

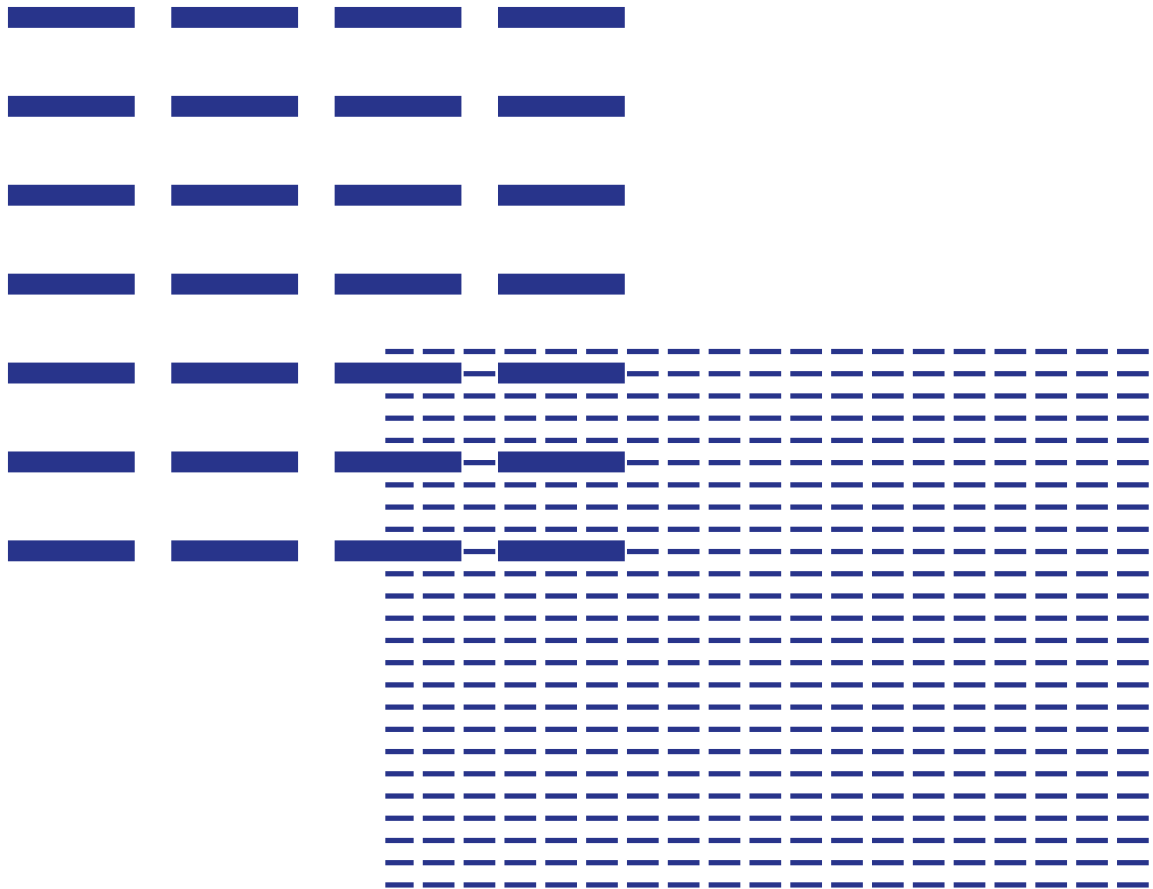


ITB-Arbeitsberichte | Band 2

Klaus-Ulrich Remmerbach | Alexander Röllig

The Uber-Driver Digital Transformation – B2B the Next Generation of B2C

Connecting the Physical World with the Digital Sphere



We live in a digital world - even without taken notice, digitalization has shaped our environment over the last few years. The buzzword of 2014/2015 will be "Digital Transformation". In fact it is the new uber-driver and it impacts us all and will change the global economy. The information based industries are just the first wave, others will follow. Setting up a plan for the digital disruption and transforming the strategies, uprating models and capabilities to harness the advantages of digitalization and avoid it pitfalls. The main focus of this paper lies on the ongoing digitalization trend and how the transformation can be adapted into the B2B sector.

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Preface

A first impression about the topicality of this paper will be given by the following links. Feel free to use your digital device (smartphone, tablet) and lay back.



Why is the topic so important - NOW?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XIQkDldpml>



What will change in businesses - NOW?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d32Ps1VYAk>



Why do businesses need to react - NOW?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjIBQ0CEZTE>

Digitalization is already touching us all and the buzzword of 2014/2015 will be “Digital Transformation”. In fact it is the new uber-driver and it impacts us all and will change the global economy. The information based industries are just the first wave, others will fol-low. Setting up a plan for the digital disruption and transforming the strategies, uprating models and capabilities to harness the advantages of digitalization and avoid it pitfalls.

The main focus of this paper lies on the ongoing digitalization trend and how the transformation can be adapted into the B2B sector.

Management Summary

We live in a digital world - even without taken notice, digitalization has shaped our environment over the last few years. The graphic is well known (What happens in an internet minute?) about the volume of data which is transferred online every minute via the internet. Lately, the topic has gained a high importance in public. News and articles in every newspaper about the digital age are popping up. Furthermore the German federal government is discussing this topic on the <<Digital Agenda>>.

Digitalization is already touching us all and the buzzword of 2014/2015 will be "Digital Transformation". In fact it is the new uber-driver and it impacts us all and will change the global economy. The information based industries are just the first wave, others will follow. Setting up a plan for the digital disruption and transforming the strategies, uprating models and capabilities to harness the advantages of digitalization and avoid it pitfalls.

The effects are now noticeable for all businesses. They have to adapt to these changes to maximize their business, explore new markets, develop new strategies and expand their business to be competitive in the future. In the digital age, internet marketing is more and more important than ever before. Big Data, e-commerce, online marketing and social media is on every agenda of the industry. It is not just certain industries which are under pressure of digitalization.

Business models, value chains and all industries need to manage these challenges. However the adaptation and processing in B2B is far behind. Many companies have long overlooked the full potential of marketing & communication development, especially in online presence and e-commerce strategies. B2B is thus an over-looked aspect in the use of online strategies. Online presence is the key in terms of developing new sales markets. Nearly every B2B - customer is a B2C - customer. Only 34% of all daily communication is professional, 66% percent is private. A radical transformation is identifiable; B2B - commerce and communication is learning from B2C, developing more touch points, becoming more consistent and more complex. So why shouldn't these manners for businesses be adapted.

To date, the e-commerce and communication management part of B2B has only had a minor part in research, teaching and literature. Furthermore, the importance and challenges of digitalization from offline contact to online contact in the coming years will be pointed out. Actual trends in B2B, the digitalization of communication, consumption and how they change consumer behavior are major aspects on which will be focused on. Information becoming easier accessible, sharing and connecting becoming more attractive and addressing more people faster, analog media and processes will be substituted via digital media and becoming normal. This will be the current status for business and private life, always being connected via internet and accessibility via mobile devices are precipitating this development.

But by taking a deeper look into the structure, processes of B2B transformation can't be found. It hasn't started; old structures, processes and information technology make it hard to follow the ongoing digitalization trends. The biggest challenges are to convince the consumers, employees about the needs of the changeover. To manage mind-set changes for the digitalization of B2B and "pure player" like amazon, means starting a co-educational process from analog to digital.

Adding the digital sphere to the physical world in B2B will set up a lot of opportunities in a long term position. The dramatic transformation of B2B commerce is impossible to overlook. B2C commerce trends drive progressive organizations to advance their online B2B platforms while laggards slog through bureaucracy, complexity or simply the reluctance to change. Along with many other findings, this paper confirms that the ability to recognize challenges, find appropriate solutions in a timely fashion, and adapt accordingly is key to achieving a strong competitive edge - and with it the opportunity to help shape the future of B2B commerce.

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List of abbreviations

B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Customer
BASF	Baden Aniline and Soda Factory - (Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik)
baslac®	Value for Money Coatings brand
Cf.	confer
CMO	Chief Marketing Officer
E	Electronic
e.V.	Eingetragener Verein (registered association)
EBIT	earnings before interest and taxes
ECR	European Coatings Refinish
EMEA	Europe, Middle East & Africa
etc.	et cetera – and so on
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
GfK	Gesellschaft für Konsum-, Markt- und Absatzforschung e. V.
Glasurit®	Premium refinish coating brand
Max.	maximum
MIS	Market Intelligence Study
MSDS	Material Safety Data Sheets
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
OTC	Over the Counter
POS	Point of Sale
R&D	Research & Development
R-M®	Premium refinish coating brand
TDS	Technical Data Sheet
USA	United States of America
VfM	Value for Money
Vs.	versus

1 Introduction – From analog to digital

We live in a digital world – even without taken notice, digitalization has shaped our environment over the last few years. The graphic is well known (*What happens in an internet minute?*) about the volume of data which is transferred online every minute via the internet.¹ Lately, the topic has gained a high importance in public. News and articles in every newspaper about the digital age are popping up.² Furthermore, the German federal government is discussing this topic on the <<*Digital Agenda*>>.³ This is hardly surprising, because the repercussions of digitalization are now noticeable.

Over the last few years, digitalization has brought new opportunities and challenges all over the world. Nearly every third word which is communicated is articulated via electronic devices. The new smartphone generation uses their phones for nearly every situation – “*mobile phones as an electronic memory source*”.⁴ The series of technical innovations in the 20th century has brought a new fundamental peak.⁵ *Google (USA)*, *eBay (USA)*, *amazon (USA)*, *Alibaba (China)*, *MercadoLibre (Argentina)*, *Zalando (Germany)*, *Facebook (USA)* are platforms which have revolutionized digital consumption & communication. All required information and material is available at the click of a mouse. Communication, shopping and “living” via internet has become part of our everyday life.⁶

The effects are now noticeable for all businesses. They have to adapt to these changes to maximize their business, explore new markets, develop new strategies and expand their business to be competitive in the future.⁷ In the digital age, internet marketing is more and more important than ever before. Big Data, e-commerce, online marketing and social media is on every agenda of the industry. It is not just certain industries which are under pressure of digitalization. Business models, value chains and all industries need to manage these challenges. However, the adaptation and processing in B2B is far behind. Many companies have long overlooked the full potential of marketing & communication development, especially in online presence and e-commerce strategies. B2B is thus an overlooked aspect in the use of online strategies. Online presence is the key in terms of developing new sales markets.⁸ Nearly every B2B-customer is a B2C-customer. Only 34% of all daily communication is professional, 66% percent is private.⁹ A radical transformation is identifiable; B2B-commerce and communication is learning from B2C, developing more touch points, becoming more consistent and more complex. So why shouldn't these manners for businesses be adapted.

¹ See appendix 1.

² Cf. (Rigby, 2015 pp. 62-73).

³ See newspaper source articles at appendix.

⁴ Cf. (Jaeger, 2014).

⁵ Cf. (Esche, et al., 2014).

⁶ Cf. (Matthee, 2013).

⁷ Cf. (GfK Verein - Gesellschaft für Konsum-, 2013 pp. 1-8).

⁸ Cf. (GfK Verein - Gesellschaft für Konsum-, 2013 p. 8).

⁹ Cf. (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 4).

This study will try to answer this question and analyses the chances for B2B to succeed through digitalization. It will highlight the importance of online and e-commerce communication management strategies in B2B. To date, the e-commerce and communication management part of B2B has only had a minor part in research, teaching and literature.¹⁰ Furthermore, the importance and challenges of digitalization from offline contact to online contact in the coming years will be pointed out. Actual trends in B2B, the digitalization of communication, consumption and how they change consumer behavior are major aspects on which will be focused on. The following chart explains the structure of the next chapters (see Figure 1).

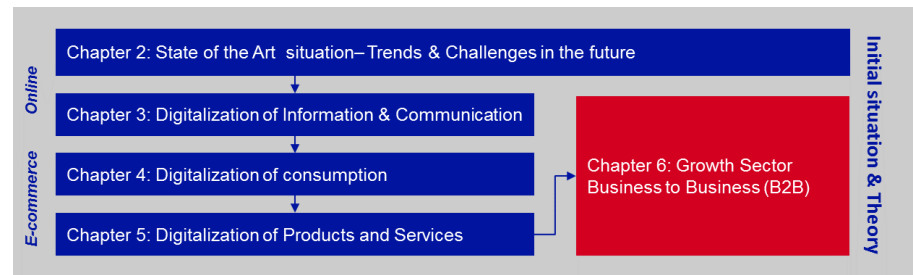


Figure 1: Scheme of the book.¹¹

¹⁰ (Masciadri, et al., 2010).

¹¹ Own figure.

2 The memory of the world in the Digital Age

Our world is digital – Digitalization is transforming our society like only the industrial revolution did before in recent history.¹² Today, there is a new fundamental digitalization peak. The abundance of data and the broad availability of mobile internet and connected mobile devices change our consumer behaviors. The consumption of products, information and communication all goes through electronic devices. Digitalization is changing our life profoundly: information, communication, private life, business life, leisure and our consumption. From the consumers perspective, very little is known about how consumer behavior is about to change due to digitalization. It is interesting that our society is not reflecting at all, how much digitalization is changing our life. The sense prevails that everything is easier, faster, more accessible and that there are no high costs for information or communication. It represents a profound change in dealing with information. All this will change the requirements for information, communication, education and the whole behavior of society.¹³ Electronic devices are the new “memory” for society.

What does that mean? First of all, the market and behavior of consumers is changing. Information and communication about mobile internet usage, consumers’ business and private communication behavior, awareness of future technologies and social media usage are more and more important for analyzing the trends of the future. These are indicators for finding the right channels and devices in communication. To be competitive and innovative in the future, these trends need to be understood and analyzed.



Figure 2: Effects of Digitalization.¹⁴

Digitalization has brought all these changes and created three powerful streams which will influence and change consumer behavior in many ways (see Figure 2). These three streams are constantly shaping our personal and consumption-related environment and continuously cause a series of very fundamental changes that is called market disruption.¹⁵ Much has changed already, but the main changes to focus on are the following ones:

- Digital Transformation (Digital Transformation across strategy, people, process and technology)

¹² (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 8).

¹³ Source: (Allensbach, 2014).

¹⁴ (Esche, et al., 2014 pp. 8-10).

¹⁵ (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 10).

- Process and culture (how to be more agile; how to be more innovative; how to operate with a 'real time' or 'always on' mentality)
- Multichannel (how to join up online and offline channels to deliver better customer experiences and greater business value)
- Growth (digital as an opportunity to drive this)
- Internationalization (more international expansion online, more translation of websites, more international search marketing etc.)¹⁶

Focusing on these parts will be the challenge for businesses in the coming years. In order to focus on specific areas, marketing agencies conducted different surveys to analyze the most relevant trends for the next few years in marketing and communication.¹⁷ The winning hot topics are: social, data, mobile, customer experience, content marketing, multichannel and personalization. These channels will help us to survive in the digital age and generate new advantages for businesses.

In the next chapter the focus lies on the presented streams and elucidate them. Furthermore, the influences for the B2B sector and focus on important instruments (online presence, e-commerce and cross channel communication) will be analyzed to manage these trends and changes.

¹⁶ Cf. (Esche, et al., 2014 pp. 10-14).

¹⁷ See appendix 2.

3 The New Digital Reality

A lot has changed in the last few years. In 2014 more data as information which is actually “live” can be seen. New tools, open source code and service are making it easier to turn data into content. The consumers’ communication behavior highlights the magnitude of change. Statistics represent that 37% of our communication is already digital.¹⁸ The new generation of smartphone users makes access, to every information platform possible. Communication and information are available whenever, wherever. Internet, social media, mobile phones and all other devices are part of our everyday communication. This is not just in our private lives either; nearly every third word people speak to workmates is communicated via electronic devices (messaging etc.). The latest studies show that there is no major difference between private and business communication. Business communication is about 35% of our daily communication. Online communication plays a big role in our private and business lives, going online more than once a day is quite normal. Three quarters of the whole population (Europe) under fourteen are online nearly every day.¹⁹

3.1 Overall Communication Behavior

Internet usage has grown significantly. It has become an integral part in consumers’ lives. This trend is validated by the current online user figures worldwide and in the different country regions (see Figure 3). In 2013 the number of internet users worldwide was 2.8 billion, up to +16% to the previous year. Especially in the EMEA region a big increase is discernible.²⁰ For example some countries in Africa have grown rapidly in the last few years. In 2009, the number of African internet users amounted to approximately 86.2 million and grew to 240.1 million in 2013.²¹ These countries are very important for internationalization (more international expansion online, more translation of websites, more international search marketing etc.). The latest analysis showed that there is no significance between weekend and weekday surfing. But there is a difference between different professions.

¹⁸ Cf. (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 19).

¹⁹ Source: (Allensbach, 2014).

²⁰ Also a big increase of mobile use is identifiable see chapter 6.2.

²¹ Source: (Statista, 2014).

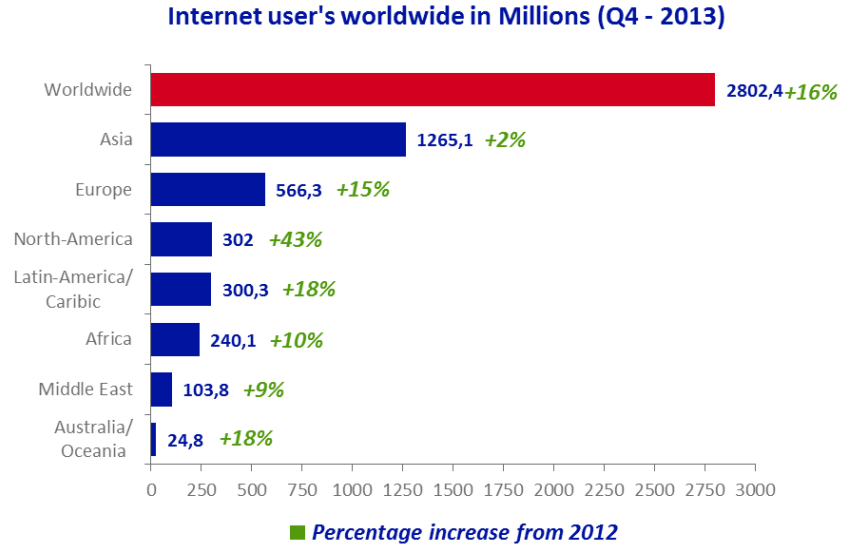


Figure 3: Online users worldwide and world regions in million.²²

The unemployed users are the most frequently internet users with 343 minutes (see Figure 4). However, after this, it is interesting to note that the group of Executive Employees or Chief Officers are the second highest users, using the internet approximately five hours a day (private and at work). It elucidates that the use of internet for information and communication in business is also a big beater.

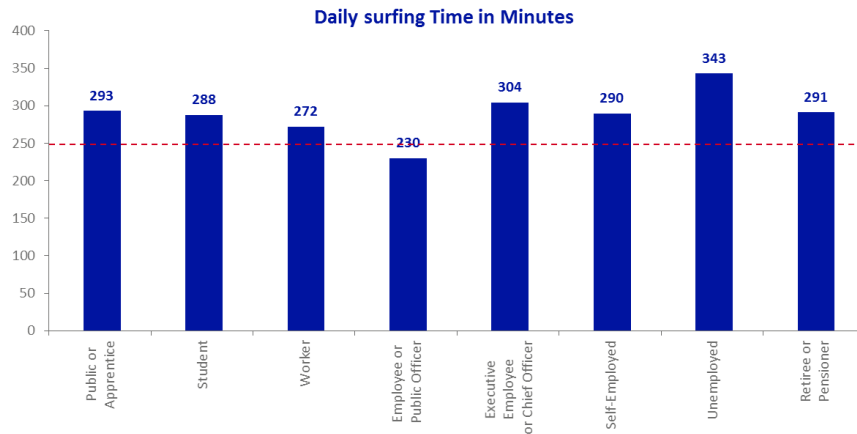


Figure 4: Internet Surfing Time by Profession.²³

The daily surfing time and usage of the internet has grown fast in the last year, especially since the new smartphone generation (see Figure 3). The use of multiple devices like smartphones, tablets and notebooks further raises the daily internet usage. As an

²² Own figure - Data: (Statista, 2014), (Internetworldstats, 2014).

²³ Own figure - Source: (Statista, 2013)

example in Germany the usage of the internet on the go rose from 23% in 2012 up to 41% in 2013.²⁴ Worldwide there were already 1.91 billion mobile users in 2013.²⁵ In 2013 there was a turnover of about 1.013 million smartphones and the forecast for 2017 will be around 1.734 million devices, a growth +71%.²⁶ These figures explain and confirm how our reality turns digital.

3.2 Digital Information & Communication in B2B today

These trends of communication behavior will have a strong influence on the communication strategies in B2B for the coming years. Based on the “GfK Study”²⁷ identifies new communication channels and strategies as the second biggest challenge for all businesses. Seven out of ten people say that demonstrating online presence (internet, online marketing) is the most important communication channel or tool to focus on for the future.²⁸ 71% of all marketing managers think that this will be the trend for the future.²⁹ The communication channels will change dramatically in a few years. The challenge is to attract attention for a product to create awareness. The internet revolutionized the information diffusion like nothing else before. To inform themselves about products, companies etc. is easier and simpler than it has ever been before. However, the B2B sector is far behind in transferring their information, communication and products via online channels, because the B2B sector is less innovation driven than B2C. In the last few years, manufacturers didn't follow these trends like the private sector. The overall daily private vs. business communication split is around 24% for business. B2B will be a new growth driver for online presence in the next few years.³⁰

²⁴ (dot.Source GmbH, 2014 p. 20).

²⁵ (Statista, 2013)

²⁶ (Statista, 2013).

²⁷ GfK Study: Study about the current challenges, trends and worries in the Marketing field. Published and composed by the “GfK” Organization in Germany.

²⁸ Cf. (GfK Verein - Gesellschaft für Konsum-, 2013).

²⁹ (GfK Verein - Gesellschaft für Konsum-, 2013 p. 19).

³⁰ (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 19).

4 Today's digital consumer

Digitalization affects, next to communication and information, the consumption behaviors. With smartphones and tablets, access to products is possible everywhere. Purchasing from the couch is the new vogue. As an example in Germany 28.8% of a sample size of 86.000 in a survey are buying their products from the couch or bedroom.³¹ After informing yourself about the features of the products, it can be purchased via electronic devices from nearly every location, whether it will be from the comfort of the couch or on the lunch break from the bench or coffee shop. Consumption became digital and became a new standard from the consumer perspective.

For that reason the changes and needs of consumer behavior must be adapted. Digital shopping information, digital distribution, digital products and digital service alternatives are the essential topics when it comes to digital consumption.

4.1 Digital shopping Information & Distribution

Digitalization changed the distribution strategy. The process chart shows the effect digitalization has had on changing the traditional order of consumer behavior (see Figure 5). Search engines and market places are changing the customer focus from a distribution channel oriented approach to a product channel oriented approach. That means, consumers are searching for a product, comparing prices and at last they are choosing the distributor.³²

The loyalty to the dealer or manufacturer changed and has become a lower importance. Nearly 69% of all consumers are informing themselves online before purchasing a product (online or offline).³³ Consumer behavior in terms of digital consumption changed and has an impact on the strategy of online shops. Consumers so far are using three primary sources of information for making their purchase decisions.

These sources are:³⁴

1. Stationary information "on site", namely POS information and personal salesmanship;
2. Online information collected on internet sites or social media networks; and
3. "Offline" recommendations from family and friends.

³¹ Cf. (Allensbach, 2014), (Statista, 2014).

³² (dmc commerce consultants GmbH, 2014 p. 2).

³³ Cf. (Fost, 2014 p. 49).

³⁴ (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 33).

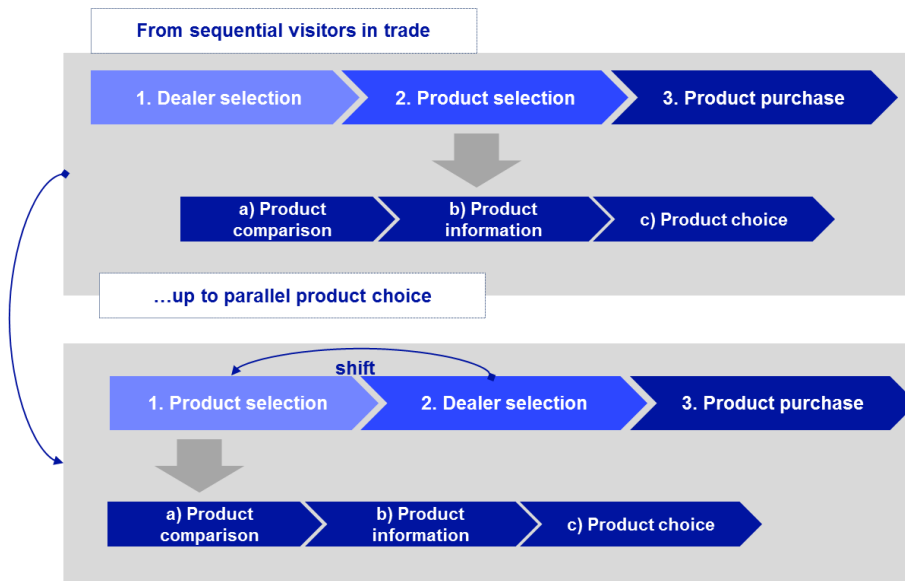
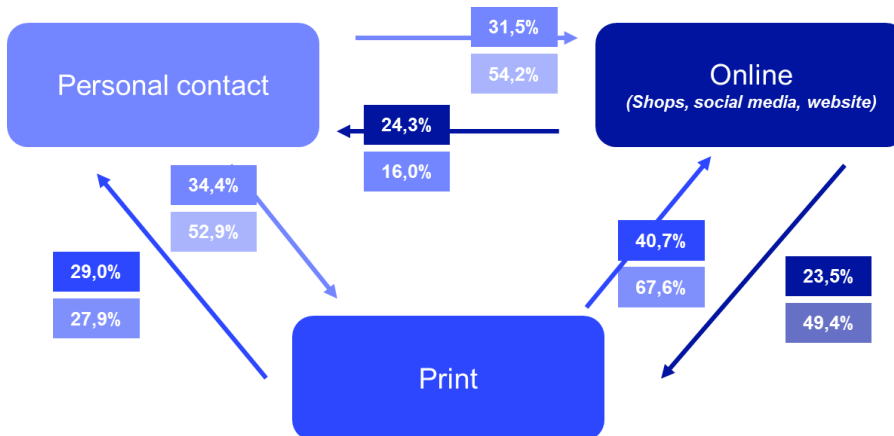


Figure 5: Changed purchasing process via digitalization.³⁵

These sources of information stand for purchasing decisions.



Example: 31,5% of all procurements in online-shops are based on personal contact; these procurements are 54,2% of the B2B Online Shop turnover.

Figure 6: B2B-Commerce: Cross channel communication.³⁶

An efficient design and interplay between online and offline information channels can be considered as an important success factor. Cross channel communication influences the purchase behavior of customers (see Figure 6). A big link between direct, indirect and online contact could be identified. Digitalization transformed online contact

³⁵ Cf. (Fost, 2014 p. 49).

³⁶ Study of ECC Köln 2014 - Data: (Hybris Software AG, 2014)

into an important information medium. This B2B Study in cooperation with *hybris*³⁷ analyzed the multi cross channel information - and procurement behavior of B2B-customers.

The study identified that: before online purchasing, 63.5% of business customers inform themselves via one or two different channels – before purchasing via print, the percentage of business customers who are using different channels is 85%. As in previous years, the internet remains one of the most important information platforms of recent years. Search engines, online-shops, business-, manufacturer- and distributor websites are the most common platforms for research.

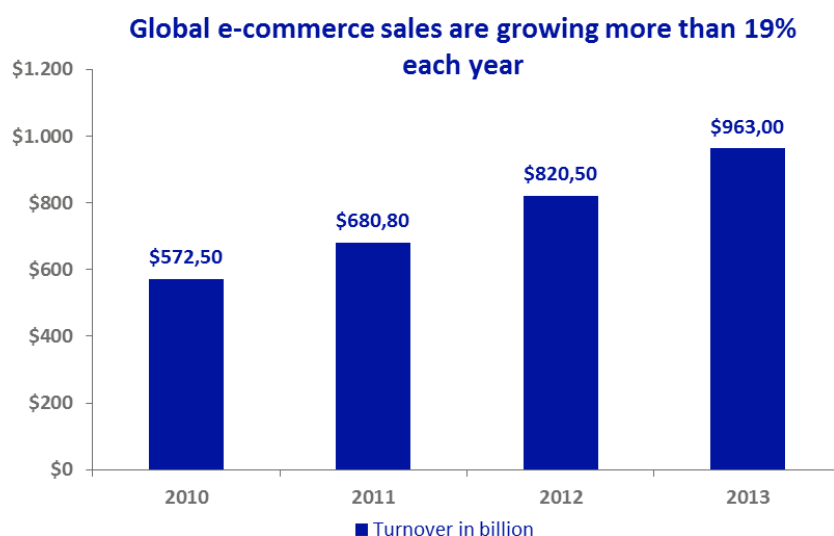


Figure 7: Global e-commerce sales in 2013.³⁸

Since 2010 global e-commerce has grown globally by 19% each year, an increase from \$572.5 to \$963 billion. For 2014, the e-commerce trend forecast is around +21%. Internationalization is a big topic in the e-commerce business for the following years. Online shops are starting to internationalize their strategies and focus. The focus lies on international markets and consumers. Expansion into regions like EMEA will be a growth potential. The reason is that in Germany, for example, the market is relatively well established and an expansion in international regions brings new opportunities in terms of growth and market share. More and more consumers are buying products online and the frequency of the purchasing behavior is growing. Consumption behavior is changing too, because of the ability to order products from overseas. In the following years, the consumption of products via online channels will grow.

4.2 Digital Consumption in B2B today

The fact that consumers are purchasing products through more than one source is nothing special anymore. But why is access to the e-commerce business only now on

³⁷ Hybris is an e-commerce technology company of SAP.

³⁸ Own figure - Data: (Bobe, 2013)

the agenda of the industry? Entering the e-commerce business in B2B was neglected by the industry before. For many products and services, it is insufficient to improve either the online or offline channel alone, because consumers look for solutions that help them extract maximum utility from a combined online and offline environment.³⁹ The interplay between online and offline channels can be considered as an important success factor for B2B. This is because the B2B is particularly affected by this, with more than 60% of consumers visiting a store and looking for information online.⁴⁰ B2B-commerce shops are one of the most important growth factors for the industry. The potential for manufacturers and dealers is high – new customers, target groups and business partners, leaner processes, marketing and sales can be pushed on an international alignment. Bringing the products and services online, to improve the digital presence, will bring competitive advantages. E-commerce with a view to internationalization and cross channel communication will be another important growth factor in the following years for B2B.

³⁹ (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 33).

⁴⁰ (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 33).

5 Are you still printing, or are you online?

What the printed catalog was before is now the digital e-version. Products can be examined in a high quality, often in 3D and individual adaptations are often possible. So why would you still order catalogs and lose time and service? The trend is moving to online depiction of products and direct online service.

The digitalization of products and services has two important repercussions and is strongly connected to the consumption of consumers. To bring your products and services online will deliver better customer experiences and greater business value. The internet can be a powerful medium to bring your services and products online to serve the consumer's consumption habits. This trend delivers new options to serve your customers' needs on a higher level.

5.1 Digital Change: Products and Service

There are always different ways to digitalize a product. For being successful the consumers' acceptance of new technologies and features need to be understood. One way is to add digital technology that enables the product to use digital information or communicate with other technology. The second is that the product itself is completely digitalized like an mp3 song. The adoption process of bringing products and services online will be necessary for firms to market. In order to do so, you need to think about how they can be digitized, i.e. finding the best strategy what kind of platform could be used for bringing your products online. The type of technology (mobile payment, same-day delivery, augmented reality) should be integrated based on consumer perception and needs. The big advantage of digitalization of products and services online is that all the existing different touch points can be combined to one single approach (see Figure 8). As an example in Germany, people are generally open to the inclusion of new digital technology in products and services. Thirty-three percent consider upcoming digital technology in products and services to their personal lives.⁴¹ That means you have a higher spread of communication and more consumers with more information can be reached.

⁴¹ (Esche, et al., 2014 p. 33).

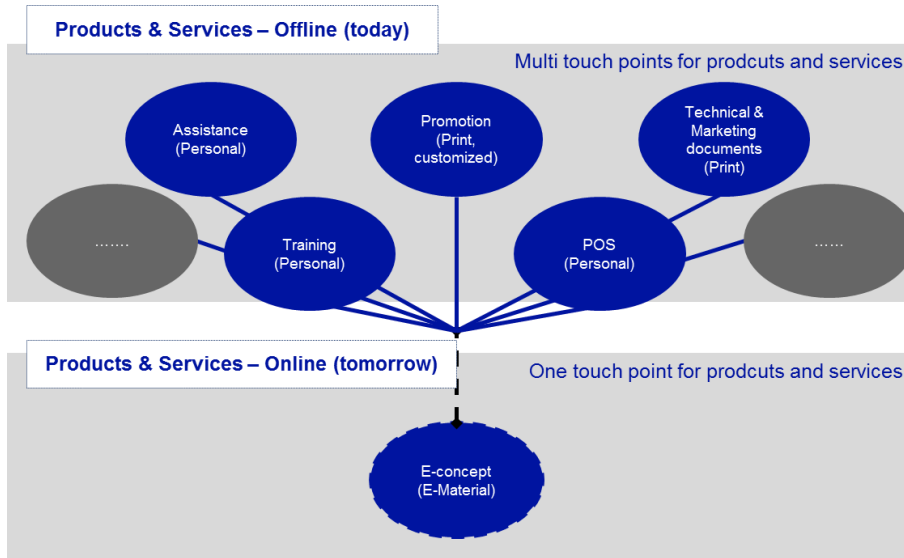


Figure 8: Digitalization of products and services.⁴²

Another fact is that the “brand” representation in online products and service as well as the way, people communicate via brands and the way the latter influence has gotten a high reputation in the last years. The values of a brand can be communicated online via a bigger circle of consumers.

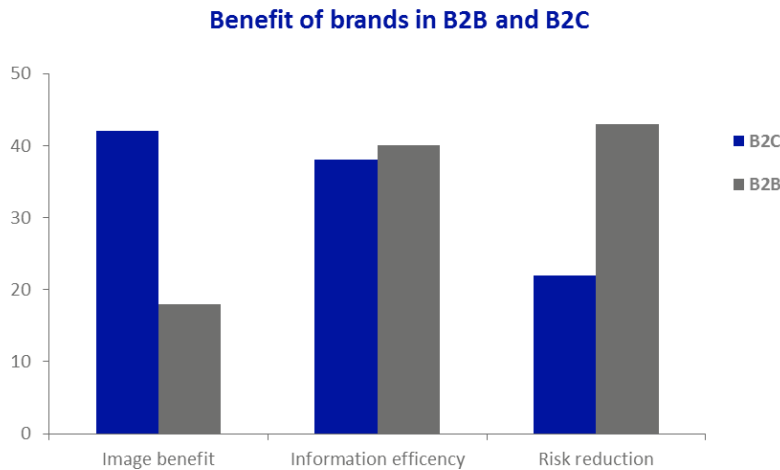


Figure 9: Brand-Benefit in B2B.⁴³

It is not only the values of a company which can be represented, also the individual brand as a company itself. The benefit of brands in B2C and B2B was analyzed by

⁴² Own figure.

⁴³ Own figure - Cf. (Masciadri, et al., 2010 p. 22).

McKinsey (see Figure 9).⁴⁴ The results show that the value of brands in B2C is different from the value of brands in B2B. In B2B the brand is a strong factor in terms of risk reduction and information efficiency. That means consumers are long term oriented and want products with brands they can trust. Their investment should be sustainable for the next years. If the technology changes they want to adapt it and do not want a complete change of systems or processes.

5.2 Digital Products and Services in B2B today

Platforms and systems for bringing products and services online are more and more common in the industry. That means communication via online mediums to represent products, information and business becomes more and more important. Consumers will not distinguish between private and business life anymore. They want the same quality in usability, design, searching and performance to what they are used to in their private life. Integration of e-commerce shops to place your products online opens new channels in terms of online marketing. In buying the products directly online, more customers can be reached. As such, a combination of information and e-commerce platform in B2B is a good opportunity for growth. Communication via brand, service and product can be strengthened and more targeted. An opportunity is given to generate a desirable image of your brand.

Today, the main B2B companies only represent themselves via websites only in order to advertise the company and their values. Detailed information platforms or distribution platforms about products or brands are not available or only in a restricted manner for business partners. They are not available for the private or general consumer. In total there is a high leak in representing products and services online in the B2B sector. Digitalization of products and services will turn into a major strategy aspect for the near future.

⁴⁴ Cf. (Masciadri, et al., 2010 p. 22).

6 Is the B2B sector ready for the Digital Transformation?

Digitalization has begun to unfold its disruptive power over our communication and consumption behavior. Moreover, there is currently no limit on this development; instead the upcoming years will bring a lot of changes and new possibilities for both consumers and companies. What does that mean for the coming years and for the industry sector? And how can these trends be adopted to get the right strategic direction for the future?

The Digital Transformation does not only influence the internet. It is included in our everyday life, objects and places (see Figure 10). A separation from the digital sphere, traditional dealers or manufacturers, private consumption and acquisition is, in the long term, unreasonable. The Internet is integrated in our everyday life and information is accessible all the times. Information, communication and consumption via electronic devices has become of utmost importance in private life and growing fast in business life.

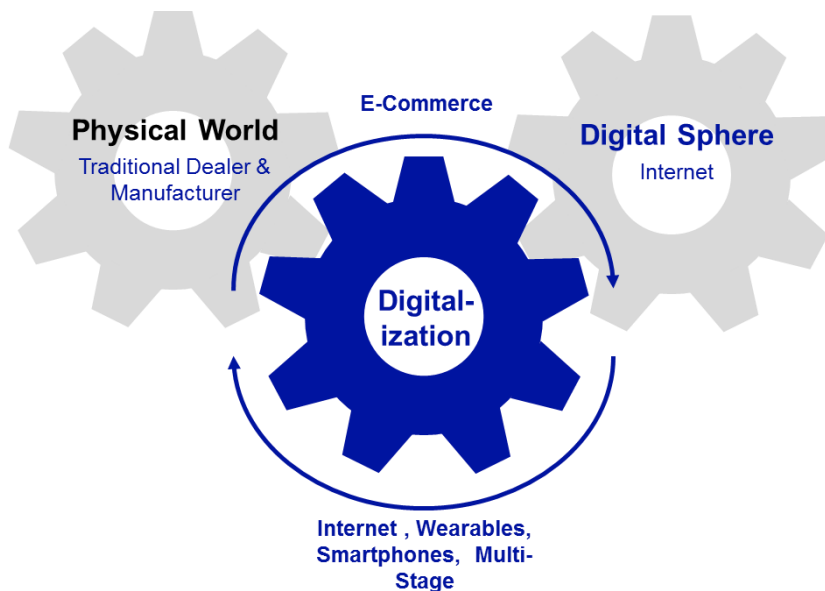


Figure 10: The Digital Transformation in B2B.⁴⁵

The Web is currently a great opportunity for B2B to move forward. The market is changing and every manufacturer/ dealer has different challenges. The following represents the identified trends and challenges:⁴⁶

- E-commerce: customers drifting online,
- More touch points, more consistency, more customer focus,
- Online price competition,

⁴⁵ Own figure - Cf. (dot.Source GmbH, 2014).

⁴⁶ Cf. (dot.Source GmbH, 2014 pp. 11-30).

- Brand management is complex in online strategies,
- Producers are starting to sell directly to the market,
- Market places are becoming more famous,
- Pure players like *amazon* are looking for niches,
- Competition via pure player's like *amazon*.

Furthermore, there are reasons why manufacturers now want to open online businesses and why it is so important to focus on the outlined trends:⁴⁷

- Trust in own competence and brand,
- Control over price and brand,
- Information and promotion via website and purchase via e-commerce shop,
- Vertical direction generates international growth.

For manufacturers and dealers it is important to respect these trends and adapt to them as early as possible. The change in the purchase behavior affects everybody. The B2B is more demanding than B2C, especially in terms of innovation. This market is less driven than the consumer market. To respond to future trends and the needs of the target audience is one of the biggest challenges in B2B. The digital network or the “e-phenomenon” is a natural outcome of the ongoing evolution of business and consumer technologies. Limited communication between companies or within companies, as well as customers, and low volumes of information, that miss customer needs, drive up costs and compromise revenue potential. An integrated digital communication network closes the communication gaps that are in the way of high performance.

6.1 Digital Transformation in B2B

A radical transformation is identifiable; B2B is learning from B2C. It develops more touch points, it becomes more consistent, more customer focused – and more complex. B2B is undergoing a transformation. Major changes in channel strategies are afoot.

However, in most companies there is still a big lag in implementing and following these trends of digitalization in order to be competitive in the future. In the near future more B2B markets and businesses have to learn from B2C and adapt and implement these trends. The outlined results of the three digitalization streams will be the base for the future strategies of B2B:

⁴⁷ Cf. (dot.Source GmbH, 2014 pp. 11-30) & Cf. (Masciadri, et al., 2010).

Is the B2B sector ready for the Digital Transformation?

1. Online presence (Information, Communication, Marketing),⁴⁸
2. Cross channel communication, more contact options (multi-stage marketing, ingredient branding, digital service),⁴⁹
3. Online shops/ e-commerce (marketing platforms, digital service).⁵⁰

The key challenges will be to develop new touch points, move online and create consistency and better customer value by using consistent marketing across multiple touch points.

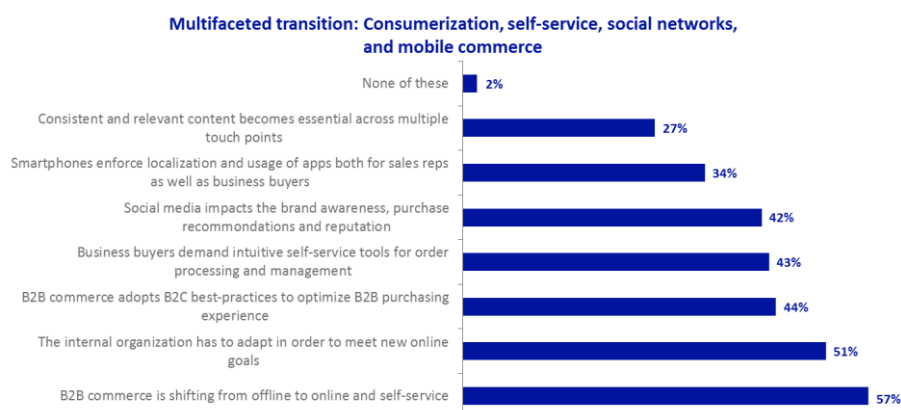


Figure 11: Multifaceted transformation in B2B - commerce.⁵¹

Companies that see this opportunity can boost customer satisfaction and even more importantly, secure the potential for future growth.⁵² The following survey results clearly indicate that B2B is changing, moving in many directions (see Figure 11). More than half of the respondents said that B2B commerce is shifting from offline to online and to self-service platforms. Furthermore nearly 51% of the respondents recognize that the internal organizations have to adapt in order to meet new online goals. In addition 40% of the respondents agreed that B2B commerce is adopting B2C practices to optimize the B2B purchasing experience; business customers require intuitive self-service tools for order processing and management; social media has an impact on brand awareness, purchase recommendations, and reputation.

⁴⁸ (GfK Verein - Gesellschaft für Konsum-, 2013 pp. 2-10).

⁴⁹ Cf. (Schönhoff, 2013 p. 8).

⁵⁰ Cf. (dot.Source GmbH, 2014).

⁵¹ Own figure - Data: (Intershop Communications AG, 2013 pp. 8-10).

⁵² (Intershop Communications AG, 2013 p. 7).

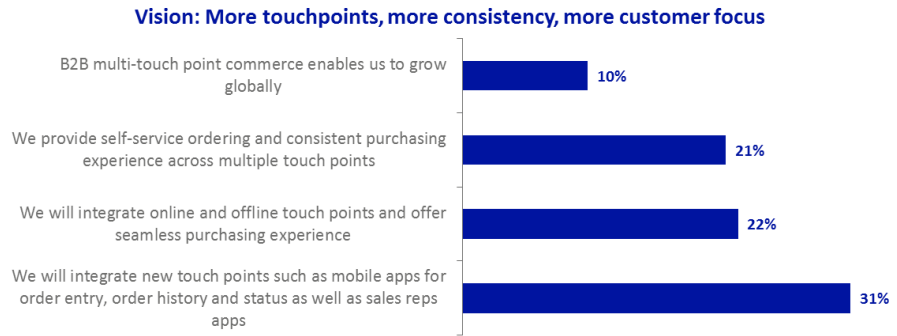


Figure 12: Visions for B2B - commerce.⁵³

The next survey result shows the answer about the vision of B2B commerce (see Figure 12). One-third of the respondents mentioned, the integration of new touch points would be the main vision. Furthermore, they declare that the combination of online and offline touch points will offer seamless purchasing experiences across multiple touch points. The consumer will be more flexible and can take decisions from his own point of view.

But where are the mind changes and visions coming from? The application of B2C expectations has a high impact on the use of B2B commerce or communication. This is a classic example of what is being termed “the consumerization of IT”⁵⁴, the world of B2B is evolving fast, and B2C trends are being reflected in the B2B environment. The following chart shows the landscape situation of B2C and B2B today and what can be changed for B2B in the future (see Figure 13). Organizations which recognize and overcome the challenges can achieve a valuable competitive edge. Consumerization is one of the latest buzzwords in the industry - B2B is learning from B2C.

But what does it mean? There is no clear answer, but in general a lot of people understand that it simply describes: making things easier or bringing it online. However the fact is that B2B can learn a lot from B2C, because every commercial user is also a consumer. Even if it is not possible to integrate every aspect of B2C, companies should use it as a “prototype” to investigate how technologies can be used to implement their B2B marketing strategies. Since every B2B-customer is also a B2C-customer, with corresponding expectations and habits, learning from B2C is crucial for companies that want to understand the future of B2B.⁵⁵

⁵³ Own figure - Data: (Intershop Communications AG, 2013 pp. 8-10).

⁵⁴ (Intershop Communications AG, 2013).

⁵⁵ Cf. (Intershop Communications AG, 2013 pp. 16-18).

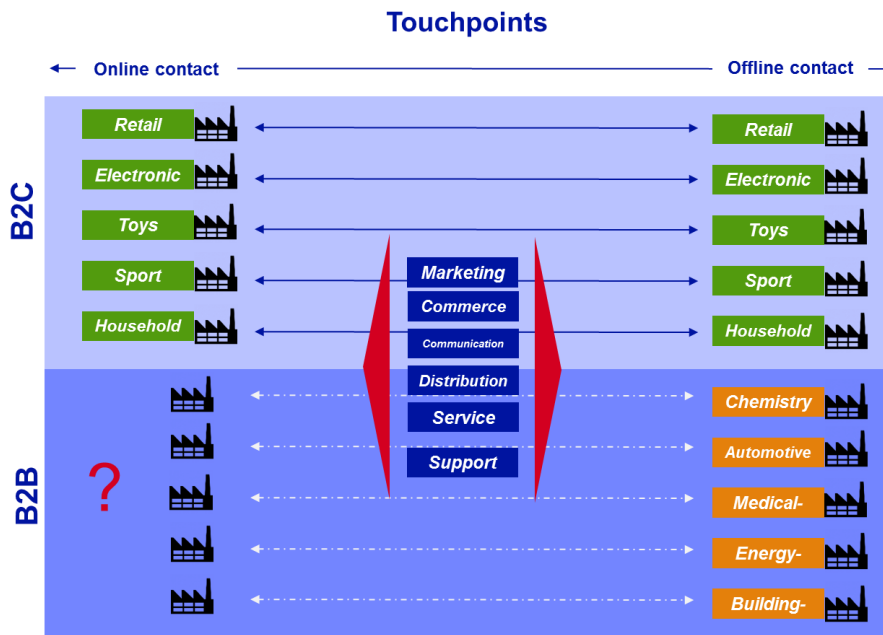


Figure 13: Developing and designing the future of B2B.⁵⁶

Industries, manufacturers or organizations that develop their B2B Commerce and communication channels now and offer a consumer-like experience will be well placed to compete in their markets. However, it is also important that they master the complex requirements and specific characteristics of the new touch points. The study “*Sorgen des Marketing 2013*” (*Cares of Marketing 2013*)⁵⁷, shows that exploiting a new market/trade channel or growing a market is the most difficult topic in marketing and growing it intensively is even harder. The web is a new opportunity for the B2B to move forward now. Using the right channels and setting levers will be worth in a long term.⁵⁸

6.2 Strategic course of action in B2B

Since the B2B sector is not as developed as it should be in terms of digitalization, many industries, manufacturers and organizations are searching for the right strategy to bring their products online. The strategies are often slowed down by the classical structures in B2B organizations. On the other hand it can be observe how turnovers can grow via online sales, with the best example being *amazon*. The different developmental stages of manufacturers can be analyzed. The e-commerce evolution can be an opportunity, especially for the vertical market. Five Phases could be identified which will be explained in the following chart (see Figure 14). The order is not always the same, but the experience out of different industries shows that they are really close.

⁵⁶ Own figure.

⁵⁷ GfK Study: Study about the current challenges, trends and worries in the Marketing field. Published and composed by the “GfK” Organization in Germany.

⁵⁸ Cf. (Intershop Communications AG, 2013 pp. 10-13).

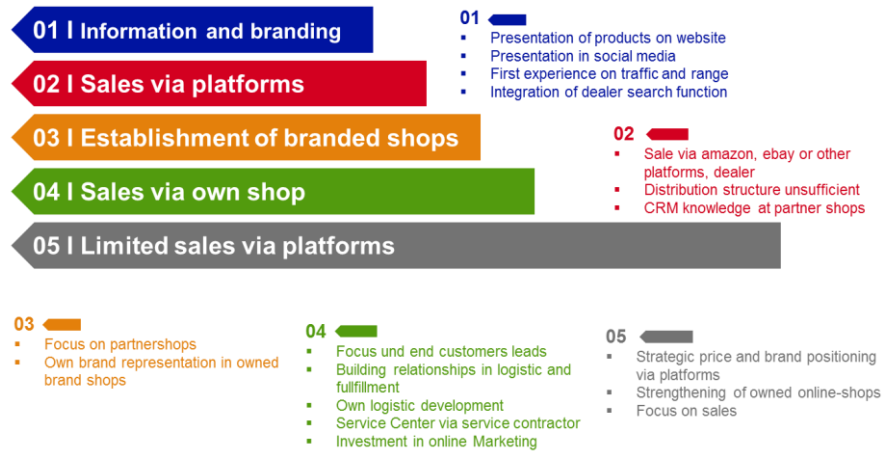


Figure 14: Evolution of manufactures in e-commerce.⁵⁹

Phase I: Information and branding

Most industries are operating in this phase. On the website they present the products without any promotions. There is no online-marketing in this stage. B2B manufactures with complex products, distribution structures are in this phase. Some B2C manufacturers are also still in this phase.

Phase II: Sales via platform

The sales of online platforms like *amazon* are growing. The industry starts to sell its products. Without any extra distribution unit the industries are selling their products directly via online distributor, platforms and *amazon*. But this includes some conflicts in the distribution structure. *Amazon* has become one of the most important customers for the industries. It generates high sales in a short amount of time. This can be called the “*Point of no return*”⁶⁰ where the evolution of e-commerce will continue; the market is too attractive for the industries and generates strong results.

Phase III: Establishment of branded shops

Now, the industries know that there are extremely high concentrations via online sales and some pure players which the market is focused on. They are trying to transfer the experience from the offline business into the online business. Chosen online dealers get special offers (products, marketing material etc.) to place the brand in a better position compared to others (shop-in-shop concepts). Also *amazon* and *eBay* are offering these conditions for the demands of the industries.

In this phase solutions are really normal, there are links from the online dealer website to the manufacturer website to inform about the company, product etc. This solution has no real benefit for the customers, but it should show that the online commerce has no influence on the direct sales. At this stage the industries already should have strategic roadmaps on how to move forward with e-commerce.

Phase IV: Sales via own shops

⁵⁹ Cf. (Fost, 2014 pp. 47-50).

⁶⁰ (Fost, 2014).

After starting business with online dealers, for establishing shop-in-shop systems to present your brand and products online, industries start to launch their own shop systems (flagship stores). In the beginning they start really carefully, because the specialist dealers shouldn't realize that the manufacturers start selling online. Topics like price, marketing, branding, product portfolio, promotions, special offers, online service are becoming really important. Here success will be measured at customer leads and conversion rate. For example when *adidas* started with their online business in 2001, they didn't expect high margins.⁶¹ Starting this process in industries is a hard step, because often you need to fight against the old internal structures and you will be met with a lot of internal critics. That is the biggest challenge in establishing flagship stores and only a few industries manage these effectively. Especially in the B2B sector, structures are really "old fashioned" to date and the B2B sector in particular is less innovative driven than B2C. If the management isn't supporting these strategies, it will be a hard work to establish these new strategies and ways successfully.

Phase V: Limited sales via platforms

After establishing a flagship store, online sales are more important than ever before. The focus lies on e-commerce and budgets. Marketing develops new strategies and ways for the online channels. Manufacturers like *adidas*, *Nike*, *Lego* (B2C) have also opening new offline flagship stores in cities. The online shop will be promoted via all channels and the success will be now measured by turnover and gross margin. The product portfolio, product availability and dealer margin will be reduced to control the distribution channels. Selling via platforms like *amazon* will be reduced completely. The process will reduce the margin in the short term. Big brands like *H&M*, *adidas* and *Apple* developed their distribution channels and strategies in this direction, as if they had seen this arising before.

It is enormously challenging to find the right e-commerce solution for one's business as consumer behavior changes rapidly. Manufacturers and dealers need to find the right way for their business especially in B2B, where the structures are more difficult than in B2C. You need to be very careful with new strategies, which are very different from the old ones. Moreover, you need to open the gate and make your way over years to a final end solution. The old process and structures in B2B can't be overcome to define something new from one day to another. The less innovative B2B sector needs time to adapt to this process. This is especially important when it comes to the distribution strategies and product portfolio you will offer online. Industries need to think about the products they want to offer, consequently (see Figure 15).

⁶¹ Cf. (Fost, 2014 pp. 48-50).

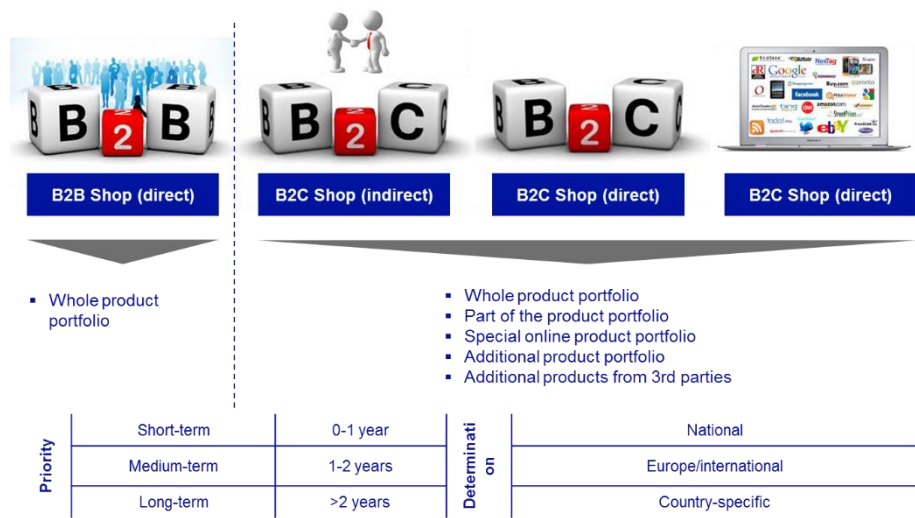


Figure 15: Product portfolio politics in e-commerce.⁶²

B2B shops normally offer the whole product portfolio. Market places and B2C shops need to differentiate, it depends on how they are going to offer their portfolio, directly via own shops or via dealers. However, the product portfolio decision shouldn't be just focused on the channels. They need to focus also on priorities (short-term or long-term orientation) and determination (national or international). This segment is influenced by so many factors, that a longer term planning over the next 5-10 years is nearly impossible (technology, consumer behavior). The business offers a lot of risks which needs to be controlled in advance.

Besides the product portfolio, the distribution strategy is an important aspect, too. The chart show where the e-commerce business can be integrated in the existing distribution channels (see Figure 16). In the B2C sector the industry is selling its products directly to the end customer. The industry in the B2B sector mostly uses the indirect distribution strategy via dealers or facilitators. It can be differentiated between single-level and multi-level distribution. The chart shows what importance e-commerce has in the distribution strategy and it points out that B2B has a big disadvantage in the communication via their end customers.

⁶² Own figure - Cf. (Fost, 2014 p. 60).

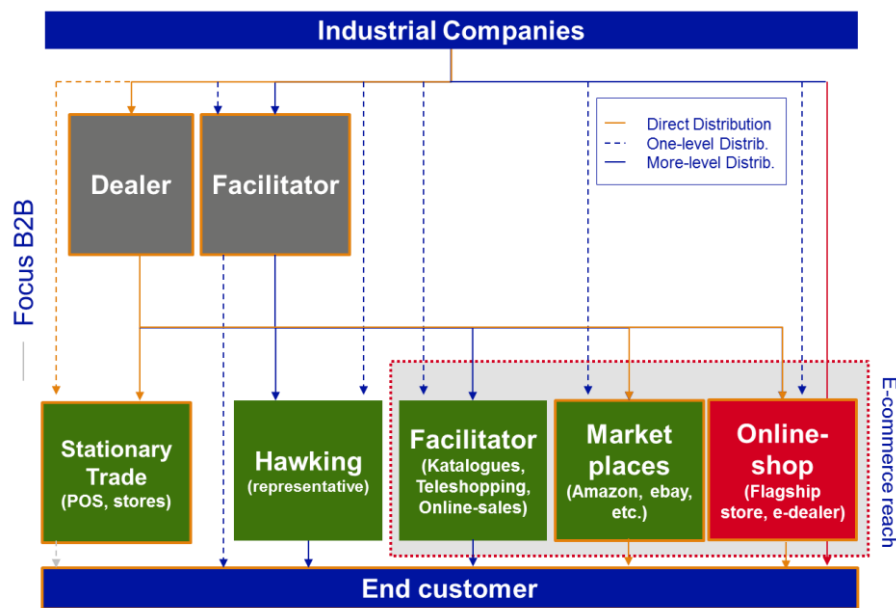


Figure 16: Distribution scheme of industrial companies.⁶³

For the B2B it is necessary to integrate a powerful communication strategy in the planning of an e-commerce strategy for its business. However information of the end customer can deliver unexpurgated information about the product offer.

In the following section the focus is set on the indirect distribution of B2B via dealer to the stationary trade (POS, stores) or direct distribution to the stationary trade stores. Furthermore, the e-commerce strategy is focused on integration via marketplaces and direct B2B online shops.

Market places (*amazon, eBay*)

Market places and “Pure Players” like *amazon* and *eBay* are playing an important role in terms of e-commerce. They can offer an opportunity or be a disadvantage at the same time. The decision to use one of these market-places probably brings the main turnover forecasts in e-commerce. On the other side a relationship can be build which will have a “*point of no return*”⁶⁴ and the power leads in the hands of these market places. For a lot of industries *amazon* has become the most important distribution channel. The correct approach to dealing with a “Pure Player” in terms of online turnover chances is one of the most important aspects for the e-commerce strategy in B2B.

Online shops (flagship store, e-dealer)

Next to the market places approach, own branded online shop can be launched. End consumers are more and more expecting the whole product portfolio online. Besides to the stationary trade search they want to have the chance to purchase the product easily online. A lot of online providers differentiate between pricing strategies. The transparence in online pricing is a high differentiation in pricing per country, consumers are just informed by the specific country price per product. An own branded shop will

⁶³ Own figure - Cf. (Fost, 2014 p. 35).

⁶⁴ (Fost, 2014 p. 47).

bring more transparency in terms of pricing, customers will see different prices per country and will create mistrust. Online-offline pricing is one of the highest challenges to manage in B2B. An appropriate strategy needs to be well developed. An own branded e-commerce shop will reduce the transaction costs for the consumer and for the producing industry. The requirements for that are well developed processes and good IT structures which can handle the dynamics of e-commerce. Furthermore, the organization needs to introduce an e-commerce unit which is focused on establishing the best strategies and channels.

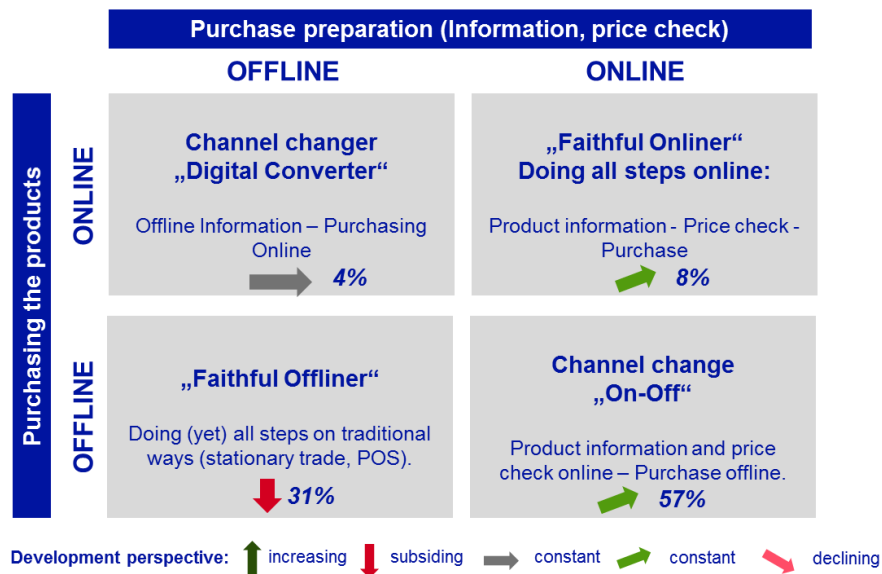


Figure 17: Consumer behavior change at distribution channels.⁶⁵

A successful e-commerce strategy in this business is a high challenge. On the one hand it needs to be ensured that the online-offline channel displacement is well integrated and managed and that the stationary trade is still collaboratively and integrated. The touch points need to be targeted in the right way and a mindset change with the consumer needs to be started. The behavior of the general consumer and touch point is changing and it is essential that the B2B e-commerce and communication strategy responds to this. The chart (see Figure 17) outlines the impact of an online-offline relationship and the advantages this can bring for the B2B. The “*faithful offliner*” is a person who is doing all steps on traditional ways. A change could be identified from offline to online. Channel changers “On –Off” are the main growing area (57%), people who are checking information and price online, but purchasing offline. Ensuing from these, a constant development of “*faithful onliner*” is measurable; this area will be the main grow area of the future.

⁶⁵ Own figure - Cf. (Fost, 2014 p. 39).

6.2.1 Challenges in B2B

In this chapter the current challenges for the B2B for launching an e-commerce and communication strategy will be outlined. Some facts were already outlined in the chapters before and are consequences of the Digital Transformation.

First of all, the main challenge in B2B is always to integrate new strategies and process into long term established structures. It is always a challenge to gain acceptance for new ways to establish in an old structure. Many delays because of political discussions can be experienced. The Digital Transformation hasn't reached most B2B industries yet, so it will be hard to generate a mindset change. Only a few industries can realize this mind-set change and establish these new structures for the Digital Transformation easily. The B2B is less innovatively driven than the B2C sector which makes it much harder; if the management is not supporting the new ways – the new approach will fail.⁶⁶

Another important point is that e-commerce and online communication will eliminate a lot of direct contact in the long term. With e-solutions less people are involved in the whole process and are active in the market. Consumers need to behave more actively than before. In B2B this is not 100% the case in the beginning, but it will reduce the cost and number of people. This will cause a high conflict between the e-commerce and direct channels which is called the *“Overcome Channel Conflict between Direct Sales and The e-Commerce Organization”*. Today there are existing different kind of channels with different contact points (see Figure 8) and in the future B2B wants to combine all channels and uses the web as one touch point for the consumer. The result will be that customers will turn from direct contact to e-contact. As the e-commerce option is becoming a more viable alternative to a traditional direct sales model, companies are increasingly converting their offline customers to more cost-effective, self-serve, online-only environments and focusing their sales representatives on acquiring and retaining higher-margin and higher-volume key account customers.⁶⁷

The fact that B2C e-commerce experience drives the B2B e-commerce experience will be challenging. The B2B must compete with the B2C customer experience standards which are built around sophisticated merchandising techniques, breadth and depth of product selection, a simplified login experience, and compelling deals and offers. Furthermore the experience tells us that the B2B-customers expect more and more B2C-like experience in this business. This puts a lot of pressure on the strategy from the beginning.

The e-commerce sector is a new business for a lot of companies. To find the right strategy well experienced or trained staff is needed - *“Get Creative about Sourcing B2B e-commerce Talent”*. B2B e-commerce executives continue to struggle today to find both managerial and operational talent to build effective teams.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Cf. (Hotz Adrian, 2014).

⁶⁷ (Hoar, 2013 p. 1).

⁶⁸ (Hoar, 2013 p. 12).

6.2.2 Chances for B2B

Next to the outlined challenge the B2B – business offers a lot of chances, to take advantage of internet-facilitated cost savings and operational efficiencies. The first opportunity is *“Increasing their use of self-service online models for low-volume and entry-level clients”*.⁶⁹ Especially in emerging countries, with low volumes and small businesses, this plays an important role. Most B2B companies or business can't afford to use sales staff to address the needs of small scale customers that buy limited amounts of products or services or buy infrequently. The right e-commerce strategy and channel integration can change this. Now the B2B companies can profitably merchandise, market and transact online with these customers. By digitizing sales and do-it-yourself online services they can also target infrequent customers with small budgets. Especially concerned companies can extend their sales and customers in this way. Now, a new customer segment can be reached which hasn't been in the focus so far, because it hasn't been profitable. In acquiring and keeping a customer with self-service portals, the costs can be driven down.

Another important trend B2B will face in 2014/2015 is the fact that: *“mobile and cross-channel are on the horizon, the emergence of mobile as a strategic channel for interacting with customers.”* The increase of mobile use will influence e-commerce in the next few years. B2B needs to include mobile for reaching, selling and servicing customers. Recently the world has a large and growing population which uses a smartphone regularly for work, private life, information, shopping etc. With so many people on the go who are increasingly insisting on mobile capabilities, that are equivalent to desktop capabilities, pervasive mobile B2B e-commerce is on its way but is still two to three years away.⁷⁰ The following chart will show an analysis of current mobile payment use in the world (see Figure 18).

⁶⁹ (Hoar, 2013 p. 2).

⁷⁰ (Hoar, 2013 pp. 12-13).

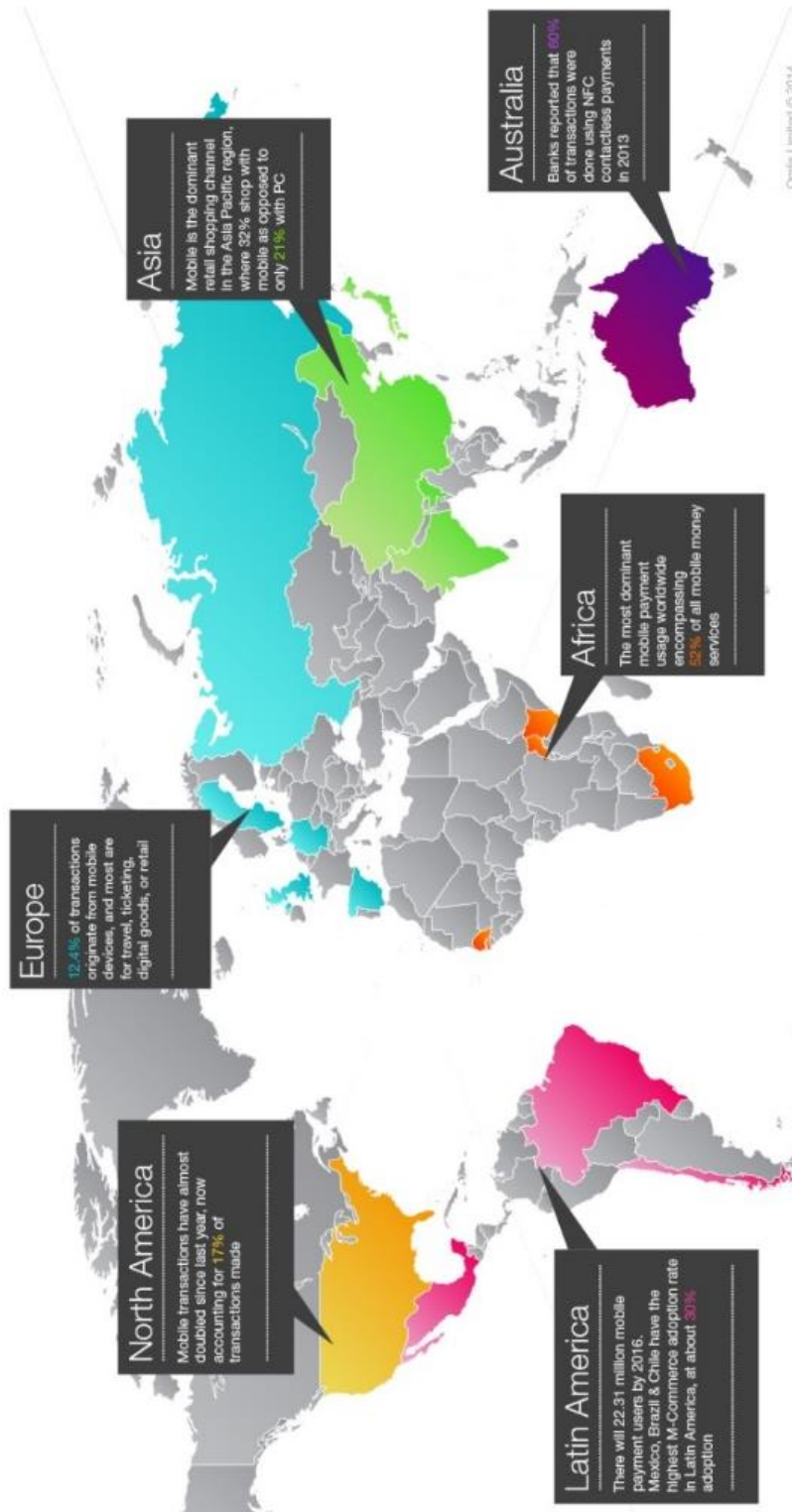


Figure 18: Omlis Global Mobile Payment Snapshot 2014.⁷¹

⁷¹ (Emma Thompson (Omlis), 2014).

There are more than 5 billion active mobile phone accounts and there is potential for widespread application of mobile payments, according to *Omlis*, a global mobile payments solutions provider. By the end of 2013, there were about 245 million mobile payment users, and Juniper Research predicts that this will almost double within the next three years up to 450 million mobile payment consumers by 2017. In terms of m-commerce value, *Gartner*⁷² predicts that total mobile payment transactions are expected to reach \$507 billion in 2014. The global adoption of mobile payments is on an upward curve, but traction is dependent on consumers' access to technologies, varying lifestyle choices, and economic factors.⁷³

Overall, the "*Online and Mobile are Transforming B2B Commerce*"⁷⁴ research yielded three key findings:

- Selling online and on mobile devices represents a significant new opportunity for B2B companies.
- B2B companies that wait too long to implement e-commerce assume a big risk.
- Self-service tools are changing the way in which B2B - customers interact with companies.

B2B companies face a complicated channel attribution issue today regarding, how to allocate sales credit between the web and their B2B direct sales forces.

⁷² Gartner, Inc. (NYSE: IT) is the world's leading information technology research and advisory company. More information: <http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2504915>.

⁷³ (Emma Thompson (OMLIS), 2014).

⁷⁴ (Emma Thompson (OMLIS), 2014).

7 Conclusion and critical appraisal

Information becoming easier accessible, sharing and connecting becoming more attractive and addressing more people faster, analog media and processes will be substituted via digital media and becoming normal. This will be the current status for business and private life, always being connected via internet and accessibility via mobile devices are precipitating this development.

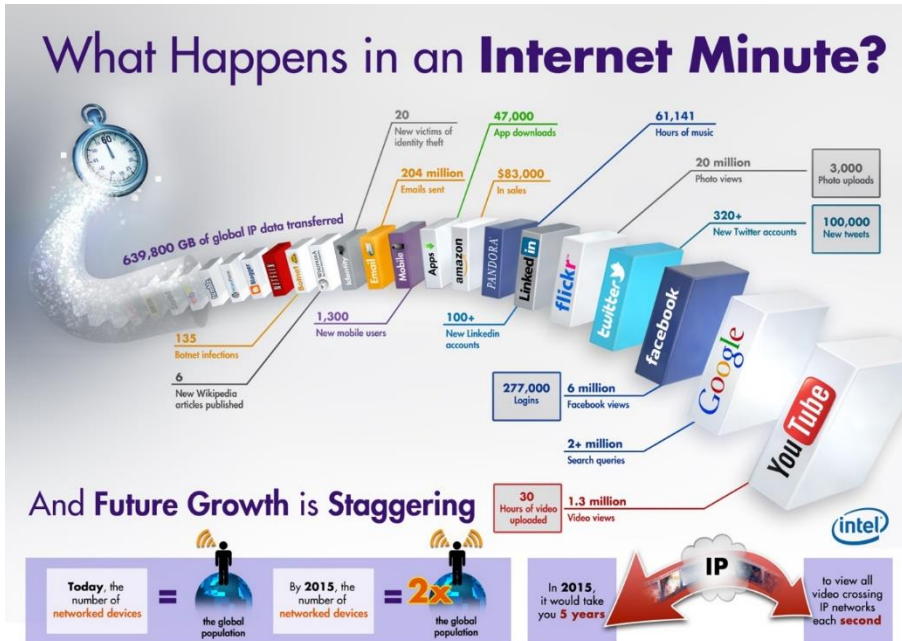
Also in B2B users will have these expectations in the recent future. The position of the consumer is growing and they will have more power than ever before. The internet provides innumerable offers which are available; this development changes the behavior and processes of the consumers. As an example the consumer is used to self-information via internet about a product, company etc. This is why the role of e-commerce, self-service and content marketing are becoming more important, consumers want to have answers now and not later on. The entire technology cycle is becoming shorter, and more digital channels are occurring at the same time. Big data volumes are bringing light in the dark of companies. On the one hand processes can be optimized and will be quantifiable. This is the base to reach more consumers, more effective and target them more specific via the digital sphere. On the other side the ongoing transformation develops new fields of activity and old business structures will come into question. Cross-linking makes things more transparent, which is not always desired from business or the politics.

But by taking a deeper look into the structure, processes of B2Bes transformation can't be found. It hasn't started; old structures, processes and information technology make it hard to follow the ongoing digitalization trends. The biggest challenges are to convince the consumers, employees about the needs of the changeover. To manage mind-set changes for the digitalization of B2B and "pure player" like *amazon*, means starting a co-educational process from analog to digital. So far there is a high leak in starting this mind-set change which needs to be filled. The direct contact in B2B will be too difficult to eliminate in a short term, because relationships between the customers are one of the key success factors in the B2B. It will be a long and hard co-educational process to transfer the consumers from offline to online contact. From a long-term view this can just be realized in a good combination of online and offline contact. For many products and services, it is insufficient to improve either the online or offline channel alone, because consumers look for solutions that help them extract maximum utility from a combined online and offline environment. Starting innovative e-commerce and online projects for B2B can bring high risks on the one side but on the other hand it can bring also opportunities for being competitive.

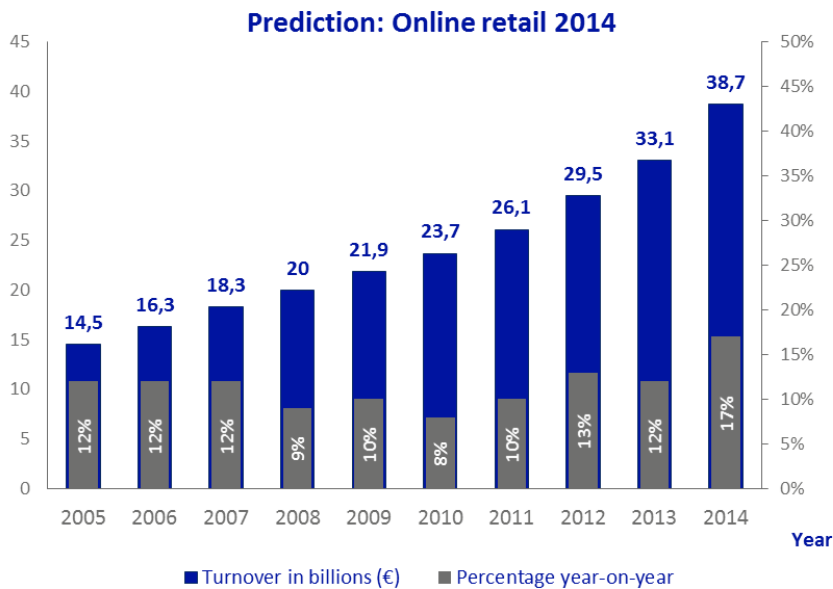
The digital trends are clearly identified and taken over in B2B; industries that are starting adjusting now will be successful in the future. Starting the transformation now means adjusting the old structures, processes and business units for innovative & successful solutions. Adding the digital sphere to the physical world in B2B will set up a

lot of opportunities in a long term position. The dramatic transformation of B2B commerce is impossible to overlook. B2C commerce trends drive progressive organizations to advance their online B2B platforms while laggards slog through bureaucracy, complexity or simply the reluctance to change. Along with many other findings, this paper confirms that the ability to recognize challenges, find appropriate solutions in a timely fashion, and adapt accordingly is key to achieving a strong competitive edge – and with it the opportunity to help shape the future of B2B commerce.

Appendix

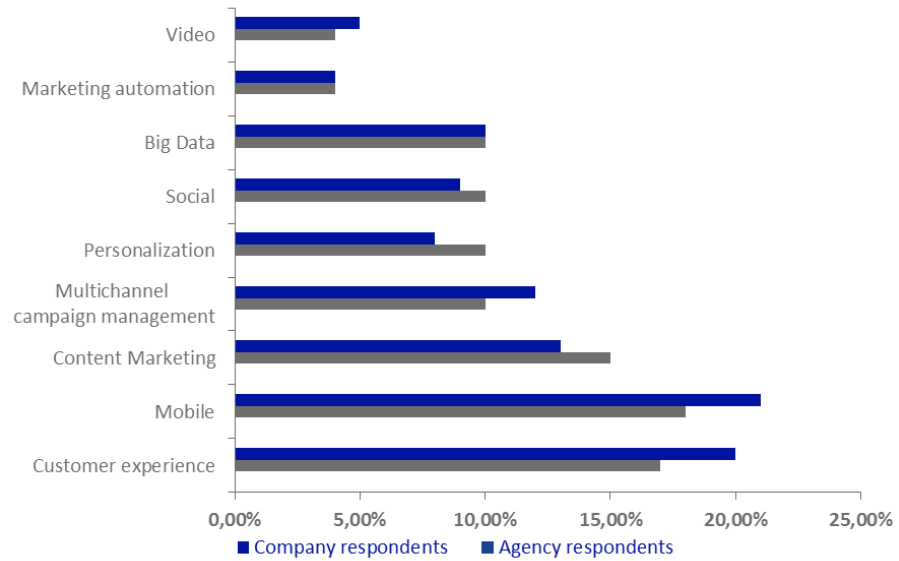


Appendix 1: What happens in an Internet minute?



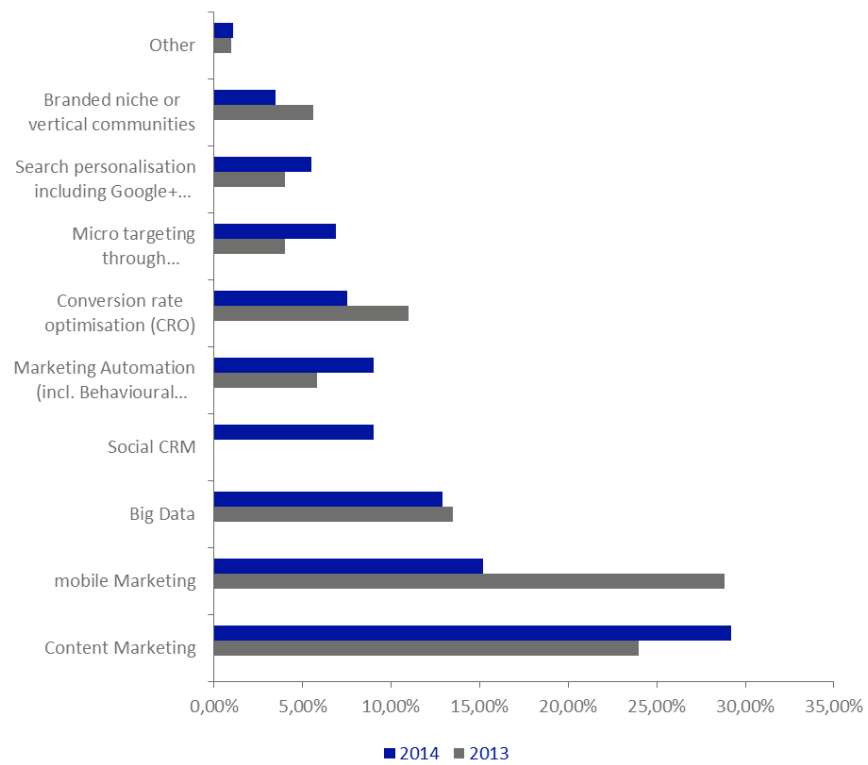
Appendix 2: Prediction Online retail for 2014 in Germany.

Which one area is the single most existing opportunity for your organization/ client in 2014?



Appendix 3: Online Trends 2014.

Most significant commercial digital marketing trends 2013 to 2014



Appendix 4: Digital marketing trends 2013 to 2014.

Always online: Usage of different online media during a day.



Appendix 5: Internet usage during the day.



ONLINE PLUS OFFLINE: THE MOST POPULAR REQUIREMENTS INCLUDE THE ABILITY TO PICK UP AND/OR RETURN ITEMS PURCHASED ONLINE AT A PHYSICAL LOCATION, A DEMAND THAT POSES SOME DIFFICULT TECHNICAL PROBLEMS.

Appendix 6: Complexity: B2B customer service and cross-touch point functionality.



<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/digitaler-wandel-druckst-du-noch-oder-geht-das-online-13146643.html>



<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/die-gegenwart/digitale-agenda-das-netzraum-der-chancen-und-der-freiheit-13102900.html>



<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/finanzen/aktien/alibaba-boersengang-chinesen-brechen-alle-rekorde-13149562.html>



<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/netzwirtschaft/alibaba-und-die-drei-milliardaere-13127679.html>



<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/unternehmen/das-zalando-prinzip-wie-will-der-konzern-auf-dauer-geld-verdienen-13102029.html>



<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/denk-ich-an-deutschland-1/meinungsforscherin-analysiert-die-digitalisierung-des-lebens-13166154.html>



<http://www.absatzwirtschaft.de/content/online-marketing/news/wie-millionen-pendler-ihre-mobilgeraete-nutzen;82492>



<http://www.absatzwirtschaft.de/content/marketingstrategie/news/online-marketing-unverzichtbar-zur-erschliessung-neuer-maerkte;81536>



<http://www.business-wissen.de/artikel/business-development-neue-marktchancen-identifizieren-und-nutzen/>



<http://www.absatzwirtschaft.de/content/marketingstrategie/news/kundenberatung-im-e-commerce-besser-als-im-stationaeren-handel;82495>



<http://www.mediadefine.com/page,aktuelle-nachrichten-marketing-kommunikation-werbung,point-of-sale-digitale-services-mehrwerte-fuer-kunden-stationaerer-handel,0,0,40,0,de.htm>



<http://www.mediadefine.com/page,aktuelle-nachrichten-marketing-kommunikation-werbung,content-management-multichannel-strategie-erfolg,0,0,40,0,de.htm>

More interesting Literature can be found under the following link:



http://www.springer.com/?SGWID=0-0-1500-2296971-0&utm_campaign=GMT23413_1&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=email&wt_mc=email.newsletter.3.GMT23413.internal_1

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After his main studies in business engineering and management at the University of Applied Science in Trier, Alexander Roellig worked as a student employee at the Daimler AG, Mercedes Benz plant of Sindelfingen. Following this, he wrote his master thesis on a “New Business Development” project and graduated to the bachelor of engineering.

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