For B2B e-commerce companies, it’s become increasingly challenging to strike a balance between providing exceptional customer experiences online and managing the complexities of selling products to companies instead of individuals.

Yet companies recognize that achieving this balance is critical to success. In a recent Aberdeen Group survey, 37% of B2B e-commerce firms listed as one of their top challenges the need to differentiate from competitors through unique, engaging digital shopper experiences.

“B2B is complex, but most B2B companies understand that this online customer experience is pretty important,” says Jim Aucoin, principal product manager for Oracle Commerce.

B2B organizations, such as manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers, differ from B2C companies in terms of the products they sell and the processes and systems employed. Most B2B organizations run several back-end systems, such as ERP, that feed into the customer experience.

Finding the balance between the B2C experience and the B2B customer’s needs, Aucoin says, requires understanding the components that make up the customer experience. Here are the basics:

- Get buyers to the site.
- Direct buyers to the exact products they’re looking for.
- Make it as simple as possible for buyers to purchase those products within their company’s specifications and contract terms.

B2B companies can sell tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands or even millions of products, so it can be tricky to help guide new as well as repeat buyers to find exactly what they’re looking for. One of the most proven ways to attract new buyers, and get repeat buyers to purchase a wider range of products, Aucoin says, is through search engine optimization.

The Oracle Commerce platform leverages all of the data a company has about its products (e.g. technical specifications, brand, price, review ratings). It can then map every path a user could take through the catalog and pass that as a page to search engines. The result is that customers using Oracle Commerce see their products returned higher in organic search results.

Once buyers arrive on a site, guided navigation is a valuable tool B2B companies can employ to help buyers find an exact product. For example, if a buyer is searching for drills in a specific size that support a certain type of battery, the buyer clicks on those attributes to refine the search. “In B2B, with many attributes for a product, guided navigation is important,” Aucoin says.

B2B companies also need to make it easy for their customers to deal with the complexity of payment, contracts and checkout. In B2B, features such as saved orders and purchase lists allow a customer to quickly reorder frequently purchased items. And B2B buyers use purchase orders that must be approved internally and entered into the vendor’s financial systems.

“In B2B, the website visitors are there looking for a product because it’s their job,” Aucoin says. “We know that if we make their job easier, they’ll come back.”

Because no two B2B e-commerce companies are alike, they all need the ability to customize their system to make it work exactly the way they want it to, and to deliver the right experiences to their customers, says Aucoin.

“Not only do we offer a lot of functionality out of the box, but our systems are also highly customizable,” he says. “That’s one of the hallmarks of Oracle Commerce.”

Oracle Commerce’s Experience Manager enables B2B companies to personalize and automate the customer’s online buying experience without having to involve the company I.T. department. Oracle Commerce also offers key B2B functionality including the ability to provide quotes to customers with workflow for approvals and to configure complex products where customers select feature options (e.g. display type, memory) and then are presented the available products refined by each feature they select.
Industry-Leading Modern Commerce

More B2B and B2C Brands in the Internet Retailer Top 500 Guide Rely on Oracle for E-Commerce*

» Dynamic, Personalized, Omni-Channel Experiences
» Best-in-Class Search and Guided Navigation
» Business User Control for Greater Agility
» Architected for Performance and Scalability
» Maximizes Visits, Conversion Rates, and Revenue

To learn more, visit oracle.com/commerce or call 1.800.Oracle 1

*Oracle is ranked as the #1 vendor for the e-commerce platform, site search, content management and CRM categories in the Internet Retailer 2015 Top 500 Guide, based on the number of Top 500 retailers that list Oracle as their provider in these categories.