

B2B media in 2025

AI, trust, and the digital evolution

Contents

	Executive summary	03			
01	The B2B landscape: A digital evolution	04	06	Account-based everything: From strategy to execution	18
02	Winning in the new B2B reality: Key budget and media spend trends	05	07	The AI advantage: Leveling up B2B marketing	19
03	Building trust and relevance: The new B2B brand imperative	08	08	The B2B event revolution: Omnichannel engagement and first-party data	25
04	Addressing consumer privacy: Future-proofing B2B marketing	12	09	A wrap up and look ahead: 2025's B2B media predictions	30
05	The re-emergence of traditional channels in the B2B space: A story of evolution and connection	15			

Executive summary

The state of B2B media is quickly evolving. Are you prepared to lead in 2025?

The B2B buying landscape has undergone a seismic shift. Digitally fluent buyers, accustomed to personalized, omnichannel experiences in their consumer lives, now expect the same level of sophistication in their professional interactions. This demands a fundamental transformation in B2B marketing, as buyers crave connection, authenticity, and a deep understanding of their unique challenges.

This report is your guide to navigating this new landscape and emerging as a leader in the age of the digital B2B buyer.

Inside, you'll discover:

The digital evolution: We'll explore the seismic shift towards digital channels and how B2B brands can leverage data-driven strategies to reach their target audience where they are most engaged.

The power of emotion: Data alone won't win hearts and minds. We'll uncover the secrets to building trust, forging emotional connections, and crafting compelling brand stories that resonate with today's discerning buyer.

Navigating the privacy paradox: In a world hungry for data but wary of intrusion, we'll provide a clear path for B2B marketers to leverage first-party data ethically and build lasting relationships based on transparency and value.

Reimagining traditional marketing: Discover the rebirth of channels like audio and TV, now supercharged with digital precision and targeting capabilities. Meanwhile, live events and sports marketing are transforming into exclusive, immersive experiences that forge deeper connections with high-value audiences.

Account-based everything (ABE): It's no longer about chasing leads, but about building lasting relationships with entire accounts. We'll explore how account-based strategies align your teams and approaches around the customer journey, driving sustainable growth and deeper engagement.

Your (not so) secret weapon, AI: Unleash the power of AI to hyper-personalize experiences, predict buyer behavior, and optimize campaigns for maximum impact. We'll explore how AI is leveling the playing field and empowering B2B brands of all sizes to experiment and expand.

The B2B event revolution: Events are no longer just gatherings; they're data goldmines and engagement powerhouses. We'll dive into the rise of micro-events, hybrid formats, and the strategic use of technology to create personalized, omnichannel experiences that extend far beyond the event itself.

The future of B2B belongs to those who embrace change, prioritize human connection, and leverage technology to create meaningful experiences. The future of B2B is here. Be ready.

The B2B landscape: A digital evolution

Over the last five years, the B2B media landscape has been reshaped by digitization, evolving buyer behavior, and rapid technological advancements.

Today's B2B buyers, primarily millennials and Gen Z (75% of buying teams by 2024 according to [Forrester](#)), are tech-savvy, digitally native, and demand seamless online experiences. This digital-first mindset has led to a surge in self-service research, with [6sense](#) revealing that 70% of the buying process now occurs before direct buyer-seller interaction. [Gartner](#) reinforces this digital transformation by predicting that 80% of B2B sales interactions will occur digitally by 2025.

This shift necessitates a fundamental change in B2B media strategies. Marketers must engage buyers earlier in their journey with personalized digital content across multiple touchpoints, particularly on mobile and social platforms – with B2B buyers 30% more likely to engage in mobile purchases since 2020. The global B2B e-commerce market is booming, worth over [\\$26 trillion in 2023](#) and projected to grow to nearly \$57 trillion by 2028.

Looking ahead, the integration of AI and advanced analytics into digital platforms will further personalize the buying experience and enhance the efficiency of sales and marketing strategies. This evolution points to a more interconnected B2B marketplace, where strategic decisions are informed by first-party data strategies and predictive analytics.

Winning in the new B2B reality: Key budget and media spend trends

In navigating the new B2B landscape, we examine key macro spending trends and allocations, focusing particularly on the US market, which often serves as a bellwether for shaping global strategies.

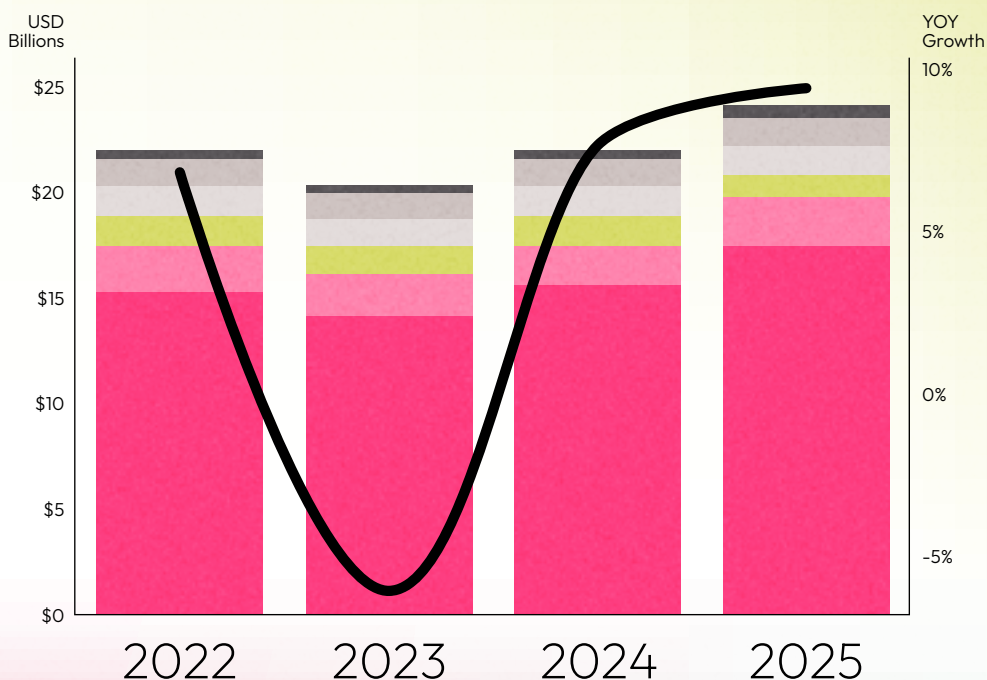
01.

B2B spend growing – with an increasing skew to digital

B2B advertising is expected to grow this year and next, following a decline in 2023. Our composite of B2B advertisers, comprised of 40 companies across Technology, Telecom, Industry and Services, is forecast to grow advertising spend 7.5% in 2024 and a further 9.5% in 2025, to a global total of more than \$24 billion.

Heavily regulated industries like tech, finance, healthcare, and telecom, are poised to lead the next surge in B2B digital ad spending. Among these verticals, telecom and tech are projected to fuel the fastest growth. By 2025, GroupM forecasts the digital US Ad spend in these sectors to be over \$7 billion.

B2B composite advertising expense by category



Source: Company filings, GroupM.
Consensus revenue estimate (S&P)

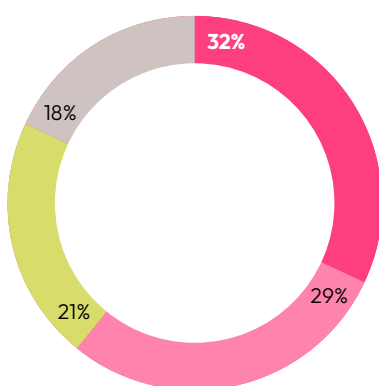
02.

Businesses need to find the right balance between growth and retention

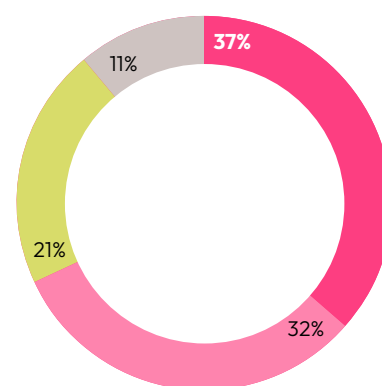
LinkedIn and Ipsos data reveals that globally, 60% of businesses prioritize new customer acquisition and are pouring resources into lead generation (36%) and pipeline building (20%). While global trends provide direction, smart budget allocation requires granular data. Analyze customer acquisition costs, lifetime value, and regional market dynamics to maximize ROI. True growth comes from balancing acquisition with retention. Loyal customers are not only more cost-effective but also form the bedrock of sustainable success.

% of B2B marketing budget allocated to marketing efforts

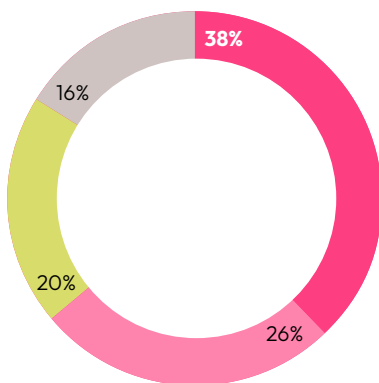
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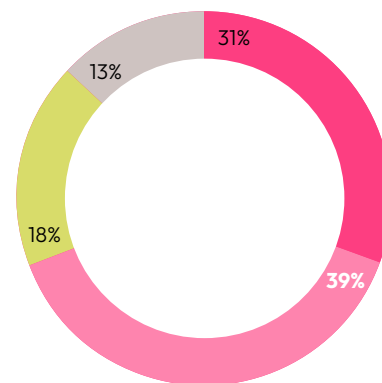
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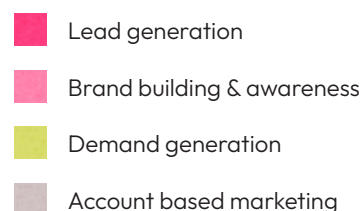
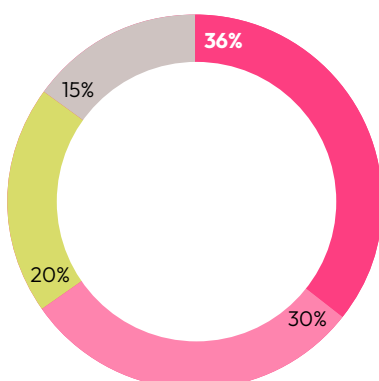
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Global

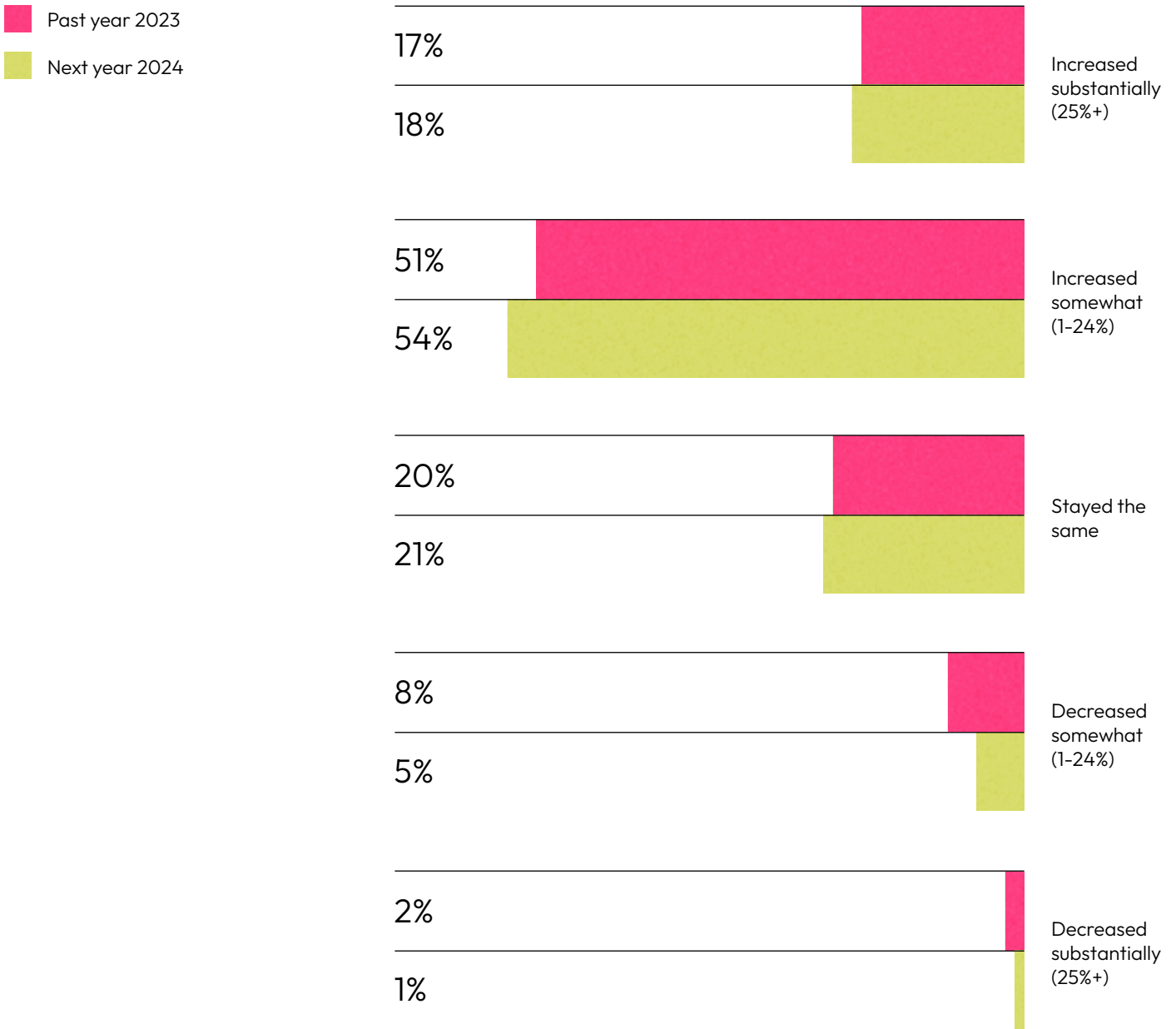


Source: The B2B Marketing Benchmark Report 2023, LinkedIn and Ipsos.

03.
A positive outlook for
marketing budgets in
2025

Despite current economic uncertainties, the overall outlook for B2B marketing budgets remains positive. A majority (68%) of global B2B marketers report budget increases, with nearly 20% experiencing growth of 25% or more. This optimistic outlook reflects the growing recognition of marketing’s critical role in driving business growth in an increasingly competitive landscape.

B2B marketing budgets



Building trust and relevance: The new B2B brand imperative

B2B brands face a very specific challenge, communicating often complex products and solutions in manner consistent with digital platforms and self-service – engaging, authentic, and moment-relevant, delivering brand trust and relevance ahead of product belief.

01. Embracing the power of emotion

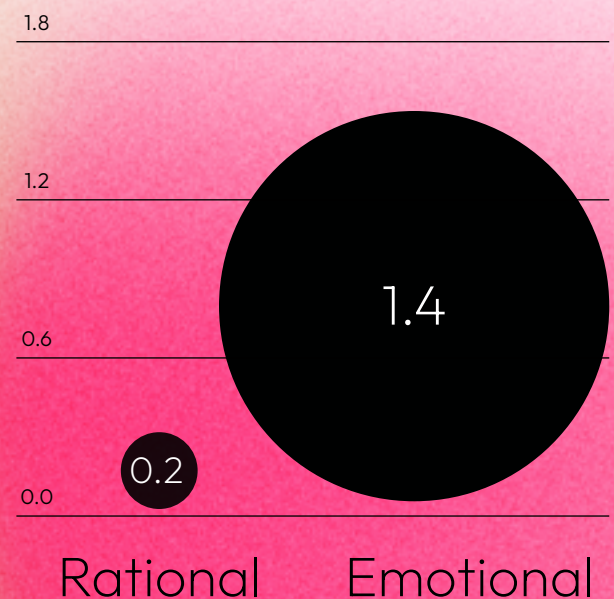
Beyond logic to the heart of the matter: While data and logic remain important, B2B brands recognize the power of emotion in driving decision-making. Research by [Google](#) and CEB's [Marketing Leadership Council](#) reveals that B2B buyers are eight times more likely to pay a premium for products and services that resonate on a personal level. It further validates this by proving that emotional ads also deliver more revenue, profit and market share growth than rational ads.

Providing a sense of safety and peace of mind: 40% of deals often stall due to a lack of consensus within the buying committee, driven by a FOMU, the “Fear Of Messing Up” (as Bain & Co and LinkedIn discussed at the 2024 [Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity](#)). While big brands often have the luxury of leveraging their reputation as a safe choice, smaller brands must work harder to build trust and mitigate perceived risks.

Showcasing the “why” behind the “what”: Buyers want to understand the purpose and passion that drives a brand. Communicating the “why” behind your products or services, beyond just the features and benefits, builds trust and fosters a sense of shared values.

Emotional ads deliver more revenue, profit, and market share growth than rational ads

Emotional strategies outperform in B2B



Source: The B2B Institute at LinkedIn

02. Humanizing the B2B experience

Storytelling: The bridge to connection: Stories have the power to captivate, inspire, and forge lasting connections. B2B brands can embrace storytelling to showcase their values, connect with buyers on an emotional level, and foster a sense of community. This can be done through long-format content, articles, and video.

- Salesforce built a community of Trailblazers, which plays an integral role to their engagement strategy by offering forums, events, and resources to help users maximize the value of Salesforce products. They feature stories of [Trailblazers](#) from all walks of life on their website and across social channels to inspire others.

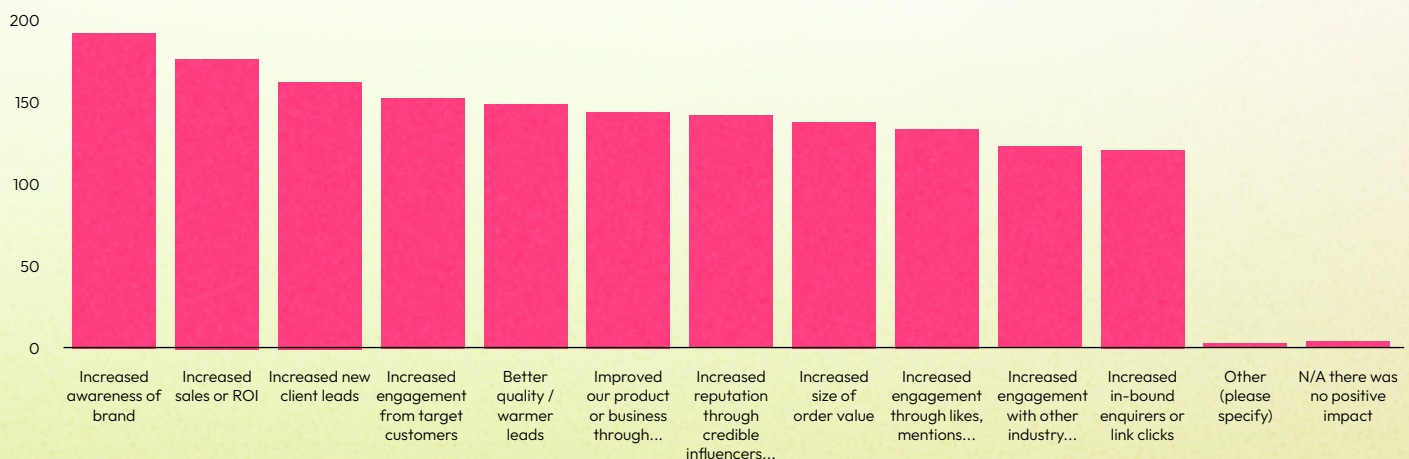
Influencer marketing: The power of peer-to-peer: Partnering with trusted industry influencers allows B2B brands to tap into existing communities and leverage the power of peer-to-peer recommendations. [Ogilvy](#) reports that 75% of B2B companies engage in influencer marketing,

with the greatest impacts being increased brand awareness, ROI, engagement, and the generation of new, better-quality leads.

Putting a face to the brand: Showcasing the people behind your brand – your employees, customers, and partners – helps humanize your company and build trust. People connect with people, and sharing authentic stories can create a powerful emotional connection.

- Cisco shares [#CiscoStories](#) on their [YouTube channel](#) and [LinkedIn page](#) to show how their technology helps make their customers more connected, inclusive, sustainable, and secure.
- IBM uses their own [employees](#) as influencers on LinkedIn to spotlight their involvement in key products and initiatives to create a stronger connection with prospective customers and potential talent.

What kind of positive impact, if any, did using a B2B influencer have on your brand? Select all that apply



DELL Technologies

Client feature

Humanizing tech: Dell's Reddit strategy blends humor, expertise, and community

Dell joined the conversation on Reddit to earn the trust of IT decision makers. Engaging in their Reddit communities wasn't enough. They created "The IT Squad," a comedy series that featured characters that navigated relatable tech issues. To further the conversation, The IT Squad characters hosted Reddit talks with real influencers who were experts on the topics. Millions of Redditors became fans, turning "The I.T. Squad" into a hit series that led to a 1000% increase in followers for Dell and a 200x increase in brand credibility.



03. Investing in brand building for long-term growth

Brand recall as a key driver: Nielsen research confirms that brand recall is a critical driver of brand lift, influencing 38.7% of brand lift in emerging media. Investing in brand building activities, such as thought leadership content, influencer partnerships, and community engagement, is essential for long-term success.

Measuring the impact of brand campaigns:

Measuring the ROI of brand building can be challenging, but it is not impossible. As companies increase their investment in brand building, they must also be prepared to invest in measurement. Attention-based metrics provide insights into how people interact with advertising, while brand lift shows if the ads are resonating and changing how people think and feel about the brand. Together, they provide a complete picture of advertising effectiveness, indicating both engagement and impact.

Aligning brand and demand: Leading B2B brands understand that brand building fuels demand. It's key to craft content and experiences that seamlessly blend awareness-building with relationship-nurturing to drive long-term results.



In a world saturated with information and choices, trust and relevance are the ultimate currencies. By embracing emotional intelligence, humanizing the B2B experience, and investing in long-term brand building, B2B brands can forge lasting connections that drive sustainable growth.

Addressing consumer privacy: Future-proofing B2B marketing

The consumer privacy landscape continues to shift, driven by stricter regulations and a growing desire for transparency and control over personal information.

It's now more critical than ever for B2B marketers to prioritize embrace a multi-signal approach, incorporating multi-data-source synthesis, AI-driven, real-time contextual targeting, experimenting with privacy-preserving technologies.

Here's how B2B marketers can navigate this evolving landscape and thrive in a privacy-first world:

GroupM estimates that Google's 'user-control' approach to tracking has a potential

70–80%

loss in third-party cookie signals across Chrome

01.

First-party data:
The cornerstone of trust and relevance

Transparency and value exchange: Be transparent about how you collect, use, and protect customer data. Clearly communicate the value exchange – what benefits will customers receive in exchange for sharing their information? Per [Label Insight](#), 95% of consumers say they are more likely to be loyal to brands that are transparent about how they use their data.

Content as a data magnet: B2B marketers have always built 1P data through content, but now the approach is shifting away from the traditional gated content approach to building communities, increasing return visitors with content series, providing interactive, personalized content, and offering valuable resources, such as ebooks, webinars, and research reports.

02.

Data-compliant
channel activations:
Driving relevant
engagement

Contextual advertising: A privacy-friendly approach: AI-driven, real-time contextual advertising which places ads based on the sentiment, tone and contextual nuances, rather than broad keyword or topic buckets, is providing a much richer opportunity for personalization, despite being cookie-free. Contextual targeting is predicted to experience nearly 14% annual growth between 2022 to 2030.

Content syndication: Quality over quantity: Modern content syndication platforms have evolved from simple lead generation tools into curated networks of premium content websites, backed by robust first-party databases. This closed ecosystem approach ensures a seamless, omnichannel experience throughout the buyer's journey, driving engagement from brand awareness to qualified conversions through targeted content and lead nurturing programs. Advertisers that leverage this content syndication model with partners like Madison Logic see 32% higher account engagement, a 28% increase in sales velocity, and even greater average order values.

Email marketing: The power of permission: Email marketing remains a powerful tool for B2B marketers, but success hinges on delivering personalized value. By leveraging segmentation and dynamic content, emails transform into cost-effective vehicles for delivering 1:1 messages and offers. Automation further amplifies this power by triggering sends based on behavior, intent, or CRM activity to ensure the right message reaches the right buyer at the right time.

03.

Embracing emerging
technologies and
strategies

Synthetic data: Privacy-preserving insights: Synthetic data, which mimics real-world data sets while preserving anonymity, is emerging as a revolutionary tool. Businesses can leverage it for market research, audience insights, and campaign optimization.

Data clean rooms: Collaboration with privacy: Data clean rooms empower businesses to combine their first-party data with that of partners in a privacy-safe environment. This collaborative approach yields a more comprehensive understanding of the buyer's journey, enabling more accurate attribution modeling across touchpoints and ultimately optimizing campaigns for demonstrable ROI.

Zero-party data: The future of personalization: Zero-party data, which is proactively and explicitly shared by consumers, offers the ultimate level of personalization. Businesses should encourage customers to share their preferences, interests, and intentions to create hyper-personalized experiences.

Collecting and updating contact data (PII) and business insight data

Owned contact forms

(contacts, content gates, on-demand gates, newsletter sign-ups)

Lead gen activity

Events

(live or online)

Data enrichment

Marketing automation functionality

(nurture, progressive forms, scoring)

The data privacy evolution is not a threat to B2B marketing; it's an opportunity to build stronger, more trusted relationships with your audience. By prioritizing first-party data, embracing privacy-enhancing technologies, and focusing on delivering value at every touchpoint, B2B marketers can navigate this evolving landscape and thrive in a privacy-first world.



Use every touchpoint along the journey as an opportunity to gain new insight into your prospects, decision makers, buying committees and customers.

The re-emergence of traditional channels in the B2B space: A story of evolution and connection

The B2B marketing landscape is constantly adapting to new technologies and evolving audience behaviors. Traditional channels, once considered outdated, are experiencing a resurgence, albeit in an evolved form. Let's explore a handful of channels making a comeback in a new way.

01.

Audio: From mass media broadcasting to highly targeted, relevant advertising

Audio has evolved beyond traditional formats, leveraging dynamic scripts and sequential messaging to craft personalized experiences through various formats, including:



Streaming audio: For Spotify listeners, ads can adapt and dynamically change based on time of day, industry, and location.



Podcasts: Platforms like iHeartRadio enhance podcast advertising by adding a contextual layer. For example, a CIO in banking and CFO in tech could be listening to the same business podcast but would hear different ads tailored to their respective roles and industries. Podcast measurement has also evolved beyond downloads and reach. Advanced attribution tracking now allows marketers to measure ad-driven visits to their landing pages, providing clear ROI and maximizing campaign effectiveness.

02.

Connected TV (CTV)/
Programmatic TV
(PTV): Bridging the gap
between digital and
traditional

This powerful channel delivers hyper-targeted, data-driven advertising that delivers digital precision at scale.



90%

of B2B marketers are likely to
implement or test CTV over the
next one to two years

knowing its potential in building brand awareness and guiding
buyers through their entire journey.

With Programmatic TV (PTV), B2B marketers can maximize efficiency by optimizing campaigns in real-time while ensuring their message reaches the right audience across a variety of networks based on targeting criteria such as demographics, location, and viewing habits.

03.

Experiential marketing:
Forging deeper
connections through
shared passions

Experiential marketing is surging within the world of live events, particularly sports. B2B brands are capitalizing on this trend, recognizing the power of shared passions to forge deeper connections with their hard-to-reach, high-value audiences. These experiences offer a unique blend of omnichannel touchpoints, influencer marketing, and immersive activations to forge brand connections that are unattainable through traditional approaches.

By crafting bespoke micro-events within broader live experiences, brands create an aura of exclusivity that resonates deeply with C-suite executives that are looking to network and foster new relationships.

04.

Sports sponsorships:
The rise of women's
sports provides a
powerful platform for
connection and growth

The surging popularity of women's sports presents another compelling opportunity for B2B brands. By aligning themselves with this movement, brands can tap into a passionate and rapidly growing audience, demonstrating their commitment to diversity and inclusion, while reaping a significant return. For instance, [Sports Innovation Lab](#) reported that Visa experienced a 2,700% year-over-year increase in ROI after announcing its sponsorship of the U.S. women's national soccer team, while Budweiser saw a 1,075% increase after announcing their NWSL sponsorship. These impressive figures are a testament to the power of supporting women's sports, particularly when you consider [Aggregate Sport's](#) finding that 62% of consumers feel better about brands that sponsor women's sports—making it a winning strategy both socially and commercially.

Finding a harmonious blend of traditional and digital channels and tactics

While digital ad spend is on the rise, traditional channels and tactics have re-emerged and reinvented themselves so they can be leveraged in a more holistic and integrated approach. By embracing the strengths of both traditional and digital channels (and in some cases where traditional channels turned more digital), B2B marketers can create powerful, multi-faceted campaigns that resonate with their target audience on multiple levels.

Account-based everything: From strategy to execution

Account-Based Everything (ABE) takes the proven success of ABM—with [Forrester](#) finding that 99% of businesses see higher ROI with account-based approaches—and transforms it from a tactical approach to a strategic imperative for B2B success. By shifting the focus from individual leads to entire accounts as the “north star,” ABE aligns marketing, sales, product, and customer success efforts to deliver holistic value throughout the customer lifecycle, driving sustainable growth in today’s complex B2B landscape.

Here’s how ABE is reshaping B2B marketing and driving exceptional results:

01.

Aligning around the customer journey, not internal silos

Breaking down departmental barriers: ABE requires a fundamental shift in mindset, moving away from siloed departmental goals to a unified focus on the customer journey. Sales, marketing, product, and customer success teams must work in concert to deliver a seamless and personalized experience.

Orchestrating a coordinated symphony: Imagine a world where every interaction a key account has with your brand, from the first marketing touchpoint to ongoing customer support, is part of a carefully orchestrated symphony. ABE makes this a reality, ensuring consistency and relevance at every stage.

Shared metrics for shared success: ABE demands a unified front, where sales and marketing work together, guided by shared metrics throughout the buyer’s journey and beyond, to achieve greater bottom-line success. By focusing on key indicators like account engagement, pipeline growth, customer lifetime value, and advocacy, businesses can truly unlock the power of account-based strategies. [is delivering tangible results, with 80% of marketers reporting improved customer lifetime values as a result of ABM.](#)

02.

Engaging buying groups with relevant content

Personalized content for every stakeholder: By focusing on accounts versus leads, you’re able to engage an entire buying group to help streamline consensus and accelerate the path to purchase. But each member of a buying group has different priorities and information needs. For instance, the CEO may seek brand recognition and market validation to support strategic decisions, while IT decision-makers skew more towards product functionality and the strength of the support system. Leveraging account-based strategies empowers marketers to deliver personalized content tailored to each stakeholder’s role, industry, and stage in the buying journey.

The AI advantage: Leveling up B2B marketing

The age of AI is leveling the playing field as it makes sophisticated capabilities accessible to businesses of all sizes. Here's how AI is creating new opportunities:

01.

Transforming ABM
with AI: From targeting
to orchestration

Precision targeting: Identifying the right accounts and decision makers

The challenge

Traditional ABM relies on manual account list creation and stakeholder identification, often missing crucial decision-makers and wasting resources on low-potential accounts. The average buying group comprises of 6.8 people but it's nearly impossible to identify and reach them all.

The AI approach

AI is transforming traditional ABM by enhancing lead scoring, automating customer segmentation, and personalizing marketing efforts for more precise and effective outreach. Demandbase's go-to-market platform uses AI to analyze advertising interactions, purchase intent, and engagement patterns, identifying buying groups, assigning roles, and creating personas for targeted outreach. Similarly, WPP and IBM's WPP Open for B2B combines IBM's watsonx AI and LinkedIn data to provide deeper insights into buyer groups, enabling more effective targeting, optimized campaigns, and data-driven decisions. These approaches showcase how AI's ability to process large datasets and generate actionable insights is reshaping B2B marketing, helping businesses connect with their audiences and drive growth.

With Demandbase's unified approach, they are able to boost targeting accuracy by 30%, ensuring marketing efforts reach the right people within the right organizations.

Scalable personalization: Tailoring content and experiences at scale

The challenge

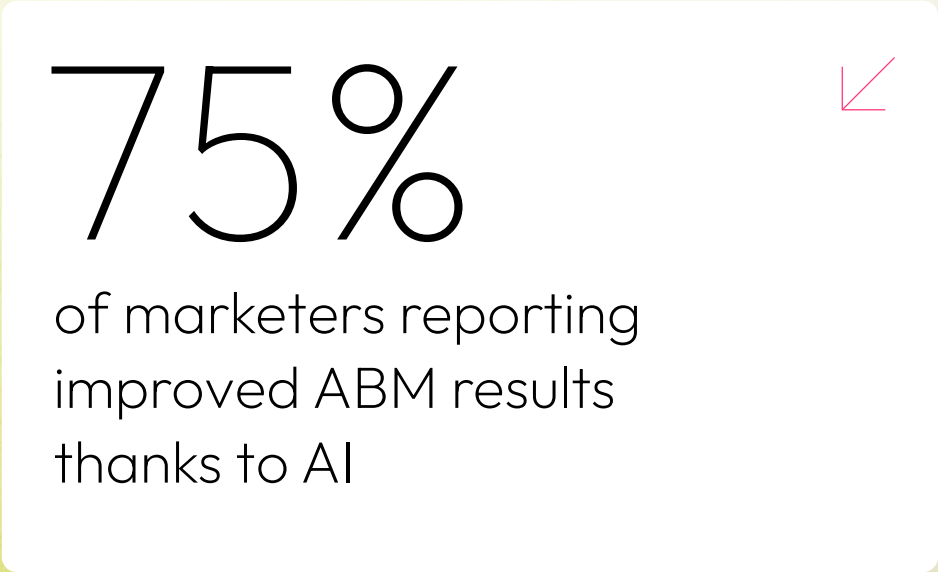
Personalization at scale has been a significant hurdle for ABM, requiring immense time and resources to tailor content for individual accounts.

The AI solution

Generative AI makes personalized campaigns at scale a reality. It crafts tailored content, powers engaging chatbots, and fuels predictive product recommendations by analyzing data points like account firmographics, buyer roles, browsing history, past purchases, and content interactions to create highly relevant experiences. This ability to personalize at scale is driving widespread adoption, with up to 45% of B2B marketers worldwide now using AI for content generation, according to [IOFold](#).

The results

Deeper, more relevant customer engagements; 75% of marketers reporting improved ABM results thanks to AI, according to [ITSMA](#) and the [ABM Leadership Alliance](#).



75%

of marketers reporting
improved ABM results
thanks to AI

Journey orchestration: Automating and optimizing the customer journey

The challenge

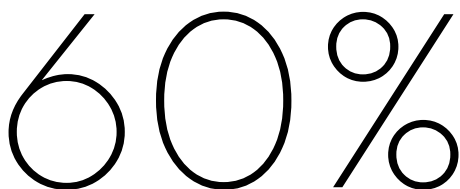
Managing complex customer journeys across multiple touchpoints can be overwhelming, leading to disjointed experiences and missed opportunities.

The AI solution

AI supercharges account-based strategies, driving maximum impact by automating personalized engagement and optimizing spend. It creates a seamless customer experience (CX) across all channels – from social media to connected TV – by dynamically adapting the buyer journey based on real-time interactions. For example, if a prospect shows interest in a specific product feature on a brand’s website, AI can instantly trigger a personalized follow-up email from a sales specialist. By analyzing historical data and identifying patterns, AI predicts which channels will deliver the highest ROI for each account.

The results

CX leaders recognize the immense potential of AI, with 60% anticipating a “transformative” or “significant impact” on their customer experience, particularly in boosting efficiency and reducing costs. By automating real-time bidding and budget allocation, AI empowers marketers to maximize efficiency and minimize wasted spend—all while resting assured they’re delivering the optimal customer experience.



60%

anticipating a “transformative”
or “significant impact”

Unified insights: Breaking down data silos for a holistic view

The challenge

Data silos between marketing, sales, and customer success teams hinder collaboration and prevent a unified understanding of target accounts.

The AI solution

AI helps create a more unified and comprehensive view of customer data by integrating information from various sources to empower businesses to better understand customer journeys and interactions.

The results

Improved collaboration and efficiency across departments, enabling teams to make informed business decisions and deliver a cohesive customer experience. Companies like [6sense](#), whose platform leverages AI to detect buying signals and predict in-market accounts, have reported a 133% increase revenue generated per day and a 39% faster average time to close.

02.

Unlocking AI's
predictive power:
From insights to action

The true power of AI in B2B marketing lies not just in uncovering hidden patterns, but in using those insights to fuel proactive, predictive strategies. Here are just a few examples:

Identifying high-value leads: AI analyzes website behavior, content consumption, and demographic data to identify patterns that indicate a higher likelihood of conversion. For example, it might discover that leads who download a specific white paper and attend webinars on project management methodologies are 3x more likely to convert into paying customers.

Predicting customer churn: By analyzing customer engagement metrics like product usage, support tickets, and billing history, AI can identify patterns that precede customer churn. This allows the company to proactively engage at-risk customers with personalized offers or support, improving retention rates.

Optimizing marketing campaigns: The AI analyzes the performance of past marketing campaigns across different channels, identifying patterns in messaging, targeting, and timing that resonate with specific customer segments. This allows the company to optimize future campaigns for maximum impact and ROI.

A/B testing and optimization on autopilot: AI can analyze the performance of different content variations and automatically optimize campaigns for maximum impact. This eliminates the guesswork and allows marketers to continuously improve their results.

Personalizing content and offers: By analyzing individual customer journeys and preferences, GenAI can personalize content recommendations, email marketing messages, and even sales outreach, to help drive higher engagement and conversion rates.

03.

AI-powered research: Driving efficiencies

Informing go-to-market plans with privacy-first data: Synthetic data is changing how B2B brands approach their buyer personas and go to market. Evidenza is an example of an AI platform that analyzes vast data to create highly accurate buyer personas (reportedly with 88% accuracy), allowing businesses to “interview” AI models for instant feedback. This eliminates the need for lengthy surveys and significantly reduces research costs all while preserving anonymity. Here are just a few uses cases:

- **Hyper-targeted market segmentation:** Identify niche buyer groups and their preferences with greater precision.
- **Agile product development:** Validate product-market fit and gather real-time feedback on features, pricing and messaging.
- **Competitive intelligence:** Analyze competitor positioning and identify market gaps.

Aiding in the buyer’s path to purchase: AI is also fundamentally changing how B2B buyers research and make decisions. Tools like ChatGPT and Google Gemini provide instant access to tailored information, product recommendations, and guidance based on the business needs they share. Instead of manually comparing options and weighing pros and cons, buyers can rely on these AI tools to do the heavy lifting, analyzing their company’s specific requirements to deliver the most relevant solutions.

04.

Improving the digital experience: Generating engaging experiences

CMOs are increasingly turning to GenAI, with 57% globally identifying it as the marketing technology most likely to deliver the highest value and ROI in 2024. The surge in interest is fueled by GenAI's ability to transform key areas of marketing, including:

Crafting relevant generative experiences: SJR, a WPP content agency, partnered with Satalia to revolutionize B2B marketing with GXM (Generative Experience Manager). This dynamic web solution leverages proprietary machine learning to deliver personalized content experiences by actively engaging users and adapting to their needs in real-time. Satalia's AI expertise ensures intelligent content delivery, while SJR's human oversight guarantees brand safety and a tailored, human touch. This powerful combination empowers B2B marketers to deliver the right content to the right audience at the right time, maximizing engagement and ultimately, ROI.

Elevating conversational marketing with AI: AI-powered chatbots are becoming more sophisticated, engaging site visitors in real-time, qualifying leads, and capturing valuable information at peak interest to enhance conversion rates. Offerings like Drift (now Salesloft), use NLP and report a 75-100% increase in conversations converted to MQLs and a 20% increase in overall sales win rate.

Unlocking scalable content creation and automation: : At the 2024 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, TikTok unveiled a game-changing tool for businesses: generative AI actors. This technology allows brands and influencers to create video content featuring AI-generated people, eliminating the traditional costs associated with actors and production. With AI voice support in 10 languages, this innovation makes high-quality video content significantly more accessible.

By embracing AI and integrating it strategically into their marketing strategies, B2B brands will gain a significant competitive advantage and drive sustainable growth in the years to come.

The B2B event revolution: Omnichannel engagement and first-party data

B2B events are no longer one-size-fits-all gatherings. Instead, they are becoming highly personalized omnichannel experiences often driven by media. In turn, companies are in search of cost-effective event solutions that ensure maximum ROI without compromising quality. Here's how the B2B events are evolving:

01.

Micro-events and hybrid formats take center stage

The rise of intimacy: The rise of micro-events, with their intimate scale and targeted focus, reflects a growing preference for personalized experiences. These gatherings cater to specific audience segments and interests, fostering stronger relationships through customized content and focused networking opportunities. This intimate environment leads to more impactful engagement and higher value interactions.

Hybrid as the new normal: Hybrid events, seamlessly blending in-person and virtual elements, are becoming the standard. This format offers flexibility and accessibility, allowing attendees to participate in a way that suits their preferences and schedules. Per [Forrester](#), 49% of CMOs believe events are now more important than pre-pandemic, with large enterprises favoring a hybrid-first approach.



49%

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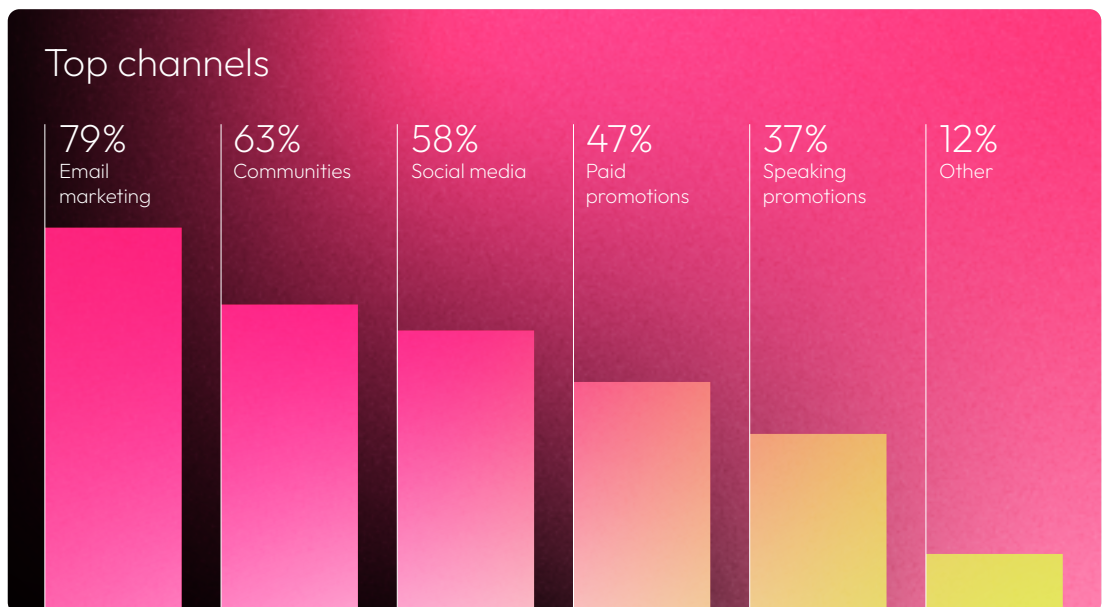
02.

Driving attendance and engagement

Importance of digital advertising: Paid media is a crucial driver of attendance and engagement for larger, engagement-focused conferences. B2B brands leverage a range of digital advertising tactics, from pay-per-click campaigns to targeted social media marketing.

Tried and true outreach tactics: Email marketing remains a dominant force, with 79% of companies predicting its continued effectiveness for conference outreach.

Supplemental channels: Platforms like Reddit (63%) and paid promotions (47%) are also gaining traction. Strategic utilization across all channels significantly elevates event visibility, boosts registration rates, and enhances attendee engagement throughout the entire event lifecycle.



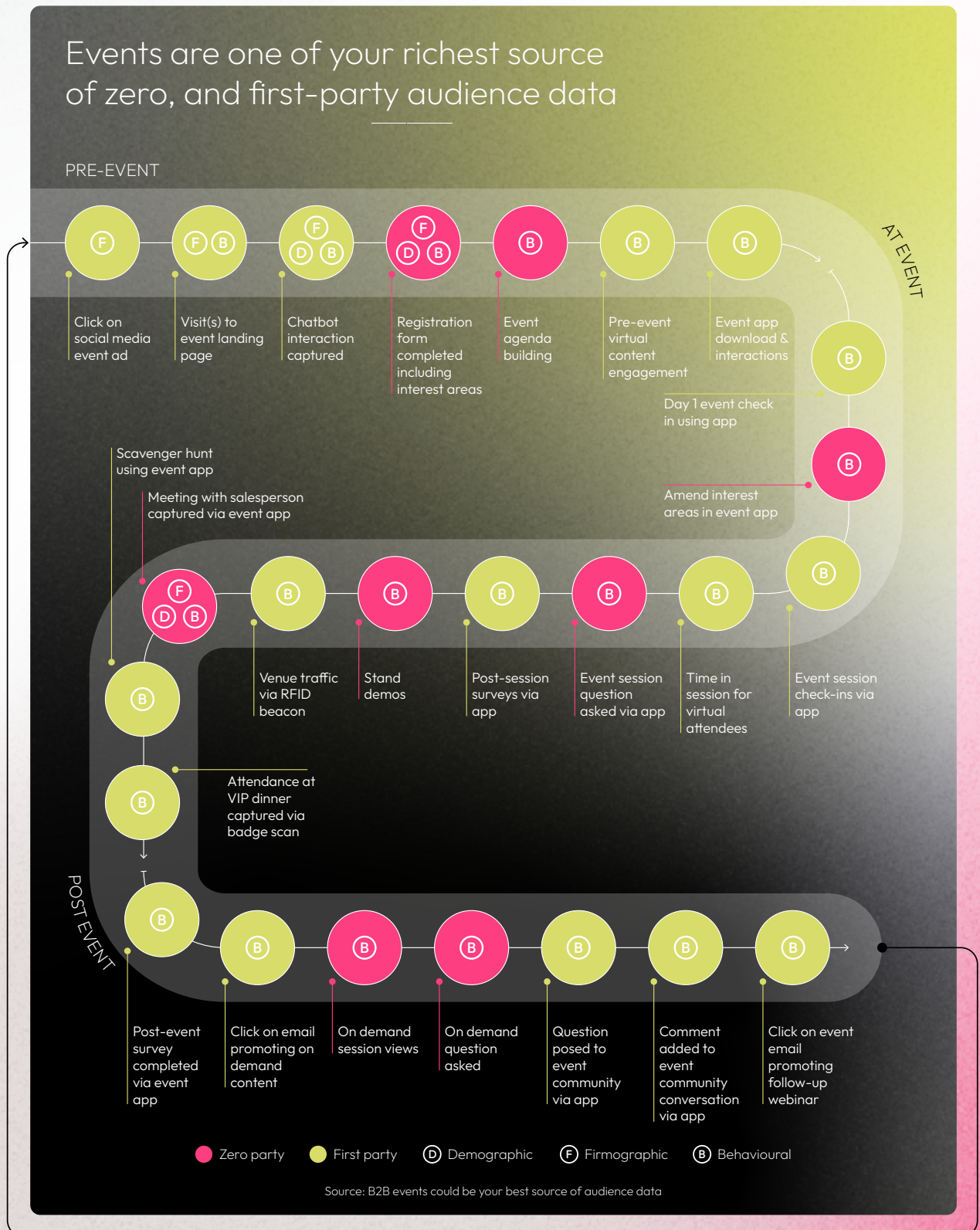
03.

Events as data goldmines

Zero-party data is the holy grail: Events provide a unique opportunity to capture valuable zero-party data – information that attendees willingly and proactively share. This includes preferences, interests, challenges, and purchase intentions.

Building trust through transparency: The key to unlocking this data goldmine is transparency. Brands need to clearly communicate how attendee data will be used and provide value in exchange for their information. [Forrester](#) found that 95% of decision-makers are willing to share contact information to register for a provider's event, highlighting the trust associated with these gatherings.

Fueling personalized experiences: This zero-party-data empowers B2B marketers to create highly personalized event experiences, from tailored content recommendations and networking opportunities to customized follow-up communications—via email nurture, paid social or programmatic.



04.

Technology as the bridge between online and offline

Seamless integration for enhanced engagement: Integrating event technology, such as mobile apps, CRM systems, and marketing automation platforms, is crucial for creating seamless omnichannel experiences. This allows for real-time data capture, personalized messaging, and a unified view of attendee engagement across all touchpoints.

AI-powered personalization: AI is playing an increasingly important role in event personalization, analyzing attendee data to deliver tailored recommendations, suggest relevant connections, and optimize the overall event experience.

Extending the event lifecycle: Technology enables B2B marketers to extend the event lifecycle beyond the physical or virtual gathering. On-demand content, online communities, and personalized follow-up communications keep attendees engaged and nurture relationships long after the event concludes.

05.

Measuring ROI in the omnichannel age

Moving beyond vanity metrics: Measuring event ROI in the omnichannel age requires a shift from vanity metrics like attendance numbers to more meaningful indicators such as leads generated, pipeline influenced, and deals closed.

Connecting events to business outcomes: B2B marketers need to establish clear objectives for their events and track how these events contribute to broader business goals. This requires integrating event data with CRM and marketing automation systems to measure the long-term impact on sales and customer relationships.



B2B events will continue to evolve and be highly personalized, data-driven and seamlessly integrated into the broader marketing mix.

By embracing omnichannel strategies and leveraging technology to enhance engagement and capture valuable first-party data, B2B marketers can transform events into powerful engines for growth and customer loyalty.



Client feature

Ecolab owning the moment through event surround

Ecolab's Water for Climate campaign harnessed the power of integrated marketing to ignite a corporate movement during tentpole events such as UN Water Conference and NYC Climate Week. With strategic media placements, they dominated the event radius with high-impact digital out-of-home boards and geo-targeted ads on street furniture and taxi tops. Journey Ads in premium Uber vehicles ensured continuous engagement, while a water drop garden installation at Bryant Park served as a captivating centerpiece. Custom content and hosted panels supplemented the events, serving as a comprehensive approach to effectively engage their C-suite target audience. This holistic approach not only amplified their message but also sparked significant conversation around water conservation with the upper echelons.



A wrap up and look ahead: 2025's B2B media predictions

The B2B media landscape is in constant flux, driven by transforming technologies, shifting buyer behaviors, and a relentless focus on data privacy. Based on the trends discussed, here are our predictions for what to expect in 2025:

01.

AI becomes mission critical

Beyond buzzword to business impact: AI will transition from a “nice-to-have” to a “must-have” for B2B marketers. Expect to see widespread adoption of AI-powered tools for everything from content creation and personalization to predictive analytics and campaign optimization.

The rise of AI-powered buying assistants: AI will play a more prominent role in the B2B buying process, with AI-powered assistants guiding buyers through product research, vendor comparisons, and even purchase recommendations.

Hyper-personalization at scale: AI will enable marketers to deliver hyper-personalized experiences across every touchpoint, tailoring content, messaging, and offers to individual buyer preferences and behaviors.

02.

The rise of the ethical data economy

First-party data reigns supreme: As third-party cookies fade away, first-party data will be paramount. B2B brands will prioritize building direct relationships with their audiences and leveraging consent-based data strategies.

Transparency and trust as differentiators: B2B buyers will demand transparency and control over their data. Brands that prioritize ethical data practices and build trust will have a significant competitive advantage.

Synthetic data fuels innovation: Synthetic data will gain traction as a privacy-preserving solution for market research, audience insights, and campaign optimization.

03.

Omnichannel experiences redefined

Events as data and engagement powerhouses: B2B events will become even more data-driven and personalized, seamlessly blending online and offline experiences. Expect to see a rise in micro-events, hybrid formats, and interactive technologies that enhance engagement and capture valuable first-party data.

Content that adapts to the channel: B2B marketers will need to create content that seamlessly adapts to different channels and formats, from short-form videos and interactive infographics to long-form articles and AI-powered chatbots.

04.

The human element remains essential

Authenticity and storytelling take center stage:

While technology will play a crucial role, the human element will remain paramount. B2B brands will need to focus on authentic storytelling, emotional connections, and building genuine relationships with their audiences.

Influencer marketing matures: B2B influencer marketing will continue to grow in sophistication, with a focus on long-term partnerships, measurable results, and integrated campaigns that span multiple channels.

Building community and fostering dialogue: B2B brands will prioritize building online communities and fostering two-way dialogue with their audiences, creating spaces for knowledge sharing, thought leadership, and authentic engagement.



B2B marketers who thrive in 2025 will be those who embrace AI, prioritize ethical data practices, create seamless omnichannel experiences, and never lose sight of the human element at the heart of every connection.

About EssenceMediacom

EssenceMediacom is GroupM's largest agency, committed to delivering breakthroughs for brands in the New Communications Economy. It has disrupted the old models across media, creative, innovation and analytics to find new opportunities for advertisers and deliver truly integrated media solutions.

Born out of two pioneering agencies, EssenceMediacom fuses Essence's performance, data, analytics and creative technology DNA with MediaCom's scaled multichannel audience planning and strategic media expertise.

As part of WPP, the world's largest marketing communications services group, and GroupM, WPP's consolidated media investment management arm, we have access to the richest data, most robust benchmarks and most advanced capabilities in the market. This helps us provide comprehensive solutions to all marketing challenges.

Our 'breakthrough' ambition is underpinned by our commitment to 'continuous learning'. We aim to ensure our people fulfil their potential by investing their whole-person wellbeing, careers and capabilities, which in turn helps grow our clients' businesses.

EssenceMediacom, with 10,000 people across 120 offices in 96 markets, is one of the world's leading communications specialists, with billings of more than \$21 billion (Source: COMvergence). Its global client roster includes adidas, Google, Dell, Coca-Cola (TCCC), Hasbro, Mars, NBC Universal, P&G, Richemont and Sony.

For more information about the report or new business inquiries, please contact Tara Fusco, EssenceMediacom's Global B2B Practice Lead, at tara.fusco@essencemediacom.com.