

■ 2018 REPORT

# The B2B Buying Process in Poland

challenges, trends, inspirations

AUTHORS

PATRONS



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B2B sales</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Finding clients and partners</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>B2B purchasing</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Trends</b>	<b>34</b>
Trend #1. From Business2Business to Human2Human. On B2B consumerization	35
Differences between B2B and B2C	35
B2B consumerization	36
Customer experience is more important than price	37
Research customer needs	41
Speak a friendly language	42
Talk to customers on social media	43
Tap into e-commerce	45
Summary	46
Trend #2. B2B clients find information and opinions online	47
Before the seller gets the chance	47
Your new clients: millennials in B2B	48
What you need to know about millennials as B2B customers	49
How to meet millennials' expectations	51
Summary	54
Trend #3. Self-service in B2B	55
B2B customers prefer self-service	55
B2B self-service in practice	56
What does the client gain?	56
What does the supplier gain?	57
Self-service challenges	58
Summary	59
Trend #4. The rise of IT tools in B2B	60
Who is the modern salesperson?	60
B2B moves to the Internet	60
CRM, or why collect data?	62
Agile sales in real-time	63
Entrepreneurs choose e-commerce	64
B2B e-commerce: advanced personalization is key	66
Towards omnichannel	67
Summary	70

# Table of Contents

Trend #5. Business customers are using mobile devices	71
Can you imagine life without a smartphone?	71
Smartphone users	71
How do we use mobile devices?	72
B2B needs mobile solutions	72
A mobile application?	73
An alternative: PWA	75
Summary	78
<b>Challenges</b>	<b>79</b>
Challenge #1. Competition in the global market	80
Borderless business	80
Cross-border dynamics	83
International expansion: the traditional model vs. e-commerce	84
International business expansion with e-commerce	85
Business scalability	86
Summary	87
Challenge #2. Working out a B2B2C model	88
A new customer journey for the end user	88
Model 1. Manufacturers supporting business partners' marketing	88
Model 2. Supplying tools to business partners	89
Model 3. Including service with the product	90
Model 4. A B2C online store as a brand builder	91
Model 5. Testing e-commerce on new markets	92
Summary	92
<b>The future of B2B purchasing</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Patrons</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Delivery, e-point, and Mobile Institute</b>	<b>105</b>

# Introduction

The B2B sector is a vital economic component, but it is a largely neglected one in terms of analysis and research. Most publications about e-commerce released in Poland focus on consumers and their buying habits. We had the privilege of being a co-author of many of these works. Yet, this time, we have decided to join with e-point to publish a report with the sole goal of finding out how the enormous B2B market segment is faring in the digital world.

In this publication, you will find information on how B2B companies buy and sell online. You'll also learn how this industry envisages its digital future, how e-commerce has affected its operations to date, and what sales standards need to be met for successful business-to-business relationships.

The report is based on research conducted among 150 persons from companies of various sizes and industries. The study was preceded by individual interviews with highly experienced B2B market participants. They have shared their B2B-focused experience of sales, purchasing, acquiring information about industry and clients, and choosing business partners. In addition, we also invited certain industry experts to share in our report.

You are about to learn interesting and surprising things about the Polish B2B market. We hope it will be an inspiring and valuable experience.

**Katarzyna Czuchaj-Łagód**

Managing Director, Mobile Institute



# Executive summary

Widespread and cheap access to the Internet, new customer shopping habits, the emergence of mobile devices, and continuing globalization have been changing the nature of B2B. This inspired us to conduct a study about what today's Polish clients need and their buying habits. We surveyed over 150 company representatives using questionnaires and extended interviews. It is the first research project of its kind in Poland.

All our respondents are very aware of the need to adjust to the new B2B environment. The line between B2B and B2C is starting to blur, although direct relationships remain vital.

## **B2B clients:**

- Have increasingly less time for business meetings
- Expect convenient digital self-service tools
- Want to buy or order online
- Appreciate immediate feedback
- Place a premium on convenience.

**IT solutions, CRM systems, e-commerce platforms, and social media are becoming powerful factors in the relationship-building process.**

This report consists of several parts. The first three include the presentation and interpretation of our survey. The next part, **Trends**, sets our findings against a wider global context that includes other studies. Then we outline the two most important **Challenges** facing B2B companies nowadays. Finally, the last part peers into the **Future** – as our respondents see it.

On the Internet, B2B companies like talking about themselves, their mission, and their history – as many as **62% of the companies surveyed mentioned their company history on their website**. At the same time, **they less often provide the solutions needed by their clients**: only 49% make it possible to buy their service/product via a website and only 15% offer useful client tools (such as creators, calculators, or configurators) on their portals. **This leaves plenty of room for improvement in terms of client focus.**

This report describes the condition of Polish B2B organizations, so it will be useful to companies who are already present on or plan to enter the Polish market. It also provides a lot of universal insights that might be valuable to many companies across the globe.

## **Justyna Skorupska**

Vice Chair of the Council  
of Electronic Economy Chamber  
Head of Business Development  
Omnichannel Expert, e-point SA



## **Wawrzyniec Hyska**

Business Development Director,  
e-point SA



# B2B SALES

# Online sales

71% of B2B market representatives state that their company sells its products or services online. The majority of enterprises (65%) have been involved in e-commerce for over 5 years. Almost every fourth company (24%) has been in e-commerce for 3-4 years, while only 1% of those surveyed have been selling products or services online for less than a year.

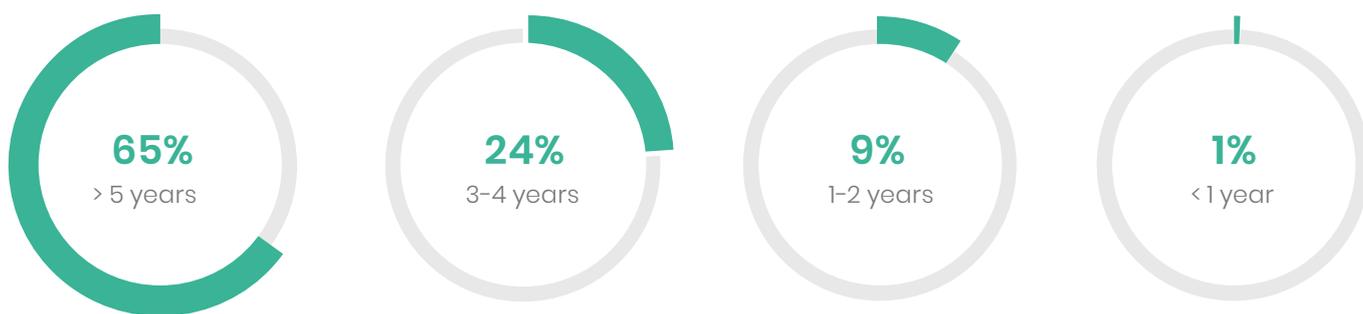
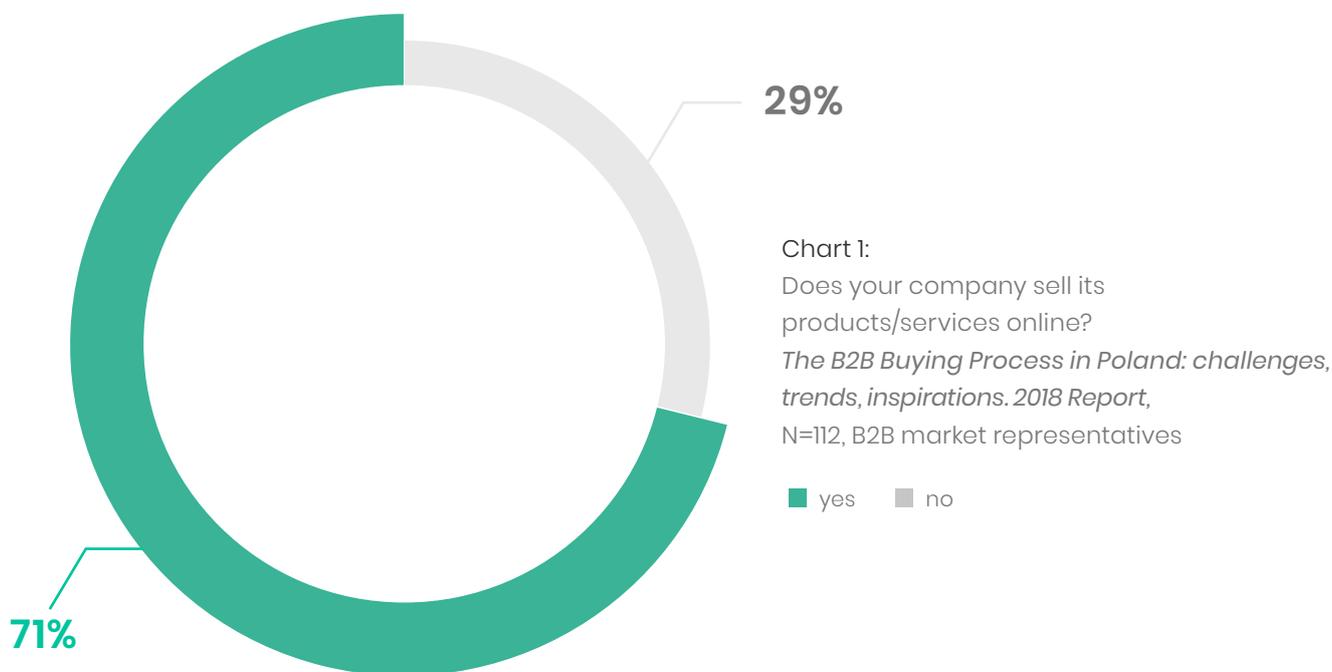


Chart 2:  
How long has your company been selling its products/services online?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
N=78, B2B market representatives selling online

## Expert opinion

### Anna Studzińska

Managing Director, Fossil Poland



*Our decision to start selling using the e-commerce channel resulted from market trends. I fully agree with the opinion that “changes in the market have never happened so rapidly, and in the future will never happen as slowly as today.” The market keeps changing so dynamically that producers and suppliers who are not able to keep up will lag behind.*

## Foreign sales

The dynamically growing e-commerce market encourages the development of cross-border trade. Lifting barriers in international trade exchange results in the increased popularity of purchases in foreign stores and in B2B purchasing. According to our study, 52% of B2B market representatives indicate that their company runs international trade operations.



Chart 3:

Does your company run international trade operations?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=110, B2B market representatives

■ yes   ■ no   ■ no idea

# Sales channels

**Sales through the company website, where products or services can be viewed or purchased, accounts for 57% of sales.** Other frequently used distribution channel in B2B is direct sales – reaching customers through either sales representatives or the company website (54%). Companies' own sales platforms, e-commerce platforms, and own ordering systems are in third place with 40%, followed by brick-and-mortar stores (36%). Every third company (34%) sells or distributes its products on social media. call center (27%), sales platforms (e.g. Allegro) (23%), sales offices (22%), product catalog available online for downloads (e.g. PDF) (17%), product catalog with a browser (13%), other (8%).

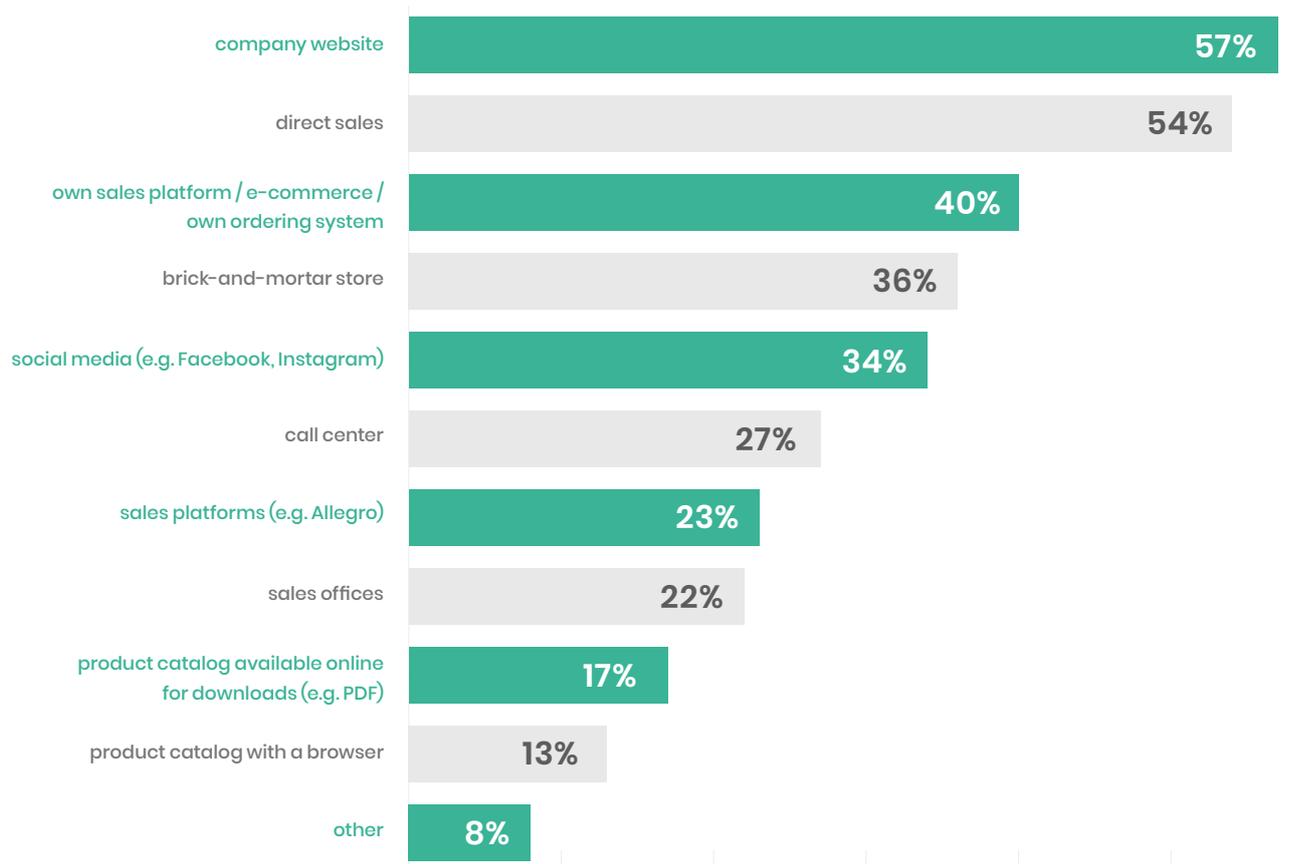


Chart 4:  
Which channels does your company use to sell or distribute products?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
N=103, B2B market representatives

## Expert opinion

### Anna Studzińska

Managing Director, Fossil Poland



*Many business clients operating offline have concerns about online sales because they notice customers fleeing to online stores. Many people go to see the product in traditional stores and then close a deal on the Internet. But traditional stores hate to be treated as showrooms. On the other hand, online stores complain about Internet shopping not being trusted enough. Although shoppers frequently search for information in online stores, they do not strike deals on the Internet. This is a synergy effect and should be viewed as a positive phenomenon. While creating omnichannel solutions to support sales through multiple channels, we apply many tools and provide many new solutions to our customers, enabling them to make purchases in the most convenient way. It is not an evolution, but more of a revolution in the way sales are approached and thought about. Recently, many publications have been trying to prove that retail is dying. That is not the case. An analysis of expert forecasts allows us to conclude that it is the companies who combine online and offline that will have the biggest chance to succeed. These are the ones that meet the rising expectations of consumers, providing unlimited choice and boosting their own advantage. Although increasingly more people choose online shopping, they flow in two directions. Offline stores face a challenge: they must propose a business model which will encourage consumers to purchase from them. Many buyers appreciate direct interactions with the seller, which is not possible on the Internet. What matters is how we approach inevitable changes in sales, whether we remain open to them to push forward and how creative we can become.*

Moving on to company websites, 96% of those surveyed run their own website. On average, each website includes six functionalities. The most frequent feature is an e-mail connection (90%), which edges out telephone contacts (83%). Almost half (48%) of the respondents provide a product browser to their customers. The least frequently offered functionalities are loyalty programmes (2%) and digital tools, such as configurators or creators (1%).

Interestingly, 62% share their company's history via the website, and only 25% offer a showroom browser.



Chart 5:

Does your company have a company website?

The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report, N=103

■ yes ■ no

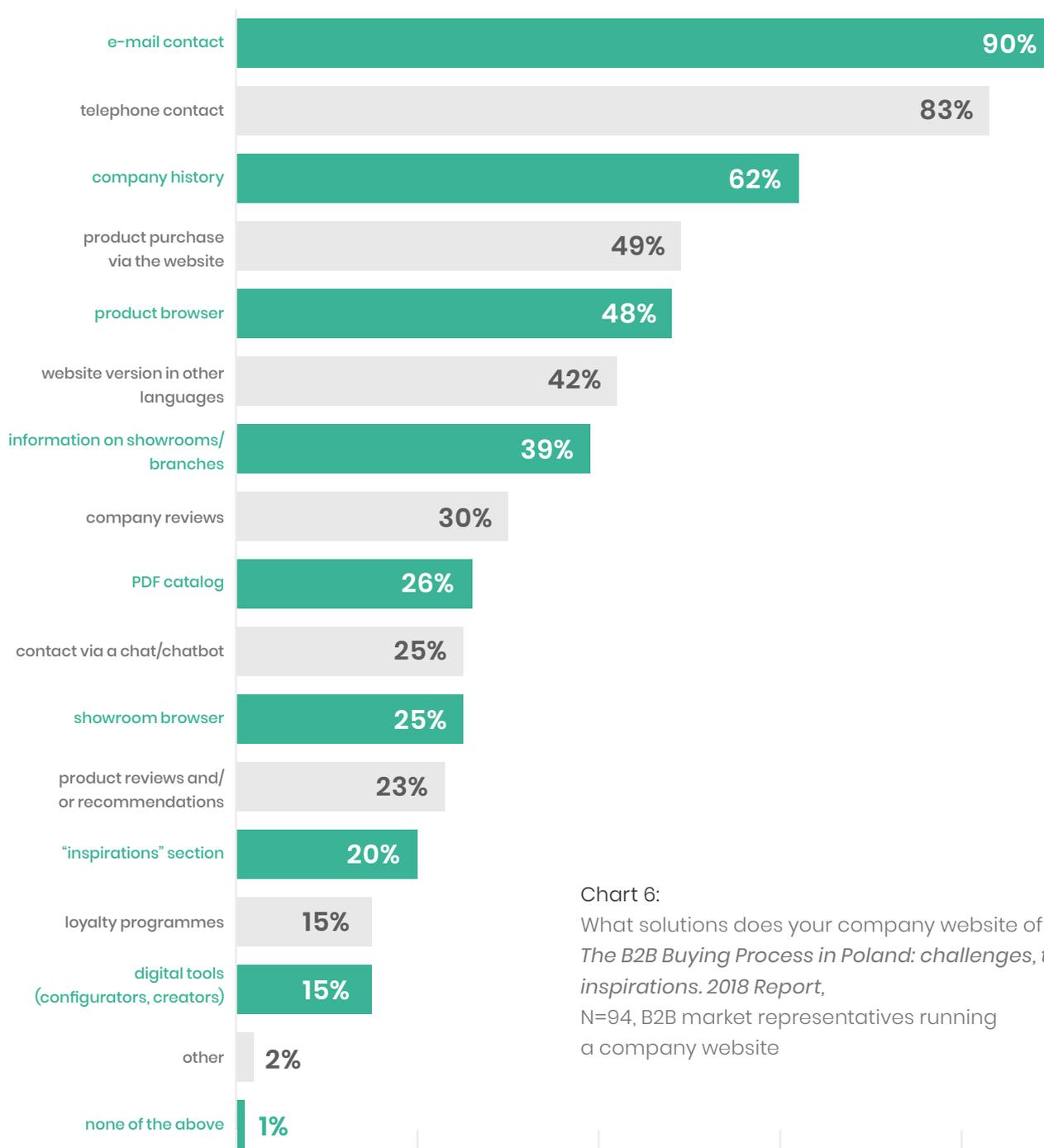


Chart 6:

What solutions does your company website offer?  
 The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,  
 N=94, B2B market representatives running a company website

## Expert opinion

### Tymoteusz Doligalski

Assistant Professor, Head of e-Business Unit at SGH, Co-founder of a graduate and postgraduate programme in e-business and online marketing



*It is worth comparing the findings presented in this report with the conclusions of research into ways of acquiring customers and building relationships with customers. The research was compiled in 2009 using questionnaire interviews on a sample of 150 companies employing a minimum of 200 persons. It was concluded that websites were then used to present company and product information and to facilitate contact for prospective customers. Less frequently, websites were employed to share information on product use, build a user community, enable product customization, or implement loyalty programmes. The findings of both studies seem to converge. It implies that the general model of Internet presence is stable and has not changed dramatically over the last nine years.*

*In the surveys, respondents often pointed out to such benefits as acquiring new customers and increased sales rather than greater loyalty. It most certainly is due to lower transactional costs and easier product purchasing from new suppliers. Thus, in general it may be assumed that an investment in e-commerce encourages market competitiveness.*

## Mobile users

82% of those surveyed indicated their company website has mobile users. Based on the overall information received, mobile user visits account for an average of 25-49% of all website hits; for 17% of respondents, this figure is over 50 percent. Creating a mobile-friendly page is vital; according to the report Omnocommerce: kupuję wygodnie (Omnocommerce Convenient Purchasing), one in five Polish consumers using a mobile device (i.e. a smartphone or tablet) is turned off by stores' non-mobile-friendly sites. That is lost buying potential.



Chart 7:

Does your website have mobile users?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report, N=93, B2B market representatives running a company website*

■ yes   ■ no   ■ no idea



Chart 8:

What proportion of website traffic comes from mobile devices?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=73, B2B market representatives running a company website and having mobile users

■ > 75%   ■ 50-74%   ■ 25-49%   ■ < 25%   ■ no idea

**63% of companies have a responsive (RWD) website**

If the majority of respondents (82%) have mobile users, how do these enterprises address mobile users' needs?

Most frequently, it is by applying the principles of RWD (Responsive Web Design) to their website, which allows the site to automatically

adjust its layout based on the size of each user's browser or device. Another 22% of companies give users a dedicated company mobile app. Interestingly, 22% of the representatives surveyed did not know how their company website worked or how it displayed on mobile devices.

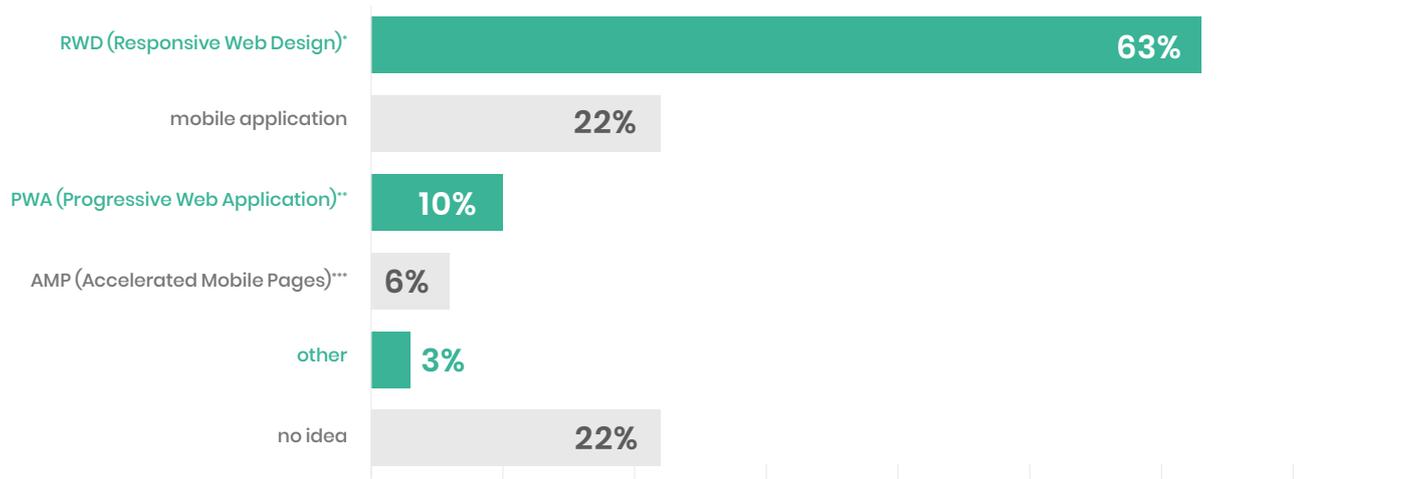


Chart 9:

How does your website address mobile user needs?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=73, B2B market representatives running a company website and having mobile users

**\*RWD (Responsive Web Design)** – Website automatically adjusts to the size of the browser window, e.g. on a smartphone or tablet.

**\*\*PWA (Progressive Web Application)** – Website application that combines the best of the two worlds: websites and mobile applications. From the user perspective, PWA behaves like a mobile application: it uses native functions of mobile devices (gesture navigation, camera, geolocation, push messages) and can work offline, but does not need to be installed – it opens through the browser, just like any traditional website.

**\*\*\*AMP (Accelerated Mobile Pages)** – Optimizes website pages to open quickly while using low-speed data transfers (e.g. EDGE).

## E-commerce implementation

E-commerce is generally viewed in a favorable light: 80% of companies surveyed stated that they have benefited from the implementation of e-commerce. According to the 2015 study *Trendy w sprzedaży B2B w Polsce 2015* (Trends in B2B sales in Poland), the key outcome for most (47%) businesses was a positive change in communication with clients. In 2018, respondents said that e-commerce initiatives have allowed them to win new customers (81%) and increase sales of products/services (73%). Three years ago, only 7% reported higher customer loyalty; today, that figure is 31%. Additionally, 25% of B2B companies state that branching into online sales has led to more favorable customer reviews.

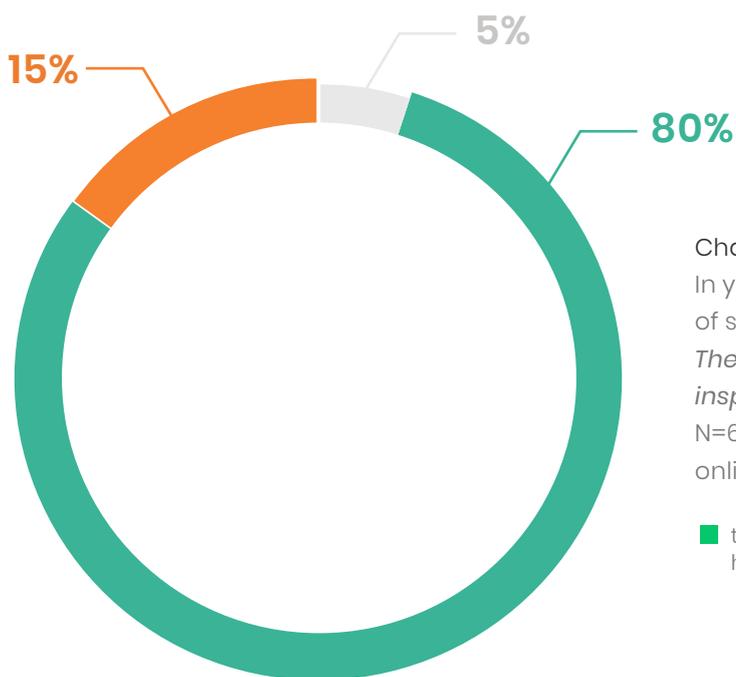


Chart 10:

In your opinion, has anything changed as a result of starting online sales?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=66, B2B market representatives whose company sells online

■ the company has benefited    ■ no change    ■ the company has lost

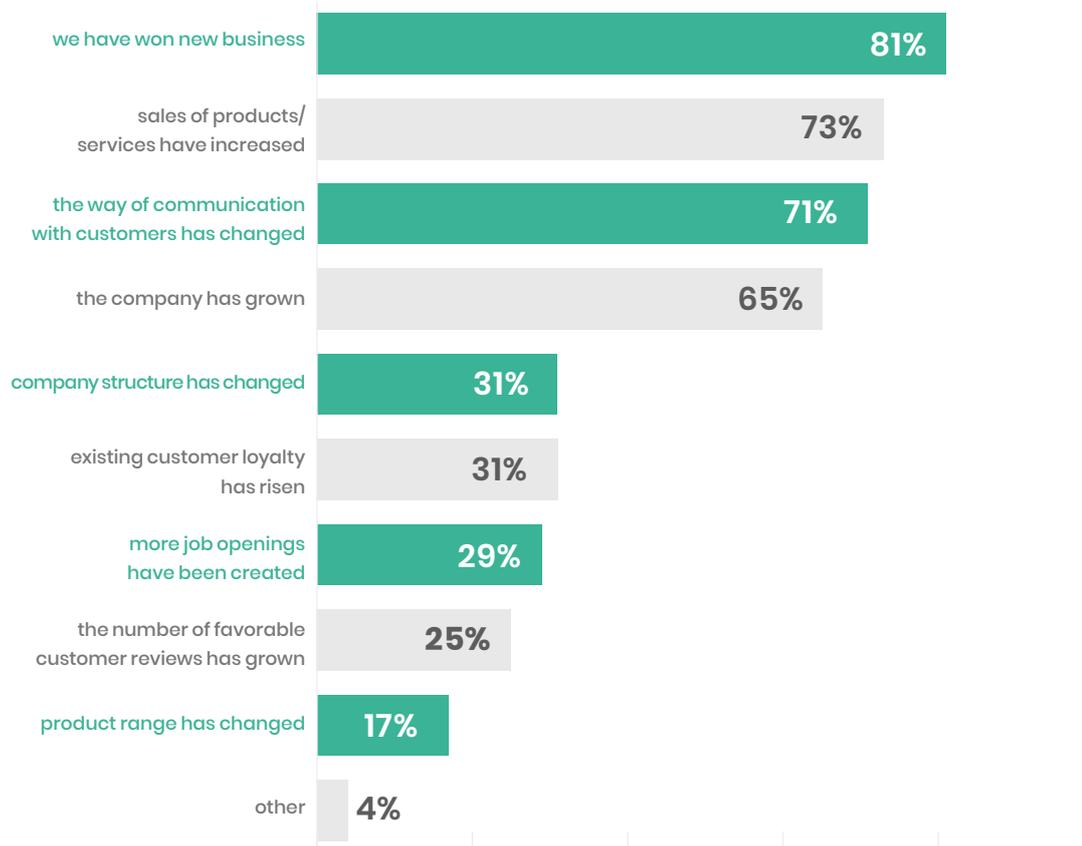


Chart II:

What has your company gained as a result of starting online sales?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=52, B2B market representatives whose company sells online

## Expert opinion

### Rafał Wierzbicki

Commercial Director, Aco Modeagentur



*From the Polish B2B perspective, we have a lot to catch up with compared to foreign markets. Commercial directors and entrepreneurs show a tendency to defend their own businesses. Awareness of the European directive on the free flow of goods in member countries is low. There is a lot of talk of exclusivity, which de facto produces monopolistic practices.*

*As I have already mentioned, in comparison to the rest of the market we lag behind. Many companies tend to believe that if someone produces something or offers a particular service, then nobody else should be allowed to do the same. This is against the law, has detrimental effects, and constitutes a serious constraint. Our retailers are also poorly qualified. Many of them fail to properly understand the role of a retailer in the purchasing process, which has numerous negative implications. It becomes clear that in the Polish culture people neither like to talk about money, nor are they ready to admit something is being done for money. It is very explicit in cooperation with corporate brands. Poles often find it embarrassing to articulate that they work to earn money.*

# FINDING CLIENTS AND PARTNERS

## Searching for business partners

Finding business partners is challenging for many companies. To achieve this, their representatives usually attend trade fairs or events (67%) or search the Internet via a browser (54%). Less frequently used methods include Internet forums (24%) and social media (21%).

Of those surveyed, 47% admit to closely monitoring the competition while searching for business partners.

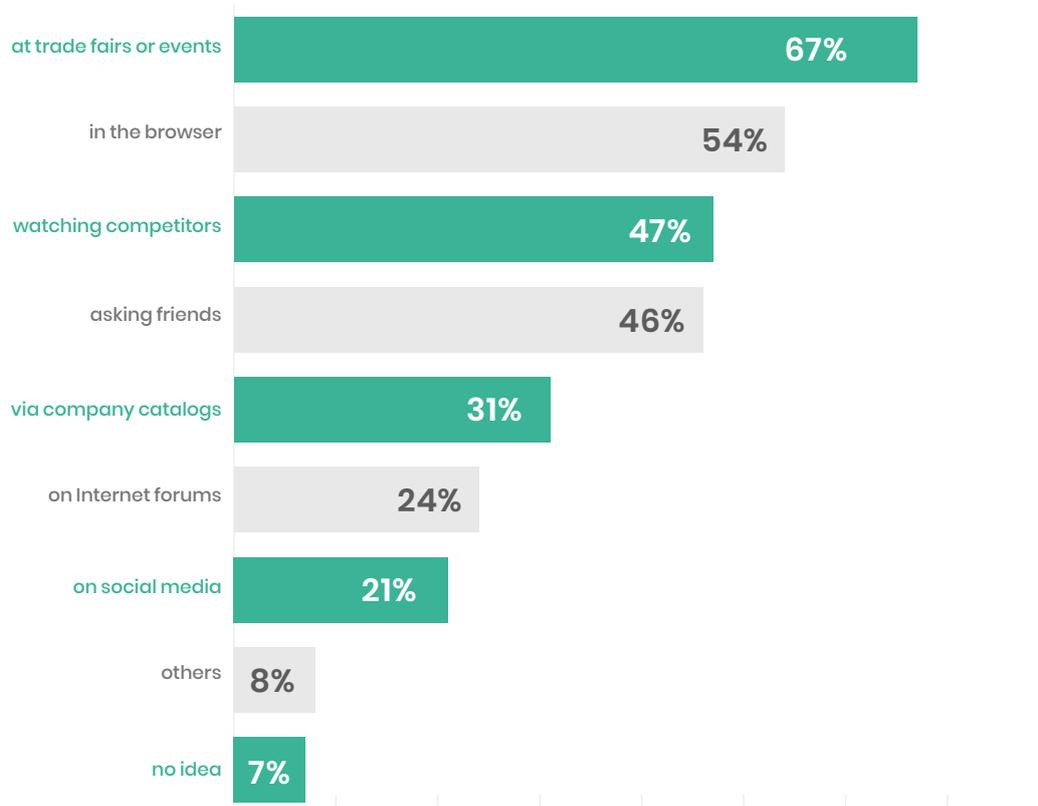


Chart 12:

How do you find business partners?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=85, B2B market representatives

## Finding information on business customers

Companies acquire information on business customers chiefly through conversing with the customer (79%). 53% of those surveyed use recommendations and opinions, while 57% utilize trade fairs and conferences. Conducting research and obtaining information from customers on a regular basis is critical for keeping up to date. More than a third of company representatives (40%) report carrying out internal surveys, which involve sending customized questionnaires to recipients and business partners. Nearly half (48%) often use generally available market reports as well. More thorough and precise surveys (i.e. commissioned to research agencies) are used by a mere 16% of companies.

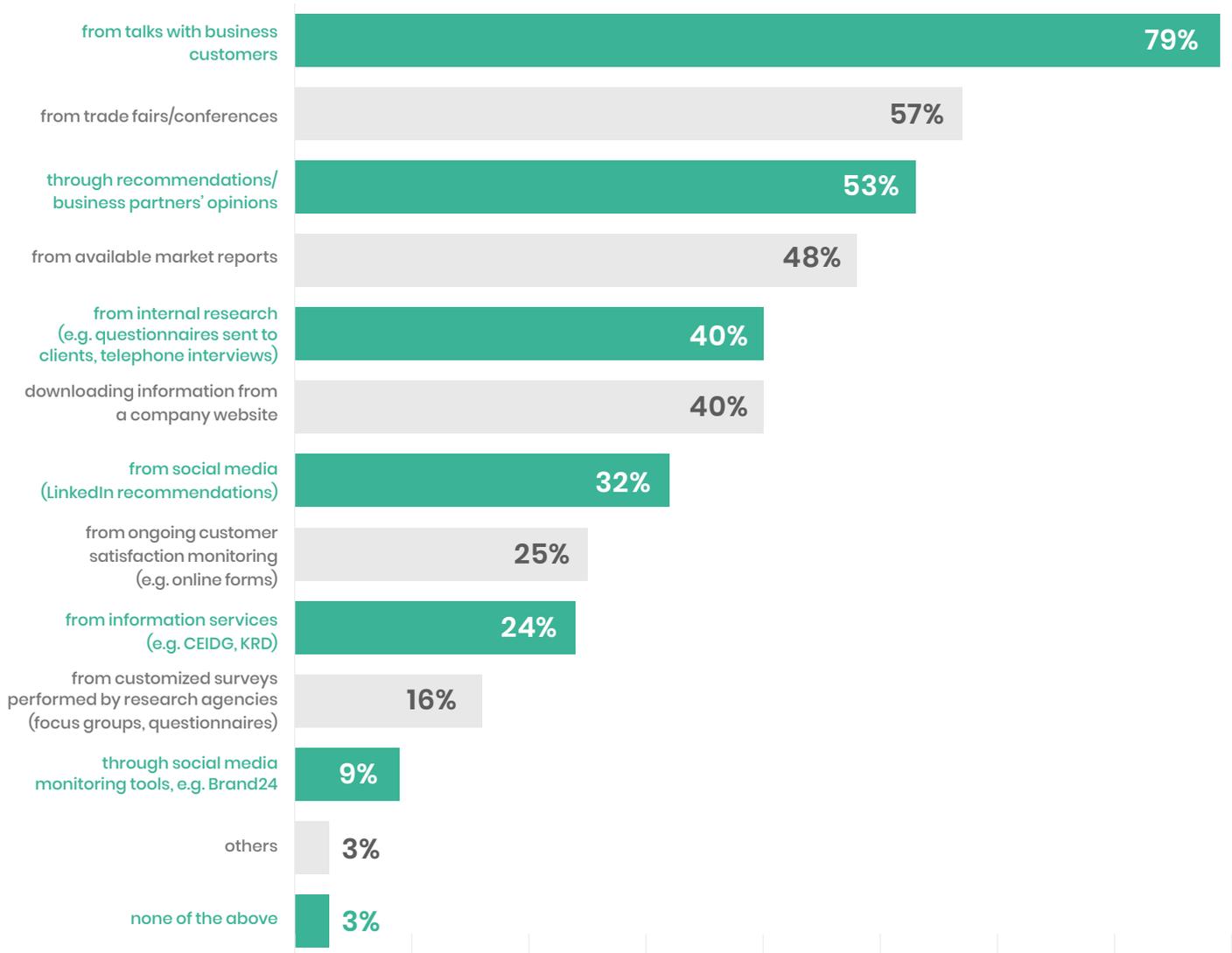


Chart 13:

Where does your company obtain information on business customers?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=75, B2B market representatives winning business clients

## Acquiring knowledge of individual customers

The Internet and social media are the most effective sources of information on individual customers. 59% of companies indicate that they obtain this knowledge by reading users' reviews on forums, while 57% use customers' social media reviews. However, internal surveys (46%, + 6 p.p. on business customers) and ongoing customer satisfaction monitoring (46%) seem to be more significant ways of finding information on individual customers.

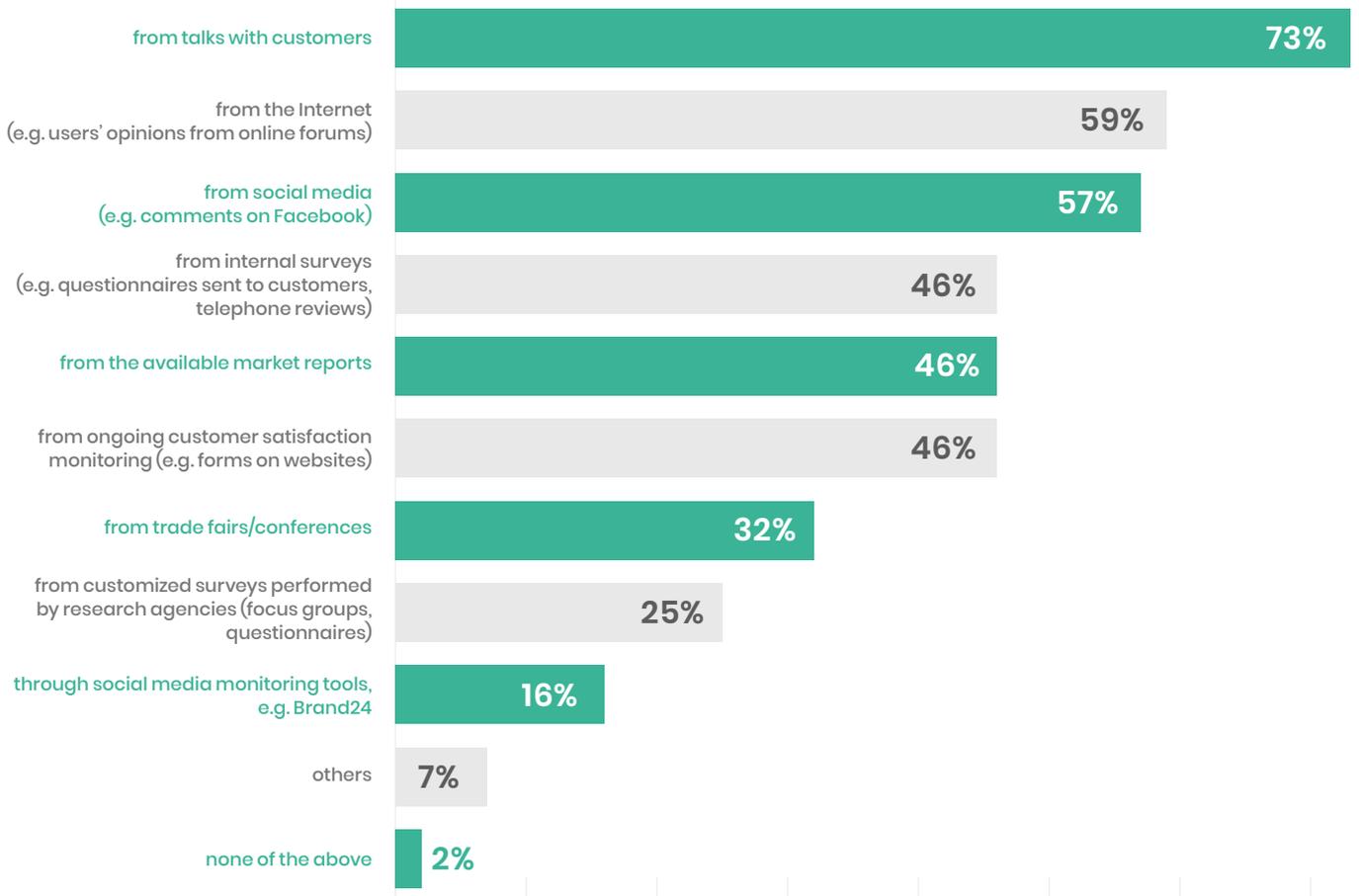


Chart 14:

Where from does your company obtain information on individual customers?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
 N=43, B2B market representatives acquiring individual customers

## Selection of business partners

While selecting a business partner, companies most often take the matters in their own hands and find partners on their own (74%). Still, 57% use recommendations from other partners and from cooperating companies, while 48% network at trade fairs and events. Only 11% of the businesses surveyed have their business partners selected by company headquarters.

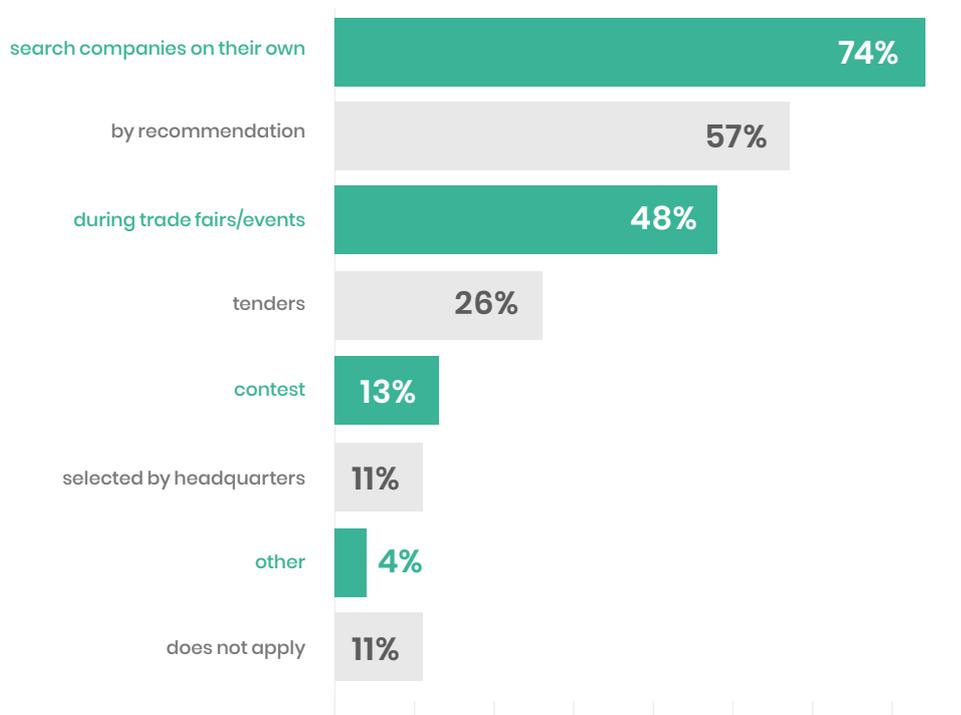


Chart 15:

How does your company usually select business partners?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
N=84, B2B market representatives

**For 83% of company representatives, terms of cooperation matter**

## Factors affecting the choice of a business partner

The selection of a business partner does not depend as much on price (57%) as on competitive terms of cooperation (83%). Opinions about the potential partner (51%) take third place, followed by the prospective partner's relevant and well-tailored offer (48%). Exclusivity (19%) and offering long payment dates (17%) have the least impact on partner selection.

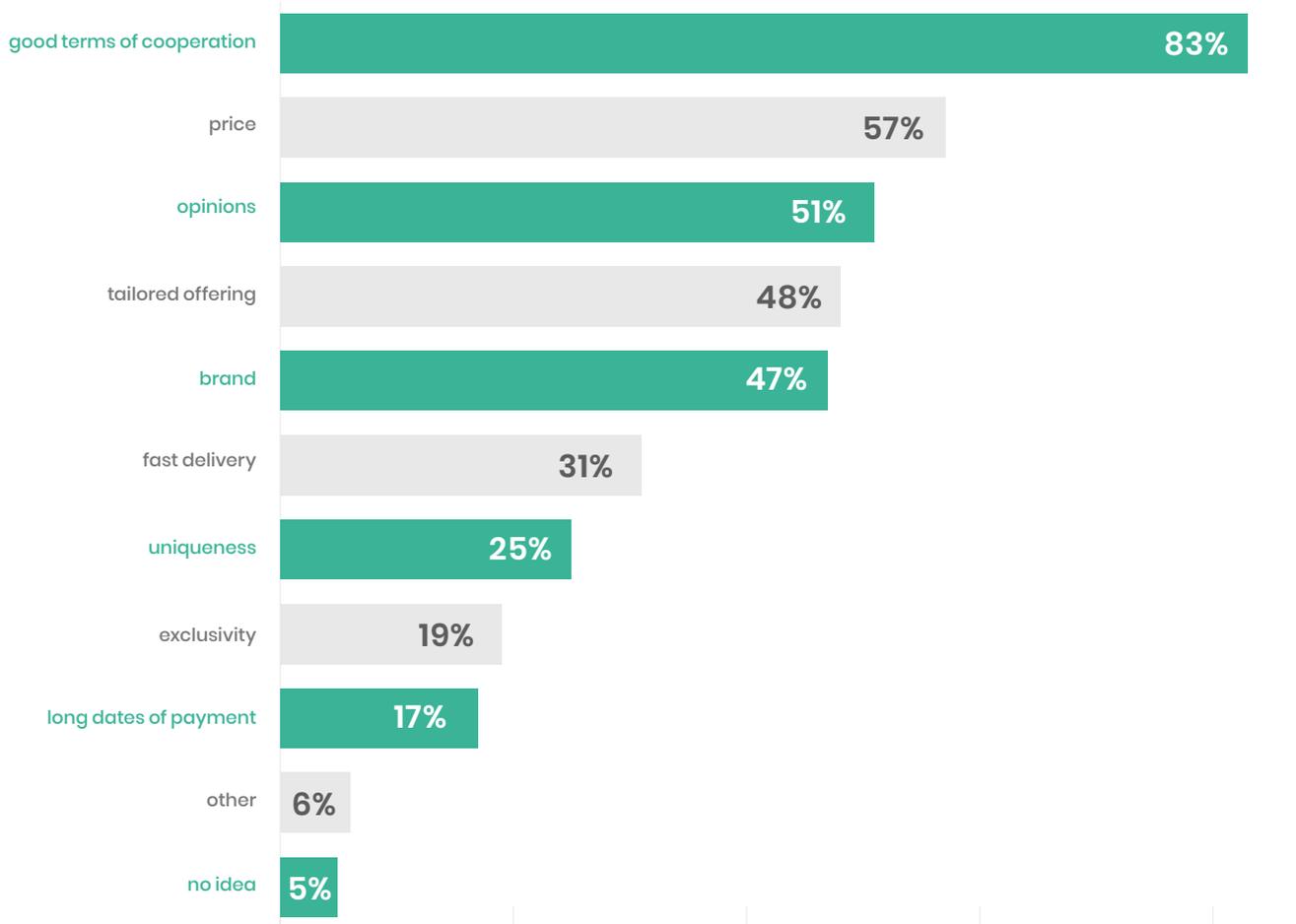


Chart 16:

What affects your decision on the choice of a business partner?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=81, B2B market representatives

# B2B PURCHASING

# Research

Where are companies looking for information on B2B products and services? Trade websites and portals (51%) and company websites (51%) lead the list, but user/customer opinions (found online and in social media) are gaining importance. According to the study *Trendy w sprzedaży B2B w Polsce 2015* (Trends in B2B sales in Poland 2015), online opinions were considered by 33% of those surveyed; in 2018, this figure has reached 48%. In 2015, 15% of respondents used social media to find product information; according to this survey, the 2018 figures place this much higher, at 39%.

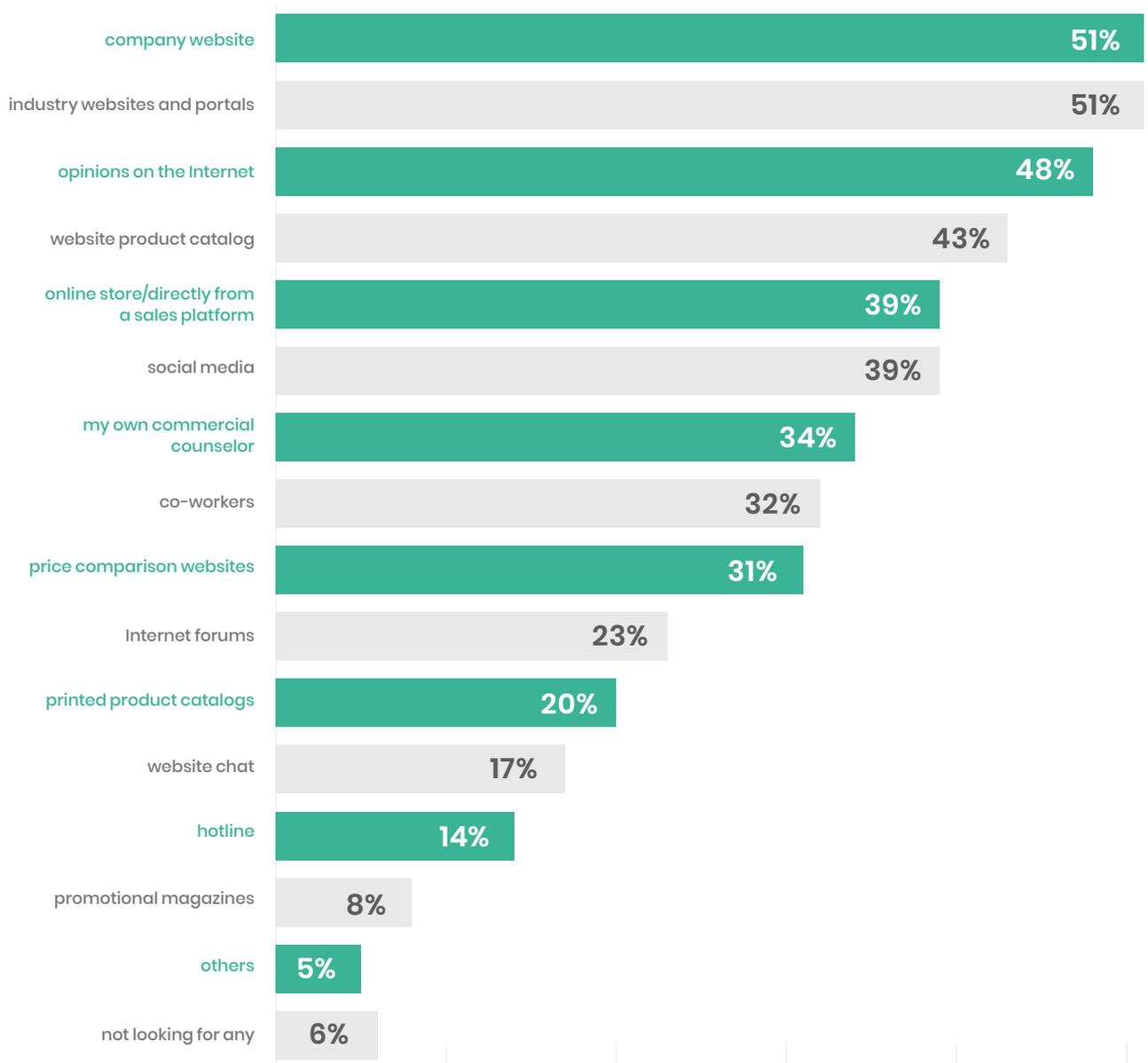


Chart 17:

Where does your company look for product information?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report*, N=65, B2B market representatives who make company purchases or understand the purchasing process



Chart 18:

Does your company purchase products via the Internet?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report.*

N=65, B2B market representatives who make company purchases or understand the purchasing process

■ yes ■ no idea ■ no



Chart 19:

How does your organization purchase company products?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report.*

*2018 Report.*

N=62, B2B market representatives who make company purchases or understand the purchasing process

**Company purchases are increasingly being made online.** 69% state that they buy products through the Internet. Of these, 65% make company purchases through online stores or digital platforms and 3 p.p. more would like to do so. Interestingly, 36% of the respondents would like to make purchases using a mobile device. Although 39% still buy in brick-and-mortar stores, only 11% of them want to continue using this channel.

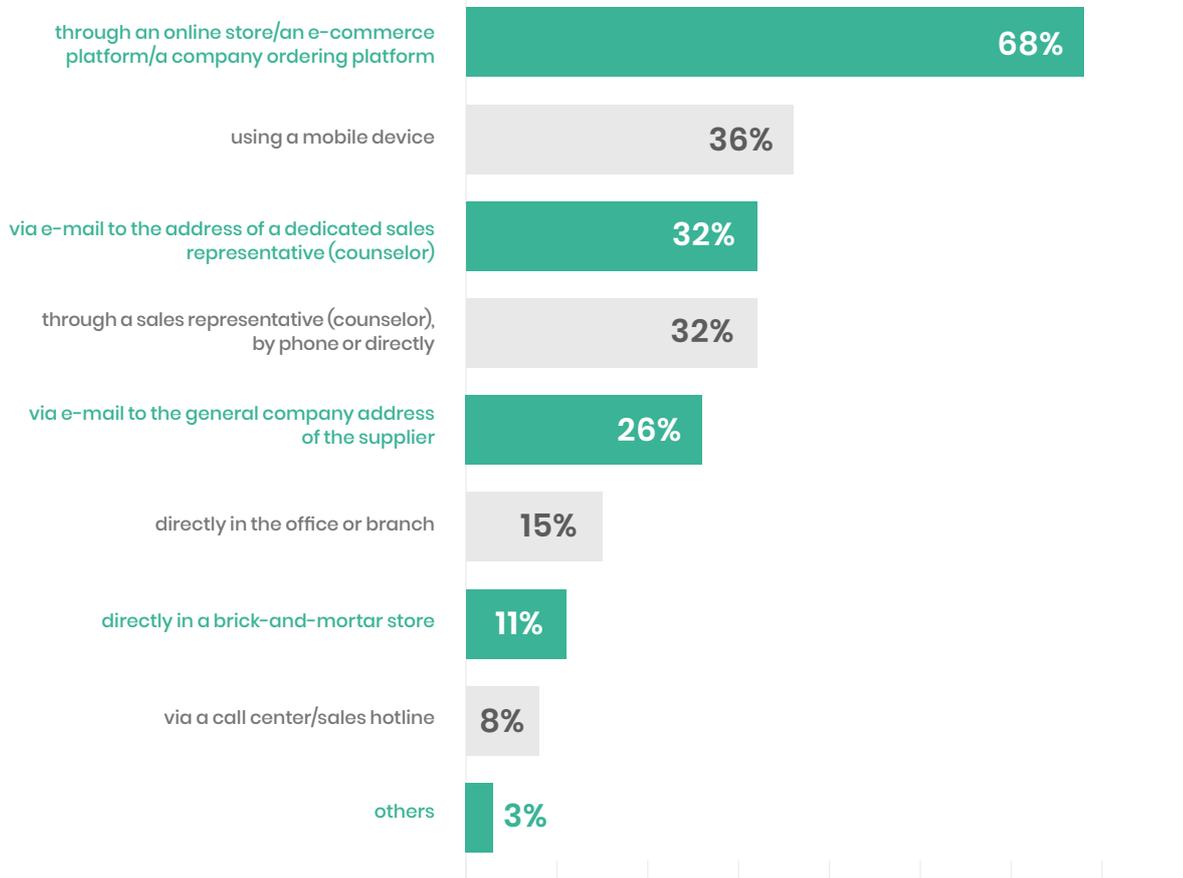


Chart 20:  
 What channels would you like to use while purchasing?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
 N=62, B2B market representatives who make company purchases or understand the purchasing process

## Expert opinion

### Rafał Wierzbicki

Commercial Director, Aco Modeagentur



*I have been purchasing for my company for a long time now, so I possess a well-developed network of contacts which I rely on. I would, however, find it very handy if there existed cumulation portals where tender bids for a given project or service could be announced. They would offer a convenient shortcut to a more streamlined process of finding suppliers. For example, say I am looking for a construction team to redecorate my showroom. I post my announcement to a portal for registered professionals and as a result I receive offers in reply to my announcement. I choose the most competitive one.*

**Companies buy products/  
services online because  
it can be done anywhere,  
at any time**

Those surveyed report an average of four reasons why their company uses online purchasing of products/services. The most frequently indicated benefits are: buying anywhere, at any time (70%), convenience (67%), and speed of purchase (65%). 42% of respondents state that online prices are lower and it is easier to benefit from various promotions and special offers (33%). 54% think that finding products online is easier.

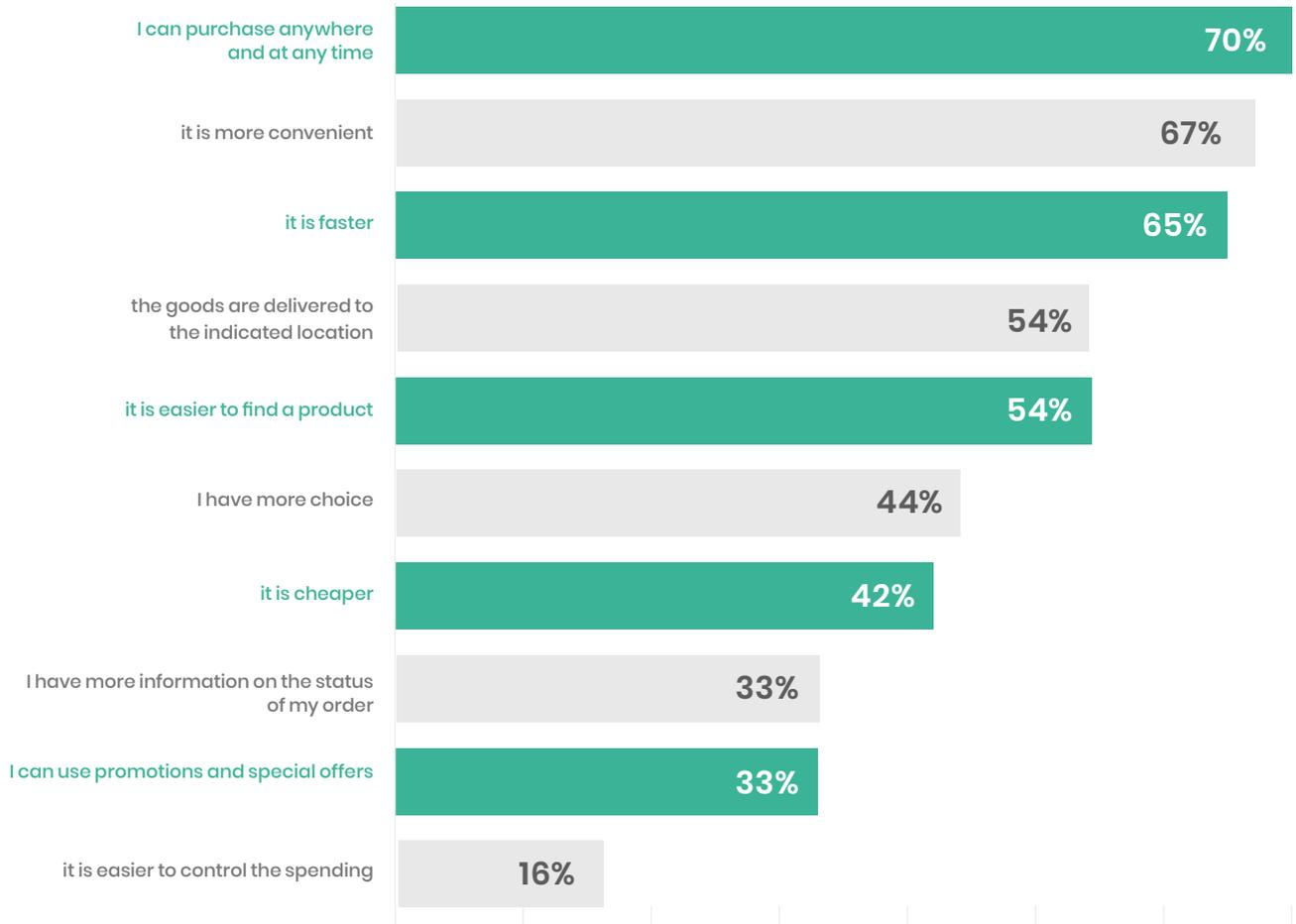


Chart 21:  
Why do you / your company purchase products or services online?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
N=43, B2B market representatives who make company purchases or understand the purchasing process

# Products purchased

The most frequently purchased products by companies are IT equipment (66%) and office supplies (59%). Among those surveyed, 43% of company representatives buy software on behalf of their companies. These purchases involve mostly browsing systems, goods analysis systems, and marketing research tools. 30% of companies buy training courses and one in five companies (20%) buy advertising campaigns.

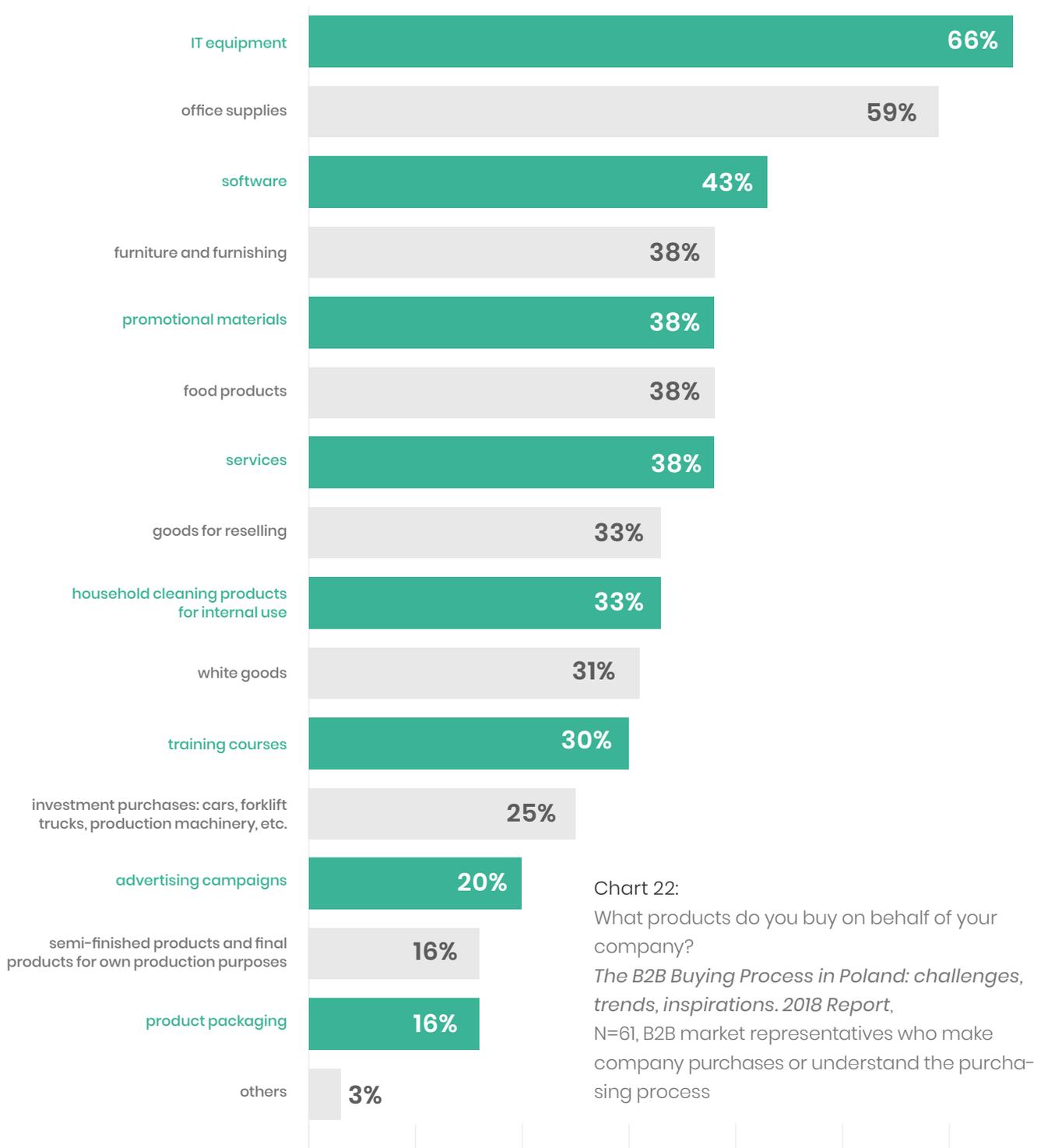


Chart 22:  
 What products do you buy on behalf of your company?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report*,  
 N=61, B2B market representatives who make company purchases or understand the purchasing process

## Buying services

**76% of companies buy office software**

Running a business often requires the purchase of services that enhance operational efficiency. 38% of those surveyed say their company buys various kinds of services. The most frequently purchased service is office software (76%). Over half (52%) of the companies surveyed purchase sales support systems; 40% have opted to buy dedicated systems (such as a CRM).

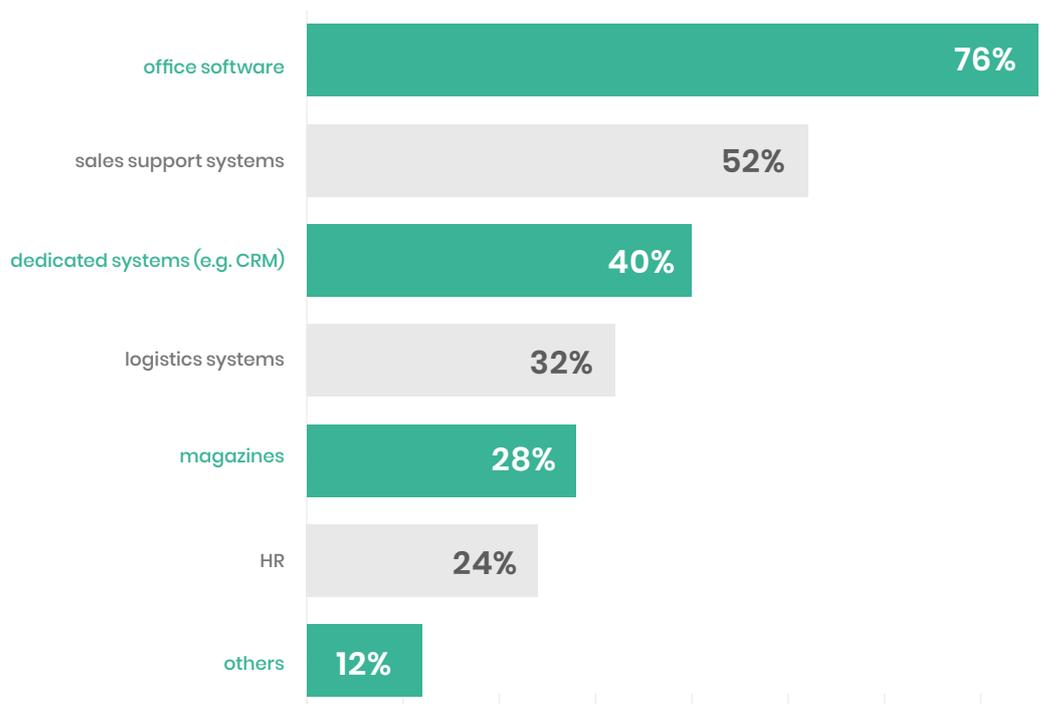


Chart 23:  
What services do you purchase on behalf of your company?  
*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*  
N=25, B2B market representatives who buy services

## Post-purchase support

Buyers focus on an average on three aspects of post-purchase support. Most often it is instant feedback (78%) which is ranked number one by these respondents, as it was in the *Trendy w sprzedaży B2B w Polsce 2015* (Trends in B2B sales in Poland 2015) survey. Receiving individual assistance from the seller ranked second (62%). The need to use various channels has increased since 2015 (now 47%, + 3 p.p.). Finally, obtaining better terms and getting personalized offers (both 43%) tied for fourth.

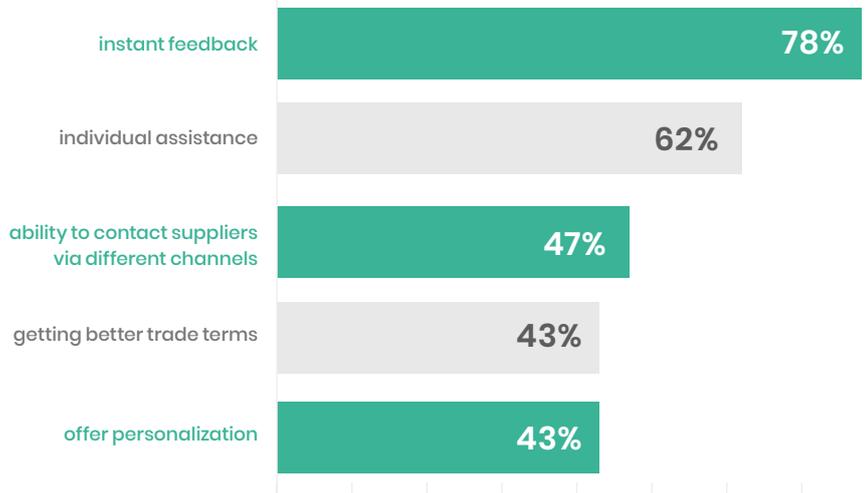


Chart 24:

In your opinion, what is most important about post-purchase support?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report*,  
N=60, B2B market representatives who make purchases on behalf  
of their companies or understand the purchasing process

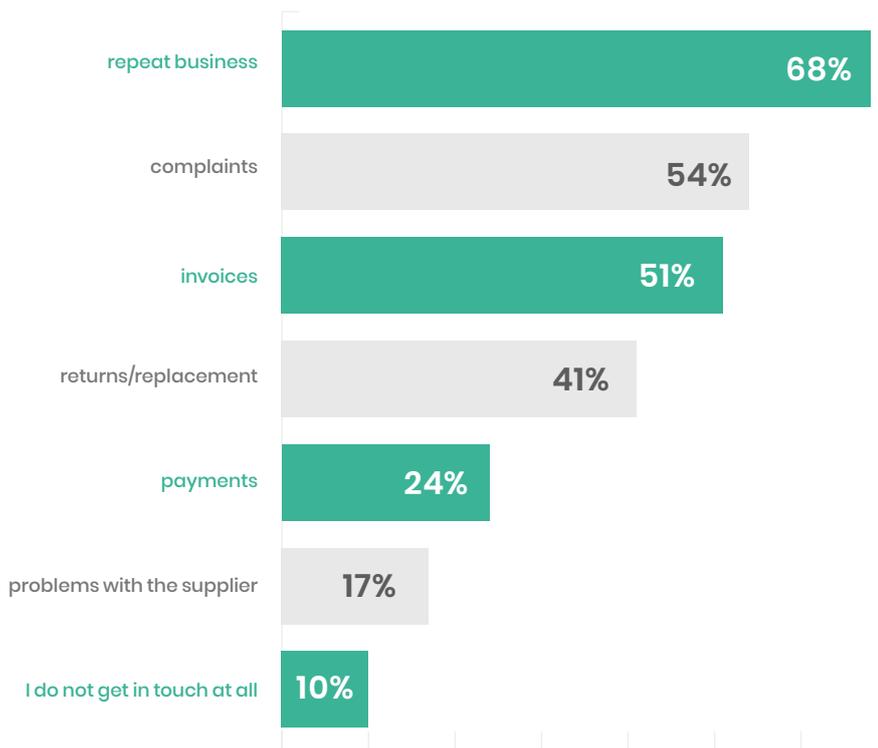


Chart 25:

What is the most frequent reason for you / your company  
to contact the supplier after the sale is made?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report*,  
N=59

Companies often contact suppliers again after the sale is made. Usually, it is to place another order (68%), followed by lodging a complaint (54%) and making settlements or paying invoices (51%). Companies generally use e-mail to contact suppliers again (83%). They are also more willing to make a phone call to a company representative or personal counselor (56%) rather than use a hotline (29%). Online chats and text messages (10%), social media (2%), and mobile applications (3%) lag behind as contact methods.

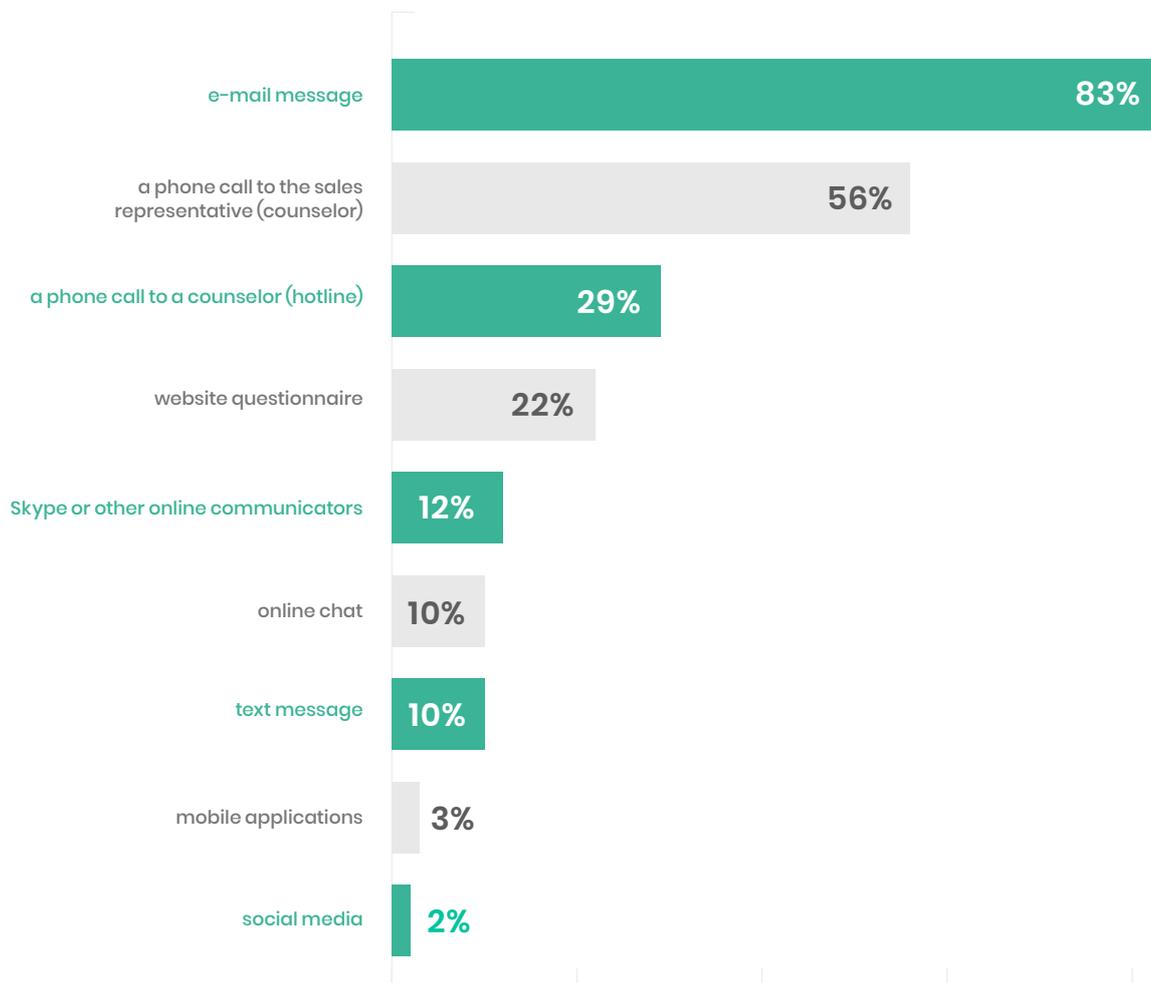


Chart 26:

How do you / your company contact the supplier after the sale?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=59, B2B market representatives who make purchases on behalf of their company or understand the purchasing process

## Expert opinion

### Łukasz Jaślarz

Business Development Manager, YOPE



*We contact our business partners most often via e-mail or telephone, although I must admit I prefer personal meetings. Unfortunately, this form of contact is becoming rather infrequent due to today's hectic pace of business. Company decision-makers, e.g. in the field of B2B, have increasingly less time for meetings, which makes this form of contact marginal. I have been active on the B2B market for over a decade and I can see this is more often the case. Regrettably, personal contact is impossible to replace, just as a photo or PDF catalog can hardly be a substitute for experiencing a real product. Being aware of that, I usually strive to meet in person with a business partner, even more so at the start of the cooperation. It offers both parties a unique opportunity for discussing the odds and ends of cooperation and for finding common ground. Currently, e-mails have become more like chats and that leads to communication chaos.*

## Value of opinion

**59% of respondents want to share their opinion about purchased products/services**

Opinions about companies' suppliers or business partners are very important. 48% of respondents state that they read reviews on the Internet while searching for information on products and services they are planning to buy. It comes as no surprise that 59% of those

surveyed would like to share their opinions and reviews about the products or services they have purchased. The ability to share their own opinions and easily find others' reviews facilitates the process of choosing a supplier, product, or service.



Chart 27:

Would you like to be able to add opinions and reviews about the products and services you have purchased?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=58, B2B market representatives who make purchases on behalf of their companies or understand the purchasing process

■ yes   ■ no idea   ■ no

# TRENDS

Our study indicates that the B2B sector is undergoing a major transformation, driven chiefly by the Internet's effect on customer behavior. A large chunk of the purchasing process has moved online and new tools have appeared; however, a personal relationship – a trust-based bond between buyer and seller – remains vitally important.

New technologies support companies' efforts to build and maintain strong relationships.

## Trend #1. From Business2Business to Human2Human: On B2B consumerization

Are B2B and B2C customers really so different? Both groups expect a great Customer Experience (CX). Moreover, B2B customers say that CX – convenience, comfort, security – is more influential than price in the purchasing process.

### Differences between B2B and B2C

The purchasing process in B2B is unique and clearly different from B2C. The B2B decision-making process takes more time, involves numerous stakeholders, and is highly complex. Company purchases imply higher stakes: they are transactions of higher value and the choice of a solution or supplier is more binding.

**Table 1. Differences between the purchasing process in B2B and B2C.**

	<b>B2B</b>	<b>B2C</b>
THE VALUE OF THE TRANSACTION	HIGH	LOW
REPETITIVENESS OF THE PURCHASE	FREQUENT	RARE
NUMBER OF DECISION-MAKERS INVOLVED	HIGH	LOW
COMPLEXITY OF THE PROCESS	HIGH	LOW
IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUYER AND SELLER	HIGH	LOW
DURATION OF THE PROCESS	HIGH	SHORT

source: e-point SA

Due to the differences between the B2B and B2C purchasing **processes**, we often assume that B2B and B2C **customers** behave differently. B2C consumers make decisions spontaneously and on impulse, while B2B customers rely on rational judgment and objective parameters. The former respond to esthetics and sales promotions and pay attention to convenience and user experience; the latter are more focused on business aspects and do not rely on personal tastes and preferences. Is that really so?

## **B2B consumerization**

Despite discrepancies in the purchasing processes, many aspects of B2B customer behavior are similar to those of B2C customer behavior. This has been labeled “B2B consumerization.”

Business customers today expect convenient, intuitive solutions, just like their B2C counterparts. After shopping on Amazon in their free time, B2B buyers find it hard to switch to tedious product ordering through a PDF catalog.

*Customer behavior is human behavior: the process of finding and purchasing products should be viewed holistically, inseparable from the personal experience of B2C buying.*

**Among the B2C segment behaviors that have transferred to the B2B domain, these are the most influential:**

- Online product search
- Making a purchasing decision before meeting the sales representative or sales department
- Contact via social media
- Expectation of a personalized buying experience.

## Expert opinion

### Maria Florczuk

Board member, Forte



*Increasingly more often, the lines between B2B and B2C sectors blur. A few reasons should be acknowledged. Online sales are becoming more popular. Consumers have become used to buying on the Internet. B2C buying is a lot easier – not just the availability of information, but also the chance to compare offers.*

*Simultaneously, customers no longer see the difference between individual buying and purchasing in a business model. As a result, they expect similar solutions and opportunities while purchasing from their suppliers, which makes the customers more demanding. B2B sector habits are defined by B2C consumer buying.*

*I believe that the blending of these two business models will become increasingly explicit. We should be well aware of this and should look for solutions that help reach business customers in the same context.*

Social media makes it easy to contact the buyers and quickly react to their actions. It also offers an efficient channel for content distribution to target recipients across all markets. Yet, social media is not only a communication and image-building tool; it's also a sales channel. As many as 34% of the B2B companies we surveyed confirmed using social media as a sales channel.

## Customer Experience is more important than price

Both B2C and B2B users find the emotions related to the purchase important: the convenience, intuitive processes, the feeling of being treated in a special way, esthetic impressions.

Although it may seem that B2B purchases are highly rational and regulated by procedures, the latest research findings are unambiguous: business customers choose companies that offer better Customer Experience. CX is more crucial to them than the product price or their previous preferences.

Also, our survey findings show that price is not a key factor for B2B customers. 57% of respondents stated that price affects their choice of a business partner, while 83% rated the importance of the terms of business offered over price. Their own opinions and price (51%) tied for third.

*Customer Experience (CX) is the sum of all customer interactions and experiences at every stage of the relationship with the company, from the initial contact to the final purchase. It involves all channels and touchpoints.*

**This term refers to more than marketing, service, or location. In B2B, CX is based on six pillars:**

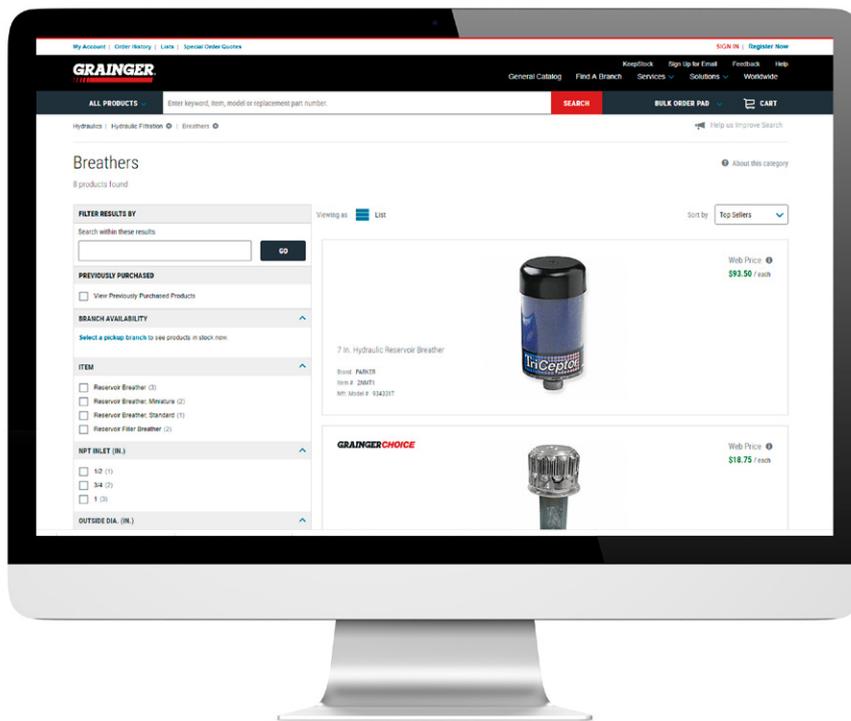
- Personalization: getting to know customers, understanding and responding to their needs
- Integrity: building trust through reliability and customer focus
- Optimization: offering solutions that allow customers to reduce time and other resources needed to perform a task
- Resolution: responding to complaints and problems in a prompt and professional way.
- Expectations: making realistic promises concerning the product range
- Empathy: imagining the situations, challenges, and emotions experienced by customers.<sup>1</sup>

The quality of their buying experience<sup>2</sup> impacts the decisions made by 80% of B2B customers.<sup>3</sup> Further, these state that they are ready to pay up to 30% more for better customer experiences. Over half of those surveyed (56%) report paying more for a product in the last six months because the experience was better than that of other, cheaper options.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, only 23% of companies boast of real excellence in customer service, and only 16% of leading B2B enterprises believe they deliver a customer experience comparable to B2C offerings.<sup>5</sup>



## Inspiration: Grainger



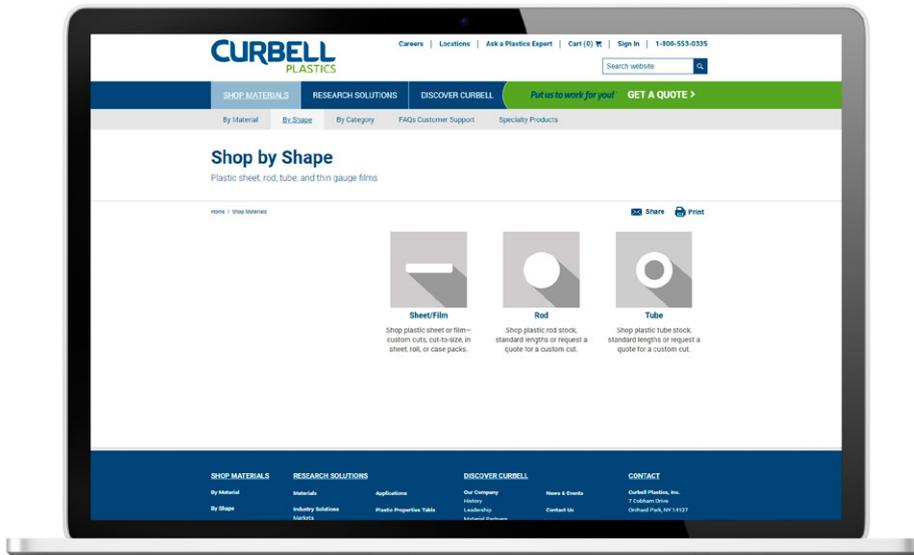
source: [https://www.grainger.com/category/breathers/hydraulic filtration/hydraulics/ecatalog/N-c6n](https://www.grainger.com/category/breathers/hydraulic%20filtration/hydraulics/ecatalog/N-c6n)

W.W. Grainger, Inc. is a manufacturing company offering engines, lighting, fasteners, plumbing, safety tools and materials, stock management services, and technical support. The company operates mainly in the B2B model and has over 3 million customers.<sup>6</sup>

Grainger is a leading supplier in the industrial sector with a well-developed online sales channel. Its website offers a delivery-time facility that displays the estimated time of product delivery based on location (a previously provided postal code) before the product is added to the cart and the actual order is placed. Plus, its mobile site allows for the use of bar codes in repeat orders.<sup>7</sup>



## Inspiration: Curbell Plastics



source: <https://www.curbellplastics.com/Shop-Materials/By-Shape>

The American company Curbell Plastics is one of the leading suppliers of foils, rods, pipes, tapes, glues, sealants, and prototyping materials.<sup>8</sup>

To facilitate purchasing, the company has introduced a non-standard browsing method on its e-commerce platform. Customers can use a function which allows them to narrow their search by showing the shape of the product they are looking for. Using shapes in a selective search is an interesting way of assisting users with their selection process.<sup>9</sup>

### **B2B customers expect an excellent customer experience, but according to the research, it is still very rare. Why?**

- Company managers do not feel the need to invest in CX
- A lack of experience in the comprehensive implementation of a CX-based strategy
- Limited investment funds
- A lack of key tools and technologies
- Inability to utilize customer data
- Poor integration between company departments.<sup>10</sup>

This situation offers a unique opportunity for companies to stand out and pioneer relevant ways to address customer needs. Where should the journey to better CX start? What does it mean in practical terms? What can B2B learn from B2C?

## Research customer needs

**The first step to better CX is thorough insight into users' needs, the nature of their daily work, and the problems they encounter.** User testing should be run at every stage of a project (e.g. while designing a new portal or digital tool).

When the idea of research crops up during a project, decision makers frequently say: "But we know our customers. Why splash out on research?" Knowing your customers does not mean you automatically understand how they will use the proposed solutions. This understanding is derived directly from research, and research – when an agile approach is applied – does not need to be expensive.

### Expert opinion

#### Radostaw Misiewicz

UX Designer, e-point SA



*To provide reliable knowledge on the ways users handle the system, their context, and what they intend to achieve, UX surveys do not need to engage large customer groups. According to the Nielsen Norman Group, a group of five users is enough to discover the problems facing 80% of all customers. With such a small group, the survey may be rerun frequently, verifying particular assumptions, whereas when researching with large groups the results tend to overlap.*

*A large number of users does not translate into a large number of applications, neither does it improve their quality. During the study itself, it is important to provide participants with very specific tasks based on their interaction with currently-used systems. The survey may take only 30 minutes but nonetheless appear very conclusive and contribute vital customer insights. Running a survey on five persons takes as little as 2.5 hours.*

*The entire study – including prototyping, the scenario, and the logistics – may take less than 5 days. Accomplishing the entire process within a week is a low-cost way of obtaining findings that can redefine the perceptions of the system inside the organization and lead to better project decisions.*

## Speak a friendly language



*"Human beings are innately complex yet strive for simplicity. Our challenge as humans is to find, understand and explain the complex in its most simplistic form. This means you, marketers. Find the commonality in our humanity, and speak the language we've all been waiting for."<sup>11</sup>*

**Bryan Kramer**

Author of H2H philosophy

B2B marketing often consists of jargon and specialist terms and can be blamed for using schematic messages. That makes clear communication the highest priority. Message should be, above all, true and simple. It should seek to build relationships; if we speak to our customers using clichés, difficult words, and dull narratives, this goal will not be achieved. Thus, B2B marketers need to employ B2C content marketing practices.

### *B2C content marketing practices B2B companies can employ:*

- **Storytelling** – selling by telling stories, or “selling without selling.” Instead of highlighting product features, present the history of its use. This method appeals to the emotions and imagination of the audience, allowing them to better retain the message.
- **Personalization** – modern customers expect personalized content. They will be more willing to read or watch material which they find relevant, which meets their interests and matches their current stage in the customer journey. A long-time customer and a prospect will find different messages relevant.
- **Authenticity** – B2C brands frequently tell stories, show the inside of their company, and do not hide behind a facade of studied, overgeneralized descriptions. They are also unafraid to openly discuss their problems and challenges, which makes them more credible.

## Talk to customers on social media

Social media marketing has long been the domain of B2C marketers, but an increasing number of B2B companies are tapping into this channel's potential.

### Expert opinion

#### Maciej Podgórski

Head of publishing house Forum Media Polska's E-Business Division and Head of Sales, chief editor and founder of several B2B business magazines.



*Today's trends clearly indicate that the length of time spent by users on mobile devices (versus desktop) is increasing. Time spent online has also increased. This makes online sales campaigns highly effective. Also, traditional sales, e.g. in tele channels, have been affected. Although product and service promotion in the online channel does not always convert into sales transactions, it significantly impacts the tele channel. It turns cold leads into warm leads and increases the chances for a salesperson to successfully close the deal on the first contact. The customer will remember the product or service if they have seen it on Instagram or Facebook.*

On social media, you can grow a closer relationship with your customers and promptly react to their actions. Social media also constitutes an effective method of content distribution among target users across all markets. It is not merely a communication and brand-awareness tool, it's an emerging avenue for making sales. As many as 34% of the B2B companies surveyed use this channel for sales.



## Inspiration: Maersk



source: <https://www.facebook.com/Maersk/>

The Danish company Maersk deals in container shipping. At the end of 2011, they started a social media campaign. Currently, the Maersk Line owns over 30 social accounts<sup>13</sup> and has over two million likes on its main page!

Maersk's published content touches upon environmental issues shows the history of the company and introduces its customers to the people inside the company. Maersk invests in high-quality photos and videos and matches its content to certain users and platforms. To ensure consistency between its various social profiles and channels of communication, Maersk has worked out a number of guidelines and utilizes training sessions to keep employees current with its social media practices.

Maersk's social media goals don't stop with lead generation. Jonathan Wichmann, head of social media at Maersk, says: "Social media is about communication, not marketing."<sup>14</sup> Even so, company surveys indicate that as many as 15–20% of all Maersk likes are generated by active customers. Almost 75% of Maersk's message recipients indicate that the company's social media efforts have their perception of Maersk.<sup>15</sup>

## Tap into e-commerce

Until recently, e-commerce was understood chiefly in terms of B2C sector dominance. Yet, B2B customers spend almost ten times more online than B2C consumers.

*Forecasts estimate that by 2020, the value of the B2B e-commerce market may amount to 6.7 trillion dollars worldwide, 2.16 trillion euros in Europe, and 344 billion zlotys in Poland.<sup>16</sup>*

### **B2B business purchasers are influenced by their consumer buying habits:**

- 49% of survey respondents in the B2B sector purchased products via services dedicated to B2C consumers.<sup>17</sup>
- 50% are interested in contributing their opinions on products and services.<sup>18</sup>
- B2B and B2C customers' delivery requirements are identical. Before the rise of the e-commerce channel, prompt order execution was impossible. Now, customers expect to place orders whenever they want and have their purchases confirmed automatically. Our survey shows that 83% of B2B respondents list next-day delivery as a vital criterion for supplier selection.<sup>19</sup>
- Esthetics and transparency, which was formerly a mostly B2C concern, have become as crucial as intuitiveness and ergonomics for B2B sales platform users. Fully 76% of business customers say that it is important for a website to be easy to read.<sup>20</sup>

## Expert opinion

### **Tomasz Skórski**

Digital and UX expert, Manager of Inter Cars' Digital Products Development



*Growing world digitalization and customer maturity make e-commerce platforms a natural tool both for our sales force and for our customers. In the automotive industry, the purchasing process involves identifying appropriate parts and matching them to the vehicles – a particular part must be quickly picked from among almost 2 million items available on the market and then ordered.*

*In designing our e-commerce systems, we were strongly aware of this being the key issue our customers are struggling with. Our top priority was not generating more traffic or dramatically boosting conversion, but ensuring the smooth operation of the tool and raising the efficiency of processes performed on a daily basis.*

*In Central and Eastern European markets where Inter Cars Group operates, we have seen sales made with our e-commerce solutions surge for years. In some markets, their share has reached 80-90 percent. Even ordering via telephone is supported, with digital catalogs and browsers being used by our employees.*

## Summary

For many buyers, customer experience is more important than the price: they are ready to pay more for a product or service when they know it entails more convenience, wider availability, and improved safety. On their way to better CX, B2B companies are taking a look at the B2C sector and adapting B2C solutions to their own needs. Foremost are social media marketing, emotional messaging, and various e-commerce systems and functions.

Remember, in B2B marketing, you are always communicating with a human being!

### Going from B2B to Human2Human allows businesses to:

- Grow long-term relations with customers
- Quickly broadcast your company's offers
- Implement an action-reaction mindset.<sup>21</sup>

### For success, the following elements are essential:

- Personalized content
- An e-commerce platform
- Social media outreach.

## Trend #2. B2B clients find information and opinions online

There are more millennials among B2B customers, and this group is used to doing Internet research and contacting sales representatives only in the final stages of their purchasing process. How can companies turn this to their advantage?

### Before the seller gets a chance

The purchasing process in B2B begins when a client becomes aware of a need or problem. Then, they start analyzing it and searching for solution. Very frequently, they will be comparing competitive offerings and consulting various stakeholders. Only then will the final decision be made.

*Problem → searching for a solution → analysis of available offers → decision*

This model is still valid, but what has changed is the moment when the seller enters the picture.

In the past, customers used to contact sellers right after they had realized a problem and started their inquiries. The seller used to contribute more than just a product catalog – they were the main source of information. Sales representatives presented solutions and shared their experience.

Not infrequently, the seller was the one to initiate contact – before the client even realized they needed a product or service. It was the sales representative who started and drove the purchasing process; as a consequence, they often came across persons uninterested in their offering.

*Problem  salesperson → searching for a solution  
→ analysis of available offers → decision*

Today, thanks to easy access to information online, business customers carry out their own research: they look for information on the web, ask questions to expert groups on social media, search for information on forums, and quickly get an opinion from their network of contacts. In other words, the purchasing process starts online and is initiated by the buyer.



Now, fewer than 30% of B2B customers want to talk to sales representatives while making decisions, and even fewer (13%) believe the sales representative can accurately understand their needs. Most respondents think sales representatives are solely focused on pursuing their sales targets.<sup>22</sup> That is why average customer is 57% through their buying decision before they reach out to sales rep.<sup>23</sup>

This has created a new kind of customer.

*56% – that’s how much more efficient a B2B sales team is if they engage a potential buyer via e-commerce channels before a sales representative makes contact.<sup>24</sup>*

## Your new clients: millennials in B2B

According to Think with Google, **27%** of company board members in 2012 were people aged 18-34. In 2014, this figure rose to **46%** – a clear upward trend.

Increasingly, millennials are the decision makers. And they influence buying decisions in a less direct way, too: they act as experts or researchers, and their opinions can be vital to other board members.<sup>25</sup>

## Who are millennials?

*Millennials are people born between 1980 and 1995. As a generation, they have seamlessly adopted digital technologies into their lives and actively use the Internet. They are open to changes and value comfort over routine standards. Millward Brown has dubbed them “digital natives.”*

Millennials regularly use the Internet at all stages of the purchasing process, often accessing it from mobile devices. They prefer friendly, intuitive services and tools, appreciate convenience, and value the ability to quickly obtain information or get things done. Millennials will not accommodate the habits of previous generations; therefore, it is necessary to consciously adjust B2B marketing behavior to their preferences.

## What you need to know about millennials as B2B customers?

Digital natives hate rigid, schematic processes – they want to buy and find information at their own pace and on their own terms.

### 1. They search for information on their own

- The modern customer has become very independent: 60% of them are not interested in using the services of a sales representative at the beginning of their search.
- 68% of customers do their own research online.
- 62% believe that, based only on online content, they can work out selection criteria and make up a list of potential suppliers.<sup>26</sup>

How do modern customers search? 71% start with a general product search, not sticking to any particular brand; this gives them a better perspective on the available solutions.<sup>27</sup>

Before a client hits the manufacturer’s website, they perform an average of 12 Internet searches of relevant phrases.<sup>28</sup> According to Forrester’s report, 82% of users saw at least five pieces of content from the supplier (the one they eventually selected) before making a purchase.<sup>29</sup>

*Pre-sale research includes products bought online and offline.*

*Buyers frequently search for additional product information online and then order through traditional channels. Interestingly, they use e-commerce as a source of knowledge – even if they do not order online.*

*It makes sense to combine online and offline communication and sales channels.*

*E-commerce does not cannibalize the traditional, physical sales network: often, e-commerce winds it up.*

## **2. They attach a lot of value to their peers' opinions**

B2B customers very often condition their choices on opinions picked up from their peers. At the research stage, they not only search for and browse information online, but they also ask questions. This happens in the physical world and on social media. Data collected by LinkedIn Business shows that the majority of online buyers rely on recommendations, while 76% give priority to suppliers suggested by their contacts. Therefore, 84% of B2B purchases start from a recommendation.<sup>30</sup>

In a 2017 study conducted by Report Demand Gen, almost half of the respondents recognized the recommendations of industry insiders as the most reliable sources of information. The significance of this source has been increasing from year to year.<sup>31</sup>

Our research also proves the same point. 53% of those surveyed point out to recommendations and business partners' comments as sources of knowledge about business clients, whereas 48% of respondents say they read online opinions while searching for information on the products or services they intend to purchase.

## **3. More decision makers participate in the purchasing process**

According to the research run by HBR in 2015, the average B2B purchase decision was made by an average of 5.4 persons. In 2017, that figure rose to 6.8 persons.<sup>32</sup> Too many cooks spoil the broth, and the more there are, the smaller the helping served on the plate of the supplier that fails to keep up with volatile trends. When the number of people engaged in the decision-making process grows, it becomes harder for suppliers to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders, harder to reach a consensus, and harder to close deals.

## **4. They expect valuable content**

Finding by Report Demand Gen showed that most business customers say it's important to feel that the content on a supplier's website has been tailored for them – and this is one their first visit to the site. Clients appreciate original, specific, and helpful content that addresses the problems and needs of a given sector. They are searching for materials to help them make decisions, and they generally avoid overgeneralized ideas and pushy sales pitches. High-quality, relevant content can, in their eyes, build a company's expert image.

# How to meet millennials' expectations

## 1. Provide valuable content

Most B2B customers prefer to do their own research before contacting a sales representative. They seek knowledge and professional materials. They will most certainly visit several competitors' websites before contacting the supplier that is best equipped to understand their needs.

In a study by Roper Public Affairs, about 80% of entrepreneurs acknowledged that educational materials have a stronger impact on them than advertising materials. Content marketing has already been noted for its potential to boost customer loyalty. About 60% of those surveyed stated that content had reassured them about their decision.<sup>33</sup>

## Expert opinion

### Magdalena Cedro-Czubaj

Marketing Director, Oknoplast



*We run a blog for each market. We can see it attracts customers. We also use various contact forms and lead collection mechanisms which can be managed depending on interests of particular customers. We employ marketing automation for this purpose.*

Customize both the content and the form of the message. Professional materials include blogs, e-books, reports, infographics, podcasts, webinars, and videos.

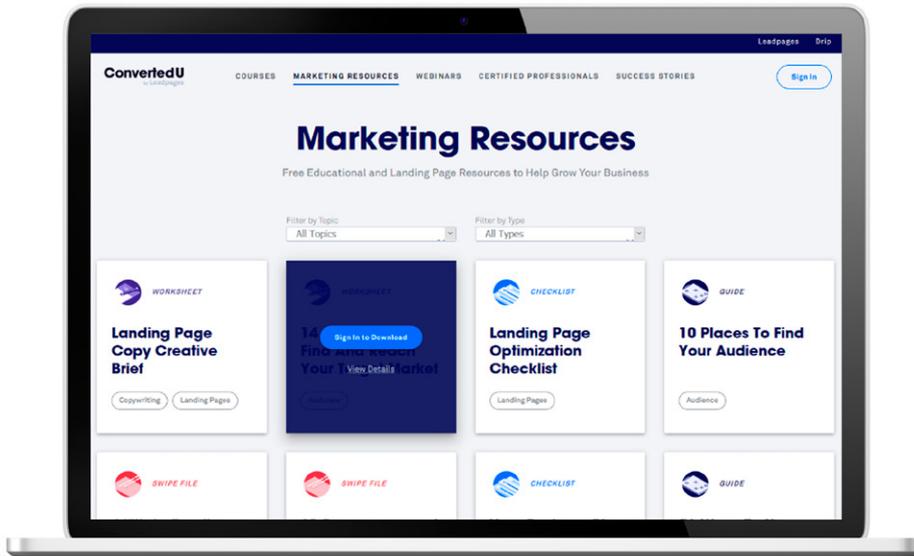
*Based on a survey by Adobe, 52% of marketers say the highest ROI is generated by video content. Short videos, which are easy to distribute via social media, are the content format favored by millennials.<sup>34</sup>*

The quality of this content matters, but so does how well it harmonizes with the needs of a given user at a certain stage in their customer journey. Millennials appreciate convenience and having content tailored to their current needs; thus, we recommend investing in message personalization and ways to precisely target your message.

According to a survey by Seismic and Demand Metric, 80% of B2B enterprises noticed increased efficiency after a content personalization strategy was applied.<sup>35</sup>



## Inspiration: Leadpages



source: <https://www.digitalvidya.com/blog/content-marketing-case-studies/>

Leadpages assists customers in the creation and optimization of landing pages. It is a small company which competes with various “big companies” and it cannot match them for budget and sales volume. So, it has focused on content marketing.

### Leadpages invested in designing educational materials for customers, including:

- online courses
- e-books
- case studies
- infographics
- podcasts
- webinars

Access to these materials was free of charge.

Leadpages' CEO, Clay Collins, has drawn the conclusion that a team of four content marketers can achieve better results than 80 traditional sales representatives.

As a result, this company won 35 thousand new customers over three years and ranked 148th among the fastest-growing companies in the U.S.<sup>36</sup>

## **2. Take care of recommendations and opinions**

A potential buyer will be curious to see how existing customers feel about the product or service. So, take care of recommendations and testimonials. You can ask clients for them directly or provide them with an easy way to share their opinions or reviews online.

According to our surveys, 59% of B2B customers welcome the opportunity to add their opinions to product websites and would like to share their opinions with others.

The report *How Online Reviews Influence Sales* concludes that a product with five opinions has a 270% higher conversion rate than a product with no opinions. It must be noted, however, that any number of opinions higher than 5 does not result in such a rapid increase in performance.<sup>37</sup>

Paradoxically, negative comments... help as well. A buyer viewing negative comments can spend four times longer on the website, which produces a conversion boost of 67%. Interestingly, the more expensive the product, the stronger the effect of the reviews posted. For relatively inexpensive products, the rise in purchase probability was 190 percent while for relatively pricey items it was 380 percent.<sup>38</sup>

The people surveyed in our study stated a rather ambiguous attitude to online opinions. On one hand, they admitted to using them and finding them useful, but on the other, they were concerned with the possibility of “fake opinions,” those posted for payment or by word-of-mouth agencies’ employees.

## **3. Address the needs of many decision makers**

A large team taking part in a decision-making process usually tends to be risk-averse, as it must solve the problems of all stakeholders, who have various expectations, needs, and concerns. Their individual interests may be diverse. The key to success is focusing on their motivators holistically. Each of them should believe that you are solving their unique problem.

For example, if the sales team leader learns the company is considering buying an online sales system, they may be naturally worried about their department losing value and try to sabotage the change. Address this person’s doubts: explain how online sales can boost offline sales, how it will streamline salespersons’ jobs and help them deliver on their targets.

That is why hearing and understanding all questions and needs and responding to them patiently is of such paramount importance. Provide varied and solid arguments to support your solution, prepare a business case, but also appeal to emotions by showing other customers’ recommendations.

## Summary

Today, customers research the market and form opinions before they meet the sales representative. Even if they make their purchase offline, they search for knowledge mainly on the Internet and often use e-commerce channels to find information.

Therefore, entering online communication and sales does not mean quitting traditional sales channels; to the contrary, it reinforces them.

The key to efficiency is taking proper care of the early stages of building awareness in B2B customers' heads and helping them find relevant information on their own.

*65% of business customers prefer to start the search with their own Internet research and choose potential suppliers based on what they learn.*

*When they initially contact the seller, they are already at 57% of their decision-making process.*

*A product which receives five opinions has a conversion rate that's 270% higher than a product showing no opinions at all.*

*A sales team will be 56% more effective if it has managed to engage the customer before the sales representative makes the first contact.*

## Trend #3. Self-service in B2B

The world is moving towards self-service. In brick-and-mortar stores, self-service checkouts are common; we tend to buy more online, and customer service is increasingly conducted by chatbots or interactive voice bots. This trend also applies to the B2B sector. By 2020, the average business customer will carry out 85% of their buying activity without any human interaction.<sup>39</sup>

### B2B customers prefer self-service

In a recent Zendesk survey, 67% of respondents stated they preferred self-service over the Internet to phone calls with company representatives.<sup>40</sup>

According to McKinsey, as many as 86% prefer self-service for repeat purchases, which is very characteristic of the B2B sector – customers tend to reorder from a partner (i.e. a supplier or distributor) they find reliable.<sup>41</sup>

75% of respondents reported that a self-service platform allows them to satisfy their needs in a more comfortable way.<sup>42</sup> It makes sense make the change and offer such tools to customers.

*A 2015 Forrester study shows that in the US alone, the demand for sales representatives in B2B will have shrunk by one million jobs by 2020. In part, this is because business customers prefer online purchasing with minimal seller engagement. Traditional sales force activity does not add value and is perceived as downright negative.*

*Forrester warns that companies which lag behind in investing in self-service online stores risk being outstripped by competitors in terms of market share.<sup>43</sup>*

## B2B self-service in practice

How can we make self-service available to B2B customers? First of all, by providing digital tools and the necessary knowledge.

- **Online stores** allow the purchase products when the customer chooses, without the need to contact sales representatives or leave one's office.
- **Online creators/configurators** enable users to simulate the environment in which the product will be used (e.g. create a virtual kitchen to assess whether a given combination of furniture will fit).
- **FAQs and online knowledge bases** let customers find answers to their questions and dig into a topic on their own, at any moment, without engaging another person.

## What does the client gain?

Modern clients are increasingly more independent and try to solve their problems as much as possible without engaging other people. As many as about 40% of business clients seek answers on their own before contacting a call center. However, there remains a lot of room for improving this result, as 91% of respondents claim they are willing to use easily accessible and relevant online knowledge bases.<sup>44</sup>

### Time savings

Customers appreciate the ability to find answers to their queries whenever they want. They do not like to listen to that monotonous music on the phone while waiting to be put through to the consultant, and they don't want to squeeze appointments with sales representatives into their tight schedules. Most customers prefer to get a smartphone from their pocket and instantly find the necessary information or place a routine order without further ado.

### Accessibility

Digital self-service applications are accessible 24/7. The user may visit them when they have the time or when a need occurs.

### **Convenience and comfort**

Digital tools, such as creators and configurators, help customers find optimal solutions independently, at a convenient moment and on their own. This is the case in the furniture industry, where tools provided by manufacturers and distributors aid architects, carpenters, or even end users. For end users, being able to match plate measurements to the size of the room or to design an interior to a plan is a much faster and more comfortable than engaging a sales representative or consultant.

## **What does the supplier gain?**

Self-service does not only benefit customers. It may reduce the cost of service and change the role performed by consultants. Thanks to the fact that answers to mechanical questions and routine cases will be provided by appropriate tools, customer service employees will be able to focus on the proactive building of customer relationships.

### **Saves money**

If most users prefer to consult online knowledge bases, we no longer require an expanded call center. This is a source of great cost-saving and allows us to find alternative ways of allocating resources.

### **Scalability**

Self-service tools are also a perfect solution for companies that are planning to expand. Scalability is highly limited in traditional forms of selling. Business expansion means additional expenditures related to hiring more direct salesmen and telephone consultants, renting more office space, and providing the necessary equipment to employees. For many companies, these may constitute a serious barrier, preventing them from expanding.

### **Improving service quality**

From the consultant perspective, self-service reduces the number of monotonous tasks: the most frequently asked questions get answered online. When customer service employees do not have to attend to simple repetitive queries, they may devote more time to solving non-standard problems and building customer relationships. In turn, customers may get excellent treatment simply because customer service representatives are not so rushed.

## Self-service challenges

To fully exploit the potential offered by self-service, we should address the following challenges:

### Keeping data current

An effective and functional self-service tool must contain reliable and current data. It requires not only frequent updates, maintenance work, and integration of data from all sources, but also systematic development, e.g. adding new products and functions or adding new FAQ questions.

### Maintaining Close Business Relationships

If the implementation of self-service tools is not performed with thought and care, the lack of human interaction may disrupt the business relationship. Self-service is not about complete automation. Take note of the situations in which direct interaction with a consultant is needed for building loyalty and long-term relationships, e.g. conversations about the customers' challenges or the presentation of a unique, personalized offer.

## Expert opinion

### Ewa Hajduk-Kasprowicz, PhD

cooperates with ThinkTank, formerly  
with Business Review Polska,  
runs a blog [relacjeb2b.pl](http://relacjeb2b.pl)



*The conducted research indicates that activity on the Internet has become an indispensable element of B2B market operations. A website, presence on industry portals and social media, and positive reviews from partners are a must for any enterprise interested in building their image and are a stimulus for initiating business relations. Online sales are ranked very positively, and there are many products/services tailored to this medium. The Internet facilitates, streamlines, and boosts businesses' attractiveness – it offers numerous new opportunities to all parties and one should tap into this potential. Valuable B2B relations are characterized by stability, long termism, high efficiency, resilience to similar terms offered by other partners, and some tolerance of minor fails. These are the ultimate cooperation attractiveness factors; they result from trust built over time and the engagement of all parties. These are the goals that can only be achieved through strong interpersonal relationships (e.g. with an advisor or representative) and mutual accommodation. This should be kept in mind while operating online.*

## Ensuring transparency and convenience

A tool that is not intuitive is likely to cause customers frustration and to be a major turn off. A self-service solution must be designed to offer users an exquisite experience. The building blocks of such an experience are:

- Placing orders online
- Facilitating order placement (e.g. a shopping cart that can be filled with many different products)
- Showing important information in accessible places on the site
- A simple customer journey
- A mobile-friendly version
- Personalized catalogs, prices, and promotions
- Educational content to help customers in their research
- Transparent content presentation and thoughtful information architecture
- Tool functions that adjust to users' needs

In B2B best practices, the design of such a tool should be informed by feedback from real users. Include user tests in the application design process; after the tool is launched, analyze users' behavior in the application and optimize the design based on said behavior.

## Summary

Give your customers tools for self-service! They are really looking forward to it.

*67% of customers prefer self-service on the Internet to a conversation with a consultant. With repeat customers, this figure rises to 86%.*

*91% of customers want to use online knowledge bases, which allows businesses to reduce call center expenditure.*

*A carefully thought-out strategy of self-service implementation may help consolidate business relations, drive sales, and limit expenditure while increasing customer satisfaction.*

## Trend #4. The rise of IT tools in B2B

To respond to the needs of today's customers, traditional sales require the support of new technologies. IT solutions have become an indispensable sales tool and exert a powerful impact on the efficiency of the sales process.

### Who is the modern salesperson?

Equipped with a mobile phone, a briefcase, and a sheaf of brochures explaining the current offerings, the salesperson has been a pivotal element in a B2B sales process – until quite recently. He or she educated customers, helped define their needs, opened customers' eyes to new solutions, and most importantly made a connection. This connection, when carefully groomed, transformed into a business relationship.

Representatives' personality and charisma were key factors in a potential customer's decision. However, today's salesperson now meets people who have already educated themselves and have made choices based on Internet searches. This raises an important question: Have salespeople become obsolete?

### B2B moves to the Internet

The Internet has changed the way we foster relationships, and the B2B sector is no exception here. Entrepreneurs frequently employ the Web to find business partners, and they look globally as well as locally. Comparing the prices and offers of various suppliers before making a purchase is standard behavior. E-commerce platforms have superseded printed catalogs.

*According to Forrester, 69% of companies plan to stop printing paper catalogs within the next 5 years and invest more resources into the online presentation of their offers.<sup>45</sup>*

More companies want to communicate directly with their audience online, so they have profiles on LinkedIn and Facebook. These are much faster and more efficient than arranging in-person meetings, which are difficult to make time for.

## Expert opinion

### **Olga Kulmaczewska**

Owner of Cocarda company, responsible for B2B sales for Swarovski Corporate Gifts division in Poland.



*I believe that in B2B, trust and relationship are key to successful transactions. This is the market where personalization is highly important, so offers tailored to company needs are key.*

Business customers still depend on relationships in the purchasing process. Interactions between buyers and sellers have simply moved online, e.g. to social media. As many as 75% of customers prefer to build relationships with companies via this channel.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, we need technological tools (such as portals, product catalogs, mobile applications, social media (already mentioned), CRM (customer relationship management), and e-commerce platforms) to support sales.

Specifically, let's now focus on CRM and e-commerce platforms.

## Expert opinion

### Agata Mazurek-Bąk

Procurement Director  
of Veolia Group in Poland



*Today the trend is to seek strategic partnerships with suppliers who are the most valuable for a given business line: they have a unique product, or the scale of orders is so large and the need of responsiveness and close relations with the supplier so important that I as a buyer do not treat such a supplier as a standard seller but a business partner. I expect more of that supplier than just a service, I expect them to understand my business and my needs. I require flexibility and responsiveness. To be exact, I expect more than if this supplier simply offered their products on the Internet. I therefore seek closer relationships and I think this trend is very strong because these days every business which wants to generate added value needs reliability. When I buy a toothbrush online as an individual customer and the toothbrush is delivered two days later than I expected, it is not a problem because I can easily substitute another product. However, if in business my delivery is two days late, it poses a great challenge and means great losses. Thus, I seek solutions where the partnership ensures a level of service necessary for my business to continue smoothly.*

## CRM, or why collect data?

Every 12 months, the amount of data on the Internet grows by 40 percent – a real digital deluge.<sup>47</sup> Every action made by a customer or a prospect may be an important guideline for a supplier. And paying attention to these actions may boost the efficiency of sales, but only if we can collect, manage and analyze the data. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems support information management, which leads to building better business relationships.

A CRM system places the business client in the center. This tool enables businesses to collect, organize, and analyze data from various sources such as portals, e-commerce, social media, e-mail marketing, direct communications, call centers, and brick-and-mortar outlets. Thanks to CRM systems and all that data, businesses can better understand customer behavior, segment customers, and customize offers and communications for each contact. This makes the sales process more effective and builds stronger relationships with partners.

*74% of companies declare that a CRM system has improved their relationships with customers.<sup>48</sup>*

Using CRM solutions gives everyone engaged in a given area of customer service access to aggregated knowledge about particular customer. As a result, every company employee in contact with this person, be it a sales representative or a call center employee, can see the full context of this relationship and understand what the customer needs at that moment. Thanks to systematically gathered customer knowledge in CRM systems, we can be certain that the information acquired by our employees will not be lost when an employee decides to leave the company; the seller-customer relationship can be seamlessly continued by a new person.

## **Agile sales in real-time**

CRM and efficient data management allow companies to react quickly to customer behavior. If a given person has visited our website several times, if they browsed our materials and checked out an offer, if they provided personal data in a form or questionnaire – all of these are signs they are interested and should become a top-priority sales target. Now, imagine getting this information in real time. This is truly a hot lead, one that's motivated to purchase. David Meerman Scott calls this approach "agile selling."

”

*"Instead of pushing buyers into a company sales process, an agile organization responds to individual clients based on their behaviors and interactions."<sup>49</sup>*

**David Meerman Scott**

If a company promptly reacts to customer needs and takes an interest in the customer, it can gain that customer's trust. It can also grab real sales opportunities and avoid wasting resources on cold, indecisive leads. This calls for a perfect blend of the human factor and technology.

## Entrepreneurs choose e-commerce

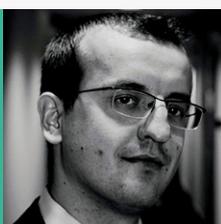
In our survey, 69% of the respondents made company purchases online and 72% said they would like to buy that way. Customers prefer shopping online because:

- They can buy at the time and place of their choosing (70%)
- It is more convenient than traditional methods (67%)
- It is faster (65%)

### Expert opinion

#### Józef Kostecki

Director for Project and Process Management, Iglotex

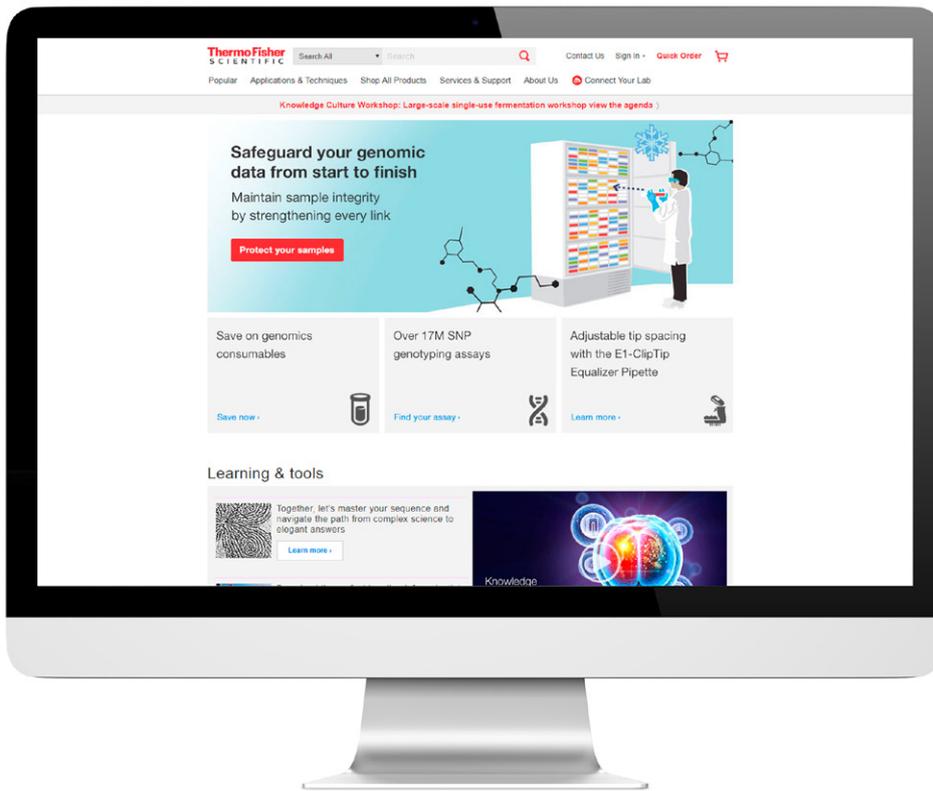


*E-commerce today is a must for two reasons: first, the expectations of business customers are changing: they want to easily place orders online; second, unemployment in Poland has been falling for a few years now and the cost of labor has been rising faster than worker efficiency, which makes the search for effective and innovative solutions necessary. At the same time, implementing e-commerce in B2B is a greater challenge than in B2C. In this sector, the process of setting prices, placing orders, and organizing logistics is much more complex.*

*It should be remembered that relationships between customers and sales representatives in the field are crucial. An e-commerce solution must match this context.*



## Inspiration: Thermo Fisher



source: <https://www.thermofisher.com/pl/en/home.html>

Thermo Fisher Scientific is an American company specializing in the development of biotechnological products.<sup>50</sup> It employs almost 70,000 people and has a mission to make the world a healthier, cleaner, and safer place.

In their business operations, they are well aware that a person placing an order is usually not an expert in a given field. Their e-commerce platform has an embedded feature that allows the customer to share their shopping lists, invite co-workers to edit them or comment on them, and then make their purchases.<sup>51</sup>

This cart structure lets customers consult with other employees before the final purchase is made.

## B2B e-commerce: advanced personalization is key

B2B requires more personalization than B2C: the offer for each partner must be customized to individual contract terms. Modern e-commerce systems oriented towards B2B market needs offer unique personalization functionalities, such as:

- Advanced price lists, featuring individual prices for every partner as per business terms
- Enhanced search options
- Presentation personalization (i.e. some products are shown only to some customers)
- Negotiation workflow
- Simple reorder functionality (i.e. customers can place the same order without having to access the catalog and choose each item again)
- Ordering products that cannot be presented in the catalog (e.g. training courses or additional services which can only be priced individually by the salesperson)
- More payment method options
- Multiple shopping carts
- Enabling sub-accounts and different user roles (e.g. Admin, Approver, Buyer) for a purchasing process that includes several people
- Integration with a procurement platform

Moreover, data obtained from an e-commerce platform allows the efficient personalization of an offer. These systems are capable of awarding discounts to business partners, offering special prices on their most frequently ordered items, and automating the ordering process.

*74% of buyers prefer to research and buy products online rather than contact a sales representative.*

*93% of buyers prefer to buy online after they have decided what to buy.<sup>52</sup>*

B2B e-commerce systems provide great opportunities for shaping business relations. They work best, however, when there is synergy between all the customer interaction channels. Channel integration helps maintain the same relationship quality with those customers for whom there are no sales stages. In this case, the whole process of making a purchase becomes one seamless experience.

## Expert opinion

### Aneta Reich-Ripaud

Project Manager

AB Cosmetique Poland



*As far as the B2B market growth in Poland is concerned, I think the accessibility of online sales will increase, just as the availability of various devices and software products (including price comparison websites) that assist buying has increased. Judging by the findings of various kinds of research, we can observe an upward trend in the use of Internet-connected devices in the B2B purchasing process.*

## Towards omnichannel

86% of buyers regularly switch sales channels, using at least two of them.<sup>53</sup> The use of offline channels is deeply rooted in the B2B sector, but the advantages of shopping online – e.g. its time-saving quality – have caused B2B customers to become more omnichannel oriented.

Behavior in the purchasing process has been studied in a survey run by McKinsey Research and the Harvard Business Review. This survey was made on 46 thousand customers and focused on the channels used in the purchasing process. It revealed that:

- 73% of those surveyed used many channels
- 20% closed their deals in a brick-and-mortar store only
- Only 7% used just one online channel<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, it was observed that the more channels a customer used, the higher the value of the purchase.

Omnichannel solutions are becoming so vitally important because they allow the integration of various communication channels, sales channels, and customer touchpoints into one consistent customer journey. Advanced CRM and e-commerce systems are the types of solutions that enable omnichannel. The smooth flow of information between channels increases efficiency and reduces customer service times. 66% of B2B salespeople recognize the correlation between new customer expectations and the need for technological investments in the omnichannel approach.<sup>56</sup>

## Expert opinion

### **Agnieszka Węglarz**

Independent strategic advisor,  
B2B expert, author of business  
publications



*Research findings prove that the Internet and mobile devices constitute a vital part of the B2B customer journey. Currently, not only B2C companies but also B2B effectively employ digital solutions to sell their products and services. It should be noted that almost half of those surveyed expect to be able to interact through various channels. From the B2B sales managers' perspective, this creates the need to effectively manage channels representing different model characteristics, different sales processes, and different value offers. Research findings, such as expectations of prompt answers and individual service, indicate the high expectations customers have in terms of after-sales service. Companies that want to successfully keep loyal B2B customers should remember about the efficient management of all touchpoints in their customer relationships.*

Thanks to advanced omnichannel solutions, a B2B customer buying online may at any moment call or write a message to his advisor. The advisor will be able to see via their e-commerce platform what operations the client has performed in his account and thus will be able to better address the customer's questions and needs. This helps streamline most sales processes and builds productive, long-standing relationships.

## Expert opinion

### Zenon Kosicki

Business Development Director,  
e-point SA



*Today, one does not need to convince entrepreneurs whose activity is based on B2B relations about their need for an IT system that supports sales. I'm talking about two categories: B2B e-commerce and CRM. Both categories may be found with the majority of distribution companies and manufacturers, who have many direct customers.*

*However, the quality of these systems is also important. A simple test can be conducted by counting the number of people employed in sales. Frequently, despite having these systems, there is an army of people employed, which causes the cost of sales to shoot up. There are multiple reasons for this situation: customers may dislike ordering using electronic devices (which is hard to believe nowadays, when e-commerce is growing constantly). Or maybe the e-commerce systems were created many years ago and are too distant from the modern experience of people ordering goods, so customers prefer to communicate via telephone or e-mail. I have come across the latter example numerous times. Despite the fact that the e-commerce system is not attractive enough for users, companies fear major changes.*

*Yet, today's technology allows changing only the exterior (the "front end") without interfering with the otherwise solid and perfected internal system. Deploying PWA (Progressive Web Applications) technology is one way to achieve this. Consulting User Experience experts and designing an interface from scratch or optimizing the customer journey is also a possibility. These actions may enliven a stodgy system that was previously used only by sales representatives.*

## Summary

Thanks to CRM, e-commerce platforms, and similar tools and technologies, companies can successfully build relationships with business customers across all channels, merging the online and offline worlds.

- 74% of customers make purchases on the Internet<sup>57</sup>
- 57% of firms believe that commerce is increasingly being done online<sup>58</sup>
- 75% of clients prefer to build relationships with a company over social media<sup>59</sup>
- Blending online and offline worlds is a natural evolution<sup>60</sup>
- 72% of B2B clients expect independent access to accounts and to ordering options<sup>61</sup>
- The more channels a client uses to make a purchase, the higher their spending<sup>62</sup>

## Trend #5. Business customers are using mobile devices

Business users increasingly use their smartphones for research and for product purchases. To address this need, companies need to invest in a dedicated mobile solution, such as PWA (Progressive Web Applications).

### Can you imagine life without a smartphone?

The first smartphone was launched on 9 January 2007. Skeptics said that nobody would be willing to use a phone without a keypad, but 11 years later it is very clear: iPhone was not only a great success for Apple, it also marked the beginning of a new era. Smartphones have become an essential element of our private and professional lives. Worldwide, more people have access to mobile phones than to toothbrushes.<sup>63</sup> Almost two-thirds of the population (over 5 billion) actively use mobile devices.<sup>64</sup> And this number increases by 4% each year.<sup>65</sup>

*Modern smartphones are more powerful than the computers NASA used to send astronauts to the moon.<sup>66</sup>*

### Smartphone users

...are not merely millennials, although they undoubtedly are the most active smartphone users. A CBOS survey stated that smartphone users are usually city dwellers, well-off, and belong to C-level professional groups. Smartphones are used by specialists, people with a technological background, medium-level personnel, and services employees.<sup>67</sup>

## How do we use mobile devices?

Not only is the number of people using mobile devices rising, but so is the amount of time. It is estimated that we use smartphones for an average of 3.5 hours a day.<sup>68</sup> And we employ them in a growing number of situations: while watching TV (89%),<sup>69</sup> travelling (88%),<sup>70</sup> when shopping at a traditional brick-and-mortar store (as many as 90%; 54% use smartphones to compare prices, 48% seek product information, and 42% seek product opinions).<sup>71</sup> Starting the customer journey on a mobile device is increasingly more common, particularly among people aged 18-39. Almost 69% of people in this age group say a smartphone is a good way to spot relevant offers.<sup>72</sup>

In the 2015 report *Polska.jest.mobi* (Poland.is.mobi), we read that “mobile never sleeps.”<sup>73</sup> This refers to how intensely the people surveyed used their mobile devices; they were unable to indicate a single hour free of smartphone use, although generally this intensity tends to fluctuate during day and night times.

*70% of B2B purchasers have increased their use of mobile devices over the last 2-3 years and 60% of them expect mobile device usage to grow.<sup>74</sup>*

## B2B needs mobile solutions

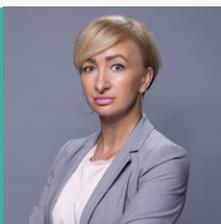
A Google report indicates that smartphones are more often used at all stages of the purchasing process: from inspiration, through research, and right up to purchase; also, mobile devices figure in after-sales service.<sup>75</sup> 80% of buyers employ mobile devices while at work to compare prices, gather product information, check out product functions and features, and contact sellers.<sup>76</sup> If they have a good mobile experience, over 90% of B2B buyers say they will purchase from the same supplier again.<sup>77</sup>

It is interesting that, given the scale of mobile usage, as many as 25% of our respondents admitted to not knowing what percentage of users browse their mobile websites.

## Expert opinion

### Patrycja Sass-Staniszevska

Chairperson of the Chamber  
of Digital Economy



*The 2015 survey showed that the traditional purchasing model of the B2B sector in Poland was undergoing a major transformation. Only 3 years ago, 44% of companies operated in omnichannel. They already offered their goods in both online stores and brick-and-mortar shops; thanks to this, they were able to provide the best purchasing experience to their customers.*

*Currently, it is becoming obvious – and it has been confirmed by the findings of this report – that it is absolutely necessary to have a mobile website. From the information obtained in the surveys, we see that mobile devices account for 25-49% of all hits on a given website. 17% [of respondents] indicated that mobile device hits accounted for over 50%. Thus, it makes sense to take better care of the mobile website. This is a very clear trend and virtually a necessity for e-commerce, both B2B and B2C.*

## A mobile application?

To address mobile users' needs, many companies develop a dedicated mobile application – as many as 22% of respondents said they used such a solution.

## Expert opinion

### **Łukasz Duda**

eCommerce Director, ABC Data



*B2B m-commerce (mobile commerce) is a natural evolution of e-commerce opportunities inspired by user needs. On a daily basis, we grab our smartphones every 12 minutes, for both business-related and personal purposes. That is why it is crucial to provide business clients with solutions customized to their expectations and style of work. Mobile e-commerce solutions call for a simplified, optimized purchasing process and for tapping into native smartphone functions. A barcode scanner in a B2B m-commerce application is a good example of this: it reduces the time needed to search for a product and place an order. Integration with the Web e-commerce platform is also vital, so that a purchasing process started on one device can be continued on another.*

However, a mobile application is not necessarily always the best solution. An average phone user has 36 applications on their phone but uses a mere 26% of them on a daily basis.<sup>78</sup>

”

*“Applications are not usually downloaded just in case – when users install a given application, it is because they are convinced it will perform some important function. If it does not meet their purpose over some period of time, most people definitely get rid of it. At the same time, almost half of the people using mobile applications admit forgetting about some downloaded applications and to stop using them. It should be understood as a low level of loyalty towards the newly acquired mobile applications.”<sup>79</sup>*

**Polska.jest.mobi (Poland.Is.Mobi)**

As many as 1 in 4 applications are never used, while 38% of users will uninstall an application right after closing a deal.<sup>80</sup> Why? A quickly fading interest in the application (34%) or no need for further use (29%).<sup>81</sup> The most frequently installed-and-forgotten applications are those in the travel (33%), shopping (18%), and food ordering (17%)<sup>82</sup> domains, while the most often used applications are the ones related to social media, communication (68%), and gaming (46%).<sup>83</sup>

*An average user downloads no new applications after owning a device for a few months.*

It is very difficult to create an efficient mobile application: it must be functional, but it also has to be intuitive, esthetically pleasing, and full of quality content.<sup>84</sup> Even if all these conditions are met, a mobile application may not deliver the expected outcomes.

What then?

## **An Alternative: PWA**

A PWA (Progressive Web Application) is an ideal solution for companies who want to address mobile users' needs and offer a better mobile experience, but who:

- Feel frustrated about the costs inherent in the design, maintenance, and development of mobile applications (which must be developed separately for iOS and Android, which pushes the costs up even further).
- Cannot afford a mobile application because it is too expensive.
- Are dissatisfied with how an application works and with its results, particularly when compared against the outlay required.

What is a PWA?

A PWA is an application created in a Web language (JavaScript + frameworks) that works like a native mobile or desktop application: it displays messages, works offline, and can utilize device functions (e.g. camera, geolocation, gesture control). Unlike other applications, it does not need to be downloaded.

## Expert opinion

### **Tomasz Skórski**

Digital and UX expert, Manager of Inter Cars' Digital Products Development



*We apply new technologies not only for sales and communication but also to acquire a better knowledge of our customers, to better understand their needs and to develop solutions which can increase their work efficiency. Today, the mobile channel is common sense, and we are curious to see how new developments enrich it with new voice interfaces, with PWAs, and with the potential offered by Augmented Reality in supporting sales. We are also analyzing the potential offered by the clever use of machine learning in some aspects of B2B.*

*In 2018, the B2B purchasing process is digital and uses omnichannel. Paradoxically – and despite the continuously increasing application of digital solutions – the role of the offline world is not shrinking. Only companies which listen carefully to their customers, develop trust, and build positive, long-term relationships based on common values stand a chance to succeed and create a great and lasting customer experience.*

From the users' perspective, a PWA combines the advantages of a browser and an application:<sup>85</sup>

- It works online and offline.
- It is very fast: it opens in less than one second. This is important, as 53% of users abandon a website if it takes more than three seconds to open.<sup>86</sup>
- It is convenient. The user does not need to download an application (which occupies device memory), yet they can browse content and place orders in ways optimized for mobile devices (e.g. using gesture control, geolocation, or the camera).
- It can display push messages, which means it can provide more opportunity for users to engage with the application's content.
- It can work in the background.
- The user can add a shortcut to the main screen, making the application easy to access – there's no need to go through the downloading process.
- It works on all platforms.<sup>87</sup>

## Expert opinion

### Michał Szklarski

Head of Digital Solutions, e-point SA



*As the PWA defines the future of the Internet, solutions of that caliber will prove highly effective across all industries – from FMCG to news portals. However, most of PWA's advantages will be observed in sectors connected to retail, both in B2B and B2C markets. A PWA can brilliantly support the omnichannel customer journey, as customers frequently seek additional product information while in traditional stores.*

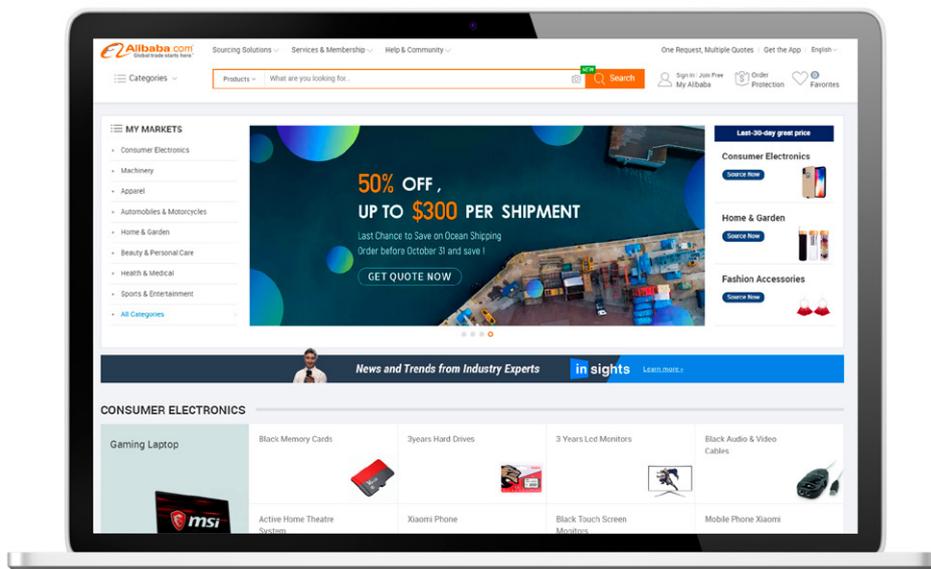
*PWAs may also provide new value in customer service: businesses can keep the customer updated through push messages regarding invoices to be paid, orders to be collected, etc. Moreover, the PWA means seamless customer experience across all devices.*

In a nutshell, PWA means:

- Lower costs
- Higher customer engagement
- Faster website operation
- Indirect SEO support
- Easier and cheaper acquisition of new customers
- Elimination of many typical mobile application issues<sup>88</sup>



## Inspiration: Alibaba



source: <https://www.alibaba.com>

Alibaba is the world's largest B2B marketplace: it serves manufacturers, suppliers, importers, and exporters from over 200 countries. Alibaba's product and service sales have always relied on m-commerce. Service developers were challenged to build a bridge to connect website users and native applications. A PWA was seen as a solution.

### Changes:

- Visual and navigation differences were applied
- A button was added to allow users to add the PWA to their homescreen.<sup>89</sup>

Using a PWA allowed developers to meet the requirements of both new and returning users. Alibaba's strategy resulted in a 76% increase in the joint number of conversions in all browsers. It also boosted the number of active Android users by 30% and the number of iOS users by 14%.<sup>90</sup> The "Add to Home-screen" button in the menu resulted in a fourfold rise in the frequency of PWA user engagement (as compared to other applications).<sup>91</sup>

## Summary

The number of mobile B2B customers is rising. Responding to their needs and offering an optimal mobile experience is a worthwhile investment; this can be done via a mobile application (a high-cost and high-risk solution) or by applying the PWA approach.

# CHALLENGES

New technologies, new user practices, new business context... these all offer enormous opportunities to companies willing to adapt to new circumstances. Yet, they also pose some challenges. In this section, we'll focus on two of them: competing in a global market and adapting to an emerging model: B2B2C.

## Challenge #1. Competition on the global market

In today's B2B market, we compete with both local and global entities. Therefore, it is best to proactively expand into international markets; this is especially true when we consider that we can expand into a new market online without ever having to establish a physical presence there. We do not need showrooms, branches, or an army of sales representatives – we can start with an e-commerce model and uncover each market's potential.

Since the 1990s, Poland has been growing its share of the global market and doing so faster than most other European countries. Already 38% of Polish e-sellers are considering entering international markets with their products. Around 3,000 Polish firms earn over half of their revenue from exports, according to the report *Sukcesy i aspiracje. Co polskie firmy osiągnęły w globalnej ekspansji, a co jeszcze przed nimi* (Successes and aspirations: What Polish companies have achieved in global expansion and what lies ahead of them). Both in B2B and in B2C arenas, a significant amount of growth can come from an international sales platform, e.g. an e-commerce system with a single logical and transactional core that runs various country-specific “front-ends.”

### Borderless business

Cross-border trade is a concept ingrained in the modern consumers' mindset. It seems natural to them to order consumer electronics from across the ocean or goods traveling a long way across Asia before reaching the comfort of their living room. For a while now, AliExpress, eBay, and Amazon have been competing for the hearts and wallets of the Polish customers. Orders traveling hundreds of miles are no longer perceived as flamboyant, but as simply routine.<sup>92</sup>

*Cross-border trade on the Internet is growing 27% annually. By 2020, it will pass the trillion-dollar mark.<sup>93</sup>*

Opening up to a new market not only allows companies to win new business, it also allows them to promote products which previously were unavailable or unknown. This makes it likely to achieve a leadership position in a given niche.

*According to the report E-Commerce w Polsce. Gemius dla E-commerce Polska ("E-commerce in Poland. Gemius for E-commerce Polska"), 48% of Polish Internet users have bought something online. However, in the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Germany this proportion reaches 80%.<sup>94</sup>*

This gap is immense. Compared to Polish customers, European clients are more willing to buy online. Polish online stores want to attract customers with lower prices and high-quality products.

## Expert opinion

### Justyna Skorupska

Head of Business Development,  
Omnichannel Expert, e-point SA



*According to the second FedEx SME Export Report, a survey run by Harris Interactive, the majority of Polish exporters from the small and medium enterprise sector continue to grow thanks to e-commerce – 30% of their revenue comes from e-commerce. Already 78% of these companies earn their revenue from e-commerce and 28% state that their revenue has increased recently.*

*We can observe two totally different attitudes: the informed salesmen who are ready for change and growth, and those for whom the local market is sufficient and who are not motivated for expansion. Supply chains and delivery times get shorter; we see big players adjust to local markets in Poland, and we thus feel surprised by the attitudes of companies focusing chiefly on the domestic market.*

We should also note the potential of these markets where e-commerce is not so popular. These are untapped markets – such as Romania, where 58% of the population has access to the Internet – and their growth rate allows<sup>95</sup> companies to build and consolidate a position before they are dominated by large international corporations. It becomes exceptionally attractive in the context of niche goods distribution or sales of goods with low purchase repetitiveness (e.g. safe deposits, collectibles). It also allows businesses to define a particular target group to which our products may be directed not only locally, but also internationally.

## Expert opinion

### Wojciech Trusz

Expert of the Polish Agency of Investment and Trade

*An important stimulus for growth in modern B2B solutions is the fact that companies become dominated by the generation of digital natives who are smoothly redefining methods of purchase analysis, supplier classification, and B2B buyer transactions and also are changing the rules of the game for marketers and product managers.*

*Polish suppliers of specialist products and services boast an export proportion of 20–98% of their total sales and have clients based all over the world. These are mostly medium-sized companies offering specialized products or services directed at other companies. They differ by region of origin, sector, and the path of international expansion they have chosen. For some companies, it is the result of the consistent implementation of a long-term strategy; others tapped into an attractive opportunity or followed a reliable business partner. In many cases, the key to success was winning and retaining customer trust in foreign markets, through readiness to take on additional effort and risk, and in unpredictable and off-strategy situations.*

An example of a Polish brand in the international B2B sector is the expansion of the company NUADU into the Singapore market. The support needed to “transcribe” the product to a new market was granted by the International Commercial Office PAIH in Singapore, headed by Magdalena Smolak.

## Expert opinion

### **Marcin Wojnowski**

CEO NUADU

*NUADU's expansion in the B2B sector is a result of the native functionalities of our product, an attractive business model, and personally groomed business relations. In technological terms, our product is made available around the world through the "cloud." Thanks to applied technology, the physical location of the end user is not relevant.*

*In terms of use, B2B customers expect painless scalability and transparency in the system, so that its functional layer does not interfere with delivering on its core mission i.e. supporting, acquiring, and evaluating knowledge. In terms of the business model, our B2B partners expect the usual thing – minimizing implementation and maintenance costs as well as maintaining and maximizing system efficiency. That is why we digitalize educational resources of leading publishers in international markets, map them onto local core curricula, and share them on our platform.*

## **Cross-border dynamics**

International trade has been with us since the dawn of time. In the era of the Internet, it has been completely dominated by e-commerce solutions that make it possible to run trade operations irrelevant of the distance.

Why do customers decide to buy abroad? They are looking for better prices, product availability, higher quality, or niche goods. For entrepreneurs, this is in response to an increasingly difficult domestic market saturation.

*Currently, we can buy from about 23,000 Polish e-stores. As forecast by the experts at Sociomantic Labs, in 2020 this number will grow to 30,000.*

*Searching for customers in new markets is a necessity. Yet, only 7-10% of domestic suppliers take the opportunity of serving international customers.<sup>96</sup>*

International expansion has traditionally been the domain of large corporations. Today, smaller companies are ready to grab it; this is because entering a foreign market has become a lot simpler, thanks to new technologies and legislative solutions. Such initiatives as the EU legislative motion to ban geo-blocking by suppliers<sup>97</sup> or the implementation of the Single Digital Market strategy, addressing many aspects of cross-border trade,<sup>98</sup> will make expansion easier for entrepreneurs.

*This also applies to the B2B sector. Forrester Research estimates that by 2021, the volume of cross-border B2B transactions will amount to 1.2 trillion US dollars.*

## International expansion: the traditional model vs. e-commerce

Although entering new markets generates multiple benefits and cross-border trade is becoming increasingly popular, both in B2B and B2C, we must bear in mind the challenges and risks involved in international expansion. We can mitigate many of them as long as e-commerce remains the axis of this process. Why is that? Because a model of development based on an e-commerce platform allows us to start trading in a new market faster and at a lower cost. In the traditional model, we focus on establishing a physical presence in a new country, building infrastructure in it and employing people; when using e-commerce, we are able to start selling without making any of the above investments.

**Table 2. Comparison of traditional international expansion and international expansion using e-commerce**

Traditional model of expansion	Expansion using e-commerce
High-cost and high-risk staff recruitment; difficulties in transferring corporate culture to the employees of the new subsidiary	Lower staff needs lower risks involved
Requires physical infrastructure	Possible sales and service from the country of origin or a neighboring country
Longer time to launch new products and services	Possibility of a fast launch of a new product, service or another innovation
Longer time to open in the new market, connected to establishing a physical presence	Shorter time to open in the new market; possibility of a fast establishment of a foothold in the new country and starting sales

source: own study e-point SA

E-commerce allows us to probe the new market and gauge its depth at a much lower cost. In the traditional model, before we are ready to assess whether the new market is ready for our product, we must build infrastructure, which is very costly. Should we fail, it will lead to major losses.

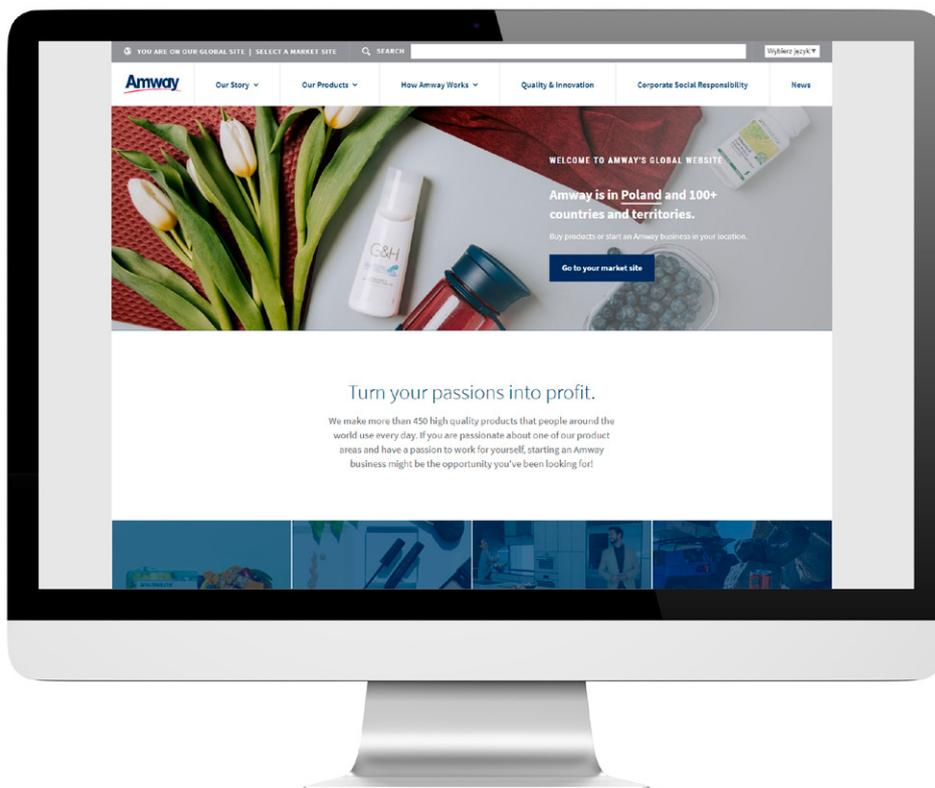
## International business development with e-commerce

When we run international operations, the coherence of the IT infrastructure is paramount. If we have a separate independent platform for each market, launching new products or business models and managing digital strategy is very expensive and time-consuming. For this reason, companies very often choose e-commerce solutions that allow them to centralize these activities and implement a consistent digital strategy.

For companies active in many markets, an international sales platform is an important strategy management tool. Thanks to it, companies are able to synchronize marketing and sales efforts, launch new products or offer new services simultaneously in all their markets, and ensure a consistent brand experience for their increasingly more geographically mobile customers and partners.<sup>99</sup> A platform with a coherent architecture that can be extended into new modules and support new implementations can seriously bring down the cost of launching products on the market.



### Inspiration: Amway



The international e-commerce platform Amway is a global leader in direct sales. It utilizes a business model which allows everyone to set up their own business as an Independent Amway Entrepreneur and sell Amway's products. Amway operates in 80 countries.



## Inspiration: Amway

### **Challenge:**

Creating a platform for 31 countries and products at differentiated prices (depending on the role of the user) with payment and delivery methods varying from country to country.

### **Solution:**

A uniform platform was set up, served by one hosting hub and a functional mobile application for entrepreneurs.

### **Outcomes:**

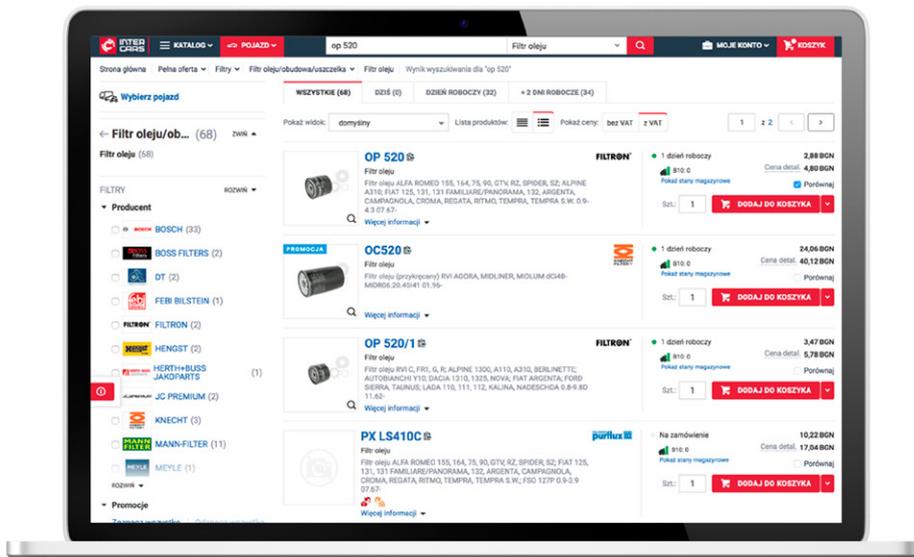
Reduction in time-to-market for new solutions, shrinking operational costs related to maintaining outlets in many countries, and – what has become its greatest advantage – reducing the development time for new versions of the platform (i.e. those dedicated to new countries). This allowed Amway to open in 17 new countries in a period of only four months.<sup>100</sup>

## **Business scalability**

Expansion based on an international e-commerce platform is not only cheaper, it is also less risky. In a short time, we can prepare a customized platform version and implement it on the new market, which allows companies to probe the market's business potential. The behavior of real users makes it possible to decide if involving resources in a given region is justified. E-commerce enables us to acquire this knowledge at a lower cost compared to traditional trade. When a particular market is not ready for our offer, it is easy to withdraw, at the same time maintaining a return base for the future. At the same time, an international platform combines a high level of e-store customization for the needs of a given market with the productive application of global company experiences.



## Inspiration: Inter Cars



In short time, Inter Cars went from a family business to an important player on the international arena: 40% of its sales are made on eight international markets, and the company ranks second in car part distribution in Europe (both for passenger cars and for heavy goods vehicles). Today, Inter Cars aims to corner foreign markets and consolidate its leading position in Poland.

A unified scalable e-commerce platform is Inter Cars' tool for international business expansion. It lets the company optimize the cost of maintaining the system and accelerates the implementation of new solutions for upcoming markets. It also constitutes an excellent base for innovations.

### [SEE THE CASE STUDY](#)

## Summary

International trade challenges faced by expansion-seeking entrepreneurs do not prevent them from employing cross-border e-commerce solutions. The value of cross-border trade on the Internet grows by 27%<sup>101</sup> annually. Expansion involves many barriers, so it is advisable to study the experiences of companies that have successfully implemented their international platforms.

## Challenge #2. Working out a B2B2C model

The lines between B2B and B2C models are fading. Companies are applying these models in an increasingly parallel way, targeting their offer both to the end user and to the partner or distributor. Manufacturers want to satisfy the needs of end users who are looking online for product information and opinions and are also becoming more independent in the purchasing process. This new model is named B2B2C (Business-to-Business-to-Consumer); it's also known as B2X or B2E (Business-to-Everyone).

### A new customer journey for the end user

Manufacturers and distributors who have operated in a purely B2B model are now aware of end users conducting their own research before contacting the seller. Before customers visit a DIY home improvement store to buy wooden floor panels, they will browse manufacturer information and other users' opinions online. Before customers buy new windows, they will read about how to choose the best windows for their needs. It's no wonder that, as obtaining such information is simple and inexpensive, this has become a steady consumer habit.

Manufacturers and distributors are responding to the trend. They know that the end user will eventually hit their website, so they take good care to post relevant information there. They adjust the language and the form of the message to the layman and know that the obligation to educate and support consumers in choosing the best option rests with them. Frequently such customers, well-informed and very independent, want to buy directly from distributors or manufacturers; they have already made up their minds.

This situation generates some challenges – chief of which is the necessity to work out new business models which combine B2B and B2C communication and account for new buying habits – but it also offers an opportunity to find innovative solutions. What does B2B2C look like in practice?

### Model 1. Manufacturers supporting business partners' marketing

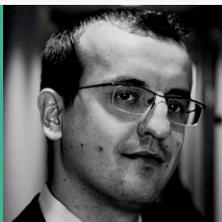
Knowing that end users will browse their offerings via their websites, manufacturers prepare materials and tools which can drive sales with business partners. Frequently, it is the manufacturer who bears the burden of marketing to and educating end users. They attract customers to their websites with valuable content, only to later direct the interested persons to a particular store or partner. The manufacturer website may also forward leads to a business partner or indicate to the customer where the nearest showroom is located and where the final deal can be struck.

This kind of activity calls for a distributor to prepare marketing solutions targeted at the end user, which can then be shared with business partners. These partners, who are often smaller businesses on a limited budget, cannot afford to make such investments.

## Expert opinion

### Józef Kostecki

Director for Project and Process Management, Iglotex



*In the western market, we can observe innovative ideas of distributors from our industry that are going beyond the classical model of cooperation. More and more often, they supply their business customers with useful tools or applications for developing their companies, supporting them in many aspects of their activity. It results from the fact that most of the entities in the catering market are too small in scale and have too limited resources to create solutions tailored to their strengths. It also is not their core activity. Distributors with more resources may support their customers by sharing practical solutions, e.g. applications for booking tables or taking orders online.*

## Model 2. Supplying useful tools to business partners

Although customers like searching for information and buying things online, sometimes interaction with another person – a consultant, carpenter, architect, salesman, designer, or advisor – is key. Business partners sell their knowledge, experience, trustworthiness, and empathy to end users. So, it makes sense to provide partners with tools to support them in their work. These tools are:

- All kinds of creators and configurators, which allow employees to prepare visualizations and valuations for end users
- Communication, scheduling, and meeting tools
- Educational materials designed for business partners

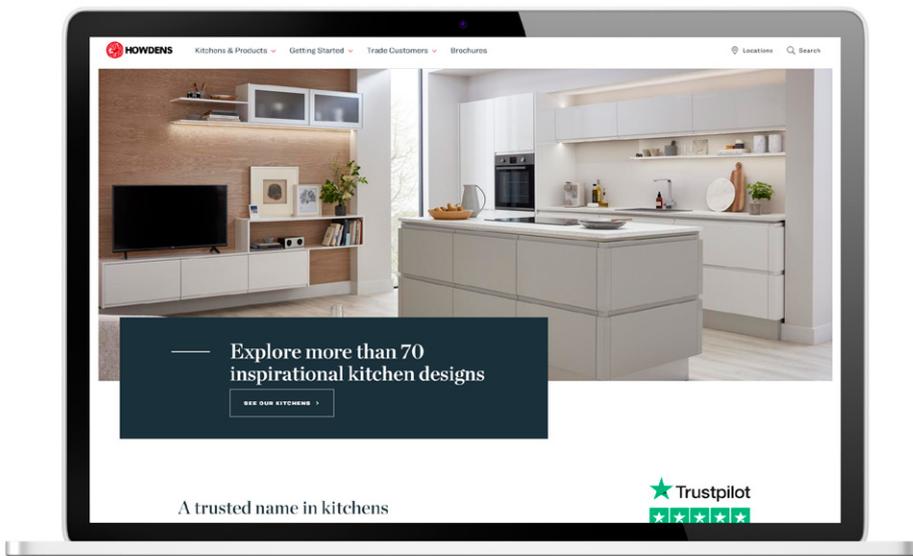
With these tools, manufacturers or distributors can deliver real value to business clients by helping them focus on their customers: the end users.

## Model 3. Combining service with the product

Frequently, the purchase of a product is connected with some level of service: carrying, assembling, consulting, training, maintenance. Therefore, some manufacturers decide to include such services in their offer. Because of this, they simultaneously form customer attachment to their brand and generate income for their business partners.



### Inspiration: Howdens Joinery



Howdens Joinery in principle operates within a B2B model and does not serve retail customers. However, this company offers a free design service to end users, who contact the nearest Howdens outlet and arrange a meeting with a designer. Next, the designer obtains room measurements and selects products from Howdens. Design tools (visualizations, 3D views, a video walkthrough, and a 360° panoramic view) are available in the online service. A carpenter chosen by the customer may also take part in the process.

Howdens not only supplies products, they also connect end users with qualified designers, thereby saving the user time. They secure clients for their business partners, but they also provide professional communication tools for customers.

## Expert opinion

### Magdalena Cedro-Czubaj

Marketing Director, Oknoplast



*I can see two strong trends in our industry. The first one is close cooperation between the business partner and the dealer. It is about the manufacturer offering an idea for growing the dealer's local business: expanding their portfolio, adding services to raise mark-up and conversion.*

*In the second model of cooperation, the manufacturer takes on those elements which, for many reasons, are not convenient for the dealers or which the dealers do not have the resources to address. For example, a manufacturer is expanding their service area so that the dealer can focus only on sales and contacting the customer; the entire service (ordering, communication, preparing an individual design, etc.) is on the manufacturer's side. Also, call centers and other tools for quick contact with potential dealers-sellers are on the rise.*

*The first model relies on long-term relationships; the second one relies on fast sales, where the dealer is the intermediary. It may also be observed that in our industry, some FMCG sales tools and techniques are beginning to be used.*

## Model 4. A B2C online store as a brand builder

The Internet makes it easy for manufacturers to start using a model of selling directly to the end user. If end users search for information on the Web and check out the manufacturer's website anyway, why not enable them to place an order right away? This can leverage the strength of the buying impulse at the exact moment when the consumer is interested and motivated to spend money. However, if manufacturers encourage customers to make purchases bypassing intermediaries, are they not threatening their own relationship with business partners? Does the bottom line suffer?

Manufacturers prefer various solutions to this problem. Some run an online store with no buying option, a store that's just for the sake of branding. It is supposed to facilitate product navigation and leverage the impulse to buy, yet no aggressive policies to drive sales are applied (e.g. large discounts which could make buying from the manufacturer more competitive than buying from a partner). Thanks to this method, partners do not feel threatened by the manufacturer's online activity. This is particularly so if the manufacturer informs the shopper where the product can be bought and provides links to business partners.

## **Model 5. Testing e-commerce on new markets**

If a manufacturer has an established network of partners and a fixed mode of cooperation, changing this might be quite a challenge. Thus, some decide to start a different model on new markets, where no established partner network exists. This encourages the testing of new solutions.

## **Summary**

End users want to know more about the products they buy, so they visit manufacturers' websites – even if they do not buy directly from them. Sometimes, motivated by convenience, they want to choose a product packaged with some level of service. This is why the B2B2C model is growing so popular: companies want to be ready to serve customers based on what that customer needs. According to research by Econsultancy, the number of manufacturers who have changed their business model and started addressing their offer to retail buyers as well as business customers (i.e. have switched to the B2B2C model) has increased by 71%. A similar trend may be spotted among retailers who enter the B2B market: they believe that business partners may add significant value for end users.

# THE FUTURE OF B2B PURCHASING

# How, in your opinion, will the B2B purchasing process change in the next 3 years?

## **That was the question we asked the respondents.**

### **This is how they replied:**

- I believe that the scale of online purchasing will grow.
- Integration of ERP systems of suppliers and recipients will emerge; it will allow companies to monitor the stock levels of suppliers and their order statuses in a fully automated way.
- Orders will be placed automatically, based on assigned minimum and maximum stock levels and on product liquidity analysis performed by algorithms.
- Customers will do most of the work themselves, using information available online. Previously, we needed sales reps to present basic information.
- The purchasing process on the B2B market will be fully automated using IT systems in which the salesman will become an assistant in choosing a product range.
- The market will evolve towards direct contact, becoming relationship-oriented in major matters. Impersonal contact (the Internet, applications) will be of lesser importance.
- The market will be better customized to customer needs, becoming faster, universal, and time-saving for the buyer and seller. It will also help sort out the sales processes.
- Despite all these assumptions, I think B2B sales will return to maintaining direct relations throughout the sales process.
- I believe the percentage of purchases made over the Internet will rise, as it saves time and money.
- We will be able to use more personalized offers.
- The weight will shift to the Internet side. There will be more tools inspired by B2C.
- I believe that, thanks to using the Internet, the offer will be available to the customers when they need it. B2B marketing will be more significant than cold calling.
- Customers will continue to inquire about purchasing platforms that can be integrated with their systems. Partners will seek process automation for logistic or personal purposes.
- The standard of service will become higher, the methods of payment will simplify, and personalization will increase.
- Due to increased competitiveness, entities in the B2B sector will understand the importance of after-sales service and that the real challenge in sales starts after a deal is closed – in the customer retention process.
- The average value of contracts in which sales representatives need to be involved will rise.

The e-commerce market is growing dynamically in terms of B2B e-purchasing. 62% of those surveyed think that over half of products or services will be bought online. 32% indicate that the percentages of online company purchases will range between 50 and 74 percent, and one in four respondents indicated this value would be between 75 and 99 percent.

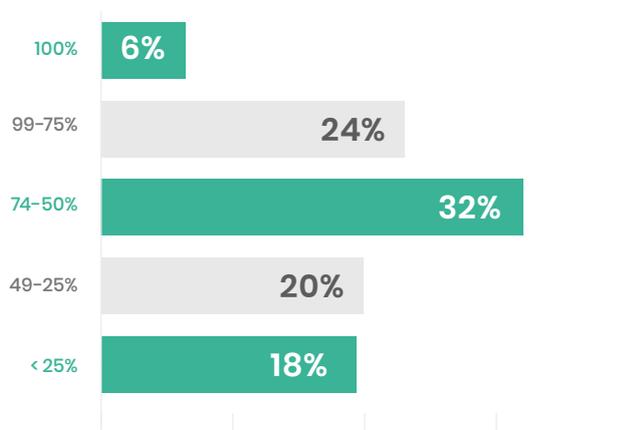


Chart 28:

In your opinion, what proportion of your company purchases will be made online in the next 3 years?

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=71, B2B market representatives

## How is your company getting ready for these changes?

- We are implementing EAN codes for all products we are selling, and we encourage our suppliers to code all articles with EAN barcodes. We are introducing electronic orders, assigning “min” and “max” stock levels to all stock keeping units. We are developing automatic reports analyzing product rotation.
- My company has been strongly aware from the very start how important it is to address customer needs in the shortest time possible and throughout the entire period of the customer’s subscription. We continually hint to our customers that we are open to dialogue to modify the application sold to cater to their needs. By implementing these changes, we build customer trust and awareness that we do not just pay lip service but we can really deliver on our promises.
- We implement IT solutions to properly develop our website.
- We train people in new technologies.
- We follow new trends, watch their efficiency, and observe how processes work with others.
- We update the website offer and try to position offer pages with offers as high as possible.
- We develop online sales, purchasing, and communications.
- We automate and digitalize whatever we can. This way, we save time and money for the implementation of interesting projects.
- We implement subsequent customer touchpoints; we automate standard purchasing processes.
- We implement B2B Marketing Automation tools.
- We develop systems which may be useful later.
- We are already transforming the IT department to address the changes in B2B structure. We offer the same to our business partners.
- We attend internal and external training courses.
- We boost the competencies of our sales force.
- We’ve opened online sales.

# METHODOLOGY

## Research method

- This report was prepared based on the survey run by Mobile Institute on the group of 145 answers provided by representatives of various companies operating in various sectors. The survey was conducted using the CAWI method (Computer-Assisted Web Interview). The data were collected in the period 09.08 – 11.09.2018.
- The survey was directed to people operating in the B2B market and making purchases on behalf of their company.
- The survey was distributed in newsletters and via social media and mail shots to business customers and partners of e-point and Mobile Institute and to companies associated in the Chamber of Digital Economy.
- The survey was preceded by extended interviews.
- A precise structure of the survey sample was presented in the section “Sample structure”.
- Many experts assisted in preparing the report, including: Anna Studzińska, Aneta Reich-Ripaud, Łukasz Jaślarz, Rafał Wierzbicki, Maciej Podgórski, Patrycja Sass-Staniszevska, Agnieszka Węglarz, Ewa Hajduk-Kasprowicz, Marcin Wojnowski, Wojciech Trusz, Tymoteusz Doligalski, PhD, Associate Professor, Maria Florczuk, Magdalena Cedro-Czubaj, Olga Kulmaczewska, Józef Kostecki, Agata Mazurek-Bąk, Tomasz Skórski.

## Sample structure

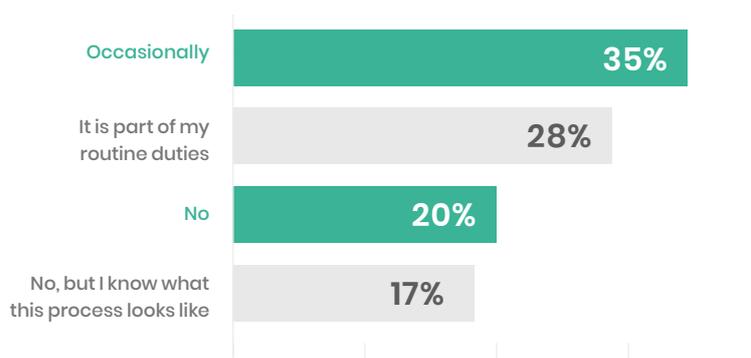


Chart 29:

Sample structure: Making purchases for internal company needs

*The B2B Buying Process in Poland: challenges, trends, inspirations. 2018 Report,*

N=145, B2B market representatives

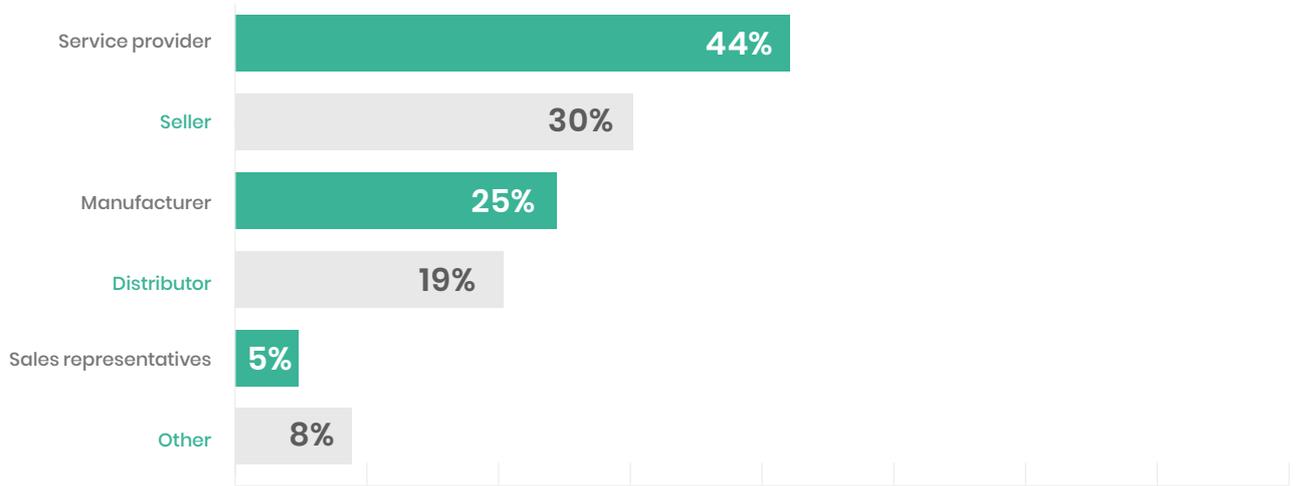


Chart 30:  
Sample structure, Department, N=107

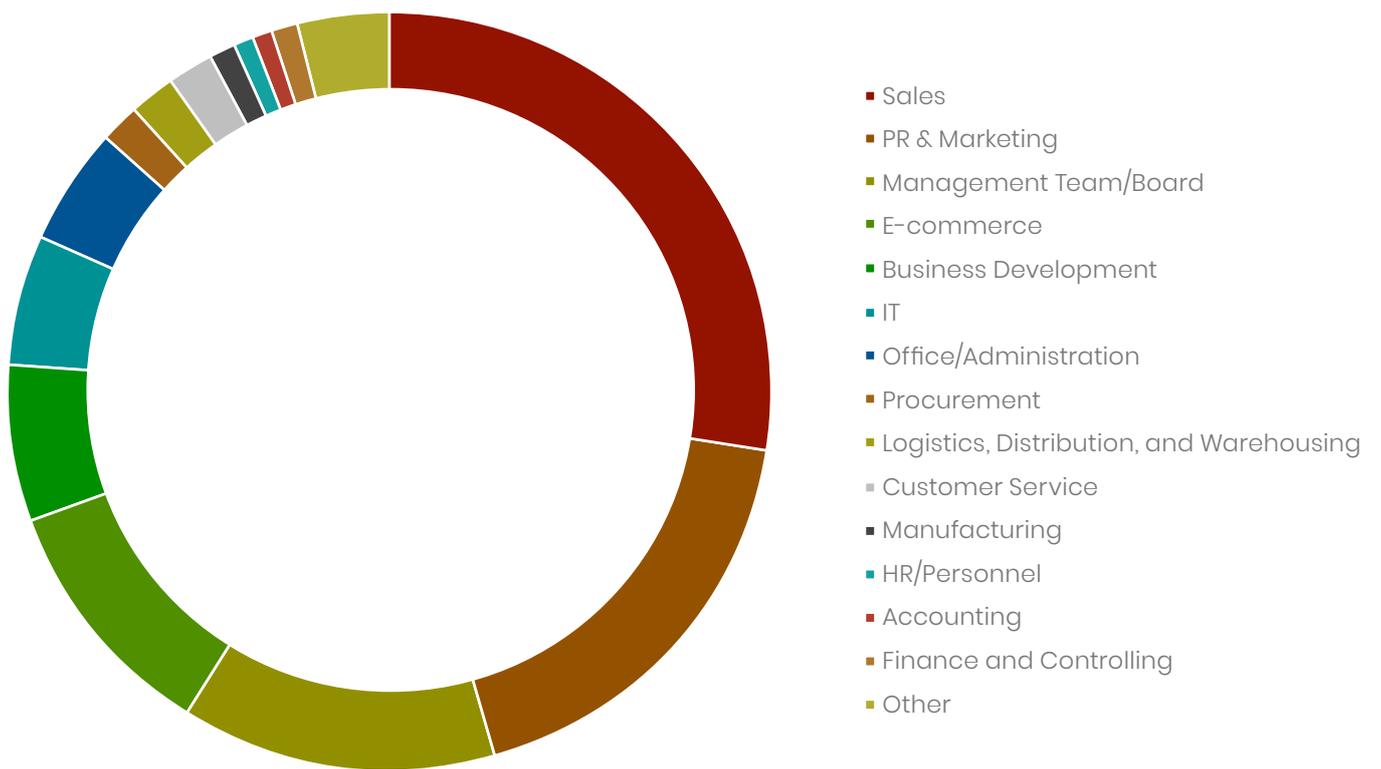


Chart 31:  
Sample structure, Department, N=107

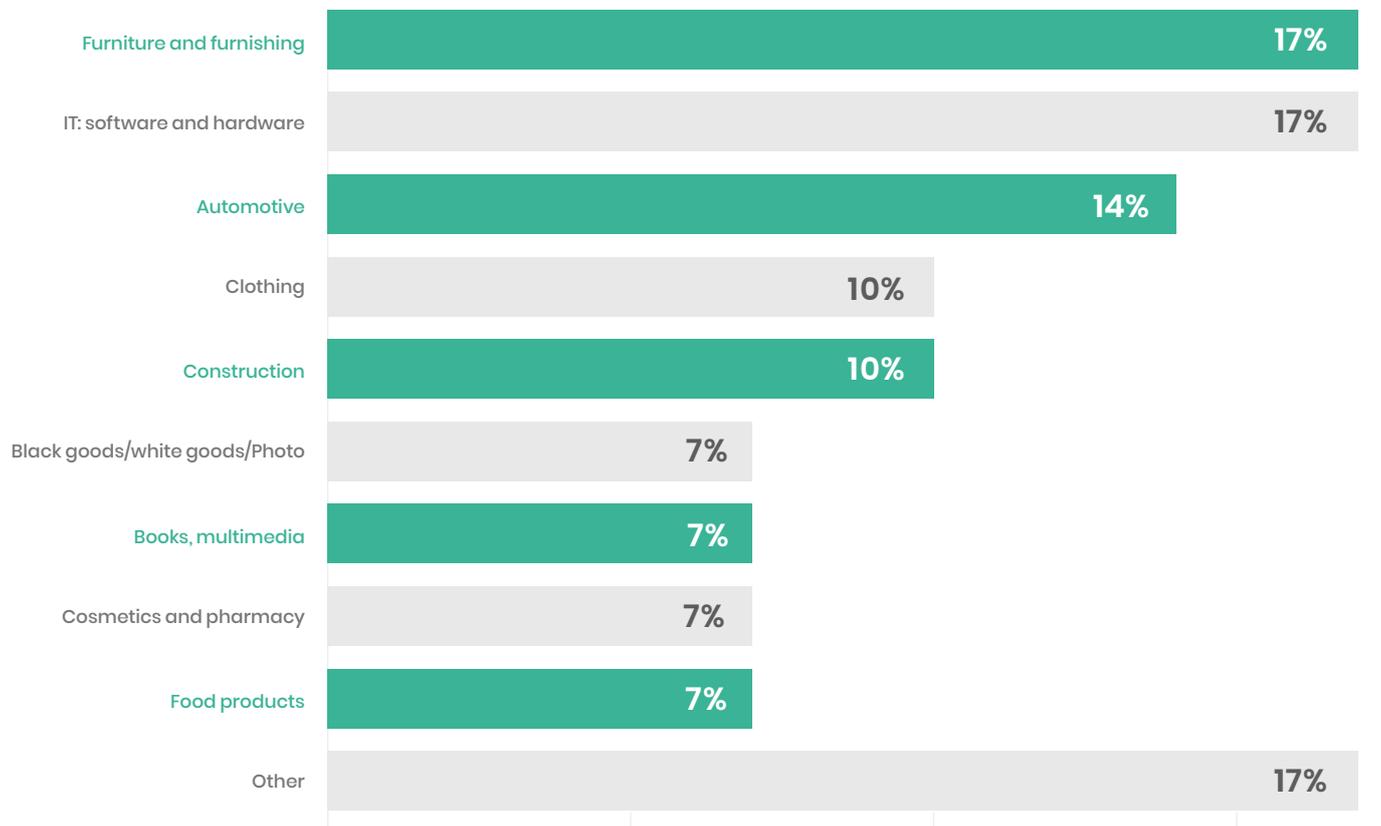


Chart 32:

Sample structure, Sector: Manufacturers, N=29

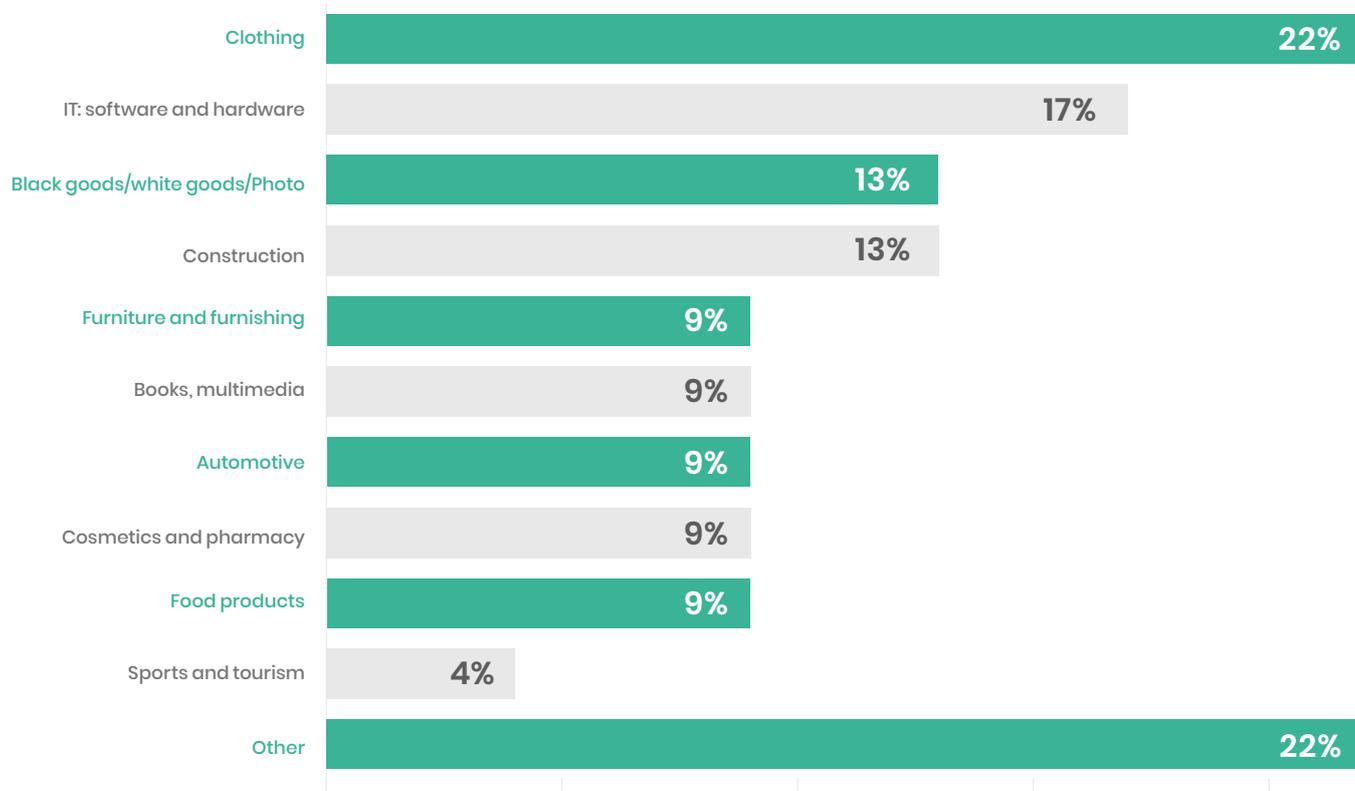


Chart 33:

Sample structure, Sector: Manufacturers, N=29

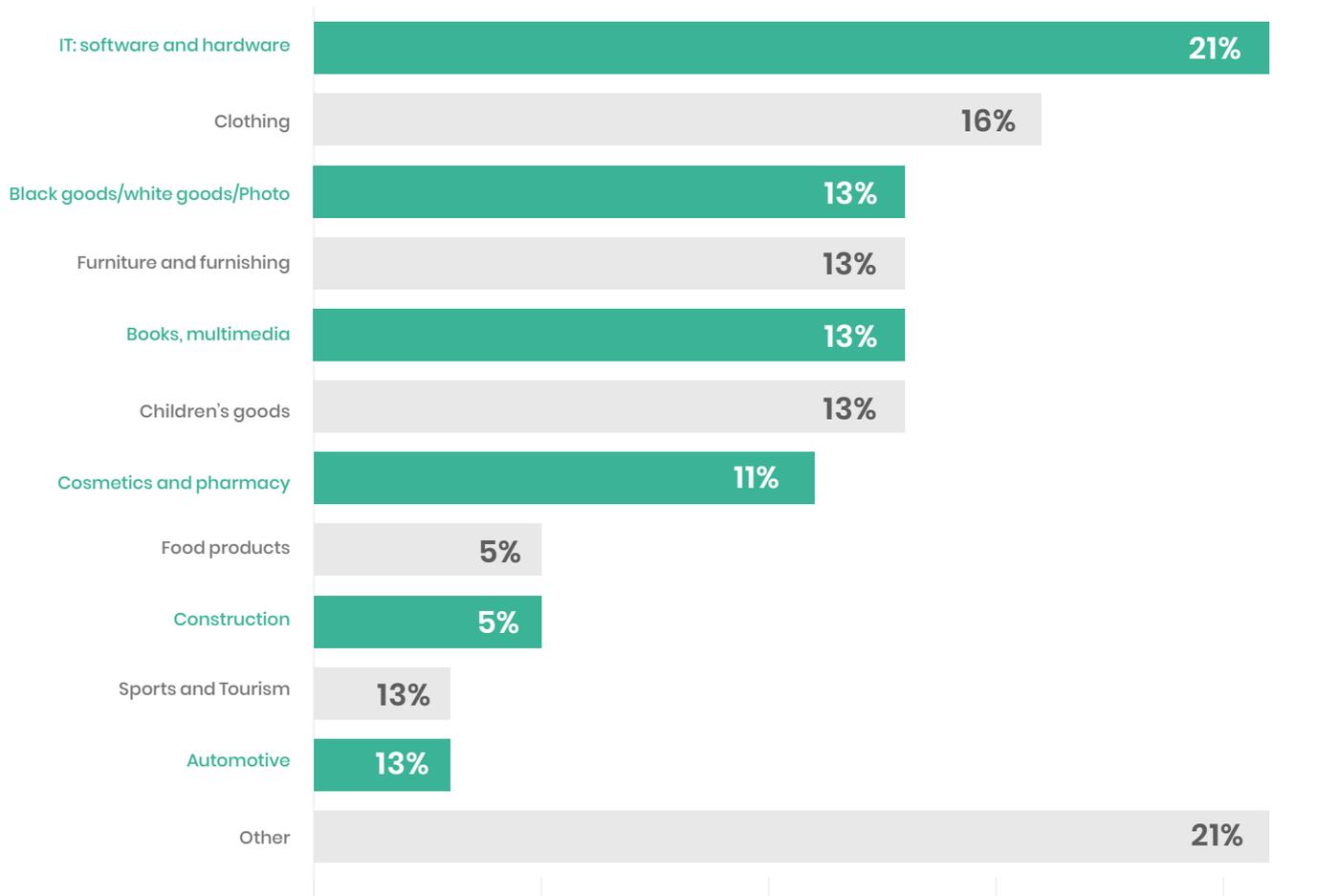


Chart 34:  
Sample structure, Sector: Sellers, N=38

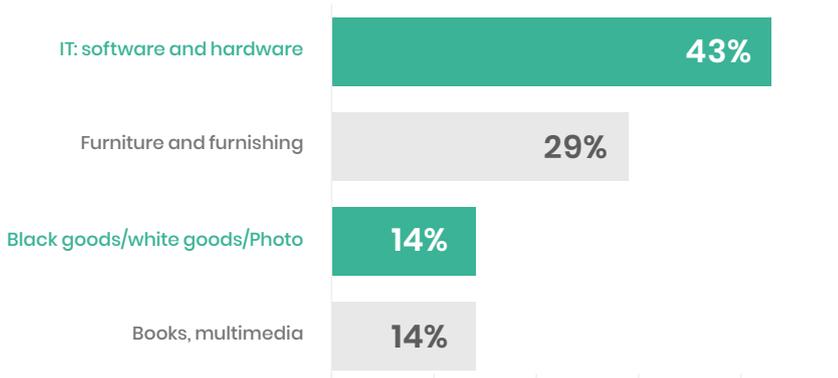


Chart 35:  
Sample structure, Sector: Sales Representatives, N=7

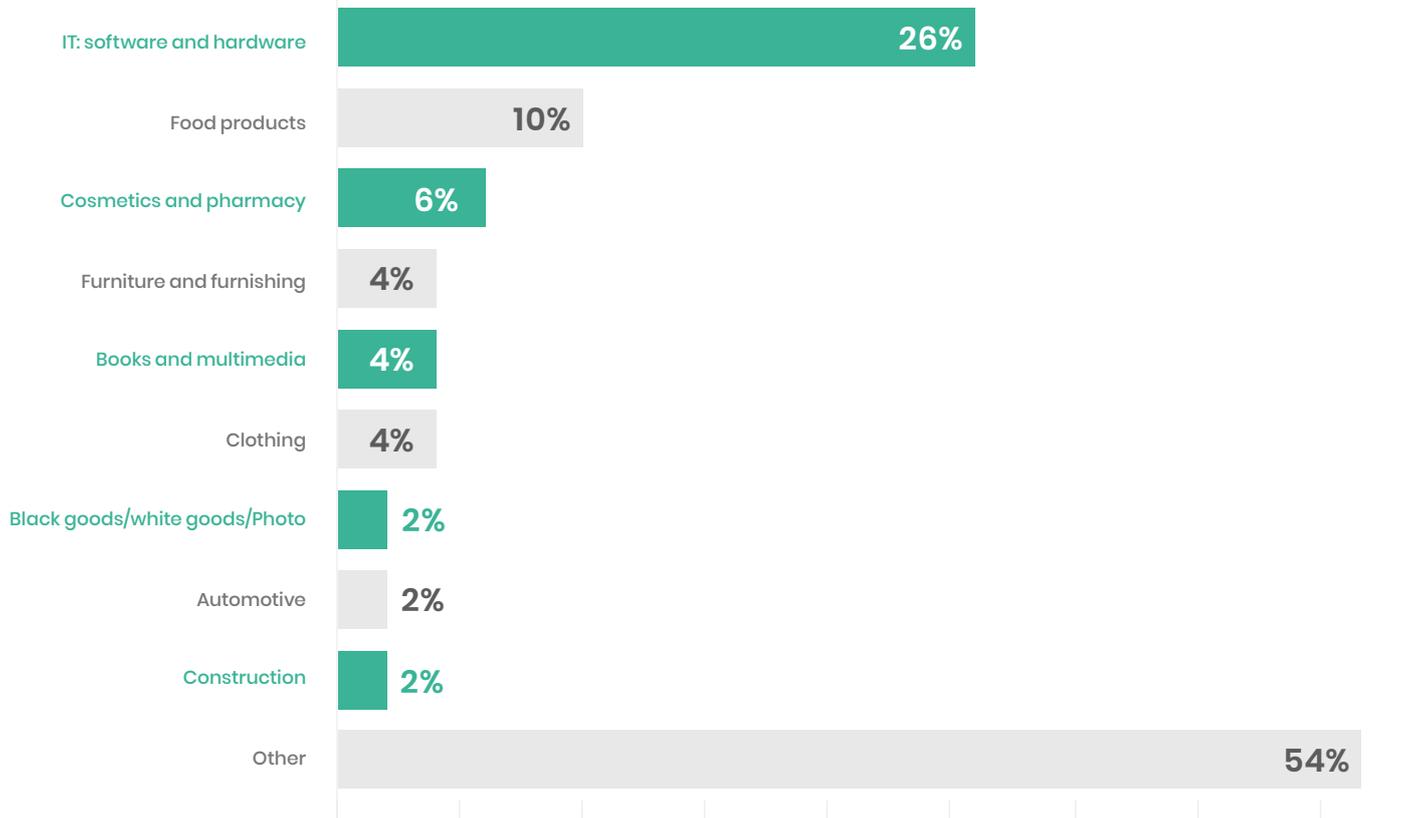


Chart 36:  
Sample structure, Sector: Sales Representatives, N=7

# Patrons

Honorary patron:

## **Polish Investment and Trade Agency**



The mission of the Polish Agency of Investment and Trade (PAIH) is to increase the inflow of foreign direct investments to the country as well as to expand the range and dynamics of the internationalization of Polish enterprises. The Agency supports business in overcoming administrative procedures and in finding appropriate locations, reliable partners, and suppliers. It operates in Poland and through its Foreign Trade Offices (ZBH) around the world. ZBH experts offer a wide range of services, from analysis of the market or a potential contractor's reliability through initializing first talks to organizing trade fair stands and business missions. Their underlying purpose is mitigating the risk of international operations.

PAIH also implements expansion programs to prospective markets: Go China, Go Africa, Go India, Go ASEAN, and Go Iran.

Mission Patron:

## **E-commerce Poland. Chamber of Digital Economy**



The mission of the Chamber of Digital Economy is to develop Polish e-commerce through cooperation, know-how exchange, legislative activity, and strong and effective representation of common interests in dialog with institutions of the Polish government administration bodies, European Union, and non-governmental organizations at home and abroad.

### **Goals of the Chamber of Digital Economy:**

- Representing and supporting the economic interests of companies connected to the digital market economy in Poland, with particular focus on companies associated with the Chamber
- Developing the economy and its various sectors at home and in Europe by employing technological, IT, and communication (ICT) innovations
- Supporting entrepreneurs (particularly small and medium businesses) by providing knowledge and technological solutions
- Supporting society in using digital solutions

# Media Patrons

## Magazyn E-commerce

Magazyn  
**E-commerce**

- A compendium of knowledge for online store owners, presenting reliable knowledge on strategic areas of e-store operations, from the technological back office to marketing and handling complaints.
- A practical training magazine for people who want to expand their knowledge of e-commerce.
- We feature articles full of practical tips and solutions which may be applied in any online store.
- High-quality, reliable e-commerce knowledge presented in friendly forms: exercises, templates, examples, guidelines, and case studies.
- Our authors are practitioners with thorough expertise in e-commerce. They have versatile experience in the Polish market and can demonstrate how to run an efficient operation.
- Tested action guidelines, tools, and solutions that can show you how to streamline your online store.

## Nowa Sprzedaż

**NOWA**  
**SPRZEDAŻ**

**Nowa Sprzedaż** is a bimonthly publication targeted at professional sales reps of products and services in the Polish market. Our readers are sales directors, managers, buying specialists, sales representatives, and owners of small and medium businesses. Our magazine is a source of inspiration and helps systematically expand the commercial competencies that are key qualities for modern organizations.

In **Nowa Sprzedaż**, practitioners and experts share their business expertise. Based on their own extensive experience in the Polish market, our authors demonstrate how to run an effective operation aimed at delivering winning sales results. We present tools, guidelines, effective techniques, and solutions which can be successfully implemented in any company. Each issue of Nowa Sprzedaż brings 100 pages of reliable analysis of carefully selected topics!

# Delivery

Surveys, interviews, interpretation of results



**Katarzyna Czuchaj-Łagód**

Managing Director,  
Mobile Institute



**Karolina Duk**

Market Research Manager,  
Mobile Institute



**Katarzyna Wielgosz**

Business Development Manager,  
Mobile Institute



**Magdalena Słomka**

New Business Developer,  
e-point

Research



**Paulina Bednarek**



**Jakub Borysiuk**



**Artur Góralczyk**

Editor



**Ewa Wojciechowska**

Content Marketing Manager, e-point

Mobile Institute is a modern research company. On a daily basis, we help companies and brands build positive consumer experiences and help them follow our motto of “make your customers proud” – which boosts their sales and competitive advantage. We support managers by offering them a “data concierge” service that ensures access to most vital business data.

We keep an eye on the market, watching the newest trends and participating in research projects with brands like Allegro, Visa, Interia, and the Chamber of Digital Economy. We employ our own technologically-advanced research tools, including responsive digital surveys, mobile opinions, and an online reporting panel that allows us to access results 24/7 and run analysis and trend observation.

## **We specialize in:**

- Researching Internet users, with representative samples of 1000+
- Multichannel opinion and satisfaction monitoring (brick-and-mortar stores, online, mobile, social media, mailings, and text messages)
- Creating and managing communities of engaged brand users (clubs) as part of the brandheroes. club platform
- Developing business strategies based on data and research
- Training companies in market trends and consumer behavior
- Providing information assistance to managers via our “data concierge”

e-point specializes in the design, development, and implementation of B2C and B2B IT platforms for international and domestic market leaders. For 21 years, we have been supporting companies' digital transformations.

Our projects have been awarded numerous prizes, including "Innovator of the Year," "2018 SAP Quality Award" and "Project Excellence Award."

We are the SAP Silver Partner for SAP Commerce and C4C products. We have expertise in Broadleaf Commerce, PWA, and solutions supporting companies' internationalization. We also create customized, dedicated solutions tailored to particular business needs.

### These companies have trusted us:



*Would you like to join them? Please let us know:*



**Rafał Wójcik**

International Sales Director  
rafal.wojcik@e-point.com  
+48 508 605 955



**Wawrzyniec Hyska**

Business Development Director  
whysha@e-point.com  
+48 510 059 127

## Footnotes

1. B2B Customer Experience: Winning in the Moments that Matter, access: 05.08.2018.  
If not indicated otherwise, this is the date of access to all sources in the digital form.
2. *5 worrying truths about the state of B2B customer experience*, <https://www.b2bmarketing.net/en-gb/resources/blog/5-worrying-truths-about-state-b2b-customer-experience-infographic>
3. *Global Survey: B2B is the New B2C*, <https://www.avanade.com/-/media/asset/point-of-view/the-new-customer-journey-global-study.pdf>,
4. *Global Survey: B2B is the New B2C*.
5. *5 worrying truths about...*
6. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W.\\_W.\\_Grainger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W._W._Grainger)
7. <https://www.practicalecommerce.com/8-Innovative-B2B-Ecommerce-Sites>
8. <https://www.curbellplastics.com/Discover-Curbell/Our-Company/History>
9. <https://www.practicalecommerce.com/6-impressive-b2b-ecommerce-sites>
10. *5 worrying truths about...*
11. *There is no more b2b or b2c: it's human to human (h2h)*, <http://www.bryankramer.com/there-is-no-more-b2b-or-b2c-its-human-to-human-h2h/>,
12. Maersk: The Value of Social Media - California Management Review, <https://cmr.berkeley.edu/blog/maersk.html>,
13. *Q&A: How Maersk Line created a brilliant B2B social media strategy*, <https://econsultancy.com/q-a-how-maersk-line-created-a-brilliant-b2b-social-media-strategy/>,
14. *The 8 Best B2B Social Media Success Stories the World Has Ever Seen*, <http://cultbiztech.com/the-8-best-b2b-social-media-success-stories-the-world-has-ever-seen/>,
15. *Being B2B social: A conversation with Maersk Line's head of social media*, <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/being-b2b-social-a-conversation-with-maersk-lines-head-of-social-media>,
16. *B2B market digitalisation. Digital purchasing platforms - Aleo i Deloitte*, [https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/pl/Documents/Reports/pl\\_Raport\\_Aleo\\_Deloitte\\_2016\\_ONLINE\\_01.pdf](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/pl/Documents/Reports/pl_Raport_Aleo_Deloitte_2016_ONLINE_01.pdf),
17. *B2B sales trends in Poland in 2015*.
18. *B2B sales trends in Poland in 2015*.
19. *B2B sales trends in Poland in 2015*.
20. *B2B sales trends in Poland in 2015*.
21. *Forget B2B Or B2C: How Inbound Marketing Is H2H (And Why It Matters)*, <https://blog.hubspot.com/insiders/inbound-marketing-is-h2h>,
22. <https://www.callboxinc.com/b2b-marketing-and-strategy/b2b-buying-process-changed-heres-not-get-left-behind/>
23. *The Digital evolution in B2B Marketing*, <https://www.cebglobal.com/content/dam/cebglobal/us/EN/best-practices-decision-support/marketing-communications/pdfs/CEB-Mktg-B2B-Digital-Evolution.pdf>
24. [https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/sales-solutions/global/en\\_US/c/pdfs/linkedin-sbi-sales-research-report-us-en-130920.pdf](https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/sales-solutions/global/en_US/c/pdfs/linkedin-sbi-sales-research-report-us-en-130920.pdf)
25. <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/the-changing-face-b2b-marketing/>
26. <https://go.forrester.com/blogs/the-ways-and-means-of-b2b-buyer-journey-maps-were-going-deep-at-forresters-b2b-forum/>
27. <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/the-changing-face-b2b-marketing/>
28. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ryanerskine/2017/12/28/how-to-turn-b2b-buyers-into-sales-leads-according-to-data/#45926aac5a18>
29. <https://www.business2community.com/b2b-marketing/state-b2b-saas-sales-01203657>
30. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/influencer-marketing-b2b-golden-bullet-bradley-elliott/>
31. [http://e61c88871f1fbaa6388d-c1e3bb10b0333d7ff7aa972d61f8c669.r29.cf1.rackcdn.com/DGR\\_DG061\\_SURV\\_B2BBuyers\\_Jun\\_2017\\_Final.pdf](http://e61c88871f1fbaa6388d-c1e3bb10b0333d7ff7aa972d61f8c669.r29.cf1.rackcdn.com/DGR_DG061_SURV_B2BBuyers_Jun_2017_Final.pdf)
32. <https://hbr.org/2017/03/the-new-sales-imperative>
33. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/capitalonespark/2013/01/23/tell-dont-sell-use-content-marketing-to-boost-your-business/#37d20e624a4d>
34. <https://www.vidyard.com/blog/video-lead-generation-demand/>
35. <https://go.seismic.com/demand-metric-benchmark-report-content-personalization-gated/>
36. <https://www.digitalvidya.com/blog/content-marketing-case-studies/>

37. <http://spiegel.medill.northwestern.edu/online-reviews/>
38. <http://spiegel.medill.northwestern.edu/online-reviews/>
39. [http://www.gartner.com/imagesrv/summits/docs/na/customer-360/C360\\_2011\\_brochure\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.gartner.com/imagesrv/summits/docs/na/customer-360/C360_2011_brochure_FINAL.pdf)
40. <https://www.zendesk.com/resources/searching-for-self-service/>
41. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/finding-the-right-digital-balance-in-b2b-customer-experience>
42. <https://www.zendesk.com/resources/searching-for-self-service/>
43. [https://go.forrester.com/blogs/15-04-14-death\\_of\\_a\\_b2b\\_salesman](https://go.forrester.com/blogs/15-04-14-death_of_a_b2b_salesman)
44. <https://www.zendesk.com/resources/searching-for-self-service/>
45. [https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy\\_w\\_sprzedazy\\_B2B.pdf](https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy_w_sprzedazy_B2B.pdf)
46. [https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy\\_w\\_sprzedazy\\_B2B.pdf](https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy_w_sprzedazy_B2B.pdf)
47. <https://www.antyradio.pl/Technologia/Internet/Jak-wyglada-sekunda-w-internecie-7625>
48. <https://www.superoffice.com/blog/crm-software-statistics/>
49. D. M. Scott, *Do not interfere with your customer's buying*, translation A. Błaż, Warsaw 2015, p. 182.
50. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thermo\\_Fisher\\_Scientific](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thermo_Fisher_Scientific)
51. <https://home.bluesnap.com/snap-center/blog/b2b-ecommerce-examples/>
52. *Death of B2B salesman*, Forrester, 2015.
53. <https://iterable.com/blog/34-essential-omni-channel-marketing-stats-you-need-to-know/>
54. <http://customerserviceautomation.pl/strategia-omnichannel-w-branzy-e-commerce/>
55. <https://biznes.newseria.pl/news/coraz-wiecej-firm,p736556481>
56. [https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy\\_w\\_sprzedazy\\_B2B.pdf](https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy_w_sprzedazy_B2B.pdf),
57. [https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy\\_w\\_sprzedazy\\_B2B.pdf](https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy_w_sprzedazy_B2B.pdf)
58. [https://www.magento.com/sites/default/files/4232\\_MarketingProfsB2BeBook\\_r2v1\\_0.pdf](https://www.magento.com/sites/default/files/4232_MarketingProfsB2BeBook_r2v1_0.pdf)
59. [https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy\\_w\\_sprzedazy\\_B2B.pdf](https://www.ecommercepolska.pl/files/8414/4705/0137/Trendy_w_sprzedazy_B2B.pdf).
60. <https://biznes.newseria.pl/news/coraz-wiecej-firm,p736556481>,
61. <https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/b2b-ecommerce/>
62. <http://customerserviceautomation.pl/strategia-omnichannel-w-branzy-e-commerce/>
63. D. M. Scott, dz. qout., p. 72.
64. *Mobile and digital in 2018 in Poland and around the world*, <https://mobirank.pl/2018/02/02/mobile-i-digital-w-2018-roku-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie/>,
65. *Mobile and digital in 2018 in Poland and around the world*.
66. *Your smartphone is millions of times more powerful than all of NASA's combined computing in 1969*, <https://www.zmescience.com/research/technology/smart-phone-power-compared-to-apollo-432/>,
67. *Using mobile phones*, [https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K\\_125\\_15.PDF](https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_125_15.PDF),
68. *Mobile marketing 2018 – 20 statistics you should know*, <https://selectivv.com/mobile-marketing-2018-20-statystyk-tore-warto-znac/>,
69. *Mobile marketing 2018 – 20 statistics you should know*.
70. *Mobile marketing 2018 – 20 statistics you should know*.
71. *Mobile marketing 2018 – 20 statistics you should know*.
72. *Mobile marketing 2018 – 20 statistics you should know*.
73. *POLAND.IS.MOBI, 2015*, [http://www.tnsglobal.pl/coslychac/files/2015/05/POLSKA\\_JEST\\_MOBI\\_2015.pdf](http://www.tnsglobal.pl/coslychac/files/2015/05/POLSKA_JEST_MOBI_2015.pdf),
74. *Mobile Marketing and the New B2B Buyer*, <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/marketing-sales-digital-go-to-market-transformation-mobile-marketing-new-b2b-buyer.aspx>,
75. *The Changing Face of...*
76. *Mobile Marketing and the New B2B Buyer*.
77. *How mobile is reshaping the B2B landscape for growth*, <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/experience-design/b2b-marketing-reshaping-growth/8>

78. *Mobile App Marketing Insights*, <https://think.storage.googleapis.com/docs/mobile-app-marketing-insights.pdf>.
79. *POLAND.IS.MOBI*
80. *Mobile App Marketing...*
81. *Mobile App Marketing...*
82. *30 statistics about mobile you should know*, <http://dworzynska.com/30-statystyk-o-mobile-ktore-musisz-znac/>,
83. *Mobile App Marketing...*
84. *Mobile App Marketing...*
85. *PWA the road to the best Mobile Experience*, <https://www.e-point.pl/blog/pwa-droga-do-najlepszego-mobile-experience>,
86. *Progressive Web Apps*, <https://developers.google.com/web/progressive-web-apps/>,
87. *PWA (Progressive Web App) – first steps*, <https://sunsrapers.com/blog/pwa-pierwsze-kroki/>,
88. *14 frequently asked questions about Progressive Web Apps (PWA)*, <https://www.e-point.pl/blog/14-najczestszych-pytan-o-progressive-web-apps-pwa>, [access:] 19.08.2018.
89. *PWA in practice*, [https://www.e-point.pl/\\_files/1500990](https://www.e-point.pl/_files/1500990),
90. *PWA in practice...*
91. *5 Big Companies Doing Progressive Web Apps Right*, <https://www.businessapps.com/blog/5-big-companies-progressive-web-apps-right/>,
92. <http://poczta-polska.pl/hermes/uploads/2017/01/raport-cbec-23.01.2017.pdf>
93. <https://www.payu.pl/blog/polskie-esklepy-powinny-ruszyc-za-granice-dlaczego-tego-nie-robia>
94. *E-commerce manual Poland: Cross-border Trade*, <http://www.ecommercepolska.pl/pi/o-nas/aktualnosci/wrzesien-2016/e-commerce-polska-handel-transgraniczny-nowy-poradnik-e-izby/>
95. <https://www.e-point.pl/blog/tworzenie-i-rozwoj-miedzynarodowych-systemow-e-commerce>
96. <http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/amp/1025057,handel-transgraniczny-to-nie-opcja-ale-koniecznosc.html>
97. <http://www.egospodarka.pl/138610,Cross-border-w-e-commerce-Jak-sie-miewa,1,39,1.html>
98. <http://www.egospodarka.pl/138610,Cross-border-w-e-commerce-Jak-sie-miewa,1,39,1.html>
99. <https://www.e-point.pl/blog/7-powodow-by-zainwestowac-w-miedzynarodowa-platfome-sprzedazy>
100. <http://dobramarka.eu/index.php/badania/174-e-commerce-to-szansa-dla-polskich-firm-na-globalna-ekspansje>
101. <https://www.payu.pl/blog/polskie-esklepy-powinny-ruszyc-za-granice-dlaczego-tego-nie-robia>

AUTHORS

PATRONS

