

E-commerce Trends

that will shape the next years



Spring

global delivery solutions

PREFACE

As more and more consumers decide to turn to online shopping, **the global e-commerce market has exploded** with new opportunities for businesses of all sizes to reach customers around the world.

In this ebook: **E-commerce Trends that will shape the next years**, we will delve into the key factors driving growth in the global e-commerce market, from the rise of mobile shopping to the importance of personalized experiences.

You'll learn about the latest global trends in e-commerce, including the growing value of social media, the impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality, and the latent need for a more sustainable industry.

But it's not just about keeping up with the latest trends – we'll also explore practical strategies that can help you succeed in the e-commerce market, including tips for optimizing your website and leveraging data analytics to drive growth.

Therefore, and whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting out, we are sure this ebook will provide you with valuable insights and actionable advice for thriving in the rapidly-evolving world of online shopping.



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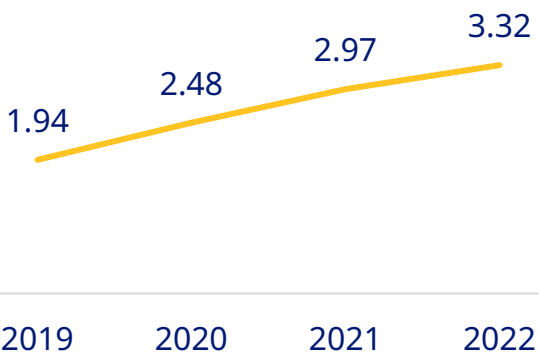
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The Global E-commerce Market

Having hit a colossal **5.2 trillion euros** worth in 2022, the Global E-commerce Market is showing no signs of stopping.

Market Revenue in Trillion €



Even if its annual growth rate seems to have peaked in 2020, it has stabilized now, with an expected average growth rate of 8.38% until 2027.

Businesses moving online was an expected shift, but the global event of 2020, really pushed the accelerator. The way we shop and interact with businesses has changed much faster than predicted years ago; and shopping online has become an integral part of our lives.

At **Spring GDS**, we identified this shift. And **we were among the first to adapt** and offer reliable transportation solutions specifically developed for this then emerging market.

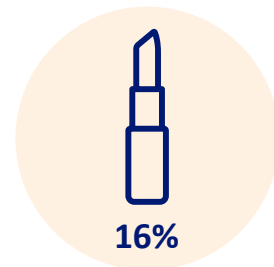


The Global E-commerce Market

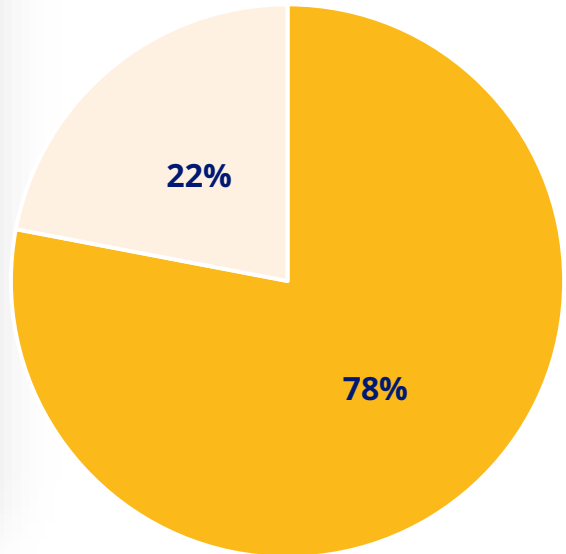


Although recent surveys, like the one done by Ipsos and Shopify in 2022, indicate financial instabilities, such as the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank or the global inflation rates are having an influence in businesses and their business owners mindsets, with 82% looking to reduce company costs because of inflation and 71% saying they are preparing for a recession in 2023, concerns seem to be decreasing: as 40% people indicating inflation was their biggest concern in the "What Worries the World" survey ran last December by Ipsos as well, which is a drop from previous studies.

Top 3 cross-border categories



Cross-border E-commerce



■ Domestic ■ Cross-border

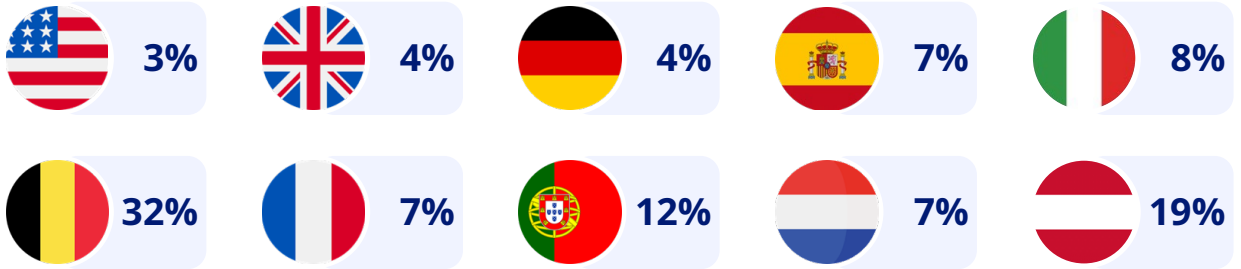
The **cross-border** section of this market **is also growing**, going from representing 16% of online transactions, to 22% in 2022.

The most popular device for making international online purchases are smartphones (44%), followed by laptops (27%) and desktops (22%).

While the top three categories of products being purchased internationally are: clothing and footwear, consumer electronics and beauty products.

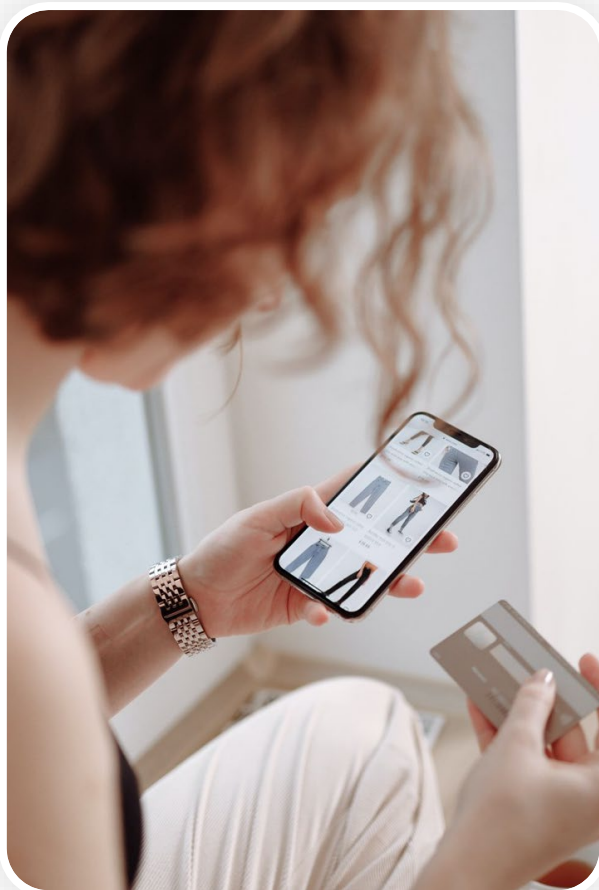
The Global E-commerce Market

Revenue Share of Cross-border E-commerce by Country in 2023



Must be noted that, regardless of which category of products you sell, **you would be depriving yourself of a great business opportunity if you don't sell cross-border**. Consumers buy products online from other countries for multiple reasons, such as lower prices, brand availability and product specialties abroad.

And while expectations might vary from country to country, we have identified the top 7 trends shaping The Global E-commerce Market these next years:



- **Social Commerce**
- **Customer Experience**
- **Privacy Regulations**
- **Ethical Shopping**
- **Omnichannel**
- **New Realities**
- **Flexibility**



Social Commerce

The First Trend

Back in 1996, Bill Gates was already able to determine:

“ Content is King ”

and now more than ever its kingdom is Social Media, with 60% of the globe already on at least one platform. And this number is only expected to keep getting bigger.

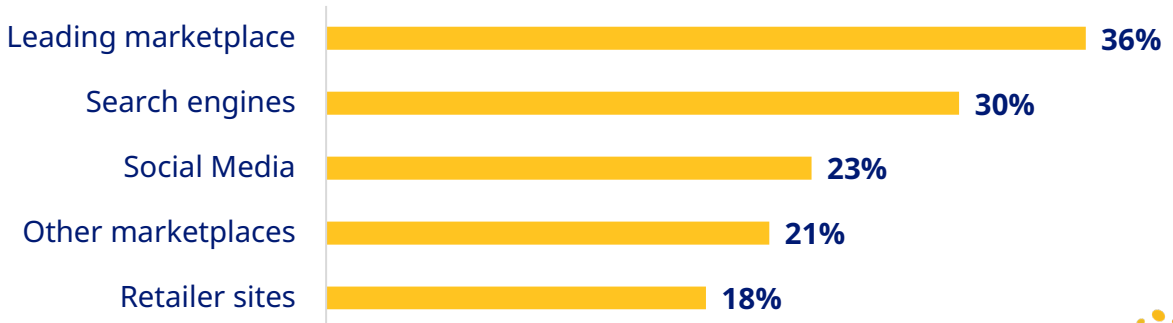
Since 9 in 10 people buy from the brands that they follow on social media, more is the incentive to join.

But before, you must know what each platform does, which type of audience uses it, and what type of content will be expected.

Gen Z is already using TikTok more than Google for product recommendations.

In these coming years, marketing and promotions done in social channels will be the most important customer acquisition and retention strategy for e-commerce eager to increase their market share.

Preferred online sources for product search worldwide 2022



Social selling

Being active in **the platforms your target uses**

Creating and engaging in relevant content for your audience

Live selling

Formats:
tutorials / interviews / games / workshops

Real time engagement:
polls / giveaways / quizzes / trivia

M-commerce

People spend **+3 hours on their phones**

Rise of **Mobile-first design**



Social selling

Careful not to confuse Social Selling with Social Media Marketing, they are not the same. Chances are, you are already doing some Social Selling in your business social media account. But keep in mind, Social Selling is not about spamming your followers' feeds with posts about your products, but the practice of **creating meaningful connections** with them, so that when they are ready to buy, **your business is top of the mind**.

Social selling identifies opportunities to connect with potential customers, reaching them in the social platforms in which they are active and engaging in conversations relevant to your e-commerce.

This allows to connect with them in a more authentic way, which helps to build trust with an audience and after, loyalty when they become a consumer.

LinkedIn, who released back in 2014 their social selling index, indicate that:

78% of businesses that use social selling outsell businesses that don't use social media.

Recommendations for Social Selling



Show you care for your audience's pain points, avoid trying to sell.



Lead and stimulate conversations relevant for your community.



Use success stories to present how your product can help its consumers.



M-commerce

Almost half of online sales are done on a mobile device, and it is just that “online” no longer means on a computer.

On average, **people are spending over 3 hours on their phones every day**; so, having the option to buy with their smartphones is no longer a nice feature for an e-commerce but an expectation that every consumer has.

And this does not mean just adapting your site to mobile, when building your site you must think mobile first, and of the best way to offer an engaging experience for mobile users.



Live selling

Remember those live shopping tv networks from about a couple decades ago? **They are back, sort of.**



According to Steve Hutt, from eCommerce Fastlane: *"live selling is a powerful tool that's fuelled by social media. You can broadcast to your audience to accelerate purchase decisions, boosting buyer engagement, and enhance product experience with real-time product demos."*

Amazon, Alibaba, Instagram, TikTok, and some others have introduced Live Selling (sometimes referred to as Live Shopping or Live Commerce).

Live Selling can be done in a social media platform, in a third-party network or in an owned channel by the brand. Each one of these have their advantages.

The advantage of Live Selling is having real time engagement, be it through polls, giveaways, or quizzes presented by the hosts; being in a social platform also allows for users to watch on their phones, wherever they are; and a livestream purchase can be made just by clicking on a link.



Live selling

The psychology of Live Selling



Users make faster purchases thanks to time-limited incentives like free shipping or discounts. Contrary to regular online shopping, where they can peruse a page before deciding to place an order.



Similar to auctions, the endowment effect can influence people watching a Live Selling; just as seeing multiple comments of others claiming to have bought the item being showcased, these push people to buy it as well.



In Live Selling, low quantities only help in increasing the demand. This is why users are more likely to want to buy an item that is Out of Stock. And stores can leverage this with waitlists and limited stock notices.



For a successful Live Selling strategy, having the right host is key. The host is the face and voice of the brand, the one neutering the community, and ensuring an excellent customer experience for each viewer.



With formats like Tutorials, Interviews, Games, Workshops, this new trend has a **high conversion rate**, with some studies reporting **up to 40%**, and was expected to reach over **400 billion dollars in sale in 2022** in China alone .

You can also incorporate an Influencer Marketing Strategy in your Live Selling plans, this allows for an increase in engagement when working with the right influencer for your target market.





Customer Experience

The Second Trend

The current state of the market brings more challenges for the businesses online, and one of them will be meet consumers growing expectations for a personalized service while having access to less and less personal information because of privacy regulations in different regions of the world.

If you want to strengthen your brand image and build loyalty, **you need to show reliability, transparency and clarity in all your communications**, with consumers and potential customers.

Tips for improving your Customer Experience

- 1 Try to have a customer support line always available. If you have consumers in different destinations, keep in mind how time differences can affect contact times.
- 2 Be proactive. Keep your customers informed of any issues you know about, avoid having them finding them out by themselves at a least convenient time.
- 3 Make sure your marketing is not selling unrealistic expectations to your consumers. Be very transparent about your product and its pricing.



Personalization

Rise of **Zero-party** and **First-party** data.

Headless architecture for sites and apps.



Customer Service

Information needs to be **easy to find**.

Chatbots powered by AI for **contact option 24/7**.



Machine Learning

Tailored suggestions to increase sales.

Personalization



Just like TikTok's For You page or the home screen from Netflix, people expect their shopping to feel personal.

They don't want to spend their time navigating endlessly through a website until they see something they might like. They want to land on the site and have options that they would want to buy from the get-go, **feel like the site understands their taste and their needs.**

Personalization can sound impossible, with consumers being more careful with the data they share online and who has access to it.

To answer to these limitations companies are starting to bet on privacy-first personalization for their sites, by relying on zero-party and first-party data instead of third-party. Zero-party and First-party data come straight from the user themselves, making them more accurate.

Zero-party data

Actively given by the consumer

First-party data

Directly collected as the consumer uses the site



Second-party data

First-party data obtained from a partner

Third-party data

Obtained/bought from aggregated sources

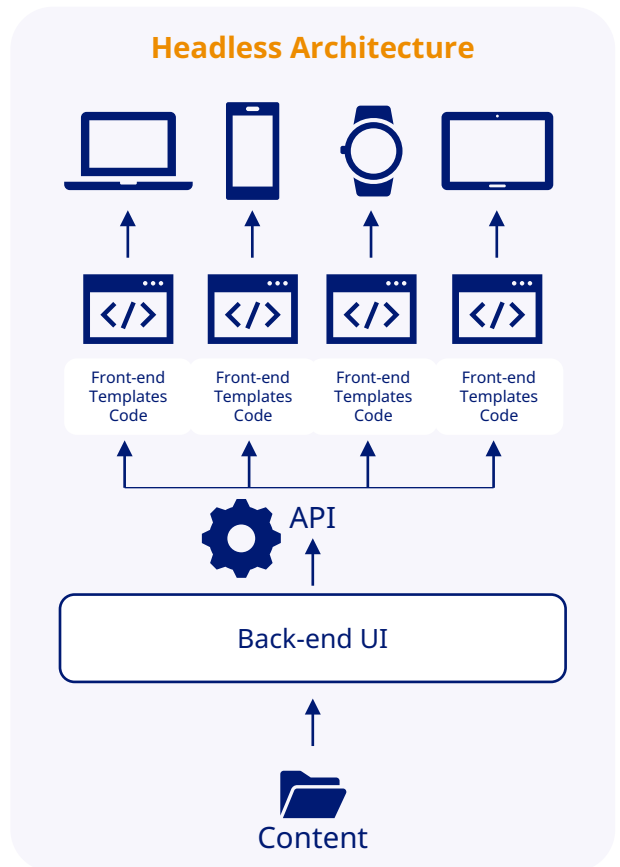
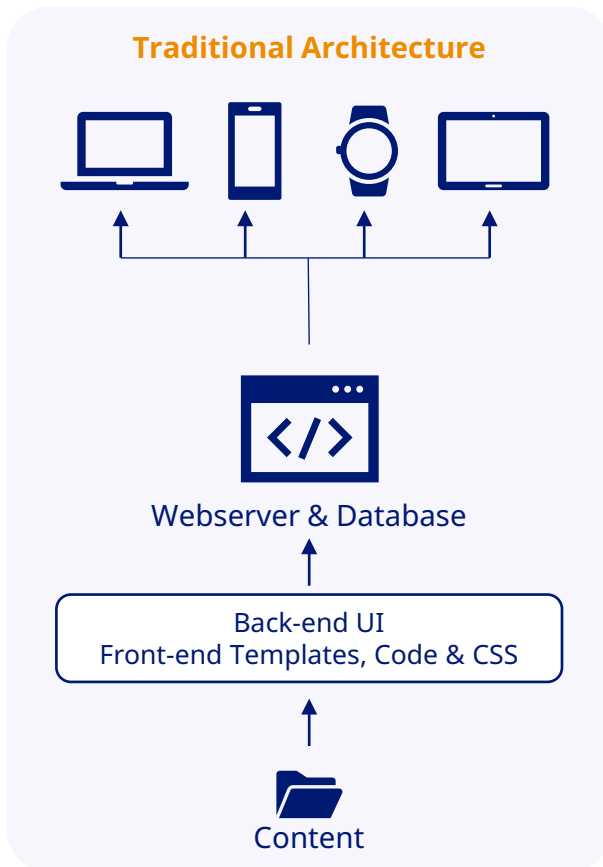
Personalization

Another option to personalize the shopping experience is going *Headless!*

A headless architecture means a separation between the front end, what consumers see and interact with, and the back end, where the content and data are stored. This allows for much more flexibility on the content which is presented to your consumers, in your website, mobile or app, letting you accomplish an even smoother customer journey.

Headless architecture are easier updates in content, and it is **much more secure**, since the front-end is separated from the back-end.

Finally, pages load much faster! Keep in mind, according to a study by Portent, speed matters: ***"A site that loads in 1 second has a conversion rate 3x higher than a site that loads in 5 seconds."***



Machine Learning

Encourage more sales and increases the overall user's satisfaction.

Just like the use of AI in chatbots, machine learning can also be used to enhance the customer experience, analysing massive amount of data from interactions across different platforms effectively, helping your business stand out from its competitors.

A machine learning solution can help you identify weaknesses, allowing you to improve the customer experience.

If it analyses real-time data, it can produce recommendations tailored to the customer preferences and make suggestions to consumers as they navigate an e-commerce.

It can help determine which products a user is more likely to be interested in and emphasise it, avoiding the risk of having them overwhelmed with too many options that might not be relevant to them.



Customer service

There are new standards for customer service: consumers want to be able to have any information they need readily available; they do not want to have to go through a hundred links to find hidden information they want before or after placing their order. If they want to know the return policy, for example, it shouldn't take more than 3 clicks to get it.

Consumers also want businesses to be available in their preferred communication channel, be it WhatsApp, or Twitter or email.

Studies show that **87% of online consumers spend less or completely leave e-commerce that don't provide satisfying customer service experiences**, it's no longer enough to simply provide quality products.

Since this is a more and more globalized industry, a solution being employed by companies selling in different countries are chatbots powered by artificial intelligence, which allows e-shops to have a customer support line always available, no matter the time zone; and let businesses learn more about the users and their behaviour.

Customers' Preferred Customer Support Contact Channels



76%



20%



14%



10%

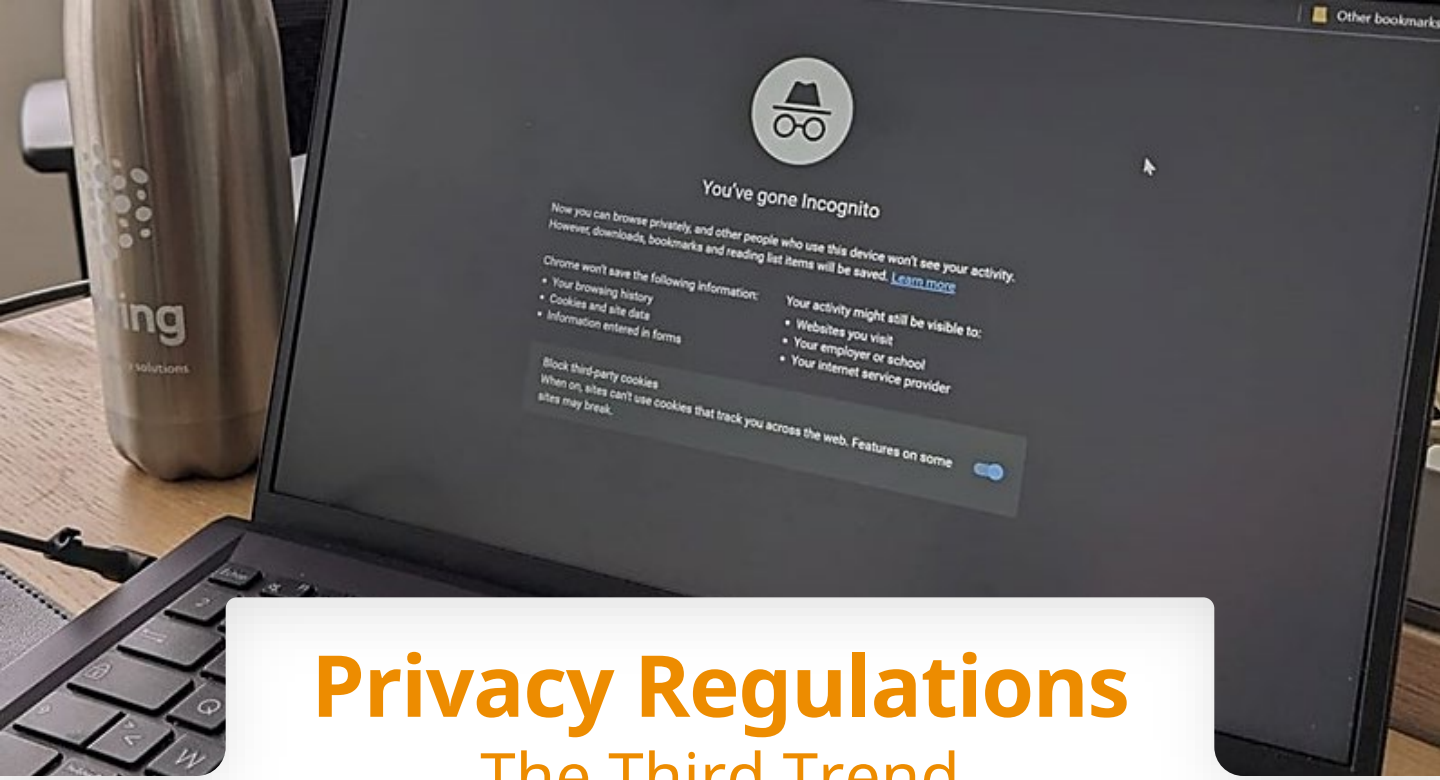


4%



2%





Privacy Regulations

The Third Trend

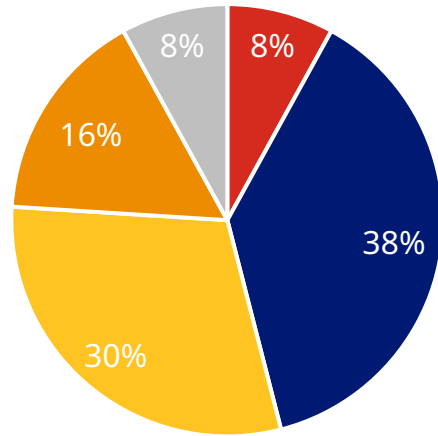
Many different regions and countries are cracking down on third-party data, and **privacy regulations** all around the world **are getting tighter**, limiting the options of companies to access the data necessary to reach their targets.

Analytic tools, like the one offered by Google, will provide less and less information, as more people choose to navigate privately.

This is pushing businesses to look for alternative ways to engage with their target audiences

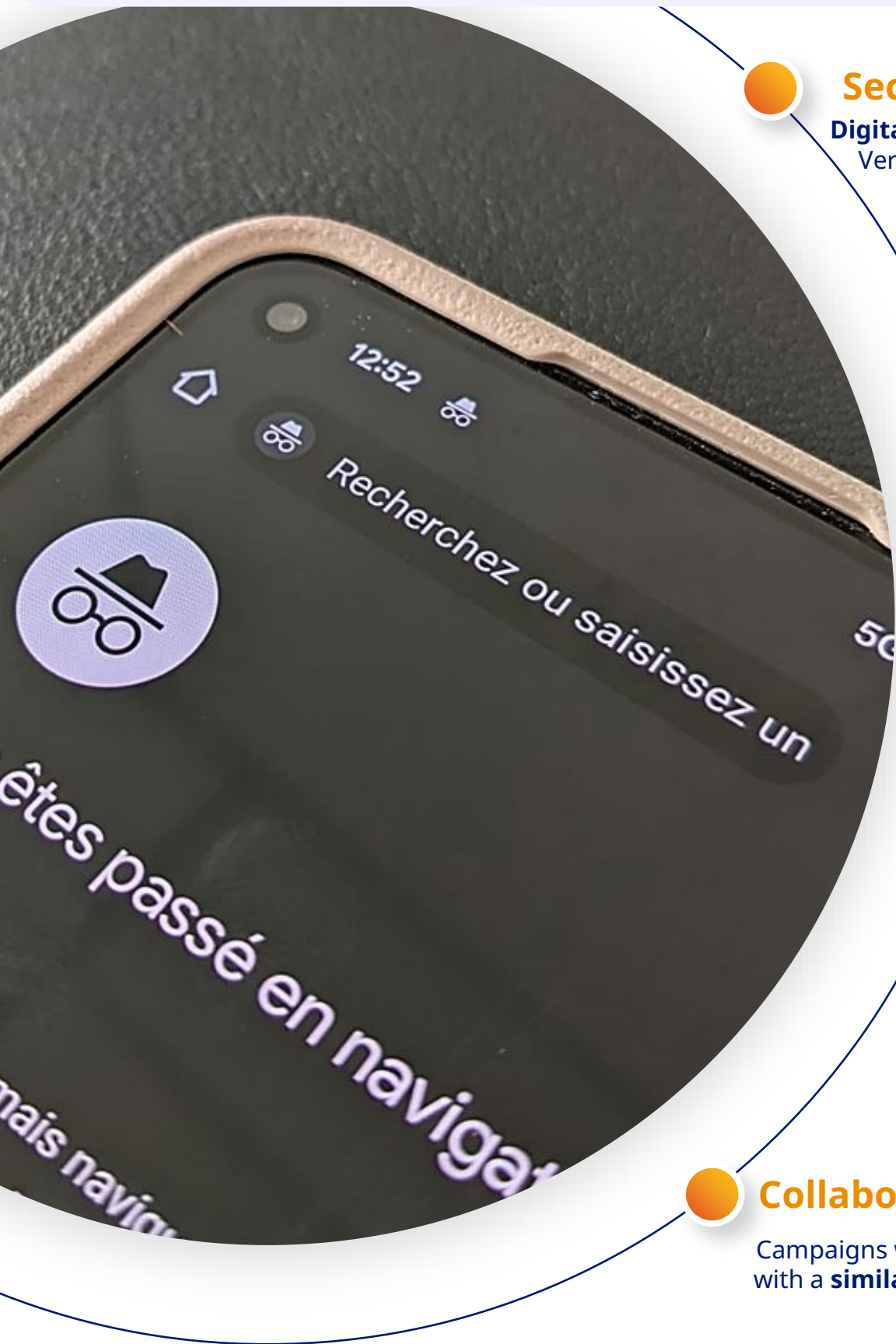
Online businesses should consider allowing consumers check-out as guests, for those who are more adamant about sharing personal information online and those who are more concerned about how their data could be used.

Worldwide consumers attitude towards data sharing



- I would always share my data
- I would be happy to share my data if it will improve my experience
- I would not be happy to share more of my data
- I want to share less of my data
- I don't know

The Third Trend: **Privacy Regulations**



Security
Digital Identity
Verification

AI



Collaborations

Campaigns with brands
with a **similar audience**



Security

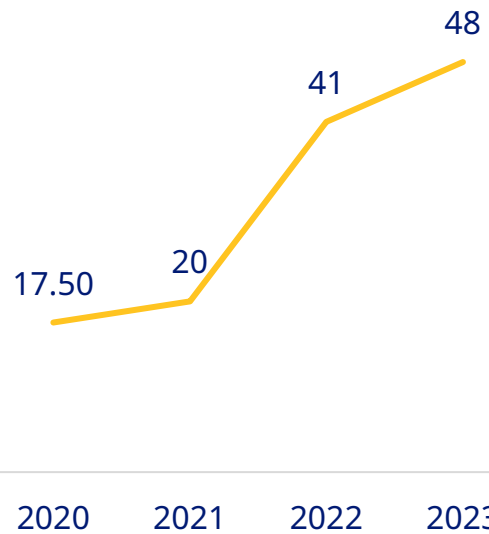
Any site looking to make their audience be secure while navigating will need to have a **custom SSL certificate**, which puts https before your site URL.

The market of e-commerce solutions for fraud detection and fraud prevention will likely double by 2025; with more companies looking to ensure consumers know their personal data, including credit card information, is being handled securely when purchasing online.

Solutions allowing for **digital identity verification** can help **boost the security of transactions**, especially for goods been shipped across borders.

Another option is the use of Artificial Intelligence. AI can be used for fraud detection and prevention. AI algorithms can examine patterns in customer behaviour to identify potential fraudulent transactions and prevent them from occurring.

Losses to payment fraud online*



*In billion US dollars

The European Commission is now working on an electronic identification (eID) named the **European Digital Identity Wallet**; it would be stored in a smartphone's digital wallet and would allow for EU residents and businesses to share safely details necessary for transactions, authenticating payments. If an agreement is reached this year, the European Digital Identity Wallet could go live as soon as 2024 .



Collaborations

Opening up to a wider audience, while partnering with a brand (or personality!) of similar size, a complementary offer and a similar market; these collaborations are not done with direct competitors.

Just like users are now performing trends as a community rather than as individuals, as we saw during the release of the latest Minions movie last year, co-authoring content between companies will be a key strategy to push your brand forward.

And in this new collaborative landscape, it will be crucial for businesses to strengthen their brand image, making it coherent between different platforms and media, since for the most part they will be meeting their customers only first, if not exclusively.



Ethical Shopping

The Fourth Trend

One thing some seem to be overlooking is that the ever-trending **Gen Z has buying power now**; they are more economical and price-sensitive than previous generations (like Millennials), but studies like Bloomberg's are expecting them to have a disposable income of over 300 billion euros. Winning this generation keener in saving and investing is essential.

ESG concerns influence more than half of global customers, as the study done by PWC in 2021 showed. Today's consumers seek out brands that match their values, with 76% claiming they would stop buying from a business if they were to learn the employees, communities or environment are being treated poorly. Consumers are spending more time carefully doing research on products and services before purchasing, they want to support more ethical businesses with more sustainable business models.

Environmental, social, & corporate governance factors

- Energy efficiency
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Waste management
- Carbon footprint reduction



- Community engagement
- Labour laws compliance
- Responsible partnerships
- Equal employment opportunity

- Risk management
- Ethical business practices
- Integrity & transparency
- Anti-bribery & corruption





Sustainability

European Green Deal 2030

Zero-waste & biodegradable packaging

Avoiding plastics

Social Values

Transparency about ethical practices

Manufacturing under **proper conditions**

The Fourth Trend: Ethical Shopping

Sustainability

The signing of the **European Green Deal** in 2020 has forced e-commerce and businesses in general to review their processes and find ways to be more environmentally friendly; in the e-commerce world this means sustainable packaging and logistic chain.

Sustainable shipping options should be highlighted during the check-out process, allowing consumers to easily identify it and chose these greener options over faster but more polluting ones.



Policy areas:

- REPowerEU & Energy
- Climate
- Environment and oceans
- Agriculture
- Industry & Transport
- Research and innovation
- Finance and regional development
- New European Bauhaus

Goals:



Climate-neutral continent by 2050



-55% greenhouse emissions by 2030



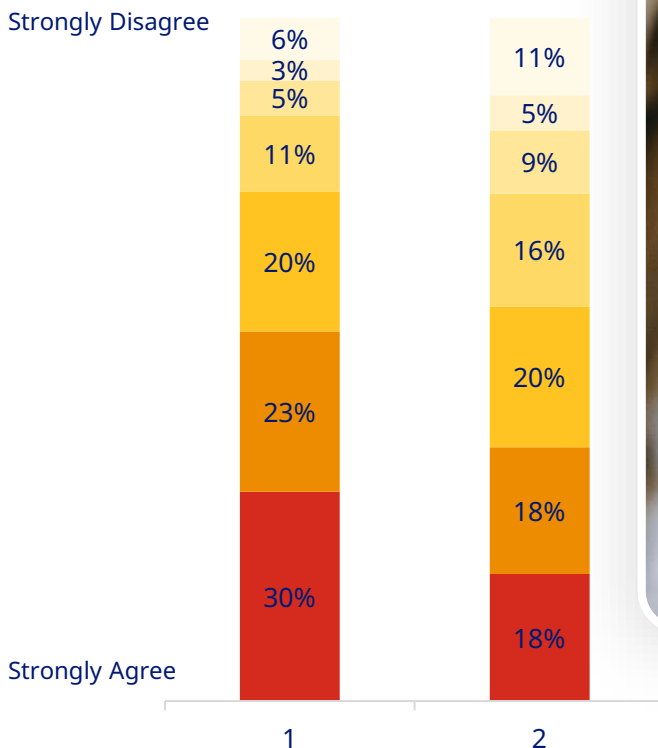
3 billion trees planted by 2030

Sustainability

Results from a survey ran in 2022 by International Post Corporation (IPC) identified consumers around the world are recycling (45%) rather than just throwing away (23%) the packaging in which their products are received; and most would prefer the packaging to be recyclable if not reusable, with **42% of digital shoppers saying they would choose a business that uses sustainable packaging over one that doesn't**, according to a Statista study.

Additionally, most would agree to receive their items a few days later in order to reduce emissions and over all environmental impact.

Sustainable Delivery Preferences



1: Willing for a later delivery to reduce impact
2: Concerned about the impact of fast deliveries



Only **8.5%** of the materials we consume are recycled or reused

Sustainability

The option of zero-waste or biodegradable packaging, reducing waste, avoiding plastics, moulded wood pallets, can have a significant impact in making your e-commerce more sustainable.

But with this rise in interest in sustainability and businesses trying to adapt to meet consumers demands, there has also been a rise in greenwashing.

Greenwashing is a marketing tactic in which an e-commerce will make it seem like their products are more sustainable than they actually are.

Greenwashing can be dangerous as it misleads consumers into believing that they are making a more sustainable purchase.

This can ultimately harm the environment and damage the trust between businesses and consumers. Additionally, consumers may become disillusioned with sustainability and believe that it is just a marketing ploy, which undermines genuine sustainability efforts.

To avoid greenwashing, businesses need to be transparent avoid their practices, measure the impact and prove willingness to evolve, adopting actions with proven better results, and allowing for a third-party to evaluate these procedures.

In a report by Google, published in April 2022, they shared the results of a global survey of executives across the world. They presented as well the top barriers on sustainability.

Barriers to achieving true sustainability

- Lack of investment in the right technology
- Lack of understanding or education
- Relentless focus on growth/profit
- Lack of budget/cost
- Lack of regulatory incentives

Sustainability in businesses

58% Admit to greenwashing in their companies

36% Have tools in place to measure their efforts

17% Use the data to identify ways to optimize

Social Values



Younger generations, namely Millennials and Gen Z, and represent a large percentage of e-commerce sales, have very strong political views, 78% of Gen Z shoppers believe brands should take stand in social issues, like diversity and gender inequalities.

Consumers are expecting brands to be vocal about their values and beliefs as well. And they can spot when a company is being disingenuous. These generation looks for the genuine and real expressions of beliefs.

And you should not overlook the Gen Z consumers, since a recent study by IMB Institute for Business and Value in association with NRF over 70% of Gen Z respondents said they influence family decisions on buying furniture, household goods, and food and beverages. And by 2031 this generation is expected to be earning more than Millennials, the more reason to make an effort to understand their needs and wants.

E-commerce businesses should look to be transparent about their ethical practices and make sure that their products are manufactured under acceptable labour conditions.



Omnichannel

The Fifth Trend

Commerce is everywhere, *online* and *offline*, and nowadays the customer journey is not linear.



Online Channels

Website, Landing Pages, Display Ads, Search Engines, Visual Searches, Social Media, Newsletters, Mobile Apps...



Offline Channels

Magazines, Pop-up Stores, TV Ads, Radio Ads, Print Ads, Billboards, Flyers, Promotional Merch, Direct Mail...

A couple years ago, Omnichannel meant that an item bought online could be returned in store or vice versa; but in today's highly digitalized world, the meaning has evolved well beyond that, to a more unified commerce experience.

A video on TikTok, a story in Instagram, a phone call, window shopping, a QR code on the street, a newsletter... the possibilities are endless!

The customer journey no longer necessarily starts or even ends at an e-commerce site.



Customer Journey

The importance of the **Brand Experience**

Consistency between channels

Optimized search

Having a **powerful search tool** in the site

Personalized and visual search options

Channel Diversification

Multiple revenue streams

Broader consumer reach

Optimized search

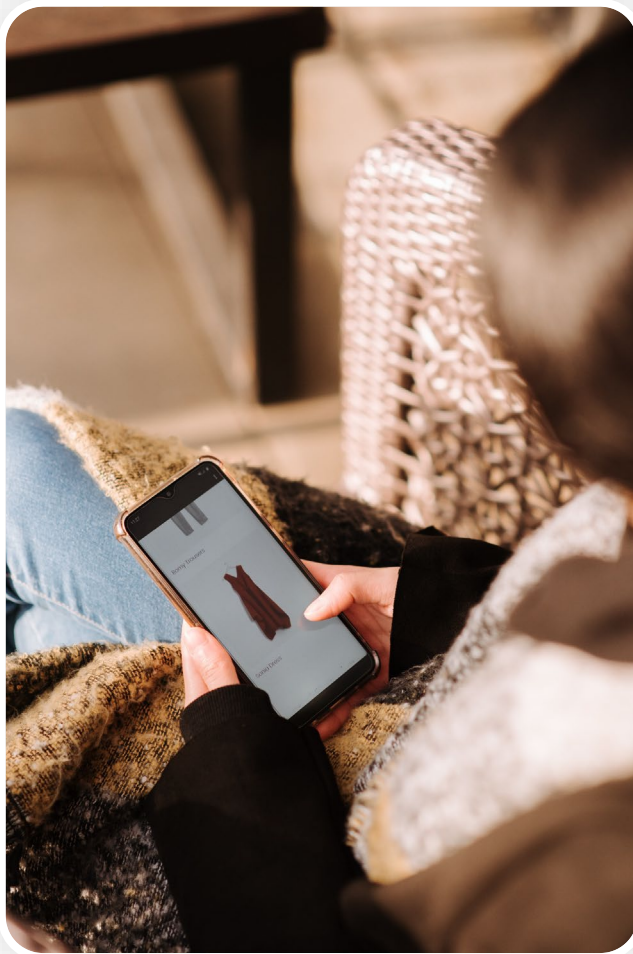
It is crucial for the search tool in sites to be not just quick but also smarter than you would think necessary.

AI-infused merchant tools can make the tasks faster and reduce the number of “No Results” pages after searches. There’s even the option of personalized searches, which allows for users to get search suggestions based on their behaviour before they even finish typing.

Visual searches take advantage of the fact that consumers are likely to buy products which are similar or of the same line to the one they are purchasing.

If a customer already has an item in mind, having the option to just take a photo or screenshot and get similar offers in the store catalogue means they are more likely to buy.

Gen Z is an audience which really exploits this feature, when they see a product they like (be it on the street or on their feed) they will just run a photo of it through a visual search, explore the matches, where it is available, and compare the prices. And if a store is not among those results, that’s a consumer they are missing out on.



People using the search option on a site are over 200% more likely to convert than regular visitors and spend 2.6 times more money.

Customer journey

Consumers are no longer buying products or services, but also a brand experience; making sure their journey is as smooth as possible, by identifying their expectations and needs for every touchpoint, can ensure their loyalty.

Because of all the independent touchpoints in which a customer can come in contact with a business, it is fundamental to offer a differentiating experience from those of competitors while staying consistent with the DNA of the brand. No matter the channel one is interacting with or transitioning to, **it should always feel like the same brand**, and it should be seamless.

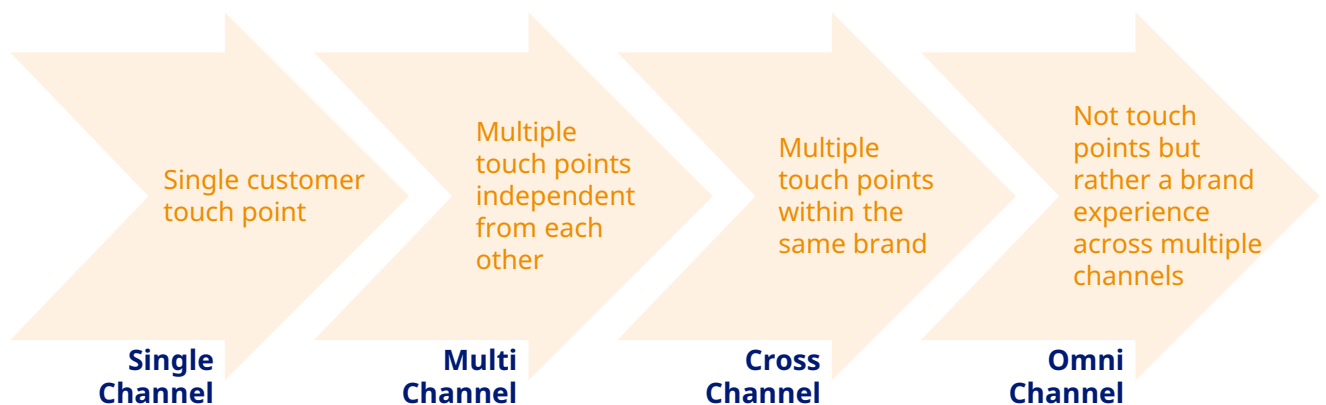
Each channel can't be an independent universe from the others, there needs to be consistency; consumers want to browse, read the reviews, place an order, and it should be possible between channels and devices, without risking having to start over their journey.

And don't limit the number of channels, because that also limits the market shares of the business, and you risk losing a customer during their journey.

Depending on the sector, some consumers might expect different options for getting in touch with the brand. With some, for example Groceries, expecting the possibility of **voice search or voice shopping** through devices like a voice assistant or their own phones.

This need is expected to grow, even if trust in voice assistants remains contentious, as in a study run by PWC showed that 50% of the people interviewed had placed an order by their voice assistant and 25% considering trying it in the future.

Customer journey channel strategies



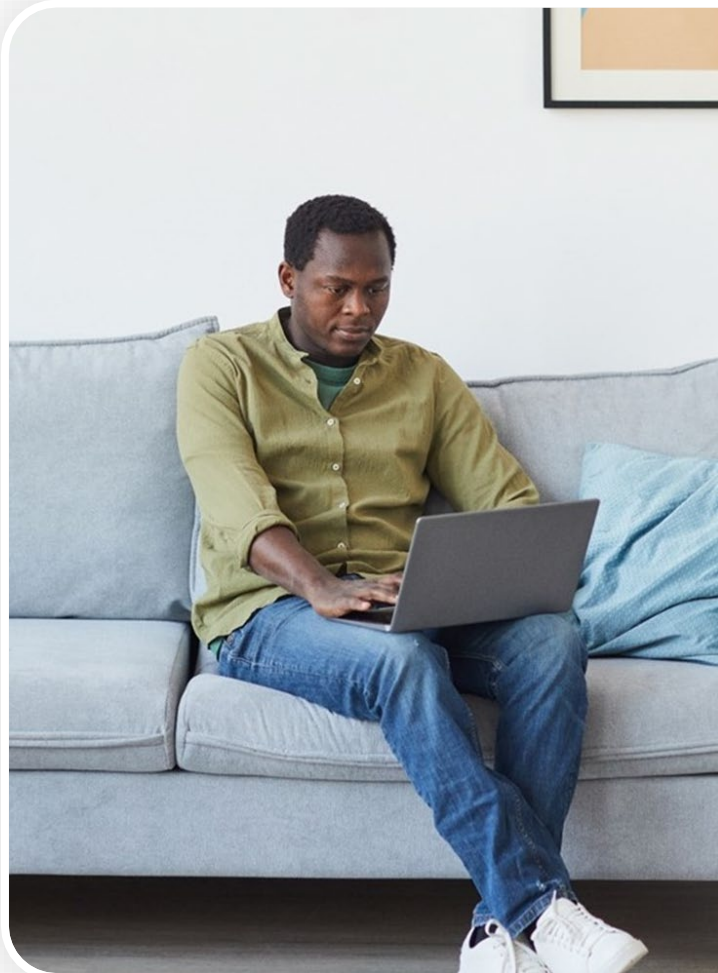
Channel Diversification

As Amazon's commissions and fulfilment fees through its marketplace increase, more sellers are looking for ways to reduce their dependence on this site; as found in Capterra's survey, 99% of the participating retail businesses intend on diversifying their operation channels from 2023. Google shopping, niche marketplaces, owned websites and specially social media are the searched options.

The giant has taken some steps trying to entice sellers to stay, with programs like: Amazon Seller Wallet, Express Payout, and Cash Advance. But the e-commerce owners understand that this is not enough of a reason to keep Amazon as their sole sales channel.

Additionally to all the advantages that having **multiple revenue streams** and a **broader consumer reach** than only one marketplace means.

While, of course, this does not represent a loss of relevance of this marketplace, it does show that smaller and medium-sized online businesses are adventuring to other platforms to meet their customers. And these new pastures, with lower fees for the companies looking to sell, also mean consumers will have cheaper options when comparing products between sites.



Another option to diversify is to offer subscriptions, they allow customers to receive the products they need on a regular basis without the hassle of having to order repeatedly. Studies indicate that **15% of shoppers have a subscription with an e-commerce site**. This model has become a trend because it provides a steady source of revenue and builds customer loyalty. It also significantly increases customer lifetime value.





New Realities

The Sixth Trend

There is no real agreement on whether augmented realities or virtual realities are the future; and while many companies are investing in either one, the other or both, it is good to **avoid trying to fit your business into either of these options just for the novelty** unless you find an action that makes sense for your activity.

AR and VR offer the chance to show consumers the products as they would be in their hands, before purchasing. They also can help incrementing sales, with studies showing the use of **AR in webstores can increase sales by up to 71%**.

Augmented Realities

AR combines the real world with computer generated interactive experiences.

Expected market value by 2028:
\$78 billions

Virtual Realities

VR is completely immersive, plunging the user in a virtual world while tracking his eye and body movements.

Expected market value by 2028:
\$27 billions



The Sixth Trend: **New Realities**



AI

Content, pricing and inventory **optimisation**



Web 3.0

Daaps, blockchain **product certification**



Metaverse

Exclusive products such as **phygitals** or **NFTs**

Mixed realities and **spatial computing**



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Artificial Intelligence

Besides its use the customer experience and fraud detection discussed in previous trends, with artificial intelligence getting more powerful, it has many more uses in the e-commerce industry.

One you might not have considered before is content writing!

AI can be used to generate more engaging product descriptions while still keeping them informative; while using data analysis, **AI can identify which features of the product to highlight in order to get better sales.**

Another type of written content AI can help create are articles and social media posts, generating content that resonates with your target consumer.

These also help businesses establish themselves as experts in their industry and build a stronger audience. And **written content created by AI can optimize your web shop** for search engines, improving its visibility and attracting more traffic.

An additional use of AI is for pricing strategies. By analysing data on consumers' behaviour, competitor pricing, and market trends, **AI algorithms can determine the best prices for products to maximize profits** and sales.

Finally, AI can be used for Inventory Managing, in order to avoid overstocking or running out of more in-demand products.

AI for e-commerce



Metaverse

When Facebook became Meta, back in October 2021, or more recently, when the Apple Vision Pro were revealed in June 2023, they are putting all their chips in the metaverse being the future. But... *what is the metaverse?* The term coined by Neal Stephenson in his 1992 sci-fi novel.

It is basically a cyberspace; with companies applying the term when speaking of AR, or VR, or *spatial computing*, although worlds are not exclusive to these technologies and can be accessed through game consoles, pcs and even smartphones.

To be clear, the metaverse is not a game, it is not Fortnite or Roblox or Second Life, or just a virtual space or UGC. It is a concept which englobes them.

Brands from different sectors (not only gaming) are opening stores, hosting events and releasing exclusive products, phygitals and NFTs in different metaverses.

Selling in a metaverse also has important bargains, **since creating a digital product does not require raw materials and less manual labour;** additionally, when a user resells, the brand can still get royalty fees.



Metaverse

The core technologies of the metaverse

- Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning
- Blockchain
- Mixed Reality (Virtual & Artificial)
- Internet of Things
- Brain-Computer Interfaces
- 5G
- 3D Reconstruction

A “true” metaverse would require a seamless transition between the digital and the “real” world, as well as a unified digital world. Going from one universe, like say Roblox, to another, like Sandbox.

And while its future might still be foggy, this Multiverse of Metaverses can still be worth exploring!

The ever-mentioned **Gen Z** is **investing big in their metaverse’s personas**, with over \$54 billions spent in 2022 in digital products (skins, clothes, accessories).

There are an estimated **400 million monthly active metaverse users**.

According to Forbes, the market was worth \$478.7 million in 2020 and is expected to reach a whopping \$800 billion worth in four years' time.

Web 3.0

The next iteration of the World Wide Web is still undefined; the first iteration, Web 1.0, was the beginning, with only the options of reading the information available; we are now in Web 2.0, which is about creating and interacting. Web 3.0, also called Semantic Web, is visioned to be about decentralizing. It is believed to represent a switch between consumers and brands.

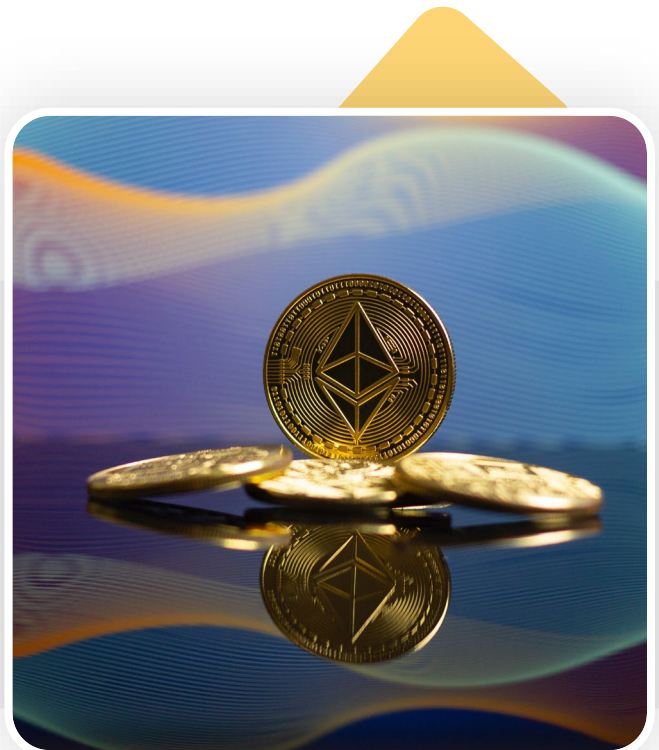
An e-commerce in web 3.0 would probably run in a blockchain, like Ethereum, with a dapp (short for decentralized application) which is a decentralized, distributed ledger that records transactions.

This ledger will allow tracking of each step of a product's journey, from conception to the consumer's hands. We will know if a product was ethically sourced, in which country, who transported the product, and across which routes it travelled.

The blockchain will allow for more transparency in the supply chain.

It will also allow for a paperless, and more secure, certification of products; since blockchain records can't be forged, the digital print accompanying a product will guarantee its authenticity. In addition, dapps can improve the efficiency of e-commerce transactions by reducing the need for intermediaries such as payment processors, banks, and other financial institutions. By eliminating these intermediaries, dapps can reduce transaction fees and processing times, making it more accessible and affordable for everyone.

Blockchains, Smart Contracts, AI, Cryptocurrencies. Many, if not most, features expected to englobe this evolution of our current web exist already.





Flexibility

The Seventh Trend

As our world keep moving ever closer to a digital-first economy, the importance of flexibility in online shopping is becoming increasingly more apparent. The ability to **quickly and easily adapt to changing customer needs and market conditions will be essential** for any business hoping to remain competitive nowadays.

And if you are a player in the international market, you need to have options adapted to other countries expectations.

Consumers and their needs can change very fast, 10% required to update the delivery address after placing a cross-border order. In 2021, these percentage was at 14%.

Depending on their country, some consumers prefer to be delivered in a mailbox (42% in France), at a parcel locker (56% in Estonia), a postal service point (38% in Sweden) or other options.

Customers need to be made aware of other fees that they will need to pay for their package, like customs. Preferably before placing their order.



The Seventh Trend: **Flexibility**

Options like:
**Paying in instalments,
BNPL, Fast Check-out**

Supporting:
**Digital Wallets,
Cryptocurrencies**

Payment



Securing long-term
growth

Use of **digital twins**

Supply Chain



Orders Fulfilment

**Return and delivery
solutions**

Payment

Consumers are increasingly expecting more and different payment options when shopping online, like the possibility to pay in instalments. The flexibility of allowing them to pay in the way that is most convenient for them can increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Offering flexible payment options can also help businesses attract new customers and increase their sales.

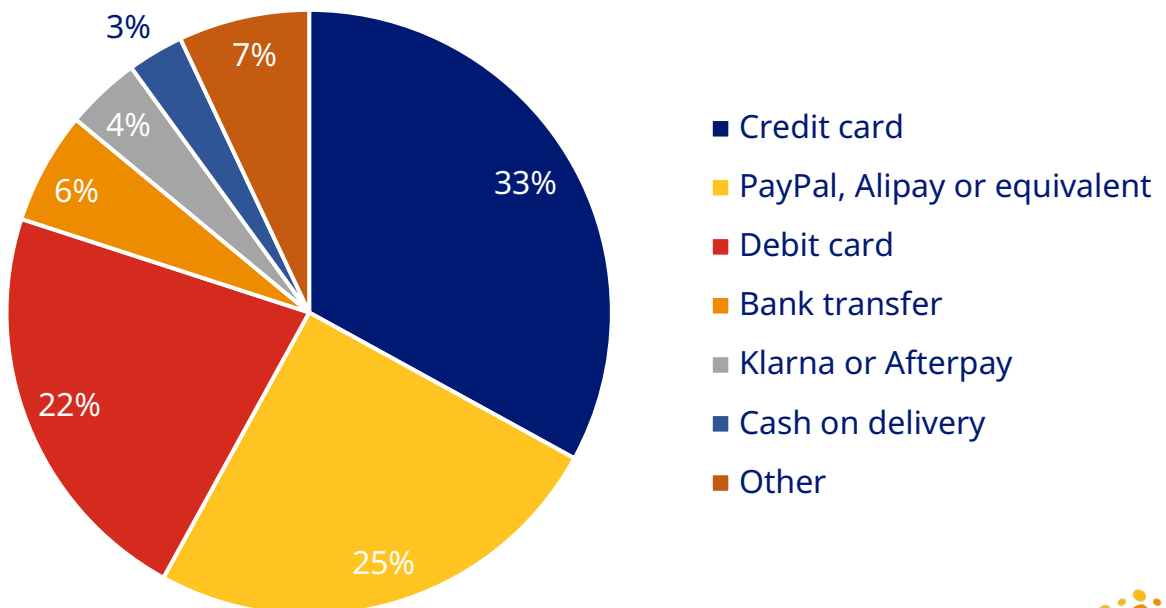
With more consumers worried about their online privacy, there is also an increase in demand for fast way check-out or guest check-outs, which don't sacrifice the security of the payment and information.

The Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) and Digital Wallet shopping options have skyrocketed in popularity these last years, with 360 million BNPL users and 3.4 billion Digital Wallet users in 2022 according to Juniper Research.

And they are expected to keep growing, with services becoming available in more countries.

Another option to consider is Cryptocurrency, even if its future continues to be uncertain. Though any e-commerce considering adding it should get as informed as possible of their risk, specially the volatility of its value; there are many benefits, of course, like lower transaction fees or the ease for international payment processing. Big companies like Tesla and PayPal (which is the top online payment gateway, with a whopping 60% of the market share) have embraced this payment option.

Preferred cross-border payment methods



Orders Fulfilment

No sale is complete until the package is in the customer's hands.

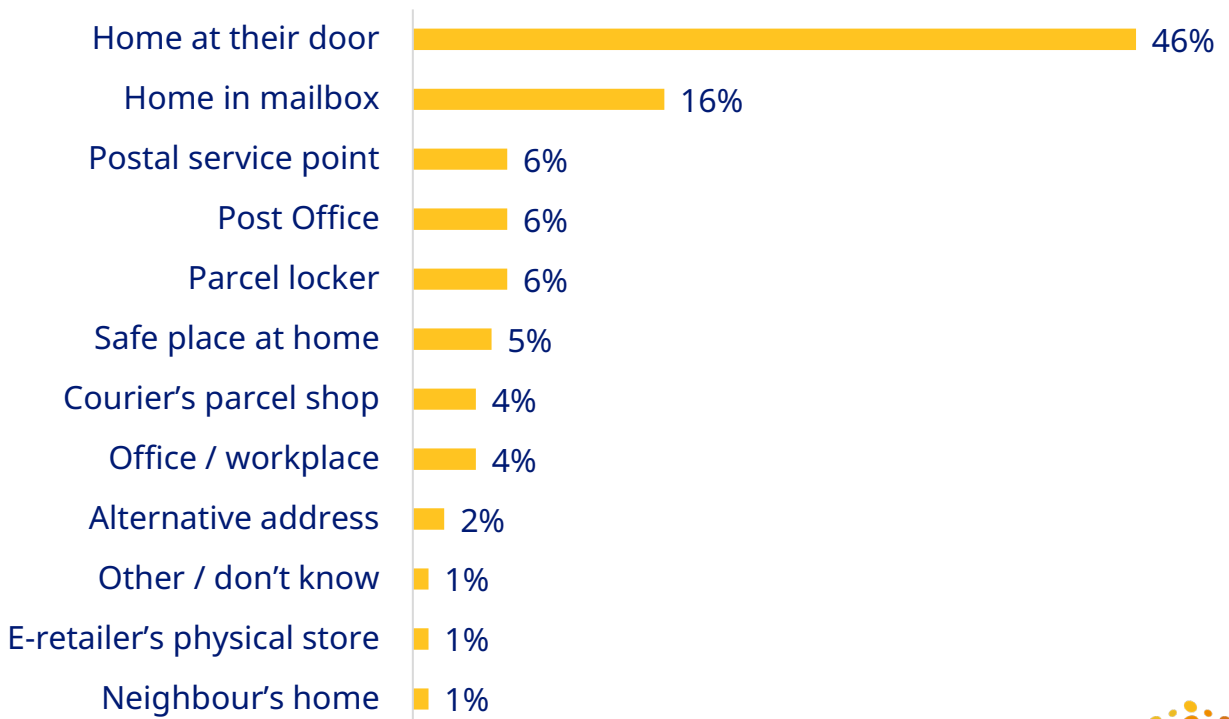
An efficient fulfilment cycle is critical for e-commerce, from sourcing the products, to storing, packaging, shipping to the consumer and at times handling a return, each step needs to be carefully executed in order to give customers a reliable shopping experience and make them want to shop in your webstore again.

In 2023, flexibility in fulfilment is not offering free shipping on every order no matter how small, since this will have an important impact on the business' margins, but having different options, from one-day shipping to a more environmentally friendly one and giving customers the power to choose.

Nowadays, consumers expect more delivery options than just at home delivery, with pick-ups at a post office, a convenience store, or even a locker.

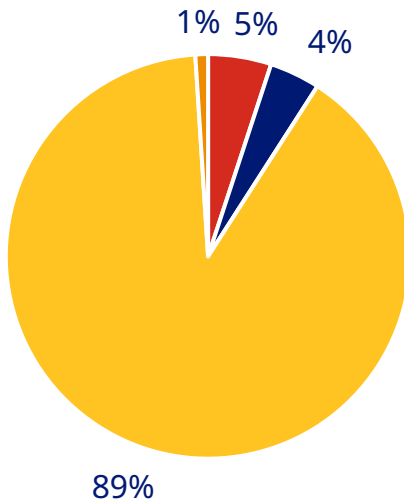
Consumers want to possibility to adapt the delivery date and place to their needs. And if an e-commerce is not proposing the options they require, they are more likely not to finalize the sale.

Chosen place of delivery for Cross-border purchases



Orders Fulfilment

Consumers doing cross-border returns



- Returned purchase
- Returned part of this purchase
- Didn't make a return
- Not yet decided

Multichannel logistics, in orders fulfilment, involves managing the transportation of products across various channels in e-commerce.

By utilizing multiple channels, businesses can enhance their reach and flexibility, adapting to market changes and customer needs.

The use of **multichannel logistics allows for greater efficiency, better inventory management, and improved customer experiences**, resulting in increased sales and revenue.

It is also important to set accurate delivery estimates before check-out and allow customers to have regular updates on their package status; if you don't provide clear expectations, your consumers will have a negative experience.

Finally, make sure you have a return policy, since **67% of shoppers say they check the return policy before they buy**. They need to know who pays for the return, and how their returns will be processed, before they click buy.



Supply Chain

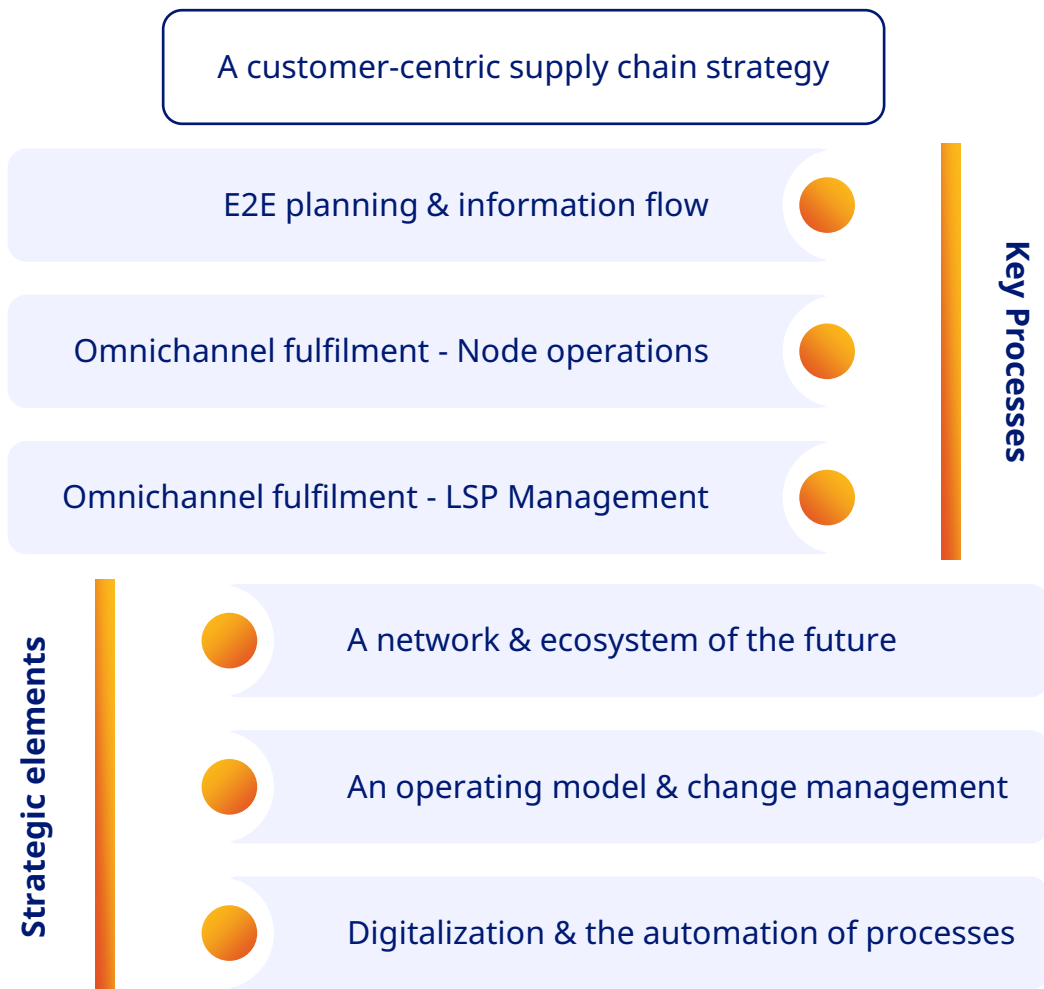
An omnichannel supply chain means **the inventory management system is interconnected across all channels** (both online and offline), allowing for real-time updates and accurate product availability information.

This flexible supply chain can fulfil orders from any location, whether it is a warehouse, a store, or a third-party logistics provider, making the process more efficient.

Some studies show how **a disrupted supply chain can cause a 62% financial loss for a business**. This proves the importance of flexibility in the supply chain, e-commerce need to recognize the vulnerability of their own supply chains and identify how to ensure their long-term growth.

The digitalization of a supply chain, using a digital twin, allows to identify issues and possible disruptions sometimes even before they happen, and better prepare for otherwise uncertain scenarios.

The building blocks of an Omnichannel Supply Chain



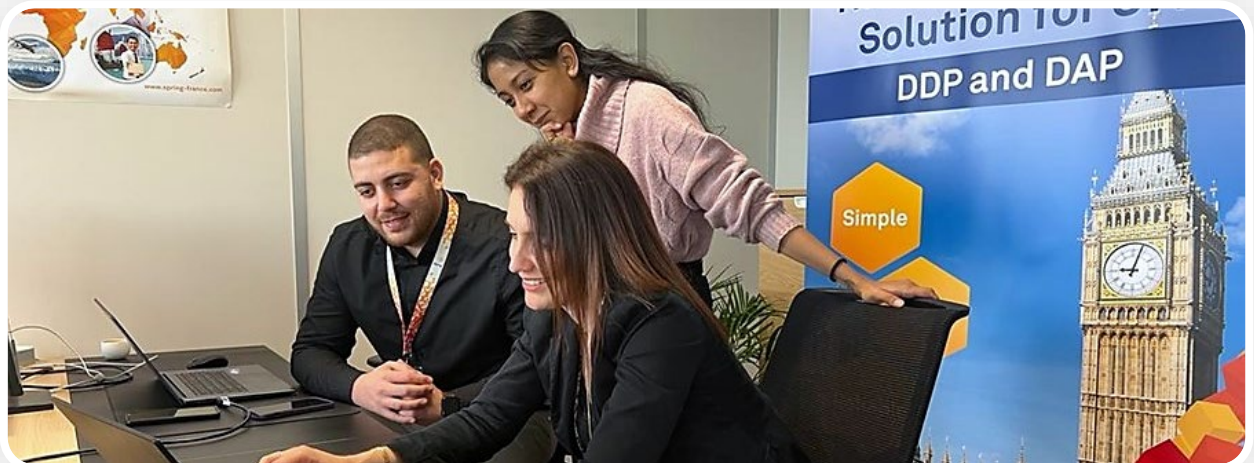
IN CONCLUSION

Understanding and identifying how to adapt to ever changing customers' expectations continues to be critical for those wanting to stay competitive in the e-commerce world.

By 2023, it is predicted to become even more important as businesses continue to embrace digital transformation, meaning a more competitive landscape. It is key to find the correct tools and partners in order to reach customers and deliver goods and services globally. This is a rapidly-evolving industry with limitless potential.

With the right strategies and investments, businesses can use e-commerce to drive growth, increase customer engagement, and improve operational efficiency. As the market continues to evolve, business owners should prepare to embrace the opportunities and challenges it will bring.

The key to success? Staying agile and adaptable. Being open to new ideas and innovations, staying on top of the latest trends, and be willing to take risks and experiment.



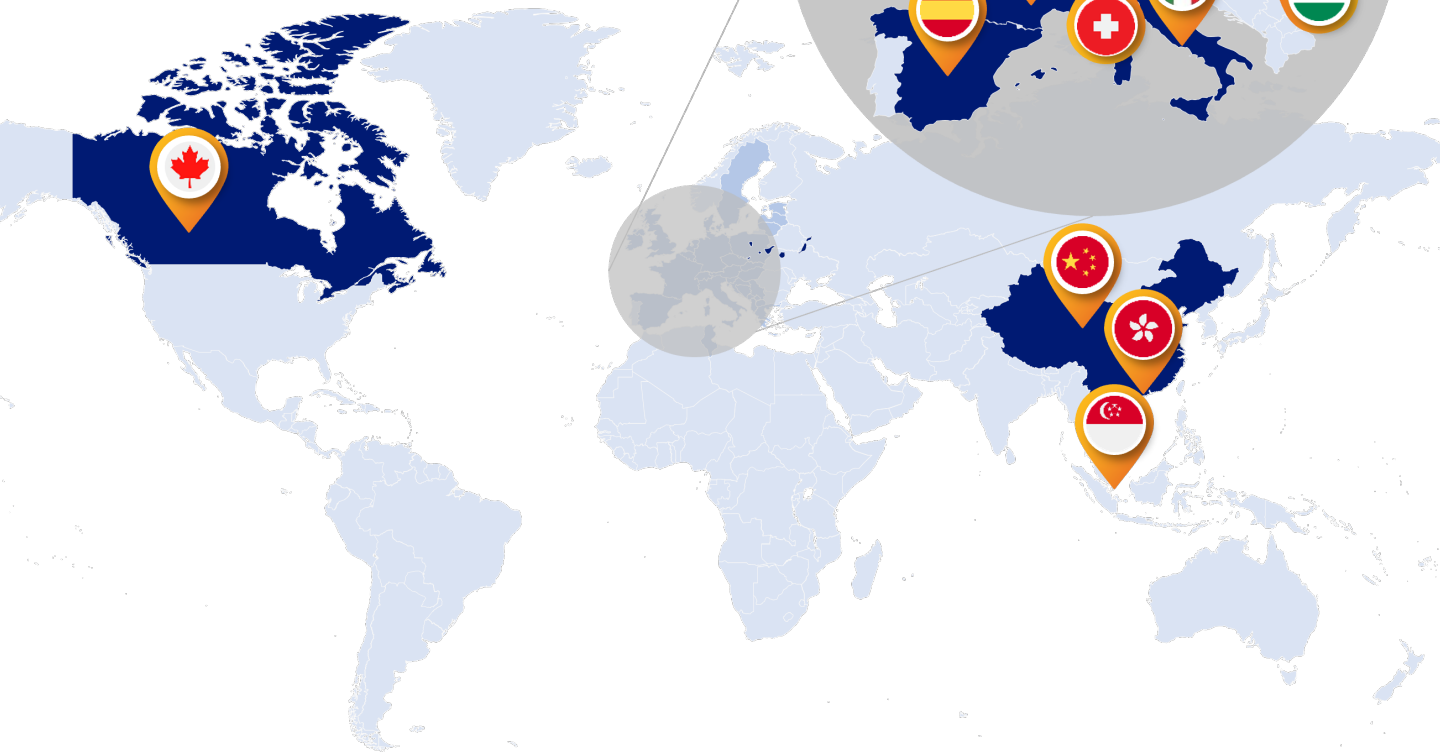
Above all, remember that this industry is ultimately about **connecting with people** – building relationships, solving problems, and creating value.

By keeping your customers at the centre of everything you do, you can build a thriving online business that makes a real impact in the world.

ABOUT US

Spring GDS

Transport solutions to **190** destinations
+230 International Logistics Partners
Present in **15** countries



We are Spring GDS, a PostNL company with over 20 years of experience in the world of e-commerce transport and cross-border.

With our network of logistics partners, we are able to provide reliable and sustainable shipping solutions to 190 destinations all over the world.

We offer different options in order to better adapt our solutions to your business and your customers' needs.

ABOUT US

Spring GDS



Tracked

Delivery of packages up to 20kg with online tracking



Signature

Delivery of packages up to 20kg with online tracking, signature and proof of delivery



Returns

Return of items with label included in the package or customer portal



Extra@Home

Delivery of large packages to Benelux at the door or a specific room in the house



Customs clearance

Your products cleared within 24 hours* thanks to our team of specialists



Collect

Delivery of parcels in post office, in relay point or in locker

Originally from Ecuador, **Samantha Rodriguez** joined Spring GDS in 2021 and is the Marketing Coordinator for Spring Southern Europe. Having worked in 3 different continents, Samantha specializes in Digital Marketing, with a keen interest in consumer behaviour, international marketing and new technologies.



Disclaimer

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