Symbioss
Transforming relationships, unlocking growth

How B2B clients choose you

Eight findings from the buyer research, and four conclusions worth acting on.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

01 Buyers rank you before they contact you

94% of buying groups put their shortlist in order of preference before they engage a single supplier. Vendor research, around 4,000 buyers, 2025.

02 First contact comes 61% of the way in

First contact with a supplier now comes 61% of the way through the journey, down from 69%.

03 Few are in the market at any one time

Only around 5% of B2B buyers are in the market in any given quarter, on Dawes's rule of thumb.

04 83% do their research before contact

83% of decision-makers do their own research before they speak to a sales team.

05 73% trust peers, 39% trust AI

Only 18% of decision-makers use AI chatbots in their research at all, and just 39% trust what those say. What they trust most is a recommendation from a peer, at 73%.

06 Group decisions now predominate

B2B buying groups now run from five to 16 people across up to four functions, and 74% of them show unhealthy conflict while deciding.

07 Buyer experience outweighs the actual offer

In 643 purchase decisions, 59% of buyers said the buying experience was the critical factor, 41% the offering.

08 13 insiders and nine outsiders decide

A typical B2B buying decision now involves 13 internal stakeholders and nine external influencers. Procurement decides in 53% of cycles.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

01 Buyers trust a peer far more than AI

Before you commit more budget to search, ask what it can actually reach. Most of your market isn't looking, and search ranks well below a peer with those who are. The channel buyers say they trust is a person in a similar role, and that is built between purchases, not during them. Drawn from findings 3 and 5.

02 Your next client isn't yet in the market

Waiting for the tender means arriving after the choice has been made. The commercial consequence is that your pipeline is decided months before it appears, by people you're not currently talking to. Keep in touch when they're not buying, because that is when the list is written. Drawn from findings 1, 2 and 3.

03 When every proposal reads well, the relationship decides

AI has made polished credentials and fluent proposals commonplace, so the offering is harder than ever to tell apart on paper. What is left to judge is the experience of dealing with you, and most of that is formed long before the proposal is written. Ask what yours is like to buy from. Drawn from findings 5 and 7.

04 Equip the person who must argue your case internally

Your champion has to make your case when you aren't there. Give them the numbers, the answer to the risk question and a version they can forward. Drawn from findings 6 and 8.

Sources by finding 01 and 02 6sense (vendor), Buyer Experience Report (2025), c. 4,000 buyers · 03 Dawes, Ehrenberg-Bass & LinkedIn B2B Institute (2021) · 04 and 05 SurveyMonkey & Reddit (2026), 1,202 US decision-makers · 06 Gartner (2024), 632 buyers · 07 SBI Growth Advisory (2024), 643 decisions · 08 Forrester, State of Business Buying 2026. July 2026

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