

INFUSE AND MOI GLOBAL REFLECT ON THE 2023 STATE OF THE B2B MARKET

The recent effects of the recession including [banking failures](#), mass layoffs, budget cuts and [rapidly changing market conditions](#) have impacted multiple industries, with tech and financial services being the most affected. The resulting evolution of the B2B landscape combined with limited resources has presented considerable challenges for businesses around the world in 2023.

In recent INFUSE market surveys, we found the buyer's journey in the B2B space had undergone significant changes (see some stats below). As would be expected, these developments heralded [new strategies by successful marketers](#) to pivot and meet the demands of buyers and clients effectively.

These invaluable insights prompted industry leaders from INFUSE and [MOI Global](#) to come together in a joint webinar to discuss the current state of demand in the B2B landscape and the impacts that the recession will have on budgets and strategies in 2023, as well as what it will mean to marketers who need to shift long-term strategies and processes.





The current state of the B2B market



Video From The Event

“There’s a lot of effort being put towards demand, but it’s still not really that strategic, or, if it is, each of the decision makers and functional areas are not speaking with each other - or it’s becoming a rat race, which tends to be a trend in North America, where you have to win and get to the finish line first.”



Recent INFUSE market surveys of 1100+ buyers and marketers revealed the following trends

- 65% want lead quality as their main outcome
- 60% are working on full funnel demand
- 58% report that their demand budget has increased
- 52% are working on improving conversion rates
- 40% are working on increasing personalization
- 30% cited a lack of resources as their biggest challenge

These statistics were echoed by the recent experience of industry leaders from MOI Global, who reported seeing **challenges with budget, timeline, and quality**, as well as the need for new strategies after the failures of pivots from previous recessions and the impact of COVID-19.

MOI leaders found that companies that decided to opt for a “pause and hold” strategy created gaps in the funnel, while those that added different tactics to each stage of the funnel without a clear understanding of the full funnel journey found a disconnect between the stages, leading to failures in scaling these strategies. Indeed, these observations provide a more comprehensive picture of the reasons behind the new market-wide focus on [improving full funnel demand](#) in 2023.

In addition, these insights also go a long way to explaining INFUSE’s observations that [companies are taking a step back](#) after generating substantial volumes of TOFU leads (during and following the pandemic), embracing the digital environment, and analyzing conversion rates to ensure smarter persona-based nurture strategies, lead scoring, and deeper engagement.

Furthermore, MOI Global leadership found that their EMEA clients, when being tasked with generating leads, applied more scrutiny to ROI reporting and utilized more “big-picture” thinking when planning campaigns. This led to higher efficiency by recognizing goals upfront, rather than relying on reactive solutions when challenges arose or large pivots became necessary—hence **lead quality becoming a larger focus in 2023**.



Demand generation vs lead generation



Video From The Event

“Only 45% focusing on personalization shows me that we’re thinking more of lead generation rather than demand generation. This includes creating content that positions you as a specialist and a leading source.”



When it comes to demand, it was agreed on by all speakers that full funnel marketing or integrated demand strategies are not being led by sales or marketing teams, but rather by revenue teams. In mature organizations, the **depth of engagement has become more of a focus** as data from multiple stakeholders in a buying committee is essential in understanding the current position of an account.

Due to the rich data collected by this focus, INFUSE and MOI leaders agreed that this is more relevant for strategies than [analyzing whether leads fulfill certain criteria to be marketing or sales qualified](#).

The obstacles standing in the way of effectively implementing [buyer personas](#) within organizations as evidenced by the experience of all attendees were:

- ▮ **Multiple, siloed departments**
- ▮ **Incorrectly identifying the role and influence of specific stakeholders within buying groups** and only focusing on key decision makers (such as CTO for tech) when members such as the CFO also matter
- ▮ **Lack of patience for performance** from stakeholders and sales teams where strategies are rushed and best practices are not followed in pursuit of generating leads or meeting priority objectives



These challenges and how organizations handle them have been found to separate the strategic agencies with more ability to pivot from those that are less dynamic and more likely to have rigid plans. **Businesses that are scrutinizing analytics and ROI as well as having these discussions with their agencies have consistently shown to be more successful** and are beginning to move toward a [demand generation](#) or [RevOps](#) mentality.



Personalization and targeting



Video From The Event

“How much do you care about your customers if everything you produce is about you?”



C-suite is not the only buyer persona that matters

In order to effectively target the buyer, **organizations need to engage the [entire account](#), not only the individuals responsible for signing off on projects**. MOI leaders also agreed that data trends and intent are necessary to engage the account correctly and that effective agencies and strategic teams are needed to push conversations.

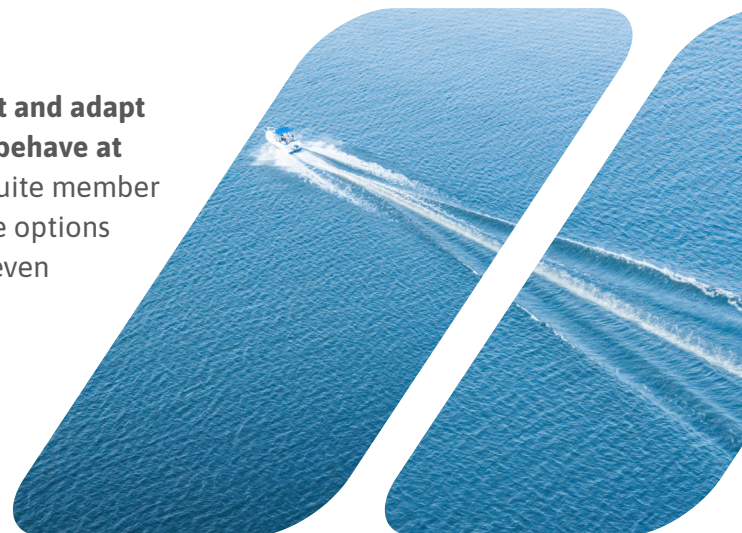
Additionally, when defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), it is important to consider that not all buyers are the same and that they cannot be treated equally (in terms of evaluating performance).

MOI Global leaders have noticed a trend that C-suite leads do not generally engage as much as more hands-on staff that have roles that include gathering data and performing research for their superiors. This has resulted in a change in the way that they qualify leads, as **a low click-through rate (CTR) among C-suite members does not equate to low account engagement or a failed campaign**.

How buyer personas are affecting KPIs

Organizations need to take a more proactive approach to target and adapt their ROI based on how each specific persona is most likely to behave at different stages in the funnel. For example, in some cases, a C-suite member will rely on their assistants or other staff to research and collate options and only engage further with the brand towards the middle or even [bottom of the funnel](#) when investigating options further.

INFUSE leadership’s 2023 market research corroborates this, as C-Suites will engage with the brand less than 2% of the time, and only [5% of an organization’s total addressable market \(TAM\) has the intent to buy](#) (LinkedIn B2B Institute).



This clearly demonstrates the need for B2B businesses to emphasize full funnel tactics while also reassessing their strategy for developing targeting tactics, KPIs, and how they measure ROI with a more personalized approach that analyzes and anticipates the behavior of a broader range of buyer personas.

To do this, it was recommended by the gathered industry experts that businesses should **facilitate more actual conversations with prospects and clients and utilize the sales team and account management individuals as resources** to better understand prospects and their needs. The lack of qualitative data and overemphasis on quantitative data has created a marketing blindspot for many organizations.

The disconnect between [marketing and sales departments](#) in many organizations was also raised as a challenge to targeting, along with an emphasis on project-based campaigns rather than evergreen ones. Project-based campaigns are often directed to meet a particular pain point or goal of the organization, which can sometimes mean disregarding marketing best practices and effective personalization as the marketing team is under pressure to deliver leads. More consistent campaigns made with long-term goals in mind tend to produce a more consistent flow of leads. **Therefore, a phased approach that allows a strategy to support a business over time will assist in recession and future-proofing the organization.**





Content marketing








Video From The Event

“If you have a really good piece of content, you want to share it with people who are also going to get value from it.”



Content marketing has never been more relevant in reaching and nurturing leads. In fact, according to a [2021 study by Edelman and LinkedIn](#), 54% of decision makers say they spend more than one hour per week reading and reviewing thought-leadership content. To create meaningful content, businesses need to understand the buying committees they are targeting. In 2023, INFUSE leadership found significant changes to the makeup and process of buying committees.

More stats from recent INFUSE market surveys show:

-  **41%** of buying committees have 7+ members
-  **25%** of buying committees have 10+ members
-  **Buying cycles are longer** compared to previous years
-  **22%** of buying committee members read over 11 pieces of content
-  **eBooks are the second lowest content type** being consumed by buyers



All attendees commented on a trend they are seeing over multiple regions: Organizations are not creating content that really speaks to the reader, and B2B tech content has a tendency to be self-serving.

Considering the current B2B landscape and the importance of personalization to buyers, many businesses need to [rethink their content strategies](#) from scratch and consider what each piece of content is intended to accomplish and where it fits into the buyer’s journey.

INFUSE surveys have demonstrated that buyers have become more independent, engaging less with sales, and becoming more self-driven with research. This means that organizations need to **create content that is available when buyers need it, on the channels they frequent, while fitting their specific stage of the buyer's journey.** By closely monitoring the types of content being consumed by various buyer personas and demographics, businesses can also better infer [audience segmentation](#) per content type and buyer journey stage.

A good example of the latest trend of self-serving content within the B2B space comes from an **experience from MOI Global's team where they took part in a survey** that analyzed content consumption from the point of view of marketers and buyers. **The analysis showed that answers from the marketers were in direct conflict with the buyers.** Buyers had indicated a significant need for vendor comparison content, but the marketers did not see the value in such content, as it apparently did not offer the organization any value.

Trying to tightly control or limit the conversation around an industry, brand, or solution will only lead to prospects seeking this information elsewhere, which means marketers are in danger of completely losing control of the narrative. **When brands have the courage to provide content that is useful to the buyer and not always of interest to the business, it shows commitment** to prospects that they are not prioritizing solely their goals and intentions.

Going beyond personalization with content planning

All experts agreed that trust from buyers is crucial and can be earned through the type of content that is published. If marketers publish content that genuinely assists buyers by making their lives easier, helping them progress in their organization, and ultimately making them feel heard and understood in their needs, it will increase their trust in the brand.

Buying decisions impact the buying committee members personally, as they are under immense pressure to make the right call and it impacts their organization's perception of them. Therefore, the more content and helpful tools a brand provides, the more incentive a decision maker will have to consider them. [HubSpot](#), [Marketo](#), and [Adobe](#) are especially adept at doing this with their educational content and academies.



The leaders at MOI Global also pointed out the challenge of long-standing beliefs among marketers that B2B content needs to be complex to be considered professional or valuable to leads. This is especially true when C-suite leads often do not have time due to busy schedules to properly immerse themselves in such content.

To cater to this limited availability by decision makers, some B2B leaders are recommending a move from traditional B2B content to bite-sized content more similar to B2C, including TikTok videos in a User Generated Content (UGC) style. The consensus of the INFUSE and MOI experts was that B2B content does not require several months of development and that platforms like Instagram and podcasts are widely underutilized by marketers.

This trend toward **shorter-form B2B content considers the [user experience \(UX\)](#) of consuming content in the way that buyers do in their personal lives** and serves as another indicator of how [B2B and B2C approaches are blending](#). Different formats consider other devices and a new generation of buyers which has an increased need for personalized and short-form content with clear takeaways.

A valuable recommendation by the experts included inviting CMOs as guest speakers for brand content to take advantage of a more genuine space to nurture relationships with buyers.





AI In B2B marketing



Video From The Event

“Technology will never replace humans, but it’s about using technology to augment our skill set.”



The INFUSE and MOI experts spoke positively about the undeniable rise of AI in the form of [ChatGPT](#) and other tools. Everyone agreed that these tools were always meant to be aids for refining work and not for eradicating human involvement.

MOI Global leaders shared their 80:20 rule for creating content with AI, in that **AI is tasked with the grunt work as a “brainstorming body” or virtual assistant and the marketing team then refines it.**

Humans (unlike AI) have empathy and are able to utilize an emotional lens—which is necessary for understanding leads and creating content to suit their unique goals and needs. As a result, they are unlikely to be fully replaced in the marketing process.

AI was also identified as being **useful for A/B testing, assisting with repetitive tasks, and refining processes, as well as simplifying technical text or processes to be better understood by audiences.**





Key Takeaways

- ▶ **Full funnel strategies work** when the leads and funnel stages are well understood.
- ▶ **Qualitative data is useful** in gaining a better understanding of prospects.
- ▶ **Measuring the depth of engagement of leads** provides useful insights to pivot marketing strategies and content where necessary.
- ▶ **Aligning the sales and marketing departments** will assist in developing accurate buyer personas and target market segmentation.
- ▶ **It may be necessary to reassess strategies** for developing targeting tactics, KPIs, and how ROI is measured and adapt to a more personalized approach that analyzes and anticipates lead behavior.
- ▶ **Content needs to provide genuine value** to leads and the content format needs to consider the channels, devices, and time constraints of buyers.
- ▶ **AI is useful to B2B marketers as a tool** to assist team members with grunt work, repetitive tasks, and A/B testing and not to replace any function or role.

Our INFUSE demand experts are available to help you adapt your marketing and targeting strategies to the evolving needs of buyers in 2023 and empower your teams to drive demand outcomes to achieve revenue goals.

CONTACT OUR TEAM AT letstalk@infusemedia.com FOR CUSTOM-TAILORED CONTENT CRAFTED BY OUR TEAM OF INDUSTRY EXPERTS →

MOI Global is a leading global B2B agency for technology brands, [visit their website](#) for more information on their selection of exclusive solutions →



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