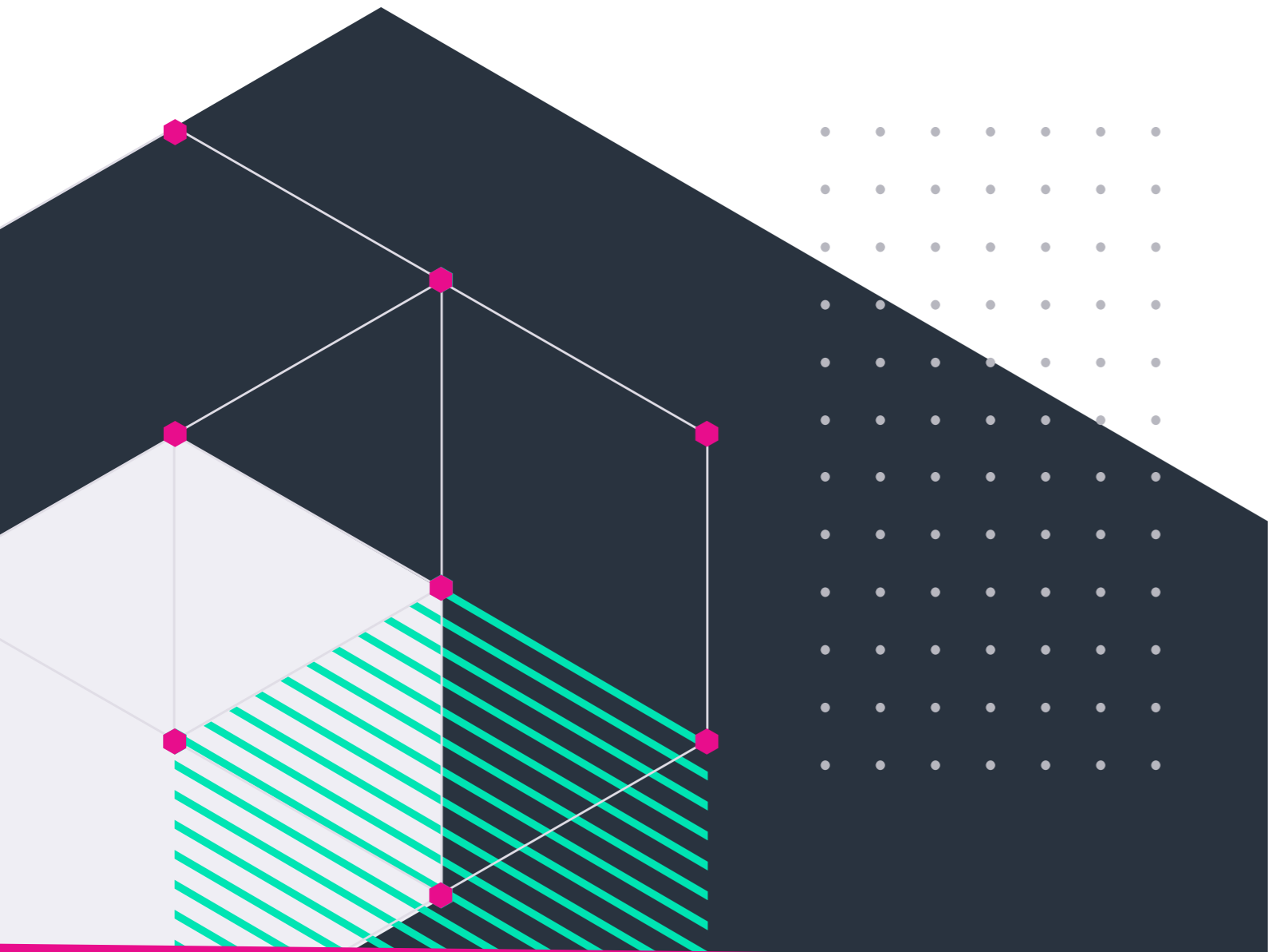




# B2B ECOMMERCE TECH: WHAT DO YOU NEED IN 2022 AND BEYOND?

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Create an Experience Your Buyers  
Will Keep Coming Back For



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# Introduction: It's Time for B2B to Evolve

Let's start with the obvious: B2B businesses have been operating from completely different business models to B2C ones. Because of this, B2B businesses have sometimes been slower to adopt new technology throughout the sales process.

**T**hey've been sticking with what they know: using field sales representatives, tradeshows and showrooms to showcase and market to prospective accounts. This needs to change. In order to enhance sales and keep customers loyal, these businesses must look to the B2C world, where exciting new technology is gaining some serious traction.

In this report we're going to explore how you can do that, looking at how the lines between B2B and B2B eCommerce are blurring and what sort of technology you can use to get ahead.

Read on to find out more.



# Why Does All This Matter Now?

## B2B Buyers Are Evolving

The B2B buyer of old is being replaced. This new generation of buyer is digitally savvy, living in a connected, social world. And here's the crucial part: they are inherently B2C buyers too.

B2C buyers have certain expectations when buying products online. They need to be able to find what they need quickly and easily. And they expect to be able to do so from anywhere at any time.

So, when these same buyers go online to make their B2B purchases - if necessary within their industry - they expect the same seamless customer experience.

This means these buyers are bypassing the traditional B2B sales methods and funnels, which limits the opportunities for salespeople to add their expertise and knowledge into the mix. This doesn't mean technology is replacing salespeople, but instead that B2B businesses need to know how to adapt.

## A Global Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic changed everything. Buying behaviors, especially in the B2C world, evolved rapidly, with shoppers given no other choice but to head online when stores closed. Businesses were forced to keep up with the demand, pivoting their efforts to eCommerce sales in a bid to survive.

B2B faced the same challenges. In-person sales became impossible, field representatives were unable to travel and large expos were postponed or canceled. It left few options for B2B businesses to turn to.

Now more than ever, the lines between B2C and B2B buyers have blurred and businesses must adapt accordingly.

## Competition Is Rising

The B2C world has always been fiercely competitive, particularly when it comes to eCommerce. And now B2B businesses are feeling the same heat.

A more global, connected world means buyers are no longer limited by location - they can access suppliers anywhere on the planet without even leaving their home or place of work.

They can look to use exchange rates when purchasing to try and get the same items cheaper overseas, for example. With access to more suppliers, they can get stock when they need it, not just when it's available locally. Diversifying and extending product ranges is easier than ever.

Throw Amazon and B2B marketplaces into the mix and it's easy to see how B2B businesses have more to contend with than just their domestic competitors.



# Preparing for a Digital B2B World

So we've got more digitally in-tune buyers, the pandemic throwing everything we know out the window and competition at an all-time high. It's a lot to deal with.

**B**2B businesses need to look for new ways to both entice new customers and keep long-standing ones. The answer lies in technology, specifically modern day, MACH-based (microservices, API first, cloud native, headless) technology that gives businesses the agility, scale and flexibility they need to adapt quickly and grow at pace.

“This is compared to traditional platforms that have all been tightly coupled and leave little room to integrate with other vendors or customize the digital experiences exactly how a business needs them”.

The MACH approach is a relatively new one, but one that more B2C companies are adopting. With MACH, you can separate the frontends and backends of your company's digital architecture. This allows businesses to easily stitch together a stack made from an array of best-of-breed vendors, based on the solutions that the company needs and that align with its roadmap.

MACH-based technology can solve for a lot of things given how versatile it is. With that in mind, let's look at what B2B businesses should be focusing on when setting up their digital offering, especially in relation to their commerce channels.

## Digital Merchandising and Personalized Experiences

It's time to say goodbye to printed catalogs and online PDFs, because the rise of digital merchandising is upon us. B2B businesses need to incorporate shoppable content within their digital channels, allowing buyers to access and purchase products across different areas of the site or within different pieces of content. This offers a more streamlined ordering experience, which is exactly what B2B buyers want.

Importantly, all the merchandising and content across different channels needs to incorporate personalization. Not just on an account level but to every user who logs in or views products.

With a MACH-based approach, B2B businesses can look to leverage artificial intelligence (AI) technology, for example, to make content and products hyper-personalized. They can use data and analytics to inform and predict content needs, offering recommendations for specific buyers based on previous buying habits, trends and online behavior.

With the right technology, B2B businesses can provide more tailored offerings for each account and deal with all the complexities that come with that. Things like account-specific pricing and account-based approval workflows as well as relevant shipping and fulfillment options.

## Flexibility and Adaptability

As B2B business look to adapt and grow, they will need technology that not only allows them to do so now, but grows with them well into the future. They will need the flexibility to spin up multiple sites and experiences based on new brands or product lines when entering new regions or markets perhaps with different currencies and languages. And they will need to be able to create and add new content for all these requirements.

Utilizing a headless content management system (CMS), for example, within a MACH approach will let B2B businesses do all the above and more. They will be able to create and reuse content types across different channels and digital experiences, meaning workflows are streamlined and duplication of work is minimized.

A headless CMS will also enable businesses to manage and apply branding and styling across the board. It's the perfect combination of structure and consistency when dealing with so many components and complexities, as well as providing the agility and flexibility required to meet all the different needs of the business and its customers.

## Powerful DAM Capabilities

B2B businesses utilize a lot of different content and media types to showcase products and highlight detailed product information. From brochures to product downloads, imagery, detailed specification and usage documents, the need for a powerful digital asset manager (DAM) is paramount. With MACH, this DAM can easily integrate with a business's CMS and the rest of the technology stack.

It's all about speed and performance. With so many files and rich images, the DAM need to be able to export, deliver to any channel and distribute to third parties such as marketplaces at speed.

With such a large volume of content too, another capability B2B businesses need within their DAM is proper search functionality. This will mean businesses can easily find what they need, when they need it.

## A CMS That Works for You

We've touched on a few things that the right CMS can help B2B businesses with. When you take a closer look, however, what B2B businesses need from their CMS compared to B2C isn't all that different – it's their content needs that vary.

For B2B businesses that also have a D2C (direct to consumer) or even B2C offering, the right CMS will be able to handle everything across all channels.

Essentially, they'll be able to co-manage the entire process from one interface, highlighting yet another way MACH technology can help streamline a business's content, digital channels and the workload that comes with it.



# Next Steps

Ready to Power Up Your B2B eCommerce Tech?  
Want to know more about the technology and approaches covered in this guide?

Get in touch with our expert team by emailing [contact@ampliance.com](mailto:contact@ampliance.com) or visiting [ampliance.com](https://ampliance.com)

Amplience powers digital-first brands and retailers with the freedom to do more. Our low-code CMS, DAM and Digital Experience Management platform allows more than 350 of the world's leading brand teams to manage content, not code. The result is a rapid ROI for our clients who are delivering data and insight-driven customer experiences that drive deeper, more valuable customer relationships. Amplience supports the industry's transition to Microservice, API-first, Cloud and Headless (MACH) technologies, is MACH certified and an executive member of the MACH Alliance.

Named a Strong Performer, Amplience was recognized by Forrester in The Forrester Wave™: Agile Content Management Systems (CMSes), Q1 2021 report with the highest possible scores attained in the criteria of decoupled delivery, deployment and system performance, components, and marketplaces.

Powering customer experiences for the world's most innovative brands, Amplience's customers include Ulta Beauty, Coach, GAP, Crate & Barrel, Harry Rosen and Missguided.

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