6 Ways to Level Up Your Business with ERP-integrated Ecommerce

The Ultimate Ecommerce Guide

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In 2020, the pandemic resulted in a massive boost to ecommerce activity because online shopping was the only option available for most people to buy the things they needed. Some of these changes in consumer behavior and the digital investments made by businesses to survive the pandemic persist even after things returned to normal.

How can you leverage ecommerce to build B2B relationships and meet client expectations as they adjust to the new normal? Integrating a full-featured ERP-integrated ecommerce solution can help B2B businesses create sustainable revenues and enhance client loyalty while reducing costs.

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Consumers and businesses voted online with their wallets

When the pandemic hit, the demand for online shopping experiences surged as people sought to reduce the risk of exposure and comply with health and safety regulations.

Consider these statistics:

43% year-on-year increase in ecommerce sales in the US in 2020[1]

87% B2B buyers identifying new suppliers online after the pandemic, compared to 78% before[2]

19% Growth in global ecommerce revenue forecast in 2020[3]

For small to medium-sized businesses, the shift in shopper behaviour, along with pandemic-driven hits to revenue, were not the only business challenges they had to deal with.

The challenges of a demanding B2B marketplace

Competition from major retailers and direct-to-consumer (DTC) businesses

Leading DTC sites like Amazon and giant retailers like Walmart are becoming directly involved in the B2B ecommerce space. Both companies now have B2B marketplaces targeted as small and midsize businesses. Although the revenues from these new ventures are unlikely to compare to their DTC sales, the trend does not bode well for SMBs in the B2B ecommerce business.

Rising shopper expectations about easy and convenient shopping

Increasingly, shoppers expect to be able to shop at any time, on any device. Because B2B buyers are retail shoppers in their personal lives, they'll expect the same ease and convenience from their suppliers. The restrictions imposed during the pandemic have only accelerated these expectations.

High fulfillment costs

Farming out fulfillment to third-party services to keep costs down may have offered short-term benefits in the past. But today's B2B customers expect a higher quality of service at every stage of their purchase. To stay competitive, businesses must cut out the go-between and take ownership of the full customer experience.

Surges in online traffic (scalability)

Overburdened delivery and pickup services, abandoned carts due to a lack of available pickup or delivery slots, inventory stock-outs without an efficient substitution process—during the pandemic, this was the costly fallout of unprecedented demand. A business that can't inform a customer about a product's availability, location, or delivery time will quickly lose that customer.

Slow adoption of automation logistics

There's a lingering notion among most SMBs that using automation to fulfill orders is a gimmick and not a necessity. This mindset overlooks the optimized efficiency and elimination of errors that automation brings, needlessly risking losses, expensive mistakes, and noncompliance with industry regulations.
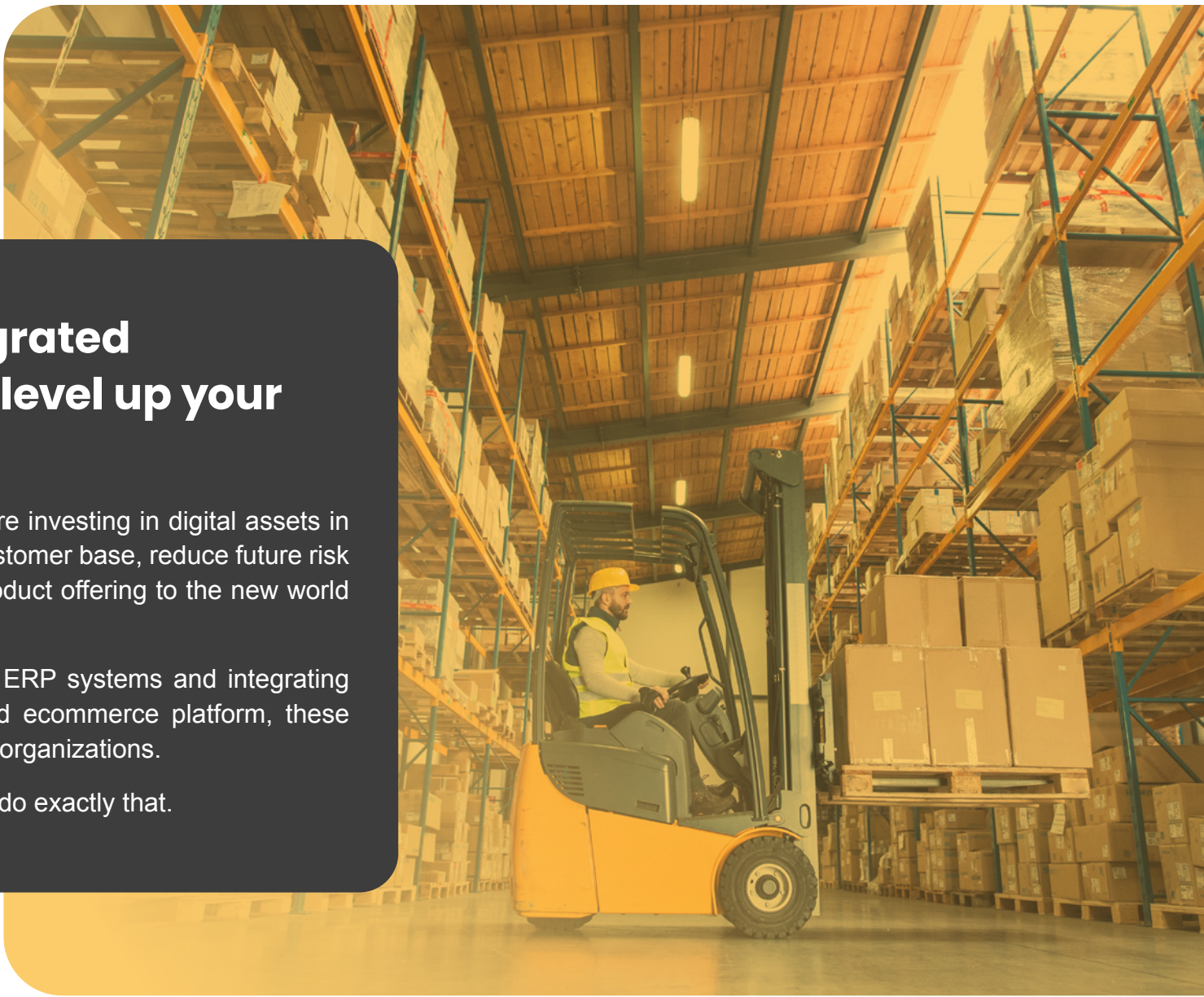
Fluctuating prices that require quick decisions

Quick price changes demand quick decisions. Having to do manual calculations based on data drawn from colleagues working in silos increases the risk of slow or poorly informed decisions.

Limited development resources for deployment and maintenance

Most SMBs in the B2B space do what they can with what they have. They may not be aware of the latest software developments that have the flexibility and power to meet their needs while allowing them to stay on budget.

6 ways ERP-integrated ecommerce can level up your B2B business

Forward-thinking B2B leaders are investing in digital assets in order to retain and grow their customer base, reduce future risk to revenues, and adapt their product offering to the new world we live in.

By taking their high-performing ERP systems and integrating them with the right cloud-based ecommerce platform, these businesses are leveling up their organizations.

Here are six ways you, too, can do exactly that.

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01. Grow your online sales.

Through the right ERP-integrated ecommerce solution, you simplify local, national, and international sales. Your cloud-based ecommerce platform offers 24/7 anywhere access to both your shoppers and your teams. The latter share the same data, as it is updated in real-time, whether sales are being made on your online platform or stock is entering your warehouse.

Create unique online experiences

Your ERP-integrated ecommerce solution can differentiate your brand by creating unique online experiences that do the following:

> Maximize brand visibility with search engine optimization tools.

> Craft a unique, enjoyable user experience.

> Offer click-and-collect services, like curbside pickup, as a method of contactless delivery during pandemic-related store restrictions.

> Connect with customers through user reviews, social media, and more.

> Inform shoppers with detailed, media-rich product pages.

> Personalize coupons, promotions, and loyalty points.

> Offer built-in multilingual and multi-currency support, integrated payment with major payment solutions, and integration with shipping companies and tax services so you can work accurately and efficiently worldwide.

Integrate with giant marketplaces

With the right ERP-integrated ecommerce solution, your business can tap into the enormous sales volumes of Amazon and eBay two of the largest marketplaces on the web to reach new shoppers who wouldn't typically visit your website.

As Amazon and eBay shoppers browse your catalogue and purchase your items, your platform syncs sales back to your store and processes them just like any other orders, handling fulfillment, returns, and inventory management from your ecommerce platform with no further effort on your part.

02. Build on customer engagement and loyalty.

As your customer base grows, you'll want to nurture its engagement with your brand. Through your ERP-integrated ecommerce solution, you offer customers the speed, convenience, and transparency that keeps them coming back. By owning the fulfillment process, you also protect your brand's status in the community—especially during the pandemic, when anxiety about the availability of supplies is higher.

You can further engage your customers by using powerful marketing tools like Mailchimp to increase conversions and improve your success in recouping abandoned cart sales. Mailchimp's easy-to-use marketing platform enables you to create and automate email campaigns to targeted customers and groups. You can use several strategies:

> Blast emails to promote products and support promotions.

> Automate email reminders to customers with abandoned carts to recover up to 11% of abandoned cart sales.[4]

> Review analytics of open rates with segmented data to gain insight into new sales opportunities.

03. Level up your cost-effectiveness.

Your ERP-integrated ecommerce solution generates cost savings because it enables you to do the following:

Automate critical enterprise operations, which makes it easier for you to do business online even as your sales increase. For example, you receive orders, invoice clients, update your inventory across your ERP and your web store, and notify shipping—all in a streamlined, real-time process that eliminates human error, takes only a few seconds, and lowers your costs.

Refocus your team's efforts on product development, sales strategy, and customer service while your ERP-integrated ecommerce platform, for example, eliminates duplicate manual data entry and automates the rest.

Integrate seamlessly with business systems that communicate directly with each other, thereby avoiding information silos that delay or undermine decision-making. These include top-of-the-line solutions for accounting, taxation, and customer relationship management .

Offer self-service to customers 24/7, so you can sell more without adding staff.

Reduce the waste of perishable goods and other time-sensitive products through timely information management that alerts buyers about product availability and delivery.

Decrease IT support for deployment and development because your cloud-based ecommerce platform offers you all the tools to flexibly manage and evolve your business from one place, no matter how many locations you have. As a result, your IT resources can focus on more value-added projects.

Reduce the need to "rip and replace." With the right ERP-integrated ecommerce solution, your new platform can be phased in gradually. For example, you can focus on one area of activity at a time, like a specific product line, a defined territory, or particular commerce functions.

As a result, you mitigate risk while your older system continues to do its job and your team learns the ropes of the new platform.

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04. Automate your supply chain and logistics.

The right ERP-integrated ecommerce solution delivers real-time visibility into every component of your materials across your distribution network. This orchestration of insights in your supply chain enables your business to do the following:

Maximize productivity by forecasting potential overages or underages in whatever resource you're using, so you can make the necessary adjustments to maintain productivity.

Stay on top of deliveries by coordinating your operations and warehouses, no matter what their location.

Reduce your time to market.

Make your shipping and logistics management **more efficient** through analytics that enable you to optimize your choice of carrier for the type of shipment under consideration.

React quickly to changing market conditions based on accurate, real-time data.

05. Scale your business flexibly.

As we saw during the early stages of the pandemic, online demand for products and services can fluctuate significantly at different times. A flexible cloud-based ecommerce platform scales your infrastructure based on demand and enables you to change workflows and leverage your ERP so you have a more consistent cost and margin for your online food and beverage business.

Such a platform also enables you to make changes to your architecture, add new applications, or replace existing ones without having to re-platform and rebuild your entire commerce ecosystem.

06. Expect reliability, speed, and support.

Given the stakes for your business, you want to be confident that your potential provider of an ERP-integrated ecommerce solution can deliver a highly reliable platform and furnish first-class technical training and support when you need it.

When evaluating potential providers, assess whether the company is friendly, responsive, and experienced, with a track record of success in your industry. Ask them for relevant case studies. Have candid discussions with the provider's customer references.

The right provider should fulfill all these needs.

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Is it time to upgrade your current platform?

You may already feel that your ecommerce platform has certain weaknesses:

> It doesn't support the scale of your business.

> It limits your ability to respond to changing customer demand.

> It hampers customer service.

> It involves costly order fulfillment.

With the right ERP-integrated ecommerce solution, you can give yourself the flexibility and power to adapt to whatever lies ahead.

For over 20 years, k-ecommerce has worked with ecommerce clients in the food and beverage industry across the U.S. and Canada. Our solutions bring together expertise, knowledge, and a strong partnership with Acumatica, Microsoft (Gold Partner), SAP, and other ERP solutions.

That's great news for businesses looking to grow their B2B customer base, reduce future risk to revenues, and adapt their product offering to the new world we live in.

About k-ecommerce

k-ecommerce is mdf commerce's platform for SMBs, providing all-in-one ecommerce and digital payment solutions integrated to Microsoft Dynamics, SAP Business One and Acumatica.

k-ecommerce simplifies and accelerates online growth, offering a complete omnichannel ecommerce solution supporting both B2B and B2C engagement.

Strengthening Our Market Position

By combining k-ecommerce and Orckestra, **mdf commerce** is strengthening its market leadership position in the digital commerce landscape.

- ▸ k-ecommerce provides SMBs with intuitive, all-in-one ecommerce and digital payment solutions that seamlessly leverage ERP data for automation, security and speed.
- ▸ The Orckestra headless commerce platform is designed to serve the complex needs of enterprise-level retailers and global brands as they unify omnichannel operations and shopping experiences online or in-store.

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