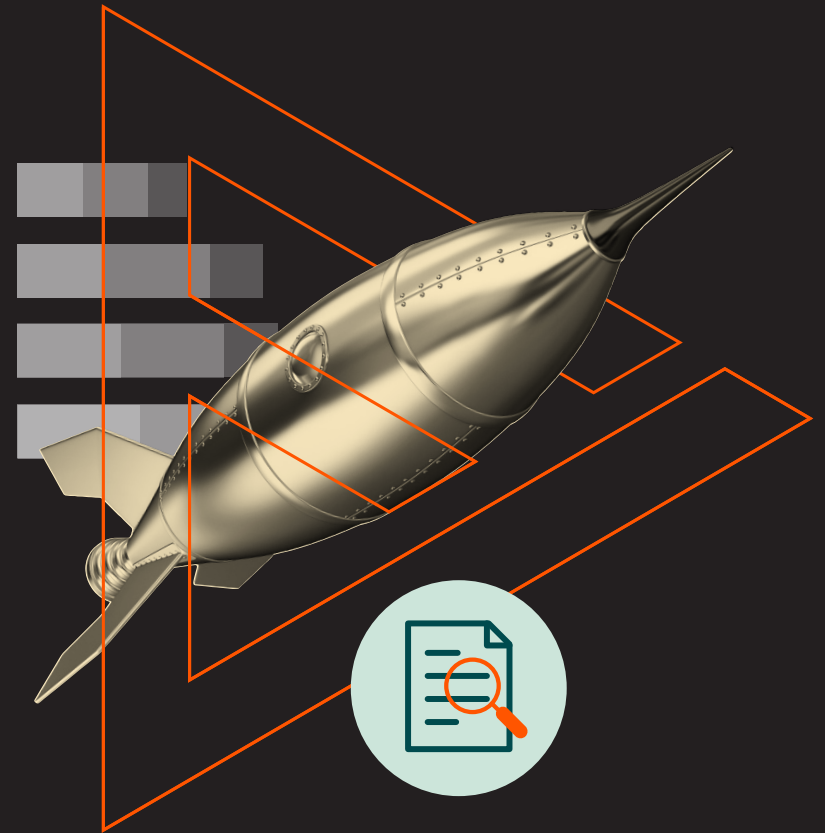




High-Impact Content Marketing: A Guide for B2B Tech Brands

Optimize Your Content Engine
to Accelerate Pipeline and
Business Impact



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The B2B Buyer Journey Is Complicated – Success Depends on High-Impact Content Marketing

Long. Complex. Chock full of pitstops. Those are only a few ways to describe the journey B2B buyers take before turning into closed-won revenue. And guess what? That journey gets more complicated by the day. The typical B2B buying decision is made by a committee — six to ten decision-makers, on average. Oh, and that doesn't include the influencers who may not have the final say but weigh in with their two cents all along the way.

So yes, your brand has to appeal to a large group. No matter how savvy your Sales team, though, most of the weight falls on marketing's shoulders because today's B2B buyers don't want to spend much time talking to sales reps. Only 17% of their journey is spent talking to suppliers.¹

| In other words, 83% of their journey consists of consuming content that helps them identify and consider potential solutions.

You may have heard some people call it “the era of the self-serve buyer,” while other conversations revolve around the mystery of the “Dark Funnel.” No matter what you call it, the end result is the same: today's B2B buyers want helpful, transparent, comprehensive information they can consume at their own pace. It's mission-critical to have high-impact content that meets their expectations at every step. For more mature brands, this doesn't mean starting from scratch — it's all about scaling what works and ensuring your content strategy evolves in tandem with B2B buying trends.

And what about all those AI chatbots like ChatGPT and Perplexity that your prospects are using? You need to fuel them with the information you want prospects to understand, making the role of content marketing even more important.

The Path B2B Buyers Take (And How to Measure Your Progress)

No matter your product or persona, all B2B buyers follow the same general path:

Awareness, Acquisition, Conversion, Close, Loyalty.

It isn't quite the Yellow Brick Road, though, because buyers don't follow a nice, neat linear path through each stage. They may waffle back and forth between stages, they may drop out for a while, and to make it even more complex, all of their fellow decision-makers may be in different stages. This is why B2B tech sales cycles are so long. It takes the average B2B SaaS buyer 56 days to go from anonymous first touch to a demo. Getting all the way to closed-won takes, on average, about seven months.²

Since B2B buyers only want to interact with Sales at the end, you need a robust content library to keep them engaged. However, tech companies often confuse volume for effectiveness. It's not about creating a bunch of content to cover a long sales cycle – it's about creating the right content.

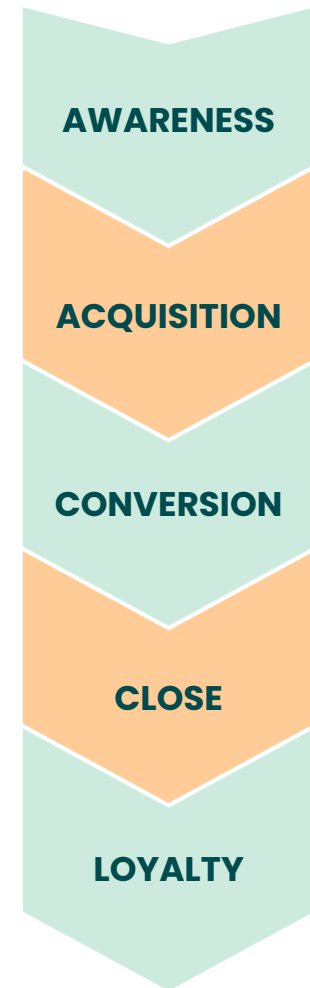
It can be tempting to try to skip stages in a rush to revenue, but B2B buyers have made their expectations clear: 90% of them say it's important for vendors to provide relevant content at each stage of the buying process.³ In 2023, B2B content consumption was 19% higher than in 2022. In 2024, B2B content consumption rose an additional 14%.⁴

What exactly does “relevant content” mean? And how do you know if yours is working?

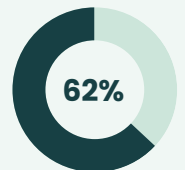
Let's break down each stage:

In the **Awareness Stage**, the buyer isn't technically a buyer yet. Instead, they know they have some kind of issue and are trying to figure out what the problem actually is. This is where top-of-funnel thought leadership content that addresses specific pain points — like blog posts, articles, infographics, and short videos — is so valuable. This isn't the time to blatantly sell your product or service. Instead, your content should provide the unbiased data and insights someone needs to identify their problem and begin learning how to fix it. Start strong out of the gate and you'll not only showcase your expertise but also start building trust.

Because top-of-funnel content is ungated, you don't know who is consuming it — meaning your only measuring stick is impressions. Impressions can happen in lots of places, like your website, social media, third-party websites, and partner channels. All are valuable, but impressions on your own website come with detailed Google Analytics data that tells you how visitors got to a specific asset and how long they spent consuming it. That's how you identify which topics, types of content, and distribution channels appeal most to your audience.



Did You Know? 62% of B2B buyers rely more on practical content like case studies and visual content, like webinars, to guide buying decisions.⁷



In the **Acquisition Stage**, the buyer-to-be is actively looking for solutions to their problem. They still have a bit of learning to do, so they need more top-of-funnel thought leadership content, but they also need middle-of-funnel content — like ebooks, best practice guides, interactive assessments, and webinars — that can help them narrow down a list of premier vendors. Success here is a careful combination of education and proof of your market leadership.

In this stage, you measure progress through engagement, including web metrics (the number of pages per session, exit pages, and time spent engaging with key pages), email metrics (open rates, click-to-open rates), and other intent signals (search terms by account, job postings, news). The most important metric, though, is engagement by your target accounts (which an ABM tool like Demandbase will measure in Engagement Minutes). By fine-tuning the level of engagement by contacts across an account, you will see when an organization is actively moving into Acquisition mode and looking for a solution.

As you navigate the nuances of each stage, keep these benchmarks in mind:

Stage	Metric	B2B Tech Benchmark
Acquisition	Pages Per Session	3
Acquisition	Average Session Duration	2:46
Acquisition	Landing Page Conversion Rate	7.84%*
Conversion	Email Open Rate	17.6%
Conversion	Email Click-Through-Rate	2.50%
Conversion	Email Click-to-Open-Rate	9.8%
Conversion	Lead-to-MQL Rate	39%*

*Industry benchmarks for B2B SaaS

The **Conversion Stage** is where the rubber meets the road — you either prove you’re worthy of the buyer’s shortlist or you lose out to the competition. To prove your worthiness, you need to keep the content magic going. That means warming leads in an automated email nurture.

This is where many tech brands fail because they turn every lead over to Sales the moment they fill out a form. However, the buyer isn’t ready for a sales conversation yet. A whopping 79% of marketing leads never convert to sales — and a lack of lead nurturing is the common cause.⁵

If you’re going to make it onto the shortlist, you’ve got to prove you can generate results. A combination of middle- and bottom-of-the-funnel content like case studies, use case one-pagers, and total economic impact reports show the business impact you create for your customers. You’ll know if it’s working based on two sets of metrics: email engagement and lead-to-MQL rate. If you’re targeting specific accounts, you’ll also want to measure your account-to-MQA rate.

In the **Close Stage**, the buyer has selected a favorite vendor and just needs a few more details to get to the finish line. Make that final push with solid bottom-of-the-funnel and sales enablement content like product briefs, testimonial videos, and how-to guides. The most important metric in this stage is obvious: closed-won revenue.



Did You Know?

Organizations that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales-ready leads at a 33% lower cost.⁶

Finally, in the **Loyalty Stage**, the buyer has officially become a closed-won customer — but that doesn’t mean it’s time to let off the gas pedal. Loyalty isn’t automatic; it’s carefully cultivated. To earn it, you must continue building a meaningful relationship. Keep them updated on industry developments and new product features in a monthly newsletter or a podcast. Become their go-to expert with videos, a consistent blog cadence, FAQs, and how-to guides. Remember, it’s always cheaper to retain an existing customer than to convert a new one.



How Does Your Content Marketing Maturity Measure Up?

Consider your content marketing to be like a fine wine — the more mature it is, the better it is. What tannins and body are to wine, an expert team, frameworks, and carefully-considered strategies are to content marketing. The most mature content marketing teams:

- Create measurable impacts on the organization
- Accurately predict results for paid and owned programs based on previous performance
- Make data-driven optimizations to strategies and tactics
- Are recognized by the entire organization as crucial to the brand's success

Looking at this from a more tactical level, fully-mature content marketing teams:

- Have a defined strategy that's based on the organization's overall business goals
- Are aligned with the rest of the organization on corporate and product value propositions and differentiators
- Thoroughly understand ideal customer profiles (ICPs) and their pain points
- Build a roadmap of net-new and repurposed content assets
- Set clear roles and responsibilities for internal and external resources
- Frequently analyze key performance metrics

Even well-resourced teams can hit a ceiling. You may have the headcount and the budget, but are you maximizing insights and ROI from every content asset, campaign, and channel? Are you impacting the business as a whole?

How Mature is the Typical Tech Brand?

Firebrand uses a proprietary Content Marketing Maturity Matrix to assess tech brands' current operations, uncover gaps, and identify opportunities. While we use a number of variables as part of our assessment, here's the easiest way to sum it up:



Did You Know? Only 42% of tech marketers have a documented content strategy⁸ and only 54% measure the ROI of their content marketing.⁹

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined ICPs/target audiences • Established messaging • A full-funnel journey 					
Defined Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution & amplification frameworks • Streamlined approvals • Scalable 					
Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated resources • Publishing cadence • Promotion cadence 					
Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI analysis framework • Optimizations • Data-driven pivots 					
Overall Business Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurable business impact • Predictable paid & owned results • Crucial to brand success 					

Advancing through the matrix doesn't mean simply publishing more content. Instead, progress comes from a strategic action plan based on proven frameworks, best practices, optimized resources, and ongoing data analysis.

Real World Example: Taking the Express Lane Through the Content Maturity Matrix

A leading public cybersecurity provider had a large content library and well-defined target personas, but asset creation was ad hoc and performance data analysis was sporadic. Firebrand performed a content audit of their efforts over the previous 12 months, diving deep into asset creation trends in each stage of the funnel, engagement insights, and distribution processes.

After this deep dive, we rated their existing content marketing maturity at Stage 3. Because they have a large team that's bolstered by external resources, we developed a strategy to reach Stage 5 within five months:



One of our first priorities was to host a messaging workshop that aligned everyone on value propositions and differentiators for the organization and its flagship product.



We also conducted several working sessions to gather win/loss insights from Sales, discuss key business goals for the year, and determine priority target verticals.



We built a year-long content marketing roadmap that included creating 10+ net new content assets to fill gaps in the funnel.



Our content marketing roadmap was so comprehensive that it formed the foundation for 15 integrated campaigns across four vertical themes and five horizontal themes.

Real World Example: Jumping Over Hurdles to Closed-Won with Content Marketing

A fintech brand came to Firebrand with a list of seven reasons why they were losing sales deals. After a comprehensive assessment of their current content marketing programs, the content assets that support each stage of their buying journey, the content assets aimed at each target persona, and performance data across channels, we identified 19 key opportunities to address each closed-lost reason from several angles.

Through these opportunities, the organization was able to:



Expand its content distribution channels with a light lift and generate more awareness with its highest-priority personas



Create new ways to differentiate itself from its top competitors



Build content that showcases the startup's strong business impact on clients



Re-engage cold leads



The Content Strategy That Hits Maximum Marketing Velocity

Game-changing content marketing can't exist in a vacuum. If you're going to put in all the hard work to strategize, execute, analyze, and optimize, you want to reach maximum velocity. For tech brands, velocity doesn't mean moving faster. It means aligning channels to multiply impact and extract more value from every initiative.. Here at Firebrand, we call it Multiplier Marketing.



Content-Driven Examples of Multiplier Marketing

Most tech firms focus on PR and SEO to generate awareness and website traffic. But then what? Here's how a high-impact content marketing team answers that question:

They work with the SEO team ahead of time — even in a corporate or product messaging workshop if necessary — to talk through ICP data that can help inform keyword research.

They coordinate with the PR team ahead of time so they have fresh content ready to go — especially lead generation magnets — to take full advantage of big announcements, awards, events, and anything else that will catch the media's eye and drive new traffic.

They have the website copy down pat, addressing key pain points and solutions for each ICP. After all, PR and SEO programs are going to drive relevant traffic; it's up to the content marketers to have a message that resonates.

They ensure the website experience is a good one, including intuitive navigation and a comprehensive resources section where all of this new traffic can consume content at their own pace.

They have valuable gated content that website visitors will be happy to exchange their email address for, followed by email nurture campaigns that guide them through the funnel.

Another giant focus for tech brands is paid media, with some guidelines recommending they spend as much as 8% of their revenue on advertising.¹⁰ That's a sizeable investment, and to maximize it, remember that content marketing and paid media are perfect companions. A high-impact content marketing team will work with the paid media team to make sure:

- Everyone is aware of new content trends, performance insights, and data benchmarks that can help inform new advertising campaigns
- The ad copy packs a punch and grabs attention in a world where most people are adept at tuning out advertising altogether
- Every campaign has a landing page with messaging that resonates and aligns with best practices
- There are rock-solid gated assets for every lead generation campaign
- There are email nurture campaigns in place to guide paid leads through the funnel

Think of It Like a Relay Race

You have other marketing programs that are building awareness, driving traffic, and targeting your most important prospects. It's content marketing's job to take the baton and build trust, authority, and loyalty.

Your Action Plan: How to Get Even More from Your Content Strategy

You've seen what high-impact content marketing can do. Now, let's make all of this information work for you. While it may be tempting to start typing away at new blog posts, ebooks, and emails, those aren't your immediate next steps. These are:

1. Conduct a content audit to see the forest from the trees

Get out of the daily grind and explore what all of your work is actually accomplishing. Do you have content assets for your key personas and themes in every portion of the funnel? Do they follow best practices? How are they performing? How do they measure up to B2B and industry benchmarks? Do you have any gaps, like a distribution channel you could be doing more with?

2. Become one with your corporate and product messaging

Ensure every content asset and campaign aligns with up-to-date messaging and positioning. Aligning your content strategy with documented value propositions and differentiators will streamline asset creation and approval.

3. Discover how well you know your ICPs

Who are you talking to in all of this content? What are their biggest challenges? What would make their daily work better, stronger, and more efficient? How are your solutions a prescription for their pain? What expertise can you share to prove that your prescription is the best one?

4. Make your data your friend

The best content marketers pair creative instincts with relentless performance analysis. Data tells the story behind everything we do. It's easy for busy teams to let this fall by the wayside, but data analysis is absolutely critical to maximizing your time. After all, why spend time writing new blog posts if you don't have any visitors? Or why spend time writing new whitepapers if none of your landing pages are converting?

Create a KPI analysis strategy that includes which metrics you'll look at and when. Some need to be analyzed monthly, while others can be monitored quarterly. And make sure your strategy includes time for optimizations! Even the best content marketers need to make adjustments based on the data.

The Final Take

The sooner you start down this path, the sooner you'll have a well-oiled content engine that leaves your competitors in the dust. It's time to kick your brand into high gear!

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Ready to outshine your competitors?

Firebrand's content marketing team knows what it takes to crush your goals.

We create, execute, and optimize content strategies that span every stage of the B2B buyer journey, with distribution across owned, earned, paid, and shared channels. Whether you're ready to refresh your roadmap or unlock new growth from your existing content engine, Firebrand's expert content marketing team can help. Let's talk about creating a program designed to scale quickly. [Let's talk about creating a program designed to scale quickly.](#)

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