



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# E-commerce in the B2B market: solutions for the point of sale

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## Abstract

B2B marketing is challenging, presents itself in a very competitive market, and adds to it high sales volumes, greater capacity for expansion, and the possibility of maintaining truly strengthening partnerships for years, which are beneficial for the growth in the market in which it is inserted. The aim of this work is to analyze the subject of a small business and the use of Internet marketing tools in the given subject with the aim of revealing dysfunctional elements, proposing changes in the use of online marketing tools and marketing strategy and thus improving the effectiveness of the ongoing advertising campaign. The work deals with determining attitudes towards online shopping among potential customers using a questionnaire and obtaining a statistical interpretation of data, which is important for categorizing customers into target groups, taking into account the price and product policy of the store. This data is used to create an appropriate pricing policy and to target advertising. Also in the practical part, the task is to analyze the existing promotion of the company using Internet marketing tools and propose changes.

**Keywords:** B2B marketing, E-commerce, Trade marketing, Curricular stage, Online stores, Selling point.

## Introduction

The arrival of the internet radically changed the way of doing business. In this sense, digital media offer different alternatives to conventional methods for companies to market their products and services. In this way, concepts such as electronic commerce have emerged in the markets to the point of being an unpredictable element to negotiate strategically in organizations of different lines and sectors, in which the secure transmission of information and funds, and the presence of actors and physical spaces to negotiate are eliminated (Chandrasekar Subramaniam, 2002; Laudon & Traver, 2016;

Tsai & Chiang, 2011). It should be noted that e-commerce is one in which goods and services are exchanged electronically and related to information communication, payment management, financial instruments, and transportation. In this way, electronic business allows aligning business objectives with the strategy and facilitates the creation of new products, markets, distribution channels and reduces the cost of business activities (Chan, 2004; Fernández-Portillo, Sánchez-Escobedo & Jiménez- Naranjo, 2015; Heng, 2003; Moreno, Kiran *et al.*, 2016).

In this sense, Business-to-Business (B2B) e-commerce is a widely used modality and implies negotiation between the seller and buyer, therefore, B2B is the electronic support of commercial transactions between companies that allows a company to establish electronic relations with its partners. In this sense, e-commerce continues to grow and will be the broadest form of organizational negotiation in the future. Therefore, this work holistically explored the evolution of e-commerce within the organizational strategy and its relationship with the B2B business model through a bibliometric analysis (Fensel *et al.*, 2001); Martínez-López, *et al.*, 2018).

The evolution and dissemination of e-commerce dates back to the period where the first supercomputers and online commerce were created, at the end of the 1960s, with the use of technologies such as electronic data interchange and the transfer of electronic funds by companies such as Ford and General Motors, which observed the difficulties of costs, speed and certainty inherent in paper transactions (Eastin, 2002; Tuunainen, 1998; Williams & Frolick, 2001).

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In its beginnings, e-commerce faced problems related to communication issues, the business process between commercial actors, services offered, and the context of remote or online processes; In addition, this involved improving the experience for consumers, businesses, government and mobile devices. In the process, problems were also resolved, such as those related to the lack of personal treatment between the client and the buyer, the inability to experience the product before buying it, the need for Internet access to carry out the transaction, fraud, security problems, etc. logistics delays, customs taxes, return of products, infrastructure development for electronic commerce, among others (Alrawi & Sabry, 2009; Niranjnamurthy *et al.*, 2013, Sudha & Premchand, 2014a, Sudha & Premchand, 2014b).

In addition to the above, the term itself of electronic commerce has undergone various transformations and approaches according to different authors, ranging from logistical and supply chain-related approaches to approaches towards different interactions and users (Monroe & Barrett, 2019). For example, widely cited authors such as Sila (2013) propose a unitary concept of B2B EC, defined as all Internet-enabled B2B technologies that enable supply chain partners to buy and sell products and services and share information.

**Analysis of the Current (online) Promotion of the Company**

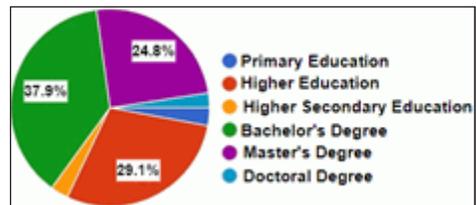
In order to better formulate recommendations regarding the use of online marketing tools in the selected company, a separate questionnaire survey was conducted, which consisted in asking questions about factors that influence the purchasing behavior of consumers and serves for more effective use of online marketing tools, taking into account the wishes and motives of the respondents . The questionnaire formulates recommendations for the marketing strategy and the use of online marketing tools, which are then implemented in the marketing plan. The analysis of the use of online marketing tools formulates the shortcomings that the company must eliminate and formulates final recommendations for using new and already implemented online marketing tools together with the budget proposal for the marketing campaign.

**Analysis of Consumer Behavior based on a Questionnaire Survey**

The analysis of consumer behavior is pre-set using an actually conducted questionnaire survey and is intended to contribute to the understanding of consumers in order to improve internet marketing. At the same time, the questionnaire suggests the possible use of tools for online promotion of the company using the data obtained Questionnaire survey Q1 to 27 is shown in Tables 1-10 and Figures 1-7.

**Table 1: Questionnaire survey - Q1- Q3**

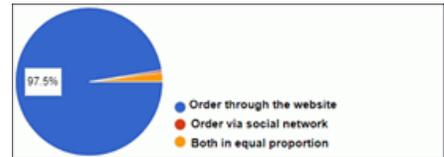
Q1	Gender	A total of 206 respondents took part in the survey, with 87.9% completing the questionnaire was completed by women and 12.1% of questionnaires were completed by men.
Q2	Age	Respondents were divided into 5 age groups, 15-18 years old, 19-26 years old, 27-30 years old, 31-35 years old and 36 to 40 years old, as the e-shop is focused on selling clothes from manufacturers that focus on fashionable clothes, where the main consumers are people in this age range. In the question dealing with determining the age of the respondents, a total of 5 age groups were determined: 15 to 18 years, 19 to 26 years, 27 to 30 years, 31 to 35 years, and 36 to 40 years.
Q3	Current level of education	



**Figure 1: Education of respondents.**

**Table 2: Questionnaire survey - Q4- Q6**

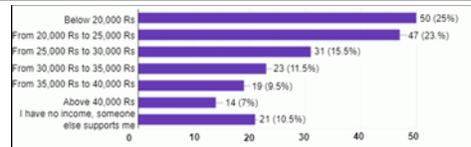
Q4	Do you buy fashion online	This question examines how often respondents shop for fashion online, 27.7% of respondents said they shop fashion regularly (every month), 42.7% said they shop occasionally (once a quarter), 26.7% said that they do so rarely (several times a year), only 2.9% of respondents said that they do not buy fashion online at all.
Q5	If you shop for fashion online, do you mostly	The aim of this question was to find out where the respondents most often buy fashion online. 53% said that they buy from large companies, 16% buy from medium-sized companies, 21% buy from all merchants (large, medium and small, including sole proprietors), 7% said that they buy from small companies or sole proprietors.
Q6	When shopping using the Internet, which form of communication do you prefer?	



**Figure 2: Channel for ordering**

**Table 3: Questionnaire survey - Q7- Q9**

Q7	On average, how much do you spend on fashion in online stores?	This question asks how much respondents spend on fashion when shopping online each year. 55% said they spend less than CZK 10,000 a year, 30.5% spend between 10,000 and 20,000 per year, 8.5% spend from 20000 to 30000 per year, 3.5 spend from 30000 to 50000 per year, 2.5 admitted to spending from 50000 per year.
Q8	What is your annual income?	



**Figure 3: Annual income of respondents.**

Q9 How much are you willing to spend on one pair of pants?

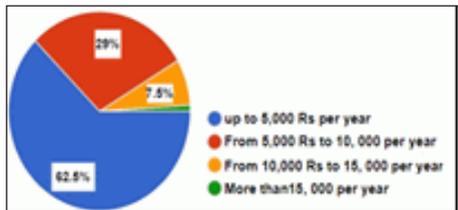


Figure 4: Spending on one pair of pants

Table 4: Questionnaire survey - Q10- Q12

Q10 How much are you willing to spend on one sweater?

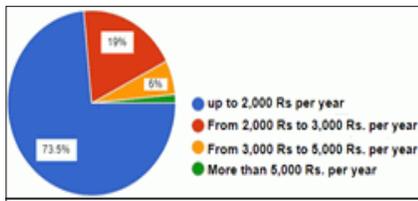


Figure 5: Spending on a sweater

Q11 How much are you willing to spend on a dress/costume? (informal)

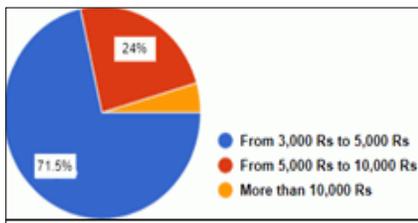


Figure 6: Spending on dress/costume (casual).

Q12 How much do you spend on buying fashion accessories (jewelry, bags, handbags, scarves, straps, etc.)

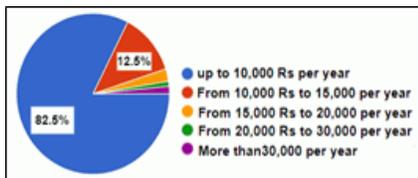


Figure 7: Spending on fashion accessories

Table 5: Questionnaire survey - Q13-Q14

Q13 Quality is important to me when shopping. This question examines how customers perceive product quality when shopping online. In this question, a scale from 1 to 5 is offered, where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important, 5% of respondents are not oriented at all by quality when purchasing, 2.5% have rather an indifferent attitude to quality when purchasing, 20% state that they have a neutral attitude, 47% of respondents state that quality is rather important, 30% state that quality is very important.

Q14 Price is important to me when shopping. This question examines the attitudes of customers towards online shopping in terms of how they perceive price. This question offers a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important. 1.5% of respondents are not at all guided by price when purchasing, 3.5% have a rather indifferent attitude towards price when purchasing, 24% state that they have a neutral attitude, 37.5% of respondents state that price is rather important, 33, 5% say price is very important.

Table 6: Questionnaire survey - Q15

Q15 Brand is important to me when shopping. This question examines the attitudes of customers towards online shopping in terms of how they perceive the brand and if brands are an important criterion when choosing goods. This question offers a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important. 30% of respondents are not at all guided by the brand when purchasing, 18.5% have a rather indifferent attitude towards the brand when purchasing, 28.5% state that they have a neutral attitude, 18.5% of respondents state that the brand is rather important, 4, 5% say that the brand is very important.

Table 7: Questionnaire survey - Q16- Q17

Q16 Do you enjoy discovering new brands? The task of this question is to reveal the respondents' attitude towards new brands, they seem to be looking for them on purpose or rather they prefer the old ones and if they do, to what extent they are interesting to them. 10.5% of respondents say that they like to discover new brands and search for them on purpose, 46% like to discover new brands but more by accident, 38% do not like to search for new brands, but if they come across them, there may be an exception, 5.5% he always remains loyal to his favorite brands and therefore does not advise discovering new brands.

The results indicate that new brands have a relatively high chance of establishing themselves on the market, as 56.5% positively evaluate new brands' discovery.

Q17 Where was the last time you came across a new brand? Finding out where the respondents last came across a new brand aims to help promote new brands on the fashion e-commerce market and thus improve the product promotion strategy, as the e-shop brings new brands to the market. 40.5% of respondents said that they last came across a new brand on the social network Instagram, 20.5 on Facebook, 15% on Glam. The other respondents mentioned their own variants, which, however, are not important for the purposes of marketing management, as it is not possible for the e-shop to cooperate with the mentioned companies, such as Zalando (where 5.5% of respondents last came across a new brand, or zoot).

Table 8: Questionnaire survey - Q18- Q20

Q18 When you shop online, is delivery time important to you? The question examines, it seems important for consumers, what is the delivery time. 49.5% of respondents state that they always monitor the delivery time, 46.5% rather do not monitor the delivery time, 4% state that the delivery time is not that important to them.

This can be used as a competitive advantage because it is possible to target that group of consumers for whom it is important to have the goods as soon as possible.

Q19	Is it important for you to track the progress of the order?	The question examines how customers behave when they have completed an order but have not yet received it. 60% prefer to monitor the status of the order, 33.5 rather do not monitor the order's progress, 6.5% do not monitor the order's progress at all. It is important to inform customers in an appropriate way about the status of the order (for example, SMS or e-mail, sent automatically after the order status has changed).
Q20	Do you value a personal approach from a trader?	A personal approach to communication with the customer can mean: addressing in an e-mail by name, a thank-you letter sent with the order, personal discounts, building relationships with the customer through social networks (for example, responding to comments, messages, etc.), offering using (e.g. via chat or phone call) advice etc. This question examines how respondents perceive the personal approach from the salesperson. 46.5% of respondents said they would welcome it, 39.5% said rather yes. Overall, it turns out that the vast majority of respondents would welcome a personal approach, while only 0.5% of respondents are not at all interested in a personal approach and 13.5% are not sure if it is important to them.

**Table 9:** Questionnaire survey - Q21- Q24

Q21	Does the 1st purchase discount influence your purchase decision?	This question investigates the respondents' behavior regarding the 1st purchase in the e-shop, if a discount on the 1st purchase would induce the customer to make a purchase. 36.5% of respondents answered that the discount on 1st purchase is unlikely to influence their 1st purchase decision, 32% of respondents said that this discount is likely to influence their purchasing behavior, but to some extent, 18% said that the discount is likely to influence their 1st purchase decision, 9.5% said that their shopping behavior is not affected by such a discount at all, 4% of respondents said that their shopping behavior is greatly influenced by the discount on the 1st purchase.
Q22	What discount would make you make the 1st purchase?	This question examines the situation regarding the 1st purchase in an e-shop, what kind of discount would make the customer buy. 75% of respondents said that a 15% discount would be best, 21% would be satisfied with a 10% discount, and 4% would buy with a 5% discount. In other words, this situation perfectly maps the fact that, as a rule, customers are sensitive to the maximum discount. Attracting a customer through advertising is not as cheap as giving a discount on the 1st purchase, thus earning trust.
Q23	Do you use discount coupons?	This question examines whether discount coupons seem to be a good sales promotion tool and how often respondents use them. 12.5% of respondents use discount coupons whenever they get them, 54.5% use them sometimes if they get them, 30% say they rarely use them, 3% don't use them at all. In order to support sales, it is recommended to introduce discount coupons in the e-shop.

Q24	Do you like goods from:	This question examines which fabrics the respondents prefer, and this can contribute to the analysis of the assortment offered in the e-shop. 49.5% of respondents said that they prefer goods made of natural materials, 48.5% prefer goods made of mixed materials, and only 2% prefer goods made of artificial materials.
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**Table 10:** Questionnaire survey - Q25- Q27

Q25	If you order delivery, which service do you prefer?	In this question, the attitude towards the delivery of goods was ascertained if the customer orders the goods in the e-shop. 57% of respondents said that they prefer a parcel to the delivery point of the Parcel service, 25% of respondents prefer a PPL parcel, 7.5% a parcel from Post, only 3% of respondents said that they prefer a parcel. Other services and delivery methods make up an insignificant fraction, they personal collection for 1%, other respondents preferred several services at once to the same extent.  The company currently only uses the services of the Post Office, which appeals to the overwhelming majority of respondents. However, it is recommended to also use the services of the courier company, as 25% of respondents use its services.
Q26	What benefits are important to you when shopping online?	This question examines the main benefits that customers recall in connection with online shopping. This helps to better understand the motivations of customers to shop online. 38.5% of respondents state that the most important factor for them is the possibility to choose goods in peace, 30% mentioned a larger assortment compared to brick-and-mortar stores, 12.5% of respondents mentioned saving time, 9.5% mentioned higher quality at a favorable price, 9% the possibility of returning goods within 14 days, 1 respondent prefers a combination of benefits.  It is recommended to work on expanding the product range.
Q27	If you buy clothes and fashion accessories, then:	In this question, it is investigated whether the purchasing behavior of the respondents depends on the origin of the goods and the attitudes of potential customers towards the origin of the goods. 43% of respondents prefer Foreign products, 56% of respondents said that they do not differentiate between the origin of goods, and 0.5% of respondents prefer Indian products.

This work is focused on the analysis of the use of online tools of Internet marketing in the selected online store <https://www.marksandspencer.in/>. The purpose of the analysis is to describe the individual tools and evaluate their use, whether they seem to be used effectively or not. This analysis will serve for the subsequent evaluation of marketing campaigns and the formulation of recommendations for

their optimization in the part of the work. The owner of the online store <https://www.marksandspencer.in/> uses the following internet marketing tools to promote thie e-shop: Website, PPC ads, fashion search engines, and Social networks.

### Observations and Discussion

For the product portfolio, it is recommended to use the strategy of central diversification (adding new products that are related to the company's activities), which should enable the company to expand the product portfolio, but also to reach a wider range of customers according to its segmentation from question no. 7, 8-12 (Tables 3 and 4), which examined questions about spending on individual types of clothing and accessories. Product diversification means targeting different groups of consumers in terms of willingness to spend certain amounts for individual types of goods. It is also recommended to include in the assortment fashion accessories that are not represented in all categories. Segmentation of customers according to age groups and parameters that influence purchasing behavior (price, quality and brand) from questions no. 13-15 (Tables 5 and 6) should help them use online marketing tools, especially PPC ads more effectively and communicate the most important factor for each age group in advertising messages they follow when purchasing. This data is also recommended to be used for e-mail communication with customers.

For the promotion of the e-shop, it is recommended to use the market penetration strategy, which is to increase the share of current products in its current markets by means of marketing efforts. By these marketing efforts we mean the effective use of internet marketing tools such as PPC ads, social networks and websites

As the exit serves goods from new brands on the market (or those with minimal representation and publicly unknown), it is recommended to look at questions 16-18 (Tables 7 and 8), which examine Discount coupons, events and sales are recommended to promote sales. Questions 15, 16 and 17 capture attitudes towards new brands and clearly answer that the best means of promotion for new brands are social networks. Meanwhile, Instagram leads among social networks.

For sales support, it is recommended to look at questions 21-23 (Table 9), which determine the attitudes of customers towards discounts, but also outline for the company that it is necessary to work on the discount policy, for example the results of 22 say that the most requested discount on the 1st purchase (which can be cleverly introduced as a sign-up reward, among other things, to get new email contacts) is 15%. As it follows from question no. 23, it is also appropriate to introduce discount coupons, because the vast majority of people use them. Coupons can be sent either with an existing order or as a small favor in an email. Question no 25-27 is shown in Table 10

### Conclusion

Using a large number of internet marketing tools is very demanding, costly and laborious and may not always pay off. The effectiveness of the use of these tools depends on their correct settings, therefore the main recommendation for the online store [www.dressitprague.cz](http://www.dressitprague.cz) is to improve the settings of the already used tools, which must be based on statistical data from previous advertising campaigns. It was found that the store does not devote enough time to working with social networks, even though they have a huge potential for the fashion industry. The survey shows that social networks are the most effective tool for promoting new brands, because respondents remember new brands in connection with social networks (Q17).

It was found that the store does not devote itself to SEO optimization and the development of its own blog, therefore it is recommended that it starts to devote itself to these activities as soon as possible. If writing your own texts in the blog is impossible, then it is recommended to use copywriting. With the help of SEO, it is possible to achieve traffic without additional costs, because proper optimization supports the naturalness of the search, if the details and meta descriptions of the products are correctly described (related to what the user is searching for on the Internet). Meta descriptions must be original and at the same time short and contain a call to action for users to convince them to click on the link.

Recommendations for the use of e-mailing, it is first necessary to get contacts to customers, and therefore it is necessary to get them to register on the website, which is usually not easy, if the customer does not see any advantage for himself that results from registration. Therefore, it is recommended to offer the customer some benefit for registration, such as a loyalty discount, coupons, special offers, etc. Using e-mailing, the store can inform customers about special offers, new collections, new articles (if it has its own blog), contests, etc. These e-mails can make the customer visit the site and, in some cases, make a purchase. Remarketing is also important to apply if the company wants to make the use of Internet marketing tools more efficient and it is necessary to work on the use of this tool together with the optimization of PPC ads with Google Ads.

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