



WHY WE WROTE THIS EBOOK

The buying cycle for business buyers and their decision-making teams has increased. 54% of B2B buyer respondents to a recent survey reported a somewhat or significantly increased buying time¹. More B2B buyers are focused on improving ROI, and require a lengthier evaluation of ROI in their decision-making process. But research is the biggest reason for the extended buying cycle. "80% [of respondents] said they spent more time researching purchases, and 73% said they use more sources to research and evaluate purchases," according to the report².



We've put together this ebook for marketing leaders in the B2B community. You need to be able to meet your business buyers where they are: online. And you need to be able to provide them with the educational content they want, in the formats that resonate with them. And finally, you need to be able to track it all for the benefit of your own organization, and turn it into a positive return on investment.

METRICS YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT

We want to turn you and your marketing team into lead generation gurus. To do that, you'll need to be laser-focused on some very specific metrics:

- Lead Quality
- Conversion Rate
- Search Engine Rank
- Format Effectiveness

Throughout this ebook, we'll be discussing a number of marketing methods, techniques, and available formats today. We'll also be discussing current ways to measure the success of each of these methods, and which metrics you should be tracking.

WHY TARGETING MATTERS

Your business has a very specific audience. Perhaps your industry is incredibly specialized, and you only create your product for one specific purpose. Or maybe you've determined that your product has the

² 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016



¹ 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

89% of B2B researchers use the internet during the B2B research process⁵.

most influence at enterprise-level companies where there is already a demand. Whatever the audience looks like, they have some demands of you; are you meeting them in your marketing?

Respondents to the 2016 B2B Buyers Survey from DemandGen said the single most influential aspect of any vendor's website is "relevant content that speaks directly to [their] company³." In fact, 69% said it was "very important," while 27% said it was "somewhat important." As a B2B marketing leader, you need to be able to meet these demands.

And more than that, you need to be able to benefit from those efforts. The good news is that you can; marketers see an increase of 19% in sales when using personalized web experiences⁴. Creating relevant content that targets your core audience while converting those audience members to leads is how you'll create a lead generation machine.

WEBSITE

WHAT IT IS?

A website is an online representation of your business that acts as your main digital lead generation machine. It tells people about your core purpose for existing, educates prospective buyers on why you're the best choice to meet their needs, and shares information about how to contact you. Your website should behave as a 24/7 salesperson.



IS A WEBSITE USEFUL FOR B2B COMPANIES? HOW?

A website isn't just useful for B2B companies; it's essential. Today's business buyers begin their research online when it comes to finding solutions. 89% of B2B researchers use the internet during the B2B research process⁵. Web search and vendor websites, at 68% and 54% respectively, were the first two resources that informed purchase decisions by B2B buyers⁶. Online sources were well above trade shows, at 15%.

⁶ 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016



³ 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

⁴ The Realities of Online Personalization, Econsultancy and Monetate, 2013

⁵The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, Think with Google, March 2015

A website accomplishes these high-level objectives for your organization:

- 1. Provides specific, educational, relatable content to attract prospects
- 2. Enables you to rank better in search engines among your competitors
- Converts prospects into qualified leads

WHAT TO TRACK & HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

Using a web analytics tool such as Google Analytics or HubSpot, you'll be able to track website metrics. Later in this ebook we'll talk about some additional metrics influenced heavily by your marketing strategy, but these are specific to your website:

Time on Site (Average Session Duration): the average amount of time a user spends on your site during one visit. B2B companies' websites should be aiming for an average session duration of 1½ to 2 minutes; this shows engagement and resonance with the information you're presenting. To improve this number, test the design of your site and the arrangement of the content to ensure that the most useful information is obvious to initial visitors on the most common first pages visited (entrance pages).

Pages Viewed: the number of different pages viewed during a session by one user. Aim for at least 2 pages viewed; that will reduce bounce rate while also showing that prospects are interested in your content and product. If you find that your pages viewed number is low, we would recommend improving inbound marketing tactics - discussed later in this ebook - to encourage multiple page views.

B2B companies' websites should be aiming for an average session duration to 1½ to 2 minutes.

View of a Key Page: the number of page views on a specific page, such as a conversion page, product information page, or pricing page. The goal for this page will depend entirely on historic data for this page; obviously, the goal is to see this metric go up. To improve views on a specific page, focus on optimizing that page for findability on search engines (SEO).

Conversions: the number of times visitors exchange information and land on identified confirmation pages. Again, this goal will depend on historic page data; you want this conversion number to be increasing consistently. Implement inbound marketing tactics, which we discuss later in this ebook, to increase conversions on your website.



Load Time: the amount of time it takes your site to fully appear on a device. Abandonment rates increase after a load time of longer than 2 seconds.

Bounce Rate: the percentage of sessions in which the person left your site from the entrance page - the first page they visited - without interacting with the page. These are also called single-page visits. A bounce rate between 30% and 60% is ideal for B2B companies. If you find that your bounce rate is high, we would recommend optimizing the content on your site for better search engine results. See the section on SEO of this ebook for details.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE HIGHLY TARGETED

The major reason to create a highly targeted website for your prospects to visit is because it's what they want. B2B researchers want to know immediately "how any new product will ultimately benefit their business," says DemandGen's latest B2B Buyer's Survey Report⁷, by demonstrating a strong knowledge of the buyers' industry, company and needs.

Most obviously, you can create very specific content for your site that targets your exact audience. We'll address that in the content marketing section coming up. But beyond that, personalization on your site will aid in the positive impact your site can have on a buyer's research process.

The Content Marketing Institute says, "Personalization is the process of targeting content to individuals based on one or more of the following: who they are; where they are; when, why, and how they access content; and what device they use to access it, according to Scott P. Abel of The Content Wrangler⁸." Marketers see an increase of 19% in sales when using personalized web experiences⁹. Tactics include product recommendations, targeted calls-to-action, personalized nurture sequences, and automated inbound marketing content.

Research from VB Insight indicates that only 20% of B2B buyers purchase mostly from a sales representative today¹⁰. Therefore, personalizing as much of the online - and offline - buyer experience as possible is becoming a must-have for B2B sellers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

The 3 Levels of B2B Marketing Personalization Quick Start Guide from MyPlanet Step-by-Step Guide to Personalization in Marketing Campaigns from HubSpot How to Decrease Your Bounce Rate from HubSpot

Top B2B Website Metrics to Monitor Using Google Analytics from Hinge



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⁷ 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

 $^{^8}$ 2016 http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2014/08/content-marketing-personalization-when-how/

 $^{^{\}rm 9}$ The Realities of Online Personalization, Econsultancy and Monetate, 2013

INBOUND MARKETING

WHAT IS INBOUND MARKETING?

Inbound is a buyer-centric marketing strategy to turn your website into a lead generation machine by increasing quality leads through providing targeted, educational content that promotes trust in your business. Inbound marketing uses education-focused tactics to guide potential customers through the buyer's journey: from researching their problem, to identifying possible solutions, to making a decision about a provider.

IS INBOUND MARKETING USEFUL FOR B2B COMPANIES?

In a word - yes. Inbound marketing strategies rely heavily on educating prospects with the information that they most want at any stage during their buyer's journey. Recent research shows that 96% of B2B buyers who responded to a survey want content with more input from industry thought leaders, rather than content that sells¹¹.

In addition, inbound marketing works best by using content that a prospect wants to download in order to convert, and then keep in contact with, site visitors who are qualified leads. 47% of buyers viewed three to five pieces of content online before contacting a sales rep¹². From a



INBOUND MARKETING METHODOLOGY

business perspective, the ROI of inbound marketing speaks for itself; companies are 3x as likely to see higher ROI on inbound marketing campaigns than on outbound, regardless of company size or total marketing spend¹³. Research from Gartner professes that properly executed inbound tactics are 10 times more effective for lead conversion compared to outbound methods¹⁴.

AS LIKELY TO SEE HIGHER ROI ON INBOUND MARKETING CAMPAIGNS THAN ON OUTBOUND

MORE EFFECTIVE FOR LEAD CONVERSION COMPARED TO OUTBOUND METHODS



Our own research shows that inbound marketing methods produce an ROI 4x higher that of outbound methods for B2B companies.

¹⁴ http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics



¹¹ 2016 Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

¹² 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

¹³ State of Inbound, HubSpot, 2015

METHODS USED IN AN INBOUND MARKETING STRATEGY

With a strategy of inbound at the core of your B2B organization, any marketing tactic can be transformed to be more "inboundy." We'll be covering some of these more in-depth throughout this ebook, but here's a quick run-down of some examples we've seen in the industry and in our own clients:

Trade Shows: 75% of B2B marketers consider trade shows and other in-person events to be an effective marketing tactic¹⁵. Making your trade show lead capturing ability stronger using inbound methods can create a higher ROI from these important events.

Landing Pages & Forms: Landing pages are web pages dedicated to converting visitors to leads. Typically, it includes an offer in exchange for the visitor's contact

Companies with 30+ landing pages on their website generated 7x more leads

information. According to a HubSpot survey, companies with 30+ landing pages on their website generated 7X more leads than companies with 1 to 5 landing pages¹⁶. Measuring conversion rate on a landing page is the number one indicator of success or need for improvement. According to Wordstream, B2B companies should look for a conversion rate of 2.23% or higher on their landing pages¹⁷. Neil Patel recommends aiming quite a bit higher than that - 10-13%¹⁸. Additional metrics to watch on landing pages include form abandonment rate and bounce rate.

ATTRACT NEW PROSPECTS WITH INBOUND MARKETING



¹⁸ http://www.forbes.com/sites/neilpatel/2014/09/04/figuring-out-landing-page-effectiveness



¹⁵ B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

¹⁶ https://offers.hubspot.com/2013-state-of-inbound-marketing

¹⁷ http://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2014/03/17/what-is-a-good-conversion-rate

Calls-to-Action: A call-to-action (CTA) is an engaging button or link that you place on your website to drive prospective customers to convert to leads through landing page forms. There are a number of metrics you can measure to gauge the effectiveness of this inbound tool, according to HubSpot¹⁹: views, clicks, and submissions being primary. Utilizing historical data from your CTAs is the best way to determine effectiveness.

Buyer's Journey & Sales

Funnel: This graph illustrates the buyer's journey and how it interacts with the sales funnel. Establishing both of these elements is important as a solid foundation for an inbound marketing strategy. It will help dictate what content gets produced, as well as what happens to leads when they are generated by your website.

Content Marketing: This is a huge piece of an inbound marketing strategy and one



that's the main driver of each piece of the inbound method, from initial attraction of prospects to converting leads and closing sales. There's an entire section on content marketing coming up in this ebook where we'll dive into what it is, the tactics involved, and how to measure its success.

Lead Nurturing: 79% of marketing leads never convert into sales²⁰. Lack of lead nurturing is the common cause of this poor performance. According to a Marketo benchmark study, on average, 50% of leads are not yet ready to buy when they initially come into your pipeline. "Lead nurturing creates automated, ongoing communication with your potential buyer throughout the sales cycle and beyond— maximizing results and revenue for your organization," according to Marketo's definitive guide²¹ on the subject. Lead nurturing is typically done using a number of segmented workflows with automated emails.

²¹ The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing, 2nd Addition from Marketo, 2015



 $^{^{19}\} https://knowledge.hubspot.com/cta-user-guide-v2/how-to-analyze-your-call-to-action-cta-results$

²⁰ http://www.hubspot.com/marketing-statistics

WHAT TO TRACK & HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

All of these metrics can be assessed using a web analytics tool built for both content and lead generation (such as HubSpot) but can be measured manually as well. These are important to track month-over-month and then compare in a rolling 12-month analysis for patterns. For each metric, the goal is always to increase.

Visitors: individual people, counted by IP address, who visit your website.

Leads: visitors to your website who fill out a form, giving you permission to continue a conversation with them.

Marketing Qualified Leads: leads that meet specific qualifying factors that identifies them as members of your target audience, answered through questions they've answered on forms through your website.

Sales Qualified Leads: MQLs vetted by a member of the sales team and further qualified as a potential sale, meeting both budget and readiness factors.

Sales: Customers; those who have finalized a purchase.



The way to increase the numbers of each of these metrics for your B2B organization is through a leadgenerating website coupled with a growth-driven inbound marketing strategy.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

The Insider's Guide to B2B Inbound Marketing: Secrets Revealed from Trending Up Inbound sMarketing Agency
Do You Need a New B2B Marketing Strategy? 10 Questions to Ask from Trending Up Inbound sMarketing Agency
How To Know if B2B Inbound Marketing Fits Your Manufacturing Company from Trending Up Inbound sMarketing Agency
Four Questions To Determine Your Landing Page's Effectiveness by Neil Patel for Forbes

Call to Action - What is it? Improve CTR! from MarketingTechBlog

The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing, 2nd Addition from Marketo

Before we jump into content marketing, let's talk about a game-changer for digital marketers everywhere, and for B2B marketers in particular: search engine optimization, or SEO.



SEO

WHAT IT IS

Search engine optimization, or SEO, is the practice of continuously updating the way your website and its content are put together, so that they're easily searched and found by search engines like Google. This benefits people looking for information you have to offer.

On average, B2B researchers do 12 searches prior to engaging on a specific brand's site.

IS SEO USEFUL FOR B2B COMPANIES?

Yes, SEO is of great benefit to B2B companies who are doing it. However, if your competitors are implementing SEO and you aren't,

you're in trouble. Since search engines base their opinion of your site on an algorithm, and that algorithm is programmed to give priority to sites that a) provide lots of educational resources, b) are updated frequently and c) provide value to searchers, your site will fall behind without those consistent optimization updates.

From a purely lead generation perspective, SEO is paramount to your success. Research shows that those involved in the B2B buying process are already 57% of the way down the path to a decision before they'll actually perform an action on your site²². In fact, search is business buyers' #1 resource for research; "90% of B2B researchers who are online use search specifically to research business purchases," according to Think with Google²³.

On average, B2B researchers do 12 searches prior to engaging on a specific brand's site (downloading a piece, subscribing to a blog, using a 'contact us' form, etc.). About 71% start on a generic query, so they're looking for product first, not for you²⁴. That's directly in line with the



 $^{^{22}\} https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/articles/b2b-digital-evolution.html\\$

²³ The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, Think with Google, March 2015



identified buyer's journey exercise we talked about in the inbound marketing section.

WHAT'S THE PROCESS TO IMPLEMENT SEO?

SEO is a living project, and one that needs to be done on a continuous basis. Entire books have been written on this subject, but we'll summarize here (and we strongly encourage you to check out the additional resources from this section). These are the steps we at Trending Up use to establish a process for our B2B clients for continuous search engine optimization:

- 1. Perform a content and website audit for SEO.
- 2. Research targeted keywords and key phrases (note: these two phrases are used interchangeably, so we'll be using keywords moving forward to mean both).
- 3. Establish benchmark metrics for the keywords.
- 4. Implement the keywords across the site, in content, meta descriptions, title tags, headers, and blog posts (not too many in one place; remember, it is possible to over-optimize).
- 5. Continuously update, test, and track.
- 6. Repeat these steps at least once per quarter.

One other incredibly important thing to note about SEO is that it's slow. Once implemented, it can take months for the changes to take effect. Have patience, and be consistent.



WHAT TO TRACK & HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

There are more than a dozen metrics involved in determining your search engine ranking. We've identified the most popular and easiest to track month-over-month using a web analytics tool, or a number of other tools available for little to no cost online. These metrics will give you a good idea of how your optimized site is performing.

Channel - Referral Traffic: The channel is the way a visitor gets onto your website. Referral traffic is website traffic, or visitors, that come to your site via links from another website. In SEO-speak, these are called backlinks, part of off-page SEO (not on your own page). These take longest to develop, as

 $^{^{\}rm 24}$ The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, Think with Google, March 2015



they require another, more highly-ranked website to take notice and link back to your site.

Channel - Organic Search Traffic: Organic search visitors are the ones who look for a term using a search engine and visit your site as a result. These are on-page SEO results and are a good success measurement for your keyword strategy. Ideally, these numbers will start to rise within 2 months of implementing an inbound or content marketing plan that incorporates targeted keywords.



Keyword Rank: where the keyword falls on search engine results pages (typically, Google). The goal is to be on page 1 (ranked 1-10), and better yet, in the top 4 or 5 results.

Search Volume: number of times a search for the exact keyword is made in a month. This number will help predict the opportunity for conversions from organic search. The higher the search volume, the harder it is to rank, but the better results you'll see as a result of ranking highly on those SERPs (search engine results pages). When choosing keywords, target a good mix of both high (100+) and low (-25) search volume phrases.

CTR Opportunity: Rand Fishkin of Moz defines this as knowing "what other features are in the search results — images, news boxes, ads, videos up at the top, instant answers, knowledge graph on the right-hand side that's going to draw clicks away from my potential to get searchers to click on my result²⁵." It keeps a B2B company from focusing on keywords that otherwise look like great potential targets, but in reality won't garner many conversions.

Difficulty Rating: This rate states how hard it will be to rank in organic results. The lower the number, the easier it is to rank against your competitors. The rating is on a scale of 1 to 100. Getting a good mix of 50+ and -50 terms will benefit your overall search optimization strategy.

²⁵ https://moz.com/blog/discovering-prioritizing-best-keywords-whiteboard-friday



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SearchEngineLand produces this fantastic periodic table of SEO success factors²⁶; as a content team, we've found it incredibly helpful to reference this chart as a way to establish our goals for optimization beyond these initial metrics.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SEO HIGHLY TARGETED

Using a combination of long-tail keywords (more than 3 words) and shorter, broad keywords that your exact target audience are using, you can create some very targeted optimized results. While these highly targeted keywords may have low search volume, you can be sure that the audience using them is definitely searching for a B2B organization like yours; long-tail keywords convert 2X better than their associated head keywords²⁷.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

Guide to SEO plus the Periodic Table Of SEO Success Factors by SearchEngineLand Beginner's Guide to SEO by Moz

An Essential Training Task List for Junior SEOs by Moz

A Step-by-Step Process for Discovering and Prioritizing the Best Keywords by Moz

How to Integrate Long-Tail Keywords by Neil Patel

KPIs for SEO: Measuring SEO Success by SearchEngineLand

²⁷ http://neilpatel.com/2016/04/02/how-to-generate-long-tail-keywords-using-quora-and-google-trends/



²⁶ http://searchengineland.com/seotable

SEO & INBOUND MARKETING IN REAL LIFE: PART OF A HIGHLY TARGETED B2B STRATEGY

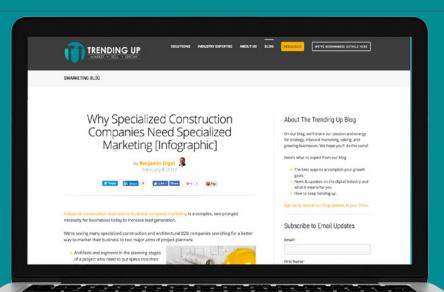
Our content team started a new campaign targeting specialized construction companies using a mix of long-tail keyword search engine optimization and inbound marketing content on our site.

First, we researched a short list of long-tail keywords with low difficulty, high click through opportunity, and mid-to-low search density (indicating highly targeted, engaged searchers).

Our main goal was to rank in the first spot for at least one of five keywords:

- 1) targeted marketing for specialized construction
- 2. targeted marketing for architectural construction
- industrial construction business-to-business company marketing
- 4. inbound marketing for B2B construction companies
- 5. marketing strategy for specialized construction company

Next, we wrote an educational blog post about targeted marketing for specialized construction. It was well-researched, contained some of the keywords we identified, and had a compelling title. We also created an infographic to go with the post and highlight the data we uncovered. Three other supporting blog posts, linking back to this initial post, were also published in consecutive weeks.



Within 45 days, our blog post appeared in the first spot on Google's search engine results page for the keywords targeted marketing for specialized construction and inbound marketing for B2B construction companies and remains there today. The people clicking through on the post are highly targeted and engaged prospects.



INBOUND MARKETING: CONTENT, SEO, AND LEAD NURTURING IN REAL LIFE

Elle is a marketing coordinator at a national seller of packaging machinery in the US. She struggles to meet the demand for lead generation through traditional marketing tactics, and the website she manages doesn't provide quality leads to the sales team. While their company has a large presence at multiple trade shows throughout the year, she lacks the ability to track any prospects or leads that come from those efforts in order to follow up on them.



Based on research using Google's customer journey tool, it was clear that there are a number of online research channels that her target audience uses prior to making a purchase, including organic search, referral sites, social media, and email.

Report using The Customer Journey to Online Purchase, thinkwithgoogle



We worked with Elle to establish an inbound marketing campaign with a few specific objectives:

- 1) Increase website traffic
- 2. Increase quality leads from the website
- Establish a way to nurture leads throughout their decision-making process

After conducting a website audit, we aligned Elle's B2B manufacturing website with the new goals in mind, implementing better SEO tactics, establishing a blog, and creating some major landing pages for their top solutions.



One major campaign we conducted was around coffee packaging machinery. Using fresh, educational content and strategic search engine optimization, we were able to place this packaging manufacturer's content squarely on page 1 for related Google searches.

Using social media and email channels to share the content helped grow visits from those channels.

Between those channels and organic growth, traffic to the website rapidly increased by almost 70% within 6 months.

Converting site visitors through engaging downloadable content was the next goal of the campaign. We created and launched a Coffee Roaster Planning Production Tool with the goal of

All Straping Visions Images Made More Sertings Tools

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lead www.tevelandequipment.com **
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Linar Weigh Filler - State Street Problems Street Wow
Linar Weigh Filler - St. Weigh Filler Support Filler Supports - Coanading Weigh Filler Street Round Street Wow
Linar Weigh Filler s., Coanading Weigh Filler s., Bulk Filler Systems, Dual Lane Weigh Filler Street

Packaging Machinery - Many Price Points & Options
lead www.tepupackagingstreets.com/Peckaging/Machinery - (314) 444 7656
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gaining qualified coffee producers as leads. The tactic worked; 8 new qualified leads came through the site within the first 6 months of launching this small campaign.

Once the leads were in the system, Elle needed a way to ensure that each lead received follow-up. We established a series of automated marketing emails that keep her manufacturing company front-and-center in the minds of these targeted leads, and it has helped to gather additional information from these buyers while also keeping engagement up.

CONTENT MARKETING

WHAT IS CONTENT MARKETING?

Content Marketing Institute defines it best: "Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action ²⁸."



²⁸ http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/



In order to have a lead-generating website that attracts and educates prospects, B2B organizations need to be active in producing content. Regardless of the format of this content, it must be relevant to your target audience.

IS CONTENT MARKETING USEFUL FOR B2B COMPANIES? HOW?

88% of B2B marketers²⁹, and 81% of manufacturing marketers³⁰, say they use content marketing today. But effectiveness seems to be a problem: only 30% for B2B,

TYPES OF CONTENT PREFERRED

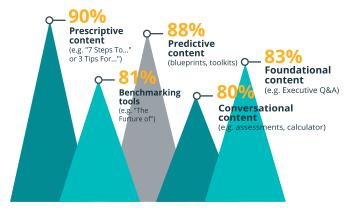


Chart from 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

and 18% for manufacturers, say that they utilize content marketing effectively.

For those manufacturing, business financial, construction, and other B2B companies who dedicate the time, resources, and strategy to effectively utilize content marketing, it's very useful. Without a strategy and plan, content will not be effective in meeting your marketing and business goals.

Content marketing is a differentiator for B2B companies with long sales processes whose buyers conduct months of research prior to making a decision. Research³¹ shows that content marketing is more effective when there is a documentation of the strategy, clarity around success, good communication, and experience. In addition, 78% of consumer believe that companies behind content are interested in building good relationships³². If that's a top goal of yours, then content marketing is built for you.

Earlier in this book, we talked about personalization as a valuable technique for highly targeted marketing. Respondents to the 2016 B2B Buyers Survey from DemandGen said the single most influential aspect of any vendor's website is "relevant content that speaks directly to [their] company³³."In fact, 69% said it was "very important," while 27% said it was "somewhat important." In addition, research from McMurray/TMG found that 90% of consumers find custom content useful³⁴. An important part of creating a content marketing plan should be to build content around what B2B researchers are looking for, and what they will find most beneficial to their purchase decision; that will also determine effectiveness.

Only 30% for B2B, and 18% for manufacturers, say that they utilize content marketing effectively.

^{33 2016} B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016



²⁹ 2016 B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

^{30 2016} B2B Manufacturing, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

³¹ 2016 B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

³² McMurray/TMG via Hubspot, 2015

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO IMPLEMENT CONTENT MARKETING FOR B2B ORGANIZATIONS?

Implementing content marketing at your business requires three major pieces (apart from actual creation of assets): creating a mission statement by which to judge all content creation, having a documented plan to meet defined goals, and managing content pieces as business assets.

- 1. Create an editorial mission statement. For B2B organizations, it'll address the following:
 - Your audience target (also known as a persona): identify the type of person you can help most with your content. This could be researchers at varying levels of a target business's organization, a business owner, an engineering director whoever your target audience is.
 - The information you'll offer: what will be delivered to your audience. This will consist of answering the top concerns that your audience has, and providing them with additional information they'll find useful.
 - The desired outcome for your audience: things your audience will be able to do once they have consumed your content. Will they be able to make a decision, choose a provider, implement a change?

48% of the most effective B2B marketers have a documented editorial mission statement³⁵.

As you consider producing new content, pages, pieces, or messages, ask yourself these questions to determine whether or not it belongs in your B2B organization's content marketing plan:

- Will this help to advance our business objectives (i.e., does it further our reason for existing)?
- Will it be actionable to our target audience?
- Will it help us meet our key goal for content?

48% of the most effective B2B marketers have a documented editorial mission statement³⁵. Among manufacturing marketers, that number was only 18%³⁶.

2. Establish benchmark metrics and define the goals for your content.

Creating goals for your content to meet, such as lead generation, engagement numbers, and target audience usefulness, is the first step. We'll discuss metrics for content marketing success in-depth in the next section so you can gauge how your content is working.

^{35 2016} B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016



³⁴ McMurray/TMG via Hubspot, 2015

Over the last six years, B2B marketers have consistently cited website traffic as their most often used metric. However, this year's survey by Content Marketing Institute also asked marketers to rank metrics by importance, with results being: sales lead quality (87%), sales (84%), and higher conversion rates (82%)³⁷.

White papers, webinars, and case studies were the top three preferred content formats for B2B decision-makers.³⁹



A content marketing plan puts a roadmap in place for the "creation, publication, and governance of useful, usable content," says Kristina Halvorson of Brain Traffic. It incorporates three major elements strategically:

- Analytics of your current content: what's working, what's not, and what haven't we tried yet?
- Content: literally, what you'll be addressing and communicating through your production.
- Format: how you'll be publishing your content for your audience to consume (i.e. images, blogs, ebooks, whitepapers, social media, etc.)

Respondents to Demand Gen Report's 2016 Content Preferences Survey³⁸ said that content that includes independent voices — thought leaders, third-party analysts and peers — resonates with them the most. However, an overwhelming number of buyers (95%) are open to considering vendor-related content as trustworthy - if it's not salesy. B2B buyers continue to be turned off by long content with a heavy sales pitch.

Shorter content formats were cited as preferred by 88% of business buyers, and those shorter formats are more likely to be shared with colleagues and peers. However, longer content formats are clearly useful to B2B buyers for making decisions based on the data.

This year, white papers, webinars, and case studies were the top three preferred content formats for B2B decision-makers³⁹. When compared to last year's results, case studies are new to the list, which represents a significant shift toward user stories that resonate with prospects.



 $^{^{\}rm 36}$ 2016 B2B Manufacturing, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

³⁷ 2016 B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

^{38 2016} Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

WHAT TO TRACK & HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

We've covered quite a few metrics so far that will overlap with content marketing, such as those from your website and inbound marketing. The following metrics are related directly to your content marketing strategy success, and as usual, higher is better:

Engagement Numbers: These include shares, likes, comments on your site and on social media. They can assist in giving a greater picture of what your audience finds useful.

Scroll Depth: a measurement of how far down a page a visitor scrolls⁴⁰. This metric isn't available on most web analytics platforms, but there are a few available that offer this, like Crazy Egg's heat maps or WordPress's Scroll Depth plug-in.

Conversion Rates: The number of visitors that made an action - visited another page, filled out a form, subscribed to a blog notification - on the page.

Views: The number of times a post or page has been visited.

Conversion Rates by Topic/Campaign/Persona: Test all ways of categorizing your data to determine any patterns for your content and its relevance with your audience.

Business buyers access businessrelated content from mobile devices... with 82% accessing on a smartphone, and 56% from a

Medium/Sources: This metric identifies where people were prior to accessing your content. It allow you to understand what channel contributed the most to your content visibility, so you can continue publishing in that channel and potentially increase its use.

User Type: metric to measure what percent of the page views is due to returning visitors (a good indicator of the level of trust and authority your content has) and new ones (which indicates the ability our content has to attract new readers).

Mobile: This number let you know what percentage of your readers are accessing your content from a mobile device so that you can optimize accordingly. Business buyers access business-related content from mobile devices much more this year than last, with 82% accessing on a smartphone, and 56% from a tablet according to DemandGen's 2016 Content Preferences Survey Report. Think

⁴⁰ http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2016/03/measure-engagement-right/



³⁹ 2016 Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

58% of B2B marketers find infographics an effective marketing format⁴⁴.

with Google notes that there has been an impressive 91% growth in use over the past two years throughout the entire buyer's journey (instead of just at the initial stages of research)⁴¹. As a result, it is important that all content from B2B organizations be accessible and optimized for mobile devices to ensure that you're reaching your target audience from all possible avenues.

FORMATS FOR CONTENT MARKETING

The average number of formats used by B2B marketers is now thirteen. This data from the Content Marketing Institute shows what other marketers consider the most effective tactics for their B2B organizations⁴²:

Here we'll take a look at some formats that B2B buyers have identified as ones they use during their research and decision-making processes, as well as some additional formats you may consider adding to your own content publication.

EBOOK

An ebook is a visually appealing booklet with data-rich, researched content that provides information to your target audience. It's a premium content piece that's heavy on images and data display. An effective ebook will have imagery, research, and engaging data displays.

Effectiveness Ratings for B2B Tactics



 $^{^{41}}$ The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, Think with Google, March 2015

^{42 2016} B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016



WHITE PAPERS/ANALYST REPORTS

White papers are typically funded research pieces. While pleasantly laid out, visual design is not the



primary way that the information is displayed. The goal is to present the findings of the research. Third-party/analyst reports were cited as the most valued content type in this year's Content Preferences Survey by 77% of respondents⁴³.

An effective white paper will have new research to share that resonates with your audience.

INFOGRAPHICS/IMAGES

Image marketing is becoming increasingly more prevalent among B2B marketers. Infographics like the one shown here translate a data set into an engaging, shareable image that's also educational.

58% of B2B marketers find infographics an effective marketing format⁴⁴. And 45% of business buyers place a high value on visual formats⁴⁵. People absorb image content 20 times faster than written content, so the fact that visual formats resonate with buyers should come as no surprise. Content with relevant images gets 94% more views than content without relevant images. And infographics are

Liked and shared on social media 3X more than other any other type of content⁴⁶.

An effective infographic will share data in a new, appealing way that's logical to viewers.

CASE STUDIES

Case studies are stories from your business that showcase you solving a client's problem with your product or solution. Case studies, cited by 72% of respondents, were second on buyer's lists of most valued content format⁴⁷.



Typically, case studies focus on the problem that the client was experiencing, the solution implemented, and the results. Quotations from the client assist with the story, as well, lending influence to the case study.

⁴⁶ http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/visual-content-marketing-strategy



 $^{^{\}rm 43}\,2016$ Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

^{44 2016} B2B Content Marketing - North America, Content Marketing Institute, 2016

⁴⁵ 2016 Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

EMAIL

There a number of different types of emails you may send out at your organization, but if you're not taking advantage of this important engagement tactic, you'll be left behind your competitors. There are two major metrics to measure when it comes to email:

Open Rate: The percentage of emails sent that are also opened by recipients. B2B companies should aim for a 30-35% open rate to be on par with competitors⁴⁸.

Click Rate: The percentage of people who opened your email and also clicked on something within it. B2B companies that sent 16 - 30 email campaigns per month had the highest median click rate of 6%, with those that sent 6-15 emails per month with a click rate of just over 5%⁴⁹.

Using the word "video" in an email subject line boosts open rates by 19%.

And here's an interesting statistic from HubSpot: Using the word "video" in an email subject line boosts ope] rates by 19%, click-through rates by 65% and reduces unsubscribes by 26%⁵⁰.

BLOGS

A blog is an avenue through which you can create and publish fresh, relevant content for your audience. These online articles are useful for in-depth explanation of a variety of singular topics that your audience will find educational. Following the trend of shorter content types with a vendoragnostic tone, 63% of respondents to the 2016 Content Preferences Survey said blog posts were the content type they were most likely to share with colleagues⁵¹.

A well-written blog will be full of engaging posts. It's an important part of the 'attract' phase of inbound



marketing, as well. B2B marketers that use blogs receive 67% more leads than those that do not. And, companies who blog receive 97% more links to their website - an important part of a complete SEO strategy⁵².

Here's an additional resource to help you get started: How to Build a Successful Business Blog in Minutes from HubSpot.

⁵⁰ http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/visual-content-marketing-strategy



⁴⁷ 2016 Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

⁴⁸ What's a Good Email Open Rate & Click Rate? [Benchmark Data], Hubspot, 2015

⁴⁹ What's a Good Email Open Rate & Click Rate? [Benchmark Data], Hubspot, 2015

VIDEO

Seventy percent of B2B buyers and researchers are watching videos throughout their path to purchase (+52% in two years). Nearly half of these researchers are viewing 30 minutes or more of B2B-related videos during their research process, and almost one in five watch over an hour of content. Videos about product features top the list, followed by how-tos and professional reviews⁵³. Some specific channels include:





YouTube: the world's most popular video-

sharing platform. It's owned by Google, optimized for search, but not available in all countries worldwide. It's also banned by some workplaces. Reach is extensive compared to any other video social media platform.



Vimeo: Available in more countries since it's not as popular as Youtube. It's not free, however. As a video-sharing platform, it's known for high quality.



Facebook/Facebook Live: Facebook recently stepped into the video sphere by allowing for directly uploaded videos on their platform, as well as live-streaming video to be hosted. In fact, people spend 3x longer watching video which is Live compared to video which is no longer Live, according to Facebook⁵⁴. Facebook generates about 8 billion video views on average per day⁵⁵.

In a development that demonstrates the growing power of video in the B2B buying process, YouTube/ Vimeo ranked third among social media sources on B2B marketers' sites, with 13% describing the sites as "very important" and another 47% describing it as "somewhat important⁵⁶."

Video is rapidly growing as a content format, and it's important for B2B organizations to adopt this content format to showcase products, value propositions, and information about your business. Engagement is high, and prospects find it useful to gather information for their decision.



⁵¹²⁰¹⁶ Content Preferences Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

 $^{^{\}rm 52}$ http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/business-blogging-in-2015

 $^{^{\}rm 53}$ The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, think with google, 2015

⁵⁴ http://www.socialmediatoday.com/marketing/top-5-facebook-video-statistics-2016-infographic

⁵⁵ http://www.socialmediatoday.com/marketing/top-5-facebook-video-statistics-2016-infographic

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT HIGHLY TARGETED

Be ultra-specific in your content. Too often, marketers try to cast a wide net by being general; this is not the time. "Specificity increases credibility because specific details are simply more believable than broad assertions," urges Copyblogger's Brian Clark. But beyond that, update website design and content to highlight the biggest needs of your target audience: strong knowledge of the business landscape, ROI, and peer reviews of your solutions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

Content Marketing 101 for B2B Marketers by Trending Up Inbound sMarketing Agency

What Content Metrics Really Matter by Contently

A Practical Guide to Content and Its Metrics by Moz

4 Quick Wins to Increase Your YouTube Engagement by Neil Patel

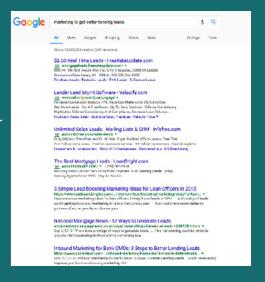
INBOUND MARKETING WITH CONTENT & SEO, IN REAL LIFE: A WINNING STRATEGY FOR B2B LEAD GENERATION

Our next big campaign was targeting CMOs at financial institutions, introducing them to the value of inbound marketing. Using a combination of long-tail keyword targets, content marketing in the formats of blogs and a downloadable ROI calculator, and inbound marketing methods, we successfully converted 15% of viewers into leads in one month.

After researching multiple keywords to track, we wrote a series of blog posts with information relevant to this group. Of the views to those blogs, over 40% of the views over 3 months came from organic sources; that tells us that the keyword targeting is working.

The keywords we now rank highest for from this campaign are inbound for growing business bank leads and marketing for getting better lending leads.

The blog post Inbound Marketing for Bank CMOs: 3 Steps to Better Lending Leads remains one of our best-performing single blog posts, with a click-through conversion rate of over 15%. The offer itself has a conversion rate of just over 7%, above average for a B2B calculator-type offer. Based on these metrics, we'll continue to offer similar content to this group as we grow our content marketing.





SOCIAL MEDIA

WHAT'S B2B SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media drives 31% of overall referral traffic on the Internet⁵⁷. While social media as both a channel and a format seems to be playing a lesser role in B2B buyers' decision-making process since last year,



it's an excellent way to amplify the effects of your content through distribution, and assists with your brand identity.

IS SOCIAL MEDIA USEFUL FOR B2B COMPANIES? HOW?

From a marketing perspective, social media is incredibly useful for distributing and amplifying the content you're producing. It gives you a way to communicate with - both to hear, and be heard by - your audience. It's also a great forum on which to establish your thought leadership strategically - by answering questions, offering

advice, and sharing meaningful industry research.

Another huge benefit of establishing a social media presence is creating a personality for your brand. Through social, you can share more personal, human-centric stories - and connect even better with your audience.

TrackMaven recently released a B2B industry report⁵⁸ on social media use and engagement for various social media platforms. Here were the two biggest takeaways:

Biotech, Engineering, and Financial Services brands are in the social media sweet spot⁵⁹. Brands in these industries have both substantial audience growth and high content engagement on social media, indicating



⁵⁷ http://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2015/02/03/social-media-now-drives-31-of-all-referral-traffic/#9bb5ed61aeed



impactful social content. The financial services industry's 81.77% average follower growth per brand is especially impressive given the industry's large median social following.

Machinery Manufacturers are adept at growing their audiences⁶⁰. Across the B2B landscape, brands in the machinery sector see the highest social media audience growth, with an average follower growth of 129.02%. Engaging content is a correlated factor; social media content from machinery brands is ahead of the B2B pack because of its high engagement.

Clearly, content is resonating for B2B industries on social media platforms - when the content is engaging and relevant.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS & HOW TO MEASURE THEIR SUCCESS

Establishing which channels are worth your time and attention is a project in and of itself. Much like content marketing, social media

The financial services industry's has an 81.77% average follower growth.

marketing needs a strategy and a content plan. 66% of manufacturers claim the social media platforms they use are effective⁶¹. You should start by looking at your buyer personas - your target audience - and identifying which attributes align with which social channels best. That will give you a good idea which of these channels may be the best fit for your content.



LINKEDIN

All but three of the 17 B2B industries analyzed in the Social Media Impact Report see their largest social media audiences on LinkedIn⁶². Among B2B industries, professional services brands have the largest median LinkedIn audience at 1.2 million followers.

Industry-wide, however, B2B brands see minimal engagement ratios on LinkedIn. Machinery brands perform best on LinkedIn, but still sport a measly average engagement ratio of 1.98 interactions per

post per 1,000 followers⁶³.



Engage with LinkedIn followers through visual content that piques interest for a click through to a blog or other landing page. This can be established through a quote or data point as well. LinkedIn users are looking for high-quality, professional content that helps them learn something.

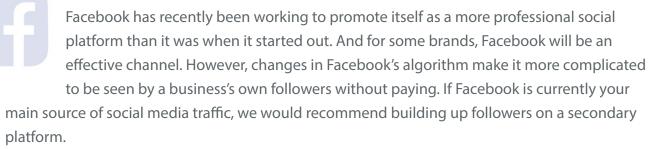
^{60 2016} B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016 61 2016 B2B Manufacturing, Content Marketing Institute, 2016



^{58 2016} B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

⁵⁹ 2016 B2B Buyers Survey Report, DemandGen, 2016

FACEBOOK



Engage with Facebook followers via video content; it will rank higher in followers' feeds and is considered better for engagement. Articles with captivating imagery are also a good content piece to share, especially if you've incorporated humor into the post.



PINTEREST

Overall, B2B industries showed an engagement ratio - followers to interactions - of 15.88 on Pinterest, with the financial services industry at a 69.92 ratio (far above any other industry). B2B being successful on Pinterest came as a surprise, but it aligns with the data we examined earlier about the success of infographics with B2B researchers.

Engage Pinterest users by sharing the infographics you're creating as part of your content strategy.



TWITTER

Across industries, B2B brands have an average engagement ratio on Twitter that is below two interactions per post per 1,000 followers⁶⁴.

Engage Twitter followers using hashtags that your audience uses, sharing both quotes and headlines that link to a longer article, and share animated GIFs to illustrate your statements.

66% of manufacturers claim the social media platforms they use are effective.



INSTAGRAM | STORIES AND FEED

Similar to Pinterest, B2B companies experience a very high engagement ratio on Instagram - the highest engagement of any of the platforms in the report (which, notably, did not include YouTube). The machinery industry stood out with a high ratio of 25, and engineering with a ratio of 44⁶⁵.

^{64 2016} Social Media Impact Report: B2B Industry Edition, TrackMaven, 2016



^{62 2016} Social Media Impact Report: B2B Industry Edition, TrackMaven, 2016

^{63 2016} Social Media Impact Report: B2B Industry Edition, TrackMaven, 2016

Engage Instagram users by sharing short snippet videos, small infographic bursts, and high-quality photography of your product or solution.



SNAPCHAT

Over the past two years, there's been a dramatic shift in the B2B researcher demographic. Back in 2012, there was a pretty even mix across age groups. In 2014, however, 18- to 34-year-olds accounted for almost half of all researchers, an increase of 70% Given this information, it's time to consider Snapchat for your business.

Snapchat, the social platform known for content that disappears in 10 seconds or less while applying entertaining filters over faces, isn't just for teens and young millennials anymore, even though that remains its primary base as of right now. In fact, 25-and-older demographics are 50% of its new users⁶⁷.

With that in mind, engage B2B buyers on Snapchat through short videos showcasing your brand's personality. Interview personnel, show your company picnics, and publish video of your product all in one account.

THE ABILITY TO TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE USING SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

The important thing about targeting your audience using social media is that it's unique to your audience - literally. Based on the metrics you're tracking for the people who are following you and engaging with your content, you can tailor the following to make it even more targeted:

- Timing: what time you share which formats and on which platforms
- Format: which ones resonate better with your audience? Test, and adjust accordingly.
- Content: what are you talking about, and which topics have the best response?
- Reach: how many people saw your content as a result of sharing it on a social platform?
- Click-through Rate: Most importantly, which platforms, formats, and content types encouraged people to go back to your site and take action there?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

How to Find The Most Profitable Social Media Platform For Your Business by Neil Patel

The Best Brands on Twitter Don't Tweet Like Brands from Contently

The Beginner's Guide to Social Media from Moz

The Snapchat Marketing Guide for Brands from TrackMaven

⁶⁷ https://contently.com/strategist/2016/08/18/snapchat-demographics-shift/



^{65 2016} Social Media Impact Report: B2B Industry Edition, TrackMaven, 2016

 $^{^{\}rm 66}$ The Changing Face of B2B Marketing, think with google, 2015

CONCLUSION

Highly-targeted marketing is becoming more and more important to your prospects and future clients. Your business buyers are spending months researching to make a large purchase; they need to see that you know them well, can provide education to help them make a decision, and can handle their business. Using educational content, hard-hitting research, and data-backed marketing, you can take your website from a useless marketing product to a lead-generation machine.

ACTION ITEMS

Using the research in this ebook, you should have a clearer understanding of the vast array of marketing techniques, metrics, and content formats available to you to establish highly-targeted marketing. From personalization, to targeted content, to identifying keywords, to researching benchmark metrics, it all starts with one thing: what do you hope to accomplish? From there, prioritizing based on those overall goals is key.

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Trending Up is an agency focused on lead generation. We aim to be trusted advisors in the dynamic field of digital marketing opportunities for B2B companies focused on attracting their target audience, educating prospects, and growing their business by creating a lead generation machine from their websites. We are experts at using educational inbound methods which are foundational to bridging the gap between our clients' marketing and sales teams. We embrace data, technology and creative to deliver stories and enhance the understanding that B2B organizations have about their prospects and clients. As an integrated partner, we enable our clients to transform into strategic thought leaders with the ultimate goal of propelling lead generation and revenue. Visit our resource center at TrendingUpStrategy.com/resources.

We also publish frequent blog posts with news and advice.



