

B2B MARKETING WORLD 2021 COLLECTION

by Stephan Wenger



**A COLLECTION OF 15
ARTICLES FROM
B2B MARKETING
WORLD**

The following collection covers 15 articles which were published in 2021 on www.b2bmarketingworld.com.

Topics range from B2B Marketing Basics, B2B Marketing Strategy and B2B Marketing Case Studies & Examples, to Lead Management.

Enjoy!

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WHAT IS B2B MARKETING

by Stephan Wenger



A DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF BUSINESS-TO- BUSINESS MARKETING

Whether you are new to B2B marketing or a seasoned pro, it is important to understand how this type of marketing works. In this post, we will explore what this type of marketing is and how it works. B2B Marketing is far more complex than simply marketing to businesses. A first quick definition is, that B2B Marketing, or Business-to-Business Marketing, is marketing to another business with the intention of building, maintaining and expanding relationships with other businesses.

Marketing is a very broad topic with a wide range of terminology covering many different techniques and approaches. All definitions, however, have one core aspect in common. The Customer.

If you are to reach your target audience, it is essential that whatever marketing approach you take is 100% customer-centric. Reaching your target audience is at the heart of all marketing.

The relationship between a company and its target audience will to a large extent influence all marketing activities. B2B (business-to-business) relationships are, as the name implies, relationships between two companies, whereas marketing activities between a company and consumers are referred to as B2C (business-to-customer) Marketing.

These two types of marketing highlight a distinct difference between marketing to businesses and marketing to individual consumers. This is the reason why B2B Marketing exists. B2B marketing is a specific marketing discipline, defined by the relationship between two different companies.

This article gives an overview of what B2B Marketing is, helps define the key terminology, including the difference between B2B and B2C marketing, outlines an effective B2B Marketing strategy, and showcases different examples of B2B Marketing.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF B2B MARKETING?

There are various definitions of the term B2B Marketing in marketing literature. The simplest definition of B2B Marketing is all activities involved in marketing a product or service to another company. However, this basic definition lacks multiple important factors. For a more comprehensive definition, it is necessary to outline what Marketing is and then apply this definition to the business-to-business environment.

A very early definition of marketing comes from Kotler (1991):

“Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they want and need through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others.”

His definition, together with the well known “4P” concept by McCarthy (1991) - Product, Price, Promotion, and Place - gives a framework for a modern B2B marketing definition.

B2B Marketing incorporates these fundamental concepts:

- 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

The aim of B2B Marketing is to create added value for people and the business or organization that implements it. For profit-focussed companies, B2B Marketing aims to convert this added value into leads, sales opportunities and turnover.

Based on these principles we can define B2B Marketing as following ->



The strategies and processes involved in marketing and distributing a product or service to another company or organization.

B2B VS. B2C MARKETING

B2B Marketing and B2C Marketing are very different, although they both share certain characteristics as well. Due to the crucial distinction between consumers and businesses, and the different marketing content and channels involved, B2B and B2C marketing each require different strategies. To get a good understanding of what differences exist, this chart provides an overview.

	B2B Marketing	B2C Marketing
Target Group	Group of people working for businesses or organizations.	Individual consumers.
Number of people involved	More than one person makes the purchasing decision. Typically, the buying decision is approved by a buying center.	One person makes the decision, often consulting friends or family to discuss the intended purchase or to justify a decision they have already made.
Product / Service	Complex products or services requiring detailed explanation. Often long-term investments.	Less complex products or services. Often consumer goods for daily usage.
Price	High volume investment goods. Often defined by budget limits.	Lower absolute prices. However, compared to budget/ willingness to pay B2C prices can be high too.
Place / Distribution	Complex distribution process, often international or global.	Fast delivery, often 24/7, and typically available everywhere.
Promotion / Communication	Due to the nature of the products/ services, promotion and communication is usually fact-based, with less emotional selling. Multi-channel communication is not yet widely used.	Driven by emotions, needs and desires. Strong brand and price-focused communications. Multi-channel communication is standard.

This basic overview outlines the most important differences between B2B and B2C marketing. In addition, there are many differences in marketing to a company compared to a consumer.

B2B MARKETING STRATEGY

A B2B Marketing strategy includes the same basics as non business related marketing strategies. Where B2B Marketing differs is how to adapt the following framework to business-to-business needs. A vital point concerns B2B content marketing. Content plays an important role in the marketing stages we'll discuss below.

Every B2B Marketing strategy consists of these 6 steps:

1.) Definition of Aims

The starting point is to define what the B2B Marketing strategy aims to achieve. The clear, SMART definition of goals is an important step to building a successful, long-term strategy. The marketing objective is often derived from the company's goals and sales aims.

2.) Analysis

The next step involves an internal and external analysis to understand the current state of marketing efforts within the company. Market research helps to identify the motivation and needs of the target group. To help achieve this, advanced marketing organizations use big data from various sources to combine market, customer and company data for analysis.

3.) Definition of Target Group and Buyer Personas

The target group definition derives from the aims and analysis. The target group will be as homogenous as possible, and has distinct criteria separate from other target groups. The "Buyer Persona" concept helps to make the target group more vivid.

A Buyer Persona is the ideal customer, illustrated by an imagined person with defined behavior, needs and attributes. In B2B it is often necessary to describe multiple Buying Personas for one product or service, as the whole buying center needs to be targeted.

4.) Description of the Customer Journey

The Customer Journey is the ideal route the potential customer takes from first contact until a long-term relationship with the company has been successfully established. It is described in phases and has multiple touchpoints. Each touchpoint marks an exchange of information between the company and the targeted customer. Ultimately, the user journey is mapped to actions within a B2B Marketing plan.

5.) Creation of a B2B Marketing Plan

The B2B Marketing plan outlines how to reach the target group at each stage of the customer journey. It incorporates content and channels as well as measures applied during and after the sales process to establish customer loyalty. The marketing plan describes each touchpoint in detail, links them together and creates a timeline on when to execute these actions. Further, cost per action (CPA) defines the overall cost, respective budget, of a B2B Marketing campaign.

6.) Establishment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Measurements

Each action needs to be measured and reported. Two main categories of data can be differentiated. There is data which helps optimize campaigns and increase efficiency. KPIs are data used to define the success of a campaign. A KPI dashboard strongly depends on the aims of the strategy. This last step is used to adapt aims and these metrics are included in the analysis phase, making a B2B Marketing strategy a closed process.

B2B MARKETING EXAMPLES

Company: **JIRA**

Marketing channel: Website

Jira is a software product from the Sydney-based, global acting company, Atlassian. Landing on the JIRA website provides a first glance of their proposition: the #1 software tool for teams. A clear Call-to-action (CTA) aims to convert a visitor to a free trial customer. The four core features are shown with screenshots from the software providing a first glance at usability. A sub-navigation UI guides the user to the most important categories; features, product guide, the enterprise version of the tool, and their pricing model. Interestingly, the top-navigation on all pages reveals that JIRA is part of Atlassian and allows users to navigate to further products from the company. This approach aims to cross-sell and create an Atlassian software stack.

Company: **Maersk**

Marketing channel: LinkedIn

Maersk is a Danish container logistic company with 88,000 employees. Their LinkedIn company page has 730,000+ followers (2020) with extremely high engagement rates. Maersk regularly uses storytelling and strong visual content to market their solutions. They also use paid advertisements on LinkedIn to further increase the reach of their content.

Company: **Animagraffs**

Content type: Educational, descriptive content

Animagraffs is a one-man show. Jacob O'Neal showcases how complex topics can be explained visually. The animated content aims to educate the target audience and to support fact-based content. This type of content is used to describe the working principle behind a product. Especially during the search for solutions, customers search for "how to" or "what is" information. Questions like "how speakers make sound" can be used by a company that produces a unique part of a loudspeaker to market their solution to a brand like Bose or Sony.

SUMMARY

B2B Marketing describes marketing activities aimed at establishing a relationship between two businesses. Business-to-business marketing has distinct differences from business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing. Most notably, B2B decisions are made by more than one person, namely the buying center. The products and services are typically more complex and require a high explanatory effort. Business-to-business product/service prices are higher, and the distribution of the goods is more complex and often international or global. Due to the nature of the business, promotion is less emotional although long-term relationships are key.

To combine all these aspects in a B2B Marketing strategy, the following 6 steps are required:

- Definition of Aims
- Analysis
- Definition of Target Group and Buyer Personas
- Description of the Customer Journey
- Creation of a B2B Marketing Plan
- Set up of Key Performance Indicators and Measurement

Some very good examples of B2B Marketing strategies are JIRA, Maersk and Animagraffs.

25 B2B MARKETING DEFINITIONS

by Stephan Wenger



WHAT IS BUSINESS TO BUSINESS MARKETING? AN ANALYSIS.

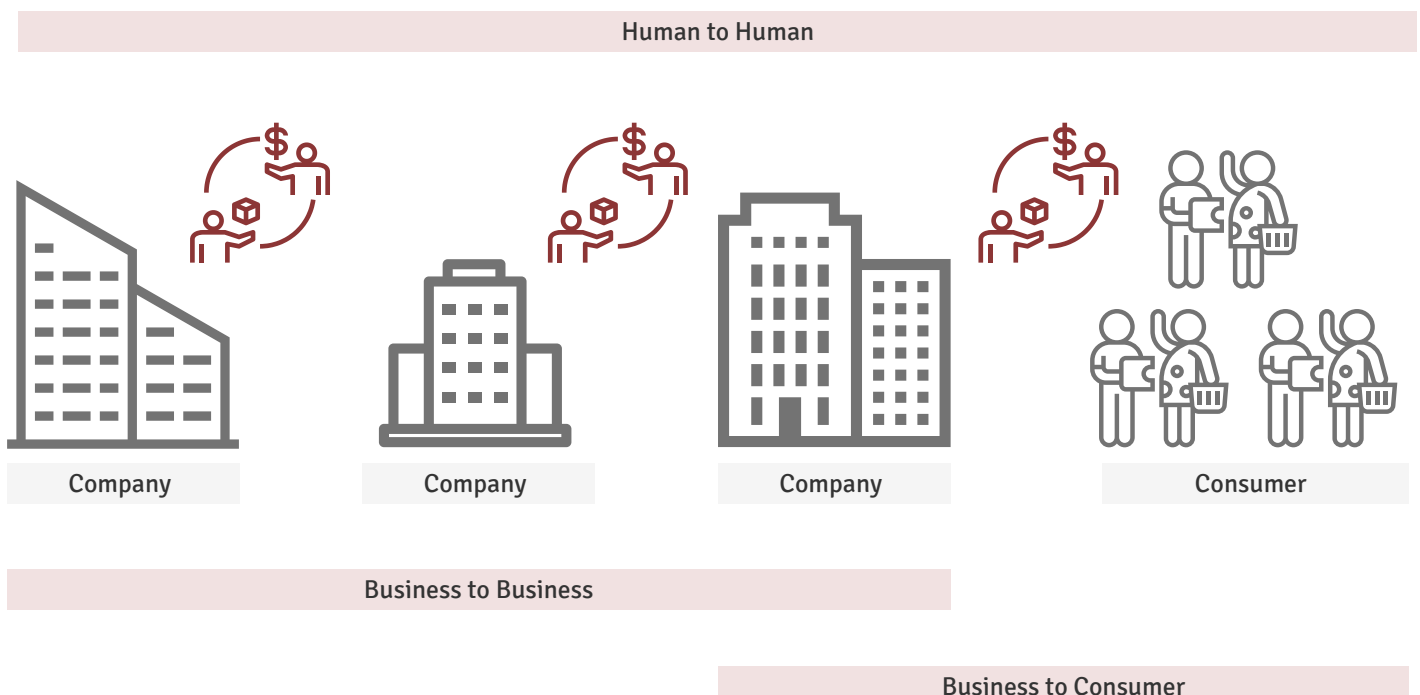
Business to Business Marketing, or B2B, is a specific marketing discipline that centers on the provision of a product or service from one company to another. Put simply, the term refers to all of the activities, and perhaps even obligations, that are required during the marketing and sales process, including, 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.



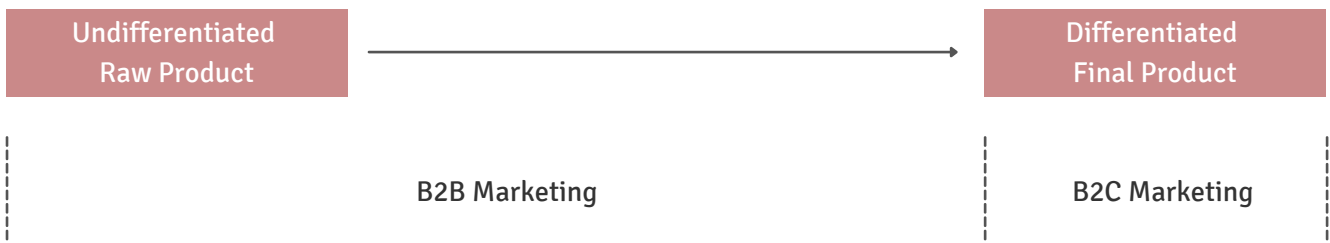
I ANALYZED 25 DEFINITIONS

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 of 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.

B2B MARKETING IN A NUTSHELL

by Stephan Wenger



A BASIC GUIDE IN THREE PHASES

Marketing is essential. But it's hard to create a B2B marketing plan from scratch. You will find many blog posts on the subject and even more templates on how to create your strategy technically. But the essentials? Some advice briefly? That's hard to get. Therefore, this article outlines the very basics to clearly lay out working principles. All marketing efforts can be categorized into three phases along the customer journey. This is not your everyday marketing how-to-article. You will read about prospects, leads, and customers and the ingredients of a blueprint B2B Marketing plan.

WHAT IS B2B MARKETING AND WHY YOU NEED A PLAN

Business-to-Business marketing includes all actions and processes to market and distributing a product or service to another company or organization. In other words, it is marketing directed at other businesses instead of directed at consumers (B2C marketing). In a classic definition, marketing aims at a specific target group and covers the "4Ps": product/service, price, place/distribution, and promotion/communication.

A marketing plan consists of a defined strategy and tactics to fill this strategy with life. Without a strategy, the best marketing tactics might be in vain. A strategy helps you to stay on track. However, tactics make sure to hit the market with your message. Both areas together are known as B2B marketing and build the backbone of your customer-oriented business. Not yet convinced? Here are some more reasons a marketing plan helps to increase turnover and helps you spend your budget wisely.

THREE MARKETING PHASES

Basically, all marketing efforts can be sorted into three phases: finding, winning, and keeping a customer. In literature, you will find different models and frameworks on how to structure your marketing. The common ground is to focus on the customer journey.

Naturally, the journey starts before the purchase, followed by the purchasing phase, and ends after the sales were made. The "before", during" and "after" phase of a purchasing decision has three stages:

- Before the Purchase: Prospect
- During the Purchase: Lead
- After the Purchase: Customer

This basic principle is also true for B2B marketing. Although there are severe differences between B2B and B2C Marketing, this basic principle holds true for both types of marketing. Each phase is marked by distinct start and end criteria. Therefore, the targets, strategies and tactics are also different for each phase.

Your marketing plan needs to cover all three phases that build the backbone of your strategy.

PROSPECT, LEAD, CUSTOMER

The abbreviation PLC is used to describe an ideal customer journey. From an unknown member of your target group through to a loyal customer. To get a better understanding, these examples describe a typical customer journey.

1. Prospect

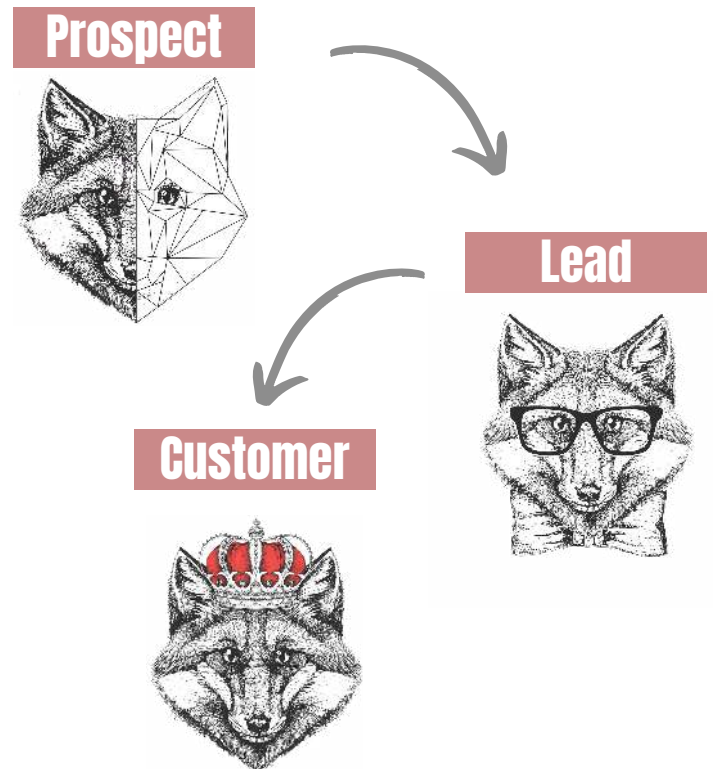
A customer to be, before the purchase phase is called a prospect. A prospect is a member of your defined target group. A standard method to describe your target group is the "buyer persona" concept—a detailed description of your ideal customer. This phase aims to get into the prospect's head. Your buyer persona most likely does not know your brand nor your product or service. Instead of spending money on branding (read this article to understand why this is a waste of money), create a super-specific marketing tactic to tackle your well-defined niche.

2. Lead

As soon as the prospect asks about your company, product or service, he enters the purchasing phase. His status changes from "Prospect" to "Lead". All measures of this phase aim to nurture the lead and get as much information across as possible. This process is also known as Lead Management. This phase aims to make your lead a customer. Naturally, this transition happens with the purchase itself. Marketing efforts of this phase aim to inform the lead about the use and the Unique Selling Propositions (USPs) of your product. With this intention, you try to create trust and a positive benefit-cost-ratio. This phase aims to give the customer more than he pays for.

3. Customer

The short-term goal is to win a customer. The long-term goal is to keep a customer. The last phase of your marketing efforts intends to establish a long-lasting relationship with your client. Studies claim it is by far more resource-intensive to win customers than to keep them. Further, a happy client will share his experience with other members of your target group. The principle of word-of-mouth is the best way to achieve positive branding without spending millions on advertising. These three phases are the backbone and logic structure of marketing efforts. Thus, build your B2B marketing plan upon them.



BLUEPRINT OF A MARKETING PLAN

Here are the ingredients you need to craft an actionable, output oriented, and measurable marketing plan:

- Three phases of marketing
- Marketing Strategy
- Marketing Tactics
- Mathematics

The three phases of marketing are the outline and your marketing efforts. The marketing strategy, derived from the business strategy, sets the scene. Marketing tactics fill the strategy with life and help it hit the market. Finally, mathematics is necessary to measure Key-Performance-Indicators (KPIs) to prove your marketing successful.

Correspondingly, you need to design marketing that tells the right people the right message via the right channels. The right people are your target group. The right message is your USP. The right channels are your multi-channel marketing mix.

THE NEXT STEPS TO YOUR ULTIMATE B2B MARKETING

The above may seem simple, but make sure to understand the big picture these basic principles describe. No detailed marketing plan, content marketing, marketing channel mix, social media concept, Google Ads campaign, lead management process, or conversion rate will succeed if the above basics are not applied.

The sheer endless possibilities of modern marketing are a considerable risk to the marketing of industrial companies. The likelihood of failure increases with every option to spend money. Therefore, craft your B2B marketing step by step.

These articles on www.b2bmarketingworld.com will help you to do so:

How to create your B2B Marketing strategy in 6 steps - Part 1

How to create your B2B Marketing strategy in 6 steps - Part 2

SUMMARY

Marketing is essential for business success. This holds true for B2C Marketing and even more so for B2B Marketing. Not because of shiny ads, but due to a way of addressing your daily work.

A marketing strategy written down in a marketing plan helps to understand the customer's journey. From being a prospect, on the lookout for a solution to his problem, to a lead that needs to be nurtured and finally is convinced to buy. Ultimately, you want a loyal customer who continues to do business with you.

To master your B2B Marketing, you need these ingredients:

- Understand the three phases of marketing: Prospect, Lead, Customer
- A marketing strategy derived from business goals
- Your actionable marketing tactics to achieve your marketing goals
- Mathematics to play and understand the game of big data and KPIs

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN B2B MARKETING AND B2C MARKETING

by Stephan Wenger



OR IS EVERYTHING HUMAN-TO-HUMAN (H2H) MARKETING?

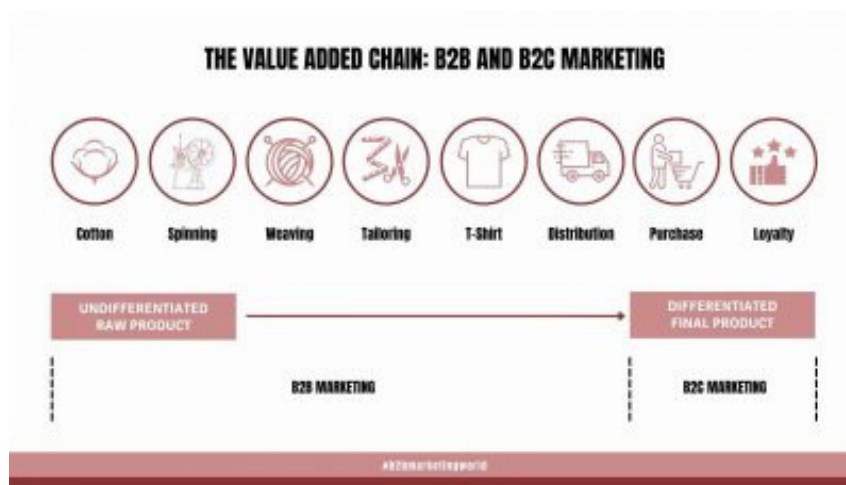
Ever wondered what makes Marketing for consumers (B2C) and marketing for companies (B2B) different? Depending on the source of information, you will read about huge differences and the trend of adopting B2C marketing for Business-to-Business Marketing strategies and tactics. Understanding the differences and make use of them is key to succeeding in your marketing role. The differences in real-life vary from industry to industry. This article gives you the most comprehensive overview of the crucial differences and outlines the consequences for your daily job.

1. WHAT IS B2B MARKETING, AND WHAT IS B2C MARKETING? A BRIEF DEFINITION.

Business-to-Business marketing describes all activities a company does to market a product or service to another company to influence the business relationship of two companies positively. By trend, decisions are made less emotional. The purchaser is less price-sensitive, and the product or service is complex and has a high explanatory effort. The purchase is built on a personal relationship and has a long-term perspective.

The definition described in this article [What is B2B Marketing? A Definition](#) puts it briefly: “The strategies and processes involved in marketing and distributing a product or service to another company or organization”

Business-to-Consumer marketing focuses on the relationship between a company and the end-customer of a product or a service. By trend, consumers are influenced by emotions, are price-sensitive, and make subjective decisions. Consumers do not necessarily seek long-term partnerships or try to make deals for the long run. The consumer themselves purchase without the involvement of other people.



To understand the difference between B2B and B2C Marketing, it is necessary to understand the basic mechanisms of both market types.

B2B marketing covers the whole value-added chain. In its most comprehensive form, from the raw material to the final product. The raw material, slowly transforming into the final product, becomes less and less differentiated. Each step of this transformation may happen between two companies – the one selling, the other buying – and is supported by B2B marketing. B2C marketing only covers the final step of this process—the point where the product is sold to the consumer.

2. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN B2B MARKETING AND B2C MARKETING

The definition of the two terms already gives some hints on the differences in marketing. The following table focuses on the 7Ps of marketing and covers the most important parts of the marketing mix. To gain even deeper insights, you also find differences regarding the most common marketing channels.

2.1. B2B VS. B2C FOR THE 7PS OF MARKETING

Here are the differences between B2B Marketing and B2C Marketing for:

- Product & Service
- Price
- Place / Distribution
- Promotion / Communication
- People
- Processes
- Physical Evidence

PRODUCT & SERVICE

B2B Marketing

Have a higher complexity and often need an expert to understand features and USPs, which leads to a high explanatory effort for marketers and sales. Specifications, norms, and standards are at the center of the product/service comparison.

B2C Marketing

Consumers understand the pros and cons of the product or service without understanding the mechanisms behind it. Brand, loyalty, or convenience are more important than the product benefit itself.

PRICE

B2B Marketing

Low price sensitivity. Prices are compared, and decisions are not made without at least a second offer. Budget constraints and bidding processes, often required by law, influence the price.

B2C Marketing

High and low-price sensitivity, depending on the product. Consumers have a hybrid price perception as soft facts such as branding, personal status or perceived (promised) features influence the price sensitivity. By trend, price is an emotionally influenced buying aspect.

PLACE / DISTRIBUTION

B2B Marketing

Shipping costs can be high due to heavy or bulky products. The shipment might include dangerous goods and require special preparation. Typically, distribution is global but not decentralized. That means global fulfillment processes out of centralized warehouses with high planning and managing demand. International expertise is required.

B2C Marketing

Fast delivery and 24/7 accessibility to the products/services are state-of-the-art. The fulfillment is often to the doorstep. Consumers do not have to leave their houses to get products. The distribution is an important factor for a buying decision. Ad hoc decisions at the point of sales (e.g., supermarket cashier) are common.

PROMOTION / COMMUNICATION

B2B Marketing

Less emotional, fact, and “educational content” driven. The marketing communication differs strongly, depending on buying phase. Awareness is followed by education and deep-dive know-how to prove the company's ability. Promotional communication like success stories and testimonials are less important than in B2C. Word-of-mouth and community management, including professional social media platforms, are part of B2B marketing communication. Niche target groups require a strongly segmented marketing mix.

B2C Marketing

Emotional, brand, and brand promise focused. Fewer facts than in B2B. Communication targets the ultimate buying decision phase without necessarily educating the consumers upfront. Emotional and often irrational triggers rush consumers into a decision. B2C marketing communication positively influences these moments. After-sales communication is used to reassure consumers about their decision and build up loyalty. By trend, the target groups are bigger, and mass media is used to reach them.

PEOPLE

B2B Marketing

Marketing and salespeople are vital success factors in B2B. The personal relationship is at the center of the buying process and often a critical criterion. Due to the nature of the business, this group of employees are well trained and know the functional principles of the product. Salespeople often install products at the customer's site and educate the customer. The knowledge is deep and requires training which makes sales and marketing people expensive. The fluctuation rate is lower than in B2C, and loyal employees often are 100% convinced of the superiority of the product/service.

B2C Marketing

Employees in B2C are often brand ambassadors and the face of the brand to the public. Due to the nature of consumer business, the face to face contact can be the one reason for purchase. Salespeople are trained on processes and how to behave, rather than on the product itself. For services, this is different as the service can only be fulfilled satisfactorily if the employee knows his job. People in B2C are easier to replace and cheaper in training. However, their impact on the sales process can be higher. Some markets have a high fluctuation rate, and loyal employees are often loyal to the brand or their colleagues.

PROCESSES

B2B Marketing

B2B processes often focus on the internal part of the valued added chain. These processes basically have the aim to increase efficiency. Typically, not all processes interact with each other, e.g., the sales process is not linked to the purchasing process. That means more interfaces and a high managing demand of processes. Fast-growing companies often lack proper organizational management as budget is typically allocated towards R&D and production resources.

B2C Marketing

B2C processes focus on the external part of the value-added chain to increase the effectiveness of actions. However, for markets with a high price sensitivity, efficient internal processes are often a USP of companies. Process interfaces are often established at an early stage. B2C companies typically have proper organizational management and actively build processes.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

B2B Marketing

Physical evidence is normally realized with product samples or demos at the customer's site. Depending on the product or service, physical evidence is only possible during the project realization. That means there are typically project phases in which the customer can convince himself about the promised product quality and perception.

B2C Marketing

Brick-and-mortar stores are still the typical way to establish physical evidence. Consumers can walk in and perceive the product. For services, it remains a marketing job to replace physical evidence, e.g. videos of the service, ratings and feedback, or a relatively new way – virtual reality. Online stores bypass the lack of real-world stores with free returns.

2.2. B2B VS. B2C FOR THE MOST COMMON MARKETING CHANNELS

For an even closer comparison of the two terms, the following overview gives an insight into the differences of marketing channels for both types of marketing:

- Online Appearance
- Social Media Marketing
- Search Engine Marketing
- Content Marketing
- Classic Marketing (Print)
- Event Marketing

ONLINE APPEARANCE

B2B Marketing

Online Marketing is less comprehensive established in B2B due to the slower adaption of trends and opportunities. B2B companies often have a rudimental online appearance and do not use the full range of the online marketing kit. The aim is often focused on information and visibility, instead of conversions, leads, and turnover.

B2C Marketing

B2C is the pacemaker of online marketing, and the digitalization of business is a vital parameter for many companies. There are multiple online pure players on the market which have their only presence online. A proper online appearance is the most important part of the marketing mix and is constantly developed further.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

B2B Marketing

LinkedIn, the professional network has over 645 million users in over 200 countries, whereas Facebook has only 80 million small- and medium-sized business pages. The social media strategy strongly depends on the aim. With a focus on networking and reaching decision-makers, LinkedIn is the best choice. With a focus on influencing your small- and medium-sized company customers and for employer marketing, Facebook is still a relevant channel. There are multiple reasons from a branding perspective to use Instagram. Videos, most likely educational content, are perfect for YouTube and like video content hubs.

B2C Marketing

The target audience strongly influences the choice of social media channel for B2C. More precisely, of the target audience's age. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter, and WhatsApp have different core, user groups. Against the rumor that Facebook is growing old, still, a full 30% user group is aged 25 through 34. True, the user group 65+ years has doubled in the US to 41%. Another example is Snapchat. The platform is used by 69% of 13-17 years old, and this value is constantly decreasing the older we get. Only 10% of 50-64 years old use the unique messaging service.

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

B2B Marketing

Without a doubt, SEM is a vital part of marketing activities. The B2B portfolio is often a niche that leads to very specific content with an educational focus. Due to the relatively small group of competitors, it is typically easier to rank on longtail keywords, specific to the respective business. The cost per click is also cheaper than in a high-competitive area. Even more so, brand inquiries are easy to catch. Still, that does not mean B2B search engine marketing can be done casually. To rank number 1 or at least on the first page requires a professional approach.

B2C Marketing

By trend, the keywords you try to rank for in B2C are more competitive than in B2B. Consequently, companies need to invest high, in both SEO and SEA experts and advertising. Services like Google My Business are often used for customer feedback and have high risks if not managed professionally. SEM people need to react flexibly to the 3000+ changes of the google algorithm per year (2018 number). It is also necessary to do AB testing and to adapt Google Ads campaigns regularly. From a content perspective, text alone does not work anymore. SEM requires text, pictures, videos, infographics, and all other sorts of animated content pieces.

CONTENT MARKETING

B2B Marketing

Content marketing aims to provide additional value to the target group. The nature of B2B marketing requires educational content to explain the product or service in detail. Thus, not only the functionality and features are relevant, but also the "behind the scene" perspective. Educational content proves the competence of the company and is a valuable source of information. The content marketing strategy needs to consider the different roles of people in the buying center. E.g., the user needs content to understand the working principle of the product. The influencer might want to know the technical or physical principle which results in a certain feature. And the decision-maker wants a comparison of different available solutions. The different requirements need different types of content. This is part of a B2B content marketing strategy.

B2C Marketing

B2C products often require content types to decrease the complexity of the buying decision. Without a buying center as in B2B, the individual needs to decide on his or her own if the product or service is worth it. And if the brand promise given by an advertisement is trustworthy. Therefore, the aim of B2C content marketing within the buying process is building trust. From a branding perspective, content needs to be engaging, rememberable, and emotional. A strong brand reduces buying barriers and increases trust. Hence, in B2C, the content marketing strategy is derived from the aim and may address the same person with different contents. In both B2C and B2B, the content needs to fit the buying process and needs to provide additional value.

EVENT MARKETING

B2B Marketing

There are different events such as exhibitions, networking events, or industry symposiums. Event marketing plays a vital role in presenting products and technology to the target group, but events are also an opportunity to meet other industry players. B2B is largely built on trust, and therefore, such networking opportunities play a vital role in the relationship.

B2C Marketing

Events are typically used to display the newest products or services to a larger audience. Branch-specific events good opportunities for customers to see all provider of a specific product at one place. Exhibitions offer the possibility to see, touch and test the latest product innovations. Such events are very important from a branding perspective and are often expensively staged.

CLASSIC MARKETING (PRINT)

B2B Marketing

The classic brochure and print advertising are still a common things in B2B. Printed brochures, for example, are heavily used at exhibitions and as a presentation tool during customer talks. Due to the complex products, the high explanatory effort for the sales rep is supported with printed material. The advantage of physical documentation is to have it available independent of electricity, smartphones, and notebooks. Commonly, no electronic devices are allowed at the customer site—especially if the sales talk happens on plant premises. There are still industries and decision makers who read print copies (see this article for details on digital natives).

B2C Marketing

In B2C, the purpose of printed material needs to work without the interaction with a sales guy. The print material needs to be self-explanatory. To catch the recipient's attention is hard, and the attention barrier is huge. Leaflets by snail mail are a common way of sending daily updates e.g., on grocery coupons. Other usages of print marketing material are company magazines, sent directly to the customer. With the ever-growing importance of digital channels, the classic print marketing material is continuously decreasing. But this also bears an opportunity because competition for the letterbox may be easier to win soon.

See this Hubspot blog article for further reading on the subject.

3. HUMAN 2 HUMAN MARKETING (H2H)

This article outlines that B2B and B2C marketing are different. Having a look on the classic 7Ps of marketing and common marketing channels, distinct differences can be listed.

One aspect frequently discussed when talking B2B vs. B2C is that, in both cases, humans interact with humans. A conclusion would be that the difference between B2B and B2C is outdated, and the only necessary approach is Human-to-Human "H2H".

Although this is correct often, it is also wrong for eCommerce. When purchasing online from Amazon.com, you have no interaction with a human. The strong brand, the convenience and your trust in the brand, replaces the human factor.

Another argument against the simplified concept of Human-to-Human is, this term only reflects the obvious – that we are all humans. It is just too generic to provide a valid framework to work with. However important the human factor is, it cannot be used to describe different marketing approaches.

To sum up, B2B and B2C marketing is still a valid framework to describe marketing for the various parts of the value-added chain. From raw material to the final product and beyond.

SUMMARY OF: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN B2B MARKETING AND B2C MARKETING

Business-to-Business Marketing (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer Marketing (B2C) are different. There are differences from the perspective of the classic 4Ps of Marketing and considering the more comprehensive 7Ps. With a closer look at the most common marketing channel, the target group and the nature of the product has a big impact on your marketing. In some industries, this impact will be bigger than in others. Sometimes, B2C and B2B Marketing are very alike. On other occasions, you will experience differences like day and night.

The key take-away message is to know and understand your target group and how to reach them. This simple perspective defines the facets of your marketing strategy, content, and channels. Another aspect of knowing both, the B2B and the B2C end of things, is to learn from each other. Frequently, B2C marketing trends are adapted by B2B marketing over time. The reason for this phenomenon is we. Humans.

In both cases, people are collaborating. The exemption is eCommerce and purely digital services without another human interaction. Still, the basic concepts, differences, and peculiarities of B2B and B2C Marketing need to be considered before neglecting them. That's your very own choice when defining your state-of-the-art marketing strategy.

WHY YOU NEED A B2B MARKETING PLAN

by Stephan Wenger



**BECAUSE RUNNING
OUT OF OXYGEN
WILL KILL YOU**

When running a business, you most likely thought about marketing. And about how marketing can help you to win customers. Often, marketing efforts are random and burn money instead of generating leads and customers. A simple solution is to create a marketing plan. A marketing strategy and marketing tactics are also necessary for B2B companies — probably even more important than in B2C. This article will show the fastest way to fail and how to craft a basic B2B marketing plan.

EVERY BUSINESS PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED WITH MONEY

Businesses are bound to earn money for a simple reason. Money solves business problems. And most companies and organizations have a problem to solve. True, Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) have another mission than to make the owner, stakeholders, or employees rich. But how much can you help others when you are broke? Every company needs to make money to finance expenses. A profit-oriented company can achieve record results by reducing the cost to a minimum and maximizing turnover. That's economy 101.

“

Money is not everything, but it ranks right up there with oxygen.

Zig Ziglar

Marketing helps you with both: increasing turnover and spending money effectively. The best marketing tactics and actions might be in vain without a proper plan. A strategy helps you to keep on track. This is true for your business plan and the marketing plan. A marketing plan is not only reasonable in B2C but vital in B2B. The smaller your company is, the more valid this statement is. Why? Because your resources are limited. And you are bound to spend your budget wisely.

THE FASTEST WAY TO FAIL IS TO COPY THE MARKETING PLAN OF A BIG PLAYER

A common mistake for new marketers is to look at what others are doing. The obvious thing to do is to copy your biggest competitor. In many cases, this market leader is a big, multinational player. What works for them should work for you. Right? Wrong! Unless you have unlimited resources, you have no chance to compete against them.

Big companies have a dedicated marketing team, more experienced, and much higher budgets than you. This results in a David vs. Goliath comparison. Your only chance to win is to be cleverer. Here, being cleverer means to target a very specific audience with a very specific marketing plan. Find a narrow niche and uniquely communicate with this target group. This approach is the exact opposite of the mass marketing of big, global acting companies. Therefore, the details of your marketing plan are vital to avoid this common marketing mistake.

Read more about this principle in the book "The 1-Page Marketing Plan" by Allan Dib

STRATEGY VS. TACTICS ON YOUR MARKETING PLAN

Strategy vs. Tactics. The difference between strategy and tactics is important to understand. A strategy is the big plan and provides the outline on how to reach your goals. Tactics are how to fill the marketing plan with life. Marketing tactics put the marketing strategy into action. A strategy without tactics is an academic paper without value for a real-world business. Tactics without a strategy are ineffective and are bound to fail.

Your marketing plan, therefore, consists of both – a marketing strategy and a marketing plan. Your strategy and tactics are influenced by your business plan that includes your business model. It is important to derive a marketing strategy from the business strategy. This results in a streamlined approach throughout your whole organization. In conclusion, you are lost without a marketing plan, and your actions are based on luck.

THE INTERNET IS OVERWHELMING

Yet another easy mistake to make is to start with online marketing. The possibilities the internet offers are overwhelming and easy to access; it was never been easier to launch your first Facebook campaign. And it was never more likely that you would lose money on a big scale. Global players like Google, Facebook, TikTok, and their incorporated brands like Instagram, YouTube, and others, are world champions in wasting your money. The good thing is, it is always up to you if and how you spend money with them.

Above all, you need to answer a simple question: who is your target group, and how to reach them? Well, not so simple, but crucial to answer.

Ultimately, this question is the most important one – answered by your B2B Marketing plan. Don't make the same mistake as so many others do. "Just do it" works for Nike, but not for an industry company about to start their marketing efforts.

THE BASIC B2B MARKETING PLAN

How to craft a marketing plan fills books and full-time studies. Here's the outline in a nutshell. Your marketing efforts can be grouped into three phases:

1. I know my target group
2. I sell to my potential customer
3. I keep him a customer

In other words, these three phases reflect your target group as:

1. Prospect
2. Lead
3. Customer

The abbreviation of these three phases, "PLC" will keep popping up repeatedly. The whole marketing effort aims to develop a prospect to a customer by nurturing a lead.

Get more insights on how to create a marketing plan in B2B.

SUMMARY OF: WHY YOU NEED A B2B MARKETING PLAN

Marketing can help you increase your turnover and spend your money effectively. The smaller your company is, the more important it is to do marketing right. You cannot afford to compete against big, multinational companies. They have a higher budget and a team of marketing people. Therefore, don't copy these big competitors.

Target a well-defined niche with dedicated marketing actions. A marketing plan helps you to outline the strategy on how to tackle your potential customers. A marketing plan defines actionable tactics to implement the strategy. Above all, it answers the vital question of who your customers are and how to meet them.

A marketing plan in business-to-business markets is equally important as in B2C. Due to limited resources and the urgency to spend each marketing € wisely, a B2B marketing plan might be the lifeline of your company. Each company needs a marketing plan to do business successfully.

Find the step-by-step guide, in 2 parts here:

- [How to create your B2B Marketing strategy in 6 steps | Part I](#)
- [How to create your B2B Marketing strategy in 6 steps | Part II](#)

INDUSTRIAL MARKETING

by Stephan Wenger



THE PREQUEL OF MODERN B2B MARKETING

Industrial marketing is to market a good or service to another company within an industrial market, which is in contrast to consumer marketing that aims to market to consumers. Defining marketing by the type of market was established decades ago and is still a valid and important concept. Modern industrial marketing is called business-to-business or B2B marketing. B2B marketing strategies put the customer first and are of utmost strategic relevance for the whole company. The nature of an industrial good has distinct differences from a consumer good. This article addresses these differences and outlines why industrial marketing is the prequel of modern business-to-business marketing.

THE HISTORY OF INDUSTRIAL MARKETING

The term “industrial marketing” originates way back to when Philip Kotler created today’s marketing discipline. With his popular marketing mix concept and the “Four Ps of Marketing”, Kotler linked marketing to products and distribution. The very nature of a product and to whom it is sold is still an important concept. It is important because the buyer, the seller and the good defines a market. Hence, the definition of a market is inseparably linked to the definition of marketing itself.

An industrial good sold to another company defines the discipline of marketing as industrial marketing. Industrial marketing happens within an industrial market.

On the contrary, a consumer good sold to an end customer defines consumer marketing strategies and actions on a consumer market.

With the rise of globalization and the derived marketing internationalization, the terminology industrial marketing was replaced by business-to-business marketing. At the same time, consumer marketing started to be known as business-to-consumer marketing.

Another aspect that has put “business” in the distinction of different marketing disciplines is that marketing affects the whole business, not only the product or service. Modern marketing management aims to focus all business areas on the market and customer. In other words, a modern marketing strategy puts the customer first. All other business disciplines follow.

INDUSTRIAL MARKETING DEFINITION

The history of the term already indicates vital aspects for a proper definition.

“

Industrial marketing, also known as business-to-business marketing or B2B marketing, aims to market an industrial good or service to another company.

The used marketing strategies and actions cover the classic four 4Ps of the marketing mix:

- Industrial product or service
- Place, which is the distribution of the product or service to another company
- Price
- Promotion and communication on an industrial market

Naturally, modern marketing disciplines such as online marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing (SMM), eCommerce and content marketing are also used as industrial marketing methods.

However, the basic definition, derived from the market definition, remains untouched and still has its value. Not only in literature but also in daily marketing practice. The article differences between B2B and B2C marketing provides a comprehensive overview of the mentioned aspects of Business-to-Business Marketing and Business-to-Consumer Marketing.

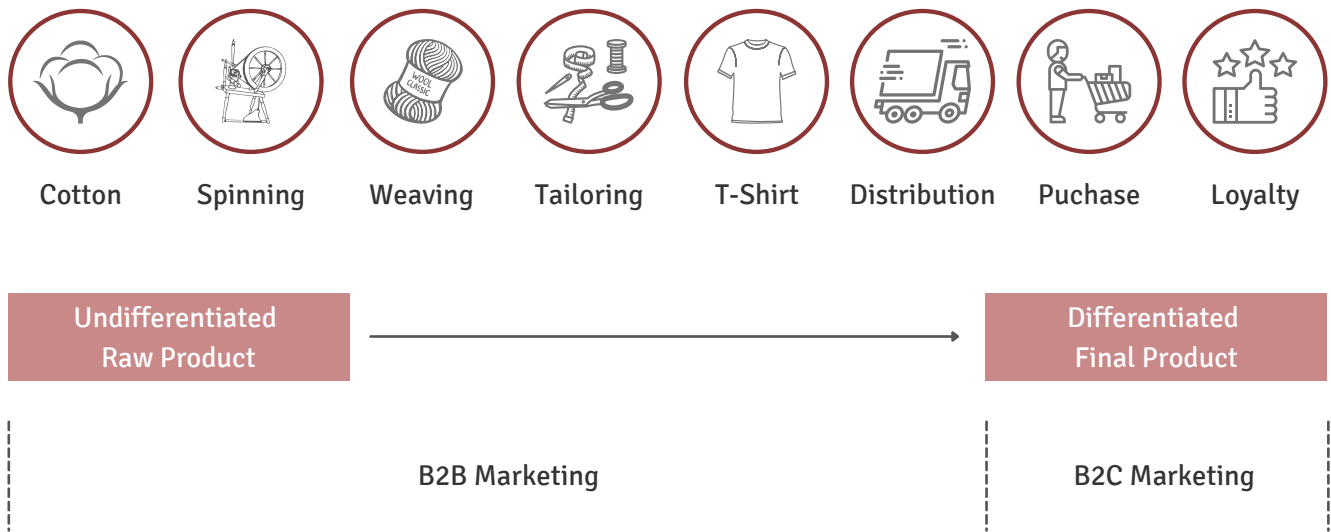
WHAT ARE INDUSTRIAL GOODS? WHAT ARE B2B GOODS?

There are three types of goods: products, services, and digital products. The term industrial goods apply to them all. There are industrial products (e.g. steel), industrial services (e.g. engineering of a furnace that melts steel) and digital industrial products (e.g. software controlling the steel melting temperature).

As already explained, the market definition implies different goods: industrial or consumer goods. An industrial good is sold and bought on an industrial market, and a consumer good is traded on a consumer market.

This is also very clear when looking at the value-added chain that covers all steps from a raw product to a final, end customer ready, product.

VALUE ADDED CHAIN



Based on the value-added chain perspective, an industrial good has these characteristics:

- An industrial good is less differentiated at the beginning of the value-added chain

For example, the raw material cotton has fewer differentiation criteria (e.g. quality, origin) than a T-shirt (color, size, brand, style, price, distribution channel, etc.)

- The complexity of an industrial good typically increases with every manufacturing step.

This is linked to the increasing differentiation of intermediate products on its way to the final product.

For example, the chassis of a vehicle is more complex than the mining of iron ore, which is the raw material for steel production.

- Working principles and/or physical properties are often essential for the buyer.

This is a distinction to a consumer good that mainly is sold because of its uses for the buyer.

For example, the working principle of a mobile phone is less important than battery time, size, and camera resolution. The camera module's mechanical, electro-optical, and electronic details are of utmost interest when Foxconn works with Apple on the iPhone camera specifications.

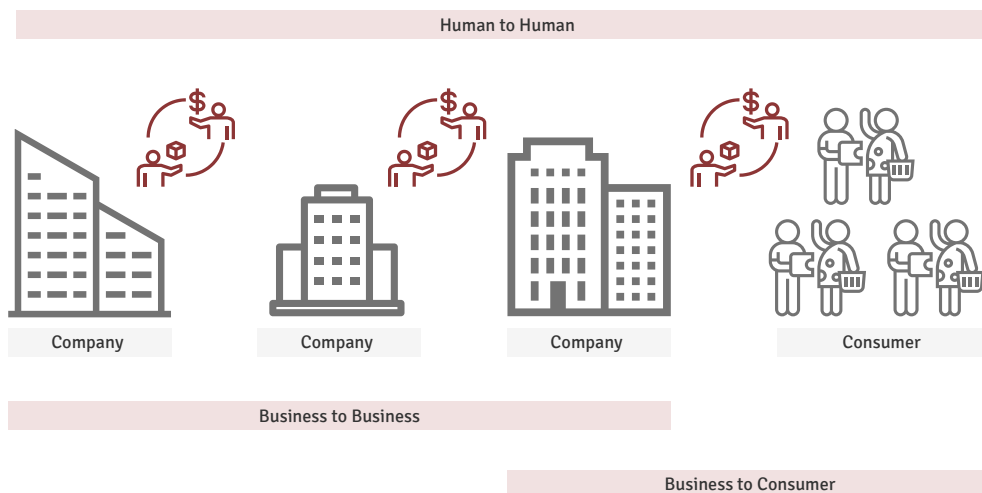
- Due to their complexity, industrial goods have a higher explanatory effort towards the end of the value-added chain.

This affects marketing actions drastically.

For example, think of the endurance against UV radiation of a synthetic plastic of which your garden table is made. This aspect is harder to understand and explain than the crude oil quality from which the plastic originates. On the consumer market, the customer only wants to know if the table looks the same after years of nice garden parties in the sun—a comparably easy task for marketers.

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKET

This article has outlined the definition of a market and the basic difference between a consumer (B2C) and an industrial market (B2B). For a more precise view, some further principles are helpful.



- **Supply and Demand**

The trade of a product between supplier and buyer (=market), based on supply and demand. In B2B markets, the free market economy is typically globally. Raw materials are traded around the globe. These materials are also listed on the stock exchange. This makes the marketing for many raw materials a global one. For example, sugar is made of cane sugar cultivated and harvested in Brazil, the USA, South Africa, Australia, and many other countries. The aim of B2B marketing is also a global target group.

- **Online transaction and market size**

The transaction or purchasing process on an industrial market is largely done in a classical sense, offline. However, major online pure players enter the market. Amazon Business, Alibaba or Global Sources are just three examples of eCommerce B2B marketplaces. Judged by market size, the B2B eCommerce market is already five times bigger than the B2C market and is valued at US\$ 14.9 trillion in 2020 (Statista, 2021).

- **B2B buyer definition**

A buyer has the aim to purchase a defined good from a seller. Therefore, the buyer creates a demand fulfilled by the seller. In B2C markets, a buyer is an individual person. In B2B markets, the buyer acts via a person or a group of people. The common term to describe objectified buying decisions is Buying Center. A group of people with different roles aims to make an objective purchasing decision to fulfill the companies demand. B2B purchasing decisions are typically process-oriented and secured by approval steps. That makes a B2B buyer less vulnerable to emotional decisions. "Point of Sale" decisions common on a consumer market is almost non existing in industrial markets.

SUMMARY

Modern business-to-business marketing (B2B Marketing) originates from industrial marketing, defined decades ago. Industrial marketing aims to market an industrial good or service to another company, not a consumer. Philip Kotler established the basis for this definition by introducing the “4Ps of marketing”: product, price, promotion, and place. The product and promotion are two aspects of how to define a market itself. That makes the marketing definition inseparable linked to the market itself.

Industrial marketing happens on an industrial market marked by the purchasing process between two companies. Modern definitions of an industrial market use the terminology business-to-business or B2B market. The reason for putting “business” in the center of things is important. Modern marketing strategies affect the whole business, not only the classic 4Ps. In other words, the strategic foundation of a business is the marketing strategy, focusing on the customer above all others.

Center of attention of B2B Marketing is industrial goods, namely industrial products, industrial services, and digital industrial products. These goods are created throughout the whole added-value chain. From raw material till the final product. Only the last step is part of the B2C marketing: market the final product to the end consumer.

Examples of industrial marketing are activities of raw sugar producers to increase their sales volume on the global sugar industry market. Or the engineering and production of a vehicle chassis by being served by the steel and aluminum manufacturing industry.

Continue to read further details on the differences between B2B marketing and B2C marketing.

MARKETING STRATEGY FOR B2B

by Stephan Wenger



HOW A B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IS DEVELOPED

Marketing Strategy. Marketing Plan. Marketing Tactic. There are different terms to describe the purpose of your B2B marketing efforts. However, these terms describe different aspects of modern marketing. This article not only defines these phrases but also outlines the correlation between the company vision and aims. Michael Porter describes three generic marketing strategy types: Differentiation, Cost Leadership and Focus. The most celebrated marketing strategy of recent years, however, is simple: answer customers' questions. "They ask, you answer" by Marcus Sheridan is a genius marketing strategy targeting modern, digital customers. Reading this article, you can develop a proper marketing strategy.

WHAT IS A B2B MARKETING STRATEGY?

A marketing strategy is a top-level plan for reaching a defined target group and turning them into customers of their products or services. A good marketing strategy revolves around the very foundation of the company: its core values, brand positioning, target market and target group. Marketing centric companies put their marketing strategy on a level with the companies' strategic goals. In such customer-centric companies, all other strategies, like the sales strategy, digitalization strategy, market entry strategy, R&D strategy and alike, are derived from the marketing strategy.

The terminology strategy is easy to understand and yet hard to grasp in detail. Aim, tactic, plan, vision, and strategy are often used synonymously. A grave mistake. Here's an easy to remember mnemonic.

- Vision: Travel the world and enjoy diverse cultures
- Aim: Visit the town behind the mountains
- Strategy: Take the river
- Tactic: Use a boat
- Plan: Row with two paddles simultaneously

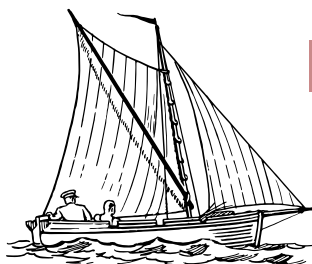


Vision: Travel the World

Aim: Visit the Town behind the Mountains



Strategy: Take the River



Tactic: Use a Boat



Plan: Take two Paddles

The benefits of a marketing strategy are a clear path to meet your aims and fulfill your vision. The tactics and the plan to bring your tactics to life derive from the marketing strategy. This basic principle holds for all market types, including B2B and B2C markets. Therefore, a B2B Marketing Strategy has the same foundation as a B2C Marketing Strategy. The vision, aim, strategy details, tactic, and plan are different from company to company and depend on many influencing factors.

DIFFERENT B2B MARKETING STRATEGY TYPES

A marketing strategy is inseparably linked to the market on which the company acts. The market centers on the company strategy and main company aim. Michael Porter developed three generic strategies to do so:

- **Differentiation**

The company targets a mass market and aims to differentiate its portfolio from the competition. The concept of “unique selling proposition – USP” describes criteria making a product or service stand out. A highly differentiated portfolio allows higher prices because it fulfills customer needs better than the competition.

- **Focus**

A clearly defined, very specific niche market typically has less competition. The high degree of specialization increases market entry barriers and make a well-developed niche profitable. Instead of competing head to head in a mass market, a niche strategy aims to develop outstanding knowledge of this narrow-defined market segment.

- **Cost Leadership**

This resource- and efficiency-based strategy intends to provide the best price-value ratio. The lowest possible costs allow low prices for the same quality as the competition. This strategy works well in price-sensitive markets in which cost advantages are long-standing.

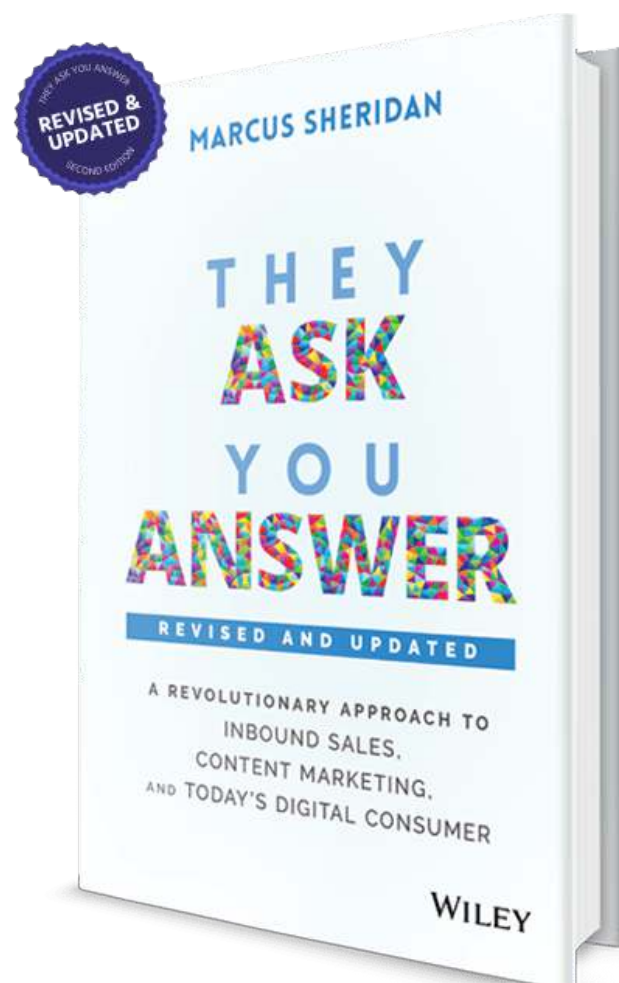
The marketing strategy consequently needs to describe tactics and actions to serve these generic company strategies. A common B2B Marketing strategy framework is the Four Ps of the marketing mix: product, price, place, and promotion. Expanded concepts are the Seven Ps, adding People, Processes, and Physical Evidence to the 4Ps. This comprehensive comparison explains the differences between Business-to-Consumer Marketing and Business-to-Business Marketing. Porter’s three generic strategies are a common approach to the subject. However, there are multiple ways on how to differentiate between marketing strategies in B2B. One of the most celebrated approaches has been put into writing by Marcus Sheridan in his bestselling book “They ask, you answer”, a new and highly successful strategy to target the modern, digital customer.

THEY ASK, YOU ANSWER

The title of the book is the idea briefly. Customers ask a question, and the company answers them. This is such an easy truth and yet so impactful and hard to realize in practice. The core idea is that potential customers ask questions along the whole customer journey.

Think about yourself when buying any random product. You probably ask yourself if this is the right choice, how the product works, if any given feature is necessary for your demand, what the product specification means if the product also fulfills your need that is slightly out of the intended usage, etc. Thinking about it, a customer probably has 100 more questions for a complex B2B product.

The marketing strategy aims to answer many customer questions in an honest and non-promotional way. It is the mother of “educational content” – a content type that increases the customer’s know-how instead of targeting his emotions. One may say this is the counterpart to intuitive, emotional selling. The more a customer knows, the better it is for the company—an outstanding strategy at first glance.



- Pricing and Cost

Customers want to know how much they pay. And ultimately, they will get an answer to this question. So why hide prices in B2B in the first place? The same is true for running costs. Customers not only have a reasonable right to know the running costs, but they will also discover in the long run and damage your business with bad word-of-mouth if you have not been honest from the start. Will your competitor see the prices? Well, yes – but he knows them anyhow. Be sure of that fact. Does your service have a price range? Give customers an average or a rough estimation. Your goods are high priced, and you are afraid to scare away customers? Better let them know early in the process and not after your sales team has put effort into the opportunity. Or even better, outline the increased value your product delivers for the high price. You get the point...

- Problems

EVERY product and service have a weakness. It is trustworthy and fair to talk about these weaknesses. Customers will decide if this very weakness is a showstopper for them or not. Talking about problems is hard. But it creates an atmosphere of honesty, transparency, and trust. This will pay off in the long run. Especially for industrial goods often sold based on trust and long-term relationships.

- Versus and Comparisons

Nike vs. Adidas. Apple vs. Samsung. Your company vs. your biggest competitor. People like content that is easy to digest and answers questions straight away. What can I expect from you and what from your competitor? By providing this content type, your customer will see if your offer matches his need or not. This creates a clear expectation for the customer. The result is a satisfied customer or an informed customer buying from your competitor. But it will never be an unsatisfied customer that harms your reputation. If you have no advantage over your competitors, you may have to circle back to Porter's generic strategies to create one.

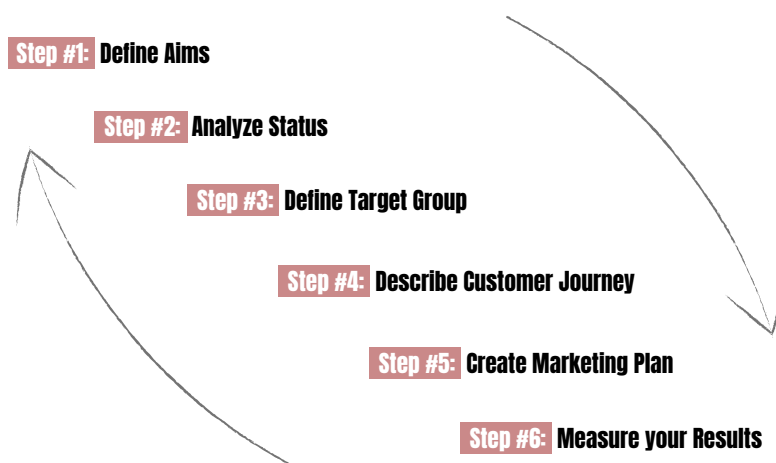
- Best in class and Reviews

These content types are similar based on the principle we already discussed: people love to compare: themselves, products, and services. Best in class and reviews showcase your solution compared to others. This is done in a storytelling way, using a holistic perspective instead of a single feature. Also, with this aspect, the honest approach and value-adding content aim to educate the potential customer. This strategy creates a comprehensive overview for the customer and strengthens your position in this market.

“You ask, they Answer” is an interesting and effective B2B marketing strategy. Taken to the extreme, the idea of answering customers' questions at all costs is a company philosophy. And at the same time, a sales strategy, digital strategy, and content marketing strategy. This powerful approach to the modern digital customer allows Business-to-Business marketing teams to position the company as a know-how leader. A hard to beat brand promise.

HOW A B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IS DEVELOPED

Let's repeat what we discussed earlier. A strategy is a company's top-level plan on meeting a defined target group to achieve a certain company aim. The company aim serves to fulfill the vision. Therefore, a strategy is always derived from a bigger picture. This picture's single dots and pixels are defined in the marketing strategy, outlined in the marketing tactics and concretized in the marketing plan.



The 6 steps to create a marketing strategy in B2B are:

- Step #1 – Define marketing aims

The marketing aims are derived from the company aim. All marketing aims are bound to contribute to a larger purpose of succeeding in the defined B2B market.

- Step #2 – Analyze the status quo

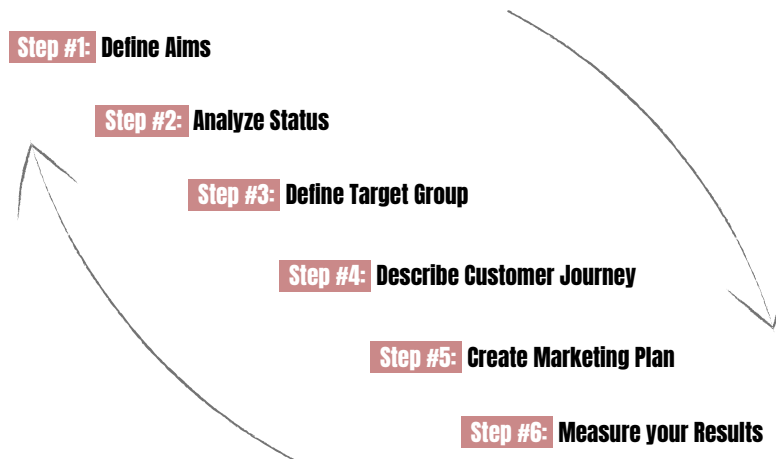
You may create your strategy the first time or work on your annual update. The analysis phase increases your knowledge about the current state to understand what is necessary to meet the ideal state of your desired marketing purpose.

- Step #3 – Define your target group and buying center personas (BCP)

“Everybody” is not a target group. In industrial markets, your target group is not necessarily a single person. The so-called “buying center”, a group of people with different roles, is typical for B2B. The classic target group definition works and modern concepts of buying personas.

- Step #4 – Describe the customer journey. Your B2B Marketing Tactic.

A customer journey is an ideal path a potential customer takes from first interest to a loyal customer. During his journey, a prospect contacts you multiple times until he converts to a customer. These touchpoints, offline and online, are defined and described in the customer journey map. This is the core of your strategy. It answers the question, “how do I target my future customers?”



- Step#5 – Create your B2B marketing plan

The marketing plan itself reflects the first 4 steps. It is a comprehensive, actionable plan that describes details on how to address the target group. Channels and contents are mapped with the customer journey. A storyline is also part of your marketing plan. Here, a marketing plan is the game plan and focuses on “how” instead of “why”. For internal communication purposes, make sure to add an executive summary of your plan. A strategy is good, but a self-explanatory one-page marketing plan is better. Management will thank you.

- Step #6 – Make your results measurable

Marketing controlling is a necessity. Modern digital marketing is based on KPIs and big data. This final step of your marketing strategy closes the loop to your analysis and make actions measurable. You better know which half of the budget is spent in vain, right?

SUMMARY

A marketing strategy is a business's most important plan for reaching the target group, part of a defined B2B market, intending to turn them into customers. The center of a proper marketing strategy orbits the company's core value, including brand and company vision. This vision defines the marketing aim that determines the marketing strategy. Once you have your strategy specified, the tactic to get there results in an actionable marketing plan.

There are many approaches to creating a B2B marketing strategy. Markets and marketing are closely linked. The three generic market strategies by M. Porter give a basic strategy framework. A new approach, however, is "They ask, you answer" by Marcus Sheridan. The simplicity of answering customers' questions as a strategy is genius. The idea is to gain trust by being honest and helpful. A company that follows this simple truth is bound to be recognized as a know-how leader. A competitive advantage that is hard to beat.

All strategy frameworks have the same basic 6 steps in common. Conducted as a closes circle, these steps are:

- Step #1 – Define marketing aims
- Step #2 – Analyze the status quo
- Step #3 – Define your target group and buying center personas (BCP)
- Step #4 – Describe the customer journey. Your B2B Marketing Tactic.
- Step#5 – Create your B2B marketing plan
- Step #6 – Make your results measurable

Details are described in [How to create your B2B Marketing Strategy in 6 steps, Part I](#) and [Part II](#)

HOW TO CREATE YOUR B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IN 6 STEPS | PART I

by Stephan Wenger



THE FIRST PART OF YOUR STEP- BY-STEP GUIDELINE

Let's face it – you probably landed here after a google search “how to create a B2B marketing strategy”. I assume you did so because you never wrote a Business-to-Business marketing strategy before. Am I right? No worries, this article outlines the 6 necessary steps to create your marketing strategy. This is the first of two parts on how to create a marketing strategy.

Whether you are new to marketing or 10 years on the job, one of the first things you start with is defining a proper strategy. Every B2B marketing department should have one. Not because theory tells you so, but because a written document helps to focus on the central theme, the main topic. A strategy paper is a mental anchor and guides you if times are hectic. Especially when you take over a new marketing job, it is vital to focus and ramp up fast. This is an obvious thing to say. However, it is very complicated to manage. This article focuses on tasks that are essential if you are in this situation. There are 6 steps that assist you in the first 90 days. By the way – “The first 90 days” by Michael Watkins are a great source of knowledge on how you pay off for your new employer fast. Highly recommended.

STEP #1 - UNDERSTAND YOUR PORTFOLIO AND DEFINE AIMS

You need to understand what your company sells. Without this basic know-how, all your marketing efforts will be less effective, if not in vain. This first step sounds simple, but by trend, a B2B portfolio is more complex to understand than in the consumer environment. Sometimes, you will need comprehensive background knowledge to understand the working principles of a B2B product. This makes B2B Marketing so interesting yet challenging. Here are some characteristics of a B2B product/service:

- The highly explanatory effort of function and usage
- Product attributes are influenced by standards and norms
- High R&D investments and long development cycles to realize the final product
- Installation requires trained personal from the manufacturer
- Product requires specific framework conditions to work properly or is part of larger machinery or installation
- Individual product components or project-based development requires comprehensive documentation and support during the sales process

This list only covers general aspects a typical Business-to-Business portfolio has. The branch itself strongly influences the actual product characteristics. Your first and most important step is to understand the portfolio. There are two approaches to achieve this first step of your marketing strategy:

1. JOIN THE SALES TEAM AND ATTEND EXHIBITIONS

The easiest way is to walk alongside a senior sales representative during customer meetings. Use the common time during your trip to learn how the sales rep sees the portfolio. You gain the perspective you will need the most: the market view. Inhale the needs of customers and listen to the wording they use. Attend exhibitions to get the full dose. There will be countless sales talks, the product portfolio is showcased, and the competition is present—a perfect opportunity. By the way – this is also a great way to keep yourself up to date. Each marketing manager should be attending industry-leading exhibitions frequently.

2. HANDS-ON TRAINING. DO A FEW WEEKS IN AN INTERNSHIP AND BE PART OF THE PRODUCT MANAGEMENT, R&D AND ASSEMBLY TEAM.

Nothing is more instructive than to do things with your own hand. Discuss this point already at your job interview and make sure it is part of your onboarding training. You can learn everything about the “important” internal process tool later... Join the product management team and ask them about positioning, branding, and why a certain function is a USP. Challenge them and offer your marketing expertise to walk through the portfolio. Once you understand the portfolio, see what is coming next. A glance at R&D projects to learn about new technologies and ideas will be an eye-opener. And finally, get your hands dirty. Wherever possible, spend a few days assembling the products. Or at least watch how the products are made. This gives a very good feeling on the value of the products. Probably even more important: your company’s internal network grows. It will be a great source of content in the future.

STEP #2 - ANALYZE THE STATUS QUO OF THE MARKETING MIX

Without a proper analysis, you will have trouble identifying shortcomings and the potential to enhance good-performing actions. Each strategy creation process requires a comprehensive internal and external analysis of the status quo. These approaches help you to gain access to the needed information quickly. Again, this step is also important if you update your existing strategy. It helps to identify gaps in your current setup.

1. LIST EXISTING CHANNELS

There are internal and external channels. This basic distinction is a simple way to structure your channel overview. Another way is to sort channels by own channels vs. not-owned channels. Your company website, for example, is a channel you own. You do not own LinkedIn but simply use this channel to communicate.

An important step is to identify the channel owner within your company. Who is in charge of Google Ads in your team? Who owns the intranet channel to spread internal news?

2. LIST ALL EXISTING CONTENT TYPES AND ASSETS

Organize the assets to meet the principles of the channel analysis. Some content works better on certain channels than others. The basic funnel concept is a valid framework in many cases.

However, remember step 1 and define your very own funnel concept.

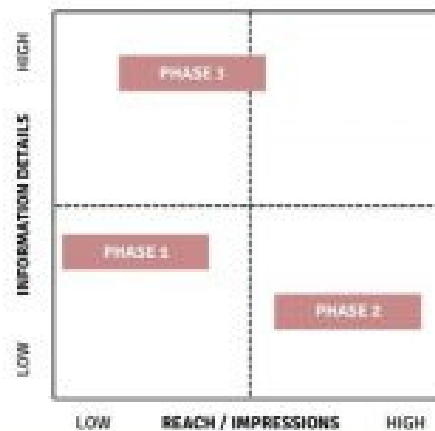
Categorize your content according to the following logic:

- Top of Funnel
- Middle of Funnel
- Bottom of Funnel

This overview of Semrush will help to identify which of your content is typically used in which funnel step. However, this is just a framework and you need to adapt to your company specifics.

3. ANALYZE CAMPAIGNS AND HOW THEY ARE SET UP

Campaigns typically have phases and follow aims to convert the target group from the top of the funnel to the bottom of the funnel. The further down the funnel, the more content details are required. Typically, reach and an impression is affected accordingly. In other words, your marketing actions get more and more specific on the way down the funnel. The result of your analysis might look something like this:

PHASES OF A B2B MARKETING CAMPAIGN

#B2Bmarketingworld

This image shows a campaign in three phases. Phase 1 is likely to be a product launch, kicking off a new topic. Phase 2 aims to generate as much awareness as possible and provides the traffic base for phase 3. In the final phase, the reach declines, and the target group gets detailed content to generate a lead. For your company, these phases may vary.

If your company has an established marketing team, it is likely that 1.) and 2.) are combined in 3.) Channel management combined with asset and content management often builds a very good framework for campaigning.

STEP #3 - DEFINE YOUR TARGET GROUP AND BUYING CENTER PERSONAS (BCP)

The concept of buying personas or personas is the evolution of a classic customer segmentation model. The concept is broadly used in B2C to describe a target group by describing the archetypical person, member of this target group. Multiple personas can be created, and all activities are aligned according to the specifics of this very person.

For your B2B marketing strategy, a single person is not enough. Decisions in B2B are made by a buying center or at least by two people. Therefore, the adaption of the buying personas concept needs to be adapted to the model of Buying Center Personas (BCP). The concept is built on multiple personas who are part of the purchase decision of a buying center. The tricky part is to understand the different needs of each role (=persona) and how this role contributes to the decision.

Interestingly, not all B2B buying personas focus on the benefit of the product or service. This is the main difference to a B2C buying persona.

Here's an example to underline this aspect:

The role "user" needs to know the product's benefits or how a service solves their problem. The role "buyer" from the purchasing department is interested in the price and the purchasing conditions.

Still, your marketing campaign needs to address all these needs. It is OK to establish the buying persona for the main decision-maker first to make things easier. Because it is also vital to keep your marketing strategy actionable. Over time, your pool and understanding of multiple buying personas will increase. As needs typically evolve slower in B2B, you will create your Buying Center Personas over time.

SUMMARY OF: HOW TO CREATE YOUR B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IN 6 STEPS | PART I

This article covers the initial three of the 6 steps to create your B2B marketing strategy. Each marketing manager, young or a seasoned pro, is bound to have a written marketing strategy. This strategy is the central theme and guidance for all marketing actions. The creation of a marketing strategy has these 6 steps. The second part can be found [here](#)

Step #1 – Understand your portfolio and define aims.

Understand what you want to market. Without knowledge of what and why, each strategy is bound to be wrong.

Step #2 – Analyze the status quo of the marketing mix

Unless you start from scratch, do an analysis. No matter if you create your strategy the first time or you do your annual update. The analysis phase aligns the current state and the ideal state of your marketing.

Step #3 – Define your target group and buying center personas (BCP)

There is no chance to do the right things if you do not know whom to address. "Everybody" is not a target group.

Step #4 – Describe the customer journey and combine print and online in your marketing mix
The most challenging step is to combine channels, content, and target groups to create a customer journey map for all members of the buying center personas. This is the core of your strategy.

Step#5 – Create your B2B marketing plan

The actual plan itself reflects your hard work of the first 4 steps. Create a comprehensive guide that builds a strong base and an actionable plan that can be read in 5 minutes.

Step #6 – Make your results measurable

You better know which half of the budget is spent in vain, right? And make sure you use your data and act accordingly.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IN 6 STEPS | PART II

by Stephan Wenger



THE SECOND PART OF YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDELINE

This is the second and final part on how to create a marketing strategy. In the first part, you learned how to understand your portfolio, define aims, and analyze the marketing mix's status quo. The first part also outlined the target group and buying center personas (BCP) definition. In this second part, you will read about the final three steps, including the customer journey, your B2B marketing plan and how to define marketing KPIs.

If you miss the first three steps, here they are:

- Step #1 – Understand your portfolio and define aims
- Step #2 – Analyze the status quo of the marketing mix
- Step #3 – Define your target group and buying center personas (BCP)

STEP #4 - DESCRIBE THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY AND COMBINE PRINT AND ONLINE IN YOUR MARKETING MIX

Print is dead, long-life print. With print media, it is like with fashion: it all comes back sometimes. The most impressive example is the print catalog from Amazon, launched for the holiday season 2019. The synonym company for online retail and eCommerce uses a print medium as a gateway to digital. Remarkable.

B2B marketing often heavily relies on "the old way", the classic above-the-line print-based marketing. Sales reps continue to use brochures to explain features to a customer. In a business environment where products and services have a high explanatory effort, customer meetings and representation by sales remain important. Sales talks may happen in environments where digital tools are not handy. Imagine a sales rep talking about an oil pipeline valve in the middle of the refinery and use his white iPad. A printed brochure on which he can take notes is still something your sales might ask for. Further, mobile devices are often forbidden in sensitive areas of, for example, a production plant. If the sales pitch happens there, your sales will use offline media to back their online content.

This does not mean sticking with just one printed channel. Use the whole range and reuse your content. Produce a digital brochure and use a web-to-print solution to serve your sales rep. Learn from the Amazon example and connect the printed version with the digital one. Think again about our sales rep for pipeline valves. The customer may use his smartphone to see the installed valve via Augmented Reality (AR) once he is back at his office desk. Or a simple QR code to open a YouTube video showcasing various valve applications.

Use the full range of content types and channels. You will need them to address the different buying center personas.

The exact plan on how to use the described full range of content types and channels to reach the customer along the intended customer journey is described as customer journey mapping. This method describes how and where the customer interacts with your company and with your brand. Each touchpoint needs to be actively managed and offers a chance to provide information. Having a glance at step #2 and the described channels, funnels, and campaigns analysis. According to a user journey map, the combination of marketing channels, content in a campaign, is the ultimate usage of all these basic concepts. Taking the different target groups and buying center personas into account, multiple user journey maps are necessary.

This final step is already merging into step #5 and the creation of the marketing plan itself.

STEP#5 - CREATE YOUR B2B MARKETING PLAN

The previous 4 steps build the base for your marketing plan. How much of each step you want to include in your marketing plan paper depends on different aspects. The more information you add to your plan, the less actionable the paper will be. On the other hand, a comprehensive approach allows a deep understanding of all actions.

Therefore, it makes sense to do both. Create a comprehensive marketing plan that is your reference. This reference is the central theme of your marketing work. It guides you through challenges and helps in crisis moments. This document – yes, it needs to be written down – should be updated once a year. Preferable before you budget for the upcoming year.

Second, derive a more actionable B2B marketing plan from the comprehensive one. This plan focuses on the actions—on what to do and when to do it. You did a good job if this executive summary can be read in a few minutes. Still, it needs to contain the key actions for your team members or external agencies.

It is also necessary to budget your marketing expenses. As budgeting itself would fill books, only three basic approaches are mentioned: bottom-up, based on targets, top-down based on (typically) turnover percentage and KPI driven, based on success. For further reference, I recommend having a look at this Hubspot article

STEP #6 - MAKE YOUR RESULTS MEASURABLE

My overall advice for B2B marketers is: do whatever is ultimately useful for sales. An easy thing to say. The marketing, lead management and sales funnel best describe what is meant by that:



Modern B2B marketing organizations focus on both the marketing funnel and the lead funnel. The interface between marketing and sales is lead management. The measurable value that marketing can provide to sales leads. Therefore, your marketing strategy needs measurable results. Define Key-Performance-Indicators (KPIs) for each action. Start with reach and awareness in the marketing funnel, followed by conversion in the interface of marketing and lead management and the number of leads at the end of the lead funnel. The ultimate aim is to calculate the marketing budget's return with realized sales originating from marketing actions. This aspect focuses on output instead of input.

However, no marketing department can survive without the measurement of input KPIs. Each action and each channel needs measurement. Each step of the marketing funnel – top to bottom – has its own KPIs, ratios, and qualitative metrics. Terminology like reach, impressions, conversion rate, cost-per-click, cost-per-lead, cost-per-mill, click-through-rate, bounce rate, etc. is a (digital) marketer's daily job.

Unfortunately, there is no easy answer on what to measure and what to report. The basic idea, however, is to measure as much as you can without limiting your resources. A KPI without subsequent action is useless and not worth the effort. And ultimately, not every data point is a KPI nor is every KPI interesting to management.

SUMMARY OF: HOW TO CREATE YOUR B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IN 6 STEPS | PART II

This article completes the 6 steps to create your B2B marketing strategy. Remember, each marketing manager should have a written marketing strategy to guide him. A strategy is important because it is the central theme and guidance for all marketing actions. Creating a marketing strategy has these 6 steps, including the initial three from Part 1 you can read here.

Step #1 – Understand your portfolio and define aims.

Understand what you want to market. Without knowledge of what and why each strategy is bound to be wrong.

Step #2 – Analyze the status quo of the marketing mix

Unless you start from scratch, do an analysis. No matter if you create your strategy the first time or you do your annual update. The analysis phase aligns the current state and the ideal state of your marketing.

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Step #5 – Create your B2B marketing plan

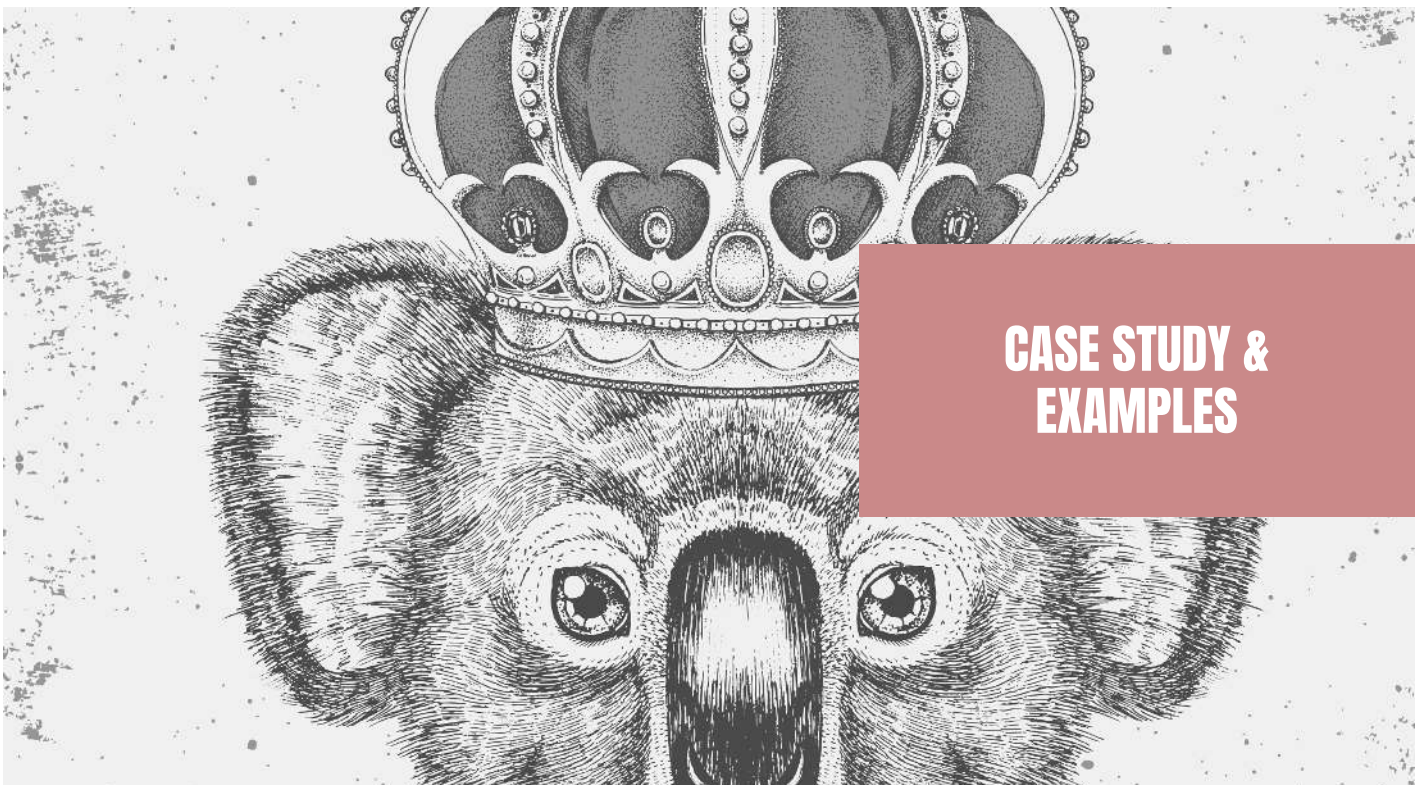
The actual plan itself reflects your hard work of the first 4 steps. Create both a comprehensive guide that builds a strong base and an actionable plan that can be read in 5 minutes.

Step #6 – Make your results measurable

You better know which half of the budget is spent in vain, right? And make sure you use your data and act accordingly.

TOP 5 B2B MARKETING BLOGS IN 2021

by Stephan Wenger



**CASE STUDY &
EXAMPLES**

BLOGS DEDICATED TO BUSINESS-TO- BUSINESS MARKETING

I analyzed over 60 marketing blogs from huge entities like Harvard Business Review to small, personal marketing blogs. Among these blogs, there are only 16 dedicated to B2B Marketing.

Why should you browse this list? It is hard to get dedicated B2B marketing know-how online. Most marketing content sources circle around consumer marketing. The same applies to universities and online courses, which is why I curated and analyzed over 60 marketing blogs to find B2B focused ones.

This post presents the top 5 B2B focused marketing blogs. This comprehensive list enables you to level up your B2B Marketing knowledge. Of course, when you have finished reading all the articles on B2B Marketing World.

BUSINESS 2 COMMUNITY



"The Big One"

<https://www.business2community.com/b2b-marketing>

Business 2 Community receives over 616k organic visitors every month, making the page the biggest one on the list. The site covers a broad range of topics such as marketing & sales and technology & innovation.

The B2B Marketing category has an unlimited number of posts and 91,000 pages in the Google Index. On average, 8 articles are published per month. This gives you plenty of updated content to read, and you can learn B2B Marketing from one of the biggest sources on the web.

The range of topics is extremely broad: B2B Marketing trends, online marketing, buying center and buyers personas, personalization, content marketing, UX and UI, B2B Marketing strategy, SEO for B2B Marketers, Lead management, advertisements, etc.

B2B MARKETING ZONE



"The most comprehensive collection out there"

<https://www.b2bmarketingzone.com/>

The name is accurate: this page is all about B2B Marketing. Each month, the page sees a rough 4,000 visitors and has over 18,000 organically ranking keywords. B2B Marketing Zone is a collection of different marketing sources online; the articles on top are auto-curated based on reader data.

Thus, the page covers a broad range of topics from many sources, from marketing strategies to actionable guidelines. You will find B2B Marketing examples and theoretical groundwork. The outstanding aspect of this page is the colossal topic collection. A long list of over 100 themed categories guides you to your topic of interest. The article itself opens in an iFrame and pulls the content from the original source blog or website.

B2B Marketing Zone is a valuable source of information. But, you need to know what you are looking for. Otherwise, you might get lost in the endless list of articles on the page.

B2B MARKETING.NET



"A whole universe built around Business-to-Business Marketing"

<https://www.b2bmarketing.net/en-gb/resources/blog>

B2B Marketing.net is a UK-based team established in 2004 and dedicated to B2B Marketing. Events like "Ignite" or the "B2B Marketing Awards" are well known in the industry.

Not surprisingly, the B2B Marketing blog is full of high-quality articles. Many renowned marketers contribute as guest authors. Meanwhile, 54,000 monthly visitors make this blog the second largest on this list. Over 71,000 organically ranking keywords underline the bandwidth of marketing content available.

The blogs cover everything about B2B Marketing. The list of topics is a true A-Z directory. Besides classic blog posts, you will also find B2B Case Studies on the page.

b2bmarketing.net is a must-have bookmark and a valuable source for every B2B Marketeer.

OKTOPOST



"With a focus how to optimize your B2B funnel"

<https://www.oktopost.com/blog/b2b-marketing/>

Oktopost is best known for its social media marketing solutions. They have all eyes on the funnel, especially on top of funnel activities. Based on this knowledge, Oktopost has its own B2B category on its blog. The claim is to learn how to optimize the B2B funnel.

12,000+ monthly visitors and over 570 B2B Marketing pages in the Google index, underlining Oktopost's focus on Business-to-Business topics.

The content circles around top of funnel activities and lead creation. Use cases and guest authors contribute to forming a comprehensive knowledge hub. Naturally, there are also many articles on B2B Social Media Marketing.

The Oktopost B2B Marketing Blog is the one source for all marketers looking for actionable top-of-the-funnel advice.

VELOCITY



"Making B2B Content Marketing awesome"

<https://velocitypartners.com/blog/>

The Velocity agency blog focuses on B2B Content Marketing. With this focus, their work is a unique source of great content. A must-have for all Marketers that know how important outstanding content is in B2B.

The page attracts 3,800 visitors every month and offers 1-2 new blog posts every month, making Velocity a great resource for those too busy to read daily.

Their writing style is casual and easy to digest. Many articles are short-form “food for thought” pieces and designed to spark ideas. Storytelling and humor are at the core of this page. Still, the content is far from shallow. It is one of the best sources for B2B Content Marketing on the web.

BONUS: 6 GERMAN B2B MARKETING BLOGS

As a bonus for all B2B Marketers speaking German, here are 6 great sources on the subject. Business-to-Business is the backbone of the German and Austrian economies. Still, there are very few dedicated Marketing sources available. The ones worth reading are:

B2B Marketeer

<https://b2bmarketeer.de/>

Marktschreyer

<https://www.marktschreyer.de/blog/b2b-marketing/>

B2B Marketing Blog

<https://www.b2bmarketingblog.de/>

Bundesverband Industrie Kommunikation

<https://bvik.org/blog/>

B2B Digitalisierung

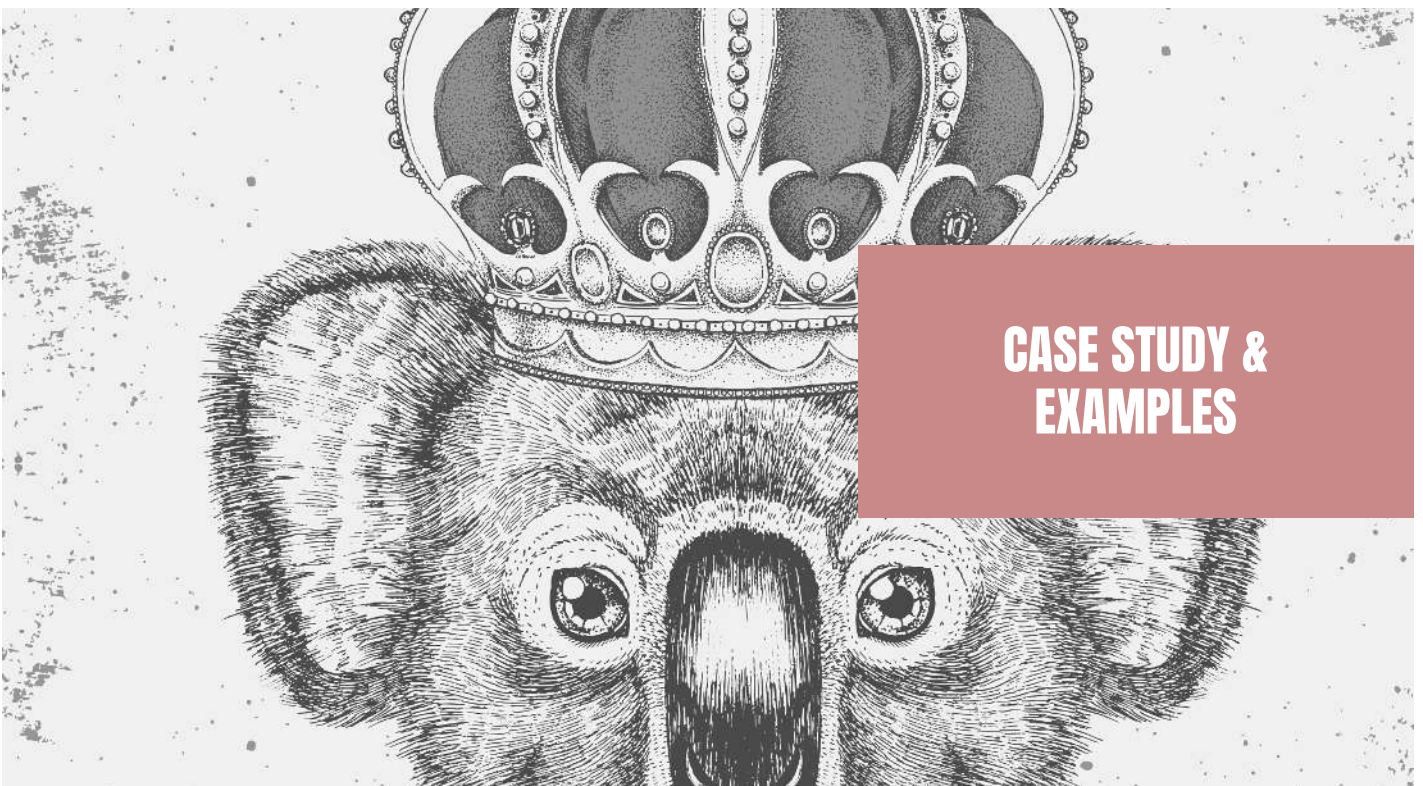
<https://b2b-digitalisierung.ch/b2b-online-blog/>

Marconomy

<https://www.marconomy.de/>

5 GREAT B2B MARKETING EXAMPLES 2021

by Stephan Wenger



WHAT TO LEARN FROM THESE REAL-LIFE B2B MARKETING USE CASES

You do not have to reinvent the wheel. There are plenty of great B2B Marketing examples out there. This post pulls together 5 outstanding examples across different marketing disciplines and channels.

Learn how a big container logistic company entertains over 870,000 followers on LinkedIn and understand how to use animated graphics as part of your content marketing mix. Don't miss out on example number 5 and see how Cisco System uses YouTube. These examples are handpicked and outline how you, as a B2B Marketeer, can make use of them.

B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE #1 - MAERSK

Maersk is a global operating container logistics company with over 80,000 employees in over 130 countries. Their portfolio consists of transportation services, supply chain and logistics, financial services, and digital solutions.

Great example for: LinkedIn, Social Media

WHAT THEY DO EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD

Maersk has a strong online appearance, but its LinkedIn profile sticks out. Social media and active community management seem to play an essential role at Maersk. Their main LinkedIn page counts over 870,000 followers. Maersk has a very high post frequency with often multiple posts per day. Pictures, slideshows, and videos are used to create an emotional experience.

People and employees give the company a face, and the social media team features employees to give insights into their daily job. This approach triggers engagement and increases the post reach. The content strategy is not only to showcase products and solutions but also to enhance the brand experience. Classic storytelling elements, like this company history post, focus on brand values and long-standing experience.

WHAT TO LEARN FROM THIS B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE


B2B Marketing on social media is not only about showcasing products. The “social” in social media is there for a reason. People want to engage with other real people. Give your brand a face and make your follower a part of your story. Share insights with them.

Bring employees on the LinkedIn stage and showcase how they contribute to the company’s success. Actively manage your community and reply to comments immediately; an answer two days after the post is in vain. People will have moved on. The bottom line is to act like a real human. Maersk plays this game very well.

A.P. Moller - Maersk
871,543 followers
5d • 🌐

A.P. Moller - Maersk supports the increased global momentum on decarbonization in the shipping industry.
#Maersk #ClimateAction #decarbonization #sustainableshipping

See translation



"This is indeed a very good week for shipping and decarbonization, with the American IMO ambitions being the latest announcement after encouraging news from Britain and a solid plan from Singapore."

0:11 / 0:23

Decarbonization Goals in Shipping


👍👎🗨️ 659 • 6 comments • 8,181 Views

👍 Like 🗨️ Comment ➔ Share ↗️ Send

A.P. Moller - Maersk
871,400 followers
2w • 🌐

"I'm proud to be the first female marine pilot in my country." Meet Captain Arrienne at [Port of Tanjung Pelepas](#), a joint venture between APM Terminals and MMC's ports and logistics division. ...see more

See translation



Nevertheless, I enjoy the challenges as it keeps me on my toes.

PTP Women in Logistics


👍👎🗨️ 1,301 • 22 comments • 20,652 Views

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A.P. Moller - Maersk
871,392 followers
1d • 🌐

A.P. Møller - Mærsk A/S – Trading update for Q1 2021 and 2021 full year guidance adjustment has been revised upwards with an underlying EBITDA now expected in the range of USD 13-15bn. Full statement here: <https://bddy.me/3sW0> ...see more

See translation




👍👎🗨️ 1,026 • 5 comments

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A.P. Moller - Maersk
871,392 followers
2d • Edited • 🌐

On this day in 1956 containerisation was born when Malcom McLean developed the modern intermodal shipping container. Happy Anniversary to the steel box and end-to-end supply chain possibilities 🙌 #Maersk #containers #interm ...see more

See translation



American businessman and transport entrepreneur Malcom McLean

Maersk: The birth of containerisation anniversary

👍👎🗨️ 1,507 • 26 comments • 29,877 Views

👍 Like 🗨️ Comment ➔ Share ↗️ Send



B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE #2 - JIRA BY ATLISSIAN

Jira is issue tracking software to plan, track, release, and report tasks. Atlassian claims that Jira is the #1 software tool used by agile teams. Atlassian, the company behind Jira, also provides well-known planning and collaboration tools like Confluence and Trello. The company has 5,000 employees, over 180,000 customers, and 7 offices globally.

Great example for: Website

WHAT THEY DO EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD

Jira is a licensed software provided via cloud service. The tool comes with many features. The price is influenced by the number of users and the feature package you choose, and the billing cycle, monthly or annual. Sounds complicated? It is. Still, the Jira website provides pricing in a very neat and structured way.

 Cloud
 Data Center

Plans and pricing

How many users do you have? ?

Billing cycle: Monthly Annual

	Free	Standard	Premium	Enterprise
	<p>\$0</p> <p>Always free for 10 users</p> <p>Get started</p>	<p>\$7</p> <p>per user (average) \$70 a month</p> <p>Start trial</p>	<p>\$14</p> <p>per user (average) \$140 a month</p> <p>Start trial</p>	<p>Billed annually. Switch the Billing cycle to Annual to view Enterprise pricing.</p> <p>Contact sales</p>
	<p>For small teams to plan and track work more efficiently</p>	<p>For growing teams focused on building more together</p>	<p>For organizations that need to scale how they collaborate and track work</p>	<p>For enterprises with global scale, security, and governance needs</p>

Plans and Pricing for Jira on Atlassian Website (c) Atlassian

First, you can choose between Cloud service or Data Center pricing (discontinuing 2024). Second, the price adapts based on the number of users you need. An easy monthly vs. annual billing cycle shows the impact on pricing. The biggest challenge with software is to show the features per package. Jira shows a long list of features but describes each feature on click.

This approach makes it easy to pick the right package. The usability and clear price policy is a benchmark example of how to display B2B pricing.

	Features			
User limit (per site)	10 users	10,000 users	10,000 users	10,000 users
Site limit	One	One	One	Unlimited
Scrum and Kanban boards	✓	✓	✓	✓
Backlog	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agile reporting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customizable workflows	✓	✓	✓	✓
Apps and integrations >	✓	✓	✓	✓
Automation	Single project	Single project	Global and multi-project	Global and multi-project
Roadmaps	Basic	Basic	Advanced	Advanced
Dependency management	Basic	Basic	Advanced	Advanced
Capacity planning	-	-	✓	✓

Plans and Pricing for Jira on Atlassian Website (c) Atlassian

WHAT TO LEARN AS B2B MARKETER

Have a clear price strategy and don't hide prices. It is not user-friendly to only provide the option to request a quote. Purchasing departments typically have a clear budget scope. Give them a boost in making the first decision by showcasing your price model. This will get your product or service into the second round.

It is OK to display a lot of your functions. However, ensure the user understands them right away. Also, explain the benefit of each function and make this information as easily accessible as possible.

B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE #3 - ANIMAGRAFF

Founded by Jacob O’Neal, Animagraffs provides animations on functional principles. The animation provides an easy-to-understand description of how things work. Complicated principles can be explained by showing an animation. Animagraffs combines animations, 360° images, and explanatory text. Examples range from “How Cryptocurrency works”, “How a Jet Engine Works” to “How the Human Eye Works”.

Great example for: Content Marketing, Educational Content

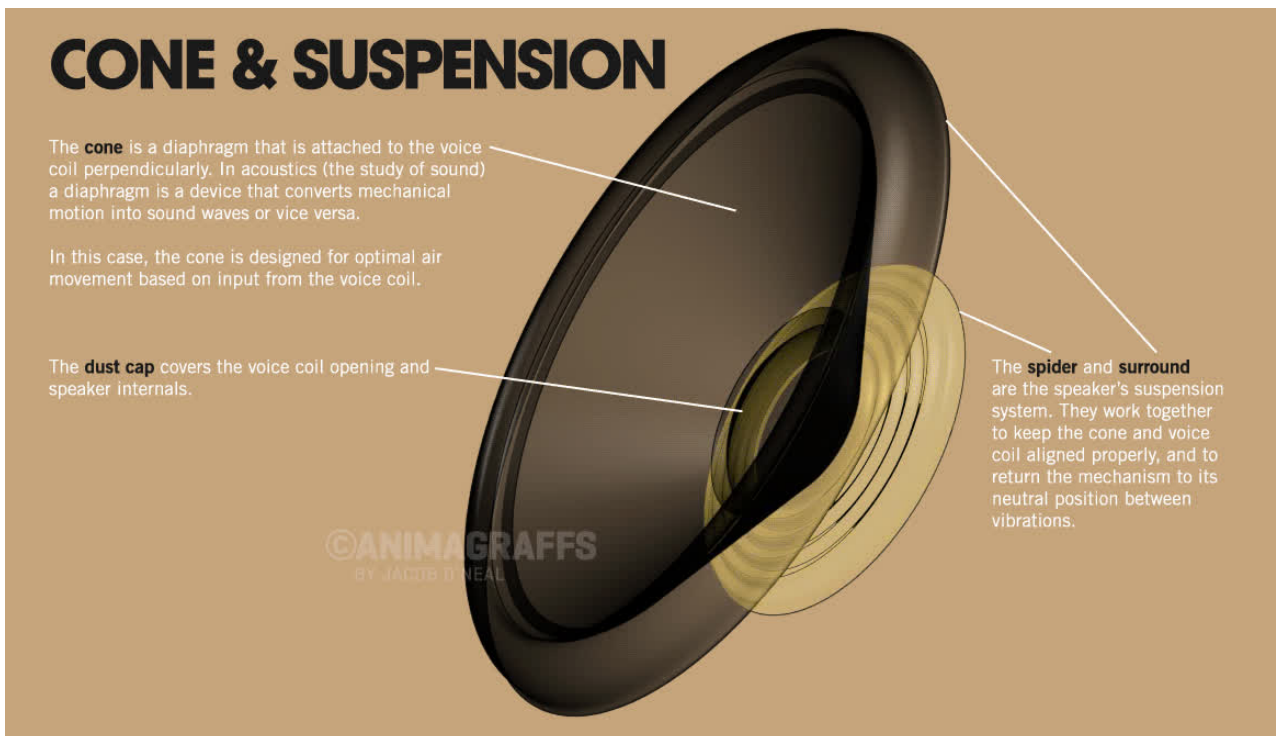
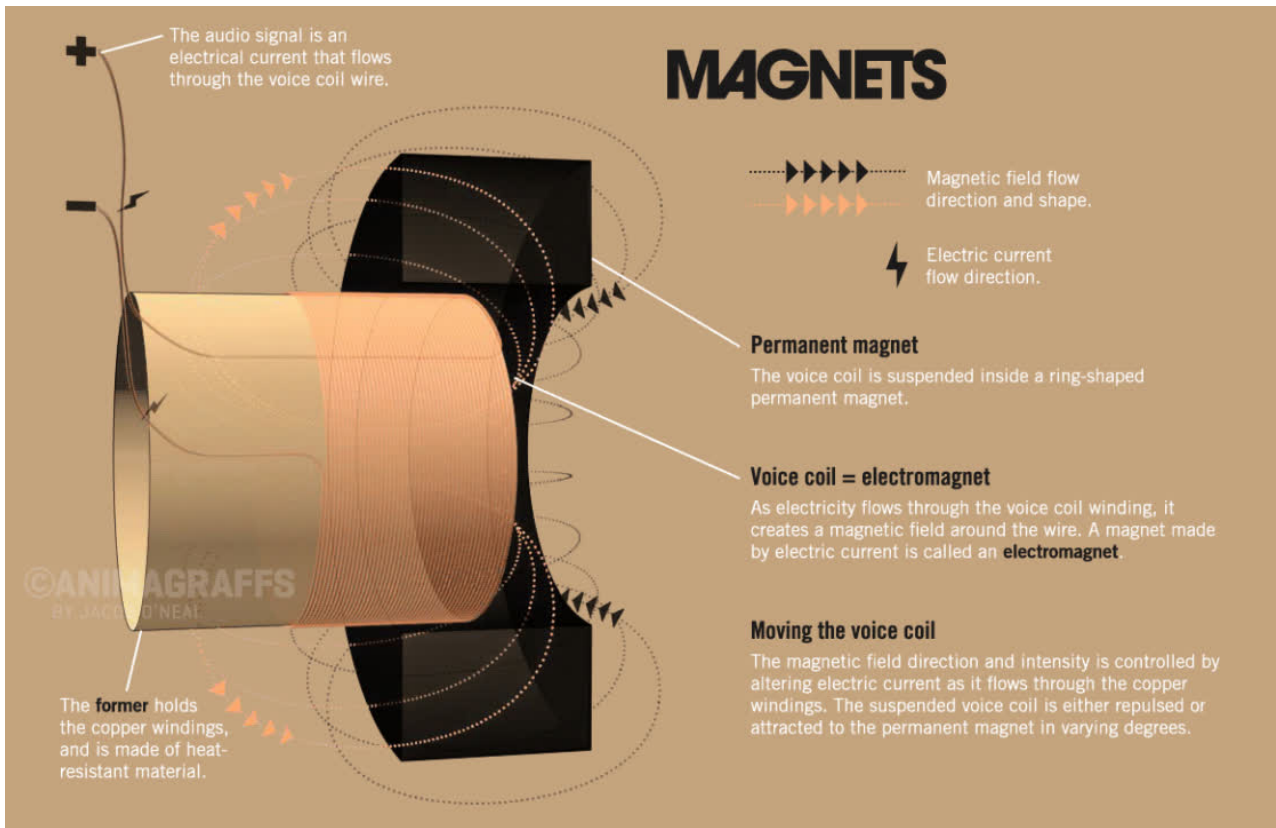
WHAT THEY DO EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD

The high-end visualization combined with clear explanations makes complicated information easy to digest. The user can look up a detail, e.g., a car engine, or learn the complete working principle. Animagraff uses the right level of detail without overwhelming the audience. This content is called “educational content” and is used to educate your audience to create thought leadership.

WHAT TO LEARN FROM THIS B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE

Educational content is a terrific way to build a long-lasting thought leadership position. B2B relationships are often based on trust between the two companies. The nature of the business and high investments result in long lead and sales cycles. By proving such a degree of detail, including your know-how, your customers will recognize you as a trustworthy source of knowledge.

Used as a brand positioning concept, you gain an advantage over competitors that is hard to catch up with. Used for product explanation, education content proves what you promise. This is an argument far stronger than a simple ad claim.



B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE #4 - ASANA

Asana is software to organize tasks and collaborate. This software is highly competitive, and people test multiple solutions before they stick with one of them. Asana offers a free test version. By doing so, the company can communicate with users directly, as e-mail registration is required. Asana takes this opportunity and provides outstanding newsletters.

Great example for: Newsletter / After-purchase-phase

WHAT THEY DO EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD

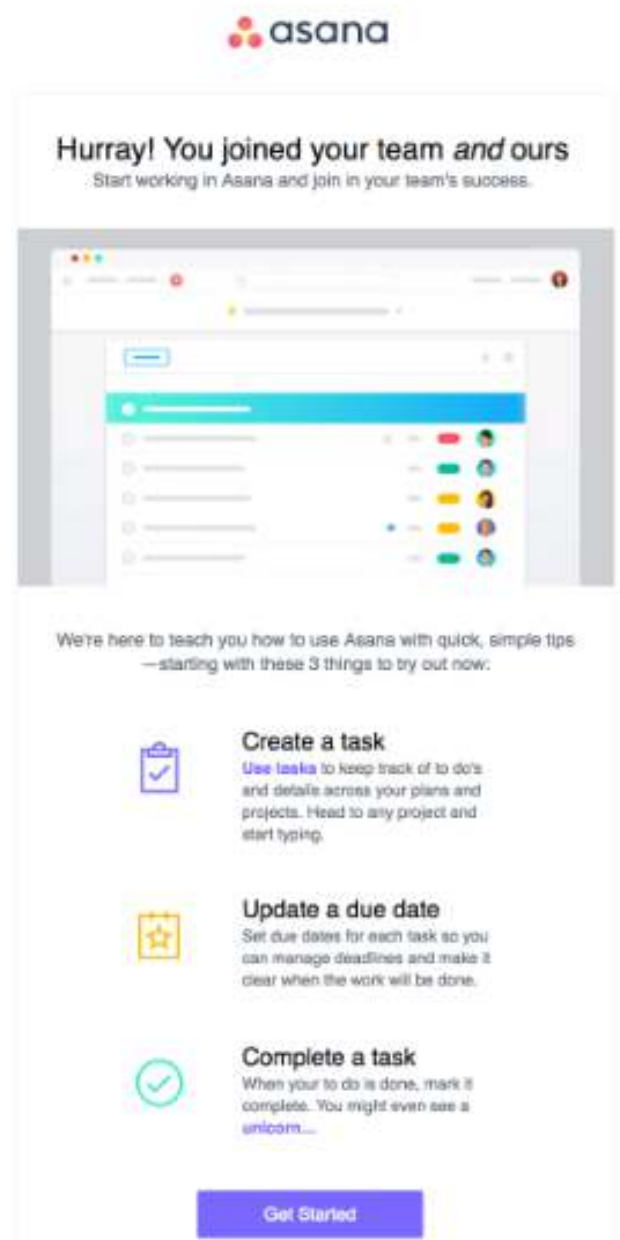
The hardest thing with new software is to decide on the right one. The first few clicks decided whether you like the software or not. If usability is bad or you don't know where to start, you may never return.

Asana overcomes this initial barrier by sending a welcome newsletter, including three simple steps to use the tool:

- create a task
- update a due date
- complete a task.

This user activation helps to keep Asana in the game. It is neither commercial nor advertisement or spammy. It is a helpful newsletter with clear and activating Call-to-Actions.

Once you have started to use new software, it's vital to keep users busy. The more often the tool is used, the less likely it is for the user to change software. Asana tackles this aspect by sending a newsletter that triggers an emotional part of your daily job: what should you get done today. Again, this newsletter is generic, but it focuses on a pain we all know—keeping track of things. The clear CTA creates a new ticket, and the user is in the game.




Asana Newsletter Activation (c) Asana

WHAT TO LEARN FROM THIS B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE

Simple. Provide newsletters that are:

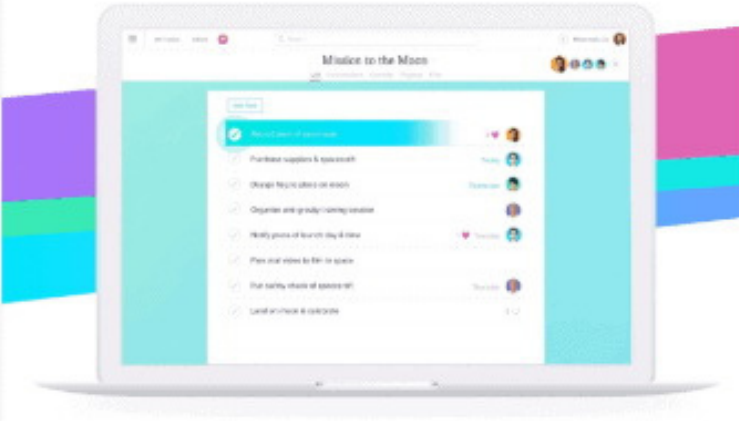
- Helpful
- Trigger emotions or help to solve a pain point
- Have a clear Call-to-Action

Do not use newsletters to advertise. People are done with this content. Newsletters are a channel to distribute content. Not a channel to advertise free of charge.



What do you need to get done today?

We can help you stay on top of your task list.



Create 1 task for something that you want to accomplish today:

- Assign the task to yourself
- Add today's date as your due date
- Mark the task complete when you've finished it (nice work!)

[Add Your Task](#)

B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE #5 - CISCO

Cisco System is a true technology company heavyweight with a turnover close to 50 billion USD (2020) and over 75,000 employees. Established in 1984, Cisco offers software-defined networking, cloud, and security solutions for different company sizes. Their YouTube channel counts 288,000 subscribers.

Great example for: YouTube, Social Media

WHAT THEY DO EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD

Cisco runs an outstanding YouTube channel, focusing on different target groups and offering videos for many portfolio offerings. Their channel is very well organized, showing different categories such as “About Cisco”, “Small Business”, “Networking” or “Data Center & Cloud”. All videos are neatly organized in playlists to provide comprehensive knowledge for different target groups.

Each playlist has a description of what to expect and videos that provide added value for e.g. the small business owner interested in working with Cisco. These videos make this huge company accessible. The employees give Cisco a face to the customer and offer help and extensive know-how.

The screenshot displays the Cisco YouTube channel interface. The left sidebar includes navigation options like Home, Explore, Subscriptions, Library, History, Your videos, Watch later, Liked videos, and a list of subscriptions (Music, Sports, Gaming, Movies). The main content area is organized into three primary categories: 'About Cisco', 'Small Business', and 'Networking'. Each category features a grid of video thumbnails with their respective view counts and playlist titles. For example, under 'About Cisco', there are playlists for 'Cisco Newsroom' (334 views), 'Cisco Customer Experience' (56 views), 'Corporate Social Responsibility' (70 views), 'Cisco Live US' (40 views), 'Partners' (61 views), and 'Global Sponsorships & Product Placement' (16 views). The 'Small Business' section includes 'Cisco Small Business | Overview' (9 views), 'Securing Your Small Business Network' (21 views), 'Small Business Networking' (19 views), 'Small Business | How-To Tech Guides' (258 views), 'Collaboration | Cisco Small Business' (34 views), and 'Small Business | Customer Spotlights' (9 views). The 'Networking' section shows 'Networking' (62 views), 'Networking | How-To Videos' (48 views), 'Networking | Switches' (8 views), 'Networking | Wireless' (5 views), and 'Networking | SD-WAN & Routing' (9 views). The interface includes a search bar at the top and navigation tabs for HOME, VIDEOS, PLAYLISTS, COMMUNITY, CHANNELS, and ABOUT.

WHAT TO LEARN FROM THIS B2B MARKETING EXAMPLE

YouTube is a huge content platform that allows direct content distribution to your very own target group. Even more important, videos convey much more than facts.

Employees are a brand's face to the customer. With a growing number of videos, it is important to have an organized YouTube channel, which is comparable to your website homepage. Visitors should understand right away what value your videos have.

Organize playlists from a customer perspective. Not from an internal view / organigram.

The screenshot displays the Cisco YouTube channel interface. On the left is a navigation sidebar with options like Home, Explore, Subscriptions, Library, History, Your videos, Watch later, Liked videos, and a list of subscriptions including Music, Sports, Gaming, and Movies. The main content area features a video player for 'Cisco Small Business | Overview' with a 'PLAY ALL' button. Below the player is a description of Cisco Small Business products and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button. On the right, a search bar is positioned above a list of seven video thumbnails, each with a title, channel name, and duration.

Video Title	Channel	Duration
Cisco Small Business IT Solutions	Cisco	0:30
#CiscoChat - Cisco Small Business Portfolio	Cisco	9:54
5 Tips for Deploying your Small Business Network Cisco Small Business IT Solutions	Cisco	2:05
#CiscoChat Live - Empowering Small Business with Cisco Business	Cisco	1:02:41
Growing Your Small Business Network with Cisco Partner Solutions	Cisco	0:37
Cisco Live Melbourne 2019: Small Business is Big Business	Cisco	21:53
#CiscoChat Live - Cisco Designed: The New Normal for Small Businesses	Cisco	

Cisco YouTube Channel (c) Cisco/YouTube

SUMMARY

These 5 B2B Marketing examples showcase outstanding companies and their efforts to use the full range of marketing tactics.

The logistic company **Maersk** understands it very well to put the “social” in the center of their LinkedIn activities. A followership of over 870,000 receives multiple updates daily—from text to picture, from videos to slideshows.

How to communicate software pricing, including various options, is nicely done by **Atlassian** for their cloud software product JIRA. All influencing factors are shown at first glance.

Animagraffs is an exceptional example of how to use animations as educational content. “how does an engine works” provides animated yet insightful content. This content is helpful to explain a complex product and its working principles.

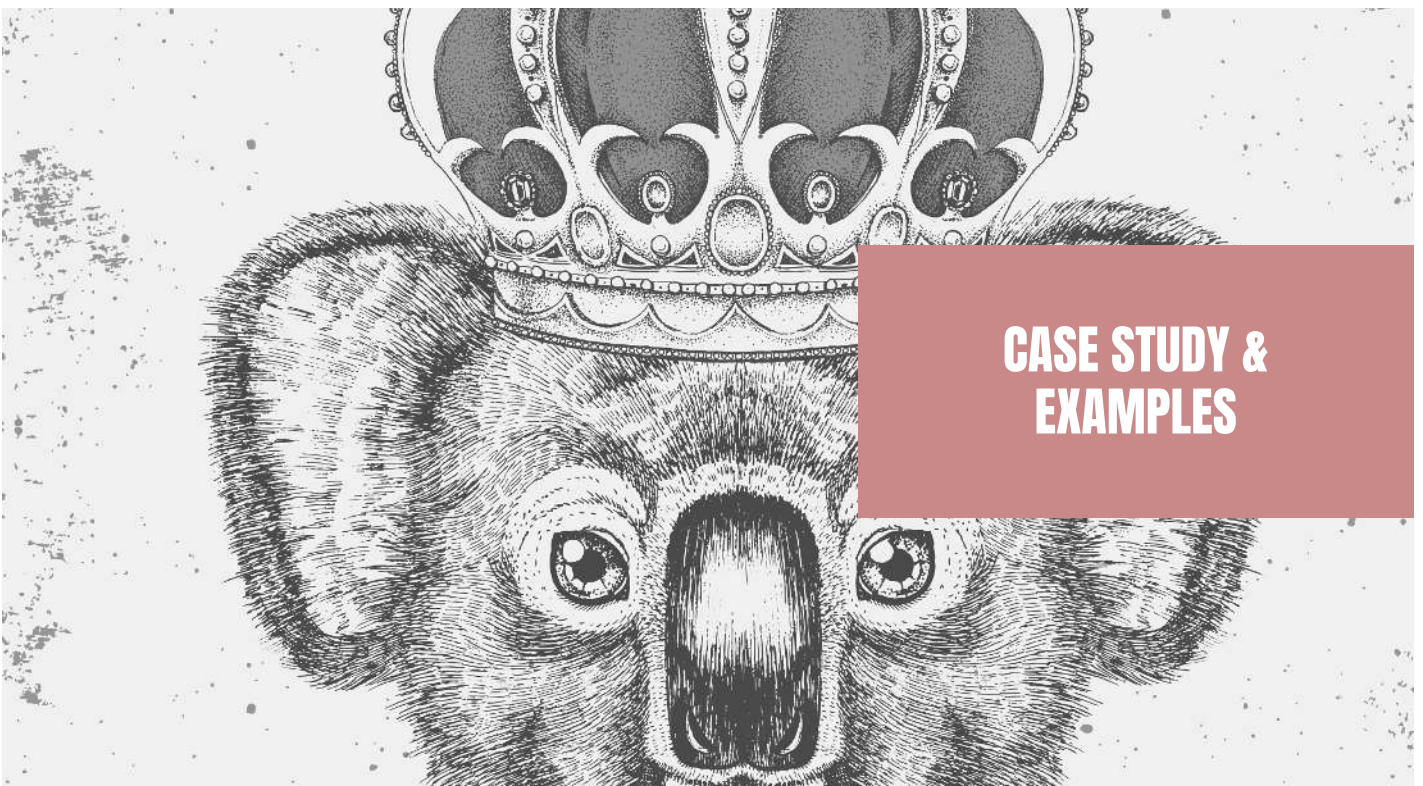
The newsletter must not be misused for advertising. Add value in a welcome message after a successful subscription. **Asana** does this in a very clever way.

Videos are a vital part of every marketing content mix. For huge B2B companies such as **Cisco**, YouTube is a suitable platform to communicate and educate your audience. A neatly organized channel makes it easy to find the right playlist for each target group.

You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Learn from established companies and incorporate their proven marketing tactics in your marketing plan.

IMPLEMENTING MARKETING AUTOMATION? WHAT A RIDE!

by Matthias Haberler



HOW CANON AUSTRIA MANAGED THE INTRODUCTION OF MARKETING AUTOMATION

Change is inevitable, and there is no running away from it. Introducing Marketing Automation to your organization is a big change: a roller coaster ride of emotions. In this article, I want to take you on an exciting, stirring, and eye-opening journey. Fasten your seatbelts and get ready for a bumpy ride.

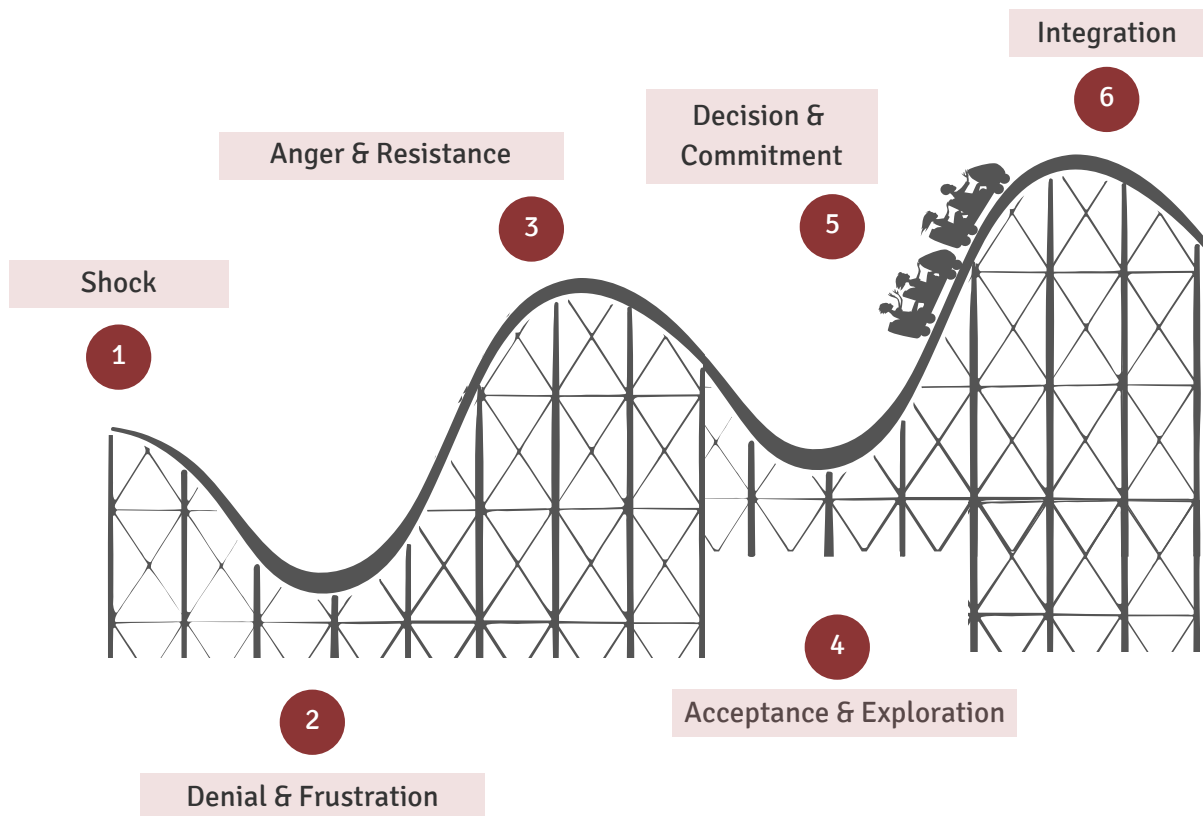
Spoiler alert: It's worth the effort. Skip the whining and jump directly to phase 4 for results & recommendations

THE CHANGE-PROCESS

The legendary Kübler-Ross Change Curve is a popular and trusted model used to understand emotional transition and change stages.

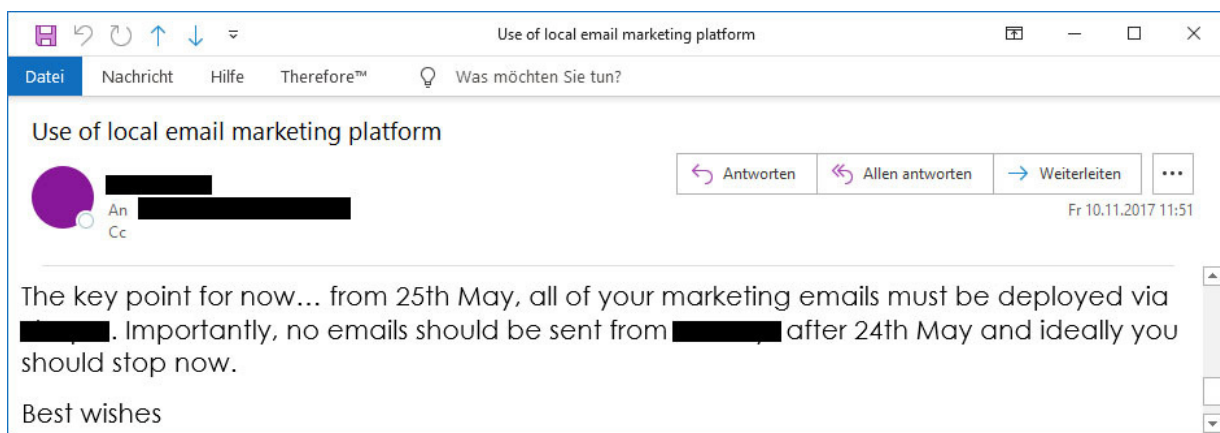
It helped me navigate through implementing Marketing Automation within our organization:

- **Phase 1 - Shock**
- **Phase 2 - Denial**
- **Phase 3 - Anger & Resistance**
- **Phase 4a - Acceptance & Exploration**
- **Phase 4b - Hope & Enthusiasm**
- **Phase 5 - Decision & Commitment**
- **Phase 6 - Integration**



PHASE 1 - SHOCK

To be very honest: I was shocked when - back in 2017 - I received that e-mail (see below) from the headquarters' marketing department. In anticipation of GDPR - Europe's new data privacy and security law - we were to stop all e-mail marketing activities and immediately terminate any contract with local agencies regarding newsletters.



Canon e-mail, "GDPR is coming" (c)Canon

“

As with any change that is not triggered from within, I was reluctant to give up our current way of working...

It is said that roughly 70% of transformation projects fail. The first reason for failing is that the team isn't aligned around the change story. I couldn't agree more.

PHASE 2 - DENIAL

In Austria, we've been utilizing newsletters for over 15 years and gathered around 60.000 subscriptions (we call them fans) within five business segments. We considered ourselves a "developed" country, having a mobile-ready html-newsletter with reasonable opening-rates around 30-40%.

On a pan-European scale, two things were clear: we had a fractured martech use throughout the countries and recognized an inconsistent use of our main CRM platform. I've experienced that first-hand when I was part of the central team rolling out a Sales Enablement Programme to all countries a couple of years earlier: Centrally driven projects aim for a standardized, one-size-fits-all solution - a so-called MVP-approach (Minimum Viable Product) - therefore I was sure that switching to a pan-European toolset would throw us back into marketing stone age.

For example: Would we even be able to distinguish Mr. & Mrs.? A simple "Hello Firstname!" wouldn't do in a traditional country where the majority still wants to be addressed with her or his full academic title...

So, getting stripped away of our known & beloved tools (especially our award-winning cross-media-engine), I was on the brink of mutiny.

Hence, I tried to postpone the inevitable for as long as possible: I've argued that the contracts with our e-marketing tool provider were based on yearly subscriptions and therefore could not be terminated easily - at least not without (great) financial sacrifices. On top of that: "does the new tool even address the different legal requirements opt-in vs. opt-out countries"?

The only thing achieved by that was frustration levels on both sides went through the roof.



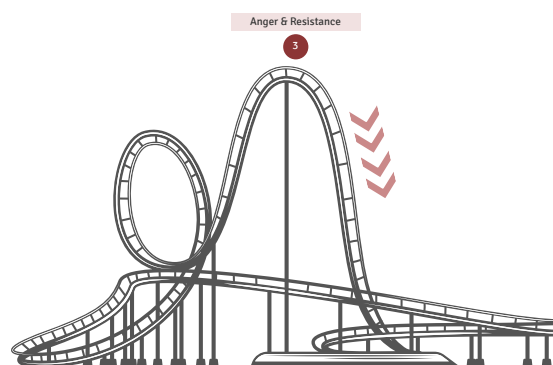
“

As manager and team-leader I should know better, but one cannot simply ignore the phases of the “Change Curve”.

PHASE 3 - ANGER & RESISTANCE

My resistance was futile (and unnecessary) - GDPR was just around the corner, and compliance issues had to be dealt with - no wonder considering the astronomical fines (up to 4% of a firm's worldwide annual revenue) that would accompany the new legislation. I know: A large multinational corporation like Canon simply can't afford to leave those doors open.

But accepting that was for a later stage... In hindsight, we could have moved a lot faster through those early stages - had we worked together and not against each other... The project committee would put more effort on the initial project-communication and the local buy-in with today's knowledge.



The data-cleansing process that followed the initial audit was a rather painful one. Every newsletter contact that couldn't be proved to have an opt-in and anyone within our CRM system that hasn't had a documented touchpoint (visit, phone call, etc.) for the last 5 years (the typical contract period in our business sector) had to be deleted.

Approaching GDPR go-live, the number of potential recipients went down to a mere third, and we lost about 50% of our contacts in the leading CRM system (and a bunch of other "unnecessary" data - like a customer's birthday & hobbies - caused by the "data minimization principle").

It took us years to reach those numbers (and reside among the top-ranking Canon countries).

Not everything was bad, though.

Because headquarter did not only stop local activities. Our colleagues from London presented us with something new as well: A pan-European Marketing Automation system would be integrated - hosted & managed centrally, but with possibilities to add local flavor.

Back then, my (anger-narrow minded) expectation was to work with something that's been confined to a fancy and - if used only for that - a most likely expensive newsletter tool.

“

**With one clean sweep,
our data was gone - and
with that our motivation
as well.**

PHASE 3 - ANGER & RESISTANCE

After overcoming those pesky “not invented here” issues, I quickly discovered that our beloved, “sophisticated” newsletter had actually become old-fashioned or mature at best.

“

**“Modern Marketing“ had
bypassed us without me
even noticing.**

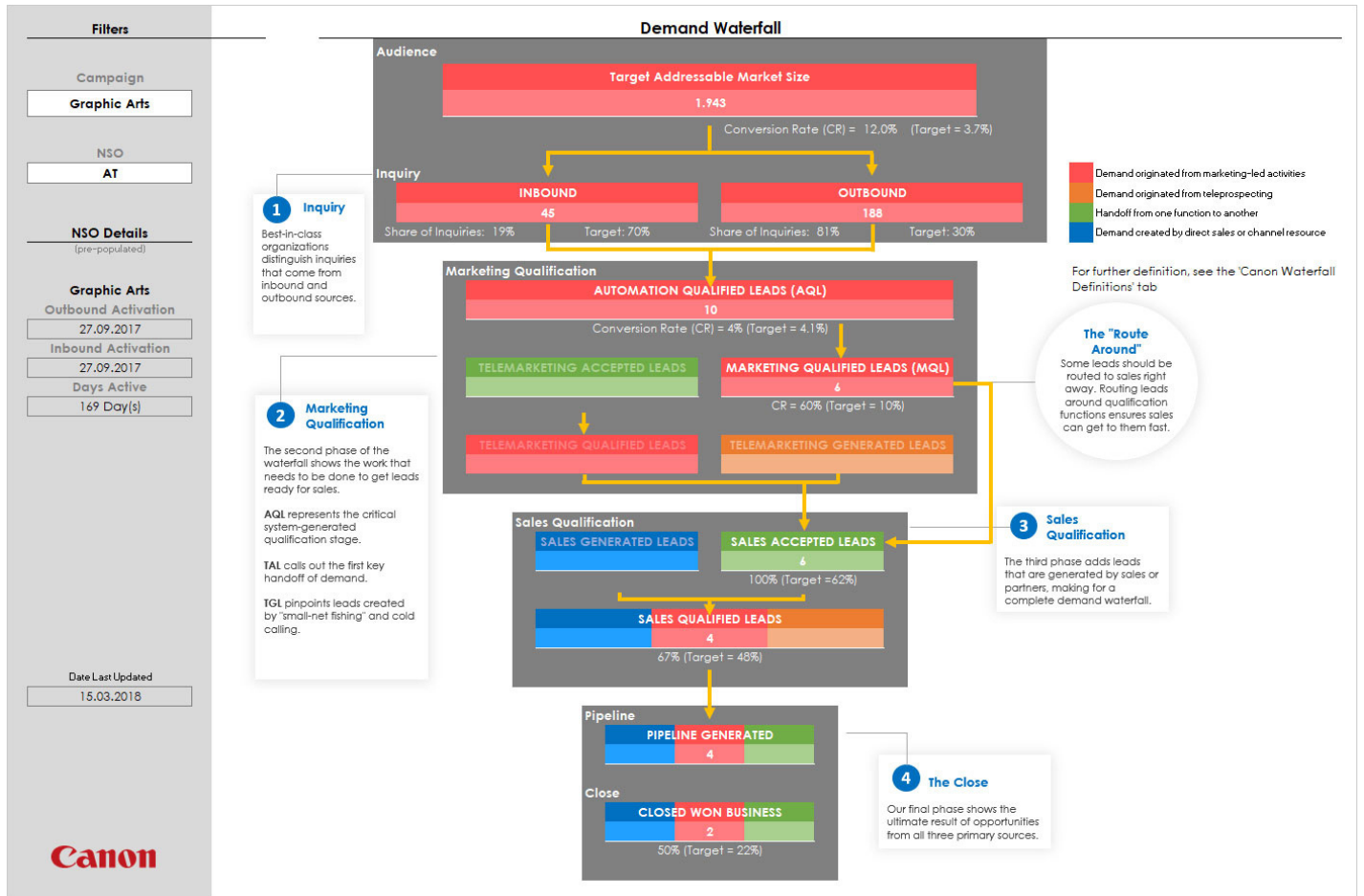
It was then that I realized that lifelong learning is imperative... we had been in our comfort zone far too long. GDPR was the shakeup we needed - a catalyst for change. Once our reservations had been set aside, we embarked on the great adventure of “Marketing Automation”.

During the onboarding process, we’d been introduced to a whole new world of marketing-buzzwords (e.g., lead-scoring) and tons of new abbreviations like UTM, MQL, SAL, DLG, and TOFU/MOFU/BOFU (I promise, explanations will follow below ;-). It’s almost as if we had to learn a new language - a language that only very few of us (the youngest) understood.

Marketing Automation might deliver value to our organization: Besides always-on campaigns that would magically fill an ever-growing sales pipeline, there would be an automated nurturing process for leads through the funnel, and for the first time, everything could be measured (even centrally) - e.g., via UTM codes (Urchin Tracking Module) by closing the gap between website & CRM-system - and referenced to lots of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators, like conversion-rates) & management-ready dashboards (see reverse demand waterfall below).

Best of all: Marketing, Marcoms, Sales and IT(!) would work closely together. Yeah, finally an end to silos!

PHASE 3 - ANGER & RESISTANCE



Canon Demand Waterfall (c)Canon

PHASE 4B - HOPE & ENTHUSIASM

Because, when you implement Marketing Automation at your company, all stakeholders need to collaborate. Just having your marketing department publish generic content on the web and via e-mails, pushing as much Marketing Qualified Leads (MQL) as possible into the funnel - and for sure having sales complain about the quality of those - wouldn't suffice.

We discussed this at length and even installed a new role called "Sales Excellence" to guide the bridging process (no extra headcount though - just another hat, distributed among two senior roles in marketing and sales).

Alongside sales, we defined a new Demand/Lead-Generation (DLG) process with shared responsibilities and agreed service levels (SLA).

By doing so, we've reached the 3rd milestone of Stephan Wenger's Lead-Maturity-Model. We're working on level 4 now ;-).

IT worked closely with our CRM admins and ensured that web forms could automatically create leads in the system. Fortunately, we also have a company-owned call center at our disposal that handles lead qualification prior to any Sales Accepted Lead (SAL). That was our plan, at least.



If a bad (lead) process is automated, it still remains a bad (lead) process.

PHASE 5 - DECISION & COMMITMENT

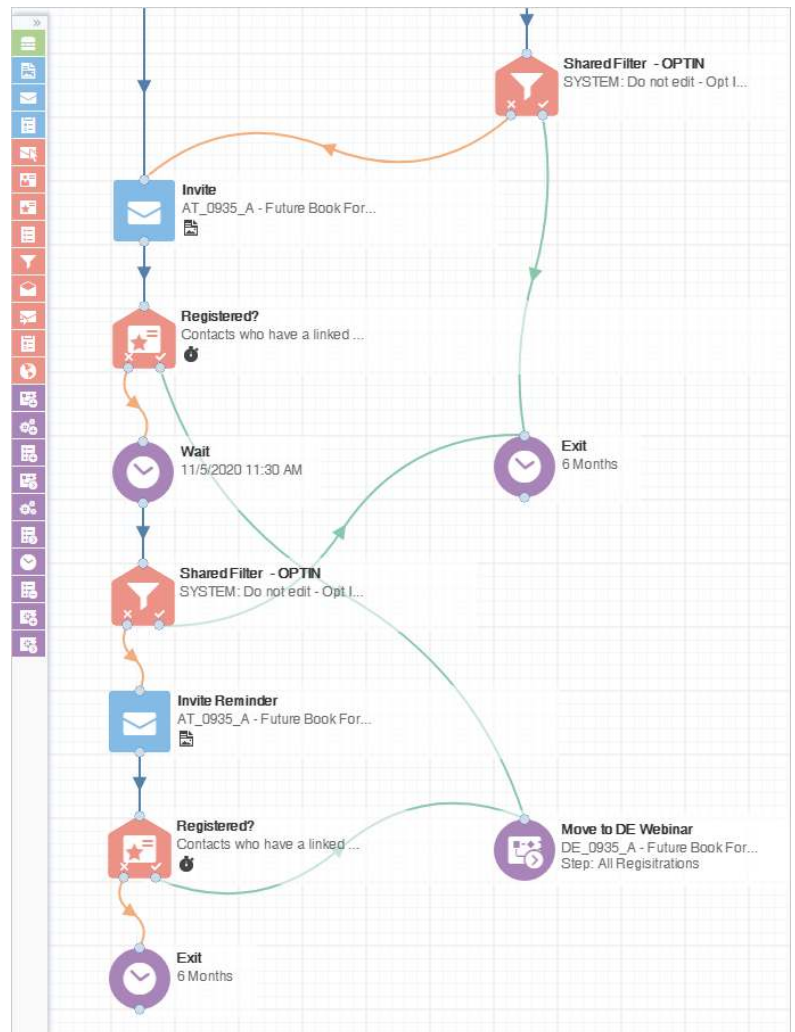
One might think that Marketing Automation would reduce the workload in the marketing department. On the contrary: That lead-generation engine is a resource-hungry beast...

Automation requires planning: What assets should be used in the various stages of the lead generation process (Top, Mid, Bottom of Funnel -

TOFU/MOFU/BOFU)? When they should be „gated” (though that’s another story to be told). Which moves should be considered (reminder-mailings, no-shows, tell-a-friend, etc.)?)

It took us a considerable investment (mostly time), but thanks to the newly formed central demand-lead-generation team (DLG) and a few automation gurus (big shoutout to my go-to person Will Oliver), we’ve experienced a strong learning curve and were among the first countries to receive admin-privileges to launch our own, local campaigns.

We almost broke the toy (and excitement) when we enabled lead-scoring for one of the first campaigns, though, as the thresholds were set way too low, and therefore every single white-paper download was escalated to sales.



Canon Eloqua-play (c)Canon

“

The one thing about Marketing Automation that I find misleading, is just that: “Automation”.

PHASE 6 - INTEGRATION

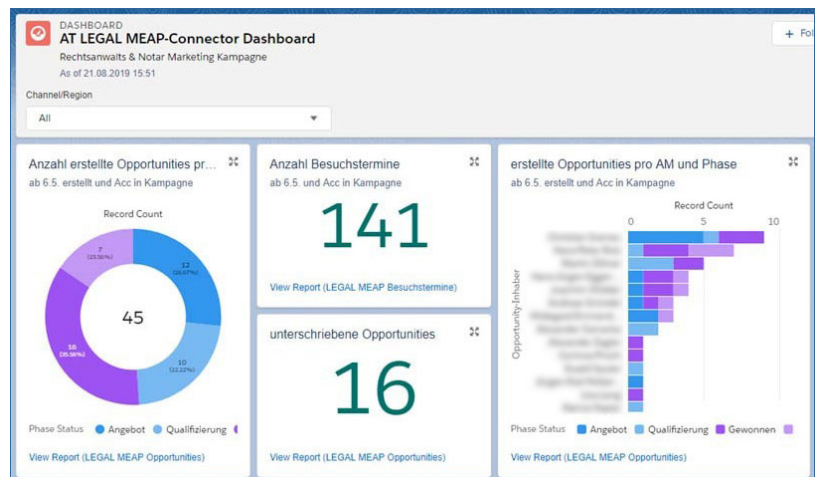
Today we find Marketing Automation in our local newsletters, use it for event management (invitation process, different follow-ups for no-shows & visitors) and other, more ad hoc outbound activities.

The results started to show incredibly early. We even had enormous success with one of our first ideas. Tons of leads (and more important: sales visits) came from that pURL-driven outbound campaign in the legal sector. Sure, truth to be told: the figures would look very different without follow-up (via call center). The tool does not sell by itself.

On top of a great sales pipeline - we achieved a Return on Marketing Investment of 1:7 - we've also won one of those fancy cross-media marketing awards again. We merged a print mailing (with QR-codes and Augmented Reality inserts) with individual websites (using pURLs with personalized images and content blocks to enhance the viewing experience) to raise awareness for a new product we had just launched. I wrote an article about it (sorry, German language only) if you want to know more details - you'll find it on LinkedIn.

But for most of the time, we stay digital (or "mobile-first," as they say). Most recently, we've added a "subscription engine" on white-paper downloads (suggesting the proper segments of our b2b-newsletters) and successfully experimented with dynamic content blocks on landing pages & mailings.

Sure, the tool is still more advanced than us - i.e., we're not using it to its full extend yet (especially regarding A/B-testing and lead-scoring) - but we're making progress with every campaign.



Canon Dashboard (c)Canon

“

They say: appetite comes with eating. I agree: we are hungry for more...

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Marketing Automation isn't a magic silver bullet shipped within a fancy martech toolbox... it requires mutual efforts from all stakeholders in the buying journey (and your IT department) - hence a lot of change management.



**Implemented correctly,
Marketing Automation will
boost your gameplay and
therewith your pipeline.**

Especially the nurturing part. So please, go for it. Embrace the change. And don't ignore the curve. Be ahead of it :-).

SUMMARY OF: IMPLEMENTING MARKETING AUTOMATION? WHAT A RIDE!

Marketing Automation isn't a magic silver bullet shipped within a fancy martech toolbox. And introducing it to your organization is a big change. In other words: a roller coaster ride of emotions with a lot of ups and downs.

At first, it's hard to let go of your existing tools (and routines), but with a bit of curiosity and commitment, any organization can have fun (and a full sales-funnel) with Marketing Automation. It requires mutual efforts from all stakeholders (Marketing, Marcoms, Sales and IT) and a lot of thinking - because, if a bad (lead) process is automated, it still remains a bad (lead) process. Marketing Automation also won't likely reduce the workload in your marketing department - those will be shifted towards planning and coordination. Implementing Marketing Automation has changed us a lot - but for the better.

My advice: take the ride and embrace the change.

WHAT IS LEAD MANAGEMENT?

by Stephan Wenger



A DEFINITION OF LEAD GENERATION, LEAD NURTURING AND LEAD QUALIFICATION

You need a simple definition of Lead Management? The definition varies in the literature. This is not surprising because the definition depends on the responsibility for lead management. The task to generate, nurture and qualify leads may lie with sales or with marketing. That's why the definition varies from a sales-centric perspective to a more marketing-focused one. The broadest possible definition is: Lead Management consists of all processes and actions to win potential customers and convert them to customers. This is also the goal of Lead Management: create new sales opportunities.

THE DEFINITION OF LEAD MANAGEMENT

To understand the definition of Lead Management and its core value, look at the bigger picture. Lead Management is the interface between marketing and sales. The process to generate leads is the middle part of the marketing and sales funnel. Based on the basic "AIDA" model, the funnel can be described:

That means that the lead funnel needs to convert interest into desire. And, the lead funnel bases on the marketing funnel and leads to the sales funnel. Therefore, it's a very interesting link between two typically separated departments. The implication of this perspective is that Lead Management has the potential to align marketing and sales.



Having these aspects in mind, the best definition is:

"Lead management is defined as the methodology, process, and software to generate, nurture and qualify leads using sales and marketing strategies."

This definition not only covers the lead funnel but also outlines the three core functions of lead management:

- Lead Generation
- Lead Nurturing
- Lead Qualification

LEAD GENERATION

Based on the marketing-lead-sales funnel, the first job of Lead Management is to generate leads. This is done by converting potential but largely unknown customers into someone interested in the company and products or services. It, therefore, includes all measures necessary to create a cold lead. Further, lead generation also marks the interface between the marketing funnel and the lead funnel. These four steps along the lead generation process are closely linked to marketing actions. Especially the first step has no clear separation to marketing and is typically shared between the two disciplines.

1. FIRST TOUCHPOINT WITH THE COMPANY

Simple. The unknown member of your target group needs to engage with your content. A, often digital, first touchpoint is the start of the customer journey. This initial contact with your company expresses first interest and is an essential part of lead creation.

2. ENGAGEMENT WITH CONTENT

The more engagement, the better. Online examples are clicks, sessions duration, or other engagement metrics. Offline, the person expresses interest at an exhibition or simply calls you.

3. CALL-TO-ACTION (CTA)

The click on a CTA marks an interesting moment in this fresh relationship. It's something like the first kiss with your date. It's an expression of interest and the willingness to further engage with you and your company. CTAs vary from downloads, contact forms to live chats or e-mail subscriptions.

4. SHARE ADDITIONAL CONTACT DETAILS

Ideally, the members of your target group will share contact details such as name, e-mail, company, job title, and alike. The tricky aspect of this step is to ask as much data to work with the prospect. Another difficulty is keeping the barrier low. Examples vary from e-mail only registrations to full-scale contact forms that ask for your social security number.

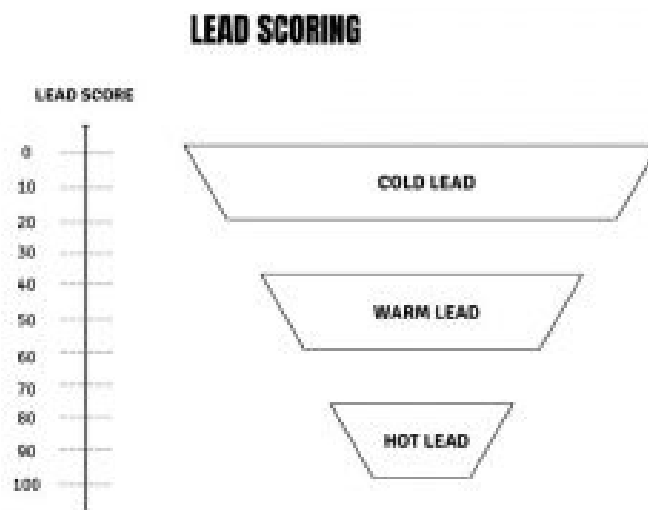
The result of the lead generation phase is a new lead, defined by criteria by the marketing and the lead management department.

LEAD NURTURING

Lead nurturing, also called lead cultivation or lead development, is turning a cold lead into a hot lead by continuing interaction with the prospect. Regarding the AIDA model, this means to turn an interest into a desire. Lead scoring helps to identify how far the lead is developed.

To increase the lead score, it is necessary to nurture the lead via targeted marketing activities. A common approach is to define lead nurturing campaigns that target already known customers. Different marketing actions and content are used to further engage and develop a lead depending on the lead score. How many points a lead is assigned for a certain engagement (e.g. download; contact form or sign-up) depends on your company and how valuable you think this very touchpoint is.

Ultimately a hot lead handed over from marketing to sales is called a marketing qualified lead (MQL). A MQL is a typical output and performance KPI of the marketing department.



LEAD QUALIFICATION

The third and last step of lead management is to qualify leads. As already described, a cold lead is nurtured to become a hot lead. The transition from lead scoring to lead qualification – an MQL - is also the first qualification step. The two other common steps are a Sales Accepted Lead (SAL) and a Sales Qualified Lead (SQL).

An MQL is qualified by the marketing team, based on defined criteria. However, the sales team needs to cross-check if the MQL really fulfills all defined criteria. This is a sort of double-check on the lead quality. If sales accept the MQL, the lead status changes to SAL, and the lead is assigned to a sales representative.

At this point, either the sales representative or the sales back-office reaches out to the customer to align on his request and clarify his demand. The end of this process marks the last step in the lead qualification. If successful, the SAL becomes a Sales Qualified Lead and the sales funnel is in full swing.

CRUCIAL ASPECTS FOR A GOOD MARKETING - LEAD - SALES PROCESS

The output of the lead funnel – a sales accepted lead – also is a critical task for the sales funnel. If lead management is poor, the sales funnel might remain empty. Or, even worse, sales are flooded with spammy leads. Therefore, these two critical aspects need to be considered:

- Sales need to trust Lead Management

Without mutual trust and alignment, the qualification process is bound to fail. The sales department can reject a MQL and hence, influences the target value of the lead management department. The feedback loop between sales and lead management is critical, as lead management needs to learn if, e.g. the qualification process is faulty. Therefore, open discussions, regular meetings, and mutual trust are of the highest value.

- Sales must not be spammed by Lead Management

There is a risk that marketing aims to create as many MQLs as possible to reason their marketing spending. There, the output of the lead funnel spams and blocks the sales funnel. Sales reps are tied up in trying to find high-quality leads that convert. A KPI to measure this aspect is the ratio of MQLs and SALs. This quality ratio should be close to 1. The higher the ratio is, the closer lead management brings a lead to the expectations of sales. The lower the ratio is, the more spam leads management creates.

SUMMARY OF: WHAT IS LEAD MANAGEMENT?

The definition of lead management varies in literature because the definition depends on the responsibility for lead management. The task to generate, nurture and qualify leads may lie with sales or with marketing. For a proper definition, look at the bigger picture. Lead Management is the interface between marketing and sales. Having these aspects in mind, the best possible definition is

"Lead management is defined as the methodology, process, and software to generate, nurture and qualify leads using sales and marketing strategies."

This definition also outlines the three core functions of lead management:

- Lead Generation
- Lead Nurturing
- Lead Qualification

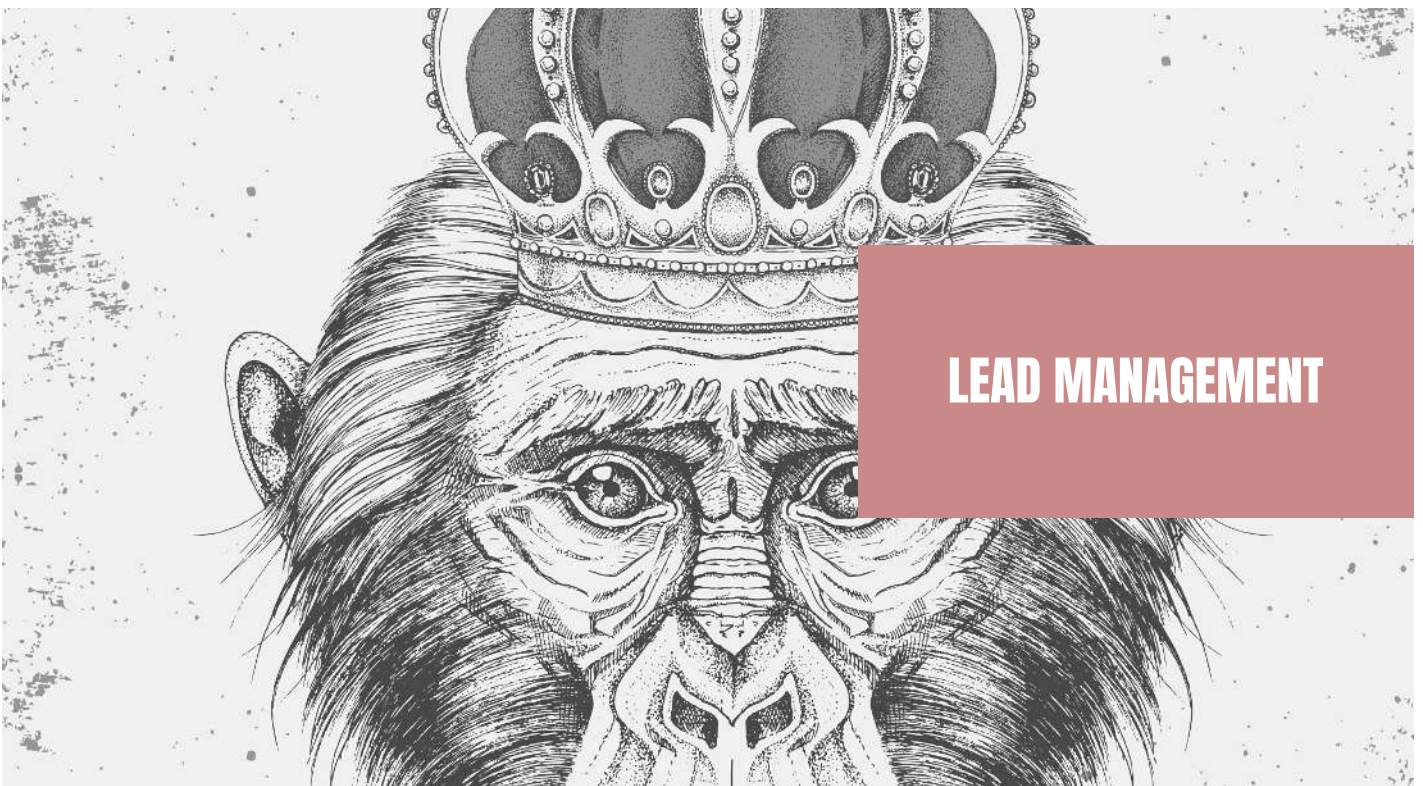
The first step of Lead Management is to generate leads by converting potential customers into someone who has shown interest. The result of the lead generation phase is a new lead. A lead is a mutual definition of the marketing and the lead management department.

Lead nurturing, also called lead cultivation or lead development, is the process of turning a cold lead into a hot lead. This is done by continuing interaction with the prospect and increase the lead score. The higher the score is, the hotter the lead gets. Ultimately this lead is handed over from marketing to sales. This is called a marketing qualified lead (MQL).

The last step of lead management is to qualify leads. The typical qualification as MQL to a Sales Accepted Lead (SAL) is followed by the ultimate step – the Sales Qualified Lead (SQL). This final step marks the end of the lead funnel, and the sales process starts.

8 STEPS OF THE MARKETING AND SALES FUNNEL

by Stephan Wenger



LEAD MANAGEMENT

FROM A POTENTIAL CUSTOMER TO A WON CUSTOMER

You will learn how to define interfaces between departments and to agree on common aims. This article covers 8 steps from a potential customer to a lead and ultimately to a won customer. The funnel concept describes the journey from marketing to sales. To streamline this process, it is necessary to commonly define the different funnel steps. The alignment of responsible departments is the base for a streamlined, output-oriented organization. This article builds on the AIDA concept. From attention to interest. From desire to action. This groundwork concept is still valid and provides a robust structure to build a modern marketing, lead management, and sales channel.

The sales and marketing funnel concept is a fundamental principle of marketing theory. A model that shows a potential customer's journey, from the first interaction with a brand or product till the final purchase. This model is also known as the AIDA model, an acronym for four stages: Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action, published in 1925. However, the fundamentals have not changed. What Salesforce calls the "Customer 360" is a modern way to convert the target group into customers. The funnel concept builds the backbone for successful 360°-degree customer management—from a member of the target group to a won customer.

The AIDA concept provides an important base for details of the funnel concept. The figure maps the 4 stages with duties of the marketing and the sales department. This classic approach to marketing and sales is still often found in today's companies' organizations.

MARKETING, LEAD MANAGEMENT AND SALES

"All too often, organizations find that they have a marketing function inside Sales, and a sales function inside Marketing."

(Kotler, Rackham & Krishnaswamy, 2006)

The prejudice is that marketing is the creative and communicative department that spends money. Sales, on the contrary, is out in the field with direct customer contact, selling, and making money. Marketing and sales don't always get along.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the fast push towards digitalization, and the high importance of customer-centricity, the fight between marketing and sales seems even more outdated than ever before.

An elegant way to solve this problem is to use Lead Management as an interface. The mutual definition of interfaces helps to streamline both departments. Therefore, Lead Management is the missing link between Marketing and Sales.

8 STEPS OF THE MARKETING, LEAD MANAGEMENT AND SALES FUNNEL

Based on the AIDA model and the three steps of the funnel concept, the following picture outlines a streamlined Marketing – Lead Management – Sales process. It includes 8 steps:

- Potential Customer
- Contact
- Cold Lead
- Marketing Qualified Lead



- Sales Accepted Lead
- Sales Qualified Lead
- Opportunity
- Sale

THE MARKETING FUNNEL

The classic marketing job is to raise awareness and spark interest. This can be done on a company level or directly for a product or service. The key question is where to generate awareness and how to spark interest. The target group, in B2B Marketing often the buying center, are per your definition of potential customers. A common concept to describe the target group are buyer personas. At this step, the target is defined, but there is no personal data available. The potential customer is unknown to the company.

Therefore, the consequent next step is to create a contact. A contact is a potential customer and member of the target group of which basic, personal details are known. This happens after a first engagement with the company and your content. The minimum information that marks a contact is the e-mail address. This is also referred to as a unique identifier and can be transferred to a CRM system. However, contact has not yet specifically expressed interest. His intentions, desire, and problem are blurry. Consequently, marketing aims to further engage with the contact to gather more information.

Caveat: CRM systems often use "contact" differently, e.g. for existing customers or fully developed leads. Be careful not to mix up terminology internally.

THE LEAD MANAGEMENT FUNNEL

A Lead, also called Cold Lead, is a contact with minimum contact information who asked about the product or service. Criteria when a contact converts to a lead strongly depends on the process definition. Typically, a lead is transferred to CRM, whereas a contact remains with marketing systems like the website. Common criteria for a lead are:

- Comprehensive personal data, including name, job title or company
- Multiple touchpoints with the company, e.g. downloads, webinars or contact forms
- Trigger signals such as "buy now" CTAs or "request for quotation" contact forms

At any rate, the lead status marks the end of the awareness phase. From a cold lead to a hot lead, lead nurturing aims to generate interest and convert the lead down the funnel. For details on whom to nurture and score a lead, read this article. Further, align your criteria with your company's aims and structure.

A hot lead is also called Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) or Qualified Contact. An MQL reached a certain lead score, previously defined by Marketing, Lead Management, and Sales. This is a very important aspect because an MQL is a typical output KPI of Marketing and Lead Management. Cost per MQL helps to argue budget and shows the Marketing efficiency.

The third step of the Lead Management Funnel (fifth step overall) is the Sales Accepted Lead (SAL). The MQL is handed over to sales. Sales cross-check the defined criteria and reasons if the MQL is ready for the Sales funnel. If so, Sales accepts the lead and the MQL converts to a SAL.

THE SALES FUNNEL

The transition from the lead funnel to the sales funnel is defined by accepting a Marketing Qualified Lead and converting this MQL into a Sales Accepted Lead. At this point, the work for the sales team starts. The sales representative engages with the SAL and discusses key aspects of the case. These aspects are often referred to as BANT, an acronym standing for budget, authority, need, and time. If all criteria are met, the SAL converts to a Sales Qualified Lead (SQL). This qualification marks the start of the sales funnel.

In an early phase of the sales process, the sales representative further discusses the customer's needs and desires. An opportunity or, casually, "sales case" is worked on by the sales team. Comparable with nurturing a lead, the sales representative develops the opportunity by providing case-relevant information, USPs, and ultimately, an offer.

Last, the final step of this journey is to close the deal and win the customer. This final step is the output KPI of the sales team.

HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS

There are two approaches to do so:

- Measure absolute numbers

Each step and hence, each status can be measured in absolute numbers. E.g. how many leads were generated by marketing? How many MQLs were accepted by sales, etc. This perspective helps to measure the effectiveness.

- Measure ratios of absolute numbers

The absolute numbers of each step can be compared to the absolute numbers of another step. These ratios describe the effectiveness. The closer the ratios to 1, the higher the effectiveness. If you can convert 100 opportunities into 100 closed deals, your effectiveness is 100%.

Ratios also help to estimate how much input you need to meet a certain output aim. If your goal is to close 100 deals and your ratio to opportunities is 25%, you need 400 opportunities to meet your goal. This works back to e.g. how many contacts are necessary to meet your final aim.

SUMMARY OF: 8 STEPS OF THE MARKETING AND SALES FUNNEL

The sales and marketing funnel concept is a still valid, fundamental principle of marketing theory. It shows a potential customer's journey, from the first interaction with the company till the final purchase. AIDA-model, an acronym for four stages - Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action - provides an important base for further details of the funnel concept. Although strongly interlinked, Marketing and Sales often do not get along very well. An elegant way to overcome conflicts is Lead Management.

8 STEPS OF THE MARKETING, LEAD MANAGEMENT AND SALES FUNNEL



By combining the AIDA model with three phases of the funnel concept, it is possible to outline 8 steps from a potential customer to a won customer. These 8 steps are:

- Potential Customers of the target group or buying center are often described with the buyer personas concept.
- A Contact is a member of this target group with known, basic personal details. The first engagement with your company and content is required to obtain this information.
- The first step of the Lead Management funnel is called a Cold Lead. It is a contact that asked about a product and would share further personal details.
- Successful lead nurturing results in a high lead score and converts a cold lead into a hot lead. This status is also known as Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL)
- A Sales Accepted Lead (SAL) results from a successful conversion from the Lead Management funnel into the Sales Funnel. The lead meets the mutually defined criteria and was approved by sales.
- The first sales task is to further engage with the prospect and identify if the sales cases meet further criteria, referred to as BANT criteria (an acronym for budget, authority, need, and time). If this check is positive, the SAL converts into a Sales Qualified Lead (SQL).
- An Opportunity or "sales case" describes the attempt of the sales team to convince the potential customer to buy.

- The last step is a Sale. The positive closure of the opportunity marks the end of the funnel concept.

The effectiveness of each step can be measured in absolute numbers, e.g. number of Marketing Qualified Leads. The efficiency can be described with ratios of absolute numbers of two steps. A 10% ratio between MQL and SAL means that only one out of ten MQLs meet sales expectations.

THE LEAD MANAGEMENT MATURITY MODEL

by Stephan Wenger



HOW TO USE LEAD MANAGEMENT TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING

Your marketing department does not get along well with sales? Do sales claim that marketing is only spending budget? Marketing does not contribute to the sales targets? And above all, management does not know whom to believe and how to overcome this situation? If any of those apply, this article provides answers—it is a step-by-step guide on building a relationship between marketing and sales. The missing link between these two departments is Lead Management. The Lead Management Maturity Model provides an actionable framework to help you solve this tight spot.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LEAD MANAGEMENT MATURITY MODEL (LMM-MODEL)

The LMM-Model provides a framework for developing an organization in dependency on its marketing, lead management, and sales departments.

It was first published in 2021 in the book "[B2B Marketing Handbook](#)". Stephan Wenger contributed to this book with a chapter on "Successful Lead Management" and introduced the LMM-Model. [Get the Lead Management Maturity Article here.](#)

Marketing is a team effort across the whole customer journey. This includes the marketing funnel, lead funnel, and sales funnel. According to the "[State of Marketing](#)" report by Salesforce, marketing owns lead generation in only 32% of all cases exclusively. However, 65% claim that marketers contribute or co-own the process. This underlines how important a close collaboration between marketing and sales is. It sets the scene for the LMM-Model.

The Lead Management Maturity Model, therefore, combines two approaches:

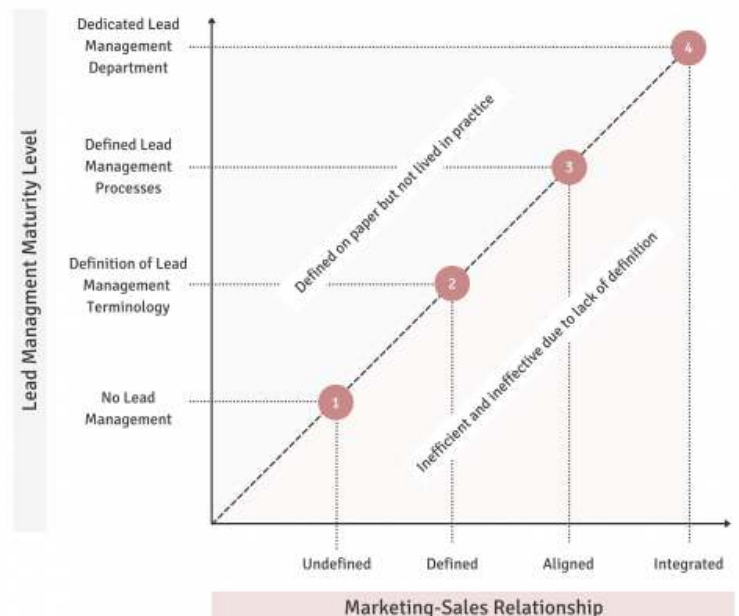
- The Marketing & Sales Relationship status.

Kotler, Rackham & Krishnaswamy introduced four relationship types between these two departments: undefined, defined, aligned, integrated.

- The maturity of the Lead Management process.

This perspective answers how well and comprehensively a lead management process is established at your company. 4 Phases are used to describe it: No Lead Management, Definition of Lead Management Terminology, Defined Lead Management Process, Dedicated Lead Management Department.

Here is a first glance at how the Lead Management Model combines these two approaches:



MARKETING & SALES RELATIONSHIP STATUS

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitalization of communication and customer-centricity. Marketing typically owns digital communication. That makes it more important than ever that marketing and sales closely collaborate. Still, the two departments rarely get along well. Reasons can be found on grown company structures. Responsibilities between marketing and sales are blurry.

“

All too often, organizations find that they have a marketing function inside Sales, and a sales function inside Marketing.

(Kotler, Rackham & Krishnaswamy, 2006)

Marketing is not measured by output KPIs that are clearly linked to revenue. Typical B2B sales tend to be old-fashioned and neglect digital communication. This might be an overstatement. However, back in 2006, Kotler stated in "Ending the War between Sales and Marketing."

Having this in mind, 4 relationship types between marketing and sales can be defined:

- Undefined

The relationship between the two departments is undefined. Both departments have grown independently and are not actively managed. They follow their own targets, and they act without knowing much about what the other discipline does.

- Defined

The defined relationship is characterized by defined rules to avoid disputes. Each department has clear boundaries and responsibilities. The two groups have a basic understanding of tasks important for both. To some extent, they use the same language, such as "how to define a lead".

- Aligned

Marketing and sales are aligned and have clear responsibilities. However, rules and processes are flexible and are built on mutual understanding. The two departments aim for the same goal and respect each other's competence. Marketers work with sales on important accounts and/or opportunities.

- Integrated

In a fully integrated setting, the boundaries between the two disciplines become blurry once again, however, in a positive, beneficial way. Processes and used language are shared to commit to a common goal fully. One cannot exist without the other. Marketing and sales are no longer strictly separated but benefit from each other's core competencies.

Lead Management holds an important role in evolving from an undefined an integrated marketing-sales structure. A common goal of the sometimes blurry interface leads and how to handle them. This basic principle is further incorporated into the Lead Management Maturity Model (LMM-Model)

LEAD MANAGEMENT

The definition of Lead Management covers the lead funnel and links it to both the marketing and the sales funnel:

"Lead management is defined as the methodology, process, and software to generate, nurture and qualify leads using sales and marketing strategies."

The three core functions of modern Lead Management are:

- Lead Generation includes all measures to create cold leads and marks the interface between Marketing and Lead Management.
- Lead Nurturing is the central task of Lead Management and is defined as the methodology and processes to convert a cold lead into a qualified marketing lead.
- Lead Qualification is the end of the lead funnel. This step is the interface between lead management and sales. Therefore, it reasons lead management output.

As described, the LMM-Model combines the relationship status between Sales and Marketing and the maturity of the Lead Management process. Maturity is described with 4 phases:

- No lead management

There is not Lead Management department, and the organization does not actively manage leads. Typically, new sales opportunities are created by the sales team without a prior lead status.

- Definition of lead management terminology

The organization uses definitions for the most important lead management terminology. The related parties like Marketing and Sales have a basic understanding of according processes. However, lead management processes are yet not fully developed; there is no established system or software in place.

- The defined lead management process

The organization has a defined lead management process in which lead statuses are clearly described. Further, responsibilities and the lead management process are actively managed and further developed. This lies with either the marketing or the sales department, as there is no dedicated lead management department. Lead management software helps support the lead management process.

- Dedicated lead management department

A dedicated Lead Management department is established. This department must generate, nurture, score and qualify leads. The department is closely interconnected with Marketing and Sales. Responsibilities are clear, and a common understanding of terminologies, processes, and aims is established. A lead management software is deeply integrated into the CRM system and mutually used by all departments within the company.

Based on these concepts, the Lead Management Maturity Model can be applied.

OVERVIEW OF THE LEAD MANAGEMENT MATURITY MODEL

The following summarizes the LMM-Model. Read a detailed description of the Lead Management Maturity Model in this article.

The LMM-Model has 2 axis, 4 crossing points, and 2 areas above and below the path to the ideal state of Marketing, Lead Management, and Sales.



- The x-axis describes the 4 relationship types between Marketing and Sales.
- The y-axis describes the 4 maturity phases of Lead Management.
- The 45° path with its 4 crossing points is the path to the ideal state of the three departments.
- Subsequently, the two areas below and above the ideal path are:
 - Lead Management is defined on paper but not lived in practice.
 - Lead Management is inefficient and ineffective due to a lack of definition.

THE FOUR CROSSING POINTS IN THE LMM-MODEL

The 45° line is also defined as the aimed state of developing lead management. The four crossing points describe milestones in the development process:

- Undefined Relationship – No Lead Management

This is the initial step where both the marketing-sales relationship and lead management are undefined.

- Defined Relationship – Defined Lead Management Terminology

A base definition marks the second milestone within departments and topics.

- Aligned Relationship – Defined Lead Management Process

An aligned relationship between marketing and sales with a defined and implemented lead management process describes the third milestone. This state of the organization is marked by clear responsibilities and rules on how to develop a potential customer to a closed sale.

- Integrated Relationship – Dedicated Lead Management Department

The most mature organization has a dedicated lead management department that takes over responsibility for the lead funnel. This department supports the already fully integrated marketing and sales departments.

ABOVE AND BELOW THE PATH OF THE LMM-MODEL

The area below and above the path to the ideal state indicates the shortcomings of organizations:

- Above the path – Defined on paper but not lived in practice

The missing practical implementation is distinct for the organizational states above the path. Lead management maturity is more developed than the relationship between marketing and sales.

- Below the path – Inefficient and ineffective due to lack of definition

States below the path indicate that the sales and marketing relationship is more advanced than lead management maturity.

SUMMARY OF: THE LEAD MANAGEMENT MATURITY MODEL

The LMM-Model is a management framework that builds on two perspectives and outlines how to connect Marketing and Sales, helped by Lead Management. The two perspectives are:

First, the 4 relationship types between Marketing and Sales:

- Undefined
- Defined
- Aligned
- Integrated

Second, the 4 maturity levels of the Lead Management Process:

- No lead management
- Definition of lead management terminology
- The defined lead management process
- Dedicated lead management department

By combining the two aspects in a model with the x-axis (Marketing-Sales-Relationship) and y-axis (Lead Management Maturity Level), you get 4 crossing-points on a path to the ideal status of all three departments.

These 4 crossing-points are:

- Undefined Relationship – No Lead Management
- Defined Relationship – Defined Lead Management Terminology
- Aligned Relationship – Defined Lead Management Process
- Integrated Relationship – Dedicated Lead Management Department

Ultimately, by entering your company status, you will be either on the ideal path or find yourself below or above this ideal line. That means:

- Above the path – Defined on paper but not lived in practice
- Below the path – Inefficient and ineffective due to lack of definition

This basic overview of the Lead Management Maturity Model provides a first guide on how to develop your organization actively. By connecting Marketing and Sales via Lead Management.

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by Stephan Wenger