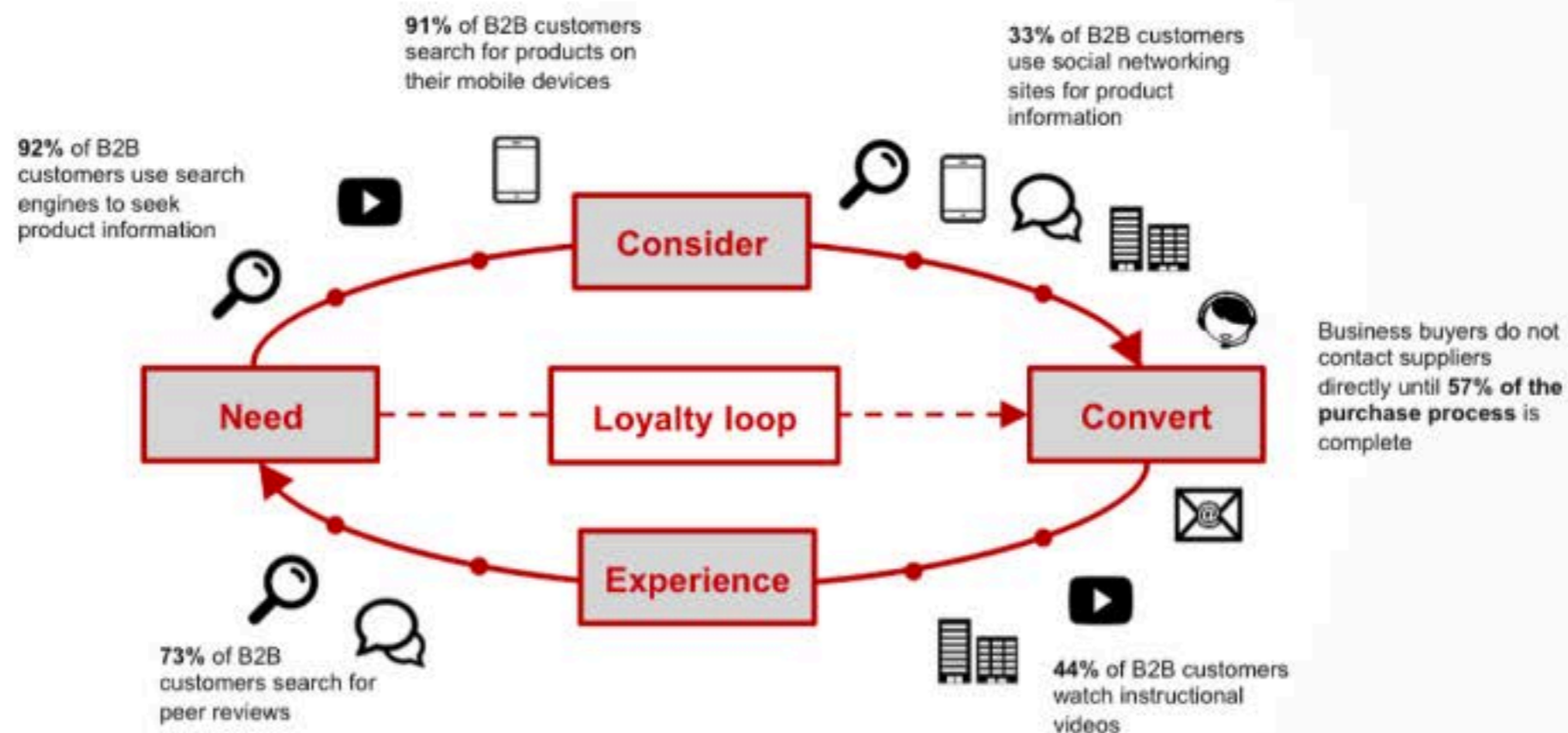


To-Do List For B2B Digital Marketing

by Mads Krogh Petersen

Google, Forrester and others have helped us understand the significant role of digital in the decision making process. However, it can be difficult to convert this potential into specific digital activities geared to deliver on the business' strategic objectives. As a consequence, a digital marketing strategy in business-to-business is often limited to a corporate website featuring diverse product presentations and a LinkedIn Company Page. Both are essential ingredients, yet more can be done to deliver across the different steps of the decision making process.

- Search
- Social
- Digital content
- Company website
- Mobile and tablet
- Direct contact
- Direct email



The role of digital across the different stages of the decision journey

Here are some of the basic to-dos for a B2B marketer who takes digital seriously:

Corporate Website – what is its role?

You inevitably need to take your corporate website seriously rather than perceive it as a parenthesis in your marketing and sales strategy. Content needs to be based on customer insights including search patterns and intelligent linked to whatever you are selling. It is the *occasional resource* in the sense that your target audience is unlikely to visit the site except at the specific time they are considering buying from you. However, this is towards the *end of the customer decision journey*, and you want to influence the attitude and opinions of your stakeholders at an earlier stage to maximize the likelihood of conversion.

Digital Event Amplification

As a B2B company it is likely that you are using physical events to present your product and services to the market. Only a fraction of your target audience will attend your events, due to time and cost restraints or other priorities. You should use digital to reach out during the events delivering the bespoke event content through the digital channels targeting non-attendees within your target audience. This requires a full understanding of digital channels and media, including your CRM database, Twitter, LinkedIn, digital key opinion leaders, your industry's primary digital destination for information gathering and all media products available including **Sponsored updates**, **Promoted Tweets** or **Promoted Stories** by Outbrain.

Introduce Social in the Sales Process

The quick and effective way to get your sales force started on “social” is via a curation approach. This means that you need to educate your sales people to share *and* comment on relevant content pertaining to your industry. This of course, requires an understanding of “relevance” and available content. Most importantly, it also requires an opinion of why the specific piece of content is important to the target audience. The job of the marketing function is to provide instructions and a short list with content articles and “plug and play” opinions, which can be adjusted by the individual sales manager. [Click Here For How To.](#)

Humanize and Customize your Sales Presentation In Real Time & Learn

Digital should enter the *face to face* meeting beyond the omnipresent Power Point. Best practice include tablets which offer the opportunity to create a hitherto unseen level of engagement in sales meetings. The tablet *humanizes* the digital experience by offering a social, interactive experience fueled by finger touch. Attention is diverted *from* nuisances such as laptop hardware, the mouse, boot time and navigation to truly engaging the prospect through the discipline of Solution Selling. Also, it enables collaborative customization based on probing, questions and answers during the sales meeting. The customized presentation should be distributed to the prospect after the meeting. The presentation is accessed by the prospect via a link distributed via email and viewed as an overlay on the B2B customer portal. All interaction data from the meeting and beyond are stored in a database. Data is leveraged to optimize sales meetings and propositions thereby making a closed marketing loop.

Content Hub for Thought Leadership

You should use content marketing for the times when your stakeholders are not interested in talking to a sales guy. That is most of the time in a complex decision process. In addition to the curation concept described above, you need to create your own content for a fully fledged content marketing plan. This content should be placed on a dedicated thought leader content hub, and not on a tab or menu point on your corporate website. One reason is that true thought leadership and commercial content do not melt well. If you do it well, you become a major destination within your category for information gathering. You continuously curate trending content, you deliver opinions on the trending content, and you blend your own content in the mix to support the extended customer decision journey.

Integrate Social in the Face-to-Face Meeting

Understanding industry key conversations taking place in social media and trends in content consumption is a perfect conversation starter with business decision makers. This understanding can be leveraged as an “excuse” for your sales force to meet more often with decision makers. As an example, in my work in Healthcare, integrating insights on social media conversations in a given therapeutic area into a face-to-face sales presentation, has been proven to provide an edge vis-a-vis competitors.

Build a Large (quality) Contactable Audience

The end game is to get ONE and complete view of the customer in your CRM system. However in the digital sphere you will often not hold more “intimate” details such as business e-mail and mobile number, and your history of interaction may be as seemingly tenuous as a *like*, *retweet* or a *comment* on one of your content pieces. So fill up the channels with a large volume of targets via your LinkedIn company page, Twitter profile, your email database, Favorite lists, etc. Be mindful that it will take time, it should go on infinitely and you constantly need to maintain the quality of your contactable audience.

Create Social Media Stars

You need a “spiritual leader” in your company which delivers your brands’ take on today and tomorrow through social media. At an extreme she becomes an “influencer” on LinkedIn, builds a following in the tens of 1000s on Twitter, co-author article with analyst companies, the Forbes of this world, and other VIPs in the industry. Her view points are constantly commented on, liked, retweeted and otherwise cited and circulated across the digital sphere. Sounds simple? Yes, but have a look something as basic as the LinkedIn profiles of most C-level folks, and it does seem obvious that we still have some ground to cover. In addition, you may also sponsor third party digital Key Opinion Leaders to further elaborate on perspectives within the category to extend credible visibility.

Make Digital Part of Your Product or Service

Marketing in the classical *promotional* sense and as an “isolated” discipline is on the decline. People do not want to consume marketing *per se*. You need to integrate your marketing and the delivery of value at each interaction with the customer, and digital is a scalable enabler. New examples appear every day. Here are a few examples:

- Cloud software such as Salesforce allows for contextual and task based marketing. You buy add on functionality as it is immediately required for your task at hand.
- Online banking systems dynamically offer add-on services carefully tailored to the financial transaction undertaken based on complete view of the financial engagement with the bank.
- Patient Support Programmes deliver customized “information pills” to each patient extending the pharmaceutical company’s proposition beyond an often commoditised product.

Digital as an Eco-system

“Test and learn” and “one step at the time” in order to prove ROI are well known credos in most companies.

However, some things work best at scale. Just like you would never expect an incomplete product to succeed commercially, you cannot expect disparate digital tactics to have a significant impact. You need to add the above ingredients to your digital strategy to activate the potential of digital. At Vertic we call it **Entanglement**.