Launch your BigCommerce Site into the 25th Percentile

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Introduction

Recently on Apruve's blog, we discussed five high-level suggestions for improving your B2B e-commerce website.

We based these suggestions off of data we uncovered while creating our 2018 Apruval Rating Report. Throughout this study, we found that many - if not most - B2B companies are falling short in their e-commerce initiatives in at least some way or another.

(In fact, it's fair to say that many B2B companies, unfortunately, are falling short in more ways than one.)

To supplement this high-level content, we decided to create a more in-depth guide, focused specifically on helping B2B companies using **BigCommerce** to get the most out of everything the e-commerce platform has to offer. In doing so, these companies can enhance their customers' overall experience with their brand - and keep them onboard for a long time to come.

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LAUNCH YOUR BIGCOMMERCE SITE INTO THE 25TH PERCENTILE
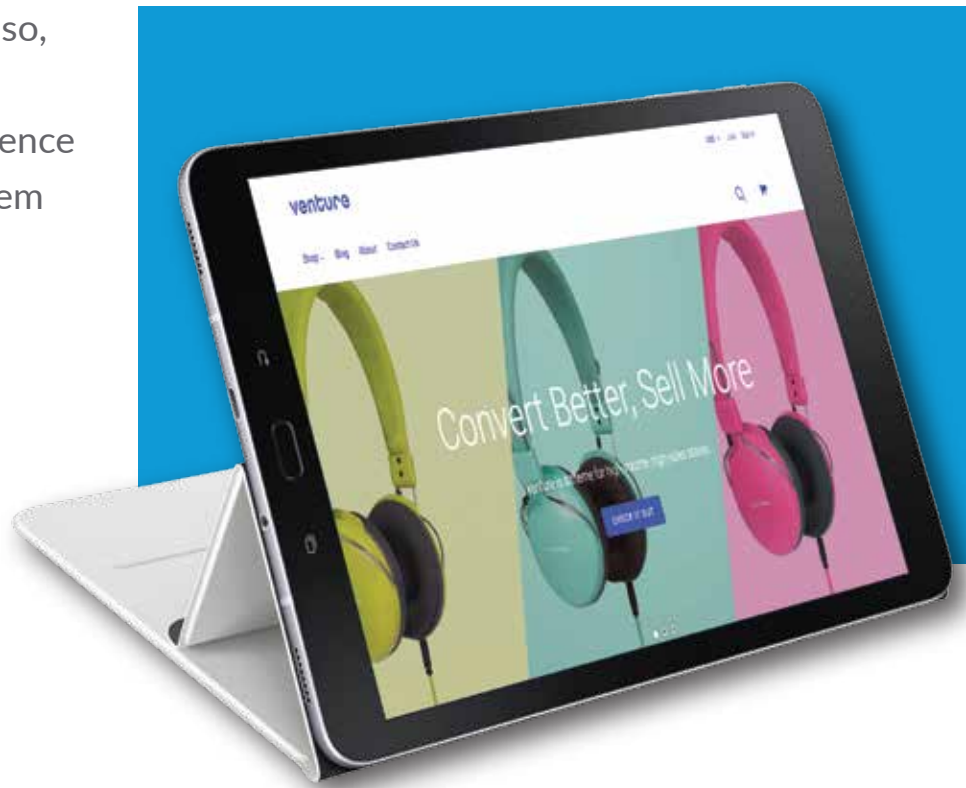
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The main goal

How to put your B2B BigCommerce site into the top 25 percentile

As we mentioned above, we at Apruve have recently discovered that a sizeable number of B2B companies that use BigCommerce for the e-commerce side of their business simply aren't taking full advantage of everything the platform has to offer.

The key areas in which companies often fell short are as follows:

MOBILE RESPONSIVENESS

PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY • VIDEOGRAPHY

PRODUCT REVIEWS

ORDERING • PAYMENT • DELIVERY

Throughout this guide, we'll take a look at some of the findings from our study, explain exactly how many companies are falling short in a certain area, and provide specific instructions as to how to remedy the issue using BigCommerce.

Let's dive in.

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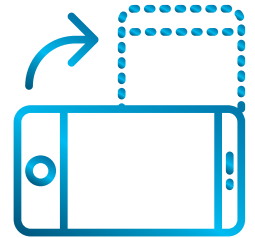BIGCOMMERCE

Make your B2B e-Commerce site mobile responsive

The need for B2B companies to develop an e-commerce website that is fully functional on any and all mobile devices is becoming less of a "nice to have" and more of a necessity as we move further into the digital age.

According to data collected in 2017 by BCG:

80% of B2B buyers use mobile devices for work-related purchases

70% of B2B buyers report a significant increase in their mobile device usage over the past two to three years - with 60% of them believing this upward trend will only continue

60% of B2B buyers say their mobile experience with a site has played a signifcant role in their most recent purchasing decision

Unfortunately, only 53% of the B2B e-commerce sites we analyzed for our Apruval Rating Report were considered to be mobile responsive. That is, only a little less than half of the companies we surveyed don't provide an optimized mobile experience for their e-commerce clientele.
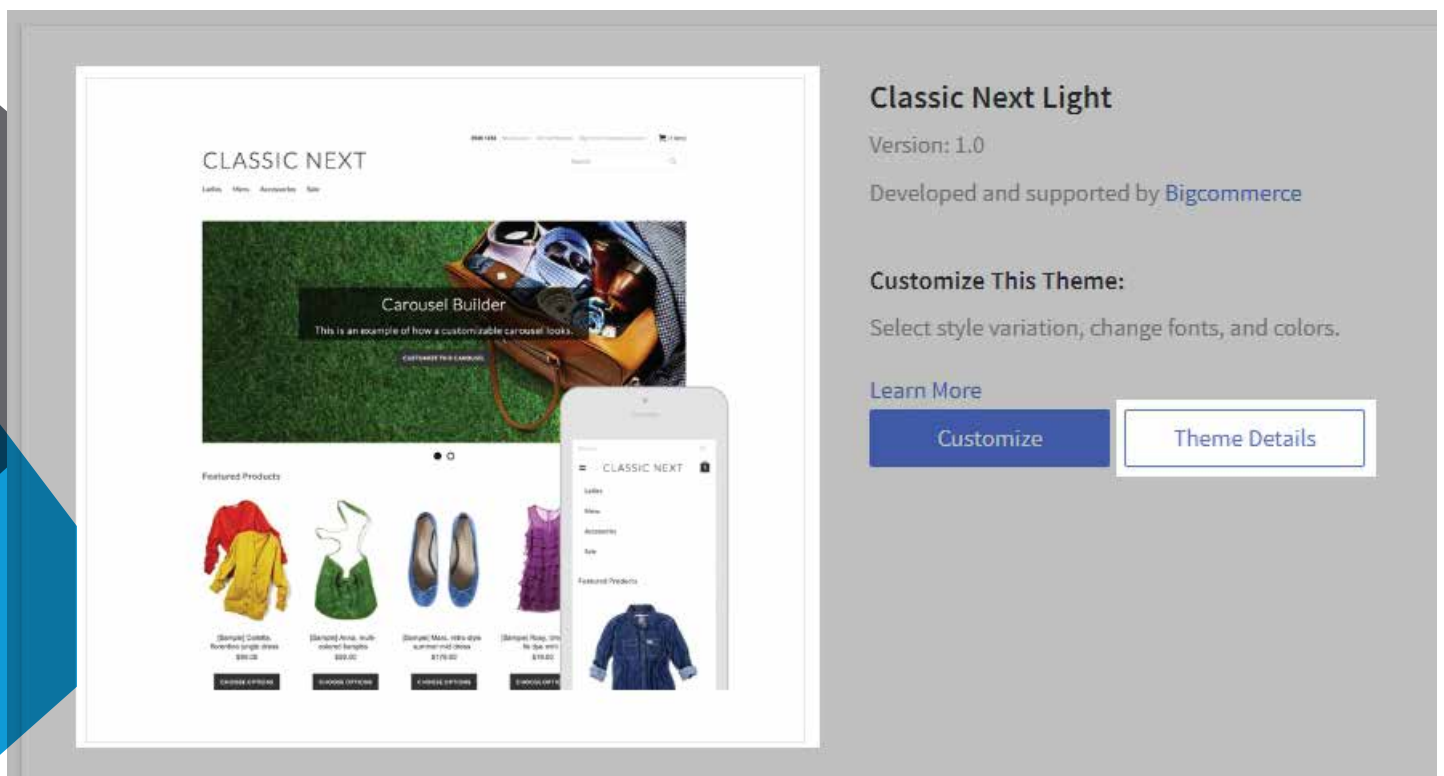
Needless to say, the companies that haven't taken the time to create a mobile-responsive version of their website are likely missing out on a ton of business.

Source: Boston Consulting Group (BCG)
https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2017/marketing-sales-digital-go-to-market-transformation-mobile-marketing-new-b2b-buyer.aspx

Now, for those whose e-commerce site is housed on BigCommerce, there are two ways to go about making this happen.

First, you'll want to determine if the theme you're currently using is responsive in itself. To do so, go to your **Storefront**, then click **Themes**. Click **Theme Details** for your current theme, then click **Features**.
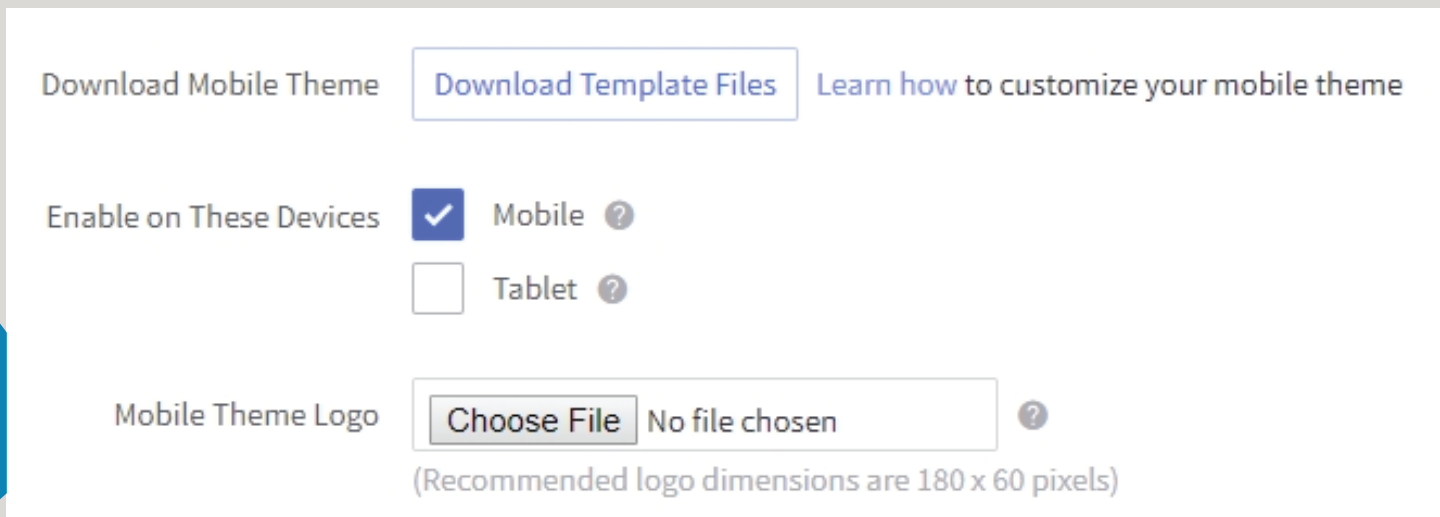

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B000000070E&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM1B0000001fPA

If the theme does offer a mobile-responsive design, "*Responsive Design*" will be listed under the theme's set of features.

If it doesn't offer a mobile-responsive design, you have two options. Firstly, you're not exactly attached to the theme, you can, of course, simply switch to a different one. However, if you'd like to keep your current theme, you'll have a bit more work ahead of you.

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First, you'll want to enable the mobile version of your theme. To do this, go to your **Storefront**, then go to **Mobile Theme Settings**, then check the box that says "**Yes, enable the mobile theme.**"
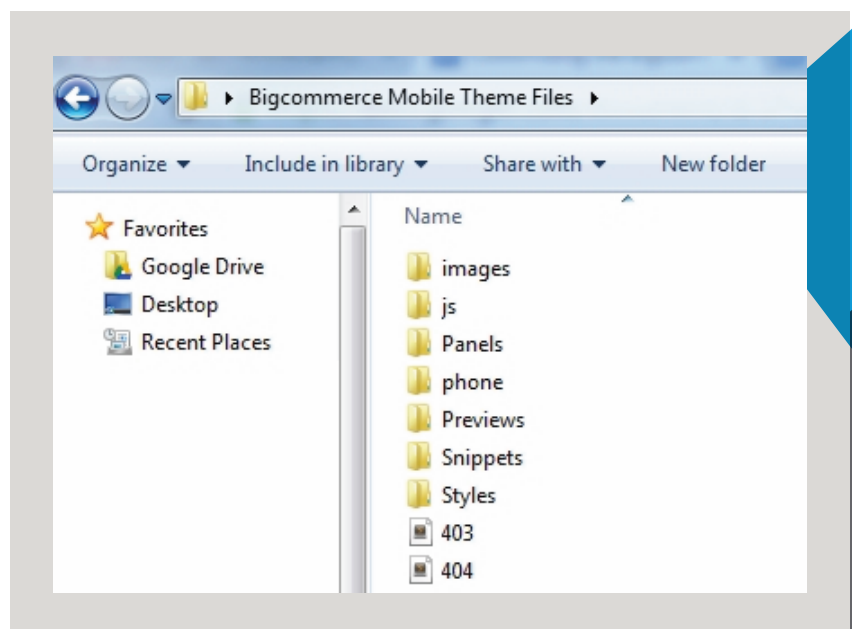
You'll then be shown the following screen:

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B000000070E&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM1B0000001fPU

First, check the applicable boxes, so that your soon-to-be-created mobile theme will be shown to visitors using both mobile devices and tablets.

Then, download your Template Files, so you can get started creating your customized mobile theme. After you download the template files, you'll need to unzip them onto your computer. You'll then be presented with a folder that looks something like this:

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B000000070E&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM1B0000001fQ3
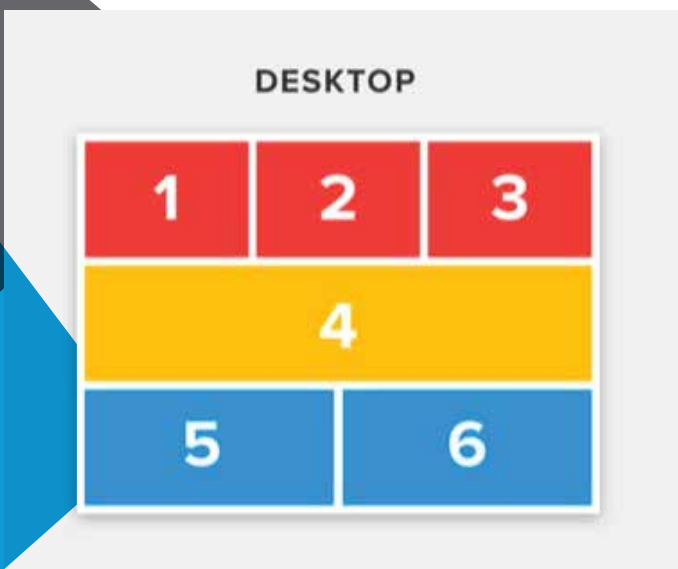
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From there, you'll be able to edit each separate HTML and CSS document accordingly. While we won't get into the technical side of doing this, we will provide you with a few suggestions as far as what the focus on, here.

(Note: The following is adapted from Neil Patel's guide for creating a mobile-optimized website.)

First and foremost, consider how you want the following aspects to appear for your mobile users:

- Your site's overall layout

- Images

- Buttons

- Videos and/or animations

- Forms

As Neil explains, while on a desktop your website might look like this:

...you'd want it to look more like this on a mobile device:

Source: Neil Patel
https://neilpatel-qvjnwj7eutn3.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/desktop-mobile-layout.jpg

BIGCOMMERCE
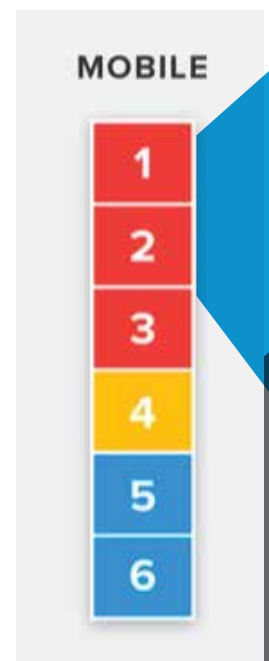
Google makes it a bit clearer, showing side-by-side examples of a site that has and has not been optimized for mobile devices:

Basically, your goal is to create an entirely separate version of your site dedicated to your mobile users. This will allow them to get full value out of your website, no matter which device they're currently using.

A few other things to consider when creating a mobile-friendly version of your site:
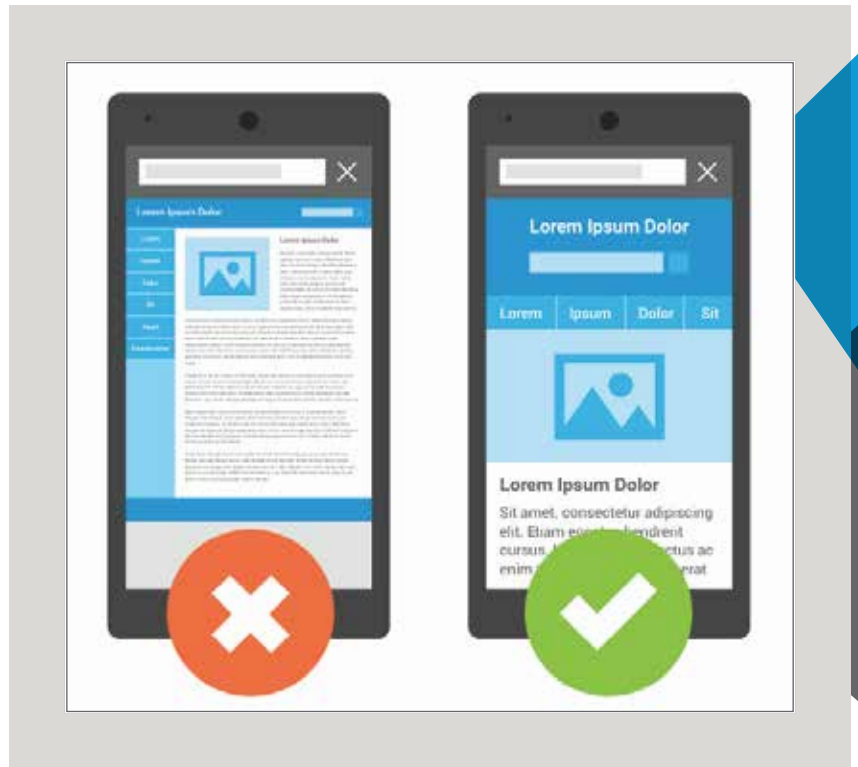
Keep file size to a minimum, as this will reduce site load speed - and keep your visitors on your site. One way to do this is to reduce image quality slightly for your mobile website.

Disable (or reconfigure) any popups or forms you offer on your "original" site. Since your visitors engage differently with your site on mobile than they do via desktop, the timing and display of an original popup may be more interruptive than anything.

Add links to your contact information, so users can simply tap your phone number to place a call, or tap your address to have directions pop up in their navigation app.

Yes, creating a dedicated mobile version of your website will require you to invest a good amount of time and energy (or money, if you end up needing to hire a developer). But, when you consider that you'll be ahead of nearly half of your competitors after doing so, the long-term benefits will *definitely* make the initial investment completely worth it.

Source: Google
https://developers.google.com/search/mobile-sites/imgs/mobile-seo/viewport.png

Add product photos and videos to your website

Due to the nature of e-commerce, customers aren't necessarily able to see, hold, and touch the products they're considering purchasing before they actually purchase them.
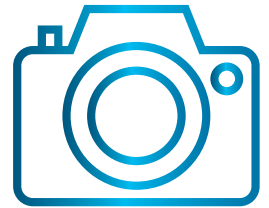
While, in the B2B realm, your clients will likely have a chance to interact with their desired products before making a commitment, the fact remains that such engagement won't happen until a bit later on in the buyer's journey.

But, in order to actually get your clients to this point, you'll need to showcase your products on your e-commerce website, using photographs and videos.

The benefits of doing so are huge. According to The MX Group, 77% of B2B marketers say video is the most effective form of content marketing. Additionally, 70% of marketers say video is more effective than any other content in terms of converting qualified leads into customers.

However, as we discovered earlier this year, less than 20% of B2B companies actually use video content to sell or promote their products.

Now, if you're part of the 80% of companies that don't yet showcase your products using videos, you'll want to start by producing a series of demos for each of your products. *(ImpactBnD finds that such demos are typically the first type of video content B2B companies tend to focus on. And, again, they're the most effective way to drive conversions, as well.)*

But let's back up a bit, and go over the basics of creating high-quality product photographs, first.

Source: The Mx Group
https://www.themxgroup.com/blog/violators-16-stats-prove-value-b2b-video/

Source: Impact
https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/new-video-marketing-statistics-2019

For BigCommerce users, the following guidelines apply to all product photographs:

Use JPG, JPEG, GIF, or PNG file formats only

1280 x 1280 px is the optimal size for product photos with zoom capability

The filename can only include letters and numbers

To upload your product photographs, you can use the upload image form within Big-Commerce, or you can use WebDAV to upload multiple photos at once.

Image Manager

Click the button below to upload one or more images from your computer. You can use the image by clicking the 'Insert Image' button on the editor when creating content.

Upload Images...   Delete Selected

Quill Brand® Contemporary, Flat Stack, Full Strip, Desktop Stapler, Metallic Black (79604Q)

Item #: 901-79604Q   Model #: 79604Q   Brand: Quill Brand

★★★★★ ▾ 135 Reviews Write a Review

1X Earn 1K QPoint for every dollar spent on this product. See how

$8.99 Each
When you buy 6+

○ One-Time Purchase

1   🛒 Add to Cart

Add to My List

There are two main "types" of product photographs you'll want to create.

The first is the standard studio photograph, in which the product appears over a plain background:

Notice that Quill provides multiple views of the product, allowing potential customers to assess the product from all angles.

Additionally, you'll want to create "lifestyle" shots of your products, showing them in an environment typical of their real-world use:

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B000000079G&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM130000018UBi

Source: Quill.com
https://www.quill.com/contemporary-full-strip-stapler/cbs/150305.html

As shown above, 3M include a photo of its Post-It notes being used as bookmarks within a daily planner.

This goes hand-in-hand with our next point, which is that you also want to showcase your products' most vital features within your photographs. Again, though it's a rather simple example, the photo above shows how customers will be able to take advantage of Post-Its' "stickiness" - which, to be sure, is the main selling point of the product in question.
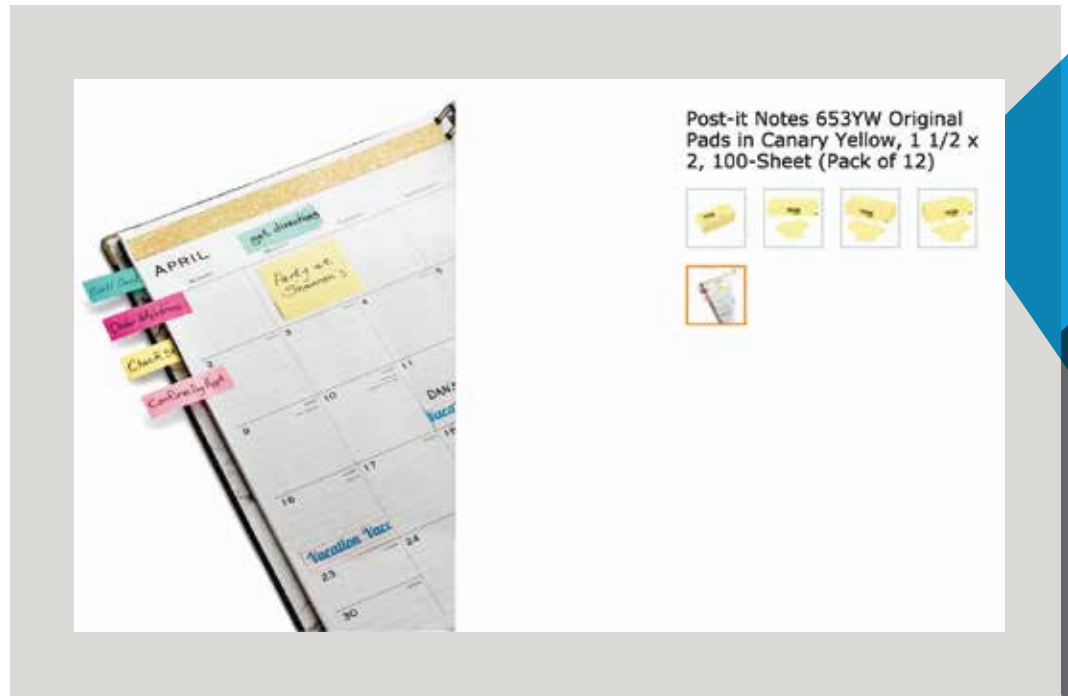
Finally, your product photographs should be consistent in terms of the following:

Color theme
Location and/or context
Quality (both in terms of hue, saturation, etc., and file format/size)

Essentially, you want to be sure that each of your product photographs "fit" within your overall product page - and your site as a whole.

Now, while the best practices for creating product videos is relatively similar, it's worth going over them separately.

Source: Amazon
https://www.amazon.com/Post-Original-Canary-Yellow-100-Sheet/dp/B00006JNMW

YouTube

Vimeo

Metacafe

Megavideo

First of all, BigCommerce allows users to embed videos from the following sources:

Additionally, BigCommerce allows for the use of a variety of video file formats, including:

Flash

HTML5 audio and video

Quicktime movies

Shockwave applications

Windows Media/Real Media files

Other websites, via an iframe

Again, you'll want to include a mix of video clips created in-studio, as well as one of two videos of your products "in action." This can be a simple, straightforward demo video, or it could be a more in-depth, story-driven video:

```
<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/hP34oHx68g0" frameborder="0"

allow="accelerometer; autoplay; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture" allowfullscreen></iframe>
```

(Note: While there are a variety of other types of video content you can make to add value to your B2B e-commerce website, as we said earlier, it's best to get started by focusing squarely on your products.)

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Again, the above advice pertains when creating video content as well as still photographs: Be consistent in terms of the aesthetic "feel" of your videos, and ensure that each video you create is up to standard in terms of quality.

Simply put:

The more (and better) product photos and videos you create, the more your products will come to life in the eyes of your potential customers. In turn, they'll be much more likely to reach out and schedule an actual product demo with your company

Source: Vidyard
https://www.vidyard.com/blog/12-types-video-b2b-business/

Include product reviews on your eCommerce site

Whether we're talking B2C or B2B, social proof is huge for generating new business.

According to data collected by BrightLocal, 85% of consumers trust online reviews as much as peer recommendations. Additionally, 73% of consumers place more trust in a brand after reading positive reviews from other customers.

To add to all that, Spiegel found that consumers are 270% more likely to purchase a product that has five reviews than a product that has zero.

So, to say it plainly:

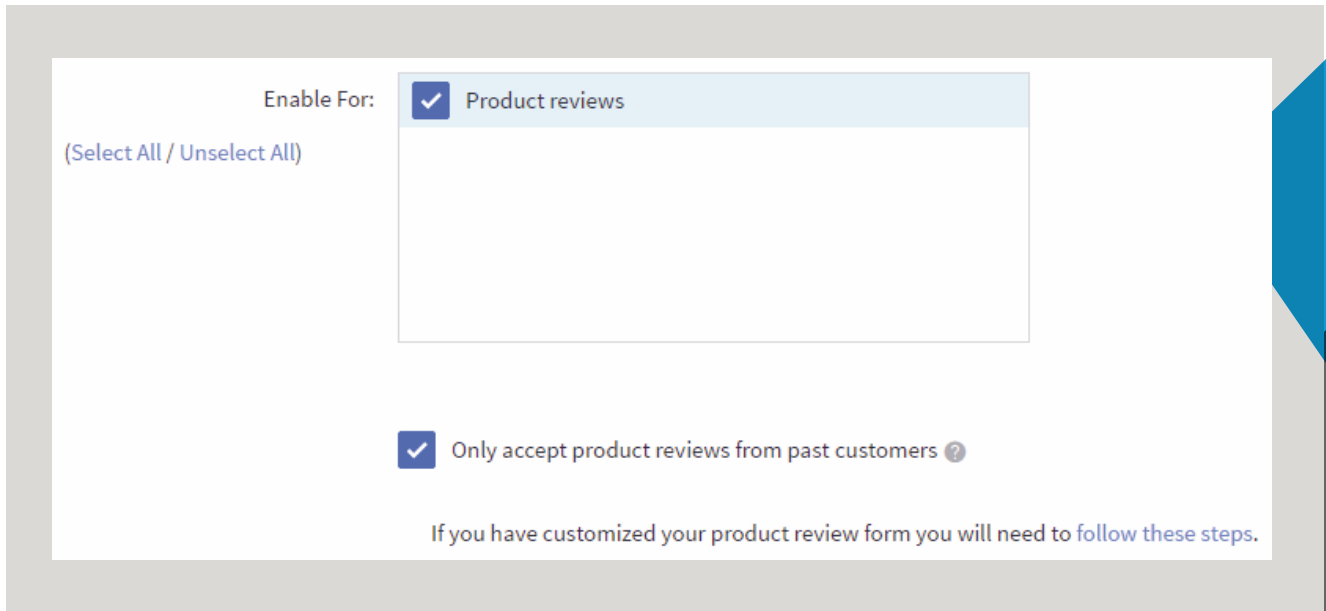You need to include reviews on your product pages in order to spur engagement among potential customers.

Here's how to do it using BigCommerce:

First, you'll need to enable comments in the first place. You can do this by clicking on **Advanced Settings**, then **Comments**.

Then, select **Built-In**, and **Save**. On the next screen, select **Built-In** near the top of the page; then, check the box next to **Product Reviews** as follows:

Source: BrightLocal
https://www.brightlocal.com/learn/local-consumer-review-survey/?SSAID=314743&SSCID=c1k2_3pd8s

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As shown in the below image, you also want to check "Only accept product reviews from past customers." Obviously, you'll only want those who have actually used your products to be able to review them.

Now, once you allow your customers to leave reviews, you'll want to keep a close eye on what they're saying - for a variety of reasons.

First of all, you want to be able to respond to each review appropriately. For positive reviews, you'll want to thank the customer - and perhaps see if they'd be interested in providing even more feedback to you personally. For negative reviews, you'll want to reach out to apologize, and assure the customer that you're working on a remedy to the problem they mentioned.

(Note: This is another reason you want only your customers leaving reviews; since you have their contact info, it will be easy to respond to their comments as necessary.)

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Another thing to look out for, here, are bots, spam, and other such "nonsense." For this reason, BigCommerce provides the ability to **Approve**, **Disapprove**, and **Delete** comments, accordingly:

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B000000071C&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM1B000000VT4o

Another way to combat bots and the like is to throttle reviews:

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B000000071C&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM130000018UQ4

As shown above, this allows you to limit the number of reviews to be posted over a specific period of time. However, if you've already designated that only registered customers can leave reviews, you probably won't need to go this route.

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You can also edit the following parts of a given review:

Tile

Author

Status

Content

However, you should never edit any part of a review without first contacting the customer who left the review in the first place. Even a minor change may cause frustration and distrust on their end, which could not only damage your company's relationship with that customer, but may also cause them to spread their distrust throughout their network. That said, before you change anything about an individual's product review, check to make sure they're onboard first.

Going along with that, you also don't want to delete negative reviews - no matter how tempting it may be. For one thing, if your site is full of five-star reviews, most consumers will see right through the facade (nobody's perfect, after all). Secondly, ignoring and/or censoring negative reviews essentially means you're turning a blind eye to the negative aspects of your products - meaning you have no hope of improving them in the future. As much as positive product reviews can help spur business, negative reviews can allow you to do what needs to be done to provide high-quality products to your customers in the first place.

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Optimize your eCommerce site's transactional processes

We've alluded to this a few times throughout this guide:

The entire point of having an e-commerce site for your B2B company is to allow your customers to take control of the the majority of the process.

Which is exactly what your customers want. According to Forrester, 74% of B2B buyers typically go through at least half of the purchasing process before even reaching out to a vendor nowadays.

And, even after a potential customer has made contact, they still don't necessarily want to have their hand held throughout the rest of the process. That said, you'll want to allow them to do as much as they possibly can without needing to reach out to you.

There are a number of things you can do within BigCommerce to give more control to your potential clientele, including:

Providing delivery estimates

Allowing payment via a variety of currencies

Enabling recurring orders and billing

Offering preferred checkout options

Offering various payment methods

Let's take a closer look at how to implement each within BigCommerce.

Source: Forrester
https://go.forrester.com/blogs/15-05-25-myth_busting_101_insights_intothe_b2b_buyer_journey/

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DISPLAY DELIVERY ESTIMATES

If you use UPS or USPS, you can opt to display delivery timing estimates for each when individuals begin the checkout process.
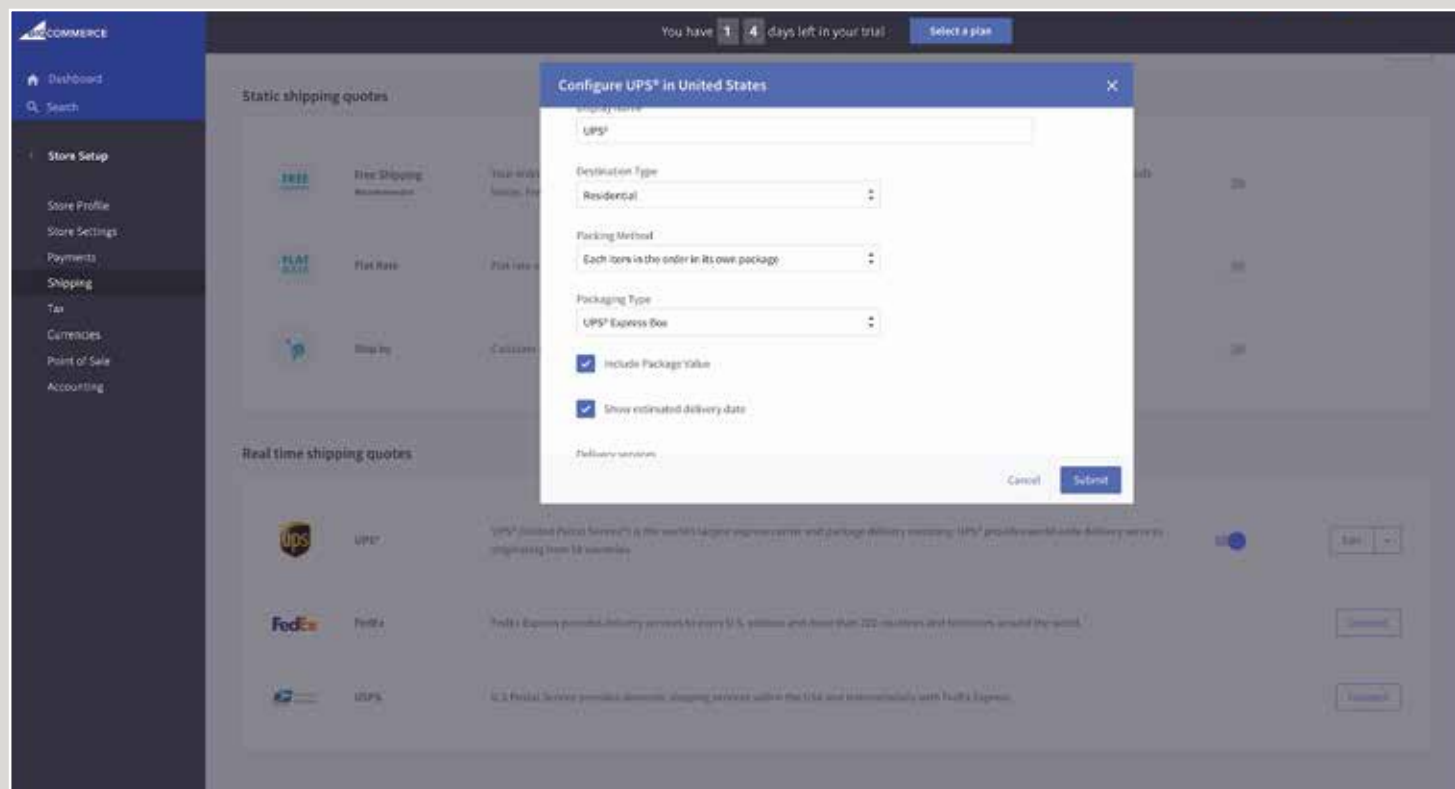
In turn, your customers will be able to choose the delivery option that works best for them - without needing to reach out to you for more information.

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/ydyiekThSE_xgmT6YcoJmqPhq-
zlZZ9h3mr7914925Jg0ZcugcFmS_2aJe8ci8h0yNCi6IvTV-JMamM-mgz
lz5QqM7CsvsZt9sgmsNHPCJuNz3QLtvuXvcTth3DHkKl30mRB8G-aj

ALLOW SEPARATE CURRENCIES

For companies that cater to clientele all over the world, you'll definitely want to configure your BigCommerce site accordingly.

By clicking **Currencies** within your **Store Setup** menu, you can:

Add a currency type, complete with Currency Name, Currency Code, and Currency Country/Region

Automatically or manually edit the exchange rate of a given currency

Enable/Disable a specific currency for a period of time as necessary

You can also define a specific currency as your default, which will then allow BigCommerce to automatically calculate the exchange rate for a different currency based on your choice of default.
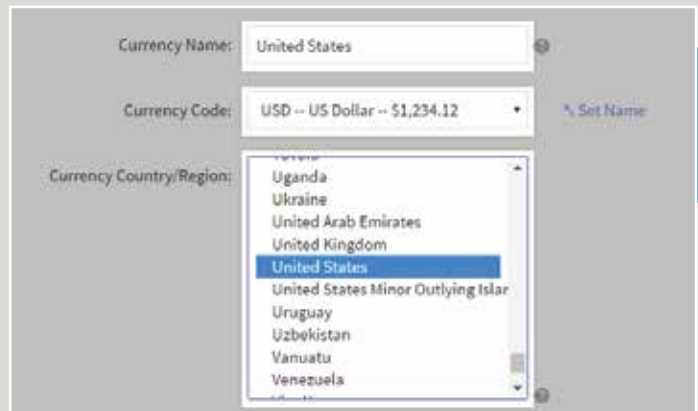
Source: Big Commerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/s/article/Managing-Currencies

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/ydyiekThSE_xgmT6YcoJmqPhq-zlZZ9h3mr7914925Jg0ZcugcFmS_2aJe8ci8h0yNCi6IvTV-JMamM-mgz lz5QqM7CsvsZt9sgmsNHPCJuNz3QLtvuXvcTth3DHkKl30mRB8G-aj
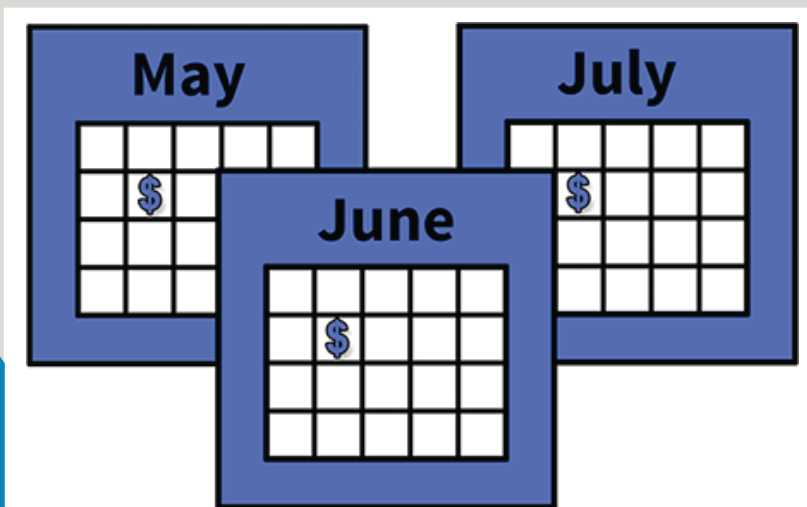
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ENABLE RECURRING ORDERS AND BILLING

Since your B2B company likely has a solid base of repeat customers that make regular, scheduled purchases, you'll want to make it easy for them to conduct these routine transactions.

Furthermore, if your company sells high-priced products - and offers them on credit - you'll want to provide your customers a way to make payments automatically as needed. Not only will this make things easier for your customers, but it will also mean you won't need to waste time every month checking to ensure you received your monthly payments.

With BigCommerce, you can set up recurring billing based on repeat ("subscription") purchases or based on your pay-by-credit agreements.

However, you'll need to download one of a selection of third-party apps within BigCommerce in order to accomplish either of these tasks.

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/s/article/Setting-up-Recurring-Billing
https://support.bigcommerce.com/servlet/rtaImage?eid=ka61B00000006uG&feoid=00N1300000BR3CT&refid=0EM1B0000018yqd

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To set up recurring billing, you'll need to use one of the following:

Paywhirl
Rebillia
MiniBC

To set up layaway or pay-by-credit functionality, you'll need to use:

Afterpay
Apruve

As far as accepting payments, you'll want to provide a variety of both online and offline options. While you don't necessarily need to include any and all available options, you'll want to tap into your customer base to see which ones they typically prefer to use. That way, you can be nearly certain that there won't be any "hangups" on your customers' end when they go to finalize a purchase.

Source: BigCommerce Support
https://support.bigcommerce.com/s/article/Offline-Payment-Methods
https://support.bigcommerce.com/s/article/Online-Payment-Methods

Wrapping Up

As we said earlier, a pretty good chunk of B2B companies have yet to figure out exactly how to create an e-commerce site that truly meets the needs of their target audience.

If you've gotten started in any of the above ventures, you're almost certainly ahead of a good amount of your competitors. If you haven't gotten started...well...now's the time to do it!

In either case, the main thing to keep in mind is to figure out ways to give your customers more and more control over their experience with your company. Yes, you'll still need to step in at certain times along the way - but the more automated these processes are for your customers, the easier it will be for them to get what they need from your company.

ABOUT APRUVE

Apruve is a B2B credit network that connects business buyers, their suppliers, and third-party banks to drive B2B sales through easy, risk-free lines of credit. Apruve integrates directly into online stores or ERPs to manage credit programs for suppliers with and without eCommerce. To learn more about how Apruve can grow your business, visit www.Apruve.com.

Contact us today to learn more.

Call us 844-4-Apruve
Email us hello@apruve.com