

eCommerce Solutions— How Do Distributors Decide?

A closer look at
integrating online sales
into your operations

EPICOR

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Where is eCommerce headed?

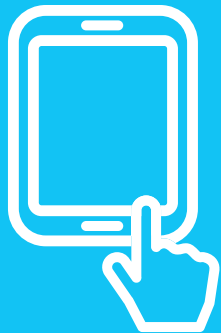
...Wherever you'd like it to go.

There's no question eCommerce has changed the distribution landscape.

- ▶ It's changed how you find, engage, and retain customers
- ▶ It's changed your relationship with customers and the skills your people need to serve them
- ▶ It's a necessary business tool
- ▶ It offers you a way to grow while lowering costs and increasing customer satisfaction
- ▶ It changes how you work

The real question is how those changes to the distribution landscape fit into your business strategy. Is eCommerce a core capability you need to survive, or does it play a more supportive role while services differentiate your business from others? Either way, you need a smooth flow from your customers' expectations to your business process.





More than half of those surveyed expect at least

50%

of their customers to buy online within three years

eCommerce for Distributors

If you're reluctant to offer an eCommerce option for your customers because you think it won't be utilized, think again. According to Forrester Research:

- ▶ 87% of B2B companies said they migrated customers to online sales
- ▶ More than half of those surveyed expect at least 50% of their customers to buy online within three years¹
- ▶ 51% of B2B digital professionals said omnichannel customers increased spending in the past year
- ▶ 50% of B2B digital professionals said profitability for online ordering increased²

¹ Source: Forrester. The case for Omnichannel Commerce. Aug 2017

² Source: Forrester. Commerce technology investment trends. Sep 2017



What about eCommerce and ERP?

Consider how eCommerce will integrate with existing systems—including enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions—and where investments need to be made to maximize its potential.

An effective eCommerce strategy integrates the system with other technology—most importantly, your ERP solution—to streamline processes and create efficiencies. Consider investing in an eCommerce solution that integrates with your existing ERP or implementing an eCommerce solution endorsed by your ERP provider to ensure the systems are set up to work in tandem.

2018 eCommerce Investment Insights



70%
of business leaders say they are investing more in digital commerce due to **competition** and **new technologies**.



71%
prioritize the digital commerce **platform** itself when making new investments, which is often a primary **driver of ROI**.



62%
say **partnering** is key to success—particularly to complement/supplement existing resources and fill internal gaps.



Source: Forrester. Commerce technology investment trends. Sep 2017

eCommerce in Distribution

Online activity in distribution is growing, and online capability is a growing prerequisite for success. Firms that are expanding show greater eCommerce investment and higher profitability overall than lower-growth peers. In Industrial Distribution's 2019 Survey of Distributor Operations, 33% of respondents said Internet sales is one of their top four primary growth strategies—up from 28% the prior year—and 75% of respondents said they expect their online sales to increase over the prior year.³

eCommerce is widespread in the consumer market, and while distributors were initially slow to join the movement that retailers started, it's since become mainstream. Distributors who offer eCommerce are part of a market that—according to research firm Forrester—grew online B2B sales from \$780 billion in 2015 to almost \$1 trillion in 2018. By 2023, Forrester projects that these sales will reach \$1.8 trillion.⁴

Distributors without the means to provide eCommerce from scratch still have options. They can enlist the service of an eCommerce provider, work with an independent system integrator, or utilize available software. Whichever route is selected, it is simplest and most effective for the eCommerce system to be directly integrated with the distributor's ERP system to create a seamless flow of orders. eCommerce and ERP integration can be a large hurdle for distributors who build and support their own platform.

B2B mobile commerce is fast becoming as important as overall eCommerce. Customers now expect to be able to shop at any time and location. To meet these demands, a distributor needs to provide a mobile viewing experience that aligns with their full website. Utilizing a sales order automation provider can take care of this issue. Such a provider takes care of routing email, fax, and print orders into a company's ERP system—eliminating human error and increasing responsiveness to customers.

³ Industrial Distribution's 72nd Annual Survey of Distributor Operations, June 10, 2019.

⁴ Forrester Analytics: B2B eCommerce Forecast, 2018-2023, December 14, 2018.



Epicor eCommerce solutions

Epicor eCommerce helps you reach more customers, differentiate your business, and deploy best-in-class distribution.

If you want to compete with the likes of Amazon® and Grainger®, you need to manage more services for more customers—all while managing costs. In a time of tight margins, that means sophisticated inventory controls, exceptional customer service, advanced forecasting, and sharper pricing tools. The deep distribution expertise Epicor delivers includes best-practice processes, key differentiators, and top technologies to help you boost both productivity and growth.

The most modern eCommerce solution—Epicor Commerce Connect

If you want to turn online purchasers into full-time accounts, this is where you start.

Epicor Commerce Connect with Prophet 21® and Eclipse™ combines consumer functionality with B2B capability. It's cloud based, fully mobile, and backed by a huge variety of Apple Store-like apps.

- ▶ Cost-effective cloud service requires minimal hardware, support cost, and time
- ▶ Tightly integrated with Epicor Prophet 21 and Epicor Eclipse
- ▶ Fully responsive web design—it's ready for mobile commerce
- ▶ Multilanguage, multicurrency, and multistore capability
- ▶ Out-of-the-box, modern eCommerce functionality
 - Feature-rich B2C eCommerce administration toolset with page themes/templates
 - Search engine optimization (SEO), search, product catalog, checkout, payment, and site analytics
- ▶ Out-of-the-box B2B eCommerce functionality—developed by Epicor on top of Magento
 - Customer account management, price, order, reorder, and bulk order
- ▶ B2B customer self-service with access to order status, shipping, account history, invoices, payments, and returns (RMA)
- ▶ Out-of-the-box self-service tools for marketing promotions and web discounts
- ▶ Social capabilities—e.g., blogs, product reviews, and ratings—plus integration with platforms like Facebook®, Twitter®, etc.
- ▶ A complete end-to-end service—implementation, eCommerce business consulting, website design, third-party product content integration, back-end integration, configuration, and SEO service



There's more than one way to make everything work—explore other Epicor solutions

Epicor has a variety of ways to make eCommerce work for distributors like you—whether you are in an industrial-oriented or a construction-oriented business. And no matter your business size or budget, we can get you started with a modern, fully-integrated business system. Both Prophet 21 and Eclipse offer out-of-the-box storefront solutions that give you:

- ▶ A fully hosted, integrated web storefront that can reduce your customer support costs and give your customers more flexibility to access price and product information from anywhere, anytime
- ▶ Clearly identified links to streamline navigation and direct visitors to the information they need
- ▶ Tight integration that lets the customer enter order information directly into your system, so your staff can focus on other priorities
- ▶ 24/7 convenience—allowing independent contractors, shift workers, and other clients to place orders after you've closed the office for the day
- ▶ Mobile access, so customers can place orders from anywhere—even remote jobsites
- ▶ Account management tools that provide fast access to bids, open orders, order history, payment history, and shipping information
- ▶ Reporting tools that offer deep visibility into how your customers use your site—including which customers clicked your banner ads and how often they clicked
- ▶ Powerful API for connecting your business to the world—providing a full .NET stack and supporting SOAP and REST for Internet connectivity
- ▶ cXML provides consistent communication of business documents between procurement applications, eCommerce hubs, and suppliers
- ▶ Built-in EDI capabilities, or easy interoperability with EDI mappers

The Epicor distribution solution

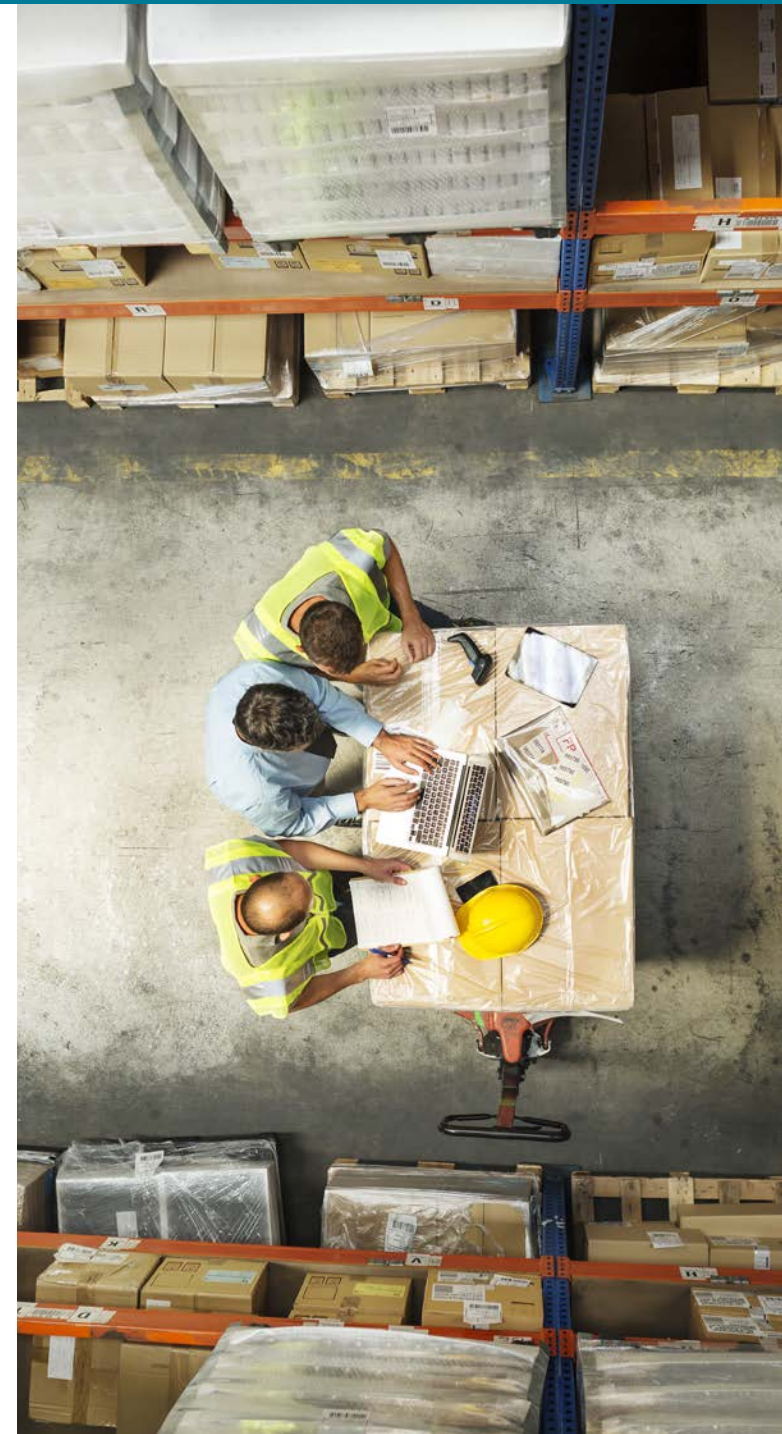
Epicor is here to help distributors grow. We're a high-value, low-risk, and deep-experience pathway to bring your ERP systems to the cloud—and your business to your customer. What's more, we can prove it—we have five times more second-time ERP buyers than the industry average.

Only Epicor can provide complete business digitization along with the refined expertise of a half-century of distribution experience. This includes open eCommerce platforms, mobile sales and field services, wireless sales counters and warehouses, advanced inventory management and customer optimization tools, cloud deployment, and direct 24/7 support.

Additionally, Epicor builds in the little things that only a distributor could love like work queues, wire cutting, PO variance queues, kitting, assembly and production orders, job management, VMI, and special project pricing.

These features combine to bring you:

- ▶ **Best-in-class processes** built into Prophet 21 and Eclipse business systems
- ▶ **Value-adding differentiation** focused on industrial and construction distributors
- ▶ **eCommerce tailored to your needs**—from interfaces to full infrastructure solutions
- ▶ **Analytical tools** that include buying trends, a customer profitability analyzer, and strategic pricing
- ▶ **Mobility** for remote workers, mobile workers, sales, and services
- ▶ **Flexible deployment**—including cloud, hosted, or on-premises





About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation drives business growth. We provide flexible, industry-specific software designed to fit the precise needs of our manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industry customers. More than 45 years of experience with our customers' unique business processes and operational requirements are built into every solution—in the cloud or on premises. With this deep understanding of your industry, Epicor solutions dramatically improve performance and profitability while easing complexity so you can focus on growth. For more information, [connect with Epicor](#) or visit www.epicor.com.

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