

# Build a Digital Commerce Tech Stack for Sales Success

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Initiatives: [Sales and Revenue Technology](#)

Digital commerce is a strategic priority for most sales organizations, yet many chief sales officers are unfamiliar with the technology required. CSOs must understand the digital commerce tech stack and collaborate with cross-functional peers to ensure investments align with strategic needs.

## Overview

### Key Findings

- In our 2022 survey, 38% of sales leaders ranked digital commerce among their top five use cases for selecting revenue technologies.
- Technology decisions to deliver against digital commerce strategy often omit the chief sales officer's (CSO's) viewpoint, focusing on vendors and functionality instead of customer and sales needs. This potentially leads to customer dissatisfaction and reduced revenue.
- The executive suite is recognizing the need for collaboration across commercial functions to deliver their digital commerce strategies. This includes evaluating and selecting the technologies required to scale revenue generated through digital channels.
- Digital commerce and sales technologies often remain siloed and do not share appropriate customer data. This decreases overall effectiveness and risks growth opportunities.

### Recommendations

To ensure your sales organization is equipped with the technology required to successfully deliver your digital commerce strategy:

- Get involved in digital commerce technology selection by understanding the technology capabilities that underpin a digital commerce sales channel and how they may integrate with the sales function. Work with cross-functional peers to understand existing digital commerce technologies.
- Collaborate with IT and marketing partners to review your current and target states of digital commerce maturity against the illustrative technology stacks in this research to identify application needs.
- Contribute to the technology selection process alongside peers by ensuring your inputs are captured in the requirements-gathering phase and that you are included in vendor assessment and selection.

## Introduction

### [Build a Digital Commerce Tech Stack for Sales Success - Shareable Summary with Notes](#)

As buyer preferences continue to lean toward digital commerce, <sup>1</sup> CSOs recognize digital channels are a fundamental component of go-to-market strategy. In fact, 96% of surveyed organizations expect to have a digital commerce business by 2027. <sup>2</sup> Yet, CSOs often struggle to understand the technologies required to establish a successful digital sales channel. This is counterintuitive, as digital commerce has enormous potential to drive value for the sales organization.

Firstly, the provision of a self-service channel for customers to buy independently presents an opportunity for a new revenue stream. Additionally, by recognizing that the tools a customer needs to self-serve and what a seller needs to sell successfully are largely the same, CSOs can rationalize technologies, deliver more efficient processes and improve commercial performance. Instead, CSOs have a blind spot to a critical enabler of their goals and ultimate responsibilities — digital commerce technology.

As CSOs play a progressively active role in digital commerce strategy design and implementation alongside their peers, they must understand how digital commerce technology needs differ from those required to support traditional sales channels. CSOs must be able to contribute to digital commerce technology decisions to ensure sales strategy and execution align. Failure to do so risks one of two suboptimal outcomes:

1. Overengineering solutions to provide capabilities beyond their needs, limiting the profitability of the digital sales channel through unnecessary costs

2. Underinvesting in the tools and applications necessary to deliver the desired customer and seller experience, stifling the opportunity for digital revenue and often resulting in abandonment of the initiative altogether

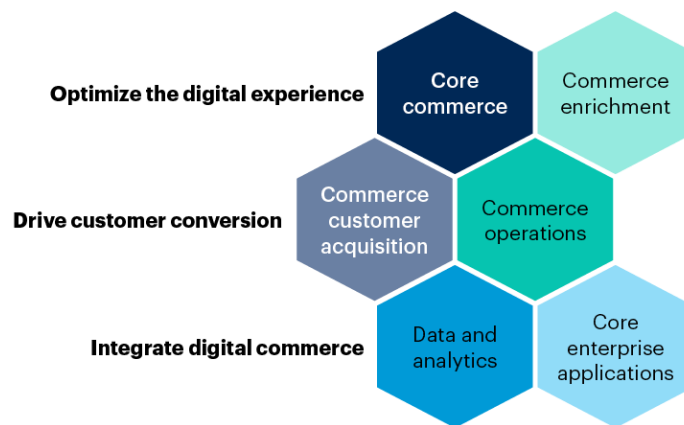
This research educates CSOs on the six categories of applications that make up the digital commerce technology stack (see Figure 1). The stack is organized into three high-level use cases for technology:

1. Optimize the digital experience for customers and sellers.
2. Drive customer conversion and revenue.
3. Integrate digital commerce into the broader organization.

Use this research to understand how technology needs differ according to your organization's digital commerce maturity. These insights will help inform collaboration with peers, such as IT and marketing, to effectively scope your requirements and narrow down vendors, features and functionality according to your strategic needs.

**Figure 1: The Digital Commerce Technology Stack**

### The Digital Commerce Technology Stack



Source: Gartner  
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## Analysis

## Familiarize Yourself With the Typical Digital Commerce Technology Stack

Providing an optimal digital commerce experience requires an inherently different set of applications than those needed to support traditional seller-led sales motions. Buyers expect instant access to content and information to help them independently navigate their purchase journeys, and they demand immediate responses from digital platforms as they progress in their decision making through to purchase.

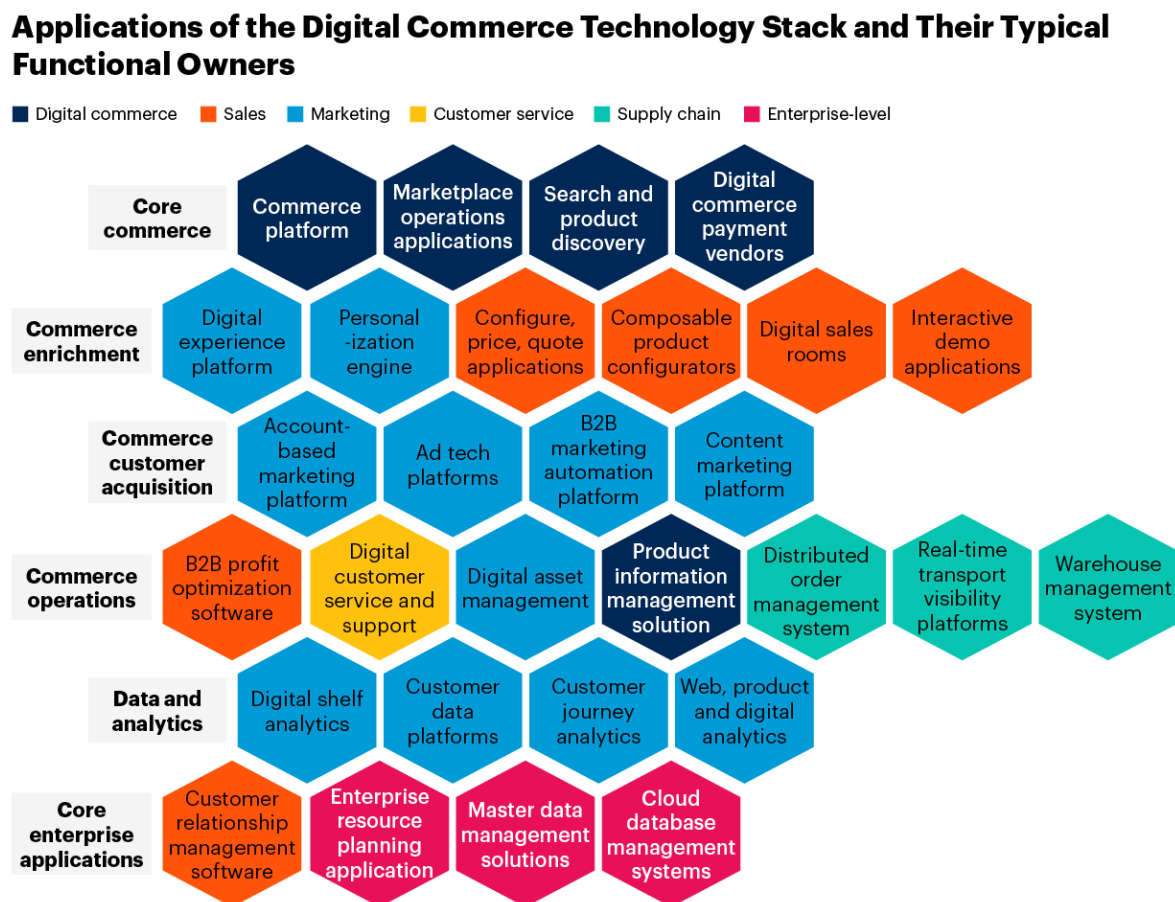
Consequently, sales organizations must establish a technology stack that provides a dynamic, seamless digital experience — focused on both providing buyers with appropriate digital interactions and integrating with broader systems and applications to support agile internal digital commerce operations.

Familiarize yourself with the six categories of the digital commerce technology stack and the applications that contribute to them (see Figure 2):

- **Core commerce** — Applications that provide fundamental product discovery and sales capabilities required for a transactional digital commerce channel
- **Commerce enrichment** — Applications that provide buyers with compelling self-service digital and/or seller-assisted interactions
- **Commerce customer acquisition and growth** — Applications that enable the organization to orchestrate the digital customer journey for buyers
- **Commerce operations** — Applications for managing and operating core processes for the digital commerce business, such as content creation and management, pricing, and fulfillment and logistics.
- **Data and analytics** — Applications that enable the management and use of data to inform digital commerce strategy, tactics and operations
- **Core enterprise applications** — Systems of record with which the digital commerce business needs to integrate

Figure 2 also highlights the illustrative functional owners of each application, underscoring that the deployment and maintenance of a digital commerce sales channel is an enterprisewide initiative. It requires cross-functional alignment and collaboration to ensure the necessary technologies and their capabilities are deployed effectively.

**Figure 2: Applications of the Digital Commerce Technology Stack and Their Typical Functional Owners**



Source: Gartner  
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For more detailed information on digital commerce technology applications and their capabilities, see [Master Your Digital Commerce Tech Stack for Revenue Growth](#).

By understanding the six categories of the digital commerce technology stack and their relevant applications, CSOs can have constructive conversations with cross-functional peers to identify high-level technology requirements for delivering digital commerce.

## Use Digital Commerce Maturity to Guide Your Technology Needs

Digital commerce maturity helps identify the technologies required to deliver your digital commerce strategy, while avoiding premature investment in unnecessary applications. CSOs should collaborate with other executives responsible for digital commerce leadership to assess current and target levels of digital commerce maturity according to existing capabilities and strategic objectives (see [Digital Commerce Maturity Model for Sales](#) and [Tool: Digital Commerce Maturity Assessment for Sales](#)). Review your current- and target-state maturity levels against the illustrative technology stacks below to identify application needs.

As organizations progress through digital commerce maturity levels, the focus shifts from simply providing a transactional digital sales channel, to greater integration with the wider organization and an enriched customer experience. To identify what an optimal customer experience looks like, collaborate with marketing and customer service to conduct journey mapping for target customer segments. For resources on customer journey mapping, see [Ignition Guide to Aligning a Sales Process With the B2B Customer Buying Journey](#).

### Digital Maturity Stages

#### Developing

For organizations pursuing a proof of concept for digital commerce or trialing small-scale pilot projects, implement entry-level **core commerce** technology. This should provide core capabilities such as a digital product catalog and merchandising, the ability for customers to add products to a basket and apply promotions, facilitation of check-out and payments, and the hosting of customer accounts. To implement core technology:

- Select a **digital commerce platform** to provide the core capabilities required to deploy and manage a simple digital route to market (see Figure 3 and [Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce](#)).
- Ensure the platform provides natively integrated payment functionality and can be integrated with enterprise applications — such as CRM, ERP and MDM — to deliver adequate core capabilities for this maturity level.

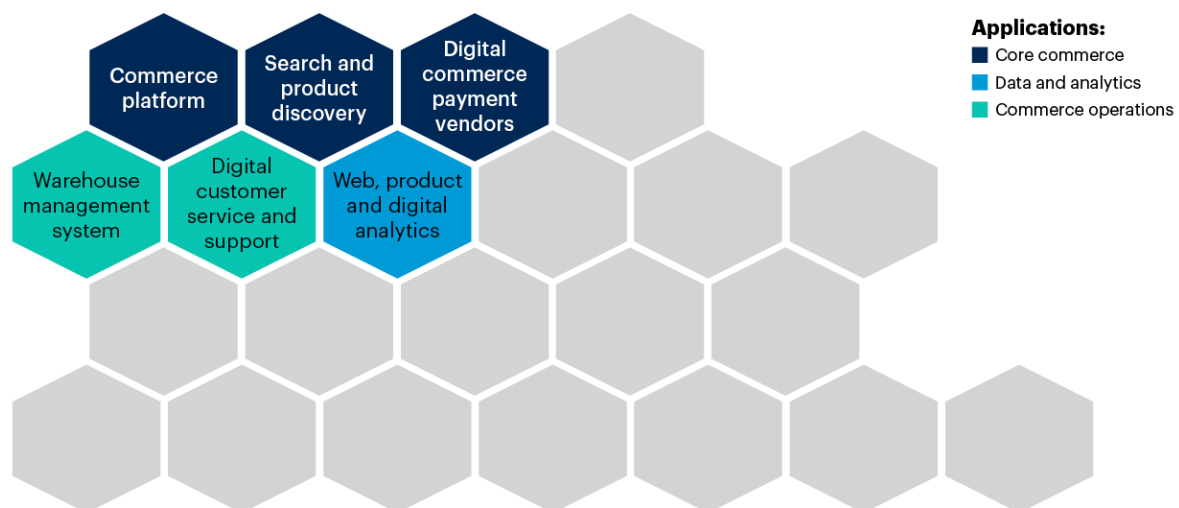
#### Scaling

Organizations seeking to establish a more permanent digital sales channel and begin incorporating customer needs into the digital commerce experience should develop a basic technology stack beyond core tech (see Figure 4 for an example):

- Expand payment methods, such as the ability to “add to account,” by selecting an appropriate **digital commerce payment vendor(s)**.
- Provide real-time visibility of inventory and stock availability with **warehouse management systems (WMS)** and/or **distributed order management (DOM)** systems.
- Improve site search and navigation using **search and product discovery** tools, and customer analytics derived from **web, product and digital analytics** applications.

**Figure 3: Digital Commerce Technology Stack for Scaling Digital Commerce Maturity**

### Digital Commerce Technology Stack for Scaling Digital Commerce Maturity



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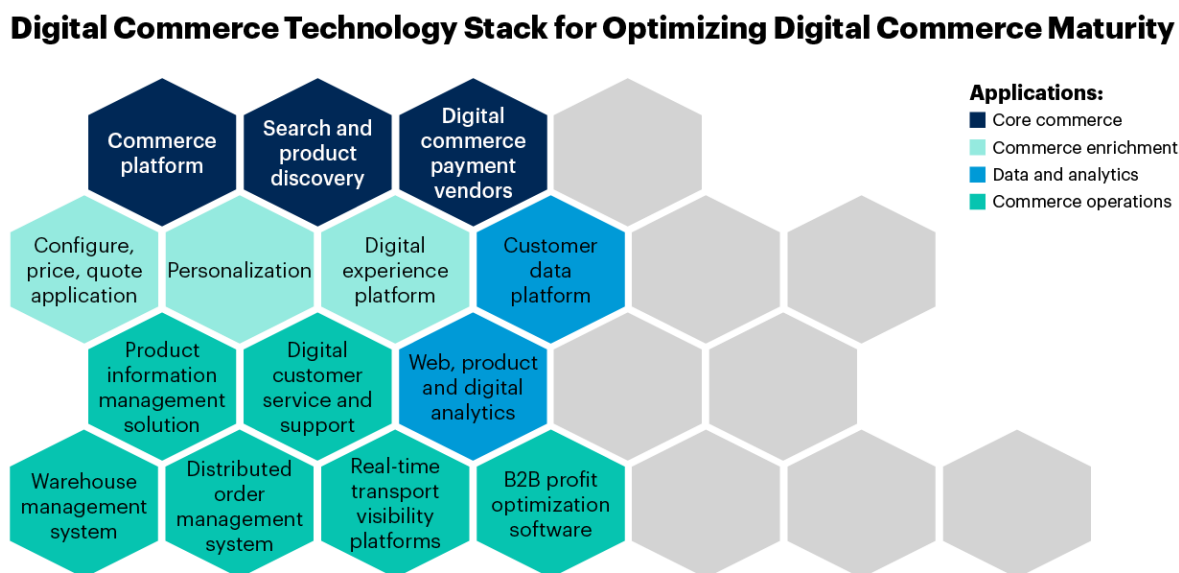
### Optimizing

Organizations seeking to build on an established digital commerce sales channel by enhancing the customer experience through more advanced capabilities and coordinated demand generation should expand their technology coverage across **all categories** of the technology stack (see Figure 4):

- Enrich the customer experience by incorporating additional functionality with configure, price and quote (CPQ) applications; digital service and support applications; and real-time transport visibility platforms.

- Deliver tailored, end-to-end digital engagement using search, personalization and digital experience platforms (DXPs), leveraging more complete customer profile data derived from a customer data platform.
- Drive internal process efficiency by leveraging a product information management (PIM) solution to manage digital commerce content, and profit optimization software to manage pricing across channels.
- Establish deep data and analytics capabilities by integrating digital commerce data with a customer data platform to deliver personalized, one-to-one customer experiences, optimize demand-generation activity, and develop agile cross-functional, customer-centric internal processes.

**Figure 4: Digital Commerce Technology Stack for Optimizing Digital Commerce Maturity**



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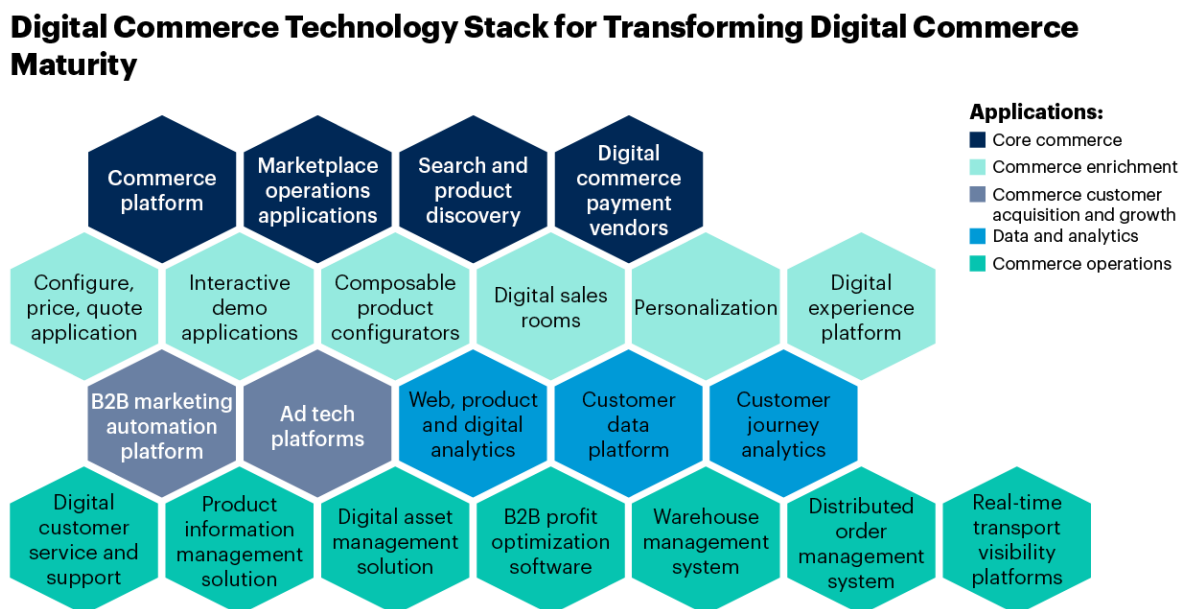
## Transforming

Organizations aiming to fully integrate digital commerce into their overall commercial strategy by using it to augment the performance of other sales channels should continue to evolve their technology stack with **new and emerging applications** (see Figure 5). At this stage, digital commerce becomes a baseline for broader organizational change. This may include the invention of new business models, the convergence of digital and physical customer interactions, and the provision of truly innovative seller-assisted digital experiences:



- Focus on developing commerce enrichment capabilities to embed the digital commerce experience into the broader customer experience by providing functionality that can be leveraged both as buyer self-service and seller-assisted digital interactions (for example, interactive demo apps and composable product configurators).
- Leverage digital sales rooms to allow sellers to collaborate with buying group stakeholders, track progress against their buying journeys and guide buyers with appropriate customer interactions.
- Expand your commerce offering by integrating a marketplace operation application to enable complementary third-party suppliers to sell their products/services via your channel.
- Deliver holistic demand generation processes across channels, working with your marketing peers to integrate additional commerce customer acquisition and growth applications, such as B2B marketing automation and ad tech platforms.
- Bolster commerce operations with PIM and digital asset management (DAM) applications to deliver sophisticated product experience management solutions.

**Figure 5: Digital Commerce Technology Stack for Transforming Digital Commerce Maturity**



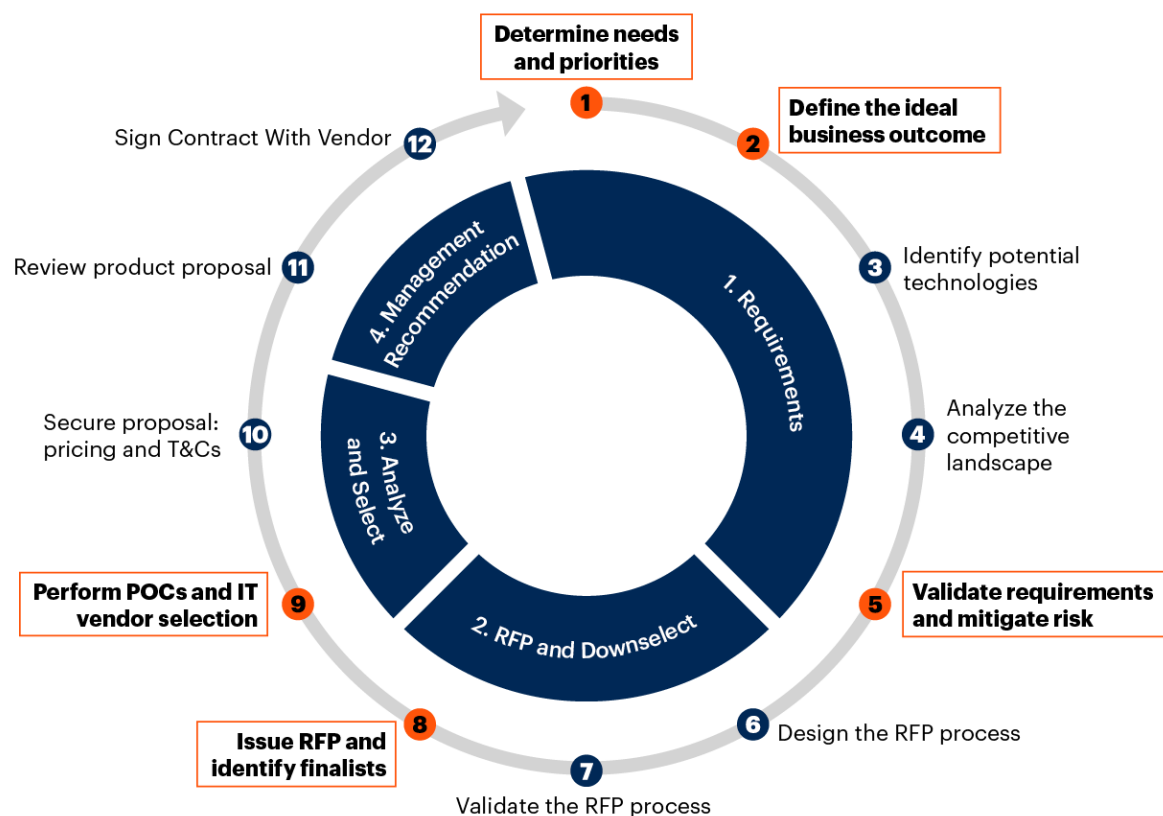
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## Contribute to the Technology Selection Process

By understanding the digital commerce technology stack and collaborating with peers to assess every function's needs in accordance with digital commerce strategy and maturity, CSOs will position themselves to provide valuable input to the technology selection process (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Framework for Technology Selection**

### Framework for Technology Selection



Source: Gartner  
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While IT and procurement teams are likely to lead the overall process, CSOs must understand platform selection criteria (see [Use 4 Key Criteria to Evaluate Digital Commerce Platforms](#)). Likewise, they should ensure they are involved in the following phases:

- Determining needs and priorities
- Defining the ideal business outcome

- Validating requirements and mitigating risk
- Identifying RFP finalists
- Selecting vendors

## Evidence

**2022 Gartner Revenue Success Survey:** This survey was conducted from November through December 2022 to understand key differences in the revenue tech stack, sales enablement approaches to behavioral change and collaboration skills of high performers and low performers. The survey was completed with an online sample of 194 C-suite respondents (chief sales officers, chief revenue officers, etc.), senior sales executives and other senior leaders across Asia/Pacific (9%), Western Europe (18%) and North America (73%). Qualifying respondents had roles focused on commercial operations/revenue operations, sales strategy, sales/revenue technology or specific geographic location with enterprisewide annual revenue in 2021 of more than \$5 million or equivalent or business unit/region annual revenue in 2021 of more than \$25 million or equivalent. Industry segments included banking/financial services, business services, information technology, manufacturing and healthcare providers. *Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.*

<sup>1</sup> **2022 Gartner B2B Buyer Survey:** This survey was administered in November and December 2022 and included data from 771 B2B buyers from the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Australia. Respondents who qualified for this survey had to be employed full-time at an organization with total revenue of at least \$250 million or equivalent and had participated in a significant B2B purchase decision. A “significant B2B purchase decision” is defined here as a decision that required deliberation with at least one other person and the evaluation of more than one potential supplier or vendor. Respondents were instructed to answer questions based on their experience with this recent purchase and with the supplier that was used to complete the purchase. Respondents evaluated the quality of the purchase decision and provided insights into various stages of their recent purchase decision. *Disclaimer: Results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.*

<sup>2</sup> **2022 Gartner Chief Sales Officer Strategy Survey:** This survey was conducted from November through December 2022 to understand how sales teams align their go-to-market (GTM) approach to changing customer needs. The survey was completed with an online sample of 213 chief sales officers and senior sales executives across Asia/Pacific (13%), Western Europe (17%) and North America (70%). Qualifying respondents belonged to either a sales, commercial operations or revenue operations function of an organization with enterprisewide annual revenue in 2021 of more than \$50 million or equivalent or business unit/region annual revenue in 2021 of more than \$250 million or equivalent. Industry segments included banking/financial services, manufacturing, services, information technology, healthcare providers and energy. *Disclaimer: The results of this survey do not represent global findings or the market as a whole, but reflect the sentiments of the respondents and companies surveyed.*

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[Reap More Value From Digital Commerce Investments](#)

[Align B2B Digital Commerce With Customer Buying Jobs to Drive High-Quality Deals](#)

[Make Sellers Critical Value Sources in Digital Buying Journeys](#)

[Use a Digital Commerce Tech Reference Model to Improve CX](#)

[Choose the Right Digital Commerce Platform Architecture](#)

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