

The 2021 Roadmap for Industrial Sales & Marketing

Presented by
klyck.io





Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital solutions has changed the competitive playing field for industrial manufacturers and distributors. Although this paradigm shift presents many great opportunities for growth, sales and marketing leaders are experiencing significant challenges implementing strategies to leverage digital tools to drive increased ROI and better connectivity with their customers.

In this eBook, we will focus on 6 keys to success for creating winning sales and marketing strategies that will empower your business for success in the digital industrial revolution.



6 Key Aspects



1. Sales & Marketing Alignment



2. Content and Communication Strategy



3. Utilization of Data in Marketing and Sales



4. Supporting Systems




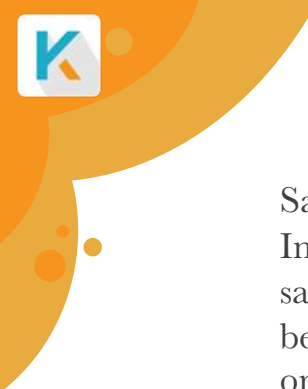
5. Sales Team Training and Development



6. Better Customer Conversations


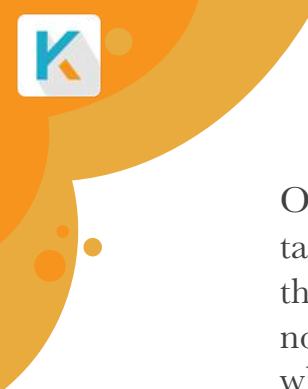


1. Sales and Marketing Alignment



Sales and marketing. Hatfield and McCoy. In the B2B world, they are essentially the same thing. However, the age-old conflict between these two heavily siloed organizations is slowly coming to a peaceful end, and in order for companies to successfully navigate the digital landscape, there is no other choice. It is imperative in terms of successfully maximizing the effectiveness of your commercial strategy. Modern buyers are now far ahead of most sales teams when it comes to research and targeted marketing is imperative to ensure that your company appears on their radar, long before a sales call is ever made. Recent research reports that most B2B

buyers view five or more pieces of content before making a purchase decision. They are also performing more self-guided research online than ever before. Research from Forbes shows that buyers are as much as 70% of the way through the buying process before they engage with a sales rep. ([Forbes](#)). Additionally, companies with properly aligned sales and marketing teams generate 208% more revenue from marketing activities ([Impact](#)).



Online resources, engaging content, and targeted digital communications are now at the forefront of the buying cycle. Sales is now managing only the end of the process, when most buyers have already developed their own perceptions about an organization's products and solutions. None of these are new concepts to marketing leaders, yet for industrial B2B firms, understanding how to incorporate these marketing practices into their sales process is still conceptually akin to quantum theory, black holes, and “to be or not to be”.

So, how do organizations begin to address these dynamics and what does it mean for their strategy? First and foremost, there is an increased importance on marketing being in the driver seat of demand generation and being viewed as a revenue generator within the organization. This concept has perhaps been the most difficult for industrial firms to embrace as historically the marketing function was simply the “coloring in department” tasked with tactical objectives like making flyers, planning trade show events, and creating brochures.



The primary areas of focus for marketing to support digitalization and sales success are:



Creating high-quality, engaging content that effectively tells the story of how the organization and its connected solutions bring value by solving complex problems within their customer's organization.



Managing demand generation activities to fill the top of the funnel. This includes all digital strategies to drive website traffic, social media engagements, etc.



Providing tools such as marketing automation, CRM, and sales enablement systems to help nurture customers through the sales funnel and empower the sales team with data and actionable insights to help close more business.



We will cover each of these topics in further detail later in the eBook and dive deeper into the principles, applications, and best practices that you can implement within your own organization.

However, at a macro level, successful B2B organizations ensure that their marketing and sales teams are aligned, and actively work to remove any barriers for collaboration.

One part of the solution is to ensure that marketing leaders have a seat at the executive table.



A recent study conducted by the Marketing Science Institute (MSI), found that just 2.6% of board members had active marketing experience. The average tenure of CMOs is also continuing to fall, with the role now averaging only 43 months. This is fueled by a trend to spread the traditional role of the CMO into other executive functions such as a Chief Brand Officer, Chief Experience Officer and also the Chief Digital Officer ([PR Week](#)). The danger for B2B companies not having marketing positioned at the executive table is that many of the core functions of marketing, most specifically creating engaging content that's directly aligned to the target market, are overlooked.

It's also important to highlight that digital marketing is no longer a subset of traditional marketing. Marketing, in the modern sense, is digital. However, this changing dynamic is frequently misunderstood by organizations who are aligning marketing, and it's digital tool kit, underneath executive leaders in non-marketing or non-commercial centric roles. Executives who have ascended into roles such as the newly expanding Chief Digital Officer position, by way of traditional IT-based career paths, may deeply understand the technology aspect of customer engagement but may lack the commercial experience that is foundational for navigating the new landscape of marketing.



2. Content and Communication Strategy


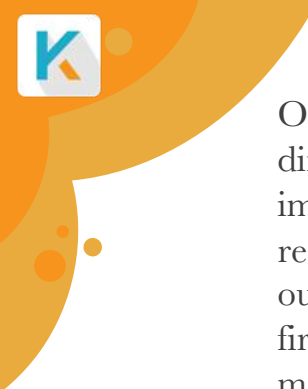




Content is king. That's a concept that marketers have held true for some time now, historically driven by consumer marketing and B2C channels. However, as B2B marketing continues to evolve, we are seeing more and more consumer concepts, creeping into the realm of manufacturing and distribution. That is definitely true when you consider the new challenge of marketing and selling complex systems to clients who are interested in more than just product, specs, and price.




Great marketing is great storytelling. When it comes to the digital industrial revolution, the new story is much more complex, emotive, and conceptual than anything the B2B industry has ever addressed.





Organizations that are successful in directing the narrative of this new, immersive story are focusing time and resources on something that is somewhat out of the norm for most B2B industrial firms – investing time into creating and maintaining formalized and inclusive messaging guides. A good guide should include a clear and concise definition of what your solution is, what does it do, your key messages, supporting proof points, and the specific customer problems that it addresses.

Proper messaging guides should convey the narrative and value that complex solutions bring to clients. Good messaging is the essential building block of all great content and will ensure that communications are


simple, effective, on-brand, and perhaps most importantly, consistent. This becomes even more essential when considering an outsourced strategy for content creation. Outsourced content strategies are quickly becoming a significant part of the B2B marketing framework. There are many factors that influence this, primarily the fact that for most B2B marketing organizations multimedia content creation is simply not a strength, further exacerbated by the challenge of finding, hiring, and retaining employees with the skills to perform these functions. B2B firms are not always the most “on trend” organizations or cultures that high-performing content marketers want to align themselves with, so hiring for those positions can be difficult and expensive.





As with most digital marketing roles, the highest performing individuals in the area of content creation typically have a significant amount of specialty expertise that doesn't necessarily transcend across other marketing functions. A great web designer and an astute videographer are rarely one in the same, so seeking specialization in these functions is critical to success. Hence the value of outsourcing to an established firm, that specializes in a particular field, is often the easiest way for B2B firms to achieve their objectives in a timely and cost-effective manner. It also provides a variable cost model that is more easily modulated based on ever changing marketing needs and yearly budgets.

The final challenge is deciding on a communication strategy that you will use to distribute your content. This is where many B2B organizations meet a dead end. According to Forbes, more than 60% of all content created in B2B firms goes unutilized by their sales team when engaging customers ([Forbes](#)). Additionally, B2B firms are lagging behind B2C in terms of utilizing the proper tools (such as marketing automation, social media tools, Google AdWords, etc.) to effectively reach their customers and measure the level of engagement. In the next few sections we will outline specific systems, processes, and tools that you can use to ensure that the content your organization is investing in generates a measurable return.






More than 60% of all content created in B2B firms goes unused by their sales team when engaging customers ([Forbes](#)).



3. Utilization of Data in Marketing and Sales Strategy





The ability to collect, analyze, and take action on customer engagement data is the key to successfully driving ROI from digital marketing and sales activities. To properly execute a successful industrial sales and marketing strategy in the evolving competitive landscape, data must provide the roadmap. The growing significance of marketing analytics in overall strategy is validated by data from the 2018 CMO Survey, which reports a projected 218% increase in spending on marketing analytics over the next 3 years ([CMO survey](#)).

There are many things to consider when developing data strategies for B2B marketing and sales. Additionally, there are literally thousands of systems and software platforms available to help companies collect, analyze, and take action on their data. Before diving into the tactical applications, organizations must first develop a roadmap for data utilization aligned to each stage in the sales cycle. The following are key areas where data can be applied to marketing and sales for IoT solutions.

1

Customer segmentation and market data

–Aggregating current and potential customers into specific segments, and analyzing the needs and challenges of each, will assist in creating customized marketing messaging and communication channels.

2

Account sales history and product gap information

- This will allow companies to determine how they can customize their marketing and sales approach for existing accounts.

3

Lead generation data and new customer prospect lists

- New opportunities may likely exist in segments outside of the traditional business model so creating ways to capture and take action on data from leads, purchased target lists, or other customer information is paramount.

4


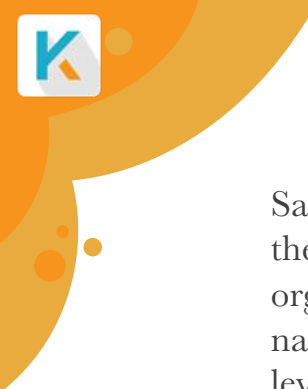
Individual contact data for prospective buyers within an account

- Utilizing this information will allow companies to further refine their messaging and approach based upon the specific buyer personas that the sales team will be engaging with.

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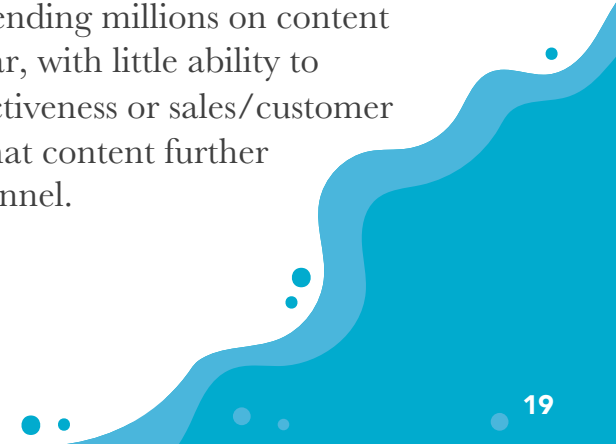
Customer engagement data

- This is a broad category and should include any inbound or outbound customer touch-points, including ones from email campaigns, social media, and sales.



Sales touch-points have historically been the most difficult to measure and most organizations have little idea about what narrative is actually occurring at the sales level, beyond basic opportunity data logged into CRM. Even more difficult to measure is the utilization and engagement of marketing material with end-customers during the sales cycle. Collecting, analyzing, and taking action on sales engagement data is a new concept for most industrial companies but managing this process more effectively can significantly improve the conversion rate of complex solutions in the pipeline.

To reinforce why it's important to measure these touch-points, let's take a look at some macro-trends in marketing budgets. Recent data reported in the 2019 CMO Survey indicates that B2B companies are allocating as much as 5.4% of total revenue to their marketing budgets. ([CMO Survey](#)). With content and multimedia asset creation continuing to consume a higher percentage of overall marketing budgets, large B2B firms are now spending millions on content creation each year, with little ability to measure the effectiveness or sales/customer engagement of that content further down the sales funnel.





As spending continues to rise on content creation, there is a need to measure the effectiveness of investments. Systems need to be in place to help capture, analyze, and take action on the data points that are being collected about customers and their buying journey. Data collection is paramount to successfully understanding how to tailor your marketing and sales messages to the needs of your customers.



4. Supporting Systems





Once the data has been collected, it's necessary to have systems in place to help manage the data, and the entire sales and marketing process. There are over 7,000 different MarTech platforms available, but there are three core systems that will assist you in maximizing your ROI on sales and marketing activities.



**Customer Relationship
Management
(CRM)**




**Marketing Automation
(MA)**



**Sales Enablement
(SE)**




First, at the center of any tech stack is a CRM and it is the core foundation of MarTech for B2B sales and marketing organizations. CRM is no longer a tool that's simply "nice to have", it has become a critical backbone to enabling effective sales and marketing strategies.



The average return on investment for CRM is \$8.71 for every \$1 spent.

Effective sales organizations are 81% more likely to be practicing consistent usage of a CRM.

CRM applications can help increase sales by up to 29%, sales productivity by up to 34%, and sales forecast accuracy by 42%



Marketing automation software is seeing exponential growth within the B2B sector. MA allows companies to significantly improve their marketing lead generation, lead nurturing, and lead scoring activities. Because this system manages all customer touchpoints prior to sales team involvement, it is key to engaging customers early in the buying cycle.




Most B2B buyers perform 8-12 online searches before interacting with a vendor's website and are already 57% of the way through the buying process before the first meeting with a representative ([Bluecorona](#)).



67% of purchases for multiple industrial manufacturing and pack-and-ship industries were influenced by digital ([Bluecorona](#)).



80% of marketing automation users see an increase in number of leads and 77% report higher conversion rates ([Demand Gen Report](#)).



Marketing automation takes the intelligence gathered from a CRM, and allows marketing teams to create meaningful, automated action to help manage the buying journey. The most common applications for automation are executing customized email campaigns, website lead generation, social media management, and hosting custom landing pages to pull leads into the funnel. Marketing automation is a powerful system that can help bridge alignment between marketing and sales by adding significant value to both groups.

The third core system is sales enablement, a powerful new platform that is quickly evolving within leading industrial

manufacturers and distributors. Sales enablement (SE) is the process of providing sales organizations with information, content, and tools that help salespeople sell more effectively. The aim is to provide salespeople with what they need to successfully engage the buyer at every stage throughout the buying process. When properly implemented, sales enablement allows a large number of salespeople to achieve quota in a scalable, predictable, and repeatable fashion ([B2B Sales Enablement](#)). Being one of the newest growth areas of the MarTech landscape, there are many viable systems available to help organizations achieve their sales enablement goals.



So, how does Sales Enablement work?

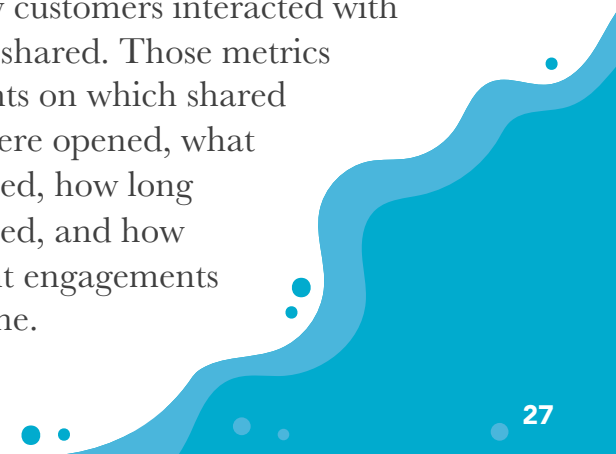
The best sales enablement systems allow marketing to maintain an up-to-date repository of content that is directly available to sales representatives on any device, so that they have access to use sales support content when and where they need it.





Sales enablement also provides the ability to customize and tailor content for each customer interaction by using data from CRM and marketing automation. For example, a good SE system should be able to link to a CRM, import relevant information on customer meeting schedules, the customer's industry, the contact's job title, prior sales history, product mix information, and other segmentation information in order to automatically customize the information that is to be presented during the sales call. Since SE platforms are directly connected to the sales team, and informed from other supporting systems, they are quickly becoming the most powerful way to help marketing and sales collaborate to effectively lead customers through complex sales cycles.

Sales enablement also continues to provide a data feedback loop to the sales user and the organization by collecting a variety of customer engagement data points about sales meetings and content sharing. Using sales enablement to prepare, present, and share content with customers allows sales and marketing leaders to visualize a wealth of data about the sales cycle, such as what steps sales users took to prepare for their meeting, what content was presented during the customer meeting, and most importantly, how customers interacted with content that was shared. Those metrics include data points on which shared content emails were opened, what content was viewed, how long content was viewed, and how many subsequent engagements occurred over time.







5. Sales Team Training and Development





A core challenge for industrial businesses who are transitioning into selling more complex, connected solutions is that they typically have a legacy sales force that is not equipped to make the transition from relationship-based, product centric selling to consultative-based, complex solution selling. The majority of manufacturing organizations have aging sales teams who have driven sales growth primarily through relationship building activities, calling on the same account base for many years and differentiating on price and product features rather than their ability to help design a tailored solution for their clients ([tED magazine](#)).



With the proliferation of new, connected solutions that are quickly becoming the centerpiece of B2B customer needs, this creates a significant problem for organizations that are looking to innovate and grow their business in the new digital industrial revolution. Organizations must double down on investments to help their sales teams make the transition, including exploring new ways to deliver training, coaching, and skill enhancing tools. Learning management systems have historically been the digital solution to address this need in organizations but with complex solutions and buyer journeys evolving rapidly, online training modules aren't the answer to the problem.

One modern method that is gaining momentum is delivering training via Podcasts. One-third of American's are now actively listening to Podcasts on a regular basis and roughly 40% of listeners are specifically searching for educational content ([Musicoomph](#)). With low startup costs and easy hosting options available, there is a huge opportunity for organizations to build on this trend and deliver educational content that can be consumed during periods of time that have traditionally been non-value added. Consider how many combined hours each year your sales team spends driving to and from sales calls. With podcasting, that non-value added time can be converted into an opportunity to consume valuable content.





Training and development is another area where sales enablement software can be used effectively. In addition to being the conduit that delivers properly aligned marketing content to sales users, SE systems can also deliver training and development resources when and where sales users need them. For instance, if a sales representative has a meeting scheduled to discuss a specific solution with a prospective client, SE can deliver the proper training and coaching resources for the rep to review prior to the meeting. SE provides the ability to measure these activities, so sales managers can accurately assess which reps are or are not engaging in training activities relevant to their sales calls and can better align their sales coaching practices based on each team member's needs.



6. Better Customer Conversations





This brings us to our most critical concept, which should be empowered by all the data, systems, training, and content that has been discussed previously. The most important action to drive ROI from digital marketing and sales activities is to empower sales reps to conduct better, more informed conversations with their clients.



It's not that relationships aren't important. Conversations and relationships are still at the heart of successful selling; however, relationships are now formed by sales reps becoming trusted advisors and digital navigators to help their clients overcome their ever-evolving challenges. ([Leadfuze](#)) Conversations and relationships that lead to success in modern industrial sales are also occurring much higher in the organization than sales reps are traditionally used to.

Although the more traditional contacts in industrial sales (such as facility managers, specification engineers, and project managers) are still involved in the cycle, decisions on systems that involve large scale integrations, such as IoT solutions, are typically being handled at the VP and C suite level. This presents a new challenge for legacy sales teams that are comfortable in their traditional roles.



To bring together a successful strategy that enables better conversations for sales reps, organizations must build upon all the concepts we've previously discussed. Marketing teams must produce more engaging, educational content that helps convey the value of complex industrial solutions. Data, in conjunction with CRM, marketing automation and sales enablement, must be used to tailor and inform communication strategies that fill

sales funnels and nurture potential buyers to become qualified sales leads. CRM systems must be used to provide sales with a stratified view of the funnel and keep record of the many touch-points that occur during a long industrial sales cycle. Training and development must be properly executed to ensure that sales reps are prepared to have detailed conversations with informed buyers higher up in the organization.



To put the final icing on the cake, sales enablement systems can be used to help execute and measure everything that happens during the final stages of the sales cycle. Being the system that bridges the gaps between sales, marketing, and the customer, sales enablement can be one of the most valuable tools in the MarTech stack when it comes to driving increased revenue of IoT-based solutions. With its ability to intelligently tailor content for sales users based on the customer's industry, job function, and sales stage, sales enablement systems provide reps with the ability to align their entire approach to address the needs of their customers. This approach helps ensure that sales reps always have the right content at the right time, allowing them to focus on the most important customer interaction, the conversation.



As long humans remain at the center of the buying cycle, high-value personal interactions will always remain the most important part of the selling process. However, just as connected industrial solutions leverage digital technology to help machines perform at their best, digital sales solutions help salespeople perform at their best. There isn't any great mystery to effective sales and marketing for industrial solutions. It's simply using technology to make your process more efficient.

Thanks for reading!

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