

# Accelerating sales growth through B2B digital commerce

How high-maturity companies navigate today's budget realities to achieve results

January 2026

# Introduction

Business-to-business (B2B) buyers want better, easier ways to do business. The companies that serve them are working hard to meet that demand by improving digital tools, expanding sales channels and forging connections across their own businesses that help deepen connections with customers.

Many suppliers, vendors and sellers (referred to collectively in this report as “suppliers”) are still in the early stages of digitizing the end-to-end buyer experience—and tight budgets aren’t helping them advance as fast as they’d like.

That leaves *plenty of opportunity* for B2B companies across industries to grow digital commerce capabilities.

Our latest research reveals there’s also *plenty of reason*.

In late 2025, we commissioned a blind survey of 530 B2B buyers and 530 B2B suppliers at US-based companies across a broad range of sectors and industries. The survey responses yielded insights into the factors driving choice, preference and spend among buyers, along with the decisions and actions driving success for today’s most mature suppliers (those with the most effectively digitized, automated and connected sales processes across front- and back-office operations).

**In this report we explore the challenges that many B2B companies face—and how digitally mature commerce organizations are seizing tomorrow’s opportunities today.**

## MATURE B2B DIGITAL COMMERCE COMPANIES GROW FASTER

B2B suppliers with high digital commerce maturity **beat annual sales goals by a 110% greater margin** than low-maturity suppliers.\*



6.1% High maturity

vs.



2.9% Low maturity

\* Statistics in this report are derived from 2025 B2B commerce research commissioned by Deloitte Digital. See page 11 for methodology.

Percent by which suppliers exceeded annual sales goals

# Today's challenges open the door to differentiation

Among B2B suppliers, most surveyed leaders feel squeezed between rising expectations from their customers and investment barriers that limit their ability to respond. The pressure is compounded by the range of experiences to digitize, the diversity of customer segments and buyer stakeholders to serve, the pace of channel and technology evolution, and more.

## **IT'S ALL CONNECTED**

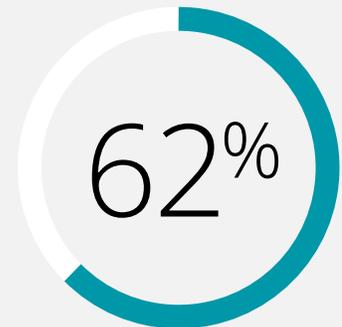
Through our research we identified three areas where successful B2B commerce organizations have focused their investments and aligned their efforts:

**Expanding commerce channels to meet customers where they are**

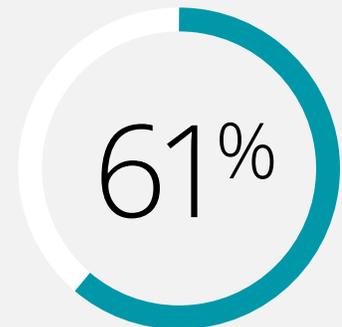
**Getting more from ERP upgrades through front-office operational integration**

**Identifying and activating AI and agentic use cases that advance business goals**

## **SURVEYED SUPPLIERS FACE CONFLICTING CHALLENGES**



said **securing budget for needed tech investments** is a major challenge



said **rising customer expectations** are a major challenge



# Mind the disconnects

Most B2B suppliers believe they're doing pretty well when it comes to streamlining digital B2B commerce—with 72% saying their sales processes are mostly or highly automated.

However, just 47% of buyers said purchasing processes are mostly or highly automated—a significantly lower average estimate than what suppliers believe they've enabled.

Additional disconnects in the perceptions of suppliers and buyers appeared in our research. For example, buyers were 6x as likely as suppliers to say purchasing/sales processes are “mostly manual”—and 3x as likely to say it's difficult to do business with them.

Surveyed suppliers recognize what's at stake. On average, suppliers estimated that 13% of sales bids are lost due to negative buyer experiences, while positive experiences yield a 36% revenue uplift. Buyers largely agreed—estimating they spend 29% more with suppliers that provide a positive purchasing experience.

**So at the same time most suppliers feel *squeezed* between budgets and expectations, many appear unaware of an equally challenging gap:**

- Suppliers put significant revenue at risk when they fall short of customer expectations.
- Many overestimate how consistently they're meeting customer expectations.

In the following sections, we explore the real state of progress and opportunities in B2B digital commerce—and the actions that have helped mature organizations leap ahead.

## **SUPPLIERS KNOW WHAT'S AT STAKE ...**

13%

**Sales bids lost** due to *negative* buyer experiences (est.)

36%

**Revenue uplift** when they provide *positive* experiences (est.)



## **BUT MANY SUPPLIERS OVERESTIMATE THEIR PROGRESS**

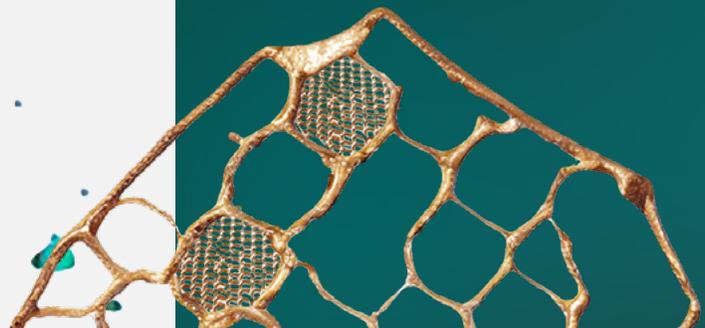
*Percentage of respondents who believe sales processes are mostly or highly automated:*

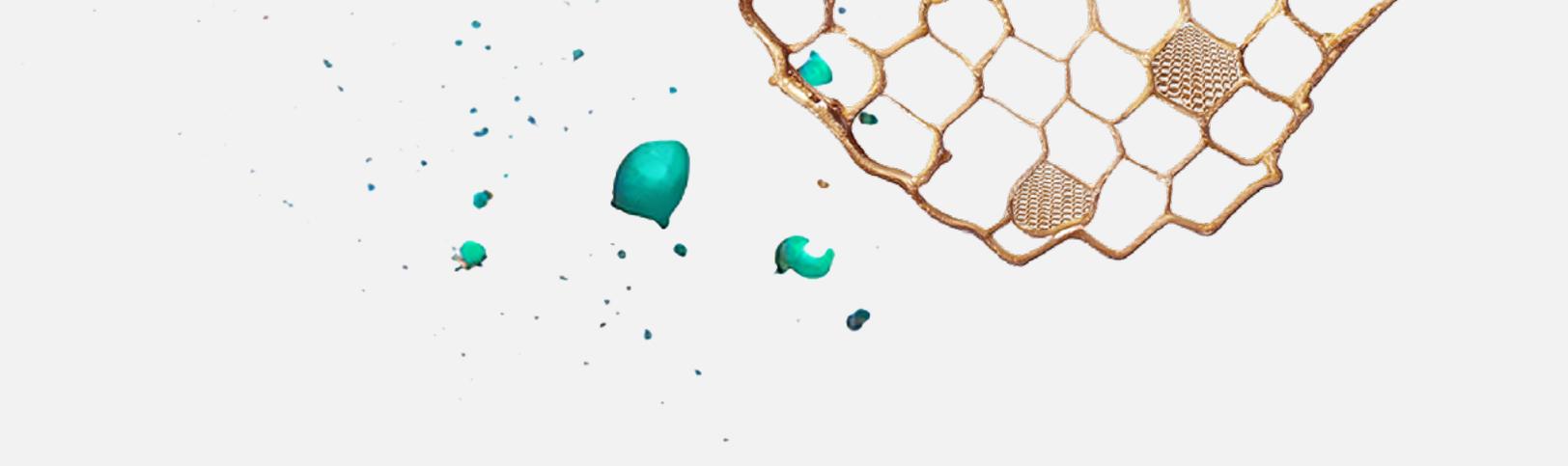
72%

**Suppliers**

47%

**Buyers**





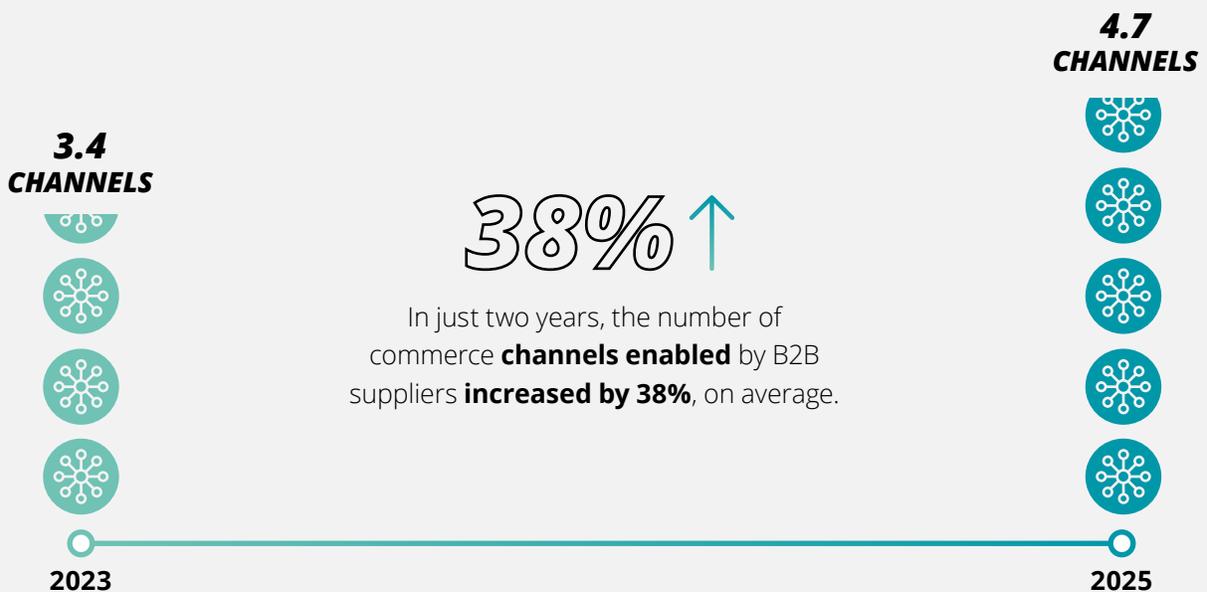
# Expanding commerce channels to meet customers where they are

B2B buyers have always been particular about *what* they want from the companies they do business with. For decades, in-person sales and electronic data interchange (EDI) served as the primary channels for B2B transactions.

Today, buyers have become more particular about *where* they prefer to do business, with 65% saying they select purchasing channels based on ease of use. Suppliers are responding by expanding the number of channels they enable in order to meet each of the customer segments they serve in the channels they prefer. *(Please see graphic.)*

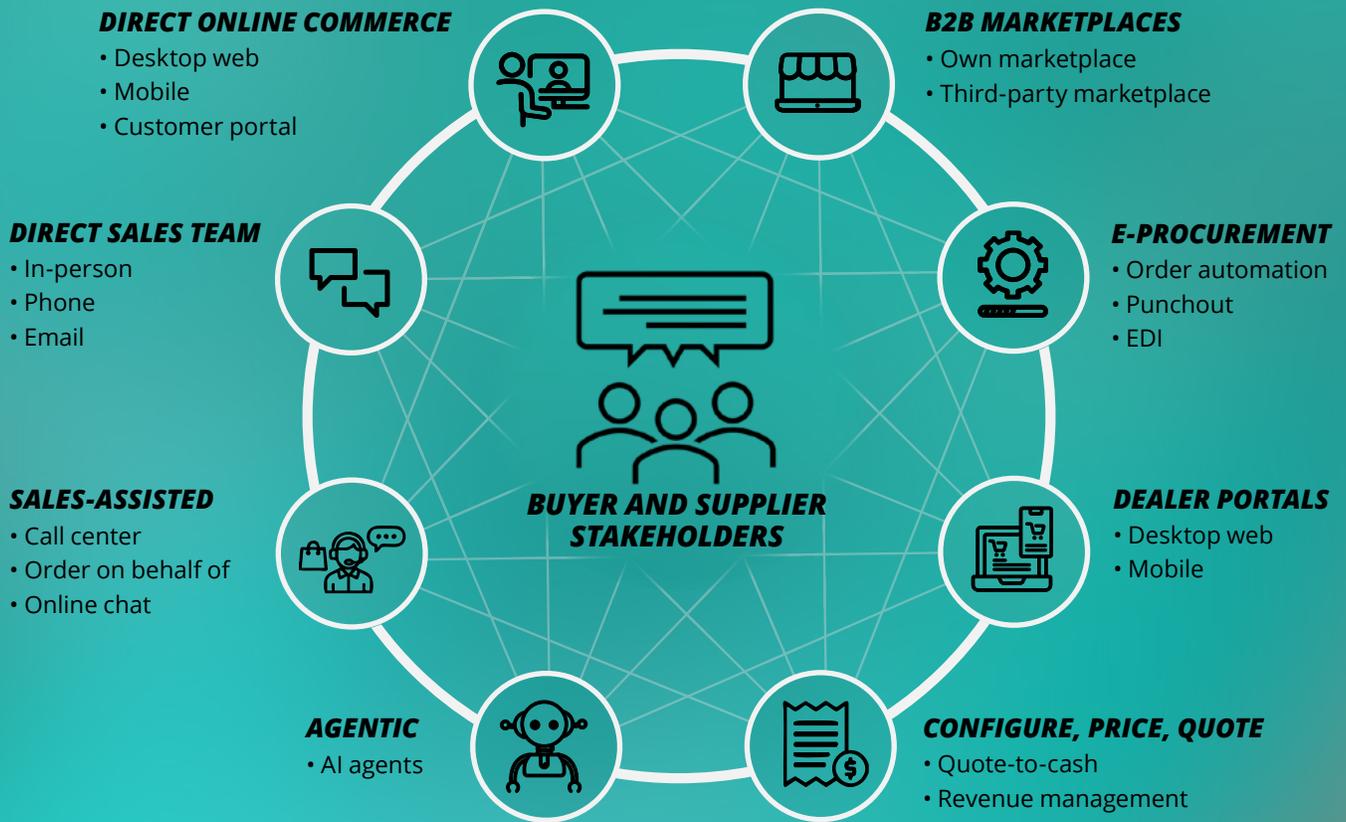
EDI remains a viable and important channel, as does in-person sales. But suppliers that haven't enabled additional channels risk losing or failing to win customers—perhaps sooner than they realize. Our research revealed that 92% of B2B buyers currently using EDI plan to shift partially or completely to other channels such as e-commerce or procurement commerce.

## SUPPLIERS EXPAND CHANNEL CHOICES



# OMNICHANNEL B2B COMMERCE IS KEY TO MEETING CUSTOMERS WHERE THEY ARE

Successful B2B commerce organizations address these evolving customer preferences by taking an omnichannel approach to customer engagement—with each channel connected to the customer data and operational processes that enable smooth, connected experiences for each segment of buyers.



# Getting more from ERP upgrades through front-office operational integration

Many suppliers are moving to upgrade their core ERP systems, often as part of larger back-office digital transformation initiatives. However, relatively few have seized the opportunity to integrate front-office operations as part of ERP upgrade initiatives.

Providing the easy, connected experiences that buyers seek is extremely difficult if marketing, sales, commerce and service systems and teams can't immediately access the same data and tools that finance and supply chain teams use to keep the business running efficiently.

**Integration is key to streamlining operational efficiency—and the linchpin for elevating customer experiences.**

Buyers expect up-to-date product information, easy-access tools, up-to-the-minute delivery status and on-time invoicing *in the channel they prefer*. So suppliers should connect data, teams, tools, platforms and processes *in every channel they serve*.

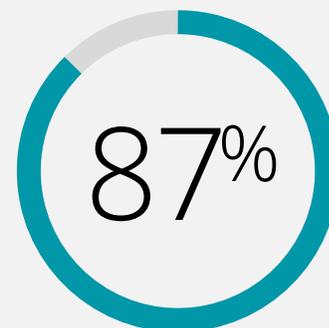
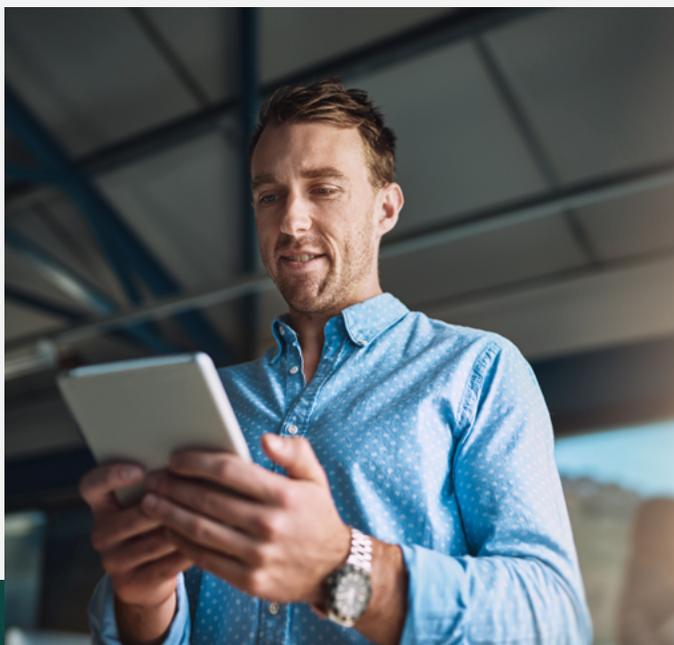
Getting it right means aligning and creating new connections across the enterprise. *(Please see next page.)*

This is an area where commerce leaders can build an especially strong business case. Surveyed organizations that have completed front- and back-office integration of data, processes and functions are 3x as likely as others to rate collaboration as excellent across sales, marketing and customer service—a strength that enables them to better connect customer experiences across channels and purchasing life cycles. And they're nearly 4x as likely to say their sales process is highly automated—meaning commerce processes likely are more efficient.

End-to-end integration can make doing business easier—and customers more loyal. Respondents at completely integrated companies were more than 4x as likely as others to say it's *very easy* for customers to do business with them, and more than 2x as likely to rate customer trust as *very high*.

Perhaps most important, fully integrated companies beat their annual sales goals by 6.3%—nearly twice the margin by which other companies beat their goals.

That margin may be all the business case you need: **Front-office integration actually can help pay for ERP upgrades.**



Nearly 9 in 10 B2B suppliers are **upgrading their ERP** currently or soon—providing a once-in-a-generation opportunity for end-to-end operational integration.

# The business case for front-office integration

Business silos leak value. When marketers are unaware of current priorities in product life cycle management, they can wind up promoting the wrong offerings while missing opportunities to seize market share elsewhere. When sales teams lack visibility into supply chain delays, they may make promises they later can't keep.

The list goes on—but so does the list of opportunities that suppliers can activate when front- and back-office teams, processes and data are connected as part of ERP modernization. Our client experience shows the value that can accrue as a result.

*Client impact:*

## **A WINNING FORMULA FOR OUTSIZE VALUE**

An energy and chemicals company included front-office integration as part of its ERP upgrade. The result?

**24%** additional investment produced

**57%** of the total value case for the upgrade

## **THE CONNECTIONS THAT DRIVE VALUE**

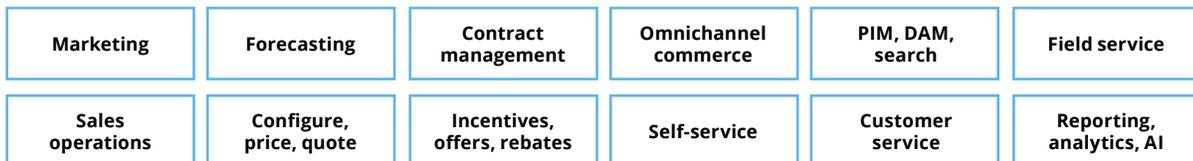
### **CHANNELS AND INTERACTIONS**

Means of exchanging information between suppliers and buyers/dealers



### **FRONT OFFICE**

Customer-facing functions focused on delivering value and building relationships with external stakeholders



### **BACK OFFICE**

Internal administrative and support functions that facilitate the smooth operation of the organization



**Key to acronyms:** PIM: product information management; DAM: digital asset management

# AI agents show potential, though adoption remains nascent

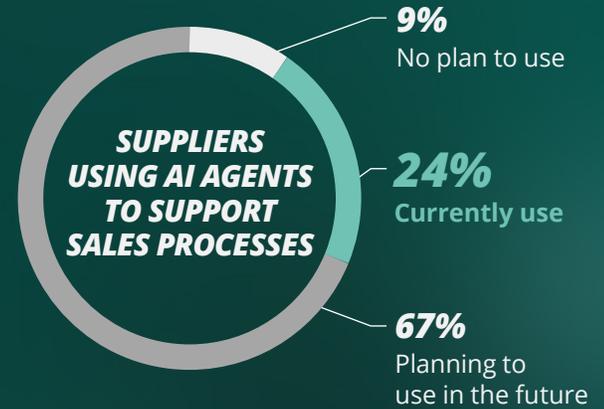
While AI and agentic AI have lately become the talk of the business world, many B2B suppliers have yet to embrace AI extensively as part of the sales process, choosing instead to spend limited technology budgets on more basic priorities needed for omnichannel B2B commerce.

According to our research, 45% of all B2B suppliers currently use AI and 24% of all B2B suppliers use agentic AI. While adoption of agentic AI is yet to reach critical mass, B2B commerce organizations currently using the technology are leveraging it across a range of use cases. *(Please see graphic.)*

High-maturity digital commerce organizations are leaning in. Compared to low-maturity commerce organizations, they're 5x as likely to use AI *extensively* and 5x as likely to use agentic AI *at all*.

Among buyers, adoption of AI and agentic AI in purchasing processes is higher, with 61% of respondents using AI and 38% using agentic AI. The most common buyer use cases for agentic AI include searching, evaluating and choosing the products; configuring the products and services they desire; viewing order statuses and updates; and ordering products and services. As buyer use cases expand, it will become increasingly important for suppliers to optimize data, channels and purchasing processes for both human and automated sales interactions. After all, AI agents need easy ways of doing business, too.

The good news as you look ahead? **Most suppliers that have adopted agentic AI report positive improvements in productivity and profitability.**



## TOP SUPPLIER USE CASES FOR AGENTIC AI IN B2B COMMERCE

- #1 Chatbots
- #2 Lead prioritization
- #3 Lead and account research
- #4 Automated proposals
- #5 Autonomous merchandizing and inventory management
- #6 Demand forecasting

# Making the case for digital B2B commerce investment amid tight budgets

Through analysis of our research, we unearthed a powerful correlation: The suppliers that have most effectively digitized, automated and connected sales processes across front- and back-office operations are *also* the suppliers that most consistently provide the consistent, positive experiences demanded by today's buyers.

In other words, high-maturity B2B digital commerce organizations have managed to “break the squeeze” between budgetary constraints and rising customer expectations that most survey respondents face.

They've done so by making the case for focused investments that target three strategic opportunities:

- Channel expansion and enhancement to meet customers where they are
- Integration of front-office operations to enhance value from ERP upgrades
- Activation of AI and agentic AI to serve targeted, high-value use cases



As you evaluate your own organization's progress and build the case for investment in B2B digital commerce capabilities, consider these questions:



- 01** Do we have an accurate understanding of the sales challenges and friction points that our customers face, and how digital omnichannel commerce can help?
- 02** Do we understand the value case for accelerating digital B2B commerce transformation—and how to best communicate the case to business stakeholders?
- 03** What will help us better meet the expectations of customers in the channels they prefer?
- 04** What front-office improvements and omnichannel capabilities can we enable as part of our ERP upgrade?
- 05** Where and how should we deploy agentic AI in our sales processes?



## LET US HELP YOU BUILD THE CASE FOR DIGITAL COMMERCE TRANSFORMATION

A focused workshop involving cross-functional leaders and facilitated by Deloitte Digital's industry and technology specialists can help organizations rapidly identify priorities, gaps and quick wins in B2B digital commerce. Engaging key stakeholders can play an important role in helping build alignment around your transformation roadmap and prioritizing investments that can provide rapid ROI.

**Ready to take the next step?** Let's schedule a strategy session to assess your current state and map your future path.

### GET IN TOUCH

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### METHODOLOGY

#### B2B supplier survey

Statistics cited in this report are based on a blind survey commissioned by Deloitte Digital and conducted by Lawless Research in August and September 2025. The 530 respondents met the following criteria:

- Full-time employee of a US B2B company with 1,000 or more employees and \$100 million or more in annual revenue
- Director level or above, with responsibility for growth strategy, sales channel strategy, and/or sales and business development
- In one of the following departments: customer success, commerce/digital product, executive leadership, IT, operations, product management, revenue operations, sales development, business development, sales
- Represented one of the following types of businesses: agriculture; automotive; chemicals; consumer packaged goods; health care & life sciences; industrials; logistics; manufacturing; media, entertainment & publishing; oil & gas; retail & commerce; technology (software and hardware); telecommunications; wholesale

#### B2B buyer survey

Statistics cited in this report are based on a blind survey commissioned by Deloitte Digital and conducted by Lawless Research in August and September 2025. The 530 respondents met the following criteria:

- Full-time employee of a US B2B company with 1,000 or more employees and \$100 million or more in annual revenue
- Director level or above
- Had been an evaluator, influencer, decision-maker or executive approver for at least one purchase of a product or service valued at or over \$100,000 in the past 12 months
- Had purchased a product or service from one or more of the following 14 types of supplier businesses within the past 12 months: agriculture; automotive; chemicals; consumer packaged goods; health care & life sciences; industrials; logistics; manufacturing; media, entertainment & publishing; oil & gas; retail & commerce; technology (software and hardware); telecommunications; wholesale

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