How to Expand B2B Sales With a New Commerce Platform

Case studies, implementation effects, functionality descriptions and success factors

Table of contents

01.

B2B E-commerce
– the Modern Sales Channel

40%
of surveyed
companies sell
online

86%
of surveyed companies
conduct sales via
the Internet

Growing a business these days is quite a challenge. The echoes of pandemics, and the unstable political and economic situation - including rising costs and inflation - are all factors that make it difficult to maintain adequate turnover and margins. What's more, the tightening playing field is also influenced by increasing competition and the growing expectations of your clients. This makes companies operating in the B2B model look for new sales channels and increasingly develop online distribution models.

The value of the global B2B e-commerce market was estimated at around $6.92 trillion in 2021. It is estimated that the value of the European market alone will reach nearly $14 globally in 2025.[12] What's more, as many as 83% of companies in developed countries focusing on B2B business sell online.[3]

The implementation of a B2B platform, and the resulting opportunity to develop sales in a new channel, will bring a number of benefits to your company, support the work of your sales team and, most importantly, respond to the needs of your customers!

[1] Business-To-Business (B2B) E-Commerce Market Global Industry Assessment & Forecast, Vantage Market Research, 2022
[2] B2B e-commerce revenue, Statista, 2021
[3] B2B e-commerce report, Delloite, 2022

Customer's Perspective

Your customers want to buy online

Business and commercial decisions are increasingly being made by generations whose representatives have been using the Internet from an early age, and e-commerce is an everyday occurrence for them - for example, people born in the 1980s or 1990s (not to mention later generations).

B2B customers' expectations stem from their B2C shopping habits

For customers, it is important to have 24/7 access to products, convenience, a good and intuitive shopping experience, personalized offers, clearly presented prices and payment terms including trade discounts, and delivery terms tailored to the customer's logistical requirements.

"

The SIG.pl e-commerce system is not only a modern sales platform. It is also a channel for the communication and implementation of marketing activities - including a loyalty program. Building relationships with customers is one of the assumptions of our omnichannel development strategy - we build relationships both directly and online - always where it is the most convenient for the customer.

Bartosz Plich

GROUP DIRECTOR OF OMNICHANNEL, SIG

Sales Representative's Perspective

The B2B platform is a tool to support daily work

The B2B platform is on any device and facilitates comprehensive customer service. It allows you to present an offer, place orders on behalf of the customer and generate offers in a document format of your choice (e.g. xls, csv, pdf). It also gives access to the customer's order history, terms and conditions, loyalty program and customer documents resulting from their purchase history (e.g. invoices, complaints, offers).

Increased work efficiency and time savings

With the introduction of online sales, salespeople spend less time on order entry and clerical work, focusing more on quality customer service, technical advice and relationship building. According to Gartner, almost half of Millennials prefer to do B2B transactions without salespeople, so the role of the sales team is changing from salespeople to advisors and account managers, regardless of the distribution channel.[4]

> Technology today is no longer an add-on to business, but its essence. Our platform is both technologically advanced and easy to use. We respect our customers' time and want to be available to them anytime and anywhere. What's more, by automating processes, our salespeople are relieved of backoffice work and can focus primarily on customers.

Michał Martowicz

PRESIDENT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD, EUROTERM POLSKA

The platform is a complete source of information about products, business terms and conditions (discount prices) and stock levels

An e-commerce platform provides a knowledge base for the sales team - because access to information is fast (web, mobile), data is up-to-date and provided in an accessible way (UX).

Company's Perspective

Automation of sales and customer service processes

The increase in service efficiency translates into the possibility of increasing the scale of the company's operations. E-commerce also provides the opportunity to reach new customers - such as by enabling the development of international sales with relative ease.

Cost optimization and sales growth

The better productivity of the sales team translates into a reduction in service costs. Increased customer loyalty, more frequent orders, easier accessibility and the ability to reach the full range of products support sales increases.

The development of the e-commerce platform was a strategic business decision, supported by a series of changes related to the transformation of Pneumat's operations. The changes involved automating and streamlining all the company's processes, with a particular focus on those within warehousing and logistics. The online store itself was already a kind of icing on the cake. In mature companies, often based on traditional offline sales channels, the proper preparation for e-commerce development is fundamental. Online sales require the automation of complex business processes in such a way that they can be scaled up later.

Mateusz Waligóra

E-COMMERCE MANAGER, PNEUMAT

> "

On the following pages, we present the effects of B2B platforms in three companies that operate in areas that are demanding and, it would seem, difficult to transfer to the online world, where relationships have always been the basis of business. The distribution of building materials, pneumatics and industrial automation or the installation industry - these are areas, not obvious for e-commerce, in which our clients have been successful in the online world!

Therefore, if, when hearing about the development of online distribution, you repeat that "it will not work in my industry" - be sure to read our study and read the success stories of SIG, Pneumat and Euroterm.

We hope it gives you plenty of inspiration!

Tomasz Gutkowski

HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT / COMMERCE PLATFORMS
UNITY GROUP

Case Study

Omnichannel Model Platform Awarded "Best in E-commerce B2B"

SiG × unity GROUP

SIG ✕ unity GROUP

Omnichannel Model Platform Awarded "Best in E-commerce B2B"

1st place

SIG.pl system was awarded the "Best in e-commerce B2B" award for its modern trading platform (2022)

+142%

increase in revenue from online sales (2021 vs. 2020)

+60%

increase in the number of online customers (2021 vs. 2020)

+40%

increase in the number of e-invoices (2021 vs. 2020)

+80%

more product indexes ordered (by shopping customers) in the omnichannel model (average for 2021)

+30%

increased efficiency of salespeople (serving omnichannel shopping customers) (average for 2021)

What has led to the success of your platform?

The success of our platform is based on the fact that customers and their needs are the starting point for SIG.pl's development. We listen to our contractors, collect their opinions and try to solve their problems by responding to them through dedicated functionalities in our e-commerce. The platform has been developed for several years - we have been systematically adding new solutions that not only enable convenient shopping, but also allow us to improve customer service processes.

Our approach and its effects have been recognized - both by impressive increases in sales realized effectively through channel synergy, but also in the most important competition for the e-commerce industry in Poland. We are proud that our platform won in the "Best in E-commerce B2B" category - this is a great success!

What is omnichannel commerce for you and how does your online store fit into it?

For us, omnichannel is a customer-centric approach - a continuous development aimed at providing the best and most consistent experience with a company regardless of the channel. We are very pleased with the success of the B2B platform, but we treat e-commerce as a complement to our approach and not a competitive channel to the traditional one. We ensure consistency in pricing, terms and conditions, product availability and delivery standards. Internet, stationary

points, direct service through merchants - these are coherent channels. We are seeing steady growth in the number of customers and revenue from e-commerce. These are elements of the development of the omnichannel model and the synergy effect of several channels.

How does the efficiency of operations change with omnichannel strategy?

We analyze various parameters and the examples are numerous! Salespeople taking care of contractors who buy online and offline have nearly 30% more customers than those who deal only with customers who buy at stationary points. Their work is more efficient - time previously spent on operational order processing is now spent on researching customer needs, building relationships or simply serving more customers.

Another example of efficiency gains relates to assortment. Customers using the e-commerce channel and at the same time shopping at stationary outlets buy nearly 80% more product indexes than those not using the e-commerce channel. They have more time to browse the offer, use recommendation systems, system calculators and dedicated promotional actions - customers appreciate these solutions and our effectiveness is increasing! Customers who contact us through various channels are also more loyal - they buy more often and more frequently. The number of people making transactions through the platform nearly tripled between 2019 and 2022!

Bartosz Plich

GROUP DIRECTOR
OF OMNICHANNEL, SIG

SiG ✕ **unity** GROUP

Omnichannel Model Platform Awarded
"Best in E-commerce B2B"

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Industry: distribution of building materials and systems

Scope: UK based, operations in 9 countries, including: Germany, France, Ireland and Poland

Activity in Poland: for more than 25 years, distribution is carried out via over 50 branches located throughout Poland, as well as through an e-commerce platform available since 2016

B2B platform: www.sig.pl based on Unity.Commerce technology

CHALLENGE

The implementation of the B2B platform was to be SIG's next step in implementing an omnichannel strategy aimed at developing sales, marketing activities and resulting processes around ever-changing customer expectations.

SIG's key need was to be able to create **multiple functionalities according to individual needs arising from its distribution model and target group**, and to be able to **grow**.

02.

Omnichannel Model Platform Awarded "Best in E-commerce B2B"

SOLUTION AND KEY FUNCTIONALITIES OF THE PLATFORM

Unity Group has implemented a **dedicated B2B platform** based on **Unity.Commerce** in PHP technology. The solution enabled us to prepare the needed functionalities, adapting the platform to the specifics of the construction industry and its customers. It is a platform that can be **constantly developed** – and always **according to the current needs of the company.**
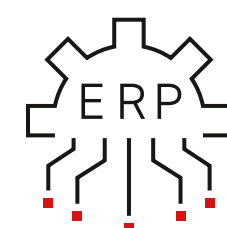
The platform was integrated with the ERP system via the Mule ESB data bus. Unity.Commerce is an open-source solution that enables the flexible and scalable linking of applications and, most importantly, real-time data flow between them. This is especially important for presenting individual price lists, exchanging product and order information or updating inventory levels.
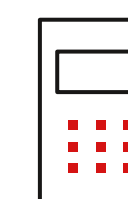
System calculators are dedicated for building products. Unique functionality that enables the automation of product selection and the purchase of indicated items with "one click". For example: simply enter the area of a given type of wall in order to obtain a list of of all products needed for its finishing along with the demand for each of them.
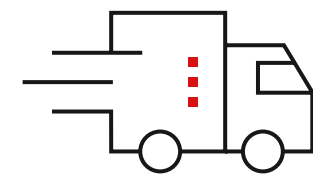
02.

Omnichannel Model Platform Awarded "Best in E-commerce B2B"
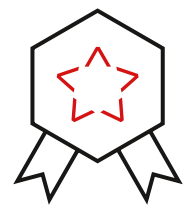
Individual price lists, which enables the presentation of specific prices, discounts and terms of trade for individual customers - are fully consistent with the traditional channel. SIG is also able to present more than one price depending on the place of delivery.

The Flexible delivery system can be tailored to customers' needs - it's possible to order goods to the address of a construction project or with pickup at a SIG branch, all synchronized with the stock levels of individual branches
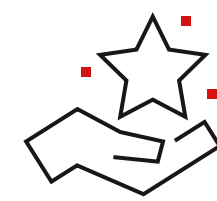
The product recommendation option enables the presentation of complementary goods, substitutes and accessories - supporting up-selling and cross-selling processes.

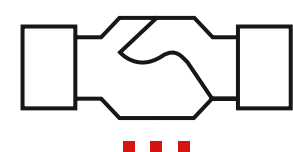**Shopping lists** make it easier for contractors planning purchases.
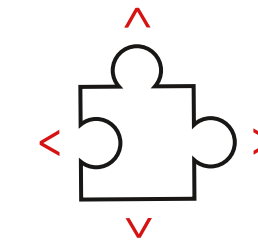
Advanced filters make it easier for contractors to search the product base.
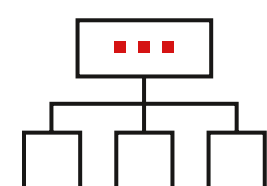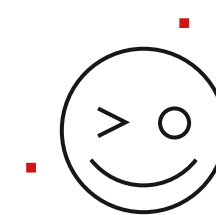
Omnichannel Model Platform Awarded
"Best in E-commerce B2B"

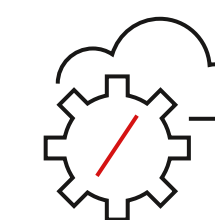**The quotations module** enables the creation, editing and sending of quotations between the contractorand the investor.

The hierarchical structure of contractors enables management over an advanced system of authorizations at the employee level.

The loyalty program is available for all customers, regardless of purchase channel.

The Expanded CMS provides a place of central management for all information and functions.

02.

Case Study

From a Closed B2B Platform to a Modern E-commerce in a Niche Industry

Pneumat. ✕ **unity** GROUP

Pneumat. ✕ **unity** GROUP
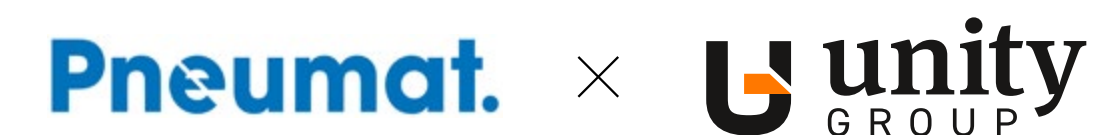
From a Closed B2B Platform to
a Modern E-commerce in a Niche Industry

+198%

increase in conversion rate
(Q2-Q3/2022 vs. Q2-Q3/2019)

+118%

increase in revenue from online sales
(Q2-Q3/2022 vs. Q2-Q3/2019)

+95%

increase in the number of online
transactions (Q2-Q3/2022 vs. Q2-Q3/2019)

+85%

increase in the share of online sales
in total sales (Q2-Q3/2022 vs. Q2-Q3/2019)

+12%

increase in the average value of an online
order (Q2-Q3/2022 vs. Q2-Q3/2019)

How was the development of e-commerce at your company?

The online store was developed as part of a broader digital transformation which included, in our company, successive areas of operation based on the following infrastructure elements: ERP, CRM, WMS, and subsequently just the e-commerce system. Initially, it was a closed system to which only active Pneumat customers had access, and the prices and stock availability of products offered online were only visible to logged-in users.

In 2019, we decided to create an e-commerce department and start the serious development of our platform engine based on Unity.Commerce. Only by unlocking the registration process and the presentation of prices and assortment availability did we fundamentally change sales in the online channel. This is understandable, because customers - including business customers - now expect the same level of comfort and the same simplicity of shopping as in a typical e-commerce dedicated to individual customers. These changes have brought great results - in 2019, one in six orders was processed in the online channel - now it's one in three transactions! We are also very pleased with the increase in conversion and revenue levels from the online store.

What should businesses pay attention to when implementing e-commerce?

It is extremely important to determine the company's current position and sales volume, and to try to

predict as precisely as possible the expansion outlook and potential for scaling sales in the online channel. Therefore, when deciding on an e-commerce engine, it is worth considering several different areas, including the turnover volume, number of transactions, number of SKUs, multi-variant products, multi-language and multi-currency of the store. An initial determination of these parameters and a look at their magnitude in the future will certainly determine the choice of a specific technology solution. An incorrect choice can cause significant problems (if not at the start, then certainly in the future), which reflect most quickly on the stability and performance of the entire system.

What functionalities are key in the Pneumat store?

Operating in the B2B market requires the ability to build business relationships between business partners that are based on a comprehensive pricing and discount policy. That's why our platform has functionalities that enable us to map individual trade conditions for each of our customers in the online world, including buyer limits, discount matrices, and special prices or lower prices for volume purchases.

Also extremely important are solutions that simplify and speed up the purchasing process, such as dedicated configurators, an expanded user panel with a full history of offers, invoices and orders, the ability to build shopping lists for cyclically ordered goods, and the ability to place so-called quick orders, which are based on the import of an Excel file, or to divide an order into separate shipments during the shopping cart process.

Pneumat. × **unity** GROUP

Mateusz Waligóra

E-COMMERCE MANAGER, PNEUMAT

Pneumat. ✕ **unity** GROUP

From a Closed B2B Platform to a Modern E-commerce in a Niche Industry

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Industry: pneumatics and industrial automation

Scope: Poland, Czech Republic & Ukraine

Clients: maintenance services, distributors, industry and factories

Differentiators: more than 160,000 products - including the possibility of precise personalization

B2B platform: www.pneumat.com.pl based on Unity.Commerce technology

CHALLENGE

In the first years of e-commerce, online sales were made only through a closed platform available to registered users.

In 2019, Pneumat's online store was opened to all customers, completely rebuilt, and its functionalities modified in line with the latest solutions that customers are familiar with from B2C stores.

From a Closed B2B Platform to a Modern E-commerce in a Niche Industry

SOLUTION AND KEY FUNCTIONALITIES OF THE PLATFORM

The new platform is based on **Unity.Commerce** technology and has been integrated with existing ERP, PIM and WMS systems. The system also has a number of dedicated solutions resulting from the specific needs of the company's unusual customers, as well as a fully customized customer experience.
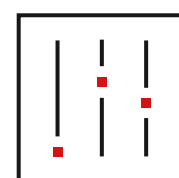
An advanced configurator with the ability to input multiple variables enables customers to personalize products themselves, based on the values they choose. The configurator gives customers lead times and capacity in real time.
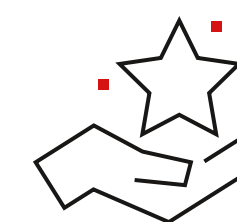
Warehouse morning order peaks are relieved due to the introduction of special sales offers during hours when sales were lower. A "Night Owls" promotion is currently in effect, which runs daily from 6 pm to 9 am, helping the warehouse to better balance its operations and optimize the shipping process.

Pneumat. ✕ **unity** GROUP

# From a Closed B2B Platform to a Modern E-commerce in a Niche Industry

Dedicated solutions for corporate customers are available, including a flexible XLS file generator, common corporate order lists, individual trade credits and dedicated purchasing matrices for individual customers.
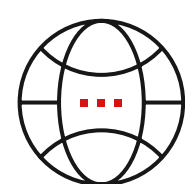
Multicurrency and multiple language versions of the system, based on integration with Google Translate, enable free business development in additional markets.

Using data from the company's internal systems ensures accurate information is awlays displayed regarding the number of available units and expected delivery times from in-house and supplier warehouses.
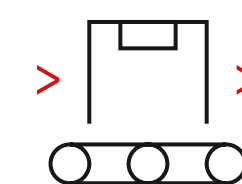
Orders can be split into parts with different delivery methods, addresses and deadlines, all while maintaining a single payment.
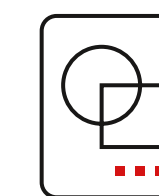
The new platform includes most of the customer experience requirements known from the best e-commerce marketplaces while maintaining specific functionality related to the technical marketplace in the B2B sector.

It was also an opportunity to increase administrative capabilities, better control account permissions and provide both administrators and content teams with more opportunities for changes in key areas such as SEO.

20

Case Study

Automation of Sales Processes Thanks to the Platform in the SaaS Model

Euroterm technika grzewcza i sanitarna ✕ **unity** GROUP

Euroterm
technika grzewcza i sanitarna

✕

unity GROUP
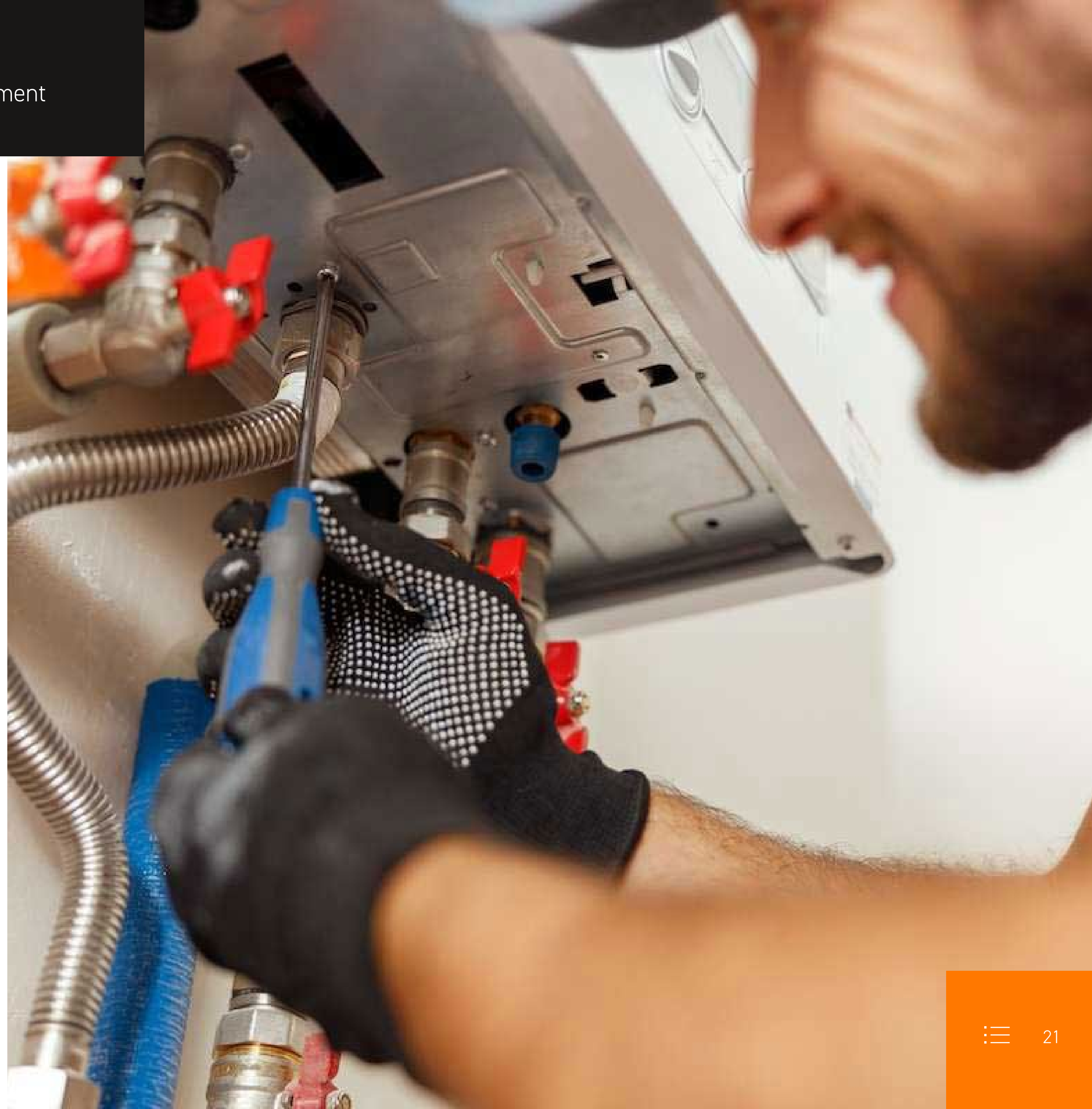
Automation of Sales Processes
Thanks to the Platform in the SaaS Model

+50%

all transactions moved to the online channel over a year (2021 vs. 2020)

+150%

increase in revenue from online sales (2021 vs. 2020)

+135%

increase in the number of transactions concluded online (2021 vs. 2020)

+220%

sessions from organic traffic (2021 vs. 2020)

200%

average basket value online is twice the value of an offline order (average for 2021)

+25%

one in four orders was generated online (average for 2021)

What was the starting point for building the e-commerce platform?

First and foremost, we wanted to implement a solution that would bring real value to customers and optimize order processing on the part of Euroterm24. Our e-commerce has greatly streamlined the purchasing process and the work of the sales team.

The B2B platform is one of the elements of the digital transformation we are implementing. We understand this process very broadly as the standardization of the sales process, automation of repetitive activities or moving entire processes to digital and, as previously mentioned - building value for the customer.

## What is the development of the B2B platform like?

We develop the platform systematically, using the method of small steps. We use new, commonly available functionalities prepared by the ONe team, but we are also increasingly creating them on our own - according to current needs. We are currently paying a lot of attention to the integration of platform functionalities with marketing activities. A good example of comprehensive measures taken to create consistent communication across different sales channels is the development of a loyalty program. We also take care of optimizing the store in terms of

SEO, resulting in an increase in the number of organic sessions by more than 220% in a year! It's getting easier and easier to find us in search results, including for queries about local wholesalers.

How does your e-commerce interact with other sales channels?

We are an organization that develops sales based on omnichannel - our customers have access to exactly the same offers, purchase conditions or delivery methods, regardless of where they make their purchase. The specific sales channel is of secondary importance in this case - the customer's choice of the Euroterm24 offer itself, and their satisfaction, is more important for us.

On the other hand, the e-commerce platform is a solution used by everyone - not only customers, but also salespeople and many people in the company who need information about products, photos, dimensions or current stock levels. That's why the quality of product presentation or responsiveness of the platform is so important to us. Customers appreciate the availability of various forms of delivery and payment, and we, as a company, enjoy the ability to scale our operations. It's also important to us that, thanks to the platform, our sales and marketing create a cohesive ecosystem in which both customers and company employees move seamlessly.
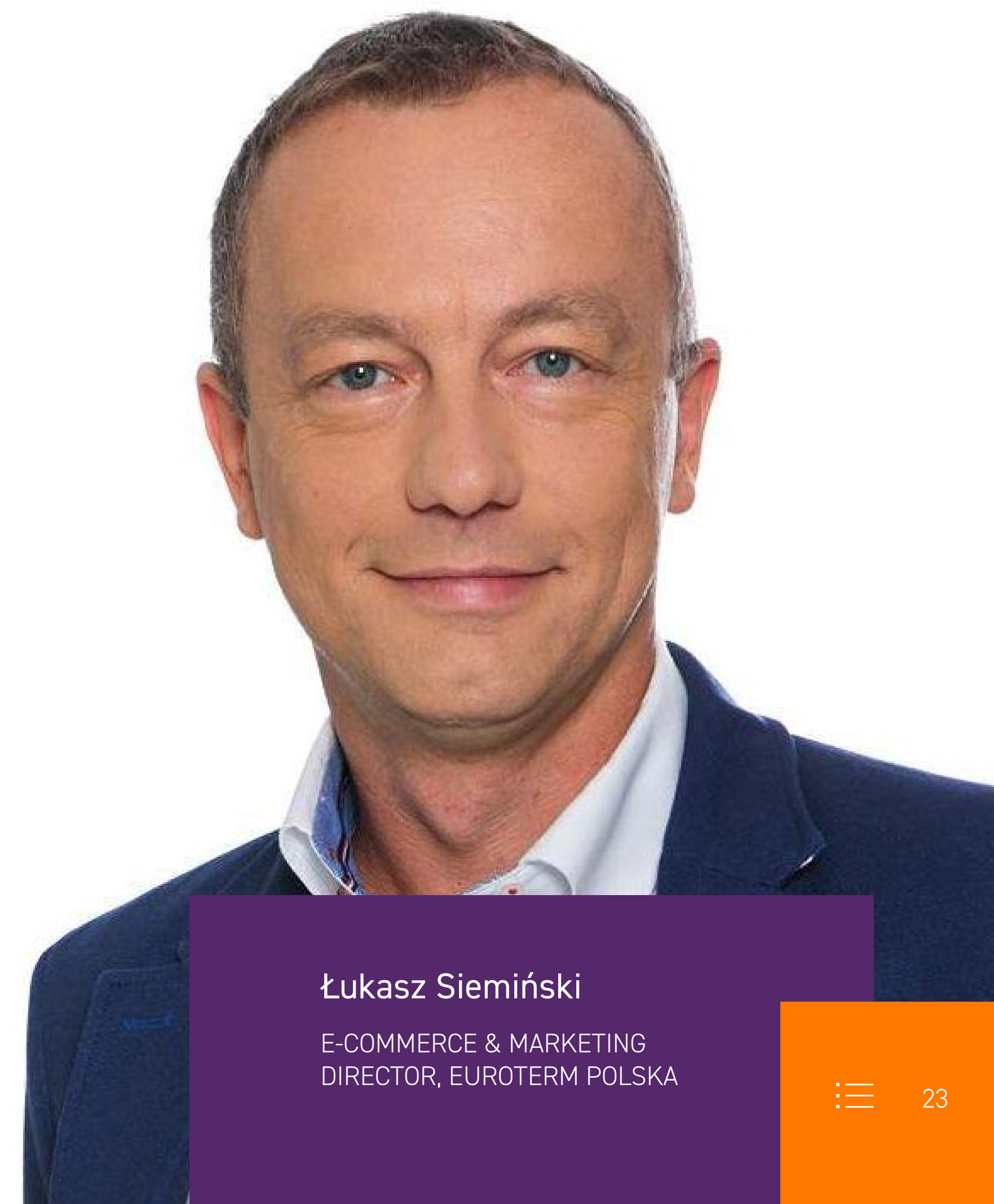
Łukasz Siemiński

E-COMMERCE & MARKETING
DIRECTOR, EUROTERM POLSKA

Automation of Sales Processes
Thanks to the Platform in the SaaS Model

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Industry: installations - heating, sanitary and plumbing technology

Clients: technology solution providers, installation suppliers and contractors, installation and construction companies, developers

Company size: more than 300 employees, with more than PLN 350 million (approx. 74 million EUR) in revenue

B2B platform: www.euroterm24.pl based on the ONe B2B system

CHALLENGE

Over the years, Euroterm grew rapidly, which created more and more challenges in terms of order processing or customer service. Orders were placed through various channels that were in no way integrated or connected in any way, which posed an obstacle to scaling sales.

The IT system that Euroterm needed was to evolve as new technologies advanced and market requirements grew.
The functionalities were to meet the changing needs of the company - even those that changed in just a few years.
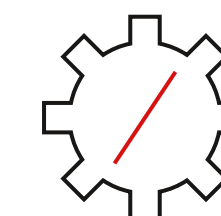
Automation of Sales Processes
Thanks to the Platform in the SaaS Model

SOLUTION AND KEY FUNCTIONALITIES OF THE PLATFORM

The **ONe B2B platform**, a turnkey business solution in the SaaS model billed on a subscription basis, and dedicated to companies making sales in the B2B model, has been implemented. The system enables online and offline customer support with a single platform.

Fast and reliable data flow between systems is achieved thanks to integrations (ERP, PIM, WMS), which also translates into efficient customer service. Orders placed by 5 pm are fulfilled with guaranteed delivery at 7 am the next day, or within 4 hours for personal pickup at the nearest Euroterm branch (click & collect).

Sales process management is automated from a single system. Salespeople are relieved of backoffice work and can focus mainly on customers.

Euroterm
technika grzewcza i sanitarna

✕

unity GROUP

Automation of Sales Processes
# Thanks to the Platform in the SaaS Model
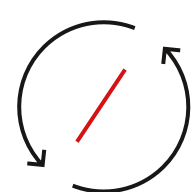
Field branch profiles can be changed, from a typical wholesaler with industry-specific items to consulting offices for technology solutions and cross-docking points.
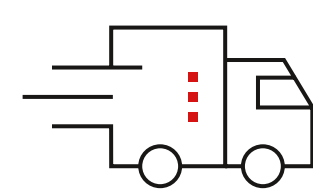
The delivery system can be adapted to customers' needs - goods can be ordered to the indicated address of the investment or with collection at a Euroterm branch, both from the stock of the central warehouse and from the warehouses of local wholesalers.

The platform is continuously developed – and easily adapted to changing business conditions and customer expectations including, among others, an offer engine, construction calculators or a loyalty program.
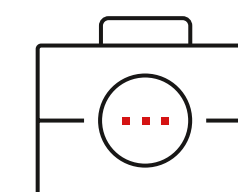
The full product portfolio can be presented, including a wide base of assortments from the logistics center and products available in the warehouses of local branches.
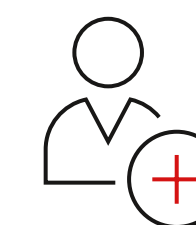
Profile functions for customer employees have different levels of authorization across the likes of reviewing the offer, ordering, and accessing the history record of transactions and documents.

Automation of Sales Processes
Thanks to the Platform in the SaaS Model

Customers can also prepare various purchase lists created for the needs of individual investors.

The increase in efficiency of the sales team results in an increase in the number of customers who can be serviced at the same time.
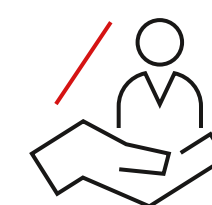
It's also possible to create customer segments and tailor product proposals, communications, promotional activities or delivery terms to them.
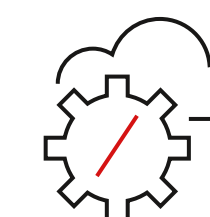
Access to individual commercial terms makes it easier to quote and create cost estimates. The platform enables the creation of order templates, for example, under typical and recurring orders.

03.

What Influences the Success of B2B E-commerce?

B2B platform implementations at SIG, Pneumat and Euroterm are success stories, but also required hard work over several years. A successfully implemented e-commerce allows a company to map its unique operating model and differentiators, and enable development in line with changing trends, as well as the needs of specific customer groups. However, success depends on many factors. Among the most important are:

Cooperation with a trusted implementation partner who will recognize the needs of the company and suggest an optimal technological solution.

Commitment and conviction to e-commerce in the organization - also among the sales team, which usually treats the new channel as a threat to their work (fear of lowering their commissions and deteriorating customer relationships).

The development of functionalities and promotional activities - the implementation itself is just the beginning and an e-commerce should be taken care of just like any other sales channel.

| 01. | 02. | 03. | 04. | 05. | 06. | 07. |

Implement such e-commerce mechanisms that will meet the previously identified needs of customers - because it is their problems that we will solve.

Choosing the right technology.

The appropriate competence to conduct effective online sales.

Continuously encouraging customers to use the B2B platform.

03.

What Influences the Success of B2B E-commerce?

"

Simply choosing the right e-commerce engine does not guarantee success - the choice of a technology partner is of great importance. Ultimately, it is the quality of implementation that can determine the success or failure of the project. It is worth paying attention to the competence of the company, as well as its previous experience and quality of references. The informed choice of an e-commerce implementation partner will determine the further scaling of the business and any competence or technological limitations. The implementation company should be a conversational partner and help with the strategic decisions, preferably already at the stage of choosing an e-commerce engine. On the other hand, it is a mistake to think that a partner implementing a platform for us will relieve us of 100% of the burden. Competence on the organization's side is extremely important at the stage of implementation and defining development directions.

Mateusz Waligóra

E-COMMERCE MANAGER, PNEUMAT

Are You Interested in Implementing a B2B Platform? Let's Talk!

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Unity Group implements projects, offering the end-to-end digital transformation of business. We have a track record of more than 500 successful projects and offers solutions in 4 key areas:

CLIENT

Increased engagement and improved experience: B2B e-commerce, B2C e-commerce, mobile solutions and web portal development

PROCESSES

Digitization to support business efficiency: Product Information Management (PIM), Order Management Systems, Master Data Management, and Business Process Automation

DATA

Fueling Digital Business: Data Engineering, Data Analytics, Machine Learning

CORE SERVICES

IT Architecture: Systems Integrations, Cloud Services, Managed Systems, DevOps

25+
Years on the market

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Clients

500+
Successfully implemented projects

500+
Professional employees