B2B ECOMMERCE WORLD · INDIANAPOLIS

AI Year One

What we tried, what failed, and what's next

Rudy Abitbol

AI for manufacturers & distributors · rudyabitbol.com

FEATURING A REAL CASE STUDY

One electrical distributor's first year with AI

WHO I AM · RUDY ABITBOL

AI that *pays back.*

I help manufacturers and distributors find the AI that pays back, build it with their team and make it stick.

18+	15+	10K
years in B2B	conference stages	LinkedIn followers

Former Director of Digital Channels, Lumen / Sonepar · Forbes contributor · Speaker at NRF Europe, B2B Online, Master B2B

WHAT I DO

B2B Commerce AI CORE
Commerce ready for AI-driven buying.

- **AI Opportunity Workshop**
  Half a day. Three priorities. One working demo.
- **AI Adoption Sprint**
  One workflow, built and adopted with your team.
- **Fractional Head of AI**
  Ongoing AI leadership, hands on.
- **GEO**
  See how AI describes you, then fix it.

CONNECT ON LINKEDIN

/in/rudyabitbol

Want the slides? No photos needed. DM me, I'll send the deck.

CLIENTS & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

sonepar · GOODYEAR · kate spade NEW YORK · DAVIDsTEA · bdc

SHOPIFY & AKENEO CERTIFIED

shopify · akeneo

TODAY

Three acts, *one real story*

01

What they tried

Turning manufacturer files into product pages that sell

02

What failed

Output that looked finished and wasn’t

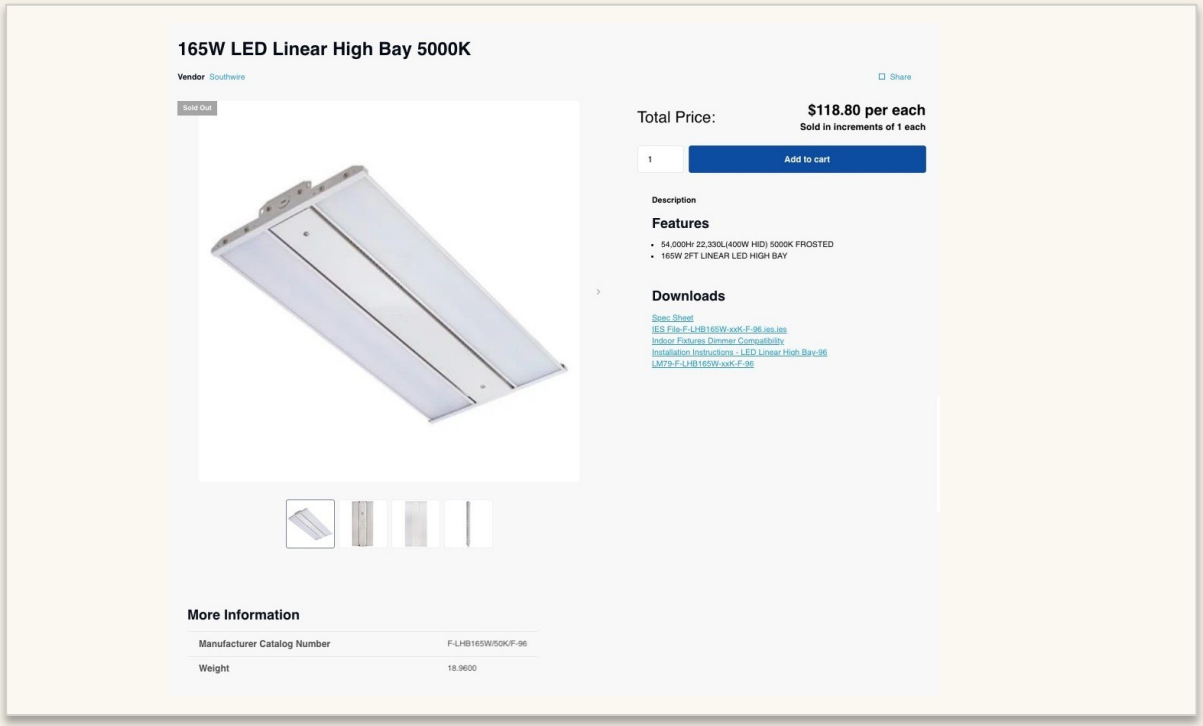
03

What’s next

Five things to do before 2027

Case study: an electrical distributor, shared with permission

The original product page *was almost empty*



ON THE PAGE

NO description

NO specifications

BARELY ANY features

The useful details were stuck in manufacturer files and weren't structured for search or purchase.

A product image is not a product detail page.

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

A “match” could still leave *the product empty*

WHAT COUNTED AS A MATCH

01 Weight only

02 Case pack only

03 A spec sheet was present

≠

WHAT SELLERS NEEDED

01 Complete searchable attributes

02 A complete product description

03 Verified specs, features and downloads

The record was identifiable. It was not sellable.

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

AI-referred buyers are *better buyers*

3×

AI-driven traffic to Shopify stores, year over year

+80%	Higher conversion from AI-referred sessions vs. organic search
+14%	Larger order values on AI-referred orders
~2×	First-time customers from AI vs. other channels

A sparse product page can't win this buyer.

Source: Shopify, The Entrepreneur Effect (Oct 2026). Platform data, Apr–Jun 2026.

ACT 1 · THE DATA · SHOPIFY

Specific *beats popular*

75%

of AI-referred sales came from stores selling specialized products

Nearly 54% of new stores sell outside the top 100 categories.

MY VIEW

Agents match buyers on attributes, not brand size.

In B2B, every SKU is a specialized product. An empty spec field is an invisible product.

> *If the spec lives in a PDF, the agent can't see it.*

Source: Shopify, The Entrepreneur Effect (Oct 2026). Platform data, Apr–Jun 2026.

AI could fill the gaps. *Safety set the limits.*

WRONG DATA COULD LEAD TO

Misuse, or even a fire.

Very different from getting the material wrong on a sweater or a pair of shoes.

TRUSTED-SOURCE RULE

Manufacturer website only.

Scrape and infer only from the manufacturer’s own content. Safer, but still incomplete.

The source rule reduced risk, but it didn’t fill every gap.

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

An LLM helped build *a Python workflow*

01 **Parse**

Spec sheets and HTML descriptions

02 **Extract**

Usable attribute values

03 **Update**

Individual fields in the PIM

81,000+

data points extracted and added to the PIM

PLOT TWIST

“I didn’t know the first thing about running a Python script.” — their EVP of Ecommerce

> *Unstructured source content became editable product data.*

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

No platform works *out of the box*

THE CONSTRAINT

≈700

more attributes in the PIM than available metafield capacity

THE WORKAROUND

One structured description field.

Carried the PIM detail to the storefront without a metafield per attribute.

MY VIEW + SHOPIFY DATA

21M

apps installed in 2025, +19.5%. Shopify, BigCommerce, Adobe: every stack has gaps.

Workarounds are the job, not a failure.

Source: Shopify, The Entrepreneur Effect (Oct 2026). App installs, 2024–2025. ≈700 is the distributor's operational estimate.

ACT 1 · THE DATA · SHOPIFY

You don’t need agents. *You need to start.*

TOOLS CLOSE THE SKILL GAP

78%

of 6,535 surveyed merchants built their own store. You don’t need an AI engineer to begin.

WAITING IS THE EXPENSIVE CHOICE

57%

of founders who waited to launch wish they’d started sooner.

> *Asking AI “how do I…?” is a strategy. Waiting for perfect data is not.*

Source: Shopify, The Entrepreneur Effect (Oct 2026). Merchant Pulse Survey, May 2026; Harris Poll for Shopify, 2026.

It looked finished. *The links were invented.*

WHAT WORKED

Structured, polished descriptions.

Refined prompts made the HTML cleaner and more consistent.

WHAT BROKE

Links to stored PDFs were invented.

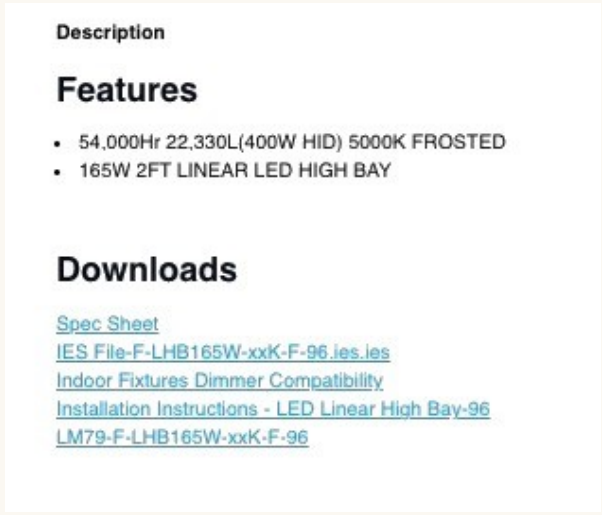
The page looked complete, but no one could trust its links to the source files.

Validation became part of the workflow.

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

From a sparse page *to a confident purchase*

BEFORE



→

AFTER



- **Description**
  Verified product context
- **Specifications**
  Detailed values on the page
- **Features**
  Benefits that matter to buyers
- **Downloads & links**
  Real manufacturer files

Complete details. More confidence. Easier decisions.

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

Their plot twist is *the market pattern*

WHAT WE SAW FAIL		HOW TEAMS FIXED IT	
01	Polished output, invented facts	→ Validate every output	→
02	Agents acting without approval	→ A human signs off	→
03	Pilots with no owner	→ One owner, one metric	→

BEST PRACTICE FROM DAY ONE

Ground AI in your own files (RAG)

It retrieves from source docs, cites them, or says “not found.”

Scoped permissions, approval gates

Read-only by default. Every write needs a sign-off.

Owner and baseline before the pilot

Measure today, so you can prove tomorrow.

Build the guardrails in from day one, not after launch.

Field notes from 2026 B2B sessions and client work. Not a study.

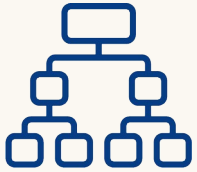
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Enrichment takes *more than one prompt*



Source

Use trusted manufacturer content



Structure

Review your data architecture, then turn documents into PIM attributes



Validate

Check every generated output

Better data in. Better product pages out.

Real case study from an electrical distributor, shared with permission

Product data is *an ongoing effort*

STAGE 0
Identifiable
SKU, image, price. Where they started.

STAGE 1
Searchable
Core attributes in the PIM. Filters work.

STAGE 2
Sellable
Full description, specs, verified downloads.

STAGE 3
Agent-ready
Grounded in source docs, cited, audited monthly.

NORTH STAR

Your top 50 sellers go to Stage 3 first. They set the premium standard for the whole catalog.

- **Define the example pages**
  One gold-standard page per category. AI and the team copy the pattern.
- **RAG + web audit**
  AI fills gaps from your own files. A web audit shows what AI still gets wrong.
- **Run it as a loop**
  Audit, enrich, validate, publish. Then again next month.

Start with your top 50. Raise one stage at a time.

ACT 3 · MY VIEW · 2027

Earn the agent’s trust, *then the buyer’s*

01

Discovery first

Agents can already check out on Shopify. In B2B, win the recommendation and the reorder first.

02

PIM-first

Specs, policies and pricing logic structured at the source.

03

Human sign-off

Agents recommend. A person approves, until the data earns trust.

Trust before autonomy.

Shopify opened checkout to AI agents (TechCrunch, Sept 28, 2026). OpenAI retired ChatGPT Instant Checkout (March 2026).

ACT 3 · TAKEAWAYS

Five things to do *before 2027*

1

Audit

Ask AI about your top 20 SKUs this Monday

2

Prioritize

Pick your top 50 sellers as the north star

3

Define

One gold-standard page per category

4

Ground

AI fills gaps only from your own files (RAG)

5

Repeat

Re-audit and enrich every month

Test your top 20 on Monday. Lift your top 50 this quarter.

YOUR MONDAY MORNING

Ask AI about *your top 20 SKUs.*

Whatever it gets wrong is your 2027 roadmap.

Then lift your top 50 to Stage 3 this quarter.

TRY IT FREE · HUMAN AFTER ALL GEO AUDIT

Is AI telling your buyers *about you?*

We ask Claude, ChatGPT and Gemini the questions a real B2B buyer would ask, and show whether they name your brand.

- **Brand recall** — Do they know you when asked by name?
- **Unaided discovery** — Do they recommend you when buyers don’t name you?
- **Technical readiness** — Can AI crawlers read your site and product data?

humanafterall.ca/geo-audit

> *Run it on your brand before Monday’s top-20 SKU test.*

THANK YOU

Let’s keep *the conversation going*

WHAT I DO FOR MANUFACTURERS & DISTRIBUTORS

PIM and product content that AI can read and buyers trust.

- Akeneo PIM and Shopify Plus for manufacturers and distributors
- Supplier files turned into structured EN/FR product data, gaps flagged
- Your top 50 SKUs to Stage 3 first, then the rest of the catalog

shopify akeneo

Thank you to the distributor’s team for sharing their story.

CONNECT ON LINKEDIN

Rudy Abitbol

PIM, product content & B2B commerce AI

linkedin.com/in/rudyabitbol · **DM me for the deck**

Want your top 50 at Stage 3? Let’s talk.