

B2B bullish about e-commerce opportunities

By [Nick Durrant](#), issued by [Bluegrass Digital](#)

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Business has changed forever, we need to rethink our priorities, strategies and processes. Suddenly entire workforces are working remotely and most budgets are now non-existent. Despite all this uncertainty, businesses need to move forward whatever the circumstances.

Until now, businesses have been struggling to prioritise customer service and experience but this has quickly become the top priority. In fact, the top-two digital experience tactics B2B leaders say need the most improvement are understanding who their customers are and personalising the digital experience to each customer. This is according to a [B2B Digital Experience Report titled 'A Customer-Centric Pivot in Pivotal Times'](#) by Episerver.

The report says 85% of businesses still expected their digital experience budget to increase next year. The top investment priorities, to serve the customer better in this digital-first economy, are personalisation technology and an e-commerce platform.

Digital-first approach

For companies to survive this economic crisis, we anticipate that these projects will be fast tracked because selling directly to customers online is the most significant opportunity for businesses. The solution is a customer-centric, digital-first approach. It is crucial for them to get their products and services in front of their customers, digitally. However, many of them now realise that they are ill-equipped to move to a digital-first world.



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Digital experience is by far the biggest differentiator. According to the report, more than a third of B2B leaders indicated that their digital experience differentiated their company the most from competitors online, followed by their social media presence.

It also states that B2B customer relationships are in their infancy and more than half of B2B businesses define their customer relationships as strained, developing or non-existent. They have had to rely on partners to manage those relationships to-date.

Personalisation definitely pays off

Products and services should be designed to meet immediate needs and the digital experience should be prioritised by what customers require today. Many businesses have now realised that relevant content was their best bet if they wanted to connect with their customers in a meaningful way.

Nearly half of B2B leaders think they are getting a better experience when a B2B company personalises content based on their history, behaviours and personal information. However, 93% of companies know personalising content on their website has increased their company's revenue.

Selling direct

B2B decision makers believe the way to self-serve is by accessing pricing without speaking to someone. This might be why

41% of respondents say selling directly to their customers is their company's top opportunity. Furthermore, 61% of B2B leaders fear AI will replace them in the next five years and about 80% think AI will make them better at their job in the short term.

Data breaches

About half of B2Bs have experienced a data breach in which their customer data was exposed despite 91% of companies taking every reasonable step to keep customer data secure and meet data compliance laws.

Move fast, pivot quickly and reach customers digitally

Businesses need to be agile and pivot at a moment's notice. Doing nothing could be detrimental. The most successful businesses will focus on building a digital-first business today, so they can better serve their customers tomorrow.

Most manufacturers and distributors predict that e-commerce will be a significant revenue driver by 2025. The majority of them said they expect that more than 20% of their revenue will be derived from the B2B e-commerce websites they own and operate by then.

So, selecting the right web content management system is a key part of any company's digital transformation. The system should support the business needs, optimise workflows and integrate with other systems.

ABOUT NICK DURRANT

Nick Durrant is MD at Bluegrass Digital, a digital production agency. We work with marketing teams and creative agencies around the world delivering digital platforms. After spending 15 years in working the industry in the UK and setting up the business in London in 1999, Nicholas now runs the business from Cape Town, developing the business in Africa and Europe.

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