

# The art of selling online

By [Nick Durrant](#), issued by [Bluegrass Digital](#)

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Commerce in the digital age is more than transactions, products and catalogues. Selling online means telling stories, evoking emotion and establishing trust. No one owes you their business, you have to earn it with every interaction.

Leading brands have visibility into what content should be created, what experiments to run and what will lead to better conversions. There are tools like Optimizely that help digital teams deliver individualised experiences to every customer.

It's essential to set up an omnichannel, ever-present experience for your customers. This allows them to engage with your company at their convenience – where and when they want. Make sure your customer experience is seamless. Switching from app to web browser should be as easy as changing from your PC to phone for email.

Businesses need to track the customers at all times and across all channels to do this effectively. Data insights allow one to unearth the true, hidden motivations behind people's actions. One might find the pain points customers think they have, are derivative of problems far more meta. They can then market to the customers' root needs – perhaps needs they don't even know exist.



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## Know your customers

Understanding customers is crucial for any business. How important? According to a study by PwC, one third of customers who have a bad experience will break up with a brand. There are a few things businesses need to know about their customers to generate leads. They must stop guessing, they need to know what marketing content to deliver to whom and when.

Consumers' expectations have shifted to the point that people expect a personal digital experience that mirrors the typical level of personalisation they receive offline. Many have grown accustomed to personalised experiences from their news feed, social network, and shopping recommendations.

Expectations have risen so high that companies who want to improve their products are changing their strategy to address this need directly. Many business and technology leaders name personalisation as a top commerce technology investment priority.

To create helpful, human digital experiences requires constant invention from every company. A digital experience platform (DXP) should make creating behaviour-driven experiences simple, crafting sophisticated content faster, collaborating easier and anticipating customer needs possible. One can eliminate guesswork and make every interaction actionable.

One needs to personalise experiences with insights on not only where your customers are coming from, but what they are likely to do next. Getting personal helps customers customise every interaction.

Behind every unique data set, is a human being. When you unlock data's potential, you uncover more humanised digital experiences. Each time users return to your site, what they see should evolve with their unique tastes and behaviours.

## The ever-changing customer journey

Previously, B2B transactions encompassed a complex, time consuming sales process and involved numerous decision-makers. This laborious B2B purchase journey has now been streamlined. There have been drastic changes to the consumer buying journey and B2B purchase paths have also transformed significantly in recent times.

B2B customers still go through the basic steps in the purchasing journey, they still need to identify the business need, researching solutions, evaluate the various options and then make a decision. However, the biggest difference is that they can now do research online, making the process faster and more efficient.

## Providing customers with the right information

To stop losing customers and to succeed in an increasingly competitive B2B buying environment, e-commerce businesses need to focus on providing their customers with the right information that is specifically designed to enable them to buy. Today, sellers have far fewer opportunities to influence customer decisions.

The availability of quality information through a plethora of digital channels has made it easy for consumers to gather information independently. This means sellers have a small window to influence customer decisions.

Gartner research found that customers who perceived the information they received from suppliers to be helpful in advancing across their buying jobs were 2.8 times more likely to experience a high degree of purchase ease, and three times more likely to buy a bigger deal with less regret.

In fact, this research finds that when B2B buyers are considering a purchase, they spend only 17% of that time meeting with potential suppliers. When buyers are comparing multiple suppliers, the amount of time spent with any one sales rep may be only 5% or 6%.

Buyer enablement helps buyers buy by providing them with the necessary information and tools to make the buying process easier to navigate and complete.

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Nick Durrant is CEO of Bluegrass Digital

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