

# WHAT'S WORKING WITH B2B CONTENT SYNDICATION?

Best-In-Class Companies Extend Brand Voice,  
Gain Intent Signals From Syndication Initiatives

**DEMAND GEN**  
REPORT  
SPECIAL REPORT

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# INTRODUCTION

Content syndication can have an invaluable impact on B2B go-to-market initiatives. If utilized correctly, it can help organizations generate demand, discover new opportunities, move leads through the sales funnel and generate revenue. Yet despite its effectiveness, content syndication is an often-overlooked tactic for engaging prospective customers in various aspects of the B2B customer journey.

Close to one-third (30%) of B2B companies find content syndication to be one of their most successful lead generation tactics, research from *Demand Gen Report* shows. **Content Marketing Institute** research found top B2B marketing performers are more likely than average performers to amplify their content using non-owned channels. However, only 27% of B2B marketers are currently using content syndication and/or promotional tools, according to Content Marketing Institute.

The growth of organizations embracing content syndication provides opportunities for forward-thinking organizations to take advantage of a tactic their competitors may not yet be using. In this report, we'll examine how progressive B2B organizations are seeing notable results from content syndication initiatives. Sharing insights from both experts and practitioners, the report will highlight how content syndication can help B2B marketers:

- Connect with new audiences by extending the brand to new watering holes where prospective customers may be researching a purchase decision;
- Gather valuable intent signals collected from engagement with syndicated content;
- Continue conversations with top-tier accounts and streamline their buying decisions; and
- Accelerate business deals by providing information at the right time and in the right channel.



# UNDERSTANDING B2B CONTENT SYNDICATION OPTIONS

Content syndication is the practice of using third parties to distribute or publish your content on their properties or newsletters. Syndicated content can be gated or can drive users to gated content on your organization's website, helping to capture crucial information about users.

There are several free options for syndicating content. Your organization can collaborate with another company on gated content to be shared with both audiences, partner with a company to cross promote each other's content on social media or share your content on relevant blogs that accept guest posts.

While all of these methods are excellent starting points for a content syndication program, many B2B organizations find that adding a paid content syndication play to the mix greatly enhances the effectiveness of their content syndication efforts. Paid content syndication providers can share your content on a wider variety of sites in their network, narrowly target audiences based on your specific parameters and capture user intent data, all of which can help your organization generate more — and more qualified — leads.



# HOW CONTENT SYNDICATION CAN BENEFIT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Content syndication can benefit B2B companies of any size, especially those whose product or service offerings have a long, complex sales cycle. Mat Phillips, Co-founder of B2B demand gen provider DemandWorks Media, said the tactic works well for B2B software vendors because their customers' purchasing process typically requires multiple inputs at the corporate level and plenty of research, often in the form of content, to ensure "best fit." For companies with a similar sales cycle, content syndication has the potential to:

## **Guide prospects through the sales funnel**

A prospect's early research often commences with general content that's wide in scope, according to Phillips. As research continues, prospects may start to consume more specific content focused on their niche concerns. Content syndication can help guide prospects to more detailed content such as price comparisons or product features.

"In certain industries, buyers are extremely overwhelmed by the amount of content at their disposal, so self-discovery is a bit daunting," noted Alicia Esposito, Senior Content Strategist at digital B2B media agency [Content4Demand](#). "Using syndication allows you to get the right content in front of the right people at the right time."



## **Expand brand reach to new audiences**

For organizations that already have a robust content program on owned media, content syndication is an opportunity to generate net-new leads by reaching new prospects in places where they may be researching a purchase decision. “Content syndication can help companies reach more of their audience in different places. Instead of constantly pulling people into our websites, we can reach them where they are on other sites,” said Anna Hrach, a strategist at the content marketing consulting firm **Convince and Convert**.

By identifying which content drives the most engagement on your site and repurposing it via content syndication, “you’re essentially getting your story out to a new pool of people so you can add them to your nurtures and campaigns and build relationships,” explained Esposito. This can be a useful way to reach a customer niche your organization has been struggling to access.

## **Enhance the organization’s thought-leadership reputation**

Strategically placing content via syndication can also help build brand clout and credibility. This can be especially valuable if your organization is trying to reaffirm its positioning in a specific industry or for a specific persona, Esposito said. “For instance, if you’re trying to target CIOs at large retailers, finding a relevant publication that speaks to these personas and partnering with them on content syndication is a great way to build credibility with their audience,” she noted.



# HOW B2B BRANDS CAN CREATE EFFECTIVE CONTENT SYNDICATION PROGRAMS

To develop an effective content syndication program, “think of content syndication just like you would any other distribution channel,” said Hrach. “Marketers should always tie their content syndication goals back to their overarching goals.”

Esposito recommends that marketers begin by asking these key questions:

- Who is our target audience?
- Where are their “watering holes” — the places they go for information and insight?
- Which sources and thought leaders do they trust?
- What type of content do they consume?
- What content do we have that aligns with these requirements and the channels we use for syndicating said content?

The biggest mistake that Esposito sees marketers make when implementing a content syndication program is using poor-quality content or the wrong content. “If you’re trying to connect with a new audience, it’s important to focus on providing relevant, high-value content that builds trust and credibility,” Esposito explained. “‘Big rock’ E-books or other formats play a huge role here because they offer an equivalent value exchange in return for the prospect’s information. They also provide a great jumping-off point for additional, more targeted content should a buyer further engage.”



Hrach urges marketers to put themselves in their customers' shoes. "Think about the audience you're trying to reach," she said. "Then, look at your content. If you were your audience, and you stumbled upon this piece of content on one of the sites you're syndicating it to, would it make sense? Would the content provide value? Would you want to read it? The answers to all of those questions should be an enthusiastic 'Yes!'"

The right content syndication partner is as important as the right content to the success of a paid content syndication play. "Find a partner that aligns with your vision, mission and values," said Hrach. "Audiences are really, really tired of inauthentic content and experiences. So, find partners or sites that are a natural fit for your organization."

When considering paid-provider options, weigh cost-per-lead or cost-per-click against the quality of the provider's audience and its alignment to your target market, Esposito advised. How accurately can the provider target the desired audience? For example, DemandWorks delivers content based on email newsletter subscription preferences and in-market behavior, but can also target prospects more narrowly by job role, job function, company size, company revenue, industry, technology stack and other criteria.

Phillips recommends that B2B marketers seek a partner who understands what they hope to accomplish and works with them to reach those goals. For example, can the vendor deliver leads via custom workflows and technology? "Start with a test and set clear goals to determine if that test was successful," he suggested.

Also consider what additional tools a provider brings to the table. "Look for breadth of capabilities," advised Esposito. "Do they give you access to robust analytics and intent data so you can pivot direction if needed?" DemandWorks offers features like personalized experiences, intent layering and predictive targeting that are designed to maximize conversion rates.



# HARNESSING THE POWER OF CONTENT SYNDICATION TO EMPOWER SALES

A well-thought-out content syndication program can empower B2B sales teams with new leads and new insights about those leads. “Knowing who is researching and ready to buy provides sales teams with the intelligence to strike when the iron is hot,” said Phillips. Here’s how three B2B marketers are using content syndication to expand brand reach, attract new prospects and identify sales-ready leads.

## **Delivering Relevant Content Drives High-Velocity Sales**

**AT&T Cybersecurity**, a leading provider of unified security management and community-powered threat intelligence, has found DemandWorks’ content syndication program to be a valuable source of new leads. AT&T Cybersecurity targets information technology practitioners at a wide range of mid-market firms, including retailers, banks, restaurants and technology startups.

DemandWorks uses AI technology to identify prospects meeting AT&T Cybersecurity’s specific criteria. It then uses highly targeted B2B email newsletters to deliver relevant content, including white papers, E-books and webcasts, to their email inboxes. Tracking engagement enables AT&T Cybersecurity to identify the most promising prospects, who then become leads for handoff to the sales team.

The ability to quickly distribute timely content to a wider audience has been especially useful for AT&T Cybersecurity. After the Petya and WannaCry ransomware attacks in 2017, AT&T Cybersecurity created rapid response guides for IT professionals, which DemandWorks swiftly placed in the inboxes of security decision-makers at prospect companies.





“A number of really great leads came from [those guides] because we were able to rapidly get them in front of our target audience,” said Vincent Lucier, Marketing Program Manager at AT&T Cybersecurity. Within the first quarter, AT&T Cybersecurity was able to close deals from DemandWorks leads; within two quarters, they were ROI positive.

## **Enabling Content Binges To Signal Sales Readiness**

Content is **PathFactory's** business. The marketing technology company helps its clients deliver personalized content to B2B prospects at each stage of the buyer journey. To attract those clients, PathFactory leverages a wide range of content, including E-books, checklists, white papers and infographics.

B2B buyers typically consume multiple pieces of content before they're ready to engage with a salesperson. When relevant content is easy to access, PathFactory has found sales-ready buyers willingly “binge” on it. In fact, PathFactory sees bingeing — rather than clicks or form-fills — as the best indicator of in-market prospects. Using the DemandWorks platform, PathFactory can reach highly targeted leads and deliver content that gets them to binge — and buy.

PathFactory provides a list of target accounts, which DemandWorks uses to generate a list of targeted prospects. Using email newsletters, DemandWorks delivers targeted content that pulls prospects into the sales pipeline. Seeing how much content each individual has binged on gives PathFactory's salespeople insights into which leads are ready to buy.



DemandWorks newsletters have a 19.3% binge rate and leads spend an average of two minutes and 27 seconds with the content. “DemandWorks has been a top performer, generating leads who are truly self-qualifying after they click on a content offer,” said Chris Vandermarel, Senior Demand Generation Manager at Pathfactory. “It has [brought] to light people we’ve never spoken to before, who are great fits for our product and net-new to our lead database.”

## **Using Top-Of-Funnel Content To Generate Qualified Leads**

**PayScale** helps organizations of all sizes make smarter compensation decisions by leveraging real-time salary profiles and data-driven insights. Most of the company’s B2B sales leads are generated by inbound and content marketing. Focusing on high-level thought leadership, PayScale uses a robust library of educational content, such as white papers and original research, to support its sales funnel.

Partnering with DemandWorks helped PayScale generate a consistent flow of qualified leads. Targeting prospects at large companies who have HR-related job titles, DemandWorks delivers top-of-funnel content via email newsletters. When prospects share their contact information to view content, PayScale’s predictive scoring model qualifies them and moves leads down the sales funnel.

Between 10% and 15% of PayScale’s MQLs come from DemandWorks, and 60% of leads DemandWorks generated are net new. “DemandWorks helps us fill the top of the funnel with high-quality leads,” said Mike Kang, Market Segment Manager at PayScale.

By facilitating multiple touchpoints for each contact, DemandWorks also helps boost PayScale’s brand recognition.



# THE FUTURE OF CONTENT SYNDICATION

What is the future of content syndication as a B2B marketing tactic? “It will be interesting to see how rules and best practices around syndication will evolve, especially as there are more open conversations around data use and privacy for marketing and targeting,” said Esposito.

Phillips agrees, noting: “Data privacy is firmly on the agenda with topics such as GDPR and CCPA. Where this is going in the future, no one is quite sure, but the trend is toward tighter security and greater transparency.”

The expansion of content experience, and interactive content in particular, is another key trend to watch, Esposito believes. “As content libraries diversify, and as buyers expect more immersive content, marketers will need to verify that they can maximize the reach and value of these resources,” she explained. “They must also determine whether their syndication partners can support these experiences or easily connect to them through their branded channels.”

Esposito also expects increasing buzz around intent data to drive evolution in the syndication space. “We’re seeing more marketers focus on the quality of leads, not the quantity of leads,” she said, “and intent data is central to identifying highly engaged buyers and delivering the right content to them at the right time.”

Relevance remains the key to successful content syndication, no matter what form your content takes. “There is an absolutely overwhelming amount of content now, which means there’s a ton of noise for our audiences to filter through,” said Hrach. “Make it easy for them. Give them the information they want, the information that helps them and the information they seek. It really can be that simple.”

## **DemandWorks** M E D I A

DemandWorks' unique demand generation programs enable you to deliver your content, to the right buyer, at the right time, on any device. With personalized user experience, dynamic content, intent based targeting, mobile optimization, and custom 'pay for performance' pricing, you can be sure of 'guaranteed response' with some of the best conversion rates in the industry.

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## **DEMAND GEN** 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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