A UNIFIED ECOMMERCE PLATFORM WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS CAN BE A B2B CUSTOMER ENGAGMENT GAME-CHANGER

Bachir Kassir, president, WebJaguar

Customer engagement is challenging in any area of ecommerce, particularly for B2B companies. The complexities built into B2B shopping, combined with many companies' disparate systems being unable to communicate with each other, make B2B companies struggle to engage customers. To discuss how using the right tools in one platform can help B2B companies streamline their processes and create better shopping experiences, Digital Commerce 360 spoke with Bachir Kassir, president of WebJaguar.

DC360: What tactics should B2B companies be using to effectively engage B2B buyers online?

Kassir: Personalization and leveraging ecommerce data to drive engagement is a must. Companies should be able to leverage data to identify customers who haven't logged in for a while, those who purchased a specific product or customers who spent more than $10,000 in their last transaction, for example. Then, they can send those customers personalized offers to promote engagement.

Another way to engage buyers is through shipping rule technology. Inform customers of their different shipping options, including less-than-truckload (LTL) and standard carrier costs based on cart value, so they can make the right decisions. An abandoned cart is common with any ecommerce platform, but what isn't common is building business rules around it and embedding dynamic promotions and incentives to convert customers.

If these tools aren't part of the platform, it will be difficult and expensive for B2B companies to engage buyers.

DC360: What customer engagement challenges are most problematic for B2B companies now?

Kassir: Different tools are used for different types of engagement. And there are so many tools available. The challenge is making all of them work together to provide effective B2B buyer engagement. This is very hard to do unless these capabilities are native to the ecommerce platform companies are using.

For example, say a company is using a third-party email marketing program. How does that email marketing tool know the highly personalized data about the B2B buyer? It doesn't. This knowledge of personalized data must be real-time to be effective. Integrating B2B customer data in real time with third-party tools is not only challenging but also but costly.

DC360: What strategies and technologies should they implement to overcome these issues?

Kassir: Having the right ecommerce platform that combines these tools under one roof will solve all these challenges. On a single platform, these tools will have instant access to highly personalized customer data such as orders, logins, purchase level, cart abandonment, and purchase history, among others.

Regardless of their platform, B2B companies should have at least one knowledgeable person on staff to run and manage their ecommerce platform. This lets them maximize their benefit.

They should also work with a vendor, such as WebJaguar, that offers a platform that encompasses all the essential B2B tools and can support them with all their B2B ecommerce needs—rather than work with so many disparate vendors and extensions that don't communicate well together.

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