

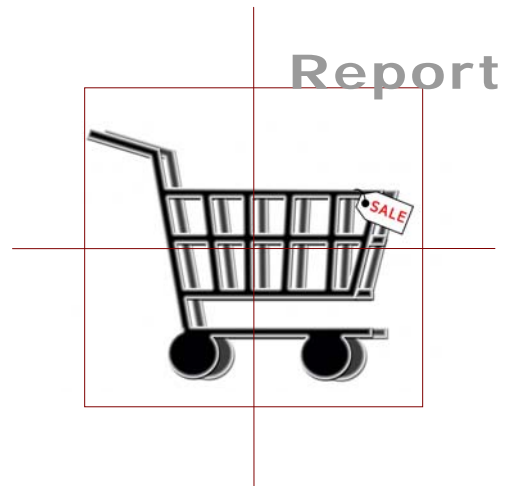
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## **NORWEGIAN SME: USING E-MARKETPLACES AS A SALES TOOL TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS**

Idar Haugnes and Bjørn Borg Kjølseth  
eMarket Services,  
Innovation Norway/Norstella

[www.emarketservices.com](http://www.emarketservices.com)

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## Summary

This document contains the results of a survey on the use of electronic marketplaces that was conducted by NorStella and Innovation Norway. The study focused on the experience of small and medium sized companies' use of e-marketplaces as a sales and marketing tool towards international customers.

This study has gathered the experience of 21 Norwegian companies that use e-marketplaces to sell to international customers. On average the participating companies sell less than 5% of their products/services through the e-marketplace, but companies that sell products/services that are suitable for the international market sell a larger share through the electronic marketplaces.

The report shows that e-marketplaces are mainly used as a marketing tool and to deliver offers. The companies present themselves by being listed along with other companies that deliver the same kind of products/services.

Many of the participating companies feel that the e-marketplaces do not give them sufficient possibilities to present them as well as they wanted, and a major challenge for them is the desire to meet with the customers in a more personal contact.

Companies are selected to deliver an offer (Request for Quote, RFQ) or contact potential customers themselves after having identified an opportunity. After identification of the sales possibility the company will follow-up by using traditional channels (telephone or meeting) or by sending out more information (e-mail, refer to information found on the company homepage or by post).

The participating companies either see the e-marketplaces as a way of selling to existing customers after having been requested to join the marketplace by the existing customer – or they see the marketplace as a marketing channel to find new customers. Companies that use the e-marketplace as a marketing channel do so because they see them as effective, while companies that sell to existing companies via this channel do not see that they reduce costs or simplify the sales process. This was also confirmed by the free comments that were given in addition to the listed answer alternatives in the survey.

Only a minority of the companies say that electronic marketplaces are used as a part of an overall strategy.

The report shows that 64% of the companies have had increased sales during the last year through the e-marketplace, and 84% of the asked companies have – or expect to have – an improved result.

86% of the companies say that they will continue to use e-marketplaces as a sales and marketing channel.

## Conclusion

Previous studies have shown that only a small number of companies, about 2-3% of the European small and medium sized enterprises (SME) use e-marketplaces as a sales and marketing channel<sup>1</sup>.

Our study shows that e-marketplaces is an interesting sales- and marketing channel towards new markets and customers and that companies that are using e-marketplaces see an increased turnover combined with a better result and therefore want to continue using them.

An unexpected result of the study is that companies that have been requested to start using e-marketplaces by existing customers and sell to these customers, do not see that the e-marketplace makes the sales process more efficient. This contradicts other case studies and could be an interesting topic for a new study.

A challenge for the e-marketplaces is to address the problems that companies have in presenting themselves well enough for potential customers, and that this problem also causes some of the companies to find the e-marketplaces difficult to use.

The combination of being little used (2-3% of the European SME), but at the same time giving positive results (84% of the respondents in this study) and desire for continued use (86% of the respondents) tells us that SME's need more information about available e-marketplaces and how they can be used.

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<sup>1</sup> The European e-business report, 2004 Edition", e-business W@tch.  
[http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/key\\_reports/documents/EBR04.pdf](http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/key_reports/documents/EBR04.pdf)

See also other report by eMarket Services  
[http://www.emarketservices.com/start/Knowledge/E\\_business\\_Issues/index.html](http://www.emarketservices.com/start/Knowledge/E_business_Issues/index.html)

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## 1. Document information

### 1.2 Working group

The work presented in this document was done by Viggo Smestad (Innovation Norway), Bjørn Borg Kjølseth (AlphaBit Data, [www.alphabit.no](http://www.alphabit.no)) and Idar Haugnes (EdiSys, [www.edisys.no](http://www.edisys.no)), on behalf of NorStella and Innovation Norway.

### 1.3 Contact information

For more information or questions, please contact

**Arild Haraldsen**

[arild.haraldsen@norstella.no](mailto:arild.haraldsen@norstella.no)

**Viggo Smedstad**

[viggo.smestad@invanor.no](mailto:viggo.smestad@invanor.no)

**NorStella**

C. J. Hambros plass 2C  
N-0164 Oslo

**Innovasjon Norge**

Pb 448 Sentrum  
N-0104 Oslo

Tel: +47 22 99 61 00

[www.norstella.no](http://www.norstella.no)

Tel: +47 22 00 25 00

[www.innovasjon norge.no](http://www.innovasjon norge.no)

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## 2. Background

Innovation Norway and NorStella both have as one of their goals to increase the use of electronic marketplaces. Both organisations felt the need for increased knowledge on the use of such marketplaces and agreed to carry out a joint study. Innovation Norway is among other activities active in an international cooperation effort, eMarket Services, that offers a directory of global e-marketplaces.

In order to collect knowledge it was agreed that a limited survey should be conducted on the use of e-marketplaces.

## 3. Problem areas

While NorStella has a wide focus when it comes to the use of e-marketplaces, Innovation Norway primarily focuses on the small and medium sized enterprises (SME) and their sales to international customers. The study has primarily used the focus of Innovation Norway. We wanted, as the questions in the survey show, to study why companies use e-marketplaces, their experiences and their results, and what the companies would do in the future regarding e-marketplaces.

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## 4. Method

We considered different methods to conduct the study, and decided to use a questionnaire. We assumed that this would give us the best result given the time we had available. An interview survey would have required larger resources. We carried out the survey by using an online questionnaire developed using Questback. It contained 19 questions. The first three were used to identify the participants. We limited the number of questions so that the survey would not be too extensive and thus prevent companies from answering.

## 5. Selection

This survey had as its aim to analyse the experience of Norwegian SMEs that sell products and services to international buyers through an e-marketplace.

In order to find the companies, we started with a selection from the eMarketServices directory of available e-marketplaces ([www.emarketservices.com](http://www.emarketservices.com)). The selection was done randomly, but with the limitation that we were looking for e-marketplaces that we assumed had Norwegian suppliers that were targeting customers outside of Norway. In this way we were able to identify 18 e-marketplaces.

In order to find the selling companies that use the e-marketplaces, we either contacted the e-marketplace and asked for suitable companies or we used reference lists that were available on the e-marketplace. The selling companies were then selected randomly.

Some of these e-marketplaces were not able to give us the contact details of the companies due to confidentiality or due to other reasons.

The table below lists the 7 e-marketplaces that we selected companies from:

E-marketplace	Address
Achilles	<a href="http://www.achilles.com">www.achilles.com</a>
Alibaba	<a href="http://www.alibaba.com">www.alibaba.com</a>
FIS, Fish Information & Services	<a href="http://www.fis.com">www.fis.com</a>
GoTranslators	<a href="http://www.gotranslators.com">www.gotranslators.com</a>
Industritorget	<a href="http://www.industritorget.se">www.industritorget.se</a>
SeaQuipment	<a href="http://www.seaquipment.com">www.seaquipment.com</a>
ShipServ (TradeNet)	<a href="http://www.shipserv.com">www.shipserv.com</a>

## 6. Implementation

In spite of limiting conditions in the search for companies **which** should be Norwegian, SMEs and actively selling to international customers via the e-marketplace, we managed to identify 46 companies.

We either made contact with the appointed contact person of the company, or we requested the help from a representative of the marketing department in the company. The work to find candidates that wanted to respond was time-consuming.

Each company was contacted by telephone and asked if they wanted to participate in the survey. If they agreed, they were sent a link to the questionnaire via e-mail. This e-mail

contained background information about the survey in addition to information about NorStella, Innovation Norway and eMarket Services.

Of the 46 mailed requests, 21 answered our survey. This is as was to be expected. The selection is not large enough to make wide reaching generalisations, but in our opinion it is large enough to give an indication of many of the problem areas.

## 7. The results

The results of the survey are presented in the following pages as tables for each problem area.

In addition to answering the questions by using the given alternatives, it was possible for the respondents to enter their own comments. We have chosen not to quote these replies since they do not give additional information.

The first three questions were used to identify the respondent. This information is not presented due to confidentiality.

### 7.1 Industry

We asked the respondents to identify the industry that their company belonged to. We had not pre-defined categories and the result was 21 different answers. The answers of course reflect the e-marketplaces that we had chosen as the basis for the selection of companies. The industries are grouped and found in the table below:

#### Industry the respondents belong to

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Data consultant, sale of equipment

Electronic sales

Fish and fish products, animal supplement nutrition

International marketing

Purchase and sale of machine parts and maritime equipment

Offshore, oil and gas support services

Product development and tools production

Ship broking, purchase and sale of used fishing boats

Ship-equipment, Industrial and ship-lighting

Translation

We also asked what services and products were offered through the e-marketplace. The answers were mainly in accordance with the industry the company belonged to and did not give additional information.

## 7.2 Products and services sold via the e-marketplaces

Based on the answers and information about the companies and the e-marketplaces we can group the products and services in the survey as shown below:

Products/Services sold via the e-marketplaces	Total
Special products (require specific information to be sold)	11
Standardised products (product name/description is enough to identify it)	7
Services	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

## 7.3 What e-marketplaces are used?

The respondents were asked which e-marketplaces they use and which one was the most important for them. The answers shows that in general it was the e-marketplaces we knew that they used that was the most important and often the only one they used.

Other e-marketplaces that were mentioned were:

E-marketplace	Address
Gule Sider	<a href="http://www.gulesider.no">www.gulesider.no</a>
ILSmart.com	<a href="http://www.ilsmart.com">www.ilsmart.com</a>
Metal Suppliers Online	<a href="http://www.suppliersonline.com">www.suppliersonline.com</a>
Nettkatalogen.no	<a href="http://www.nettkatalogen.no">www.nettkatalogen.no</a>
Proz	<a href="http://www.proz.com">www.proz.com</a>
Safety Construction Inc	<a href="http://www.offshoretechnology.com">www.offshoretechnology.com</a>
SISCommerce	<a href="http://www.siscommerce.com/">www.siscommerce.com/</a>
TRADUguide	<a href="http://www.traduguide.com">www.traduguide.com</a>
TranslatorsCafé.com	<a href="http://www.translatorscafe.com">www.translatorscafe.com</a>

eMarket Services defines an e-marketplace as an electronic portal that is

- Open to several buyers and several sellers
- A trading platform, but the e-market itself does not buy/sell on the platform
- Offers at least one trading function

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Among the trading functions are:

- Supplier directories and search engines for finding suppliers and getting leads
- Tendering services for finding orders and placing requests
- Classifieds for finding and publishing discrete offers
- Auctions to achieve the highest price when selling
- Reverse auctions

Advanced e-marketplaces and trading networks may also offer system integration between the buyer's and seller's business systems via the marketplace.

Questions 7.12 and 7.13 show that the following trading functions were used:

**Products/services sold via the e-marketplace**

Trading function	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total
Supplier directories or Classified Ads	7	2	3	12
Tendering services		9		9
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>

As expected there is a connection between the complexity of the product and the trading function used. For standardised products it is easier to use the e-marketplace for marketing and then be found, whereas specialised products to a larger extent are sold as the supplier answers a request for quote or proposal in a tendering process.

## 7.4 How long has the company used the e-marketplace?

On the question about how long the company has used e-marketplaces as a marketing channel the answers vary from 0 to 13 years. The average is 4 years.

Years	Companies
< 1	3
1-2	4
3-4	5
5-6	5
7-8	1
> 9	2

For companies that sell standardised products, the average is 2 years, whereas the other two groups have on average used e-marketplaces 5 years.

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## 7.5 The e-marketplace's importance vs. company turnover

On the question as to whether the e-marketplace is important, measured as a percentage of the company's total turnover, it appears that the e-marketplace is not of great importance for most of the respondents. Among those that know the importance, about half say that sales via the e-marketplace accounts for less than 5% of the total turnover. For 12% of the companies sales via the e-marketplace is over 50% of the total turnover.

Among the 21 companies, 4 answered "Don't know" on the question about the importance of the e-marketplace. These are not included in the table below:

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Turnover via the e-marketplace	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Less than 5 %	4	4	0	8	47 %	3 years
5 – 20 %	2	1	3	6	35 %	4 years
20 – 50 %	0	1	0	1	6 %	6 years
More than 50 %	0	2	0	2	12 %	8 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The table shows a positive correlation between the experience on use of e-marketplaces and the sale via the e-marketplaces.

## 7.6 Sales development over the last year via the e-marketplaces

When asked about the sales development the companies have had with e-marketplaces from 2005 to 2006, more than 64% of the respondents answer that there has been some increase since last year, and 21% answer that the increase has been over 10%.

There is a large group (7 companies) that answered "Don't know" on this question. These have not been included in the table below:

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Sales development via the e-marketplaces last year	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Less than last year	1	0	0	1	7 %	1 year
As last year	1	2	1	4	29 %	5 years
Small increase <10%	2	3	1	6	43 %	4 years
Large increase >10%	1	2	0	3	21 %	7 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

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## 7.7 Share of sales to international customers

For the survey we were seeking Norwegian SME's that sell products and services to international customers via e-marketplaces. It was therefore expected that the share of sales to international customers would be higher than the average for Norwegian companies or companies that sell via e-marketplaces.

3 companies answered "Don't know" on this question. These have not been included in the table below.

A careful evaluation of the answers indicate that companies that are selling services that are suited for international customers also have a large share of their turnover via e-marketplaces..

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Share of sales to international customers	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Less than 5%	2	8	0	10	56 %	4 years
5 – 20 %	1	0	0	1	6 %	1 year
More than 50%	3	1	3	7	39 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

## 7.8 Why do the companies use e-marketplaces?

On the question about why companies use e-marketplaces, we presented a set of given alternatives, where the respondents could grade their answers on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = total agreement, 5 = total disagreement)

The alternatives that the companies were asked to consider were:

- Expressed wish from an existing customer
- Expressed wish from a new/potential customer
- Wanted to do as my competitors do
- Possibility to find new customers
- Possibility to sell more to existing customer
- Save costs – less expensive marketing tool
- Easier sales process up until offer is presented
- We have made a strategic decision to use e-marketplaces

One company had used the e-marketplace to sell used production machinery before the company was liquidated. For the purpose of this question the e-marketplace was acceptable, but the company has not been included in the considerations due to its liquidation.

### 7.8.1 Expressed wish from an existing customer

#### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Wish from an existing customer	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	4	2	3	9	45 %	3 years
Neutral (3)	2	2	0	4	20 %	5 years
Agree (4 – 5)	1	6	0	7	35 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data show that companies that sell specialised products have chosen to use e-marketplaces after an expressed wish from existing customers.

### 7.8.2 Expressed wish from a new/potential customer

#### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Wish from a new/potential customer	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	0	5	3	7	35 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	2	3	0	5	25 %	5 years
Agree (4 – 5)	5	2	0	7	35 %	2 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The table shows a positive correlation between companies that sell standardised products and are relatively new to e-marketplaces after a wish from a new/potential customer.

### 7.8.3 We wanted to do as our competitors do

#### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Wanted to do as our competitors do	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	3	5	1	9	45 %	5 years
Neutral (3)	2	2	1	5	25 %	3 years
Agree (4 – 5)	2	3	1	6	30 %	3 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data does not indicate that companies use e-marketplaces because the competition does so.

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## 7.8.4 Possibility to find new customers

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Possibility to find new customers	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	0	6	1	7	35 %	5 years
Neutral (3)	0	1	0	1	5 %	4 years
Agree (4 – 5)	7	3	2	12	60 %	3 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data indicate that companies selling standardised products or services see a large opportunity to find new customers via e-marketplaces.

## 7.8.5 Possibility to sell more to existing customer

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Possibility to sell more to existing customers	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	3	3	3	9	47 %	3 years
Neutral (3)	1	2	0	3	5 %	3 years
Agree (4 – 5)	2	5	0	7	37 %	5 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

19 companies answered this question. The data indicate that companies that have used e-marketplaces for a longer time use them to sell to existing customers.

Sales of the kind of services that are included in this study seem to be targeted at new customers.

## 7.8.6 Save costs – less expensive marketing tool

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Possibility to sell more to existing customers	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	2	7	2	11	55 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	1	2	1	4	20 %	5 years
Agree (4 – 5)	4	1	0	5	37 %	2 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

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The data indicate that companies that have used e-marketplaces for a relatively short period see them as an opportunity to save costs.

There is also a positive correlation between the companies' evaluation of using e-marketplaces as an opportunity to find new customers and a possibility to save costs as the table below.

### 7.8.7 Easier sales process up until offer is presented

#### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Easier sales process up until offer is presented	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	3	5	1	9	45 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	1	2	1	4	20 %	5 years
Agree (4 – 5)	3	3	1	7	35 %	2 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data do not show a definitive trend, maybe with the exception that companies that have used e-marketplaces for a relatively short time feel that e-marketplaces makes the sales process easier.

When comparing the "Expressed wish from existing customers" and "easier sales process", we see that companies that started using e-marketplaces after a wish from an existing customer mainly find that the e-marketplaces do not make the sales process easier (negative correlation).

#### Wish from existing customers

Easier sales process up until offer is presented	Disagree (1 – 2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4 – 5)	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	3	1	5	9	45 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	2	1	1	4	20 %	5 years
Agree (4 – 5)	4	2	1	7	35 %	2 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

## 7.8.8 We have made a strategic decision to use e-marketplaces

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

We have made a strategic decision to use e-marketplaces	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	1	7	3	11	55 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	1	1	0	2	10 %	3 years
Agree (4 – 5)	4	2	0	6	30 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data show that companies selling specialised products or services have not made a strategic decision to use e-marketplaces, whereas companies selling standardised products to international customers use e-marketplaces as a part of a defined strategy.

## 7.9 Results achieved from using e-marketplaces

When asked what results the company has achieved by using the e-marketplaces, 84% say that the use has already given, or will give them improved economic results.

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Results achieved from using e-marketplaces	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Do not think it will improve the results	1	4	0	5	26 %	4 years
Not yet, but we think it will improve our results	2	2	0	4	21 %	4 years
Better results	4	3	3	10	53 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

There is a strong and negative correlation between improved economic results and a demand from existing customers to use of e-marketplaces, as the following table shows:

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### Wish from existing customers

Results achieved from using e-marketplaces	Disagree (1 – 2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4 – 5)	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Do not think it will improve the results	0	1	4	5	26 %	4 years
Not yet, but we think it will improve our results	1	2	1	4	21 %	4 years
Better results	7	1	2	10	53 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

## 7.10 Challenges when using e-marketplaces

When asked what challenges the companies faced when using e-marketplaces, we presented the following arguments and asked the companies to evaluate each one:

- Reluctance from the sales people
- We would rather meet the customer in person
- It is difficult to use the e-marketplace
- We feel it is difficult to present ourselves well enough to be chosen by the customers
- The e-marketplace does not reach the customers as well as we had wanted

The tables below shows the distribution of the evaluations

### 7.10.1 Reluctance from the sales people

Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Reluctance from sales people	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	5	4	3	12	63 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	1	3	0	4	21 %	4 years
Agree (4 – 5)	1	2	0	3	16 %	2 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data indicate little reluctance from the sales people towards the use of e-marketplaces.

## 7.10.2 We would rather meet the customer in person

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

We would rather meet the customer in person	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	1	0	3	4	20 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	3	3	0	6	30 %	3 years
Agree (4 – 5)	3	7	0	10	50 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data show that companies selling services suited for sale through an e-marketplace only to a limited degree want to meet the customers in person, and quite understandably companies selling specialised products want to meet the customer in person.

## 7.10.3 It is difficult to use the e-marketplace

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

It is difficult to use the e-marketplace	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	5	6	3	14	70 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	1	0	0	1	5 %	2 years
Agree (4 – 5)	1	4	0	10	25 %	2 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

Most of the companies do not have any difficulties in using the e-marketplaces, and those that do have problems are mainly found among companies selling specialised products.

## 7.10.4 We feel it is difficult to present ourselves well enough to be chosen by the customer

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Difficult to present ourselves well enough	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	2	1	3	6	30 %	4 years
Neutral (3)	2	4	0	6	30 %	3 years
Agree (4 – 5)	3	5	0	8	40 %	4 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

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The data show that companies selling specialised products find it difficult to present themselves well enough to be chosen by the customers.

There is also a strong and positive correlation between the perception that e-marketplaces are difficult to use and the perception that it is difficult to present the company well enough. This combination should be seen as a challenge for the e-marketplaces.

### 7.10.5 The e-marketplace does not reach the customers as well as we had wanted

#### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

The e-marketplace does not reach the customers	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Disagree (1– 2)	0	2	3	5	25 %	5 years
Neutral (3)	3	4	0	6	30 %	3 years
Agree (4 – 5)	4	4	0	8	40 %	3 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

The data show that companies selling products would have liked the e-marketplaces to have a larger reach to new customers.

### 7.11 What are the e-marketplaces used for?

When we asked what the e-marketplaces were used for, we presented alternatives that companies could select one or more from.

Alternatives	Number	Percentage
Marketing – being found by new customers	15	71 %
Deliver offers	11	52 %
Evaluation of seriousness of buyer/seller	7	33 %
Receive orders	9	43 %
Invoicing	1	5 %
Payment	1	5 %

As can be seen from the answers, there is only a small percentage of the companies that use the functionality of invoicing and payment. This is not surprising, but must be seen in light of the e-marketplace selection that we made and the functionality offered by these.

## 7.12 How are the products marketed on the e-marketplace?

When we asked in what way the companies market their products on the e-marketplace, we presented a list of alternatives and let the companies choose one or more.

Alternatives	Number	Percentage
We are listed in a directory together with other companies that deliver the same kind of products/services.	14	78 %
We have our own product catalogue	4	22 %
We buy a prominent position by using advertisement	4	22 %

As can be seen from the answers, most of the companies are listed in directories on the e-marketplaces. Only a small group have product catalogues. One company answers that they do not see the e-marketplace as a marketing channel.

## 7.13 How is sales/marketing done on the e-marketplace?

When we asked how the companies deliver offers or do sales on the e-marketplace, we presented a list of alternatives and let the companies choose one or more.

Alternatives	Number	Percentage
We are selected to participate in a request for quote by the customer (pre-qualification)	12	67 %
We find interesting requests on the e-marketplace and reply to these (RFQ)	10	56 %
Our customers send us an order directly and only through the e-marketplace	7	39 %
We participate in auctions	4	22 %
We have a frame agreement that our customers use through the e-marketplace	1	6 %
We participate in reverse auctions	0	0 %

## 7.14 How is sales/marketing done on the e-marketplace?

When we asked how the companies use the e-marketplace to do sales and marketing, we presented a list of alternatives and let the companies choose one or more.

Alternatives	Number	Percentage
We talk to the customer by phone	19	91 %
We meet the customer in person	16	76 %
We send information by e-mail	16	76 %
We refer to information that can be found on our homepage	15	72 %
We send information in the post	11	53 %
We demonstrate our products/services for the customer	7	33 %
We present our company to the customer	3	14 %

In addition to traditional marketing, e-business in the form of a homepage or use of e-mail is important channels to reach the customers.

Other measures that are mentioned are exhibitions, ads in the Yellow Pages and participation in trade associations.

## 7.15 Will you continue using the e-marketplace?

The answers to the questions on whether the companies want to continue using the e-marketplace is clear. Only the one company that used the e-marketplace to liquidate his business answered No to this question.

86% answer Yes, and almost half of the respondents want to increase the use.

### Products/services sold via the e-marketplace

Difficult to present ourselves well enough	Standardised Products	Specialised Products	Services	Total	Percentage	Avg. Use of e-marketplaces
Yes, and we will increase the use	4	4	1	9	43 %	4 years
Yes, at today's level	3	4	2	9	43%	4 years
No	0	1	0	1	5 %	1 years
Don't know	0	2	0	2	10 %	3 years
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>4 years</b>

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