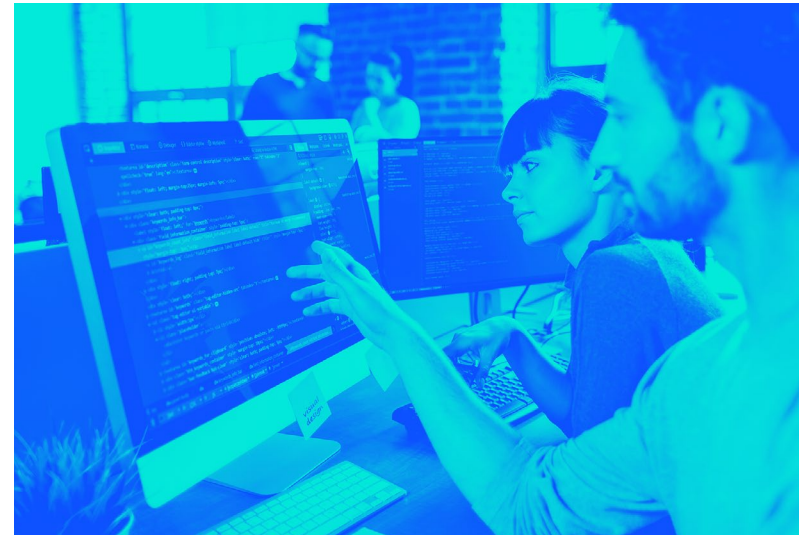




FAST, FLEXIBLE, COST-EFFECTIVE ECOMMERCE

Real-world examples
of how B2C and B2B
companies have overcome
6 common pain points



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INTRODUCTION

Why companies are looking for new ecommerce platforms now

Ecommerce has been growing rapidly for years, and COVID-19 accelerated that growth dramatically. That's true whether you're a retailer selling to consumers or a manufacturer, wholesaler or distributor selling to businesses.

The impact on consumer shopping was evident during the 2020 holiday period when U.S. retail web sales jumped 45.2% compared to 2019. Ecommerce penetration of November-December sales surged to 25.7% in 2020 versus 19.2% the year before, according to ecommerce research and news organization Digital Commerce 360.

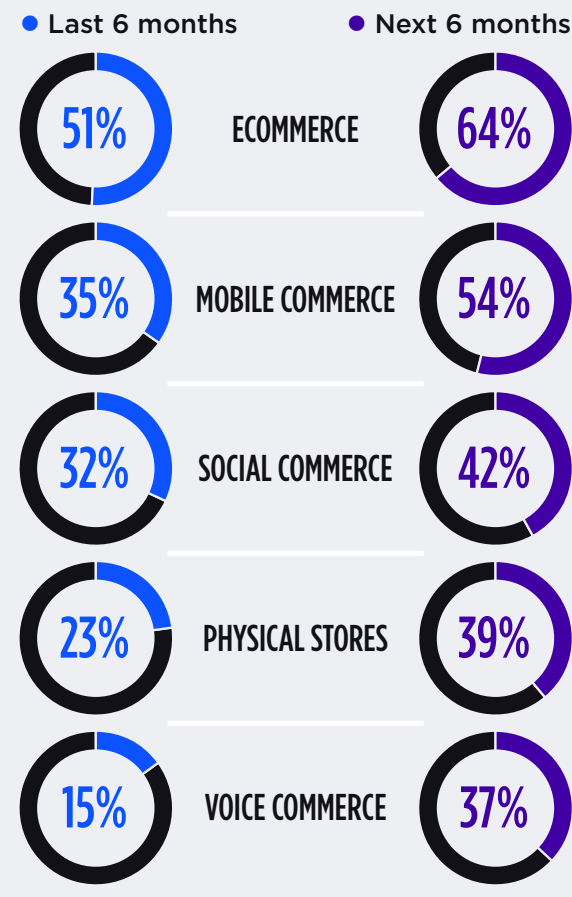
It was a similar story on the B2B side, as fear of traveling kept manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors from closing sales through in-person visits or trade shows, driving more business online. B2B ecommerce sales increased 9.6% in 2020, Digital Commerce 360 estimates. That's stunning growth given that total U.S. manufacturing and wholesale sales decreased 2.6%.

This surge in online purchasing has both retailers and B2B sellers looking for better ecommerce technology. 51% of retail chief financial officers said they had invested more in ecommerce in the past six months in a September 2020 survey by advisory firm BDO, and 64% planned to spend more in the next six months.

At around the same time, Digital Commerce 360 surveyed retail and B2B companies about their technology investment plans and found the top priority was

Where retailers are investing

Percent of CFOs who increased spending in the following areas:



Source: 2021 BDO Retail CFO Outlook Survey of 100 retail chief financial officers in September 2020

their ecommerce platform, cited by 51% of respondents. The ecommerce platform is the foundation on which transactional websites are built, encompassing such basic features as web page design, order and inventory management and checkout.

An ecommerce platform must be reliable, secure and easy to use — that’s always been true. But today, it must also be highly flexible.

“Retail is competitive; brands need to stand out. Everyone wants to find innovative ways to sell. They need a platform that can enable freedom and flexibility without drowning in operational complexity,” says Meghan Stabler, vice president of product marketing at ecommerce platform provider BigCommerce. “If a company wants to stand up a new promotion, it wants a non-technical person to be able to create the promotion and update the site in real-time, as opposed to having to go to a tech person, get in a queue and maybe wait for weeks to launch the promotion.”

Another reason flexibility is crucial is that consumers and businesses research and buy online in so many ways. They shop not just via company websites and mobile apps, but also on online marketplaces like Amazon and eBay, social media sites like Facebook and Instagram and by ordering through voice-activated smart speaker systems like Amazon’s Alexa or Google Assistant.

The complexity of ecommerce today could explain why 78% of companies responding to the Digital Commerce 360 survey said they rely on vendors to supply their ecommerce technology. Why? The top answer, cited by 80% of respondents, was, “We don’t have the expertise in-house.”

With retail and B2B companies prioritizing investments in their ecommerce platform, it’s worth taking a look at the two main options available to them, SaaS and open source, and how SaaS in particular has evolved in important ways. ◆



“Retail is competitive; brands need to stand out. Everyone wants to find innovative ways to sell. They need a platform that can enable freedom and flexibility without drowning in operational complexity.”

—**Meghan Stabler**,
Vice President of Product Marketing,
BigCommerce

A BIG SHIFT IN ECOMMERCE TECH

Open source means that companies using the software can see and modify its source code. SaaS, or software as a service, refers to software that is hosted and maintained by the vendor and accessed by clients via the web.

Each type has its advantages and disadvantages. Open source provides unlimited flexibility because a company can change anything about how the platform works. The problem is that to do that companies need skilled software developers — and the changes they make increase the complexity of upgrading to new versions of the software.

There are also concerns about the security of open source software. A 2020 report by cybersecurity firm Risk Sense notes that while a benefit of open source software is that many developers can access and replicate a piece of code, that also introduces risks because “any vulnerabilities in that code can likewise be replicated.”

In fact, the number of reported vulnerabilities in open source code doubled in 2019 to 968 from 421 in 2018, RiskSense said. And 154 of those potential weaknesses were found in the Magento open source software frequently used in ecommerce. Of those, RiskSense said, three had been “weaponized” into code that was being used to attack Magento sites, including one that steals payment card data from those sites.



↑ 2x

The number of reported vulnerabilities in open source code doubled in 2019 to 968 from 421 in 2018.

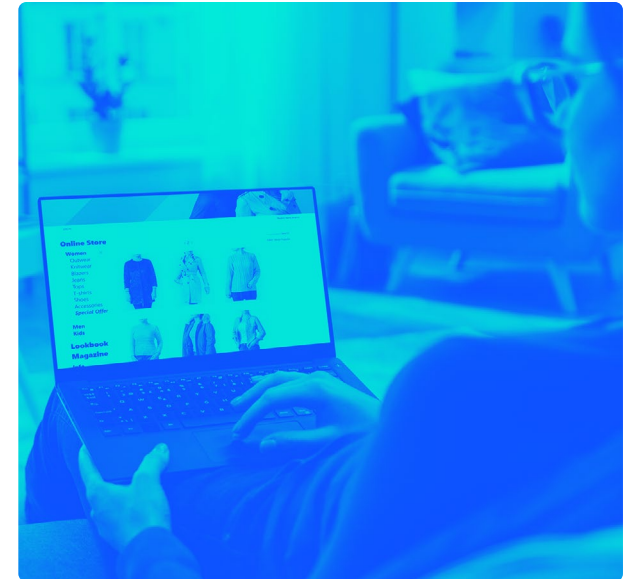
THE EVOLUTION TO OPEN SAAS

SaaS frees companies from the burden of maintaining and upgrading the hardware and software that underpin their websites and apps and avoids the security concerns inherent in open source software. SaaS vendors take responsibility for making sure that sites and apps are available and secure. Meanwhile, they offer the convenience of regular enhancements that all clients can use without upgrading to a new version of the platform.

The big disadvantage of SaaS systems in their early years was that they limited the flexibility of companies to tailor a system to their needs. They were closed systems — features the vendor provided worked well and required little in-house expertise, but they were hard to customize to a retailer or B2B company's individual needs. For example, if weather has a big impact on a company's sales, it would have been hard to plug in a weather update feature to change what web pages show based on current conditions.

That's changed in recent years with the evolution to Open SaaS. Today, an Open SaaS platform like BigCommerce is designed to enable clients to easily add features they need to do business effectively, whether that's a third-party shipping or personalization app, or a custom workflow system for obtaining purchase approvals from large business customers.

With BigCommerce, over 90% of the platform can be customized via APIs — application programming interfaces, essentially intelligent tunnels for moving data from one system to another. An example would be an API that brings information about trending styles on social media into an apparel retail website so it can show visitors similar hot styles from that site's product catalog.



90%

With BigCommerce, over 90% of the platform can be customized via APIs

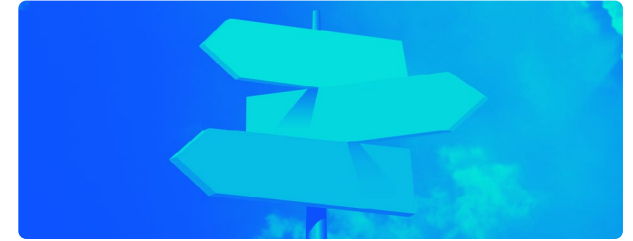
APIs ENABLE FLEXIBILITY AND CUSTOMIZATION

What's more, BigCommerce has built robust APIs that can move a lot of data swiftly, ensuring that web pages and apps respond quickly and that retailers can provide the optimum customer experience.

“Customizability is what we're about,” says Stabler of BigCommerce. “If a client likes our native checkout but wants to brand it differently, or wants to include some other functionality, our API will let you integrate a new checkout into our platform.”

That allows BigCommerce to provide the flexibility companies need today. While many smaller firms will find the built-in functions of BigCommerce meet all their needs, larger companies likely will have very specific requirements. No ecommerce platform out of the box can meet the needs of every organization — that's why BigCommerce has opened up virtually all of its platform to APIs.

The security, reliability and ease of use of SaaS combined with the flexibility provided by APIs has enabled BigCommerce clients to address many of the most common headaches ecommerce teams face. Many of those headaches show up in what may be the biggest frustration for ecommerce executives: low conversion rate.



“Customizability is what we're about.”

—**Meghan Stabler**,
Vice President of Product Marketing,
BigCommerce

978 OF 1,000 VISITS LEAD TO NO SALE

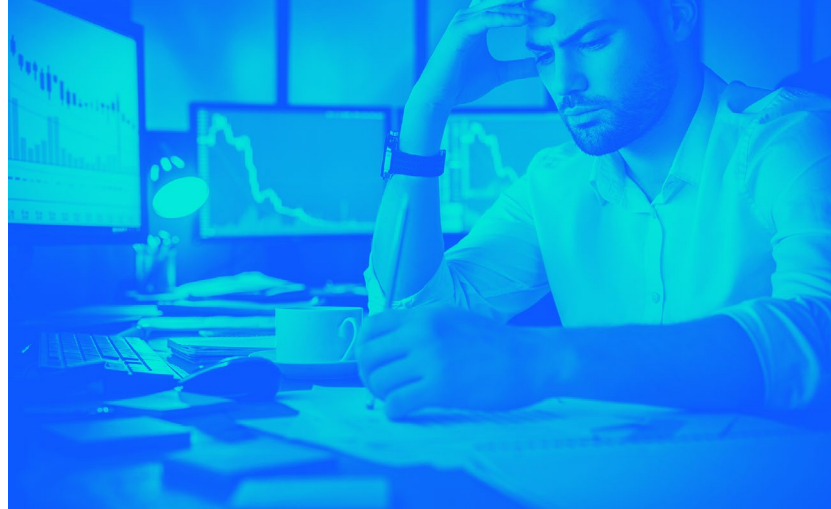
The median conversion rate — the percentage of website visits that end in a purchase — is only 2.2% for North America’s 1,000 leading online retailers, according to Digital Commerce 360. That means that of 1,000 visits to a typical retailer only 22 will end in a purchase.

It’s no surprise then that most ecommerce executives are focused on conversion rate. In fact, after attracting new customers and retaining existing clients, improving conversion rate was a top priority of retail and B2B ecommerce executives surveyed by Digital Commerce 360 in 2020, cited by 60% of respondents.

Removing the obstacles to online purchasing inevitably leads to a noticeable lift in conversion rate. That’s evident from the following real-life examples of how retailers and B2B companies addressed six of the most common ecommerce pain points. ◆



Source: Digital Commerce 360 2020 Ecommerce Technology Survey based on 121 retailers



6 COMMON PAIN POINTS

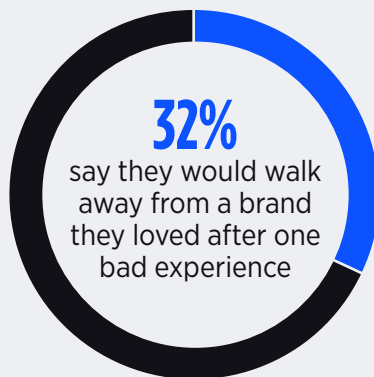
and how to address them



PAIN POINT #1

“My ecommerce platform won’t allow me to deliver the kind of experience my customers want.”

Consumer Survey



Source: PWC

A pleasing customer experience can be a big differentiator.

According to a 2018 survey from consulting service PWC, 73% of all respondents reported customer experience as an important factor in their purchasing decisions. Additionally, the same survey found that 32% of customers said they would walk away from a brand they loved after one bad experience.

A good customer experience takes many forms, from helping customers find what they want easily to ensuring pages load quickly and providing features that are especially useful for a particular kind of customer. Improvements in those areas can dramatically boost conversion rate.

For Australian retailer Ice Jewellery, the big pain point was its inability to promote bestsellers to the top of search and category pages on its old site built with Magento open source technology. On that site, they had to manually rank best sellers to put them into prominent positions, an impossible task for a merchant with more than 20,000 SKUs, says chief executive officer Simon Molnar. “Some of our categories were a few thousand products,” he says. “To merchandise an 8,000-product category is impossible.”

Magento was ending support for the version Ice Jewellery was using, so Molnar went looking for a new platform, and first considered the newer version of Magento. “We felt Magento 2 was not as complete a platform and ruled them out,” he says. He then compared Shopify and BigCommerce. “I realised pretty quickly that with Shopify, you mold to them, whereas with BigCommerce, it molds to us.”

Design agency Moustache Republic developed a product-categorisation tool that worked well with BigCommerce, allowing bestsellers to automatically rise to the top of search results and category pages. Ice Jewellery also plugged in several apps that integrate easily with BigCommerce, such as Barilliance for personalisation, Instant Search Plus for site search and TrustPilot for customer reviews.

Ice Jewellery launched on BigCommerce in April 2020 just as the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting an initial peak. Not knowing how much consumers would be willing to spend at a time of crisis, the retailer cut back its marketing spend by 60% — but still saw a 10% increase in sales. “If that doesn’t speak to the value and power of the BigCommerce website, I don’t think there’s going to be a stronger metric than that,” Molnar says.

One other metric helps explain the surprisingly strong sales: a 52% increase in conversion rate on the new BigCommerce site.

TAILOR PAYMENT OPTIONS TO CUSTOMER PREFERENCES

For Carewell, a retailer of adult diapers and other home healthcare products, a big barrier to conversion was its inability to store customers’ credit cards on its Shopify site. Shopify’s payment service, Shopify Pay, had a feature that sent a code to a customer’s smartphone to check out, but that wasn’t well suited to Carewell’s largely older demographic, says co-founder and chief executive officer Bianca Padilla.



“I realised pretty quickly that with Shopify, you mold to them, whereas with BigCommerce, it molds to us.”

—Simon Molnar,
CEO, Ice Jewellery

She also found it hard to develop new site features using Microsoft's GitHub development environment and push them to the Shopify site, or to test changes before deploying them. "Shopify is a great system, because it's very simple," Padilla says, "but when you have a more complex product catalog you need greater ability to manage your store your own way."

After moving to BigCommerce, Carewell could enable customers to check out quickly using stored credit card information. That feature, Padilla says, "is incredibly important for our business and has directly increased our conversion rate by 200%."

CUSTOMISING A SITE WITH HEADLESS COMMERCE

Certain kinds of customers have particular needs not addressed by cookie-cutter websites. And one way to offer unique functionality is through headless commerce, one of the hottest trends in ecommerce. That means a company can tailor the site's presentation layer, the web pages customers see, any way it wants, while still using the ecommerce platform's core capabilities in areas like order management, shipping, payment and hosting.

BigCommerce has responded to the headless trend by expanding its APIs that allow companies to create customised web pages via connecting to any source of data, images or information. That might be a content management system, a digital experience platform with customer data or an Internet of Things device, such as a machine that tracks consumption of inputs to allow timely reordering.

That capability has made a big difference for several client companies, including furniture retailer Burrow, says Kabeer Chopra, co-founder and chief production officer.



Enabling check out with stored credit card details "is incredibly important for our business and has directly increased our conversion rate by 200%."

—**Bianca Padilla**,
Co-founder and CEO, Carewell

“The value of the BigCommerce headless solution has been huge for Burrow, specifically in enabling us to craft a unique shopping experience,” he says.

Burrow designs modular couches and loveseats, designed to be easy to carry up to the walk-up apartments of many young city dwellers. Often, its customers want to buy an item before they’ve moved into their new place. That means delaying delivery, which is not a standardised checkout option on most platforms. Nor is the option to require a signature on delivery, which is also important for a company like Burrow whose customers may spend thousands of dollars on a single purchase.

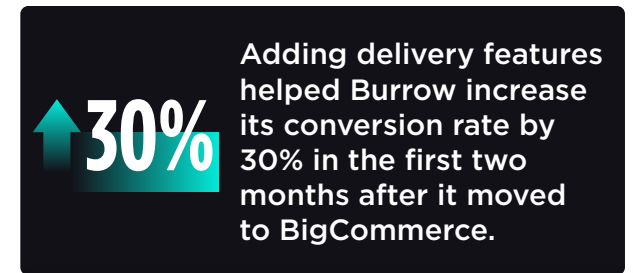
“Controlling [these aspects of fulfillment] was really important to us, and were the two top requirements from a headless standpoint,” Chopra says. “Fortunately, BigCommerce offers both of those capabilities.” Adding those features helped Burrow increase its conversion rate by 30% in the first two months after it moved to BigCommerce.

FASTER SITES SELL MORE

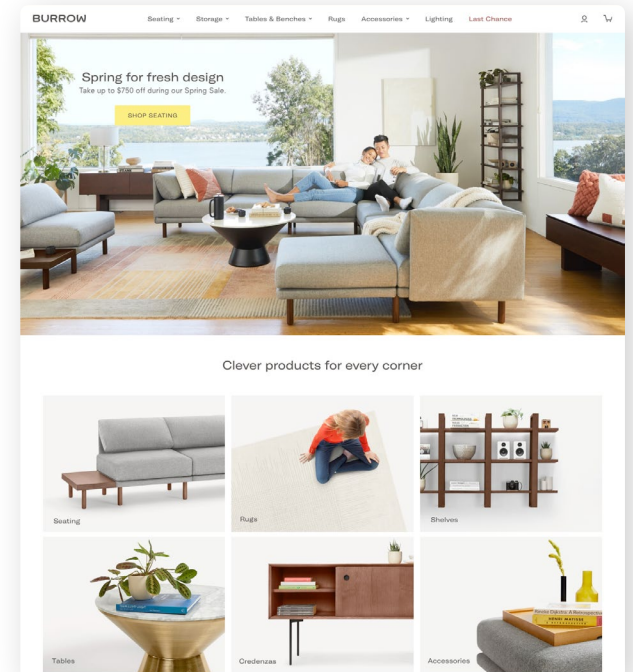
When retail websites are complex, their pages can load slowly, and that can lead customers to leave. That was a problem for Car and Van Mats, a UK retailer, which saw a big lift when its new BigCommerce ecommerce platform made its site much faster.

“Our catalog includes various makes, models and years, different qualities of carpet and rubber, and trim colors, and our WordPress site just wasn’t quick enough to handle it,” says founder and managing director Jane Green. “It would take up to 25 seconds for a page to load, whereas on our BigCommerce site pages load in less than two seconds.

“It’s great because all of the people who dropped off the site before are now finding it takes only a few short seconds to go from cart to checkout.” ♦



Adding delivery features helped Burrow increase its conversion rate by 30% in the first two months after it moved to BigCommerce.



PAIN POINT #2

“I can’t make changes to my website quickly because I have to wait for technical personnel to do the work.”

One of the main things companies look for in an ecommerce vendor is technology that’s easy to use — including for people who aren’t technical.

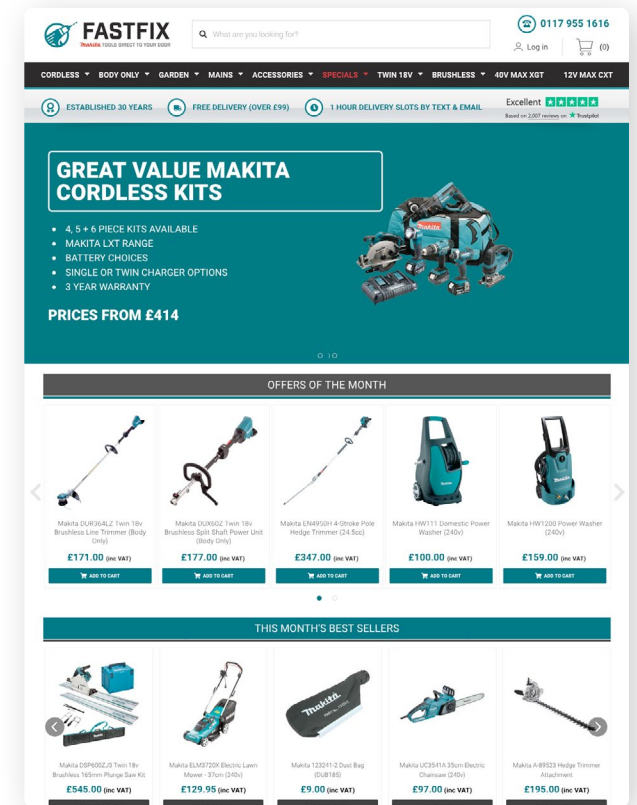
That was cited by 65% of respondents to the 2020 Digital Commerce 360 survey of ecommerce executives, making it the third most important factor in selecting a tech provider.

Many share the sentiments of Lee Hackett, the ecommerce and marketing manager for tool selling brand Fastfix. He shares some of their struggles with Magento:

“We found Magento 2 to be a very locked down platform. We wanted to have a more open, hands-on approach where we could actually work with the software ourselves and add to the platform. The way Magento is set up you have to get a developer to do everything for you, which gets expensive.”

Since moving to BigCommerce, Fastfix has been able to make more changes themselves instead of relying on developers.

Hackett explains: “Since launching on BigCommerce in May 2020, the platform has given us a more modern approach for doing business online. It has given us the feeling that we’re back in control of our own site, rather than being dictated to by developers” The greater flexibility has given Fastfix a 15% increase in online orders.



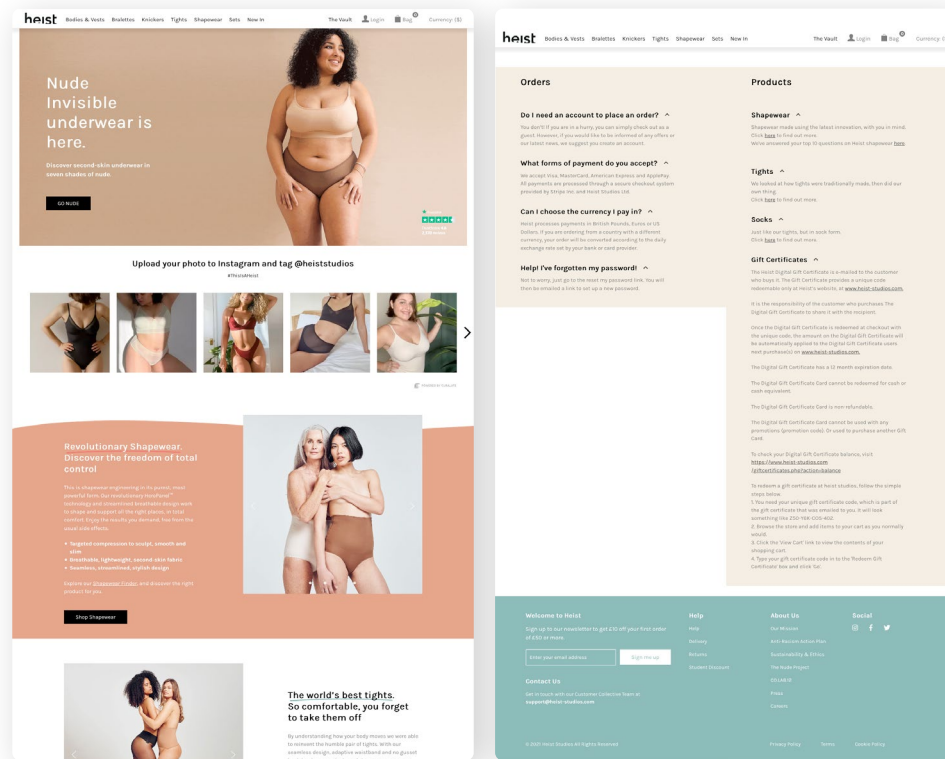
NO DEVELOPER, NO PROBLEM

Heist Studios, a UK-based women's underwear brand, has been able to get along without a single software developer on staff since moving to BigCommerce, says Daniela Nardelli, the company's digital marketing manager.

"A testament to the ease of the platform is the fact that I don't have a web or product management background, yet I've been able to pretty seamlessly pick up launching products, running promotions, building coupon codes and the like pretty quickly," she says.

Heist's web design specialist has created new pages, such as a FAQ page, without the help of IT personnel or an outside agency, using an app called Shogun Page Builder that works with BigCommerce. Creating new web pages is even easier for BigCommerce clients since the company's June 2020 introduction of its own Page Builder, a design tool that allows users to drag and drop blocks of content — individual products, carousels, text blocks, images and video, promotional banners, buy buttons and more — onto new or existing pages.

Also vital to Heist was BigCommerce's support for multiple currencies, a must-have feature for a company with loyal customers all over Europe as well as in the U.S. and UK.



Heist's web design specialist has created new pages, such as a FAQ page, without the help of IT personnel or an outside agency.

HELP CUSTOMERS FIND WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR

Consumers get frustrated when they can't find what they want on a retail site. In fact, poor search results was the third-biggest frustration shoppers cited in a 2020 consumer survey by Digital Commerce 360 and online survey firm Bizrate Insights.

Sometimes searches and category pages don't provide what the shopper wants because the retailer's ecommerce platform limits the number of parameters that can be used to describe an item. For example, Shopify and Shopify Plus only allow merchants to describe products by size, color and material, and limits client companies to a maximum of 100 combinations of those three parameters. For some catalogs, that's OK, but for many businesses that won't work.

Shoe retailer Jildor, for example, requires many more options for describing its 41,000 SKUs, says Joe Friedman, director of omnichannel operations.

"Certain shoes are available in 20 colors and three widths, so we needed a platform that could handle all those options," he says. Jildor considered Shopify but, Friedman says, found that "Shopify has a limit on how many production options you can have per SKU — this definitely was a deal-breaker for me."

Jildor ultimately moved from its custom-built website to BigCommerce, which allows for many more ways to tag products. ◆



“Certain shoes are available in 20 colors and three widths, so we needed a platform that could handle all those options.”

—Joe Friedman,
Director of Omnichannel Operations,
Jildor

PAIN POINT #3

“When you consider all the costs, our ecommerce platform is too expensive.”

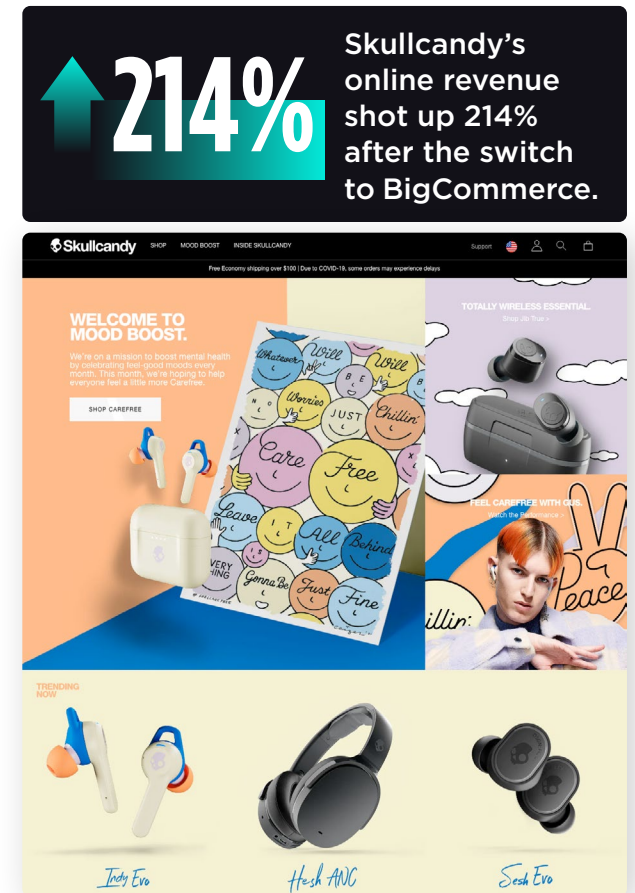
Nobody wants to pay more than is necessary for technology.

And many companies have found themselves spending more than they anticipated for ecommerce platforms that are complex to manage and require expert in-house or outside agency expertise to customise to their needs.

For example, Skullcandy, a digitally native brand of audio headphones, migrated away from Salesforce Commerce Cloud because it was so expensive and difficult to manage and maintain, says chief information officer Mark Hopkins. “It didn’t have a lot of agility and our team was tied to doing things on a slow cadence, as well as using external development resources that resulted in higher cost,” Hopkins says.

Since moving to BigCommerce, he says, “we are saving a significant amount of money on development and overall platform costs. More importantly, we now have an extremely agile environment that can change quickly to meet our business needs.”

Skullcandy’s conversion rate increased 82% and online revenue shot up 214% after the switch to BigCommerce.



“Our experience and successful launch with BigCommerce is a great example of how like-minded brands can effectively align,” Hopkins says. “Technical barriers were removed and we are able to focus on growing our business today while benefiting from BigCommerce’s forward-thinking roadmap and steady cadence of new features, which are designed for brands like us.”

DEVELOPMENT COSTS ADD UP

The idea that a platform may be suitable for one company but a poor fit for another is a realisation many ecommerce executives have come to after trying to run their site on Magento, a widely used open source platform.

LA Police Gear, which sells equipment and apparel for law enforcement officers, moved its ecommerce site to Magento in 2017 and, in the words of chief executive officer Mark Hedman, “It was an utter disaster. I’m talking massive issues: The site was always down, sometimes for multiple days. Support was very slow, and it was hard to reach the right person. Things would never get solved. We had to manage everything. It was terrible.”

It was also costly. “Anytime we needed to change something, even one little change, the cost was astronomical,” Hedman says. “Then we had to pay licensing and hosting costs as well. It was hugely expensive.” When Hedman moved his site to BigCommerce, he found he had most of the features he needed out of the box, and that BigCommerce’s APIs enabled him to easily connect to any outside apps he needed as well as to his internal ERP system.



“Technical barriers were removed and we are able to focus on growing our business today while benefiting from BigCommerce’s forward-thinking roadmap.”

—Mark Hopkins,
CIO, Skullcandy

THE RIGHT PLATFORM CHOICE CAN YIELD BIG SAVINGS

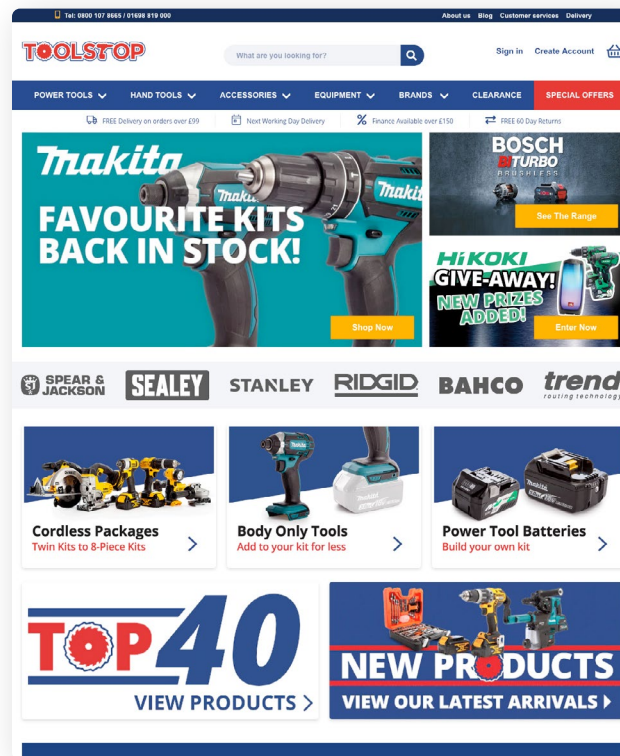
Other companies have quantified the savings of switching from Magento to BigCommerce.

Thompson Tee is saving \$82,500 a year since making that move, says co-founder Billy Thompson.

For example, Toolstop, a UK hardware retailer, is saving 250,000 pounds a year — nearly \$340,000 — since moving its Toolstop ecommerce site to BigCommerce from Magento, says ecommerce manager Neil Bruce.

Bruce says Toolsaver (another ecommerce site Toolstop built on BigCommerce) now can rely on its in-house developers rather than expensive outside agencies to maintain and improve its site. And, he says, Toolsaver can't make the kind of costly errors with a SaaS platform like BigCommerce that are possible with open source technology where all the code is exposed to developers.

“On BigCommerce you're working with scripts, plug-ins and APIs, so you can't really break anything,” Bruce says. “That flexibility and security was one of the big factors that made us decide to build the Toolsaver site on BigCommerce.”



£250,000

Toolstop is saving £250,000 a year since moving its ecommerce site to BigCommerce.

LOOK BEYOND THE LIST PRICE

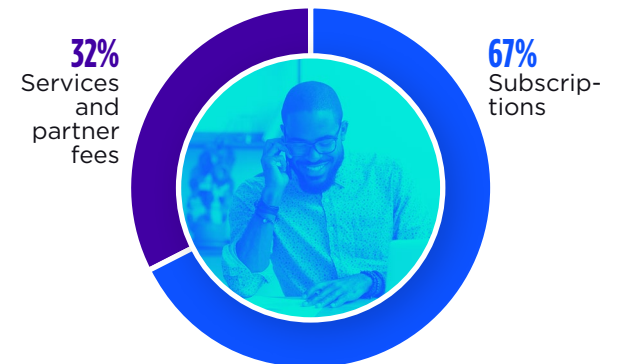
Cost can also be a deciding factor for companies comparing BigCommerce and Shopify, even though the list price for at least the basic versions of those ecommerce platforms is similar. There are many features built into the BigCommerce platform that require paid add-ons when using Shopify. A BigCommerce analysis of features used by its clients suggests they would spend between \$5,800 to \$30,000 more a year to get the same functionality on Shopify that they get with BigCommerce.

The cost of an ecommerce platform can also go up if a platform provider penalises clients that don't use its payment-processing system. For example, Shopify Plus charges clients an additional .15% for any transactions that don't go through its proprietary Shopify Payments service. That can add up: For a company selling \$10 million a year online that's an additional \$15,000 going to Shopify above what the company is already paying for payment processing.

For Shopify, ancillary services provide most of its revenue: In the first nine months of 2020, 67.8% of Shopify's revenue came from what it calls "merchant solutions," which encompasses fees it charges for its payment services as well as for handling shipping, providing financing to retailers and supplying them with point-of-sale equipment.

BigCommerce is the inverse of Shopify: It brought in 67% of its revenue from subscriptions in the first three quarters of last year, and only 32% from services and partner fees. That means BigCommerce is primarily focused on delivering value through its ecommerce platform, and allows clients to choose whatever payment and other services they prefer.

BigCommerce brought in **67%** of its revenue from **subscriptions** in the first three quarters of last year, and only **32%** from **services and partner fees**.



For Hickies, for example, that was a big reason for moving from Shopify to BigCommerce.

“We were very happy with Braintree as our payment processor, but it looked like Shopify wasn’t going to let us continue using them — the company was very much pigeon-holing us into what we could and couldn’t use,” says Jonathan Segev, director of technology at Hickies, which sells shoelaces that never need to be tied.

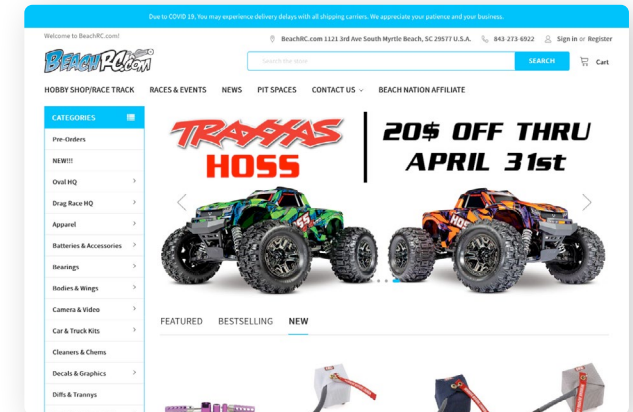
“The other options we were hoping to put on our site — like Google Pay — seemed to become increasingly out of the question with Shopify,” he says. Once Hickies moved to BigCommerce it was able to easily add Google Pay: “It was literally flipping on a switch,” Segev says.

PAYMENT PROCESSORS ARE NOT ALL THE SAME

For some retailers, being able to work with their preferred payment processor is crucial.

BeachRC, a retailer of radio-controlled model cars and accessories, does more than 80% of its business through its physical store in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and needed an ecommerce platform that would work with its store’s payment processor, Square.

“I know some of the ecommerce platforms like Shopify have internal point-of-sale systems, and that wasn’t going to work for us,” says Brent Densford, chief executive officer of BeachRC. “BigCommerce was the only platform that offered an inventory integration for both the website and brick-and-mortar location through Square. That was the most important thing to us.” ♦



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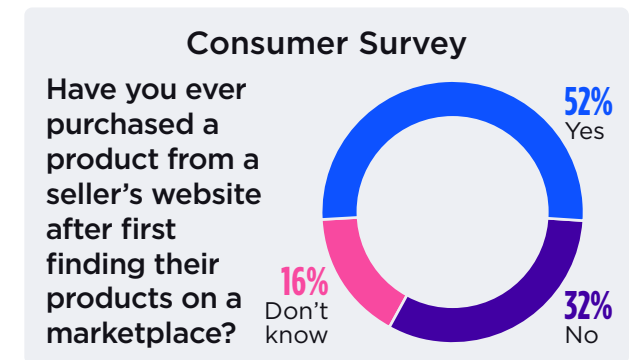
—Brent Densford,
CEO, BeachRC

PAIN POINT #4

“I need a platform that allows me to sell through multiple channels including social media, marketplaces and physical stores.”

Today’s consumer shops in all kinds of ways, and businesses want to reach customers everywhere they are.

Increasingly, that’s on Amazon: 89% of consumers surveyed by Digital Commerce 360 and Bizrate Insights in May 2020 said they had purchased from a seller on Amazon’s marketplace, and 52% said they later went to the merchant’s website to make a direct purchase after first discovering the product on a marketplace.



Source: Digital Commerce 360/Bizrate Insights 2020 Marketplaces survey of 1000 online shoppers

Consumer Survey

Many consumers buy on web marketplaces

Which of the following describes your experiences with marketplaces over the past year? (multiple responses allowed)

I have purchased from an Amazon seller on Amazon’s marketplace	89%
I have made a purchase on eBay	50%
I have left a product review on Amazon	49%
I have purchased on other U.S. marketplaces beyond Amazon, eBay and Walmart	43%
I have made a purchase on Walmart.com from a seller other than Walmart	36%
I have purchased from specialty marketplaces that focus on a unique category or customer segment such as Etsy, Newegg or Reverb	29%
I have left a product review on a marketplace other than Amazon	27%
Products I typically purchase on marketplaces were out-of-stock or not available as a result of COVID-19	26%
I have purchased from a Chinese marketplace (Tmall/Taobao/JD)	6%

Source: Digital Commerce 360/Bizrate Insights 2020 Marketplaces survey of 1000 online shoppers

Brent Densford, chief executive officer of BeachRC, says he's found Amazon to be an effective customer acquisition channel, especially when he offers only some of his radio-controlled cars and accessories on Amazon while keeping other items exclusive to his own website. But he might never have realized those benefits if BigCommerce didn't make it so easy to offer products from his catalog for sale on Amazon.

"I would have never gone out to put products on Amazon on my own," he says. "The fact that was going to be easy to integrate directly through BigCommerce is why I did it — and now I see one out of every 10 orders coming to us through Amazon."

BETTING ON SOCIAL COMMERCE

Skullcandy has found it similarly easy to deploy BigCommerce's Facebook Shop, allowing it to sell directly on the leading social network.

"We are really taking bets on social commerce, leveraging built-in BigCommerce integrations to serve product catalogs across social channels where orders start in the social channel and seamlessly drop in BigCommerce's control panel for streamlined fulfillment," says chief information officer Mark Hopkins.



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—Mark Hopkins,
CIO, Skullcandy

Retailers also want to make it easy for their loyal customers to shop both their physical stores and websites, and offering gift cards that shoppers can use online and offline is a way to encourage that. After moving to BigCommerce, Woodland Hills Wine Company for the first time was able to offer gift cards that shoppers can use across channels, says Jon Morgan, IT project manager.

“If I buy a gift card in the store, we can create it in BigCommerce and it can be redeemed on the site,” Morgan says. And if a customer buys a gift card online it can be used in the store, with both the store and online systems keeping track of the balance remaining on the card. That’s the kind of cross-channel consistency that meets customer expectations at a time when a global Visa survey recently found that 85% of consumers expect to be able to use digital options when shopping in stores.

Convenient features like that helped Woodland Hills increase online revenue by 82% and conversion rate by 109% after moving to BigCommerce. ◆



↑ 109%

Convenient features like cross-channel consistency helped Woodland Hills increase conversion rate by 109% after moving to BigCommerce.

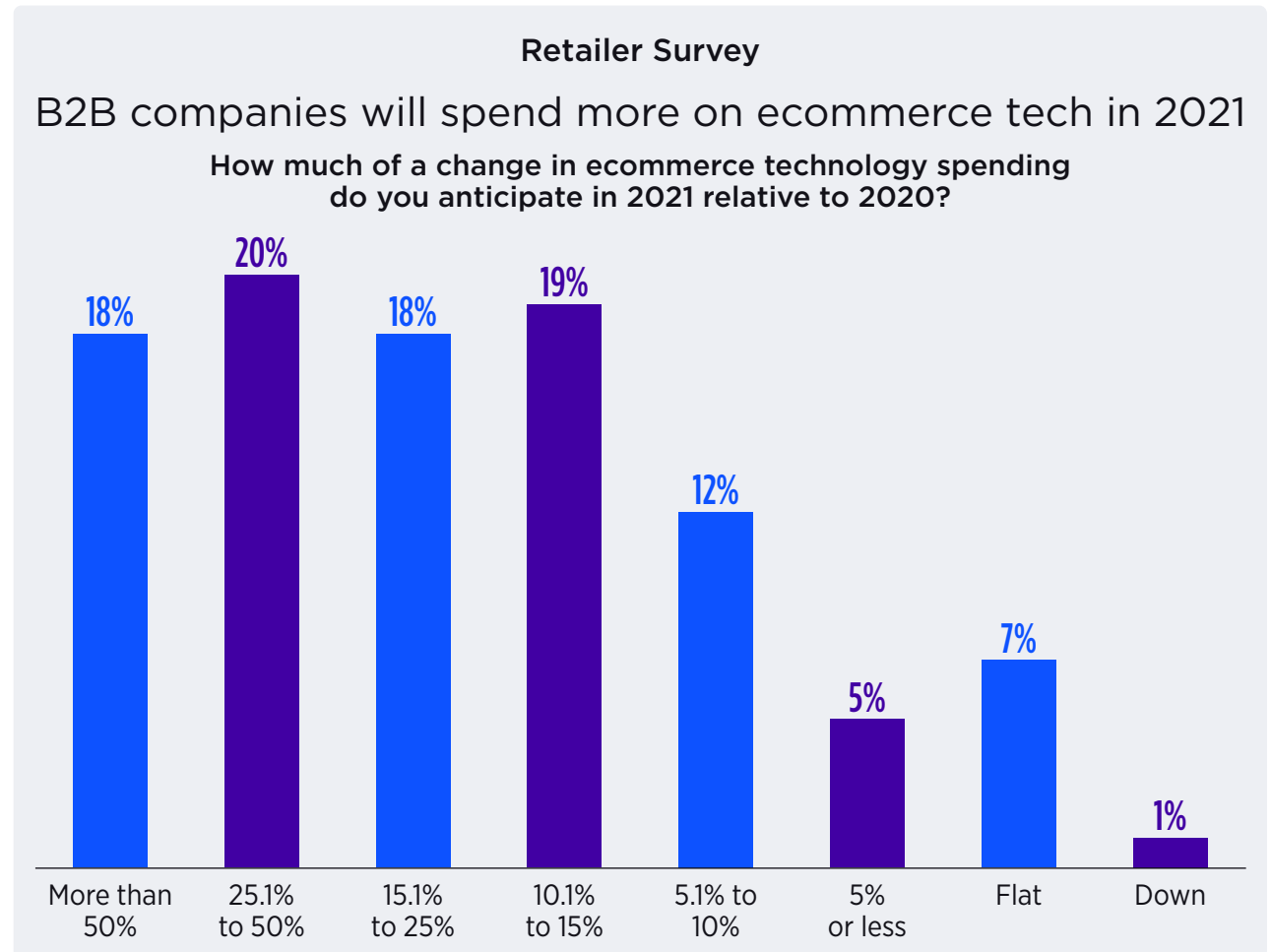
PAIN POINT #5

“I need a platform that meets the demands of B2B.”

Complex products that may need to be configured individually, large catalogs, negotiated pricing. These are just some of the features that make B2B ecommerce complex.

With more business buyers searching the web to buy, B2B companies — primarily manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors — are looking to upgrade their ecommerce platforms. In fact, in an early 2021 survey by Digital Commerce 360, more than 90% of respondents said their companies would spend more on ecommerce technology, and a majority cited that enhancing their ecommerce platform was a top priority.

Atlanta Light Bulbs, which sells lighting primarily to contractors and other

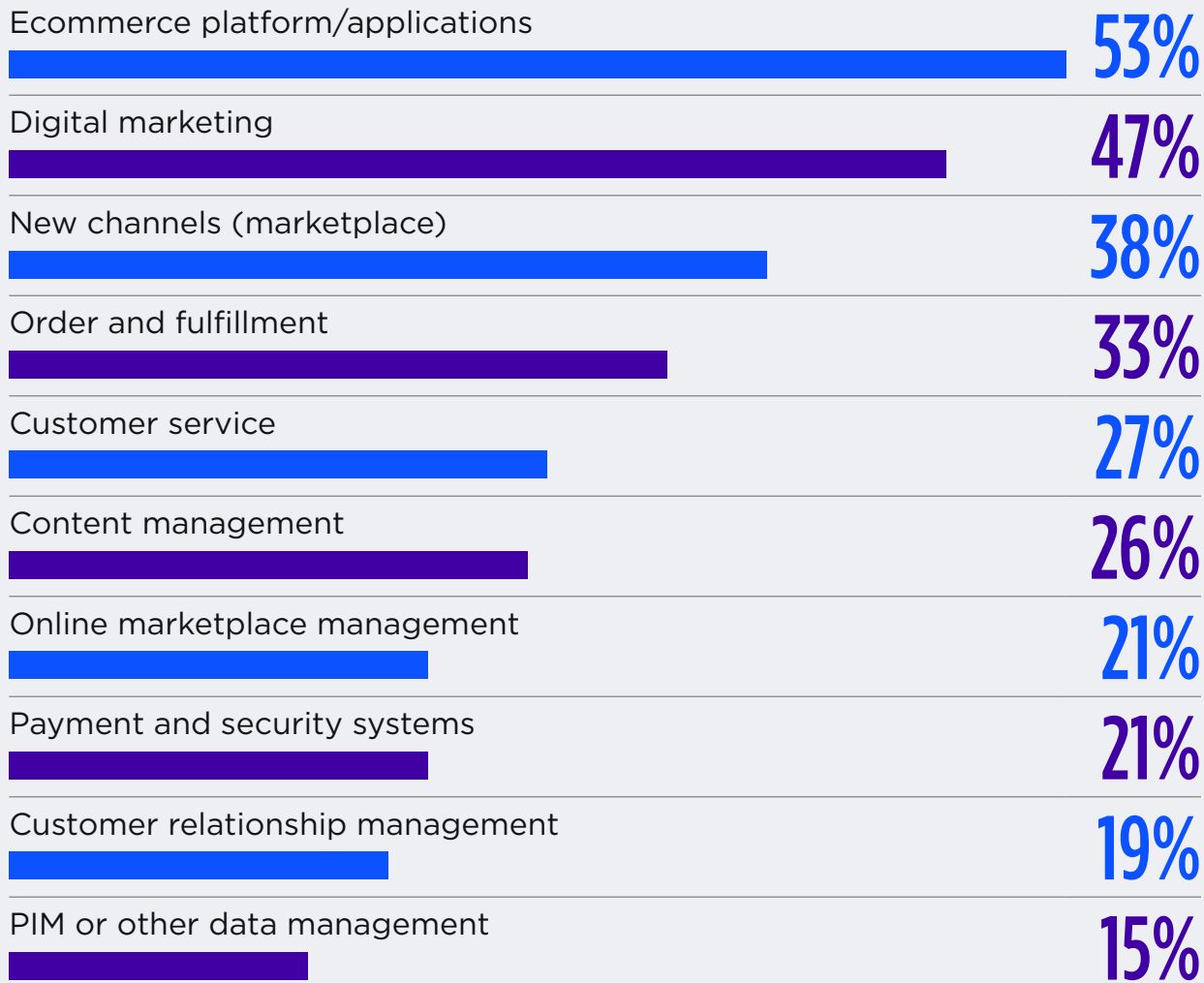


Source: Digital Commerce 360 2021 B2B Sellers survey based on 110 sellers

Retailer Survey

Ecommerce platform is a top B2B priority

What are your top three ecommerce technology budget priorities over the next year?



Source: Digital Commerce 360 2021 B2B Sellers survey based on 110 sellers

businesses, is an example of a mostly B2B online seller that found it could meet its needs with a combination of the out-of-the-box features of BigCommerce and a selection of apps that easily plug into the platform.

Among the built-in features Atlanta Light Bulbs uses is the Customer Groups pricing tool that puts business accounts into different tiers based on their projected spending, allowing the wholesaler to offer discounts tailored to each tier, says Chief Executive Officer Doug Root. He complements that with the RewardCamp app available through the BigCommerce app store that tracks customers' purchases and shows them the credits they earned every time they log onto the site.

"Combining Customer Groups with RewardCamp's loyalty program has really helped with our loyal B2B buyer who we want to come back and buy over and over again," Root says.

In addition, Root plugged in the Quote Ninja app that enables customers to

quickly get a quote on large orders for the 8,700 products the company sells online. The results were immediate: It generated \$100,000 in sales in the first 90 days, Root says.

Another add-on, PriceWaiter, appears on product pages, inviting hesitant customers to name their price. “On the back end we have loaded up all of our pricing rules into the PriceWaiter System,” Root says. “That app knows if we are willing to sell X items for Y dollars — as long as the order value is above Z.

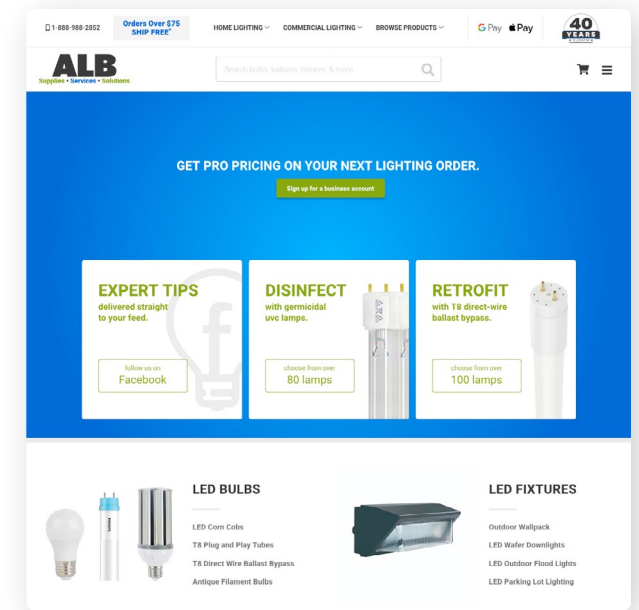
“PriceWaiter auto-calculates all of that on the fly for the B2B buyer so they don’t have to wait to hear back from us. They just get a message that says we’ve accepted their offer, or, if the price is too low, we offer them a different deal.”

When someone seems likely to leave a page, a PriceWaiter pop-up appears, that says, “Don’t leave yet. Make us an offer on this item. Maybe we can work with you.” Root says that helps save some sales with buyers focused on price and contributed to a 29% year-over-year increase in web orders.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS ARE MET

Other B2B companies with complex catalogs and products have seen similarly strong results with BigCommerce.

For example, Umpqua Feather Merchants, a distributor of fishing flies, redesigned its site with the help of ecommerce agency The ZaneRay Group so that customers can browse by a variety of specialised parameters, such as where the sportsperson will be fishing or the type of fish they’re trying to catch, as well as by SKU number and product name.



Customers can export the items in their shopping carts to a file, edit them and upload their order, instead of having to manually key it in. Sales reps can also create recommended orders to send to customers, who can approve and place the order. The improved features produced a significant lift in online revenue in 2020.

ZaneRay president Reed Gregerson says Umpqua is a good example of a company using its ecommerce to be much more than a shopping cart.

“It serves a multitude of B2B and D2C customer types, from dealers to professional industry users, to retail consumers, each with distinct shopping needs,” Gregerson says. “The site also serves to promote Umpqua’s brand by blending informative and memorable content with the shopping experience. BigCommerce is a great platform choice for building this kind of multifaceted online presence.”

Orange Coast Pneumatics, which provides specialized cylinders, valves and fittings, integrated a part-building process that only shows compatible parts as a customer builds out a piece of custom equipment. That application, created with BigCommerce partner Optimum7, helped increase its conversion rate by 120% and revenue by 90%. ◆



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—Reed Gregerson, President, ZaneRay

PAIN POINT #6

“I want to be able to test out a new ecommerce platform before I make a decision, and not be left on my own when migrating to a new system.”

Moving to a new ecommerce platform is a big commitment and migration can be a painful process.

Thus an ecommerce vendor with a responsive team can be a big help. And more than a quarter of respondents to the 2020 Digital Commerce 360 survey of ecommerce executives reported that one of the main things they look for when choosing an ecommerce vendor is the ability to try a platform for free.

Online Stores was able to get both the free test drive it wanted and help with implementation when it moved off its Magento platform that senior creative director John Mirenzi describes as “a house of cards,” prone to frequent failure.

Retailer Survey

Companies want vendors that will help

What are the main things you look for when choosing which vendor to work with? (multiple responses allowed)

Responsive team	73%
Works well with my other technology systems	66%
Technology that is easy to implement and use	65%
Great references	59%
Guaranteed response times if something goes wrong	45%
A package that offers many features in one system	31%
Willing to negotiate on fee structure	31%
Ability to stop service when wanted without incurring a fee	30%
Willing to negotiate on contract terms	27%
Free trial period	26%
Low price	23%
Short contract terms	9%
Other	6%

Source: Digital Commerce 360 2020 Ecommerce Technology Survey based on 121 retailers



“It was BigCommerce that gave us the keys and said, ‘Here, take it for a drive and see if you like it.’”

—John Mirenzi, Senior Creative Director, Online Stores

Online Stores, which operates eight ecommerce sites selling flags, safety gear and other products, looked at a lot of platforms, including Magento 2, Shopify Plus, Kibo Commerce, Mozu, Workforce and Salesforce Commerce Cloud.

“But it was BigCommerce that gave us the keys and said, ‘Here, take it for a drive and see if you like it,’” Mirenzi says. “We were able to put it through the paces and try to do what we needed to do to see if the platform would work for us.”

“We did that with a couple of other platforms, but it just didn’t work out so well. The support wasn’t there, the help wasn’t there that we needed to really evaluate. But Andrew, a sales engineer, opened BigCommerce up for us like, ‘Here, you want an environment? Here, I’ll spin one up for you.’ We just were able to do what we needed to do to evaluate the platform.”

A STEP-BY-STEP MIGRATION PLAN

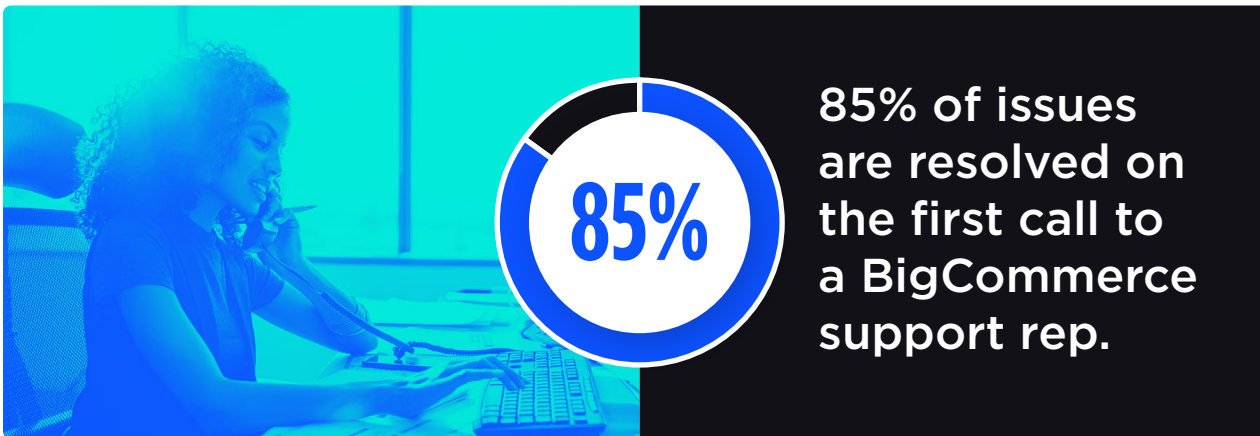
And once it decided on BigCommerce, the retailer got the help it needed to make a smooth transition. A BigCommerce implementations architect laid out a step-by-step plan for migrating the sites to the new software, says Chrystal Rhome, director of technology at Online Stores. “In past implementations we discovered there was so much work to do it just paralysed us,” Rhome says. “What do I do first? And then you just don’t do anything because you don’t know what to do.”

“So to have her there right from the start, saying, ‘Okay, here’s the order that we’re doing to do it, here’s the timeline that each thing should take, and here’s a complete list of everything that past customers have come across that you want to make sure you address as well,’ was invaluable.”

And when Online Stores hit a snag in integrating with the Kount fraud-prevention system, a BigCommerce solutions architect helped get the retailer over the hump.

In the end, Online Stores wound up launching on BigCommerce just as the coronavirus pandemic hit in early 2020, causing a spike in sales on one of its sites, DiscountSafetyGear.com, that led the retailer to add a second shift of workers to handle the heavy volume of orders. “BigCommerce handled it like a champ,” Rhome says. “We didn’t have any problems with slow traffic or order volume, and received no complaints about technical issues on the website.”

With BigCommerce the support doesn’t stop after launch. The platform is proud to offer 24/7, U.S.-based support. Merchants are usually talking to a support rep within two minutes, and 85% of issues are resolved on the first call. ◆



CONCLUSION

Technology should fit your business, not the other way around

There is no single ecommerce platform that is right for every business. Each company must identify their requirements and then find the ecommerce technology that suits their needs.

For companies just beginning to sell online, a conventional, closed SaaS system with little customisation capability might be adequate, at least temporarily.

For those that have unique requirements and a strong team of software developers, open source software might be the answer. But they should keep in mind what Jon Morgan, IT project manager at Woodland Hills Wine Company, concluded after reviewing Magento's open source software: "It felt like you needed a degree in engineering just to maintain basic functionality."

Companies that rely heavily on Adobe marketing software or Salesforce's customer relationship management system might favor those companies' ecommerce platform subsidiaries — Magento in the case of Adobe, and Salesforce Commerce Cloud (formerly Demandware) for the CRM company. But decision-makers also might prefer an independent platform provider like BigCommerce that has no bias when it comes to the technology its clients use.

BigCommerce evolved to an Open SaaS model because it meets the needs of a broad range of companies. Its core software provides all the features many



companies will need, while hundreds of pre-integrated apps add best-of-breed functionality in all aspects of ecommerce.

And, by opening up 90% of its platform to APIs, BigCommerce guarantees that its clients will have the freedom to incorporate whatever data and services they may need in the future. All the while, they can rely on BigCommerce to provide such underlying services as website hosting, security and PCI compliance, with strong guarantees of fast site performance and uptime.

Customers want to purchase in whatever way best meets their needs. And companies selling online should demand the same flexibility to satisfy their specific requirements when selecting an ecommerce platform. As an Open SaaS platform, BigCommerce is designed to enable retailers and B2B companies of all sizes to meet today's requirements and respond to new opportunities that emerge in the future. ◆





BigCommerce (Nasdaq:BIGC) is a leading software-as-a-service (SaaS) ecommerce platform that empowers merchants of all sizes to build, innovate and grow their businesses online. As a leading Open SaaS solution, BigCommerce provides merchants with sophisticated enterprise-grade functionality, customization and performance with simplicity and ease-of-use.

Tens of thousands of B2B and B2C companies across 120 countries and numerous industries use BigCommerce to create beautiful, engaging online stores, including Ben & Jerry's, Molton Brown, S.C. Johnson, Skullcandy, Sony and Vodafone.

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