

Food Manufacturing

How to select a B2B self-service customer ordering platform

20 Key Questions that will help you become a customer service portal expert



Mezze.

Independent surveys have found that **75% of customers said self-service is a convenient way to address issues and 67% of customers prefer self-service over speaking to a support agent [Survey]**.

So, whether you're considering an ERP add-on, an off-the-shelf platform or an industry-specific solution, these are the questions to consider.

Is this for you?

Is your business thinking of providing or upgrading an online platform for its B2B/trade customers to allow a range of engagements, such as making orders, viewing product range, promoting products, dealing with issues, etc?

You could be the

- **Founder**
- **Managing Director**
- **Head of Customer Service**
- **Supply Chain & Fulfilment**
- **Finance or IT Management**

...looking to find efficiencies and a competitive advantage for your business.

Find out what the innovative market-leading businesses are doing in your sector.

What you'll learn

Some of the questions are about your business: what's unique about it and what requirements you may have that you haven't yet considered. They're designed to help you identify topics you need to raise with any potential supplier and avoid making costly assumptions about what they may already understand.

The other type of question helps you consider what you need to ask of any potential supplier and crucially, the system they're proposing.

Once you've worked through all the subjects below then you should have all you need to commission a modern online ordering and customer service platform which will transform the way you do business and make huge efficiency savings!

20 questions to consider



1. Customer Experience and Interface

Have you seen or tested the customer interface? Is it as intuitive and user-friendly as market-leading B2C platforms like Amazon or Tesco? Would your customers feel comfortable using it on a daily basis?

Think about whether a mediocre or poor customer experience is acceptable for your business and customers.

2. Branding

Can the solution be customised with your company logo and brand colours? Consider who will be using the new platform and what image and message do you want to project?

3. Scalability

Can the system automatically scale up or down based on demand, ensuring seamless operation during peak periods? Is your business growing? Can the system cope with more users, transactions & data?

4. Key Requirements for Your Business

Does the system for example support order cut-off times, minimum orders by pack size, make to order or date lead ordering and how does this affect the overall customer experience? What are the must have requirements for your business?



5. Industry-Specific or Generic Platform

Is the solution tailored specifically for the food manufacturing industry, or is it a generic platform? Why is this important? A specialised solution should include the features your food business requires as standard, whereas a generic platform will require costly customisation, potentially compromising user experience.

6. Implementation Timeline

What is the typical time frame for a rollout? Are you looking at weeks or months for full deployment? A longer implementation typically carries a great risk and cost.

7. Reference Customers

Can the solution provide a reference from a customer currently using this solution within the food industry? If not, then you may want to question how suitable the platform is for Food Manufacturing.

8. Support for Product Launches & Promotions

How does the solution support new product launches and time-sensitive promotions? How much work will be involved on both sides and will this cost more money?





9. Handling Different Payment Types

Can the system accommodate different customer types, such as credit customers, proforma customers, direct debit and those who pay by bank card before placing an order? What are the costs & transaction fees?

10. EDI Integration

How does the solution integrate with Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems? Is it fully compatible and will it save you time? Can you apply the same business rules to your EDI transactions that you have in the solution so you have a consistent approach to orders across your whole business no matter where they originate?

11. Order Query Management

Can the system efficiently manage and route order-specific queries? Can any of the typical queries be handled automatically?

12. Credit Management

Does the system provide a secure and authorised process for managing credits that are raised against an order? Can the processes be automated?





13. Contractual Obligations

What is the minimum contract length required to implement and run the solution? Any 'gotchas' in the small print? Any hidden costs? Is the pricing transparent with a clear example?

14. Set-up Costs

What are the upfront setup or implementation costs involved? Set-up costs will vary a great deal, depending on a number of factors. How unique is your business and the way it operates? Does the software provider already have the features you need or will they need to build them as part of the implementation? Will there be integrations to 3rd-party systems?

15. Ongoing Costs

What are the ongoing costs involved? There may be monthly or annual fees, either fixed or variable. You may need to consider ongoing costs for the software as well as the provider's fees.

16. Total Cost of Ownership

What is the total cost of ownership, including any hidden or ongoing costs? This should include any implementation, training or customisation costs, plus any monthly or annual software licence and support/maintenance costs. Also remember to factor any minimum contract lengths (e.g. 1 year, 2 year etc.).





17. Return on Investment (ROI)

Can the provider demonstrate a clear ROI based on the problems the system solves versus the implementation and ongoing costs? What factors would affect ROI and how might you measure them?

You may want to consider factors like: reduced order inputting time, reduced mistakes and fewer order update phone calls.

18. Training Requirements

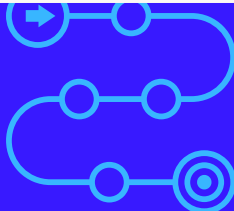
How straightforward and easy-to-use is the new system? How much training will be required for both your team and your customers to ensure smooth operation and adoption of the system? What type of training is provided? What format and how accessible?

19. Support and Ongoing Relationship

Once you're signed up, does the provider communication drop off a cliff? Is the provider and their team based in your country? What sort of response times can you expect for both problems and work requests? Does the provider seem proactive and invested in the success of your business?

20. Product Roadmap

What value adding and problem solving features have been added to the solution recently and what are planned? Are you being sold on a piece of technology that's at a standstill and near the end of its life-cycle?



If you'd like to find out how your food manufacturing business could **optimise resources** and **boost revenue** with Mezze's industry-specific solution, contact us today.

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