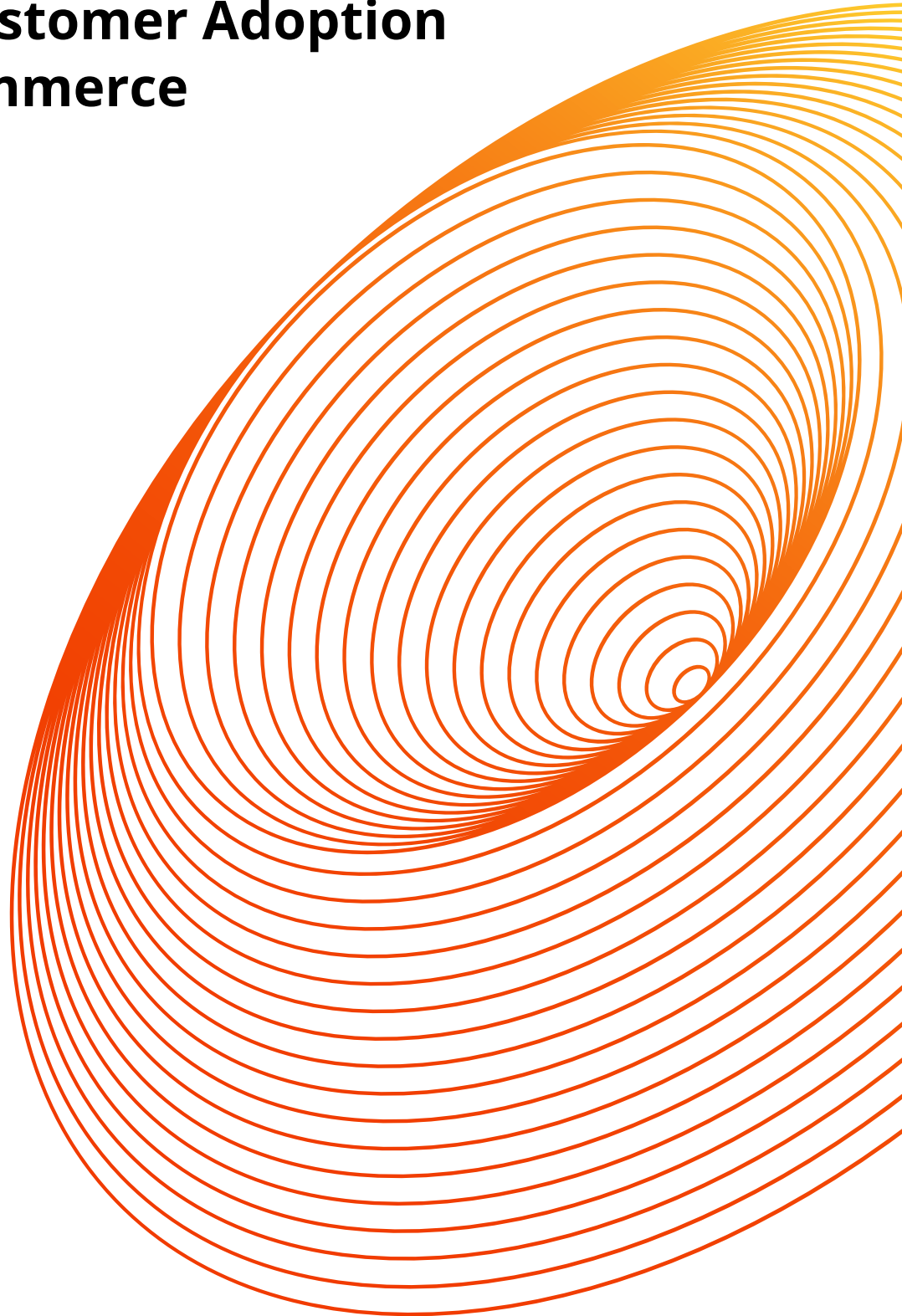




# Guide to Customer Adoption in B2B eCommerce

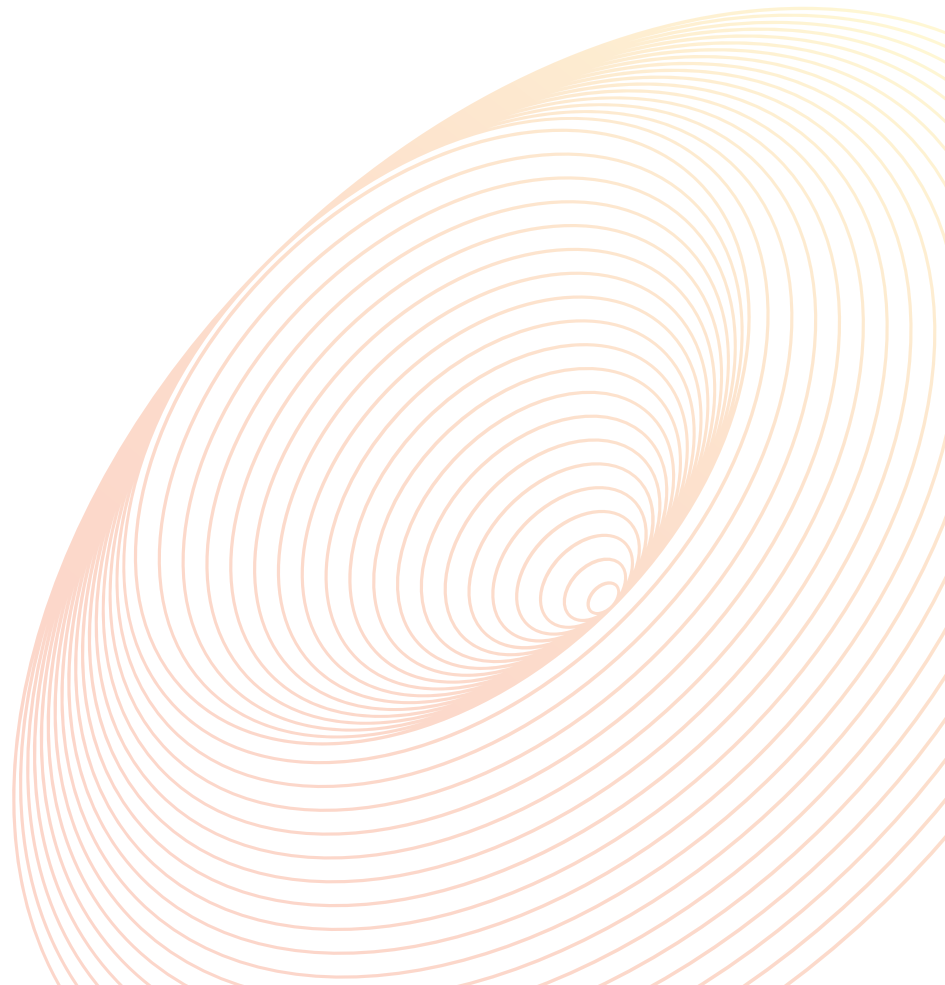


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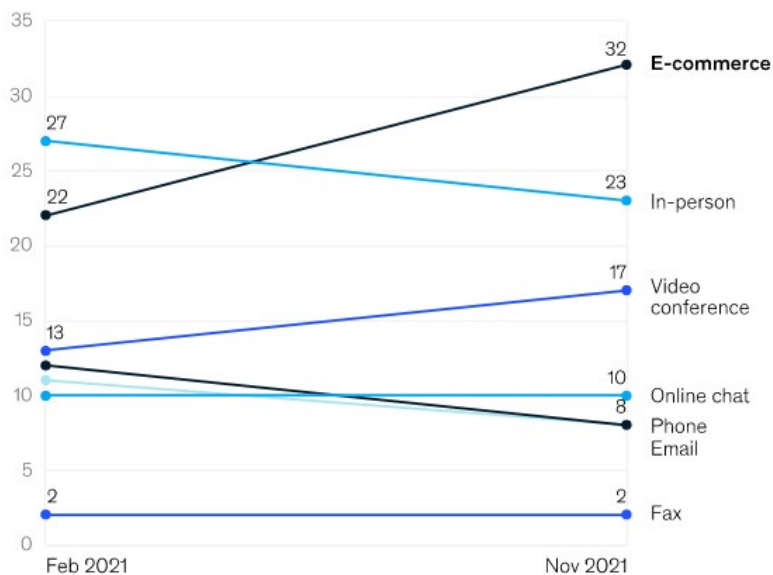
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Everyone is shopping online these days. Even as COVID-19 winds down and we return to normal life, nobody's flocking to physical stores in favor of eCommerce websites. Just the opposite, interest in eCommerce continues to intensify. Like regular consumers, B2B buyers want similar things. They look for personalized experiences, easy ordering, order tracking, and payment options.

**Effectiveness of sales channels,<sup>1</sup> % of respondents who identified channel as their most effective, US only**



**E-commerce has now surpassed in-person as the single most effective channel.**

**Source:** McKinsey

According to [McKinsey](#), eCommerce is the most effective sales channel for the majority of B2B businesses. Buyers prefer to use digital tools to reach their purchasing goals. They're ready to build relationships online, make higher-value purchases, and expect their digital experiences to be better - or at least the same - as offline ones.

In another survey, Mckinsey reported that 40% of suppliers pursued a strategy of making eCommerce channels more appealing than offline options. They see digital channels as a superior alternative to delivering profitability and boosting revenues per order.

However, building an eCommerce presence is not enough. The benefits will be realized only if you entice existing customers to embrace your digital channels. Aside from focusing your digital marketing efforts to acquire new customers, you shouldn't ignore working with existing customers and getting them to use your website.

This paper will offer best practices to help businesses shift their offline B2B customers to online purchasing.

# The Difference Between Acquisition and Adoption

There's tons of digital marketing literature about using technology to engage with customers. But these strategies aren't made for getting existing customers to purchase from your website. That's because there is a major strategy difference in acquiring new customers versus encouraging existing customers to change how they do business with you.

**Acquisition** is about generating new traffic through digital and offline marketing. The goal is to drive new buyers to your website and generate interest in your brand. You want to either make a sale or gather information for a lead. You realize the benefits of digitizing with new visitors immediately. That's because their baseline experience with your company is wholly digital.

We all know that acquiring customers is essential. But retaining existing ones is easier, brings more profitability, and increases loyalty. So, don't get so busy with acquiring that you forget about getting existing customers excited about your solutions.

**Adoption** is all about changing (in this case, digitizing) existing customers' buying habits. You may have customers that still phone in, use fax, or even email in their orders. But these purchasing behaviors can hold both the business and customers back. To remain competitive, organizations move online and launch eCommerce websites. And when customers start relying on your website, it's important to guide them and offer value wherever possible.

Adoption shouldn't just be focused on the customer. It should also extend to all digital workers involved in maintaining the eCommerce website. Employees need adequate training to master new ways of doing things, so consider creating a knowledge base, multimedia, or manuals. Provide incentives for those who embrace change, and focus on customer-facing sales, success, and support roles. Once they're on board, they will sell the idea down to your customers.

As customers get comfortable with your eCommerce website, they'll make larger orders and more frequent purchases. Your sales representatives will work more efficiently, customer service will focus on serving customers, and order entry will be eliminated. Furthermore, you'll capture all sorts of data for rich customer insights.

# Take the First Steps

You can't expect to get customers to adopt and get behind your digitizing efforts if you aren't fully invested in the effort from the start. What you get out of the process depends on what you put in.

## Set aside ample resources.

Successful adoption begins with assigning human and marketing resources to the cause. Start with creating a dedicated team responsible for the adoption process. Their purpose is to help customers learn about your new offerings and get employees behind the change. Remember, this investment pays off with higher average order values and eventually more cost-effective sales.

## Keep the customer in focus.

Analyze your existing purchase process, as it can offer clues about what specific area of the journey you should improve on. For example, if you're selling cleaning supplies, your customers might be calling your sales team every time they're looking to buy more than five boxes of cleaning solvent. These customers may even need more products down the road, but it's difficult to anticipate this future need through traditional methods.

## Customer-centric masters sail above others

# 13%

Masters realize a 13% growth rate.

# 3x

Masters contribute 3X more to total revenue.

# 2.5%

Masters achieve a 2.5% higher EBITDA margin.

Source: Accenture

But with digital, you can filter out behavior, what the customer looked at, and what they ordered. This data is gold, as it can be leveraged to create a targeted list to send promotions or other personalized emails. Or, it can be used to notify users of changes to their orders. A more sophisticated approach is to make this data available to customers in an on-demand, self-service fashion.

# Make the Case for Change

Customers follow the lead of their sales reps. Buy-in from your sales and customer service staff is essential. Effective change management begins with making the case for change. Show staff the benefits in terms of making their work easier and increasing the potential for financial gain.

Identify key players on adoption teams and set adoption goals. Make sure all employees are fully trained. This includes using the website itself, navigating the back-end, and utilizing the CRM (if applicable). All sales reps and customer service staff must be prepared to support online sales.

Existing customers will have relationship expectations and may have concerns about the change. During the adoption period, it is important for forward-facing staff to:

- Be ambassadors for change
- Reassure customers
- Reinforce the benefits of change.

Only then are you ready to begin implementation.

Consider an eCommerce solution that comes with a CRM or can be tightly integrated with one. It will help you filter out early adopters and craft experiences that will resonate with them. An eCommerce solution like that allows you to segment your customers in a variety of ways for targeted marketing and sales campaigns.

## Step 1: Gather existing customer data.

Begin with identifying all current clients. Comb through digital and print records. The length of your sales cycle will be a key factor in determining what records to include. For long sales cycles, you may need to go back 3 to 5 years. For shorter cycles, you should include 2 to 3 years of sales. Once you've identified all existing customers, set up a record in your CRM for each of these customers.

If you don't have a CRM, get one! A customer relationship management (CRM) solution is critical to organizing all customer information in one place. With a good CRM, any team member can see at a glance a full 360° view of the customer to guide their interactions. Your CRM should capture all customer interactions, not just orders and service tickets; and should allow you to segment customers for more effective marketing. Here's a [guide to selecting the right CRM](#) for your business.

## Step 2: Get people registered.

It doesn't make sense to waste resources onboarding early adopters. Some of your customers will naturally gravitate to your website because this is how they prefer to do business.

Are you inviting customers to sign up for an account and find yourself with a low adoption rate? A good place to look is the account registration process. Initial account registration must be quick and easy. Your customers are busy, and they don't want to spend time on a lengthy or tortuous registration process. Don't ask for more information than you need to get started.

Remember, you can always do better (at removing friction). So keep looking for ways to make it easy for your customers to quickly register for an account. Younger buyers are eager to order online but they are particular about how they do it. Did you know that 80% of buyers aged 25-35 and 82% of buyers aged 36-50 opt out of gated content if it requires filling out a form? The same applies to account creation, so make the process painless.

## Step 3: Start spreading the news.

Once you have identified your target audience, it is time to begin communicating with your existing customers. Here's where targeting the message becomes super important. And as mentioned before, a targeted, personalized message will not fall on deaf ears.

This is where a CRM can help personalize your messages. Once you've personalized the message, play up the benefits of registering for an account. One way to overcome possible resistance is to show how online ordering will make the buyer's job much easier. Some key points to include are:

- Quick order and reorder options
- Ability to order 24/7 even when businesses close for the day
- Streamlined online RFQ, QTC, and order approval process
- Online order tracking
- Order history
- Online payment (if appropriate)

Not only should account registration be easy, you should show them how to do it. Since different people learn in different ways, send emails with easy-to-follow directions and a link to a quick video showing how to set up an account. Communications should reinforce the benefits of an online account and remind buyers that the change allows you to serve them better. Here's a sample communication to get you started.

*Dear Matt,*

*Thanks for being a loyal customer of Bright Idea Widgets. We appreciate your business and are always looking for ways to serve you better. To that end, we've recently launched our new website, [BrightIdeaWidgets.Com](http://BrightIdeaWidgets.Com).*

*You'll find your favorite products like Blue Widgets, Red Dots, and Small Green Boxes are easy to find by clicking on the Products drop down menu. We hope you'll take a moment to visit the site, take a look around, and then click on Create Account on the upper right-hand corner.*

*Establishing an account is quick and easy, we just need a few bits of information to get started. We've even put together a short video to explain the process. {embed your video link here}*

*Once you have an account, you will be able to order online anytime and from any place you like. At the office or with mobile on-the-go.*

*In addition, you'll have 24/7 access to your order tracking and order history. You'll find that re-ordering is easier than ever and order accuracy will be improved.*

*And if you need assistance, I'm still only a phone call or email away. I can even walk you through the Create Account process by phone if you like.*

*I hope you will find the new website clean, efficient and easy-to-use. If it is not, I'd love to hear your feedback. Thanks again for your continued trust.*

*Sincerely yours, George the Salesperson*

Make sure that all new print and electronic mailings include the website address to find more information on products and services. The web portal should become your primary means of contact and your marketing materials should reflect this.



# Provide Incentives for Sign Ups

During the initial planning process, you set realistic goals for adoption rates. Offering incentives is a powerful tool to help meet your goals.

## Incentivize customers

Offer customers an incentive for their first online purchase. Incentives can take many different forms. While the obvious incentives are free or discounted merchandise, consider creative incentives as well. It could be premium-grade marketing materials, brand swag, discounted freight, or extended payment terms (45 days instead of 30) for the first order.



**amazon incentives**

### Purchase Amazon Gift Cards in bulk for your business

Amazon Incentives offers flexible gift card options for your business with no fees or minimum order quantities.

- Order physical gift cards, email gift cards, gift card claim codes, and more.
- Customize your physical and digital gift cards.
- Purchase with a bank transfer or credit card.

[Sign up and purchase](#)

### Incentives products

All of our products are available in bulk in denominations from \$1 to \$2,000.



Source: McKinsey

[Amazon offers a discount program](#) for bulk purchases of gift cards that can be leveraged as incentives. By offering an incentive, you encourage that very first purchase online and this helps clear the highest hurdle. Once the customer makes the initial purchase and you deliver a positive experience, they will be sold on the concept. The benefits become obvious. And don't forget, if you have an existing loyalty program, convert it to an online-only loyalty program.

# Incentivize sales representatives

Sales representatives should be in complete alignment with the company's decision to digitize ordering. Your sales force must be leading the charge in online sales. As with any new program, there is bound to be some level of resistance.

Remove any negativity around digitization. Shift the focus from the negative attitudes of adding something electronic to their jobs towards discussing positive qualities of sales reps. Have them take ownership and leverage their customer service skills to guide customers or give them tips with your new system.

Identify the champions of change early on and nurture them. These are the sales representatives that will ultimately have the greatest influence over the rest of the team. Call attention to quick wins at the start of meetings with success stories.

Quick wins are confidence builders reinforcing that teams are on the right track. It's also important to offer incentives to representatives that help clients set up their accounts and place their first order. Some possible ideas:

- Introduce a new compensation structure in the form of sales bonuses, higher commissions, and additional time off.
- Gamification and internal contests to reward reps with the most signups or online sales. Create a leaderboard for the month or week.
- Repurpose offline sales. Instead of eliminating your salesforce, use digital to enable and expand their capabilities. This evolutionary approach should be part of the digital transformation of your company.

Despite your best efforts, some clients may continue to phone or fax their orders. One strategy is to train sales reps to take the order by phone or fax and set up an account for the customer at the same time. It's a great opportunity to assure the customer that the personal relationship is intact.

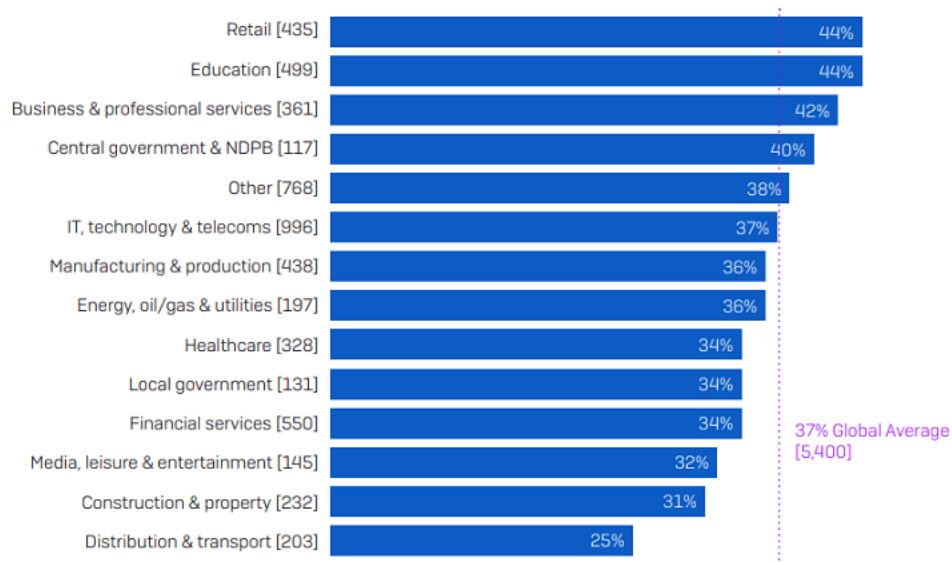
# Managing Resistance to Change

The greatest barrier to your success in adopting existing customers will be resistance to change. Most people resist change, even change that is good for them. Resistance to change is rooted in fear. There is fear of the unknown and fear of loss, and this resistance will be encountered by both customers and sales staff. In order to minimize resistance, it is crucial to understand the root cause of their fears and address these fears upfront.

**Customers** are afraid of sharing their data. Include your privacy policy on your website and assure customers that you will keep their information secure. Customers also need assurance that your site is secure. Over the last few years, many manufacturers and distributors have been targeted by [ransomware attackers](#) to cause disruption and extort large ransom payments.

## Retail and education suffer the most ransomware attacks

Looking at the level of attacks by sector, we see considerable variation in the propensity to be hit by ransomware across different industries.



*In the last year, has your organization been hit by ransomware? Yes [base numbers in chart] omitting some answer options, split by sector*

Source: Sophos

Customers are also afraid of losing relationships. B2B commerce is built on trust and relationships that are often forged over long periods of time. Customers want reassurance that if something goes wrong, they can pick up the phone or send an email and get a prompt response.

It's not a foreign concept - it's the same reason why department stores exist despite the prevalence and convenience of Amazon.

With digital tools, you can offer customers the ability to review what they already ordered, track their orders, and reorder items. Pricing is also a big part of personalization. Preferred online pricing and incentives are expected by customers in most digital commerce scenarios.

Despite the benefits, customers may still resist change. That's why it's important to reassure them that online ordering will only strengthen their relationship with you. After all, digitizing routine workflows will give sales reps additional time to better serve customers with improved products, better prices, and more time devoted to every customer.

**Sales reps** are afraid of losing revenue and their job. Getting their buy-in is key, as they are the main players in the adoption process. It's best to address these fears from the start of the implementation process.

A sales rep only works 8 hours of the day and helps one customer at a time. With digital, you can have a 24/7 sales rep behind the scenes that takes action on what was done, identifies what's popular, and offers customers relevant information.

Reassure sales reps that they aren't being replaced by a website, but they are being enhanced. Digitizing some aspects of the sales process leaves them more time to nurture new leads, convert leads to customers, and provide existing customers with more personal attention.

At the same time, sales reps should continue reaching out to customers via emails and phone calls. Show reps how this change has the capability to actually increase their earning potential, as they spend more time booking new business and less time answering questions about existing orders.

Here's how it could work in practice: The sales rep can create an account, assign the account a temporary password and then send an email with the order details, account details, and instructions on how to change the temporary password. Then, a follow-up phone call will assure the client of the relationship and serve as an opportunity to answer any questions.

# Assessing Continually

Just as a thermostat measures temperature and adjusts to the desired target, you must continually measure adoption rates against the initial goals set. And if your adoption numbers slip, you'll know where to look, how to backtrack, and correct course.

Start with baby steps. Maybe it means creating a landing page with a single product and tying that page to analytics. This way, you're not just offering a page for your users, you're measuring customer activity and taking action on something concrete.

Depending on the length of the sales cycle, you should assess progress monthly or quarterly. If existing customers are resisting adoption but continue to place orders via phone or fax, this indicates possible problems with the sign-up process, the communications process, or the design of the website.

## 1. Monitor activity on site

It's not enough to get clients to establish an account, you've got to get them to shop! Monitor site activity to determine if adopted customers are using the site. Track the amount of time per visit, the number of pages visited, and the amount of time on the page. Once customers begin to visit the site, place follow-up calls or send emails to determine if they could find what they needed quickly and easily.

There's a popular saying that it takes a village to raise a child, and the same is true for business ecosystems. Everyone must do their part - including customers - for a successful business transformation.

Listen to their feedback carefully and take what they say seriously. Your first test audience can provide crucial information about user experience. If your customers report that they can't find something or navigate through the site, it could indicate poor site design. Listen to feedback and adjust. Consider sending surveys to site visitors. These surveys should reinforce the goals of improved customer experience and easier purchase journeys.

The feedback gained immediately after implementation is crucial to the fine-tuning process. Extended time on site and time on page can be a sign of increased interest in products or a sign of poor design. Listen carefully to what clients say to discern the difference.

## 2. Monitor the first order

Monitor the rate at which adoptees are ordering or requesting quotes. Low rates could indicate problems with site navigation or the checkout workflow. Place follow up calls and emails to determine why a customer that orders on a regular basis hasn't placed an order online. As customers begin to order, monitor the platform used. Do customers place more orders from desktop or mobile?

**In the absence of usual (or physical) ways of doing things, familiarity is critical. Make sure customers can order seamlessly on any browser, on both desktop and mobile, as these are the future of mobile shopping.**

The vast majority of B2B buyers use their smartphones to search for products, browse catalogs and read reviews. Sales reps should place a follow-up call after the first order is received. This is the time to thank the customer for ordering and find out if there are questions or problems with the process. All feedback should be noted in the CRM and shared with the team.

## 3. Monitor repeat orders

Most B2B companies focus more resources on acquisition than retention. Focusing on retention will differentiate you from your competitors. Doing so requires a culture of customer knowledge, attained by capturing customer data into your CRM system. This 360° view of the customer becomes even more important when purchasing decisions are complex where your offerings must be tailored and timed exactly.

**Email is an effective tool but can be dangerous when used incorrectly. If you want customers to open and read your emails, communicate how well you understand their needs. Customers expect companies to say - You did this, and this, and this, and that's why I'm sending you an email.**

Use the data you collect on customer buying habits to segment customers and tailor your offerings. To prompt more frequent purchases, test the use of spend- or frequency-based loyalty programs where appropriate. Online buyers also respond to upselling recommendations and quantity discount reminders. Continue to add value by adding additional content to the website.

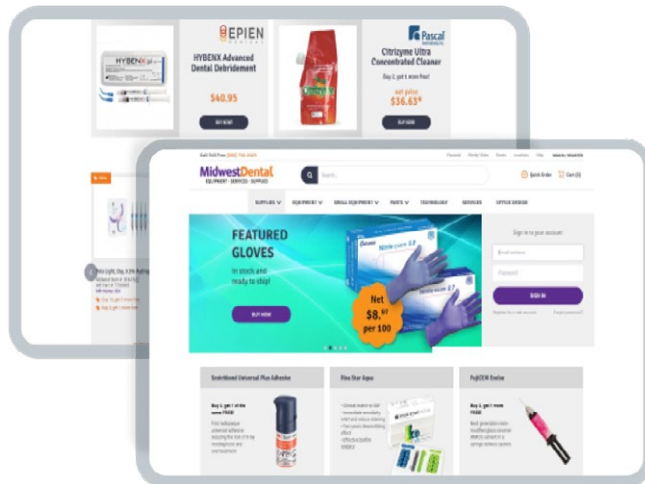
Make sure your customers can access the support they need online through product manuals, marketing or sales materials, and warranty information. Automate the return authorization process as well. Customer interactions across all silos should reinforce the value placed on the relationship. Whether the customer is talking to sales or accounting, everyone should be concerned with the health of the customer relationship during the transition. This reinforces the idea that digitizing is for the customer's benefit.

# B2B Organizations That Saw Record-Breaking Adoption



## Midwest Dental

Midwest Dental is one of the largest dental suppliers serving the midwestern United States. The distributor offers a wide array of services to dental practices including supplies, tools, and equipment. When Midwest upgraded its eCommerce platform with a modern solution from OroCommerce, it faced the problem of getting its customers to use the new platform to submit and manage orders.



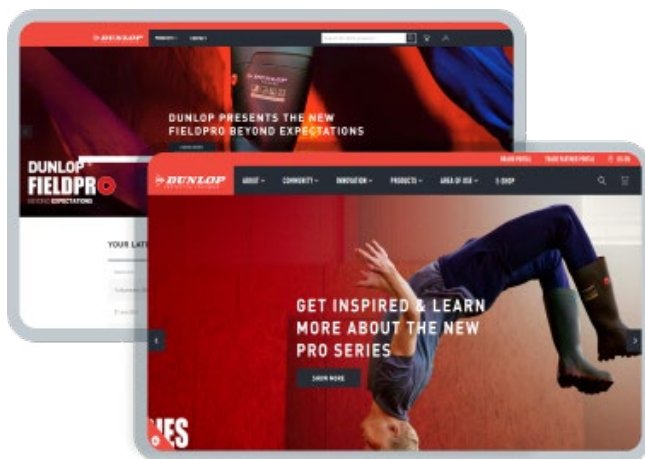
### Key ingredient to success: video tutorials

Midwest wanted to ensure their new solution was well-received by customers. They spent time creating video tutorials that showcased portal features and familiarized customers with using the system to place orders. These tutorial videos helped spread awareness, accelerate adoption, and most importantly, educate new customers. Midwest also introduced videos for sales staff, which sped up buy-in and promoted best practices within the company.



## Dunlop

Dunlop Protective Footwear is a manufacturer of footwear for rugged environments. It serves a diverse customer base in the food processing, chemicals, mining, forestry, and oil and gas industries. As part of its digital transformation, Dunlop selected OroCommerce's B2B eCommerce solution for the flexible implementation options, customization potential, and native B2B features.



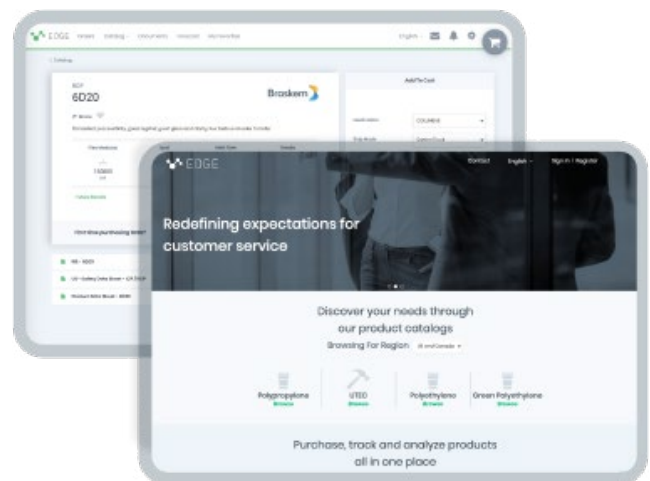
### [Key ingredient to success: video tutorials](#)

Instead of focusing on any particular industry, Dunlop focused on rolling out its sales portal for its long-tail customers. These small businesses had unique requirements, which allowed Dunlop to test the waters, gather feedback, and optimize the purchasing experience. The platform's adoption exceeded all expectations. Website traffic spiked, leading to a 40% increase in conversion rates and a 10% increase in average order values. Two full-time employees were saved from time-consuming tasks. Numbers like these prompted Dunlop to expand digital purchasing to the rest of its customers.



### **Braskem**

Braskem is an international chemicals and petrochemicals manufacturer focusing on plastic and resin pellets. The distributor sells complex sets of chemicals across borders and in various markets. The petrochemical industry is traditionally an offline industry, and many eCommerce platforms could not accommodate Braskem's complex ordering and support customers required.



### [Key ingredient to success: a MVP approach](#)

Braskem's digital team and partner AAXIS launched the first phase of their OroCommerce project after the three-month design period. Over the course of the year, Braskem added more features, onboarded customers, and collected feedback. Customers got what they wanted - features like product catalogs specific to their industry (such as food or automotive) and relevant search attributes (such as tensile strength) right in the ordering portal. For Braskem, this agile approach reduced risk, maintained focus, and sped up adoption.



# So How do You Get Customers to Purchase Online?

Leaders often worry about disturbing their existing customer relationships, and with good reason. However, they certainly cannot wait until competitors start taking away their customers. The minimum viable product (MVP) is the answer. This approach allows you to evolve your proof of concept and maintain a path forward - rather than rip and replace.

The iterative process of a MVP is a crawl-walk-run approach that focuses on tangible results that can be built upon. It's something that allows you to test your user experience ideas without unnecessary risk, make optimal use of resources, and get to market faster.

[Learn about the MVP approach to B2B eCommerce in our guide.](#)

Just as important as the strategy is the technology.

If you're selling B2B, don't go building your B2B experiences with a B2C platform. The B2B eCommerce platform by OroCommerce has the B2B feature set and flexible workflow engine you need to customize your customer's experience. It comes complete with OroCRM, Oro's powerful relationship management solution.

But don't take our word for it. For 2021, Gartner named OroCommerce first in the B2B digital commerce use case. It's a testament to our dedication to creating the most flexible, robust, and feature-rich products on the market.

To see how Oro's digital solutions can help you, try out a free demo or contact one of our solution experts.

Here's how it could work in practice: The sales rep can create an account, assign the account a temporary password and then send an email with the order details, account details, and instructions on how to change the temporary password. Then, a follow-up phone call will assure the client of the relationship and serve as an opportunity to answer any questions.

## About OroCommerce

Oro Inc. is a software company that gives B2B commerce companies the freedom to evolve and grow their business. It is the company behind OroCRM, OroCommerce, OroMarketplace, and OroPlatform products that help B2B sellers embrace the complexity of their businesses to scale and continuously improve.



An out-of-the-box B2B eCommerce solution that can handle B2C, B2B, B2B2C, multichannel, or marketplace selling. You even have the option to deploy as traditional or headless eCommerce.



A growing ecosystem of technology partners, system integrators, developers, and 24/7 support to help every step of the way during your transformation.



Freedom to deploy to the OroCloud environment with advanced monitoring and 24/7/365 support, to any other major public or private cloud, or a hosting provider of your choice or even your own IT



A deployment option for your needs, whether it's with OroCloud, on a third-party private or public cloud, on-premise, or multi-vendor environments.

**Talk to Oro today to discuss your technology needs.**

**Contact Oro**