GETTING STARTED WITH E-COMMERCE

So…you think it is time to do E-Commerce?   You want to start selling your products and services online but getting from where you are today to really doing that seems like a tall order. E-commerce today can go in so many different directions. It can become overwhelming to try and figure out how to get started and who can help you get started.

At integraSoft we've been helping customers grow their business through E-Commerce for over 12 years. We recently released the 3rd generation of our E-Commerce solution called integraE-Commerce.   One of the exciting things about our new integraE-Commerce solution is the ability to have it completely integrated with your WWW home page. Yes, we will continue to have an out of the box landing page that you can customize but we will also give you the ability to go further, working with your web design company. It also supports mobile screens and has a modern look/feel to the entire E-Commerce experience.   This version of our E-Commerce solution was created new from the ground up leveraging the most current technologies used today for E-Commerce solutions.

Integration with ERP

One of the things that is important when getting into E-Commerce is the integration with your ERP solution. At a high level the ERP solution is where Customers, Orders, Payments and Inventory is managed.   Through E-Commerce and ERP integration you can really drive some cost savings vs a non-integrated solution.   When you can extend that integration not just to ERP but also to POS (Counter Point) and Sales Reps (integraRep) you start so realize exponential savings. Areas where the integration between E-Commerce and ERP can really been realized include the below.

• Integrated payments. Use the same credit card on file for E-Commerce and non-E-Commerce transactions.

•Customer specific pricing (matrix pricing) based on customer login.

•Enable customer self-service through 24×7 access to the site to place orders, look up past orders and tracking numbers.   Customers can maintain ship-to addresses and signup online.

•Single product catalog maintained in ERP but available to E-Commerce.

•No duplication of order entry when orders are entered in non-integrated E-Commerce solution and then re-entered into your ERP.   Order number assigned immediately once order is placed.

•Turning abandoned carts into orders

Questions to Consider

What do you want to ultimately achieve with a new E-Commerce site?

•Just get my catalog online

•Enable Customer Self Service

•New Customers through Search Engines

•New Customers through online referrals

•Sell at Amazon?

•All of the above?

How you are you planning to maintain your product content?

•In house E-Commerce admin?

•Marketing Agency?

•Web Design Firm?

•Do you already have an existing physical product catalog?

•Have you budgeted for role/resource or vendor to manage?

•Who will be the target users of the site?

•New customers?

Five Steps to Develop and Implement

•Pick the right partner and develop a plan. Getting online is more of a journey then a quick trip to the convenient store.   Work with your ERP vendor and a Web Design firm that knows how to integrate with the E-Commerce solutions provided by your ERP vendor. If you have a local web design firm that has helped through the years to get your WWW site going, initiate a conversation with them and your ERP supplier to develop a plan.   Many web design firms will want to direct you towards a non-integrated E-Commerce solution.   If you are considering going down that route, understand the additional costs and complexity that will add to your business moving forward.   Together the Web Designer and integraSoft can propose a plan that aligns with your business strategy to help you maximize the benefits of E-Commerce.

•Get your product catalog online. It all starts with being able to represent your products to customers online. You don't even need to take orders yet. It can be a significant effort to gather all the digital collateral needed to represent your products online. Contact your suppliers or the company that does your product catalogs and see what they have. Your goal should be to turn your physical catalog into a digital catalog. Strive to use the same pictures and product descriptions where it makes sense. Avoid only putting a PDF version of the product catalog online. That will really not enable the shopping/order experience to occur.

•Turn on E-Commerce. Once your product catalog is online and you're happy with it, turn on E-Commerce shopping cart. Start with getting some of your more technology friendly customers online and using the site then expand from there. Consider offering initial and ongoing promotions for customers to use the site.

•Drive traffic to your site. There are so many different ways to drive traffic to your site and acquire new customers for you or your re-sellers.

1. Leverage social media (twitter, Facebook, linked, etc.) to invite new customers to visit your site and purchase.

2. Use "referral" links on the sites of your business partners (re-sellers, affiliates, etc.).

3. Be relevant in search results. Work with your web design firm to take advantage of SEO especially in the markets/verticals you serve.

•Review results and adjust. Looking at the key indicators of your web site often through a combination of sales reports and Google Analytics.

1. Are web sales growing? Are site visits growing?

2. What is the conversion rate from abandon carts to orders?

3. What pages are being viewed the most?

4. How much traffic is coming from search?

Ready to Begin Your E-Commerce Journey?

The 5 steps above occur on the typical journey of E-Commerce. integraSoft and our Web Design partners are ready to help you through the E-Commerce journey. Weather upgrading from and existing solution, transitioning from a non-integrated E-Commerce solution or creating an E-Commerce solution new, we can help you maximize your investments in technology and ROI. Please contact us to start your journey to E-Commerce and help you integrate E-Commerce into your unique brand and WWW web site.

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