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Digital commerce

The world of e-commerce has changed in the last six months, driven by an increase in internet purchases from consumers in lockdown. That same drive to make the order process as smooth as possible has required businesses to look at making sure their customers have a much more efficient transaction for business-to-business (B2B) sales. They now want their website to perform better than their best salesperson. Not only in terms of increased profit from sales orders but also reducing the time a salesperson spends on admin and repeat tasks.

By increasing the productivity of salespeople and allowing B2B customers to self-serve, businesses are seeing an **increased ROI by reducing their cost of sale**. And that further benefits them if their market size becomes 'squeezed' in an uncertain future. Additionally, "contactless commerce" means there is less physical human interaction needed, leading to safeguarding of the workforce.



What is shaping these changes?

LinkedIn's latest *State of Sales Report 2020: Europe Edition*¹ has found that 60% of B2B salespeople are expecting a decrease in deals. 51% of sellers have found budget cuts at their customers, with 42% of customer industries at a standstill or reducing headcount. Despite these challenges and opportunities, the average UK B2B salesperson is spending 64% of their time on admin and repeat tasks, and only 36% on the actual selling.

Leading management consultancy firm McKinsey & Company² recently reported that digital interactions are valued by both customers and businesses as **two to three times more important than traditional sales** interactions. Self-service research, evaluation, and ordering/re-ordering (e-commerce) were already preferred by 60%+ of customers in 2019 - and this has only accelerated.



McKinsey
& Company

63%

Of businesses with face-to-face sales forces working in tandem with digital (including e-commerce) report it as just as effective or more

3%

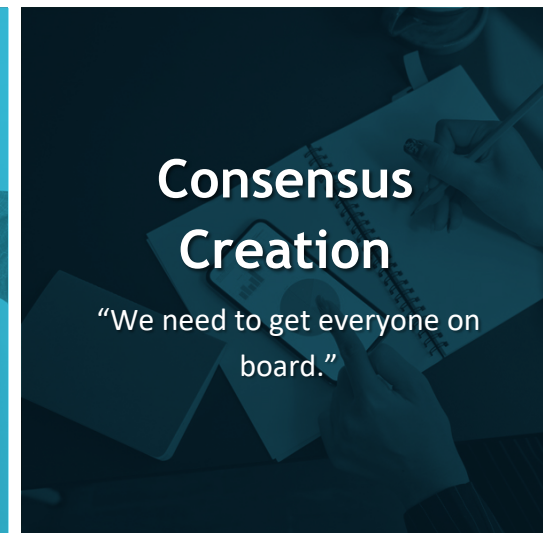
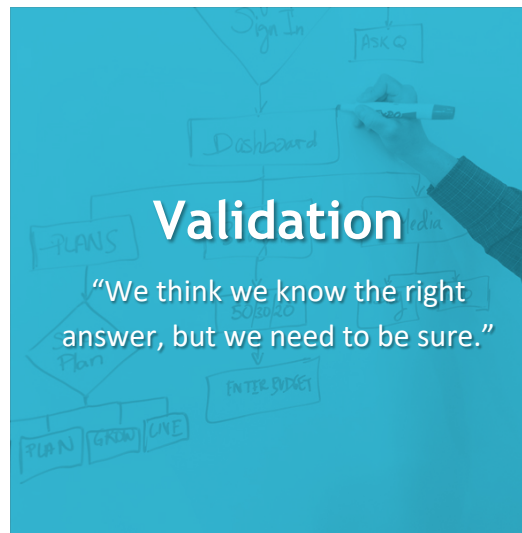
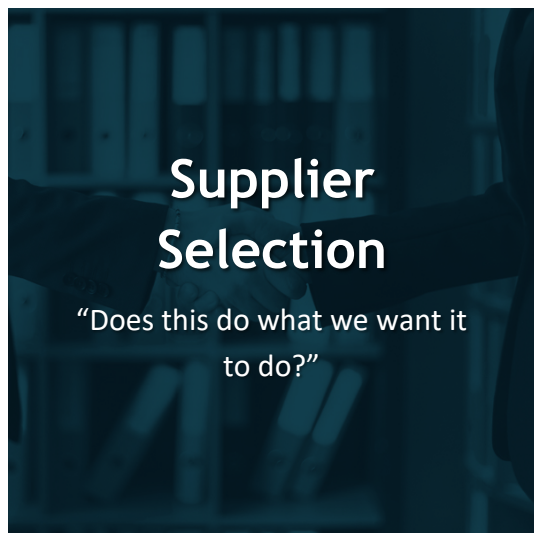
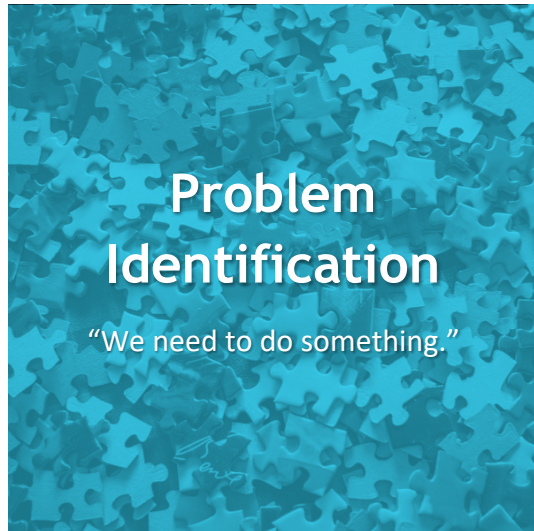
Of UK sales forces have yet to change to either a fully or partly remote selling model (videoconference, phone, and digital/e-commerce)

¹ [Announcing The LinkedIn State of Sales Report 2020: Europe Edition](#)

² [The B2B digital inflection point: How sales have changed during COVID-19](#)

Breaking down the buyer journey:

Leading global research and advisory business Gartner³ have found that business customers typically have six “jobs” they are looking to complete when buying:



QUESTION

So how do you combine:

Giving salespeople more time to sell by taking admin and repeat tasks off them?

Giving your customers the self-service digital options they are requesting?

Giving prospects and customers what they need to complete the jobs they have in order to buy?

ANSWER

The digital high-performing salesperson

By looking at the top attributes of your highest-performing salespeople, we can replicate those best practices using e-commerce. In the next section we look at these high-performing sales aspects and provide an example of how one such skill can be broken down and reproduced through the internet.

A high-performing salesperson would:

Self-generate new leads

Build client relationships

Gain commitment to progress from the prospect

Know the products and services

Solve problems for customers

Be outcome focused

Share best practice amongst colleagues

Consistently manage own sales pipeline

Handle objections

SKILL: SELF-GENERATE NEW LEADS

What does this look like with e-commerce?

What a high-performing salesperson would do for lead generation	What e-commerce can do - a starting point
Get a solid idea of what made a dream customer or prospect.	Use existing data to automatically find out who your best customers are.
Put together a prospect list of dream customers.	Use public company data sources to prepare a list of prospects that are more like your best customers.
Run a campaign to those prospects.	Campaign specific landing pages for emails/marketing/calling activity (even separate branded microsites).
For prospects thinking “We need to do something.”, they would get to the heart of what the real problem was	Site-wide content to promote common customer challenges and solutions for them.
For prospects asking “What’s out there to solve our problem?”, they would advise and qualify out if needed	Multiple routes to products and categories based on industry, application, problem area – whatever works for your customers.
For prospects wanting an answer to “What exactly do we need the purchase to do?”, they would get a list of said requirements.	Demonstrate understanding of what a product/solution needs to do by showing key features, use cases, case studies.
For prospects checking “Does this do what we want it to do?”, they would find out what was important to the customer, from both the product/solution side and the business delivering it	A product page with everything on it that is needed to assist a sale - including technical information, specifications, installation guides.
For prospects who “think we know the right answer, but need to be sure.”, they would remove any buyer uncertainty and uncover and address any objections	Demonstrate understanding of what a product/solution needs to do by showing key features, use cases, case studies.
For prospects saying “We need to get everyone on board.” they would want to find out who could say no (apart from the buyer) and why – so it could be addressed	Content that may be relevant for one decision maker (e.g. stock availability) that can be shared separately from other content (e.g. cost/benefit calculators).

E-commerce solution summary

So, it becomes apparent that we can replicate the best aspects of your best salespeople using e-commerce. Then each business needs to look at the time saved by this increased productivity and decide what to do with that now 'redundant resource'. The preferred route would be to engage your salespeople in strengthening customer relationships and protecting your turf. They could also be diverted to making outbound calls to old customers to 'round them up' and bring them back into the fold. Then there is using salespeople for 'Smart Calling' to new prospects and winning new customers.

If you have a large product database and staff taking inbound enquiries from your business customers, **this paradigm shift will affect you**. In a reducing market size, those that have embraced this technology will be the leanest and most profitable. That means serving customers better, increasing staff productivity, improving average order value, and extending customer lifetime value.




What can you do right now?


There are simple modelling tools that will demonstrate how much impact e-commerce could have on your business. You can walk through scenarios that could include the e-commerce platform and the connectivity into your accounts system, your CRM, your stock control system and so on.

Look for an option with a payment plan. That way, you will have your online system launched and returning a profit before you have paid for the solution. Also insist on a money-back guarantee that what is being promised can actually be delivered.

Need help with getting your e-commerce aligned with a high-performing salesperson, or simply interested to find out more?

[Book Discovery Call](#)

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