

# THE 5 BIGGEST DOWNSIDES OF OUTDATED B2B ECOMMERCE SOLUTIONS

eCommerce has revolutionized how B2B buyers place orders in manufacturing and distribution. However, many distributors—particularly those using custom-built solutions or outdated eCommerce platforms—are struggling to meet rising buyer expectations in today’s on-demand economy.

With a dated aesthetic and a lack of key eCommerce features common in B2C, many of these solutions simply do not allow manufacturers and distributors to provide a modern ordering experience that their buyers want to use.

Here are the 5 biggest downsides of outdated B2B eCommerce solutions:

1

## LIMITED B2B SELLING FEATURES

The B2B ordering process is defined by unique characteristics, such as high-volume ordering, repeat orders, and customer-specific pricing. Many prevailing online ordering solutions lack the B2B-specific features suppliers need. A thoughtfully-designed user experience is the biggest factor driving software adoption, and an eCommerce platform not optimized for B2B selling often goes unused.

2

## AN INFERIOR DIGITAL CATALOG

While a digital catalog without images may be unheard of in the B2C world, many outdated B2B eCommerce portals provide only a list of text without any product photos. Some don’t even allow room for comprehensive product descriptions. In essence, it is like interacting with nothing but a glorified order form. A sub-par catalog doesn’t answer the questions that buyers have when making purchasing decisions, and requires the buyer to contact the supplier’s back office team for information and clarification.

3

## LACK OF ACCESS TO IMPORTANT DATA

In addition to providing detailed product information in the digital catalog, it’s also important to provide B2B buyers with access to their order history, particularly because recurring reorders characterize B2B buying in manufacturing and distribution. Many B2B eCommerce solutions in manufacturing and distribution today provide only limited access to order history or none at all. Product inventory availability, data that buyers are accustomed to seeing in the B2C buying environment, is also often missing from prevailing B2B eCommerce solutions, greatly increasing the risk of backorders.



## A POOR MOBILE EXPERIENCE

Most B2B commerce platforms available today are dramatically lacking when it comes to mobile ordering, providing an experience that's a far cry from their counterparts in B2C. For one, many distributors haven't taken advantage of consumer mobile phones and tablets, requiring customers to place orders instead with "brick-on-a-stick" barcode scanners. In cases where mobile ordering is accessible on a smartphone, it is often just a portal accessed via a mobile web browser, requiring a reliable Internet connection. Native mobile applications, on the other hand, are installed on the device, functional offline, and provide a superior mobile ordering experience.



## STAGNATION AND INFLEXIBILITY

Current B2B eCommerce solutions feel outdated for good reason: they are. Many prevailing B2B eCommerce solutions were developed years—even decades—ago. And because upgrading this software or integrating new features is often cost prohibitive, updates are infrequent at best. This stagnant approach has made it difficult for many manufacturers and distributors to meet the growing expectations of their customers and has led many companies to turn to SaaS (Software-as-a-Service) solutions as a way to keep pace with rapid advancements in technology.

Ultimately, manufacturers and distributors are finding that their outdated commerce solutions don't meet their needs, losing business to competitors offering a more modern buyer experience. To learn more about updating your outdated commerce software and providing an exceptional B2B buyer experience for your customers, contact Handshake today at [info@handshake.com](mailto:info@handshake.com) or 855-532-9044 (+1-646-434-2553 intl).

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## ABOUT HANDSHAKE

Handshake provides the B2B Commerce platform for manufacturers and distributors that powers standout ordering experiences both in-person and on-line. Companies using Handshake transform their sales effectiveness and drive operational efficiency, delighting customers and growing lasting relationships.

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