

B2B Digital Experience Report: A Customer-Centric Pivot in Pivotal Times

A global survey highlighting B2B priorities and plans, tactics and technologies for digital experience management in six industries.



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From the Editor

Dear B2B Leaders,

Business has changed. In the wake of COVID-19, companies – likely including your own – are re-thinking priorities, plans and processes. Suddenly entire workforces are remote, budgets are slashed and hiring plans are frozen. Those of us who worked during the Great Recession (2007-2009) see similarities and all of us who experienced the devastation of 9/11 know how people come together in beautiful ways when the world is mourning.

People sometimes refer to life-changing events as “before” and “after” moments when nothing was the same “after” the life event as it was “before” that life event. The global pandemic of 2020 is certainly a collective before-and-after event. So how do we adapt in its aftermath – particularly when B2Bs can't see past today and tomorrow?

Despite all the ongoing uncertainty, businesses must move forward. It's not business as usual but business must still be done under unusual circumstances.

During the height of COVID-19 outbreaks around the world (March 2020), I carried out previously planned research on behalf of Episerver to poll 600 global B2B decision makers about digital experience tactics and technology. To create the survey and to ensure my analysis of the findings stood against the expertise of my colleagues, as well as the current cultural and economic climate, I asked for help from Justin Anovick, Nate Barad, Mike Bernard, Rachel Teitt Gill, Katrin Menzel and Joey Moore who are all experts in technology products, organizational departments and/or industries. I've included notes and quotes from these thought leaders. Post-publishing, you'll see Episerver teams use this data in incredible ways to help our customers with decision-making.

This is all to say, what you get here is an entirely editorial, non-promotional view of the B2B digital experience market. I give you my former-journalist's honor.

Through a series of questions, we guided respondents through a SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing their business as it relates to digital experience. Here, we provide a snapshot of the data through the lens of industry changes. In our data collection, several trends emerged for B2B companies in these six industries:

- **Healthcare**
- **Financial Services**
- **Commercial Services & Supplies**
- **Manufacturing**
- **Distribution**
- **High-Tech**

...and among these departments:

- **Marketing**
- **IT**
- **Ecommerce**

While most findings included within are from the overall results across departments and industries, we've segmented some findings – properly labeled throughout – to make them even more relevant to your job capacity and industry.

Throughout our analysis, one truth became clear: focus on the customer by understanding who they are and what they need. Many have started with this time-tested approach, then a few common obstacles get in the way of putting customers first.

When asked if their company has a customer-centricity gap 71 percent of B2B leaders across industries, for instance, said “yes, the digital experience their company offers does not meet the needs and expectations of their customers.”

Even before the business impacts of COVID-19, organizations were struggling to prioritize customer service and experience. In fact, **the top-two digital experience tactics B2B leaders say need the most improvement in their organization are (1) understanding who their customers are and (2) personalizing the digital experience to each customer.** Managing the content is the third-biggest improvement B2Bs say they need to make.

While answers around budget and investments are as clear as mud following a difficult Q1 2020 for businesses around the world (**as of March 2020, 85 percent of businesses still expected their digital experience budget to increase next year**), companies agree on where digital experience spend should go. The top-two investment priorities serve the customer better in this digital-first economy. At the height of COVID-19 uncertainty, **personalization technology and an ecommerce platform were the top-two B2B investment priorities in 2020.** Budget withstanding, we foresee an acceleration of these projects in order for companies to survive.

What many organizations are finding out the hard way is that they are ill-equipped to move to a digital-first world. They must be able to get their products or services into the hands of their customers, digitally. **Forty-one percent of respondents said selling directly to customers online is the most significant opportunity for their business in the next year.**

With the crippling effects of coronavirus on the economy, organizations demand unprecedented agility to pivot on a moment's notice. Customer-centric, digital-first approaches are the answer. By doing the next-best thing for their customers today, companies will be able to serve them tomorrow. Let's take a look at how.

Sincerely,



Amberly Dressler
Corporate Communications Manager at Episerver
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Key Findings

Digital experience as a differentiator.

Over one-third (37 percent) of B2B leaders indicate their digital experience is what differentiates their company the most from competitors online, followed by their social media presence (31 percent).

B2B customer relationships are in their infancy.

Fifty-four percent of B2B organizations define their customer relationships as strained, developing or non-existent – having relied on partners to manage those relationships to date.

The gap between expectations and execution.

Seventy-one percent of B2B organizations have a customer-centricity gap.

Been there, done that digital transformation.

Eight in ten (82 percent) B2B organizations have already undergone a digital transformation project according to IT, marketing and ecommerce leaders.

Amazon not an adversary...?

Fifty-two percent of B2B leaders claim Amazon is an opportunity for them.

Personalization pays off in revenue, reputation gains.

Subjectively, 46 percent of B2B leaders “think” they are getting a better experience when a B2B company personalizes content based on their history, behaviors and personal information. Objectively, 93 percent of companies “know” personalizing content on their website has increased their company’s revenue.

Just show me the money.

The top way B2B decision makers want to self-serve is by accessing pricing without speaking to someone, which might be why 41 percent of respondents say selling directly to their customers is their company’s top opportunity.

“Robot” frenemies.

A whopping 61 percent of B2B leaders fear AI will replace them in the next five years but even more (82 percent) think AI will make them better at their job in the short term.

Data breaches are when, not if.

Nearly half (49 percent) of B2Bs have experienced a data breach in which their customer data was exposed despite 91 percent of companies taking every reasonable step to keep customer data secure and meet data compliance laws.

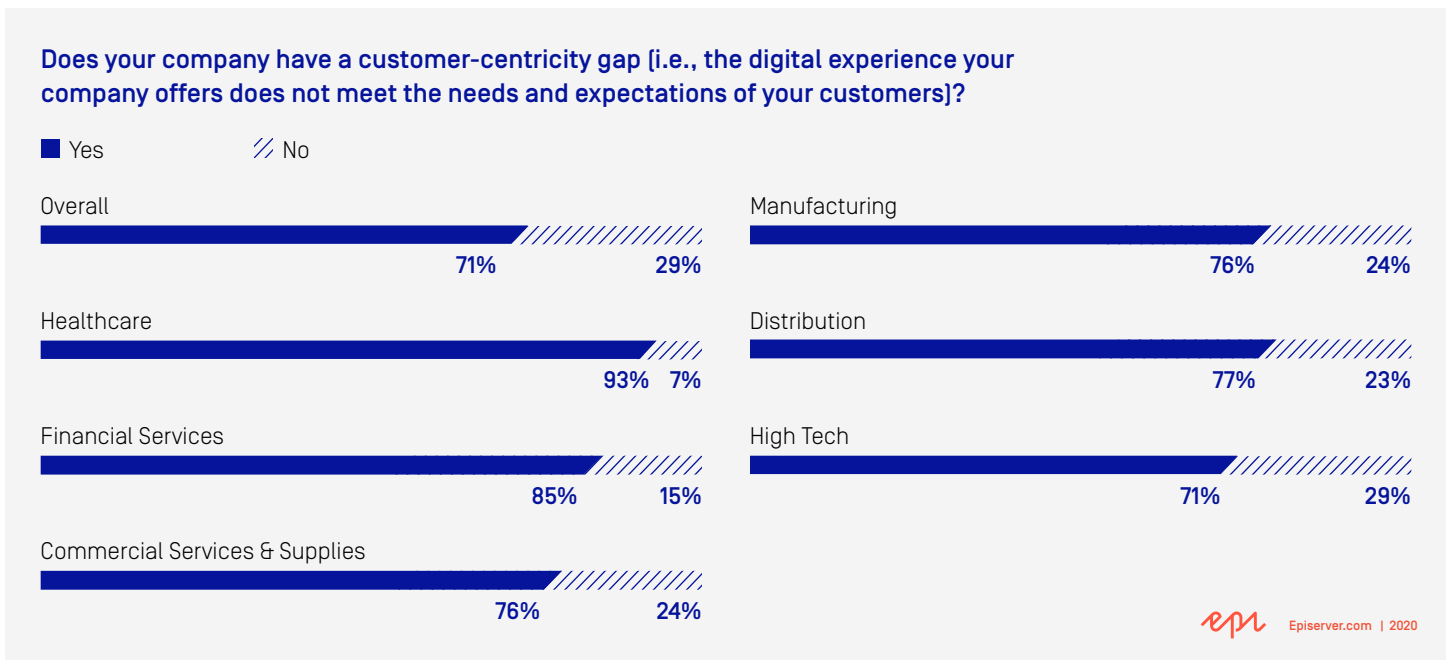
Closing the Customer-Centricity Gap

In times when businesses require short-term thinking to protect long-term viability, customers must remain central through all parts of the organization, product and services. Campaigns and communication should be approached with empathy. Products and services should be designed to meet immediate needs. Digital experience should be prioritized by what customers require today.

As business buyers ourselves, we can name quite a few grievances we have with the companies we ourselves do business with. It usually boils down to: their website just didn't work the way I wanted it to, or I couldn't find what I needed to. At Episerver, we refer to this as a "customer-centricity gap". In other words, the digital experience a company offers does not meet the expectations of their customers.

When we asked decision-makers at B2B companies if their company has a customer-centricity gap (using that same definition), 71 percent indicated "yes" we do.

The customer-centricity gap widens when isolating this data by vertical. Healthcare and financial services are most likely to have a customer-centricity gap. As could be expected due to their own technology use, the high-tech industry is the least likely to have a customer-centricity gap.



When companies are customer-centric, respondents indicate the top ways they close the customer-centricity gap are:

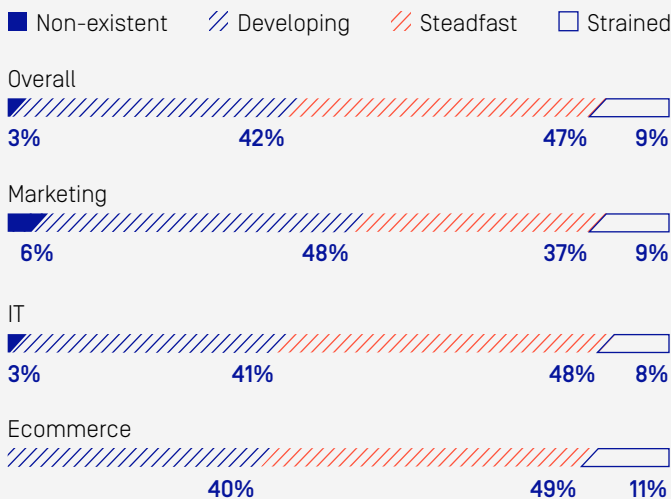
1. We put the customer at the heart of their business processes
2. We invest in the online/digital experience
3. We design our products around customers
4. We have a continuous feedback loop

Putting the customer at the heart of business processes is the only way to operate when customers are concerned about their health, their companies and their financial future.

So much has changed in how we work, how we do business with other companies and how we all talk to each other about this historical period. Companies that aren't relating to us and providing ways to cope to our unique personal and professional situations, are written off as tone deaf. Overnight, many leaders realized relevant content was their best bet if they wanted to connect with their customers in meaningful ways. Most companies are too far removed from their customers, however, to help.

When we asked about the nature of B2B organizations' relationships with their customers today, **more than half [54 percent] of respondents said their company's relationship with customers is either strained, developing or non-existent.** This is partly because the customer relationship in B2B scenarios are often managed by third parties.

What best describes your company's relationship with its customers?



Here is how we asked respondents to classify their customer relationships (what would you choose?):

Strained: We used to manage our customer relationships directly and sell/interact directly, but marketplaces are making that more challenging.

Developing: We started to rely less on partners to manage those relationships and are now selling to/interacting directly with customers as well.

Non-existent: We rely on partners to manage those relationships and sell to customers.

Steadfast: We manage our customer relationships directly and interact with customers directly.

How a Manufacturer Connects with Customers

Longtime Episerver customer Janome, a global manufacturer of sewing machines, is no stranger to the world of retail partners – both small and large. While getting closer to customers typically involves selling directly to customers in order to react to buying habits, Janome maintains steadfast relationships with its community of creators, dealers and educators without direct ecommerce. They've harnessed the power of brand advocates via content initiatives ranging from

blogs to in-person and digital events. Janome's steadfast relationships were proven this year when its community came together in myriad ways to help supply homemade face masks during a worldwide shortage. Janome has its thumb on the pulse of its customer community through content initiatives. Alternatively, 55 percent of manufacturing leaders indicate their relationships with customers are either non-existent, developing or strained. How can you get closer to your customers to understand what they need, in this moment?



Leaning In on Industry, Internal Strengths

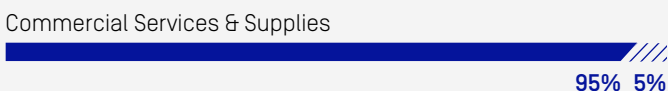
Many B2B organizations have more ideas than they do time, more projects than they have people. No one in marketing, ecommerce and IT roles will ever say they have all the budget and manpower they need. Gosh, what should I do with all this discretionary spend? Despite this, industries surprisingly looked quite healthy in the digital experience department as of March 2020.

While economic downturn will certainly impact budget, there seems to be an existing digital experience to work with. When we asked B2B leaders if they think their companies adequately invest in improving the digital experience it delivers customers online, we got a collective “heck ya” with 95 percent agreeing their company adequately invests in digital experience.



Does your company, in your opinion, adequately invest in improving the digital experience it delivers customers online?

■ Yes // No



The confidence continues across various statements regarding a company’s digital presence according to marketing, ecommerce and IT leaders. Sixty percent of respondents agree their website is industry leading and follows industry best practices (manufacturing is most likely to disagree). An equal percentage of respondents (60 percent) agree with the following:

- Our website is seen as a source of truth and expertise for our target customer
- Our website is an indispensable asset to our business partners and salesforce

Respondents have already overwhelmingly been through a digital transformation project with most saying it was successful. With answers being completely anonymous and aggregate – meaning egos or politics were out of the way – this confidence seemed high considering the customer-centricity gap these same organizations reported.

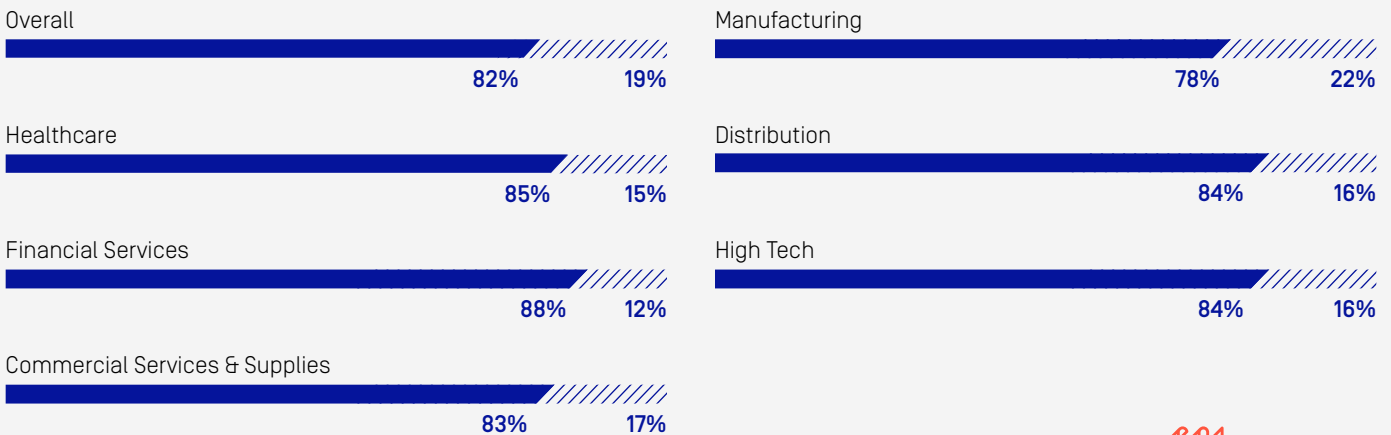


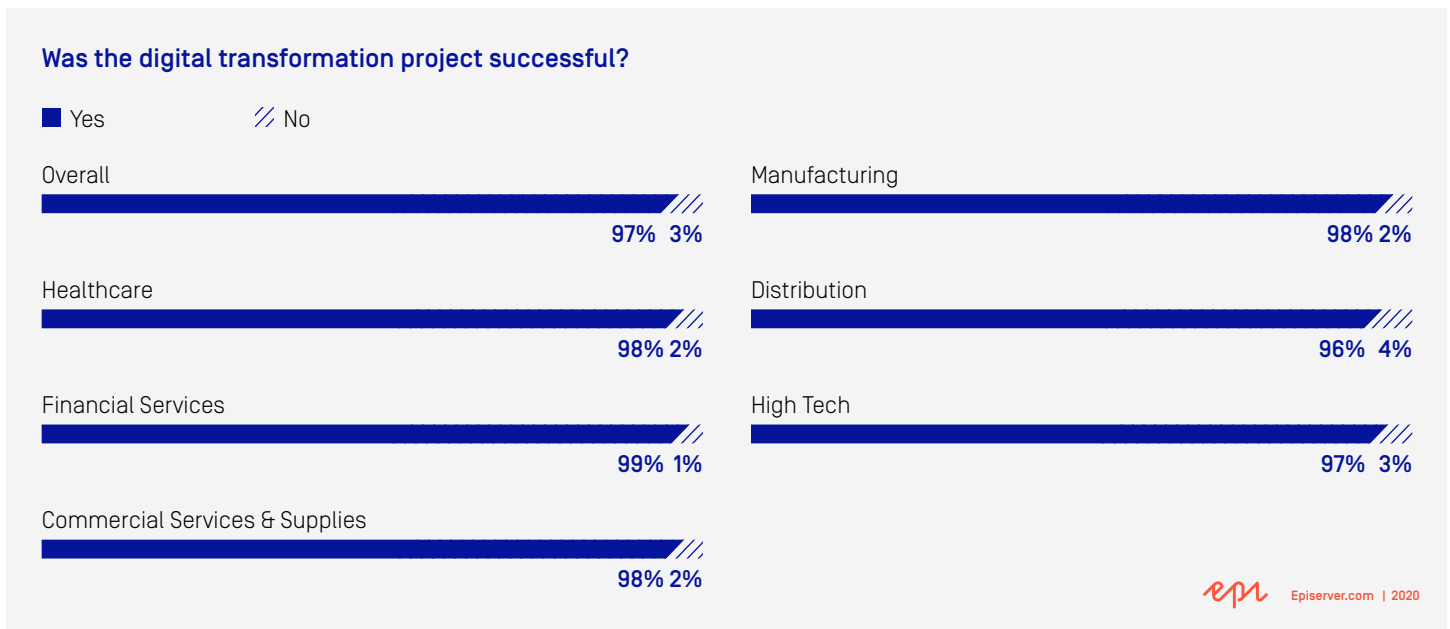
“The teams at B2B orgs we have researched spend an incredible portion of their day on digital engagement; working through reports and the daily backlog of digital content and tasks to execute. Because ‘we’ are spending the majority of our time on our digital properties, we assume that our customers are doing the same. This is why planning for customer scenarios and focusing on the needs they are coming to you for is so critical for success. A significant amount of customer research is performed long before you know who they are, which is a game changer for B2B sales and marketing.”

— Nate Barad, Senior Director of Product Marketing at Episerver

Has the B2B company where you work undergone a digital transformation project?

■ Yes ▨ No





According to respondents, there were reasons for digital transformation success and reasons for failure. The top-three reasons their digital transformation project was successful were: [1] the software vendor we chose, [2] our implementation partner and, tied for third, [3] executive buy-in from our company and [3] that the project was adequately funded. The top three reasons a digital transformation project failed were:

1. Lack of executive buy-in within our company
2. Our company has a culture that does not embrace change
3. (Tied) The software vendor(s) we chose
3. (Tied) Key employees left before it was finished

Companies need to check their organizational health before embarking on a digital transformation project. It's not organizational reasons, however, that some companies have been held back from a project in the first place. **B2B leaders cite it's [1] too expensive and [2] it takes too**

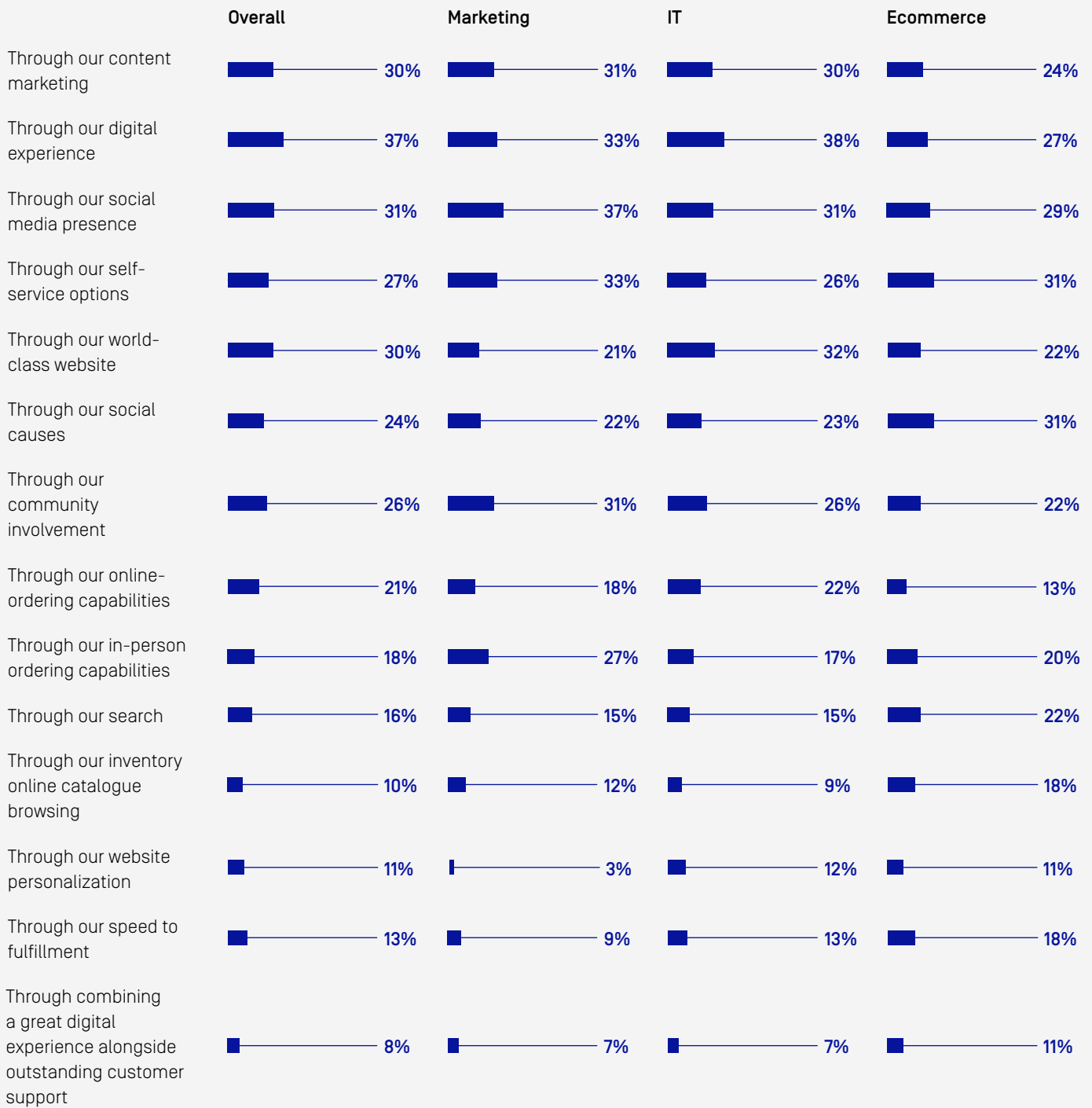
much time as the top-two reasons their company has not undergone a digital transformation project.

While some digital transformation initiatives may be accelerated during the COVID crisis, other investments may be paused or canceled altogether. Customers' needs are narrower at this time. Businesses must consider what customers need to get done now and how their already-strong initiatives can help them get it done more efficiently today. Overall, B2B organizations say they most differentiate themselves online through their digital experience.

“The organizations we spoke with that drove successful adoption of digital transformations have passionate support from executive leadership. With proven, established channels for sales and communications, encountering push back within your organization is a given. Executives that regard digital as a critical factor in customer experience gain more success, because they are open to being creative and quickly testing new ways to engage customers.”

— Nate Barad, Episerver

What differentiates your company the most from its competitors online?



With all this confidence about their websites and digital experience, companies can lean into this strength as it matches the way decision-makers like to learn about businesses and the way business will be conducted in a new digital-first environment. In fact, companies concerned about the postponing and sometimes outright cancellations of tradeshows have reason for hope. **Only 14 percent of respondents by role (IT, marketing, ecommerce) prefer to learn about a B2B company via a tradeshow.** Similarly, just three percent indicate trade shows are effective for reaching customers [see page 14].



“Many people bemoan doing events and don’t think much in the way of generating demand. The data here seems to validate that if only 14 percent of B2B leaders prefer to learn about companies at tradeshows. Will it be the death of the tradeshow?”

—
Joey Moore, Senior Director of Product Strategy & Evangelism at Episerver

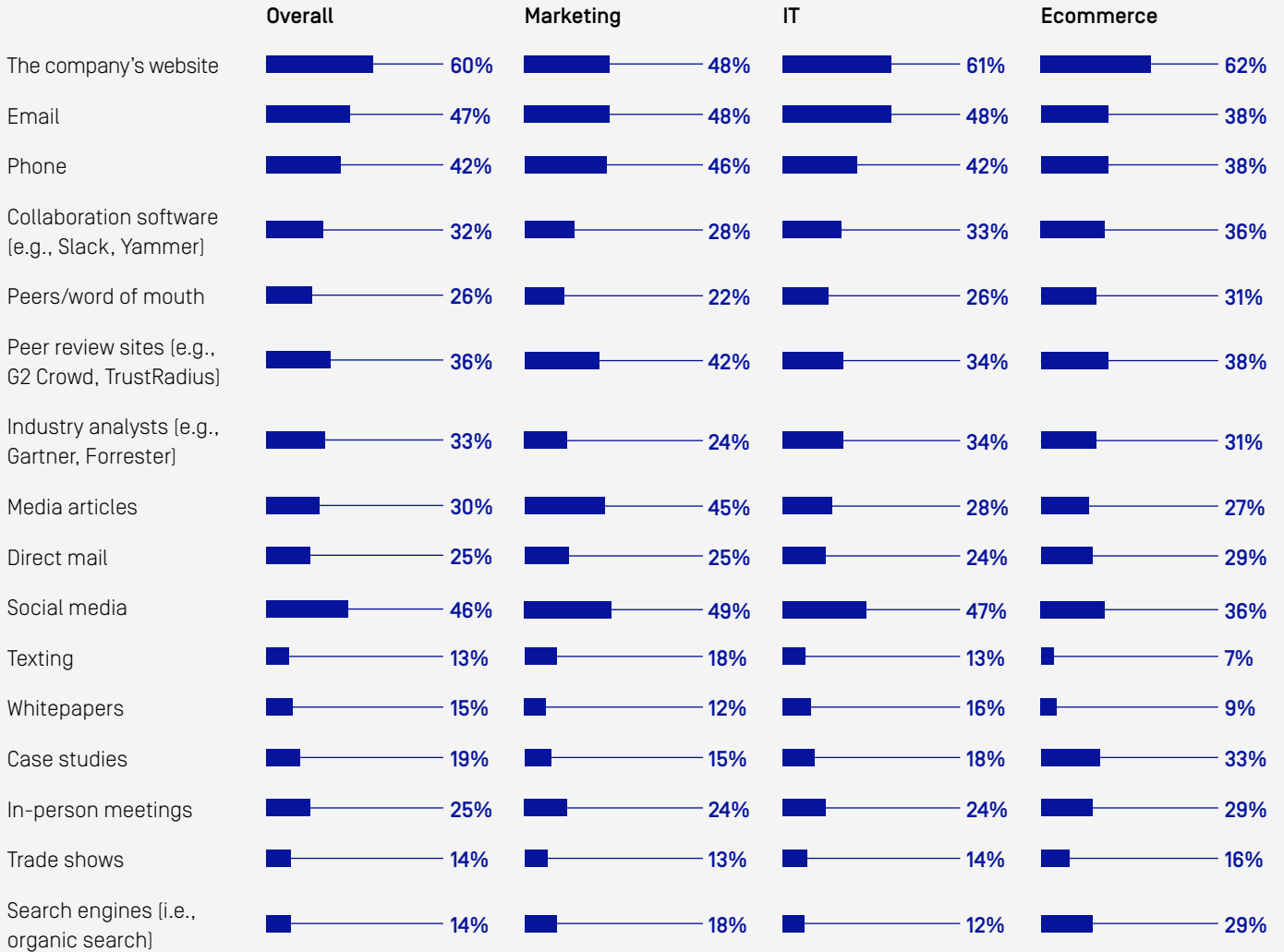


“The tradeshow data is particularly interesting to me as many B2B marketers still believe in trade shows, allocating a large portion of their budgets toward them. Or at least they believed in trade shows before COVID-19 made them re-think their events and replace them with digital efforts. Looking at our findings here, that might actually be a good thing.”

—
Katrin Menzel, Marketing Director at Episerver



When researching a B2B company to do business with, what is your preferred way to learn more about them?



This digital-first approach to researching B2B companies should be welcomed by the **95 percent of respondents who said they were proud of their company's website and 92 percent who said their company makes it easy for customers to do business with them from their smartphones** (e.g., app, mobile website). While only 29 percent of B2B leaders say half or more of their workday is spent doing work from their smartphones, that number is only expected to rise – and B2Bs seem well equipped to manage a more mobile future.

“B2B leaders value independent feedback. While much of the marketing B2B companies conduct rightfully includes digital channels where they share information about themselves, leaders shouldn't overlook the value of third-party validation where trusted advisors do the talking instead. The data shows more than a third of B2B leaders seek industry analysts, media articles and peer review sites to gain confidence in their decisions.”

Rachel Teitt Gill, Director of Corporate Communications at Episerver



Recognizing Weaknesses in the Mirror

B2B organizations appear more prepared for a digital-first environment than many would expect. Having undergone successful digital transformation projects already, the 600 respondents across industries surveyed have gotten a head start on digital requirements. Although post-COVID, some companies have realized they need to scale faster. At Episerver, we've seen multiple examples of frontline industries moving to the cloud nearly overnight to handle the spikes in traffic. Some of the organizational roadblock that has stalled B2B organizations in the past, has been cleared with companies knowing they need to do something differently to survive.

Weaknesses abound, however, in many B2B organizations still not knowing who their customers are and not being as digitally agile as the times require.

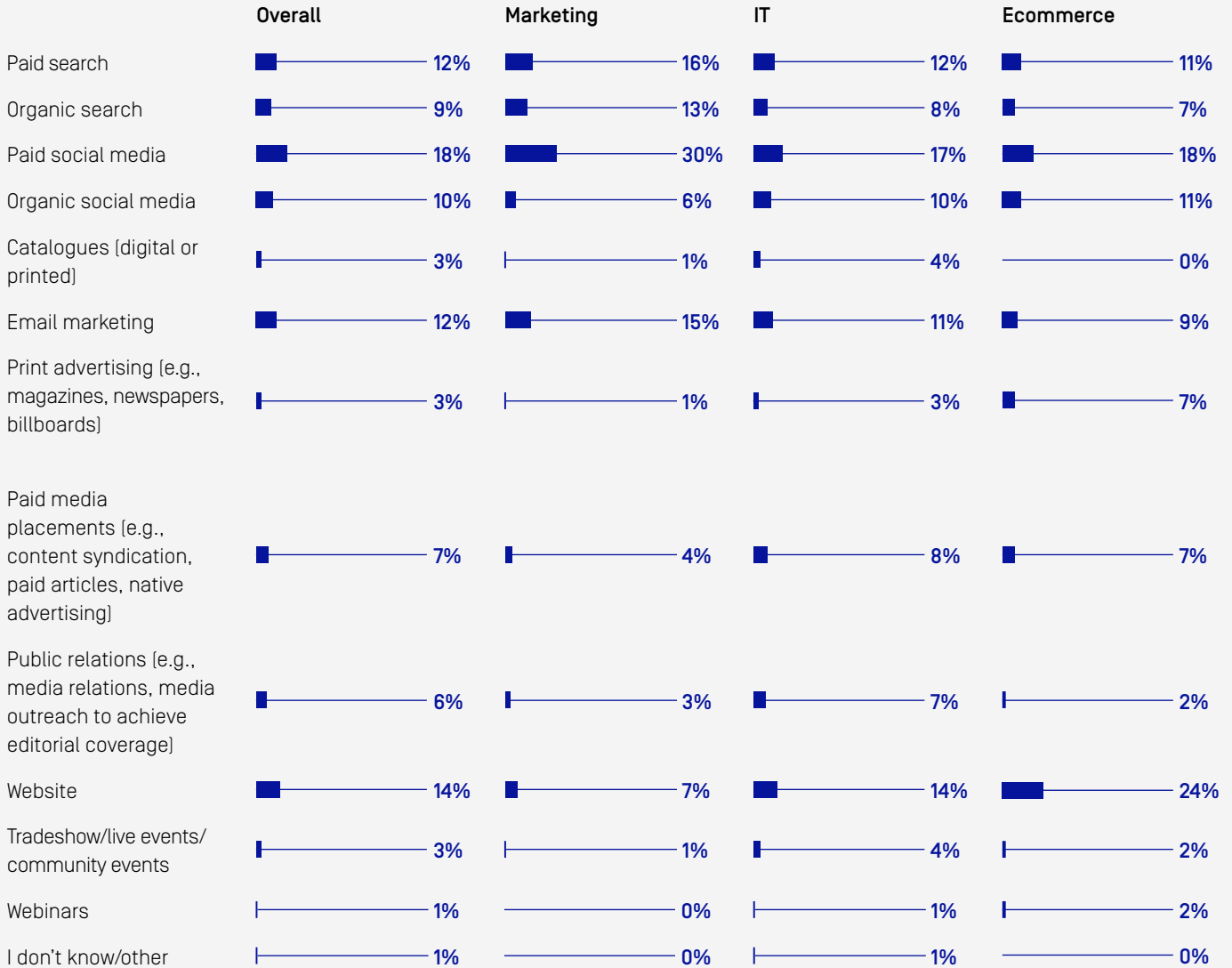
The top-three digital experience tactics across industries that need the most improvement at B2B organizations according to respondents are:

1. Personalizing the digital experience to each customer
2. Understanding who our customers are
3. Managing our content

Not knowing who their customers are may be one reason B2B leaders favor the paid social channel as much as they do – it's considered the most effective channel to reach customers (page 14). With plenty of targeting options and the algorithms to deliver targeted content, social media networks provide a way to segment customers more effectively than many B2B companies are currently capable of elsewhere.



What one marketing channel helps your organization reach customers most effectively?



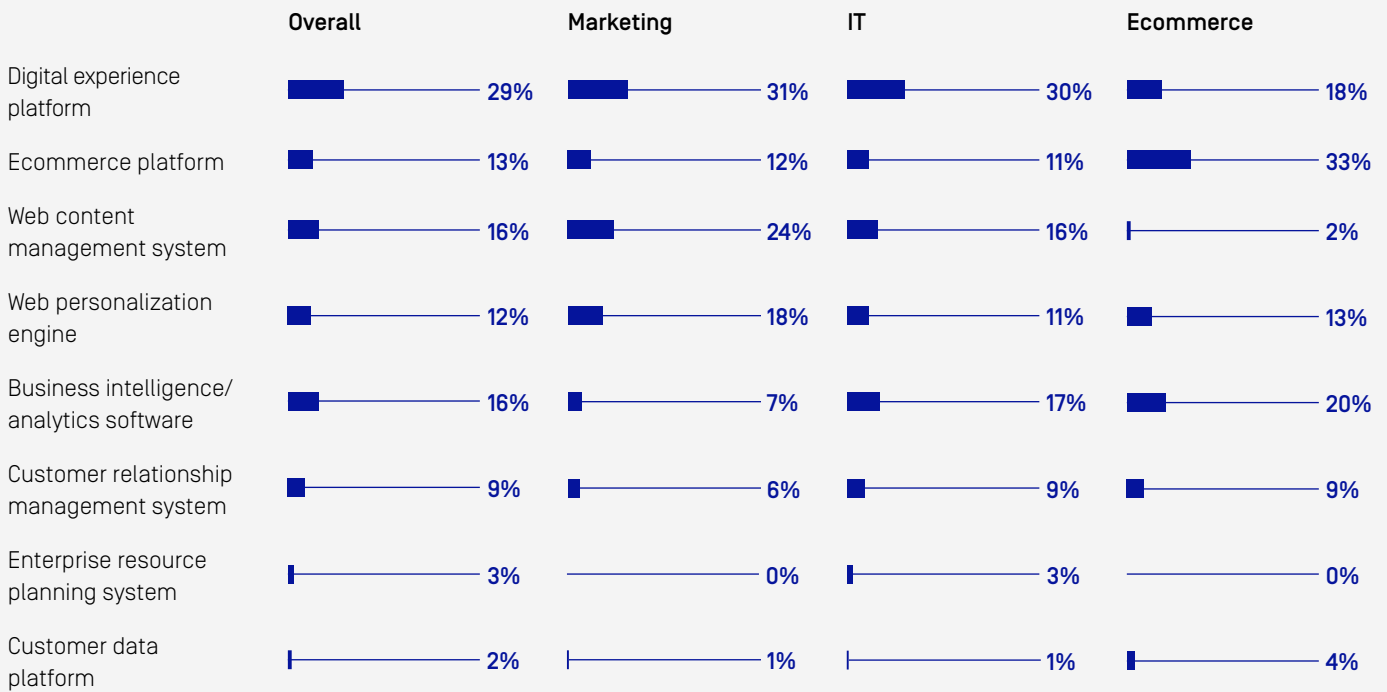
Perhaps the reason B2B organizations are lacking the ability to personalize content and know who their customers are – even after a successful digital transformation project – is that they didn't go "all in." They could potentially still be working with disparate systems, which is why they don't know who their customers are nor personalize content to them.

"It's common to refer to digital transformation as an ongoing process, not a 'one and done'. The data suggests that most B2B organizations have already undergone a digital transformation project but still aren't able to personalize the digital experience to each individual. Struggling to know who their customers are might reflect that digital transformation is actually an ongoing process rather than an end state."

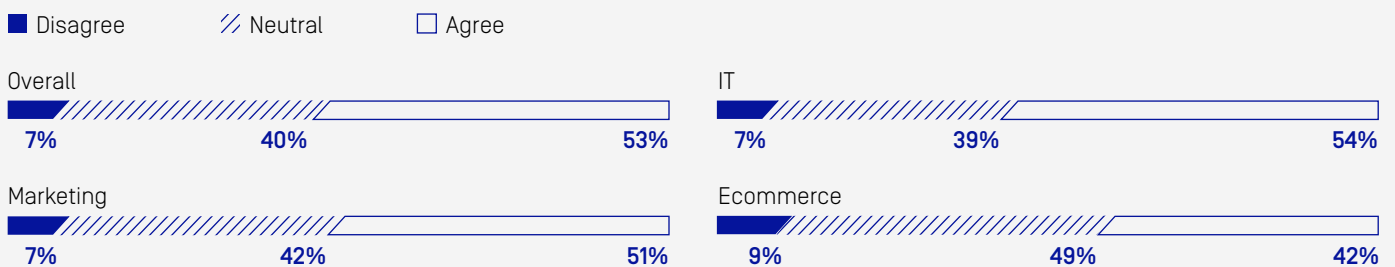
—
Joey Moore, Episerver

This disconnect between companies and their customers may mean digital transformation projects did not include an infrastructure with a single source of business and customer truth. The data indicates digital commerce may not have been part of that digital transformation project as well. Ecommerce leaders were least likely to say their company provides a mature digital commerce experience despite most going through a digital transformation project already.

What type of software would best help your company become more digitally agile?



Our website has a mature digital commerce experience for our customers to purchase products at their negotiated prices:



In which of the following ways would you like to self-serve [without speaking with someone] when working with a fellow B2B company?



The demand for ecommerce is great as B2B leaders wish to self-serve.

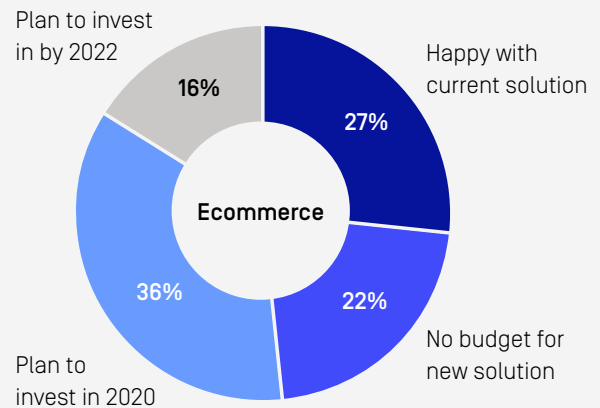
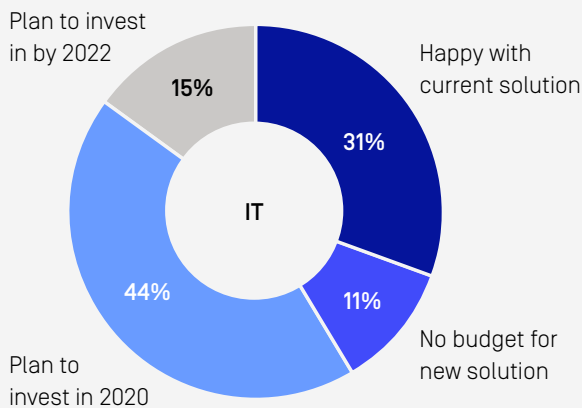
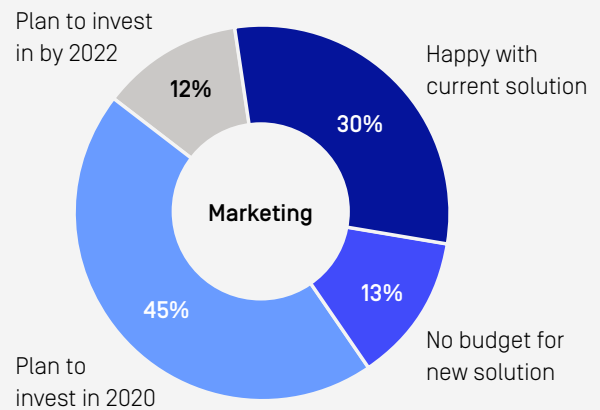
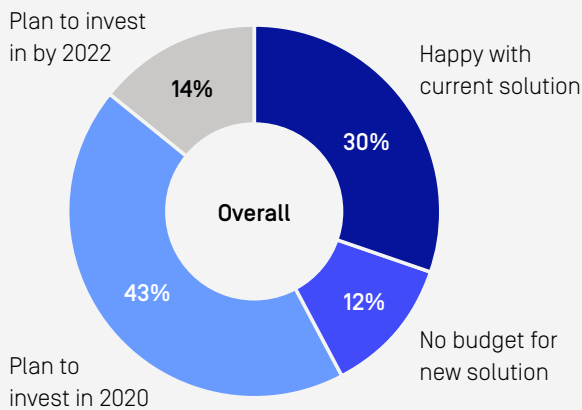
Seeing 38 percent of B2B leaders would like to order products for the first time and 35 percent would like to re-order products from the B2B companies they work for, lack of digital commerce could mean missing out on additional revenue streams in hard times.

Therefore, 57 percent of B2B organizations across the five verticals and across job roles surveyed plan to invest in an ecommerce platform in the next two years. B2B ecommerce is expected to pay off with 72 percent of B2B companies expecting 41 percent or more of their revenue in 2025 to be derived from the B2B ecommerce websites they own and operate.

“All generations of people use digital more for what used to be human interactions. This shift in our home life is following us into the workplace. We realize a mutual benefit when a customer can execute many interactions digitally in an easy, self-service application, while the provider engages more channels of distribution.”

—
Nate Barad, Episerver

What are your investment priorities for an ecommerce platform?



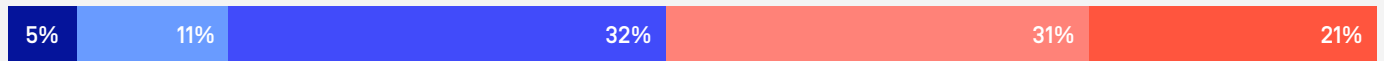
How much of your 2025 revenue do you expect to be derived from the B2B ecommerce websites you own and operate?

■ *NA, a B2B ecommerce website is not in our plans by 2025
 ■ 1% to 20%
 ■ 21% to 40%
 ■ 41% to 60%
 ■ 61% to 80%
 ■ 81% to 100%

Overall



Healthcare



Financial Services



Commercial Services & Supplies



Manufacturing



Distribution



High Tech



Pouncing on Clear Opportunities

In today's world, businesses are met with the challenge of deciding what products, services and technologies their companies should invest in and how they can adjust their budget to be better positioned for the current recession. While the decisions are daunting, the biggest opportunity for businesses is to invest in products and services that better serve the customer in today's digital-first (and now digital-only) economy. Once a rarity, more B2B organizations have now undergone a digital transformation project than not. There is some discrepancy about what that entails – too many companies still need to add ecommerce for example and not enough companies know who their customers are or can customize content for each of them. Most B2B companies in the six industries surveyed have a foundation to work with in lean times but many are looking for more to get the job done.

Sixty percent of B2B leaders plan to invest in personalization by at least 2022, followed by a web content management system, followed by an ecommerce platform.

Personalization as a lower-cost point solution can provide quick gains in reputation and revenue.

Companies that are not personalizing content because they think their customers will find it “creepy” should know



that only 10 percent of B2B leaders worry their personal information is being used by companies opportunistically when a digital experience is personalized to them. Rather, 46 percent think they are getting a better experience because of personalization and 42 percent think a company cares about their experience when the website personalizes content based on their history, behaviors and personal information.

For these reasons and others, **93 percent of B2B leaders say personalizing content on their website has increased their company's revenue.**

“Organizations that are successful are using personalization in many ways. It is now assumed that any digital engagement will be personalized and often the term is used in a different way. Some teams described it as, ‘A follow-up email with suggested research’, many discussed ‘recommended content in emails’ or ‘recommended products based on previous purchases’. Personalization is maturing into a necessary and fundamental capability of digital experience.”

—
Nate Barad, Episerver

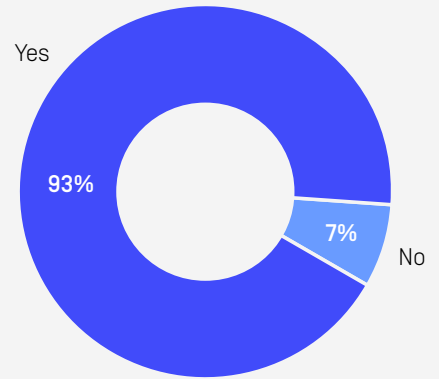
Companies not personalizing content on their websites today say the main reason [42 percent] is because their customers value their privacy. We know there is a dynamic line between personalization and privacy but B2B leaders indicate they are not concerned about the misuse of their data but rather prefer the convenience of it all. Convenience is a common theme for B2B expectations.

Once a rarity as well, B2B organizations are becoming more favored and profitable when they provide a transparent view of their pricing on their websites. This low-cost move could significantly move the needle for companies whose target audience prefer to self-serve. **Across roles, the top way marketing, IT and ecommerce want to self-serve is to access pricing without speaking to anyone according to 39 percent of respondents.**

This self-service aligns to the opportunity of B2B commerce. When asked about the most significant opportunities for their company in the next year, 41 percent of B2B leaders say it's selling directly to their customers online. The second-biggest opportunity is expanding into new geographies [37 percent], followed by providing their salesforce with digital selling tools [36 percent].

Selling directly is even more critical now as digital-first capabilities is not a nice-to-have but rather a need-to-have.

Has personalizing content on your website increased your company's revenue?



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“The single-biggest finding in this data is the need for B2Bs to sell digitally, which may seem completely obvious to some but still a core functionality missing for many. Respondents not only say ‘selling directly to our customers’ is the single-biggest opportunity for the companies they work at, but they also tell us it’s exactly how they wish they could interact with the companies they work with. There’s a commerce disconnect in B2B that will be remedied faster this year than any previous period.”

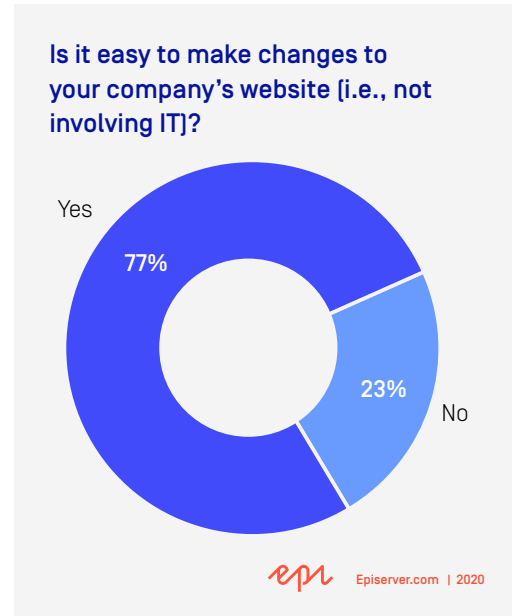
Justin Anovick, Chief Product Officer at Episerver



Partsmaster Sees Peak B2B Commerce Orders During COVID Crisis

Industrial products supplier Partsmaster launched an ecommerce site in early 2019 on Episerver. While even a year ago direct digital

sales were seen as a luxury for distributors, one year later digital-first capabilities are now a necessity. With increased digital demand due to COVID in both orders and web traffic, Partsmaster was able to support its customer base with the infrastructure it had in place to scale quickly. [Learn more here.](#)



Another trend seen today that would have been unheard of several years ago, is the ability for non-IT professionals to make updates to their websites without the involvement of a technical colleague. This roadblock is a thing of the past for most B2B organizations while others still struggle and look at their more agile peers with envy.

In today's climate, giving marketing access to make changes to the website on the fly is critical. Content during a crisis can be dated in an instant and, worse, be insensitive.

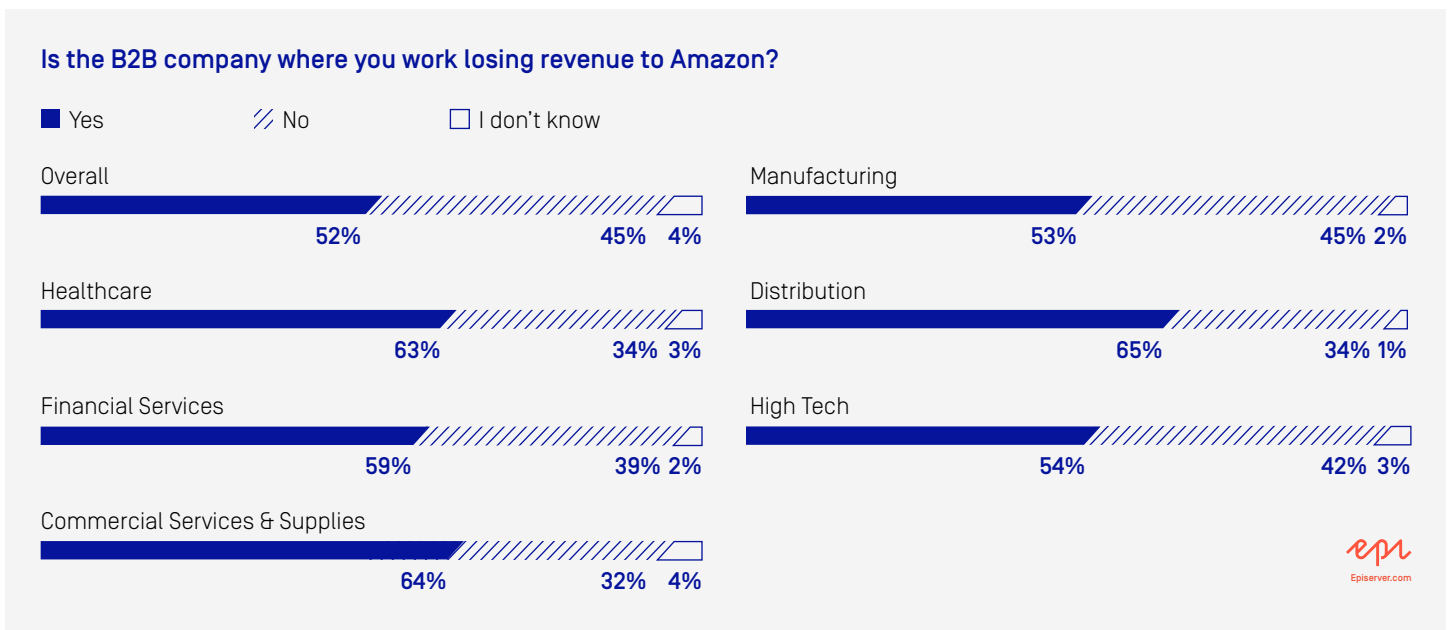
Carestream Dental Pivots from Seller to Advisor

As a provider of digital solutions for dental practitioners, Episerver customer Carestream Dental faced a unique situation when dentists had to close their offices due to COVID-19 distancing recommendations. The company immediately pivoted from a site whose primary objective was to market and sell equipment/services to one of providing customer guidance as a trusted advisor while everyone navigates through the new normal. Their investments in building up the flexibility and scalability of their digital experience infrastructure allowed them to effectively pivot and publish educational microsites within days, not weeks like it would have taken on their previous content management system.



Yet another change in the B2B world is how companies are dealing with Amazon (and other marketplaces). Certainly a threat for B2C retailers, B2B leaders see both opportunity and trepidation when considering selling through Amazon.

While Amazon is dipping its digital toe into industries like healthcare and financial services, it's worth breaking down this finding by verticals since the impact varies. Sixty-five percent of distribution companies, for example, indicate a stark "yes" they are losing revenue to Amazon. Even with revenue loss, Amazon is seen more as an opportunity than a threat for many B2B companies surveyed.

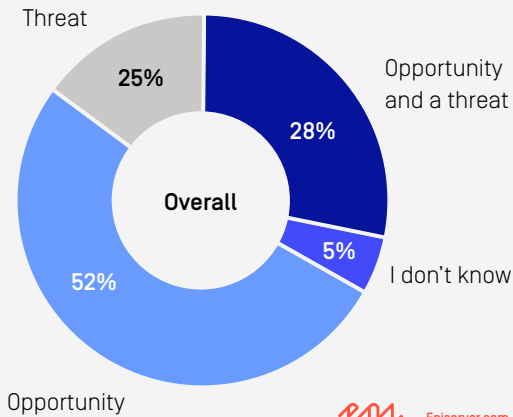


“Organizations need to approach the Amazon marketplace strategically. On one hand, sellers benefit from Amazon’s scale to open new revenue streams that aren’t limited by geography. On the other hand, selling through Amazon distances the seller from their buyer and erodes already slim margins. Don’t be too quick to jump into selling on Amazon. Put a plan together and create specific tests to find out what works best for your business. Organizations that do this well can realize a huge opportunity, but it must be done thoughtfully.”

Mike Bernard, Head of Audience and Product Marketing at Episerver



Is Amazon a threat or an opportunity for the B2B company where you work?



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“Organizations had mixed responses to large marketplaces, with many seeing it as an opportunity to expedite fulfillment. One common trend people shared was that their expertise in serving their customer would be the driving value of their business, and one that won’t be replaced by Amazon or other distribution giants. The specific knowledge people have in servicing a specific industry will be permanent, while the way people can communicate and deliver that expertise to a customer will continue to evolve.”

— Nate Barad, Episerver

Minimizing External and Internal Threats

Nobody could have ever planned for 2020 to start the way it did. B2B organizations around the world had high hopes for how they'd move the needle in the new year. With a digital transformation project behind most of them, they were eyeing additive technology like ecommerce and personalization. They finally knew which marketing campaigns were working, most of the lot finally could make changes to their websites themselves and even Amazon didn't seem that big, bad and scary. Oh, 2020 was going to be grand. Very unfortunately for everyone, the world took a collective turn and even secure jobs seemed in jeopardy.

We take risks during times of prosperity and minimize them when there is uncertainty. Customers must remain the central point, but internal and external threats jeopardize the acquisition of new ones and the retention of existing ones.

Twenty-seven percent of B2B leaders say increasing digital expectations from customers or partners is their top external threat with an equal amount (27 percent) saying increasing costs to acquire new customers is their biggest external threat, followed by digitally native startups disrupting their industry (17 percent). As one can imagine, the perception of the single biggest threat varies by industry. "Global pandemic" was not an option, but we can all agree it's a top threat across business types.



What is the biggest external threat to your organization?

- Digitally native startups disrupting our industry
- Increasing costs to acquire new customers
- Channel conflict preventing us from selling online
- Increasing digital expectations from our customers or partners
- Competitors investing in digital experience solutions more than we are
- Digital fatigue (i.e., tired of being required to use myriad digital tools and apps concurrently)

Overall



Healthcare



Financial Services



Commercial Services & Supplies



Manufacturing



Distribution



High Tech



Internally, threats are pervasive as well.

The top internal threat is legacy, in-house software holding organizations back from their digital agility goals (which makes us wonder how far those digital transformation projects really went). The second-most-agreed-upon internal threat is having disparate/disjointed technology holding them back from providing the digital experiences their customers expect. While these two data points certainly prove why companies still struggle to know who their customers are even after a digital transformation project, herein lie a critical problem with digital transformation projects to begin with: everyone is measuring with a different stick.

While technologies offer a potential panacea to today's challenges, anxieties remain around the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation on future job security.

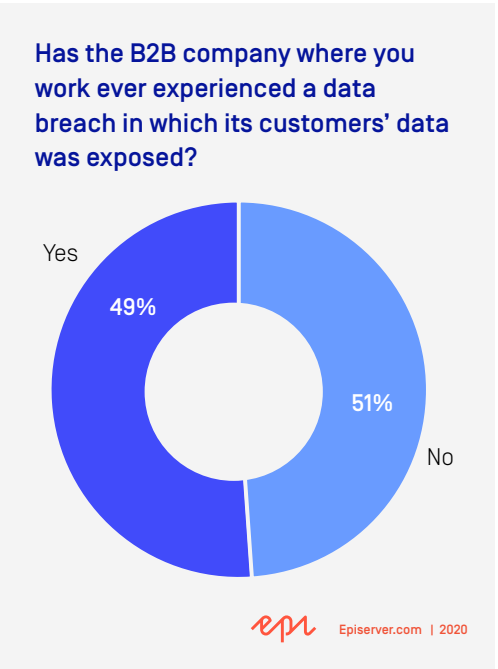
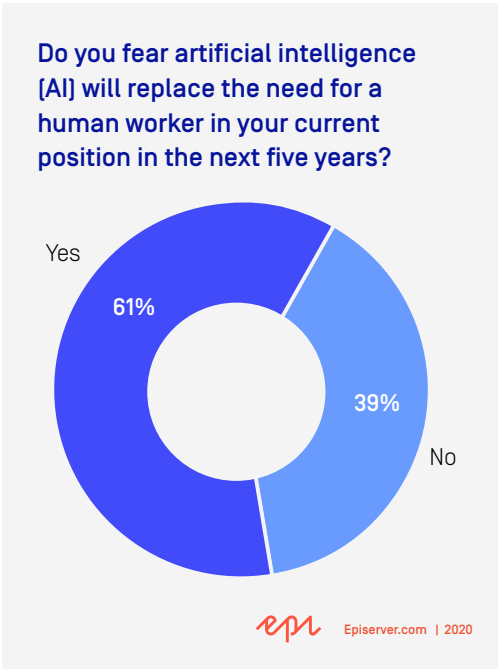
Sixty-one percent of B2B leaders fear that AI will replace the need for a human worker in their current position in the next five years. Eighty-two percent of B2B leaders say, however, that AI will make them better at their job in the next two years. Better data quality is how 82 percent of B2B leaders say AI will make them better at their job in the next two years.

With more data, comes more responsibility. Forty-nine percent of B2B companies have experienced a data breach in which its customers' data was exposed. Forty-four percent of B2B leaders say their personal data has been exposed due to a breach at a B2B company in which they do/did business with.

This is all despite 91 percent of B2B leaders saying the B2B company where they work takes every reasonable step to meet data compliance laws and keep its customers' data safe.

“The great news is the awareness people have that there is a priority to improve their digital customer experience. While they may still respond that they are the source of truth on their brand, individually people still know that constantly improving and reviewing digital engagement is a successful investment, regardless of industry. Having a foundation to quickly create new experiences, learn from and optimize them is the new norm.”

— Nate Barad, Episerver



Closing the Customer-Centricity Gap for Good

What is clear through our research is that B2B organizations understand the importance of digital means to serve their customers. They've undergone digital transformation projects but haven't reached the peak of what customer centricity requires: knowing who their customers are and exceeding the expectations they personally have. Already lacking the ability to meet customer expectations, many companies aren't prepared to weather the current storm. From healthcare to manufacturing, businesses across all industries must explore new tactics for engaging with customers, providing seamless experiences and building relationships in a new business climate.

Provided within are dozens of findings in which B2B leaders can use to make decisions. While times are changing fast, the customer-centric, digital-first focus can provide certainty in uncertain times. We'll see the companies able to focus on the customer, accelerate digital projects and serve more relevant content to customers during this time be better prepared for the changed future.

If you have any questions about the data included here or our team's analysis of the findings, please let us know. We will help you ourselves or point you to one of our many subject matter experts who can and will break down the data by country, industries and roles on [Episerver.com](https://www.episerver.com).

Our hope is we all come back stronger from these unprecedented times and, in a small way, that this data helps.

Best of luck to come back stronger,



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Methodology

The “B2B Digital Experiences Report” from Episerver explores the priorities and plans, tactics and technologies of 600 decision-makers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and Australia. Respondents are employed full-time by healthcare, financial services, commercial services, manufacturing, distribution and high-tech organizations. The survey was conducted in March 2020.

Respondents from the “B2B Digital Experiences Report” referenced herein, are rounded out as follows:

Geography



Employed at a B2B organization as a decision-maker.



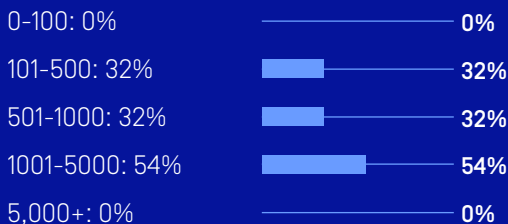
Job Role



Annual Revenue



Company Size [By Employees]



Company Industry



Decision-Making Level



Data lists and graphs included throughout this report may not add up to 100 percent since exact percentages were rounded to whole numbers and/or in some cases, respondents were able to select multiple options depending on the question.

About Episerver

Episerver empowers businesses to scale through the most customer-centric approach to digital experiences. Its Customer-Centric Digital Experience Platform™ features best-in-class content management and robust commerce, both backed by AI powered data and personalization solutions. The platform has consistently earned industry, analyst and media recognition for its vision, capabilities and customer commitment. Episerver's 900+ partners and 825+ employees in offices around the globe are proud to help more than 8,000 customers enrich their customer lifetime value, increase revenue and grow their brands. Learn more at www.episerver.com.

