

# The AIM Blog

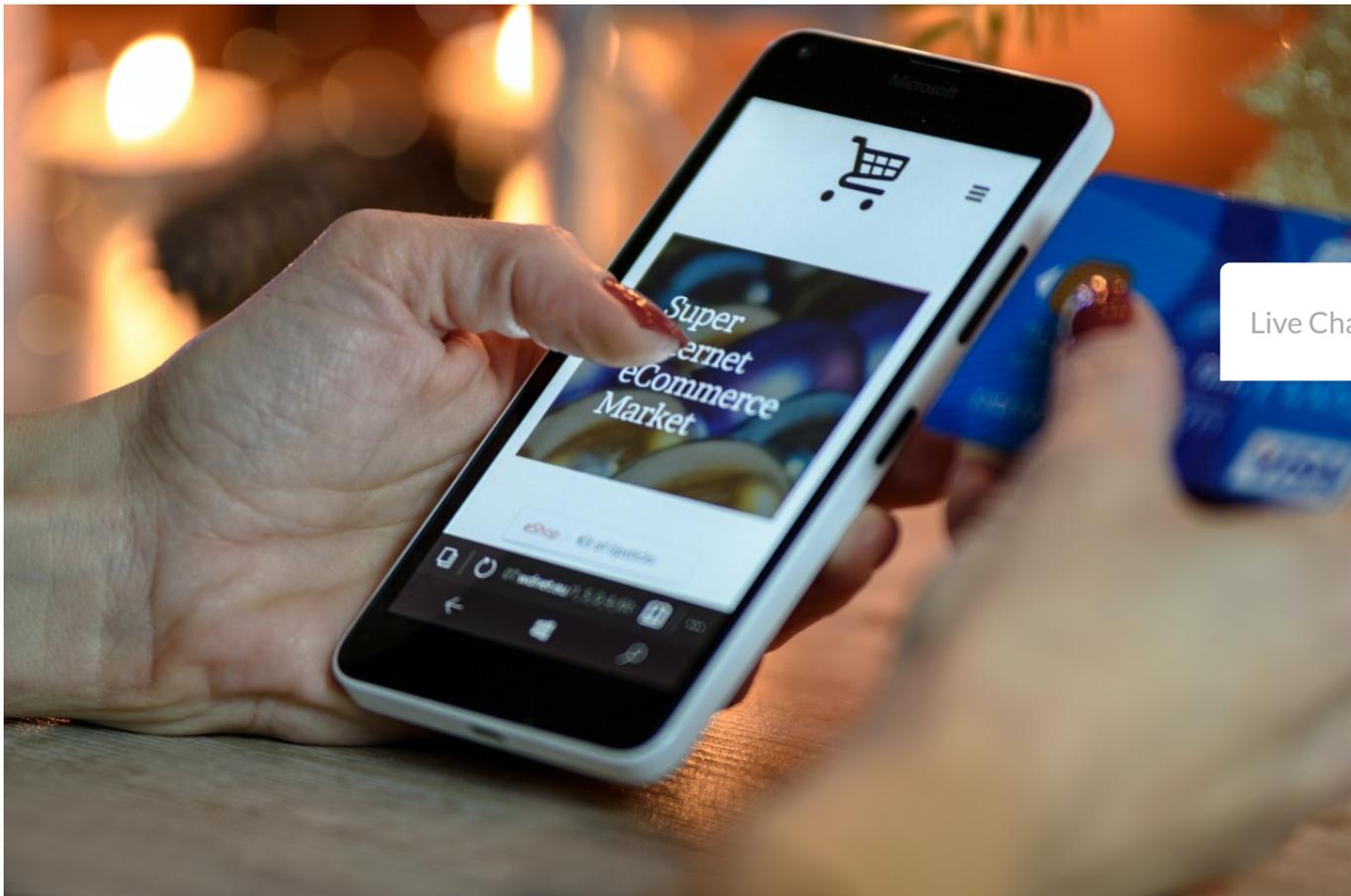
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## Systematic Assumptions of B2B Buying

*Like other forms of buying, B2B buying has shifted to be predominantly digital. Learn more on the balance between in-person and digital, and find out what to expect for B2B buying going forward.*



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Person-to-person relationships have changed greatly over the past year and because of that, many are concerned about the long-term impact on the B2B buying journey. Over the past decade, we have emerged in a new era of product and resource acquisition brought on by the ease of access to digital information. Prior to the pandemic, there was concern over a shifting mentality that has caused nearly 60 percent of buyers to transact without human contact. With the onset of the pandemic, this number has increased and become more greatly cemented.

It is important to first understand why this is happening, as we often are too quick to blame many of the resources we all use advantageously. Yes, digital access is unlike anything we have seen prior. Competitive advantage continues to be a trial. But the digital footprint has also created opportunity. Think of a climate like the present without this level of interconnectivity. It has become greatly beneficial for many in maintaining business evolution. Still, as time progresses, B2B buying moves further away from human interaction. But that might not last as long as you think, at least not to the present degree.

## The Pendulum

Some very clever researchers from Wake Forest and Florida State University have hypothesized that digital engagement in the B2B journey is a pendulum, and eventually, digital fatigue will set in, causing interactions to be redefined in human relationships. They speculate that events of heavy digital engagement will create behavioral desperation. What they could not foresee was an event like what we are currently experiencing. To say that people are digitally fatigued today would be an understatement.

What has become evident is that even with a return to in-person B2B buying, there will still be a significant place for digital connectivity. Once the pendulum balances, some will find themselves more favorable of less human engagement. Buyers adjust their behaviors according to their own needs and the trends of the greater market, but this often is faced with limitations. As we have seen, buyers opt for the “good enough” resolution rather than achieving an optimal solution. This is where the resourcefulness of the other “B” in the B2B scenario is elevated.

## Resources

To combat the disillusionment of buyers, distributors must understand the preferred and necessary strategy of the buyer. If they choose to purchase with minimal consultation to the detriment of the order, the accountability should be in the entire process rather than a blame of the chosen transaction method. Distributors should work to engage with greater information and a sense of collaboration, regardless of how it might be delivered. Is the customer always right? No. But give them the tools to be right.

Inevitably, the higher reward and lower risk for everyone in the B2B process comes with a higher possibility of partnership. But that partnership looks different these days and will continue to be unusual. In the 60+ years that the buying process has been academically

continue to be an advisor in the 20+ years that the buying process has been academically scrutinized, the present climate is probably the most challenging. Take in what you learn that works well, listen to customers, and understand the power of direct and even indirect relationships.

by [Seth Barnett, VP Content Development](#)

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