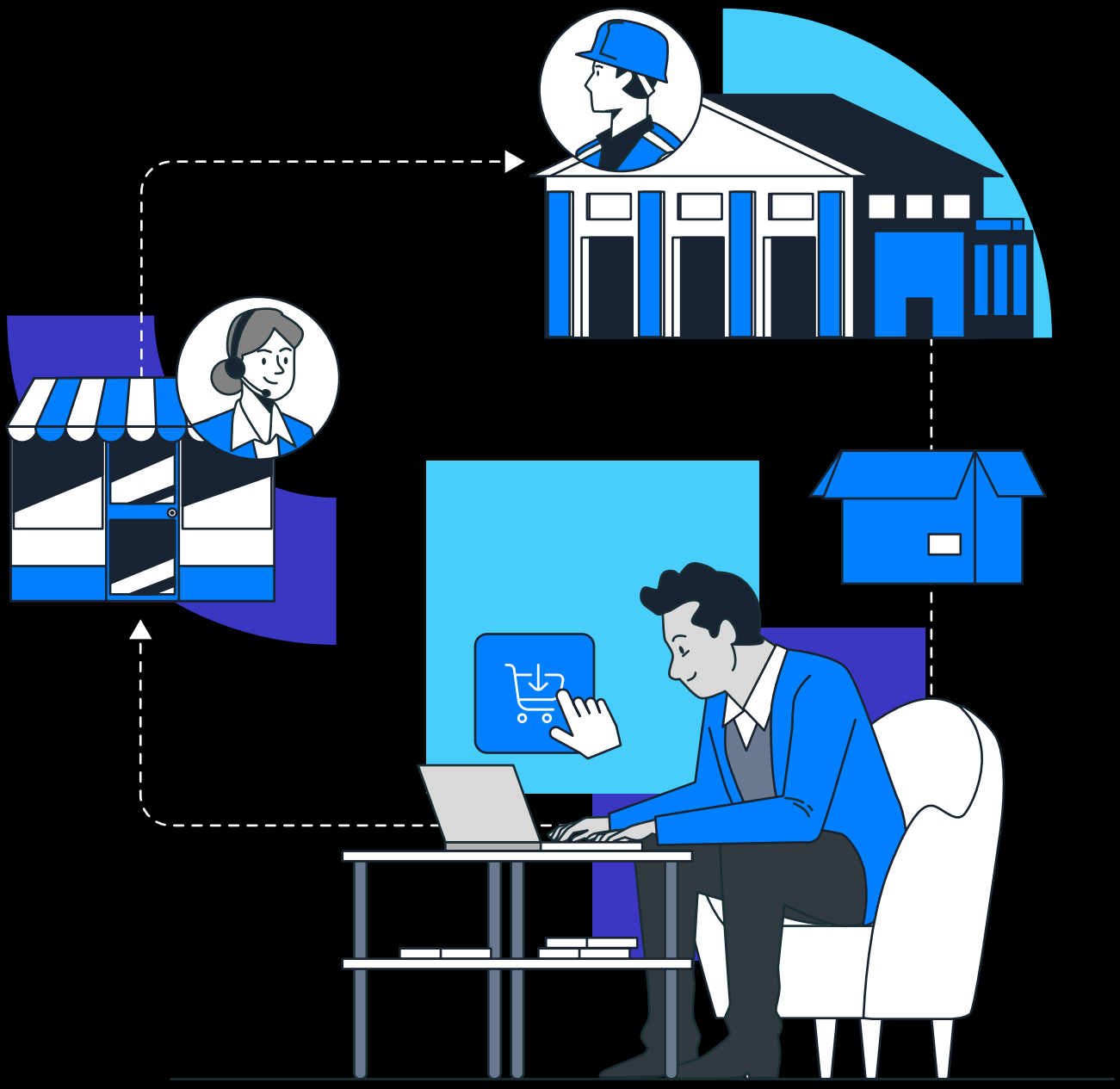
B2B Commerce: A new strategic opportunity for retailers

Analysis, examples, and best practices



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Amid a crowded customer goods market, economic slowdowns, and seriously fierce competition, B2B is becoming a key growth driver for retailers.

According to Digitial Commerce 360, the B2B eCommerce market will grow by 20% annually between 2023 and 2032 in Europe, North America, and the Asia-Pacific region — reaching $19 billion, $23 billion, and $121 billion, respectively.

But shifting from B2C to B2B does not happen overnight. After all, professional clients have different needs and expectations than everyday consumers!

To help you navigate the challenges and opportunities of B2B, we have studied the strategies of some of the world's biggest retailers. Our market analysis, best practices, and case studies offer expert insights to help you expand into B2B simply and effectively.

Ready to dive in?

Chapter

01.

B2B: A new opportunity for growth for B2C

Is B2B (business to business) a haven for B2C (business to consumer) brands?

Walmart, the world's top retailer, has been in the professional sales market since January 2023 with the launch of Walmart Business, marking a big shift from B2C to B2B (see case study: How B2B clients have become crucial for Walmart).

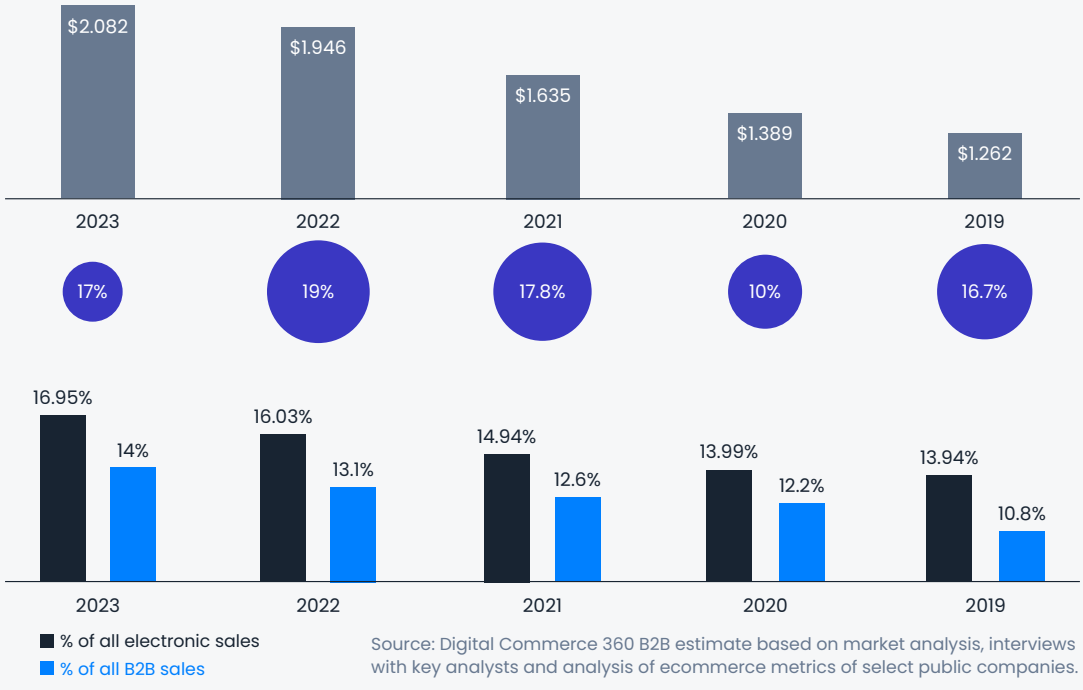
Historically, non-food retailers have pioneered the mixed B2B/B2C model, with DIY retailer Home Depot being one of the most successful examples. After 10+ years (see case study: How B2B has dominated sales at Home Depot), professionals now account for "close to 10% of Home Depot's client base and around half of [its] sales," according to Hector Padilla, Vice President of External Sales and Services.

In Europe, sports and leisure distributor Decathlon broke into B2B 20 years ago with Decathlon Pro (see case study: Why Decathlon has separated B2B from B2C).

Meanwhile, decoration and furnishing chain Maisons du Monde has been successfully growing its B2B sales division for a decade. In 2023, it earned €100 million in B2B revenue out of a total €1.04 billion — with plans to double or triple that number by 2026. (see case study: ECommerce is becoming the focus of Maisons du Monde Business' strategy)

B2B ecommerce sales continue to grow at a healthy clip

In trillions, with **growth**



Source: Digital Commerce 360 B2B estimate based on market analysis, interviews with key analysts and analysis of ecommerce metrics of select public companies.

We are seeing a clear trend of B2C companies expanding into B2B, driven by global leaders. However, B2B clients have different needs than everyday buyers, and you need to understand these differences before jumping to B2B.

Case study

How B2B clients have become crucial for Walmart

01.

What's the main focus?

Walmart is the go-to neighborhood discount store in the US, with 90% of Americans living within 10 miles of one of its stores. Many small businesses already rely on Walmart, but the company wanted to do more to serve its existing customers and grab the attention of new ones.

"We believe we can do even more to meet their needs and that there's a good opportunity to gain new [business] clients who have never previously considered using Walmart," explains Ashley Hubka, Senior Vice President of Walmart Business.

"The [COVID-19] pandemic helped shine a light on the role of **small businesses and nonprofit organizations** in their local communities," adds Hubka. "ECommerce has created new and more diverse buying opportunities for small businesses and organizations."

02.

What solutions have been put in place?

Walmart created **Walmart Business**, a dedicated eCommerce offering for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) and nonprofits.

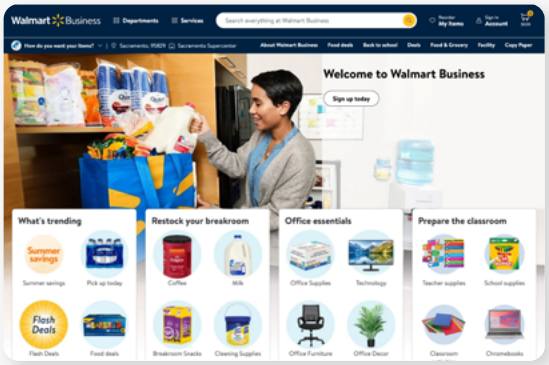
In January 2023, Walmart launched business.walmart.com, featuring over 100,000 products. Two months later, the company opened a **B2B marketplace**. It combines Walmart's extensive range of food, hygiene, home office, electronics, and IT products with B2B-specific products, such as classroom and office equipment.

Walmart Business simplifies the B2B buying experience with multi-user accounts, personalized recommendations, and efficient stock management. Plus, the Walmart Business+ program provides extra benefits, such as free delivery and discounts on repeat orders, for $98 a year.

03.

What are the expected outcomes?

One of Walmart's main objectives is to maintain and strengthen its relationships with the local economic and community fabric. Against a backdrop of digitalization of the economy, Walmart intends to play a role in supporting local businesses, providing tailored solutions for SMEs and associations.



Walmart's main goals are strengthening its relationships with local communities and boosting local economies. Additionally, Walmart aims to increase its profit by expanding into the B2B market, using automation and advanced technologies.
It expects that by 2026:

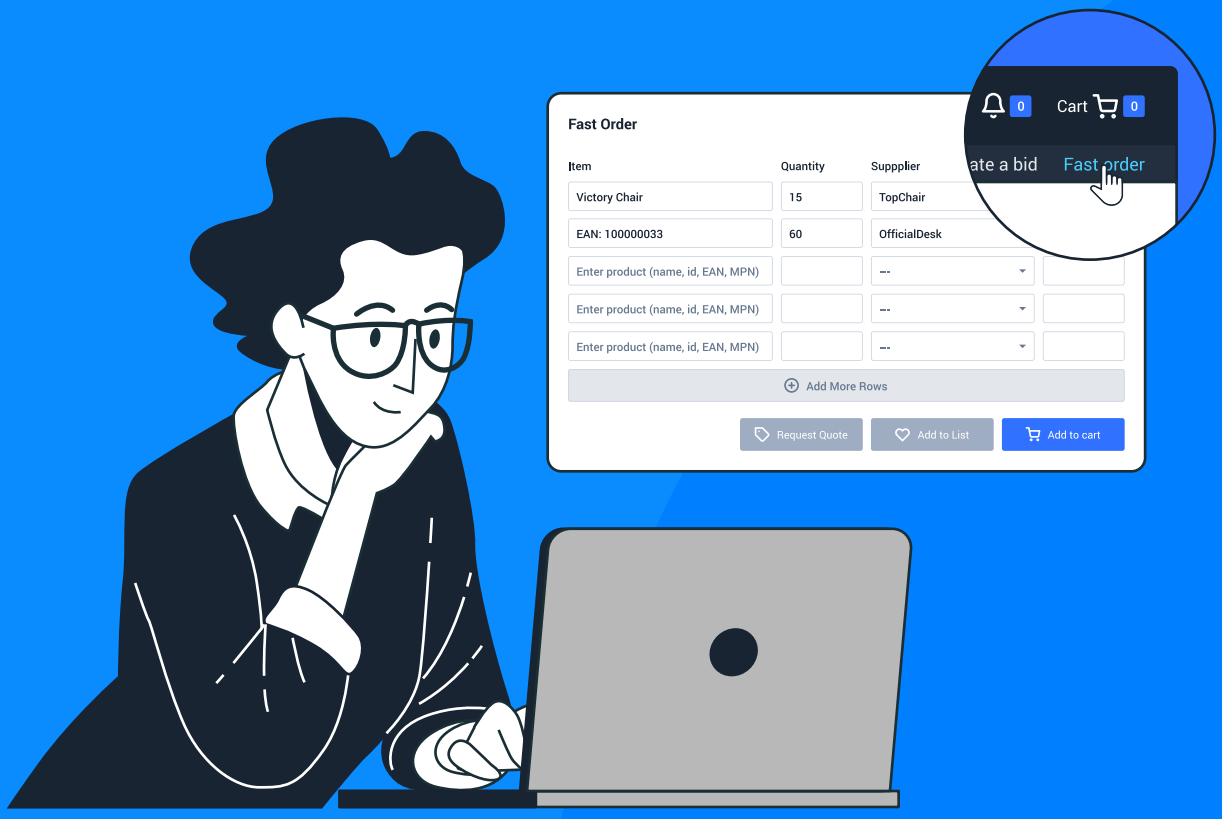
65% of its stores and 55% of its distribution centers will be automated

potentially cutting unit costs by 20%

Chapter

02.

B2B clients are unlike other clients



Ashley Hubka, Senior Vice President of Walmart Business, puts it simply: "The business customer is not just another buyer — they are a different kind of buyer" (Retailtouchpoints, 13/07/2023).

Selling to B2B clients comes with unique challenges, including:

- Managing high-volume orders, both one-time and recurring
- Publishing tailored product catalogs
- Handling duty-free prices and complex tax systems
- Issuing quotes, pro forma invoices, multiple invoices for single orders, etc
- Offering flexible and negotiable prices
- Navigating multi-level approval and expense authorization procedures
- Responding to calls for tender
- Coordinating multi-drop deliveries in large quantities during business hours
- Granting supplier credit and payment terms
- Accepting payment methods, including bank transfers
- Offering complete solutions (including installation, assembly, and maintenance) with a technical assessment

Beyond these, which call for specific features, **the expectation of customization** is the biggest difference between B2B and B2C.

"We can't treat business customers in the same generic and mass-market way as B2C customers," explains Olivier de Rocca Serra, Marketplace and B2B Director at Maisons du Monde.

"Whether it be in terms of verticality and targeting or project size and duration, the expectations and functionalities are different."

So, for a successful expansion into B2B, **you must adapt your strategy**. Consider creating a dedicated business unit, gradually adjusting your offerings, and developing multi-channel capabilities. (Keep reading for a breakdown of the best practices to succeed in B2B!)

Case study

Why Decathlon has separated B2B from B2C

01.

What's the main focus?

Decathlon Pro was launched in 2005 following a large in-store order of sports equipment that required multiple delivery points and specific payment conditions. Since then, Europe's leading sports retailer has **made its B2B operations an independent entity.**

Decathlon even created **a subsidiary to handle remote sales** through catalogs and eCommerce.

02.

What solutions have been put in place?

The subsidiary has its own website, separate from the retail site, with its own technology and maintenance. There's a call center platform, incoming order processing, and in-house sales representatives to handle tenders. The site also links to the Decathlon Pro site for the general public.

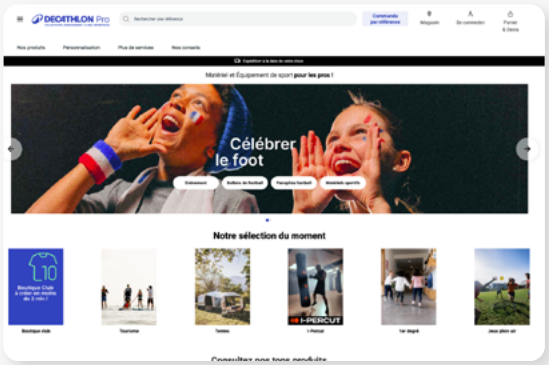
03.

What are the expected outcomes?

Today, Decathlon Pro operates like a "small business within the business," says Élodie Goret, Decathlon Pro's Head of Marketing & Client.

It has "its own support departments (i.e., offering, supply chain, marketing, and accounting) and is organized based on [the] type of customer: education and public institutions, amateur clubs, and businesses, with a director in charge of each major target who oversees their respective strategies."

This dedicated structure allows for serving a diverse clientele: "Each target is made up of sub-targets, each with different stakeholders: primary, secondary, or higher education in the education sector, as well as diverse business targets (from nursing homes to company gyms)."



With B2C growth slowing down, particularly online, Decathlon Pro aims to become Decathlon France's top growth driver by 2026.

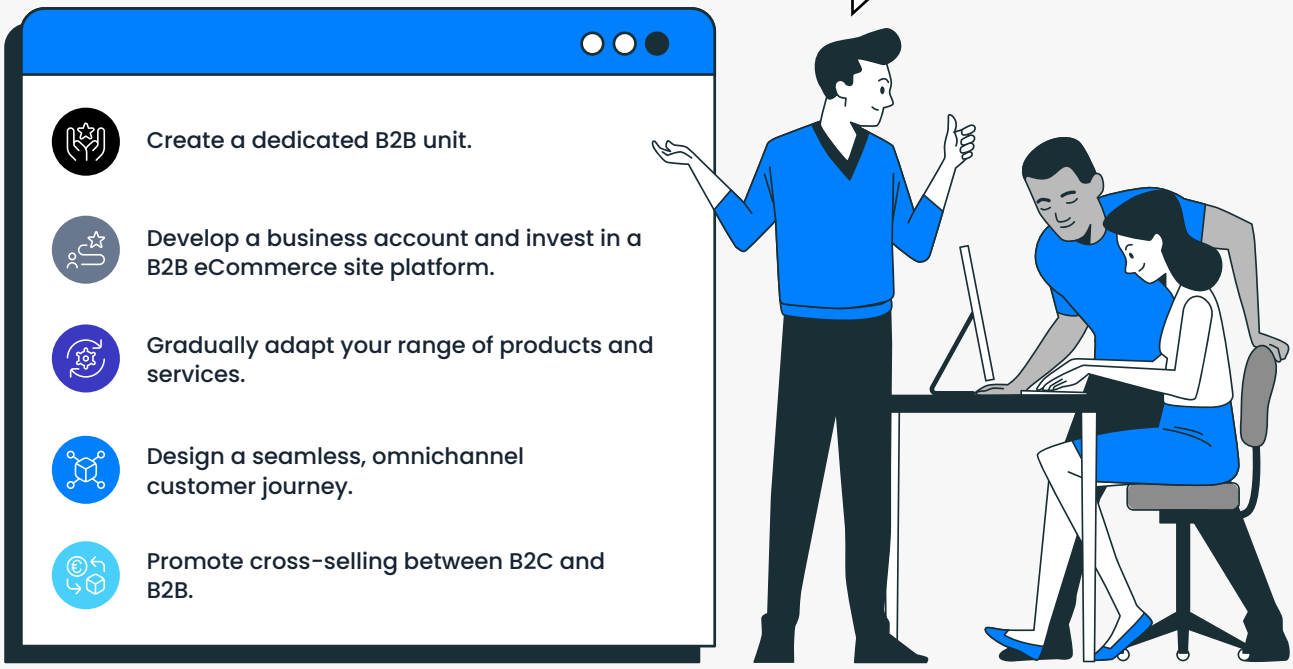
Chapter

03.

Five best practices for a successful B2C-B2B transition

Successfully expanding into B2B requires a solid strategy

Here are our tips to help you on your way:



1 Create a dedicated B2B unit

Establishing a subsidiary or autonomous B2B unit lets you focus on B2B needs without B2C distractions. This unit can have its own roadmap, technology, staff, and more — guaranteeing **laser-focused attention to professional clients.**

With a dedicated team for your B2B unit, you can improve service quality and satisfaction. This unit can also develop highly targeted marketing campaigns and sales strategies that truly resonate with professional clients.

Additionally, this autonomous structure allows you to test new B2B products and services more easily, encouraging innovation and adaptability. The cherry on top? You can **reinvest profits from the B2B unit into its growth and innovation.**

Example

Maisons du Monde Business operates within Maisons du Monde's Executive Digital IT & B2B division.

2 Develop a business account and invest in a B2B eCommerce site platform

A dedicated business account and B2B eCommerce platform offer several advantages to professional clients. These benefits are:

Financial

Financial incentives, such as discounts for high-volume orders, are common for business clients.

Example

Lapeyre's Exclu Pro program offers a 15% discount on most products and 4% back on annual sales.

Home Depot Pro provides paint and discounts on fuel to individuals with an account.

Time-saving

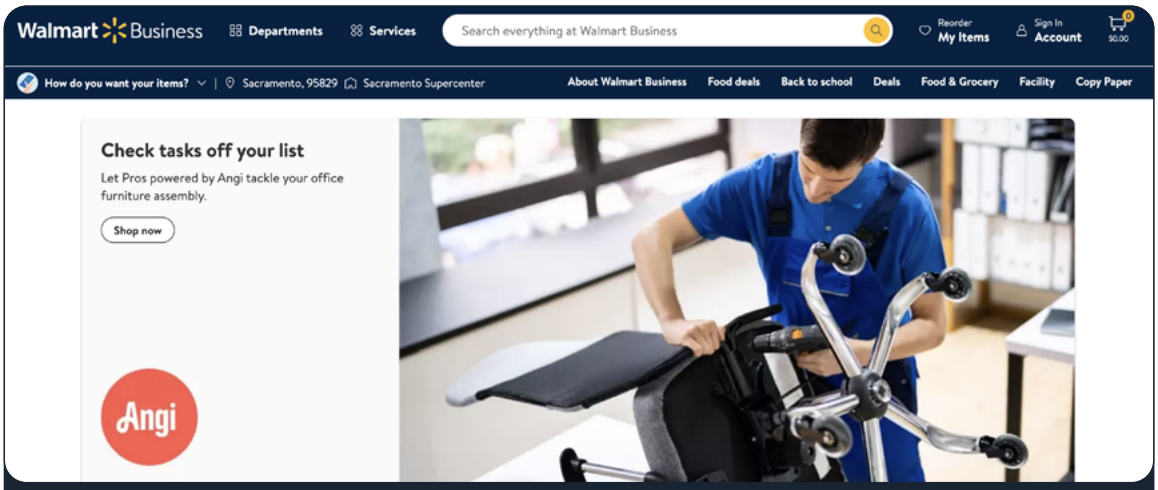
A B2B eCommerce site or platform saves clients time by combining previously separate functions, such as displaying prices before tax and discounts, viewing quotes and invoices, and tracking orders. While some of the "front-office features" may be shared with B2C, these functions require a specific headless eCommerce platform for B2B.

Example

Walmart's app allows you to add up to five people to the same account and track shopping budgets.

Experience-based

Experience-based services strengthen credibility with professional communities by helping them do their jobs better.



Example

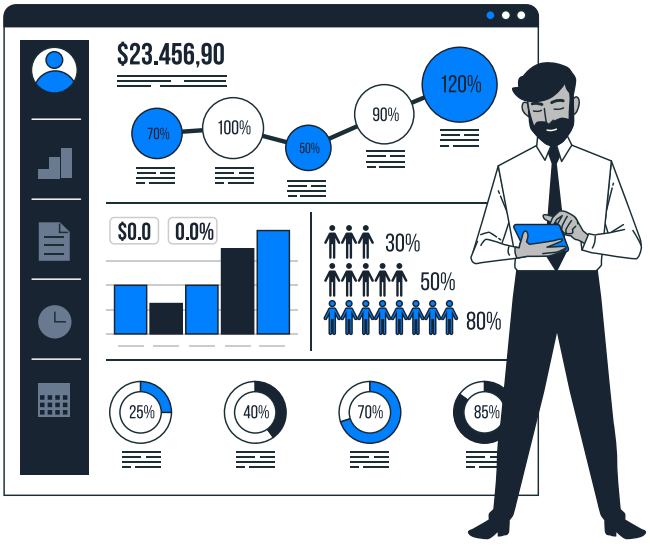
The Walmart Business app integrates with Angi, a platform that connects people with local service providers for tasks such as installation and assembly.

Home Depot's "The Path to Pro" recruitment site allows small business owners to find qualified professionals in their area.

Decathlon Pro offers amateur sports clubs turnkey e-boutiques to sell its merchandise, including clothing and bags. It also provides teaching aids to teachers who are not specialists in physical education.

Maisons du Monde Business plans to provide internet coaching services to interior designers.

Business accounts and a solid B2B eCommerce platform also enable you to **gather data and customer insights**. This allows for better targeting, sub-targeting, persona defining, and prospecting new customers and targets.

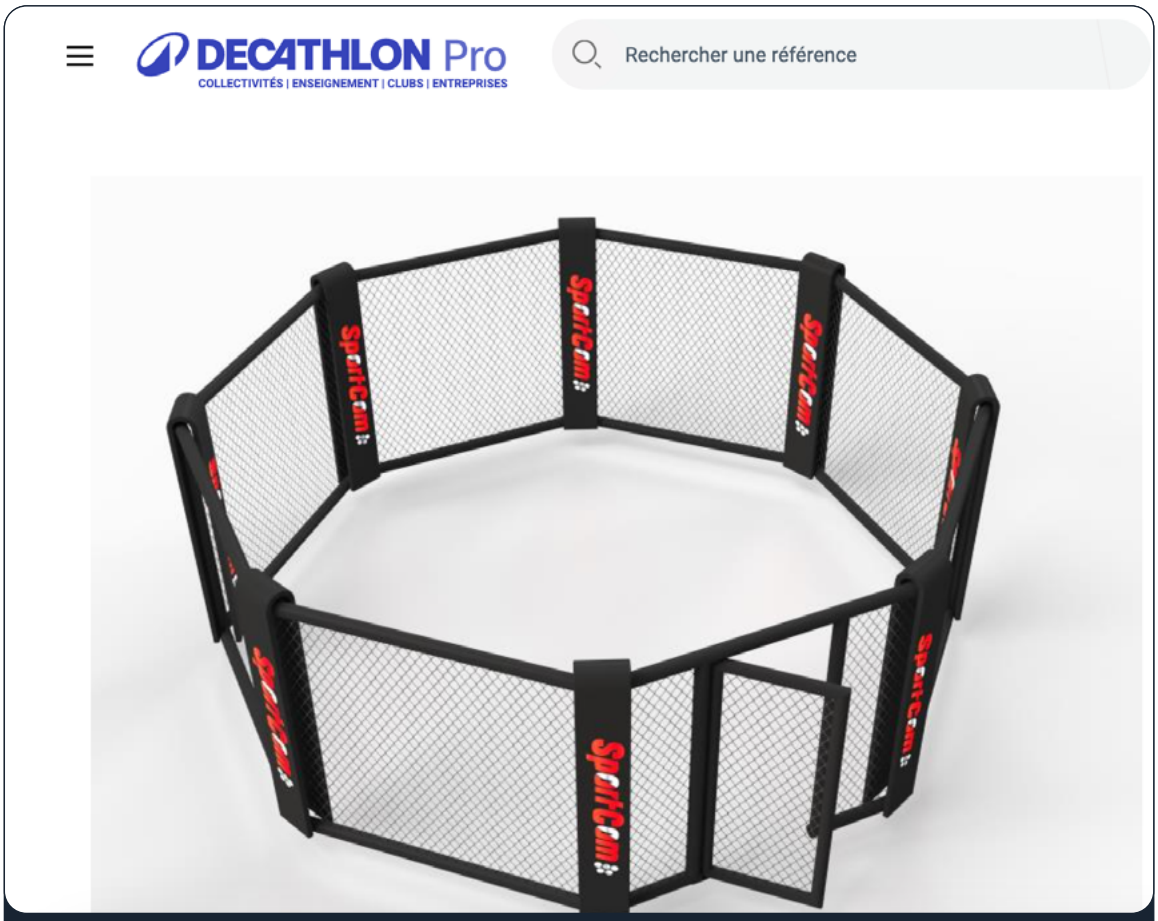


3 Gradually tailor your range of products and services

When a retailer decides to expand from B2C to B2B, they might think of offering the same products to both customer groups. We like to call this a “band-aid solution”: It might work initially, but it is not viable in the long term. Products for professional use must meet **stricter usage and safety standards,** so retailers need to adapt their offerings to satisfy these needs.

Expanding and adjusting a product range often involves creating a B2B marketplace. While this helps diversify products and prevents stockouts, it is not enough on its own. B2B sales require personalized service, so it is best to pair your B2B marketplace with logistical management, tailored delivery solutions, and personalized support for a complete solution.

In other words, only a **holistic, integrated approach can address all the challenges of B2B.**



Example

Declathon Pro offers 12,000 items, split 50-50 between its own-brand products and those of other manufacturers. Some products, such as boxing rings, are exclusive to its professional range.

Maisons du Monde Business has a catalog of 750 products, half of which are also available to the general public. This is expected to increase considerably once its dedicated B2B marketplace opens.

4 Design a seamless, omnichannel customer journey

Like regular consumers, business clients expect a seamless digital experience from B2B distributors. According to the B2B Shopper Report 2023-2024, two-thirds of professional buyers feel this way.

However, the customer journey is more complex in B2B than B2C. So, **retailers must use multiple sales channels** to meet the diverse needs of their business customers. This becomes even more crucial as retailers establish themselves in the B2B market.

For a successful omnichannel journey, you must **integrate all available sales channels**, both online and offline. These include websites, mobile apps, physical stores, phone support, and more.

Managing an omnichannel approach also means **regularly optimizing for personalization**. By collecting and analyzing data on customer interactions, retailers can offer tailored responses and products to each business.

Example

Home Depot recently acquired Construction Resources, which has 39 showrooms across the eastern US, enabling it to start selling via this channel.

Maisons du Monde Business has a call center platform, an expanding field sales force, and a showroom for personalized service.

5 Promote cross-selling between B2C and B2B

Once your B2B unit is running smoothly, focus on cross-selling opportunities between your B2C and B2B operations.

To succeed in B2C-B2B cross-selling, **start by analyzing customer buying behaviors**. This will help you identify products often purchased together and understand client preferences. You can then use these insights to create personalized offers, such as product bundles and additional services based on purchase history.

Next, **train your sales teams** to spot cross-selling opportunities and recommend complementary products to B2B clients. Finally, ensure your B2C and B2B channels work together seamlessly to centralize information and simplify the buying process.

Example

At Decathlon, some of the sales staff who typically work with individual customers (B2C) are also trained to handle business-to-business (B2B) sales. These employees use a special app to offer B2B products to customers who need them. As a result, Decathlon Pro can proudly say that they have 3,665 experts, both in-store and remote, available to serve their customers, out of a total of over 10,000 employees in France. Similarly, Maisons du Monde Business has assigned specific staff in their stores to focus on B2B sales and plans to equip them with a digital sales app, similar to the one they already use for individual customers.

Case study

How B2B has dominated sales at Home Depot

01.

What's the main focus?

North America's top DIY retailer aims to offer high-quality products to all types of professionals — from small building contractors to architects and property maintenance companies.

02.

What solutions have been put in place?

In 2012, Home Depot launched **the Pro Xtra program**, offering small business customers tiered pricing, rewards, and personalized offers. This program is now integrated into Home Depot's digital system.

Three years later, Home Depot acquired Interline Brands — a wholesaler of building maintenance, repair, plumbing, hardware, and electrical supplies — and rebranded it Home Depot Pro. With a revenue of $1.7 billion, Interline Brands significantly expanded Home Depot's B2B presence.

From there, the company continued growing by acquiring:

- HD Supply, a leader in maintenance products, in 2021.
- International Designs, a renovation materials wholesaler, in 2023.
- SRS Distribution, which supplies materials to roofing contractors, landscapers, and pool builders, in 2024.

Through these acquisitions, **Home Depot has developed an omnichannel profile**. It offers sales in-store, through key accounts and regional representatives, by phone, in showrooms, and online through its eCommerce site.

The Home Depot Pro site now connects to Home Depot's ordering and invoicing system, allowing sellers to modify their orders online. In stores, Pro clients get dedicated parking and a rental service for materials and vehicles.

Finally, Home Depot has created a **network of distribution centers for bulk materials** and a recruitment app for construction workers.

03.

What are the expected outcomes?

"We're building a **unique and interconnected professional ecosystem**," says Ranjeet Bhosale, Home Depot's Vice President of Customer Marketing and Operations (paymnts.com, 12/01/2023). "What we love is to find the right balance between transactional and experiential benefits."

The company has already experienced excellent outcomes:

Professional clients participating in the program spend **18%** more at Home Depot in their first year and make purchases twice as often as non-members.

Home Depot makes more than half of its revenue **($152.7 billion in 2023)** from professional clients.

Chapter

04.

The B2B commerce toolkit for retailers

Once you understand your business customers' needs and best practices for online B2B sales, it is time to explore the key features of a B2B eCommerce solution and the proper technological architecture to use.

The key features of a B2B eCommerce platform

01. Personalizing the buying experience

Personalized products

Products should be tailored to meet the specific needs of each customer.

Preferential rates

Negotiated pricing terms should be reflected on the platform to encourage buyers to use the online service.

Terms of payment

Negotiated payment terms should also be available online to make transactions easier.

02. Displaying correct and detailed information

High-quality images

Images should be clear and detailed to allow buyers to visualize the product and know what to expect when it arrives.

Documentation technique

Technical specifications, installation manuals, and compatibility sheets should be easily accessible.

Environmental information

More and more customers are concerned about environmental aspects, so this information should be readily available.

03. Simplifying the decision-making process

Intuitive navigation

Products should be well-organized for easy and intuitive searching.

Optimized search

Buyers should be able to quickly find products by entering references or keywords.

Quick ordering

For recurring purchases, it should be possible to place orders with just a few clicks.

04. Offering an omnichannel experience

Real-time synchronization

Information should be updated in real-time across all channels.

Multiple portals

Different portals for different types of users (end customers, sales agents) allow for tailored management.

Connected purchasing channels

Buyers should be able to use different channels (mobile, computer) without losing any information.

1 Personalizing the buying experience

As we have discussed, personalization is crucial for professional buyers. A solid eCommerce platform will offer features to support this.

These include:

Personalized products

The best platform will enable you to tailor products to each client's specific needs. For example, airlines may have different requirements for the same types of products.

Preferential rates

ECommerce platforms let you show negotiated prices to encourage purchases. For example, a large supermarket chain like Franprix will clearly display special offers directly negotiated with suppliers.

Terms of payment

B2B platforms also allow you to share negotiated payment terms to simplify transactions. If a client wants to pay via bank transfer, for example, you can display all the necessary details (ABA, SWIFT, IBAN, etc.).

Prioritizing personalization helps boost customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially for those who are used to manual buying processes.

2 Displaying correct and detailed information

Professional buyers should have **all the information they need** to make an order independently.

For example, clearly display all specifications and compatibility information for complex products (such as heat pumps or an HVAC system) to avoid confusion and increase conversion rates. Yack, a manufacturer and importation specialist of air conditioning equipment, follows this rule. It ensures all technicians have the necessary information to install Yack devices correctly, which is crucial for customer satisfaction.

Integrating a **PIM (Product Information Management) system** with your B2B eCommerce platform is key here. It should include:

High-quality images:

Clear and detailed images allow buyers to know what to expect when they receive their products.

Technical documentation

Provide easy access to technical specifications, user manuals, and compatibility sheets.

Environmental information

More clients are conscious of environmental concerns, and you should give them information about this. For example, construction giant Eiffage is launching a sustainable eCommerce initiative with its new BlueOn platform, which aims to increase transparency on carbon emissions.

Implementing these elements can increase customer conversion rates and reduce support requests.

3 Simplifying the decision-making process

Professional buyers are often pressed for time, so they need a platform that enables fast, stress-free purchasing.

Here are some essential features that make this possible:

Intuitive navigation

Top platforms help you list products clearly to make browsing easy. For instance, an eCommerce site for a large supermarket should list products under titles such as “Fruits and Vegetables,” “Dairy,” and “Cleaning Supplies.” This helps buyers quickly find what they need.

Optimized search

B2B eCommerce platforms let customers find products in seconds. For example, a clothing retailer selling in bulk can have an advanced search bar on its eCommerce site where clients can enter models, reference numbers, and keywords such as “jean skirt” or “striped sweater.”

Quick ordering

For repeat purchases, placing orders in a few clicks is essential. DeSter, an online platform for buying food packaging, has a “Buy Again” button for regular clients, allowing them to re-order frequently purchased items in a snap.

These features **take the headache out of the buying process**, helping boost your average order value (AOV), reduce errors, and slash processing time.

4 Offering an omnichannel experience

Lastly, a seamless client experience across all channels is key. Buyers should be able to **start their buying journey on one channel and complete it on another** without any hassle.

In B2B eCommerce, you will need a simplified payment process and an OMS (Order Management Software) that integrates with your B2B eCommerce platform. Here is how this can help:

Real-time synchronization

The software can update product information in real time across all channels. For example, a car parts supplier can instantly update its stock levels and prices on its website and mobile app, so clients can always see what is available and avoid stockouts.

Multiple portals

For tailored account management, you can create different portals for different types of users, such as end customers and sales agents. For instance, a global furniture company can have separate portals for its customers in France and Germany, ensuring a smooth experience tailored to each market.

Connected purchasing channels

This allows customers to use different channels without losing information. For instance, a construction company can offer an online platform for purchases accessible from any device. Customers could start their order on their work computer and finish it on their smartphone.

Overall, an effective omnichannel experience **increases customer satisfaction** and streamlines order management.

Technology adapted to B2B requirements

In 2024, B2B eCommerce demands a **high-performing, flexible, and SaaS solution** that can drive business growth and help you tap into new markets at a lower cost, and provide a stellar customer experience. Here is what you should prioritize in your B2B eCommerce platform:

1 A tailored technological architecture

A **headless architecture** is necessary as it consolidates data from various sources (ERP, CRM, etc.) and makes it accessible across multiple channels (mobile, desktop, etc.). This supports seamless and **real-time communication** of customer information.

We also recommend looking for a system with an **eProcurement API**. This enables seamless integration with sales portals, eProcurement systems, marketplaces, eCommerce platforms, and external orders.

Headless architecture

A headless architecture is necessary as it conslidates data from various sources (ERP, CRM, etc).

APIs

We also recommend looking for a system with an procurement API. This enables seamless integration with sales portals, eProcurement systems, marketplaces, eCommerce platforms, and external orders.

Real-time communication

To ensure that the information is always up-to-date

2 Scalability and modularity

B2B eCommerce platforms must be modular, robust, and scalable to adapt to changing market and technological demands and grow with your business. The key elements that ensure this are:

Modular architecture

Easily add or remove modules based on needs.

SaaS structure

Access the latest technological innovations.

Flexibility

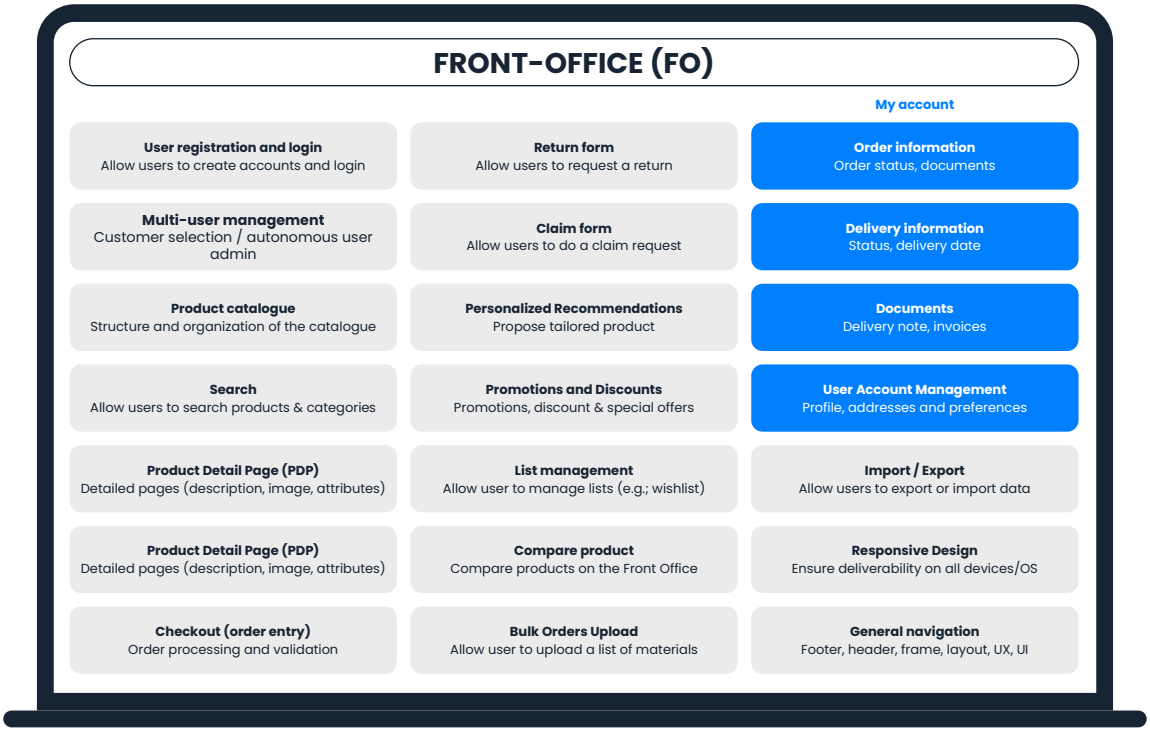
Customize the platform to meet specific business needs.

Performance

Efficiently handle large volumes of transactions.

The table below outlines features that can be integrated into a headless architecture with your existing systems for seamless internal operations (Back Office).

The table below shows the different functions users can see (Front Office) and interact with thanks to the B2B eCommerce platform.



Case study

ECommerce is becoming the focus of Maisons du Monde Business' strategy

01.

What's the main focus?

Maisons du Monde launched Maisons du Monde Business 14 years ago to meet customer demands. "A number of our B2C clients asked their interior designers to incorporate our products into their projects, and others, such as hotel or restaurant owners, approached us directly to supply their businesses," explains Olivier de Rocca-Serra, the retailer's B2B and Marketplace Director. For around 15 years, this B2B offering has been developed as a "complementary extension" to Maisons du Monde's core business. It operates in every country where Maisons du Monde is present.The primary target for Maisons du Monde Business is the hospitality sector, followed by architects, office real estate clients, cafés, restaurants, and retail stores.

02.

What solutions have been put in place?

The **Maisons du Monde Business catalog** features 750 listings, with half also available in the B2C range of 10,000+ products. It can be accessed through a dedicated section of Maisons du Monde's B2C eCommerce site and is also available in print.

The retailer has also set up **Business corners** in stores and about 15 showrooms in France and Italy. Additionally, **three Maisons du Monde-franchised hotels**, run by independent hotelier group Vicartem, serve as live laboratories.

03.

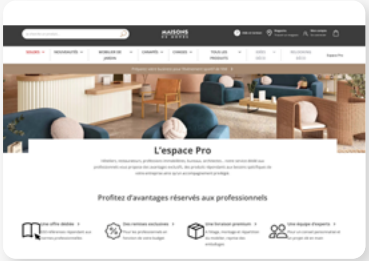
What are the expected outcomes?

Maisons du Monde Business **employs 50 people** across sales (50% of its staff), sales administration, customer services, and interior design.

The interior design division is "partly composed of designers who visit clients and create 2D and 3D plans, which is an important aspect of our service offering," says de Rocca-Serra.

"We also have a sales team in the field that we are currently strengthening as sales teams are more capable of seizing opportunities with clients in person rather than over the phone," he adds.

The role of physical stores is also currently being redefined. "All of our sales staff have been trained in B2B sales, and we are in the process of designating Business references in-store," de Rocca-Serra explains.



While human interaction remains a central part of the B2B customer journey, a new phase is beginning for Maisons du Monde Business — one where "**eCommerce is becoming the focus**," de Rocca-Serra shares. The company is reinvesting to "offer a seamless experience on par with that provided by pure players," he announces.

This involves making invoices, prices excluding taxes, commercial terms, and more accessible online. It also means **deploying a dedicated B2B marketplace** "with salespeople who sell exclusively to professionals and a much wider range of products and services specifically for business clients."

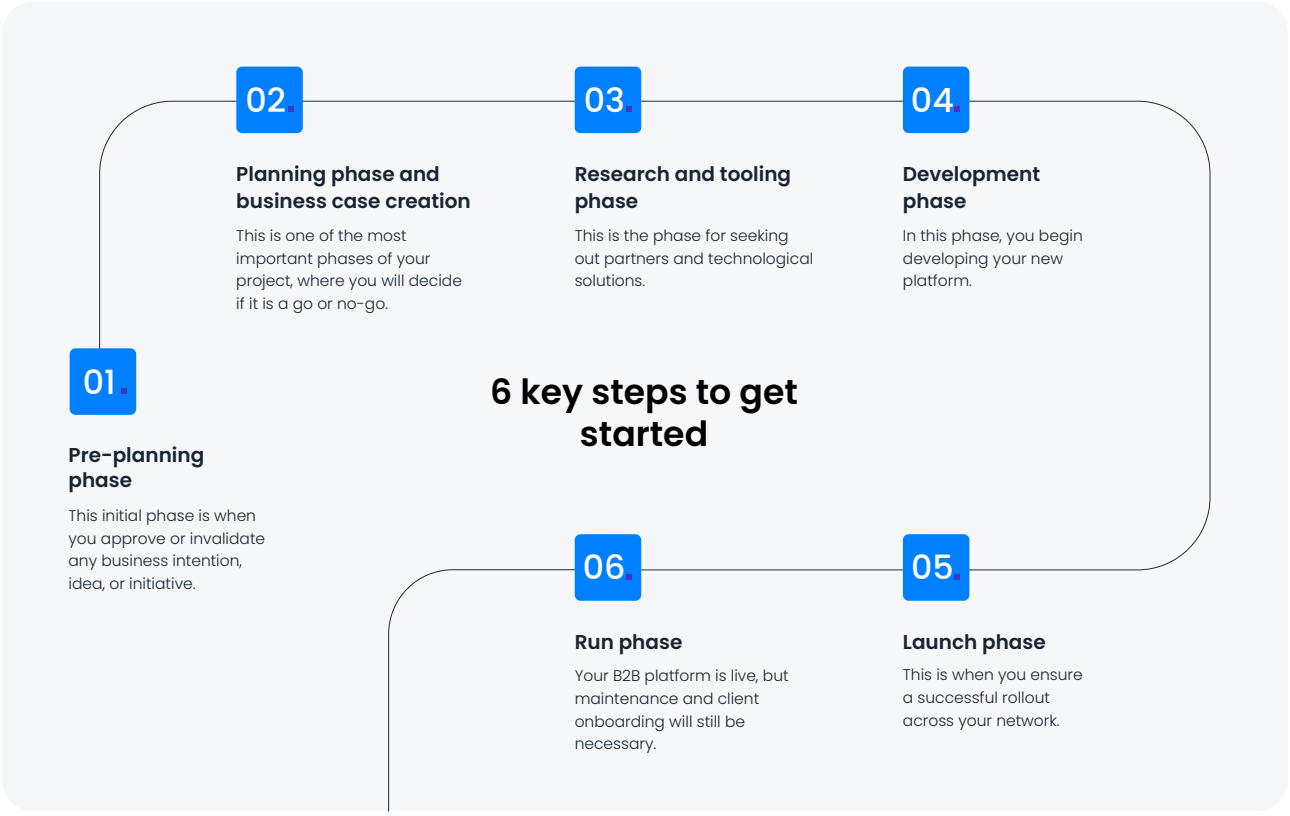
This B2B marketplace will be developed using existing B2C technology (Mirakl) and is expected to launch in **Q3 2024**.

Chapter

05.

The key steps of a B2B eCommerce project for B2C retailers

You have learned about the advantages of expanding into B2B, best practices, the different components of an eCommerce system, and the appropriate technology to use. All that is left is to discover the key steps to follow when launching your B2B eCommerce project.



01. Pre-planning phase

This initial phase is the time to approve or invalidate any business intention, idea, or initiative. It is focused on **creating value for the business**, such as setting up a B2B eCommerce site, B2B client portal, or B2B marketplace.
The pre-planning phase involves **answering a guiding question** as simply and objectively as possible. Deliverables may include:

- **Opportunity assessments**
- **Feasibility studies**
- **Impact assessments**
- **Audits**
- **Scoping reports**

The aim is to make a quick decision (within 1 to 3 months) on the initiative. This ideation phase acts as an initial checkpoint before transitioning to a more comprehensive planning phase.

02. Planning phase and business case creation

This is one of the most critical phases of your project, where **you will decide if it is a go or a no-go**. This phase focuses analytical efforts on various topics to aid in decision-making:

- **Analysis of customer segments and target personas**
- **Promises to customers**
- **Target customer journeys**
- **Formalization of the value proposal.**
- **Product and service offerings**
- **Revenue projections (i.e., Business plan)**
- **Project cost estimates (CAPEX and OPEX)**
- **Target geographic scope**
- **Scope of the MVP (Minimum Viable Product)**
- **Project portfolio and target schedule**
- **Modeling of target business processes**
- **Target organization and key resources**
- **Target functional and application architecture**
- **Target functional mapping**

Creating a business case is also part of this second phase. It will result in more detailed deliverables, including:

- **A business plan**
- **An organizational framework**
- **A list of functional specifications**
- **A B2B sales architecture diagram**

Prepare to adapt your business case into an executive summary of a maximum of 10 slides for presentation.

03. Research and tooling phase

Once your executive committee approves your business plan, the next step is to find partners and technological solutions. For a B2B eCommerce project, look for IT service providers, such as B2B eCommerce software (CMS) publishers or integrators.

You will also need to **organize an RFI** (Request for Information) **or an RFP** (Request for Proposal) to send to future candidates.

The RFP process comprises several rounds, each with specific objectives:

- **Product demonstration: See the technology in action**
- **Functional and technical analysis: Evaluate the foundational aspects**
- **Commercial negotiations: Discuss the business model**
- **IT discussions: Explore hosting, security, data compliance, infrastructure, etc**

This phase may take some time (3 to 6 months), depending on stakeholders' availability and decision-making speed.

04. Development phase

During this phase, you will focus on developing the new platform.

It begins with the **design sub-phase**, aimed at detailing your specifications or creating your initial backlog v0/v1 (if you are using the Agile method). Additionally, this sub-phase is focused on building targeted customer journeys through mock-ups (UX) and design (UI).

During design, you also should **analyze your existing IT system**. Check that your ERP, PSP, PIM, DAM, CMS, OMS, MDM, SSO, UMS, WMS, CRM, CDP, and other IT solutions will integrate with your new platform.

After designing is complete, you can work on your Sprints and Agile ceremonies (Sprint Review, Sprint Planning, Sprint Retrospective, Daily Scrum) or your development cycles.

Throughout development, conduct regular unit tests. Then, **complete development with an end-to-end testing phase** that accounts for the complete user journey. Lastly, you will need to carry out user acceptance testing to ensure compliance and quality.

05. Launch phase

Even when the core IT framework is ready to be rolled out, there are still a few tasks you need to complete to guarantee a successful launch:

- **Preparation and organization of your product catalog (tree structure, content, visuals, etc.)**
- **Help and support documentation (help desk, FAQ)**
- **Marketing and communication plan (internal and external)**
- **Internal user training**

- Marketing promotion plan
- Brand identity at launch
- Preparation of data repository
- Data migration plan
- Target organization
- Modeling of target processes
- Onboarding of stakeholders (change management)
- Rollback plan
- Contractual framework (Terms of Use/Sale, Legal Notices, etc.).
- Impacts on accounting and finance
- TPM (third-party maintenance) organization

Changeover plan (2 weeks minimum)

Go/No-go meeting.

06. Run phase

Your B2B eCommerce platform is now live! You can take a breath and prepare for a **full-scale rollout over the next 6 months.**

To start, we recommend giving access to a limited number of clients to ensure the platform is operating fully in the production phase, and then gradually opening it up to the rest of your clients. Make sure you **decide on your rollout strategy as early as possible!**

Small adjustments will be necessary during the production phase, so ensure you have a strong support team to address any problems with little stress.

On average, **a stabilization period of around two weeks** is needed to ensure everything is running smoothly. The project team should continue to assist during this time. The customer support team will then take the reins to handle any bugs, questions, or change requests.

To maximize user adoption, we recommend **creating training resources** that cover how to use the platform. These can include:

- Videos
- Detailed procedures
- Documentation
- Group training sessions

And do not forget to **integrate a change management strategy** with detailed retrospective planning from the start to guarantee a successful transition.

06.

Conclusion

A source of growth for retailers at their fingertips

Retail is changing, and the less-concentrated B2B sector presents an opportunity for growth in the industry.

Successfully entering this space can be tricky for retailers due to the unique needs of B2B customers across various industries, company sizes, and positions. Still, many retailers have made the leap — it just takes a progressive approach and dedicated efforts.

To do the same, focus on:

Governance and human resources

Creating a dedicated B2B unit, with a specialized team and sales force.

Marketing

Implementing professional accounts with loyalty programs and promote services to B2B targets.

ECommerce and operational management tools tailored to B2B practices

Adopting the proper tools, including a robust B2B eCommerce platform with a headless architecture and a SaaS structure, a website and/or app, tools for invoice generation and expenditure management, etc.

Retailers, you have the expertise to expand into a new space. With the right technologies and strategies, the transition to B2B is within your reach!

Meet the authors

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