

A woman with voluminous, dark curly hair is smiling broadly and shaking hands with another person whose back is to the camera. The woman is wearing a dark purple blazer over a white top and a necklace with a blue pendant. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office or meeting space.

# Making a promise to the business customer:

Why Customer Promise campaigns are even more  
effective in B2B than B2C

**WARC** | Advisory

LinkedIn | The B2B Institute

## About this report

**Market orientation is about putting customers at the heart of everything a business does. But over the last two decades, many companies have drifted away from the customer, becoming overly enamoured with their own product or straining to connect the brand to a higher social purpose.**

In our previous research, we presented a new mental model for business – developed by the B2B Institute at LinkedIn and Roger Martin (CEO Advisor, Strategist and Author of “Playing to Win”) – that aligns product, marketing, sales, and customer experience within a holistic promise to the customer mindset. Findings from an analysis of over 2,000 B2C advertising campaigns suggest that brands that make a credible promise to their customers can gain a brand building and commercial advantage.

In this report, we focus explicitly on the value of customer promises in B2B advertising. As readers will discover, customer promises have an even greater potential to drive impact across key brand and business metrics. Moreover, they are far less common in B2B advertising, with huge whitespace opportunities for B2B brands that are bold and brave enough to adopt a Promise to the Customer mindset.

## Content

Introduction by Roger Martin	<u>3</u>
Foreword from WARC	<u>4</u>
The view from The B2B Institute	<u>5</u>
<b>Chapter 1:</b>	<u>10</u>
<b>The power of Customer Promise campaigns:</b>	
New research on their impact in B2B	
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	<u>20</u>
<b>Mapping the landscape:</b>	
Which types of Customer Promise are most widely used in B2B?	
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	<u>29</u>
<b>The view from the B2B frontline:</b>	
How marketing experts responded to our findings	
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<u>37</u>
<b>Winning through Customer Promises:</b>	
A checklist for success	
Final takeaways	<u>49</u>

# Introduction by Roger Martin



## Roger Martin

CEO Advisor,  
Strategist and Author of  
"Playing to Win"

In 2023, Jann Schwarz and Mimi Turner of the LinkedIn B2B Institute and I published a report based on research supported by WARC on a concept we came to call "Making a Promise to the Customer." Our work showed conclusively that advertising campaigns featuring a memorable, valuable and deliverable Customer Promise dramatically outperform campaigns that do not include or feature one. The results were so striking that I wrote: "It is no exaggeration to say that in the four decades I have been working on strategy and branding, this Promise to the Customer finding is the single most exciting discovery with which I have been involved."

As any experienced researcher knows, a great piece of research produces as many new questions as it does answers and our PTTC study was no exception. Jann, Mimi and I immediately wondered – as did many who read the report – whether the results would be different for B2B companies and their advertising campaigns. Our original

study using WARC's overall database of more than 2000 advertising campaigns was heavily weighted towards B2C campaigns (almost 95%).

To answer this important question, we worked with WARC to build a dataset of exclusively B2B campaigns, more than 700 of them. The answer we got was powerfully simple. *Making a Customer Promise in a B2B campaign is much more important and impactful than in a B2C campaign – across all important dimensions of performance.* By multiples. Yet, despite the massively greater effectiveness of making a Customer Promise campaign versus not in a B2B campaign, it happened in only 18% of B2B campaigns versus 40% of B2C campaigns.

**"There is no way to sugar-coat the implication: the vast majority of B2B advertising campaigns are designed to be ineffective. And that creates a doom-loop."**

A B2B business tentatively invests resources into an advertising campaign. It fails. And the conventional wisdom becomes that advertising in B2B doesn't really work, so invest elsewhere, especially in so-called 'performance marketing.' That doesn't have to be the case. Design advertising well with a compelling promise of value to the customer and the effectiveness boost will dwarf the delta in B2C campaigns.

The tool is right there staring any B2B marketer in the face: spend your mental energy on formulating a memorable, valuable and deliverable promise to your customer. The bonus for this approach is that very few of your competitors are likely to be doing the same. They are too busy planning price promotions and doing performance marketing. The field is wide open for you!

# Foreword from WARC



**Paul Stringer**

Managing Editor,  
Research & Advisory,  
WARC

**Commissioning any new type of research is a leap of faith. You do not know exactly what you will find, whether it will have meaning, or create the kind of impact you hope for. But after proving the power of a Customer Promise in B2C advertising campaigns, we knew we had to take that next step to test whether Customer Promises also had value in B2B advertising.**

In short: they do. In fact, the relative impact of a Customer Promise in B2B is even larger than in B2C. Customer Promises in B2B are more likely to drive improvements in brand health and market share. And they work particularly effectively when budgets are tight.

Yet compared to B2C, Customer Promises are underutilised. Very few B2B brands are making a clear Promise to the Customer. What's more, most Customer Promises are very product-focused and lack emotional appeal.

In this way, our research supports conclusions made elsewhere about the current limitations of B2B advertising. The common thread is that B2B advertising needs to be less lower funnel and more upper funnel, less tactical and more brand-focused, less rational and more emotional.

What's different about this piece of research is we offer a solution as well as a diagnosis of the problem.

As readers will learn, Customer Promises can be a source of competitive advantage

for brands of all shapes and sizes. That's even more the case in B2B because of the complex nature of decision making. Buying groups tend to gravitate towards companies that are known and feel familiar.

Customer Promises can make brands familiar by being memorable, valuable and deliverable. They can cut through the noise and the messiness of decision making by offering a clear and simple articulation of the value delivered by a brand to its customers. It sounds simple, but of course, there is a huge amount of work involved in designing and projecting a clear Promise to the Customer.

We hope, after reading this paper, more B2B marketers will see the value of going on that journey.

# The view from The B2B Institute



**Jann Schwarz**

Founder

The B2B Institute at LinkedIn



**Mimi Turner**

Head of EMEA & Latin America

The B2B Institute at LinkedIn

**Marketing is expensive. Customer promises are free.**

**The great problem for marketers is not that they don't know what to do. It is that often, they don't have the money to do it.**

Every marketer understands that asymmetric advantage lies with bigger brands. The double jeopardy rule defined by the Ehrenberg Bass Institute brutally underlines this. And if you want to increase your market share, the rule of Excess Share of Voice decrees that you have to outspend competitors to do it.

But, what if you don't have more money? What if the constraints you face are hard financial limits? What can you do when some of the most fundamental laws of marketing are against you?

This is a question that the co-authors of this report first started thinking about over two years ago. At that time, we approached this problem somewhat in reverse, by asking the question: "What can marketers do to make

their message projection more effective?"

But the power of the findings of our first report was so significant that we have now come to view the problem as: "What could you do to make your existing message projection measurably more effective without spending an extra dime?"

The answer is that you make a promise to the customer that the customer understands.

In our first report we found that across all budget sizes, B2C Customer Promise campaigns were 1.47x more likely to increase brand health and 1.59x more likely to increase market share.

When we looked at campaigns with lower budgets, Customer Promise campaigns were even more effective: they were 2.5x more likely to increase brand health and 2.3x more likely to increase market share.

In our latest B2B campaign dataset, those findings have not only held true but also

are more pronounced: lower budget B2B Customer Promise campaigns are 1.7x more likely to increase brand health and 2.7x more likely to increase market share than higher budget ones. For the first time, we are able to offer an effectiveness strategy that is budget-neutral and enhances meaningful marketing metrics.

At The B2B Institute, we believe that using creativity to build brand fame and reputation delivers outsized outcomes in B2B. Our belief is that brand is not just a "nice-to-have," it is an essential full-funnel deal-closing advantage.

And, while there are as many definitions of 'brand' as there are marketers, as our two pieces of work now clearly demonstrate, making a clear promise of value to your customers is the right way to build our brand.

**Jann Schwarz & Mimi Turner**

# Industry point of view

There's the famous saying that, "No one gets fired for hiring IBM". The promise stands as something that you can point out... People can stand behind that promise and say, "IBM said that this would happen and it did indeed happen". It makes it easier for procurement groups to make these decisions. It provides accountability.



**James Hankins**

Global VP of Marketing  
Strategy & Planning,  
Sage

"Speed to value" is a significant opportunity in any B2B environment. Large enterprises face a constant influx of use cases and challenges, making it crucial to recognize purchasing seasons and budget availability. If you can narrow your promise to deliver results within a meaningful timeframe for the customer, you can cut through the noise.



**Sven Dellagnolo**

Senior Director of Global Demand  
Generation & Marketing Strategy,  
Lexmark

Thinking about trust and long-term relationships in B2B, that's what making a customer promise is all about. It's centred around being able to build trust and secure long-term relationships.



**Harjot Singh**

Global Chief Strategy Officer,  
McCann Worldgroup &  
McCann

# Executive summary

In June 2023, WARC and The B2B Institute released research revealing how B2C brands can achieve commercial and competitive advantage by making a Promise to the Customer (or through a Customer Promise; we use the terms interchangeably). In this report, we focus on B2B.

## What is a Customer Promise?

A Customer Promise is a direct commitment made by an organisation to its buyers and users. The most powerful ones are highly memorable, readily auditable and of genuine value to all prospective customers. It's not something to be done lightly: the business must be able to deliver on its promise 100% of the time. You can read more about our Customer Promise research in the Harvard Business Review.

**Key findings from research:** This report is based on an analysis of over 700 B2B case studies drawn from the WARC database. The studies are all entrants or winners in major awards shows, and therefore meet a high benchmark for creative excellence and effectiveness. Our research shows:

1

**Customer Promises are much less common in B2B.**

Only 18% of B2B campaigns make a Promise to the Customer, compared to 40% of B2C campaigns.

2

**Customer Promise campaigns in B2B are nearly two-and-a-half times more likely to report on brand health shifts than non-Customer Promise campaigns.**

They significantly outperform non-Customer Promise campaigns, and do so by a much greater margin than in B2C.

3

**Customer Promise campaigns in B2B are nearly three times more likely to report on market share increases than non-Customer Promise campaigns.**

Again, they're more powerful on this measure than in B2C customer promise campaigns.

4

**Customer Promise campaigns in B2B work particularly hard when budgets are tight.**

As we saw in B2C, making a Promise to the Customer is especially advantageous for scale-up brands or businesses with limited marketing resources.

5

**Customer Promise campaigns in B2B are 67% more likely to achieve 'Brand Builder' status.**

The probability of reaching the point on WARC's B2B Effectiveness Ladder where advertising delivers lasting commercial benefits is significantly greater when a Customer Promise is made.

### What types of Customer Promise are most prevalent in B2B?

There is a heavy skew towards product. 69% of B2B Customer Promises are product-based, compared to 37% in B2C. Such campaigns can be highly effective so long as brands remember the 95:5 rule: they must feel valuable and desirable to the 95% of customers who aren't actively in-market at the time of communication, not just the 5% who are.

Our research identified two white spaces. Just 23% of Customer Promises in B2B led with an emotional appeal (versus 35% in B2C). This may be under-exploited territory. As Les Binet and Peter Field have pointed out: "The data suggests that decision-making in B2B is only slightly more rational than in B2C. In 70% of B2B cases, emotional consideration is of equal or greater importance than rational consideration."

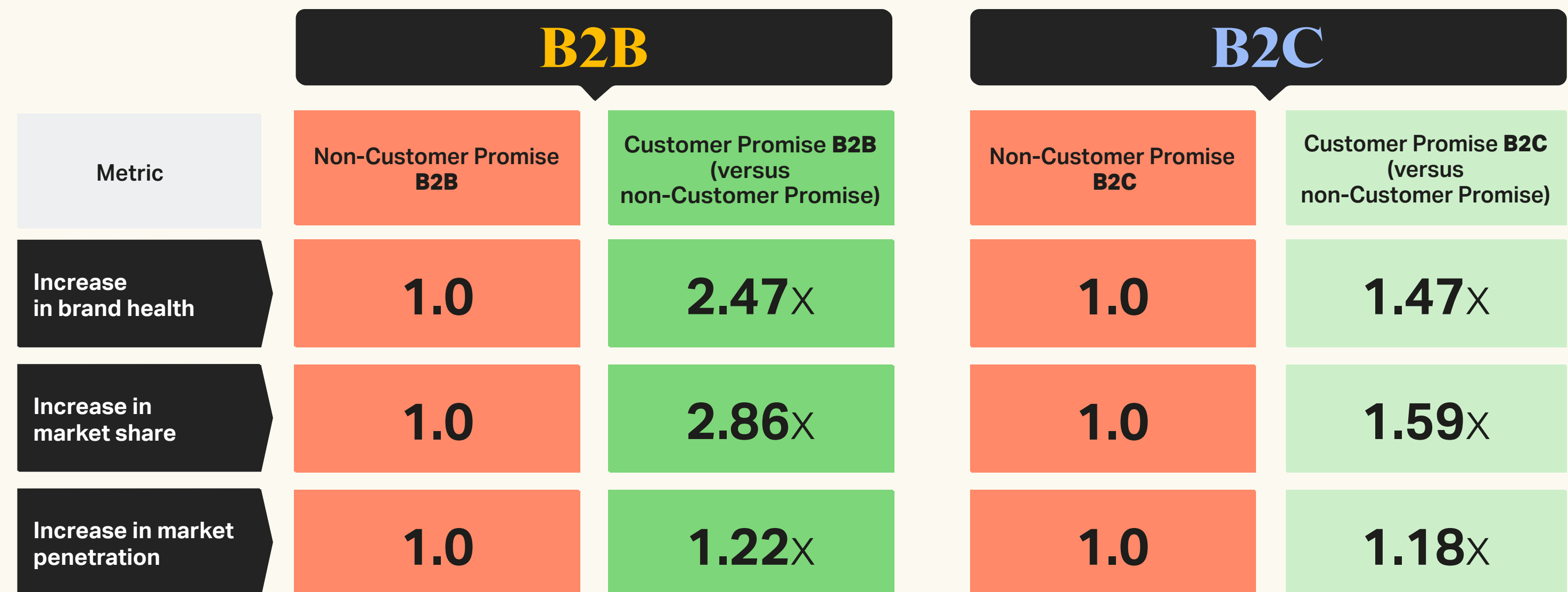
Even more notably, Customer Promises centred on CX and the path-to-purchase featured in only 7% of the studies analysed (compared to 24% in B2C). Identifying key Category Entry Points, and framing the Customer Promise accordingly, may represent a rich opportunity for B2B brands.

### Why Customer Promises are so effective in B2B

The dynamics of B2B buying processes are evolving. Purchasing committees are getting larger; they're evaluating more vendors; and they believe the performance gap between candidates is narrowing. New research by The B2B Institute, Bain & Company and NewtonX highlights one significant consequence of these changes: buying groups overwhelmingly gravitate towards brands with which they're already familiar.

81% say that their chosen solution was known to 'all or almost all' of the group at the beginning of the process.

A strong Customer Promise drives familiarity while helping derisk the buying decision. As Harjot Singh (Global Chief Strategy Officer, McCann Worldgroup & McCann) explains: "They work because of their inherent customer-centricity and strategic simplicity. They're an antidote to complexity, which can be a huge advantage for the brand and ultimately for the customer too".

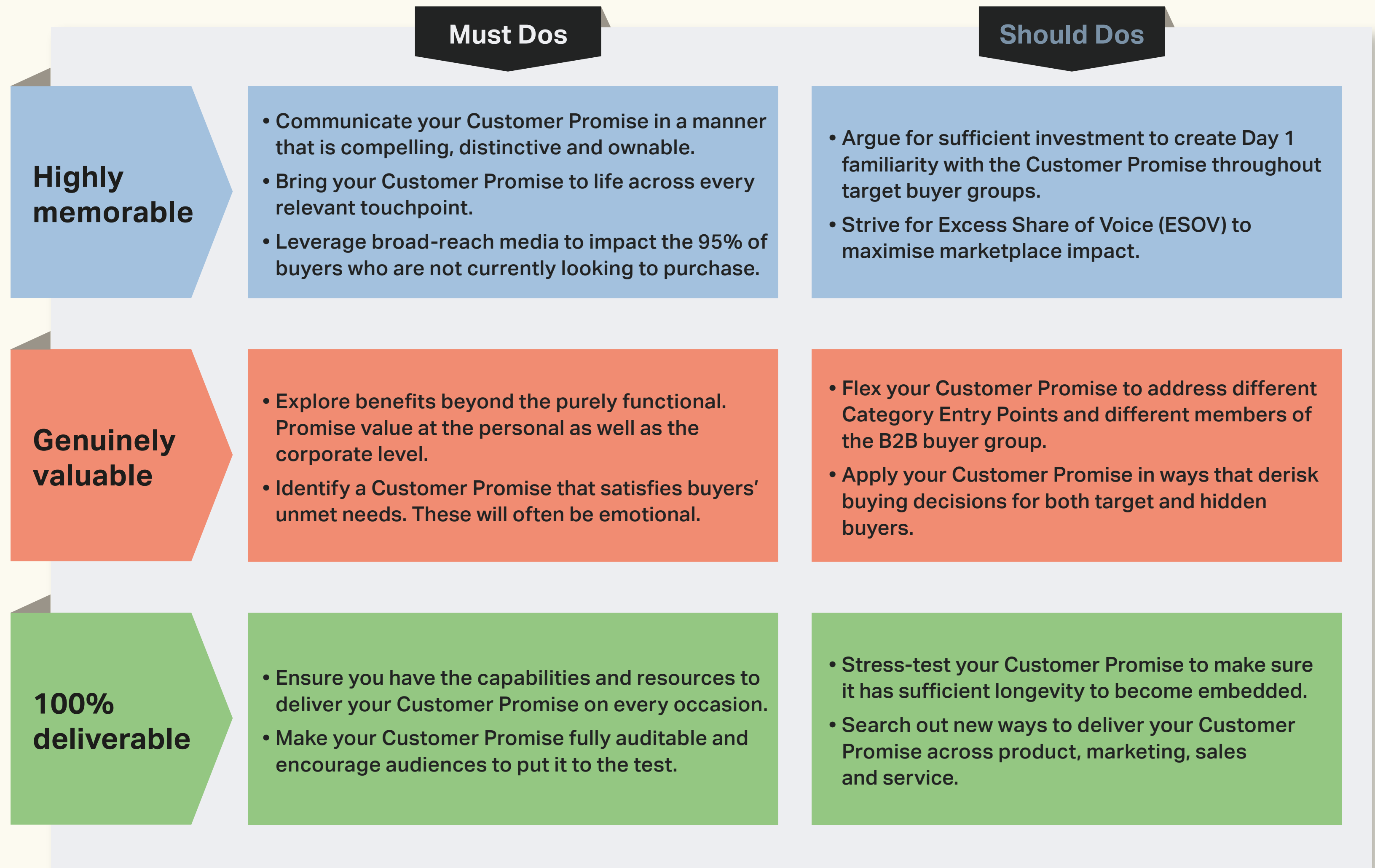




## Winning through Customer Promises

The paper concludes by providing actionable insights and advice to B2B brands interested in creating a Customer Promise campaign.

The recommendations are structured around the three essential components of such campaigns: ensuring they're highly memorable, genuinely valuable to audiences and 100% deliverable.



## Chapter 1

# The power of Customer Promise campaigns:

New research on their impact  
in B2B



# What is a Customer Promise?

**A Customer Promise can be defined as a direct commitment made by an organisation to its buyers and users.**

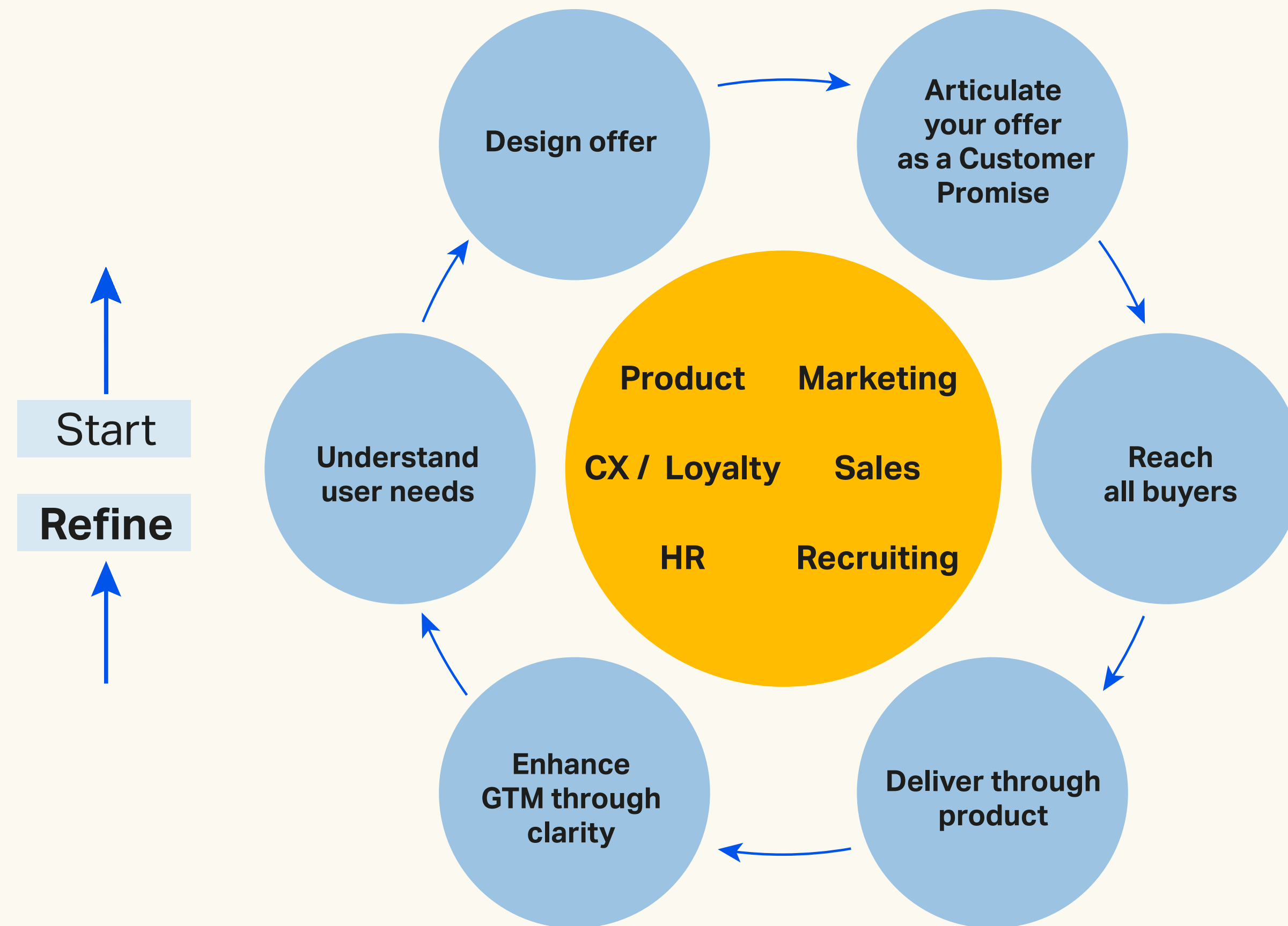
Customer Promises should be specific and auditable rather than vague statements of intent. The easier one can be put to the test, the more convincing customers will find it.

Making a Promise to the Customer is a company-wide effort. Every part of the business, whether focused on product, price, place or promotion, must be focused on two key questions: "What is the value we promise to our customers, and how do we deliver it time after time?"

When made and fulfilled with 100% consistency, audiences stop thinking about a Customer Promise and accept it as a true statement of fact. Trust and belief are generated, and the brand is elevated above more generic alternatives.

If you'd like to know more about Customer Promises, the [Harvard Business Review](#) has published an in-depth article on the topic.

The Customer Promise Cycle



Source: 'Going-to-market in a price sensitive world', Roger Martin and Jann Schwarz.

# Projection is vital

**Customer Promises are about much more than marketing communications, but comms are still critical.**

Just as in B2C, B2B brands need to increase their stock of mental availability so that they are easily recalled by as many purchasers as possible whenever a buying need emerges.

Failure to do so diminishes an organisation's ability to create future demand. And that's particularly crucial in B2B. In many business sectors, 95% of potential customers are out-of-market at any given time – a much higher percentage than in most B2C categories.

As well as being deliverable by the organisation and valuable to audiences, the Customer Promise must therefore be memorable. The most effective Customer Promise campaigns combine an explicit commitment with distinctive expression.

By contrast, non-Customer Promise campaigns are either inward-looking, purely educational or simply geared towards generating social buzz.

## B2B campaigns that make a clear Promise to the Customer



# Putting Customer Promises to the test

In June 2023, WARC and The B2B Institute at LinkedIn published a major study on the impact of Customer Promises. The goal was to explore whether campaigns that make a Promise to the Customer deliver a measurable competitive advantage for brand owners.

The answer was an emphatic 'yes':

1. Customer Promise campaigns were shown to deliver a brand-building and commercial advantage over non-Customer Promise campaigns, irrespective of budget, number of channels or duration.
2. Making a Promise to the Customer increased the likelihood of campaigns delivering long-term brand and sales growth.
3. Customer Promise campaigns were seen to be a key differentiator for scale-up brands or businesses with limited marketing resources.

The full report is available here: [Making a Promise to the Customer: How to give campaigns a competitive edge.](#)

In the original study, our focus was primarily on B2C. While some B2B case studies were included, they represented just 5% of the data set. Working once again with The B2B Institute, we have now conducted parallel research that focuses exclusively on B2B.

Are Customer Promises equally effective in business contexts?

## Research methodologies<sup>1</sup>

	B2B	B2C
Sample size	703 campaigns	2,021 campaigns
Time frame	2010 – 2023	2018 – 2022
Geographies	North America, Europe, MENA, Asia	North America, Europe, MENA
Campaign objective	Brand building or activation <sup>2</sup>	Brand building

Methodological notes:

- 1 Both pieces of research centred on an analysis of WARC's extensive database of case studies. All these studies are entrants or winners in major awards shows, and therefore meet a high benchmark for creative excellence and effectiveness.
- 2 In the B2B research, we ensured the sub-samples of 'brand building' and 'activation' case studies contained the same ratio of Customer Promise to non-Customer Promise campaigns. The inclusion of 'activations' does not therefore skew the results.

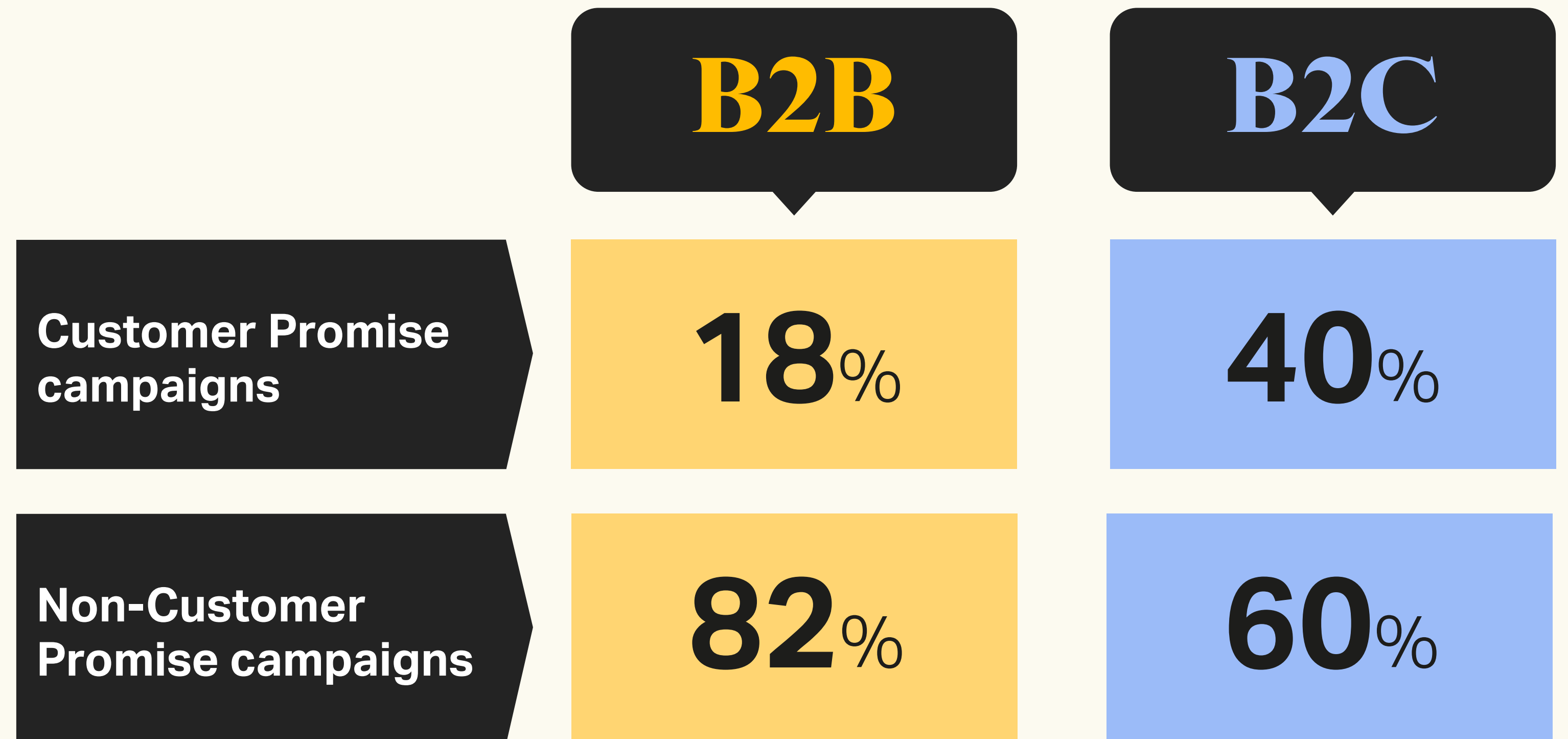
## Key Finding #1

# Customer Promises are much less common in B2B

Fewer than one in five B2B campaigns made a Promise to the Customer, regardless of whether the objective was brand building or activation. This is significantly lower than the results from the B2C study.

Given that B2B purchases are often high-consideration / high-risk, and lead to a relatively long-term relationship between buyer and vendor, this infrequency is surprising. It certainly suggests that making a Customer Promise could represent a competitive opportunity for B2B brands.

Prevalence of Customer Promises



## Key Finding #2

# Customer Promises in B2B have a strongly positive impact on brand health

In the B2C research, we saw that making a Promise to the Customer is more likely to deliver a meaningful uplift in key brand health measures such as consideration, preference, purchase intent and perceived quality.

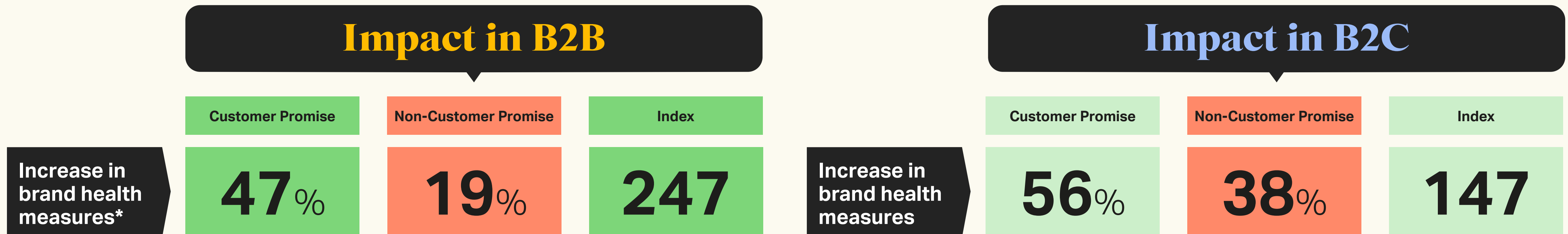
Not only were these findings repeated in our B2B analysis; the relative outperformance was significantly greater than in B2C. Across the total sample of brand-building and activation case studies, 47% of B2B

Customer Promise campaigns drove improvements in brand health compared to 19% of non-Customer Promise campaigns. In other words, they were nearly two-and-a-half times more likely to move these metrics. (For comparison, Customer Promise campaigns in B2C are approximately 50% more likely to be effective in this regard).

There were indications from the data that including a Customer Promise in B2B campaigns with brand-

building objectives pays even richer dividends. 67% of such campaigns reported increases in brand health (versus 29% for non-Customer Promise campaigns).

In crowded B2B markets, awareness can also be an important objective. Customer Promises appear to deliver benefits here too, with 63% of such campaigns more likely to record increases in awareness compared to 50% of non-Customer Promise campaigns.



\* Brand health is a collection of metrics that commonly reflects the consumers' view of the brand. They are usually measured by brand tracking surveys. Brand health measures can include brand consideration, purchase intent, brand perception, brand preference, quality and value perception, and brand trust.

### Key Finding #3

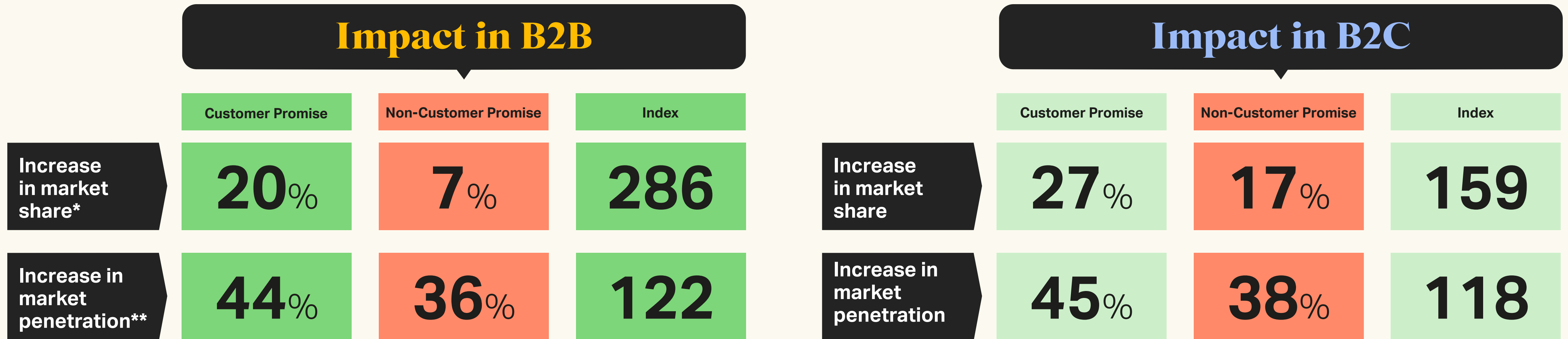
# B2B Customer Promises are nearly three times more likely to deliver increases in market share

**B2B campaigns that made a Promise to the Customer were nearly three times more likely to report increases in market share than non-Customer Promise campaigns. They also appeared more likely to report increases in market penetration (44% vs. 36%) and revenue (30% vs. 20%).**

Two things stand out when comparing these findings to last year’s research. First, the B2C numbers are generally higher. Second, and just as importantly, the performance gap is again larger in B2B.

Customer Promise campaigns in B2B are nearly three times more likely to report increases in market share

than non-Customer Promise ones. That being said, only a relatively small percentage of B2B customer promise campaigns (20%) reported increases in market share, highlighting potential room for improvement in the future.



\* Market share is the portion or percentage of sales within the category of a particular brand or media owner.

\*\* Market penetration is a measure of how much a product or service is being used by customers compared to the total estimated market for that product or service.



## Key Finding #4

# As in B2C, Customer Promises in B2B deliver valuable advantages for scale-up brands or businesses with limited marketing resources

In evaluating campaigns, a key metric applied by WARC is the Creative Commitment score.

Numerous studies have proven that budget size, campaign duration and the number of channels deployed are all key drivers of effectiveness. Creative Commitment is a composite of these three factors, with possible scores ranging from 3 to a maximum of 15.

In an analysis published in October 2021, The B2B Institute at LinkedIn, WARC and Lions revealed how the average Creative Commitment score for B2B campaigns had declined sharply over the past 10 years. By the end of the period, it was 5.9 compared to 8.2 in 2011.

In our latest research, the average score for Customer Promise and non-Customer Promise campaigns was of

a similar level (6.2 vs. 5.7). We can therefore rule out the differences in impact being a function of higher Creative Commitment. What was noteworthy was how Customer Promise campaigns appeared to be disproportionately effective at the lower end of the scale. This repeats a key learning from the B2C research and provides an important insight for organisations with smaller marketing budgets.

\* Note: Low bases

### Creative Commitment score of 7 or below\*

### Creative Commitment score of 8 or above\*

	Customer Promise	Non-Customer Promise	Index	Customer Promise	Non-Customer Promise	Index
Increase in market share	19%	7%	271	25%	19%	132
Increased brand health	47%	27%	174	71%	41%	173

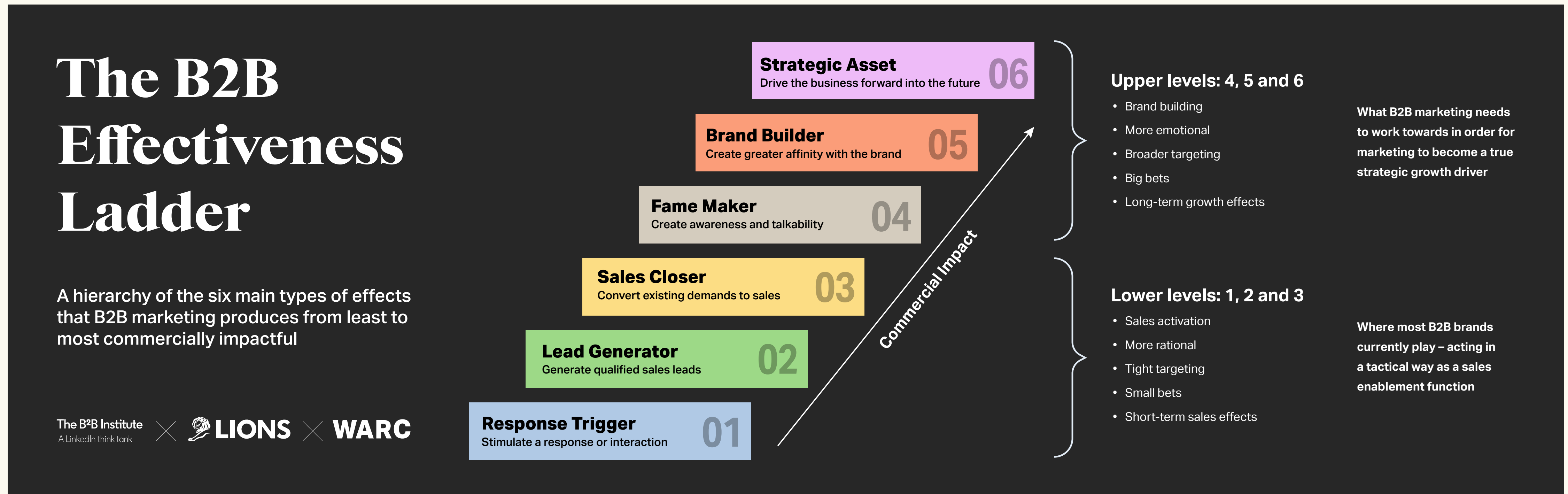
# Customer Promises and The B2B Effectiveness Ladder

**The Ladder** is a framework that ranks B2B campaigns by objectives and outcomes.

It was built by studying the goals and results of campaigns in WARC’s database, grouping the campaigns into broad categorisations, and then setting them in a hierarchy from least to most commercially impactful.

The Ladder is best thought of in two parts. **Rungs 1 – 3 focus on the kind of short-term effects** to which activations are typically geared. The gold standard here is sales conversion (Rung 3).

**Rungs 4 – 6 are about longer-term effects.** The pinnacle here is Rung 6, where comms become a true strategic asset and drive future growth.



## Key Finding #5

# B2B Customer Promise campaigns markedly outperform non-Customer Promise ones across both levels

While few activations drive long-term effects, powerful brand campaigns can and do have a positive short-term impact. They stimulate interactions; they generate leads; and they help close sales.

Strongly effective brand campaigns will therefore appear on most of the rungs of the Ladder, and sometimes on all.

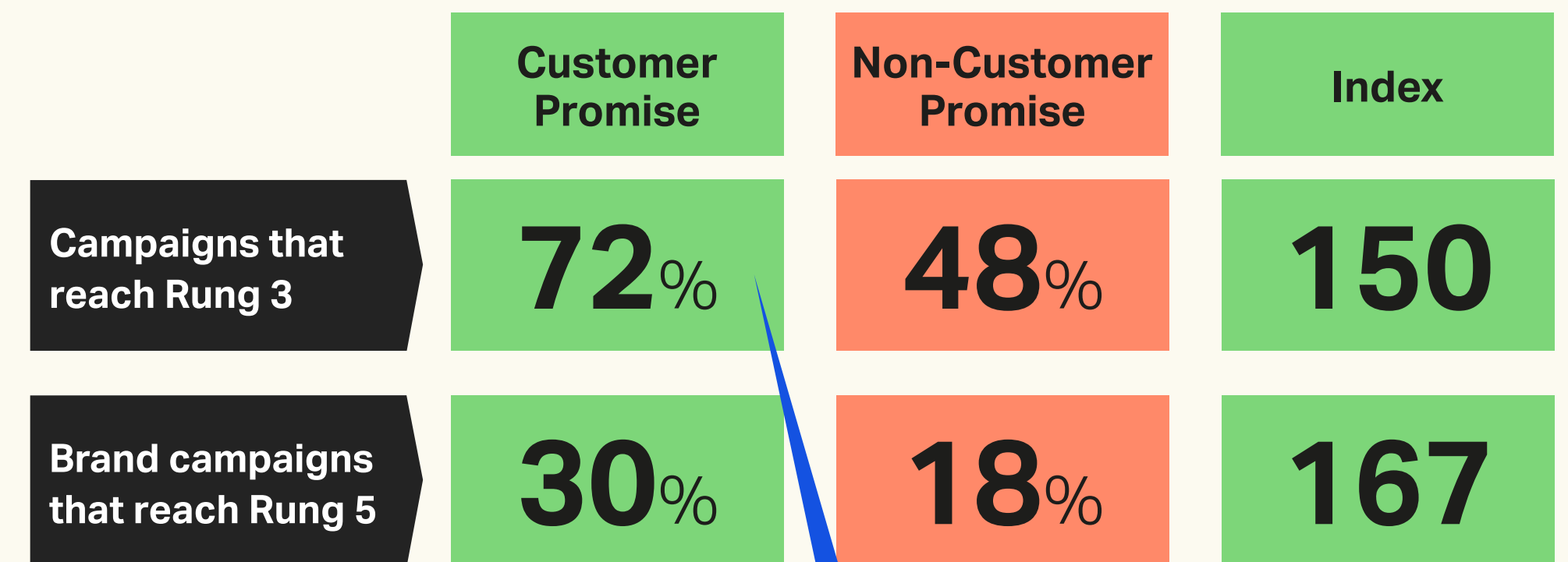
Our analysis shows that Customer Promise campaigns are 67% more likely to reach Rung 5, which is the point where comms begin to deliver lasting commercial benefits. This matches a key finding from last year’s research: B2C campaigns that made a Promise to the Customer were two times more likely than non-Customer Promise campaigns to drive sustained brand and sales growth.

Of course, it’s quite legitimate for campaigns to have specific, short-term objectives: content needs eyeballs; events need attendees; time-limited offers need to maximise take-up; and so on.

Customer Promise campaigns would seem to have an advantage here too. 72% of the case studies we analysed met the end-goal of driving sales. For non-Customer Promise campaigns, the figure was 48%.

We have seen that B2B Customer Promises have the tendency to outperform non-Customer Promise campaigns across a variety of metrics. But what types of Customer Promise are most prevalent? And accordingly, where are there white spaces in B2B?

## How Customer Promise campaigns perform on the B2B Effectiveness Ladder



From our sample, among all Customer Promise campaigns, 72% achieved Rung 3 Sale Closer and 30% achieved Rung 5 Brand Builder

## Chapter 2

# Mapping the landscape:

Which types of Customer Promise are most widely used in B2B?



# There are four main types of Customer Promise

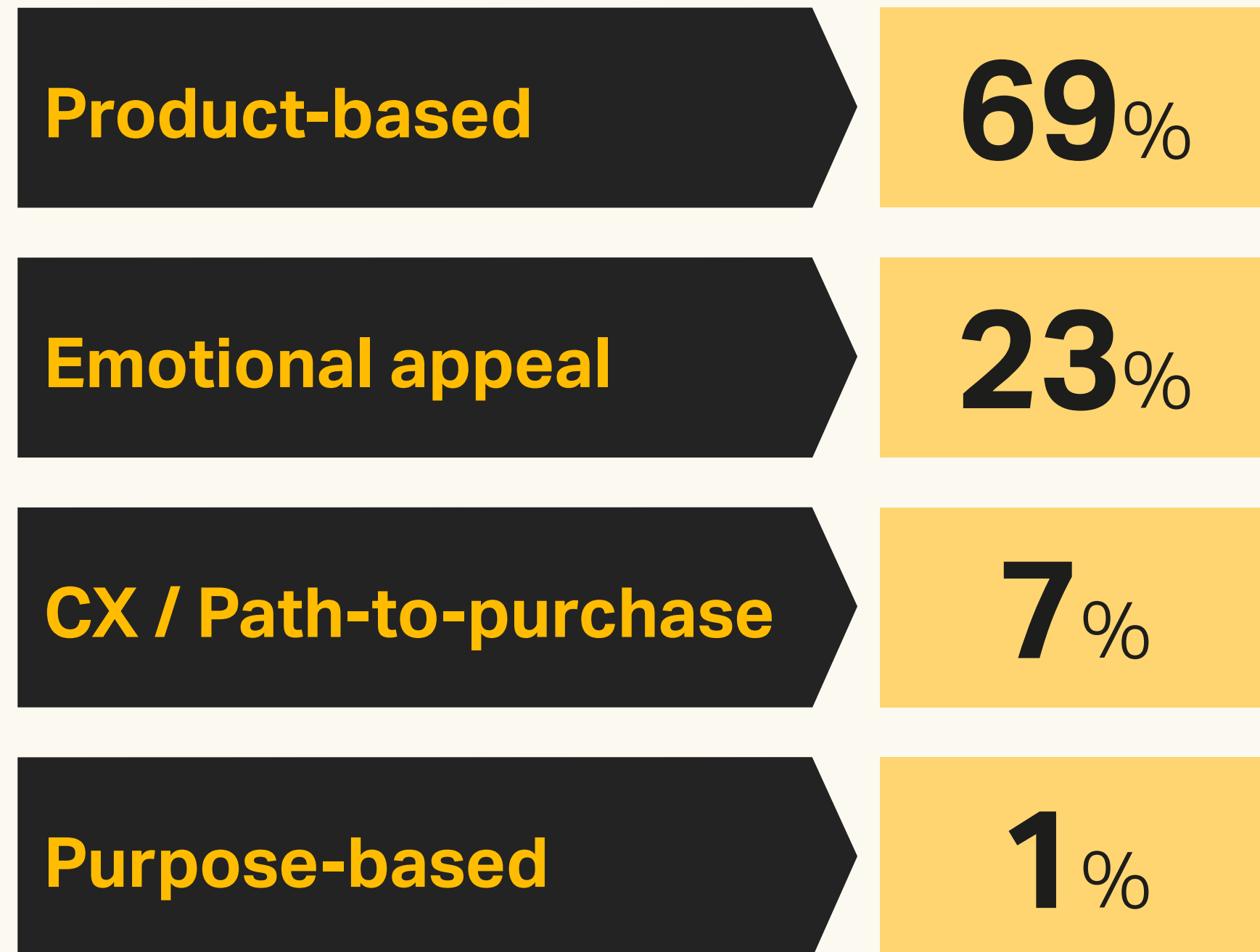
Category	Type	Description
Product-based	Quality / range of products	A brand makes a Promise to the Customer about the superior quality (comfort, safety, security, effectiveness, taste, ingredients, etc.) of its products.
	Value for money	A brand makes a Promise to the Customer that its product / service is worth investing in and provides value for money.
Emotional appeal	Emotional promise*	A brand makes a Promise to the Customer that they will feel differently when they use its products or services.**
Customer experience / path- to-purchase	Customer experience / service	A brand commits to taking away the pain points in the purchase process and / or providing the best customer experience or service.
	Winning back trust	A brand commits to winning back their customers after crisis.
Sustainability	Purpose based	A brand promises to help their customers live more sustainable lives.

\* Category of 'emotional promise' excludes campaigns that fail to link a specific product / service with a change in the customer's emotional state (e.g. the John Lewis Christmas advert would not qualify – this is an advert that leverages emotion but without making a clear or explicit promise to the customer).

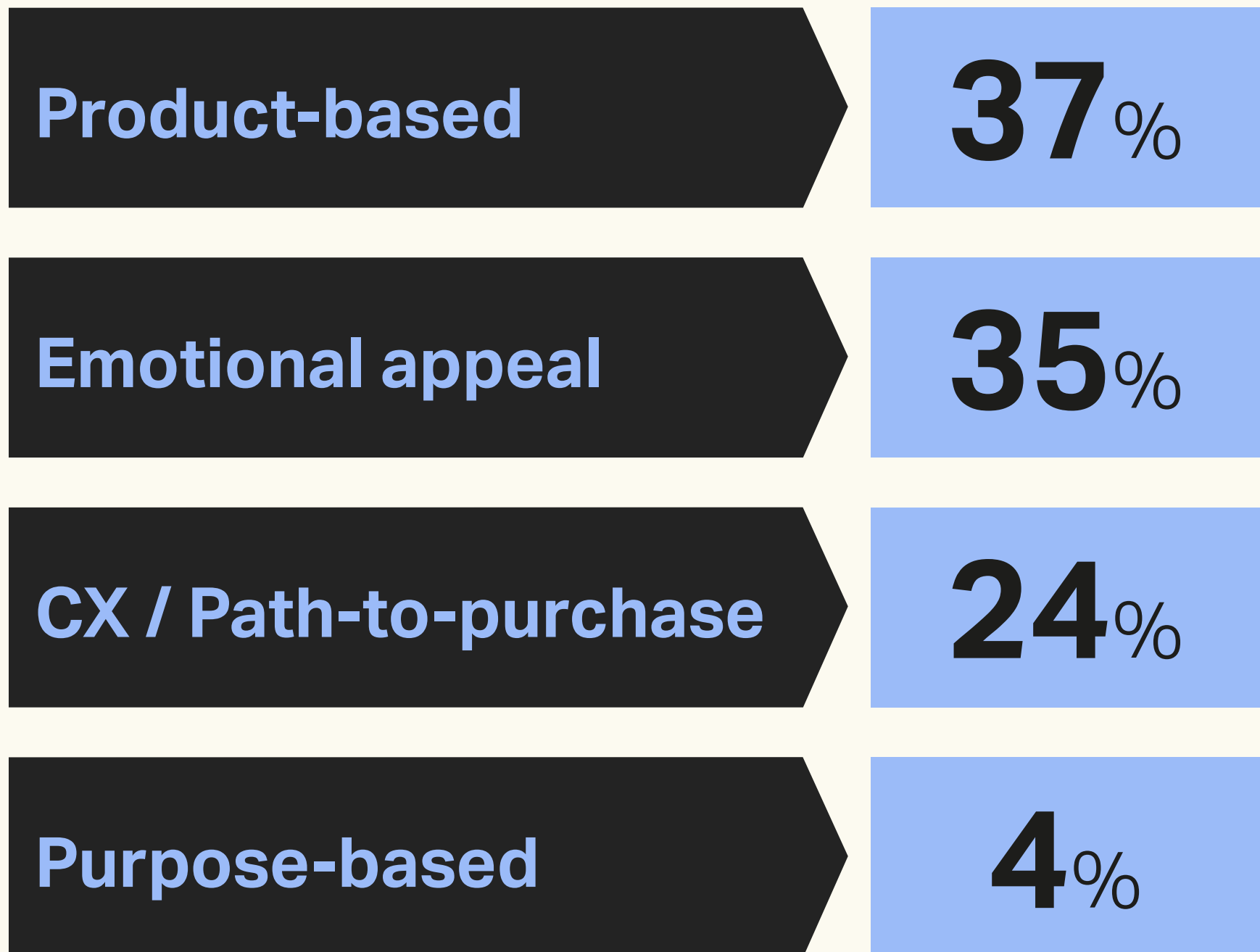
\*\* This includes emotional support: A promise to provide support to its customers every day / at key stages in their lives / in specific moments of need by, for example, relieving pain, reducing anxiety, and so on.

# The mix of Customer Promises by type is very different in B2B

## Customer Promise mix in B2B



## Customer Promise mix in B2C



Why might this be, and what are the implications for B2B marketers?

# Product-based Customer Promises dominate in B2B

No one immersed in B2B marketing will find it surprising that over two-thirds of the Customer Promises made were product-based. Most B2B companies are product-led, especially in the tech sector. And product leaders, quite naturally, are convinced that buying decisions are based more or less solely on product quality.

Performance and the value / cost equation always matter, of course; and product-based comms can be highly effective when combined with a memorable and distinctive Customer Promise. But there are three big watch-outs:

# 1

**Beware the 'product delusion'.** Not every member of the buying committee in a target organisation will be obsessed with product performance (and some may not even understand the finer points of detail). Even those that are will be primarily interested in the overall benefits rather than individual features and functions.

# 2

**In most B2B sectors, products and services evolve fast.** A product-based Promise to the Customer should therefore be framed in such a way that it has lasting appeal, rather than simply capturing a minor (and probably transitory) point-of-difference.

# 3

**Building on this second point, remember the 95:5 rule.** Product-based Customer Promises need to feel valuable and desirable to the 95% of customers who aren't actively in-market at the time of communication, not just the 5% who are.

Case study

# BT Enterprise



## What is the Customer Promise?

“With unbreakable wi-fi, it’s all business and no drama”.

## Why is it valuable to customers?

SMEs don’t want anything to get in the way of their business running smoothly. They have enough headaches without technology letting them down.

Reliable wi-fi is particularly crucial, but 47% of SMEs suffer from inconsistent connections. BT has the solution: its “unbreakable wi-fi”, which switches automatically to the EE mobile network if there’s a problem with the fixed line.

## How did BT make it memorable and auditable?

Battered by COVID, SMEs wanted action and solutions more than broad-brush empathy. BT used gentle comedy and insights into what small-business life really looks like to communicate its product-based Customer Promise.

To underline the inherent audibility of “unbreakable wi-fi”, BT also promised expert set-up, guaranteed speeds and no-quibble refunds.

## What were the results?

- BT Enterprise’s Customer Promise generated all-time highs in terms of consideration and preference. It also succeeded in shifting the value equation: agreement that “BT offers good quality products and services” jumped from 38% to 60%.
- Short-term margin ROI was £6.32 for every £1 spent on media, with long-term margin ROI estimated at £13.52 per media pound.

Read more here: [BT Enterprise: How BT reconnected with the UK’s small & medium businesses by being all business. No drama.](#) | WARC



# Emotional Customer Promises appear to be under-leveraged in B2B

**We found that just 23% of B2B Customer Promise campaigns led with an emotional appeal, compared to 35% in the B2C data set.**

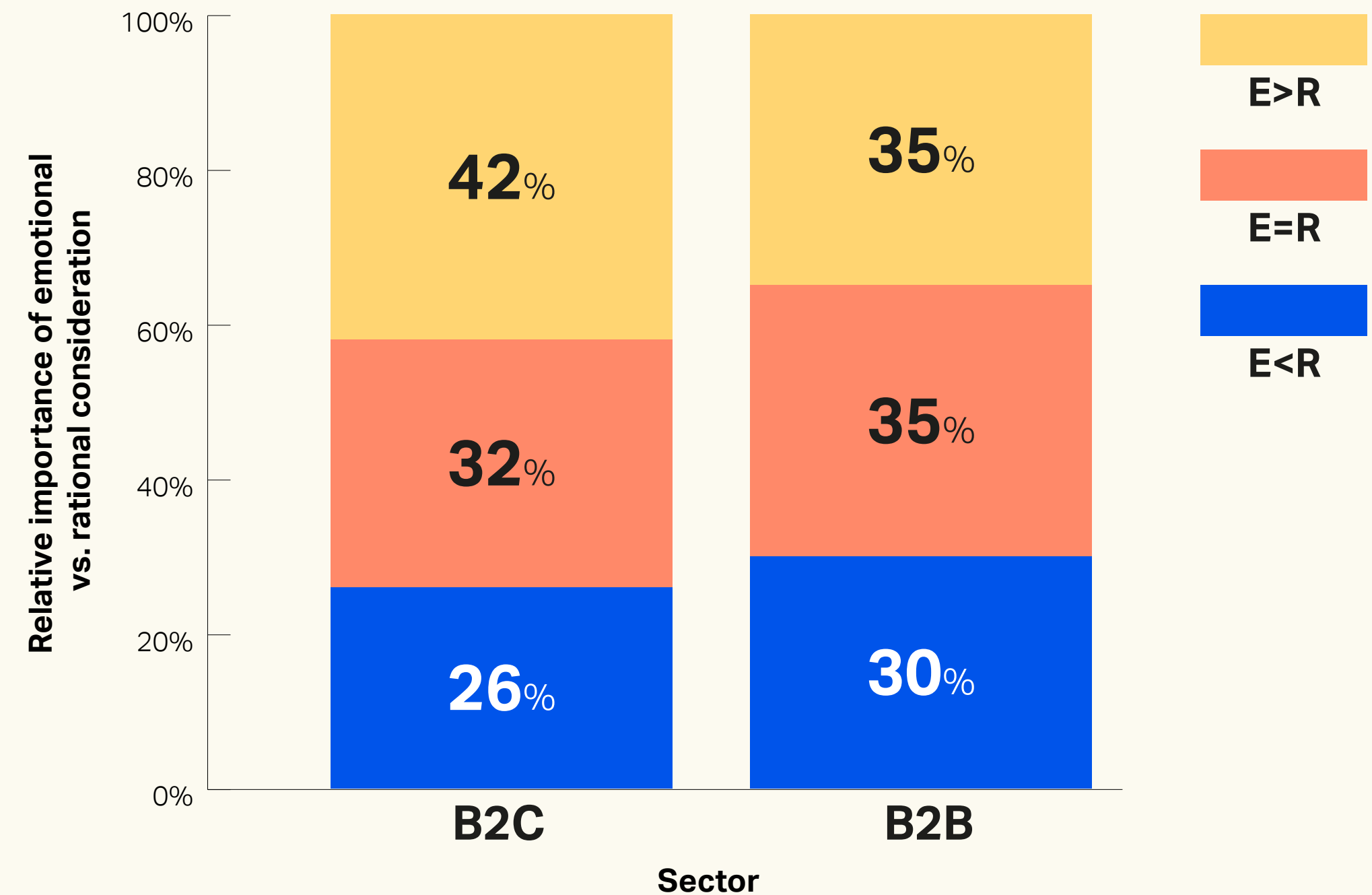
Numerous studies – including [research by System1](#) – have shown that emotional messaging tends to be more effective. The way our brains are wired means it cuts deeper and is easier to remember.

From [analysis of the UK IPA Databank](#), Les Binet and Peter Field have demonstrated that this holds true in B2B. As they say: “It is automatically assumed that decision-making in B2B buying is profoundly more rational than in B2C. Yet the data suggests that it is only slightly more rational...Grouping campaigns by whether emotional consideration was of greater, equal or lesser importance reveals only slight differences between B2B and B2C”.

Emotional messaging is particularly effective in the long term, because it creates positive sentiment towards the brand before a buying need emerges. Over this horizon, emotional B2B campaigns generate 1.4 Very Large Business Effects on average versus 0.2 for rational campaigns.

Customer Promises with an emotional appeal go beyond providing a reason-to-believe and create the desire to believe. They can help engender positive bias throughout the buying process, a critical advantage when the functional differences between vendors are often slight.

**In 70% of B2B cases, emotional consideration is of equal or greater importance than rational consideration**



Source: [The 5 principles of growth in B2B marketing: Empirical observations on B2B effectiveness](#) | WARC.

## Case study

# Workday



## What is the Customer Promise?

“Be a Finance and HR rock star”.

## Why is it valuable to customers?

Buyers of enterprise solutions – such as cloud applications for finance and human resources – need to be confident they’ll get the right capabilities and performance. But they also want to know that everyone in the organisation will feel good about using the chosen system.

In projecting its Customer Promise, Workday’s goal was to extend awareness beyond the C-suite and create an emotional bond with current and future users.

## How did Workday make it memorable and auditable?

Everyone likes a brand that speaks their language, especially if it does so with humour. Workday achieves this by asking how the likes of Ozzy Osbourne and Billy Idol feel about the term ‘rock star’ being used as an everyday corporate compliment.

People audit an emotional Customer Promise differently to a product-based one. What matters most is how it makes them feel. Positive effects are then transferred onto the product or service, creating a predisposition to believe.

## What were the results?

- Workday’s Customer Promise has delivered significant uplifts in familiarity and consideration to use, while transcending the confines of B2B marketing.
- To date, the campaign has generated 4.5 billion earned media impressions and 93.6% positive sentiment.

Read more here: [Workday: Rock Star | WARC](#).

# Customer Promises focused on CX and the path-to-purchase are largely absent

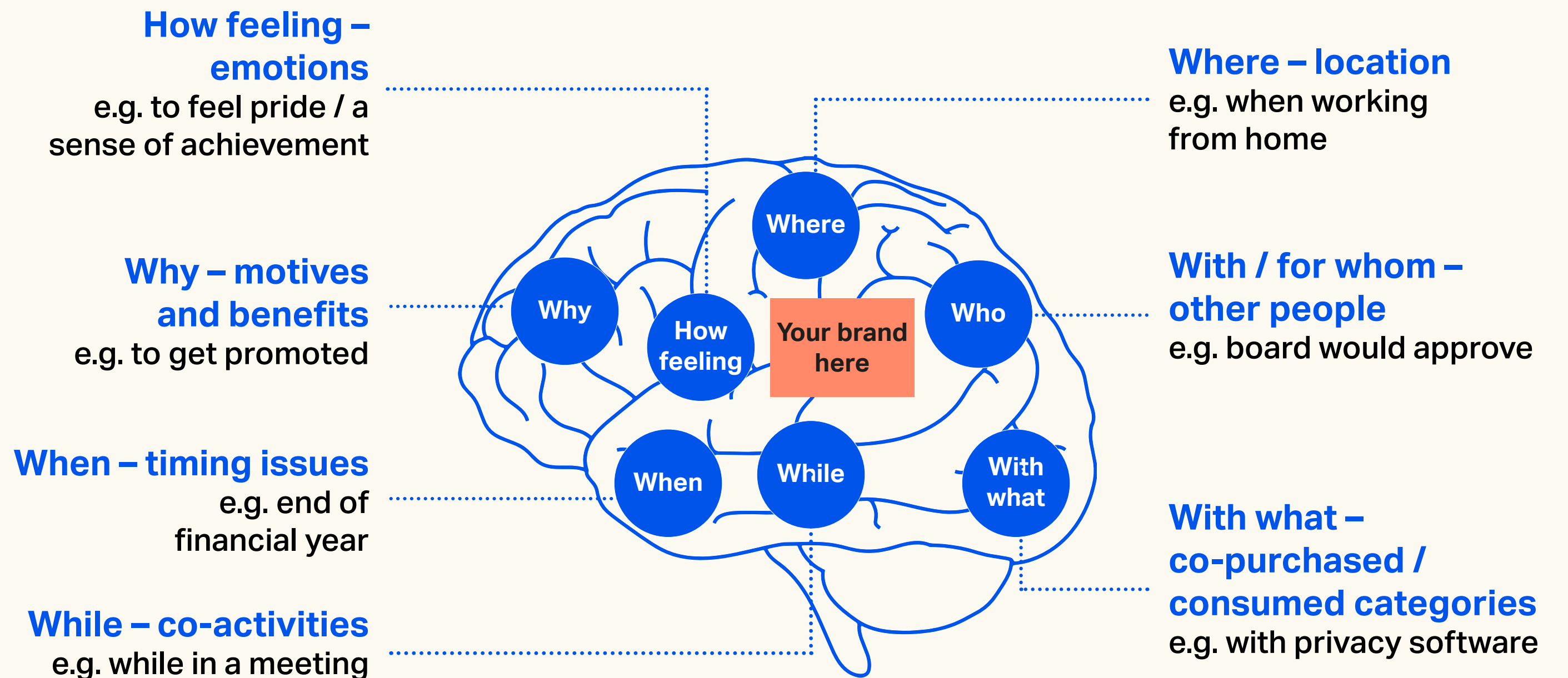
Even more than emotion, there appears to be white space here for B2B marketers to exploit. Customer Promise campaigns centred on customer experience and the path-to-purchase featured in just 7% of the case studies analysed.

To unlock future demand, B2B brands need to ensure they're front-of-mind for as many potential customers as possible whenever a buying need emerges.

This makes it critical to own the right Category Entry Points (CEPs). Professor Jenni Romaniuk of the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science defines CEPs as "representing the internal and external factors that guide memory retrieval in each individual buying situation".

Customer Promises that target the most relevant CEPs, and which are supported by outstanding CX once the customer engages, can be a highly effective strategy in B2B. Salesforce is a case in point. The company enjoyed widespread name recognition, but audiences were less familiar with how it could help fuel business growth. In response came the Trailblazers campaign, launched in 2019 and premised directly on a variety of different buying situations.

## How to identify Category Entry Points in B2B: The W's Framework



Source: Category Entry Points In A B2B World: Linking Buying Situations To Brand Sales | The B2B Institute & Ehrenberg-Bass Institute.

## Case study

# Amazon India



## What is the Customer Promise?

“However small your business, Amazon can make it more powerful”.

## Why is it valuable to customers?

Small businesses are the lifeblood of the Indian economy but tend to trade in traditional ways. Newcomers like Amazon are often viewed with suspicion.

With the vast majority lacking an online presence, COVID posed an existential threat. To survive, there was an urgent need for change.

## How did Amazon India make it memorable and auditable?

Before it could empower small businesses, Amazon needed to break down the barriers to adoption. Moving fast, it radically overhauled the customer experience for sellers: killing off complex registration processes; introducing local language interfaces; and putting SMEs front and centre of its Prime Day campaign. The watchword was simplicity. Even its TV ad stressed that “selling on Amazon is as easy as reciting a nursery rhyme.”

The Customer Promise was highly auditable. Sales would immediately show owners whether their business had become more powerful or not.

## What were the results?

- Top-of-mind awareness rose from 59% to 88%, with preference increasing by 10 points. 200,000 new SMEs signed up to the platform, two-thirds of whom were based outside the main cities.
- Amazon also saw a x3 growth in registrations from Hindi-language sellers.

Read more here: [Amazon: Making small, powerful | WARC.](#)

## Chapter 3

# The view from the B2B frontline:

How marketing experts responded to our findings

# Many B2B organisations struggle to leverage their brand fully

**Brand Finance has calculated that B2B companies underperform their B2C counterparts by 5 points in terms of the contribution 'brand' makes to business value. Closing this gap would translate into almost \$1 trillion of increased value.**

The sector recognises the problem. 80% of B2B marketing and sales professionals in the USA say it is difficult to integrate their brand across channels, whilst 78% of B2B marketers globally do not feel their brand performs 'brilliantly' in terms of distinctiveness or creative stand-out.

This is often a problem of organisations' own making. The reality is that brand building remains a low priority within many B2B businesses... and the numbers prove it.

Les Binet and Peter Field have posited a rule-of-thumb that B2B organisations should invest 46% of their budget in

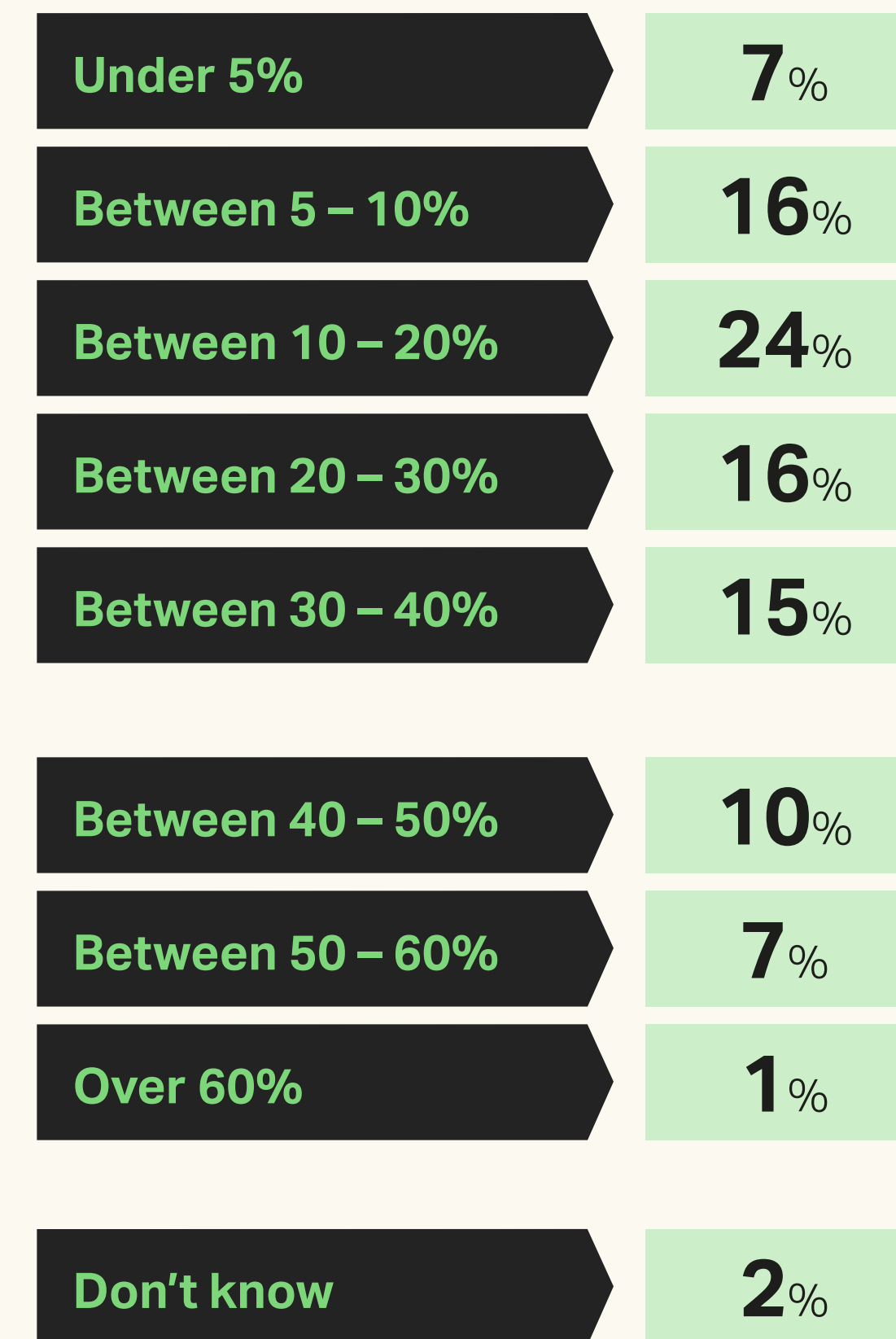
brand building and 54% in shorter-term activations, compared to the 60:40 split they recommend in B2C. But research shows fewer than one in five B2B companies are heeding this advice.

Most B2B marketers know this is short-sighted (quite literally), but struggle to convince their colleagues of the need for change. Could Customer Promises be the lever they're looking for?

To find out, we talked to three experts in the field:

- **Sven Dellagnolo**, Senior Director of Global Demand Generation & Marketing Strategy at Lexmark
- **James Hankins**, Global VP of Marketing Strategy & Planning at Sage
- **Harjot Singh**, Global Chief Strategy Officer, McCann Worldgroup & McCann

**Q: What proportion of your organisation's marketing budget for the current fiscal year is specifically allocated to B2B brand-building and brand marketing programmes?**



Source: Transmission, 'The State of B2B Brand Building 2022'. n= 500 senior marketing leaders in B2B organisations worldwide. Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

# Our experts believed Customer Promises have high potential

**We asked our trio why Customer Promises seem so effective in moving the needle on both hard and soft metrics.**

For James Hankins of Sage, it boiled down to the fact that Customer Promises are “statements of public commitment that make the brand accountable”. In turn, this makes it easier for buying groups to justify their decision – both to themselves and others.

The concept of accountability emphasises why the most powerful Customer Promises are highly auditable. As Sven Dellagnolo of Lexmark put it: “It’s important to promise specific outcomes... If you can narrow your Customer Promise to deliver results within a meaningful timeframe, you can cut through the noise.”

Harjot Singh of McCann Worldgroup & McCann attributed the success of Customer Promises to their “inherent customer-centricity and strategic simplicity. They’re an antidote to complexity, which can be a huge advantage for the brand and ultimately for the customer too”.

All three agreed on why Customer Promises work particularly hard for B2B organisations with lower budgets: they allow a brand to concentrate its firepower; tell a consistent story across touchpoints; and stand out meaningfully in ultra-competitive markets. In James Hankins’ words: “There’s greater risk for businesses in choosing a smaller supplier, but a Customer Promise can help stress the potential upside”.

**Trust and reliability become key differentiators when the competition is intense...  
A well-crafted Customer Promise simplifies the core proposition and makes it easier for potential clients to remember why they should choose you.**



**Harjot Singh**

Global Chief Strategy Officer,  
McCann Worldgroup &  
McCann

# They also provided strong insights into why Customer Promises are relatively scarce in B2B

## Why do B2B brands appear more hesitant than B2C brands to make explicit Promises to the Customer?

Sven Dellagnolo felt the central issue was what companies like Lexmark actually sell. As he pointed out, it's different to a bar of Snickers: "B2B solutions often depend on numerous variables controlled by the customer. If we fail to implement a solution due to factors beyond our control, the brand cannot fulfil its Customer Promise. That's an inherent risk".

Harjot Singh made a related point: "Unlike in B2C where there's a single product suited to a broad audience, B2B has more tailored solutions for different clients

and stakeholders. That makes it more challenging to create one single, clear Customer Promise".

Challenging... but far from impossible. Harjot continued: "You need a Customer Promise with agility and leeway that's responsive to different needs".

Developing such a Customer Promise requires insight. James Hankins believed this is an area where B2B brands can sometimes come up short: "A lot of companies, especially smaller ones, don't do their market orientation. They don't go out to find where the opportunity is". Accordingly, they miss "the human motivations beneath the purchase".

**B2B brands forget they're talking to individuals with hopes, dreams and ambitions. We talk a lot about ourselves in business but not enough about the customer benefit.**



**James Hankins**

Global VP of Marketing  
Strategy & Planning,  
Sage



# Customer Promises matter... but how they're applied matters just as much

**Harjot Singh talked about how "a Customer Promise does not require large advertising budgets. The Promise itself can become the cornerstone, or centre of gravity, of the overall marketing effort".**

But what you do need, he said, is "a clear and precise strategy that's aligned with the path-to-purchase". For Sven Dellagnolo, this was also fundamental: "Large enterprises face a constant influx of use cases and challenges, making it crucial for sellers to recognise purchasing seasons and budget availability".

All our experts pinpointed the challenge of addressing the varied – and sometimes conflicting – priorities of different stakeholders within a buying committee.

How the Customer Promise is expressed will therefore need to be flexed to meet the particular demands of, say, IT or Finance.

At the same time, as James Hankins emphasised: "Talking to individuals with a tailored message is expensive, and there's no technology able to do it". This puts a premium on comms that resonate across the whole buying group (as well as other, probably unseen influencers within the organisation).

Effective Customer Promises carry meaning for, and convey value to, different constituencies of interest. This is a core advantage; and it's becoming ever more important given how buying dynamics are evolving.

**Good marketing provides genuine value and assistance when a customer is making decisions... Campaigns with a strong Customer Promise can be very effective, so long as they're specific and focused.**



**Sven Dellagnolo**

Senior Director of Global Demand Generation & Marketing Strategy, Lexmark

# Customer Promises are an effective response to changes in the B2B buying process

Discussing the enterprise technology space, Sven Dellagnolo observed that: **“The complexity of B2B engagement has grown exponentially. Buyer groups have significantly increased in size, which has made decision-making more challenging”.**

Research suggests this is true across sectors. Compounding the issue, a study by Merkle has found that B2B buyers believe the performance gap between candidates is narrowing and (perhaps as a consequence) are evaluating more potential partners than ever.

For James Hankins, the key change has been disintermediation: “Previously, a lot of B2B sales were driven through partners or relationships. However, the

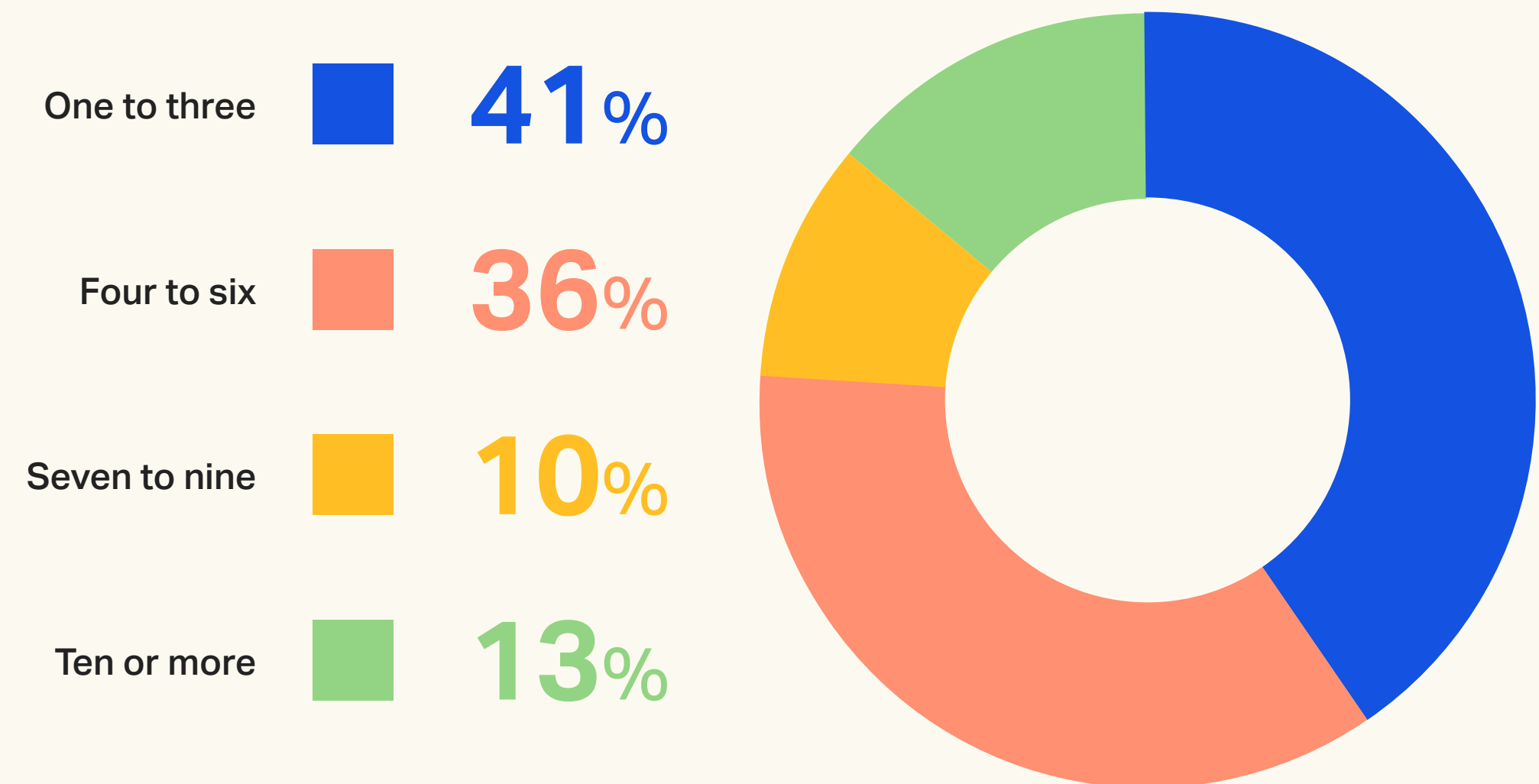
cloud computing revolution has enabled SaaS solutions to be delivered directly via e-commerce platforms”.

Harjot Singh echoed Sven and James’ comments: “Data analytics and AI have become integral to B2B decision-making, and there’s often a lot of stakeholder complexity... That means there’s a pressing need to be even more exceptional in how you offer up solutions”.

Making a Promise to the Customer helps B2B organisations address these new dynamics. Customer Promises provide a fixed point around which consensus can aggregate; elevate a brand’s perceived performance; and give it a meaningful ‘presence’ even when the sales team aren’t physically in the room.

**60% of buying committees now comprise at least four people**

How many people were involved in the purchase process?



Source: Demand Gen Report and Demandbase, ‘2022 Buyer Behaviour Survey’.

# Customer Promises can also help B2B brands recalibrate their marketing focus

**There's an urgent need for organisations to rethink their approach to comms, according to James Hankins: "There's an obsession around the bottom of the funnel... This mindset has disproportionately infected B2B versus B2C. The 95:5 rule states that you've only got 5% of the market ready to buy at any one point. What about the 95% that come over the next five years?"**

To maximise mental availability and unlock future demand, brands need to be distinctive. Harjot Singh felt this was often an issue in B2B: "There isn't as much emphasis on brand differentiation as there's traditionally been in the B2C world".

For Sven Dellagnolo, the starting point is to "acknowledge that things have changed. People now talk about the 'shadow funnel'\* and self-guided influencing. These are factors that B2B companies must address if they're going to influence buying groups' thought processes".

In their different ways, these are all powerful arguments for thinking longer term and investing more in brand

building. A study by The B2B Institute and Bain & Company underlines the point. B2B buyer groups overwhelmingly gravitate towards brands that are already familiar. In the research, 81% said that the chosen solution was one that 'all or almost all' of the group knew at the beginning of the process. Only 4% of final purchases went to products known only to the recommending function.

The study found that some very human dynamics are at play here. It is the fact that other people in the buying group are aware of the brand that leads to it being chosen; personal familiarity is not enough. Furthermore, individuals will not fight for a solution if their colleagues have not heard of it, even if they believe it to be superior. Conversely, they are willing to pay more for products known to other members of the committee.

However good their product or service, B2B brands that don't command widespread familiarity when the buying group first meets will always struggle to land the contract. A strong Customer Promise can help brands clear this critical first bar.

**To win, B2B brands need to be known to all members of the buying group at the start of the process**



Source: [Demand Gen Report and Demandbase, '2022 Buyer Behaviour Survey'](#).

\*A shadow funnel is a relatively new concept. It acts as a secondary funnel behind the primary sales funnel. Its purpose is to engage leads who are somewhat familiar with the problem, solution, and overall product landscape, but who haven't yet discovered the vendor's specific product.

# Customer Promises can add an extra dimension to the essentials of product performance

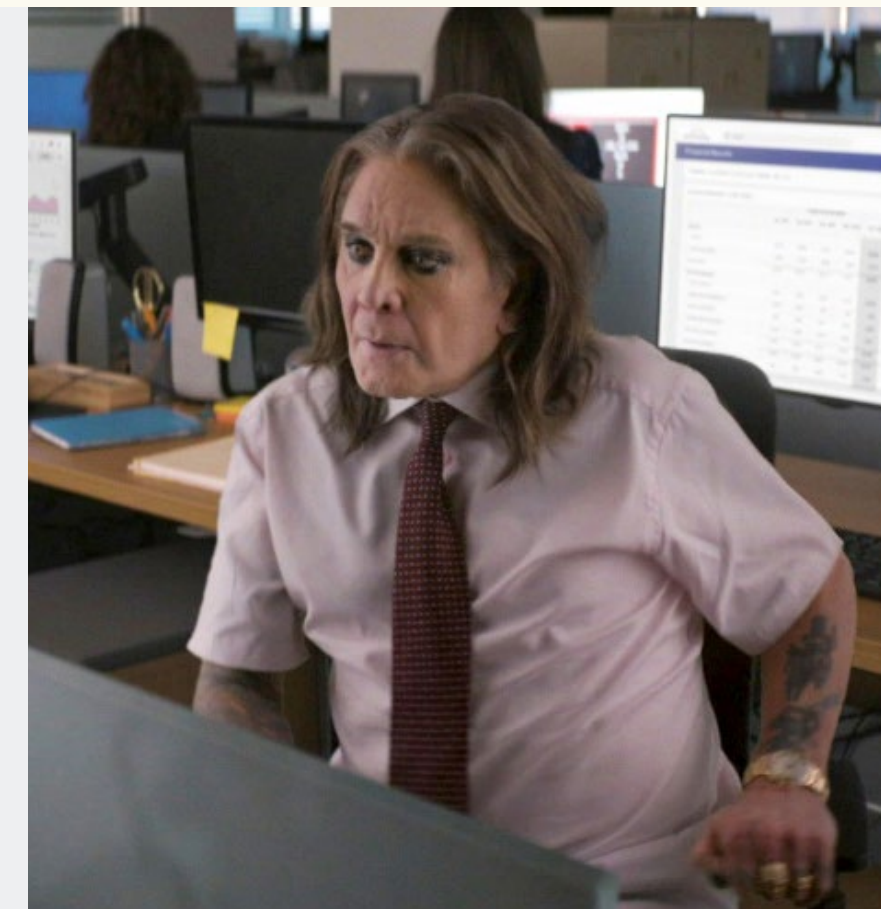
Product plays a pivotal role in B2B marketing, something that all our experts were quick to stress. Sven Dellagnolo summed it up well: “Product is what the enterprise purchasing process is ultimately executed against”.

“Features and technical specifications contribute to reputation”, said Harjot Singh... But they’re not the only factor. He went on: “B2B marketing does often need to be functional, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t also be thinking about building emotional connections with people. As marketers, we can adopt both playbooks”.

For James Hankins, the two are conjoined: “If I see a product ad with a Customer Promise and I raise an eyebrow – that’s an emotional response. It doesn’t necessarily have to tug at my heartstrings”.

Just as in B2C marketing, the goal is to create a behavioural response. Whether centred on product, emotion or the customer experience, Customer Promises are simply a means to this end.

Having seen the evidence of impact for Customer Promises in B2B and having heard from the experts, what are the key considerations for B2B marketers to win with their Customer Promise?



## Chapter 4

# Winning through Customer Promises:

A checklist for success



# Getting it right

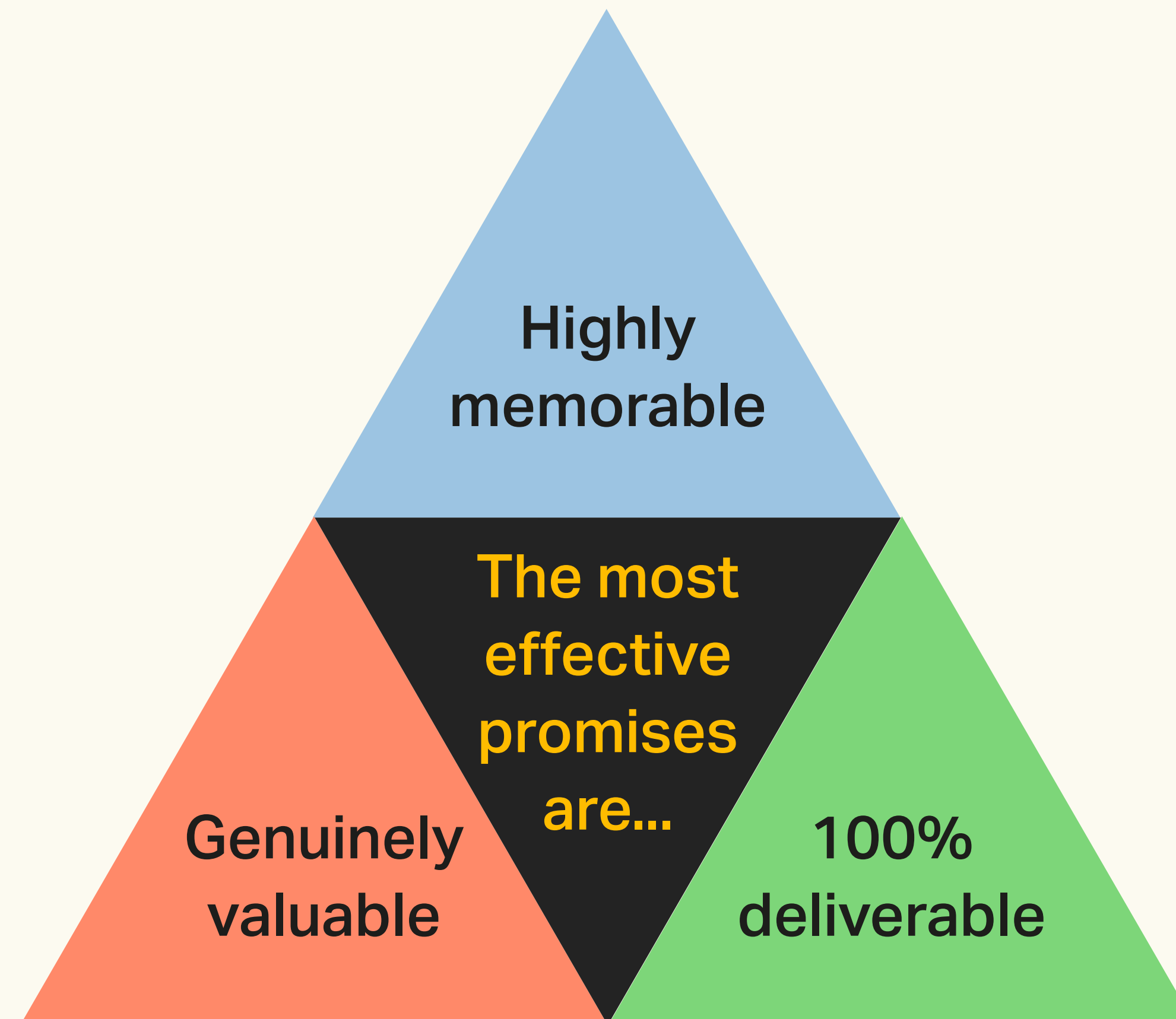
**There are no silver bullets in marketing, a truth that applies equally to Customer Promises. But adhering to best practice will significantly increase the chances of success.**

As with all other elements of a go-to-market strategy, developing and deploying a Promise to the Customer requires rigorous examination of an organisation's capabilities, the competitive landscape and the core needs of its primary audiences. Multiple factors need orchestrating and harmonising. Actions need to be tested and lessons learned. Every part of the mix needs to be scrutinised, adjusted and optimised over time.

Drawing on proven principles of marketing effectiveness, this final chapter seeks to provide actionable insights and advice to B2B brands interested in creating a Customer Promise.

It's structured around the three essential components of a Customer Promise campaign: ensuring it's highly memorable, genuinely valuable to audiences and 100% deliverable.

## The 'holy trinity' of B2B Customer Promise campaigns



# Effective B2B Customer Promises must be highly memorable

## Must Dos:

### 1

Unless target audiences know about the Customer Promise, it might as well not exist. Increasing mental availability is crucial.

**A Customer Promise must therefore be communicated in a manner that is both compelling and distinctive.**

**Establish ownership of each and every message by investing in durable creative assets.**

### 2

Studies have shown that using multiple channels increases return on advertising spend. Impact is exponential rather than cumulative.

**A Promise to the Customer must therefore be driven across touchpoints.**

**Everything should convey the same Customer Promise, whether it's a TV ad, a podcast, an influencer strategy or the signage in your showroom.**

### 3

At any given point in time, 95% of B2B buyers are typically out-of-market. Communicating a Customer Promise to these buyers is the key to creating future demand.

**In projecting the Customer Promise, B2B brands must therefore seek to maximise audience coverage by using broad-reach media.**

**The evidence is that this also increases the effectiveness of performance and 1:1 marketing.**

# Effective B2B Customer Promises must be highly memorable

## Should Dos:

### 4

Marketing is expensive but it costs nothing to make a Promise to the Customer. A Customer Promise can help brands drive better results, without the need to invest more in marketing.

**Of course, Customer Promises cannot defy the laws of brand growth. Big brands tend to win in marketing because they have more customers and larger budgets. But a Customer Promise is a cost-neutral strategy that brands can leverage to deliver brand and business impact, and, in turn, unlock more investment in marketing.**

### 5

Every category has its own demands, and every brand has its own playbook for success. However, in general, B2B organisations under-invest in 'brand' and over-invest in 'activation'. As a rule-of-thumb, at least 40% of spend should be dedicated to brand-building activities.

**Given the growing importance of being familiar to buyers from the very start of the process, organisations should consider recalibrating towards 'brand'. A powerful Customer Promise will help B2B marketers make the case for change.**



# Effective B2B Customer Promises must be genuinely valuable to the audience

## Must Dos:

### 1

Customer Promises must target specific buying situations. Their value correlates directly to how well they match customer needs during the purchasing process. The most effective ones also make contract renewal more likely by positively impacting how ownership and usage *feel*.

**For B2B buyers, there is a complex interplay of corporate and personal motivations. Therefore, the strongest Customer Promises will often do more than simply offer functional value. They will show how a brand's product or service can add tangible value to customers' lives on an ongoing basis.**

### 2

As Roger Martin has said: "If your Customer Promise is about delivering a twelve-inch, tungsten carbide rolling cutter drill bit, your customers won't care much which supplier fulfils that promise".

**Customer Promises don't need to be unique, but they do need to transcend category table-stakes. This underlines the importance of research and insight: where are the unmet (perhaps even unarticulated) needs that your Promise to the Customer can satisfy? Very often, these needs will be emotional.**

# Effective B2B Customer Promises must be genuinely valuable to the audience

## Should Dos:

### 3

Many B2B companies have multiple product streams and / or target a wide variety of industries. The probability is that buying situations will vary quite markedly across these different products and sectors.

**While the central Promise to the Customer should remain consistent to avoid dilution, it also needs to be flexed to cover different Category Entry Points and different members of the B2B buyer group. This will maximise its relevance to each individual customer, and therefore its perceived value.**

### 4

One of the reasons advertising pays back is that it creates a sense of security amongst the target audience. They're reassured that they'll get their money's worth. Campaigns that include a clear and valuable Customer Promise can accentuate this benefit.

**Brands should pay particular attention to how the Customer Promise will help derisk the buying decision, especially for those members of the committee who are less knowledgeable about (or interested in) specific features and functions.**

# Effective B2B Customer Promises must be 100% deliverable

## Must Dos:

### 1

Customer Promises are fundamentally about trust. They are only meaningful if the customer has absolute faith they'll be met.

**A Customer Promise therefore needs to be delivered consistently, to an exemplary standard, and across every customer-facing activity. Brand owners need to be certain they have the resources, capabilities and commitment to make sure it is.**

### 2

Some brands default to Customer Promises that are vague and generic, like 'Your Trusted Partner' or 'You're in good hands'. Not only do these lack a cutting edge, they are impossible for a customer to verify.

**A Customer Promise should be concrete and auditable. Consider ways in which customers can put it to the test, as FedEx famously did by promising "When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight".**

# Effective B2B Customer Promises must be 100% deliverable

## Should Dos:

### 3

Belief in the Customer Promise will only come when someone has heard and / or experienced it multiple times. Like any type of brand platform, Customer Promises take time to embed.

**A Customer Promise should therefore have longevity. Since B2B product development cycles generally move fast, the sweet spot will be where a fundamental brand truth meets underlying customer needs.**

### 4

B2B organisations need to be permanently in beta mode. While what is delivered should stay consistent for an appreciable length of time, how it is delivered can and should constantly evolve.

**Brands should allocate resources and energy to exploring better ways to deliver their Customer Promise. This isn't just about product and marketing. There are always ways to improve sales and service processes too.**

# Winning through Customer Promises: Summary of key success factors

## Must Dos

## Should Dos

### Highly memorable

- Communicate your Customer Promise in a manner that is compelling, distinctive and ownable.
- Bring your Customer Promise to life across every relevant touchpoint.
- Leverage broad-reach media to impact the 95% of buyers who are not currently looking to purchase.

- Argue for sufficient investment to create Day 1 familiarity with the Customer Promise throughout target buyer groups.
- Strive for Excess Share of Voice (ESOV) to maximise marketplace impact.

### Genuinely valuable

- Explore benefits beyond the purely functional. Promise value at the personal as well as the corporate level.
- Identify a Customer Promise that satisfies buyers' unmet needs. These will often be emotional.

- Flex your Customer Promise to address different Category Entry Points and different members of the B2B buyer group.
- Apply your Customer Promise in ways that derisk buying decisions for both target and hidden buyers.

### 100% deliverable

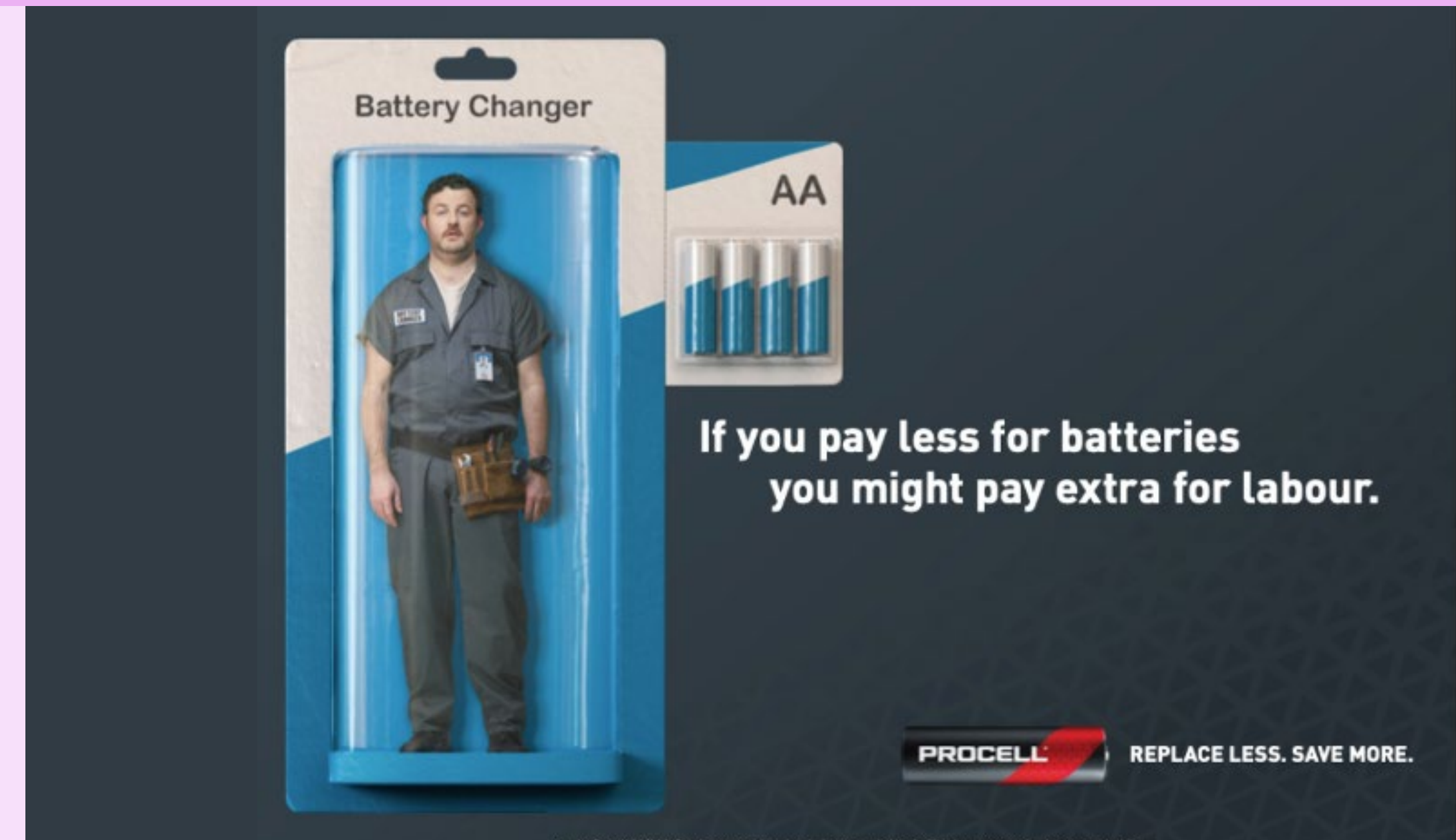
- Ensure you have the capabilities and resources to deliver your Customer Promise on every occasion.
- Make your Customer Promise fully auditable and encourage audiences to put it to the test.

- Stress-test your Customer Promise to make sure it has sufficient longevity to become embedded.
- Search out new ways to deliver your Customer Promise across product, marketing, sales and service.

**Here are two Customer Promise campaigns that meet all these criteria and have, as a consequence, delivered outstanding results.**

## Case study

# Procell



## What is the Customer Promise?

“Replace less. Save more”.

## Why is it valuable to customers?

For procurement professionals, AA and AAA batteries figure low on the agenda. They simply aren't interested in comparing products, and therefore default to price when making buying decisions.

But what they are interested in is business continuity and cutting out wasted effort. Procell's insight was that the issue isn't how long batteries last. It's the (hidden) cost of business disruption when the things they power stop working.

## How did Procell make it memorable and auditable?

To humanise its Customer Promise, Procell introduced two official company 'battery changers'. Their antics demonstrated how much breakdown moments cost companies in terms of time, distraction and business interruption.

Procell had some fun with the concept, sending out mailers with battery changer dolls and fake cheap battery packs. It also created a cost calculator, allowing prospects to audit the possible savings for themselves.

## What were the results?

- Spontaneous awareness grew from 23% to 30%. Brand health metrics also improved significantly, with a 6-point increase in perceived longevity and a 15-point decrease in perceptions of Procell as 'too expensive'.
- Best of all, the Customer Promise drove sales. Penetration rose from 16% to 30% during the first year of the campaign.

Read more here: [Procell: Meet your battery changer | WARC](#)

Case study

# Sage



## What is the Customer Promise?

“Sage gives business owners the power to boss it”.

## Why is it valuable to customers?

Many start-ups are motivated by the desire to be master of their own destiny.

Owners want control... and they need it too. Whether it's paying invoices, filing tax returns or making payroll, they're looking for accounting software that works on their phone, is customisable but not complex, and doesn't cost a fortune.

## How did Sage make it memorable and auditable?

Sage harnessed multiple touchpoints, from TV to a TikTok challenge, to show how it helped business owners “boss it”. Whatever the channel, the Customer Promise was expressed in straightforward but empowering language. Key verticals were targeted by using archetypes, including a fishmonger, plumber and architect.

A notable feature of the campaign was how it combined specific use cases with the reward of ‘winning’. It was therefore auditable on both a product and an emotional level.

## What were the results?

- The campaign enabled Sage to leapfrog competitors like Quickbooks and Xero. Those who had seen the advertising rated the brand significantly higher on measures such as ‘human’, ‘simple to use’, ‘good value’ and ‘a leader’.
- The Customer Promise helped Sage itself to “boss it”, driving sales growth of 193% versus the year prior.

Read more here: [Sage: Don't Call it a Comeback | WARC](#)



# Final takeaways

## 1

**B2B Customer Promise campaigns are more likely to drive uplifts in brand health measures such as consideration, preference and purchase intent.**

47% of the Customer Promise campaigns analysed delivered uplifts, compared to 19% of non-Customer Promise campaigns.

## 2

**B2B Customer Promise campaigns also appear to outperform in terms of market share, penetration and revenue gains.**

Our research shows they are nearly three times more likely to report increases in market share than non-Customer Promise campaigns.

## 3

**Customer Promises deliver significant advantages for B2B brands with limited marketing resources or who are looking to scale up.**

Customer Promise campaigns are more effective at all investment levels, and disproportionately so when budgets are smaller.

# Final takeaways

## 4

Whether the task is activation or brand building, B2B Customer Promise campaigns work harder than non-Customer Promise ones.

Based on WARC's B2B Effectiveness Ladder, Customer Promise campaigns are 50% more likely to be a 'Sale Closer' and 67% more likely to be a 'Brand Builder'.

## 5

These findings point to a clear competitive opportunity, especially since Customer Promises are used infrequently in B2B.

An explicit and valuable Customer Promise was evident in just 18% of the B2B campaigns studied. At 40%, the figure is much higher in B2C.

## 6

69% of Customer Promises identified were product-based. Emotional and CX / P2P Customer Promises appear under-leveraged in B2B.

While perhaps not surprising, this skew flags white spaces for B2B brands to explore. The mix of Customer Promise types in B2C is much more evenly distributed.

# Who we are

**At WARC, our purpose is to save the world from ineffective marketing by putting evidence at the heart of every marketing decision.**

We believe that effective marketing is based on facts and not opinions.

Since 1985, we've brought confidence to marketing decisions through the most trusted research, case studies, best practice, data and inspiration.

Today, we help 75,000+ marketers across 100+ countries. Our clients include the world's leading brands, advertising and media agencies, media owners, research companies and universities – including the top-five largest agency groups and top-five largest advertisers in the world.

Learn more about **WARC Advisory** [here](#).

For more information on bespoke advisory projects, please contact [imaad.ahmed@warc.com](mailto:imaad.ahmed@warc.com).

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## About The B2B Institute at LinkedIn

**The B2B Institute is a LinkedIn Think Tank that researches new approaches to B2B growth.**

The Institute partners with leading academic and industry experts to empower the B2B community with breakthrough ideas and category-defining research.

They are a diverse team of talented strategists and storytellers who are passionate about helping B2B marketers realise the opportunity brand advertising has in driving growth.

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