

More Than Words'  
essential guide to

# How to sell to Multi Academy Trusts

It is essential for any marketing campaign to understand who is responsible for final procurement decisions, and the academy sector presents suppliers with one of the more difficult systems to understand.

In this guide we'll introduce Multi Academy Trusts, how you can target them effectively, and how to start selling to the right decision makers for your products and services.

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# Academies

State schools that are independent of the local authority are known as academies.

Compared to any local authority maintained school, academies have greater autonomy over the educational process.

Their term dates can be set independently and they do not need to follow the national curriculum, although academy students sit the same exams as other state school students, and they follow the same admissions rules.

Academies receive funding directly from the government through academy trusts.

## Multi-Academy Trusts

Non-profit organisations that run more than one academy school are called Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). Some academies are not part of a Multi Academy Trust, but the Government intends to move all schools into trusts by 2030, so understanding them now is vital.



**Total number of Academies in England  
as of 2021**

**8,909**



**Total number of Multi Academy Trusts  
as of March 2022.**

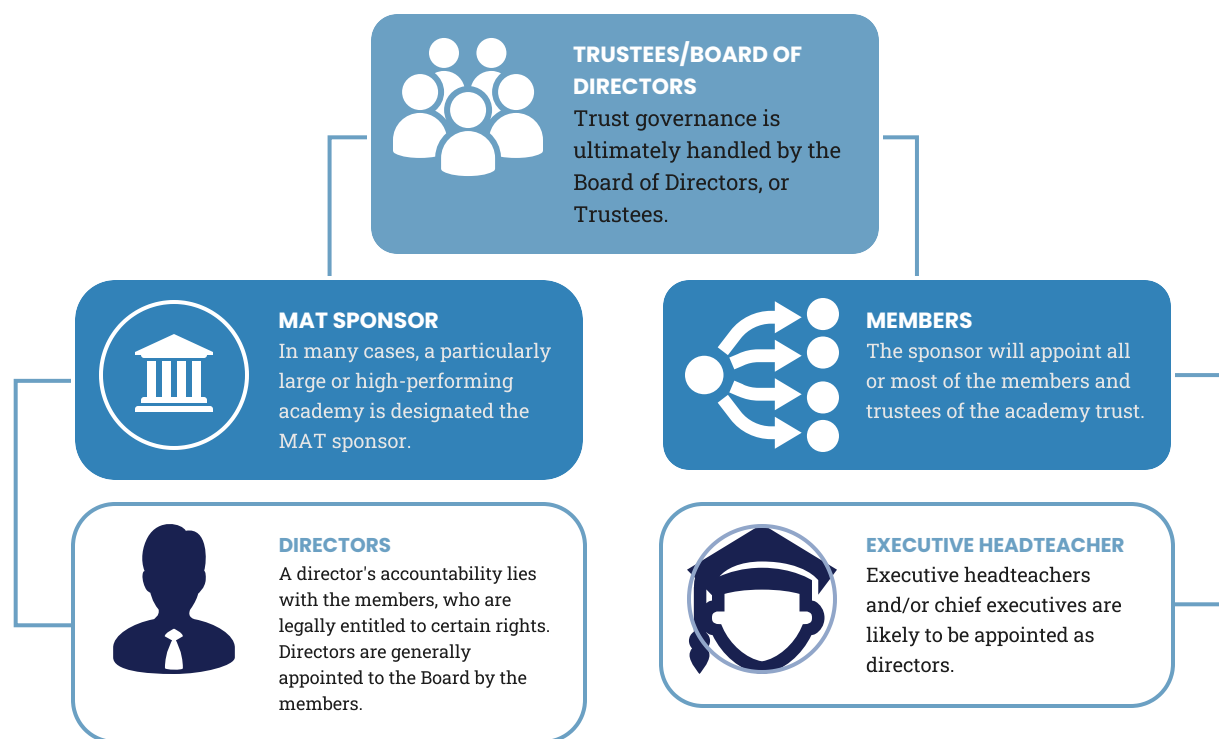
**1,436**

# What is the purpose of Multi Academy Trusts?

It is the government's intention to make the United Kingdom's education sector more robust and effective. Schools within MATs can share best practices and receive assistance from trust leaders in maximising efficiency and managing finances effectively.

The educational landscape will also become more competitive as trusts become more widespread, as they increase financial stability by creating economies of scale.

## Structure of MATs



## Budgets

Academy schools in the UK receive government funding directly from the Department for Education (DfE). Academy Funding Agreements govern how funding is shared between schools within a trust. The MAT is essentially an independent charity with a single board of trustees that oversees all its decisions. In MAT schools, all staff are employed by this charity, which functions as a single organisation.

# What is the benefit of selling to Multi Academy Trusts?

## A greater number of opportunities

Other schools do not have as much freedom when it comes to spending decisions as academy schools do.

Their decisions can include:

- ☐ Services related to HR
- ☐ The provision of legal services
- ☐ Providers of catering services
- ☐ Buildings and infrastructure
- ☐ Service providers of utilities

## Schools in MATs can take advantage of economies of scale.

For example, a MAT may have 15 academies, and each academy may use a different learning management system.

There are costs associated with each system, including:

- ☐ Execution
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Education & training
- ☐ Upkeep

This includes the cost to the Trust to get consistent data from all of these platforms, as well as the cost of retraining staff as they move between academies.

In spite of the relatively high cost of purchasing for all 15 schools in the trust, purchasing a single solution saves money.



# The Procurement Process

1

## **Purchases between £0 and £999.99**

Academies and trusts use a 'best value for money' approach for these, smaller purchases. There is no official process, although suppliers do need to provide a written quotation.

2

## **Purchases between £1,000 and £4,999**

For these purchases, academies look for the best value from quotations received, of which they must put forward at least three for the academy Head Teacher to approve.

3

## **Purchases between £5,000 and £24,999**

Academies must obtain at least three written quotes and send a purchase requisition form as well as a copy of the three quotes to send to the Trust, based on the best value quotes available. These purchases are approved by the CEO.

4

## **Purchases of £25,000+**

Competitive tendering is required for high-value purchases.

# How can I reach Multi Academy Trusts?

There are some general rules you can follow to improve your chances of reaching decision makers within MATs.

Educating trust staff about your product should be your first priority. They are very busy. It is advisable to avoid cold outreach without value, or sending general sales material.

In any outreach, make sure you give them value by providing thoughtful, educational content, inviting them to a learning event, or offering quantifiable results your previous customers have gained.

In addition, introductions can be useful.

While a Trust CEO is unlikely to introduce you to another, schools that have been your customers can introduce you to a Trust.

## Key staff roles



# Key purchasing facts for Multi Academy Trusts

Following the identification of your key marketing decision makers, the next step is to identify the times in the year when your marketing will have the most impact.

## Do MATs have a schedule for purchasing decisions?

Each academy receives its annual budget in September, meaning that many purchases are made in late summer or early September, ready for the new school year.

However, there are also times in the year when academies and school leaders begin planning procurement, and this is the ideal time to approach them with informative content about your product and service, so they have your business top of mind during these discussions.

These periods vary from academy to academy, and depending on the department you are approaching. A good rule of thumb is that planning discussions around:

- ☐ Furniture
- ☐ Buildings
- ☐ Websites & Marketing
- ☐ School Improvement

take place during

OCT

NOV

DEC

JAN

Meanwhile, academies start planning for:

- ☐ EdTech
- ☐ Staff Training
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Learning Resources

during

APRIL

MAY

JUNE



# 5 ways to win more business from MATs and Academies



## 1 Don't just market to MATs

Your product or service is ultimately influenced by the MAT Executive Team, but **individual Academy leaders almost always influence purchasing decisions.**

**Academy Schools begin their new academic year and financial year in September.**

As soon as they get their budgets in September, they can start planning and spending for the new year.



## 2 There is a lot to be done in September



## 3 Build a bespoke mailing list

Using a **proven marketing database** from a company like More Than Words can help you to reach only the **decision-makers with the budgets and responsibility for procurement** within MATS or individual academies.

**Create a marketing campaign that proves your expertise.**

Education decision-makers look for value for money in their low and mid-range purchases, and it is easier to gain their trust by showing that you understand the market they are working within.



## 4 Use your knowledge of education challenges



## 5 Choose the right approach

Plan your interventions to benefit the schools and students most in need, align them with business priorities, and evaluate their impact.  
**Always lead with value and be prepared to provide evidence.**

# Get your UK list of Multi Academy Trusts



Over 8,000 companies in the UK have used More Than Words as an education marketing agency to promote their products and services to a highly-targeted audience.

The following information will be provided to you when you order our list of multi-academy trusts in the UK:

- 1,436 trust groups comprising 8,391 schools,
- CEO & CFO contacts within MATS
- the email addresses of 9,147 decision-makers, and
- comprehensive market intelligence and personal information for the high-value contacts at listed schools.

Our team looks forward to working with you and your team to explore new opportunities within multi-academy trusts.

[Get In Touch](#)

**We are open Monday- Friday during office hours**

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