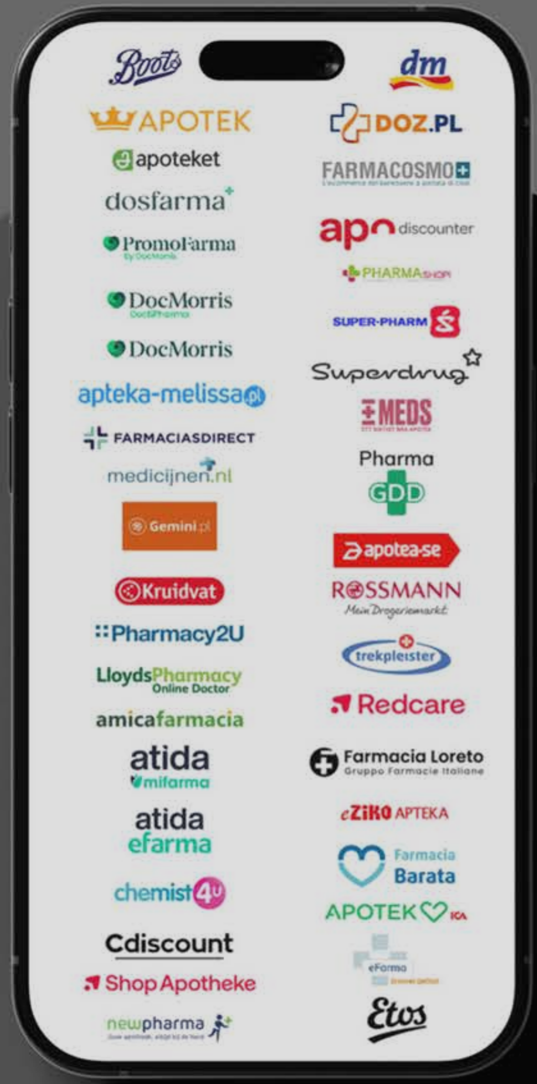
Europe's Top 40 OTC eCommerce Platforms

- Key Players shaping the industry
- Surprising Patterns to know
- Why to be cautious with Pan-EU Negotiations



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EU OTC eCom Retail Landscape: Scope

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We analyzed the top eCom platforms selling OTC products in Europe's 8 leading eCom countries. Each player was scrutinized using 200+ factors to objectively measure their capabilities and true footprint in their respective countries.

Countries Analyzed

Players Analyzed

Players were identified based on their organic search ranking for key OTC terms, as well as the traffic to their platform. Amazon entities were excluded, as the importance of the platform is clearly known in all analyzed countries.

Watersky Digital is a Hamburg-based consultancy specializing in Digital Marketing Benchmarking. We constantly analyze brands and eCom platforms across the world to create actionable guidance on where and how to meaningfully optimize your eCom presence.

selected clients:

Analytical Methodology

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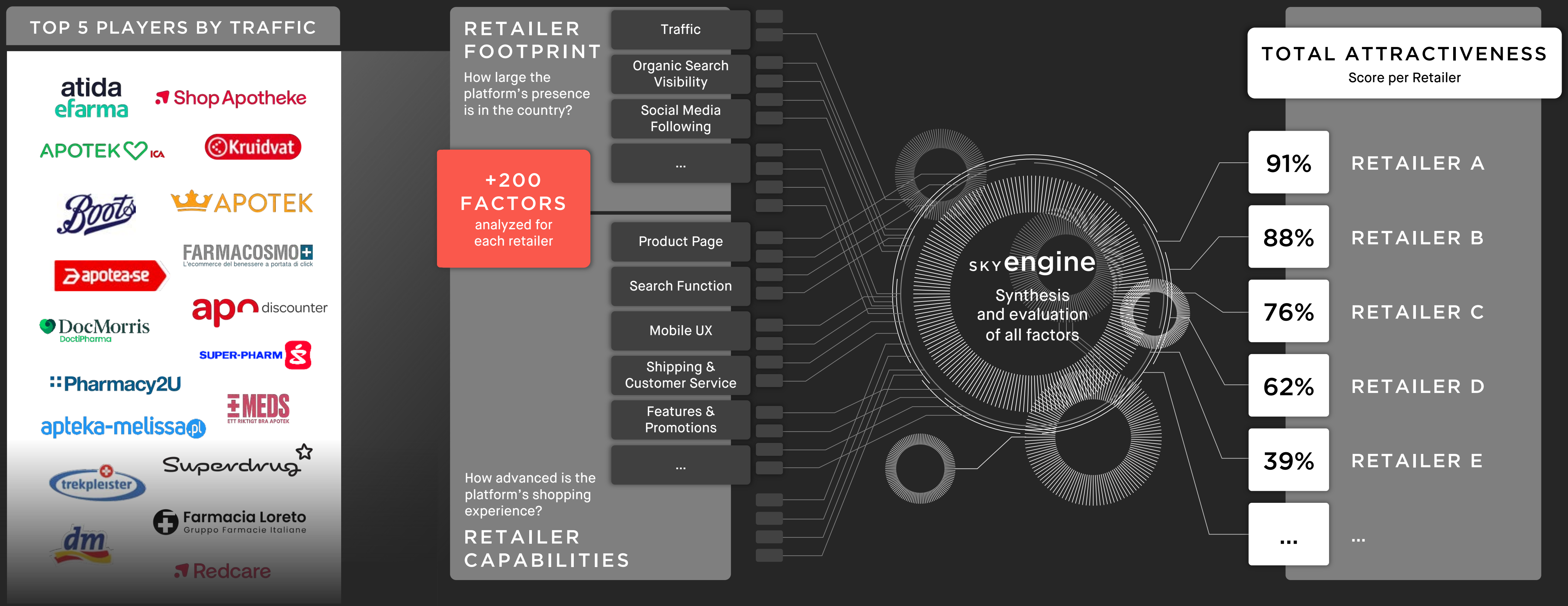
Our Database includes hundreds of eCom retailers & marketplaces from across the globe, which are benchmarked against each other, to uncover how important they truly are in their country and category.

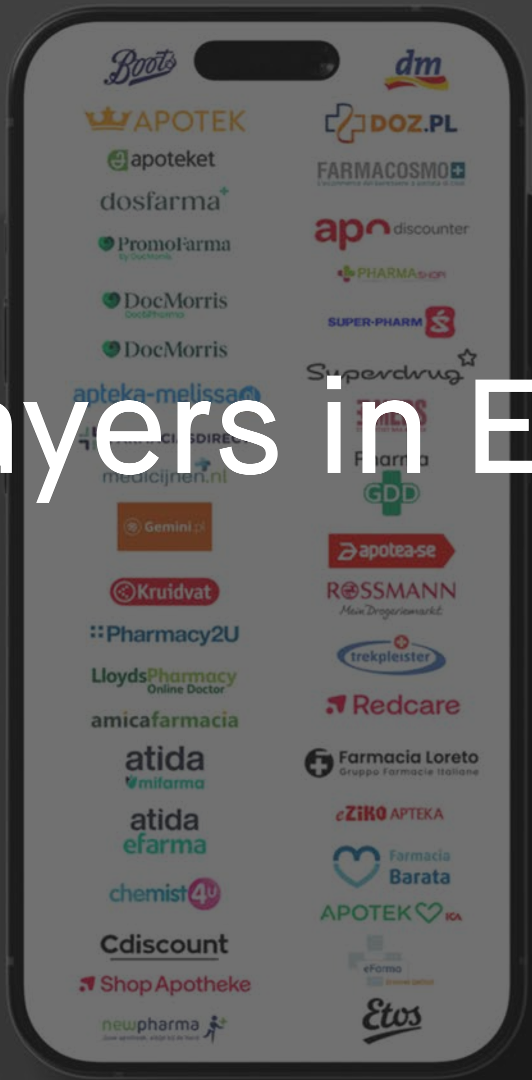
For this, Watersky Digital's proprietary analytics engine combines **quantitative data** from 30+ tools with **qualitative** expert assessments of the platforms' UX, Shopping Experience, Customer Service, etc.

All values are then compared against the **220.000+ datapoints** in Watersky's database, to objectively judge how good each player is on each individual metric.

Methodology:



1 Market Overview: Top 40 OTC eCom Players in Europe



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Market Overview

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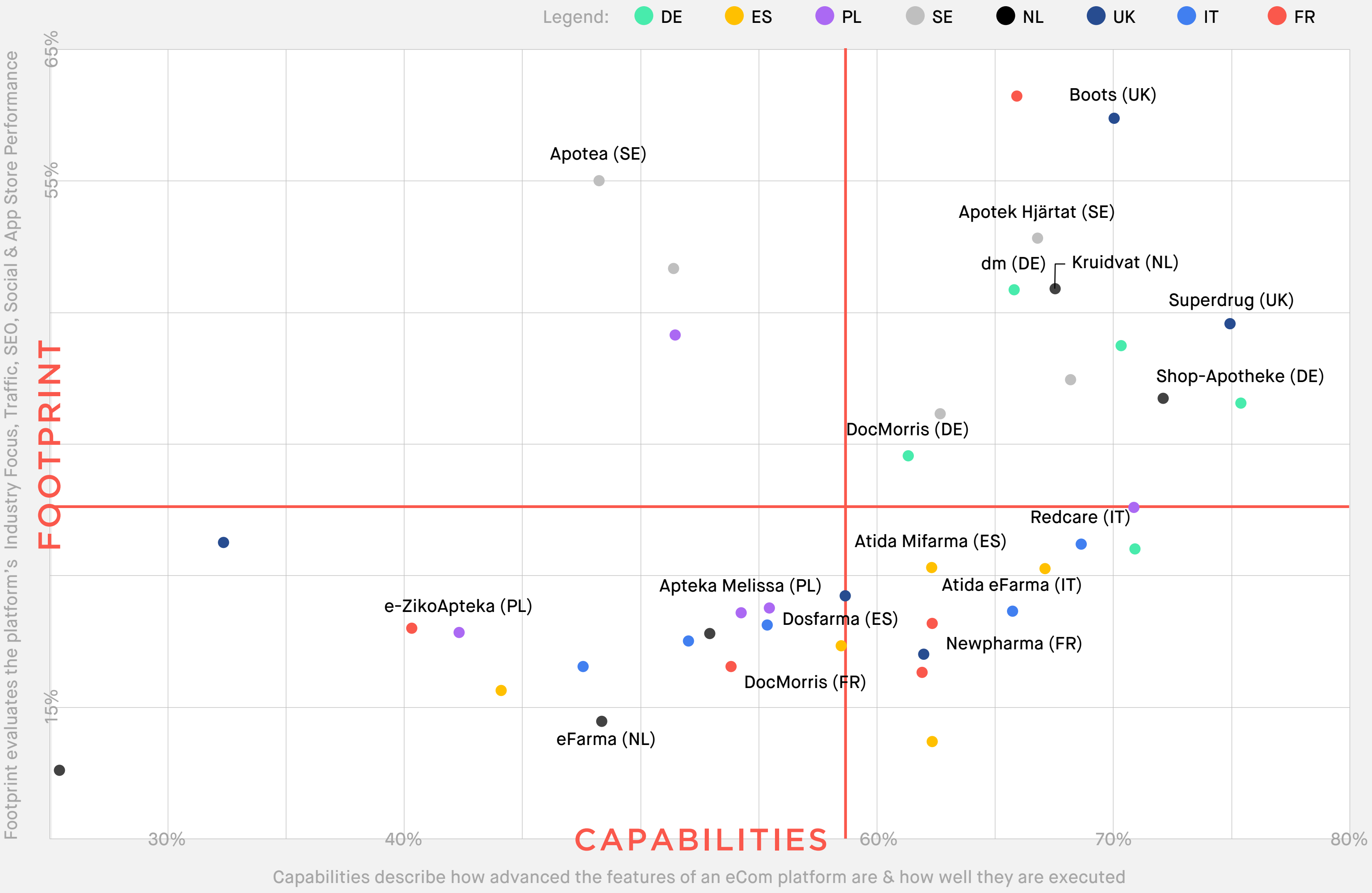
Digital Maturity varies Greatly within Europe

This eCom landscape overview shows how the top eCom players in each country perform in terms of footprint (reach potential) and platform capabilities (conversion potential). All values were normalized to allow cross-country comparison.



Footprint: Great Divide between Countries

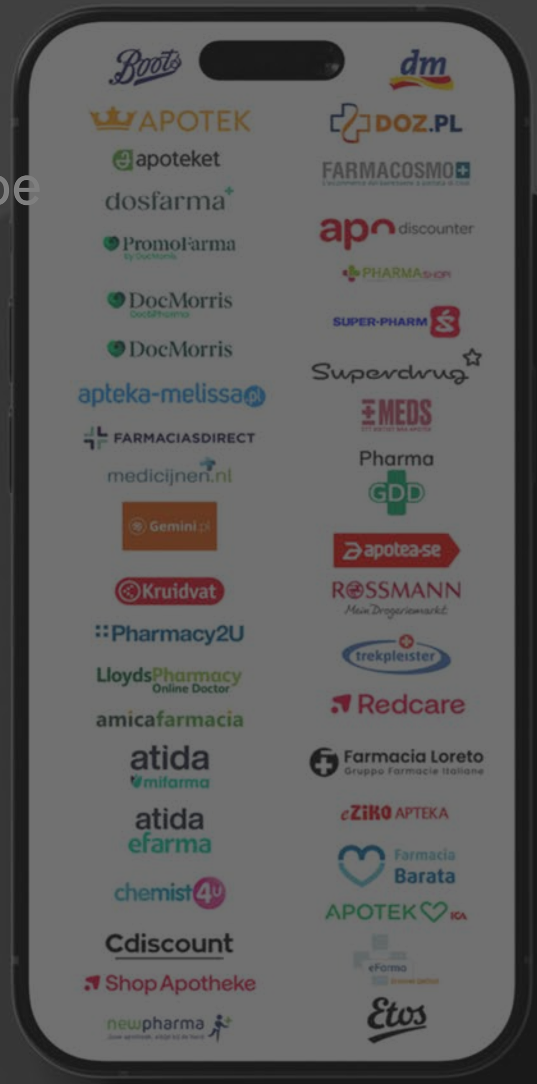
The upper half of the matrix is dominated by high-performing players mainly from Germany, Sweden, the UK, and the Netherlands.
This means these players have achieved a significantly higher penetration of their home markets, than their counterparts abroad.

Capabilities: Strong Players in every Country

Unlike the previous dimension, every country featured several players with above-average capabilities (right of the red vertical line). This shows that advanced shopping capabilities are now a must in OTC eCommerce and no longer a "nice to have" reserved for classical eCom categories, like fashion.

ePharmacies (can) beat Drugstores

ePharmacies (online-only pharmacies) can't do attractive eCommerce? Far from true! The top quadrant (top right) features a solid number of ePharmacies that perform on par or even outperform drugstores in their markets.
However, the vast majority of ePharmacies do not realize this potential, yet.



Boots
dm
APOTEK
DOZ.PL
apoteket
dosfarma
FARMACOSMO
PromoFarma
apo discounter
PHARMAshop
DocMorris
SUPER-PHARM
DocMorris
Superdrug
apteka-melissa
MEDS
FARMACIASDIRECT
medicijnen.nl
Pharma GDD
Gemini
apotea.se
Kruidvat
ROSSMANN
Pharmacy2U
trekpleister
LloydsPharmacy Online Doctor
Redcare
amicafarmacia
atida mifarma
Farmacia Loreto
atida efarma
eZiKO APTEKA
chemist4u
Farmacia Barata
Cdiscount
APOTEK
Shop Apotheke
newpharma
Etos

Impact of Differences in eCom Maturity & Market Concentration

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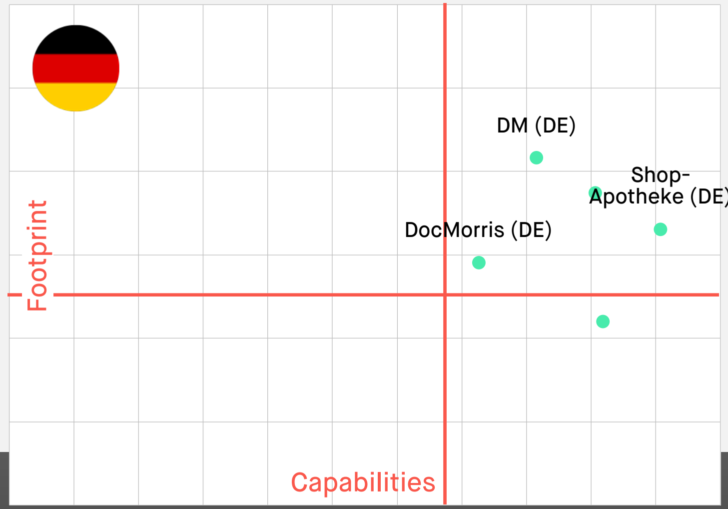
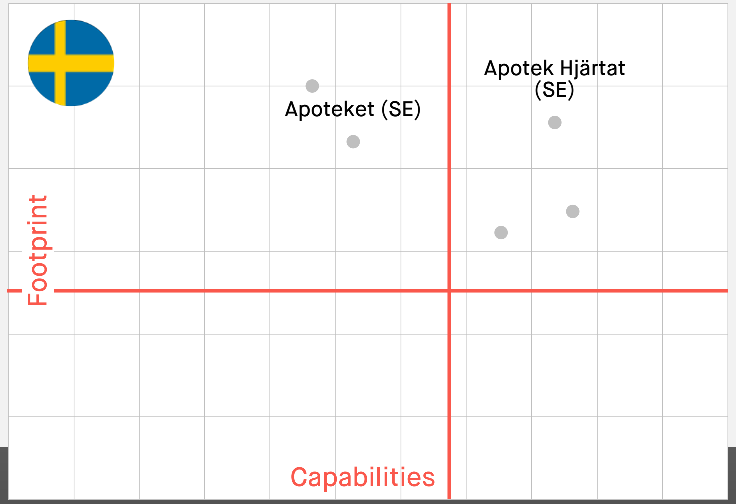
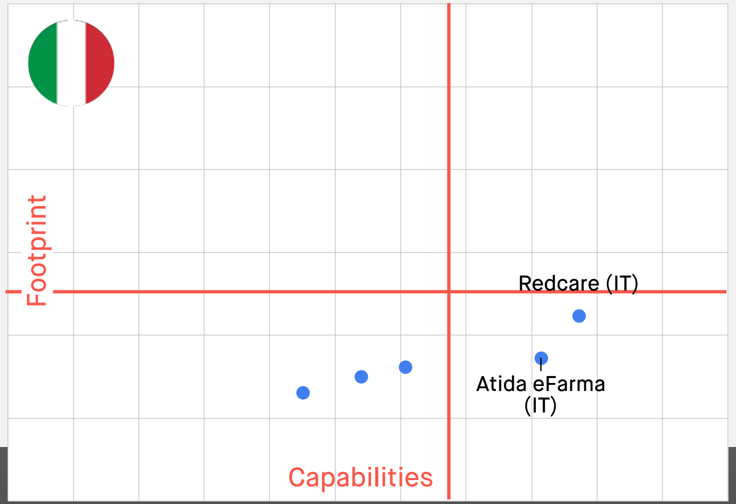
Is it enough to only work with the biggest player in a country? Do you always need to invest in the most advanced eCom capabilities?
The answer to this varies strongly, depending on each country's eCom landscape:







Germany: Highly Competitive & Advanced Market

Highly competitive market where all top 5 players have a solid footprint in the market and strong eCom capabilities.

While drugstores like dm dominate in terms of footprint, ShopApotheke (ePharmacy) clearly leads in terms of capabilities.

Impact

working with both ePharmacies and drugstores is essential (for categories eligible to do so, e.g. nutritionals). However, make sure to reflect the differences in footprint when negotiating with them (e.g. ShopApotheke vs. DocMorris).

Sweden: Highly Concentrated eCom Market

A highly concentrated market, in which the top 5 players all hold a significant share of the market (high footprint).

Unlike Germany, the market is dominated by different types of Pharmacies - Apotea (Online Only) and Apotek Hjärtat (Omnichannel) - who, however, differ strongly in terms of their platform capabilities.

Impact

This market can be penetrated while working with a just few players. These can be seen as strategic counterweights against each other, as they have a similar footprint in the eCom market (unlike offline).

Italy: Fragmented & Less Advanced Market

None of the top 5 players hold a dominant foothold in the market. In fact, the smallest of the 5 players generates only around 500,000 unique visitors per month.

Interestingly, Redcare and Atida eFarma are significantly more capable than their competitors but only feature a slightly higher footprint. Hence, don't be blinded by their capabilities when negotiating with them.

Impact

This indicates that the market is much more fragmented and hence requires a diversified strategy that involves working with a larger number of eCom players to properly reach the Italian population.

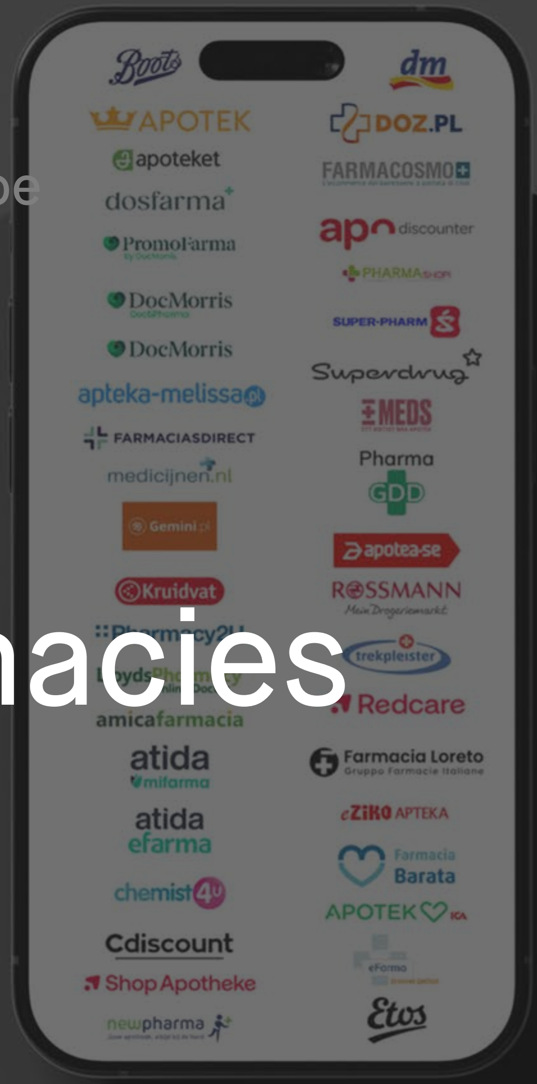
1 Market Overview: Top 40 OTC eCom Players in Europe

2 Country Comparison: Trends & Differences

3 Retail Formats: Drugstores vs. Pharmacies

4 Zoom-In: Cross-Country Players

5 Showcase: Best in Class Capabilities



Drugstores a Must for OTC & Pharmacy Products

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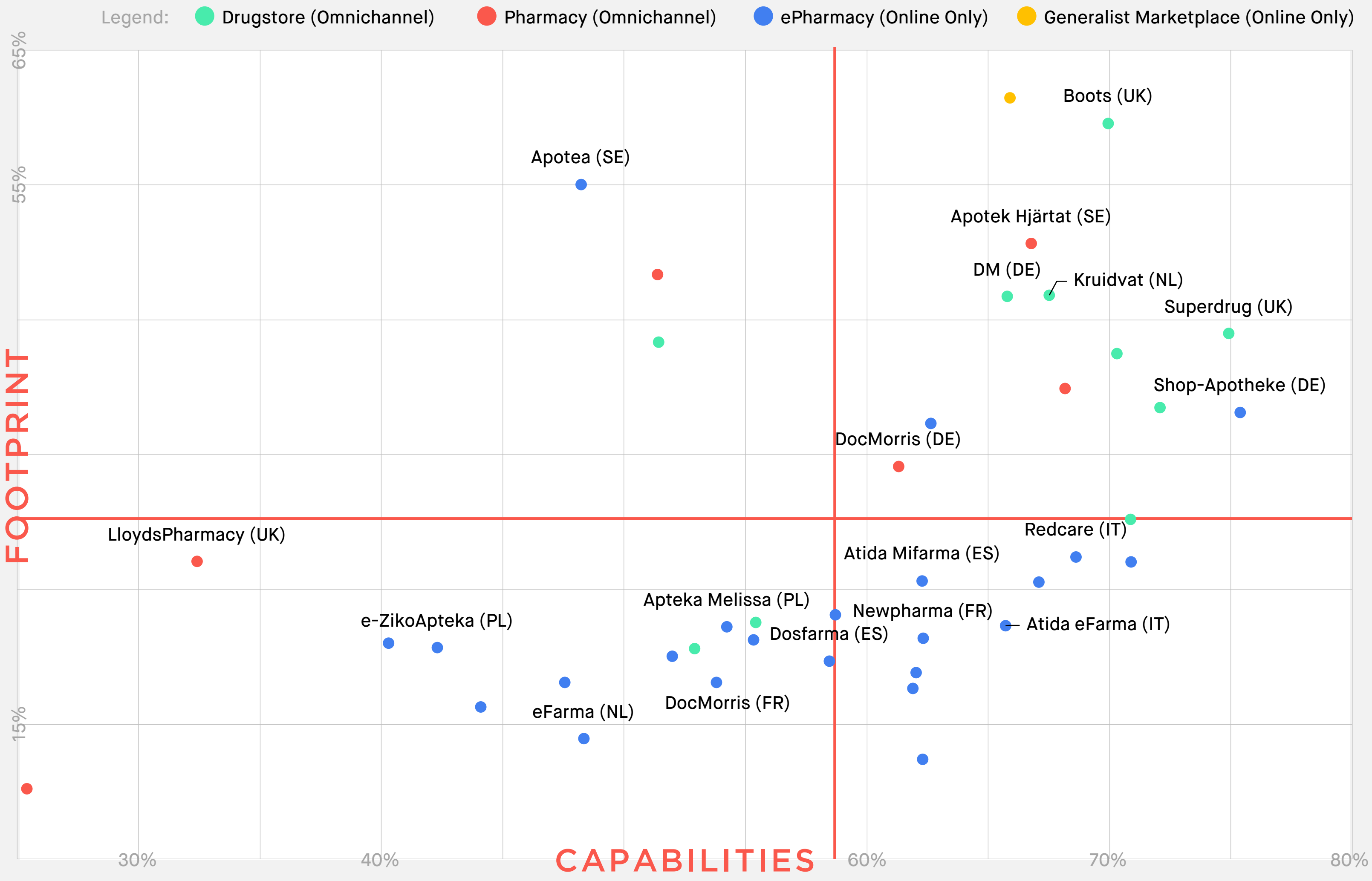
This overview shows patterns of performance among the different retail formats: Omnichannel Pharmacies, ePharmacies, Drugstore and Generalist Marketplaces.



Drugstores are Key to OTC eCommerce

Drugstores consistently dominate the eCom landscape. Hence, they need to be part of any successful OTC eCom strategy, for products that can be sold via this channel.

Watch out: Italy and Spain are ePharmacy Countries

While Drugstores are important, they do not lead the OTC category in all markets:
In Italy and Spain, the market is dominated by Omnichannel and ePharmacies.

Omnichannel Pharmacies can & must develop a strong eCommerce Presence

Companies like Apotek Hjärtat (SE) show that omnichannel pharmacies can build a highly competitive eCom presence, capable of taking on Online Pure Players.
However, most omnichannel pharmacies, like Lloyds Pharmacy (GB) are not realizing this potential yet. They are putting their long-term eCom viability at risk by featuring only the bare minimum of eCom capabilities.

Omnichannel Close-up

Drugstores also Outperform Pharmacies

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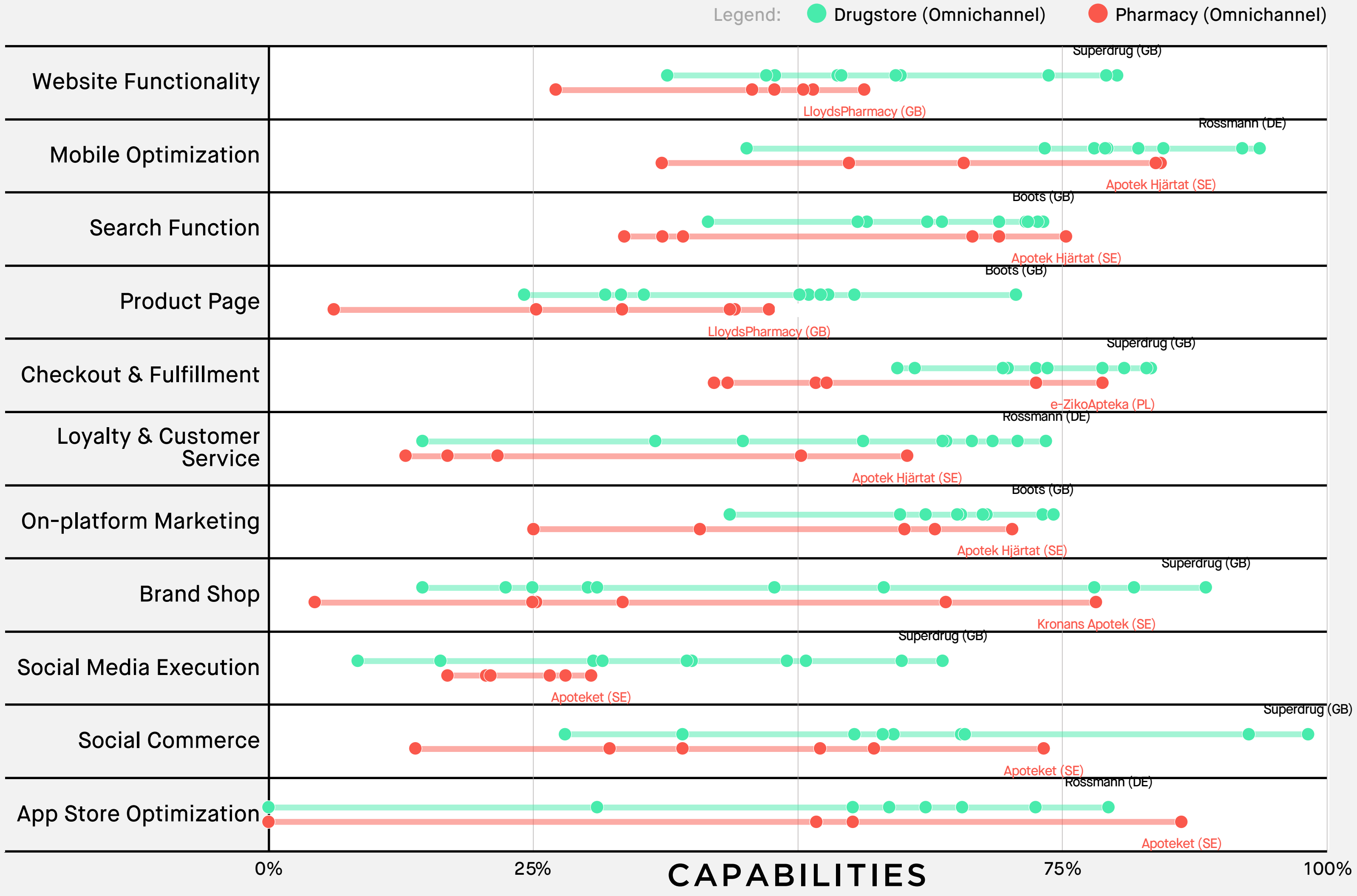
When **comparing omnichannel players** (both Drugstores and Pharmacies), Drugstores outperform Pharmacies on almost every capability… however, **not consistently:**



Drugstores optimize the entire conversion funnel

Drugstores perform well on lower funnel or conversion-focused functions such as optimized UX for decisive mobile shoppers, intuitive checkout functionality, and properly leveraging Social Media and Social Commerce. However, they also have strong discoverability features in the upper funnel in the form of search functions, brand shops, and on-platform marketing possibilities.

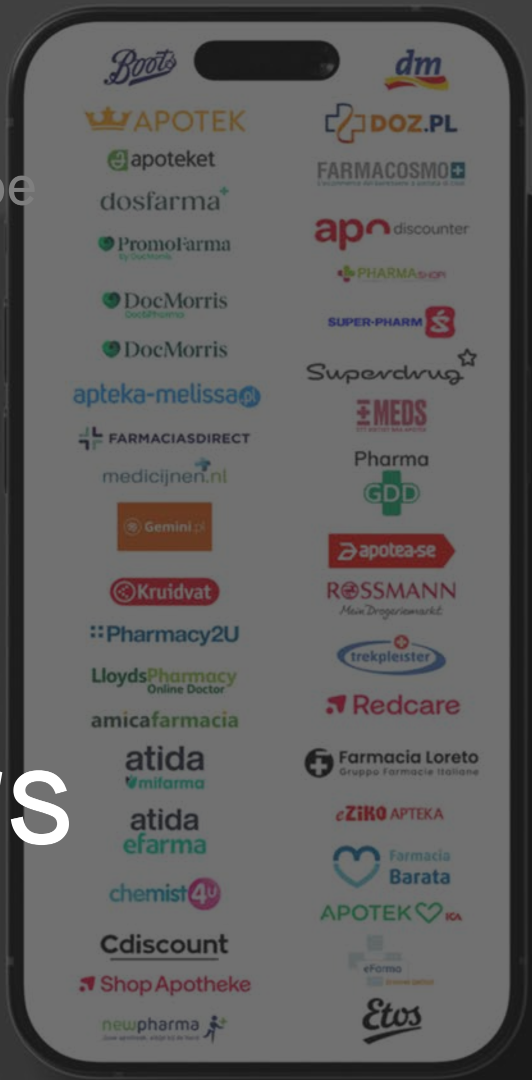
Very few outliers found among Pharmacies

Omnichannel Pharmacies are yet to catch up across the board. In the areas of search functionality and App Store optimization, some Pharmacies even scored higher than Drugstores.

Worrisome here is the unevenness of the distribution for Omnichannel Pharmacies: While a few feature strong capabilities, many struggle even with basic capabilities.

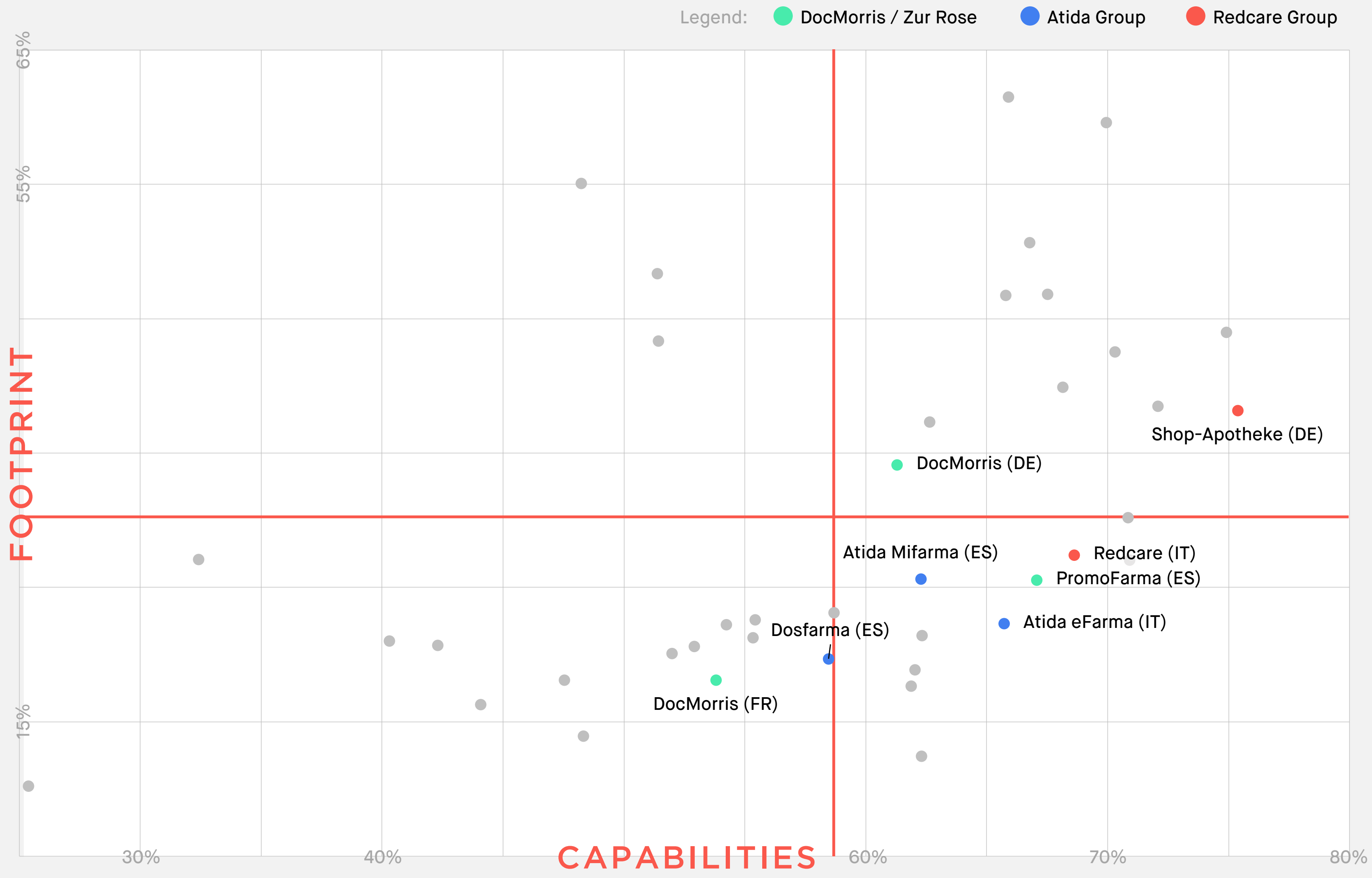
This shows that Omnichannel Pharmacies can be competitive. However, they need to clearly commit to enhancing their shopping experience or risk being left behind soon.

4 Zoom-In: Cross-Country Players



Groups not Leveraging their Advantages Equally

A comparison of the top European ePharmacy parent companies and their subsidiaries shows surprisingly large differences in digital maturity:



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Redcare Group: High Performer

Despite the difference in maturity between Redcare (IT) and Shop Apotheke (DE), the group collectively outperforms the DocMorris and Atida Group. Redcare's clear lead in terms of capabilities shows a strategic commitment to delivering cutting-edge shopping experiences and synergistically rolling this out across all countries.

DocMorris Group: Very Inconsistent

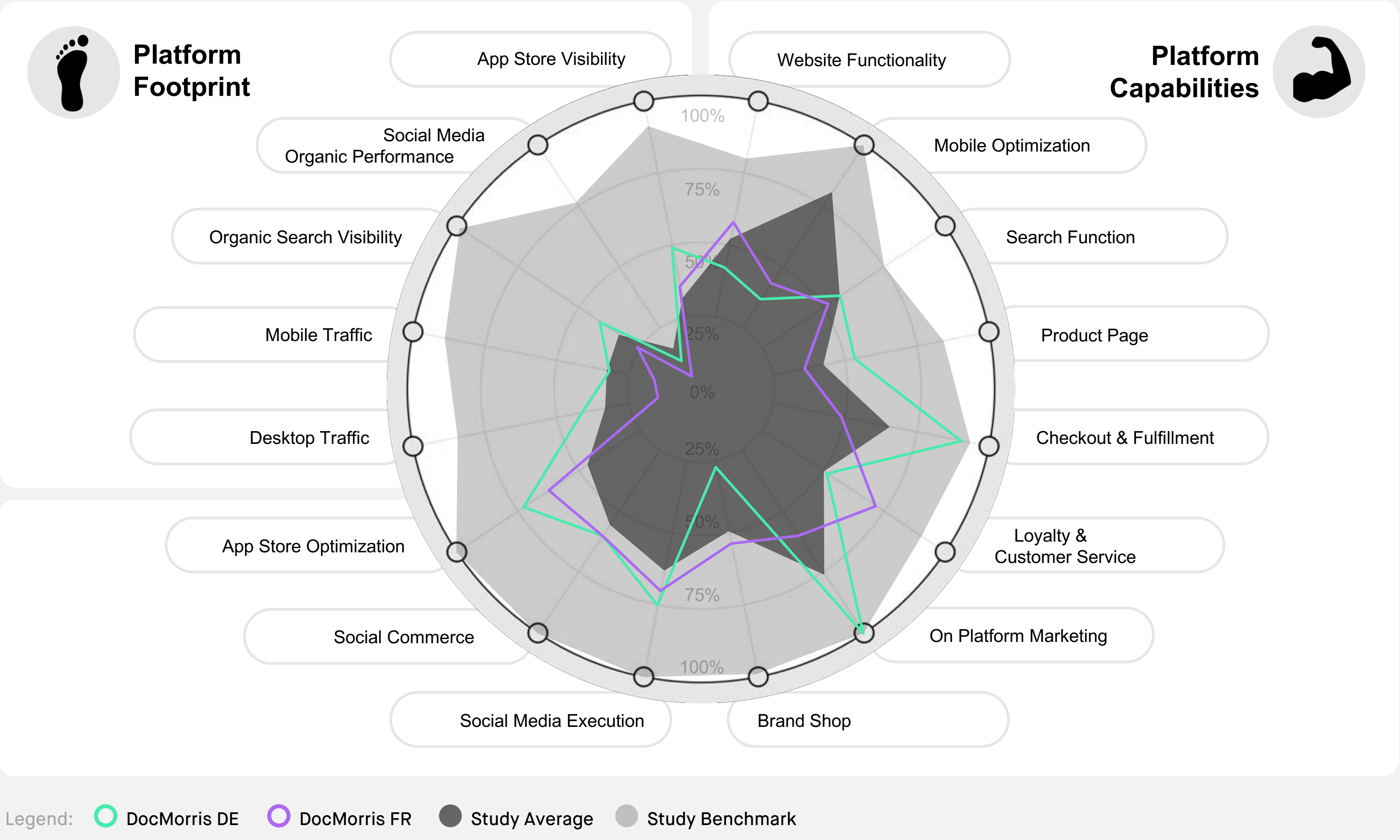
DocMorris showed the biggest differences between countries. While the delta in footprint is grounded in different market structures, the delta in capabilities clearly shows a lack of harmonization across countries. Hence, negotiating on a European level is likely ill-advised, as capabilities and the footprint in each market vary strongly between countries.

Atida: Simple but Consistent

Though Atida can’t beat the other groups in terms of capabilities, it consistently scores amongst the top players in ES and IT. Also, the similarity of capabilities suggests a healthy focus on realizing cross-country synergies, apart from maintaining two ePharmacies in the same market (Spain).

The DocMorris Paradox

Zooming into DocMorris in France and Germany reveals a starkly differing digital setup:



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DocMorris shows the greatest Gap in Digital Maturity

DocMorris in Germany ranks among the top 15 retailers in the study. However, DocMorris France lags behind at Rank 26.

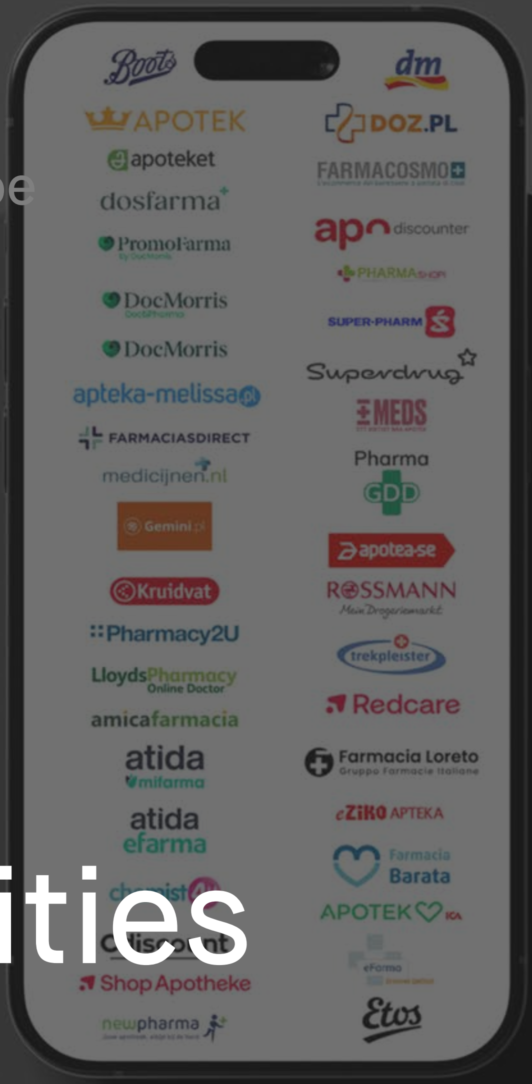
The differences in their performance stem from DocMorris Germany offering users better-structured product pages, better shipping and customer care options, on-platform marketing, and better app store optimization.

Watch out while negotiating with Parent Companies

The DocMorris example shows that while parent companies are eager to acquire retailers, this may not equate to properly leveraging synergies between them.
When negotiating at the group level, eCommerce leaders need to take this into account and uncover each country affiliate's true importance in its market. Taking the time for this step significantly reduces the risk of overinvesting (e.g. assuming a similar execution as in the platform's core market).

5 Showcase: Best in Class Capabilities

Several examples of cutting-edge capabilities used to drive conversion and improve the shopping experience for OTC products.



Capability Showcase

Advanced Conversion Drivers on Product Pages

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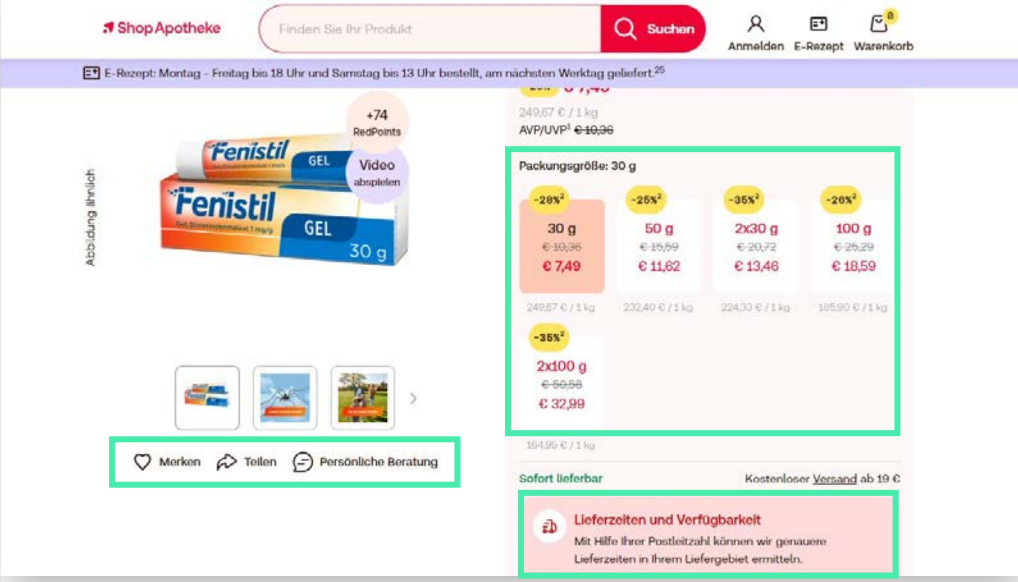
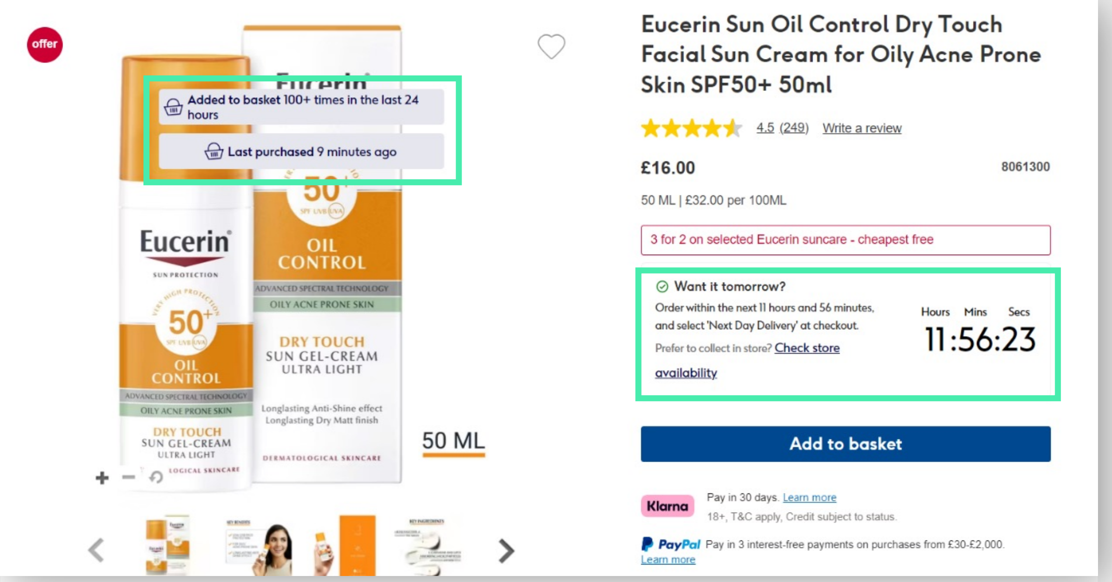
Advanced players show detailed product information to drive conversion. This comes in the form of **social proof** on Boots (UK) and **availability information** combined with **consultations** on Shop Apotheke (DE). These features all reduce the perceived risk of purchase from the customers' point of view and thus drive the conversion rate.



Source: https://www.shop-apotheke.com/

Shop Apotheke (DE)

- Users on Shop Apotheke's product page can access a **personal consultation.**
- By clicking on the link, the users can **ask for a call back** from a pharmacist, leave a written message, or call the pharmacist's hotline.
- Users can also easily choose between **different pack sizes.**
- **Availability** and **shipping times** are showcased more clearly when users share their post code.



Source: https://www.boots.com/

Boots (UK)

- Dynamic text displayed on the primary image showing when the product was **last purchased** and **how often it was added** to the basket in the last 24 hours. This kind of social proof can drive up conversion by reducing doubt.
- A **countdown timer** also creates pressure to complete transactions by showing possibilities for next-day delivery. Users must order within the timeframe displayed above to benefit from shorter delivery windows.

Capability Showcase

Content-Driven Guided Selling

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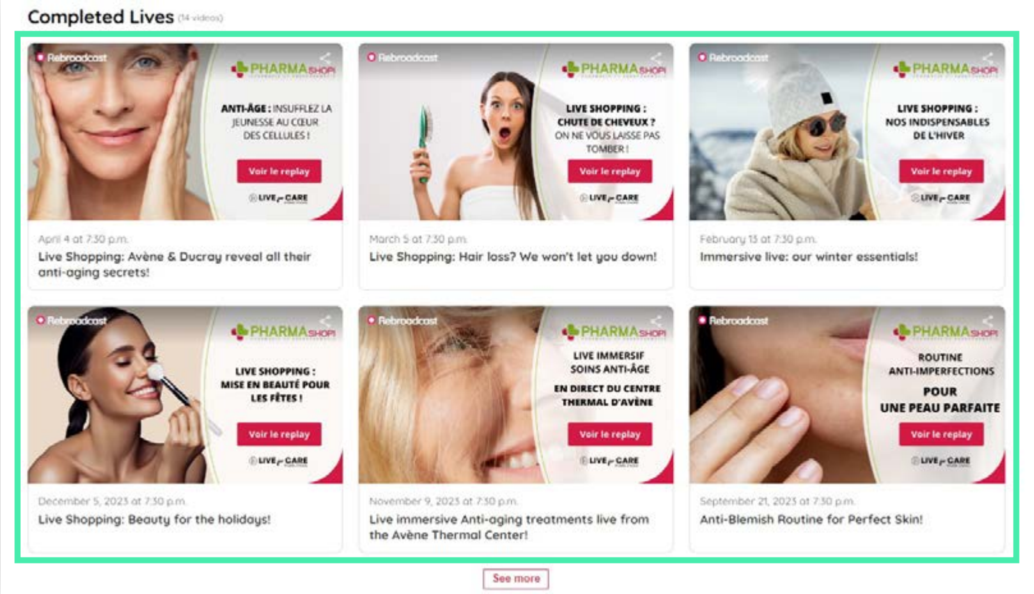
Advanced players have brought in aspects of **content marketing** and **social engagement** techniques to their platforms. By offering valuable content to their users, they create opportunities for brands and categories to better showcase themselves.

Source: https://www.rossmann.de/

Rossmann (DE)

- Rossmann offers a **podcast** for new parents.
- Podcasts provide the opportunity to build meaningful connections with your audience.
- Engaged audience members are also receptive to product guidance and recommendations.



Source: https://www.pharmashopi.com/

Pharmashopi (FR)

- Pharmashopi offers **live webcasts** where people can shop while watching video content.
- **Livestream shopping** offers the convenience of discovering products from a convenient place such as users' homes. shopping. Plus, it retains important benefits from the offline shopping experience in the form of human interaction.

Capability Showcase

Mobile First UX Implementation

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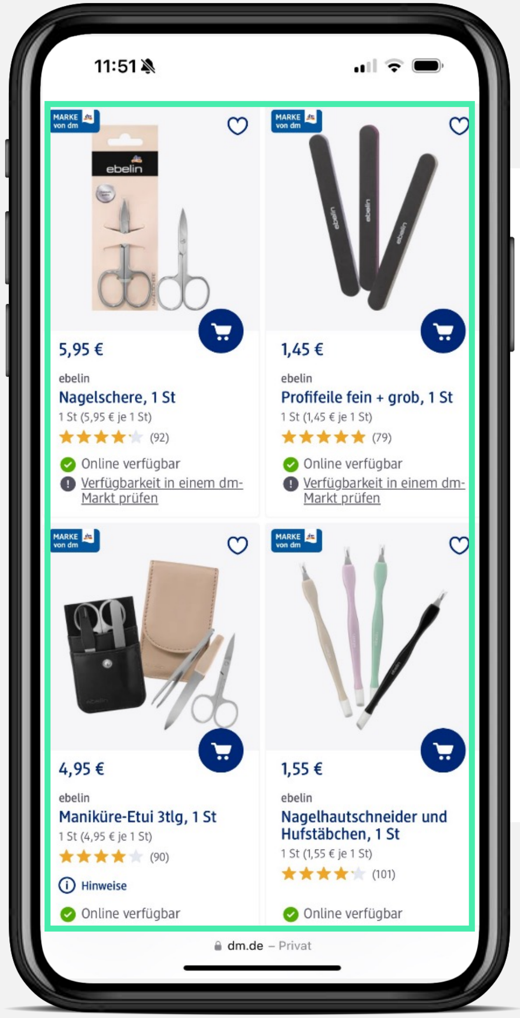
Advanced retailers don’t only have good Mobile UX, they go a step further and think **mobile first.** Leaders utilize **mobile native elements** such as video display, buy button, and navigation placements clearly with the mobile user in mind.



Source: https://www.dm.de/

dm (DE)

- **Videos** are part of the rich content on dm. However, there is a **preview** that opens when you click on the video. It is then up to the customer to decide whether they want to watch the full video or exit.
- The **Search Results Page** on dm is packed with buy buttons, ratings and reviews, as well as in-store and online availability. This makes the buying experience much easier for the customer.

Source: https://www. apodiscounter.de/

Apodiscounter (DE)

- Apodiscounter offers a visually appealing Product Page that is easy to use and features high-quality images and video content. The product details, **ratings & reviews** are displayed prominently on top of the image. This makes it easy for the customer to navigate.
- To make it easier to get back to the top of the page, the retailer also offers a **sticky navigation button.**

Capability Showcase

Seamless Social Commerce Integration

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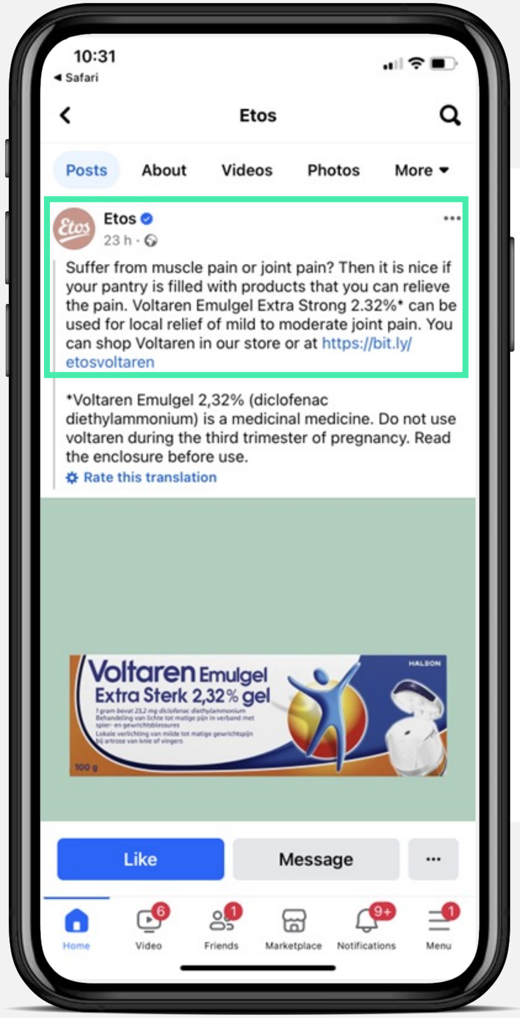
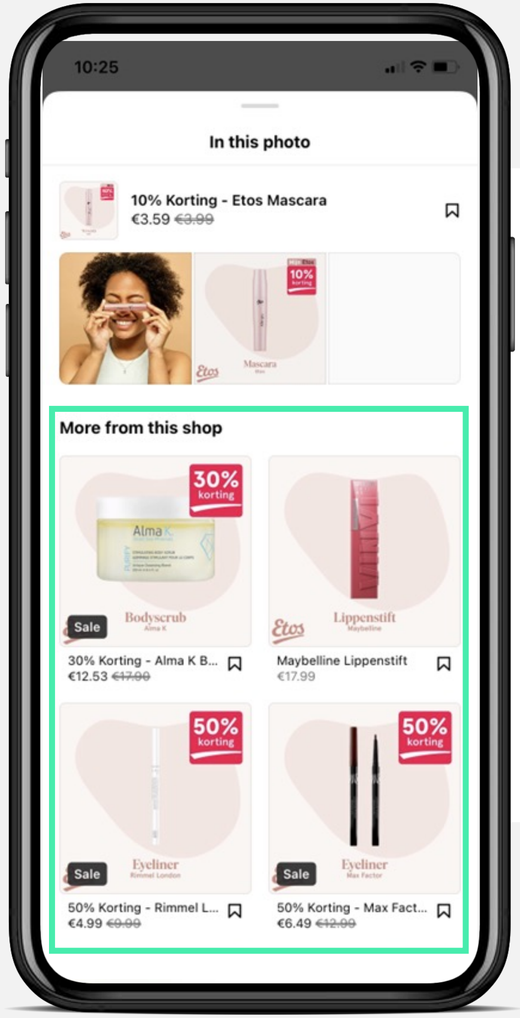
Social Commerce is quite uncommon in Europe making it an untapped avenue to drive conversion. Few players have mastered the seamless integration between social media and eCommerce. Here are examples from Etos (NL)'s Social Media pages:



Source: https://www.facebook.com/etos/

Etos (NL)

- Etos's Facebook Account features products in their Posts and Reels.
- **Posts also link back to the brand shop** on the retail platform.
- Interlinking is important for higher conversion rates.



Source: https://www.instagram.com/etos/

Etos (NL)

- Etos's Instagram account features **shoppable posts.**
- By clicking on the link, users also get a **list of suggested products** from other brands.
- Product recommendations help increase key metrics such as conversion, average order value, and repurchase. They can also increase customer loyalty and retention.

Want to dive deeper?

That was only the Tip of the Iceberg...

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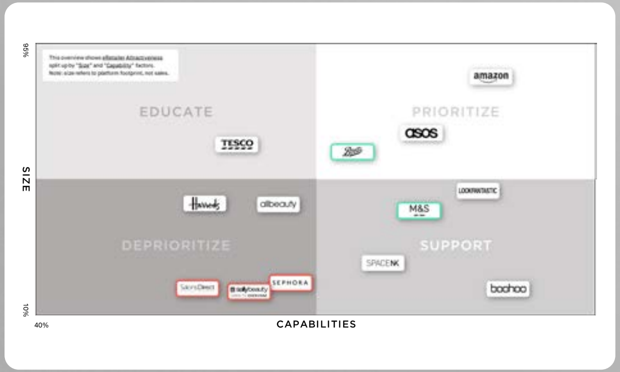
Get access to the **full set of data** or request data on **any other eCommerce player** relevant to you.

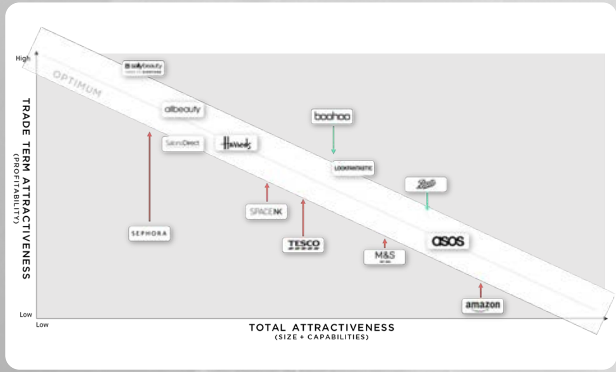
Prioritize your eCom Landscape:

Empower your eCom Negotiations:



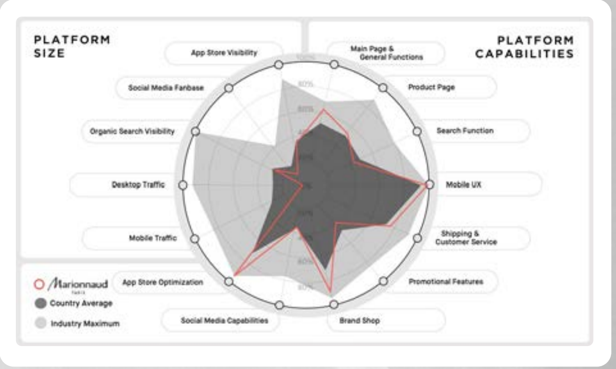
eCom Landscape Segmentation

Gives an unbiased view of each player's true significance in your market.



Data-driven Customer Tiering

Reveals if your trade terms fit what the platforms can truly deliver.



Detailed eRetailer Scorecards

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Makes findings tangible and keeps you up to date.

We continuously analyse eRetailers in different industries around the globe...

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...

...

... so don't hesitate to request any eCom Platform you're interested in!

What's next?

Order a Detailed Report for your eCom Landscape!

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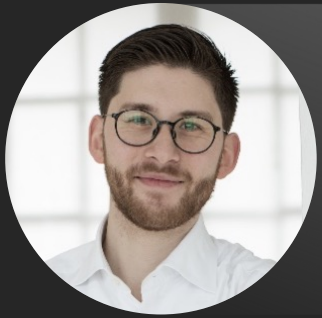
Your personal contact to receive a non-binding offer:



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About Watersky Digital

Founded in 2017 during the Oxford MBA, Watersky Digital is a Hamburg-based consultancy specializing in Digital Marketing Benchmarking. We constantly analyse brands and eCom platforms across the world to create actionable guidance on where and how to meaningfully optimize your eCom presence.

Selected clients:

What Our Clients Say ★★★★★

"Watersky's eCom Segmentation helped Bayer to bring its LATAM eCom operations to a new level. It helped us to understand each platform's importance and decide where to invest."

Bim Gutierrez
Global eCom Director
BAYER Consumer Health AG

"We used Watersky's eCom Segmentation tool first to get a clear view on the capabilities & ambitions of our current & potential customers. We then clearly structured, ranked & prioritized them based on our findings. Using these outcomes for both strategic (internal) & Joint Business Planning (with customers) purposes helped tremendously to have more fact-based discussions and to define common mid- to longer-term goals."

Oliver Wenzel
Head of eCommerce DACH
Wella AG

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- Organizational maturity assessment & optimization
- Digital KPI architecture
- ...

IMPLEMENTATION ACCELERATION

- Agency selection & briefing
- Steering & challenging agencies
- Tool & tech-stack consulting
- ...

UPSKILLING

- Keynotes
- Hands-on workshops
- Playbooks & video learning
- Learning management
- ...

OUR ANALYTICAL BACKBONE

Proprietary benchmarking methodology to assess the digital ecosystem through the eyes of the consumer.

DIGITAL BENCHMARKING

Of any Brand, Retailer or Marketplace

In every country around the globe

Starts where your internal analytics stop