

B2B Decision-Makers Diversify Digital Research

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Search, mobile and video all important information sources

Business-to-business companies have increased their presence online over the past several years to cater to a growing number of decision-makers turning to the internet for information. Data from Marin Software points to increased competition in the B2B paid search space as a result, evidenced by the fact the average cost per click in the B2B space increased 29% from Q4 2010 to Q4 2011.

Additional findings from Compete and Google highlight why B2B companies are fighting it out in paid search: 73% of US B2B information-gatherers who went online to conduct purchase research turned to a search engine to do so.

Google and Compete polled more than 1,600 B2B executives in the US and tracked the online activity of Compete's panel of US web users to and from a select set of B2B websites. In addition to a high preference for search engine use among B2B influencers, the study also showed an increased reliance on more visual information sources.

Data collected from Feb 2010 to March 2011 showed B2B-branded searches on YouTube more than doubled in number during that time. And as more brands use video content assets to share product-specific information, provide demos and offer testimonials, these numbers should continue to grow.

This info-gathering activity doesn't just occur on desktop devices. Google and Compete found one-quarter of all B2B online purchase researchers accessed the web from their mobile devices.

C-level executives "often an elusive but desired target audience" were more likely to use mobile devices than the general US business population. In fact, 28% of C-suite execs used mobile devices and 21% used tablets to gather purchase information, compared to 25% and 12% of the general B2B audience, respectively.

Research from ad agency TricomB2B and University of Dayton School of Business Administration showed an even higher concentration of B2B influencers researching purchases on mobile devices. More than half (59%) of US B2B purchase decision-makers had used a smartphone to gather information "growing evidence of the increasingly important role mobile plays in the B2B purchase process.

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