

A man with a goatee, wearing a light blue sweater and jeans, stands in a warehouse aisle. He is smiling and holding a laptop. The background shows tall shelves filled with cardboard boxes.

Why your B2B retail website is losing you money (and how to fix it)

A practical guide to spotting and fixing the hidden revenue leaks on your B2B retail website, backed by recent industry data and real performance benchmarks.

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Executive Summary

Your website is your most visible sales tool. For B2B retailers, it is where buyers research products, compare pricing, place orders and manage accounts. Yet many B2B retail websites still lose revenue through slow performance, dated design and journeys that ask buyers to work too hard.

The data is clear. Nearly half of B2B buyers say they are dissatisfied with the digital experiences their suppliers offer.

Three-quarters say they would switch to a competitor that delivers a better one. Average B2B ecommerce conversion rates sit at around 1.8%, and checkout abandonment remains above 70%. Those percentages translate into orders that never make it through to confirmation.

This whitepaper covers five common areas where B2B retail websites lose money, explains why they matter and lays out practical steps you can take to improve them.

It is written for marketing directors, ecommerce managers and business owners who know their website should be doing more, but are not sure what to tackle first.

If you sell electrical supplies, industrial components, building materials or any other B2B product range, the principles are the same. The good news is that most of these issues are fixable. Better still, small improvements often deliver measurable returns.

We have structured this guide around five problem areas. Each section includes industry benchmarks so you can compare your site, followed by practical actions you can take.



The B2B retail landscape in 2026

B2B ecommerce is now a core channel. The global market is valued at over £25 trillion and growing at a compound annual rate of 14.5%. In the UK, B2B ecommerce for physical goods is on track to surpass £120 billion. Around 80% of B2B sales interactions now happen through digital channels, up from just 13% in 2019.

Buyer expectations have moved on faster than many B2B websites. Millennials and Gen Z now account for 71% of B2B purchasing decisions. These buyers grew up with Amazon, instant delivery and one-click checkout. They expect speed, transparency and a buying experience that respects their time.

A full 68% of millennial B2B buyers prefer self-service research tools over speaking to a sales rep, and 90% report dissatisfaction with at least one part of their current supplier experience.

The gap between what buyers expect and what many B2B retailers deliver is where the revenue leaks start. According to recent industry data, only 17% of B2B companies use data to personalise their buyer journeys and just 7% deliver a consistent experience across digital channels.

What follows are five areas where B2B retail websites commonly lose money, plus a framework for fixing them.

1

Before we get into the detail, it is worth saying this: these are not edge cases. They are patterns we see repeatedly when auditing B2B retail websites. A distributor whose site takes six seconds to load on mobile. A wholesaler whose checkout has 23 form fields. A retailer whose site search returns zero results for 12% of queries. These are everyday problems with everyday revenue impact.

1. Slow site speed is costing you conversions

£2 billion+

Estimated annual revenue lost by UK online businesses due to slow-loading websites

Speed is the first impression your website makes. Before a buyer reads a single word or browses a product, they have already judged your experience by how quickly the page loads.

In B2B, where buying decisions involve multiple stakeholders returning to your site again and again, slow load times build friction at every stage.

A B2B website that loads in one second converts at three times the rate of one that loads in five seconds, and five times the rate of one that takes ten seconds. Every extra second of load time reduces conversion rates by between 7% and 20%. And 82% of consumers say slow page speeds influence their purchasing decisions.

Despite this, performance has barely improved in recent years. Around 82% of B2B pages load within five seconds, the same figure recorded in 2019. That might sound fine until you look at what it does to conversion.

What to look for

Test your site using Google PageSpeed Insights and focus on Core Web Vitals:

Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) should be under **2.5 seconds**

Interaction to Next Paint (INP) should be under **200 milliseconds**

Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) should be below **0.1**

Currently, only around 43% of mobile websites meet all three thresholds.

Quick wins

- Compress and properly size product images. Image optimisation alone has been shown to cut load times by up to 65% and double conversions in some cases.
- Defer non-essential JavaScript and load scripts asynchronously where possible.
- Use a content delivery network (CDN) to serve assets from locations closer to buyers, especially if you sell across multiple regions.
- Review your hosting. Cheap shared hosting can add one to three seconds to load time. A well-optimised server can cut load times significantly.
- Prioritise speed fixes on high intent pages first: checkout, login, product category and product detail pages.

When Vodafone improved its LCP by 31%, it saw a 15% increase in lead to visit rate, an 11% boost in cart to visit rate and 8% more completed sales.

Speed has a direct link to revenue, it's not a technical vanity metric. Speed also affects visibility in search engines. Google uses Core Web Vitals as a ranking factor, and search engines allocate a limited crawl budget to index your site. Slower pages often mean fewer product pages discovered and ranked.

For B2B retailers with large catalogues, that can mean less organic traffic, fewer buyers and less opportunity to grow without increasing ad spend.

2. Your mobile experience is driving buyers away

85.65%

Cart abandonment rate on mobile devices, compared to 73% on desktop

There is a persistent myth in B2B that buyers only use desktops. But it's wrong.

Over half of all web traffic now comes from mobile devices, and mobile interactions drive more than 40% of revenue for B2B brands. Procurement managers, field buyers and operations teams use phones and tablets to browse catalogues, check stock levels and place reorders on the go.

Yet mobile B2B experiences are often poor. Desktop users convert at roughly 3.9%, while mobile users convert at around 1.8%. That is not because mobile users are less serious. It is usually because the site was designed for desktop first and mobile second. Smaller screens, slower networks, fiddly forms and checkout flows that have never been tested on a phone all add friction.

Mobile cart abandonment sits at 85.65%, compared to around 73% on desktop. That 12-point gap can represent a lot of lost orders, especially for repeat-buy catalogues where buyers already know what they want.

What to look for

Check your analytics for mobile traffic share and compare conversion rates by device. If there is a big gap between desktop and mobile performance, your mobile experience needs attention.

Pay particular attention to product pages and the checkout flow on smaller screens.

Quick wins

- Audit your checkout on a real mobile device, not just a browser resize. Test iOS and Android on slower connections.
- Reduce form fields at checkout. Baymard Institute research shows an ideal checkout can be as short as 12 to 14 form elements. Most sites could cut fields by 20% to 60%.
- Implement mobile-friendly payments such as Apple Pay and Google Pay and make reordering simple for returning customers.
- Make search and filters thumb-friendly. Touch targets should be at least 48 pixels. Filters should be easy to apply and clear.
- Consider if a progressive web app (PWA) is right for your repeat buyers. PWAs can load faster, work offline and feel like an app without a download.

Research from BCG found that 90% of B2B buyers are more likely to reorder from a supplier that offers a strong mobile experience, compared to around 50% who would return after a poor one.

One practical point that gets missed: B2B buyers often access your site on corporate networks with firewalls, older browsers and shared bandwidth.

Your site may test well at home but struggle in real workplace conditions. If your mobile site is slow or broken on corporate networks, you lose opportunities before buyers ever see your catalogue.

3. Poor product discovery is hiding your catalogue

95%

of B2B buyers choose vendors who provide enough content to guide them through each stage of their buying journey

Your catalogue might be broad, but if buyers cannot find what they need quickly, it might as well not exist.

In B2B retail, catalogues often run to thousands of SKUs with complex specs. Weak search, unclear navigation and thin product pages are expensive problems because they stop buyers long before checkout.

B2B buyers spend most of their research time online, and 87% say online content has a major or moderate impact on which supplier they choose. Your website needs to answer questions buyers used to ask sales reps directly: compatibility, specifications, stock, lead times and bulk pricing.

Too many B2B retail sites still rely on basic keyword search that returns irrelevant results, use category structures that make sense internally but not to buyers and bury key product information behind multiple clicks.

What to look at

Run a search audit. Try ten common buyer queries and assess the results:

- Are results accurate and fast?
- Do you handle synonyms, part numbers and common misspellings?
- Do you surface in-stock products and relevant alternatives?

Then look at your site search analytics. High exit rates from search results pages are a clear signal that search is letting buyers down.

Quick wins

- Invest in intelligent site search that understands intent, not just keywords. AI-led search tools can interpret queries such as “food-grade seal for a 1 inch valve” without the buyer knowing exact product names.
- Structure product data so it is machine readable. Clean attributes, searchable specs and consistent formatting make discovery easier for buyers and search engines.
- Add faceted filtering so buyers can narrow results by spec, brand, price range, stock status and other relevant attributes.
- Improve product pages with clear specs, downloadable data sheets, compatibility information and good imagery. Keep layouts scannable.
- Build supporting content around products. Technical guides, application notes and comparison resources help buyers decide and improve organic visibility.

Only 24% of B2B wholesalers currently use AI to improve buyer experience, which means there is a real head start available for retailers who invest in smarter product discovery.

When buyers cannot find what they need, they do not wait. They open another tab.

B2B marketplaces have grown from 75 to over 750 in five years, and six in ten B2B buyers already do more than a quarter of their purchasing on Amazon Business. Your onsite discovery needs to feel at least as easy as the platforms buyers already use.

There is an SEO angle too. Thin, duplicated or poorly structured product pages struggle to rank. Organic search converts at around 2.6% for B2B, one of the highest rates of any channel. Every product page that fails to rank is a missed opportunity to capture buyers who are actively searching for what you sell.



4. Checkout friction is killing your orders

70.22%

Average cart abandonment rate across ecommerce, with B2B often higher due to complex ordering requirements

Getting a buyer to add products to their basket is only half the job. The other half is getting them through checkout.

The average checkout has 5.1 steps from basket to confirmation, and that has not changed since 2012. Nearly one in five buyers abandon orders because the checkout is too long or too complicated. Unexpected costs at the payment stage, including delivery charges, taxes and fees not shown earlier, drive almost half of all abandonments.

B2B checkout adds complexity: purchase order numbers, account-specific pricing, delivery windows and internal approvals. If your checkout cannot handle these smoothly, buyers often revert to phone or email, which undermines the purpose of ecommerce.

What to look for

Map your checkout step by step and count the form fields. Baymard Institute recommends a maximum of 12 to 14 form elements for an optimised checkout.

Also, check whether pricing, delivery costs and estimated delivery dates are visible before the final payment step. Surprises are the biggest cause of abandonment.

Quick wins

- Show all costs upfront. Display shipping, VAT and any surcharges as early as possible.
- Offer guest checkout. Let buyers complete the order first and create an account afterwards.
- Implement flexible payment terms. B2B buy now, pay later transactions are predicted to reach nearly £400 billion globally by 2026. Net 30, net 60 and embedded credit options can improve conversion.

- Add trust signals throughout checkout: clear returns policies, security messaging and recognisable payment logos.
- Make reordering easy. Saved baskets, quick order forms and CSV uploads can cut time to purchase for repeat buyers.
- Set up abandoned basket emails. Cart recovery emails often achieve open rates above 41% and conversion rates around 10.7%.

Baymard estimates that better checkout design alone could recover £200 billion of lost orders across US and European ecommerce. Even a small share of that is meaningful for any B2B retailer.

One practical difference between B2B and B2C checkout: consumer checkout is mostly about speed. B2B checkout needs speed and operational flexibility. The best B2B checkouts use smart defaults, show fields only when relevant and remember preferences so repeat buyers can order in minutes.

Payment matters, too. Nearly 40% of B2B buyers now make purchases over £400,000 through digital channels, up from 28% two years ago. Buyers need confidence that payment is secure, terms are clear and the process is reliable.

5. No personalisation means missed opportunities

66% of B2B buyers now expect personalised experiences comparable to consumer ecommerce

Many B2B buyers now expect their online experience to reflect who they are, what they have bought before and what they are likely to need next.

Two-thirds of B2B buyers expect personalisation on par with consumer ecommerce. Businesses implementing AI-led personalisation report conversion rate improvements of up to 28%.

Yet many B2B retailers still show the same homepage, the same product lists and the same generic recommendations to everyone.

his matters because B2B buying journeys are long and involve multiple stakeholders. A typical sale can involve around ten decision makers and take over four months to close. During that time, stakeholders visit your site repeatedly. If your site does not remember them and adapt, you add friction to every return visit.

What to look for

Compare logged-in and logged-out experiences:

- Do returning customers see negotiated pricing?
- Can they access order history and saved lists quickly?
- Are recommendations based on purchase patterns or generic best sellers?

If the answer is no to any of these, there is room to improve.

Quick wins

- Start with account-based personalisation. Show account-specific pricing, previously ordered products and suggestions based on purchase history.
- Segment your catalogue. Different buyer types need different views. A trade counter customer, a facilities manager and a project specifier care about different details.
- Build self-service account portals. Let buyers manage users and permissions, track deliveries, download invoices and access order history without contacting your team.
- Use data to trigger relevant communications: reorder reminders based on typical cycles, low stock alerts for frequently bought items and personalised promotions based on browsing.
- Connect CRM, ERP and ecommerce platforms. Real-time syncing keeps pricing, stock and customer data accurate across channels.

Personalisation does not have to mean a full platform overhaul. Many of the highest-impact changes can be implemented in stages. Start with the changes that remove the most friction for your highest value customers and build from there.

Personalisation also helps your sales team. The goal is to free people from routine tasks so they can focus on complex deals and strategic accounts. When your website handles reorders, stock checks and simple enquiries, your team spends less time on admin and more time building relationships.

Content plays a part too. Different stakeholders care about different things. A technical buyer wants specifications and compatibility. A finance decision-maker wants terms and ROI. Procurement wants ordering efficiency and account tools. Tailoring content by role, behaviour or account history helps each stakeholder find what they need faster.



A practical audit framework

Improving a B2B retail website does not need to be one giant project.

The most effective approach is to audit each of the five areas below, score your current performance against benchmarks and prioritise changes that deliver the biggest impact for the least effort.

Here is a simple framework to get started:

Area	What to measure	Benchmark to aim for
Site speed	LCP, INP, CLS via Core Web Vitals	LCP under 2.5s, INP under 200ms, CLS under 0.1
Mobile UX	Mobile vs desktop conversion rate gap	Gap of less than 1 percentage point
Product discovery	Site search exit rate, zero result rate	Exit rate below 30%, zero results below 5%
Checkout	Cart abandonment rate, checkout form fields	Abandonment below 65%, fields at 12 to 14 maximum
Personalisation	Returning vs new visitor conversion rate	Returning visitors converting at 2x or higher

You should run this audit quarterly. Buyer expectations change, and your website should keep up.

The ROI of getting it right

It is easy to view website optimisation as a cost. In practice, it is often one of the highest return investments a B2B retailer can make.

A one-point increase in conversion rate, for example from 2% to 3%, can reduce customer acquisition costs by 15% to 25% because you get more orders from the same spend

For a B2B retailer generating £500,000 per month online, moving from 2% to 3% conversion could represent an extra £250,000 per month in revenue without increasing traffic.

The numbers add up at a granular level too:

- A faster checkout that recovers just 5% of abandoned baskets can add thousands of pounds per month.
- A one-second improvement in page speed that lifts conversion by 10% often pays for itself quickly.
- A personalisation programme that increases average order value by a few per cent across thousands of transactions adds up fast.

The compound effect matters most. Improvements to speed, mobile, discovery, checkout and personalisation reinforce each other. Faster pages reduce mobile bounce. Better discovery leads to fuller baskets. Personalisation improves reorder rates.

Gartner projects that 75% of B2B organisations will complete their highest revenue deals through digital channels by 2028. The gap between digital leaders and laggards is widening.

A useful way to frame the business case: if your website generates £200,000 per month at a 2% conversion rate, you are attracting roughly 10,000 visitors. Those visitors are already on your site. You do not always need more traffic. You often need to convert more of the traffic you already have.

Where to start

If you are wondering where to begin, here is a sensible order of priority:

1. Start with speed. It is quick to measure, usually low risk to improve and it benefits everything else. Run a Core Web Vitals audit this week and fix the biggest issues within 30 days.
2. Fix your checkout. This is where revenue is closest to the finish line. Reduce fields, make costs clear, add trust signals and set up basket recovery emails.
3. Tackle mobile. Audit the full journey on real devices and fix the biggest friction points. Pay close attention to search, filters and checkout.
4. Improve product discovery. Upgrade search, tidy product data and build content that helps buyers make decisions.
5. Layer in personalisation. Start with basics such as account pricing and order history, then progress to segmentation and recommendations as your data and platform mature.

A 30-day action plan you can actually run

If you want to move from reading to doing, this is a simple month-long plan that works well for most B2B retail sites. It assumes you have access to analytics, your ecommerce platform admin and someone who can make site changes (internal team or agency).

Week 1: Baseline and quick diagnostics

- **Capture a baseline:** record current conversion rate, revenue, average order value, cart abandonment and top landing pages.
- **Run Core Web Vitals tests** on your top category pages, top product pages, login, basket and checkout.
- **Walk the full journey** on mobile and desktop. Buy a product end-to-end, including account creation and password reset.
- **Pull your top-20 site searches** from analytics and test the results manually.

Output: a short list of issues with actual evidence, not just your opinions.

Week 2: Speed and stability fixes

- Focus on changes that reduce load time without redesigning the site.
- Resize and compress images, especially on category pages and product pages.
- Remove or delay scripts you do not need on every page.

- Fix layout shift issues caused by late-loading banners, pop-ups and embedded content.
- Check hosting resources and caching. If you are fighting your server every day, you are paying for it in lost orders.

Output: improved Core Web Vitals on high-intent pages and fewer user complaints that start with "it's slow".

Week 3: Checkout and mobile friction

- Remove or combine fields that buyers do not need.
- Ensure totals, VAT and delivery costs are visible before payment.
- Add express payment options where they fit your customer base.
- Improve mobile tap targets, error handling and form input types.

Output: a shorter checkout with fewer abandoned baskets.

Week 4: Discovery and reordering

- Improve search relevance for the queries you pulled in week 1.
- Add missing synonyms, part number handling and "did you mean" suggestions.
- Tighten category filters and make them easy to use on mobile.
- Add or improve quick order tools for repeat buyers (saved lists, upload, order by code).

Output: buyers find products faster, and repeat orders take less time.

How to measure progress

Do not wait for a full year to decide if the work was worth it. Track these weekly:

- **Checkout completion rate** (basket to order)
- **Search exit rate** (search results to exit)
- **Mobile conversion rate** and mobile basket abandonment
- **Core Web Vitals** on your top 10 revenue pages

If one metric improves but revenue does not, check for changes in traffic quality and product availability. If revenue improves but conversion does not, check average order value and repeat buying.

Turning your website into a dependable sales channel

Your B2B retail website should do more than look professional. It should make it easy for buyers to find the right product, place an order and come back to reorder.

The five issues covered in this whitepaper are common, measurable and fixable. Many B2B retailers are losing revenue in at least two or three of these areas. The ones that address them systematically recover that revenue and make life easier for their customers at the same time.

B2B ecommerce is growing quickly, and buyer expectations keep rising. Every day your website underperforms, you pay for traffic that does not convert, lose orders to competitors with smoother checkout journeys and miss reorders because returning customers cannot find what they need quickly.

The best B2B retailers treat their website as a living asset. They test, measure and improve continuously. They listen to what their data is telling them and act.

Pick the biggest gap between where you are now and where you should be, fix it and move on to the next.

You don't need perfection, you just need progress.

Ready to find out where your website is losing money?

Ascensor helps B2B retailers build websites that convert. From performance audits and UX reviews to full platform builds and ongoing optimisation, our team has been delivering measurable results for B2B businesses since 2007.

Get in touch for a free initial review of your website performance.

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Sources and further reading

The data referenced in this whitepaper has been drawn from the following sources, all published or updated between 2024 and 2026:

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