

# What Marketers in the Manufacturing & Industrial Sector Need to Know to Win in 2025

A deep dive into the 2024 Superpowers Index reveals what's important to manufacturing buyers, the top priorities for manufacturing marketers, and the key trends impacting the manufacturing and industrial sector in 2025.



# Introduction

As the manufacturing and industrial landscape continues to evolve, marketers within this sector must stay ahead of emerging trends and shifting buyer priorities to maintain a competitive edge.

This report delves into the critical insights from the manufacturing cut of the **2024 Superpowers Index**, highlighting what matters most to buyers, the top priorities for marketers, and the key trends shaping the sector.

# What's important to manufacturing & industrial buyers in 2025?

A cost reduction exercise is the top trigger driving manufacturing and industrial buyers to seek new products and services in 2025, highlighting the ongoing need for efficiency and cost management in today's challenging economy.

New business requirements, increasing customer expectations, and regulation requirements make up the top four, reflecting the dynamic nature of the manufacturing and industrial sector where companies must continually adapt to changes in market conditions, technological advancements, and shifts in buyer behavior.

Organization growth is also driving the need to seek new solutions, indicating that some companies within the sector are finding success in expanding their operations, entering new markets, and scaling their production capabilities.

*What are the top triggers driving manufacturing and industrial buyers to look for new products and services in 2025?*



## #1 Cost reduction exercise



## #2 New business requirements



## #3 Increase in customer expectations



## #4 Regulation / compliance requirements

(E.g. governance, environmental regulation, etc.)



## #5 Organization growth

## TOP DECISION-DRIVERS FOR MANUFACTURING BUYERS

The 2024 Superpowers Index reveals significant shifts in manufacturing buyers' priorities compared to last year, further emphasizing evolving buyer expectations and market dynamics.

The dramatic rise in the importance of thought leadership indicates that buyers increasingly value suppliers who can help them navigate uncertainty with up-to-date guidance on emerging trends, best practices, and industry developments.

The growing trend towards valuing brands that demonstrate strong DEI and sustainability practices is also reflected by the rise in importance of suppliers who take care of business partners and communities, have a culture of diversity and inclusion, and align with buyers' personal values and ethics.

*What matters most to buyers when choosing suppliers of manufacturing & industrial products and services?*

2024 RANK		2023 RANK	
#1	Active thought leaders in their category / sector	21 <sup>st</sup>	Active thought leaders in their category / sector 
#2	Takes care of its suppliers, business partners and communities	7 <sup>th</sup>	Takes care of its suppliers, business partners and communities 
#3	Offers enough variety and choice	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Offer enough variety and choice 
#4	I feel safe signing a contract with them	1 <sup>st</sup>	I feel safe signing a contract with them 
#5	Takes steps to mitigate risks	8 <sup>th</sup>	Take steps to mitigate risks 
#6	Competitively priced	10 <sup>th</sup>	Competitively priced 
#7	Has a culture of diversity and inclusion	26 <sup>th</sup>	Has a culture of diversity and inclusion 
#8	Is a brand that aligns with my personal values and ethics	16 <sup>th</sup>	Is a brand that aligns with my personal values and ethics 
#9	Is known as being a good employer	13 <sup>th</sup>	Is known as being a good employer 
#10	Leader in innovative products & services	25 <sup>th</sup>	Leader in innovative products & services 

## INFORMATION NEEDS & SOURCES USED ACROSS THE BUYER JOURNEY

*What information are buyers of manufacturing & industrial products and services looking for at each stage of the buying journey?*

At the start of the purchase journey when deciding which brands to consider, buyers are initially focused on identifying products and services that meet their requirements, assessing affordability against budgets, and seeking assurance of reliability and performance. To gather this information, buyers are turning to expert opinions from industry analysts, concise and accessible content from suppliers, and recommendations and first-hand experiences from peers and community groups.

During the initial research process, buyers are deepening their research and starting to compare different solutions offered by suppliers, while still seeking information from industry experts, short-form content from suppliers, and industry-specific communities and forums.



### DECIDING WHICH BRANDS TO CONSIDER



### DURING THE INITIAL RESEARCH PROCESS

INFORMATION NEEDS

- Researching appropriate products and services (38%)
- To understand pricing of the solution (37%)
- Understanding the credentials / performance of suppliers (36%)

- Researching appropriate products and services (35%)
- To understand pricing of the solution (35%)
- Building my awareness of which suppliers offer appropriate solutions (34%)

INFORMATION SOURCES

- Industry analyst firms and consultants (39%)
- Short-form content from suppliers (38%)
- Industry-specific communities / forums (29%)

- Industry analyst firms and consultants (43%)
- Short-form content from suppliers (39%)
- Industry-specific communities / forums (33%)

## INFORMATION NEEDS & SOURCES USED ACROSS THE BUYER JOURNEY

*What information are buyers of manufacturing & industrial products and services looking for at each stage of the buying journey?*

After initial research has been conducted but before requesting a formal quote/proposal, buyers are looking to experience the solution for themselves by seeking a trial or demo, alongside further evaluation of pricing and assurance of reliability and performance. At this stage of the journey, buyers are also seeking more detailed and specific information from suppliers via in-depth, long-form content.

When comparing quotes and making a final decision, buyers are also looking to understand the culture, values, and trustworthiness of suppliers and the extent to which these align with their employer's and their own values. To gather this information, buyers are consuming short-form and in-depth content from suppliers, as well as seeking opinions from credible, independent third parties.



### AFTER INITIAL RESEARCH BUT BEFORE A FORMAL QUOTE / PROPOSAL / TENDER



### COMPARING QUOTES / PROPOSALS / TENDERS AND MAKING A FINAL DECISION

#### INFORMATION NEEDS

- To understand pricing of the solution (34%)
- Understanding the credentials / performance of suppliers (32%)
- To organize a trial / demo / sample of the solution (31%)

- To understand the pricing of the solution (35%)
- Researching appropriate products and services (32%)
- Understanding the culture, values and trustworthiness of suppliers (30%)

#### INFORMATION SOURCES

- Short-form content from suppliers (41%)
- Industry analyst firms and consultants (40%)
- In-depth content from suppliers (33%)

- Short-form content from suppliers (36%)
- Industry analyst firms and consultants (35%)
- In-depth content from suppliers (30%)

# Considerations for marketers

The 2024 Superpowers Index highlights the evolving priorities and decision-making processes of manufacturing and industrial buyers. Understanding these shifts is crucial for marketers aiming to effectively engage with their target audience and drive successful outcomes.

The top triggers for seeking new products and services, such as cost reduction, new business requirements, and increasing customer expectations, underscore the need for efficiency, adaptability, and responsiveness to market changes.

Additionally, the significant rise in the importance of thought leadership and DEI reflects a broader trend towards valuing expertise, ethical practices, and alignment with personal values.





CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR  
MARKETERS:

#1

# Emphasize Thought Leadership and Expertise

Position your company as a thought leader by sharing industry insights, participating in relevant communities and events, and publishing original, thought-provoking content. Buyers increasingly value suppliers who can provide up-to-date guidance on emerging trends, best practices, and industry developments. Demonstrating your expertise can help build trust and differentiate your brand in a competitive market.



CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR  
MARKETERS:

#2

## Highlight Ethical Practices and DEI Initiatives

Showcase your commitment to ethical practices, community involvement, and diversity and inclusion. The growing importance of DEI and sustainability practices means that buyers are looking for suppliers who align with their personal values and ethics. Promoting your company's CSR initiatives and inclusive culture can boost brand advocacy and attract today's socially conscious buyers.



CONSIDERATIONS  
FOR  
MARKETERS:

#3

## Provide Comprehensive and Accessible Information

Ensure that detailed product information, transparent pricing, and evidence of your credentials are readily available across all stages of the buyer journey. Buyers rely on a mix of short-form and in-depth content, as well as expert opinions from industry analysts and peer recommendations. By addressing these information needs and leveraging preferred sources, you can support buyers throughout their journey, facilitating informed decision-making and fostering long-term partnerships.

# What are the top priorities for marketers in the manufacturing & industrial sector?

## HIGHEST PRIORITY MARKETING STRATEGIES

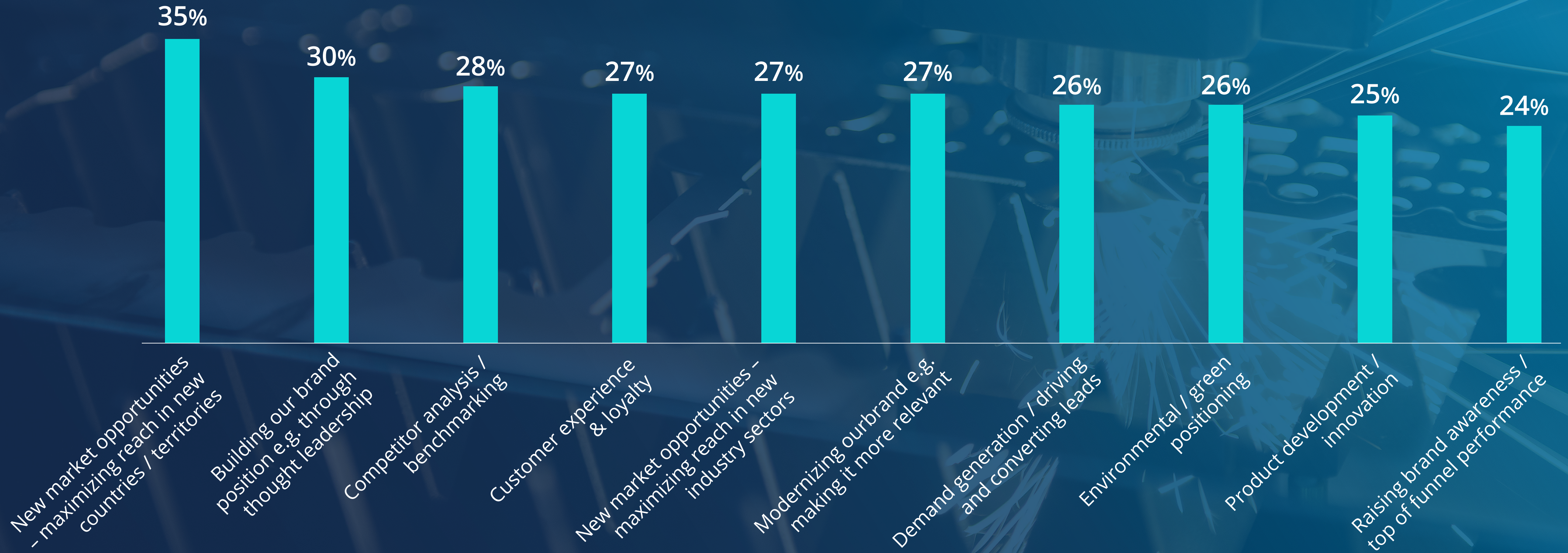
Encouragingly, the top priorities of marketers in the manufacturing and industrial sector reflect the needs and decision-drivers of today's buyers.

'Building our brand position through thought leadership' came out in second place, indicating that marketers are placing high importance on creating quality content that showcases their expertise and builds trust and credibility.

'Offering enough variety of choice' and 'being a leader in innovative products and services' both featured in the top 10 decision drivers for manufacturing buyers (3rd and 10th respectively), so it's also encouraging to see 'product development / innovation' in the top 10 priorities for marketers. The growing influence of DEI and alignment with personal values and ethics is also reflected in the top priorities of marketers, with 'modernizing our brand by making it more relevant' and 'environmental / green positioning' taking the 6th and 8th spot respectively.

In the previous section, we highlighted the importance of suppliers addressing the information needs of buyers to support them throughout the buyer journey, and marketers placing 'improving the customer experience and driving loyalty' high up in their priority list suggests they are aware of this and taking it seriously.

Which marketing strategies are top priority for marketers in the manufacturing & industrial sector in 2025?

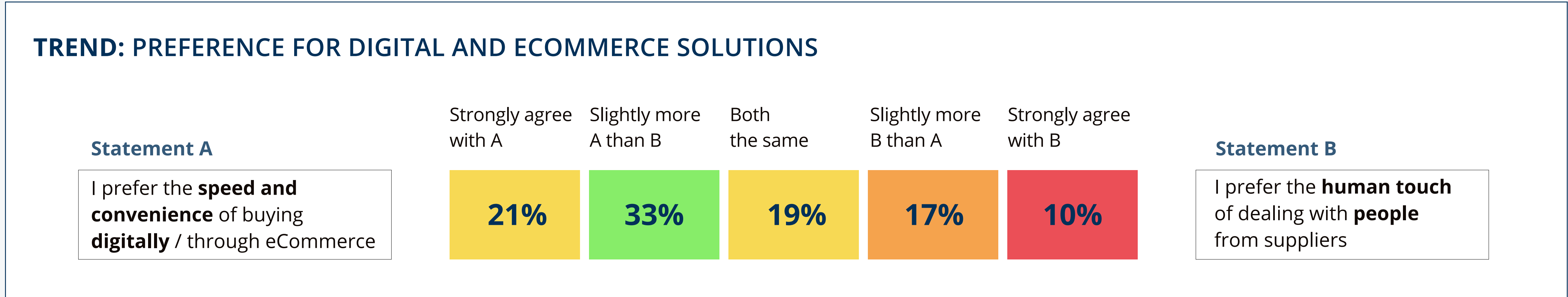


# What are the key trends impacting the manufacturing & industrial sector?

The 2024 Superpowers Index reveals several key trends that are shaping the manufacturing and industrial sector, particularly in relation to digital transformation and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI). These trends highlight the evolving preferences and expectations of buyers, as well as the opportunities and challenges presented by new technologies.

## CURRENT BUSINESS TRENDS

**54%** of decision-makers in the manufacturing and industrial sector prefer the speed and convenience of buying digitally / through eCommerce, compared to **27%** who prefer the human touch of dealing with people from suppliers, reflecting the growing importance of digital channels in the purchasing process. Buyers are increasingly looking for efficient and convenient ways to procure products and services.



55% of decision-makers in the manufacturing and industrial sector expect to be able to purchase all products and services for their business through eCommerce platforms, compared to 23% who agreed that it is not appropriate to buy any products and services for their business through eCommerce platforms, further emphasizing the shift towards digital-first procurement.

### TREND: EXPECTATIONS FOR ECOMMERCE PLATFORMS

#### Statement A

I expect to be able to **purchase all products** and **services** for my business through eCommerce platforms

Strongly agree with A



Slightly more A than B



Both the same



Slightly more B than A



Strongly agree with B



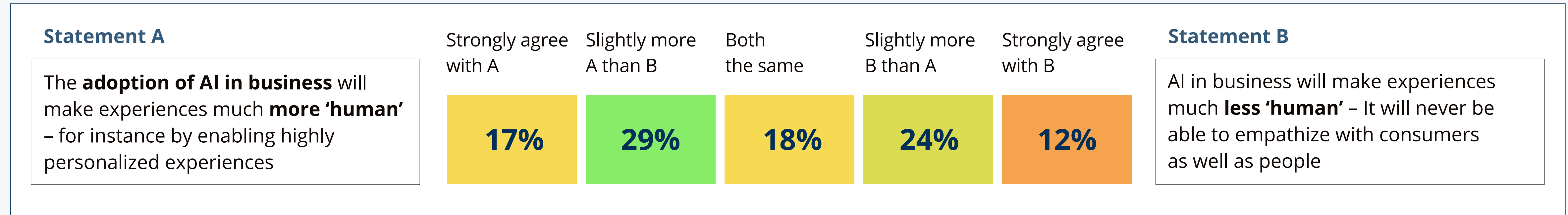
#### Statement B

It is **not** appropriate to buy any **products** and **services** for my business through eCommerce platforms



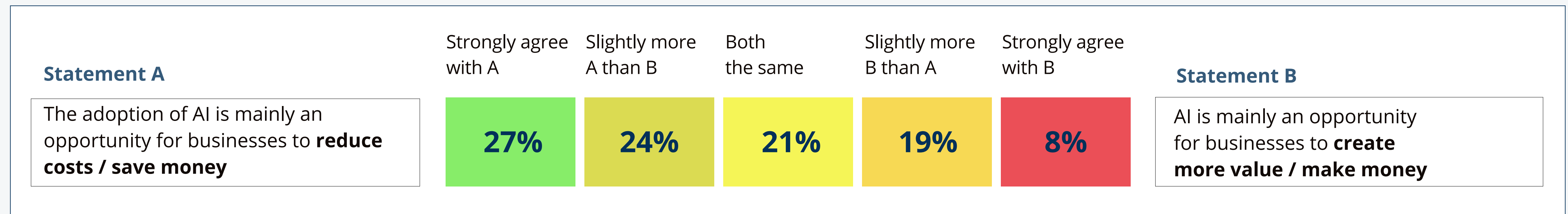
## TREND: ADOPTION OF AI IN BUSINESS

**46%** of decision-makers in the manufacturing and industrial sector agree that the adoption of AI in business will make experiences much more ‘human’, for example by enabling highly personalized experiences, compared to **36%** who agreed that AI in business will make experiences much less ‘human’, for example AI will never be able to empathize with consumers as well as people can.



**51%** of decision-makers in the manufacturing and industrial sector agree that the adoption of AI is mainly an opportunity for businesses to reduce costs / save money, compared to **27%** who agree that AI is mainly an opportunity for businesses to create more value / make money.

While AI is recognized for its potential to personalize experiences and improve efficiency, there are also concerns about it’s ability to empathize with consumers and create value for the business.

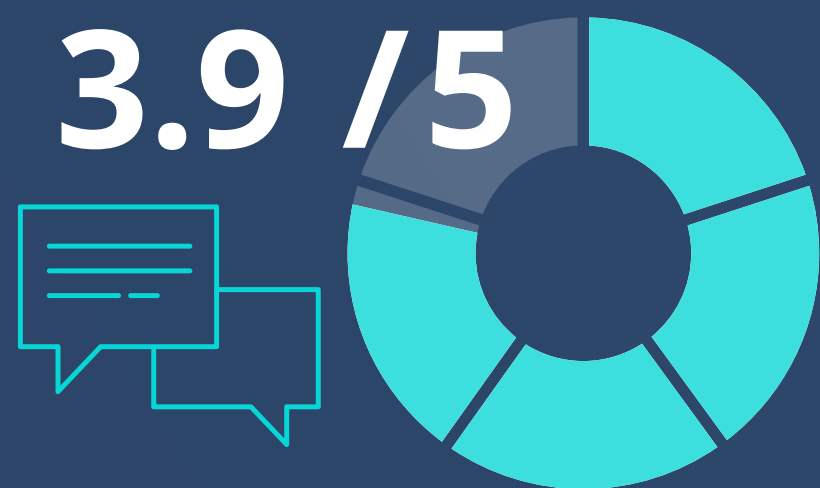


## ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUPPLIERS

### Similarity of marketing and communications messages

Decision-makers perceive that many brands have very similar marketing and messaging, suggesting that brands need to focus on creating unique and differentiated propositions and messaging that sets them apart from competitors.

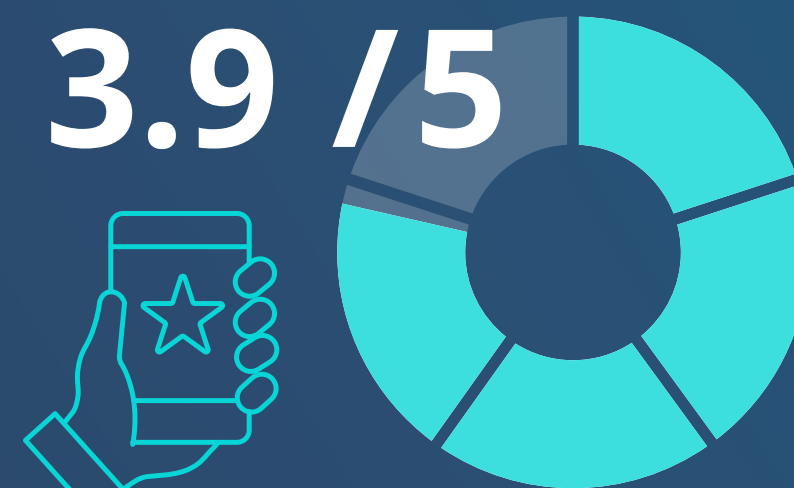
“Many of the brands I see at work have very similar marketing and communications messages – they all sound and act the same.”



### Desire to be better understood

Decision-makers want suppliers to spend more time understanding their specific needs and providing solutions to their day-to-day problems, suggesting that brands should prioritize building deeper relationships with customers by actively listening to their needs and challenges and providing tailored solutions.

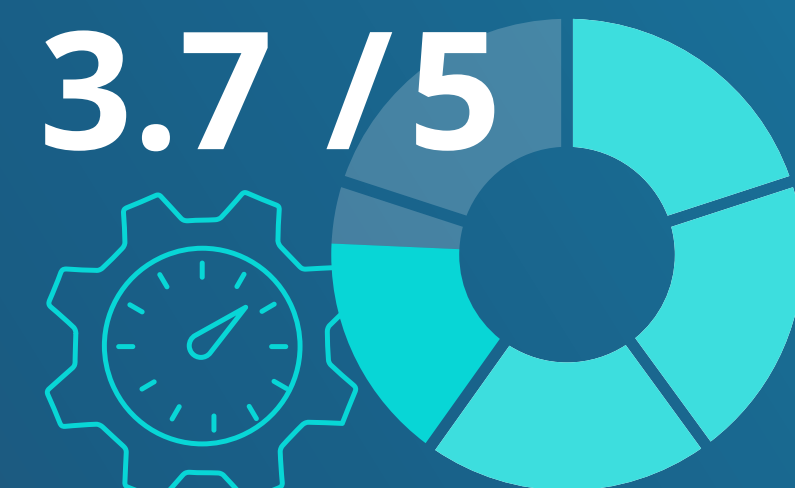
“I would like business suppliers to spend more time seeking to understand me and how it can solve day-to-day problems I face at work.”



### Lengthy purchasing processes

Decision-makers feel that purchasing journeys with most B2B suppliers takes too long, indicating inefficiencies and potential frustrations, suggesting that brands should focus on identifying and eliminating friction and bottlenecks in the sales process.

“It takes far too long to make a purchase from most of our B2B suppliers.”





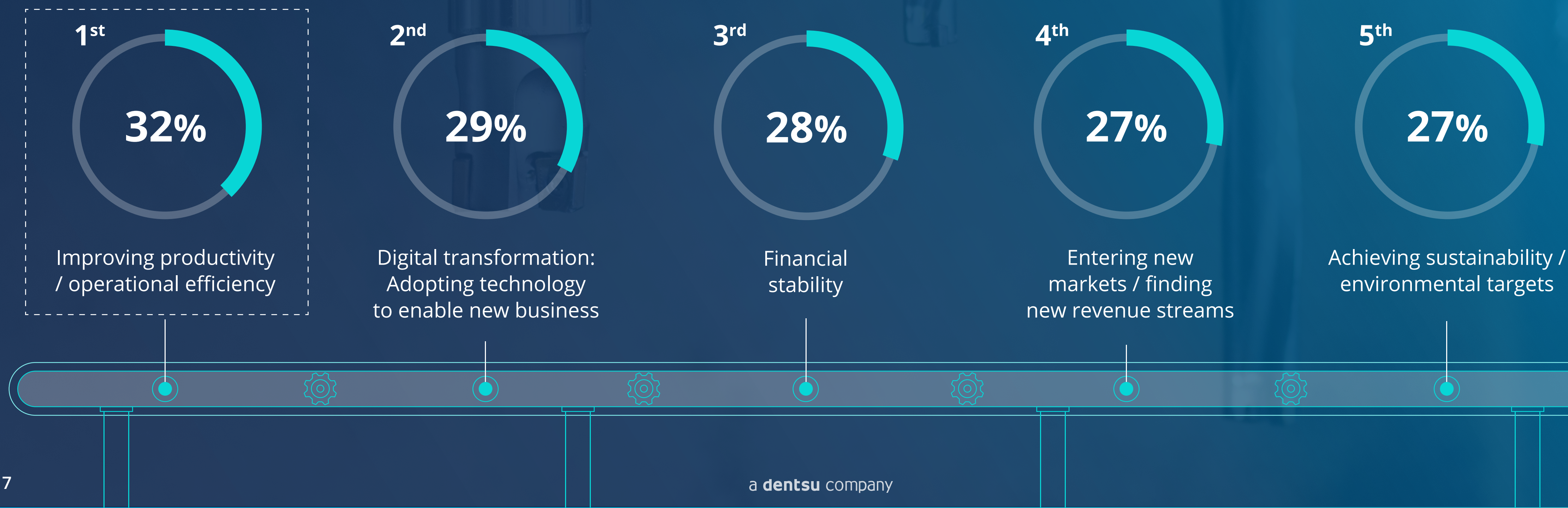
## TOP BUSINESS PRIORITIES

The top priority for manufacturing and industrial brands over the next two years is 'improving productivity and operational efficiency' and combined with 'financial stability' in third place, underscores the need to optimize processes, reduce waste, and enhance overall performance to remain competitive.

The importance of DEI and sustainability to manufacturing buyers has been highlighted throughout this report and it's therefore encouraging to see brands also prioritizing 'achieving sustainability / environmental targets' in their business strategies over the next two years.

Digital transformation is also a critical priority as brands look to adopt new technologies to innovate and develop new business models.

*Which business strategies are manufacturing & industrial brands prioritizing over the next 2 years?*





For a unique perspective on many of the big trends in B2B, including the importance of trust and brand building, the ever-narrowing gap between winning and losing, the growing influence of thought leadership, and the challenges of scaling ABM, check out the full [2024 Superpowers Index](#)



International

a dentsu company