



Cognism 

DEMAND GENERATION:

How to create demand
that drives growth

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Why demand generation is vital for B2B growth

Demand generation is a strategy for building awareness and driving interest in your product or service, with the overall aim of creating a predictable, repeatable pipeline for your business. It's a long-term endeavour, designed to reach consumers at every touchpoint of their buyer journey with your brand - from the very first moment when a prospect becomes aware of your company, all the way through to when they convert and become a fully paid-up customer, and even after this - turning customers into brand advocates.

Six reasons why you need demand generation



1. It makes marketing customer-centric

Demand generation places the customer at the heart of your B2B marketing strategy. It's about making people excited and informed about your brand and product, so that they want to learn more. It's about building and nurturing relationships with consumers over the long-term. It's about giving people relevant and useful content that draws them in and guides them through the funnel.



2. It aligns marketing and sales

Demand generation is the bedrock of sales and marketing alignment. It brings together the two disciplines over a shared, common goal: the desire to attract new business and generate new revenue.

For scaling B2B companies who haven't yet prioritised sales and marketing alignment, demand generation is an excellent way to kick off the process. It gets both teams thinking about who their ideal customers are and what kinds of challenges they face - and helps to define which types of content would be most useful for solving those challenges.



3. It establishes consumer trust

Demand generation helps to establish your brand as one that people can trust. By providing value to your buyers, by sharing educational and inspirational content, it makes people view your business as one they can count on. Demand generation is a process that keeps people engaging with your brand, so even if they're not quite ready to buy from you right now, you'll be the first thing they think of when they are.



4. It produces high-quality leads

Demand generation gets you to focus on lead quality, rather than lead quantity. Demand generation works best when it's targeted and specific; the content you produce must revolve around your customers, defining the problems they encounter day-to-day and suggesting practical solutions. It helps you to understand who your ideal customers are, what they're looking for and where you can find them.



5. It generates predictable revenue

Put simply, demand generation will help you grow your B2B company. If you build interest in your business, and you capitalise on that interest with compelling and informative content, then your customer base will start to grow.

But demand generation doesn't just lead to revenue – it leads to predictable revenue. It will help you to construct a repeatable pipeline and gives you all the insights you need to make better, data-driven business decisions.



6. It delivers strong ROI

Last but not least, demand generation is cost-effective. You don't need huge marketing budgets to do it right. All you need is an understanding of your ideal customer and how your product or service can help them. The hard work of demand generation – creating and sharing content – is only as expensive as you want it to be.

As we'll find out later, there are all sorts of demand generation tricks and hacks that'll help you deliver your strategy without breaking the bank. So we can say that demand generation is the perfect choice for scaling B2B companies.

Demand generation at Cognism

Cognism is a great example of a B2B organisation successfully deploying demand generation. With a small marketing team, we generated 50% of the company's new business MRR targets last year, which helped to grow our business from \$2.5 million ARR to \$7 million ARR.

Over the course of this guide, we're going to share our demand generation knowledge with you, so that you too can create demand that drives B2B growth.

Here's what you'll learn:

- ✓ What the most useful B2B demand generation strategies are.
- ✓ What content marketing is and how it can help you grow your business.
- ✓ How to plan and amplify your content to help you close more deals.
- ✓ How to measure the success of B2B demand generation, including the must-track marketing metrics.
- ✓ How to align your sales and marketing teams around demand generation.

Welcome to ***Demand generation: How to create demand that drives growth.***

B2B demand generation strategies

Cognism 

We are going to focus this section on two cornerstones of B2B demand generation:

- Growth hacking.
- Content marketing.

We'll study each of these in turn. To kick us off, **Alice de Courcy**, Head of Marketing at **Cognism**, writes about growth hacking, what it is and how you can get started.



A B2B marketer's guide to growth hacking

When you first hear the term "growth hacking", your mind fills with questions. Is it complicated? Does it work? Is it even legal?! While it sounds like a dark art, there is science and strategy behind growth hacking and it can be extremely effective when you get it right. For B2B startups that want to grow super-fast, but only have limited resources, growth hacking strategies can be a great choice.



Growth hacking defined

Growth hacking is the most recent iteration of demand generation. The term was coined by entrepreneur **Sean Ellis** in 2010; he's now the CEO of **GrowthHackers**, an online community dedicated to promoting the art and science of growth hacking.

In a nutshell, growth hacking is a branch of digital marketing where everything you do is designed to get the maximum number of users for the lowest possible outlay. The name is the clue; growth is everything! The "hacking" part refers to the unconventional, out-of-the-box ideas that companies try to achieve super-fast growth.



Who is growth hacking for?

Because it's about achieving a lot with a little, growth hacking is usually a method for startups and scaleups. They don't have the budgets for big advertising campaigns or star-studded product launches, so they have to get creative. For B2B and SaaS companies that often need to grow quickly to reassure investors, it's a popular strategy.



What does a growth hacker do?

As you might have guessed, a growth hacker focuses on growth. It's one of the fundamental umbrella metrics for B2B startups and that's all they need to care about.

Growth hackers don't have to be singular entities, either. Anyone can be a growth hacker as long as they have the right focus.

That means being adaptable, creative, analytical and finding unique ways of growing a company's user base.



Growth hacking examples

There are many famous examples of companies using growth hacking successfully. Here are some of the most notable:

Dropbox

The online storage firm offered existing users extra capacity if they referred their friends.

airbnb

The online travel app leveraged the classified site Craigslist to bring early users in quickly. Even when Craigslist found out what was going on and shut it down, it was too late, Airbnb users were hooked!

Gmail

Google's email app started by invite only, which created massive FOMO in the tech community. Everyone wanted one!

Evernote

The notes app started out with early funding woes, but due to giving away their basic service for free (the so-called "freemium" model), Evernote became a multi-million dollar company with over 75 million users.



How to get started

The concept of growth hacking is not as anarchic as it sounds. It's based around a rigid structure, driven by data and managing only what you can measure. Here are the five steps to success:

1 Get your product right

Before you spend time and resources getting your product in front of as many people as possible, you have to make sure that it works. You want new users to love your product, not discard it immediately. Where possible, build in a network effect.

2 Set your goals

Set precise, measurable goals for your growth hacking campaign. If your goal is raising your number of users, define how many users you want to bring onboard. Before you start, work out what success looks like for you.

3 Test, test, test!

You can't run multiple growth hacking ideas at the same time, because you won't know which ones are working. Pick one growth hacking strategy and implement it quickly. Run these as structured experiments. Here is an example of one we recently held at Cognism:

Hypothesis:

We can capture Google leads for under \$300 optimising bidding for 2nd/3rd search positions and optimising landing pages for conversion on these specific search terms. We have also optimised keywords and will be bidding only on exact match.

Design:

Create a bespoke landing page for B2B lead generation

Duration:

2 weeks – run only on working days

Budget:

\$100 per day/per campaign. Total \$1000.00 USD budget

4 Analyse your results

Measure your idea against your predictions to decide if it worked. Then, move on to the next one. Let the data drive your growth hacking in the right direction.

5 Learn and improve

Perform more split tests to look for ways to improve your growth hacking campaign. Practice makes perfect.



Growth hacking ideas

There is an enormous number of growth hacking strategies out there. Some involve creating content that promotes your product and getting it out to as many people as possible. Others are about making your product appear more desirable, creating a buzz around it. Here are twelve ideas you can try:

Create valuable and relevant content

- Start a blog and update it regularly.
- Create the kind of content that your users can't wait to share with their network.
- In the early days, build authority by leveraging external experts and use their brand and distribution networks to gain traction.

Go viral

- Be everywhere on the social media channels that matter to your ideal customers!
- Create memes and videos that become a sensation.
- Focus on content that is brave, bold and cuts through the noise.

Influencer marketing

- Find social media personalities with big followings among your target audience.
- Ask them to contribute to your content and promote your brand.

MVP marketing

- When resources are limited, you need to focus carefully.
- If you have an idea for a piece of long-form content, for example, before you spend days creating it, write a short LinkedIn summary post on it and ask people to comment if they would like 'early bird access'.
- The traction you get here will be a good litmus test for the content's appeal and it only took you 30 minutes to discover.

Contests and giveaways

- People love to take part and win prizes!

Incentives for referrals

- If it worked for Dropbox, it can work for you!

SEO

- Tactically include keywords in your blog content.
- The goal with SEO is to get your site ranked higher on Google and noticed by more people.
- It doesn't have to cost money, it just requires long-term commitment and a clear strategy. Get started early on.

Email sequences

- Never underestimate the power of email marketing!
- Introduce your brand to your target audience through a series of emails.

PR

- Get your product featured in relevant and widely-read publications.
- For B2B SaaS startups, a good option is **TechCrunch**.
- You can hack this early on by flipping the focus of your PR onto the key people in your business rather than the company. Build personal brands and tell your people stories.

PPC or social media advertising

- Invest some budget in highly-targeted ads on Google and social media.
- Run tests in Ad sprints. Test, optimise and find your perfect combination to drive growth. You can learn a lot on just a small budget.

Develop a tool

- A great way to hack growth is to build a free tool that will be useful to your target audience. It could be as simple as an email subject line simulator.
- Make sure it is something that will keep people coming back and which can have a lead capture mechanism built into it.
- If you can, get it featured on **Product Hunt**.

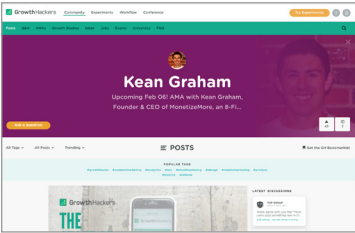
Build a useful list of tools

- If you can, build a page that will drive unusual traffic to your website.
- Build a list of tools that are relevant to your target audience.
- Don't be afraid to feature competitor products and multiple vendors.
- Any list a vendor is on will give them a reason to share it. Leverage their audience to grow your own.



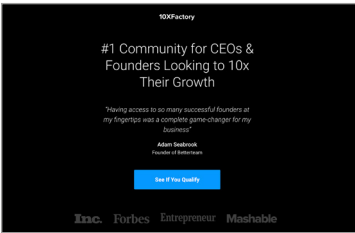
Growth hacking online resources

Besides ideas and strategies, there are lots of growth hacking resources out there to boost your knowledge.



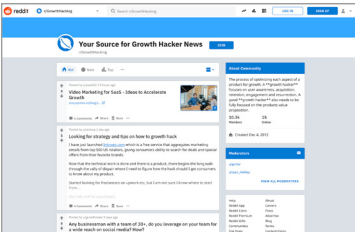
GrowthHackers

Sean Ellis is the CEO of Growth Hackers and the site has a community full of advice and tips collated from the world wide web. If you want to keep up to date, this is the best place to be.



10X Factory

Have you heard of the 10X concept? It claims that the best engineers have to be “10x as productive as the worst”. This fuelled the idea for 10X Factory; its Slack channel offers access to the best entrepreneurs in the world to ask questions and learn from other successful growth hackers.



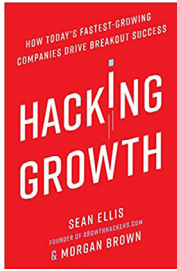
r/GrowthHacking

Where would we be without Reddit? The GrowthHacking subreddit is a bustling community covering all kinds of topics related to growth hacking and digital marketing.



Growth hacking library

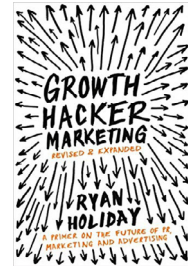
If you'd prefer to fill your bookshelf, here are some essential growth hacking books to add to your collection:



**Hacking Growth:
How Today's
Fastest-Growing
Companies Drive
Breakout Success**



**The Growth
Marketer's Playbook:
A Strategic Guide to
Growing a Business in
Today's Digital World**



**Growth Hacker
Marketing: A Primer
on the Future of
PR, Marketing,
and Advertising**

A B2B marketer's guide to content marketing

The second pillar which is core to any B2B demand generation strategy is content marketing. It's an area of B2B marketing which is growing in importance year on year. And with good reason - it's becoming an integral weapon in the business arsenal, with its capacity to delight audiences, convert customers and deliver strong ROI.

B2B content marketing stats and facts

- According to the **B2B Content Marketing 2019 Report**, commissioned by the Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs, 58% of B2B marketers spent more on content creation in 2018 than in any other year.
- Compared to traditional marketing methods, **content marketing costs 62% less** and, in terms of B2B lead generation, generates around three times the number of leads.
- On average, brands that use content marketing achieve conversion rates **six times higher** than those that don't.
- Salesforce UK set up a Social Success content site containing blogs, interviews, eBooks and videos. Three months later they were seeing **incredible results**: an 80% increase in traffic, 10,000 eBook downloads and 6,500 newsletter sign-ups. So even the big brands recognise the value of content marketing!

Why has B2B content marketing exploded?

Because it can deliver a raft of benefits to a business:

- **It builds brand awareness** - content is a highly effective and low-cost way of promoting your brand and attracting customers.
- **It creates backlinks** - if you have quality content on your website, then other websites will want to link their content with yours - increasing your own website's ranking.
- **It's the engine for good SEO** - quality content, fully optimised with relevant keywords, will ensure your company's website stays at the top of a search engine page.
- **It creates loyal customers** - if you keep providing insightful content, you'll build a fanbase who'll keep engaging and coming back to your brand, every single time.
- **It generates new leads and business** - content marketing ensures that your brand will be found by buyers and helps to convert them into customers.

Read on for a full end-to-end guide to B2B content marketing, from planning all the way to activation and measuring the success of your content strategy. It features top tips and advice from some of the top content marketers working in some of the biggest B2B and SaaS companies globally.

How to plan your content

**SALES
HACKER**

Meenakshi (Meenz) Nautiyal is the SEO Marketing Manager at **Sales Hacker, Inc.**, the world's largest online B2B sales community.

She has 9 years of experience in B2B and SaaS marketing, particularly in startup-phase companies. Her responsibilities at Sales Hacker include SEO and product marketing, content creation and website architecture.

For Meenz, successful content marketing starts with preparation and planning. *"Before you start creating your content, there are three things you need to do to get fully prepared,"* Meenz told us. *"They are: knowing who your audience is, aligning marketing with sales and building a content calendar."*

Meenz gave us good advice for each of these three stages:

1. Knowing your audience

*"To know your audience, you have to develop your **Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)**,"* said Meenz. *"Your ICP is a complete picture of your perfect buyer, including where they work, how they make decisions, and the kind of problems they're encountering daily. Once you know who your customer is, you can create content that is 100% targeted for them."*

Meenz had the following tips for building your ICP for content:

- ✓ **Interview your best customers** – they will have great insights to share about your product and how it's perceived in the wider industry. Use their knowledge to influence your content.
- ✓ **Focus on pain points** – get an understanding of the problems your customers are facing; your content should be providing solutions for them.
- ✓ **Listen to your sales team's cold calls** – you will learn what prospects in your industry are talking about, plus the language and terminology they use; feed this into your content.

2. Aligning marketing and sales

"Just as important as knowing your customer is getting marketing and sales aligned around content," said Meenz. She shared some ideas for aligning these two departments:

- ✓ **Create a shared library of your content** – save the content you produce in one central location. Google Drive, OneDrive and Dropbox are popular file storage options. Make sure your content is easy to find and stored in clearly labelled folders.
- ✓ **Schedule weekly content meetings** – get your senior marketers and salespeople together in one room. Brainstorm content topics and formats.
- ✓ **Unify your goals** – have your sales and marketing leaders agree on shared content objectives. What does a successful content marketing strategy look like? Decide on the aims of your content and select the metrics you're going to track.



3. Building a content calendar

"In my experience, it's always best to form an outline of your content before you start publishing it," said Meenz. "A content calendar will help you to plan out in detail the content you want, fully aligned to your business goals and important dates in your industry diary."

Here are some content calendar pointers from Meenz:

- **Plan your content on a quarterly basis** - this gives you the space to innovate and be flexible. You don't want to plan things too far ahead.
- **Include important dates and industry events in your calendar** - take advantage of these happenings by scheduling relevant content around them.
- **Always mix things up!** Don't just plan out the standard blog posts. Add videos, webinars, case studies, whitepapers and podcasts to your content marketing slate.


Cognism's content calendar

Are you looking to get your content marketing off to a flying start in 2020? Then download our free content calendar today! We use it to plan out our content months in advance, helping us to build a content strategy that's fully aligned with our **B2B lead generation** goals.

Cognism's content calendar template will help you to:

- ✓ Map out every piece of content on a day-by-day basis and never miss a deadline!
 - ✓ Get an overview of where your content is being shared throughout the year.
 - ✓ Keep internal stakeholders in your business informed about the types of content you're producing.
 - ✓ Align your content marketing efforts to the wider goals of your business.
- ✓ Match your content to the keywords you want to target in 2020.
 - ✓ Quickly spot any gaps in your content, empowering you to innovate and get creative!
 - ✓ Build a central repository of your content, which can be shared with anyone in your team!

Download our **FREE** content calendar template [here](#)



Date	Channel Strategy			Content Strategy		Campaign Strategy		Performance Strategy	
	Channel Type	Channel Name	Topic/Subject	Media Type	Topic	Channel	Channel	Channel	Channel
2020-01-01									
2020-01-02									
2020-01-03									
2020-01-04									
2020-01-05									
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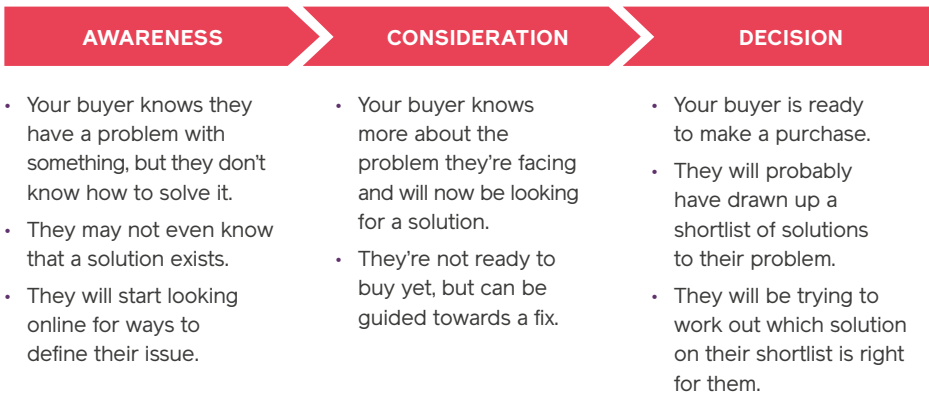
Mapping your content to the buyer's journey

B2B content marketing is a great way to make buyers aware of your brand and product. It can help you with **B2B lead generation** and turning those leads into customers. However, that's only if you do it right.

It doesn't matter what form your content marketing takes, whether it's a whitepaper, blog template, podcast, video or anything else; it's about reaching your prospect with the right piece of content at the right time. For that, you need to look at your buyer's journey and make sure your content has it covered. Let's find out more.

1. What is the buyer's journey?

Your buyer's journey is the path that someone takes from knowing nothing at all about your product and how it can help them, to becoming a customer and later, a raving fan. There is no one standard buyer's journey, but you can generally split the buyer's journey up into three stages.



When analysing your buyer's journey, remember, it's not about you, it's about the buyer.

You may also find that different buyers go through different journeys with you, depending on their circumstances. This is why buyer personas are essential in B2B content marketing.

2. Why content mapping is important

By studying the buyer's journey for your customers, then mapping your content to it, you'll quickly see what content you should be offering, and when.

You'll be able to create compelling pieces of content for each stage of your buyer's journey, guiding your buyer from awareness, through consideration and decision, to becoming a happy customer. You will also be able to get in front of the right buyers at the right time, improving their experience with your company, generating more leads and ultimately increasing your sales!





3. How to get started

The first thing you should do is go through your company’s entire library of content and analyse where each piece sits on your buyer’s journey. When you audit your content in this way, you can quickly see where the holes that need filling are.

Next, it’s time to create content that helps your buyer at each stage of their journey with you.

Cognism is happy to provide a free template, which you can use right away! Save it and use it at your company, to help you map out your content for each of your buyer personas.

PERSONA NAME:

	AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	DECISION
<div></div> <div>CONTENT TYPE</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blog post• Whitepaper• Infographic• Press release</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whitepaper• Webinar• Video• Case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-pager• Pricing slide• Case study• Product guide	
<div></div> <div>CONTENT THEME</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• SDR skills list• Cold calling how-to guide• Lead prospecting FAQ• Sales KPIs playbook</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sales tech stack guide• Sales Director interviews• Data cheatsheet• Customer review video	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Product explainer• Product features checklist• SMB customer testimonial• Competitor comparison	
<div></div> <div>KEYWORDS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• B2B lead generation• B2B prospecting• Outbound sales software• Outbound lead generation</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• B2B data• Revenue generation• Sales intelligence• Sales acceleration software	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ROI• Revenue technology• Growth• Scaling	
<div>CONTENT TITLE</div> <div>.....</div>	<div>.....</div>	<div>.....</div>	
<div></div> <div>ACTIVATION CHANNEL</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company website• LinkedIn• Twitter</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landing page• External publications• Email newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company website• LinkedIn• Personalised email	

Keywords and SEO

Once you've planned your content and created it, it's time to publish! How can you get as many people as possible to view it? One way is search engine optimisation, or SEO. A quick definition of SEO is:

"SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the practice of optimising content to be discovered through a search engine's organic search results."

From Ahrefs, What is SEO? [Search Engine Optimisation Explained](#)

Your guide for this section is **Kendall Walters**, Content Marketing Manager at **Vidyard**, the online video platform for business.

Kendall is a highly-experienced inbound content marketer, editor and award-winning writer. During a varied career, she has worked for several global brands, nonprofit organisations, marketing agencies and news publications.

Kendall's primary responsibilities at Vidyard include managing the Vidyard blog, creating in-depth downloadable content and producing copy for landing pages, web pages, blogs posts and more. Who better to give advice on the popular topic of SEO?

"Optimising blog content for search is one of the single most important things you can do to create an effective post - and channel - that drives organic traffic to your website," Kendall told us. "My top tip would be: think about keywords first!"

Kendall supplied us with three great ideas for picking the right keywords and enhancing your blog for search.



1. Research your keywords

"When I approach creating (or assigning) blog content, I always start with keyword research. Find out what questions people are asking around the topic you want to write about. Doing this is an incredibly powerful way to determine what information your piece needs to include in order to be valuable to your audience."

"It's also a great way to identify other possible topics you can write about. I use SEO tools to research the topic and related terms until I have a primary term and a nice bucket of latent semantic indexing (LSI) keywords to go with it."



2. Research your competitors

"Next, I conduct competitor research to see if they have published posts that are already ranking for the required topic. I look to see if there's anything they're missing."

"This allows me to identify if there are any opportunities for me to provide a more in-depth, well-researched, or well-written post. I also look at the content my organisation has already published on this topic (or related topics) so I can include relevant internal links. I use this information to build out the skeleton of my blog post."

"Often the keywords will provide you with some guidance on what sections the post needs to have."



3. Optimise your blog

"From there, I continue to research the topic as I write to ensure the piece is as well-informed and educational as possible. When it comes to editing, I like to pull up the keywords so I can guarantee they appear in the most important parts of the blog post (for me, these are the headline, the first 100 words and the subheaders)."

"Once reviewed, I move on to staging the post. This is where I include the primary keyword in the meta description, metadata for images and the URL."

How to amplify your content

Content needs an audience. Publishing engaging, persuasive content is not enough - you need it to reach people. For this, you need a strategy for content amplification that gets your content seen.

Karla Rivershaw is Head of Marketing at **Turtl**, the premium content creation software. Karla has a great deal of experience in marketing strategies that push content to the right people at the right time. She gave us her five top tips for content amplification.

Turtl



1. Know your audience

"Before you start spending time on amplifying your content, you need to know where your ideal customers spend their time," Karla told us. "Once you have this information, you can start targeting them where they are."

"To begin, develop your Ideal Customer Profile or ICP. Your ICP is a comprehensive description of your perfect customer; the kind of customer that can find massive benefits from your product or service, while also being able to give you enough value in return to make your business profitable."

Why is ICP important? When you build a detailed picture of your ideal customer, you can work out:

- What they enjoy doing.
- Where they spend their time.
- What media channels they consume.
- The types of content that they will respond best to.



2. Bring in influencers

The sad truth is: no-one cares what marketers think! Everyone knows the famous B2B sales quote, *"People buy from people."* The same is true in B2B marketing.

"To make an impact with your content, you need to get someone to front it who your ideal customers know, like and trust," Karla said. "That way, when they see it, they will engage with it and act on it. What you need are influencers!"

Karla gave us a definition of influencers and the best strategies for getting them to work with you:

"Influencers are thought leaders that have a following of people who fit your ICP. A good place to start is to seek them out on LinkedIn and invite them to collaborate with

you on content. You'll find this is easier than it sounds - people who have achieved influencer status in their careers are unlikely to turn down the opportunity to reach even more people!"

"My advice is to interview influencers in your industry and turn your conversations into blog articles. Afterwards, leverage the power of influencer networks to promote your content - influencers typically bring huge audiences with them."



3. Grow your networks

Karla had some useful tips to share for growing your business network. "As a content marketer, you should always be looking to grow your network and your own sphere of influence. Set yourself weekly or monthly targets to search for potential contributors and partners. LinkedIn is a great resource for people working in B2B."

Events are also important. "Attend events and meet as many people as you can," Karla advised. "When you take someone's business card, make sure you follow up. Once you have started a relationship, use it. Ask your partners to share your content. It's a free and easy way to achieve amplification."

Karla had a bonus tip for us - when you post content to social media, tag people you think might be interested in what you have shared. All it takes is for one influencer to see your work, then retweet it or share it - and you never know, it may go viral! Again, it's free and super easy.



4. Focus on quality

"It sounds obvious, but the best way for content to find an audience is for it to be good!" Karla told us. "Quality content is good for two reasons."

- **It's good for growing an audience organically** - if you frequently publish superior content, your readers will share it and your following will grow.
- **It's good for Google** - when you follow Google's guidelines around creating valuable content, your website will rank higher in their search engine results. That means more people will see it.

Unsure about what constitutes quality content? You'll find Google's own guidelines [here](#).



5. If it works, do more of it!

Karla's guidance is to measure everything related to your content. If you don't, how will you know if it's working or not?

*"At the start of your content amplification strategy, it's important to A/B test," Karla said. "Try out different methods, ideas and channels; you'll quickly see which ones are the most successful. Study your **B2B data** - Google Analytics is a great tool for website engagement data. If you use a social media scheduling tool, use its reporting function to get a clear picture of your most popular audiences, as well as the best days/times for you to post."*

"Then, focus your energies on what works. Keep pumping out regular, quality content, aimed at your ideal customers and their pain points, on the channels where they spend their time - and you'll quickly find success!"



Juro

Using content to close deals

Tom Bangay is Director of Content at **Juro**, the end-to-end contract management platform. Tom has a wealth of experience in content management and production, and knows how B2B startups and scaleups can leverage the power of content to grow quickly.

Tom's advice about using content to close deals will help you think about content in a strategic way, using it to speed up the sales cycle and get your target prospects to sign on the dotted line!



1. Personalise your content

Personalisation is an extremely powerful facet of content marketing. Everyone likes to feel like they're being spoken to directly, after all. Personalising your content is one great way to build trust and get crucial buy-in from key stakeholders.

Personalising every bit of content, though? It sounds like a lot of work – but it doesn't have to be. Tom's top tip is not to create new personalised pieces every time. Instead, adapt the content you already have.

"Let's say, for instance, you have a prospect who's really close to signing," Tom began. "Your sales team is desperate for a relevant case study that nails their exact use case – but there isn't one! In this scenario, don't think you have to create a new case study from scratch. Take a look at the ones you've already written. You might be able to rephrase a couple of lines to make it perfect for that specific prospect: specialised for an audience of one."

"It might not need a great deal of time and effort, either – changing a few words here and there might do it! Just make sure you're focused on the prospect's pain points and how your product can provide the perfect solution."



2. Align marketing and sales

"Content marketing is a long-term strategy," highlighted Tom. "For best results, you need to keep churning out content that's relevant at every stage of the sales funnel. This is where content marketing comes into its own. It helps to guide prospects through the funnel, nurturing and delighting them, until they eventually become customers."

To make the most of this process, you need both marketing (the content creators) and sales (the deal-makers) singing from the same hymn sheet. Tom recommended setting up regular cross-team meetings to identify...

- The target accounts that your sales team are focusing their efforts on.
- The types of content that will be needed for each of those accounts.

If you're a salesperson who's got an account that's very close to closing – bring in your content creator! Maybe there's a content piece that will help you get the deal over the line. Startups and scaleups often target an incredibly narrow niche – if sales have become hyper-focused, content should too.



3. Choose your content wisely

In business as in life, everyone is different. Everyone responds to content in different ways. Some people love videos, for example, while others prefer good old-fashioned text-based content. So, you have to choose the types of content you produce wisely. How can you make informed decisions around content?

"The first step is to go back to your buyer personas," said Tom. "What do they tell you about your target prospects? What kinds of content do they typically enjoy? Use the insights to prepare a content plan for each prospect."

*"Bear in mind, though, that people will be looking to engage with different types of content throughout their buyer's journey with your brand. At the Awareness stage, short-form top-of-funnel content is best. Prospects might only have the appetite for long-form content when they reach the Decision stage. **LinkedIn Marketing Labs** has identified that, on average, buyers consume 10 pieces of content before making a purchasing decision."*



4. Pick the right channels

Just as important as knowing the types of content that resonate with your buyers is knowing which channels to reach them on. *"Again, your buyer personas will tell you which platforms your prospects are primarily using,"* Tom told us.

"Another good source of information is your sales team. Ask your salespeople where their conversations are happening. Are your prospects engaging with sales over social media (LinkedIn, Twitter etc.) or on email?"

"Don't forget the power of direct mail in this regard. Handwritten letters and physical gifts can be very successful drivers of engagement, especially in this digitally-saturated age. Sending a prospect a hard-copy book you wrote establishes a permanent physical reminder of your value proposition and ensures that your brand stays on their desk."

Define the best place to engage with your target accounts – and then double down on it. If you have one paid content channel that beats the rest consistently, ditch all the others and increase your cadence on the winning channel. Keep pumping out relevant content in the right place and you'll be in a much better position to steer your prospect towards closing.



5. Establish your brand as an authority

This is perhaps the hardest part of the content marketing puzzle. Marketing Donut has highlighted that only **2% of sales are closed on the first meeting**; the other 98% will buy only once a certain level of trust has been built up.

To get higher close rates, you need to build up trust around your brand. Content marketing is your path to getting there. Tom showed us how.

"Bring in experts to front your content. Find influencers and thought leaders in your industry, people who other people respect and listen to. Connect with them and set up as many interviews with them as you can."

"This isn't as difficult as it sounds. Someone who's achieved influencer status in their career is unlikely to reject a request to influence even more people. There are people keen for the spotlight in every industry vertical. Use their interviews as the basis for your content."

Tom identified three benefits to using contributors in this way:

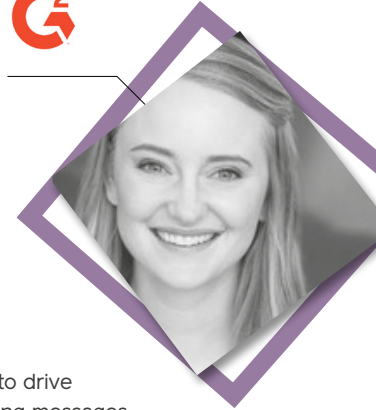
- **It gives you regular, relevant content to publish** - and it doesn't cost you anything to produce!
- **It helps to quickly build brand awareness** - influencers bring their own audiences with them.
- **It will build that all-important trust around your company** - which means that prospects will be much more likely to close deals with you.

Repurposing content

Content marketing isn't always about creating something new - it's about being clever and resourceful with what you've created already. For this section, we called on the expertise of **Kristen McCabe**. Kristen has worked in marketing on two separate continents, from being a Marketing and Events Coordinator for the **Australian Association of National Advertisers** to her work as a Content Marketing Manager for **G2** in the USA. Currently, Kristen is a consultant offering businesses guidance in digital marketing and branding, and teaches content marketing at the **General Assembly** in Chicago.

Kristen's approach to marketing involves using data-driven insights to drive creative thinking. She is passionate about building authentic marketing messages and campaigns that resonate with people. Kristen's specialties in marketing include copywriting, SEO, video and events.

We asked Kristen for her thoughts on repurposing content and she gave us three core areas to focus on.



1. Video

"Video is a really powerful tool for storytelling and making a connection with your audience," Kristen said. "But don't think you have to make videos totally from scratch. If you've been publishing content for a while, then you've already built up a library of blog posts, infographics and case studies. You can use the content you already have as the basis for your videos."

"Look at the analytics for your blog. Which posts are the most popular with your audience? Once you find that out, you can take those blogs and create videos out of them. If you have a blog with, say, four sections, then that's four videos! That gives you a series of videos you can promote on social media over weeks or months."

"Include video as a separate section on your content calendar. Build out a strategy for video production and promotion. Every month, identify your top-performing blogs and block out some space on your calendar for videos."

When it comes to video, budget is a traditional concern for B2B marketers. "Video can be expensive, but it doesn't have to be," Kristen told us. "Nowadays, everyone has decent HD cameras on their smartphones! There are free tools available as well. I've used **Lumen5**, which lets you create professional-looking videos in minutes. All you need to do is copy and paste your blog post, select your images and music, and it will create the video for you. It's a great option for companies with limited marketing budgets."

If you're looking to create videos of yourself, co-workers, or customers, Kristen suggests learning a few essentials. "Take the time to research the basics when it comes to lighting and sound. You can chat to the camera and give an amazing delivery, but if

the technical element falls short, so does the professionalism of your video. And, when you really want to bump things up a level, the film production community is full of amazing freelancers ready to help!"



2. Quora

"Quora has been a really successful channel for me," Kristen said. "It's an online Q&A forum, where users can ask questions and get replies from anyone. I've found it to be very effective because the people who post on Quora are looking for answers; they're looking for insights and knowledge-sharing. That's perfect for content marketing!"

"I search for questions that are relevant to my business and industry. You can use a keyword search to find them. Questions with lots of upvotes and answers are the best ones to get involved with - these are the threads that the most amount of people are looking at. Then, I contribute to the discussion, writing a short-form answer and including a link to the long-form blog at the end."

"Getting involved on Quora like this is a great way of repurposing your content. It helps to position you and your brand as thought leaders to be trusted. It also helps to drive more traffic to your website. Another benefit is that it shows you what topics people in your industry are interested in. This can give you inspiration for future blog posts, videos etc."



3. Podcasts and webinars

"Podcasts and webinars have never been more popular," said Kristen. "They're only going to grow as a marketing channel in the next few years. Again, they're a good means of repurposing content. Take your most popular blogs and turn them into podcasts. If there are topics your audience is particularly interested in, setup some webinars based around those topics."

Kristen emphasised the value of outside contributors. *"In content marketing, one of the most powerful things you can do is get some external contributors to be a guest star in your podcasts and webinars," she advised. "Reach out to thought leaders in your industry. Ask them if they'd like to be interviewed for your podcast. Influencers bring with them their own audience of followers, which is a great thing for engagement!"*

Much like video, Kristen believed that lack of budget shouldn't be a deterrence for setting up podcasts and webinars. *"There are free tools and platforms out there," she said. "If you don't know where to start, I can recommend the **G2 website**. It's a great resource for finding the right software for your business!"*

Measuring the success of content marketing

Creating content and sharing it are just the first steps in your content marketing strategy. To achieve your goals with content marketing, it's essential to measure and track everything you do. Then, use your findings to optimise and improve your content marketing in the future.

Whenever and wherever you publish a piece of content, you create **B2B data**. This data can be monitored and used to improve your content marketing game.

We sat down with **Emily Byford**. Emily is the Content Marketing Manager at **SaaStock**, a global community of software as a service (SaaS) founders, executives, and investors. Cognism was an exhibitor at the SaaStock 2019 flagship event in Dublin.

Emily shared her insights into measuring B2B content marketing success in three main areas. But before you can measure, you need to know what you are measuring for.

SaaStock



Set your content marketing goals

"Before you start publishing content, think about what you want to achieve," Emily said. "If you don't know what your goals are, how will you know if you're being successful?"

Emily's ideas for goals were improving numbers around:

- ✓ **B2B lead generation** - names at the start of your sales funnel.
- ✓ **Brand awareness** - making people more aware of who your company is and what you do.
- ✓ **Engagement** - views, dwell time and shares for your content.
- ✓ **Lead nurturing** - moving leads along your sales funnel.
- ✓ **Sales** - turning leads into customers.
- ✓ **Customer retention** - getting existing customers to buy from you again.
- ✓ **Subscription growth** - adding numbers to your subscription service.

Once you've set your goals, it's time to decide which metrics to track.

Emily showed us the metrics that matter across the three main content marketing channels.



1. Search engines

"Many of your potential buyers will find your content through search engines such as Google," Emily confirmed. "You need to make your content as easy to find as possible, driving more traffic to your website. How do you go about doing this? By improving your SEO skills!"

"The goal of good SEO is to get your content to rank as highly as possible on search engine results for your chosen keywords. Google is clever enough that if you work out your keywords and write content that provides value to the reader, it will reward your content with a high ranking."

"Be careful, though! Don't overstuff your content with keywords. It's bad for the reader and bad for your ranking. Google's algorithm will spot what you're up to and penalise you by pushing your website down the list, making it harder for people to find."

Here are the three search engine metrics you need to track for your content marketing:

IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	SITE VISITORS
The number of times your content was shown on Search Engine Results Pages (SERPS).	The number of times users chose to visit your content after seeing it show up in search results.	The number of users that came to your site. They could be new users, reading your content for the first time, or returning users who are loyal to your content.



2. Your website

"Once a visitor is on your website and engaging with your content, there are several opportunities to measure success," Emily continued.

Here are the three website metrics Emily recommends that you track:

UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS	PAGES PER VISIT	BOUNCE RATE
The number of times a page on your site has been visited by a user, excluding repeat visits.	<p>The average number of pages on your site a user visits when they come to your site.</p> <p>This is calculated by dividing total page views by the number of visitors.</p>	The proportion of users that leave your site after viewing only one page, expressed as a percentage.



3. Social media

"Social media is where you promote your content," Emily explained. "It's also where readers who find value in your content may choose to share it with others. Of course, there are metrics you can track to evaluate your success here too."

Emily gave us these important metrics to track:

REACH	ENGAGEMENT	AUDIENCE GROWTH RATE
The total number of social media profiles that see your content.	The number of interactions your content receives. This can differ by social media platform. For example, on Facebook, you can receive likes, shares and new followers.	The change in your company's number of followers across all social media platforms.

Emily had one last bonus tip for us:

"The one thing you need to track across all your channels is your conversion rate. Your conversion rate is the percentage of users who view your content, then go on to do what you want them to do. For example, if the goal of a piece of content is to drive subscribers to your newsletter, your conversion rate is the percentage of people who, after reading your content, click 'subscribe'."

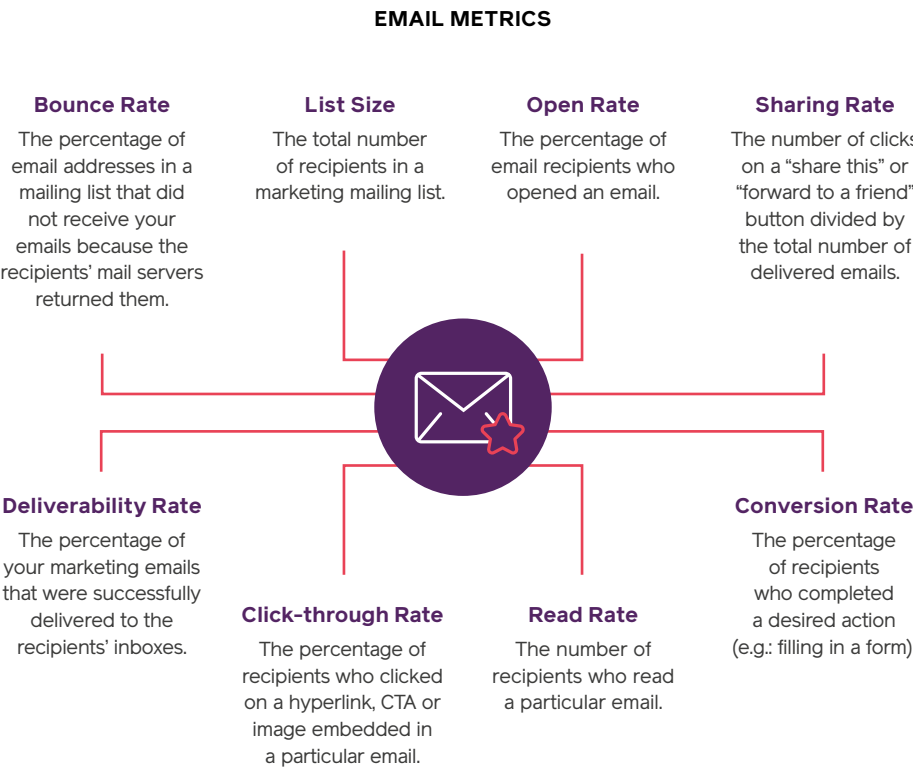
"In this example, you would track conversions by setting up unique codes in the links inside your content, which tell your CRM where each subscription comes from."

The must-track B2B marketing metrics for demand generation

B2B marketing is evolving from an art to a science. There are many advanced reporting tools now available, including free platforms such as Google Analytics. Marketers are able to measure their performance as never before.

But which metrics do you really need to track for B2B demand generation? Marketing is, after all, a very broad church, involving lots of interconnected disciplines and functions.

Cognism's Head of Marketing, **Alice de Courcy**, has given us a list of the B2B marketing KPIs which really matter to her. We've put them into a useful infographic for all marketers to use. Measure them regularly and use the insights you'll gain to optimise and accelerate your B2B marketing activity.



SOCIAL METRICS



Retweets and Shares

The number of retweets and shares a specific social post gets.



Followers

How many followers your company has on a particular social media channel.



Post Volume

How many social posts your company makes during a specific time frame.



Likes and Favourites

The number of likes and favourites a specific social post gets.

Lead Number

The number of leads generated through social media activity.



Follower Growth Rate

The number of new followers you gain on a social media platform during a specific time frame.

Engagement Rate

The number of engagements on a piece of content (likes, shares, comments) divided by the number of followers.



Referral Rate

The percentage of your website visitors who are coming to your site from social media.

PAID SEARCH METRICS



Impressions

The number of times your ad is shown on a search engine results page.



Ad Position

The position of your ad on a search engine results page in relation to other ads.



Cost per Impression

The total number of impressions per ad divided by 1,000.



Click Rate

The total number of times your ad is clicked on.



Lead Rate

The number of leads each ad generates.



Cost Per Lead

The total cost of your ad campaign divided by the number of generated leads.



Cost Per Click

The total cost of your ad campaign divided by the number of clicks.



Closed Deal Rate

How many deals were closed from a paid ad campaign.

WEBSITE AND CONTENT METRICS

Form Submissions

The total number of times a form was completed on a webpage.

Content Shares

The number of times your content is shared during a specific time period.

Unique Page Views

The number of times a specific webpage was viewed at least once.

Conversion Rate

The number of unique visitors to a website who turned into customers divided by the total number of unique visitors.

Content ROI

The total amount of revenue generated from each piece of content divided by the costs of producing the content.

Content Downloads

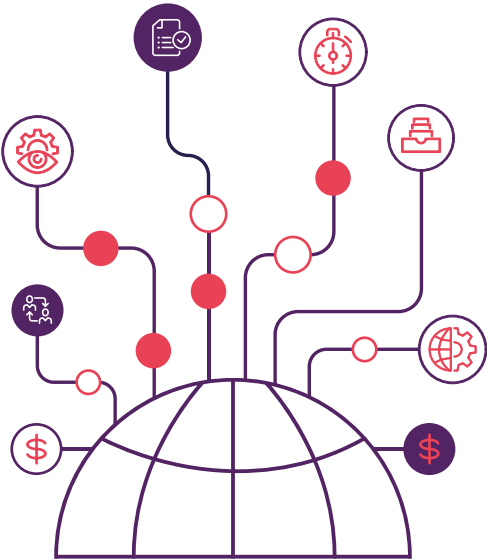
The number of times a piece of gated content was downloaded.

Leads Generated

The number of leads generated from website or content activity.

Website ROI

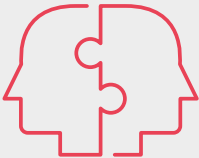
The total amount of revenue generated from website activity divided by the investment costs of running your website.



CHANNEL PERFORMANCE METRICS

Leads by Channel

The number of leads generated from a specific marketing channel.



Closed-Won Deals by Channel

The number of closed-won deals generated from a specific marketing channel.

Four strategies for B2B sales and marketing alignment

Over the course of this guide, we've talked a lot about aligning marketing and sales. And with good reason - it's a foundation principle of B2B demand generation.

Michael Levy is the Principal at **GZ Consulting**, the B2B industry's leading sales and market intelligence consultancy. He has pinpointed four winning strategies for sales and marketing alignment.



1. Account-based marketing (ABM)

In recent years, account-based marketing (ABM) has risen to the top of the B2B marketer's toolkit for demand generation. ABM identifies the top customers and prospects based upon an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP). While an ICP can be defined as a set of firmographic selects (e.g. size, geography, industry codes, installed technology), this approach only makes sense when launching a company or product.

Once a firm has established itself, the ICP should be based upon a company's own data (e.g. wins, losses, renewals, upgrades, churn). By combining company data with a reference **B2B data set**, a better targeted ICP can be defined. This customer base can then be expanded to identify similar companies.

Sales and marketing organisations can then identify a common set of company properties (firmographics, technographics, business signals, sales triggers) to expand their universe of high-priority prospects and customers.

The importance of demand units

The ICP provides a top company and prospects list for the organisation. Sales should be targeting demand units (buying committees) consisting of purchasing, technical decision-makers, economic decision-makers, and influencers.

Targeting one or two people at a firm or blanketing an organisation with marketing are both inefficient. If the rep only sells to end-users or technical decision-makers, he or she misses most of the demand unit members.

ABM, with its focus on demand units at top customers and prospects, supports targeted messaging across the full set of decision-makers and influencers. Furthermore, focusing on a smaller set of companies in distinct verticals allows for the development of narrowly defined messaging and content based upon demand unit personas.



2. The Chief Revenue Officer (CRO)

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) subscription models place a greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and coordination between functions. In this environment, maintaining distinct sales, marketing, and support departments under separate management makes less sense. Instead, greater coordination and alignment between the functions are required to grow revenues and reduce churn.

So, firms have started to create a Chief Revenue Officer role, which oversees sales, marketing, and customer success teams. The CRO is responsible for managing the customer journey and defining metrics and processes which support the customer and grow the top line.



3. B2B Data-as-a-Service (DaaS)

Sales and marketing were a bit slow to recognise the value of B2B DaaS as it lacked the “shiny new object” appeal of other demand generation solutions. But there are many benefits to it.

B2B DaaS supports many corporate processes including:

- Digital marketing landing pages (improved web forms).
- Duplicate record management.
- Lead enrichment.
- Customer segmentation and reporting.
- Audience targeting.
- Lead scoring and routing.
- Researching accounts, contacts and leads within CRMs.
- **B2B prospecting** based upon persona (function, level, location).
- AI initiatives.

How B2B DaaS works

B2B DaaS prefills CRM and MAP records during customer, sales, and service data entry. It then maintains data quality, increasing sales rep confidence in CRM intelligence and improving AI-based recommendations. B2B DaaS reduces wasted time keying in company and contact information and provides standardised intelligence such as industry codes, job functions, and sizing data.

The benefits of B2B DaaS for sales and marketing

Not only are enriched records more reliable, but sales reps can focus on activities where they excel and take joy – interacting with customers and prospects. Because account and contact intelligence are prefilled and automatically maintained, reps can focus on account planning, messaging, and reaching out to the broader demand unit.

Thus, sales reps are more effective and efficient. Likewise, marketers benefit from improved **B2B lead generation**, webform prefills, better lead management decision-making, improved segmentation, and better audience building and messaging.



4. Sales Engagement Platforms (SEPs)

The last alignment driver is the rise of Sales Engagement Platforms (SEPs), which support a strategic approach to sales messaging and account prioritisation.

Five years ago, there was a clear handoff between B2B sales and B2B marketing. Once a lead was deemed marketing qualified, it was sent to sales which often ignored the lead. Instead, leads were often generated by sales reps. Now that leads are better targeted due to ABM and data enrichment before being passed to sales, reps can immediately kick off a cadence of messages from the SEP.

Once a better-qualified lead is passed to sales, they can perform a “double-tap” by placing a cold call and emailing a contact on the first day. What’s more, the sales emails and subsequent steps are pre-planned and A/B tested by sales operations and marketing to ensure that messaging is optimised.

Dynamic lead prioritisation

SEPs support dynamic lead prioritisation so that reps can focus on the next best activity throughout the day. Much of the non-customer interfacing overhead in sales (populating CRMs, prioritising tasks, setting follow-up tasks and documenting call disposition) is automated by B2B DaaS and SEP vendors.

Improving sales productivity

While this automated engagement sounds like sales decision-making has been removed, this is far from the case. Sales reps decide which outbound cadences to employ, which products and services to pitch, and how to personalise each message. When much of the administrative overhead is removed, sales reps can focus on building authentic one-to-one messages with each member of the demand unit.

Improving personalisation

Unlike marketing automation which sends general messages to prospects, sales reps can use SEPs to review and customise emails before sending them. This provides an opportunity to personalise each message by vertical, function, or previous discussions. In this case, automation supports more authentic relationships between buyers and sellers by allowing reps to focus on messaging.

The benefits of SEPs

With SEPs, sales reps can be confident that:

- They are focusing on decision-makers at ABM prospects.
- Their time is allocated to the next best activity.
- Their messages are tested for efficacy.
- Follow-up tasks are scheduled even though they are not stopping to consider their next steps.

How the four trends drive better alignment

The four trends (ABM, CRO, B2B DaaS, and SEP) all promote sales and marketing alignment in the following ways:

- They are all focused on closer relationships with top prospects.
- They provide improved information and messaging at every stage in the buyer's journey.
- They promote customer insights and a focus on demand units.
- They synchronise activities across the two revenue functions.
- They rely on a common reference data set that is continuously maintained across sales and marketing platforms.
- They drive a common set of defined metrics and definitions, such as lead scoring models, ideal customer profiles, and buyer personas.

A blueprint for demand generation success

Building a demand generation engine that is repeatable and predictable is hard work. It requires just the right balance of long-term strategies, such as SEO plays, in combination with shorter-term strategies which can drive quick-win demand and feed a hungry sales team with aggressive growth targets.

Start building your content and SEO strategies from Day 1, as these lay the foundations for scalable and efficient growth. At the same time, build out a stream of paid advertising tests to run. Don't get put off by a need to spend large budgets to gain insights which are seen to have statistical significance - you can learn a lot on as little as \$500.00!

Wherever you can, build networks. Leverage partners, affiliates and thought leaders to bring authority and new audiences to your efforts. And a final thought - don't overlook more traditional marketing demand generation methods such as webinars and whitepapers. If you do anything differently, let it be that you build them on the validation of an MVP first. This is our blueprint to demand generation success.

Contact Cognism today

Cognism is the perfect tool for demand generation. Find your ideal B2B customers, automate your email marketing campaigns and build a scalable, repeatable foundation for revenue growth.

Want more information about the world's best all-in-one globally compliant prospecting solution? We'd love to show you all the benefits we can offer over a quick, 15-minute demo. Click the link below to register your interest!



Request your demo now

