



B2B Trend Report

Trends, predictions and key drivers for
success in B2B commerce 2023 and beyond

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Introduction

Welcome to the B2B buyer's paradox. In 2023, B2B commerce has never been easier – or harder. On the one hand, buyers can access products and information wherever, whenever. They have never had more information at their fingertips. On the other, they face information overload, managing multiple buying stakeholders, and are drowning in choice.

As a result, the B2B buying process has become increasingly complex, with buyers struggling to balance the need for speed and efficiency with the need for thorough research and due diligence. To succeed in this new landscape, businesses must learn to navigate the paradox of B2B buying: to provide buyers with the information they need, while also simplifying the decision-making process.

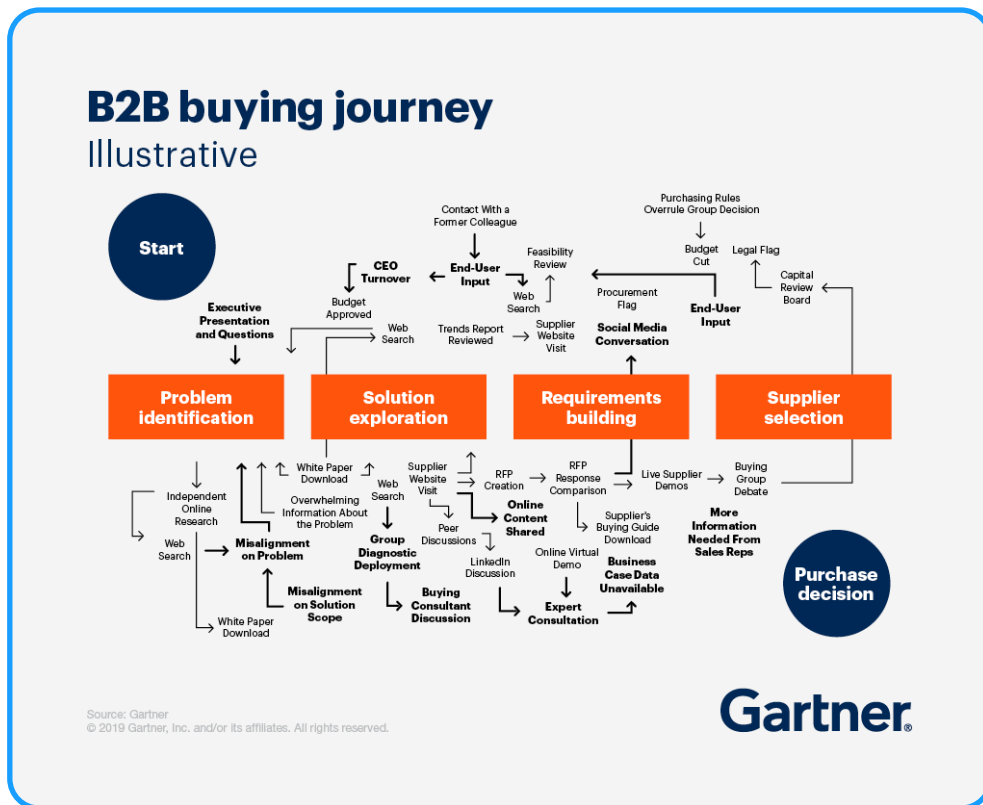
In this ever-evolving world of B2B commerce, businesses that can strike this balance will emerge as leaders in their respective industries, achieving success and growth.



What does the B2B commerce landscape look like today?

Complexity is giving B2B buyers a headache. According to Gartner, more than three-quarters (77%) of B2B buyers agreed that their last purchase was over-complicated. Research shows that the buying cycle could last anything from a couple of weeks to extending over months. With an average of six to 10 people involved in each decision, getting agreement on anything is, quite frankly, painful¹.

Just a glance at Gartner's illustrated buying journey shows the challenge. But it is also an opportunity. Because any B2B vendor that can make this demanding journey easier is likely to outshine the competition.



¹ <https://www.gartner.co.uk/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey>

Digital transformation of a seller's operations and processes can help make the buyer experience more seamless and remove friction. However, digitization in itself is not a silver bullet – how it is implemented is what matters.

B2B buyers in 2023

49% buy products already online

68% will increasingly use digital channels for purchases in the future

45% still think that buying online is more complicated than buying offline

Then there is the question of capturing the buyer's attention and being front of mind with the right message at the right time.

You can be reasonably sure with B2C sales – from pasta sauces to shampoo – that there'll be a sizeable audience both attentive and ready to purchase your product when you launch your marketing campaign. However, when it comes to sizeable B2B purchases like new software or significant equipment, most of your audience simply isn't in market at that specific moment.

The *LinkedIn B2B institute* found that, at any given time, 95% of potential B2B buyers are inactive. That leaves the whole B2B sector chasing just 5% of active purchasers. Unsurprisingly, untargeted cold calling (or the digital equivalent) often falls on deaf ears.

A new approach is needed.

² THE B2B FUTURE SHOPPER REPORT 2023, Wunderman Thompson

The changing B2B consumer

People do strange things when they walk through their real or virtual office doors. They transform into ‘businesspeople.’ As a result, there has been a tendency to believe that the normal rules of consumer behavior don’t apply to B2B commerce – that ‘business’ is different.

But B2B buyer attitudes are changing. Enabled by digital transformation, catalyzed by the pandemic, and driven by new customer experience expectations, the B2B buying experience is taking on a new shape.

The biggest shift is generational. As of 2023, 65% of B2B buyers are between the ages of 18 and 40³. In one market – the UK – Gen Z alone make up 20% of the total workforce⁴.

Age is more than just a number. There are marked characteristics of the next generation of B2B buyers that influence how B2B commerce is conducted. The LinkedIn Institute referred to this new cohort as BETAs⁵:



Blurred work-life boundaries influence professional attitudes



Evolving, their identity is defined by professional status and their personal brand



Tech native, it has always been a part of their lives



Activist, purpose matters – privately and professionally.

The research acknowledges that you don’t have to be a Millennial to also be a BETA, but given they now make up most of the purchasing workforce, their values will inevitably influence how B2B commerce is conducted.

Whether or not you want to call it the Uberization of B2B commerce, the fact is that B2B consumers have stopped putting on their ‘business face’ when they come to work. They expect similar friction-free, digital experiences at work as they do at home. This means being available in the channels that they want when they want and offering personalized service all the way.

³ <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/5-predictions-b2b-marketing-2023>

⁴ <https://www.thehrdirector.com/features/demographics/changing-face-uk-workforce/>

⁵ <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/b2b-institute/thebetas>

Everything, everywhere, all at once

The title of 2023's runaway film success is a neat way of summarizing today's B2B commerce challenge. Buyers want information and purchasing ability on their terms, whether that's in-person, online, via chatbot, over mobile, or even TikTok. Yes, TikTok, where ads have a potential reach of nearly 885m adults globally and brands like Sage accounting and Grammarly consistently post to attract new customers⁶.

With B2B customers' thumbs already hovering over their mobile (around three-quarters of millennials state their smartphone is the most important device in their day-to-day life⁷) it makes sense to meet them where they are. According to the Wunderman Thomson research cited earlier, 71% of respondents would like to shop B2B more easily through their mobiles, and 66% want an experience like that offered by consumer brands⁸.

That's easy for them to say but how do you target all the involved stakeholders in a B2B purchase in channels as intimate as mobile? Buying cohorts can have as many as ten different people – and personalities – involved?

In the next section, we'll explore just how B2B commerce brands can find ways of being everything to everyone in efficient and effective ways.

“Buyers are engaging with sales teams later and buyer demographics are shifting, with more people involved at every stage, who all have different information needs and personal styles.”

Antonia Wade, Global CMO, PwC⁹

⁶ <https://www.oktopost.com/blog/tiktok-b2b-marketing-examples/>

⁷ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/three-strategies-marketing-millennial-b2b-buyers-g-david-dodd/>

⁸ <https://internetretailing.net/b2b-shoppers-happy-to-use-an-avatar-to-order-in-the-metaverse-but-also-keen-to-buy-more-easily-online-study/>

⁹ <https://www.marketingweek.com/antonia-wade-b2b-buyer-journey-fix/>

Meet customers' needs, whatever, whoever they are

Personalization

Ensuring that as a B2B supplier, you understand the buyer's needs is now non-negotiable. This has been possible, just as in B2C, by using 'adtech' to track buying habits and searches and then serving ads, relevant content, and messages based on those preferences.

With the expected deprecation of cookies, this may prove more difficult; however there are a range of tactics from improving first-party data resources to data partnerships that are allowing brands across both B2B and B2C to continue to understand their customers' discreet needs and tailor marketing accordingly.

However, the B2B environment is still much 'higher touch' than B2C, and personalization is expected across the board. Gartner urges B2B commerce companies to focus on 'Buyer enablement'. Simply put, this is content that helps the buyer by making their purchasing journey as easy as possible.

At a bare minimum, buyer enablement content should be: Relevant, easy, useful, and credible.

In an ideal world, buyer enablement content would also be: Shareable, provide confidence, align to customers' emotional needs, and lead back to the company's unique differentiators¹⁰.

How does this work when the buyers involved can be so many and so different?

According to the LinkedIn B2B Institute, this is where understanding how to interact with the 95% of buyers who are not in market comes into play.

"Advertising is not persuasion, it is publicity. It's just making people aware of the product or service and at some later date, when they need the product or the service, they will think of your company and they will buy your company, generally. There will not be a click in that process."

Jon Lombardo, Global Head of Research, LinkedIn B2B Institute¹¹

Called the 95:5 rule, the advice from the Institute is, instead, to build relationships with customers outside the buying environment. This gives businesses the opportunity to share interesting content, provide useful advice and interact with the different buying cohorts without the pressure of closing a sale.

Then, when the time comes that the potential customer is in the market, there is significantly more 'mental availability' – in other words, your brand comes instantly to mind when they identify a need. This makes it much easier to gain consensus among those ten potentially very different buying personalities because each has a meaningful understanding of your product offering.

¹⁰ <https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/buyer-enablement>

¹¹ <https://www.marketingweek.com/linkedin-b2b-institute-advertising-memorable-clickable/>

Practical personalization

Underneath the overarching brand work, there are practical ‘in-market’ steps B2B commerce brands should take to secure a sale. Practical personalization means looking at the various levers that can tip the scales in your favor, including bespoke product packages, customer specific pricing, and recommendations.

Pricing

There is anxiety among B2B businesses that publishing prices will somehow drive customers away. Certainly, depending on the suite of products available, the pricing range can be quite extensive, but even estimated figures can put buyers’ minds at ease. Price visibility is the top thing a technology vendor can do to make a prospective client likely to buy (71%) versus free trials (70%) or customer reviews (35%), says one set of research¹².

Demonstrating a degree of flexibility is one way of making customers feel truly special. In a piece on pricing strategy, Bain calls companies that are willing to do this ‘Opportunists’:

*“Opportunists can capture share by adjusting prices based on market dynamics and competitive positioning, and exchange price for other benefits such as longer contracts, incentives for bundling multiple offerings together and volume guarantees.”*¹³

Adjusting prices has a definitive upside with one commenter suggesting that a one per cent improvement in price optimization can increase total profits by 11.1%. In fact, there can be a definite downside to not adjusting price, with Gartner finding that more than two-fifths of businesses (41%) find pricing mismatch with expectations the biggest deal breaker¹⁴.

Content, reviews, and forums

B2B buyers are very proactive, seeking out information for themselves and arming themselves before a rep conversation. It’s one of the reasons pricing transparency is so important, because no one wants to go through hours of research only to find the product is too expensive.

Where once it was the vendor sales teams themselves that were the main source of information, B2B buyers are turning to their peers.

According to TrustRadius, 41% of Gen Z and 29% of Millennials named ‘check review sites’ as their first step in the buying journey. For five years, vendor sales representatives were among the top five most commonly-used resources but in 2022, they dropped from the top five completely – replaced by communities and forums¹⁵.

B2B commerce brands can take inspiration from B2C’s success with user generated content (UGC) by producing more neutral, informative content that is of use for executives outside the buying cycle. This could include ‘how-to’ guides, latest updates, and market intelligence. It’s a trend that is on the increase, with 54% of US and UK B2B marketers expecting to spend more on content creation and strategy in 2023¹⁶.

¹² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/garydrenik/2022/12/13/what-significant-shifts-in-b2b-buyer-behavior-means-for-2023/>

¹³ <https://www.bain.com/insights/pricing-strategies-for-volatile-times>

¹⁴ <https://www.gartner.com/en/digital-markets/insights/how-the-b2b-purchase-journey-is-evolving>

¹⁵ <https://www.trustradius.com/vendor-blog/2022-b2b-buying-disconnect-the-age-of-the-self-serve-buyer/>

¹⁶ <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/5-predictions-b2b-marketing-2023>

Channel preference and self-serve

With all this self-serve activity (virtually 100% of buyers want to self-serve part or all the buying journey, up 13% from 2021¹⁷), in-person sales rep meetings look to be going the way of the dinosaur.

Remote working has moved many interactions onto hybrid solutions such as Zoom or Teams or messaging via channels like WhatsApp. In fact, since its launch in 2018, WhatsApp Business has over 50m business users and claims to improve customer service by 22% and sales by 127%¹⁸.

Hybrid working looks to be here to stay, and with it, hybrid B2B commerce.

According to McKinsey, hybrid selling that was instigated by the pandemic, is expected to become the most dominant sales strategy by 2024. It apparently drives up to 50% more revenue with deeper customer engagement.

Hybrid selling means being omnichannel, using remote and ecommerce, self-service, virtual, and in-person reps. For the customer, it involves fewer meetings in an already packed schedule, and for the vendor, remote sales reps can reach four times as many accounts in the same amount of time¹⁹.

Encouraging B2B customers to self-serve and interact across different channels also has the potential to deliver a valuable resource back to the commerce business – data.

“The D2C model gives brands the opportunity to collect first-party data on their customers. And with this data, the possibilities are endless – brands can customize products and create new products, all with the customer in mind.”

Cindy Liu,

eMarketer director of forecasting at Insider Intelligence²⁰

Product customization is becoming central to attracting and retaining B2B customers. Bespoke pricing, bespoke products and bundles all demonstrate real value for money when customers worry that large-scale purchases can't quite fit their needs or come with significant wastage.

¹⁷ <https://www.trustradius.com/vendor-blog/2022-b2b-buying-disconnect-the-age-of-the-self-serve-buyer>

¹⁸ <https://meetanshi.com/blog/whatsapp-statistics/>

¹⁹ <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-future-of-b2b-sales-is-hybrid>

²⁰ <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/why-more-brands-should-leverage-d2c-model>

Direct-to-consumer (D2C)

Direct-to-consumer (D2C) has become an essential sales channel in B2B business, offering companies a new way to sell their products and services directly to end customers.

One of the key benefits of D2C in B2B is direct control over the sales process. Companies can strengthen customer relationships, collect customer data, and gain valuable insights into buying behavior by selling their products or services directly to end customers. This enables companies to better align their marketing and sales strategies with customers' needs and preferences.

In B2B, D2C also offers the opportunity to build a direct brand presence and increase brand awareness. By offering their products or services through their own sales channels, companies can strengthen their brand and create a consistent brand experience for their customers. This allows them to communicate their message and values directly to customers and build long-term customer loyalty.

Another benefit of D2C in B2B is the flexibility and agility it offers companies. By selling directly to end customers, companies can respond quickly to market changes, introduce new products, and adapt sales strategies. As a result, companies can respond more rapidly to customer needs and gain a competitive advantage.

In the next section, we'll see how B2B technology is evolving to fit the 'new personalization', using new tools and innovations to allow B2B commerce to become more flexible and responsive to market conditions.



Technology meets the new personalization

The future is composable

Personalization isn't a one-time job. Even with the same, single customer, their needs and opinions change over time so you have to adjust your strategy accordingly.

When customers switch to a new channel they do so abruptly and en masse. Brands have little notice and have to move quickly but the problem for most retailers is that their systems are not typically built to adapt this fast.

This is where composable commerce comes in.

Think of a conductor guiding their orchestra through a complex piece of music. When the score demands a crescendo, he whips every section into a frenzy of activity. In a moment of peace, with just the slightest hint of melody, he quiets the drums, the brass and the wind to allow the violins their moment to shine.

Composable commerce is the bringing together of solutions from multiple vendors (and, indeed, multiple solutions from a single vendor) to create a bespoke suite that answers your brands' specific needs.

Made up of technologies that fall under such terms as headless CMS, API-first architecture and best-of-breed solutions, these aren't composable commerce itself, but its building blocks.

Most commonly, composable commerce is low or no-code, meaning retailers can implement systems with a minimum of IT support. This is essential if you're to react quickly to changing market conditions. Onboarding highly skilled staff is a time-consuming and expensive process.

Composability isn't an all or nothing solution. It's also possible to introduce composable commerce in some market segments where trends tend to move fast while maintaining legacy operations that are still relevant and too costly to replace.

There are still challenges when it comes to implementing composable commerce. You must be clear on your goals, as well as anticipate how those might change in the future and what the potential impact might be. And you will most likely need the assistance of partners to help you get the best configuration possible.



Open commerce

Open commerce is an extension of the composable commerce principles, which allows B2B ecommerce companies to build the exact experience their customers and teams need using open-source code. This means everything can be customized, extended, and integrated and helps B2B businesses build an experience that is fully differentiated from the competition.

Open commerce is:



Open commerce allows for plugins such as the OCI (open catalog interface) Punchout, which links a B2B purchaser's procurement system to the B2B merchant's ecommerce site.

The customer can then put products into their basket while all the background data, such as shipping address and cost centers, are transferred directly into the procurement system. This helps buyers manage multiple suppliers and deal with large volumes of paperwork that otherwise can result in mistakes and processing delays²¹.

²¹ <https://store.shopware.com/en/orca433338576913m/sap-oci-for-shopware-6.html>

Conversational commerce

We can't end a conversation about commerce without talking about conversational commerce. Coverage of ChatGPT, Microsoft's investment in AI-powered conversational search, or the more recently launched Bard from Google, is widespread across media.

Both have made a splash as people experiment with these tools and often produce weird and wonderful results while practical applications are rapidly being explored. But conversational AI presents a massive opportunity for B2B commerce into 2023 and beyond.

AI-powered conversational commerce has already existed in the form of chatbots for some time, and the market continues to grow. Grand View Research estimates that the global chatbot market is expected to reach \$9.4bn by 2024, with a compound annual growth rate of more than 24%²².

However, the evolution into ChatGPT and Bard presents even more opportunities.

Search and content:

Customers can ask for information that suits their very specific requirements and receive it in as non-technical a way as they need.

Translations:

In an increasingly global marketplace, being able to deliver content in a local language is a competitive advantage. CSA Research found that 65% of customers prefer content in their own language, even if it's poor quality, and 40% won't buy in languages other than their own²³.

Communicate:

To save time for sales reps, conversational AI can generate accurate and bespoke communications for clients, freeing employees up to do higher-value work.

²² <https://www.maddynews.com/uk/2023/03/18/ai-powered-chatbots-the-next-frontier-in-e-commerce-customer-service/>

²³ <https://csa-research.com/Featured-Content/For-Global-Enterprises/Global-Growth/CRWB-Series/CRWB-B2C>

Cloud, AI, and IoT in B2B Commerce

Flexibility appears to be the watchword for B2B commerce, with the ability to scale up or down according to demand. Just as hybrid working has led many business owners to scale down the physical footprint of their offices, so moving some technology capacity to the cloud allows many to adopt an ‘all you can eat’ approach to storage and IT services.

The global commerce cloud market size was USD 12.32 billion in 2019, and Fortune Business Insights projected it would reach USD 55.67 billion by 2027, exhibiting a CAGR of 20.8 % during the forecast period²⁴.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are providing B2B commerce brands with similar advantages. Through automation, they enable companies to make human resources stretch further, fostering growth and international expansion.

As mentioned above, the potential for AI services like Chat GPT could allow modest-sized companies to expand far beyond their physical capacity. Experts such as Boston Consulting Group predict that Generative AI – AI that can create content, text, and images from text – will be a significant time-saver for businesses in the next five years²⁵.

IoT will perform a similar function, allowing the automated ingestion of data from maintenance of equipment to monitoring of its use and when it might need replacing. Connectivity improves the tracking of materials, allowing for a smoother supply chain and better inventory management, improving revenue and enhancing personalization.



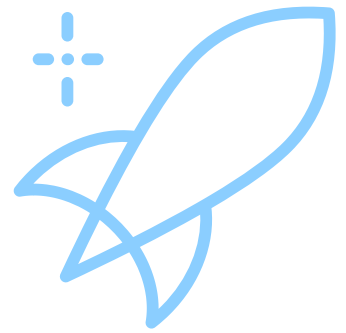
Data management

With so many streams of data coming online, and advanced technologies’ ability to channel huge volumes of data, there is an imperative to make sure data management capabilities are up to scratch.

Flexible product information management (PIM) systems that can handle growing numbers of SKUs, but that can also link to customer data platforms (CDPs) and customer relationship management (CRM) systems are vital. It will be increasingly necessary to maintain control over customer buying trends and improve personalization and relationship building across the customer journey.

²⁴ <https://www.fortunebusinessinsights.com/commerce-cloud-market-102802>

²⁵ <https://www.bcg.com/x/artificial-intelligence/generative-ai>



Driving B2B commerce success: **Key Drivers for long-term growth in 2023 and Beyond**

Clearly, there is a wealth of both challenge and opportunity for B2B commerce brands. From our research for this whitepaper, we have identified three essential trends that B2B commerce brands should embrace to drive success in the future.

Composable commerce is a must

If businesses have learned anything since the start of this decade, it's that customer behaviors and trends can change quickly, and it doesn't always require a pandemic as the catalyst. To succeed, B2B commerce brands must be flexible, not just to respond to customer needs but also to stay relevant, innovate and keep costs under control. Composable commerce is the answer to all these challenges.

Cloud native, AI, and IoT

Technologies that allow businesses to scale at comparatively low cost will be key. On top of composable commerce, making use of the 'all you can eat' nature of cloud-native services, and taking advantage of the automated insights and data available through AI technologies will allow even moderately sized businesses to compete on a level playing field with advanced, large-scale corporations.

Enter the digital sales room

The sales rep is not defunct, but they are taking on a very different shape. Interactions are almost entirely digital-first, and the customer is looking to arm themselves with information before they'll even contemplate a conversation. Comprehensive content and transparency on price are the first port of call, followed by peer reviews and conversational search. The digital sales room is the ideal environment to host all of this, a rich and pressure-free environment where potential buyers can learn all they need to know while also being in the most convenient place to proceed to a transaction.

Cross-channel customer experience

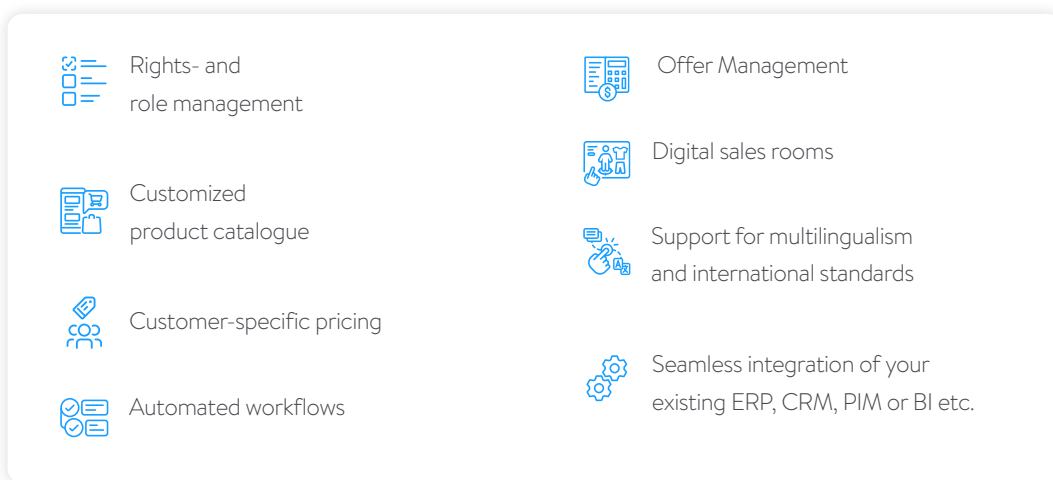
Building on the 95:5 rule, it's vital to build a consistent and robust presence in the mind of the potential customer. This brand building generates significant 'mental availability' when the time comes to purchase. Then you must make sure your product is easily findable at the point of purchasing decisions and that all digital and physical touchpoints interact seamlessly. The key to making the buyer journey as simple as possible is to remove all obstacles and pain points and to deliver a customer experience as friction-free as ordering a takeaway meal or hailing a ride.









Shopware's B2B capabilities

Shopware as a future-proof ecommerce solution for B2B

In today's rapidly evolving ecommerce landscape, having the right tools is crucial to achieving success. At Shopware, we recognize the complexity of modern business operations and have developed a suite of powerful tools to help you optimize your processes and cultivate strong customer relationships.

Shopware's extensive and customizable B2B features enable you to accelerate and optimize your digital transformation while prioritizing your unique business needs. This includes streamlining and automating processes and seamlessly integrating with your existing system landscape.



-  Rights- and role management
-  Customized product catalogue
-  Customer-specific pricing
-  Automated workflows
-  Offer Management
-  Digital sales rooms
-  Support for multilingualism and international standards
-  Seamless integration of your existing ERP, CRM, PIM or BI etc.

Our API-first strategy simplifies the process of integrating third-party functionalities, systems, and shopping channels, allowing you to streamline your operations from inventory management to aftersales and achieve fully automated workflows. By implementing an individually tailored best-of-breed strategy, you can achieve higher productivity and better profitability in the long run. Additionally, our open commerce philosophy provides access to a vast network of experts and resources, giving you all the necessary tools to turn your vision into reality.

With Shopware, you can easily integrate both B2B and D2C commerce onto a single platform, allowing you to stand out from competitors and unlock your full potential. By centralizing your system, you can manage orders, inventory, and customer data more efficiently, saving you time and resources.

Rights and role management

Security is one of the top priorities for any business that operates online. It is crucial to ensure that only authorized personnel can access sensitive data and make changes to your store's administration. This is particularly important for B2B merchants, who often have multiple employees working on their online store, each with different roles and responsibilities.

Shopware offers a powerful rights and role management system that allows you to create different administrative roles with varying access levels to your Shopware storefront. This allows you to empower your employees with the ability to make necessary changes or assign specific responsibilities.

As a B2B merchant, you may have a sales department, a marketing department, and even an agency that helps you optimize your products. It is advisable to create individual users for each department, giving them access to only the parts of the storefront they need to do their jobs. For instance, the purchasing manager can control budget settings, while the buyer may only have access to order lists.

With Shopware, you can create administrative roles with specific permissions to ensure that each employee can perform their duties without compromising the security of your store.

Offer management

The offer management feature provides you with the flexibility to offer your customers varying prices for products and general discounts. You can manage offer requests directly from the admin panel and decide whether to accept, reject, or modify them according to your preferences. You can easily monitor the status of each offer request with color-coded markings that indicate whether it has been accepted, rejected, or needs editing.

In addition, the admin panel gives you access to important information such as the original and reduced order values, as well as general discount details. You can also view customer information, which can help you make informed decisions about accepting or rejecting offers.

Customer specific pricing

Consider setting up bespoke prices for your most loyal customers. With Shopware, you can effortlessly pull defined prices from your system of choice through API and display them throughout the customer journey, providing a personalized pricing experience for each customer. This feature is explicitly designed to handle millions of different prices and customers while maintaining optimal performance, which is especially beneficial for customers with multiple individual pricing conditions.

By offering personalized pricing and loyalty discounts, you can reward your frequent, startup, or longstanding clients and increase customer retention. This approach to pricing also helps establish your brand as customer-focused and trustworthy with a tailored shopping experience.

Flow Builder / Rule Builder

Shopware's admin panel offers two powerful tools that serve distinct functions: the Rule Builder and the Flow Builder. The Rule Builder is the central control unit that empowers merchants to automate various business processes and tailor the customer journey with just a few clicks. For example, you can easily specify which shipping costs, prices, and payment methods to show and when to display them.

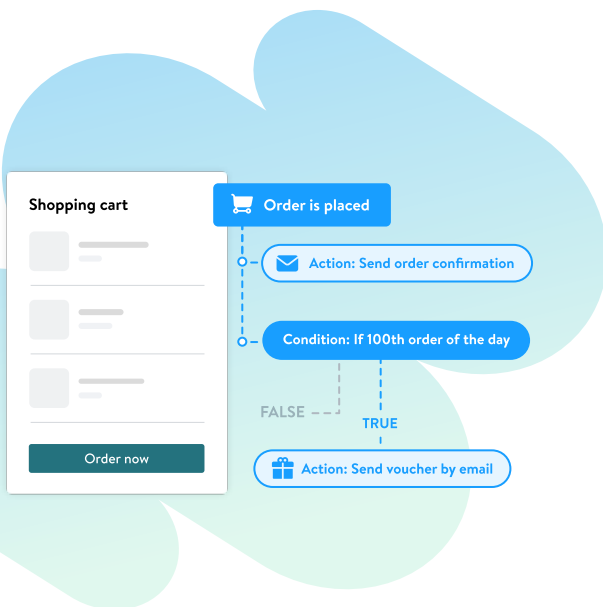
To create rules, you need to include at least one condition, and you can add multiple conditions and sub-conditions. By linking these conditions, you can automate even the most complex business operations without any coding skills. From managing content and marketing strategies to streamlining shipping procedures and payment options, the Rule Builder is a powerful tool that enables you to personalize your customers' journey and automate time-consuming workflows.



Combined with the Flow Builder, the possibilities for designing business processes become endless. The Flow Builder is highly flexible and can adapt to every business model. It allows you to set up highly customized business processes and automate them by reacting to various triggers, including internal events in Shopware or third-party systems. With the Flow Builder, you can effortlessly achieve more in less time by simplifying even the most complex business processes and automating workflows individually.

In essence, the Rule Builder provides a way to describe instructions, while the Flow Builder enables merchants to define the behavior of the Shopware platform in response to specific triggers.

In a B2B context, you can use the Flow Builder to trigger Slack notifications for sales reps when a customer places a new order. Setting up a webhook in the Flow Builder will automatically notify Slack when a new order is placed. You can also use the Rule Builder to specify that you only want to receive notifications for customers flagged as "VIP." With these powerful tools, your sales reps can for instance prioritize their efforts and provide personalized service to your most important customers.



Digital Sales Rooms

Digital Sales Rooms is an innovative feature of Shopware that addresses the unique challenges faced by B2B merchants. It enables live customer advice directly from your ecommerce solution through one-on-one conversations or group presentations. This is especially useful for products that require intensive consultation.

Before the consultation, you can already send your customers a compiled selection of products. Thanks to Instant Listing, you can also react to changing customer needs anytime during the live consultation and present alternative products (cross- and upselling).

With Digital Sales Rooms, there is no more need for outdated product catalogs! In self-guided mode, B2B customers can view and purchase customized offers directly in the online store. Information about stock levels, prices, and product variants is automatically updated, saving you the hassle of manually sending out new offers when the product range changes.

Multi-inventory

Effective inventory management is essential for B2B merchants with multiple warehouses, as keeping track of product stocks and availability is crucial for your business success. With Shopware's Multi-Inventory functionality, you can manage your inventory with ease, ensuring that products can be purchased independent of the inventory location, as long as they are available in one of them.

This feature allows you to manage availability using warehouse groups and priorities, in addition to being configured using the Rule Builder. As a result, customers can access the products they need, regardless of their location, providing a seamless shopping experience.

By utilizing Shopware's Multi-Inventory functionality, you can streamline your inventory management processes and avoid the risk of overselling or underselling products. This ensures that you can meet customer demand efficiently, reducing the likelihood of delays or cancellations. Overall, this feature is a powerful tool for B2B merchants looking to optimize their inventory management and enhance the customer experience.



Subscription SOON

Offering subscription services is a smart way for B2B merchants to increase the customer lifetime value and provide a consistent source of revenue. In the future, Shopware will simplify the process of configuring subscription offers through its user-friendly admin interface, enabling merchants to easily create and manage their subscription offers without any hassle.

Moreover, Shopware has already introduced a valuable feature tailored for B2B merchants - the order list function. It enables the automation of orders or subscription management and allows the creation of manual order lists that can be simultaneously shared and processed by multiple people within the company. The upcoming subscription service will complement this feature, offering merchants an even more comprehensive solution.

With the upcoming Subscription function, customers can easily purchase subscriptions through the storefront checkout and manage them in their account, providing them with a seamless and hassle-free shopping experience. This feature not only enhances the convenience for customers, but also ensures a reliable and steady stream of recurring revenue for merchants.

By providing subscription services, B2B merchants can strengthen their customer relationships and establish a stable revenue source. This feature is an excellent opportunity for driving growth and building customer loyalty, while also streamlining business operations.

Conclusion

The world of B2B commerce is evolving at lightning speed, and businesses that want to stay ahead of the curve need to be agile, innovative, and customer-centric. In this report, we explored the latest trends and predictions that will shape the future of B2B commerce.

One thing is guaranteed - digital transformation and personalization are no longer buzzwords but the driving forces behind successful B2B commerce. As ecommerce platforms become more sophisticated, businesses that invest in automation, omnichannel strategies, and customer experience will have a competitive edge. But that's not all - to thrive in the fast-paced world of B2B commerce, companies must also prioritize agility and innovation.

To achieve success, businesses need to have a deep understanding of their customers and make data-driven decisions. Gone are the days of relying on intuition and guesswork - the businesses that stay ahead of the curve will be the ones that embrace data-driven decision-making. And, of course, security and trust must not be overlooked, as data breaches and cyber attacks can have serious consequences.

So, what does the future hold for B2B commerce? Rapid technological advancements, shifting customer expectations, and intense competition. But for businesses that can adapt to these changes, the future is bright. The key to success lies in embracing digital transformation, prioritizing customer experience, and remaining vigilant about security. Are you ready to join the ranks of successful B2B businesses?

We're here for you!

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About Shopware

Shopware, founded in Schöppingen in 2000, offers a holistic omnichannel digital commerce platform for sophisticated mid-market and lower enterprise merchants, with high flexibility and various options for B2C, D2C, B2B, as well as service-based use cases. Shopware is well-positioned and one of the market leaders in its segment, especially in the DACH region, with a fast-growing business in North America.

The solution is headless, API-first, and uses an open source architecture, allowing merchants to individually customize and scale the product offering, creating a strong customer experience. Furthermore, Shopware relies on a global network of 1,600 sales, technology and solution partners, securing a stable ecosystem. Shopware merchants currently process a combined GMV of more than 20 billion USD across the global Shopware platform.

