

**CHECKLIST**

# Take the First Step Toward Direct Selling

Follow this blueprint to add a direct-to-consumer (D2C) web store to your B2B business.

If you're interested in pursuing D2C selling but aren't sure how to approach it, this five-step checklist is a great place to start.

## 1 Get to know your target market.

- Research competitors' D2C sites to see how they appeal to their prospects and customers.
- Run quick surveys on Facebook, LinkedIn, or other social media, offering free products or incentives in exchange for key information from respondents such as if they'd buy your product, how much they'd be willing to pay, etc.
- Develop a list of product fans to test out your ideas on content, product offerings, refinements, and more. This also can lead to built-in buyers when you do launch your site.
- Consider hiring a market research firm to survey your most promising target personas and conduct in-depth interviews.

**Direct selling by manufacturers is fueling e-commerce growth.**

### 101%

of all retail gains in 2020 were online sales. This means sales through other channels—stores, catalogs, and call centers—declined.<sup>1</sup>

### 40%

of US internet users expect to make 40 percent of their purchases from D2C brands in the next five years.<sup>2</sup>

## 2 Start building your marketing plan.

- Start marketing a month or more before your launch. The more lead time, the better.
- Conduct keyword research and use it to inform your organic and paid search strategies. If you're unfamiliar with search engine marketing, read up—or hire a pro.
- Focus on a handful of social media channels where you know your target customers are active. Don't worry too much about growing your social media accounts until your new D2C brand has a substantial following.
- Consider working with social media influencers. Some of them may be willing to co-create content with your brand.
- Gather testimonials from individuals who have tested or used the products you'll be selling to consumers.
- Don't forget **email marketing**. You can use marketing automation to set up sequences that will nurture customers and prospects automatically.
- Hire a marketer or outsource to a solution agency if you don't have an internal marketing team.

## 3 Choose the right technology.

### Minimum requirements for success

At a minimum, your e-commerce platform should:

- Offer both B2B and D2C functionality
- Let you manage all your sites with a single unified platform
- Make it easy to add new sites without installing new software (or purchasing new licenses)
- Provide managed cloud services to help you scale fast and easily handle growth in traffic or transactions
- Support a selection of payment and shipping options

### Value-added features

Consider adding more D2C-friendly features, such as:

- Personalized product recommendations
- Visual merchandising
- User segmentation and targeting
- Drag-and-drop web page creation
- Support for multimedia content
- Support for user-generated content, such as product reviews
- One-click checkout
- Mobile-first design templates
- Headless commerce with Progressive Web Apps



## 4 Fast track your deployment.

- Consider a phased approach to deployment so you can get your site to market in weeks rather than months and start learning what works and what doesn't.
- When you build requirements, consult key internal stakeholders like finance, operations, customer service, and sales as well as members of your target market.
- Group features in "must have" and "nice to have" categories.
- Choose a solution partner with extensive experience building D2C sites.
- Create product categories and taxonomies so customers can find products in as few clicks as possible.
- Define policies for consumers covering shipping, support, returns, data privacy, etc.
- Gather all your product information—including images, copy, video, pricing—and connect your product information management system with your commerce platform.
- Recruit site testers from your target market.

## 5 Measure your performance.

- Track business metrics like conversion rates, overall sales, repeat purchase rates, new customer acquisition growth, and return rates from day one.
- Continually evaluate marketing strategies and try something new when they aren't working.
- Watch site performance and work with your cloud service provider to ensure a seamless shopping experience.

### Learn more about adding direct selling to your B2B business:

[eBook: The D2C Formula for B2B Growth](#)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/article/us-ecommerce-sales/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.emarketer.com/content/how-d2c-brands-are-challenging-incumbents-with-earned-media>



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