



WHITE PAPER

The Power of eCommerce

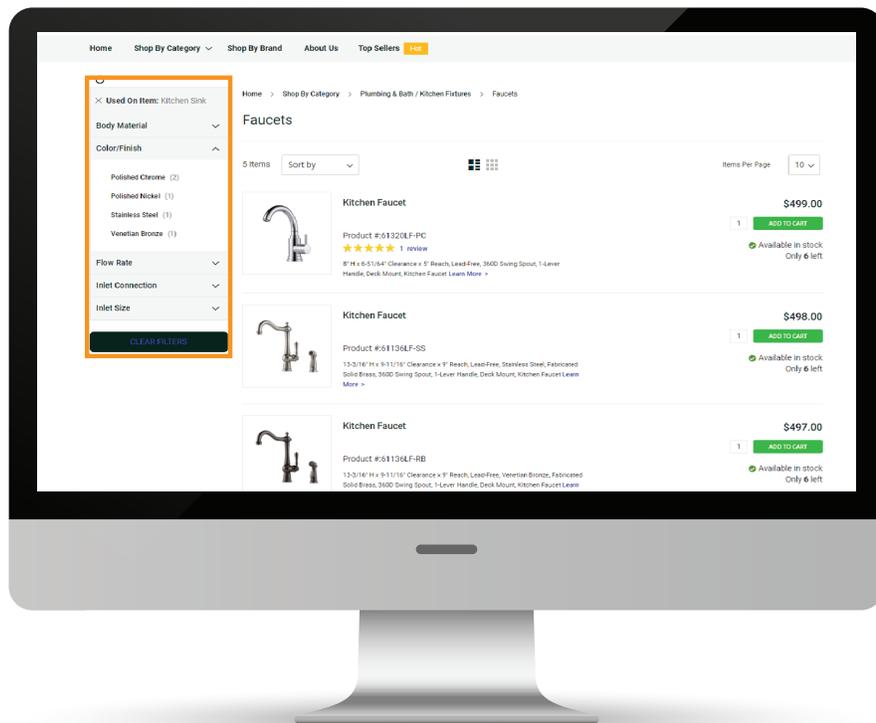
Why Having a Strong Digital Presence is Crucial for Distributors in Today's New Market



A new business reality requires new distributor thinking. As we know, the shopping journey has significantly shifted over the past year, with an undeniable need to enhance the online customer experience. More customers are looking for a webstore that delivers rich product content, filtered navigation, advanced search capabilities, and a superior, connected customer portal. For distributors to keep up with their customers' changing needs, having an ERP-connected webstore that creates a seamless shopping experience is imperative.

ELEVATE YOUR BUYER'S SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Product data drives your eCommerce business's success – it's valuable information about every product you sell online. Great product data includes detailed, rich, and industry-specific information about the individual products in a distributor's catalog. Having well-structured product content allows you to leverage superior on-site search, navigation and filtering, and merchandising tools.



Access to the right information at the right time becomes critical for your customers to make fast decisions. Distributors who provide their customers with access to a detailed product catalog containing unique descriptions, high-quality product images, and an easy-to-navigate interface tend to have higher retention and re-order rates.

Having an ERP system that partners with reputable content providers minimizes the task of crafting a rich, searchable product catalog. Great product data includes detailed, rich, and industry-specific information about the individual products in a distributor's lineup. Having well-structured product content allows you to leverage that data for tools like on-site search, navigation and filtering, and merchandising tools. Ultimately, the strength of your product content directly correlates to your buyer's experience. A team of data experts consult on category make-up and use migration tools to load your product information into a centralized PIM (Product Information Management) system. The PIM organizes product data and alerts the distributor when critical information is missing. This vital tool is the essential piece of communication between your customer-facing online store and your ERP.

INCREASE PROFITABILITY ACROSS YOUR OPERATIONS

Tight integration between your ERP and eCommerce webstore eliminates the cost of multiple product databases and duplicate data entry—which means fewer errors, better accuracy, and lower overall operational costs.

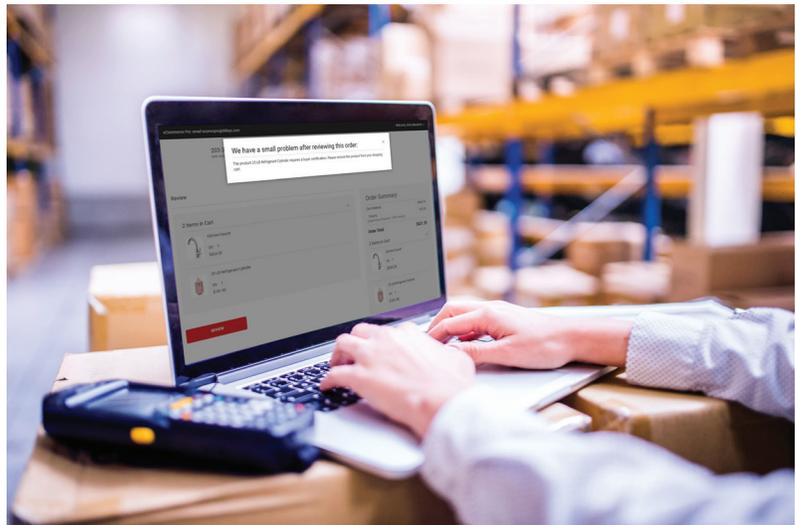
The task of manually managing inventory across systems by hand, verifying shipping addresses are entered correctly, and ensuring relevant product details are accurate can have a serious impact on customer service standards. With a connected all-in-one system, users are no longer required to hand-key sales orders into the ERP or update online product information with Excel document uploads.

In addition, having an eCommerce platform that connects to your ERP allows for checkout with order validation, ensuring all eCommerce orders are automatically following the same rules as an order entered through the ERP.

Examples of eCommerce checkout system processes that follow ERP sales order rules include:

- PO Required
- Product Certification
- Box Qty requirements
- Web contract restrictions
- Sales tax calculations and miscellaneous charges

As a result of having a connected system, your customers experience accurate online inventory levels, consistent product information, and transparent order and delivery status. Ensure your business has an ERP-connected eCommerce solution to drive competitive advantage and compete and provide a top-tier customer experience, regardless of how small your company may be.



PROVIDE YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH B2B SELF-SERVICE

Today, many distributors are providing their customers with a dedicated online self-service portal: giving customers access to their account 24/7, along with visibility to the full product catalog, upsell products, pricing, previous order history, and more. A fully integrated e-commerce component delivers accurate stock levels, customer-specific pricing, and convenient shipping options. Customers can order with confidence knowing the posted information they see online is correct.

Buyers are looking for a seamless shopping experience with the option to choose a branch location for in-store pick up, receive text notifications, request special pricing for larger quantities, select credit card or on-account order payment, and pay their receivables online.

Your eCommerce platform should have the ability to manage the complexity of effective self-service by incorporating sophisticated ERP business rules and workflows. The tight integration between your ERP & eCommerce software combines the strength of your physical store with online convenience.

REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN TODAY'S EVOLVING MARKET

As we adjust to today's modern buyer's evolving needs, it's essential to understand that your customers are part of a steady buyer migration toward e-commerce online shopping and the use of contactless digital tools. To remain competitive, distributors must provide a compelling customer experience, leveraging your physical store with the immediacy and convenience of online buying.

“In today's marketplace, the way to retain customers is to take any friction out of the buying process. One way to create value is to deliver a seamless experience between the distributor's physical location and its online presence. Providing your customers quick access to review, edit or change their orders and immediately pay online provides convenience and flexibility. The influx of large digital competition has put a fire under the local distributor to use technology to greatly improve the customer experience.”

- Barbara Jagoe, COO, DDI System



Consumers expect access to a robust eCommerce platform with substantial online content and multi-level attribute filtering to reduce the time it takes to locate products. They need full access to their past orders, shopping carts, pricing, payment options, and advanced capabilities such as approval levels. With an ERP-connected eCommerce, information flows seamlessly in real-time, delivering a customer with the same experience online, in-store, or on the phone.

Having a fast, secure, leading-edge eCommerce platform allows your customers to engage with your company anytime, anywhere. By unifying your ERP's information with a powerful eCommerce platform, you exceed customer expectations and remain their vendor of choice.

About DDI System:

DDI System's leading-edge ERP & eCommerce technology equips distributors with the ability to drive operational excellence, improve margins, and thrive in today's competitive marketplace. Featuring an integrated CRM, fast POS capabilities, professionally designed quotes & orders, and mobile ERP functionality, Inform leverages industry-specific experience and proven sales tools to deliver a unique solution for wholesale distributors.