

What makes a great B2B marketer?

 By [Warren Moss](#)

16 Aug 2018

Strong Business-2-Business (B2B) marketers are a rare breed. I've met many of them globally and over the years I've noticed a few characteristics that sets the strong, talented and effective ones apart from the rest. In order to analyse what makes them outstanding B2B marketers though, we need to accept a harsh reality that I see time and time again in B2B environments.



© Dmytro Sidelnikov via [123RF.com](#)

The truth is that most B2B companies have offerings that are not too dissimilar from each other. Whether it's telecommunications services, commercial insurance, software or banking, the products and services B2B marketers are "selling" to potential buyers are largely commoditised. If a B2B marketer represents a truly unique offering, chances are it won't be unique for that long.

So what would make a customer choose to buy business banking from a particular bank versus another? What would make a customer choose to buy commercial insurance from insurer A rather than insurer B? Why select software vendor X rather than vendor Y?

I say it's the way the brand makes them feel, and whether there is a synergy between the brand, the people that work there and the buyer. People buy from people, yes, but people buy from people they like and trust. People also buy from brands they believe in or have a chemistry with.

An alignment between personal and brand values

Effective B2B marketers understand brand, and brand architecture at its core. Because they understand this inherently, they typically choose to work on brands whose values are close to their own personal values. Therefore being authentic when they create marketing communications is easy – because it happens more naturally.

I use an example that Steve Jobs mentioned once, even though it is a B2C example, as it demonstrates this concept well. He mentioned Nike, who makes shoes which are just as good as Reebok or Adidas, and which have almost identical product features. But why do some people continue choosing Nike instead? Because they resonate with what Nike stands for, and they instantly “get” what sets Nike apart from other shoe brands: celebrating great athletes and their achievements.

A marketer that inherently shares similar personal value sets to Nike, i.e. recognising greatness and applauding it, will be able to market Nike shoes authentically, in ways that will probably be hugely impactful. And the same would apply in a B2B context, with B2B brands and B2B marketers. Individuals who behave and believe similarly to the values of the brand they’re marketing, are immediately set up for a quicker path to success.

Value in relationships

As I’ve mentioned, because products and services in a B2B context are generally so commoditised, buyers tend to buy from people they connect with. B2B marketers understand this chemistry because they’ve felt it themselves, often in their own personal relationships.

That’s why I find that successful B2B marketers tend to naturally place value in relationships, whether this is their family life, work life or their social circles. They may not necessarily be the person with hundreds of friends, but the friendships they do have will typically be strong and long-lasting.

Because they understand how this chemistry feels, they’re able to recreate it in their marketing more easily, in a way that is authentic. In the same way that your high school English teacher told you to “write what you know”, experience is the richest teacher when it comes to producing excellent and authentic work, that instantly connects with others.

Results-driven

“ Naturally, results-driven people thrive as B2B marketers. They’re not fearful of being accountable – in fact, they get a kick out of their actions being measurable, and they are particularly motivated by this. ”

B2B marketing is one category that is genuinely measurable, as you can directly track your marketing spend to how many leads and sales result from the campaigns you come up with. Marketers that don’t like being held accountable, and prefer to focus on sexy ideas, rather than campaigns that deliver real value to a business, will not succeed as B2B marketers.

Curiosity

B2C brands generally have bigger budgets and lend themselves to visible ATL campaigns, often accompanied by the chances of industry awards. After all, the Ad of the Year is never going to come from SAP, it will most likely come from Coca-Cola or Toyota. Understandably, most marketers want to work on big B2C brands because big visual campaign work is often seen as a validation of their expertise.

But it’s not like that in B2B.

B2B marketing is a subtler beast, which is why I think that for someone to be truly good as a B2B marketer, you need to be less traditional in the way you think, and you need to ask lots of questions. Being naturally curious is key to this, looking at

things from different angles, having the drive to ask why things can't be done differently, or better, instead of settling for the status quo.

“ *Innovation needs to be part of who you are, not something you just pay lip service to.* ”

This list is not mutually exclusive, these are simply my observations after years of working in the industry. It's worth noting too that these are all softer skills, which means that the first step to improving on them is recognising them as growth areas. Your personality evolves based on your life experiences, and I believe you can change aspects of it if you really want to succeed as a B2B marketer – all you need is the willingness to do so.

ABOUT WARREN MOSS

Warren Moss is the founder & CEO of Demographica, a full-service specialist agency focusing on Business to Business (B2B) and niche consumer markets. What makes Demographica unique is the fact that anthropology (the study of human societies and cultures and their development) is at the heart of all of their strategies. Warren and Demographica have been recognised by winning some major business and marketing awards. Warren is also currently the Chairman of the Direct Marketing Association of South Africa.

- #BizTrends2022: After messaging fragmentation comes messaging consolidation - 6 Jan 2022
- B2B marketers shouldn't look at SMEs as a single amorphous audience - 18 Nov 2021
- B2B success lies in solving customers' problems - 7 Sep 2021
- Enable your account sales team with these steps - 10 May 2021
- #BizTrends2021: B2B CMOs need to be a little bit braver, bolder in 2021 - 6 Jan 2021

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>