

# **E-commerce Platform Development Guide: Factors and Types to Consider**

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The rapid-changing digital industry has made E-commerce an essential aspect of modern business. As we are moving to the digital world, the E-commerce industry continues to rapidly develop and expand. An E-commerce platform is a special software that allows companies to launch, host, and manage their online store. Such platforms differ in their functions and allow business owners to create an online place to sell their products. Choosing the right E-commerce development platform to build an online store in 2023 is critical for businesses looking to thrive in this competitive environment. E-commerce development companies offer a variety of features, and scalability, serving businesses of all sizes. Read this guide and consider factors such as ease of use, customization, security, and support to make a decision and choose the platform that best suits your unique goals and requirements.



## E-commerce Platform Development Guide: Factors and Types to Consider

Today, with the help of E-commerce platforms, owners of both small and large businesses are creating a place for themselves in the digital world that is developing at a rapid pace.

Online selling has become such a cost-effective, efficient, and popular way to make money that everyone wants a piece of the pie. Experts believe that by 2040 more than 95% of all purchases will be made via the Internet. With more and more shoppers choosing to shop online, there is no better time to set up an online store with the help of an online store builder.

**20.8%**

e-commerce sales are expected to account of retail sales worldwide in 2023

**\$3.5 trillion**

B2C e-commerce marketplaces are estimated in sales by 2024.

**2.14 billion**

shoppers in the world buy items online

**TOP-5**

countries buying online  
1. China  
2. USA  
3. UK  
4. Japan  
5. Sweden

Dozens of different E-commerce development companies on the market offer platforms that vary in features and tools. But all of them are designed to help businessmen succeed in online trading. Whether you're a small business owner looking to expand your customer base, an entrepreneur starting a new venture, or an established retailer looking to grow its online presence, E-commerce platforms always come in handy. With a wide selection of the best E-commerce platforms today, you can choose the one that best suits your needs. But without understanding the platforms, business owners are often looking for options with low prices. Unfortunately, when their company grows and develops, they notice that the chosen system does not allow scaling.

And this leads to costly and time-consuming migration. But how to choose the right platform for your business and why is it important not to make a mistake?

## Factors to Consider When Choosing an E-commerce Platform

Before choosing an E-commerce platform, there are many essential factors to consider. For example, you must evaluate your business goals as well as the needs of your potential customers. The most important thing is not to rush into a decision. Choosing the right platform can both save you from unnecessary problems and automate your business processes, as well as create additional ones. Different E-commerce platforms vary not only in price but also in the availability of different features, integrations, commissions, and support costs.

Try to take the time to explore what each platform has to offer so you can assess the situation accordingly. In the end, you will be able to decide what is best for your business. Here are a few things to look out for:



### Business goals and objectives

There are many types of E-commerce platforms, from hosted to self-hosted, cloud, mobile, social, subscription, free, and open-source. But you should first consider your business requirements to determine which type of platform best suits your needs.



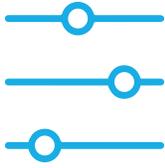
### Budget constraints

Choose the platform that best suits your budget. We advise you to look for opportunities to pay monthly amounts instead of relying on providing a small percentage of the sale of the E-commerce websites development company that hosts your platform.



### Technical requirements

The type and number of features of an E-commerce platform should match the needs of your business. Therefore, it is best to choose a platform that provides a wide range of technical features (e.g. plugins, shipping, product management, analytics, business tools, email marketing options, POS system, etc.). In addition, you can choose to develop a custom solution that will allow you to scale anytime or add a feature needed.



### **Level of customization**

With a modern E-commerce template, your business will stand out from the competitors and impress your customer base with its user interface. No one likes to shop in outdated interfaces. Rather, with a top-notch E-commerce template, you create a memorable interface that matches your brand and makes your site stand out from the rest. Soft Industry Alliance has solid expertise in custom software development using emerging technologies from the first sketch of an idea to the final release. You can see more here.



### **Scalability and growth potential**

Consider scalability, which is the ability of a platform to handle a surge in customers and orders. Assess platform scalability to meet expected growth by considering factors such as cloud infrastructure, load balancing, and caching mechanisms that provide optimal performance during periods of peak traffic. Also, ask yourself the question: **Will the platform grow with your business?**

With the help of headless experience, Soft Industry Alliance helped the Client scale globally. Headless helped to change the technology, culture, and mindset of the company which can now be processed for all corners of its organization to follow. As a result of the partnership:

- The organization is accelerated regardless of the country or region.
- The frontend system was replaced without bringing operations to a halt, thereby maximizing efficiencies.
- The organization's initiatives are advanced while delivering a highly personalized experience from country to country.



### **Security features and compliance regulations**

Data privacy and security are very important. Payments and contact details of your customers must always be secure. An E-commerce platform must comply with the laws on personal data that it collects during transactions. Review the platform's security measures, including PCI DSS compliance, SSL certification, and strong authentication mechanisms to ensure that sensitive customer data is protected and trusted by potential customers.

Soft Industry Alliance provides top businesses with practice in full and

strict compliance with the required industry-wide standards. We will fuel your business with the best services that are trusted and reliable. We offer a broad range of custom services such as web development, mobile application development, testing & QA.

Clients trust us for our clarity, structure, high-performance rate, quality and functionality across every stage of the software development process. For instance, we can boast of ISO 9001, ISO 19011, and ISO 27001 certificates. Following all the necessary regulations, the software development company guarantees that the final version of the E-commerce platform will meet customer data privacy requirements.



### **User-friendliness and ease of use**

Complex platforms may require additional staff training costs. Therefore, the platform must be easy to use. Shopping on mobile devices has become the norm. Therefore, you must ensure that the platform is user-friendly in every way, including for mobile devices. Analyze the platform architecture and its ability to integrate with existing and future technologies such as APIs, ERPs, CRMs, and payment gateways for seamless compatibility and extensibility.

A good example when using mobile devices is a shopping platform. Soft Industry Alliance team created an AR app transforming the mall into a gamified playground where visitors can play multiple AR games to gain points and win amazing prizes. After the app implementation, the client engaged new customers, dipping them into an engaging play with a full AR immersion available through regular smartphones:

- The ground floor of the mall serves as a playground and is divided into three different game zones.
- Any customer can take part in this game.
- Customers are provided with a range of games to choose from.

- All the games are pinpointed on the live map and activate interactive scenarios.
- Customers can use the achievement points they earned.



### **Customer support and resources**

One of the most essential points of having an online store is that it is available to customers 24/7. It means that people can look for support for your products/services at any time of the day. Customer relationship management should provide enough tools to handle different support options at other times - live chat software, chatbots, contact forms, social media integrations, etc.

## Types of E-commerce Platforms

The possibility of scaling, development, and synchronization with external services depends on the types of platforms for E-commerce. With the right platform, a business can grow in a matter of months. Here are what types of E-commerce platforms exist and how they differ:



### Hosted platforms

Hosted solutions are installed in the platform's data center and you can connect to them remotely via the Internet. Software vendors take care of the servers that host the E-commerce engine, and you pay a subscription fee for access. This can be a great choice if you don't have the skills and resources to maintain your server.

### Self-hosted platforms

Another option is to create your own platform from scratch. This is a serious job that requires a lot of time, effort, and resources. As a result, you will have complete control over your E-commerce platform and the flexibility to do whatever you want with it. The main benefit is that you will have a fully customized and personalized online store that can scale as your business growth. **Soft Industry Alliance has 20+ years of hands-on experience** in creating custom solutions. Soft Industry Alliance is a reliable product development partner, adviser, and implementer focused on helping clients boost their E-commerce practice to a completely new level.





### Open-source platforms

Open-source platforms provide a significant degree of adaptability and customization for businesses looking to create their own online store. These platforms are built on open source, which allows developers to modify and extend the functionality according to specific requirements. **The main benefit of open-source platforms is their ability to accommodate unique business needs.** But enterprises choosing open-source solutions must be prepared to invest in technical resources and consider ongoing maintenance and security updates. You can increase the number of products or ensure the correct operation even with an ever-increasing number of users. Open-source systems are created by users who place great value on a system that allows the editing of a huge number of elements. Such systems are very convenient in the SEO process. Open source platforms are chosen by people **who are just starting** an E-commerce business, as well as **medium and large companies.**

### Cloud-based platforms

This type of hosting is based on the cloud. Providers offer security, network functions, and data center. You can access and store cloud platform applications, programs, and data over the Internet. **Soft Industry Alliance** is a full-cycle software development company that **partners with AWS** and helps business owners streamline their practice by implementing Cloud solutions. Soft Industry Alliance is trusted by hundreds of global organizations for its outstanding expertise, transparency & commitment.



## Step-by-step Guide to Choosing the Right Platform

Vendors offer a variety of features, and scalability, serving businesses of all sizes. Here are some of the aspects we recommend you pay attention to:

# 01

### **Determine business needs and goals**

First, you need to study in detail your potential target audience and understand what it needs. Then it will become clear how to make your business needs and goals as attractive as possible.

# 02

### **Asses technical requirements**

Explore native and third-party analytics, marketing, and customer support platform features to optimize business operations and drive customer retention. When it comes to your customers, it's critical to provide them with simple, diverse, and secure payment options to keep their personal and financial data safe. Therefore, look for a platform that offers multiple payment methods that are safe and convenient for your target customers. E-commerce software must support popular forms of payment: cash on delivery, credit and debit cards, e-wallets, internet banking, and even blockchain currencies. Before choosing an E-commerce solution, you need to do a quick geolocation survey to find out what online payment methods are available in the countries where your customers are located.

One of the great examples of a successful payment system is B2B and B2C portal delivered by Soft Industry Alliance for a market-leading company whose parts and assortment are sold to over 150 dealers from 34 countries. During the collaboration, we helped the company create an all-in-one comprehensive e-commerce portal for B2B and B2C spare parts sales. Now, it operates in 15 markets with market-specific prices, currencies, and language versions and over 10 000 end-users have already made direct purchases from the portal through the B2C part of the solution. So, the core project engagement activities included such functionality:

- Maintaining rich web catalogs with intuitive visual search and fast text and part ID search (less than 3 sec for a catalog with 150K parts).
- Automated discount calculation (depending on the products in the basket, special offers available, customer track record, market, etc.) and shipment cost calculation (less than 1 second for a basket with 500 items).
- Converting the order into a special format and transferring it to a

dealer or manufacturer.

- E-com as a service for dealers, which enables them to sell their accompanying products in the same e-shop.



## 03

### Identify budget constraints

Your success begins long before your platform is up and running. This starts when you create a plan for building your platform, which includes a list of expenses and a budget. Below, you will see two main categories of expenses:

- E-commerce website design and functionality: This is what people see when they visit your site, interact with your content, and make a purchase. For example, the layout of your site will affect how long people stay on your site and your conversion rate.

— Infrastructure: There are many necessary expenses to build and maintain your E-commerce store, but things that your audience doesn't necessarily notice. This includes buying a domain, setting up hosting, and Search Engine Optimization.

## 04

### **Research and compare platforms**

The thing is, you can't easily decide which platform is the best choice for your business. You can research and then test different platforms before you are ready to decide to turn your site into an online store. You can compare the features, pricing, usability, and functionality of each platform accordingly. If none of the platforms meet your criteria, you can always create your own platform if you have the resources to do so.

## 05

### **Assess the level of customization and scalability**

With a custom platform created from scratch, you can use almost any programming language and framework. Customization is very often the most expensive both in terms of time and resources, but it has a lot of advantages over ready-made solutions. It is worth programming the E-commerce platform on your own if you want to create a product with unique features or complex integration with other systems and services. In addition, be sure, your business will grow with you. If you do not have such ambitions, you hardly need a platform. Your online store will need to support additional products and handle additional traffic generated by an expanded consumer base. If the platform can scale with your store, chances are you will choose the right solution for your E-commerce business.

With over 20 years of experience, Soft Industry Alliance offers custom solutions: software development, product consulting & audit, quality assurance & testing, and further platform support.

## 06

### **Evaluate security features and compliance regulations**

Every time, when making a purchase, the client is faced with the need to provide some of his data. The issue of data security has become one of the key issues in the field of E-commerce. Unfortunately, not all sellers can guarantee reliable protection of customers' personal data. Fraudsters often gain access to information and use it to deceive people. That is why evaluating security features and compliance regulations are crucial.

# 07

## **Analyze user-friendliness and ease of use**

The mobile shopper audience is growing exponentially. You need to take care of mobile optimization yourself, or just choose a modern, mobile-ready theme. Such a template will provide comfortable and ultra-fast shopping on portable devices, which will lead to an increase in the number of loyal customers and sales. Mobile commerce has become a vital channel for E-commerce stores. Did you know that global mobile shopping revenue exceeded \$3 billion in 2022? Your customers hold their smartphones in their hands most of the time, and it is easier and more convenient for them to shop online using their phones than from laptops or desktops. Make sure the E-commerce platform you choose is compatible with multiple operating systems and works across all screens and devices.

# 08

## **Consider customer support and resources**

The customer contact center should be professional, with several levels of service, depending on the issue or problem being addressed. It is also important not to restrict access - technical support should be available 24/7.

## Evaluating Factors to Consider When Selecting an E-commerce Platform Development Contractor

We have approached the most interesting part: how to choose a competent contractor that will help you achieve your core goals and take your business to the next level. Finding the perfect contractor always takes time and deep analysis. Here are some tips to help you in your E-commerce development company research.

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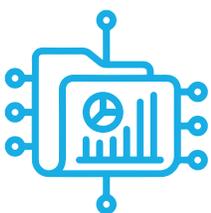


### **Analyze the expertise in E-commerce platform customization and integration offered by the E-commerce platform development company**

Find out what technologies the E-commerce platform development company works with and whether they can be implemented in your project.

After all, different projects require different innovative solutions, and often even the best contractors may not have the proper level of customization and integration you need to achieve your professional goals. In addition, it is very important that the E-commerce platform company is aware of all the latest technologies because the tools are constantly changing and it is essential to keep track of these changes. Soft Industry Alliance is known as the best software development company on the market with over 20 years of professional experience. The software development provider covers the technology needs of leading companies who are determined to succeed in the E-commerce niche by implementing custom solutions.

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### **Ask E-commerce development companies for portfolios and experience**

Always check the E-commerce software development company's knowledge of the technologies you are interested in, and experience in different areas. The portfolio should feature a wide range of projects in the E-commerce niche.

Read all the information carefully and evaluate the examples. In addition, we advise you to analyze various reviews. These should be reviews from reliable resources that are publicly available on the Internet. They can be located both on the main page of the platform and in the comments section. You will find information about the problems faced by clients and you will understand what to expect during the cooperation. Try to communicate with the E-commerce development companies on social media and blogs to find out as much info as possible.



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### **Tell the custom E-commerce software development company about your business needs**

You must clearly define your business needs and see how well the E-commerce platform development company understands them. Provide the E-commerce software development company with a detailed plan for your project. Describe in detail your task for developers, and demand from them an estimate of your expenses in return. The response from the E-commerce development companies will show that the team is ready to provide you with everything you need even before cooperation. This will ensure a fair price. Such an approach will make it easier for you to negotiate in the future because you will have a clear set of requirements and the custom E-commerce software development company will be aware of them in advance.



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### **Look at the E-commerce platforms development company's communication**

Pay attention to the communication inside the E-commerce platform development company you are going to work with - ask questions that interest you and look at how the E-commerce platform development company reacts.

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## Conclusions

Summing up all mentioned above, it is impossible to deny that E-commerce is the future. If even 10-20 years ago online shopping caused certain doubts and mistrust, now they have become commonplace. After all, it is more convenient, cheaper, and easier to get exactly what you need.

You have already read that with E-commerce platforms, your customers can learn more about your brand and services, and this is where the bulk of your interactions take place. The right E-commerce platform also makes it easier for you to successfully sell your services to other companies. Moreover, it can be used to drive product sales and help you with consumption statistics and economic performance charts. By analyzing all these factors, you can find the solution that best suits your company's needs.

And Soft Industry meets all the requirements. A market-leading company offers worthy services that stand out from other companies at an affordable price and quality. Do you still have doubts? Visit the website and drop us a line to get the answer to all your questions.

You can get free meeting with our specialists



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