

# Brand to Buyer

A LinkedIn B2B Technology Buyer and Marketer Survey – EMEA 22/23



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# B2B marketing. It's got a job to do. It's functional. It's got no business getting creative. Really?

Received wisdom is yesterday's thinking. Just ask B2B buyers. Which is exactly what we've done. We wanted to find out more about whether current B2B technology marketing is hitting the mark with buyers. Does a focus on features and benefits motivate their purchase decisions, or are they looking for something different?

This extensive survey of technology decision makers and marketers certainly revealed a few surprises. While some leading technology companies have captured the imagination of buyers, many are yet to push the creativity button. Marketers have the green light to up their game, build a more engaging brand and take advantage of growth trends in the industry.

That means being more distinctive, more memorable and better understood. Technology marketers need to build brands that are relatable to the ever-broadening spectrum of technology buyers – from the IT department to line-of-business users. Brands that show clearly why investing in their technology can help buyers achieve their strategic goals. Brands that are visible in the places where buyers look for information.

Digital is now mandatory, but the broader mass market vehicles should not be forgotten. This is particularly

relevant when communicating the bigger brand picture and broadening brand appeal.

And marketers shouldn't talk only to prospective customers. It's now just as important to seek out external advocates and ensure that they're kept informed. They've become an increasingly powerful influence in the decision-making process.

**A B2B brand can be so much more than the sum of its products.** We found that what technology buyers value includes the whole vendor story. This ranges from their capabilities and their people, to their wider corporate values and reputation as an employer. Marketers who demonstrate aligned values can have a positive impact on purchase decisions.

So, we say, why be bound by the traditional, functional view of how B2B marketing should be done? Now's the time to elevate B2B technology brands and their marketing to increase engagement and drive sales.

**Welcome to the age of brilliant B2B technology brands.**



**Jim Habig**  
VP of Marketing,  
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions

## Our approach

The LinkedIn B2B Technology Buyer and Marketer survey, in association with B2B International, includes insights from

# 2,095

technology decision makers (technology buyers) and

# 2,124

senior marketing professionals in North America, Latin America, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific.

Of these,

# 40%

of respondents were from the EMEA region.

For more details, please see the **Survey respondents and methodology** section on page 27.

## 01



As business' dependence on technology continues to increase exponentially, today's technology buyers find themselves at the centre of the corporate stage.

**IT is no longer simply a support function. It now underpins the entire business, from digital sales channels to digital supply chains – and all the systems and processes in between.**

The fact that IT departments' profile and visibility have been increasing means that they've been under enormous pressure to make the right investment choices. And despite recent economic shifts and the prospect of a budget squeeze, technology buyers remain central to many projects that are shaping the enterprise of the future, spanning digital transformation, automation, big data, artificial intelligence and beyond.

This report explores the world of today's technology buyers, the challenges they face and the opportunities that this presents for technology vendors. It also looks at how technology marketing is evolving to better meet buyers' needs.

The insights we've uncovered will help marketers to build stronger B2B brands through a better understanding of the buyers that they are marketing to. We also shed light on what makes a great B2B technology brand and what tactics marketers can use to drive their brand to greater success.

Most importantly, it provides **five key trends that will help marketers create a stronger B2B technology brand.**





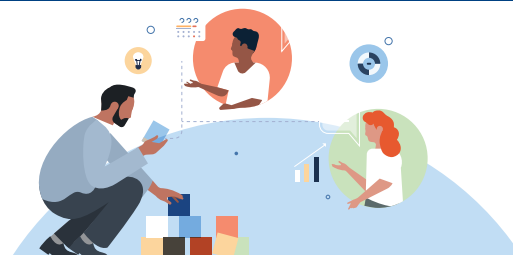
## 02

## Trends uncovered

## TREND 1

**Get creative with your content strategy**

Cutting through means adding imagination.



## TREND 2

**Cheer on branding in its long-term race**

Building a brilliant brand means seeing beyond immediate returns.



## TREND 3

**Know that a good employer signals a great brand**

Getting buyers to buy means demonstrating shared values.



## TREND 4

**Be where your customers are**

Being listened to by buyers means sharing the same destinations.



## TREND 5

**Influence the external influencers**

Having buyers pay attention means having the ear of advocates.



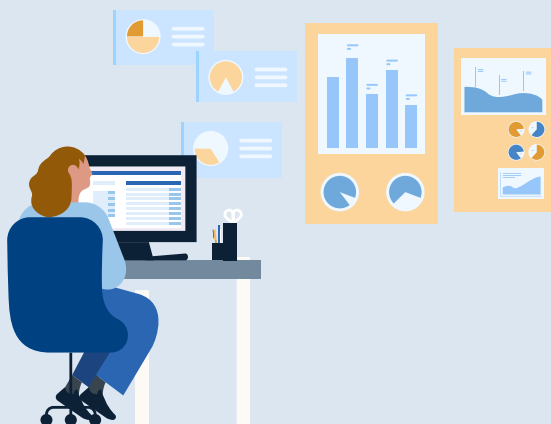
## 03



## Seeing inside today's technology buyer world

Technology is a business enabler – the success of any business today depends on its technology. With the technology marketplace getting even more crowded and competitive, the role of the technology buyer is becoming ever more complicated.

For tech marketers, stepping into the shoes of tech buyers can be extremely helpful. By meeting buyers at the right place, at the right time, with the right message that resonates with their priorities, marketers can build a strong foundation between tech buyers and tech vendors.



*Over the course of my career, marketing has always had one reason to exist – and that is to bring the customer inside the business. None of that's changed – but what has changed is the technology we have available to understand our customers and the acceleration in the pace of change. As marketing leaders, we have to understand that acceleration. It involves the way humans are, the way that society evolves and the way that technology is driving that evolution.”*



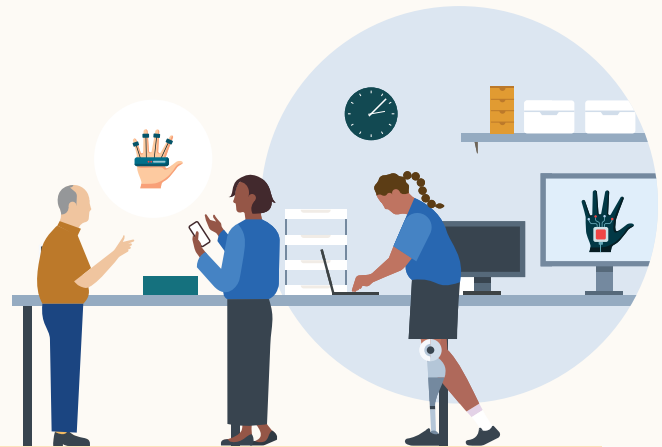
**Alexis Oger**

Vice President – EMEA  
Marketing, Dell Technologies

## Organisations view technology as a source of growth

Our research comes off a 12-month period that's seen technology businesses continue to invest in digital transformation and reshape working practices. Tech buyer budgets and headcounts have grown significantly.

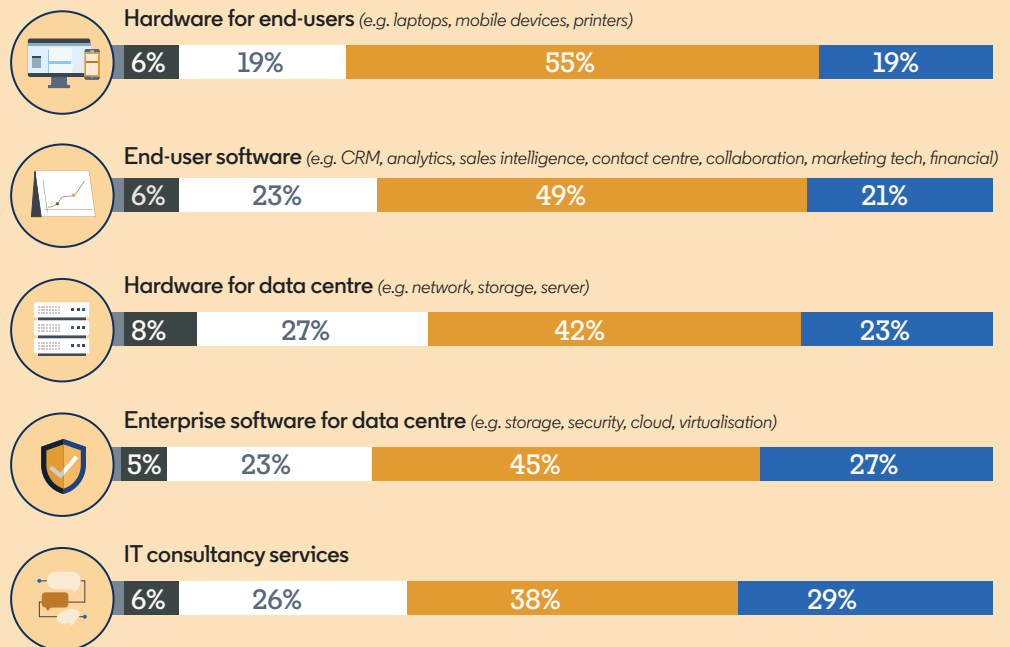
Buying budgets increased across nearly all product categories, with the most significant increases occurring in hardware for end-users, where 76% of buyers reported an increase.



**Figure 1.**  
**Tech buying budget**

*How has your team's tech buying budget changed in the past 12 months for each of the following categories?*

- Significantly increased
- Slightly increased
- No change
- Slightly decreased
- Significantly decreased



At the same time, nearly half of technology buyers (48%) saw their team headcount increase over the last 12 months, particularly within the Enterprise segment.

Buyers in Africa (58%) are significantly more likely to report headcount growth, while those in Western Europe (42%) are less likely to do so. And IT is the function that's most likely to have seen rapid headcount increases, reinforcing the view that technology has become a critical foundation for all areas of the modern business.

Organisations now overwhelmingly see technology as a source of growth (66% of EMEA technology buyers), rather than merely as an operating cost and are more focused on finding ways to improve their performance (62%) than on keeping costs low. And while the year ahead is likely to be significantly more challenging, the fact that organisations see technology as a way to get ahead provides grounds for being optimistic that technology spending will prove more resilient than other cost lines.

66%



of EMEA buyers agree that technology investments help drive their organisation's growth rather than simply being a cost of doing business.

62%



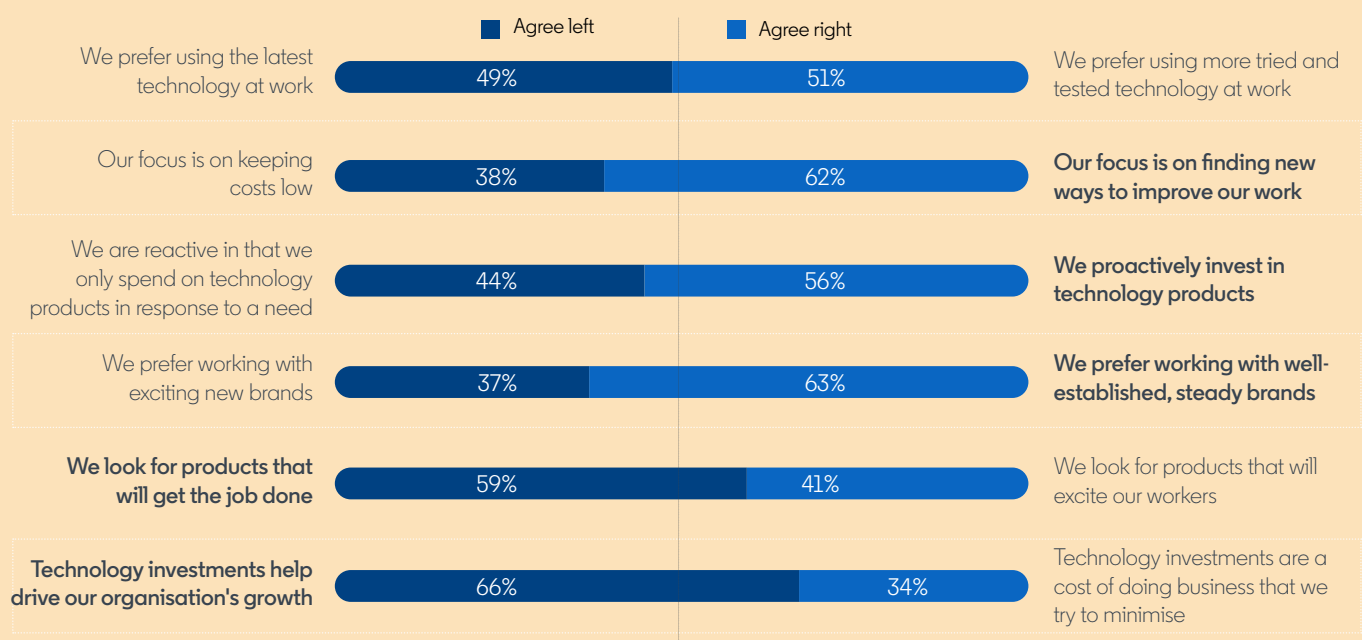
say they are more focused on finding new ways to improve their work than on keeping costs low.

56%



of buyers proactively invest in technology products, showcasing that they genuinely view and treat technology as an investment into their organisation's growth.

Figure 2. Tech buyers' technology preferences



Today's tech buyers anticipate that adoption of new technologies will continue to be a strategic priority, reflecting current views of technology as a potential source of competitive advantage. This advantage can be achieved through increased operational efficiency, or the delivery of more differentiated customer experiences.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cloud-native platforms** are two areas that feature high on the list of buyers' strategic priorities, highlighted by 31% and 27% respectively. And AI is significantly more likely to be a priority for Enterprise buyers (38%) and for those in Saudi Arabia (54%).



But the standout primary driver of technology spending for the year ahead will be risk mitigation. **Cybersecurity** is the #1 priority for technology buyers over the next one to two years, highlighted as a strategic priority by 37% of respondents overall, with particular emphasis in Israel, France, Nigeria and Austria.



## Identifying issues: competition, cost and workforce

**Competitive pressures and cost concerns** rate high on the list of challenges faced by buyers of new technology.

37%



say 'Having the right technology to stay ahead of the market' is a challenge.

34%



say 'Getting the right products and services while keeping our costs low' is a challenge.

**Workforce-related issues also featured strongly.** Following the switch to hybrid working, the need to support employees with the right technology remains front-of-mind.

60%



say that a shift to remote/hybrid work has had a noticeable impact on how they purchase technology.

33%



say 'Equipping and supporting employees both in the office and working remotely' is also a significant challenge.

**Figure 3. Tech buyer top 4 challenges**

#1

Having the right technology to stay ahead of the market.

#2

Troubleshooting/resolving technical issues.

#3

Getting the right products and services while keeping costs low.

#4

Equipping and supporting employees both in the office and working remotely.

Coping with increased levels of employee churn is another major issue, with 70% of technology buyers saying they are concerned by their organisation's ability to meet existing and emerging internal challenges resulting from staff turnover and changing employee expectations.

Buyers also face their own departmental issues. When asked which challenges had the biggest impact on their team's ability to meet its goals and objectives, buyers highlighted two in particular: 'Employees taking on dramatically new roles and responsibilities' and 'Needing to do more with fewer resources'.

There's a clear and positive take away for B2B vendor marketers here. The more that they can demonstrate to buyers how technology increases competitive edge without breaking the bank – as well as relieving cost concerns and employee churn while enabling more workforce productivity – the more they can drive sales.

04



## Technology marketing is adapting to change

The B2B technology market has already been impacted by changes in the buyer landscape, but the marketer landscape is also evolving. Shifts in spending priorities and operating models, in particular, reflect marketers' moves to better meet buyers' needs.

### Big budgets could be shrinking

The need for technology grew during the pandemic, as it offered the resiliency and competitive edge businesses needed. This led to increased marketing budgets and a growing need for skilled marketing teams, which continued as the industry emerged from the pandemic, with tech marketers reporting significant increases in budgets and headcount in the 12 months to June 2022. This growth was consistent across all geographies, with the biggest YoY increase seen among vendors of software for data centers.

However, the landscape has now shifted and the trend towards increased budgets looks to be in reverse. This new economic landscape will exacerbate the challenges marketers shared about securing budget in the future, particularly for brand marketing.



*Even though marketing has been embarking on a digital transition for a decade, the COVID crisis has accelerated not only the digitalisation of marketing, but also its “premiumisation”. We did in 18 months what would have been done in 10 years. Marketing has evolved from the status of “adjustment variable” – in reference to the famous advertising cuts in the event of a company’s financial loss – to the status of being a “strategic function” of the company’s business. Marketing has become a real lever for growth. Proof of this is the impact of marketing investments on the growth of eCommerce during the pandemic.”*



**Jeremy Chapuis**

Director, EMEA Marketing  
Media Centre of Excellence,  
Lenovo

17.1%



budget increase reported by marketers, on average.

19.1%



YoY average increase.

70%

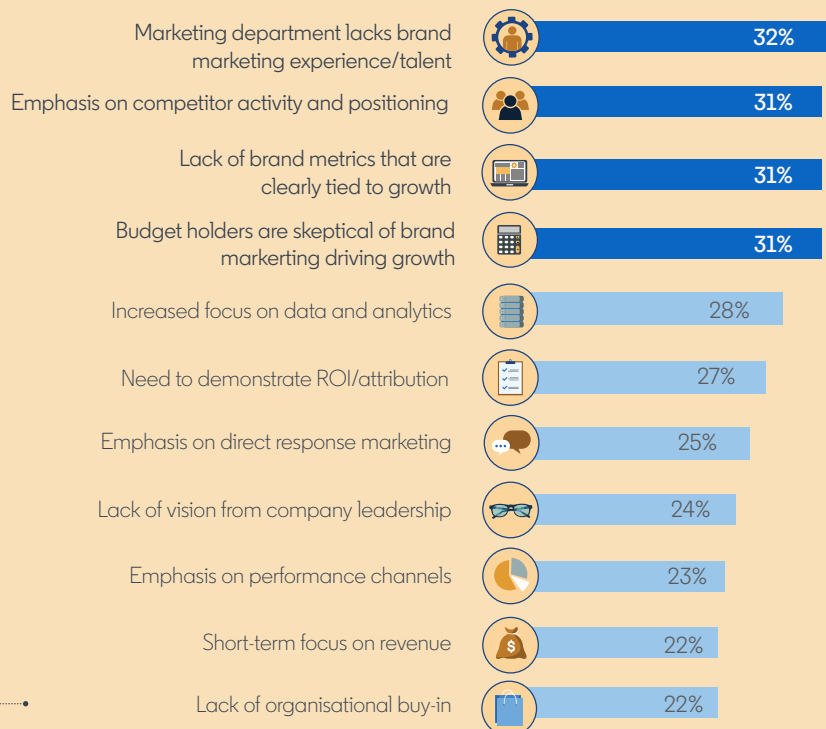


headcount increase reported in the 12 months to June 2022.

Looking ahead at a potential reversal of the trend towards increased budgets, we asked marketers why they may face challenges in securing budget in the future, particularly for brand marketing. A number of reasons were cited.

At 32%, the most common issue cited was lack of experience/talent in the marketing department, followed by 31% who cited budget holders being skeptical of the ability of brand marketing to drive growth.

**Figure 4. Primary challenges to securing budget for brand marketing investments**



*So much more of the selling process is now being driven without the traditional engagement of salespeople. It's driven by self-education and research. Buyers are interacting through technology such as AI chatbots rather than people – and marketing is at the heart of that.”*



**James Whitmore**  
EVP & CMO, NetApp



## Spend priorities are shifting

Over the last 12 months, as B2B tech marketers adapted to changing buyer behaviours, clear shifts in areas of investment have emerged.

Digital advertising, in particular on social media, is becoming the dominant area of spend, consuming an increasing proportion of marketing budget from both vendors and agency marketers. This aligns with tech buyers' saying that social media and search are now their primary sources for getting information to support their purchases.

# 29%



of vendor marketers said they've substantially increased spend on social media over the last 12 months – the most of any category.

# 26%



of vendor marketers said they substantially increased spend on search engine advertising.

# 32%



of tech marketers **ranked social media advertising top of all categories** for where they were mainly investing their marketing activities



*Here at LinkedIn, we've seen these patterns play out first-hand. It's encouraging to see our technology customers increase their spend on digital marketing and advertising services – a testament to how crucial it is for B2B brands to continue to invest in strengthening their presence, despite uncertainty. Many tech customers are in the market to reposition their brand and get in front of the conversation on digital transformation."*

**Tom Pepper**

Senior Director, EMEA and LATAM,  
LinkedIn Marketing Solutions



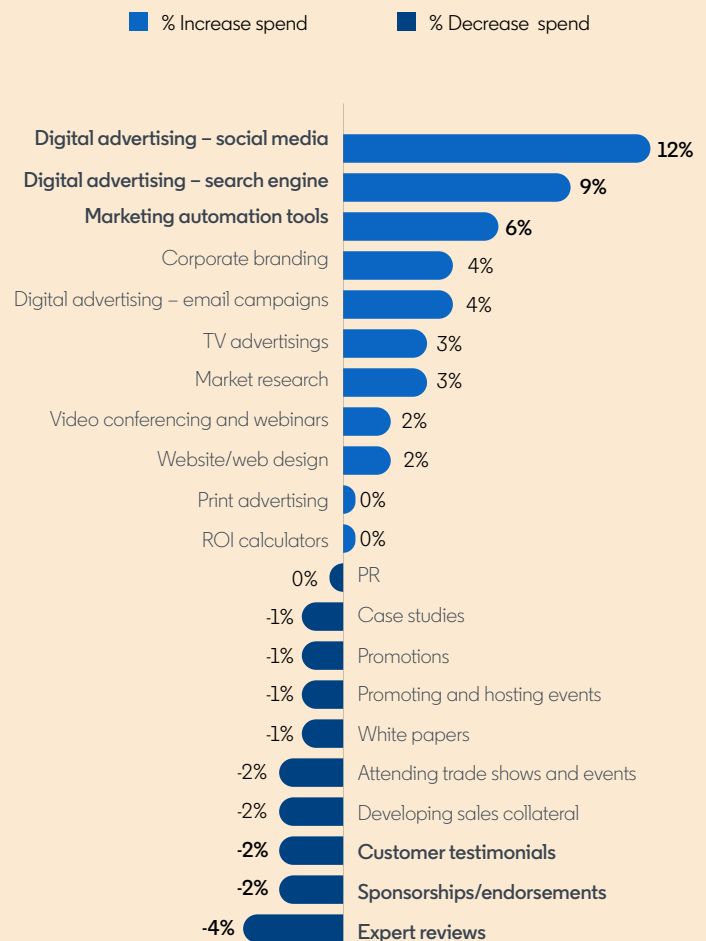


Tech marketers are supporting their increasingly digital activities by upping their use of marketing automation tools, which now account for a growing proportion of marketing budgets. When asked to identify the marketing activities that account for the largest proportion of their budgets, 29% ranked automation tools second out of twenty activities, behind only social media advertising.

And it's no surprise that, while some marketing activities are attracting increased investment, others are inevitably declining. Areas where more marketers reported declining spend than those reporting increases include expert reviews (-4%), sponsorships/endorsements (-2%) and customer testimonials (-2%).



**Figure 5.**  
**Marketers' budget spend changes over the past 12 months**  
*Net % significant increase vs % decrease spend*



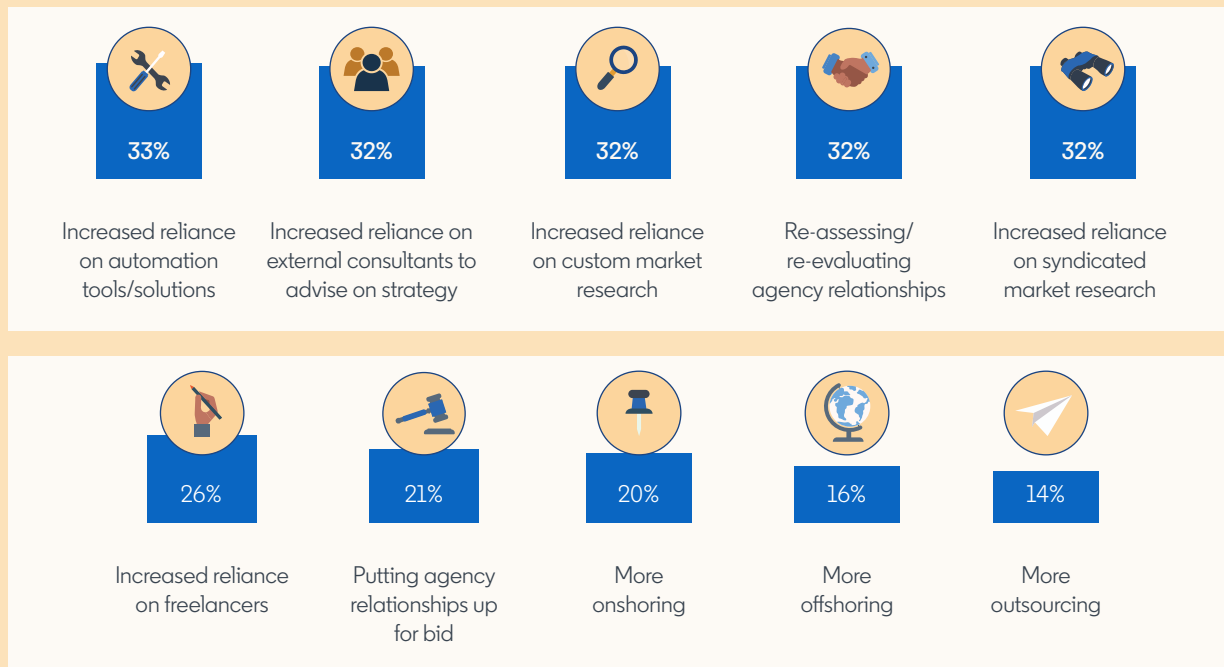
## Operating models are evolving

Marketing operating models and resourcing strategies are also evolving, as evidenced by an increasing reliance on external resources and a re-evaluation of existing agency relationships.

75% of EMEA marketers have increased reliance on outsourced services and manpower – including external consultants, outsources and freelancers – perhaps due in some part to the talent gap mentioned above that was identified by technology buyers.

And while 32% of marketers say they are reassessing their agency relationships, they are less likely to say they are “putting agency relationships up for bid” compared to those who are not reassessing agency relationships. These marketers are not necessarily looking for entirely new relationships, but are reconsidering or renegotiating their current ones.

Figure 6. Marketing activity shifts over the past 12 months



Given the re-adjustments in the preferred marketing mix covered in the previous section, it seems likely that some of this evolution in operating models reflects the changing skill sets that marketers need to execute their strategies. But it could also reflect the challenges they face given the high rates of staff turnover over the last couple of years.

Also, the criterion of ‘Employees taking on dramatically new roles and responsibilities’ was identified as the issue which has the biggest impact on their team’s ability to meet its goals and objectives.

With so much uncertainty surrounding employee numbers and duties and the need to quickly adapt skill sets as marketing technology develops, marketing departments need to keep an open mind towards the way they operate in order to continue to hit their goals. As employees seek newer challenges, further investment in upskilling can help retain valuable talent.



In fact, we can already see technology vendors starting to take action. The most popular ways they have been improving employee workplaces are through addressing work-life balance issues, making commitments to diversity, equality and inclusion, and increasing their positive impact on the community and society.

05

# Building a brilliant B2B technology brand



## TREND 1

## Get creative with your content strategy

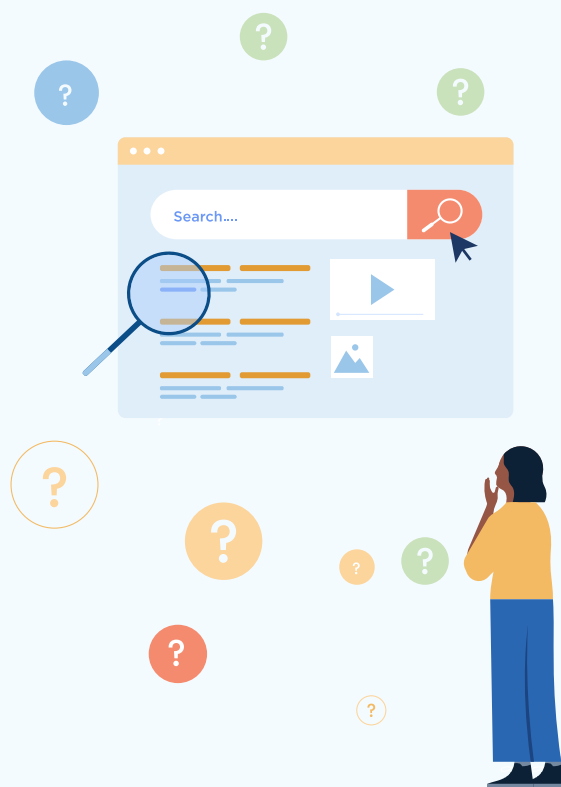


## Buyers want justifiable reasons to buy

**Many buyers feel that tech vendors are not adapting to their changing needs and are struggling to provide the support that buyers want.**

When asked which buyer needs vendors were having the most trouble addressing, 'Demonstrating the ROI of investments' and 'Helping fill the gaps left by employee churn' came top of the list. Clearly, buyers want help from tech marketers in demonstrating the business case for technology investment.

Buyers also don't seem hugely impressed with vendors' marketing efforts. When questioned about whether vendor marketing was answering their questions or providing compelling messages, tech buyers are generally underwhelmed.



# 61%

of buyers feel that B2B advertising is too vague to be relevant to their business.

# 75%

of buyers feel that ads are not always appropriately targeting them.

# 73%

of buyers feel that ads don't always demonstrate a good understanding of their organisation's problems.

## Buyers value clarity and useful information

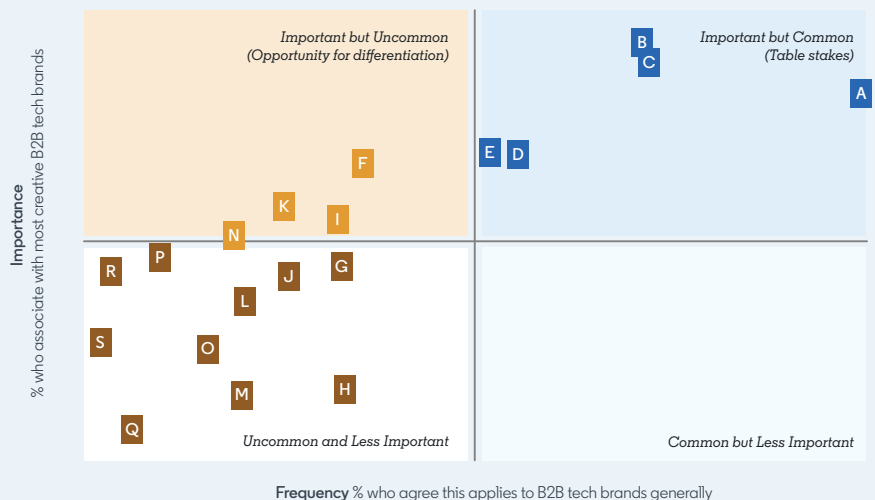
Tech buyers told us in no uncertain terms that content needs to be useful, clear and easy to understand – and this is where B2B marketers are mostly getting it right. But our research also shows the importance of content being relevant and credible – and here there is some room for improvement. It's also significant to note that, while factual and clear information is undoubtedly important, it will not make brands stand out. B2B marketers need to elevate their brand by offering something more attention grabbing and memorable.



**Figure 7.**  
Importance vs. prevalence of attributes for unlocking marketing creativity

Attributes in order of importance

<b>A</b>	Understand what ads are trying to sell	<b>K</b>	<b>Ads catch and hold my attention</b>
<b>B</b>	Ads are useful/informative	<b>L</b>	Ads set up the right expectations for how organisation experiences the product
<b>C</b>	Ads have a clear message	<b>M</b>	Share ads with other people on the buying committee
<b>D</b>	Can recognise the brand running the ad	<b>N</b>	<b>Ads demonstrate how their solutions will solve my organisation's problems</b>
<b>E</b>	Ads are relevant to me	<b>O</b>	Ads are appropriately targeted towards me
<b>F</b>	<b>Ads deliver a credible message</b>	<b>P</b>	Ads are memorable
<b>G</b>	Ads are inspiring	<b>Q</b>	Other people on the buying committee have shared ads with me
<b>H</b>	The buying committee talks about ads seen when making purchase decisions	<b>R</b>	Ads are entertaining
<b>I</b>	<b>Can remember the brand name of the advertiser after</b>	<b>S</b>	Can identify the protagonists in ads
<b>J</b>	Ads demonstrate a good understanding of organisation's problems		



## Who tops the creative B2B charts?

If technology buyers are not enamoured with vendors' marketing efforts, what does it take to impress them?

When we asked buyers the open-ended question of which B2B technology brands have the most

creative approach to marketing, they selected a top four of Microsoft, Google, IBM and Amazon.

Buyers cited 'attention-grabbing/different/unique' as a stand-out value for Microsoft, Google, IBM and Amazon. Overall, this was the attribute

mentioned most by buyers as their reason for giving a brand a high ranking.

'New/innovative advertising methods' was also a value highlighted by buyers in relation to Microsoft, Google and Amazon.



*We shouldn't forget that B2B buyers are only humans at the end of the day. They don't want to be bored with dry content, they want to be entertained. From our experience, we can stick out with more creative promotional material, but overall there are great B2B companies to get inspired by. We have a dedicated channel in our team in which everybody posts their findings."*

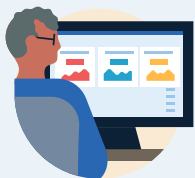


**Britta Kristin Agel**

Head of Global Demand Generation Marketing, Spryker Systems

## Demonstrate the 'why' as well as the 'how'

While clear, factual, product-based content is undoubtedly important to technology buyers, creating a strong B2B technology brand also requires something more distinctive. And there are clear ways that technology brands can deliver content strategies that are not only relevant and helpful, but also creative.



One way is through including data-driven thought leadership as part of a successful marketing strategy. It's an approach that gives marketers the opportunity to offer distinctive points of view, setting vendors apart from their competitors, while offering useful insights to target buyers and building vendor credibility.



Making content more relevant and engaging can be achieved by moving on from simply talking about the amazing features of a vendor solution. Marketers need to tell stories that give buyers a reason to care, linking the vendor proposition to the issues – both organisational and individual – that keep buyers up at night. The 'why' matters as much as the 'what'.

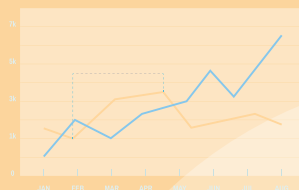


Talking about how vendors can help buyers to maintain competitive advantage; find new ways of working; drive growth and fill the gaps created by higher levels of employee churn, are all approaches that are likely to capture attention.

Investing in innovative data-driven thought leadership and more targeted sector or persona-specific messaging are important opportunities for marketers to increase perceived relevance.

## TREND 2

## Cheer on branding in its long-term race



## Going digital for short-term success

**When asked about the impact on short-term sales performance, marketers considered digital activity to deliver the best results overall.**

That's no surprise, given the spend priorities and buyer preferences we've outlined above. It may also reflect the fact that digital marketing's impact on lead generation and sales metrics can often be easy to measure and demonstrate in the short term.

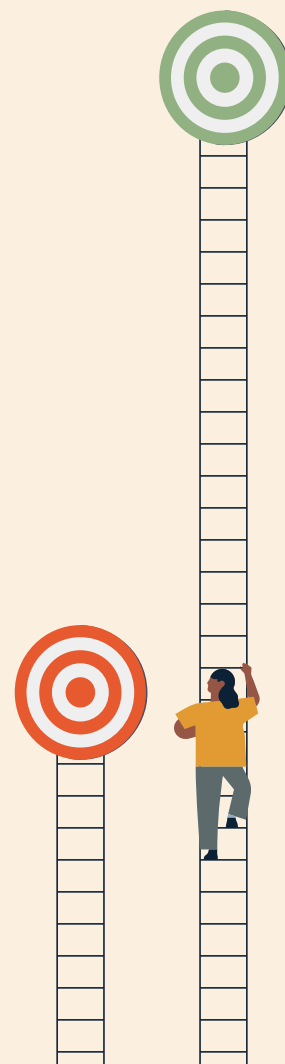
# 79%

of marketers ranked social media advertising, websites and email highly on impact.

# 79%

of marketers prioritise customer testimonials for having high short-term impact.

Different tactics, however, were favoured in specific regions, reflecting significant differences in buyer behaviours and channel adoption across geographies. For example, while sponsorships/endorsements and attending trade shows/events were ranked the most impactful in the short-term in Western Europe, these activities were ranked 14th and 20th respectively out of 21 tested activities in the Middle East.



## Branding is the key to long-term impact

**When asked which activities have the biggest long-term impact, a slightly different picture emerges.**

Globally, corporate branding and market research were ranked top, with 82% of EMEA marketers citing these as having significant impact. And marketers in the Nordics, Middle East and Africa put corporate branding at the top of their list for long-term impact on growth.

Overall, brand marketing was ranked as one of the most impactful investments for achieving long-term growth. But it's only the ninth highest budget item, with the highest being social media advertising. This reflects the

current priority of allocating funds for short-term initiatives rather than long-term growth, as well as budget holders' skepticism of the ability of brand marketing to drive growth (as previously mentioned). **Investments in brand marketing could come under further pressure during a downturn if budgets decrease.**

31%



of technology buyers say that there is a lack of brand metrics that are clearly tied to growth.



*There's a real difference between the theory of brand building and then the practice of standing in front of the board and being asked to explain how you spent millions of dollars. In theory, there can be recognition that this is a longer-term investment and needs to be measured in a completely different way. In practice, once that campaign starts to run, you will still get questions about the contribution it's making to the pipeline. We've got to be aware of that and make sure that we can point to that contribution. The fact that a brand campaign can now be targeted and you can point to movement within those targeted customers, gives you something to leverage."*



**Paige O'Neill**  
CMO, Sitecore



## Fly the brand flag

The fact that marketers are prioritising spend on areas where they think they can maximise short-term success (such as digital activity), over areas that they believe will have greater long-term impact (like market research and corporate branding), suggests that they're being driven more by short-term KPIs than longer-term value.

**Finances are likely to get tighter for many B2B technology companies over the next one to two years. Marketing budgets will inevitably come under pressure. There'll be a strong temptation to sacrifice activities such as brand-building – which marketers recognise as having the greatest impact on long-term value – in pursuit of short-term lead generation metrics.**

**Yet history suggests this would be a mistake.** In fact, our past research has shown that companies who continued to invest in their brand during recessions are the ones that win market share and are best placed to capitalise when the economy rebounded. It's a phenomenon we explored in LinkedIn's webinar: [All-Weather Marketing](#).

It's also important to note that brand building can have more of an impact on short-term sales metrics than many people appreciate.

# 63%

**of technology buyers prefer to work with established brands.** This could be due to variety of factors such as proven expertise, greater trust, or strong alignment with brand values.

Marketing leaders need to be evangelists during this period, educating other senior colleagues on the long-term value of brand investments. Marketers need to resist the pressure to slash spending on activities that don't have an immediate impact on pipeline.



*Everyone understands that you can't just drive demand without upper funnel investments. But at the core of your strategy, you need a very data-driven, ROI-driven argument where you can show that investment X leads to output Z. Once you have that, you're in a better position to make the case for building out the brand infrastructure. But as a marketer, you have to have conviction in arguing for brand budget as well. The numbers won't do the job for you."*



**Kerstin Köder**  
Head of Marketing EMEA, SAP

## TREND 3

# Know that a good employer signals a great brand



## The employer brand has never been so important

**Being perceived as a good employer is becoming an important factor in technology purchasing decisions.**

A huge

89% 

of tech buyers say that working with B2B technology brands that have a very positive perception as an employer is important to them.

Marketers believe that an ‘employer brand’ is a factor, with only 6% saying that being perceived as a great place to work would have no impact on a buyer.

This all suggests that buyers are looking beyond just features, pricing and service when selecting vendors, and that they consider whether a vendor’s values align with their own. It may also reflect buyers’ desire for continuity of relationships with their suppliers and concerns over staff churn impacting service levels. Which may in turn imply buyers’ preference for working with companies who are more likely to have similar brand values.

We found that factors influencing a buyer’s perception of a vendor as an employer include:



Work-life  
balance  
(cited by 42%  
of buyers)



Salary/  
compensation  
(41%)



Career  
advancement/  
development  
opportunities  
(39%)

It’s no secret that strong employer brands attract the best talent – people who can deliver on the promise of technical expertise and innovation.

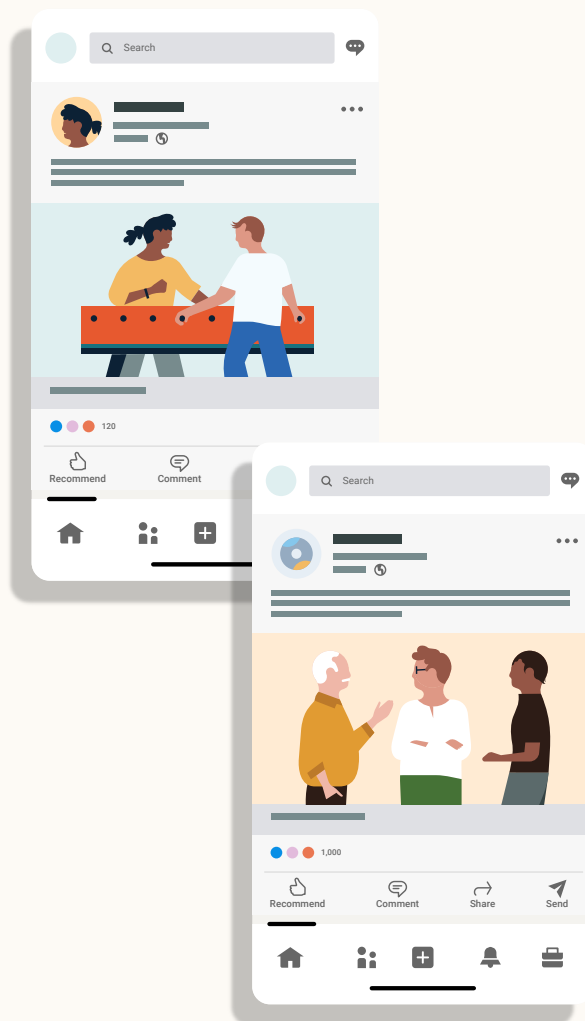
## Engage in employer branding

Vendors who invest in their employer brand can not only attract top talent – a vital issue as firms cope with changing employee needs – but can also directly and positively influence buying decisions.

Marketers need to take an active role in shaping and promoting their employer brand, rather than seeing it as an issue for the HR department.

Creating a unified brand narrative, which encompasses employees as well as customers, is an important starting point.

And when promoting their employer brand – whether by showcasing employee welfare programmes or highlighting innovative working practices – marketers should also think about the audience. It's not just prospective and current employees that need to be reached, **it's also prospects, customers and influencers.**



*The role of the CMO isn't just about the brand or generating demand. It's about the broader identity behind them, an identity that needs to engage not just customers but the employees a business depends on. That CMO role is expanding, because your identity isn't just a product story – it's a company story."*



**Alexis Oger**

Vice President – EMEA Marketing,  
Dell Technologies

## TREND 4

## Be where your customers are

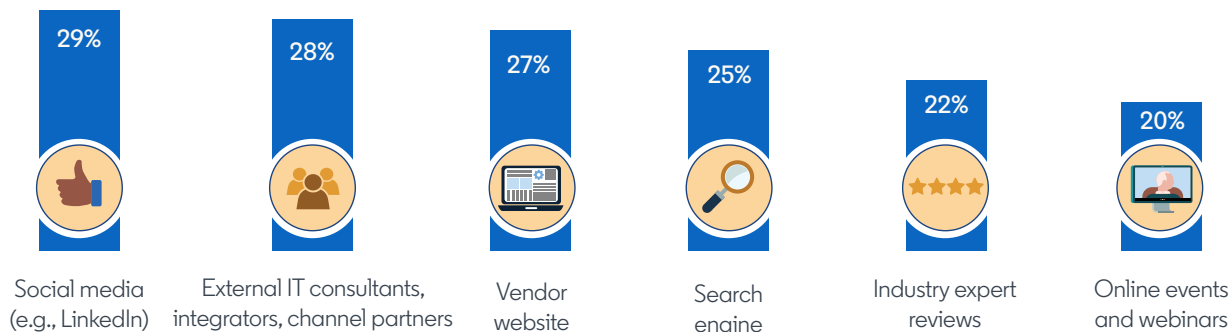


## Social media and search at its strongest

One area where vendor marketers have an opportunity to up their game is in making sure their information is in the right place to be easily found by prospective customers. Unsurprisingly, online sources are most popular. Social media such as LinkedIn and search engines are now the overall most commonly used information source by tech buyers.

Social media seems to be the most useful source of information for EMEA buyers. Here too we see a difference in regions, with buyers in Western Europe being more likely to say that vendor websites are more useful than social media.

Figure 8. Most useful source of information for tech buyers






It's also worth noting that some of the least popular sources of information for buyers include ROI calculators and TV ads. **Marketers may be well advised to pause for thought before devoting large chunks of their budget to the next high-profile TV campaign.**

## Don't ignore websites and webinars

When looking at where to spend their budgets, it's important that tech marketers align with tech buyer behaviours. If we compare where tech buyers say they go to for information, with where tech marketers are investing, we can see opportunities to optimise spend.

Continuing to prioritise social media advertising and search engine makes perfect sense based on the data, but there's also a case for vendors to increase investment in their own websites and online events such as webinars.

Figure 9. Where buyers go for information on tech brands

	 BUYERS <i>Base: 835</i>	 CLIENT-SIDE MARKETERS <i>Base: 660</i>	 AGENCY-SIDE MARKETERS <i>Base: 214</i>
Search engine/ Digital advertising – search engine	1 <sup>st</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Social media (e.g. LinkedIn)/ Digital advertising – social media	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Vendor website/Website/Web design	3 <sup>rd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
External IT consultants, Integrators, VARs/MSPs	4 <sup>th</sup>	N/A	N/A
Online events and webinars	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Emails from vendors' contacts	6 <sup>th</sup>	N/A	N/A
Industry expert reviews/Expert reviews	7 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Customer testimonials	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
Vendor presentations/Pitches Developing sales collateral	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
In-person events and conferences/ Attending trade shows and events	10 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
New articles and press releases/PR	11 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
Case studies	12 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Automated emails from vendor/ Digital advertising – email campaigns	13 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
White papers	14 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
TV advertising	15 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
ROI calculators	16 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>

## TREND 5

## Influence the external influencers



### External advisors are filling the marketing gap

For many tech buyers, external IT advisors are the second most useful source of information. This is particularly the case for larger enterprises and IT roles, where they are used more extensively than online sources.

# 34%

**of all buyers have used external IT consultants, integrators and channel partners.**

Marketers should note that this increases to 41% for Enterprise buyers and 40% for IT contacts.

These findings reinforce the learnings from LinkedIn's 2021 [‘The Age of Agility’](#) report, which highlighted the trend of the ‘anonymous buyer’. Buyers want to be anonymous for the majority of their buying journey and will thoroughly research a company – using the vendor’s website and other third-party sources – before reaching out to the sales team.

### Keep advocates in the know

Given the importance to buyers of external advisors (consultants, systems integrators and channel partners) – particularly in categories such as end-user software and data centre software – it’s essential that marketers have the right channel and influencer programmes in place. They can gain real traction by ensuring that the people who have the ear of buyers are well-informed about the vendor’s proposition.

To engage these influencers, marketers also need to make sure that, as well as articulating the vendor’s proposition to buyers, influencers can clearly communicate the value that the vendor can create for and with their partners.

**And it’s not just paid advisors who should be marketed to.** Any existing user of a product or service can become an important advocate, exerting a big influence on the decision-making processes of their peers. To stay front-of-mind, it’s vital that vendors find these advocates, encourage them and keep them informed about products. This can be achieved via advocacy programs or user forums, where top users get privileged access to new features before general release in return for their feedback and support.

## 06

## Building successful B2B tech brands

The tech buyer's landscape is always changing, but one thing remains clear: buyers will always be looking for better technology to support their business.

How B2B vendor marketers appeal to tech buyers ahead of the competition – through standing out from the crowd and telling the right stories on the right channels – is key to becoming and remaining a winning B2B tech brand.

### Five key trends for marketers to accelerate growth with a breakout brand

**TREND 1****Get creative with your content strategy**

Understanding the evolving challenges that buyers face has always mattered. But today, achieving impact means not just speaking to those challenges. It also means speaking to them creatively.

**TREND 2****Cheer on branding in its long-term race**

A common misconception persists that branding cannot be easily measured, relegating its position in the pecking order for budget allocation. It's time for branding to rise up the ladder – marketers need to sing its praises as a driver of long-term success.

**TREND 3****Know that a good employer signals a great brand**

A great brand is built from the inside out. Buyers know and value this. Marketers need to evaluate how tech buyers perceive their employer branding – it's now an important factor in their decision to buy.

**TREND 4****Be where your customers are**

Alignment is essential. It's no good shouting about innovative solutions if buyers aren't there to listen. Ensuring marketing messages get heard means being where decision makers go for information.

**TREND 5****Influence the external influencers**

One key destination that buyers head to is outside advisors. Marketers need to get their propositions in front of those who can help advocate on their behalf.

## 07

## Survey respondents and methodology

The data for this report was collected through an online survey administered to 1,709 respondents in the EMEA region. The survey fieldwork was conducted by B2B International during May and June of 2022.

The survey sample was distributed across two different groups, as indicated below:

Technology purchase decision makers  
(tech buyers).

**Tech buyers**

**835**

survey completes



Professionals engaged in marketing of technology brands and services on both the client and agency-side (tech marketers).

**Tech marketers**

**874**

survey completes



## Geographic spread

### Buyers:

46%

Western  
Europe

19%

Middle  
East

19%

Nordic

16%

Africa

### Marketers:

46%

Western  
Europe

22%

Middle  
East

20%

Nordic

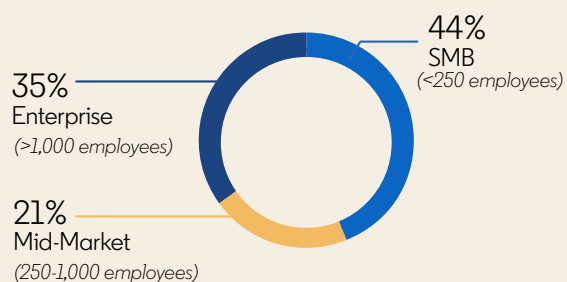
13%

Africa

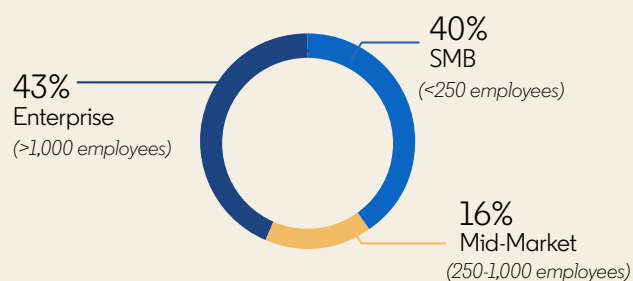


## Business size

### Buyers:

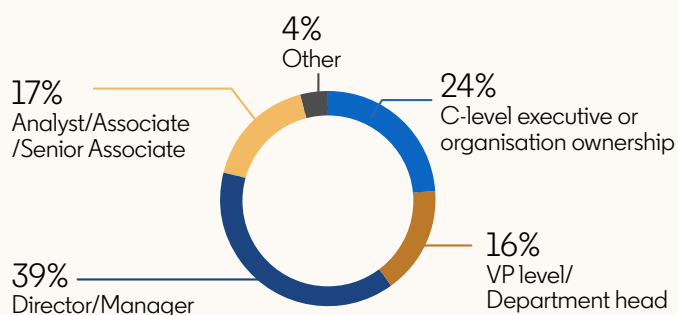


### Marketers:

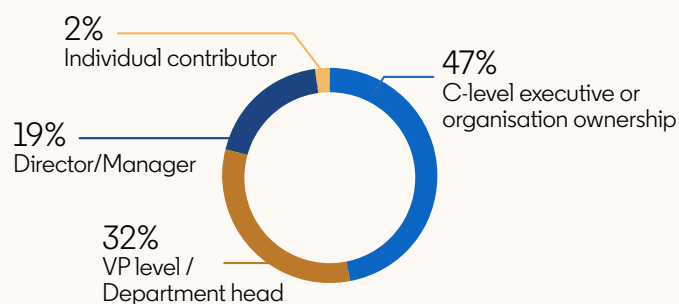


## Level of seniority

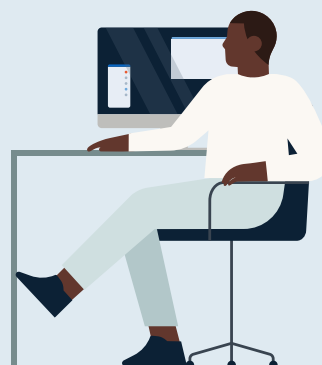
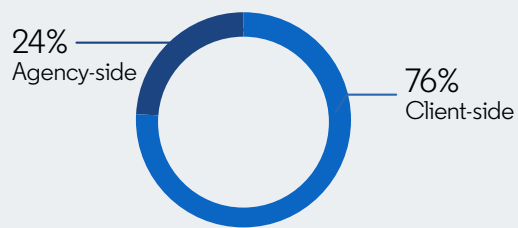
### Buyers:



### Marketers:



## Tech marketer types



# Brand to Buyer

Building B2B tech brands that shine

## How LinkedIn can help tech marketers

There is a tremendous opportunity ahead for B2B marketers to leverage creativity, bold messaging, and customer empathy. B2B is evolving, rewiring the way we live, work, shop, and consume. B2B is growing. B2B is receiving massive investments. And more than ever now, B2B is showing up on LinkedIn, not because we have the world's largest professional audience, but because we have the data, tools and solutions allowing B2B brands to reach them in a meaningful way. At LinkedIn, we are committed to keeping pace with your needs. We understand and respect the B2B world you evolve in, and how could we not? We were built for B2B.

For additional tech marketing resources, visit [lnkd.in/techhub](https://lnkd.in/techhub)

## About B2B International

B2B International is a global, full-service market research firm dedicated to researching business-to-business markets. They help clients to make smarter decisions driven by exclusive insights, empowering them to grow. They are part of Merkle B2B; the world's leading, purpose-built end-to-end B2B agency, bringing together the best B2B capabilities and competencies to architect modern-day customer experiences.

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