

TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS GUIDE to MARKETING



INTRODUCTION AND THE HISTORY OF MARKETING

Remember the days when traditional marketing was the only way for marketers to execute fun and engaging campaigns? Fast-forward to today, and you have entered the integrated marketing world. It's a world where traditional marketing still exists, but now comes in an obvious second to the Internet's results-driven capabilities.

It should seem that the rise of digital, result-driven campaigns would make it easier to decide which tactics to deploy. However, traditional and digital marketing are beginning to blend at an extraordinary rate as companies look to new and surefire ways to get the best results. Today, we live in a results-driven marketing economy that encompasses all forms of integrated marketing activities. What to do first and where to focus your budget can seem daunting to any marketer.

And yet, regardless of how you generate your demand, the tools you use and how you choose to use them will make or break your marketing efforts. All too often, we see organizations try out new digital platforms because it's the new 'cool' thing. Other times, they focus too heavily on traditional methods with no tangible way to track them. This leads to sub-par results and a mediocre marketing campaign. Why is this? Are companies suddenly becoming bad marketers, or are we truly struggling with the way we go to market through all of this noise?

Let's take a look at the history of marketing. In early Marketing 101 classes, we were taught that each person can see upwards of 2,000 marketing

messages per day when living in a city and simply walking around. In the digital age, research firms have estimated that each person now sees up to 20,000 different marketing messages per day. Of course, it is IMPOSSIBLE to retain all of this information. Standing out against your competition and all the marketing noise is becoming more and more challenging.

We no longer want to experience marketing with push-through mentalities. With everything at the user's fingertips, we can now make our purchasing decisions based on our wants and needs. People have the power to look up reviews of any company alongside competitor offerings. These empowered consumers can now make decisions without a sales person telling us what we want. They KNOW what they want and how to get it. The marketer's job is to remind them of that want and pull them in with it.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Marketing in the technology space is no different. As an IT organization, you are expected to prove how you are better than your competition. This guide is built to help you – as a marketing expert in the technology space – learn the ins and outs of marketing for IT. We will address what you can do to stand out in such a competitive, rapidly-growing industry, while assuring you are generating demand using the right tactics at the right time. And most importantly, we demonstrate how you can keep up with the rise of marketing, get through the marketing noise, and be the 1 in 20,000 marketing messages that gets noticed.

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CHAPTER 1

THE TECHNICAL PERSONA



Many companies have forgotten they sell to actual people. Humans care about the entire experience, not just marketing or sales or service. To really win in the modern age, you must solve for humans. Every process should be optimized for what is best for the customer — not your organization.

~ Dharmesh Shah, CTO and Founder of HubSpot

Understanding your persona is a critical piece to any marketing campaign. The new trend in marketing is for companies to move away from the concept of B2B or B2C and instead look at what is coined as H2H, or Human-to-Human Marketing. Your message no longer has impact when it relates to what you and your company do. It needs to relate to the end-user.

This type of marketing campaign needs to answer questions like what drives your intended persona? Which pain points do they have that you can solve for? How can you create remarkable content that will inform them, as well as draw them in to learn more about your brand? In essence, marketing to a company is no longer about the company. It is about the human being or beings who run the organization.

Understanding your IT persona

Marketing to the technology persona is by far the most important first step to creating your marketing campaign. You no longer have the flexibility to create a one-stop shop marketing plan that will attract everyone. Marketing has become too cluttered. The only campaigns that will bring remarkable results are those that are targeted to the human, NOT the business.

The IT persona is a complex persona to understand. People in all areas of IT have different, multifaceted needs. IT personas are smart, tech savvy, and inundated with marketing messages – more so than any other industry in B2B. Despite this, they are still a great persona to attract when you know what will capture their attention.

What your CIO persona wants

SiriusDecisions did a study that looked into the CXO role to better understand their overall buying habits. According to John Neeson's "The Future of Marketing" presentation, one finding was that the CIO is typically involved in all stages of the buying cycle, they are more likely to get their information from referrals, exploration of known vendors, and Internet searches.

The CIO is also, on average, more interested in downloading a case study or demo than an analyst paper or video. This tells us that the CIO persona is most attracted by the bottom line. To market to them appropriately, you need to grab their attention with your bottom funnel content.

Bringing bottom funnel content to a CIO also poses another challenge, however. How do you capture the attention of someone who doesn't know you, doesn't want to be sold to, and has likely made up their mind on which direction they would like to go in?

This is where marketing gets fun. You can start to understand the CIO and their psychographics. Aside from buying behavior, you should also try to answer the following questions:

1. What are they interested in reading?
2. Which sources do they go to for research and information?
3. Are they married?
4. What do they like to do in their free time?
5. What keeps them up at night?
6. How do they interact with the Internet?
7. Are they male or female?
8. Do they have a Director of IT or someone in their organization that will refer you?
9. How do you then grab the CIO's attention?
10. Where does the CIO go for information?

All of these questions and more are the foundations for creating any successful persona. Only when you truly understand your buyer can you create a piece of content or construct a marketing campaign that you know will convert the right audience.

One question you may ask is how many personas should my company have? A general rule is to have a minimum of 3 personas for your organization. However, some companies have over 15 personas. In general, most industry experts recommend you have as many as you need to match the diversity of your customer base.

The CIO Buyer's Behavior

Buying Cycle

Consistently shows a high interest during all stages of the buying cycle.

Top Initiatives

Cloud implementations, costs, virtualization, budget, control, data resources, security, and ROI.

Where do they find information?

Internet searches, exploration of known vendors, and referrals.

What carries the most weight when they make a vendor decision?

Previous experience with a customer, perception of brand with no previous experience, or customer references?

Remember:

"You can't be everything to everyone, but you can be something to someone."

~Drew Davis, Brandscaping

CHAPTER 2

KNOW YOUR GOALS AND COORDINATE THEM WITH SALES



When looking at your overall marketing campaign, you should be reviewing 2 essential points:

1. What is the overall goal for your marketing campaign?
2. How will you align this goal with your sales team and assure the Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI) is achieved?

To determine the goal of your marketing campaign, you should have a thorough understanding of what your sales process and sales cycle look like. If your goal is to achieve closed business, then knowing how long this process will take is a large variant to determining the longevity of tracking your campaign.

You should also have a thorough understanding of your personal benchmarks to know how your company can achieve continuous success. Benchmarks can vary widely between companies and are subjective to what your overall organizational goals are, who your customers are, and how they engage with you.

If you have not measured these benchmarks internally, you can certainly look at industry metrics to get a baseline. However, tread lightly. Benchmarks can hold inconsistencies and may not align with your overall goals and organizational structure. This is why it is important to not be discouraged if you don't meet the numbers or if you see a large variation in your overall results.

Below is a baseline of some of the more consistent industry benchmarks material found by TopRank Online Marketing:

Source	Medium	Success Rates: Industry Averages
Landing Page	Website Visit to Responder	2-5%
Search	Organic Search to Lead	7-9%
Search	Google AdWords CTR	6-7%
Search	Mobile Banner Ads CTR	.9-1.0%
Search	Paid Search to Raw Lead	2-4%
Email	Email Whitespace Open Rate	5%
Email	Email Whitespace CTR	2%
Email	In -house Newsletter Open Rate	15-18%
Email	In House Newsletter CTR	20-22%
Social	Facebook CTR	.21%
Social	Facebook Raw Lead Conversion	.7%
Social	Twitter B2B Post Engagement	.9-1.3%
Social	Twitter Conversion Rate	2.2%
Social	LinkedIn CTR	.025-.04%
Social	LinkedIn Raw Lead Conversion	.8%

Once you have a clear understanding of which benchmarks you are looking to meet, you can then build an appropriate campaign that aligns to them.

The next step is to look at your current sales and marketing alignment and determine where there may be gaps. Marketing and sales have fought the good battle for years over the quality and quantity of leads needed to meet business goals. The good news is that with all of the marketing technology platforms available today, it is easier to track the effectiveness of marketing campaigns from the top of the funnel onwards.

Moving them down the funnel, on the other hand, is still a struggle for many organizations. Without a proper smarketing (sales + marketing) plan, your prospects are left without the human element that brings them to be a closed lead.

Making clear goals across teams and across your marketing efforts ensures that your message will be effective and consistent.

CHAPTER 3

WRITING CONTENT THAT CONVERTS



Let's face it: Marketing Information Technology can seem boring. I mean, really. Who wants to download the latest white paper on the future of servers and storage? Even the most technical person is being bombarded with fancy marketing messages that makes the latest and greatest Gartner report appear dry. With B2B Marketing reporting that 71% of marketers consider content marketing critical, how do you break through the clutter? Easy. You build remarkable content that makes IT sexy.

Wait, what?! No, we don't mean dressing up your eBook in a red dress and buying it a cocktail. We do mean giving your marketing some spice. All too often we see dry, stale, product-based marketing messages for IT. Just because you are talking about hardware,

software, and IT services doesn't mean you can't get creative and have fun with it.

Before embarking on any new piece of content or campaign, make sure you spend some time with your teams brainstorming personas and what will drive them. For example, the CIO persona is often categorized as a "golfer." So why not create a piece of content that speaks to how a "great" IT department never needs a mulligan? Or create a piece of content that explains how moving to the cloud may be your best "backswing" yet. The options are endless, and the creativity will take your content from something that could have been dry to a fun, enticing, and effective persona-based piece.

The Importance of top of the funnel content

“Your top of the funnel content must be intellectually divorced from your product, but emotionally wed to it.”

~Joe Chernov, Vice President of Content at HubSpot

Developing content for all stages of the funnel is not only important, but also necessary to your marketing efforts. You can have the best idea and content, but somehow still miss conversions. This is because promoting the right content at the top of the funnel is often a step that many organizations miss. In fact, a recent study by B2B Marketing stated that the biggest challenge that 37% of marketers face is engaging their target audience.

You may have an amazing product, fantastic success stories, and an unmatched customer service response team. Asking someone to learn about you and what you do before you know more about them, however, is like going on a first date and discussing marriage and babies before exchanging hellos.

You want to ease your prospects into getting to know you and understanding why you are awesome before prompting them to ask for more. You want to give them that “butterflies-in-the-stomach” feeling that warrants the dating discussion first.

Creating content for the top of the funnel means taking a holistic approach to your personas and understanding what makes them tick. Let’s go back to the golf analogy. When creating a piece of content

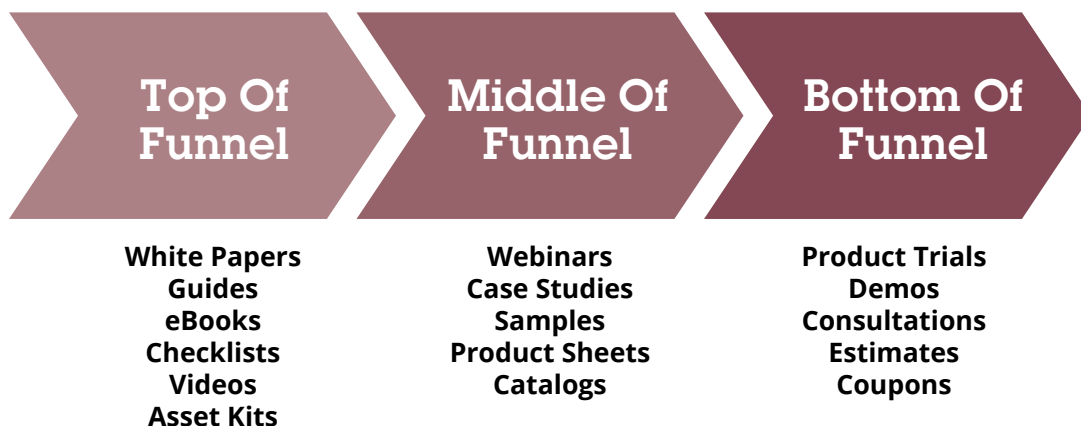
for the top of the funnel, you need to accept that your first collateral piece – the one on how a “great” IT department never needs a mulligan – should not have anything to do with you.

This collateral piece may discuss 10 top secrets to boosting an IT departments, which are secretly your company’s 10 greatest execution strengths. Alternatively, it might be a general guide to assuring how an IT department can prevent downtime. Regardless of which direction you choose, you as a marketer need to understand that your chosen direction should align with the persona’s interests.

In all, you must be sure to write for the end user, NOT for yourself.

There is a place for sales slicks, case studies, and internal videos, but it is not at the top of the funnel. If you are looking to create content that converts, make sure that the content is written for your persona and gives them something valuable for themselves and their business.

The following chart shows a general rule for which type of content you should create based on the buyer’s journey:



CHAPTER 4

TECHNICAL WRITING AND PRODUCT-BASED CONTENT



“Good marketing makes the company look smart. Great marketing makes the customer feel smart.”

~Joe Chernov, Vice President of Content at HubSpot

Now that you have focused on your top of the funnel content, you also want to be sure you have a clear plan on the middle and bottom of the funnel content. In the IT industry, content can be a challenge to produce, especially when copywriters need to be both technical writers and savvy marketers. Your organization must have the unique ability to take something technical, digest it in a technical way, and present it in a compelling and marketable format.

The good news is that you likely have multiple people in your organization who can help you achieve this goal! Once you have a great piece of content that you want to write, follow these steps to assure you have the technical know-how to WOW your audience:

Interview technical people who have industry knowledge regarding your topic

You likely have the best resources already at your disposal when it comes to writing your content: your experts. Although your technical colleagues may not be the best writers, they are full of fantastic information that will help you set a plan in place for your content outline. When interviewing these individuals, it's best to come prepared to these meetings with a list of questions, and always be sure to ask for resources to research further afterwards.

Research, research, research

This is the most important step in assuring you understand the technical content you are writing about. There are a lot of great avenues to support your research from both paid and free options. Be sure to check out Gartner and Forrester, and don't be afraid to even peruse other places on the internet, like social media. Some websites have hidden gems that include technical charts, infographics, educational blogs, and slideshares that organize loads of technical data into one place.

Create an outline and present it to your technical resources

Once you have determined what you are going to write about and have digested the information to the point where you understand the solutions, it is time to get organized. Building a basic outline will help you organize all of your thoughts into one place. It will also help you build the content flow once it's ready. Furthermore, the outline should be presented to your technical experts to confirm that the direction is indeed aligned to the solution.

Brain dump

This is the fun stage where the writing begins. After your outline is created, you can now spend time writing the content. Have fun and don't forget to rely on your research to assure technical accuracy.

Send your content to a technical specialist for a quality check

It's always good to have your marketing team send the final written piece to the technical specialist for one last check to assure that all points were met and the messaging is accurate. While writing and technical writing in this industry go hand-in-hand, doing a final fact check is always a best practice to assure your content is not only great, but also technically accurate.

AND THAT'S IT!

Follow these steps and your team will be well on its way to developing great product-based or technical content that will continue to convert your middle and bottom of the funnel leads!

CHAPTER 5

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS



When building your marketing plan, it is important to consider how you will distribute your information and content. The most important medium to be sure that you have budgeted for is your website. Without a great website at your disposal, you are already doing yourself a disservice as a marketer.

Your website should aim to be the core distribution channel for all of your marketing activities, with all other channels pointing back to your site. A strong foundation in place allows you to focus on developing content to promote through your site, as well as promote the following distribution channels.

Email

The state of email has changed considerably over the last few years. Rather than using email marketing as a demand generation tactic, companies are now looking to email as a lead nurturing tactic through marketing automation. For example, if a prospect finds a great piece of content through your website, then the goal would be for them to enter their information – including their email address – to download your content.

Once downloaded, the prospect should now be entered into a lead nurturing workflow that sends specialized emails to them based on their interest for subsequent weeks. Each piece of content should be selected based on interest, persona targeting, and where they are at in the funnel.

Social media

Social media has risen to the top of the charts when it comes to marketing for technology. While many information technology companies are still testing the waters when it comes to social media, those that have are seeing tremendous success. IT decision makers are increasingly becoming more social, and they are using information on social networks to make their decisions. Here are some statistics on this trend based on a study commissioned by LinkedIn and conducted by Forrester Consulting and Research Now:

- 88% of IT decision makers visit a social network at least monthly
- 85% use at least one social network for business purposes
- 73% have engaged with a vendor on a social network

Top reasons ITDMs use social for business:

- 58% want to learn from trustworthy peers and 39% want to learn from experts
- 40% want to quickly find information
- 37% want relevant insights, information, and opinions
- 49% want access to a broader network

Being social is extremely advantageous for IT organizations. It is also important to understand the best use of social media and how you can leverage being digitally social correctly.

It is extremely advantageous for IT organizations to be social. But knowing this is only half the battle. It is also important to understand the best use of social media and how you can leverage being digitally social in the right way.

When social media goes wrong: The social cocktail rule

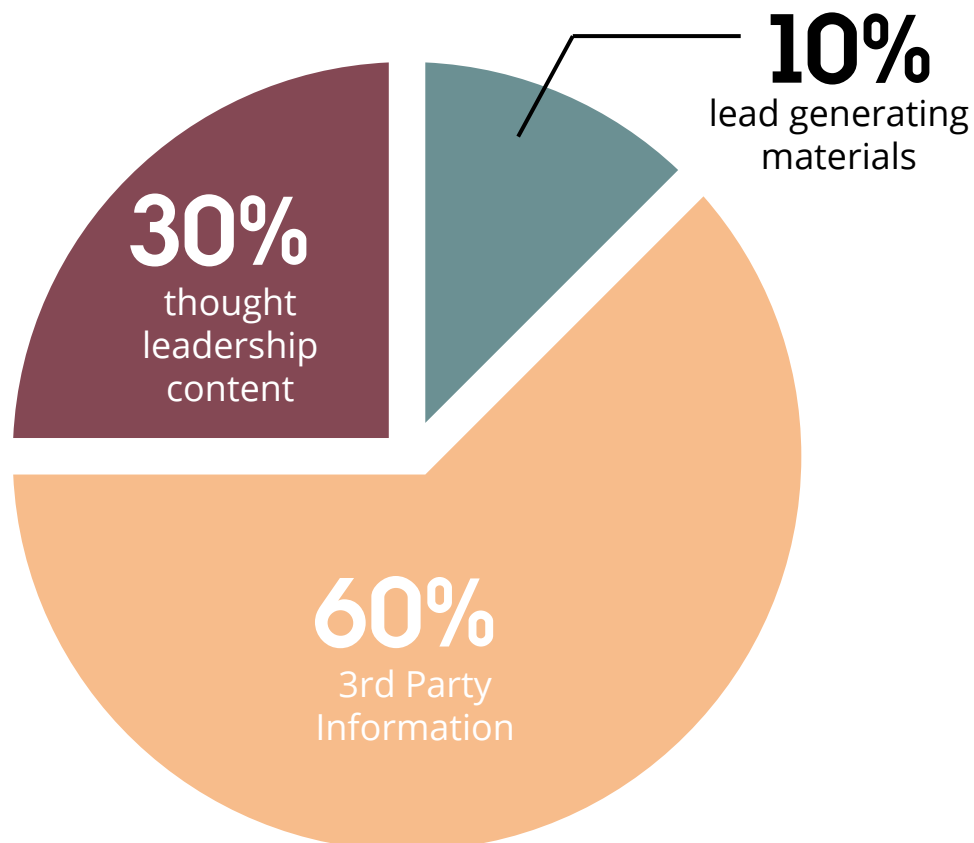
Ever go to a party and get instantly annoyed by the loud person in the middle of the room that does

nothing but talk about him or herself? You can't wait to walk away, grab another drink, or start up a conversation with someone that will listen and/or converse as a result.

This is no different from social media. All too often, companies start a social model and then do nothing but post about their organization, accomplishments, and (gasp) sales pitches. This will not help you. In fact, it will do the opposite. No one will be around to tell you to stop. Keep in mind that when you are posting to social media, you are at a virtual cocktail party. Don't be that annoying person. Be the engaging, exciting, charming partygoer that everyone wants to talk too.

The 60-30-10 rule

In addition to the cocktail rule, you should also look to adopt the 60-30-10 rule of social engagement. Post 60% of your content as third-party information (e.g., links to industry articles, popular content), 30% thought leadership content from you (such as blog articles and news), and 10% lead generating materials (offers of direct content).



Paid digital marketing

A great way to promote your content is through search engine marketing (SEM) and social media advertising. You can choose campaigns ranging from social promotions (e.g., LinkedIn sponsored updates, Twitter sponsored posts, Facebook sponsored posts) or go the route of Google AdWords or Remarketing campaigns. Each of these tactics has its benefits as well as its risks. In addition, depending on your campaign goals, you will want to be sure you map out which platform you plan on promoting your content through first.

Why am I not getting results?

Campaigns that fail are typically due to not having a clear plan to develop content relevant to the platform. For example, a LinkedIn sponsored update is built based on persona targeting. Therefore, if you are writing your eBook for a CIO in Texas, you can specifically segment all CIOs in Texas to see the sponsored post. To help lower the costs and raise the number of impressions, be more social with that specific content. This means having your company and your team share and like that content across platforms. Your more creative, top of the funnel, and psychographic-based content will perform best here.

Performance is also contingent on competition for the audience, the price you're willing to bid and your bid strategy. This is where LinkedIn sponsored posts become more complex. A post that gets little social activity and performs well might come at a higher cost.

Organic activity is tied to something called "relevance score." Social activity does help increase the organic/free amplification. When someone likes or shares content, it has a greater potential to get impressions from their connections – and any subsequent action is now free.

If you are creating a piece of content for a Google AdWords campaign, you want to focus on what they will be searching for, not so much on CIO's psychographics (what makes them tick). Persona targeting in this area is much more complex, as you need to understand what this person is searching for and where they are searching from. Extending your search ads to display or use targeted re-marketing can help make your Google advertising more persona-based. You can start to target people by interest, demographics, income estimates, what websites interest them, and even which individual web pages they've visited or ads they've engaged with previously. When planning to use these pieces for digital advertising, this is where your middle of the funnel or even bottom of the funnel offers will perform best. You will pay more for conversions, but they will be much more targeted to a specific message or product.

Landing pages

Aside from search engine marketing and paid marketing, landing pages are integral to your marketing strategy. If the goal of your campaign is to generate leads and conversions, then you need to spend as much effort on your landing page as you do your content. And don't stop at just the creation of the page. Performing ongoing A/B testing to your landing page is critical for determining what will provide the optimal results for conversions.

As a benchmark, great purpose-built content can expect to see anywhere from a 0.5%- 1% CTR in the tech industry at the baseline for a paid digital campaign. If you are not seeing this rate, be sure to test, optimize, and analyze for long-term results. In addition, more than half of your audience is viewing your landing page on a mobile device. If your landing page is not mobile-friendly, you will be losing 50% of your lead potential right out of the gate.

Blogging

"Don't focus on having a great blog. Focus on producing a blog that's great for your readers."

~Brian Clark, Copyblogger

A blogging strategy is not only important, but crucial to the long-term success of your content marketing plan. When it comes to web content and search engine optimization, blogging is one of the best things you can do for your business. Google loves fresh content, and as Rand Fishkin of Moz says, "Don't build links. Build relationships." Optimizing your site is no longer about building links for your site or making your site accessible. It's about being a thought leader and providing your prospects and end users a great online experience.

Blogging is by far the best way to do this. In a recent blog article posted by Hubspot about business blogging in 2015, some of the top stats on why you should blog include:

- B2B marketers who use blogs receive 67% more leads than those who do not
- Marketers who have prioritized blogging are 13 times more likely to enjoy positive ROI (HubSpot)
- By 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationships without talking to a human (Content Marketeer)
- Companies who blog receive 97% more links to their website (Webquacker)
- Blogs have been rated as the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information

These are some pretty fantastic statistics! With that being said, there are also several tips to how you can assure you are blogging in the best interest of your organization:

1. Finding time

Time is the biggest factor that hinders companies from blogging regularly. Blogs take time, and not everyone is a free-form writer. However, it is likely you already have bloggers working for you without even knowing it. Open up an internal blogging program, and you are bound to have people interested in creating content from time to time. When in doubt, you can also look to outsource your content development to an agency or third party writing organization. Just be careful. The world of information technology requires technical writers. You want to be sure if you do plan to outsource your writing that it comes from a credible source known for technical expertise.

2. Writer's block

Writer's block is also one of the major reasons companies are unable to put out consistent content. But you are in luck! There are several wonderful tools available to help break writer's block. Check out our favorite tool here:

**HubSpot's Blog
Topic Generator**

CHAPTER 6

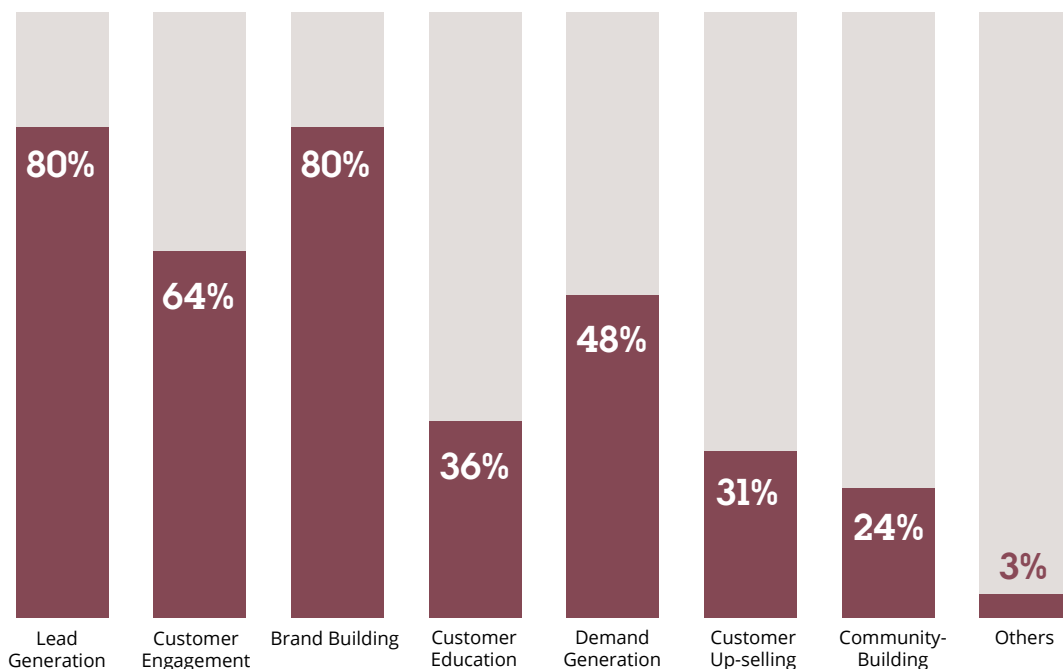
EVENT-BASED MARKETING



While this guide is mostly aimed towards digital marketing, it wouldn't be a definitive guide without a chapter on event-based marketing. In fact, in a recent study conducted by MarketingProfs, 91% of B2B organizations are investing in events annually. With over half of these executives stating that events help support lead generation and grow their sales pipeline, it's no wonder that technology organizations are still relying heavily on actual events as a part of their

marketing plans. It has been said that for every \$1 you spend at a trade show, you should receive \$5 back on average.

According to "The State of B2B Event Marketing" by Regalix as cited by Marketing Profs, the common objectives for B2B organizations to run an event include:

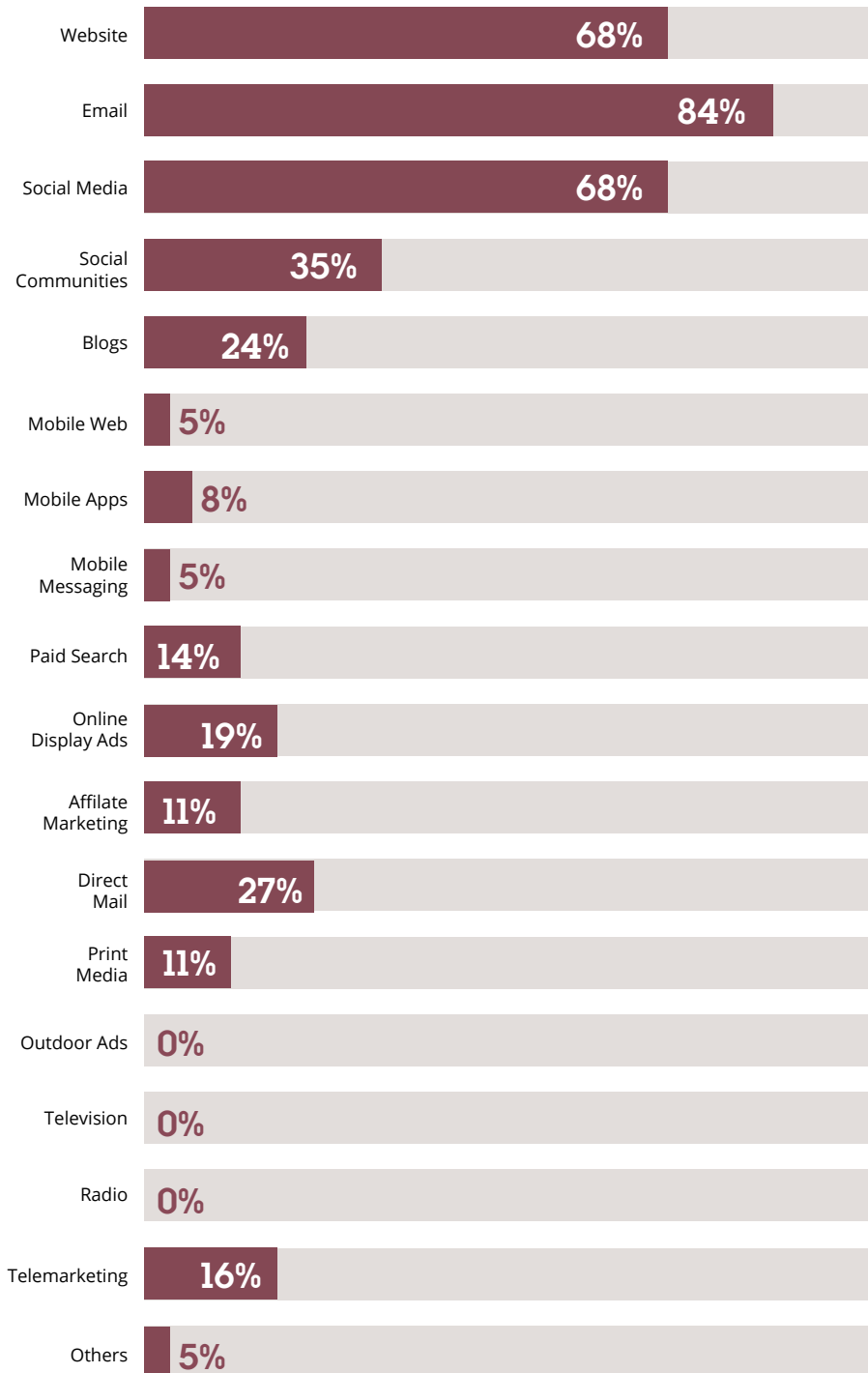


What types of events are being run?

MarketingProfs continues: 57% of surveyed companies indicated that they only worked on physical events, 35% worked on a blend, and only 9% of organizations ran only virtual events. Conferences were also found as the most effective type of event-based marketing, with over 72% of B2B marketers preferring them.

How do you market and promote your event?

Event promotion can be a daunting task for any marketer. From those surveyed above, email marketing still stands true as the most preferable tactic to drive event attendance at 84%. Social media and website promotions come in a close second at 68% wherein traditional methods such as radio and television are rated as the least effective methods.



Regardless of how you plan to break up your marketing budget, be sure that event-based marketing finds its way in. While events are more on the traditional side, nothing beats person-to-person contact. Events are a great way to build credibility, as well as form new and lasting relationships.

CHAPTER 7

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MARKETING



Gartner predicts that by 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationship without talking to a human. The only way to keep up with this rate is to deploy marketing automation or technology into your marketing campaigns. The landscape for technology in marketing is vast and growing every year. Back when the iPhone first came out, the world joked, “there is an app for that.” In the world of marketing, there is now “a platform for that.” For example, in the Marketing

Technology Landscape chart developed by Chief MarTec, the landscape has been doubling year over year with the number of platforms available.

With marketing to people becoming more advanced, demanding, and cutthroat, getting your message across is dependent not only on your skills, but the technology behind you. Unsure of where to start?

[View the Marketing Technology Landscape here](#)

Here are some tips to help support determining which tools are best for you and if you are currently spending budget on any that are unnecessary:

Confirm your goals

Before looking at your marketing technology platforms, you should go back to square 1 (or chapter 2) and determine what your marketing goals are. Are you focused on lead generation? Awareness? Lead scoring? Sales Enablement? Knowing your goal is half the battle to determining if your business is using the right technologies.

Take an inventory of all tools you use

After reviewing goals, you should then take an inventory of the tools you currently use. Here are some helpful questions to consider when reviewing tools:

- Do I need this tool?
- Am I getting the right value out of this tool?
- Will this tool help me meet my goals?
- Are there portions of this tool that I am not using today that will help me achieve my goals?
- Can I combine everything and find one system that will output the same or better results?
- What is the monthly and annual cost for the tool?

You may be surprised to find that you are ready to look into a more robust marketing automation solution or that you have capabilities at your disposal that you have not been leveraging.

Do an annual analysis of top technologies in the marketplace

All too often, organizations are afraid to look at new tools due to the time that it takes to invest in change. Change can be scary and difficult. It can also stress your systems. However, with the increase of marketing

platforms and technologies available, it would benefit you to be aware of some of the top technologies available. Doing an annual review and answering a few sales calls about new tools will only benefit you and the growth of your business.

Change may not be necessary, but it's good to know that there is a possibility! Just be careful when those awesome sales reps sell you on a tool that you don't need. Always do your research and even use social media to your advantage when looking for peer reviews.

Are you currently using a marketing automation platform?

If your answer is yes, congratulations! You are well on your way to building a robust digital marketing plan for your information technology company. Your next step is to go back to your inventory and determine if you are using the tool to its fullest capacity. Even the most successful marketers still have a ways to go when it comes to executing on their platforms to their advantage. Don't be afraid to try something new and test the limits with the newest programs (and even beta programs) being launched!

If your answer to the above question is no, that's ok too. It's likely that you are currently running a bunch of other tools and have not had the budget or the time to invest in a more robust system yet. That being said, investing in a full-scale marketing automation platform will benefit you and your marketing. According to HubSpot, here are a couple reasons why:

- Companies that automate lead management see a 10% or greater increase in revenue in 6-9 months. (Gartner Research)
- 46% of marketers with mature lead management processes have sales teams that follow up on more than 75% of marketing-generated leads. (Forrester Research)
- Businesses that use marketing automation to nurture prospects experience a 451% increase in qualified leads. (The Annuitas Group)

Some of the top systems available (per Chief MarTec's Marketing Technology Landscape) are:



Technology marketing tools will only continue to grow and become more cluttered. The best way to stay ahead is to be aware of what you have, what else is out there, and what will help you achieve your goals.

If you keep a close eye on those tips and act accordingly, you will be one step ahead in assuring your technology and your marketing efforts are in sync.

CHAPTER 8

LEAD FOLLOW-UP AND PROGRESSION



In this guide, we have talked a lot about lead generation from both inbound and outbound activities. Chapter 2 spent some time talking about goals and the importance of having alignment between your marketing and sales teams. The next and final step to any marketing campaign is to also assure that leads being generated are also being progressed. Here are some crazy statistics from Velocify that should make your head spin:

- Making an attempt to contact a lead by phone within 1 minute improves lead conversion rates by 391%
- Leads first contacted after 7 or more call attempts are 45% less likely to convert, but it takes about 6 attempts to make contact
- On average, by properly timing your phone calls, you get a 49% conversion gain
- On average, by properly timing your emails, you get a 53% conversion gain
- Combine both calls and emails, and you get a 128% conversion gain

Based on these statistics, you would think your sales team would aggressively be following up on leads to achieve those gains. However, statistics from Mashable say otherwise:

- The average sales rep makes 1.5 call attempts
- The average company takes 44 hours to respond to leads
- 55% of companies don't respond at all

It's time to revisit that Smarketing plan you built in Chapter 2 and assure your sales team is properly following up on your leads!

Here are some other tips from Mashable for lead follow-ups:

- Wednesdays and Thursdays are the best days to qualify leads. Focus on deploying your marketing campaigns in and around these days to assure you are following up the best way possible.
- If you contact someone on Thursday, you are 49% more likely to get in contact with them than Tuesday
- You have a 164% increase in qualifying your lead if calling between 4-5 than 1-2
- You will receive a 900% increase in contact rates if you call within 5 minutes of a lead conversion versus 10 minutes

Now that you know when and how often to follow up on your leads, the next thing you will want to do is track sales conversions. Every organization is going to be different and have a different sales cycle. The statistics below from Implisit are based on average lead to conversion rates and are only meant to serve as a guide.

- On average, it takes 84 days to convert 13% of leads to an opportunity
- On average, it takes 18 days to convert 6% of opportunities to wins

Lead-to-deal conversion rates from tactics:

Tactic	Lead to Opportunity	Lead-to-Deal Conversion Rate
Whitespace List (Outbound)	2.5%	.02%
Events	4.2%	.04%
Email Campaign	.9%	.07%
LinkedIn	6.5%	.34%
Webinar	17.8%	.44%
Partner	10%	.48%
Tradeshows	12.4%	.55%
Marketing and Advertising	15.3%	.78%
Sales generated	13.9%	.94%
Paid Search	14.3%	.99%
Social (Facebook, Twitter, Other)	17.2%	1.47%
Website	31.3%	1.55%
Customer and Employee Referrals	24.7%	3.63%

If highly recommended that you build your own chart to track lead to opportunity and opportunity to close rates per each tactic and campaign you run. This will help assure that the content you build over time will be highly focused and qualified. You could have the best content that gets an

enormous amount of leads. But if those leads do not turn to wins, you should always re-think and re-vitalize your content strategies. Not every piece of content is going to perform at fantastic rates, but every piece of content IS an opportunity to become a better marketer for your business.

CONCLUSION

With this eBook, we hope that you will walk away with some tips and ideas for how to achieve marketing greatness in the Information Technology industry. Each industry is unique, and so are the complexities and persona-based strategies within them. While marketing for IT has many similarities, it also provides many challenges for the average marketer. You have to be as agile and adaptable as the technology you're marketing.

The positive outlook: Technology is growing at an exponential rate. Staying ahead of the curve and marketing your organization appropriately will help secure long-term growth for both you and your organization. Here are the key takeaways from this eBook:

BE UNIQUE

Marketing is complex and the landscape for marketing within tech has changed exponentially. Push marketing no longer works. Pull marketing can't work on its own. You must combine the powers of both Inbound and Outbound marketing to cut through the marketing clutter and noise. Be the 1 in 20,000 marketing messages that makes a difference.

KNOW YOUR PERSONAS

Understanding who you are marketing to and what drives them is integral to your marketing plan. We no longer live in a world of B2B or B2C. It's now H2H. Market to human beings, and you will make a tangible increase to your results.

SET GOALS

Do not embark on a marketing plan without a substantial goal in place. This should be a goal that is built and designed by both marketing and sales. Without alignment in these departments, your marketing campaigns will lack synergy and proper follow-through. Know your goal, execute it, and track results to assure the long-term success and achievement of your goal.

BUILD REMARKABLE CONTENT

Every piece of content you create should have a purpose and a place in your marketing funnel. Do not create content that purely serves your needs. Create content that serves a purpose for your personas.

KNOW YOUR INDUSTRY

Information Technology is a complex industry that requires coupling technical knowledge with artistic flair. Don't be afraid to push the boundaries and create technical content that is compelling, succinct, and sexy.

UNDERSTAND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Not only should your content be remarkable, but it should also be built for the medium you are promoting it on. Understand where you plan to promote your content and build content that will convert for that channel. Creating a piece for every channel is how campaigns fail.

HAVE A PARTY

Well, not really. But don't forget to put some of your budgets towards events. Events still play a very large role in the Technology Industry and you can receive some serious ROMI from face-to-face interactions.

TECH FOR TECH

Marketing technology plays a very integral role for marketing in the digital age. Take inventory of the tools you are using and test them against your goals. If they aren't helping you achieve your goals, it's time to re-think your technology platforms. Marketing automation and technology overall can be powerful tools to help you analyze and build your marketing strategies. Don't be afraid to try some new things out.

PROGRESS YOUR LEADS

Generating leads is just the first step in your marketing goals and strategies. Keeping an eye on your campaigns and how they are progressing is integral to their long-term success. Assure your marketing plan is aligned to lead follow-up and that leads are moving along as expected. When looking at lead-to-conversation and lead-to-close rates, analyze what works best and what has room for improvement. This will help you build on your long-term marketing plan for endless marketing success.

AND FINALLY, IF THERE IS ONE THING THIS EBOOK SHOULD LEAVE YOU WITH, IT'S THIS:

"Our job is to connect to people, to interact with them in a way that leaves them better than we found them, more able to get where they'd like to go."

~Seth Godin



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