

B2B eCommerce

Discovery Questions



Questions are the key to selecting a new platform and building a new site. These questions have been collected over the past 5 years, and they are an excellent way to get your team thinking about the value of eCommerce in your B2B organization.

General Questions

- Why are you looking at eCommerce? Customers, first mover, competition?
- How do your online activities and experience differ from your offline (call center, sales reps, etc.)
- What market trends are most influencing your business
- How is your industry changing?
- How is the internet changing your business?
- What channels do you use to sell your products today (internet, catalogue, sales, partners, etc.)?
- Who is your customer base? Who are most profitable?
- What is your most exciting product line? Most profitable? Most purchase on internet?
- Who are you major competitors (online and offline)?
- Why do customers purchase from you versus competitors? Why do they buy from your competitors?
- How do you differentiate yourself?
- What does your site do well? Not well?
- What sites do you want to emulate (industry and non-industry)?
- Do you have an international strategy? Multi-lingual and multi-current?
- When you look at your requirements, do you view them as complex or straight forward?
- How important is the user experience for your customers?
- Where is your product data today? How?
- Do you have a creative agency that you work with? Do they have online experience?
- What type of internet marketing do you do? SEO, SEM, Display advertising, etc.
- When all is complete, what does success look like for you in your online channel? How will you measure it?

Questions to answer for your vendors

- What eCommerce platform(s) do you have today?
- What are the challenges with your current platform?
- What platforms are you evaluating?
- How much revenue do you do online today?
- How many sites do you operate? What are they? What distinguishes them?
- Do you operate internationally? Multi-lingual? Multi-currency? How do you do this today on your sites (separate sites?)
- Have you developed a requirements document? Prioritization?
- What are your top 3 key requirements?
- Do you have an internal IT team? How involved do you want them in the future maintaining / development of product?
- Java or Microsoft experience internally?
- Do you have a PIM? If not, are you looking at one?
- What analytics package do you use today?
- Current database preferences? App server preferences?
- What is your ERP system? Any order management?
- How many systems do you need to integrate with?
- What do they know about Endeca? How do they feel about Endeca?
- Do you have a digital marketing agency for creative?
- Timing for phase 1 launch? Any events driving timing?
- B2B , B2C, B2G or some combination?
- At the end of the day, how will you determine this project to be a success?
- What is the average order value?
- How many peak transactions?
- How many products / SKUs?

Questions to ask about PIM

- What is driving the need for a PIM / PCM system?
- How many products do you have?
- How many product categories do you have?
- What search tools are used to access those products?
- How many attributes do you have across all of the products?
- Where is product content stored today? (CRM, ERP)
- How many sources do you need to aggregate together to create a single source of truth?
- How do you publish product content today?
- Do you store all product content together?
- What is the process to add attributes today?
- Where are product images stored?
- Do you have unstructured data like video, user reviews, community comments, attachments (PDF, MSDS, Word Doc, Excel, etc.)
- How many people manage products?
- Is product content distributed or centralized (ie category managers manage all of their product content)
- How complex are your products? Please give an example of one of your more complex products
- What channels do you need to distribute your product content on? (mobile, web, customers, partners, distributors) and in what formats? (excel, XML)
- Do you have any GDSN initiatives?
- Will vendors need to be able to update their own information in a product or supplier portal?