

heutink.
international

Replatforming e-commerce to **increase customer satisfaction**

30,000

products online (2022)

130,000

online transactions
per year

5,000

order lines per hour in
peak season



CHALLENGE

- Customers with specific needs
- Peak season in the summer months
- Diverse customers and products/services
- Improved customer experience

SOLUTION

- Migration to Intershop Commerce Platform
- Personalized portal based on the type of customer
- Integration with CMS and marketing tools
- Private cloud

ABOUT HEUTINK

Heutink has brought craftsmanship and quality to educational supplies for over a century. Reinier Willem Heutink founded the Netherlands-based family business in 1911. Today, third-generation Jessica Heutink and partner Henk Fokke lead the Heutink Group as an international distribution and manufacturing business with a forward-thinking global vision.

www.heutink.nl

What if your commerce solution works fine, but you envision the challenge to stay relevant and differentiate in the future, and you decide to migrate to a new B2B commerce platform? Tjibbe van Doorn, E-Commerce Manager at Heutink, shares his experience with replatforming Heutink's commerce platform while experiencing the pressure of a peak season.

Heutink has developed into an international distribution and manufacturing company of educational supplies for elementary and high school and childcare facilities. Heutink voor Thuis ('Heutink at Home') also offers children's educational development products. Parents and guardians can order these products. Tjibbe: "We want to help inform and inspire everyone who contributes to children's development and education."

Complex and specific needs

Heutink is a supplier "not for B2B", says Tjibbe, "but for B2E, Business to Education. That is because schools are not commercial organizations. Their needs are different and very specific. For example, many schools are part of a foundation that includes multiple schools and shelters. Facility employees need to be able to make purchases for various schools. In the web portal, they must be able to log in to the right organization and switch between organizations, depending on the school for which they buy supplies. So, account management is quite complex. Another example of specific customer



needs is that teaching materials are both offline – books – and online – software. In the case of online methodology, schools need to be able to purchase licenses. A third customer-specific feature is that our peak season is right before the summer holidays. Our customers order their school supplies at the same time, all at once. In peak season, we receive 150 orders per hour, consisting of 5,000 order lines per hour."

With more products, services, and target segments

Heutink has been selling online since 2000 using a homegrown online shop. For 22 years, the platform developed into an online shop focused on primary schools. It has worked properly for all these years.

Tjibbe: “From the perspective of our core business, replatforming our commerce was not that necessary at all. From a short-term growth perspective, replatforming was not necessary either.” So why migrate? Tjibbe: “If you keep doing what you have always done, nothing will change. The world changes, the market changes, the buyer needs change and Heutink changes. Around 2014 we focused more on our other products and services. We added more target segments. It was not only about school supplies anymore. These changes resulted in different requirements for our e-commerce platform.”

Thinking about change

Tjibbe explains that they wanted the new e-commerce platform to be more than an order entry tool. The new platform should make it possible to inform, inspire and advise customers to show the full potential of what Heutink has to offer. “The new platform should be future-proof and help us with our ambitions to grow.” To become more experienced in the possibilities of a platform, Tjibbe centralized various shops and platforms of the Heutink Group and integrated them into one centralized e-commerce platform with the help of Intershop’s implementation partner De Nieuwe Zaak. “We used this as a testing ground, leading us to experience opportunities we did not have until then.” This also convinced the board that replatforming offered many opportunities. From orientation to implementation of the e-commerce platform took about three years.



Platform requirements

It all started with making a list of requirements for a new commerce platform. For Heutink, this was an extensive list with 60 to 70 items, varying from technical demands to practical functionalities. “Approval flows are important for our customers,” Tjibbe continues, “as well as the vision on e-commerce from the perspective of the e-commerce platform supplier. For Heutink, modular design is important. The platform should be an e-commerce hero. Content management and marketing tools were less important because, for this functionality, we use other tools. However, these tools should easily integrate with the platform. First we made a shortlist of e-commerce platforms and invited the vendors to demo their platform. When we decided that the Intershop Commerce Platform was the right solution for our needs, we searched for an implementation

partner. The choice for De Nieuwe Zaak was logical because we had collaborated with them before and know them as a strong partner.”

COVID and no delay

“When we wanted to kickstart the project, the COVID pandemic was a fact. Nevertheless, we decided to start. A large part of the analysis phase and the first part of the realization phase have been done completely by working remotely. We conducted all meetings with De Nieuwe Zaak through digital communication channels. In retrospect, this may have contributed to the successful migration. Meetings were highly effective, and some of the less dominant people could now have their say – more than in group meetings.” Heutink opted for an agile project approach – a requirement from De Nieuwe Zaak. “This is the best way to replatform your com-

merce solution because you don't know for 100 percent what the result will be."

Replatforming challenges

Right before the peak season, the Heutink.nl online shop went live. This shop is aimed at the Dutch market for primary, secondary and higher education and childcare target groups. To put it plainly, failure was not an option. As in any large project, Heutink and De Nieuwe Zaak faced several challenges. "Performance was one of them – and performance is a big challenge when peak season is coming. Intershop helped to solve the performance issue in time. The soft launch was in October 2021, when we guided our most important customers through the migration together with De Nieuwe Zaak. The big bang was in February 2022. It was excited for us that we were dependent on De Nieuwe Zaak to a substantial extent before going live. Now I can say that we can have faith in them. Our pain was their pain; they gave everything to make it successful."

Another challenge was change management, both in the organization and for customers. Tjibbe emphasizes the importance of selecting key users: "They can be the ambassadors of the new platform. Also, make sure to embed e-commerce in the organization. At Heutink, we involved the marketing, sales, and IT departments. E-commerce also supports the sales department to save time because customers can find information themselves in the self-service portal."

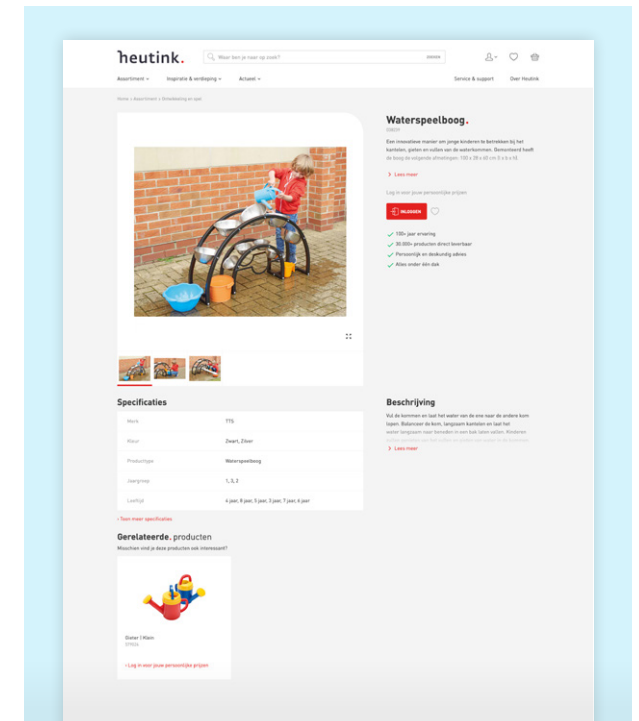
Focusing on customer experience

Tjibbe: "For every decision we make, our goal is to add value to our customers – in our services and from a customer satisfaction point of view. Now that the platform is live, we will focus on improving our website's customer experience and making it more relevant. It is challenging to improve the customer experience for diverse customer segments. We are implementing SPARQUE.AI now for a better customer experience. We start with AI-search, the functionality we received negative feedback on. The SPARQUE AI-recommendation functionality will follow after. We also discussed with De Nieuwe Zaak which new features can be implemented before the next peak season. We already see that we are improving because the share of wallet increases."

Heutink is still working on a data-driven approach. We are at the beginning of our digital transformation. "We notice many opportunities to explore the new platform to better present product and service groups. Every day, we can be better."

"Intershop helped to solve the performance issue in time."

Tjibbe van Doorn, E-Commerce Manager at Heutink



ABOUT INTERSHOP

Always nearby



Intershop is the engine that drives digital commerce. Our powerful B2B e-commerce platform enables the world's leading manufacturers and wholesalers to transform their business and increase revenue in a digital-first world.

Our cloud-based solutions give you an essential foundation for digital success, plus the flexibility to deliver

unique experiences and quickly react to changing needs. With a global presence and extensive partner network, we support your success every step of the way—creating opportunities to scale, innovate, and gain a competitive edge.

Intershop is built to boost your business. Discover what we can do at www.intershop.com.

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www.intershop.com/en/locations
info@intershop.com