values, and increased purchasing frequency.

After the platform has been deployed, look to other initiatives to continually turn the needle.

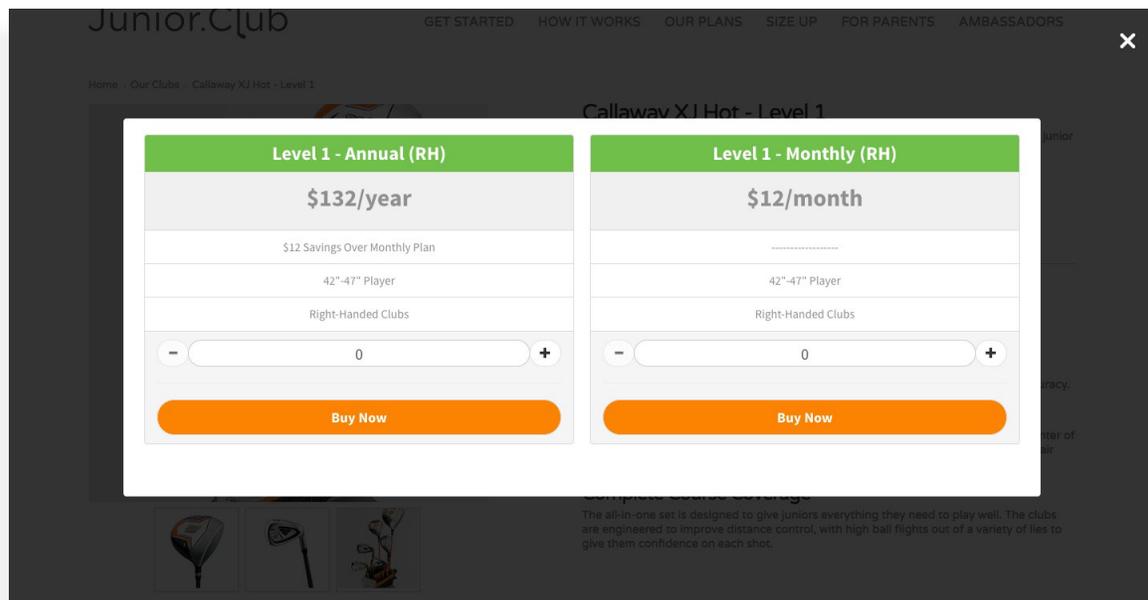
Likely, if you are a B2B organization, you supply products that are consumable or will need to be continually maintained and replaced. Allowing for both subscription-based and traditional one-off purchases can lock in buyers, yield higher customer lifetime values, and simplify doing business.

Furthermore, the data can empower your sales team to present and offer complementary products, as well as understand when a customer might be ready to buy.

Industry behemoth Amazon has already begun to implement these programs. For instance, certain products, such as this air filter, can be purchased in regular (monthly) increments.



On your own ecommerce store, you can use integrations with partners like Rebilla to manage [saved credit card information](#) for individual customers, or [PayWhirl for recurring billing](#).



Example of a recurring billing option on a BigCommerce store.

5. Align business processes and teams to scale.

Organizations often find themselves working inefficiently due to resources being in the wrong roles, or process silos that negatively impact momentum.

These obstacles occur either because the digital channel was built as an 'add-on,' and not cohesively structured within the organization, or because organic decisions over time have morphed into a structure (i.e. solely Marketing or IT "owning" the ecommerce software) that no longer has an effective foundation for cross channel cohesive growth.

Review your current organizational structure. Re-align your roles and resources. If need be,

look outside the organization and hire. Once that structure is in place, have a charter over budgeting and management decisions that impact this digital team.

6. Reduce back-office costs and sunset legacy systems.

As commerce platforms become more robust in functionality beyond just a “shopping cart,” their reach and influence within a company’s existing technology landscape is widening.

Lines of traditional applications are blurring as large software companies are acquiring and integrating smaller, specialized software at a rapid pace.

When undergoing a digital commerce initiative, it is important to understand the selected commerce technology platform’s roadmap and what that signifies in terms of capabilities. This knowledge could allow you to trim license and maintenance costs on overlapping technology and reduce technical bloat.

7. Ensure ecommerce complements all other sales channels.

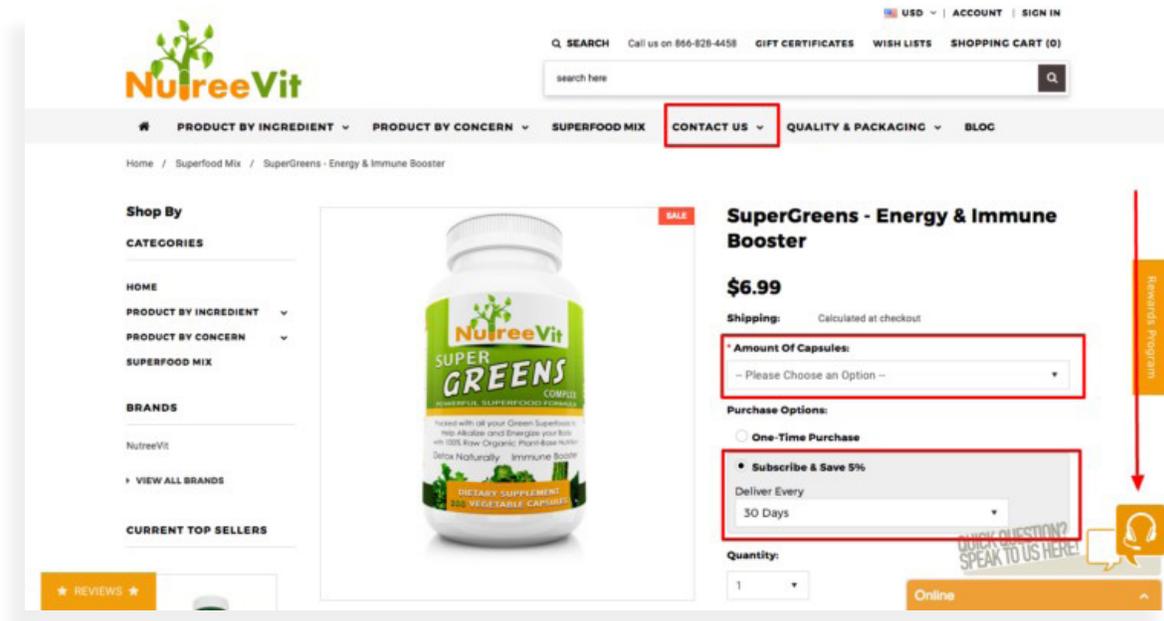
Internal Channel Conflict is a [common pain point](#) for B2B organizations. With industry analysts predicting the demise of the B2B salesman, the online channel is recognized as a legitimate threat.

Organizations that successfully overcome internal anxiety communicate early and often with the individuals that could be affected. The digital teams, alongside sales leadership, should showcase the benefits of customers leveraging technology-based customer self-service and how it can actually help sales members retire and exceed quotas.

For example, in the telecommunication space, B2C-like ecommerce sites often exist for SBMs to order hardware, upgrade their plans or increase their services. Only if and when that customer becomes complex does an actual sales representative take over the account.

This approach allows the team to focus more on selling and less on order taking.

See here how [NutreeVit](#) follows this approach. They offer a [subscription model](#) for self-service customers, and allow for support outreach or a customer portal in order to upsell or cross-sale customers as needed. There is also a clear Chat Box in the lower right-hand corner.



This type of model also builds a hot lead list for your salespeople.

BigCommerce integrates with multiple Live Chat services. Here are just a few of your options:

- [Live Chat Support](#)
- [Olark](#)
- [Facebook Integration to Messenger Chat](#)
- [Live Chat](#)
- [Tidio Chat](#)
- [Casengo](#)

- [Free Call](#)

[See all your options here.](#)

8. Creating value for the human side of the transaction.

[Usability is an essential element](#) in creating value for customers. This does not necessarily mean creating “consumer-like” ecommerce experiences centered on visual and interactive elements. Instead, focus on factors like:

- Site performance
- Robust search, i.e. faceted search
- An efficient purchasing funnel
- Detailed product content
- Simplified checkout to create a “business-like” commerce experience

Check out BuySwings.com’s simplified checkout process that enables various B2B checkout functionalities not seen on B2C sites.



Free Shipping Everyday On Orders Over \$199 Some Products Excluded

Secure Checkout

STEP 1: ACCOUNT DETAILS	Checking out as a guest	MODIFY
STEP 2: BILLING DETAILS	Change Billing Address	MODIFY
STEP 3: SHIPPING DETAILS	Change Shipping Address	MODIFY
STEP 4: SHIPPING METHOD	Truck Delivery With 24 Hour Call Ahead 2-4 Business Days (LTL) for \$603.63	MODIFY
STEP 5: ORDER CONFIRMATION		

Please review the contents of your order below and then choose how you'd like to pay for your order.

Cart Items	Qty	Item Price	Total
 46" Ultraleisure Style Square Portable Park Picnic Table With 4 Attached Seats <small>(Top/Seat Color: Mystic Blue, Frame Color: Brown, Add Inground Mount Kit: No, Add Surface Mount Kit: No) Ships Within 2 Weeks</small>	15	\$744.19	\$11,162.85
		Shipping (Truck Delivery With 24 Hour Call Ahead 2-4 Business Days (LTL))	\$603.63
		Subtotal	\$11,162.85
		Grand Total	\$11,766.48

Clear shipping expectations set

Gift Certificate or Coupon Code: [APPLY](#)

How Would You Like to Pay?

- Credit Card
- Use Purchase Order *APPROVED ACCOUNTS ONLY*
- 

Purchase orders accepted

Order Instructions/Comments (Optional)

Custom instructions optional

Hear From Us Via Email?

- I'd like to receive your newsletter

[PROCEED TO PAYMENT](#)

Shop the best deals online!

BuySwings.com offers one of the largest selections of commercial or residential park and playground equipment online. We service recreational parks, schools, churches, government entities, and many of the largest companies around the world! We also sell equipment that will be perfect for your back yard. Guaranteed A+ service and customer satisfaction, it's what makes us who we are!

YOUR ACCOUNT

- [Sign In or Create An Account](#)
- [My Account](#)
- [View Cart](#)
- [View Quotes](#)
- [Track Your Order](#)
- [Personal Info](#)
- [Check Order Status](#)
- [Order History](#)

INFORMATION

- [Financing](#)
- [Testimonials](#)
- [Tips and Guides](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Shipping & Returns](#)
- [Terms & Conditions](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

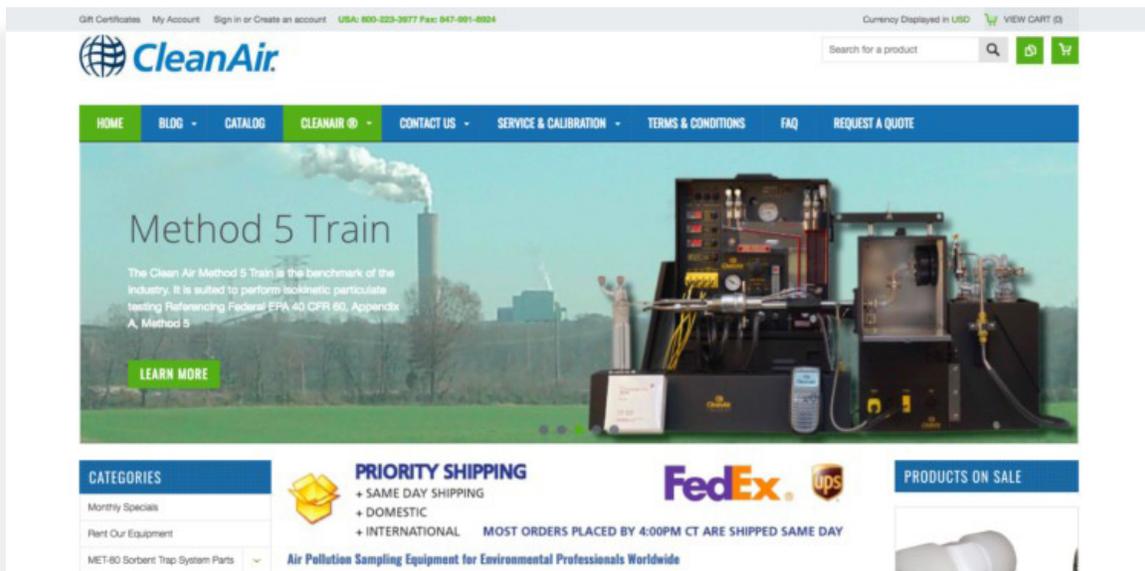
CONNECT WITH US

- [Facebook](#)
 - [Twitter](#)
 - [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- 1701 Whittle Springs Rd.
Knoxville, TN 37917
A Division of Creative Play Stores LLC

Need help? We're available at 888-429-0753 • Email us at Sales@BuySwings.com

Usability also means empowering customers to take control and complete goals on their terms. Including responsive design as part of the ecommerce software frees customers to research, complete transactions, and manage their accounts, regardless of device. This cross-device enablement can also make sales representatives in the field far more productive and efficient.

Here is CleanAir's desktop site, with their responsive mobile site beneath.



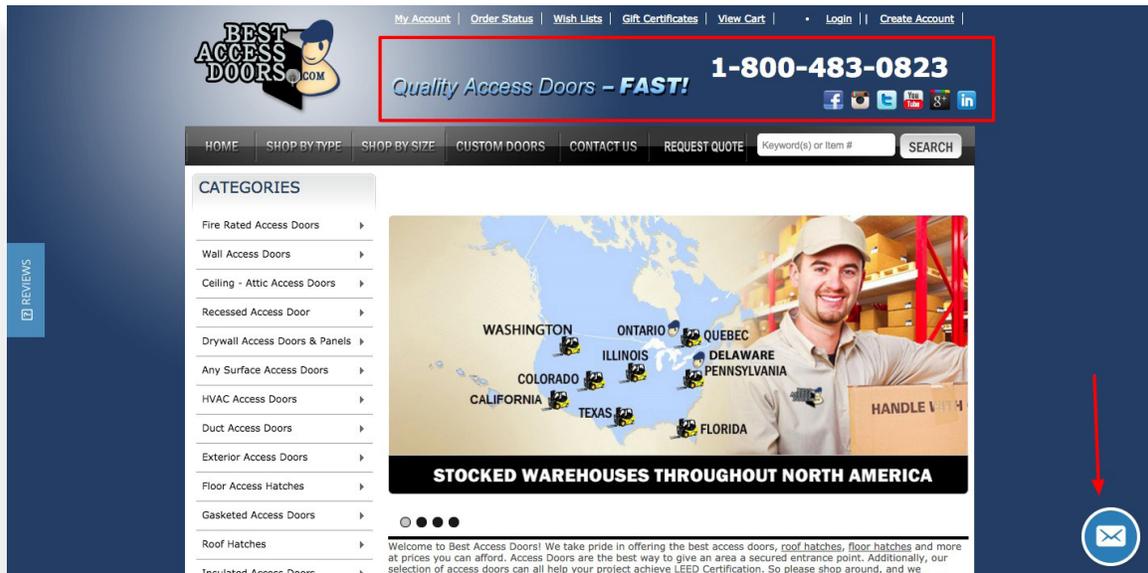
In terms of engagement, migrating customers to the ecommerce channel should not come at the expense of creating deeper customer relationships.

Enable customer service integration to provide customer service agents with a complete view of the ecommerce system, allowing them to resolve issues in real-time, and act consultatively to recommend cross-sells and upsells when appropriate.

See below how BulkBookstore enabled this feature for their customers.



Best Access Doors does this by showcasing their phone number as well as enabling chat.



B2B customers don't necessarily interact with the website in the same way consumers do, yet it is important to educate customers and present them with highly relevant information about new products, services, and promotions. Offer targeted content in places it will be seen, like order confirmation pages and within the My Account section.

Here is a good homepage example from Telephone Man Telecom Supply.



CATEGORIES

- Telephone Systems
- Phones
- VOIP / IP Phones & Systems
- Headsets
- Paging
- Networking Gear
- Fiber Optic
- Wire, Cable & Cords
- Installation Material
- Battery Backup / UPS's
- Surge Protection
- Bells & Whistles
- Tools
- Music On Hold
- CLEARANCE

POPULAR BRANDS

- Avaya/Lucent/AT&T
- Samsung
- Nortel Networks
- NEC
- TTM
- Panasonic

Your #1 Source for all things Telecom - THE TELEPHONE MAN

FEATURED ITEMS

<p>Berk-Tek LANmark 6 Cat6 Plenum Cable Blue, 1000 FT Box \$375.00 \$275.00</p> <p>Add To Cart </p>	<p>Polycom SoundPoint IP-450 3 Line SIP Phone \$250.00 \$80.00</p> <p>Choose Options </p>	<p>Cisco 7970G Telephone \$210.00 \$125.00</p> <p>Add To Cart </p>
<p>SYSTIMAX 2071E GigaSPEED XL Cable. CAT6 CMP \$700.00 \$325.00</p> <p>Choose Options </p>	<p>LANmark-10G2 Plenum CAT 6a UTP Cable 1000 FT Spool Gray \$850.00</p> <p>Add To Cart </p>	<p>Avaya 5410 Digital Telephone \$65.00</p> <p>Add To Cart </p>

PRODUCTS ON SALE

Samsung IDCS 500, 8MWSLI Analog Station Card with M/W 8 Port
\$325.00

Add To Cart

CURRENT TOP SELLERS

Handset Cord Dark Gray 12' or 25' / Starting From
\$2.00

Choose Options

9. Creating value for the business side of the transaction.

No two customers are the same. Customize the ecommerce channel to cater to the way they do business and become an indispensable business partner.

This starts by building one-to-one relationships. Use segmentation to present customer-specific catalogs and pricing, as well as introduce incentive programs that reward customers for loyalty and the volume of business they transact.

Customer Groups

Create a Customer Group  Customer Group for Guests Retail Customers [View 20](#) 

<input type="checkbox"/>	Group Name	Discount	Customer Group Discounts	Customers in Group	Action
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Commercial Bulk Buyers 5% OFF Everything	5.00% Discount	0	12 (View)	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Commercial Buyers 10% Off	10.00% Discount	0	17 (View)	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Retail Customers (default)	\$0.00 Discount	0	7550 (View)	...
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Wholesale Customers Distributors	0.00% Discount	9	71 (View)	...

[View 20](#) 

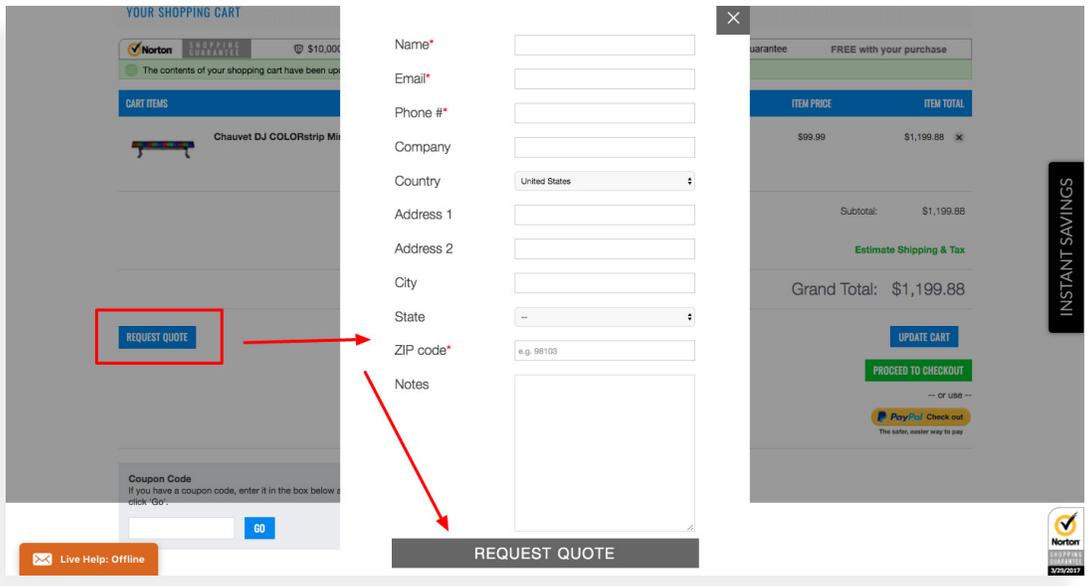
Made with  by the BigCommerce team

These preferred customer groups see specific products and prices

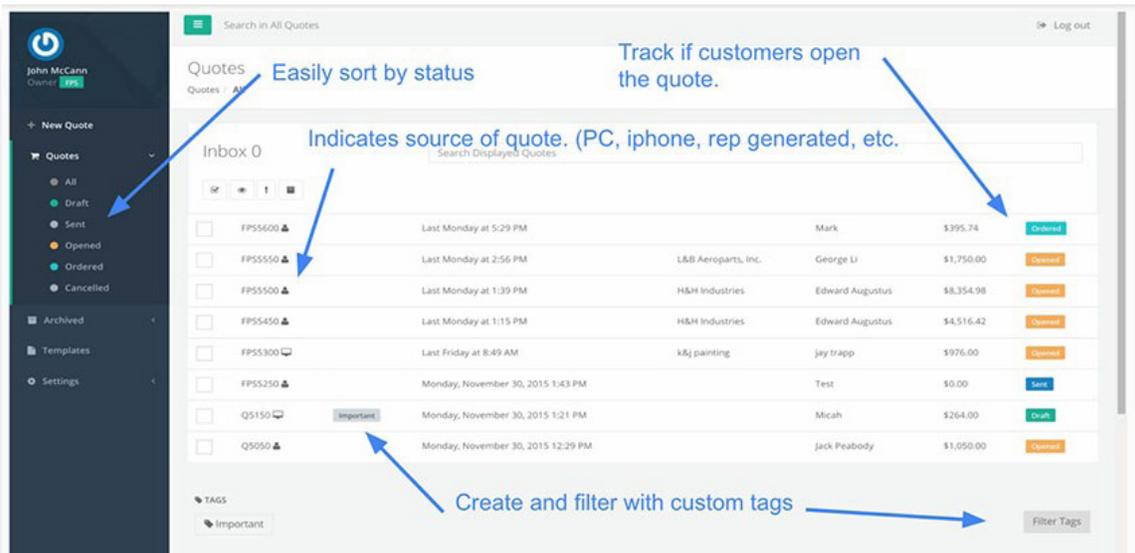
Then, develop workflows that align the ecommerce ecosystem with the way your customers do business to remove any friction from the process.

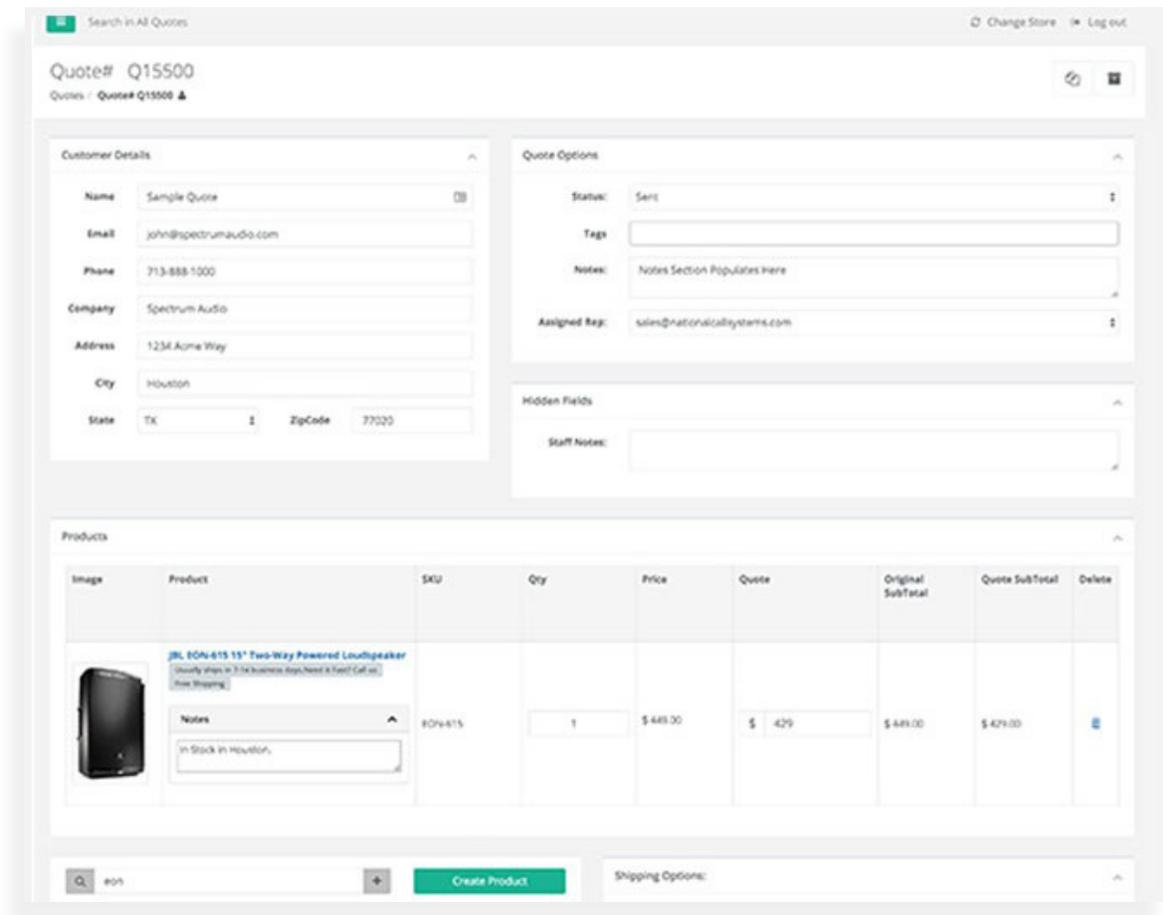
For instance, if customers require a multi-step order approval process, the underlying ecommerce platform should be built to support this. On many ecommerce platforms, this is done with a Quoting tool.

Here is what an on-site quote builder looks like for your customers.



Here is what you see on the backend.





The same goes for payments. From enabling Purchase Orders, to checking credit availability and enforcing purchasing thresholds, ensure the ecommerce system conforms to customer needs.

For wholesale brands which need customer financing options, look for ecommerce platforms that integrate with Klarna and AfterPay.

Carl J. Hones
SWISS MADE

Customer [Edit](#)

Shipping [Edit](#)

Billing [Edit](#)

4 Payment

Payment Method

PayPal

Credit Card

Klarna Pay Over Time with Klarna

\$87.00/mo. for 18 months

Apply and get a decision instantly. No application needed for existing accounts.

KLARNA CREDIT	
Est. total of payments	APR
\$1,566.00	9.99%

1 Promotional offer. Subject to a \$2 minimum interest charge and [credit terms](#). Klarna Credit accounts are issued by WebBank.

Klarna

PLACE ORDER

Order Summary [Edit Cart](#)

1 Item

1 x Respire Red	\$1,432.00
-----------------	------------

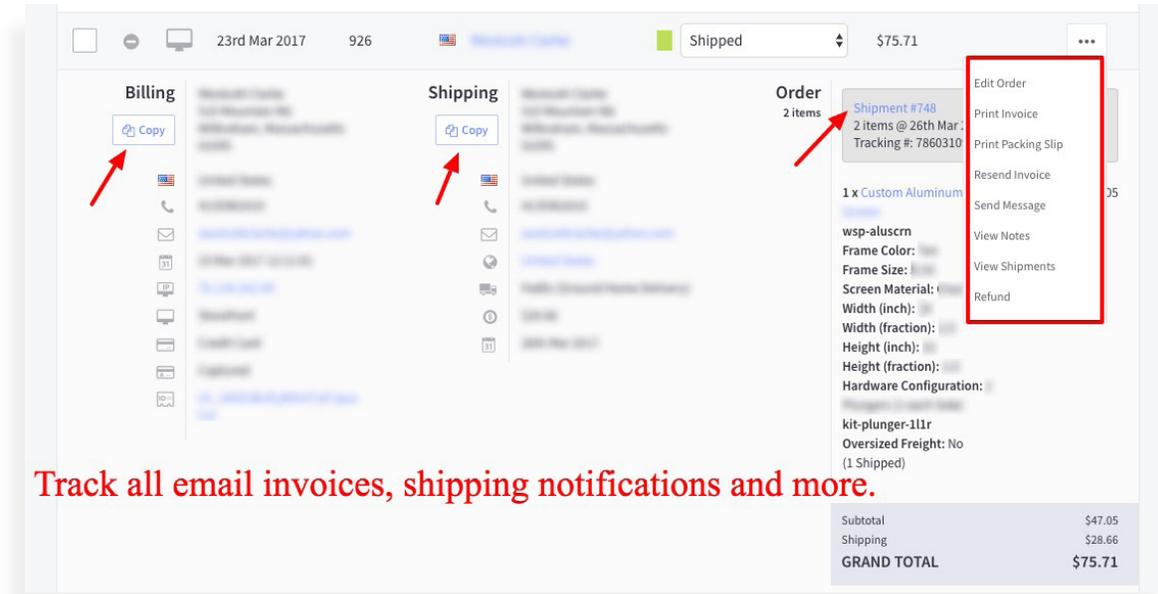
Subtotal \$1,432.00
Shipping Free
Taxes \$0.00
[Promo/Gift Certificate](#)

Total (USD) **\$1,432.00**

Klarna and BigCommerce enabling customer financing options

Keep customers in the loop by being transparent with data. Proactively notify customers of backordered items and low inventory counts for products they purchase to minimize any potential disruption to their business.

BigCommerce automatically emails customers their invoices when an item is ordered and a [shipping](#) update when it is shipped out. Merchants can use the Orders channel on the BigCommerce backend to dive into any specific area, resend invoices, manage returns and refunds, etc.



And though it's only applicable in a subset of B2B use cases, enabling punchout to allow catalog feeds and ordering directly through the customer's procurement system can make the ecommerce channel a powerful tool for building lasting value. That's why BigCommerce integrates with hundreds of ERP systems, syncing information back and forth in real-time.

25 experts on B2B marketing and ecommerce

Beyond getting set up as a B2B online seller, it's important that you market yourself appropriately as well. There are crucial differentiations between how B2C and B2B customers want to be marketed toward. That said, those differentiations are becoming more and more alike every day.

It can be hard to keep up pace. We caught up with 25 industry experts to get their take on how B2B brands should market to their customers.



Karl Pawlewicz, Head of Communications, [Olark](#)

B2B buyers want to self-educate vs. talk to sales reps

A 2015 Forrester report by Andy Hoar (“Death of a B2B Salesman”) states: “The data is very clear that B2B buyers now favor do-it-yourself options for researching products and services. By a factor of three to one, B2B buyers want to self-educate versus talk to sales representatives to learn about products and services.”

With this shift in preference in mind, use a CRM to capture every customer conversation and review that data often. For example, if you're using chat to talk to customers on your website, review your transcripts regularly and look for FAQs. Use this insight to bolster your self-serve help center to make it as useful as possible.



Steve Deckert, Co-Founder, [Smile.io](#)

Dedicate 50% of your budget to B2B retention.

The customer lifetime value of B2B clients is so high that you need to invest in retaining these clients. Over 50% of your budget should be dedicated to keeping them coming back, since they can have CLVs in the range of thousands of dollars per year.

Reward them for their patronage and loyalty. Remember that some B2B buyers CANNOT receive gifts due to internal policies, so when you're offering rewards give them the option of receiving a discount or a gift.



Krista Fabregas, Founder + Startup Consultant,
[Fit Small Business](#)

Too many B2B vendors still treat websites as a catalog.

Too many B2B vendors still treat websites as a catalog and take orders via phone or fax. Business customers like to access wholesale pricing and volume discount levels online, and many like to purchase online, too. Implement a full cart checkout experience for B2B buyers, complete with freight and volume shipping options.



David Wiltshire, Founder, [Patchworks](#)

Consider your customer's wants and needs.

Your ecommerce site for wholesale should offer the same level of service you would expect from the traditional method of an account manager on the phone. Consider your customers wants and needs and make it as simple and easy to use as possible.

Integrate your systems for the precise data flow. There's nothing worse than a customer placing an order for stock that isn't available.



Ransom Carroll, CEO + Founding Partner,
[Cart Designers](#)

Create a 'wholesale' friendly experience for your customers.

Use a theme that is built for B2B style interactions or hire an agency to retool your existing theme into a more 'wholesale' friendly experience for your customers. B2B customers know what they want more so than B2C, so cross selling and displaying 'featured' items might require less focus.



Marcel Munoz, CTO, [Thanx Media](#)

Take inspiration from B2B ecommerce.

Take inspiration from B2C ecommerce, but remember that there are differences. Traditionally, B2C has lead the way for innovation in the ecommerce industry, and B2B sellers can learn a great deal from watching B2C retailers, but the two cannot be treated the same.

One key difference is that B2B tends to involve longer relationships, both before the initial purchase, and as additional or repeat purchases are made. This can be particularly useful for personalization, as more data can be found with a longer buying cycle, but this may require more attention from a traditional sales team and lead to channel conflicts.

Overcome channel conflicts by integrating ecommerce with traditional sales techniques for a positive and effective experience.



William Harris, CEO, [Elumynt](#)

Start thinking like a B2C brand.

People who make purchases for B2B are beginning to expect your site to operate as easily as Amazon does. You need a better UI, easier navigation, improved product descriptions and more.



Shayla Price, [B2B Content Marketer](#) + [Writer](#),
[Entrepreneur](#)

Segmentation is an essential part of a B2B marketing strategy.

Tailoring your brand message to fit the unique needs of your target audience encourages the customer to learn more about your brand and products. So focus your efforts on speaking to specific pain points and benefits that only they will understand.



Johnathan Dane, CEO + Founder, [KlientBoost](#)

Your selling approach should depend on the product.

Consider that depending on the product you're trying to sell, some visitors will never buy it ecommerce style, but would rather talk with a person. Depending on the customization and nuances your product has, you might find that you'll do better with a lead gen type of approach.



Jessica Thiele, Marketing Manager, [Virtual Logistics](#)

Consumers are expecting the B2C experience online.

Whether you're B2B or B2C, consumers are expecting the B2C experience in terms of how they interact with your business online. If you think about it, this makes complete sense: your customer experience expectations as a consumer don't change when you walk through your business' front door for a day of B2B buying (or selling).

Make sure the experience is slick and does not violate any preconceived expectations your consumers might have. And when in doubt, use the Amazon customer experience as a benchmark. After all, this is the benchmark experience many consumer unconsciously compare your customer experience to.



Drew Sanocki, Founder, [Nerd Marketing](#)

Think B2C.

Businesses are just made up of individuals, and they are on Facebook and other consumer channels. Don't disregard these.



James Thomson, Partner, [Buy Box Experts](#)

Create effective volume discounts for B2B customers.

Understand your unit economics very well so you can create effective volume discounts for B2B customers.



Matt Phillips, President, [Phillips & Co.](#)

B2B brands should invest in SEO.

[B2B brands should invest in SEO](#), as job one is simply being found. Next, make sure your offering is clear and simply organized. Because the web provides so many options that are just a back button away, making sure your site answers a potential customer's question quickly is paramount.



Talia Wolf, Founder & Chief Optimizer, [Get Uplift](#)

Make it about the customer.

While most brands focus on showcasing their products, pricing and features, what customers really care about isn't the what it's the WHY.

There are hundreds of competitors out there competing for your audience, why should they choose you? The key is getting to know your customers, understanding their challenges and telling their story — not your own.

Most marketers address their customers as numbers, geographical locations or type of browser and completely forget that behind those browsers and screens are people with real challenges, searching for a solution for their problem.

Specifically with B2B products, these challenges are usually more in-depth and require a greater sense of understanding. These shoppers aren't just buying for themselves, they have a team, a manager and other responsibilities to consider that B2C clients may not have.

If you understand your customer's real challenges, concerns and needs, you can optimize your site for them, address those concerns first-hand and build an experience that solves their problems and as a result grow your sales.



Alex Birkett, Growth Marketing Manager,
[ConversionXL](#)

Authentic messaging and content works on B2B.

Businesses are still made up of humans, so your messaging still has to be human, too. Don't think that because you're a "brand" you have to sit behind this wall of jargon and distracting design.

Text emails with personality convert well. Authentic messaging and content still works on B2B. Don't sacrifice what makes your brand unique because you think it's necessary to do so only because you're B2B.



Jason Dea, Director of Product Management,
[Telus Health](#)

Make it easy to do business with your brand.

While B2B buyers are also influenced by branding and vision, more than individual consumers B2B buyers also care about practicality. Make it easy to do business with your brand.

Logistics can often be an especially tricky topic in B2B, so if you aim to target that segment make sure all your shipping, receiving, accounting and return logistics are in place, streamlined, and well communicated to buyers.



Ben Cahen, CEO, [WisePops](#)

Be value-additive.

For B2B businesses, being known as value-additive is critical for sales. First and foremost, value-additive content ranks well in SEO, which is a huge B2B acquisition channel. Secondly, the buyer's journey for B2B is different than B2C, and the product will likely go through more vetting. Being associated with value additive content improves your perceived ROI.



Emil Kristensen, CMO & Co-Founder, [Sleeknote](#)

Abandon the traditional B2B sales methods.

I would recommend abandoning the traditional B2B sales methods. Creating a personal relationship with your customers (business or consumer) has become much more important than a great sales pitch.

B2C communication has increasingly become more personal, and I believe that it's the way to go for B2B communication as well.



Pekka Koskinen, CEO, [Leadfeeder](#)

Make the most of B2B opportunities.

When it comes to B2B sales, the deals are bigger and fewer than B2C sales, so it's all about making the most of your opportunities. You need to over-deliver on your prospects' expectations, so they'll remember you and feel good about teaming up with you.

And you need to be active on as many marketing channels as possible, so that wherever your prospects are, you are available to help them out with useful advice.



Meenal Malik, Head Sales & Customer Relations, [Outfy Inc.](#)

Price and product USP are most important to B2B sales.

For B2B sales, price and product USP are the most important aspects to be highlighted. Promote your products with detailed descriptions, and the product's unique features highlighted.



Grant Thomas, Marketing Manager, [Justuno](#)

Capture more B2B leads with a lead magnet.

The B2B sales process is generally longer and requires multiple marketing touches which

means you need to start with leads before you get customers. The best way for B2B businesses to capture more leads is with a lead magnet, also known as gated content. This is a piece of downloadable content that visitors must enter an email to view.

The most effective lead magnets are relevant to the business and to the content of the landing page. For example, if I'm selling software for inventory management and a high traffic landing page talks about the big costs associated with inaccurate inventory counts, I'd present visitors with a guide on how to reduce inventory costs in ecommerce.



Roy Aftab, Founder + CEO, [Web Ecommerce Pros](#)

Reach your B2B audience with social advocacy.

My top piece of advice for brands selling B2B online is to reach their audience with social advocacy. The ROI there is more than any other form of advertisement. The fundamental reason this works is that social advocacy relies on the action and feedback of real people for buying decision. This conversational form of interaction added trust and value to your brand.

Followers are willing to pay high prices when they see influencing personalities using the product. The investment on social advocacy gets you the currency of trust by your customers.



Alexei Alankin, Founder + CEO, [Eventige Media Group](#)

Focus on creating a powerful B2B user experience.

Focus on creating a user experience just as powerful as you would expect to have on a B2C-focused web presence. Usability, content, and customer experience are just as important in the B2B environment, as they are within the B2C.

The key difference is that brands are only recently starting to realize this. Many have successfully pivoted, and are already reaping the rewards.



Vishal Wadher, CEO, [Atmosol](#)

Know your demographic.

We have seen clients that “sort of” understand who their demographic is. They come to us saying, “Millennials are our core demographic,” but we soon find that is not the case, but that Gen-Xers are more apt to purchase.

Make sure you pay attention to the digital tools that you use like Facebook Insights or Google Analytics to make sure that you are marketing to the right groups.



Jonathan Anderstrom, Founder + President,
[Creed Interactive](#)

Don't rely solely on your B2B store.

Leverage existing relationships and salespeople to help guide and drive customers through your store. Target existing customers to upsell them through the store with more selection, easier ordering, and increased responsiveness.

Final word

All in all, it is a misconception that the ecommerce world cannot support the needs of B2B sellers and brands. It is not a misconception, however, that your brand may not be ready. Be sure to allocate the appropriate funds to your B2B site launch — including work with partners and agencies to build the unique tools you need.

Even though you may need to make an investment, the increase in revenue you can potentially expect vastly outweighs this initial expenditure.

An ecommerce platform like BigCommerce is more than extensible enough for what you need, and [some basic SEO techniques for B2B sellers](#) will set you on the path to success. But like any good investment and growth opportunity, there will be a small capital investment upfront.

Don't worry though. Average launch time is three months — and sales start pouring in immediately.

Need some examples of B2B businesses putting these strategies to work? Check out our post on [13 B2B brands changing how businesses buy](#).

See how the BigCommerce platform works by taking a product tour.

TAKE A TOUR

Category Name	Products	Products in Sub Cate	Visible in Menu?	Category Mappings	Action
Station	2	0	X		...
Bank	0	0	✓		...
Driver Solution	1	0	✓		...
GB Card	1	0	✓		...
Shop Men	56	100	✓		...
Shop Women	98	213	✓		...
Special Editions	0	0	✓		...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tracey Wallace is the Editor-in-Chief at BigCommerce, where she covers all things ecommerce: marketing, design, development, strategy, plus emerging trends, including omnichannel and cloud replatforming. She is often featured in publications, such as Forbes, Entrepreneur, Mashable, and ELLE, along with leading BigCommerce partners like HubSpot and Square. She launched her career in ecommerce with Y-Combinator backed Shoptiques.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was written in collaboration with [Gorilla Group](#), which contributed heavily to the 9 actionable tips.

Gorilla Group is an award-winning ecommerce service provider – including 4 Webby Awards and 2 Interactive Media Awards – and [BigCommerce Elite Partner](#). Their team works with category-leading brands looking to launch B2B as well as Direct-to-Consumer including Cargill, Citizens of Humanity and Dollar Tree.