



Pax8 SMB Buyers  
**Asia-Pacific**

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**In Asia-Pacific**, B2B buyers, especially those at small and midsize businesses (SMBs), have shifted from relying on salespeople to using digital tools to guide their purchasing decisions. While sales reps once controlled access to product details, pricing and supplier options, the internet now empowers buyers to research independently. Search engines, peer reviews and social media have become primary sources of information, reducing the need for early engagement with sellers.

This digital-first mindset has led many SMBs to embrace marketplaces and e-commerce platforms for self-service procurement. These channels offer quick comparisons, transparent pricing and simplified transactions. According to McKinsey and Boston Consulting Group, more than half of SMBs now favour these models and plan to expand usage. However, this shift doesn't sideline traditional partners. Instead, it gives managed service providers (MSPs) and resellers new opportunities to meet buyers where they are and offer value-added services.

Even with streamlined buying, SMBs often need help deploying, integrating and managing solutions. That's where trusted MSPs and resellers remain vital. By understanding how today's buyers move through the digital journey, partners can intercept at key moments to deliver services, support and long-term value.

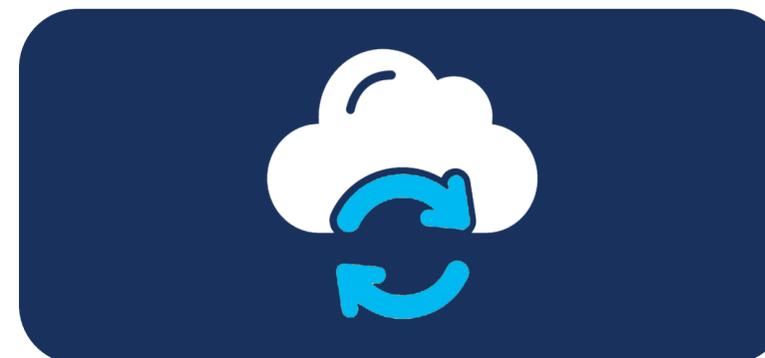
This report by Channelnomics and Pax8 explores how to engage SMBs across these evolving sales channels.



# Sizing the Asia-Pacific SMB IT Market



In Asia-Pacific, the SMB IT market is valued between \$65 billion and \$80 billion (USD) annually, with some analyst firms estimating the opportunity could exceed \$200 billion. This wide range reflects both the complexity and potential of the segment. For vendors, service providers and channel partners, SMBs represent a substantial and growing opportunity to deliver IT products, services and support tailored to the needs of smaller businesses.



In Asia, SMBs are moving toward a more flexible way of buying IT. They use marketplaces, MSPs, vendors and advisors depending on the situation. Marketplaces and MSPs are now the most commonly used sources, reflecting a shift away from traditional, partner-controlled procurement. Instead of sticking to one path, SMBs mix channels based on what each purchase demands: speed, complexity or expert input. This hybrid model is becoming the norm, giving SMBs the control they want without losing the support they need.



Much of the IT value in the SMB segment comes from services layered on top of software and infrastructure. These services include monitoring, maintenance, cybersecurity and user support. They account for a large portion of the potential revenue opportunity. For partners focused on delivering high-value outcomes, the Asia-Pacific SMB segment remains one of the most accessible and scalable markets in the IT channel.

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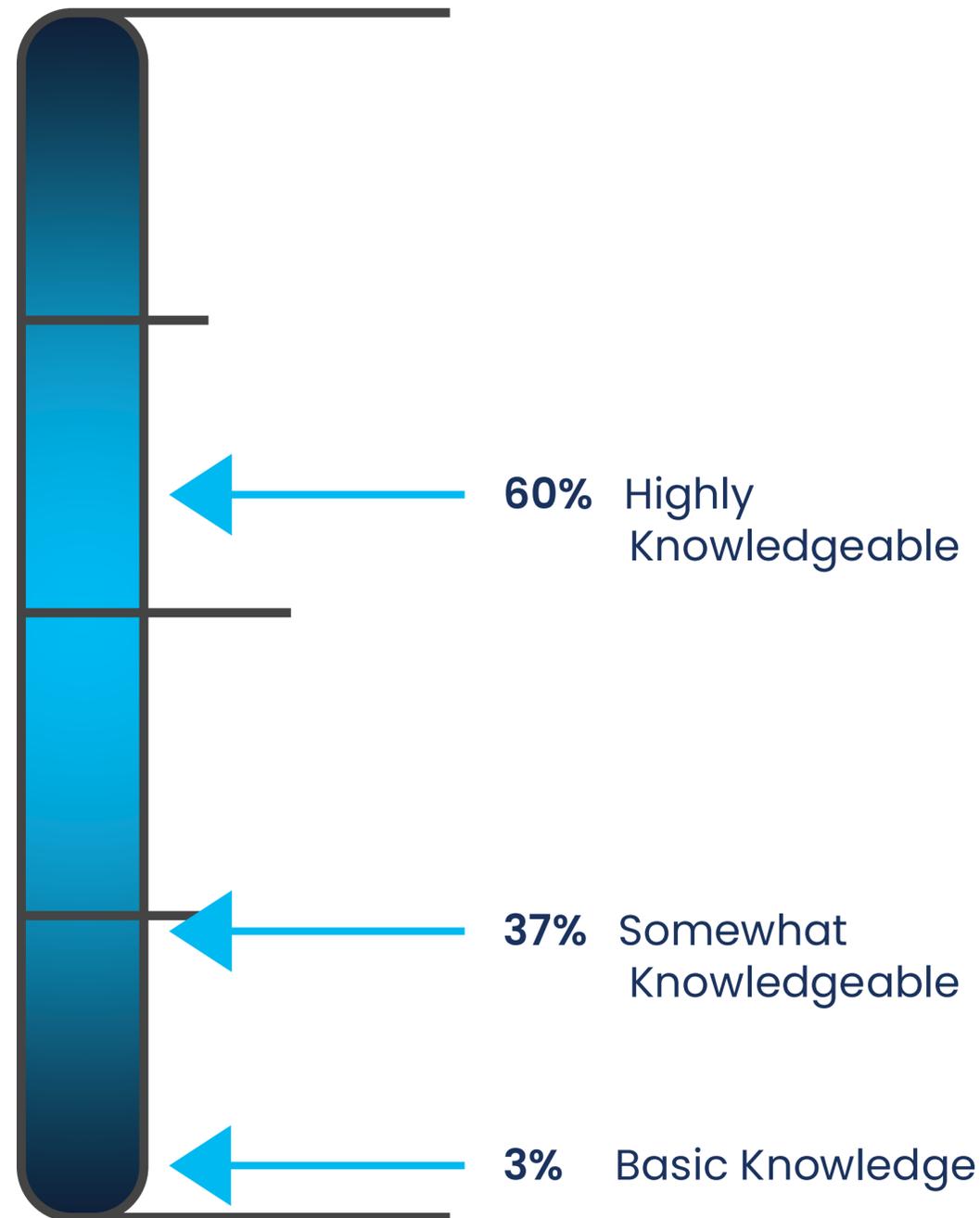
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# Buyers' Technology Knowledge Level



Most SMB IT decision makers in Asia are responsible for purchasing technology on behalf of their entire company or IT department. This responsibility carries significant weight.

Yet only 60% say they feel fully confident in their knowledge when evaluating, trialing and acquiring IT products and services. The remaining buyers acknowledge gaps in expertise, especially when dealing with unfamiliar vendors, complex solutions or evolving technologies. While many consider themselves competent, few claim complete certainty across every decision.

This confidence gap underscores the continued need for expert input, whether through trusted partners, MSPs or consultative sales support.

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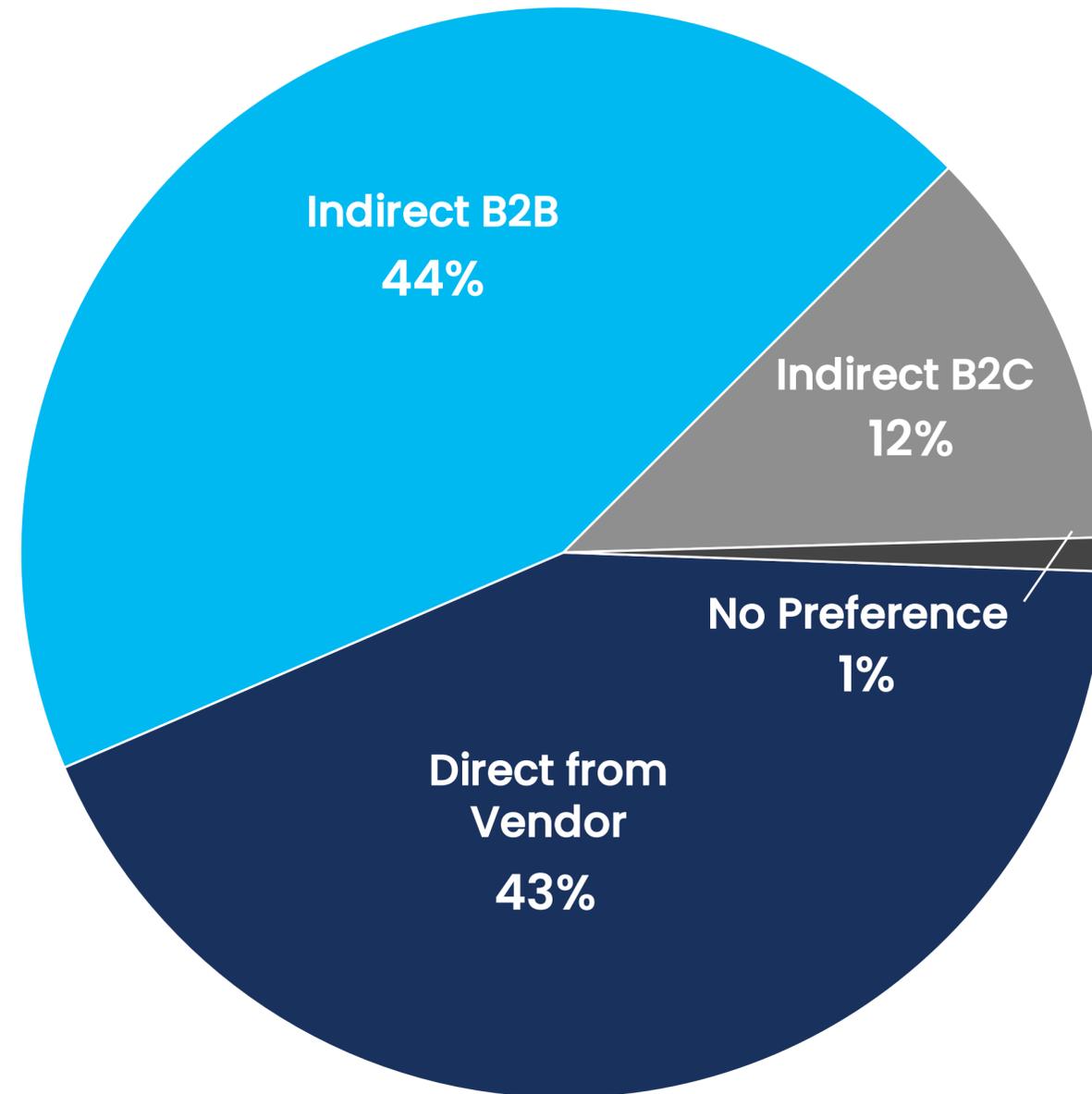
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# SMBs Prefer Purchasing Indirect



In Asia Pacific, SMBs show a near-even split in how they prefer to purchase technology products and services: 44% prefer to go through indirect B2B partners such as MSPs, resellers and distributors, while 43% choose to buy directly from vendors. An additional 12% favour B2C channels, including consumer-focused platforms and retail. This balanced distribution highlights the region’s diverse go-to-market dynamics, where both direct and indirect models are equally important.

The continued strength of the indirect model is rooted in relationships. Channel partners often offer more than competitive pricing. They offer trusted advice, ongoing support and local responsiveness. These attributes are crucial in a region as diverse and complex as Asia Pacific. For many SMBs, these partners are long-standing advisors who help simplify decision-making and reduce risk, especially when evaluating new or complex technologies.

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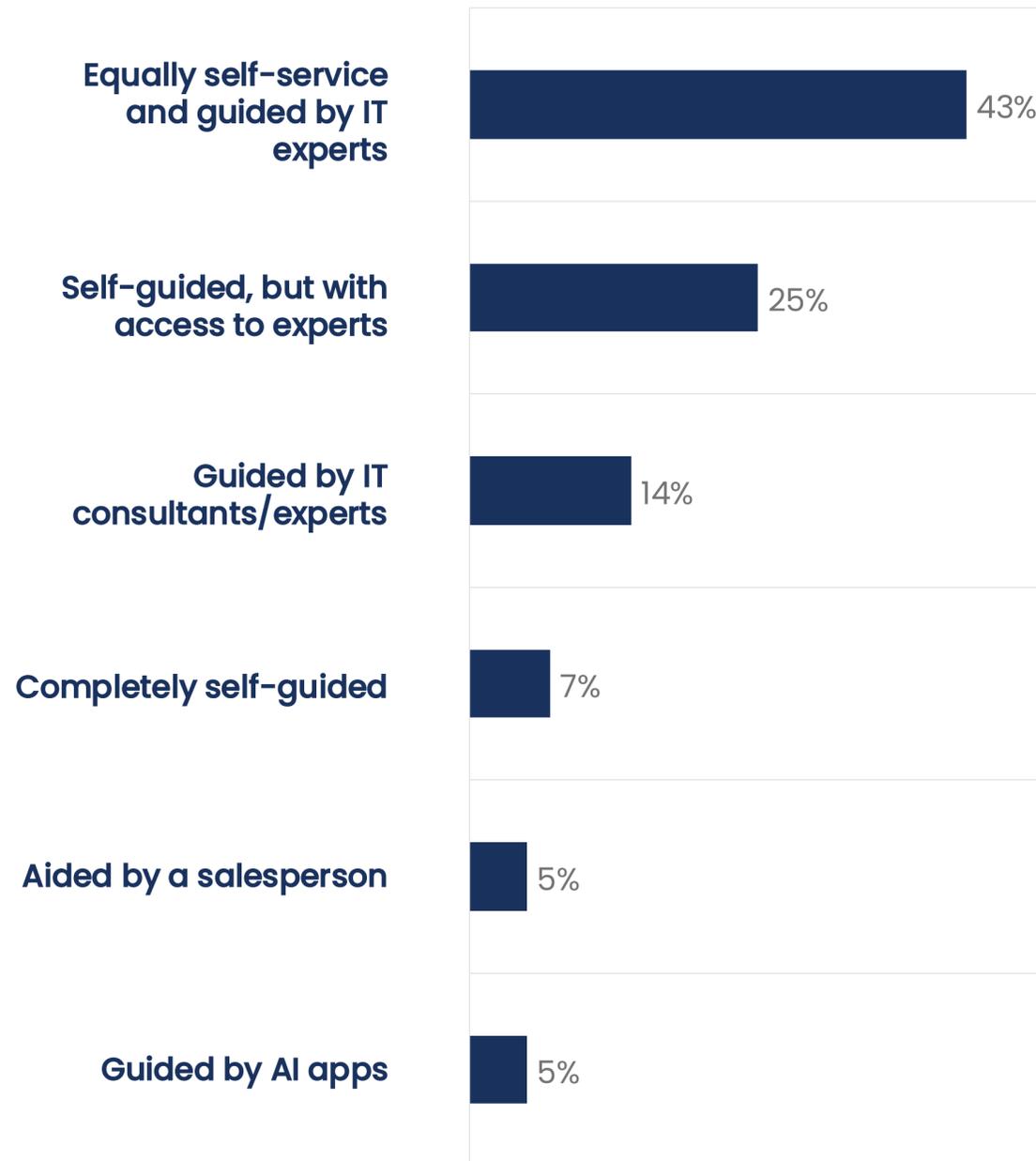
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# SMB Buyers Approach Purchasing as a Solo Exercise



In Asia, SMB IT buyers tend to favour a balanced approach to purchasing. They manage much of the process independently while still relying on expert input. A combined 68% say they either split the process equally between self-service and expert guidance (43%) or prefer to lead with self-guided research but retain access to experts (25%). This shows a strong desire for autonomy, along with recognition that external insights are often necessary. This is especially true when assessing complex or unfamiliar solutions.

Traditional consultant- or salesperson-led purchases remain limited, accounting for just 14% and 5% respectively and only 5% rely on AI tools to guide decisions. While AI and automation are making inroads, most Asian SMBs continue to trust established human-led support channels when making IT investments. Independence is growing. However, expert validation remains critical.

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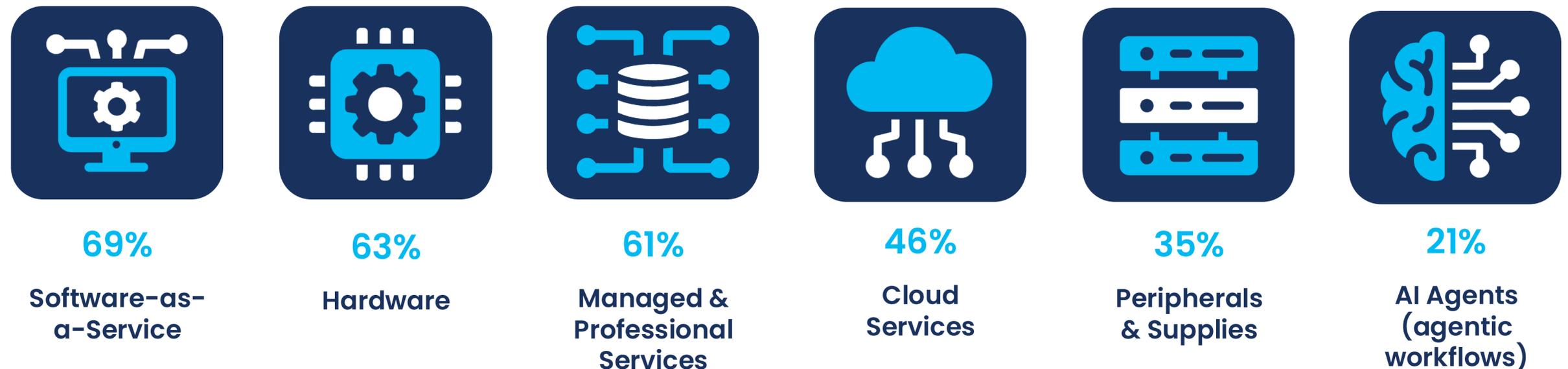
# What SMBs Buy Through Marketplaces & E-Commerce

“Self-service” purchasing often means sourcing through a marketplace, whether hosted by a vendor, solution provider or retailer. As demand grows for self-service options and vendors continue shifting their go-to-market models to platform-based selling, partners are adapting accordingly.

Many now enable customers to transact digitally through their own marketplaces, often with the support of intermediaries like

Pax8. Others are leveraging proprietary e-commerce platforms or private offers facilitated through hyperscale such as Amazon Web Services or Alibaba’s marketplaces.

Marketplaces and digital sales outlets aren’t limited to cloud services. SMBs are increasingly using these platforms to procure a broad range of technology solutions, including software subscriptions, hardware components, infrastructure products and even professional services.



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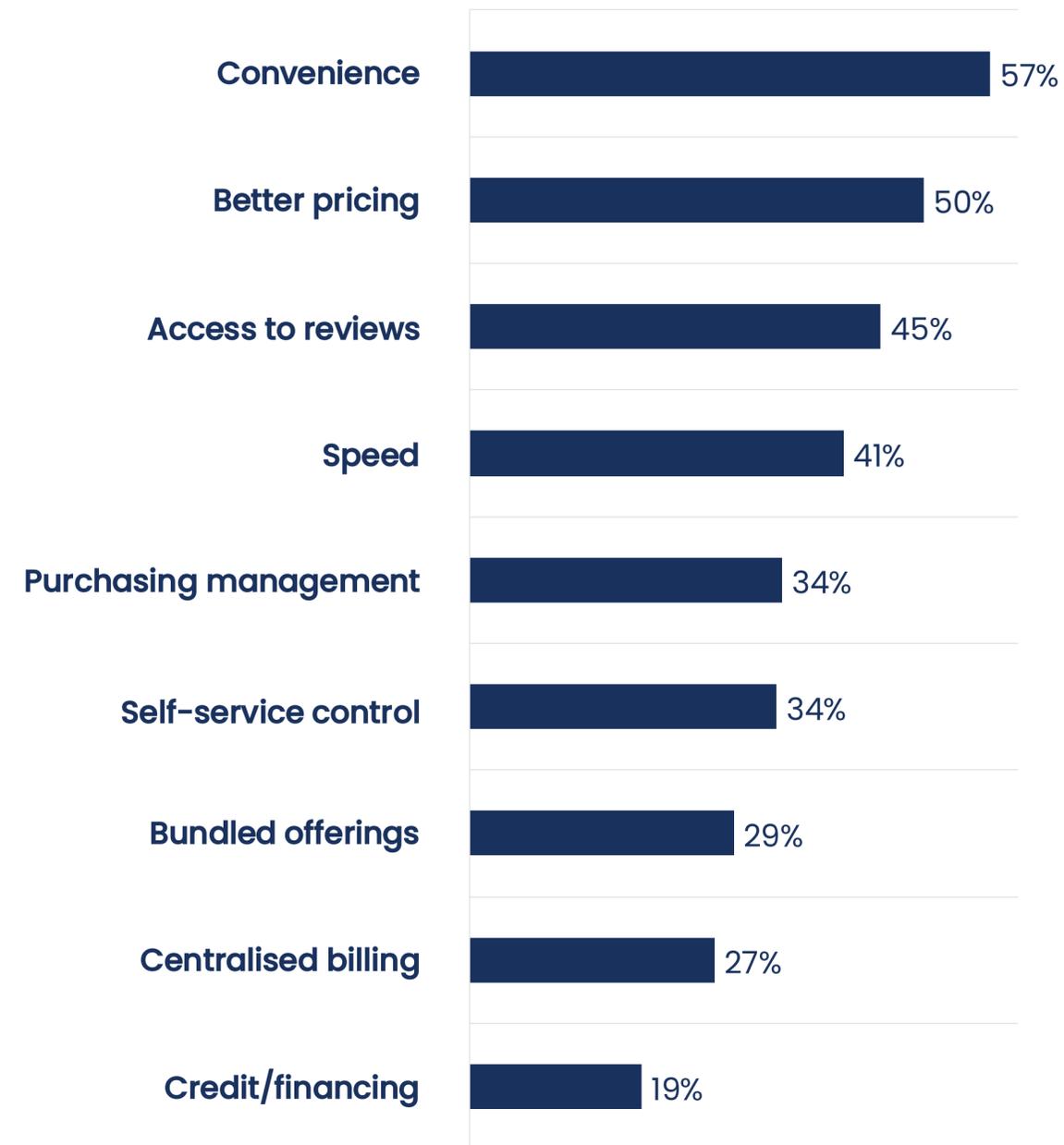
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# What Draws SMBs to Marketplaces & E-Commerce Sites



SMB buyers have been conditioned to expect marketplaces and digital sales platforms to offer better economics (pricing), speed and convenience. In other words, the “Amazon Experience,” in which they can get what they need with just a few easy clicks.

Marketplaces are increasingly important not just as a point of sale, but also as a point of information. SMB buyers turn to marketplace platforms to find products that meet their needs, details about their features and functionality and reviews based on the experiences of other buyers.

Marketplaces aren’t static sales platforms. They’re dynamic engagement platforms that provide SMB customers with options, including engaging with trusted advisors and salespeople throughout the sales journey.

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# Top Factors Influencing Choice of Purchasing Source



58%

**Budget & Price**



42%

**Product Availability**



34%

**Tech Compatibility**



36%

**Delivery Speed**



26%

**Brand Reputation**



27%

**Access To Expert Advice**

When it comes to IT purchasing in Asia, SMBs follow a clear set of decision-making priorities. Cost comes first. Budget and price are the top influencers, with 58% of buyers stating that affordability directly influences their purchasing decisions, including the products they buy and from whom they buy them. But competitive pricing alone isn't enough to close a deal.

Availability and speed also factor heavily. Forty-two per cent of SMBs cite product availability and 36% point to delivery speed. Fast, reliable access to technology is critical, particularly in dynamic or resource-constrained environments.

Compatibility is another key consideration. About one-third of buyers (34%) say new solutions must integrate cleanly with existing infrastructure. And while many SMBs prefer to lead their research, 27% still seek expert input to validate their decisions. Brand reputation ranks slightly lower at 26%, suggesting that while name recognition is helpful, practical concerns such as price, performance and fit carry more weight.

Taken together, these priorities demonstrate that Asian SMBs prioritise IT investments that deliver immediate value, minimise disruption and align with their long-term operational needs.

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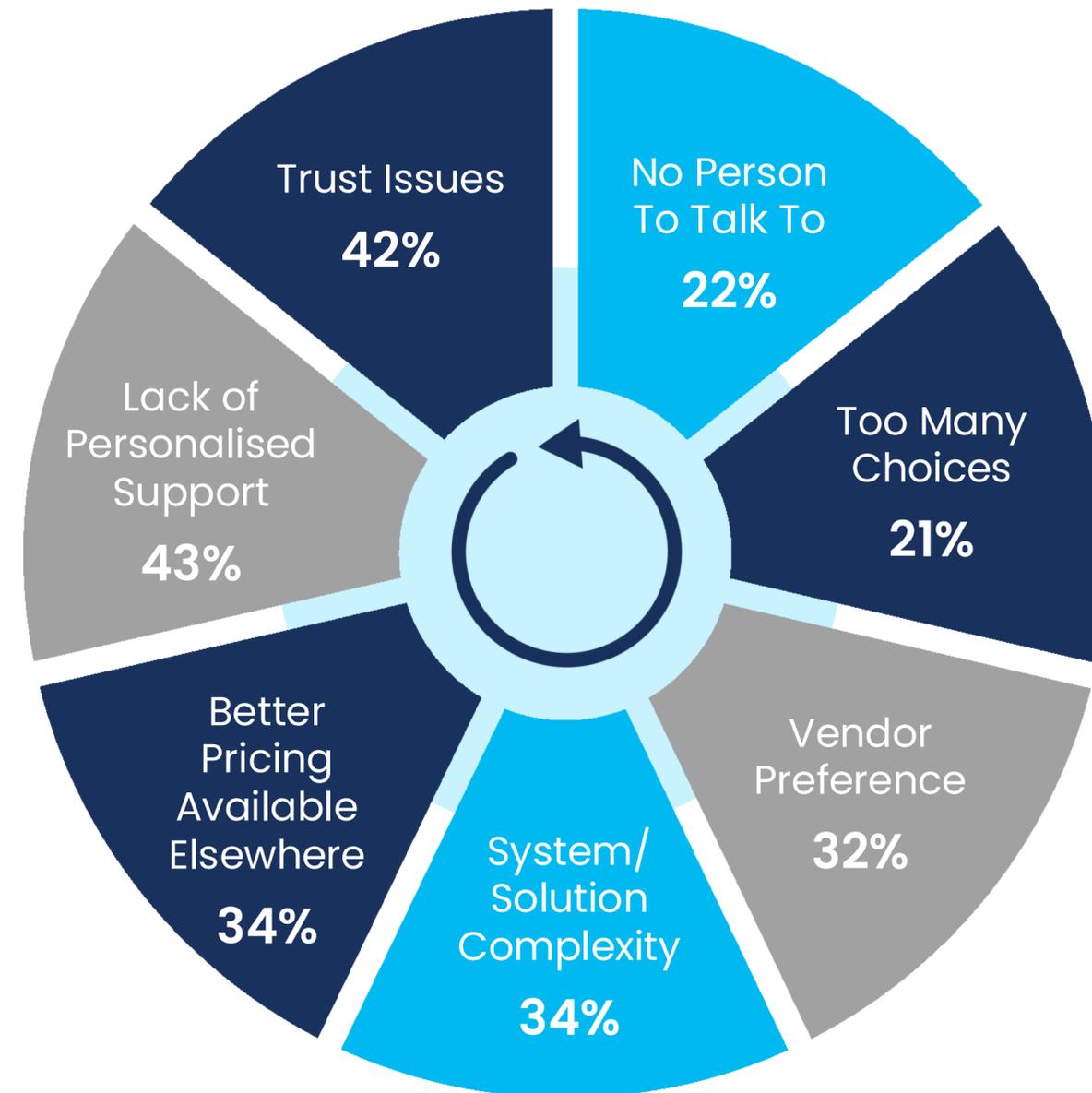
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# Reasons SMBs Avoid Buying Through Marketplaces



Despite the convenience and speed that marketplaces offer, many SMBs remain hesitant to complete IT purchases through these platforms. The primary barrier is trust. Buyers often lack confidence in unfamiliar sellers or the reliability of the post-sale experience. Without transparency or accountability, concerns about return policies, incomplete information and poor service emerge quickly.

Another issue is the lack of personalised support. SMBs want more than a transaction. They want guidance, especially when dealing with complex or integrated solutions. The inability to speak with a person or obtain expert advice makes many buyers uncomfortable. Even the abundance of choice can work against marketplaces, creating decision fatigue rather than clarity.

Ultimately, SMBs value relationships and expert reassurance. Until marketplaces can better replicate the consultative and supportive nature of traditional channels, many buyers will continue to view them as a secondary option, rather than a primary path for IT procurement.

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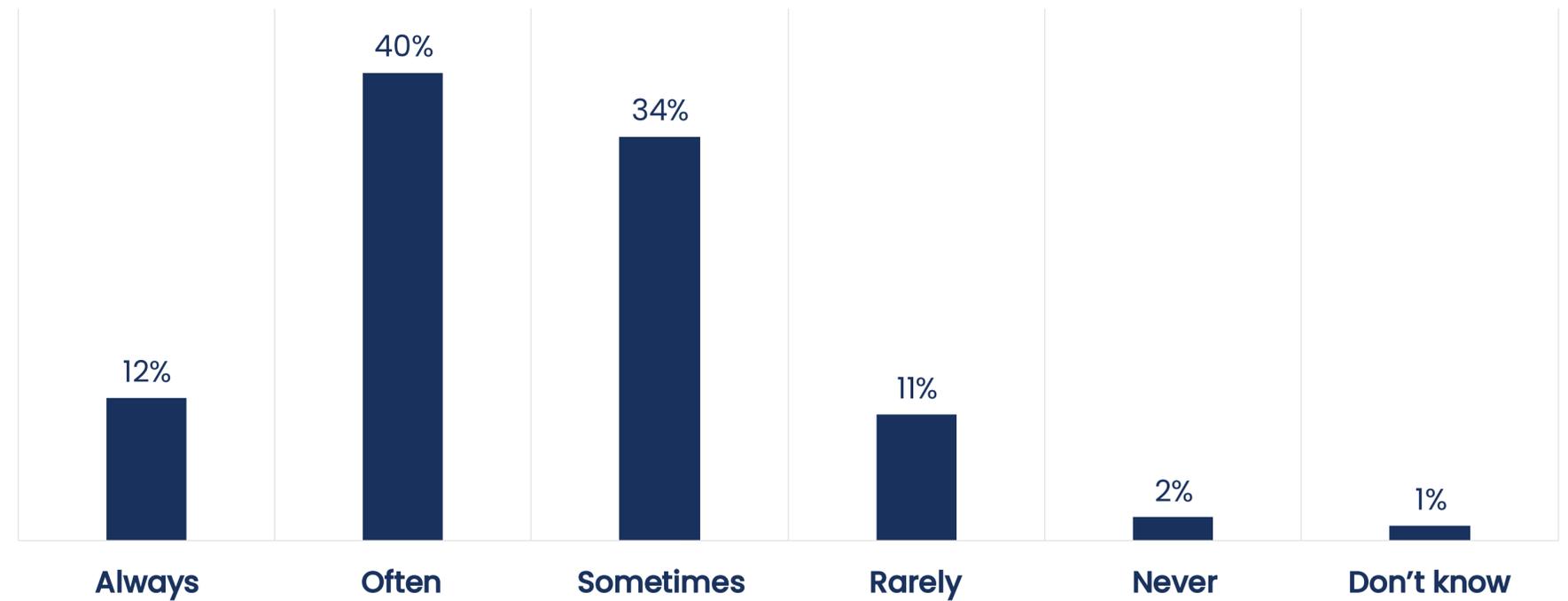
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# Buying Through Marketplaces Still Requires Expert Support

## Frequency SMB Buyers Seek Professional Assistance During or After Purchasing Through Marketplaces



Even as marketplaces gain traction among SMBs for IT purchasing, the data shows that expert guidance remains essential to the buying experience. A full 86% of SMB buyers report seeking professional assistance at least some of the time when purchasing through marketplaces, with 40% saying they do so often. This underscores a critical reality: convenience and self-service do not eliminate the need for human insight.

What this means is that marketplaces aren't replacing traditional sales or advisory roles. Instead, they're reshaping them. Buyers are comfortable navigating product listings and comparing prices, but

when it comes to assessing technical fit, long-term value or integration requirements, they still rely on experts. The continued demand for support—during or even after a marketplace purchase—suggests that SMBs see expertise as a complement to digital buying, not a substitute.

This insight is especially relevant for vendors and partners looking to support buyers in a hybrid purchasing environment. It's not enough to offer transactional ease; enabling expert access within or around the marketplace experience is what ensures confidence, satisfaction and repeat business.

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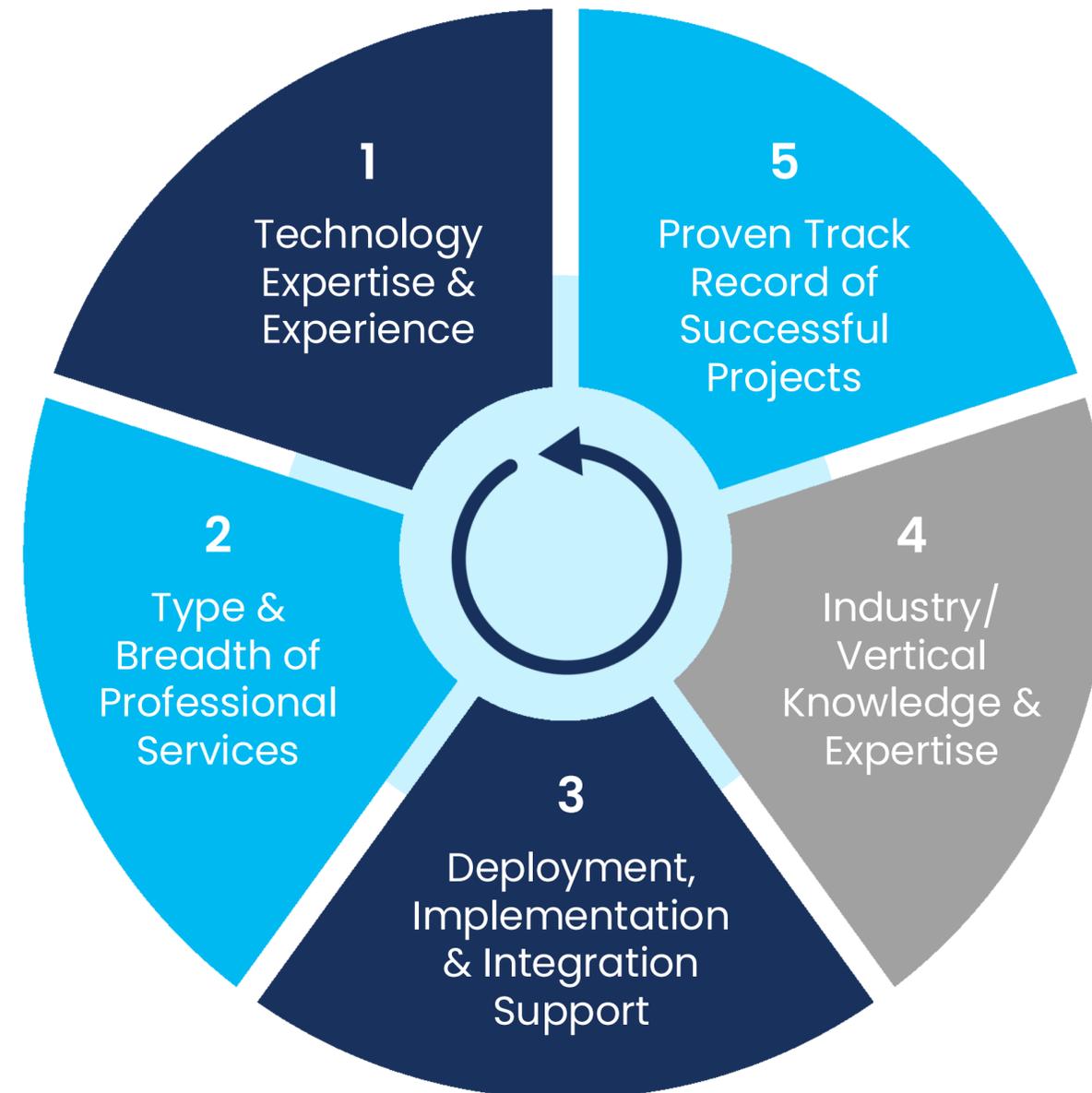
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# SMB Buyers Seek and Appreciate True Expertise



More than two-thirds of SMBs regularly source products through an MSP, reseller or other IT solution provider. While they have a strong desire to act independently, they tend to trust and value the services, support and expert guidance they receive from their solution providers.

But that trust isn't always easy to come by. SMBs have stringent requirements for how they select their expert support. When they seek help, they want providers that really understand the technology and can provide high-quality professional support services.

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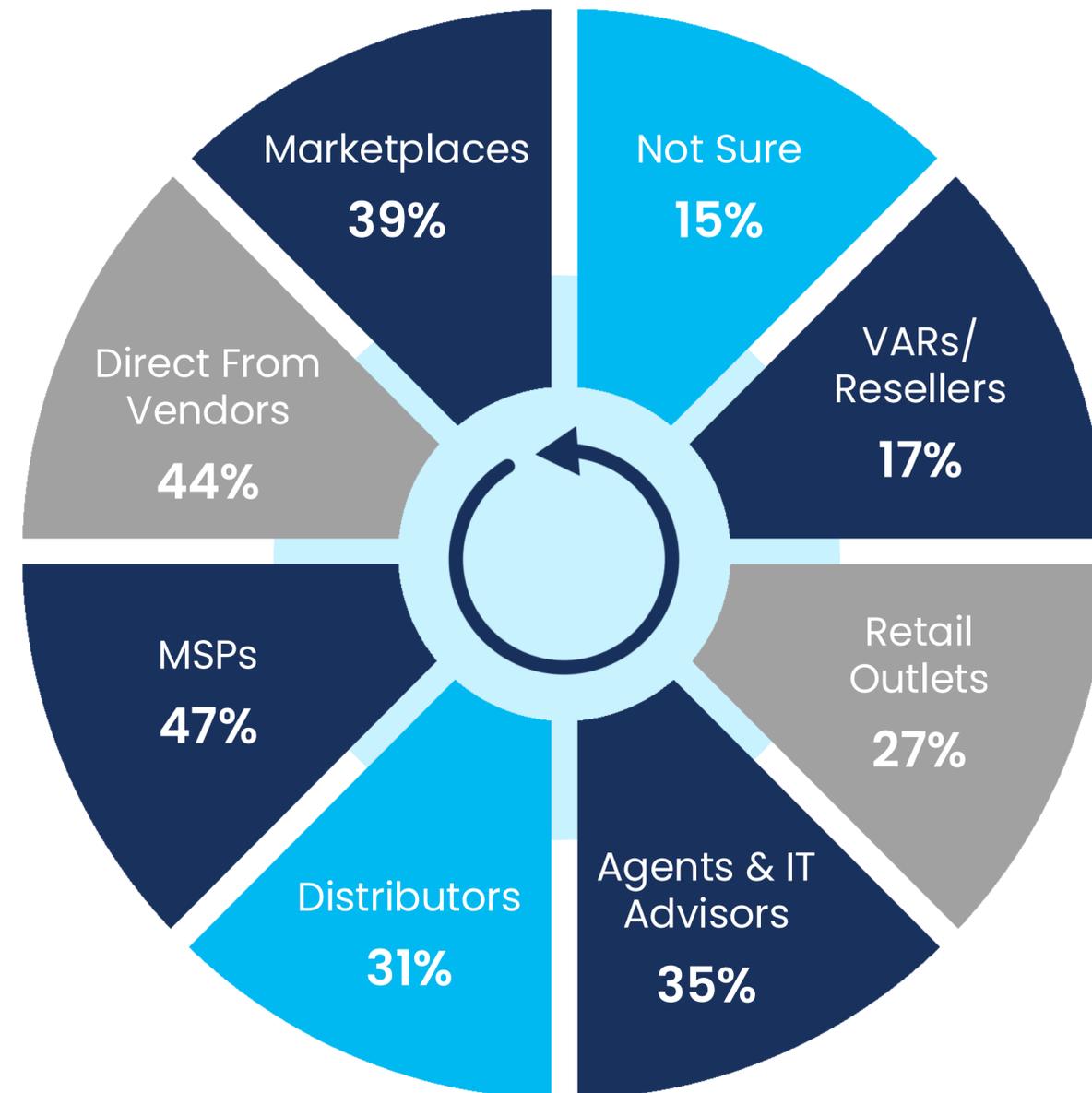
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# Most Significant SMB Buying Sources Over The Next 5 Years



The Asian SMB buying landscape is set for continued diversification, with no single channel expected to dominate. SMBs will increasingly adopt a hybrid approach that balances digital convenience with trusted advisory relationships. Managed service providers (MSPs) are expected to continue as a cornerstone of purchasing activity, offering tailored solutions and ongoing support. Direct vendor engagement is also likely to grow, driven by buyers seeking speed, control and price transparency.

Marketplaces are expected to gain even more traction, particularly as platforms enhance product discovery, configuration tools and support options. Meanwhile, agents, distributors and retail outlets will continue to serve as complementary channels, especially for complex purchases or localised needs. The future of SMB buying will be defined not by where purchases occur, but by how seamlessly each source aligns with the buyer's evolving expectations for value, access and guidance.

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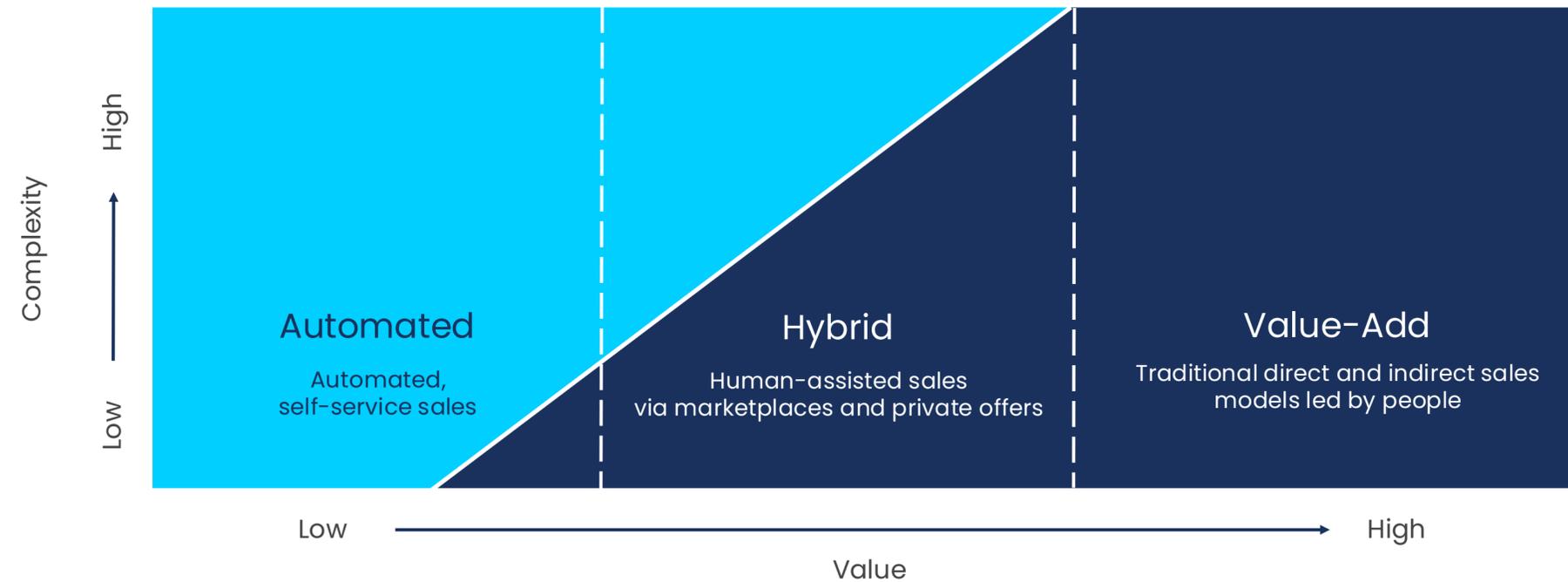
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# How MSPs Should Segment Sales



SMBs want purchasing options that combine self-service with expert support. Many prefer MSPs that offer both E-Commerce portals and managed services, allowing them to complete simple transactions independently while relying on experts for more complex needs. This hybrid model is a growing competitive advantage for providers.

Marketplaces work well for low-complexity purchases like hardware, standard software and routine services. Automation delivers the speed and convenience SMBs expect, especially for repeatable, clearly defined transactions that don't require assistance.

As complexity and value increase, human involvement becomes essential. Advanced solutions and integrated deployments need consultative sales, technical expertise and project oversight. Providers should align engagement models to these needs. They should automate where possible and guide buyers through more intricate decisions to maximise support and value.

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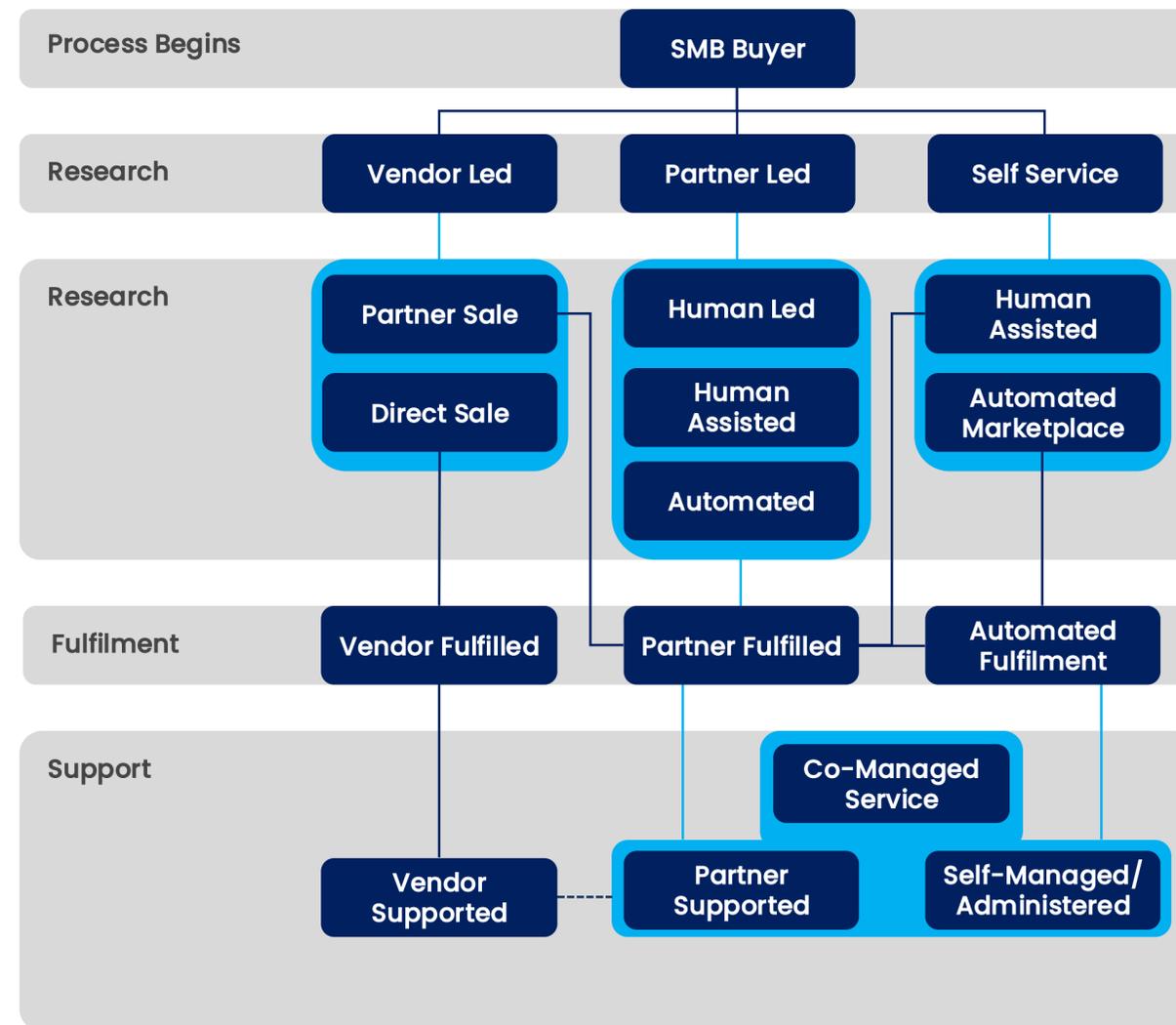
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# SMB Pathways for Purchasing Products and Services



Not every sale follows the same channel or purchasing process. When acquiring products and services, SMBs typically engage through three distinct pathways, which closely align with the Automated, Hybrid and Value-Add segments of the broader sales model. Each pathway reflects varying degrees of complexity, buyer involvement and need for external expertise.

To support these models, MSPs should:

- Provide self-service resources covering use cases, product capabilities and services.
- Offer multiple purchasing options, from self-service to expert-led engagement.
- Ensure support is available across the entire buyer journey, including post-sale.
- Enable add-on purchases of services and support, regardless of the original sales channel.
- Focus on delivering high-quality, value-added services that improve outcomes.

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# Disclosures and Methodologies

Pax8 commissioned Channelnomics to conduct this survey as part of a series of sponsored research projects aimed at tracking the evolving needs and trends of SMB technology buyers. While Pax8 commissioned this research, the company did not influence the analysis, findings or reporting contained in this document.

The survey includes responses from 615 small and midsize businesses across North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. All respondents represented companies with 10 to 500 employees, with the majority concentrated in the 100- to 500-employee range. Each participant held IT purchasing responsibilities within their organisation and had made technology purchases within the past six months.

The survey was conducted between April 15 and May 15, 2025, using an online, self-administered questionnaire with aided response options. The results carry a margin of error of  $\pm 5.5\%$  with a 95% confidence level. Channelnomics believes that the data and insights presented in this report accurately reflect the prevailing experiences and sentiments of the SMB community at the time of the survey. Channelnomics reserves the right to revise or amend the analysis and reporting without notice.

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## About Channelnomics

Channelnomics is a global analyst and research firm that helps technology vendors and service providers fine-tune their channels, win customers and sharpen their competitive edge. The company offers a portfolio of best-in-class products and services, including research, market analysis, thought-leadership content and expert guidance. Our innovative analysts leverage data to develop customised route-to-market strategies for any client that wants to translate vision into value.

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## About Pax8

Pax8 connects partners, vendors and SMBs through AI-powered insights and comprehensive product support. With a global ecosystem of 40,000+ managed service providers, Pax8 empowers businesses to grow securely by provisioning, deploying and optimising agent-ready solutions. Its modern cloud marketplace simplifies procurement and consumption-based billing, while expanding into the Managed Intelligence Provider (MIP) space to enable partners to deliver intelligence-driven services that unlock the full potential of the agentic future.

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