

5 WAYS FOR YOUR SALES TEAM TO LEVERAGE MARKETING CONTENT

It's Time To Step Up That B2B Buying Experience

Are your sales reps selling? Before you jump to that defensive, knee-jerk, "Yes, of course!" response, take a few seconds to reconsider the question. *Selling* to the B2B buyer is not commensurate with *winning* the B2B buyer. And you ~~want~~ need to win.

In today's competitive, content-crazed and emotion-driven market, salespeople can't afford to sit back and *sell* solutions. They need to *win* the buyer's affinity and respect, and this takes a bit more effort than dishing out that hard-sell, close-the-deal spiel that traditional reps can preach in their sleep.

The real question you need to ask: "Are my salespeople *winning over our buyers* by creating exceptional buying experiences?"

BUILD AN EXPERIENCE, AND THEY'LL GIVE YOU LOYALTY.

Today's buyers expect a paradigm-shifting sales process: that game-changing, insight-driven buying experience that makes them think differently, think *smarter*, about their business.

Corporate Executive Board (CEB) reports that 53% of B2B buyer loyalty is driven by the sales experience. That means that *more than half* of **your sales enablement success** depends on 1) aligning your marketing and sales teams and 2) aligning your marketing and sales processes with the way today's savvy, self-reliant buyer *wants* to buy.



GIVE THEM CONTENT, AND THEY'LL GIVE YOU RESPECT.

An exceptional buying experience provides *value* and *insight*, not facts and solutions. The hyper-personalized, perspective-shifting marketing content you provide to buyers during your sales interactions, as well as the way you deliver this content, are the key contributors to that experience.

Here are five ways to leverage your marketing content and create a remarkable, differentiating experience for your buyers:

1. RESPOND LIKE YOU MEAN IT.

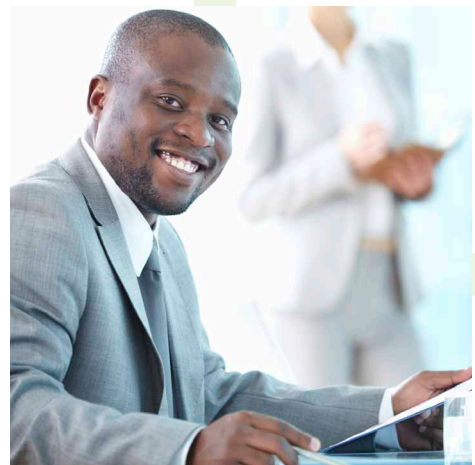
When a buyer reaches out, this is your only chance to make a first impression. We all know how important first impressions are, especially if the buyer already has a list of your competitors to contact next. (And he does.) You may have an incredible product or service, but if your reps don't greet that buyer with respect and responsiveness *the first time*, he's not going to give you the time of day down the line.

Do not hesitate to deliver what the buyer asks for, even if it's a request for pricing during the first call. Responsiveness is the bedrock of that all-important bridge of trust between buyer and seller.

2. STOP SELLING. START GUIDING.

Buyers don't respond to the traditional sales rep anymore. But they do respect the sales *guide*.

Think of the sales guide as a "new breed" of sales rep. Instead of hunting for that "hook" to slip in one of his company's off-the-shelf solutions, the sales guide attentively *guides* the buyer through the decision-making process. And he does this with valuable information (e.g., case studies, reports, guides and expert insight from third parties) that you can't get with a simple online search.



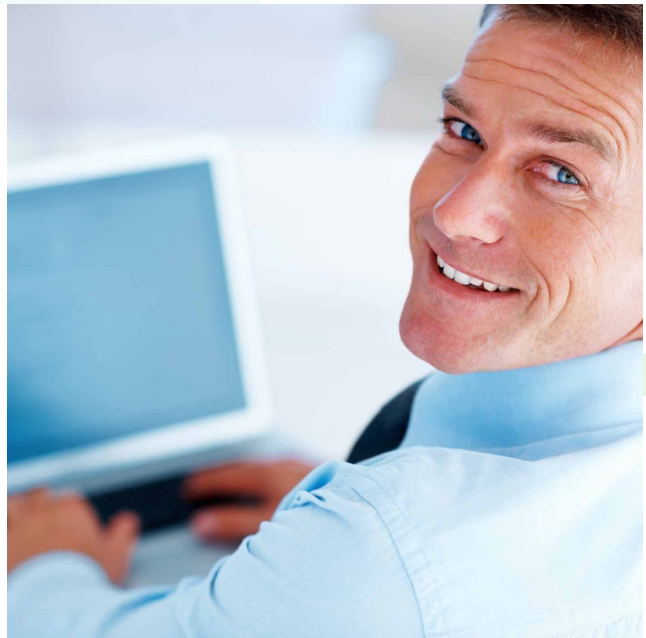
The job of the sales guide is not to replace or outshine the buyer's own information and knowledge, but to respect his independence and *complement* his research. This stimulates a real dialogue and shows the buyer that you 1) understand his pains/problems and 2) have the insight and thought leadership to *really* solve them.

3. TARGET WITH RELEVANCE AND NURTURE WITH STRATEGY.

According to the GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, 80% of B2B decision makers prefer to get company information in a series of targeted, "bite-sized" articles, rather than in one intrusive advertisement. A **strategized lead nurturing campaign** does just that: sending out helpful articles, case studies, whitepapers and tip sheets at strategized points in your buyer's decision-making process.

Remember: This is about how your *sales reps* leverage your marketing content. Your sales reps are the closest to your leads; they know them best as *people*, not just as potential buyers. Such familiarity allows them to target and segment your company's messaging and offers, using **powerful tools for campaign automation** on a more personalized level.

CEB tells us that 79% of marketing-qualified leads never convert. And it's often the case that these "hot leads" are failing to buy at all, despite strong intent to purchase. What's going on here? Buying teams are bigger, more diverse and armed with loads of information and purchasing consultants. There are many hands in the decision-making jar, and this sticky situation jams up your sales enablement pursuit. But when your **sales team delivers targeted, relevant and valuable marketing content at appropriate points in the buying process**, it cultivates the team consensus that's key to facilitating B2B purchasing decisions.



4. MIX IT UP.

You may think that providing *no content* during your sales process is the worst thing you can do. And you're *almost* right. No content is bad, but *bland* content is worse. Mix up your content in different formats. Mix up your content delivery with different tactics and channels.

Use sales portals or deal rooms that promote a private, secure space where the buyer and rep can share or view content, meet virtually and communicate throughout each stage of the engagement.

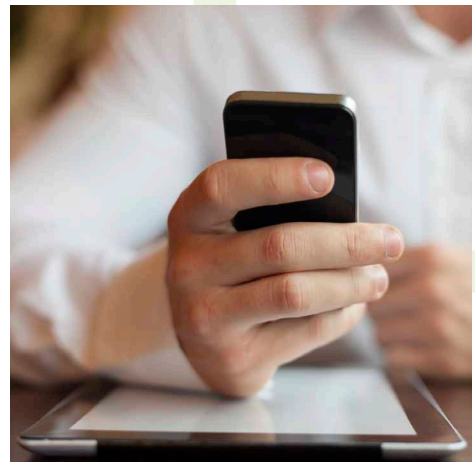
With this seamless sales portal at their fingertips, your sales reps can easily pick and choose from a diverse range of content (e.g., presentations, movies, case studies, whitepapers, third-party research, etc.) and communication methods to get the right information to the right buyers at the right times.

Remember: Email is not the only delivery channel out there. Sure, it's the most familiar to your buyers and the most commonly used channel in the sales process, but "familiar" and "common" are not what you're going for here. This is not about handing off great information, but rather winning over the B2B buyer with an exceptional, insightful experience. Capitalize on social media outlets when possible, pepper in some printed content and (once again) leverage those sales portals/deal rooms to supply your information in a more engaging, interactive way.

5. DON'T DROWN THE BUYER.

Don't submerge your buyers in a sea of emails. Put an organized story together with those integrated marketing solutions, such as the aforementioned lead nurturing automation tools and interactive sales portals.

A buyer who feels overwhelmed and confused is not a buyer who is going to *buy into* your company's insights or offerings. Be organized, deliberate and consistent with your marketing content.



All of this may sound overwhelming, but when we break it down we have a sustainable and repeatable process. Open your buyer's eyes and get him thinking differently with valuable, targeted and relevant content. Unleash these perspective-shifting insights in a myriad of formats and delivery tactics. Be responsive, be organized and step up your sales process by leveraging integrated marketing solutions like sales portals and campaign automation. And most importantly: Respect the buyer enough to stop selling, start guiding and get serious about creating that exceptional buying experience.

Ready to make your buyers feel exceptional during your sales process?
Fill out our contact form to help your sales reps boost that B2B buying experience with the Accent Technology team.

