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## ProductCart Build To Order: features

Many unique features not available in other small business ecommerce software

ProductCart Build To Order is at the same time a powerful shopping cart system, a product configurator, and real-time online quoting software. Quite simply, **there is nothing like it.**

ProductCart BTO includes a number of powerful features not available in other small business shopping cart software, which give you additional tools to effectively handle the sale of configurable products and services over the Internet.

The following is a brief overview of some of its features and functionality.

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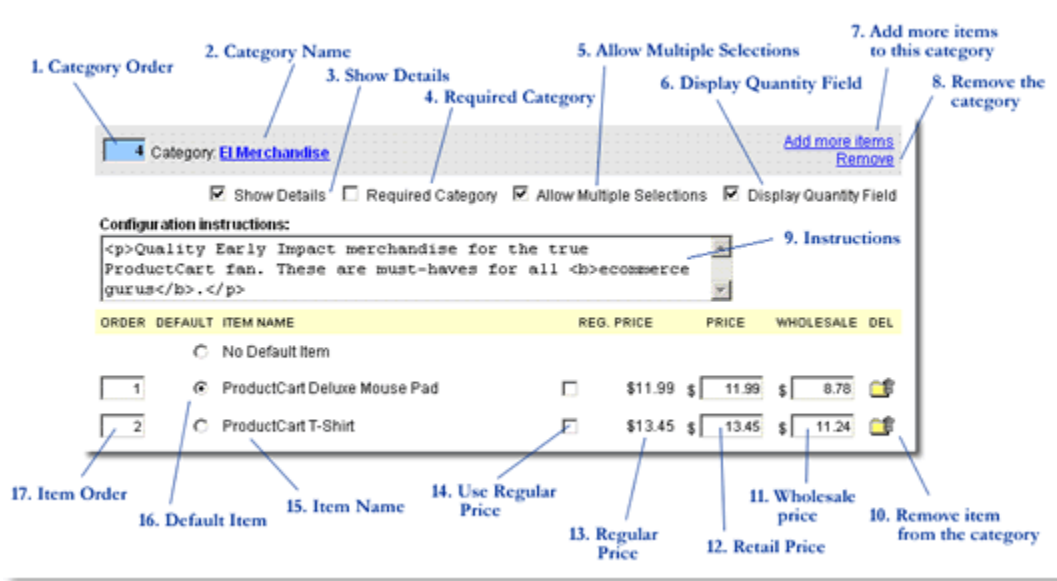
### Features Overview

Among Build-to-Order's powerful and completely unique features:

- **Quickly setup configurable products & services** - A point-&-click interface allows merchants to assign any number of items to a configurable product, organizing them in meaningful categories that are shown to the user as drop-down menus, radio buttons, or check boxes, depending on how they are setup.
- **Maintain full control of the customer's experience** - The system gives merchants complete flexibility in defining which options should be available for selection; which options should be required; which options should be exclusive (choose one or the other) and which should not (choose any of the following); how the price should change when different options are selected; etc. Through the new [Conflict Management](#) system, customers are prevented from selecting incompatible options, or forced to select multiple items that are all required for the selected configuration.

In addition, the store administrator has access to a number of display options that dynamically control the way configurable options are presented to the customer. For example: radio buttons vs. drop-down menus, alternating background colors for table rows, fully customizable "View Details" pop-up window to provide the customer with more details about the options available for selection, etc.

- **Guide customers with 'default' configurations** - Merchants can suggest a default configuration that their customers can choose 'as is' or edit as they wish. The product's price is calculated dynamically and instantly updated based on the merchant's default selections and the customizations selected by the user.
- **Provide custom quotes 24x7** - Build-to-Order can also transform a Web site into a powerful, 24x7 custom quoting system. Customers have the ability to save the product or service that they have configured to their account so that they may print it, edit it and submit it as an order at any time.



## Build To Order vs. Unlimited Product Options

There is a major difference between the functionality offered by ProductCart BTO and the 'unlimited product options' feature that some other ecommerce solutions provide. 'Unlimited product options' means that the store administrator can associate a product with a variety of available styles, colors, sizes. These options are NOT 'products' available elsewhere on the store. In other words, they do not 'exist' separately from the product that they apply to.

This approach works just fine when the store sells relatively 'simple' merchandise. For example, this approach works great if the store were to sell a pair of khakis, where the options could be: style, color, size, etc. But this approach does not work nearly as well when the store sells much more complicated items, which are a combination of products available as stand alone items on the store (e.g. hard drives), items not available as stand-alone (e.g. microprocessors), and options (e.g. white or black desktop case).

Another example: let's say your store sells custom furniture (or allows visitors to obtain custom real-time quotes). Finished pieces of furniture are made of wood panels, cabinets, door knobs, countertops, and many other items, some of which may also be available for sale as stand alone items, some of which may not. The final product (e.g. a custom configured kitchen), is the combination of a variety of other products that make up the configurable one.

These are not just options, they are actual products, each with their own price, image, description, etc. Some of them may be available for sale as stand-alone items, some may not. Regardless, ProductCart BTO gives vendors the ability to combine ANY existing products to create a new, configurable one. So, a specific customizable kitchen may allow the customer to select from 5 of the 10 countertops carried by the store, 4 of 7 refrigerators, all of the wood paneling, etc.

ProductCart BTO gives store administrators far more flexibility than shopping carts using simple product 'options'.

## A Unique Database Architecture

In order to be able to implement the functionality described above, ProductCart BTO uses a highly flexible product catalog. There are three types of products on a BTO store:

1. **Standard Products** are products as they exist in any online store. Standard Products may or may not be available for sale (e.g. a 'coming soon' product is not), but they are always visible in the store catalog. In other words, they would always come up in a store search. Standard Products are organized in categories that are visible to customers when they browse the store.

For example: a custom furniture store may sell 'Stools' as stand alone products.

2. **Build To Order Only Items** are products that are not available for sale stand alone, and therefore do not come up in store searches or when customers browse the store. They can be assigned to a category that contains Standard Products as well, or they can be organized in categories that are not visible to customers when they browse the store.

For example: the same custom furniture store may not sell door knobs for kitchen cabinets as stand-alone products, and therefore will not want them to be visible in the store catalog other than as parts of a configurable kitchen.

**Build To Order Products (or Services)** are combinations of Standard Products and/or Build-to-Order Only Items, presented to the user as meaningful groups of selectable options. Some groups may contain single-choice options (e.g. you can only select one of the available monitors for your custom computer), some multiple choice items (e.g. you can select any of the available software programs to be installed on your custom computer). The store administrator defines the groups and the items/products within each group that are available to customers to select from while configuring a certain BTO Product. The store administrator, however, does not actually define how the custom product or service will end up being configured. That's up to the customer as he/she makes selections from the available options.

For instance, a catering business may offer four Services: "Breakfast", "Lunch", "Dinner", and "Special Events". A "Dinner" would likely include groups of products/items that might not be available for the customer to select with a "Breakfast". The actual content of a "Dinner" is then configured by the customer during the ordering process (i.e. 2 entrees, 2 appetizers, no desserts, wine, etc.). The vendor only defines the choices (groups of products/items) from which the customer can select.

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## New features recently added to the built-in product configurator

As mentioned above, we have applied significant improvements to the [product configurator](#) that is the center piece of the unique Build To Order version of ProductCart. The new features give you additional levels of flexibility in terms of how your customers can customize their product (or service) during the ordering or real-time quoting process.

### Associate a quantity field with any selectable item

When setting up a configurable product or service, you can now show/hide a quantity input field for any of the options assigned to the product. This is a huge improvement to the product configurator. For example, when ordering a custom gift basket, customers will be able to select how many units they need for any of the products that they are adding to the gift basket, as long as you are allowing them to select more than one unit. Therefore, on the same product or service configuration page, you can have a combination of items that can be added to the configuration in more than one unit (i.e. the quantity field is shown), and items that can only be selected, but for which a quantity cannot be specified (i.e. they can only add one unit to the configuration - the quantity field is hidden).

### Set quantity discounts for selectable items

Depending on the number of units of the configurable product that the customer is purchasing, and/or on the number of units of a specific item added to the configuration, the price of that item can change dynamically based on quantity discount tiers set for it. This powerful feature has a wide range of applications. For example, the unit price of the option "4-Color Printing" may change as the customer decides to purchase 2,000 instead of 500 custom business cards. Change the quantity and everything is recalculated on the fly, without refreshing the configuration page.

### Quantity-independent additional charges

Continuing on the "business cards" example, an order for 500 business cards could be charged the same \$150 setup fee that is charged on an order for 10,000 business cards. Similarly, having a Jazz Band at a wedding reception would cost \$1,500 regardless of the number of guests. The price of the "dinner" portion of the wedding reception, however, does change based on the number of invited guests. ProductCart Build To Order now allows you to separate items that

affect the product or service configuration regardless of the quantity ordered. You can associate N additional charges with the configurable product or service and organize them in meaningful categories. In the storefront, these charges are shown to customers on a page separate from the product or service configuration page. Continuing on the "wedding reception" example, the shopping cart will now allow customers to first configure their dinner (appetizers, first courses, soups & salads, beverages, etc.), where the total price is a function of the selected items and the number of guests, then add other items whose price is not affected by the number of guests (e.g. photographer, dj, flower arrangements, etc.).

#### **Show category-specific instructions on the configurator pages**

Configuring a custom product or service can be somewhat intimidating to a new visitor to your store. Now you can better guide your customers by showing comments or instructions above each category of selectable options. Especially on complex product configuration pages, this feature will make the ordering process much easier for the customer.

#### **Manage conflicts between selections**

The new [Conflict Management Add-on](#) for ProductCart Build To Order adds a new layer of sophistication to the system by allowing you to create an unlimited number of rules that govern item selection on the product configuration page. For example, if item A is selected, then items B and C from category XYZ cannot be selected. Or if item A from category 123 is selected, the item D from category 567 must be selected. Incompatible items are automatically "grayed out" so that they are immediately, visually unavailable for selection.