Relewise

The B2B Personalization Playbook

Proven growth tactics for B2B E-commerce managers in 2025

Introduction

As a B2B professional, you know your customers expect **more** than just quality products. They want seamless, tailored shopping experiences that truly understand their contexts and anticipate their needs.

Delivering this kind of personalization isn't just an advantage—**it's a necessity**. Yet, bridging the gap between generic interactions and hyper-relevant experiences remains a challenge for many businesses like yours.

In this playbook, we'll guide you through **proven personalization strategies** that can transform your customer journey, boost conversions, and foster lasting loyalty. You'll discover how to optimize search, deliver tailored recommendations, and increase engagement—all with practical steps you can apply to your specific setup.

We'll finish by showing you how these techniques have helped industry leaders like **Ahlsell**, **EET Group**, and **Juuls** propel their B2B e-commerce forward.

I hope you enjoy your read!

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What's holding B2B E-commerce back?

B2B e-commerce faces several well-known challenges in optimizing user experience on their sites. To understand why many B2B businesses struggle with personalization, let's first look at the key challenges that stand in their way.

Complex product catalogs and difficult product discovery

B2B catalogs often contain **vast numbers of products with technical specifications**. For instance, Ahlsell manages over 430,000 items, while EET Group handles 1.8 million active items across 1000+ brands. This **complexity** can overwhelm buyers, making it challenging to find the exact products they need.

Lack of personalized experiences

Even with access to extensive customer data, many B2B companies struggle to provide personalized experiences. This gap leads to **generic interactions** that fail to meet the specific needs of individual buyers or their organizations.

Inefficient search functionality

Poor search capabilities can **cause frustration and lost sales**. 80% of B2B buyers have switched suppliers because their services didn't meet buyer expectations, according to Accenture. This results in billions of euros in **lost revenue** for retailers each year.

Challenges in managing multiple user roles within organizations

B2B purchases often involve multiple stakeholders, each with unique roles and behaviors. The experience must be tailored to **adapt to organizational behavior** as a whole while simultaneously considering the unique needs of individual users. For many B2B companies, translating this understanding of their customer base into their e-commerce strategy remains a significant challenge.

Inability to leverage data for targeted marketing and insights

It's also a challenge for many B2B companies to convert their data it into **actionable insights that can be capitalized** on. This challenge limits their ability to deliver targeted marketing and enhance their offerings over time—for instance, through **retail media efforts**, which have been shown to achieve a 90% profit margin.

How these challenges affect business outcomes

Being aware of these challenges, what could be the potential consequences of not addressing them?
Let's take a closer look at how each one impacts your bottom line.

Lost revenue due to unsuccessful searches

Inefficient search functionality directly impacts the bottom line. When buyers can't find what they're looking for, they're likely to abandon their purchase.

Missed opportunities for upselling and cross-selling

Without personalized recommendations, B2B companies miss out on opportunities to suggest complementary products or upgrades, limiting their potential for revenue growth.

Decreased customer satisfaction and loyalty

A frustrating buying experience can erode customer satisfaction and loyalty. This can lead to lost business and damaged relationships.

So, what are some concrete steps you can take to address these challenges?
Let's look at it in the following chapters!

Pillars of personalization that drive efficiency in B2B e-commerce

Showing your customers you know them - deeply!

Getting the right foundation

B2B e-commerce businesses often have **extensive customer data** at their fingertips, yet many struggle to turn that information into personalized experiences. This disconnect leads to generic, one-size-fits-all interactions that don't address the specific needs of individual buyers or their organizations.

Combining behavioral and historical data is your gateway to bypass this. By analyzing individual user behavior —across both online and offline channels —you gain the deep insights needed to tailor offerings precisely to your customers' needs, being well on the way to overcoming the personalization challenges we discussed in the previous chapter.

For example, at first, a user from a particular industry may see recommendations influenced by that industry classification. But the more they interact with the site, what they're presented with will **shift to reflect** their specific browsing habits, purchases, and even the needs of their particular context, like a project or company.

This adaptation must happen **in real-time**, dynamically reflecting your customers' changing needs and preferences, to facilitate an even more efficient buyer journey.

What kind of data do you need?

Behavioral data and **order data** are the two most **important data sources** for personalized B2B e-commerce experiences.

Behavioral data

provides insights into customer engagement patterns, which are a crucial foundation for understanding preferences and intent.

Order data

can be sourced from platforms like ERP systems. It provides valuable insight into purchasing patterns of various customers and segments

To effectively reflect the complexity of B2B personalization, ERP data is a must. Without it, personalization efforts will struggle with accounting for the complexities that define B2B operations, such as dynamic pricing structures, role-specific access, and contract-driven product catalogs.

CRM and product data integrations compliment this by adding granularity, which further refines and enhances personalization.

In B2B, ERP data is of vital importance

B2B ERP systems contain order history, customer contracts, and pricing information,

Different customers often have unique **contracts** that **dictate access** to specific product catalogs, customized pricing, and tailored purchasing conditions.

These details, governed by the ERP, must integrate into personalization engines. This ensures that customers are only presented products they are **authorized to purchase**, both in search and recommendations.

You can also add CRM data, which helps give an understanding of customer backgrounds and interactions and enable deep segmentation and cross-channel campaign activation...

...and product data that adds another detailed and accurate dimension to product recommendations

What about the heavily regulated industries?

For some businesses, **regulations may dictate** who can buy certain products or what items can be purchased together.

In critical industries, such as healthcare, incorrect product recommendations could have **severe consequences**. These restrictions must be integrated into the **data models** to ensure recommendations comply with legal and safety requirements.

How to make it happen

1   **Define your goals clearly**. Map your data and make sure you have what's needed. Then, develop a step-by-step plan to activate your data, gradually progressing toward your end goal.

2   Create an **overview of your touchpoints** and carefully analyze whether the data you have aligns with your vision for each touchpoint. Ensuring the right data is available is essential for creating seamless, impactful experiences.

3   **Make use of technologies**, like search and personalization platforms, that can factor in the above, analyze, and then respond instantly to current actions while considering historical behavior.

Building tailored product recommendations that *actually* work

With the robust data foundation we just established, you can deliver highly personalized product recommendations that tap into the exact context of each buyer, showing them items that are relevant to both their role and projects.
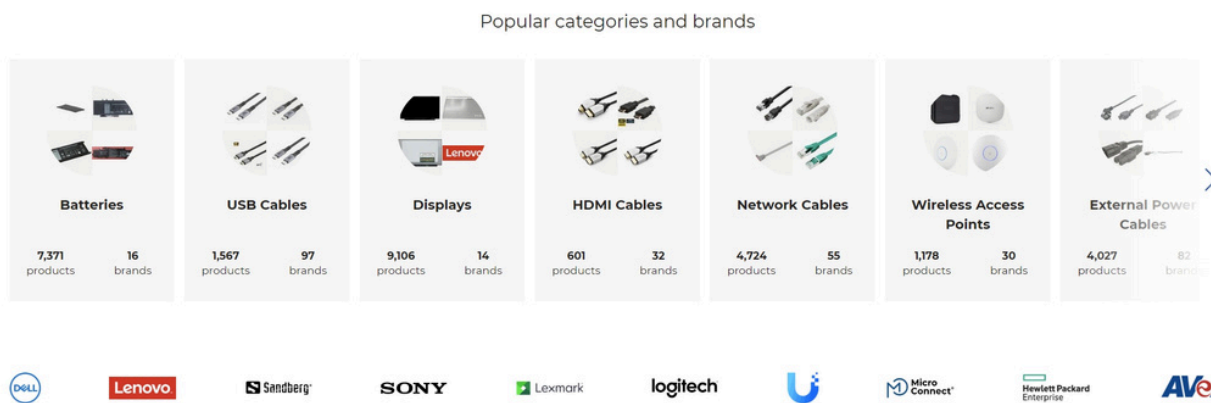
Analyzing their customer behavior, EET saw how recommending popular categories and brands on the front page before logging in makes more sense than highlighting popular products. Not knowing a user's identity because they aren't logged in makes it challenging to provide precise item recommendations, making **categories and brands more inspirational**.
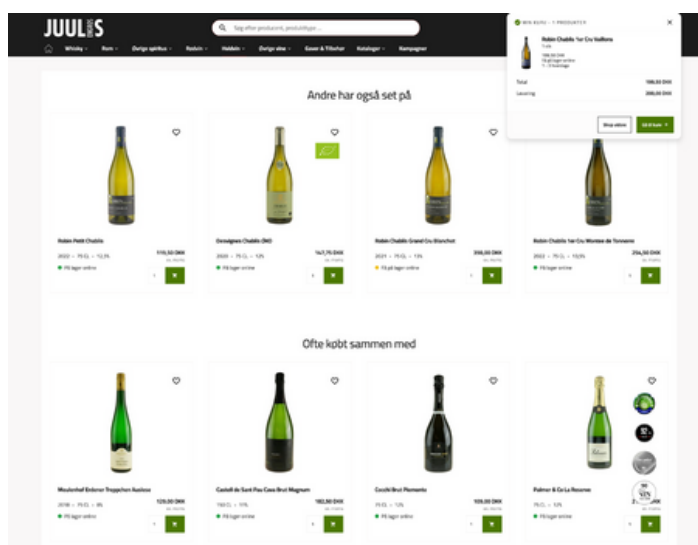
Juuls know that their customers often purchase wines for **entire menus at a time**. By adding a *Purchased with Product* recommendation on the PDP, they now show related items that effectively **enhance upselling and cross-selling opportunities** in connection to the product the customer is currently viewing.

Strategically placing recommendations demonstrates the **value of understanding customer intentions** and offering relevant solutions, enhancing the buying experience while driving additional revenue

Implementing advanced search capabilities

Understanding complex naming conventions

B2B product catalogs can be overwhelming. With product catalogs full of technical specifications, part numbers, and industry jargon, it's easy for buyers to get lost.

It is essential to develop search functions **capable of processing technical product names, specifications, and attributes**. This requires a robust search platform that can interpret industry-specific terminology.

For example, Ahlsell implemented a search function that understands this, enabling customers to find products using partial information or trade lingo.

Don't just set and forget your search system. Track unsuccessful searches, gather feedback, and use that data to refine your search algorithm over time. This ensures your search tool is always improving.

How to make it happen

1 Start by **listing common naming conventions** and technical terms specific to your industry.

2 Work with subject matter experts to ensure your search function **recognizes all the right terminology.**

3 Make sure to keep your **reference list regularly updated**, adding new terms to maintain an effective search functionality

Tailoring search results with contextual relevance

To make search results **contextually relevant**, they must be automatically influenced by their past purchases, specific projects, and preferences, for example, by using data from the ERP we mentioned earlier. The experience should also evolve, reflecting your customers' **changing needs and expectations.**

Imagine a buyer from the engineering sector searching for a part. They likely don't want to sift through unrelated products — they want **search results that match their specific project.** Filters and relevance modifiers can ensure your search results are contextual and tailored, making the process of finding relevant items faster and more efficient.

Remember

Mobile responsiveness is a need-to-have in B2B

More and more B2B buyers are shopping on their phones. On such a small screen, showing search results with utmost relevance first is an opportunity you cannot miss. If your site is not optimized for mobile, it's time to make that a priority.

How to make it happen

1 Make sure to activate your behavioral data, using it to **spot trends in search patterns and product preferences.**

2 Use machine learning to **constantly improve search relevance**. The more you learn from your users, the smarter your system becomes.

3 **Highlight previously purchased products in your search results**. As B2B buyers often have repeat purchases, it helps to enhance the buying experience by streamlining the ordering process.

Personalization for multiple users within the same company

In B2B e-commerce, purchases aren't usually made by a single person. Instead, there are **multiple stakeholders involved**, each with their own role and set of requirements. The shopping behaviors of these stakeholders can differ drastically. Ignoring these differences results in a generic experience that frustrates users and complicates the buying process.

Alongside individual preference, advanced personalization must also consider the **behaviors of colleagues**, including the specific department or project where these actions come from. This is essential for B2B, where a purchase might involve various decision-makers with unique needs but still requires a unified experience for the organization.

Personalizing the experience for multiple users within the same company is key to solving this challenge.
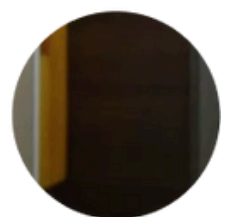
How to make it happen

1 Make sure your user profile system captures **individual preferences and role-based needs**.

2 Implement **hierarchical permission structures**, so users only see information that's relevant to them, whether that's pricing, product availability, or specific project requirements.

3 Alongside individual needs, make sure to consider the **behavior of colleagues where relevant** to ensure personalization also aligns with workplace habits.

If a coworker frequently orders a specific type of notebook for the office, those notebooks are likely relevant to you as well.

Highlighting or boosting items in search results that have been known to be relevant to coworkers ensures the **personalization aligns with workplace habits**, making the experience more efficient.

Turning your website traffic into business gold

So far, we've explored effectively leveraging your existing data to improve the shopping experience and boost site conversions. But there's still **additional value waiting to be realized**.

B2B companies invest significant resources in **driving traffic**—this investment can be turned into actionable business opportunities with formidable payoffs. As you optimize the personalization of your site, you'll uncover new opportunities for monetizing your traffic.

One of the most lucrative ways to do this is through **retail media**. By using the data from your e-commerce platform as your foundation, you can offer targeted advertising opportunities to suppliers or partners. Because your **first-party data** gives you deep insights into your customers, the advertising opportunities you can offer are highly personalized, standing out significantly from other types of advertising.

In other words, you're turning your **traffic into a new revenue** stream. And with **profit margins reaching as high as 90%,** it's a revenue opportunity too good to pass up.

How retail media works

Niche audience access: B2B platforms provides access to a niche, high-value audience that can otherwise be difficult for your suppliers, now your advertisers, to reach

Intent-rich environment: Unlike other ad spaces, customers on B2B platforms are actively seeking products or services, making your platform an ideal place and perfect moment for advertisers to influence purchase decisions.

Hyper-personalized targeting: You've got rich, first-party data at your fingertips, meaning you can serve highly targeted ads that factor in the nuances of the context of your customer. These ads are thus far more likely to convert than generic advertising.
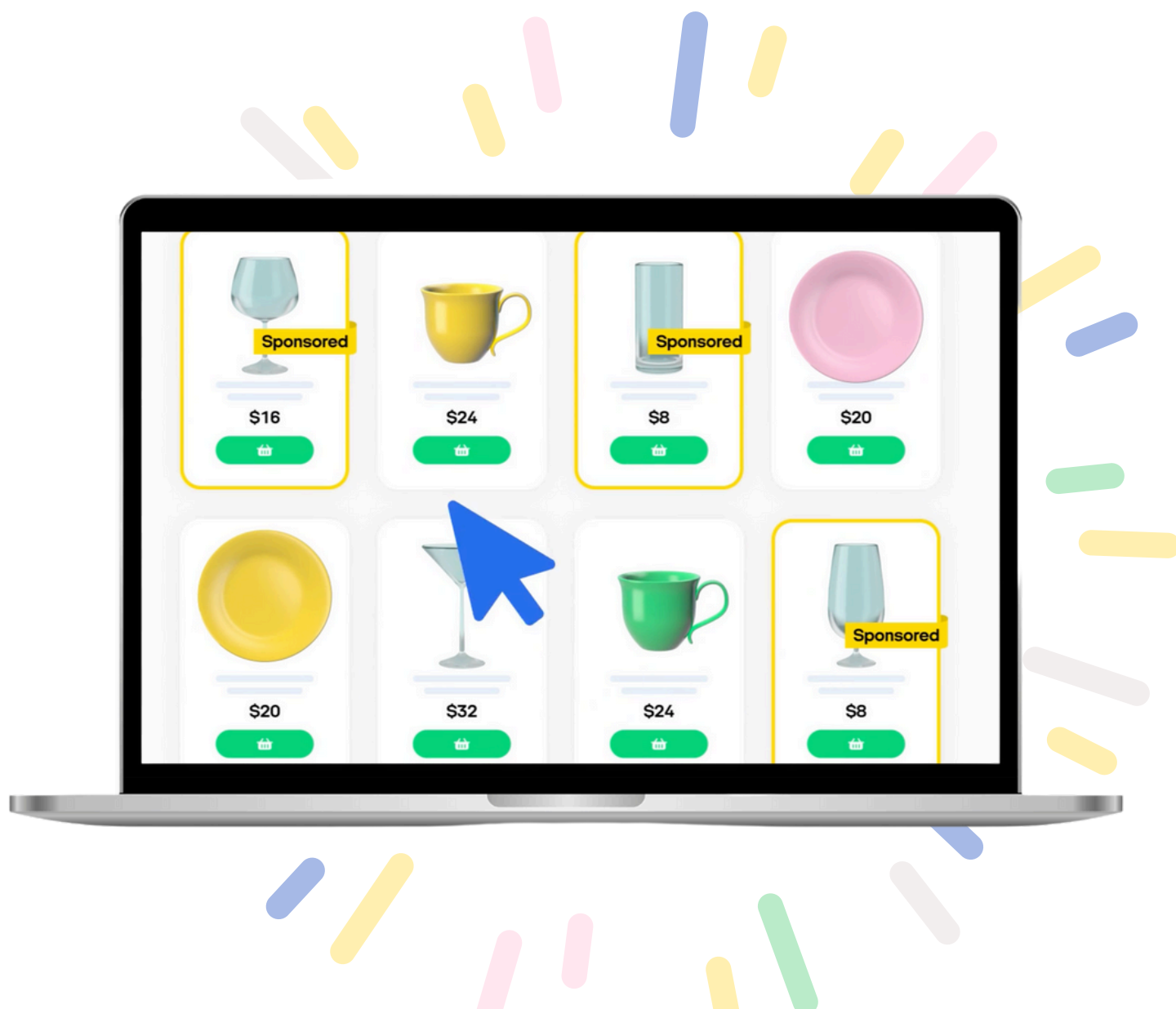
How to make it happen

1 Design a **clear retail media plan** for your suppliers that outlines ad formats, targeting options, and pricing.

2 **Contact key suppliers to introduce your retail media program**. Present your payment term options and negotiate terms, such as direct billing, trade credit, or alternatives like product discounts.

3 Set up a **system to run and manage** your ad campaigns. Share detailed performance reports with suppliers to highlight ROI.

How companies have used Relewise to implement the above:
Real-world success stories

ahlsell

Managing complex search to improve customer loyalty and conversions

Ahlsell, the largest technical distributor in the Nordics, faced challenges with its extensive product catalog of over 430,000 items. To improve product discovery and enhance customer satisfaction, they implemented a personalized search solution that understood complex naming conventions.

Key improvements

- Integrated an advanced search solution developed on the Relewise platform, which understands complex product naming conventions and allows users to search by product number, name, and size.
- Enhanced the search experience by incorporating and leveraging user behavior tracking, which continuously improves search results based on past interactions.

Pain points:

▶ Complex product catalogs

▶ Inefficient search functionality

Impact:

▶ Time spent on product searches **reduced by 50%**

Read the full case here ★

Results

Customers find what they need in half the time

Service levels improved across online and physical stores

Increased customer loyalty and repeat purchases

![eet logo]

Strategically placing personalized recommendations to enhance engagement

EET Group, a global IT distributor with over 1.8 million products and 1,000+ brands, faced difficulty in providing personalized experiences for their 30,000 B2B customers. By integrating online and offline data, they were able to offer highly relevant, personalized product recommendations.

Key improvements

- Integrated personalized product recommendations, such as "Recently Viewed Products" on the homepage, and positioned "Products Viewed After Viewing Product" on the product detail pages (PDP), considering the distinct B2B shopping journey.
- Developed personalized category and product recommendations to enhance the shopping experience, utilizing Relewise to integrate both offline and online data.

Pain points:

▶ Lack of personalized experiences

▶ Underutilized data for targeted marketing

Impact:

▶ Up to 50% of orders influenced by personalized recommendations

Read the full case here ★

Results

Around 30% of orders across all markets included items from "Recently Viewed Products"

13% of orders were influenced by "Products Viewed After Viewing Product" recommendations

Enhanced customer engagement with a more personalized, B2C-like experience

JUUL'S
VIN OG SPIRITUS A/S

Building B2B e-commerce from scratch in a traditional industry

Historically reliant on personal relationships and skilled salespeople, the company saw a need to integrate personalized, seamless experiences into their brand new, online B2B platforms. By leveraging Relewise to dynamically manage contract-specific pricing, advanced search functionality, and tailored recommendations, Juuls now delivers consumer-grade B2B experiences—personalized and intuitive—without sacrificing the complexity required by their professional buyers.

Key improvements

- When logged in, B2B customers can now view tailored discounts and promotions directly within product pages and search results, reducing dependency on sales teams.
- Their search platform handles industry-specific terms, vague queries, and personalizes based on context , such as specific flavors or food pairings, delivering relevant results for professional buyers.
- Tailored recommendations ensure that Juuls' B2B customers can more easily discover relevant pairings and new products.

Pain points:

▶ Inefficient search functionality

▶ Lack of personalized experiences

Impact:

▶ Online sales grew from 2.3% in 2018 to 30% in 2024

Read the full case here ★

Results

30% of total revenue now comes from online channels, reflecting significant growth without affecting online sales

Search functionality improved decision-making efficiency for professional buyers

Customer engagement and average order values increrased through personalized recommendations and contextual insights.

Wrapping up

Curious to know what this could look like in your e-commerce?

Thank you for taking the time to read our B2B personalization playbook!

We hope you've gained valuable insights to improve the experiences you deliver to your B2B buyers. Through advanced search, personalized recommendations, and intelligent segmentation, you will be effectively activating your data, not only meeting but **surpassing customer expectations**, driving loyalty, conversions, and sustainable growth.

However, we understand that every business has unique needs.

Our team brings extensive experience to evaluate your current framework and provide actionable, qualified recommendations to help you increase conversions and create more personalized customer journeys.

So, don't hesitate to reach out! We'd be happy to review your setup and share our ideas with you!

Book a consultation

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Who is Relewise?

About

Relewise is a personalization and search platform designed to process large-scale, complex data efficiently, handling the unique demands of B2B e-commerce.

Founded in 2020, Relewise has grown quickly and we are proud to work with a diverse range of large and influential clients today.

Integrations

Born headless and API-first, Relewise is built to integrate with any platform to create outstanding customer experiences. We have your back, no matter the platform you are on or the technology stack you use.

Learn more 👁

Partners

We have a diverse portfolio of implementation partners, each specializing in distinct fields and delivering robust, comprehensive business solutions.

Learn more 👁
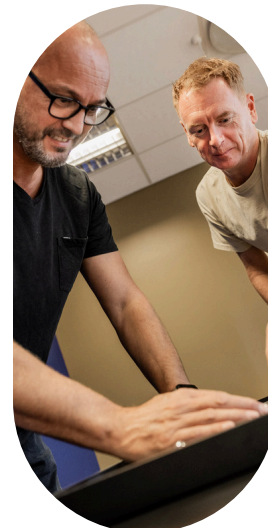
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Don't be shy. Get in touch