Hybrid growth factor

How three businesses are growing fast with hybrid models that blend B2B and B2C e-commerce.

More and more of today's businesses are breaking out of their boxes

They are blending B2C and B2B business models in new and innovative ways. Consumer brands are becoming wholesalers and selling direct to big companies. And B2B brands are adding direct-to-consumer stores and giving their small business customers a more "consumer-like" experience. Whether the new business model you're adding is B2B or B2C, changing lanes isn't easy.

B2B companies need to learn how to delight their customers and B2C companies need to understand the complexities of B2B selling. The good news is that many companies have adopted a hybrid business model and achieved tremendous success. What do most of these organizations have in common? A willingness to innovate and an e-commerce platform that supports both B2B and B2C sales.

This eBook looks at three companies that are succeeding with hybrid business models and Adobe Commerce.

B2B is really different

Many B2C businesses are eager to enter the multi-trillion-dollar B2B marketplace. But the complexity of B2B e-commerce can be a shock to people who've spent most of their lives in the B2C world.

Here are just some of the ways in which B2B e-commerce is different:

- Initial B2B sales cycles are frequently longer and involve more people.

- B2B customers often reorder the same products again and again (and again).

- B2B customers often need a custom price quote before they buy.

- Business purchases may require purchase orders and other extra steps like approval from procurement.

- Businesses may have very specific shipping requirements that vary by location.

- Businesses may require more detailed invoices and other documentation.

- Different businesses expect their own product catalogs and pricing.

- Different types of businesses may be subject to different tax rates.

A Little Lovely Company

Wholesale, retail, and whimsy

A **Little Lovely Company** creates fun, affordable decorations for kids' bedrooms. They sell direct to consumers through brick-and-mortar stores and e-commerce. And they sell online to wholesale businesses and resellers. When they first started selling online, they set up a store on Magento Open Source. But they outgrew it quickly because it didn't fully support their growing B2B sales. Rather than extend Open Source any further, they began looking for a hybrid e-commerce platform that could support their B2C and B2B businesses.

Company: A Little Lovely Company, founded in 2014

Footprint: 80 employees, two stores, 4,200 resellers, and 3,000 wholesale accounts

Requirements: Wholesale and retail sales (B2B+B2C), scalability, support for multiple stores and countries, easy to customize

Solution: Adobe Commerce

Partner: Guapa

Result: 133% YoY growth within months of the upgrade

Their requirements included:

- Unified management for both B2B and B2C selling.

- Scalability and performance to support high volumes of traffic and transactions.

- A unique experience for wholesale buyers and account management for their sales reps.

- The ability to track resellers' locations and buying patterns to avoid unnecessary competition.

HP Inc. (Asia Pacific)

Bringing high tech to businesses and consumers across Asia

The Asia Pacific division of **HP Inc**. makes 3D printers that can even print their own replacement parts. They sell online and in store, and their customers include consumers as well as small and medium businesses and employee purchase programs. In other words, they have a hybrid business model spanning B2B and B2C. When they first introduced e-commerce, they used Adobe Commerce to build web stores in Thailand andIndonesia. The initial experiment revealed they needed a lot more than the B2C basics. They needed an e-commerce platform with B2B and B2C capabilities to help them:

- Add more (lots more) local stores and more languages.

- Connect the online and in-store experience.

- Add more features for B2B buyers like a simple account dashboard.

Adobe Commerce: one platform for B2B and B2C commerce in 5 countries

HP Inc.'s Asia Pacific division decided to migrate to Adobe Commerce 2 because it offers hybrid B2B and B2C, is global-ready, and includes multichannel functionality. They use it to power web stores across five countries. All of these regional web stores share the same "HP Universe" back end. The common back end provides a consistent brand experience and user-friendly management options while allowing each country to make customizations to meet local requirements. For example, the Indiasite successfully tested a "click and collect" program ultimately adopted by 600 local stores. And Hong Kong connected e-commerce to retail point-of-sale systems, allowing online booking for in-store demos.

Company: HP Inc. (Asia Pacific)

Requirements: A hybrid e-commerce platform combining B2B and B2C features as well as support for multichannel sales and local commerce

Solution: Adobe Commerce

Results: 600 stores now participating in the "click and collect" program

Five countries have rolled out hybrid commerce with Adobe Commerce, and more are coming soon.

Steelcase

Reducing complexity, increasing loyalty

Founded in 1912, **Steelcase** makes and sells highly-customized office furniture designed to help people reach their full potential. Their products are built to order, with a truly mind-boggling 25 quadrillion possible SKUs. And they sell them through an extensive network of dealers that reaches everyone from individual consumers to enterprises.

While Steelcase was initially an early e-commerce adopter, their first platform did not fully support their product lines or business model. They decided to replace their old e-commerce platform and reinvent their customer experience for both their dealers and their customers.

Company: Steelcase

Footprint: 25 quadrillion SKUs, thousands of B2B sites in development, 90% of B2B sales from eProcurement

Requirements: Replace an out-of-date e-commerce solution with a modern, flexible, and hybrid platform with B2B and B2C capabilities

Solution: Adobe Commerce

Solution partner: PunchOut Catalogs

Result: A foundation for thousands of custom sites

Adobe Commerce—a built-to-order experience to sell built-to-order furniture.

Steelcase chose Adobe Commerce because it's extremely flexible and offers a wide range of B2B and B2C functionality. Working with PunchOut Catalogs, Steelcase created a whole new customer experience that revolves around:

- **Customer-specific sites where B2B buyers can make purchases**—On these sites, individual buyers answer questions to generate a custom product catalog based on their needs and locations, as well as product availability. Automating the order process has minimized errors and dramatically sped up the product selection process.

- **A visual product configuration engine**—Using a simple interface, buyers can select a base chair type and customize elements like color, fabric, arm type, roller type, etc. Buyers then see a preview of their personalized chair with 3D visualization.

- **Support for punch-out purchasing:** "Punch-out" purchasing lets B2B buyers start from their internal eProcurement systems, like SAP and Ariba, and seamlessly "punch out" to the Steelcase web store where they can browse, search, and choose products to buy. When they're done, their shopping cart is automatically passed back to the eProcurement system where the sale is approved and becomes a purchase order.

Steelcase also uses Adobe Commerce to power its direct-to-consumer web store.
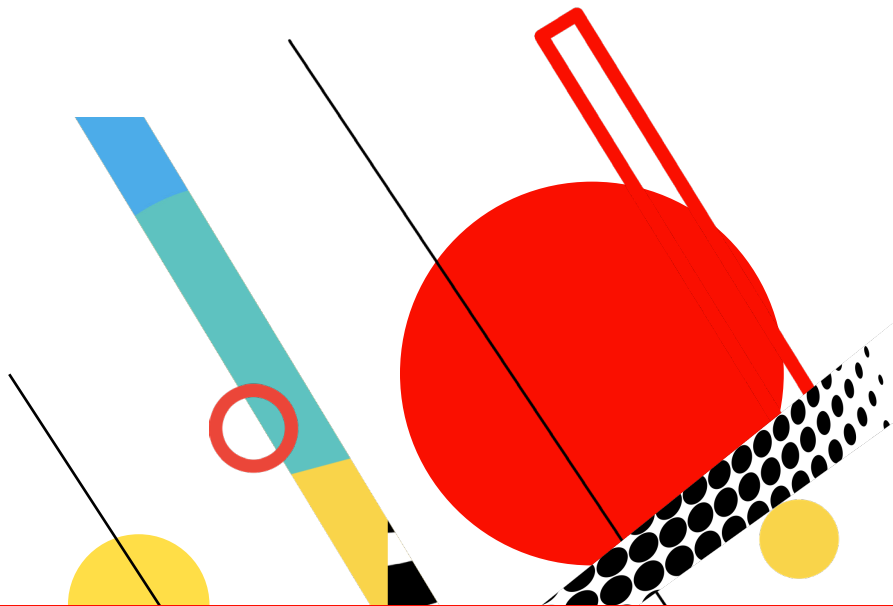
How to choose a hybrid platform

10 questions to ask when you're choosing a hybrid
e-commerce platform

- Does your platform have a complete feature set for both B2B and B2C business models?

- Can your platform run B2B and B2C web stores from a unified product catalog?

- Does your platform support multichannel sales and order management?

- Does your platform allow mobile-first development?

- Does your platform offer no-code page development tools?

- Can your platform scale to handle spikes in traffic during peak periods?

- How can you customize the user experience for customer segments?

- Can you get analytics from multiple storefronts?

- Does your platform have a large developer community and many pre-built extensions to quickly add features?

- Is there a large global network of solution partners?
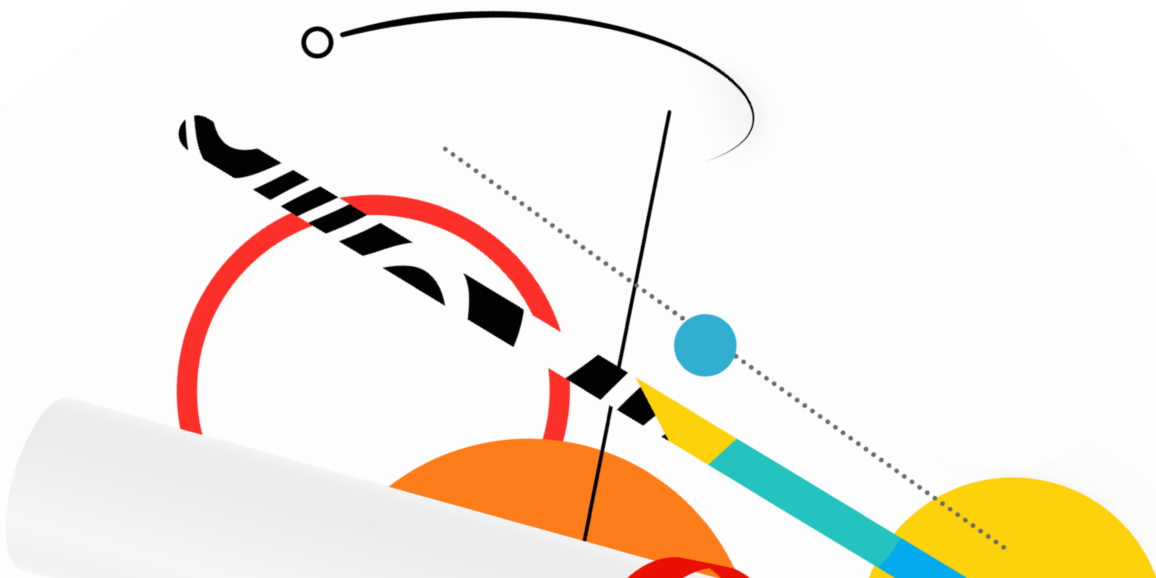
About Adobe Commerce

Adobe Commerce is the world's leading digital commerce platform. 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 platforms, including marketplaces. It's more than a flexible shopping cart system. It's the building block for business growth.