

KEOMarketing

MARKETER'S GUIDE



**10 Trends Successful B2B Marketers
Can't Ignore in 2020**



SEARCH



MARKETING



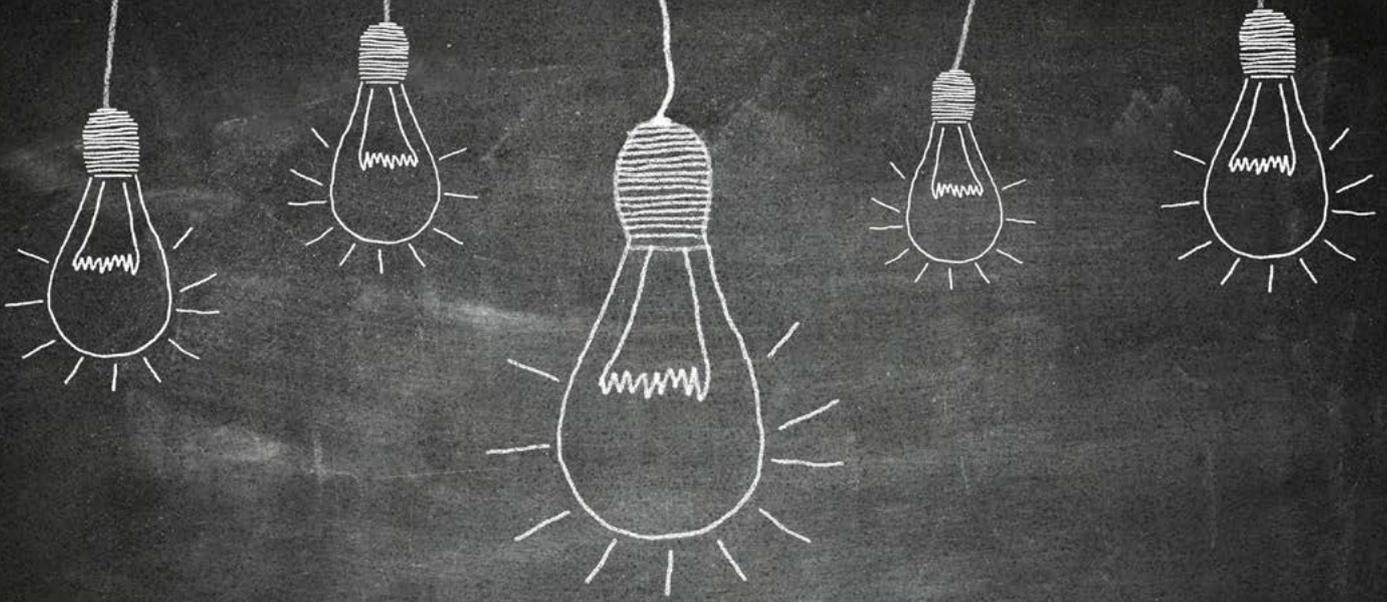
SOCIAL



MOBILE



ADVERTISING



10 Trends Successful B2B Marketers Can't Ignore in 2020

It's that time of year when many B2B marketers are thinking ahead, contemplating changes they must make to their current approach to see improved results and a better return on investment. This is also a perfect chance to firm up your strategy and budget for the New Year.

As 2018 comes to a close, seize the opportunity to reflect back on what has and hasn't worked for you this year and identify new trends to stay ahead of the pack. To give you a head start, we have compiled a few predictions about where successful marketers will be focused in 2019.



1. The world has become even more mobile.

We've long since passed the time when the question of having a mobile-friendly site is even up for debate. Most marketers have realized the critical importance of mobile optimization, mainly achieved via responsive design. Now marketers need to further identify ways in which they can attract and accommodate mobile users.

Consider these stats:

85% of users say mobile devices are a central part of everyday life

83% say a seamless user experience across all devices is somewhat or very important

With regard to content, **91%** say access to content however they want it is somewhat or very important

Since April 2015, Google has made it clear that sites which haven't been optimized for mobile will see a negative impact on their search results. For B2B marketing agencies and their clients, optimizing all forms of content to provide the best possible user experience on mobile devices must be a top priority.



Successful businesses will embrace the mobile shift by emphasizing:

- 6 Digitally integrated products and services
- 6 Cross-functional agility
- 6 Speed and innovation

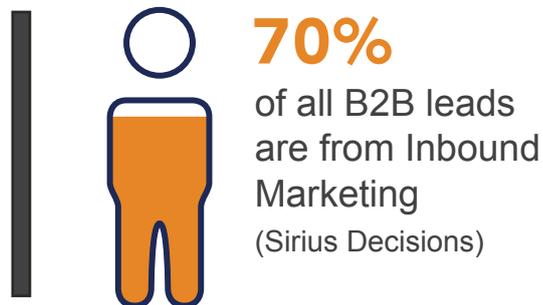
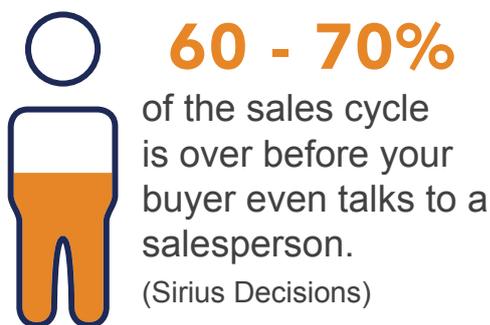
These should be core elements in all decisions guiding content, design and overall strategy.





2. Traditional solution selling no longer works.

This may be difficult for B2B firms to accept, but the reality is that customers today simply don't need sales departments like they used to. Buyers have changed, which means our approach to targeting and converting them must also change.



The majority of the buyer's journey presents itself today as self-directed research. This now happens in a digital environment where the buyer controls the process and navigates on their own, before they connect with someone in sales. Therefore marketers are increasingly handling a greater portion of what used to be the early sales cycle. Marketers engage and nurture prospects in these early stages and must use high-quality content and targeted advertising tactics to achieve the goal of guiding prospects through their journey to connecting with a salesperson at their company.

Marketers must also use targeting and retargeting to identify prospects, craft strategic personalized messaging and potentially influence buying decisions before the prospect reaches out to connect with sales.



3. Marketing technology is changing.

Marketers have recognized the value of data-driven planning. Revising and refining strategies based on insight about what customers want and how they look for it can greatly improve campaign outcomes.

This is a trend that is likely to continue to expand in 2019 as more and more data-related resources become available to marketers. Many firms already use contextual marketing, which refers to the ability of marketers to target advertising and messaging based upon user behavior such as website visits or online searches.

However, up until recently, marketers generally relied upon data that measured things that already happened, such as customer actions or advertising campaign results. The hot trend now involves tools that can provide data almost immediately about things happening right now.

In a recent report, Forrester spotlighted more than 100 vendors that provide real-time interaction management solutions. These programs can tell marketers where specific buyers are right now, and what they are doing, providing the opportunity to show them highly-targeted ads geared toward things they are looking for at that particular moment.



The accessibility of these kinds of data tools, and the volume of detailed information they can provide, will allow marketers to use this wealth of customer insight to guide their decision making.

At the same time, marketing automation tools and programs are more accessible than ever. In an effort to position themselves as a more comprehensive marketing solution, email service providers such as MailChimp, Constant Contact and AWeber are continuously expanding and upgrading their features and services to include more automated marketing offerings. They have a lot of competition, though, as they are up against established, well-known vendors such as HubSpot, Eloqua and Marketo, as well as newer arrivals like Bluecore.



4. Customer targeting has improved and become more important.

We are now in what we have come to view as “the age of the customer.” As Forrester notes, we are in the early stage of a 20-year customer-driven business cycle in which the most successful enterprises will constantly reinvent themselves to better understand and serve increasingly powerful customers. These empowered buyers demand a new level of personalized customer attention.

Smart B2B marketers realize that it isn’t just about marketing to a company. It’s about trying to connect with a person, the individual buyer or decision-maker. In order to have the best chance of converting a prospect, you need to be able to get inside their head in order to understand their challenges and priorities, which can help you figure out how to motivate them to take action.

Understanding the buyer is critical for marketers. Yet it is clear that many marketers are still falling far short.

96% of consumers say they receive improperly targeted information or promotions.





A one-size-fits-all approach to digital marketing won't get you the results and ROI you want, at least not as effectively as if you made an effort to personalize messaging by targeting your specific audience(s).

B2B marketers can use tools such as Demandbase or LinkedIn Business Solutions (formerly Bizo) to select specific advertising targets, to as hyper-focused a degree as they choose. In some cases, they may want to identify just a handful of target customer businesses and configure their campaigns so ads are only displayed to people affiliated with those companies.

As we mentioned above, there is now a wealth of data available to marketers, including that related to real-time behavior. This data can be a valuable asset in guiding their approach in engaging with specific audiences and nurturing leads. Insight about buyer motivation and behavior will help marketers understand how to tailor their approach and messaging to best align with a specific buyer's goals and challenges. For example, a technology security company can track which users visit the section of their website devoted specifically to issues faced by educational institutions, and can then show those visitors special offers promoting education-focused services and packages.

Successful marketers will leverage all available data to personalize messaging and target the ideal audience to receive that messaging.



5. Demands on marketers have changed.

As we already noted, the role and responsibilities of marketers have changed. They are now accountable for a greater part of the work involved with engaging and nurturing prospects early in the decision-making journey.

Some of the roles marketers will be charged with include:

- 6 Data analysis and management
- 6 Buyer conversation and engagement
- 6 Content planning and creation
- 6 Customer insight specialist

Successful marketers will need to evolve or get left behind. They must explore and embrace innovative thinking and new approaches.

This new accountability for marketers translates to a process that includes targeting ideal customers through proven inbound marketing campaigns; creating compelling content; targeting marketing campaigns with a focus on mobile, local and search; and developing an infrastructure to monitor, track and propel leads through a system designed to provide the best solutions at the right time.



6. Marketers are using more interactive assets and tools in their content.

Smart marketers have realized the value of providing various types of interactive tools and other resources to site visitors, accessible for free.

Lithium is a technology firm that provides social software platform solutions to help companies engage on social networks more efficiently. Visitors to their website immediately see a video demonstrating how clients use the software and emphasizing its benefits by citing specific stats related to increased conversions and sales. The site also offers a selection of resources including infographics, white papers, webcasts and eBooks.

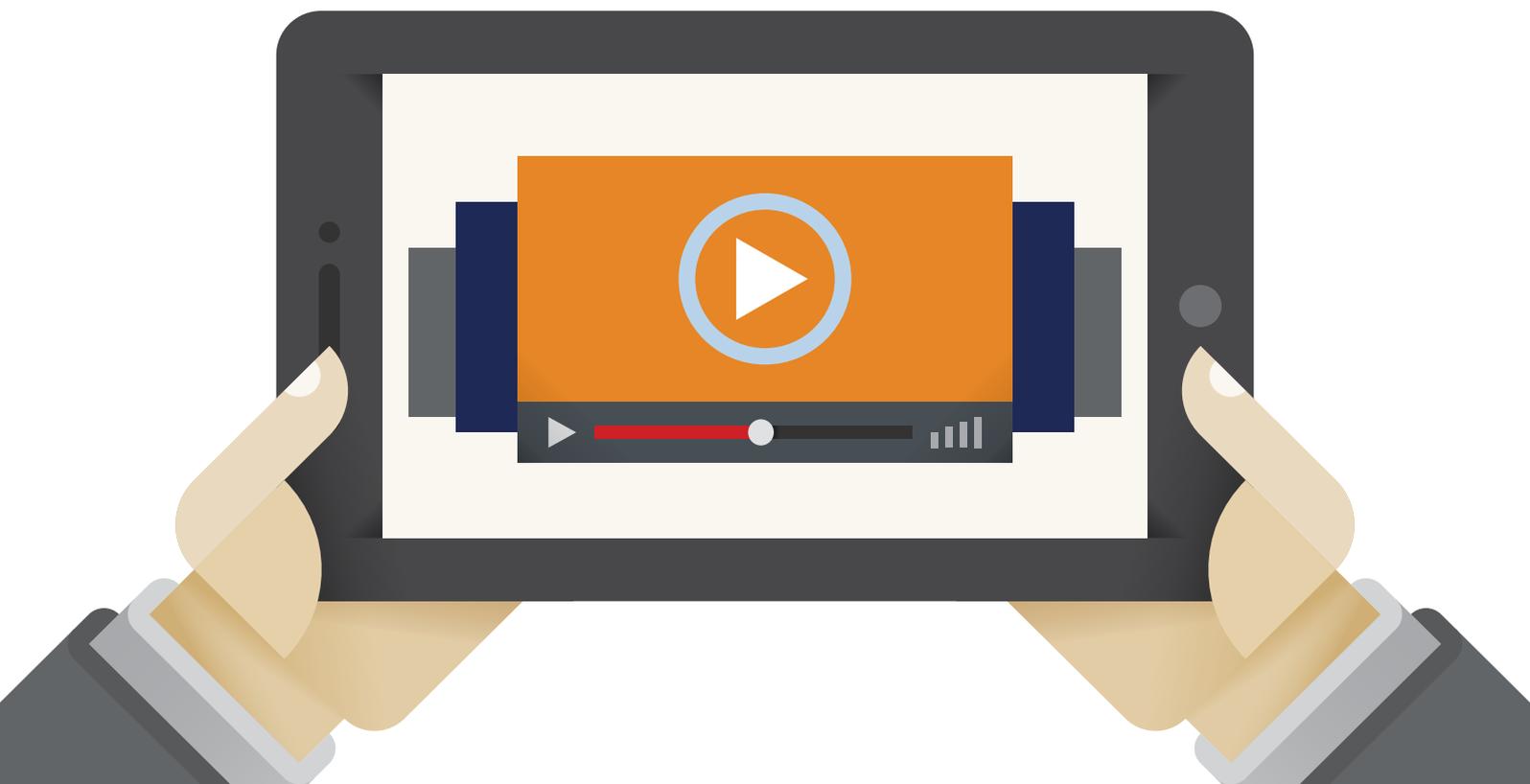
B2B companies will increasingly incorporate calculators, estimating tools or other interactive resources right into their website. Providing interactive content and helpful resources right on your website helps visitors, increases conversions and also establishes your company as a go-to authority for information, as well as a great destination for valuable content and tools.

This all boils down to attracting visitors' attention and keeping them engaged. While mobile users are certainly a strong factor driving this trend toward more interactive, compelling content, it's really a need to accommodate users who have a shorter attention-span in general. In addition, "sticky" content offers a variety of valuable benefits in areas like SEO and social.



7. Video has taken over.

- 6 We spend an average of **76** minutes each day on digital video, with more than half of that time on tablets or smartphones. (Ogilvy & Mather)
- 6 **52%** of marketing professionals worldwide name video as the type of content with the best ROI (Invodo)
- 6 **69%** of marketing, sales and business professionals have used video marketing, and another 31% are planning to. (Inside CXM)
- 6 More than **80%** of senior executives watch more online video today than they did a year ago. And **54%** of senior executives share work-related videos with colleagues at least weekly. (Forbes)





Even B2B marketers who have been slow to embrace video content will now find it impossible to ignore. YouTube, Facebook and other channels are spotlighting video ads, and video-centered content is a must for appealing to the mobile crowd. Not wanting to ignore this content element that has now become nearly mandatory, more and more businesses will include video as a core component of their content marketing plan.

Marketers will realize that, when it comes to video, content and community are both vital elements. Creating a video that tells a compelling story is important, but you also need to create enough interest that the audience will want to share and discuss it.

This will also be the year that video will finally play a prominent role in search, at least if recent reports that Google has been testing video ads in search results indicate new developments on the horizon.



8. Content that works is relevant and packaged in creative ways.

Marketers will put increasing emphasis on developing content people actually want to see and read. Technology such as ad blockers has made it very easy for people to avoid online advertising that comes in traditional formats. This forces marketers to be more creative and resourceful in creating high-value content that interests the audience, and packaging it in a way that ensures people will see it.

Savvy marketers have already adjusted their approach to content to align with reader behavior, particularly with mobile users in mind. Changes in search algorithms have also motivated businesses to reevaluate their content strategy. Google's favoring of relevant and lengthy content means that marketers have good reason to invest in a robust, high-quality content program.

94% 

of B2B marketers use LinkedIn to distribute content, making it the top choice for this purpose.

It was followed by Twitter

87% 

and Facebook

84% 

(Content Marketing Institute)

One way marketers will be sharing content in nontraditional format is by increasingly using social media channels as a distribution tool. LinkedIn has made a big push to attract marketers to its publishing platform, and Facebook has also increased its advertiser-friendly features, allowing videos to be posted directly on the channel and launching the Instant Articles tool. With reports that Twitter may abandon its 140-character limit, that too may soon become a more attractive option for marketing content.



9. Local is now essential.

Local search has been moving up the list as an important priority for marketers for a while, but it is now something that demands significant attention. Thanks to the dominance of mobile devices, people are making buying decisions on the go much more frequently, and then taking immediate action. It is vital that marketers know how to effectively connect with buyers when they are ready to make a decision, wherever they happen to be. Providing relevant, useful information specifically directed toward that user's needs and location greatly increases the odds of conversion.

Rapid innovations involving location-based marketing technology and wearable technology will create massive opportunities for savvy marketers who move quickly to embrace this new territory. These technologies provide an opportunity for businesses to offer a real-time, interactive experience with customers and prospects that goes way beyond anything we've seen up to this point. For example, a business could use geo-targeting capabilities combined to detect prospects or customers wearing smartwatches or traveling near iBeacons in the vicinity of a retail location or service facility, and can then display current offers or real-time updates to those particular individuals.

A person in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and yellow tie is pointing their right index finger towards the letters 'SEO'. The letters are large, blue, and set against a semi-transparent white rectangular background. The background of the image is a blurred office setting with warm lighting.

SEO

10. SEO continues to evolve.

Search engine optimization is always a major priority for B2B marketers, but exactly what that looks like continues to change in ways that can be surprising and unpredictable. High-quality content remains important, along with a focus on problem-solving. Marketers will need to continue to do their research to uncover buyers' most pressing problems, and then create content solves those challenges.

This goes along with the growing trend of putting a strong emphasis on providing an optimal user experience (UX). Instead of just telling visitors and buyers about their products and services, B2B firms must demonstrate an understanding of this audience's frustrations and pain points, and then explain how their products or services can solve those issues. This can be accomplished using a variety of content formats, including videos, slide-based presentations, case studies, and articles.

This not only provides value and keeps the visitor engaged, but it also offers SEO benefits because the content is more likely to align with user intent, matching up with the search terms people would use. Again, this content must also be packaged and displayed in a way that is mobile-friendly, to ensure the best user experience and favorable search rankings.

Sources

60 to 70% of the sales cycle is over before your buyer even talks to a salesperson. - [Sirius Decisions](#)

70% of all B2B leads are from Inbound Marketing - [Sirius Decisions](#)

We spend an average of 76 minutes each day on digital video, with more than half of that time on tablets or smartphones. - [Ogilvy & Mather](#)

52% of marketing professionals worldwide name video as the type of content with the best ROI - [Invodo](#)

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- [Content Marketing Institute](#)



About KEO Marketing

KEO Marketing Inc., a leading business to business (B2B) marketing agency based in Phoenix, Arizona, develops and implements strategies to help clients significantly increase leads and sales.

The company's solutions include marketing strategy, brand positioning and messaging, inbound marketing, search engine marketing and optimization, website development, social media, pay per click and display advertising, local and mobile marketing and more. Some of the world's largest brands have depended on KEO Marketing for marketing programs that deliver tangible and substantial results.

For more information and to request a complimentary marketing audit visit keomarketing.com

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