

The Secret to B2B Marketing in 2021

**Finding a Pathway to Help You Generate
High-Quality Audience**



WHAT DESCRIBES YOUR B2B MARKETING STRATEGY IN 2021 - STATUS QUO OR NEW?

When 2020 started, B2B marketers were already at different stages of implementing strategies and marketing trends that could help them offer personalized customer experiences. But, despite the hype and the promises of impact, how many popular trends have B2B brands actually succeeded in adopting in the last couple of years?



The idea of personalization in marketing started in the early 2000s and hinges on the basic notion of customizing customer experiences using data

THE GROUND REALITY OF PERSONALIZATION

Less than
49%

of marketing leaders believe they provide an experience that is aligned with customer expectations

Only
47%

of marketers say they have a completely unified view of customer data sources

Source: [Salesforce](#)

In this e-book, we will look at how B2B marketers fared in terms of adopting popular marketing trends in 2020, examine some of the reasons for leaks in a marketing funnel, and explore how you can keep up with today's customers.

HOW DID B2B MARKETING FARE IN 2020?

As a B2B marketing agency, we pay attention to the varying degrees of success with which popular marketing strategies are adopted. Dive with us as we look at some examples from the B2B marketing space and pick out elements that were executed well and those that weren't.

The Good: Digital-First Approach

Growing globalization and the appetite for digital content has been moving B2B marketers towards digital tactics for a while. And since the events of last year, companies that relied heavily on in-person activities in the past have been adding more and more digital interaction points in the form of revamped websites, easily accessible digital content, social media presence, real-time conversations, and email marketing. As a result of this digitalization, brands and customers are able to interact easily across multiple platforms.



68% of CMOs expect to increase martech investments over the next 12 months – [Gartner](#)

The Bad: Content Quality

An overwhelming 82% of marketers leverage content marketing to engage customers although, the sobering truth is that not every brand can produce content that delivers high impact. When it comes to creating content, besides experience about the solution or industry and good content creation skills, do you have the ability to factor in the needs of the audience?

Source: [State of Content Marketing in 2021](#)



Only **66%** of B2B marketers prioritize audience's needs when creating content - [Content Marketing Institute](#)



The Good: Account-Based Marketing

Realizing the value that account-based marketing (ABM) generates, a good 67% of B2B brands last year opted to include this strategy as part of their initiatives. While there is clear value in being able to target the right audience, executing an ABM strategy requires great synergy between sales and marketing, among other things, making some B2B marketers less eager to implement it.. However, as investments in marketing technology increases, more brands might turn into adopters.

Source: [Not Another State of Marketing Report 2021: Hubspot](#)



62% of marketers experienced a positive impact since adopting ABM
- [Forrester](#)

The Bad: Cost of Ad Placements

Paid advertising offered by Google and LinkedIn continues to be a popular channel, with 65% of B2B marketers stating they acquired leads by placing targeted messages on LinkedIn. But, despite Google's extensive reach and LinkedIn's access to exclusive B2B audiences, the high cost per click (CPC) has led some brands to reduce their dependence on paid advertising, especially with recent budget cuts. Will these platforms continue to be viable options in the long run?

Source: [75 B2B marketing statistics to know in 2020](#)



The average cost-per-click (CPC) in the software industry is \$3.80 and the most expensive software industry keyword CPC is \$95 - [HubSpot](#)

The Good: Real-Time Customer Engagement



For industries, such as financial services, that deal with huge volumes of consumer queries, chatbots based on conversational AI are helping reduce the strain on employees. By understanding and responding in real-time, chatbots improve a customer's experience, giving them an interactive and quicker alternative to emails.



56% of customers prefer interacting with chatbots- [a Facebook study states](#)

The Bad: Quality of Leads from Events



The trend of sponsoring large events seems to have switched effortlessly from in-person to virtual events among B2B brands. While the sponsorships help improve brand visibility, beyond that, the quality of leads generated does not meet the return on investment (ROI) desired by the sponsor. With a good majority of marketers continuing to rely on sponsorships to generate leads, where should B2B brands draw the line between brand visibility and lead quality?



74% of B2B event organizers see a positive ROI at least 6 months after a virtual event - [Markletic](#)

The Good: Video Content



Bite-sized tutorials and product demonstrations continue to top the list of video content that B2B audiences look for while evaluating solutions. In keeping with this trend, most B2B marketers favor YouTube to host videos. With the number of face-to-face events also dropping, it is safe to say that brands have succeeded in capturing the interest of those audiences that are looking to fill the gap with video content.



50.9% of B2B decision makers use YouTube to research purchases - [Hootsuite](#)

The Bad: Postmortem Campaign Analysis



Although more B2B brands are now leaning towards data-driven campaigns, some marketers have been known to leave the measurement of performance data and insights until the completion of a campaign. But as customers call for increased personalization in every interaction, can B2B brands afford to put off analyzing audience insights till the end?



37% of marketers say that proving the value of marketing analytics is one of their top 3 biggest challenges - [Gartner](#)

WHERE ARE THE LEAKS IN YOUR MARKETING FUNNEL COMING FROM?

It is normal for B2B brands to lose a certain percentage of leads in a funnel even with a good nurture strategy. Hence the term: Funnel. At the same time, there are cases where leads were lost at an alarming rate despite the availability of the best tools, strategies, and approaches. In our conversation with clients in the B2B space, we identified a few common reasons that lead to a drastic loss of an audience. The reasons are as follows:

Leak #1: Email Fatigue

As part of a digital-first strategy, B2B brands rely heavily on email marketing to engage consumers. On a global scale, close to 300 billion emails were sent and received each day in 2020, including those that were work-related, marketing-based, among other personal communication. With the volume of emails growing, any communication that was not hyper-targeted and personalized saw higher unsubscribe rates.

Source: [Statista](#)



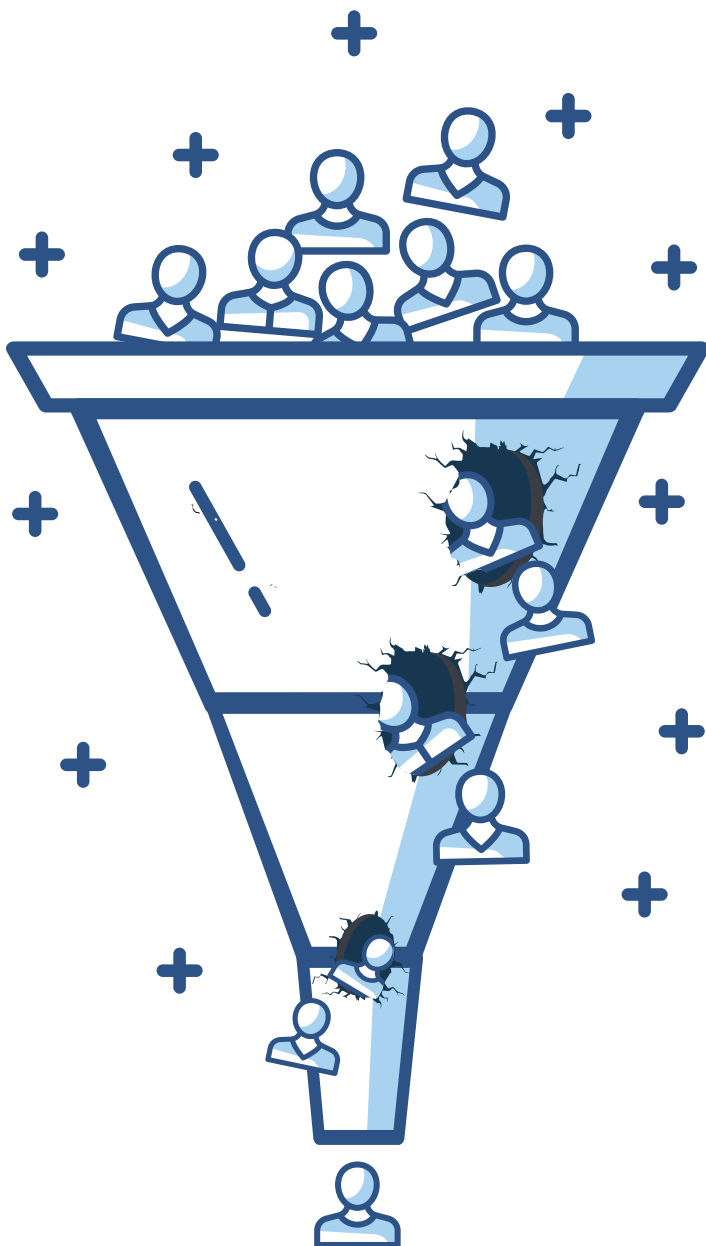
40% of consumers say they have at least 50 unread emails in their inbox – [Hubspot](#)

Leak #2: Bombarding Audiences with Content

In the past year, we noticed a trend among a few B2B brands to use a later-buying stage content in their first interaction with a consumer. With the sudden adoption of digital channels, these brands might have overlooked the progression of customer touchpoints in their eagerness to reach out to new leads. And by doing so, the brands reduced their chances of progressing a lead to the next buying stage.

Leak #3: Lack of Analytical Insight

As the call for data-driven marketing got louder, B2B leaders invested in several analytical tools. However, the inability to drill down to individual touchpoints and the use of myriads of marketing tools made it hard for B2B marketers to measure and optimize programs. On the other hand, brands that invested in the right tools struggled to find data specialists who could interpret insights; some others failed to use the insights to optimize their campaigns.



Leak #4: Lacklustre Content Strategy

Despite the knowledge that content is essential to succeed, many B2B brands have been guilty of churning out far too much or too little content. According to the Content Marketing Institute, 63% of businesses lack a documented content strategy. With an inability to create engaging content consistently, several brands missed the opportunity to engage and retain consumers.

Leak #5: Virtual Events

B2B brands were quick to jump to virtual events as a way of bridging the gap when opportunities for face-to-face events declined last year. After all, 85% of B2B marketers believe that the interactions at events help accelerate a buying journey. But with an influx of virtual events, the resulting noise has caused brands without a nurture plan to lose leads rapidly.

Source: [Marketers cite positive ROI from events: Marketing Charts](#)

Leak #6: Gaps in Lead Nurturing

A common mistake that brands make in nurturing leads is spending a disproportionate time in raising brand awareness for top-of-the-funnel leads or attempting to convert a lead in a short period. The missing element in both cases is a structured nurture strategy - a top reason why 79% of marketing leads do not convert to a sale (MarketingSherpa).

Source: MarketingSherpa



65% of B2B marketers have not established lead nurturing. **79%** of B2B marketers have not established lead scoring

CREATE SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES, **THE SOUKMEDIA WAY**

The mounting complexities that accompany each marketing approach and the need to create highly personalized experiences are enough to overwhelm even the most seasoned marketing professional. And the real challenge begins when these complexities cause you to lose opportunities to competitors. Is there a right approach or combination of channels that can elevate your marketing strategy?

SoukMedia has created a tried-and-tested and holistic approach called the 360-degree marketing. Using this approach, we help brands present a complete view of their products and guide audiences through a carefully crafted set of touchpoints – leading to highly qualified leads.



The 360-degree marketing approach leverages the best of programmatic advertising and omnichannel marketing to help brands cut through the noise

The 3 Phases in 360-Degree Marketing

Our approach follows three distinct phases intended to help clients succeed. The phases include:

1. Building awareness with strategically placed targeted ads
2. Nurturing leads with a well-curated content syndication strategy
3. Wrapping up using a product-focused webinar

The final act in the journey helps leads experience the product or solution firsthand. The details of the phases are as follows:

Phase 1: Audience Generation and Brand Awareness

61% of marketers consider lead generation as their biggest challenge, which comes as no surprise. SoukMedia has developed a robust in-house publishing platform that allows us to cater to the audience generation needs of clients across regions and industries. But we do not stop there. We drum up interest in an offering by creating and deploying display, native, or social media ads that redirect leads to strategically placed content.

We use a programmatic approach because compared to Google ads or Facebook, we get more creative options and control over ad placements. This approach also works best for B2B clients who need to target smaller, specialized sets of audiences. Additionally, the availability of real-time insights allows campaigns to be optimized on the go. The audience that is generated in this phase can then be nurtured further with content syndication.

Source: [The ultimate list of marketing statistics for 2021: Hubspot](#)

Phase 2: Content Syndication

Once the interest of an audience gets heightened, we use personalized campaigns to drive the audience to various content such as articles, e-books, whitepapers, and others to nurture and build a relationship.



The success of this phase depends on the strength of a content pipeline and how well it covers a buyer's information needs at different stages

In our own experience with clients, we saw how a strong content pipeline helped us generate 800+ leads for a global IT client. The impact of content is different at various stages. For example, an article can help influence a lead in the early stages of the buying process, while a product-focused webinar has much more impact on leads in the bottom funnel. As we gather more insights into leads through content syndication, we refine the target audience and take them one step further in their journey with a brand.

Phase 3: Webinars

People are attracted to visual content - we know this even without referring to statistics around media usage. For B2B marketers, webinars are the most effective visual content to engage with their audiences. In fact, about 49% of buyers rely on video content, such as webinars, before making a purchase decision. This is a compelling reason why we recommend following up leads with an invitation to a webinar in the third phase.

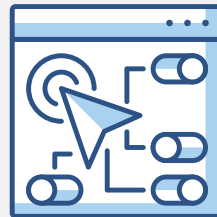
SoukMedia works with clients across industries to perform end-to-end execution of webinars, including researching topics, identifying speakers, and promoting events to drive desired conversion rates. For a global software client, our webinar strategy helped deliver a conversion rate of 35% that was 10% more than the expected conversion rate. Similarly, we helped deliver a 40% conversion rate from 300+ qualified leads for the product-specific webinar of an Indian cloud software provider. Since webinars provide prospects with an opportunity to interact with subject matter experts and widen their understanding of the offering, they are well-positioned to appreciate a trial offer - which leads us to the final stage of our nurture process.

Source: [B2B buyers have spoken: here's what they want from your content marketing](#): LinkedIn

THE BASICS THAT GUARANTEE THE SUCCESS OF 360-DEGREE MARKETING

As we work with more and more clients, we understand the importance of using multiple interaction points across platforms, particularly as the popularity of instant messaging applications, social media channels, and microblogging sites continues to grow. As a result, we strongly focus on engaging leads through personalized conversations or events across the three phases of building awareness, content syndication, and webinar participation.

Emails, too, play a huge role in nurturing leads with the potential to generate ten times the response rate. Working with different clients, we have seen how targeted email campaigns deliver better results.



89% of customers on average can be retained with a strong engagement strategy

AI-Based Insights

Lastly, through each of the phases, we rely on AI-powered tools to intelligently measure, assess, and score leads as they interact with different touchpoints. By analyzing the characteristics of a customer's engagement in each touchpoint, in addition to the number of interactions, SoukMedia can consistently generate highly qualified leads for clients.

Source: [Why omnichannel strategy matters](#)
[40 statistics to inform & enhance B2B lead generation strategies](#)



Client Success Story: 1000+ leads for 4 webinars with a **35%** conversion rate. **82%** found the webinar exceeded their expectations

WHY IT'S TIME TO MOVE TO 360-DEGREE MARKETING?

SoukMedia's 360-degree marketing includes key aspects from the top trends in marketing, such as the need for customized and seamless experiences, content marketing, engagement, testing and optimization, among others. Our approach helps us put together a plan that is targeted at the right audience, personalized to meet customer preferences, spans multiple platforms and channels, and is optimized at every stage with real-time insights.

360-Degree Marketing

Holistic, Cross-Channel Strategy

Higher Insights into Consumers = More Personalization

Control Over Ad Placements

Measure ROI for Each Channel

Meet your Customers at Their Point of Purchase

Build Loyal Customers

Seamless Brand Messaging

Combines Offline and Digital Channels

360-Degree View of Brands

Focuses on Customer Experience

Optimize On-The-Go

Traditional Marketing

Siloed Channel Strategy

Limited Insight into Consumers = Less Personalization

Limited Channels for Ad Placement

Costs Limited to Individual Channels

Missed Opportunities Due to Limited Reach

Leaks in the Lead Funnel

Disjointed Messaging Across Channels

Fewer Touchpoints

Limited View of Brands

Lack of Insight into Customer Interaction with Other Touchpoints

Post-Campaign Analysis of Results



HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR **MARKETING STRATEGY?**

Even as we help clients with a programmatic, multichannel approach, we understand how daunting it can be to transition to a new form of marketing. To help you make a start, we put together a checklist of ten questions that you can use to assess your current strategy. The checklist has a two-fold benefit:

- It helps your in-house marketing team identify gaps in the current strategy.
- It gives you a base with which to assess the effectiveness of a marketing service provider, should you choose to hire one.

Ten Questions to Help You Build a 360-Degree Marketing Strategy

1. Do you know who your buying personas are?
2. Do you know how many touchpoints it takes to make a sale in your organization?
3. Do you have a content strategy that caters to different touchpoints?
4. Do you have predefined KPIs to help you assign credits to touchpoints?
5. Do you have a lead scoring or lead validation mechanism?
6. Does your strategy include personalized engagement?
7. Are your call-to-action leading to a desired outcome?
8. Do you use social listening tools to track trending topics in your industry?
9. Does your reporting dashboard give you constant, granular insights into your campaign?
10. Do your marketing tools offer mid-flight optimization of campaigns?



If you were able to satisfactorily answer a good majority of the questions along with supporting data, then the great news is that you are on the right path. But, if you are struggling to find data points that can answer most of these questions, it is time to bring in some external help.

As a leading digital audience acquisition company, we help clients create a holistic marketing approach. We understand that what works for one organization may not work for another. So, rather than providing a standard solution, we first assess current strategies, tools, and needs before suggesting changes to any existing strategy or creating a new tailor-made strategy.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As technology helps us understand audiences better, the smart thing to do is to leverage this information to bring about change in the way marketing is traditionally done. SoukMedia can help you learn from and join the ranks of leaders who are reaping the benefits of a holistic marketing approach. We are excited to see the changes that this shift in marketing will bring for you.

You can find us at www.soukmedia.co.