



The path-to-purchase in B2B tech:

How senior IT leaders are approaching the journey

Smoothly and seamlessly guiding customers to consider and ultimately buy from your organisation is a complex journey of many stages. This so-called ‘path to purchase’ (P2P) is crucial to commercial success and business growth – and it’s a process that’s ever-evolving, with instant information at the fingertips of buying committees like never before. And as if all that wasn’t enough to think about, doing so against a backdrop of market, economic and political disruption over the last few years simply adds to the urgency.

Understanding your customers’ perceptions, motivations and desired outcomes along this journey is critical – if you don’t, there’s a risk your competitors will – and conducting research among that audience can give you the necessary solid footing to proceed from.

To better understand the environment that buyers are operating in, we set out to interview a selection of senior IT procurement leaders across the UK to understand the approach to purchasing in their organisation and identify the most important way markers influencing their chosen route.

We spoke to senior IT and procurement decision makers from enterprise organisations in the UK. Here’s five things they told us that were key to their approach:

1

Partnerships are in demand

Organisations aspire to longer-term partnerships with trusted vendors, to feel supported through periods of disruption; there’s a considerable business cost to onboarding new supply partners.

Look to develop trust from the outset of the procurement process for the greatest competitive advantage



No reason why we would want to go with a brand-new supplier when we had a trusted supplier offering us a similar or same product at the same price

Head of ICT Services, Retail

2

Think beyond the immediate need

Showcasing the ability to support wider business innovation and strategic delivery, as well as consideration to external factors, will be favourably received.

Gain an understanding of the wider business objectives and external impact to enable a consultative approach throughout the procurement process



I don’t see them as just an external supplier... they’re identifying strategic opportunities, identifying what other clients are doing... bringing that insight to us to allow us to intelligently make the right decisions

IT Manager in Procurement, Banking

3

Off-the-shelf presentations won’t fly

While the product solution is often ‘standardised’, there’s scope to provide a more creative approach to presenting the proposition.

Tailor your approach to the customer needs in the procurement process, and deliver in an authentic, human fashion, including the people who will continue to support their needs



Some are so busy trying to tell you how good they are...but they don’t tailor their solution to you....They should help me along the journey, show me what benefits they will bring to me and my organisation

Head of Property and Programme Management, Retail

4

Strive for high certainty and low risk

These are major procurement drivers - they’re implicitly and explicitly conveyed through your people, your portfolio, and your wider brand reputation.

Provide tangible evidence of high certainty and low risk, as well as on-going reassurance, to benefit your chances



One vendor came in so cheaply. It was well over 20% below the nearest competitor...it made us suspicious...We doubted their ability to deliver because we knew what the cost of delivery would probably look like. So actually we scored them down

Head of Infrastructure Operations, Civil Service

5

Sustainability: the box ticking days are over

Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) credentials are under increasing scrutiny - and are expected to increase in the future.

Refine your own policies, and ensure they match up to potential customer ambitions; the procurement decision could ultimately come down to this



For us, it’s really important. Not just would they do it but also how...If the company receives bad brand rep, that’s not good because it will impact our brand and our customers as well

Global Head of Infrastructure and Information Security, Insurance and Asset Management

Look out for the full report from our interview series coming soon. In the meantime, get in touch to talk about how bespoke brand research insights can help to assess and optimise your own organisation’s path to purchase

Let’s talk about research