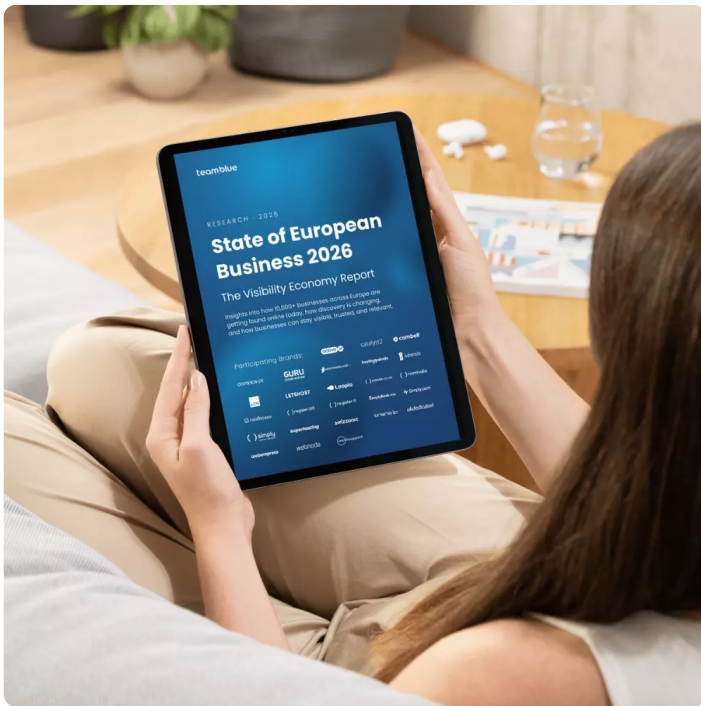


European businesses facing “Visibility Gap” as AI redefines search and customer discovery.

State of European Business 2026 Report warns rising competition, advertising costs and changing algorithms are creating new barriers to visibility for European businesses, who remain unprepared for the pace of AI-driven change.



- **Nearly one in three European businesses says reaching customers online is getting harder**
- **Small businesses are twice as likely to feel unprepared for AI-driven change**

•Only 5.5% of businesses feel completely in control of how customers discover them online

GHENT, BELGIUM 16 JUNE 2026 – European businesses are finding it harder than ever to reach customers online and are grappling with a lack of clarity about what drives growth, according to the first annual State of European Business Report, from digital ecosystem provider team.blue.

The study, which was carried out among more than 10,000 businesses across 32 countries, warns of an emerging “Visibility Gap” for European businesses – a growing disconnect between their online presence and their ability to understand, influence and measure how customers discover them.

The way customers discover brands is changing faster than most businesses are adapting, with nearly one in three businesses (30.6%) reporting that reaching customers online has become harder over the past two years. The discovery landscape is both richer and more fragmented than it has ever been – a dynamic team.blue has termed the “Visibility Economy”.

Businesses are losing confidence in how customers find them

When asked about the biggest challenges affecting their ability to reach customers online, businesses cited changing algorithms (38.8%), rising advertising costs (37.2%) and increasing competition (35.2%) as the top barriers. Together, these challenges make reaching customers online less predictable, leaving many businesses experiencing an ‘AI Fog’ - uncertainty about which channels and activities will drive growth.

This uncertainty becomes particularly significant when it comes to how businesses understand their own online visibility. Just 5.5% of businesses say they feel completely in control of how customers discover them online, while more than a third (37.7%) feel only slightly or not at all in control.

The AI readiness gap is growing – and small businesses are falling behind

The challenge for businesses is not only navigating today's competitive online environment but preparing for how AI could reshape the way customers find products, services and brands in coming years. Three quarters (75.2%) of European businesses agree that AI will change how customers discover businesses online. However, fewer than one in three (29.6%) consider themselves prepared for these changes.

This readiness gap is particularly pronounced among smaller businesses which make up 99% of all companies in the EU and employ nearly half (48%) of the region's workforce, according to Eurostat. Companies with fewer than 50 employees were twice as likely (30.7%) than larger businesses (13.7%) to report that they felt unprepared for AI-driven change.



"We're experiencing a period of significant change in how businesses are discovered online. Customers are finding companies through more channels than ever before, while AI is reshaping the way information is surfaced and recommended. Many businesses recognise this shift is happening, but our research shows they don't always feel prepared for what comes next. The challenge is not simply keeping up with change, but building the confidence and visibility needed to grow in a more complex digital environment."

Claudio Corbetta, Group CEO, team.blue



"As AI becomes a bigger part of how customers discover businesses, it is becoming harder to understand what drives visibility and growth. Businesses need a clear digital foundation they can control and build on. The opportunity isn't to chase every new AI tool or platform; it's to ensure the information customers and AI systems rely on is accurate, trusted and easy to find. That's why a strong website remains one of the most important assets a business can have."

Bilal Ahmed, Chief AI & Data Officer, team.blue

Visibility starts with owned channels

As businesses navigate changing digital channels, many are underutilising one of the few digital assets they directly control: their website.

While 86.5% of European businesses have a website, only 9.7% accurately track how website visitors become leads or customers. More than half (50.9%) do not track this at all. This presents a significant opportunity for businesses to improve visibility into the channels driving growth and better understand how customers move from discovery to purchase.

The full report can be found [here](#).

Methodology

The findings are based on the State of European Business 2026 survey, commissioned by team.blue and conducted in early 2026.

The survey gathered responses from 10,059 businesses across 11 European markets, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Respondents represented organisations of all sizes, ranging from freelancers and sole traders to large enterprises.

The logo for team.blue, featuring the text "team.blue" in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The dot above the "i" in "blue" is a light blue circle.

 **team.blue website**
team.blue

About team.blue

team.blue is a leading AI-powered digital enabler for businesses and entrepreneurs across Europe, serving more than 3.3m SMB customers in 22 countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom). team.blue is a one-stop partner for web hosting, domains, e-commerce, online compliance, lead generation and other SaaS solutions, supported by more than 4000+ experts. team.blue's vision is to make online business success simpler with the intelligence of AI at every step.