What Does a 'Unified Platform' Really Mean?

The Reality of Combined B2B and B2C Commerce Platforms

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INVESTING IN A TRULY UNIFIED 2B AND B2C PLATFORM

There is a lot of talk around investing in commerce platforms that can manage both B2C and B2B experiences. Brands, especially in consumer goods and high tech manufacturing, are realizing they can gain great efficiency and cut costs substantially by investing simultaneously in both.

Many vendors claim to have a unified B2C and B2B platform, but what does *unified* actually mean?

The way something is marketed can look fantastic, but when it comes down to using the platform, it can be a different story.

An integrated platform is one thing, but building a platform from the ground up for both B2C and B2B at the core - involving the same data and the same UI –because that is **a truly unified platform.**

When evaluating commerce platforms, ask these key questions to better understand what you are truly purchasing.

"The unified platform helps our clients meet the increasingly rising customer expectations of buying in consistent, cohesive and uniformly branded online stores."

Aman Bedi,
CTO of TAISTech,
A Mastek Company

QUESTION 1: WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY A SINGLE, UNIFIED PLATFORM?

First and foremost, ask about the underlying architecture that will power your B2C and B2B experiences.

- Is this solution built on the same platform?

- Will your development team have to build, learn and develop completely separate applications with different programming languages?

- Is the architecture built API-first with modern standards-based programming languages?

QUESTION 2: IS IT A SINGLE TOOLSET?

What will the user experience be like for your team?   Can business teams control everything across B2B and B2C sites in one toolset?   Be sure to understand:

- Can my team leverage shared administration and sites access for B2C and B2B sites?

- Do they log in to one place? Does it look the same?

- Will they be using a single UI?

- Are any separate business or IT skills required to work with these unified tools?   What about training? Is that the same for both teams?

- Can my team leverage the same content, product data, design templates across sites?

- What will still need to be managed by IT? Can my team refresh page design, to optimize personalized search, and refine navigation without IT involvement?

"Oracle Commerce Cloud is unique in that it offers our clients a truly unified platform that enables them to streamline their B2B and B2C markets."

Amir Razmara
CTO Avenue Code

QUESTION 3: WHAT ADDITIONAL INTEGRATION, IF ANY, WILL BE NEEDED?

Even a platform that is unified at the core will still require some additional technology integration. Questions to ask about integration include:

- Can you leverage the same integrations you've built for your B2C site to power your B2B site - or vice versa?

- What technology integrations around payment providers, taxes, and reviews are pre-integrated?

- Are there extra costs for analytics, A/B testing integrations, recommendations, responsive design, image scaling, and CDN?

- Are there extra costs for in-store and call center applications?

- How is the hand-off of data between critical applications like ERP and CRM managed?

"We needed a platform that would be user friendly to promote to our clients both B2C and B2B the same experience."

Sandra Chayo
Marketing Director
Hope Lingerie

QUESTION 4: HAVE YOU GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO FUTURE EXPANSION?

You can't predict the future of your business nor should you be penalized for growth and success. Today, you may be thinking about how do you streamline your investments across B2C and B2B, but make sure to also take into consideration future areas of investment and that your commerce platform of choice can support your needs of today and beyond.

- What is the process when my team wants to expand into new countries, test new markets, makes an acquisition or and launches new brands?

- Can my team easily expand to new business models?

- Will my team have to start from scratch or can we leveraging the same instance?

QUESTION 5: WHAT ABOUT PRICING?

Pricing is always an important question. First and foremost, find out if your platform request is a single subscription price or are there different pricing metrics for B2C and B2B?

- Always ask for transparent pricing to know what you are going to get:

- What is the cost for extra sites?

- Will I be charged if I go over my committed order number and revenue?

- What if I want to add more accounts?

When it comes to the upgrade process, ask:

- Are there costs to upgrade to the latest release?

- Are there maintenance costs and support fees?

QUESTION 6: WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY CLOUD?

Cloud can mean many things – is it true SaaS or is it on-premise hosted in the cloud? Evaluate the underlying infrastructure and understand who actually manages database, app server, hardware, security, and compliance. The **biggest question** of them all is determining if the platform in question is indeed a single, unified B2B and B2C platform built on SaaS?

"Oracle Commerce Cloud allows us to experiment and take things to market quickly."

Surya Koppera
AVP of eCommerce
Things Remembered

"It's a much faster time to market, lower cost to implement, lower operational costs."

Tom McFadyen
President
McFadyen Digital, agency partner of Alpha Industries.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER ORACLE COMMERCE CLOUD

Only Oracle Commerce Cloud is truly a *unified, single platform* built from the ground up for both B2C and B2B. The commerce engine, drag and drop experience management, personalization, search, and SEO, content, PIM, AI, AB testing, pricing, promotions, merchandising, media, and catalog management are all fully unified and managed centrally.

LEVERAGING A SINGLE PLATFORM

There are clear opportunities for businesses to invest in both direct and B2B eCommerce simultaneously and leveraging a single platform enables brands to gain great efficiency and cut costs substantially.

With a single platform, single toolset, and single subscription; brands can simplify their technology ecosystem, streamline vendor relationships and create a single source of truth for customer and company data for better visibly and informed decisions.

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Just listen to HOPE Lingerie, an Oracle customer, on their experience with this unified platform.

Oracle Commerce Cloud once again named a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce for 2018:

- Oracle Commerce Cloud is positioned as the overall Leader in "Ability To Execute," and the overall "winner" of the MQ.

- Oracle Commerce Cloud was able to improve even further over last year's **excellent** positioning.

- In the accompanying Critical Capabilities for Commerce document, Oracle Commerce comes on TOP in two key categories: "Product Scores For Robust Global Implementations," and "Product Scores For Fast, Nimble Implementations."

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