

# How to Find Your Perfect Partner.

7 questions to ask when you're selecting a solution provider for your next B2B eCommerce project.



# Find the perfect match for your eCommerce needs.

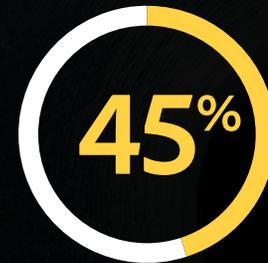
You've chosen your B2B eCommerce platform, and now you need help with implementation. Or maybe you need help with platform selection, too. Either way, you need to find a qualified solution partner.

A good solution partner can help you refine your requirements, choose a platform, and get it all done in record time. They may even provide helpful business and change management advice. But a partner that's not a

good fit for your business can add complexity and cost to an already challenging process.

A thoughtful selection process should minimize the risk and maximize the rewards of working with a partner.

**This eBook covers 7 things you should consider when choosing a solution partner for your next B2B eCommerce project.**



**of B2B companies surveyed by Forrester said finding an appropriate solution partner was "extremely" or "very" challenging.<sup>1</sup>**

Asking the right questions can make finding the perfect match both faster and easier.

<sup>1</sup>"What It Takes to be Leader in B2B eCommerce," Forrester Research, June 2018. The survey included 302 B2B companies in five countries (US, UK, Germany, China, and Australia).



## What you should know before you talk to solution partners

Before you talk to solution partners, you should have a clear understanding of what you need. This means having a realistic set of requirements, including the features that are must haves, nice to haves, and have later.

This kind of information will allow solution partners to match your requirements to their capabilities and accurately price your project.

## 1 Do they know your market and your business?

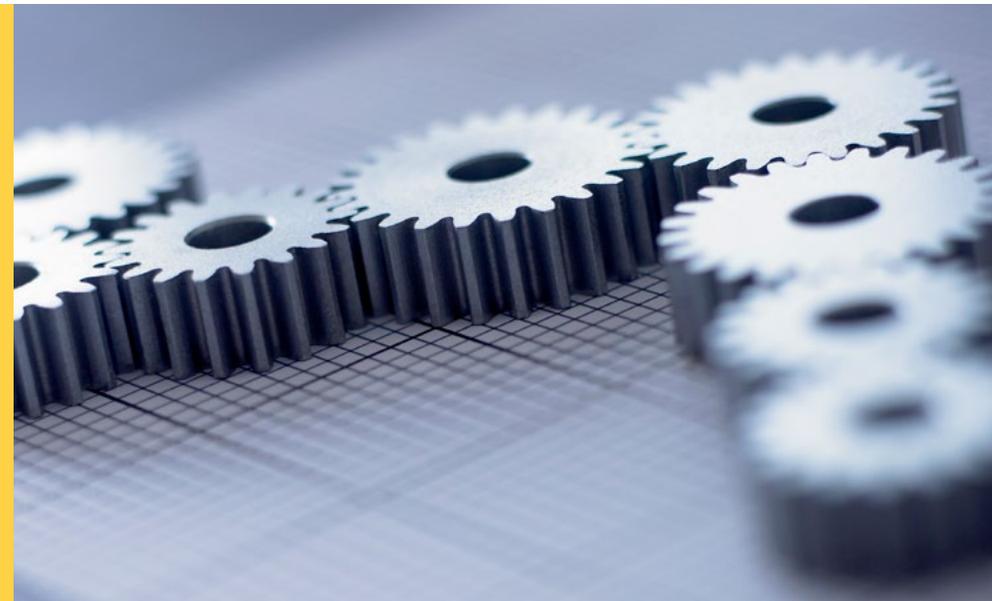
Some solution partners are generalists while others dive deeper into a specific niche. However, any solution partner you consider should have some understanding of your market and your business. This is especially important for B2B commerce, which is more complex than consumer-focused retail.

Ideally, every solution partner you consider should already have some customers in or adjacent to your industry. If their customers include your competitors, though, you may need to look at their NDA.

Every solution partner you consider should already have some customers in or adjacent to your industry, and a minimum of 20 or so B2B successes.

## 2 Do they have a portfolio of successful B2B eCommerce sites?

There is no substitute for real-life examples. While some NDAs require partners to stay silent about their work, a successful solution partner should have some examples to show off. And you should be able to take a deep dive into reference projects and speak to reference clients. In general, a qualified B2B solution partner should have a minimum of 20 or so B2B successes—and, ideally, a lot more.



### 3 Will they be available when, where, and how you need them?

Depending on how your team works, you may be more comfortable with a solution partner that has teams based in your time zone and/or staff who speak your local language. You may want a dedicated contact for phone calls. Or you may want someone available during certain hours on Slack or Skype.

There is no right answer to this question, only what works best for your team. But the good news is that today's collaboration technologies make working across time zones a lot easier. For example, Slack clearly displays each team member's time zone as well as their local time.

### 4 What do their other clients look like? Are they bigger or smaller than you?

Solution partners often have a customer "sweet spot." Some specialize in large mid-market and enterprise clients. Others specialize in smaller, more nimble organizations.

Ideally, your partner should be used to working with businesses about your size. If you are bigger than their other clients, you may need assurance that your solution partner can handle your demands. If you're smaller than their other clients, you may need assurance that you will not be deprioritized in favor of "bigger fish."

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## 5 How much do they outsource?

Outsourcing is an integral part of business today. But outsourcing can add an extra layer of complexity and risk to your project. The more your solution partner outsources, the less they control—and the longer it may take them to respond to issues.

## 6 What development process do they use?

There are many different development processes in use today. Popular options include Agile, CI/CD, and Waterfall, all of which can produce excellent results. However, it's important to ask your solution partner why they chose the methodology they use. And you'll definitely want to bring your IT department and internal project manager into this discussion.

### Is Agile really better?

Agile is a very popular development process. And some data suggests that it really is better. According to an analysis of more than 50,000 IT projects, Agile projects are twice as likely to succeed as—and 1/3 less likely to fail than—Waterfall projects.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>CHAOS study 2013-17, The Standish Group.

## 7 What does the pricing model look like?

Options include fixed price, hourly pricing, or on-site hires. The best pricing option will depend on the complexity of your project and your tolerance for risk. Often, B2B projects can be more expensive because the underlying business logic is more complex. You may want to take a phased approach to development and invoicing in order to space out payments over time. That approach will be easier to manage if you already have a

solid understanding of your overall requirements and have sorted your must haves from your nice to haves.

The bottom line? Your solution partner should work with you to select the best option. And they should be willing to talk with your procurement department and provide any information required.

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### GOT SOLUTION PARTNERS?

**Magento has one of the largest networks of eCommerce solution partners.**

When you choose Magento Commerce, you will have many solution partners to choose from. The Magento network includes more than 350 partners worldwide who work with companies of all sizes.

[Learn more >](#)



## ABOUT MAGENTO

Magento, an Adobe company, is a leading provider of cloud commerce innovation to merchants and brands across B2C and B2B industries and was recently named a leader in the 2018 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce. In addition to its flagship digital commerce platform, Magento boasts a strong portfolio of cloud-based omnichannel solutions that empower merchants to successfully integrate digital and physical shopping

experiences. Magento is the #1 provider to the Internet Retailer Top 1000, the B2B 300, and the Top 500 Guides for Europe and Latin America. Magento is supported by a vast global network of solution and technology partners, a highly active global developer community, and the largest eCommerce marketplace for extensions, all available for download on the Magento Marketplace.

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