

# Overcoming 11 Hurdles in the Building Materials Sector

Sell more products  
online and in-store.





## Calling all Building Material Companies!

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**Here at Experlogix, we're all about helping you to digital transformation. There's always going to be obstacles along the way so here's our guide to get you over 11 of the most common hurdles for a smooth run and winning finish!**

We know how important the B2B industry is. Forrester Research estimates that the global B2B ecommerce industry will top \$1.1 trillion globally by 2020 – the equivalent of one in every eight dollars spent in B2B.

And you know what? We think that's only going in one direction: more and more B2B companies will embark on their own digital transformation journey and engage fully in online trading.

But we've spoken to enough building material companies in the B2B space (merchants, suppliers, wholesalers, distributors, and manufacturers) to know all about the challenges you face every day – in order processing, scalability, real-time information and lots more.

We've managed to boil down the challenges you face into these 11 hurdles.

# 1

## The Repetitive Strain Injury of Manual Order Processing

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### Let's paint a picture.

Constant phone calls between the sales rep and the office; endless spreadsheets; emails and sometimes even pen and paper.

And here's the thing: that's only the information-gathering start of it.

When it comes to actually placing an order, you might be talking spreadsheets on laptops; another phone call; two emails; phone again but your colleague's on another call.

Suddenly it's almost midnight and your sales rep is keying product codes and quantities into an Excel spreadsheet with the actual up-to-date status of the stock remaining one of life's great mysteries.



# 2

**(Sssshhhh...)**

## **“It’s Catalogue Time”**

After Christmas and the Friday before a well-deserved fortnight off in the summer, it’s surely everyone’s favourite time of the year: the time of year the catalogue needs to be updated!

Thousands, maybe tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of items.

Many, many different variations. SKU codes coming out your ears. Aches in your forefinger from scrolling through Excel docs. Aches in your eyes from squinting to try to find the horizontal scrollbar. Aches in your brain from information overload.

And you know what?

All that’s before the dreaded “P” word is mentioned. If you still print your catalogue, we’ll say no more right now, except this:

**First, we feel your pain.**

**Second, it doesn’t have to be this way.**

# 3

## Beware Bespoke

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**When it comes to coding, it's true: anything is possible.**

But it's also true – we know, because we see it every day – that bespoke solutions to complex processes and interlocking systems can add layer upon layer upon layer of complexity until eventually the so-called solution becomes part of the problem (stay tuned for lots more on the battle between Problem and Solution below).

And the opportunities to both upsell to existing customers and offer such a seamless onboarding to new customers that they just can't help but order more and more from you are lost in a sea of clunky code and bad user experience.

That's without even mentioning the drain on time, energy and budget that are the common hallmarks of almost every bespoke enterprise ecommerce solution.

**So beware bespoke. Or be sorry.**

(The alternative, of course, is to be part of a scalable platform that helps you every step of the way on your digital transformation...)



# 4

## **Meet Scale, a.k.a. He Who Must Not Be Named**

“Scale” is five letters and one syllable, but in many ways it’s the biggest word in business. If you can’t do things at scale, then the process of layering on more and more resources as you grow will cause you sleepless nights far into the future. And sleepless nights might be the least of your problems.

Being able to process orders at scale, without requiring the deployment of the world and its mother to make sure everything is adequately fulfilled, is often seen as the stuff of dreams in business. But those dreams can be a reality.

Case studies and regular customer feedback on our WebShop product – just one element of the Experlogix Digital Commerce cloud platform – has told us that moving to our WebShop cloud platform reduces resource for manual ordering by up to 25 times! Yes that’s right, orders processed up to 25 times faster – allowing so many of your resources to be reinvested back into developing customers and business as opposed to processing orders. Systems that allow scale, not get in its way.



# 5

## And Here's Real-Time, Scale's Even Rarer Little Brother

It's arguably the biggest friction in business, at any level: getting the right information, at the right time, to assist the right decisions. If the words "24-hour Batch Processing" mean anything to you, you'll know what we mean.

Take a quick quiz.

**Q: What might help your sales reps blitz their targets in the field?**

**Q: What might convince your web-browsing customer to place that chunky order right now?**

If you shouted out "Accurate, up-to-date and customer-specific information about stock and pricing!", well done - you win a star!

Real-time processing is arguably the beating heart of successful, scalable B2B ecommerce businesses. But very often the lack of it is a massive hurdle in the way of your company's growth.





# 6

## Your Processes are Holding You Back

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**“I coulda had class. I coulda been a contender.  
I coulda been somebody.”**

Marlon Brando’s Terry in *On The Waterfront* was arguably movie history’s most convincing representation of one all-too-human emotion: regret.

When it comes to living and dying, business is slightly different than life. Terry had sagged and slowed down with age. He had missed his chance of glory. Businesses, though, don’t sag or slow down with age. They sag and slow down with bad decisions and clunky processes.

Good, informed decisions make for solid, sharp, precise processes, make for greater efficiencies, make for much healthier bottom lines.

All that’s within your reach. So the good news: your business can be a contender! Tidying up your processes now can get you there.

That’s where the Experlogix Digital Commerce cloud platform can come in.

Because our technology helps wholesalers and other B2B businesses do things better than they’ve ever done them before.

Because doing it the other way could just get you that one-way ticket to Palookaville.

# 7

## When Your Solution Becomes Your Problem

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**“In the red corner, weighing in at...”**

When it comes to solving complex problems, it's often the case that **Problem is a bigger, stronger man than Solution.** Often Problem is alpha male while Solution is shy and retiring. Solution sometimes struggles to make himself heard while Problem is clear, present and in your face.

Problem brings three, four or more providers together for the mother of all knees-ups. Solution stops the party and tries to make them work through the hangover.

When that's the case there's usually only one winner. Solution might stick around a while. If he's lucky, in time he'll become Problem's sidekick, giving you the answers he thinks you want but feeding Problem the lunch leftovers when you're not looking.

And that's not why you hired Solution, is it? Eventually you realise that and send him back in the direction he came from.

But now two years have passed, those three, four or more providers are no longer talking to each other and Problem has grown bigger, bolder and has started to harass the two new girls in accounts.

**It's time to show this guy who's boss.**

You need someone to whip Problem into shape once and for all. Someone to help those three, four or more providers talk to each other and get along.

We all just want to get along, right?

# 8

## Some Software Providers Think You're Not Special

**It's true. You are special.**

You do some things completely your own way. That's okay. But when it comes to implementing tools, systems and solutions, sometimes you're asked to believe that you're not special. That an off-the-shelf product is just what you need.

"But what about our customised ERP system?" you say.

"Oh, don't worry about that," says the man from Off The Shelf Software Ltd.

"What about the complexity of our customer price lists?" you say.

"Piece a cake!" says the man from Off The Shelf Software Ltd.

But then the off-the-shelf product needs a tweak here, and a tweak there, and then the man from Off The Shelf Software Ltd needs to ramp up the costs because the off-the-shelf product needs to be broken into 17 different bits and put back together with 32 other bits that aren't off the shelf at all and the man from Off The Shelf Software Ltd realises, finally, that you're very, very special indeed.

It doesn't have to be this way, of course. There are people who know exactly how special your needs are, and work seamlessly to make sure those needs are met.



# 9

## **The words “ERP Upgrade” bring you out in a cold sweat.**

The ERP upgrade project. It happens maybe once every 8–10 years. It’s almost impossible to avoid.

If you’re not the owner/manager and you’ve got lucky in your career progression, you’ve managed to avoid it altogether so far in life, and you might even be keen to keep that winning streak going.

If you have been through it, you know this is a nettle that just has to be grasped every so often.

Thoughts of ERP system upgrade are liable to bring people out in a cold sweat. But that time might not be right now. Right now, you might not need the magnitude of an ERP upgrade, and all that goes with it. You might just need a system that integrates much better with your current ERP system.

Better overall processes PLUS you manage to postpone the ERP upgrade until a time when it’s really necessary.

**What would you say to the peace of mind brought by people who’ve done it all before?**

# 10

## The Tail that Wags the Dog

This one keeps coming up: the underlying concern that any new solution might end up forcing your wholesale, distribution or other enterprise-grade B2B company into adopting far-reaching, undesirable and frankly unnecessary changes to your business model.

The ripple effect of these changes could be felt by almost everyone in your company (and not always for the better).

What you generally need: **a solution that fits with your needs, makes things better in its area and doesn't mess things up elsewhere.**

What you sometimes get: a product that brings you two steps forward and two steps back as one problem solved creates headaches further along the food chain.

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**What the Experlogix Digital Commerce Platform gives you: a system that allows your business model to flourish, not force it to change.**



# 11

## Many People, Many Skill Sets, Many Products

When it comes to your people, diversity is always great. You get different backgrounds, different cultures, different dynamics, different creativity, thought processes and approaches to solving problems, all of it adding up to way more than the sum of its parts.

**But here's when diversity isn't good: when it involves your systems.**

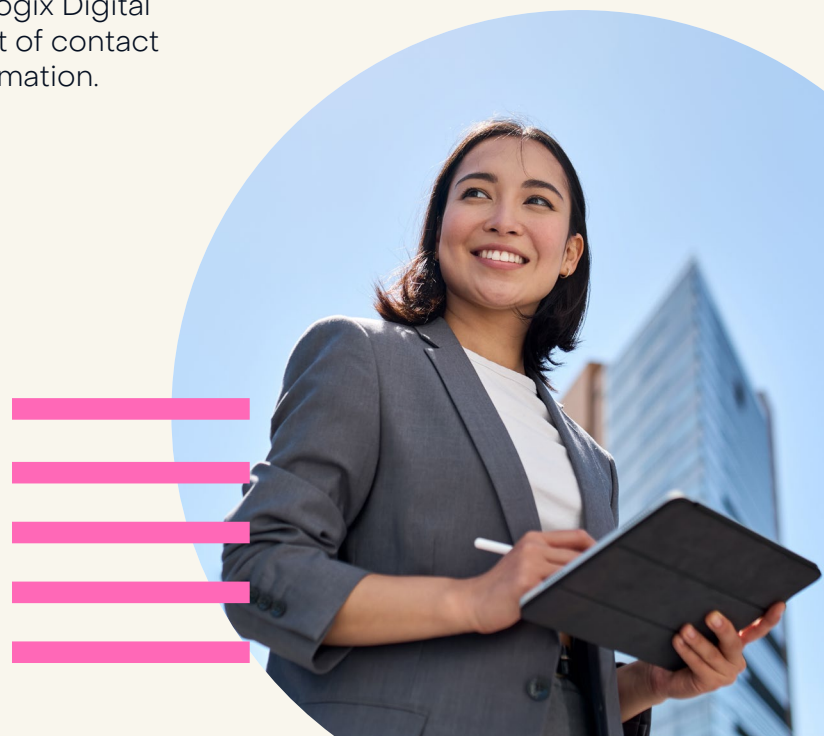
You have one system to manage the bones of your website, often another to run the ecommerce cart, another to administer your catalogue, another for internal systems, another in your ERP.

Before long your office language is some crazy form of Esperanto spoken by one person in the entire world, who then decides she wants to take six months out to see Machu Picchu.

And why wouldn't she? Because while she somehow managed to master learning your very own office language, there were ten other problems giving her so many headaches that she needed to break for beyond.

What you need: systems that talk seamlessly to each other, all the time. Experlogix Digital Commerce Software provides a cloud platform that grows as you do. WebShop is way more than just a website. SalesRep is way more than just an app.

Continually being improved by our award-winning in-house research and development team, the Experlogix Digital Commerce cloud platform is the single point of contact to help you achieve your B2B digital transformation.





**We help companies  
sell smarter.**

Find out more information at [experlogix.com](https://experlogix.com).

**Request a Demo**

