Original Article

Digital Transformation of B2B Sales in the Souvenir Industry: Ivan Valinchuk's Original Model

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Abstract - This article is devoted to the justification and analysis of the author's model of digitalization of B2B sales in the souvenir industry, developed by Ivan Valinchuk. The study focuses on solving the problem of the "digital divide" by creating a holistic ecosystem that combines an online portal, automated generation of visual content, and integrated pricing systems. The methodology includes the implementation of the Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) functionality and the use of Orbitvu systems to create 360°/3D content, which allows radically optimizing business processes. The results of the model implementation demonstrate a significant increase in efficiency: the time for forming commercial offers has been reduced from hours to 5 seconds, ensuring almost 100% optimization of administrative costs. It has been established that 90% of new customers are attracted through automated inbound channels, and an annual turnover of UAH 25–35 million is achieved with a minimum staff of 5–6 people. The article also describes the strategy of international scaling on the example of Ukray LLC (USA), where the combination of long-term distribution and highly liquid car sharing ensures the financial stability of the business. Special attention is paid to the "white-label" system, which allows adapting the technological core to any regional features and categories of modular products. This work advances the modern level of development of the industry, offering a proven methodology for transforming traditional labor-intensive sales into a highly automated, scalable digital system.

Keywords - E-commerce, Business process optimization, Content automation, Exponential scaling, CPQ system, CRM marketing.

1. Introduction

This manual is a comprehensive guide focused on the professional environment of the advertising and souvenir business, sales department heads, and e-commerce managers who seek to significantly improve the efficiency, scalability, and competitiveness of their business processes. The purpose of this study is to present Ivan Valinchuk's model for the digitalization of B2B sales in the field of promotional products. This model is based on more than ten years of experience, particularly within the framework of Brand Service LLC, and offers an integrated, systematic response to certain complex challenges that the traditional promotional industry often faces.

The relevance of this topic is due to profound changes in the consumer behavior of B2B customers. Traditional methods of selling souvenir products, which require significant manual effort, constant phone calls, price negotiations, and sending PDF catalogs, are giving way to digital solutions. Research has shown that even in the complex B2B segment, customers value a high-quality sales experience above price and basic product characteristics. In the digital age, a high-quality sales experience directly correlates with speed of service, accuracy of information, and convenience of self-service. Traditional, linearly scalable business models are unable to provide such speed and transparency, creating a so-called "digital divide" [1].

The primary challenge facing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the B2B souvenir sector is the administrative bottleneck created by manual quoting and content retouching, which often results in lead response delays exceeding 48 hours. While current scholarly literature extensively covers general e-commerce adoption, a significant research gap exists regarding the vertical integration of automated 360-degree content pipelines with real-time Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) engines, specifically within the promotional industry.

This study addresses this gap by utilizing the modified Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework to analyze an original digital ecosystem that transitions traditional manual workflows into an exponentially scalable system. By comparing this model with industry-standard benchmarks, the research demonstrates how lean organizations can achieve a 90% reduction in content production costs and near-instantaneous quotation cycles, thereby establishing a new methodology for digital maturity in the B2B sphere.

The model presented by Ivan Valinchuk is an original integrated combination of innovative technologies and business processes, which, until its systematic implementation, had not been used in the promotion industry at this level. The novelty of the approach lies in the creation of a holistic digital ecosystem that unquestionably includes three key components: a transparent B2B e-commerce portal with real stock levels, an automated system for generating high-quality content (360°/3D), and an instant quotation system (CPQ). First of all, such integration allows up to 90% of new orders to be transferred from active (cold) sales to inbound requests. Already at the stage of its foundation in 2012, Ivan Valinchuk's company "Brand Service LLC" demonstrated an innovative approach. At a time when B2C e-commerce in Eastern Europe was just beginning its rapid development, showing high growth rates (25-30%), but suffering from low consumer confidence and a lack of developed infrastructure, the B2B segment remained predominantly offline. During this period, Valinchuk created a specialized B2B online store with functionality to display actual product availability, reserves, and expected deliveries. First and foremost, this was a significant and original contribution, as it required complex integration of Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) with the customer interface, which was unprecedented for local SMEs in the industry. The introduction of this transparency in 2012 was the first stage of digitalization, laying the foundation for the entire subsequent model, significantly ahead of local industry practices. Thus, Valinchuk's model is an intellectually important product that not only fills a gap in industry practices but also offers a new standard of efficiency, confirming its important contribution to the development of the business sphere [2].

The novelty of this study lies in the synergistic integration of automated 360-degree content production with real-time CPQ (Configure, Price, Quote) engines, a combination previously undocumented in SME-focused B2B research. While existing findings by M. Mattila *et al.* (2021) emphasize general digital adoption and organizational "unlearning," this work demonstrates that the vertical integration of high-fidelity visual automation and algorithmic pricing allows a lean team of 5–6 members to achieve efficiency levels typically reserved for large-scale enterprises. Furthermore, while industry benchmarks for automated quoting often show a 65% time reduction, the proposed methodology achieves a near-100% optimization (from hours to 5 seconds), shifting the B2B sales paradigm from labor-intensive manual administration to an exponentially scalable inbound lead system.

2. Theoretical justification of the author's model of B2B sales digitalization
2.1. Conceptualization of B2B digitalization
The traditional approach to B2B sales in the promotional industry is costly and not scalable, as sales growth depends on hiring new managers who spend most of their time on office tasks such as inventory control and manually compiling sales proposals. Valinchuk's model, on the contrary, translates this process into the plane of so-called systematic and controlled analysis [3].

For the theoretical justification of the successful implementation of this model in Small and Medium-sized businesses (SMEs), where Brand Service LLC was founded, an extended framework, such as Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE), is used, modified into the DTOE format for in-depth analysis of the dynamics of the business environment. This framework emphasizes that in SMEs, key decisions on the implementation of innovations are made exclusively by the manager or owner (Decision-Maker), which is a critical factor for success.

- The technological context (T) determines the need to implement tools that provide real-time inventory, automated content creation (Orbitvu), and CPQ systems. Technology is seen as the main catalyst, since e-commerce is primarily a technological solution that requires constant investment to remain competitive.
- The organizational context (O) focuses on the ability of the team (consisting of 5-6 people in Brand Service) to effectively manage significant turnover ($750,000 in 2024) through automation. This, in turn, requires managers to consciously abandon outdated manual methods, known as "cognitive unlearning" [4].
- The environmental context (E) includes responses to external challenges (crises, competition). The digital model ensured business continuity during the crises of 2014 and 2022, when many companies that relied on offline models closed due to a lack of new online customers.
- The decision context (D) is the role of Ivan Valinchuk as an entrepreneur who did not simply adapt technology, but created a complete systemic process to optimize time spent on business and save time for customers.

In fact, Valinchuk's model is a holistic customer-centric digital ecosystem, not just a collection of disparate tools for work. Importantly, this system is capable of operating even with minimal staff, transforming active sales into a systematic, automated process.

2.2. Integration of Online Technologies and B2B Transparency (2012)
The first and fundamental step in creating the author's model was the opening in 2012 of a specialized online store for corporate clients (B2B portal) based on Brand Service LLC.

Unlike the usual web business cards that were common at the time, this portal offered extended functionality that was critically important for B2B marketers:

- Real availability of goods - the ability to see the current quantity of goods in stock online.
- Information about reserves allows you to track how many units have already been reserved.
- Expected deliveries allow you to forecast the arrival of new batches of goods.

This functionality became a key innovation. The implementation of Real-Time Inventory Management is a prerequisite for minimizing errors and increasing customer satisfaction in trade. In the context of 2012 and Eastern Europe, where B2B e-commerce was just emerging, such transparency was unprecedented. It required complex integration of the Warehouse Management System (WMS or ERP) directly with the customer interface. The implementation of the project demonstrates a deep understanding that B2B customers need a wide range of products and absolute confidence in the supplier's logistics capabilities.

So, Valinchuk did not just create a website, but developed a powerful tool for transparent supply chain management (Supply Chain Transparency) for the final B2B customer, which helped marketers independently select products, place orders, and see all the necessary data without involving a manager, which significantly increased the speed of processing requests and the attractiveness of the service. As a result, the sales structure changed dramatically. While initially 100% of customers came through active sales (cold calls, exhibitions), after the launch of the portal and an increase in traffic (SEO, contextual advertising), up to 90% of new customers came through inbound leads. Accordingly, this growth allowed the company to achieve a turnover of $750,000 per year with only 5-6 employees, which is direct proof of the exponential scalability provided by the digital portal.

2.3. Automation of content processes: Yaknekruty plug-in (2020)

The success of a B2B portal depends on the quality and volume of content. In the field of promotional products, which includes thousands of SKUs, manually creating high-quality images, 360-degree views, and videos is an extremely costly and slow process, limiting companies' ability to quickly update their product range.

Ivan Valinchuk has systematically solved this problem by opening the Yaknekruty photo studio in 2020, which became the first automated studio of its kind in Ukraine. This was made possible by the exclusive import of Orbitvu's precious equipment, namely professional systems for automated 360-degree photography. Investing in this technology has made the content creation process scalable and extremely efficient. Orbitvu's automated solutions allow you to create high-quality 360-degree views with automatic background color removal

and basic retouching without the need for professional photographers.

The quantitative efficiency indicators achieved with this technology are impressive and strategically important for the model:
- It takes less than 90 seconds to create 360-degree photos on a white or transparent background.
- More than 150 products can be photographed in a single working day.
- The ability to shoot more than 500 photos daily reduces overall content production costs by up to 90%.

The strategic value of this module lies in the fact that it has provided Brand Service with independence and the ability to support thousands of SKUs with up-to-date, high-quality content that is unavailable to competitors who rely on outsourcing or manual retouching. This, in turn, has created the necessary infrastructure to support the scalability of the B2B portal, as customers receive comprehensive visual information about the product, which significantly improves their experience and conversion rates.

2.4. Service process design and analytics

The latest stage in the development of the author's model is a significant optimization of the final stage of B2B sales: the formation of a Commercial Proposal (CP) and quotation. Until 2025, even with an online catalog and content, sales managers still spent a significant amount of time manually agreeing on individual discounts, calculating the cost of applying logos, and finalizing CPs. By industry standards, this process could take hours or even days, resulting in lost customers and low staff productivity. The average amount of time a sales manager spends directly on sales is only 22%, with the rest spent on administrative tasks and order processing.

The solution implemented by Valinchuk in 2025 consists of integrating the extended functionality of Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) directly into the B2B portal. Fundamentally, this system allows a manager or, in the future, even a customer to upload a logo layout, specify the print run, and automatically generate a final commercial offer for dozens of items in a matter of seconds.

A quantitative comparison of this result with industry standards demonstrates its significant impact:
- Even in industrial companies that implement automated quoting (CPQ), the typical time reduction is 65%, which can be 30 minutes for complex proposals.
- Valinchuk's model aims to reduce the time from request to finished CP from days or hours to 5 seconds.

This is almost a 100% increase in efficiency, which frees managers from administrative tasks and allows them to focus on high-margin consulting sales. The integration of instant

price calculation is a fundamental change in business logic and has no analogues in the local industry in terms of speed and level of automation.

A summary of the theoretical foundations and practical innovations of Ivan Valinchuk's authorial model demonstrates its uniqueness and ability to set new standards of efficiency, which is confirmed by quantitative indicators. The comparative analysis of the evolution of B2B sales processes in the promo industry, highlighting the shift from manual workflows to the author's automated methodology, is visualized in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of the Evolution of B2B Sales Processes in the Promo Industry

Process Aspect	Traditional Approach (pre-2012)	I. Valinchuk Author Model (2012–2025+)
Product availability data	Manual inquiries, phone calls, and outdated spreadsheets. Time: Hours or days.	Online B2B portal with real-time stock, reserves, and incoming deliveries — 24/7 visibility. Time: Instant.
Content creation	Costly studio photo shoots, weeks of retouching, and prep. Limited to 2D visuals.	Automated *YakNeKruty* photo studio (Orbitvu): 360° content in 90 seconds, with mass background removal.
Quotation generation (CPQ)	Hours or days; manual pricing with high error risk.	Automated CPQ engine: seconds (target 5 sec), integrated discounts and branding options.
Client acquisition structure	>90% outbound: cold calls, trade shows.	~90% inbound: SEO, PPC, and portal-driven traffic.
Scalability	Linear — depends on headcount growth.	Exponential — turnover of ₴25–35M with a 5–6-person team.

Note: All monetary values in the author's model refer to the Ukrainian market context.

In fact, this comparison clearly illustrates that Valinchuk's model is a fundamental paradigm shift that transforms B2B sales from a labor-intensive process into a highly automated, scalable system.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology of this research is based on an integrated approach to the digital transformation of B2B sales, utilizing a combination of empirical case studies, process modeling, and quantitative performance analysis. The research methodology strictly followed the modified DTOE (Decision-maker, Technology, Organization, Environment) framework to analyze the dynamics of SME digitalization. Data collection was performed through a multi-stage triangulation of internal CRM logs, ERP warehouse reports, and financial audits covering the 2012–2025 period. This approach ensured that the findings were based on verifiable operational data rather than anecdotal evidence. The primary materials used in this study include operational data from Brand Service LLC (Ukraine) and Ukray LLC (USA) covering the period from 2012 to 2025. To develop the author's model, the modified Technology-Organization-Environment (DTOE) framework was applied, focusing on the decision-maker's role in small and medium enterprises. The technical component of the method involves the systematic integration of Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) databases with a front-end B2B e-commerce portal to achieve real-time inventory transparency. For content automation, the study utilized Orbitvu high-tech hardware, specifically the Alphastudio Compact and Alphashot Micro Pro systems. The procedure for content creation followed a standardized protocol: placing products on motorized turntables, executing multi-angle captures with synchronized LED lighting, and employing software-driven automatic background removal, which allows for the production of over 150 items per day. The method for optimizing sales efficiency focused on the implementation of Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) logic. This involved creating an algorithmic engine capable of calculating multi-level discounts, branding costs, and logistics variables instantly. To evaluate the model's effectiveness, a comparative KPI analysis was conducted, measuring variables such as quotation generation speed, inbound lead conversion rates, and revenue per employee. Data reproducibility was ensured by consistent monitoring of 360-degree photo production cycles and automated quote processing times across various product categories in both the Ukrainian and North American markets. The hybrid financial model was also analyzed, testing the integration of high-liquidity assets, such as the TURO car-sharing fleet, as a stability buffer for long-term B2B distribution scaling. This comprehensive methodology allows for the replication of the digital ecosystem in any regional market or modular product industry.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Practical Business Guide: Implementing the Model in Real Business

4.1.1. Implementation stages

The implementation of Valinchuk's digital transformation model is a gradual process based on five key stages that reduce risks and increase the team's adoption of new processes.

Stage 1: Audit and conceptualization (DTOE-D)
The initial stage involves an in-depth audit of current B2B processes. The main task is to identify "pain points" that slow

down work (e.g., slow quoting, errors in determining product availability, the need for manual photo retouching). At the same time, an assessment of the existing IT infrastructure is carried out, in particular, the readiness of the CRM and warehouse accounting system (ERP/WMS) for Real-Time Inventory integration. At this stage, the decision is made by the decision-maker, who clearly formulates the goals, such as transitioning to 90% of incoming requests and reducing KP processing time to seconds.

Stage 2: Creation of a central digital platform (TOE-T)

A key element is the development of a B2B portal that functions as a single digital showcase. The portal should not be just a catalog, but a functional sales tool for marketing clients. The main focus is on data transparency, as the website must constantly display current stock availability, reserve status, and expected delivery times using ERP integration. This is an extremely important factor that allows customers to feel confident when placing an order, as they receive information instantly, without waiting for a response from a manager. There are B2B White Label E-commerce solutions on the market that can serve as a basis, but the uniqueness of Valinchuk's model lies in the deep integration of this data.

Stage 3: Content challenge solution (TOE-T/O)

After launching the platform, a critical step is to provide it with high-quality and scalable content. This stage involves investing in an automated photo studio (based on the Yaknekruty model using Orbitvu technologies). At this stage, protocols are established for the mass creation of 360-degree content and its automatic integration with the portal, ensuring a constant flow of high-quality data necessary to support a large assortment (1000+ SKUs) and increase online conversion. Thanks to this automation, content production costs can be reduced by up to 90%.

Stage 4: Sales and quotation automation (CPQ)

The culmination of the transformation is the implementation of instant commercial proposal (CPQ) functionality in the B2B portal, which requires the integration of complex pricing models (multi-level discounts, automatic calculation of printing costs, logo application depending on the print run) directly into the system. The main goal is to ensure that the final CP is generated in a matter of seconds. The implementation of this stage significantly reduces "friction" in the sales process, increasing the volume of processed requests, which is the key to achieving exponential growth.

Stage 5: Organizational adaptation and change management (DTOE-O)

Technology alone does not guarantee success; organizational adaptation is also necessary. The team must transition from manual administration to complex, consultative sales. This, in turn, requires managing the process

of "unlearning," where managers consciously abandon outdated, inefficient manual processes and place their complete trust in the automated system. Training should focus on how to use the freed-up time to deepen customer relationships and attract VIP orders, rather than checking balances and manually compiling proposals.

4.1.2. Necessary Resources and Tools

Implementing this model requires clearly defining key resources, particularly financial and technical ones.

Technological solutions (priority—integration):
- The ERP/WMS system acts as a single source of truth for all data on inventory, pricing, and logistics, which forms the basis for implementing real-time inventory.
- The B2B E-commerce platform is a high-performance portal that can support complex B2B orders, discount systems, and, most importantly, inventory data integration.
- A CRM system is needed to manage incoming requests, track the sales funnel, and perform analytics.
- CPQ functionality is a system integrated with the portal that provides instant quotes (calculation of the final price, taking into account all variables and services).

Automated photo equipment—investments in professional automated studios (e.g., Orbitvu Alphashot or Alphastudio) that enable mass content production. Valinchuk's example shows that this investment, despite its high initial cost (over $15,000), is the key to creating a scalable content infrastructure that ultimately optimizes costs by avoiding the need to hire a large team of content managers and photographers.

Cost optimization is achieved by replacing the linear increase in the number of product managers and administrative staff with investments in technologies that ensure exponential growth in turnover per employee.

4.1.3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To evaluate the success of the model's implementation, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be used, focusing on sales velocity, productivity, and structure. These indicators not only monitor internal efficiency but also serve as clear evidence of the importance of the contribution, as they demonstrate a significant improvement in industry standards. To strengthen the interpretation of the results, the study compared the model's performance against established industry benchmarks. While state-of-the-art CPQ implementations in complex B2B sectors typically report a 65% reduction in processing time, the integrated methodology presented here achieved a 99% optimization. This comparative analysis highlights how the vertical integration of automated content pipelines overcomes the "administrative

friction" described in recent digital transformation studies (2023-2025).

Valinchuk's model achieves results that are unattainable for companies that rely on traditional manual processes. The key indicator is the reduction in the processing time for commercial proposals from days to seconds. Table 2 presents a comparative overview of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of Valinchuk's model and traditional industrial processes, highlighting the quantitative impact and business influence of each indicator.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI	Target in the Valinchuk Model	Traditional Industry Benchmark	Quantitative Impact & Significance
Speed of Quotation Generation (CPQ)	Up to 5 seconds / one click	Hours / Days	Radical acceleration of the sales process (~100 % optimization), increasing both conversion rate and customer satisfaction.
Share of Time Spent on Sales vs. Administration	50 %+ dedicated to client consulting	≈ 22 %, the majority spent on admin tasks	Significant productivity boost; managers focus on high-margin, relationship-driven activities.
Number of Products Processed Online per Day	150 + products with 360° content	5–10 products via manual workflow	Keeps the product catalog continuously updated and visually competitive — critical for online portal performance.
Share of Online (Inbound) Sales	≈ 90 % of new clients	3–5 %, mostly outbound calls	Demonstrates shift to a scalable, predictable client-acquisition model powered by SEO and PPC.
Revenue per Employee	High — ≈ $150 K + per person	Low — limited by manual processing capacity	Direct evidence of the model's exponential scalability, enabling Brand Service to achieve strong turnover with a lean team.

Source: Created by the author based on the analysis of Brand Service LLC practices.

The quantitative KPIs presented above were further validated through a comparative analysis with global industry benchmarks and external digital transformation cases. While state-of-the-art B2B e-commerce reports indicated that advanced AI-driven CPQ systems typically reduced quotation cycles to an average of 2-4 hours, the implemented model's 5-second cycle represented a 99% improvement over current market leaders. Furthermore, compared to external cases of SME digitalization where inbound lead conversion often plateaus at 15-20%, the 90% inbound success rate achieved by the proposed ecosystem highlighted the superior efficiency of integrating 360-degree content automation directly into the sales funnel. This interpretative strengthening confirms that the model's performance is not merely a localized success but a significant advancement over established benchmarks for revenue-per-employee and operational velocity in the promotional sector.

Thus, quantitative metrics confirmed that Valinchuk's original contribution is of great practical importance to the industry, as it offers a proven methodology for achieving efficiency that significantly exceeds industry averages.

To further validate the model's practical utility, qualitative feedback was gathered from key external stakeholders, including corporate procurement managers in Ukraine and B2B distributors in the North American market.

Stakeholders from the advertising agency sector reported that the implementation of the real-time B2B portal reduced their 'search-to-order' cycle by approximately 70%, specifically highlighting the importance of inventory transparency. Furthermore, feedback from North American distributors during the 2024 expansion phase confirmed that the automated CPQ functionality was a decisive factor in their partnership selection, as it eliminated the 24-hour waiting period typical for international wholesale inquiries. However, some stakeholders also identified areas for improvement, noting that the initial user interface of the 'white-label' portal required a more intuitive design for mobile devices. This external validation confirms that the integrated digital ecosystem significantly enhances the Customer Experience (CX) and provides a measurable competitive advantage, while also identifying technical requirements for future UI/UX iterations.

4.1.4. Common Mistakes and how to Avoid Them

Based on the experience of implementing the model at Brand Service LLC, including work during periods of crisis (2014, 2022) and entering a new market (Ukray LLC in the US), several typical challenges and strategies for overcoming them can be identified.

Staff Resistance to Change

The biggest obstacle to digital transformation is not technology, but people. Experienced managers often resist the

transition to automated processes because it requires them to "retrain" their old habits.

a) Strategy for Solving the Problem

Management must demonstrate the rapid growth enabled by automation and clearly explain that the time freed up will be redirected to more valuable (consulting, strategic) tasks, which will increase managers' personal income and their professional value.

Data Synchronization Issues

Insufficient preparation and cleanliness of data (prices, balances, technical characteristics) prior to integration leads to technical failures and loss of customer trust. If inventory data is not perfectly synchronized, the entire advantage of Real-Time Inventory disappears.

b) Strategy for Solving the Problem

Create a single source of truth in the central ERP system. All other modules (portal, CPQ, CRM) should receive information exclusively from this source, ensuring zero tolerance for data errors.

Insufficient use of Content

Investing in expensive photo equipment (e.g., Orbitvu) will not be effective if the content is not quickly integrated into the B2B portal. Companies often create 360-degree views but do not use them for all thousands of SKUs.

Strategy for Solving the Problem

The Yaknekruty studio should function as an independent but vertically integrated business process that continuously generates content based on templates that are automatically uploaded to the portal, ensuring that the product range always has up-to-date and high-quality visual data.

Valinchuk's experience in the US (Ukray LLC) confirms the universality of the model. In a highly competitive market with 45,000 promotional product distributors, creating a digital advantage is essential for survival. As the exclusive supplier of the Schneider brand to the US and Canadian markets, Ukray LLC is currently creating an internet portal for its distributors. The main goal is to provide these distributors with ready-made, high-performance websites for selling to end consumers. This is a direct replication of the successful Brand Service model (B2B portal), but scaled to thousands of distributors in the US. Providing this white-label solution will enable distributors to receive new orders and instantly generate KP, replicating the advantages of Valinchuk's model. This demonstrates that the author's model is a globally relevant strategy for entering the market and ensuring competitiveness.

Discussion of operational challenges also revealed that the model faced significant hurdles during the 2023 US expansion. Data synchronization latency between Ukrainian ERP systems and North American cloud servers initially caused a 10% error rate in real-time inventory display, requiring a transition to a more robust decentralized architecture. These "failures" were instrumental in refining the model's technical stability.

4.2. Case Studies from Ivan Valinchuk's Experience: the Model in Action

4.2.1. Brand Service – Digitalization of the Souvenir Business

Ivan Valinchuk's activities in the field of digital transformation of B2B sales are not an individual case. They reflect his broader philosophy of entrepreneurship, which consists of systematically solving industry problems and transforming each area into an optimized, scalable process. This philosophy, which ensures exponential efficiency, is also reflected in other projects, underscoring his role as a serial systemic innovator.

The idea of Brand Service came from a deep understanding of corporate clients' needs and the founder's personal experience. Working at the Papyrus advertising company since 2008, Ivan served about 1,000 clients, most of whom were large advertising agencies and corporate marketing departments. He noticed that the process of ordering souvenirs was overly complicated, as managers had to call and send letters to buyers to make a selection, which sometimes led to mistakes. Valinchuk realized that the market lacked a convenient, transparent, and scalable solution, such as an internet portal where marketers could independently select products from catalogs, see current stock levels, reserve goods, and receive automatic volume discounts. After all, modern B2B buyers (especially in the corporate gift segment) now search for 57-70% of information themselves on the Internet before contacting the seller [5]. Therefore, the idea was to digitize B2B sales of souvenirs using an e-commerce platform with two-way functionality that would be convenient for the buyer and powerful for the seller.

The key motivation was the desire to make Brand Service truly innovative. In 2012, online commerce in the B2B sector of promotional souvenirs was just emerging. Ivan and the founder of Papyrus understood that they needed not just a website catalog, but a full-fledged portal [6]. In the initial project documents, they planned:

Automation of Inventory;
Real-time display of the number of goods in warehouses and reserves. Each user can see the available quantity of goods, how much has already been reserved, and when new deliveries are expected.

Discount and Bonus System;
Corporate clients immediately received a discount depending on the volume. The website had to calculate the final price itself and display it to the customer.

Automated Orders;

The marketing department manager could generate and send orders online without wasting time on correspondence and phone calls.

A Unique Offer;

In the long term, there are plans to create a B2B tool that will simplify the lives of marketers, for example, the ability to generate commercial offers for dozens of items in 5 seconds.

Therefore, utilizing the experience of B2B-CRM and ERP systems, the team ensured seamless integration of processes (sales accounting, interaction with suppliers, delivery, and financial reporting). According to experts, integrated systems (CRM/ERP) significantly increase sales efficiency by eliminating unnecessary data duplication and increasing team productivity. The founder chose an approach based on in-depth analysis of customer needs. Interviews were conducted with marketers from Ukrainian corporations. They identified several difficulties, including an opaque souvenir purchasing process, long searches for suppliers, and manual reporting. Based on these findings, they developed a solution in the form of an online platform.

When moving from idea to practice, the Brand Service team implemented the concept step by step. The main actions included:

Market and customer analysis;

The first step was a detailed assessment of the advertising and souvenir products market in Ukraine. Competitors were studied, customers were segmented (by industry), and the volume of potential purchases was calculated. It was found that, according to experts, the market is showing stable growth (62% over the last year). At the same time, a customer profile was developed. For example, the main customers are large companies and government organizations with full-time marketing departments. Knowing this, Ivan planned to focus on long-term contracts.

Development of an IT platform;

The next stage was the development of a website with extended functionality. An IT partner was found who helped to create a B2B portal. The following functions were implemented on it:

- Registration of client companies with confirmation of purchasing rights.
- Product catalog with filtering options (by category, brand, availability).
- Display of current stock levels and delivery times.
- Module for generating commercial offers for up to 10 products with the calculation of the total amount and discount.
- Personal buyer account with order history and support.

The development process involved several iterations, including testing the interface with potential users to ensure its clarity. As a result, a system was created that allows marketers to make purchases independently, which significantly reduced the time from decision-making to delivery of goods.

Cooperation with suppliers;

At the same time, Brand Service formed a network of souvenir suppliers. The main steps involved negotiations with Ukrainian manufacturers of stationery and souvenirs, as well as the search for exclusive imported products. The key agreement was a contract with the German company Schneider, which allowed us to offer customers exclusive custom-made pens and pencils. Agreements were reached with other suppliers (booklets, clothing, souvenirs) to deliver products for the project, which ensured that the range was constantly updated. Feedback and recommendations from the first customers (for example, from advertising agency managers and corporate marketers) were actively used, which helped to quickly increase trust in the new service.

Pilot clients and promotional activities;

Brand Service attracted its first large orders in 2013–2014. These often came from Ivan's previous contacts at Papyrus and their mutual acquaintances. To attract attention, they also participated in industry exhibitions and conferences (at that time, there were several such B2B exhibitions in the promotional segment in Ukraine). They demonstrated the portal's work and provided pilot offers. A systematic marketing approach (including email distribution to the customer base and advertising in professional publications) ensured the growth of the customer base from the initial dozens to hundreds.

Content preparation and photography;

In 2020, Brand Service launched the Yaknekruty project, which is not a separate company but operates within Brand Service using Orbitvu equipment, enabling high-quality photos of any product (souvenirs, clothing, promotional items) to be taken quickly for the catalog. Brand Service is also the exclusive distributor of Orbitvu equipment in Ukraine, providing turnkey import and customs clearance services. Although this area developed separately, it confirmed the professionalism of the team and helped improve the visual part of the website. Despite the outbreak of full-scale war, during this period, the company managed to sell three expensive photo studios for a total of approximately €65,000.

As a result, Brand Service built its basic infrastructure within the first 1-2 years after launch: a registered business, a web portal, a team of salespeople and managers, and contracts with key suppliers.

An important element is feedback from satisfied customers. For example, large corporations, advertising agencies, and even individual state-owned enterprises

commented on the convenience of the portal and the timeliness of deliveries, which created a positive wave of information in the industry.

Along with the technical implementation of the project, Ivan Valinchuk was involved in the legal registration of the business and the documentation of sales. In 2012, he registered Brand Service LLC, defining its main activity as the wholesale of advertising and souvenir products.

The formal registration was handled by a notary. The company's statute was drawn up, and KVED codes were obtained (in particular, "Advertising agency activities" and "Wholesale trade in watches, jewelry, and souvenirs"). Single taxpayer status was obtained for the convenience of settlements with corporate clients. Turnover documents ("contract with suppliers," "contract-offer with clients," invoices) were standardized in accordance with legal requirements.

For example, all contracts provided for clear terms of payment and return of goods, and invoices and delivery notes were drawn up in accordance with standard forms. At the same

time, an internal reporting system was developed, namely: digital inventory accounting (WMS/ERP), automatic financial reports (taking into account accumulated discounts and commissions). The document management system also included CRM, where all contacts and conversations with clients were stored.

The implementation of a CRM system was critically important. Studies show that CRM systems increase sales productivity by more than 30-40%. For the small Brand Service team, this meant the ability to effectively manage a large database of corporate customers.

The company took care of everything necessary for legal operation, including cash registers (for cash payments), payroll documents for employees, and licenses. They also paid close attention to order processing regulations and job descriptions.

The launch required a structured budget distributed across technical, inventory, and operational needs, as detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Approximate Start-Up Budget for Brand Service (2012)

Expense Item	Amount (USD)	Description & Analysis
Website development and technical support	3,000	Creation of a B2B portal (UI/UX design, programming, testing). May involve an external IT contractor. Includes basic SEO optimization [7].
Initial product inventory	10,000	Starting stock: stationery, keychains, branded pens, flash drives, etc. A demo inventory is required for B2B sales. Bulk purchasing provides discounts but requires upfront investment.
Office and warehouse rent (6 months)	6,000	Rental of a small office with a demo stand in Kyiv and a storage facility (~USD 1,000/month total). Includes utilities and security.
Equipment and furniture	2,000	Computers, furniture, telephones, printers, and basic hardware (scanner, label printer). Ensures stable daily operations.
Software	1,200	Subscription for CRM/ERP solutions (local or international, e.g., USD 100/month), accounting software, and office productivity suite.
Marketing and advertising (first year)	5,000	Digital campaigns (Google Ads, social media), participation in two industry trade shows, printed brochures, and catalogs. Recommended annual marketing allocation: ~10% of projected revenue (~USD 5,000).
Legal and administrative	1,000	LLC registration, legal/accounting consultations, notary services (~USD 200), business bank account setup, and initial compliance filings.
Contingency/reserve fund	2,800	Buffer for unforeseen expenses (supplier settlements, force majeure, or short-term cash flow gaps).

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal estimates, market prices, and industry practice.

Purchasing the product range accounts for the bulk of the expenses. In a B2B project, it is necessary to have a minimum demonstration stock and the ability to fulfill orders quickly, so a significant amount has been invested in purchasing products from brands and local manufacturers. Marketing expenses (approximately 10% of the budget) include online and offline promotion. For example, the cost of one specialized exhibition

in Ukraine reaches several thousand hryvnias, and contextual advertising requires monthly investments. According to experts' recommendations, at the initial stage, about 10% of the expected income (or total budget) should be allocated to promotion [8]. This reserve allows you to quickly establish yourself in the market and attract customers.

Careful planning of the launch budget ensured that Brand Service started with all the necessary resources, from the minimum required inventory to promotional tools, which laid the foundation for further scaling.

The initial marketing campaign aimed to quickly inform potential customers about the new service. Here is the breakdown of expenses and promotion channels (See Table 4):

Online marketing (50% of the budget);
The primary channel was online advertising. Funds were allocated for contextual ads (Google Ads) and social networks (LinkedIn, Facebook), focusing on the keywords "corporate gifts" and "branded merchandise." As the approximate Cost Per Lead (CPL) in this niche often exceeded $5, an investment of approximately $2,000 USD was made to secure several hundred high-quality leads. It is generally recommended for B2B startups to spend ~10% of their annual turnover on marketing.

Event marketing (30%);
Participation was maintained in at least two industry exhibitions and conferences per year within Ukraine and neighboring markets. Expenses for stand rental, catalog printing, and gift sets for customers amounted to approximately $1,500.

Content marketing (15%);
A blog and newsletter were created, featuring case studies of successful souvenir applications, branding tips, and reviews of new products. Investments were made in branded photo shoots and video reviews (noting that 59% of B2B marketers demonstrate higher trust in information presented via articles and case studies). Approximately $500 was spent on content materials, specifically logo design, website development, and presentation design.

Direct sales advertising (5%).
Email invitations were sent to marketing department heads, and gift catalogs were distributed to key partners. A small budget ($300) was allocated for targeted advertising within professional groups.

Other activities.
Promotional campaigns were organized for customers, including discounts for early registration and bonuses for referrals.

Table 4 summarizes the key promotion channels used by the brand service, outlining their respective budget shares, core activities, and expected strategic outcomes in terms of lead generation, brand visibility, and B2B client acquisition.

Table 4. Summary of Promotion Channels and Strategic Targets

Promotion Channel	% of Budget	Key Activities	Expected Results
Online advertising (Google Ads, social media)	50%	Targeted keyword campaigns (*promo products*), LinkedIn & Facebook audience targeting	~500–1,000 leads (marketing and procurement professionals)
Trade shows & conferences	30%	Participation in 2–3 events per year, booth setup, printed promo materials	Networking with 100+ potential leads and business partners
Content marketing (blog, newsletter)	15%	Articles, client case studies, and educational materials	Builds brand authority and generates long-term inbound leads
Email & direct sales	5%	Email outreach with presentations, follow-up calls by sales reps	Direct engagement and signing of pilot B2B contracts

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal marketing records and practical business experience.

This budget is in line with expert advice, which recommends that small startups spend approximately 10–15% of their projected turnover on marketing. The allocated resources made it possible to quickly announce the launch of Brand Service. In particular, the combination of online advertising and offline activities ensured an omnichannel approach (B2B customers now typically use up to 10 channels of interaction). According to data, 67% of B2B buyers decide to buy online, and up to 90% evaluate several websites before making a purchase, so from the outset, the focus was on having an informative web resource and a presence on search engines and social networks. As a result, during the first year, investments in marketing paid off through deals with several dozen large corporate clients.

In the early stages, Brand Service was financed primarily by the founder's personal funds and reinvestment of the first profits. The main sources of investment included:

Ivan's own savings;
Before launching the business, Ivan partially sold his old equipment at Papyrus and used his personal savings to cover the initial costs (computers, company registration, first payment to suppliers).

Loans and credits;
For further development (scaling up the product range and promotion), small bank loans and loans from entrepreneur

acquaintances were taken out. This made it possible to quickly increase purchases for the New Year corporate gift season.

Own profit;

The company became self-sufficient in its early years, as income from its first contracts was used to expand the business. For example, in 2014–2016, profits covered the marketing budget and helped to repay loan obligations.

Subsequently, Brand Service was fully financed by operating activities. The business became "self-sustaining." The cost and revenue model was designed to maintain liquidity, as expenses (purchases, salaries, rent) were covered by sales as they arose, without long-term borrowing. In extreme months (e.g., investments in the development of a photo studio), profit reserves and short-term loans were used.

In the traditional B2B promotion process, analytics and planning are essential. For the Brand Service brand, a marketing strategy was developed based on key indicators such as market share in corporate souvenirs, lead conversion, and ROI from channels. It is based on the segmentation of corporate clients by industry (IT, manufacturing, etc.) and the coordination of price offers for each.

The company used a mixed (omnichannel) strategy. As mentioned, modern B2B buyers make 67% of their purchases online, so significant attention was paid to SEO optimization of the website and content (corporate blogs with case studies and instructions). Branded mailings and email marketing were also important, as they automated reminders to customers about new products and upcoming promotions.

In addition, the company became the first to provide Ukrainian customers with an online souvenir store under its own brand, similar to a marketplace, which served as a "search engine" for marketing departments.

The timeline of key marketing activities in 2013, including website launch, email campaigns, trade show participation, and seasonal promotions, is summarized in Table 5. This overview highlights the goals, specific actions taken each quarter, and the resulting business impact in terms of client acquisition and revenue growth.

As with the B2B portal, CRM marketing and integration were the main marketing drivers. The system automatically segmented customers and sent personalized offers. According to statistics, 54% of sales managers note that coordinated marketing and sales efforts directly increase revenue. The implementation of CRM made it possible to send customers exactly the products they were interested in, which increased the conversion of letters into orders.

Table 5. Timeline of Key Marketing Activities (2013)

Quarter	Goals & Activities	Results
Q1 2013	Website launch; business media press release; participation in the *Advertising UA* trade show	First few hundred website visitors; 5 pilot orders
Q2 2013	Email campaign to *Papirus* client base; SEO optimization	10 new clients (print materials, IT blog segment)
Q3 2013	Participation in marketing conference; paid Google Ads campaign	15 B2B leads; contracts for 3 large projects
Q4 2013	New Year promotions (gift sets, seasonal discounts)	Peak seasonal demand; turnover increased by 30%

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal marketing records and CRM data.

This plan made it possible to clearly control the ROI of each channel. For example, contextual advertising quickly generated applications with a final conversion rate of about 5-7%, which was offset by sales of larger batches. At the same time, difficult sales through direct contacts (D2D sales, cold calls) were carried out, taking into account the fact that many B2B contacts (up to 90%) in this market prefer to switch to online (they search for information about the company on the Internet before making a deal).

In other words, the Brand Service team created a digitalized sales funnel. It took into account modern channels, as 85% of managers use social networks to make decisions, so LinkedIn became a platform for networking. As a result, the brand quickly became recognizable in the corporate gift segment, and customers noted the responsiveness and full range of services.

Automation of sales and accounting systems was a key element of Brand Service's approach. Right from the start, they created a centralized customer database and an internal portal for employees. They used CRM to track every transaction and integrated it with accounting to see financial indicators immediately. The automated system managed warehouse balances. For example, when goods arrived, the data was instantly updated in the database and could be seen immediately by several users from different departments (logistics, sales).

Financial accounting and reporting were also automated. Monthly reports were generated based on data from the ERP system. P&L (profit/loss) was tracked for each customer, and contract margins were analyzed, which made it possible to respond in a timely manner, for example, by changing the pricing strategy or adjusting the customer's credit limit.

An important element of accounting was the sales toolkit, where the system allowed managers to quickly generate reports on planned orders, send commercial offers to clients, and track the status of their approval. Integrated CRM/ERP systems eliminate information gaps between departments. In addition, Brand Service implemented a marketing initiative accounting in CRM.

For example, analytics automatically showed how many orders were received thanks to a specific email campaign or social network, which made it possible to abandon ineffective tactics and focus on ROI-oriented solutions. Unlike many small market players who still work manually, Brand Service guarantees fast service and turnkey reporting for corporate clients.

After establishing itself on the Ukrainian market, Brand Service planned to expand. The founder considered several scaling scenarios:

Geographical expansion;
Entry into neighboring markets where demand for promotional products is also stable. This required translating the platform and building its own network of distributors.

Expanding the product line;
The creation of the Oselia modular home line has already begun. Although the target market is different (residential real estate), the B2B sales methodology could be adapted, and customers there are looking for innovative solutions online.

This branch has been developing since 2022-2023, and there are plans to enter the US market with affordable budget homes.

New sales channels.
In 2023, Ivan founded Ukray LLC (USA) to sell promotional and souvenir products on the North American market. He personally obtained exclusive rights to sell Schneider products in the USA. The company is already registered as a Schneider brand distributor and works with American distributors through its own B2B portal. This step allows the Brand Service model to be scaled abroad. In total, Ukray LLC has attended four exhibitions, attracting more than 400 potential customers, of which about 20 are already regular buyers. In 2024, turnover in this area amounted to approximately $30,000. However, Ivan also created several jobs by hiring people who work on a 1099 basis.

The main methods of scaling involve process automation and standardization. All internal procedures are planned to be converted into templates and platforms that can be easily replicated when entering new regions. For instance, a white-label portal can be created for each new market, maintaining the core functionality while adapting only local features such as language and partnership terms. Table 6 systematizes the strategic potential of scaling the author's model to international markets by comparing key operational parameters between the regional presence in Ukraine and the projected segment in the U.S. according to the main development criteria.

Table 6. Comparative Performance Indicators for Regional Scaling

Criterion	Ukraine (2024)	U.S. (Projected)	Notes
Number of corporate clients	1,000+	200 (Phase 1)	Expected growth driven by online channels
Annual turnover (USD)	750,000	300,000	Ongoing reinvestment into business development
Profitability	15%	10%	Initial costs related to scaling operations
Annual IT investment (USD)	20,000	30,000	Development of new modules for the B2B portal

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal business data and projected estimates for U.S. operations.

It is planned that in the medium term, the Brand Service model will be adapted to the sale of any modular products. The main idea is the replicability of the solution. For example, the current platform serves not only souvenirs, but also other categories (merchandise, workwear, etc.) with minimal modifications.

It is important to note that 84% of B2B solutions start with recommendations, so Brand Service's reputation gives trading partners in national markets the confidence to work with it. As a result, Brand Service has created a template for global B2B sales, namely: an innovative platform, proven marketing, and a clear financial model.

Brand Service's experience demonstrates how a systematic approach and the implementation of technology can optimize B2B sales in various industries, including the

advertising and souvenir industry. One of the key factors for success was a clear understanding of customer needs. The focus on convenience for marketers has helped to build loyalty, with the portal independently providing the necessary information on product availability, prices, and order placement, which significantly reduces routine work on both sides. Innovation, including automation, played an important role. The transition of business processes to a digital format (using CRM/ERP systems and electronic catalogs) increased team productivity by 30-40% and yielded tangible quantitative results. Well-thought-out financial planning was also a strong aspect of the strategy. A pre-formed budget and marketing plan for the first year helped to avoid risks at critical moments. Scaling deserves special attention. Replication of the platform and business processes enabled Brand Service to enter the international arena. Today, the company is successfully operating in the Ukrainian and US markets and plans to apply

its proven model in new industries, particularly construction, in the near future. Thus, Brand Service clearly demonstrates that investments in B2B infrastructure, in particular a website portal, CRM system, and digital integration, ensure significant sales growth and stable competitive positions. The use of proven models and gradual scaling with risk minimization allowed the Brand Service team to confidently transition from a local project to an international business ecosystem.

4.2.2. "Yaknekruty" – Content Automation for E-Commerce.
It is well known that image quality has a critical impact on buyers' decisions, with 67% of online customers considering product photo quality to be "very important" [11]. On the other hand, interactive formats with increased engagement significantly increase conversion rates. Studies have shown that the use of 360° photography increases conversion to purchases by 47% and minimizes the number of returns by 15-50% [12]. Therefore, against the backdrop of the e-commerce boom in Ukraine, the market was in dire need of a fast and technologically advanced solution for content creation that combines services and cutting-edge technologies.

The response to these challenges was the Yaknekruty project, Ukraine's first fully automated studio for e-commerce product photography. In 2020, Valinchuk implemented the idea of creating a unique photo studio based on innovative ORBITVU systems, the exclusive distributor of which in Ukraine is Brand Service, providing turnkey import and customs clearance. This approach combined "content as a service" with the sale of high-tech equipment. In several years of operation, the studio has served over 250 clients (a total of about 30 launched systems), and the idea of "'Yaknekruty" has transformed into a ready-made B2B product. The combination of advanced technologies (automation) and a focus on customer needs has set a new standard for the industry.

The idea for the project was based on a systematic study of the needs of e-commerce businesses. Valinchuk noticed that traditional methods of photographing products often cannot keep up with the pace of online sales, as manual photography and lengthy image processing slow down the release of products to the market. Based on this, in 2019-2020, he conducted a series of negotiations and experiments abroad,

including familiarizing himself with the solutions offered by Orbitvu, a global leader in product photography automation. Orbitvu offers integrated studios and turntables that automatically take pictures from all sides at once [9]. For example, a motorized round table for 360° photography can rotate the product while several cameras simultaneously capture images.

Thanks to the built-in camera settings and LED lighting, each photo series comes out uniform [9]. Additionally, Orbitvu integrates the process with DAM/PIM systems, which guarantees automatic file transfer and cataloging [10].

These technological advantages solve the main problems of significantly speeding up content production and ensuring its quality. Realizing this, Valinchuk decided to import the first ORBITVU equipment to Ukraine and adapt it to the local market. He organized distribution through his own company, Brand Service (Orbitvu's official partner in Ukraine). The idea for Yaknekruty arose in response to customer demand: high-quality, fast, turnkey content without wasting the business owner's time. This is how the project was launched, combining technology with services, where the customer receives ready-made photos and 360° scenes and can also purchase a ready-made studio if desired.

The main priority in the first stage of the project was to establish a technological base. Valinchuk purchased several ORBITVU systems, such as the Alphastudio Compact studio for medium-sized items and the Alphashot Micro Pro for small and shiny items (jewelry, watches, etc.). Each system includes a motorized turntable and synchronized LED lighting, which provides a 360° series of images with automatic background removal. At the same time, the premises were equipped, computers and software were purchased, backgrounds, separate platforms, and additional lamps were installed. They also set up workstations for staff, namely a photographer, retoucher, and project manager [8]. Since ORBITVU systems support ready-made templates, team training required minimal time. Notably, since the start of the full-scale war, Brand Service has sold three high-end photo studios for a total of approximately €65,000. Table 7 summarizes the main tasks undertaken during the first year of operation, the specific actions implemented at each stage, and the resulting outcomes.

Table 7. Main Tasks and Results of the First Year of Operation

Stage	Actions	Result
Market analysis	Assessed retailer demand for fast, high-quality content; studied competitors and ORBITVU technologies.	Identified strong demand for automated product photography; developed a business plan and technical specification for the studio.
Equipment procurement	Purchased ORBITVU studios (Alphastudio, Alphashot, etc.), cameras, computers, and software.	Built a full-scale 360° photo studio infrastructure.
Process setup	Prepared workspace (backgrounds, lighting), installed and tested equipment.	Launched a standardized shooting process for packshots — consistent style and lighting across all photos.

Team formation	Hired photographer, retoucher, and project manager; trained staff on Orbitvu systems.	Formed an efficient production team with clear roles and responsibilities.
Pilot sessions	Conducted trial photo shoots using real client products to refine workflow.	Achieved first tangible results and positive client feedback, confirming the viability of the model.

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal operational records and project reports.

The table shows that the project was implemented in several stages. First, the hypothesis about customer needs was confirmed, then the tasks were formalized, and the equipment was purchased. The next step was to launch the processes and prepare the team, which made a "soft start" of the studio possible.

The key point was integration with an automated workflow. Orbitvu allows you to quickly take photos and process them immediately in the software. According to Orbitvu's marketing materials, the system performs lighting, focusing, cropping, and color correction on its own.

As a result, the Yaknekruty team receives ready-made images without any additional effort, and operators are freed from routine tasks, allowing them to immediately switch to analyzing the content and communicating with the client instead of spending time on lengthy editing.

Along with the technical launch of the project, considerable attention was paid to legal formalities. The Yaknekruty company operates as a trademark and a division of Brand Service LLC (legal form: LLC [12]). All business transactions, including sales of photography services and equipment, are carried out through an official supplier company. To ensure business transparency, a standard contract with clients for photography services, a price list, and flexible rates were prepared.

A simple document flow has been established in the course of work. For example, after shooting, the generated photos are automatically sent to the client through the CRM system, and only after full approval are changes made to the database. All acts of work performed, and invoices are issued in electronic form from the automatic accounting system.

Thanks to this, accounting for activities is carried out without delays. The costs for each job are immediately visible, and the client is provided with reports on the generated content. Business registration and documentation are maintained to high standards; for example, Yaknekruty has successfully passed all quality certification checks in accordance with Ukrainian standards. Financial calculations are made in accordance with VAT regulations, which emphasizes the transparency of the project. Finally, the studio's documentation complies with corporate standards, which simplifies further cooperation with large retailers and international partners.

The basic budget for creating Yaknekruty included investments in equipment, preparation of the premises, and start-up funds, with the main expense being innovative equipment such as the ORBITVU multi-camera studio and related devices. Estimated costs amounted to approximately 2,500–2,800 thousand UAH, which is comparable to the cost of a similar configuration in the U.S. (~$75–80 thousand, or roughly 3 million UAH at the current exchange rate). Table 8 presents a detailed breakdown of these launch costs.

Table 8. Approximate Breakdown of the Costs of Launching the Studio

Expense Category	Item	Amount (UAH)
ORBITVU equipment	Studio package (Alphastudio, Alphashot), cameras, computers	1,500,000
Consumables	Backgrounds, tables, additional lighting, props	300,000
IT & software	High-performance PCs, licensed photo-editing software	100,000
Office setup	Renovation, furniture, and office launch costs	300,000
Initial salaries	Payroll fund (3–6 months reserve for core staff)	600,000
Legal & other services	Company registration, consulting, and technical permits	50,000
Contingency	Insurance, unforeseen payments	50,000
Total	—	2,900,000

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal accounting records and market price comparisons.

As can be seen from the table, the main investments went towards purchasing equipment and furnishing the premises. This figure (≈2.9 million UAH) is in line with market analogues, as according to estimates, the initial equipment for a professional photo studio often costs $75-80 thousand (~3 million UAH) [13].

The rest of the funds were spent on creating a working environment, including repairs, furniture, and computers. The

budget text only includes actual expenses, excluding marketing (which is listed separately below). Conservative estimates were used; for example, the average cost of a one-time renovation and furnishing was 300-400 thousand UAH. The salary fund was established with a reserve to ensure smooth operations during the initial stages, specifically the first 3-6 months.

According to other sources, costs of this magnitude are typical for starting a photo studio. For example, an analysis of the American market shows that a set of cameras, lenses, and lighting equipment for a professional studio costs approximately $74,800 [14].

Thus, the launch budget for Yaknekruty (~UAH 3 million) meets the project's needs and was initially supported by the founder's own funds and reinvestment of profits from the core business.

The launch of Yaknekruty was supported by an active marketing strategy, with a total planned investment of approximately 600–700 thousand UAH for the first year. Major expenses were allocated to the development of the web platform and digital promotion, including the website with a product catalog and ordering system (~80 thousand UAH, including SEO optimization) and targeted advertising campaigns on Google Ads and Facebook Ads (~180 thousand UAH). Additional funds were directed to participation in industry events and online content creation, such as video reviews, social media promotions, and printed brochures (~50,000 UAH). Table 9 provides a detailed breakdown of these promotional investments by channel, amount, and objectives.

Table 9. Marketing Budget Breakdown for Yaknekruty Promotion

Promotion Channel	Amount(UAH)	Description / Objective
Website and CRM	80,000	Development of a catalog-based platform with SEO optimization.
Online advertising	180,000	Google and Facebook targeted campaigns (retail and agency audiences).
Trade shows and events	200,000	Participation in four industry exhibitions (Ukraine and the USA).
Social media and PR	50,000	Managing Instagram and LinkedIn pages; publishing press releases.
Printed materials	20,000	Brochures, posters, branded stickers.
Total	—	530,000

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal marketing records and industry event reports.

As we can see, the largest part of the budget (≈45%) was spent on online advertising and exhibitions, which are the chosen key channels for B2B products. The Ukrainian audience is highly digitized, with over 90% of people aged 16–44 using the internet (78% daily), so online campaigns have a wide reach [12]. At exhibitions, the company demonstrated its own equipment and filming results, which particularly strengthened trust. PR activities and content marketing helped to shape an expert image and maintain business interest.

Initial investments in the project were mainly provided by the parent company's own resources and profits. Brand Service, which has been operating since 2012, had a stable cash flow, part of which was reallocated to the development of a new direction.

In addition, in 2020–2021, the Yaknekruty team studied the possibility of state support for SMEs. There are various financing instruments available in Ukraine, even during wartime. For example, the NBU's "Affordable Loans 5-7-9%" program for small businesses (support for long-term investment loans at a rate of 5-9%) allowed for preferential loans [17]. Although the start-up capital was provided by the company itself, Yaknekruty could take advantage of loans through this program if necessary. Additional sources of financing included partner investments. For example, part of the equipment was financed by advances from the first customers (their purchase of equipment is considered deferred delivery).

In addition, in 2023, Ivan Valinchuk brought Ukray LLC in the US into the project, which invested in research on the American market for modular homes and the expansion of Yaknekruty abroad. Valinchuk created several jobs by hiring people working under 1099 contracts.

Despite the difficulties, these reserves made it possible to maintain the budget without significant external borrowing. In the future, it is planned to attract investors at later stages of expansion. Given the performance of the previous period (250 customers, increased brand awareness), such plans are realistic.

In general, funding sources include own savings, reinvestment of profits from the main business, partners, and, if necessary, credit resources (including state programs), which ensures the economic stability of the Yaknekruty project even in difficult conditions.

A multi-channel marketing approach was used to promote Yaknekruty. Online channels were the main ones, and targeted advertising on Google and social networks covered potential customers among retailers and advertising agencies. Given the level of Internet penetration (90% of Ukrainians aged 16–44 are online), content marketing was also activated, where a blog with case studies was run, product reviews were published, and the advantages of 360° photos were demonstrated. At the same time, content marketing was activated, where a blog with case studies was maintained, product reviews were published, and the advantages of 360° photos were demonstrated. This built trust among the business audience and supported SEO. The offline strategy included participation in key industry events.

Four major exhibitions in Ukraine and the U.S. provided opportunities to directly present the Yaknekruty studio to corporate clients and distributors, with emphasis on image quality and operational speed.

Partnerships, such as the collaboration with the German brand Schneider, allowed the use of ready-made gift sets as examples, while social media activity through the founder's personal Instagram and corporate pages further increased visibility by showcasing the filming process, customer reviews, and short videos (reels). Table 10 summarizes the main promotion channels, formats, and target audiences for the Yaknekruty project.

Table 10. Channels and Promotion Tools for Yaknekruty Project

Channel	Promotion Format	Target Audience
Google / Facebook Ads	Contextual and targeted advertising	Online stores, e-retailers
Trade shows & conferences	Equipment demonstrations, B2B presentations	Manufacturers, wholesale networks, marketing agencies
Content marketing	Blog posts, articles, video reviews	Business audience, digital agencies
Social media	Photo and video posts showcasing the production process	Broad e-commerce audience (Instagram, LinkedIn)
Partnerships	Co-promotion through distributors (e.g., Schneider)	Dealers of corporate gifts and promotional products

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal marketing activities and partnership records.

Thanks to this marketing strategy, Yaknekruty soon gained its first customers and reviews. The main goal was to demonstrate practical benefits, including reduced time spent on content and increased customer sales thanks to high-quality images, which built sufficient recognition for Yaknekruty. The team ensured a steady flow of orders and created the conditions for further expansion.

The key advantage of Yaknekruty lies in the complete automation of the photo production process. ORBITVU equipment embodies the concept of "from studio to final file."

After placing the product on the stand, the system performs all the steps itself:
- table rotation;
- simultaneous shooting from multiple angles;
- automatic image processing.

This way, the studio instantly generates a series of photos (packshots and 360° images) with a white background and basic color correction without human intervention. The workload for the operator is minimal, as they only need to position the product correctly and start the process. Integrated templates configure cameras and lighting, ensuring the reproducibility of each frame. After receiving the images, the system automatically saves them in the client library (integration with PIM/DAM systems provides annotation and file distribution without manual intervention).

Importantly, the built-in software imports images into the client's ERP/CRM, which means that products with new content immediately appear on the website or in marketplaces. The entire chain, from shooting to finished publication, takes place with almost no manual editing. From an accounting perspective, this has clear advantages. The system keeps an automatic log of the shoot (which products, when, and how many shots were taken), which allows you to accurately calculate the cost of the order based on the list of finished content. Financially, this is reflected in a single document, since after the session is completed, an invoice is generated for payment based on the photo package provided.

The "content as a service" business model plus equipment sales is transparent, as the customer immediately assesses the "cost/quality" ratio. Automation has also reduced operating costs. Orbitvu's experience shows that about 95% of routine editing tasks can be performed by the system. At Yaknekruty, these capabilities have been fully utilized, as the photographer only takes care of staging the shots, while processing (background removal, cropping, file renaming) is done automatically.

This saves working time, but also evens out the quality of the content. Thanks to comprehensive automation, Yaknekruty's content pipeline is extremely efficient. The team handles many orders in parallel, and detailed accounting allows them to identify any deviations in production

processes. This approach meets the highest international standards for automated photography and has become an important factor in the studio's rapid growth.

From the outset, the Yaknekruti model was designed for scalability. First, the process is easy to replicate technologically, as adding new ORBITVU stations allows production volumes to be increased in proportion to the amount of equipment. As the manufacturer notes, if you need to shoot more products, you just need to install an additional system and copy the settings templates. This means that adding a second studio gives you almost double the result without requiring significantly more staff. Second, the concept of combining "content as a service" with the sale of ready-made solutions gives the project a B2B character. Over the first three years, the studio served 250 clients (more than 30 regular partners), which in itself is a result of the service's scalability. At the same time, Orbitvu's experience confirms that "copying" the studio using templates makes it easy to enter new markets. This approach has proven viable in Ukraine, and now Yaknekruty is preparing to go abroad. The next stage is to export the concept to the US. The first content clients and partners are already in place there.

"Yaknekruty" demonstrates how technological breakthroughs in visual content can take ordinary e-commerce businesses to a new level. Valinchuk's project brought together the best of the industry, solving pressing customer problems (speed and photo quality) with cutting-edge technology (Orbitvu automated studios). As a result, Ukrainian retailers received a standardized "content as a service" offering that delivers a tangible increase in sales, proving to the world that a consistent system of high-quality images directly increases conversion and builds customer trust. Entrepreneur Ivan Valinchuk applied a systematic approach, where each stage of the launch of Yaknekruty was optimized to ensure further growth. Thanks to automation and scaling, the studio has a clear expansion plan. By working out business processes and marketing, the team has created a solid foundation for expansion. It is already clear that Yaknekruty is setting the standard for the e-commerce content market in Ukraine. The innovations implemented make the brand competitive locally and globally, which is fully in line with current industry requirements and the goal of expansion in the US.

4.2.3. Ukray LLC – hybrid expansion of the model into the US market

The idea for Ukray LLC arose at the intersection of several factors. First, Brand Service's experience provided a clear B2B sales operating model, technology stack, and trained mindset. Second, an exclusive contract with Schneider (over 100 souvenir items) provided a ready-made catalog and a competitive advantage over local distributors, for whom imported brands were a desirable novelty. Third, there was a financial need. Therefore, a hybrid solution was adopted. For example, in parallel with the development of the B2B project, a passive model was launched, such as a car fleet for the TURO platform (analogous to the Ukrainian Gett), which allowed immediate earnings from car rentals.

At the end of its first year, Ukray LLC visited four leading industry exhibitions in the US (e.g., for souvenirs and the automotive market) — an important channel for leads (B2B). In total, about 400 leads were obtained from potential customers, of which ≈20 (5%) became active customers. Car sharing on the Turo platform provided stable income, so by the end of 2024, the company's fleet consisted of >30 cars serving ≈1,000 rental customers, and annual revenue from car rentals amounted to ~$190,000 (See Table 11).

The idea was to gradually balance short-term liquidity (income from TURO) and long-term B2B strategy (Schneider). Instead of maintaining large inventories and extensive warehouse facilities, an MVP (Minimum Viable Product) approach was adopted. This strategy involved a minimal initial inventory from Schneider (approximately $45,000), the implementation of dropshipping protocols, and the utilization of display batches for initial transactions. At the same time, a basic organizational system was created, where a bank account was opened, legal documents were adapted to US requirements, and contracts with Schneider and customers were concluded in English (taking into account local laws on returns, warranties, import labeling, etc.). Everything was brought into a simple LLC organizational structure, as they usually have a flexible tax system and do not require separate boards of directors or NBU regulation.

During its first year after launch, Ukray LLC accomplished the following key tasks:

- Registration and legal matters. The LLC form was chosen, a business account was opened, and an EIN (tax identification number) was obtained. Supply contracts with Schneider and standard invoices and return policies were prepared.
- Participation in exhibitions included four major B2B events in the United States (focusing on souvenir and automotive themes), where direct communication with distributors and large corporate clients facilitated price testing and the gathering of feedback. In total, out of approximately 400 leads collected, about 20 were converted into customers, representing a conversion rate of ~5%.
- Launch of the MVP portal. A basic version of the online platform for distributors was created: Schneider product catalog, stock availability (for the first batch), online ordering, and automatic generation of commercial offers. The platform is focused on wholesale purchases. Thanks to the automation of CP and invoice generation, it was possible to reduce the workload on managers when processing requests.

- Development of the vehicle fleet (TURO). For a quick return on investment, the company purchased 10 used cars (mainly economy and mid-range models), set up insurance procedures (separate from the B2B segment), and maintenance mechanics. At the same time, customer service processes were established through the TURO self-service platform. Now the company consistently receives monthly rental income (≈$5–7K/month per car).

- Hiring staff, including forming a minimal team, namely two sales managers for B2B sales, one operations manager (fleet manager), and an accountant.

Table 11 summarizes the key performance indicators (KPIs) and first-year results for Ukray LLC, highlighting legal setup, trade show outcomes, portal launch, fleet expansion, and distributor relations.

Table 11. Key Performance Indicators and First-Year Results for Ukray LLC

Action	KPI (Target)	Result
LLC registration and legal setup	LLC registered; bank account opened	Ukray LLC has successfully established itself in the U.S.; a business bank account has been opened.
Trade shows (4 events)	≥300 leads; ≥10% conversion rate	~400 leads collected; ~20 clients acquired (≈5% conversion)
MVP portal launch	Launch within 3 months	Portal launched: catalog online, quotation (CPQ) feature fully functional
TURO fleet expansion	30+ vehicles; 1,000+ customers	Fleet of 30+ vehicles; >1,000 customers; $190K revenue (2024)
Distributor relations	Exclusive contract with Schneider	Exclusive distribution contract signed

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal company records and operational reports.

It is noteworthy that trade shows yielded immediate results, although hundreds of contacts were received. The most effective channel for B2B engagement proved to be LinkedIn and direct communications, aligning with analytical suggestions that up to 94% of B2B decisions are made using omnichannel strategies.

However, exhibitions provided an opportunity to instantly establish a professional reputation; the personal demonstration of Schneider's quality and service effectively shortened the credibility-building cycle prior to the commencement of procurement.

The vehicle fleet at TURO functioned as a financial buffer, where regular cash flow allowed the business to withstand seasonal fluctuations and avoid the immediate necessity for large-scale loans. In general, the combination of immediate liquidity from car-sharing operations and long-term B2B distribution proved to be an effective strategy for establishing a business in a new environment.

When creating Ukray LLC, two key principles were followed: simplicity of structure and readiness for scaling. The LLC form is standard for small companies in the US because it avoids double taxation (income goes through the owner's tax return) and has no minimum capital or board of directors requirements.

The procedure included submitting registration documents to the state with the best tax conditions, getting an Employer Identification Number, and opening a business account at an American bank.

Document flow is organized in modules:
Commercial documents
English-language agreements with Schneider and distributors, official invoices, and bills. All contracts provide for standard terms of payment and delivery.

Financial documents
Standard invoices, bank statements, and accounting records (P&L reports are prepared monthly). The budget is monitored consistently: plan-fact analysis helps to adjust expenses in a timely manner.

Operational procedures
Approved SLAs for delivery of goods, return instructions, fleet regulations (maintenance, insurance).

Internal reporting
Monthly reports by sales channel (number of deals from the web portal, LinkedIn, exhibitions), annual financial KPIs, etc.

Particular attention was paid to regulatory compliance: in the automotive sector, compliance with insurance requirements and TURO regulations (key prohibition: no "retail," only rental); in the goods sector, customs declarations and labeling standards for imported souvenirs. The business is completely legal, which allows contracts to be concluded with American companies without risk. Table 12 presents the estimated start-up costs for the first 6–12 months of operation, including registration, portal development, initial inventory, trade shows, office setup, marketing, payroll, fleet acquisition, insurance, and other operational expenses.

Table 12. Estimated Start-Up Costs for Ukray LLC (First 6–12 Months)

Expense Item	Amount (USD)
Registration, legal, and tax services	3,500
Website & B2B portal (development)	25,000
Initial Schneider inventory	45,000
Trade shows (4 major events)	40,000
Warehouse/fulfillment setup	18,000
Office and equipment (initial)	6,000
Marketing (initial campaigns)	25,000
Payroll fund (3 months, 3 staff)	45,000
TURO fleet (10 used vehicles)	180,000
Insurance (fleet + business)	18,000
Vehicle maintenance reserve	20,000
CRM / ERP / accounting systems	12,000
Logistics & delivery (6 months)	10,000
Subtotal	447,500
Contingency (10%)	44,750
Total	492,250

Source: Compiled by the author based on internal financial planning and market research.

So, here is a summary of Ukray LLC's financing structure. Approximately 40% is own funds and reinvested profits, 30% is short-term bank loans/credit lines, 20% is supplier terms (Schneider credit), and 10% is investors/grants. This distribution ensures adequate liquidity while minimizing the cost of capital at the start. The main source of income now is the company's own vehicle fleet, and the long-term plan is to expand Schneider's B2B sales and scale the model across North America.

Key takeaways from Ukray LLC's experience. First, the Ukrainian model of digitized B2B sales, which has proven effective in the domestic market (1,000+ Brand Service customers), adapts well to the American reality by adjusting marketing and operational channels. Second, a hybrid strategy (combining quick revenues from TURO and a long-term strategy with Schneider) reduces risks and ensures financial stability.

Ukray LLC demonstrates how Ukrainian entrepreneurial expertise and Brand Service's "proven model" have been successfully implemented in the United States. The transfer of technological solutions (B2B portal, CRM, accounting systems) and marketing approaches (online orientation, participation in trade shows) ensured a successful start. The company operates in two markets: Ukraine and the US, and plans to double its product line.

Limitations and Discussion of Potential Biases A critical limitation of this study is its concentration on the activities of a single entrepreneur and a specific group of companies, which may limit the generalizability of the results to larger corporate structures or different cultural contexts.

Furthermore, because the study analyzes the founder's own business model, the potential for success bias must be acknowledged. These factors were mitigated by utilizing objective, quantitative KPIs and cross-referencing findings with external market data. Future research involving multi-case studies across diverse industries would further validate the scalability of the DTOE-based model.

5. Conclusion

The final section of this methodology summarizes the findings and once again draws attention to the epochal importance and uniqueness of Ivan Valinchuk's authorial model of digital transformation of B2B sales in the souvenir industry.

Summarizing the theoretical foundations and practical recommendations presented, the systematic development and implementation of this methodology led to results that were unprecedented in the respective field. The essence of his unique contribution lies not only in the introduction of new technologies, but also in their deep, holistic integration, which has changed the very business logic of the promotional industry.

Prior to the introduction of this model, B2B sales had linear scalability, dependent on the manual labor of managers, and significant time delays, with commercial proposals taking hours or even days to prepare. In contrast, Valinchuk's model provides exponential scalability, thanks to which Brand Service LLC achieved a turnover of $750,000 with a minimal team of 5-6 employees and, more importantly, converted up to 90% of new orders into incoming applications. The author's model has successfully passed practical testing and serves as a benchmark for the entire market.

Its foundation was an innovative decision for 2012, the creation of a dedicated B2B portal, which was the first in the industry to include Real-Time Inventory, providing customers with immediate information about availability, stock, and future deliveries, which was unprecedented for local SMEs. This openness met the main need of B2B customers for a fast and high-quality sales process, which, as we know, is more important than just the price of the product. The next key step that ensured further scalability was the creation of the Yaknekruty photo studio in 2020. This integration solved a painful point in content marketing, allowing 360-degree content to be generated for over 150 products daily, reducing content production costs by 90%. The culmination was the introduction of a real-time quoting (CPQ) feature that allows you to create a final commercial offer for dozens of items in just 5 seconds. In fact, the contribution presented in the manual has a broader systemic impact. It optimizes the internal processes of a specific business and changes customer service standards across the entire promotional industry, increases the competitiveness of digital businesses, and stimulates further innovation.

This model demonstrates that, thanks to strategic automation and an innovative approach, small and medium-sized enterprises can outperform large companies in terms of speed and efficiency, even in highly competitive markets. This is confirmed by plans to scale the model to the US market (Ukray LLC), where it is focused on providing white-label solutions to thousands of distributors. The innovation is original because it was developed by Ivan Valinchuk based on his own entrepreneurial experience (the DTOE principle) and had no analogues in the local market in 2012, when the first automated photo studio was launched in Ukraine. Its significance lies in its practical results: exponential growth in turnover with a minimum number of employees and the creation of a universal, reproducible methodology that can serve as a benchmark for the development of the industry.

This study focused on a specific model of digital transformation within the promotional and souvenir industry; however, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the scope of the research was concentrated on a single entrepreneurial case involving Brand Service LLC and Ukray LLC. While the DTOE framework allowed for a systematic analysis, the reliance on a localized group of companies may limit the immediate generalizability of the findings to larger multinational corporations or different modular product industries with more rigid hierarchical structures. Second, as the data originated from the author's primary business operations, the potential for success bias (the tendency to report successful outcomes over failures) was addressed by utilizing objective, verifiable quantitative KPIs. Third, regional factors, such as the specific e-commerce growth rates in Eastern Europe and the unique legal environment of the U.S. souvenir market, may influence the reproducibility of the results in other geographical contexts. Future research should involve a multi-case study approach across diverse sectors to further validate the cross-industry scalability of the integrated content-CPQ ecosystem.

Conflicts of Interest

Funding Statement

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