

## **Tips & Tricks for a Successful Ecommerce Integration**

### **1. Abstract**

### **2. Introduction**

### **3. Find 'Where You Are'**

### **4. Internal Factors That Work Out**

- *Grab the right team*
- *Acquire support and executive buy-ins from stakeholders*
- *User-friendliness*
- *Prioritize and fix the issues*

### **5. Backend Integration**

### **6. Steps to Success**

- *Closely observe your business*
- *Data Synchronization*
- *Accomplish automatic interactions*

### **7. Conclusion**

### **8. References**

## **1. Abstract**

The advent of mobile and internet technology have led organizations today to take advantage of the world-wide consumer market by means of ecommerce integration. Ecommerce integration emerged as an alternate to traditional model of doing business where purchases and transactions are all done manually. Ecommerce oriented approach helps customers to easily make purchases and manage transactions without needing to rely on human support or contact. This paper illustrates the steps one got to pursue in order to accomplish successful ecommerce integration.

## **2. Introduction**

Ecommerce integration is defined as the processing of orders and financial transactions by using a website in substitute for a traditional model of performing business. The concept is actually a combination of both local and online practices. Now-a-days most of the companies incorporate the ecommerce method of showing customers the products and services which are available for purchase. Though a majority of business practices and administration are handled by live staff, the vital part of review and purchasing is wholly handled by an automated computer based system. The primary benefit of using an ecommerce system is, companies can become more customer-focused and spend more time working with their clients, promoting new offers and building fresh developments, while the functions like inventory, distribution and billing are all handled by the ecommerce system. Small businesses, in order to stay at the peak of responsibilities, it is quite important to sell products quickly and effectively using ecommerce integration.

## **3. Find 'Where You Are'**

With ecommerce terrains changing rapidly, drifts are being witnessed in consumer expectations, social networks and multiple sales channels. These days, the consumers of mobile and tablets have made e-retailers stay awake for 24X7. A recent report by Forrester says that mobile transactions will reach 31 billion dollars by 2016. Today, tablets generate a pretty satisfying portion of total website visits. A research done by Adobe® says that tablet visitors are three times more likely to make a purchase online when compared to smartphone visitors. Also, tablet visitors, on an average spend 50% more per purchase than smartphone visitors. These scenarios indicate that tablet sales will obscure laptop sales by 2015. Studies say that 30% of consumers make purchases by using more than three commerce channels to research an item. Additionally, a survey by The Nielson Company discloses that 60% of consumers reach a particular brand or retailer site by means of social media networks.

On observing all the above mentioned scenarios closely, find out the place where you are staying up currently. Answer yourself whether the current technology platform you're relying upon scales to support systems that are growing exponentially and meet the complex collection of customer touch points. With more number of orders coming into your web store, there are chances that your integration becomes less and the applications get disconnected. This could eventually increase the probability for human errors and delays service managements to the core.

#### **4. Internal Factors that work out**

There are a plenty of internal factors that serves a sizable impact on your integration efforts. Having putting in those factors into the process, scope sneaks and cost overruns can be easily overcome. Illustrated below are few of the internal factors that matter widely in the journey of integrating ecommerce.

- ***Grab the right team***

Building a team that is right in getting the job done right is greatly important. Classify the team members based on the ones who actually deserve to be on the list of stakeholders who involve in the integration planning. Also, consider on them who are well versed in IT and customer support. Apart from that, determine the team with respect to the departments, divisions and business units your business has.

- ***Acquire support and executive buy-ins from Stakeholders***

Once the team has been set off, start working on the momentum on ecommerce integration projects. Gaining and maintaining accord with stakeholders seems to be more difficult without having a visible and practical executive sponsorship. Hence, it becomes enough significant to get executive buy-in and support from all stake holders.

- ***User-friendliness***

Have the human factor in mind while integrating ecommerce to your business. Individuals are generally used to the traditional methods of shopping and hence it is important to design an ecommerce system which is inevitable to human aspects. Take into concern that when you make changes to a current workflow, consider the impact on employees who have been following the same process for years. For sure, they wouldn't be having input to the new process and will not be trained to it.

- ***Prioritize and Fix the issues***

Prior to begin any ecommerce integration activity, it is important to address any poorly written code, weak infrastructure, fuzzy process, hacked up software, faulty shortcuts and poor documentation. Fixing these issues first will certainly not cost you anything.

## **5. Backend integration**

E-businesses generally grow up with a random combination of point products, which are purchased and built independently with factors leading to a consistent, scalable and enterprise architecture. This eventually results in layers of applications which run on different platforms. If your eCommerce business is really a hard-to-go-through thing, then integrating your backend system with social networks and mobile devices will greatly help. E-commerce cross channel technology ecosystems are not at all subjected to easy fixes, plugs and plays. By implementing a service-oriented architecture an excellent connectivity is accomplished over your web store, backend applications, multiple sales channels and trading partners.

Backend integration is a first class opportunity to take into concern your applications and business processes, so that you can make the necessary changes anytime. Legacy applications are purely costly and destructive to your business. Anyhow, ripping off them out suddenly is also not going to work out.

## **6. Steps to Success**

- ***Closely observe your e-business***

A successful ecommerce requires real-time access to product information, customer information and supply chain information. Keenly look at the factors like applications, infrastructure, staffing resources and trading partners. This is the reason why technologies need to be scalable. Another issue can be platform compatibility. Hence make sure that you understand the architecture prior to evaluating the purchase of any new applications and also before integrating existing applications in order to avoid disruption or data loss.

- ***Data Synchronization***

Data synchronization includes data quality and data accuracy. In case if accurate product data is not synchronized between your ERP, order management system, warehouse and trading partners, utmost risk is going to faced on excess inventory, inaccurate pricing, manual reconciliation of invoices and unhappy customers who cannot track the status of their orders. Also, if up to date customer data is not synchronized between your web store, ERP and CRM systems, you won't be able to view order histories and demand the patterns of each customer. This indicates that your opportunity to offer additional product recommendations and personalized promotions will be lost. In order to yield the better results you want, first of all you got to make all necessary improvements to the workflow. Hence, document and test your current workflow processes in the appropriate way before moving forward with the synchronization.

- ***Accomplish automatic interactions***

Automatic interactions are extremely relevant if your current mode of operation is to drag the various elements of information for different people who are responsible for the varying aspects of your ecommerce business. Streamlining the flow of data between systems should be your ultimate goal and consolidating that data by means of a single user interface should be done in a consistent way. There are a number of master data management (MDM) tools to help you centralize all the data into a single user interface. This would provide you up with real time access to the key data that's driving your e-business and help you respond quickly to the changes, reduce costs and improve the customer experience and loyalty.

## **7. Conclusion**

Ecommerce integration is becoming repeatedly significant as people are more into making their shopping on the internet. Industries and organizations using ecommerce integration as a part of their processes include non-profits, health care providers, educational providers, information technology companies, research and development firms, business and networking associations, web design companies and employment agencies. This paper carried out some valuable info on eCommerce integrations and how businesses are cherishing by switching over to an ecommerce based system.

## **8. References**

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