Understand your digital commerce maturity.

Without question, today's online buyers have thousands of choices—and you may be lucky to capture their attention for only seconds. That's why it's more important than ever to understand your customers and deliver a compelling, best-in-class digital commerce experience. According to recent research by the Baymard Institute, approximately 70 percent of shopping carts are left abandoned online. There's no reason to find yourself in this situation.

Whether your business is B2B or B2C or both, Adobe Commerce— powered by Magento—gives you unparalleled agility and scalability. You'll design and deliver sites that bolster your brand and attract and retain customers.

As purchase trends continue to evolve and buyers expect more personalized, engaging experiences, now is the time to assess your digital commerce presence. This eBook provides a framework for you to determine the maturity of your online business through five key phases of development.

> " The most significant benefit of Adobe Commerce for us is the flexibility we get from the platform—be it merchandising activities, marketing demand generation, spinning up a campaign, or creating content quickly . . . Overall, our markets can do more a lot more quickly, which is ultimately what it's all about."

Adobe Commerce Cloud customer
*The Business Value of Adobe Commerce Cloud*
IDC, March 2021

The 5 stages of digital commerce maturity.

Most businesses—as they grow and evolve—focus on delivering a richer and more sophisticated experience to their customers. They may add new channels, create more personalized and efficient purchasing, provide more account management capabilities, use data and insights more intelligently, and integrate commerce with other business systems.

This maturity typically develops across phases, beginning with what we call the Nascent and Basic phases and advancing to the Emerging, Advanced, and finally Cutting-edge phases. Businesses may pass through these phases in sequence as they grow, or they may leapfrog over multiple phases by upgrading their commerce resources and tools. B2C and B2B companies share much in common as their digital commerce efforts mature—similar challenges, goals, and buyer behaviors. But for B2B businesses, there are a few unique challenges. The journey for both is worth taking a closer look.
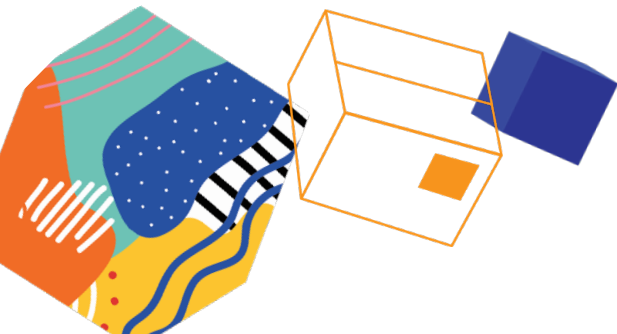
Introducing the five stages.

Nascent

For both B2C and B2B, the focus is on creating a single, simple transactional site.

Basic

There is an increased emphasis on improving performance and optimizing the mobile and basic site experience. Collecting data while improving performance and delivering content and promotions becomes a larger focus.

Emerging

Businesses may look at expansion into new markets and regions. New business models may be added, plus more integration with key business systems. For B2B, providing a self-service customer portal also becomes important.

Advanced

AI and ML-driven personalized shopping experiences take priority. For B2B, the focus is on improving the customer journey, supporting the purchase of complex, highly configured products online. Self-service portals mature to add more account management capabilities.

Cutting-edge

It's all about a seamless, highly personalized omnichannel approach with a unified, consistent shopping and fulfillment experience. For B2B, all account interactions are online, with fully automated personalization and a strong focus on AI-driven experiences.

#1: The Nascent phase

In the earliest phase of digital commerce maturity—the Nascent phase—both B2C and B2B businesses have a single, simple transactional site with a common customer journey. Ordering is basic, with only individual buyer accounts available.

Content creation processes are typically manual during this phase, and websites and experiences are not localized for different regions. Pages may be updated sporadically, with no particular cadence. Digital content and asset management is minimal, and there is no personalization of content. Very little focus is placed on collecting thorough, reliable data, and there is limited integration with other business systems.

#2: The Basic phase

In the Basic phase—for both B2B and B2C businesses—there is more opportunity to optimize the customer experience. For example, the merchant might focus on improving performance and ensuring a smooth purchasing experience on mobile devices. During this phase, there is also an increase in engagement, with more emphasis on creating content to connect better with buyers, though that content is likely not yet personalized. Content and asset management is minimal.

As the basic site experience improves and grows, merchants often begin to look for ways to grow their audience—expanding into new global markets or exploring selling in marketplaces like Amazon, JD.com, or Alibaba. And the digital commerce platform becomes more connected with other back-end business systems like ERP (enterprise resource planning), PIM (product information management), OMS (order management system),

and CRM (customer relationship management). It's important that the commerce platform be fully integrated into all of these systems to combine data all in one place in order to begin personalizing the customer experience.

For B2B companies, a few additional considerations come into play during the Basic phase. Refining the buyer experience to enable easier ordering and reordering becomes important, and most businesses add the ability to upload lists of SKUs or create requisition lists. Account management capabilities develop with the addition of company accounts that can support multiple buyers with different roles and permissions.

#3: The Emerging phase

Businesses in the Emerging phase—whether B2C or B2B—are now looking beyond a single channel or two into more complex selling environments where they are expanding their reach into new regions. This phase is characterized by expanding sales to cover multiple regions, and B2B sellers may add direct-to-consumer (D2C) sales, while B2C sellers may engage in online wholesaling (B2B). Personalization becomes more prominent, with rules-based customer segmentation and possibly the beginning of automated product merchandising. Management of content and digital assets also becomes more important.

As complexity evolves, both B2C and B2B merchants in this phase start to prioritize taking a unified approach to data that enables informed, data-driven decisions. Typically, they begin to leverage APIs or connectors for real-time integration with key business systems. This can help ensure that their digital commerce system has the latest customer, product, inventory, shipping, and other data.

For B2B companies, digital and in-person sales are becoming more fluid, with sales reps able to provide assisted selling online, open real-time chat sessions with customers, and respond to quote requests online.

#4: The Advanced phase

B2C businesses that have entered the Advanced phase will start to have multiple selling environments, and will design each of them to be unique to the channel and audience—introducing sophisticated commerce experiences that stand out against the competition. At this stage, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine-learning (ML) personalization capabilities are required to automate and optimize the experience based on real-time data insights.

Many B2B merchants will also begin to support the purchase of complex, highly configured products online through guided selling processes and CPQ system integration. More account management tools are added online so that customers have a self-service portal for engaging with them 24/7. The self-service portal typically matures during this phase, bringing more capabilities to serve customers online.

For both B2C and B2B companies, growth is sustained through a culture of continual testing, iterating, and improving the customer journey. And business systems are further integrated to enable better customer experiences and operational efficiency. Effortless shopping and purchasing become critical, and that means giving customers choices. Flexible fulfillment options like in-store pickup and ship-to-and-from-store let shoppers fill an order from anywhere.

#5: The Cutting-edge phase

By the time they reach the Cutting-edge phase, most B2C merchants are delivering seamless shopping that connects every customer interaction with a unified, consistent experience across all channels. Merchants may have fully optimized their new go-to-market models and strategies and may be pioneering new ones. API-first or headless commerce becomes important here—enabling rapid iteration of different storefronts as the business evolves and responds to change.

These businesses have the technology, resources, and data analytics to create a customer journey that's unique for every shopper. They move quickly by embracing an agile, iterative approach across the organization. Content and digital asset management is fully integrated during this final phase. Content creation processes—from ideation through publication—are fully automated.

For B2B companies, the Cutting-edge phase is typically much more advanced than previous phases. They may also have a strong focus on implementing AI to save their customers time and enable more efficient buying by automating purchasing based on buyer profiles and consumption patterns. With insights derived from AI, products can be automatically delivered to customers at just the right time.

The B2B merchant might also make nearly any account interaction available online for maximum customer convenience. Customers can manage their orders, invoices, company credit, warranty claims, support requests, and returns. They can access marketing resources and knowledge bases, and they can pay their bills online.
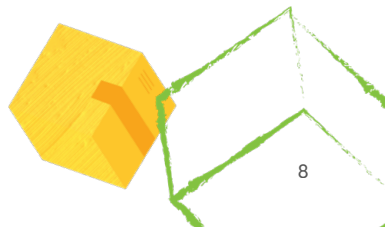
Take the next step toward digital commerce maturity.

Adobe Commerce gives businesses the power to create unique and engaging shopping and buying experiences with rich, out-of-the-box commerce capabilities, unlimited ability to customize, flexible headless architecture, and seamless third-party integrations. It's designed to assist you in every phase of your digital commerce maturity—from Nascent through Cutting-edge. An intuitive interface and advanced AI features enable you to use Adobe Commerce to create personalized, multi-channel experiences on a single platform.

Here's a quick look at a few of the Adobe Commerce features:

Page Builder	Create compelling experiences and easily manage pages with intuitive drag-and-drop content editing tools.
PWA Studio	Build, deploy, and optimize progressive web apps (PWAs) quickly and cost-effectively.
Amazon Sales Channel	Sell and distribute on the world's largest online marketplace directly from your Adobe Commerce store.
Segmentation and Targeting	Segment both registered users and guests by various parameters to establish more precise marketing and better personalization.
Product Recommendations	Deliver more relevant experiences to every shopper. Powered by Adobe Sensei, this feature provides a direct way to increase the impact of digital merchandising while reducing the manual work required to uncover meaningful product preferences.

Live Search	Get highly relevant search and personalized results—all while simplifying back-end management. Live Search combines the power of Adobe Sensei AI with real-time data.
Business intelligence	Rely on a centralized hub for business intelligence capabilities that provides a single source of truth for all your commerce data, combined with data visualization and robust dashboard and report building tools.
Support for global sites	Create authentic, localized brand experiences across multiple websites. Adobe Commerce's multi-site architecture uses a common codebase and database for all versions of your site, so you can quickly configure and launch in global markets without developer intervention.
Order management tools	Sell and fulfill from anywhere and everywhere. Our inventory and order management feature helps businesses with multiple brands, sites, stores, warehouses, etc. create seamless cross-channel experiences.
Customer loyalty tools	Build customized rewards and referrals programs to engage existing customers and reach new ones.
Integrated B2B functionality	Personalize content, pricing, and product assortment for every B2B customer. Set up self-service portals to manage company accounts and buyers, set purchase approval rules, track orders, company credit, returns, and more. Enable frictionless self-service ordering with SKU list uploads, requisition lists, and easy reordering.

Learn more about everything Adobe Commerce has to offer.

Learn more

"Cart and Checkout UX," Baymard Institute, 2021.

Jordan Jewell, Leslie Hand, Matthew Marden, "The Business Value of Adobe Commerce Cloud," IDC, March 2021.

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