

E-Commerce Platforms



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Introduction

One of the most important decisions you make at the beginning of your e-commerce journey is choosing your platform. This guide contains all the factors and considerations that must be considered to determine how to choose the best e-commerce platform.

Why is choosing an e-commerce platform important for your business?

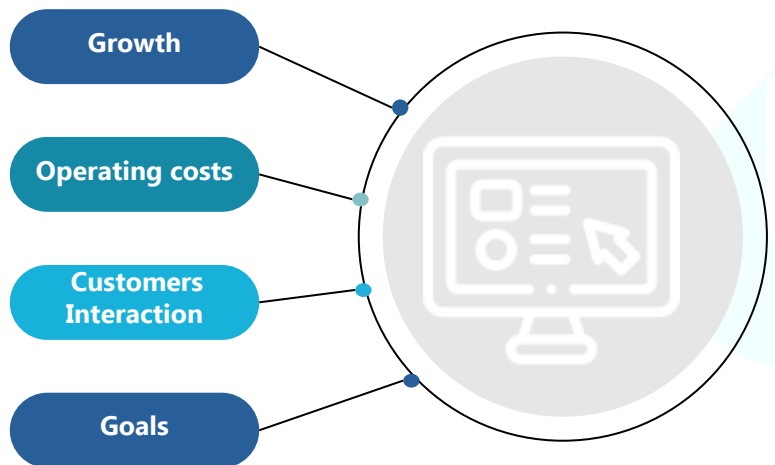
Doing an e-commerce business requires more than one process other than listing your products on the website. If you get this simple point, you can benefit from the digital environment where many tasks and activities that require human intervention are automated and simplified. As for choosing the e-commerce platform, it is necessary to know 4 crucial points that define this system:

how fast growing is your business?

the basic costs that include the cost of setting up an e-commerce platform, and ongoing development and maintenance costs.

the ability to control customers reactions.

define the proper method of operation and establish priority for achieving the goals.



There are many companies that aim to focus on matters that require high accuracy such as:

Branding, template design, content presentation, user experience ease. Most of the time, there are problems faced by e-commerce in attracting and increasing potential customers and following the steps of the business process. In turn, these processes help you determine whether you are achieving a healthy return on investment on the e-commerce system or not?

Introduction

Why use an e-commerce platform?

If you have an e-commerce, there must be a main system to ensure online competition in the right way. It is clear that the e-commerce platform is the backbone of retail companies or online services, and the platform contributes to simplifying how your business interacts with customers, employees, and competitors.

These platforms are software applications that enable companies to perform complex functions, including customer relation management (CRM), inventory management, mobile commerce, web design, and warehouse fulfillment.

Companies adopted their own platform internally by the IT and development team before considering options for specialized e-commerce. This procedure was challenging, expensive, and could not be integrated with other software solutions for the same business.

The method of using private buildings today is used by a few companies working on specialized solutions. It includes free platforms and proprietary software with the potential of meeting the requirements according to the company's construction of these solutions. It can also be customized by a team of developers or work with a pre-built platform hosted in the cloud.

What is the best e-commerce platform?

Choosing a platform based on its popularity is not the best way, but rather choose the best that achieves the results and goals you set for your business. They can be simple goals such as increasing revenues or improving customer engagement, and they may be complex such as: the stakeholders who have conflicting goals, in addition to the platform being commensurate with the current technical expertise of your team, as well as the competitiveness of your company. If competing in a fast-paced field can face technical disruptions, then a system must be established in which you can move and modify to suit your business.

Platform Types

First: build your own platform:

This method is more than one type of e-commerce platform, it requires you to contract with an internal or external person for development. If your business is very specialized and you have specific needs and requirements that no commercial platform can provide, your choice may be to build your own platform.

Second : traditional e-commerce platform :

This type of platform facilitates the purchase of license fees in advance and renewing them annually. The IT team and developers will then build, customize, and install the platform either on-premises or in the cloud, such as: Oracle Commerce & Kentico platform.

Third: open-source e-commerce platform:

Similar to traditional systems and the same development procedures, however, there is an upfront cost to purchase the license that must be paid for implementation and continuous development such as: WooCommerce & Magento.

Fourth: cloud platforms:

Traditional and open-source platforms have been installed on a hosting system and call themselves cloud platforms such as: Demandware.

Fifth: E-commerce platform (Software as a Service) SaaS:

It is available in a service software form and builds a database on a single data. Whoever uses this platform gets the same technology for a fixed monthly fee that covers the costs of continuous maintenance and upgrading of server technology.

Platform Establishment and Maintenance Costs

When choosing an e-commerce platform, it is essential to choose the platform that can do its costs such as:

1. Maintenance costs:

Depending on the size and complexity of the platform site, maintenance expenses might vary and the degree to which technical assistance is required. If you choose a traditional / open-source platform, you will be responsible for maintaining the site until it functions in accordance with its specifications.

2. Upgrade costs:

Open-source platforms require you to download and install updates whenever they are released, you need to install them immediately; otherwise, your system may be targeted by hackers and become vulnerable to cyberattacks. Installing updates requires technical knowledge; you may need external assistance.

3. Adding new features/optimization costs:

Consumer behavior changes from time to time, the platform must be kept relevant to their needs and met.

4. Costs of UX changes:

The goal is to change consumer attitudes and behavior. If e-commerce becomes stalled, you have to change the platform, but it will be expensive.

Why are SaaS e-commerce platforms hosted on the cloud not similar?

It may seem that the platform on the cloud is a SaaS product, but this is not true. When using an e-commerce platform on the cloud, you still need initial development and customization, just like traditional and open-source platforms do. Many cloud-hosted platforms are outdated platforms that are still hosted on a cloud platform and still require you to perform maintenance and install upgrades. You must therefore rely on a technical assistant to complete the task. If this is completed, the platform becomes considerably yours. For this platform, you do not need to maintain a physical server-based hosting provider.

Platform Selection Factors



Platform provider experience:

Check the technical expertise and skills that the platform provider has in order to help meet the needs of the existing requirements. In addition, check their knowledge in your field of work, as it may be helpful in researching current studies, dealing with customers, and making sure that they are ready.



Support

Search for vendors who offer emergency assistance and can be reached in a variety of ways



Scalability

You can figure this out by growing your business, figuring out how to measure the platform that is challenging to evaluate in order to determine what is holding you back.



Mobile compatibility:

The mobile-compatible platform is positive, "It will make up a third of total retail e-commerce sales." Reported by BIGCOMMERCE regarding mobile commerce.



Security

provide the necessary security protocols for the e-commerce.



Search engine optimization SEO compatibility:

E-commerce platforms that feature SEO are able to get a high ranking from search engine results.

E-Commerce Platform Features

The customer experience must be taken into consideration when choosing an e-commerce platform. The method used to present it will affect the customer experience and will result in the success of your e-commerce. The user-friendly platform can improve customer satisfaction and help your team achieve their goals. Keep in mind that the user experience depends on the flexibility and adaptability of the system.

E-commerce systems must be able to respond immediately to these changes and developments as we move further into the IoT era. Personalization is the key element of the customer experience, so the platform can integrate with AI and machine learning tools to understand consumer patterns for different types of customers.

When choosing an e-commerce platform, each platform has its own set of unique features and functions. You can figure out what features your platform needs:

01 A complete catalog:

the product catalog is the heart of your inventory, so check to see if the catalog is easy to use and up to date. It is important to establish whether the product catalog meets the requirements of your sector with a feature that allows your customer to determine the size or color of the product; additional examples include several products and how to link between product pages.

02 Flexible pricing:

Not only promotions or discounts but also multi-currency support and multiple fees can be applied.

03 Website personalization:

Online shoppers today expect a personalized experience; you can look for motorized platforms with recommendations, and they can also deliver suggested things for purchase to customers based on previous purchases.

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