



An emedia guide to: B2B Lead Generation for the Complex Sale

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What's inside?

What is B2B Content & Why is it Critical?

What Makes Quality Content?

Most Successful B2B Content Types

Promoting Your B2B Content

Content Promotion Methods

The Lead Funnel – Critical Metrics for the Lead Generation Process

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B2B Lead Generation – Why it Drives Sales

Nowadays, buyers research business and technical issues, as well as conduct pre-purchase product research, largely on their own. Then they reach out to the sales departments of credible vendors to discuss these vendors' solutions on an enlightened basis. The implications for B2B vendors is that they must make available quality, findable content that educates prospects on the problems they face and how their solutions will help. This is the bare minimum requirement for B2B marketing in the 'teens.

To succeed, B2B marketers must develop a content-driven relationship with prospects. Provide the information prospects seek to gain understanding of their business problems, build vendor credibility as a result, and get prospects' permission to directly offer more such information. Make this information available where prospects can find it. Generate leads through quality content, permission-based interface mechanisms, and targeted content distribution channels. Over time, leads generated through this strategy

What is B2B Content & Why is it Critical?

The B2B content marketing method requires content that informs prospects on issues that face them as professionals. Both written & multimedia content can alert prospects to the existence of potential situations within their industry or area of responsibility. It can raise the profile of potential issues already on the professional's radar. It can offer solutions to problems that the business professional is currently investigating. Finally, it should present your company's solution as a top alternative towards addressing such issues.

B2B content designed to generate leads must educate and inform, not sell, at least not overtly. Sales sheets and brochures do not qualify. People will not access these until they are ready to buy. The prospect must want to download or access content, and consume it as something that will make her a more capable business professional. You should integrate your firm's solutions in a low key, subtle manner, &/or simply discuss them in the sponsor's afterword to the piece. This is how you market your company's solutions during the critical pre-purchase research phase that is part of all prospects' buying processes.

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What Makes Quality Content?

- Educational & Informative
- Popular Topic within its Audience
- Concise, to the Point
- Focused, not Expansive
- Catchy but Descriptive Title
- Easy to Scan – or Summary Should be Included
- Created in Prospects' Language & Professional Jargon
- Quality Production – Holds Prospects' Attention
- Optimized for SEO
- Easy to Share – consider both Social Media and File Size
- Discusses Your Company's Solution, but not Front & Center

To succeed, B2B marketers must develop a content-driven relationship with prospects.

Most Successful B2B Content Types

- **White Papers.** 5-7 pages plus executive summary in front
- **Webinars & Webcasts.** Recorded webinars generate leads long after the live event
- **Ebooks.** Longer than white papers, more modular, more substantial
- **Guides.** Instructional or directional pieces towards approaching particular issues
- **Product Trials.** A downloadable sample of your product or service
- **Research Reports.** Original research results packaged for consumption
- **Surveys.** Offer attractive prize in exchange for data
- **Widgets, Tools, Calculators.** Branded labor-savers that put your company's name front & center
- **Infographics, Posters.** Summarize complex info at a glance, in a visual manner
- **Presentations.** Turn Powerpoints & Prezis into running productive offers
- **Podcasts.** For those who prefer audio consumption
- **Tip Sheets.** Can make a lot of information easily scannable
- **Videos.** Visually engaging, easily shared

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Promoting Your B2B Content

Thought Leadership

One goal and benefit of B2B content, and its promotion, is to present your company as a thought leader. Thought leaders gain respect and credibility from prospects within their markets; this pays off over the long run. Thought leadership can be a primary goal or a valuable byproduct of lead generation.

Lead Generation

Lead generation is a more measurable goal. Use your B2B content to attract sales leads for immediate distribution or leads to nurture and build a relationship. Do not rely on one method of content promotion to generate leads.

Test and work through a portfolio of content promotion methods:

Content Promotion Methods

1. Outbound Marketing Tactics to Promote Content:

Types:

- **Rental List Email.** Reach new prospects by paying partners or publishers to broadcast your message to their lists.
- **Direct Mail.** Buy or rent prospects' physical addresses; present enclosed offers or offers available via mail or online response forms.
- **Telemarketing/teleprospecting.** Share your offers with agreeable prospects following info gathering call. Alternatively, set appointment or product trial.
- **Telequalifying.** Validate information with quick calls to prospects for leads harvested through other methods.
- **Trade Shows & Events.** Meet potential prospects face-to-face.

Advantages:

- Can generate leads more quickly & proactively.
- Phone & trade shows facilitate real-time human contact, still the richest form if you can get it. Proactive telemethods may ferret out true decision makers when executed well.
- Can reach decision makers when they're aware of an issue but have not yet begun active research.
- Can get you in the door ahead of competitors relying solely on inbound methods.

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Limitations:

- May be intrusive, causing prospects to ignore it, or possibly get annoyed.
- Gatekeeper barriers (human, digital, legal) increasing over time.
- Lower potential for social & viral leverage.
- More expensive on a cost-per-lead (CPL) basis.

2. Inbound Marketing Tactics to Promote Content

Types:

- **Content Hosting Sites or Nanosites.** Company or publisher-run websites or microsites featuring downloadable B2B content.
- **Content Syndication Networks.** Independently-run set of targeted websites hosting downloadable B2B content.
- **Search Engine Optimization.** Help your key webpages, and hosted B2B content, top keyword searches.
- **Pay-Per-Click Search Engine Marketing.** Buy top ranking in keyword searches.
- **Social Media.** To enhance prospects' discovery and greater engagement with your B2B content.
- **Blogs (including Guest Blogs).** Present content in a way to enhance engagement, as well as SEO ranking.
- **Viral Seeding/Viral Marketing.** Capitalizing on personal networks within your market to promote content sharing and engagement.
- **Virtual Trade Shows & Expos.** Aggregate & present your content in a central online forum set to draw targeted prospects.

Advantages:

- High potential for visibility & exposure, directly, as content is sharable, and indirectly, as SEO improves through more backlinks.
- Your offers may be better received, as they are not presented via a means perceived as intrusive.
- Superior branding potential. Prospects access your offers in contexts over which you exert greater control, such as your landing pages.

Limitations:

- Design, setup, & deployment may be more difficult and involved than that for outbound methods.
- Usually requires more patience than for outbound hybrid email campaigns; takes longer to generate significant lead flow.

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- Reliant on common awareness of a problem or issue (for which your company is the solution) among prospects – which drives inbound research by prospects.

3. Permission-based Email - Vital for Content Success

Types:

- **Opt-in House List.** Cultivate email-based relationship with your house list, driven by quality content.
- **Email Bulletins or Newsletters.** Carry your offers to targeted audiences of decision makers managed by vendors or publishers, generating leads in the process.

Advantages:

- B2B decision makers rate email the most effective lead generation tactic*.
- Can reach decision makers at all stages of pre-purchase, even before they've commenced active research.
- Prospects always check their email.
- Prospects only access items which interest them.
- Permission-based is not intrusive. By definition, permission-based senders have entrée into prospects' inboxes. Managed email bulletins or email newsletters can get your offers to lists more expansive than your house list.
- Subject lines and from addresses offer excellent opportunities to attractively present offers.

Disadvantages:

- Lists may be limited in scope, depending on the source.
- Marketers can burn a list out, depending on how they manage email deployments on their own.
- Email deployment can run into spam trouble, even with pure intentions. Marketers managing email on their own must be ever mindful of email law.

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The Lead Funnel – Critical Metrics for the Lead Generation Process

– In Sequence from 1st Contact to Sale

Raw Inquiries

First contact: collateral downloads, inquiries, prospects reached by teleprospecting or Sales, etc.

Marketing Qualified Leads

Leads qualified & deemed acceptable by Marketing according to guidelines pre-agreed with Sales.

Marketing Automation Qualified Leads

Leads funneled through a company’s marketing automation software

- Inbound Inquiries
- Campaign-Generated Leads – From externally-focused campaigns
- Campaign-Generated Leads – From campaigns focusing on company’s own house list

Teleprospecting Generated Leads

- Teleprospecting Accepted Leads
- Tele-qualified, originating from other sources

Sales Generated Leads

Prospects originating from Sales’ own efforts

Sales Accepted Leads

Leads generated by Marketing, Teleprospecting, or Sales, to be approached by Sales

Sales Qualified Leads

Leads getting through 2nd level qualification when contacted by Sales become Qualified Prospects, according to guidelines pre-agreed between Sales & Marketing

Qualified Prospects

Closed Sales



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Technologies

CRM

Centralizes key client & prospect info, offering superior account management and 360 degree view of clients/prospects in their interactions with company's departments.

Marketing Automation

Integrated with CRM, facilitates effective lead management, including the following components*:

- **Drip Marketing.** Automate messages so they go out based on a prospect's interaction and needs.
- **Lead Capture & Assessment.** Facilitate offer registrations through customized forms and online lead capture. Score and qualify leads and route them to sales.
- **Lead Nurturing.** Automate multi-step programs so you can communicate with individuals over a period of time to move them forward in the engagement process.
- **Integrated Multichannel Marketing.** Leverage website, social, email and CRM behavioral data to drive conversations with individuals over email, direct mail, phone and website. Track and leverage behaviors across all channels.
- **Revenue Measurement.** Measure the effectiveness of lead generation sources as well as content offers/campaigns through the various stages in the sales funnel all the way to revenue attribution.

Website Analytics

The collection & analysis of website visitor behavior. Helps understand, increase, and convert inbound leads.

Content Analytics & Tracking

A host of technologies for discovering new insights from prospects' behavior involving, and driven by, a company's content on the company website and elsewhere.

Dynamic Content

Content customized for requestors based on past behavior.

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1. Define Your Audiences.

Horizontals (titles, professions, areas of expertise), verticals (industries, markets).

2. How do your audiences gather information on business problems and solutions?

3. How & where can you best reach your audiences?

4. Which content types do your audiences prefer to consume?

White papers, webinars, video, etc?

Talk to your customers, look at competitors' published collateral, etc.

5. Look at your internal resources.

Get cooperation of in-house domain experts – the people who provide content expertise to collateral creators.

Do you have sufficient resources to create the content? If not, consider freelance writers and producers, if adding to payroll is not an appropriate option.

Also look for industry thought leaders willing to serve as content partners; lead sharing or other barter arrangements may even be worked out.

6. Look at your company's solutions/products/services.

What problems faced by your audience do they solve?

Choose one, create collateral addressing the problem, mentioning your company's solution among other possible solutions.

Put your company's solution in a good light, but your collateral should not be a sales piece, promotional video, etc. Its main role is to educate prospects on the problem in question.

Remember to create a compelling story, so your piece may get a viral lift.

7. Create multiple collateral items to extend your story across different collateral types.

White papers, webinars, ebooks, blog entries, infographics, etc.

Your content should be reused and reformatted to extract the most value.

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8. Promote your collateral where your audiences will see it and accounting for how they consume B2B content.

- You can very effectively reach most B2B audiences during the critical first-mover stage before prospects actually begin to research solutions by email. Your house list and email bulletins/newsletters work best for this.
- To reach prospects in research mode post your collateral on hosting sites targeting your audience, on your website, and in email bulletins/newsletters.
- Beyond these, promote your collateral where your research indicates your audience will see it.
- Do not short change SEO or social media, regardless of where your audiences permit you to harvest the most leads.

9. Process leads through your lead funnel using a marketing automation system.

Store Marketing-Qualified Leads and Sales-Qualified Leads in your CRM system, accessible to both Sales and Marketing.

Resources

- Lead Generation for the Complex Sale, by Brian Carroll
- MarketingSherpa – email newsletters, webinars, sponsored guides
- B2B Lead Blog - b2bleadblog.com
- Inbound Needs Outbound - ardathalbee.sys-con.com/node/1878858
- 6 Weeks To A Great Webinar: Generate Leads And Tell Your Story To The World, by W. Wayne Turmel
- Crafting White Paper 2.0, by Jonathan Kantor
- Writing White Papers, by Brian Stelzner

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About eMedia

eMedia has specialized in B2B lead generation, content creation, and building demand since 1999. We reach more than 10 million decision-makers across over 80 niche-oriented audiences within the following B2B areas:

- Information Technology
- Supply Chain/Logistics
- Human Resources
- Marketing/Sales
- Corporate Finance/CFOs
- B2B Events
- Manufacturing
- Small Business
- Procurement
- Hospitality Management
- Healthcare Technology
- Electronics
- Occupational Health
- Environmental Management
- Project Management
- Packaging/Converting
- Construction & Architects
- Professional Development
- Design Engineers
- Control Engineers
- Printing
- Facilities Management ...And More

eMedia's expertise and personal service permit effective implementation of Guaranteed Cost-per-Lead programs for our clients' offers and collateral. Or we can drive highly targeted traffic to clients' web pages.

eMedia offers both proactive media (permission-based email bulletins to our audiences) and multichannel options ideal for decision makers in research mode. Our clients capitalize on these channels to fill their lead pipelines and nurturing systems.

eMedia can also help you create winning collateral selections for your lead generation campaigns.

Contact eMedia at 312-754-6355, 800-782-6167, or inquiries@emedia.com.

ACCELERATED B2B LEAD GENERATION – ON DEMAND

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Contact **e media** today...

Find out how we can assist you with your **lead generation**, **click-through** and **brand awareness** campaigns; we can even produce the **content!**

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