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Fast Facts:

Takeaways from International Survey of the Use of Digital Purchasing Tools

Colleagues:

Lujie Chen, China Europe International Business School

Damien McLoughlin, University College Dublin

D.V.R Seshadri, Indian School of Business

Jim Narus and Michelle Steward, Wake Forest University

Which digital purchasing tools are most frequently used by purchasing managers in the four countries surveyed?

- **To Keep Up with Market and Technology Trends** – *Online resources from trade associations* (48.5%) followed closely by *social media* (43.8%) and *online groups* (42.9%)
- **To Find New Products and Vendors** – *Search Engines* (83.2%) and in a distance, *online groups* (44.1%) and *e-mail promotional messages from suppliers* (41.9%)
- **To Evaluate Products and Vendors** – *Internal vendor scorecards* (42.6%) and *External product and supplier review sites* (42%)
- **To Manage Ordering, Delivery, Inventory, and Payment** – *Corporate resource planning ERP* (61.2%) and *Internal software* (57%)
- **To Communicate Internally** – *E-mail* (93.5%) and *Text* (71.8%)

Summary – The most frequently used digital tools are e-mail (93.5%), search engines (83.2%), and text messages (71.8%). ERP and internal software are used for vendor management. Vendor scorecards and other online sources (e.g., trade association sites, groups and review sites) are increasingly used.

Which digital purchasing tools are most frequently used by purchasing managers within China, India, Ireland, and USA?

- **To Keep Up with Market and Technology Trends**
 - **China** – *Social media* (74.1%), *Online groups* (61.6%), and *online resources from trade associations* (54.2%)
 - **India** – *Online resources from trade associations* (46.7%) and *online groups* (30.5%)
 - **Ireland** – *Social media* (57%), *online resources from trade associations* (46%), and *online groups* (40%)
 - **USA** – *Online resources from trade associations* (44.7%) and *online groups* (31.6%)
- **To Find New Products and Vendors**
 - **China** – *Search engines* (87.9%), *Purchasing sites* (70.3%), *Social media* (67.5%), *Online Groups* (65.7%), and *E-mail promotional messages from suppliers* (65.3%)
 - **India** – *Search engines* (73.4%), *E-mail promotional messages from suppliers* (38.1%), *Online groups* (38%)
 - **Ireland** – *Search engines* (85%), *E-mail promotional messages from suppliers* (47%)
 - **USA** – *Search engines* (82.5%)
- **To Evaluate Products and Vendors**

- **China** – *Social media (72.7%), External product review sites (68.5%), Risk management software (68.1%), and Internal vendor scorecards (63.9%)*
- **India** – *External product review sites (45.7%)*
- **Ireland** – *Internal vendor scorecards (41%)*
- **USA** – *Internal vendor scorecards (42.8%)*
- **To Manage Ordering, Delivery, Inventory, and Payment**
 - **China** – *ERP (75%), Vendor management systems (73.1%), Spend analysis software (63.9%), Internal software (56.5%)*
 - **India** – *ERP (77.2%)*
 - **Ireland** – *Internal software (72%)*
 - **USA** – *Internal software (67.1%), ERP (55.8%)*
- **To Communicate Internally**
 - **China** – *E-mail (88.4%), Text messaging (86.1%), OneNote (53.7%), Sharepoint (51.5%), Yammer (51.9%)*
 - **India** – *E-mail (91.5%), Text messaging (79.1%)*
 - **Ireland** – *E-mail (98%), Text messaging (60%)*
 - **USA** – *E-mail (97.4%), Text messaging (59.5%)*

Summary – Managers in the four countries all frequently use these tools: search engines, online resources from trade associations, online groups, vendor scorecards, E-mail promotions from suppliers, ERP and internal vendor management software, e-mail and text messaging. **Chinese** purchasing managers use the widest variety of digital purchasing tools most frequently. They are distinctive in their reliance on social media, purchasing sites, external product review sites, vendor management systems, risk management software, spend analysis software, and specialized communications applications. **Irish** purchasing managers rank second in terms of variety and frequency of digital purchasing tools used, mirroring Chinese counterparts in many ways, most notably in the use of social media. They prefer internal software to ERP systems. **Indian** and **USA** purchasing managers tend to use fewer and more selective digital purchasing tools and use them far less frequently than their Chinese and Irish counterparts. Their digital purchasing tool usage corresponds to the most popular internationally.

Which digital purchasing tools are most frequently used by Millennial and Older (36 years and up) purchasing managers in the four countries surveyed?

- **To Keep Up with Market and Technology Trends**
 - **Millennials** – *Online resources from trade associations (59%), social media (53%), online groups (48%)*
 - **Older** – *Online resources from trade associations (52%)*
- **To Find New Products and Vendors**
 - **Millennials** – *Search engines (81%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (58%)*
 - **Older** – *Search engines (84%)*
- **To Evaluate Products and Vendors**
 - **Millennials** – *Vendor management systems (52%), External review sites (50%), Social media (48%), Vendor scorecards (45%)*
 - **Older** – *Vendor Scorecards (42%), External Review Sites (40%)*
- **To Manage Ordering, Delivery, Inventory, and Payment**
 - **Millennials** – *ERP (65%), Internal software (55%), Vendor management systems (46%)*
 - **Older** – *Internal software (66%), ERP (61%)*
- **To Communicate Internally**
 - **Millennials** – *E-mail (96%), Text messaging (83%)*
 - **Older** – *E-mail (95%), Text messaging (70%)*

Summary – Both Millennials and older purchasing managers surveyed frequently use these digital purchasing tools: E-mail, text messaging, search engines, online resources from trade associations, vendor scorecards, and ERP. **Millennials** more frequently used social media, online groups, E-mail promotions from suppliers, external review sites, and vendor management systems. Older purchasing managers more frequently used internal software for vendor management.

Which digital purchasing tools are most frequently used by Millennial purchasing managers in the four countries surveyed?

- **To Keep Up with Market and Technology Trends**
 - **China** – Social media (66%), Online resources from trade associations (65%), online groups (53%), Blogs (53%)
 - **India** – Online resources from trade associations (58%), Online groups (53%)
 - **Ireland** – Online resources from trade associations (64%), social media (55%)
 - **USA** -- Online resources from trade associations (39%), online groups (39%)
- **To Find New Products and Vendors**
 - **China** – Search engines (87%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (76%), purchasing sites (66%), online groups (61%), social media (58%)
 - **India** – Search engines (68%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (53%)
 - **Ireland** – Search engines (91%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (55%)
 - **USA** -- Search engines (67%)
- **To Evaluate Products and Vendors**
 - **China** – Vendor management systems (82%), Social media (69%), External review sites (68%), Risk Management (61%)
 - **India** – External Review Sites (37%)
 - **Ireland** – Vendor Scorecards (55%)
 - **USA** -- Vendor Scorecards (44%)
- **To Manage Ordering, Delivery, Inventory, and Payment**
 - **China** – Vendor management systems (71%), ERP (69%)
 - **India** – Internal software (68%), ERP (68%)
 - **Ireland** – Internal software (82%),
 - **USA** -- ERP (67%)
- **To Communicate Internally**
 - **China** – E-mail (97%), Text messaging (94%), Jive (81%)
 - **India** – E-mail (91%), Text messaging (55%)
 - **Ireland** – E-mail (97%), Text messaging (94%)
 - **USA** -- E-mail (94%), Text messaging (72%)

Summary – **Chinese Millennials** use a wide variety of digital purchasing tools frequently including social media, online groups, purchasing sites, vendor management systems, and risk management. **Irish Millennials** come in second in terms of digital purchasing tool use. In particular, they prefer internal software for vendor management. **Indian** and **USA** purchasing managers are more selective in their digital purchasing tools and they use them less frequently.

Which digital purchasing tools are most frequently used by Older purchasing managers (36 years and up) in the four countries surveyed?

- **To Keep Up with Market and Technology Trends**
 - **China** – Social media (77%), Online resources from trade associations (69%), online groups (64%), Blogs (61%)
 - **India** – Online resources from trade associations (45%)
 - **Ireland** – Social media (57%), Online resources from trade associations (44%), Online groups (42%)

- **USA** -- *Online resources from trade associations (46%), online groups (31%)*
- **To Find New Products and Vendors**
 - **China** – *Search engines (88%), purchasing sites (72%), social media (71%), online groups (68%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (61%)*
 - **India** – *Search engines (68%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (53%)*
 - **Ireland** – *Search engines (91%), E-mail promotions from suppliers (55%)*
 - **USA** -- *Search engines (67%)*
- **To Evaluate Products and Vendors**
 - **China** – *Vendor management systems (79%), Social media (74%), Risk Management (71%), External review sites (69%), Vendor Scorecards (66%)*
 - **India** – *External Review Sites (49%)*
 - **Ireland** – *Vendor Scorecards (39%)*
 - **USA** -- *Vendor Scorecards (44%)*
- **To Manage Ordering, Delivery, Inventory, and Payment**
 - **China** – *ERP (77%) Vendor management systems (74%), Spend Analysis (67%), Internal software (58%)*
 - **India** – *Internal software (80%), ERP (63%)*
 - **Ireland** – *Internal software (71%)*
 - **USA** -- *Internal software (71%), ERP (55%)*
- **To Communicate Internally**
 - **China** – *E-mail (85%), Text messaging (83%), OneNote (58%), Sharepoint (56%), Yammer (56%)*
 - **India** – *E-mail (99%), Text messaging (80%)*
 - **Ireland** – *E-mail (99%), Text messaging (61%)*
 - **USA** -- *E-mail (99%), Text messaging (59%)*

Summary – **Older Chinese** purchasing managers use a similar, wide variety of digital purchasing tools frequently as do their Millennial counterparts. A few notable exceptions include 1) older managers use these tools more frequently: social media, risk management, ERP, spend analysis as well as OneNote, Sharepoint, and Yammer communications applications; 2) older managers less frequently use E-mail promotions from suppliers. **Older Indian** purchasing managers tend to use the same tools as Millennials. Older Indian managers use ERP and texting more frequently. They use online groups and internal software less frequently. **Older Irish** purchasing managers frequently use similar digital purchasing tools as Millennials. Older managers use online groups more frequently and vendor scorecards less frequently. **Older USA** purchasing managers more frequently use internal software and less frequently use ERP and text messaging than Millennials.

NOTABLE FINDINGS

- Chinese purchasing managers more frequently use a wider range of digital purchasing tools than counterparts in the other three countries.
- Irish purchasing managers ranked second in terms of the variety and frequency of digital purchasing tool usage.
- USA purchasing managers tend to use a more narrow selection of digital tools and utilize them less frequently than counterparts elsewhere.
- Digital purchasing tools used frequently in all four countries include e-mail, search engines, text messaging, ERP and internal software for vendor management.
- Surprisingly, vendor scorecards, online trade association sites, online groups, and review sites are frequently used by all surveyed groups.
- Millennials use text messaging, social media, online review sites, purchasing sites, and vendor management systems more frequently than older purchasing managers.
- Older managers use internal vendor management software more than ERP software.