



BigCommerce
PARTNER

The Agency's Guide to Ecommerce Technology

Contents

- 3 Intro: The Build vs. Buy. vs. Lease Paradigm
- 7 Key takeaways: Guide overview
- 8 Chapter One: Benefits of a SaaS ecommerce platform
- 11 Chapter Two: Organizations best suited for SaaS
- 14 Chapter Three: Is SaaS right for your merchant?
- 15 Chapter Four: Secure and supported data migration
- 19 Chapter Five: Success story: 25% increase in business by adding BigCommerce
- 23 Chapter Six: Conclusion

An introduction

from Brian Parks, Vice President of Enterprise Solutions

The Build vs. Buy. vs. Lease Paradigm

Disclaimer: I am a religious believer in the Software-as-a-Service model and have been since 2004 when I first implemented Salesforce.com seamlessly without an IT department.

One of the best things about my job is that I have the pleasure of regularly speaking with a broad range of clients selling online, from small venture-backed DNVB's (digitally native vertical brands) to Fortune 1000 companies. In recent months, I noticed a shift in these conversations, specifically the way that businesses large and small are thinking about digital strategy.

For example, I recently spoke with an innovative furniture startup who thinks of itself as a technology company creating digital experiences, as opposed to a "product" company. It was clear their focus was on the customer experience beyond the product. It's not about couches, it's about code.

Similarly, I met with a massive multinational corporation that now has an innovation group pushing lean startup methodologies of test-and-measure across multiple business units. They are trying to get "agile," so they want to be a software startup as well.

It makes me think of when friends joke about if you have straight hair you'll inevitably wish your hair was curly and vice versa. Big companies want to act like nimble startups. Small ones want to get big. All of them want to be technology companies because "software is eating the world," and the list of the world's most valuable companies is now dominated by tech.

At one point in my career, I was responsible for the teams building our Software-as-a-Service platform. Owning product and engineering was an interesting challenge, and it forced me to create a framework for what to build, what to buy, and what to lease (i.e., integrating a partner or consuming a SaaS offering). There are many great product thought leaders that have more eloquently captured how to best think about this challenge, and I'm confident I consulted them when thinking about it.

In other words, what follows is a synthesis of what I learned from speaking with and reading commentary from dozens of experienced product leaders that I trust and helped shape my thinking on how to approach decisions about technology investments.

So here's how we made decisions.

When to Build, Buy or Lease

If the capability was absolutely core to what customers expected us to deliver or a key differentiator, we built it. If it was a common capability that we could embed with off-the-shelf software or open-source code we usually went that direction assuming that the cost of development was not insignificant or the cost of purchase was not too significant. Another consideration with utilizing 3rd-party software for a software platform was clearly the IP impact of building a platform whose value was intimately tied to a 3rd party. Lastly, if it was a common capability that could be utilized via SaaS and plugged into the platform, this was a highly desirable approach because it gave us more flexibility in the future while keeping startup investment low both in license and integration costs.

Put another way - if it was core to our value prop or a differentiator, build it.

When it comes to ecommerce, businesses face a similar question. It's not completely out of the question to hire some developers to build a completely custom site from the ground up. The cost may not even seem that daunting at first blush. It actually isn't the initial build that is the challenge, it's the maintenance and continuous development to keep up with the breakneck pace of innovation in ecommerce technology. A large, well-capitalized company could potentially afford to go this path, but I would argue it's still not an intelligent investment.

The big question here is "Are you a software company or do you sell products?" It's hard to be a software company. If it isn't your core value proposition and focus (for instance, if you sell couches or t-shirts) then, I'd recommend you don't try to be a software company.

What about buying? I look at software licenses and open-source platforms as the equivalent to “buying” because of analogous characteristics such as high upfront costs and ongoing maintenance. You’re not starting from scratch, but you now own the problem. If the software vendor adds capabilities or requires a new security patch, your technology team needs to make those upgrades. It’s a never-ending cycle of cost and attention distracting you from your core mission. Again, if it’s absolutely core to your capabilities or you have extremely custom requirements, buy a software package and plan to continue to invest in maintenance and continual customizations going forward

Now let’s talk “leasing” which in this case is referring to a SaaS subscription model. It’s a bit more challenging when you’re building your own platform to incorporate SaaS technology into the core. It is actually super helpful to keep coming back to the question of “what is our core value?” when trying to figure out what to build vs leverage a 3rd party. But, this approach has a ton of benefits including faster time to market, easier integrations with open SaaS API’s, lower upfront costs, and it’s typically easier for business users to configure, thereby reducing the burden on technology and operations teams. Often overlooked, the SaaS model also makes it easier to swap out technologies as new players and innovations come to market.

The general concern with SaaS is whether it will have all of the features or be customizable enough to meet the specific requirements you have. In almost every situation, if we or our customer could consume a good 3rd-party SaaS application to solve the problem, we integrated instead of building it. Don’t reinvent the wheel especially if it wasn’t core to your value.

So, what does this mean for an ecommerce business? If you’re building your own custom platform, you’ll likely learn that the ongoing burden of caring for and maintaining proprietary technology will quickly outpace the benefits of absolute control. I see this every day, when \$100MM+ businesses with fully-custom ERP, PIM, and shopping carts give up on keeping up.

*The pace of change has never been faster,
and business agility is now the single
biggest competitive differentiator in retail.*

For the vast majority of merchants, your viable options today are buy (software) or lease (SaaS). And the flexibility of the leasing option has grown tremendously with more and more openness in platforms, more API's, and the headless approach to developing truly custom experiences while leveraging the off-the-shelf core commerce capabilities through a solid, scalable SaaS ecommerce platform.

Ultimately, when it comes to the recipe for a winning digital strategy, it doesn't matter if you're a startup or Fortune 100 business. Hiring developers to build rich, custom front-end experiences in React.js or any other framework will only get you so far. The burden is high for those that attempt to reinvent the wheel and try to be software companies. Conversely, product-centric companies — regardless of whether they sell consumer electronics, apparel or ball bearings — that figure out how to make technology work for them, as opposed to slowing them down, are primed to shape the future of retail for years to come.

Cheers,

Brian Parks, Vice President, [Enterprise Solutions, BigCommerce](#)

Key takeaways

Guide overview

In the following pages, we'll discuss the key benefits of a SaaS ecommerce platform versus an on-premise or custom solution. These points have been collected via our enterprise-level partners, successful enterprise-level merchants who have made the switch, and our data migrations team who has migrated more than 20,000 stores from various ecommerce platforms.

If you're pressed on time, here are the top down highlights you need to know about what SaaS solutions, like BigCommerce, offer to our merchants and our partners:

- 99.99% uptime track record.
- Mitigation of DDoS attacks and proper handling of PCI compliance processes.
- 24/7 support staff to handle your technical issues so you can focus on your client's growth.
- Go-to-market launch time frame of weeks, not months, so merchants can get up and selling as efficiently as possible.
- 300+ curated store integrations and enhancements with best-in-breed partners including Paypal, HubSpot, Square, Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and more.
- Open APIs for lean and malleable custom integrations.
- Crisis mode prevention—no costly maintenance or bug updates and patches.
- Annual merchant savings in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Shopper conversion rate increases above 50% due to an increase in site speed.
- Fully supported data migration handled by experts with more than 25 years in the field.

Benefits of a SaaS ecommerce platform

There are many tools available to help take your agency to the next level. Whether you want to revolutionize how you offer social media marketing to drive merchant sales and brand loyalty, or you're looking to launch a strategic influencer campaign, you can leverage various technologies to scale your business and increase revenue.

Yet, as the ecommerce space becomes more and more competitive, clients expect a certain level of quality, performance and innovation from agencies. The non-negotiables for playing in the ecommerce game are site speed, stability and security.

For an on-premise solution, merchants may be spending hundreds of thousands a year just to ensure they're meeting the minimum set of expectations from their customers.

For merchants utilizing a SaaS backend, site speed, stability and security are built in, and part of their business contract. Below are more details on SaaS non-negotiables and contracted deliverables.

Managed uptime and security

A modern SaaS platform is managed by a professional, experienced organization that's dedicated to ensuring your online store is always up and performing at top speed. They work hard to ensure a consistent and quality user experience for your customers.

In fact, the larger SaaS ecommerce platforms typically enjoy a 99.99% uptime record over the course of years — a figure with which most on-premise solutions hosted by internal IT departments can rarely compete.

When it comes to security, ecommerce technology often requires software updates and patches to address new vulnerabilities. With an on-premise solution, the onus to do this is on the merchant or the website manager — meaning they must stay up to date with the most recent technology news and must make sure they are protected from risks such as hacks or fraud. With a SaaS solution, these updates and patches happen automatically behind the scenes, allowing managers to focus on their business rather than the backend.

At BigCommerce, our infrastructure is designed by the same architects behind Twitter, Salesforce and Texas Instruments and our product team is managed by the same person that led the first Magento Enterprise product launch. Our platform caters best to mid-market retailers used to interacting with cloud software that reduces overhead and increases efficiencies.

Denial of service mitigation

[DDoS attacks](#) can strike without warning, and can be caused intentionally by hostile outside parties or triggered by scripts that scour the internet looking for vulnerabilities. But when a store is hosted online with a SaaS provider, DDoS mitigation is handled for you, providing better protection than most self-hosted providers can offer.

PCI compliance

Credit card data is very sensitive, and PCI compliance (the process of ensuring your ecommerce platform is securely dealing with card information) is an incredibly expensive and time consuming endeavour that most retailers shouldn't try to handle themselves. With a SaaS platform, it's handled.

User experience best practices

SaaS product teams have learned how to create an optimal, frictionless shopping experience through in-depth research and professional A/B testing. In addition, the easily updated themes available on a SaaS platform allow stores to stay on top of ever-changing best practices without facing development charges each time they want to test a new look.

BigCommerce works closely with leading design experts to deliver the most flexible storefront development environment on the market. This new framework delivers themes that convert and scale as a business grows and has tools that let developers build highly customized and unique storefronts. These tools include new capabilities like browser sync to centrally test updates to a site across multiple devices, a development environment that allows developers to make and test changes without impacting a live store, themes that can be built to deliver customized customer experiences, and integration with a suite of search engine optimization and conversion tools proven to increase sales.

Dynamic performance scaling during high traffic

A quality SaaS provider can handle massive amounts of traffic that would put self-hosted solutions down for the count. During the holidays, for example, many self-hosted solutions become unresponsive as their networks struggle to keep up with traffic spikes. A good SaaS solution builds networks that can handle peak traffic, meaning your store is up when your competitors may not be.

As proof, BigCommerce clients experienced 100% uptime throughout the past four Cyber Five holidays during the Thanksgiving to Christmas selling season. In addition, during a major sporting event advertisement, BigCommerce supported more than 9 million visitors within four hours to one site — all without compromising the uptime of any other site on the platform.

Professional, knowledgeable support staff

SaaS providers like BigCommerce employ knowledgeable support teams who know their software inside and out, meaning merchants don't have to hire, train and maintain their own internal IT team to manage their shopping cart and keep their online store up and running. Often, the more experienced account reps and technical teams are also well versed on commerce topics and can provide you with endless insight to help you grow your business. In addition, many SaaS platforms offer dedicated account managers who essentially serve as expert ecommerce advisors, giving customers and partners the benefit of working with someone who truly knows their business.

For agencies, the BigCommerce Partner Program takes support one step further by offering hands-on and personalized help from a library of online resources, as well as dedicated account managers and content marketing resources.

Launch in 1/3 the time

The ability to go to market faster gives you an edge on your competition. With a SaaS solution, a new enterprise-level store can launch in a third of the time it takes to do so with a custom or on-premise solution. Even stores with hundreds of thousands of SKUs can launch on their timeline, rather than waiting on a six-month or longer setup process required of a custom or on-premise solution.

Organizations best suited for SaaS

The disruption of the traditional on-premise and self-hosted ecommerce paradigm began in 2010, when the world's most popular SaaS shopping cart offerings were just getting off the ground.

Since then, modern SaaS platforms have continued to improve in overall product sophistication and customer support. They've become increasingly well funded, more technically adept and capable of hosting impressive, global infrastructures.

In this section, you'll find everything you need to know about the differences between SaaS and on-premise solutions, and which one might better fit your clients.

What type of organization can benefit from a SaaS platform?

A SaaS ecommerce platform is not going to be the right fit for every organization. For example, they don't work well for retailers who also double as a wholesaler or distributor, those who have multiple warehouses operating in multiple countries and languages, or merchants with significant dependencies on multi-million dollar fulfillment automation or ERP systems. Such businesses often require extremely complex customizations to their shopping platforms that render most SaaS platforms infeasible.

Aside from those scenarios, SaaS platforms are flexible and scalable enough to meet a wide range of business needs.

Those serving as parent companies to several ecommerce sites

Many high-volume retailers have stumbled upon a SaaS solution when looking to quickly test a new product, brand direction or competitive offering. Due to the simplicity of the backend, these retailers often implement the SaaS platform throughout the entirety of their owned and operated sites.

BigCommerce functions as an approved vendor for several Fortune 500 parent companies with multiple ecommerce sites. For these companies, the unit economics to host multiple sites with an on-premise or customer solution do not add up. Each site would cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. With a SaaS solution, your entire workforce can be trained on one cloud ecommerce solution — and launch multiple stores or provide proof of concept in an agile fashion.

Those looking for feature richness

Many SaaS platforms have come a long way in terms of feature richness, customizability and scalability. They are an excellent fit for the vast majority of SMBs (businesses with 1-100 employees and less than \$50 million in annual revenue) that want to set up an online store quickly and easily. SaaS is perfect for companies that want to offload their hosting and management burdens with a minimum amount of upfront expenses and maintenance costs.

Perhaps surprisingly, the best SaaS ecommerce platforms also make sense for larger enterprises with annual revenues from \$50 million to \$1 billion, provided that they have sizable investments in their ecommerce back-office infrastructures. For the fit to make sense, the organization needs to have appropriate expectations about what a SaaS commerce platform should be used for and what it shouldn't — at least in terms of utilizing a modern n-tier architecture where functions in applications are segregated into tiers to allow for more flexibility.

For example, by using a modern product information management (PIM) tool to power multichannel publication needs and manage product data, a larger organization can connect the rest of its legacy ERP systems (i.e., accounting, customer-relationship management (CRM) application, inventory, procurement, distribution and fulfillment software) to a modern SaaS platform without having to sacrifice the features or complex integrations typically reserved for on-premise offerings.

Those looking for easy integration and automation

A SaaS commerce platform for a \$50M+ organization should be used as a cost-effective, single component in a broader omnichannel architecture that's largely powered through automation, much like an ERP or a PIM.

Since a SaaS commerce platform generally offers APIs, its product, customer and order data can be automatically manipulated both inbound and outbound. This allows you to develop customizations in other parts of your ERP infrastructure, keeping the shopping cart lean and malleable.

Those looking at ecommerce as a spoke, not the hub

One of the objections enterprise-level businesses often have about SaaS ecommerce platforms is this: the platform, they say, is just too rigid and offers no access to the underlying source code. Those who tend to favor on-premise and self-hosted platforms also say that SaaS solutions lack a host of ERP-related features (i.e., customer management, product management and order management), and believe that SaaS management tools are too simplistic or don't offer granular control of product and order management workflows.

Rebuttal: if you're using the SaaS platform in a broader scale context by letting it power your shopping cart functionality and connecting it to other systems for back-office functions, it can absolutely offer great utility and economy.

Those wanting a modern design & excellent customer experience

As an agency, you should consider a refreshed store design and updated user interface at least once a year for all of your merchants. For high-volume SMBs or mid-market companies, this should be done once a quarter. SaaS frontend templates are extremely flexible, and if the ecommerce platform is used as one element of a broader ERP solution, a site can be reimagined, redesigned, flushed of product and order data, and fully re-deployed in a short period of time.

Is SaaS right for your merchant?

SaaS platforms save merchants from paying extra in licensing fees, patching vulnerabilities and completing auto upgrades.

Successful businesses are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars by migrating from on-premise or custom ecommerce solutions to SaaS. That freed-up revenue is great for agencies, because merchants often shift their spending to your own services after seeing that there is a lower total cost of ownership.

So is SaaS right for your merchant?

Use this checklist to understand whether or not it's time for them to make the move to SaaS.

- ✓ **They sell via one or more retail B2C or B2B ecommerce storefronts.**
SaaS platforms are a great fit for most B2C and B2B merchants. Brands currently using SaaS over on-premise include Cetaphil, Josie Maran, Schwinn, Payless, Toyota, Gibson and many more.
- ✓ **They need to integrate with best-in-breed applications to meet ever-changing customer expectations and increase conversion.**
SaaS platforms integrate with hundreds of industry-leading applications, from inbound marketing solutions like HubSpot and CRMs like Salesforce to social advertising on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. New integrations are regularly added to help keep merchants ahead of the curve.
- ✓ **Their business currently lacks IT resources or pays for third-party IT support.**
SaaS platforms ensure fast, reliable and scalable performance without significant IT costs.
- ✓ **They want to increase brand awareness and improve conversion.**
Modern SaaS platforms include the tools needed to scale business, including single-page checkout, faceted search, social selling and more.
- ✓ **They want to both increase business productivity and lower the cost of doing business.**
SaaS platforms remove the need for software or maintenance overhead, saving merchants hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs. These platforms also allow merchants to focus time and energy on marketing and customer strategy, rather than having to handle frequent IT issues.

Secure and supported data migration

Migrating an enterprise brand's online presence from one ecommerce technology to another is all about mitigating risk. Slow and steady, fix what is broken, don't let anyone do anything radical chasing the latest fads or pushing the envelope into anything black or even grey. Keep your IT department from inadvertently destroying your SEO rankings, customer experience and trusted checkout process.

For mid-market retailers, the goal is often this: let your competitors test out the newer, more cost-effective software. We'll follow suit if it works. Up to this point in this guide, we've been proving to you that it does. Other agencies are already saving hundreds of thousands of dollars on technology, spending those savings on marketing efforts and merchant acquisition and likely coming really close to out-competing you.

So, what are you waiting for? Likely, you're resting between a rock and a hard place — not sure how to migrate to marketing a new ecommerce platform quickly, without failure, and while still continuing to act on all your other initiatives within your agency.

At BigCommerce, we understand those concerns, which is why we've built out an internal team that supports in the onboarding of each and every one of our partners.

With BigCommerce, it's an earnest partnership. BigCommerce account execs truly co-sell with agencies, adding 150-200 enterprise clients per quarter. Our teams collectively work to bring you more business.

BigCommerce takes time to understand your merchant acquisition goals and values before advocating on your behalf. Our partners have an increased win rate because BigCommerce solution engineers sell based on the right partner for the project.

In working with so many brands, we've learned that every single online store is unique in their offering and their ecommerce needs. We make things happen quickly. Our on-demand support, transition tools, and import/export function brings merchants on to the platform at record speeds.

90% of BigCommerce enterprise clients launch in under 90 days.

In all, BigCommerce and our global team of partners provide a rare service within the ecommerce industry, and we're one of the only SaaS ecommerce platforms to offer it.

In the course of performing so many migrations with so many partners, our team has spoken to a diverse group of merchants, walking them through the process of moving to a new platform.

Below are the top five myths we've heard from merchants about data migration.

DATA MIGRATION MYTH #1

We have great engineers. We can do it ourselves.

Even if a merchant has a great developer, our experience has taught us that the first time they undertake an unfamiliar task like this, it rarely goes according to plan. Anybody who has tried to renovate their own house knows how steep the learning curve can be. Wouldn't your time be better spent growing your business and serving your customers while delegating your migration to an agency with a platform that can get it done quickly and correctly?

Data isn't something merchants want to risk, and we've heard our fair share of self-migration horror stories. When they're talking about securing and improving their financial future, they can't afford to let their ego get in the way. Instead, they need to trust their migration to an agency alongside an industry-leading team with more than 20,000 successful migrations completed.

DATA MIGRATION MYTH #2

We miss out on sales while you migrate our data.

A store never goes offline during the migration process — not even for one second. We do all the work on the new BigCommerce store, then give merchants as much time as they need to customize settings, test the site and train their team. When they're ready, and only when they're ready, they can simply click a button to launch the store — complete with all the years of data accumulated, as though it had always existed on our platform.

While all of this is happening, the original store stays live on their current platform. We don't require that it come down, and we actually advise against it. We understand that uptime is one of the most crucial factors to gaining and maintaining consumer trust, so all our work can happen with no downtime required.

DATA MIGRATION MYTH #3

We'll lose our design if we migrate.

Is your merchant worried about losing their custom design? They don't need to be. BigCommerce's open template files allow merchants to bring custom design elements to new stores, and agencies are always available to step in and ensure that it happens seamlessly.

DATA MIGRATION MYTH #4

When we move the store to a new server, we'll lose all our traffic.

It is true that moving to a new server, even when using the same domain name, can impact search engine rankings if done improperly. The good news, though, is that people move servers all the time, and search engines like Google have best practices which mitigate the effects.

BigCommerce follows those best practices to minimize all controllable risk. We properly implement 301 redirects for each of your product and category pages, and can even replicate the URL structure of your previous platform. Our goal is to move your product data with the same search ranking foundation you had built on your previous platform. That way, our SEO-friendly platform can quickly drive your traffic to new heights.

Migrating means we can clone our store exactly.

No, a merchant cannot clone their store exactly. We can, however, migrate all existing data from your current ecommerce store to your new backend. In fact, we make sure that happens without opening you up to any potential issues or liabilities.

As for a store's look and feel, merchants typically think about leaving their current platform because it's lacking in some way, so what would they want to recreate those same shortfalls? The quicker they embrace the idea that it requires some change to improve an online business, the quicker they can benefit from migrating to a fully featured enterprise solution like BigCommerce. We offer a wealth of next-level features that will ensure the transition is as painless — and profitable — as possible.

For instance, with dozens of integrated payment gateways, you'll rarely need a payment option we don't offer. Chances are that we have an integration with the payment gateway you are using right now, and you may even find new options like [Square](#) and [PayPal powered by Braintree](#) that you like more.



In all, BigCommerce offers more than 300 one-click integrations with leading software providers like [SurveyMonkey](#), [HubSpot](#) and [Salesforce](#). That makes it easy to integrate with the tools you already use, plus add new tools to stay on top of the latest industry trends.

Success Story: 25% increase in business by adding BigCommerce

CASE STUDY

Brand Labs grows agency revenue 25% with BigCommerce

App integrations, design flexibility and customer support deliver best-in-class results

- ✓ 25% agency revenue growth in one year with BigCommerce
- ✓ 90% of new and re-platforming clients choose BigCommerce
- ✓ 100% employee support of transitioning to BigCommerce as offered solution

Introduction

Dane Downer and Kevin Harman started an ecommerce solutions agency in a roundabout way. Downer first worked with Harman to create an educational and lead-gathering website for the manufacturing company Harman's family owned.

This work piqued their interest: why not try their hand at ecommerce? They launched RedHatsandMore.com, a product site for members of the Red Hat Society — and the rest is history. The success of the website spawned what is now Brand Labs.

The Rochester, Michigan agency works with wholesalers, manufacturers, and retailers on building, developing, relaunching and marketing online businesses. Notable clients include Apple reseller Mac of All Trades and Autograph Foliages, a high-end artificial foliage and holiday decoration company that sells to theme parks, movie sets, and hotels.

After growing out of two past ecommerce platforms — including one self-built model — Brand Labs evolved into a partnership with BigCommerce: enabling their scale and innovation, and ultimately bumping up their bottom-line.

Here's how.

Business Goal

When Downer and Harman started RedHatsandMore.com, they built their own ecommerce platform from the ground up — which is no easy task.

"It worked well and helped us move ahead of our competitors, but we were spending more time fixing and updating it than we were on our actual business," Harman says.

The manual work was halting progress, and losing them business. They went in search of a new solution.

When Brand Labs first launched, Downer and Harman quickly sought a partner with a pre-built platform they could put clients on. The resulting relationship with an early innovator worked as a quick fix, but it didn't evolve. The team once again ran into limitations.

"We became so handcuffed in terms of what we could do. We got tired of having to say no to clients," Harman says. "They didn't provide what we needed and what our customer needed."

"The platform provider also offers professional and marketing services — the same services Brand Labs offers. That makes them our competition," Downer remarked.

It became clear to the Brand Labs team that they needed a change — fast. As their business was quickly ramping up and customer ecommerce demands grew, they began their search for a new platform solution that would provide the functional flexibility and partner support they needed to bolster their growth.

That's when Brand Labs turned to BigCommerce.

Finding the Right Platform

Brand Labs saw BigCommerce as a leader in B2B ecommerce.

"The co-founders were aware of BigCommerce for years, but what really sealed it for us was their commitment to the B2B space. We felt like our business models were so aligned. It was a natural choice," Harman says, adding that Brand Labs typically works with companies with annual revenues of \$2 million to \$50 million.

The BigCommerce platform shattered the operational roadblocks of the previous platform. It was a big win.

"We showed BigCommerce to our development team and they came back saying, 'We like it.' They had not been happy working with the archaic structure of the previous platform where changes and integrations involved crazy workarounds," Harman says, adding, "My devs are 100% behind it."

Workflow-optimizing app integrations gave Brand Labs the flexibility and innovation they deserve.

"The ShipperHQ, Smile.io, Yotpo, AutoResponder Max and Nextopia apps that integrate with BigCommerce do wonders for our clients. With other platforms we needed custom integrations for some of these products," Harman says.

BigCommerce removed the resource-heavy work, allowing Brand Labs to focus on more opportunities to gain more business.

Probably the biggest BigCommerce benefit: Brand Lab's customers with content in WordPress don't need to port it. Conversations with prospects looking to re-platform have become much easier.

"We feel confident we are putting the best platform in front of them," Harman says.

Big Merchant Results

Downer and Harman say Brand Labs is slated to grow revenues by about 25% this year, and they attribute a part of that to BigCommerce. Nearly 90% of new and re-platforming customers are choosing BigCommerce.

When it comes to exceeding expectations and decreasing development time, BigCommerce takes the cake.



Our entire team is BigCommerce focused. It's profitable for us, it takes less of our time to develop, and customer service from BigCommerce is great. - Kevin Harman, CEO

This opens Brand Labs to serving mid-market companies with a global presence." They are multi-site, single inventory companies that would have needed an enterprise solution in the past. BC is a good fit," Harman says.

The success doesn't stop there: Brand Labs customers are also seeing the results.

Within months of launching on BigCommerce, Mac of All Trades has already seen boosted revenue and conversion rates are the highest they have ever been.

Another merchant, Autograph Foliages, saw explosive growth when they moved to BigCommerce. Brand Labs was able to tie in a backend discounting tool into the platform to provide the same service customers received if they called for a quote. Online selling has helped the company grow by seven figures in revenue in the past year.

One of Downer and Harman's favorite case studies involved custom chocolatier, Bon Bon Bon. The company was on a modern platform that Brand Labs works with. Product customization was key, but the platform didn't have the right tools for the job.

"It wasn't easy for a customer to build a custom box of chocolate," Harman says. The business also struggled with the lack of design flexibility. "The design didn't reflect the owner's personality," adds Harman.

In a re-platform to BigCommerce, those issues were quickly solved. Brand Labs designers ultimately used BigCommerce to create a site that works like the owner envisioned. "Their sales have gone up dramatically."

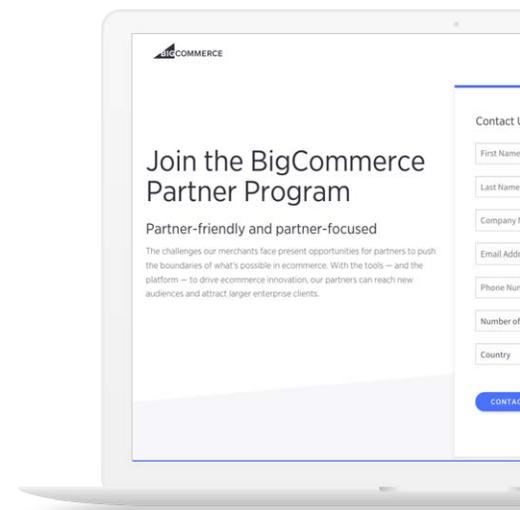
The Brand Labs business continues to see growth using BigCommerce. Harman and Downer are looking forward to putting more customers on BigCommerce, especially now that the platform has a full-featured plug-in to WordPress.

"We're having a lot of conversations around that and love that aspect. BigCommerce is really focused on content which is really needed in ecommerce."

Conclusion

The ecommerce technology you use within your agency to power the ecommerce needs of your merchants can be a make or break decision when it comes to the overall profitability of your business. Omnichannel operations are no longer a nice-to-have. They are a requirement for scaling businesses of all sizes. That doesn't mean, though, that omnichannel operations must be expensive. There are cost-effective solutions out there that allow merchants the flexibility to be agile in their marketing and customer retention campaigns — while also ensuring that the site is always up and live, the checkout process meets current standards, that the PCI compliance is taken care of and that every new industry shift, curve and pivot will already be accounted for within the backend.

Here is the BigCommerce SaaS promise to our partners: using SaaS will lower the total cost of ownership, increase security, and ramp up time-to-launch for each and every one of your merchants.



This shift will potentially result in a world of success for your agency, as merchants tend to shift funding towards your own offering and specialities.

The BigCommerce Partner Program offers agencies an opportunity to build a robust base of merchants as clients, with steady support and enablement for all stages of growth.

Learn more about how you can join and start offering SaaS to your clients.

[BECOME A PARTNER](#)