

The New B2B Playbook

Content and the
art of demand
generation

roo & eve

The gated content ‘lead generation’ era is over.

Today’s B2B buyers want to consume high-quality content, gather insights, and solicit advice from their peers - before ever talking to sales.

In fact, according to Gartner, 43% of Baby Boomer, Gen X, and Millennial customers prefer a sales rep-free experience.

So how can B2B brands meet changing buyer needs in 2022 and beyond?

Enter demand generation (demand gen). A demand gen strategy is built for the way customers buy today. The goal is to expand your audience, build trust and authority, and generate interest in your business, which results in high-quality inbound leads.

Given the way people buy has changed dramatically, it’s no wonder that demand gen has climbed the agenda for most B2B marketers with 70% of marketers saying their demand gen budgets will increase. (Demand Gen Report)

In this guide, we hope to provoke your thoughts about demand gen and the ways that brand awareness, inbound marketing, and sales conversions can benefit from this approach.

The opportunity with demand generation

At its simplest, demand generation is educating your audience with no expectation in return.

A demand gen approach means your business is top of mind and the best option if/when they ever need a solution.

Demand generation centres on engaging your ideal customers before purchase intent or motivations have set in, making it one of the most powerful methods of increasing brand awareness.

It's no surprise then, that investment and interest in demand gen is growing rapidly.

One of the greatest benefits of demand generation is the ability to reach people before they're problem or solution aware.

This requires a strong strategy and high-quality demand gen content.

While dark social channels fuel demand generation, the very best results are borne out of an approach led by the right content - using engaging and intelligent content, which is refined through continuous testing.

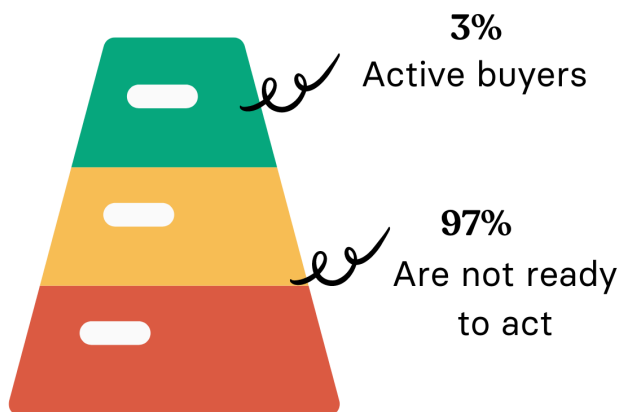


Why now is the perfect time for demand gen marketing

According to LinkedIn Research, only 3-5% of the market is in buying mode at any given time.

While the 5% isn't a precise rule for every sector, it gets the idea across that the vast majority of businesses, for a large proportion of products, are not in the market in particular time periods. That that fact is profound for marketing.

Yet most B2B marketers focus all their efforts on that 5% - capturing demand.



We understand. As ex-Head's of Marketing, we know you have MQLs to hit. Revenue numbers to reach. And your sales team wants more leads.

But the B2B buyer journey has changed.

While you're focusing on the 3%, the 97% are still watching:

They're educating themselves, learning about pain points, and starting to trust the experts. They might not be ready to buy now, but in 12-18 months?

That 97% slowly turns into the 3%.

The B2B Institute liken this to a 'memory link' for your brand in the buyer's mind. This memory link is activated when the buyer does come into the market.

And research shows that when buyers do search for solutions, they strongly prefer brands they're familiar with.

Familiarity is built over time, with consistent messaging.

And if you haven't invested in reaching them, you'll miss out. Because someone else is grabbing their attention. Educating them and being a valuable resource to them.

When the time comes to buy - who do you think they will turn to? Those who were chasing the 5%, or those that invested in them?

Engage the 97% and you'll be set for years. That's why demand generation is so important.

The impact of the changing B2B buyer

According to Gartner, some two-thirds (66%) of B2B buyers are now self-serving information before contacting vendors.

In fact, 53% of buyers would prefer to buy without any interaction with sales at all.

And when they do speak to sales, they want a greater level of insight and advice.

The days of generic scripts and PowerPoint slides are over.

In addition, B2B purchases can be complex and take months - if not years - to complete.

The challenge often revolves around getting multiple stakeholders with different agendas to agree on something that will cost their business many thousands of pounds.

Interestingly, recent research shows that 78% of marketers agree it's now more difficult to get consensus from buyers on sales.

This isn't helped by the fact that 55% of buyers now consider a large number of possible vendors for each purchase.

Because there are fewer active buyers in-market, businesses must put a greater focus on demand generation and growing their category as a whole.



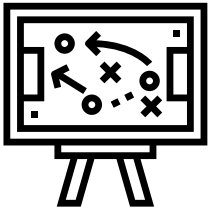


Pro tip:

Focus on being memorable among the 97% so when they do enter the market, your business comes to mind, easily.

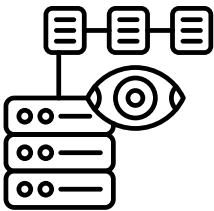
The demand gen fundamentals

There are a lot of factors to consider and implement within a demand gen strategy. Here are the core fundamentals to have in place.



It all starts with strategy

Here you need to understand your buyers deeply and create a demand gen strategy that aligns with how they buy. This requires customer research, channel planning, distribution strategy, and content strategy.



Right data, metrics, and insight

The big change here is pivoting from channel level metrics (e.g. how many 'leads' did we get from Google) to actual marketing results (e.g. how much qualified pipeline did we generate through out website last quarter).



Create high-quality content

The key here is to think like a media company and create high-quality content that your ideal customers find valuable. We explore this in more depth in the next chapter.



Execute consistently

Effective demand gen takes time and requires consistency in creation and execution. Be prepared to execute the strategy with conviction and a long-term view.



Keep improving over time

Each week, month, and quarter, goals change and audience behaviours shift. So keep improving, adapting, and evolving. Optimising your demand gen approach will lead to major rewards down the line.

The power of demand gen content

We believe that content is so critical to all aspects of demand generation that it deserves its own chapter.

In fact, one of the first steps to increasing demand generation is to start with a strong content strategy.

Research shows that if your business is better at building brand-relevant memories, your brand becomes more competitive. Putting yourself in the mind of your customer isn't easy, but it's essential to success.

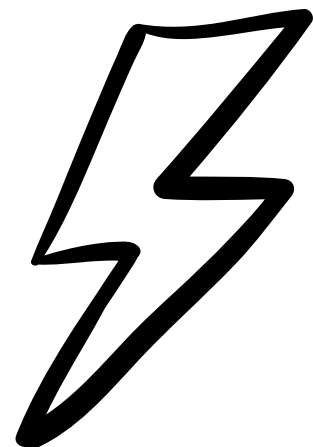
With this in mind, businesses must ensure their content is aligned to buyer pain points, high quality, valuable, and optimised.

This means marketers must be more intentional about how they create content and create pieces that buyers feel inspired to share with each other.

If you can identify those category pain points - then you can use them to build mental availability.

When creating demand gen content, consider the following questions:

- What challenge or pain point is my customer experiencing that my solution can solve?
- What valuable information can I share that will help my ICP become more successful?
- What data points can I find to back this up?
- Who's expert opinion can I add to increase the value 10-fold?





Pro tip:

To maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of a demand gen strategy, it's essential to use the right content. And the best way to approach demand gen content is to put yourself in your buyer's shoes. You can't create good content without truly understanding your ICP and addressing their pain points.

Your demand gen approach: What to consider next

1.) Are you prepared to make the switch from lead gen to demand gen?

Switching from lead gen to demand gen requires a shift in mindset. You need to change your objective from collecting contact information to telling stories that move your buyers forward in a buying cycle.

2.) Is your content created specifically for demand generation?

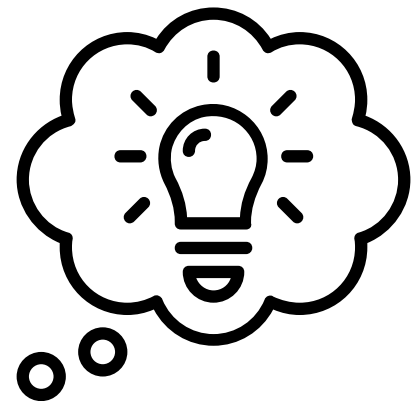
A solid demand generation strategy requires the best content. The kind of content that helps build client trust, and lays the groundwork for important conversations about customer pain points and the solutions your business can offer. Customers will remember your brand as a guide within the marketplace and look to your business as a subject matter expert for future needs.

3.) Are you willing to give it enough time to work?

Effective demand gen takes time. You will not see results in days, weeks, or yes, even months. Marketing leads will drop (this is to be expected). When moving from sending sales whitepaper downloads to leads with buyer intent, you can expect the volume to dip a lot. Yet the quality should be strong. And conversion rates better still.

4.) Do you have leadership buy-in?

You really want to switch to a demand generation strategy, but your board needs to see results soon. The pressure to do more with less and at a faster rate is pressing. So how do you convince senior leaders to make the pivot? Start by knowing your historical performance, then show leadership what happens if you continue on the current path. Finally, educate stakeholders on what the new strategy and results will be.



Our approach to demand generation

Roo & Eve's approach to demand gen is grounded in customer insights, fuelling engaging and intelligent content marketing which is refined through continuous testing and improvement: an approach which has proved indispensable to our clients.

We create bespoke demand gen content strategies for all of our clients. This enables us to adapt to evolving trends, as well as the clients' business as a whole.

Acting as an extension of your team, we provide the ultimate flexibility.

If you want to execute marketing differently, you need to abandon the outdated principles that are holding you back.



About Roo & Eve

Roo & Eve was founded in 2020 as a specialist freelance duo. With over 25 years combined experience, we have helped to establish a benchmark for B2B content marketing excellence, specialising in demand gen content.

We have supported clients predominantly within Fintech, SaaS, Regtech, Proptech, and Data.

From strategy to content creation and distribution - we are constantly refining our approach to help our clients make the most of this transformative development in B2B marketing.

Ensuring a customer-centric approach to demand gen and using it to improve content marketing is at the centre of our work at Roo & Eve.

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