

**Big Ideas** EARN EZT  
from **B2B Ignite USA**

**We wish we could  
have been gathering  
with our industry  
peers in Chicago  
for B2B Ignite USA**

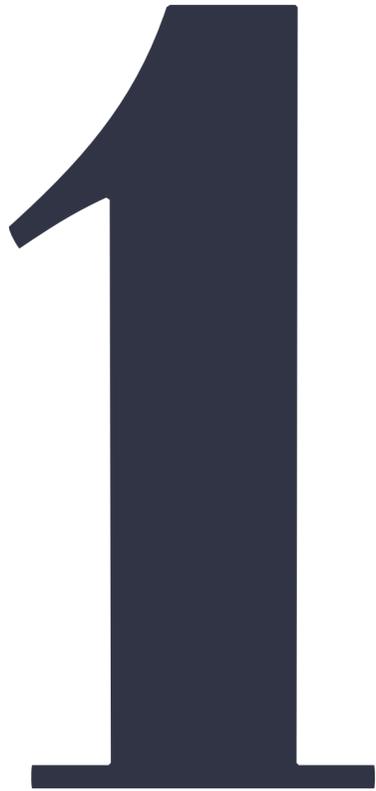
**but...**

thanks to the hard work of the B2B Marketing staff and an incredible lineup of speakers, the virtual event experience certainly still packed a punch.

While we weren't swapping business cards between sessions or mingling over conference cocktails, we got all the B2B insights we could have hoped for – and then some.

Over the course of two days, we “zoomed” from ABM and Martech to purpose-driven brand building and leadership in the face of uncertainty. And best of all, we compiled all the big ideas heard ‘round B2B Ignite so get ready to dive right in.

*Read on for some of our key highlights from the event*



# Avoid the trap of logic-based thinking

The role of rational thinking in business decision making is certainly overstated and many important motivational drivers often overlooked.

As we like to say here at Earnest, business people are people too – they just happen to be at work.

We've got to take the time to understand what truly makes people tick, harness their emotions, appeal to their hearts and minds.

In the opening keynote of B2B Ignite USA, Ogilvy chairman Rory Sutherland spoke about something every B2B marketer should get familiar with – behavioral economics. It's a branch of science that focuses on the realities of decision-making – particularly financial decisions.

It's super relevant to all of us as we're in the business of communication and that communication exists to help persuade.

Taking a step back from strictly economic and pragmatic thinking to explore the psychological and behavioral forces at play opens a host of new, more innovative approaches.



There's a whole game up for grabs in innovating in psychological terms rather than technological terms."

*Rory Sutherland, Ogilvy*

*Here are some useful resources specifically made with B2B marketing in mind:*

*Mind of the buyer*

*The Yes Factor*

# The move from sales enablement to sales engagement

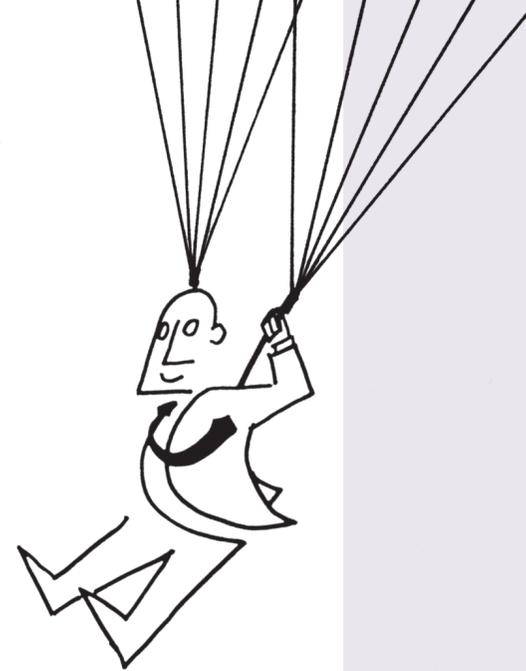
A clear sentiment shared throughout the sessions at B2B Ignite USA was the need for marketing to get closer to sales than ever before.

Rather than a simple handoff, the relationship between sales and marketing should be about active collaboration, communication, mutual respect and trust. To be as effective as possible, the two functions should seek to adopt a common language and mindset along with metrics by which to measure success.

In his session 'Thinking in Systems', Dow Jones CMO Rossa Shanks emphasized that the best marketers truly understand sales, allowing them to create a real revenue generator.

It requires a growth mindset, marked by expansive thinking beyond marketing and an empathy for sales, to effectively break down silos.

Shared metrics lead to accountability and are the foundation upon which sales and marketing can work in parallel towards a common goal rather than the traditional passing of the marketing/sales baton.



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# Embrace your role as change agent to claim your seat at the table

Despite the new challenges that have arisen in the wake of Covid-19, marketers at B2B Ignite were optimistic about the opportunity presented to them as organizational change agents.



As discussed by CMOs on the “What does the future hold for the B2B CMO?” panel, the crisis has reconfirmed marketers’ ability to respond quickly and dynamically and to lead in the face of uncertainty. Furthermore, it’s validated the importance of having the voice of the customer represented at the highest levels of an organization. Marketers have been critical to understanding and addressing the changing needs of their customer base, helping brands engage in meaningful and authentic dialogue with them (along with employees and investors, too).



Marketers should seize this opportunity to really step up and take a lead role in educating about the evolved role of marketing in strategically driving growth.”

*Debbie Murphy, Member,  
The Economic Club of Chicago*

Panel members urged that, beyond their role in crisis communications and management, marketers should draw a straight line between marketing and the financial goals of the organization. Now is the time to extend influence beyond the communications function and fight for a seat at the table, in order to be a part of conversations around larger organizational strategy.

In his session 'Vital B2B Benchmarking Stats', Earnezt's Managing Partner Chris Wilson illustrated that there's a clear B2B content problem in terms of relevancy and connection.

Data shows that B2B buyers are overwhelmed with the volume of content available and many think branded B2B content isn't relevant to them or is boring, repetitive and expected.

FireEye CMO Vasu Jakkal stressed the importance of driving relevancy and connection in content, saying, "No one is listening if they can't relate. We need to move from messaging to stories."

Author David Nihill also offered his own advice for creating content that connects and engages – by infusing humor and personality.

Here are Nihill's tips for using humor to craft content that connects:

- *Start with pain points*
- *Think fun over funny*
- *Ask what your customer would do*

50%

of business and IT buyers say the content they receive is useless<sup>1</sup>

71%

of execs think that branded content is boring<sup>2</sup>

# Content that connects is king





# No strategic alignment without operational alignment

Without integrating technology, you can't harness the full power of marketing.

Several sessions highlighted this notion of supercharging your marketing through tech stack integration – and not only within the marketing function but in coordination with sales and customer success as well.

Jay Famico of Iron Horse broke down the top cited benefits of centralized operations, called 'RevOps':

## *Vision*

- Shared operational objectives and priorities

## *Measurement*

- Aligned KPIs and metrics
- Improved measurement, tracking and forecasting
- A single source of truth for all KPIs, metrics and reporting

## *Technology*

- Unified management of key processes
- More tightly aligned tech stack
- More strategic use of tech

## *Operations*

- Increased responsiveness
- Reduction in costs through elimination of redundancies
- Decreased errors/defects in deliverables and processes

Interested in exploring centralized operations? Here are Famico's tips for getting started:

## *Walk the talk*

If marketing, sales and customer success are not operationally aligned, they're not aligned

## *Centralization*

The more centralized your operations functions are, the tighter aligned your marketing, sales and customer success teams will become

## *Boil a Pot, not the Ocean*

If you don't have RevOps currently, start with incremental steps to bring the functions toward operational alignment

## *Be inquisitive*

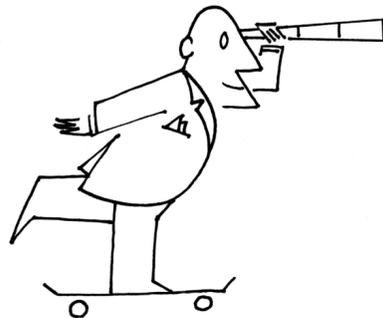
Most of the reports on RevOps are skewed so do your due diligence

# Activate your brand purpose

In today's world, brand purpose must extend beyond a company's 'reason for being'

Brands are expected to take a stand and activate that purpose for the better of the world around them. While B2C brands like Patagonia have been at the forefront of cause-driven marketing, more B2B brands are leading and acting with purpose.

For brand purpose to have impact, it first and foremost needs to be authentic and then put into real action.



Here are some tips for acting with purpose, from Jill Dudones of Omobono:

- 1 Look inside your business to revisit, rigorously test, and adjust your purpose statement
- 2 Listen to understand your audiences
- 3 Embrace the power of your people to ensure alignment and to deepen your purpose
- 4 Activate your purpose, ex. rethink thought leadership, co-create with employees and partners
- 5 Measure the impact on society, employees/culture, and the business

93%

of B2B businesses are somewhere on the purpose journey <sup>3</sup>

57%

are more focused on purpose today than three years ago <sup>4</sup>





# Brand building is good for business, too

Brand experience – as a culmination of identity, behavior, capability, and culture – not only represents what a company stands for but it has a direct impact on the bottom line.

In his session ‘The Power of Brand,’ Stefan Doering of PwC UK stated that the best brands are consistent, relevant and distinctive and showcased how long-term brand building provides more sustainable business growth than short-term sales activity. While the immediacy of sales activity is attractive, the data shows that the effects of brand building last longer and accumulate over time.

Furthermore, Jill Dudones of Omobono shared the impact of purpose-driven brand building on sales and stock performance:

### *Ready to dive deeper?*

*Here are four arguments for why B2B marketers should spend more on brand building*

## 206%

.....  
stock market out  
performance of purpose  
active brands since 2010 <sup>5</sup>

## 71%

.....  
of B2B buyers more  
likely to purchase when  
they see their personal  
values reflected <sup>6</sup>



# Take the next step on your ABM journey

It's clear many of us are well on our way on the ABM journey – now it's time to scale the mountain. Meredith Fuller at Quarry outlined how to take ABM to the next level from good to great through new approaches to targeting, personalization, and value creation:

## Targeting

### Good

- Ideal Customer Profile (fit-based)
- Basic tiering of accounts (by firmographics)
- Personas identified by roles

### Great

- Advanced “Fit, Intent + Engagement” modeling/scoring to segment/prioritize
- Personas mapped across buying group(s)
- Contact coverage assessment and appending

## Personalization

### Good

- Account and contact specific (1:1)
- Cluster-based (ie. industry) (1:Few)
- Role-based

### Great

- Contextual, dynamic customization – in real time
- Engagement-based
- Buyer journey stage-based
- Intent-based

*Hungry for more?*

*Learn more about crafting truly bespoke marketing with Earnest's free ABM guide*

## Value Creation

### Good

- Time-bound campaigns (“on” then “off”)
- Marketing-led only
- Short-term window to drive impact

### Great

- Time-bound campaigns and perpetual programs (“always on”)
- Delivers value over a long period of time
- Amortizes costs more like a capital investment
- Mix of marketing-led and sales triggered plays

# Now's the time for helping, not selling

The need to find meaningful ways to help customers during this time of uncertainty, instead of self-serving initiatives and hard selling, was a resounding message throughout B2B Ignite USA.

It will be the brands that are the most helpful now that customers will remember later.

FireEye's Vasu Jakkal stated "Build trust, lend a hand, show empathy. Help people choose optimism." and Omobono's Jill Dudones implored "We need to go from "I'm here for you" to "what can I do for you?"

Here at Earnzt, we couldn't agree more. We've been guiding our clients with the principle of helping, not selling and during B2B Ignite USA we decided to practice what we preach.

We used our sponsored booth to drive awareness and support for The Greater Chicago Food Bank, inviting fellow attendees to *#Ignite4Chicago* by joining us in the donation of meals to those in need. While we couldn't be in Chicago with our fellow marketers, it was powerful to come together to rally for the city that has been an incredible host to the B2B marketing community over the years.

[Click here to learn more about how you can help your customers when they need it most](#)



# Want some help?

If you'd like to talk about ways your business could put these big ideas into action, we'd love to hear from you.

Drop us an email any time  
[hello@earnezt-agency.com](mailto:hello@earnezt-agency.com)

**EARN EZT**