

^ KLEVVU +  BIGCOMMERCE

# The Ultimate Guide to B2B Product Discovery



Published By

» DISCOVERED  
FROM KLEVVU

# Executive Summary

Companies in the B2C sector understand that customers are willing to pay more for a great experience, and as a result have prioritized providing convenient, personalized experiences. Amazon is a great example of this as it gives tailored recommendations to visitors based on previous purchases or browsing history. However, the same cannot be said for B2B brands who have traditionally ranked significantly lower in customer experience surveys in comparison to B2C counterparts.

Today's B2B buyer expects the same highly personalized shopping experience they have become accustomed to on their favorite DTC websites.

Featuring comments from top experts in the B2B ecommerce space, this practical guide, in association with Klevu and BigCommerce, will cover the ultimate product discovery tips to enable B2B retailers to give customers the best shopping experience they need, with all the DTC features they expect.

# Table of Contents

**04** What is Product Discovery and Why is it so Important?

---

**06** Understanding the Modern-Day B2B Buyer

---

**10** Troubleshooting 5 Common B2B Ecommerce Issues

---

**14** B2B Conversion Challenges Solved

---

**20** B2B Vertical Focus: Automotive

---

**21** B2B Vertical Focus: Food

---

**22** B2B Vertical Focus: DIY

---

**28** So, What's Next?

# What is Product Discovery and Why is it so Important?



## What is Product Discovery?

In the very simplest terms, product discovery describes the process by which your customers explore and find your products. From the moment a customer arrives at your online store, whether or not they have a specific item in their mind, they're expressing an interest in exploring your product range. Product discovery is the art of

making sure that this process is made as seamless and productive as possible – and it's especially important within the complex B2B arena.

Brands and retailers are recognizing the increased need to improve this often overlooked and untapped area of customer experience. Excellent product discovery should go beyond simply ensuring that your customers find the product they were looking for – it should enable them to discover relevant, appealing items beyond their initial points of interest. When product discovery is firing on all cylinders – everyone wins. Customers gain a more satisfying and personalized shopping experience, and retailers see better conversion, customer retention, and AOV.

## Why is it a Growing Requirement?

The ecommerce space continues to accelerate. Customer expectations are increasing, and so too is the competition. A lot of effort goes into driving traffic towards a store, so once potential customers have started a shopping session, retailers need to put every possible measure in place to ensure that a successful conversion is achieved. Product discovery has a huge role to play here.

B2B customers are looking to learn about new products in a different way, and product discovery forms an increasingly important component of this experience. The personalization of online shopping sessions is becoming a baseline expectation – we expect to be presented with appealing options as a default. Stores everywhere are raising their game (and the bar along with it...).

As far as product discovery goes, shoppers should, at the very minimum, be able to find an item that they already have in mind – their internal search should always throw up the right results, regardless of their search term. This is especially important for B2B businesses, which may sell a range of highly specialized and specific items, which customers will need to find with pinpoint accuracy. At the other end of the spectrum, product discovery is a chance to truly delight, impress and cross-sell.

# Understanding the Modern-Day B2B Buyer



In the previous era of B2B, sales happened in a more physical world. You had face-to-face conversations. You looked at physical catalogs and placed orders through the mail.

But that world no longer exists. Now, customers want to place orders online without ever even talking to a sales rep. In fact, **research shows** that modern B2B buyers conduct roughly 12 online searches before making a purchase from a chosen brand.

To help you succeed, we'll discuss the new B2B buyer and provide tips on how you can exceed their ever-growing expectations for ecommerce.

## The Changing B2B Buyer

When it comes to B2B ecommerce, to stand out from the competition, you must focus on exceeding your buyers' expectations. It's no longer enough to have a functioning ecommerce website. Instead, you must be able to replicate the same B2C website experience that shoppers are familiar with in their personal lives.

They want robust product information, which includes multiple images and even video showing how the product works. They want advanced search capabilities, so they can quickly find the specific products they're looking for. And of course, they want to do it all from their smartphones.

In fact, as much as **80% of B2B buying decisions** are based on a buyer's direct or indirect customer experience, and only 20% is based on the price or the actual offering.

Part of this change in expectations can be attributed to the fact that there are more millennials in the workplace. For instance, in 2020, **close to half of B2B buyers were millennials** — nearly double the amount from 2012.

Not only are they in the workplace, but millennials are also much more involved in making business decisions. A **recent report** found that 44% of millennials are making purchasing decisions while 33% say they are key influencers or recommenders in the purchasing process.

So what can you do to capture their needs and create compelling customer experiences?

## 01. Include rich product information on your website

We touch on this above, but it's worth going into more detail — just like you should with your product information. For example, we mentioned video because it's one of the most compelling types of content you can include on your product pages.

According to a recent [survey conducted by Isoline](#), 53% of B2B decision makers said video was the most useful form of content, followed closely by case studies. Video was also the top choice for the type of content most shared.

Just like B2C websites, you can also include user reviews on your product pages. This can help build trust since the reviews are collected from other customers.

## 02. Start to create personalized experiences for B2B buyers

According to [research from Accenture](#), 50% of B2B buyers identify improved personalization as a key factor when searching for online suppliers with whom to build business relationships. Even more importantly, 48% of consumers spend more when they receive personalized experiences.

As an example, with BigCommerce, you can use customer groups to segment your buyers. Then, you can use banners, carousels, and other tools to make product recommendations or offer special discounts.



Not only is this good for customer experience, but it also helps with cross-sell and upsell opportunities. As shoppers can consider complementary products they might not even know that you offer.

### **03. Make the checkout process as frictionless as possible**

B2B buyers have complex needs that differ from B2C buyers, and there's no place that's more clear than checkout. B2B buyers want to purchase as quickly and efficiently as possible, so just like with B2C buyers, you need to provide a frictionless checkout experience to get them to convert.

But what does that look like? One option is to allow for buy again capabilities so that customers can easily reorder the products they purchase from you regularly.

Additionally, if there's multiple levels of approval that need to take place before they can complete the purchase, it's helpful to have an account management system that can define roles and permissions. That way the entire buying process can happen smoothly online.

You can also go one step further and allow your sales team to log in on behalf of the customer to add products to the cart and complete the order placement.

## **Wrapping Up**

As B2B buyers' needs evolve, businesses must adjust their approach to selling online. By focusing on replicating as much of the B2C experience as possible while still keeping in mind the complexities of B2B, you should have the right strategy in place to succeed in today's world.

# Troubleshooting 5 Common B2B Ecommerce Issues



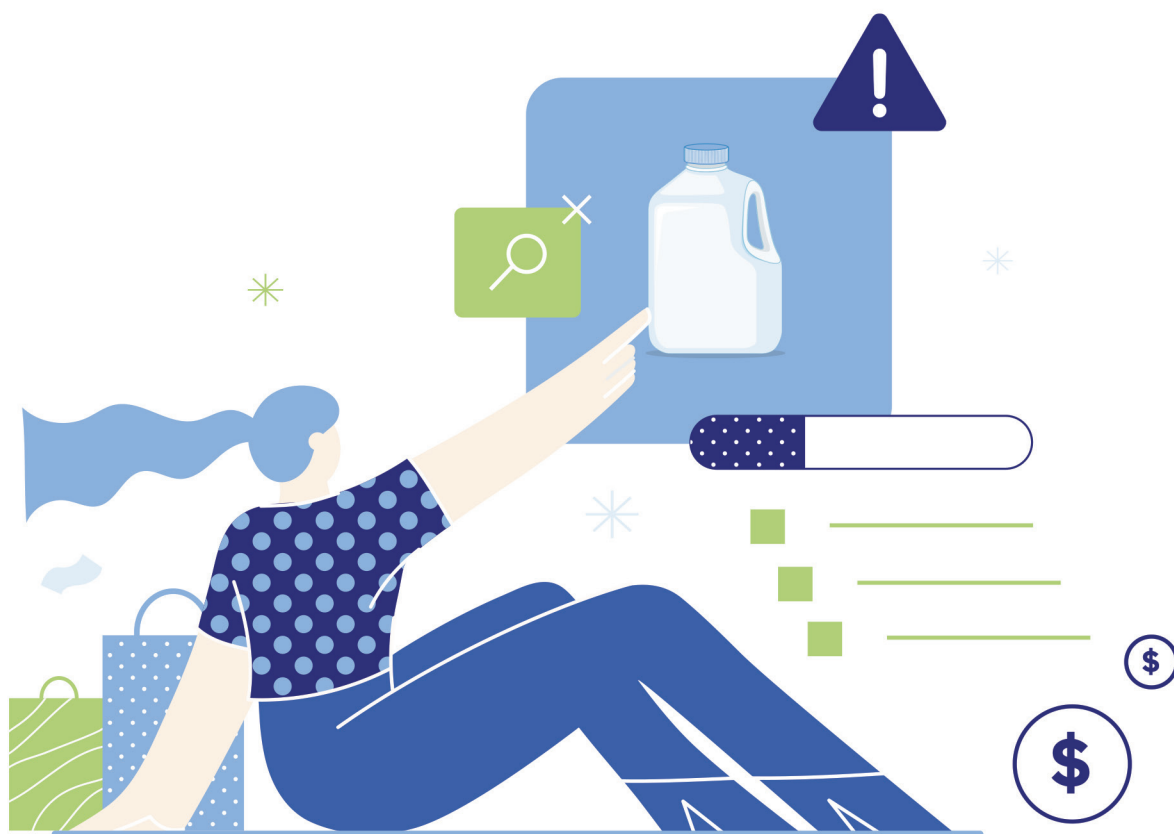
**Lori McDonald**

In this section we will explore five issues that arise on B2B ecommerce sites, some of the most common causes, and ways to fix them.

## **FAILURE #1: Users can't find what they're searching for**

Accurate search results are essential to successful ecommerce. If your customers can't find what they're looking for in the first few results, they're likely to leave in search of a site that won't waste their time.

If your search results are inaccurate—or even worse, blank—you'll want to investigate three places: your data source, the search index, and the search implementation.



## FAILURE #2: Shipping rates inaccurate or non-existent

It is important for customers to be able to predict the cost of shipping as well as delivery times, which can be complicated in the B2B space. When shipping rates are not working properly, the problem is usually the interface with shipping providers like UPS, FedEx, or USPS.

Some common issues we have run into include problems with the origin address, allowable shipping methods, and invalid logins or API Keys with the shipper. These issues are easily resolved, while other causes can be more involved, like network and firewall issues, server communication, software settings, or even security protocols. There are a lot of moving pieces when dealing with shipping, so be sure to cover all your bases.

## **FAILURE #3: Promotions are not working correctly**

Promotions are a great marketing tool, but if they don't work properly, it can cause customers to become frustrated and abandon their order. Issues with promotions are most common when multiple promotions are running simultaneously. Be sure to plan in advance how promotions will work together and set them up accordingly.

Free shipping on purchases over a minimum amount is a common promotion. However, when other discounts are applied, how does the free-shipping calculation work? Unfortunately for store owners, some ecommerce platforms will do the free-shipping check using the order's subtotal before other discounts or promotions. This can lead to an order qualifying for free shipping when it really should not.

## **FAILURE #4: Products Not Showing Up**

Obviously, when products that should show up on your site are not there, it's a problem! The product details, images, and attributes have been entered, but nothing shows up in a product search, product category page, or even the product page itself.

When we are called in to help troubleshoot products that are "Missing in Action," the most frequent problem is with data. When critical or required fields in the ERP or the ecommerce database are empty, products may fail to show up. This often happens with mass data loads or from manual-entry errors.

Aside from data, you may also want to check the product publishing properties, stocking threshold, and page permissions for other possible causes.

## FAILURE #5: Site Slowness

The fastest websites result in the most sales, so we regularly watch and analyze websites to improve speed and performance. There are many issues that can slow down websites, so you may want to tackle them one at a time. Some of the usual suspects are:

- Bad database management
- Heavy use of third-party add-ons
- Under-resourced host servers
- Poor network performance (common in self-hosted sites)
- Lack of code caching (We have found that good caching strategies can reduce load time by 50% or more)
- Large images and files
- Unnecessarily complex or repetitive query calls to the database (usually with a custom ecommerce build)

Monitoring the speed of your ecommerce site is something that requires regular attention.

In fact, maintaining and troubleshooting issues on your ecommerce site is an ongoing project. Some failures, as well as their solutions, can be specific to your software platform and integrations, so be sure to work with a developer who can look at your specific situation. It is essential that your development team understands both the technology needed to fix the issue and your overall digital solution and considers impacts to other areas of your site, maintenance costs and the site performance as a part of their work.

## B2B Conversion Challenges Solved



As a B2B retailer, the challenges you face are unique. Your customers are highly motivated to make very specific purchases, but face sifting through complex catalogs to find what they're looking for. In this section, we outline three ways you might be losing sales due to poor product discoverability — and how on-site search might be the answer to all your problems.

## Conversion Challenge 1: Searching for the Super Specific

**The Issue:** Large product ranges/ catalog make it difficult for your customers to find products that meet specific requirements

As a B2B retailer, chances are you offer a large, specialist and highly technical product range. Meanwhile, your customers are on the hunt for incredibly specific items.

Without a well-crafted search experience, your customers can find themselves experiencing a frustrating “needle in a haystack” situation. If your store isn’t able to take them swiftly and efficiently to the products they’re searching for, you risk customers bouncing and turning to a competitor.

The traffic reaching B2B stores tends to be highly intentional. Your customers have likely arrived at your store because they have a specific requirement. Search-led journeys are common with a customer profile of this nature, and as a result, a poor search experience can prove especially costly to your conversion rate.

**How Klevu helps:** Dynamic filters deliver intuitive and well-ordered search results

Klevu provides a truly elevated on-site search experience. A wide range of features take its functionality far beyond what’s natively available from e-commerce platforms.

It’s this degree of extra polish that can make a world of difference when it comes to satisfying the search requirements of the B2B market.

When it comes to honing in on highly specialized, specific items among a wide range of products, **dynamic filtering** comes into its own. When presented with the results of an on-site search, customers see **AI-driven dynamic filters** that automatically interpret and display the most relevant product attributes.

This means your customers experience a results page that's quick and easy to refine as they narrow down their search results.

## Conversion Challenge 2: A Broad Range of Specialist Search Terms

**The Issue:** You miss sales as search queries aren't recognized and fail to serve up the correct products.

When searching for specific items on your B2B online store, your customers could use a wide range of search terms, from brand names to SKUs, trade terms to part or model numbers.

As a result, they may enter a term that isn't recognized by your on-site search, resulting in a "no results" page ... even if you do stock the product that they were looking for!

These are sales that you simply shouldn't lose. By giving the impression that the items they require weren't stocked, you've needlessly lost a promising sale and created a disappointing end to their user journey. You also run the risk of losing them as a customer in the future, as they'll wrongly assume you won't be able to meet their requirements.

**How Klevu helps:** Automatic catalog enrichment and NLP capacity help to interpret a broader range of search queries

When selling online in the competitive B2B space, it's vital to correctly interpret your customers' intent. Klevu has several measures in place to ensure that customers will be served up the products that they were hoping to find, however they phrase their search.

Klevu's **automatic catalog enrichment** utilizes metadata to add contextually relevant synonyms to your catalog. This results in up to three times the depth and coverage



of search results. No matter what query your customer chooses to input, they'll get accurate results.

Additionally, Klevu's **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** capacity considers the **actual meaning** of keywords, resulting in a more intuitive and accurate experience.

Even if the search term your customer inputs doesn't appear in any of the associated product information, the correct product can still be interpreted and delivered in their search results.

### Conversion Challenge 3: Missed Opportunities for Cross-Selling

**The Issue:** You miss the chance to fully leverage product discovery, resulting in suboptimal AOV.

With large, varied catalogs and clearly defined market segments, your chance to up and cross sell as a B2B retailer is significant.

But it can be hard to manually merchandise such broad ranges of products and collections — and it's a huge time suck for your busy e-commerce team.

Today's consumer expects a more personalized e-commerce experience, and this applies to B2B just as much as D2C. If you're not providing a shopping experience that lives up to these expectations, you run the risk of losing out to competitors who've got a better measure of their audience.

**How Klevu helps:** Advanced AI and personalization capacities put the right products in front of the right eyes, at the right time

The smartest way to make the most of every opportunity available from your search-led customers is to lean on the power of AI.

Klevu's advanced algorithms ensure that your **products are merchandised to optimum efficiency** — not only across your search results pages, but your **category pages** and any **landing page** that you choose to create too.

You can also benefit from the instant impact of quick search overlay (“search as you type”) functionality, which gets trending products in front of your most motivated customers before they’ve hit a single key.

**Personalization** within Klevu means that each and every time your Customers visit and interact with your store, their experience becomes more customized and fulfilling. Recommendations and suggested products are deployed to maximum effect.

## **Ready to Take Your B2B Conversions to the Next Level?**

B2B e-commerce customers have specific requirements and limited time, so products must be relevant and quick to locate. This is where a sophisticated on-site search integration can ride to your rescue, providing specialized help for B2B retailers looking to deliver enhanced customer experience and maximize each and every chance of conversion.

There are two ways to take a mountain of complexity out of your B2B eCommerce business or project:

## **First: Get rid of any 1-1-1 customer pricing relationships.**

This means – 1 customer, 1 SKU, 1 price. Many B2B businesses fall into the trap of creating a unique price list for each customer, essentially creating customer groups of 1. Switching this to tiered pricing of say 4 tiers (either flat discount % per tier or unique price list per tier) means you only have 4 customer groups and this reduces eCommerce complexity dramatically.

If you have even one unique price for one SKU for a given customer, that means they are a new customer group and price list. Manage any outliers by exception only, either by custom quotes per order or by a unique price list/group. The more customer/pricing groups you have, the more geometrically complex your customer and product models become...

## **Second: minimize or eliminate product visibility rules by customer.**

Many B2B businesses try to limit the range of products their customers can view/buy once they're logged into the eCommerce site. Again, each unique customer catalog view requires a unique customer group to manage these rules, adding significantly to complexity.

Minimize or eliminate unique catalog views by customer to reduce this complexity – because it extends down into site search, other apps and many other areas of the site logic. It gets especially complex when you have products with variants where you want them to see some variants but not others...

Is your B2B business wrestling with these issues and what are you doing about it?



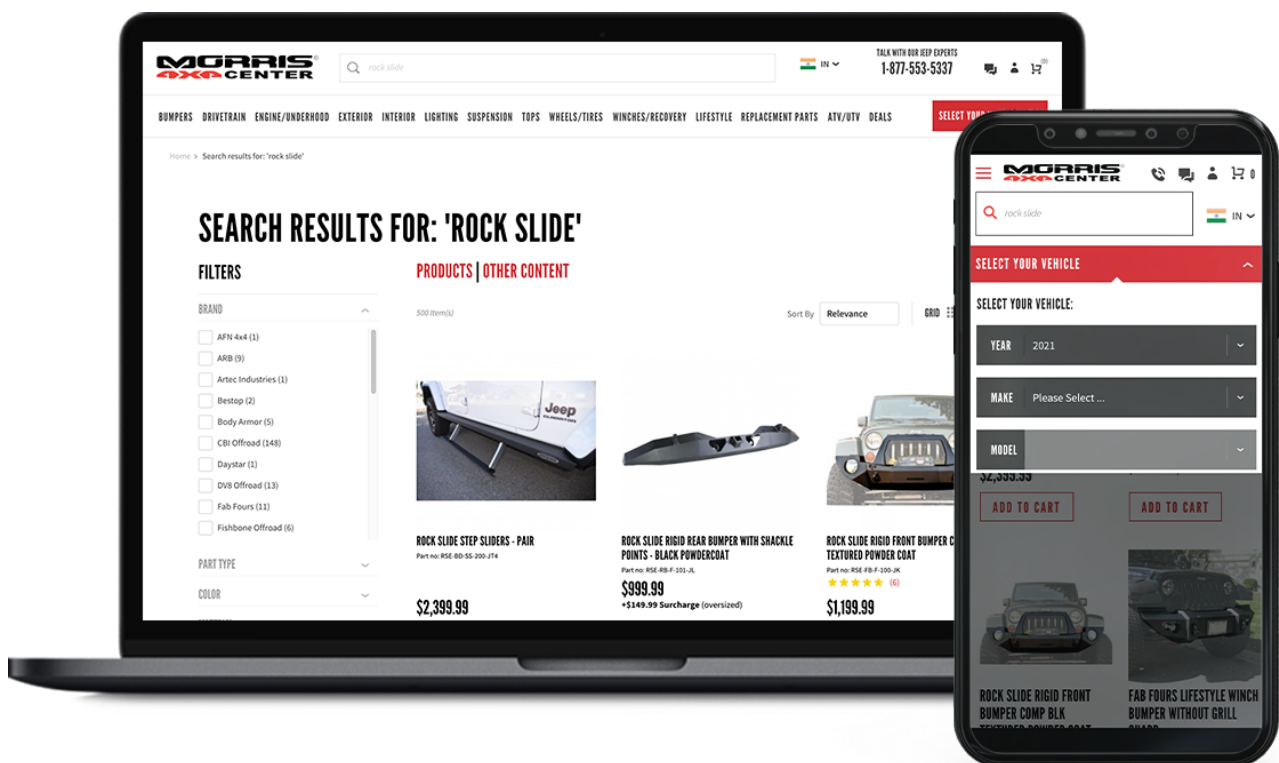
**Jason Greenwood,**  
**B2B Ecommerce Consultant, Host of the Coalface Podcast**

# B2B Vertical Focus: Automotive

The pandemic has shifted consumer behaviour globally, and likely permanently. Many sectors are booming online after consumers have become used to online shopping. Cars and car parts are no exception. In fact, **59% of shoppers' time** is spent researching online when it comes to an auto related purchase.

The problem is, when it comes to car parts, things can get complicated and for product discovery journeys, compatibility becomes paramount to relevancy.

Klevu developed an advanced search function for B2B and B2C retailers in the automotive sector that allows shoppers that know exactly what they are looking for, to choose the make/model/year within search. How it works: Within the product data, associations are made between products suitable for different car makes and models and/or year of car. So, a shopper can drilldown to their specific make/model/year and see products compatible with their choice at the top of the product list. As you can see here with **Morris 4x4 Center**, the chosen make/model/year persists for the whole session, including subsequent searches, until cleared or changed by the shopper.

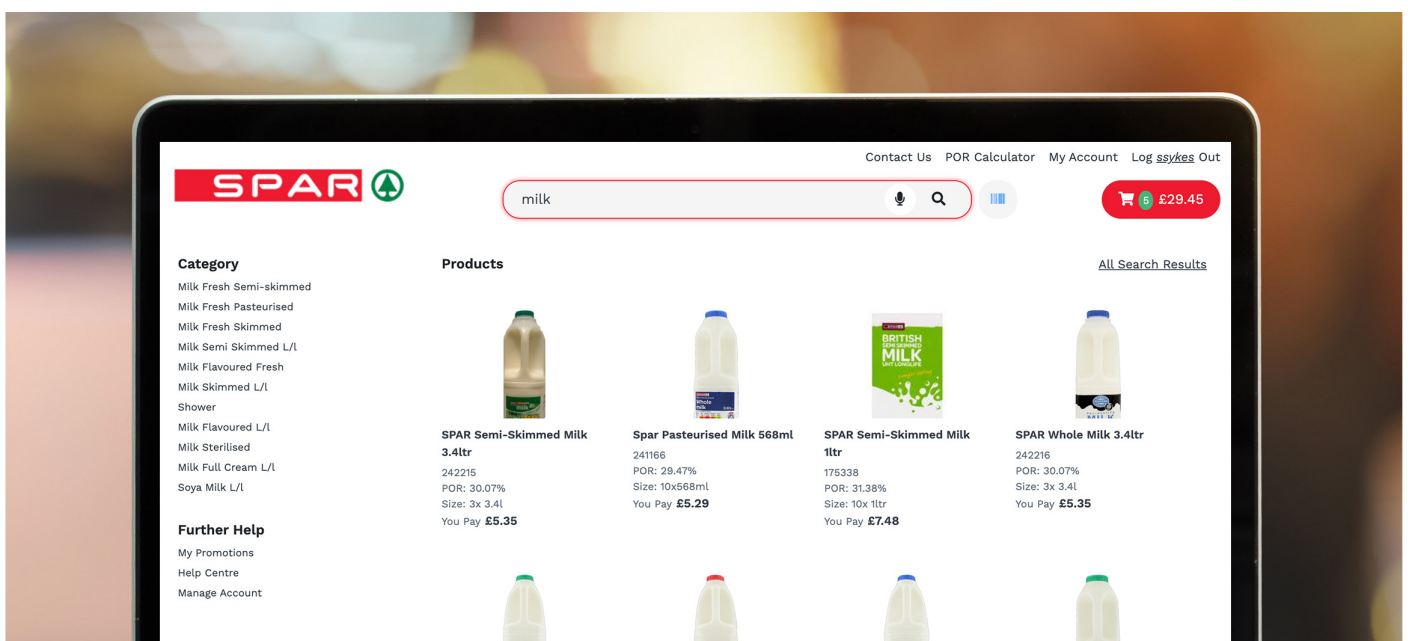


# B2B Vertical Focus: Food

Typically there's been a reluctance in the Food and Beverage industry to make the switch to ecommerce. This is mainly due to the unique challenges faced in this particular industry, as both businesses and consumers may have felt more comfortable buying and selling the more traditional way. However, the Covid pandemic provided the catalyst for this ecommerce push – whether it's someone doing grocery shopping from the comfort of their home, ordering a takeaway during their remote working session, or a restaurant getting food supplies to fulfill orders without having the fear of running out of ingredients.

For complex B2B retailers in this industry, potentially juggling multiple storefronts, suppliers and customer groups, on top of an intricate and diverse product range, things can quickly become complicated.

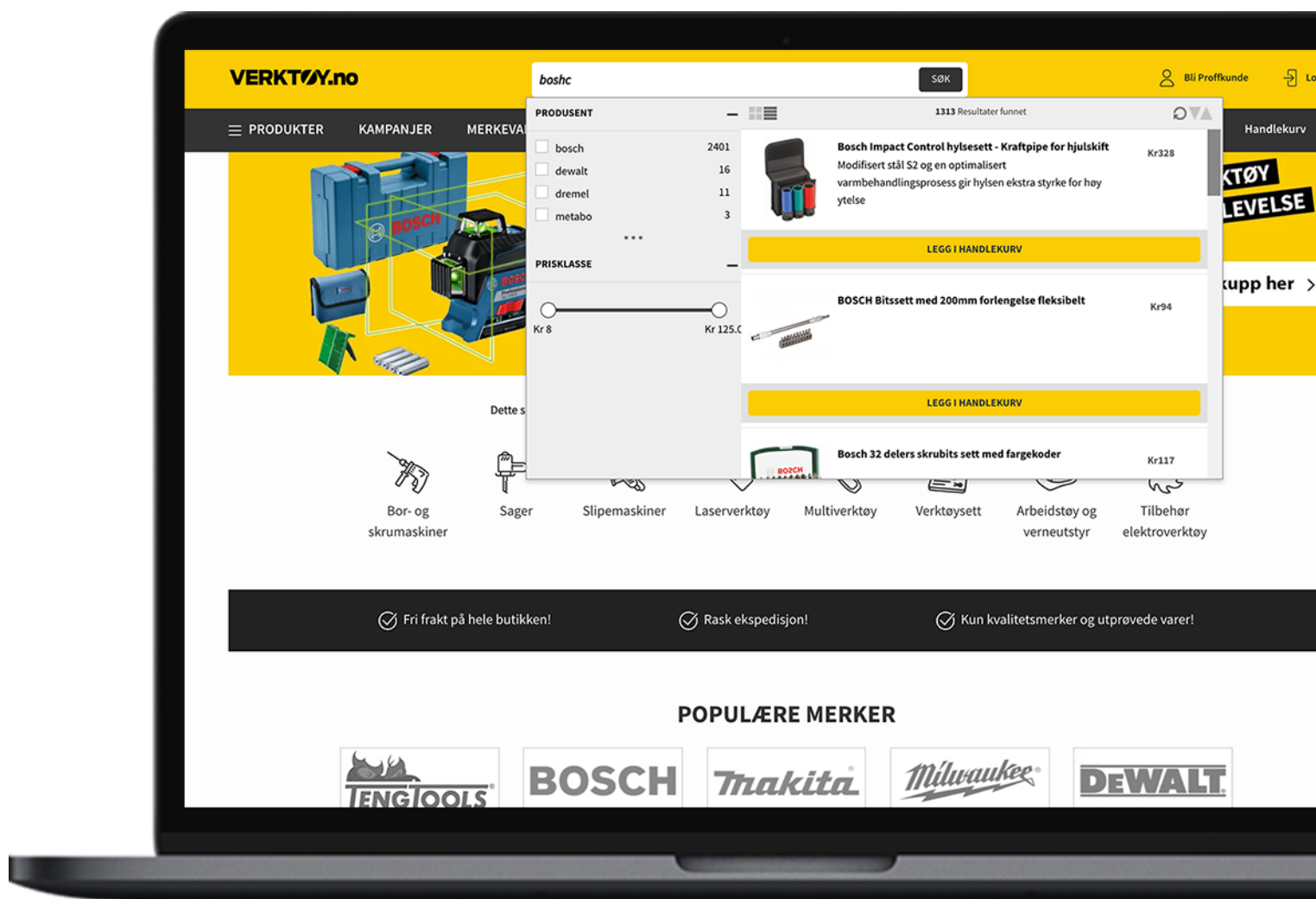
A case in point is **A.F. Blakemore**, a major supplier to Spar businesses. The B2B retailer struggled to leverage its product data to create a good product discovery experience. However, the company decided to integrate Klevu's powerful Smart Search and Smart Category Merchandising features which utilized different feeds and showcased products based on shopper intent, rather than just the most popular products.



## B2B Vertical Focus: DIY

There was a huge boom in DIY activities during the pandemic, with home improvement and gardening activities **growing by almost 50%**, compared to the same period a year before. According to **Diginomica**, B&Q experienced a 117% jump in online sales during 2020, while Screwfix performed even better at a 146% increase, which further emphasizes the growth of this sector. **Recent surveys the Kingfisher** conducted of their customers showed that 20% of 18-35 year olds were carrying out DIY projects for the first time, 55% increasing the amount of DIY they have done and 65% feeling more confident in their DIY skills, which contributed to a huge chunk of their overall sales.

When it comes to DIY, online retailers in this sector typically have an expansive product catalogue, and without Natural Language Processing enabled things like SKU search or searches using descriptive terms rather than product names can become problematic. In addition, many B2B websites are both B2B and B2C, so tailoring these websites to work for the general public as well as tradespeople can also be a pain point for these retailers.



A perfect example of a company experiencing these issues is **Verktøy**, a Norwegian B2B and B2C business that sells building and DIY supplies and machinery. Boasting a large, complex product catalog, the website needed a product discovery optimization tool to help customers easily find specialist items. The **Verktøy** ecommerce team needed the search to be able to handle misspellings as well as understand shopper intent and inflection, whether they searched by brand, description, sentiment, or even measurements. Klevu Smart Search injected synonyms into the already large product catalogue allowing for relevant results to be displayed even if shoppers were using conversational and complex terms.

## Case Study

# “Stronger Together: Scale & Convert With BigCommerce & Klevu” Delivering a B2C like experience, for B2B



Toolstop replatformed to BigCommerce fully managed SaaS commerce platform with a user-friendly back end, site-speed and checkout performance. The business also needed a powerful product discovery solution. Klevu's API approach combined with AI and NLP enriched search delivers a strong ROI and had proven its worth at Toolsaver (Toolstop's sister company) so implementing Klevu on their B2B and B2C sites was high on the agenda.

[Download PDF case study](#)

## Results







BigCommerce offers powerful ecommerce tools and a valuable partner network – without the cost or complexity of traditional ecommerce solutions. Klevu is an intelligent AI and NLP based on-site search solution – that turns shoppers into customers.

The BigCommerce and Klevu partnership delivers a high functioning user experience that drives conversion, to exceed Toolstop's performance expectations as the business scales. BigCommerce's partnership with Klevu means an easy integration with a one-click app install, and an automated data feed via BigCommerce's open API structure. Once Klevu is installed, BigCommerce's search input is automatically transformed into Klevu Smart Search, which can be customised in the Klevu Merchant Center directly within the BigCommerce control panel.

As with Toolstop, BigCommerce works with retailers to help them sell at any stage of growth. BigCommerce offers lower total cost of ownership (TCO) compared to traditional on-premise hosting, which requires additional hardware, maintenance and management, and presents a host of hidden costs. Instead, BigCommerce offers fixed, predictable pricing based on order volume.

BigCommerce's open API structure allows retailers to fully customise their store and features, creating totally unique user experiences to set them ahead of the competition. In addition to extensibility, retailers also need a reliable, secure solution with absolutely minimal downtime. BigCommerce Enterprise boasts an industry-leading median uptime of 99.99%, with fully managed security and maintenance. Search which converts by applying a layer of AI and NLP via the merchandising and discovery suite, shoppers are shown highly relevant products when they search to improve conversion for Toolstop.

Klevu understands the intent of the shopper from the first two keystrokes, and even delivers results relevant for long-tail queries like 'best cordless drill' as well as product-specific SKUs, however they are entered,

## **Klevu Feature Focus**

- Klevu Search Analytics – Toolstop receives daily search insights into what customers are searching for which helps manage inventory levels and new product lines.
- Customisable Search Overlay and Merchandising Features – A JS overlay speeds up the user journey concurrently providing the customer with auto suggestions, category listings and CMS pages.
- B2B Pricing Functionality – Toolstop uses customer group pricing which increases relevancy and personalization for B2B customers.

*BigCommerce is fantastic, anyone can use it. Klevu means it is easy for a customer to come to our site and find what they are looking for with as few clicks and as minimal browsing as possible. BigCommerce and Klevu are very competitive against your competitors and the usability is great, anyone can use and configure it. It's so simple to set up.*



Neil Bruce, E-Commerce Manager



## So, What's Next?

At Klevu, we believe that great customer experience isn't reserved for B2C retailers, and that technology and innovation isn't the privilege of a chosen few. B2B buyers are digitally savvy, potentially even digital natives.

Klevu has enabled B2B brands looking to double down on better product discovery, with great examples featured here including **Spar and A.F. Blakemore, Verktoy**, and **Toolstop**, who saw more than an 11% increase in transactions via Klevu compared to the previous year, and a 10% reduction in search exit rates (indicating customers were successfully finding what they were looking for!)

Large product catalogs and multiple customer groupings or price lists can present challenges for product discovery in B2B ecommerce – but there's also real potential to be tapped, with the right approach and assistance. Product choice and variety as well as unique customer profiles and requirements can all add up to more chances for accurate recommendations and more opportunities to increase cart value.

With Klevu and BigCommerce, B2B brands looking to optimize their websites can ensure that the full scope of their product range is being leveraged to maximum effect to enable high intent and even more spontaneous product discovery.



**Nilay Oza, CEO**



### Useful links:

[BigCommerce B2B Edition](#) | [Klevu](#)



A Global Finnish Company



Copyright 2021 © Klevu Oy. All rights reserved