

internetRETAILER[®]
portal to e-commerce intelligence

FIRST-EVER

B2B

GUIDE TO

E-COMMERCE

2015 EDITION

The Strategies, Best Practices and Technologies
Driving The Digital Transformation of Business

Complements of *Internet Retailer*

The importance of customer-centric B2B experiences

Whether it's reordering frequently purchased items, checking account balances or paying invoices, business-to-business buyers expect suppliers to provide a customer-centric online experience.

"B2B buyers expect their suppliers to know their preferences and their pricing agreements when ordering online, just as a supplier's sales representative would," says Andy Lloyd, general manager, commerce products for NetSuite Inc., a SaaS e-commerce and business system platform provider. "Not embracing customer-centric design increases the risk of losing a sale."

Integrating a customer relationship management application with the e-commerce platform is a key step to providing a customer-centric experience, as buyers' pricing agreements and information about buyers' product preferences and purchasing histories reside in CRM applications.

"Once suppliers can access customer data within a CRM application, they can create custom product catalogs based on individual buyer preferences and show them customized catalogs as they log on to their web site," Lloyd says. "These types of features tell buyers the supplier knows who they are and that their business is valued."

Product configurators that let B2B buyers choose the features they want and store those properties for future orders is an effective way to create a customer-focused online experience. For example, many businesses have standard configurations. Being able to create, then save that configuration and call it up for each future laptop purchase speeds the purchasing process and increases customer satisfaction.

Displaying product variations in a grid layout order form so the buyer can quickly choose the colors, sizes and quantity of each item needed and then easily add everything at once to the cart, further enhances the customer experience. "This way the buyer doesn't have to place separate orders for each configuration," Lloyd says.



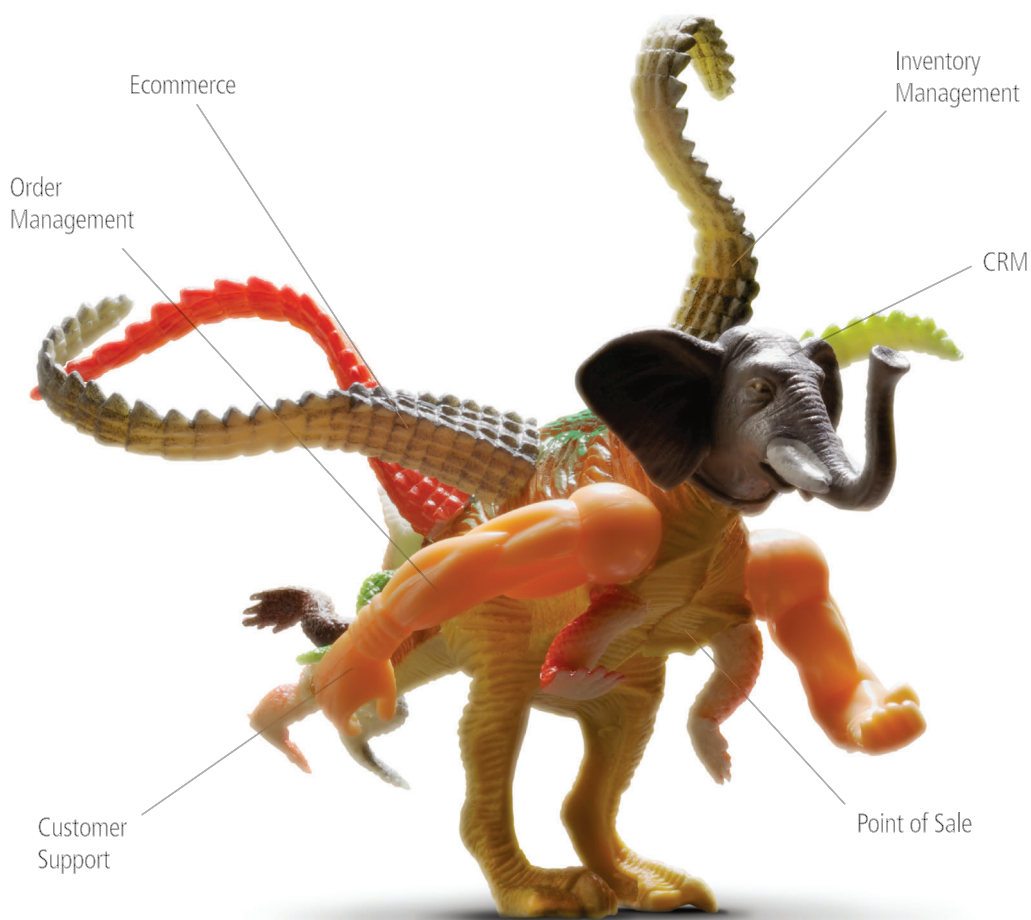
Showing buyers projected delivery dates at the time of purchase is another way to cater to buyers' needs. It's common for a buyer to need quick delivery for a replacement part or product that has unexpectedly run out. Providing the expected delivery date and options for faster delivery can ease the buying decision. So too can allowing the buyer to select the desired delivery date and what it will cost to deliver the order within that window.

While such bells and whistles as product configurators are sure to catch a B2B buyer's attention, some of the most effective customer-centric features revolve around making it easier to place orders for everyday items. One option is to store a buyer's order history so he can call it up for review on demand and adjust the quantity of items or select specific items from the list for reorder for that purchase only. Buyers should also be able to create and store seasonal shopping lists to speed the purchasing process as their product needs change throughout the year.

One aspect of the customer-focused experience suppliers should not overlook is site search. With supplier catalogs containing up to tens of thousands of products B2B buyers want to quickly narrow search results to find the right item. Faceted search enables buyers to drill down into search results using attributes related to the keyword entered. For example, a buyer entering the search term "wood screws" can be shown such attributes as length, thread size and types of screw heads.

"Many of the customer-centric features available to suppliers have been proven to work in the B2C world, so there is no reason B2B suppliers can't apply them to their web site," says Lloyd. "There is a lot B2B suppliers can learn about customer-centric design from B2C sites." ●

IF YOU'RE RUNNING SIX SEPARATE SYSTEMS, IT'S GOING TO GET UGLY.



TODAY'S COMMERCE RUNS ON 1 SYSTEM, NOT 6.*

If you're running separate systems for different parts of your business, your whole business suffers. Data isn't consistent across your touchpoints, so customers get inaccurate, confusing information. And that means lost sales, decreased satisfaction and a frustrating experience. SuiteCommerce is a single, complete commerce system that functions brilliantly across every touchpoint—web, mobile, social, in-store, phone—in any country. It gives you the information you need to provide the most optimized shopping experience your customers can get. And that's how you keep customers today and get new ones tomorrow.



*If you run more than 6, we can help you too.

SuiteCommerce

SuiteCommerce.com