



How does ERP fit with e-commerce?

ERP is complex and not intended for public consumption. It assumes that the only people handling order information will be your employees, who are highly trained and comfortable with the tech jargon embedded in the software. But now customers and suppliers are demanding access to the same information your employees get through the ERP system—things such as order status, inventory levels and invoice reconciliation—except they want to get all this information simply, without all the ERP software jargon, through your website.

E-commerce means IT departments need to build two new channels of access into ERP systems—one for customers (otherwise known as business-to-consumer) and one for suppliers and partners (business-to-business). These two audiences want two different types of information from your ERP system. Consumers want order status and billing information, and suppliers and partners want just about everything else. But no matter what the details are, solving the difficult problem of integrating ERP and e-commerce requires careful planning, which is key to getting integration off on the right track.