

B2B Marketplace :

What's at Stake for your Business Strategy?



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Introduction

Propelled by e-commerce giants such as eBay, Amazon or Alibaba, the marketplace model has long been associated with B2C and C2C players taking advantage of the numerous benefits facilitating their online business. These platforms are beginning to attract B2B players who want to position their brand online.

Marketplaces are particularly attractive because of the diversity of their product catalogues, their optimal positioning on the main search engines and the high-performance tools they offer their sellers.

According to the survey [INSEE \(TIC-TPE 2016\)](#), "Business-to-business online transactions count for 150 billion euros in online turnover, i.e. 130 billion euros for companies with more than 10 employees and over 20 billion euros for those with fewer than 10 employees."

For all sectors of activity, B2B marketplaces are an intermediary for putting sellers in contact with buyers who have an online purchasing project.

This white paper presents the advantages of having a winning strategy on B2B marketplaces, from the choice of platform to the analysis of the ROI of the investment.

1. A HIGH-POTENTIAL BUSINESS MODEL

Created to meet the challenges of e-commerce, marketplaces are developing faster and faster and offer sellers high-performance lead generation tools. These online platforms put buyers and sellers, B2C or B2B, in contact in order to carry out a specific purchasing project.

The nature and the reason for purchases differentiates B2C marketplaces from those with a core B2B business. B2C purchases tend to satisfy immediate needs, for buyers who have 100% control over purchasing decisions, regardless of the influence of their entourage.

The B2B purchasing decision making process takes more time. In particular, it depends on the interactions between professionals in the same organization: the purchasing department, accounting department, company management, etc. Some technical products also require specific customization to be perfectly adapted to the client's needs (dimensions, integrated tools, etc.). The sourcing of this type of product is particularly long and tedious. Transaction amounts can reach several tens of thousands of euros! Another difference compared to B2C purchases is the need for proximity, expertise and reassurance, which is more important in B2B.

33%

In 2021, marketplaces are predicted to represent 33% of the total online sales volume.

Lastly, as part of a B2B transaction, the buyer expects to be accompanied on his or her purchase path by an account manager and marketing experts attentive to his or her business needs.

It is expected that B2B marketplaces will become even more preeminent in the coming years, changing the purchasing processes of companies, which are already relying increasingly on online product sourcing.

2. DIGITIZATION: A STRONG ALLY FOR B2B

Digital marketing drivers have long been associated with brands and companies in the B2C sector. Many professionals limited themselves to traditional marketing techniques and only invested in strategies such as trade shows and printed advertising. Marketing experts had difficulty proving the ROI of these strategies, but continued to invest a significant budget in them nonetheless.

But digital marketing has progressively succeeded in gaining ground as it offers relevant audience analysis, accurate audience segmentation, and provides companies with highly effective lead generation tools.

65%

[According to a survey conducted by Edelman in collaboration with LinkedIn](#), 65% of B2B buyers continue to look for online opportunities to strengthen their positioning, especially in times of crisis.

Digital strategies have quickly become a real ally for sales and marketing managers who aim to meet the growing needs of customers whose purchasing path is anything but linear. These B2B buyers expect sellers to facilitate their purchasing process by handling their requests quickly and efficiently. They appreciate the combination of digital processes and real conversations so they can make their purchases with complete peace of mind.

95%

[According to a GARTNER report](#), 95% of B2B purchasing decisions are the result of prior web research.

The B2B marketplace model is one of the most relevant digital drivers because it has the power to combine quantity and quality, and it is easily measure the return on investment.

3. EASY TO MEASURE ROI

Most B2B marketplaces offer their sellers the ability to measure, in real time, the performance of their online presence. Thanks to a lead management interface, each seller can follow the evolution of requests received and prioritize those that deserve the most attention (urgent, high-budget projects, etc.).

Using the initial goals and the cost of presence on these digital platforms, it is possible to easily calculate an ROI. To do so, all the seller has to do is evaluate the total number of leads received in a given period of time and their commercial potential, comparing them to the amount invested in the platform.

However, the volume of leads received can be analyzed in different ways, depending on your goals: developing your brand image or closing online sales for example. Some brands want to position themselves on B2B marketplaces to ensure that they are present on an equal footing with their main competitors. In these cases lead conversion isn't the number one priority.



4. THE ADVANTAGES OF A B2B MARKETPLACE FOR SELLERS

The B2B marketplace model has become very popular among professionals worldwide. Recognized as a trusted third party, the marketplace is a perfect intermediary between buyers with a concrete purchasing project (short and medium term) and sellers who want to make sales online.

B2B marketplaces offer many advantages to sales and marketing professionals:

- They are suitable for all different sectors.
- They integrate a range of tools to guarantee sales follow-up, from the first contact to the validation of the order by the buyer.
- They allow interaction with professionals who are experts in B2B lead generation.
- They offer responsive customer service attentive to sales issues.

My sales rep, Pascale, is very professional and attentive. Our collaboration is fluid and easy and allows me to make decisions quickly. DirectIndustry sends me proposals and I just have to choose.



Arthur Goudena
Marketing Director at PHC Europe

At VirtualExpo Group, we offer our clients personal support. An account manager and team of SEO experts are committed to helping each client company position its presence online.

I chose to work with DirectIndustry rather than their competitors because I liked their site right away. I was immediately attracted to their professionalism. The website is well built and the SEO is very ergonomic and easy to understand. In addition, I have a very good relationship with my sales rep, Helge. He is always available and helpful. When a customer trusts you, the relationship can only be a win-win situation. With DirectIndustry, I always get the help I need.



Nelly Desbiens
Marketing & Business Director at Shemesh Automation

5. SUCCEEDING ON A B2B MARKETPLACE: OUR EXPERT ADVICE

For over 20 years, VirtualExpo Group has been supporting B2B professionals in their digitalization strategy. Here are the main areas of development that we suggest to our marketplace sellers to help them stand out online:

- **Choose a B2B marketplace that offers tools and visibility:** here are some examples of tools and services offered by the online platforms: an interface for discussion with buyers, product promotion services, flexible payment methods (advance payment, bank transfer, credit card), etc.
- **Give your time and be responsive:** processing leads quickly guarantees the satisfaction of online buyers. They spend a lot of time selecting and comparing the right products for their project. It is essential to stand out by responding quickly and being proactive.
- **Choose additional services:** here are some examples of advertising services offered by B2B marketplaces: banners, newsletters, sponsored publications on B2B media, etc.
- **Effectively analyze the ROI:** the calculation of the ROI will depend above all on what you expect from the marketplace. If your goal is to develop your brand image, your ROI will be calculated based on the number of views of your products and logo. If your goal is to boost your online sales, then your main calculation criteria will be the number of leads you receive and the quality of conversations with buyers.

The example of PHC Europe:



PHC's goal is to become a trusted brand, a leader in the field of sustainable medical and biomedical solutions. Its mission is to improve health and well-being around the world by enabling its customers to work in good conditions. PHC meets the needs of customers working in the pharmaceutical, biotechnology, hospital, clinical and industrial sectors. They bring unique perspectives to scientific research.

PHC has been a client of Directindustry for over 10 years! The site not only helps us present our products, but it also offers us product highlights, email campaigns and other marketing services. The reason we use all these services is simple: the results we get are excellent.



Arthur Goudena
Marketing Director for PHC Europe



486K
content displays



31M
advertising displays



615
requests



5K
prospects



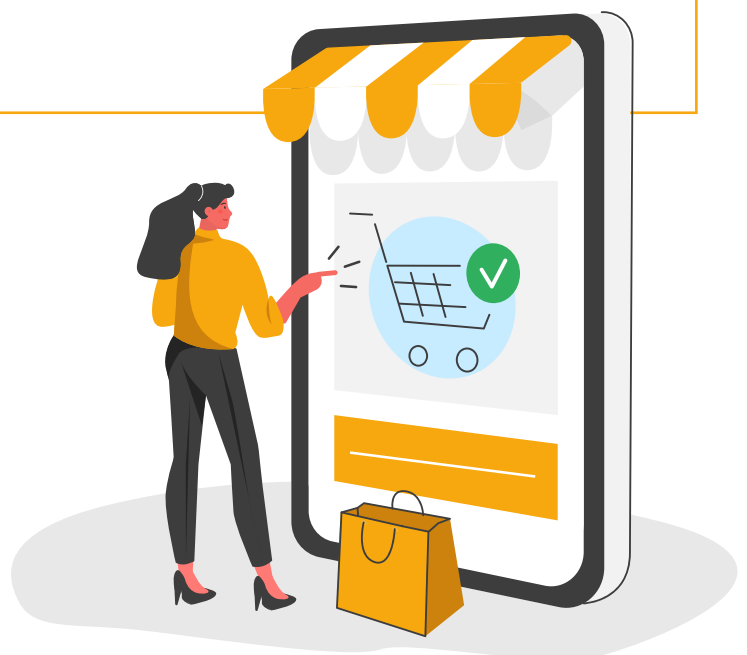
897
clicks

Conclusion

Whether you already have an active digital presence or you are thinking about your digitalization strategy, being present on a B2B marketplace is a major driver for growth for your company. The management tools offered by online platforms specializing in B2B are increasingly efficient and guarantee you real-time follow-up with your leads. B2B marketplaces also offer a range of services to promote your company's brand image. Some marketplaces provide you with personal contacts who will assist you step by step in making your transition to digital a success.

It is important to choose a B2B marketplace that is well referenced on search engines and has an international audience. You can also choose to position your products on different online platforms according to their market share in specific areas (country, continent) or their specialization in a particular field (industry, aeronautics, etc).

There is no miracle solution: the success of your presence on a B2B marketplace will be the fruit of your commitment to your future buyers. Responding to their requests quickly and efficiently will allow you to stand out from your competitors and make more online sales. All of the keys to success are in your hands, it's up to you to boost your online visibility!





At VirtualExpo, we help everyone with a B2B project make the right decision. We offer buyers carefully organized information by selecting quality products and suppliers from around the world. Day after day, our incentive is to help businesses carry out their projects. A lack of quality information will never be an obstacle to their success.

The year 2020 marked the start of a new era for VirtualExpo Group. Continuing in its trailblazing spirit, the company launched six specialized B2B marketplaces to effectively meet the requirements of its audiences.

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CONTACT

Asmaa Soussi

Brand Content Manager

communication@virtual-expo.com

