



University of Wisconsin-Madison

**UW E-Business Consortium**

*"Helping Industry Gain Competitive Advantage Through E-Commerce and E-Business"*

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**Project Report**  
(Abridged Version)

# E-Commerce Platform Requirements

## Project Sponsor

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## **Executive Summary**

Over the past 15 years, the rapid evolution of Web technologies and customer expectations has continually posed challenges for companies trying to sell their products and services online. Like many other companies that established a Web presence in the 1990's, J. J. Keller is striving to stay abreast with best in class e-commerce capabilities. Through the implementation of a new e-commerce platform, many issues regarding maintenance and functionality with the existing Website can be addressed, and this will help position the company for continued strong growth of their e-commerce channel.

In order to determine the various capabilities and functionalities of the ideal e-commerce platform that will meet J. J. Keller's business needs, research into the necessary requirements was performed. Throughout the project, defining the necessary requirements for platform selection was the primary goal of the student team. Initial research was performed through reading Internet articles and analyzing the best in class B2B and B2C Websites. This provided the team with a basic understanding of the different features and benefits provided by implementing a third party platform. Interviews were then given to prospective platform vendors, UW E-Business Consortium member companies, and a multidisciplinary team from J. J. Keller. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight as to the necessary, important, or commonly over-looked functionalities and features of an e-commerce platform. A competitive analysis was also performed on some of the key competitors and products of J. J. Keller to see how the relative competition was utilizing their platforms. Combining all of the gathered data, the team was then able to organize the requirements in ten different categories.

An e-commerce platform was defined as a collection of technologies that work together to provide an infrastructure for a business to conduct online transactions. Categories such as "Content" and "Catalog management" provide functionalities that allow for easy product management and organization on the back end. "Site Navigation" demonstrates the need for intuitive customer usability throughout the entire Website. Important features such as product promotions and discounting capabilities are defined within the "Marketing Tools" section. "Shopping Cart and Checkout" defines all of the necessary functionalities for customers to purchase product through the Website. "Search Engine Optimization" relays the importance of having search engine friendly Web pages to ensure that customers can easily find the Website. All of the account management tools including viewing order history and subscriptions are found in "User Account Management". Issues with e-commerce standards and compliance, as well as customer and company safety are addressed in the "Security" section. "Web 2.0" addresses the needs of having features such as blogs and wikis or integration with popular social networking sites. Finally, in "Other" other software used by J. J. Keller is highlighted that should be easily integrated with the new platform. In total, 233 key requirements were defined that were viewed as important when considering e-commerce platform selection.

Best in class B2B and B2C e-commerce Websites have set the standard for user expectations. Providing a positive user experience will play a vital role in online business success and is necessary to stay ahead of the competition. By implementing an e-commerce platform that satisfies the compiled requirements, J. J. Keller has a significant opportunity to separate itself from competitors and become a best-in-class Website.

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