



Getting Content In-Front of IT Decision Makers

By Greg Smith



Unless you've been living under a mainframe, you know that the explosion in smartphone adoption, combined with the proliferation of digital and social communication tools has changed how technology solutions are purchased. And since today's IT buyer determines when, where and how they engage with a brand, they control the buying process more than vendors control the sales process.

In order to address this reality, it's no longer about simply pushing content to buyers via email, events, and the sales force, but making sure your content is available when buyers go looking for it. And most are consuming more content than you may realize, with the average IT decision maker consuming five pieces of content before speaking with a vendor.

In this EMI Perspective, we'll explore how the technology buying process has changed and the new communication sources that companies must use to get their content in-front of IT decision makers.

Cooking Up Content for New Audiences and Platforms

Our research shows that the fundamental content that decision makers desire in each phase of the buying cycle has not changed, but their preferred content sources have. These new sources, combined with a growing IT decision maker audience, are forcing vendors to rethink their approach to information distribution.

IT Buyers Mindset 2013

	Awareness	Consideration	Purchase
Desired Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought leadership • Technology trends • Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product reviews and demos • Analyst research • Case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROI tools • Product reviews • Analyst research
Preferred Content Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search engines • 3rd party Technology sites • Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Search engines • Vendor websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor websites • 3rd party Technology sites • Social media

The content creation process must also acknowledge the fact that today's IT solutions are impacting all aspects of a business — not just the data center. As a result, the number of departments and decision makers involved in the buying process have expanded. Business line owners and IT executives are collaborating more than ever before to drive innovation and business results, and vendors must acknowledge this reality and provide content that presents solutions from technical, business and ROI perspectives.

The challenge of broader content development is further magnified by flat marketing headcounts and budgets which make it difficult to create the quantity of quality content required. One effective solution is to move away from the traditional assets that are extremely time intensive and go to an agile development methodology that produces a broad range of brief, but valuable marketing content every few weeks. These morsels are easily consumable and enable a company to target the different audiences across multiple communication platforms (e.g., tech communities, blogs and social media). This approach also works well with an audience who are using mobile devices to obtain much of their desired information.

Social Media is Critical but Not the Only Ingredient

Trusted content and advice is a top priority for all decision makers, and many question the objectivity of the information they obtain from IT vendors. This reality has motivated technology buyers to become heavy users of social media, where they can access and learn from a wide network of trusted colleagues. And peer-to-peer learning is not limited to the early stages of the buying cycle, as a recent study of IT decision makers demonstrates:

- 85% use at least one social network for business purposes¹
- 73% have engaged with an IT vendor via a social network¹
- 50% use social media to influence their decisions in each phase of the buying cycle¹

While IT vendors can't ignore the growing influence and role of social media throughout the buying cycle, it should never be the sole focus. Multiple communication channels must be employed to widen your reach. In particular, search engines, third-party technology sites and vendor websites are among the most preferred content sources for IT buyers in 2013.

Developing a Recipe for Technology Marketing Activities in 2013

Today, IT decision makers are conducting more research than ever before and are deciding when, where and how to engage with technology companies. This shift in power has come quickly, and is a reality that can't be ignored. As you create your 2013 marketing programs, be sure to look at them from a buyers' perspective. If you aren't providing the type of content they desire and making it available via the sources they prefer, the ROI of your marketing activities will end up being under-cooked.

¹ Forrester Research 2012



Key Takeaways

- Inbound marketing activities must be a top priority
- Decision Makers consume 5 pieces of content before speaking with a vendor
- Search engines and social media are the top sources for obtaining content

About the Author

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About EMI

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