

One Platform to Rule Them All

5 reasons to choose a hybrid platform that combines B2B and B2C capabilities



The lines between B2B and B2C commerce are blurring.

A growing number of B2C companies are getting into B2B eCommerce. In the U.S., online B2B sales are more than double online retail sales,¹ and B2C companies want a piece of it. So they're adding wholesale storefronts to diversify and grow their sales, and even creating custom product lines for corporate use.

And the opposite is also true: B2B companies are selling direct to consumers in growing numbers. It's both a new source of revenue and a great way to understand how people use their products and how they could be improved. The end result is better products and more sales for the company and its distributors.

Whether you're adding B2B or B2C, you'll need a new set of eCommerce features, which you'll have to build or buy. **This eBook identifies five reasons to choose a hybrid eCommerce platform** that combines strong B2B and B2C functionality.

¹"Mapping the \$9 Trillion US B2B Online Commerce Market," Forrester Research, April 2018.

B2B eCommerce is a big opportunity, but just how big is it?

If you define B2B sales as employee purchases on supplier websites, the U.S. market is expected to surpass \$1 trillion.² If you add online B2B sales conducted through business networks and electronic procurement systems, it's a staggering \$9 trillion.³

²"Forrester Analytics: B2B eCommerce Forecast, 2018 to 2023 (US)," Forrester Research, December 2018.

³"Mapping the \$9 Trillion US B2B Online Commerce Market," Forrester Research, April 2018.



1 You won't end up with two platforms.

Running two separate eCommerce platforms—one for B2B and one for B2C—can lead to duplication of effort and systems. You'll have to manage two vendors as well as two platform lifecycles and update schedules. You'll need to integrate both your platforms with CRM, ERP, and other systems. And you'll need to juggle two sets of infrastructure requirements.

Overall, your eCommerce ecosystem will be more complex and require a lot more work to maintain. You may need different teams to support each system, and you may not have enough time to scale or fully customize either one. It will also be more difficult to get a holistic view of business performance, because your web, customer, and product data will be siloed in different systems.

With a hybrid platform, you can support B2B and B2C models with one system, efficiently manage both with the same team, and get a unified view of your business results.

2 You'll get a jump on the competition.

Adding a new B2B or B2C model can take time, especially when you need to configure a new eCommerce platform or add extensive customizations to your existing one. If you have a hybrid platform, you can get to market much faster. Instead of buying a new platform or building new features, you can “flip a switch” and start configuring products and processes.

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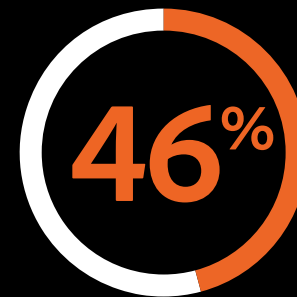
3 You'll stand out.

Some B2B-only platforms are built with a B2B aesthetic. This means they lack some of the “consumer-like” features that both B2B and B2C shoppers expect, like rich content, visual merchandising, personalization, etc. But that doesn't work anymore. B2B buyers require a high-quality digital experience when visiting B2B

sites online. 46 percent of B2B buyers and researchers are now millennials, who overwhelmingly prefer a more modern digital experience.⁴

A platform vendor with roots in both B2B and B2C commerce will offer a common architecture with shared content and design

elements. This means you can easily craft your B2B experience to include the consumer-like features B2B buyers want while providing a consistent brand experience across all your sites. Since B2B customer-experience index ratings tend to lag behind those of B2C companies,⁵ an easy-to-use digital experience will help your B2B brand stand out.



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⁴“The Changing Face of B2B Marketing,” Think with Google, March 2015.

⁵“Improving the business-to-business customer experience,” McKinsey, March 2016.

4 You'll be ready for anything.

Digital commerce has reduced the barriers to entry into all markets. Many B2B companies are forming direct relationships with consumers. And many B2C companies are tapping into the large and lucrative B2B space. With

so much change and disruption in today's markets, you need all the flexibility you can get. A hybrid platform keeps your options open and makes it easier to explore new business strategies whenever you're ready.

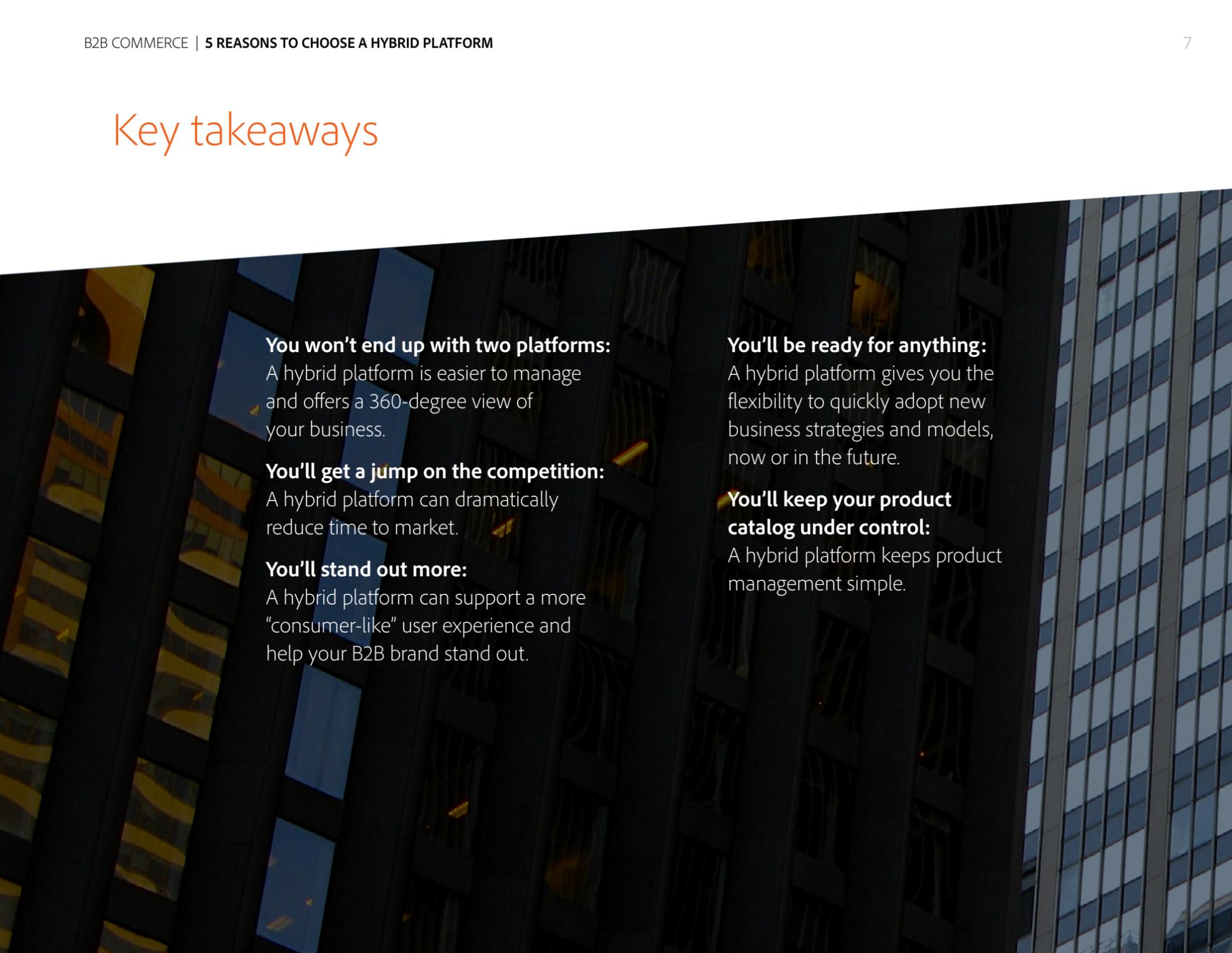
5 You'll keep your product catalog under control.

When you have multiple eCommerce platforms, you end up with multiple product catalogs. This means you need to maintain two sources of product data and keep them synchronized. Hybrid B2B and B2C systems offer unified catalog management so you can

keep track of all your products in one place. You can keep all your products in the same database. Certain products can be turned on and off for B2B and B2C buyers. And managing inventory also becomes much easier.

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Key takeaways



You won't end up with two platforms:

A hybrid platform is easier to manage and offers a 360-degree view of your business.

You'll get a jump on the competition:

A hybrid platform can dramatically reduce time to market.

You'll stand out more:

A hybrid platform can support a more "consumer-like" user experience and help your B2B brand stand out.

You'll be ready for anything:

A hybrid platform gives you the flexibility to quickly adopt new business strategies and models, now or in the future.

You'll keep your product catalog under control:

A hybrid platform keeps product management simple.



ABOUT MAGENTO

Magento, an Adobe company, is a leading provider of cloud commerce innovation to merchants and brands across B2C and B2B industries and was recently named a leader in the 2018 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce. In addition to its flagship digital commerce platform, Magento boasts a strong portfolio of cloud-based omnichannel solutions that empower merchants to successfully integrate digital and physical shopping

experiences. Magento is the #1 provider to the Internet Retailer Top 1000, the B2B 300, and the Top 500 Guides for Europe and Latin America. Magento is supported by a vast global network of solution and technology partners, a highly active global developer community, and the largest eCommerce marketplace for extensions, all available for download on the Magento Marketplace.

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