



EBOOK

Webstore Maturity: Using Your ERP Data to Shortcut eCommerce Success



B2B eCommerce is expected to more than double between 2024 and 2030, but starting or even expanding a corporate online store can create a data dilemma because of the sheer volume of products. eCommerce platforms require a ton of product information to deliver a modern online shopping experience.

From product names and types to SKU numbers, descriptions, dimensions, and inventory status, just collecting and verifying all the information needed can bog down webstore projects and slow growth for B2B companies. Pressured by online sales increasing year-over-year, suppliers typically struggle with:

- Effective product data collection strategies
- Time and resources required for data scraping and webstore data maintenance
- Technical skills to implement and integrate product data management systems



Data wrangling becomes the dividing line between companies excelling in online sales and those still navigating webstore basics. The speed of success is often determined by the data strategy and source. Businesses can save time and money by leveraging their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) data to build an eCommerce platform. For example, eCommerce platforms that connect to ERPs can easily:

- Turn SKUs into unique product pages – whether it's 3 products or 3,000,000
- Segment products into groups and categories enabling product filtering
- Display in-stock data at each location, ensuring real-time accuracy
- Display customer-specific pricing based on each user login

Keep reading to understand the role ERP systems play in advancing the maturity of your webstore and see how to leverage the data you already have to drive more online sales.

Understanding Webstore Maturity and ERP Data

Webstore maturity is largely affected by data management and is segmented into three phases: Novice, Intermediate, and Expert. A mature online store means that your eCommerce platform and operations are well-connected, efficient, and capable of providing the type of customer experiences that accelerate revenue growth.

Crawl

Novice Stage

- ✓ Online catalog
- ✓ Manually taking orders for both new and existing customers over the phone or via email
- ✓ Manual order and payment processing

[Page 4 →](#)

Walk

Intermediate Stage

- ✓ Webstore for existing customers — sales team still onboards newly acquired customers
- ✓ Leveraging ERP data in its current state to populate webstore product details
- ✓ Begin cleaning data in bulk with the PIM tool

[Page 5 →](#)

Run

Expert Stage

- ✓ Webstore drives new customer acquisition
- ✓ Leverage ERP data and third-party data providers
- ✓ Ongoing product information updates and enhancement
- ✓ Internal sales and services teams utilize webstore quoting and order functionality to drive new and existing customer sales

[Page 7 →](#)

Crawl

ONLINE CATALOGS AND AUTOMATION BEGINNINGS

At this stage, businesses are just beginning their online sales journey. Much like learning to walk or ride a bicycle, the Novice stage is all about experimentation and learning.

Novice companies typically rely on static, online catalogs (like PDF brochures) to showcase their products. Orders are taken manually over the phone or via email, and payment processing is also handled manually. This stage represents the initial phase where businesses are establishing their online presence and learning the basics of website sales.



It can be difficult to evolve beyond the Novice stage. The key is to take a phased approach, serving existing customers first.

Progressing Beyond Novice: Serve Your Existing Customers First

Progressing out of the Novice stage can be daunting, because the time and technical investments of an eCommerce platform can become barriers to advancement. Many leaders and their teams are simply too busy to make a change when the status quo is adequate. While connecting ERP data to an eCommerce platform can solve the initial need for accurate information, the work required can still feel overwhelming. Plus, leaders may be concerned about not having all the product photos and descriptions needed to build the perfect webstore.

In these situations, focus first on building an online store to serve the needs of existing customers making repeat orders. Current customers know what you have to offer, and more often than not, they know what they need. Thus, phase-1 webstores don't require detailed product photos, descriptions, and sophisticated filtering options. Repeat buyers only need product numbers, keywords, or manufacturer names to find what they are looking for – data that is typically readily available in an ERP system. The key is to use what you already have and then keep building toward perfection in phase 2 and phase 3.

As an accurate source for intelligent data capture, ERPs are the best way to get webstores up and running quickly. They house information to build a functional online sales engine for existing customers.

Walk

ERPS WITH SOME AUTOMATION

As businesses progress to the Intermediate stage, they advance from crawling to walking. With more strength and agility, they know how to use their ERP data in its current state to populate webstore product details. Efforts are made to validate, correct, or clean this data in alignment with the Product Information Management (PIM) tool. They have used their webstore for existing customers, allowing their sales teams to focus on acquiring new clients. This stage signifies a transition towards more automated processes and better data management, improving efficiency and customer satisfaction.



Many companies will stagnate at the Intermediate stage.

INTERMEDIATE STAGE

Advancing Beyond Intermediate: Challenging the Status Quo

Many webstores will go dormant at the Intermediate stage. The most common reason? Leaders know they need to improve their online shopping experience, but they aren't sure where to start. In most cases, they simply aren't taking full advantage of all the advanced capabilities within their eCommerce platform. Learning more about features and functionality is typically the next step in designing a concrete plan.

At this stage, taking digital sales to the next level requires two things:

1. Finding internal efficiencies to increase profit margin-per-order and
2. Adding self-service tools to make it easier for customers to do repeat business.

For example, here at Billtrust, we help our clients:

- Offer their buyers an estimating tool to create their own job estimates
- Showcase specific vendors and products to receive manufacturer rebates
- Give their buyers the ability to pay their invoices online

Not Competing with Sales, Complementing Sales

Another common reason companies stall out at this phase is fear that the online store may compete with the internal sales team. But when used to their maximum potential, webstores actually empower sales professionals to do more, giving them more insight into what customers are shopping for.

For example, salespeople are linked to their assigned customers in the ERP and eCommerce platform, so they can be notified when their customers place an order. Salespeople benefit from this passive sales channel because it allows them to track orders, identify upsell opportunities, and reach out at the right time to ensure customer satisfaction. Additionally, sellers can use the eCommerce platform themselves to find the products for their customers – it's much easier to navigate than an ERP system!



Leverage advanced eCommerce features and remote sales management capabilities to improve both the shopping and selling experience.

Run

ERPS WITH ADVANCED AUTOMATION

At the Expert stage, companies advance from walking to running. Speed and expertise distinguish these sales leaders. The webstore becomes a more powerful tool for new customer acquisition.

Businesses leverage ERP data and information from third-party providers to ensure accurate and up-to-date product details. Ongoing enhancements to product information are made automatically, reducing manual work while maintaining high data quality standards. Internal sales teams use advanced quoting features and ordering capabilities within the eCommerce platform for both new and existing customers, showcasing a high level of integration and sophistication in eCommerce operations.

Tips for Becoming an Expert: What the Pros Do

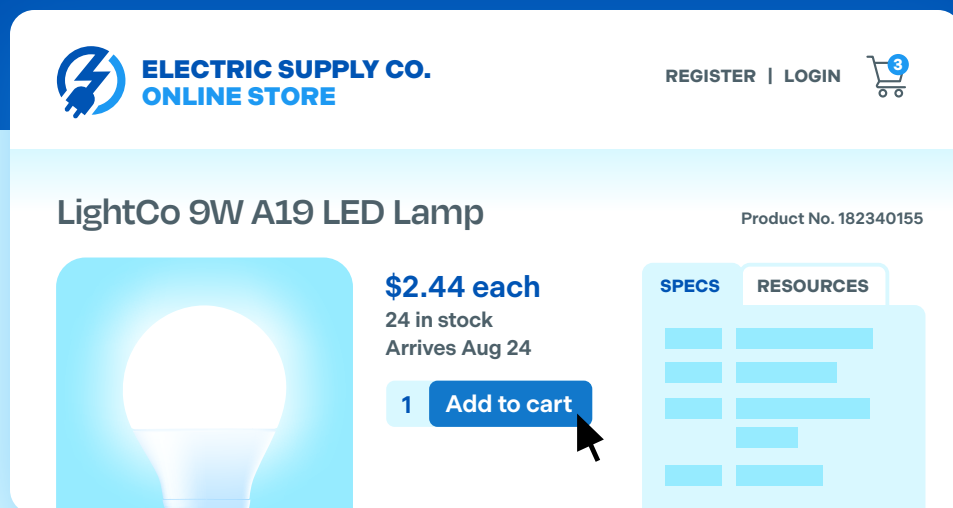
- Create specific pages dedicated to high-demand, commodity items, such as copper pipes and fittings for plumbing-supply companies. This makes it easier for customers to quickly find and buy the correct size and type for commodity products.
- Create product groups, customizing them for specific buyers. For example, product groups for jobs that contractors are completing for their end customers. This also makes products easier to purchase.
- Create vendor-specific pages that include resources like installation manuals to showcase that brand's products. This helps strengthen vendor relationships while promoting products with higher profit margins.



Billtrust eCommerce: Let Your ERP Drive Your Online Sales

Ready to advance your eCommerce strategy? Billtrust's [eCommerce solution](#) integrates directly with your ERP system to populate product pages and update inventories in real time. We help distributors, manufacturers, and other suppliers remove manual work from webstores and keep their customers happy with straightforward online shopping experiences. With Billtrust as your [eCommerce partner](#), you and your buyers benefit from:

- ✓ Automated processes leveraging best-in-class ERP integrations
- ✓ An easily configurable webstore and mobile application
- ✓ Real-time stock availability data and store pick-up information
- ✓ AI-driven product recommendations showing the next product to buy
- ✓ Unique storefronts with a personal touch for high-value customers
- ✓ Simple ways to search, buy, and self-serve, including multiple ways to reorder
- ✓ A one-page checkout experience that streamlines sales transactions
- ✓ Advanced SEO optimization tools that promote high profit margin products and enable companies to rank higher in Google search results



Billtrust's ERP Integrations

Billtrust's native integrations include Epicor Eclipse, Epicor Prophet 21, DDI System, Acumatica, Savance, Infor, and more.





HVAC Distributor Increases Revenue 38% with Billtrust

With a webstore that lacked functionality and support, Design Air found its employees spending too much time troubleshooting issues instead of consulting with customers. Leveraging integration with their Prophet 21 ERP system, Design Air now has a webstore with well-categorized data and intelligent search. Since implementation, they have experienced a 38% increase in revenue and a 25% decrease in inbound calls, freeing up time for their inside sales and support teams. [Read the full story.](#)

Ready to make eCommerce your new sales success story?

Get the integrations you need to build and maintain product information with less manual work. Accelerate your online sales journey with Billtrust.



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