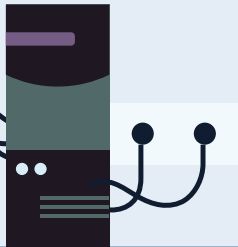
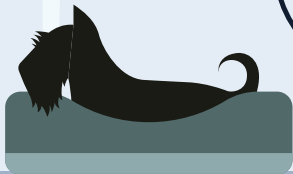
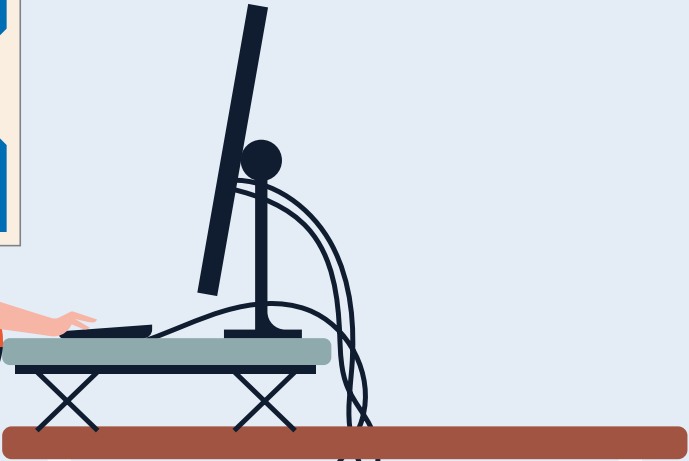
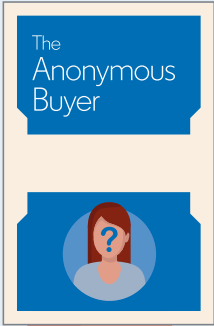




# How to market to **Anonymous** Tech Buyers

Tactics to reinvigorate  
your demand generation and ROI





# Welcome to the world of the Anonymous Buyer

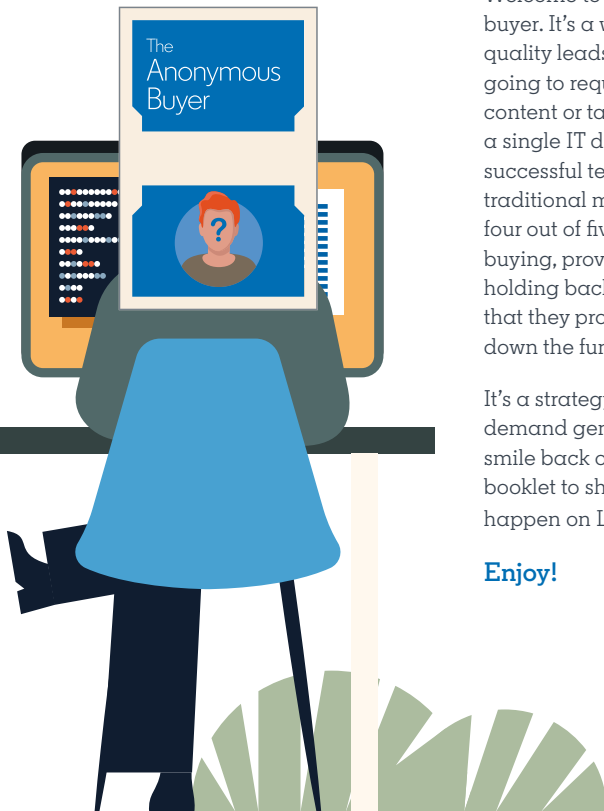
This should be a boom time for the tech sector, with businesses in almost constant buying mode and 40% planning to increase their spending on IT this year. And so why does LinkedIn data show tech marketers to be 10 percentage points less happy than their marketing peers?

As a marketer on the frontline of demand generation, you probably know the answer. The chances are you're feeling the effects of a fundamental shift in how businesses buy tech. It's a change that leaves traditional lead generation strategies with diminishing returns because 81% of the people now involved in IT purchases are actively avoiding filling in lead generation forms.

Welcome to the world of the anonymous buyer. It's a world where delivering high-quality leads to your sales colleagues is going to require more than just gating content or targeting your campaigns at a single IT decision-maker. Today's most successful tech businesses are flipping the traditional marketing model, inspiring the four out of five employees now involved in IT buying, providing value from first touch, and holding back their lead generation tactics so that they provide better quality MQLs further down the funnel.

It's a strategy that can reinvigorate your demand generation, boost ROI and put a smile back on your face. We've created this booklet to share ideas for how to make it happen on LinkedIn.

**Enjoy!**



# The new tech-buying journey

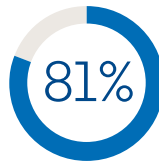
The traditional tech marketing model was built for a world where a single IT decision-maker (ITDM) took the lead on almost all tech buying decisions. They were easy to identify and target, and happy to share their details and have follow-up conversations because it made them better at their job.

This isn't how most tech buying journeys now work. Tech-savvy employees at all levels are confident about suggesting solutions based on their own experience and new providers they've heard about. Thanks to Freemium business models they're often able to experiment with new ways of doing things without going through a procurement process.

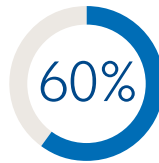
In fact,  
**50%**  
of IT purchases  
no longer go through  
formal approval.



It's not the job of these new buyers to sign cheques. It's their role to experience a solution and get a sense of what your business is all about first.



of buyers today say they avoid filling in contact forms



of buyers say they're not comfortable sharing details with a business they haven't already worked with

**They don't see it as their role to take a sales call – but that doesn't stop them driving a purchase decision forward.**

LinkedIn's in-depth study of global IT buying trends shows that anonymous buyers pay far less attention to specs and prices, and focus instead on Reputation, Recognition and Reviews. When tech businesses flip the traditional marketing model, they are able to create the experiences that deliver on these three R's. This is what earns the right to generate high-quality leads further down the funnel.

## Helping anonymous buyers buy

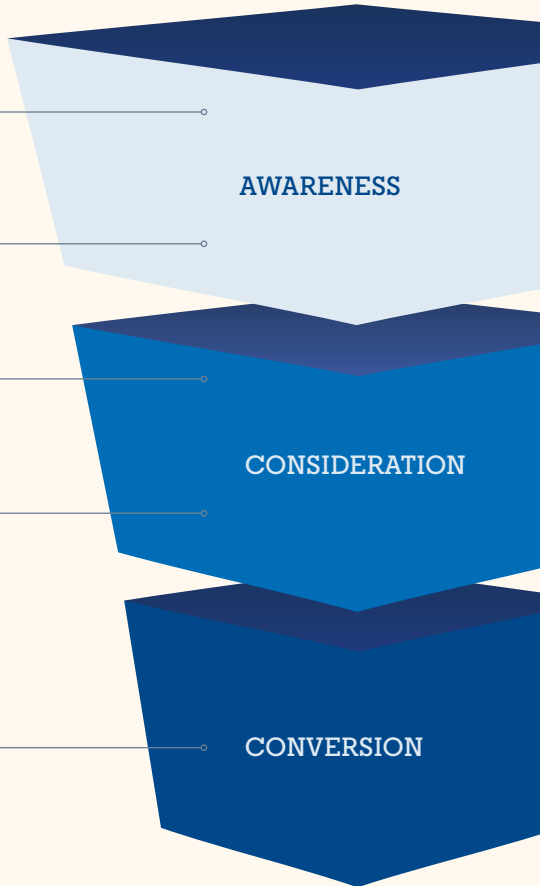
Brands need inspirational brand marketing to reach all current and future anonymous buyers, and sell them a motivating vision of how things could work

A brand-led approach to thought-leadership reinforces reputation and brand salience, establishing credibility at scale

Prioritising accessibility of information helps anonymous buyers follow up on what they've heard about your solution

Making it easy to experience freemium or trial versions turns anonymous buyers into anonymous customers, builds recognition, and persuades them to share details. Other experiences of your business can have the same effect

Asking for contact details from people already trying your solutions generates high-quality leads for sales and amplifies your brand through reviews



The B<sup>2</sup>B Institute | LinkedIn

## Balancing brand and demand in B2B

Analysis of IPA effectiveness data shows that B2B businesses grow most profitably when they split marketing budgets 50:50 between brand and demand.

# Becoming a hybrid tech marketer

LinkedIn analysis of the B2B tech marketing teams that are most successful at generating leads shows that they have a far higher proportion of marketers in brand roles – and significantly fewer focused exclusively on demand generation. These businesses take a full-funnel approach, which enables them to deliver at all of the key stages of the anonymous buyer journey.

Top lead generators have

71%

more of their marketers in brand roles

73%

fewer marketers in demand generation roles

How does having more brand marketers help generate leads more effectively? It has to do with the skills those marketers have and the way that they work. They don't sit in ivory towers thinking exclusively about above-the-line advertising campaigns. They have a diverse skillset that includes social media, content marketing – and lead generation itself!

In fact,

32% of these brand marketers

also have lead generation skills.

They're what we call hybrid marketers.



Being a hybrid marketer means that you are perfectly adapted to reach and engage anonymous buyers throughout the funnel. Having a mix of practical and creative skills means you aren't pigeon-holed by one channel or tactic. It helps you to base your demand generation on inspiration and experiences rather than just asking for details.

## Want to build your hybrid marketing skills?

Try these LinkedIn Learning courses:

- **Marketing Foundations: Integrated Marketing Strategies**  
*With Mark Burgess*
- **Storytelling for Business Video**  
*With Roger Schulman*
- **B2B Foundations: Social Media Marketing**  
*With Luan Wise*
- **Creativity Bootcamp**  
*With Stefan Mumaw*
- **Advanced Lead Generation**  
*With Dayna Rothman*

Start learning with your one-month free trial

# Aligning your approach with sales

It's difficult to adjust your strategy to the anonymous buyer journey if your targets force you to chase a high volume of leads at the lowest possible cost. In the anonymous buyer era, a Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) is the endpoint of a nurturing experience rather than the start of it. This produces fewer MQLs – but a far higher quality of leads.

Focusing less on lead volume and more on the revenue that those leads deliver is a win-win for both sales and marketing. However, it isn't something that you can simply announce to your sales colleagues. It's important to demonstrate the process involved in nurturing leads prior to generating them, in order to reduce lead volume targets in a credible way. Show how you're delivering higher quality leads before you talk about how many of them sales need.

An important element of this can involve aligning your approach to targeting. This can have real benefits when it comes to marketing to anonymous buyers. If you agree a list of high-potential target accounts as part of an Account-Based Marketing (ABM) strategy, you can then go broad and target all of the potential anonymous buyers within those accounts – which usually means every employee. If you can get everyone at a high-priority account talking about your solution, you give your sales team a big advantage in today's era of distributed tech decision-making.



## Top tips for aligning your approach with sales:

- Communicate about what you're doing and how it will improve MQL quality
- Work with sales to calculate revenue-based metrics such as the percentage revenue contribution of marketing-sourced leads
- Track the percentage of sales connections that have been reached by marketing and aim to increase this overlap
- Focus on agreed high-potential accounts and target all potential anonymous buyers within them using LinkedIn Account Targeting
- Use the Lookalike Audience feature within LinkedIn Matched Audiences to reach similar anonymous buyers at similar businesses

# Targeting tactics for anonymous buyers

When almost any employee could take on the role of an anonymous buyer, how can you target them sensibly at scale? These tactics can help you to reach the most relevant anonymous buyers for your solutions – and respond to signals of interest with relevant content and experiences.



Use broad targeting facets like Function and Industry for long-running brand campaigns that get you talked about in the market as a whole



Target by Skills to reach all of the anonymous buyers who have the knowledge to influence a purchase in your category



Retarget those visiting your website with personalised content for different functions or verticals

## Targeting tactics in action:




**Microsoft** used Video for Sponsored Content to set out a vision for a new culture of work that was designed to inspire employees at every level of a business – and helped deliver leads at a CPL 20% below Microsoft’s expectations.



CPL reduced by **20%**



The AI-driven visual search platform **SYTE** used Skills-based targeting campaigns to reach retail executives involved in building better eCommerce solutions, generating over 35 MQLs per week.



**35** Generated MQLs per week



# Building a motivating brand

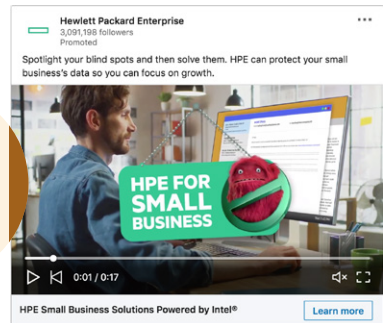
As a tech marketer, you don't just want a brand that people have heard of. You want a brand that motivates all kinds of people to take action: a famous brand that springs to mind whenever an anonymous buyer starts to think about making their working life work better.

Nobody starts conversations with the manager of their IT department just because they've heard of you. To get anonymous buyers talking in the way that makes things happen, you need to aim higher. To build a famous brand, aim to

be strikingly original: bring out the most innovative points in your proposition and communicate them in a way that's different to everybody else in your category. If you can connect to audiences' emotions successfully, you're most of the way there.

## Motivating brands in action:

When **HP Enterprise** decided to build its advertising for hybrid cloud solutions around **a large red, furry monster**, it ensured that people would recognise, remember and talk about their campaigns, whether they worked in IT or not.



The B<sup>2</sup>B Institute | [LinkedIn](#)

## The Power of Emotion

B2B strategies that appeal to emotions are 7x more effective at driving long-term sales, profits and revenue.

# Experiences to nurture anonymous buyers

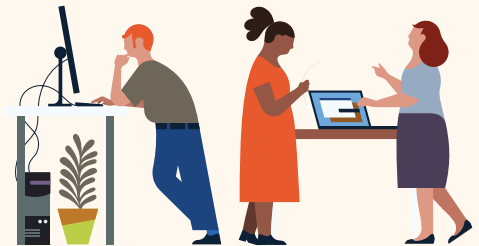
How can you nurture a buying prospect who doesn't think of themselves as a buyer – and doesn't want to share their details with you? You put them in control of building their own personalised experiences.

Self-personalisation involves inviting buyers to share information that's obviously relevant to the experience they're having. If somebody's searching for the right solution for their business, asking them what the business does and what their role is makes sense to them. Asking for their name and email address doesn't.

Reassuring anonymous buyers that they're in control of their buying journey gives you the ideal framework for nurturing them. It also provides you with valuable insight about the questions your audience wants answered and the nature of their interest in your business.

You can use this approach to help anonymous buyers find what they need, try your solutions for themselves, and get a sense of what it's like to work with you. Here are some top tips for helping them experience your business:

- Remove gates from content so that anonymous buyers can explore your proposition
- Signpost freemium or free trial versions of your solutions where available, to help them see you as a partner
- If you're a hardware provider, consider special offers or discount programmes for employees at target accounts
- Create unboxing, how-to and troubleshooting video content, to give the experience of talking through your solution face-to-face
- Demonstrate customer-centricity by paying close attention to questions on LinkedIn and other support channels



## Anonymous buyer experiences in action:

The enterprise software business, **UiPath**, used LinkedIn Conversation Ads to deliver a self-personalised experience, with audience members choosing to visit a website, read a relevant white paper, sign up for a product trial or talk to sales.



The headset manufacturer **Jabra** runs discount programmes for all employees of its high-potential target accounts, engaging them with its high-end consumer products and creating advocates for its enterprise solutions.



The conversational marketing platform **Drift** makes its employees the stars of engaging how-to videos. These address key customer questions, and provide an experience of the company's culture in action.



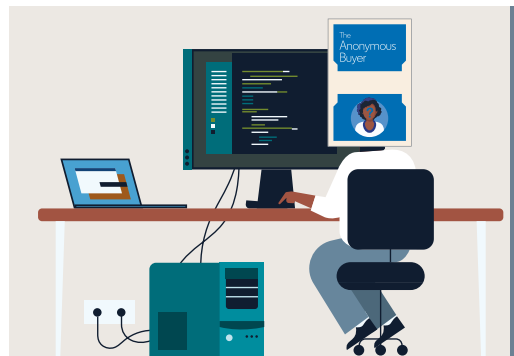
# When and how to ask for contact details

Once an anonymous buyer is experiencing your business on their own terms, they start to think differently about their relationship with you. When you are already treating them like a loyal customer, they are far more willing to share their details.

The key is to identify the signals that show you when an anonymous buyer is ready for deeper engagement – and then reach out for details in a way that involves a clear value exchange. When anonymous buyers have a clear reason for moving your relationship to the next level, they are far happier to complete lead generation forms.

Top tips for turning anonymous buyers into leads:

- Design lead generation so that it follows strong signals of interest: re-targeting people visiting product pages, for example
- Use Conversation Ads to determine where people are in their buying journey, and how they want to engage
- Be transparent about why you're asking for details and how they'll be used
- Ask anonymous buyers to nominate whether they would like to speak to sales or not



## Anonymous lead generation in action:

The enterprise software business **Atlassian** invites users of its freemium versions to participate in community groups, discussions and events, deepening the relationship and providing a value-adding opportunity for lead generation.



# Positioning your sales team as trusted experts

In the anonymous buyer journey, a lead represents someone who is already engaged with your business and your proposition, and may well be experiencing a free version of it.

This changes the role of sales from pitching a solution to helping an anonymous buyer expand the relationship with your business.

Incorporating sales leads into your content in the role of trusted experts and advisors can help to smooth this transition. It often leads to anonymous buyers taking the initiative in reaching out.



# ROI and the anonymous buyer journey

Marketing to anonymous buyers is a long-term strategy. It involves building a motivating brand over time, and nurturing prospects until they are ready to engage as a lead rather than asking for details straight away. For this reason, it's important to use genuine Return on Investment (ROI) metrics when measuring the value that your marketing delivers.

A recent LinkedIn survey showed that most digital marketers attempt to measure ROI far too quickly. Although the average sales cycle lasts six months, they attempt to prove the return on their marketing investment within a month of a campaign running. Because no real return exists at this point, they're forced to use immediate KPIs like cost per click (CPC) or cost per lead (CPL) to prove value. However, these numbers don't take into account the quality of leads or whether they go on to deliver revenue.

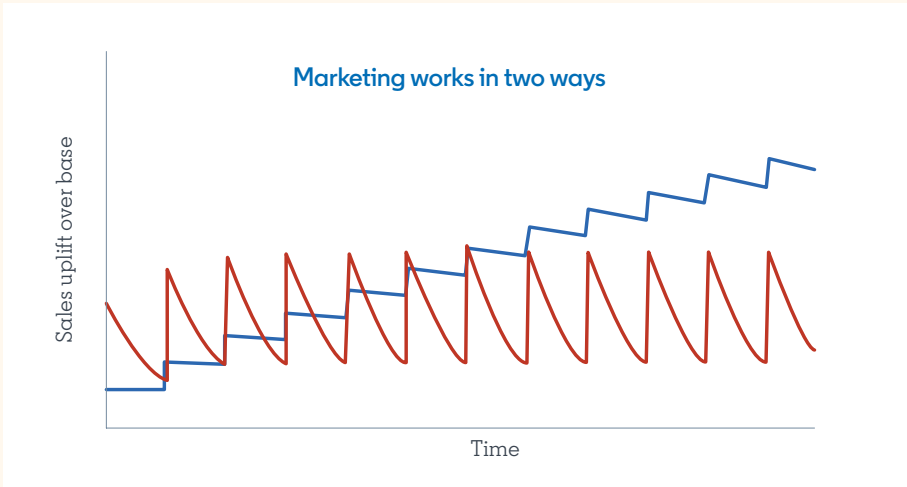
The problem is, these cost-based metrics don't take into account the quality of leads or whether they go on to deliver revenue. Worse, they incentivise marketers to demand contact details from anonymous buyers at the first available opportunity – which is the opposite experience to what your prospects want.

## Here are some recommendations for changing the conversation on ROI:

- Reposition ROI as a metric that takes time to calculate – but is all the more meaningful as a result
- Reach out to sales to help access revenue figures and build a number that both teams have faith in
- Calculate the length of your average sales cycle
- Define ROI as the revenue generated by marketing efforts during the sales cycle, divided by the total amount invested in marketing over the same period
- When it comes to investing in brand, compare ROI over several sales cycles, so you can see the benefits build over time
- Look for comparison points, year-on-year and quarter-on-quarter, where you can track the impact of a stronger brand through reduced lead generation and customer acquisition costs

## How brand builds activation effectiveness over time

Taking a long view of ROI is important because an anonymous buyer marketing strategy will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of lead generation marketing over time.



### ■ Sales activation

Converts brand preference into immediate responses. High efficiency & ROI

### ■ Brand building

Builds brand preference & reduces price sensitivity. Main driver of long term growth & profit



# How to market to the Anonymous Buyer

The key take-aways:

- Inspire potential anonymous buyers with an accessible vision of how your solution can change their lives
- Treat your buyers and influencers as valued customers before they become a lead
- Don't make engagement conditional on completing a data capture form
- Aim to become a hybrid marketer by cultivating a mix of brand and demand generation skills
- Run brand campaigns with broad targeting to reach anonymous buyers at scale
- Work with sales to calculate ROI retrospectively over previous sales cycles
- Respond to signals of interest with self-directed nurturing experiences
- Generate leads as part of a clear value exchange with anonymous buyers already engaging with your business

## LinkedIn

For the first time in the history of media, you can reach the world's professionals all in one place. More than 670M people worldwide gather on LinkedIn to stay connected and informed, advance their careers, and work smarter. Together they comprise the largest global community of business professionals. These are the decision-makers, influencers, and the leaders of today and tomorrow—precisely the people you want to target.

For more information, visit [marketing.linkedin.com](https://marketing.linkedin.com).

## The B<sup>2</sup>B Institute | LinkedIn

Learn more about the B2B Institute's research paper:  
[5 Principles of Growth in B2B Marketing](#)

