

BRINGING B2C PERSONALIZATION TO B2B BUYERS



The Top Way to Deliver a B2C Shopping Experience Without
Sacrificing B2B-Specific Purchasing Needs

“Consumerization” of B2B eCommerce is a hot topic. Increasingly, corporate buyers are bringing expectations honed in their off-duty shopping lives to work—and that means B2B companies are awakening to the challenges long faced by their B2C colleagues, such as competition from the Amazon juggernaut, online price transparency, and demand for round-the-clock convenience.

In response to these changing expectations, B2B suppliers face a long list of existing B2C eCommerce best practices to implement—from social media customer service to responsive design on mobile devices to product reviews and ratings. Simply finding where to begin the B2C-style shopping transformation can be its own challenge.

Thankfully, there’s a single top priority that helps determine the others: personalization. Research shows that shoppers now expect online shopping experiences to reflect their priorities: more than half of consumers say they expect brands to recognize them across touchpoints, from the store to the mobile device to the eCommerce site and back again, and say they buy more from merchants whose offers take into account past purchases and interactions (both online and offline).¹

By adopting best practices from B2C merchants who use data on shopper behavior and knowledge of the customer lifecycle to inform which products, offers, site tools, and services are most relevant to individual visitors, B2B suppliers can more accurately develop their B2C-style offerings to match customers’ needs.

To take full advantage of personalization, B2B merchants should first ensure they have a firm foundation: a best-in-class eCommerce platform that offers both cutting-edge B2C-style features and key B2B functions, such as flexible payment options—along with the ability to tap real-time insights into customer behavior, to better hone the relevance of offers and products on display.

Armed with these tools, B2B sellers can start offering a personalized site experience by focusing on:



New online prospects. Whether they’re loyal offline customers making the leap to online ordering or buyers new to the B2B brand, potential first-time customers will be bolstered by comprehensive product content and self-service features.



Ready buyers. In the moment of purchase, prominent, flexible, and easy-to-use payment options tailored toward B2B buyers are paramount, as is ready access to live help across touchpoints.



Return customers. Veterans of a B2B seller’s eCommerce site don’t need to be convinced to use it all over again; they just want to accomplish their purchases efficiently. Sites that prioritize reordering tools and shortcuts for this segment will earn lasting loyalty.

By tailoring experiences for these audience segments and applying the latest advances in predictive merchandising to each, B2B sellers lay a strong foundation for future “consumerization” efforts.

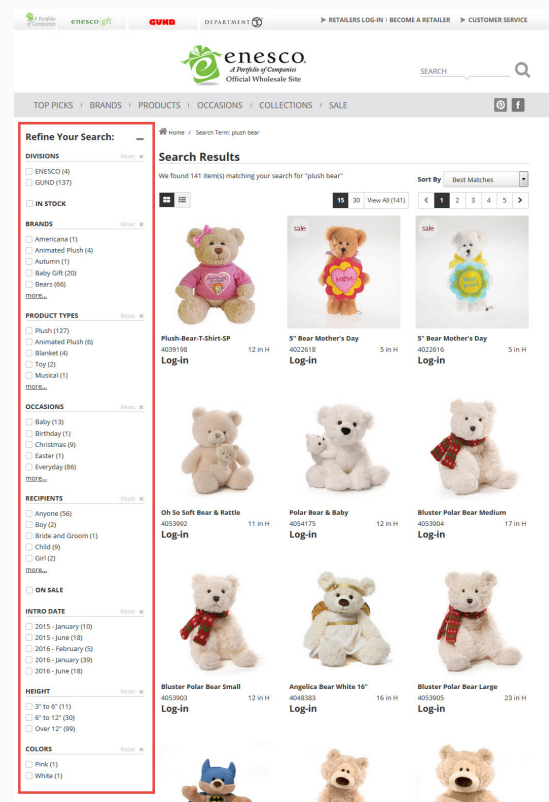


NEW ONLINE BUYERS: SHOWCASING BREADTH, EXPERTISE, AND FLEXIBILITY WITH CONTENT

When it comes to encouraging new online purchasing, B2B sellers must demonstrate an authoritative grasp of buyers’ needs, as well as showcase the breadth and depth of relevant product offerings—and price points. Among the B2C best practices to adopt for this audience:

► Efficient product discovery with robust on-site search.

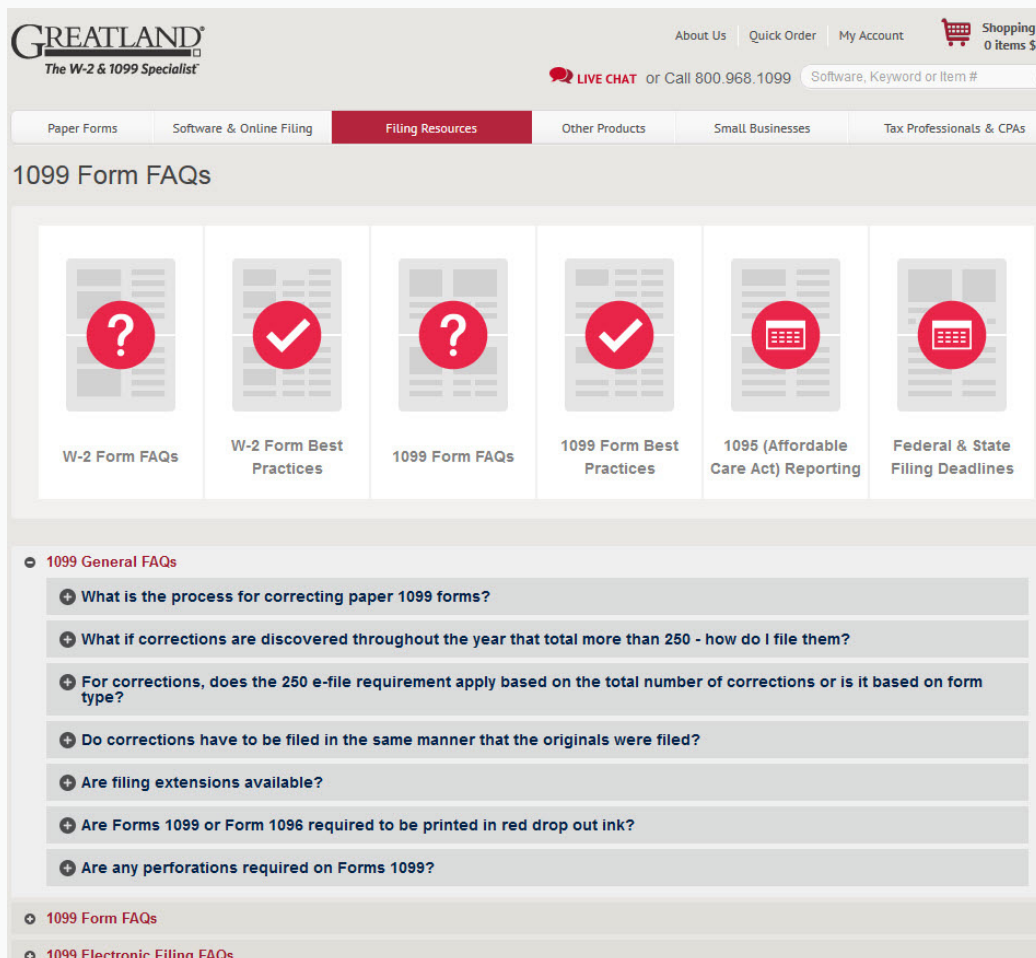
B2C merchants have been steadily refining on-site search to heighten visibility of “long-tail” products and expanded SKU options. B2B suppliers should adopt faceted search that enables visitors to filter results sets quickly based on individual product attributes—and go further by ensuring searches by part number and manufacturer number. The ability to locate the products B2B buyers seek is a key differentiator, with 53 percent saying they’d be willing to switch to a supplier that offered better search capabilities.²



KIBO B2B MERCHANT ENESCO PROVIDES A CROSS-BRAND SEARCH FUNCTION THAT ENABLES BUYERS TO FILTER RESULTS BY A WIDE RANGE OF ATTRIBUTES, FROM COLOR TO BRAND TO THE DATE THE PRODUCT WAS INTRODUCED. SUGGESTED SEARCH FUNCTIONALITY EXTENDS TO PRODUCT NUMBERS, LISTING THE NAMES AS WELL AS THE NUMBERS OF THOSE PRODUCTS POTENTIALLY MATCHING WHAT’S BEING TYPED.

- ▶ **Comprehensive product and self-service content.** If 53 percent of corporate purchasers say they want to look up information online prior to purchase³, B2B sellers must accommodate with comprehensive B2C-style content. In addition to robust product information—including multiple images and detailed specs—B2B sellers should continue “Q and A” content, customer service information such as product guarantees, and buying guides, such as Kibo B2B merchant Greatland’s expert FAQs on filing 1099 forms.

To accommodate this variety of content, B2B suppliers must elevate their online eCommerce game to incorporate not only product information pulled from a catalog or database, but also free-form supplemental content, along with the ability to integrate content types across the eCommerce website.



- ▶ **Counter-intuitive product recommendations.** While most B2C sites incorporate cross-sells and “good/better/best” promotional strategies to drive order totals higher, B2B merchants need to demonstrate their understanding of purchasers’ cost constraints by suggesting lower-priced items when appropriate. This “down-buying,” as technology researcher Forrester calls it⁴, can put procurement managers’ minds at ease and convince them to approve broader use of the B2B vendor’s eCommerce offerings. B2B sellers should fine-tune recommendation engines to provide savvy product alternatives in addition to the usual cross-sells that feature complementary or accessory items.

- ▶ **Mobile apps—and policies—to enable B2B sales rep success.** Existing loyal customers who've previously bought offline are a ripe potential eCommerce audience. If 38 percent of B2B sellers agree that customers spend more after migrating to online, and nearly half agree that those customers are more likely to become repeat buyers than offline-only customers⁵, B2B sellers can reduce sales and support costs by moving previously offline customers online.

To cater to this potential audience, B2B merchants should devise policies and incentives that reward sales reps for enabling transitions to the eCommerce site and provide bespoke mobile tools to support the journey. B2C-style point-of-sale apps retooled for B2B purchasing can provide sales reps with access to a customer's order history across touchpoints, their frequently-ordered items, and authorization and payment information.



READY BUYERS: DEMONSTRATING FLEXIBILITY TO CLOSE THE SALE

Once visitors move from research mode to buying intent, B2B sellers must demonstrate their ability to accommodate buyers' business requirements surrounding purchase authorization, payment, and fulfillment. To do so, B2B merchants must diverge significantly from the B2C playbook to accommodate a complex array of factors. Among them:

- ▶ **Roles and approvals.** Different employees within a customer organization may browse, select, approve, and submit orders, requiring B2B sellers to integrate user permissions and workflows into their account management tools.
- ▶ **Expanded payment options.** In addition to credit cards and alternative payment methods such as Paypal which are B2C staples, B2B sellers must enable purchase orders, lines of credit, and check payments.
- ▶ **Personalized pricing.** Customers may receive price breaks based on volume purchasing in the past, or may be eligible for regional or other targeted discounts.

While the B2B payment process may not resemble a straightforward B2C eCommerce checkout, B2B sellers can still adopt B2C best practices when it comes to messaging payment flexibility. Leading B2C merchants treat key customer service features like a top product, and B2B sellers should follow suit, spotlighting the array of payment and fulfillment options they provide throughout the eCommerce site experience—not just at checkout. Visibility of payment options is especially critical given the importance of payment flexibility for B2B buyers, 49 percent of whom said they'd switch suppliers to access better online payment options.⁶

Furthermore, B2B sellers should follow B2C merchants' lead when it comes to supporting these processes with robust customer service information and prominent access to live help – both in the form of a call center phone number, which should be click-to-call-enabled on mobile devices, and a link to live chat agents. Live chat is an increasingly popular option, with 46 percent of U.S. online adults using it in the past year.⁷

KIBO MERCHANT IDVILLE DEVOTES CONSIDERABLE HOME PAGE SPACE TO PROMOTING ITS CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFERINGS, INCLUDING THE AVAILABILITY OF EXPERT ADVICE, FREE AND FULL LIFETIME SUPPORT, AND PAYMENT FINANCING. “THE IDVILLE ADVANTAGE” IS THEN PROMOTED ON EACH PRODUCT PAGE IN A MORE CONCISE FORMAT THAT LINKS TO RELEVANT CUSTOMER SERVICE PAGES.

The IDVILLE Advantage

Expert Advice

Friendly staff & dependable service

- Talk to a real person within 15 seconds - no recordings!
- FREE and full technical support for life of your printer - we originated the idea, and stand by that promise today!
- Our company has been providing ID products to companies like yours for over 30 years!



Latest Technology

Security meets functionality

Use your ID Maker system for a variety of functions such as visitor ID Badges, access control, loyalty and checkout systems... and more! IDville provides everything you need to keep your building safe and secure.

Superior Products

Full range of ID solutions

- All the accessories you need to wear IDs
- Badge reels, lanyards, badge holders
- Visitor ID solutions, office signage, and printer supplies

Free & Full Lifetime Support

You'll always reach a live person when you need assistance. No time limits, no fine print!

Free Hot Swap Protection Plan

If your ID Maker printer ever needs repair, we will send you a loaner printer of the same model or better right away

Financing Available

We make your investment as easy and cost-effective as possible

30 Day Guarantee

We know you'll love our products and we back them with a satisfaction guarantee

Same-Day Shipping

Is standard at IDville!



RETURNING CUSTOMERS: FOCUS ON SHORTCUTS

B2B prospects who become online buyers should be rewarded for their business with relevant targeted messaging that alerts them to discounts on replenishment items and potentially relevant additional products, along with time-saving shortcuts once they're ready to buy again. Efficiency is of premium importance for B2B buyers, 61 percent of whom say they'd increase their online spending budget if it were easier and more convenient to make purchases on the Web.⁸

Among the ways merchants should satisfy B2B buyers' hunger for helpful shortcuts:

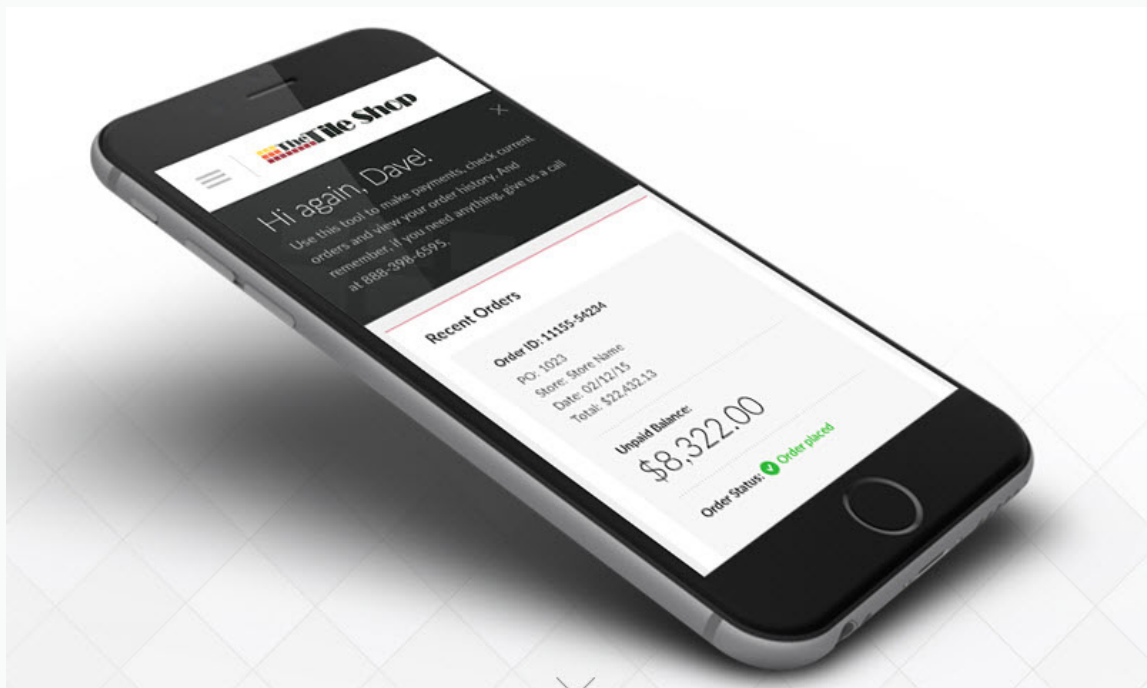
- **Personalized messaging with a focus on replenishment and value.** B2B suppliers should calendar purchase-triggered promotions that remind buyers when it's time to stock up again and alert them to price drops on previously-ordered items. These messages should be available both in email and SMS format, given that 22 percent of all traffic to B2B websites is set to originate on mobile devices this year, according to Forrester.⁹

- ▶ **eCommerce site shortcuts for reordering.** Returning customers' view of B2B eCommerce sites should prominently display features such as access to past order history, saved product lists, "quick search" features, management of multiple-user permissions and purchase authorizations, and other shortcuts to facilitate account management and re-orders.
- ▶ **Mobile tools to boost re-engagement on the road.** B2B suppliers should enable eCommerce platform features such as responsive design and app support in order to give B2B buyers access to order histories and other account information via mobile devices. The ability to look up previously-ordered items and billing information on the go is especially crucial for those customers responsible for procurement across multiple locations within their companies.

THE WEBSITE FOR B2B SUPPLIER GRAINGER INCORPORATES A "BULK ORDER PAD" IN THE GLOBAL HEADER, ENABLING BUYERS TO ENTER SEVERAL ITEM NUMBERS AND ADD THEM TO THE CART IN A BATCH. ON-SITE SEARCH RESULTS ADDITIONALLY ENABLE CUSTOMERS TO FILTER RESULTS SO THAT THEY ONLY SEE WHICH ITEMS THEY'VE PREVIOUSLY ORDERED.

The screenshot displays the Grainger website's search results for "solo cups". The header includes the Grainger logo, navigation links (General Catalog, Find A Branch, Services, Solutions, Worldwide), and user options (Sign Up for Email, Feedback, Help, Español). The search bar shows "solo cups" with a "SEARCH" button. Below the search bar, a breadcrumb trail reads: Furniture, Hospitality and Food Service | Food Service Disposables and Dispensers | Disposable Cups. The left sidebar shows filter results by keyword "solo cups" and a list of product categories like "Disposable Cold Cup (35)". The main content area is titled "DISPOSABLE CUPS" and shows "8 Results Found that include 79 Products in Disposable Cups with 1 filter applied". A red box highlights the "View Previously Purchased Products Only" checkbox, which is checked. Below this, the results are sorted by "Best Match" and show a product "SOLO CUP Disposable Cup" with a price range of \$141.55-\$253.50. A "VIEW ALL 2 PRODUCTS" button is visible. At the bottom, there are links for "Expand to Compare" and "Quick View Most Popular Products".

KIBO MERCHANT THE TILE SHOP OFFERS MEMBERS OF ITS PRO NETWORK A FULLY RESPONSIVE WEBSITE, PRO MY ACCOUNT, THAT GIVES THEM MOBILE ACCESS TO THEIR ORDER HISTORY, PAYMENT INFORMATION, AND ORDER STATUS – INCLUDING WHETHER OR NOT ITEMS ARE READY FOR PICKUP AT THEIR DESIGNATED SHOWROOM. THE SERVICE IS SUPPORTED BY INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS ON THE FLAGSHIP ECOMMERCE SITE THAT EXPLAIN THE PROGRAM AND ITS FEATURES.



CONCLUSION: FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE TO ACHIEVE B2B SUCCESS

Becoming a nimble online competitor is a steep challenge for many B2B businesses. Fortunately, there is retail technology on the market today that can solve many traditional B2B challenges. By finding an eCommerce provider that offers B2B and B2C in a single engine, you gain the power of a B2C shopping experience without sacrificing all necessary B2B features and functionality.

By prioritizing personalization, attuning their offerings to the customer lifecycle and utilizing nimble retail technology, B2B sellers can not only reap immediate rewards in terms of revenues, they can also inform their future eCommerce priorities, thereby ensuring continuing relevance to their audience and setting the stage for long-term growth and customer loyalty.

¹E-Tailing Group and MyBuys, "Consistent Personalization Everywhere Consumers Shop," February 2015, <http://www.e-tailing.com/content/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/7th-Annual-Personalization-eBook-MyBuys-and-e-tailing-group.pdf>

²Accenture Interactive, "2014 State of B2B Procurement Study: Uncovering the Shifting Landscape in B2B Commerce," June 2014, <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-state-b2b-procurement-study-uncovering-shifting-landscape>

³Forrester Research, "Death of a (B2B) Salesman," April 2015, <https://www.forrester.com/Death+Of+A+B2B+Salesman/fulltext/-/E-RES122288>

⁴Forrester Research, "Deliver Four Capabilities To Resolve The Buyer/Seller Conflict Within B2B eCommerce," December 2014, <https://www.forrester.com/report/Deliver+Four+Capabilities+To+Resolve+The+BuyerSeller+Conflict+Within+B2B+eCommerce/-/E-RES113445>

⁵Forrester Research, "The Case for Channel Shifting Offline Customers Online," June 2015, <https://www.forrester.com/report/The+Case+For+ChannelShiftin+g+Offline+Customers+Online/-/E-RES93421?objectid=RES93421>

⁶Accenture Interactive, "2014 State of B2B Procurement Study: Uncovering the Shifting Landscape in B2B Commerce," June 2014, <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-state-b2b-procurement-study-uncovering-shifting-landscape>

⁷Forrester Research, "Brief: Don't Make Your Customers Call You For Service," May 2016, <https://www.forrester.com/report/Brief+Dont+Make+Your+Customers+Call+You+For+Service/-/E-RES134006#reference4>

⁸Accenture Interactive, "2014 State of B2B Procurement Study: Uncovering the Shifting Landscape in B2B Commerce," June 2014, <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insight-state-b2b-procurement-study-uncovering-shifting-landscape>

⁹Forrester, "Digital Is Busy Transforming B2B Commerce," August 2015, <https://www.forrester.com/report/The+New+And+Emerging+World+Of+B2B+Commerce/-/E-RES90701>



THE UNIFIED OMNICHANNEL COMMERCE SOLUTIONS OF MARKETLIVE, SHOPATRON AND FIVERUN

Kibo is the strategic merger of industry leaders, Marketlive, Shopatron, and Fiverun. With a combined 40 years of innovations, we're joining forces to help retailers and branded manufacturers unify the consumer experience. Kibo is a complete omnichannel commerce platform, delivering the lowest total cost of ownership and the fastest time to market. With predictive technologies and enterprise performance, we can help you achieve increased sales. No matter the challenge, Kibo powers your success.

ECOMMERCE

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ORDER MANAGEMENT

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MOBILE POINT OF COMMERCE

- Save the Sale and Endless Aisle
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