



SELLING FROM THE SOFA

OUR BEST TIPS ON HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR SALES STRATEGY WHEN CONDITIONS CHANGE

E-book by: Frida Ahrenby



FOREWORD

Push rewind to the beginning of 2020 and the world looked vastly different. We were working from our offices and were travelling to meet face-to-face. Even if we worked on the go before, independent of time and place, an array of digital tools has catalyzed a whole new meaning to the concept of “working digitally”. The new global situation has forced us all to go remote and digital in order to keep, not only business and economy running, but all relationships that are important to us, such as family and friends.

In this e-book we will share our insights and learnings about how B2B sales has developed from traditional to digital sales processes, how to meet the demands from the buyer journey and how to adapt your sales strategy when conditions change. We will also give you our best tips on tools to use for your digital sales process.

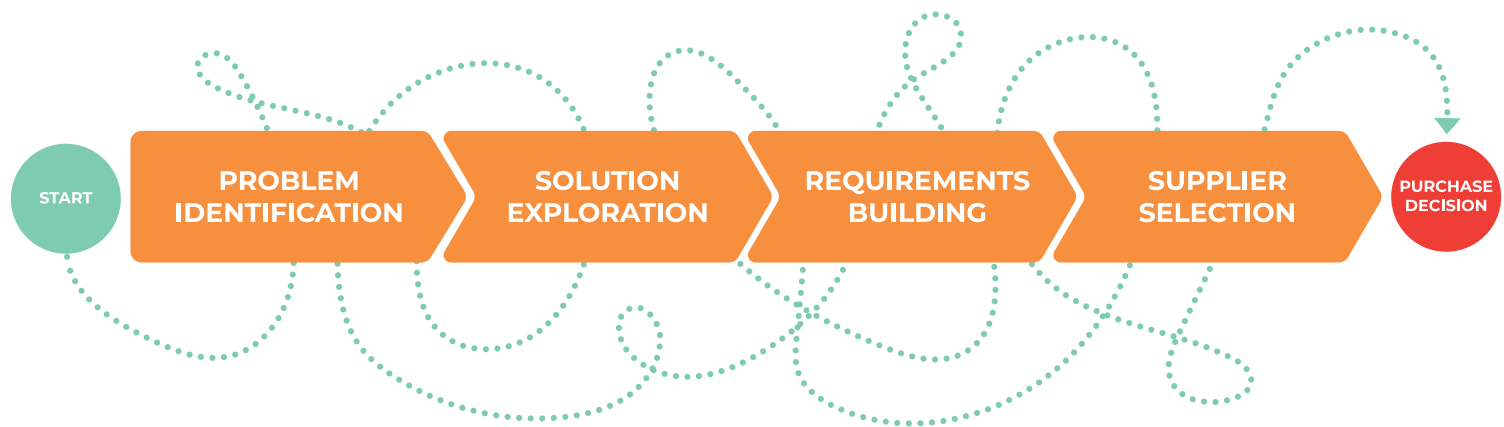
Hope you enjoy the read, and please don't hesitate to share if you find it interesting. If you have any questions, feedback, new ideas, or suggestions based on what you've read, please send them to frida.ahrenby@getaccept.com



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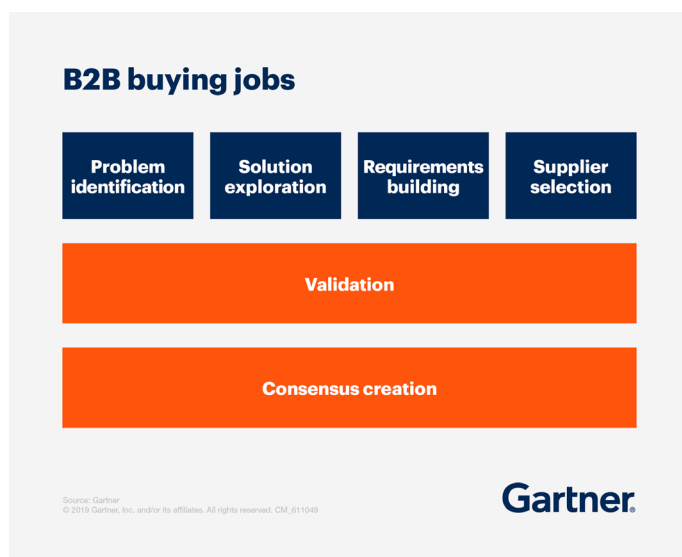
THE NEW B2B BUYING JOURNEY

There is no news that the B2B buying journey has changed. It's full of twists and turns and different touchpoints before a buyer reaches a decision. And during that amount of time, because of the easy accessible and digital information, the buyer will spend a lot of time gathering and digesting information independently, before even reaching out to a seller to discuss.



According to Gartner when B2B buyers are considering a purchase they spend only 17% of that time actually meeting with potential suppliers. At the same time the buying process involves 6 to 10 decision makers and 77% of B2B buyers state that their last purchase was very complex or difficult. Year over year, the number of buyers involved in typical sales cycles has increased illustrating the hurdles modern sellers face in navigating complex purchasing decisions - with reduced influence and mechanisms to influence customer choices.

Gartner research further describes six B2B buying “jobs” that a buyer needs to complete successfully in order to finalize a purchase.



- **Problem identification**
“We need to do something.”
- **Solution exploration**
“What’s out there to solve our problem?”
- **Requirements building**
“What exactly do we need the purchase to do?”
- **Supplier selection**
“Does this do what we want it to do?”
- **Validation**
“We think we know the right answer, but we need to be sure.”
- **Consensus creation**
“We need to get everyone on board.”

In order to finalize the steps, the buyer may have to go back multiple times and jump between each of the different “jobs” to arrive at a completely validated decision. Each time and in each step, new information gathering is carried out to move forward in the process, which adds to the complexity of decision making.

How should sales adapt the way of working to meet the new demands from buyers? What drives a buyer decision?

Our experience from driving sales for a long time, tells us that:

- Buyers value suppliers that make it easy for them to navigate through the buyer journey by sharing relevant information at the right time to help them through the different stages of the process.
- By sharing the right information during the purchase journey it becomes 3 times more likely to win the deal
- Sharing concrete information, nothing unnecessary, is most appreciated. Simplicity is of utmost importance.
- Highlighting how customers in a similar industry or persona have faced the same problems and combatted them successfully with your solution fosters deal momentum
- Focus on the customer and the problem they are facing. Put your own sales targets aside and concentrate on understanding the customer's needs in order to build trust and help them make the right decision.

Gartner on the same topic, talks about buyer enablement as the provisioning of information that supports the completion of critical buying jobs.

What opportunities and challenges are there further when the sales process in times like these is becoming even more digital?

Being in the business of sales enablement and e-signing, 95% of our sales have always been digital and we have learnt a lot in terms of doing business digitally because of that. There are pros and cons with every approach, and the insights we have gathered along the way are:

CHALLENGES WITH A DIGITAL SALES PROCESS

- It's difficult to add value and to bring a personal touch to the meeting.
- It might be more difficult to explain and show your product within a limited time frame.
- It is usually harder to drive engagement and get feelings confirmed.
- Its harder to create trust and credibility for you as a salesperson and for the product.
- Bringing new information to the table when customers are actively doing their own research and online education has created a more informed buyer than ever before.
- Based on trends in B2C consumer purchasing, B2B buyers expect a free trial period to navigate the solution themselves - this can make it difficult to maintain dialogue or to represent the offering in the best way if the customer is using the solution on their own.
- Online review sites and 3rd party opinions can influence customer sentiment so it is important to maintain a healthy presence on these websites.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH A DIGITAL SALES PROCESS

- Time is all of a sudden not such a scarce resource. There is time for more activity and more meetings when no time is put on transportation to and from customer meetings.
- It might be easier to book meetings with potential customers, since the availability for online meetings usually is better than meetings face to face. Customers usually feel that there is less commitment and easier to accept an online meeting, which from a seller's perspective is a great springboard.
- A digital sales process might open up for new perspectives on your ideal customer profile (ICP). It might be possible to reach new regions, new industries, new personas when going digital compared to a physical sales process.
- With the time for increased activity and more meetings online, sales might increase with reduced inefficiencies and bottlenecks from within an office environment.
- Other competitors may struggle in the transition to a digital environment - opening up further opportunities for more agile firms.
- Time to review all existing sales processes and methods without sacrificing too much market opportunity.

What to think about when sales is going digital

To address the challenges with a digital sales process, clear communication and feedback becomes vital. Make sure to summarize the key takeaways of each digital meeting, the expectations, both on the buyer and the seller, and make sure both parties give their commitment to what's been discussed as well as the next steps.

In order to create trust and reliability use references and customer cases. People always like to hear about other customers, compare needs and solutions, and in times like these it becomes even more important with social proofs and sharing stories about other companies taking decisions to move forward.

In addition, make sure to engage and create feelings. Humans make many decisions based on feelings and it's important to create that personal relationship also when meeting online. One way to do this is to use video for your meetings, but also when presenting proposals and agreements. Dare to be different and keep the dialogue personal. Also, try to reach out through new channels, such as social media, in combination with emails and phone calls to stand out from the crowd.

Digital tools to make you succeed

The purchase journey has changes and sales need to adapt - here are the digital tools necessary to be able to meet the new demands and stay one step ahead.

The CRM is core in any sales business and helps manage all customer data. It provides structure for the seller, and based on the data and insights, the seller can take action. Make sure to visualise the most important KPIs and dashboards to drive the right initiatives towards your customers.



Prospecting tools will make it easier to find the right prospects to go after. Make sure to put some time and effort into defining your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) by using the data from your CRM, identifying value segments and customers. Monitor and act upon different triggers that could mean a sales opportunity.



Video conferencing gives you the chance to make online meetings as personal as possible. Engage, ask interactive questions, have eye contact and make sure that both video and sound is on!



Employee Management tools in order to track and measure the wellbeing of employees. Carefully follow the trends over time, discuss and act quickly to make sure your organisation stays healthy.



Sales Analytics tools enabling recording and coaching of customer meetings, makes it possible to understand how meetings are done, and how the sales dialogue is carried out. It provides the insights for how to improve the business in general and the process in particular.

CHIRUS

JIMINNY

GONG

Gamification tools inspire better performance and motivation. Teams can be measured and rewarded on clear KPIs and competitions, creating a fun and engaging culture.

SalesScreen

PLECTO

AMBITION

Presentation, proposal and e-signing tools are a way to simplify and streamline the sales process and create buyer engagement. It is a must have when working in a digital environment.

 **GetAccept**

E-learning platforms which support certification can allow you to quantify the uptake on new digital learning modules and improve sales team performance.

Video messaging tools for sales people to communicate outside written text. They also can capture the attention of buyers with creative thumbnails.

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Key takeaways to bring with you after reading this e-book

Make sure to summarize the main points to take with you:

- Buyers are overloaded with information and need help to make the right decisions. Make sure to provide them with the right information at the right time, to push them forward in their decision process
- Keep the personal touch throughout the digital sales process, create engagement by using video, chats in combination with your online meetings.
- Take full advantage of and use digital tools for different functions and touchpoints. There are many great tools out there! Take the chance to look over your tech stack.
- Take the time to look over your ICP, there might be hidden opportunities with new target groups!



Hope you enjoyed the reading. Thanks to Breakit and all participants in our crash course “Selling from the sofa”, who shared insights making this ebook possible.

– Frida Ahrenby

Source: <https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/b2b-buying-journey> | <https://www.gartner.com/en/sales/insights/buyer-enablement>