



Making the Most of Your B2B Marketing Dollars in 2009  
WHITE PAPER



There is no arguing that the world is in the midst of an economic recession with virtually no B2B business sector spared. The industrial and manufacturing segments continue to suffer from the effects of tightened credit, decreasing order volumes and project postponements and cancellations. With this as a backdrop, B2B marketers are facing even greater pressure than normal to produce programs that will help retain existing customers while still generating demand from prospects – and all this with significantly less budget than prior years. This white paper will provide practical examples of how to best apply precious marketing dollars during 2009. Included will be ideas about how to retain current clients and also to increase business over the next year.

### **HOW BAD IS IT?**

Most economists now agree that the recession actually began in December 2007. By the third quarter of 2008, personal consumption in the United States contracted for the first time in almost two decades. Renowned economist Nouriel Roubini (<http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~nroubini/>), once dubbed Dr. Doom, is now considered a sage for predicting the United States would likely face “a once-in-a-lifetime housing bust, an oil shock, sharply declining consumer confidence and, ultimately, a deep recession.” The bad news? He predicts that the country is only halfway through the recession that will be the longest and most severe since the 1940s.

The good news? Roubini does not think that the United States will see another Great Depression. While this paper was being written, a vast federal stimulus package approaching \$1 trillion was approved and is now working its way to the state level. In theory, this plan should bolster the industrial sectors and manufacturing sectors, which economists believe bottomed out in the fourth quarter of 2008 but will see an upswing by mid- to late-2009. Most importantly, significant growth is projected for many sectors of the economy such as alternative energy, the manufacturing chain for electric cars, pharmaceutical research and bioscience.

Even with these positive indicators, the current downturn is demanding marketing budget restrictions, forcing B2B marketers to choose the best and most cost-effective tactics for their customers. As companies reassess and prioritize budget dollars, B2B marketers are looking for new strategies that may differentiate them from competitors who either go silent or resort to diminished traditional programs.

## A JOB TO DO

Finding wise marketing tactics to employ will be essential this year... not just to find new customers but to maintain existing ones as well. Companies can't just sit back and wait for the economy to recover and then resume daily business. They still have clients to keep happy, sales funnels to fill, leads to generate and deals to close. And in 2009, many B2B marketers will have to meet the aforementioned objectives with a flat or reduced budget, so smart, cost-effective marketing practices are imperative.

Interestingly enough, even in the face of economic recession, almost one-third of B2B marketers plan on increasing their marketing budgets during 2009, according to BtoB's "2009 Marketing Priorities and Plans" survey. Another 43.5% of marketers plan to keep budgets equal to 2008 and only about one-quarter plan to decrease their marketing budgets in 2009, according to the online survey of over 200 B2B marketing professionals in November 2008.

Among the key findings of the survey:

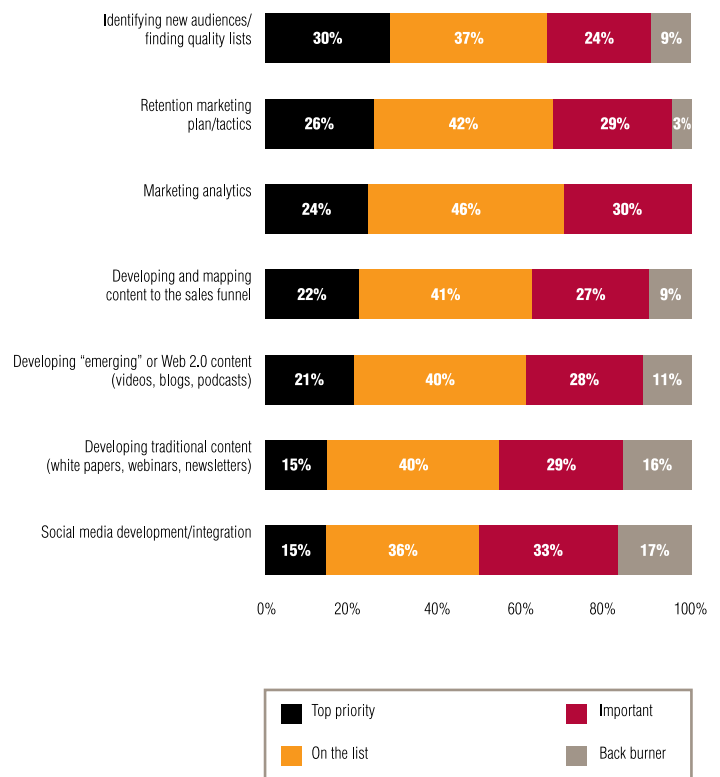
- Customer acquisition is the top marketing goal in 2009 for B2B marketers (62.2%)
- Customer retention was cited by 20.6% of marketers as their top marketing goal, followed by brand awareness (12.4%)
- A total of 66.5% of marketers plan to increase online spending in 2009

MarketingSherpa's recent study of B2B marketers validated the importance being placed on new customer acquisition. Thirty percent of the B2B marketers surveyed stated that their top priority for 2009 is to identify new audiences and find quality lists.

Therefore, chances are good that your competition is finding new ways to obtain new clients in new markets.

*How are you going to find yours?*

In this paper, TriComB2B presents a variety of practical exercises and tactics to consider when making or modifying 2009 marketing plans.



Source: © Marketing Sherpa, 2009

### **RECOMMENDATION #1: STRATEGIC AND FISCAL PHYSICAL FOR A COMPANY**

The first recommendation is a diagnosis of a company's status in the marketplace. This process is essential and should not be pushed aside by daily distractions. At a time when the stakes for success are so high, leadership needs to take a break to ask some tough questions of itself and its management team:

- Where are changes in business volume happening and why?
- Where are the most profitable areas of the business?
- Why are they more profitable?
- What is the competition doing?
- When was the last time a customer was contacted? What is his/her perspective on the industry?
- Is the current product or service mix relevant in today's market?
- Is the industry in a time of transition?
- If so, what does that mean for the future plans of the company and future markets?
- What is the profile of an ideal client?

Reading through this list is equivalent to enduring a root canal for some and creates a mix of anxiety and panic in others. It may be easier to ride things out and keep the status quo, but TriComB2B advises otherwise. In an environment where competitors may be struggling and focusing internally, now may be the time to plant the seeds for increased business from existing customers and new business opportunities from different audiences.

### **RECOMMENDATION #2: A COMPANY'S MESSAGE NEEDS TO MAKE AN IMPACT NOW**

Another important tactic is to make sure a company's message is making the impact in the market that it wants. Today's business climate is making it critically important that an organization knows how it wants to be positioned in the marketplace, and, once there, what it wants to say.

TriComB2B believes that the time for small and medium sized businesses to make an impact is now. Many large corporations are battenning down the hatches and are not as well positioned to make a mark as small and medium sized businesses may be at the moment.

TriComB2B applies to itself the old messaging rules that still ring true today – be credible, unique and compelling. Develop value-based statements that clearly articulate your business value to existing and potential customers and avoid hyperbole. By applying these guidelines, an organization has a better chance of reaching the right person...but more importantly having that individual listen to its message. And one way to reach that person is through a well developed Web plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION #3: IT IS ALL ABOUT THE WEB**

The single greatest competitor within the industrial and manufacturing sector today is the back button on a potential client's computer. In the \$14 trillion U.S. manufacturing industry, over 90 percent of industrial buyers will go to the Internet as a first step when researching new sources for the goods or services. And in doing so, they will spend six to eight hours a week online searching for products (Source: ThomasNet, Nov. 2006).

Before spending dollars anywhere else, companies should spend as much as possible to make their websites highly accessible and compelling to users. It also is no longer important to just have a website. The science behind attracting a target audience is just as important. Now is the best time to apply racing stripes (as TriComB2B scientifically refers to it) with search engine optimization, Web analytics and other performance measurement tools.

Once a Web plan is in place, tap internal thought leaders to participate in a blog. TriComB2B is seeing higher adoption of blogging as a practice within B2B. If a community of users has already been established, a blog is an excellent platform for a company. Nurturing and building a blog community is an inexpensive way to complement customer service and assist in establishing a company as a thought leader within its respective market area.

#### **RECOMMENDATION #4: ASK SALES WHAT THEY NEED NOW**

Along with a strong Web plan, companies need to place create a fresh dialogue with their sales teams. Maximizing the effectiveness of the sales force is essential when business is slow. Three simple questions can help to focus spending and ensure essential sales support programs aren't cut arbitrarily.

*Does sales have what it needs to function?* Before eliminating the print budget, companies should ask sales to prioritize needs. Before cancelling translation projects, marketing leaders should ensure strategic geographic development programs aren't left in a lurch. Optimize reduced printing budgets by prioritizing, migrating to electronic downloads or implementing a well-managed print-on-demand program.

*What competitive pressures are they seeing?* Slow economic conditions can lead to atypical competitive behavior. Aggressive or desperate competitor behavior may require defensive strategies that elevate important value propositions such as a company's strong balance sheet or a total life cycle cost position.

*What is a good lead?* With so much pressure on new audience identification and list acquisition in 2009, marketers still need to be sure that only quality leads are delivered to sales. Programs that emphasize quantity over quality are doomed to fail as sales loses interest in follow-up activity. Understanding the attributes of a good quality lead will help marketing develop effective lead generation programs that filter out distractions.

So what can be done to generate good quality leads? The tactical answers are different for every market. However, regardless of your tactical plan, consider this simple but powerful principle – the Law of Attraction – when deploying your precious marketing resources in 2009.

#### **RECOMMENDATION #5: APPLY THE LAW OF ATTRACTION**

The Law of Attraction is simply defined as the attractive, magnetic power that draws similar energies together. This law attracts thoughts, ideas, people, situations and circumstances. When applied to B2B marketing, this theory maintains that the quality of a marketing program will determine the quality of a prospective customer attracted by the program. This principle can be applied to traditional tactics to which companies are already committed and can also be applied when considering new strategies for lead generation. Consider these two examples.

##### **Trade Shows**

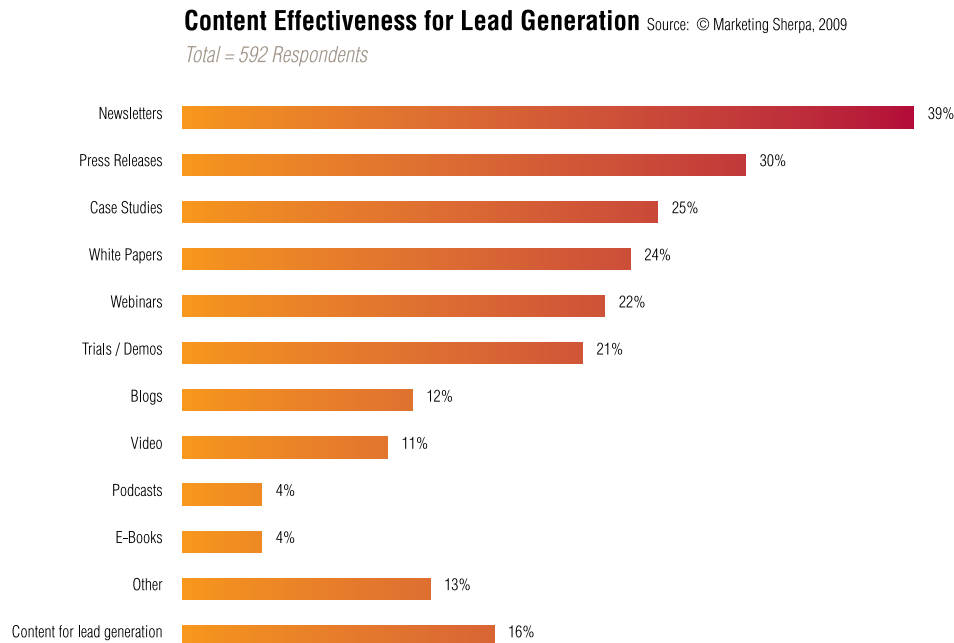
If trade shows are still important to achieving a company's 2009 business goals, TriComB2B recommends considering a smarter approach to maximize the value derived from participation.

A surprising majority of exhibitors do little to nothing to announce their participation to attendees. If your 2009 budget dollars are still committed to trade shows, send attendees a post card or eliminate postage using e-mail announcements. Include a URL to a microsite or landing page highlighting new products, announcements, promotions or exclusive show events.

Improve the quality of your company's presence by actively participating in discussion forums and speaking engagements. Establish your company as a thought leader for little to no cash investment by placing your experts directly in front of your target audience. But start now. Calls for papers for most Q4 shows are already in process.

## White Papers and Case Studies

A recent MarketingProf's study entitled "B2B Lead Generation: Integration of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 Media" cited white papers and case studies as two of the most effective content types for generating leads.



White papers and case studies are excellent forums for articulating a company's value proposition in a factual manner with little to no bias (reference Recommendation #2). No wonder these tactics rank so highly as effective content for lead generation. So why isn't everyone writing them? Because it's hard work. Done effectively, customers need to be engaged, internal subject matter experts must contribute content and professional writing resources must pull it all together.

With outside marketing expenditures cut to razor thin levels, 2009 may be the year to initiate a white paper or case study program to help meet lead generation objectives. Once completed, consider distributing the content via multiple media to account for the wide range of audiences you likely need to address in the B2B environment. This may include e-mail distribution, website downloads, webinars and podcasts.

In addition to generating new leads, there is another element of good B2B marketing that should not be forgotten...enhancing relationships with existing clients.

### RECOMMENDATION #6: BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP

There are a handful of highly effective tactics that can be leveraged for building long-term relationships with existing clients as well as for filling sales funnels. Online tactics such as discussion forums and RSS (real simple syndication) can help keep your message and expertise front and center with customers and prospects.

Offline, organizations may consider reaching out to customers in some new and personal ways. The best ambassadors for representing a company's offerings are its own people. Create opportunities, such as networking receptions, lunch and learn series and user groups where existing and potential clients can learn from staff members, and more importantly, from each other. Simple events such as these are surprisingly affordable to execute and may provide an excellent alternative to trade shows at a fraction of the cost.



## **A CHALLENGING YEAR**

They say that a calm sea does not make a skilled sailor. Take this year to show your organization what you can do in these challenging economic times. The good news is that there are potential growth areas within the economy, which are open to new marketing opportunities. And the great news is that by making adjustments to your marketing plan for 2009 and taking advantage of the rare chances this recession provides, your organization can still generate leads and obtain new clients.



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Smart. Strategic. Technical.