

What Marketers in Professional Services Need to Know to Win in 2025

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



Introduction

The landscape of professional services marketing is evolving at an unprecedented pace. The **2024 Superpowers Index** provides a comprehensive analysis of the critical factors influencing professional services buyers, highlighting their priorities and preferences.

This report delves into the essential insights from the research, offering marketers a strategic roadmap to navigate the complexities of the sector. By understanding the top priorities for professional services marketers and identifying the key trends shaping the industry, this report equips you with the knowledge and tools needed to excel in 2025.

What's important to professional services buyers in 2025?

TOP TRIGGERS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PURCHASES

In 2025, buyers are primarily driven to seek professional services due to organization growth and regulation/compliance requirements. Growth often requires external expertise to manage scaling operations, while compliance with governance and environmental regulations necessitates specialized knowledge to ensure adherence to legal standards.

Cost reduction exercises and new business requirements also play a crucial role in triggering the need for professional services. The emphasis on cost reduction suggests that businesses are continually seeking ways to optimize their operations and improve their bottom line, particularly in today's challenging economy. Similarly, new business requirements, such as entering new markets or launching new products, often require external expertise to navigate unfamiliar territories and ensure successful implementation.

Lastly, conversations with other professionals are a common trigger for purchasing professional services. Recommendations and insights from peers can significantly influence a business's choice to engage professional services, highlighting the value of trusted advice and shared experiences in the professional community.

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



#1 Organization growth



#2 Regulation / compliance requirements
(E.g., governance, environmental regulation etc.)



#3 Cost reduction exercise



#4 New business requirements



#5 Conversations with other professionals

TOP DECISION-DRIVERS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUYERS

The 2024 Superpowers Index reveals a significant shift in what buyers prioritize when selecting suppliers of professional services. Notably, the importance of a brand aligning with personal values has surged to the top spot from 7th place the previous year. This indicates a growing emphasis on ethical considerations and corporate social responsibility in business decisions.

Similarly, the rise of DEI, which has jumped from 29th to 2nd place, and taking care of suppliers and communities maintaining its importance, underscores the increasing recognition of the value of DEI and corporate social responsibility within organizations.

Integration with existing processes and operations, along with the ability to increase revenue or gross sales, have also become more crucial, moving up from 16th to 4th place, and from 12th to 5th place, respectively.

Lastly, the importance of working with suppliers that keep buyers up to date and enhance employability has seen a significant rise from 24th to 6th place, reflecting the increasing value placed on learning and professional development.

What matters most to buyers when choosing suppliers of professional services?

2024 RANK		2023 RANK	
#1	Is a brand that aligns with my personal values and ethics	7 th	Is a brand that aligns with my personal values and ethics
#2	Has a culture of diversity and inclusion	29 th	Has a culture of diversity and inclusion
#3	Takes care of its suppliers, business partners and communities	5 th	Takes care of its suppliers, business partners and communities
#4	Integrates smoothly with our processes and operations	16 th	Integrates smoothly with our processes and operations
#5	Increase our revenue or gross sales	12 th	Increase our revenue or gross sales
#6	Working with them keeps me up to date & makes me more employable	24 th	Working with them keeps me up to date & makes me more employable
#7	Products and services just work and are not prone to fail	8 th	Products and services just work and are not prone to fail
#8	Provides the support, information and expertise we need	4 th	Provides the support, information and expertise we need
#9	Support us with expertise	1 st	Support us with expertise
#10	Is known as being a good employer	10 th	Is known as being a good employer

INFORMATION NEEDS & SOURCES USED ACROSS THE BUYER JOURNEY

What information are buyers of professional services looking for and which sources are they using 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 content from suppliers, and information found on supplier websites.

During the initial research process, buyers are continuing their research into the performance of suppliers and the solutions on offer, while also starting to look for news articles about the supplier in addition to opinions from industry experts and short-form content from suppliers.



DECIDING WHICH BRANDS TO CONSIDER



DURING THE INITIAL RESEARCH PROCESS

INFORMATION NEEDS

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

- Understanding the credentials / performance of suppliers (38%)
- Researching appropriate products and services (37%)
- To understand pricing of the solution (33%)

INFORMATION SOURCES

- Industry analyst firms and consultants (34%)
- Supplier websites (31%)
- Short-form content from suppliers (30%)

- Industry analyst firms and consultants (35%)
- Short-form content from suppliers (33%)
- News articles about the supplier (31%)

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, the information needs of buyers remain the same, but they are starting to seek more detailed and specific information from suppliers via in-depth, long-form content, in addition to industry analyst views and short-form content from suppliers.

When comparing quotes/proposals and making a final decision, buyers are unsurprisingly comparing the pricing of solutions, as well as making a final evaluation of the different options available and further assessing the credentials of suppliers. To gather this information, buyers are once again consuming both 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 (36%)
- Researching appropriate products and services (33%)
- Understanding the credentials / performance of suppliers (33%)

- To understand the pricing of the solution (39%)
- Researching appropriate products and services (33%)
- Understanding the credentials / performance of suppliers (29%)

INFORMATION SOURCES

- Industry analyst firms and consultants (36%)
- In-depth content from suppliers (31%)
- Short-form content from suppliers (31%)

- Industry analyst firms and consultants (29%)
- Short-form content from suppliers (28%)
- In-depth content from suppliers (26%)

Considerations for marketers

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

The top decision drivers when choosing suppliers, such as aligning with personal values, a strong DEI culture, and being known as a good employer, reflect a broader trend towards valuing suppliers who prioritize CSR initiatives.

Additionally, the rise in the importance of integrating smoothly with existing processes and increasing revenue, underscore the need for efficiency and a focus on cost reduction and growth.



CONSIDERATIONS
FOR
MARKETERS:

#1

Align with Buyer Values and Ethics

In 2025, professional services buyers are placing a significant emphasis on working with brands that align with their personal values and ethics. This shift highlights the growing importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethical considerations in business decisions. Ensure that your brand's values are clearly communicated and resonate with the ethical standards of your target audience. Demonstrating a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community support can enhance brand appeal and foster stronger relationships with clients.



CONSIDERATIONS
FOR
MARKETERS:

#2

Leverage Trusted Information Sources

Throughout the buyer journey, professional services buyers rely heavily on trusted information sources such as industry analyst firms, as well as supplier websites and short-form content from suppliers. Focus on creating high-quality, accessible content that addresses buyers' key information needs, such as product performance, pricing, and supplier credentials. Collaborating with industry analysts and ensuring a strong online presence can help build credibility and trust, making it easier for buyers to consider and choose their services.



CONSIDERATIONS
FOR
MARKETERS:

#3

Emphasize Integration and Revenue Growth

Buyers are increasingly prioritizing suppliers that can integrate smoothly with their existing processes and operations, as well as those that can contribute to revenue growth. Highlight your services' compatibility with clients' current systems and showcase case studies or testimonials that demonstrate successful integrations. Additionally, emphasizing the potential for increasing revenue through the use of their services can appeal to buyers looking to optimize their operations and achieve financial growth.



What are the top priorities for marketers in the professional services sector?

HIGHEST PRIORITY MARKETING STRATEGIES

The top priorities of marketers in the professional services sector somewhat reflect the needs and decision-drivers of today's buyers, although there are notable absences.

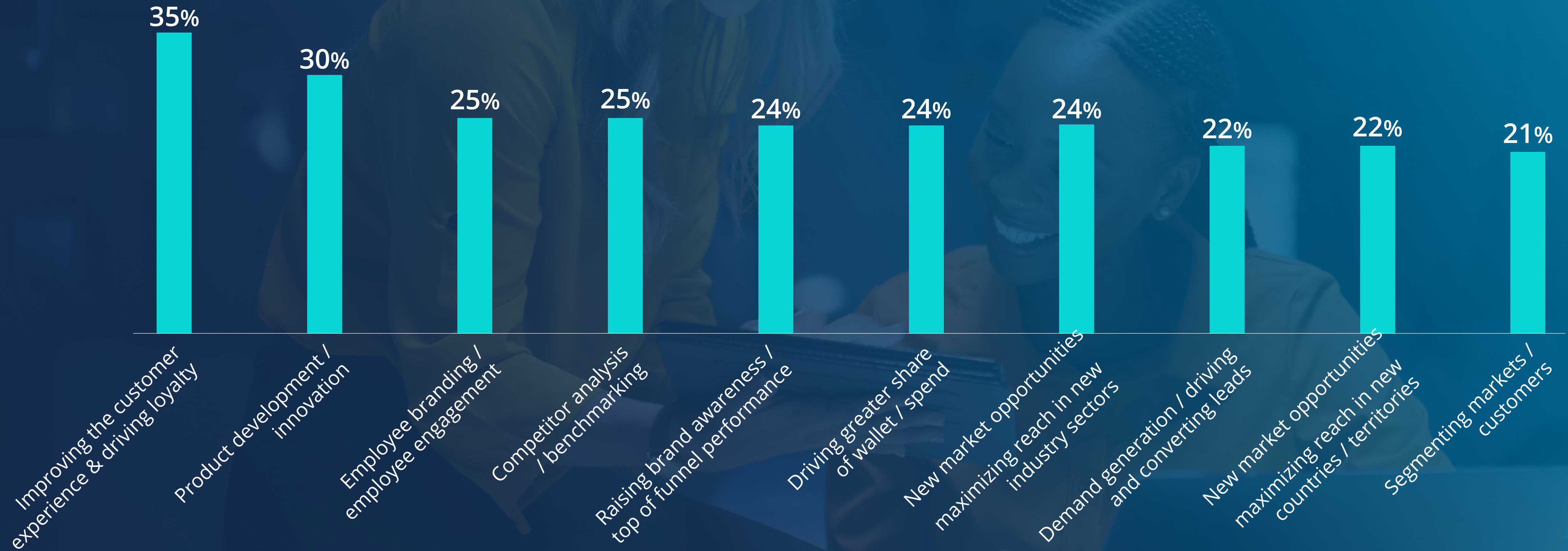
With 'provides the support, information and expertise we need' appearing in the top 10 decision drivers for professional services buyers, it's encouraging to see 'improving the customer experience and driving loyalty' come out as the top priority for marketers.

'Product development / innovation' came out in 2nd place which will be welcome news for professional services buyers who place great importance on 'integrates smoothly with our processes and operations', 'products and services just work and not prone to fail', and 'working with them keeps me up-to-date and makes me more employable'.

'Employee branding / employee engagement' makes up the top 3 which again aligns well with buyers seeking professional services suppliers who are known as good employers.

Notable in their absence are priorities related to DEI and CSR, which are key decision drivers for buyers of professional services, and content / thought leadership activities, which are important sources of trusted information during the buying journey.

Which marketing strategies are top priority for marketers in the professional services sector in 2025?



What are the key trends impacting the professional services sector?

The 2024 Superpowers Index reveals several key trends that are shaping the professional services 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

52% of decision-makers in the professional services 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.

TREND: PREFERENCE FOR DIGITAL AND ECOMMERCE SOLUTIONS

Statement A

I prefer the **speed and convenience** of buying **digitally** / through eCommerce

Strongly agree
with A

24%

Slightly more
A than B

28%

Both
the same

22%

Slightly more
B than A

17%

Strongly agree
with B

10%

Statement B

I prefer the **human touch** of dealing with **people** from suppliers

57% of decision-makers in the professional services sector expect to be able to purchase all products and services for their business through eCommerce platforms, compared to 20% who agreed that it is not appropriate to buy any products and services for my 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

24%

Slightly more A than B

33%

Both the same

24%

Slightly more B than A

13%

Strongly agree with B

7%

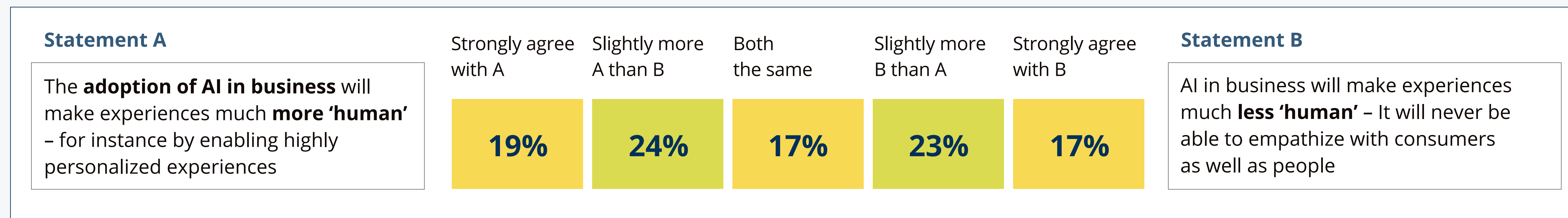
Statement B

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



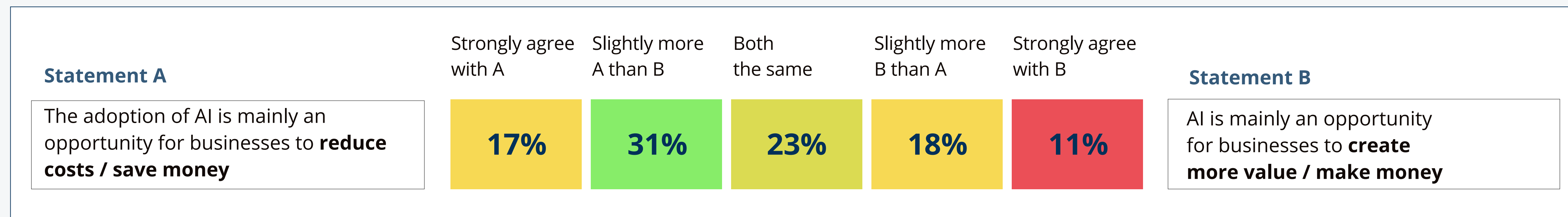
TREND: ADOPTION OF AI IN BUSINESS

43% of decision-makers in the professional services sector agree that the adoption of AI in business will make experiences much more 'human', for example by enabling highly personalized experiences, compared to **40%** 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.



48% of decision-makers in the professional services sector agree that the adoption of AI is mainly an opportunity for businesses to reduce costs / save money, compared to **29%** 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 its ability to empathize with consumers and create value for the business.

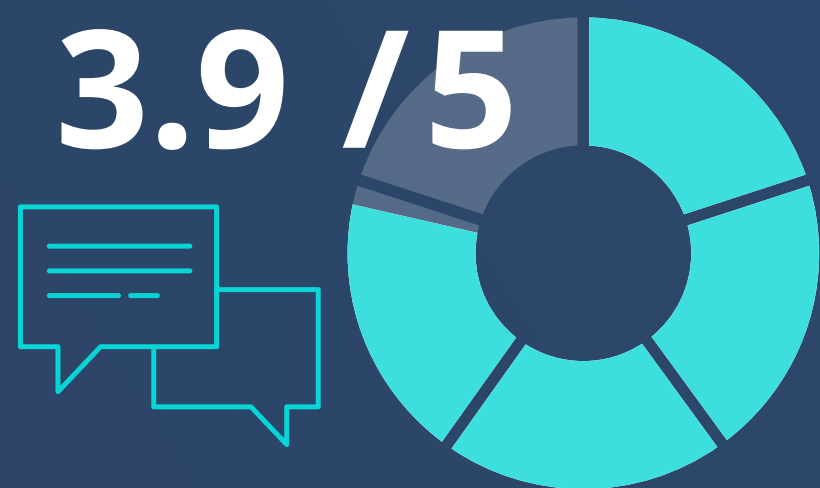


ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUPPLIERS

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.

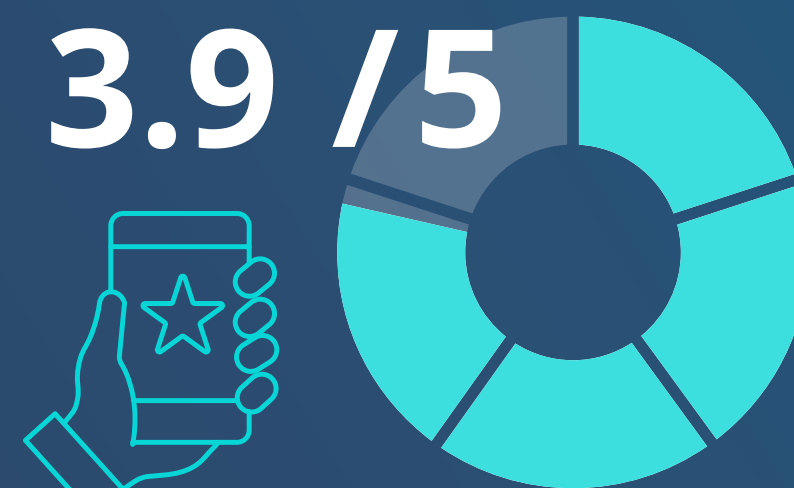
“Many of the brands I see at work have very similar marketing and communications messages – they all sound and act the same.”



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.

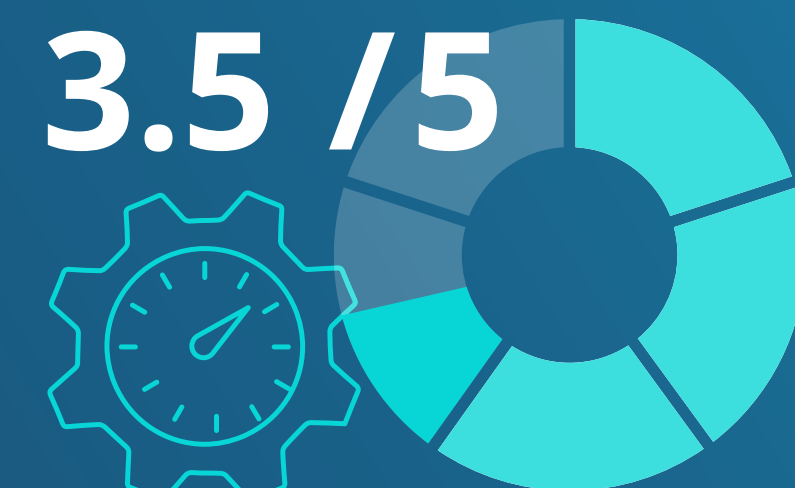
“I would like business suppliers to spend more time seeking to understand me and how it can solve day-to-day problems I face at work.”



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.”



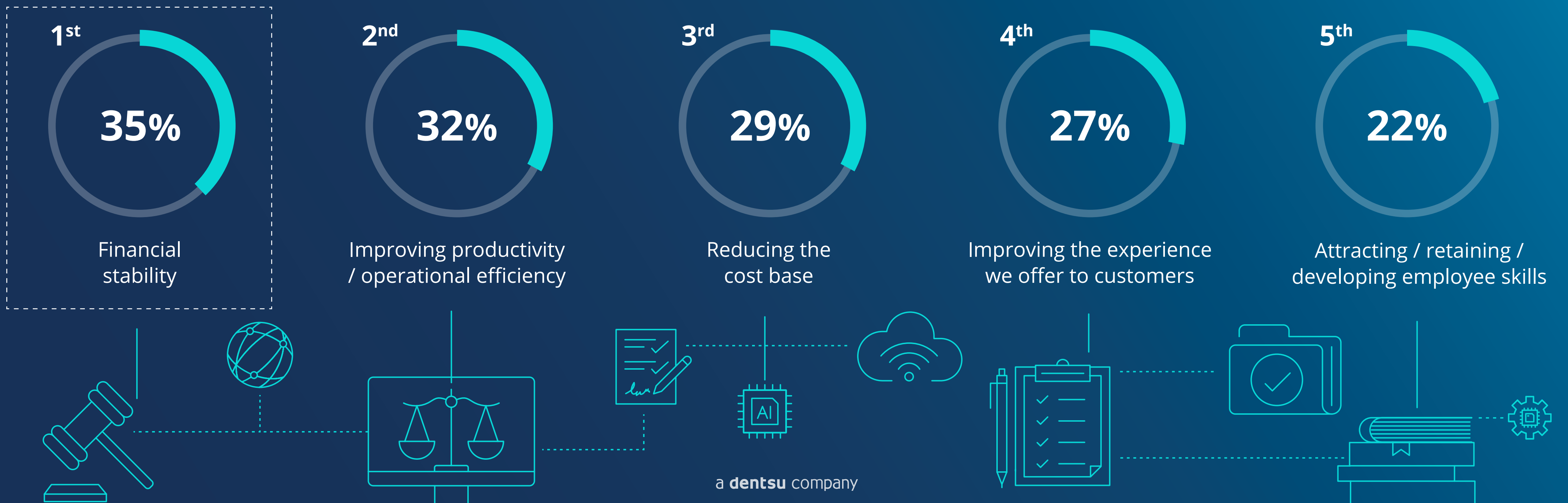
TOP BUSINESS PRIORITIES

The top priorities for professional services brands over the next two years are ‘financial stability’, ‘improving productivity / operational efficiency’, and ‘reducing the cost base’, highlighting the need to optimize processes, reduce waste, and enhance overall performance to remain competitive.

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

The importance of delivering great customer experience and being known as a good employer to professional services buyers has been highlighted throughout this report and it’s therefore encouraging to see brands also prioritizing ‘improving the experience we offer to customers’ and ‘attracting / retaining / developing employee skills’ in their business strategies over the next two years.

Which business strategies are professional services 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](#)