



CONSIDER THIS WHEN CHOOSING AN E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

INTEGRATED VS. INTERFACED:
WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR WEB STORE?



CONSIDER THIS WHEN CHOOSING AN E-COMMERCE PLATFORM

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INTRODUCTION

A web store that truly delivers value through revenue goals, stronger brand awareness or greater market reach is what businesses really go for when they start selling online.

But once the ball gets rolling, many businesses are unsatisfied with the way their existing internal systems interact with their brand new web store. They run into maintenance, administration and other upkeep limitations created by the workload of an e-commerce site and disconnected systems. And since the investment in time, money, and in getting their web store in place was considerable, starting over isn't the preferred option.

Read more and learn about how to get an optimal return on your web store investment and how to even boost the ROI of your ERP system implementation.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT WEB STORE PLATFORM

You want to start selling online. You look for web store platforms that can make this happen. You already know your internal processes and how to cover the new online activity in your organization.

The choice is hard to make as it is, especially in an emerging industry with a lot of well-known e-commerce platforms. Going with the flow, by simply choosing a popular platform and having it hooked up to your ERP system seems like a good idea.

However, if your goal is to add a profitable online sales channel, this approach – in the end – may not be such a good idea.

EXPERTS PREDICT ONLINE SHOPPING WILL DOUBLE TO ACCOUNT FOR 38% OF ALL CONSUMER PURCHASES BY 2020

38%

2020

2

THINK BEFORE YOU CHOOSE AN INTERFACED SOLUTION

You would like to have a web store with up-to-date product information that offers visibility of online activities to your entire organization. This means for example, that web orders need to be processed in your ERP, and inventory information should be made available in your web store.

Interfacing is one option that uses your ERP system as the starting point for your e-commerce site. It creates a bridge between the two systems. However, this type of project is a potential bleeder. Interfacing solutions are open-ended by nature and require business logic from both systems: your web store and your ERP. The initial investment in your ERP system has already been significant, and when the web store starts running, the requirements to adjust or extend the interfaces will keep on coming.



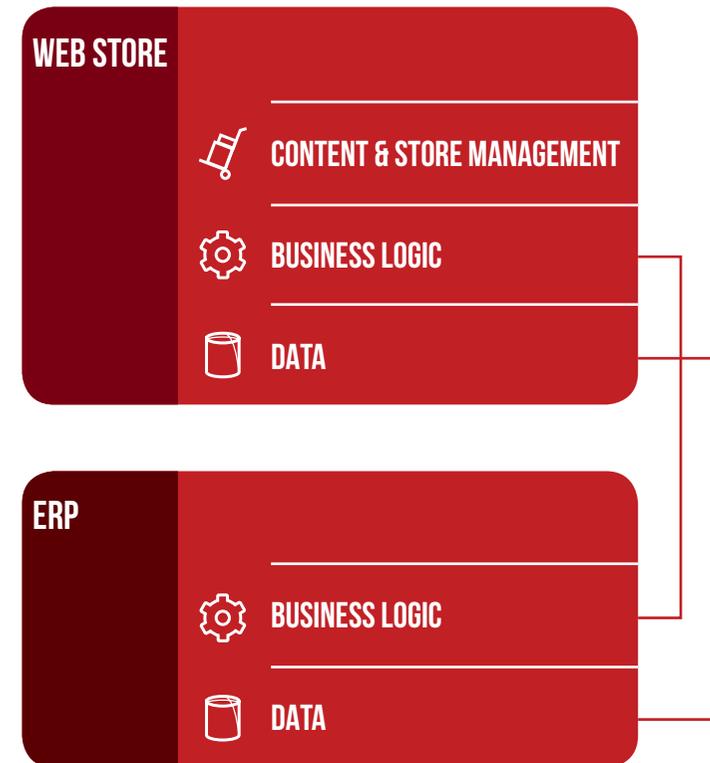
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WHY INTERFACING IS NOT AS SEAMLESS AS IT SEEMS

The answer is simple. Not one, but two systems need to be maintained: your ERP and your web store. Each one of them carries their own ability to process orders, calculate prices and keep track of inventory levels. Both the business logic doing all calculations, and the database storing all information need to be set up and configured identically, and constantly synchronized.

When your web store is interfaced to your ERP, the exact way of calculating orders in this system needs to be copied to your web store. This is necessary in order to show customer-specific prices or to handle discounts exactly the way they are processed while invoicing in the ERP system. Additional interfaces and more development in the web store are always needed to ensure these processes are able to function properly between the two systems.

If you want to ensure that your customers' experience is as pleasant and efficient as if it were done with your sales rep behind their ERP system, or through EDI (Electronic Data Interchange), all that time you invested in your ERP needs to be spent over and over again on your interfaced web store.



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YOUR WEB STORE SHOULD EASILY MEET YOUR BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

Still think interfacing is a good idea?

WHAT IF

- YOUR PRODUCT CATALOG CHANGES EVERY SIX MONTHS?
- YOU REQUIRE A SEGMENT OF YOUR BUSINESS CUSTOMERS TO PRE-PAY A CERTAIN PART OF THEIR ORDERS?
- YOU HAVE BEEN USING A COMPLEX PURCHASING POLICY FOR YEARS AND YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT OPENING UP YOUR ONLINE SALES CHANNEL FOR THESE CUSTOMERS?
- YOU WOULD LIKE TO OFFER YOUR CUSTOMERS THE OPTION TO PURCHASE FUTURE INVENTORY BY TAKING UPCOMING SCHEDULED DELIVERIES INTO ACCOUNT?

Each of these very relevant business requirements causes new interfaces and redundant development of features that are, ironically, already available in your ERP. Sure, adding interfaces may look and work like integration, but it is not.

INSTEAD

- IT IS MUCH MORE COSTLY TO SET UP.
- IT WILL PRODUCE ERRORS DURING OPERATION.
- IT WILL BE EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE TO MAINTAIN.

INTERFACING A WEB STORE WITH AN ERP SYSTEM SIMPLY RESULTS IN A LOT OF UNNECESSARY WORK.

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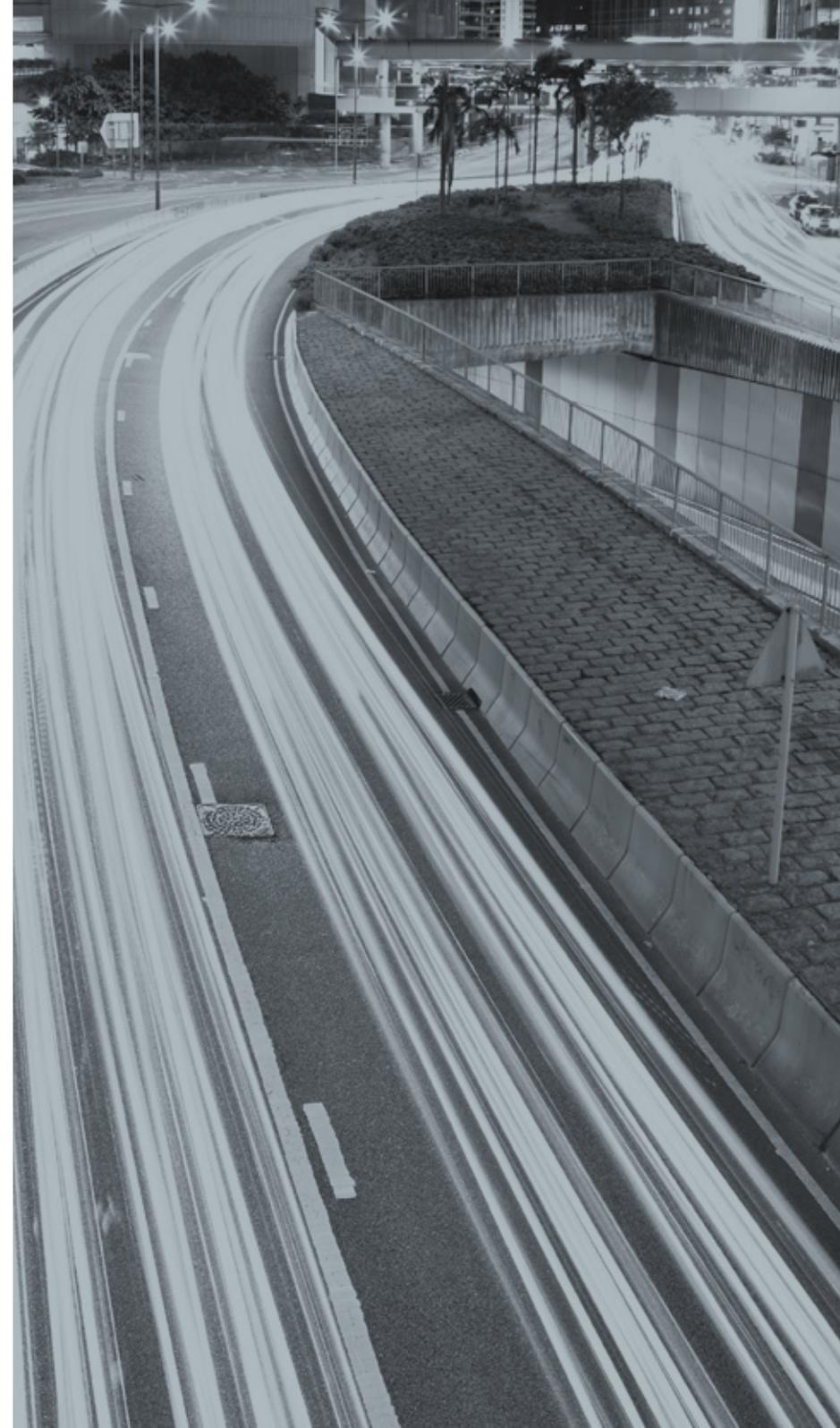
DO IT DIFFERENTLY: USE YOUR ERP AS THE STARTING POINT

Let's go back a few years. You wanted to automate your business. It was a large investment and took a lot of consideration. Finally, you purchased a system that was able to support the primary processes that contribute to the success of the company.

Today, you want your business online. It's not just a matter of setting up a web store. It's a new activity that's critical to your business. It's an additional revenue source that can deliver new opportunities.

But, where to start?

The good news is, a lot of work is already done. The automation of the new online processes you will be using was already set up during the implementation of your ERP. So, why not use all this information as the starting point for your web store?



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LEVERAGE YOUR ERP INVESTMENT

An integrated web store uses your existing ERP to calculate its orders, keep inventory levels and product information. With an integrated web store you are leveraging and re-using your ERP investment.

Let's look at your business benefits. All the information in your ERP is now available through your online sales channel as well. Online orders do not need to be synchronized because they are instantly available through your back-office, where they are processed the second an online customer proceeds through checkout.



“One system has to be leading in your e-commerce journey: your ERP”

Mike Vermeer,
Commercial Analyst of Pelican Rouge

More benefits?

Next to boosting your ERP's ROI, your integrated web store can go live in just 15 days or less, depending on which system you run. The integration – which would be a multi-week interfacing project – can then begin. No ongoing and costly implementation projects, just the import and merger of Sana objects within your ERP. Your web store can start generating revenue sooner, making the investment in an integrated e-commerce solution that much better.

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WHY 100% INTEGRATION IS KEY WHEN STARTING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE BUSINESS

An Easy-to-Navigate Catalog

An integrated web store is a natural online extension of your offline business. Its search engine takes your ERP's product attributes into account automatically. Not only for search, but for guided navigation as well. This allows customers to easily drill down very large and complex product catalogs by using search filters. This in turn, results in higher sales.

Payment Updates That Keep Up

If your ordering system automatically calculates a service charge for small orders, your web store will too. If certain business customers need to pre-pay a part of their order before it has been processed, the integrated web store will automatically ask for an online payment of that amount.

Flexibility With Adapting Product Information

Do the products in your ERP change twice a year or more and differ per customer? Your integrated web store takes that into account and adjusts automatically as updates are made to the back-office. Do you want to cross and upsell based on product relations that are already available in your ERP system? Yes, you can do that too. With an integrated e-commerce platform, it's all automatic.

Your Customers Are Taken Care Of

Do you have customers with specific prices or a complex discounting algorithm? It's all available in your web store, without additional programming or interfacing. Your customers are truly self-served, 24 hours a day.

An integrated e-commerce platform truly meets all expectations by adding an online sales channel that leverages your ERP system. Investment and time for implementation are less and running costs are lower. All excellent reasons why your integrated web store will succeed.

Integral Web Store, Integral Service and Support

Where should you go to add an online sales channel to your business? Your ERP vendor who is familiar with your ERP logic and technology? Or a web agency that knows all about rendering web pages, design and online payments?

Why not do both? Sana has a tight network of over 100 ERP vendors delivering Sana solutions worldwide that can be coupled with search engine optimization, online payment systems and / or design. And all this comes backed by over 20 years of e-business experience. It's all there.



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ABOUT US

Sana delivers fully integrated e-commerce solutions for Microsoft Dynamics and SAP that help manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers grow online, including mobile support for sales agents.

With more than 20 years of e-commerce experience and a worldwide network of partners, Sana offers a complete set of additional services e.g. advice on Search Engine Optimization (SEO), online marketing, hosting, online payment providers and graphic design that are essential to successfully run your online business.

Sana is a Gold Microsoft Partner, Certified for Microsoft Dynamics NAV & AX (CfMD) and an SAP Partner.

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