mindlinQ

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E-Commerce Questionnaire

The following questionnaire will help prepare your organization to write a full Request for Proposal for an E-Commerce site.   It is important to answer as many questions as possible before jumping into this project, as it may help you to focus and plan the site as you go, as well as communicate it clearly to our team.

In any E-commerce or database solution, we ask that you budget for a "design document".   This is the blueprint that will finalize all engineering elements prior to actual programming, to ensure the scope of work as you desire it is fully realized and communicated before we can outline project costs.

Please answer in detail as many of the questions applicable.   If you have a printed catalog or data sheets, please provide a sample.   Email the completed questionnaire to *info@MindlinQ.com.*

1. How many products do you have (how many SKU or product variations)? How many categories/subcategories? Will the categories change or grow in number? How is categorization applied—by an existing database structure, or will it be done only at the site?

2. What type of products? In what quantities are they usually sold?

3. Who will do fulfillment? (shipping, returns, etc?) How will your information get to fulfillment channels (via file upload, fax, email, full system integration?) Describe your normal offline process, and indicate how much integration will be necessary.

4. What type of reporting is required? (Total sales, status of order, etc.) Where this information be displayed/stored?

5. What types of payment (PO, credit card, online or offline payment)? Which cards? (Visa/MC? American Express?)

6. Do you have an existing Internet Merchant Account for processing credit cards directly you're your Bank account, and can it be used for Internet usage? (Some banks will not allow this, or will charge higher fees because of the high return/cancellation percentage.)

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Cont.

7. How many individual transactions do you "realistically" expect per day in the first year? Second year? Fifth year? What is average sale total normally?

8.   Who can order on your site? Anyone? Do they fill out a profile that is saved in the database for future access to them? What type of password authentication and security do you need Standard SSL + Web password? What other information do you want to store in user profiles?

9. Will you offer multiple levels of pricing? (Wholesale, retail, bulk, international?)
    How many levels?
    What about "special" customers who have a negotiated pricing? How will the site handle them?

10. Taxes – How many states do you operate in, and does your sales tax vary according to city or state pricing? What internal tax system or accounting software do you use for calculating and reporting? Do we need to integrate? How often will you need to pull reports?

11. Do you need the sales information to be automatically dumped into an existing database/mainframe? What type of database/mainframe is it? Give details of hardware and software, including any accounting packages.

12. Do you need inventory levels to be returned into the Web database periodically you're your internal system, and what type of database/mainframe is it? How frequent is the inventory exported to site?

13. Do you intend to host this yourself? Or, do you want to set it up on its own server and co-locate it at an ISP so that you are not "sharing" with any other sites? (Some ISPs offer software sharing so that you can take advantage of someone else's software license and server configuration.)

14. Is this a mission-critical site? That is, is it worth paying extra for redundancy on different servers for backup, a development server for making changes so that you don't endanger the live site, frequent server monitoring and daily backup, etc. so that you are not down for one single minute of any day?

Cont.

15. If you sell software, do you intend to offer immediate download or email a location after payment is cleared? Manual or automatic email? Will there be demos for free? How large is the file size on your software? What reporting system will you require (total downloads, successful/partial downloads)?

16. Who will maintain the product database and the site content? What level of expertise do these administrators have? Do you need a Web-based administration for catalog? Page content? How many administrators, and do they have to have separate passwords and different levels of access?

17. Will new product data be imported from internal server or mainframe? How often? Will Internal data need to be supplemented by additional data per item (i.e. thumbnail photos, long descriptions, cross selling information, etc.)

18. Will you want cross-selling capability to associate products with each other? How will these relationships be defined, on your internal server or at the Web server?

19. What other areas of content on the site will need to be developed? Please quantify in number of 'pages' (interfaces), and specify which of them need to be content-managed by non-technical personnel. We can build custom forms for updating select content, or put in place a full Content Management System if the requirements are larger or more complex.

20. How will you market the site? Will you be providing XML feeds of your database to any search engines via a "paid inclusion" program?

Finally

After you've exhausted yourself filling out the above questionnaire and are ready for the next step, fax it to us at (949) 789-0356!Better yet, email us the whole document – send it to *info@MindlinQ.com*-- and we'll call you for an initial brainstorm. (Make sure you give us your full contact information, please.)