

6 words to guide you on your B2B content marketing journey

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Content Marketing Institute research tells us that B2B marketers are doing well when it comes to educating and growing awareness but are struggling with building lasting relationships and building the bottom line. The rise of digital has resulted in an ever-increasing wave of competition to reach audiences, be they business or consumer. So how do we engage customers through to point of sale and beyond?



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1. Data

Like everyone else, the B2B buyer is going digital-first. An [IDC study found](#) that 75% of B2B buyers and eight out of 10 C-level execs use social media to make purchasing decisions. That's great but remember: when posting content, B2B brands are not only competing against other business accounts but also against personal accounts. So we only have a small window for our target audience to see and – more importantly – engage with our content. The key metrics, such as when our target audience is online and what type of content yields the highest engagement rate, will determine what to push and when. This data is critical.

Another opportunity is ensuring maximum discoverability by means of a proper SEO strategy. Digitalisation has made many B2B buyers turn to Google for product and service information, and data comes into play here too.



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2. Authenticity

According to Marc Mathieu, the former senior VP of marketing at Unilever, marketing used to be about creating a myth and selling it, but now it's about finding a truth and sharing it. This is as true in the B2B sector as it is in the consumer realm. The open dialogue that marketing has become demands that we build our brand into a platform that our audience trusts.

3. Usefulness

That authentic platform must serve audiences information that's useful and relevant to them. B2B customers are particularly focused on return on investment, so the stakes are high. They're looking for expertise and for facts about products so that they make the right purchasing decisions on behalf of their business. It's a big responsibility that we should bear in mind.

4. Quality

Bombarding B2B buyers with stock-standard content or a sales pitch will lead to them losing interest very quickly. So we have to be wary of using data to fulfil the urge to become breaking news providers. This would place the accuracy of information or quality of editorial at risk of compromise. It's not about getting there first; it's about leaving a lasting impression.

5. Innovation

The onset of Covid-19 made B2B marketers realise we had to find new socially distanced methods of engaging with our customers. Webinars, for example, have been around for a while but might not have had the growth they've experienced were it not for the lockdown. We now know that a well-planned webinar with engaging content will attract attendance and participation.



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6. E-commerce

One of the best ways to affect the bottom line is to close the loop in terms of the actual transaction. Instead of focusing on just generating great content as a method of marketing, we should shift to driving business to the transaction – without becoming salespeople.

According to Forbes, B2B e-commerce is likely to be the largest area of e-commerce growth from 2020 to 2025. But we cannot sacrifice the storytelling aspect of B2B marketing to this goal. It's a tricky line to straddle, but we can do it with the digital tools available to all content marketers today.

The future of content marketing is bright. There's a reason Seth Godin calls it "the only marketing left" – it's authentic, useful and perfectly suited to the internet generation. In the B2B arena, an established brand that regularly delivers trusted content will always attract the right audience. And we now have access to data that can ensure what we generate and serve to audiences, no matter how niche, is delivering ROI.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dev Naidoo is the general manager of B2B at New Media. He started in the media business in 1993, when print orders were massive and the postal system was key to distribution, and counts himself fortunate to have been part of the evolving media landscape as audiences adapted to digital. Dev leads New Media's B2B marketing division, which reaches an audience of over 500 000 people with over 30 brands that cater to the architecture and construction, manufacturing and processing, retail, medical and finance sectors. Leo Redelinghuys is the co-founder and MD of Swipe iX. She is a natural early adopter, who has specialised in digital solutions and software development for 20 years. Before Swipe iX, Leo held positions at Inxcom, Touchline Media and 24.com and was the founder and GM of Touchlab, the technology division of Media24. An innovative entrepreneur with a passion for long-term collaboration with clients, she has an executive programme qualification in business strategy and general management from Harvard Business School.

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