



10 steps to:
**Unlocking the
content dungeon**

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Your audience is calling out for good content. But you're finding it hard to produce the goods. So we say it's time to unlock the content dungeon.

Who knows what you might find...



Introduction

Content. Who needs it?

There's no hiding from it – B2B marketing has changed, for good.

Your potential customers are no longer sitting around waiting for you to get in touch; they are out there doing their own research.

In fact latest research has shown that 9 out of 10 buyers say that when they are ready to buy they'll find you.

It's clear we're in the middle of a big shift from outbound to inbound marketing – with latest predictions estimating 80% of new leads will come from inbound marketing by 2015.

All this means your marketing needs to be set up to be part of the conversation throughout the buying cycle – offering something that is relevant, interesting, useful, thought provoking (and dare we say funny?)

You need to be sharing great content – in the right place, at the right time with the right people.

But there's a sticking point. We're all screaming the same thing: “We've just not got enough content.”

Or more astutely: “We've just not got enough GOOD content.”

So to stand out from all the noise, what can you do to feed your content marketing efforts and stay ahead of your competition? Luckily you may find you already have a whole raft of content locked away that has long been forgotten – and can be the answer to all your problems.

Here are 10 steps to unlocking your content dungeon and making the most of it.

Now 9 out of 10 buyers say when they're ready to buy they'll find you.¹

[Tweet this statistic](#)



Step 1

Think about your audience

When it comes to content it's all about a value exchange with your potential customers. Deliver consistent, on-going valuable information to your buyers and they should ultimately reward you with their business and loyalty. It's the simple principle of reciprocity if you are into your social psychology.

Get under the skin of your audience with buyer personas. Think about their business goals, their personal goals, the challenges they face and what they need to know (the questions they are asking when searching online).

Create content that really resonates; think about where your potential customers are in the [buyer journey](#) and match content to their needs.

During early stage awareness, content such as analyst reports and whitepapers as well as sponsored research are likely to have the most cut through.

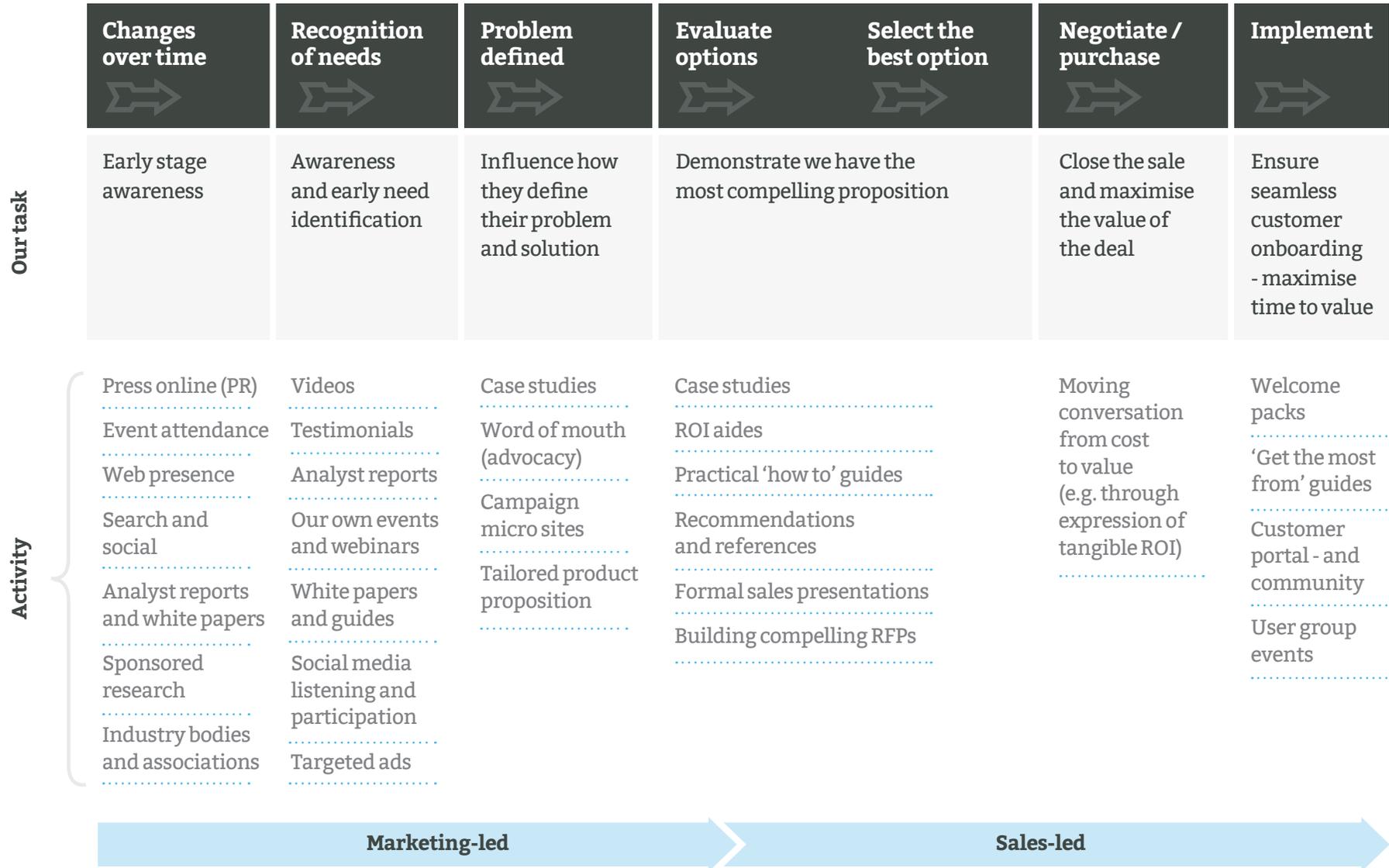
Moving further down to problem definition and evaluation, case studies, how to guides and campaign microsites are more likely to cut the mustard.

78% of B2B buyers are looking for information around their business challenge.²

Tweet this statistic



Today's buyer journey





Step 2

Run a content audit

One of the first and most important stages of your content strategy is taking stock of what you have available to you at the moment.

Check your intranet to seek out all of those forgotten gems that you commissioned five years ago and have been left to collect dust – there is still value in them. Take a look on your own website – you will be surprised as to how much is out there. Whitepapers, research reports, case studies even old news articles could prove useful later down the line.

Map the content you have to the buyer journey. What do you have that fits into the top, middle and bottom of the funnel and where do you need to plug the gaps?

Talk to your sales guys – they may be using content that has completely slipped under the radar. Sure there may be a few PPT presentations that you wish you had never set eyes on, but they will be sure to give up some highly useful stuff that will be invaluable to your potential customers. You could even hold a ‘content amnesty’ once a year so the business can have any collateral they use tidied up by marketing.

70% of buyers review four or more pieces of content on their path to purchase.³

Tweet this statistic



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Step 3

Re-purpose the old stuff

The reality about the majority of the content you will find in your audit is that it is not necessarily bad in itself, just some pieces may not be fit for purpose.

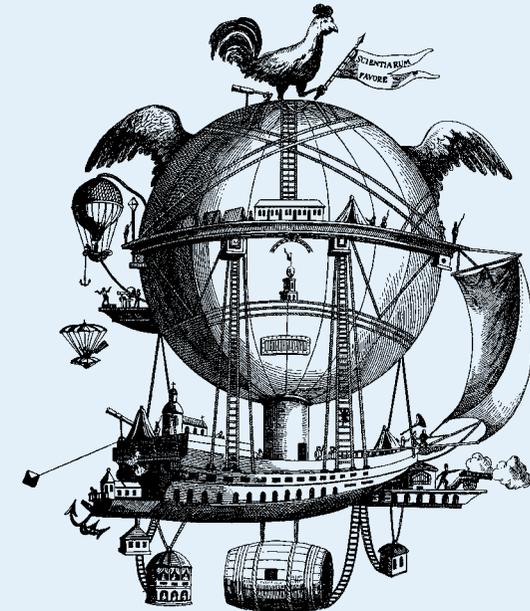
91% of B2B marketers tailor their content in at least one way.⁴

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Find out what your audience are really looking for – do they prefer infographics to animations or have a penchant for pictures?

Turn old boring papers into new shiny content – a corporate brochure could become your most watched animation, a series of whitepapers, your very first mobile app.

Break single pieces of content into multiple 'bite-sized' bits – If the order value is more than \$10k – 70% of buyers say they review four or more pieces of content prior to purchase.



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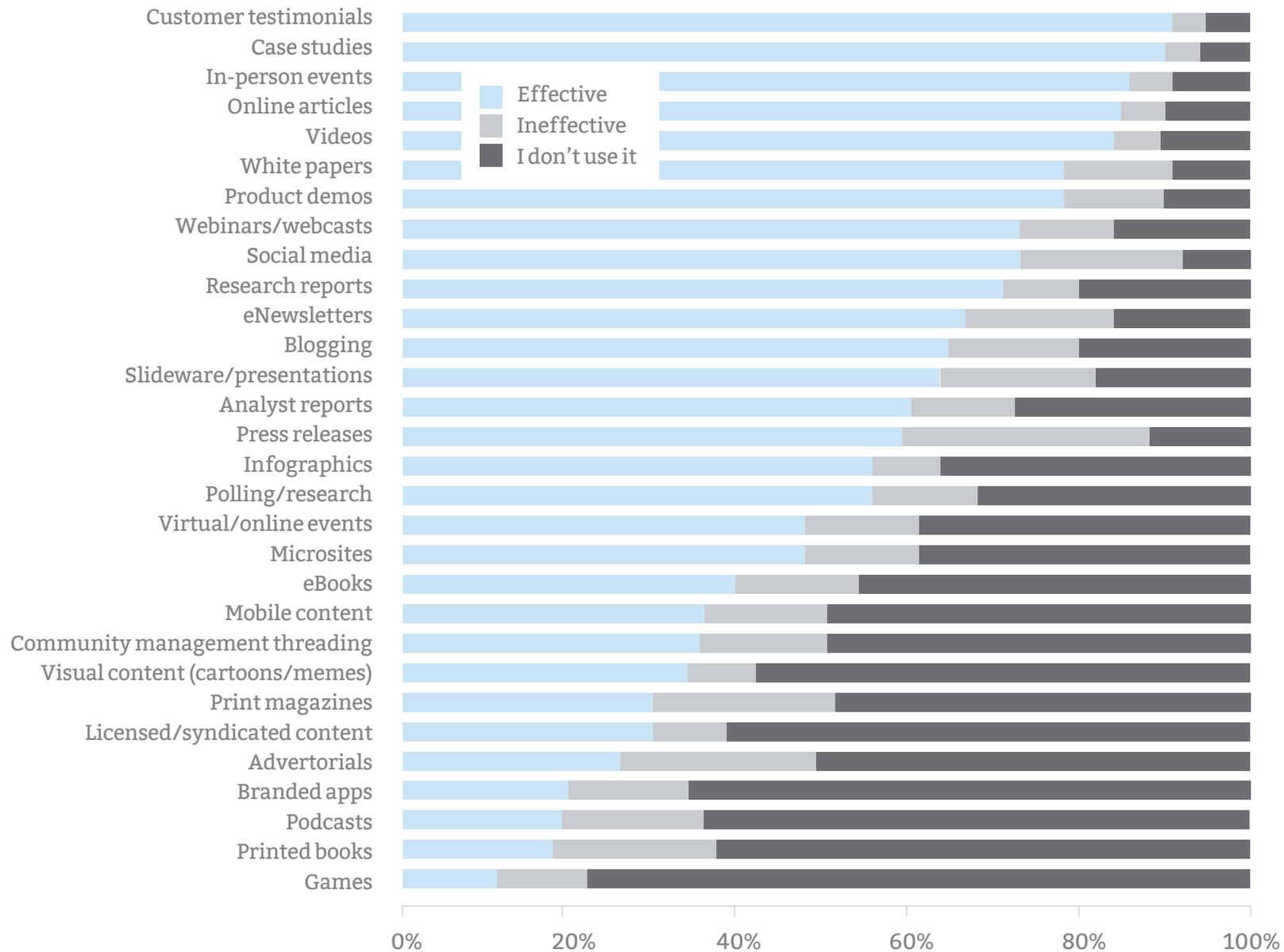
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The effectiveness of different pieces of b2b content⁵





Step 4

Build your thought leadership team

Your team of thought leaders are the most important people to keep the content marketing engine running – congregating the best people from across the business is essential.

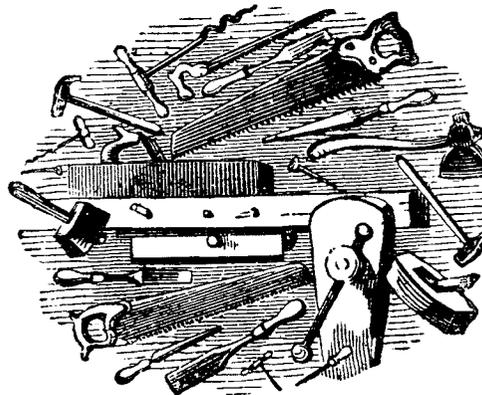
Talk to your subject matter experts. Yes they may often be wearing white coats and blink when exposed to sunlight – but they are always a mine of information.

Make it easy for them – their time is precious so work around them. Ghost write content from their input, pick the low hanging fruit and use social collaboration tools, such as [yammer](#), to make the whole process easier for everyone.

Give them the direction and time to write or contribute to content and emphasise the importance to the business. Finally show what is in it for them.

34% agreed information from subject matter experts is the most credible.⁶

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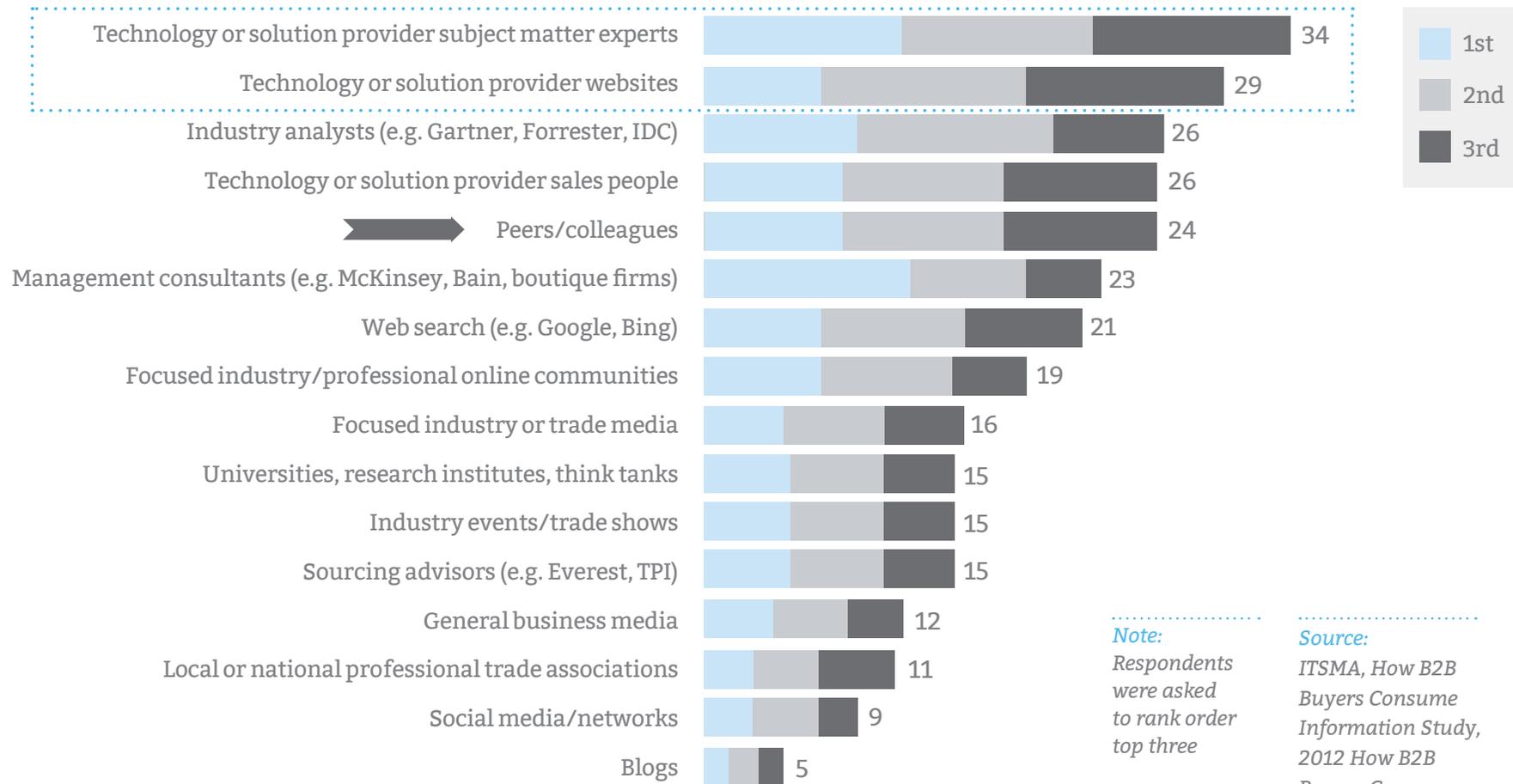
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Step 10

Solution provider resources are more credible than peers

Which of the following sources of information are most credible?

(Rank order 1st, 2nd, 3rd)
% Of respondents (n=299)



Note:
Respondents were asked to rank order top three

Source:
ITSMA, How B2B Buyers Consume Information Study, 2012 How B2B Buyers Consume Information



Step 5

Reward contribution, from across the business

Just like your customers, the content creators within the business will want to know how they will benefit and feel part of the process.

Reassure your subject matter experts that this will help boost their public profile – and play to their ego by promoting the author (and even their photo) on each piece of content.

Reward them for their involvement – from a simple company-wide thank you or a direct link to bonuses and remuneration for content creation through to creating a gamification programme to continue to recognise and reward contributors throughout the process.



Badgeville enables businesses to gamify the workplace

Over 70% of global 2000 organisations will be gamified by 2014.⁷

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Step 6

Give the internal audience what they need

Today it is estimated that 90% of marketing deliverables are not used by sales – so be sure to create and repurpose content that they will use time and time again.

Content doesn't just have to be about meeting the needs of your customers – it can be about meeting the internal needs of your business as well.

Content should be all about enabling your sales team to show their industry knowledge – give them an angle, a point of view and a vision of what's next. – they won't sell what they don't know and do not want to be caught out in a meeting.

8 minute expert guides do a great job of prepping sales for a meeting – giving them a quick overview into what you sell, who's it for, what to ask and who to bring to the meeting (and they can easily be re-puposed into handy sales apps).



Today, prospects have made 60% of their purchase decision before even talking to a sales rep.⁸



[Tweet this statistic](#)

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Step 7

Think mobile

The mobile explosion is huge. Mobile web searches currently make up a quarter of all mobile traffic and global mobile activity now accounts for 15% of all internet traffic. Mobile devices really are engrained into our lives.

Make sure all your current and future content is mobile optimised or risk of your potential customers having a poor experience of your brand before they have even met you.

Create content that can easily be viewed and shared via mobile devices and think about the use of mobile apps – creating portals for customers to access and receive content wherever they are.

Re-develop current pieces of content specifically for mobile devices – making them concise and easy to read on the move.

Global mobile activity now accounts for 15% of all internet traffic.⁹

[Tweet this statistic](#)



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Step 8

Make it easy to share

Whilst creating shiny content is great, getting it to the widest possible audience is the end goal. So make sure all of your content is as easy to pass on as possible.

Use industry standard platforms that can be easily accessed from any device (and are likely not to be blocked in the workplace). Think YouTube, Vimeo, Slideshare, Flickr and the like. Be sure to include sharing options

within the content itself – give your audience the option to easily tweet snippets of key messages and include sharing buttons and options where you can.

Incentivise your audience to share your content where possible – competitions needn't be constrained to the B2C side of the fence, and a giveaway for one lucky user of your hashtag can work wonders to making your content fly out of the door.



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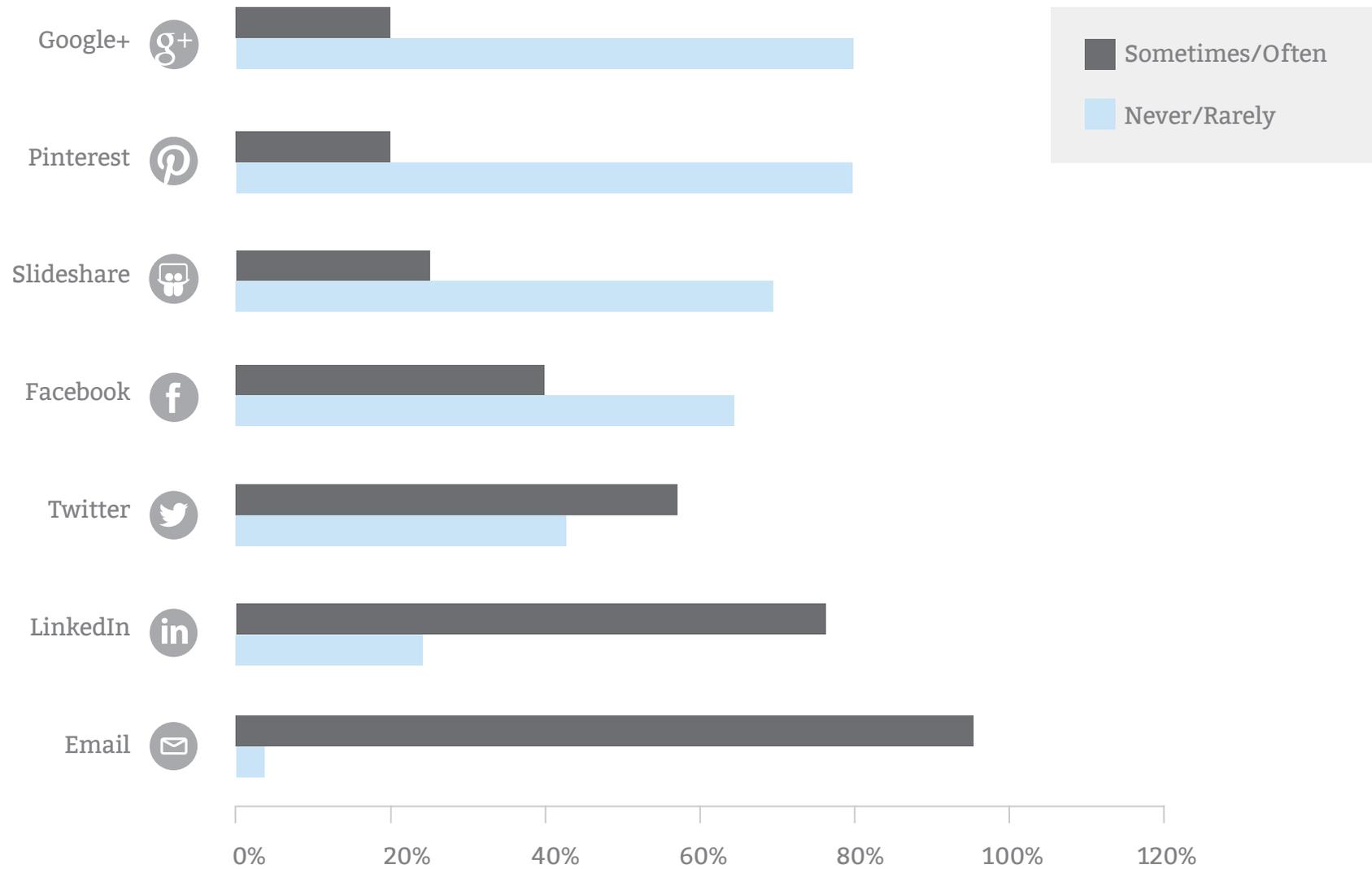
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How buyers prefer to share content with their colleagues¹⁰





Step 9

Pick the right distribution channels

Choosing the right channels to share each piece of content through is an important part of your strategy to ensure you are reaching the right audience in the right places.



First think of the objective for each channel – where your blog may, for example be about positioning you as a thought-leader and to keep your brand front of mind, twitter may be all about creating a conversation online and showing your credibility in the industry.

Finally agree some desired outcomes and KPIs for each channel – looking at what you are hoping each network will add to your marketing. Increase in followers, increase in click throughs and increase in content views are all important metrics.

Secondly, agree the focus for each channel – which will you use to provide deep analysis, which will you use to converse with your potential customers?

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Planning your social strategy means having the right focus for each channel

	Objective	Focus	Desired outcome
Twitter (Owned Media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position company as thought-leader Build audience engagement & dialogue Show we are credible Keep us front-of-mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share content we generate (blog / YouTube) Share our news/promote events/case studies Share valuable third-party content (wider blogosphere/media) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in click throughs to blog / YouTube/our website Increase in Mentions and Retweets Increase in followers
Blog (Owned Media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position company as thought-leader Build audience engagement & dialogue Help shape and guide buyer strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide analysis, opinion and guidance on key issues, industry and new developments Deliver a rich and engaging experience wherever possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in page views Increase in inbound & outbound links Increase in comments Increase in sharing of our content Increase in search performance on keywords
Blogosphere (Earned Media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position company as thought-leader Create and participate in conversations online Show we are credible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening online to identify where we should be commenting or stimulating discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in share of voice online Increased participation in online discussions
LinkedIn (Owned/Earned Media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage professional networks of our key execs to open up new conversations Keep us front-of-mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating blog and Twitter feeds Participating in the right online groups – and stimulating discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in click throughs to blog/our website Increased participation in online discussions
YouTube (Owned Media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position company as thought-leader Show we are credible Help shape and guide buyer strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide analysis, opinion on key issues, industry and technology developments Share our story Share client case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in channel views Increase in channel subscribers Increase in comments



Step 10

Measure and learn

The reality is that all content and all channels may not work for you and your customers. Some businesses flourish on Facebook – sharing some great content. Others find their audience gravitates to LinkedIn.

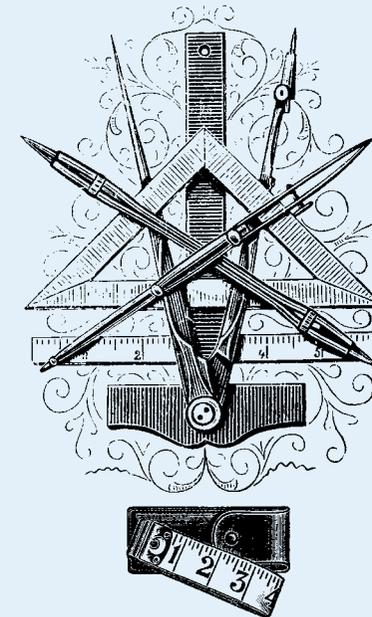
The key is to use your measurement to keep track of which pieces of content are resonating with your audience and which are being left to collect dust. Be sure to react to these findings, and quickly.

Finally experiment with new content, and new channels and measure the success of each. You never know where there might be a hidden pool of potential just waiting to be found.

Tools such as Hootsuite, Google Analytics and Tynt are essential parts of your arsenal to measure content distribution and effectiveness.

60% of buyers want vendors to use more data and research to support their content.¹¹

[Tweet this statistic](#)

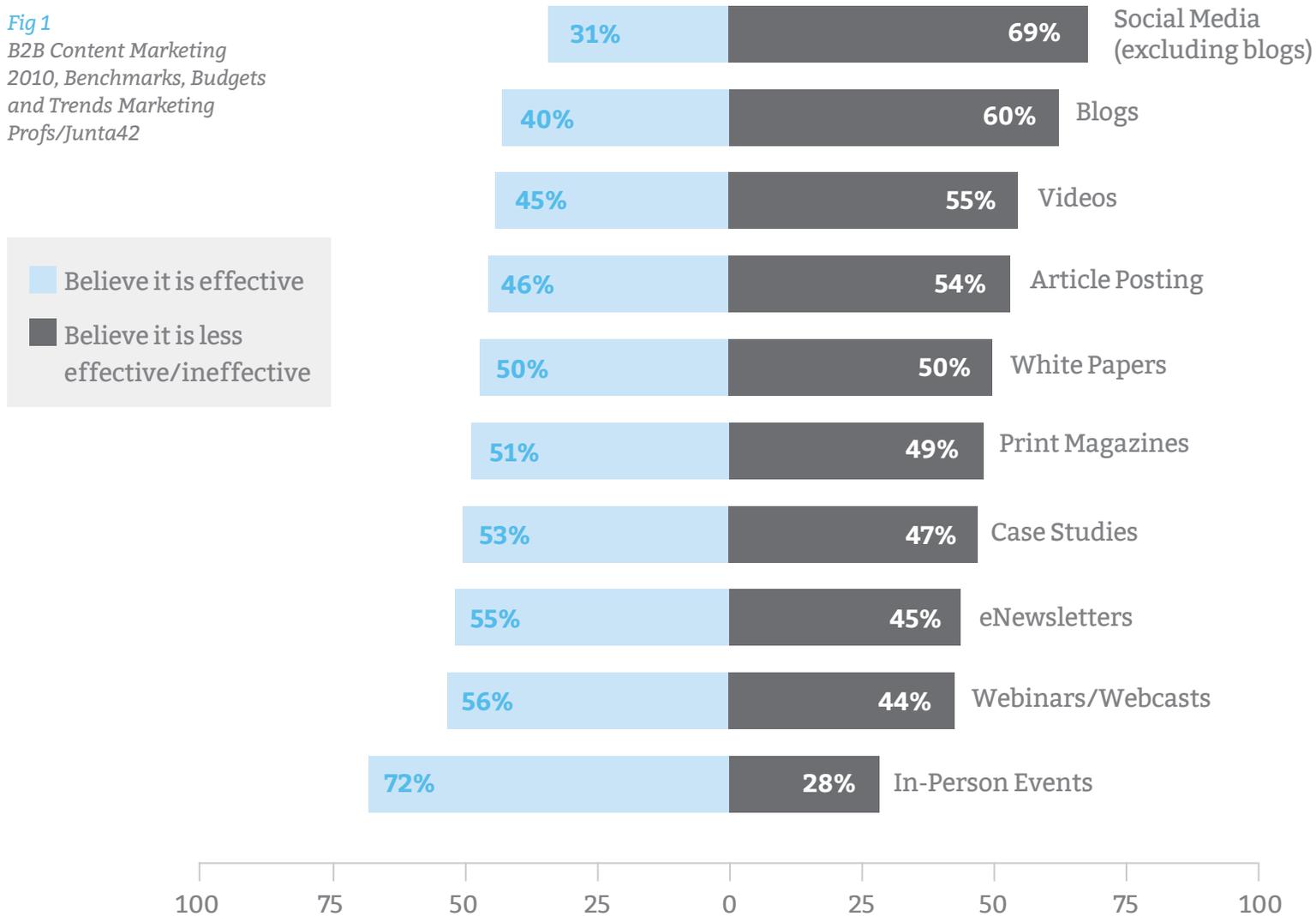


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Confidence gap

Effectiveness ratings of tactics among users

Fig 1
B2B Content Marketing
2010, Benchmarks, Budgets
and Trends Marketing
Profs/Junta42





Ready to unlock your content dungeon?

Contact us on 020 3463 9447 or info@earnest-agency.com

