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B2B Challenges in the Automotive Sector

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Worldwide demand for vehicles and their associated parts and accessories presents major business opportunities for forward-thinking manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers.

Globally new vehicle sales will [rise by 1.7% year-on-year](#), reaching 89.6million units in 2025. However, ride-sharing and ride-hailing systems and autonomous vehicles are changing patterns of use, sales, and ownership. Rather than selling vehicles, there's a new focus on providing '[mobility solutions](#)'. New technology allows vehicles to monitor themselves and even order replacement parts and consumables automatically. There's scope for new thinking and more adaptable approaches.

However, like other sectors, the [automotive industry](#) must tackle ongoing challenges of materials and skills shortages and supply chain disruptions. With increasing costs putting pressure on profitability, efficiency and improved performance are essential.

Cloudfy is a purpose designed [business to business (B2B) ecommerce solution](#) for the automotive sector. You can simplify your operations, save money and scale as your business grows.

Online inventory visibility and automated sales order processes [minimize data entry errors](#). As a [software as a service (SaaS) solution](#) you'll also [simplify your IT requirements](#) and reduce license fees.

Pre-built integrations with leading enterprise (ERP) systems and third-party extensions simplify customization. You'll improve data management and control and deliver frictionless online self-service for customers.

Cloudfy scales easily to meet peak demand and can grow with your business. Regular updates delivered in the cloud mean you don't have to worry about maintenance and security updates either.

B2B challenges in the automotive sector

Margins are tight in the automotive industry, especially as the sector invests in the latest electric vehicle and safety technology. Challenges include logistics management, supply chain uncertainties, labor shortages, economic and political instability. New competitors are emerging and mergers and acquisitions are changing the rulebook.

| Shortages and costs | Goods movements | Quality | Complexity | Customer Preferences |

Shortages and costs

Meeting increased demand is putting the need for components such as semiconductors in the spotlight. Despite increased production of lithium batteries, the supply gap is likely to remain significant to 2035. Labor shortages will also compound limited parts availability. Pressures on the international transport network and increasing energy costs add to production expenses.

Goods movements

Visibility of goods movements is an acknowledged gap which creates uncertainty and increases risks. Pilfering and product substitution can damage reliability and reputations and affect business efficiency and profitability.

Quality

Tracking products back to suppliers is an important part of supplier quality management. Even small variations in quality can cause significant disruptions and increase costs. Low confidence in product quality makes sorting processes, inspection and remediation significant issues.

Complexity

Complex relationships across vehicle design, development, manufacturing and sales lead to vulnerabilities across the automotive sector. Delays in major manufacturing countries such as the US and China have a major impact around the world.

Customer preferences

Preferences for sustainable and convenient mobility solutions are driving demand for improved fuel efficiency and reduced emissions. Additional customer choice is driving manufacturers towards lower production runs with increased configuration options. In the after-market sector this adds complexity and costs.

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Opportunities to streamline automotive sector sales with B2B ecommerce

The automotive industry is becoming more competitive as companies modernize sales processes to increase their market share. B2B ecommerce contributes to the changing face of the automotive sector.

With the right solution you can scale your online sales as demand increases. You can sell in new market sectors and regions and increase customer loyalty with advanced B2B feature

OPPORTUNITY 1

ECOMMERCE REPLATFORMING

Over time all ecommerce sites need updates and upgrades to keep pace with the latest trends, innovations and security risks. Failing to meet customers' needs represents a major risk that requires a fast and effective solution. If your site can't meet increased demand or is difficult to manage and maintain you could lose valuable sales. In contrast, by providing outstanding online experiences for your customers you can gain a competitive advantage.
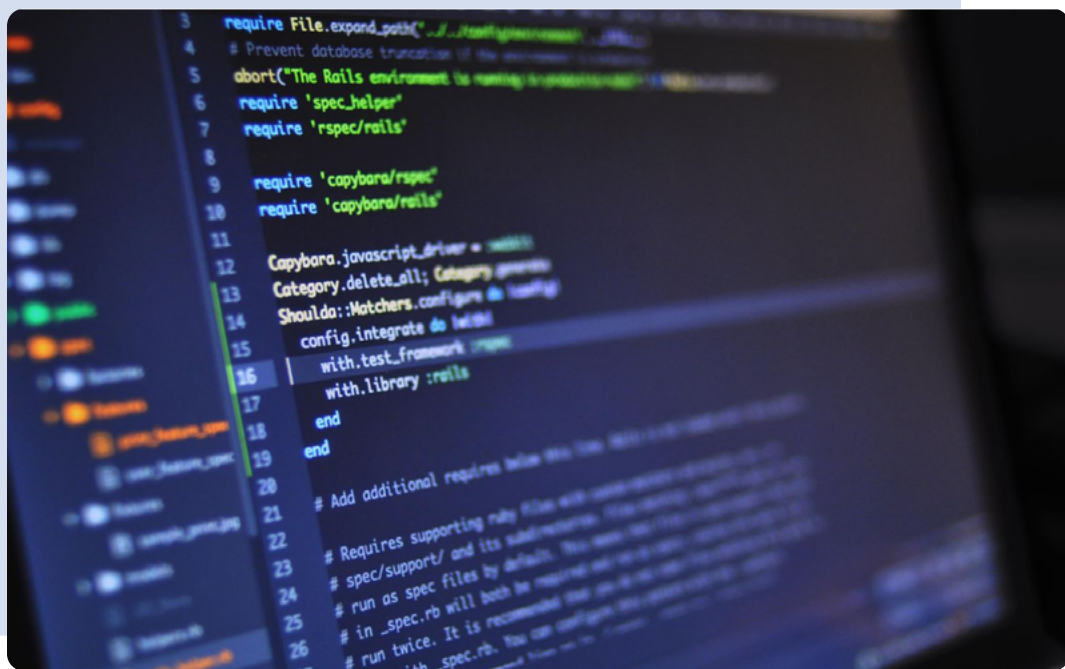
SOLUTION 1

Rather than spending money on temporary fixes it's often better to look for an alternative solution. However, many ecommerce platforms offering B2B functionality don't meet the needs of complex automotive sales. It's important to take a strategic long-term view.

Replatforming to a purpose designed B2B ecommerce solution will help you stay competitive and increase sales. You can simplify and streamline your workflows and improve customer experiences. With powerful new ecommerce features, you will improve performance and reduce operational and maintenance requirements.

OPPORTUNITY 2

ERP INTEGRATION

The combined power of your ERP system and B2B ecommerce improves performance. Your online and offline sales channels can work seamlessly with your systems for accounting, inventory control and warehouse management. Efficiency improves and you'll have better visibility across all your business functions. You will save money, improve sales processes and gain valuable in-depth market intelligence to streamline sales scheduling and planning.

SOLUTION 2

Pre-built integrations provide a cost-effective way to automate key business processes. With out-of-the-box connectors for market leaders like SAP, Sage, Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Oracle, implementation is fast and cost effective. Your registered customers can see inventory, pricing and delivery information in near real time and manage their accounts. You'll almost eliminate manual data entry, so you'll also minimize errors and delays. There's no need to wait for lengthy data synchronization.

OPPORTUNITY 3

INTERNATIONAL SALES

The automative sector is truly global and one of the most effective ways to grow your business is to expand internationally. However, different languages, pricing, tax and compliance requirements can make this a challenging option. Creating new sales channels for every country and region you serve is time-consuming and expensive. Despite this, sales increase when you present your catalog in the local language and your customers can purchase using their preferred currency. Local needs vary too, so you might want to offer different products, combinations and fulfillment options.
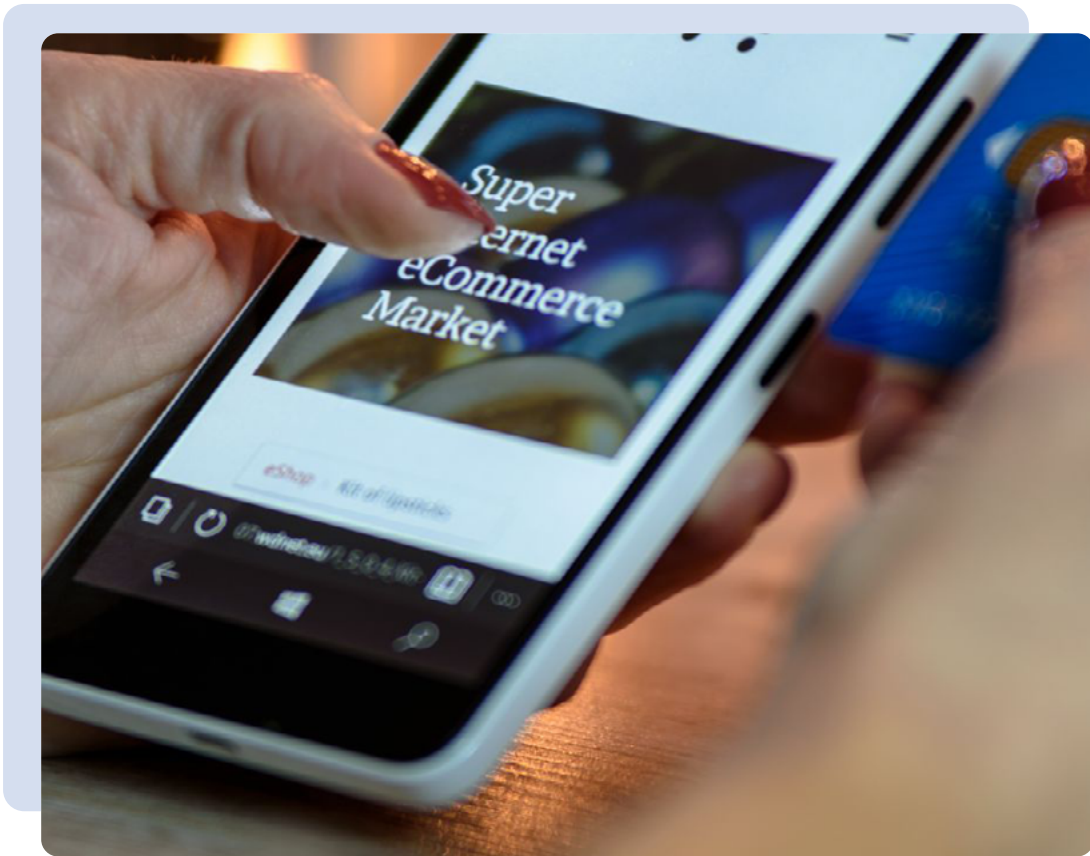
SOLUTION 3

A purpose designed B2B ecommerce platform helps you meet the needs of your international clients. You can deliver your online catalog in multiple currencies and languages. You can even offer individual clients their own personalized catalog, with bespoke pricing and payment arrangements. You don't have to create separate sites; you can control it all from an easy-to-use administration dashboard.

OPPORTUNITY 4

CUSTOMER SELF-SERVICE

Automotive procurement involves tight purchasing controls to manage budgets and approvals. However, these can often have an impact on fast and efficient ordering. Applying spending limits across buyers, departments, and locations with multiple authorizations adds complexity. Traditional paper-based systems aren't suitable for modern practices and requirements in the automotive sector. You can become part of the procurement solution for your customers when you provide powerful self-service tools.

SOLUTION 4

Digitization can transform procurement and improve transparency. E-procurement allows your customers to automate key purchasing processes. B2B ecommerce helps your buyers navigate your full product range, delivering smooth and fast buying experiences. ERP integration digitally transforms order processing and payments and speeds up your order-to-cash (O2C) cycle.

From custom category menus and restricted product management to unique homepages and dashboards you can meet many different needs. You can also manage fluctuating costs, providing the most accurate pricing for your customers. You can even automate processes based on customer details like their location or job role.

With PunchOut your buyers can view your catalog and make purchases directly from their own procurement system. They can browse your product range and place orders using their preferred electronic format. For larger customers electronic data interchange (EDI) ordering supports secure data sharing over the internet using encryption and digital certificates.
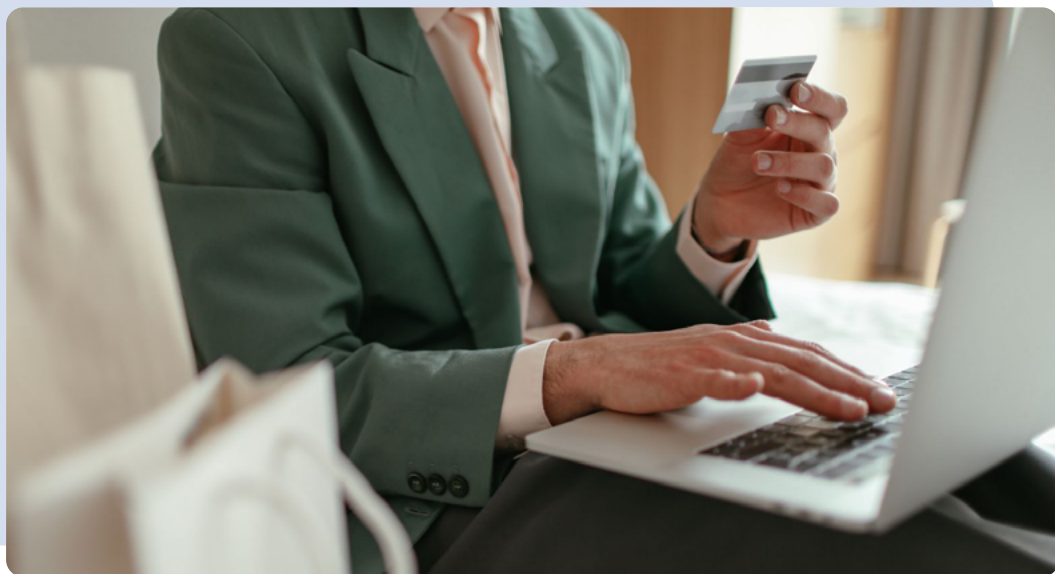
OPPORTUNITY 5

EASY REORDERING

Simplifying difficult buying journeys helps you build long-term customer loyalty. Many of your customers place multiple repeat orders, often for the same or similar items, which is time-consuming and frustrating. You can help them save time and improve efficiency with easy reordering tools.

SOLUTION 5

Minimizing repetitive tasks reduces administration and improves consistency and accuracy. It's easy to schedule reminders and follow-up calls to improve customer relationships and increase sales. You will simplify order approvals when you provide multi-level authorization workflows as part of your ordering process.

Easy reordering tools also help increase sales and improve customer retention. For example, your clients can simply upload or email Excel files to their customer portal for processing. They can save multiple lists of frequently purchased items as templates or favorites lists. They can search for additional products and add them easily using the product name or SKU.

OPPORTUNITY 6

PRODUCT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Your customers must find the automotive products they need quickly. They will want to confirm which ones are compatible with specific vehicles and equipment.

Your product catalog might include hundreds or even thousands of SKUs with extensive and detailed data. Maintaining up to date information, specifications and compliance data is a major administrative overhead.

SOLUTION 6

Online product management tools make it easy to link compatibility data to every item. Product information management (PIM) built into your ecommerce platform or integration with your own PIM software make the process simple. Your customers can use filters to find suitable products by make or model, brand or price, for example. This speeds up the ordering process and reduces incorrect orders, returns and customer enquiries.

OPPORTUNITY 7

INVENTORY VISIBILITY

Speed and visibility are essential in the automotive sector. You might deal with thousands of SKUs and running out of stock or overstocking can have a major impact. Your customers need reliable inventory information to manage their operations. Transparency gives your customers confidence to place their orders and increases satisfaction. You can also benefit from reduced enquiries about stock levels and back-orders.

SOLUTION 7

Modern supply-chain challenges are a major issue for the automotive sector. To minimize risks, you need powerful tools to optimize your inventory. Integrating inventory management systems with your B2B ecommerce platform means new orders automatically update stock levels. You'll minimize over-ordering and out-of-stock orders. Pre-set thresholds allow you to maintain minimum inventory levels and keep everyone up to date..

OPPORTUNITY 8

PRODUCT CONFIGURATIONS

If you sell complex and configurable automotive products, it's time-consuming to manually create detailed quotations. Your customers must request quotes and accurately specify their requirements. Delays and queries can slow down your sales order process and errors affect profitability.

SOLUTION 8

For complex orders with hundreds of possible combinations a powerful configure, price quote (CPQ) online tool simplifies ordering. With automated behavior-guided support you can help your customers specify their requirements online. You can include details such as order size and shipping requirements to make sure your quotes are fast, accurate and efficient. Predefined rules included in your automated process make sure customers can only select deliverable options.

Alternatively, your buyers can specify their requirements, add queries and attach documents. Accurate real-time specification and pricing minimize delays and customers can quickly see the impact of changes. You can add automated recommendations and suggestions for associated products, services, promotions and offers. Once agreed, quotes can generate purchase orders for immediate approval and processing

OPPORTUNITY 9

MOBILE SALES

As in so many other markets, automotive sector buyers use a range of digital devices to research, specify and purchase products. Your own skilled field sales representatives can also use digital tools to improve customer service.

SOLUTION 9

A field sales representative app reduces the cost of sales with quick access to customer information, product lists and pricing. Sales professionals can work online or offline and upload customer notes and order details whenever they have secure internet access. A powerful customer ordering app helps your buyers collate orders by searching or using the cameras on their mobile devices. They can simplify ordering for multiple locations or replenish stockrooms and warehouses easily and efficiently.

OPPORTUNITY 10

TRACKING AND TRACEABILITY

To maintain high quality throughout the supply chain product tracking is a valuable tool. You'll increase customer confidence with reliable and efficient traceability. You can help your customers capture, store, and manage data about product information, serial numbers, lot numbers, and expiration dates.

SOLUTION 10

You can streamline and simplify product tracking and traceability throughout your inventory, logistics, and shipment processes. Serialized inventory and order management tools make it easy to assign unique license numbers to your orders. You can flag 'serialized' products on your site or ERP system and allocate license numbers from your preferred software. Orders are then automatically tagged with the next available number and the details returned to your back-office systems.
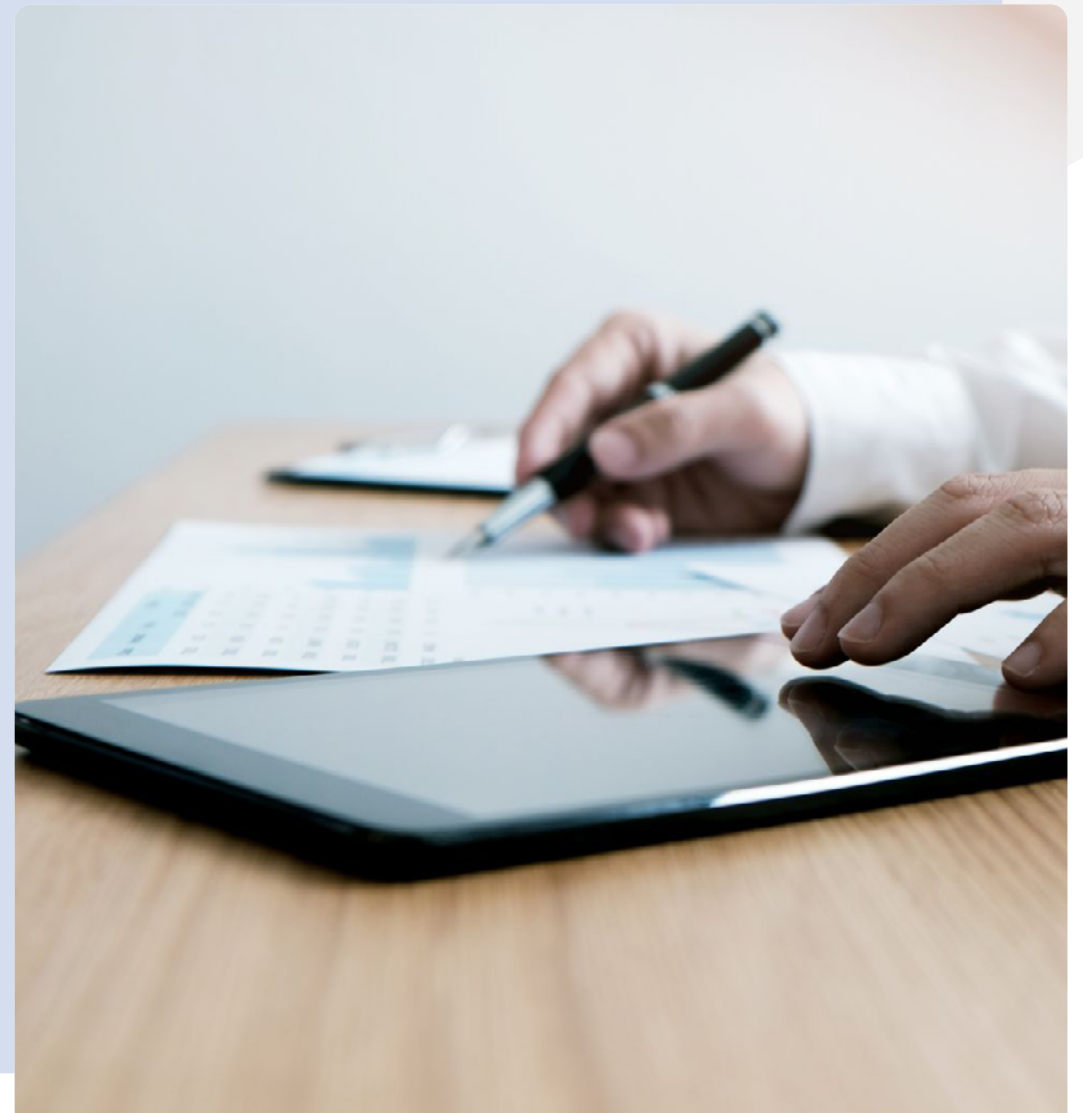
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Case Studies:

ACM PARTS

ACM Parts is Australia's largest provider for the automotive repair industry. Repairers can source all their parts, paint, panel supplies and consumables in one place. The company chose Cloudfy's comprehensive pre-built B2B ecommerce features and integrations to support its plans for business growth.
Read more

TOW TRUST

UK-based Tow-Trust manufactures and distributes high quality commercial and non-commercial towbars, kits and towing accessories. With an expanding catalog of manufacturer-specific products and increasing competition, the company chose Cloudfy's effective and scalable B2B ecommerce solution.
Read more

SAF HOLLAND

The Stara division of SAF-Holland manufactures and distributes automobile parts across Europe. The company chose Cloudfy to upgrade their B2B ecommerce solution with more robust functionality to streamline their operations.
Read more

B2B ECOMMERCE FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR FROM CLOUDFY

Materials shortages, cost pressures and supply chain challenges can all affect your sales in the automotive sector. With the latest B2B ecommerce technology from Cloudfy you can respond quickly and effectively to changing requirements.

Easy navigation, real-time inventory visibility and tailored pricing simplify your buyers' purchasing journeys. Seamless ERP integration helps to streamline sales processes, and you'll always have a clear view of your operations. Automatic order workflows reduce errors, improve efficiency and increase customer satisfaction. You can enhance customer experiences, increase loyalty and minimize costs as your business grows.

Find out why Cloudfy is the best B2B ecommerce platform for automotive sector sales.

Book a free demonstration today

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FAQs

Does my automotive business need a B2B ecommerce platform?

Yes. Online engagement in the automotive sector is increasing with more aftermarket sales taking place online than ever before. Your business buyers are increasingly happy to make even high value purchases online. However, if their digital experiences aren't good they will soon move on to another provider. They want to build and maintain relationships with trustworthy business partners who provide easy purchasing, good support, transparent pricing, and useful information.

Can I improve purchasing journeys for my automotive buyers with B2B ecommerce?

The automotive sector is complex, and products and parts must match specific makes, models and locations. Your customers research products online to find the right items at competitive prices. They want to know you have the stock they need available for fast delivery. With the right B2B ecommerce solution you can help them find what they need and place their orders efficiently.

Can I increase sales for my automotive business with B2B ecommerce?

B2B ecommerce helps your customers make the right purchasing decisions. With reliable deliveries and competitive pricing, you can help their businesses meet expectations, grow and succeed. You can help them explore your product catalog and recommend product configurations and bundles. You'll increase customer satisfaction and add to their lifetime value.

Can B2B ecommerce help my business meet changing demand in the automotive sector?

Increasing demand and tight margins put pressure on all your business processes. However, with forecast global new vehicle sales rising by 1.7% year-on-year, there are huge opportunities. As buyers place more orders online your competitors are certainly developing their ecommerce strategies to meet this demand. You don't want to miss sales opportunities by falling behind. your competitors are certainly developing their ecommerce strategies to meet this demand. You don't want to miss sales opportunities by falling behind.

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WORK WITH A TRUSTED PARTNER

To answer all these questions and the many others you will certainly have about the best B2B ecommerce software for your manufacturing, distribution, or service business the expert team at Cloudfy will be happy to help.

Cloudfy has been designed from the beginning to meet the needs of B2B ecommerce and you can launch a new site in weeks rather than months or even years. You can fully integrate orders, pricing, product and stock data with a range of ERP, warehouse and accounting systems.

Upgrade your B2B Ecommerce Stack with ease

REQUEST A DEMO   I HAVE QUESTIONS FIRST

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