



T R I P T E N T

B2B MARKETING GETS PERSONAL

Building Trust Through Emotion





TRIP T E N T

INTRODUCTION

A Letter from the Editor

Imagine an ad agency as an orchestra. If we stay seated, focused solely on the data like sheet music, we'll play the right notes. If we don't improvise or stray from what's on the page, every transition will be smooth. But then, the conductor hands us that infamous instruction:

Once more, with feeling.

The audience might admire technical precision, but they can feel it when the music lacks soul. Our audience can, too. It's not enough to follow the notes; people want an emotional connection.

For decades, B2B marketing has operated under the assumption that facts and data alone were enough to close a deal. This approach may have helped us reach the bottom line, but its limitations are becoming more apparent. Marketers are now discovering that empathy is the critical element for a partnership that endures.

Triptent set out to explore the current disconnect and challenges associated with generic B2B marketing tactics. Our key findings point to the role of emotion in marketing and the importance of understanding an audience's needs in developing effective strategies.

According to the data, B2B marketers acknowledge the value of agencies but crave meaningful partnerships. They seek agencies with technical expertise and a profound understanding of the human element that drives brand connection.

The results highlight the undeniable power of storytelling. Narratives that resonate with audiences will build lasting brand loyalty and inspire and motivate people to connect with the brand on a deeper level.

It's time to face the music: Old marketing formulas are holding us back. This study is meant to foster a collaborative approach between brands and agencies built on mutual respect and a shared focus on human-centric marketing. Only then can we perform a song that moves an audience.



Chapter One

OPPORTUNITY

Marketers see emotion as a competitive advantage in B2B marketing.

A sea change is on the horizon.

A staggering 81% of marketers plan to increase their investment in human-centric strategies in the coming year. This shift away from a purely transactional approach signifies a fundamental change in B2B marketing, and how that change is perceived. It's no longer just about selling products; it's essential to build relationships with their audience, as well.

81% *of marketers plan to increase their investment in human-centric strategies in the coming year*

It's no surprise that emotion plays an important role in consumer marketing, but B2B marketers are recognizing that making customers feel understood is a powerful tool. This is evident by the 69% of B2B marketers who see brand building and human-centric marketing as a competitive advantage, even over immediate results. Emotions are the key to unlocking a deeper connection with customers. **When a customer feels understood, a powerful bond is formed, one that transcends mere transactions and fosters long-term loyalty.**

Human-centric marketing achieves this by incorporating real stories and emotions. Sharing the experiences of real people using a product or service allows potential clients to see themselves reflected in the narrative, fostering a sense of identification and understanding. Imagine a B2B software company showcasing a client who struggled with a specific challenge and overcame it by using their product. **This emotional connection is far more impactful than simply listing product features. It builds trust and demonstrates the value proposition in a relatable way.**

The benefits extend beyond emotional resonance. By incorporating real human stories, B2B marketing can also enhance the effectiveness of overall marketing activities. Clients gain a deeper understanding of a product's capabilities and how it can solve their specific problems. This clarity and connection lead to more informed decisions and a smoother sales process.

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of B2B marketers see brand building and human-centric marketing as a competitive advantage

Chapter Two

CHALLENGE

Understanding emotions is vital to navigating the roadblocks in B2B marketing and brand building for marketers and stakeholders alike.

Marketers understand the undeniable value of brand building and customer relationships to drive sales. Yet, they lack the data to understand their audience and 47% face challenges trying to justify an emotion-focused strategy to stakeholders.

*Despite **54%** of marketers prioritizing brand awareness,*

***47%** still need help to present a compelling business case for brand building.*

While a limited budget is often assumed to be the primary obstacle, it's not the only concern. A significant 42% of marketers named insufficient data on customer emotions as another major hurdle. This underscores the growing awareness among marketers of the importance of building a strategy with emotion. The key roadblock is the lack of data on customer sentiment and the challenge of quantifying the impact of emotional connection on brand perception.

The data reveals a clear disconnect between brand awareness and performance measurement within some marketing teams. A majority of marketers polled see the problem. While more than half say their organizations prioritize brand awareness efforts, 14% feel performance-driven marketing tactics sometimes undervalue these efforts.

This underscores the crucial need for aligning brand awareness goals with performance metrics. By demonstrating the impact of adequate data and performance metrics, marketers can bridge this gap and ensure a more comprehensive approach to marketing strategy.



Chapter Three

A NEW APPROACH

B2B marketing is P2P marketing.

B2B marketing, when centered around trust and personal connections, can offer significant personal and professional growth opportunities. However, this human-centric approach does face hurdles. Resource constraints, a common challenge, often limit B2B marketers' ability to invest in relationship building, a crucial element in fostering trust and loyalty. Understanding customer emotions, another significant barrier, is a skill that can be developed with the right tools and strategies. With this vital insight, crafting P2P, or person-to-person, connections through human-centric campaigns becomes a manageable obstacle.

As the data confirms, building trust is paramount to B2B marketing, and it's the marketer's role to be the trusted advisor in this process. Agencies need to deploy a P2P strategy, with marketers identifying **trust as the top emotion** they aim to trigger in clients to secure campaign buy-in. A sense of trust is established when a B2B marketer portrays a genuine understanding of the challenges faced by the individuals within a client company. This fosters a more open and collaborative relationship, paving the way for effective marketing initiatives and making the marketer an integral part of the client's success.

The solution to these challenges lies in the power of storytelling. In fact, 'story' was used 155 times in our survey results, suggesting that B2B marketers are already becoming savvy with its power. Stories that authentically depict the struggles and triumphs of individuals and the people behind the businesses have the potential to deeply resonate with audiences, bridging the gap between B2B marketers and their clients.

There are several ways to approach a good story, but the key is emotion. Ultimately, the marketer is an ambassador, forging a real P2P relationship by sharing an experience. The empathy behind these stories is what will resonate with the audience and build trust.

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Chapter Four

RELATIONSHIPS, REDEFINED

Marketers expect more from their agency counterparts.

Agencies are on the brink of a transformative era. While they have long been seen as valuable partners, marketers are now envisioning a deeper collaboration, expecting agencies to become authentic extensions of their internal teams. This shift in perception not only underscores agencies' significant role in the marketing landscape but also presents a promising opportunity for growth and success.

Understanding the nuances of a B2B marketer's specific industry is paramount. Agencies must go beyond generic marketing tactics and demonstrate a grasp of the challenges and opportunities unique to each client's field. This specialized knowledge allows for the development of targeted strategies and campaigns that resonate with the intended audience.

Triptent found that **59%**
of marketers find agencies helpful,
but a significant **41%** *crave more.*

This call for improvement highlights a shift in expectations. B2B marketers are seeking agencies that possess a deep understanding of their specific industry. They want this knowledge translated into a faster, more agile execution that drives results.

Interestingly, the data challenges a common assumption. While data is crucial, marketers are less concerned with the plain facts and figures and more focused on how agencies interpret and utilize these insights. What truly matters is the ability to connect the dots and harness the power of data creatively to achieve marketing goals.

Among marketers who don't find partnering with an agency effectively helps them achieve marketing goals, 55% say understanding of the industry and 50% say execution speed are the top factors for which they seek improvements in the agency.

B2B marketers are seeking partners who understand the fundamentals of marketing and possess a deep comprehension of their specific industry. This industry expertise is critical to translating insights into action. **Marketers crave faster, more agile execution, and campaigns tailored to their unique audience and market dynamics.**



CONCLUSION

This rise of human-centric marketing in B2B is a welcome transformation. It presents a promising opportunity for growth and innovation in the B2B marketing industry. It also acknowledges the complexity of human decision-making and the power of emotional connection. By prioritizing storytelling, data insights, and trust, B2B marketers are forging a more meaningful path to customer engagement and long-term success.

Just as the bond between the storyteller and audience is changing, so too has the relationship between marketer and agency evolved. Marketers are no longer content with scripts and outsourced tasks. They seek true partners – strategic extensions of their teams that possess industry expertise, prioritize speed and agility, and leverage data creatively to conduct the marketing orchestra and achieve marketing goals. It’s an opportunity for agencies to build stronger, more effective partnerships with B2B marketers, navigating the ever-changing marketing landscape together.

While data analysis is a core competency, data can be a catalyst for human connection, but it’s just one piece of the puzzle. Marketers seek agencies that can translate data insights into creative solutions. This means going beyond reports and charts to identify hidden patterns, uncover customer needs, and develop innovative strategies that deliver a measurable impact.

The right data is the catalyst for these P2P emotional connections. It’s the initial stride in equipping agencies with a competitive edge and enabling brands to transcend the noise, connecting with customers on a deeper, more human level. It equips marketers with the tools to craft stories that resonate with people.

Data is the first note.

Emotion is the symphony.