

10 Reasons Why Your B2B Website is Letting You Down





B2B ecommerce is accelerating. Fast. Online B2B revenues are double those of B2C and show no signs of stopping.

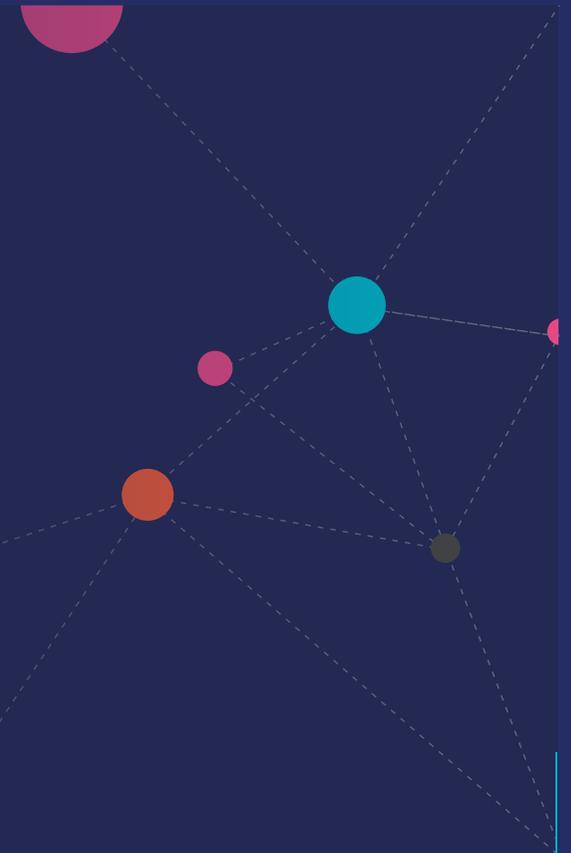
In fact, by 2020 - in just three short years - B2B ecommerce will be worth \$6.7 trillion globally. For those of us in the UK, that's more than £5.3 trillion.

B2B customers are increasingly behaving like their B2C counterparts and seeking the same integrated online experience that they demand in their personal lives. The rise of ecommerce is one of the biggest trends in B2B marketing right now and while B2B businesses can learn a lot from B2C, there are some elements that make B2B ecommerce unique. The last thing you want to do is provide

a poor experience and drive your customers towards your competitors, but sometimes it isn't easy to spot the mistakes. The intricacies of B2B buyer behaviour mean that great experiences and a slick, convenient customer journey require time, patience and a little help.

That's where we come in. We're helping our clients make the most of the opportunity, ensuring they stay ahead of their competitors time and again. And we can do the same for you.

Here are the top 10 reasons why your B2B website could be letting you down and how to remedy them.





You Don't Have a Customer-Focused Description of Your Company

01

It's easy to assume that your audience knows your business and industry as well as you do.

The assumption is so strong that many websites make it difficult for a visitor to find out exactly what the company does. The message can get lost in jargon, acronyms and platitudes or, worse still, vague marketing speak which turns off buyers and leaves them wondering why they even bothered visiting your website in the first place.

Don't assume that visitors will know your industry and your offering.

When describing your company, step back and tell them exactly what you do in simple terms, and make sure this information is on your home page.

Although you need your audiences to know what you do, they're more interested in how

you can help them. Provide a summary to distinguish your offering from competitors, but also reveal how you can help them by addressing their pain points, demonstrating benefits and achieving the right emotional response.



You Don't Make it Obvious that You Know Your Core Audiences

02

UX, or user experience, is the overall online experience that your visitors get from your company. It's the glue that holds your online presence together.

It's obvious that page layouts, navigation and hyperlinks should lead visitors through the site with simple steps that take them through the buying process, but you also need to understand the different customer journeys that are taking place.

A page hierarchy flowchart will allow you to map out the way that your pages link together, though you also need to cater to a very specific range of audiences or buyer personas.

Know your core sectors and connect them with your UX. Build pages that relate only to them, identify their pain points and provide solutions.

Focus your web design, content and ecommerce squarely at those audiences that generate the most revenue for your company.

But you need to provide a balance. Being a generalist and covering all the bases may mean that you won't attract anyone, but being a specialist and catering for one audience may mean that you are missing out on other business on the boundaries of your expertise.

What you need is a multi-tiered approach, which provides broader messaging to spread your net wider, but also includes a suite of sector-specific pages to really drill down into your core target audiences and demonstrate that you understand their needs.



You Don't Cater for Early Stage Buyers

03

The vast majority of prospects who visit your website will not be at a stage where they are comfortable with filling out a contact form or ready to call your sales team. Many won't even want to trade their details for a report or white paper.

These lead magnet tools are vitally important, but you also need to build trust with potential customers by providing information that shows you understand their industry and their problems, without them having to give anything in return at first.

Provide ways for them to get answers to their questions without having to get in touch.

These snippets of information that you provide need to solve problems, but you can also use them to plant more questions and lead them to data capture forms for them to download more information.

Working this way, you can also help customers decide whether your product or service is something that they should even consider in the first place.

Once your visitors are ready to download, they will. That's as long as you provide them with the tools to get to that stage in the first place.



Your Calls to Action Just Aren't Compelling

04

Calls to action (CTAs) are commonplace on websites, quickly getting your visitors into the buying loop. The further someone has to search through your website, the higher the likelihood that they're going to head to your competitors instead. A CTA is a direct instruction which compels your visitors to take the action that you want them to take.

CTAs come in many guises. The line of copy above a webform which reads "Join Our Mailing List", the link at the end of an article reading "Click Here To Learn More" and even "Buy Now", "Add To Basket" and "View This Week's Offers".

However, with B2B purchasing it can be subtler. The first time someone visits your website they may be researching the marketplace, so you need to use CTAs to reach out to them and transition them through the buying process from first principles.

Each CTA needs to take into consideration:

- Visibility
- Description
- Clarity
- Persuasion

CTAs need to leave the user in no doubt of the action to take, why they should take it and the result they'll get.

You can design a visually stunning button, but if the message doesn't connect with your audiences then you've lost them. If it's positioned in the wrong place, you've lost them. If it isn't harmonious with the rest of your site's design, then you've lost them.

Creating and placing your CTAs isn't the end of it. Measure the performance and adjust the elements based upon your findings, conducting A/B testing. Give as much thought to the pages that you're directing visitors through to. Do they continue the theme of the CTA and are they as compelling?



Your Content Mix isn't Working

05

If you're running a B2B website your primary goal is to make a profit, but as covered earlier you need to transition your visitors through a series of steps before they become customers. Content is a great way of allowing you to do this.

Your audience doesn't want to know that much about your company, they're more interested in how you can solve their problems.

As a result, you need to be writing content that's not necessarily about your product, but instead about your potential buyer's situation. Focus on what matters to your audiences.

Blogging is a great way to build a library of information about your target industry. Posts are short enough to be read quickly, plus they are non-threatening for the buyer that's simply doing research. They can also interest

buyers and direct them to CTAs to transition them to the next stage of the buying process. Never forget the importance of data capture.

You're also going to need different content for different audiences. Some people like to read through a detailed piece, others just like to be told the top line facts. Sometimes an infographic will tell the whole story, whereas a video is more suitable at other times.

You need to consider a mix of social, short-form, long-form, opinion and technical pieces. Provide an additional layer of white papers and reports, which people can only get hold of by providing their details in exchange. Above all, make your content engaging and shareable, and remember those CTAs.



Your Ecommerce Solution Doesn't Do You Justice

06

Is your ecommerce solution too basic for your large product inventory? Does the complexity of your products require rich product content, imagery and datasheets? Are your customers able to leave reviews of your products? Or perhaps you don't have an ecommerce solution at the moment.

The rise of ecommerce is one of the biggest trends in B2B marketing. While B2B businesses can learn a lot from B2C, there are some elements that make B2B ecommerce unique.

Whether you're selling rubber gloves or complex electronic measuring equipment, a growing portion of your customer base will prefer to buy online.

The challenges of B2B product complexity can so easily create customer confusion. As well as providing technical specifications,

product benefits and value comparisons, it's likely you'll need to offer the option of buying on account, manage a variety of pricing structures and offer a range of shipping options. All of this needs to be provided in a format that is accessible and intuitive for your customers.

If implemented and maintained correctly, your ecommerce solution will boost your sales dramatically, reduce costs, tie your existing customers into your product offerings for the long-term and attract more new business away from your competition.



You're Not Using Dynamic Personalisation

07

Dynamic personalisation allows you to serve up website content that changes based on each visitor's requirements. For example, you may want to show a customer a different homepage to what you'd show an existing lead, which would also be different to what you'd show a first-time visitor. Dynamic personalisation means you can deliver the right content to the right people, at the right time.

Dynamic personalisation is even more important in the B2B arena, where large product inventories and multiple target audiences are commonplace.

You can serve up a completely different ecommerce experience for each target sector based on their login details. Not all visitors who arrive at your site are ready to make a purchase, but those who navigate to your product pages are getting closer to making a decision. Dynamic personalisation can

nudge your visitors in the direction that you want them to go, delivering content based on previous actions.

A changing, personalised website experience not only promotes a great user experience, but can create more conversions by transforming your site from a source of static information and a hard sell into a two-way conversation with your audiences. It allows you to deliver timely, relevant content, build trust, and personalise your calls to action.

Although dynamic personalisation can seem like a daunting challenge, the underlying technology is relatively easy to implement and can make a huge difference to the revenues your website delivers.



Your Content Has Stagnated

08

Once you've generated content for your website, that's not the end of it. If you're not regularly adding new information then your infrequent updates will send the signal that communication is not a top priority. This can impact upon your sales volumes.

Always ensure your content is fresh and changing, but don't just create content for the sake of it.

You need to be connecting regularly, but you need to be connecting relevantly.

The customer's experience is one of today's most important business battlegrounds. If you can provide valuable content that makes your customers lives easier and helps them navigate the pitfalls of business then you're one step ahead of the competition. Keep going, keep providing regular updates and information that keeps them coming back.

Make sure you don't forget the basics either. Add publication dates to blog posts so that people can see they are current.

Encourage your audiences to comment on your articles, link them into social media channels and discussion groups. Answer questions and get involved in discussions.



Your Website Has Speed Issues

09

Although a B2B ecommerce website is likely to be large it also needs to be lean and load fast. It's well known that content loading issues cause visitors to bounce off your website, but user impatience is increasing and people are now far less forgiving of a bad online experience. In particular:

- 50% of web users expect a site to load in 2 seconds or less.
- 40% of people will abandon a web page if it takes more than 3 seconds to load.
- 79% of online shoppers who have had trouble with a website loading said they wouldn't return to the site again.

Loading times are a major factor in page abandonment, but before you can do anything about your loading time, you need to find out how your website stacks up at the moment.

You can identify the bottlenecks in your website and pinpoint best practices using Pingdom's website speed checker tool

or similar. Page speed can be affected negatively by many things, though the most common ones are:

- Lack of image compression
- CSS, JavaScript and HTML not minified
- No browser caching
- Too many redirects
- Slow database queries
- Slow routing
- No CDN (content delivery network)

Not only will your user experience be affected by slow page loading times, but Google will also reduce your visibility in its search results.

This creates a continuing downward spiral of less visitors and higher bounce rates.



You Don't Know How Your Visitors Found You

10

It's not always obvious why people are visiting your website, where they arrive from and what they do when they get there.

You likely have Google Analytics or a similar web analytics system embedded in your pages and you probably know how many visitors you're getting each month. Perhaps your metrics are tied to business targets in some way as well. That's great, though there is so much more that can be done with your web analytics.

There is much more to your website data than counting visitors.

Instead you need to focus on the metrics that really matter to your business goals and also communicate those metrics in useful ways to senior management teams.

Defining your website's key performance indicators (KPIs) is your first requirement,

such as user tracking, website conversions, site actions, goal setting, CTAs and internal site search usage.

By generating, analysing and acting upon clear web analytics you can make better decisions about how to leverage your marketing resources, doing more of what works and less of what doesn't.



Putting it All Together

Now you should be all geared up to improve the online experience for your customers. As B2B ecommerce continues to accelerate, you need to be thinking about the overall experience that you can provide to your audiences.

Think about putting together your customer-focused company description, make it obvious to your visitors that you understand the challenges of your core audiences and make sure that you're catering for those early stage buyers. Work on making your CTAs as compelling as possible, work on your content mix and evaluate your current ecommerce offering. Is it up to the job? Are there any elements that can be improved?

Explore the opportunities for adding dynamic personalisation to your website, address any speed issues that your website is experiencing and use analytics to increase your revenues.

Once you've got all this in place, keep on top of the content and keep innovating.

Let us know how you get on, we'd love to hear from you, and if you need any pointers along the way we're here to help.

The Shopcreator Advantage

Looking for a bespoke B2B ecommerce solution that's integrated into your back office software or supply chain? You've come to the right place.

Bespoke Integrated Solutions

- Do you require a complex B2B solution offering prices determined by client, contract or volume?

Design & UX Development

- Is your current design affecting your conversion rates and customer engagement?

Fully Managed B2B Ecommerce Services

- Not sure what IT resources you require to implement and run a successful B2B ecommerce site?

Strategic Technical Consulting

- Looking to achieve a market position and online solution that propels you to the next level?

— Here at Shopcreator we've been helping our clients make the most of the ecommerce opportunity since 1998, ensuring they stay ahead of their competitors time and again. We can do the same for you.



Fully-managed ecommerce services

Not sure what resources you require to implement and run a successful B2B ecommerce site?

We take the time to understand your business, ensuring your site reflects the needs of your customers. Our goal is to ensure that the ambitions of your business are matched, if not exceeded, by your online presence and we provide you with named technical and service contacts to help support you from day one.



Bespoke solutions

Need a complex B2B solution offering prices determined by client, contract or volume?

We've been integrating with third parties and developing bespoke solutions for 20 years. This includes payment providers, ERP systems, CRMs and custom in-house applications. We understand the challenges that come with bespoke B2B integrations and the importance of performing a detailed requirement analysis up front.



Design services

Want a bespoke website, designed to optimise your conversion rates and boost sales?

We live and breathe beautiful bespoke designs which are crafted to boost your sales. At the start of the project, we meet with your business face to face so that we can understand you and your target audience and how you want your brand to be represented. An initial concept is created based on these discussions and further refined to your specifications by our experts as the site comes to life.



Outstanding customer support

Looking for UK-based support that understands your business?

Rest assured that you will always speak to a human, somebody who knows your site and your business.



We understand the business of B2B and can ensure you make the most of the opportunity. If you want to increase your online sales or you're just uncertain what your next few steps should be, then we are here to help.



Want To Increase Your Online Revenues?

Talk to us

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