

SMB Buying Guide

Simplify buying to support growth

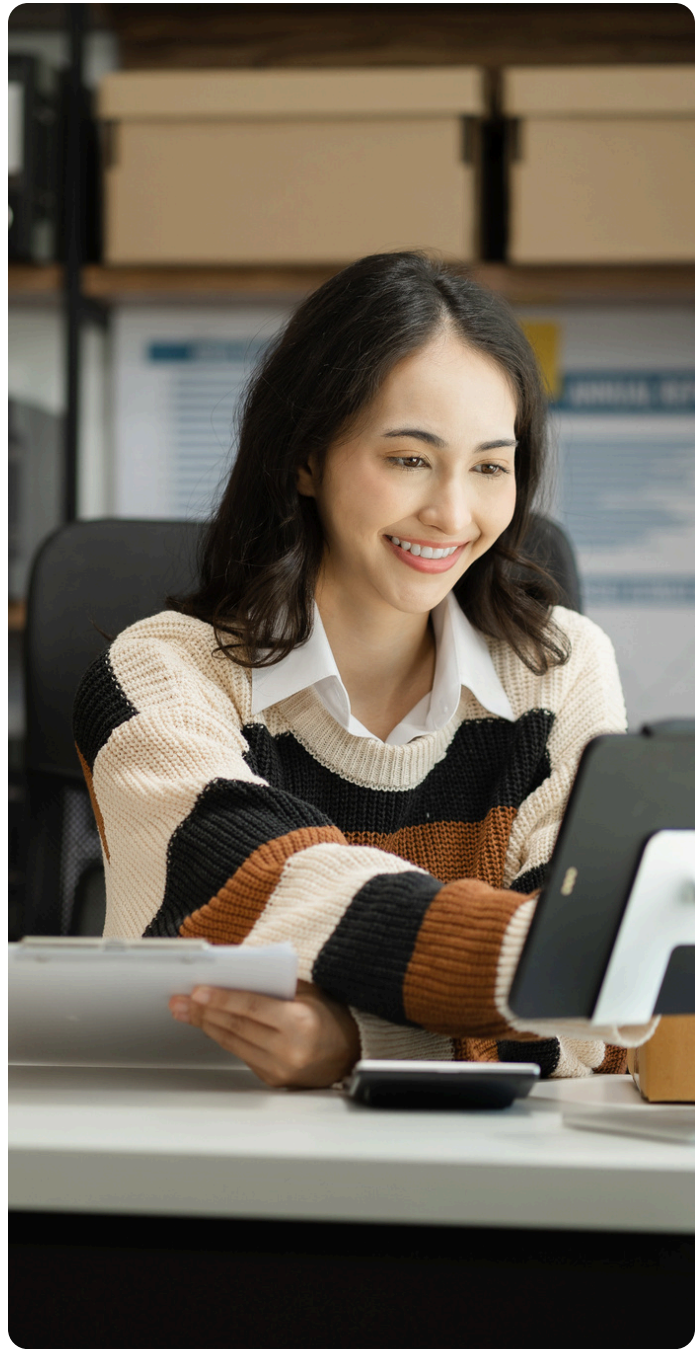
amazon business

Introduction

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) continue to navigate higher costs, tighter margins, and growing pressure to make every dollar count. Purchasing, often overlooked in the past, is now a key area for SMBs looking to improve efficiency and manage costs without sacrificing quality.

As product prices and supplier expectations evolve, businesses are being more intentional about how they buy. Many are reviewing who they buy from, how purchases are tracked, and whether teams are following the same steps every time. Without a clearly defined process, it's easy to overspend, reorder items by mistake, or miss out on better pricing.

This guide is designed to help SMBs build a simple, effective approach to purchasing. Whether you're managing procurement part-time as one of your many responsibilities or improving an existing system, here are steps that can help you take better control of spending, stay organized, and get more value from your vendor relationships.



Top procurement initiatives for SMBs

SMBs are focusing on three essential procurement needs: controlling costs, gaining clear visibility into spending, and simplifying the purchasing process. Managing costs protects margins, better insights inform smarter purchasing decisions, and simplifying buying reduces errors while maintaining purchasing standards.

Consistency in purchasing

Inconsistent purchasing creates challenges for SMBs. When teams follow different buying processes—or no process at all— it can lead to duplicate orders, approval delays, and added expenses. Without standardized steps for ordering and tracking, SMBs may end up spending extra time correcting mistakes and reconciling purchases instead of focusing on growing the business.

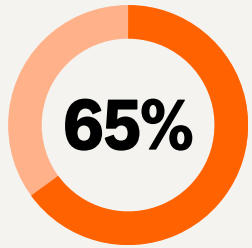
Managing costs

Rising cost pressures are pushing SMBs to rethink how they buy. Many struggle with unpredictable pricing, scattered purchases across various suppliers, and missed opportunities for savings. Without strategic supplier relationships and optimized purchasing, companies may pay more than necessary. They may also find it harder to negotiate better pricing, secure volume discounts, or take advantage of flexible payment and shipping options that could reduce costs.

Visibility into spending

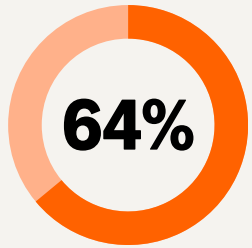
A major challenge for SMBs is limited visibility into their spending data. Many businesses rely on email threads and spreadsheets and use a variety of suppliers, making it harder to get a clear picture of their spending. According to a recent survey by S&P Market Intelligence, only 19% of SMBs report making heavily data-driven decisions[1]. This lack of data insight makes it difficult to track spending across departments or identify available cost-saving opportunities.

1. How Small Businesses Compete with Data Analytics and AI, S&P Market Intelligence Survey, 2024.



of procurement professionals identified cost control as their top priority

Source: 2024 PwC Digital Procurement Survey



of decision-makers identified improving data and insights as another top priority

Source: 2025 State of Procurement Report



Your guide to buying

Simplify team purchasing

For many SMBs, purchasing often falls under the responsibility of employees who wear multiple hats, such as office managers, operations leads, or leaders themselves. As a result, the process needs to be simple and fast for procurement teams and easy to follow for users. Digital procurement tools can also help track spending, improve communication, and provide a centralized place to access vendors and data. By setting up internal buying policies and workflows in place, SMBs can manage business purchases, spot savings, and maintain control, all while keeping the process straightforward. A digital-forward solution can help streamline, boost operational efficiency, and keep teams organized.

Track and review spending

Growing businesses need visibility into their spending to maintain financial health and resilience. Purchasing analytics tools provide insights into spending patterns, key suppliers, and savings opportunities. With real-time reports, businesses can track monthly purchases, category spend, and shipping costs. For SMBs, these tools turn spending data into practical cost-saving decisions, help them anticipate needs, and plan for growth.



Amazon Business has the most robust reporting system for analyzing and understanding our spend and business, allowing for much less manual analyzation on our part. Time spent by our stores on ordering.. has gone down significantly, too. We are saving hours in payroll each month.

Rachel Jacobs, Operations Manager, The Paper Store

Your guide to buying (cont'd)

Keep the process consistent

A consistent purchasing process improves operational efficiency and reduces common purchasing errors like understocking and unauthorized spending. Digital tools like Business Lists help SMBs streamline reordering by allowing buyers to store frequently purchased items, making it easy to quickly reorder and maintain consistency. Additionally, Approval Workflows helps ensure that only authorized purchases are made by routing approvals through designated decision makers.

Set clear purchasing guidelines: who can buy, how requests are submitted, and who approves them. Moreover, using a single business purchasing account with the ability to add multiple users allows SMBs to track purchases, reconcile transactions, and monitor delivery status in one place, keeping everything organized. This reduces communication delays, improves spend oversight, and minimizes process confusion.

This approach not only makes onboarding new employees easier, but also helps mitigate errors, save time, and lead to more predictable purchasing outcomes.



The fact that Amazon Business saves even more than a personal Prime account is the absolute best part about the program, hands down. Layer in the ability...to have assigned ordering permissions for your employees, and to have multiple locations under one login, and you save time and money.

Kristin Kidd, COO,
Head to Toe Brands

Your guide to buying (cont'd)

Adapt to economic shifts

SMBs are often affected by broader economic changes, such as fluctuations in market demand, shifts in commodity prices, or changes in supply chain dynamics. Having a flexible purchasing process enables businesses to quickly adjust to these changes and maintain continuity in operations.

Having access to an extensive network of vendors in one centralized location provides SMBs with the flexibility to find alternatives when needed. This approach reduces reliance on a single supplier or needing to go to multiple sources and helps ensure business operations and growth are not affected by changes in supply availability. It is also important for businesses to identify backup suppliers for critical products in advance, allowing for quicker adaptation when circumstances change.

Regularly reviewing supplier relationships, including pricing, lead times, and service levels, helps SMBs stay ahead of potential challenges. By building a purchasing process that is both adaptable and proactive, businesses can position themselves to handle changes in the economic environment without sacrificing control over spending or efficiency.



Consolidate supplier selection

Amazon Business does the hard work of vendor management, bringing together hundreds of thousands of sellers competing to offer a wide selection of products at competitive prices, all with the reliable and convenient delivery experience you are used to from Amazon.



AGILE ROBOTS

In some commodities, [with Amazon Business], we do see a drop in costs and improvement on availability and lead times in particular in electronics."

Sascha Holtke-Tuchtfeld, Head of Procurement and Supply Chain Management,
Agile Robots



Three steps on how to start simplifying buying for work

1. Implement a digital purchasing solution that can seamlessly integrate with your e-procurement system.

2. Utilize a solution that meets multiple supply needs, and is familiar, convenient, and intuitive for your users.

3. Set up ways to order, receive, and reconcile faster, so you can focus on what matters most.



Three steps to control costs

1. Review your purchasing history and buying trends to identify recurring costs. Look for opportunities to consolidate purchases or discover better pricing.

2. Simplify how purchases are made by creating clear guidelines and using tools that help reduce manual processes. This reduces mistakes, saves time, and helps everyone follow the same steps.

3. Focus on building long-term relationships with a smaller group of reliable suppliers. This can lead to more savings, consistent quality, and stronger partnerships.



Three steps to strengthen your purchasing policies

1. Define purchase approval rules by setting clear guidelines for who can approve purchases and when.

2. Standardize the process through creating consistent steps for submitting, reviewing, and tracking purchases.

3. Regularly review and adjust your policies to ensure they align with business needs and purchasing compliance requirements.

Get more value and grow your business with smart business buying

With the value, convenience, and features of Amazon Business, SMBs are making smart purchasing decisions that simplifies procurement, controls costs, and support business growth.



Quantity Discounts

Access business-only pricing and take advantage of Quantity Discounts on millions of products.



Request for Quote

Get custom offers tailored to your business needs and gain typical savings of 5% or more.



Budget Management

Set spend thresholds for your buyers and avoid the risk of overspending.



Pay by Invoice

Improve your cash flow with more flexible payment terms and digital invoices. Subject to credit approval.



Account management

Add multiple users, manage permissions, and create buying groups for added efficiency and visibility.



Approval Workflows

Create multi-tiered approval workflows to approve every purchase or only those above a set threshold.



Amazon Business Analytics

Access multiple reports, such as orders and returns, to better forecast the volume of supplies needed for your business.



Business Lists

Create lists of frequently purchased items and reorder from these lists easily and efficiently.



Buying policies

Define policies to prefer or restrict sellers and steer buyers to products that fit business needs.

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Get started today

Sign up for a free business account to uncover valuable insights on your business's buying behavior and discover where to cut costs, increase efficiency, and drive growth amid economic changes.
To learn more, visit **business.amazon.com/smallbusiness**.