GODFREY

A MARKETER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE TO INDUSTRY 4.0

INTRODUCTION

The global IIoT market is rapidly growing and is estimated to be almost a trillion dollars by the end of 2025. The chances are that you're tasked with helping your company capture a portion of this market – and your success hinges on breaking through the noise. You must prove how your IoT solutions provide real results for customers by building a stronger case for the premise that a new and significant era in automation technology is already underway and real solutions exist in the marketplace.

We must help audiences throughout the automation marketplace get useful and productive insight into what is different and, more importantly, what it means for their markets and businesses. This guide brings together our published insights from the last several years, providing a single resource to help you gain a new perspective on Industry 4.0 and the impact it has on B2B marketing communications.

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INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN AUTOMATION

By: Alison Fetterman

As director of strategy at Godfrey, I spend part of my day diving into the trends and challenges that affect our clients — their products, markets and audiences. In this post, I share how digital transformation and the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) affect companies and key decision makers in the automation space.

What are some challenges within the automation and industrial manufacturing markets?

Challenges in automation and industrial manufacturing have been consistent over the past few years, yet the urgency to solve those challenges has become more intense. These include the aging manufacturing facilities and the workforce that serves them, increased customer demands and digital transformation driving company roadmaps.

Goals in automation have consistently centered around cost reduction, improved productivity, efficiency and uptime, which are now being driven by digital transformation. But as the workforce evolves and technology becomes the foundation for operational strategy, the technology is often outpacing the skills of the workforce, requiring a dedication to training and skills development. It also brings new players to the decision-making process. Back in 2017, Godfrey conducted research with partner AMG Research to evaluate how the role of IT was working its way into operations conversations, along with challenges around internal structure, security and scale.

Expectations around the implementation of connected devices and the Internet of Things driving business value are high. But change is hard. Team dynamics are changing; business models are even changing. Traditional manufacturers are exploring SaaS models, performance-based contracts and other methods to generate revenue from more than just products and systems, in order to position themselves as a long-term partner and tap into additional revenue streams. So as marketers, we are being asked to evolve the industry perception of some companies, align their brand with a digital future and to encourage creating user experiences that let their customers know they get it and are investing in it themselves.

What are some trends in this market, and how might they affect businesses this year?

Trends are certainly centered around how technology can show real value for manufacturers and their customers. As a marketer, I'm seeing the phrase "digital transformation" in trade publications, company communications and third-party research as much as the phrase "innovative solutions" in years past. It is a buzz word that is losing impact due to overuse, as manufacturers understand they need to be part of the conversation. An *Automation World* article, "Industrials Must Shift Gears on IIOT," explains that industrial transformation is a more accurate phrase, meaning "the proactive and coordinated approach companies use to leverage digital technologies to create step-change improvement industrial operations." This translates to a manufacturer's ability to deliver connectivity, flexibility and increased customization for its customers.

Customer-buying behavior, distribution and business models are also changing. Manufacturers need to be able to deliver a digital experience that serves their customers outside of the sales call. As stated in a recent report by Gartner, "most B2B manufacturers are struggling to build the digital marketing strategies and purchase guidance needed to help buyers make the most informed decisions."

In a ranking of digital performance among B2B manufacturing brands, the analysis reported that 62% of these brands fell below average. "If B2B marketers can't get digital marketing right, they could seriously jeopardize the success of their company's future digital business strategies, or worse, fail to protect themselves against looming competitive threats."

What are some industry opportunities for the industrial automation space?

The data-driven mindset has permeated all industries and for industrial automation, this mindset is making an impact on every aspect of an operation, from maintenance to safety to supply chain. The opportunities are endless. Being able to capitalize on them relies on a commitment to digital adoption and the ability of operations to overcome barriers to create an undeniable competitive edge.

Modern Materials Handling published a report by Transparency Market Research stating that the global IIoT market will attain a value of $991 billion by the end of 2026. They also cited that "major cybersecurity concerns are hampering IIoT adoption and are likely to restrain the growth of the global market. Lack of skilled workers and standardization in procedures are also restraining growth." Some other barriers were outlined in the 2017 MHI Industry report.

All of these technologies and the promise of ultimate productivity is competing for your customer's attention and resources. Despite the benefits and projected investments, these barriers are a reality that manufacturers can face together with their customers in order to achieve success. There can be room for everyone in this emerging market — late adopters can learn from the case studies of early adopters and align their plans with best practices. Early adopters are driving competitive advantages and the value they can provide to their customers today.

How will these factors affect marketing in this industry?

Many industry players are providing the service, support and technology to make a difference for their customers, and it is generally accepted that the adoption of advanced technology is necessary in order to stay competitive. For some time, the value of IoT in industrial manufacturing and automation was limited, but the use cases and value are proven, making it undeniable.

The challenge for companies is to break through the noise and communicate in a clear and compelling way how their IoT solutions provide proven, real results for their customers as well as continuing to tell these stories, showing the value and motivating the audience to take the next steps toward adoption. Companies need to work with the sales team so the message is consistent and so they have the tools they need to invest in driving longer, more complex sales.

The stakeholder group has grown, too. There are now five or more people involved from engineering to purchasing to operations and finance. And we know IT's influence is growing as systems become more connected. Each audience member has different concerns. Segmentation and personalization throughout the journey to purchase is no longer nice to have. It's a business imperative.

A BOLD, NEW VISION FOR THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE

By: Alison Fetterman

Self-healing supply chains. Cognitive manufacturing platforms. Sentient machines collaborating with workers. The Internet of Manufacturing. Even an anticipatory Internet of Life Cycle.

Those are just a few of the elements released in Frost & Sullivan's mind-blowing white paper, "Vision 2030: The Factory of the Future."

Well Beyond Internet of Things

The revolutionary changes outlined in the 26-page white paper go well beyond the Internet of Things and Industry 4.0 concepts laid out in our recent Marketing to Engineers® presentation. And that is understandable. IOT and Industry 4.0 are much more about the changes anticipated over the next three to five years.

The Frost & Sullivan document takes many of those ideas and extends them into the future: the next 10-15 years.

A few of the things it envisions:

- Networks of small, nimble factories will replace today's large, centralized plants.
- Factories will be strategically located to customize their output for specific regions and customers.
- Manufacturing will transition from making parts to "as-a-service" business models.
- End products will be designed to achieve outcomes rather than meet specifications.

Digital Twins

Those smarter products will not only gather data about their condition and performance, but will share that data with a "digital twin" or model that can predict wear or the need for maintenance. And even more importantly, that model can anticipate when the product will have to be replaced by a next-generation product better designed to meet customer need.

Raw materials and products will enter the Factory of the Future through autonomous supply chains that will automatically manage purchases and can "heal themselves" when problems occur.

Innovation Will Get Smarter

Innovation itself will have to get smarter, spanning not only a company's internal resources, but its entire ecosystem of partners, customers and other institutions. And using advanced analytical tools, crowd-sourcing and even automating the innovation process itself.

Lest we forget the human element, workers in the Factory of the Future will need to be much more digitally savvy. They'll need to be comfortable interacting, and even collaborating, with machines. And they will sometimes need to defer to the machine's "judgment," even in situations that seem counterproductive.

Every Aspect to Be Affected

In short, "Every functional aspect of the enterprise is likely to be affected," the report says. And it will require significant organizational and cultural shifts to achieve.

So not only is Information Technology (IT) becoming more important in the industrial buying process, the entire process itself is being retooled and automated, data-driven and digitized — with major implications for marketers.

And while we may not think such a space age future is possible by 2030, Frost & Sullivan see these changes as unavoidable. And gaining momentum every day.

Most Important Requirement: Trust

Interestingly, the white paper concludes with an ironic note on the most important requirement for success in the digital factory: trust. Companies will have to trust that the information they're relying on is accurate and secure. That it can be shared across their ecosystems without fear of theft or loss of intellectual property. And workers will have to be confident that their companies will help them with the training they need to transition into this bold new future.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE "SMART FACTORY" REVOLUTION (PART 1)

By: Brian Moore

What is the "smart factory?" Many in the automation technology marketplace are asking – and B2B marketers are challenged – to bring clarity and relevance to the issue.

There is a major technology shift underway in the automation technology marketplace ... one that offers big challenges – and opportunities – to B2B marketers in that space.

One of the challenges is what to call this technology shift: "Smart Factory," "Connected Industry," "Industry 4.0" and the "Industrial Internet of Things" are all attempts to label or brand a series of fundamental changes in different types of manufacturing technologies and processes.

Another challenge is to define this technology shift. One automation supplier uses this explanation: "A merging of the virtual world of information technology, the physical world of manufacturing machines and the power and potential of the Internet. Ultimately, these changes center on the integration of all areas of industry made possible by Information Technology."

OK, that *sounds* pretty cool. Only what does it really mean?

Provide Clarity and Relevance

Some in the automation industry question whether there's actually a revolution going on at all. They argue that recent technology changes are simply the next step in machine-to-machine communication and automation system enhancement.

B2B marketers in this space need to clarify and build a stronger case for the premise that a new and significant era in automation technology is underway. We must help audiences throughout the automation marketplace get useful and productive insight into what is different and, more importantly, what it means for their markets and businesses.

Target audiences – technology and software providers, automation OEMs, discrete machine builders and manufacturing end users – seek to separate practical ideas from the hype, so they can make forward-looking and productive decisions for their businesses.

Over the next several weeks, we will dive into several "smart factory"-related topics and potential B2B storylines. Topics we'll discuss include:

- **Search terms: What DO we call this shift?** In a Google-driven world, there's a marketing instinct to attempt branding an industry trend; this is not necessarily the winning strategy, especially if you're late to the game. B2B communicators need to be rigorously disciplined about the terms they focus on when trying to capture interest in technology topics, particularly ones that can quickly get "jargon-ish." We'll take a look at some of the top terms related to this new era, examine search volumes and try to define which term can be best applied to a specific technology trend.
- **Is the "smart factory" already here?** Although it may appear that many industrial "Internet of Things" concepts are still off in the future, some of the technology that's needed is already in place. What's the best way to communicate this to your specific audiences – and how do you separate hype about what's possible from what's actual and real?
- **Automation joins the Internet.** The "smart factory" will incorporate aspects of the broader Internet into the way machines and production floors operate. This will require that automation networks have new links outside the factory floor – what will that take to accomplish?
- **Changing the changeover.** In the past, changeover was a necessary cost. With the advent of more autonomous and networked machines, these changes will happen in much less time or in actual real-time. What impact will this capability have – on machine builders, on end-users and on the ability of manufacturers to achieve economical, cost-effective production of lot sizes of one, mirroring the personalization that the Internet has made common in people's everyday lives.

Our goal is to provide insight and practical suggestions on ways B2B marketers can help clear up areas of confusion and drive development of relevant content to their customers.

THE "SMART FACTORY" REVOLUTION: WHAT'S IN A NAME? (PART 2)

By: Brian Moore

B2B marketers in the automation and controls market segments have many terms for referring to the "smart factory" revolution. Which one is best?

The recent gathering of global movers and shakers at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, met under the overall theme of "Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution." The "fourth industrial revolution" is the term used in Davos to describe the fundamental changes underway in today's global manufacturing technologies and the broader world of digital technology.

As B2B marketers focus on creating relevant content for the automation and controls OEM and end-user audiences, it's important that these topics are relevant, timely and also search optimized. With tons of buzzwords flying around, it's easy to get caught up in the frenzy.

Right now, along with "fourth industrial revolution," terms in use include "Smart Factory," "Connected Industry," "Industry 4.0" and "Industrial Internet of Things," just to name a few. So let's ground ourselves in the content that's truly valuable to audiences. We'll do that by taking a look at some commonly used search terms being applied to the changes underway in the automation industry and see how they stack up.

What's in a Name?

One thing I noticed in general news coverage of the Davos conference was that the mention of the theme was often followed by an explanation of what "fourth industrial revolution" is supposed to mean.

Finding the right term will help B2B marketers get past the setup – "what it is we're talking about" – and enable us to focus on what matters: effectively telling stories and communicating the advantages that our clients' technologies offer.

We recently analyzed average monthly U.S. search volumes for a host of terms on this topic. Some of the results included:

- internet of things – 49,500
- iot – 27,100
- m2m (machine to machine) – 9,900
- industry 4.0 – 1,900
- industrial internet of things – 720
- smart factory - 260

"Internet of Things" had the most volume, but that has generally been accepted as a term encompassing virtually everything that has internet-enabled technologies embedded in them – not just manufacturing technology, which is where our focus lies.

Most terms were only in the hundreds of searches per month, and none really demonstrated the kind of volume that really settles the issue.

It's also important to remember that you need content to back up your keyword, not just in a generic way where you "stuff" the term onto a page that doesn't really talk about the term at all.

For a little more perspective, we reached out to some trade magazine editors in the industrial automation space. Not surprisingly, there was no consensus on what to call the changes that are now gaining momentum in the industry. One editor had this to say: "When we refer to it, we say Industry 4.0 and we say Industrial Internet of Things. There's also the Internet of Things, which is broader."

"Smart" Move: Focus on Clarity

At Godfrey, we've chosen to use the term "smart factory" – even though other terms have more volume. Smart factory is clear, simple and self-explanatory ... and we will be able to generate strong and effective content about changes and opportunities in smart factory technology, applications and developments in the near future.

Smart factory is the right term to start telling that story well:

- It focuses on the specific market – the factory
- "Smart" is a benefit and forward-thinking
- It is present tense, clearly implying something that is going on here and now

This last point is important: **Smart factory tells you, more directly than other terms, where this change is happening and that it will make the factory a smarter, more sophisticated and productive enterprise**.

Let's try a little test. Which term works better?

"Packaging systems with Internet of Things-enabled PLCs and HMIs will have faster changeovers and greater flexibility..."

or

"Packaging systems with smart factory PLCs and HMIs will have faster changeovers and greater flexibility..."

For B2B marketers, this clarity and focus is the best first step toward helping tell good, strong stories to the audiences we target – technology and software providers, design engineers, automation OEMs, discrete machine builders and manufacturing end-users.

And there are good stories to tell. In our next post, we'll dig into the following question:

Is the "smart factory" already here? Although it may appear that many smart factory concepts are still off in the future, some of the technology that's needed is already in place. What's the best way to communicate this to your specific audiences – and how do you separate hype about what's possible from what's actual and real?

SMART-FACTORY-READY TECHNOLOGY: TELL THE STORY NOW (PART 3)

By: Brian Moore

The smart factory "revolution" is being built on existing automation and controls technology; B2B marketers need to tell that story to target audiences.

Smart factory technology promises to revolutionize today's global manufacturing platforms and processes. The advances include greater flexibility, more digital intelligence and automation systems that are able to quickly respond to rapid changes in consumer and market demand.

It's a transformative vision for the automation industry – but to make the smart factory a reality, must we wait for a whole new generation of technology to be introduced? Not really. Many automation and controls technology suppliers have products and systems with necessary capabilities already in place.

And that's the challenge for B2B marketers: How do you identify which of your company's offerings are smart-factory-ready – then clearly explain and elevate their value to forward-thinking machine builders and end-users in a way that helps you build competitive advantage?

Much Technology is Smart-Factory-ready

In researching and writing dozens of automation and controls case studies, technical papers and other materials for more than a decade, I've discovered that many automation and controls companies have made significant progress toward deploying system features and capabilities that can be utilized by automation OEMs and end-users to make their machines and plants smart-factory-ready ... today.

This is a great story for B2B marketers to tell: **Companies who can clearly show that their technology is ready to contribute to making the smart factory a reality today also demonstrate that they are ahead of the curve** – and that they have been "smart" about making their systems flexible and full-featured enough to satisfy new and emerging requirements.

Focus on Connectivity and Intelligence

What aspects of currently installed and/or available technology should B2B marketers investigate and promote, in order to elevate their company's smart factory profile? Here are two areas to consider:

- **Connectivity**: Machine-to-machine communication, as well as integration of production machines into plant and enterprise networks, requires state-of-the-art connectivity: bus architectures and interfaces that can support high-speed, high-density transfer of production information and automation sequences.

Questions to consider: How well does your company's technology support these requirements? What protocols do they support? What physical interfaces – particularly high-speed Ethernet-type interfaces – are built into your components?

These questions apply to more than just PLCs and automation controllers. Components as diverse as pneumatics valves and fluid flow meters now incorporate these interfaces – which means they can be plugged into machines that OEMs are building that target smart factory customers.

And yet these details can sometimes be buried in a table of technical features on the fourth page of a datasheet. They should be leveraged to strengthen the case that your company's products – and approach to technology – make you a strong contributor to smart factory solutions.

- **Intelligence**: It's distributed throughout today's manufacturing platforms, weaving digital technology into virtually every device and component. Every cycle of every actuator can be recorded; sensors capture visual, heat, moisture and other environmental factors; electrohydraulic controllers measure actual resistance of loads moved against established values.

Questions to consider: How intelligent is your technology? How easily and efficiently can you make the data your intelligent technology captures available to machine builders and end-users to improve the performance of their systems and operations?

In many cases, your engineers may have done a superior job – so **the best step you can take is to develop a strong case study** that clearly describes how this is accomplished.

One story I wrote described how an automated welding system made innovative use of drive technology to track the quality of each and every weld the system made. The story also detailed how that information was used by an automotive parts supplier to document and improve welding quality and satisfy regulatory requirements.

The intelligence in the drive technology wasn't that new. However, the application was and demonstrates how, with the right storytelling, existing technology can be newly and legitimately positioned as being ready to fit into the latest automation needs.

Engineers Will Help Identify Smart Factory Features

Work with your engineers and product managers to understand why certain features and capabilities are in place on existing machines and encourage them to "connect the dots" to emerging smart factory requirements.

It's not necessary to "stretch" either the capabilities of your company's technology or the smart factory definition in order to build an effective B2B case that your company's technology is already smart-factory-ready.

In our next smart factory post, we'll take a look at how intelligence, connectivity and other technology factors are changing the machine changeover – and how B2B marketers can take advantage of that change.

SMART FACTORY TECHNOLOGY WILL CHANGE THE CHANGEOVER (PART 4)

By: Brian Moore

Smart factory technology will change how a common task, called the changeover, occurs; that's an opportunity for B2B marketers to highlight their new capabilities to target audiences.

Whether it's a machine tool switching from producing one part to another, or a high-speed bottling machine switching from 12-ounce bottles to half-liter bottles, "the changeover" is a necessary step in virtually every manufacturing process.

It's also a cost – because when changing from one product run to another, nothing is produced; and in highly automated manufacturing operations, that's a cost that businesses constantly seek to minimize.

Smart factory technology will make the changeover more streamlined and flexible. **Smart B2B marketers in the automation and controls industry will seek out ways to highlight how their "smart-factory-ready" technology can help make this change happen.**

Smart Factory Will Change the Changeover

The advent of smart factory technology is expected to significantly improve how highly automated production machines and assembly lines change from producing one product to another.

This change could enable manufacturers to significantly increase the number, variety and customizable characteristics of their products without incurring costs associated with changing production machine setups.

Manufacturing individual products at the same cost as mass-produced, series products will open up significant competitive advantages. How this will be accomplished is through the introduction of much more intelligent and autonomous production systems.

B2B marketers need to ask: **How will our company's technology help improve the changeover? And what's the best way to tell that aspect of our smart factory story to target audiences?**

Pilot Plants Are a Good Start

One obstacle you may face is not having a detailed track record to highlight. That's OK; many of the pivotal technologies and capabilities smart factory systems will offer have only recently moved from theoretical to working systems.

One of our clients has had significant success promoting the pilot of a multi product assembly line in a pump manufacturing plant in Homburg, Germany.

The company manufactures a wide range of industrial and automation products. They're committed to positioning themselves as a leader in introducing Industry 4.0 technology – and the success of the pilot plant is a strong proof point.

The plant assembles more than 200 different hydraulic valves on this multiproduct line – without any modifications to the machines. The valve to be produced is identified with an RFID chip at each stage in the assembly process.

This individualized production means that only the given components required for processing are made available at each station. The line also supports employees in assembly. They are logged into their workstations via Bluetooth. Displays show the work instruction for the specific unit to be processed and the work step required.

This story demonstrates how "the changeover" may become a thing of the past with smart factory technology and systems. Just as importantly, it helps draw a strong portrait of how the potential of Industry 4.0/smart factory technology can become real.

Find Opportunities In-house

One lesson that our client emphasized was applying their own technology to their plant to learn how to use Industry 4.0/smart factory technology better. In fact, it became a key differentiating message: Their experience would enable them to help customers apply smart factory technology better.

Is the same dynamic at work within your company? If you are finding ways to use the latest smart factory technology to improve the way you design, test or manufacture your own products, document your process because that's a good story to tell.

If that's not the case, try to identify where your company's products, software or approach to technology have been incorporated by OEMs or major end-users in newly launched machines or production systems – ones that have been engineered for much more flexible production.

If your products or systems were integrated into the solution, it's one more story you can tell that validates how your technology is helping to make change happen.

IS THE INTERNET OF THINGS COMING TO A WAREHOUSE NEAR YOU?

By: Jim Everhart

While the adoption of the IoT has been slower than some may have expected, material handling is increasingly a focus. In fact, the Connected Warehouse is here — and getting stronger every day.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a popular topic throughout industrial America and for good reason. The Combined Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of IoT-related products and services is projected to be more than 24% through 2026, according to a report from Transparent Market Research. Major players like IBM, Amazon, Intel, Schneider Electric, Accenture, Honeywell, Cisco and Dematic are involved and more companies are emerging almost daily.

In this gold-rush atmosphere, the material handling space is increasingly becoming a focus. The promise, of course, is significant. Proponents hope to speed up processes, make workers more efficient, avoid downtime and manage entire industrial ecosystems from product development and manufacturing to sales and deployment. They believe IoT-based predictive analytics can help companies anticipate disruptions in their supply chains. They even hope to reduce picking errors by using the weights of the included items to ensure that each box or carton contains the right items.

While the embrace of IoT-related techniques has been slower than some may have expected, material handling, in many ways, lends itself to the new technology. The hallmark of the IoT — the use of sensor data to make better, more informed decisions is already well established in the warehouse. A high level of connectivity is already happening in the warehouse on a large scale: RFID and barcode scanners have been deployed for years, providing real-time location data on everything from cases and pallets to vehicles and workers.

So, the Connected Warehouse is already here and coming on strong. Typical applications of the Internet of Things in material handling and warehouse management include the following:

Fleet Management

IoT technology can help you determine the locations of fleet assets, including trucks, robots and lift trucks, as well as people. And, as you gain experience with information, it can help with right-sizing your fleet.

For instance, you might use load-sensing data to determine if a lift truck is operating with a full load of materials or products or is simply being used as a transport vehicle.

Resource Utilization

The goal of IoT systems is to improve the utilization of all the resources at your command: human, physical and fiscal. A "smart" forklift, for example, could integrate with your warehouse management system to process orders more efficiently.

Sensors on your shipping and loading area could measure dock activity, including truck arrivals and truck departures. They could determine, for instance, that a truck was docked for an hour but that loading took only 20 minutes.

Using proposed IoT technology, you could also improve stock picking, either by bringing the shelves to the worker (Amazon's Kiva robots) or by having a robot follow the worker and tell them what to pick.

Inventory Management

Sensor-based IoT systems could help you track the movement of products from warehouse to sale. As a matter of fact, some freight carriers already use IoT technologies, like GPS and connected scanners, to track the status of packages.

IoT systems could provide accurate counts and help ensure you are rotating your stock. They could even do automated reordering.

In a critical application for perishable products, they could also do condition monitoring for temperature-sensitive materials, ensuring that they stay within a certain temperature range.

Predictive Maintenance

Rather than relying on traditional measures like time intervals or hours of operation, IoT-based systems could monitor actual sensor data, like temperature or vibration, for critical warehouse assets. You could determine when a battery needs to be replaced, learn that a piece of equipment needs lubrication or find out a more serious repair is required for a conveyor. Our mythical "smart" forklift, once again, could diagnose when it needs service.

The result is less labor and parts inventory because you're not completing a service before it is required. Best of all, there are actually fewer downtime-producing failures.

Safety

IoT-based systems can also help you improve safety in the warehouse. Using telematics built into lift trucks (mostly for utilization and availability), you could detect and track safety incidents, adding notations or uploading pictures in case of an impact. Systems can also require operators to follow a safety checklist, take additional training if needed or determine if safety restraints are being bypassed. And your "smart" forklift could limit its speed in congested areas while its telematics can sense oncoming traffic and prevent collisions.

Remaining Challenges

In many cases, the greatest implementation challenge is coordinating among the various systems that may be in place in today's typical manufacturing enterprise. These programs may include supply chain management software, Warehouse Control Systems (WCS), Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP), Warehouse Execution Systems (WES), Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS) and even Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems.

For the most part, these legacy systems connect to the enterprise and each other, but not through the IoT. And, as with so many other applications of the sensor-driven Internet of Things data stream, the amount of possible data may prove to be overwhelming for these systems. Too much information can be even worse than not enough if we're not careful. However, many vendors of these systems are scrambling to adapt.

There are alternatives, however. Some companies are finding that the providers of material handling equipment (and the sensors on that equipment) can provide the data they need, which is then fed into cloud-based systems for analysis and alerts if need be.

That's why there really aren't out-of-the-box solutions. For the most part, systems need to be customized for each company and each application.

More Evolution Than Revolution

The embrace of IoT technologies in material handling practice will continue. But look for the state-of-the-art to lean toward pragmatic, day-to-day improvements rather than earth-shattering, technical breakthroughs. And for manufacturers of sensors and material handling equipment to market their product by promoting IoT connectivity, as well as talking not only to plant engineers, but also to Information Technology (IT) people.

02
THE JOURNEY

ONE ENTERPRISE, MULTIPLE TRAVELERS ON THE B2B BUYER'S JOURNEY (PART 1)

By: Brian Moore

When an enterprise makes a major buying decision, multiple participants have a say – and B2B marketers must answer their needs.

The "buyer's journey" refers to any number of models describing how customers move from initial interest to final purchase decision. It's also an effective framework marketers can use to plan how they develop and deploy a full range of techniques and resources to serve their target customer's needs.

Used by both B2C and B2B marketers, it's generally broken down into five stages:

- Awareness
- Research & Discovery
- Qualification
- Purchase
- Post-sale

The typical consumer's time on the path is relatively short and straightforward: moving from a pop-up offer on a web page to an Amazon purchase can sometimes take minutes.

In contrast, the B2B customer journey is rarely a straight line – B2B marketers know that they need to help customers navigate a winding path, one that can curl back on itself. The B2B buyer's journey typically requires multiple types of information at each stage of the journey to convince the target business to make a significant purchase or investment commitment.

Multiple Journeys

In the B2B context, the notion of a "buyer's journey" – accent on the singular buyer – is more than a little misleading.

Whether it's choosing among several suppliers to provide high-end flooring products for a new high school building, entering a long-term supply contract for paper manufacturing chemicals or making a multimillion dollar investment in the latest generation of smart manufacturing systems, multiple decision makers need to reach consensus about the best choice to serve their organization's needs.

In B2B, it is the *enterprise itself* that is on a buyer's journey, not one or two individuals. This multi-participant dynamic leads to complex interactions and information exchanges between decision makers and influencers.

And while each of these "buyers" may have increased roles or responsibilities for a specific stage of the enterprise's journey, they all have informational/communications needs at all five stages – each individual responsible for moving the enterprise through the cycle, from awareness to buying decision, has their own "micro-journeys."

Who are these buyers? Every organization is unique but, in general, they are a combination of top-level, C-Suite individuals and more mid-level operational professionals with significant input and responsibility for buying decisions:

COO/Manufacturing Directors: Senior-level people who define current and future operational needs of the enterprise. They're usually the main target of B2B marketing and, while they often have the final "sign-off" on big purchases, they operate as part of a team.

CIO/IT Department: Increasingly important in making decisions about every aspect of medium and large-scale enterprises, because IT technology is now deeply interwoven into core functions of every part of a business.

CFO/Finance: It's often thought that this audience is just an influencer, without a full path on the buyer's journey. They understand the financial requirements and impacts of a major B2B investment and demand that B2B marketers respond to their need for information related to ROI, offering ways to qualify different vendors.

Human Resources: To stay competitive, businesses must hire the best personnel, and provide the right kinds of training to keep their skills current. Thus, HR departments play a critical role in helping make sure that any major purchasing decision by the enterprise is properly supported.

Enterprise CEOs: A key part of this multiplayer dynamic, they set the long-term strategy for the company, and are just as likely to travel in parallel with the rest of the company's leadership from awareness to purchase and post-sale support.

As B2B marketers sharpen their understanding of these diverse audiences, and how they interact across the buying cycle, a new view has emerged: The B2B buyer's journey is a matrix of intersecting and overlapping information and messaging needs.

In the past, some of these audiences might have been considered "influencers" only, with some input but not really integral to the overall buyer's journey – and thus, not worth the investment in B2B marketing resources to answer their needs.

That approach risks leaving key players under-informed, and thus unwilling to complete their company's journey to your product or solution. B2B marketers need to make certain that creative, effective, well-targeted information about their products and services answers the questions and concerns of multiple B2B buyers.

Multiple Journeys: What information is needed? In our next post on this topic, we'll look at how these multiple "travelers" have information needs that differ – and how they overlap. As an example, we'll consider how all the above audiences help a manufacturer plan how it will invest in a major upgrade of their production systems to be Industry 4.0 ready.

ONE ENTERPRISE, MULTIPLE TRAVELERS ON THE B2B BUYER'S JOURNEY (PART 2)

By: Brian Moore

When an enterprise makes a major buying decision, multiple participants share in the decision. B2B marketers need to understand how their needs differ – and overlap.

In the previous post, we explored a crucial difference between the B2C and B2B buyer's journey. While the typical consumer's path to a purchase decision is relatively straightforward, the B2B customer journey is more complex. One major reason: Multiple individuals and groups participate when an enterprise embarks on a buyer's journey.

Typically, these multiple participants are a combination of top-level, C-Suite individuals and more mid-level operational professionals. Although each organization is unique, B2B marketers must consider the information needs of:

- **COO/Manufacturing Directors**: Senior-level people who define current and future operational needs of the enterprise.
- **CIO/IT Department**: Reflects the essential role technology plays in core functions of every part of a business.
- **CFO/Finance**: More than just influencers, they assess and make decisions about costs, timing and ROI impacts of a major B2B investment.
- **Human Resources**: They must participate in the enterprise buyer's journey, because they must hire the best personnel, and provide training to keep skills current.
- **Enterprise CEOs**: Because they set the company's strategy, they, too, will be seekers and consumers of B2B brand messaging and content.

B2B marketers will also need to communicate both brand messages and product content to all these audiences – but it's not one size fits all. The same material must be delivered through different formats and channels, to build credibility with each participant, answer crucial questions and concerns and, ultimately, win the business.

Serving Multiple Needs

Imagine you are an OEM that builds and supplies multiple types of food processing and packaging equipment. You learn that a major food processor (not currently a customer) is ready to start upgrading their plants to be Industry 4.0 ready.

This potential new customer makes extensive use of automation technologies at three plants. They plan multiyear, multi location investments into new production equipment that is more intelligent and networked than current systems. It's an enterprise-wide effort, so their buyer's journey will involve assessing both existing and new equipment suppliers – a major opportunity to land a big new customer.

One target company, multiple target audiences. To win, your B2B marketing and communications efforts need to be integrated and multi faceted. You should be able to answer questions different audiences share, and be nimble and well-organized enough to quickly respond to very specific inquiries – at each stage of this journey.

Awareness: The COO and CIO are your two biggest audiences here – what are your company's strengths? How Industry 4.0-ready are your product lines? Is it worth their time to investigate further?

Your brand presence needs to be strong enough to connect with the other three audiences at this stage. The CFO and HR audiences need to be familiar with you to support further exploration by the COO and CIO teams. And your brand should at least be recognized by the CEO.

Your reputation for innovation, both past as well as current efforts to meet the challenges of Industry 4.0 technologies, will help separate you from the competition. Investing in case studies, technical papers and presence in trade media can serve this goal. The bonus is that interest in these top-level messages will overlap with the other audiences, and the content you create can be reused for more specific tasks.

Research & Discovery: This is a major milestone on the journey. This is a major area where the same messages, the same content – your latest form, fill and seal machine's new features, operational and performance advantages, networking abilities, etc. – must be articulated.

For the COO team, performance data, such as throughput rates and changeover times (plus a million other details), need to be easily available. For the CIO team, they need to know about your controllers, automation software and the communications interfaces you support. And you'll need solid, substantial answers to CIO questions about how your technology aligns with emerging Industry 4.0 requirements.

HR needs to understand the skill sets required to commission and manage the equipment: What kind of engineers need to be hired? Do you provide training support? Is training included in the cost of equipment, or is it separate? HR will assess all these factors to determine personnel costs.

The CFO will want to benchmark equipment costs against the competition, and will need to understand how to measure ROI on your systems. Providing user-friendly online tools or calculators that provide substantial answers to these questions – numbers a CFO will trust – will help build your business case.

ONE ENTERPRISE, MULTIPLE TRAVELERS ON THE B2B BUYER'S JOURNEY (PART 3)

By: Brian Moore

When an enterprise makes a major buying decision, multiple participants share in the decision. B2B marketers need to understand how their needs differ – and overlap.

We've been exploring how the B2B buyer's journey differs from B2C. Our focus has been on how multiple individuals and groups in major companies interact, collaborate and contribute to the buyer's journey.

So, unlike the B2C buyer's journey (where the target is one user/consumer), B2B marketers must consider the information needs of:

- **COO/Manufacturing Directors**: Senior-level people who define current and future operational needs of the enterprise
- **CIO/IT Department**: Represents the essential role technology plays in core functions of every part of a business
- **CFO/Finance**: More than just influencers, they assess and make decisions about costs, timing and ROI impacts of a major B2B investment
- **Human Resources**: They must participate in the enterprise buyer's journey because they must hire the best personnel and provide training to keep skills current
- **Enterprise CEOs**: Because they set the company's strategy, they, too, will be seekers and consumers of B2B-branded messaging and content

From Qualification to Purchase and Support

We'll complete this three-part journey by looking at the remaining phases: Qualification, Purchase Decision and Post-sale Support.

The previous parts have centered on a fictional OEM that builds and supplies food processing and packaging equipment. Imagine that you oversee marketing for this OEM and your company wants to land the business of a major food processer seeking to upgrade their equipment to be "Industry 4.0 ready."

It's a big opportunity to earn the business of a major target with multiyear, multi-equipment sales. Although this food processing equipment supplier is just one target company, it has multiple targets in the company's five-step buyer's journey.

We've already looked at what your firm must do with these target audiences in the first two steps on the journey: Awareness and Research & Discovery. You've been successful in communicating your company's strengths and delivering key pieces of information about your products and your company's resources as your targets researched your business.

Qualification: You're getting close. Now the questions become specific in this type of buyer's journey. You need to be agile and highly responsive to every inquiry. That means you need to go from the general information and marketing materials you have for your company's products and systems to answering very specific questions about those same products from the target food processing company.

You need to facilitate contacts and lines of communication between your engineers and the COO's staff and CIO's staff. Since qualification is all about the details, there may be advantages to upping your marketing outreach to lower levels in the enterprise; it's at this point that they become major influencers on the decision makers.

Consider connecting with individuals down at the plant level: plant general managers and department managers, as well as IT staff dedicated to each facility. Can you schedule site-specific presentations or "demo lunch and learns"? Some companies even have trailers packed with displays they take on the road to target companies for one-day mini tradeshows.

It also makes sense to promote and highlight any online configuration, downloadable engineering tools or CAD files you have available, and make sure they work and are easy to access and use. If you have cost-calculation tools or methods for calculating return on investment that make a clear financial case for your company's solutions, make sure you're getting those resources to the CFO at this point in the buyer's journey.

They say seeing is believing. At this point in the buyer's journey, one of the most effective pieces of media to have available is a case study video of your latest Industry 4.0-ready machine, especially if it's a linchpin of your offer to the target company.

If the video case study is at an actual customer's facility, that's the best option. It can include your top engineering people and the existing customer discussing the machine, its benefits, the cost savings and ROI it's been providing, along with lots of great footage of the machine in action and its advanced automation and communications capabilities.

If an on-site, customer demo video isn't possible to arrange, it still makes sense to produce a module of your engineering staff taking a virtual video "tour" of a system being assembled in your shop to produce the same impact on the qualification step.

Purchase: You've done all you can up to this point to respond to the multiple needs of everyone on your B2B buyer's journey. At the purchase stage, most of the focus in this kind of multisite, multiyear investment is on the numbers – costs, design and engineering timeframes, delivery and installation schedules.

However, in the preceding steps on this journey, you and your marketing staff may have built good rapport and communication channels supporting the sales effort. Don't let that investment go to waste. Stay agile and do whatever you can to communicate customer questions and concerns to your company's sales and operations staff, so that no details get dropped.

One area you can emphasize during the Purchase step is your company's service and support capabilities. What are your company's service commitments, response times, spare parts availability and delivery commitments? This target customer has multiple plants in different parts of the country – do you have 24/7 support available in all of their locations?

Downtime is a big issue with the COO and their staff, so making sure these bases are covered and clearly communicated will help ensure that there is no last-minute hitch in closing the sale.

Post-sale Support: The deal was closed, a new customer was won and the new systems are being engineered, assembled and put into operation at your new customer's plant. But your job is not done.

The best, most valuable customer is one you *don't* have to close again. B2B marketers help their companies by investing in resources that reassure and strengthen new and existing customer relationships. This includes working with your customer to create press releases and trade press coverage of the new products you're delivering.

It helps validate the decisions by the CIO and COO teams to choose your products. The top-level CEO audience at the food processing company will be able to demonstrate that they are making wise investments to be competitive and productive using your cutting-edge production technology.

Continuing communication on social media platforms, trade press, website updates and webinars about the latest developments in your product lines will help keep your new customer informed. It also helps make sure that, when they're ready to make the next major technology purchase, their journey – and yours - skips the first two steps and goes right to Qualification.

Multiple Audiences on One Journey

The B2B buyer's journey is, of necessity, one that involves multiple audiences and participants. The enterprise is making the buying decision, but there will always be more than one person or audience tapping that "buy" button.

Every target customer is different, but more and more, conditions have evolved. It's rare that you have just one decision maker supported by "influencers." Collaborative decisions for major technology investments are now becoming the norm.

03

THE ENGINEERING BUYER

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF THE ENGINEER: 6 MAJOR MISCONCEPTIONS REVEALED

By: Godfrey Team

Getting into the head of an engineer is a top-of-mind task for B2B marketers. Because the engineer's mindset is different from other influencers in the buying process, B2B practitioners often fail to grasp the engineering mentality. These misconceptions often lead to communication problems — and wasted marketing budgets.

To help B2B marketers improve their communications with the engineering audience, *UBM Tech*, publisher of multiple online and print media reaching electronic, IT and industrial design engineers, recently completed a massive study distilled into the deck, "What's on the Mind of the Engineer?" Blending that study with decades of Godfrey experience with engineers in mechanical, civil, chemical and other disciplines, it's apparent that misunderstandings occur in six major areas:

1. Engineers think inside the box, so don't push the envelope.

It's true that engineers often appear to be thinking inside a box with little interest in exploring unconventional ideas. But that is a big misconception. People outside the engineering discipline mistake the level of single-minded focus and sustained concentration needed to solve an engineering problem with rigidity and close-mindedness. Just like everyone else, engineers have a two-sided brain. Their creative side enjoys trying new things. When asked by the *UBM Tech* study, an astounding 97% either agreed strongly or somewhat strongly with the statement, "I like trying new things." In fact, older tenured engineers "derive more satisfaction from solving problems and thinking 'outside the box' than others."

In summary, each side of an engineer's brain is likely to be more intense than average. The mindshift for B2B marketers is not to avoid creative messages or innovative offerings, just make sure your messaging is ramped up to be real signal rather than more noise.

2. Engineers know it all, so don't bore them with facts.

It's true that engineers are educated in a rigorous discipline and, these days, getting advanced degrees and additional certifications. But while engineers may know more than the average Joe, they also understand that they are life learners. The *UBM Tech* study shows that 87% agree strongly or somewhat strongly with the statement, "I like to

learn about things even if they may never be of any use to me." And one *UBM Tech* study after another states the number one concern among all engineers is "keeping their skills current and their technology knowledge up to date."

In summary, an engineer's brain is an information sponge. The mindshift for B2B marketers is to include a space where engineers can do a deep dive into your brand's knowledgebase and engage with your subject matter experts through webinars, tutorials, and forums — either face to face or online.

3. Engineers are wired in, so you can switch off print media.

It's true that engineers are heavily endowed with smartphones, tablets and power-user laptops. And they are increasingly linked in to social networks and online communication — especially the younger set. But when it comes to doing their job, the UBM study shows engineers prefer straightforward information sources: talking to fellow engineers, visiting vendor websites and trade publication media (including email newsletters, websites and print publications).

In summary, traditional media is still important — along with trade shows — depending on the engineer's discipline and tenure. The mindshift for B2B marketers is to recognize that engineers are unusually susceptible to cognitive overload and to select media carefully to improve receptivity for the information you want to communicate about your brand.

4. Engineers think they are smarter than anyone else in the room, so appeal to their ambition for innovation.

It's true that engineers are open to new ideas, as previously discussed. But "innovation" is the weakest way to appeal to the engineer's mind. In fact, the *UBM Tech* study reveals that companies offering the most innovative products in the industry or introducing more new products per year than any other company had the least influence in earning their trust, especially among tenured engineers.

The mindshift for B2B marketers: delivering accurate information, resolution to problems and high cost/performance value can build loyalty for your brand.

5. Engineers are loners, so don't expect them to connect with social media.

It's true that engineers can focus in their own little world, as explained above. But in fact, they are not loners. A majority of engineers in the *UBM Tech* study saw themselves as extroverts. Social media is being used increasingly — including LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+ and Facebook — with Google+ appealing to tenured engineers over Facebook and Twitter. And 64% attended at least one trade show over the last year. A vast majority — 92% — strongly agreed or agreed somewhat with the statement "I am very comfortable sharing my view with my co-workers." Collaboration is highest with European engineers, but Japanese engineers are less comfortable in leading groups or sharing information among co-workers.

In summary, engineers are clued into the social landscape, but they are not lemmings. The mindshift to B2B marketers is that engineers will engage with social media, just make sure if your brand engages with them through social media, that the venue and content is very, very relevant — especially for tenured engineers.

6. Engineers are wound up too tight, so my fun idea will help them unwind.

It's true that engineers face time and cost pressure at work, which, according to the *UBM Tech* study, is increasing. But when creating a "fun" event or concept for an engineer, it's important to remember that "fun" in an engineer's mind may take a different form. Engineers identify with Dilbert and can smell a marketing ploy from miles away.

In summary, engineers come in all shapes and sizes and ages and disciplines. The mindshift to B2B marketers is to get pro insight before thinking your idea will illuminate the LED in an engineer's brain.

Conclusion: Use insight to clear up misconceptions and deliver B2B communications into the engineering brain.

THE MANY PERSONAS OF THE AUTOMATION & CONTROLS ENGINEER

By: Jim Everhart

Start building your own audience personas. Leverage the number of accessible resources and experiences to gain insight into the factors that affect purchasing behavior.

There is no single persona for the automation and controls engineer. This category of buyer contains its own subsets of unique profiles, each approaching your brand with their own motivations and concerns. Let's look at a few of these audience groups in general and explore what makes them different.

Engineer #1: The Machine-building OEM

Original equipment manufacturers certainly care about product cost, but marketing messages should mainly focus on factors that reduce the overall cost including time-savings and make their jobs easier as machine builders:

- Easier programming
- Faster installation and commissioning time
- Reducing machine footprint
- Lower energy consumption
- Lower cost of machine ownership for end-users

Product quality and availability as well as engineering support are also key factors. Finally, product features and benefits are important, especially in helping OEMs differentiate their equipment for end-users.

Engineer #2: The End-user

End-users are concerned with cost, of course, but for them, cost is largely an issue of maximizing uptime and productivity. To the extent that end-users specify components, they may direct their OEMs to specify components from automation companies they can trust for reliability and functionality. The ability to standardize and reduce components across multiple production lines is an important message for end-users seeking to shrink their supply chain and cut inventory and maintenance costs. End-users are interested in messages about:

- Lower total cost of ownership
- Less maintenance and downtime
- Improved overall equipment effectiveness (OEE)
- More flexibility for faster production changeovers
- Increased energy efficiency

As automation end-users embrace smart factory concepts, messages about securely connecting multiple production lines with each other and with the IIoT will resonate in the buying process.

Engineer #3: The Systems Integrator

Systems integrators are an important audience, as they work directly with end-users but have slightly different motivational appeals as they specify automation components. In addition to cost, product reliability and features and benefits, systems integrators may have more interest in messaging about:

- Ease of engineering and programming
- Open standards for compatibility
- Speed of commissioning

And while product availability is important, messaging about ease of ordering, fewer part numbers and reliable delivery times will also appeal to systems integrators.

You Can Start Building Your Own Audience Personas

If you know where to look, this kind of knowledge is always within reach. You can leverage a number of accessible resources and experiences to gain insight into the factors that affect purchasing behavior. These include:

- Secondary research, like studies completed by major professional organizations and publications
- Institutional knowledge gained from decades of experience in marketing to these professionals
- Client perceptions, including success stories or anecdotes from sales and customer service personnel
- Review of published articles appearing in trade and professional journals
- Monitoring online activity, like social media and even the customer's own website
- Primary research, which could include surveys as well as in-depth interviews conducted with customers and prospects

The automation and controls engineer can make an elusive buyer. But when you listen in the right places, you'll learn a lot about what these professionals most appreciate – and what they most dread.

NEW STUDY FINDS LITTLE CHANGE IN ENGINEERS' SOCIAL MEDIA USE

By: Jim Everhart

There's been a great deal written about social media use in B2B, especially among engineers.

A new study from IEEE Engineering360 (formerly IHS Engineering360 and, before that, GlobalSpec) attempts to shed new light on the subject. The conclusions are by no means clear.

It shows that engineers still spend little time on social media at work. In fact, 62% report spending less than an hour per week, and another 21% spend one to two hours. Both results have hardly budged since predecessor company IHS Engineering360 asked the same question of engineers last year.

Social Use by the Numbers

Most respondents (65%) admitted to having LinkedIn accounts, and about half said they had an account on Facebook. Younger engineers, those under 35, were somewhat more likely to have accounts (82% vs. 63% for LinkedIn) than their over-49 peers. But even those numbers are going down.

Even more telling, the respondents reported significantly less likelihood of engaging in work-related activities, with reductions of more than 20% for activities like following companies, reading content, searching for contacts or watching videos on LinkedIn.

Content Types and Sharing

Similarly, the group was less likely to find product reviews, research new products, look for expertise or request tech support via social media sites. There were some differences among the age groups, the most telling being the nearly 30% gap between the younger engineers and their over-49 counterparts in using social networks to find new jobs.

In another key measure, 70% – up 3% from the 2015 study – said they never share or post news or information about their company to their social networks. And 83% – up 4% from 2015 – said they do not subscribe to work-related blogs.

Video Remains the Standout

The major bright spot on the social media front was YouTube, with half of the survey participants visiting the site for work-related purposes. The most popular video types were how-to videos or tutorials (86%), product demos (85%) and training videos (71%), all of which increased in usage in this year's study.

The study found that social media continued to trail more traditional information resources, like search engines, online catalogs, supplier websites, trade pubs, word of mouth, white papers, trade shows, case histories and webinars in their value to the respondents' work. Ironically, the top-rated social media resource, Google+, received exactly the same 3.3 rating (out of 7) as print advertising.

The top challenges in using social media for work-related purposes:

- 64% said other methods are more efficient
- 55% said social media has too much noise and not enough substance
- 38% said they couldn't find useful content
- 38% said the content they find is not reliable

The vast majority of the 850 respondents to the survey were engineers or other technical professionals. And, like the engineering profession itself, the sample was decidedly older: 68% were over 49, and only 10% were under 35.

Opposing Views

Does this study simply document the perception that aging engineers are going to resist social media with their last breath? Or, conversely, does it validate the idea that B2B marketing is somehow immune to social media?

Actually, in my view, it indicates a more nuanced approach than either extreme above. First, we can expect social media to grow in usage over time. But engineers and technical people will need different social media choices than the ones currently available for the following reasons:

- They deal with highly technical information
- They crave tons of data
- They will want to communicate, not with the masses, but with a small group, perhaps even a handful of people, globally
- They are talking about proprietary information – trade secrets their employers would not want them to share with the world

That doesn't sound like photo sharing or 140-character messages.

THE 5 THINGS ENGINEERS LIKE TO TALK ABOUT

By: Brian Moore

The engineering audience needs in-depth content about the issues that really matter to them. Understanding those needs is the first step toward fostering a robust and ongoing conversation.

Marketing to engineers is always a sophisticated conversation. This industry is driven by technological change and business demands for cost reduction, increased productivity and better return on investment. It's fair to say your target audience is "bombarded" with content that promises the perfect solution to every problem they face. But that's not a conversation, let alone a sophisticated one.

The engineering audience needs – and will pay much greater attention to – in-depth content about the issues that really matter to them. Understanding those issues is the first step toward fostering a robust and ongoing conversation.

The Five Most Popular Topics of Discussion

A recent study (we commissioned primary research from Feedback, a Richmond, Virginia-based firm that specializes in ethnographic research into specific audiences) strongly indicates that automation and controls audiences are especially drawn to conversations around five current topics:

1. Practical Implementation of Smart Factory Technology

Understand what kinds of technologies they need to begin integrating into their systems. What kind of functionality do they need to deploy? How do they utilize new concepts, such as embedded sensors and more autonomous control systems to further the integration of people and machines?

2. Updating Aging Infrastructure

What's needed to make today's automation and manufacturing systems smart-factory-ready? There's increasing interest in deploying robotics and other increasingly automated systems, but what's the best way to do this without completely ripping out and discarding existing, highly valuable production systems?

3. Cybersecurity in the Age of the Industrial Internet of Things

When embedding sensors and intelligent technology in their machines, what risks are there that these digital devices can be hacked? Building confidence in the newest generation of machines with billions of devices and communication channels interacting with each other is crucial.

4. The Impact of Big Data

Data-rich manufacturing environments capture and process vastly greater amounts of data; how do they optimize how this data is captured and provided to end-users to be of greatest value at the machine level, on the factory floor and across the enterprise?

5. Expanding Use of Simulation and Virtual Modeling

How can advances in simulation technology be used to shorten machine development timeframes and gain insight into system behavior early in the design cycle to prevent costly redesigns? These are powerful capabilities, but what changes in the OEM's engineering culture and processes are needed to make the best use of these advances?

What We Know for Sure

Our list of topics is not comprehensive, but it does cover the vital issues that remain "top of mind" for automation and controls audiences. Regardless of the topic, however, engineers share a focus on the applicable and the practical: a recognition that the smart factory/Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) revolution is quickly moving from theory to practice. They seek concrete, usable advice and insight, backed up by proof in the form of case histories, focused webinars and demonstrations of working systems that apply the latest capabilities to actual production challenges.

MEET THE ENGINEER: THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

By: Brian Moore

Reaching an audience as highly skilled and technically oriented as engineers requires not only a deep knowledge of technology, but also a thorough understanding of the audience's motivation. Engineers are sophisticated users of online resources. They can be quickly turned off to what they see as promotion or fluff, and they demand authentic, practical information. What's on their minds? Is it cost or quality? Performance or standards compliance? End-user acceptance or ease of use? All of the above?

Nailing those drivers is the key to success in marketing to this complex and multifaceted audience.

1. They love data.

The more exhaustive, the better. That means product information, reviews and specs. Application notes. White papers and trade publication articles. They want to see charts and graphs, performance data and hard information. Social media, not so much. Blog posts, forums, apps and infographics are their least favorite types of content. But that may be changing a little (see Point No. 3). And, as for trade shows, more than half of these professionals say they have not gone to one within the past year.

2. They are under pressure.

Engineers are expected to meet deadlines, cut pricing, design for manufacturability and get their products to market faster. Yet, they're still on the hook for product reliability: According to one survey, 44% say the pressure to meet deadlines is putting product quality and reliability at risk.

One design engineer we interviewed told us that he deals with more than 2,000 suppliers.

And, these engineers worry about keeping up with all the new technologies and products – everything from the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), to cybersecurity, to augmented reality, to robotics, to additive or 3D manufacturing.

3. They are retiring in droves.

More than 60% of the audience is over 50, according to a recent survey, (we commissioned primary research from Feedback, a Richmond, Virginia-based firm that specializes in ethnographic research into specific audiences.) And less than 20% of the design engineer audience is under 40. Over 40% say their companies are losing specialized knowledge and expertise faster than they gain it. And, less than half say their companies have practices in place to capture and retain that knowledge.

The younger engineers coming up through the ranks are slightly more likely to use a mobile device or view a video, podcast or webinar than their older colleagues. But, it's not a huge sea change: It is, after all, still tough to read a data sheet on a three-inch screen.

4. They are part of a team.

No longer does one engineer specify or authorize a purchase. More and more, engineers are buying as part of a team. And, that team grows larger every year. In addition to other engineers, it might include representatives from marketing, R&D, manufacturing and sales for an OEM.

There might be a technical committee involved with specifications or a commercial committee in charge of negotiating contracts – in other words, squeezing their suppliers on price and delivery.

5. They love being engineers.

Despite the pressures and frustrations of their jobs, 84% would recommend their profession to a friend or child. Seventy-four percent feel appreciated and respected and 71% think engineering is a respected profession.

On the negative side, 24% are actively seeking another job and 20% are concerned with job security.

HOW ENGINEERS MAKE A PURCHASE – SUPPORTING AND ENERGIZING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

By: Todd Walter

B2B purchasing has increasingly become a team sport, with lots of different players joining in at various stages of the process. We highlight the people involved and provide examples of how their buyer's journey aligns to their needs.

How exactly do engineers go about making a purchase? How do engineers buy? We highlight the people involved and provide examples of how their buyer's journey aligns to their needs.

They Move in Packs

B2B purchasing has increasingly become a team sport, with lots of different players joining in at various stages of the process. For example, an OEM purchase of a new component or technology may involve representatives from purchasing, sales, product management, operations and even marketing. If it involves a significant capital investment, approval by senior management or ownership may be needed.

They're Doing More Research Than Ever Before

Making the process more challenging, the B2B buying journey is more self-directed. Long gone are the days when a sales rep controlled the process and fed customers the information he or she thought they needed, when they needed it. Buyers want to conduct their own initial research, often before sales and marketing even know they are interested.

In fact, research from the CEB Customer Purchase Research Survey indicates that the average B2B buyer is 57 percent of the way through their decision-making process before engaging a supplier sales rep.

The Journey is Long and Unpredictable

In the "considered purchase" environment of B2B, the buying process can take longer – up to two years in some cases. All of these players have their own information needs and learning styles. So the process has become more complicated than ever. But maybe the big picture will make things a bit more manageable.

The Players

For example, the chart below shows the key players in the automation and controls space during the buying process at the institutional level. On the individual level, each of these "players" may contain multiple players of their own – like the sales, product management and manufacturing professionals that make up the OEM team.

The Path

The typical customer journey is rarely a straight line. Instead you must help customers navigate a winding path as our buyers bounce back and forth throughout the process.

How the Journey Plays Out

For an OEM, the process may start as a marketing challenge. Let's say, for instance, a design engineer is envisioning a new generation of plastics machines. And he or she is hearing all the talk about smart factories and Industry 4.0 (i4.0) and the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT). The sales team says the competition is coming out with a connected "Smart Plastics Machine" that allows remote diagnostics, and they are charged with meeting that challenge.

So, in the awareness phase, the design engineers will do searches on i4.0, IIoT and the like. They will probably start with articles from broad design engineering publications like *Machine Design*, where they may see some ads. In the research and discovery phase, they may visit some industry forums where they can see how other engineers are tackling these problems. They may visit the websites of a few likely suppliers, perhaps downloading a video or white paper, or look them up at a trade show.

In the qualification phase, they may look at a case history, or download printed literature or e-books, deepening their knowledge and beginning to sketch out the outlines of a solution. As they get closer to a solution, they may access suppliers' CAD files to experiment with how different solutions fit an existing machine footprint. And when they finally get to the purchase phase, only then will they be entertaining sales reps' presentations and checking out their finalists on social media.

The Marketer Has a Role

So, that's the way things happen. Except that they happen differently for every buyer. Marketers must think constantly about the buyer's journey, considering all the possible places that prospects and customers may go for answers and developing the materials they need to advance through the process.

04

THE IT BUYER

HOW THE INDUSTRIAL INTERNET OF THINGS WILL IMPACT B2B MARKETING

By: Alison Fetterman

The Industrial Internet of Things changes B2B marketing significantly by giving IT decision-makers a lot of clout in the manufacturing buying process.

As a B2B marketing agency deeply immersed in the manufacturing sector, Godfrey has been following Industry 4.0 and the related Internet of Things for some time.

As a matter of fact, I wrote a blog post entitled, "The Rise of the Manufacturing CIO in Marketing" last December. It outlined the emerging role of Information Technology roles, and the Chief Information Officer (CIO), in the industrial buying process.

But we wanted to know more about this new enterprise connectivity, which is known by a variety of terms, including the Industrial Internet of Things and Industry 4.0.

So in January, Godfrey partnered with AMG Research to learn more about how all of this would impact B2B marketing.

We presented the results of that research at CFE Media's Marketing to Engineers event.

Perhaps the most important finding was that, in fact, the B2B industrial buying process is changing. Here's how:

Key Insight No. 1: New players totally disrupt the old dynamics.

There are new players entering the B2B buying process. Even more significantly, they are entering in an unprecedented way.

In the past, when the buying team expanded, it usually involved adding new influencers and maybe a few recommenders, almost as an afterthought.

For example, a representative from maintenance might be added to a group considering the purchase of a new line of equipment to make sure ongoing maintenance requirements are considered. Experts from Environmental Health and Safety may be added to review environmental impact and/or liability concerns, etc., or purchasing people may be added to negotiate contract details.

The key point: They came in as an influencer. But not a decision maker.

Our research found, however, that decision makers from Information Technology are being added to B2B buying teams, but in a totally different way; they are bringing both money and authority.

In effect, they are the funding source, especially for projects that involve the kind of enterprise-wide connectivity represented by the Industrial Internet of Things.

And with the money comes the clout. Our study found that IT staff is the dominant player at all three stages of the buying cycle. They are much more likely than other titles to initiate, advocate for and approve high-level IIOT/Industry 4.0 projects.

Key Insight No. 2: New players differ significantly from your traditional buyers.

These new IT buyers behave much differently than the traditional audience for an industrial product, who usually are engineers:

- **They have different goals and objectives.** IT buyers are excited about the tremendous opportunity IIOT/Industry 4.0 offers to improve access to customer data, and generally improve operations. Things that are at the top of the engineers' list, like cutting costs, reducing downtime and generating revenue, are less important.
- **They prefer different types of content.** A surprising number of IT people favored trade shows, with case studies and long-form articles or white papers next. Data sheets — engineers' go-to resource — never made the list.
- **They have different criteria for selecting a partner.** IT people are concerned with cost, reputation/experience and security. Engineers want to hear the quality and performance messages, as well as tech support.
- **They have different companies they look to for help.** Whereas a typical engineer looks to component manufacturers, like Rockwell, Emerson and Schneider, the IT audience would seek out IBM right at the top of the list, then GE and SAP.

Thus, talking to an IT person in the same way you address an engineer will get you nowhere fast. The typical industrial marketing relying on data sheets outlining performance benefits, like uptime and productivity, will clearly miss the mark.

NEW B2B BUYERS FOR INDUSTRY 4.0: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By: Godfrey Team

As IoT takes control of manufacturing environments, the traditional engineer decision maker is being joined by IT roles. New buyers mean new strategies. Are you ready? As IoT takes control of manufacturing environments, the traditional engineer decision maker is being joined by IT roles. New buyers mean new strategies. Are you ready?

Hype regarding the Internet of Things (IoT) is inescapable. It has been described as part of the fourth industrial revolution, altering the way we work, relate and live. This digital transformation is a major focus for B2B marketers as they wonder how it will unfold in industrial and manufacturing environments. Why? Because IoT transforms not only how components and systems are managed and connected, but also who decides which solutions to implement. This shift will have a huge impact on B2B marketers, particularly those in the automation and controls space.

With the Internet of Things, you can't just market to engineers anymore.

Right now, successfully reaching engineers is essential to B2B companies striving to have their products integrated into a system or specified as an OEM solution. As the Internet of Things takes greater control of manufacturing environments, the traditional engineer decision maker is being joined by representatives from IT teams. These Industry 4.0 solutions engineered for a connected industrial environment won't be adopted without IT buy-in and support. The influence and purchasing power of a process or design engineer or systems integrator will be shared with an IT Director, CIO or CTO. This changing buying dynamic means B2B marketers can't just market to engineers anymore. The design engineer still matters, but as soon as a machine, component or system shares data, IT roles in charge of security, software and hardware have a stake in the game. And IT decision makers will expect something different from your company.

Industry 4.0 is a game changer for B2B marketers — are you ready?

Godfrey conducted an independent research study with AMG research to confirm the trends we were seeing and learn how to change our marcom programs to target these new, increasingly important IT decision makers. Download the research report on the Godfrey website, and check out these highlights on the impact of IoT on B2B marketers and how to adapt.

- **Impact: New target audiences — CIOs, CTOs and IT Directors — require a shift in marketing strategy.**
  Action: Research these new information technology roles as they apply to your industry and company's solution. Conduct interviews and surveys to understand these new buyers and influencers and how to communicate with them. Create new personas to synthesize the findings and keep these new target audiences top of mind as you plan new communications programs.
- **Impact: IT professionals have different drivers and desired outcomes for IoT solutions.**
  Action: Create a new messaging framework and supporting content strategy. While operations and engineering teams are typically concerned about cost reduction or increased productivity, IT is focused on aligning technology initiatives with business drivers and goals. Leverage topics that appeal to both audiences like improved operations or system uptime, quality, security and better access to data (for customer or performance uptime) and ROI.
- **Impact: IT professionals have unique challenges, key questions and decision criteria.**
  Action: Produce content that proactively provides answers to the critical questions and concerns of IT decision makers. They face vast challenges and need help. They are trying to maintain existing systems while driving digital transformation. They need to balance innovation with operational efficiency. Address issues that are important to them, such as compatibility, data storage and security and infrastructure. Be the solution to their problems.
- **Impact: IoT initiatives can be funded by IT budgets. But they may never actually buy directly from your company.**
  Action: Don't expect ready-to-buy leads for the IT Director, CIO or CTO, but they can disqualify you even being considered if you ignore marketing to them. Consider how you will define success when establishing metrics for campaigns.
- **Impact: Engineers like data sheets. IT decision makers want proof of experience.**
  Action: Create new content pieces that showcase your experience and clearly define your offer. Case studies, white papers, long-form articles, blog posts and educational seminars can help you build credibility and explain why your solution trumps the competition.
- **Impact: The engineering team knows your company and solution. IT teams don't know or TRUST your brand.**
  Action: Take your new content, make it available in multiple formats (videos, industry articles, blog posts, webinars) and broadcast regularly across multiple channels. You'll need content that pushes product solutions and differentiates your brand to convince them your company can help them harness the potential of IoT. IT professionals are major content consumers throughout the buying process and quality, and easy-to-find content (optimized for search!) can help you build awareness and trust.

THE RISE OF THE MANUFACTURING CIO IN MARKETING DECISIONS

By: Alison Fetterman

The role of manufacturing CIOs is expanding, which makes them key influencers who are worth reaching in B2B marketing plans for security, software and hardware purchases.

There has been a lot of coverage about the Internet of Things (IoT) and its effect on modern manufacturing. For marketers, as the IoT becomes more of a reality through practical applications on the plant floor, it is critical to understand how manufacturing decision-making is now more complex, and how your audiences are changing.

As marketers for automation and controls solutions, we have been tuned into the buying processes and preferences of design engineers for decades. So much so that we created this essential guide on the Godfrey website: "Marketing to Automation & Controls Engineers."

And while all the critical insights that apply to those key decision makers still hold true, Godfrey has recently invested in research and developed key insights about an emerging group of influencers, namely the CIO and their IT teams who could be responsible for things like security, hardware or software.

Plant-level engineers and COOs still drive decisions around the technology, applications and machines developed and maintained to run their operation. But, with the integration of software and hardware, cloud-based services and enterprise-wide monitoring, marketers need to get their messages in front of IT, a brand-new type of audience.

IT has different challenges and motivations, as well as very different kinds of technology expertise and ways of approaching technology decisions. IT professionals access information in different ways and as IT systems and smart technology become more deeply integrated into manufacturing operations, the CIO and IT staff may be learning about a part of the business that is new to them.

The *2016 State of the CIO Study* by the Society for Information Management (SIM) identified the following as **key areas of focus** for the CIO:

- Improving IT operations/systems
- Security management
- Aligning IT initiatives with business goals
- Leading change efforts
- Implementing new systems and architecture

At the same time, and in parallel, plant-level management, COOs and manufacturing engineers and specialists are tasked with working with the CIO and IT, leveraging all the power of digital intelligence to make their plants smarter, more flexible and more fully integrated into the company's overall IT infrastructure.

Everyone's roles are becoming increasingly complex, as they are caught between the demands of maintaining existing systems yet expected to drive digital transformation.

Bridges need to be built to help plant-level engineers and COOs understand what information the CIO and IT staffs need to help advance the creation and implementation of smart manufacturing systems.

IT may not be familiar with operations on the plant floor. And even though your technology and offerings might be familiar to those with manufacturing or automation backgrounds, the CIO and their team may have never engaged with your brand. And the CIO audience is likely risk-adverse, with key issues such as security and compliance driving preference.

It is key that your company have a strong brand identity that is relevant to all audiences, as it can eliminate stages in the buying process. Or as a start, begin to develop messages related to common goals for all stakeholders. Productivity. Quality. Faster time to market. Efficient operations. Cost cutting. Bring these teams together with an ROI story that both can get behind.

05 THE PLAN

DEVELOPING A PLAN TO SUCCESSFULLY REACH ENGINEERS

By: Alison Fetterman

In today's varied landscape of marketing tactics, which ones are best positioned to communicate your message? And which channels will be the most effective at reaching your audience where they are? Put existing research and experience to work to help ensure your plan is based on the needs and interests of your audience.

In today's varied landscape of marketing tactics, which ones are best positioned to communicate your message? And which channels will be the most effective at reaching your audience where they are? These are not easy questions. But you can put existing research and experience to work to help ensure your plan is based on the needs and interests of your audience.

A reasonable approach to developing an effective tactical plan is to consider three main factors: your marketing goals, how your audience engages with content and where they go for information – especially as you consider the demographic of older vs. younger engineers.

Know Your Own Goals

Do your company goals suggest a strategy to establish thought leadership? Or are you trying to build awareness around a major product launch? With your goal in mind, look at your messaging strategy and determine what you are trying to communicate – or what questions you are trying to answer for your audience – and align the tactics to those in the buying process.

Thought leadership, for example, can be cultivated during the awareness or discovery phase of the buying process, and most valuable tactics here would be white papers, articles, case studies or e-books. For a product launch, where the audience is looking to understand features and benefits and qualify the purchase, your focus could be on product information, reviews, webinars, product demos and how-to videos.

Know Their Habits

This is when you can't take anything for granted. For example, let's focus on the senior design engineer and the staff engineer (i.e., experienced vs. young). It's easy to assume the older engineers will prefer traditional channels while the younger engineers would tend to skew digital. But the difference isn't as great you might think. A recent study – commissioned primary research from Feedback, a Richmond, Virginia-based firm that specializes in ethnographic research into specific audience – found only minor variations (less than 5% in most cases) in social sharing among these groups.

That same study found that engineers under 40 were:

- Slightly more likely to use videos, podcasts and webinars
- Slightly less likely to download a PDF of articles, surveys or industry-trend reports
- 10% more likely to view email, news articles and e-newsletters on a mobile device

Find Their Channels

Once you have determined your message and created the appropriate content pieces, you need to determine what channels to use to get your message in the right hands. The options are seemingly endless. First, use the techniques we've discussed to learn where your audience goes for information. Second, approach planning with flexibility and agility. Be willing to try something and then monitor results. If it's not working, move on to the next option. If it is working, think of how to expand your presence there.

You can reach your existing audience by leveraging your existing platforms – your website, social media, e-newsletters, etc. But to find a new audience, you'll have to deploy your content wherever their journey takes them. Typically, engineers prefer supplier websites, search engines, trade publications, printed and online catalogs, e-newsletters and sales reps.

Start Your Plan

There's a lot to consider. Here are a few of the ways that you can get started:

- Run a few keyword searches. If you turn off Google's personalized results, this will give a clear picture of how your competitors are ranking. Your analytics and webmaster tool reports will show exactly how you are performing on important keywords. If your search performance is low, you should consider an organic search engine optimization program. And if you're launching a critical campaign, a paid search program is the quickest way to ensure that your site gets listed.
- Find the right channels and partners for your audience. Horizontal publications like *Design News* and *Machine Design* are still valuable, but today's options reach further than ever. You can leverage ad networks to serve targeted banner ads or trade associations to build custom content programs. Paid advertising and editorial relationships, with targeted channels can achieve impressive results for awareness and credibility.
- Identify social media platforms that your engineer audience frequents. Though under-40 engineers are more likely to use Facebook than their older colleagues, the totals are still low. LinkedIn may be more appropriate, with many targeted groups for engineers across many disciplines. And though Instagram does not lead in user volume, the same study, conducted by Feedback, found it more engaging for engineers than any other platform.
- Listen to and engage in your audience's conversations. Challenge your sales force to ask their customers about their preferred social networks, forums or blogs. Have your internal teams find opportunities to engage on behalf of your company. This can be as easy as posting your branded content on social media or as involved as joining online discussions on sites like eng-tips.com or edaboard.com.

THE ROLE OF PR IN REACHING ENGINEERS

By: Todd Walter

Follow these three quick tips to learn about the role of PR in reaching your engineer audience.

A few months ago, one of my colleagues blogged about a study on engineers' use of social media (see page 38). Interestingly, the data indicated engineers continue to rely on traditional resources, such as trade publications, supplier websites, case histories and white papers for their information ahead of social media.

In one perspective, that's good news for marketers because it means you have the opportunity to leverage trade media outlets (print or digital) to reach your engineering audience. And, knowing that engineers place high trust in published trade editorial articles, it makes sense that public relations is still an effective way to reach engineers.

Here are three quick points on how you can use PR to reach engineers.

1. Figure out what your audience is talking about.

To join the conversation, you first need to know what engineers are talking about. One of the tools of the trade you can use is the annual editorial calendar. Similar to a roadmap, a trade publication editorial calendar maps out key topics, trends and themes that editors will be covering throughout the year because that's what their audience (and yours) wants to read about. For example, a quick glance at the editorial calendars for some of the leading automation and controls publications shows a range of topics, including Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), Industrial Ethernet, Cyber Security, Robotics, Simulation and Modeling, IT/OT Convergence, Conditioning Monitoring and more. These are some of the hot topics that automation and controls engineers care about.

2. Determine what you can talk about.

Once you determine key topics, you need to figure out what you can contribute to the conversation. Many companies already have expertise on these topics as well as existing material and knowledgeable staff who can participate in interviews. Using the editorial calendar as a map, look a few months ahead and pick a topic that relates to your company's expertise or experience. For example, maybe you're using remote diagnostics in your own production line and can offer to share some lessons learned with the editor who's assigned to that topic later in the year. Or maybe your company is using 3D printing to save money and improve customer service and can offer details in a case study.

3. Join the fray and make your conversation stand out.

As the great Wayne Gretzky said, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take." The same concept applies in getting your company news out there. You won't be heard if you don't reach out to editors and let them know you have something to say. Stay in touch with editors and build relationships. Meet with them at trade shows. Keep a pipeline full of news releases about company projects and activity. Announce certifications and milestones. Share the results of an industry study your company conducted. Speak at industry conferences and invite editors. You can even post insightful comments on other people's online articles to add your perspective to the conversation and make your voice heard.

As you plan your marketing activity for the year, remember to benchmark the topics your audience cares about. Look for ways you can use PR and create news to join the conversation.

MAKE ENGINEERING EXPERTS THE STARS OF YOUR CONTENT MARKETING PROGRAM

By: Steve Graham

It's an annual conundrum for manufacturing companies. How do you make your content marketing program more engaging and results-oriented for the audience you're most trying to reach, i.e., engineers and industrial buyers?

According to a recent article on customerthink.com, you need to create content that engineers care about and trust. And who do engineers trust most? Their engineering peers at manufacturing companies.

ENGINEERING.com and TREW Marketing recently conducted a survey to determine who engineers trust most with content. Engineers have the highest trust (4.5 out of 6) in content written by an engineering expert at a vendor company, followed by industry analysts (4.3) and published editorial pieces in industry publications, print or online (3.9).

It makes sense, doesn't it? As a marketer, you probably trust your peers in the marketing field more than anybody else in your industry.

What kind of content resonates best with engineers?

According to another survey cited on customerthink.com, engineers want content that:

- Is technically accurate (98% say it's highly or moderately important)
- Includes detailed diagrams and images (94%)
- Is current (94%)

Factors cited as less important to engineers include content that:

- Is easy to read (90%)
- Is professionally designed (82%)
- Contains sources that are well cited (71%)
- Includes quotes or testimonials from users, vendors or industry leaders (45%)

What does this mean to you, the B2B marketer? It means you need to involve your engineers, your subject matter experts, in your content marketing program. Maybe they don't do the actual writing of the content pieces, but they can serve as invaluable resources and authors of content that rings true with their peers and your target audience. For example, you could do a short Q&A and write it up as a blog post. Or perhaps do a video interview. Those are just a couple of ways to engage your engineers that won't take up too much of their time.

The content you develop can be used on your website, and distributed through social media, public relations efforts and even paid media. Having a documented, integrated content marketing strategy really helps maximize your return on investment.

So, as you plan your content marketing program, remember to engage your engineering experts and create content that resonates with their peers. It will help you achieve the kind of results you're looking for.

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