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# 5 REASONS

## WHY SELLING ONLINE

## MAKES B2B COMPANIES

## MORE EFFICIENT

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[www.sana-commerce.com](http://www.sana-commerce.com)

**84%** of B2B buyers would  
be open to purchase industrial  
materials and parts online

*Source: Acuity Group 'State of B2B Procurement', 2014*



## Introduction

Offline orders have made your company very successful. They brought your company to the level it is now. Your employees are used to this method and your daily challenge has become to handle incoming orders as efficient as possible.

So far so good. But you also notice the B2B market is changing. You want to keep up, but unfortunately, efficiently handling offline orders is no longer good enough. You need a new strategy. A new strategy that includes selling online.

Adding an online sales portal to your business expands your reach and helps to provide better service to customers. It also makes you able to create operational excellence for your sales organization.

In this whitepaper we collected 5 simple reasons that explain why selling online makes B2B companies more efficient.

## 1 Online ordering takes less time to process

Phone, fax or e-mail. Orders that come through these traditional channels need to be handled manually. A time consuming process that prevents your sales team from actually making sales.

An online sales portal helps your B2B business handle orders more efficient. Because the online sales portal is directly lynched to your ERP system, the right order information is automatically stored within a second. Customers can place orders without taking up valuable time of your employees and your company no longer runs the risk of man made errors.

*“You will never have to run out of stock again.”*

Another benefit of having your online sales portal directly connected to your ERP system is the convenience of having direct insight in

accurate stock information. When customers order products 'offline', your B2B business runs the risk of promising products that are not actually in stock. As a result, customers often have to be contacted and asked if they would like to order alternative products, or wait for when your inventory is up to standard.

With an online sales portal, customers can only order what's actually in stock. Because of this, your employees will save time and and you'll never have to run out of stock again. On top of that, your customers can estimate the delivery time more accurately and feel more secure about their purchase. In all, having direct insight in accurate stock information makes everyone's life easier.

## 2 Online ordering is less sensitive for mistakes

Every order in your B2B business goes through the same specific set of steps. It helps to make the ordering process more effective. But every step has it's own vulnerabilities and with each added step you increase the chance of errors.

*"Mistakes that are caused by manual processing often include shipment returns, which are expensive and time consuming."*

What if your customer support or sales support employee no longer has to

manually copy the order information into your ERP or administration system? Wouldn't that help to prevent mistakes and therefore help save your company time and money?

Giving your customers the ability to order directly in your online sales portal, excludes the risk of miscommunication.

## 3 You will save time answering simple questions

The service your B2B business provides is highly valued by your customers. In fact, it's one of your unique selling points.

A lot of B2B businesses have sales support departments that repeatedly answer questions all day on the phone about order history, stock levels or detailed product information.

The sales support department has almost become a symbol that reflects great customer service. But it is also a time consuming symbol. It makes your sales organization spend time on answering the same questions over and over again.

This of course is no problem when these are questions only your agents can answer personally.

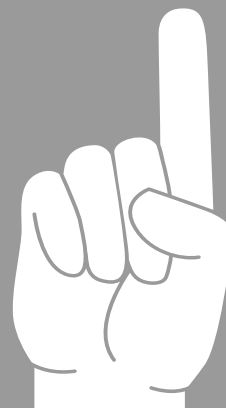


# 91%

of Sana customers recognize that manually processing offline orders is one of the main reasons for shipment mistakes

**71%** of B2B buyers even prefer to conduct their own online research before contacting a sales rep.

*Source: Acquity Group 'State of B2B Procurement', 2014*



But most of the questions are not special. The information could have been easily retrieved by the customers themselves if only there was an online sales portal with product information like customer specific) pricing and accurate stock level available to them.

So if you don't have an online sales portal, they will have to call you, or send you an e-mail for every simple question they might have. This is why adding an online sales portal to your business is already a big win for efficiency.

## **4 Your sales team can find all information in one place**

When you are having an assortment of approximately 200 000 products it is not only hard for your customers to get the right information. It can also be hard for your own sales organization to immediately have the right information available. Therefore adding an online sales channel can be

beneficial for both external and internal customers.

If you setup an online sales portal, you make all relevant product information available at one location, anytime and anywhere. An online sales portal will soon become a very convenient tool for everybody in the organization to lookup product information, prices, product images, stock levels and so on.

If you do this right, all colleagues involved in sales will embrace the online sales portal. Therefore there is a pretty good chance they will promote it among your customers, leading to better adoption and more efficiency. It's that simple.

**83%** of B2B buyers use supplier websites for online research but less than half of those find it the most helpful channel

*Source: Acquity Group 'State of B2B Procurement', 2014*

## 5 Your outside sales reps become more effective

An online sales channel is not only build to extend a sales reps activities but also to make him more efficient. How does that work?

If the online sales portal is up and running, sales reps can have instant access to all product information, pricing and stock. Also information regarding the order history of a customer, possible outstanding amounts and frequently ordered products are available at-a-glance. Using all this information in meetings with customers will really make your employees operate much more effective. Now they can make more specific product suggestions based on previous orders, on the spot.

Besides that, any order the customer would like to place with the sales rep, can be processed directly in the sales portal, showing the customer specific pricing and taking into account their particular ordering conditions. We make this available for our customers in a mobile ordering app that also works offline. Just in case there is no coverage at the customers' location.

## Conclusion

Adding an online sales channel to your B2B business is a big win for efficiency. It takes less time to process, is less vulnerable for mistakes and you'll never have to run out of stock again.

Next to this, you're sales organization will save valuable time answering simple questions. They will be much better prepared for making sales on the road, in a meeting or even just at the office because all information they need is ready and fast available to them.

Maintaining an efficient ordering process will keep your business in the best possible shape. And being in good shape does not only help your customers better or even beat the competition, it makes you feel much better, and and isn't that what every B2B company is looking for?

## About Sana Commerce

We help wholesalers and manufacturers to grow online. We do this by delivering fully integrated B2B e-commerce solutions for Microsoft Dynamics and SAP that are easy to use and have a low cost of ownership.

With more than 20 years of experience in the field of e-commerce and a worldwide network of over 130 partners, Sana offers a complete set of additional services that are essential to successfully run your online business, such as advice on Search Engine Optimization (SEO), online marketing, hosting, online payment providers and graphic design.

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## Start selling today!

Starting integrated e-commerce with Sana is quick. You can easily launch your online store in only 15 days with the complete and professionally designed web store, out-of-the-box. You have everything you need to make your storefront stand out, without the need for extensive technical knowledge.

Call us for the next steps in your inquiry, or please visit our site for more information.

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## Want to know more?

Download our free e-book 'Things they don't tell you about B2B e-commerce' from our website.

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