

Brand to Buyer

A LinkedIn B2B Technology Buyer and Marketer Survey – North America 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

2,214
senior marketing
professionals in North
America, Latin America,
Europe, Middle East, Africa
and Asia-Pacific.

Of these,
24%
of respondents were from
the North America region.

For a more details, please see the *Survey respondents and methodology* section on page 31.

01



As business' dependence on technology continues to increase exponentially, today's technology buyers find themselves at the center 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're 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.**



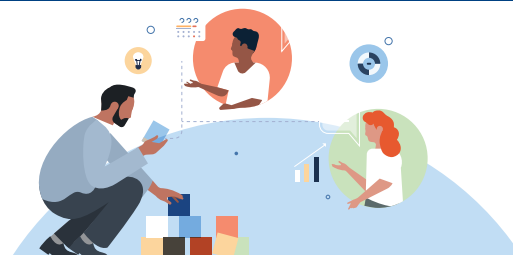
02

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 increasingly complicated.

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



Organizations 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. Technology buyer budgets and headcount have grown significantly.

Buying budgets increased across nearly all product categories, with the most significant increases occurring in Enterprise software, where 79% of buyers report an increase.

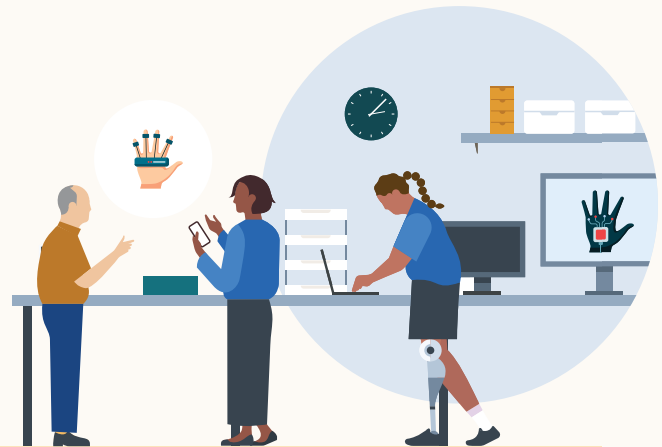
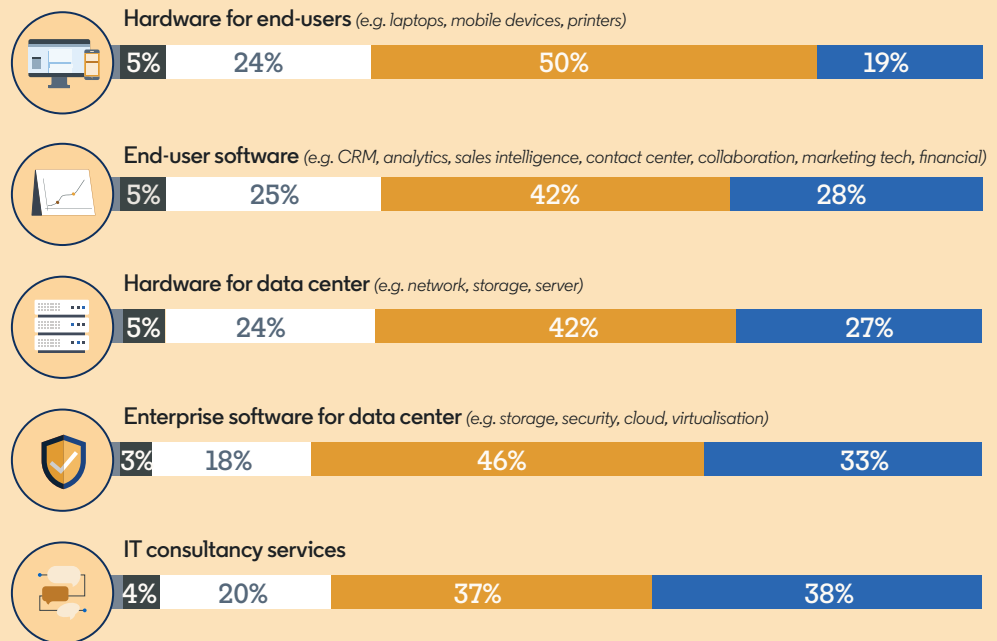


Figure 1.
Tech buying budget

How has your team's technology 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 (47%) saw their team headcount increase over the last 12 months, particularly across businesses within the end-user software segment. 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.

Organizations now overwhelmingly see technology as a source of growth (according to 72% of North

American technology buyers), rather than merely as an operating cost, and are more focused on finding ways to improve their performance versus keeping costs low.

And while the year ahead is likely to be significantly more challenging, the fact that organizations see technology as a way to get ahead provides strong rationale for being optimistic that technology spending will prove more resilient than other cost lines.

72%



of North American buyers agree that technology investments help drive their organization's growth, rather than simply being a cost of doing business.

73%



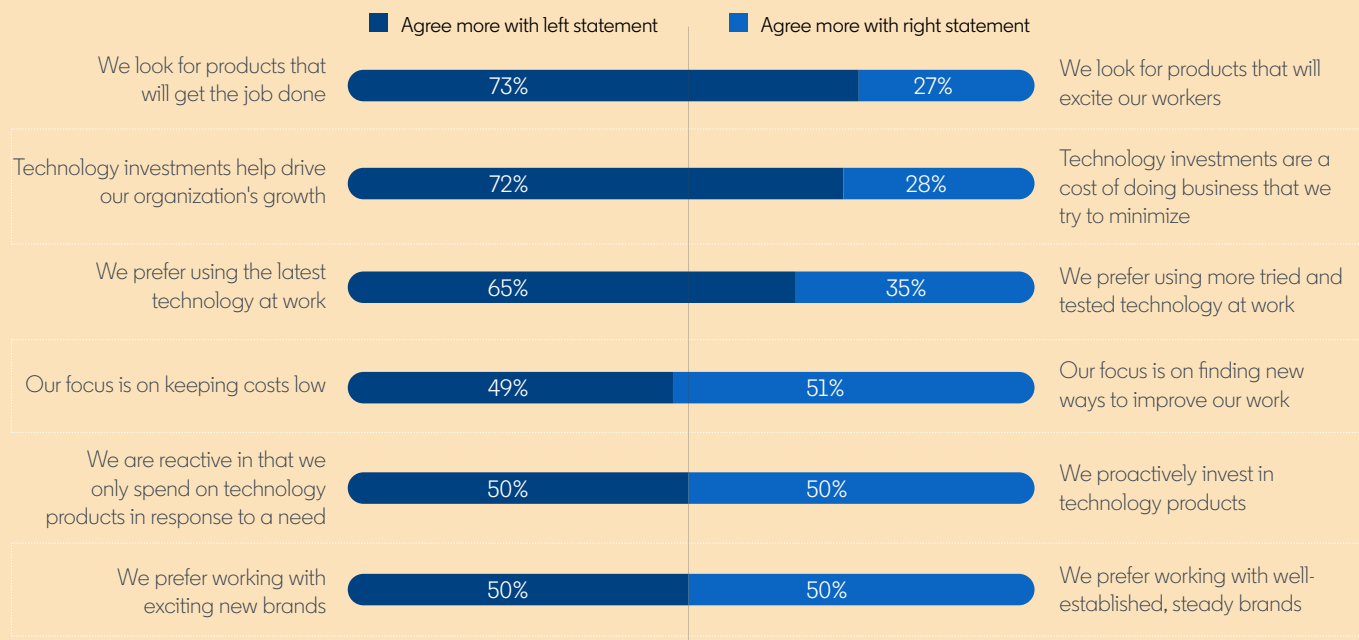
say they are more focused on finding products that get the job done, as opposed to those that excite their workers.

65%



prefer to have the latest technology at work, versus tried and tested solutions.

Figure 2. Technology buyers' technology preferences



Today's technology 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.

Cloud-native platforms and high-performance computing are two areas that are high on the list of buyers' strategic priorities, highlighted by 34% and 32% respectively.



But the preeminent 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 39% of respondents, with enhancing data privacy not far behind.



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

36%



cite 'Having the right technology to stay ahead of the market' as 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.

61%



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

33%



cite 'Providing our workforce with the most up-to-date technology products and services' as a top concern.

30%



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

Coping with increased levels of employee churn is another major issue.

+75%

of technology buyers say they are concerned by their organization's ability to meet existing and emerging internal challenges resulting from staff turnover and changing employee expectations.



Figure 3. Buyer's top challenges when purchasing technology



US buyers (28%) are facing challenges in finding products that are easy to deploy. Whereas a big proportion of buyers in Canada (42%) are finding difficulty in getting the right products and services while keeping costs low.

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 insight 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.

29%



budget increase
reported by marketers,
on average.

68%



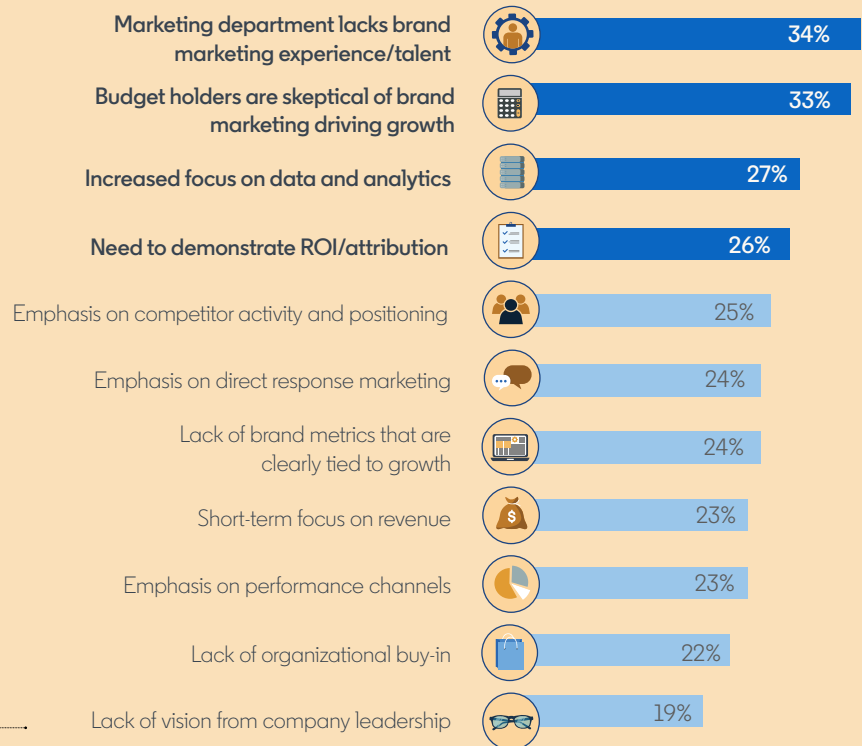
reported a headcount
increase in the 12
months leading up to
June 2022.



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.

The most common issue cited was lack of experience/talent in the marketing department (34%), followed by budget holders being skeptical of the ability of brand marketing to drive growth (33%). US marketers were significantly more likely to cite an increased focus on data and analytics (30%), compared to Canadians (18%).

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

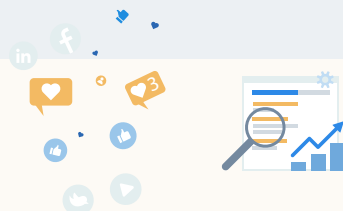


Spend priorities are shifting

Over the last 12 months, as B2B technology marketers adapted to changing buyer behaviors, 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 technology buyers saying that social media and search engine marketing are now their primary sources for getting information to support their purchases.

20%



of vendor marketers said they've substantially increased spend on social media and search engine marketing over the last 12 months.

18%

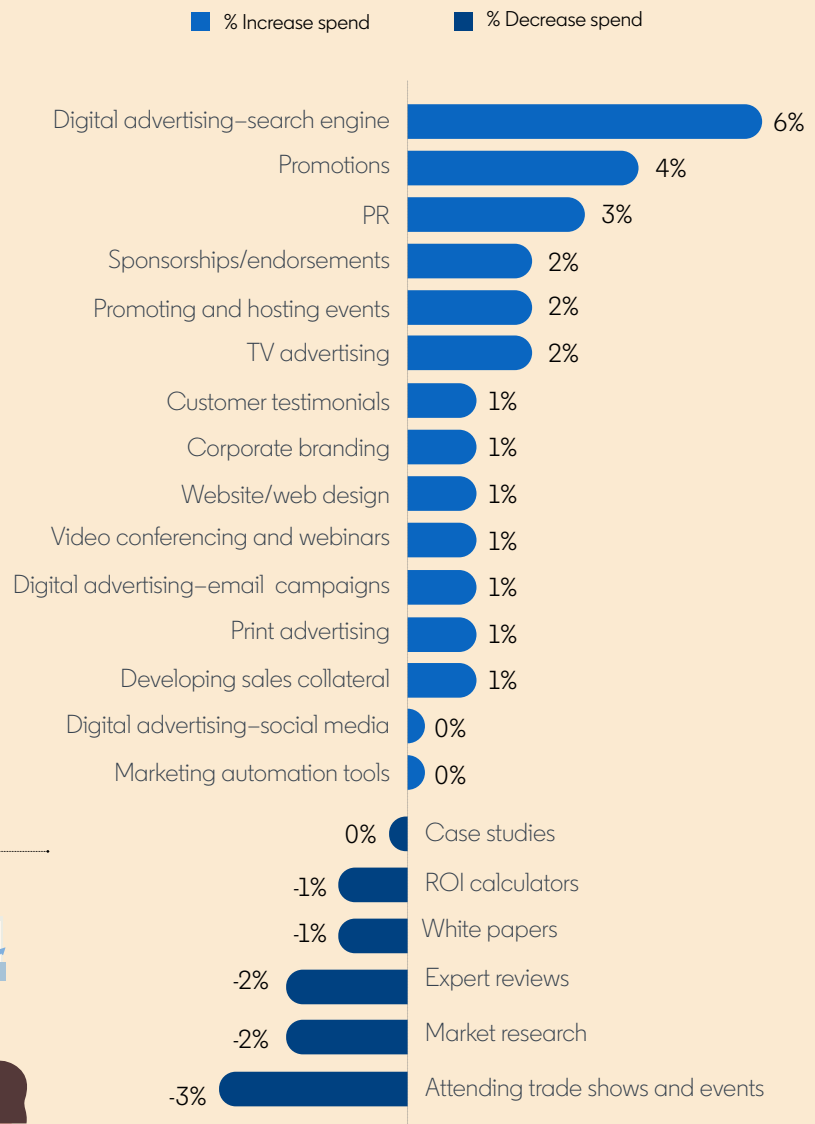


of vendor marketers said they substantially increased spend on email campaigns.

When we asked technology marketers where they were mainly investing their marketing activities, social media advertising and email campaigns (both 29%) topped the list of all categories. Promotions and website design tied for third and fourth place (26%) on a list of twenty featured activities.

It's no surprise that while some marketing activities are attracting increased investment, others are inevitably declining. Areas where more marketers reported declining spend compared to those reporting increases include expert reviews (-2%), market research (-2%), and attending trade shows and events (-3%).

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





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

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.

76%

of 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.

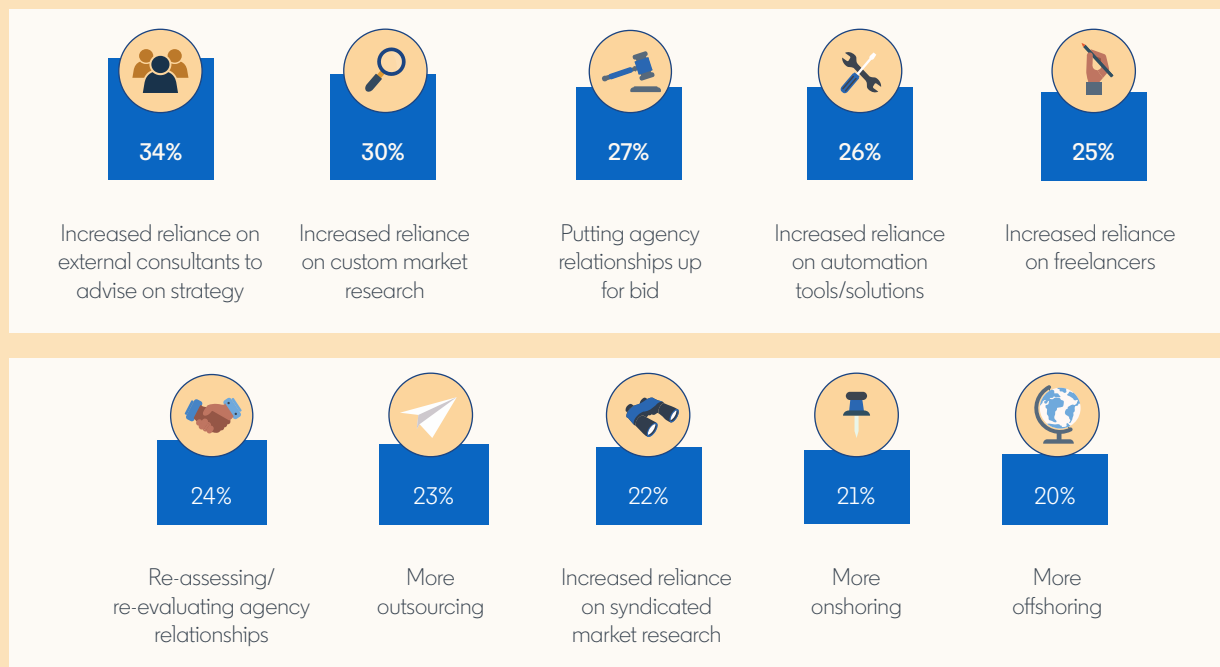
This trend is particularly prevalent in the US, where 36% report using external consultants to advise on strategy—a significantly higher percentage than Canada (21%).



27%

of marketers are actively putting agency relations up for bid. And while 24% are reassessing their agency relationships, they are not necessarily looking for new relationships, but are reconsidering or renegotiating their current ones.

Figure 6. Marketing activity shifts over the past 12 months



Given the readjustments in preferred marketing mix covered in the previous section, it seems likely that some of this evolution in operating models reflects the evolving skill set 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 increasing their positive impact on the environment, reducing work hours, and increasing career advancement opportunities.

05

Building a brilliant B2B technology brand



TREND 1

Get creative with your content strategy



What buyers expect from technology marketers

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

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. These findings are particularly key. Clearly, buyers want help from technology marketers in demonstrating the business case for investment.

While 25% of US buyers believe that vendors are having trouble helping customers ‘demonstrate the ROI of investments’, 13% of Canadians believe vendors are

struggling with ‘less informed/savvy purchasing teams’—indicating this issue is a significantly greater challenge for them than their US counterparts.

Overall, buyers do not seem impressed with vendors’ marketing efforts. When questioned about whether vendor marketing was addressing their questions and/or providing compelling messages, technology buyers are generally underwhelmed.

63%

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

65%

of buyers feel that ads aren’t always appropriately targeting them.

65%

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

66%

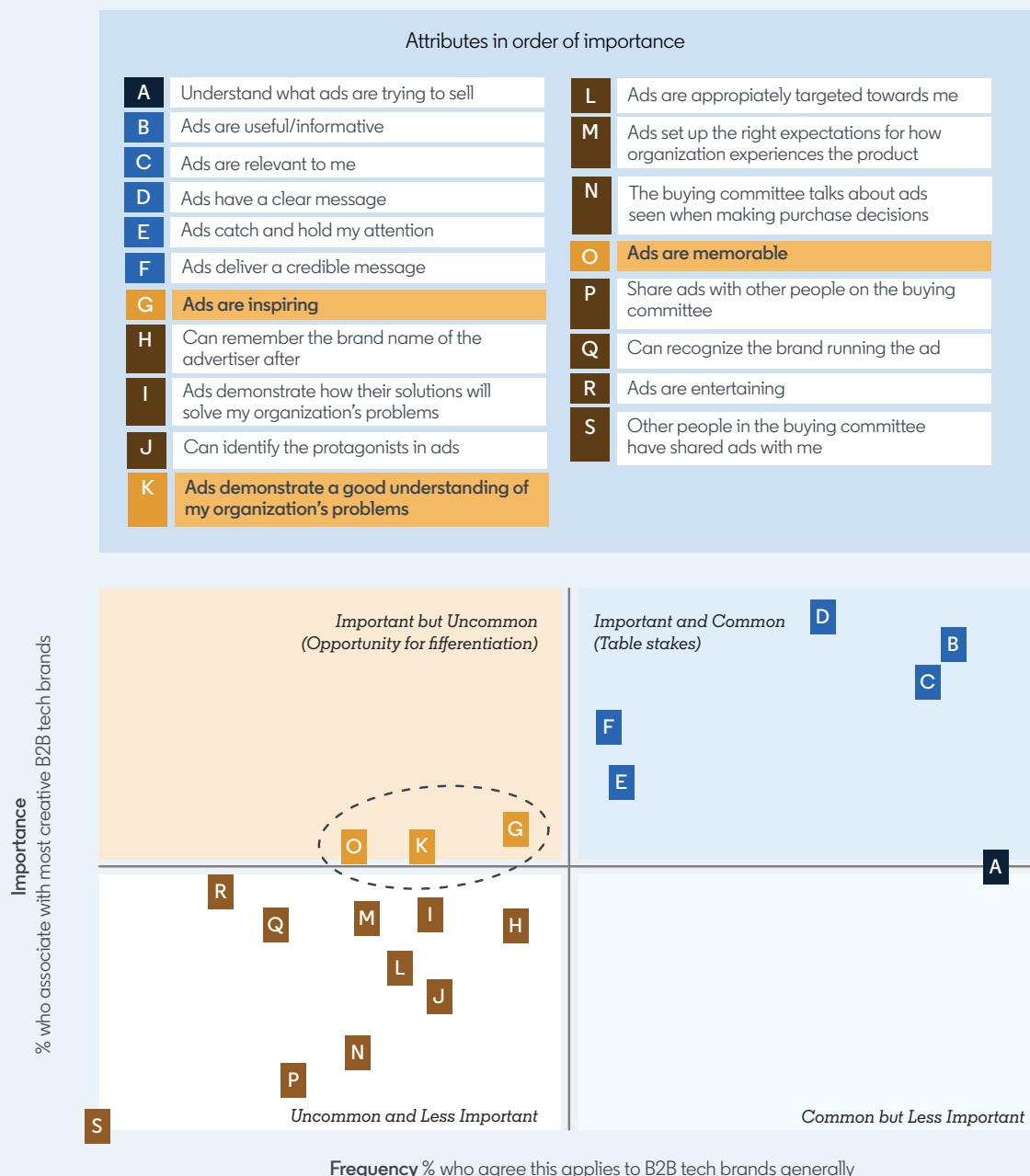
of buyers say that they generally skip past ads when they see them.

For technology marketers, this should be alarming as much of their advertising doesn’t seem to be engaging to decision makers.

Buyers value clarity and useful information

Technology buyers told us in no uncertain terms that content needs to be clear, useful, and relevant—and this is where B2B marketers are mostly getting it right. But our research also shows the importance of content that is relevant and credible—and here there is some room for improvement. It's also worth noting that while useful 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



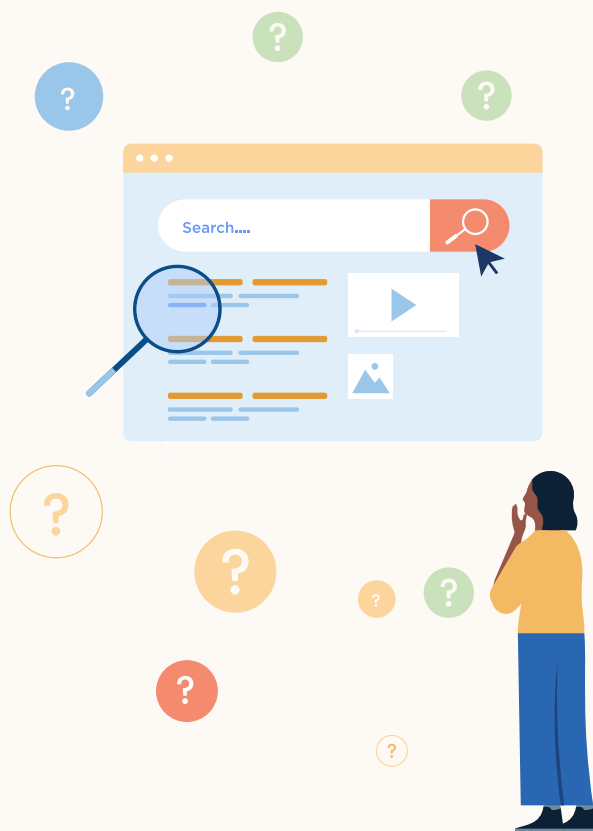
Who tops the creative B2B charts?

If technology buyers are not enamored 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 three of Google, Amazon and IBM.

For marketers, the key question is why buyers ranked these brands so highly? What can marketers learn about brand attributes that appeal to buyers?

Buyers cited 'Entertaining/humorous/emotional' and 'Attention-grabbing/different/unique' as standout traits for all three of their top brands. The takeaway seems to be that buyers' attention is drawn to more creative and emotional brand attributes.

Clearly, marketers have an opportunity to gain more traction with buyers by appreciating the importance they place on engagement and innovation when evaluating suppliers.



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 inspiring.



One way to do this is through data-driven thought leadership as part of a successful marketing strategy. It's an approach that gives marketers the opportunity to offer distinctive and memorable points of view, setting vendors apart from their competitors. At the same time, it enables marketers to offer useful insights to target buyers and build vendor credibility.



Another area for differentiation highlighted by our research is demonstrating a good understanding of customers' problems. 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 organizational and individual—that keep buyers up at night. The ‘why’ matters as much as the ‘what’.



Messaging that makes it easier for buyers to build the case for investment—for example, by explaining business benefits such as driving efficiency, increasing productivity, and enabling better collaboration—can be particularly helpful.

Our survey suggests that to capture buyers' attention, vendors should talk about how they can help them maintain a competitive advantage, find new ways of working, drive growth, and fill the gaps created by higher levels of employee churn.

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



Yes, we're B2B marketers, but as everyone says: it's another person at the end of the line. How do you connect with that person on a level that makes them feel something? We can tell you that we make life better for billions of people, billions of times a day, but unless we can find a way to showcase how we're doing that, I don't think we can win."

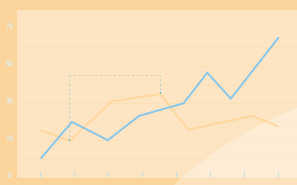


Amanda McDonald

Director, Global Digital Marketing,
Akamai Technologies

TREND 2

Cheer on branding in its long-term race



Short-term impacts versus longer-term value

When evaluating the effectiveness of different marketing tactics on sales and revenue performance, some are considered to be effective for both short and long-term goals. Others are thought to be better for driving either one or the other.

Digital marketing and brand delivering on both fronts

Market research, marketing automation, print, customer testimonials, and case studies are all seen as having a valuable impact in both the short and long term.

For about 89% of technology marketers, digital marketing—including social media advertising, websites, search engines, and email—was also considered

important for driving both short and long-term value.

When we asked about corporate branding, technology marketers see corporate branding as almost equally important in the long term as they do the short term (90% and 89% respectively).

Some tactics, though, are seen as having a definite short-term sales performance bias. These include online events, webinars, and expert reviews, with 92% of all marketers prioritizing these tactics for short-term impact.

Different tactics, however, were favored in specific regions, reflecting slight differences in buyer behaviors and channel adoption across geographies. For example, promotions were regarded as having higher short-term impact in the US (93%) than in Canada (85%).

Conversely, other tactics are seen as having a bias towards long-term impact. In this case, PR, attending trade shows, and in-person events

were ranked top, with 92% of marketers citing these as having significant impact.

However, these findings are not universal. Whereas US marketers put attending trade shows and events, developing sales collateral, and sponsorships at the top when it comes to long-term impact on growth, marketers in Canada ranked PR, marketing automation tools, and corporate branding as their top three. Print advertising is also seen as significantly more important in the US.



What gets measured, gets budget

The fact that marketers are prioritizing spend on digital activity—particularly social media advertising and email campaigns—reflects the increased value they’re deriving from these tactics in both the short and long term.

But here we see an interesting disconnect. While corporate branding is rated highly for delivering both short and long-term impact, it’s well down the list of current spending in 20th place—the highest being social media advertising. Amongst marketers, just 14% have increased corporate branding spend in the past 12 months.

This could be due to the relative difficulty of demonstrating tangible value from brand building activity in order to secure budget, when compared to highly targeted and measurable digital campaigns.



24%



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



Our lead generation team is measured on driving quality leads through the funnel, and one of our most successful activities is a sequential campaign that starts with a brand video. We don’t expect clicks, we just want people to watch it, so they know who our brand is. Then we re-target people who watched the video and move them down the funnel. This greatly reduces our cost for gated content downloads at the steps that follow further down the funnel.”



Kenn Gold

Senior Director Global Paid
Digital Marketing, Okta

Fly the brand flag

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 recognize as having a substantial impact on long-term value—in pursuit of shorter-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 capitalize 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.

We also discovered that half of technology buyers prefer to work with established brands, rather than newcomers. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as proven expertise, greater trust, or strong alignment with brand values.

The primary takeaway though, is that marketing leaders need to be evangelists during this period, educating other senior colleagues on the value of brand investments.

Marketers need to resist the pressure to slash spending on activities that they don't believe will have an immediate impact on pipeline.



We are increasing our focus on brand building. We realize the impact that brand building has on our demand generation activities, and the more awareness there is around our brand, the more successful those activities will be. Since making a shift to investing more in brand building, we have seen more leads, a better conversion rate, and a slight decrease in cost per lead."



Kim Roman

Senior Director Global Campaigns
and Performance Marketing, TalkDesk

TREND 3

Know that a good employer signals a great brand



The employer brand has never been so important

Another interesting finding from our survey is the fact that being perceived as a good employer is becoming a very important factor in technology purchasing decisions.

89%

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

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



Work-life balance
(cited by 47% of buyers)



Benefits, and salary/
compensation (38%)

And it's interesting to note that work-life balance, employee retention, positive impact on community, and career advancement were all rated significantly higher in the US than in Canada.

Marketers also believe that an employer brand is a factor, with only 3% 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.

This may, in turn, imply buyers' preference for working with companies who are more likely to also have similar brand values.

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

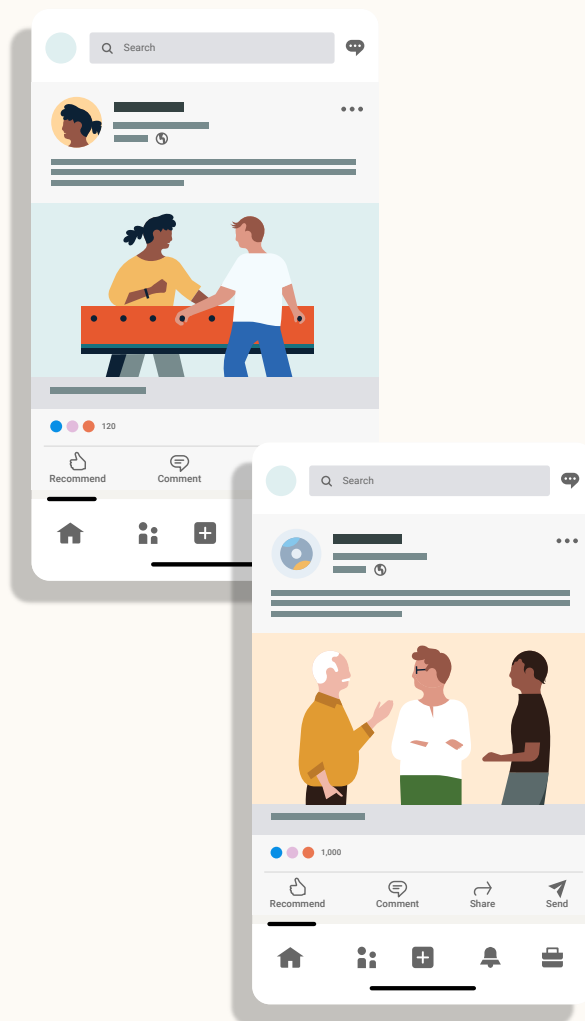
Engage in employer branding

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 engagement programs 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
Regional CMO, Dell Technologies

TREND 4

Be where your customers are

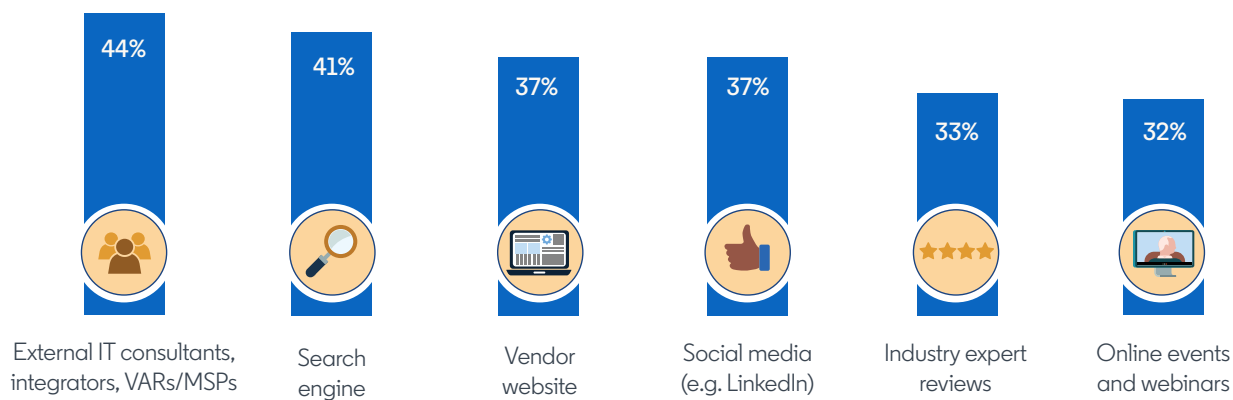


Social media and search are strongest

One area where vendor marketers have an opportunity to improve 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 commonly used information sources by technology buyers.

This is especially true of IT departments. We found that most prefer turning to search engine and social media for sourcing information, when compared to other functions of the business. Also in contrast, IT departments are less likely than other buyers to turn to vendors' websites.

Figure 8. Most used source of information for technology buyers






It's also worth noting that some of the least popular sources of information for buyers include ROI calculators, white papers, and automated emails from vendors.

Don't ignore expert reviews

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

Figure 9. Where buyers go for information on technology brands

	 BUYERS <i>Base: 511</i>	 CLIENT-SIDE MARKETERS <i>Base: 375</i>	 AGENCY-SIDE MARKETERS <i>Base: 139</i>
External IT consultants, Integrators, VARs/MSPs	1 st	N/A	N/A
Search engine/ Digital advertising–search engine	2 nd	5 th	4 th
Vendor website/Website/Web design	3 rd	3 rd	9 th
Social media (e.g. LinkedIn)/ digital advertising–social media)	4 th	1 st	7 th
Industry expert reviews/expert reviews	5 th	9 th	3 rd
Online events and webinars	6 th	10 th	1 st
Vendor presentations/pitches/ developing sales collateral	7 th	6 th	5 th
Emails from vendors contacts	8 th	N/A	N/A
Customer testimonials	9 th	13 th	14 th
In-person events and conferences/ attending trade shows and events	10 th	10 th	9 th
News articles and press releases/PR	11 th	14 th	9 th
Case studies	12 th	7 th	6 th
TV advertising	13 th	4 th	2 nd
White papers	14 th	12 th	12 th
ROI calculators	15 th	8 th	7 th
Automated emails from vendor/ digital advertising–email campaigns	16 th	2 nd	12 th

Our research suggests that marketers should continue to prioritize social media advertising and their website, but that there is also a case for vendors to increase their investment in search engine marketing and develop targeted relationships with external industry experts.



Given that email campaigns were the highest budgeted item for technology marketers, but that they are ranked at the bottom of the list by buyers, marketers should evaluate the need to devote large chunks of their budget to their next email campaign.



You've got to make sure that you're top of mind for your target audiences. If you were doing a brand campaign in the past, you used to think automatically of TV and airport billboards. But the technology available today means that we're able to be much more targeted. LinkedIn, for example, enables us to really filter down who we are trying to reach with our branding. That's made branding a more relevant option for smaller B2B companies than it ever has been."



Paige O'Neill
CMO, Sitecore

TREND 5

Influence the external influencers



External advisors are filling the marketing gap

For many technology buyers, external IT advisors are relied upon as the most used source of information.

44%

of all buyers use external IT consultants, integrators and channel partners.

And we see a similar trend when considering the most useful sources of information. The greatest proportion of buyers (38%) think external IT consultants, integrators, and channel are the most valuable sources of information.

This shows how technology buyers can often remain anonymous for much of their buying journey as they will often thoroughly research a company—using other third-party sources—before reaching out to a sales team.

Keep advocates in the know

Given the importance that buyers place on external advisors (consultants, systems integrators, and channel partners), it's essential that marketers have the right channel and influencer programs 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 top 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 technology brands

The technology 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 technology 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 technology brand.

Five key lessons 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**

It's a common perception 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 technology 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 1,025 respondents in the North America 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
(technology buyers).

Technology buyers

511

survey completions



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

Technology marketers

514

survey completions



Geographic spread

Buyers:

53%

United States

47%

Canada

Marketers:

71%

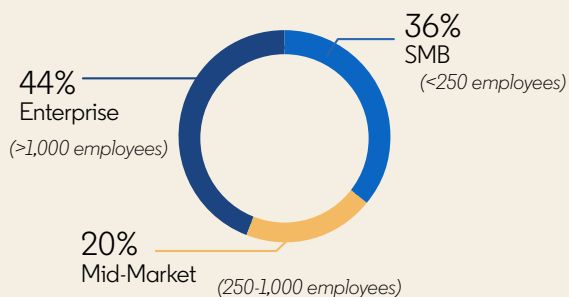
United States

29%

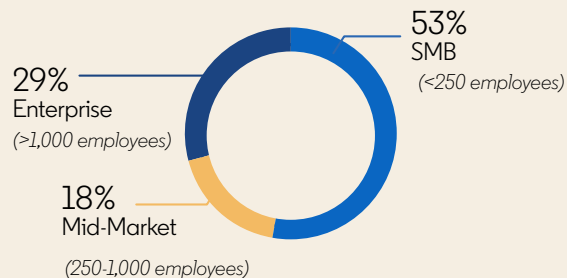
Canada

Business size

Buyers:

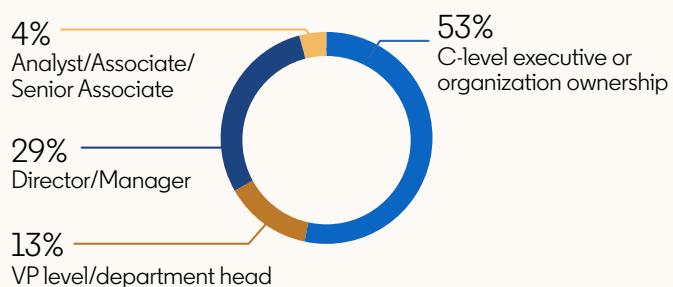


Marketers:

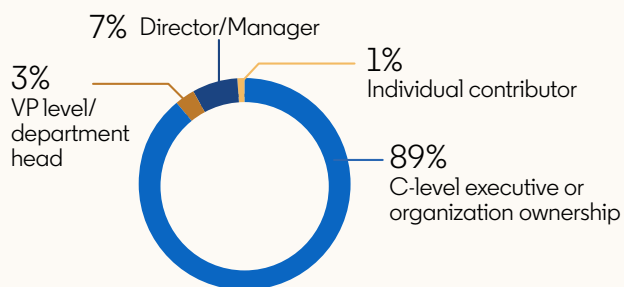


Level of seniority

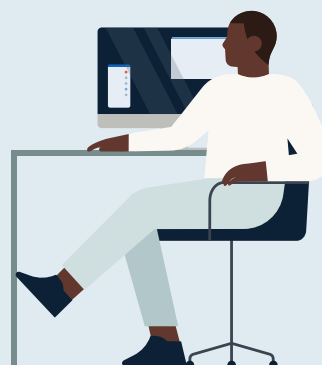
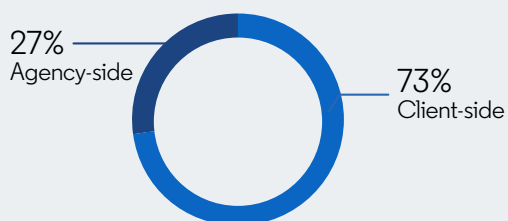
Buyers:



Marketers:



Tech marketer types



Brand to Buyer

Building B2B technology 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

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.

For more information, contact B2B International at info@b2binternational.com or visit www.b2binternational.com.