

(Navigating) B2B sales challenges in digitalized business markets

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As digital technology rapidly transforms business-to-business (B2B) markets, sales professionals are required to continuously develop new digital competencies to navigate this changing landscape (Krafft et al., 2020; Leszkiewicz et al., 2022; Mullins & Agnihotri, 2022). Many B2B organizations prioritize digital reskilling and upskilling to ensure their salesforce can effectively engage in dynamic business networks. However, over half of sales leaders report skill gaps among their teams, highlighting the need for capabilities that support both internal and inter-organizational relationships (Cruz et al., 2022).

In an increasingly interconnected global economy, B2B firms face additional challenges, including geopolitical competition, supply chain volatility, sustainability pressures, and demographic shifts (Von Der Leyen, 2019). Agile and responsive approaches to management are also reshaping the institutional landscape for sales teams, influencing network interactions and adaptive strategies within organizations (Alexopoulos et al., 2024).

Despite these demands, educational programs in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and vocational training often lag in equipping future professionals with digital and network-focused skills (Omazic & Zunk, 2021). This special track aims to bridge this gap by addressing pressing questions around how B2B sales organizations can adapt to digitalized business ecosystem and enhance intra- and inter-organizational relationships in a sustainable, agile, and skill-rich manner.

This session invites IMP scholars (and practitioners) to explore:

- **Challenges and Strategies in Digitalized Business Networks:** How digital tools and technologies are reshaping interactions within B2B networks and impacting inter-organizational relationship management.
- **Skill Development in B2B Sales:** Discussion on theoretical as well as empirically validated skill models that foster network-oriented competencies and enhance inter-firm collaboration.
- **Innovative Educational Programs:** Showcase research-driven approaches to B2B sales education, including graduate-level curricula and training models that address evolving digital and networked market demands.

Targeted Participants

This track is open to all IMP conference attendees interested in exploring how digitalization and network dynamics are reshaping B2B sales and marketing. Contributions from diverse disciplines and research perspectives are encouraged to foster a comprehensive discussion on the digital transformation of business networks.

Track organizers: Giang (Jane) Dao, Aristotelis Alexopoulos, Pavlos Vlachos, and the CustMaS team – a cooperative ERASMUS+ project CustMas, consisting of five European universities (website: <https://www.custmas.eu/>)

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