

A woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a white striped shirt and olive green trousers, is standing in a warehouse. She is talking on a mobile phone held to her left ear and is reaching into a cardboard box on a wooden table with her right hand. The table is cluttered with several other cardboard boxes of various sizes. In the background, there are more boxes and a metal shelving unit. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, possibly from a window on the right.

Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021

Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021 is the fifth edition of Litium's annual survey of digital commerce between companies (B2B). The study was conducted during March 2021 and is based on responses from 846 respondents in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, combining in-depth interviews and a digital survey.

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Digitalization is a journey – you decide how to start and what the destination looks like

I'm happy to present our fifth annual report on Scandinavian B2B Commerce. Filled with valuable insights and shapes of things to come. As expected, digital commerce is high on the agenda of most B2B business leaders these days. And while efficiency is still the main driver for digitalization of sales, new customer expectations and the ability to compete is moving up the ranks as key drivers. It is clear that B2B companies increasingly embrace the opportunities that digital channels offer for building and nurturing customer relationships and securing continued business growth.

Digital B2B commerce is not a matter of black or white, do or don't. As can be seen in the report and our new B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder, the level of digitalization across companies comes in all shades. Some B2B companies start their journey by focusing on recruiting new customers through digital marketing. Others enable sales through a digital product catalog while a significant share is already selling through an established platform for ecommerce. The starting point for digitalization as well as the end goal will vary dependent on company size, industry, offering and not the least, customer maturity.

But even so, digitalization is happening at all levels and industries. The market is changing, and so are customer expectations. To seize the opportunity this offers, I encourage all B2B companies to make a focused assessment of what their future positions should look like. Decide on your next digitalization destination – and get going.

Best of luck! (And if you want luck out of the equation, you know where to find us.)



Patrik Settlin, CEO Litium AB



About Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021

The 2021 edition of Scandinavian B2B Commerce surveys the same geographical markets as last year: Sweden, Denmark and Norway, addressing B2B companies of different sizes and in different sectors. (For details about the demographics of the study, see page 42.) However, we made a few updates to the study compared to last year.

To identify new areas of interest for digital B2B sales, nine in-depth interviews were conducted prior to the quantitative part of the study. In these interviews, we were able to dive deeper into the needs, wants and expectations of B2B companies at different development stages. As a result, we have included additional questions about how companies work to understand their customers' buyer journeys and how this work impacts their sales and marketing activities, internal processes and support systems. The 2021 report also includes a new perspective on how data-driven B2B companies are and how they use data and insights to develop their channels and offering.

Another major update to this year's report is based on the conclusion that enabling digital B2B sales should not be seen as black or white. Instead, transitioning from a more traditional sales model to fully seizing the benefits of digitalization is more of a step-by-step approach. In addition to surveying what digital channels B2B companies use to sell their products directly, this year's study also includes options where companies *enable* sales through digital channels. This can be by allowing buyers to ask for a quote or price through digital channels or to browse through a digital product catalog, without being able to place an order directly online.

This new view on digital sales and sales enablement has allowed us to study different B2B companies' progress from considering digital sales to offering full-blown online commerce solutions with a dedicated data-driven mindset. This work has resulted in a new segmentation model, the *B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder*. The segmentation model is presented in its full in a supplement to the main report.

Over the years, we have seen how companies in the consultancy and services sectors face other challenges when it comes to digitalizing their sales processes and customer interactions. Therefore, we have chosen this year to focus on product-selling B2B companies, such as those in manufacturing, and companies at different areas of trade, from wholesalers to distributors and resellers. We should keep in mind that this will have an impact on the numbers, and not all data reported will be fully comparable to previous years.



Two thirds of all B2B companies enable sales through digital channels

- 65% of B2B companies use digital channels to enable sales. A webshop, with or without required login, remains the most popular channel for digital B2B sales: a third (34%) of companies offers one or both options for online purchases.
- As an alternative to selling directly online, 17% of B2B companies allow customers to ask for a price or a quote online and 10% to browse through a digital product catalog before contacting the company.
- External marketplaces is still pretty much unexplored territory for B2B companies. Only 5% sell their products through this channel.
- Wholesalers and distributors/resellers remain ahead of manufacturing companies as 83% and 75% respectively use digital channels for sales or sales enablement.
- Digital commerce is a matter for the management team in B2B companies. In a majority of businesses, the overall responsibility lies with one or several of the company CEO, CMO and head of sales. Only 15% of B2B companies have a dedicated head of ecommerce, 10% a digital strategist as responsible.
- A majority of B2B companies that use digital sales channels are optimistic about the future: 74% predict that their online sales will continue to increase in the coming three years.
- 27% of all companies that do not already offer digital sales, plan on introducing a webshop/ecommerce solution in 3 years.
- The key driving forces for digital sales are similar across countries, industries and organization sizes. The aim to simplify administration and streamline sales remains the top driver.



Increased focus on understanding the customer journey and improving the customer experience

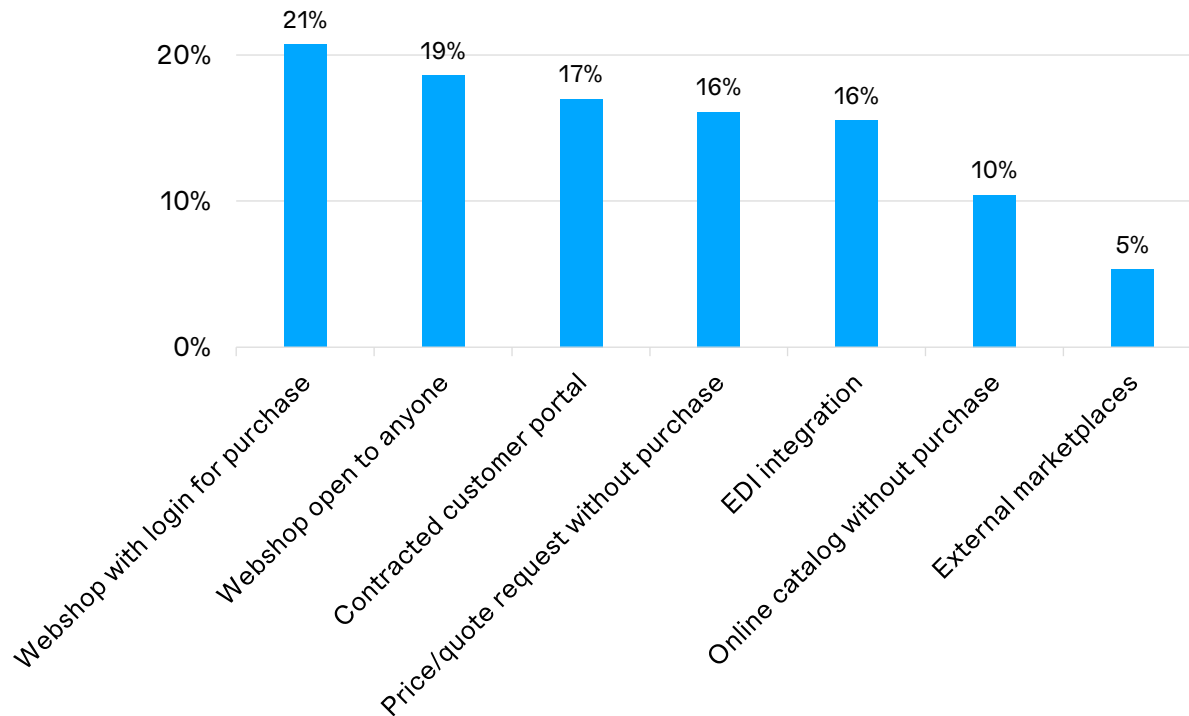
- Companies not yet selling through digital channels are concerned with losing their personal relationship with customers when moving to digital commerce. The following top challenges are related to transitioning from one way of doing business to another: Difficulties integrating digital sales with the existing business strategy (26%), and established procedures and practices (18%).
- About half (52%) of B2B companies have mapped their customers' journey. A majority of these companies have also acted on the work done in terms of how the organization, its processes and its support systems are developed.
- 71% of all companies in the study, regardless of sale strategy, work actively to drive traffic to their website and/or webshop.
- A strong majority of B2B companies measure and follow up on their activities in digital channels, but surprisingly, as many as 38% don't. Most companies tend to focus on top-funnel metrics, such as webshop and website traffic (40%), followed by opened and clicked email (28%). As we move further down the sales funnel, the numbers decrease. Only 12% of B2B companies measure customer satisfaction related to their webshop.
- We believe that data insight is the key to improved customer understanding, a more tailored online offering, efficient processes and, in particular, a profitable digital business. Yet only 13% of B2B companies consider themselves to have a data-driven mindset. 18% collect and analyze data on a weekly or monthly basis.



B2B digital commerce in numbers



B2B companies' digital sales channels



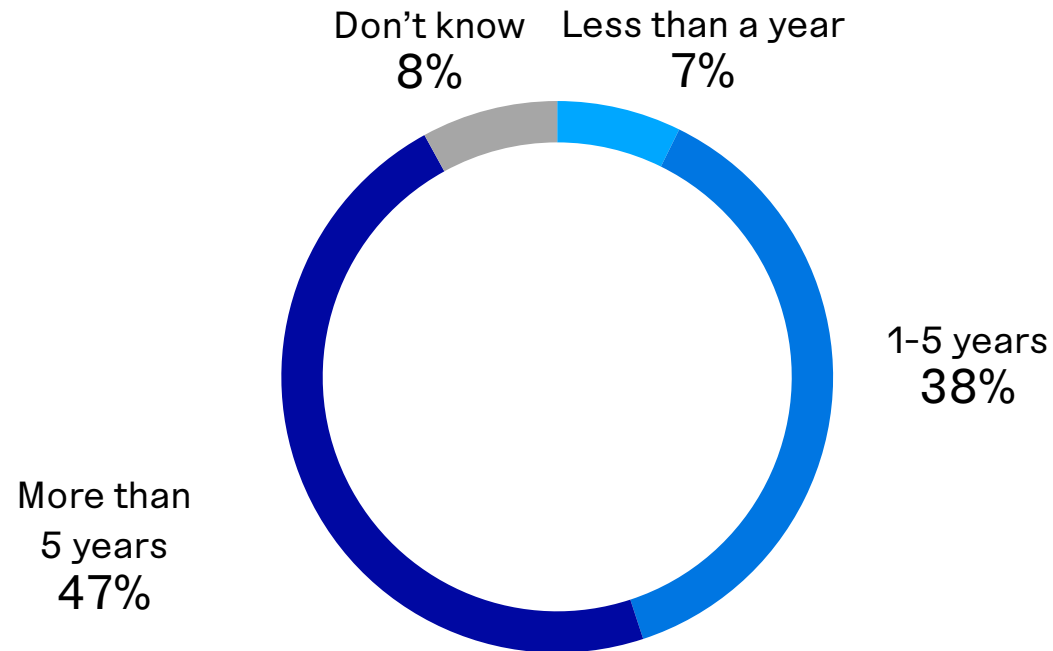
Which digital channels do you use for B2B sales?
Sample: All (846).

65%

of B2B companies use digital channels to enable sales

- A webshop, with or without required login, remains the most popular channel for digital B2B sales. A third (34%) of companies offer one or both options for online purchases.
- This year's study expands the scope to include scenarios where companies *enable* digital interaction without an option to purchase. 17% of B2B companies allow customers to ask for a price or quote online and 10% to browse through a digital product catalog before contacting the company.
- Wholesalers and distributors/resellers remain ahead of manufacturing companies as 83% and 75% respectively use digital channels for sales and sales enablement.
- The flip side is that 35% of companies still do not use digital channels to enable sales; in Denmark as many as 42%.
- Smaller companies continue to lag behind their larger peers as 51% do not use any of the suggested channels for digital sales.

Years with digital sales



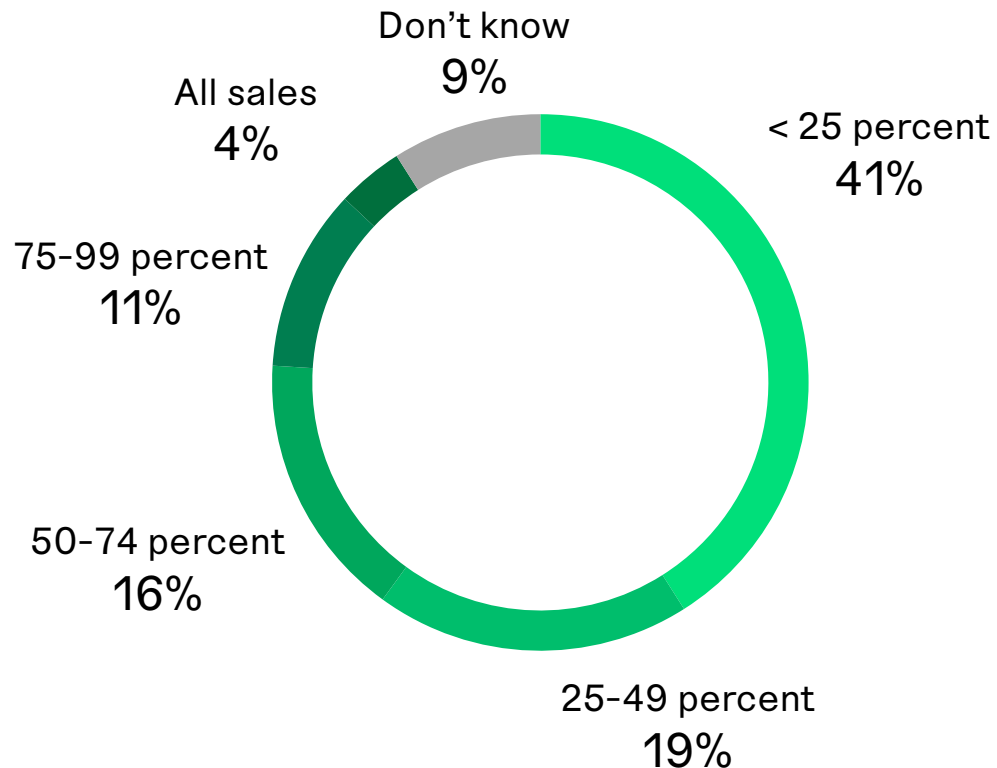
How long have you offered digital sales?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

47%

have supported digital sales for more than five years

- Half of the B2B companies enabling sales through digital channels today have done so for more than five years. Surprisingly, as few as 7% of the companies stated that they have started doing so during the last year.
- There is a notable difference between small and large companies in terms of how long they have enabled sales through digital channels. 19% of smaller businesses (0-20 million in revenue) started with some form of digital sales or sales enablement within the last year. Larger businesses (200 million or more in revenue) have offered digital sales for a longer time on average, 57% for more than five years. This would indicate that smaller companies are beginning to up their game when it comes to digital sales.

Percentage of B2B sales that are digital



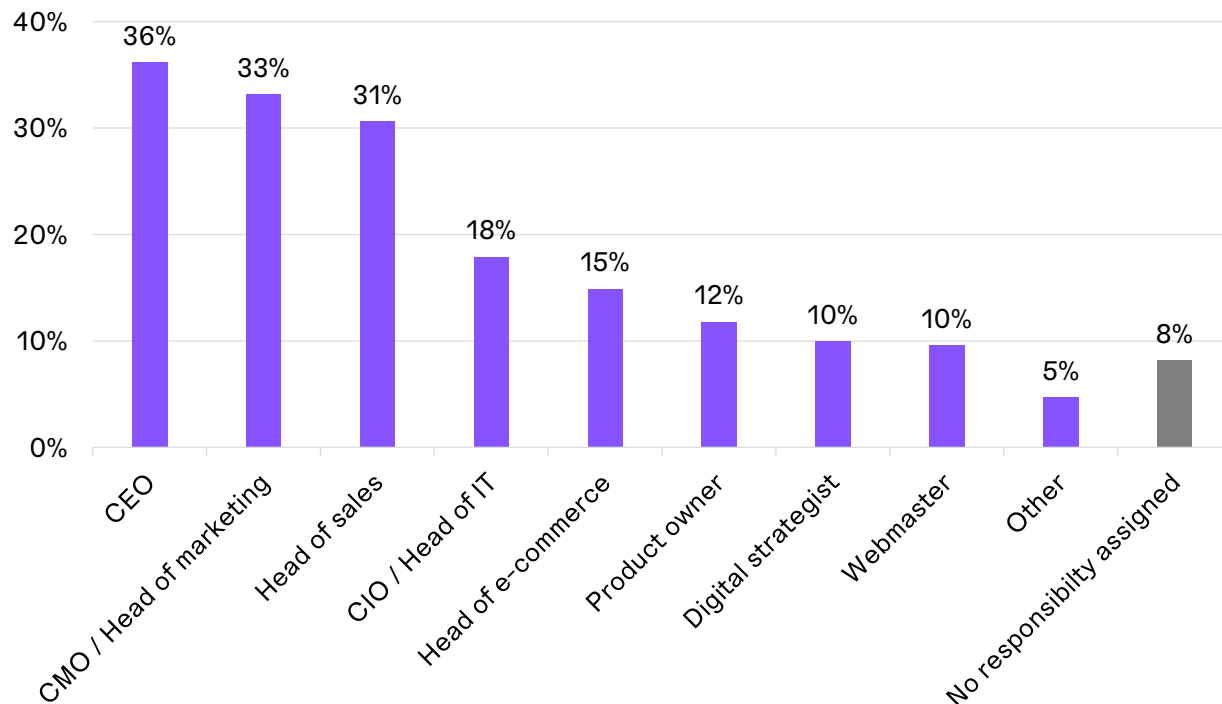
How much of the company's total sales do you estimate are digital?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

50%

of companies do more than
a quarter of their business digitally

- Half of all companies generate a significant part of their revenue, over 25% of total sales, through digital channels.
- As we have seen, larger companies are more active in this area than smaller businesses. It is therefore noteworthy that companies with 0-50 million in revenue are strongly over-represented among those who do *all* their sales through digital channels. This would indicate a trend of small companies leapfrogging larger businesses. They do this by going directly to digital channels rather than building direct sales infrastructure or using resellers.

Who is responsible for B2B companies' digital commerce?



Who is responsible for the company's digital commerce?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

C level

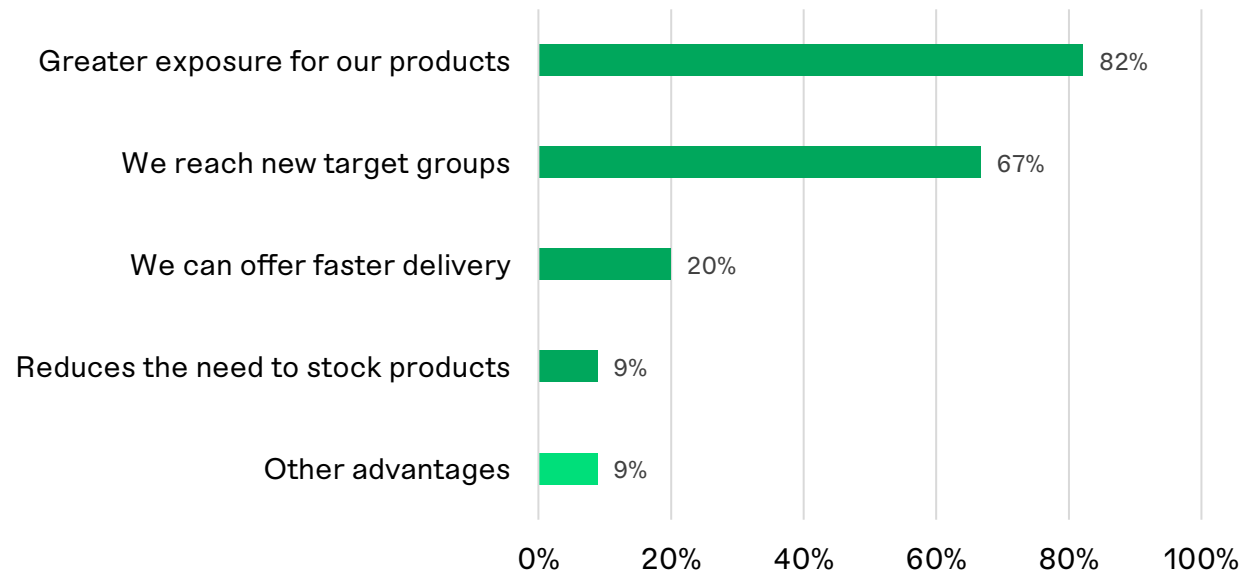
Digital sales – a matter for management in B2B companies

- Digital commerce is a matter for the management team in B2B companies. In a majority of businesses, the overall responsibility lies with one or several of the company CEO, CMO and head of sales. In larger companies, the CMO is more likely to be in charge while the CEO typically takes on this responsibility in smaller companies.
- 15% of B2B companies have a dedicated head of ecommerce, and a digital strategist is responsible in 10%. In larger companies (+200 million in revenue), 25% have a head of ecommerce and 18% a digital strategist. This strengthens the perception of greater digital maturity at larger companies.
- 8% of companies don't have a dedicated person responsible for its digital commerce initiatives and we wonder how this could enable for digital sales performance.

External marketplaces for B2B sales



Advantages of selling through external marketplaces



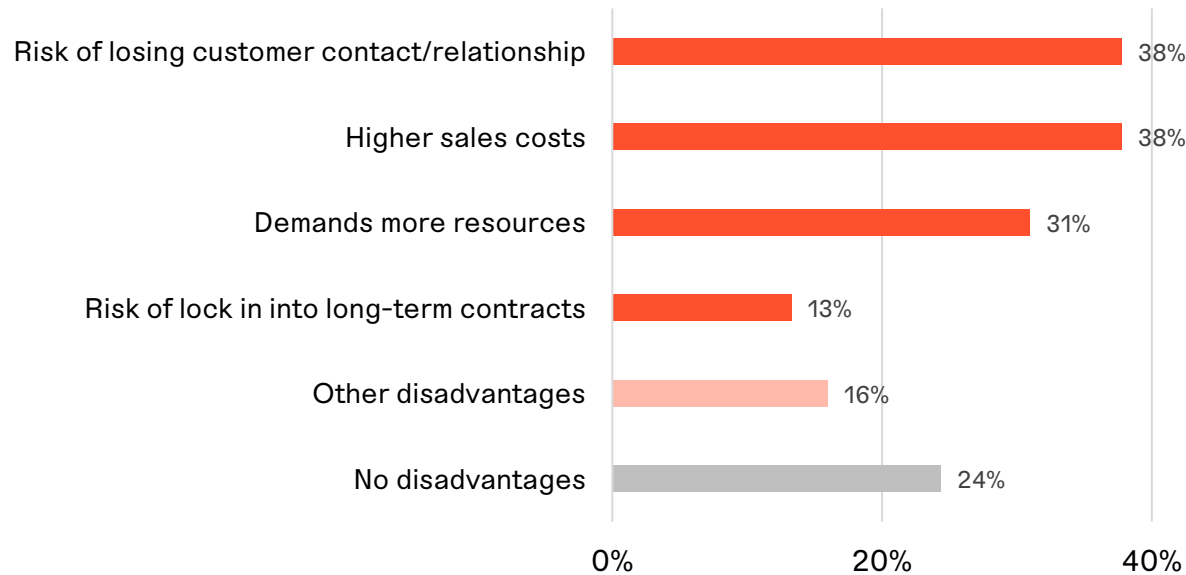
What do you consider the benefits of selling through a marketplace?
Sample: Sells via external marketplaces (45).

82%

choose external marketplaces to increase exposure

- As we have seen, 5% of all B2B companies already engage with external marketplaces to sell their products.
- The two strongest reasons for doing this are to secure greater exposure for their products (82%) and to reach new target groups (67%).

Disadvantages of selling through external marketplaces



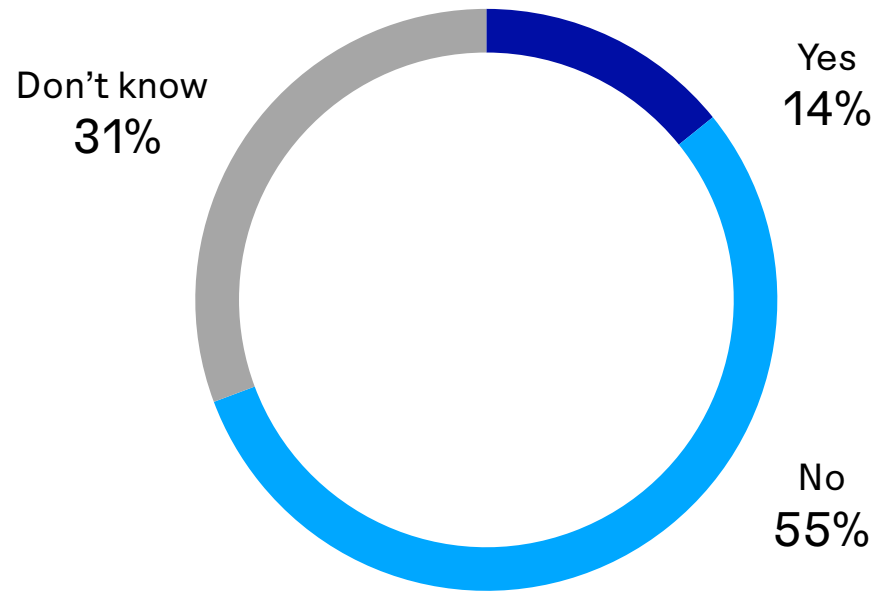
What do you consider the disadvantages of selling through a marketplace?
Sample: Sells via external marketplaces (45).

24%

do not see any disadvantages of selling through external marketplaces

- Over a third (38%) of companies using external markets to drive sales fear the risk of losing customer contact and the same goes for the risk of higher sales costs. The demand for more resources to manage this channel is another strong concern (31%).
- Interestingly, a quarter (24%) of these companies do not see any disadvantages with these external platforms at all. This difference might be due to how well integrated and automated internal processes are within the business itself.

Plans to use external marketplaces



Do you plan to sell all or part of your product range on external marketplaces?
Sample: All that do not sell through external marketplaces (801).

14%

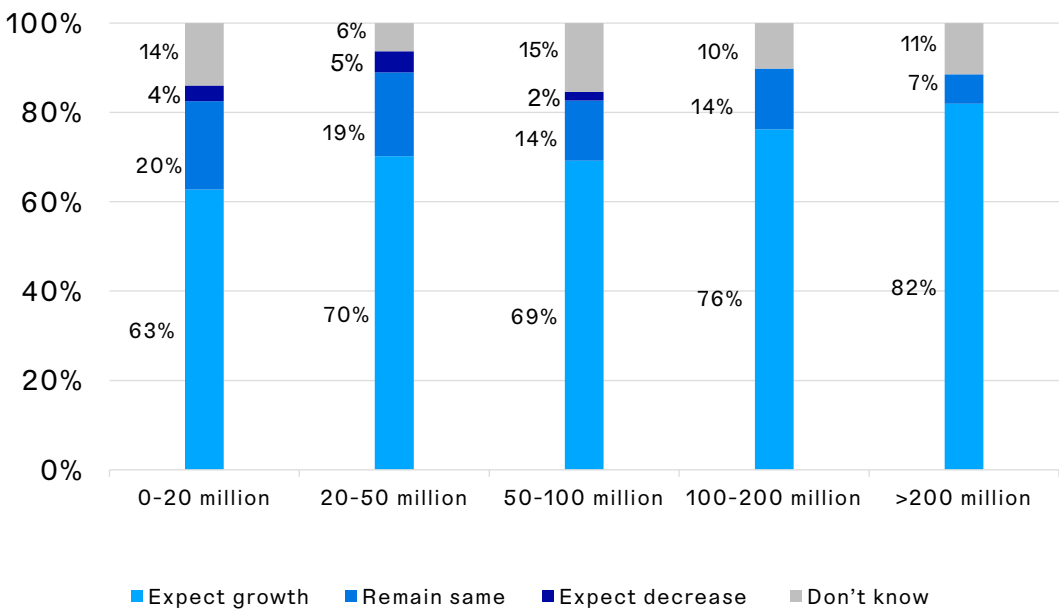
plan to use external marketplaces in the future

- 14% of companies that do not yet use external marketplaces for their B2B sales plan to do so in the future.
- More respondents than in previous years name a specific marketplace where they plan to sell. Amazon comes out on top, named by several respondents as a potential marketplace to use for sales. As many as 19 national marketplaces are mentioned, such as Finn and Blocket. Amazon's launch on the Swedish market appears to have led to increased diversity.
- Danish businesses are more skeptical about using marketplaces, with 67% having no plans to launch on external marketplaces.

The future of Scandinavian B2B commerce



Three-year forecast by company size



82%

of the largest companies expect online sales growth in the coming 3 years

- A majority of B2B companies that are enabling sales through digital channels are optimistic about the future. Overall, 74% predict that their online sales will continue to increase in the coming three years. Wholesalers are more optimistic than the average as 85% expect digitals sales to increase.
- There is also a clear difference in expected sales growth when comparing larger and smaller companies. The larger the company, the greater their expectations of an increase in sales.
- No larger companies (+100 million in revenue) expect their online sales to decrease over time. A larger number of smaller companies expect their digital sales to remain unchanged.

Do you plan to sell all or part of your product range on an external marketplace?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

An overwhelming majority of B2B companies think digital sales will increase in the future, and some note that the pandemic has probably speeded up digitalization. Some respondents believe it will increase as younger digital natives demand it and others because B2B online behavior increasingly resembles B2C buying behavior.

How do you think B2B companies' purchasing behavior will be affected by digital commerce in the future? Sample: All respondents (846)



Faster and easier business, easier to adjust sales, less sluggish flow.

It will increasingly resemble buying behavior in B2C, which requires B2B companies to deliver that type of customer journey.

There will be more and more digital commerce and it will force new solutions.

[We will see] increased demands on the possibility to buy digitally, to be able to tailor their order, quickly see lead times.

Most businesses are planning to improve their existing digital sales platform or webshop in the next few years. Several others are looking to develop their offering and improve across all digital processes.

How does your company plan to develop their digital sales channels in 2021 and on? Please share one or more activities planned for the coming years. Sample: All respondents (846)



[We plan to launch a] a new webshop with more integration.

More automated flow. More channels to market on. Easier conversion for customers. Faster way through the buying funnel.

[Our] main focus is on improvement and development of digital processes.

[We want to] become an easier company to buy from, offer high quality products that customers actually want.

Some of those who think digital sales will neither increase nor decrease put this down to the pandemic. Others are confident that they already have the entire market covered. No plans to develop the company website or the business as a whole was another reason for stagnation in online commerce.

You have stated that the company's digital sales will remain the same. Please tell us why.
Sample: Thought digital sales would remain unchanged (56)

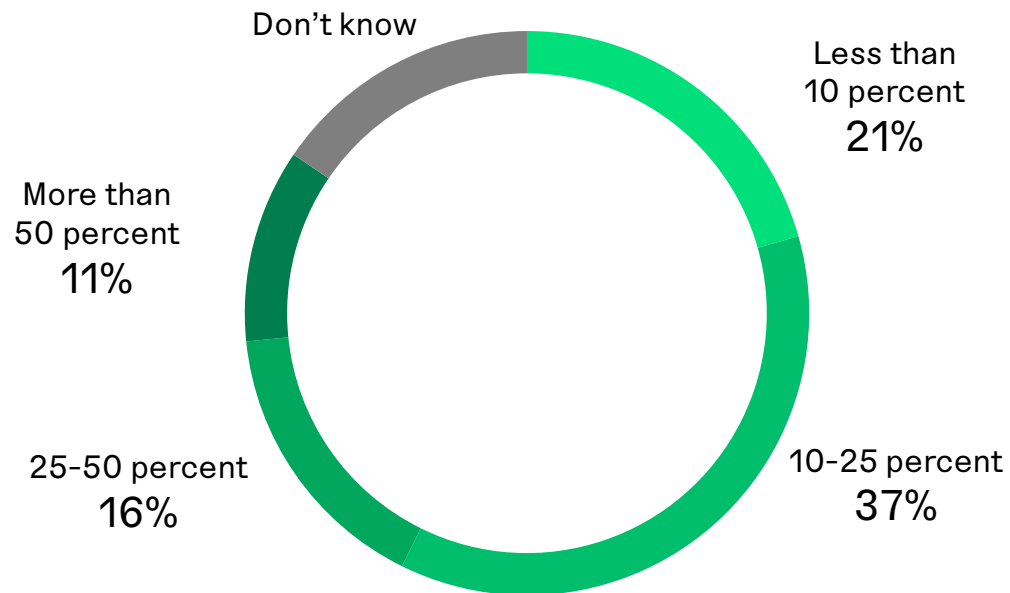


[We expect] increased competition in the industry; large foreign players entering the Swedish market as well.

We use old systems that need to be replaced, so there is not much new development that can drive more sales to the website.

[We have a] solid customer base and positive development so far but expect more competition.

Digital sales growth



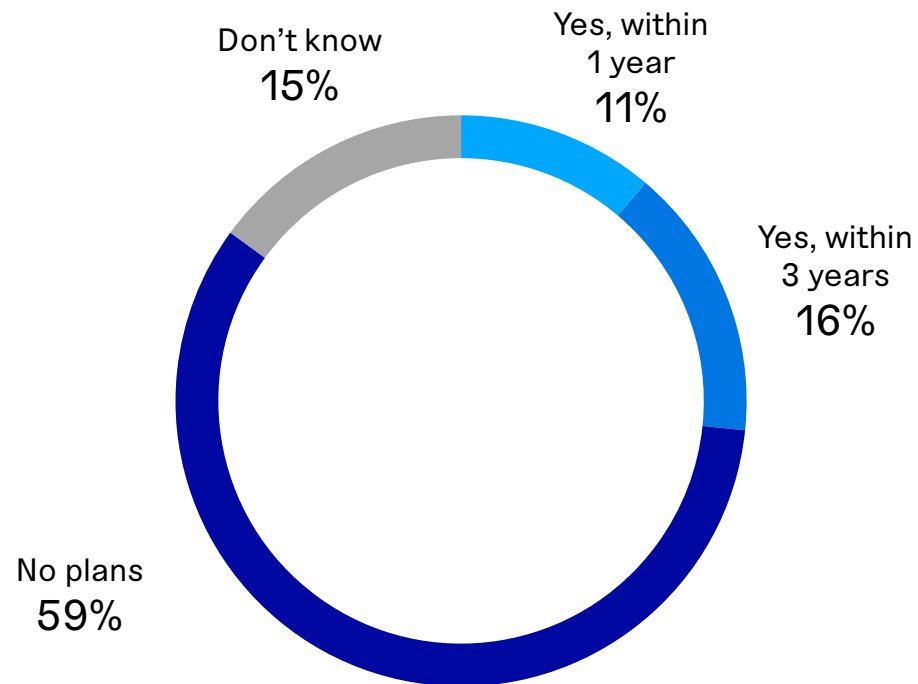
How much do you expect the company's online sales to increase?
Sample: Sells through digital channels B2B and thinks sales will increase (316).

27%

expect online sales to increase by more than 25%

- Almost a third (27%) of B2B companies who sell online today expect to see sales in digital channels significantly increase, by more than 25 percent.
- Smaller businesses (0-20 million in revenue) are positive towards growth in digital sales. 20% of all companies in the segment expect to see an increase of more than 50% for the next year.

Plans for digital commerce at B2B companies without this today



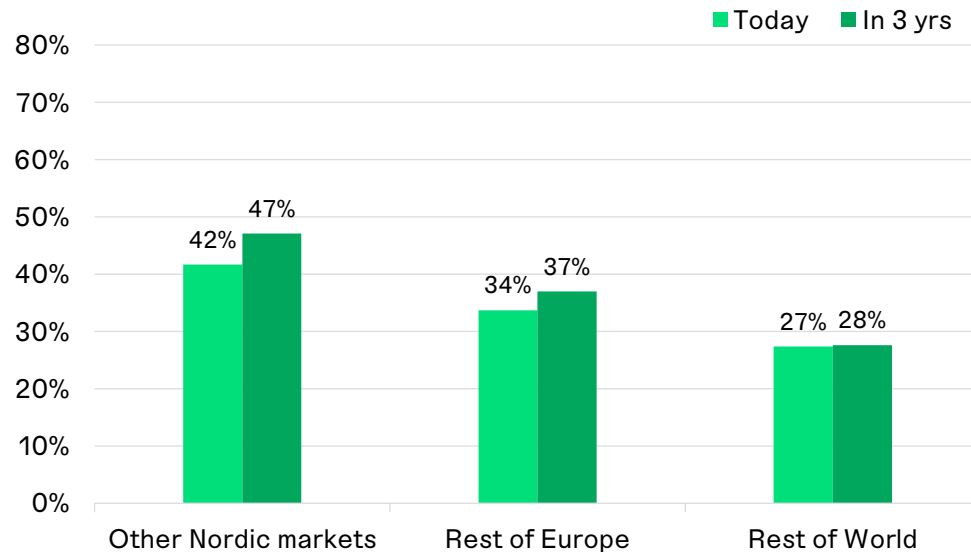
Do you plan to offer digital sales through a webshop/ecommerce solution to your business customers in the future? Sample: Does not currently sell through digital channels (419).

27%

of companies without a webshop plan to offer it within three years

- We can clearly see an increased aim to offer new digital sales channels. 27% of all companies that do not already offer digital sales plan on introducing a webshop/ecommerce solution in 3 years.
- Smaller businesses are in a majority of those who do not plan to start doing commerce online and make up 75% of those without plans.
- Norwegian businesses also appear more resistant to digital commerce as 64% do not have any plans to move their sales online.

Markets for digital sales today and in three years



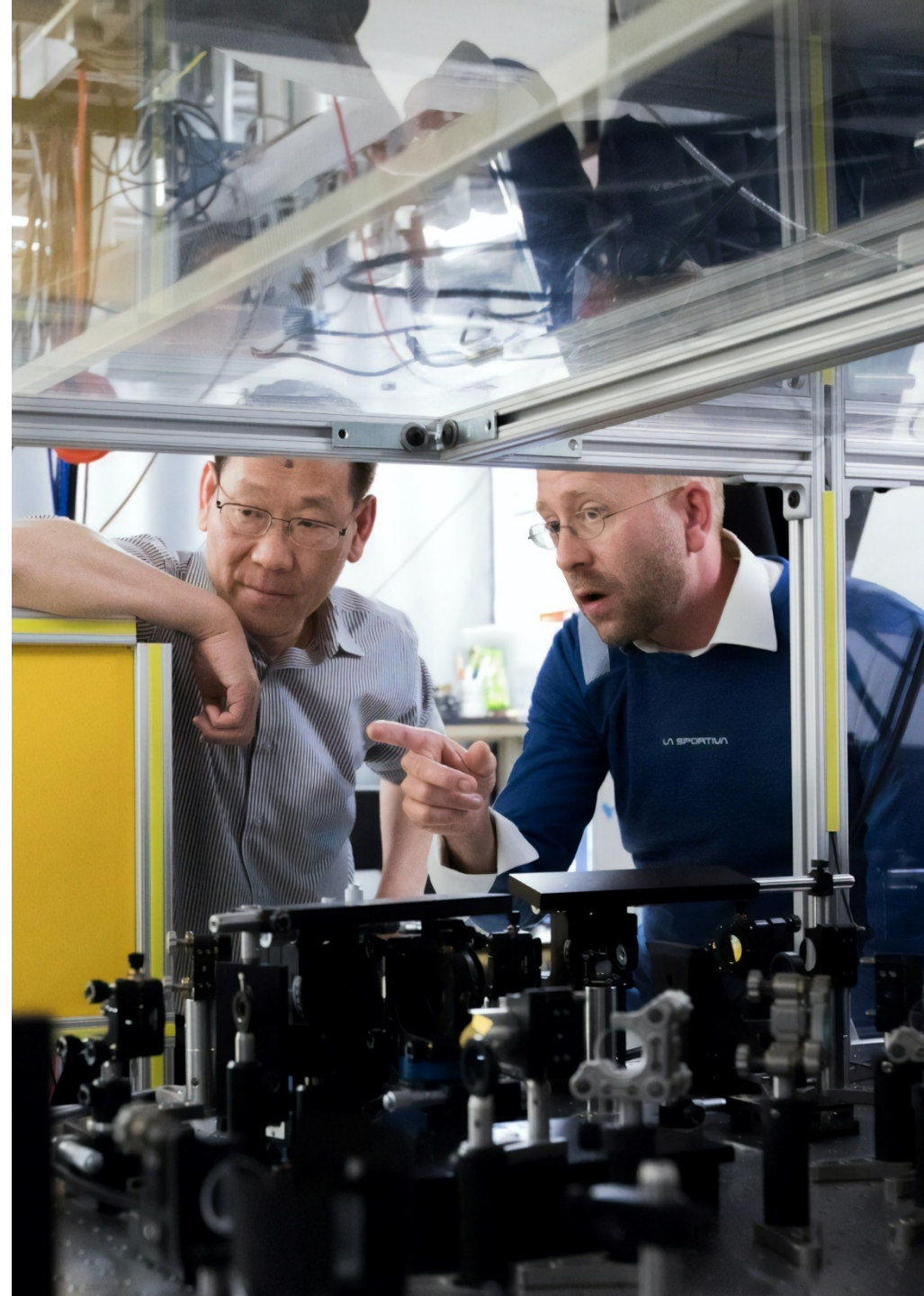
In which markets does your company offer digital sales? /
In which markets do you think your company will offer digital sales in three years?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

37%

of B2B companies expect to sell through digital channels in Europe in 3 years

- Digitalization of sales activities is an important tool for B2B-companies' internationalization. As many as 42% of companies use their digital sales channels today to reach other Nordic markets, 34% Europe and 27% internationally.
- Manufacturing companies are using digital channels to internationalize their business to a greater degree. 51% are doing this in the Nordics, 47% in Europe and 42% internationally.
- Large companies (+200 million in revenue) is the segment with the most international business. 43% of these businesses have sales in the Nordics, 44% in Europe and 39% in the rest of the world.
- Norwegian businesses are less international in their digital sales than their Scandinavian counterparts.

Driving forces, challenges and results



Key driving forces for digital sales



What are the main goals or driving forces for your digital sales?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

40%

Simplifying admin and streamlining sales is the strongest driving force

- For companies already selling over digital channels, the key driving forces are similar across countries, industries and organization sizes. The aim to simplify administration and streamline sales remains the top driver (40%). As in previous years, this indicates that B2B digital sales enablement is largely about reducing internal costs.
- However, making it easier for customers to buy online and meeting customer needs for digital sales are both highlighted by a third of the companies (30%). Another 30% see generating new sales by reaching new markets and customers as a key driving force.

Key driving forces for increased digital sales largely come from customer demand. This includes expectations for easy purchasing, order customization and an overall more automated buying process.

B2B businesses seem to accept that more digital sales might lead to decreased customer contact, but some suggest that they will find a way to combine digital sales with a personal connection.

How do you think B2B companies' purchasing behavior will be affected by digital commerce in the future?
Sample: All respondents (846)



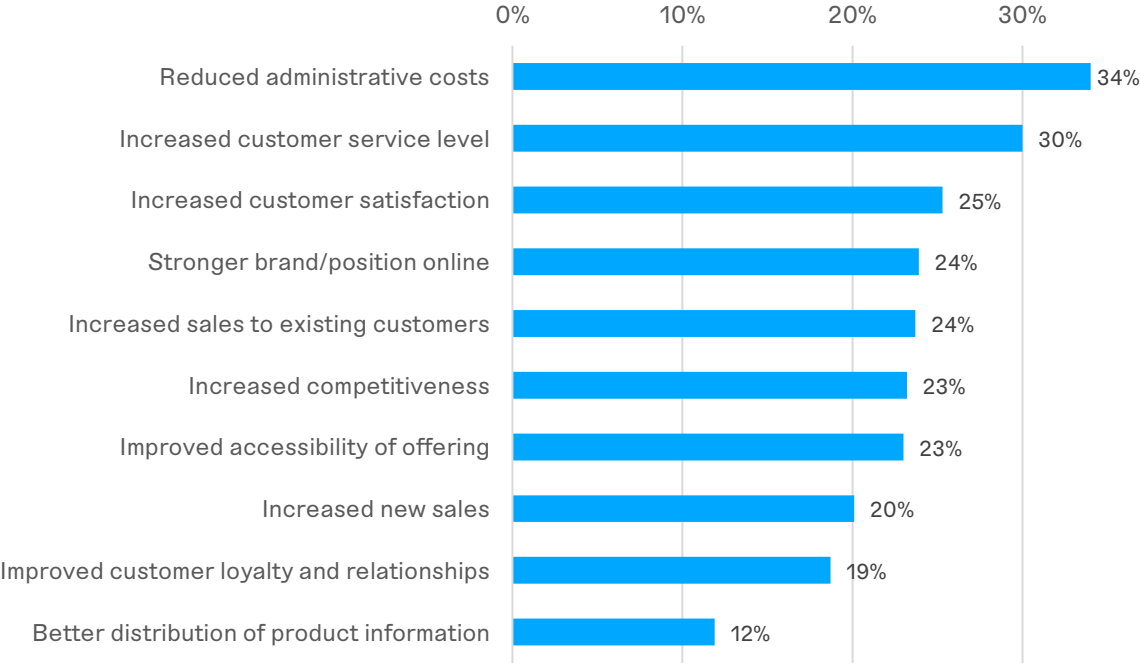
A transformation is needed in how the offering is packaged and communicated before the sharp increase can happen. It requires a user perspective, especially for more complex products, services and systems.

Customers want to know our products better before making the first contact.

B2B buyers increasingly expect automation and integration with their primary suppliers. If you cannot deliver on that, you will be overlooked.

Digital sales will increase, but the guidance and personal follow-up when at a store will still be of great importance.

Most important results from a digital sales investment



Which do you consider to be the most important results of your digital sales investment?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

34%

consider reduced cost for administration the biggest gain

- In this year’s survey, the most important results from digital sales enablement are more evenly spread across more aspects of the business compared to previous years.
- Mirroring the aim to simplify administration and streamline sales, reduced administrative costs is still the biggest gain from a digital sales investment (34%). But businesses have started to acknowledge the impact on other areas: Increased customer satisfaction has gained in relative importance and now ranks as a top three gain (25%).
- Wholesalers express a slightly different view, as 40% see improved accessibility of their offering as most important.

Key driving forces for introducing digital sales



What are the driving forces as you plan to introduce an ecommerce solution for business customers?
Sample: Plans to introduce e-shop (148).

30%

plan to launch ecommerce to increase competitiveness

- The top ranked internal drivers for companies planning to launch an ecommerce solution for business customers are simplifying admin and streamlining sales.
- The greatest differentiator between those who already sell through digital channels and those who plan to is the latter's focus on introducing a new channel to increase competitiveness. This indicates that keeping up with what competitors are doing has emerged as a significant driver for those that are not yet there.

Challenges of launching B2B digital commerce



What do you consider the biggest challenges of B2B digital commerce?
Sample: Does not sell through digital channels (419).

28%

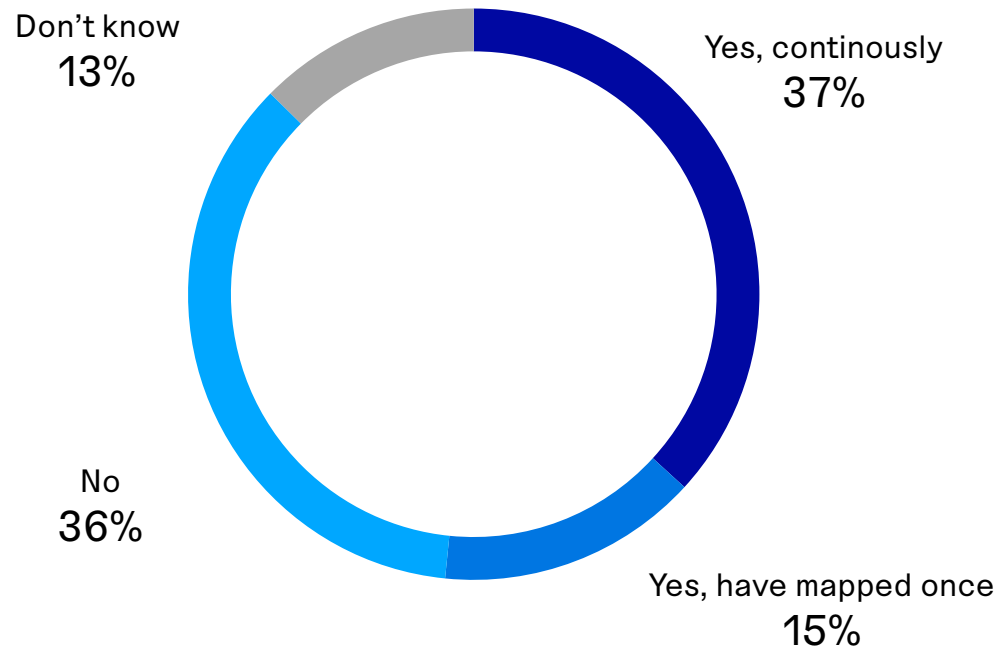
find it challenging to translate personal sales and relationships to digital

- Companies not yet selling through digital channels are concerned with losing their personal relationship with customers when moving to digital commerce.
- The next two top challenges are also directly related to transitioning from one way of doing business to another: Difficulties integrating digital sales with the existing business strategy (26%), and established procedures and practices (18%).
- Larger businesses struggle to a greater degree with established processes when introducing a new way to sell. 21% of large businesses (+200 million in revenue) see this as an issue, whereas it is not a factor for smaller companies. The bigger the organization, the longer it takes to get approval for a strategic decision such as launching digital commerce.
- 24% of companies in the manufacturing sector see integration with existing systems, such as ERP, as a key challenge.

B2B commerce and the customer journey



Understanding the B2B customer journey



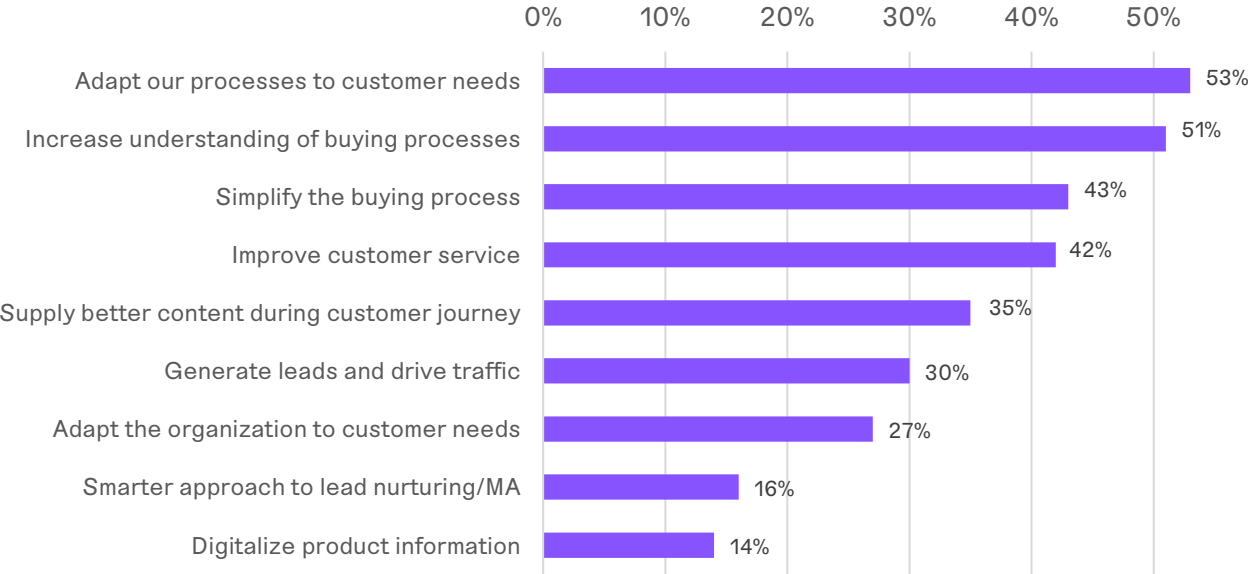
Has your company mapped the customer journey, i.e., where, when and how new and existing customers interact with your company? Sample: All respondents (846)

52%

map the customer journey

- To make the best digital impression on customers and drive sales, we believe that B2B companies need to improve their understanding of the customer journey. This means when, where and how new and existing customers interact with the company. About half (52%) of B2B companies have mapped their customers' journey, representing a strong increase from the previous year (42%).
- While some companies (15%) see this as a one-time effort, 37% continuously work on understanding the customer journey.
- Smaller companies are less likely to have mapped the customer journey. Only 35% of companies with up to 20 million in revenue have done so.

Why B2B companies map the customer journey



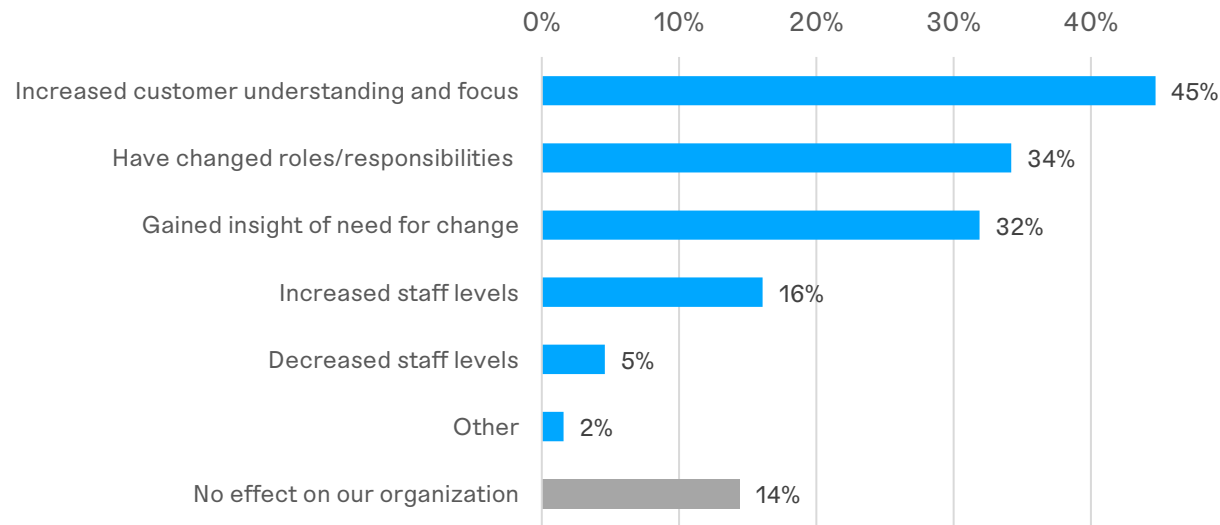
What purpose do you have for mapping the customer journey?
Sample: Has mapped the customer journey once or continuously (436).

53%

consider adapting processes to customer needs the key driving force

- Although a significantly larger number of companies say they map and analyze their customers' journey than the previous year, the reasons remain much the same. The biggest is to adapt processes to customer needs (53%). This goes hand in hand with the second highest goal: to increase understanding of the B2B buying process (51%).
- As we can tell from the following charts, a majority of the companies have also acted on the work done in terms of how the organization, its processes and its support systems are developed.

The customer journey: impact on the organization



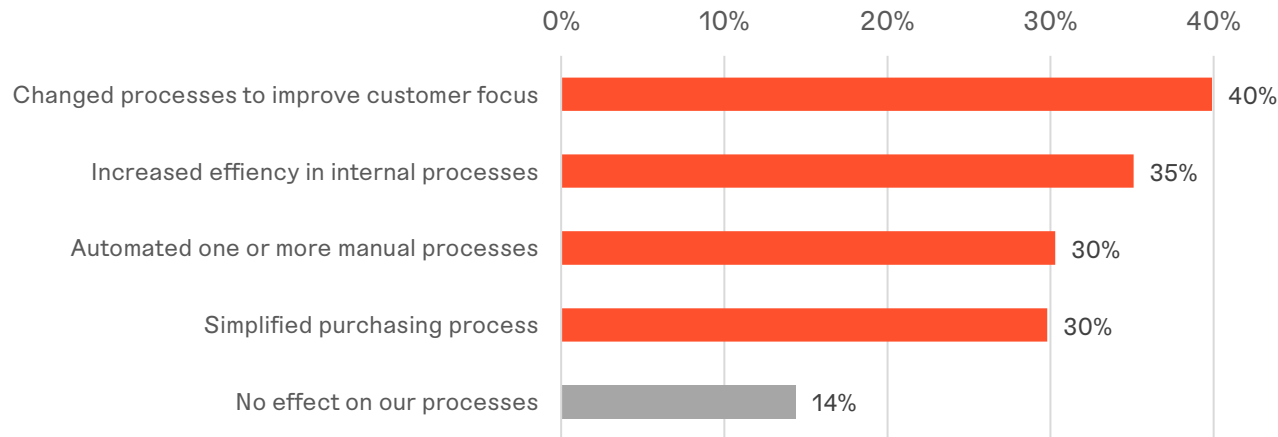
You responded that your company mapped the customer journey, i.e. where, when and how both new and existing customers interact with your company. State how it affects your company's organization. Sample: Has mapped customer journey once or continuously (436).

45%

have a greater customer focus

- A majority of the companies that have mapped the customer journey have also acted on their findings. Only 14% say that the work has had no impact on their organization.
- The most significant effect is that companies have increased their customer understanding and have a clearer customer focus (45%). About a third (34%) have changed roles and responsibilities in their organizations as a result, while another third (32%) have gained insight into a need for change.
- Some differences can also be seen when comparing different company sizes. Larger companies are more likely to hire more staff (22%). On the other hand, smaller organizations are less likely than average to change roles and responsibilities within the organization (22%).

The customer journey: impact on processes



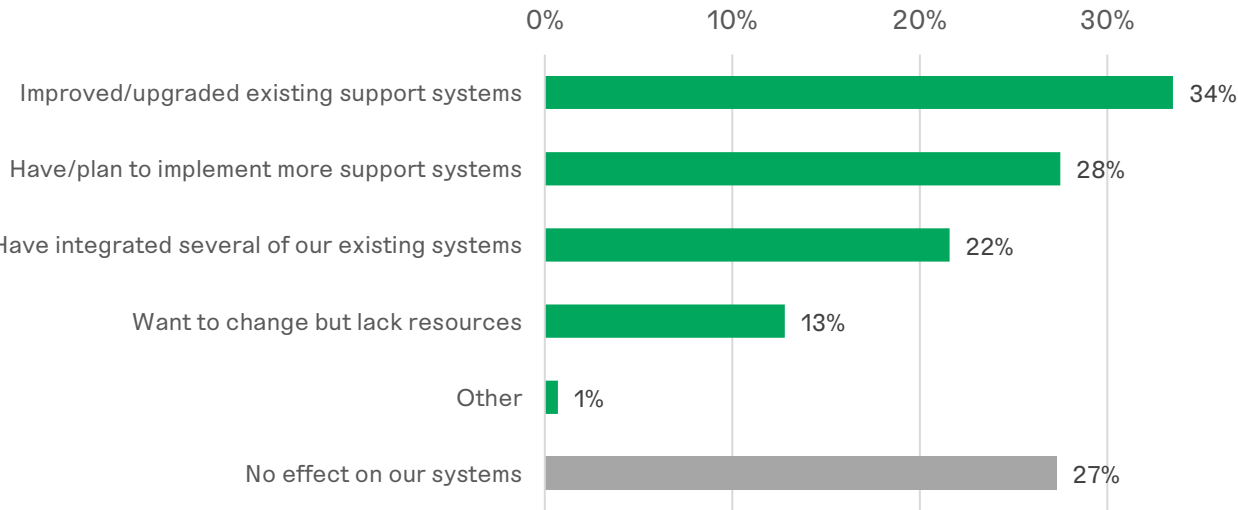
You responded that your company mapped the customer journey, i.e. where, when and how both new and existing customers interact with your company. State how it affects your company's processes. Sample: Has mapped customer journey once or continuously (436).

40%

have more customer-focused processes

- Mapping the customer journey led to changes in processes for 84% of B2B companies. The primary focus has been on changing processes to improve customer focus (40%).
- In 2021, automation seems to be the word on everyone's lips. 75% of larger companies (+100 million in revenue) have automated one or more processes as a result of their work on the customer journey. However, the trend is far less apparent in smaller business (0-20 million in revenue), with only 15% automating their processes.
- Wholesalers have the greatest focus on making it easier for the customer to purchase (42%), with only 24% of manufacturing companies sharing this focus.

The customer journey: impact on support systems



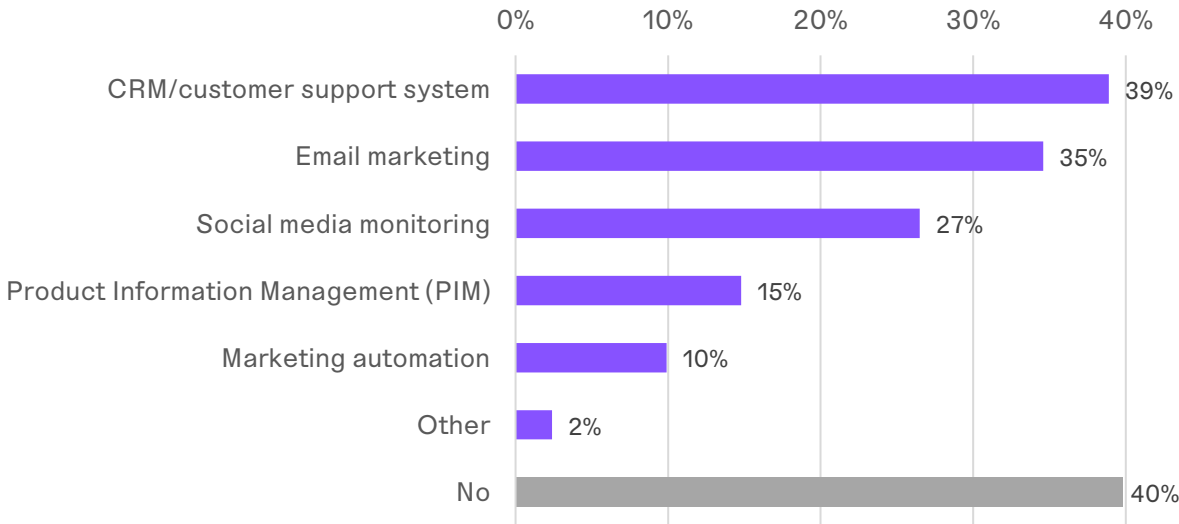
27%

see no effect on support systems

- The area that has generally attracted less attention from companies after analyzing their customers’ journeys is support systems. 27% of the companies reported no effect on this area.
- However, as we have seen, a significant number of larger businesses (+200 million in revenue) have automated their processes after mapping the customer journey. This is accompanied by a clear trend toward investing more in systems to support the buyer’s journey. As many as 43% have improved or upgraded their existing systems, 34% have implemented more support systems, and 30% have integrated their systems.

You responded that your company mapped the customer journey, i.e. where, when and how both new and existing customers interact with your company. State how it affects your company’s support systems.
Sample: Has mapped customer journey once or continuously (436).

Improving the customer experience



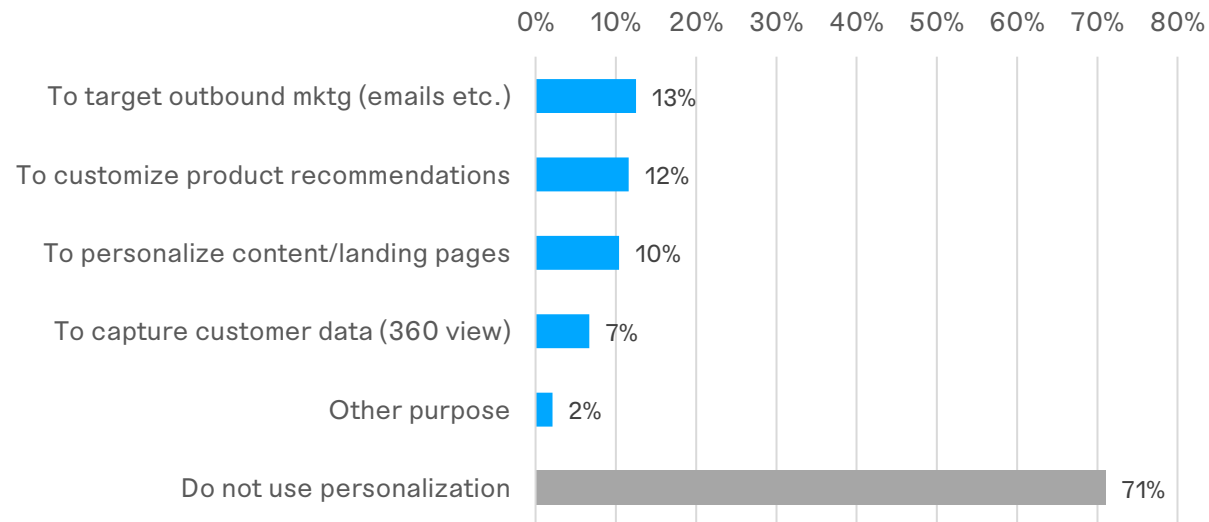
Do you use any of the following to enhance the digital customer experience?
Sample: All (846)

60%

use some form of system to improve the digital customer experience

- 39% of all B2B companies are using a CRM or customer support system to enhance the digital customer experience. Only 10% of the companies use a marketing automation solution for this purpose.
- The overall trend of larger companies being more progressive holds true here as well. 55% of larger companies (+200 million in revenue) have a CRM, 33% use social media monitoring and 27% use a Product Information Management (PIM) solution.
- By contrast, as many as 63% of smaller companies (0-20 million in revenue) still do not have any system in place to support and improve the digital customer experience.

How B2B companies personalize the digital customer experience



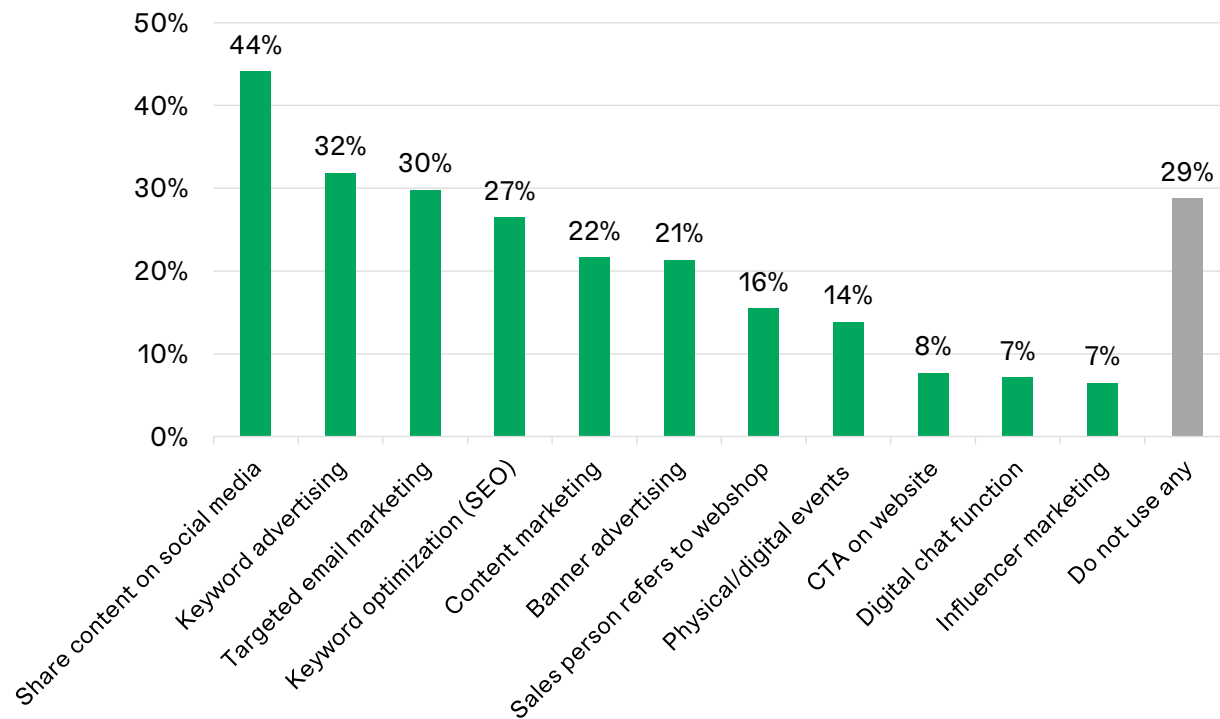
Does your company use any solutions for personalization?
Sample: Enables sales through digital channels (427)

71%

do not use personalization

- While a majority of B2B companies use systems to support the customer experience online, only a few companies have adopted personalization to tailor the digital customer experience (29%). The primary tool for this involves targeted outbound activities such as email marketing.
- Smaller companies are even less likely to personalize, with only 17% of companies with 0-20 million in revenue and 21% with 20-50 million in revenue doing so.

Driving traffic and converting visitors to customers



How do you work to drive digital traffic to your website and/or webshop and convert visitors to customers?
Sample: All respondents (846).

71%

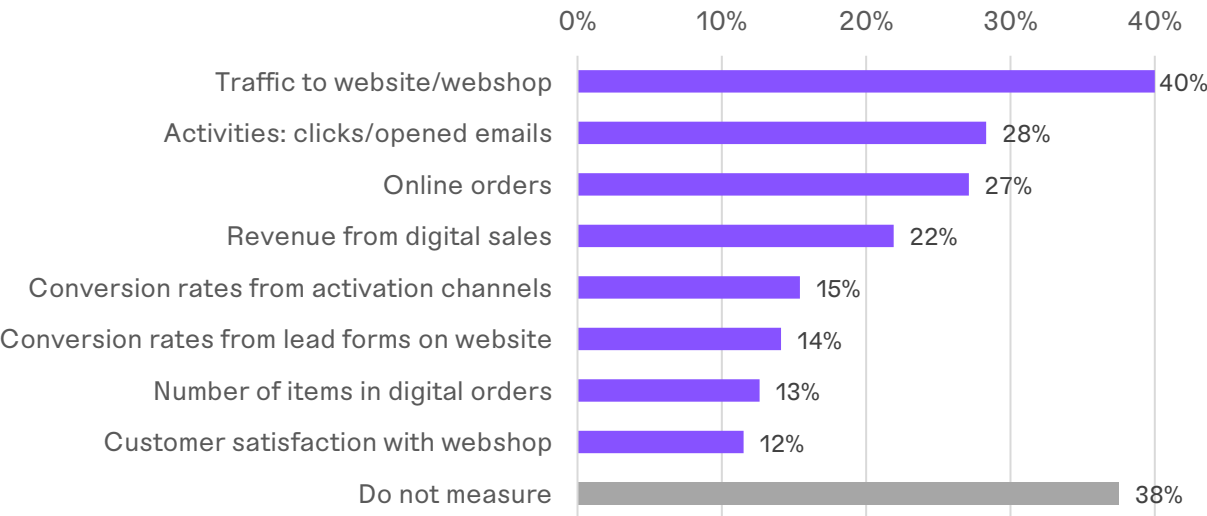
actively drive traffic to their website

- A majority of businesses (71%), regardless of sales strategy, work actively to drive traffic to their website and/or webshop. Still, there is a noticeable difference between the different business sectors.
- Wholesalers are taking the lead here as well with 81% actively working on driving traffic and sales. In this segment, 47% use keyword advertising (such as Google Ads), 38% actively use SEO and 46% rely on email marketing. 15% also have a digital chat function implemented to guide customers through the purchasing process. Our conclusion is that manufacturing companies can clearly benefit by taking a cue from the wholesale segment.

The data-driven organization



Measuring and evaluating digital customer interactions



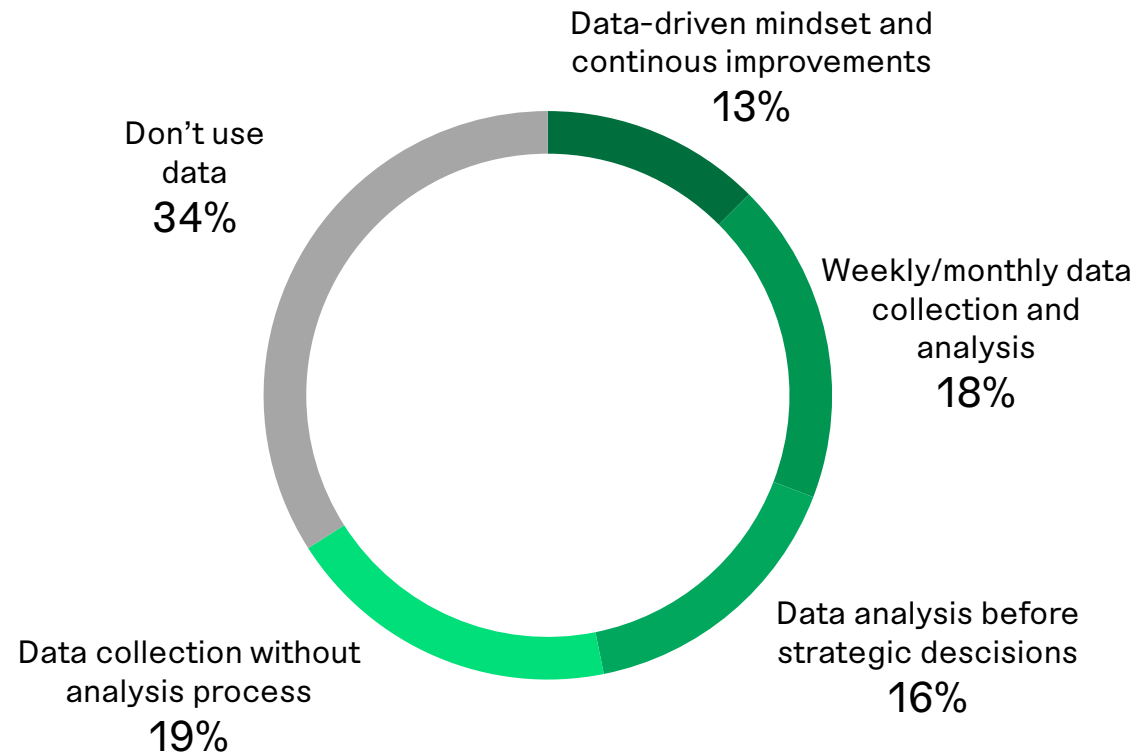
How do you measure and evaluate your digital interactions with customers?
Sample: All respondents (846)

38%

do not measure and evaluate their activities

- A strong majority of B2B companies measure and follow up on their activities in digital channels, but surprisingly, as many as 38% don't. 60% of smaller businesses (0-20 million in revenue) don't measure at all.
- Most companies tend to focus on top-funnel metrics, such as webshop and website traffic (40%), followed by opened and clicked email (28%). As we move further down the sales funnel, the numbers decrease.
- Wholesalers are generally better at following up on their activities: 73% track some sort of KPIs for their digital business, with number of digital orders as the top metric (48%).

Data-driven businesses



How do you use data to develop your offering and digital channels?
Sample: All respondents (846)

47%

actively use data to develop
their offering and digital channels

- Continuous improvement supported by sound data analysis should be essential to all companies engaging in some form of online sales. Data insight is the key to improved customer understanding, a more tailored online offering, efficient processes and, in particular, a profitable digital business. Yet only 13% of B2B companies consider themselves to have a data-driven mindset. 18% collect and analyze data on a weekly or monthly basis while 16% do it prior to major decisions.
- The bigger company, the stronger their focus on data. 21% of larger businesses (+200 million in revenue) apply a data-driven mindset and 22% gather and analyze their data weekly/monthly.
- Only 5% of small businesses (0-20 million in revenue) have a data-driven mindset, and 58% still don't use their data at all, leaving plenty of room for improvement.

About Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021

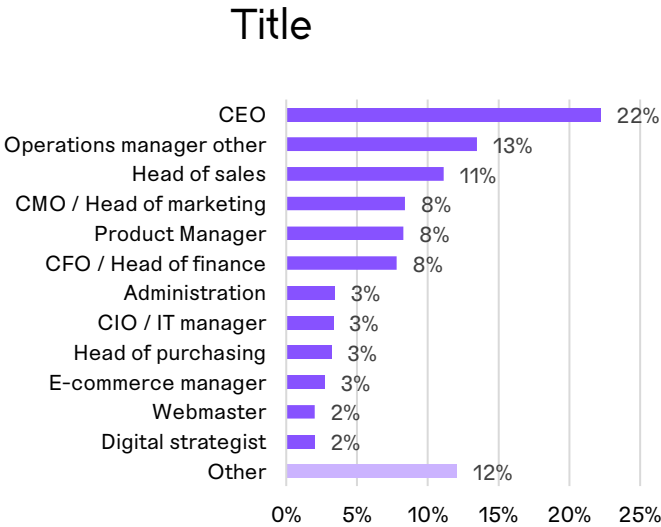
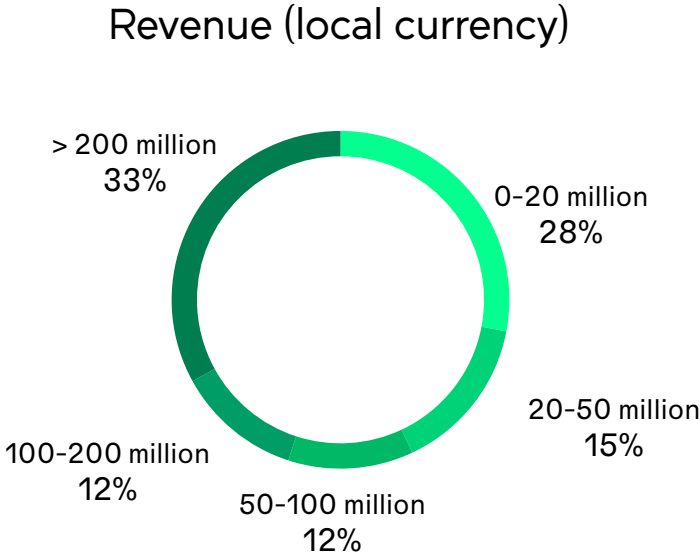
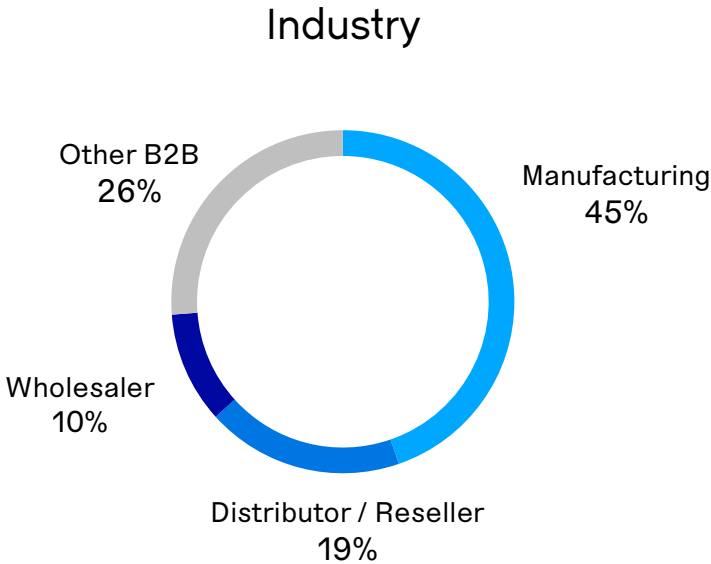
The Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021 study was conducted by Litium in February-March 2021. As a foundation for the quantitative part of the survey, nine in-depth interviews were conducted with Scandinavian B2B companies in different industries. The main study was then run as a web survey sent out to a selection of companies in combination with a panel of decision makers at B2B companies in

the Scandinavian countries – Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

The results presented in the report are based on 846 qualified responses, consisting of 435 respondents from Sweden, 207 from Denmark and 204 from Norway. 82% of the companies sell directly to corporate customers while the others sell to consumers or corporate

customers through resellers. 35% also sell directly to consumers.

This year’s report is the fifth edition. As in previous years, B2B agency Crescando has led the project in cooperation with research firm Norstat.





Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021 The B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder

The B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder is based on the analysis of the 2021 Scandinavian B2B Commerce survey, the fifth edition of Litium's annual survey of digital commerce between companies (B2B). The study was conducted during March 2021, combining in-depth interviews and a digital survey targeting B2B decision makers in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder is based on responses from 511 selected companies in the main survey.

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The B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder

The **B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder** is based on the analysis of the 2021 Scandinavian B2B Commerce survey. It dives deep into the findings from both nine in-depth interviews and the extensive data set collected in the quantitative study to understand how B2B companies are transitioning from a more traditional sales model to one where they seize the benefits of digitalization.

Establishing the maturity ladder

B2B commerce involves a range of channels and possibilities for companies to either sell or to enable sales through digital channels. As seen in the main report, the channels span from digital product catalogues, webshops with or without login, external marketplaces, to integration via EDI or to customer purchasing portals. For this section of the report, companies that neither sell through any of these channels nor plan on establishing a commerce platform in the foreseeable future, (representing in total 255 companies out of 846) are left aside

The analysis further reveals a smaller group of companies that offer digital sales through channels that are not integrated to the company's website or ecommerce platform. Instead, they are selling via EDI, through a direct integration with contracted customers' purchasing portals, or through external marketplaces, such as Amazon or Alibaba. As our objective is to learn about the development path for a company's own digital sales channel, we have not included these 80 companies in the Maturity Ladder.

Five segments from getting ready to flying

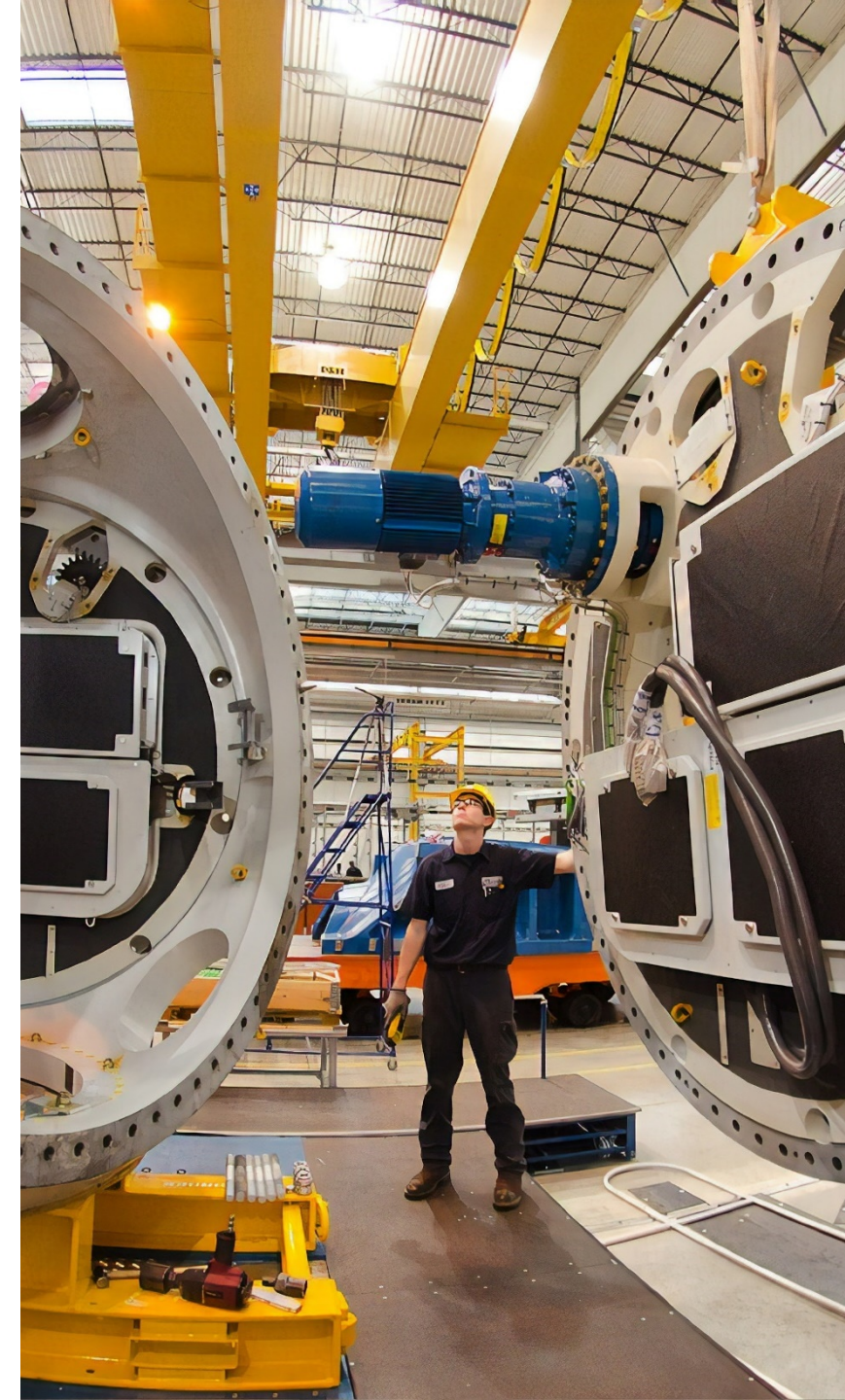
The result from our deep dive into the remaining 511 companies is the B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder, presenting five different segments, each at its own maturity level on the ladder. The ladder starts with companies not yet engaging in digital sales but planning to do so in the near future, and ends with those offering full-blown online commerce solutions, with a dedicated data-driven mindset.



As we move up the ladder, the maturity level of our B2B companies increases not only in terms of digital sales activities and the number of digital sales channels used, but also in how active they are in analyzing their customers' journey, how they market their offering in digital channels, use different systems to support the digital experience and how they leverage data to continuously develop their offering and digital channels.

- **Step 1: Getting ready (8%)** – Companies that have not yet engaged in digital sales but plan to launch a webshop based on a full-blown ecommerce solution in the coming three years.
- **Step 2: Walking (36%)** – Companies that do not offer a digital sales channel but enable sales in its digital channels by providing the option to browse a digital product catalogue on the web before contacting the company or to request a price or offer online.
- **Step 3: Running (32%)** – Companies that enable their business customers to buy through a professional webshop/ecommerce solution. Digital sales is seen as an important complement to more traditional B2B sales channels.
- **Step 4: Sprinting (15%)** – Digital sales and the company ecommerce solution is an integrated and important component of the company's business and sales strategy. Digital sales are supported through sound marketing in digital channels.
- **Step 5: Flying (10%)** – Ecommerce is at the core of the company's business model and represents a significant share of all sales. Data and continuous business analysis are seen as essential to developing the business.

The distribution of companies among the five segments is similar across Scandinavia. The exception is segment 4: Sprinting, which is overrepresented in Sweden and underrepresented in Denmark.



Choose your final destination

The aim of the Maturity Ladder is to share insights that allow B2B companies at different stages of the digital sales development to benchmark their efforts against others. However, we do not think that the maturity ladder should be seen as the complete guide to how each and every company should develop their approach to digital sales or sales enablement. Every company should rather assess what level on the ladder is the best destination for their business.

”

The most important thing is to get started. Digital marketing and ecommerce – it's a huge area. Prioritize and get started!

”

The first step might not be to integrate the ERP-system and start selling online but rather to start with a digital product catalogue. Or to start blogging and create landing pages to drive traffic.

”

Our salespeople view the website as a complement, not a competitor. We become more efficient as we reduce workloads for both inside sales and customer support.

”

Availability and efficiency are our main drivers. There are so many persons involved in a B2B purchase and we need to simplify the process. If we succeed, it will be easier to buy from us and customer loyalty will increase.



The B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder

	1. Getting ready	2. Walking	3. Running	4. Sprinting	5. Flying
Share of total	8%	36%	32%	15%	10%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No digital sales channel implemented, planning for ecommerce • Limited focus on customer online experience • Starting out with digital marketing • Measurements focused on top-funnel KPI:s • Limited focus on data and analytics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling sales through digital product catalogue and/or offering online • Sales channels integrated into ERP and/or CRM system • Basic focus on digital marketing • Digital solutions focused on leads, rather than sales • Measurements focused on marketing conversions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company ecommerce solution implemented • Digital sales seen as a complement to personal sales • Wider use of marketing tools to drive and convert traffic • Increased focus on measuring sales in digital channels • Limited overall focus on data collection and analytics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital sales an integrated part of company business strategy • Customer journey in focus to improve digital presence • Focus on optimizing digital sales and marketing performance • KPI:s include focus on sales and customer satisfaction metrics • Data-driven mindset for continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital sales vital to company's overall business performance • Ecommerce solution fully integrated into business processes and systems • Strong focus on customer journey to improve offering and digital channels • High level of maturity in terms of activating offering and brand in digital channels • Data driven organizations with focus on continuous improvements
Average no. of digital sales channels	0	1.6	1.7	1.8	2.0
Mapped customer journey	51%	59%	54%	62%	90%
Average no. of solutions supporting digital experience	1.2	1.5	1.7	1.8	3.0
Average no. of marketing channels	2.3	2.8	3.1	3.1	4.8
Average no of KPI:s	1.1	1.7	2.6	3.3	4.6

Sample: Companies selling or planning to sell through own digital channels (511).
For details on the variables, see p. 17.

Segment 1: Getting ready (8%)

Embarking on the digital journey and planning for digital sales

The first segment, at the first step of the maturity ladder, includes companies that do not yet enable their customers to buy through digital channels but that are *Getting ready* to start climbing the digital sales ladder. They do this by planning to launch a webshop, an ecommerce solution, in the coming three years.

41% of the B2B companies in this segment state that they will introduce ecommerce within one year, the rest within three years. The main drivers for this are to increase customer service levels and increase new sales by reaching new markets and new customers. Almost a third of the companies (31%) also say that they will start selling their offering on external marketplaces.

Understanding the customer journey – a side business

At the first step of the ladder, companies are obviously behind the rest of the segments when it comes to digitalizing their sales. They are also generally at a lower level when it comes to other aspects of digitalizing their business in terms of marketing or data analytics. About half of the companies have mapped their customer journey but, so far, this has had a fairly limited impact on their digital sales and marketing activities.

Limited focus on supporting the online experience

Companies that are *Getting ready* use an average of 1.2 systems or applications to support their customers’ digital experience. A CRM solution is the most common, but still only deployed by about half (54%) of the companies. A large majority of the companies are not using any system to personalize the customer experience in digital channels.

	1. Getting ready
Share of total	8%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No digital sales channel implemented, planning for ecommerce• Limited focus on customer online experience• Starting out with digital marketing• Measurements focused on top-funnel KPI:s• Limited focus on data and analytics
Average no. of digital sales channels	0
Mapped customer journey	51%
Average no. of solutions supporting digital experience	1.2
Average no. of marketing channels	2.3
Average no of KPI:s	1.1

In the starting blocks of digital marketing

Despite not selling online, companies in this segment have started to engage customers through digital marketing. Their most common activities are to share content in social media, linking back to the company website (used by 56% of the companies) or to use search engine marketing such as Google Ads (41%). Again, this places the companies in the *Getting ready* segment at an entry level compared to the other segments when it comes to digital marketing.

Measuring top-funnel activities with limited data focus

When measuring and evaluating their activities and customer interaction in digital channels, these companies tend to focus on metrics and KPIs in the top of the sales funnel. It's most popular to track the number of visitors to the company's website (46%) or clicks and openings in e-mails sent (26%).

As a matter of fact, *Getting ready*-companies are not data driven. 39% state they do not use data to develop their offer or digital channels. A third (33%) say they collect data on a regular basis but that they do not have a clear process for how to analyze it, indicating room for improvement.

An opportunity for benchmarking to develop digital presence

As B2B companies are *Getting ready* to digitalize their sales activities and online presence, there is a clear opportunity to learn from other B2B companies in the same field when it comes to marketing and selling online. Although all companies on the segment have stated that they will launch ecommerce in the coming years, next step on this ladder could be to introduce a digital product catalogue, supported by a professional Product Information Management (PIM) system. Others start by offering the possibility to ask for a price or quote online, before the personal dialog takes over.



Segment 2: Walking (36%)

Establishing a foundation for digital sales and marketing

The name *Walking* indicates that companies in the second segment have started their journey towards digital commerce. Although they do not yet offer a digital sales channel in terms of a webshop or ecommerce solutions, they still *enable* sales in their digital channels. They do this by allowing customers to request a price or a quote online (75% of the companies) or to browse a digital product catalogue on the web before contacting the company (48%). About a third of the companies on the ladder are found in this segment.

Close to half of the companies (48%) plan to introduce a webshop in the coming years. The main driver for this is, as for most companies in the study, to simplify administration and increase sales efficiency. However, what sets this segment apart is a stronger drive than average to launch ecommerce to increase new sales by reaching new markets and customers.

Some of the companies currently use other digital channels such as direct integrations with customer purchasing portals, using EDI or selling through external marketplaces. The *Walking* companies use an average of 1.6 different channels to sell or enable sales online, including a digital product catalogue or the possibility to request a quote online. Overall, digital sales still represents a smaller part of the company’s sales revenue.

Supporting digital customer interaction through systems integration

About two thirds of the companies (63%) in the *Walking*-segment state that they have integrated their solution for digital sales or sales enablement with another system. As we have seen for the whole study, ERP and CRM system integrations rank on top.

Companies in the segment support the digital customer experience with an average of 1.5 different systems or applications. Those most frequently used are a CRM system (48%), closely followed by email marketing (44%).

	2. Walking
Share of total	36%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling sales through digital product catalogue and/or offering online• Sales channels integrated into ERP and/or CRM system• Basic focus on digital marketing• Digital solutions focused on leads, rather than sales• Measurements focused on marketing conversions
Average no. of digital sales channels	1.6
Mapped customer journey	59%
Average no. of solutions supporting digital experience	1.5
Average no. of marketing channels	2.8
Average no of KPI:s	1.7

Stepping up digital marketing activities

Walking-segment (step 2) companies are more active than the *Getting starters* (step 1) in marketing their offering in digital channels to drive traffic and sales. An average of 2.8 channels are used. The most popular are sharing content on social media (51%) and search engine marketing (41%) followed by targeted email marketing and campaigns (33%).

Measuring top-funnel activities but limited data focus

When it comes to measuring and following up on the digital activities, the companies on step two are also more sophisticated than their peers on step one as they also measure conversions in the funnel to a greater degree. 20% follow up on conversions in terms of filled-out website forms, and 17% measure conversion rates in channels such as social media, email and advertising.

In the *Walking*-segment, still only a small share of the companies (12%) claim to have a data-driven mindset and continuously use data to learn and develop. A third of the companies (29%) state that they do not use data at all to develop their offering and digital channels while another quarter of the companies (24%) collect data but do not have a process for how to use it.

Seeing the opportunity for digitalization and progress

In conclusion, companies in step two have seen the value and importance of digitalizing their business, which is manifested through the opportunity for customers to interact through digital channels. Companies have also taken steps in terms of marketing and data analysis but there is clearly room for further improvement to digitalize sales and marketing – and, in particular, to build a solid structure and processes for following up on the results and continue to improve the work.



Segment 3: Running (32%)

Improving customer interaction with integrated ecommerce

The third step on the maturity ladder has been named *Running* since it represents B2B companies that have a clear agenda for digitalizing their business. They have made it possible for other companies to buy directly from their own webshop, through an ecommerce solution. 58% of the companies provide a webshop where customers are required to log in to purchase while 54% provide an open webshop.

The segment represents almost a third of the B2B companies (32%) who use an average of 1.7 digital channels to do business. In addition to their ecommerce solution, as many as 26% of the companies also use EDI (compared to 16% of the companies overall). Wholesalers and distributors/resellers are overrepresented on this segment while we find more manufacturing companies in segment 2.

Starting to integrate digital sales in the overall business model

To support the digital customer experience, companies use more systems and applications than previous segments, an average of 1.7. Email marketing is at the top (48%) followed by CRM (43%). As many as 39% of the companies also state that they use social media monitoring tools and 24% have a Product Information Management (PIM) system. The use of solutions to personalize the customer experience remains fairly low as 61% of companies do not have this.

When it comes to driving traffic to the company website and converting visitors to customers, the *Runners* generally have more tools at their disposal. In addition to the channels used by earlier stage companies, 13% also offer a digital chat function to assist customers in completing their purchase. We can also see that the ecommerce solution is being integrated more naturally into the overall business model. As a result, sales organizations are recommending that customers use the webshop more than before, to complement direct sales activities.

	3. Running
Share of total	32%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company ecommerce solution implemented• Digital sales seen as a complement to personal sales• Wider use of marketing tools to drive and convert traffic• Increased focus on measuring sales in digital channels• Limited overall focus on data collection and analytics
Average no. of digital sales channels	1.7
Mapped customer journey	54%
Average no. of solutions supporting digital experience	1.7
Average no. of marketing channels	3.1
Average no of KPI:s	2.6

Focus on marketing KPIs and data insight increases

This group of companies are not only being more active in digital marketing, with an average of 2.6 KPIs, they are also better at following up on and learning from the work done. About half of the companies (52%) actively track orders from digital channels. 44% follow up on digital sales revenues. Although representing an increase from earlier segments, this still indicates that over half of the companies selling online do not actively follow up on the results.

What sets *Runners* apart from segments higher up on the maturity ladder is that they are not data-driven to the same extent. A fifth of the companies (22%) state that they do not actively use their data. 41% collect data but do not have a process for analyzing it while the rest look into their data on a more ad hoc basis, before a major decision or as part of yearly business planning.

The digital sales platform is in place – now it is time to optimize its use

We conclude that the *Running* companies have established a strong foundation for further developing their digital sales and customer interactions in terms of an ecommerce platform: They work actively to drive traffic and sales through digital marketing activities. A natural next step for *Runners* to reach the next maturity level is to increase their focus on measurability and apply a more data-driven mindset. By analyzing and learning from the data generated from digital marketing and sales activities, companies will be able to learn more about how customers want to interact and buy and change their ways of working to match this.



Segment 4: Sprinting (15%)

Understanding the customer journey becomes a key to success

With companies in segment four, the *Sprinters*, we see how digital sales and the company’s ecommerce solution have become an integrated and important component of the company’s business and sales strategy, rather than a nice add-on. In these 15% of all companies on the maturity ladder, digital sales are actively supported through sound marketing strategies for digital channels, and they are continuously monitored and analyzed.

The higher we climb on the maturity ladder, the fewer small companies we find. 49% of the companies in this segment have an annual revenue of more than 200 million, compared to 33% of the companies in the study overall.

Another aspect that sets *Sprinters* apart from previous segments is that a third of the companies (34%) have a dedicated ecommerce manager and 16% have a digital strategist to be responsible for digital sales. Both these roles are less likely to exist in companies on lower steps on the ladder where the overall responsibility for digital sales tends to be with the company CEO.

Several parallel paths to digital sales

On average, *Sprinters* use 1.8 digital sales channels. As many as two thirds (65%) of the companies offer a webshop requiring login, while 51% offer an open webshop. As in segment three, a fourth of the companies also use EDI. *Sprinters* also tend to turn to external marketplaces to a greater degree than the previous segment with 13% actively using these sales channels.

	4. Sprinting
Share of total	15% <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital sales an integrated part of company business strategy• Customer journey in focus to improve digital presence• Focus on optimizing digital sales and marketing performance• KPI:s include focus on sales and customer satisfaction metrics• Data-driven mindset for continuous improvement
Average no. of digital sales channels	1.8
Mapped customer journey	62%
Average no. of solutions supporting digital experience	1.8
Average no. of marketing channels	3.1
Average no of KPI:s	3.3

Understanding customers to drive traffic and maximize sales

Sprinters typically have a clear understanding of the importance of mapping the journey of their business customers. 62% state that they map the customer journey, on a regular basis or as a focused project. A key driver is that they want to simplify the customer journey and make it easier to interact with the company (64%). Another driving force is that they want to be better at reaching potential customers and drive traffic to their website and webshop (46%).

As a result, companies in the *Sprinting* segment also have a more explicit focus on driving traffic and converting this traffic to sales by using an average of 3.1 different marketing channels.

The digital sales platform is in place – now it is time to optimize

A majority (82%) of the companies use some solution to support the digital customer experience. With an average of 1.8 applications, they combine, in order of priority, CRM, email marketing, social media monitoring and PIM applications. Half the companies also use solutions to personalize the customer experience, such as outbound marketing activities and personalized emails (27%) or tailored product recommendations (23%).

Sprinters have a strong focus on learning from data with about a third of the companies claiming to have a data-driven mindset for continuous improvement. The remaining companies in the segment collect and analyze data on a weekly or monthly basis. When it comes to following up on marketing KPIs, a fair amount of the group (22%) has moved beyond measuring sales to also following up on customer satisfaction in digital channels.

On the way to digital sales excellence

Sprinters have a holistic view of digital commerce, supporting online sales with integrated processes and systems to attract, convert and nurture customers over time. A data-driven mindset and the will to drive continuous improvements will be the key to progressing even further.



Segment 5: Flying (10%)

From digital transactions to long-term customer relationships

The fifth segments represents the top 10% most advanced companies on the maturity ladder. We refer to them as *Flying* because ecommerce is at the core of the company’s business model and digital channels provide a major contribution to overall revenue. Data and continuous business analysis are seen as essential to develop the business, drive sales and to build and nurture long-term customer relationships.

Flying companies offer an average of 2.0 digital sales channels. 62% have a webshop requiring login, and 60% have a webshop that is open to everyone. A third of the companies have also deployed EDI. 17% leverage external marketplaces as a complement to their own platforms, and about a third of the remainder plan to do so in the future.

Drivers for engaging in digital sales are similar to those in the other segments with the significant difference that *Flying* companies have an increased focus on driving customer loyalty (25%). Fortunately, these efforts seem to pay off as these companies see the reward of increased customer loyalty and stronger customer relations as a result of their investments in digital sales to a greater degree than others.

More experience, more sales and stronger international presence

Naturally, more companies than in the other segments have been engaging in digital sales for longer than five years. In a significant share of the companies (64%), digital sales represent more than 25 percent of overall company revenue.

The *Flying* segment also operates in the international market more than other companies. 62% sell through digital channels to other Nordic markets, 48% to the rest of Europe and 40% have a global reach.

	5. Flying
Share of total	10% <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital sales vital to company’s overall business performance• Ecommerce solution fully integrated into business processes and systems• Strong focus on customer journey to improve offering and digital channels• High level of maturity in terms of activating offering and brand in digital channels• Data driven organizations with focus on continuous improvements
Average no. of digital sales channels	2.0
Mapped customer journey	90%
Average no. of solutions supporting digital experience	3.0
Average no. of marketing channels	4.8
Average no of KPI:s	4.6

Customer understanding as the basis for sound customer relationships

We are not surprised to see that most of the *Flying* companies (90%) have analyzed their customers' journey; 71% do it on a continuous basis. Again, this is almost twice as often as in segment one. The number of systems used to support this digital customer experience is also far higher than in other segments with an average of 3.0 applications. In addition, as many as two thirds (63%) of the companies have implemented some sort of solution to personalize the customer experience.

With an average of 4.8 marketing channels and tools used, companies in this segment are also more likely than in the other segments to invest in digital marketing to drive traffic and sales.

The devil is in the details

The fifth segment naturally also represents the most data-driven organizations. *Flying* companies measure and follow up on both digital marketing and sales activities throughout the whole funnel, from traffic and conversions to orders, revenue and customer loyalty. Almost half of the companies (46%) claim to have a data-driven mindset with the remaining (54%) collecting and analyzing data on a weekly or monthly basis.

Ready to establish yet another step on the ladder

We can see how companies at the top of our maturity ladder have elevated their digital business to a strategic level in their organization. Here we find companies that do not only view ecommerce as yet another sales channel but as a vital part of the business strategy. They also focus on moving from a transaction-centric approach to building customer relationships over time. We can all look forward to following these companies as they continue to develop their approach to B2B commerce and establish yet another step on the maturity ladder.



Scandinavian B2B Commerce survey – Variables per topic

Digital sales channels used for B2B sales	Solutions used to support digital customer experience	Marketing channels used to drive traffic and convert to sales	KPIs used to measure and evaluate digital interactions
Online catalogue without purchase	CRM/customer support system	Share content on social media	Traffic to website/webshop
Price/quote request without purchase	Email marketing	Keyword advertising	Activities: clicks/opened emails
Webshop open to anyone	Social media monitoring	Targeted email marketing	Online orders
Webshop with login for purchase	Product Information Management (PIM)	Keyword optimization (SEO)	Revenue from digital sales
External marketplaces	Marketing automation	Content marketing	Conversion rates from activation channels
Contracted customer portal	Other	Banner advertising	Conversion rates from lead forms
EDI integration		Salesperson refers to webshop	Number of items in digital orders
Other		Physical/digital events	Customer satisfaction with webshop
		CTA on website	
		Digital chat function	
		Influencer marketing	

About Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021

The Scandinavian B2B Commerce 2021 study was conducted by Litium in February-March 2021. As a foundation for the quantitative part of the research, nine in-depth interviews were held with Scandinavian B2B companies in different industries. The main study was conducted as a web survey sent out to a limited selection of companies in combination with a panel of decision makers at B2B companies in the Scandinavian countries – Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

The results presented in the overall report are based on 846 qualified responses. The B2B Commerce Maturity Ladder represents a subset of these companies that are either selling or planning on selling through their own digital commerce platform. This section of the report covers in total 511 companies, consisting of 285 respondents from Sweden, 121 from Denmark and 105 from Norway.

This year’s report is the fifth edition. As in previous years, B2B agency Crescendo has led the project in cooperation with research firm Norstat.

