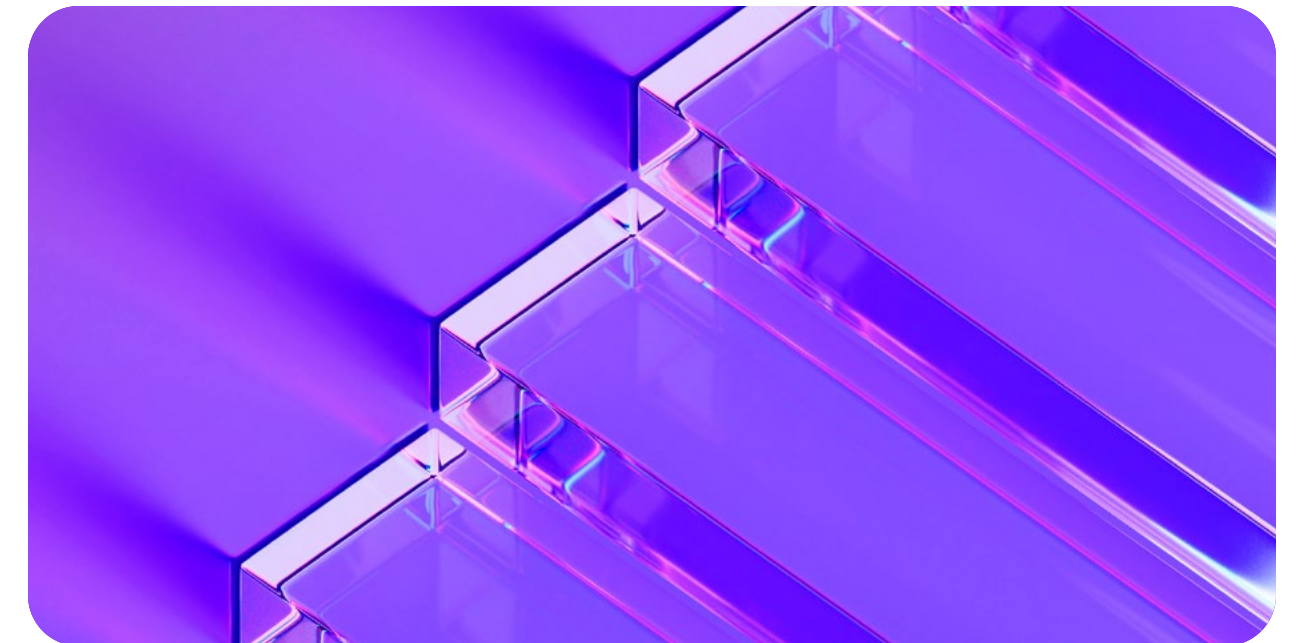


*SCHERMER*

# How to Build a For Business Brand

The essential guide to successful B2B marketing within B2C companies



# What you'll get from this guide

Every company is looking for new frontiers where they can grow, innovate and win. For consumer companies, launching or building For Business brands is where they lay the groundwork for new growth.

The problem? A consumer-facing marketing approach wasn't designed to generate For Business results.

A repurposed strategy focused on consumer behaviors leads to underperforming For Business programs and confusion. There's a better option, and it starts by understanding the fundamental differences between consumers and business buyer groups. We can show you how.

In this comprehensive guide, you'll discover:

## **Hurdles and opportunities facing For Business brands**

See what holds For Business brands back. Find opportunities to understand your business buyer groups better, identify account-based intent signals and engage stakeholders in meaningful ways.

## **Data and insights to transform your B2B for B2C program**

Gain proven insights and focus your efforts where you can have the biggest impact.

## **Actionable steps you can take to evolve your For Business strategies**

This guide will help you bring inspiration and actionable guidance back to your team – two essential ingredients in reaching For Business success.

## **Wisdom from the agency that wrote the book on building For Business brands**



*At SCHERMER, we've helped over a dozen For Business brands within consumer companies launch, scale and dominate. We created our For Business program for this exact situation, giving us an unmatched understanding of what you may be facing.*

*Now, we're sharing our experience and winning strategies from our work with top For Business brands, including **Red Wing for Business, Best Buy Ads, and Logitech for Education**. With the insights from this guide, you can advance your organization and boost For Business performance. Discover the most effective ways to build commitment, connections, trust and insight.*

**Let's get to business.**

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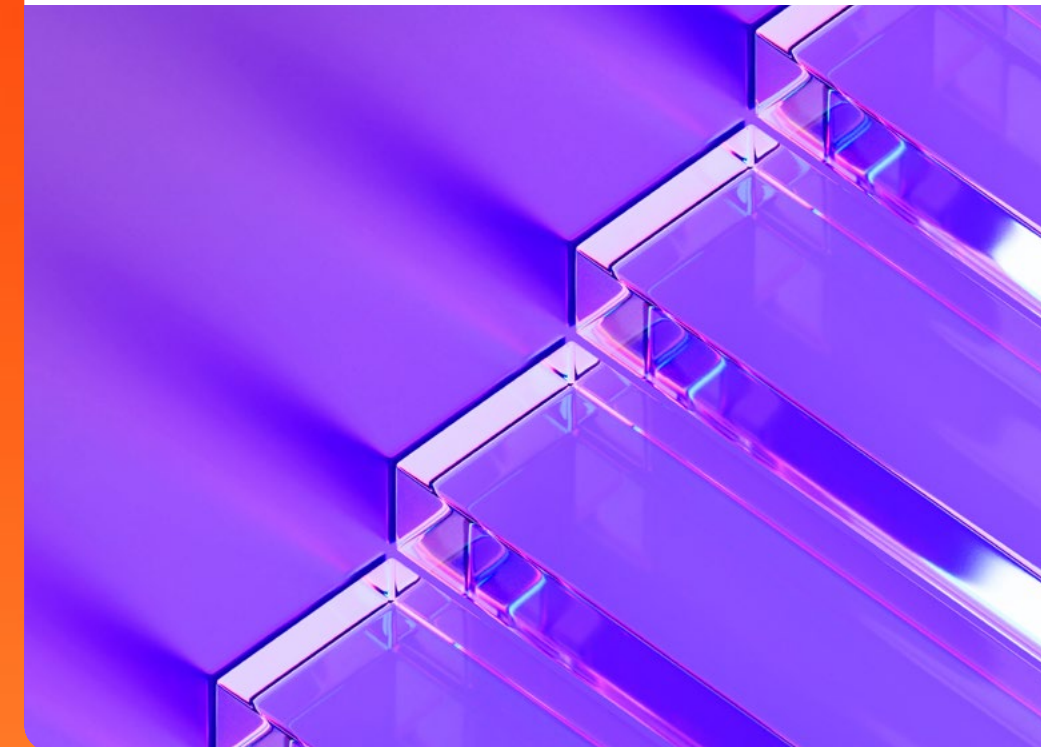


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# Build Commitment

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Written by Chris Schermer  
President & Owner  
SCHERMER



**The foundation of a successful For Business brand is unwavering commitment from leadership.**

If you're in charge of a For Business brand within a consumer company, you might wonder why it's so challenging to build momentum. Start by looking internally. Are you getting the resources and support your For Business brand needs?

Marketers and leadership must work together to transform cultures, secure resources and understand business buyer groups' unique needs. Cutting corners by applying a "lift-and-shift" of your company's consumer-facing strategies won't work. That approach is a surefire path to unremarkable results – and it's all too common. Let's dig into how commitment can drive For Business success at consumer companies.



*Successful For Business marketing isn't about quick wins. It requires a deep, top-down commitment to nurturing relationships, understanding complex buyer journeys and transforming organizational culture. You must advocate relentlessly for the tools, teams and technology that For Business brands require. With that level of commitment, brands can lock in meaningful growth and the budget to support it.*



Chris Schermer  
President & Owner

## Lead an organizational culture shift by educating and advocating

To succeed as a For Business brand, you need to understand the differences between consumers and business buyers, such as longer sales cycles and more complex decision-making. A For Business marketer needs their organization to embrace a more relationship-focused approach. This shift requires ongoing education and advocacy, and marketing leaders must lead the way. It starts by gaining clear commitment from the top.

According to a study from change management experts Prosci, projects with extremely ineffective executive sponsors were only 27% likely to meet their objectives compared to 79% with extremely effective executive sponsors – nearly a 3x increase in success.<sup>1</sup> Leadership must champion the For Business cause, ensuring it receives the necessary attention and buy-in to grow.

At SCHERMER, we see this often in our clients' organizations. For them, gaining executive sponsorship starts with laying out their overall For Business strategy, calling forth the unique qualities and needs of their business buyer groups and being clear about what they need to succeed. Surfacing insights specific to your business buyers can go a long way in building commitment from the C-suite. The more you know about target buying committees and the problems your For Business brand can solve, the easier it is to create a unified vision of success and a For Business-centric culture.

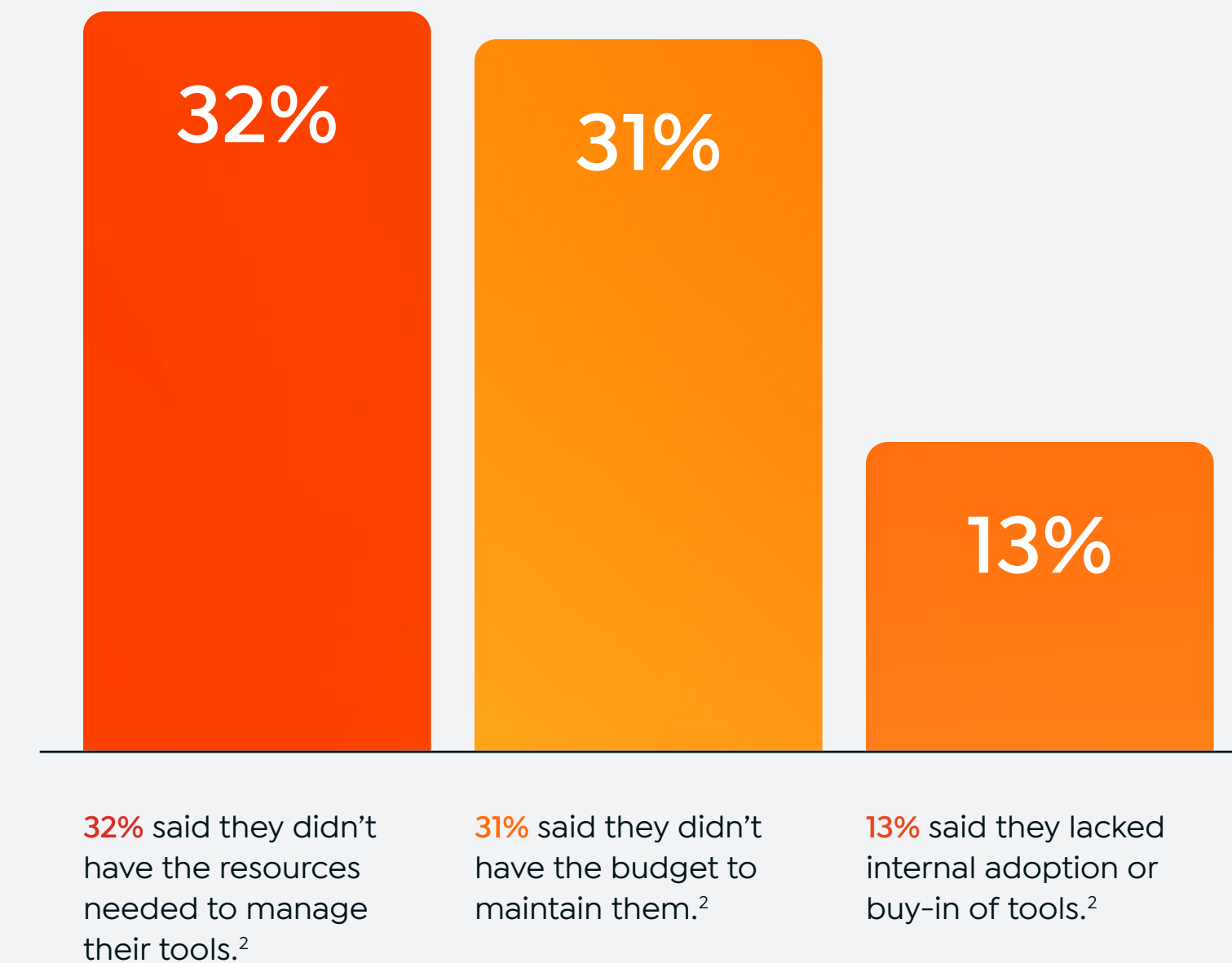
# For Business marketers need dedicated technology and teams to drive growth

In an enterprise organization, tools, technology and resources are often shared between consumer and B2B teams. This can be great for efficiency and cost savings but detrimental to For Business marketing success. A long-term relationship focus requires dedicated technology, channels, systems, datasets and content to meet business expectations and drive growth.

Investing in technology that supports business buyers is crucial. Your ideal For Business tech stack should include account-based management (ABM) platforms designed for business interactions, marketing automation tools capable of handling complex sales cycles and personalization and analytics platforms that surface actionable insights into business buyer behavior and marketing results.

With these dedicated assets and tools comes the need for dedicated individuals or teams to manage them. Without this support, strategies and programs won't see the light of day. Or worse, you'll never know how effective they are.

### Managing For Business tech and teams requires real investment



# Technology hurdles to overcome

Here are 4 common scenarios we've seen that our clients have had to overcome:

**1. Deprioritized IT support from the consumer organization for B2B web properties.**

This makes it difficult to build content hubs for sales teams and buyers, landing pages for more tailored experiences and meaningful thought leadership programs.

**2. Customer lists combining consumer and business contacts that lack critical data.**

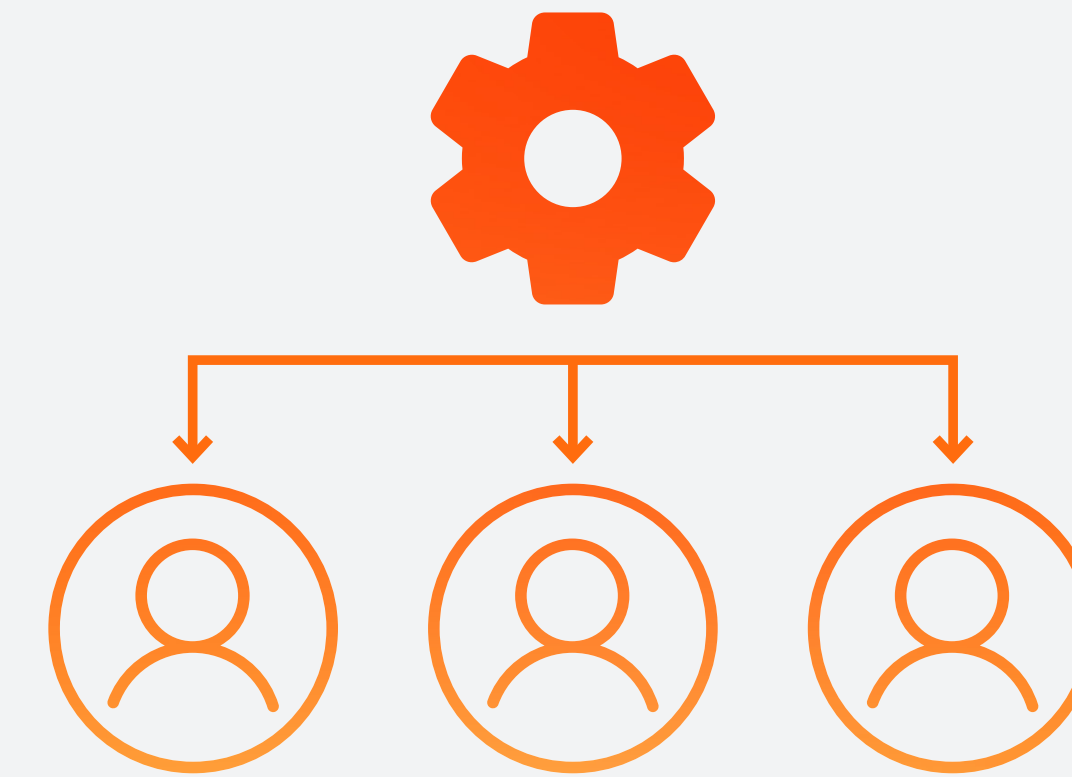
Since business buyer decision-making involves multiple stakeholders, you need to be able to manage and message multiple contacts within the same company. Lists also need to be useful and relevant enough to help your sales teams build real relationships over time.

**3. Research teams focusing on B2C audiences.**

Business buyer research is necessary for effective For Business marketing. And since there's little overlap with B2C customers, time and resources spent researching consumers won't inform your efforts.

**4. Shared social channels with the consumer business due to a lack of resources.**

Shared accounts make it obvious to buyers that your business focus isn't a priority but an afterthought. You also miss out on opportunities to build For Business relationships through social engagement and thought leadership.



Organizations can ensure their For Business brand's efforts are well supported and positioned for success by allocating resources for dedicated tools and teams.

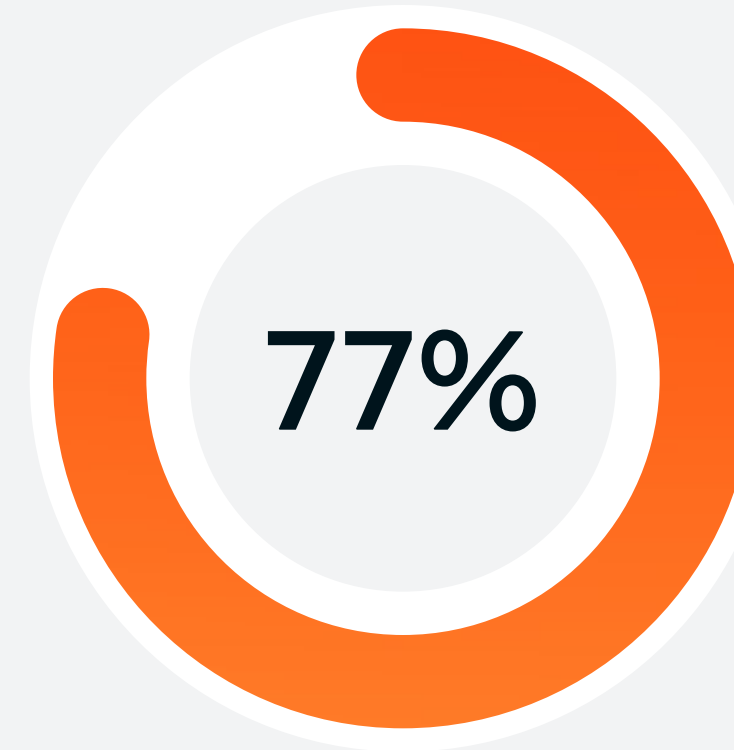
Check out our Resources section on page 23.

# Know what buyers need to decide, then deliver a simple path to purchase

Business buyers have different and more complex needs than your consumers. Spend the necessary time and resources researching and analyzing buyer groups so your value propositions, content, solutions and experiences are tailored to their specific needs.

According to Gartner, 77% of business buyers say their latest purchase was very complex or difficult. To make buyer experiences easier, marketers must uncover insights into buyer behavior, preferences and decision-making processes to craft effective marketing strategies. Then, use regular feedback loops to gain ongoing insights. This ensures that your marketing efforts continue aligning with changing buyer requirements and market trends.

One financial services client we worked with faced extremely long buying cycles and large buying committees. After taking the time to research and understand their prospects, we were able to stand up an entirely new demand gen, content marketing and marketing automation ecosystem that engaged buyers by addressing their pain points throughout this long lifecycle. If this client had followed their consumer strategies and focused only on converting prospects, they would have missed out on engaging the leads who sought out insight and education in the earlier stages of their journey.



77% of business buyers say their latest purchase was very complex or difficult.<sup>3</sup>

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**Gaining trust and loyalty from business buyers is paramount to your success. If marketers listen closely, they will learn what buyers require to earn it. Jump to the next section to learn how to connect buyer needs with your For Business brand.**



# Build Connections

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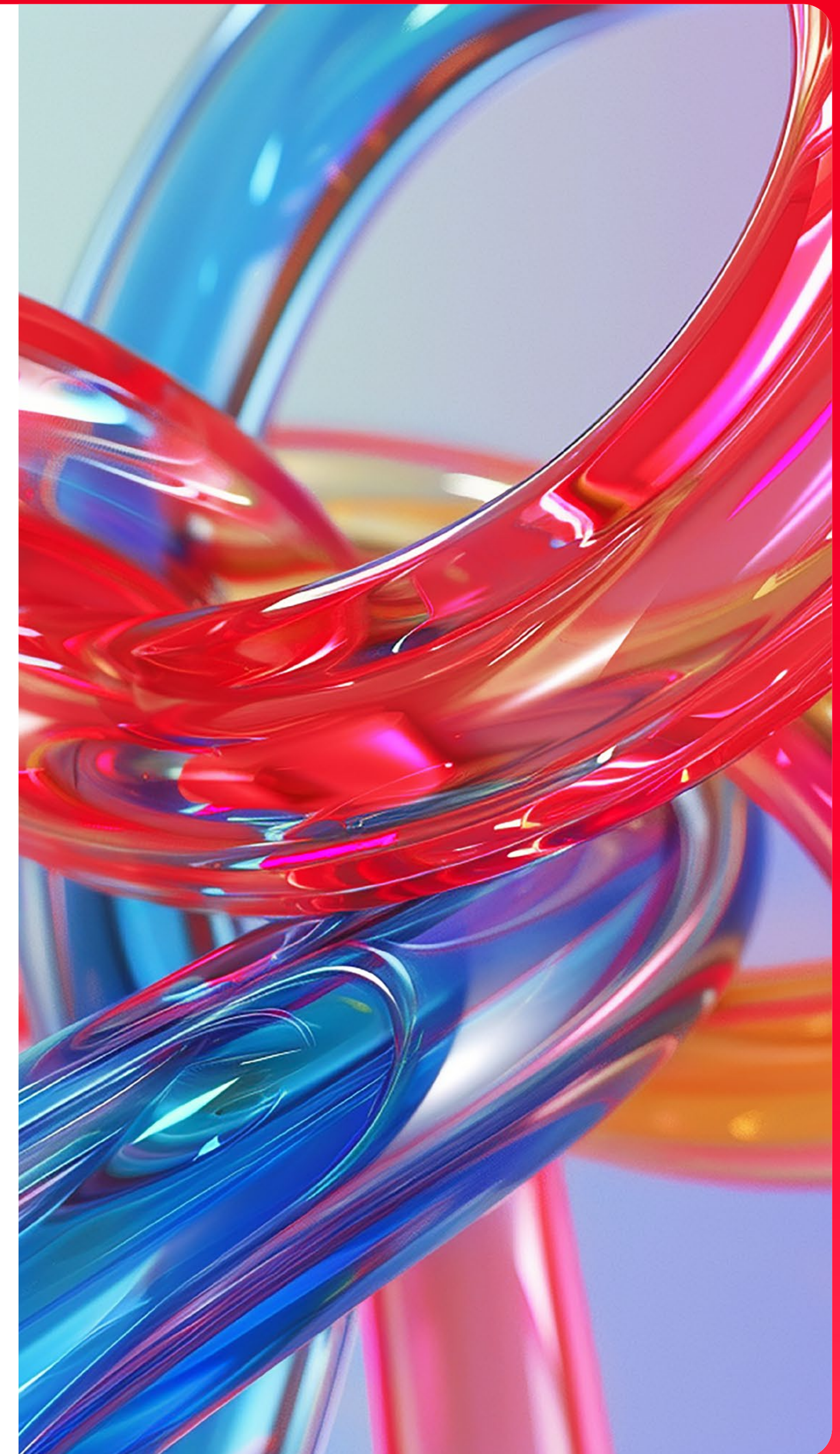


Written by Drew Shaman  
VP, Client Strategy & Service  
SCHERMER



**A meaningful relationship with your For Business buyer is the framework of a successful marketing strategy.**

But it's more complicated than social posts about upcoming trade shows or sending disjointed sales emails. Understanding decision dynamics, channel preferences, content needs and sales cycles is essential for meeting business buyers with the right content at the right place and time. Let's drill down into the marketing tactics, techniques and strategies to effectively build connections with your business buyers.





## Building Buyer Personas

When creating personas for each member of your buying committee, fill in the sections listed below. Map out the buying journey as much as possible, including any hurdles through implementation and ongoing support.

- Titles and responsibilities
- Biggest pain points
- Problems your brand solves for them
- What your brand allows them to do
- Their needs throughout the buying journey
- KPIs they're responsible for
- How they research and evaluate solutions
- Factors influencing their decisions
- Trusted sources for making purchase decisions
- Seasonality to their decision-making
- Are they problem-aware, solution-aware or brand-aware?

# Understanding decision dynamics

To make meaningful connections, you first need to understand the decision-making process at target companies. Unlike in B2C, where individual consumers usually make quick buying decisions on their own, your For Business buyers typically take months (to over a year) and loop in multiple stakeholders, including procurement, finance, executive sponsors and organizational users. On top of that, all of these stakeholders come to the table with differing agendas and requirements. Tools such as account-based marketing (ABM) platforms, journey maps and buyer personas help marketers deliver more targeted and personalized strategies to engage and attract buyers.

Buyer personas and journey maps are crucial to growing For Business brands. We advise clients not to launch products or campaigns without them. It's not always possible for every timeline and budget, but the downstream benefits of doing so far outweigh the upfront investment.

Once you understand the complexity of your business buyers' journeys, you can use that to inform your content, creative and channel mix. Consider each stakeholder's ideal process, level of involvement, role in the decision, content needs and channel preferences. At SCHERMER, we've coined this approach the "connections strategy."

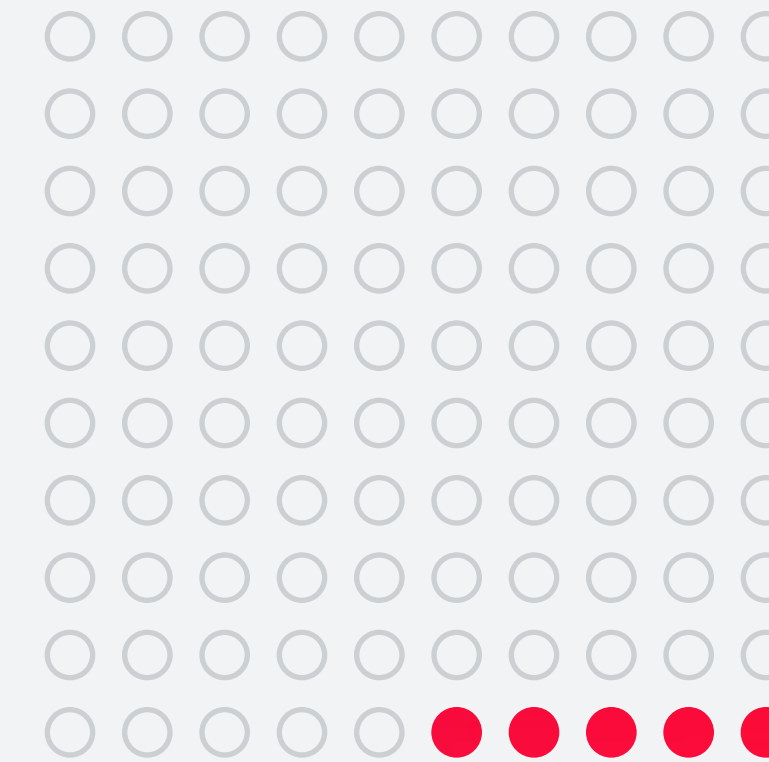
Using this strategy, we map tailored content and experiences to each stakeholder's buying journey so we can speak directly to their unique priorities and preferences. A connections strategy supports buyers at each stage of their journey and gives marketers feedback on where they can have the biggest impact – ultimately increasing engagement, conversions and revenue.

# Be always on and always ready

While consumer marketing is focused on reaching a large number of buyers, For Business marketers must focus on a smaller number of the most ideal buyers. These buyers are making large, important purchases that will impact others and their own professional trajectory. Being ever present for buyers during their long buying cycles is required to nurture those relationships. Showing up only when business buyers are ready to close ensures little impact on the final decision.

According to LinkedIn, 95% of business buyers aren't buying at any given time.<sup>4</sup> That's a lot of potential revenue and partners who must be reminded of your brand and educated on your offering during non-buying periods. Always-on brand and demand generation efforts are great ways to keep 95% of buyer prospects warm, while lead generation and ABM programs deliver content and experiences to the other 5%.

An always-on approach requires dedication. Purchase decisions can't be made until buyers know their budgets, schedule demos, engage in (many) sales conversations, assess all solutions, present the business case to executive leadership, build consensus and gain approval. All these tasks take time, and the journey requires a lot of content and communication. Ensuring each buyer can find what they need from your brand when they need it doesn't happen by accident – it requires strategic thought and a lot of effort.



Only 5% of B2B buyers are ready to purchase.<sup>4</sup>

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Brands with predictable seasonality or buying seasons, like government contract renewal periods, should increase brand awareness, thought leadership and lead generation efforts during the non-buying season. This strategy keeps media and acquisition costs down, using the first-party data collected during the non-buying season as a springboard for conversion later.



9 out of 10 business buyers are more likely to engage with brands that provide personalized experiences.<sup>5</sup>

# Personalize experiences for the strongest connections

**Personalization is about understanding and addressing the specific needs of each stakeholder within buying committees.**

This could involve altering your messages to hit the most relevant pain points for that role, driving to more personalized web experiences or varying your frequency and channels. However, delivering personalized experiences at scale can be challenging. Leveraging data and technology, such as ABM, automation and AI, can help you understand your clients better and personalize marketing in meaningful ways.

Your For Business transactions are rooted in relationships. Digital marketing efforts, then, should aim to build and nurture your connections. And you can bet they'll differ from your consumer brand's efforts.

By understanding the digital landscape and leveraging it effectively for your business buyers, you can transform your brand's narratives from being heard to being felt. This is a shift from mere communication to deep connections based on your understanding of your buyers' needs and challenges.

# Build Trust

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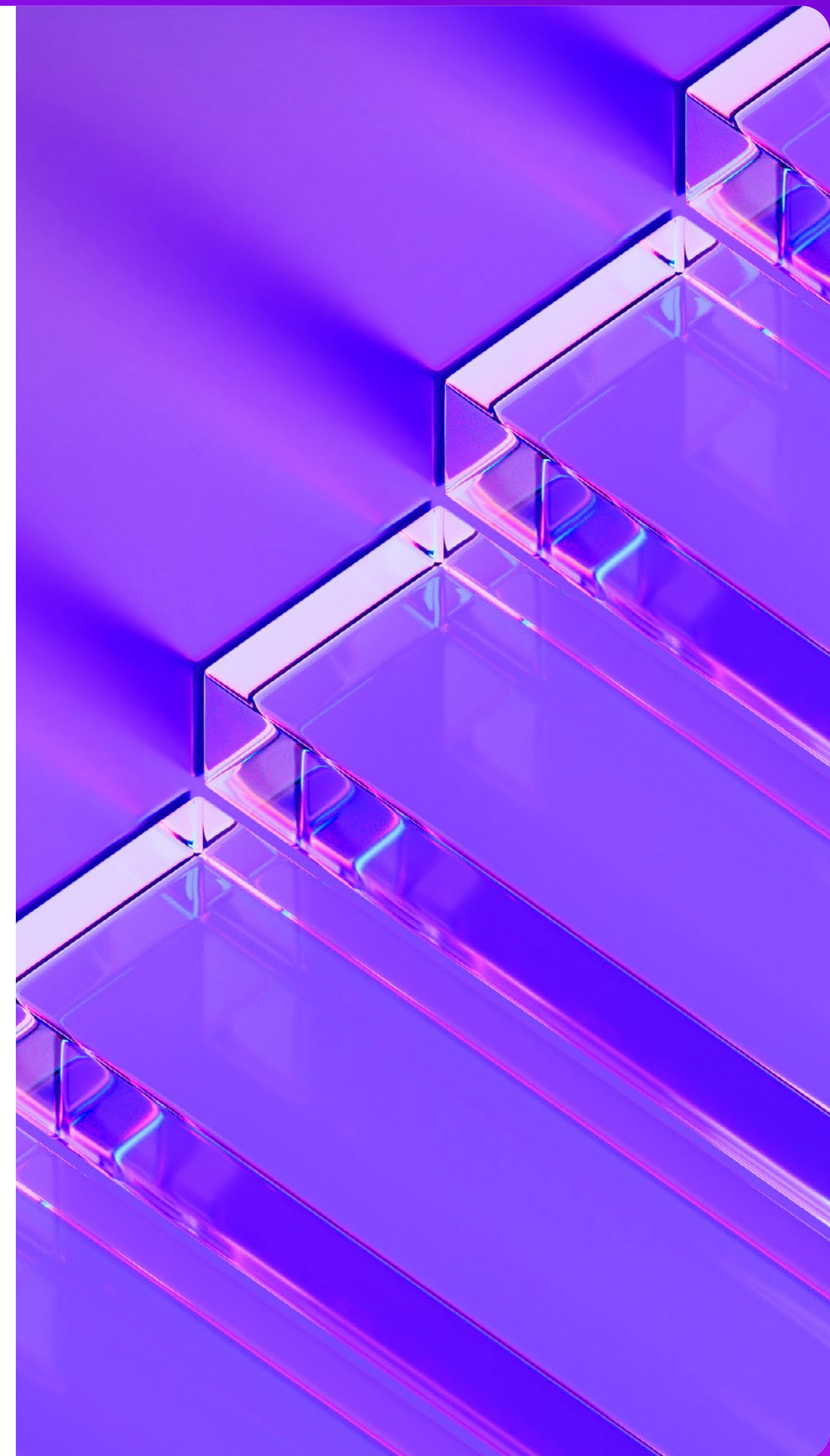
Written by Nathan Denton  
VP, Creative & Content  
SCHERMER



**There are significantly more factors that come with trusting your For Business brand compared to your consumer one.**

Because you're coming from a consumer organization, your business buyers may have negative perceptions, question its relevance or have had a poor experience with the consumer brand. Or maybe they haven't heard of your brand at all.

Any of these situations can slam the door shut on your For Business efforts. So, how do historically consumer companies translate and tout their For Business brand story to buyers? Let's explore how to leverage your consumer brand's equity, the unexpectedly powerful role of emotion in business decision-making and the best way to build buyer trust.





*When For Business buyers see personal value in their decisions, they're more likely to buy from you and pay more. If you want buyers to bet their career on you, show them you're committed to their success, not just the sale.*



Nathan Denton  
VP, Creative & Content

## Leverage the consumer brand, but don't get cast in its shadow

**Your consumer brand is strong enough to launch a For Business program – take advantage of that equity.** Building and growing your For Business brand will come with some built-in brand momentum. However, your business buyers need a significantly different experience than consumers. For that reason, think of your consumer brand attributes as a source of inspiration, not a shadow the For Business brand must live under.

While the history of a consumer brand can help streamline and speed up brand awareness efforts, it can also impede success. Business buyers demand relevant and tailored experiences, content, support and service from a brand to earn their trust. Consumer-focused brands haven't considered the nuances of buyers and their businesses. So, while a buyer may be aware of a consumer brand – and maybe even admire it – they likely have doubts it will deliver what they need to help them do business better.

When the consumer brand is a baseline, you can leverage inherent brand strengths, leave behind what doesn't translate and add what's needed to create the most relevant brand for your business buyers. Only with this freedom to evolve the consumer brand can For Business marketers ensure buyers receive the right experiences, content and communication to earn their trust and form long-lasting relationships.

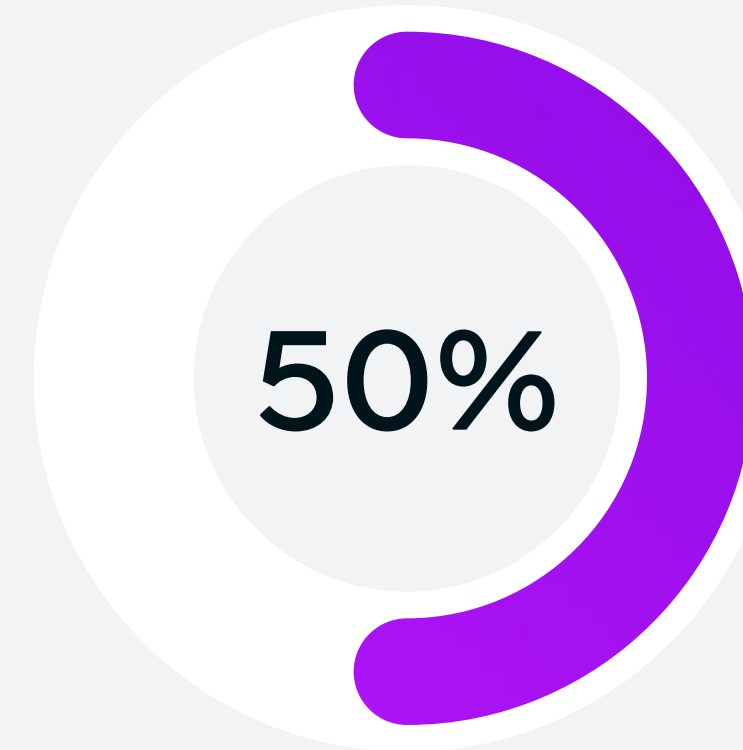
# Respect how emotion drives For Business decision-making

Often, the tedious 6–12-month process of business decision-making is an emotional pressure cooker. A lot is riding on the decision, so we understand why business buyers take their time. This one choice impacts the trajectory of the business, but it also equally impacts buyers personally.

Reputation, promotions, job security and career advancement are all on the line. So, make no mistake: For Business buyer decision-making is a personal and emotional one. According to a Google study, that process is significantly more emotional than consumer decisions<sup>6</sup> – and For Business creative must lean into it.

Making your buyers the heroes in creative and focusing on their desired outcomes helps them envision the personal reward of working together. And that personal value leads to substantial business value.

According to Google, buyers are 50% more likely to purchase a product or service when they see personal value in their business purchase and 8x more likely to pay a premium when personal value is present. So, while the perception is that organizations are rational and logical, the people within are just that – people. And those people require an emotional, personal connection to a For Business brand to make a confident decision. So, get personal with For Business creative to get results.



Buyers are 50% more likely to purchase a product or service when they see personal value in their purchase.<sup>6</sup>



Buyers are 8x more likely to pay a premium for products and services when they see personal value in their purchase.<sup>6</sup>

# Building on a legacy brand while championing business buyers

**When a 120-year-old consumer brand approached us to launch their first-ever For Business brand campaign,** we leveraged their long-held brand equity to tell a different story – a story that resonated with their business buyers’ needs and concerns.

Our campaign championed this audience, raising awareness around the important work they do and engaging them with relevant, insightful content and creative throughout the long sales cycle. Following this campaign, our client saw a 34% increase in qualified leads and revenue growth across 74% of accounts despite unfavorable market conditions. Their business buyers felt heard and celebrated by a brand they admired. And the results reflected the trust they were able to build.





# Understand what joins brands and buyers together for the long term

We've said it again and again, but that's because of how important it is: the biggest thing that will determine the long-term success of a For Business program is building trusting relationships. Of course, revenue, profit, market share and the like are indicators of success. However, those metrics result from how well the brand has connected with its business buyers. So, how do For Business brands build trust that fosters long-term relationships? Well, just like you do with anyone else.

Get to know business buyers, then help them out. Make them smile. Listen. Give advice. Make their jobs easier. Be present. And support them through and through. Your For Business brand is well positioned to become a trusted and loyal partner, so take advantage of the opportunity. Buyers will rely on brands to support them as they continue their unique journey – gathering information, learning about the offering, collaborating with colleagues on the buying committee and ultimately selling the solution to the rest of the organization. If a For Business brand is empathetic to a buyer's situation, displays relevance and expertise and shows up at the right time with the right content from start to finish, it'll earn the trust required to form a long-term partnership.



3 out of 4 B2B buyers said their decision to purchase from a vendor was based on trust and credibility.<sup>7</sup>

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### What we mean by “the right content at the right time”

From your connections strategy, you can create assets that communicate what a buyer group needs at different stages. This can range from white papers and webinars to sell sheets and video series. Successful For Business marketing is about leveraging the insight that exists within your organization to create relevant, useful content for buyers. It's about shifting from always selling to educating, inspiring, engaging and supporting.

# Build Insight



Written by Matt Mudra  
VP, Planning & Performance  
SCHERMER



**For Business marketing leaders within a consumer company are often accountable for a substantial portion of an organization's revenue growth. This requires them to continually reinforce their impact and value.**

Measuring the success of your For Business efforts can be challenging due to the complex nature of business buying. Ensuring that efforts are calculated the right way, with the right data, and supported by the right tools and technology is critical to showing value and overall marketing effectiveness. This section explores the types of tools, metrics and strategies that can drive meaningful insights and results.





*Measurement methods need to match the For Business buying cycle and prioritize metrics that matter. Patience and proper attribution are key elements when measuring effectiveness. Investing in the right tools to capture these insights will change your For Business program's trajectory.*



Matt Mudra  
VP, Planning & Performance

# Measuring performance takes commitment and patience

Revenue attribution and marketing performance measurement are extremely complex. We owe it to the For Business buying process, of course – it lasts an average of 6 or more months,<sup>8</sup> requires an average of 27 interactions<sup>9</sup> and involves an average buying committee of 6.8 people.<sup>10</sup>

For this reason, For Business brands need tools that can track results from all business marketing channels, including content marketing (blog, case studies, webinars, white papers), website and landing pages, email, chat, search, social media, paid campaigns, referral marketing, videos and offline channels. Keeping track of everything is no easy task, but it is necessary for attribution. Asking salespeople to manually capture and track data can lead to inconsistency, making measuring your impact nearly impossible.

Measuring For Business marketing efforts also requires patience – and data. At SCHERMER, we often experience clients pulling the plug on in-market campaigns after only a few months – even when they know the typical sales cycle is 6 months (or longer). Tracking the average time it takes a lead to convert into a buyer, for example, can aid in aligning your organization's expectations with your buyers' behaviors.

# Focus on the metrics that mean more

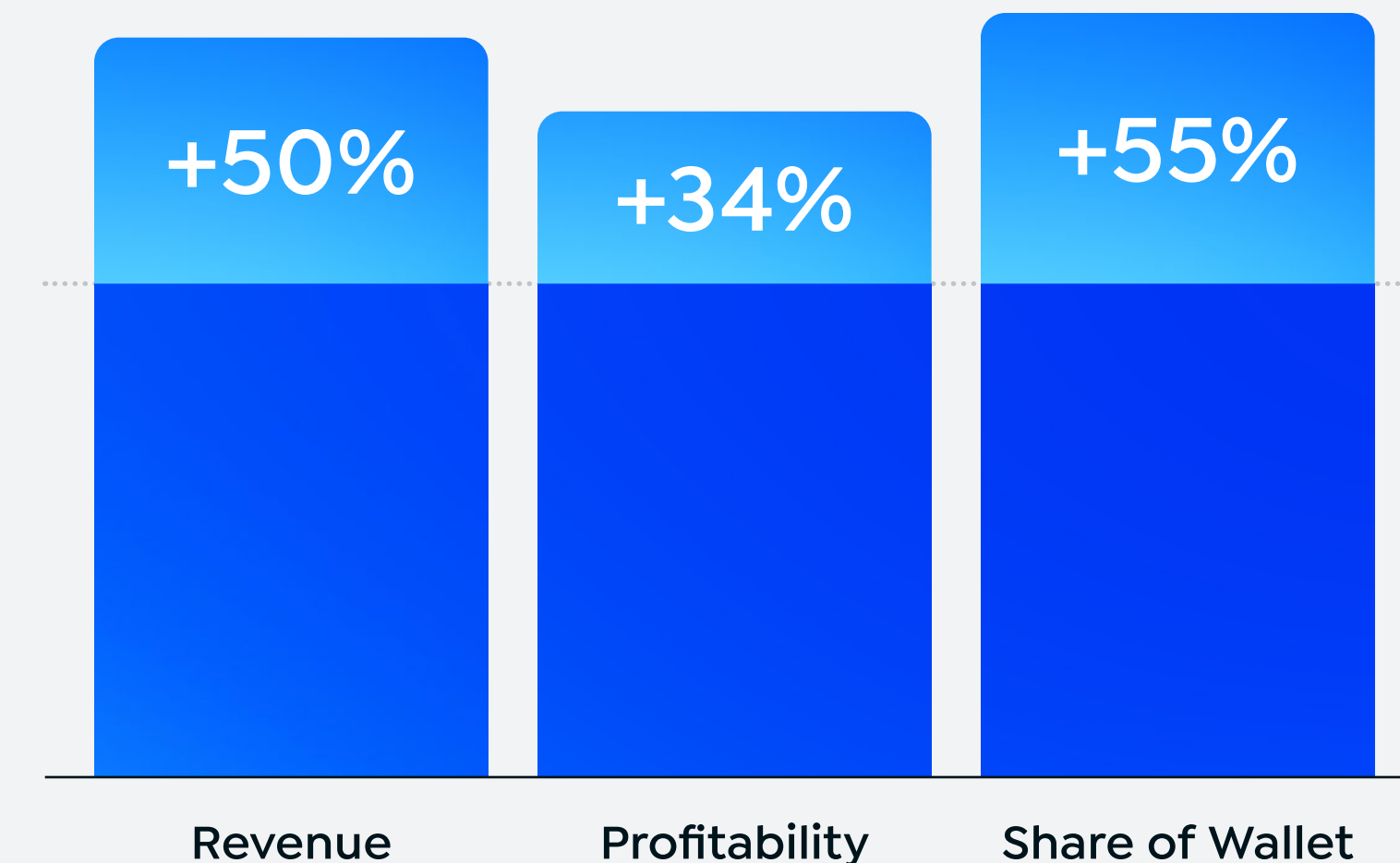
In For Business marketing, long-term, relationship-based metrics are crucial. Don't focus on the consumer marketing team's metrics – measure and monitor the analytics that enable you to optimize programs and campaigns, defend marketing budgets and strategies and foster lasting connections with buyers.

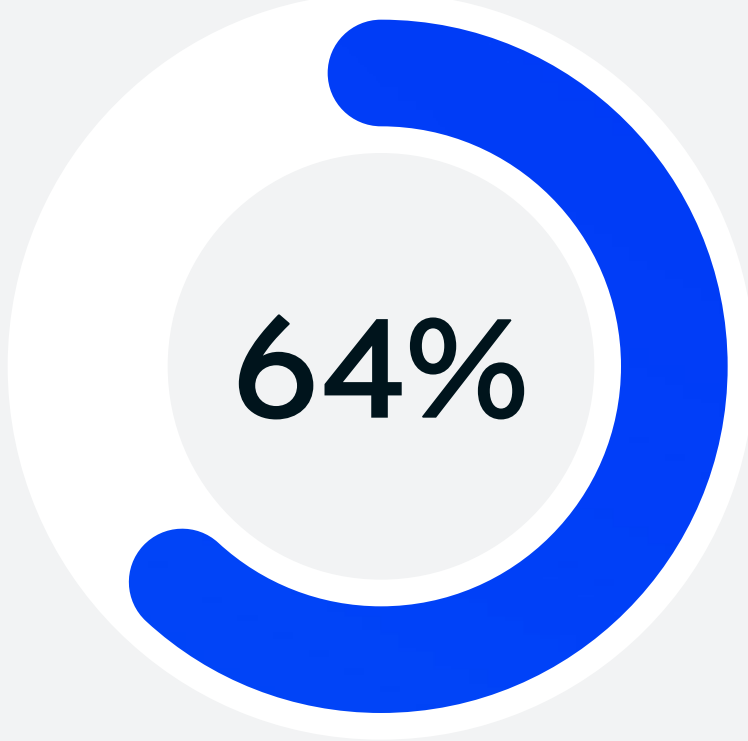
The key is customer engagement metrics.

According to a report by Gallup, B2B companies that excel in customer engagement achieve 50% higher revenue and 34% higher profitability than those that do not.<sup>11</sup> To build and maintain long-haul engagement with business buyers, look to metrics like customer lifetime value (CLV), customer satisfaction (CSAT), net promoter score (NPS), retention rate and churn rate to provide insight into the health and loyalty of your connections.

Pair these long-term metrics with timely program and campaign numbers such as conversion rate, marketing qualified leads (MQLs), sales qualified leads (SQLs) and MQL to SQL rate. Adding in regular feedback mechanisms like a solid voice of the customer (VoC) strategy can also help you monitor, iterate and improve marketing efforts. This will also give you helpful insight into your business buyer's decision-making process.

B2B businesses with high customer engagement scores achieved 50% higher revenue, 34% higher profitability and 55% higher share of wallet than those with lower scores.<sup>11</sup>



A donut chart with a blue ring and a white center, showing 64% of the circle filled with blue. The percentage '64%' is written in large black font in the center.

64%

64% of B2B marketers don't trust their marketing measurement for decision-making.

A donut chart with a blue ring and a white center, showing 61% of the circle filled with blue. The percentage '61%' is written in large black font in the center.

61%

61% of B2B marketers don't believe their measurement and analytics align with organizational objectives and/or growth strategies.

# Invest in technologies built to support For Business brands

The tech stack at your consumer company likely doesn't accommodate the unique needs of a For Business brand. As a result, you will need dedicated datasets within the current platforms – or new technology altogether – to be successful.

According to a report by Forrester, 64% of B2B marketing leaders admitted they don't trust their organization's marketing measurement for decision-making.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, 61% conceded that their measurement doesn't align well with organizational objectives or growth strategies.<sup>12</sup>

Fortunately, many tools designed to handle B2B's complexity offer robust features that enable effective, data-driven For Business marketing and automation.

# Finding the best For Business tools

When considering the right tools, look for platforms capable of managing long sales cycles, prioritizing high-value accounts and factoring in multiple touchpoints – in addition to providing detailed reporting. A For Business brand also benefits from platforms that integrate with one another for seamless, accurate measurement.

ABM platforms such as 6sense and Demandbase offer the ability to find accounts that are in-market and activate them directly. While your consumer marketing team may be focused on individual decision-makers, your For Business tools need to identify account-level intent signals and find buying committees at different stages of the buying process. Other intent data tools, such as G2 Buyer Intent, Bombora and ZoomInfo, can help you identify accounts actively seeking solutions. These tools can integrate with your customer relationship management (CRM) platform, such as Salesforce, for a seamless handoff to sales.

Finally, pure intelligence and analytics tools, such as Tableau or Looker, allow you to create custom dashboards by pulling in your ABM, CRM and other data. This lets you see campaign performance and pipeline health in real time.

Depending on your needs, you might need a combination of tools or a more robust platform that offers exactly the features you want. Investing in the right tools enhances efficiency and provides the insights needed to demonstrate marketing effectiveness and continually refine.

## Factors for finding the right tools for your For Business brand



Here are some considerations to keep in mind as you explore and compare tools to support and grow your For Business marketing.

- Alignment with your KPIs and marketing strategies
- Customer and data management sophistication
- Integration with existing platforms and the potential to scale
- Personalization and automation capabilities (including multi touch attribution)
- Content management offerings and insights (or how it integrates with your CMS)
- Analytics and performance measurement
- Compliance and security features
- Your budget and ROI expectations

# Your For Business brand's success story starts today

Now that you know how to build commitment, connections, trust and insight with your business buyers, **it's time to level up your For Business marketing.** Start with these steps:

- Examine your internal processes, tools and resources to see if you have what you need to be successful.
- Embark on business buyer group research that will help you shape journeys and provide easy paths to purchase.
- Leverage your understanding of your For Business buyers' pain points to develop personalized, highly relevant content and creative.
- Drill down into analytics that will allow you to capture results and inform future marketing efforts through powerful tools.

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11. Gallup
12. Forrester

## FOR BUSINESS MARKETING RESOURCES

A list of tools and resources that can help you drive results.

→ **6sense**

→ **Demandbase**

→ **G2Buyer Intent**

→ **Bombora**

→ **ZoomInfo**

→ **Salesforce Marketing Cloud**

→ **Tableau**

→ **Looker**

## About the authors



**Chris Schermer**  
President & Owner  
SCHERMER



Chris doesn't just know B2B; he embodies it. Since 1997, he's led brand, demand and digital initiatives for some of the world's leading B2B companies, helping even the most established consumer brands expand successfully into the For Business space. A respected industry leader, Chris served on the ANA's Business Marketing board of directors for 8 years, founded the MN chapter of the Business Marketing Association and currently sits on the board of MAGNET, a network of agencies with 3,500 employees and \$300M in collective revenue. His passion is guiding brands through the unique challenges and opportunities of growing For Business brands.



**Nathan Denton**  
VP, Creative & Content  
SCHERMER



Nate brings over 20 years of experience leading creative and digital experience teams with a passion for helping brands connect meaningfully with their audiences. At SCHERMER, he leads our content and creative teams, specializing in crafting experiences that inspire and engage business buyers, especially for brands within consumer companies. Nate's background at top agencies like IA Collaborative, Mirum, One North Interactive and Ogilvy, combined with his love for culture, allows him to bring a unique blend of creativity and strategic thinking to every project.



**Drew Shaman**  
VP, Client Strategy & Service  
SCHERMER



Drew has been a driving force at SCHERMER for over 5 years, leading account teams and managing campaigns for clients building For Business brands, including Red Wing for Business, Best Buy Ads, 3M Medical and EarthDaily. With 23 years of experience in digital transformation and marketing at agencies like Colle McVoy, Carmichael Lynch, Fallon and space150, Drew understands how to navigate complex business buying cycles and deliver results that resonate with buyers.



**Matt Mudra**  
VP, Planning & Performance  
SCHERMER



With 10+ years of experience across the full digital mix, Matt specializes in integrating data and analytics to drive For Business success for consumer organizations. At SCHERMER, he leads digital and demand capabilities, from POEM connection strategy to channel management, media technology, marketing automation and CRM platforms. Matt's expertise in using data to optimize campaigns makes him the go-to person for brands looking to maximize their B2B impact.

### It doesn't end here.

When you're ready to take your For Business brand to the next level, so are we.

We've led For Business marketing for more than a dozen +\$1B consumer companies and are ready to do the same for your brand. From brand development to product launches to channel marketing, we're well versed in business buyer needs and can effectively address them to drive results.

Keep the momentum going. See our work and reach out at [schermer.co/forbusiness](https://schermer.co/forbusiness)

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