WHAT'S WORKING IN
CONTENT MARKETING?

AI-Generated Content Streamlining Workflows;
Orgs Refining Segmentation

DEMAND GEN REPORT®

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INTRODUCTION

B2B buyers are **five times more likely** to engage with content than traditional sales outreach, but an oversaturated landscape makes creating engaging and unique content easier said than done. Luckily, the latest advancements in AI — specifically, generative AI — are helping marketers streamline content creation and curate highly relevant assets quicker.

While generative AI has launched many discussions and promises of quick content development, it isn't the panacea to the hard work behind content creation. What AI can do is alleviate some of the pressure on marketers to craft hyper-personalized assets. In reality, marketers still need to analyze buyer data to determine customer preferences and align assets to prospects' pain points and needs, as well as determine the content formats and delivery channels that are most effective.

"When it comes to delivering content, the deluge of internal and external data is giving way to a trend toward hyper-segmentation," said Leslie Talbot, SVP of Marketing for science-backed revenue growth services company **Corporate Visions**. "The concept is that you must deliver a unique message to a unique person at any unique time and be able to follow them all the way through their buying journey. And it obviously makes things much more difficult for marketers, because it's an infinite number of messages and different configurations that you need to deliver."

This special report will explore the content preferences of modern buyers with expert insights to uncover how successful practitioners are approaching content marketing. Specific topics of discussion include:

- How practitioners are using data to segment their audiences and deliver highly targeted content;

- The latest research into B2B buyer habits and the content types they prefer;

- The increasing popularity of video — whether it's CTV, webinars or YouTube videos — to engage and educate buyers while building brand awareness;

- The power of leveraging thought leadership content, case studies and peer reviews to build credibility; and

- How organizations are embracing the "edit, then take credit" mentality when leveraging content technology such as generative AI to streamline the content creation process.

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>
> **LESLIE TALBOT, CORPORATE VISIONS**

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ADDRESSING SEGMENTATION CHALLENGES

Even the most engaging content can fall flat if marketers aren't targeting the right audience. If they're reaching out to a prospect who is just starting their journey, a late-stage product sales sheet is not going to resonate. Intent, firmographics, technographics and key accounts are other segmentation strategies used by modern marketing teams.

Clearly, segmentation remains an issue for marketers: Research revealed that **38% of respondents** will invest in getting to know their audiences better, which starts with foundational marketing, according to **Kyall Mai**, an award-winning B2B practitioner in multiple industries, including finance and transportation.

"It is critical to figure out the criteria for who your ideal clients are at an organizational level, which often means acquiring data from external sources like Dun & Bradstreet and ZoomInfo and attending trade association events and getting lists of people that register or attend," Mai said.

However, practitioners need to be cautious when segmenting. Talbot warned that the saturated solutions landscape provides practitioners with almost too many segmentation options.

"There's such an infinite number of tools out there that sellers and marketers can use to segment, slice and dice their audience in different ways that you must be very purposeful about the way you do it," she continued. "Otherwise, you'll end up just getting completely crushed under the weight of the number of messages that you can create."

Proof Point:

Tapping into the popularity of true crime, **Hogan Lovells** started a podcast series — "Proof In Trial" — that brought consumer-friendly true crime stories to life for audiences beyond corporate legal departments. The company engaged reporters covering the business of law and waged aggressive organic and paid social media campaigns, focusing on LinkedIn and Twitter, to increase reach and engagement. It targeted different audience segments with varied paid and organic posts and used A/B testing to ensure reach and resonance.

Season one's five-week promotional campaign generated more than 625,000 social media impressions, while season two's three-week promotional campaign generated more than 654,000 social media impressions.

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DETERMINING THE RIGHT CONTENT FORMAT FOR EACH AUDIENCE

Audience segmentation is only half of the content marketing battle: Marketers then need to shift their focus to the content itself. According to the "2023 Content Preferences Survey," more than two-thirds of buyers (67%) engaged with webinars over the past 12 months, while research and survey reports came in at 55%.

Predictably, content preferences vary by stage. Among the most popular content formats for early-stage research were infographics (62%), blogs (58%) and podcasts (56%). Meanwhile, assessments (49%), webinars (48%) and case studies (44%) dominated the mid-stage. For late-stage research, buyers cited user reviews (29%), third-party analyst reports (29%) and ROI calculators (26%) as the most useful.

In terms of social media preferences, a Gartner study found that YouTube (65%) is the top social media channel to influence B2B purchasing decisions, followed by Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok.

"People don't realize how hugely important social media is to their omnichannel approach, especially with B2B buyers," said Brooke Sellas, CEO and Founder of social media marketing agency **B Squared Media**. "We all assume that Facebook is B2C, but it is changing."

Video is an extremely popular format, agreed Mai, but he added short videos are more apt to engage prospects. He explained that as the Covid-19 pandemic shut down in-person meetings and marketers shifted toward webinars, most organizations already have a library of video content that no one's using. To optimize and repurpose those assets, Mai suggested that practitioners edit the video into smaller, more bite-sized pieces, because "shorter videos are more likely to be viewed, and that gives you an opportunity to add more touches," he explained.

Proof Point:

In early 2022, **Paddle** raised a Series D funding and was in the process of acquiring ProfitWell for $200 million. The company used the opportunity to bring its customers behind the scenes of a tech acquisition, which included partnering with an award-winning documentary filmmaker. The acquisition closed and the teams quickly cut the documentary — "We Sign Tomorrow?" — and launched the trailer as Paddle announced the deal to the market. The company followed up with screenings in multiple cities, and several extra video edits focusing on Product Strategy, People & Culture, Marketing and other specific topics. As a result, the campaign videos have been watched more than 30K times.

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> **KYALL MAI, AWARD-WINNING B2B PRACTITIONER**

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LEVERAGING AI TO BOOST CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

AI can assist with meeting the increased need for content to reach hyper-segmented audiences. Though AI isn't new, its uses for content expand every day. With that in mind, **72% of business executives** are planning or already using AI for content, with the top use case being using generative AI to create drafts and round out online content.

"Now we can get a video of a webinar that we had, which was an hour long, punch it into an AI tool, ask it to transcribe that one-hour webinar, which then takes about 40 seconds," said Mai. "From that transcription, we can ask it to summarize the content into five key points, which then becomes the brief."

One of the most beneficial uses of AI is to streamline the content creation processes, Mai added. He continued that practitioners should leverage the technology to create a first draft of content.

"Once AI has done an initial pass, someone who is skilled and knowledgeable can finish the job," said Mai. "A process that would have taken at least a week can be done within minutes, and we can get a brief to a content writer very, very quickly."

Proof Point:

OK, here's the deal: Generative AI-created content is too new for any reliable case studies. So, to demonstrate our point, we asked ChatGPT to write one for us:

"Company X, a leading e-commerce platform, harnessed the power of AI-generated content to transform its marketing strategy and drive exceptional growth. To address its content creation challenges, Company X decided to integrate AI-generated content into their marketing workflow by partnering with a prominent AI solution provider known for its natural language generation capabilities. The AI system was trained on a wealth of product information, customer reviews and industry trends, enabling it to generate content that aligns with Company X's brand voice and resonates with its target audience. As a result, Company X saw:

- 30% increase in click-through rates and a 20% reduction in bounce rates on product pages;

- 40% increase in organic traffic within six months;

- 50% increase in social media engagement and a 25% growth in followers over the course of a year; and

- 15% increase in customer satisfaction scores.

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CONCLUSION

B2B content marketers are managing a lot of expectations around content development and distribution. The access to internal and data is fueling the trend toward highly segmented audiences, which creates increased pressure to develop content to engage buyers at various stages of their journey with differing needs and interests.

That said, video is leading in terms of content preferences, and thought leadership remains a key content type to build trust and awareness. To turn out more content tailored to specific audiences, many B2B marketers are turning to generative AI tools. However, it's unrealistic to let AI do the job of content creation entirely; instead, B Squared Media's Sellas said there's going to be an increased need for people who are skilled at training AI.
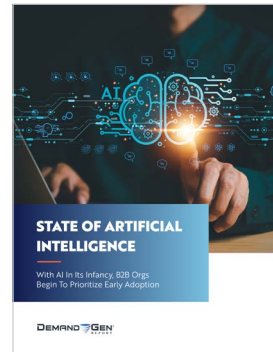
"In terms of AI-generated content, we're going to see an increased need for people who have that ability to edit with power, punch and personality," she explained.

What's Working In Buyer Engagement?
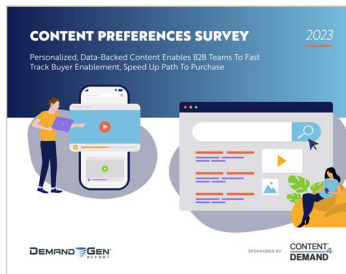
2023 Content Preferences Survey Report

State Of Artificial Intelligence

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 multichannel demand generation efforts.

201.257.8528

INFO@DEMANDGENREPORT.COM

BY KIM ZIMMERMANN, CONTRIBUTING WRITER