

Why Web Buyers are Different

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The reality is most corporate buyers makes purchases online and offline. The figure below provides a summary of the key differences between traditional and Web-savvy buyers.

| Area | Traditional Buyer | Web Buyer |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Control of Buying Process | Seller in control. Pre-Internet made it hard for buyers to gather data to effectively compare suppliers, not anymore. | Buyer in control. Technology gives buyers more leverage with suppliers such as reverse online auctions. |
| Price | Standard prices. Buyers used to getting prices from a price list or catalog. Hard to change prices due to cost of printing & distribution catalogs / price lists. | Price flexibility. Internet used to quickly compare different company's prices (transparency). Catalog or list prices now only a starting point. |
| Research on Prospective Suppliers | Medium. Many costs involved using offline techniques to review capabilities. | High. Internet makes it fast and easy to research prospective suppliers. |
| Personalization | Accept "standard" packages. Could be very costly to do provide customized client service in pre-Internet era. | Expect customized service. Example is a dedicated area on their supplier's Web site that can view with specific information on their account. |
| Service Hours | 9-to-5 | 24/7 Technology such as cell phones and handheld computers have extended the workday. The expectation is the employees work longer-but so do suppliers. |
| Loyalty | Medium to High High costs usually involved with changing suppliers. | Medium to Low Web makes it easier to replace non-strategic suppliers. |
| Customer Service | Done in-person and via telephone. | Multichannel Done in person, via telephone, e-mail correspondence, etc. |

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