



The Modern Sales Pitch:

How to use content to drive sales



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The traditional sales pitch is dead.

In its place is a nuanced approach that recognizes that buyers are in control. The modern sales pitch values buyers as partners in the process, not merely targets of a barrage of sales and marketing content sent their way in an attempt to sway their purchase decision.

The buyer experience is the cornerstone of successful customer relationships. To create an engaging buyer experience, sales organizations must curate content that aligns with the buyer journey. By providing relevant, high-quality content to potential buyers at key stages of the buying journey, your sales team can help guide the prospect to a confident decision.



*In 2020, the B2B **customer experience** was the number one key brand differentiator, beating out both product and price.*

Optimizing The Buyer Experience

TIP #1: Buyers Hold the Cards

B2B buyers today are a new breed; they're driving the bus and sales reps are along for the ride. Did you know your sales reps have roughly **5%** of a customer's time during their B2B buying journey. **Forrester** reports that 90% of business buyers start their journey with an online search, with many increasingly opting for a self-directed digital approach throughout the majority of the purchase process:

- 60% of B2B buyers prefer not to interact with a sales rep as the primary source of information
- 68% prefer to research on their own, online
- 62% say they can now develop selection criteria or finalize a vendor list—based solely on digital content

In fact, a Gartner **study** found that B2B buyers spend only 17% of the buying journey meeting with sales vendors. If buyers are comparing multiple suppliers, they may only spend 5% or 6% of their time with any one sales rep. The same research found that a large portion (44%) of Millennials prefer *no sales rep interaction* in a B2B purchase setting. As Boomers retire and Millennials become the primary decision-makers, this self-directed, digital-first buying paradigm will eventually become the norm.

Given that sellers have less and less opportunity to influence customer decisions, sales leaders need to embrace digital sales models and provide personalized, informational content via digital channels that helps **guide and support** buyers along their learning and discovery path toward the final destination of solution selection.

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***“Our job is no longer to convince the buyer to buy.
It's to help the buyer buy.”***

*Steven Casey, Principal Analyst, Forrester,
SiriusDecision Summit 2020 keynote presentation*

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TIP #2: It's Not About You

The traditional sales pitch tends to focus on the product or solution but the key to winning business is to put the primary focus on the buyer, to understand the buyer, their industry, and their pain points.

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“Most sales reps start their positioning talking about themselves. Almost every corporate deck I’ve seen starts with: ‘Let me tell you about us.’ Sales reps need to flip the script and start every prospect interaction, especially one that falls into the ‘pitch’ category, talking about what is emotionally interesting to the prospect.”

Mark Stuyt, Chief Engagement Officer, Neural Impact

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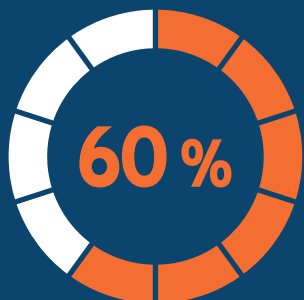
Buyers want to know the sales team has a solid understanding of the business and industry landscape, gravitating toward vendors that make a concerted effort to understand their goals throughout the buying journey. Indeed, a NewVoiceMedia [study](#) found that 86% of respondents would be more likely to place an order if a sales rep could demonstrate that they took the time to research and understand the needs of the company.

Knowing the customer, where they stand, and what motivates them to choose you or a competitor, is the foundation of delivering a superior buyer experience. In order to engage prospects, develop a strong understanding of:

- Industry drivers
- Market forces
- Business drivers & trends
- Business challenges
- Project objectives & risks
- Business case expectations
- Key operating metrics
- Financial benchmarking

Mark Stuyt, Chief Engagement Officer at Neural Impact, recommends spending a sizeable amount of time documenting the discovery questions and the sequence in which they will be asked. “Always start with questions about *their project*, then the business drivers, then the IT considerations, then (finally) the opportunity (budget, timelines, etc.).”

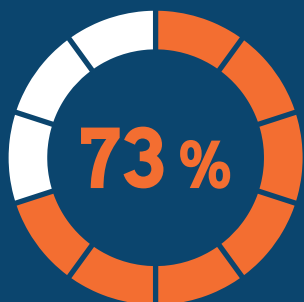
On an individual level, knowing the buyer and learning how they think extends far beyond LinkedIn profiles. Personality predictor tools can help you infer how prospects prefer to be engaged and receive information. This knowledge informs decisions about which touchpoints, content types, and formats would be most effective, i.e., does the buyer read trade publications or prefer industry podcasts?



More than 60% of buyers now say providers that are knowledgeable and address their needs have the most positive impact on their buying decisions.

TIP #3: Personalization Wins Hearts & Minds

As buyers migrate from in-person channels to digital alternatives to make their purchase decisions, sales professionals need to craft personalized customer experiences to engage buyers across the buyer's journey. Websites, digital channels, and content streams must be purpose-built to deliver content that both educates buyers and convinces them that their needs, expectations, and business challenges are being understood and addressed.



73% of B2B executives say customer expectations for personalized experiences are higher now than ever.

Forrester [research](#) found that buyers expect knowledge of their personal journey to be persistent in every experience, pre- and post-sale. Neural Impact's Mark Stuyt concurs: "Using the persuasive power of primacy and recency, every pitch deck should start and end with content that is very, very interesting to the prospect."

Vendors need to take an intuitive approach, investing in the people, processes, and technology that help them gain greater insight into each buyer to create inviting and personalized experiences.

TIP #4: Buyers Want a Partnership

Modern buyers expect to be treated as partners, not as targets, according to a recent **report** by Forrester and SiriusDecisions B2B research teams. Like any good partnership, buyers expect experiences that are:



1

Connected: Buyers expect vendors to work with them on a shared set of goals throughout the pre- and post-sale experience. Connectedness creates lasting partnerships through empathy and commitment.

2

Open: Buyers expect more visibility and easier access to relevant information, such as pricing, business practices, policies, and market feedback. Openness reduces buyers' frustration and establishes trust and affinity.

3

Collaborative: While today's buyers tend towards self-directed learning, the sales professional's **role** is to help buyers evaluate the quality of information to arrive at their own understanding of difficult issues. Providing high-quality content and digital tools throughout each stage of the buying journey drives this collaboration toward a successful conclusion.

Understanding the Buyer Journey

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“With more information, options and people involved in a buying process, buyers are paralyzed when trying to move forward.”

Brent Adamson, Distinguished Vice President, Advisory, [Gartner](#)

”

Customers today have a complicated, fragmented, and non-linear path to purchase. Gartner describes the stages of the B2B buyer journey as:

1

Identify the problem: The business has an issue and a solution must be found. Your product or solution is not even on the radar at this point.

4

Select a supplier: “Does this supplier’s solution do what we need it to?”

2

Explore solutions: Now that the customer understands the problem, they embark on research into possible solutions.

5

Validate the solution: Buyers need to be sure that they’re making the right decision and the vendor’s solution can solve their problem.

3

Evaluate the requirements: The customer outlines what they expect the solution to do for their company.

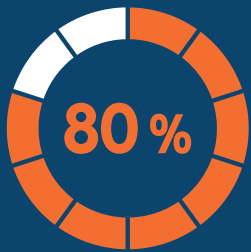
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Gain consensus: “This is the solution we need; now we have to get everyone on board.”

Keep in mind these stages don’t necessarily unfold in sequence. Plus, not only do buyers move through multiple stages towards their buying decision, but the number of individual stakeholders involved in a complex B2B purchase can be upwards of 10 people, further complicating the process.

Creating the Modern Sales Pitch Across the Buyer's Journey

Buyers are increasingly interacting with content digitally in a self-directed learning approach vs. personal interactions with sales reps as they move towards a purchase decision. A recent [survey](#) of customer stakeholders found that they used suppliers' websites at almost the same rate as interacting with sales reps to complete the most common buying stages in the journey.



Gartner says [80%](#) of B2B sales interactions between suppliers and buyers will occur in digital channels by 2025

TIP #5: Timing is Everything

Given that buyers are increasingly moving through the buying journey via digital channels, solution providers need to ensure that their digital content is tailored to the phases, or 'jobs,' of the buyer's journey. Delivering the right content at the right time is key to moving prospects through the buying stages towards a favorable outcome.

1. Problem Identification

Buyers in this initial stage are looking to understand their problem. Content at this point in the journey should help them define the problem, the cost of the problem to their organization, and the return on investment of the solution.

Product-related content is not part of this interaction. In fact, [49% of sellers](#) said one of the top five frustrations during the buying process is getting pushed to buy when they're just learning. Instead, demonstrate that you understand the issues and challenges impacting the buyer and provide expertise that helps buyers fully comprehend their problem. Becoming a trusted expert and advisor is the goal.

Sample content: industry-specific whitepaper

2. Solution Exploration

Once the prospect grasps the full picture of their problem, the search for a solution begins. Sellers must ensure that their solution becomes top of mind. Search rankings, social media, and advertising come into play at this stage; sellers must be present in search results with engaging content that instills confidence, creates an emotional response, and demonstrates the viability of their solution for solving the buyer's problem.

Sample content: 90-second product insight video

3. Requirements Building

As buyer's attempt to determine how the solution will function within their own company's processes and procedures and how it will integrate with other systems, they may create a request for proposal (RFP) and evaluate RFP responses.

But you don't need to wait for an RFP to illustrate how your organization can fulfill the prospect's requirements. By helping buyers write their requirements, sellers can highlight the strengths of their solution and the additional benefits of working with them—and gain a competitive advantage in the process. By doing the difficult work of helping prospects create the checklist, understand the timelines, and quantify the impact of the solution, your offering is likely to **get fast-tracked** to the top of the potential solutions list.

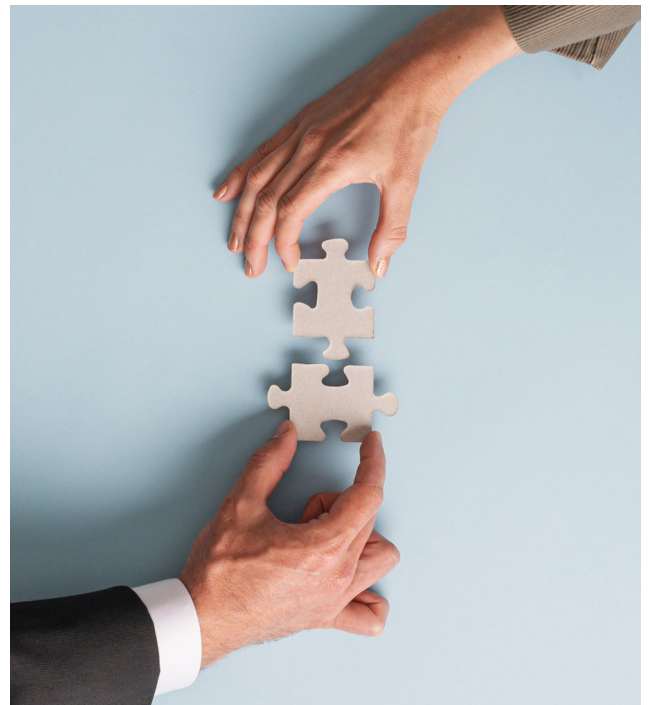
Sample content: requirements checklist

4. Supplier Selection

Buyers need to know that a solution can meet all of their needs. At this stage, leverage the breadth of sales and marketing channels and related marketing content to establish your organization as a credible company worthy of doing business with.

- website
- search presence
- social media presence
- thought leadership visibility
- testimonials
- use cases
- industry recognition
- certifications & partnerships

Sample content: product demo



5. Solution Validation

At this stage of the buyer's journey, buyers have a solution in mind but want to confirm they're making the right choice. This job is all about case studies and third-party expert analyses. Buyers want real-world end user feedback and references that proves the solution can solve their problem.

Sample content: case studies and third-party reviews

6. Consensus Creation

Given the potential number of stakeholders involved in the decision-making, getting everyone on board can be a challenge. At this stage, the buyer must convince the other stakeholders in the buying group of the merits of the chosen solution. Your goal is to provide the buyer with resources and support that will help them gain consensus.

Sample content: customer testimonial

Many of these six buying jobs will be visited repeatedly throughout the buyer's journey, with prospects simultaneously dealing with solution validation and consensus creation throughout the entire buying process. This nonlinear looping and bouncing around from one job to another means that **buyers value suppliers that make it easier for them to navigate the purchase process.**



TIP #6: Put the Buyer at the Center

An understanding of the complexities of the buyer journey provides a foundation for developing content that wins business. By building marketing strategy and content development around the jobs or stages prospects must undertake during the non-linear buyer's journey, your content will resonate with prospects, no matter where they are in the process.

The trick is not to bombard buyers with a deluge of content; instead, the name of the game is to **simplify the buying process** with proactive, personalized content that anticipates questions and roadblocks and helps prospects manage these obstacles with ease. In fact, the objective of your marketing efforts is to help buyers advance as far along the buyer's journey as they can—armed with all the information, tools, and resources you have provided within the content funnel—without the need to contact your sales team.

Keep It Spinning for Consistent Revenue

Whether you favor Hubspot's **sales flywheel**, Amazon's **virtuous circle**, or the concept's creator Jim Collins' **flywheel effect**, the premise is the same: put the customer at the center of your sales and marketing strategy to maintain momentum; activity in each segment of the wheel **creates energy** and passes it along to the next, until it circles back to the start where satisfied customers become evangelists, attracting new leads.

Consider a marketing flywheel that aligns content with the jobs in the buyer's journey, keeping the flywheel spinning and eliminating friction throughout the journey. This circular concept of delivering digital content that addresses the type of content prospects are looking for based on where they are in the buyer's journey — **awareness, evaluation, selection, service** — simplifies the buying process, while continuing to provide relevant content after they become customers to build loyalty and foster lead referral.

A) Awareness

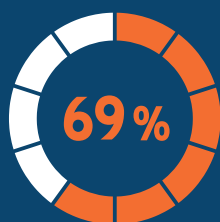
Buyers seek knowledge. They're looking for answers, resources, and insight to educate them on what they should consider; buyers want to understand their problem, how industry challenges and trends impact their business, how other businesses are tackling the issue, and how your solution could help them solve their problem.

Effective sales teams do the research to understand the prospect's industry, business needs, pain points, and how their solution can help—and they have relevant content teed up to support buyers throughout the education process. Even though buyers want to self-educate and remain anonymous in early stages of discovery, they will **engage** more with empathetic sellers who demonstrate they can help and share relevant examples.

B) Evaluation

In this critical part of the journey, buyers understand the problem and are now identifying solutions, assessing different vendors to determine best fit. To convince buyers to move along to the next stage of the purchase process, you need to engage them with content that positions your company as the solution to their problem, specifically demonstrating how your offering can make a positive impact on the business.

At this point in the process, social proof from credible sources is ideal for building trust. According to SiriusDecisions [research](#), winning sellers are more likely to provide custom solution content and informative collateral materials to intuitively bring prospect and offering together



69% of buyers say it's essential that vendors show they understand their industry and market conditions to be included on a prospect's shortlist.

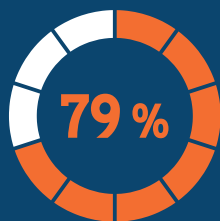
C) Selection

Once buyers reach the selection stage of their journey, they will have compiled a list of vendors that align with their needs. Despite compiling a short list, research will continue until they select a winner. This is your opportunity to shine as a vendor, by proffering content that will close the deal.

Content at this phase of the buyer's journey needs to demonstrate that your company is more than a vendor; you're a partner. Building [emotional buyer engagement](#) through transparency and trust is extremely powerful and is often a more potent influence than rational/physical elements in how a prospect engages with an organization.

Now is an opportunity to talk more about your company and its offerings rather than your industry; not only do you understand their industry, market conditions, and their unique challenges but you're ready to be part of the solution.

Give the buyer control with snackable bits of insightful information, i.e., short, specific, on-demand demos that address a particular challenge and illustrate how your solution can solve the problem. Demonstrate how your offering stacks up against the competitors and provide real-life social proof of its effectiveness.



79% of B2B buyers report that the content provided by a rep is very to extremely influential in their selection of one vendor over another.

D) Service

Once a prospect selects your solution and becomes a customer, the onus is on you to service their needs and deliver a frictionless and engaging customer experience. **Hubspot** considers this phase the Delight Stage, in which companies are tasked with providing “an outstanding experience that adds real value, and empowers people to reach their goals and become promoters of your company.”

Awareness

- White papers (industry)
- Blog posts
- Articles in industry publications
- Infographics
- eBooks about the problem/challenges
- Educational webinars
- Tip sheets
- Press releases
- Social media
- Website
- How-to video

Evaluation

- Ebooks
- Case studies
- Reviews
- Whitepapers (solution)
- ROI calculator
- Product guides
- How-to content
- Checklists
- Product demos
- Competitive analysis



Selection

- On-demand videos
- Case studies
- Client testimonials
- Third-party reports
- Vendor comparison
- Detailed solution specifications

Service

- Welcome email
- Video tutorials
- Industry updates
- Retargeting campaigns
- Self-service knowledge bases
- Insider how-to guides
- Newsletters
- Personalized email campaigns

Metrics Matter

TIP #7: Knowledge is Power Revenue

Measuring the impact of buyer engagement helps build repeatable revenue engines by determining what content advanced the buyer through their journey and which content stalled or cut the journey short. By tracking sales activities and resulting engagement data, you will uncover clues to improving your content going forward.

The final, and most important, piece of the metrics puzzle is determining which content translated to conversions. Knowing which sales pitches are opened, what content is viewed, and if those deals move to closed provides sales leadership with concrete best practices, they can use to coach the sales team.



Measuring Engagement: Examples

- Website sessions
- Page views
- Google search ranking
- Social media engagement
- Number of repeat visitors to your site
- Progress from ungated to gated content
- Number of opt-ins to gated content
- Growth in marketing-qualified leads
- Growth in sales-qualified leads
- Buyer journey progression

Questions to consider:

- Which e-books or whitepapers were downloaded?
- How many prospects attended the webinar?
- Which case studies or articles were viewed?
- Which marketing/sales emails are opened?
- How many prospects moved from one stage to the next in the buyer's journey?
- Do your reps understand your key initiatives?
- Are reps executing your initiatives?
- How are initiatives landing with customers?
- Are your key initiatives driving business results?

QorusDocs + Highspot: Accelerate Time to Revenue

TIP #8: Leverage the Combined Power of QorusDocs + Highspot

Simplifying the Buyer's Journey

A sales professional's job is to make the purchase decision as simple and frictionless as possible for the buyer, supporting them as they move along the buyer's journey with relevant content, resources, and tools. Whether they're seeking an industry-focused whitepaper, product demo, or RFP response, today's buyers move fast and expect value-added, personalized insights at a moment's notice.

By leveraging the sales enablement power of Highspot, in combination with QorusDocs proposal management software, you can easily fulfill the needs of your prospects—whether that's content, tools, knowledge, or information—to help them clear any hurdles and support their decision-making process as they progress through the buyer's journey, ultimately, to a closed deal.



Best-in-class companies with sales enablement were 50% more likely to have sales reps who achieved quota.

Sales Enablement Made Easy with Highspot

Highspot's sales enablement platform enables customer-facing teams to accelerate revenue by managing content, training revenue teams, executing sales plays, enabling channel, and engaging customers. With Highspot, you can **engage buyers at the right time, everywhere they are**, and design the perfect buyer experience with personalized microsites and email pitch templates that automatically sync communication, content, and CRM data so every interaction feels personal.

Plus, real-time notifications indicating when a prospect has opened, downloaded, or shared content, including time spent on each page or individual slide, **makes engagement tracking easy** and offers insights into the specific features or benefits that buyers are interested in.

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“Access to up-to-date and approved content is crucial for sales teams to deliver real value to customers. Through the partnership of QorusDocs and Highspot, we support our shared customers’ ability to quickly identify and leverage effective content for developing responses to RFPs and addressing buyer inquiries.”

Jake Braly, VP of Strategic Alliances, Highspot

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Completing the Sales Cycle with QorusDocs

To complete the sales cycle, QorusDocs helps you create personalized, data-driven proposals and quickly respond to RFPs—directly from Highspot.

QorusDocs empowers your bid and proposal management teams as well as sales teams. Pitch and proposal content is easy to locate and personalize, with powerful search functionality, easy personalization and collaboration tools, and an intuitive user interface. Your entire sales force, including remote staff, can use it to build customized, professional, engaging proposals in minutes rather than hours.

Better Together

By combining Highspot’s sales enablement platform with business-critical document generation from QorusDocs, sales teams can:

- Automate the response to RFPs, security questionnaires, DDQs
- Create a sales presentation, SOW, proposal, and contract with a single click
- Dynamically update company data points in your content, including staff numbers, revenue, and number of offices
- Bulk-generate documents against your CRM records
- Design templates directly in Microsoft Office

With the powerful duo of QorusDocs and Highspot, you can quickly and easily create and manage content for your customer-facing teams AND seamlessly complete the sales cycle—from creation to close—with personalized and data-driven proposals and RFP responses.

Request a [demo](#) to learn more about how QorusDocs and Highspot can help you drive more buyers to the finish line.