

Digital Twins and customer success in B2B settings: Related or not related?

Roberto Mora Cortez
Southern Denmark University
Michel Van der Borgh
Copenhagen Business School

Cite as:

Mora Cortez Roberto, Van der Borgh Michel (2026), Digital Twins and customer success in B2B settings: Related or not related?. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (132295)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



Digital Twins and customer success in B2B settings: Related or not related?

Abstract

Digital twins (DTs) are widely recognized as post-deployment technologies for optimizing operations and enhancing value-in-use. Yet this narrow framing creates a critical blind spot: their potential as pre-deployment sales tools remains largely unexplored. As a result, sales functions are often excluded from DT development, despite high potential of DT's use in value tangibilization and customer persuasion. This study investigates the underleveraged potential of digital twins in B2B sales and customer success. Study 1, based on in-depth workshops with industry practitioners ($n = 15$), reveals a functional misalignment in expectations: while R&D and Marketing view DTs as performance enablers, Sales struggles to see their relevance in the sales process. Study 2, using a dyadic dataset of supplier executives and customers ($n = 429$), shows that companies generally do not see benefits for sales when using DT, and that DT use significantly predicts realized customer success if (1) the CEO has a marketing orientation and (2) instills a data-driven decision making culture. Study 3 ($n = 800$), a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ factorial experiment, shows that using DTs during the sales process increases customer purchase intention by making future value more tangible. Together, the findings reveal a missed strategic opportunity: digital twins not only create value-in-use, but also anticipate value in the sales phase. The authors discuss implications for solution suppliers and identify areas for further research.

Track: Business-To-Business Marketing & Supply Chain Management