

B2B, IT'S GETTING PERSONAL

Deloitte Digital research reveals how B2B companies are unlocking the benefits of personalization

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Business-to-business (B2B) buyers may be making decisions on behalf of their companies, but their expectations are shaped by their experiences as everyday consumers. Deloitte Digital research shows a 20% surge in consumer demand for personalized experiences between 2022 and 2024—and B2B buyers are no exception. In fact, industry research has shown that 73% of B2B buyers expect a consumer-like, personalized experience¹. They're accustomed to seamless, relevant interactions in their personal shopping and expect the same level of ease and insight when it comes to business purchases. They want experiences that anticipate their needs, simplify decision-making and add tangible value.

Yet B2B buying is anything but simple. With multiple stakeholders, long buying cycles and high reputational stakes at play, the path to purchase is far more complex than B2C. That complexity may explain why our research found that B2B companies trail their B2C counterparts when it comes to delivering personalization that meets evolving expectations. But some are getting it right, and we've identified how they're doing it. By zeroing in on what truly matters to customers across the buying journey, prioritizing relevant channels, and harnessing impactful technologies and creative resources, these companies are turning personalization into a powerful competitive advantage.

PERSONALIZATION POWERS B2B GROWTH

Our research found that 19% of surveyed B2B companies have advanced personalization capabilities. These companies are setting themselves apart with customer-centric strategies and targeted investments—and it's paying off. We call them B2B personalization leaders, and on average, they allocate 60% of their total marketing budget to personalization, far outpacing the 37% allocation of their peers with less mature capabilities. This commitment shows on the bottom line. Compared to brands with less mature capabilities, B2B personalization leaders have higher average order values, higher customer lifetime value and they're **~3X as likely to have exceeded their 2023 revenue goals by 10% or more.**

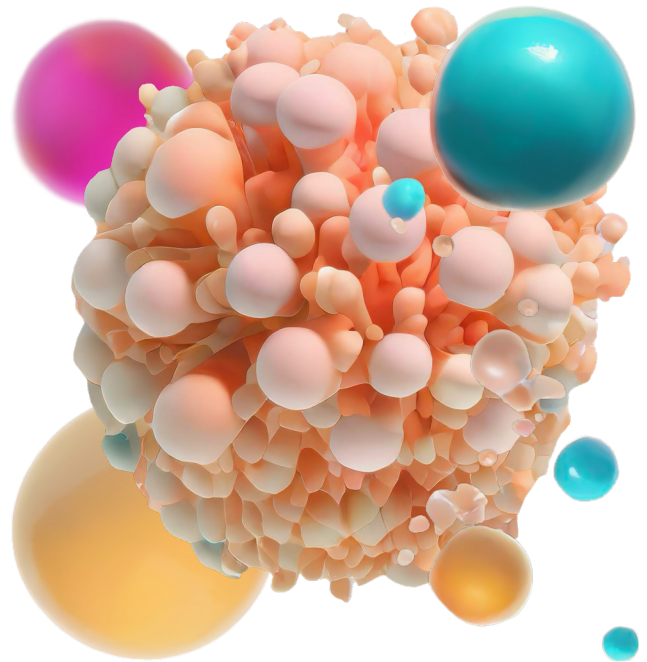
COMPARED TO BRANDS WITH LESS MATURE CAPABILITIES:

58% vs. 13%

B2B personalization leaders were nearly 4.5X as likely to call personalization core to their **customer strategy**.

58% vs. 13%

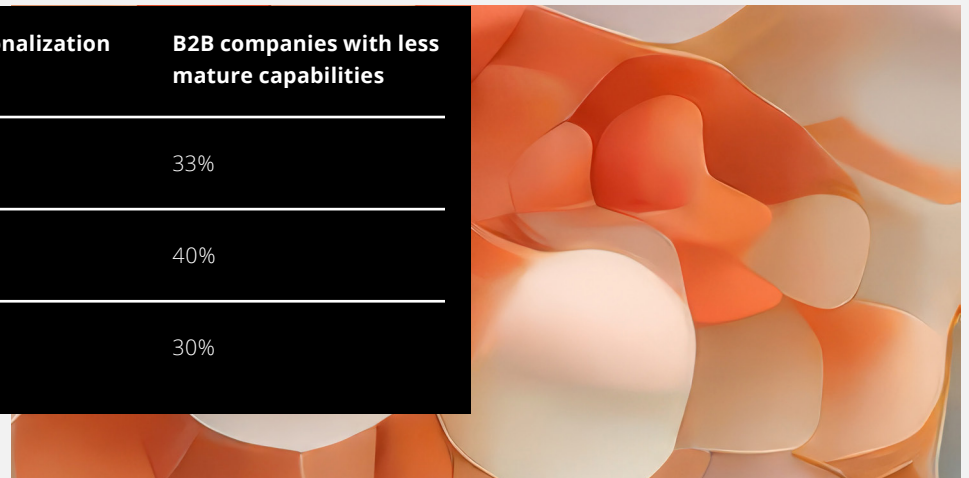
B2B personalization leaders were nearly 4.5x as likely to have **extensive insight** into customer preferences.



B2B COMPANIES OF ALL MATURITY LEVELS CREDIT PERSONALIZATION FOR IMPROVED METRICS

	B2B personalization leaders	B2B companies with less mature capabilities
Average order value (AOV)	53%	33%
Customer lifetime value	79%	40%
Exceeded revenue goals by 10% or more	94%	30%

* Percentages reflect the improvement that brands attributed to personalization.



Here's how to drive B2B performance through personalization

GIVE B2B CUSTOMERS VALUE

Surveyed consumers across both B2B and B2C expressed they don't just want surface-level customization—they expect tangible, personalized benefits like exclusive discounts or tailored bundles. This is especially critical in the B2B realm, where purchases and pricing are highly visible and widely scrutinized, and reputations can be burned or burnished by purchasing decisions. Different personas across the buying journey need to see clear, personalized value that aligns with their business priorities.

A generational shift in B2B has influenced what's important to these buyers. According to a 2023 survey of B2B buyers², 71% of buyers today are Gen Z or millennials. Whereas previous generations of B2B buyers relied on sales reps to negotiate these personalized deals, today's younger buyers are more self-directed. These independent, digitally savvy buyers enter the process with a keen brand awareness and a shortlist of potential suppliers. In fact, research shows that 81% of in-market B2B buyers already have a preferred list even before they begin formal research³, and 90% of buyers ultimately choose from their day-one list³.

That makes brand positioning more important than ever. Personalized offers and

content need to reinforce the overall value proposition, so that when buyers are ready to act, the brand is already top of mind.

Among customers:

78% want personalized insights that save them money.

84% said special discounts or bundles had a medium or high influence on their purchase decisions.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CHANNELS

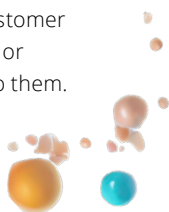
An effective channel strategy reinforces brand positioning, promotes products and services, and empowers both customers and sales teams. B2B personalization leaders are ahead of the curve in investing in omnichannel delivery capabilities to reach customers where they are. As customers shift how they research and purchase, B2B companies must extend personalized experiences and capture customer data across both traditional and emerging channels, recognizing the heightened importance of social channels and digital self-service platforms.

B2B personalization leaders are:

More than **30x** more likely to be capable of identifying customers and providing a personalized experience across multiple brands and channels (95% vs 3%).

5X

Gen Zers and millennials were nearly five times as likely as **Gen Xers and baby boomers** to say personalized customer experiences were very or extremely important to them.



HARNESS POWERFUL TECHNOLOGIES AND RESOURCES

Our research shed light on key technology and capability gaps that B2B companies need to address to unlock more value from their personalization efforts. For many B2B companies, fragmented data, insufficient analytics capabilities and anemic content generation systems stand in the way of providing the personalized experiences buyers demand.

Data platforms and tools

Customer data platforms (CDP) are considered the gold standard for **collecting and activating first-party customer data**—and B2B personalization leaders are 1.7X as likely as less mature peers to leverage one to personalize at scale.

68% of B2B personalization leaders are using a CDP for first-party data management, compared to 40% of less mature peers.

Beyond first-party data, the use of second- and third-party data can help provide a more complete, nuanced view of customers. Data clean rooms are a secure way to integrate and analyze this data while maintaining compliance with evolving regulations. Notably, B2B companies trail their B2C counterparts in adopting data clean rooms, leaving untapped potential in refining their personalization strategies.

24% are currently investing in data clean rooms to leverage and activate additional sources of data, compared to 36% of B2C brands.

Decisioning capabilities

To decide what content and offers to share with customers, as well as when and where to share them, B2C companies need **robust analytics and modeling capabilities**.

60% of B2B companies have analytics, testing and measurement capabilities...

But even among those with capabilities, **nearly half** describe them as insufficient.

Content & design systems

Unlike traditional creative, personalized content and design needs to be developed in **components that can be reused and recombined** based on customer- or channel-specific needs.

39% of B2B companies have a content management system...

But over **1 in 4** said creative / design is a significant capability gap.

Generative AI (GenAI)

This technology can drive **higher quality and higher volumes** of content and design—although our research shows that fewer B2B companies are leveraging it than B2C brands.

74% of B2B companies had either already invested or planned to invest in 2024 in GenAI to support personalization, compared to 85% of B2C brands.



SECTOR-SMART, BRAND-RIGHT PERSONALIZATION

Our research also illuminated sector-specific opportunities in personalization. For example, financial services companies are currently three times less likely than technology companies to personalize based on buyers' channel preferences. Meanwhile, chemical companies are more than twice as likely as financial services and technology companies to cite data science capabilities as a gap in their personalization efforts.

The exact path for maximizing personalization's impact will look different for every organization—it depends on industry / sector dynamics, brand identity, and the needs of buyers across multiple personas. While there's no standard blueprint to follow, our team has the multi-sector experience to help your company understand where its greatest opportunities lie and how to unlock their potential.



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ENDNOTES

- 1.IDC Three Ways B2B Commerce Will Fundamentally Change by 2025, published October 2020
- 2.[How B2B Organizations Can Win With Younger Buyers](#), Forrester's 2023 Buyer's Journey Survey
- 3.6sense 2024 B2B Buyer Experience Report [A New Reality of B2B Buying: Implications for Marketing and Sales Teams](#)

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

In early 2024, we surveyed 600 business executives responsible for personalizing the customer experience (100 at US business-to-business companies and 500 at US business-to-consumer companies), plus 1,000 adult consumers who had interacted with a B2B or B2C brand online or through an app in recent months. Building on this research, we developed a framework to define a company's personalization maturity based on four categories: degree of personalization, data capabilities, delivery and organizational structure.

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