

25 B2B MARKETING DEFINITIONS

by Stephan Wenger



WHAT IS BUSINESS TO BUSINESS MARKETING? AN ANALYSIS.

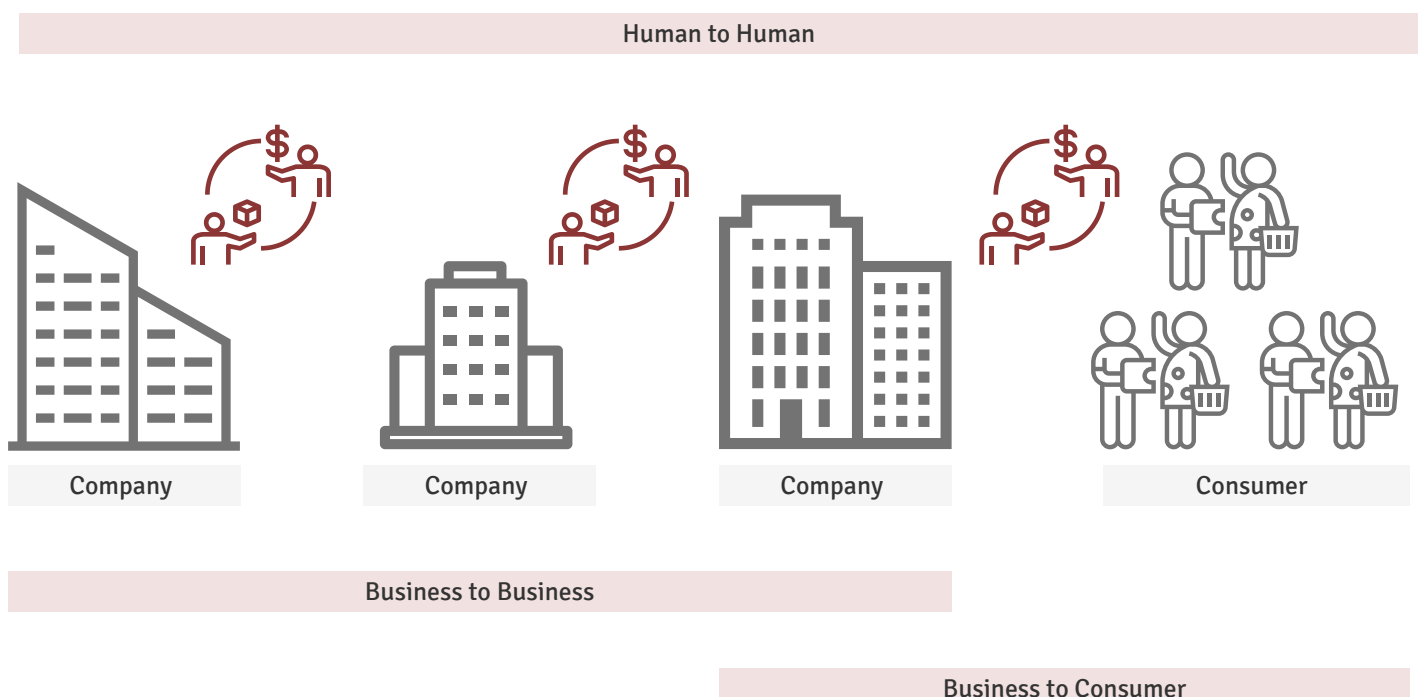
Business to Business Marketing, or B2B, is a specific marketing discipline that centers on the provision of a product or service from one company to another. Put simply, the term refers to all of the activities, and perhaps even obligations, that are required during the marketing and sales process, including, advertisement, product positioning and value proposition, distribution, price and client service. Unlike B2C marketing, where the recipient of a company's service is an individual client, B2B marketing remains strictly on the corporate level. Let's take a look at this somewhat daunting concept in a little more detail.

WHAT IS A B2B MARKET?

As indicated above, a B2B market differs quite drastically from a consumer, also named B2C market. Though both are generally driven by the same compassion for added customer value, and the continued desire to expand and improve the products or services being offered, the former deals exclusively with transactions between corporate entities. To take this fairly brief definition as complete, however, would be a mistake. Given the sharp distinction between consumer and business demands, and the varied solutions required to satisfy them, it is important that we highlight not just the contextual differences presented by the two markets, but further the channels they house to complete their affairs.

Illustrating this pragmatically, while B2C markets are merely concerned with selling products in their final form, that is, once complete and ready for consumer use, B2B markets span the entire value-added chain. Businesses cooperate with one another, lending their services and specific skill sets to the products development process, to transform it from its raw form, as an undifferentiated item, into a complete, differentiated end result.

Take for example a jumper. Markets in the business-to-consumer realm, like those in the retail industry, will only gain access to the product once it is complete. Their job is to sell it to the end customer. The business-to-business markets, however, are the ones charged with gathering the materials for the jumper, organizing its manufacture, and overseeing its safe delivery. Essentially turning the raw product, in this case, a ball of cotton, into a fully functional item of clothing.



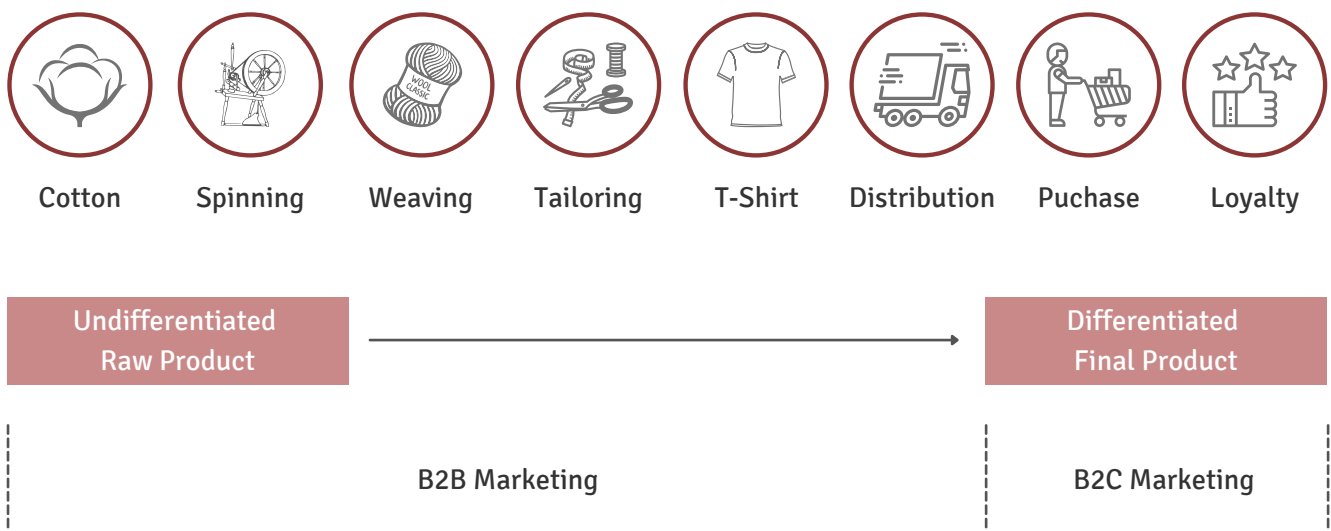
I ANALYZED 25 DEFINITIONS

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of definitions that pertain to this category of marketing. While, historically, the phrase “industrial marketing” was popular among those working in the field, we now rely almost exclusively on “business-to-business marketing” when referring to the activities that occur between corporate entities. We felt it important that we refine this concept and identify the elements which make a definition not just appropriate for the subject matter, but that further ensure its survival in an already crowded environment.

Generally, B2B marketing definitions focus on the unique status of the notion as a transaction between two businesses, rather than as a concept concerned with finalizing sales. Though in relying on this factor, authors are able to rightly distinguish between the two models, many fail to describe in detail, or at all, the varied channels and content types employed by each.

A comprehensive definition will not only explain the recipients of B2B marketing strategies, but further detail the processes it involves the purchasing decisions common to the trade, and the complex distribution processes required to transport goods throughout the value-added chain.

VALUE ADDED CHAIN



The 25 analyzed definitions have these aspects in common:

- Use terms are: industrial marketing, business-to-business marketing and B2B marketing
- Focus on transactions between two business instead if business and consumer
- Covering the 4Ps of marketing or parts of it: promotion / advertisement, product, price and place / distribution
- Applied to products and/or services alike

Further, the B2B Marketing definition by B2B Marketing World incorporates these aspects in addition:

- Marketing focuses on people
- Marketing is a process
- Marketing has a social aspect and is practiced by individuals or groups
- Marketing is about creating and offering value
- Marketing is about the product or service
- Marketing covers the distribution and price of this product or service

If you are still not satisfied with the given definitions, continue to read for a full list of different marketing definitions.

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF B2B MARKETING DEFINITIONS

Owing to the sheer diversity of definitions that are currently available both on the internet and within academic literature, we have compiled a list of examples we feel effectively, and holistically, communicate the components of a B2B market. We hope that, in digesting these definitions, you not only become better acquainted with the somewhat challenging concept that is B2B marketing but further expand your theoretical knowledge of the field. Something we know will help you to excel professionally.

ONLINE SOURCES

#1 Wikipedia

“Industrial marketing (or business-to-business marketing) is the marketing of goods and services by one business to another. Industrial goods are those an industry of uses to produce an end product from one or more raw materials. The term, industrial marketing has largely been replaced by the term B2B marketing”

#2 LinkedIn

“[...] business-to-business marketing refers to the marketing of products or services to other businesses and organizations.”

#3 G2 Learn Hub – The Technical Definition

“B2B marketing is promoting products and services to other businesses, typically: (1) at large volumes, (2) with lengthy sales cycles, (3) to multiple decision-makers, and (4) with more complexity than consumer products.”

#4 G2 Learn Hub – The Business Definition

“B2B marketing can also be defined as the marketing of products or services to other businesses for use in production, general business operations, or resale to other consumers.”

#5 G2 Learn Hub – What it Really Means

“In simple terms, B2B marketing is a business promoting its products or services to another business”

#6 Sendepulse

“Business-to-business (B2B) marketing is a process that involves selling a certain product manufactured by one company to another. Also, it’s necessary for any company that wants to offer its services to other organizations.”

#7 Hubspot

“B2B (business-to-business) marketing refers to any marketing strategy or content that is geared towards a business or organization. Any company that sells products or services to other businesses or organizations (vs. consumers) typically uses B2B marketing strategies.”

#8 Comboapp

“B2B marketing (business to business marketing) is the business process of creating relationships with other companies in order to sell them products or services.”

#9 Marketing Career

“In Business to Business marketing (also known as B2B or industrial marketing), products and services are sold to other businesses rather than to the general public.”

#10 Marion

“B2B marketing is the process of one business marketing its products/services to another business. Business to business marketing is needed when one company’s output is required for another company to maintain or improve its operations.”

#11 Marketing Schools

“Business-to-business marketing (or B2B marketing, as it is commonly known) involves the sale of one company’s product or service to another company.”

#12 Marketing Schools

“Industrial marketing, also known as business-to-business (B2B) marketing, is a branch of communications and sales that specializes in providing goods and services to other businesses, rather than to individual customers”

#13 Study

“B2B (business-to-business) marketing is marketing of products to businesses or other organizations for use in production of goods, for use in general business operations (such as office supplies), or for resale to other consumers, such as a wholesaler selling to a retailer.”

#14 Copypress

“B2B marketing stands for business-to-business marketing. Businesses will create marketing material for other businesses, as opposed to marketing material directly to consumers.”

#15 B2B International

“B2B marketing is therefore about meeting the needs of other businesses, though ultimately the demand for the products made by these businesses is likely to be driven by consumers in their homes.”

#16 Gartner

“B2B marketing is a collection of techniques for marketing to business buyers. Its goal is to improve lead quality, sales acceptance of leads and conversion rates.”

#17 Oracle

“[...] the marketing of products and services directly from one business to another, rather than trying to reach the broader consumer market.”

#18 Seobility

“The term B2B (Business-to-Business) marketing describes the marketing of products and services to organizational customers. The term industrial marketing is often used synonymously.”

#19 Splash Copywriters

“Quite simply, B2B marketing happens when one business markets a product or service to another.”

BOOKS

#20 Innovative B2B Marketing; Simon Hall; 2017

“B2B Marketing, sometimes referred to as “business marketing” or “industrial marketing”, is the practice of individuals or organizations marketing products or services to other companies or organizations.”

#21 The Complete Guide to B2B Marketing; Kim Ann King; 2015

“B2B Marketing, also known as business-to-business marketing, is simply business selling at scale to buyers in other companies.”

#22 B2B Marketing; Uwe Seebacher; 2021

“[...] as the marketing that takes place between market participants who, due to their original business function in a defined market, are suppliers or subcontractors and buyers of raw materials and semi-finished products and are therefore not end customers or end consumers.

#23 Business-to-Business Marketing; Mark Eardley; 2016

“Business-to-Business or B2B Marketing is sometimes referred to as industrial or trade marketing, and it deals with products and services that are bought by enterprises rather than individual consumers.”

#24 Business to Business Marketing; Nick Ellis; 2010

“The term “business-to-business marketing” is used to describe the marketing activities of any kind of organizations which has exchange relationships with other organizations or businesses”

#25 Business-to-Business Marketing; Ross Brennan, Louise Canning, Raymond McDowell; 2010

“Business marketing is concerned with the marketing of goods and services to organizations. The key distinguishing feature of business marketing is the nature of the customer, rather than the nature of the product.”

SUMMARY

In a nutshell, B2B Marketing describes the activities that occur between two businesses throughout the development stage of a product’s lifecycle. Besides targeting a different audience to consumer-based markets, B2B decisions are often made by several individuals, since the products on offer are typically more complex, and thus require high explanatory efforts. Promotion is generally less expressive than that required by a B2C market, though both are consistent in their pursuits of client loyalty. Responsible for transforming a raw product into a final result, the actors who operate within B2B markets must clearly define their aims, conduct extensive analyses, and establish strategic plans to ensure effective communication among one and other and to encourage the creation of a productive environment in which results are delivered both promptly and efficiently.