

B2B ARTICLES - AUGUST 23, 2023

When Belts are Tight, Lean into Strategic Simplicity in B2B Marketing

Picture this: a robust sales team of 10 to 12+ employees and a lean marketing team of 2 to 4 employees.

Sound familiar? This common scenario for B2B businesses will likely continue. According to the CMO Survey, over the past year, marketing teams have only grown by 3.4%, compared to 15.1% in the previous year. These [lean marketing](#) teams will often feel the pressure to create warm leads for their sales team but don't know where to focus their limited time.

Not only are marketing teams tight, but so are budgets, with 52% of CMOs reporting decreased marketing spending levels. Responding to budget cuts (and layoffs), 49% of US B2B marketing teams are consolidating teams/jobs.

Common Mistakes of Lean Marketing Teams

One mistake these lean teams can make is trying too much at once: launching ads on various platforms, taking on marketing and sales content for different industries, and tackling SEO. This stretches the team too thin and doesn't allow them to test a specific channel and see if it's bringing in qualified leads and propelling business growth.

On top of missing valuable data collection to see which channels drive conversion, teams taking on too much will suffer burnout. One study found that 42% of respondents noticed that increased workloads burden workers and 41% reported burnout among workers. Burnout often leads to higher employee turnover, making these already lean teams leaner.

Many B2B marketing teams lack data that shows them what tactics are working. It can feel like boiling the ocean if they don't know where to start or what to cut. One solution is strategy simplicity, which helps teams reduce channels to focus on the ones that produce the most substantial results and nail them down before moving on to new ones.

Strategy simplicity refers to creating and implementing marketing strategies that are straightforward, streamlined, and measurable. It involves distilling complex marketing concepts and plans into simple, concise, and actionable strategies that small teams with limited resources can effectively execute.

Follow the Data, Not the Competition



Executing Strategy Simplicity in Lean Marketing

The core idea behind strategy simplicity is to follow the data that shows where the value is rather than relying on gut instinct or mimicking competitors. Lean marketing teams should focus on the essential elements of [B2B marketing plans](#) that will yield the most significant impact while minimizing unnecessary complexity and waste.

Strategy simplicity emphasizes clarity, efficiency, and practicality, enabling lean marketing teams to work more effectively and achieve their goals with fewer resources.

To execute strategy simplicity, marketing teams need to start by:

- Setting clear goals and objectives
- Estimating KPIs and success metrics
- Selecting a specific budget and amount of time to test a tactic before moving on to the next

Ideally, there is an integrated marketing and sales CRM, which means they can match which marketing activities influenced closed-won deals.

If this is not the case, frequent communication with sales is necessary. Marketing should set up regular meetings and a cadence for getting feedback and lead intel. To avoid blanket statements from sales members on disqualified leads, marketing should ask thorough questions like:

- Why was the lead disqualified?
 - Are they not the ideal buyer?
 - Is it due to budget, authority, need, or timing (BANT)?
- Is the lead saying no forever or no for just now?
- Should the lead be sent back to marketing for more nurturing?

In preparation for these meetings, the marketing team should pull some examples of leads they identified as highly qualified to determine why they weren't [sales-qualified leads](#) (SQLs).

What to Do Without Data

Strategy simplicity for lean marketing teams without data means taking tactics one at a time (or a few at a time, depending on resources).

The trick is staying focused on the process and not working on a million different projects. Lean B2B marketing teams should hone in on one or two channels that make the most sense for their business (with their buyer and budget in mind) and laser focus by tweaking, testing, gaining insights, and moving forward from there.

Running and Testing Ads

Start with ads that spell out buyer pain points. Make sure to check incoming leads for quality and make adjustments as needed. Continue iterating and testing different pain points to see what messaging truly resonates with your ideal buyers.

If an ad gets a lot of clicks but no conversions on the landing page, the landing page messaging could be off or not incentivizing enough. Rerun the ad with those tweaks to see what's improved.

Testing too many changes simultaneously (messaging, images, CTAs) can make trends unclear and difficult to follow. Document tests to not repeat the same mistakes. Remember to focus on messaging and the buyer rather than tinkering endlessly with bidding strategy and design choices.



Focus on the Buyer

B2B marketing teams need to define their audience and then determine where they are. For example, PPC ads might reach the audience better if leads aren't converting from a LinkedIn ad campaign.

Marketing teams should lean into a buyer-centric approach to messaging. This means building content that speaks to buyers' pain points and values rather than autobiographical content focusing on products and services.

To determine these pain points, teams should follow cues from data on what messaging resonates with the buyers. The team can capitalize on market forces and trends once marketing has tapped into the current needs and pain points.

Documentation for Future Success

Even if a tactic fails, marketing teams can gain buyer insights, such as:

- What messages do and don't resonate (pain point or value point)
- Where their audience resides (LinkedIn, Facebook, or Instagram)
- Who exactly they're speaking to (decision-maker, influencer, end user, job function, etc.)

An essential factor in implementing strategy simplicity is documenting everything. Marketing teams may want to return to a specific tactic and shouldn't have to start from scratch.

Teams that document their process have the potential to identify and replicate successful strategies, cutting down on time spent in a discovery phase. Identifying these successful strategies also provides an understanding of what works and contributes to business growth and revenue.

Benefits of Strategy Simplicity in B2B

Sales and Marketing Alignment

By focusing on one tactic at a time, B2B marketing teams can see data trends better and allocate resources more effectively to the working channels and efforts that provide the best outcome. Teams can truly optimize their content when they hone in on one channel.

Nearly 60% of sales and marketing professionals have observed that teams that lack alignment and collaboration are twice as likely to fall short of their revenue goals.

This highlights the importance of establishing a harmonious relationship between sales and marketing, particularly when their customer relationship management (CRM) systems are not integrated.

By fostering a cadence of communication and cooperation, these teams can work together towards a common objective and achieve better results. Creating check-in points with key sales team members will help both teams better understand performance.

Improve Data Sharing

While data sharing between sales and marketing is essential, marketing also needs better data share with other business units and leaders. Since 75% of organizations use qualified lead projections for quarterly sales forecasting, business leaders look to marketing for this information.

Improved data sharing enables better collaboration, alignment, and decision-making across different departments, fostering a more cohesive and integrated approach to overall business goals.

Simplifying the B2B marketing strategy and focusing on key metrics means teams can communicate and share data more effectively with other business units and leaders.

Reduce Marketing Team Burnout

Lastly, B2B marketing teams focusing on strategy simplicity help make the workload more manageable for employees and reduce burnout. Gallup found that employees who strongly agree they have too much to do are 2.2 times more likely to report experiencing burnout very often or always at

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Conclusion

From the sheer amount of pressure marketing teams face, they don't want to have any missteps. At the same time, it can feel like trying to boil the ocean. It's okay to cut back and focus on what's driving results.

By implementing strategy simplicity, marketers can be more thoughtful in cutting, changing, and prioritizing marketing activities.



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