How to Keep Customers Coming Back

The Essential B2B E-Commerce Adoption Guide

Ssana

Contents

The Reason Your B2B Web Store
Is Struggling: Adoption

If you've had any experience in or around a B2B web store, then you probably already know customer adoption is half the battle.

The reason? It's tough to meet the expectations of buyers, who are accustomed to seamless B2C purchasing experiences. Equally challenging is the buy-in of commercial teams, who view e-commerce projects as threatening at worst, and unnecessary at best.

At Sana Commerce, we've studied the core components of what makes a B2B web store work. For over 15 years, we've helped B2B organizations apply those components to run highly successful web stores, and now, we're sharing our expertise.

In the Essential B2B E-commerce Adoption Guide,
you can expect to learn:

– Why adoption is integral to your digital transformation strategy and success
– What's stopping your customers from adopting your web store
– How you can get them to not just use your web store, but return
– Where you stand with B2B e-commerce adoption currently
– When you can expect to see actionable results (with the help of SMART goals)

Ready to get your B2B web store set up for success? **Let's get started.**
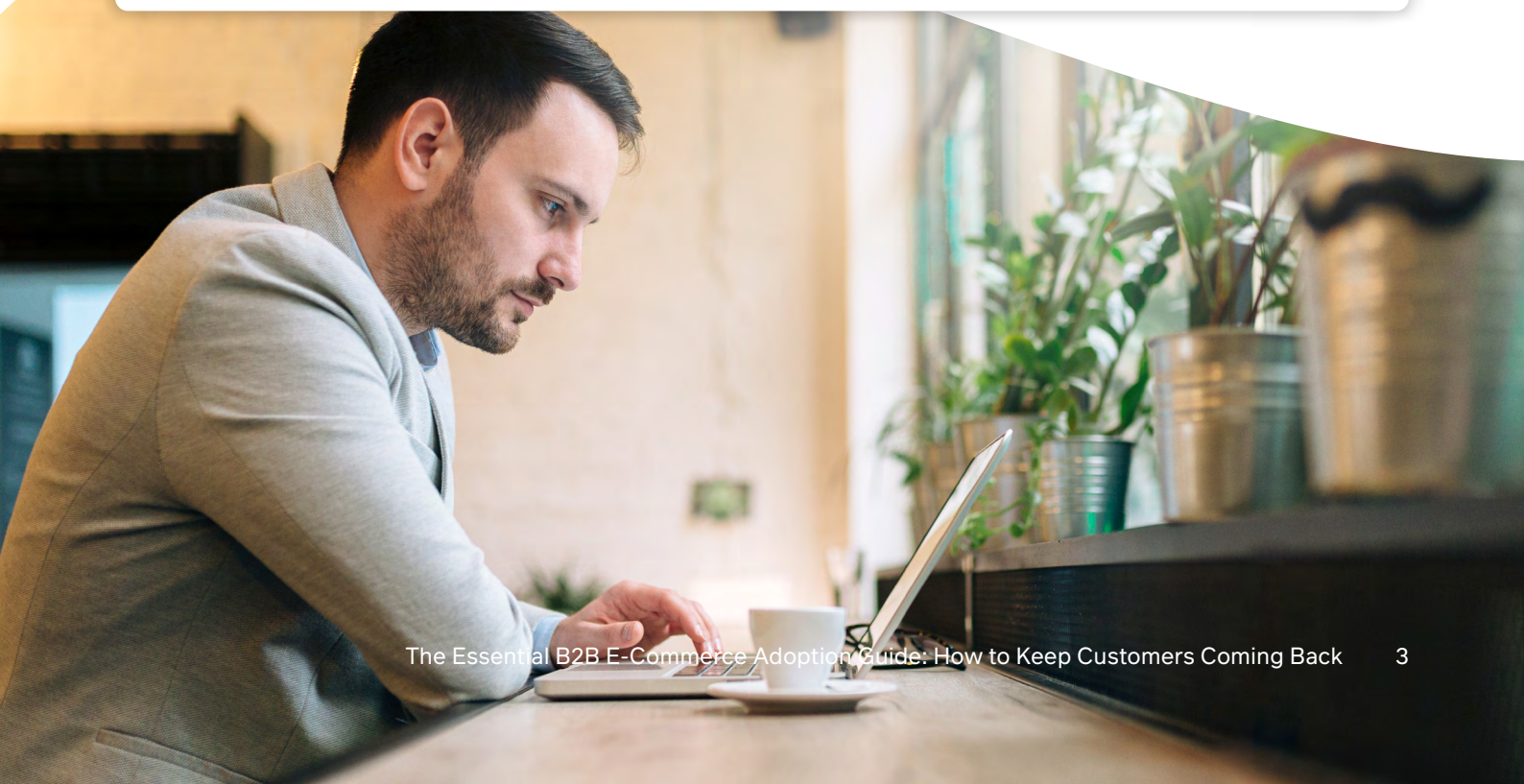
Increased e-commerce adoption:
what you stand to gain

Adoption directly correlates to e-commerce project ROI.

Let's start with the obvious: for your e-commerce project to provide high ROI, you need customers to adopt your web store.

E-commerce projects are sizeable investments, and when adoption is a priority, you reap the rewards of a high ROI. Wondering how?

An automated web store empowers your customers with personalized self-service, bringing down your cost per sale. Additionally, it streamlines processing that would have previously cost manhours, lowering operational costs.

Adoption allows your sales teams to streamline their efforts.

A poorly used web store leaves your sales team focused on managing accounts, without much time for strategic acquisition and retention.

When your web store is effective and therefore trusted by your sales teams, it enables them to streamline their efforts into strengthening your customer portfolio.

Effort that might have gone into client management can now go into upsell and cross-sell, and key accounts can get the focus they require for better relationships overall.

Adoption creates opportunity for **product exploration**.

A good web store enables customer exploration of the entire sales catalog, making it easier for cross-sell and upsell opportunities to present themselves.

Moreover, high adoption can improve traffic, which bolsters your organic rankings, creating an additional entry point for prospects in the research phase of their purchase journey. **Open catalogs can entice potential customers who seek insights on your offering.**

Adoption provides unparalleled **customer insights**.

High web store adoption gives you in-depth access into the way your customers think. You can run A/B tests on web store features, analyze why some products perform better than others, and incentivize cart abandonments with promotional offers.

None of this is viable if your customers aren't using your web store. When adoption is a priority, you're able to access insights that strengthen your product offering, upsell strategies, and commercial tactics.
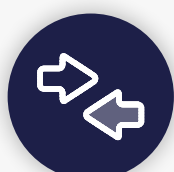
Low adoption leaves you vulnerable to **competition**.

Today's B2B buyers are digitally native, and their expectations are shaped by the B2C purchase experiences so ubiquitous in their private lives.

Low adoption is a sign your buyers are dissatisfied with your web store experience. If your digital channel is not being utilized by buyers in the industry, chances are someone else's is. Would you risk becoming vulnerable to your competition?

How does poor B2B e-commerce adoption hurt your business?

Customers who don't use your web store translate directly to less ROI, more strain on your commercial teams, and leaves you less focused on capturing new demand.

A poorly used online sales channel has negative implications across almost every function of your business, hurting progress on key business goals, including growth and profitability.

A low share of revenue on your web store leads to higher cost-of-sale, thanks to customers relying heavily on your sales or customer service teams for order processing.

With your commercial teams under strain, your pipeline deals with the consequences. Your gross margin naturally stagnates, or worse, shrinks, and the ROI on your e-commerce project will be negatively impacted.

Do your customers use your **web store**?

We see it time and time again: a B2B organization invests meaningfully in a new e-commerce platform, rolls out a shiny new website – all for their customers to call on the phone to place their order.

A couple rounds of this is enough to make the most patient among us give up – but that would be a strategic mistake.

A vast majority of B2B companies already use e-commerce because it is the only scalable way in the 21st century to increase revenue, work efficiently, grow your customer base, and develop a strong brand image.

A global pandemic and supply chain struggles have revealed the need for a future-proof digital transformation strategy – which is where e-commerce comes in. An online channel is a powerful tool for unlocking sales efficiency, superior customer experience, and in-depth customer insights.

However, B2B web stores require a conscientious and multi-factorial approach for success. Simply investing in an e-commerce platform is no longer enough – the extent to which your channel gets used is a key component to the success of your project.

How do you measure B2B e-commerce adoption, and why is it important?

B2B e-commerce adoption refers to the rate at which your customers rely solely on your web store to execute orders and gather key information.

Calculating your web store adoption rates helps impart valuable insights into how your online channel is performing for your organization. Here's a handy cheat sheet of formulas (plus what you can expect to learn from them):

Formula ↓

Helpful For ↓

Web Store Adoption Rate (WSAR)

$$\text{WSAR} = \frac{\text{Total \# buyers placing regular orders online}}{\text{Total \# buyers invited to your web store}}$$

A holistic overview of how your marketing efforts and CX contribute to your online sales channel.

Registration Rate (RR)

$$\text{RR} = \frac{\text{Total \# buyers registered online}}{\text{Total \# buyers invited to your web store}}$$

A closer understanding of how your awareness activities have performed, and a good gauge of customer interest.

One Time Adoption Rate (OTAR)

$$\text{OTAR} = \frac{\text{Total \# buyers who have ordered from your web store once}}{\text{Total \# buyers invited to your web store}}$$

High one-time adoption + low web store adoption might mean your CX is not up to mark.

Key Account Adoption Rate (KAAR)

$$\text{KAAR} = \frac{\text{Total \# key accounts who have ordered from your web store once}}{\text{Total \# buyers invited to your web store}}$$

For those B2B organizations dependent on select key accounts for revenue – maximizing this figure will be integral.

Remember that excluding the number of customers who are not able to buy from your web store is necessary for an accurate metric. It's important to emphasize sales is not the only important metric worth measuring the success of your web store by.

Customers need your web store to be a reliable, real-time source of truth.
In providing this, you succeed in drawing buyers back to the place where you sell.

Here are some other points of data outside of sales that are worth tracking on your web store:

– Total # of unique logins per key account
– Total # orders tracked and traced per key account / Total # orders
– Total # invoices paid online / Total # invoices paid
– Total # searches performed in invoicing history
– Decrease in offline request for order statuses/invoices/return orders

Using measurable metrics to keep track of your web store adoption can help strengthen your marketing and commercial strategy to cater better to your customers.

Five Common Causes of
Poor Web Store Adoption

B2B buyers today have high expectations from their vendor web stores. A desire for efficient, reliable, and convenient processes means that their online purchase experience needs to be seamless for them to choose it over another sales channel or competitor.

Order errors that arise from inaccurate information, an inability to access basic account information, and clunky UX all lead to buyer dissatisfaction. Poor web store adoption can therefore mean you're at risk of your customers churning, especially if your commercial teams can't accommodate their needs quicky.

The first step to trouble-shooting low adoption of your web store is identifying the reasons so many B2B buyers might be resistant to it. Below, you'll find five of the most common reasons for poor B2B web store adoption:

1. Mainstream e-commerce solutions don't meet B2B needs

Oftentimes, mainstream e-commerce solutions simply can't cope with the needs of a B2B web store. Why? No real-time data available, a result of little to no integration with the ERP.

For most B2B organizations, the ERP is a source of truth that no web store can be built without. That's because it contains the data for your 'holy triangle', i.e., your products, pricing, and customers.

Most e-commerce platforms therefore work by duplicating the data found in the ERP – a solution that gets messy fast, resulting in silos between the two systems, and inaccurate data on your web store.

Integrating your ERP directly with your e-commerce platform is essential to web store accuracy, and therefore, adoption.

2. Unreliable information leads to broken trust

The relationship you have with your customers is built on a foundation of trust. This trust is strengthened with price transparency, quality assurance, and a clear commitment to seamless experience.

A buyer asked to switch their purchasing to your online channel, only to find an incorrectly listed price or discount, inaccurate stock levels, and an absence of trade agreements can understandably experience frustration.

Your chosen e-commerce platform plays a significant role here. To avoid compromising trust, it's necessary to use tooling that will minimize data error and prioritize customer convenience.

3. Internal resistance results in **lost opportunity**

An ineffective web store might end up creating work for your commercial teams. Why? Inaccurate stock and pricing information (a result of no real-time updates) or inaccessible account information mean they end up troubleshooting issues that arise from a lack of real-time updates and poor customer experience on your web store.

Though your salespeople and customer service teams should be focused on strengthening relationships, they end up working as IT support. These issues create a natural distrust and resistance between your internal stakeholders and web store.

When this is the case, promotion of your web store is equally low. For your internal teams to become champions of your web store, it is necessary that you set it up to be an effective and helpful channel for them.

4. Absence of efficient goal setting to **track progress**

All too often, a B2B e-commerce project finds itself off the runway, in the air, and without a destination. Efficient goal setting is much like charting a flight – without course, your project will quickly lose momentum, and find itself drifting.

One of the main issues with goal setting around e-commerce projects is the absence of measurable and meaningful targets. Most organizations know they want their online sales channels to have high adoption rates, but few know exactly how to accomplish this.

Your e-commerce provider should be able to help you structure this, so you're aware exactly how your investment is making impact.

5. Poor communication leaves customers disengaged

With so many contesting priorities driving the successful launch of an e-commerce project, it is perhaps understandable that customer onboarding might take a back seat. The opposite needs to be true for high adoption. Getting your customers involved from the very start will ensure you have a web store that caters to their needs.

Qualitative and quantitative research in the form of surveys or interviews will ensure you have a complete understanding of their expectations and preferences.

This research ensures your customers feel involved in the process from the start, resulting in less resistance when it comes to migrating their purchase process. Adoption of a new platform without the correct training or communication can result in confusion and struggle very quickly, especially for customers used to traditional mediums.

QUIZ: Is Your Web Store Optimized For Adoption?

Is your organization doing everything it can for strong and growing web store adoption? Take our two-minute quiz to figure out where your organization stands.

1. Does your web store display real-time transaction-critical information?

○ No, it has been a struggle to get accurate information on our web store.

○ Yes, our IT and CS teams do a good job in updating web store information for it to be as accurate as possible.

○ Yes, our e-commerce platform enables native integration with our ERP, ensuring real-time updates, anytime of the day.

2. How healthy are your web store adoption rates? (Hint: You can calculate this like so: total # buyers placing regular orders online/ Total # buyers invited to your web store)

○ Our web store adoption rate is less than 40%

○ Our web store adoption rate sits somewhere between 40%-70%

○ ____ rate sits above 70%
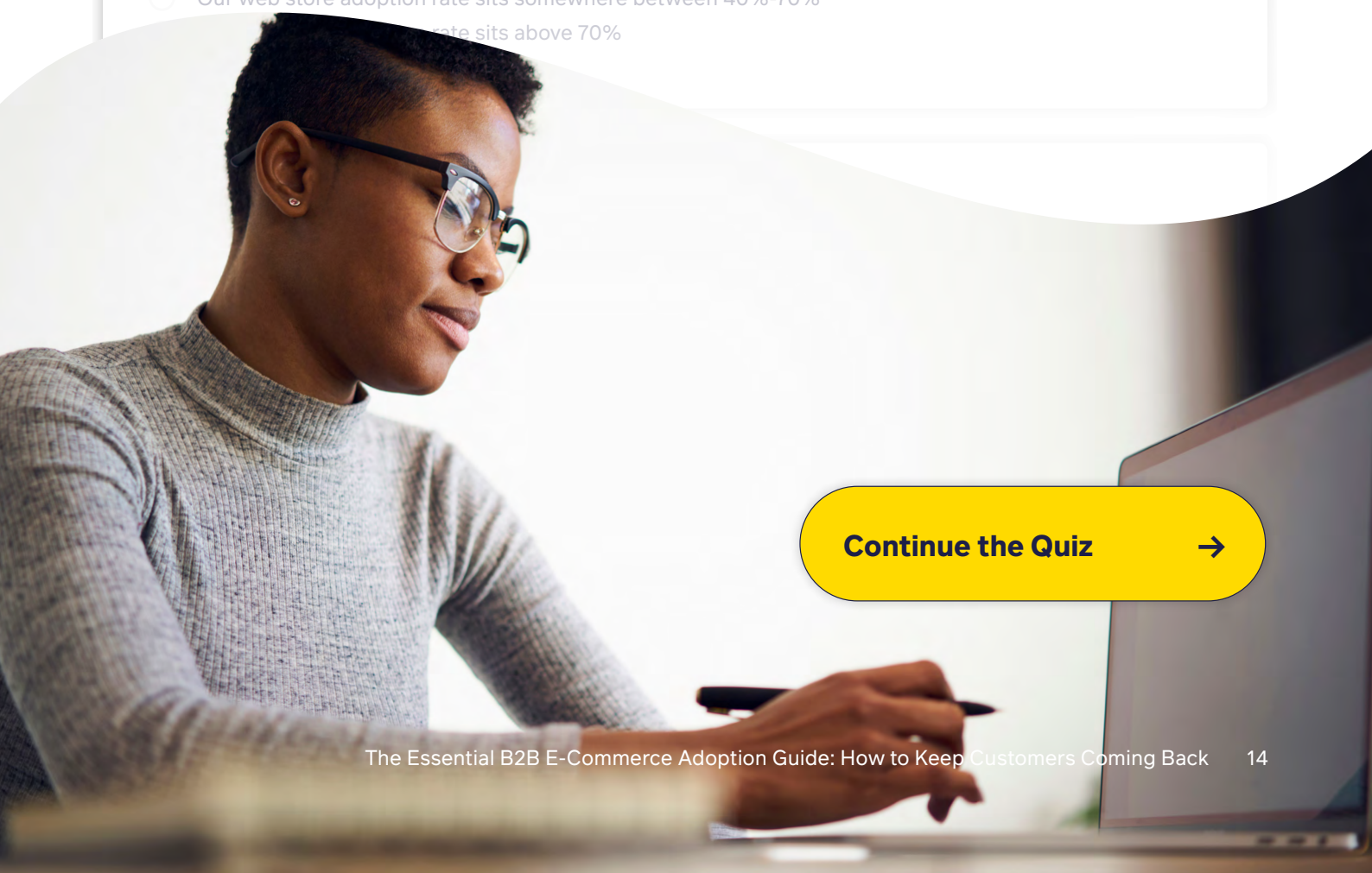
Continue the Quiz →

How ERP Integration
Supercharges Your Adoption Rate
(Plus, Four Tactics to Keep Your Customers Coming Back)

When your ERP and web store work as one, you can leverage a single source of truth to ensure you're always presenting always accurate transaction-critical data in real time.

Inaccurate information and broken trust?

A thing of the past.

This is why an integrated e-commerce platform is essential to high web store adoption, and in turn, digital transformation success.

ERP integrated e-commerce ensures your web store becomes a source of truth that both your customers and commercial teams rely on for information.

When buyers trust your web store, your sales reps feel more comfortable endorsing it, naturally promoting high rates of adoption.

Tactic #1:
Foster collaboration with your internal teams

When there is a conscientious effort to bring your internal teams into the e-commerce conversation, collaboration grows and strengthens your project outcome.

Once your B2B e-commerce project is live, it helps to highlight the ways in which the web store can empower their work with features built specifically for commercial teams.

For example, when sales reps can log in as customers, they get access to real-time account information and sales agreements. This allows them to tailor offers and present relevant cross-sell options to customers, empowering them to work efficiently.

Your salespeople can focus on landing new accounts and improving your share-of-wallet with existing customers. Your sales and customer service teams can gather market knowledge and become trusted touchpoints for your customers. A natural improvement of trust between your internal teams and the web store will drive adoption.
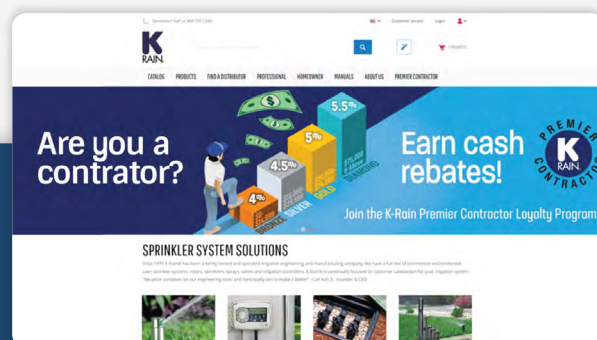
Success stories:

How adoption assists your internal teams

" Having both a B2B and B2C platform together has had a huge impact on our customer service and sales teams, thanks to automated order management and customer self-service capabilities. This means our team can focus on cross- or upselling, as well as on having a meaningful impact on our channel partner relationships by, for example, placing an order on behalf of a distributor who may be in the field/on the go and not have hands free."

Emily Pelosi
Digital Marketing Consultant at K-Rain®

Read how Emily Pelosi, Digital Marketing Consultant at K-Rain®, found ERP-integrated e-commerce drive efficiency for the organization's commercial teams.

ERP integrated e-commerce delivers superior customer experiences, thereby driving adoption. With access to both offline and online customer history, your customers can access everything from order history, quotes, and returns with ease.

Integrated e-commerce can also enable your customers to leverage your ERP's standard quote request (RFQ) process, so that they're able to both create quotes and place orders while on your web store.
Most importantly, ERP integrated e-commerce does not disrupt the online buying process, which means the buyer doesn't have a reason to go back to any other sales channel.

Tactic #2:

Prioritize customer experience (CX) with personalization

For customers to feel incentivized to use your web store, their experience needs to be on par, and indeed, better, than their offline experience.

Personalization allows customers to feel catered to, without having to involve a salesperson or customer service manager. There are a few ways your web store can offer a superior personalized experience, thereby encouraging adoption:

– Order to quotes
– Customer-specific pricing and promotion
– Customer-specific inventory/product views
– Save shopping cart orders to purchase later
– Reorder directly from past orders
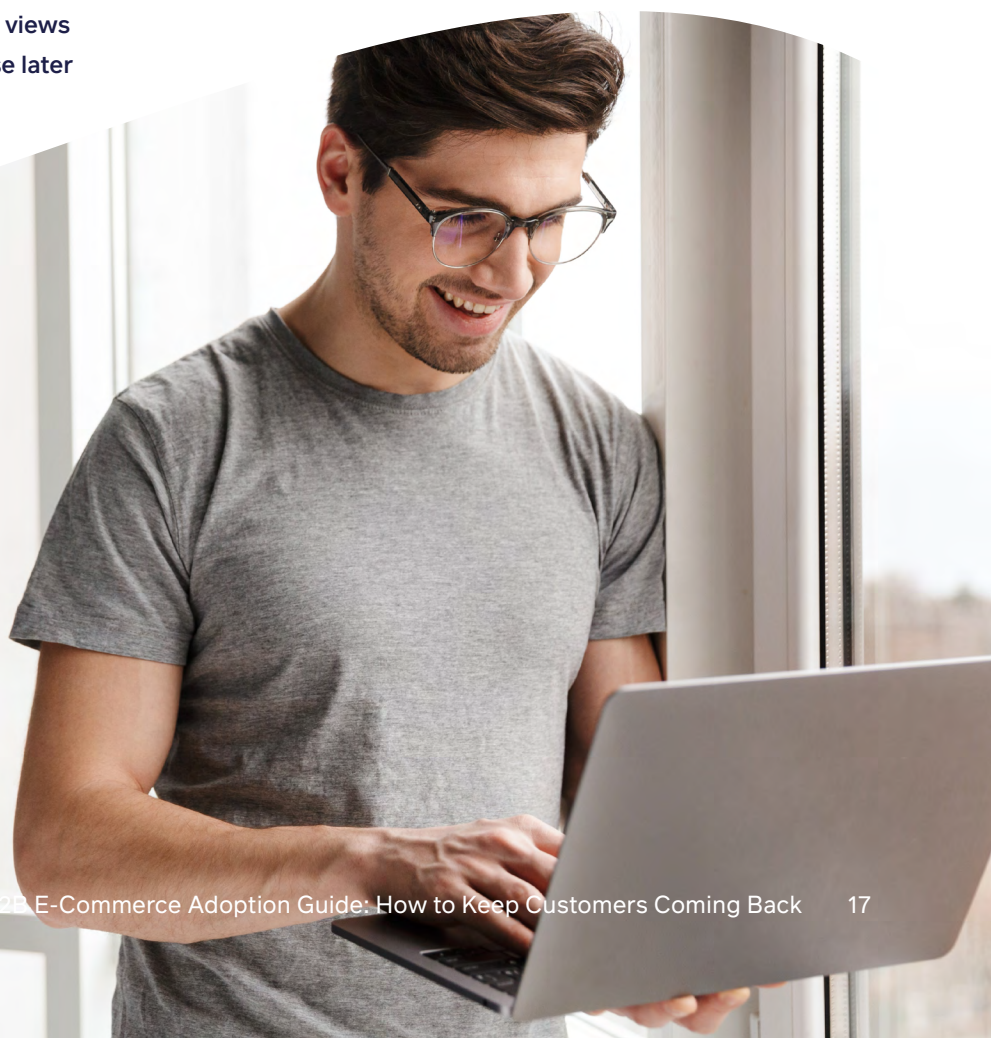
Tactic #3:

Turn your customers into brand advocates

Your customers are your most enthusiastic champions. To drive adoption, it's vital to showcase why your web store is as much an investment in them as it is in your organization. Here's how:

–   **Customer interviews:** The research phase of your e-commerce project should include customer interviews. Gathering their input will ensure a web store that caters to your customer's pain points and create an interest in adoption.

–   **Onboarding programs:** Preparing onboarding materials and scheduling trainings to run through the functionality of your web store will empower customers and help ease those less used to digital environments for ordering.

–   **Web store incentives:** Incentivizing shop accounts with loyalty programs and online-only promotional offers can help facilitate adoption.
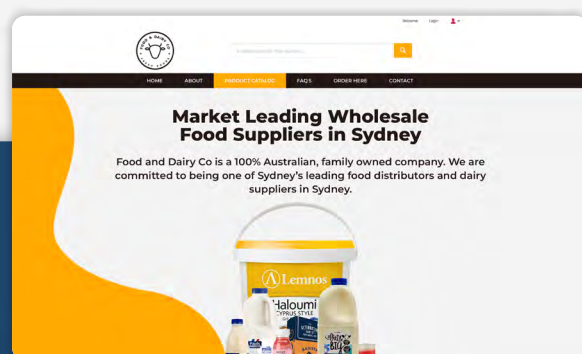
Success stories:

How adoption leads to brand advocates

"   Thanks to ERP integration, agents can rely on information in the web store as the most up-to-date and relevant source of truth for customers, without needing to switch between systems. Agents also feel less pressure to rush conversations with customers, mainly because there are less calls coming through, this improves the experience for the customer and the chance for advocacy in the long run."

Daniel Wickman
CFO, Food & Dairy Co

Learn how Daniel Wickman, CFO at Food & Dairy Co leveraged web store adoption to improve customer relationships and create brand advocates. .

ERP-integrated e-commerce delivers results that are measurable and impactful. Since all your offline and online data reside in one place with integrated e-commerce, it becomes easy to compare and track the performance of your web store.

Tactic #4:

Harness the potential of your tooling through SMART goals

Efficient goal planning can help you zero in on aspects of your web store that need strengthening and can put into place metrics that allow you to track success.

SMART goals stand for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. This acronym may not be new to anyone who has worked in project management, but it is a helpful structure nonetheless, especially when it comes to tracking progress on specific projects.

Wondering how you can create some SMART goals for e-commerce adoption? We've created a handy template to get you started.
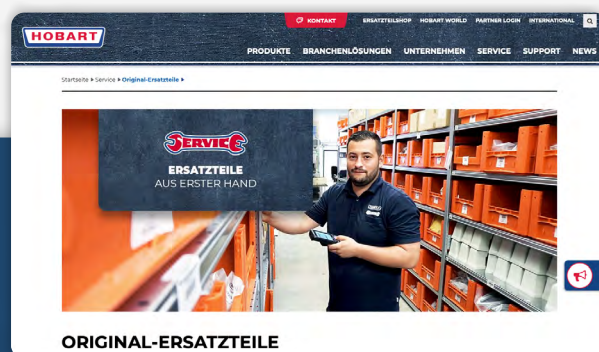
Success stories:

How adoption enables consistent growth

" The number of customers ordering via the online store has grown at a steady rate. We have seen a shift in the order intake channel from manual processing via telephone, mail and fax to the web store."

Sophie Fischer
Project Management After Sales at HOBART

See how HOBART found ERP integrated e-commerce enabled consistent, measurable growth.

Next Steps:

How To Use This Guide To Drive Your Web Store Adoption

In this guide, we've seen why web store adoption is critical for strategic growth and success. **Here's everything we've gone over in a nutshell:**

B2B buyers today expect an online purchase experience that not just as good, but better, than their offline counterparts.

Mainstream e-commerce solutions simply do not cope with the dynamic needs of B2B buyers today, because they're unable to provide transaction-critical data with the accuracy that is needed.

ERP-integrated e-commerce solves all the main hurdles surrounding poor B2B web store adoption, by creating a single source of truth that both your customers and commercial teams can trust and use.

High web store adoption results in stronger customer insights, empowered commercial teams, competitive leverage, and informed strategy that enables high ROI and revenue.

Checklist: how to use this guide

We've created this resource so you feel empowered to drive web store adoption within your own B2B organization. **Here's some next steps:**

- ☐ Share this guide with a colleague you think might benefit from reading it.
- ☐ Take our quiz to learn where your organization currently stands with web store adoption.
- ☐ Use our SMART goal planning template to get some inspiration on how you can track adoption of your web store.
- ☐ Use our template to convince your internal stakeholders why integrated e-commerce is a strategic investment for your organization.

SMART Goal template for **e-commerce success**

sana

Initial Goal(s):

Use this space to write any broad goals you might have for your web store. We've added some prompts to help.

- What are your key business objectives for the next year? ....
- What are you trying to achieve with your web store? ....
- ....
- ....
- ....

Specific Goal(s):

Add exactly what you wish to accomplish in this year. We've added some suggestions based on e-commerce success.

- Aim to improve web store adoption by X%. ....
- Create a customer onboarding program to promote web store. ....
- ....
- ....
- ....

Measurable Metrics:

Add exactly how you will know you've accomplished these. We've added some suggestions based on the above goals.

- Web store adoption rate. ....
- Registration rate. ....
- ....
- ....
- ....

Achievement Requirements:

Are your goals realistic? If yes, think about why. If not, think about what you might need to make them so. We've added some prompts to guide you.

– A truly integrated e-commerce platform that empowers business strategy.
– Conduct customer interviews/surveys to gauge expectations surrounding web store.
– A marketing plan to facilitate customer onboarding and incentivize sales through promotion.
– ....
– ....

Relevancy:

How do your tactics align with your overall goals for the year? We've put in some factors to think about.

– Will these goals drive impact? ....
– Will these goals enable progress and growth? ....
– ....
– ....
– ....

Timeframes:

What are your deadlines for meeting these goals? Are they realistic?

– Customer interviews: 3 months ....
– Web store promotional rollout: 2 weeks ....
– Email campaign with onboarding: 6 weeks ....
– ....
– ....
– ....

SMART Goal(s):

Add your revised goals here based on your answers above. We've added an example for you.

– Improve web store adoption by X%, based on our current adoption rate of X%, by Q3 of this year. This will help boost the strength of our online sales channel, improving the ROI of our e-commerce project.
– ....
– ....
– ....

About Sana Commerce

Sana Commerce is an e-commerce platform designed to help manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers succeed by fostering lasting relationships with customers who depend on them.

How? By making your SAP or Microsoft Dynamics ERP and e-commerce work as one. This eliminates system silos, as well as unnecessary complexities and compromises caused by mainstream e-commerce solutions. Instead, our approach unlocks 3 key benefits that enable you to build lasting relationships with your customers:

Total customer convenience:
Empower your customers with personalized self-service and complete transparency.

Reliability without compromise:
Eliminate errors and delays for an experience your customers can always rely on.

Constant evolution:
Quickly and easily adapt your business to meet and exceed your customers' evolving expectations.

Sana Commerce is a certified SAP and Microsoft Gold partner, backed by a strong global partner network and recognized by leading industry experts.

Want to learn more? Get in touch!

Prioritize relationships, not just transactions.
SAP and Microsoft Dynamics e-commerce.

Microsoft Partner | Gold Enterprise Resource Plan
Gold Application Development
Gold Cloud Platform

Microsoft

SAP Partner
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