

Marketteering™

Tools and tactics for the business-to-business expedition

Business-to-Business (B-to-B or B2B) marketing spelled out

Distinctly B-to-B tactics

Brand strategy

Define your entity's claim of distinction and determine if it's important to customers.

Brand coordination

Tie the product/service brands to the company brand.

Brand launch

Launch the CEO-endorsed brand internally and externally.

Prospect database

Profile your ideal customers and build a prospect list of those with whom you want to do business the most.

Lead generation

Engage directly with prospects using a variety of touchpoints: direct mail, email, landing page, website, and follow-up.

Case study

This is an examination of how a product or service solves a specific business challenge. The content addresses a problem, solution, and result.

White paper

The intent is promote your entity's thought leadership on a technology, process, or product with this publication.

Targeted content

Industry- and application-specific content proves your organization has relevant expertise and experience.

Trade shows and conferences

Pre-show campaigns engage with attendees beforehand and increase the chance of getting on their agenda. Timely lead follow-up after the event is crucial.

Lead management/nurturing

It can cost hundreds of dollars to generate one B-to-B lead; keeping those prospects warm and engaged is imperative.

Sales & Marketing in sync

These respective teams must collaborate and align messaging, intel, and follow-up.

If you're selling ice cream to consumers you need business-to-consumer (B-to-C) marketing. If you're selling ice cream to grocery store chains or capital equipment to ice cream manufacturers (or associated logistics services) you need business-to-business marketing or B-to-B!

What makes B-to-B unique?

Marketing to businesses is quite different than to consumers, for example:

1. **B-to-B audiences are much smaller** (hundreds vs. thousands, etc.). Your customer and prospect list should be scrutinized, segmented, appended on an ongoing basis. The more you get to know these contacts, the more strategic you can be.
2. **B-to-B marketing gets less exposure or fewer impressions than consumer marketing.** So, it's important that your brand message be clear, concise, and absolutely consistent in every context.
3. **B-to-B audiences include people who make purchasing decisions as a profession,** so they will tend to be more pragmatic than emotional.
4. **The B-to-B sales channel** (e.g., your salesforce, independent reps, dealers/distributors, etc.) **will require a variety of training, incentives, and sales tools.**
5. **The B-to-B customer base is made up of influencers and decision-makers** (e.g., specifiers, buyers, project managers, end-users, etc.) **with various needs and concerns.**

Because of the complexity of the channel and the customer, careful consideration should be given to your marketing communications. For example, the website must include content with depth and breadth for the greater audience, while collateral should be broken down into concise pieces with relevant topics for each user and audience.

6. Purchasing decisions take a long time.

In the meantime, nurture prospects with relevant, ongoing touchpoints to keep your brand in front of their mind.

7. The cost of a lead is high.

B-to-B relationships are cultivated a few at a time. Adding a handful of new customers annually means success. It is costly to gain customers, so work hard to retain their business long-term.

B-to-B is proactive

B-to-B is about marketing proactively (vs. "If we build it..."). Determine which segments are the most desirable based on your customers' sales history. Factor in size, location, titles of influencers and decision-makers, etc. Once the ideal customer profile is defined, develop a prospect list based on this profile.

B-to-B lead generation

A good prospect list is at the core of a lead generation program. It enables an organization to carry out direct marketing, the most effective and efficient method for generating leads. Segment the list so messages can be tailored accordingly.

B-to-B requires a team effort

When Sales & Marketing work together, they create a formidable team.

Integrating the two groups involves generating, qualifying, following up, and nurturing leads in a collaborative manner. With some effort and attention to the details, you can proactively build brand awareness and establish rapport.

More on the B-to-B tactics

Brand strategy

- Define what differentiates your company and/or its offering i.e., the unique selling proposition or USP.
- Survey customers to determine which USP is most important to them.

Brand strategy – *continued*

- Conceive a brand message based on the customers' feedback.

Brand coordination

- Coordinate your product and service brands so they are clearly linked to the company brand.
- Consider other aspects to tie in with the overall brand such as product and service features, materials, warranties, guaranties, etc.
- Branding your category of product or service can create the perception that your company leads (i.e., owns) the category and/or offers something exclusive.

Brand launch

- Get the endorsement of the new brand from the leadership of your company.
- Formally introduce the brand internally so that it is embraced as an integral part of the business.
- Introduce the brand widely to your sales channel, current and past customers, prospects, industry groups and media.

Prospect database

- Create an ideal customer profile based on your most desirable customers.
- Develop/maintain a prospect list based on the ideal customer profile.
- Segment your market and tailor your marketing communications to be applicable to each unique audience.
- A list can degrade a few percentage points per month so, maintaining your prospect list on an ongoing basis should be an SOP. This is a worthy investment for this valuable asset.

Lead generation

- A business-to-business lead generation process should entail a direct marketing program that integrates postal, email, landing page, and a content-rich website.
- Each touchpoint has a distinct purpose and advantage. These coordinated mediums have a compounding effect and increase the likelihood of engaging the audience.
- Integrated direct marketing provides valuable intelligence to Sales & Marketing, based on recipients' activities, helping them prioritize follow-up and subsequent actions.
- Direct marketing is intended to set the stage for selling. This tactic does things to support the sales process, starting with building brand

awareness and ultimately helping Sales prioritize its time and efforts.

Case study

- In business-to-business marketing it is imperative to provide evidence that a brand promise is met.
- A case study is an examination of how an entity, product, or service solves a specific business problem. The content addresses a problem, solution, and result. It can reinforce the brand message and help prove that your entity leads the industry.

White paper

- A white paper is an example of technical literature.
- Business-to-business products and services can be quite technical in nature. Content that puts high-tech concepts into understandable terms builds credibility for the marketing organization.
- This type of publication can position its author/organization as a technology or category thought leader.

Targeted content

- Industry- and application-specific content proves your organization has relevant expertise and experience.
- Disseminate applicable content prior to a big industry event such as a trade show or conference to engage your audience and manage perception.

Trade shows and conferences

- Pre-show campaigns engage with attendees beforehand and increase the chance of getting on their agenda.
- All forms of communications—pre-show campaigns, at-show advertisements or sponsorships, in booth, post-show communiques—must be carefully coordinated.
- Timely follow-up with show leads is crucial. There is a much greater chance of winning new business if your response is prompt i.e., 24 hours.

Lead management/nurturing

- It can cost hundreds of \$'s to generate one B-to-B lead. It is common for leads to be lost, forgotten, or never get the attention they deserve. Keeping leads warm and engaged is imperative.
- Determine if each lead requires immediate follow-up, a scheduled follow-up in a number of weeks, or nurtured with an ongoing series of communications to keep them warm and aware of your company.



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Sales & Marketing in sync

- These two groups must collaborate and align messaging, intel, and follow-up.
- The intelligence gathered from campaigns helps Sales & Marketing understand the prospects. They can glean who is looking at your offering and what specific products, services, capabilities, etc. may be of interest to them. When these prospects make an inquiry, or a member of the sales team makes a contact, they can be prepared to talk to these potential customers.

A foundation on which to build

The tactics covered here make an excellent foundation on which to build an effective B-to-B marketing program.

Each organization and its offering and market is unique, so contact Randy Borns to discuss your situation and a customized approach: 616.502.2213 or randy@borns.com.