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How to Successfully Scale B2B Marketplaces

Business-to business (B2B) marketplaces are experiencing a resurgence, promising to simplify global sourcing amid increasing geopolitical tensions, trade tariffs and supply chain disruptions. However, managers mistakenly apply business-to-consumer (B2C) marketplace scaling techniques within B2B contexts. Based on case studies of two pioneering B2B marketplaces, we highlight how B2C-platform thinking leads managers into scaling traps. The cases underscore the importance of setting a viable focus, deliberate product building, as well as physical selling and right-touch service, to establish and scale B2B marketplaces in traditional industries.^{1,2}

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The Challenges of Establishing and Scaling Digital Marketplaces for Industrial Procurement

Today, industrial companies heavily rely on external suppliers, making procurement not only a strategic business function but also a complex coordination task across diverse suppliers, processes and systems. For instance, Audi sources over 80% of its components externally from 14,000 suppliers.³ BASF spends nearly \$30 billion annually on procurement, almost half of its total revenues.⁴ To manage such complex supplier networks, industrial companies must employ significant resources to manage tedious, complex and multifaceted procurement activities that rely on digital infrastructure, data transparency and scalable enterprise and information systems.⁵

Yet, despite significant digitalization efforts, many procurement activities within industrial companies, such as supplier screening, tender management or pricing and quotation management, are still conducted manually or isolated from one another. At the same time,



¹ Varun Grover is the senior accepting editor for this article.

² The authors thank Varun for his valuable guidance and his constructive contributions to the manuscript's development. They are also grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful suggestions. Additionally, the authors extend their appreciation to the CheMondis and Laserhub B2B marketplaces for their trust and transparency, and especially for the generous data access they provided, which was essential to this research

³ *Responsibility in the supply chain*, Audi AG, 2024, available at <https://www.audi.com/en/sustainability/people-society/responsibility-in-the-supply-chain.html>.

⁴ *Procurement*, BASF, 2025, available at <https://www.basf.com/global/en/who-we-are/organization/suppliers-and-partners>.

⁵ Nissen, M. E. and Sengupta, K. "Incorporating Software Agents into Supply Chains: Experimental Investigation with a Procurement Task," *MIS Quarterly* (30:1), March 2006, pp. 145-166.

ever-increasing regulations such as supply chain legislation,⁶ formalized cross-border trade⁷ and internal governance bureaucracy are significantly driving up the procurement transaction costs of industrial goods. Moreover, today's global economic pressure, geopolitical tensions and trade tariffs, as well as time-to-market requirements, put industrial companies and their procurement operations under immense pressure.⁸ As intermediaries, procurement professionals rely on intelligent automation, standardized data flows and digital orchestration of procurement activities. These technologies transform fragmented, manual workflows into scalable, transparent procurement operations that open new opportunities for innovation and resilience in complex industrial supply chain networks.⁹

Business-to-consumer (B2C) platform marketplaces such as Amazon, Alibaba and Etsy have become the dominant standard for online shopping in consumers' daily lives, and are the de facto blueprint for scaling network effects and multi-sided markets.¹⁰ However, even though business-to-business (B2B) platform marketplaces have a long history, they remain far less dominant than their B2C counterparts. Pioneers of industrial e-commerce like Ariba and Commerce One took off with great promise in the 1990s,¹¹ but, like many ventures of that

period, they struggled to gain traction when the dot.com bubble burst. Yet, in this modern world of digitalization and AI, B2B platforms are now experiencing a resurgence: the growing digital maturity of industrial companies and their ever-increasing need to enhance efficiency and ensure compliance have driven the emergence of a new wave of B2B platforms.¹² Also, today's global trade tensions and tariffs are forcing industrial companies to fundamentally reevaluate their sourcing practices, prompting many to reevaluate B2B marketplaces as a strategic sourcing option.

In recent years, vertical B2B marketplaces have emerged, focusing on specific industries such as steel, chemicals or electronics. These platforms connect industrial buyers and sellers within a niche, offering industry-specific services and deep market expertise that broader platform marketplaces often lack. Yet, despite their promise, many vertical B2B marketplaces have struggled to scale, with some high-profile ventures failing entirely. For example, both XOM-materials, a poster child corporate start-up launched in 2017 by the leading steel trade organization Klöckner & Co, and merQbiz, a B2B marketplace for recovered paper products (such as used cardboard and packaging), also launched in 2017 as a joint venture between the industrial machinery giant Voith and BCG digital ventures, have been discontinued.¹³

We argue that these failures stem from a common managerial mistake: applying familiar B2C scaling playbooks within B2B contexts. Though this approach is tempting, the specialized nature of vertical B2B marketplaces requires distinct strategies and digital capabilities. For instance, complex procurement processes significantly challenge the adoption of the frictionless, high-volume transactions that

6 For example, the German Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains, which can be viewed at <https://www.bmz.de/resource/blob/154774/lieferkettengesetz-faktenpapier-partnerlaender-eng-bf.pdf>.

7 For example, the U.S. Regulations Enhancing the Administration of the Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Trade Remedy Laws, which can be viewed at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/12/16/2024-29245/regulations-enhancing-the-administration-of-the-antidumping-and-countervailing-duty-trade-remedy>.

8 Two books on digital platforms with numerous examples of their impact on everyday personal and business lives are: 1) Cusumano, M. A., Gawer, A. and Yoffie, D. B. *The Business of Platforms: Strategy in the Age of Digital Competition, Innovation, and Power*, Harper Business, 2019; and 2) Parker, G. G., Van Alstyne, M. W. and Choudary, S. P. *Platform Revolution: How Networked Markets Are Transforming the Economy and How to Make Them Work for You*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2016.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 For foundational research on early B2B marketplaces, see: 1) Yoo, B., Choudhary, V. and Mukhopadhyay, T. "Electronic B2B Marketplaces with Different Ownership Structures," *Management Science* (53:6), June 2007, pp. 952-961; and 2) Koh, T. K. and Fichman, M. "Multihoming Users' Preferences for Two-Sided Exchange Networks," *MIS Quarterly* (38:4), December 2014, pp. 977-996.

12 For insights on today's B2B platform landscape, see Parker, G., Bonnet, D., Serra, L. and Farri, E. *The Future of B2B: Harnessing Platforms for AI, Sustainability, and Connected Value Creation*, Capgemini Invent and the MIT Digital Initiative on the Digital Economy, 2025, available at <https://www.capgemini.com/insights/research-library/the-future-of-b2b/>.

13 For seminal research focusing on platform failures within industrial domains, see: 1) Hodapp, D., Hawlitschek, F., Wortmann, F., Lang, M. and Gassmann, O. "Key Lessons from Bosch for Incumbent Firms Entering the Platform Economy," *MIS Quarterly Executive* (21:2), June 2022, pp. 115-129; and 2) Wlcek, M., Knapp, J., Marheine, C. and Wortmann, F. "Revisiting the IIoT Platform Graveyard: Key Learnings from Failed IIoT Platform Initiatives," *ICIS 2023 Proceedings*, December 2023, pp. 1-9.

fuel B2C platform scaling. Additionally, industry-specific B2B platforms often lack the user base necessary to establish and sustain powerful network effects, where more buyers attract more sellers.¹⁴

Our research reveals that successfully scaling B2B marketplace operations in traditional industrial contexts requires managers and digital leaders to navigate three distinct traps, which we label “overextension,” “rigidity” and “illusion.” To describe these traps and identify effective strategies for avoiding them, we draw on in-depth case studies of two pioneering B2B marketplaces: CheMondis and Laserhub. (Our research methodology is described in Appendix A.) These marketplaces operate in increasingly digitally mature environments, navigating real-world challenges such as integrating heterogeneous IT systems, establishing marketplace governance and offering intelligent end-to-end automation. From our analysis of the cases, we have derived recommendations for overcoming the three B2B marketplace traps, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a viable focus, deliberate product development and integrating physical sales with end-to-end digital services.

Crucially, our findings show that CIOs and IS leaders are uniquely positioned to navigate the challenges of scaling B2B marketplaces by actively controlling key levers, including system integration, architectural choices and deliberately driving thoughtful automation in domains where physical sales and services remain essential. It is through these specific actions that they can avoid the traps that bedeviled earlier B2B marketplaces.

Understanding the Fundamentals of Industrial Procurement

Procurement encompasses all company activities aimed at acquiring goods or other resources from external sources (suppliers).¹⁵ Specifically, procurement involves identifying

the needs of an organization, selecting suitable suppliers, negotiating contracts and ensuring the timely delivery of quality products or services at the best possible cost, thus providing great potential to streamline processes and enable data-driven decision making.¹⁶ This means that CIOs play a central role in digitizing procurement operations, integrating heterogeneous enterprise systems and automating procurement processes. The effectiveness of these efforts directly shapes the success of the entire organization.

Procurement comprises two core processes: “source-to-contract” and “procure-to-pay.”¹⁷ These terms are widely established in procurement practice to denote two distinct activity sets that are inherently centered on the buyer’s perspective (following a typical customer journey). Figure 1 summarizes these two core procurement processes and their key cost drivers.

The source-to-contract (S2C) process reflects the strategic role of procurement, covering supplier search, evaluation and contract negotiation and management. It sets the guardrails for repeated purchases, ultimately enabling the procure-to-pay (P2P) process, which encompasses the operational role of procurement, including order placement, process management, verification, fulfillment, and invoicing and payment. While the distinction between S2C and P2P is well-established in practice, companies often adapt and integrate these processes based on spend type, involved risk and efficiency requirements.

Because companies repeatedly apply rigid S2C and P2P processes, industrial procurement is perceived as complex, tedious and, most importantly, costly. Moreover, procurement transaction costs are being further increased by recent regulatory changes, bureaucratic requirements, today’s geopolitical tensions and trade tariffs, and supply chain disruptions. Nevertheless, these challenges create significant opportunities for IS leaders to leverage B2B

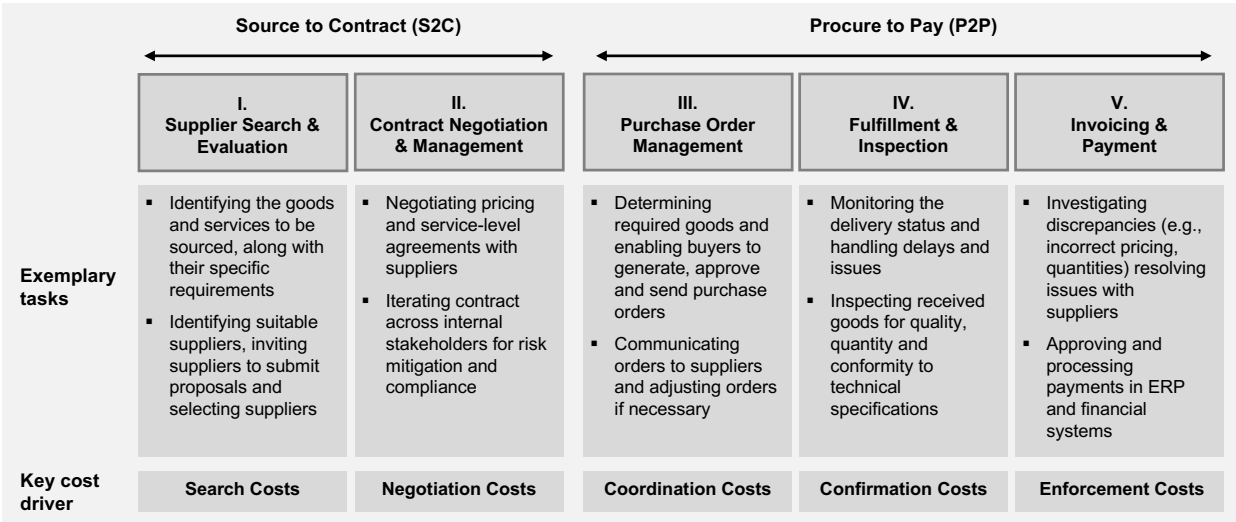
14 For insights on capturing B2B platform opportunities, see: Riemensperger, F. and Falk, S. “How to Capture the B2B Platform Opportunity,” *Electronic Markets* (30:1), January 2020, pp. 61-63.

15 See Taylor, J. R., and Tucker, C. C. “Reducing Data Processing Costs through Centralized Procurement,” *MIS Quarterly* (13:4), December 1989, pp. 487-499.

16 Further research highlighting the role of information systems in procurement includes: 1) Nissen, M. E. and Sengupta, K., op. cit., March 2006; and 2) Najmul Islam, A. K. M., Cenfetelli, R. and Benbasat, I. “Organizational Buyers’ Assimilation of B2B Platforms: Effects of IT-Enabled Service Functionality,” *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* (29:1), March 2020, Article 101597.

17 See Sarferaz, S. “Process of Source to Pay,” in *Compendium on Enterprise Resource Planning*, Springer Cham, 2022, pp. 119-135.

Figure 1: Core Procurement Processes and Key Cost Drivers



marketplaces as digital platforms that streamline operations, reduce costs and enable scalable procurement, particularly in traditional industries.

Investigating the Potential of B2B Marketplaces to Transform Industrial Procurement

The focus of our research was to investigate the potential of B2B marketplaces to transform industrial procurement—in particular, how to scale them for maximum impact. Industrial procurement has always been about buying at the lowest price, but in recent years, transaction costs have increased drastically. Additionally, especially in vertical domains, industry-specific regulations add significant complexity through, for instance, the need for batch traceability in chemicals and pharmaceuticals and airworthiness certificates in aerospace. There is also an increasing requirement to comply with trade laws such as Germany’s Supply Chain Due Diligence Act, post-Brexit regulations in the U.K.¹⁸ and the U.S. anti-dumping regulatory requirements. These regulations and

requirements increase the complexities and cost drivers of industrial procurement.

Prior studies on B2B marketplaces offer rich insights into, for instance, trust and governance,¹⁹ pricing and market dynamics,²⁰ and technology-enabled ecosystems.²¹ While foundational, this research often positions marketplaces as transaction platforms with a rather abstract and monolithic conceptualization of the business transaction itself. In addition, existing research reflects today’s industrial realities only to a limited extent and often overlooks the specific nuances of B2B business realities, leaving managers vulnerable to the B2B marketplace traps our research identified. Ultimately, today’s B2B marketplace realities are characterized

18 See *Post-Brexit Agreements*, Council of the European Union, May 28, 2025, available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/post-brexit-agreements/>.

19 For example, see: 1) Son, J., Tu, L. and Benbasat, I. “A Descriptive Content Analysis of Trust-Building Measures in B2B Electronic Marketplaces,” *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* (18:1), 2006, pp. 538-563; and 2) Koch, H. and Schultze, U. “Stuck in the Conflicted Middle: A Role-Theoretic Perspective on B2B E-Marketplaces,” *MIS Quarterly* (35:1), March 2011, pp. 123-146.

20 For example, see: 1) Alhaili, A., Elmaghraby, W. J. and Gopal, A. “Adverse Selection in B2B Secondary Market Online Auctions for IT Equipment: An Empirical Analysis,” *MIS Quarterly* (46:3), September 2022, pp. 1793-1816; and 2) Koh, T. K. and Fichman, M. “Multihoming Users’ Preferences for Two-Sided Exchange Networks,” *MIS Quarterly* (38:4), December 2014, pp. 977-996.

21 For example, see: 1) Lacity, M., O’Leary, D. E. and Conway, D. “Developing Capabilities for B2B Commerce on Public Decentralized Networks,” *MIS Quarterly Executive* (23:4), December 2024, pp. 467-481; and 2) Najmul Islam, A. K. M., Cenfetelli, R. and Benbasat, I., op. cit., March 2020.

by heterogeneous IT systems, labor-intensive processes and additional burdens from bureaucracy, regulations or geopolitical tensions and tariffs. Unlike prior conceptualizations in IS literature, in this article, we operationalize and pinpoint business transactions on B2B marketplaces by taking a process perspective, focusing on specific S2C and P2P activities.

In practice, B2B marketplaces touch the core of enterprise IT on both the buyer and seller sides. Specifically, adopting automation technologies like generative AI (GenAI) enables marketplaces to streamline complex, lengthy and tedious procurement workflows, with the ultimate goal of achieving a “perfect order”: a fully seamless and largely automated buying and selling experience. For instance, B2B marketplaces may take over manual tasks such as proposal quotation, structuring and comparison, and the automatic preparation of consolidated decision documents, facilitating the S2C process. Moreover, mandatory product information, logistic requirements or governance mechanisms, such as seller verification, streamline the S2C and P2P procurement processes significantly, thereby eliminating lengthy back-and-forth communication. Finally, buyers and sellers can compare and manage tenders and quotations in one place, shifting procurement from time-intensive one-to-one negotiations to scalable one-to-many marketplace interactions.

For CIOs and IS leaders who build or join B2B marketplaces, this creates both opportunity and responsibility. Their role is decisive in driving system integration, advancing intelligent automation and prioritizing digital investments, while ensuring that architectures remain both robust and scalable. In navigating the three B2B marketplace traps, CIOs and IS leaders can not only streamline procurement operations but can also amplify the strategic impact of their decisions, supporting procurement transformation from a costly back-office function into a competitive advantage.

How Two B2B Marketplaces Systematically Scaled Their Business

To investigate how managers avoid falling into the B2B marketplace traps, we analyzed CheMondis²² and Laserhub,²³ two pioneering European B2B marketplaces. CheMondis and Laserhub both operate in traditional industries with complex supply chains and long-standing supplier relationships that significantly rely on face-to-face interactions. Also, both case companies illustrate different approaches to maturing the B2B marketplace journey. Their journeys involve versatile approaches to onboarding suppliers and buyers, managing data, integrating with enterprise systems and establishing marketplace governance.

Laserhub and CheMondis were founded in 2017 and 2018, respectively, and serve around 10,000 customers each. CheMondis’s mission is to connect buyers and suppliers of chemicals. Overall, there are more than 100 chemical substances and product groups available on the marketplace, which aggregate in over 80,000 listings in total. Though using CheMondis to buy chemicals is free, sellers pay an annual membership fee, the price of which varies depending on the size of the company. In total, CheMondis lists over 11,000 verified buyers. Figure 2 provides an overview of the CheMondis marketplace and Appendix B includes screenshots of using CheMondis.²⁴

Laserhub is a B2B marketplace for custom metal parts. These parts encompass several processing methods, such as deburring, laser engraving, powder coating and galvanizing. Buyers upload CAD files and specify requirements (e.g., steel type, tolerances or surface quality), and Laserhub matches them with one or multiple suppliers in its network, providing a price and delivery date within seconds. Buyers joining the platform sign up to a framework agreement with Laserhub as the contracting party, thus profiting from automated supplier preselection. Figure 3 provides an overview of the Laserhub B2B marketplace, and

²² For information on CheMondis, see <https://chemondis.com>.

²³ For information on Laserhub, see <https://laserhub.com/blog/>.

²⁴ Note: All information and screenshots for both cases were valid as of November 2024.

Figure 2: Overview of the CheMondis B2B Marketplace

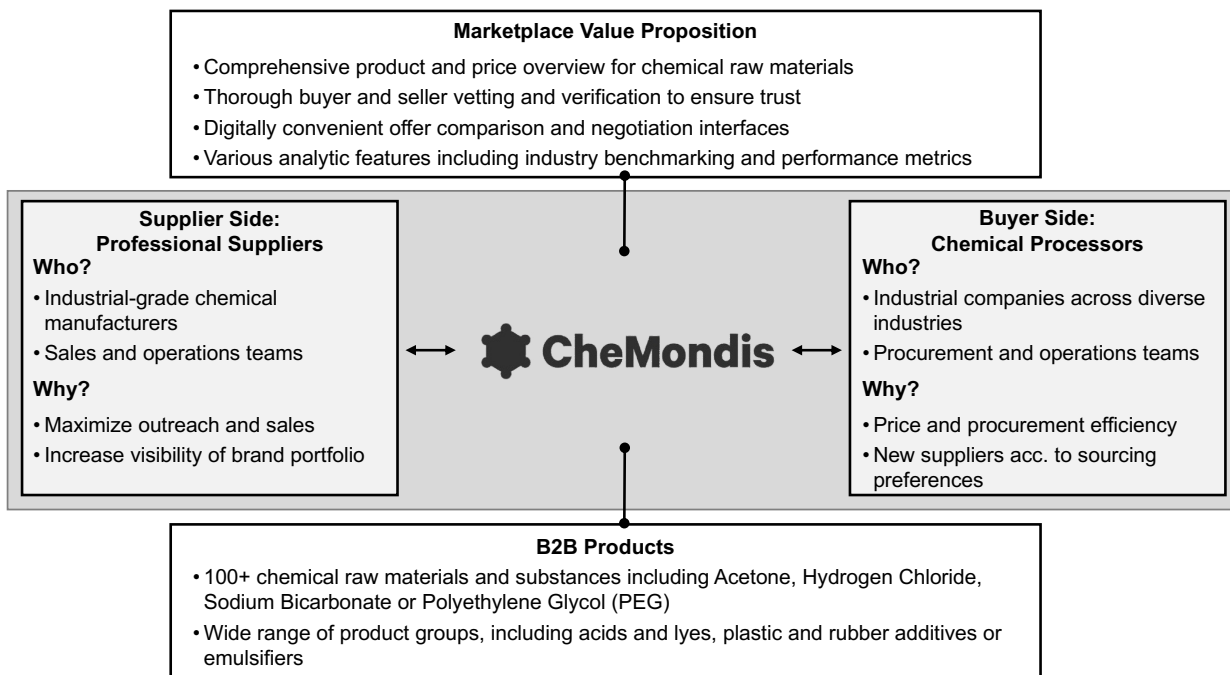
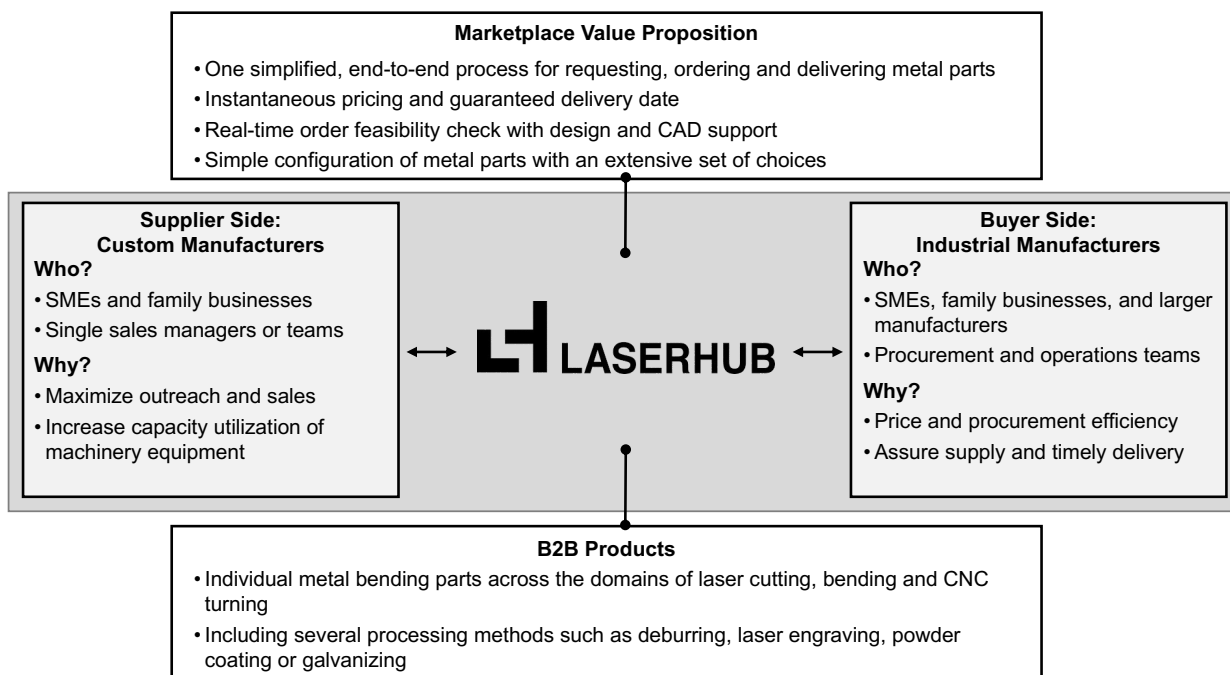


Figure 3: Overview of the Laserhub B2B Marketplace



Appendix C²⁵ includes screenshots of using the marketplace.

From our analyses of the Laserhub and CheMondis B2B marketplaces, we identified that both followed a three-phase journey in scaling their marketplaces: 1) the listing years, 2) the marketplace era, and 3) the opening up. We describe these phases below and then show how both cases navigated the B2B marketplace traps. Based on these analyses, we provide recommendations for CIOs and IS leaders on how to successfully scale B2B marketplaces, thereby streamlining industrial procurement from sourcing to payment.

Phase 1. The Listing Years: Establishing a Viable Core

In the initial phase of growing their platforms, Laserhub and CheMondis focused on facilitating the core purchase transaction. While B2C platforms often focus on enabling buyers to find the lowest price, B2B procurement is far more complex and typically involves the interplay of different IT systems on the buyer, seller and platform owner sides.²⁶ To establish a viable core, Laserhub and CheMondis invested significantly in developing basic functionality along the whole industrial procurement process, including product listing, matchmaking, trust building and fulfillment. Moreover, they realized early on that gaining a foothold in traditional industries requires a sharp focus on a small but viable niche that addresses a small number of critical procurement pain points. A senior Laserhub manager described the initial days as follows:

“The most important thing for us was focus. In our domain, there are three very common types of metal: steel, stainless steel and aluminum. If you have the usual thicknesses and sizes, you can serve quite a larger market segment without

stretching too far and remaining in control.”

Moreover, Laserhub adopted lean practices to test and validate its marketplace early on, aiming to test its market acceptance in the traditional manufacturing industry. Another senior manager described the minimal viable platform (MVP) approach adopted by Laserhub:

“With a very simple online form, we could easily check whether there was demand and whether people were signing up. That was the very first cohort of interested parties. And we were able to match a few standard customers (i.e., not ‘exotic’ ones) with a few suppliers which were very happy that we brought them new customers.”

CheMondis’s initial growth phase followed a similar approach. It pivoted from a broad chemical marketplace toward a more specialized one with a focus on paints and coatings, and textiles and adhesives. Focusing on those niches was vital to differentiate it from existing B2B procurement platforms and marketplaces, as CheMondis’s CEO expressed: “So, what we did at some point [was] focus geographically on the EU and focus on two segments: the paints and coatings industry and the textiles and adhesives industry.” He also emphasized the importance of establishing a viable core:

“It was a breakthrough because we aimed to identify a somewhat ideal portfolio buyers would search for. With that in mind, we could approach suppliers and tell them precisely what we needed. That is something absolutely critical for every marketplace platform to understand in the beginning.”

During the initial growth phase, both Laserhub and CheMondis deliberately narrowed the focus of their B2B marketplaces. Both carefully investigated “where and how to play?” (i.e., identified specific product niches and process coverage) prior to focusing on scale. Establishing a viable core enabled Laserhub and CheMondis to gain a foothold within their industries and build trust through reliable

25 Note: All information and screenshots for both cases were valid as of November 2024

26 For seminal scholarly research on the complexity of B2B platforms, see: 1) Haki, K., Tanriverdi, H., Safaei, D., Schmid, M., Aier, S. and Winter, R. “Generativity and Profitability on B2B Innovation Platforms: A Simulation-based Theory Development,” *MIS Quarterly* (48:2), June 2024, pp. 583-612; and 2) Anderson, E. G., Lopez, J. and Parker, G. G. “Leveraging Value Creation to Drive the Growth of B2B Platforms,” *Production and Operations Management* (31:12), December 2022, pp. 4501-4514.

processes. This provided them with a solid foundation for moving on to the second growth phase: the marketplace era.

Phase 2. The Marketplace Era: Strengthening the Core

In the second growth phase, Laserhub and CheMondis began to strengthen their cores by expanding the range of functionalities. In fact, both made significant efforts to increase their impact along the S2C and P2P core procurement processes. This marked the point where both marketplaces became more embedded into buyers and sellers existing IT systems and adjacent business processes.

Laserhub, for instance, took a significant risk by becoming the contracting party, assuming responsibilities far beyond matchmaking. This exposed the firm to legal and regulatory compliance, liability for defects or warranties, and contractual obligations (e.g., terms of service to uphold or deal with infringements of intellectual property rights), while also requiring stronger IT capabilities for secure data handling, order processing and documentation. At the same time, customers valued the simplified buying process, which helped Laserhub establish itself as a trustworthy and seamless alternative to traditional procurement.

Though becoming the contracting party is often seen as limiting marketplace scaling, this was the only reasonable choice for Laserhub, as explained by a co-founder:

"We early on realized that we needed to become the buyer's contracting party to really solve a procurement person's inherent problem of managing one-to-many relationships. Of course, we don't want to be the contracting party and deal with all the organizational, contractual and operational activities at first, but we realized pretty soon that it's a necessary evil. Only as the contracting party can we provide this one-to-one relationship that makes procurement significantly easier."

While challenging at first, taking on the contracting party role and offering standardized framework agreements became a unique

selling point. Laserhub's chief operating officer underscored this:

"Mastering this [our own operations as a contracting party] over time, we became really good in it. Today, our customers even value our on-time deliveries, which by the way are over 95%, thus far better than the existing industry standard."

CheMondis took a different path and remained an independent broker while investing heavily in strengthening its core. Early buyer-focused initiatives included improving product search with filters such as supplier location, packaging type and chemical grade. Also, CheMondis introduced supplier-specific brand shops to simplify bulk purchasing (see Appendix B for more details). To increase trust, CheMondis also implemented a vetting process to verify that companies were registered and reliable (e.g., checking VAT registration numbers).

Creating impact also required proactively addressing barriers or bottlenecks that hinder transactions. Tackling these barriers might involve forming strategic partnerships with partners such as insurance companies, payment service providers or logistic companies, all of which require closely coordinated integration efforts, modular architectures and IT security capabilities. CheMondis, for example, partnered with TrustShare, a leading financial service provider for digital marketplaces, to ensure safe payment and provide escrow options for all transactions.

Though both marketplaces initially offered limited services, they expanded their offerings significantly in this second growth phase by substantially increasing their coverage along the S2C and P2P processes. By focusing on scope rather than scale, Laserhub and CheMondis were able to establish a strong core that enabled them to enter the third and final growth phase: the opening up.

Phase 3. The Opening Up: Creating the Basis to Scale

In the third growth phase, both the Laserhub and CheMondis cases illustrate that scaling a B2B marketplace requires efforts beyond digital infrastructure. In fact, it involves two reinforcing dynamics: developing advanced marketplace

functionality to simplify transactions (e.g., automated CAD file checking, CRM and ERP integrations) and targeted sales efforts that drive adoption through direct engagement with buyers and suppliers. Both cases highlight that marketplace scaling must go hand in hand with enabling face-to-face sales, supported by marketplace functionality and processes that integrate seamlessly with established enterprise IT systems. Laserhub and CheMondis needed to accommodate their traditional industry practices, where handshakes and face-to-face communication are still the norm for conducting business. As a result, both companies realized early on that it is crucial to augment, rather than replace, these traditional practices. One founder of CheMondis highlighted the importance of the company's focus on sales excellence for scaling: "We identify as a software company, yes, but more than 25% of our people are employed in sales and aren't chemical engineers or software developers. That's just how it goes in our traditional industry."

Laserhub takes physical sales engagement even further. The company's leadership team commits to dedicated sales journeys and visits multiple key customers each July. Laserhub's CEO highlighted that dedication by the company's leadership team to sales is crucial for convincing hesitant buyers and sellers to join the marketplace.

To complement their physical sales efforts, both Laserhub and CheMondis made great efforts to simplify digital onboarding. Laserhub, for instance, was a very early user of GenAI, turning ERP-generated procurement emails into Laserhub-ready purchase orders and automating the corresponding communication. In doing so, it addressed the realities of a small and medium enterprise (SME) user base that might be unable to adopt more advanced integration methods. By embracing established procurement practices such as email, buyers and sellers can continue to follow their established processes using their ERP systems for procurement purposes while using the Laserhub B2B marketplace, thereby significantly reducing the adoption barrier through process integration and alignment.

Laserhub describes and advertises its GenAI innovation as follows:²⁷

"As projects often start with an email (procurement request), we now combine the best of both worlds: You can send us your inquiry by email and receive a link to your preconfigured metal parts within minutes. In doing so, we provide technology that adapts to your way of working."

In addition to its face-to-face sales efforts, CheMondis created its basis to scale by promoting the technology of strategic partners. In fact, CheMondis opened up by providing interfaces that allow access to different customer relationship management (CRM) systems. These interfaces mean that suppliers can ensure that existing leads are nurtured effectively throughout every stage of the sales funnel. To facilitate seamless order processing for suppliers, CheMondis integrated Elemica, a leading digital supply chain network for process manufacturers, into its platform. As a result, suppliers can connect their ERP system directly with CheMondis. This move meant that CheMondis evolved to become an orchestrator, requiring it to have a clear strategy for prioritizing partners, a robust IT architecture that allows for plug-and-play integration and proven and enforceable governance mechanisms.

Creating the basis to scale required Laserhub and CheMondis to provide the infrastructure and processes (physically and digitally) that make the development and integration of complementary third-party services efficient and scalable. It was only in this third phase that Laserhub and CheMondis adopted standardized application programming interfaces (APIs) to enable scalable low-touch integration, replacing the high-touch integration of strategic partners in Phase 2. In addition, both B2B marketplaces implemented scalable onboarding processes and legal foundations that are one-size-fits-all and simple rather than individualized and all-encompassing.

Having established a viable core business and evolved through the three growth phases, both companies must continue to prove the viability

²⁷ For details of Laserhub's GenAI enabled email ordering, see <https://laserhub.com/blog/bekannte-prozesse-neue-ergebnisse-konfiguration-per-e-mail/>.

Table 1: The Three Latent B2B Marketplace Traps and Case Company Actions

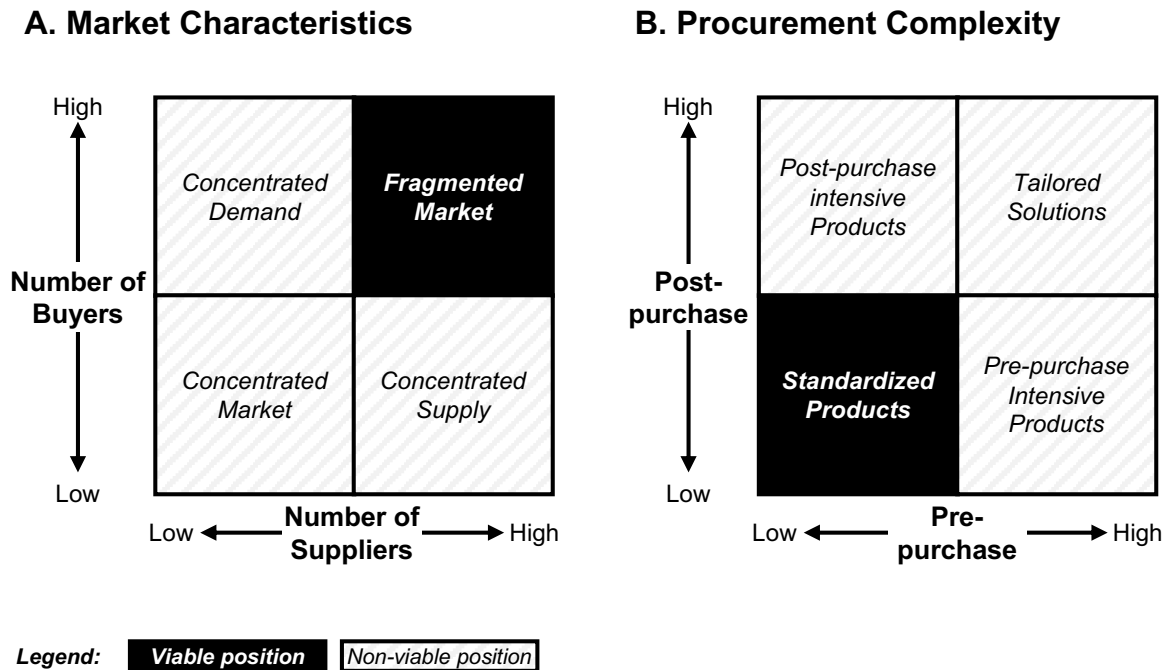
Traps	Managerial Misconceptions	Case Company Actions
1. Overextension: Trying to be Everything to Everyone (Phase 1)	From “the more the better” ... Network effects: Broad market penetration is needed for momentum. Market fit: Marketplaces work across all industries. Product fit: A diverse set of products can be sold via marketplaces.	... to setting a viable focus Network effects: Drive network effects in a niche. CheMondis focuses on paints, Laserhub on common parts. Market fit: Both companies operate in fragmented markets with no concentrated demand or supply. Product fit: Laserhub and CheMondis focus on simple, low-complexity products.
2. Rigidity: Obsessive Platform Thinking (Phase 2)	From narrow-minded platform implementation ... Value proposition: Aggregating demand and supply ensures platform success. Value creation: Focus on network effects, not standalone value. Boundary objects: Proper APIs enable seamless marketplace integration.	... to deliberate product building Value proposition: Laserhub and CheMondis offer significant value beyond pure aggregation. Value creation: Both offer services to streamline processes as well as to secure and simplify transactions. Boundary objects: CheMondis offers comprehensive integration solutions, Laserhub uses GenAI for email orders.
3. Illusion: Blind Faith in Digital Scaling (Phase 3)	From low-touch sales and service ... Customer acquisition: A great marketplace sells itself; field sales is for pipeline business. Onboarding: Minimal effort for all buyers and suppliers if APIs and documentation is right. Customer support: If done right, customer support is low- or even no-touch.	... to physical selling and right-touch service Customer acquisition: Over 20% of Laserhub and CheMondis employees are sales staff who conduct field visits. Onboarding: For effective onboarding, Laserhub and CheMondis appoint digital and domain experts, respectively. Customer support: Laserhub offers CAD support; both companies assign account managers to customers.

of their business models. With rising trade tensions, new tariffs and the rapidly increasing shift toward cost-effective sourcing from China, both marketplaces are facing new challenges and opportunities. In response, the two companies continue to verticalize their business by extending their software and service portfolio. CheMondis, for example, is facilitating China-related business through targeted procurement discovery services that rely on its marketplace backbone.

Identifying and Overcoming the Latent B2B Marketplace Traps

Accompanying Laserhub’s and CheMondis’s journeys through the three growth phases revealed certain pitfalls that both B2B marketplaces had to overcome. We conceptualize these pitfalls as three latent B2B marketplace traps, which we describe below and provide guidance on how to overcome them (Table 1 provides a summary of the traps, the common

Figure 4: Overcoming the Overextension Trap by Setting a Viable Focus



managerial misconceptions about them and the actions the case companies took to address them).

1. The Overextension Trap: Trying to be Everything to Everyone

When discussing platform marketplaces, most managers instinctively point to well-known success stories such as Amazon or Airbnb. Focusing on these B2C examples, however, often leads to ambitious goals for creating network effects, low-touch marketplace interactions and serving a very broad product portfolio. But starting out with the aim of “being everything to everyone” would have resulted in very limited success for Laserhub and CheMondis. Instead, they set more limited but realistic goals. Limited ambitions are equally crucial for IS strategy. Setting out to build “Amazon-like” scale can misdirect efforts, whereas a lean and flexible architecture allows resources to be concentrated on the areas of greatest impact.

Overcoming the overextension B2B marketplace trap required Laserhub and CheMondis to carefully consider their structural environment. Both realized that

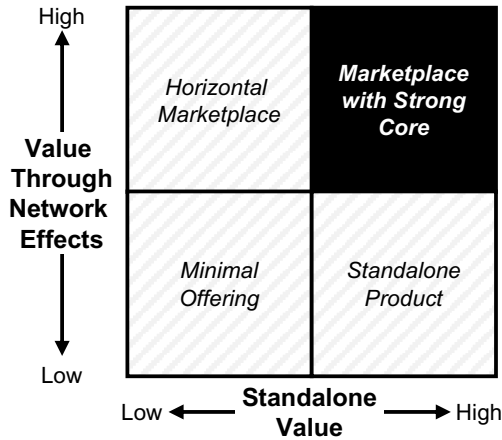
B2B marketplaces thrive under very specific conditions shaped by market characteristics and procurement complexity. We illustrate this learning in Figure 4.

Both Laserhub and CheMondis selected a sufficiently large market, but more importantly, they identified inherent market barriers that mitigate against concentrated supply or demand. In fact, both companies operate in niches with many suppliers and buyers but no dominant power structure, thus avoiding monopolistic or oligopolistic behaviors that could hinder procurement transactions. At the same time, fragmented supplier networks drive up transaction costs and reduce transparency along the supply chain, which both marketplaces provide solutions for. By augmenting the procurement process and delivering targeted functionality in the form of data standardization and process automation, both companies provide significant added value.

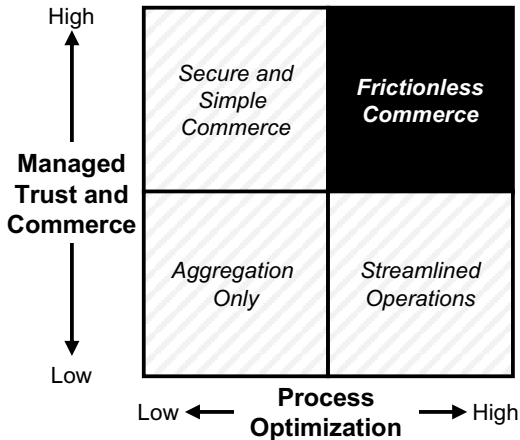
Procurement complexity was another decisive factor in overcoming the overextension trap. In practice, not all industrial products are suitable for B2B marketplaces, especially when extensive pre- or post-purchase coordination is required.

Figure 5: Overcoming the Rigidity Trap by Deliberate Product Building

A. Marketplace Positioning



B. Value Proposition Beyond Aggregation



Legend: Viable position Non-viable position

Laserhub, for instance, focused on steel, stainless steel and aluminum because they are the most common products in its market. In fact, Laserhub deliberately abandoned 3D-printed (polymer) products due to their inherent complexity and the resulting pre- and post-purchasing coordination efforts (such as design freedom, material behavior and reproducibility). For CIOs, this underlines the importance of analyzing procurement workflows to pinpoint where IT integration and automation are feasible and where complexity makes scaling prohibitively costly.

Ultimately, B2B marketplaces thrive in fragmented markets with standardized products. Though this may seem obvious, the experts in our research have found it to be widely overlooked. We therefore encourage managers establishing B2B marketplaces to critically assess their current strategies and establish a clear, sustainable focus.

2. The Rigidity Trap: Obsessive Platform Thinking

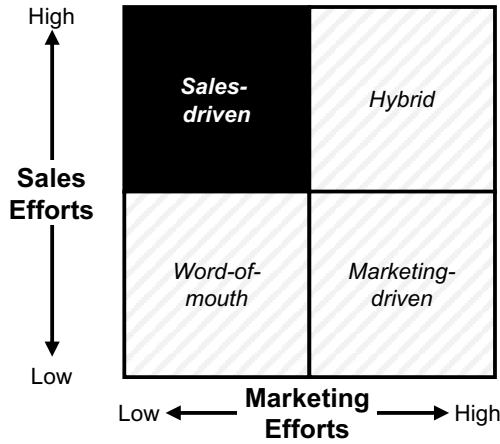
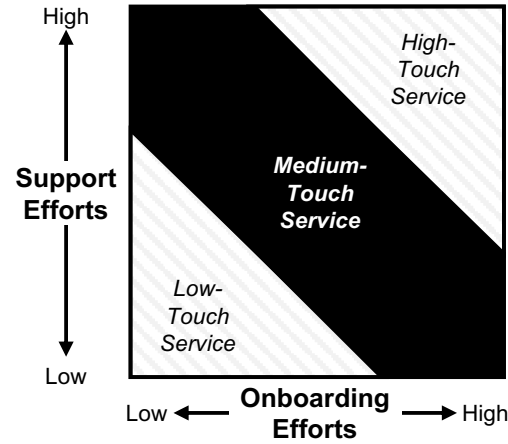
Once they have established a viable focus and entered the second growth phase, most

managers turn their attention to marketplace scaling and building up network effects. But, as Laserhub's CEO acknowledged, rapidly scaling a B2B marketplace through an early focus on user growth must be approached with caution. Though providing APIs is a common way to scale platforms,²⁸ Laserhub and CheMondis both emphasized that a strong marketplace core must be in place before scaling. This underlines the importance of ensuring robust core processes and IT architectures before pursuing large-scale growth efforts.

Overcoming this second B2B marketplace trap required Laserhub and CheMondis to significantly enhance their value-adding propositions. Both firms learned that B2B marketplaces thrive through adding deliberate product functionality beyond merely matching supply and demand. We illustrate this learning in Figure 5.

To overcome the rigidity trap, Laserhub and CheMondis recognized that simply onboarding more users was insufficient. Instead, both companies had to significantly extend the

28 See Gawer, A. "Digital Platforms' Boundaries: The Interplay of Firm Scope, Platform Sides, and Digital Interfaces," *Long Range Planning* (54:5), October 2021, Article 102045.

Figure 6: Overcoming the Illusion Trap by Physical Selling and Right-Touch Services**A. Marketplace Go-to-Market****B. Marketplace Onboarding and Support**

Legend: Viable position Non-viable position

functionality of their marketplaces by providing stand-alone value and enhancing their services along the two core procurement processes.²⁹ In fact, facilitating seamless procurement and delivering a “perfect order experience” provided greater value to buyers and sellers than blindly focusing on establishing network effects. Both companies positioned their marketplaces as providing a strong core, delivering stand-alone value and seamless procurement. Instead of committing to a scalable infrastructure, both marketplaces focused on incorporating adjacent business domains, such as legal, financial and logistics processes, where complexity and regulation demand robust integration.

Realizing the necessity of moving beyond aggregation, Laserhub and CheMondis focused on enabling frictionless commerce. Achieving this required two elements. First, the marketplace must provide a streamlined end-to-end integrated buying process for both sellers and buyers (i.e., process optimization). With Laserhub, a buyer can place a comprehensive

order, including CAD data, in less than five minutes, leveraging the platform’s automated supplier selection and scheduling, automated CAD file checks and instantaneous payment processing. CheMondis optimized processes through brand shops for bulk purchasing and ERP supply chain integration.

Second, frictionless commerce requires the marketplace to provide managed trust and commerce, thus ensuring secure and reliable business transactions. The marketplace needs to build trust among participants while streamlining commercial interactions to reduce risks and transaction costs. CheMondis, for instance, invested great efforts in supplier vetting and integrated escrow services to ensure secure payments and transactions. Laserhub became the contracting party, taking on operational tasks such as order management, fulfillment and invoicing. These examples highlight the dual challenge of enabling process efficiency while embedding trust and security into digital workflows.

Ultimately, B2B marketplaces thrive by providing a strong core and a value proposition beyond aggregation. Hence, we encourage managers implementing narrowly focused and

29 For more information, see Li, H., Fang, Y., Lim, K. and Wang, Y. “Platform-Based Function Repertoire, Reputation, and Sales Performance of E-Marketplace Sellers,” *MIS Quarterly* (43:1), March 2019, pp. 207-236.

“lean” B2B platforms to reorient their actions toward embracing deliberate product building.

3. The Illusion Trap: Blind Faith in Digital Scaling

As B2B marketplaces mature, managers often assume that digital scaling will nurture network effects, which accelerate adoption until a winner-takes-all position emerges.³⁰ This belief in effortless, low-cost digital scaling not only tempts managers to venture into B2B platform marketplace initiatives but also sustains investments, despite limited revenues or profitability. However, the experiences of CheMondis and Laserhub tell a different story, one that does not align with expectations of purely digital, low-touch scaling.³¹

Both Laserhub and CheMondis realized that overcoming the illusion trap required them to focus on physical selling and right-touch services instead. We illustrate this learning in Figure 6.

Laserhub and CheMondis invested heavily in sales teams and structured sales pipelines rather than relying on marketing-driven adoption. In fact, over 25% of both companies’ staff work in sales, conducting field sales visits and maintaining close customer relationships. Such sales efforts fundamentally contradict low-cost digital scaling and typically slow down platform scaling to levels far below initial business plans and roadmap targets. However, as highlighted by Laserhub’s CEO, customers in traditional industries highly value face-to-face interactions, compelling Laserhub and CheMondis to strengthen their commitment to costly, sales-driven initiatives.

Moreover, both companies’ customers also demand significant support and trust-building, given both the complexity of industrial procurement and the relative novelty of digital marketplaces. To address this requirement, Laserhub and CheMondis employ account managers and offer extensive phone support,

creating a high-touch service model. Though this approach strengthens customer confidence and engagement, it also increases onboarding and service costs.

To counterbalance these high-touch demands, both Laserhub and CheMondis have adopted GenAI to automate costly onboarding and support services. Laserhub, for example, scans, translates and responds to buyer email requests automatically, aligning with established procurement practices while reducing manual efforts. For CIOs and IS leaders, this illustrates how technologies like GenAI can gradually shift service models from high-touch to medium- or low-touch without sacrificing trust and reliability. At the same time, it underscores that managing sales teams and customer interactions requires robust CRM systems, which remain essential for sustaining customer relationships and scaling effectively.

In summary, our research found that B2B marketplaces thrive by focusing on physical selling and systematically adopting technology to reduce onboarding and support efforts. We therefore encourage managers striving to scale digital and low-touch B2B marketplaces to revisit their assumptions and adopt proven methods to drive down sales and service efforts.

B2B Platform Scaling Recommendations for CIOs and IS Leaders

The CheMondis and Laserhub cases highlight critical considerations for managers establishing, scaling or joining B2B marketplaces. As digital strategy increasingly converges with overall business strategy, CIOs and IS leaders are no longer solely technology enablers but active participants in shaping digital marketplace models from early-stage design and platform architecture to scaling operations and enabling future business. Based on our analyses of the CheMondis and Laserhub cases, we provide five recommendations for CIOs and IS leaders. The first two relate to effectively facilitating B2B marketplace scaling. The next two relate to driving and adapting a value-based development roadmap. The fifth relates to shaping digital business model choices.

30 For seminal research on accelerating platform growth from an incumbent perspective following an acquisition strategy, see Staub, N., Haki, K., Aier, S., Winter, R. and Magan, A. “Acquisition of Complementors as a Strategy for Evolving Digital Platform Ecosystems,” *MIS Quarterly Executive* (20:4), December 2021, pp. 237-258.

31 For information on strategies for balancing platform trade-offs, see Skog, D. A., Sandberg, J. and Wimelius, H. “How Spotify Balanced Trade-Offs in Pursuing Digital Platform Growth,” *MIS Quarterly Executive* (20:4), December 2021, pp. 259-274.

1. Prioritize Viable Functionality Over Network Effects and Hyper-Scaling

There are few successful cases of platform marketplaces. Most are B2C platforms (Amazon and Airbnb, for instance) and characterize the predominant platform narrative. However, managers and CIOs should be cautious when applying the familiar B2C scaling playbooks within B2B contexts. Our research shows that adopting sophisticated IT backbones designed for hyperscale without first showcasing viability and feasibility can lead to failure. Instead, managers and CIOs should first focus on enabling core functionality in B2B platforms that streamlines complex industrial transactions and procurement processes. We therefore recommend that CIOs and IS leaders should focus on resource stewardship and avoid the “build-it-all-now” approach. In prioritizing functionality, CIOs must promote lean, modular platforms and customer-centric problem solving over costly, high-burn investments in hyper-scale IT infrastructures.

2. Leverage Automation, Particularly GenAI, to Streamline High-Touch Services

B2B marketplaces aim to enable frictionless industrial procurement transactions. CIOs and IS leaders should view GenAI as a strategic tool to systematically reduce process frictions that limit B2B marketplace scaling. Both CheMondis and Laserhub leveraged GenAI to reduce friction, improve transaction reliability and free up human resources for higher-value tasks. In particular, their GenAI applications support the shift from medium- to low-touch service models by optimizing onboarding, support and sales outreach. For B2B marketplaces, the next frontier will involve using GenAI to enhance customer service operations. Both of the case companies are therefore aiming to automate the handling of service requests, including refunds, returns, payment-related issues, cancellations, disputes and invoice inaccuracies. CIOs should identify high-friction workflows in their B2B marketplaces where GenAI can add immediate value, while ensuring robust governance and alignment with business goals.

3. Define Your Development Roadmap Using Transaction Costs

The core value proposition of B2B marketplaces is the reduction of the significant transaction costs involved in industrial procurement, including search, negotiation, coordination, confirmation and enforcement costs. By analyzing these costs, CIOs and IS leaders can create actionable roadmaps that are truly aligned with the needs of industrial buyers and sellers but can also prevent costly but misaligned scaling or integration efforts. This focus is crucial. Though B2B and B2C marketplaces may share the basic principle of connecting buyers and sellers, their transaction cost drivers, and hence their value-creation logic, are profoundly different. To scale a B2B marketplace successfully, CIOs and responsible IS leaders must grasp this distinction and rigorously challenge any decision that defaults to better-known B2C blueprints. Overall, all actions taken should focus on addressing the high-complexity, trust-based challenges of industrial procurement, rather than merely mimicking a B2C blueprint.

4. Dynamically Prioritize Marketplace Features to Adapt to Market Shifts

Our cases demonstrate that B2B marketplaces frequently encounter an imbalance in early user acquisition. In a B2B context, most participants are more concerned with whom they buy from than whom they sell to. However, prioritizing or subsidizing buyers may not always be fruitful. In fact, complex industrial supply chains and global trade networks may be influenced by other dynamics, which articulate a more nuanced perspective on whom to focus on and when. This means that CIOs and IS leaders should design flexible systems and address shifting market dynamics promptly. For example, a supply chain disruption may favor supplier diversity and resilience, requiring different data access, visibility and support tools. CIOs should therefore act carefully yet decisively to accommodate such changes and dynamically (re) prioritize feature development to respond with targeted data insights and workflows that match the evolving needs of buyers or suppliers.

5. Assess the IT Challenges of Becoming the Contracting Party

By positioning themselves as the contracting party, B2B marketplaces have great potential to simplify and replace complex many-to-many buyer-supplier relationships with one-to-one relationships (buyer with marketplace and marketplace with seller). Acting as the contracting party reduces administrative burdens and improves transactional efficiency. However, when a B2B marketplace taps into financial, logistics or legal services, activities such as invoicing, tax handling, credit checks, regulatory compliance and legal documentation must be automated and facilitated by IT. Ultimately, becoming the contracting party is first and foremost an IT challenge that involves designing and implementing processes, systems and workflows. CIOs must therefore ensure there are end-to-end digital processes that provide transaction traceability, policy enforcement and compliance, as well as operational transparency. It falls to IS leadership to assess whether the fundamental business model decision of becoming the contracting party can be achieved at sustainable cost and risk through appropriate technology and automation.

Concluding Comments

Establishing and scaling a B2B marketplace in a traditional industry is a challenging endeavor. Yet, given the growing digital maturity of industrial companies and their ever-increasing need to enhance efficiency, it is an endeavor worthwhile pursuing. In particular, B2B marketplaces offering industry-specific services and deep market expertise hold great promise for navigating today's turbulent environment of geopolitical tensions and trade tariffs in which the rules of industrial procurement are being rewritten. However, most B2B marketplaces in traditional industries fail to gain traction as many managers fail to overcome the three latent traps: overextension, rigidity and illusion.

The root cause of failure is managers relying on copying better-known B2C platform scaling playbooks and thus overlooking the distinct nuances of B2B procurement. To guide managers in scaling B2B marketplaces effectively, we have provided recommendations for overcoming

these B2B marketplace traps. They emphasize the importance of maintaining a viable focus, the need for deliberate product development and driving thoughtful automation in a domain where physical sales and services remain essential.

In summary, our research shows that CIOs should derive B2B platform scaling strategies from the fundamental economics of industrial procurement transactions rather than focusing on superficial B2C analogies, and should strategically leverage technologies like GenAI to facilitate low-touch services, thus enabling efficient digital scaling.

Appendix A: Research Methodology

This case study research³² is based on two years of fieldwork, including interactions with the two case companies, CheMondis and Laserhub. The fieldwork took place between October 2022 and November 2024, as we accompanied both of these B2B marketplaces in their scaling efforts.³³ As a result, our analysis and the details provided reflect the companies as of 2024.

Our research involved iterative engagement with shareholders and key stakeholders at the highest level of both companies.³⁴ Unlike other studies reported in *MIS Quarterly Executive* articles, these stakeholders do not hold formal CIO or IS leadership titles. However, in the context of digital native organizations such as CheMondis and Laserhub, responsibilities typically associated with CIOs or IS leaders, such as IT system integration, oversight of large development teams and strategic decision making on IT infrastructure and scalability, are often concentrated at the top executive level. These executives therefore act as both strategists and IS leaders responsible for digital infrastructure, integration and scalability.

Additionally, as both the CheMondis and Laserhub marketplaces faced significant industry skepticism, we were able to access extensive

32 See Yin, R. K. *Case Study Research, Design and Methods* (6th ed.), Sage Publications, 2018.

33 See Langley, A. "Strategies for Theorizing from Process Data," *Academy of Management Review* (24:4), October 1999, pp. 691-710.

34 For more information, see Junglas, I. "Building a Highway Where Research Shapes and is Shaped by Practice," *MIS Quarterly Executive* (23:2), June 2024, pp. iii-vi.

Table A1: Overview of Data Sources

Chemondis				Laserhub		
	No. of sources	Expert	Length	No. of sources	Expert	Length
Context	4	Founder	220 min	3	Founder & CEO	110 min
	2	CEO	95 min	2	Founder & CEO	95 min
				2	Senior Manager	60 min
In-Depth Discussion	1	Founder	300 min	1	Founder & CEO	20 min
Total	7		615 min	8		360 min
Additional Data Sources						
Blog Entries	22	CheMondis guide articles		56	Platform and functionality	
	12	Trends and analysis articles		22	Technology knowledge	
	26	Product Update articles				
Results Validation						
In-Depth Discussion	2	CDO (industrial product company, over 100,000 employees)				30 min
	1	CTO (industrial product company, over 10,000 employees)				60 min
	1	CTO (venture-capital backed B2B marketplace)				60 min

informational material (e.g., blog entries, release notes, technology and trend reports) on their marketplace and value propositions. We also analyzed publicly available materials, including interviews, blog entries and company reports. These data sources provided comprehensive insights into the platforms' technical development, procurement logic and the broader industry context.

Finally, to prevent ex post rationalization, we validated our findings through in-depth discussions with three senior executives (CDO/CTO level) from large industrial product companies and from another B2B marketplace. These discussions confirmed the practical relevance of the identified traps, with the executives explicitly emphasizing our transaction process anchoring. Table A1 summarizes our data sources.

Appendix B: Screenshots Illustrating the CheMondis Buying Process

The following three screenshots illustrate the process when buyers log in to <https://chemondis.com>. Buyers in search of a specific chemical substance post an open request by filling out a standardized request form to specify their needs (Figure B1). Alternatively, the CheMondis marketplace offers special deals for certain chemical substances. Buyers can profit from these special deals with a few clicks (Figure B2). If buyers prefer to buy several substances from one particular supplier (bulk purchasing), they can use suppliers' designated brand shops and select the required substances (Figure B3).

Figure B1: Post Open Request

**CheMondis**

Search

Dashboard

Request Assistant

Find suitable Products and contact interesting Suppliers

Status

2 Conversations

Sourcing Preferences

You can add and edit your Sourcing Preferences to most of our Suppliers

+ Add Substance

Your account manager

Do you have any questions? Do not hesitate to contact your account manager for support.

Inbox

Special Deals

Brands

MW

Get support

Post Open Request

×

Reach out to potential suppliers by posting an Open Request. Your company information will be added automatically and Suppliers will be able to review your request and make offers.

Product / Substance / CAS no.

Enter product, substance, CAS no. ...

Grade

Select grade

▼

If you are uncertain, select technical grade

Volume

0,00

kg

Kilograms

▼

Incoterm 2020

Select Incoterm

▼

Need help picking an Incoterm? [Use our Incoterms Assistant.](#)

Final destination country

Select country

▼

Preferred packaging

Select packaging

▼

Packaging size – Optional

0,00

kg

Kilograms

▼

Expected annual demand

0,00

kg

Kilograms

▼

Let the supplier know how much you intend to purchase in the next year.

Requested delivery date

0,00

kg

Kilograms

▼

Start Messaging Now

Post Now

Figure B2: Accessing Special Deals

[Dashboard](#)
[Inbox](#)
[Special Deals](#)
[Brands](#)

Special Deals

Deals 35
My Open Requests 0

Chemicals Inc.
14:07 PM

Special Deal

Deal valid until March 31, 2025

Potassium Carbonate

Potassium Carbonate - CAS: 584-08-7

Volume	80.000,00 kg
Pickup price	128.800,00 EUR total 1,61 EUR per kg
Incoterm	FCA Berlin, Spain
Packaging	Bag

Chemicals Inc.
2025 at 03:02 PM

Special Deal

Deal valid until March 31, 2025

LIGNORIND TYPE 1

Post Open Quote Request

Reach out to potential suppliers by posting an Open Request. Your company information will be added automatically and Suppliers will be able to review your request and make offers.

Product / Substance / CAS no.

Grade

If you are uncertain, select technical grade

Volume

Incoterm 2020

Need help picking an Incoterm? [Use our Incoterms Assistant.](#)

Final destination country

Preferred packaging

Figure B3: Bulk Purchasing Through a Supplier's Brand Shop

The screenshot displays the CheMondis platform interface for a supplier's brand shop. The header includes the CheMondis logo, a search bar, and navigation links: Saved, Dashboard, Inbox, Special Deals, Brands, and a user profile (MW). The main content area is titled "Chemicals Inc." with a green checkmark and a "Copy Link" button. Below this, there are icons for a storefront and a message button. The "Overview" tab is selected, showing "All Products" with a search bar. A filter sidebar on the left includes a toggle for "Products delivered to my locations" and several dropdown menus: DELIVERY COUNTRIES, Quantity, Industry, Product group, Substances, Incoterm, Colors, and Packaging type. The main product list shows "All 23362 products" with pagination (1 of 50). Three product cards are visible: Fructose (CAS: 7660-25-5), (+)-Camphor (CAS: 464-49-3), and Inulin (CAS: 9005-80-5). Each card displays product details like purity, grade, appearance, and order quantity, along with buttons for "Add to requests" and "Message".

Appendix C: Screenshots Illustrating the Laserhub Buying Process

The following four screenshots illustrate the buying process when buyers log in to <https://app.laserhub.com/product/-sheet>. Starting a new quote requires the buyer to select the specific part type (i.e., sheet metal and tube or CNC machining) and upload a CAD file of the part to be manufactured. For demonstration purposes, buyers can also select preconfigured CAD test files (Figure C1). Next, Laserhub lists the respective metal parts, including their material type, quantity and thickness, and allows the buyer to specify additional requirements. Laserhub also processes and verifies each CAD file and flags designs that need correction or more specification (Figure C2). To simplify file corrections and prevent further mistakes during the correction, Laserhub provides a recommendation and proposes predefined configurations for each metal part (Figure C3). Finally, Laserhub processes all information and calculates the price and provides a preferred delivery date (Figure C4).

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Figure C1: Starting a New Quote

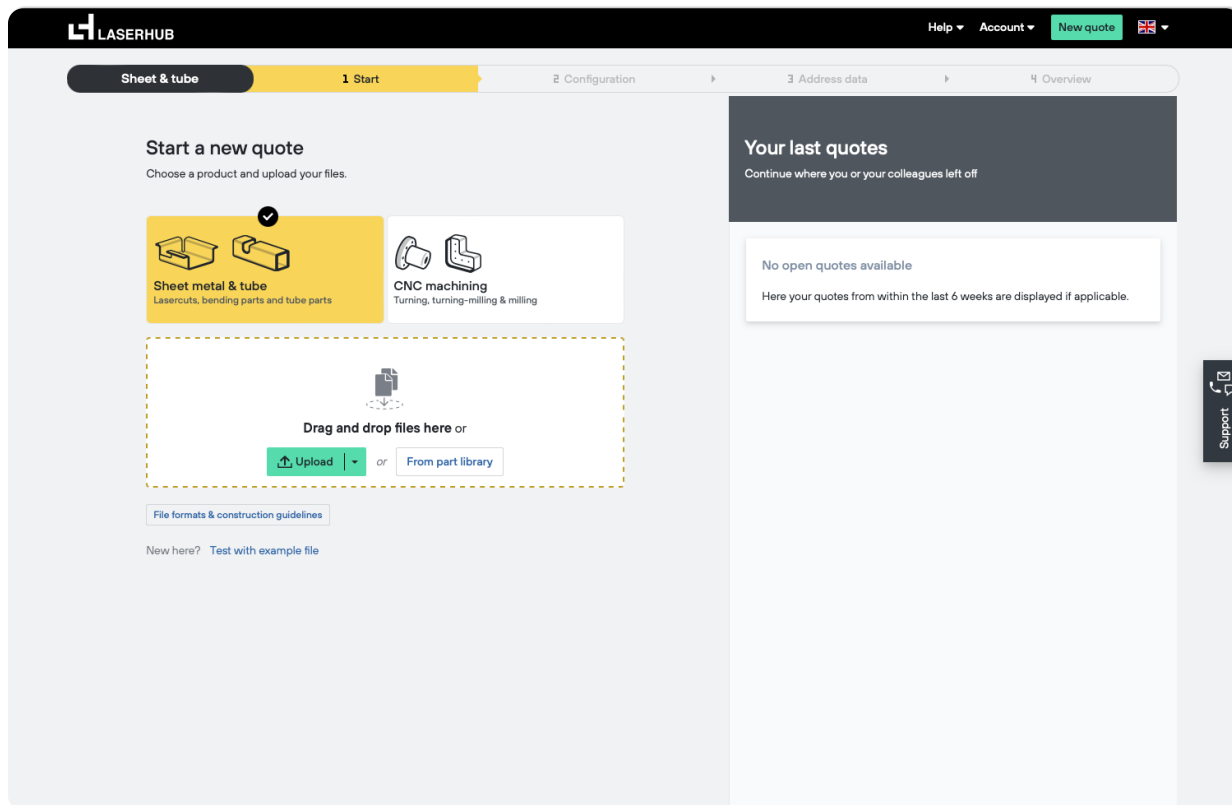


Figure C2: Shopping Cart Overview

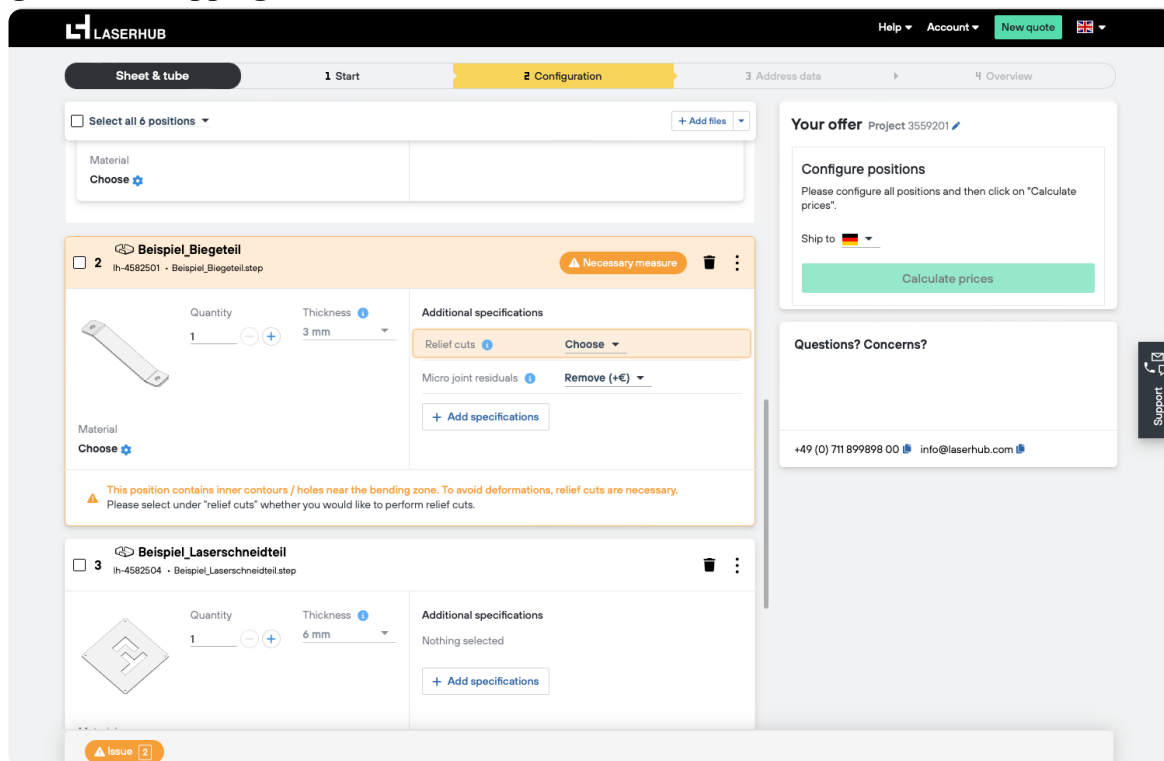


Figure C3: Recommendation and Proposed Predefined Configurations

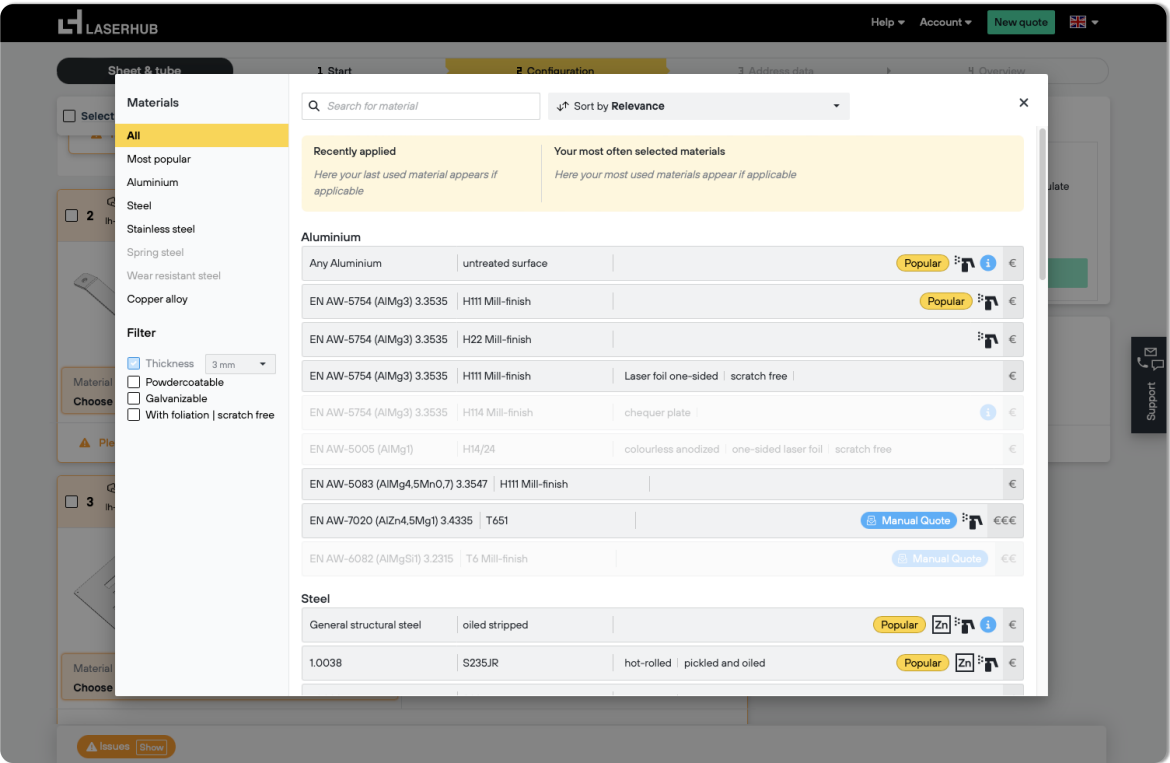


Figure C4: Price and Delivery Date

