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...WHERE B2B MANAGERS MEET AND LEARN

Fast Facts:

Use of Digital Technologies during the Decision-Making Process Survey Results

In our first survey, we sought to learn the degree to which, and the span of, digital technologies that are used throughout the decision-making process. In total, 216 respondents completed the survey. Of those, 8.3% (18) were between the ages of 21-35, 53.2% (116) between 36-55 years old, and 37.6% (82) were 56 years old or older. Respondents came from a wide-variety of industries to ensure generalizability. Respondents rated various tools in terms of frequency used on a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 = not at all and 5 = very frequently.

Results

Purchasing managers continually scan across a variety of resources to keep abreast of possible market trends. No one resource dominates; however, online resources from trade association were used the most frequently to **keep up with market trends** (average = 4.40). To **find new products and vendors**, search engines lead the group (average = 5.75), and not surprisingly so given the ease, low cost and ability to connect to a vast amount of resources. Online groups, communities and forums were used to some degree (average = 3.23), however, these resources come with caveats. Purchasing managers described a reluctance to ask many questions within online communities because of concerns over revealing competitive information and a fear of being bombarded by sales messages from lurking salespeople.

To **evaluate products and vendors**, internal vendor scorecards (average = 3.90) were used more frequently than other options. Some purchasing professionals had tried and true supplier evaluation tools, while others struggled to find a tool and methodology that effectively incorporated the needed input from the right internal customers in a user-friendly manner. Finally, to **manage ordering, delivery, inventory and payment**, homegrown in-house software (average = 5.13) led in frequency of use, though a variety of software companies are vying for the business to shift buyers from in-house to mass networked systems.

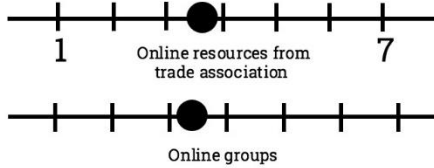
The next question aimed to determine whether **communication internally** among the purchasing manager, internal customers and other points of influence were gravitating beyond the traditional one-to-one formats to more social or group formats that might allow greater types of interactions. We found that email is the most prevalent digital medium (average = 6.83).

Finally, with software companies touting the benefits and prevalence of cloud-based software, we asked about the frequency of use of these tools to **manage customer partnerships**. The technology was not used frequently (average = 1.55 across all three major platforms).

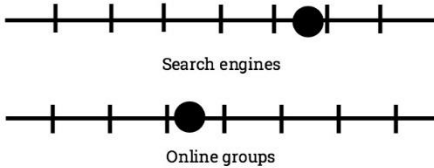
The infographic below captures the top two digital tools used per category studied. While we provided up to five alternatives per category, the remaining three not illustrated were not statistically significant in terms of usage.

The Use of Digital Technology in Today's B2B Buying Process

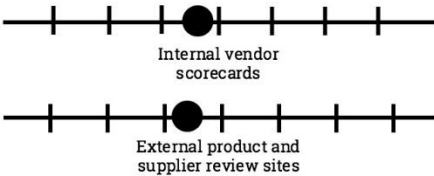
Scanning
Market Trends



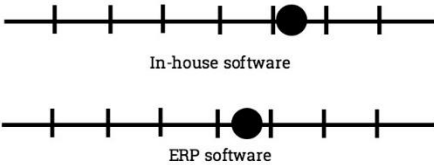
Finding
Vendors



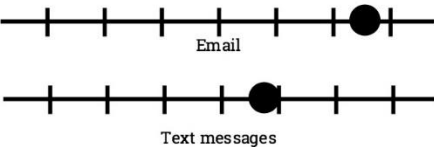
Evaluating
Vendors



Managing the
Buying Process



Communicating
Internally



Managing
Customer
Partnerships

