

Visable survey shows: A quarter of German purchasers only work with sustainable suppliers

- **One in four commercial buyers already works exclusively with sustainable suppliers**
- **52% of suppliers are already actively contributing to environmental protection**
- **The survey was carried out by Visable on the occasion of its commitment to the "Leaders for Climate Action" week of action (19 to 23 April).**

Hamburg, 19 April 2021 - Companies are attaching more and more importance to sustainability - this is the result of a flash survey conducted by Visable. For this, the operator of Europe's leading online B2B platforms EUROPAGES and wlw (formerly "Wer liefert was") surveyed 259 buyers and users of the wlw platform. Around a quarter (24%) of the respondents state that their company only works with sustainable suppliers or business partners. On the supplier side, a similar picture emerges: of the 302 companies surveyed here, around 86% say that the issue of sustainability is important (39%) or very important (47%). The survey was conducted by Visable as part of the Leaders for Climate Action ([LFCA](#)) Week from 19 to 23 April.

If professional buyers in Germany have their way, it is clear that there is no way around the issue of sustainability. 84 percent of the purchasing managers surveyed say that sustainability is important (46 %) or very important (38 %). This also has an impact on operational business: Around a quarter (24 %) say they only work with sustainably operating suppliers or business partners. More than half (51 %) also prefer sustainable suppliers. In contrast, only eight percent of the buyers surveyed said that the sustainability of a supplier is not important.

Sustainability is an important decision criterion for professional buyers

Purchasing sits at the levers of sustainability throughout the company. If two equal offers are on the table before the contract is awarded, sustainable action on the part of the potential supplier is the deciding factor in the end for many purchasing departments. Thus, 45 per cent of the buyers surveyed state that sustainability criteria such as environmental certificates are important to them when awarding contracts. For 33 percent, these are even very important.

Purchasers want guidelines and more transparency

In order to know which sustainability goals are obligatory, 39 percent of the buyers would like to see legal guidelines for companies. These create transparency and orientation with regard to the climate goals to be achieved. For about half of the respondents (48%), a "sustainability filter" on platforms such as wlw or EUROPAGES would also simplify the search enormously if only sustainably operating suppliers could be displayed. Almost 45 per cent would like to see fewer business trips and a quarter (25 %) would welcome trade fairs only taking place virtually, as this would save a lot of energy.

"The topic of environmental awareness is currently gaining a lot of importance in companies. We sense this in our daily conversations with our customers," knows Visable CEO Peter F. Schmid. "We already display environmental certifications of companies on our platforms. We will probably be able to offer a sustainability filter in the second half of the year, which is what the buyers want according to our survey. Currently, around 12,500 of the companies listed with us state that they have one or more sustainability certificates - and the trend is rising."

The relevance of trade fairs for companies is dwindling

The Visable CEO is not surprised that trade fairs are becoming less and less popular and that virtual offers are preferred. Only recently, Visable conducted a representative survey with around 1,000 decision-makers from German SMEs (up to 500 employees) together with the opinion research institute Civey, in which more than half of all executives surveyed (56.4 per cent) said that the loss of leading trade fairs for their own industry represented only a minor loss or no loss at all. "The relevance of attendance fairs for companies is dwindling in many sectors. For them, the personnel, financial and, above all, ecological costs are often out of proportion to the benefits. The Corona pandemic in particular has shown that digital is also possible. Companies are increasingly recognising the advantages of e-sourcing, digital platforms or virtual presentations of their products and services - they are significantly cheaper, more efficient and also more sustainable," says Peter F. Schmid.

Suppliers feel increased demand for sustainability

The supplier side is also reacting to the growing ecological awareness of buyers. Half of the companies from Germany surveyed by Visable register an increasing demand on the topic of sustainability in relation to their own company. For about 22 percent, the demand is less pronounced but noticeable. In addition, more than half (52 %) of the companies state that there are already active contributions to environmental protection. At 30 percent, partial contributions have already been implemented in the company. In order to differentiate themselves from the competition, 44 percent of the companies would also mark on a platform such as wlw or EUROPAGES that they are a sustainable company and prove this, for example, with certificates. When it comes to measures that would make sustainable working easier, the suppliers are mostly in agreement with the buyers: 56 percent say they would reduce their business trips. Around 45 percent would like to see legal requirements for better sustainability in companies. And at 28 percent, more than a quarter could well do without trade fairs in the future.

Sustainability will continue to gain in importance

Professional buyers and companies also agree on the future development: about 58 percent of the purchasing managers and 63 percent of the company representatives are of the opinion that the topic of sustainability will clearly gain in importance. More than 33 percent of the buyers and about 24 percent of the companies surveyed expect a slight increase in relevance. Only slightly more than three percent of the buyers and about five percent of the respondents from the companies believe that the sustainability aspect will become less important.

"Companies cannot shirk their responsibility with regard to sustainable action and the careful use of resources. Those who are economically successful must also give something back to society. Even if many companies are not yet able to manufacture their products or provide their services in a CO₂-neutral way, a first step can be taken by CO₂ offsetting their own consumption or by

switching to a green electricity provider for their business premises," says Peter F. Schmid. "For me, sustainability is a very important topic, which is why I am also personally involved with Leaders for Climate Action and support the LFCA Action Week." Timo Müller, Co-Founder LFCA, adds: "For many companies in our network, reducing their emissions alone is not enough. To make a really big difference, we all need to ask ourselves what we can do beyond that. Getting our customers and partners on board is a good way to go."

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About Visable

Visable supports industrial SMEs in making products and services internationally accessible to buyers. As a combination of its own B2B platforms and online marketing services, such as Google Ads and retargeting, tailored specifically to business customers, the company offers a broad digital portfolio for increasing reach on the Internet.

The platforms operated by Visable GmbH include wlv ("Wer liefert was"), today the leading B2B platform in the D-A-CH region with around 620,000 registered companies, and the European B2B platform EUROPAGES, on which around 3 million companies are registered. Together, the platforms reach over 4 million B2B buyers a month who are looking for detailed company and product information.

With its online marketing services, Visable offers companies additional opportunities to increase their reach on the Internet. Visable is currently the only Google Premium Partner with a B2B focus.

Visable was founded in response to the challenges of internationalisation and digitalisation in the B2B sector and today employs over 410 people at its locations in Hamburg, Berlin, Münster and Paris. As a joint umbrella for the wlv and EUROPAGES brands, Visable is continuously expanding its marketplaces and online marketing services.

For more articles, information, press releases and downloads, please visit https://www.visable.com/en_int/about-us/press.

About Leaders for Climate Action:

LFCA is a global community of over 1200 digital founders united by one thing above all: a common desire to confront the climate crisis with concrete action and to demand more effective legislation from policymakers. Their vision is a globally climate-neutral digital industry - which should serve as a model for other industries.