



Modernizing B2B Selling Experiences with Zaelab + Shopify

B2B buyer expectations are changing—and fast. With next-generation buyers and employees entering the workforce, competitive pressures, commoditization, and technology are reshaping the B2B buying journey. Traditional B2B selling methods like phone orders, email orders, print catalogs, and manual order processing are moot.



Evan Klein
CEO, Zaelab

As a B2B manufacturer or distributor, if you don't modernize your selling experiences, you'll risk falling behind more agile and forward-thinking competitors.

Modernizing any aspect of the business, particularly selling experiences, is a big undertaking. Where to start? There are hurdles to overcome from navigating operational complexities and updating legacy systems to fostering a culture of innovation and growth.

To deliver the modern experiences customers expect, manufacturers and distributors need to rethink how they engage with buyers. Modern B2B selling experiences transform how customers interact with a brand throughout the entire customer lifecycle, utilizing the latest trends in technology and customer experience to create engaging, efficient buying journeys.

In this whitepaper presented by Zaelab and Shopify, we'll explore what it means to modernize B2B selling experiences, why it matters for B2B manufacturers and distributors, and how Zaelab and Shopify can help you put technology at the center of business growth.



The Evolution of B2B Selling Experiences

From the early days of basic digital systems to today's sophisticated, customer-centric platforms, the evolution of B2B selling is marked by these stages:

1970-2000

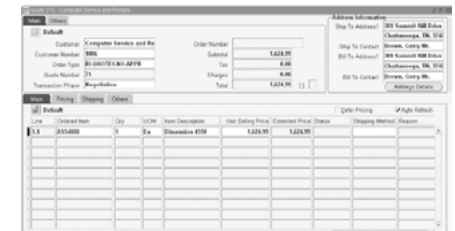
The Era of Green Screen Systems



B2B selling began with the introduction of green screen systems. These rudimentary systems allowed for basic order entry and inventory management but offered little in terms of user experience or interactivity. Transactions were simply that—transactional—lacking any personalization or engagement. Despite their limitations, green screens marked the beginning of digital transformation in B2B commerce, paving the way for more advanced technologies.

2000-2010

Introduction and Adoption of ERP Systems



The next major leap in B2B selling experiences utilized Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. These systems provided a more integrated approach to managing various business processes, from supply chain management to customer relationship management. While ERP systems brought a higher degree of automation and efficiency, they were primarily designed for internal users and lacked user-friendly interfaces.

2010-2025

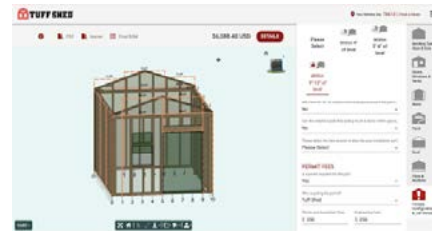
Emergence of eCommerce Portals



Soon, a significant shift occurred as eCommerce portals became prevalent in B2B selling. These platforms offered advanced functionalities, including online product catalogs, self-service ordering, and integrated payment systems. Despite improvements, many eCommerce portals still fell short of delivering truly personalized experiences, being clunky and difficult to navigate.

2025 & Beyond

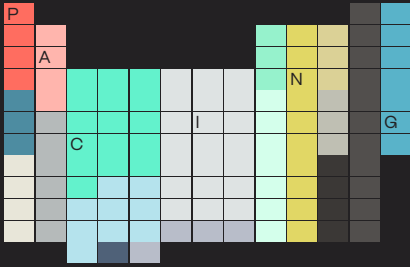
The Shift Towards Modern B2B Selling Experiences



The future of B2B selling is in creating immersive, integrated, and highly personalized experiences. Modern B2B selling experiences use artificial intelligence, machine learning, and advanced data analytics, to provide buyers with tailored recommendations, real-time support, and streamlined purchasing processes. These experiences are designed to be intuitive, collaborative, and engaging, transforming how businesses interact with customers throughout the entire buying journey.

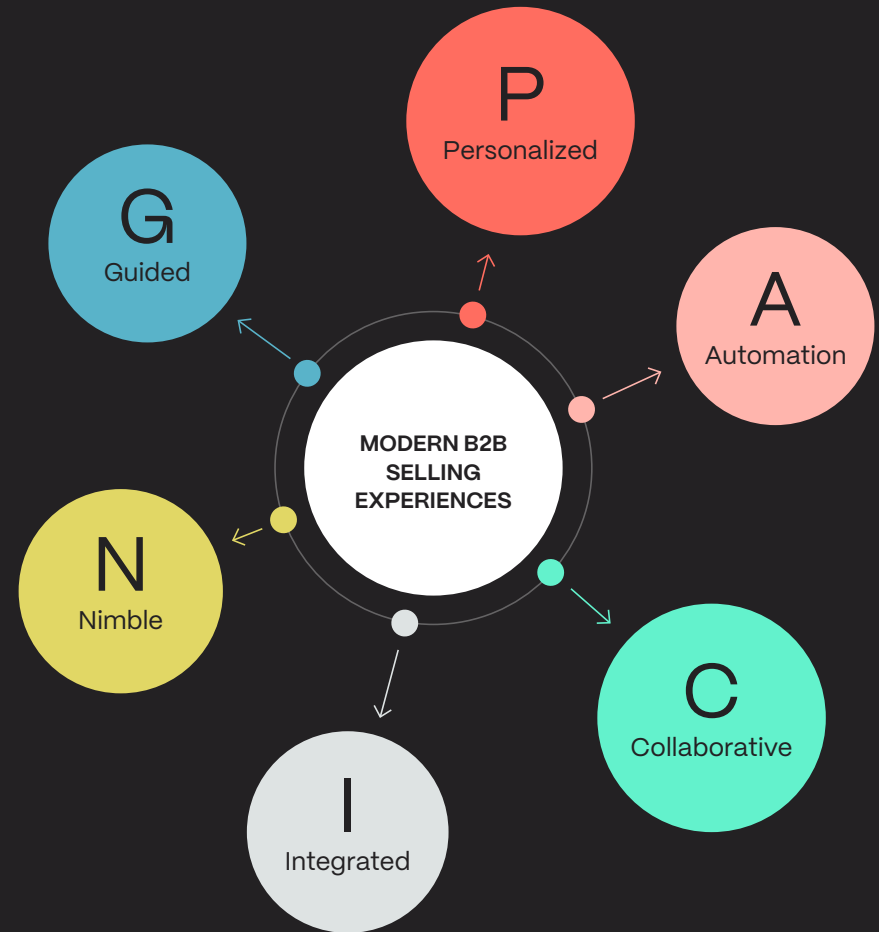
As B2B buyers' expectations continue to evolve, manufacturers and distributors clinging to legacy portals and outdated selling experiences will struggle. Older systems lack the flexibility, scalability, and user-centric features necessary to meet modern buyers' needs. This leads to frustrating customer interactions, ultimately decreasing buyer satisfaction and loyalty. Legacy systems cannot effectively leverage data insights, resulting in missed opportunities for upselling and cross-selling. Maintaining and operating these outdated systems can be costly and resource-intensive, diverting valuable resources away from more strategic initiatives that could drive business success.

The question is, how can B2B manufacturers and distributors move beyond legacy systems and adopt innovative, immersive, and integrated solutions that modernize their selling experiences?



Core Components of a Modern B2B Selling Experience

Zaelab and Shopify package essential modernized selling components using the acronym PACING: Personalized, Automated, Collaborative, Integrated, Nimble, and Guided. Each aspect of PACING contributes to a modern, efficient, and engaging B2B selling experience.



P

Personalized

Personalized

In B2B, the significance of personalization differs from the typical B2C approach. While B2C personalization focuses on targeting products, pricing, or promotions to individual users based on past purchases or interests, B2B personalization caters to the diverse needs of multiple personas interacting with the site. These personas can include engineers, procurement teams, buyers, and end users, each with distinct experience requirements and specific problems to solve.

The good news is that B2B companies are often better positioned to deliver personalized experiences because they typically have access to a wealth of informative data about their accounts. Unlike B2C companies, which can struggle to obtain relevant customer data, B2B companies usually have detailed insights into their customers' past purchases, current needs, and potential future requirements. This rich data enables B2B to create highly personalized experiences that are relevant and predictive, helping to anticipate and meet the specific needs of each persona involved in the purchasing process.

A

Automation

Automated

In complex B2B organizations, users often spend hours navigating B2B commerce or CPQ systems. By automating repetitive tasks within these environments, companies can streamline processes and enhance user efficiency. Automating these time-consuming activities not only improves the overall user experience but also frees up valuable time for users to focus on higher-value tasks, making automation a key driver of success in B2B operations.

C

Collaborative

Collaborative

In B2B organizations, many communication touchpoints still rely on legacy channels like email and phone. Buying cycles involve numerous stakeholders, including sales teams, product engineers, and multiple representatives from the customer's side. This creates an opportunity for B2B organizations to revolutionize the sales process by introducing collaborative experiences through messaging, notifications, and more. By fostering real-time collaboration, B2B companies can enhance efficiency and drive more effective outcomes.

I Integrated

Integrated

The complexity in B2B organizations—pricing, inventory, account management, and workflows—can often hinder improving the selling experience. However, modern B2B selling experiences unify and simplify the customer journey by integrating data from various systems without exposing customers to the underlying intricacies. This approach ensures that, despite the complex backend operations, the customer experience remains intuitive and user-friendly.

N Nimble

Nimble

Speed, performance, and a flexible, intuitive experience are essential for B2B buyers. Delivering a user experience that feels fast and straightforward is imperative. The ability to rapidly deploy and test new capabilities drives optimization and ensures client adoption. This agility allows B2B organizations to continuously refine their offerings and meet their customers' evolving needs.

G Guided

Guided

Guiding users to solve their problems is increasingly important in B2B sales. Without imagery, traditional search methods fall short, and purchasing decisions are driven by product attributes and technical specifications. As demographics shift and experienced employees retire, guided selling experiences can help newer buyers navigate toward the right solutions or products. These guided experiences ensure that even those less familiar with the intricacies of the products can make informed decisions, leading to better outcomes for both the buyer and the seller.

Why B2B Companies Can't Afford to Ignore Modernization

B2B buyers expect intuitive digital experiences that align with their professional needs and decision-making processes. Not delivering a dynamic buying experience? The fallout may include:

Losing Competitive Edge

B2B companies that rely on outdated selling methods will be surpassed by competitors who have adopted modern, digital-first strategies. These competitors can offer more personalized buying experiences that attract and retain customers.

Decreased Customer Satisfaction

Outdated systems lead to frustrating and inefficient buying experiences. This can result in a loss of customer loyalty, as clients may choose to work with companies that provide more user-friendly digital interactions.

Missed Revenue Opportunities

Legacy systems typically lack the advanced capabilities needed to leverage data insights effectively for upselling and cross-selling. This means missed opportunities for generating additional revenue from existing customers.

Higher Operational Costs

Maintaining and operating outdated systems can be costly and resource-intensive. These systems require significant upkeep, which diverts valuable resources away from strategic initiatives.

The Economic Impact of Modernized B2B Selling Experiences

Consider this cost difference between processing orders manually versus digitally: while a manual order can cost as much as \$8 to process, a digital order can cost as little as \$1. That's a \$7 savings per order. Now, do the math—if your company processes 100,000 orders a year, you're looking at a potential savings of \$700,000 annually. This demonstrates just one of the financial advantages of adopting modern selling strategies.

By reducing reliance on manual, labor-intensive tasks, modern B2B selling experiences significantly improve productivity. Automation and digital tools allow businesses to handle more transactions with fewer resources, reducing operational costs and freeing up employees to focus on more strategic, value-added activities. This shift lowers

costs while improving efficiency across the board, enabling B2B to operate more effectively and respond more quickly to market changes.

In addition to reducing costs, modernizing selling experiences also drives revenue growth. Digital tools and platforms provide enhanced data analytics capabilities, allowing businesses to understand customer behavior and preferences better. This enables more targeted marketing efforts, improved upselling and cross-selling opportunities, and the ability to personalize customer interactions at scale. All these factors contribute to increased sales and higher customer lifetime value.

The Modernized B2B Selling Experience Powered by Portul

Portul is the leading Shopify app designed to accelerate B2B commerce growth. Certified by Shopify, it enhances manufacturers' and distributors' storefronts with advanced features like custom catalogs, account-based quoting, and seamless ERP integrations. Delivering a high-performance and modern experience, Portul streamlines transactions, optimizes workflows, and sets a new standard for efficiency and innovation in B2B operations.

Case Study



Global Manufacturer Unlocks New Growth Opportunities with Portul

Certor, a leading manufacturer of protective sports equipment, faced challenges with legacy eCommerce operations that lacked the flexibility and scalability needed to support complex product offerings and a global customer base. Recognizing the need for a more agile and customer-centric approach, Certor made the strategic decision to migrate to Shopify, opting for scalability, ease of use, and the technology's ability to support its growing B2B operations. Shopify's powerful B2B capabilities provided Certor with the foundation needed to enhance its digital storefront, offering a seamless experience for customers and internal teams alike.

To maximize the potential of their Shopify investment, Certor partnered with Zaelab, the digital partner B2B manufacturing and distributing leaders trust to bring their roadmaps to life. Recognizing the opportunity to enhance functionality further and deliver a truly modern selling experience, Zaelab layered Portul on top of Shopify.

Portul, the only Shopify App designed to meet complex B2B needs, extends Shopify's core capabilities with advanced account management, dynamic pricing, and seamless integrations. Through Portul, Zaelab implemented a modern selling solution that enabled Certor to:

Enhance the Digital Buying Journey

Portul provides an intuitive and personalized experience that simplifies complex configurations through dynamic product recommendations, pre-configured templates, and self-service tools. These capabilities allow B2B customers to effortlessly customize products based on their specific requirements, creating a more personalized and modern buying experience that reduces errors and accelerates decision-making.

Streamline Operations

Shopify's scalability and Portul's advanced automation features centralize product information, automate pricing calculations, and synchronize order workflows with existing ERP systems. This seamless integration reduces manual efforts, enhances data accuracy, and ensures a smoother order management process from quote to fulfillment.

Improve Sales Efficiency

With guided selling tools powered by intelligent algorithms, sales reps and distributors gain access to comprehensive product insights and tailored recommendations. This enables them to confidently guide customers through the purchasing process, provide accurate solutions aligned with their needs, and ultimately close deals faster with greater precision.

With Shopify, Zaelab, and Portul, Certor successfully launched a modernized B2B commerce experience that significantly improved customer engagement, operational efficiency, and overall business growth.



7 Reasons B2B Manufacturers and Distributors Should Modernize with Shopify + Portul

The complexity of B2B sales is growing, and so is the pressure to deliver modern experiences. Manufacturers and distributors need a platform that simplifies operations while empowering them to drive business-wide success. Shopify + Portul by Zaelab offers the perfect combination to accelerate your digital transformation and stay ahead of the competition. Here's why:

1

We simplify what slows you down, so you can focus on growth.

Legacy systems, fragmented tools, and complex integrations slow down progress. Shopify + Portul streamline operations with prebuilt, flexible integrations that unify your tech stack from day one—reducing friction, increasing speed, and delivering results that make internal buy-in easier.

2

See results fast, prove your vision, and drive internal alignment.

Proving value quickly is key to securing executive buy-in and budget approvals. With Shopify's agile, cloud-based architecture and Portul's prebuilt B2B capabilities, you can deploy and showcase measurable results in weeks—not months.

3

Deliver personalized, intuitive experiences without the heavy lifting.

B2B buyers expect experiences customized to their specific roles and needs. Shopify + Portul enable role-based personalization, guided selling, and data-driven recommendations that simplify complex purchasing processes while enhancing customer satisfaction.

4

Free up your team to focus on what matters most—innovation and revenue.

Your team is stretched thin—Shopify + Portul alleviate operational burdens with automated workflows, self-service tools, and pre-configured features that let your team focus on strategic initiatives instead of manual tasks.

5

Grow at your own pace, with confidence and agility.

Markets evolve, and your business needs to keep pace. Shopify + Portul offer a composable, scalable solution that allows you to start small and expand capabilities over time—without the risk of costly, disruptive overhauls.

6

One platform. Endless possibilities.

No more siloed systems. Shopify's unified commerce platform enables you to manage both B2B and direct-to-consumer (DTC) sales from a single interface—streamlining operations, reducing overhead, and providing a consistent customer experience across all channels.

7

A trusted partner every step of the way.

Navigating digital transformation requires the right support. With Zaelab's deep B2B expertise and Shopify's world-class platform, you gain a trusted partner that aligns with your vision, provides strategic guidance, and ensures continuous success with 24/7 support.



Start Modernizing Your B2B Selling Experiences Now

As customer expectations continue to grow for fast, intuitive, and personalized digital interactions, now is the time for B2B manufacturers and distributors to take action and evolve their selling experiences to stay relevant and competitive.

Connect with Zaelab and Shopify today to modernize your B2B selling experiences.