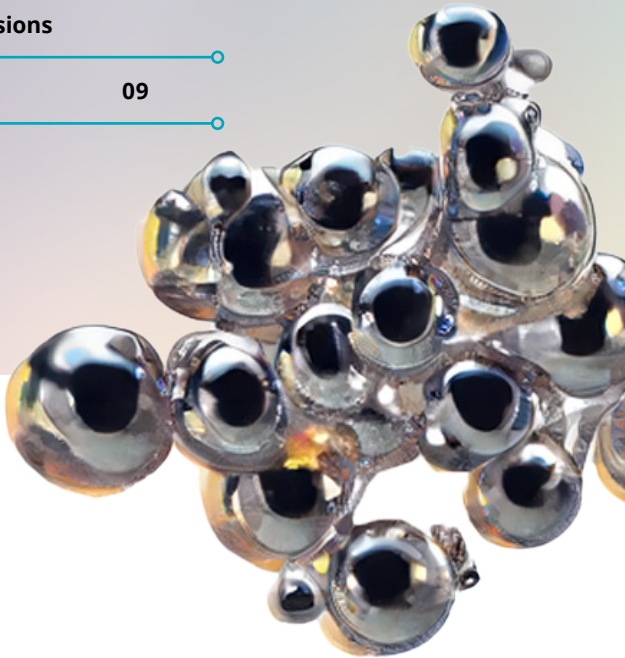# Deloitte.
Digital

How B2B brands
can stay ahead

This report explores strategies that B2B brands can adopt to enhance sales and conversions by leveraging a composable architecture that integrates product experience management (PXM), search, content, and commerce effectively. Today's digital executives and operations professionals have the opportunity to leverage actionable insights and optimize their digital ecosystems to drive business growth.

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Challenges facing B2B brands

B2B brands are currently grappling with the challenge of delivering curated customer experiences (CX) to their Millennial and Gen Z customers. These demographics are becoming increasingly significant, necessitating urgent steps to enhance customer loyalty and improve overall CX to drive sales. The urgency to act is compounded by the rapid growth of global B2B ecommerce[3], which is projected to reach a $3 trillion market by 2027. As Millennials and Gen Z are expected to constitute 75% of the workforce by 2025, their preference for digital interactions is a critical focal point for today's B2B brands. These tech-savvy generations extensively research online before making purchasing decisions, highlighting the need for B2B brands to prioritize providing elevated CX through various digital avenues.

The demand for digitalization

According to our research[1] conducted in April 2023, 45% of B2B companies report that their customer purchasing processes are predominantly manual, with 78% acknowledging a demand from their customers for digitization of the sales process. This underscores the critical need for B2B brands to deliver precise information through the right channels based on customer preferences to facilitate informed buying decisions.

The role of PXM

Many B2B brands struggle to retain customers and improve conversion rates due to ineffective dissemination of information across digital channels. A robust product experience strategy is essential. Customers often extend their research beyond the B2B site to identify the right products before making a purchase. By integrating an effective search engine with accurate product data, B2B retailers can better meet customer expectations throughout their buying journey.

Integrating PIM, search, and content systems

Historically, B2B brands have utilized PIM systems to curate and manage their product content. While having accurate product data is crucial, it is equally important to ensure this data is readily accessible to customers across all desired channels. Our research shows that B2B customers spend an average of 62% more on products and services when their buying experiences are consistently positive across various channels[1]. To boost conversions and customer loyalty, B2B brands need to move beyond single-source systems for managing product data. Integrating search and content systems with PXM can help B2B brands achieve their full potential and meet their business goals.

We have studied several factors that provide impactful CX, and suggest the top five driving forces for B2B brands to determine how to tie their product data strategy to offer a holistic shopping experience to their customers below.

01 The evolving role of PXM

PXM is rapidly becoming a pivotal element in the B2B sector, with a growing number of brands adopting this approach. Projections indicate that by 2027, a significant majority of B2B retailers will have implemented PXM SaaS platforms to ensure consistent product experiences[6]. Traditionally, product information management (PIM) systems have served as the central repository for product data. However, integrating PXM extends these capabilities to streamline data management, enhance data accuracy, deliver personalized experiences, and support omnichannel commerce—key factors in elevating overall CX. PXM enables the syndication of products and content across multiple channels in various formats, directly addressing customer demands. Research highlights that poor CX during the sales process can account for a loss of 13% in total B2B sales, underscoring the need for improved product experiences by integrating PIM and PXM into the technical stack. Furthermore, studies show that 75% of B2B buyers prefer a representative-free purchase experience, predominantly interacting with supplier websites over other digital platforms. This shift necessitates that B2B brands enrich their digital channels with tailored information to meet customer needs and foster loyalty. A Gartner study emphasizes the importance of site aesthetics and product cataloging, suggesting that these elements are crucial over traditional consultative support for complex purchasing journeys[4]. The management of product catalogs and experiences on digital shelves and product detail pages (PDPs) is foundational to the digital strategies of B2B brands. Additionally, integrating these elements with marketing campaigns and leveraging marketing platforms enhances visibility and engagement, driving more effective customer interactions and conversions.

02 Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN) Adoption

The integration of GDSN by major B2B brands aims to adhere to compliance and regulation guidelines for global transactions, presenting challenges in aligning with existing product strategy plans. PXM facilitates secure and continuous data synchronization among trading partners, helping ensure consistency across the supply chain and ecommerce content. This synchronization is vital for maintaining accurate product data, which is complemented by an effective search engine. Such a search engine is crucial for precise product discovery, engaging shoppers, and supporting their purchasing decisions across various channels through comprehensive site content management via a content management system (CMS).

## 03 Enhancing product discovery through digital channels

Product discovery on digital platforms is crucial for increasing customer engagement and driving conversions. B2B brands should invest in sophisticated search platforms tailored to meet the unique needs of their customers. The trend towards the consumerization of B2B has led to a preference for personalized experiences among B2B buyers[5]. Effective site search that delivers intent-based, relevant product results can significantly enhance the shopping experience. Quick and pertinent search results are vital; without them, buyers may disengage quickly, perceiving that the B2B brand fails to understand their needs. According to Gartner[10], Millennials and Gen Z customers show a preference for third-party customer service platforms, which bolster confidence through shared product content, reviews, and recommendations. B2B brands can build trust by enhancing their search capabilities, optimizing search engine strategies, and aligning with third-party service platforms to improve overall CX. To enhance search strategies, B2B brands should leverage detailed product attributes, data, descriptions, and categorizations. This approach can help ensure that search tools are effective and meet customer expectations in real-time, facilitating quick and informed purchasing decisions. Many B2B marketplaces are now focusing on personalizing search experiences by tailoring their technology and strategies to the specific needs of their users. Additionally, there is a growing trend among B2B brands to integrate AI-powered search tools, which offer a more personalized search experience and address complex needs such as managing multiple SKUs, comparing prices, and delivering relevant search results. This technological advancement is pivotal in connecting customers with the right products and enhancing their overall digital experience.

04 The Importance of content richness and accuracy for B2B brands

Quality and precision of content are crucial in cultivating a loyal customer base for B2B brands. According to the Gartner Personalization Customer Survey, there is a significant risk of losing customers if they perceive brand communications as irrelevant or bothersome[8]. This underscores the necessity of not only providing accurate content but also ensuring that it is easily accessible. Offering a personalized browsing experience can strengthen customer relationships and boost sales. Customers often seek familiar products but are also open to discovering new ones. Here, tailored product recommendations through up-selling and cross-selling play a pivotal role in enhancing the shopping experience and increasing transaction values.

- Despite a preference for digital transactions, buyers who use self-service digital platforms are 1.65 times more likely to experience purchase regret compared to those engaging through traditional sales channels[4]. This often stems from a lack of appropriate content that builds trust with the B2B brand. Investing in a robust CMS can help digital marketers curate, manage, and publish content seamlessly across various regions, enhancing customers' trust and connection with the brand. B2B brands can further engage customers by using chatbots or service agents to provide accurate product recommendations, comprehensive solutions, or educational toolkits tailored to user demands via the CMS.

- Global content syndication facilitated by PXM is another strategic approach helping B2B brands enhance CX for better product discoverability and ecommerce engagement. By incorporating Generative AI (GenAI) and focusing on a human-centric journey for personalized experiences, syndication enables brands to offer consistent product details in various formats across multiple channels. This approach can not only improve control over content dissemination to global customers, but can help also ensure that interactions are tailored and relevant, thereby boosting engagement and satisfaction.

- Additionally, the growing trend of investing in retail media highlights the importance of optimizing PDPs[9]. These pages, which are among the most visited on a site, should feature comprehensive product content—including images, videos, and detailed descriptions—alongside personalized recommendations. This approach not only meets the informational needs of customers at a glance but also supports growth by integrating effectively with enhanced search tools. By focusing on these elements, B2B brands can mitigate the risk of customer loss due to complex purchasing processes and ensure a smoother, more engaging digital shopping experience.
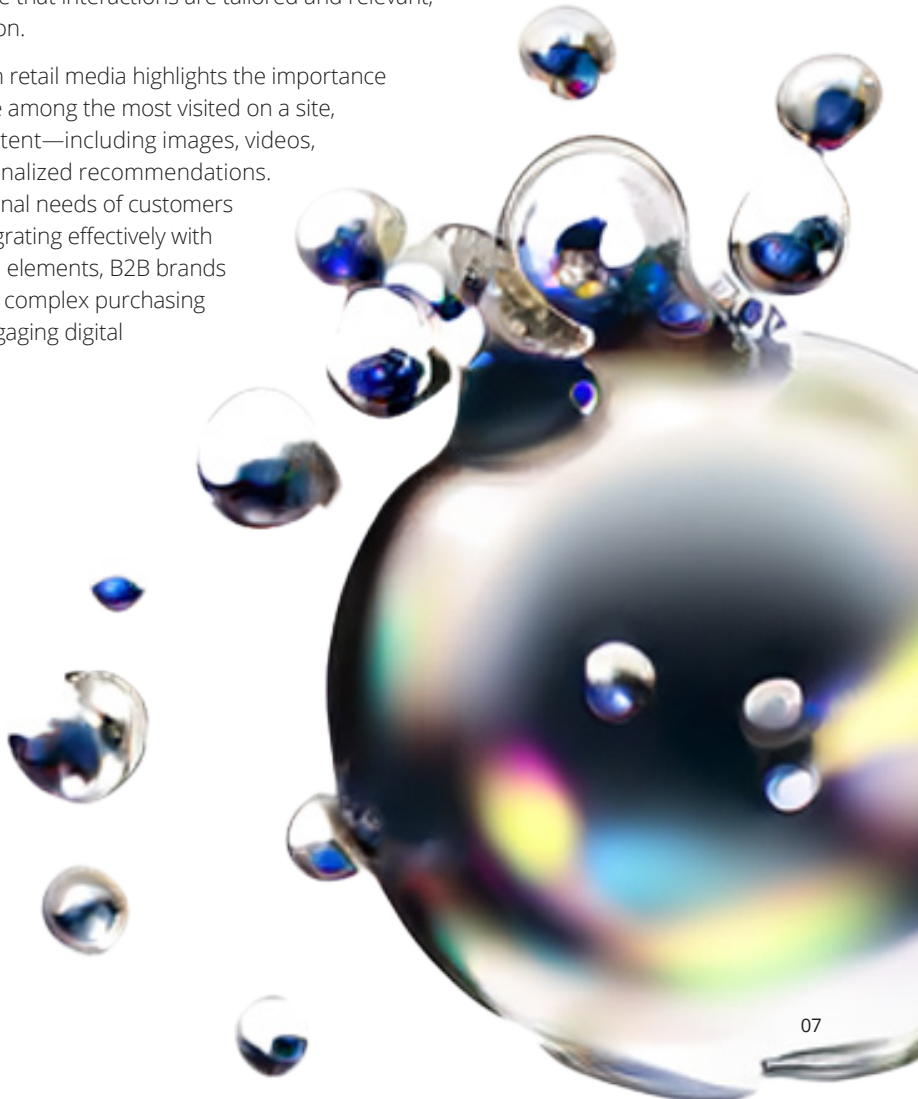
05 Leveraging composable commerce for B2B growth

Composable commerce presents a transformative opportunity for B2B brands to surpass the limitations of traditional commerce systems and align more closely with their business objectives and conversion goals. It is anticipated that by 2025, organizations that provide a seamless, unified commerce experience will witness at least a 20% increase in total revenue[5]. A critical challenge that B2B brands face is ensuring the timely delivery of the right products to customers. By utilizing the advanced features of PXM, such as product workflows, translation, digital asset management, collaboration, and the development of complex product relationships and hierarchies, B2B brands can create a composable commerce framework. This framework allows for the efficient extraction and delivery of precise product data and content with minimal effort.

Our research indicated that 64% of B2B companies find it challenging to facilitate easy interactions for their customers, with 59% investing heavily in their ecommerce platforms[1]. As Millennials and Gen Z increasingly turn to digital channels for researching, reviewing, and purchasing products, it is crucial for B2B brands to evolve beyond traditional commerce methods. These younger generations are significantly influencing B2B sales by using digital platforms to discover and validate products.

The introduction of more digital touchpoints can enhance CX, but it also places pressure on B2B brands to retain existing customers and attract new ones while optimizing their digital strategies. PXM plays a vital role here by ensuring consistent product data across various commerce touchpoints—from digital interfaces and sales-assisted environments to marketplaces, procurement platforms, and dealer portals. Many B2B brands are also updating their ERP systems to support front-office enhancements in B2B commerce. Implementing an omnichannel personalization strategy that effectively distributes product information across multiple channels will cater to the evolving preferences and needs of customers, thereby fostering a more engaging and satisfying shopping experience.

Summary: Strategies for B2B brands to enhance CX and boost conversions

B2B brands can drive higher conversions and sales by adopting a customer-centric approach and integrating advanced technologies. Key strategies include:

1. **Enhancing CX through integrated technical stacks:** Develop a cohesive strategy that includes PXM, advanced search functionalities, and the integration of CMS with commerce platforms to streamline product information and improve user satisfaction.

2. **Leveraging retail media on PDPs:** Focus on enriching product information, using high-quality media, and optimizing PDPs for conversions to assist buyers and enhance engagement.

3. **Facilitating efficient product discovery:** Implement efficient search tools and AI-driven personalization to ensure consistent product information and availability across all channels, enhancing the user experience.

4. **Building an omnichannel personalization strategy:** Syndicate product data and personalize the shopping experience across various channels, integrating physical and digital touchpoints to provide a unified customer journey.

These strategies aim to set new standards in customer engagement and satisfaction, aligning with current market trends and future-oriented business goals.

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