

7 tips to advance your digital strategy and drive sales with B2B eCommerce

COVID has accelerated the adoption of digital technology and eCommerce is now mainstream for wholesale buyers and sellers



“Companies with great digital capabilities are taking market share during the COVID-19 crisis.”

IAN HELLER
DIGITAL STRATEGY GROUP

To drive sales, improve your competitiveness, and provide better service you need a digital strategy that works. In 2020, B2B eCommerce is on course to grow by 10% even while distributor total sales are declining. At Second Phase, our clients saw their online revenue grow by 33% during March and April alone.

Now is the time to advance your digital strategy.

In this article, Second Phase shares 7 tips:

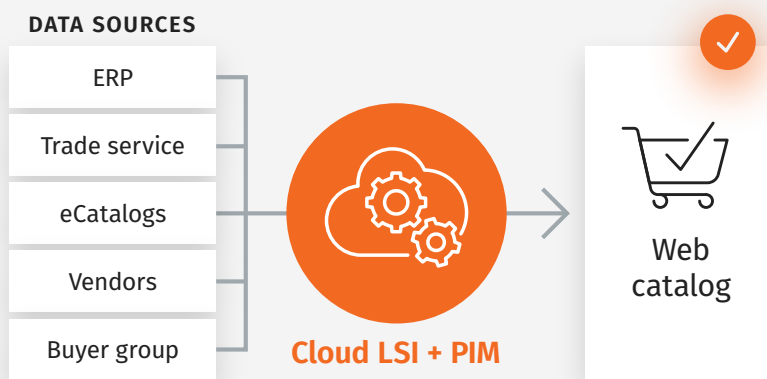
1. Make yourself more visible. **PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**
2. Provide self-service options. **SUPERIOR B2B AND B2C CAPABILITIES**
3. Deliver a quality omni-channel experience. **ROBUST ERP INTEGRATION**
4. Use a turnkey solution. **SCALABILITY**
5. Optimize reordering. **MOBILE APP**
6. Streamline invoicing. **BILLTRUST EIC**
7. Leverage shared resources. **IMARK, TRADE SERVICE**

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Make your products more discoverable WITH PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (PIM)

Inconsistent, missing, or inaccurate product data will keep your customers from finding what they're looking for – and new buyers will have trouble finding you at all.

Product Information Management is the most critical requirement for eCommerce success because intuitive access to high quality data is what drives traffic to distributor webstores. A PIM system is the foundation for boosting customer engagement and SEO which is necessary to help grow your business.



The Second Phase PIM provides a single place to manage an unlimited number of product SKUs and enforce quality, standardization, and completion. It synchronizes and indexes data from any source (ERP, Trade Service, eCatalogs, vendors, buyer group content, etc.), and updates your web catalog at any frequency and without needing translating. Product attributes and relationships are discovered automatically for intelligent search and users are able to drill down from category pages, filter based on attributes and search with the help of auto-fill.

You can further increase the discoverability of products with AI-based product recommendations, substitutes and 'typically bought together' items based on real-time buyer behavior.

1. "3 insights that will help you serve today's B2B buyer." *Think with Google*. May 2018.

2. "It's time to go beyond B2B ecommerce 1.0." *Digital Commerce 360*. Nov 2019.



Webstores are not just for purchasing—more than 90% of B2B buyers start with online research.¹ 67% of B2B purchases are influenced by digital research. By 2021, it is estimated that 55% of B2B buyers will complete half of their work purchases online.²

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Provide self-service options

WITH SUPERIOR B2B AND B2C CAPABILITIES

“Make sure your sales team understands the value in enabling B2B eCommerce technology rather than seeing it as a threat, be fair with how you handle the commission process and set up incentives for reps to step customers through the process.”

DAN HIBBERT
VICE PRESIDENT
HIBBERT INTERNATIONAL

If you are using paper catalogs, taking orders manually or fielding phone calls, then you’re losing opportunities. B2B buyers now use webstores to engage with distributors and to make repeat orders online at their convenience. To stay competitive, distributors need to give buyers the option to self-serve or risk losing them to Amazon, national distributors or local competitors that can meet this demand.

B2C Wholesale buyers are increasingly tech-savvy and are familiar with navigation conventions and user experiences for placing orders. They expect the ease-of-use to be on par with shopping for personal goods. Webstores with enhanced content make it easier for them to find what they need.

B2B B2B buying is often more complex. To make a purchase, buyers need to deal with multiple people and approvals, configure products, solicit bids, check real-time stock levels, etc. Your site must be another sales channel for your organization.

The Second Phase platform presents a consistently high quality omni-channel buying experience. Additionally, your sales reps are given the tools to assist customers with complex project configurations from anywhere, so they spend less time manually entering orders or performing routine catalog searches.

Second Phase’s eCommerce solutions relieve sales reps of the headache of simple searches and reorders.



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Deliver a quality omni-channel experience

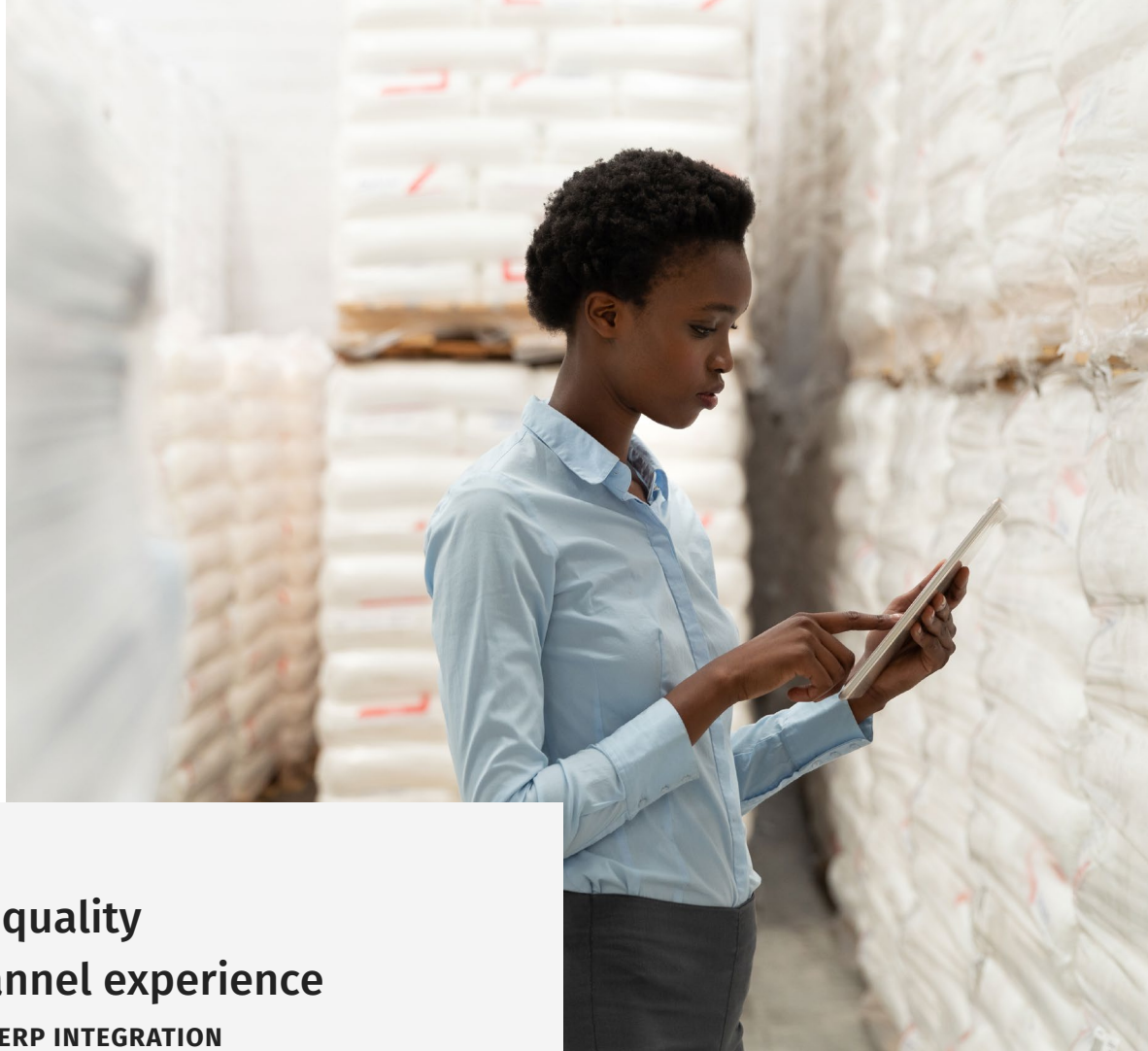
WITH ROBUST ERP INTEGRATION

Wholesalers often struggle to serve both traditional and digital channels equally. Both buyers and employees can get frustrated if they run into inconsistent pricing and inventory, out of date information and poorly formatted data.

Seamless ERP integration reduces costs by minimizing errors, shortening the order fulfillment cycle and providing consistent 24/7 visibility into stock, order history and accurate customer-specific pricing. All updates to product information and categorization in your ERP are instantly made available online.

SECOND PHASE ERP INTEGRATION BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Complex pricing (quotes, invoices, promotions, reorders and volume discounts)
- Order history including open bids, backorders, monthly statements
- Real time inventory
- Remote sales management — your sales team leveraging the webstore
- Job account management



“We needed a fresh start with a solution that gave us a platform to grow on and was fully integrated with our Eclipse ERP system. Our customers expect to be able to go online, see their account information and our available inventory in real-time and place orders electronically.”

STEPHANIE KUNTZ
MARKETING SPECIALIST
PALMER-DONAVIN

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“I’ve talked to distribution executives who think they can keep customer revenue coming in through other channels even if their website is bad. Increasingly, customers are simply buying from competitors instead.”

IAN HELLER
DIGITAL STRATEGY GROUP

Scale rapidly and maintain your site easily

WITH A TURNKEY SOLUTION

Underinvesting in eCommerce often backfires. Trying to maintain or host your own hardware and software or tying together disparate 3rd party applications can make it difficult to resolve issues or receive good tech support – and may require licensing with multiple software providers.

Second Phase provides the only cost effective all-in-one, highly configurable B2B/B2C eCommerce, PIM, and Mobile App solution designed for distributors and manufacturers. Our solution is complete, cost effective and integrates with your existing infrastructure.

Additionally, Second Phase clients receive unlimited, responsive support and ongoing consultation to maximize the long-term success of your webstore.

Read the blog: [Why turnkey works best](#)

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Optimize reordering

WITH QUICK-BUY AND A MOBILE APP

Distributors benefit from offering their customers the ability to place and pay for orders 24/7 while minimizing physical contact.

Second Phase webstores and mobile app provide the same capabilities, including:

- Quickbuy (project BOM based procurement)
- Quickpad (part ID based reorder)
- Punchout
- Purchase file imports
- Reorder pad
- Product configurators (integrated manufacturer product selection tools)

The mobile app is ideal for scanning barcodes, searching by voice, viewing a map of nearby branches and receiving push notifications.

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Streamline invoicing WITH AR AUTOMATION

Distributors will benefit by giving their customers the ability to view and pay their invoices online.

Billtrust accounts receivable automation tools will save you and your customers time and money. They leverage invoicing data within your ERP to deliver invoices (and get you paid) faster.

"We wanted to offer an easy way for customers to pay invoices online and track the payments within our ERP. We also wanted to implement credit card processing fees and surcharging. Second Phase with Billtrust helped us accomplish all three of these things."

CINDY VOLLMER
CREDIT MANAGER
PALMER-DONAVIN

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Leverage shared resources WITH BUYING GROUP BENEFITS

Utilizing the shared benefits of your Buying Group can augment the success of your webstore. Rich product data/attributes for unlimited SKUs depending on your industry have been developed for specific buying groups, including IMARK Group.

Second Phase partners with premier buying groups to include pre-packaged data sets that make updating vast quantities of complex data easier.

"The collective purchasing clout the buying/marketing groups offer puts independents on a level playing field in pricing."³

MIKE AND STEVE BLAZER

3. "The Thrill of the Game: Blazer Electric Reborn." Electrical Wholesaling. Jan 2010.

Second Phase brings all of our technological power and know-how to help provide our customers with success. With more than 18 years of experience serving distributors and manufacturers exclusively, our solutions enable our clients to drive sales, improve competitiveness and provide better service.

Call 303-582-9326 or email secondphase@billtrust.com.