



Busting B2B commerce myths.

Explore research busting 2023 B2B commerce myths to help you make more informed investments.





The pandemic has led businesses to purchase more online. It's a trend that B2B manufacturers and distributors—and the customers who purchase from them—have all noticed. There's also data to back it up, with Forrester Research projecting B2B commerce will grow at a 10.7% annual rate from 2022 to 2027 versus only 0.5% for offline B2B sales.

This significant shift is driving strategic thinking and accelerating technology investments for many manufacturers and distributors. We found in our *2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey* that 59% of respondents list ecommerce platform and applications among their top three technology budget priorities for the coming year.

But that doesn't mean there aren't B2B commerce myths floating around. We collected the top seven to set the record straight.

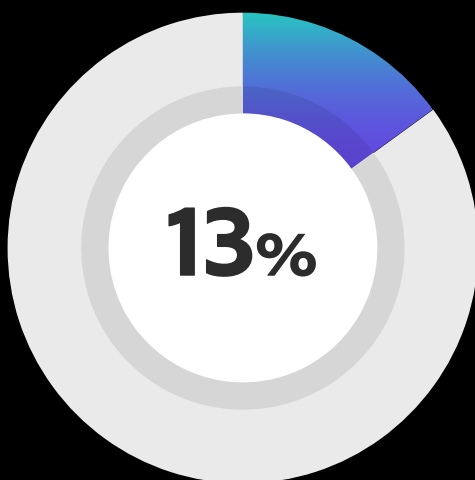
MYTH 1

Now is the time to go all in on composable commerce.

REALITY

It depends. A composable ecommerce solution can help companies with mature internal technology teams launch new features faster and integrate with new systems easier. However, ecommerce teams that don't have the right resources or expertise may start to encounter problems.

According to Forrester, one-third of digital businesses will regret "playing software company" in 2023. Businesses tasked with orchestrating and maintaining every aspect of their tech ecosystem are finding that composable projects are overly complex. Teams run into issues like relying on different systems for each function of ecommerce, lacking preview and authoring capabilities with headless integrations, and depending more on IT teams and systems integrators. "Digital businesses will pivot to re-engage with commerce solutions that balance ecosystem management, business user experiences, and function-first tech buying enablement," says Forrester.



Only 13% of businesses have "building a new headless storefront" as a top budget priority for 2023.

Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey

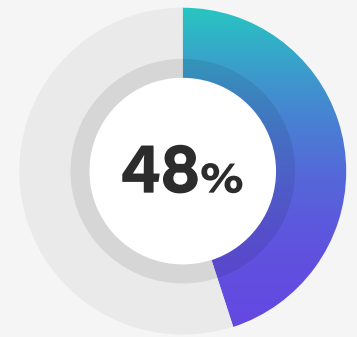
MYTH 2

Marketplaces are unattainable, especially for small companies.

REALITY

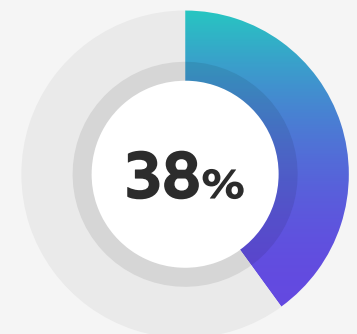
The B2B marketplace is now a mainstream digital sales channel. As this technology continues to grow, it can be a key strategy for accelerating revenue across the entire value chain. In fact, according to Digital Commerce 360, B2B marketplace sales are the fastest growing digital commerce sales channel.

Plenty of digital-first buyers use marketplaces to source and pay for business goods and services in the wake of ongoing supply chain disruption. Marketplaces can also help manufacturers include their distributors and dealers in direct ecommerce sales by allowing them to act as third-party sellers on a manufacturer's marketplace. Other B2B companies use marketplaces to host ecommerce for dealers to fulfill orders from end customers and to provide a digital portal for dealers to purchase online.



Nearly half (48%) of B2B companies say they plan to increase the number of marketplaces they sell on in 2023, including 58% of larger firms.

Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey



38% of respondents say they expect to launch a new marketplace where other companies can sell.

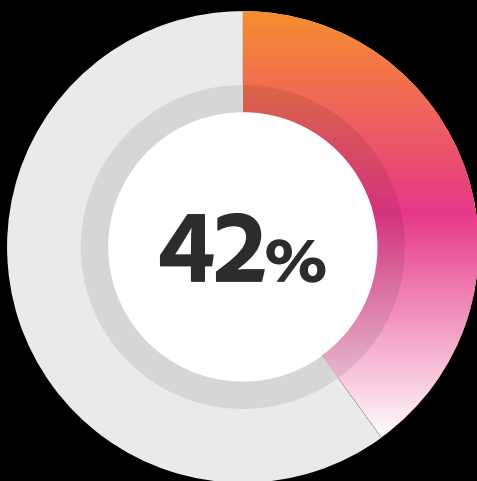
Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey

MYTH 3

B2B mobile ecommerce can be an afterthought.

REALITY

Mobile ecommerce is taking off, especially for large companies. B2B companies are spending more on ecommerce technology to improve mobile shopping experiences and generate more traffic and sales through mobile ecommerce. In our *B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey*, we found that 42% of large and 30% of smaller companies plan to introduce an app in the next five years, with the goal of making placing orders and reordering more convenient for customers already familiar with their company.



42% of B2B companies plan on launching a mobile app in 2023.

Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey

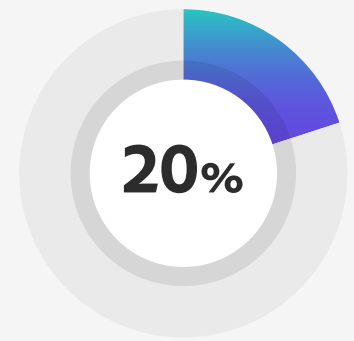
MYTH 4

Large purchases are reserved for traditional marketing and sales funnels.

REALITY

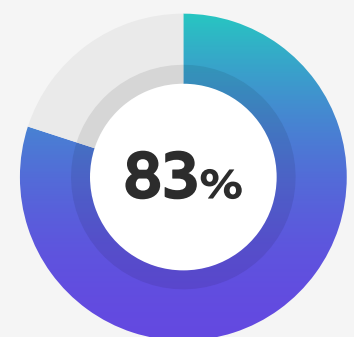
B2B customers are becoming more comfortable with purchasing through an ecommerce platform, even for large purchases. Originally just used for research and engagement, ecommerce is now a top choice for customers at every stage of the purchasing journey, and it leads in effectiveness of the sales channel. That's why 94% of B2B decision-makers say omnichannel selling is more effective than traditional selling, according to McKinsey.

B2B commerce websites are becoming an integral part of the buying journey for new and existing customers. Today, B2B buyers expect to engage with marketing assets, sales reps, product information, pricing, quoting, and ordering samples all through digital channels. Companies that integrate ecommerce into their digital marketing and sales funnel will also see higher results than those that only use ecommerce for discrete ordering portals.



20% of B2B buyers are willing to spend \$500,000 or more on a single purchase online.

Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey



83% of B2B buyers prefer ordering or paying through digital commerce.

Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey

MYTH 5

B2B personalization lags significantly behind B2C personalization.

REALITY

In recent years, B2B personalization has transformed from basic to comprehensive and immersive. B2B companies no longer undervalue the data they're capturing on their ecommerce sites, and instead they're using customer data platform (CDP), marketing automation, or customer relationship management (CRM) technologies. With this data, they're tuning in to buyer behaviors on ecommerce websites to provide marketing and sales with insights about their customers' interests and needs.

Whether the buyer has logged in recently, searched for a product, or viewed a category, that data can be used to personalize the B2B commerce experience. This includes things like automating triggered messages to buyers before and after making a purchase.

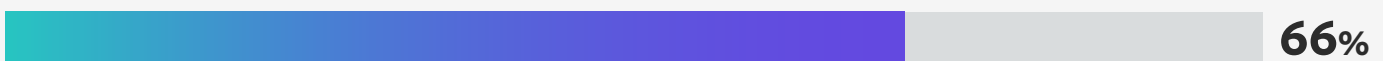
B2B companies are also now analyzing high-intent, first-party data like site search behaviors to see what buyers are looking for and the search terms they use. They can then show customers what similar buyers are purchasing, identify categories where sales are rising or falling, and anticipate customer preferences and needs much faster than market research.

63% of B2B commerce companies are planning to invest in improving the user experience by adding new personalization features.



Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey

66% of B2B buyers expect personalized experiences when buying a product or service.



Source: Adobe, 2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey

MYTH 6

B2B experiences should mimic B2C.

REALITY

The consumerization of B2B has created the tendency for companies to use the same marketing principles on businesses as they do with consumers. But that can only take you so far, as B2B buyers' profiles aren't as simple as B2C consumers.

Customizing content and purchasing options is far more complex in B2B than in B2C and requires companies to focus on the user, as well as the corporate entity and the role of the user within the company. Unlike B2C, it's not the buyer's personal preferences that matter in B2B, but what they need to do their job efficiently. Content and experiences instead need to be tailored to the buyer's role and the kind of company they work for.



Only 14% of organizations have achieved a 360-degree view of the customer.

Source: Gartner, *Gartner Marketing Survey Finds Only 14% of Organizations Have Achieved a 360-Degree View of Their Customer*

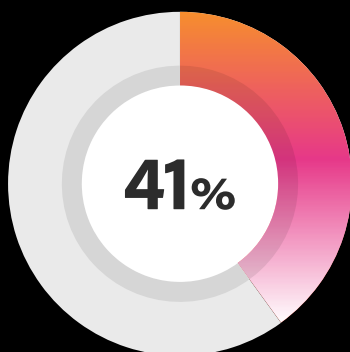
MYTH 7

Sales representatives and ecommerce cannot coexist.

REALITY

Both are valuable parts of a B2B organization. While B2B commerce is an always-on sales tool, it's a tool that sales reps can use. By filtering and sending data through a company's CRM solution, sales reps gain access to customer behavior, quote requests, and co-browsing tools that can help drive large orders and opportunities.

For example, when a customer submits a quote, a sales rep can respond within the ecommerce platform. When it comes to complex products or orders, customers often need the help of a salesperson. They can take a digital version of the product catalog on site with customers or use it as a tool to compare products and help customers make purchase decisions remotely. The website can then enable the buyer and seller to build orders together and then send them to the buyer's boss for approval. That used to be done by email, but now it can be done on the site. Sales reps can also place orders directly on behalf of their customers with all their specific pricing and catalog restrictions applied—which allows reps to be more effective at processing orders through a web platform instead of a CRM or enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. If a customer is having trouble placing an order, a sales rep can also interact directly with their account and resolve the issue.



41% of large B2B organizations say competition with internal sales resources is preventing them from selling more online.

Source: Gartner, *Sales Transformation: The Future of Sales*

CONCLUSION

Dig into the myths to build better experiences.

As more businesses buy online, B2B companies need to focus on delivering useful and compelling experiences—which they can't do if they're following industry misconceptions. Learn more about these myths and others in our latest survey, *2023 B2B Commerce Growth Strategies Survey*.

[Explore the survey](#)



Sources

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