Delivering modern e-commerce and digital experiences

Every consumer and business brand wants to satisfy its online customers and capitalize on the rapid growth in e-commerce. Yet, there's no way to do that today without a robust, modern e-commerce platform.

Consumers and business buyers alike have rising expectations for a great experience when researching, buying and using products. They expect personalized, omnichannel experiences that are seamless, connected and efficient. Customers want to find what they are looking for easily, and complete transactions effortlessly from anywhere. Also, business buyers expect capabilities that will make their job easier, including transparent access to data stored in back-office systems.

These rising expectations increase the complexity of digital selling and the number of application integrations required to deliver differentiated experiences. Brands with existing e-commerce platforms often don't have the flexibility or scalability to meet global expansion goals, and typically must rely on IT for fundamental changes. Brands just getting started selling online need to accelerate their transformation using a proven platform to avoid losing market share and time.

"What's needed is a modern e-commerce platform that more effectively meets the ever more demanding requirements of buyers and businesses alike," says Ian Davis, senior director of product management at Oracle, an industry leader in e-commerce technology for both consumer and B2B brands of all sizes.

Davis says there are five key capabilities that define a modern e-commerce platform:

1. It must enable engaging experiences anywhere—web, mobile, tablet, social and in-store—including support for responsive design. This should be supported with pre-built, configurable functionality that speeds development.

2. It must include integrated SEO, search and guided navigation capabilities that make it easy for customers to find you and what they are looking for on your site.

3. Personalization and targeting capabilities must dynamically adapt to each customer based on their context.

4. The platform must allow business users to make shopping the site pleasing and easy, without heavily relying on IT support.

5. The platform must offer a flexible, scalable, global, multi-site architecture that leverages content and data from any source.

"The best e-commerce platforms encompass these attributes and balance flexibility with satisfying the business' technology requirements, empowering non-technical users to take control of the site," Davis says.

Davis also notes that although business buyers expect consumer-like experiences, they have unique needs and

Ian Davis, senior director of product management, Oracle

complex job-related processes that need to be met by a modern e-commerce platform for B2B, such as: support for complex pricing and catalogs, multiple buyer and user roles, complex organization hierarchies, recurring orders, bulk purchases, multiple ship-to's and payment options, workflow approvals, search and navigation for customer-centric buying flows, as well as seamless access to such data as inventory, pricing and payment terms. Oracle Commerce for B2B is purpose-built to support even the most complex B2B environments.

Companies have a growing set of deployment and hosting options for their e-commerce platform. "We believe a customer should choose a vendor that doesn't lock them into one hosting option, since needs change over time and even may vary across brands and divisions of the same company," Davis says. Oracle offers a range of options to customers giving them complete flexibility from one vendor, Davis says, including "a cloud-based SaaS solution for clients that don't want to manage any of the technology associated with their sites."

Davis stresses that a successful e-commerce project requires more than the latest technology. With so much at stake, customers should look to vendors with proven successes, extensive services, and partner ecosystems that can help at every step.

The provision of an outstanding omnichannel experience that can be dynamically tailored to specific customer interests will provide for the high average order values, loyalty and advocacy that forward-thinking B2B online commerce leaders are looking for, and that B2C e-commerce leaders have come to expect. With over 15 years of e-commerce-specific expertise and hundreds of customers across B2B and retail segments, Oracle is uniquely positioned and committed to helping organizations succeed with their e-commerce initiatives. ○