

THE BEGINNER'S HANDBOOK

# LAUNCHING AN ONLINE SALES AND REVENUE CHANNEL



## CAPTURING (ONLINE) SALES IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Online selling has been a hot topic for years, but it has been especially relevant in recent months, as we've watched the COVID-19 outbreak heavily impact businesses worldwide. Before then, many organizations were doing just fine selling offline and sticking to the traditional means of engaging customers. Now, those that aren't already online are facing an existential challenge that's threatening their staying power.

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to create worry and uncertainty, e-commerce provides a very welcome and sizeable opportunity to reach the hordes of consumers all flocking to digital channels. Already, we're seeing surges in online orders: up 52% over this time last year. But it doesn't come without disruptions in supply chains, customer behavior changes, brick-and-mortar store closures, and other hurdles.



At Sana Commerce, we want to help you maneuver these challenges by offering guidance how you can launch an online sales channel with the right features, functionality, and information — quickly and while staying on budget.

## THE BASICS: WHY E-COMMERCE?

E-commerce, especially in B2B, is and has been going through a transformation. The market is changing and the way your customers approach their purchasing journey has also changed. As a result, more and more companies are adding an online sales channel to their business.

**Why?** The more you know about what your customers want, the better you can serve them. A B2B e-commerce platform allows you to improve your customer experience with simple features such as selling outside office hours (or during store closures) and still offering customer-specific catalogs and prices. These features optimize your business efficiency, improve your internal processes, and reduce costs.

For your customers, ease of use and speed are key: easier and faster checkout, easy repeat ordering, and quicker delivery and improved tracking are among the top features B2B buyers see as a priority in their B2B buying experience.



Explore our [B2B Buying Process Report](#) for more insights.

“It seems that in today’s era, a strong online presence is the fastest and most efficient way to gain new customers. That’s why it is so important that we found a partner like Sana to grow our business and reach new people.”

– **Jason Hummert** | Director of Marketing of Hummert International

## MANEUVERING E-COMMERCE AND CHANGING BUSINESS MODELS

Times are changing, and business models are no longer limited to only B2B or B2C. We are seeing a slow change to alternative models such as B2B2C (business-to-business-to consumer), D2C (direct-to-consumer) or B2E (business-to-employee) in order to better meet more specific end-consumer needs. Your online sales channel should take your business model and your customers' needs into account.

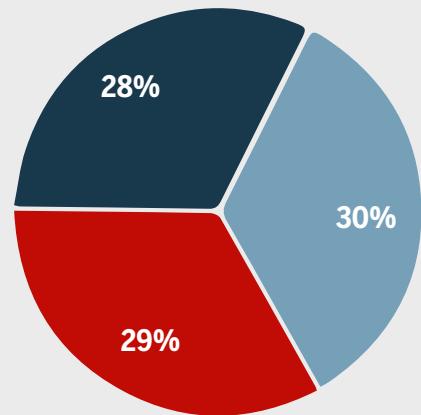


Read our [D2C and B2B2C Sales Guide](#).

Most B2B businesses have complex ordering processes, large collections of attributes and elaborate back-end systems. But as we see more blended business models and more organizations selling direct-to-consumer, we are also seeing more and more B2B sales portals trying to recreate the same user experience B2C businesses offer consumers: using wish lists, simple checkout processes, and cross- and upselling. These are typical retail tricks that can also be used to boost online B2B sales.

## TOP B2C E-COMMERCE BEST PRACTICES U.S. B2B BUYERS WANT IN THEIR ONLINE EXPERIENCE

- Easier and faster checkout
- Easy repeat ordering
- Quicker delivery and improved tracking



The reality is: B2B buyers want to access information online. You may just not be letting them, or may be making it too difficult. Let e-commerce help you leverage a key new customer engagement and sales channel.

Could buyers be concerned that a web store won't be able to provide them with accurate, individualized pricing and discounts based on their sales agreement? And what about the complexity of B2B multi-part orders, fluctuating and seasonal pricing, up-to-date inventory, delivery logistics and more? To be successful, B2B e-commerce platforms have to accurately deliver against all these complex order requirements. Sana's does.

“One of the reasons we leaned into a Sana solution is because we needed one that could support — out of the box —the pricing engine that exists in [Dynamics AX]. We have to be able to support a B2C and a B2B scenario, even with a B2B scenario that's pretty complex.”

– **Chris Rooney** | Business Analyst for E-commerce at Century Martial Arts

## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GET STARTED

B2B web stores can sound like a hassle. You may worry about long project runtime, cost, or complexity to build. But launching the B2B e-commerce experience your customers want doesn't have to be difficult.

**You just need to know where to start: in your ERP.**

Don't underestimate the complexity of an e-commerce implementation that's not integrated with your ERP system. You have worry about a complex ecosystem of technologies, and about how to connect them. This means investing in middleware and risking running a highly complex tech stack. The manual workload is

high and time consuming, both to synchronize your data before you launch and to manage your web store afterward. You can imagine that working that way can become expensive and will likely cause delays in your web store launch.

With a Sana solution, these complexities are made simple (especially compared to a solution that's not ERP-integrated):



One last burning question remains: is it too late to launch one now? The answer, fortunately, is no. But there are two things to consider when answering this question: the short-term possibilities and the long-term changes in customer behavior.

### Short-term possibilities

Is it possible to get a web store live quickly to meet the current demand for e-commerce? It is, and there are ways to make it even simpler. Choose a SaaS solution to speed up the delivery of your web store. For example, at Sana Commerce, we can set up a cloud web store (including integration to your ERP) in a matter of days — while other ERP-integrated e-commerce solutions can take a few weeks to do so. The implementation timeline, of course, does depend on the cleanliness of your ERP data.

### Long-term changes in customer behavior

After this significant shift to e-commerce, it is likely that customers won't ditch the habit. This means that launching an e-commerce store is important not only to meet the changing behavior of existing and prospective B2B customers now, but to continue educating and encouraging your customers to utilize your new online sales channel later.



READY TO REALIZE ADDITIONAL REVENUE AND REACH YOUR CLIENTS ONLINE? WITH SANA YOU CAN LAUNCH AN ERP-INTEGRATED WEB STORE IN JUST 2-4 WEEKS.

**START TODAY BY TALKING TO ONE OF SANA'S E-COMMERCE EXPERTS.**

## ABOUT SANA COMMERCE

Sana helps businesses all over the world reach their full potential. We offer the shortcut to e-commerce. How? Through 100% seamless integration with SAP and Microsoft Dynamics. Our e-commerce solution leverages existing business logic and data in powerful and user-friendly web stores. This lets our clients focus on improving customer experience, streamlining sales processes, and increasing sales volume and frequency.

Sana Commerce is a certified partner of Microsoft Dynamics and SAP. Our innovative approach and strong partner network make Sana the driving force behind over 1,200 web stores worldwide. Because of our experience and expertise, we can go all the way, offering not only a product but also supporting services such as online marketing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) advice, hosting, design and online payment providers.

**Make your business future-proof and join our e-commerce movement.**

**For more information, visit [www.sana-commerce.com](http://www.sana-commerce.com).**