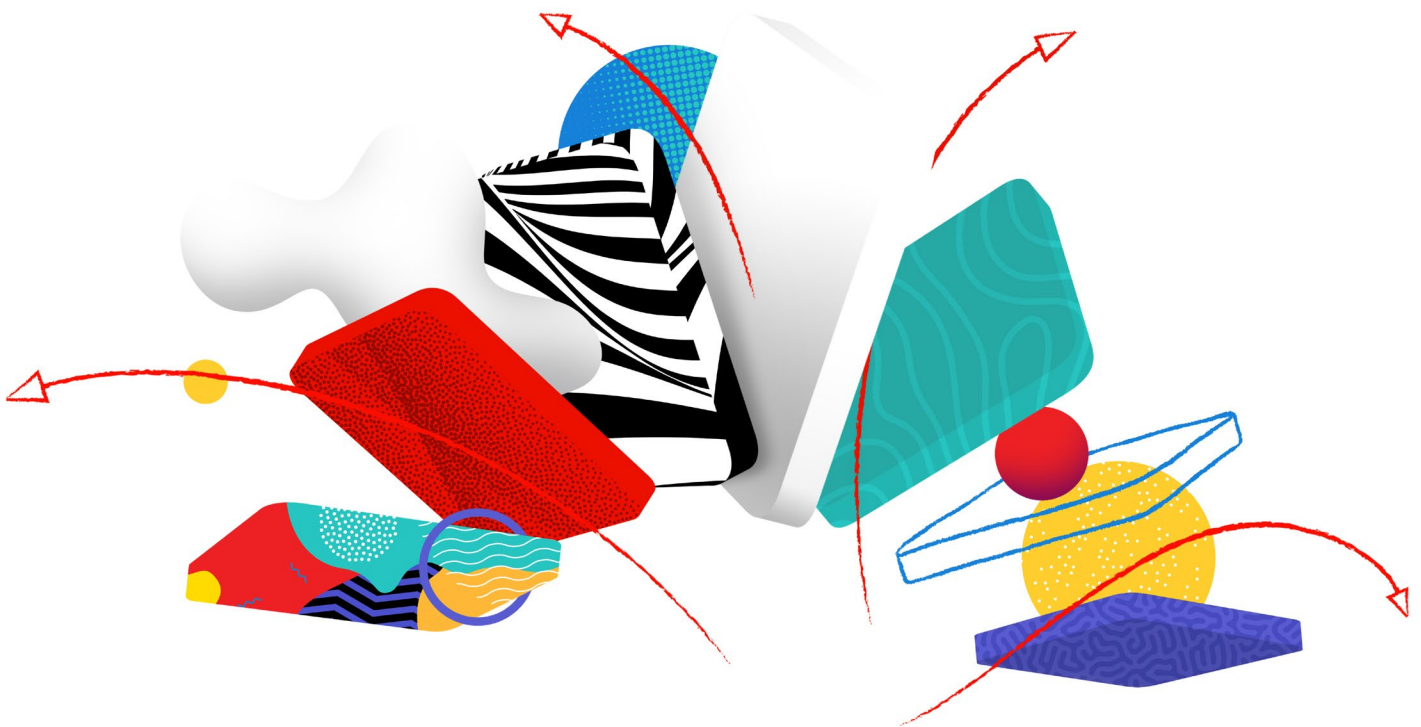




COMMERCE

Six must-haves for a fast, flexible ecommerce platform.

See which features you need in order to
grow fast and keep going.





Introduction

Now is the perfect time to get started with ecommerce.

The global pandemic permanently reshaped ecommerce. Our online shopping habits and the purchasing power behind them have changed the landscape. According to the Adobe Digital Economy Index, 2022 is expected to be the first trillion-dollar year for ecommerce. Of course, succeeding with ecommerce means finding an ecommerce platform that will support long-term, sustainable growth. A fast and flexible platform can make launching your business faster and easier. It can help you reach more customers across multiple geographies and deliver a truly unique customer experience.

But the wrong platform can slow you down. Rigid templates can limit your creativity and leave you with a store that looks like everyone else's. A lack of solution partners often means doing everything yourself. And an inflexible design can make it almost impossible to add new functionality as your business evolves and grows.

How can you get it right? **This guide highlights six questions to help you pick an ecommerce platform that's fast and flexible enough to grow on.**



The first trillion-dollar year for ecommerce is expected to be 2022.

1. Is it in the cloud?

Cloud-based platforms often cost less and can easily scale to your needs. Rather than pay for all your costly hardware and software licenses up front, you typically pay a subscription fee based on usage. You can quickly scale up or down based on your business needs. Plus, cloud-based platform vendors manage the underlying IT infrastructure for you so you don't have to deal with multiple vendors and service agreements.

Key takeaway: Whether you are just starting out or already have an ecommerce presence, choose an ecommerce platform that runs in the cloud.

2. Are you locked into rigid templates?

Your ecommerce platform should work for your business now and years from now. In other words, you need a platform that can evolve as your business grows in size and complexity. "Plug-and-play" platforms that come with canned templates and purchase flows can be easy to set up—but they may not have the flexibility or breadth of functionality you'll need over the long haul.

When you outgrow these templates, you'll have two choices: pay for customisations that are costly and difficult to implement, or pick a new platform. Unfortunately, many template-based platforms will not let you modify their code. That means you'll have to rip out your ecommerce platform and start over just as you're taking off.

Key takeaway: Don't force-fit your business needs to the capabilities of your technology vendor. Choose a vendor that provides enough flexibility to create an original customer experience.

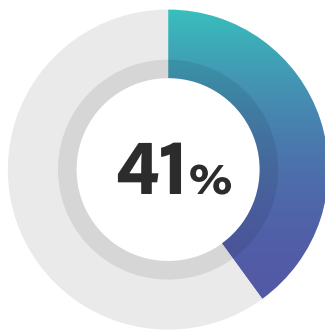


3. Does it support multiple channels, markets, and countries?

Today's ecommerce is often part of a larger customer experience spanning multiple touchpoints. Brick-and-mortar stores are going digital—and offering more shopping options like buy online, pick up in-store or curbside pickup. Now, mobile shopping contributes to 41 percent of total revenue, an 8 percent increase from 2020. And businesses of all sizes are rushing to sell on Amazon and reach new international markets.

Even if you're small now, it's important to look ahead. If your ecommerce platform doesn't support multiple channels, sites, and languages, you could find yourself having to set up a new environment to support each new market segment and audience. Running multiple independent instances adds costly overhead. It also makes it difficult to track inventory, manage logistics, synchronise content, and deliver a consistent customer experience across your sites.

Key takeaway: Think about what your business will look like two, three, and five years from now. Your platform should support your growth plans from day one.



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4. Does it play nicely with others?

Ecommerce doesn't happen in isolation. For maximum efficiency, your ecommerce platform will need to communicate with any or all of the following business systems: CMS, CRM, ERP, PIM, and more. This means it should connect easily to most commonly used business systems through proven APIs and without the need for tons of custom code. Otherwise, you may have to spend more—even a lot more—time and money on systems integration or risk critical data getting out of sync.

Key takeaway: Your ecommerce platform should be a team player. Choose one that connects and integrates easily with your other business systems.

5. How big is the ecosystem of partners and developers supporting the platform?

Most fast-growing businesses are investing in their core product (and in selling it), not in IT. As your business evolves, you'll need to quickly extend your ecommerce experience, and you may need some help. That help could take the form of a solution partner who knows your industry, or the installation of new modules written by third-party developers. As a rule of thumb, the more solution partners and developers who know and support your chosen platform, the better.

Key takeaway: More is better. Choose a platform from a vendor that fosters a large and geographically diverse community of solution partners and developers.

6. Can it support different business models?

The line between retail and wholesale is blurring. Many direct-to-consumer businesses are adding wholesale stores and partnering with retailers, and a growing number of wholesalers are selling directly to consumers online. However, these models are definitely not the same. Selling to businesses and distributors (B2B) can be more complicated and may require customised product catalogs, alternative payment options, and other special features.

For maximum flexibility, you need an ecommerce platform that offers native functionality for both retail and wholesale business models. Running two separate ecommerce systems is time-consuming and expensive.

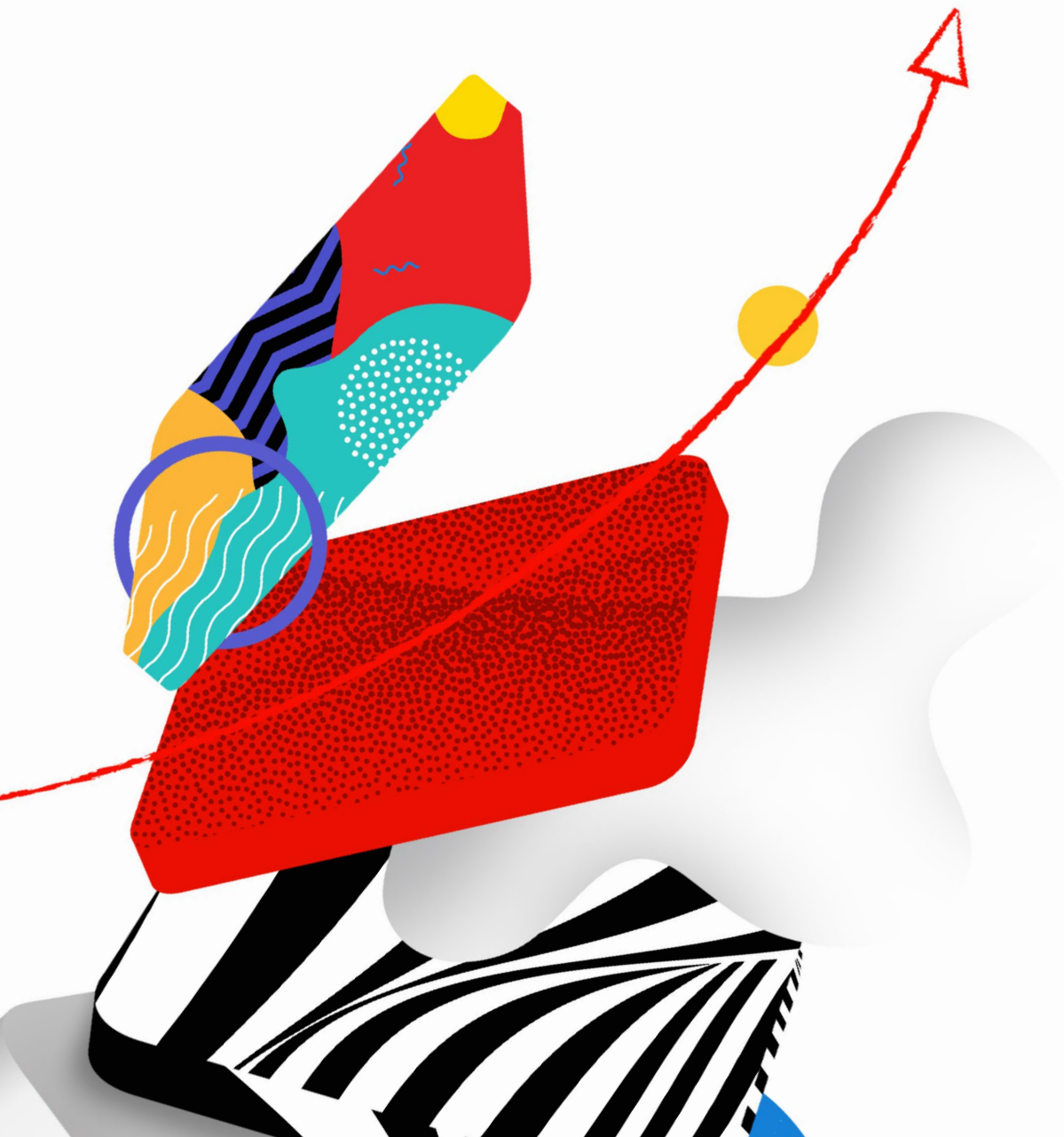
Key takeaway: If there's even a modest chance your business will adopt multiple business models, choose a platform that supports them.



Adobe Commerce can help.

Adobe Commerce is the world's leading digital commerce solution for merchants and brands. With Adobe Commerce, you can build engaging shopping experiences for every type of customer—from B2B and B2C to B2B2C. It's built for enterprise on a scalable, open-source platform with unparalleled security, premium performance, and a low total cost of ownership. Businesses of all sizes can use it to reach customers wherever they are, across devices and marketplaces. It's more than a flexible shopping cart system. It's the building block for business growth.

[Explore](#) how Adobe Commerce can help you build better commerce experiences.



Sources

"Adobe Digital Economy Index: Ecommerce Hits New Milestone — Online Prices Continue to Rise," *Adobe Blog*, September 15, 2021.



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