

B2B customers are people, too

By [Chiedza Gonyora](#)

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The B2B marketing landscape is a complex one in that messaging needs to influence a team of people - the Decision-Making Unit (DMU) - who are responsible for making purchase and implementation decisions for a company. B2B marketers have, for years, treated DMU's as a homogenous group - but it's time to embrace the concept that they're individual people with their own functions, interests and needs, and communicate with them accordingly.



Photo by [Christina Morillo](#) from [Pexels](#).

Though the thinking hasn't exclusively been brought about by the way the working world has changed during the Covid19 pandemic, something that many businesses have been able to reflect on is that with the removal of the commute to work and between meetings, and the death of the office watercooler, people now have more time to consume more, and more varied content, and being able to think more deeply, considering the choices they make in their work and personal lives.

Seamless and personalised customer experience

The opportunity in the B2B marketing space at this time is then to consider what the expectations are of each DMU stakeholder as an individual, and how they fit into the DMU itself. It's time to look beyond the functional and deliver relevant material to them on platforms that cater to what they actually want – what excites them and interests them, from a more emotional point of view.

Research by Demographica has found that decision makers often feel that interactions with B2B sales and marketing people is an energy drain, rather than an experience to genuinely engage, learn and find collaborative solutions to the problems they are trying to solve within their organisations. They want conversations that energise them – as opposed to feeling that they've had their time wasted.



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Once we start seeing them as individuals, we must take into account the fact that they're influenced by and have far more

individual experiences with B2C brands, which appeal to very personal needs. They're experiencing seamless customer experiences from these brands, so the odds are that they will be less inclined to respond favourably to a traditional, less personal B2B approach. If customer experience is going to be the biggest driver around their perceptions of brands in their personal worlds, it's time for B2B brands to focus on delivering the same experience.

The onus, then, is on B2B sales and marketing teams to work together to create a seamless and personalised customer experience that the individuals within DMU's have come to expect. If anything, the impression they need to have of a B2B brand must be even more personal, because the weight for the decision they're making on behalf of their company is all the heavier for the huge expense and effect on the business and its people.

Using deeply-immersive research is key

Our approach is anthropologically-based, so having identified the DMU, we delve into who the individuals are – what their needs are, what the human insight into their jobs and personal lives is, and how those things interact to help them form opinions. These personal opinions are what ultimately influences the recommendations they make when it comes to the buying decision. Brands must find ways to communicate with them in a way that resonates personally and recharges them.

Using deeply-immersive research – spending 'fly on the wall' time with them, seeing how the company operates, how they fit in, how they think, who they are - is key. You can formulate all the questionnaires and run all the surveys you like, but the kind of generic data those deliver just aren't enough anymore. The aim is the creation of communication that's deeply rooted in human insight, which meets their needs in the right way, on the platform of their choice and at a time that suits them, to engage and give them a tangible, personal benefit.

The world has changed – so the way B2B marketers need to approach their work, has to change along with it.

ABOUT CHIEDZA GONYORA

Chiedza Gonyora is a senior anthropologist at Demographica.

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