Planning Assumptions 2022: B2B Marketing

Leading Growth In A Fast-Changing Climate
Contents

Building A Path To Growth In A Fast-Changing Climate Page 3

B2B CMOs: Charting A Steady Course In Turbulent Waters Page 4

Marketing Operations: Revealing Unseen Possibilities To Fuel Growth Page 7

Demand And ABM: Laying The Foundation For Buyer-Centric Growth Page 10

Navigate Change With Agility And Resilience Page 13
Building A Path To Growth In A Fast-Changing Climate

The events of 2020 continue to reverberate throughout the business landscape. Companies face ongoing uncertainty as the recovery proceeds in fits and starts. To build a path forward, B2B marketing organizations need to drive cohesion and alignment — both within their function and with their revenue engine counterparts. They also must tune in more closely than ever before to customers, deftly harnessing insights and refining processes to strengthen and grow these relationships.

Achieving these aims is critical to success in 2022. B2B marketing organizations have a strong foundation, possessing the vision, insights, and capabilities to lead their companies to surer footing. This guide explores a few of the major trends that will shape the priorities of B2B marketing executives, marketing operations leaders, and demand and account-based marketing (ABM) leaders in the year ahead. It also provides the actions needed to set a successful course.
CMOs preparing for 2022 face a situation unlike any they have ever encountered.

Yet they have clear lessons to draw from as they plan. The companies that have best navigated the past year aligned their sales, marketing, product, and customer functions before or in the early stages of the pandemic-driven market disruption. These organizations balanced investments across existing and new customers, took a customer-first approach to developing genuine and empathetic relationships, and measured performance against aligned corporate and functional goals instead of siloed measures.

Here, we focus on two of the key priorities B2B CMOs must address to ensure success for their organizations in 2022. Find a summary of the additional content in our full report for B2B CMOs on page 6.
Assumption 1:
Earn Buyers’ Trust With Meaningful Action

Trust is one of the most crucial brand attributes for B2B buyers, and becoming a trusted partner is a goal expressed by companies in every industry. Yet, these same organizations struggle to understand how trust is created, when it matters, and its component parts. They also significantly overestimate the level of trust their clients have in them. As a result, trust is often relegated to a slogan or tagline, or is dismissed as only being important in a B2C setting.

Because B2B buyers have so much at stake when making a purchase decision, they crave trust. They are acting on behalf of their company, considering the company’s risk tolerance and their own professional self-interest. B2B buyers often look to build a relationship with a partner that instills strong confidence that their future actions will yield positive outcomes — which is the definition of trust.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Understand the risk-reward consideration that often drives trust-building. A B2B purchase decision can carry professional and organizational risk for buyers. Consider the perspective of your buyers and how they assess the risks and rewards involved in a purchase decision. Also recognize that many organizations and industries have established risk cultures with norms for how errors are treated and how risk and innovation are rewarded or discouraged.

• Define how trust manifests for your buyer. Forrester’s research outlines seven primary dimensions or levers of trust: accountability, competence, consistency, dependability, empathy, integrity, and transparency. How these levers play out for your buyer will be specific — and will turn trust from a hazy inspirational goal into a clear and actionable strategy.
Assumption 2:
Unlock The Doors Of Cross-Functional Alignment

Forrester’s 2021 Global Marketing Survey asked senior marketing decision-makers what was most needed to support marketing’s priorities. The top response, at 35%, was “improving marketing alignment with other functions.” When planning for 2022, CMOs need to ensure that their strategy and marketing action plan synchronize with the business strategy, the revenue plan, and the sales and product functions’ plans. Only then can marketing be confident that it will achieve critical alignment with the corporate, sales, and product functions.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Get in sync. Several strategic activities occur in parallel and influence each other: the development of the business strategy, the revenue plan, and the functional plans for sales, marketing, and product. By ensuring that strategy and plans are ratified across the strata of parallel planning efforts and that there is an agreed-upon and common set of assumptions, the marketing organization can achieve the alignment it needs.

• Improve collaboration and activate resources beyond traditional silos. To ensure clarity across hierarchies and functional boundaries, CMOs must identify points of collaboration and interlock. Audit existing ways that work is done to install mechanisms that connect functional experts to the most efficient and impactful ways to operate. Train, promote, and hire for soft skills that drive cross-domain collaboration. These mechanisms can take different shapes and forms — from shared services and centers of excellence to cross-functional pods or networked teams.

Explore more 2022 Planning Assumptions for B2B Marketing Executives in our client report, including:

• Embrace the new state of affairs. To fuel a high-performance marketing engine, CMOs must sense disruptive forces and lead the response to them. Learn what success requires.

• Rebalance marketing plans to emphasize buyer and customer experience. As CEOs look to the CMO to meet the needs of the buyer and customer at every touchpoint, marketing must reorient strategy and planning efforts toward new acquisition opportunities and existing customers.

• Move beyond marketing sourcing metrics. Now is the time for CMOs to expand the metrics conversation to include demonstrations of the revenue lift created by marketing’s efforts.

Contact us to learn how to access the full report.
Marketing operations’ core capabilities — interpreting data, applying tools, and developing processes — empower marketing organizations to deliver a superior customer experience and grow revenue. As companies continue to establish their footing, the capabilities fueled by marketing operations will be particularly important.

Effective marketing operations leaders elevate and position their teams to reveal unseen possibilities.

Read on for two of the key trends that should drive the agenda for marketing operations leaders next year. Find a summary of the additional content in our full report for marketing operations leaders on page 9.
Assumption 1:
The Rise Of Revenue Operations Enables The Optimal Path To Revenue

To achieve high performance and reduce the cost of sales, all disciplines within the revenue engine — e.g., marketing, sales, customer success — need to operate as a single, cohesive unit, with each discipline performing its core competencies to engage and close revenue opportunities. In this state of alignment, opportunities flow in optimal paths through the revenue engine.

Forrester’s sales activity study research indicates that when marketing and sales work together to enable sales to spend more time on late-stage than early-stage deals, sales is more effective and opportunity acquisition costs are optimized. Optimal paths vary according to factors such as demand type and opportunity type, so organizations must identify their optimal paths and shepherd opportunities through them to improve both buyer experiences and revenue production.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Identify the best functional combination to use the B2B Revenue Waterfall effectively. Aligning revenue production to the best resources at each stage of Forrester’s B2B Revenue Waterfall™ requires a clear understanding of revenue operations resources and their capabilities. Articulate the role of each operational function in the revenue engine using resources such as the Forrester Revenue Operations Range Of Responsibilities Model.

• Manage effective handoffs between stages. One of marketing operations’ core responsibilities is the design of the revenue opportunity prioritization and routing process. Work with sales operations and customer success operations to implement clear service-level agreements (SLAs) among functions and develop an optimal path for opportunities within the B2B Revenue Waterfall.
Assumption 2:
Consider The Customer In The Optimal Revenue Mix

Renewing existing customers at a high rate allows organizations to grow faster and more profitably than does relying on net new opportunities. The broad adoption of recurring revenue models — and the corresponding changes to the customer dynamic — make it essential for marketing to maintain a focus on existing customers, especially when developing revenue plans.

The revenue engine comprises people, processes, and systems that drive the conversion of prospects to customers and maximize customer lifetime value. The revenue engine functions need to consider the various opportunity types that flow through the engine — from acquisition of first-time customers to retention of existing customers to cross-sell and upsell opportunities. To optimize customer experience and drive revenue production, revenue operations leaders or functional operations leaders must align internal resources to the unique mix of opportunities that make up their revenue plans.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- **Deploy an aligned planning process.** Align marketing, sales, and customer engagement functions on fiscal planning efforts using the Aligned Revenue Planning Process. This process, typically managed by the organization's revenue operations team or functional operations teams, involves aligning company executives on the prime go-to-market mix by defining the organization's segmentation hierarchy for planning. Subsequent steps include developing the annual revenue production plan and allocating resources to support plan execution.

- **Design the revenue production plan.** Consider the long-term impact of renewing existing customers on your organization's revenue goals. With this impact in mind, use the go-to-market and route-to-market modeling steps of the Aligned Revenue Planning Process to define your revenue plan by segment and channel. The critical output of revenue planning is the establishment of the initial revenue targets for the fiscal year.

Explore more 2022 Planning Assumptions for marketing operations leaders in our client report, including:

- **A cookieless diet leads to improved fitness.** Google’s deprecation of third-party cookies and tightening data privacy regulations make building a first-party data strategy imperative. Find insights to realign focus to first-party data.

- **Develop a fuller picture of marketing contribution.** Forrester data shows that marketing sourcing metrics are marketing’s most commonly used performance indicator. Yet, sourcing metrics are failing marketers, and alternatives must be considered.

- **Adaptability triumphs over adversity.** Organizations that have a flexible business operating model and can change quickly grow significantly faster than the industry average. Focusing on process innovation and optimization will enable adaptability.

Contact us to learn how to access the full report.
2022 will be a critical year for demand and ABM leaders as they establish new foundations to sustain pipeline momentum in the post-pandemic world — where B2B buyers’ expectations of being heard, known, and understood are higher than ever. Meeting and exceeding buyers’ expectations starts with embracing a buying group focus.

As one marketing leader we interviewed said, “Until you focus on the entire buying group experience, you are locked into the machine of lead generation instead of creating emotional connections.”

Explore two key actions for cementing a buying-group focus that should be on every demand and ABM leader’s agenda for 2022. Find a summary of the additional content in our full report for demand and ABM leaders on page 12.
Assumption 1: Move From Click-Based Engagement To Real-Time Buyer Enablement

Eighty-one percent of global senior data and analytics decision-makers surveyed by Forrester confirm their organizations are investing in data, analytics, and insights to create differentiated experiences, products, and services that enable empowered buyers and customers. But insights require action. Real-time buyer enablement refers to the shift from selling “at” buyers to enabling buyers to get the information they need in the moment to support their decision-making.

This requires a change in mindset from data collection to signal detection and contextual response to develop an enriched and actionable understanding of the buyer that fuels the revenue engine. This mindset shift is operationalized inside program design. Rather than deploying tactics to drive clicks, tactics are engineered as sensors that capture and connect the most relevant signals from buyer behavior and activity.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• **Identify the buying signals that matter most.** Understand the types of signals that are characteristic of buyers as they move through their journey and where to capture these signals. Classify and connect buying signals by organizing them into three broad categories — directed, detected, and derived — to engineer the most effective sensors and inform first-party data strategies.

• **Leverage buying signals in program design.** Use buying signals to target, trigger, and tailor messaging, delivering the next best action across the buying group while training the feedback loop to continuously improve signal response through contextual interaction.
Assumption 2:
Use Demand Program Plays To Engage And Move Buying Group Members

B2B organizations rely on demand programs’ ability to influence buying group members, which brings new opportunities into the B2B Revenue Waterfall and moves existing opportunities through the waterfall. Demand marketers have access to data, processes, and technology that can support buying group needs and complex B2B purchase dynamics like never before. Demand program plays are variations of programs that support demand objectives and target individual buying group members. Creating demand program plays is a scalable and repeatable process that helps marketers refine how they engage and enable all members of the buying group.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

• Outline all needed program plays to capture buying group members and drive engagement. To support the movement of an opportunity through the waterfall, each program has an objective (activate, validate, or accelerate), and each program objective has multiple program plays that support the program objectives.

• Define program rules to design program plays. Demand programs continue to engage individual buying group members using known persona attributes and account demographics, but they should also be designed with buying group context. When designing program plays, demand marketers need program rules to provide the structure. By clearly defining and documenting entry, treatment, and exit rules for each program play, demand marketers can design, execute, optimize, and measure programs in a scalable and consistent way.

Explore more 2022 Planning Assumptions for demand and ABM leaders in our client report, including:

• Update scoring models and SLAs to focus on buying groups. Scoring models that do not incorporate interest and intent signals will continue to prioritize individuals over buying groups, potentially missing the real opportunity.

• Better understand the opportunities that drive revenue. Campaigns to drive revenue should blend demand programs with reputation and customer engagement programs to support revenue objectives.

• Determine the right mix of marketing approaches. Leaders should be thoughtful and data-driven in their marketing approach decisions so that they can capture the full value of known or projected opportunities.

Contact us to learn how to access the full report.
Pandemic-induced disruptions to business models and marketing plans underscored the need to embrace change. Navigating 2022 will require continued agility and resilience. Many of the external and internal forces that have upset the status quo may also unleash growth. By driving alignment with other revenue engine functions and orienting processes around a greater customer understanding, B2B marketing organizations can steer their companies toward a clear competitive advantage.

As you make your plans for the year ahead, look to Forrester to support and advance your vision and help you anticipate change and excel. Reach out to learn how you can access our full Planning Assumptions 2022 reports for B2B marketing executives, marketing operations, demand and ABM, portfolio marketing, channel marketing, and other functional areas.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Driving Revenue Growth: Achieve Next-Level Revenue Engine Performance
- Charting A New Path To Growth: B2B CMO Insights From The Forrester Marketing Survey
- Introducing The Forrester Aligned Revenue Planning Process
Secure Your Foothold in a Fast-Moving Climate

The opportunity for B2B marketing organizations has perhaps never been greater — and the stakes have never been higher. Forrester can help you seize opportunity while mitigating risk. We partner with B2B marketing executives and marketing functional leaders to build and execute strategies that drive measurable impact on pipeline, growth, and customer loyalty.

Explore our Forrester Decisions services for B2B marketing:

• Forrester Decisions for B2B Marketing Executives
• Forrester Decisions for Marketing Operations
• Forrester Decisions for Demand & ABM
• Forrester Decisions for Portfolio Marketing
• Forrester Decisions for Channel Marketing

EXPLORE MORE PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS 2022 CONTENT:
Visit the hub to read our B2B sales guide and blog posts from across B2B marketing, sales, product, and more.

GET IN TOUCH

Americas: +1 615.395.3401
EMEA: +44 (0) 2073 237741
Asia Pacific: +65 6426 7006