Who's calling the shots – you or your tech stack?

Oui!

Non.

commercetools

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Naysayer

Noun [ney-say-er]

The legacy commerce solutions holding your company back from innovation and excellence.

Example: Our current commerce platform is such a Naysayer — the technology is old and inflexible, which routinely limits our commerce capabilities, ideas and how efficiently we can connect with customers.

Yeasayer

Noun [yay-say-er]

The modern commerce solutions pushing your organization forward, often powered within a headless commerce environment. Also includes the people who champion those technologies and improvements.

Example: I'm so thankful we replaced our outdated commerce platform with a Yeasayer! The capabilities of our technology stack no longer limit our ability to innovate quickly and improve experiences for end-users.

When was the last time you heard "no" when exploring a new commerce solution at work?

Hopefully, a recent example is hard to come by. But as many of us know, that's not always the case. When it comes to having technology conversations with our coworkers, "nah," "nope" and "maybe next year" get tossed around far too often.

But how often does your technology actually have the final say?

As the global shopper pool has grown to over 2 billion, so have expectations. Organizations today must work tirelessly to improve their digital capabilities in alignment with elevated customer and employee demands. But even as commerce environments and customer needs continue to change rapidly, one key group is often playing catch-up: your technology stack.

Are these Naysayers — i.e., your legacy commerce solutions that make it

impossible to innovate quickly — holding back your business? If so, it's time to kick them out of the equation once and for all.

Of course, it's not always that simple. Our 2022 survey of 300 global business decision-makers in non-technical roles found that leaders continue to struggle to execute on their company goals and improve in ways that set them apart from competitors, often because of the digital solutions at their disposal. Our report connects the dots between what's possible when organizations finally remove outdated legacy solutions (and beliefs) from the equation — and what's stopping them from doing so sooner.

There's no time or space at your company for Naysayers. Have you made sure there aren't any in your ranks?

KEY FINDINGS
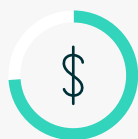
Nearly three quarters of respondents **(74%)** recognize that **failure to adopt emerging commerce solutions** will negatively impact areas of their business.

Almost three-quarters of respondents **(73%)** say it's likely or very likely they'll take their business as a consumer elsewhere when a brand **doesn't have the shopping experience they expect.**

More than two-thirds of respondents **(68%)** say it takes their **company three months or longer** to take new commerce solutions to market.

Over half of organizations **(55%)** aren't yet providing **multiple payment methods** to consumers.

Half of respondents **(50%)** report that their own reservations about their organization's technologies have **limited their company's ability to innovate** as quickly as needed.

Almost half of respondents **(45%)** said **only a minimal amount of their annual budget** is dedicated to improving or expanding commerce capabilities.

Over a third of respondents **(36%)** say they feel **jealous of competitors' commerce offerings.** Among those who feel jealous, the majority **(61%)** say it's because of how quickly their competitors can introduce new offerings.

Nearly a quarter of respondents **(23%)** have considered **leaving their current job** due to their company not innovating fast enough.

Who's louder:
Your Naysayers or
your Yeasayers?

Many non-technical business decision-makers want to embrace commerce innovation — but they need help overcoming resistance from the Naysayers around them.

Nah.

Yes!

The reality when Naysayers take over

When it comes to adopting modern commerce solutions, most decision-makers understand the high stakes they face today. This anxiety surfaces in all areas of the business, including fears around negatively impacting:

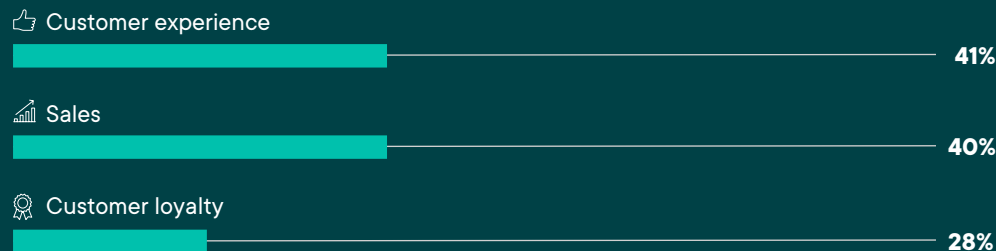**Customer experiences**

Sales

Loyalty

Concerns over the inability to adopt emerging commerce trends will only deepen moving forward, as non-technical business decision-makers recognize the growing distance between their aging solutions and younger shoppers.
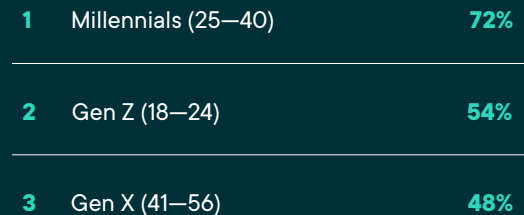
Respondents are most worried about losing loyalty with millennial (72%) and Gen Z (54%) customers — and rightfully so, considering these age groups represent almost a third of U.S. online shoppers overall.

Respondents are most worried about losing loyalty with millennials (72%).

Top 3 areas of business impacted if organizations fail to adopt emerging commerce trends

👍 Customer experience   **41%**

📈 Sales   **40%**

🎖 Customer loyalty   **28%**

Top 3 age groups respondents worry about losing loyalty with

1	Millennials (25—40)	72%
2	Gen Z (18—24)	54%
3	Gen X (41—56)	48%

Many decision-makers are equally aware of why customers are frustrated with their existing commerce experiences

When asked about the top areas of customer frustration with their brands, respondents flagged that shoppers often had difficulty accessing the information they require. In particular, decision-makers believe customers struggle when searching for products and services, interacting with customer service support teams and even finding basic product information.

Huh?
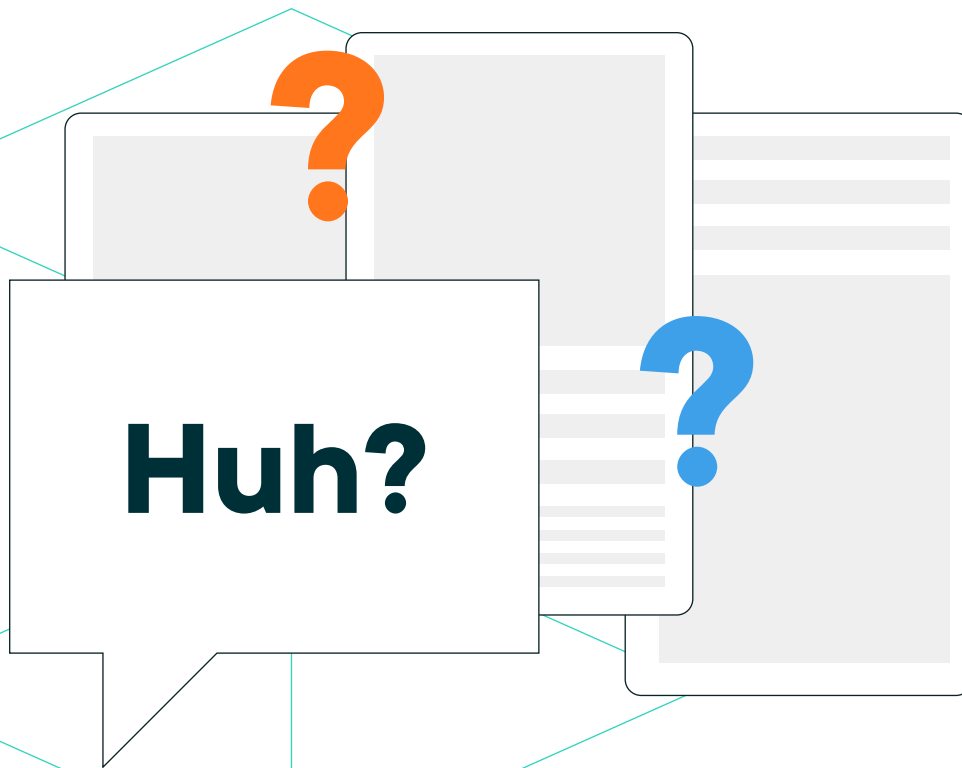
Customers' top 3 sources of frustration when purchasing from decision-makers' brands, according to decision-makers

23%
Searching for products/services

22%
Interacting with customer service support

19%
Finding product information

Three signs Naysayers are running your business

When technologies have been in place for a long time, it can be difficult to identify issues and locate remedies. You may be surprised by the technologies lurking as Naysayers across your organization — and the many ways they're holding your company back. Here are three tendencies to look for:
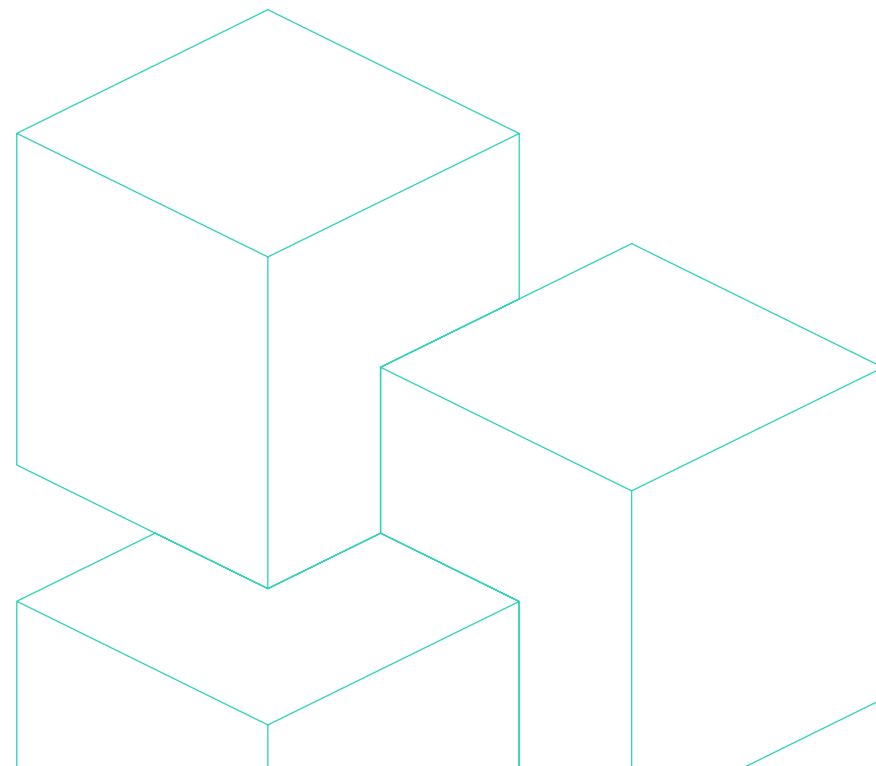
01

You're unwilling to face the truth

Over a quarter of decision-makers (26%) believe failure to adopt emerging commerce solutions won't affect them at all. This sizable minority of business leaders still fail to see the importance of evolving commerce solutions with the times — and Naysayers aren't making it any easier to find clarity.

In addition, 40% of respondents also say customers **never** experience frustration when purchasing from their brand. It's dangerous to remain unaware of your customers' needs and problems, especially when your competitors are certainly working to better accommodate those evolving expectations. When was the last time you checked in with your shoppers and employees? If you feel out of touch with key groups across your organization, now is the time to connect, reconsider and face the music.

40% of respondents say customers never experience frustration when purchasing from their brand.

02

You're fine with maintaining the status quo

Three-quarters of respondents (75%) agree demand for new commerce capabilities can pull focus from existing offerings that work just fine — even though "just fine" is rarely good enough in today's rapidly evolving commerce marketplace.

In the same vein, half of respondents (50%) shared that their personal reservations about their organization's technology have limited their company's ability to innovate as quickly as it needs to. Of course, not every brand should tackle, invest in and grow the same commerce solutions and channels at the same pace. But there's always a need to continue exploring emerging technologies and find new opportunities to innovate your current offerings — and only a Naysayer would dismiss that exciting work.

Half of respondents (50%) shared that their personal reservations about their organization's technology have limited their company's ability to innovate as quickly as it needs to.

03

You're scared to try and fail

Almost half of respondents (46%) say they feel pressure to adopt commerce solutions and capabilities that might be inconsistent with their brand — even though with the right platform, experimentation is so low-stakes there's no reason not to at least try out new commerce solutions and tools.

There's also some finger pointing going on. Almost a quarter of respondents (21%) said other decision-makers at their organization were too quick to embrace new commerce solutions or capabilities. But welcoming and remaining open-minded to new solutions and capabilities is the exact key to success in a fast-changing world. Risk comes with reward for companies that innovate fast and consistently, but Naysayers make it hard to see this connection clearly.

Almost half of respondents (46%) say they feel pressure to adopt commerce solutions and capabilities that might be inconsistent with their brand.

Pass the megaphone to your Yeasayers, fast

Decision-makers who want to move their organizations forward are often held back by outdated tools and peers with less appetite for innovation. **Are your Naysayers speaking louder than your Yeasayers?**

It's an important question to answer, considering almost half of respondents (45%) shared that the strongest pressure to drive greater revenue for digital channels

at their organization comes from themselves as individuals — more so than their competitors (22%) or industry trends (20%). Likewise, almost a quarter of respondents (23%) have considered leaving their current company because it doesn't innovate fast enough, indicating the importance of exploring new solutions and opportunities to decision-makers.

This is all good news
It's time to rally your Yeasayers

The bottom line

Many non-technical decision-makers are excited about the possibilities of modern commerce solutions and are willing to put in the work required to drive lasting change. If you're excited by what you've read so far, you're likely one of them.

But you need tools to counteract the Naysayers in your ranks and reinforce the value of experimenting with new commerce solutions in low-stakes environments. In some cases, decision-makers at your company may also need to self-reflect to evolve and overcome their own Naysayer tendencies, which stand in the way of innovation. This is work you should be doing, too.

Yes!

Can you spot the negative impacts of your Naysayers?

When it comes to adopting modern commerce features, many companies have not yet nailed the basics. However, some decision-makers already have ambitious plans for the future.

Is your company as modern as you hope?

For the most part, non-technical business decision makers see progress happening at their companies. Most respondents (79%) said their organization has implemented at least some modern commerce solutions.

However, companies aren't making as much use of modern commerce features and digital purchasing options as they could and should be. Less than half of respondents (38%) feel their organization has fully blended traditional options and modern commerce solutions — a must-have for competitive retailers. Another 21% of companies haven't adopted any modern commerce solutions at all.

MODERN COMMERCE UPDATE REQUIRED
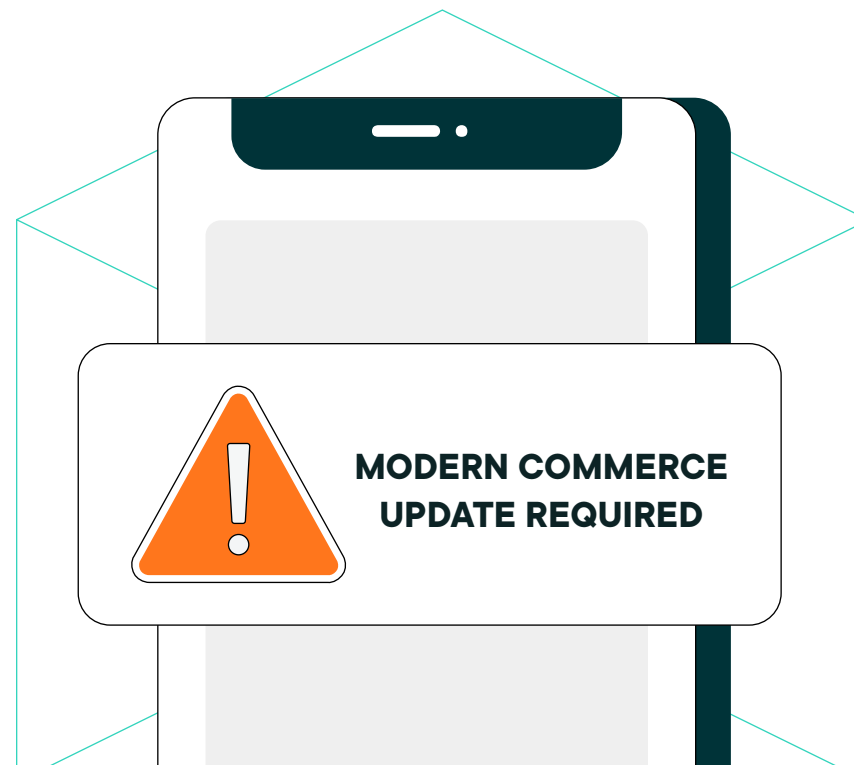
How respondents rate their companies' current commerce technologies

21%

"We rely on traditional options and haven't adopted **any** modern commerce solutions"

41%

"We rely on traditional options, but have also added **some** modern commerce solutions"

38%

"We have **fully** blended traditional options and modern commerce solutions"
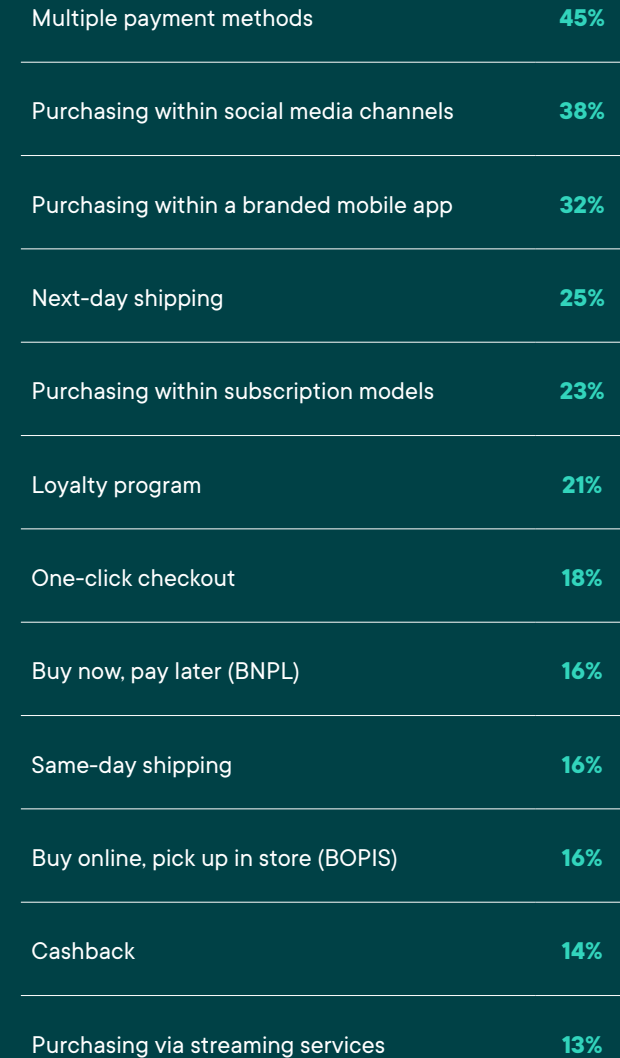
This lack of innovation is no surprise, given how many organizations currently lag behind on implementing commerce basics, lacking even the barest-bone capabilities. For example, a majority of respondents (55%) don't currently offer multiple payment methods to their customers. Adoption numbers are even lower for other common commerce expectations like next-day shipping, loyalty programs and cashback.

You can already imagine this downward trend continues with even more recent and forward-thinking innovations. Less than 10% of respondents offer purchasing within virtual reality/augmented reality, purchasing within a digital game, building your own/custom SKU or voice-activated purchasing. Only 11% offer purchasing within the metaverse.

Top five trends respondents plan to adopt within the next 12 months:

Ⓒ Cryptocurrencies

26%

◉ The metaverse

25%

⊡ NFTs

23%

⊪ Voice-activated commerce

21%

⬡ Web3

20%
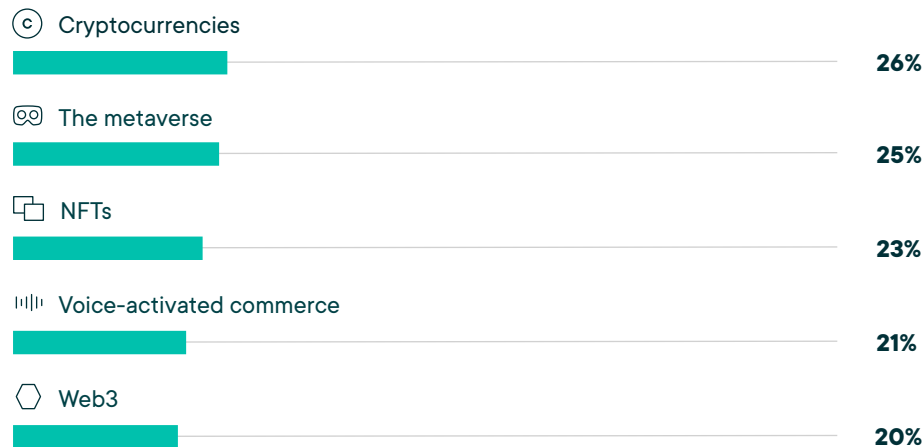
Top commerce features and digital purchasing options offered by respondents' companies

Multiple payment methods	**45%**
Purchasing within social media channels	**38%**
Purchasing within a branded mobile app	**32%**
Next-day shipping	**25%**
Purchasing within subscription models	**23%**
Loyalty program	**21%**
One-click checkout	**18%**
Buy now, pay later (BNPL)	**16%**
Same-day shipping	**16%**
Buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS)	**16%**
Cashback	**14%**
Purchasing via streaming services	**13%**

When it comes to the features and options respondents would like to offer, but currently do not, most non-technical decision-makers revert to building blocks — like purchasing within a branded mobile app or offering multiple payment methods.

This hasn't stopped companies from dreaming big, as indicated by decision-makers plans for the year ahead. In reality though, companies' dreams for their commerce capabilities stretch well beyond their current needs — tackling cryptocurrencies, for example, feels rushed when you don't even offer multiple payment methods currently.

Top 5 digital purchasing options respondents want to offer, but do not

Purchasing within a branded mobile app	**39%**
Purchasing within social media channels	**35%**
Purchasing within subscription models	**27%**
Purchasing via streaming services	**25%**
Purchasing within the metaverse	**20%**

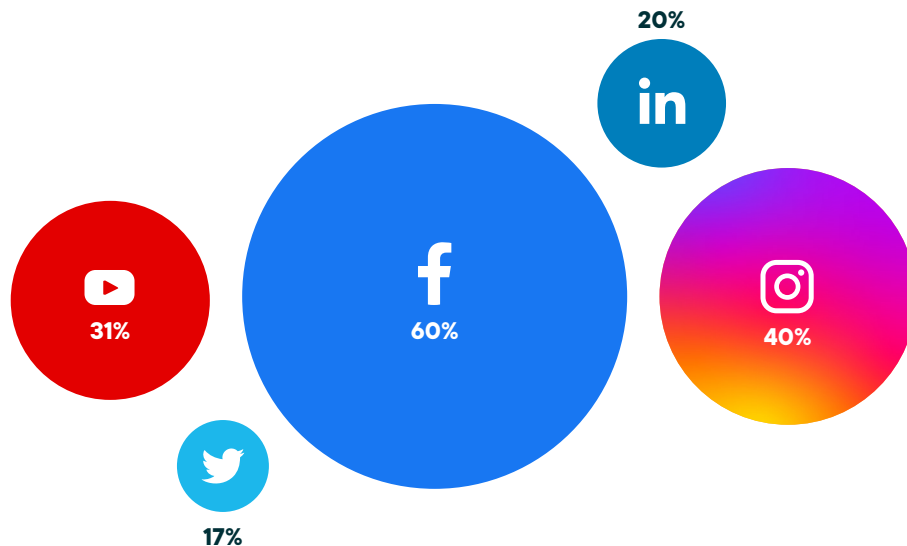## Top 5 commerce features respondents want to offer, but do not

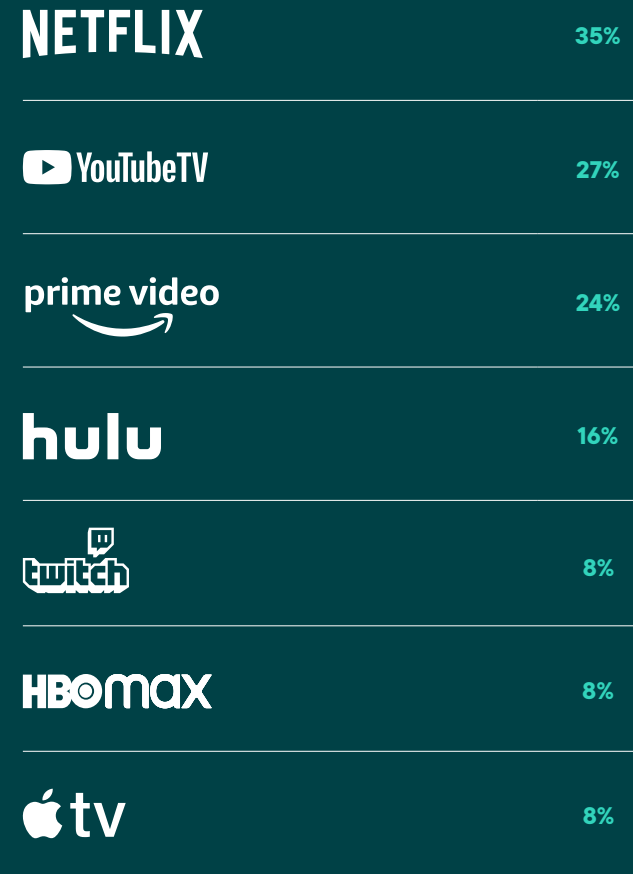|	
Multiple payment methods	**28%**
Loyalty program	**26%**
Buy now, pay later (BNPL)	**25%**
One-click checkout	**24%**
Next-day shipping	**16%**

To stream or not to stream

Despite only 13% of respondents saying their companies offer purchasing via streaming services, decision-makers remain excited about the sales potential of these interaction points, especially Netflix, YouTube TV and Prime Video. In terms of social selling, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube led the pack as the channels with the most sales potential — which is particularly notable given decision-makers' enthusiasm for social selling.

Almost half (47%) of respondents have adopted social selling, the highest percentage of any of the trends listed.

Top 5 social media channels with the most sales potential in the next year:

- YouTube: **31%**
- Facebook: **60%**
- Instagram: **40%**
- LinkedIn: **20%**
- Twitter: **17%**

Top 7 streaming services with the most sales potential in the next year

NETFLIX	**35%**
YouTube TV	**27%**
prime video	**24%**
hulu	**16%**
twitch	**8%**
HBO max	**8%**
tv	**8%**

With such high commerce hopes, where are the results?

It's likely Naysayers causing complacency are holding companies back from embracing the new commerce capabilities respondents are excited about. Despite the overall lack of adoption around modern commerce features among our respondents, decision-makers don't actually feel like outdated commerce solutions hold back their companies. Maybe it's just that your Naysayers are so deeply entrenched in your organization and operations that you're now conditioned to believe this is just the way things are.

Of course, it can be challenging to register this downward spiral at first. Here are a few red flags to watch out for:

+ 40% of respondents say their company's commerce solutions hinder the sale of their products or services. Of those who reported commerce solutions posing a negative impact, almost half (49%) feel the issue has existed for at least a year.

+ Almost a quarter (22%) of respondents said they don't want to offer any of the digital purchasing options listed. A fifth of respondents (20%) said the same about commerce features.

+ When asked which streaming services had the most potential to drive sales, 38% of respondents choose "none of the above" — suggesting these decision-makers don't believe streaming services show future sales opportunities.

+ A third of respondents (34%) said their company struggles with outdated commerce solutions.

The bottom line

Companies' adoption of modern commerce features and digital purchase options lags behind what's possible, and also what's hoped for.

Some decision-makers are excited to test new capabilities like purchasing in the metaverse or jumping on trends like NFTs. But Naysayers clearly exist among us — a vocal minority who don't think their companies need to expand digital purchasing options or commerce features at all. We know they're there, as loud and skeptical as ever. Whether you feel up to speed or behind the times, there's no room in your organization for technologies that hold back your team and business.

No.

Getting rid of your Naysayers, officially

Internal barriers like lack of budget and overly complex decision-making processes hold companies back from true commerce innovation.
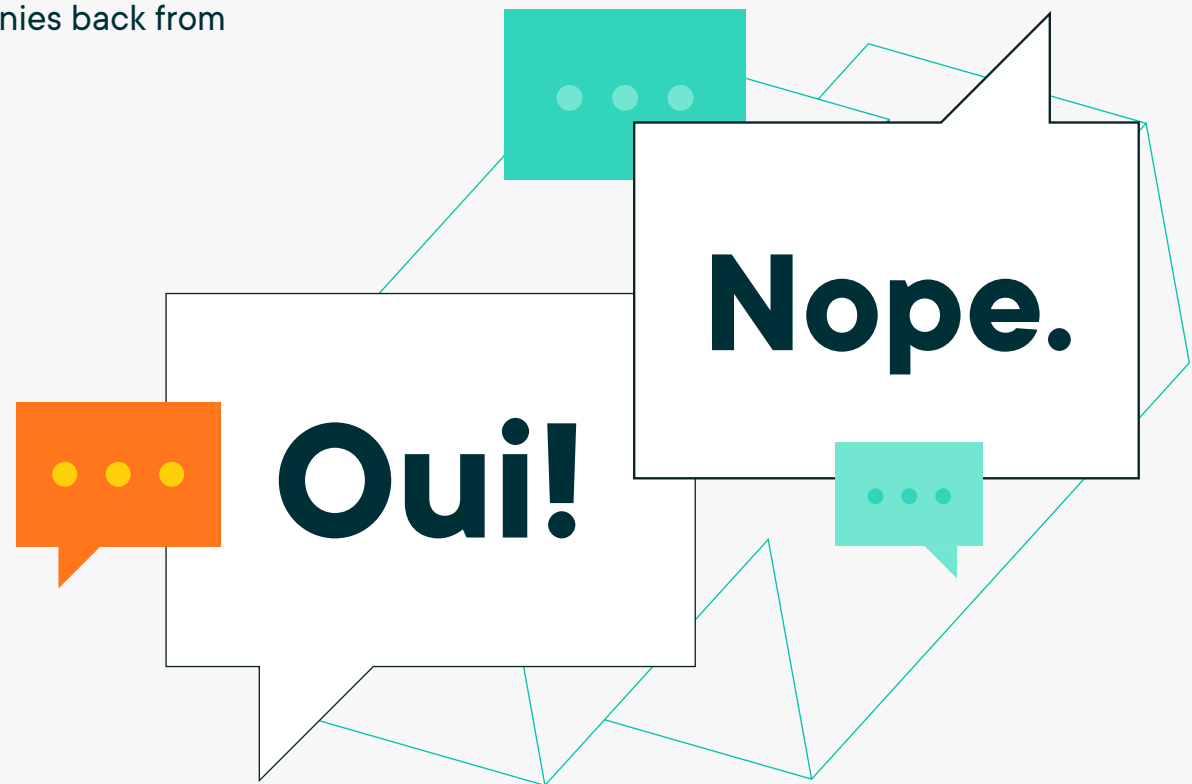
Why is it so hard to boot your Naysayers?

A primary roadblock is budget, which was cited among respondents as a key reason their companies don't implement more commerce capabilities. Almost half of respondents (45%) said only a minimal amount of their annual budget is dedicated to improving or expanding commerce capabilities, and more than half of respondents (52%) said they've decided to not implement a new commerce capability in the past due to budget.

For digital purchase options specifically, cost, lack of knowledge and difficulty of integration are the top reasons for not implementing more solutions now. Respondents' reasons for not offering commerce features are similar, though lacking internal team resources ranks higher and implementation timelines rank lower (at No. 6, not pictured on the chart below).

Top 5 reasons companies don't offer more digital purchase options

The required technology is too expensive	39%
We lack the internal knowledge about how to use new solutions	32%
The required technology is too difficult to integrate with our existing solutions	29%
We're unsure if our customers really want new digital purchasing options	24%
Implementing new options takes too long	18%

Top 5 reasons companies don't offer more commerce features

The required technology is too expensive	38%
The required technology is too difficult to integrate with our existing solutions	31%
We lack the internal knowledge about how to use new solutions	24%
We lack the internal team to manage and see through these investments	22%
We're unsure if our customers really want new commerce features	19%

Time is another common innovation hurdle. Most respondents categorized their own organization as slow to implement new commerce solutions — more than two-thirds of respondents (68%) say it takes their companies three months or more to take a new commerce solution to market. About a third (34%) say it takes six months or more.

Three and even six months are likely aspirational timeframes for legacy solutions, and decision-makers may not be fully aware of the extended timelines for the projects they oversee. Perhaps they're also overconfident in their own abilities (sounds like someone under a Naysayer's spell to us). This is a timeframe standard brands can — and should — be working toward, however.

When commerce progress at your organization slows, it's natural to compare your rate of evolution against other companies. Moments of jealousy may creep in — after all, falling behind your competitors in key areas of commerce experiences presents real setbacks for your organization.

Top 6 reasons respondents are jealous of competitors' commerce offerings

1 They can introduce new commerce offerings more quickly than we can

2 They have more budget for commerce offerings than we do

3 They take more risks with their commerce offerings than we do

4 Their commerce offerings work better than ours do

5 They have the in-house capabilities to power modern commerce solutions and capabilities

6 They have the right third-party relationships to power modern commerce solutions and capabilities

💬 **YEASAYER TIP**

One reason commerce feature adoption might be slow at your company? There are too many people involved.

Almost a third (31%) of respondents shared that more people are involved in decision-making around commerce solutions now compared to 2019. Only 7% said the number of voices in the room has decreased. Adding more stakeholders to the process can drag out timelines and clutter decision-making.

To avoid these issues, follow your revenue trail. The rapid rise of eCommerce has more people wanting a say, and decision-makers across all sorts of departments and roles are eager to get involved. That democratization is great, but can unravel your organization when left unchecked. **Develop a process to elicit feedback and account for many viewpoints, but with guidelines and parameters in place that ensure having too many stakeholders involved in the process never impedes progress.** You can often categorize employees and set permissions based on the level of involvement they have with allocating and spending budget.

Currently, over a third of respondents (36%) report feeling jealous of competitors' commerce offerings. With budget and time constraints on their minds, it's no surprise the majority (61%) of respondents attribute these jealous feelings to the speed at which competitors can introduce offerings — followed closely by competitors having more budget (52%).

Non-technical business decision-makers also expressed envy toward competitors taking more risks with their commerce offerings (34%). While many of your decision-makers intend to push the envelope, your commerce platforms' restricted capabilities hold them back from experimenting and innovating quickly.

61% of respondents attribute these jealous feelings to the speed at which competitors can introduce offerings — followed closely by competitors having more budget (52%).

The bottom line

While resistance from Naysayers may be the biggest barrier holding back your current commerce solutions, advocates for innovation also have to contend with internal barriers like a lack of budget, integration difficulties and long implementation timelines. Adopting a headless commerce platform — a technology framework that decouples your front-end and back-end experiences — eases many of these difficulties by making integration easy, keeping costs low, speeding up implementation, and removing risks.

To get started, follow your jealousies. Identifying areas across your competitors' experiences that elicit a strong reaction from you — whether feelings of inspiration or fears of falling further behind — is an excellent indicator of where you should make immediate and meaningful improvements in your own commerce solutions and capabilities.

Bring your personal standards into the office

Decision-makers are enthusiastic adopters of modern commerce solutions in their personal lives. So why not at work?

If Naysayers at your organization are still overpowering decision-making, there's one last tactic you can take: Ask your organization's leaders about their personal commerce preferences.

When shopping for themselves outside of work, decision-makers demand modern commerce experiences, and they'll walk away when they don't get what they want. As shoppers, respondents are also excited to try new and innovative commerce experiences that they don't necessarily think of implementing at work.

+ A majority of respondents (59%) say they're more likely to shop with companies that have a modern commerce experience than those that do not.
+ Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) say it's likely or very likely they'll take their business elsewhere if a brand doesn't have the shopping experience they expect.
+ Of the 78% of respondents who either have not shopped within the metaverse or don't know what it is, 38% still expressed interest in trying it.
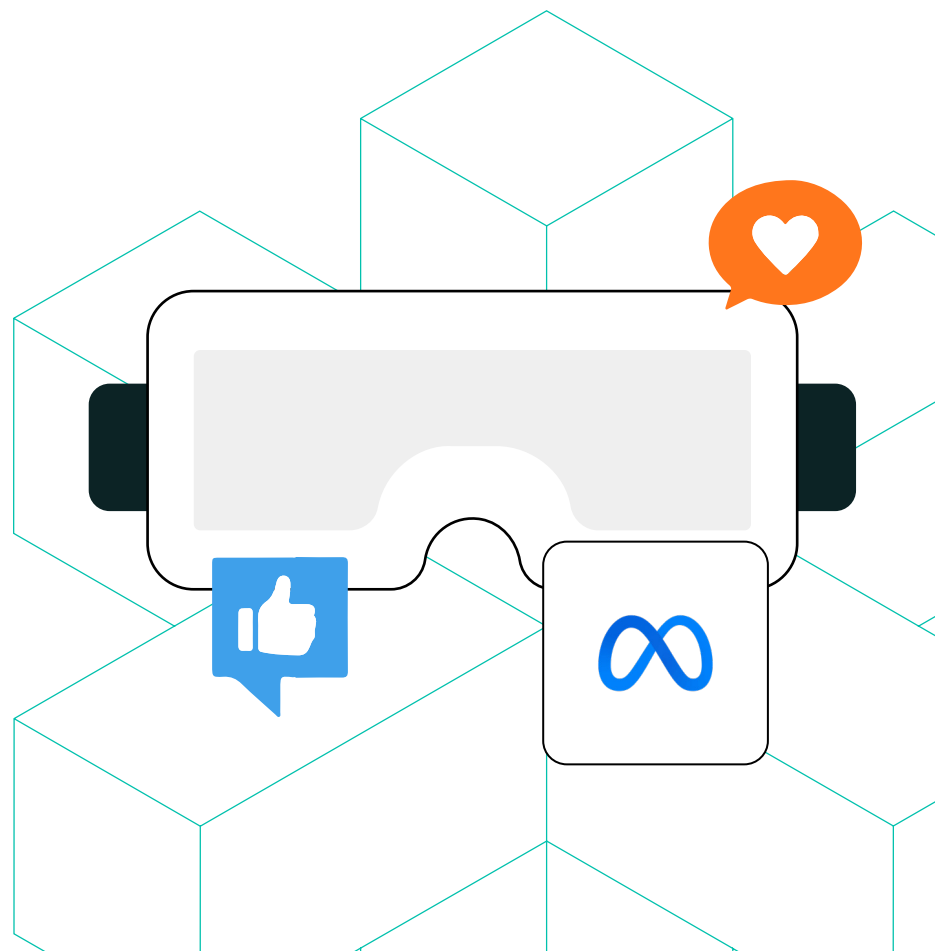
53%
of respondents say they've already shopped in the metaverse

15%
of respondents who already shopped in the metaverse would do so again

38%
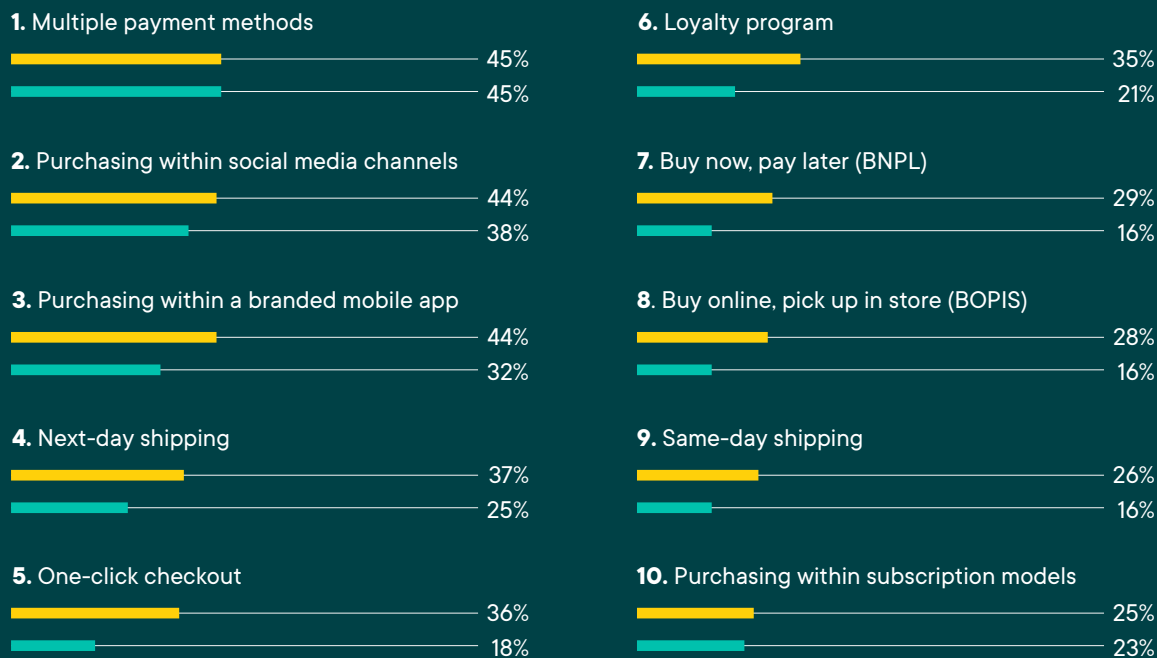of respondents say they would try shopping in the metaverse

It's time to hold your company to the same standard of innovation and commerce excellence.

When asked which digital purchasing options and commerce features were important to them as shoppers, many respondents flagged options and features their company doesn't offer. For example, despite enthusiasm for shopping in the metaverse, only 11% of respondents say their company currently offers this option and only 20% say they want to offer this option at their company. The same goes for other popular commerce features like loyalty programs and one-click checkout.

Top 10 digital purchasing options + commerce features important to respondents as shoppers vs. company offerings

Percentage who said this option or feature was important for brands to offer

Percentage who said their company offered this option or feature

1. Multiple payment methods
- 45%
- 45%

2. Purchasing within social media channels
- 44%
- 38%

3. Purchasing within a branded mobile app
- 44%
- 32%

4. Next-day shipping
- 37%
- 25%

5. One-click checkout
- 36%
- 18%

6. Loyalty program
- 35%
- 21%

7. Buy now, pay later (BNPL)
- 29%
- 16%

8. Buy online, pick up in store (BOPIS)
- 28%
- 16%

9. Same-day shipping
- 26%
- 16%

10. Purchasing within subscription models
- 25%
- 23%

The bottom line

Decision-makers at your company may be more open-minded to modern commerce capabilities and digital purchasing options when reminded of the myriad ways they benefit from and enjoy these experiences as customers. By pointing out this discrepancy between leaders' personal and professional preferences, you and other change advocates can open the eyes of your colleagues to the importance of innovation — and how they may already be more familiar and comfortable with change than they initially think. **And how even more ready they are to eliminate pesky Naysayers.**

CONCLUSION

Like it or not, there are Naysayers among your organization. The question is, how to stop them from standing in the way of long-term innovation?

Now is the time to reflect, reconsider, and change course. As a first step, determine where your current commerce capabilities fall short. Then, identify the challenges non-technical leaders face when it comes to reconciling how digital solutions can help move forward your business goals.

Connecting with your peers and pushing your organization in a more progressive and innovative direction is simply the name of the game in 2022.

Technology should never have the final say.

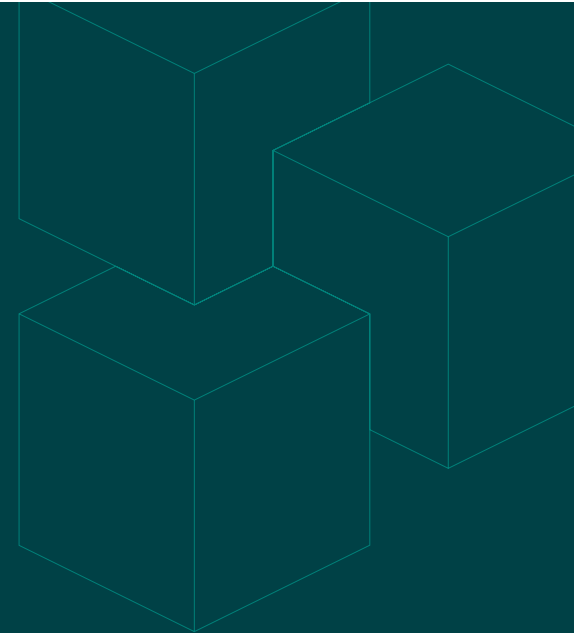### Switch to commercetools and take back control of your business.

Methodology

The 2022 Commerce Innovation report surveyed 300 non-technical business decision-makers globally in March 2022. All respondents work at the director level and above and are a part of the formal decision-making process around eCommerce solutions at their organization.

ABOUT COMMERCETOOLS

The inventor of headless commerce, commercetools is an innovative technology disruptor that has established itself as an industry-leading eCommerce software provider. Today, some of the world's most iconic brands and growth-focused businesses trust commercetools' powerful, flexible, scalable solutions to support their ever-evolving digital commerce needs. As the visionaries leading the modern MACH (Microservices-based, API-first, Cloud-native and Headless) architecture movement, commercetools provides customers with the agility to innovate and iterate on the fly, merge on and off-line channels, drive higher revenue and future proof their eCommerce business.

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