



Win More of the Q4 IT Budget Spend: 3 Marketing Tactics

By Greg Smith

Since 80% of channel revenue is generated by the install base, tech marketers should work with partners to target this audience with a Q4 marketing campaign.

For most tech companies, Q4 is a time fraught with concern over hitting annual sales goals. But fortuitously, it's also a time marked by major IT expenditures as companies seek to "flush" their current year's tech budget. This rush to spend translates into a huge opportunity for the tech marketers who are able to capture the attention and interest of key decision makers.

In this EMI Tech Perspective, we explore three marketing tactics that tech marketers should concentrate on to take best advantage of the end-of-year IT budget flush.

1. Leverage the power of partners, but be prepared to do some heavy lifting

For the channel, start by reviewing your top five to seven channel partners and identify those who have not executed any of your integrated campaigns in the last six months. Then, select a campaign that targets the partners' install base since 80% of their revenues are generated by this group.

While partners may be amenable to the idea of a campaign, their biggest barrier to a full commitment is often a lack of resources to implement it. Combat this common objection by offering an incentive of incremental marketing staff to help them get the job done. The support staff can be comprised of your own team or a third-party marketing firm, but what matters most is that they have a broad set of marketing skills and a good understanding of the channel environment. Whether customizing marketing materials or finalizing campaign strategy, 20 to 30 hours of support time per partner should be sufficient assistance to get the campaign in market.

Providing this extra manpower can strengthen already productive partner relationships and help build more powerful ties with new relationships.

2. Remember, decisions are made by people, not companies

Today, marketing and IT executives are working closely with business line owners to drive innovation and results. As a result, they are all equally involved in the tech buying process. Vendors who want to engage these distinct decision makers must acknowledge this reality and create messages and content that speak to them as unique individuals rather than as a homogenous group.

Work with your sales team to identify three to five customers with the highest revenue potential, and then target them with an account-based marketing program. While account-based marketing isn't a new tactic, those who successfully employ it approach it from the perspective of the individual decision maker instead of the company perspective. That is, they work with each account team to identify the key decision makers, their business objectives and challenges, and their role in the

purchasing process. Tech marketers can then use this information to determine the most appropriate messages, content, and communication channels to best engage each individual.

The good news is that this individual discovery process doesn't take much time and is critical to developing and delivering an effective account-based marketing program.

3. Content marketing: it's not too late

Today's IT buyers search for trusted content and information throughout the entire buying process so it's important to not overlook your inbound marketing efforts in Q4. While content marketing for the Awareness phase shouldn't be ignored altogether, it's prudent to target and engage those who are farthest along in the decision making process and most likely to imminently purchase.

Tech marketers should consistently and methodically promote content that's relevant to the Consideration and Purchase phases of the buying cycle, and use the channels their target audience desires to ensure the content is found and consumed. Online communities, social media and vendor websites continue to be the preferred content sources in the later stages.

Making sense of the Q4 craziness

The rush of Q4 can leave even the most seasoned tech marketers stressed as they try and tackle too many things in an attempt to be all things to everyone. Instead, it makes sense to limit your "To Do" list to just a few priorities that can have the greatest impact on your sales numbers.

Taking the time to have meaningful conversations with your key channel partners and sales team can inform the strategy you take with your outbound efforts. And, while you may be in the home stretch, don't overlook targeted inbound marketing since decision makers are still seeking content to guide and support their purchasing decision – even if they're talking to your sales team on a regular basis.

Q4 doesn't have to be a time of anxiety and madness. By strategically focusing on a few key initiatives, you can take pride in knowing your sales team is out closing the deals you helped facilitate.



Key Takeaways

- Promote marketing campaigns that target your top partner's install base and provide marketing staff to help execute it.
- Target key decisions makers at top accounts with personalized communications.
- Tailor inbound marketing efforts to the Consideration and Purchase stages of the sales cycle.

About the Author

Greg Smith is Managing Director of the Technology Practice at EMI Strategic Marketing.

Connect with Greg at [linkedin.com/in/jgregorsmith](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jgregorsmith), gsmith@emiboston.com or (617) 226-4330.

About EMI

For 25 years, EMI has been working with a broad range of companies to drive results through our clients' sales, service and partner channels. From start-ups to the Fortune 500, our strategic programs and deep industry expertise have helped them all to achieve greater growth and increased customer loyalty.