

Index

About the	whitepaper	3
Chapter 1.	Introduction to digital transformation in B2B sales 1.1 Opportunities in digital sales channels 1.2 Barriers to adoption 1.3 Resolutions through strategic partnerships 1.4 Your path to sustainable growth	4
Chapter 2.	Opportunities in digital sales channels: expanding your B2B growth potential 2.1 Electronic data interchange (EDI): streamlining complex B2B transactions 2.2 Punchout systems: plugging into your customers' buying processes 2.3 Self-service eCommerce: empowering the independent buyer 2.4 Digital self-service layer: supporting customers beyond the sale 2.5 Workforce augmentation: empowering your sales teams with digital tools	6
Chapter 3.	Barriers to adoption: overcoming challenges in digital transformation 3.1 Lack of knowledge and expertise 3.2 Complex commercial agreements and compliance requirements 3.3 Technological constraints and legacy systems 3.4 Investment and budget constraints 3.5 Legacy thinking and leadership resistance 3.6 Internal sales team resistance 3.7 Limited research and planning for adoption 3.8 Underestimating the digital shift among B2B buyers	9
Chapter 4	Assessing risks and benefits: building a balanced perspective 4.1 Documenting requirements: the power of clarity 4.2 Descriptions and responsibilities: setting clear expectations 4.3 Assessing risks and benefits: building a balanced perspective 4.4 Documenting requirements: the power of clarity 4.5 Best-fit platform selection: the 80/20 rule for success	13
Chapter 5.	. Conclusion: paving your path to sustainable B2B growth 5.1 The 5 stages to reach a sustainable growth	18
About		21

About the whitepaper

This isn't just another guide, it's your roadmap to unlocking sustainable sales growth in the B2B world. Packed with real insights and actionable strategies, this whitepaper dives deep into the heart of digital transformation. Whether you're just starting your journey or looking to refine your approach, you'll find everything you need to navigate the evolving B2B landscape with confidence. From exploring highimpact digital channels to overcoming internal barriers, every section is designed to help you stay ahead of the curve and drive meaningful results. Get ready to turn challenges into opportunities and take your B2B sales strategy to the next level!

The experts



Khalid Khan Transformation Director — Arsenalia

In today's evolving B2B landscape, understanding the buyer journey is key to building lasting relationships and driving growth. From initial awareness to post-purchase engagement, every touchpoint is an opportunity to enhance loyalty and satisfaction. By leveraging digital transformation, businesses can create seamless, customer-focused experiences that improve efficiency, unlock new revenue streams, and adapt to changing dynamics.



Vikram Saxena CEO — BetterCommerce

Digital transformation isn't just an add-on for B2B companies, it's the way forward. Adapting to evolving buyer expectations and global challenges requires unified, efficient workflows. Innovative tools, like WhatsAppenabled trade portals, empower customers to place orders and track shipments effortlessly. The challenge lies in selecting the right technologies in a crowded market. Businesses should focus on integrated solutions that simplify operations and deliver real value.



Jason GreenwoodFounder & Lead Consultant — Greenwood Consulting

B2B commerce demands a digital-first approach to meet rising buyer expectations and achieve sustainable growth. Unified, scalable solutions simplify processes and enhance customer experiences. Tools like automated order management and personalised eCommerce platforms enable buyers to make quick, informed decisions. The challenge is cutting through the crowded tech landscape to find solutions that align with business goals, delivering value and adaptability.

1. Introduction to digital transformation in B2B sales



1.Introduction to digital transformation in B2B sales

For B2B leaders, the world of sales is transforming at breakneck speed. Gone are the days when business transactions relied solely on traditional channels and face-to-face relationships. Today's B2B buyers, influenced by consumer-like digital experiences, are demanding the same convenience, autonomy, and speed from their business suppliers. So, how do you turn this shift to your advantage? How do you navigate the digital maze to achieve sustainable growth?

This whitepaper is your guide through the digital maze, created with insights from our three-part podcast series on B2B sales transformation. Together, we'll tackle the journey from opportunity identification to overcoming obstacles and leveraging partnerships. Here's what's in store:

1.1 Opportunities in digital sales channels

Digital sales channels are redefining the B2B buying experience. From EDI to self-service eCommerce, each channel has unique possibilities to streamline operations, empower buyers, and expand reach. But with every new channel comes the question: How do you implement it effectively and maximize the benefits?

1.2 Barriers to adoption

The road to digital transformation isn't always smooth. Many B2B companies hit speed bumps like budget constraints, resistance from traditional sales teams, or a lack of digital expertise. Legacy systems and leadership hesitation can further complicate the path. We'll break down these barriers, showing you how to anticipate and tackle the common hurdles that could slow your progress.

1.3 Resolutions through strategic partnerships

Digital transformation is a team effort. To overcome adoption challenges and ensure long-term success, building strategic partnerships with consultants, agencies, and tech vendors can make all the difference. We'll explore what to look for in a partner, from choosing the right platform to aligning goals and managing risks.

1.4 Your path to sustainable growth

By the end of this whitepaper, you'll have a clear, actionable plan for navigating the future of B2B sales. You'll know which digital channels offer the best growth potential, how to break through adoption barriers, and how to leverage partnerships for lasting impact. Let's dive in and discover how you can transform these insights into real-world results.

By 2025 of B2B sales interactions will occur in digital channels (Gartner).

2. Opportunities in digital sales channels: expanding your B2B growth potential



2. Opportunities in digital sales channels: expanding your B2B growth potential

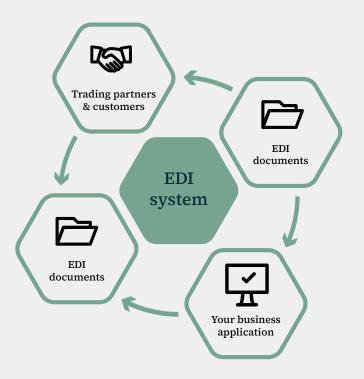
Ready to dive into the digital sales channels that are reshaping B2B commerce?

In today's market, buyers want more than just product access they're looking for flexibility, ease, and independence throughout their buying journey. This is where digital channels come into play. Each offers a unique path to connect with customers, streamline processes, and increase efficiency. Let's explore five essential channels, each packed with potential to grow your business.

2.1 Electronic data interchange (EDI): streamlining complex B2B transactions

First up is EDI, one of the most reliable digital tools for companies handling high transaction volumes. EDI remains a foundational tool in meeting these needs, automating the exchange of critical documents such as purchase orders and invoices between ERP systems. This integration significantly reduces manual intervention, lowering the risk of costly errors and accelerating transaction processing.

For companies managing complex order flows, EDI offers a streamlined solution that enables real-time data updates and faster order fulfilment, ensuring smoother internal operations and more reliable customer interactions.



Watch out for this: EDI's setup can be resource-intensive, both financially and technically. You'll need the right expertise to get it running smoothly, but once it's in place, it's a powerhouse for efficiency.

2.2 Punchout systems: plugging into your customers' buying processes

Imagine your commerce platform connecting directly with your customer's procurement software. That's what a punchout system does, allowing customers to order from you without leaving their own internal systems. A punchout system bridges the gap between a company's eCommerce site and the customer's procurement system, creating a unified, embedded experience that simplifies purchasing. This setup is particularly beneficial for high-frequency buyers who can access product catalogs, initiate purchases, and complete transactions directly within their procurement workflows.

Top benefits of self-service portals



Why punchout systems stand out: by embedding your brand in your customer's workflow, you make it easier for them to choose you time and again. This streamlines procurement for high-volume accounts and solidifies your position as a go-to supplier.

It's a convenience-driven world, and buyers appreciate the independence of self-service options. This channel lets your customers manage their orders on their schedule, which is essential in an increasingly digital market.

What to consider: Punchout systems require a robust tech setup and close collaboration with customers. They're best suited for high-value accounts where the time and resources invested in setup are likely to pay off in the long run.

Key considerations: Building a top-notch self-service platform requires well-designed user experience and frequent updates. Buyers expect smooth navigation and quick access to information, so regular maintenance is a must.

2.3 Self-service eCommerce: empowering the independent buyer

Today's B2B buyers often want to research, compare, and purchase without waiting for a sales rep and self-service eCommerce platforms provides this freedom. Offering 24/7 access, self-service eCommerce meets the expectations of digital-native buyers who value the ability to make quick, informed decisions on their terms.

2.4 Digital self-service layer: supporting customers beyond the sale

Once a sale is complete, a digital self-service layer can enhance the post-purchase experience. Offering options like order tracking, invoice access, and self-help tools allows customers to resolve issues and manage their accounts independently. This approach reduces dependence on customer service teams while empowering buyers to resolve many of their needs independently.

They can access information instantly, without needing to call in, boosting satisfaction and retention.

Potential pitfalls: Implementing a userfriendly self-service layer requires upfront investment in design and functionality, as well as real-time data access. Ensuring that customers get accurate, timely information is crucial for this tool's success.

2.5 Workforce augmentation: empowering your sales teams with digital tools

Digital transformation isn't only about customer-facing changes. Augmenting your workforce with digital tools allows your sales team to focus more on building relationships than managing repetitive tasks. By automating routine work, companies enable their teams to be more responsive and efficient in handling client needs. This approach doesn't just improve team productivity; it also enhances customer experience by ensuring that buyers receive prompt, focused attention.

- → How it adds value: Tools like CRM systems, digital catalogs, and AI-driven insights empower your team to personalize outreach, understand customer needs, and deliver higher-quality service. It's about making your team's work smarter and more strategic.
- → What's the challenge? While workforce augmentation can be a game-changer, it also requires training and support to ensure adoption. Without a structured onboarding process, sales reps may hesitate to adopt new tools fully.

3. Barriers to adoption: overcoming challenges in digital transformation



The biggest challenges in digital transformation



3. Barriers to adoption: overcoming challenges in digital transformation

While digital sales channels hold vast potential, the journey to adopting them is rarely straightforward. Many B2B companies encounter obstacles that can slow or even stall their digital transformation. From resistance within the team to legacy systems and budget limitations, these barriers are all too familiar in the B2B world. But knowing what you're up against is the first step to overcoming it. Let's dive into the main challenges that B2B companies face on their digital journey and how to approach them.

3.1 Lack of knowledge and expertise

Digital transformation often requires specific technical skills and an understanding of modern digital tools that may not be readily available in many B2B companies. Without expertise in eCommerce platforms, integrations, and customer experience design, businesses may struggle to implement effective digital channels.

What's the challenge? Many teams find themselves navigating unfamiliar territory, which can lead to hesitation or costly missteps. The lack of internal knowledge can also make it harder to evaluate and choose the right technology for long-term success.

How to fix it?

- **1. Upskill through training:** Invest in regular training programs tailored to your team's specific needs.
- **2. Leverage external expertise:** Bring in consultants to guide your team through the initial phases of digital adoption.

3.2 Complex commercial agreements and compliance requirements

B2B relationships often involve longstanding agreements, unique pricing structures, and compliance obligations that aren't easily adapted to digital platforms. Integrating these elements into a new digital system can be daunting, especially when agreements need precise control over pricing, discounts, or contract terms. → What's the challenge? Commercial agreements can limit flexibility, complicated pricing setups, and create logistical hurdles when transitioning to a digital platform.

The solution:

- 1. Simplify with technology: Use contract management tools to automate compliance checks and streamline agreement updates.
- 2. Collaborate with legal teams early: Ensure legal and compliance teams are involved from the start to avoid delays.

3.3 Technological constraints and legacy systems

Legacy systems, such as outdated ERP software or paper-based catalog processes, are common in B2B businesses. These systems often struggle to integrate with modern digital tools, leading to data silos and a lack of real-time information, a significant barrier to seamless digital transactions.

Imagine trying to fit a modern engine into a vintage car. Legacy systems in B2B work much the same way, they're foundational but not designed for today's digital tools.

What can you do?

- 1. Layer, don't replace: Instead of overhauling everything, integrate digital tools over legacy systems to preserve core functionality.
- **2. Build for the future:** Gradually phase out outdated systems while ensuring new tools are scalable and adaptable.

of firms report that legacy 72% systems hinder their digital transformation strategies (Forrester).

3.4 Investment and budget constraints

Adopting digital channels requires financial investment, and for some companies, budget limitations can be a major hurdle. Compounded by previous unsuccessful tech initiatives, many B2B businesses hesitate to allocate resources toward new digital projects.

→ What's the challenge? Even if the business case is strong, tight budgets or a risk-averse approach can prevent digital transformation from moving forward.

Make it work:

- 1. Start small with an MVP: Test digital initiatives with a minimal viable product to reduce upfront costs and demonstrate value.
- 2. Highlight ROI: Build a business case showcasing long-term savings and revenue growth to justify the investment.

3.5 Legacy thinking and leadership resistance

In many established B2B companies, leadership and sales teams may be accustomed to traditional methods. Shifting from relationship-based sales to digital channels can feel like a threat to the status quo, especially for those who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with digital tools.

→ What's the challenge? Resistance to change can hinder digital initiatives, especially when top decision-makers or key sales representatives aren't on board.

Break the mold:

- **1. Present data-driven cases:** Use realworld examples and competitor case studies to illustrate the tangible benefits of digital transformation.
- **2. Embrace open dialogue:** Encourage leadership to engage in discussions about their concerns and address them with transparency.

3.6 Internal sales team resistance

Sales teams may resist the shift to digital channels, fearing it could impact their roles or change commission structures. This resistance often stems from a perception that digital tools will replace rather than support their work.

Reflective pause: How can self-service tools help our sales team be even better at what they do?

→ What's the challenge? Resistance from the sales team can slow adoption and limit the success of new digital tools.

Shift the perspective:

- **1. Showcase the benefits:** Highlight how automation can free them from repetitive tasks, allowing more time for strategic relationship-building.
- **2. Pilot programs:** Let them experience the tools in a low-pressure environment to see their value firsthand.

3.7 Limited research and planning for adoption

Digital transformation often fails without adequate research and planning,

particularly around customer expectations and adoption strategies. Lacking a solid strategy can lead to digital tools that don't align with actual buyer needs or don't gain traction internally.

→ **What's the challenge?** Many companies jump into digital initiatives without a clear plan, leading to missed opportunities and suboptimal implementation.

Get it right:

- **3. Engage stakeholders early:** Conduct internal assessments and customer surveys to understand pain points and expectations.
- **4. Iterate based on feedback:** Use pilot programs to refine your approach before a full-scale rollout.

3.8 Underestimating the digital shift among B2B buyers

Millennials buyers, who increasingly dominate the B2B space, have digital-first expectations. Yet, many companies fail to recognize this shift, missing out on opportunities to engage a new generation of decision-makers.

→ What's the challenge? Ignoring the digital preferences of younger buyers can make a brand appear outdated and limit its market reach.

Take action:

- **1. Prioritize customer-centric tools:** Develop intuitive platforms that cater to these preferences.
- **2. Monitor and adapt:** Continuously gather feedback to ensure your digital tools evolve with buyer expectations.

4. Resolutions through strategic partnerships: building the bridge to digital success



4. Resolutions through strategic partnerships: building the bridge to digital success

Digital transformation doesn't happen in a vacuum. Even the most forward-thinking B2B companies need support to overcome adoption barriers and maximize the impact of new digital sales channels. This is where strategic partnerships come into play. By collaborating with consultants, agencies, and technology vendors, you can access the expertise, tools, and guidance necessary to make digital transformation a reality. Here's how to choose the right partners and set the stage for a successful partnership.

higher revenue growth **1.8X** for B2B companies excelling at Customer Experience (Forrester).

4.1 Selecting the right partner: matching expertise to your needs

Choosing the right partner can be the difference between digital success and a stalled initiative. Each type of partnerconsultants, agencies, or technology vendors offers different strengths, so it's essential to identify what your business truly needs.

Steps to select the right partners

- 1. Define each role clearly: Decide which tasks require external support and clarify each partner's role. Consultants might lead strategy, agencies handle branding and UX, while vendors supply the necessary technology.
- 2. Evaluate based on industry **experience:** Look for partners who have experience in your specific industry or a similar B2B environment. They'll bring insights into similar projects that help avoid common pitfalls.
- 3. Look beyond capabilities: It's tempting to choose partners based solely on their skills, but cultural fit matters too. Select those who understand and respect your company's values and long-term vision.

Selection prompt: Which tasks are essential to achieving our digital goals, and who brings the most relevant expertise for each?

4.2 Defining roles and responsibilities: setting clear expectations

Clear, upfront communication about roles and responsibilities is essential to avoid misunderstandings and ensure accountability. Each partner should know their role in the process, whether it's helping with platform selection, training, or ongoing support.

Steps to define roles effectively:

- **1. Map the project scope:** Clearly outline the phases of the project and assign responsibilities for each task.
- **2. Establish communication channels:** Regular check-ins and updates help keep everyone aligned and provide opportunities to address any emerging issues.
- **3. Set expectations for deliverables:** Clearly define what success looks like for each partner's role, from deliverables to performance metrics.

The payoff:

A well-defined structure reduces the risk of finger-pointing or dropped responsibilities. It ensures each partner focuses on their area of expertise, creating a cohesive and efficient workflow from start to finish.

4.3 Assessing risks and benefits: building a balanced perspective

Working with external partners comes with inherent risks, but the benefits often far outweigh them when managed properly. Identifying potential risks upfront can help in choosing partners wisely and setting realistic expectations.

Common risks:

- → **Misaligned objectives:** partners may have different priorities, leading to conflicting approaches.
- → **Scope creep:** without clear boundaries, projects can expand beyond their initial scope, increasing costs and timelines.
- → **Budget overruns:** mismanagement or unexpected issues can lead to financial strain.

How to maximize benefit:

- **1. Set clear metrics for success:** Define KPIs to track progress and measure the impact of each partner's contribution.
- **2. Foster open communication:** Regular feedback loops help identify and address issues before they escalate.
- **3. Leverage partner expertise:** Partners bring specialized knowledge that can accelerate your transformation and deliver quick wins

4.4 Documenting requirements: the power of clarity

For digital transformation to succeed, there needs to be a clear, shared understanding of your project requirements. Consultants play a crucial role in documenting and defining these needs, ensuring that agencies and vendors are aligned on deliverables.

Detailed documentation minimizes misinterpretations and sets a clear path for implementation. When partners understand exactly what's required, they can execute with confidence and precision.

Best practices for effective documentation:

- **1. Collaborate with consultants:** Work closely with strategy consultants to define both business and technical requirements.
- **2. Include all stakeholders:** Ensure that input from internal teams and external partners is captured to create a holistic view of project needs.
- **3. Regularly update documentation:** As the project evolves, keep documentation current to reflect any changes in scope or requirements.

Quick tip: Use documentation not just for alignment but as a tool to track progress and measure success against initial goals.

4.5 Best-fit platform selection: the 80/20 rule for success

The 80/20 rule is a practical approach to balancing customization with functionality. By concentrating on the essential 20% of features that deliver 80% of the value, B2B companies can avoid unnecessary complexity and reduce costs. Another way to approach it is to consider platforms that can meet 80% of the requirements out of the box, without heavy customization.

Steps to apply the 80/20 rule:

- 1. Define essential features: Focus on features that will directly impact business goals, such as eCommerce capabilities for sales or inventory management for order tracking.
- 2. Limit customization to high-impact areas: Customize only where it offers a significant advantage. For example, if customer segmentation drives your sales strategy, prioritize customization here but avoid over-customizing general features.
- **3. Evaluate long-term maintenance:** Customized features may require more ongoing support. Keep this in mind to ensure that customizations don't become costly to maintain.

Quick tip: When considering customizations, ask, "Will this customization solve a specific business challenge or create long-term value?" If the answer is no, it may be best to stick with the standard feature set.

Imagine a B2B company considering a new eCommerce platform. Instead of customizing every feature, they decide to focus on refining only the product 'configure, price, quote' feature as it directly impacts the buying experience and will lead to higher conversion rates. Other features, like order tracking, remain as-is to streamline costs and implementation time.

Decision prompt: Which features drive the most impact? Use the 80/20 rule to focus on these, minimizing customization to save on cost and complexity.

By forging the right partnerships and leveraging external expertise, B2B companies can overcome the hurdles of digital transformation. Strategic partnerships don't just provide technical support, they offer insights, experience, and a pathway to lasting growth. Working together with skilled partners empowers your business to embrace digital change, adapt to modern buyer expectations, and position itself as a leader in the digital B2B landscape.

Data-driven businesses are growing at **30%** annually, expected to earn \$1.8 trillion by 2025 (Forrester).

5. Conclusion: paving your path to sustainable B2B growth



5. Conclusion: paving your path to sustainable B2B growth

Digital transformation is no small undertaking, especially in the complex world of B2B sales. As we've explored, the journey involves navigating both opportunities and challenges, with a need for strategic partnerships to support and accelerate your progress. By embracing digital sales channels, tackling common barriers, and leveraging the expertise of carefully selected partners, your business is primed to unlock a new level of growth and customer engagement.

5.1 The 5 stages to reach a sustainable growth

Sustainable digital growth is an ongoing journey, one that requires B2B companies to stay adaptable and committed to evolving alongside market and buyer demands. Here, we outline the stages of this journey, each essential for maintaining a competitive edge and positioning your company for lasting success.

Stage 1

Embracing the journey of digital transformation

Digital transformation is more than an initial upgrade, it's a commitment to continual improvement. In today's B2B landscape, companies that are agile and responsive are better positioned to thrive. The key is to recognize that transformation isn't a single event but an ongoing process of adapting to change. Think of it as a mindset, not a milestone.

Reflect: how ready is your business to embrace continuous evolution rather than a one-time transformation?

Stage 2

Aligning with changing buyer expectations

Modern B2B buyers expect speed, simplicity, and personalized experiences. To stay aligned with these evolving needs, digital strategies must be regularly assessed and refined. By keeping pace with customer expectations, companies stay relevant and can anticipate trends rather than merely reacting to them.

Action: establish regular strategy checkpoints to ensure your digital approach is meeting current and future buyer expectations.

Stage 3

Building resilience through incremental improvements

Sustainable growth isn't about large, disruptive changes; it's about ongoing, manageable upgrades. A focus on incremental improvements keeps digital solutions agile, minimizing the risk of disruption and allowing your business to stay flexible in the face of industry shifts.

Tip: adopt a mindset of resilience, where each phase builds on the last. This approach helps you adapt with minimal disruption.

Stage 4

Mapping a future-ready technology roadmap

A well-structured technology roadmap is your guide for scalable growth. By planning for adaptability and embedding flexibility into your digital strategy, you'll be prepared to respond seamlessly to new developments. This forward-looking approach minimizes costly overhauls and keeps your technology aligned with business goals.

Plan: create a roadmap that allows for growth, flexibility, and quick integration of emerging tools and features.

Stage 5

Cultivating a culture of agility and innovation

Digital transformation thrives when it becomes part of a company's core identity. Fostering a culture of agility across teams means viewing change as an opportunity, not an interruption. With a digitally resilient workforce, your business is better positioned to innovate and stay competitive.

Commit: empower your teams with a forward-thinking mindset that embraces change, driving continuous growth and innovation.

About

Arsenalia

Arsenalia is a multidisciplinary consultancy dedicated to driving digital transformation in commerce. With expertise across multiple centers of excellence, we specialize in integrating strategy, technical solutions, and creative innovation to help our clients thrive in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

We understand the complexities of B2B commerce from intricate product offerings and dynamic pricing models to multilayered purchasing journeys. Our team excels in delivering scalable, high-impact solutions paired with strategic advisory, ensuring every stage of the buyer's journey is tailored to meet the unique demands of B2B organizations.

Get in touch

Whether you're starting with digital transformation or refining your strategy, we're here to help.
Connect with us to explore tailored solutions to drive your success.

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BetterCommerce

BetterCommerce is a unified platform that addresses complex use-cases for B2B businesses. Designed for mid-market companies, it offers out-of-the-box PIM and several other modules, eliminating the need for lengthy integrations.

The platform streamlines end-to-end B2B commerce for wholesalers, manufacturers, and distributors, with tools like Smart AI Inbox and a WhatsApp-enabled trade portal, allowing customers to check order status, stock, prices, and place orders via email. BetterCommerce stands out by offering comprehensive, easy-to-use solutions that reduce total cost of ownership and deliver high ROI.

Greenwood Consulting

Greenwood Consulting specializes in providing expert guidance for B2B and DTC digital commerce, serving clients across the globe. With a focus on assisting well-funded startups and medium to large-scale enterprises, the firm is dedicated to steering businesses through their digital transformation journey. Their goal is rooted in delivering absolute excellence in digital execution, driven by a passion for transforming digital laggards into industry leaders.

At Greenwood Consulting, the belief is that the best digital technologies are those that unleash, enhance, and inspire human potential, making a meaningful impact on both businesses and their customers.

