

What's Working In Demand Generation In 2019?

Fearless Marketers Rethink Traditional Channels,
Test New Tactics To Boost Buyer Interest

DEMAND GEN
REPORT
SPECIAL REPORT

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“Demand marketers are getting really good at knowing what works (and what doesn’t) to move the growth needle. What’s more, they’re getting even better at proving it.”

— RICHARD HILL, QUARRY

Introduction

As buyers grow more selective with their content consumption and time, generating and maintaining demand is becoming a more elusive task for B2B brands. But fearless marketers are plowing ahead, experimenting with different channels and investing in demand generation to kickstart conversations with potential customers.

According to *Demand Gen Report research*, **71%** of B2B marketers said their demand generation budgets will increase in 2019 — **46%** said it will increase by 20% or more. This renewed focus on demand generation accompanies a shift towards more precise, targeted strategies to engage buyers.

“The days of spreading marketing budgets far and wide are over,” said Richard Hill, Managing Director of Growth at **Quarry**. “We’re seeing money that would once have gone to mass advertising and broad-based brand building is being redirected into more focused, measurable demand generation efforts... Demand marketers are getting really good at knowing what works (and what doesn’t) to move the growth needle. What’s more, they’re getting even better at proving it.”

This special report will explore what’s working in demand generation and spotlight success stories from companies such as Radius, Bottomline Technologies, SAP Concur and more. Topics covered include:

- **The growing role of ABM** in demand generation;
- **The reemergence of direct mail** as a top-tier strategy;
- **How marketers are refreshing webinars** with new approaches, such as panels and interactivity;
- **How influencers can extend content reach** and credibility; and
- **Why more B2B companies are turning to review sites** in their demand gen process.

Salesforce Executive Talks Demand Gen Evolution, Top Channels

NATE SKINNER SALESFORCE PARDOT



In this exclusive interview with *Demand Gen Report*, Nate Skinner, VP of Marketing for **Salesforce Pardot**, shares his thoughts on the evolution of demand generation, top channels for success and more.

Demand Gen Report: How do you think demand generation has evolved over the past few years? Where do you see it going in 2019 and beyond?

Nate Skinner: Now more than ever, marketers are being pressured to prove ROI to help justify marketing budget and spend. **According to Gartner**, we've reached a point where marketing has more money for technology than any other department and with that comes a shift from quantitative marketing (getting the most clicks) to qualitative marketing (getting the right clicks).

Teams must get smarter about demand generation by testing what's working. With bigger budgets comes higher expectations for ROI. Historically, marketing has had a bad rep for the spray-and-pray strategy — targeting all people versus the few qualified leads. Successful demand generation is now about getting the most qualified leads to your website to engage with the brand in a meaningful way. Savvy marketers will always be able to create favorable numbers, but today's teams want to know how many leads were converted and how.

ABM is one of the hottest growing trends, and it happens to be the antithesis of a spray-and-pray approach. The future of marketing is a more personal approach towards leads to create more genuine and impactful interactions with prospects. AI is another emerging technology for demand generation, helping to automate segmentation and drive insights around campaigns to determine the best next steps to convert leads.



DGR: What is important for demand gen success from an organization/process standpoint?

Skinner: Integrated team collaboration and transparency are critical factors in demand generation success. Sales and marketing teams need to be aligned to effectively communicate and empower each department to succeed.

Most organizations understand the importance of both departments needing to be in sync on what metrics to track and measure to drive successful demand generation, but they often haven't agreed on how to define those metrics — how does each department define a qualified lead or conversion? Is it someone who has clicked on the website, or someone that has consistently engaged with several pieces of content? If marketing and sales have different interpretations of what makes a qualified lead, then one of two things will happen: teams may be missing out on qualified leads or creating a bottleneck by capturing too many leads. While technology can augment demand generation, it can only go so far. It's imperative that cross-collaborative teams actually interact, discuss measurement and define success in order to optimize for the organization's success as a whole.

DGR: What are some of your top tactics/channels for demand generation?

Skinner: I believe the top five tactics or channels for demand generation right now include SEO, email, direct mail, review sites and content marketing.

A stellar SEO strategy helps drive visibility in search engines when prospective customers are looking to solve specific challenges. It's an important top-of-funnel strategy for your business to rank well for keywords your target buyer is searching for.

Though blasting emails no longer works to engage your prospects, email is not dead. The right email sent at the right time to the right buyer is a great approach that nurtures leads through the funnel when done thoughtfully and strategically.

Direct mail, while a more seasoned demand generation strategy, still works in B2B because it can stand out from the noise and overload of information online.



Review sites are a great channel to build credibility and trust in your brand. People look to others for reviews and experiences for lots of purchases, and technology purchases are no different. People also trust experts that evaluate products and services on review sites for objective insight into a brand's credibility and best fit. However, be aware that converting customers to reviewers can be costly, but worthwhile.

Lastly, content marketing is a critical tactic for driving demand generation. When done effectively, strong content helps educate and inform prospective customers. One way to do this is by creating authentic content that shows the “how to” for buyers and showcases your brand as a helpful resource and thought leader.

DGR: How do you think marketers can enhance their demand generation with ABM?

Skinner: Those same tactics I mentioned earlier are still relevant but can be done with an account-first approach. An account-based strategy helps focus a tailored and high-value approach to demand generation. Coupled with AI, marketers can get automatic insights into more accounts that are also likely to be strategic to focus on — for example, AI can tell you that these additional 20 accounts look very similar to your top 10 accounts, so let's add these to your priorities — providing white space awareness around your account-based strategy. Coupling these approaches can help scale and make your team aware of trends you weren't previously aware of.

DGR: Is there anything else marketers should know?

Skinner: Marketing and sales are better together, and data is the tie that binds these two teams. We're going to continue seeing the shift to one platform, a common data set and having customers at the center.



Multi-Touch ABM Paves Way For Success

Skilled marketers are enhancing their demand generation efforts by incorporating ABM into the mix, as it moves from an industry buzzword to a business necessity for getting ahead.

“What’s not working is doing nothing on account-based marketing,” said Jon Russo, CMO and Founder of **B2B Fusion**. “Marketers are in a situation where they need to be testing ABM approaches... The days of spray-and-pray email or voice communication are done — the buyer has no time to waste on non-personalized, non-value add interactions.”

Indeed, the statistics show that **almost half** of B2B marketers (**46%**) plan to test or deploy ABM solutions in 2019 as part of their demand gen strategy. But when it comes to ABM success, industry experts recommend marketers leverage a mix of channels throughout the buyer’s journey to reach prospects.

“There’s no silver-bullet tactic or channel,” said Hill. “Rather reaching and engaging high-value accounts takes a well-orchestrated cadence of multiple touches, delivered both online and offline, that together paint a vivid, authentic and irresistible picture of their future with you.”

Digital Pi, a marketing automation consulting company, won a **Killer Content Award** at this year’s *B2B Marketing Exchange* for its *Secret Sauce* campaign, which aimed to establish relationships with marketing automation users on the Inc. 5000 list. To do so, Digital Pi developed a triple-touch ABM campaign that included a “door-opener” direct mail package of hot sauce that was followed up with emails and phone calls. The results speak for themselves: **more than 4,500 people engaged with the campaign and more than half (64%) of all landing page traffic came from organic social media.**

“Our goal with the *Secret Sauce* campaign was to reach a very targeted audience and engage them in a special way,” said Jeff Coveney, EVP of Digital Pi. “By using a multi-touch approach, we were able to let the audience know we were on the Inc. 5000 and invite them to engage with us at the gala.”



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— JON RUSSO, B2B FUSION

Making A Direct Connection

In the race to capture buyer attention and accelerate deals, more B2B companies are going back to old-school tactics, such as direct mail, that enable them to stand out from the crowd.

“What was ‘old’ is ‘new’ again,” said Russo. “Direct mail as a tactic has been re-energized. With the ability to reach decision makers in a very personalized way on a non-crowded marketing channel, more companies are heading in that direction.”

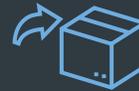
The resurgence of direct mail in B2B may be driven in part by its ability to drive greater success than efforts to reach buyers on crowded, digital spaces. According to the **DMA**, direct mail results in a higher response rate (5.1%) than other marketing tactics, such as email (0.6%), social media (0.4%) and online display ads (0.2%).

Imprivata, a healthcare IT security company, recently used direct mail to reach accounts on its target list. The company created a “Summer Reading Book Club” and sent three books accompanied by hand-written notes to target accounts. The campaign began as a pilot program directed at four key accounts, but quickly expanded to an additional 14 accounts after **driving a 100% response rate in the pilot.**

Radius Turns To Sendoso To Streamline & Scale Direct Mail Program



\$1K in pipeline
for every \$1 spent



60% response rate
from sent packages

The Challenge

Radius, a customer data platform provider, has been a long-time user of direct mail to reach new prospects and engage current customers. The company was sending more than 500 mailers each quarter, executing all initiatives in-house.

Sourcing the package contents and personalizing each mailer was incredibly time consuming and didn't allow the sales team to send them in a natural cadence with their sales cycle. As such, Radius began looking for a solution that would enable the company to scale its direct mail program, as well as empower its sales team to manage their own budget, send mailers on demand in their own time and track packages.

"Direct mail allows us to get in front of our prospects and customers in a fun and personalized way, drive attendees to our events, set up intro meetings and push leads through the funnel quicker," said Amanda Rupp, Marketing Manager at Radius. "[But] we are a small team and don't have the bandwidth to do everything in-house. We wanted an easy and quick way for our sales reps to reach prospects."



The Solution

Radius selected **Sendoso**, a direct mail sending platform, to address these challenges. Using the platform, Radius' sales team was able to quickly sort their direct mail options and budget, and then send the right mailer at the right time accompanied by a handwritten note. According to Rupp, Sendoso has enabled the company to send large volumes of gifts and use direct mail at every stage of the buyer's journey.

"We have intro Radius swag and content bundles for the top of the funnel," said Rupp. "[We also have] wine sends inviting guests to our executive dinners and field events, one-time bulk sends to run alongside marketing campaigns, gift cards and sweet treats. The crowd favorite is being able to send anything through Amazon with a custom handwritten note and repackaged in a Radius box. Our sales reps like the opportunity to think outside the box and have more of a say in the direct mail campaigns."

The Results

Using Sendoso, Radius has generated a 60% response rate to its direct mail packages and driven \$1,000 in pipeline for every \$1 spent.

"Sendoso has saved me hours and overhead putting together these great bundles," said Rupp. "We are able to implement an automated send for when a person requests a demo on our website and the Salesforce and Marketo integrations makes it easy to track the results, statuses and budgets."



Refreshing Webinars To Drive Conversations

Webinars continue to be a popular demand gen channel for B2B marketers, with **58%** of respondents to the **2019 Demand Generation Benchmark Report** citing it as their most successful tactic for top-of-the-funnel engagement.

But these aren't the PowerPoint-packed webinars of years past. Modern marketers are revamping webinars with new strategies — such as interactive tools and panels — that make them more conversational and engaging for prospects.

“Webinar technology is a 'must do' channel,” said Russo. “With the ability in webinars to have interactive questions, [marketers can] further target or personalize content and follow up based on the answers to the interactive questions.”

According to **research** from **ON24**, **69%** of marketers say they build webinars with interactivity in mind and 31% say they use webinar video for panels.

“One of the biggest changes we have seen in webinar marketing is the move to more conversational formats, such as panel discussions,” said Mark Bornstein, VP of Content Marketing at ON24. “Buyers' professional expectations are largely driven by their personal lives, and that means providing more approachable and, frankly, more human experiences. They don't want to be lectured to; they want to participate in conversations, where panelists are talking to each other but also including the audience in the discussion. This type of conversational marketing increases audience participation and content retention. It's good for your audience but also good for you as the more you interact with your prospects, the more you learn about them.”

Among ON24's list of the top “Webinars That Rocked In 2018” is **SAP Concur**. The travel, expense and invoice management company put together a panel-led webinar featuring voices from **the Conference Board**, **Backpocket Brewing** and the **Boy Scouts of America Blackhawk Area Council**.

In the webinar, titled **“Tips & Triumphs from SMB All-Stars,”** panelists discussed how to avoid financial risk, sustain business growth and more. Attendees were able to ask questions, take a survey and interact with the panelists on LinkedIn. **The format proved successful and garnered more than 400 attendees, almost half (41%) of whom downloaded content from the webinar. The average viewing time was 48 minutes.**



Influencers Boost Brand Reach, Credibility

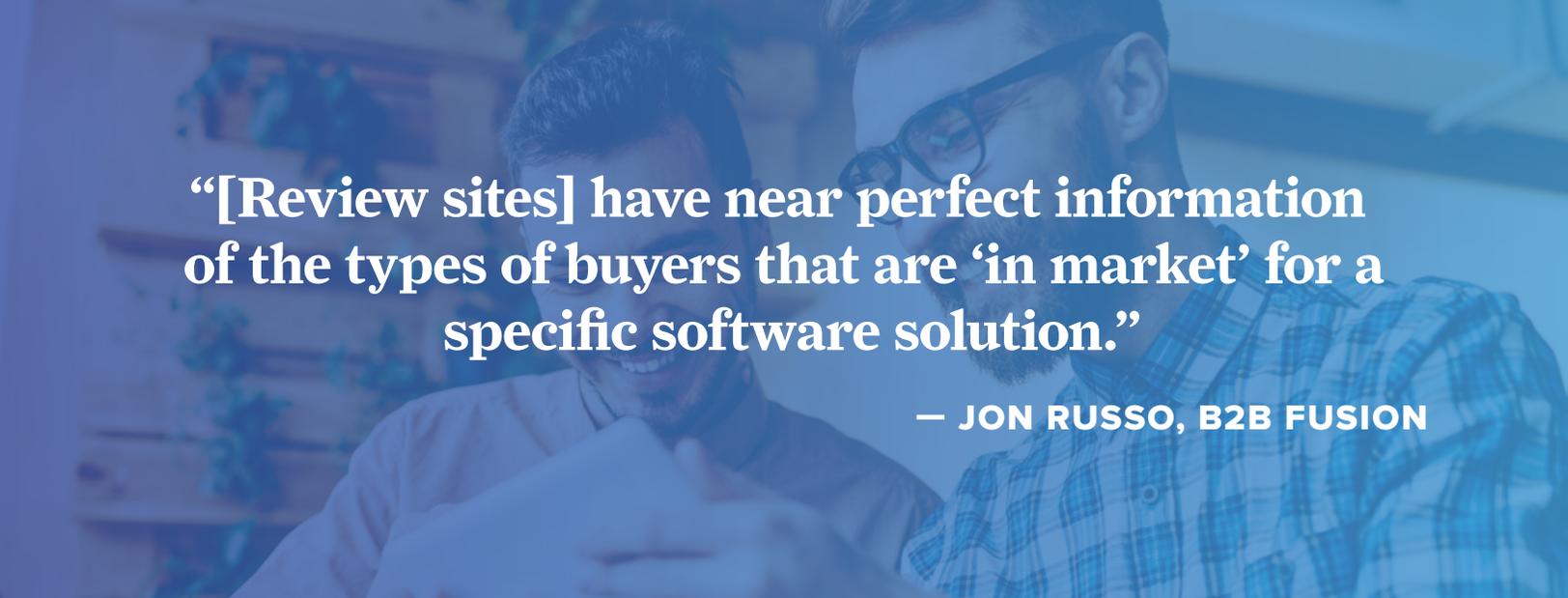
The rise of influencer marketing extends beyond B2C and is growing rapidly in the B2B marketplace. **Research** from *Demand Gen Report* shows **95%** of buyers prefer credible content from industry influencers, a significant bump from 65% in 2018. In addition, 55% of marketers say they plan to spend more on influencers in 2019, according to **research** from **Traackr** and the **Altimeter Group**. B2B brands that skillfully select influencers to work with and bring them into the content creation process can reap the benefits of their extended audience and established credibility amongst buyers.

“The sheer volume of information and media that confronts people in the business world is overwhelming and often pretty boring,” said Lee Odden, CEO and Co-Founder of **TopRank Marketing**, in an **exclusive Q&A** before the *B2B Marketing Exchange*. “[Plus,] buyers don’t trust advertising or brand marketing messages. Co-creating content with trusted experts brings credibility and interest to the brand message.”

But creating influencer content for the B2B sphere requires a different approach than its B2C counterpart, notes Lee. He recommends B2B marketers centralize their influencer operations for a streamlined process, strive towards always-on influencer marketing backed by software investments and consider both micro and macro influencers for their campaigns.

Bottomline Technologies, a payment and invoice automation software provider, began experimenting with influencer marketing in 2018. The company worked with **Content4Demand** to create a Killer-Content-award-winning E-book peppered with industry influencer perspectives on **“The Future of Business Payments.”** **Social promotion from the influencers generated 33% of overall downloads in the first four days of launch and 50% of the traffic from social posts was net-new.**

“Leveraging industry influencers for this campaign not only lent credibility to the content, but also enabled us to extend our reach,” said Christine Nurnberger, CMO of Bottomline Technologies. “The industry influencers we worked with have extensive networks of followers on social media platforms. We saw great results from this content, both in terms of our own direct promotion and sharing through these influencers’ networks as well.”



“[Review sites] have near perfect information of the types of buyers that are ‘in market’ for a specific software solution.”

— JON RUSSO, B2B FUSION

Harnessing The Power Of Peer Review Sites

In addition to influencers, peer review sites such as **G2** and **TrustRadius** are emerging as a powerful demand gen tool for B2B companies. According to the **2018 B2B Buyers Survey Report**, 65% of buyers rely on peer reviews during their research process. B2B brands can therefore use intent data from these sites to identify potential buyers for nurturing.

“Review sites like G2 are positioning themselves as intent data providers. They have near perfect information of the types of buyers that are ‘in market’ for a specific software solution,” said Russo. “This type of review engine therefore becomes an extremely powerful tool as it relates to demand generation.”

Speakers on a revenue ops panel during the *B2B Marketing Exchange* also pointed to the power of peer review sites and urged B2B marketers to use the plethora of data housed on these sites to their advantage.

Bill Binch, CRO of **Pendo**, said during the panel that the digital products cloud provider company uses G2 to pinpoint prospective buyers, as well as kickstart conversations based on reviews of the buyers’ product gaps and pain points. According to Binch, the company received an almost immediate ROI from doing so.

“You can figure out who is searching for your company and looking at competitors,” said Binch. “Knowing when somebody is on my site is great but knowing when they’re looking at my competitors gives me a chance to pounce at the right moment... Then, I’ll look at the two-, three- and four-star reviews, pick up some themes about what their users are saying and see if they apply to us. I’ll give them a call and say, ‘Hey this is Bill from Pendo. I saw the reviews on a third-party site about your product and these are the areas we can help.’”



“[Marketers are getting better] at demonstrating the impact their efforts are having on driving revenue [and] defending their organization’s investment in demand marketing.”

— RICHARD HILL, QUARRY

Conclusion

B2B marketers are honing their demand generation skills as they learn what is and isn't working when it comes to capturing buyer attention in today's changing market. To maximize their growing investments in 2019, industry experts recommend marketers take a measured approach and balance new strategies, including ABM, influencers and peer-to-peer review sites, with traditional tactics such as direct mail and webinars.

“[Marketers are getting better] at demonstrating the impact their efforts are having on driving revenue [and] defending their organization’s investment in demand marketing,” said Hill. “That’s leading to better business cases, resulting in greater budget increases for demand marketing relative to other, less accountable alternatives.”

Interested in learning more?



Salesforce Pardot is smarter marketing automation on the world's #1 CRM. With Pardot, B2B marketers can find and nurture leads, close more deals, and maximize ROI. Salesforce Pardot gives you the power to engage with quality leads at every stage in the sales cycle, and you'll never let a cold lead slip through the cracks. Pardot makes it easy to build intelligent nurture campaigns and smoothly pass leads between marketing and sales, and with Pardot's native data analytics dashboards you'll always know how your marketing impacts your business.

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Additional Resources



2019 Demand Generation
Benchmark Survey Report



The Practitioner's Guide
To Signal & Intent Data



2019 Content Preferences
Survey Report



Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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is a skilled reporter covering the B2B marketing beat. She is also an avid reader, a travel junkie and a lover of all things carbs.