24 questions COOs should ask when buying a distributed order management system (OMS)

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When evaluating a distributed Order Management System (OMS), a Chief Operating Officer (COO) needs to focus on strategic alignment, operational efficiency, and ROI at each stage of the buying process. Read on for a list of key questions tailored to each phase.

Define the problem you're trying to solve

You're aware an OMS may be able to address specific business challenges, but you need to nail down the problem you need to solve first.

1. **What operational inefficiencies are we currently experiencing in our order management process?**
    - What percentage of orders are delayed, have to be rerouted, or canceled due to inaccurate stock data or operational inefficiencies? Are we able to report on these effectively?
    - Are we losing revenue or customers due to limited fulfillment options or poor inventory visibility?
    - What percentage of customer service calls are due to canceled orders or 'where is my order' (WISMO) inquiries?
2. **How are these inefficiencies impacting customer satisfaction and profitability?**
3. **What are the main trends in ecommerce and omnichannel fulfillment that we need to adapt to?**
4. **What competitive advantages can we gain by adopting a new OMS?**

Evaluate potential solutions

You start to look at the options available.

5. **What specific use cases does an OMS need to support to meet our business goals?**

6. **Do the vendors shortlisted provide flexible ways to integrate with our existing systems (ERP, WMS, CRM, POS)? Have they integrated with similar systems before?**

7. **What scalability and flexibility does each solution offer to support our growth and unique and evolving business needs?**
    - How can we evaluate flexibility?
    - What are our scalability requirements for orders?
    - What are our scalability requirements for showing real-time inventory availability to customers?

8. **What is the total cost of ownership (TCO) for each solution, including implementation, licensing, and maintenance?**

9. **What security and compliance measures does each vendor offer?**

Select a vendor

It's time to decide on a vendor and finalize the purchase.

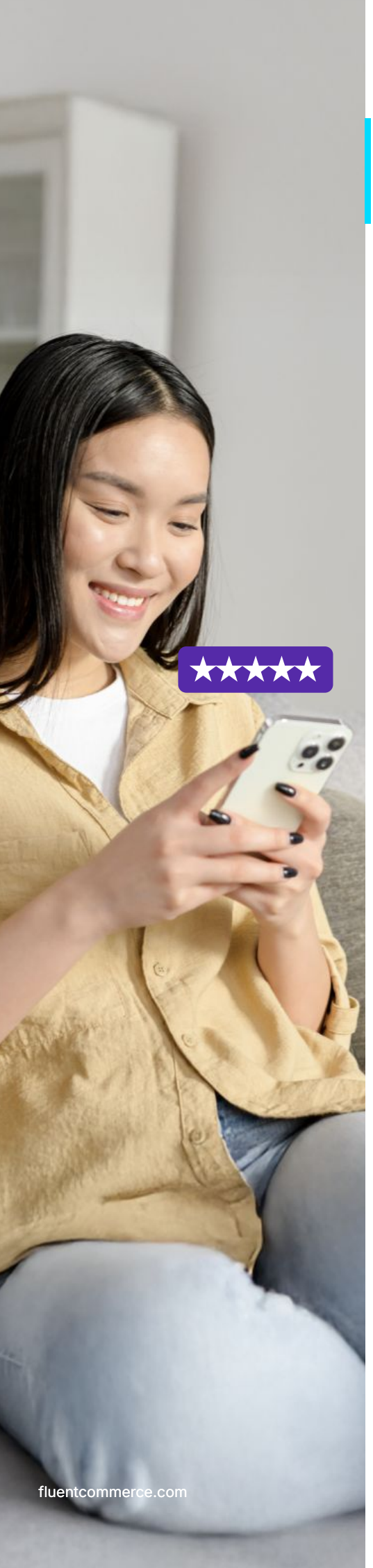
10. **What operational inefficiencies are we currently experiencing in our order management process?**

11. **What KPIs should we use to measure the success of the implementation? E.g.,**
    - Customer service
        - Call volume
        - Call resolution time
        - First call resolution
        - Average call handling time
    - Fulfillment optimization
        - On-time In Full (OTIF) rate
        - Canceled order rate
        - Average order processing time
        - Average delivery speed
        - Average delivery distance of an order
    - Customer Satisfaction
        - Net Promoter Score (NPS)
        - Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)
12. **What is the vendor's track record with similar organizations?**
13. **What is included in the service level agreement (SLA)?**

Implement the solution

Your goal here is to ensure deployment success.

14. **What is the plan to onboard internal teams and ensure adoption across departments?**
15. **How do we mitigate risks associated with the implementation process?**
16. **What is the process for customizing the system to meet our unique requirements?**
17. **How do we ensure data integrity during migration to the new system?**
18. **What resources are available if issues arise during deployment?**



Optimize and Review

It's time to conduct a post-implementation review and identify opportunities for the future.

19. **Are we achieving the expected operational and financial benefits?**
20. **What areas of the system need further optimization or additional training?**
21. **How is the system performing against predefined KPIs?**
22. **What feedback are we receiving from end-users (employees and customers)?**
23. **What opportunities exist to leverage advanced features or expand system capabilities?**
24. **Do we have the right team structure in place? Is it set up to take full advantage of optimization opportunities?**

By addressing these questions, a COO can ensure that the evaluation, selection, and implementation of an OMS aligns with the organization's strategic goals and delivers measurable value.

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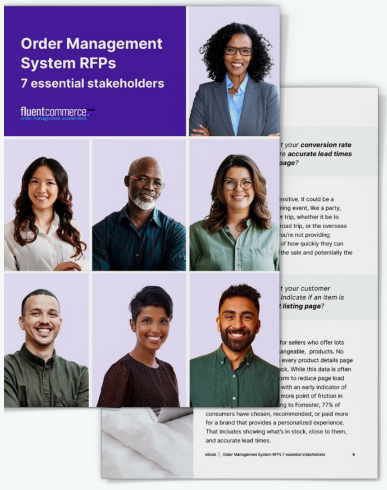

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