

THE 2014 B2B MARKETING ADVISORY

*How to become
a marketing
change agent*





B2B MARKETING WAS ONCE A SECOND-RATE BUSINESS FUNCTION EQUATED WITH THE UNSCIENTIFIC MYSTERIES OF BRANDING AND TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING, BUT WITH FAR LESS PANACHE THAN B2C.

**THAT WAS THEN.
THIS IS NOW.**

..... IT'S TIME TO DITCH THE SECOND-STRING MENTALITY.

Today, B2B marketing helps forecast revenue, formulate customer strategy, and inform decisions that move the entire company forward.

B2B marketing is all about knowing what information your buyers need and delivering it just when they need it. It's about guiding your customers through their decision-making process. It's about continuing to be of value long after the sale. It's about being accountable and using scientific methods to show how marketing directly impacts sales and company revenues.

It's a daunting world where you need to anticipate the needs of your customers, master analytics, embrace marketing automation, and identify with sales. And it requires you to adopt the mindset of a publisher and become an expert at content marketing.

But that's not all. To succeed in this rapidly evolving environment, you must become the agent of change in your organization. You need to champion the seismic shift away from your solutions to one focused squarely on customers. You must take the lead in aligning marketing with sales, IT, and customer service.

You need to champion the seismic shift away from your solutions to one focused squarely on your customers.



“In today’s online and social world, marketing is responsible for up to 70% of the entire buying process — which means marketing and sales need to rethink how they work (and work together) to generate revenue.”

Most of all, you need to demonstrate that marketing is no longer a mystical practice but a C-level, data-driven operation focused on delivering sales-ready leads that result in revenue.

To prepare you for success, we have gathered the following insights to help you take action as you embrace customer centricity, refine your content marketing, dig deeper with analytics, and collaborate and align with sales.

The Definitive Guide to Marketing
Metrics and Analytics, Marketo

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF THE CMO²

WHERE BEING A CHIEF MARKETING
OFFICER NOW ALSO REQUIRES YOU TO
BECOME A MARKETING CHANGE AGENT.



WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

WHAT CHALLENGES DO THEY FACE?
MOST B2B MARKETERS KNOW TONS
ABOUT THEIR OWN PRODUCTS BUT
LITTLE ABOUT THEIR CUSTOMERS.

..... EVANGELIZE CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

For years, they've focused on selling products rather than helping customers solve problems. To adapt to this new way of doing business, marketers need to know as much about customers as they can.

While your CRM system offers some data points to consider, these systems were not designed for today's newly empowered consumer. They also don't provide the kind of deeper insight into the customer that you now need.

Becoming customer centric requires a mindset shift inside your organization. It's not an easy process, which is why some B2B companies have avoided this step.

Unless you know who your buyers are, how they play a role in the decision-making process, and what steps they take to arrive at their decision, your content is just window dressing for your website. Or worse, spam in your prospect's inbox.

To be successful in B2B marketing, you need to get involved in your prospect's research process as early as possible. You have to be more relevant and useful than your competitors by sharing engaging and educational information. Rather than creating content to support the sales cycle, you need to design a revenue model that matches the buyer journey and aligns lead-nurturing content to that model.

*Becoming
customer centric
requires a
mindset shift
inside your
organization.*



“Making your company inherently useful without expecting an immediate return is in direct opposition to the principles of marketing and business deeply ingrained at all levels.”

Jay Baer, Youtility

HOW TO DO IT:

THINK OF YOUR BRAND AS A SERVICE.

Your job isn't to win contests based on how clever your collateral or campaigns are, nor is it about keeping track of how many “likes” your company has on Facebook. And it's absolutely not about your product features. It's about how many relationships you foster and what you do to make them flourish. You need to campaign for this idea within your company and convince others that this is the new path to success.

LEARN EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS.

It's astonishing just how little insight B2B marketers have about their customers, especially when compared to their B2C counterparts who have rafts of psychographic and demographic information about their customers. For far too long, B2B companies have been preoccupied with products and services while customers have been an afterthought. Now it's time to listen, gather data, and draw insights from inside and outside your company. Marketers have to lead this process because it informs much of what marketing does. Customer knowledge sharpens your content marketing and lead-nurturing strategies and helps you tie marketing to revenue.

HOW TO DO IT:

KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER, EVEN AFTER THE SALE.

It's conventional wisdom that landing new customers can cost as much as five times more than keeping the customers you have. In this new marketing environment, you need to adopt a customer engagement mentality around your customers before and after they buy. This allows you to onboard them successfully, expand your relationship with them beyond the initial sale, and cultivate a lifelong partnership that encourages them to sing your praises far across the digital landscape.



**SEE THE WORLD
THROUGH THE EYES
OF YOUR CUSTOMERS.**



**ENGAGE THEM IN CONVERSATION,
OFFER UP USEFUL INFORMATION,
AND SERVE THEIR NEEDS BEYOND
THE SALE.**



**YOUR BUYERS ARE
TWO-THIRDS OF THE
WAY THROUGH THE
BUYING PROCESS
BEFORE THEY GIVE
YOU A CALL,**

**WHICH MEANS THEY ARE VORACIOUSLY
CONSUMING CONTENT ONLINE—
YOURS AND YOUR COMPETITORS'.**

..... PRACTICE NEXT-GENERATION CONTENT MARKETING.

Early adopters to content marketing responded to this buyer shift by creating a lot of content. They thought if they generated a ton of white papers, videos, blogs, and more, they would gain a top rank on Google and prospects would show up and buy.

That notion is prehistoric.

Content marketing is no longer a differentiator; it's a requirement, and it's a lot more sophisticated.

Your content needs to be high quality, highly relevant, engaging, and easy to share. It needs to be scooped up early and often throughout the research process. It needs to do more than just impart information. It needs to engender knowledge and good will.

Today, it's imperative that you create content that engages your ideal prospects and your current customers. Focus on telling stories and aligning content to your customer's journey, and you will outpace your competition.

Are prospects ignoring your content? Do you know why? Is it filled with company-focused information and product-laden feature lists? Let's face it: technology isn't sexy or entertaining; it can be downright boring. But when you incorporate storytelling, you tap into a powerful form of communication that helps your message resonate with prospects. A good story allows you to engage with your audience, build relationships, and make your content memorable and shareable.

Content marketing is no longer a differentiator. It's a requirement, and it's a lot more sophisticated.



“The storyteller strategy educates, entertains, engages, and has impact on audiences because the content goes well beyond the scope of the product or service into why the organization exists at all.”

Joe Pulizzi,
Epic Content Marketing

Powerful stories have an impact on the brain, according to Paul Zak, a pioneer in the field of neuroeconomics. Zak discovered that if you put readers at the core of a story and appeal to them emotionally, their brains respond by releasing oxytocin, which is responsible for a variety of behaviors including empathy, generosity, and trust. If your buyers can identify with your stories, you can influence their behaviors.

“Stories are how we think. They are how we make meaning of life,” says Pamela Rutledge, Director of the Media Psychology Research Center. “Stories are how we explain how things work, how we make decisions, how we justify our decisions, how we persuade others, how we understand our place in the world.”

HOW TO DO IT:

CREATE STORY LINES, NOT SNACKS.

Are you suffering from social media overload? Do you lose track of time creating, consuming, and sharing 140-character content bits that never quite satisfy your hunger for deeper meaning? Social media channels provide us with the ability to distribute content across the web like breadcrumbs. But many times, these B2B breadcrumbs are mere morsels. Weave compelling story lines cohesively across all your channels—website, social media platforms, email, offline advertising, events—anywhere you plan to show up. Your efforts should be focused on a consistent, compelling story, not individual networks.

While the Internet has given rise to a population of content skimmers, B2B buyers are often looking for more in-depth and relevant information to help them solve their problems. By using stories, B2B marketers can cut through the clutter and engage buyers at a deeper level.

HIRE JOURNALISTS FOR BETTER STORYTELLING.

Companies such as Cisco, Boeing, and Eloqua have hired journalists to create unbiased and helpful content focused on the customer. Journalists think in multimedia terms, know where to find and how to create compelling stories, and have an innate ability to see things from an outsider's perspective.



HOW TO DO IT:

CULTIVATE TRUST, AVOID SELF-PROMOTION.

When creating content, it's critical to avoid bias and self-promotion. In short, get over yourself! A recent CMO Council survey revealed that, although content marketing is a major influence on vendor selection, just 9 percent of decision makers trusted vendor content. You need to create thoughtful, educational, and trustworthy content that is focused on the customer. Your content needs to address the challenges your buyers face and the decisions they have to make. Be empathetic and provide them with the information they seek. Savvy marketers create individual buyer personas and map content to each stage of the decision-making process.

FIND AND FILL KNOWLEDGE GAPS.

Google is moving toward relevancy and context and away from keywords as search-ranking criteria. To keep pace with these changes, you need to create educational content to fill knowledge gaps based on customer questions and problems. By making content that people want to read and share, companies build links organically.

HOW TO DO IT:

MAKE YOUR CONTENT MOBILE-FRIENDLY.

Smart B2B marketers design corporate websites with mobile users in mind so that their content can be consumed on a variety of devices. They use responsive design rather than creating a separate site for mobile users. Bonus: Google prefers responsively designed websites that only access one URL across all devices and don't require redirects.

CONTINUE CONTENT MARKETING AFTER THE SALE.

Use the methodologies and tools of content marketing to make your customer engagement communications helpful and relevant. Adapt lead-nurturing functionality to the entire customer life cycle. Create compelling stories, distribute them across all your media channels, and track their effectiveness. Keep listening, keep communicating, and stay engaged.

“42% of IT heads find it extremely or very challenging to find trusted information.”

Connecting the Dots
Between Content and Sales,
IDG Enterprise



**DON'T CREATE MORE
CONTENT. CREATE
BETTER CONTENT.**



**OFFER UP STORIES THAT ADDRESS
THE CHALLENGES OF YOUR READERS
AND THEY WILL REWARD YOU WITH
THEIR ATTENTION AND TIME.**



WHAT'S THE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE AND SCARY REALITY FACING B2B MARKETERS TODAY?

IT IS NOW POSSIBLE TO TRACK MARKETING'S IMPACT ON REVENUES.

..... ADOPT (AND USE) BETTER TOOLS FOR BETTER DECISIONS.

Historically, companies viewed marketing as a cost center because marketers did not have a clear path from intangibles like brand awareness, organic search results, or press release reads to increases in revenue and profits. They planned programs and committed budgets without knowing what impact their marketing efforts would have.

There was no accountability.

The rise of marketing analytics and marketing automation software has changed the game. Marketing results can now be tracked and measured.

Marketers are drowning in data points: website visitors, social media followers, LinkedIn group members, webinar viewers, email opens, and click-throughs to name a few. Marketing automation software tools have added to the flood. The volume is growing exponentially, but for the most part, **only 20 percent of data is actually used.**

The rise of marketing analytics and marketing automation software has changed the game.



“The more data is valued by the organization, the more value it can usually deliver.”

Value to Vision:
Reimagining the Possible
with Data Analytics, SAS

Figuring out which data to track is a monumental challenge.

Jim Lenskold, author of *Marketing ROI: The Path to Campaign, Customer, and Corporate Profitability*, offers some advice: “Prioritize when and what to measure based on the answers you need to make decisions that will improve your profits.”

In other words, figure out your objectives and then determine which metrics best support them.

Trying to figure out marketing’s return on investment (ROMI) takes a long time. It’s been called the Holy Grail of marketing, but it only provides historical context. Rather than react, be proactive. Predict what’s going to generate revenues next quarter and next year, not just what happened last year or last quarter.

HOW TO DO IT:

CONSIDER MARKETING AUTOMATION AS THE MARKETING SYSTEM OF RECORD.

Marketing automation handles the long middle of the marketing and sales process. It fills the chasm that formed when marketing took credit for generating leads but not the responsibility for nurturing them, and when sales deemed those same leads worthless if they weren't ready to buy. B2B marketers have only scratched the surface of what marketing automation software can do. According to SiriusDecisions, 85 percent of marketers say they are not using marketing automation software to its full potential.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A LEAD-NURTURING STRATEGY.

Your marketing automation system has the potential to be a finely tuned machine for responding and reacting to what your leads are telling you through their actions. Marketing automation allows you to make prospects feel like everything they receive from you is a natural progression from what you just sent them, but it's still in its infancy. You have to consistently examine and refine what the process looks and feels like from the customer standpoint.



HOW TO DO IT:

CREATE A WEIGHTED MODEL TO ATTRIBUTE MARKETING'S INFLUENCE ON SALES.

Automation systems do a good job of tracking marketing sourced leads—those people who respond to an email or register for a webinar—and then track their progress through the system. But marketing isn't a closed-loop system. Leads can enter your pipeline through a phone call or a referral and are then influenced by marketing but often don't get counted as marketing wins. Some systems attribute 100 percent of every marketing opportunity to every touch point. Buyers also might consume several content assets and campaigns in several places, not just one, and those access points need to be measured correctly. With a weighted model, which distributes value across all campaign touches, you can see all points of marketing influence, not just a single point, and attribute each touch appropriately.

USE DATA TO TEST HYPOTHESES.

With automation software, you now have the ability to analyze data in thousands of ways. You can test how a single piece of content performs, see where customers get stuck, and pinpoint areas that need to be refined. The reality is that you have more data than you know what to do with. And to be effective, you need to be able to draw insights from that data. So you need to think critically, ask questions about the data, and build a strong relationship with your data analyst. Don't let yourself fall victim to analysis paralysis; embrace this newfound repository.

HOW TO DO IT:

PRACTICE DATA-DRIVEN OPTIMIZATION. RELENTLESSLY.

Marketing automation isn't a solution for a lack of leads, nor will it instantly provide feedback about what you need to do to be a better marketer. That hard work comes from your ability to analyze the data and refine your actions toward better results. Only then can you automate your marketing processes.

CREATE A REVENUE MODEL THAT MAPS TO THE SALES FUNNEL.

The revenue model is the foundation for data analytics. Think of it as a state diagram; no lead can be in two places at any one time. Use the results gleaned from your marketing automation system to measure the process defined in your revenue model. At a very high level, it works like this: Examine how many leads you have at each stage of the marketing process, look at what percentage move from one stage to another, and then multiply by average deal size. These numbers will allow you to begin talking about the marketing pipeline in dollars and cents, the terms your CFO and CEO are looking for.

“Without analytics, you’re flying blind.”

The B2B Marketing Manifesto,
Velocity Partners



**THE FOUNDATION
FOR MODERN
MARKETING ISN'T
ABSTRACT CONCEPTS;
IT'S DATA.**

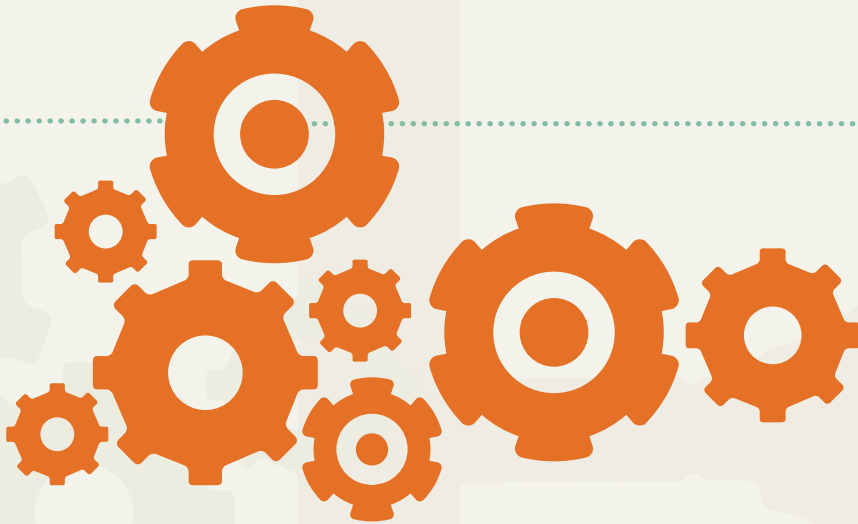


FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO ACCOMPLISH, DEFINE HOW TO MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS, TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS, AND ITERATE YOUR WAY TO ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS.



**THE EVOLVING
ROLE OF MARKETING
DEMANDS THAT
MARKETING AND
SALES WORK
TOGETHER.**

ERASE THE LINE BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING.

Traditional barriers need to be obliterated and collaboration is paramount to success. It's marketing's job to empower sales to continue delivering the right content to the right person at the right time with the same level of service that prospects have experienced during lead nurturing.

Yet at most companies, sales and marketing barely talk.

Only two-thirds of sales reps believe that their company's content is valuable and relevant to customers, according to a [Selling Power's Content Marketing and Sales Effectiveness white paper](#). The research also shows that "nearly 50 percent of sales reps and more than one-third of sales managers do not understand their own company's content-marketing strategy." This disconnect typically happens when marketing has not mapped its content to the buyer journey or revenue model and doesn't communicate with sales.

It's marketing's job to empower sales to continue delivering the same level of service that prospects have experienced during lead nurturing.



HOW TO DO IT:

INVITE SALES TO THE TABLE EARLY AND OFTEN.

The key to success is for marketing to work with sales to define what a qualified lead is, what the lead handoff between marketing and sales looks like, and create a revenue model that tracks leads from the marketing automation system, to the sales system, and through to close.

B2B marketers can start the conversation by inviting sales to take an active role in:

- Documenting the buyer's journey.
- Contributing to and adopting the revenue model.
- Developing and agreeing to a scoring system that pinpoints and defines the transition from marketing to sales.
- Committing to a service-level agreement that quantifies how long sales has to follow up with a qualified prospect, when to discard a lead, and when and how to recycle it.

HOW TO DO IT:

DEVELOP A SALES CONCIERGE DESK.

B2B marketers need to hire—or develop—hybrid marketing, sales, and social professionals who will serve as a primary contact for prospective buyers, long before they are ever handed over to sales. These people add a human touch to the marketing automation process, reaching out through the phone, email, or social media channels to help buyers get the information they need. Their focus is on qualifying and nurturing leads and adding value during the buying process, rather than receiving a sales commission.

The people who fill this position, sometimes called market development or lead development representatives, are pros at recognizing when prospective customers are moving toward a purchasing decision but still need to be nurtured. They can also tell when to fast-track highly qualified prospects ready to buy.

Despite having a role that can be comparable to sales, lead reps act as a bridge between marketing and sales. They can help the sales team optimize social media channels with marketing's insight and content. At the same time, they can help translate sales lingo and practices into insight for marketing about how buyer preferences and requirements are changing and how industry trends are shifting.

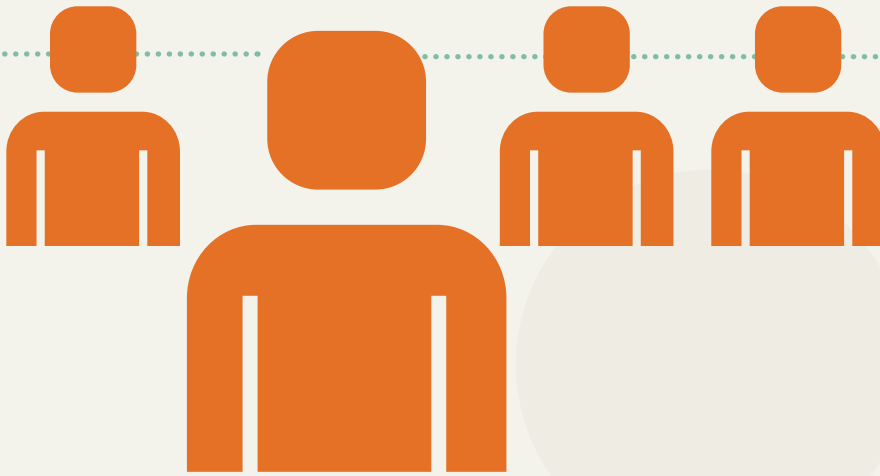
“Only 24% of companies have formalized their marketing-sales handoff.”

2013 State of Inbound Marketing, Hubspot



**LOSE THE “US VERSUS
THEM” MENTALITY.**

**LEADERS TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY
FOR RESULTS.**



**LOOK FOR WAYS TO ERASE
THE LINES BETWEEN MARKETING
AND SALES AND ESTABLISH SUCCESS
METRICS THAT ACKNOWLEDGE THE
CONTRIBUTION OF EACH STEP.**



B2B MARKETERS FACE MANY NEW CHALLENGES:

**KEEPING THEIR CUSTOMERS FRONT
AND CENTER, EVOLVING THEIR CONTENT
MARKETING STRATEGY, USING DATA
TO TIE MARKETING EFFORTS DIRECTLY
TO REVENUE AND PROFITABILITY,
AND FORGING A BETTER RELATIONSHIP
WITH SALES.**

..... DO MORE: BECOME A CMO².

Being an effective B2B marketer means doing more. It means becoming a change agent and taking the lead. Because marketing accounts for about 70 percent of the sales cycle, it only makes sense that you, marketing leader, take the helm.

That's why we propose that today's successful CMO also take on the title of Change Management Officer and become CMO².

That means turning your marketing skills inward to sell change upstream and down.

That means keeping track of progress and showing results.

And that means staying the course, even as fear, uncertainty, and doubt get in the way.

Reorienting your people, processes, and tools around the customer isn't going to be easy. Figuring how to leverage data and analytics to distill actionable insights about your customers is complex and scary. Aligning with sales is going to take a lot of patience and communication. But the payoffs that come with mastering these new tools, processes, and thinking will be well worth the effort. With these new insights, you'll be better prepared to navigate the rapidly evolving B2B marketing landscape.

Reorienting your people, processes, and tools around the customer isn't going to be easy.

**CHANGE IS CONSTANT.
CHANGE IS HARD.
WE'RE HERE TO HELP.**

*Yesler is a B2B marketing agency
that helps technology companies deliver
predictable revenues, sustainable
growth, and measurable results.*

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