

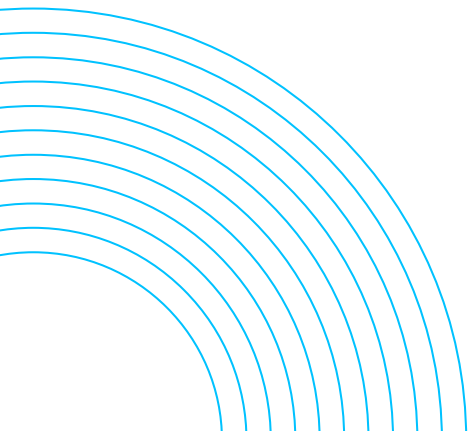
Roadmap to eCommerce success

5 steps to boost your eCommerce expansion



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Cracking the ecommerce code

Today's buyers — whether B2C or B2B — expect frictionless and engaging buying journeys. They demand a new level of reliability, completeness and consistency of product information to make confident online purchase decisions.

In addition, ecommerce continues to reshape customer focus and supply chains. By the beginning of 2021, ecommerce sales hit \$4.891 billion. And they are expected to reach about 7.4 trillion dollars by 2025. This growth shows no signs of stopping with 65% of B2B organizations across industries fully transacting online today.

Businesses must meet the growing demands for secure, convenient, and direct shopping while delivering outstanding customer experiences — the only way to differentiate themselves from the competition. How can you meet these expectations? This ebook shows you 5 steps for a strong ecommerce foundation.

Statista / McKinsey



Digital commerce in B2B

With a new generation of customers and new business models emerging, the only way forward for B2B is a greater reliance on ecommerce and the flexibility to adopt relevant trends and technologies. Today's B2B buyers expect B2C-like experiences,

prefer digital self-service and rely heavily on digital information to progress across their entire buying journey. This means that B2B businesses should focus less on hard selling – and more on striking the right balance of human and digital interactions.

80%

of B2B sales interactions between suppliers and buyers are expected to occur in digital channels by 2025

41%

of B2B buyers read at least 3 pieces of content before contacting a salesperson

58%

of B2B purchases start the buying journey with an online product search

70-80%

of B2B decision-makers prefer remote human interactions or digital self-service

Remove friction in your ecommerce customer journey

Are you asking yourself how to:

- Manage product data, rich media and branded content across complex and disconnected systems?
- Deliver more compelling product content across channels at scale?
- Reduce the struggle to use digital content in an efficient and effective manner?
- Reduce time-to-market?
- Ramp up selling in marketplaces?
- Read on to learn how to build a solid base for your ecommerce business.

Then it might be time to rethink your ecommerce strategy.



Step 1: Know your audience

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Today, 73% of millennials are involved in the B2B buying process and they expect the same personalized and seamless digital experiences, whether they're interacting with B2C or B2B brands.

Forrester



Who are the new B2B buyers?

68%

prefer to research
online on their own



66%

expect companies
to understand
their needs and
expectations

Serve your audience precisely what they want

Knowing who your target audiences are, what makes them tick and what they expect is critical to targeting them with the right content and offers.

Don't rely on gut feelings to do this, rely on facts. Information gathered over the years on your most loyal customers, regularly collected customer feedback, a look at what your competitors are doing, and testing, testing and testing in marketing efforts will allow you to get a good picture of what your ideal buyers expect.

This helps you create a fairly reliable profile of your ideal customers and target your future strategies and marketing measures accordingly.



5 ways to get to know your audience better



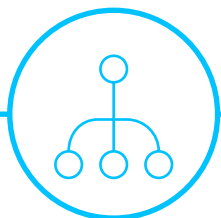
Analyze current customers

Analyze and discover what they perceive to be the most crucial benefits of your product or service. Look at your database and try to find trends: Who are they? Are they digital savvy? What did they buy and how often? Did they give any feedback? What type of content do they consume? Do they face a similar issue? Transactional data and direct feedback through polls, testimonials and product recommendations can give you a real sense of what links your audience together.



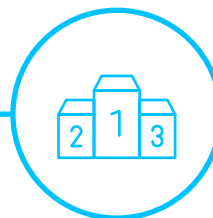
Collect customer feedback

Gain valuable insights into your existing customer base via customer satisfaction (CSAT) surveys, pop-up surveys, email surveys, social media polls, etc. Ask clear and concise questions: Are you satisfied with our product or service? How would you describe the buying experience? What challenges are you trying to solve? Be proactive in understanding your audience and how they perceive your brand.



Run A/B tests

A/B testing provides tangible insights into what your audience wants — so you never have to play the guessing game. It's a systematic way of comparing different touchpoints, contents and product presentations to see what creates the most engagement, leads and sales. For example, you may send 50% of your traffic to variation A and 50% of your traffic to variation B and track the results.



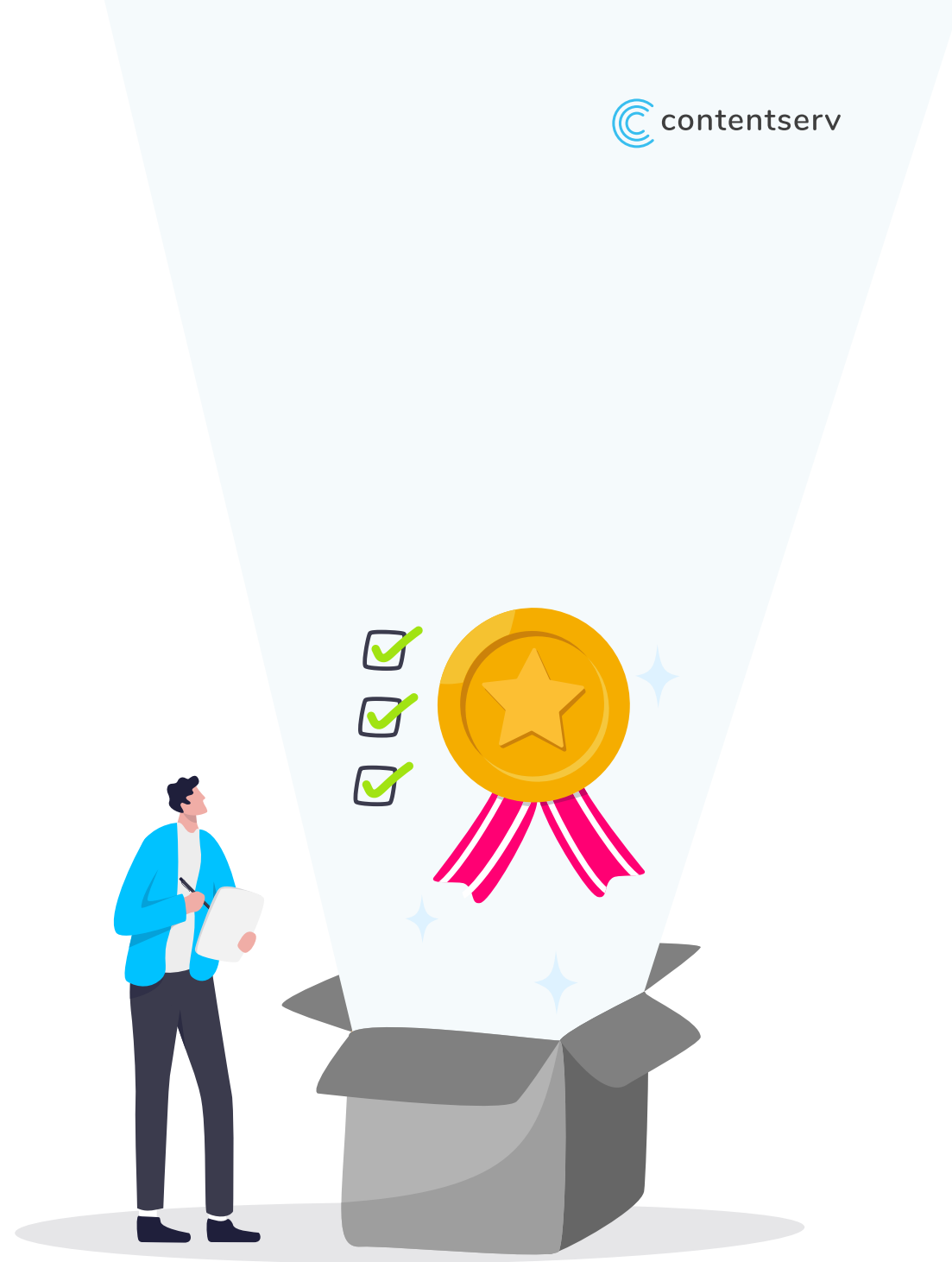
Check your competition

Look at your competitors, evaluate their brand, the advertising message and the types of marketing strategies they use. Are they reaching segments you haven't considered? How are they positioning themselves? Competitor research is a great way to identify your competitors' weak spots and overlooked market areas. You can also learn from how they market their brand to prospects. This can inspire you to find ways to distinguish yourself and fill potential gaps through your offer.



Define buyer personas

When you finally have enough data about your target audience, you can start defining buyer personas and buying groups. It's easier to create effective campaigns when you know your customers' wants, needs and interests as well as their decision process and motivation when you are addressing buying groups in B2B. Imagine your ideal customers: What characteristics do they share? What challenges do they face that you could help them solve? How do they research the products and services they need? Your buyer personas should include elements such as age, location, income level, job title, pain points and personal background.



Step 2: Improve data quality and consistency



Content can make or break your ecommerce site

Every year, poor data quality costs organizations an average of \$12.9 million. Besides having an impact on revenue, it can negatively affect how your clients perceive your brand.

Today, to successfully sell a product across channels, you'll need more than a few basic facts.

Unlike a traditional retail store where customers can try and test the product in person, ecommerce doesn't have that option. That's why buyers strongly rely on comprehensive product descriptions, stories, images, videos and articles to make their buying decision.

78%

higher conversion rates become possible through quality product descriptions

20%

of purchase failures are potentially a result of unclear or missing product information

40%

of consumers have returned an online purchase specifically because of poor product information

78%

of B2B consumers prioritize the content source's trustworthiness

Gartner

Ensuring product data quality for your ecommerce business

Transform your data

Turn multiple data sources, formats, types and versions into one consolidated, business-relevant data set. Make it easily accessible for all channels, purposes and contexts.

- **Assess** your existing data quality issues and analyze the root causes of frequent recurring data quality problems
- **Merge** critical data from multiple systems and sources into one central location
- **Use** data quality workflows to de-duplicate, cleanse, validate and normalize your product data to get a single view of master data by creating Golden Records.



Govern your data

Now that your data is clean, accurate and normalized, make sure to keep the quality by implementing a data governance strategy.

- **Define** and implement rules, processes, automations, roles, standards and metrics that ensure the efficient use of information and establish policies to guarantee consistency
- **Monitor** your data quality at all stages of the product content management process
- **Determine** a communications strategy to inform people across the organization about data governance
- **Review** your data governance policy regularly. A successful data governance program requires a continuous effort



Enrich your data

In ecommerce, your product data must fulfill and surpass the benchmarks for enhanced, robust and descriptive data.

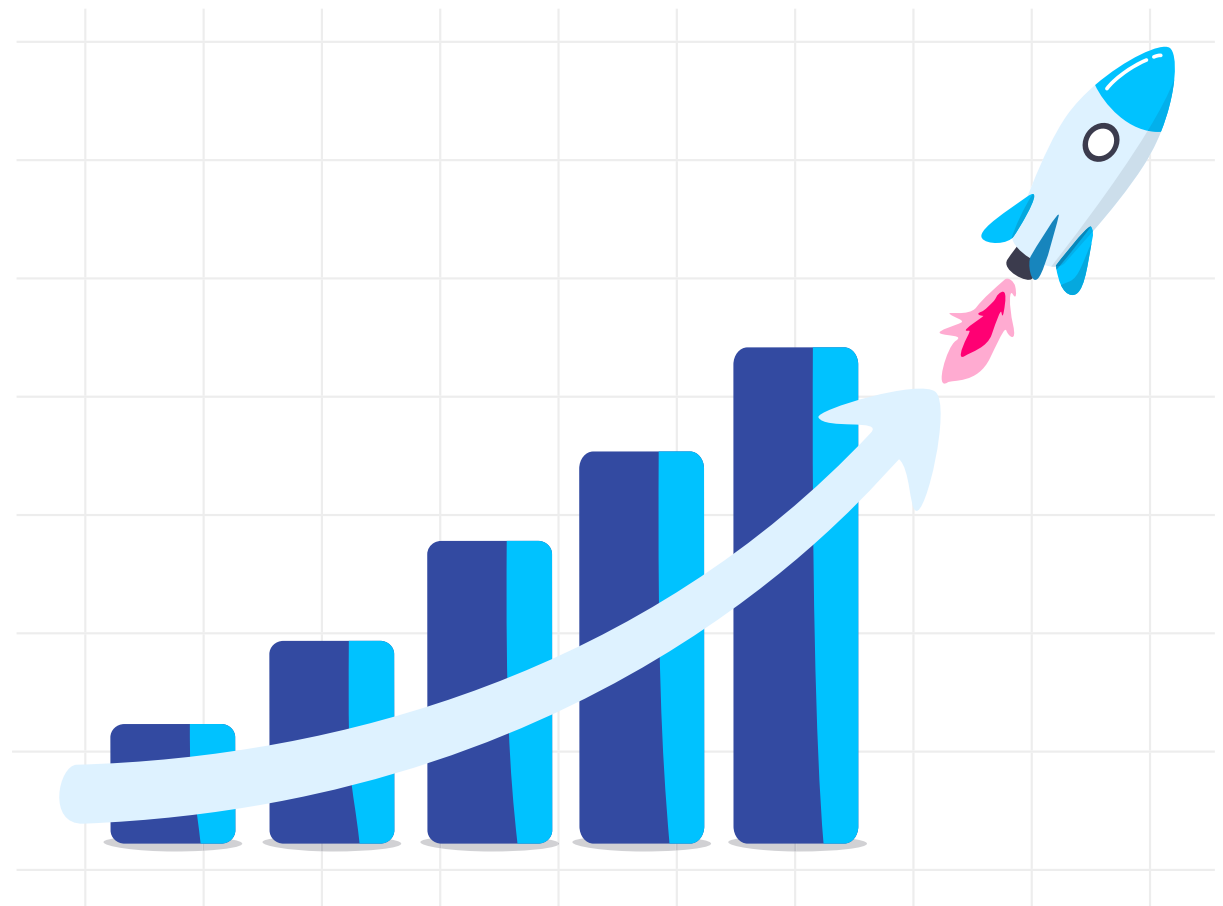
- **Identify** weak points of your product content and enrich it with relevant and current information about your product as well as emotionally engaging stories
- **Use** high-quality content such as comparison charts, graphics and videos combined with associated product information management across channels
- **Create** and manage references to other products like spare parts, bundles, upsells, cross-sells and reviews e.g., “shop the look” or “you may also like”
- **Maintain** and optimize product data attributes to boost your SEO and achieve high rankings for product detail pages and category landing pages
- **Follow** and maintain global standards for a multitude of product types. Integration with global data pools such as GDSN enables you to comply with regulations while providing rich product information



Product content powers the buying experience



Step 3: Increase your reach



Reach more audiences both where and when customers expect

Organizations that already deploy omnichannel outreach strategies enjoy 89% more customer retention and satisfaction than those that opt for more divided methods of interaction. But targeting new marketplaces and platforms is not enough to drive growth. Brands and manufacturers need to provide consistent omnichannel product experiences that exceed customers' expectations.

Omnichannel ecommerce success depends on the consistency and accuracy of your company's product data. The discrepancy of information on different sales channels leads to poor customer experiences — and a decline in trust. That's why brands need to ensure that product information is distributed to the right touchpoints, is constantly updated and aligns with the requirements of the respective sales channels. **Softtek**

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62% of B2B buyers today develop a finalized vendor list based solely on digital content.

Forrester

Building a memorable omnichannel buying experience

Provide a seamless shopping experience from the first touchpoint to the last, regardless of the channel your customer is using.

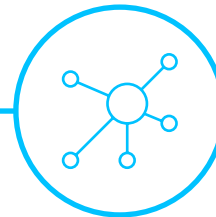


5 ecommerce tips to increase your reach and drive sales



Review your existing business model

To meet the expectations of modern consumers and implement an effective omnichannel strategy, you need to understand each of your customer touchpoints. The key lies in your customers' behavior. You'll need to gather data and map their buyer's journey, then tailor the marketing process to make it a priority to keep up with their ever-evolving needs.



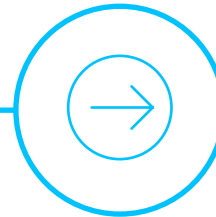
Distribute your enriched product information to all your channels

An effective omnichannel strategy goes beyond simply enabling customers to communicate with your company via different touchpoints. It's about unifying data so that customers find complete, consistent and personalized information about the same product on different channels. You can rely on high-functioning software solutions to simplify this process.



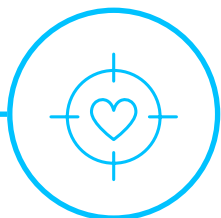
Localize your product content

When it comes to ecommerce, to engage with new audiences, you need to be able to ‘speak’ to your customers in their native language and terminology. Having product content that is both appealing and relevant for each language and culture will allow you to significantly expand your market reach, increase revenue and decrease returns.



Simplify and automate processes

By automating text generation, data enrichment and translations, ideally supported by a comprehensive PIM system, your company can significantly streamline its growth initiatives. With a PIM, you can optimize the creation process of multilingual, contextual product content, while complying with the unique requirements of each digital platform and marketplace.



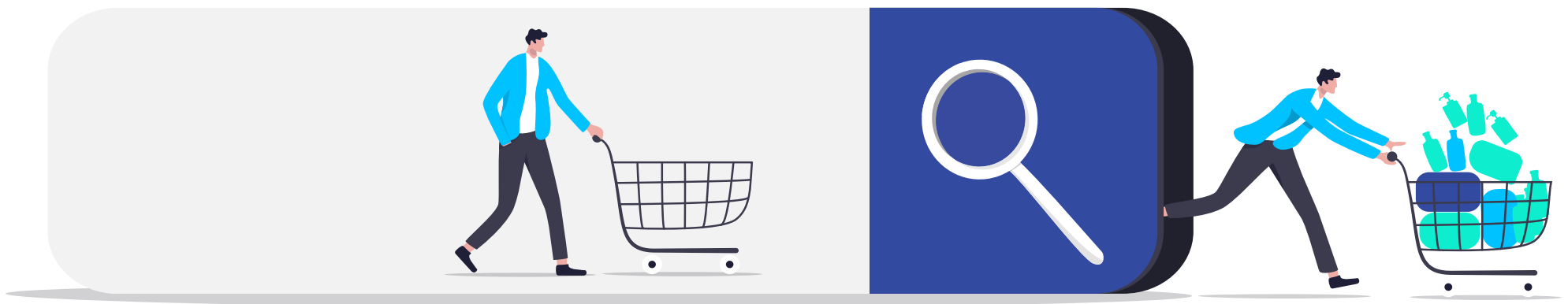
Use reviews and social validation

For customers, online reviews and testimonials are all about building trust. Word of mouth marketing is still one of the most efficient sales techniques. Customers can learn about your brand on third-party sites, like Google, Yelp and Angi. You can also interact with your audience directly on these sites by responding to reviews, answering questions and addressing any issues that arise.



Remember: Increasing your reach isn't just about offering an omnichannel experience —z it also requires providing contextual product information to match customer expectations.

Step 4: Personalize the buying experience



Meet buyers where they are and enable the next step

Customers now view personalization as the default standard of engagement.

The pressure is clearly on for ecommerce businesses that do not yet offer a personalized customer experience, but there's an opportunity for the ones that get it right.

- Deliver immediate value
- Remove friction
- Optimize the next interaction
- Drive better experiences
- Build customer loyalty

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87% of customers are now looking for a personalized and consistent experience across different shopping channels

Business Insider

How to deliver a high-impact and personalized customer experience

There is no one-size-fits-all personalization strategy, but there are ways to simplify your approach

- Share consistent, complete, reliable and always up-to-date product information from a single source across all channels
- Ensure a consistent brand experience and therefore high recognition across all digital touchpoints
- Provide relevant rich media content to illustrate complex product features and thus increase conversion rates
- Continuously identify customer behavior and actively solicit customer feedback to optimize your offering
- Link product data, digital assets, customer insights, sales data, and product performance to create targeted and ideally dynamic up-sell and cross-sell offers
- Present your product information in different guises to fit the context and preferences of the target audience rather than “one-size-fits-all”.



Key benefits of personalization for...

Your customers

- Reliable product data and information
- Greater product transparency
- Higher purchase confidence
- Personalized experience
- Emotional connections
- Seamless cross-channel engagement
- Frictionless buying process

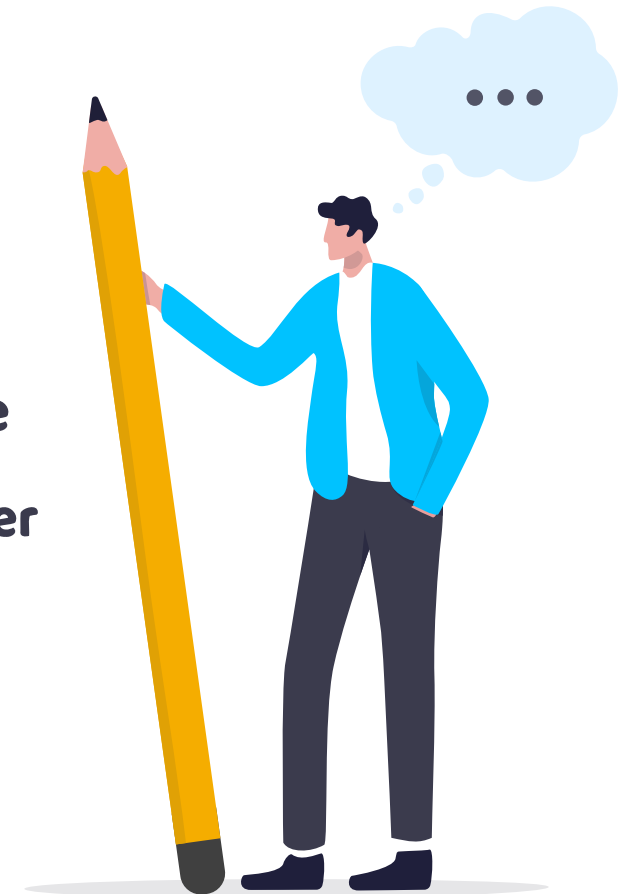
Your business

- More efficient sales cycle
- Better data and analytics
- More upsells and cross-sells
- Greater customer retention and loyalty
- Higher product page conversions and fewer product returns
- More collaboration between suppliers
- Better top-line and bottom-line results



Step 5: Create brand advocates

- I agree
- I disagree
- Maybe later



Turn customers into your biggest advocates

Acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one. The bottom line: keeping the right customers is valuable.

Creating a great ecommerce buying experience across all touchpoints and valuing, appreciating and respecting your customers as individuals will allow you to build strong relationships with your most valuable customers.

Doing so will lead to higher brand awareness, favorable word of mouth and ultimately more sales. If customers genuinely enjoy the buying experience, they are more likely to buy more and recommend you in the future.

By turning your customers into your brand advocates, your business becomes more visible to larger audiences, and you can increase your revenue while spending less resources on advertising or other traditional marketing strategies. **HBR**



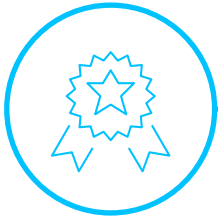
Why brand advocacy is important

Brand advocates are so enthusiastic about a brand and product that they speak out in public on behalf of a company. This will help you:

- **Build trust:** Trust in a brand or product is a crucial factor in a buying decision. Brand advocates show their own trust in your offer through user-generated content and are thus seen as a trustworthy source themselves.
- **Demonstrate the value of your products or services:** Brand advocates leave positive reviews and high-quality testimonials about your product or service. That can help convince those who are still looking.
- **Extend your reach:** Brand advocates today often use social media and most likely share information about your offer with a substantial audience that you would otherwise not reach with your marketing efforts. It's valuable no-cost PR.
- **Promote business growth:** Increased visibility and positive exposure have been proven to lead to higher conversions, more likely sales and more extensive shopping carts. Brand advocates thus promote extra profit.



5 tips to develop brand advocates



Offer excellent customer service

Customers who feel that they are in good hands and that they have received excellent service, especially when an issue has been successfully solved, will be happy to recommend you to others. This is the first step to long-term brand loyalty and credible testimonials.



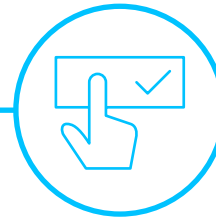
Create incentives

Encourage customers to recommend products after purchase and share their reviews on social media, by offering small incentives such as discounts or coupons in exchange. This can be helpful especially when you are still building up referrals for your products and brand.



Build a loyalty and referral program

Offer your loyal customers discounts, free products or upgrades, for example, based on points they've earned through their purchases. And, in addition, enable them to earn corresponding discounts or points by referring your products to new customers.



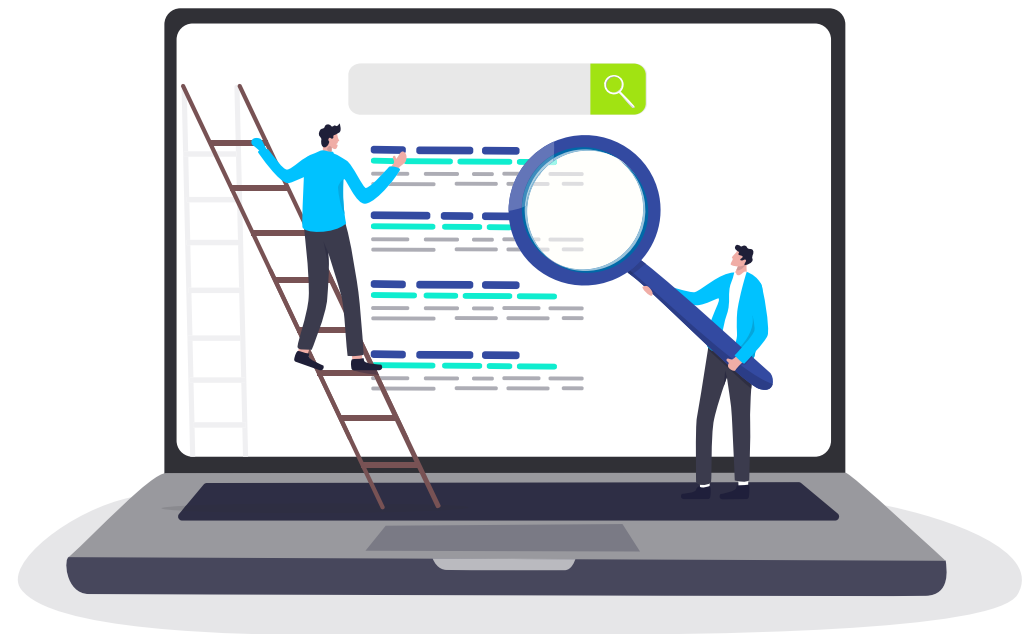
Make valuable information accessible

Engage your customers with easy-to-access, highly relevant, valuable content associated with your brand and products – the more convenient to access the more likely it is for them to share your content on social media and relevant communities and add user-generated content as well.



Take your customers' input seriously

The best way to encourage customers to advocate for your brand is to honor their opinions. Asking for customer feedback via periodic surveys, polls or, depending on your business, also in personal conversations or even through a customer advisory board, shows customers that you are confident with your company and trust their suggestions.



Achieving ecommerce success with ContentServ



Watch your business grow

By being strategic in tailoring your product content to your customers' needs and delivering personalized customer experiences, you can establish stronger bonds with your customers that will bring your brand more value over time.

To build a scalable ecommerce business, you must be able to deliver product data seamlessly across multiple channels, while leveraging insights into your customers' behavior, needs and expectations.

Your marketing processes need to be well equipped to solve challenges in a highly automated way. Solutions that make it easy and efficient to develop and distribute mere master data into rich, useful and transparent product information will help you do this.

It can be overwhelming to manage your omnichannel product content, but with the right tools, you can be on top of every campaign and channel – and watch your business grow!



Create frictionless experiences with Contentserv

Contentserv enables future-focused brands, manufacturers, distributors and specialized retailers to deliver exceptional, frictionless product experiences throughout the whole buying journey. It empowers businesses to streamline the creation, personalization and syndication of product content across multiple digital channels.

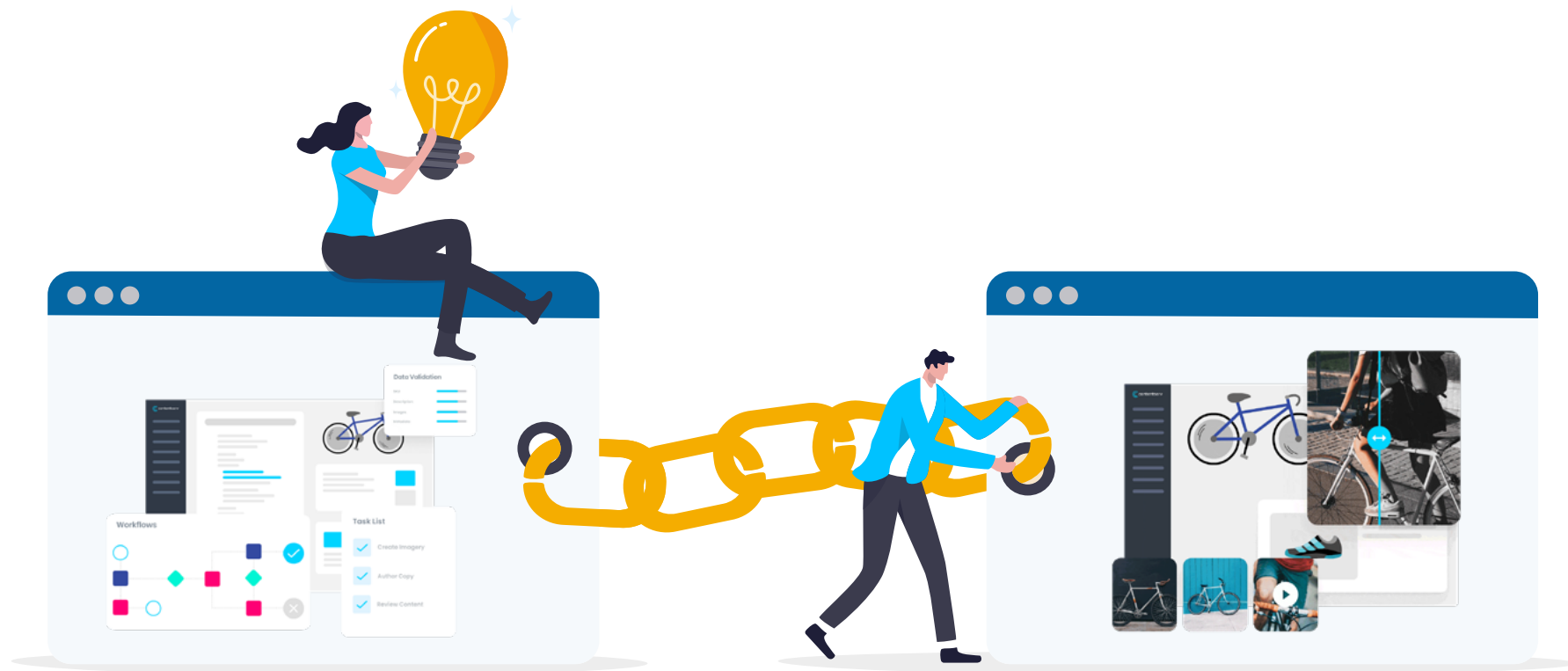
How? Contentserv's Product Experience Cloud is an end-to-end Product Information Management (PIM) solution paired with an integrated Digital Asset Management (DAM) System, that allows you to highly automate the onboarding, validation, management and enrichment of product data and digital assets in a single source of truth and deliver exciting shopping experiences to all your ecommerce touchpoints.

Contentserv helps you stand out, drive more traffic to your product pages, increase conversions and boost customer satisfaction — all with a robust, secure and scalable cloud-based platform for a low-risk, worry-free experience.



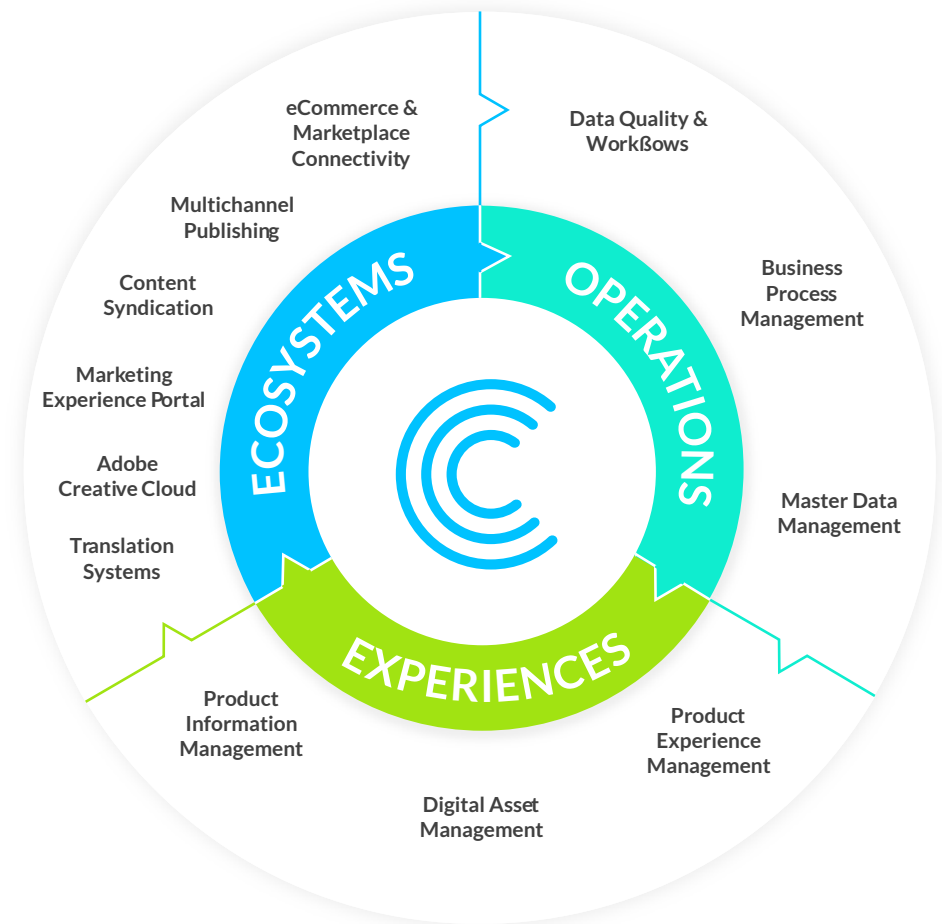
PIM and DAM – a perfect combo

Tying together your brand assets with accurate data is key to your ecommerce success — and a robust PIM and DAM integration will help you achieve this goal. In the age of disruption, it gives you the agility to create groundbreaking product experiences that set your business apart from everyone else.



ContentServ's Product Experience Cloud enables you to:

- Import, integrate and consolidate product data from multiple sources such as ERP, CRM, data pools, supplier and vendor sources and other file systems to a single repository
- Validate, clean and govern product data to ensure quality, consistency and completeness thus elevating reliability and customer trust
- Localize and enrich product content to cater to global customers, expanding market reach
- Manage and organize digital assets and provide them in various formats for multiple ecommerce channels, increasing accessibility, accuracy, actuality and brand control
- Associate and enhance product information with the right digital assets and ensure all product content meets channel-specific requirements
- Produce and deliver vibrant, engaging and contextualized product content driving compelling buying experiences





Contentserv can help guide you to ecommerce success

Contentserv all-in-one Product Experience Cloud helps you manage your product content at scale, get your products to market faster and deliver personalized product experiences across all touchpoints. Find out how Contentserv can help unleash your product information potential and deliver groundbreaking ecommerce experiences.

[Get in touch](#)

Resources

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About ContentServ

ContentServ helps brands and retailers offer customized and highly converting product experiences that delight customers, improve time to value and boost ROI.

Learn more at www.contentserv.com