



The B2B Buying Journey

There are many different factors and considerations that influence the buying process. B2B marketers can use this resource to understand the journey a buyer may take to purchase sales and marketing enablement technologies and solutions. Our hope is that this will allow for more effective planning for digital marketing campaigns that drive brand awareness, engagement and leads – and, ultimately, buyers.

THE CHALLENGE FOR B2B MARKETERS

How do you ensure that prospective customers know your brand...

Before
they need your product?

During
your research?

Through
the evaluation (RFP) process?

... and beyond?

THE BUYER & THEIR BEHAVIOR

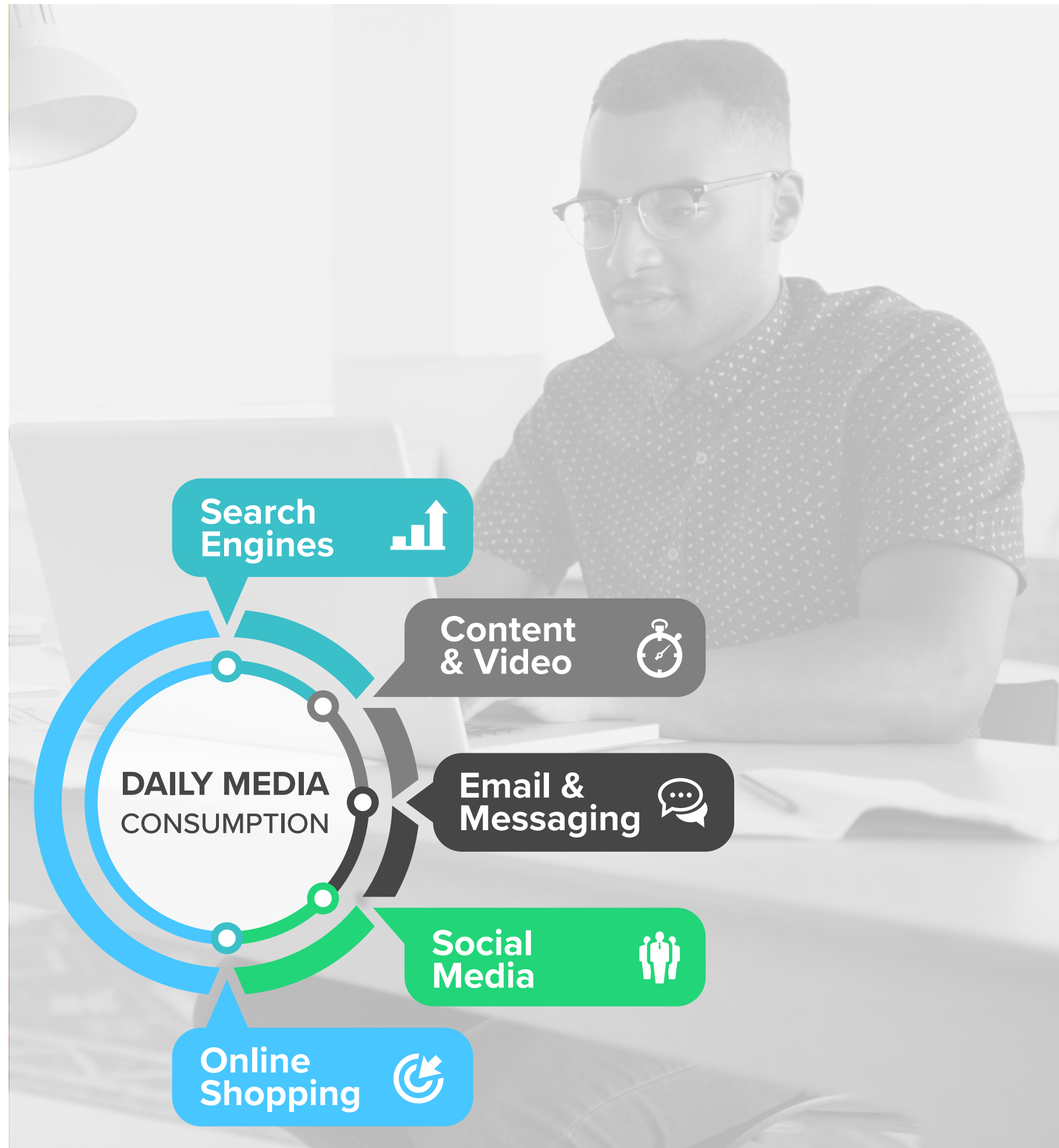
Like all marketing professionals, the ability to multitask and stay “connected” with digital devices on-hand is paramount. How can companies provide marketing solutions that capture a buyer’s attention?

First, it is important to understand the buyer’s online behavior – as well as the behaviors of their prospective buyers.

Studies have shown that many professionals spend more than 70% of their time online – whether it’s surfing content, consuming videos, or engaging on social media. Of that 70%, conducting searches only takes up around 1%. Many would argue that this 1% is the most important percentage, as this is one of the few opportunities to guide prospective buyers to your site to answer their questions and find a solution for their needs.

To capitalize on this 1%, a combination of display advertising and search engine marketing is essential to reaching these prospective buyers and tapping into the other 69% of their time spent online with your content and/or business solutions. (Sources: eMarketer, Forrester and other research studies).

B2B marketing professionals mostly stay up to speed with the latest marketing trends by reading relevant industry content on association sites and eNewsletters. Additionally, these same B2B marketers (aka “prospective buyers”) may check their social media, as well as visit their favorite websites, blogs, etc. that reflect their personal interests.





As marketers surf the web, they may see ads for work-related products on consumer sites and for personal products on business sites. This is an example of “programmatic advertising,” where technology enables many advertisers to competitively bid in real-time on available ad space within sites these professionals visit daily. Advertisers can target buyers throughout the internet – as opposed to past technologies, only advertising on a single site and hoping buyers visit this site and see their ad.

THE BUYING JOURNEY PROGRESSES THROUGH MANY STAGES.

In order to gain traction with prospective buyers through programmatic advertising, it helps to understand the B2B buying journey. As shown above, prospective buyers tend to self-educate online, prior to engaging with a sales representative. With so many resources available, the buyer can get nearly all the information he or she needs in seconds. Product details, technical specs, analyst ratings, user reviews and even pricing are only a few clicks away via search engines and company websites.

B2B buying tends to be a longer and more complex process than its consumer equivalent, with decision makers carrying a much heavier weight i.e. company best interest, budgetary restrictions, quotas etc.

Perhaps this prospective buyer is currently focused on building a new website, updating collateral and planning a major tradeshow. They do not have a budget for a new CRM and have very little time to consider it. They may also be unaware of the many CRM software brands on the market. This prospective buyer may be aware of Salesforce.com, as the company has a strong presence across marketing trade publications, conferences and shows. However, they are unaware of the many competitors including Sugar, Act!, Insightly, Sage, Base and ZoHo.

TARGET BUYERS ON THEIR FAVORITE SITES.

Some of those CRM companies create advertising campaigns to raise their awareness with marketers and prospective buyers. They use programmatic display advertising to get their ads directly in front of marketing managers at companies of the ideal size and geographic location.

Unsurprisingly, these prospective buyers begin to see display ads for CRM companies on the marketing sites they frequent, as well as on pages unrelated to work life – such as news, entertainment and lifestyle sites.

GOOD CREATIVE CAPTURES BUYER'S ATTENTION.

Over many months of seeing these ads, prospective buyers have developed an affinity for brands whose ad campaigns are relevant to them, even though they aren't far enough in their journey to consider buying.

For example, a **B2B marketer** may not be in the market for a CRM system ... yet.

These CRM companies are using a technique called **persona targeting** to reach their target buyers based on key firmographic and demographic data. For example, professionals in marketing roles at companies with more than 100 employees in the manufacturing industry.

This approach enables companies to get their message in front of a highly defined audience of prospects. Allowing your company to avoid wasting budget on a traditional ad campaign targeted to a more general, less qualified set of prospects. Building this kind of **brand recognition** increases the likelihood that your product will be included in the consideration set when a qualified prospect has a need and starts researching solutions.

A NEED ARISES

As B2B marketers plan and budget each year, their needs change based on their organization's goals. For instance, if a goal for the marketing team is to deliver and manage a pipeline of leads for the sales team, they will need a CRM to effectively manage this project. Prospective buyers can start by searching broad terms like "top challenges with CRM implementation" and "what to look for in a CRM solution." They may read multiple articles on marketing trade association sites, blogs and company sites, or even current and past customer reviews.

BRAND RECALL

Once the prospective buyer has done a bit of research, they may start to notice display ads for top CRM brands – including a few new software systems they are not familiar with. During this research

period, the prospective buyer is likely to recall these targeted ads and google the brands they remember. This is an example of **behavioral targeting**, which is also referred to as **search retargeting**. Specialized companies (like Multiview) have obtained statistics citing that B2B marketers have searched phrases about CRM and read articles related to utilizing a CRM software. Website algorithms recognize these buyers are likely to be in the buying journey for a new CRM and serve related ads accordingly.

A NEW CONTENDER EMERGES

B2B marketers conduct thorough discovery and research to vet brands and products prior to purchase, hoping to find the right solution. Prospective buyers' main goal is to narrow the list of CRM softwares down to a handful for further consideration. During this time, buyers may start seeing ads for new brands they may not have previously considered. Upon further research, it may appear that one of these new products meets all the preferred criteria and price point to become a contender. This form of behavioral targeting is called **competitor conquering**. This is when companies target their ads to people who have searched their competitors' branded keywords and/or visited competitor websites.

NARROWING DOWN THE LIST

Prospective buyers may get an initial recommendation regarding certain products or solutions, so they conduct more specific research on terms like "CRM case studies," "CRM comparisons" and "CRM ratings." In addition to organic links, they click on several ads within website pages

that contain relevant information for their current needs. They read the content and continue to do additional searches to dig deeper and learn more. These prospects are now well educated on CRM and have narrowed down their consideration to a handful of top CRM softwares.

Companies can reach these buyers by targeted **search engine advertising**, where companies bid against each other to have their ad show up as a top result within a search page. This process utilizes keywords and phrases buyers used in recent relevant searches to find information. It's important to note that the buyer clicks on several of the search ads of the brands they recognize from previous targeted display campaigns.

Overall, the combination of display and search has proven to drive a higher response and potential for conversion from buyers.

WHAT'S THE BUYER THINKING?

Throughout their research, prospective buyers visit many CRM vendor websites. Most of the time, they leave without filling out forms or downloading content. Periodically, prospects see specific ads from brands after visiting their site. One ad may remind them to download an eBook that they had clicked on but never completed the form. This brand is now considered "top-of-mind" for the prospective buyer, and they've gone back to that site several times after seeing ads.

Companies can reach these buyers with **site retargeting**, a technique that tags people who leave the company's website and shows

branded display ads to prospects as they surf their favorite sites across the web. This approach helps you stay top of mind with interested prospects and reminds them about your unique value proposition.

CONDUCT REPUTATION CHECKS

At this point, buyers are typically ready to issue an RFP to their top two choices. Before doing so, they search for information about the reputations of the companies themselves and their products. They enter in keywords like "reviews" for both brands to find out what kinds of experiences customers have had with each company. They may also search "news" for both brands to learn about any recent changes in their organizations. Even if prospective buyers find largely positive reviews about each company, they can now note more specific questions to include in the RFP.

Bonus Tip:

Always be sure to advertise as a "top result" when searching your own brand name. This will ensure that you always show up when buyers are searching for you and does not allow competitors to take the prime spot.

HIT THE ROAD.

While waiting on responses to their RFP, prospects may attend a tradeshow or industry event, where they come across an ad from a brand directing them to visit their tradeshow booth for a demo and free gift. This is no coincidental encounter. This type of display targeting is called **geo-fencing**, which is a valuable tool many companies use to target digital users within very specific geographic locations, such as within the walls of an industry association trade show or conference.

GETTING READY TO BUY.

With proposals in hand, prospective buyers will continue to conduct searches if they feel the pricing is too high. In order to get a better deal, buyers may search terms like “discounts” or “sales” in conjunction with the brand names. This is a great example of search behavior that indicates a person’s strong intent to buy. Smart advertising companies (like Multiview) use this type of signal to trigger display ads that provide more relevant solutions and help guide their buying decision. For example, one of the brands being considered, could influence the purchasing decision by running display ads touting a research study that showed they are the best value for the money.

TIME TO BUY, BUT THE JOURNEY IS NOT OVER.

After months of research, numerous proposals, and rounds of competitive pitch presentations, the B2B marketer finally signs a contract for a CRM software. Months later, the buyer has the system deployed and is using it to power his or her email marketing campaigns. After purchasing the CRM, the buyer may continue to see ads from the same brand while browsing the internet. However, this time it’s for a different product. In this instance, the buyer is being targeted specifically by that brand as part of a customer upsell campaign. The company is using **CRM data targeting** to display their ads to current clients (and prospects) in their database, helping them drive interest and build awareness of additional products.

IT’S TIME TO RENEW.

The B2B marketer has had a successful year using his/her chosen CRM to fuel digital campaigns and manage a pipeline of leads for sales. Now it’s time to consider renewal. Therefore, the buyer begins researching online and visits competitor websites once again to make sure their platform is still competitive with the latest features and value. Once again, the buyer begins noticing CRM ads showing up on his/her frequented websites, which means that the buyer is now being **behaviorally targeted** by other brands.

Ultimately, the buyer will renew if they decide the ROI received from the current platform was strong. In summary, you must be present to win!

THE BUYER’S PLAN COVERS THE THREE PILLARS OF DIGITAL MARKETING.

As mentioned earlier, the buyer is a savvy marketer who successfully built and executed an initial marketing plan, including a new website, several major tradeshow, and a new CRM system to power their email campaigns.

Now that he/she has successfully achieved these things, the buyer is expanding his/her strategy to cover all three pillars of a best practice digital marketing plan – **owned media, earned media and paid media**. The buyer is particularly excited to ramp up his/her **paid media strategy**.

Prospects complete **70% of their buying journey** before making contact with vendors.

100% of potential buyers research solutions and companies online.

Your competitors are online trying to capture the attention of your prospects.

Be **Present to Win**
in each stage of the
Customer Journey:

- 01 Exploring
- 02 Researching
- 03 Evaluating
- 04 Validating
- 05 Purchasing



The B2B marketer also adds the powerful combination of **digital display advertising** and **search engine marketing** to influence potential buyers across the entire purchase journey. He/she knows that this strategy will drive awareness with prospects, draw them to the website, and produce quality leads to pass on to the sales team.

THE BUYER GETS RESULTS WITH THE DIGITAL MARKETING “POWER COMBO.”
This power duo is **digital advertising** and **search advertising**. Digital Advertising includes Brand awareness, Engagement & Affinity, and a lift for Other Marketing tactics. Search Advertising includes Website Visits, Calls and or Form Fills. The buyer must be present to win at each stage of the customer's journey. With the power duo there is an average of 38% increase in brand search activity for prospects exposed to a display ad. There is also a 200% average lift in clicks for branded and category search teams. (Source: camScore)

THE BUYER HAS COMPLETED THEIR DIGITAL BUYING JOURNEY.
The buyer plans to use search engine marketing and several display campaigns to build brand relevance and affinity with his/her target audience as they traverse the buying journey, readying the path for when they need his/her product.

The buyer will use a **persona targeting** campaign to reach highly defined segments of potential customers based on their industry, company and professional role. The B2B marketer will also start a **behavioral targeting** campaign to reach prospects who are actively researching the types of products he/she offers or a competitor.

Lastly, the buyer will implement a **site retargeting** campaign to stay top of mind with people who have visited the website and left without converting.
Alongside each of these campaigns, prospects will see search engine ads tailored for each part of their buying journey based on their search habits.

Being a savvy marketer, the **buyer uses custom graphics** and finely tuned **search engine ads** for each of their campaigns. This cuts through the clutter and is designed to capture the attention of his/her prospects, delivering the **right message** to the **right person** at the **right time**.

CONTACT OUR DIGITAL MARKETING EXPERTS

To Start Being Present to Win

Multiview Introduction

Multiview, the leader in digital publishing solutions for associations and digital marketing solutions for B2B marketers, connects the B2B world.

We build digital publications that bring thousands of trade associations spanning nearly every industry together with millions of their members.

We also deliver digital marketing solutions that connect B2B companies with millions of their customers at every stage of the buying journey.

Connect with us

Multiview connects brands to their target audiences with digital media. As a leading digital publisher and marketing company for 20 years, we help over 1,200 associations and 11,000 companies find and connect with millions of B2B buyers. Using proprietary first party data you won't find from any DSP, a full-service creative department, and unparalleled marketing consultation – we're experts at getting your brand and message out. 7701 Las Colinas Ridge, Ste. 800, Irving, Texas 75063.

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