

# Content Marketing Key To B2B Sales Funnel

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Lead generation, nurture both benefit from content marketing

With the average cost per lead increasing and marketers competing for buyer attention, traditional lead generation tactics are no longer enough.

Business-to-business (B2B) companies are looking to content marketing to boost their lead generation efforts.

“Informative, nonpromotional content in the form of webinars, white papers, videos, blogs and peer recommendations on social networks and forums can attract prospects,” said eMarketer’s Lauren Fisher, author of the new report, “B2B Lead Generation: Using Content to Acquire Customers.” “It can also be used to build and maintain ongoing relationships with potential buyers—a must for remaining top of mind throughout the purchase process.”

Customer acquisition—including both lead generation and lead nurture—are top priorities for B2Bs, according to several surveys, including a June 2011 poll from MarketingSherpa.

Content, especially different types like white papers, fact sheets, case studies, webinars and email newsletter campaigns, can help serve these purposes throughout the B2B sales funnel—and according to data from Focus Research, the usefulness of these types of content is different for B2Bs than for business-to-consumer oriented companies.

“Online content is the fuel for the new B2B marketing lead generation engine,” said Fisher. “In creating informational, educational and actionable content in the form of white papers and webinars, marketers can effectively lure early-stage buyers into their sales pipeline.

“By mixing this content with comparative, company-specific and interactive content—and regularly sharing it via email or e-newsletters—marketers can build relationships designed to nurture prospects throughout the sales funnel,” she continued.

The full report, “B2B Lead Generation: Using Content to Acquire Customers” also answers these key questions:

- Why is content marketing essential for B2B lead generation?
- How are B2B buyers using content to make their purchase decisions?
- What type of content is best for generating and nurturing B2B leads?
- How can marketers leverage various online marketing content formats?

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