Amplience

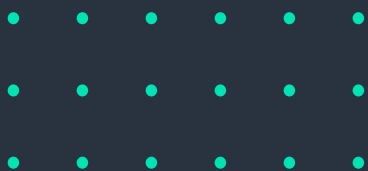# CREATING COMPELLING B2B CONTENT TO SCALE

Deliver Experiences Specific to Your Buyer's Needs

Contents

Introduction

Content consumption has grown rapidly recently. But typically it's been much more prevalent in B2C environments than B2B. But more than ever, whether it be B2C or B2B, buyers are not only demanding more content, but more engaging and relevant content throughout the entire purchase journey.

As a result, B2B businesses to adjust. They need to prioritize their content and digital strategy a lot more than currently. Here, we will take you through how we have gotten to this stage, the type of content you should be looking at delivering to cater for the needs of modern day B2B buyers, and of course how you can actually achieve it.

EMOTIONAL VS. TRANSACTIONAL

B2B purchases are made by individuals on behalf of their business, and are not for personal use. As a result, they are often more transactional and specific in nature, with buyers not prone to impulse purchasing. With the target audience being a sales representative or buyer who is often purchasing on a schedule or contract terms, the goal is to make B2B purchasing and re-ordering relevant and easy for each buyer. But to do so, you need to create content that builds trust and consistency. Your content needs to be relevant and likely more informative and educational, going into more detail than perhaps a lot of B2C content needs too.

This might look like providing spec sheets, information guides, detailed invoicing, and brand or manufacturer specific FAQs to address multiple needs of a purchasers who make the buying decision.

SINGLE TRANSACTION VS. ROI

B2B buyers need to meet margins, demands, and growth projections. Their purchases are driven by a business need, with the numbers having to stack up. This is completely different to say when a consumer researches a brand of sneakers as they're not looking at the one-time purchase as an investment they need to quantify (in most cases). As a result, B2B brands need to build content that presents data that can be used objectively for buyers when making decisions, and that can help sway decision makers.

This might look like a freight or purchase calculator that shows the percentage saved when purchasing in bulk or displaying MSRP prices on product pages with calculated margins.

INFORMATION VS. DETAIL

When consumers choose to make a purchase they may research certain information like brand, material, or recent reviews. But B2B buyers require specific specifications and details (and a lot more of them) when making a purchase. Building upon the "emotional vs transactional" point mentioned, building confidence with B2B buyers is critical for retaining business. Often B2B buyers are experts in their field, especially in medical or manufacturing, so delivering detailed and specific content that they can rely on not only builds trust, but this information can also be relayed to the end-customer in FAQs, customer service inquiries, or on product pages.

This might look like an installation guide or part sheets for specific machines or product models, or a manufacture information sheet with country of origin,lot numbers, or ingredients.

What Makes Compelling B2B Content

Understanding the differences between B2C and B2B content is half the battle. Now that you understand the needs of B2B buyers, creating compelling content is the second piece to delivering a rich content strategy. Regardless of your company size, developing quality content for B2B buyers requires originality, attention to detail, and consistency.

Target Buyer Personas

Personalized and contextual content is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, delivering hyper relevant content when you buyer needs it allows you and your buyer to build that relationship and trust a lot more. Secondly, if you are able to deliver the right content and the right time in the purchase process, ultimately you will get them through to checkout a lot quicker. B2B buyers are light on time and the last thing they want is to waste time searching deep into a site for everything they need, especially if they've ordered it before. And lastly, by delivering personalized content you are more likely to be able to up or cross-sell to your buyers. You can more easily leverage data like purchase history and real-time behavioral information to serve them content and products you know they will be interested in, that complement their current purchases.

B2B buying is often hierarchical, with multiple levels of approval needed before placing a purchase. You need to understand this when creating and serving content. Regional buyers for example have different content needs than managers or VPs, and are more likely to want content specific to product details and that includes product specifications, like products or merchandizing display details. Regional Managers or VPs however might look for ROI specific data to inform purchasing approval. Using customer groups and segmentation to target content relevant to the customer is critical to ensuring you're delivering contextual information specific to that user.

Deliver consistent content across all channels

Long gone are the days of fax sheets and scanned catalogs. B2B businesses need to be offering customers multiple ways in which they can purchase, and purchase quickly and easily, incorporating both digital and offline touchpoints. This can be everything from a web portal, to email, a tradeshow kiosk, apps, you name it.

Critical to your buyer's experience will be you creating and delivering consistent content across all of these touchpoints. Not only will this continue to build trust with buyers, but it creates a more streamlined experience that makes discovering information and purchasing a lot easier for your buyers. Because buyers want the same experience regardless of which channel they choose, they want to be able to find the same information wherever they are, and more often than not too, they want to be able to move from one channel, from one device to another without it hindering the purchase process. In this way, the purchase process is very similar to B2C with buyer expectations only getting greater, especially of the digital experiences they interact with.

Evolution of Content Consumption

B2B businesses have been creating static content for decades, even in the early ages of the internet. B2B buyers might flip through a catalog, go to a tradeshow, interact with a sales rep, or with some sophisticated brands; navigate to a brand's B2B purchasing portal.

U ltimately, in-person interactions with reps were highly personalized but the product content and purchasing support was limited. We know some enterprise businesses still rely heavily on one-to-one contact between reps and buyers, but while these orders are significant, they only account for the very top 1% of purchases.

In order for your business to scale, you need to be creating content to attract new buyers, content that caters to their digital-first buying habits and trends. Because with the increase of connectivity with social apps and mobile devices, there's been a dramatic change in the way that we interact with digital content, especially in the last 5 years with B2B buyers.

In the present, of course catapulted by the COVID-19 pandemic, B2B buyers are interacting with content dynamically across multiple channels throughout the purchase flow. B2B buyers may interact with a digital rep through chat on an iPad as they walk through their store's shelves identifying what needs to be replenished. Or, they may receive an automated email with an inventory reminder that stock might be low with an offer to preview a new collection.

In the future, B2B buyers will interact with content interactively, by sending an audio request to their IoT device asking to "replace coffee filters" or with AR technologies that can scan shelves and create orders based on size, dimension, and existing product assortment.

All of this becomes extremely important when building content specific to your B2B buyers needs and new digital buying habits. Content and information can no longer be siloed or maintained in spreadsheets or PDFs, data needs to be indexed and queried across multiple different technologies. Because buyers are expecting consistent, relevant information regardless of where or how they purchase or research.
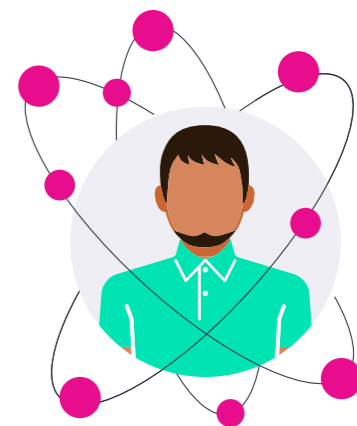
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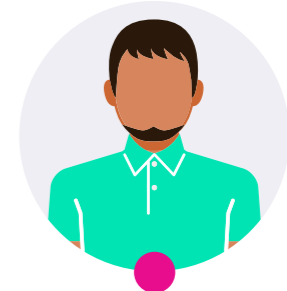
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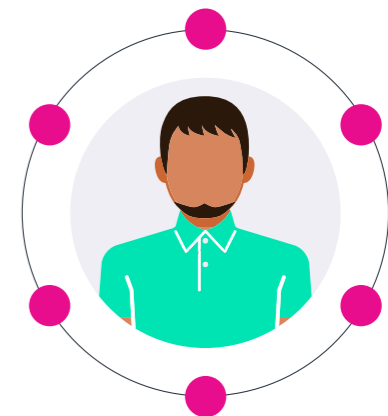
DYNAMIC

Future

INTERACTIVE

Why You Need a Headless CMS

Static content is no longer cutting it with this new era of buyers. Content needs to be converted into data that can be segmented, targeted, personalized and delivered across multiple channels. But how?

The technology B2B businesses, brands and manufacturers, are looking to in order to scale their business and deliver the compelling, consistent content buyers demand is MACH (Microservices, API-first, Cloud Native, Headless).

A MACH approach essentially lets businesses pick best-of-breed systems that will connect through APIs to form an architecture that is designed specifically to their business needs. They can utilize the likes of a headless content management system (CMS) and digital asset manager (DAM) alongside their PIM, ERP etc that allows for much easier creation and publishing of content in conjunction with their product and catalog data, pricing information and the likes.

B2B buyers want continuity. Because like B2C buyers their purchase journeys aren't linear. They will switch channels and devices all the time. So, they need a consistent experience tailored to their needs regardless of where they interact, including emails, purchasing apps, tradeshow kiosks, or web portals. By utilizing a headless CMS within a MACH approach, everything is connected through APIs, data and information easily and quickly be passed to different frontends and customer touchpoints. Importantly, this means information and content is consistent given it is pulled from the same place. Plus, with the power to be able to create content in one place that can be utilized across all channels, duplication of work is minimized.

Ultimately a MACH approach allows B2B businesses to create much richer and engaging experiences. They can layer in personalization especially, harnessing machine learning and AI that allows them to target and segment buyers much more than previously possible. It's all about context and getting that content to buyers when they need it most.

Scale Your B2B Content Today

Compelling, personalized content is so pertinent for B2B businesses right now. It simply has to be part of your strategy.

A headless CMS and a MACH approach will allow you to not only let you scale your content but also future-proof yourself too, helping engage with and build relationships with your customers. If you're interested in learning more about how a headless CMS or MACH approach can help your business, get in touch with the team at Amplience.

Amplience powers digital-first brands and retailers with the freedom to do more. Our low-code CMS, DAM and Digital Experience Management platform allows more than 350 of the world's leading brand teams to manage content, not code. The result is a rapid ROI for our clients who are delivering data and insight-driven customer experiences that drive deeper, more valuable customer relationships. Amplience supports the industry's transition to Microservice, API-first, Cloud and Headless (MACH) technologies, is MACH certified and an executive member of the MACH Alliance.

Named a Strong Performer, Amplience was recognized by Forrester in The Forrester Wave™: Agile Content Management Systems (CMSes), Q1 2021 report with the highest possible scores attained in the criteria of decoupled delivery, deployment and system performance, components, and marketplaces.

Powering customer experiences for the world's most innovative brands, Amplience's customers include Ulta Beauty, Coach, GAP, Crate & Barrel, Harry Rosen and Missguided.

The Freedom to
DO MORE

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