RetailDNA

Sell direct to customers with Salesforce's enterprise cloud
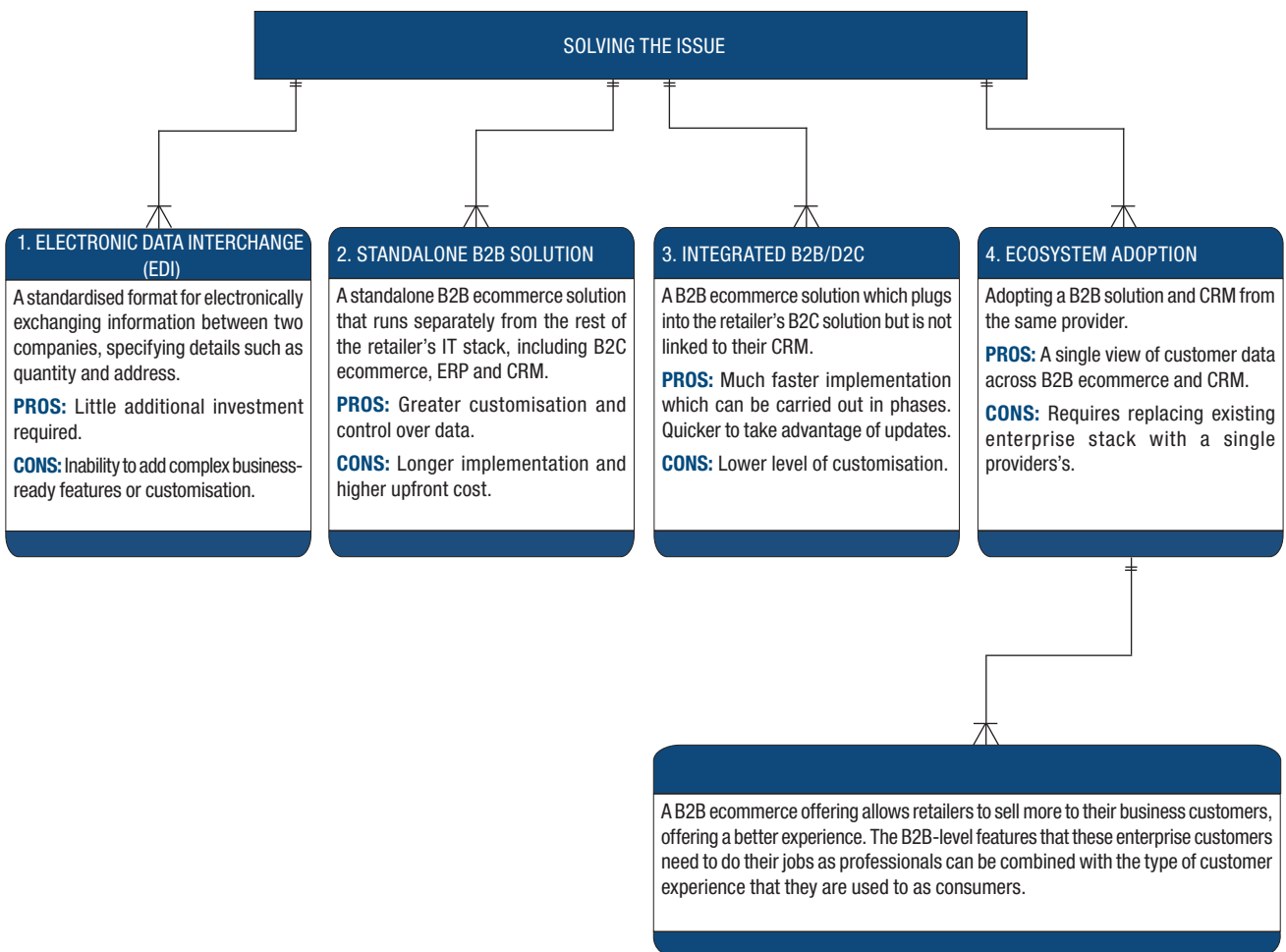
At a glance

B2B ECOMMERCE PORTAL A B2B ecommerce portal allows business customers to buy products online with features such as invoicing or multi-user accounts.

SOLVING THE ISSUE

1. ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE (EDI)

A standardised format for electronically exchanging information between two companies, specifying details such as quantity and address.

PROS: Little additional investment required.

CONS: Inability to add complex business-ready features or customisation.

2. STANDALONE B2B SOLUTION

A standalone B2B ecommerce solution that runs separately from the rest of the retailer's IT stack, including B2C ecommerce, ERP and CRM.

PROS: Greater customisation and control over data.

CONS: Longer implementation and higher upfront cost.

3. INTEGRATED B2B/D2C

A B2B ecommerce solution which plugs into the retailer's B2C solution but is not linked to their CRM.

PROS: Much faster implementation which can be carried out in phases. Quicker to take advantage of updates.

CONS: Lower level of customisation.

4. ECOSYSTEM ADOPTION

Adopting a B2B solution and CRM from the same provider.

PROS: A single view of customer data across B2B ecommerce and CRM.

CONS: Requires replacing existing enterprise stack with a single providers's.

A B2B ecommerce offering allows retailers to sell more to their business customers, offering a better experience. The B2B-level features that these enterprise customers need to do their jobs as professionals can be combined with the type of customer experience that they are used to as consumers.

Introduction: The state of B2B selling

Projections by analyst house Frost and Sullivan indicate the B2B eCommerce market may be worth more than twice the B2C one this year[1].

Through online retail, manufacturers that previously sold on a wholesale basis can now sell directly to their business customers, known as business-to-business (B2B) selling. Advantages include:

◇ **Better data** – If brands own the customer relationship, they can analyse data and feed this back into their operations. This includes purchase data information on how they interact with different promotions and time spent on specific product pages.

◇ **Ownership of customer relationship** – Serving the customer directly offers the opportunity to build brand presence and loyalty.

◇ **Broader margins** – Selling direct means no seller fees.

◇ **Greater control** – When selling directly manufacturers have complete control over merchandising and pricing of their products.

Business buyers purchase for different reasons than consumers, and thus have a completely different set of needs from an eCommerce portal. Some key requirements are listed below:

◇ **Higher order value** – The average order values for B2B are higher than those of B2C: average deals for B2B commerce are worth around $170k[2].

◇ **More focused marketing approach** – Companies can engage in more targeted marketing campaigns campaigns, with higher conversion rates as buyers and come to the site with a clear idea of what they need.

◇ **Repeat business** – Business purchases have to go through an extensive internal approval process with multiple personnel involved. This means a customer is likely to make repeat purchases.

◇ **Less seasonality** – Demand for business products is more consistent and less subject to peaks and lulls.

◇ **Changing buyer behaviour** – According to a report by UPS, industrial buyers are becoming younger, less loyal to tradition and much quicker to use ecommerce for a purchase[3].

With the evolution of ecommerce, rather than dealing with electronic data interchanges or emailing orders, business customers can place the order via the company's own web shop and have their product delivered through their chosen fulfilment method.

However, neither manufacturers nor traditional B2 retailers are optimised for selling to B2B markets. B2Cready ecommerce portals do not offer the necessary payment and account-level options needed by business buyers. Meanwhile, manufacturers may not have an ecommerce portal and be optimised to ship to their retailer mwholesale partners who may have stores and warehouses min multiple locations.

360 DEGREE VIEW OF DATA

Most B2B ecommerce sites will offer similar features to business customers, making it difficult to find differentiation through user experience or convenience.

Alongside product differentiation, one way to achieve competitive advantage over other B2B retailers in the same sector lies elsewhere: in the collection and usage of data.

The most effective way to take advantage of customer data is to bring it together, by linking the ecommerce site with back-end CRM systems.

1. Source: Frost & Sullivan, https://store.frost.com/u-s-b2b-ecommerceplatform-market-forecast-to-2023.html
2. Source: Salesforce
3. Source: UPS, https://solutions.ups.com/IBD-Study-2019-LP.html

About the product

Salesforce's B2B Commerce allows retailers to achieve this competitive advantage by providing a single view of the customer across all the points of interaction. The company's B2B Commerce integrates with its suite of enterprise offerings to create a single source of data on business customers.

This 360 degree view encompasses Salesforce's other tools, which include:

◇ **CRM** – Manage sales pipelines, quotes and proposals.

◇ **Service** – Manage customer support functions including call centres and self-service portals.

◇ **Marketing** – Reach new customers through personalised advertising across multiple channels.

◇ **Engagement** – Build custom apps to use in the Salesforce cloud.

◇ **Platform and Ecosystem** – Run business processes via applications.

◇ **Integration** – Connect and access apps, data and devices together in one place.

◇ **Community** – Collaborate with other Salesforce users.

◇ **Analytics** – Analyse historical data to receive recommendations.

Adopting B2B Commerce as part of this ecosystem means it can exchange data with these systems without the need for complex integrations. This integration is available through Salesforce Platinum Partner OSF Digital.

OSF Digital, a commerce consultancy, specialises in implementing Salesforce for ecommerce partners. It began partnering with Salesforce in 2009 and since then has been implementing Salesforce Commerce, Marketing, Service, Sales and Community Clouds on a global scale.

It has worked with consumer-facing retailers and now works with B2B sellers implementing Salesforce.

The consultancy offers the ecosystem integration expertise to complement Salesforce's platform expertise. OSF Digital has a cross-disciplinary team of around 1100 people globally, including around 400 certified Salesforce engineers.

It combines three areas of expertise:

◇ Expertise in Salesforce's platform, including creating and managing a single view of the customer

◇ Knowledge of the requirements of business sellers

◇ Understanding of B2C retail

OSF Digital will provide the initial consulting work to help the client define the scope of the project and then carry out the integration. It then provides ongoing support and continuous improvement, offering support and customer service management.

OSF specialises in the integration to solutions for ERP, Payment Gateways, Order Management, CRM, customer services, marketing, logistics and other systems the customer may have within their environment to facilitate the commerce process.

Through this integration, the retailer can:

◇ Create a 360-degree view of the customer and manage a single customer relationship across all of these systems.

◇ Use Salesforce's AI layer to gain insights from historical data and provide smart recommendations to online customers to increase their basket size.

◇ Use Salesforce's natural language processing to analyse written content and sentiment to help automate sales and service.

◇ Benefit from Salesforce updates without them affecting existing customisations.

◇ Eliminate the need for storage servers by storing all B2B customer data in the Salesforce cloud.

◇ Develop and quickly roll out applications for the B2B ecommerce offering through native tools and Salesforce's app exchange.

FAST AND EASY SEARCH WITH STRONG FILTERS: Business buyers may need to deal with technical product names. Requirements are specific while product ranges are wide.

QUICK REORDERING OF RECENTLY PURCHASED PRODUCTS: Business customers may have high throughput of products but limited storage space.

MANAGEMENT OF LARGE ORDER QUANTITIES using different file formats.

ACCESS TO ORDER DETAILS such as invoices and delivery notes and self-serve management of order and account details such as invoices and delivery schedules.
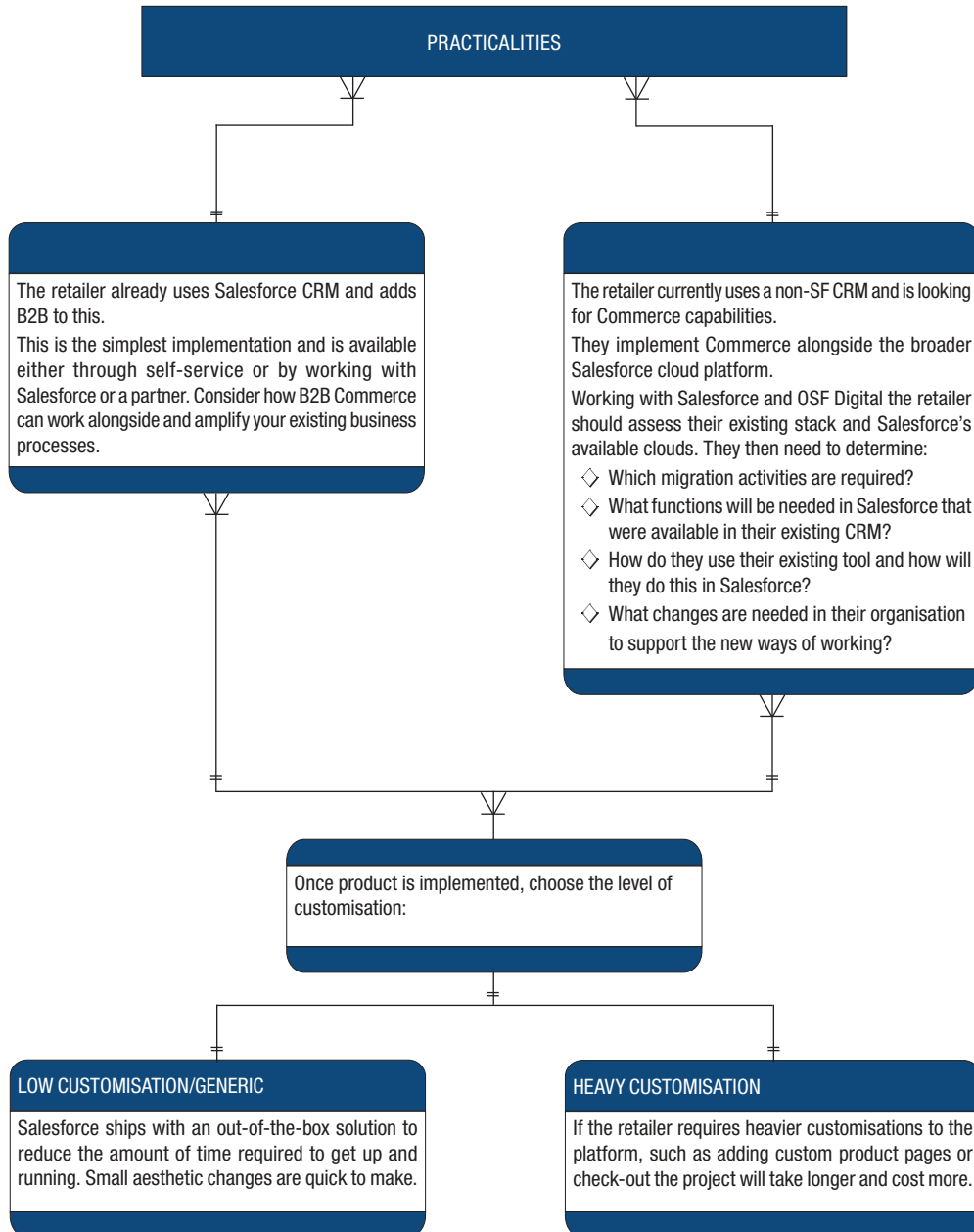
FLEXIBILITY to purchase via purchase orders, invoices, wire transfer, credit card or other alternative forms of payment.

PAYMENT OPTIONS or account-based pricing dependent on contract terms.

APPROVALS WORKFLOW: Manage the approvals process for orders online.

PERSONALISATION: Recommendations for relevant related and auxiliary products.

Practicalities

PRACTICALITIES

The retailer already uses Salesforce CRM and adds B2B to this.

This is the simplest implementation and is available either through self-service or by working with Salesforce or a partner. Consider how B2B Commerce can work alongside and amplify your existing business processes.

The retailer currently uses a non-SF CRM and is looking for Commerce capabilities.

They implement Commerce alongside the broader Salesforce cloud platform.

Working with Salesforce and OSF Digital the retailer should assess their existing stack and Salesforce's available clouds. They then need to determine:

◇ Which migration activities are required?

◇ What functions will be needed in Salesforce that were available in their existing CRM?

◇ How do they use their existing tool and how will they do this in Salesforce?

◇ What changes are needed in their organisation to support the new ways of working?

Once product is implemented, choose the level of customisation:

LOW CUSTOMISATION/GENERIC

Salesforce ships with an out-of-the-box solution to reduce the amount of time required to get up and running. Small aesthetic changes are quick to make.

HEAVY CUSTOMISATION

If the retailer requires heavier customisations to the platform, such as adding custom product pages or check-out the project will take longer and cost more.

Original BTC

CASE STUDY

A UK-based lighting manufacturer seeks to grow sales with a B2B ecommerce portal.

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ABOUT
Founded in 1990, Original BTC designs and manufactures lighting for domestic and contract interiors. They have china and metalworks factories across the UK. The company has an international focus, with showrooms in London, Paris and New York.

The business sells to customers including resellers, wholesalers and interior designers for commercial and residential projects. Prominent retailers selling its products include John Lewis, Heal's and the Conran Shop.

THE BUSINESS CASE
The company already had a simple checkout-only ecommerce site for consumers.

Working with OSF Digital, Original BTC began implementing Salesforce at the end of 2014 and launched it at the beginning of 2015. It uses Salesforce's cloud for CRM, processing orders, managing production in its factory and logistics and fulfilment.

Previously B2B orders had been conducted through customers sending emails with their requests. Original

BTC's team would then manually input these into the CRM and order fulfilment systems.

Having collected significant customer information within these systems, the company wanted to use this information to automate customer processes and offer self-service options in order to:
◇ Offer a better, more streamline customer experience
◇ Reduce manual interventions by staff around order input and errors

THE DECISION
Original BTC worked with OSF Digital and Salesforce to add B2B Commerce. It went live with its new website on 22 November.

As Original BTC was an existing Salesforce customer the IT integration was simple. It used the out-of-the-box B2B ecommerce solution with customisation to ensure it

integrated with the company's current processes such as fulfilment, scheduling and accounting.

It also customised the look and feel of the site to make it consistent with the company's existing brand guidelines.

As well as a new look and feel the site now allows:
◇ Ability to see a unified view of the customer across various functions including the clouds they already have, such as sales, service and commerce
◇ Extending account-based discounts to customers to increase average order value and loyalty
◇ Making changes to orders, delivery options (pick up or ship to), locations and dates

RESULTS
The main metric for the success of the project is take-up by business customers who use it to place orders; results are encouraging so far.

It still allows customers to order via email but is nudging them strongly towards the new system. Customers can self-register through the site.

Conclusion

Selling to B2B customers is a major opportunity for manufacturers and B2C retailers. It requires specific tools that offer a retail manufacturers and B2C brands while catering to enterprise buying processes.

By working with OSF Digital and adopting the Salesforce ecosystem alongside the Salesforce B2B Commerce retailers can share data between the platforms.

This allows them to:

◇ Grow sales and customer loyalty

◇ Obtain a single view of customers and their data

◇ Offer a better customer experience backed up by data

◇ Reduce manual interventions from staff

NEXT STEPS

To learn more about Salesforce's Commerce tool, visit: https://www.salesforce.com/uk/products/commerce-cloud/b2b-ecommerce/. The site contains descriptions of the different products as well as more detailed notes on integration.

Contact OSF Digital here to begin a consultation and implementation of the product: https://www.osf-global.com/contact

OSF|DIGITAL

salesforce

InternetRetailing Blue Paper - Solutions to commercial questions

RetailDNA

Section:	Business Management
Vendor:	Salesforce/OSF Digital
Product:	Salesforce B2B Commerce

Blue Papers focus on solutions to commercial opportunities and challenges in multichannel retail and digital direct sales.

Our White Papers, Sector Reports and Top500 performance rankings set out the board-level discussion for commercial success and our Blue Papers examine the technologies and systems that form part of the solution.

Drawn from our comprehensive industry directory of technologies and services in use by our Top500, RetailDNA, our Blue Papers form a regularly-updated library of actionable, proven solutions.

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