

2025

BABEL

B2B TECH

BAROMETER

What is influencing buying
decisions in B2B tech



1) INTRODUCTION

It's been a bumpy few years for the global technology industry, but it's not been as boom and bust as some would have you believe. Now AI is promising to shake up the industry once more- for better or worse? Well, it depends on who you ask. One thing's for sure, tech investment remains as solid as ever.

The fact is, tech investment has only grown. Gartner estimates that [global IT spending will reach \\$5.74 trillion in 2025](#), up 9.3% from 2024. And with nearly every sector adopting AI to aid business goals, it's unlikely that we'll see this slow anytime soon.

This doesn't mean buying decisions are taken any less lightly. Elongated buying cycles with numerous stakeholders involved at every step of the way aren't going anywhere. And the market itself hasn't got any less crowded, with nearly every company pivoting to sell, use and - more than anything - talk about AI. Differentiating your brand as a tech vendor has never been more critical, especially with the growing competition making it harder to even get a foot in the door.

Take the [95-5 rule](#) - only 5% of technology buyers are looking to actually purchase in any given quarter. The remaining 95% will become buyers later down the line and shouldn't be discounted, so brands need to focus on becoming memorable. With all of this in mind, how can tech vendors break through the noise and get themselves noticed and remembered?

Our B2B Barometer breaks down the various areas of consideration for vendors trying to catch the attention of IT decision-makers in 2025.

With respondents from across the UK and the US, we've got you covered. From who these decision-makers are, where they get their news, what influences purchase decisions, and what they engage with the most. Packed with data and analysis, our B2B Barometer features everything you need to know to stand out in a crowded market and win over decision-makers.



JENNY MOWAT
CEO

2) KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It might be the oldest trick in the marketing book – “know your buyer” – but it’s stuck around for a reason. If you’re trying to sway IT decision-makers, you’ve got to know who you’re talking to.

In the B2B tech game, however, it’s more a case of ‘know your buyers’. Investing in tech is no longer (if it ever was) a single person's decision. There’s a whole team of people involved in the buying process and, according to our data, it’s not always the same role that has the final say from organisation to organisation.

However, our research has narrowed it down slightly with a clear top four likely suspects who often have the final say in buying decisions. Unsurprisingly, the CEO or Owner was up at 26%, alongside the usual suspects of the CIO/CTO (29%), the Technical team (28%), and the Financial Director (26%).

While the final decision maker varies, the data is clear on who is normally sitting around the table (and it's a big table) when the decision is made - that's who you need to be talking to.

“When it comes to major technology investment decisions, which stakeholders in your business have the most influence on the choice of provider, if any?” (Pick up to 3)

30%

CIO/CTO

29%

Systems Integrator
or Technical team

27%

CEO/Owner

26%

Financial Director or Procurement

21%

CFO

20%

CMO/Head of Marketing

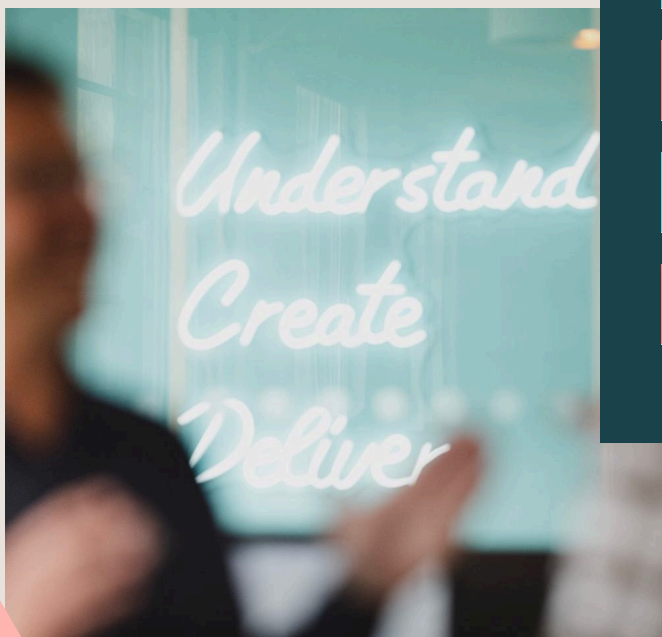
19%

Investors

18%

COO

*According to 202 UK and 201 US technology buyers within organisations employing at least 1,000 people.



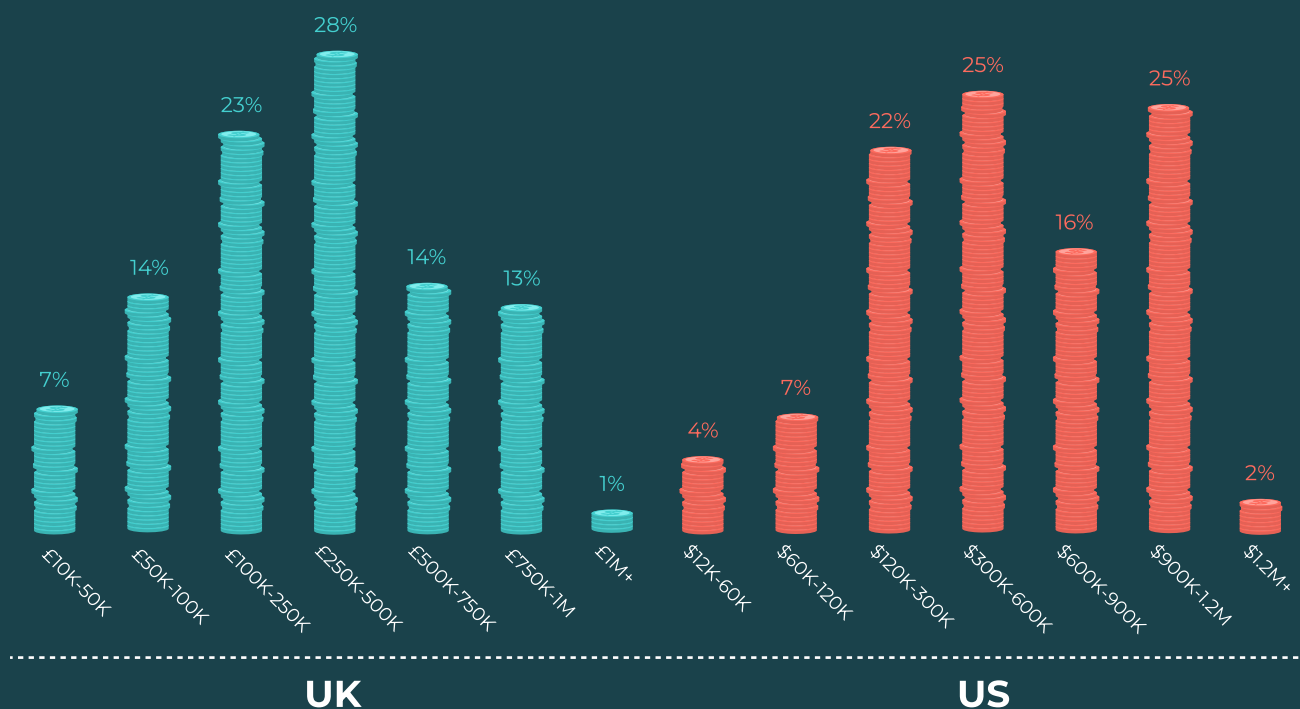
MONEY TALKS

Regardless of who gets the final sign-off, how much are businesses investing in tech in the current market? In a world of tight budgets, organisations are also navigating an AI boom driving more and more tech purchases as they try to keep up. But as they balance operational needs with spending on glitzy AI products, which will come out on top?

Perhaps encouraged by all of the hype around AI, our data shows that tech spending is healthy, especially in the US. For the UK, 27% reported investing over £500,000 this year, while 41% of US organisations reported spending over the equivalent \$600,000.

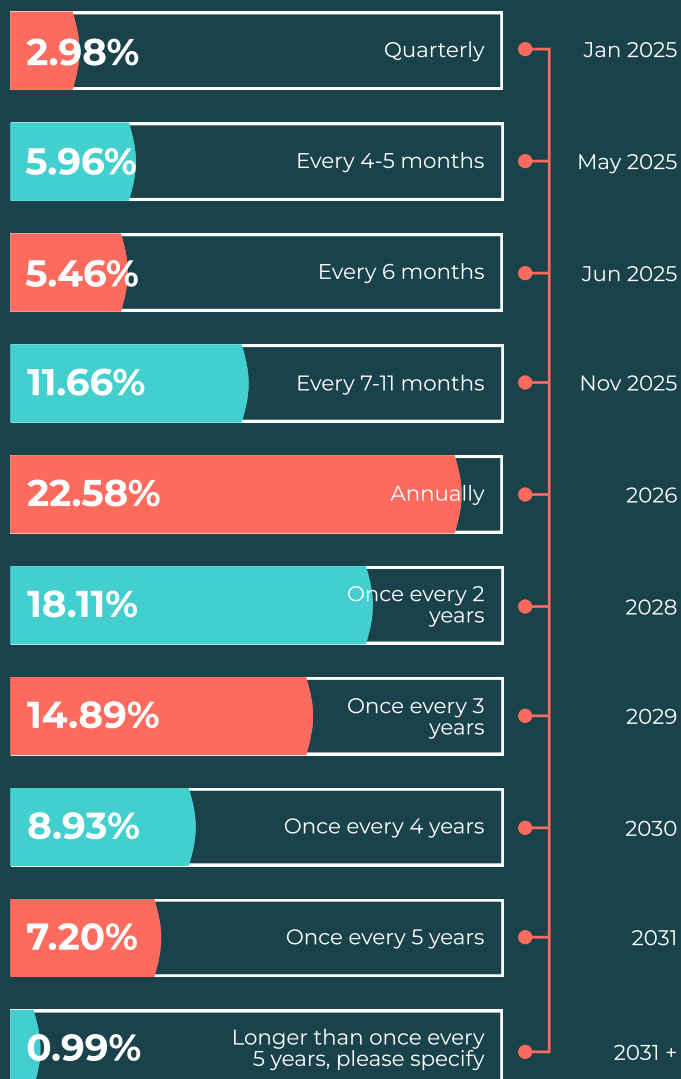
While the UK seems to be erring on the side of caution with tech investment, the US is putting more buck behind its bang. Nearly a quarter (24%) of US technology buyers said their spending was between \$900,001 and \$1.2 million compared to just 12% of UK technology buyers spending the equivalent amount (£750,001 to £1 million) in 2024.

"How much is your organisation investing in technology purchases this year?"



LONG BUYING CYCLES MAKE INVESTING IN BRAND BUILDING AN IMPERATIVE

***“How frequently do you purchase/
replace technology solutions, if at all?”***



B2B buying cycles are famously long, and in tech even more so. Our data shows the truth in this, with 49% of technology buyers only purchasing or replacing solutions every 2-5 years. The 95-5 rule is in full effect here, making brand-building communications and marketing campaigns that build mental availability imperative.

This is compounded further by [‘The Rule of Three in Every Purchase Decision’](#). Research by BBN shows that when someone moves into buying mode, the first search engine they use is their head. When they do this, typically only three brands will immediately come to mind, one of which they will buy from in 90% of cases.

Tech vendors need to, therefore, invest in maximising their share of voice and awareness, so that they build mental availability amongst the buyer and are remembered when they come to market. Not only that, they must educate the buyer on why their solution should be selected, influencing and shaping the buying criteria through strategic thought leadership and content marketing campaigns. Finally, case studies, testimonials and ongoing engagement campaigns can help support conversion, showcasing the success others have had in choosing the vendor to solve their problem.

"For too long, B2B brand building has been too product-centric. Too rational. Too generic. And too often solely focused on generating leads. Media spend does all the work as marketing departments look to fill the funnel with Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) to hit their targets. This is not an effective use of budget, particularly when looking at the length of buying cycles within the B2B landscape.

"What happens when you flood the funnel with MQLs driven by product-centric marketing is sales teams end up complaining that the leads aren't the right fit. Or opportunities aren't yet ready to buy. And those MQLs end up sitting in a CRM getting cold and old.

"The B2B brands that are growing are those that have flipped the script and started focusing on their brand. Developing emotional positioning and messaging that is memorable, repeatable, and shareable. That drives long-term brand retention and generates demand over time. They also take the time to educate their audience and the buying committee, helping to influence their path to purchase. They then invest in performance marketing to convert those that come into the market. These leads are already primed by the brand advertising and influential content that's gone before, and are much more ready to buy than generic MQLs."

ASH LOCKETT
**HEAD OF B2B
MARKETING**



3) SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Which of the following channels most influence what brands you consider when shortlisting solutions/services for purchase?
(Select up to 3)

Company website



26%

Analyst reports



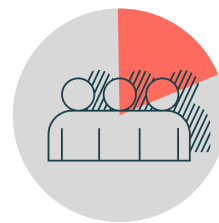
23%

Industry reports



21%

Industry events



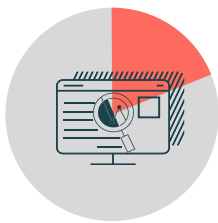
19%

Word of mouth



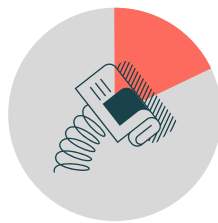
19%

Search engines



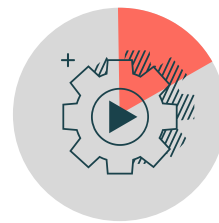
19%

Media coverage



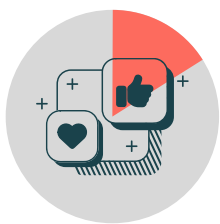
18%

Advertising



17%

The brand's social Media



16%

Company blog and resources



15%

Industry awards



14%

Podcasts



14%

WHICH CHANNELS MOST INFLUENCE PURCHASE DECISIONS?

With an unending list of channels to peruse, there have never been more places to reach IT decision-makers. So, where should brands focus their efforts? Our research can shed some light on the topic.

The company website was ranked as the most influential channel, with 25% of technology buyers selecting it as the most important resource when making purchasing decisions. There's a lot of emphasis placed on earned channels (and rightly so), but the website is still the 'home' of the brand, and it remains as influential as ever. Outside of this, earned channels came out on top, with analyst reports (23%), wider industry reports (20%), and word-of-mouth recommendations (17%) all rating highly for their influence on tech purchases. But, obtaining a presence on these channels is far from easy, it requires careful relationship-building with the right analysts, journalists, and industry thought leaders.

44%

of tech buyers trust analyst or industry reports when choosing a new solutions

"Relationship building is vitally important with analysts, just as it is with media. Both receive heaps of pitches that aren't always relevant, so do your research on each analyst's specific focus and remit rather than spray and pray pitches to all of them. It's also important to understand how each analyst firm operates in terms of what it sells and how it generates value from its reports so you can build up credibility and ensure the relationship isn't one-directional."

DECLAN BRADHAW
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR



WHAT ARE DECISION-MAKERS LOOKING FOR?

Our data clearly shows that IT decision-makers still have the appetite and (more importantly) the funds to invest in new technologies. So, we know they're looking and we need to be memorable, but how?

CREDIBILITY

Brand credibility and trust are key. When we asked technology buyers about their spheres of influence, 44% said that third-party reports (23% said analyst reports and 21% said wider industry reports) had the most influence over their purchasing decisions. Similarly, when we asked what sources they value most when assessing unknown vendors, neutral, third-party sources again came out on top. The advice of contacts, analyst reports, and third-party commentary were all equally valued by 42% of technology buyers, with owned marketing sitting fractionally behind at 41%.

These results are no surprise. Independent, trustworthy sources are what give vendors that all-important credibility. By linking their brand to relevant buying situations through inclusion in analyst reports, media coverage on industry hot topics, and customer success stories, vendors can build their reputation in their category. So when it comes to tech purchasing decision time, tech vendors that have built their credibility up through sources like these will be the first to come to mind.

“When approached by an unknown technology vendor with a potentially relevant solution, how would you assess their offering?”



43%

would reach out to their network for advice on the company



42%

would try to find analyst reports on the company



42%

would research any third party commentary on the company



41%

would read their website and the owned marketing resource they have available

CONSISTENCY

Getting into these neutral, trustworthy sources is no mean feat. But arguably, it's not the hardest part of the puzzle to solve. Keeping brand consistency across both owned and earned channels is the trickiest, and most crucial task with over two-thirds (67%) of technology buyers reporting that consistent messaging across channels is an important factor for them.

If a decision maker, during the consideration process, compares a company's website to a third-party report and finds two contrasting messages, it could understandably create doubt. In the purchasing process, doubt leads very quickly to indecision, to no decision, and likely the loss of a potential sale.

While this might sound dramatic, remember with purchasing decisions, your brand is rarely considered in a vacuum. If you're showing mixed messages and creating doubt while a competitor is consistently and clearly showing up, you will lose out more often than not.

"Developing consistent messaging that fits both with your brand, your buyer persona, and the hot topics in the industry is a delicate needle to thread, but a necessary one."




"Messaging really is the key to effective PR and Marketing in the B2B world. Once a company is clear on this and knows where it wants to position itself and what industry topics it wants to become a thought leader on - that's when PR can really shine."

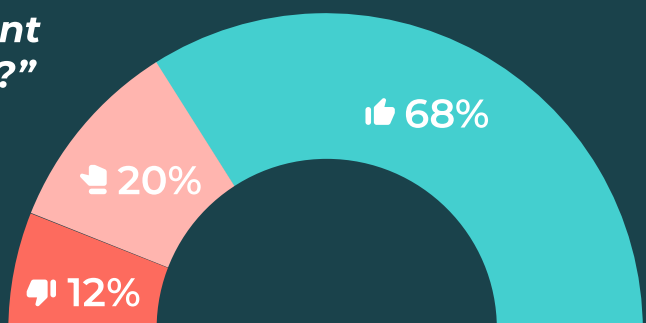
"With these messages solidified, we can secure coverage using comments on industry hot topics and issues jumps on breaking developments. When this thought leadership content is used in tandem with the existing drumbeat of company news, we can build up company spokespeople as credible industry voices - and by extension, the company itself"

KATIE OWEN,
DIRECTOR



"How important / unimportant is it that these channels clearly show consistent messaging, branding and ownership?"

-  Important (Net)
-  It makes no difference
-  Unimportant (Net)



4) MEDIA THAT MATTERS

WHERE DO BUYERS GET THEIR NEWS FROM?

While our spheres of influence show what channels make the difference at purchasing time, you need brand awareness for any of this to matter. Beyond word of mouth, the best route is through those trusted sources - media coverage.

When people think 'media coverage', national publications are the first to come to mind but it's a misconception that coverage in these publications is the most valuable for B2B businesses.

These national news sources are not as heavily weighted in the minds of IT decision-makers as you would think. Technology trade publications are far more valuable for reaching technology buyers.

Why? Because nearly half (44%) most regularly get their B2B and technology news from tech, vertical, and business trade media. In comparison, only 15% of technology buyers regularly consume national media.

So, while 'national coverage' may sound good, it's often a vanity metric; it's not where the tech buying audience is. That's not to say that national media isn't valuable, but it's not where vendors should focus all of their efforts.

PODCAST MANIA

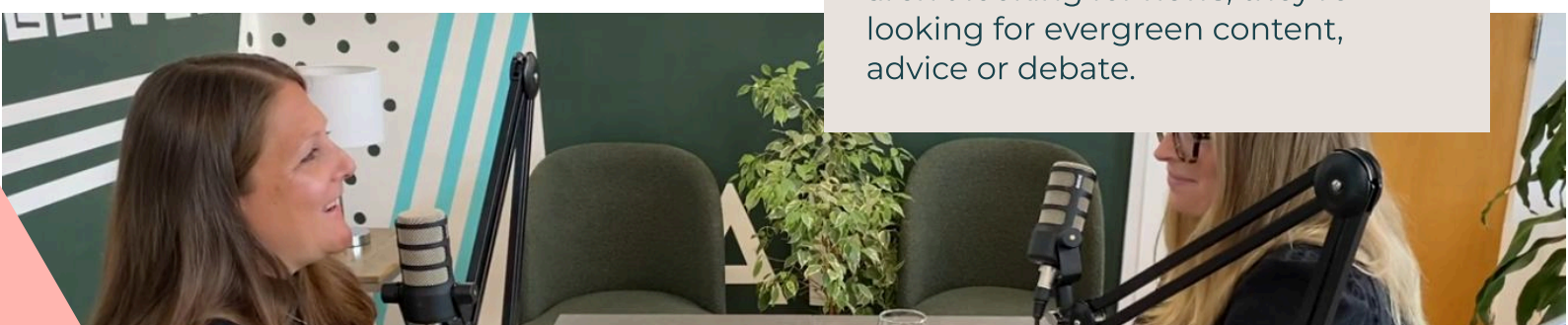
At times, it feels like every, brand, woman, man, and child now has a podcast. There's been an unprecedented boom in the medium and it's now established itself as a channel in its own right, with 60% of B2B marketers planning to increase their use of podcasts.

95%
of tech buyers
listen to podcasts
which focus on
B2B tech and
business issues

These might sound like surprisingly large numbers, but our research shows that 95% of technology buyers are already listeners of B2B tech or business podcasts - so the demand is certainly there.

Podcasts might not seem the most natural home for B2B technology content but that is part of the appeal. Podcasts provide a completely different value, focusing not on news but on advice or industry hot topics. The conversational nature allows space for natural discussions, giving tech vendors the chance to add some personality to their brand.

Most listeners of B2B podcasts aren't looking for news, they're looking for evergreen content, advice or debate.



MEDIA THAT MATTERS

“Where do you most regularly consume B2B business and technology news from? (Pick your top 3)”

Tech and vertical
trade media



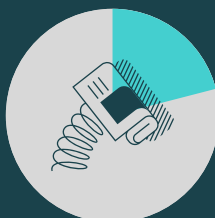
22%

Business trade
media



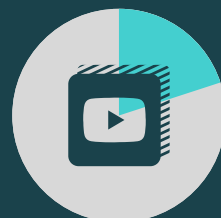
22%

Industry
newsletters



21%

YouTube



20%

LinkedIn



18%

Business podcasts



17%

Tech Podcasts



17%

X (Twitter)



16%

Tech vendor
Podcasts



16%

Vendor Newsletters



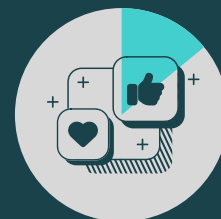
15%

National online
news



14%

Tiktok/
Instagram



14%

National Print
media



12%

Broadcast TV/Radio



12%

"The desire to feature in business press and national media is becoming increasingly strong across the industry. We relish going after the big guns when we can, and it's certainly very satisfying to see our clients' names in the major business titles when everything comes together. Having said that, trade media is still the most valuable channel for B2B tech brands, and the importance of these publications is too often overlooked."

"Senior IT decision-makers still heavily rely on the news and features they read in trade media to inform their purchasing decisions. This is because articles in these publications convey technical insights and deep analysis of the challenges shaping the industry. It's content written by experts, about experts, and for experts. While nationals, regionals and broadcast media are typically only looking at the "why" and the "who", trade media naturally goes deeper into the "how". It is where the content we produce for clients is usually most impactful, which is why we put so much emphasis on writing with our clients' target audience in mind."

"With such a fast news cycle, every piece of content needs to land in the right place to get the best result, and this approach is central to our media relations ethos."

ED COOPER,
DIRECTOR



1 in 4

B2B technology buyers working at organisations of more than 1,000 employees regularly consume their news from tech and vertical publications.

5) RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

WHAT CONTENT DO TECH BUYERS ENGAGE WITH?

So we know where we need to be, but how do you create content and stories that potential clients will actually want to read or listen to? You can get as much coverage as you like, but if it's not interesting, who will read it?

Quality, educational and engaging content will not only increase your chances at the decision-making stage but also boost meaningful brand awareness by showing you understand your prospect, their industry and their problems.

High-level general content won't cut it for B2B buyers. They want detail, and they want to see a vendor's expertise demonstrated and in action.

So, it's no surprise that 58% of technology buyers reported their interest being most piqued by thought leadership articles. These slightly longer-form pieces give you the most bang for your buck as a tech vendor, allowing you to weave brand messaging in with topical commentary around trending sector issues. Not only does this aid with your overall credibility, but it also helps build brand familiarity.

It's a similar story with research-focused news, which 30% said interested them most. By providing new (and hopefully exciting) data that buyers can use and find value in, you'll have much more luck making an impression that will bring them back to you when they're considering purchasing.

"As an agency, we've long recognised that thought leadership is the most effective way for a company to engage buyers and build trust, which is why it's at the core of everything we do. Thought leadership allows a brand to address industry challenges and opportunities, positioning them as credible experts in their field."

"Data plays a critical role in strengthening thought leadership. Conducting industry research that explores trends relevant to your business adds valuable context and supports your perspective."

"Announcements have their place in any PR programme, but they're unpredictable and often seen as self-serving. To truly stand out, a strong focus on thought leadership is essential."

PAUL CAMPBELL, **DIRECTOR**



“Thinking about the type(s) of business and B2B technology media you consume, what type of content are you are most likely to read?” (Select up to 3)

#1



Long thought leadership article

(more than 800 words drafted by a tech vendor)

32%

#2



Research-based News

(Media story based on unique data)

30%

#3



Executive profile

(i.e. feature of a CEO, CFO, CTO, talking about their career, aspirations etc)

29%

#4



Commentary

From a vendor, in a trade journalist authored article

29%

#5



Whitepaper

(in-depth content of 2,000 words or more)

28%

So, what next?

With the new year fast approaching, most marketers and communications professionals will be deep in 2025 planning. So why not use some of the insights we've discussed in your strategy?

It all boils down to this. There are dozens of touchpoints in the buying cycle and while it can seem like you need to rush to fill all the gaps with content, that's not the case. Content serves different purposes across the sales funnel and the key is to be in the right place at the right time with the right message. We've figured out the right place and time, now it's up to you to get the right message there.

That's where Babel comes in. From shaping the perfect message to ensuring it lands with impact, we're here to help you cut through the noise and connect with your audience. Let us show you how to make every touchpoint count. Get in touch at enquiries@babelpr.com to find out how.

Methodology

The research, conducted by Censuswide between August 12 and August 19, 2024, surveyed 202 UK and 201 US technology buyers from organizations with at least 1,000 employees.

Key takeaways

1. Straight off the bat, **ensuring consistency of messaging across all channels** both earned and owned should be the base of any 2025 marketing and communications strategy. It's no coincidence that two-thirds (67%) of technology buyers feel that it's an important factor for them.
2. **Tech and business trade media should be the priority targets** over flashy national coverage when trying to reach the 95% who will become your buyers later down the line. Trade publication audiences currently hold 44% of technology buyers compared to the national's measly 14%, so focus your attention here. This way, not only will the 95% actually see your content, but they'll also become more familiar with your brand over time with repeated exposure.
3. If you want to get the most bang for your buck, **detailed thought leadership is the way to go** for 2025. Longer form content that demonstrates vendor expertise was preferred by over half of tech buyers and will go a long way to building brand familiarity with the 95%. Aligning your brand with hot sector topics will also help you stand out from the crowd and differentiate you in the minds of prospects, making you memorable.
4. **Featuring in independent, trustworthy sources** also does double duty, building up brand credibility, which might just make the difference in the final purchase decision.