

**Strix®**

EBOOK

# B2B e-commerce – how to create a sales platform for the business sector?



# Introduction

The B2B e-commerce sector is worth \$8.5 trillion and is forecast to reach \$18.8 trillion by 2027. In comparison, the B2C e-commerce market is estimated at \$5.7 trillion and is expected to exceed \$10 trillion by 2027. These figures clearly demonstrate the potential inherent in online business sales. At the same time, most of the technological and business innovations are being implemented in the consumer sector. While retail customers can benefit from virtual fitting rooms, voice search, deferred payments, and a fully digitalised shopping process, business customers have to contend with an unfriendly interface, a long and complicated purchase path, and order finalisation via email or phone. Not exactly the best user experience.

In this ebook, we will discuss the characteristics and challenges of the B2B sector, analyse the needs of business customers, and present ways to increase sales and improve the experience on an e-commerce

platform. We will also walk through the process of selecting a sales platform and present what such a tool looks like using Shopware as an example.

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# Development of online sales in the business sector

**B2B e-commerce is online sales between companies, such as wholesalers, manufacturers, or distributors.** The aim of the e-commerce platform is to transfer the quality of face-to-face business interactions to the digital space and a simpler, more automated purchasing process. However, classical B2B trade is based on face-to-face relationships and networking with sales representatives, warehouses, and suppliers.

Many entities, many separate databases, and procedures to be followed to ensure that ordered goods can reach clients in time to start their journey to shops or production facilities. Is such a model fast, simple and efficient? Of course not. On the other hand, the complexity of the B2B sector causes many vendors to be reluctant to change an established system and invest in upgrading it. For a long time, the market offered few solutions tailored to business needs, focusing mainly on the consumer segment. As a result, the B2B sector was becoming increasingly obsolete. As with many business sectors, it took an external factor to expose the shortcomings of this approach. And that factor was the pandemic.

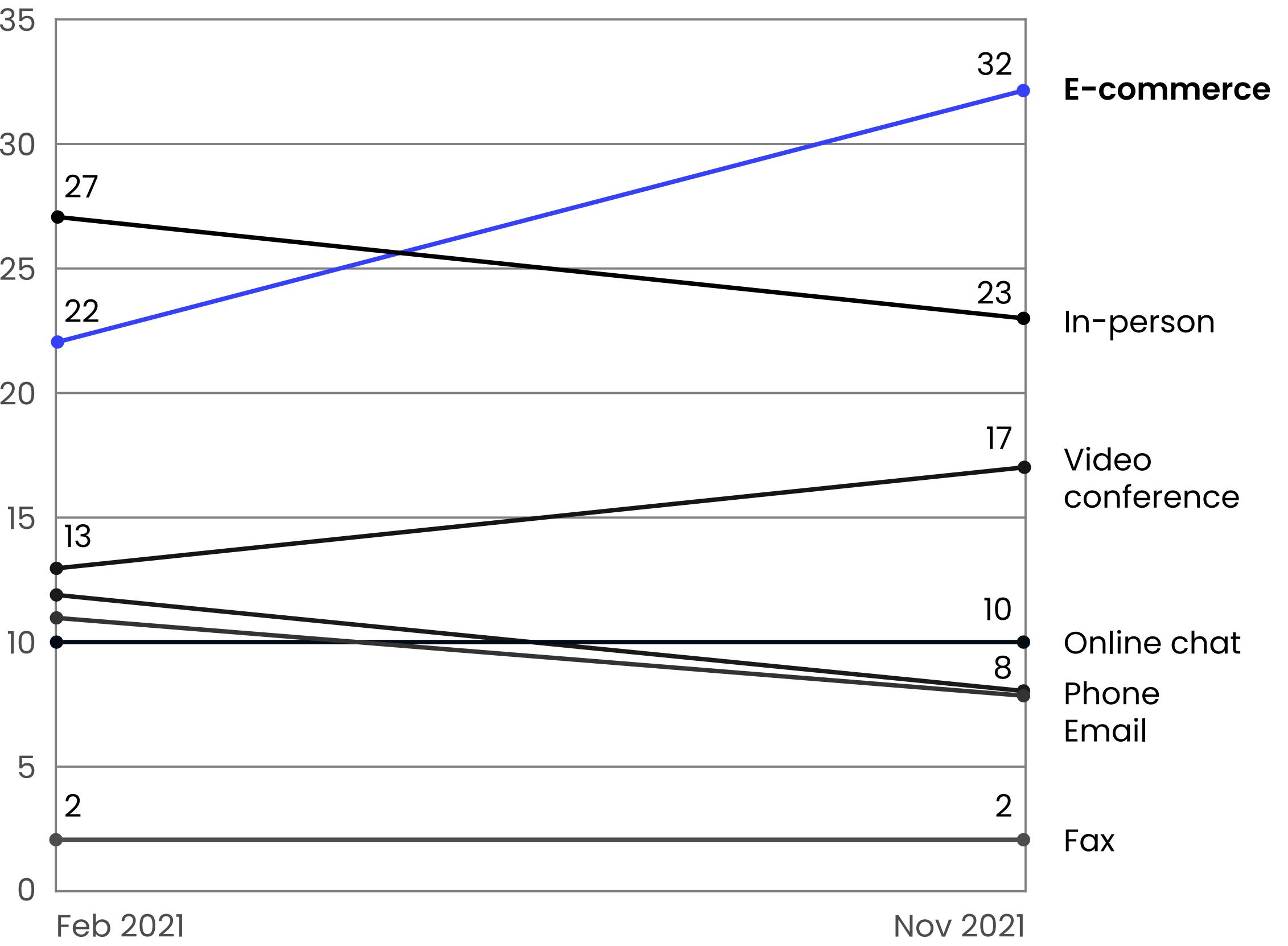
During the lockdown, it was difficult to travel what affected business meetings and the logistics. This posed a significant obstacle to establishing direct partnerships specific to the B2B industry and caused supply blockages and stock shortages in many industries. The lack of sufficient technological facilities meant that information sharing between the companies involved, updating databases, and crisis management was hampered. B2B e-commerce became crucial, but the market was not prepared for its rapid implementation because of lack of dedicated solutions and procedures on how to carry out the digital transformation of business models.

The pandemic crisis proved to be the impulse needed to modernise B2B commerce, and the percentage of companies offering e-commerce solutions is growing. **In February 2021, 53% of B2B sellers enabled transactions to be carried out completely remotely, and by November 2021 this percentage was already 65%** (McKinsey, 2022).



## Today's B2B customer

One of the main arguments holding B2B sellers back from developing online sales is the belief that their customers prefer face-to-face sales with a sales representative. Meanwhile, according to McKinsey, in 2021, as many **as 32% of companies identified e-commerce as their preferred sales channel**, with only 23% choosing in-person sales.



Source: McKinsey & Company Global B2B Pulse

Feb 2021, n=562, Nov 2022, n=602

# Characteristics of B2B trade

The specific needs of the business sector require a different approach to technology solutions than that known from B2C platforms.

## Individual pricing policy

One of the characteristics of B2B trade is variable pricing. Business-to-business sellers tend to have a smaller number of customers who order in bulk. Discounts and individual pricing for different segments are the foundation for building a relationship that pays off for both parties. A more favourable offer is aimed at those who regularly order a lot of goods, or at new customers to encourage them to return.

## Longer purchasing process

For business customers, the purchasing process is much longer than in retail. Careful analysis of the best offer, negotiation of the price, verification of product availability, estimation of the time needed to cover the demand, many decision-makers in case of purchasing, invoicing or granting credit, transport, storage, etc. Each of these steps takes time, which is

why the purchasing path in the B2B sector is much longer than in a consumer shop.

## Flexible payment methods

For B2B customers, it is important to maintain financial liquidity and reduce the time from purchase to return of investment as much as possible. Accordingly, business platforms offer their customers lines of credit, leases, and deferred payments.

## Access for verified companies

In the case of large orders, hitting on dishonest business partners can have very serious consequences, such as financial losses or freezing of funds. For this reason, the services of many B2B platforms are only available to registered and verified customers and manufacturers.

## Regular stock level updates

Information on product availability is important for all customers, but in the B2B sector, it is particularly crucial. Wholesale quantities are much more difficult to distribute and stock, and estimating lead times requires

precise data on availability and capacity in case of a shortage. Real-time data updates are fundamental to maintaining the reputation of a well-functioning B2B platform.

## Extensive product information

The B2B sector requires detailed data about offered products, such as specifications and technical parameters, certificates, use cases, or data on compatibility with other products. Extensive and detailed product information is typical for the B2B sector and requires sophisticated systems to manage it.

## Minimum order value

The sales process in the business segment is complex, so to be profitable, shops often set a minimum order value or quantity.

## Advanced customer service

Client service is a critical point in e-commerce especially in the complex B2B sector. For large customers and

specialised industries, the basis for good relationships is expert customer service that knows the product range and market specifics very well and can advise and solve logistics or procurement problems.

### **Complex company structure**

In B2B commerce, placing an order requires the involvement of many people due to the complex structure of the client company. For example, different people are responsible for product selection and budget approval. Also, the invoice is sent to the company's head office and the ordered goods go to the local shop.



# Types of e-commerce in the B2B sector

## Manufacturers

Goods are produced by manufacturers and then sold to distributors, wholesalers, or other manufacturers. Manufacturers may sell off-the-shelf items, such as hairbrushes, or parts and intermediates that make their way to factories and workshops. Manufacturers can offer their goods in their own shops, or partner with distributors and use their sales channels to reach a wider audience.

## Wholesalers

In this sales model, a company buys goods from manufacturers and distributors at a wholesale price to then sell them at a favourable retail price to private customers, organisations or other companies. Wholesalers stand at the intersection of B2B and B2C, so they have access to more customers from both sectors – private consumers can buy products at better prices and companies can place orders for more goods.

## B2B2C

Business-to-Business-to-Customer is a very interesting business model involving collaboration between B2B and B2C companies and bypassing the intermediaries. How does it work? A great example is apps such as Glovo or Instacart, where customers can do their grocery shopping at different shops and get delivery right to their door. In this way, a B2B company, such as a local bakery, is responsible for producing the food and a B2C company allows customers to order, make payment, and receive delivery. In this way, everyone wins – the manufacturer gets access to a new group of retail customers and doesn't have to incur the costs of developing e-commerce tools and marketing strategy, and the B2C company can offer its customers new products.



## Distributors

Merchandise manufacturers do not always want to take care of packaging, shipping, and marketing issues, as they prefer to focus on improving the quality of products themselves. This is when distributors come to the rescue, taking care of placing products on an e-commerce platform and fulfilling orders, from reaching the target group to delivering the parcel to the customer's warehouse. Distributors can operate in several sales models, such as the classic online shop, marketplace, or dropshipping.



## Differences between B2B and B2C sectors

The B2C sector in e-commerce is currently much more modern and innovative than B2B. This is due to the specific business model of B2B entities, in which the basis of cooperation is often a direct relationship maintained through meetings, emails, and phone calls. Vendors in the business sector tend to have fewer customers, but with a larger order volume, so a personalised approach to price and offer is essential in building loyalty. Furthermore, e-commerce platforms in the B2B sector are much more complex and therefore more expensive to develop, so sellers are more cautious about implementing new technologies.

Also, the B2C sector looks very different in case of customer relations, as clients do not need the assistance of a salesperson to make an order or present a personalized offer. Fully automated sales platforms, where the consumer goes through the purchase path themselves, are standard, and shops can take inspiration from the thousands of other companies that have implemented innovative solutions. As the B2B sector continues to be firmly entrenched in the traditional sales model, it is harder to find examples of good practices and success stories of companies that have successfully made the digital transformation.



**B2B****B2C****Automation**

The purchasing process often requires an assistant and consultation during the ordering process

The fully automated purchasing process

**Pricing policy**

The pricing depends on the customer's relationship with the shop, the order value and regularity of purchases

Same prices for all customers or particular client segments and occasional individual discount codes, e.g. for birthdays

**Payment methods**

In addition to traditional payments by bank transfer, card, or cash, customers have access to credit offers, limits, invoice payments, and leases

Payments by bank transfer, card, BLIK, instalments, and 'buy now, pay later' model up to a certain amount

**Customer service**

Constant assistance of account consultants and representatives who present the product range, give advice, propose the best offer, and negotiate rates

The consultant provides information on the current offer and provides support in case of problems with an order or return, but is generally not involved in the purchasing process itself

**Length of the purchasing process**

Long purchasing process, which can last days, weeks or months

Customers can make purchases in just a few minutes

**Personalisation**

Highly advanced personalisation including repetitive orders, individual offers, and personalised pricing

Personalisation consisting mainly of product recommendations and occasional discounts

**Number of customers**

Fewer customers

More customers

**Contract value**

Fewer orders, but higher value

Many contracts, but of lower value

# The biggest challenges in the B2B sector

## MAINTAINING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

B2B commerce is based on direct relationships between clients and sales representatives. Customers who are about to place a high-value order with a shop expect the company to give them time and attention, present a new offer, give a better price and create an opportunity for negotiation. This individual approach in exchange for a high order value is part of a business etiquette. Meanwhile, e-commerce is still associated with an impersonal, automatic approach to the customer. And this is not necessarily true.

### Solution: High-quality customer service

Online commerce gives sellers a wide open field for building relationships with buyers. The best example is qualified, expert customer service that provides information, advice and opportunity to negotiate the best offer. In the B2B model, customer service is much more advanced than in B2C. Each customer can have access to their account executive who knows the situation of their business and will guide them through the entire purchasing process on the same level as during a face-to-face meeting.

## COMPLICATED PURCHASING PROCESS

Business customers are used to the convenience known from B2C platforms. Unfortunately, B2B shops still require users to follow multiple steps and procedures to finalise a purchase. A complicated process, an unintuitive interface, insufficient product information and poorly designed search engine can effectively discourage people from trying an e-commerce platform.

### Solution: Improving the customer experience

Good UX is not only tailored for the B2C segment, and business platforms that invest in good user experience will gain a valuable competitive advantage. Personalisation and segmentation, an account for logged-in customers, advanced search, a clear interface, and customer service support will make the platform the best available option for users.

## THE NEED FOR ADVANCED PERSONALISATION

Each business client has specific needs and is interested in different products. Going through the entire catalogue and manually searching for each item can be very time-consuming and discourage exploration of the shop. Business buyers also expect the shop to take the nature of their business and the size of their order into account when preparing an offer – a loyal customer who buys a lot expects a more attractive quote than a small business that is just starting a relationship with a company.

### Solution: Customer segmentation

Segmenting customers according to keys such as average order value and frequency, length of relationship with the shop, preferred payment model, and most frequently ordered products allows advanced personalisation of the offer and an increased chance of sales. An e-commerce algorithm analyses the order history of logged-in users to display tailored recommendations and assign attractive discounts.

## **REDUCED SUPPLY OF SOLUTIONS AND SERVICES**

The B2C segment is more open to technological innovations and novelties, which is why most e-commerce solutions are developed with them in mind. Unfortunately, not all of them can be easily implemented in the business segment, which is why the demand for tools dedicated to B2B shops grows. Selecting the best technologies and implementing them correctly is therefore a major challenge.

### **Solution: Partner experienced in the B2B segment solutions**

A trusted business partner is just as important as a development strategy and e-commerce platform itself. A company that implements and maintains online shops in the B2B segment has experience in the industry and knows its needs. Such a partner will be able to advise on the best e-commerce tools, implement customised solutions and turn business goals into a functioning and effective shop.

## **A HIGHLY CUSTOMISABLE PLATFORM**

E-commerce platforms in the B2B segment are complex and highly differentiated: they require advanced personalisation, management of a large product base, customer and order databases, and industry-specific solutions. This poses a major challenge in terms of design, implementation and expansion as, for many companies, a standard application template may not be sufficient.

### **Solution: Integration with external tools**

E-commerce platforms designed for the B2B segment offer extensive customisation possibilities through integration with additional tools. CRM, PIM or ERP systems, additional payment or delivery methods, marketing and administrative tools can be freely implemented in the platform by the implementation company. The basis for the flexibility of the application is the Composable Commerce approach, which consists of building the software from specialised modules.

## **MANY PEOPLE INVOLVED**

B2B sales involves many people responsible for the various stages of order fulfilment. Customer service, product management, price acceptance, stock control, delivery order – each step complicates the platform management process from a back-office perspective.

### **Solution: Roles and permissions**

Sales platforms tailored to the needs of the business sector provide extensive opportunities to give customised roles and permissions to all company employees. A clear administration panel makes it easy to manage data and control the process, as well as enhancing the security of the platform, as only those who need it have access to specific information and permissions.

## SPECIFIC SEARCH CRITERIA

In order for an e-commerce platform to successfully replace direct sales, the shop must accurately offer customers the items they are looking for. In the case of B2B, this issue is complicated by the fact that the range is large, products often don't have a standardised name and the technical specifications are extensive. Having to search for the required item for a long time in a catalogue can discourage customers from buying.

### Solution: Advanced search

The advanced search tool relies on machine learning to suggest the best results to customers based on the most frequently searched keywords. The customer doesn't need to know the exact name of the product; the system will show him the desired item in the catalogue based on the batch number, assigned keywords, use case or phrase in the description. Typos or synonyms won't be a problem. The basis of a successful search is well-developed product information, so the PIM (Product Information Management) tool will help optimise the process.

## ATTACHMENT TO THE CURRENT BUSINESS MODEL

The B2B sector faces many technical challenges, but one of the biggest hurdles in the development of online business sales is attitude. Many sellers assume that since the current model has worked successfully for so many years, there is no point in changing it and looking for optimisation. Innovative solutions are associated with costs and risks, and adapting to new standards takes time. Thus, change is slow, and the B2B sector is not keeping up with technological developments despite customers being ready for innovations.

### Solution: Openness to optimisation

The only way to digitally transform a business is to be open to the optimisation that modern e-commerce tools offer. Of course, this is a process that takes time, commitment and resources, but progress is unstoppable, B2B customers increasingly expect the retailer to offer them a simple and convenient shopping path that they are familiar with from their everyday B2C online shopping experience.



# How to choose a B2B e-commerce platform?

## 01. DEFINITION OF BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

The most important step before choosing an e-commerce platform is to identify your goals and the business needs that the tool is designed to support. Decide whether you care about:

- expanding the customer base,
- implementing innovative solutions,
- scalability and flexibility of platform expansion,
- expanding the product range,
- relationship building,
- entering foreign markets,
- attracting business partners.

It is also important to determine the type of shop you want to run, such as wholesale, marketplace, B2B2C or dropshipping. Also, determine the size of your business and your growth aspirations. Sales platforms offer options to suit different types of customers depending

on their size, site traffic and customisation needs, so identifying your business needs is key when choosing the best tool.

## 02. SOLUTIONS FOR THE B2B SECTOR

A B2B e-commerce platform should offer a different set of tools than one for B2C. Pay attention to whether the chosen tool has a business suite and solutions specific to this sector, such as integrations with PIM, CRM or ERP tools, advanced search, offer and pricing personalisation, custom roles and permissions, and an analytics dashboard.

## 3 kluczowe narzędzia B2B:

### • ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)

Software used to manage a company's resources, such as its workforce, budget, production capacity or delivery throughput. An ERP system enables the management, automation and integration of all company processes (including partners' data) to increase productivity and control resource utilization.

### • PIM (Product Information Management)

This tool allows product data to be uploaded, processed and distributed across different channels, such as the online shop, distributor websites, social media or advertising. Examples of information collected by PIM include product descriptions, attributes, images, specification, and keywords.

### • CRM (Customer Relationship Management)

A set of procedures and technologies for customer relationship management. CRM solution allows you to collect and analyse data about customers and their orders, personalise the content displayed and monitor customers' interactions with the shop.



### **03. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT MODEL**

For e-commerce platforms, we can distinguish between two main implementation and management models:

SaaS, or Software as a Service, refers to a platform model in which the user is given access to an e-commerce tool on a subscription basis. The merchant is at the same time the creator of its platform, where, without programming, using the available functionalities and templates, he can build a shop according to his needs. This model works well for smaller businesses that use a basic set of functionalities and do not need a lot of customisation, but for those who want to build a shop their own way and have more specific requirements, it will be limiting.

An open-source platform for e-commerce is an option for those who need a high degree of flexibility in building an application. An online shop is designed and implemented by an e-commerce agency. The shop is based on the functionalities offered by the e-commerce platform, for example Magento or Shopware, but can be extended with additional integrations from external providers, such as a PIM tool, advanced search or various payment models. Custom e-commerce development allows you to tailor your shop to your needs and create a unique sales

platform with a customised set of functionalities. This model also has the advantage of being more flexible and easy to scale.

### **04. E-COMMERCE AGENCY**

Choosing an e-commerce agency is just as important as choosing the right platform. The agency is the business partner at every stage of the planning, creation, maintenance and expansion of the shop. Its offer includes:

- advice on strategic planning,
- online shop audit,
- creation of branding and shop design,
- design and launch of the application,
- optimising the purchase path,
- implementation of UX standards,
- responding to market developments,
- implementation of new functionalities.

In other words, an e-commerce agency is a company that will bring your business plans to life and accompany you in the development of your shop.



# Benefits of e-commerce development in the B2B sector

- **Reactivity**

The online platform enables rapid response to market changes and the introduction of new functionalities tailored to the customers' needs.

- **Saving time**

E-commerce allows the entire order process to be carried out remotely, with a high level of automation. The salesperson and the customer do not have to waste time travelling to meetings, exchanging emails and making long phone calls, as the system provides all the information needed.

- **Broadening the customer base**

Selling online is a way to reach new groups of customers who are used to the e-commerce standard and prefer to order remotely. This distribution channel also opens up new opportunities for online marketing and for expanding the client base more effectively.

- **Increased sales**

Online sales helps to increase the number of orders because customers have a new sales channel at

their disposal. E-commerce provides opportunities to apply sales techniques such as cross-selling or up-selling on a larger scale.

- **More effective personalisation**

It may seem that a face-to-face relationship between the retailer and the customer allows for a more personalised approach, but in the case of large companies, there is no way to remember the preferences of all customers and tailor the offer precisely to them. This is different with an e-commerce platform that collects and analyses data from order history to always display the best, personalised recommendations.

- **Business analytics**

The backbone of any business is data, but manually entering information on every customer and order would take an eternity. The analytics dashboard in the sales platform collects all the key metrics on user behaviour and preferences, analyses them in real time and generates reports and statistics. This allows you to grow your business based on measurable

data rather than guesses and predictions.

- **Better use of resources**

By automating processes such as adding new products, submitting an order for fulfilment, updating database, sending emails or analysing data, your staff can focus on more creative, demanding tasks and leave simple, time-consuming activities to the app.

- **Greater control**

An e-commerce platform gives you greater control over the operation of the business, as it monitors all changes and processes within the system. This makes it easy to identify a possible problem, verify order history or find customer data.

- **Competitive advantage**

The digital transformation of the B2B sector is underway and will accelerate. Starting to sell online is a great way to quickly gain a competitive advantage and now is the perfect time to do it. Many businesses still haven't launched e-commerce platforms and

the market is not yet saturated, even though effective technology solutions are available and ready to be implemented.

- **The image of the modern company**

Innovation is a strong marketing and communication advantage. The most talked-about companies are those that are blazing new trails, pioneering the industry and offering innovations to improve the shopping experience. The launch of a modern sales platform is an opportunity to strengthen a company's image in the business sector.



# Sales platform for the B2B sector on Shopware example



Shopware is one of the most popular sales platforms on the European market. Understanding the specifics of the industry, the company has created the Shopware B2B Suite, which includes a set of functionalities for business customers.

## Intelligent data transfer with HEPTAconnect in Shopware

Shopware enables the optimal exchange of different types of data using HEPTAconnect, a modular system that allows the creation of individual data transfer paths between systems. For example, product information from the PIM system goes to the shop. The completed order data is transferred to the ERP system. Once the order information has been processed – in terms of availability and lead time – the ERP passes guidelines to the CRM system, from which the target customer is contacted. In this way, the systems can quickly exchange data with each other, but only the data needed for the process.

## Enormous opportunities for integration

Every B2B e-commerce business is a complex organism and it's impossible to create a single model suitable for all. Shopware gives its clients the possibility to customise and expand their shop by integrating with external tools. Through API technology, Shopware customers can implement various payment and delivery methods,

ERP, CRM, PIM, analytics panels, marketing automation, email marketing, advanced search, and much more.

## Global business development

Shopware supports the global aspirations of its customers by offering them the support they need to enter new markets. Users of the platform have access to features analysing the legal and tax situation in different countries, sales channels tailored to the given market, a custom tax calculator, price and purchase configurations taking into account different currencies and the specific characteristics of the target group.

## Individual pricing policy

Achieving an experience similar to that of a customer's direct interaction with a retailer is one of the biggest challenges of the B2B e-commerce market. Shopware supports building relationships with your shop with customised offers and price lists for specific businesses. What's more, a repeat order option can be implemented, allowing regular customers to shorten the entire purchasing process.

## Assigning customised roles and permissions

Complex B2B shops require the involvement of many people – different teams are responsible for posting product information, customer service, contacting suppliers, controlling company resources and so on. They all need access to the system to do their daily work. On the other hand, giving everyone administrator rights isn't a good practice when it comes to security and process control. If too many people have access to all system rights, the risk of cyberattack or data leakage grows. Additionally, in such a case it takes more time to find out who has made changes to a particular area and why.

To avoid such issues, Shopware offers the option to assign roles, individual permissions and budgets to employees, giving users full flexibility and transparency within the platform. It's also a great customer service functionality as it gives employees the ability to manage B2B customer accounts, such as placing orders on their behalf.

## Filtering and reporting of key data from order history

Knowledge of customer behaviour is crucial for business development and strategic planning. Shopware offers baseline business analytics, but with the API-

First approach, customers can implement advanced business intelligence tools to analyse purchase history in terms of frequency, content or value of orders and purchasing habits. In this way, B2B e-commerce can more accurately assess and anticipate customer needs.

## User-friendly panel

When working with business clients, it's easy to forget that each of them is also simply a regular consumer. Entrepreneurs, who turn over huge amounts of money on a daily basis as part of their job, privately use online shops to do their grocery or clothing shopping. They are used to a high standard of customer service and an intuitive shopping path. Unfortunately, in their work they often have to contend with a clunky interface and lengthy processes. And yet, there is nothing stopping shops for business customers from being as user-friendly as those for retail customers! This is the premise behind Shopware, which offers B2B customers specialised tools for a complex, multi-level business, while providing ease of use and the best possible shopping experience. The Easymode available in Shopware is a perfect combination of B2B specialised functionality and excellent B2C UX.



## Implementation of the Shopware 6 Enterprise Edition platform for Husse

To better illustrate the possibilities of sales platforms in optimising B2B sales, we present a case study of a project we carried out for the Husse brand.



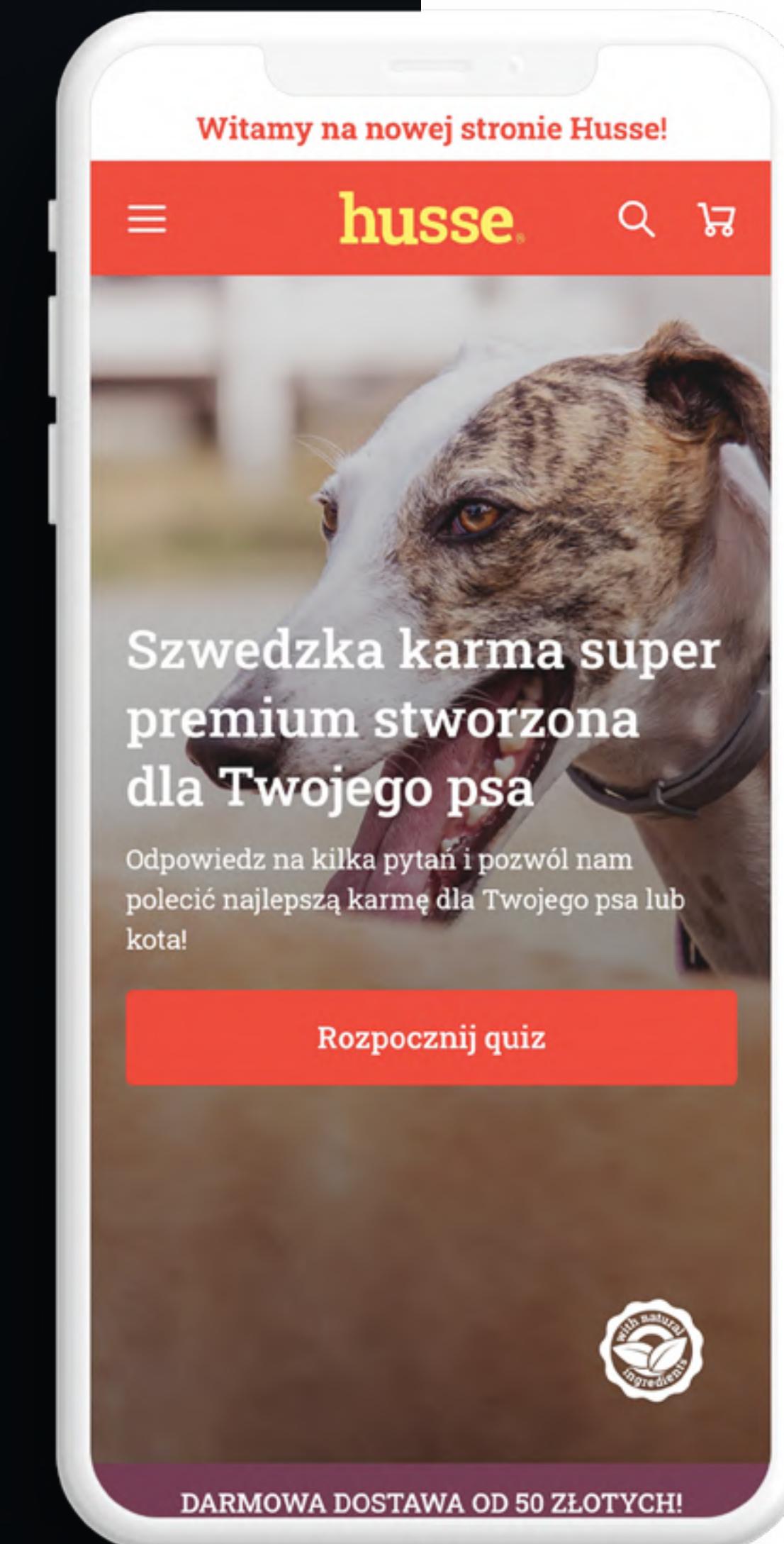
## CASE STUDY

### Brand profile and history of cooperation

Husse is a Swedish manufacturer of dog, cat and horse food, with more than 30 years of experience in promoting a healthy pet life. The brand sells both B2C, offering its goods to private pet carers, and B2B, working with breeders, vets, franchises and distributors.

We started our collaboration with Husse in February 2020 and launched the new [husse.pl](#) shop in May 2021. The project was carried out by the Strix team (e-commerce platform implementation, backend and frontend) and the K2/Commerce Sherpas team (ux and design). The Husse team was responsible for strategy preparation and coordination.

As part of the collaboration, we implemented an e-commerce platform based on Shopware 6 Enterprise Edition and a product information management system – Ergonode.



"With the launch of our new shop on the Shopware 6 platform, we can offer our customers a unique shopping experience, reaching them across multiple channels. At the same time, the new system has enabled us to automate sales processes in the digital world."

**Piotr Cieślik,**  
Managing Director Husse Polska

Kota!

Rozpocznij quiz

## CASE STUDY

### Project objective

The main goal of creating the new sales platform was to present Husse's extensive range of high-quality products and professional customer support in the selection of the assortment. The online shop we designed fulfills the function of optimised e-commerce and a knowledge hub thanks to the implemented blog function.

### The main challenge

The biggest challenge during the project was to transform the sales process based on the traditional direct sales model into a digital process and build an effective online sales channel.

Prior to the implementation of the new e-commerce platform, sales of Husse products were mainly made offline during in-person interaction. Customer orders were manually entered by sales representatives into the administration panel. When a target customer wanted to buy food, he was assigned to a consultant who delivered the order.

The presentation of the products took place during live meetings between the consultant and the customer. Stands in shopping malls or presentations at trade fairs were also used for sales. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced the potential for direct sales and required the brand to adapt its business model to online sales standards.



Jedynym źródłem białka innego ssaka jest jagnięcina o niewielkim potencjale alergizującym.

Może Ci się spodobać

DARMOWA DOSTAWA OD 50

Karma hypoalergiczna

Koty sterylizowane

Karma sucha Exclus

Karma hypoalergiczna

Koty sterylizowane

Karma sucha Exclus

Wybrane dla Ciebie

Hipoalergiczna

E-commerce B2B 23

Digest - karma sucha hypoalergiczna dla psów 7kg

Ocean C

## CASE STUDY

### Why did we choose Shopware 6?

- A flexible solution that develops dynamically and allows the system to be customised to individual business needs thanks to a wide selection of integrations.
- A modern e-commerce platform, using Symfony and Vue.js technologies and ensuring high system performance,
- A tool to support SEO, personalisation, and management of marketing content and product information.
- Support for omnichannel and social media sales.

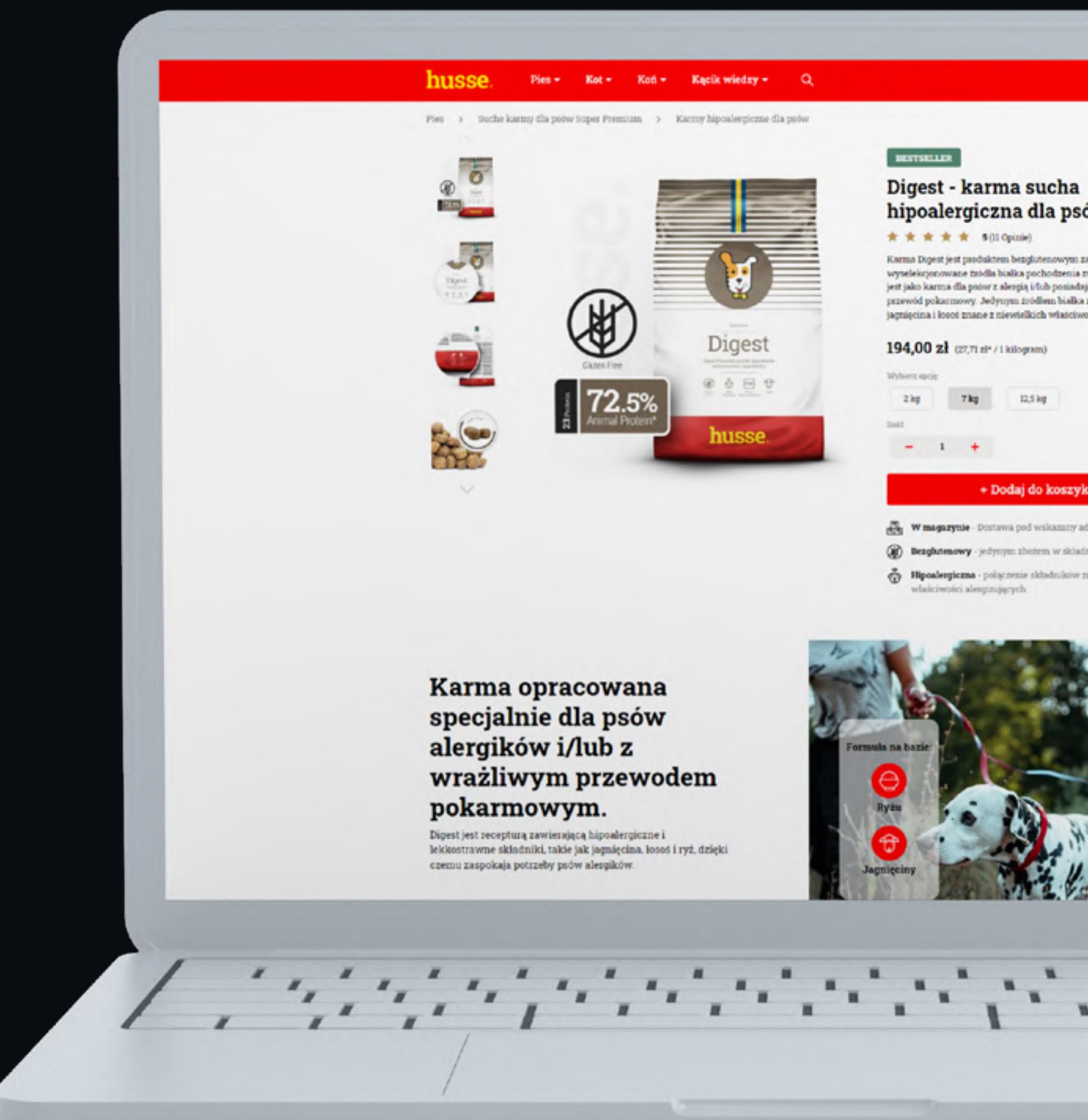
Showare 6 is based on the Symfony framework, making the platform one of the most up-to-date on the market on every technological level. Flexible and modifiable, the Symfony framework allows for very precise customisation of the shop, while ensuring maximum performance and security.

### Fast and efficient shop

By migrating from the previous solution (Magento 1) to the Shopware 6, we were able to significantly reduce the loading time of the website and eliminate the page reload effect, for example when adding products to the shopping cart. This allows Husse to offer users an excellent shopping experience.

### Advanced product page

The product card in the new Husse shop allows us to create extensive pages containing images, text, specifications and multimedia (for example, video). This allows our customer to educate, engage and provide all the information needed at a level close to direct interaction with a consultant in a brick-and-mortar shop.



## CASE STUDY

### Building customer relationships

The new husse.pl website offers customers industry knowledge and professional support. The user makes the purchase in the online shop, but at the same time the customer service team is ready to assist. The client can also use a customised product widget: simply select the breed or ailment of the animal from the drop-down menu and the system will suggest the best products. Another interesting solution is the Husse Virtual Assistant, a tool which helps the customer to match the food to their pet by solving a quiz. This allows him to personalise his shopping experience.

### Digitalisation of the traditional direct sales model

Although the Husse brand offers a fully remote purchasing process, many customers still value face-to-face interaction with a salesperson. To respond to their needs, we have implemented a custom mechanism to assign local representatives to a particular customer. From a dedicated tab, the user can search for the nearest retailer by postcode and contact them by email or phone.

On the backend side, the user is assigned to a specific representative according to the brand's organisational structure – MFDA (master, distributor, franchisee, affiliate). This mechanism is used during the registration process and when placing an order (based on the customer's postcode in the delivery address).

### Adapting to the new reality

The launch of the e-commerce platform has allowed Husse customers to benefit from new forms of purchase, payment and delivery of ordered products. This allows the brand to reach new customers and offer a full cross-section of shopping options.

## CASE STUDY

### What we accomplished

The new e-commerce platform allows the Husse brand to reach more customers through the online shop and social media sales. The capabilities of the system we've implemented, provide the shop's customers with a unique shopping experience and enable them to buy fully remotely.

#### Project effects

- Transformation of a difficult purchase path (traditional direct sales model) into optimised online sales while maintaining a direct relationship with the brand's customers.
- Simplifying the purchasing path for customers – convenient and quick e-commerce offering new forms of delivery and payment.
- Improving satisfaction of existing customers and building loyalty among new ones.
- Advanced personalisation of the offer and support of the purchasing process with educational content.
- Improved performance, loading speed and mobile features.
- Implement an easy-to-manage administration panel with the ability to assign individual roles and permissions to different team members.

"The implementation of Shopware 6 for Husse is one of the first projects to use this platform in the Polish e-commerce market. We're happy that the Husse brand chose us as a business partner. We chose Shopware because it's a flexible solution that develops dynamically, which allowed us to adapt the system to our client's business needs."

**Borys Skraba,**  
CEO Strix



# B2B can sell differently

An interview with Kacper Gugala, Regional Manager at Shopware responsible for the Polish market



**KACPER GUGAŁA**  
Regional Manager, Shopware

## What are the biggest challenges for business customers in e-commerce?

At the moment, as in other sectors, sales declines are a major challenge. The recession, inflation and economic instability are affecting market conditions and customer behaviour. Many companies have noticed fewer orders, some have been forced to put projects on hold and even lay off some staff. Even Black Friday, although continuing to have a positive impact on business, has underperformed this year compared to the last.

## How does the B2B sector differ from the B2C sector in terms of company characteristics and business needs?

B2B is still a very traditional sales model. It often works on the basis of a relationship between the sales representative and the customer. The salesperson arrives at the office or shop, shows the latest trends and promotions, and the terms of the order are often agreed over a business dinner. B2C in this respect is much more automated. However, it's worth noting that the very operation of B2B e-commerce platforms increasingly resembles what we know from B2C – the ordering process is similar, as we are already familiar with it from everyday household shopping. The

popularisation of e-commerce in the consumer sector is also translating into a growing interest in this model among business customers. Many of the solutions that have proved successful in B2C e-commerce are being adapted to the requirements of B2B, such as an intuitive interface, advanced filtering and searching or more advanced personalisation of the offer.

## How to prepare the technology base for B2B sales?

B2B poses a number of challenges for sellers that are not usually apparent in B2C sales. One of these is the scale of orders. Not only are orders of much higher value, but they also contain more different types of products. This can generate technological challenges for integration between e-commerce and ERP systems.

The second challenge is production planning. For B2C, this is often done days, weeks or 1–2 months ahead. In the case of B2B, there are situations where all products planned for production for the next 6 months are already sold out. The problem then becomes not how to sell more efficiently, but rather: how to produce products more efficiently and keep distribution flowing. Systems for analysis, estimation and resource planning are crucial in this case.

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**There is a lot of talk in the market about the importance of the brand-customer relationship. Is building such a relationship possible in the online sales business sector?**

Absolutely. However, we have to understand the nature of such a relationship in online commerce. The foundation of a good customer relationship is not so much face-to-face contact as it's convenience, a personalised approach and a high-quality experience. A perfect example is the e-commerce platform itself, through which orders are placed. Imagine a situation where you have 2 companies offering similar products. In one of them, the order requires a meeting, exchange of emails, confirmation of commercial conditions, etc. The whole process takes hours or even days. It's difficult to expect customers to return to the shop that takes up so much of their valuable time.

At the other company, order fulfilment comes down to importing an Excel file with selected products or even sending an order via API. Without cumbersome communication, catching up on details and unnecessary processes. Obviously, the second scenario has the chance to tie the customer in much more strongly, as the goal of e-commerce is to optimise and simplify the purchasing process. It is also worth noting that modern B2B systems often give us a choice. If we want

to process an order quickly and efficiently, for example by importing an Excel file, we have that option but if we want to connect with a sales representative – we can also do this. What is more, such a person can present a new product range, promotions or even prepare an individual offer online. A perfect example of this approach is the Guided Shopping function available in Shopware, which can be presented as a mixture of live commerce and interactive product presentation. This allows the offline relationship to be transferred to the online world with the convenience characteristic of e-commerce.

**What functionalities and services do business customers expect from a B2B platform?**

In B2B trade, customers are used to a personalised approach and negotiation. If they build a long-term relationship with a company, regularly place orders or buy a lot – they expect better prices and offers tailored to them. The same goes for new customers, who expect a discount as an incentive for further cooperation. An e-commerce platform has to meet these expectations, which is why one of the key functionalities is a customised price list and personalised offers.

It's also very important for customers to be able to import an order from an Excel file so that they don't

have to manually select the hundreds of items they need. From the administration panel, the function to create a company structure and assign authorisations is also very important, as with B2B orders there are often several people on the customer side involved in the process.

**Compared to the B2C sector – the B2B sector seems much less intuitive and even outdated. Why is this the case? Is the B2B market more difficult to implement innovation and improve UX?**

This is, in my opinion, an effect resulting from two elements. Firstly, the cost of investment in a B2B platform is usually much higher than in B2C. Typical implementation budgets are several hundred thousand dollars. Such an investment is therefore analysed from all angles and companies often hold off until the last minute before making a decision – they want to be sure that the investment will pay off and bring a profit.

The second element is digital transformation, which is happening at its own pace in different sectors. People in the B2B sector have worked in a certain way for several decades – building personal relationships, negotiating in boardrooms, meeting at business dinners, and discussing terms of collaboration for many hours. And now we, i.e. the eCommerce industry, come along



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and tell them 'from now on, you will do it differently'. Our solutions offer many benefits and are the result of thoughtful strategy and business analysis: they save time, achieve greater transparency, and make it easier to manage, but it's also important to understand that the concerns of people who are thinking about changing the model are natural. Will they find their way in this new reality? Will technology replace them? Will the investment in modern technology be a hit or a failure? Every innovation raises a lot of doubts at the beginning, and we, as an e-commerce tool provider, are aware of them and try our best to answer them. And we are seeing the results, as more and more business customers are interested in developing their online channels.

### How does Shopware support B2B businesses?

We offer a package created specifically for the B2B segment, as business customers need a completely different set of functionalities than B2C shops. In Shopware, a simple B2B shop can be created even in the free version of the platform, using ready-made modules and templates. For companies that need a more advanced tool, we have 3 additional versions – RISE, EVOLVE, and BEYOND – each offering features to support B2B sales.



## **Effective B2B e-commerce is possible**

The B2B sector is growing extremely rapidly, and such growth requires solutions to meet customer demands and explore new business opportunities. Improving the user experience, automating the sales process, implementing advanced personalisation, and simplifying website navigation are ways to gain a competitive advantage and save your most important business resources: time and money.





## Contact

Do you want to launch online sales in the B2B sector or migrate to another platform

**Write to us! We'll help you plan your business development strategy, audit your shop and build a functional, modern application that turns your business goals into reality.**

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