

eCommerce Platform Key Questions for Providers

Company

1. How long have you been in this business? How many clients? How many have you lost?
2. What clients fall into your “sweet spot”?
3. What peripheral or supporting services do you offer (e.g., design, email marketing, product feeds, SEO/SEM, customization, gateways)?

Products/Services

1. Is your solution offered as perpetual licensed software or on-demand multi-tenant solution?
 - If perpetual license:**
 - a. What are the hosting requirements?
 - b. What should I expect regarding upgrades (both timing and pain)? Cost?
 - c. Do you provide customization & implementation service? Can outside third parties be used?
 - If SAAS/ASP:**
 - a. Do all tiers include maintenance and support?
 - b. How often are new features introduced?
 - c. What do I do if I need a feature you don't have or plan to have soon?
2. What is your solution built on (which OS, code base and database)?
3. Please describe your architecture.
4. How long to launch a basic site? A complex site?
5. Can third-party products be used within your platform in place of the capabilities your product offers?
6. What skills does my organization (or hired third party) need to implement this platform?
7. What is your SLA for support issues?
8. What technical support services are available?
- d. Define your redundancy / disaster recovery.

Features

1. What key features are included in your solution? (Please indicate if they are B2B- or B2C-based.)
 - a. Is there a key feature that only you have?
 - b. What features are currently missing that many of your competitors have?
2. What is your product's competitive advantage over other packages? Why?
 - a. Price? Dashboard? Ease of use? Flexibility? Don't say “all of the above”.
3. Is your platform geared strictly to B2B sales or is there special B2B functionality available as well?
 - a. Describe your B2B features.
4. How can you integrate data (product, order, customer, etc.)?
 - a. Is real-time integration possible? How?
 - b. How effective are your import tools at uploading hundreds (or thousands) of products/images at a time?
5. How easy is it to create microsites or to build overseas sites in other currencies / languages?
6. Do you have a staging or test environment and a data/content migration tool to push data and content to live?
7. What about your platform makes it search-engine friendly?
 - a. How can we use your platform to improve our search rankings?
8. How does your platform integrate with other systems (fulfillment, CMS, analytics, social, back-office systems, etc.)?
9. What third party tools do your customers normally add on? Why?
10. Do you have a management console?
 - a. What can I manage with it? Is it web-based, application-based, other?
11. Please describe your reporting capabilities, ad hoc reports, etc.
 - a. Please provide a list of standard reports.
12. Does your platform come pre-configured for shipping, tax and payment processing integration? If I don't want to use the providers you selected, what are my options?
13. What integrations exist to other systems?
14. What analytics tools does your platform include? Does it provide the ability to analyze cart abandonment, quantify browser searches, tie product purchases to search terms, etc.?
15. Is it PCI compliant and certified?

Pricing

1. What is the license fee (if perpetual license)?
2. What are the pricing schedules and what features do they include? On what are they based? Provide an annual estimate of cost, based on some performance metrics
3. How do you charge for annual support? What about maintenance?
4. Are there any hidden fees (e.g., implementation, transaction costs, revenue sharing)?

For 1000s of Best Practices and Advice across 100s of topics:
Join eCommerceKnow-How.com!

©2010 FitForCommerce