



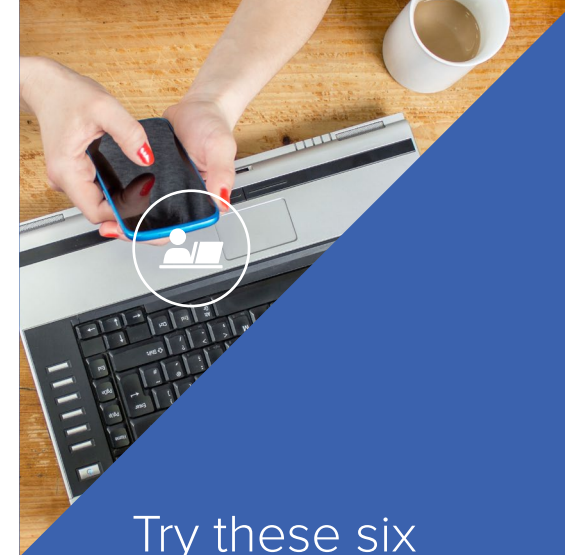
Transform your marketing strategy

8 marketing trends B2B companies can't afford to ignore

Elevate your B2B marketing efforts

Marketing—most B2B companies do it, but few do it well. The majority of marketing teams—66% according to Smart Insights—haven't fully integrated traditional and digital marketing efforts.¹ Working in silos lends itself to counterproductive duplication of efforts and a disconnected user experience.

Team disconnects, paired with poor buyer journeys and outdated multi-channel approaches, can prevent B2B marketing teams from achieving the kind of results they're looking for.



Try these six B2B marketing strategies proven to increase ROI:

1. Take advantage of video content
2. Determine where personal messages count most
3. Perfect your buyer's journey
4. Use predictive analytics
5. Develop content for mobile users
6. Ease burdens with automation

Break through the noise

The B2B marketplace is growing bigger by the year, with customers receiving hundreds if not thousands of marketing and advertising messages per day. To put it into context, in 17th century London, the average person had access to information that is equivalent to a single weekday edition of The New York Times during the course of their lifetime.²

Today, the average person has access to the equivalent of 174 newspapers worth of data per day.³ That's an enormous amount of content, far more than one can reasonably consume in a day.

With advertising representing \$350 billion of U.S. gross national product, and digital ad spend expected to surpass TV as the biggest advertising platform in 2017, savvy marketers will need to rely on emerging technology, multi-channel efforts, and best practices to stand out in the noisy B2B marketing arena.

Gartner even predicts that, "direct mail will become cool again [in 2017]."⁴ As it becomes more difficult and costly to stand out in the digital marketplace, B2B marketers will amp up their multi-channel approach by bringing highly targeted direct mail back in vogue to gain "an absurdly low cost per lead."⁵



The average person has access to the equivalent of 174 newspapers worth of data per day.

Source: The Telegraph, 2011

Tear down traditional silos

Despite the advantages, many marketing teams have yet to join their disparate marketing efforts

As B2B marketing teams seek to gain efficiency and increase messaging effectiveness, they'll need to encourage teams working in silos—traditional and digital—to reach across the aisle and collaborate.

Only 17% of businesses report having fully integrated and optimized their marketing processes.⁶ However, 50% of B2B content marketers cited content distribution (better targeting, identification of what works) as the key driver of an increase in marketing success in 2016.⁷

Here are some other suggestions:

- Unifying marketing efforts could cut down on duplication of work.
- Sharing best practices and performance metrics across all marketing teams, regardless of marketing channel focus, could help B2B marketing teams gain the insights necessary to create more effective content.
- Encouraging cross-functional marketing collaboration and ideation could drive new innovations.





Determine where personal content counts most

93% of B2B marketers distribute content through email

Creating personal content in marketing is by no means new, but it's becoming more advanced. A decade ago, it meant a mass email with each recipient's name was all the rage. Today, the granularity of getting personal seems boundless.

As far as channels through which to test varying levels of personal messaging goes, email and social channels—LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook—might be the best places to start since these are the top three channels B2B marketers use most.⁸

A whopping 93% of B2B marketers distribute content through email, followed by 89% through LinkedIn, 77% through Twitter, and 76% through Facebook.⁹ Where competition is the greatest, personal and relevant content gives you a better chance of getting your marketing messages heard.

Visitors will stay on your site an average of two minutes longer if it has a video.¹⁰ Eager to enrich the customer journey and convert more prospects into buyers, more than 96% of B2B marketers are using video in their content strategy.¹¹

Even if your company doesn't have a video production specialist, you can work with local freelancers or hire a creative agency to help you develop and implement video content.

Whether you want to explain how a product works, show off customer testimonials, or create a flashy brand piece, there are numerous ways you can use video content to keep website visitors engaged longer.



Add video to your website to:

- Make it more sticky
- Lengthen customer visits
- Enrich the customer journey

Perfect your buyer's journey

Turns out, most B2B buyers like to do some research before having that first interaction with your sales rep: “In a recent survey, 74% of business buyers told Forrester they conduct more than half of their research online before making an offline purchase. This buyer dynamic changes the role of B2B marketing in a fundamental way.”¹²

As a result, B2B marketers are tasked with not only mapping out an ideal buyer's journey, but also allow for the flexibility to painlessly switch between consuming different levels of content throughout their experience.

Forrester says, “You need to understand your buyer's typical path to purchase to build an effective omnichannel marketing strategy that successfully engages with buyers at the right time with the right content through the right channel.”¹³

The modern B2B buyer journey can span multiple channels, levels, and types of content. However, since it seems most B2B buyers prefer to conduct the majority of their research online, it behooves marketers to take advantage of this trend.



Up to 74%
of business buyers
conduct more
than half of their
research online
before making an
offline purchase.

Source: Forrester Research, 2015

Use predictive analytics

Two-thirds of B2B marketers agreed their problem is not lack of data, but their inability to draw insight from the data they have.¹⁴ This is where predictive analytics helps in our analysis.

Forrester found that teams who use predictive analytics outperform their counterparts who do not, and 83% said they have experienced a considerable business impact from using these technologies.¹⁵

More importantly, users outperform non-users on several important metrics: 72% of users exceeded revenue goals by 10% or more, while only 33% of non-users did the same; 75% of users have higher market share than competitors, while only 38% of non-users claim this status; and 58% of users exceeded their marketing business goals, while only 29% of non-users did the same.¹⁶

It would stand to reason, then, that if your company's marketing efforts aren't outshining those of competitors, it might be time to look into the future with the help of predictive analytics. Forrester observes that, "predictive analytics is on 89% of B2B marketers' road maps," so you might want to make haste.¹⁷



More than 86%
of marketers
agreed that
predictive
analytics helps
them evaluate
new market
opportunities.

Source: Forrester Consulting, 2015

Develop content for mobile users

Gartner® suggests B2B marketers borrow ideas from the B2C space in 2017

While it's clear mobile is a must for B2C companies, is it just as essential in the B2B space? Gartner predicts that “companies that consumerize (e.g. Amazon) their B2B digital commerce sites will see market share gains and revenue increases of as much as 25%” by 2018.¹⁸

If Gartner's advice sticks, more B2B marketing teams might develop content for mobile and advertise on apps.

- Taking a closer look at mobile trends, “Google announced mobile search surpassed desktop search for the first time ever” in spring of 2015.¹⁹
- Plus, the total time spent by mobile users as four hours, five minutes per day.²⁰



Mobile users spend a total of four hours, five minutes engaging with content per day.

Source: eMarketer, 2016

Ease burdens with automation

An integrated, multi-channel B2B marketing campaign that targets multiple industries and personas can have hundreds of moving pieces, making it difficult to keep up with everything and address hot topics and trends before they're passé.

Marketing automation technology can help ease burdens modern B2B marketers face when facilitating, executing, and evaluating campaign plans. These solutions make it easier to plan emails, segment customers, manage content, and plan and track each customer's journey. The automation allows the marketing department to stay lean, focused, and profitable.

According to Aberdeen Group®, marketing automation has been shown to “increase productivity, develop and execute clear marketing strategies, benchmark and improve upon marketing performance, and measurably connect marketing efforts to revenue.” That being said, companies must fully implement and tune their automation for their purposes to gain these advantages.



Marketing automation platform users are 60% more effective at developing and executing clear marketing strategies.

Source: Aberdeen Group, 2016

Marketing transformation in action

Next steps

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“

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