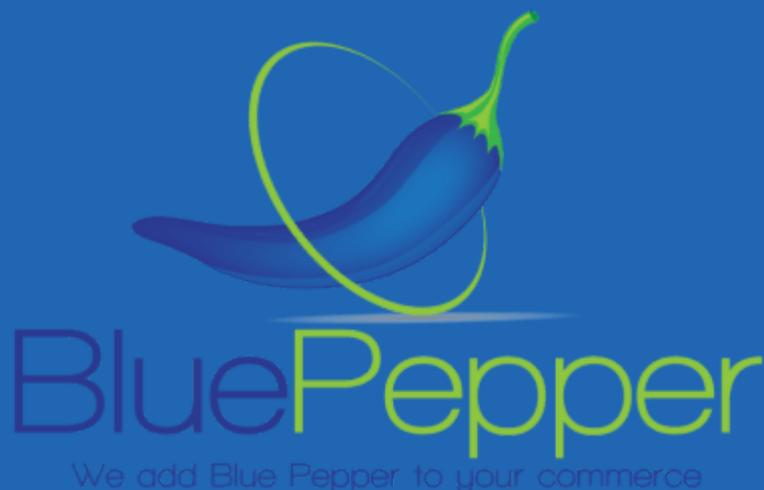


Commercial Excellence 2022

22 Trends

A view on the commercial world in
2022. By Blue Pepper

A blueprint



22 Trends in 2022

Another strange and challenging year has passed. A year where Commercial Excellence is being adopted and used by more and more companies across the globe. Our own Blue Pepper team of Commercial Excellence experts has created a list of 22 related trends that we expect you will encounter in 2022 and beyond.

1. Human-centered innovation

As consumers and buyers become more sensitive to social and environmental sustainability, proactive companies strive to put their users at the center. They understand that their brands aim to build long term and mutual relationships. Listening and responding to latent user needs increases relevance and loyalty. Design Thinking is a methodology and mindset future futureproof companies embrace.

2. Social & Creative Selling are imperative

The world of sales is becoming more complex every year. Finding new ways to connect with customers and prospects is one of the most important task for every sales person. Social and Virtual selling can not be missed in a sales person's toolkit. Creative Selling is all about new and different ways of doing business, establishing relationships, building rapport and trust and adding true value. Sales people need to become thought-leaders and educate instead of focus on hard selling.

3. Be a great Storyteller

Storytelling has been important for thousands of years and will also in 2022 become more important (mainly due to the overload of information and all the noise that surrounds us where everybody seems to be shouting just simply to be heard). A systematic way of telling your story that is really about your customer and their needs and desired and not so much about you nor your product will remain to be quite essential. Tell what value you bring to the table for your customer.

4. Better alignment between commercial teams and individuals

Companies, teams and individuals need to adjust and adapt quickly. Market situations change constantly and bureaucracy and time consuming processes have no place in today's environment. Commercial teams need to be aligned more rapidly, all working from the same plan and towards the same goals. This involves strategy development, sales, marketing, business development and customer service (or inside sales). In 2022 an increasing amount of companies will bring these departments together in one department and team.

5. Digital Marketing will increase but has to improve first

We will continue to work from home and from the office combined. This hybrid way of working asks for a different approach. Digital marketing (and content marketing as an important piece of this) will become more important but first has to improve drastically to really drive the impact that could be achieved with it, when organized correctly. Invest in online events, create simple content, personalize your approach per market segment and even per customer and person and make sure you own your audiences.

**WHAT TRENDS DO YOU
FORESEE?**



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6. Creative online collaboration

Besides common online meeting tools such as Zoom, Teams or Google Meet, there are exciting creative platforms that offer live collaboration that spark joy. For instance, Miro.com offers a large whiteboard which is editable live by multiple collaborators and allows a visual mapping, processing and knowledge exchange via images, links, text, icons, drawings and much more. Create and use more B2B content. Host live events.

7. Digital transformation will accelerate even more

The acceleration of digital transformation trends that we predict to see in 2022 and beyond might feel overwhelming. But with the right technology and the right support, these big changes will be seamless for you and your organization. According to McKinsey & Company, COVID-19 has sped up the adoption of digital technologies by years across industries.

8. Distributed enterprise

Remote and hybrid work continues to thrive. It is now the rule, rather than the exception - for companies to offer permanent flexible working arrangements for staff. With some employees working from the office and others still working from home, organizations are going to need technologies that seamlessly enable collaboration (Forbes 2022) regardless of location. Gartner therefore foresees that traditionally configured organizations will transform into fully distributed organizations. For this transformation to succeed, Gartner says it is necessary for CIOs to make major changes. It requires new business models that are geared providing fully distributed services.

9. Continued focus on the power of AI and hyper automation

Every day we create roughly 2.5 quintillion bytes of data, and that number is growing at an exponential rate. But it is important to remember that the data is only as effective as the AI systems we use to manage, regulate and mine for insights. The implementation of Artificial Intelligence will become an increasingly vital business function in 2022. Hyper Automation is the concept that says: anything that can be automated should be. Gartner argues that hyper automation boosts organizational growth and resilience. And distinguishes three main priorities: improving the quality of work, speeding up business processes and making decision-making more flexible.

10. AI-powered networking

New business meeting spaces combine casual human interactions with artificial intelligence matchmaking. For instance, Lunchclub.com offers an inviting platform to match relevant profiles and schedule online meetings. After creating your own profile including topics of interest, the platform suggests potential matches to learn your preferences and offer increasingly relevant matches over time.

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11. The importance of AI for customer experience success

New technologies, processes and the advancement and benefits of AI will continue to positively affect the customer experience in 2022 and beyond. Gartner predicts that organizations with customer service channels that properly embed AI will experience a 25% increase in operational efficiency. According to Boston Digital, investing in customer experience tools will help to strengthen your digital footprint and increase your ROI. The customer experience is becoming far more personalized and rendering traditional approaches obsolete. Customer service bots will be critical to have and will revolutionize services

12. The rise of the business technologist

With an increased pressure on organizations to digitize their services, the importance of business technologists (Gartner 2022) will come to the fore as essential players in the acceleration of innovation and digital transformation. Business technologists will be crucial to IT departments' efforts to accelerate organizational innovation.

13. Commercial Tenders will have increased focus on sustainable solutions

According to the Hackett Group sustainability will be one of the main topics organizations will source through tenders. Companies are asking procurement three categories to support sustainability; economic development, social wellbeing and the protection of our environment. Around 2023 92% of the organizations will have a program in place to source sustainable covering all these three categories. One third of the organizations though has no formal program in place yet.

14. Threshold amount for European tenders will increase again

Every two years the threshold for European tenders are increased and this will be the case again in 2022.



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15. Customer are more critical than ever before

Mainly due to Covid, customers are more critical than ever before and this is the case for B2B and B2C customers. Covid has put many organizations (and its people) under pressure and this has resulted in adequate transformation and execution of various processes where customers demand the right amount of attention and support. If companies are not able to provide the level of support they expect, they will not remain to be loyal. Businesses will have to invest substantially to continue creating and building a strong image.

16. A more customer centric approach

The customer will become more central again within the entire business ecosystem of suppliers, transportation and logistics companies, manufacturers, third parties, business partners, etc. If anything happens in this value chain, all parties are affected and typically the (end) customers pays the price for this. Which again, will lead to a decreased level of customer loyalty.

17. Sustainability KPI's will enter Commercial Excellence dashboards

"The next generation" has not stomach for today's environmental challenges and demands rapid change. It will not be enough that companies claim to have green programs in place, everybody should see these programs and the affects they have. "green washing" by the marketing department of an organization will not fly; concrete KPI's will become part of sales and marketing KPI's.

18. Inflation management

Costs have increased drastically across various industries. The cost of some materials have gone up by 30-50% or more. Some companies have passed along these increased to their customers, others have not. However, numerous companies were not ready to pass these cost increases to the magnitude of the cost differences that they faced. Shipping costs during Covid for example, increased up to 13 times compared to pre-COVID. This requires proper inflation and pricing management and the right way to do this, is to know your value, communicate your value and sell your value so that your prices grow year-on-year.

19. Pricing as a tool of sales excellence

Pricing as a siloed function cannot answer today's complexity changes and trends. Only companies implementing a more holistic approach of sales excellence, including the right levels of pricing, are able to move from quick fixes to long term sustainable growth. (The right product at the right price, at the right commercial terms for the right client = growing your business year over year).



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20. E-Commerce and OMNI Channel strategies will continue to sky rocket

2 years ago B2B e-commerce was not the preferred channel to sell. E-commerce sales was considered too critical to be differently managed than an in-person transaction between the various actors at clients and suppliers. Today however we expect that global B2B E-commerce market will reach \$51.23 trillion by 2030, growing by 14.4% annually over 2020-2030 driven by the growing trend of shifting to digital transactions among enterprises. (Source Heraldkeepers)

21. Your data (analysis) need to be reliable

Companies will look increasingly for having the right sets of data. Not just data coming from the internal organization abut also from the outside. However, it's important companies have their own data organized so they are not dependent on third parties for getting the right data. The Covid situation has shown is that there are unpredictable circumstances and that it's important to review all different kinds of scenarios. The more data and commercial analytics you can gather, the more scenarios you have calculated, the more options you have, the better your decisions will be.

22. Speed to execution

Due to the continuous changing environment we are in, your speed to execution (S2E) will have to gear up and accelerate even more. Everything you do will have to go faster and faster. Need to create a solid business plan? Do it faster. Forget about long and cumbersome processes, put your first ideas on a page and start from there. Use the Kick-ASS approach; analyze, start and steer. You don't need to know everything beforehand, work from your hypotheses and test them early and change your approach where needed.

WE'LL HELP YOU LETTING
THESE TRENDS WORK FOR
YOU