Tool: Choosing the Right Digital Commerce Search Vendor

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The market for digital commerce search has expanded rapidly as B2C and B2B organisations look to differentiate in product discovery to drive conversion. This research helps application leaders select a vendor for digital commerce search and wider product discovery capabilities.

When to Use

This Tool enables application leaders supporting digital commerce technologies to easily compare vendors of commerce search applications, based on the features they offer. The overall scope of these tools in aiding product discovery is shown in Figure 1.
Beyond supporting the “search box,” vendors of commerce search platforms support wider product discovery capabilities. Gartner splits these capabilities into three capabilities and three cross functional attributes:

1. **Search**
   - Relevance tuning and search personalization
   - Semantic search (including natural language processing [NLP] and voice search)
   - Visual search

2. **Merchandising**
   - Visual and rule-based merchandising
   - Recommendations
3. Browse

- Catalog navigation
- Search engine optimization (SEO) and landing pages
- Product and gift finder.

Cross-functional

1. Personalization

2. Optimization/testing

3. Analytics

In addition to these capabilities, some of which are focused on B2C commerce. Some vendors provide features specific to B2B use cases.

Before evaluating vendors, you should assess your overall needs, such as:

- **Full capabilities** — Evaluate search vendors that provide full end-to-end product discovery capabilities. If your organization performs poorly on search, focus on improved accuracy of results and consider and prioritize additional functionality that will benefit your most critical priorities.

- **Fill gaps** — Plug gaps in your product discovery capabilities if your organization has partial solutions but may lack more advanced capabilities. Focus on semantic search, product finders, search personalization and conversational search.

- **Compose your own** — Plan for or redesign your platform by focusing on easy integration with, ideally, any vendor. Focus on SaaS providers of specialist point solutions to build out your product discovery needs.
The focus of digital commerce search has shifted toward the wider needs of product discovery. Integration to personalization engines is common, and some vendors provide these natively. Application leaders supporting digital commerce should use this Tool to identify required functionalities and evaluate vendors based on their ability to deliver. The Tool contains a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that enables you to filter for desired technology capabilities. The filters enable you to see which vendors meet the needs of your organization. For more details and further descriptions of commerce search vendors and systems, see Market Guide for Digital Commerce Search.

**Directions for Use**

The attached spreadsheet, which is best used in Microsoft Excel, contains data on 27 application vendors and lists a further 12. Application leaders can determine which vendors meet their needs by filtering for the features they are seeking. The file contains nine tabs, in addition to the title page:

- Overview of High Level Core Functionalities (an introduction to commerce search applications)
- Vendors by Geographical Region and business model focus (B2C/B2B)
- Vendors by all Capabilities (complete set)
- Vendors by Core Search Capabilities
- Vendors by Semantic and NLP Support
- Vendors by Catalog and Browse and Navigation Capabilities
- Vendors by Personalization and Analytics Capabilities
- Vendors by B2B Support
- Vendors by Adjacent Capabilities (finders, visual search and chatbots)

Capabilities were self-scored by vendors as part of a survey response. We have used Harvey Balls to represent capability levels between “none,” “table stakes,” “differentiating” and “comprehensive.” We have not used a full Harvey Ball for any vendor capability in this research.

Filtering of vendors is done by using the filter button, as follows:
Open the Excel spreadsheet and go to any “Vendors by xxx Capability” tab.

Go to cell B4 (tab: “Capabilities”), click on the “filter” icon (see Figure 2 within the red circle) and deselect all.

Select the options you wish to filter by and click “OK.” The filter icon will become solid and only relevant vendor rows should be visible.

**Figure 2: Using the Filter Within the Spreadsheet**

**Evidence**

The data for this research was collected from survey responses from all included vendors from March through April 2021.

**Recommended by the Authors**

- Magic Quadrant for Insight Engines
- Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce
Magic Quadrant for Personalization Engines

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