

ZIPLINE WHITEPAPER SERIES

7 B2B Marketing Mistakes to Avoid **AT ALL COSTS**

ZiPLINE[®]
< B2B MARKETING >

Why Isn't Your Marketing Working?

B2B marketing is much more complex than most business professionals and marketers realize. The assumption that simply running some ads for your products or services will result in qualified leads is extremely prevalent in the B2B marketplace, but that is far from reality.

B2B marketers face a number of hurdles that other marketers don't have to deal with. Some of the most common include extended sales cycles, rotating budget calendars, internal decision-making processes, and communication difficulties that can make targeting and closing the ideal prospect extremely challenging.

Due to these unique complexities, many otherwise highly effective marketing strategies are rendered ineffective for B2B marketers. Avoiding these strategies can save tens of thousands of dollars and countless hours. Failure to avoid them can result in wasted time, resources, and brand equity.

Fresh Content

Many marketers feel compelled to crank out blog after blog, whitepaper after whitepaper, and social post after social post simply to be present with fresh content on a daily or weekly basis. While some “experts” suggest that a rigid posting calendar is absolutely essential, this is one of the biggest myths in content marketing. Yes, there may be a mild amount of SEO benefit to having fresh content on your website, but there is far more value in having high-quality, well thought out, well researched, and well-written content that resonates with your target audience.

Content marketing isn't about volume. It is about quality and engagement. Creating subpar content is a great way to turn off your reader and discourage them from engaging with your messaging in the future, plus it wastes a tremendous amount of time and money. Approach your content development from a strategic standpoint. Develop a strategy and a content plan so that the pieces you create work together to excite your prospect and help tell your brand story.



72%
of marketers say
content marketing
increases
engagement.

Direct Response Google Advertising

There is nothing inherently wrong with Google or Bing Ads and they can be extremely effective in a B2B environment WHEN USED CORRECTLY. Unfortunately, most marketers fail to consider the full buying cycle when planning a digital advertising strategy.

In the average B2B buying relationship, there are 12-14 decision-makers who weigh in before a major purchase is made. While a PPC advertisement can be a route to make an initial connection, it can't be the only communication with a target prospect. B2B marketing is the equivalent of establishing a long-term dating relationship whereas the average marketer's Google Ad campaign is a lot more like a Tinder hook-up. With B2B marketing, communication needs to continue throughout the buying cycle. The person who originally sees the PPC ad and carefully crafted landing page is rarely the final decision-maker, and even if they are, it is highly unlikely they're ready to purchase immediately without significant due diligence.

In fact, the B2B leads generated directly from a standard Google Ad campaign without any type of nurturing are often smaller prospects or tire kickers. Getting to the high-quality leads requires a longer-term, account-based marketing approach that blends strategic content with ongoing messaging to connect on a deeper level with multiple people at the prospect organization to establish and grow trust.



12-14
Decision-Makers



4-7
Month Buying
Cycle

Cold Calling

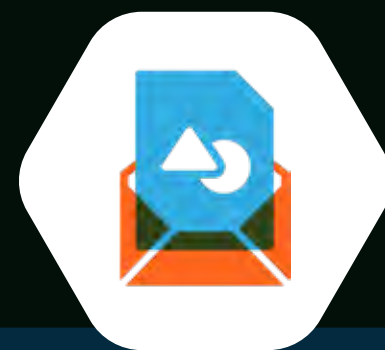
Cold calling is really more of a sales strategy but it is also a way of building awareness with prospects. Cold calling is still a very popular strategy in the B2B marketplace and it can be mildly effective, but it takes a tremendous amount of time and effort to achieve any measurable results.

Gatekeepers are feverously protecting decision-makers making communication extremely challenging, resulting in a tremendous waste of time and effort for a sales team.

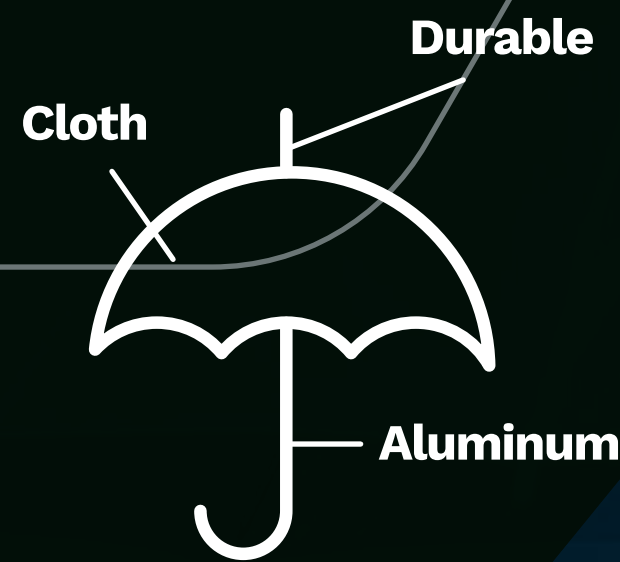
One way of greatly amplifying the effectiveness of cold calling is to warm the prospect with strategic, account-based marketing before ever making contact. Spend time communicating with the prospect through email, ads, print marketing, trade shows, and other marketing. Create interest amongst the prospect, excite them, build brand recognition so when the call comes in it is answered.



82% of buyers say they have accepted meetings with salespeople after a series of contacts



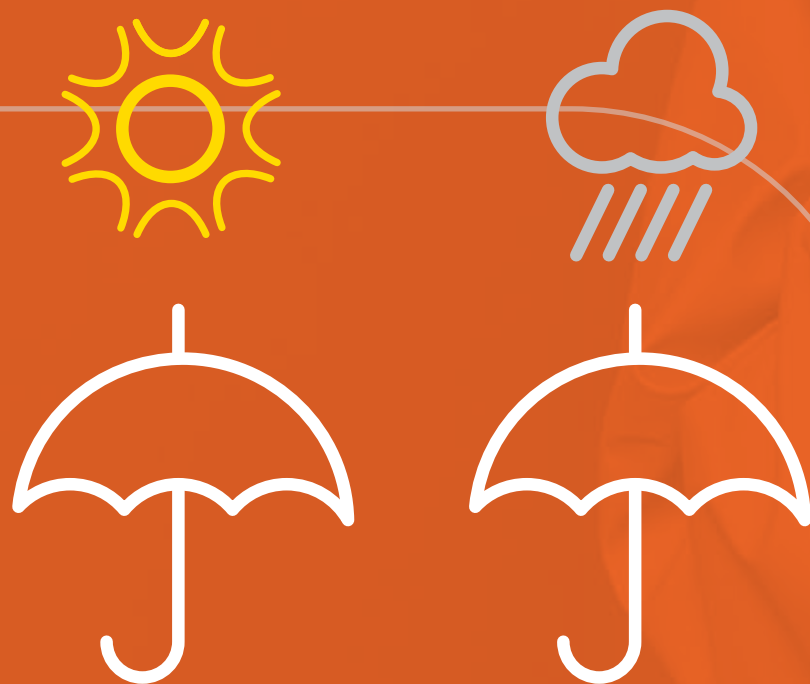
Emailing without cold calling is 98% less effective than following up an email with a call according to a study earlier this year.



Features

vs.

Benefits



Stop Advertising Features

One of the most common mistakes B2B marketers make is focusing their advertising message on the features of the product. The reality is, prospects are not interested in hearing how great you are or even how great your product is. While the specific features do play a role in the buying decision that a prospect is really concerned about, they want to really know what the product will do for them. How will it make their life better? How will it help them earn more money? Every marketer says their product is the best but only one product can be.

Helping a prospect understand how their life will be better after purchasing your product will be a lot more engaging for them. Making the case for how your product can save time or make more money means a lot more than telling someone it has a double walled construction. The facts and features often need to be listed, but helping your customer understand how it will transform their life for the better will be what drives them to take action.

Giveaways and Discounts

Giveaways and discounts can work well for retailers but they can be very challenging for B2B marketers to manage and typically do not have the desired effect. Price is only one aspect of the buying decision and often the value is far more important in a B2B environment. Providing discounts may drive some short-term interest, but that interest will almost certainly be from less than ideal prospects who are price shoppers. Once engaged, these prospects will always expect the bottom of the barrel pricing and are extremely hard to convert into good long-term customers.

The bigger problem is that discounting is a signal to both prospects and existing customers that you need business. Tipping your hand can cause significant problems for your long-term profitability. Existing customers will begin to want discounts and lower pricing because they're seeing and hearing what is being offered to other prospects. Similarly, new prospects may be turned off by the perceived neediness and less likely to sign long-term contracts and may choose higher-priced providers that are perceived to be more stable and reliable.

Sell on the value you provide not on price.

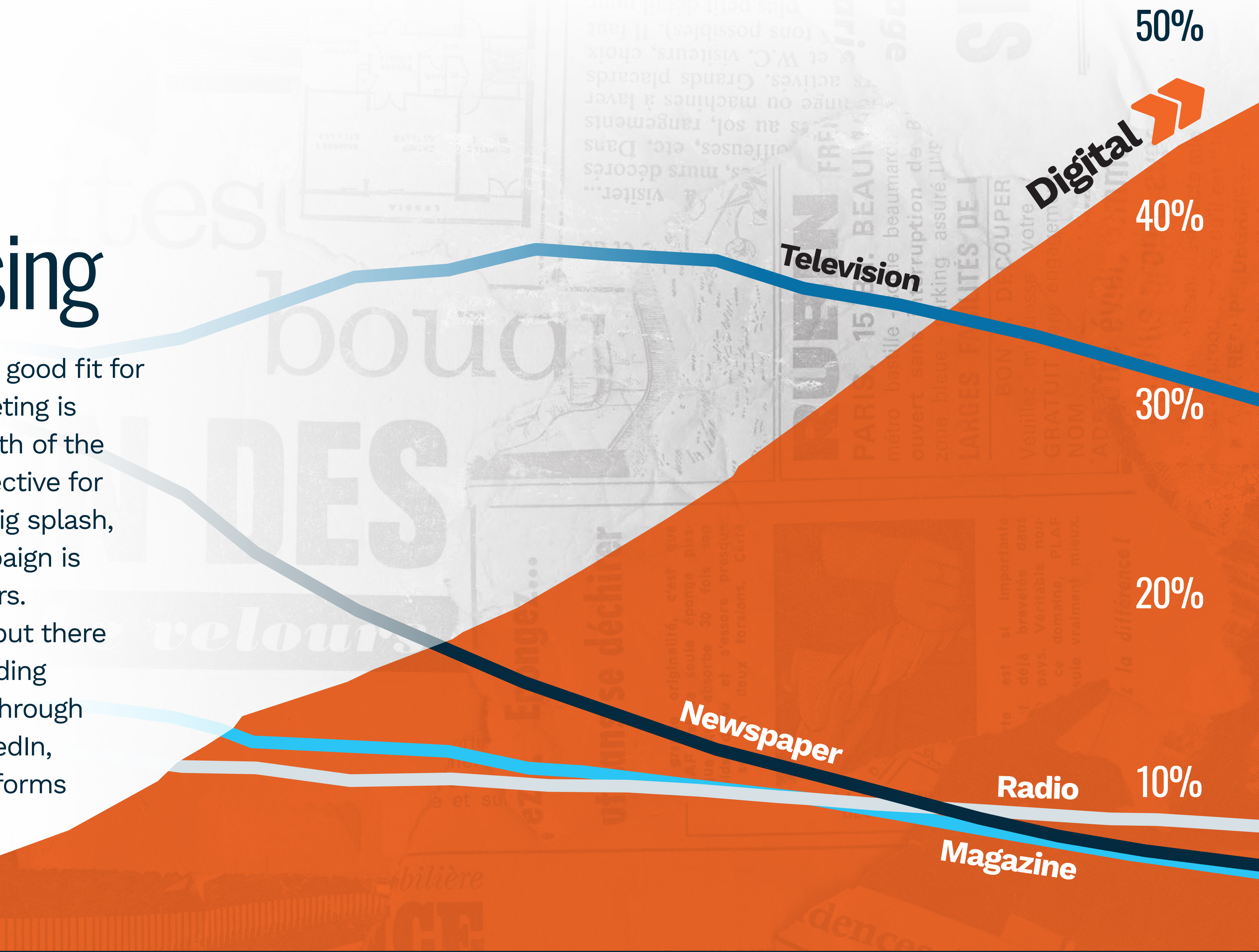


Discounting is bad for B2B businesses because:

- It creates an expectation of future discounts
- It complicates your business interactions
- It demonstrates a lack of confidence in your solution
- It erodes your customers trust in you and your product
- It lowers your margin
- It makes it more likely you will need to cut corners to deliver

TV, Radio, or Newspaper Advertising

It is extremely rare that broadcast advertising is a good fit for B2B marketers. This type of brand-focused marketing is extremely expensive and targets such a wide swath of the population that it is highly unlikely to be cost-effective for B2B marketers. There are many ways to make a big splash, but buying a regional or national TV or radio campaign is unlikely to be an effective use of advertising dollars. Branding is still important in a B2B environment, but there are much more targeted and precise ways of building brand recall with an audience. This can be done through strategic digital campaigns on platforms like LinkedIn, print campaigns in trade journals, or through platforms like tradeshows and conferences.



Email Newsletters

Email marketing is one of the most underutilized tactics in B2B marketing. Email is a tremendous way of connecting with a prospect when done correctly but the typical email newsletter offered by most B2B marketers is a swing and a miss.

Often a tremendous amount of time goes into crafting a message about how great the company is and how great their products are. Typically, there is something about the latest company party or adventure to show personality. The content is passed around internally and watered down to the point of being painfully boring. Then, after many hours of work, it is shipped out to an outdated email contact list of customers and prospects. It lands into inbox after inbox, only to be quickly deleted. This same exercise is repeated month after month with no noticeable results.

If you're sending emails like this, the sad reality is that you're wasting your customer's time. If you want to connect with your customers and prospects, your emails must provide tangible value. Each message should include insights, critical information, advice, or other worthwhile resources that make it worth a customer or prospect's time to read. A general newsletter about how great your company is doesn't do that. All it does is waste their time and erode your brand equity.



38/1

Email generates
\$38 for every
\$1 spent.

Parting Thoughts

The reality is that marketing in a B2B environment is not about the company, the marketer, or the products. It is about the customer. **The job of a B2B marketer is not to generate leads. The job of a B2B marketer is to create a deep and lasting connection with a prospect** that helps a prospect and their entire decision-making team thoroughly and completely understand the value of engaging in a long-term relationship.

This, of course, is much easier said than done. A successful B2B marketing strategy should take into account the entire customer journey and it should not stop at the point of purchase. B2B marketing is about building and growing relationships, not about selling widgets. If you build your marketing and communication strategy around providing true value to your prospects and customers through every interaction, then you will be incredibly successful.



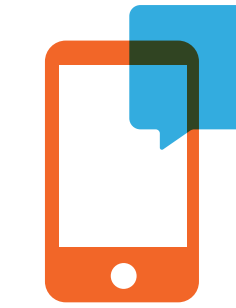
What's Your Next Step?

If you found these tips interesting and useful and would like to learn more about developing a comprehensive B2B marketing strategy, please check out our B2B Marketing Blueprint program.

This highly personalized experience connects your team with our top strategists to uncover your goals and outline a detailed 12-month B2B marketing strategy and action plan designed to help crush your goals.

For pricing and more information about this program, you can visit the dedicated page on our website at

ziplineb2b.com/b2b-marketing-blueprint/



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The B2B Marketing Blueprint



Topics & Questions

