



Digital B2B Platforms

How to Use This Guidebook

Each Digital B2B Platforms Guidebook is created with the business growth needs of small and medium manufacturers in mind. By utilizing the information in this guidebook, you are taking the first steps to creating a competitive advantage for your company by innovating in the face of disruptive technologies.

This guidebook follows a logical flow to guide you as you learn more about Digital B2B Platforms (see Fig. 1). Review the sections as they apply to your individual opportunities and resources, either in the order they're presented or jump around to fit your immediate needs.

Figure 1: Digital B2B Platforms Guidebook Information Flow



This is your toolkit for plugging into the Digital B2B Platforms innovation network.

Together, all of our guidebooks work to uplift manufacturers through increasing digital readiness; working together to accelerate the understanding and investment in emerging technologies; and foster a culture of innovation in the manufacturing industry. We encourage you to also review the other guidebooks in this series.

Who can I contact at IMS?

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Digital B2B Platforms At a Glance

What are “Digital B2B Platforms?”

“Digital B2B Platforms” encompass all the digital communications, sales, commerce, and engagement channels that manufacturers can use to communicate with prospects, customers, employees, and colleagues. From websites to social media, email marketing to online video, manufacturers utilize Digital B2B Platforms to connect with their audiences throughout every phase of their online decision journey.

Why do Digital B2B Platforms matter to the manufacturing community?

Manufacturers can be more visible and accessible to new customers, partners and geographies by utilizing digital platforms. Building relationships through online methods is critical to competing in a global economy where access to potential manufacturing partners is seemingly unlimited and word-of-mouth referrals travel fast. The definition of “business as usual” has evolved as “going digital” is now table stakes for manufacturer survival within our communities.

What are the biggest opportunity areas locally?

We have identified four key opportunity areas in Digital B2B Platforms for manufacturers:

Opportunity #1: Expanding reach beyond current geographic constraints to remain competitive in a global economy

Opportunity #2: Deepen engagement with prospects and customers as they traverse their digital customer journey

Opportunity #3: Close sales using e-commerce options and other online sales and customer service tools

Opportunity #4: Foster a more collaborative relationship between colleagues, peers, and among your employees to grow your company’s digital culture. More information can be found in the Identify Opportunities section of this guidebook.

What are the business benefits of Digital B2B Platforms?

Digital B2B Platforms have been proven to be more cost-effective means of advertising, marketing, and customer service over traditional offline tactics. Customers who feel connected to their manufacturer throughout the decision and purchase process are also more likely to purchase, recommend and refer you to their peers. Learn more about key performance indicators you can expect to improve in the Build the Business Case and Begin Implementation section.

Where can I find help to get started?

There are agencies who can assist you with full digital strategies or specific implementations of tactics on digital platforms that you’ve prioritized. There are also many free online resources, as well as educational courses offered by universities and colleges. Go the Find Help with Expert Partners for a full list of resources to help jump start your use of Digital B2B Platforms to grow your business.



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Appendix

Glossary: Digital B2B Platforms Terms

All definitions provided by online education source, General Assembly, unless otherwise noted.¹³

Analytics: Information resulting from the systematic analysis of data or statistics. In digital marketing, analytics is the information resulting from systematic analysis of data gathered from marketing activity such as email marketing, landing page A/B testing, or Google Adwords purchases.

Average Order Amount: The amount of all orders divided by the total number of orders; used in digital marketing to help calculate the necessary reach, along with CTR and conversion rate.

Banner Ads: Also known as “display ads”, these advertising units are images that advertisers place on known publishers’ websites in order to attract or re-attract their target audience.

Baseline: An established level of normalcy; in digital marketing, for example, the normal or regular number of unique visitors per day to a website.

Blogging: From the term “web log”, in which a user actively updates a visible section of a website in order to inform or attract users and customer on a regular basis.

Channels: A delivery mechanism; in digital marketing, a business’s message is delivered via one or more marketing channel such as email, social media, blogging, advertisements, etc. 22

Click Through Rate (CTR): The percentage of the targeted audience that is exposed to the marketer’s message that click on the link provided in the message and land on the marketer’s web property.

Conversion Rate: The percentage of unique visitors to a website that are “converted” into customers, users, or leads.

Digital Marketing Calendar: A tool that provides for time-based structure and discipline for the digital marketer in planning, assigning, creating, and delivering content to the marketer’s target audience.

Digital Marketing Funnel: A visualization of the calculations that starts with the total universe of targeted audiences, then measures those who click on a link from marketing content, the click through rate (CTR), the conversion rate, total conversions, order amount, and revenue.

Distribution: The means by which a product or service is delivered to its end user or customer.

Earned Content: Content not created by the marketer, but rather created and shared by fans of the marketer’s message to the fan’s social and other digital connections.

Engagement: In digital marketing, the term for user interaction with a particular piece of shared content: Likes, shares, comments on Facebook; RTs, replies, favorites on Twitter, and link clicks on all social media.

Facebook Ads: The program operated by Facebook that enables paying customers to use hyper-targeting via Facebook profile tags and traits to reach a certain specific audience via advertisements placed in the users’ timeline.

¹³ <https://generalassemb.ly/blog/digital-marketing-glossary/>



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