

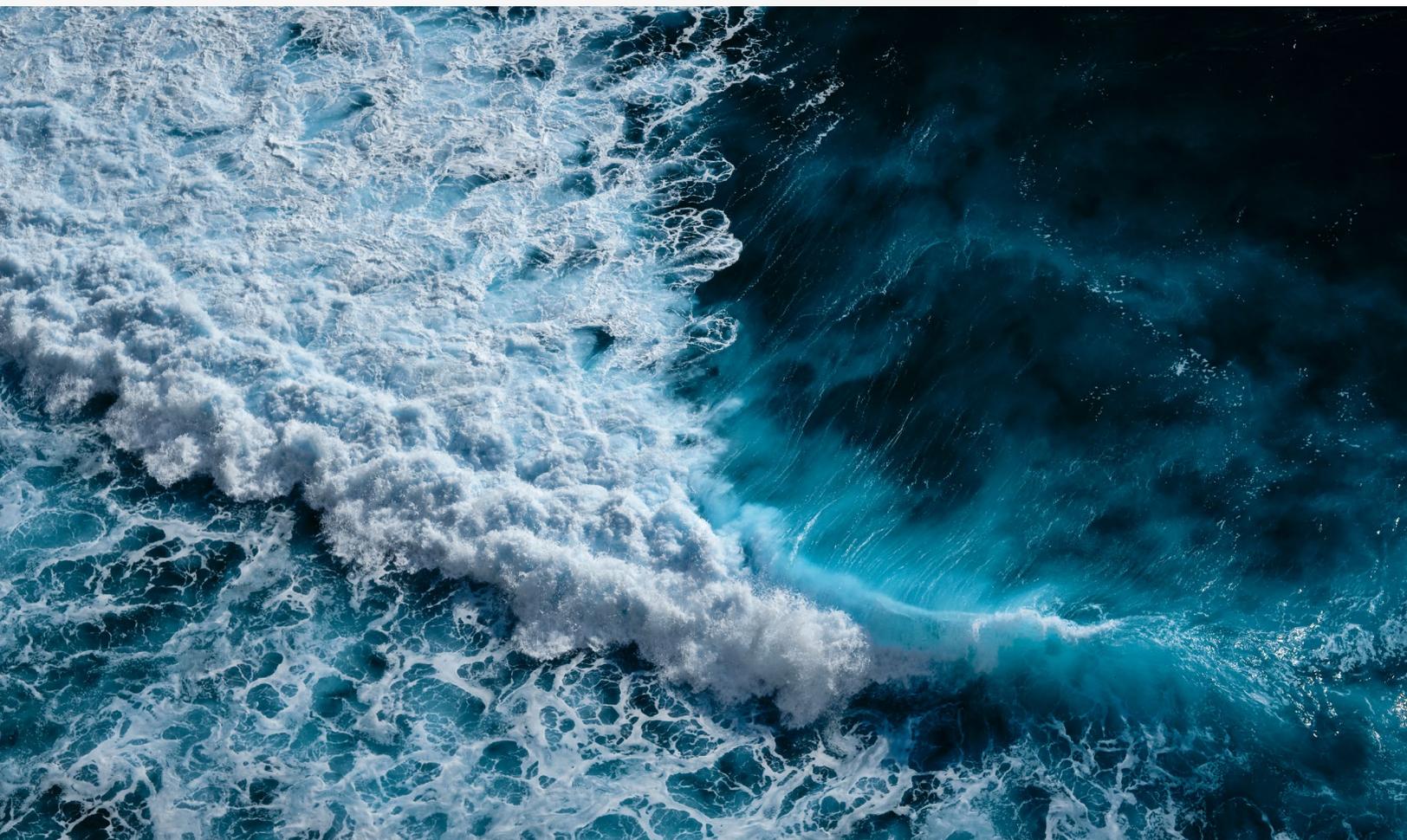
6 

STEPS TO TARGETING

A B2B BUYING
GROUP

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As B2B marketing continues to evolve and [align with elements of the B2C user experience](#), one aspect still clearly distinguishes the two. Contrary to the individualistic nature of B2C purchases, the B2B buying process often involves an entire buying group, rather than a single team member.

What is a buying group?

According to [Gartner](#) (2019), a B2B buying group (or buying committee) typically consists of six to ten team members, also known as decision makers. As a result of so many members, buying groups and their processes are a key contribution to the longer B2B sales cycle.

However, one benefit of B2B buying groups is that they tend to be responsible for larger deals than those found in B2C. Although this means there are more consequences behind every purchasing decision, this also makes them more valuable.

The four stages of the B2B buying group journey

For ease of tracking and scoring, the buyer journey is typically categorized into four broad stages:



1

Awareness Stage

The buyer realizes they have a problem.

2

Consideration Stage:

Next, the buyer evaluates the scope of their problem and researches different solutions.

3

Decision Stage:

Finally, the buyer chooses the solution that is the best fit.

4

Post-Purchase Stage:

After buying, the client is onboarded and needs support.



Preparation for marketing to a B2B buying group

It is crucial to build a strong foundation of knowledge before developing campaigns targeted to specific market segments, or [account based marketing](#) for individual accounts (ABM).



Research the Buying Committee

To establish a clear understanding of how to approach the buying group within each account, it is beneficial to first identify and perform detailed research of its members. Gather as much information on each member's preferences, both in terms of the type of content they consume and the channels they typically frequent.

Your research should also include their background within the organization and if possible, the authority they hold on buying decisions. This can help to determine the buying process they follow and guide your strategy.

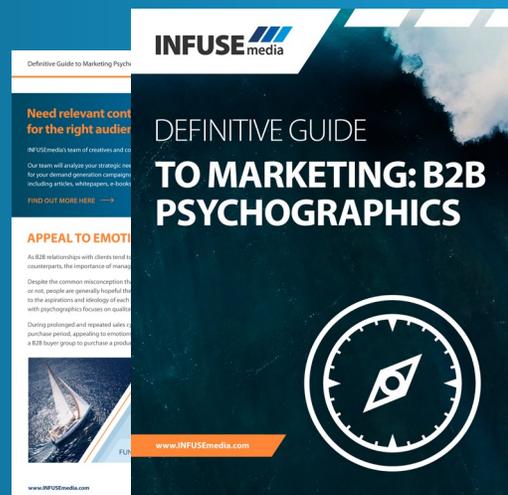
Create Buyer Personas

If your campaigns focus on whole target segments rather than an ABM strategy, build buyer personas. With the help of [marketing automation](#) software, these allow you to filter buying groups and their members depending on the parameters set. By using buyer personas, you will be better equipped to target ideal clients and buying groups with greater accuracy.

Crafting detailed buyer personas can be a complex process that can be facilitated with psychographics.

NOT SURE WHERE TO GET STARTED?

Read our [Definitive Guide to Marketing: B2B Psychographics](#) for detail on how to approach a strategy. →





Align with the Sales Team

Collaborating with the sales team will lead to higher quality campaigns led by their direct client feedback. Communication between sales and marketing teams will help to establish and adapt outreach to buying group members as necessary.

For more on boosting sales processes with alignment, read our [10 Best Practices for Sales and Marketing Alignment.](#) →



Build your B2B buying group strategy in 6 Steps

Reaching and connecting with buying groups requires a strategy that is synchronized across marketing and sales teams and that follows each account's progress as they move through the buyer's journey.

The following steps dissect the buyer's journey in greater detail and the individual tasks required of teams to create an effective and accurate strategy:



1. Becoming aware of a need

This stage represents the buyer's realization of a problem and their evaluation of whether this problem warrants action and the search for a solution.



Marketing team: At this top of funnel stage, the focus should be on demand generation content that creates awareness of your products, services, and brand. The messaging should center on the benefits prospects stand to receive and the specifics of how your products work.

Emphasizing these in relation to pain points is particularly beneficial, as these are the current focus of prospects above which brand is the best fit.

Sales team: Adapt outbound marketing materials to match the common pain points of your prospects and support this knowledge with relevant industry trends. Starting with personalization can help kickstart the B2B buyer journey and set the foundation for a solid relationship with leads.

2. Investigating options

This next stage marks the beginning of the prospect's research for potential solutions for the pain point that they have identified.



Marketing team: Prioritize educational, buyer enablement content to support prospect research, such as whitepapers, case studies, and how-to guides. Take into consideration your audience's content format preferences and demonstrate your company's industry expertise and ability to generate results. This content can be used to fuel [lead nurturing](#) over an extended period.

Sales team: Whether informed by early interactions or research, sales representatives should use this time to form an accurate understanding of prospect needs. From this, sales strategies can be personalized with current solutions in mind, or a new solution can be created in-house to match requirements. Sales teams should also lead with content and data that shows expertise and results.

3. Making a commitment to change

By this point, buyers have defined the specifics of their needs and have a clear challenge they need to solve or an objective to reach. As they commit to making a change, buyers will likely revisit research and identify the handful of companies best suited to meeting their needs.



This is a critical turning point in this strategy, as this is often when stakeholders or decision makers enter the B2B buying process to evaluate available solutions and how they match the goals of different aspects of the business.

Marketing team: To maintain lead interest, marketing teams should regularly update lead scores using automation tools. Following buyers' progress this way allows for marketers to qualify leads and create strategies to keep and develop the interest generated thus far. Findings should influence the content that is shared to leads on an individual level if members of the buying committee have been identified.

Sales team: Representatives should emphasize the benefits of products and services. Leveraging credibility in the form of client reviews or feedback, as well as any relevant accolades, can be an effective way of building trust and communicating product value. However, generic statistics and jargon should be avoided. Instead, messaging should indicate attention to detail with the level of its specificity.

4. Selecting a solution

Buyers at this stage of the B2B buying process need to acquire permission from the decision makers either within the buying committee or upper management.



Marketing team: Content should speak directly to the buying committee. Messaging should not focus primarily on tangible, revenue-focused results rather than anything that could be considered as superficial or marketing “fluff.” Marketers should leverage content to aid the evaluation process by making information easily accessible.

Sales team: The role of representatives at this step should change to consultant. Their main responsibility is to answer all queries, address objections, and prove the value of your solution above those of your competitors. Enable sales staff with up-to-date competitor comparisons to ease this process.

5. Validating choice

With the support of decision makers, buyers will be looking to finalize the last details of making a purchase and which option is most budget-friendly. Small details hold greater importance and may be the deciding factor between one solution and another.



Marketing team: Credibility should be the focus of marketing messaging at this stage. Buyers come closer to making a deal, and marketers can leverage content such as case studies and client testimonials to encourage purchases. An emphasis on the achievements of past and existing clients after choosing your solution and their positive experience can be a powerful advocate to distinguish your brand and products from your closest competitors.

Sales team: Representatives should consider and try to appeal to the unique biases and agendas of the decision makers making up the buying committee. Providing buyers with a detailed breakdown of costs associated with the minutia of each solution (including competitors) can help to start negotiations in your favor. Focus and relate the differentials of your product and brand’s offering to the specific needs of each account to increase your likelihood of success.

6. Making a purchase

At this final stage of closing a deal, buying groups will likely enter negotiations to lower the cost of purchase and maximize benefits. However, at the same time, the buyers who will use your solution directly will typically research best practices to avoid losing time learning at the time of implementation.



Marketing team: Support and encourage the curiosity of clients by moving them into a new nurturing program. This can be useful content that teaches clients how to make the most out of your solution. Nurturing this way can increase the lifetime value of each account by facilitating the transition period and building on the value of your product. Attention to detail is essential even after a purchase has been made.

Sales team: Representatives should focus on resolving any of the buying committee's objections as they seek to increase the value they stand to receive from making a deal. Sales teams should strive to match their clients' needs as closely as possible to avoid losing a sale. The challenge is to do so without relinquishing terms and reducing the scope of the sale.

Reaching the buyer group requires regular analysis and research to keep up with changing trends, needs, and buyer expectations.

Stay up to date by reading our [Outlook for 2022](#) for an in-depth exploration of changes to buyer enablement, the B2B UX experience, staffing, and much more. —>



Create a B2B buyer journey map

Once you have planned your strategy, craft a B2B buyer journey map aligned with your planned steps for reaching the buyer group to guide your outreach as buyers move through the four stages.

Your buyer journey map should include important details, such as the types of content appropriate for each stage. You can then assign these content formats to each step of your strategy.



Awareness Stage:

This content should be focused on pain points and demand generation:



- Checklists
- Guides
- Infographics
- Videos
- Pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns
- Social media posts
- Slide decks
- Thought leadership articles

Consideration Stage:

Content at this stage should be more in-depth and offer more detail on solutions:



- Case studies
- eBooks
- Free tool
- Whitepapers
- Webinars
- Video demonstrations
- Product comparisons

Decision Stage:

Conveying the value of products and solutions is the top priority at this point.



- Case studies
- Client feedback/reviews
- Free assessments
- Free product trial/demo
- Product and vendor comparisons
- Product guides

Post-Purchase Stage:

Even after conversion, clients should be nurtured with content to retain their interest:



- eBooks
- Whitepapers
- Product guides
- Thought leadership articles
- Newsletters
- Webinars
- Social media posts

Each buyer journey map should vary depending on the audience it is targeting, their preferences, and the time taken to convert.

Whereas buyer journey maps typically span across the entirety of the B2B buyer journey, maps can also be made to track a buyer's progress towards a specific stage of the journey. This can provide detailed insights that lead to significant improvements to your buying group strategy.

Overall, developing a map that categorizes your buyer's journey can help to identify buyer behavior, evaluate strategies, nurture prospects and provide a better experience that is more accurate to buyer needs.

As one of the principal factors in buyer enablement and motivating the buyer journey, creating a multi-faceted content marketing strategy is essential.

Not sure where to start? Read our [Definitive Guide to B2B Content Marketing](#) for a full breakdown of content marketing tips and strategies to facilitate your buyer journey. →





Conclusion

The most important factor of creating a strategy for reaching B2B buyer groups is adapting your tactics to suit their needs. In such a competitive environment, companies must understand and demonstrate knowledge of their buyers' preferences, pain points, and requirements.

This coupled with a tangible offer, evidence of results, and the appropriate content for each stage of the B2B buying process will likely increase the chances of success. It is also important to note the role of [nurturing in the buyer journey](#). Even if buyers are not ready to commit to a purchase immediately, they may be encouraged with the proper nurturing program.

While reaching a B2B buying group is far from an exact science and requires a significant investment into developing strategies, the steps outlined in this article are a solid foundation for expediting this process.

Our demand generation experts work with our clients to create personalized, data-driven campaigns for reaching target accounts and buyer groups.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD YOUR OWN STRATEGY TO REACH THE BUYING COMMITTEE AND FUEL YOUR SALES PIPELINE.

Get in touch with the team at letstalk@infusemedia.com to learn more. —>

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