



The Role of Business in eCommerce Platform Implementations

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Ok, so you've been handed the keys to a brand new, totally supped up, BMW M3. You know it was designed by the best German engineers. It can do things you can only imagine. You step inside. The leather has that new car smell. You drink it in, excited to start this advanced machine. You look for the place to put the key. You look for the shifter. Nothing looks as it should. There is no place for a key. There's a start button, you press it, wait for the roar of the engine - Nothing.

You feel like the characters played by Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum in Independence Day when they got into the far technically superior alien ship and had no idea how to operate it. They knew it could do amazing things, but they might as well have been in a go cart. They lacked the driving expertise.

You may feel like this when your crack IT team turns over the reins to your new ecommerce platform. You know, just know, that it can do all the things you've been dreaming about. Dynamic merchandising, personalization, promotion changes on the fly! But where's the ignition? How do I shift? You may wonder, did my IT team, with all their great intentions, even know what I was looking for in the platform? The team just spent a lot of money. Senior executives are expecting serious results, seriously quickly. They're looking at you. What to do?

Don't find yourself in this situation. New tools and technology are great. But they are just a means to an end. Did you clearly identify exactly what that end was before the technology was chosen and implemented? Business owners must be involved in any large scale ecommerce implementation from day one. They must clearly identify needs, goals, and timelines. They must be the conduit to senior management - translating, identifying issues and owning the P&L. The last thing most business people want to do is sit in technical meeting after technical meeting, but you must. The outcome is on you, so the process must be on you. This does not mean alienating your IT department. This means partnering with them to make you both look like rock stars in the end.

And don't fret if you've inherited a system that doesn't meet your needs without your involvement. There is plenty that can be done, even at reasonable cost and timing, to tweak an existing platform to better serve the needs of the business.

