The Business-to-Business Online-manual

Project "Boosting Cross-border Entrepreneurship in Life Sciences & Medicine related to Biotechnology and Medical ICT between Estonia and Latvia"

"Boost BioBusiness"

Linking Estonia and Latvia
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WHAT ARE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETS?

Although many people have heard the term “business-to-business marketing,” not everyone knows exactly what it is.

Put very simply, business-to-business marketing is the marketing of goods and services to businesses in order to keep those companies operating.

The most common business-to-business markets are manufacturers, resellers, the government and non-profit institutions. Most businesses that fall into these categories do make some money off of a consumer base; however, the majority of their capital is made off of other businesses.

One great example of this is a non-profit institution. While private donations from individuals like you and me is important to a non-profit operations, most charitable organizations make the great majority of their money from corporations or through government funding. Because of this, non-profits must make themselves and their products and services attractive not just to individuals, but also to other businesses.

To do this, non-profits and other organizations marketing themselves to other businesses must identify a competitive advantage. In other words, they must demonstrate why a company should buy goods and services from them rather than from their competitors, which is where business-to-business marketing comes in.

The biggest differences between business-to-business and business-to-consumer marketing are the types of goods and services being marketed and the types of entities the goods and services are being marketed to.

Business-to-business marketers promote goods and services that will help other companies run. Some of the things businesses produce for other businesses include equipment, components, raw materials, processing services and supplies.

In addition, because business-to-business marketers target only other companies, they have a significantly more targeted market than business-to-consumer marketers. Even when marketing very specific products for a fairly small subset of individuals, the latter type of marketer has a far larger audience than the former.

Business-to-business marketing is currently one of the fastest-growing areas of marketing. As technology brings more businesses together, companies are beginning to court each other far more aggressively. As the technology makes the world a smaller place, it becomes more important for marketing and sales professionals to understand and implement the principles of business-to-business marketing.

You might be thinking that business-to-business marketing and business-to-consumer marketing are two entirely separate things. However, before you do, know that business-to-business marketing, in many instances, is driven largely by consumer demand. In other words, if there are no consumers to purchase a product, there is no reason for a business to exist in order to make it. If that business does not exist, it will obviously not need the products and services offered by another business.

The goals of businesses and consumers are often the same. When choosing a company for goods and services, most consumers and businesses will make a decision based upon price, quality, delivery time and their history with the business. Other considerations might be the availability of the product or service and the quality of customer service if something goes wrong. [1]

Business-to-business marketing is therefore about meeting the needs of other businesses, though ultimately the demand for the products made by these businesses is likely to be driven by consumers in their homes.

TEN KEY FACTORS THAT MAKE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETS SPECIAL AND DIFFERENT TO CONSUMER MARKETS

1) B2B MARKETS HAVE A MORE COMPLEX DECISION MAKING UNIT

In most households, even the most complex of decisions is confined to the small family unit while items such as clothes, food and cigarettes usually involve just one person. The decision making unit (DMU) in business-to-business markets is highly complex or at least it has the potential to be so.

Ordering products of low value and low risk (such as the ubiquitous paper clip) may well be the responsibility of the office junior. However, the purchase of a new plant that is vital to a business may involve a large team who makes their decision over a protracted period.

[1] http://www.essortment.com/career/businessmarketi_snrx.htm

This complexity and dynamism has implications for business-to-business markets. The target audiences for B2B communications are amorphous, made up of groups of constantly changing individuals with different interests and motivations. Buyers seek a good financial deal. Production managers want high throughput. Health and safety executives want low risk. And those are just their simple, functional needs. Each person who is party to the DMU will also bring their psychological and cultural baggage to the decision and this can create interesting variations to the selection of products and suppliers.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

Faced with a multifaceted and knowledgeable buyer, it is critical that the B2B marketer demonstrates a high level of expertise in all of its interactions with the target audience. This refers not only to product knowledge, but also to the technical and other back-up that the buyer will receive throughout the life of the purchase.
The marketer must also show diligence and patience when negotiating the decision making unit and assuaging the fears of finance, production, technical and other decision-makers

2) B2B BUYERS ARE MORE RATIONAL

The description of business-to-business buyers as more „rational“ than their consumer counterparts is perhaps controversial, but someway true. We may not leave our emotions at home when we go to work, but most of us attach them to a tight leash and try to keep them away from our colleagues.
The truth is that as consumers we are often less well-informed, less accountable to others and far more susceptible to whims, indulgences, recklessness and showing off than is the case when we are in the workplace. We therefore have a tendency to make purchasing decisions that a rational observer (a business-to-business buyer that has to make a profit each month) would regard as ludicrous. As consumers we are far less likely to ask whether the product we are buying has an ROI (return on investment). We buy what we WANT, not what we NEED.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

To some extent the fact that business-to-business buyers are relatively rational makes the job of B2B marketers easier – all we need to do is design and manufacture good products, and deliver them on time and at a good price.
Not quite. It would be disingenuous to claim that business-to-business buyers are ENTIRELY rational. Due to the accountability that constrains most B2B buyers, trust and security are key issues. No B2B buyer wants to risk his or her livelihood or reputation buying an unreliable product and service. This makes emotional issues such as trust and security absolutely critical. This in turn places great emphasis on brand, reputation, case studies and

other factors which convey reliability and consistency over the life of the product or service being purchased.

3) B2B PRODUCTS ARE OFTEN MORE COMPLEX

Just as the decision making unit is often complex in business-to-business markets, so too are B2B products themselves.
Where the purchase of a consumer product requires little expertise (perhaps nothing more than a whim), the purchase of an industrial product frequently requires a qualified expert. Where consumer products are largely standardised, industrial products are often bespoke and require high levels of fine-tuning. Even relatively complex consumer products tend to be chosen on fairly simple criteria. A car might be chosen because it goes fast and looks nice, and a stereo might be purchased on the grounds that it is tremendously loud.
Even simpler industrial products, on the other hand, frequently have to be integrated into wider systems and as a result have very specific requirements and need intimate, expert examination and modification. It is difficult to imagine a turbine manufacturer or commercial website design buyer having a look at three or four products and then choosing one simply because it looks nice. The choice of turbine will involve a whole host of technical, productivity and safety issues, whilst the choice of website might be based on its integration into a wider marketing campaign, its interactivity with users and the degree to which it draws potential clients via search engines.
Car manufacturers frequently completely ignore not only how a car performs, but often the fact that the car performs at all, and instead seek to apply non-physical attributes such as sex appeal to their products. Business-to-business campaigns, on the other hand, seek to educate their target audience by providing specific factual information. A corporate vehicle fleet buyer is unlikely to purchase a car for his sales force on the basis of its colour or sex appeal. Many target companies in business-to-business campaigns are already well-informed on the product area, in which case promotional material may have to go as far as offering product specifications.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The key for the B2B marketer is to be fully informed in relation to the product or service being sold. This understanding must cover not only the „technical“ details of the offering, but also the extended offer including after sales service, problem resolution, client management team, etc. As a result, the B2B sale is often a „technical sale“, meaning that salespeople in business-to-business markets are often extremely experienced and originate from a technical discipline within their organisation. The success or otherwise of an entire business-to-business product line can be largely dependent on the abilities of a small team of salespeople.

4) LIMITED NUMBER OF BUYING UNITS IN B2B MARKETS

Almost all business-to-business markets exhibit a customer distribution that confirms the Pareto Principle or 80:20 rule. A small number of customers dominate the sales ledger. Nor are we talking thousands and millions of customers. It is not unusual, even in the largest business-to-business companies, to have 100 or fewer customers that really make a difference to sales.

There is also a matter of scale. In consumer markets there are reasonable limits to the amount that a single person can buy and use of any product. Certainly there are heavy users of all consumer products but the difference between the light user and the heavy user is a matter of small degree compared with the scale of differences in business-to-business markets. You can fit most buyers of consumer products into a “typical spend per month” with a few heavy spenders and a few light spenders at the extremes. The range of spend between the largest and smallest buyer in a business-to-business universe is likely to be much, much larger than the range of spend between the largest and smallest buyers in consumer markets. Small numbers of customers of widely different sizes – and the presence of a few **key accounts** – is a major distinguishing feature of business-to-business markets and this requires a completely different marketing approach to that required for consumer markets.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

Because such small numbers of customers dominate the lives of businesses, database management is a crucial part of business-to-business marketing. Customer relationship management systems now allow databases to be kept up-to-date with personal details of members of the DMU together with every transactional and contact record.

It is also critical that the business-to-business marketer be adept at key account management with all the manpower, proactivity and responsiveness that this entails. Key accounts not only require the product delivered to them when and in the quantities they need it; they also routinely require services such as swift problem resolution and technical advice. Indeed, key business-to-business accounts are increasingly moving beyond requiring effective products and services and good prices; they are now looking for **partnership**. They are looking for suppliers that will hold stock on their behalf, provide technical consultancy, calculate product efficiency and added value, and offer long-term on-site support.

Above all, the limited number of buying units in business-to-business markets, and particularly the concentration of expenditure amongst a few of those buying units, presents both an opportunity and an expectation that the biggest spenders are provided with dedicated value-added services that reflect their importance to the supplier. If you don’t satisfy this expectation, someone else will.

5) B2B MARKETS HAVE FEWER BEHAVIOURAL AND NEEDS-BASED SEGMENTS

B2B markets typically have far fewer behavioural or needs-based segments than is the case with consumer markets. Part of the reason for this is the smaller target audience in business-to-business markets. In a consumer market with tens of thousands of potential customers, it is practical and economical to divide the market into 10 or 12 distinguishable segments, even if several of the segments are only separated by small nuances of behaviour or need. This is patently not the case when the target audience consists of a couple of hundred business buyers.

The main reason for the smaller number of segments, however, is simply that a business audience's behaviour or needs vary less than that of a (less rational) consumer audience. Whims, insecurities, indulgences and so on are far less likely to come to the buyer's mind when the purchase is for a place of work rather than for oneself or a close family member.

It is noticeable that the behavioural and needs-based segments that emerge in business-to-business markets are frequently similar across different industries. Needs-based segments in a typical business-to business market often resemble the following:

- **A price-focused segment,** which has a transactional outlook to doing business and does not seek any „extras". Companies in this segment are often small, working to low margins and regard the product/service in question as of low strategic importance to their business.
- **A quality and brand-focused segment,** which wants the best possible product and is prepared to pay for it. Companies in this segment often work to high margins, are medium-sized or large, and regard the product/service as of high strategic importance.
- **A service-focused segment,** which has high requirements in terms of product quality and range, but also in terms of after sales, delivery, etc. These companies tend to work in time-critical industries and can be small, medium or large. They are usually purchasing relatively high volumes.
- **A partnership-focused segment,** usually consisting of key accounts, which seeks trust and reliability and regards the supplier as a strategic partner. Such companies tend to be large, operate on relatively high margins, and regard the product or service in question as strategically important.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The fact that business-to-business markets have relatively few segments makes the job of the B2B marketer easier than it might otherwise be. Nevertheless, skills in recognising which customers fit which segments, and how to appeal to each of these segments, are not easy to come by. Key challenges in establishing a behavioural or needs-based segmentation are as follows:

- Obtaining a consensus on exactly what the segments are, and what characterises them, usually requires investment in quantitative market research.

- Once a segmentation has been achieved, identifying which companies are in which segment is extremely difficult. Behavioural and needs-based segments usually transcend „firmographic“ segments, meaning that there are often no immediately manifest indicators (such as country, industry sector) of the segment to which a company belongs.
- Training sales teams, marketing teams, customer relationship and other departments must implement the segmentation by adjusting their approach to often-intangible criteria. This requires huge effort and investment horizontally and vertically within an organisation.

Given the limited size of business-to-business target audiences, many marketers find the most simple approach is to tier the target audience by size and split it by geography, with accounts receiving the attention they „deserve“ according to their strategic value to the supplier.

6) PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE MORE IMPORTANT IN B2B MARKETS

An important distinguishing feature of business-to-business markets is the importance of the personal relationship. A small customer base that buys regularly from the business-to-business supplier is relatively easy to talk to. Sales and technical representatives visit the customers. People are on first-name terms. Personal relationships and trust develop. It is not unusual for a business-to-business supplier to have customers that have been loyal and committed for many years.

The importance of personal relationships is particularly pronounced in emerging markets, such as China and Russia, which have little culture of free information, historic quality problems with local suppliers, and – in markets where the concept of branding is still emerging – little other than their trust in the salesperson on which they can judge the provenance of the product or service they are buying.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The consequences of this emphasis on relationships for marketing budgets are a relatively high expenditure on people (sales and technical support) and a more modest expenditure on other forms of promotion. Advertising budgets for business marketers are usually measured in thousands of pounds (or Euros or dollars) and not millions. The B2B salesperson is also a different animal to the consumer salesperson, in that the focus is on listening and cultivating a limited number of relationships rather than the more quantity-driven and transactional approach seen in consumer markets. This places emphasis on face-to-face contact and, as already mentioned, this salesperson must have an in-depth technical understanding of whatever he or she is selling. Trade shows therefore become far more important in B2B markets – indeed, they are the number one promotional tool of American business-to-business companies ($17.3 billion per annum spent, Source: Business Marketing Association).

7) B2B BUYERS ARE LONGER-TERM BUYERS

Whilst consumers do buy items such as houses and cars which are long-term purchases, these incidences are relatively rare. Long-term purchases – or at least purchases, which are expected to be repeated over a long period of time – are more common in business-to-business markets, where capital machinery, components and continually used consumables are prevalent.

Furthermore, the long-term products and services required by businesses are more likely to require service back up from the supplier than is the case in consumer markets. A computer network, a new item of machinery, a photocopier or a fleet of vehicles usually require far more extensive after sales service than a house or the single vehicle purchased by a consumer. Businesses“ repeat purchases (machine parts, office consumables, for example) will also require ongoing expertise and services in terms of delivery, implementation/installation advice, etc that are less likely to be demanded by consumers.

Finally, business customers tend to be regarded as long-term customers more than consumers do for the simple reason that there are fewer business customers about, and the ones that do exist are more valuable! The benefits of retaining a B2B customer are often enormous, and the consequences of losing them very serious.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The longer-term focus in business-to-business markets reiterates two key points for the B2B marketer to bear in mind: first the importance of relationship-building in business-to-business markets, particularly with key customers; and second the importance of a technically focused sales team.

8) B2B Markets drive innovation less than Consumer Markets

B2B companies that innovate usually do so as a response to an innovation that has already happened further upstream. B2C businesses tend to be less risk averse, as they have to predict and respond to the whims and irrational behaviour of consumers rather than the more calculated decision-making of businesses. B2B companies have the comparative luxury of responding to trends rather than seeking to predict or even drive them.

This is not to say, of course, that companies in B2B markets are „worse“ innovators than those in consumer markets. Indeed, the opposite is repeatedly the case, as innovations are often more carefully planned and successfully commercialised in the B2B world, in which audiences are more clearly defined and trends more easily identified.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

Business-to-business marketers have both the time and the indicative data from upstream to carefully assess their options before making a decision. As competitors are in the same position, this makes gathering good quality intelligence absolutely critical. B2B marketers are advised to undertake detailed market research, combining this with upstream information in order to build up a complete market intelligence picture.

9) CONSUMER MARKETS RELY FAR MORE ON PACKAGING

There has been a huge growth in the packaging of consumer products in recent years, as marketers seek not only to protect and preserve their products, but also to use the packaging as a vehicle through which aspirations and desires are transmitted to the customer. Consumers being less rational than business-to-business buyers, this approach has proved enormously successful at adding perceived value to products.
Adding value through packaging – making packaging a key part of the extended offer – is far more difficult to achieve in business-to-business markets, where product is judged primarily on technical criteria and the extended offer is built around relationships rather than dreams, aspirations or appearances.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The implications for business-to-business marketers are clear – packaging, like product, plays a primarily functional role. Resources are far better directed towards developing relationships and expertise.

10) SUB-BRANDS ARE LESS EFFECTIVE IN B2B MARKETS

Most neglected marketing opportunity in the business-to-business arena is the building of a strong brand. In a world where it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish one product from another, it is even more important to have the support of a powerful brand.

The role of brand in the B2B buying decision is thought to have increased over the past decade (it used to be said that its influence was 5% of the B2B buying decision against 30-40% of the consumer buying decision) and there is plenty of scope for B2B companies to differentiate themselves further through effective branding strategies.

B2B companies are generally far worse at both developing and implementing branding strategies than are B2C companies. B2B companies tend to be bad at recognising that branding strategy should envelop every customer touch point and aspect of the business – an unknowledgeable technical sales-team can undo the work of a branding communications campaign instantly.

In their rush to embrace branding strategy, many B2B companies have over-compensated and developed huge numbers of sub-brands for every aspect of their product range. This kind of approach can be effective in consumer markets, where diversified companies such as Unilever recognise the need to build relationships with segments and sub-segments of numerous target audiences. In business-to-business markets, however, target audiences are smaller and as explained above place more emphasis on relationships than brand when it comes to making the purchase decision. Most importantly, business-to-business buyers are generally more informed than consumers and tend to regard multiple brands and sub-brands as pointless and confusing, perhaps even insulting.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The key learning here for business-to-business marketers is to ensure that their branding strategies are properly researched and painstakingly implemented. Branding strategy should encompass every customer touch point within the business, and beyond, acting as a framework through which the company's values are transmitted. Above all, business-to-business marketers should recognise that „less is more" when it comes to branding – far better to have one coherent brand which customers, stakeholders and employees alike can relate to, rather than a confusing raft of sub-brands, which hinder rather than promote meaningful choice and amount to little more than product identifiers.

CONCLUSION: B2B BUYERS ARE MORE DEMANDING

The final distinguishing factor of B2B buyers is a suitable conclusion to this part: simply that **business-to-business buyers are more demanding**. They have a responsibility to make the right decision when purchasing on behalf of their companies. They take less risks and therefore need quality to be absolutely right. They have the expertise to recognise a bad offering when they see one. They are used to getting what they want. They are often paying more than they would as a consumer and therefore expect more in return. They are likely to regard themselves as interacting with the product or service supplied to them, rather than playing the role of passive recipient.

What does this mean for the business-to-business marketer?

The implications for business-to-business marketers are clear. It is our job to meet the target audience's needs; we must therefore raise our game to ensure that our product, services and intangibles meet and exceed customers" requirements.

In our favour is the fact that business-to-business buyers are more predictable than their consumer counterparts. This means that good quality market intelligence and close attention to our target markets" needs place us in a strong position to meet the needs of the market. [2]

B2B MARKETING CHALLENGES

As a B2B marketer, you are likely facing tremendous challenges. Between improving lead quality, managing the complex sale and meeting the needs of your sales team, it can be difficult to determine where your valuable time and resources should be spent.

In order to succeed, it is essential for Marketing to make a measurable contribution to sales pipelines and revenue. The path to achieve this goal is not always clear.

First, you must understand what has changed in B2B Marketing, what has caused these changes, and why they affect the way we must execute B2B Marketing going forward.

B2B MARKETING: 2000 VS. 2011

Since the year 2000, B2B market has undergone dramatic changes – in strategy, budget, measurement, philosophy and tactics. Although the internet has certainly been a big part these changes, it is by no means the only factor. In fact three concurrent factors can be named, that have transformed the B2B marketer profession.

1. REDUCED FIELD SALES FORCE

Even in growing organisations, field sales have bigger pressures then they did in the pas. They are focused solely on closing the deals this month or quarter, so they have little or no time for long-term prospect research and nurturing. At the same time in many marketplaces, the consideration cycle grew longer, often in part because more voices have been added to the purchasing committee. A chasm of weeks, month and, sometimes, more than a year, grew between the time when prospects might begin considering a purchase and the time when it made sense for field sales to get involved in the account. Marketers around the world began to worry about this growing gap and to assign resources to solve the problem. Marketing largely took over the role of lead qualification, cultivation, and nurturing from

[2] Source: B2B International Ltd, http://www.b2binternational.com/assets/whitepapers/pdf/b2b_marketing.pdf

sales. In an increasing number of organizations, this ment the marketing took over – or built from scratch – inside sales organizations or telemarketing groups to qualify and interact with leads not-yet-ready-for-primetime.

2. MANAGEMENT COST-CUTTING

B2B marketers did not leap into online marketing largely before their B-to-C peers did because they are early adopters who thought it was awful neat. They leapt it in order to save their jobs.

From late 2000 through 2002, nearly every B2B marketer was focused on a single goal: to get more leads at a lower cost. Management was sure that marketing costs were too high. A marketer who kept his or her job was one who showed how much money they saved the organization. The intense cost-cutting pressure was the top reason why internet and e-mail marketing took off so fast and hard in the business-to-business community. In fact, the differences between the consumer marketplace and B2B at that time were profound. During the recession, most consumer marketers avoided risk and stuck with tried-and-true tactics. Consumer packaged goods companies´ Internet budget were well under 5% of their total marketing budget.

However, B2B marketers who had always had less credibility with management were out on a limb and focused to try risky new tactics. The easiest way to save money was to replace old media with cheaper new media. That meant replacing print brochures with PDF-s, postal-mailed newsletters with emailed newsletters, road shows and seminars with webinars, and print ads with online advertising, including search. In just 24 months, Internet marketing leapt from nothing to a double-digit percent of budget for the typical B2B marketer.

The fact that online tactics actually worked as well - and, in some cases even better - as , the tactics they replaced was an unexpected reward. The perfect mixture of online plus offline tactics, based on what works best rather than what costs the least, would take a few more years to evolve.

3. MEASUREMENT CULTURE

Although B2B marketers had always included some direct response marketing – such as direct mail packages and trade-show fish bowls – in their mix, the field as a whole had very little culture of measurement. But measurement is part and parcel of Internet marketing.

The metrics may not be useful or even accurate in many cases… they are, after all, just numbers. There is a tremendous charm in being inundated with data when, for years, you have been forced to define your strategies and tactics with smoke and mirrors alone. Suddenly, the marketing department could report on e-mail open rates, web-site visits, PDF downloads, ad clicks, etc. The idea that everything, including offline tactics and sales lead quality, can and should be measured, was born. Sorting out which numbers were actually useful ones, learning how to let data drive tactics, and how to present data to management in a way management accepts… that would take more years.[3]

CHANGES OF LAST THREE DACADES

Since 1980, the changes have been even more dramatic. Here are some of the biggest changes that have taken place in B2B marketing and what have stayed relatively the same during the past three decades.

1) Gradually, *Industrial Marketing* changed its name to *Business Marketing* and then to *B2B*. Today, those who market products and services to businesses are "business-to-business" marketers.

2) Before the Internet, B2B marketing had relatively few choices. So planning campaigns was simple and straightforward. You would create a sales brochure, run a trade ad, send out a few press releases, and try to get a feature article written about it in the industry trade pubs.

   Today, there are dozens of other marketing methods, and a number of the early communications tools have, in many instances, fallen out of favour and been supplanted by new media—everything from e-newsletters and Webinars, to podcasts and vertical search engines. So planning a B2B macro campaign is more complex.

3) The end of the "industrial film," slide shows, and 35mm photography. In late 1970s managers, who wanted to speak with slides, had to go to the slide department to get them produced. Now, everyone has PowerPoint and can produce their own slide shows on their PCs. Today, also film has largely disappeared and replaced by digital photography.

4) The dethroning of trade journals. The primary means of marketing business-to-business products was through the major trade journals targeting the industry or market niche you wanted to reach. Today, trade magazines still exist, but are hardly

[3] B-toB Lead Generation Handbook, MarketingSherpa Inc., 2008, www.SherpaStore.com

flourishing. They struggle to compete with the Internet, and play less of a central role, though are still important in educating members of a particular industry or trade about new technologies, products, and developments.

5) The decline of print advertising**.** Whenever you wanted to promote a product, doing an ad for the product was a no-brainer. It was automatically assumed you would advertise. The question was where, when, what size, how frequently, and with what budget. Today, print advertising is rarely the primary B2B marketing medium. For many B2B marketers, it is not even on the radar. More likely to be considered: paid search, SEO, and e-mail marketing.

6) The effectiveness of planted feature articles. Writing articles for industry publications was an effective marketing strategy. Today, despite the supposed decline of the printed word, writing articles for trade publications remains one of the most potent B2B marketing tactics. Writing online articles for Websites and e-zines may generate more clicks and traffic, but in many markets, a by-lined article in the leading industry magazine still has more credibility and clout—and the reprints make terrific sales literature.

7) In the heyday of print, each industry was covered globally by too many trade publications and newsletters for most macro managers to count. So they hired a B2B PR firm to make sure their products got as much coverage as possible. But in the 1990s and 2000s, publishing underwent a consolidation, with the number of publications serving each industry declining by 50 to 75 percent or more. When macro managers saw there were only a few publications in their market, many decided they could do PR in-house, and numerous small B2B PR firms either folded or saw billings decline.

8) For many years, you could make living primarily writing sales brochures. These were slick, glossy affairs with expensive photography and high-end graphic design. It was not unusual for a client with a new product to want multiple brochures for a new product covering different applications or markets, each ranging from 4 to 16 pages or longer. Today sales literature primarily resides on the Web as pages accessible through the company's Website and through search. Fewer and fewer print brochures are published, and they are shrinking in size, with the most common format the two-sided A4 "sell sheet."

9) The primary sales collateral today is the white paper, not the brochure. While the sales brochure focused on the product, and looked and read like sales copy, the white paper focuses on educating prospects about a problem and how to solve it—and looks and reads like a how-to article or tutorial.

10) The critical importance of keywords and search**.** In the old days, the most important sales channel to cultivate was your inside sales force and your reps: the primary means by which prospects approached your company about buying your product. In 2008, the primary means of finding products is through Internet search. Therefore, the most important knowledge for the B2B marketer to acquire is not how to recruit reps (though that's still important). It's finding out the keywords and phrases prospects search when looking for your type of product or for help solving one of the problems it addresses…and along with that, making sure your site comes up on the search engine's first page when prospects type in those keywords and phrases.[4]

UNDERSTANDING THE EVOLVED B2B MARKETING ENVIRONMENT

Between the recent economic recession and the growth of social media, the B2B Marketing environment has also experienced dramatic changes.

Marketers have been forced to deliver greater results with limited resources. Recession has also created a level of uncertainty in consumers, which contributes to B2B buying processes becoming more complex.

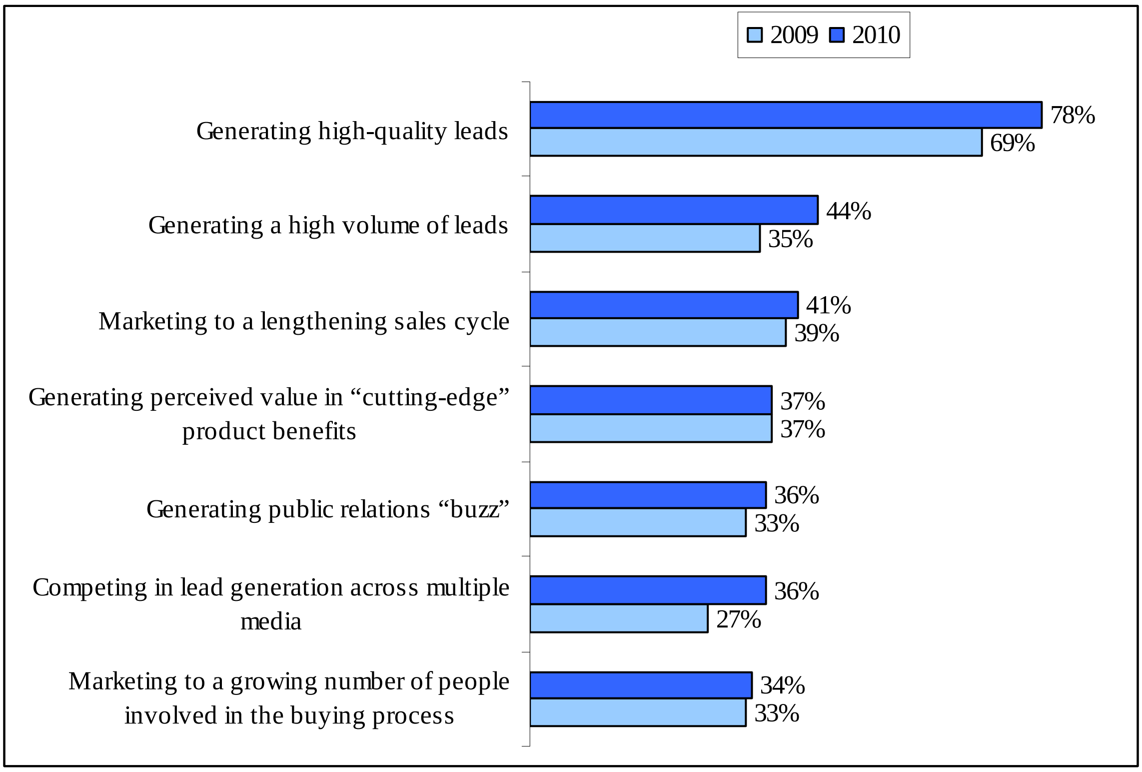
The introduction and rapid adoption of social media has empowered consumers by making information about organizations" products and services more readily available, allowing consumers to hear from their peers before they hear from you. This may also influence others" purchasing decisions on social media sites. Brands are no longer being defined only by what we say they are in positioning statements and value propositions, but also by the conversations that are happening about brands on social media sites.

These colossal changes have increased the challenges that B2B marketers are facing. As demonstrated in the upcoming chart, these challenges are increasing in pertinence to organizations over time.

[4] http://www.bly.com/content/B2BMktgHdbk.pdf

CHART 1:B2B MARKETING CHALLANGES BECOMING MORE PERTINENT TO ORGANIZATIONS

Q. Which of the following marketing challenges are currently most pertinent to your organization?



Source: Marketing Sherpa B2B Marketing Benchmark Survey Methodology: Fielded Aug 2010, N=935

The economic climate combined with consumer empowerment through social media has contributed to intensified challenges, expectations and demands of the B2B marketer. The above chart represents the growing Marketing challenges B2B organizations have faced from 2009 to 2010, and nearly every challenge elevated in pertinence to organizations in 2010.

Year after year, the greatest challenge to the B2B marketer is generating high-quality leads. Generating a high volume of leads became a greater challenge for B2B organizations in 2010, which is likely a result of the need to produce more leads with limited resources of budgeting and / or staffing.

Every challenge that presents itself is an opportunity, and in this increasingly more demanding role of the B2B marketer, you have the potential to become a true hero to your organization. By revolutionizing your B2B Marketing approach, you will play an integral role in the overall success of your business. The perceptions of Marketing by the C-Suite and other internal departments will be elevated because you will be making a measurable contribution to sales pipelines and revenues. Your sales team will finally be happy with the leads they are getting because you will improve overall lead quality with qualification, scoring and nurturing programs. Ultimately, your organization will experience greater revenues.

To achieve success, it is necessary to become more sophisticated than ever before with your Marketing practices. You must elevate Marketing's efficiency in all stages of the buying process, from lead generation to sales conversion.[5]

10 TIPS FOR INCREASING LANDING PAGE CONVERSION RATES

There is lots of buzz about blogging, viral marketing, social networking, and other new methods of generating eyeballs and traffic online. But all that traffic won't make you any money unless you can convert those unique visitors to leads or customers. Depending on whether you are selling a product directly from your landing page, asking visitors to download a free white paper, or promoting a Webinar or demonstration, conversion rates can range from as low as one percent or less to as much as 50 percent or more.

Here are 10 keys to writing landing pages that maximize online conversion rates:

1) **Build credibility early.** People have always been sceptical of advertising, and with the proliferation of SPAM and shady operators, they are even more sceptical of what they read online. Therefore, your landing page copy must immediately overcome that scepticism. One way to do that is to make sure one or more "credibility builders" are clearly displayed on the first screen the visitor sees. In the banner at the top of the page, use your logo and company name if you are well known; universities, associations, and other institutions can place their official seal in the upper left of the screen. Within or immediately under the banner, put a strong testimonial or three above the headline on the first screen. Consider adding a pre-head or subhead, which summarizes the company's mission statement or credentials. At www.bnasoftware.com , the positioning statement is: "The nation's definitive income tax management solution."

2) **Capture the email addresses of non-buyers.** There are a number of mechanisms available for capturing the e-mail address of visitors who click on your landing page but do not buy the product. One is to use a window with copy offering a free report or e-course in

[5] MarketingSherpa LLC, MarketingSherpa 2011 B2B Marketing Advanced Practices Handbook

exchange for submitting an e-mail address. This window can be served to the visitor as a pop-up (it appears when the visitor arrives at the landing page) or a pop-under (a window that appears when the visitor attempts to leave the landing page without making an inquiry or purchase). These are both blocked by pop-up blockers. A “floater” is a window that slides onto the screen from the side or top. Unlike the pop-up and pop-under, the floater is part of the Website HTML code, so it is not stopped by the pop-up blocker.

3) **Use lots of testimonials.** Testimonials build credibility and overcome scepticism, as do case studies and white papers posted on the Website. If you invite customers to a live event, ask if they would be willing to give you a brief testimonial recorded on video. Have a professional videographer tape it, get a signed release from the customer, and post the testimonial on your Website as streaming video. Require the customer to click a button to hear the testimonial, rather than have the video play automatically when the visitor clicks on the page. For written testimonials, customers may suggest that you write what you want them to say and just run it by them for approval. Politely ask that they give you their opinion of your product in their own words instead of having you do it. Reason: what they come up with will likely be more specific, believable, and detailed than your version, which might smack of puffery and promotion.

4) **Use lots of bullets.** Highlight key features and benefits in a list of short, easy-to-read bulleted items. Online buyers like to think they are getting a lot for their money, so when selling a product directly from your landing page, be sure all major features and important benefits are covered in a comprehensive bullet list appearing on your landing page. When generating leads by giving away white papers, you do not need a huge list of bulleted features and benefits. But using bullets to describe the contents of the paper and the benefits that information delivers can raise conversion rates for download requests.

5) **Arouse curiosity in the headline.** The headline should arouse curiosity, make a powerful promise, or otherwise grab the readers attention so he has no choice but to keep reading. The headline for a landing page selling a training program on how to become a professional property locator makes a big promise: “Become a Property Locator Today - and Make $100,000 a Year in the Greatest Real Estate Career That Only a Few Insiders now About.”

6) **Use a conversational copy style.** Most corporate Websites are unemotional and sterile: just “information.” But a landing page is a letter from one human being to another. Make it sound that way. Even if your product is highly technical and you are selling it to techies, remember that they are still human beings, and you cannot sell something by boring people to death.

7**) Incorporate an emotional hook in the headline and lead paragraph**. Logical selling can work, but tapping into the prospects emotions is much stronger. Especially when you correctly assess how the prospect is feeling about your product or the problem it solves right now. Another effective tactic for lead -generation landing pages is to stress your free offer in the headline and lead. Example: Haydon's landing page shows a picture of its catalogue with the bold heading above it reading, "FREE Ceramic Bearings Product Selection Guide."

8) **Solve the readers problem**. Once you hook the reader with emotional copy dramatizing her problem or a powerful free offer, show how your product or your free information can help solve their problem. For example: "Now there is a better, easier, and more effective solution to wobbly restaurant tables that can irritate customers and ruin their dining experience: Table Shox, the worlds smallest shock absorber." To maximize landing page conversion rates, you have to convince the visitor that the quickest route to solving his problem is taking the action indicated on the landing page, and not as you might be tempted to let him do surfing your site. That is why I prefer landing pages to appear with no navigation, so the readers only choice is to respond or not respond; there is no menu of click buttons and hyperlinks to other interesting pages to distract him.

9) **Make it timely and current.** The more your online copy ties in with current events and news, the higher your response rates. This is especially critical when selling financial and investment information as well as regulatory compliance products in fields where laws and rules change frequently. Periodically update your landing page copy to reflect current business and economic conditions, challenges, and trends. This shows your visitor that your company is current with and on top of what is happening in your industry today.

10) **Stress the money-back guarantee or lack of commitment on the part of the user.** If you allow customers to order products directly from the landing page, make sure you have a money-back guarantee clearly stated on that page. All your competitors give strong money-back guarantees. So you can not get away without doing the same. If your product is good and your copy truthful, your refund rates can be as low as one percent or even less.

If you are generating leads, stress that your offer, which might be a white paper, online demonstration, or Webinar, is free. Say there is no obligation to buy and that no salesperson will visit. [6]

[6] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

THE 6 KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE B2B OFFERS

How important is the offer in business-to-business marketing? Answer - very. There are numerous tests in which a simple change of offer has increased the response rate by 25% to 900%, dramatically improving ROMD (return on marketing dollars) for the advertiser. The best of these winning B2B offers share six common characteristics and to lift your response rates, your offers should, too.

WINNING OFFERS:

1. **Are different or unique**. The best offers are fresh and new. When copywriter Bill Jayme wrote the direct mail packaged that launched New York magazine, he proposed a sweepstakes. Sweepstakes have long been used to sell magazine subscriptions, but none has ever offered the prize Jayme dreamed up: dinner at Gracie Mansion with New York City's mayor. Most investment newsletters offer free special reports as premiums. The Sovereign Society, a newsletter on offshore investing, offered something different: a free Swiss bank account, a gift not given by any other investment newsletter. Most business magazines offer either discounted subscription rates or standard premiums like special reports, tote bags, or calculators. Advertising Age had a successful control where the premium was a ceramic coffee mug. Coffee mugs are nothing special. But this one was imprinted with a mock-up of an Ad Age cover. If the subscriber was Jan Smith, the headline on the mock issue of Ad Age was personalized to read: "Jan Smith Chosen as Marketing Genius of the Year."

2. **Have a high degree of desirability**. An unusual offer only works if it is something people really want. A publisher was selling a loose-leaf service on how to manage Novell NetWare local area networks. Response rates doubled when a new direct mail promotion offered a disk with free software, a collection of utilities for Novell networks. The 100% increase in orders confirmed that these software programs were tools network administrators obviously wanted to get their hands on. The outer envelope teaser read: "Yours FREE! - 5 Powerful Programs to Help You Manage Your Novell NetWare Network More Efficiently and Easily - See Inside for Details on This Special Time-Limited Offer."

On the other hand, a financial newsletter mailed a renewal promotion that offered as a premium a pack of playing cards with the editors picture on them. Not surprisingly, it flopped: who would want that?

3. **Have a high perceived value**, especially in relation to fulfillment cost. Free software has traditionally worked well as a premium. Software has a high perceived value in relation to the cost of goods. You know that purchased in a store or online, software packages can easily sell for $49 to $300 or more. Yet a CD with code on it can be duplicated

for about a dollar. But how much do you pay for a deck of playing cards at your local stationery store? For about the same, right? Therefore, the perceived value of the playing cards given as a renewal promotion by the financial publisher mentioned earlier is only a dollar, hardly a financial motivator to renew a newsletter subscription that costs $79 a year. In a promotion tied in with their sponsorship of the Olympics, IBM offered a special IBM Olympic pin as a premium. In reality, the item probably only cost and was worth a buck or so. But the mailer copy hinted that the item could become a collectible, creating an impression of potentially high value.

4. **Dramatize the brand or USP**. The Sovereign Society is a newsletter about offshore investing. The symbol for offshore investing has long been Swiss bank accounts. Therefore, the offer of a free Swiss bank account with a subscription to The Sovereign Society supports and dramatizes the newsletters USP (unique selling proposition): making money and increasing privacy by investing offshore in things like Swiss bank accounts.

Even when the offer does not at first glance seem closely related to the product, a clever copywriter can find a connection. Example: years ago, Newsweek offered a free radio as a premium for new subscribers. It would seem that, on the surface, a radio is a poor choice of premium: in the news area, radio and magazines compete with one another. But copywriter Milt Pierce used the differences between these media to make a logical connection between the premium and the product:

Dear Reader:

What is the fastest way to get the news?

It is on the radio. That is why Newsweek wants you to have, as an introductory gift for new subscribers, this superb AM/FM radio.

But what is the best way to get the news?

You won't get just headlines and a rough outline of the news, with Newsweek, you'll get the news in depth...

5. **Are easy to take advantage of**. You should make it as easy and convenient as possible for the prospect to accept your offer. How? To begin with, offer multiple response mechanisms: toll-free phone number…fax number…a hyperlink to a landing page (see www.thelandingpageguru.com)…e-mail …even (gasp!) a postal address. Different prospects respond in different ways. Create response mechanisms. In a direct mail package, enclose a fax-back form or business reply card (BRC) with your letter. If you want customers to enclose payment with their order, or privacy is a concern, also include a business reply envelope (BRE).

In a print ad, consider including a coupon or a bind-in BRC opposite the advertisement. On the Web, landing pages should ask for the minimum information from the prospect when collecting leads. If you are building your opt-in e-list, ask for name and e-mail address only. When you have multiple fields for the user to complete, use an asterisk (*) to indicate which are mandatory, and make as many fields as possible optional. Conversion rates decline incrementally for each additional field you force the prospect to fill out.

The ease and convenience of accepting the offer can even be highlighted in the copy as a benefit. In a letter selling the Board Report, a newsletter for graphic designers, copywriter Sig Rosenblum makes a benefit out of the fact that the reply element is a BRC:

Please complete the card enclosed and drop it in the mail today. It is already addressed. And the postage is paid.

6. **Minimize the buyers risk and obligation**. Do whatever you can to minimize sales pressure on the prospect. If you follow up leads by phone instead of with the field sales force, say in your copy “No salesperson will visit.” If you do not follow up leads by phone, say “No salesperson will call.” When offering anything free, a white paper, a Webinar, even a brochure, say that it is free. Do not substitute the weaker “complimentary” when writing to a high-level business audience because you think “free” is not professional or will offend them. It won’t. Everybody wants free stuff, and businesspeople and professionals are no exception. A health care agency sent a direct mail piece inviting doctors to attend a symposium. They did an A/B split test of two versions; the only difference was that B offered a free pocket diary as a gift for attendance.

Version B, offering the free gift, out-pulled version A - with no free gift, six-fold. Busy doctors were persuaded to give up an afternoon by a free pocket diary that costs about a dollar! Does the buyer have to agree to sit through a presentation or demonstration, or complete a survey? If he is not required to take further action once he accepts the offer, note this in your copy by saying: “There is no obligation…nothing to buy…and no commitment of any kind.”[7]

[7] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

5 STEPS TO BUILDING A LARGE AND RESPONSIVE OPT-IN E-LIST OF QUALIFIED B2B PROSPECTS

Many B2B marketers want to cut marketing costs by shifting more of their macro budgets from traditional direct mail and paper newsletters to e-mail marketing and e-newsletters. But if you want to ramp up your online marketing program, you should start building a large opt-in e-list of customers and prospects now. Why? Because without a significant online "house file" (list of opt-in subscribers), you can only reach prospects in your niche by renting other marketers opt-in e-lists, which is hardly cost-effective: each time you want to send another message to your industry, you have to rent the list again-at a cost that can easily reach into the hundreds of dollars per thousand names. Some marketers buy databases containing e-mail addresses of business prospects in their niche market. This can work if you are sending highly targeted e-mails on extremely relevant topics and offers to narrow vertical e-lists. But when you send e-mail messages to non opt-in lists, you are mostly asking for trouble. CAN/SPAM does not prohibit e-mailing to people who have not opted in. But people on non-opt-in e-lists are much more likely to register SPAM complaints than those on legitimate opt-in e-lists -and far less likely to buy from you. So the best online strategy for B2B marketers is to build your own opt-in e-list of subscribers. Doing so eliminates the cost of renting opt-in lists while preventing the SPAM complaints and lower response rates typical of non opt-in purchased or rented lists. When you own an opt-in e-list covering a sizeable percentage of your target market, you can communicate with your prospects and customers as often as you desire or think is appropriate at minimal cost. Being able to send an e-mail to your target market with a few mouse clicks makes you less dependent on costly direct mail, print newsletters, and other paper promotions.

By using a double opt-in process that requires new subscribers to verify their identity before being added to your e-list, you help minimize SPAM complaints and bounce-backs. Owning a large opt-in e-list of target prospects also decreases marketing costs and improves lead flow and revenues. So how do you build a large and profitable opt-in e-list of qualified B2B prospects in your field? Here are five ideas:

1. **Dedicate a portion of your online marketing budget exclusively to list-building.**

Most B2B marketers drive traffic either to their Website home page or landing pages relating to specific offers (e.g., free Webinar registration, free white paper download, purchase a product). And a lot of the traffic they drive to these pages is existing customers and prospects who are already on their e-list. You should spend a minimum of 20 percent of your online marketing budget on building your house opt-in e-list. That means getting qualified prospects in your industry who have not yet opted into your online subscriber list to do so. There are many online marketing options that work well for e-list building programs. These include pay-per-click advertising, postcard marketing, banner advertising, online ads in other marketers e-newsletters, B2B co-registration deals, video marketing, viral marketing, editorial mentions in trade publications, online article marketing, affiliate marketing, and social media- to name just a few.

2. Calculate your maximum acceptable cost per new subscriber. When evaluating marketing methods for e-list building, you have to weigh the cost of acquiring the new name vs. the value that new name has for your business.

To determine value, divide total annual revenues generated by your online subscriber list by the number of names on that list. Example: If your 20,000 online subscribers account for $600,000 in annual sales, your subscriber value is $30 per name per year. You decide how much you are willing to spend to acquire a subscriber worth $30 per year. If uncertain, use this rule of thumb: list-building campaigns should ideally pay back their cost within three to six months. Therefore, if your names are worth $30 per year each, you can afford to spend up to $15 per subscriber to acquire new names. Say you drive traffic to a landing page where people can sign up to your e-list. The conversion rate is 50 percent, so for every two unique visitors you drive to your registration page, you get one new opt-in subscriber. Using Google Ad Words, you can drive traffic at a cost of $7 per click. Can you afford that? Yes, because that means you get one new subscriber for every two clicks you buy, which works out to $14 per subscribe-.within your $15 per new name limit. Would it make more sense to base the allowable acquisition cost per new name on the lifetime customer value (LCV) of online subscribers rather than just the average one-year revenue per name? Theoretically, yes. But you can only do that if you have been marketing online long enough to have reliable numbers on which to base LCV estimates. Until you do, stick with the revenue per year per name figure as the baseline.

3. Publish a free newsletter. The best way to build and regularly communicate with an opt-in list of B2B prospects is to publish and distribute a free e-newsletter on a specialized topic related to your product line and of interest to your target prospects.

Publishing a free e-zine gives you two important benefits for your online marketing efforts. First, it gives you a standing free offer - a free subscription to your e-letter - you can use in your e-list building efforts. Second, having the e-newsletter insures that you communicate with your opt-in subscribers on a regular basis. This regular communication builds your relationship with your online prospects while increasing the frequency of branding messages and online marketing opportunities.

4. Build a „free-on-free name squeeze page." With a staggering number of free e-newsletters on the Internet competing for attention, it is not enough to have a simple sign-up box on your home page for your free e-newsletter. You should offer a bribe as an incentive for visitors to subscribe. The best bribe is a free special report the visitor can download as a PDF file in exchange for opting in to your e-list. For instance, if you sell supply chain management software, and publish an e-zine called „The Strategic SCM Partner," offer a short bonus report „7 Steps to Improving Supply Chain Management in Your Enterprise" as a premium for new subscribers. Drive traffic not to your home page or standard subscription form, but to a special „free-on-free name squeeze page" - a landing page highlighting this offer. We call it a „name squeeze page" because it extracts or „squeezes" new names for your list from Web traffic. „Free on free" means you are offering free content (the report) as a bribe to get the visitor to accept your primary free offer (the e-newsletter subscription). For an example of a free-on-free squeeze page see: www.bly.com/reports .

5.Capture the email addresses of site visitors who do not buy, subscribe, or register.

Put in place one or more mechanisms for capturing the e-mail addresses of site visitors who do not buy a product, download a demo, subscribe to your free online newsletter, or take other actions that opt them into your e-list. Going back to our example for supply chain management, when the visitor attempts to leave the site without purchasing or registering, have a window pop-up to capture his e-mail address. The headline says, „Wait! Do not leave without claiming your free special SCM report!„ Short copy explains they can get a free copy of your special report „7 Steps to Improving Supply Chain Management in Your Enterprise" by typing in their e-mail address in the blank space and clicking submit. If you are not proactively making an effort to capture e-mail addresses of site visitors who do not otherwise register, you are leaving money on the table. For more ideas on building your e-list and capturing the e-mail addresses of site visitors, go to www.thelandingpageguru.com .

5 MODERN MYTHS OF B2B MARKETING

There's a lot of misinformation out there about what works in B2B marketing. much of it spread by highly paid consultants with a new technology or channel to hype and an axe to grind. With that in mind, here are five of the biggest lies being told about B2B marketing today and the truth about each:

The myth: THE WEB HAS MADE PRINT OBSOLETE.

The reality: *Many people still prefer to read words on paper instead of on a screen, and any marketers are still heavy users of catalogs, brochures, and other print collateral.* „We still market our various niche services with brochures“, says Norman Freeman, President of Associated Global Systems. „Since we have been around for 50 years, we tend to favour print. Young professionals may agree, however, that print is not now needed if the information is available online. „I do not believe print media will die,“ says B2B copywriter and consultant Joan Damico. „Instead, it has been downsized to serve as a complement to electronic media”. „There’s also been a shift as to who’s doing the printing. The consumer is doing a larger share of the printing from the PDF files they download from your Website. It’s still easier for many people to print and then read and annotate later, than it is to boot up a laptop and do the same electronically. But that will change too as more print pieces are designed for mobile electronic devices such as PDA-s and cell phones.”

The myth: SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT AND MOST WIDELY USED B2B MARKETING TOOLS OF OUR TIME, and have overtaken Websites in importance.

The reality: *Millions of people have embraced social networks-and millions of others do not use them at all.*

Yes, social networking-along with mobile marketing and SEO-is clearly one of the „hot“ marketing methods, gaining a disproportionate share of media attention. But the truth is that many of your customers do not participate in these social sites, and have to be reached through conventional Websites and other traditional B2B marketing methods. „Social media has yet to prove itself as a medium that can out-monetize a Website,“ says copywriter April Parcher. „When prospects are searching for something specific, they do not turn to LinkedIn or MySpace first. They Google it and hunt up the Websites in that category that seem to be most relevant to their search-and that provide the most valuable content.“„Your Website is your office, the formal place of your business,“ says copywriter Susanna K. Hutcheson. „Your blog, Facebook, Twitter, these are the water cooler and the lunch room. Informal places where you make contacts much like the golf courses and country clubs of the 1950s.“ „Social networking sites are certainly a new ”feather in the cap” of many business operators and marketing professionals,“ says marketing consultant Fiona Fell. „But I do not think at this point in time that they outweigh the power of a Website for a business. A Website provides a place of solidarity and “permanency” to an online business. It gives your `tribe` and `raving fans` a place to call home, and to drop in to find out about you and your offerings.”

The myth: DIRECT MAIL IS DEAD AS A B2B LEAD GENERATION TOOL.

The reality: *Direct mail is still very much alive.*

Despite the prediction that e-mail would make snail mail obsolete, the Winterberry Group reports that spending for direct mail marketing in the U.S. was $58.4 billion in 2007, a five percent increase over the previous year. „Although much B2B lead gen has moved online, direct mail is still very effective," says copywriter Ed Gandia. „In fact, in working with clients on lead generation strategy and campaigns, I've found that response to direct mail campaigns can sometimes be higher than that of e-mail. Also, I find direct mail to be extremely effective in lead nurturing efforts-often much more so than e-mail." How could this be so? According to Gandia, with so many B2B marketers rushing online over the last five years, a strong, personalized direct mail piece actually stands out. And pieces that stand out often get read, which leads to greater response and high return on marketing investment-even higher than many e-mail and social media efforts in some cases.

„In the end, you need a little of everything. Direct mail alone won't save you", Gandia admits. „But DM can be a crucial part of a successful B2B marketing mix, regardless f what might be more fashionable or hip at the moment."

The myth: E-MAIL MARKETING IS AN OLD-SCHOOL ONLINE MARKETING CHANNEL and, with SPAM filters and firewalls, doesn't work anymore.

The reality: *It does, despite the challenges of email deliverability.*

Marketing theorists dismiss e-mail marketing as outmoded push or interruption technology. Their belief is that prospects shun communications sent to them, and instead respond only to communications they initiate and control, like social media, blogs, and online search. But research shows that people still pay attention and respond to their e-mail. A study at Loughorough University found that users take action on average in less than two minutes upon being notified that a new e-mail is waiting for them. The most effective e-mail marketing, however, may not be renting outside e-lists of B2B prospects. Two reasons why it does not work so well: it's expensive, and people tend not to buy from strangers online. A better strategy is to build your own opt-in e-list, typically by offering a free e-newsletter subscription or other valuable free content. According to a report by Forrester Research, opt-in lists (such as e-newsletter subscriber lists) retain 49 percent of their subscribers over time-more than double the retention rate of compiled or harvested e-lists.

The myth: WHITE PAPERS ARE OLD HAT-a transparent marketing ploy masquerading as real content that today's sophisticated B2B prospects see right through.

The reality: *Free content-and that includes white papers-has never been a more effective marketing tool than it is today.*

Web 2.0 evangelists champion blogs over white papers, presumably because blogs are user-generated content and therefore more unbiased, while white papers are company-generated content and therefore promotional.

However, in my view, when it comes to quality and value of content, white papers often trump blogs. Many blogs are unfocused ramblings of an individual whose credentials are unknown or unproven. White papers, though they may have a marketing objective, are carefully crafted to deliver valuable content-because without good content, they will not achieve their marketing goals. „Social media, blogs, and user-generated content are of great value yet have one major shortcoming,“ says white paper writer Michael Stelzner. „They require constant innovation and fresh content to transform lookers to prospects. Alternatively, the single well-crafted white paper can deliver a steady stream of quality leads for literally years. „Given shrinking marketing budgets and greater pressure to perform, I would stick with what we know works.“ Stelzner notes that a recent study by TechTarget places white papers number one among buyers, more so than other marketing materials.[8]

MARKETING WITH CASE STUDIES

According to copywriter Heather Sloan, case studies are often more effective than brochures and traditional sales collateral. Why? „Everyone loves a story,“ explains Heather. „An old adage says, `A picture is worth a thousand words.` Never did this wisdom ring truer than in sales conversations and marketing pieces. Stories paint pictures. Stories evoke emotions. Stories are memorable. Stories give your presentations sticking power. The easiest way to tell a marketing story is by case study.“ A case study is a product success story. It tells how a company solved a problem using a specific product, process, method, or idea. As with other marketing techniques, case studies fluctuate in popularity: while almost any company can profitably market with case studies, an informal survey of B2B Websites shows that most companies do not take full advantage of the power of case study marketing. While case studies need not adhere to any one formula, here are some guidelines. The average case study is relatively brief: one or two sides of an 8. by 11-inch page, or approximately 800 to 1,500 words. More complex or in-depth case studies can run 2,000 to 2,500 words. An effective case study makes the reader want to learn more about the product it features. It is a soft-sell proposition designed to compel your prospects to request more detailed information. If you have mirrored the readers problem successfully, the case study will propel them deeper into the sales funnel and closer to buying. For the most part, case studies are not overly technical: they are written in a style similar to that of a magazine feature article. The intent of a case study is not to present in-depth minutia and analytical data, but to briefly describe how a product or service can effectively address and solve a particular problem. You needn’t be creative or reinvent the wheel when creating a case study. Most case studies follow some variation of this time-tested outline:

1. Who is the customer?
2.What was the problem? How was it hurting the customers business?
3.What solutions did they look at and ultimately reject, and why?

[8] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

4. Why did they choose our product as the solution?
5. Describe the implementation of the product, including any problems and how they were solved.
6. How and where does the customer use the product?
7. What are the results and benefits they are getting?
8. Would they recommend it to others and why?

„We do not have formal guidelines for case studies," says Mark Rosenzweig, editor-in-chief of Chemical Processing, a trade publication that has been running case study articles for decades. „Generally we are looking for a relatively recent installation, say within the last two years, of innovative technology. What issues prompted the installation? What did it involves? What results have been achieved? We are generally looking for 1,500-2,000 word.

Because case studies are presented in a story format, readers are naturally more inclined to take interest-specially if the story has some sort of benefit to them. Unlike sales presentations, case studies are all about showing how a product or service works, rather than telling. Since the product benefits are extolled by an actual user, and not the manufacturer-the claims are more believable.

By using a satisfied customer as an example, a case study essentially demonstrates how well your product works. Rather than present a pile of facts and figures, you tell an engaging story that vividly shows your products effectiveness.

An equally strong selling point is the level of empathy a case study creates between your prospects and your satisfied customers. People tend to identify with people like themselves. Prospects feel far more at ease listening to their peers. They relate better, because they often share the same issues and problems.

The reader also believes case studies more than other sales literature. They are sceptical of ads and find brochures full of puffery, and even podcasts and company blogs self-serving. But in a case study, a customer who has no motive or financial incentive to raise the product does so, creating instant credibility.

What makes case studies so attractive to marketers and B2B prospects alike is that they are based on real-life experiences. Case studies are viewed as credible, third-party endorsements that carry a high degree of believability. That gives case studies a big advantage over traditional advertising, which consumers often view with scepticism.

A survey by Forrester Research Inc. shows that 71 percent of buyers base their decisions on trust and believability. Relating your customers` positive experiences with your product is one of the best ways to establish credibility in the marketplace. Giving your customers confidence in what you are offering dramatically increases the likelihood they will do business with you.

One of the best sources of candidates for case studies is the sales force. However, salespeople prefer to spend their time selling. They are often indifferent to marketing communications and view participating in case studies as an aggravation with no direct reward to them.

You can get salespeople excited about finding case study candidates by offering them tangible incentives: the sales rep gets cash, merchandise, or a travel incentive if her candidate is chosen and profiled in a case study. When offered a nice incentive, the sales force suddenly gets excited about the case study candidate search. The incentive does not have to be huge, but it should be desirable-a new iPod, for example.

To prepare the case study, a writer interviews the person in the customer organization who is most involved in the application. For a small business, this may be the owner; for a larger company, it could be a plant manager or engineer. Before the writer calls, the vendor salesperson or account manager handling that customer should call and make sure the customer is willing and even eager to participate. Case studies written about reluctant or hostile users are difficult to create and rarely successful.

During the interview, get as many good quotations as possible. Use these quotations in the case study text and attribute them to the person being interviewed. Reason: the quotations in published case studies can do double duty as testimonials. Tip: If the subject is not saying exactly what you want him to say, use the „So are you saying " technique. Say to the subject, „So are you saying that…"followed by the statement you want him to make. If he answers „yes, that is what I am saying " you can attribute your phrasing to the subject. Often prospects are vague with their answers, and it is up to the interviewer/writer to wring the specifics out of the interview. Whenever possible, get the subject to give you numbers, so claims and results can be specific. For instance, if the subject says the product reduces energy costs, but can not say by how much, pin him down: „Did it reduce energy consumption more than 10 percent? More than 100 percent?" He will give you a guesstimate, which you can use as an approximate figure; i.e., „The XYZ system reduced plant energy consumption by over 10%."

Before the case study can be released, the subject of the case study-the person you interviewed-must approve and sign off on the case study. Keep these releases on file. If the subject takes a job with a different company, you may lose track of him. So you can not afford to lose track of his signed permission form. Otherwise, if your authorization to use the case study is questioned, and you can not produce a signed release, you may have to remove that case study from your site.

Ask subjects of case studies whether they are willing to serve as reference accounts. That way, a prospect whose needs relate to a particular case study can in fact speak with the product user featured in that case study. Check your reference account list periodically to make sure names and numbers are current, and update as needed.[9]

4 SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITING SEO COPY THAT BOTH YOUR PROSPECTS AND THE SEARCH ENGINES LOVE

It is ironic: SEO/SEM consultants are springing up all over the place, like dandelions in spring. Yet none of them seems to agree much on the best practices, methods, and standards for optimizing Websites.

“My advice is always to write for people, not search engines,” says copywriter Dianna Huff. “Yes, it is good to place the correct keywords in the body copy, and yes, it is correct to place your most important keyword at the beginning of the title tag and in the headline of the page. „However, you do not have to do this to achieve high rankings. And you certainly should not do it if your copy ends up sounding spammy. If you want a site to rank well, you do have to optimize it, but not at the expense of the marketing objectives. Copy should be written for people, not search engines.“

„Over the years, the tactic I found that works best is to have the most targeted keywords towards the top of the page and work your way down, like a reverse pyramid,“ says Internet marketing consultant Wendy Montesdeoca. „The entire page should be keyword dense, and there can be some repetition, but from my understanding of search engine spiders, they like more organic content. „So what I found that works is to make a list of the top 10-15 keywords and use that naturally, organically, and reader friendly in the content. And of course use your top five keywords in the alt, Meta, and title tags" - Adds Montesdeoca: „There are many variables that affect SEO, and keyword density is just one. There is also infrastructure (i.e. site maps, robots.txt, etc.), proper and unique tagging with relevant keywords, relevant content, relevant inbound and outbound links, internal links, link variety (i.e. Websites, blogs, forums), videos on Website, special tags (H1, bold), and registering the site with directories.

[9] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

4-STEP SEO COPYWRITING PROCESS THAT HAS WORKED:

1. KEYWORD RESEARCH. The first step is to come up with a list of keywords and phrases for which you want to optimize the page you are writing. These should be the keywords and phrases people use when searching for your product or service on the Internet. You can brainstorm what these words might be, then use any number of online tools to find out which ones are the most popular. I use www.wordtracker.com. For detailed instructions on how to conduct keyword research and discovery visit www.thekeywordmoneymachine.com.

2. WRITE THE BEST COPY YOU CAN, FOR THE HUMAN READER. Just sit down and write the best damn copy you can about the topic. Do not even think about keywords as you write. Concentrate 100 percent on sounding like one human being talking to another about a subject he is enthusiastic about and wants to share.

3. INSERT KEYWORDS FROM YOUR KEYWORD LIST. Now go back and insert keywords from your list into the copy, wherever and as frequently as you can, without disturbing the style, tone, meaning, and persuasiveness of the copy. If forcing a keyword in disrupts the flow of the copy, do not do it.

4. WRITE KEYWORD RICH META TAGS FOR EACH WEB PAGE. The most important Meta tags are the title and description tags. The title tag is what your visitors see at the top of their browser windows when they visit your site, as well as what they see in their bookmark lists. Failure to put strategic keywords in the title tag can result in pages being poorly ranked. When your Website comes up in a Google search, the description tag is what the user sees on the search engine results page (SERP). It should incorporate strategic keywords and clearly communicate what you offer, who it is for, and the key benefit. Your major keywords should also be placed in the keywords Meta tag, though Google pays less attention to the keyword Meta tag than to the title and description tags.[10]

5 WAYS TO BOOST B2B DIRECT MAIL RESPONSE RATES

Only through testing do we learn what works-and what does not. The consumer mail order marketers live and die by the power of their direct mail and online promotions. For their businesses to make money, they must perfect their copy, design, list selection, and offers. By comparison, many B2B marketers do direct mail campaigns of only a few thousand pieces-and in narrow niche markets, only a few hundred pieces. With these small quantities, the

[10] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

number of variables you can test is severely limited. And these small-volume B2B mailers typically rely on multiple marketing channels, of which direct mail is usually not the most significant. Also, while lead-generation requires a definite skill set and knowledge base, it is somewhat less difficult than one-step promotions. With lead generation, the mailing just gets the prospect to express interest, but the sale is closed by a salesperson. In mail order, your direct mail package has to do the entire selling job. To help improve your B2B direct mail results, here are five important direct mail lessons you can learn from your B2C direct marketing brethren:

1. USE A LIST BROKER. A surprising number of B2B marketing directors tell me they rent mailing lists directly from trade publications and other list owners, and do not use a list broker. A significant minority were either not aware of the existence of list brokers or did not know what list brokers did or why to use them instead of renting lists directly from owners. You should always use a list broker. They do the list research for you for free, because you do not pay them unless you rent from them. Even then, their service costs nothing, because the list owner, not the list user, pays the brokers commission. It costs you the same to rent a list from the broker as it would to rent it directly from the owner. When you want to do a mailing to a particular industry or market segment, resist the temptation to simply call the leading trade journal in that industry and rent their subscriber list. Instead, call a list broker and ask for mailing list recommendations. You might feel certain that the trade journal subscriber list is the best and only list you should use, but more often than not, this assumption is wrong. List brokers can find lists reaching your market that you did not know existed, and often, these outperform the subscriber list you were certain would work best.

2. TEST MULTIPLE LISTS. Lists that seemingly reach the same group of prospects can vary wildly in response rates. Once, for a B2B software publisher, we tested the top two trade journals in their niche market-two publications that, to me, looked and read almost identical. Yet when the mail results came back, one publication subscriber list had generated three times the response of the other, proving that you can not assume you know which list is best and that you must test. For most B2B offers, assuming an average response rate of one percent, you can get a statistically valid test result mailing to a minimum of 1,500 names in each list. Response devices must be key-coded so you can track results.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OFFERS. Today B2B marketers know the importance of offers. The most effective method of increasing the response rate of a lead generation campaign is to use a „bait piece." The term bait piece refers to free information the advertiser offers in its mailing piece or e-mail to generate a higher number of inquiries. The word bait is used because the free content is given not just to educate the reader (as the reader is led to

believe) but to "hook" the reader by generating a response or inquiry, which can then be followed up by telephone or field sales personnel.

4. EMPHASIZE YOUR OFFER, NOT YOUR BRAND. Many B2B marketers, especially macro managers at large corporations, focus-perhaps excessively so-on branding and messaging in their communications. But according to a study by the Kern Organization, reported in the April 2008 issue of this magazine, marketing campaigns that emphasize the offer instead of the brand generate approximately 10 times more orders and sales than those focusing on brand.

The wisdom of stressing the offer in advertisements has been known for well over a century. In 1902, three years before he wrote his ground-breaking paper on the theory of relativity, a young Albert Einstein ran newspaper ads offering his services as a tutor in math and physics. The ads prominently offered a „free trial lesson" .showing that free offers really are a smart marketing tactic.

5. DEVELOP A POWERFUL USP. The idea of the unique selling proposition or USP was originated by Rosser Reeves in his book Reality in Advertising. Reeves said that to sell your product, you had to clearly differentiate it from other products in its category, and the best way to do this was with a strong USP.

According to Reeves, a winning USP has to show how your product is different or better than the competition, and how this advantage benefits the buyer. In addition, the advantage and its benefit must be significant, not trivial-strong enough to get prospects to buy your product over others. [11]

WHAT IS WORKING IN B2B MARKETING

Editor Hallie Mummert conducted an online survey of Target Marketing`s readers hip. The goal: to find out what the best practices are in business-to-business marketing today. Here is what came out:

94 percent of Target Marketing (TM) readers are involved with B2B Market. 53 percent are doing B2B only, while 41 percent do a mix of B2B and B2C.

** Brochures are not dead. New media pundits like to observe that print is dead in general and in particular, brochures are an antiquated marketing medium. But 9 out of 10 TM

[11] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

readers use brochures in some form. 73 percent still have traditional printed brochures for their products and services. 11 percent uses white papers instead of brochures to communicate product information. 6 percent have brochures that are available for download only but are not print documents. Only one in 10 TM readers agreed with the statement „brochures are old hat and we do not produce them much anymore.

"What this means is that your competitors more than likely have sales brochures. These brochures are used in inquiry fulfilment and by salespeople. Without a solid brochure for your company, product, or service, you are at a disadvantage in your inquiry fulfilment and sales efforts.

** Blogs do not rule. Wherever you turn, you read another story about the increasing influence of blogs in our society. Yet in business-to-business marketing, blogs are underused. According to our survey of TM subscribers, less than one in three B2B companies sponsor official corporate blogs that the marketing department or other areas are responsible for. Only 8 percent say that employees who have their own blogs may blog on company time.

A hefty 57 percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement „We do not operate company blogs or worry much about blogs in our marketing." Only 16 percent of PR departments targeted important blogs with special public relations efforts. And only 18 percent of marketers surveyed said they monitor other people blogs to see what is said about them and respond accordingly to correct erroneous information and misperceptions. According to this admittedly limited survey (we had 131 respondents), most B2B marketers do not view blogs as being terribly significant in the scheme of things. That is surprising, given all the hoopla about blogs in the business press.

** Dual-purpose Websites. The majority of marketers surveyed said that both branding and conversion are important goals of their Websites. 69 percent said that „branding our products and organization online "is an important consideration when creating and maintaining the company Website. Fifty-six percent of those surveyed said an important goal was „increasing conversion rates to generate more leads and sales."

Only 60 percent of the marketers surveyed said optimizing their Website to increase search engine rankings was an important consideration when creating the site. I would have thought the figure closer to 100 percent. This suggests that a significant number of B2B marketers (4 out of 10) generate new business primarily other than through Web search.

Content marketing is another hot topic on the marketing lecture circuit, and TM subscribers are sold on its value: 65 percent of those surveyed agreed that it was important to „create value-added content to establish us as thought leaders in our market. "Only 53 percent agreed with the statement that „having great copy and design on our Web pages is an important consideration when creating a Website.“

** Videos underused. Another area where TM readers seem to be behind the leading edge is online video. Fully 57 percent of those surveyed said they do not do much with video. Only 23 percent post videos on YouTube and only 11 percent do viral video marketing. Fewer than one in three is responsible for „creating marketing videos for our Website.

** The truth about social networking. Judging by the amount of coverage social networking gets in the media; you would think it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. But TM readers do not think so.

Only 18 percent of marketers surveyed agreed with the statement „social media is an integral and active part of our overall marketing,“ and only 24 percent said they are „planning to become very active in social networking. “Four out of ten marketers said they do some social networking but it is only an ancillary part of their marketing program, and eight percent felt it was a waste of time and effort. Which social networking site is most important to B2B marketers? Of those surveyed, 42 percent network on LinkedIn, 39 percent have a Facebook page, 30 percent uses Twitter, and only five percent have a MySpace page. The survey seems to indicate that social networking, while potentially valuable, is not the marketing „silver bullet“, that new media evangelists have made it out to be.

** Content is king. Another trend the business media love reporting on is the rise of content marketing. In this case, their emphasis seems congruent with the activities of TM subscribers.

83 percent of those surveyed said either that content marketing compliments and works in tandem with traditional marketing communications (71 percent) or that content is replacing traditional marketing as the primary selling tool (12 percent). Only 15 percent of marketers said they do not really do content marketing. None of those surveyed agreed with the statement „content is a waste of time.“

** What marketers value most.? The answers: content marketing (68 percent), copywriting (59 percent), search engine optimization (50 percent), graphic design (49 percent), analytics (42 percent), keyword research and discovery (37 percent), and HTML design (27 percent). The two most valued skills were content marketing and copywriting. [12]

[12] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

RULES FOR CONTENT MARKETERS

One of the biggest trends in business-to-business marketing today is content marketing. And social media seems to work best when it's based on content.

In a survey of Target Marketing readers , 83 percent said either that content marketing compliments and works in tandem with traditional marketing communications (71 percent) or that content is replacing traditional marketing as the primary selling tool (12 percent). Only 15 percent of marketers said they do not really do content marketing. None of those surveyed agreed with the statement „content is a waste of time

Here are 7 guidelines that can help make content marketing efforts more productive and effective:

1. NARROW THE TOPIC. There is no benefit to cramming every last fact and bit of information about a subject into your white paper or other content marketing piece; the prospect can get all of the same data and sources using Google.

Content marketing works best when you narrow the topic. The narrower the topic, the more in-depth and useful your content can be. For instance, let us say you are an industrial gas manufacturer creating a 10-page white paper on safety for plant managers. If the title is „Plant Safety," you cannot hope to cover that topic in even the most superficial way; entire books have been written on that subject. On the other hand, you could produce a very useful white paper on „Safety Tips for Handling Compressed Gas Cylinders." It is a topic plant personnel want and need to know more about. And with your vast experience, you can probably offer some tips and methods that are new to the reader.

2. TARGET THE PROSPECT**.** The more narrowly you target the audience for your white paper or other content marketing piece, the better able you are to deliver content that is truly useful to them. For our example of the white paper on tips for handling compressed cylinder gas, are you targeting plant managers or plant operators? Plant managers might be more interested in cylinder inventory and control, while plant operators want nuts-and-bolts tips for handling the cylinders. A CFO would want to look at reducing costly gas cylinder accidents, while the CEO might be concerned about liability.

3. DETERMINE THE OBJECTIVE. Remember, we are not in the business of giving away free information for our health. There has to be a purpose for the content we are spending time and money to produce content no one pays us for.

For instance, a software publisher found that when he lost sales, it was not because prospects bought a competitors products with better features and benefits. It was because the software in that category is expensive, and prospects, even though they wanted the functionality the software delivers, could not cost-justify its purchase. To solve this problem, the marketer published a white paper titled „Calculating Return on Investment for Purchase of XYZ Software.“ It demonstrated that, even though the software was expensive, the time and labour savings it provided could pay back its cost in 6 to 8 months. Salespeople used the white paper to overcome the objection of „it costs too much.”

4. EDUCATE THE READER. Years ago, Duncan Hines ran an ad in women magazines about its chocolate cake mix. The headline was, „The secret to moisture, richer chocolate cake.“ Why was that headline so effective? Because it implied you would learn something useful just by reading the ad, regardless of whether you bought the product. Generic advice will not cut it in content marketing today. The prospect does not want to read the same old tips he has seen a dozen times before repeated in your white paper. Chances are, you possess proprietary knowledge about your products and its applications. Share some of this knowledge in your white papers. Give your reader specific advice and ideas that everyone else is not already telling him. Do not be afraid that by telling too much, you will eliminate the prospects need for your product or service. Quite the opposite: when they learn the effort that solving their problem entails, and see that you clearly have the needed expertise, they will turn to you or help.

5. DELIVER VALUE. When you can, include some highly practical, actionable tips the prospect can implement immediately. The more valuable your content is to prospects, the more readily your content marketing program will achieve its stated objective. It is like fast food stands giving away food samples at the mall: the better the free food tastes, the more likely the consumer is to purchase a snack or meal.

6. SET THE SPECS. Outline the characteristics, features, and specifications the prospect should look for when shopping for products in your category. If you do this credibly, the prospect will turn your white paper into a shopping list. And of course, the requirements you outline fit your product to a tee. For example, if your white paper title is „10 things to look for when buying a static mixer,“ your mixer naturally will have all 10 characteristics, while the competition will not.

7. GENERATE ACTION OR CHANGE BELIEF. Content marketing is successful when it gets prospects to take action or changes their opinion, attitude, or beliefs about you and your product as it relates to their needs. When writing white papers, I always ask my client, „What do you want to happen after the prospect is finished reading our white paper?“ [13]

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[13] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

BUSINESSTOBUSINESS HEADLINE WRITING CLINIC

It is true that consumer direct response headlines can get pretty clever, daring, and even outrageous. But powerful headline writing is just as important in business-to-business marketing communications. So let us look at some successful headlines you can add to apply to your swipe file and own product or client:

1. The headline: „*Imagine Harry and me advertising our pears in Fortune*."

The story: Brothers Harry and David Rosenberg launched an unprecedented marketing ploy: advertising gift packages of their pears to business executives through a full-page space ad in Fortune magazine. Within 4 years, sales of the Royal Riviera pears soared to 87,000 boxes, and Harry and David had to double the acreage in their pear orchards, at a time when other pear growers were struggling to survive. Today they are the most recognizable brand in the „fruit by mail" business.

2. The headline: „*How to keep your products pure.*"

The story: Filterite made filtration cartridges used in pharmaceutical manufacturing, an industry where the primary concern is purity above all else. Why the headline works: Instead of focusing on the brand, it focuses on the prospect and his needs („How to keep your product pure"). In addition, it sounds like you will learn something - the secret to product purity in pharmaceutical manufacturing- just by reading the ad. The secret, of course, is to use Filterite cartridges.

This ad was modelled after an ad running in women magazines for Duncan Hines Chocolate Cake Mix, with the headline „The Secret to Richer, Moisture Chocolate Cake." The headline sounds like you will learn something just by reading the ad. What you learn, of course, is that the richest and moistest chocolate cakes are made with Duncan Hines mix.

3. Headline: „*7 reasons why production houses and ad agencies nationwide prefer nilux Ustrobe lighting when shooting important TV commercials.*"

The story: Unilux rented strobe lighting equipment to video production studios and advertising agencies for shooting TV commercials (the lights were also used in shooting films). Unilux had a combination of features and benefits that most others did not offer. Reason-why copy is as old as the hills, but it is still around today because it works. To begin with, Unilux presents product features and benefits in a list format, and people love to read lists. Second, they create a clear differentiation between their product and the competition. In this ad, Unilux gave seven specific reasons why its strobe lighting was superior.

4. Headline: *„Now you can create a breakthrough marketing plan within the next 0 days 3 … for FREE!"*

The story: Prentice Hall used direct mail packages to sell books with soft offers. You would return the reply card, and the publisher would ship the book. If you liked it, you would pay the invoice that came with the book. If you did not want the book, you returned it within 30 days and owed nothing.

That way, you could theoretically read the book, follow its instructions, achieve its objective (e.g., write a marketing plan), and then return it, essentially getting the knowledge and results for nothing. The headline „Now you can create a breakthrough marketing plan within the next 30 days … for FREE" used this ploy to sell the book How to Write a Successful Marketing Plan. The 30-day time limit, which is really the guarantee of urgency to the headline period, adds a nice sense.

5. Headline: *„How can you stop the 5 biggest problems that wreck productivity and performance in your mainframe TCP/IP network?"*

The story: This company has a software product that monitors the performance of mainframe networks. Rather than focus on the product, the ad focuses on the performance problems that the monitoring software helps you detect and fix. The five top problems are listed in the lead paragraph. Question headlines are effective as long as you do not ask a question that the prospect can easily answer. This headline arouses curiosity, because the reader wants to know what the five biggest problems are.

6. Headline: *„How to solve your emissions problems at half the energy cost of conventional venture scrubbers."*

The story: This ad succeeds for several reasons. First, there is a picture of the free brochure being offered. Second, there is an eye-catching cut-away diagram of the product, a wet scrubber (a type of pollution control device). Third, the marketer coins a term, „Hydro-Kinetic Design," which makes the device sound unique. „Hydro" means water and „kinetic" refers to movement, and ALL wet scrubbers have moving water. But only this one advertises the Hydro-Kinetic design. How-to headlines work well. This one offers two benefits. The product will solve your emissions problems. And it will cut your energy costs in half. This ad was the #1 inquiry generator in six consecutive issues of the chemical trade magazine in which it ran.

7. Headline: *„Surgical tables rebuilt; free loaners available.“*

The story: Surgical table manufacturers discouraged repair and rebuilding (although they offered it), preferring instead to sell the hospital a new table. This company was the only independent firm specializing in surgical table repair for all makes and models. To prevent operating room down-time, they would give you a free loaner while your table was being repaired in their shop. When you have something with little or no competition, a straightforward headline, making clear exactly what you are offering, usually works best: „Surgical tables rebuilt; free loaners available“ isn't creative, but it got the job done.

8. Headline: *„What do Japanese managers have that American managers sometimes lack”*?

The story: This was the headline for a direct mail promotion selling subscriptions to Bits & Pieces, a little magazine on business aimed at managers. The headline works because it arouses curiosity: do not you want to know what Japanese managers have that American managers sometimes lack?

9. Headline: *„Why most trading systems do not work … and never will*.“

The story: Most marketers of trading systems use bombastic, hype-filled copy with outrageous claims of huge profits. Instead of following in their footsteps, this trading system publisher took a different approach, acknowledging the readers built-in scepticism about all the outrageous claims being made. The headline resonated with readers, and the mailing generated three times more sales than the control.

10. Headline: *„Try burning this coupon*.“

The story: The headline dares the reader to burn the advertisement! The visual is a photo of a hand holding a match. The ad is actually a bound-in insert printed on paper treated with the fireproofing compound. When you take a lit match to the ad, it does indeed burn. But the instant you remove the match, the flame goes out - a dramatic demonstration of the fireproofing compound in action. We always talk about and look for ways to demonstrate our product in our marketing. Relatively easy to do on TV; much harder to accomplish in a print ad. [14]

[14] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

THE TROUBLE WITH B2B MARKETING

It is not easy being the macro manager of a B2B company. In addition to the usual marketing communications challenges you must deal with, there are several other issues B2B macro managers face.

One is marketing products that are inherently technical and complex, which means they are often difficult to understand. B2B agency owner Joe Lane once commented, „Consumer marketing is simple though thoughts for simple folks.“ When you are advertising a bar of soap or a chocolate cake mix, neither you nor your agency has a difficult time grasping the features and advantages of your product. But when the product is a semiconductor or a spectrophotometer, marketing that product involves achieving a degree of understanding that is not always easy to attain.

You might also take a course to get up to speed. One ad agency account executive was assigned a welding account, and found that he could not understand the terminology the client used. Nor could he empathize with the needs and concerns of their target market, professional welders. His solution was to take a course in welding 101, which eventually turned into a series of classes that led to his becoming a certified welder. Two benefits resulted. First, he could speak the client language - in fact, speak it better than they could. And second, he understood his target audience better, because he had become one of them. A science or engineering background is a definite plus when you are assigned the task of marketing technical products. You simply have the knowledge to quickly get up to speed on any new technology you encounter.

The second challenge of B2B marketing is to understand not only the product but also the Prospect - his needs, concerns, desires, and fears. Getting inside the mind of a B2B prospect is typically more difficult than understanding how a consumer target market thinks. Clearly, a big challenge when marketing a B2B product to an audience of which you are not a member is getting inside the minds of target prospects.

There are several things you can do to go about it.

First, subscribe to and read the trade publications covering the target prospects industry. Pay particular attention to the „letters to the editor“ column. It is here you can see what is on your prospects` minds.

Similarly, find and frequent the major blogs covering your prospects industry. Read not just the blog posts but study the comments. They can reveal hot button issues and where people stand on them. Not always easy to do, but if you can, interview a few of your customers. You can learn not only what is important to them but which features of your product they value.

If customers are not available for interviews, attend events where your prospects hang out. Eavesdrop on their conversations to get a sense of the language they use. When I first did this at a meeting of IT professionals, I was shocked to discover how much they relied on jargon in their conversations and eschewed plain speaking. This reduced my compulsion to always write copy to them in the simplest language possible, and I began to embrace the special terminology they used, so as to sound more like one of them. Another challenge B2B marketers face is figuring out how and why their customers make buying decisions.

According to copywriter Steve Slaunwhite, here are some of the questions to ask the product manager and sales manager about the prospects buying habits:

- „How do your customers buy? Is there a typical process?"
- „Why do they buy instead of doing nothing?"
- „What prompts them to make the decision to talk with you in the first place?"
- „What do they need to know to make a buying decision?"
- „Who else is typically involved in making the buying decision?"
- „Why do they choose your product over the competitions?"

Says Slaunwhite: „Unless you have answers to these questions, your copy is just going to skim the surface or, worse, be completely off target."

Copywriter Ed Gandia agrees. He says one of the biggest frustrations B2B macro managers have with their agencies and writers is not having a solid understanding of the clients` business drivers and industry challenges, as well as the challenges the clients prospective customers are facing. „B2B clients are not just looking for clear and persuasive copy," says Gandia. „They need someone who `gets it.` Someone who understands the bigger picture and how their clients fit into the competitive landscape." The last requirement, how a B2B marketer fits into the competitive landscape, is thanks to the Internet - much easier to ascertain than in the past. In the good old days, the only way to learn what your competitors were up to, short of industrial espionage, was to steal their brochures at trade shows.

Now, a simple Google search of industry keywords (e.g., „widget manufacturers") will bring you a list of most of your competitors. Clicking on the URL links to their web sites brings you the details you need on their products, markets, and operations; and you can find the rest in their annual reports.[15]

[15] Bob Bly, 2008, THE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING HANDBOOK

E-MAILS

E-mail has long been established as one of the hardest working tools in the marketing toolbox. Strategically, email plays an important role in achieving a wide range of marketing objectives. Tactically, e-mail appears to have unlimited potential especially when integrated with emerging marketing channels like social media. As a mature tactic, performance improvements are no longer measured in quantum leaps but in incremental steps. But when multiple improvement tactics are combined, performance is accelerated.

THREE PHASES OF E-MAIL MARKETING MATURITY

TRIAL PHASE

Organization does not have a process or guidelines for performing email marketing.

TRANSITION PHASE

Organization has an informal process with a few guidelines they sporadically perform.

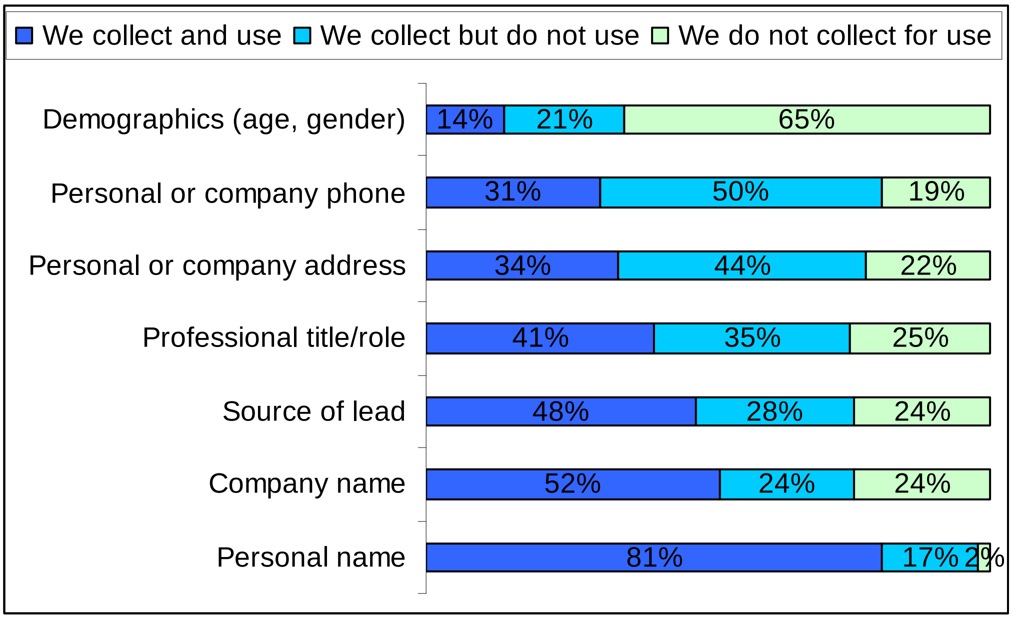
STRATEGIC PHASE

Organization has a formal process with thorough guidelines they routinely perform.

Half of all organizations stuck between Trial Phase and Strategic Phase of maturity. 14% of organizations do not have a process or guidelines for performing e-mail marketing (Trial phase). 37% has a formal process with thorough guidelines hat they routinely perform (Strategic phase) an 49 % has an informal process with a few guidelines that they sporadically perform (Transition phase). [16]

[16] MarketingSherpa LLC, MarketingSherpa *2011 Email Marketing Benchmark Report*

CHART 2: DATA COLLECTED FOR EMAIL PERSONALIZATION GOES BEYOND SUBSCRIBER NAME



Source: Marketing Sherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey Methodology: Fielded Sep 2010, N=1,115

The majority of e-mail data collection takes place during registration. A delicate balance is struck between granting a marketers wish list and not asking for so much information that it creates friction for the customer. For most companies, asking for a customer personal name, company name and lead source is more important than titles, physical addresses and phone numbers. However, each company must select their own criteria based on their industry and sales pipeline.

The industry channel determines the priority and usage of a subscribers personalized data. B2B sales are typically complex, so marketers require company name, professional title, company address and phone number. Meanwhile, B2C marketers are more interested in age, gender or other demographic information to tailor their communications. Both B2B and B2C companies find personal name and the source of the lead information key to successful email campaigns.

As predicted, strategic marketers are more likely to collect and use subscriber personalized data. The one exception is the request for personal or company physical addresses. Trial phase companies sales and marketing processes heavily rely on offline tactics such as direct mail or face-to-face sales.[17]

EXAMPLES OF B2B MARKETING EXPERIENCE OF ESTONIAN AND LATVIAN ENTERPRENEURS

QUATTROMED

Quattromed HTI Laborid OÜ started its activity in 1999 as a University Spin-Off. The project was conceived by Tartu University professors, who brought three project areas under one roof: Molecular Diagnostics, Gene Therapy and Research Tools. Today, 10 years later, all of these areas are in work, but for various reasons, they have gone different routes and operate as different companies.

Quattromed, at present time, is largest private capital based medical laboratory in Estonia. It has more than 10 years of experience in the field of providing laboratory services. Thanks to well functioning logistics and convenient IT solutions, Quattromed laboratories serve the majority health care institutions of Estonia.

The main goal of Quattromed HTI Laborid OÜ is to offer quality laboratory services, and through this to achieve a growing confidence in the services provided. Every year they put into use new modern methods, thereby offering their partners an ever-wider array of services. Laboratory performs testing in different specialties, such as clinical chemistry, hematology, cytology, immunology, molecular diagnostics (PCR), urine analysis and microbiology. Clients of Quattromed are medical centers, hospitals and private persons. Making all this happen depends on Quattromed`s ability to attract and engage skilled workers and relevant partners.

The CEO of the company, Erki Mölder, believes that at the companies start-up phase it was very important that they came out to the market with a clear platform of services, which was innovative at the time, and which others did not have.

The mistake that is often made and that we managed to avoid from the start, is keeping marveling at our product and just correcting and repairing it over and over again and forgetting that the service we provide is just one part of our customer overall value chain., - he says. At present time the technological platform makes only 20% of company turnover, what has enabled us to provide services to our clients 5 times more, than before. The further one company develops, the smaller becomes the role of the technology, because entrepreneurs need to deal with all sorts of other issues to sell their products. All of this, of course, depends on the segment, but at one point we reached the acknowledgment that we can not keep just developing our technology and have to develop added value to our products. Our business management was also built up around the service, not the technology itself, and we believe it is very important in the medical field, - he adds.

[17] Jeff Rice, Research Analyst, https://www.marketingsherpa.com/article.php?ident=31847

When Quattromed started, there were already similar products on the market, the service that had to be added to the product, including labor and all other expenses, made competitor product comparatively expensive. Quattromed implemented the existing solutions, put them in the service and began offering the same service at 2-4 times lower cost, what made it possible for the company to enter the market and find clients relatively simply.

Clients were easy to find, first, because doctors have medical records, we know what hospitals, what health care institutions, private clinics we have in Estonia, and what is also important that every medical practice within this specialty is relatively homogeneous -said Erki Mölder, -all we needed to do was to go to them, show our products, ask what else would they need, and add additional value to that: like laboratory skills, logistics, electronic information exchange possibility etc. We also arranged free trainings to our clients on “Why our products/services are better. Why something should be done differently” etc. – that was our model. We educated our potential clients. What is also very important is that you give the information to the decision makers at the right time, right place and from the right person. If economist will go to a doctor and try to sell something, then doctor would probably just nod, but the decision will not necessarily follow. We took a professor there, a development manager, a laboratory manager, a medical doctor, who all persuaded the customers based on their specialty. That is how we did this and for us it worked, - concludes Mölder.

When you are a Start-up, you believe that your product is all you have and you try to push it anywhere you can, but it has very brief success and is really difficult if client does not really need it, he can not afford it or you do not evolve it according to client specific needs, it means, that your product should fit well with clients business model – says Erki Mölder. If a Start-up tries to add something to client value chain, he should understand whether his product replaces something in the value chain or is instead forcing his client to add something to already existing product or service. Sometimes you may have a really good idea, but if it does not bring any additional value without increasing client costs, the client probably will not decide in favor of your product. The other issue is that Start-ups try to replace existing part of the value chain based on wrong assumptions, without understanding that for the client the replacement will demand huge rearrangements. Then sometimes you need to step back and admit that you will not go to one or another market.

Erki Mölder admits that understanding of the market and client needs is a very long term process and can be achieved only by being on the market for several years, keeping your eyes open, communicating and making background researches on regular basis. I have seen and even purchased some databases, - he says, - with large company it is not a problem that I can not get the company general number, but rather that in large organizations I can not find the right person who will decide whether he needs me. So if someone tells me that he wants to sell me the database with names, then it does not work. In certain cases it might be needed, but the work is technical and anyone can do this himself. It might only work if they would really find contacts of small companies that are not so easy to find in reality and you intend to make Spam posting as your marketing campaign. And it also has to be targeted to a specific campaign or product, to work.

Erki Mölder believes that the best CEO for the Start up is a sales manager from the company that the Start up has visualized as a potential client, because this is the person who actually understands what your client needs and who you should turn to, because he has been there. ”I call it Market Intelligence, - says Mölder, - it may be sort of double check or sells control mechanism, but should be done in all companies. Our laboratory manager, for example, is former laboratory manager of a hospital, who knew what kind of concerns they might have, what is the working environment of our clients, had good experience I that field an started to implement in his work at our company. You will not get this kind of information from any market research through some consultant that makes some kind of research for a month or so. And in that case the market is still examined emanating from Start up needs and point of view and not so much from client needs, - is Erki Mölder confident, - the other possibility for Market Intelligence is to regularly and systematically read suppliers, competitors and client annual financial reports, as we do at Quattromed. There we find out the basic trends: what is their financial state, what are their main incomes, what is their business, what they speak and what not about. For example, every year we check budget of Health Insurance Fund and send requests to Social Ministry to get statistics, monitor the records of family doctors etc., that gives us the frame for Market Intelligence as we analyze the past or try to predict the future. You can not get that kind of information from one market survey, -tells Mölder.
In fact, one way to enter the market, that Erki Mölder revealed, is to “Follow your client”, if you do not know how to do market research, go to a client who is on the market, push yourself through the door and listen to what he needs. You must have enough understanding or instinct, in order to understand whether or not you actually have something to offer, or if you can give enough added-value to his product. You need to follow your client, listen and look around... Sometimes you will not be let in, then you will keep on going, participate in conferences, fairs, exhibitions where you will find some contacts, but still you need to understand your client needs, look further ahead and think through whether you have enough strength and speed to reach your goal.
Erki Mölder noted that conferences and exhibitions do play a role, but you should not expect a grate sale success, it depends on the market you are in. The general rule is that if you are not here, then you do not exist, or it helps to show your client that this market really interests you, and what is important – you need to show that you are in this market. What can also bring results are so called partnering events: you look through the list of participants to find potential clients or partners, send them your proposal or description of your product or service and they either accept it and arrange a meeting or decline your offer. And then you have to figure out how far can you go with this meeting, is the person even right one to discuss business, because often those people who are out there are so-called scouts, who deliver gathered information that you are able to give to the target organization and the actual selling process is carried out by other people. The scout has a task to deliver your value proposition to research team as simply as possible and to justify it. Erki Mölder reveals, that for that purpose they prepared a 1-sheet appetizer, not much, just enough to arouse curiosity and give a brief overview of possibilities. If this material has aroused interest, they send 5-7 pages of technical description, but that material goes straight to decision makers. If the second stage is passed, they arrange telephone meetings

and face-to-face meetings, where 2-hours lecture is given by their research director, on what can actually be done, and then may be reach the agreement. But even then you might face the fact that a company is engaged with a 3 or 5 year contract with other supplier or service provider and they can not make business with you now, but is interested in making the deal in 3 years. So these events are necessary, but you have to understand your customer buying decision process, how long it might and will it be efficient for you. Because you have to realize that after paying for participation in the event, the work of lawyers, flying to the meetings and other possible costs, you might not be able to offer your product or service with the initial price – notes Mölder, -yet, it is really hard to predict and if you would hire a person from your client to be your CEO, he would probably direct your attention to these matters.

About cooperation with international partners and clients Erki Mölder pointed out couple of aspects. First, of course, it is cultural background - it is easier to work with a partner or client of similar culture and language. It would be grate if your first client would be with close cultural background and similar to your potential target group. If you succeed locally and if the operating environment of your target group is homogeneous in all countries, all you will need to do is to translate the same proposal to the language of your next potential client. Second, is the distance. Communication is not a problem per se, what it requires of us, is great willingness to fly on spot, talk, socialize If you need to fly somewhere to buy something, you will rather chose a local distributor, because it is easier, but if the same supplier will come to you with a proposal you might sign a deal with him. So if a client believes that he needs you on the spot you have to be there – this is the rule of international collaborating.

With the suppliers the main rule is to find high-quality products at the lowest price, says Erki Mölder, - you define your optimal quality requirements and choose the cheapest among them and you can change your supplier quite simply. With the partners the relationship usually lasts longer, so the decision is more complicated and important. To a certain extent here applies the same rule - set the quality standards or requirements, then look for suitable candidates for a partner, then select a partner and then, if possible, try to haggle the price down. Choosing right partners and workers is crucial for competitiveness of a company. You always have to look around and try to think bigger, where you see yourself in 5 or 10 years, and then chose partners, service providers and partners according to your vision. The company must be developed taking into account all the necessary processes. You can not forget that the technology should be patent-protected, healthcare, marketing, that you must have specific contracts with personnel or decisions of the shareholders have to be properly documented, that there must be accounting, etc..

Today all contracts go through lawyers what is also very important to escape all sort of trouble in the future. The contracts with international partners are more complicated, - admits Erki Mölder, - but he process is usually the same for all business relationships. First, Non Disclosure Agreement is signed. Then the Term Sheet is created where it is written that the technology is described in Annex 1, Visibility Study in Annex 2 and basic conditions of the contract, then it is agreed on what legislation this contract will be based on an then the lawyers come in. The common rule is to choose a law firm in the early stage of the company,

and then you have an adviser who understands the terms, with whom to discuss what to do, what are possible risks etc. In general, international agreements are subjected to U.S., German, or the legislation of England, which is ubiquitous.
Erki Mölder also shared his opinion on social media. He believes that in some cases it might work. For example, if you need to bring information to a specific target group, like Quattromed campaign testikodus.ee, which is aimed to reach sexual minorities, and if your service provides them added-value, then this information will spread there very fast. But if it is a nice to have and not must to have product, it probably will not be very efficient.

BIOATLAS

BioAtlas is an advancing European biotechnology company providing high quality molecular biology products to distributors, OEM resellers and researchers.
BioAtlas was started with the intention of establishing a portfolio of molecular biology reagents, so that clients would be able to find many products they need from a single source, giving customers the opportunity to spend less time thinking about the reagents they use and more time on their research.
Products of the company have been developed and tested to ensure their performance in where they matter the most – client experiments. Collaboration with customers and partners has become long term, and these relationships are everything BioAtlas is about. The company is constantly improving their offering, both in the lab, as well as customer service. They are always much obliged for any suggestion on how they can become a better partner.
BioAtlas started as a European company, firstly targeted to international market, firstly because the local market was too small for their products and in order to brake through in the market where there are 300 competitors, which do not really differ that much from one another, you have to be out in larger markets. The question was never about whether to do that but how and through which partners, because mostly it is not so important that your product is 10-15 times better then your competitors, than ability to open market channels. Thanks to experience in biotechnology sector the network of partners was quite big from the beginning and it was even easier to start business somewhere else than Estonia.
Indrek Kask, one of the founders of BioAtlas, recalls that they started very suddenly, within few days. When they closed first deals, they did not even have a company yet, actually the company was not established till 6 month after the first deal. That is their style, how they do business till today: first they search for a client, and by the time they find one, they do not necessarily have the final product. They share their thoughts and plans on what products they are about to get or start to make and ask what clients or partners think about them. Mostly that is how it happen, they search out the potential clients, who they believe could be the buyers, and give the finishing touch together with the buyer. We are not that kind of entrepreneurs who furbish the product for couple of years, with the support of EAS for example, and then reach the conclusion that they furbished the wrong aspect, –says Indrek Kask – but our kind of approach have worked better for us.

BioAtlas searches for clients through all kind of possibilities: fairs, conferences, mailings and most important through contacts that have evolved over time. In BioAtlas there are 3 main activities: 1. They use their network, investigate if there is somebody interested in their product, if not, then may be they can name someone who would be, and that is most important and effective channel; 2. They make a big effort to be visible at the international market, so clients and partners could easily find them; 3. They also try to do direct mailing, but they do not buy any databases in, because the success rate is really low in comparison to targeted searches that they do themselves.

My recent experience has shown that direct mail success rate may be 30%, even more, - revealed Indrek Kask – usually everybody talks about few percent, but our turnover of companies that were interested in further information was 30. Of course, in BioAtlas case it is really difficult, because their products are needed by lots and lots of companies but there is a massive amount of companies that also make such direct mailing. Indrek Kask personally does not like fairs, he believes it is lust of rich companies that already have resources to be out there and shake hands with clients, but the possibility to get a deal from here is less than with direct mailing, but the expenses are enormous. So the sale effect is quite small. In a sense of PR – absolutely, if you have the possibility, of course you should attend, but you should not expect big deals from there. At fairs and conferences there is couple of thousand people vs. in internet there are millions of people every day and the possibility to show yourself is much bigger and at a lower cost.

Today we are mainly on-line, - say Kask, – and in addition to e-mailing there are also phone calls, but the tactic on how many letters to send before and in between is specifically thought through. And the other thing - is contact searching, for that LinkedIn and other similar sources are used, to reach directly the target person. The experience has shown that the contacts that work the best are the one that have been specially found, mailing to thousands of random contacts does not work. The difficult part with mailing is to hit the right target with precise and thoughtful header, because if you manage to do that, the success is almost guaranteed.

Indrek Kask believes that for their type of companies, the most effective is when you get a partner, in the form of a local distributor, who already introduces your type of products on the spot and has developed certain circle of customers. When you market quite cheap products, like BioAtlas, then price of one transaction is really small, and if you have to pay double for delivery, of course clients would choose to buy the same product from local distributor. BioAtlas offers two kinds of possibilities to their partners: 1. They sell chemicals that are branded by BioAtlas; 2. They sell OEM chemicals, when strong local brand is put on chemicals what makes the switching much easier for the customers. The question is not always in the price, but how you present the product, what are the delivery times and other value packages that you offer. For example, BioAtlas have some German partners, who know very well that we bring few things from China and they are very satisfied with that because they would not do that themselves, because it is quite difficult. What is also important in Indrek Kask opinion, is to have market oriented mindset – if your product is really unique then you can set your own marketing principles, but if you must compete with

lots of similar suppliers you need to offer added-value to your products, like customer support, quality check, product finishing activities.
Based on real experience, Indrek Kask admits that international cooperation is not simple. You may have signed a cooperation agreement but the reality is something different, you must develop trust and it takes time. It is easier to work with Estonian or Latvian partners because we have similar culture, traditions and understanding of things, but unfortunately these markets are quite limited. BioAtlas sells a lot to Asia, for example they buy products from Asia and sell them back to Asia after giving value to them here. It is quite interesting but difficult, for example one deal with Japan is lasting by now for 3,5 years. It seems that Japanese make lifelong relationships and think long before making one. Cooperation with Russia is also difficult by because of other reasons. If you have to deal with Russian customs, then there is nothing else to do, as local organizations that deal with customs help you in some way. They have created heavy bureaucracy, but if you find good partners then the market would be quite good, because they value Estonian quality, vs. Germany or Italy where they do not know anything about Estonia.
In BioAtlas we do not start conversation with possible partner or client from blank page, usually someone makes some kind of intro and if company is interested then we start negotiating, - says Indrek Kask, but when you are in the region you might also call and introduce yourself and what you are doing, refer on companies needs and what solutions you can offer, send some materials and ask if they would have time to for you. Usually company representative find these 10 or 15 minutes which ordinarily develop in few hour meetings, where it is decided that something has to be done together. The main problem with that is that Estonians are quite poor salesmen; we do not have the courage even to pick up the phone. If we could overcome this fear, the rest would be very simple, even more if you have done your research, you see what client needs, and you can offer added-value, there are not any obstacles in your way. The worst thing that might happen is that he says that he does not want to talk to you. We fear this reaction. Indrek Kask believes that It is almost impossible to find a good salesman in Estonia.
To find out what a client needs, you must start with basics: look through the web-page, make internet research, check track record at LinkedIn, find out what products he uses, what is the price level and analyze whether you have something to offer and create your sales presentation around that product or service. If you serve your offer right then the deal is most probably done and the price will not be of great importance. To decide from whom you should start the deal making process there are few ways: 1. you can check your network and find someone who could make an intro for you; 2. you go to internet an search for labs, working on this problem and find some companies, then check at Linked In if there is anyone who knows them; 3. or simply send information to info@company.com and it might work, you just have to accept that the success rate will not be really big. You might also call your potential clients or partners but the e-mail should go first.
In BioAtlas we use Skype a lot, it gives us possibility to interactively communicate with partners and clients, - admits Indrek Kask, - I personally have around 500 contacts there and most of them are clients and partners, for our distributors there is even a condition in the contract that they have to make Skype account We use both video conversations and chat,

the last one is really important with our Asian partners and clients, who do not like to talk on the phone because it is really hard to understand what other part is talking about, but the chat gives the opportunity to translate and take time to understand what is needed. The minus is that chat is static, you think one thing but others interpret it the other way and go mad, so chat is bad for solving problems. Sometimes you need to push your clients and partners from behind to reach goals, if you just keep waiting, the greater chance is that he will not do anything.

When making deals with other countries you have to understand their culture and habits. For example in China it is almost impossible to talk on the phone, so if you want to make an order you need to start early because it takes time. With deals with Italians you must understand, that if he calls you names then he probably is in trouble with deadlines and wants to subcontract you to finish a project in 2 weeks that he was supposed to make in 2 years. Also you have to consider payment deadlines - in Italy they may be delayed for a very long time. All of these understandings come with experience.

Indrek Kask believes that in some businesses it might be important to establish subsidiaries. In some cases it is even good when you can refer that you are former Eastern Europe country, because it is known that we have cheaper labor and that is why we can provide products with cheaper price, but if you make big healthcare deal, it is very important that you are trustworthy. In India for example, they trust England companies, in Asia Switzerland has great meaning, for example BioAtlas has a Japanese business partner, who came to live and started a company in Switzerland to start selling products to Japan and it has paid off.

Making business abroad in medicine sector might have obstacles in different countries, so you have to research the legislation before you enter a market, - says Indrek Kask - for example in some countries it is forbidden to send DNA outside the country, in Italy the payment delays in hospitals might reach several years, some chemicals might be forbidden in different countries, in Russia we have faced political barriers, when we had to send our product to Frankfurt, mark the product with “Made in Germany” and then send from Frankfurt to Russia, because it was forbidden to make such a large purchase from Estonia etc. To enter a new country you have to research all aspects and talk to people who already make business in that country, – advises Indrek – you might have to pay for the consultation, but it will pay off if you get in trouble instead.

For researchers who have prepared something but do not know what are the next steps there are Technology Transfer Centers, which are very active and is operating in several countries. You go to the Centre, which are usually created by some university, where experienced people want to commercialize your product, have a good network and drive to help you and have working systems. Unfortunately in Estonia we do not have a good working centre. Also information about situation in biotechnology sector in Estonia is very limited and very limited group of people realizes that there are such facilities as Biotechnology association, Tartu Biotechnology Park who might help.

One problem with small companies is also that they do not know how to achieve global markets but fear to cooperate with larger companies with international experience, because they do not want to share their product, - says Indrek Kask – but I believe that the situation will change soon and more Estonian companies will reach international markets.

EGEEN INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

EGeen is a transatlantic CRO whose key business focus is to advance the drug development of biotech and pharmaceutical clients via expeditious and high quality yet cost-effective clinical trials.

Headquartered in California since its inception in 2001, EGeen has global capabilities in Europe and in the US.

Particular strength of EGeen is expeditious patient recruitment in Eastern Europe through wholly owned subsidiaries in Estonia and Ukraine and offices in Romania, Poland and Turkey. Currently EGeen employs 50 people in the US and Europe in clinical trial management and monitoring, QA, logistics, marketing and IT support.

The key strengths of EGeen comprise its:

Extensive network of hospitals and highly qualified medical doctors for rapid patient enrollment;

Proprietary IT-driven medical and clinical data collection and management systems;

International business and clinical standards combined with the local Eastern European operational expertise;

Experienced clinical personnel and cost-effective infrastructure to efficiently manage clinical trials in all phases and major disease areas;

We had a possibility to talk about the B2B experience with **Kalev Kask**, Chief Executive Officer of EGeen. Kalev Kask completed his graduate degree with Prof. Tamas Bartfai at Stockholm University and post-doctoral training with Prof. Peter Seeburg at the Max-Planck Institute for Medical Research in Heidelberg. He then joined the neurogenomics company AGY Therapeutics of South San Francisco as a senior scientist, followed by research at Stanford University and advisory work with Asper Biotech and Toshiba prior to founding EGeen. Dr. Kask has authored numerous scientific publications and has patented genomics derived drug and diagnostic targets.

In Kalev Kask opinion, the main biotech market is in USA and 60% of world investments are in San Fransisco Bay area, firstly because it is a very liberal place. Unfortunately in Estonia almost nobody knows how to sell abroad. A lot of companies do subcontracting and resale, but the actual selling is made by someone else.

When you start a company a network is of great importance, - says Kalev Kask from his own experience – everything goes through the network, the more people you know, the more you socialize, the better opportunity you have to brake through in any market. When he started it was the time when electronic companies realized that chip is a chip, no mater whether it is placed in computers or DNA, they are relatively similar in information handling and IT, it was also the time when Estonian Genome Foundation appeared. Kalev Kask was even invited to Motorola to talk about the Genome Foundation.

They had an idea, but the financing and commercializing was quite difficult. What Kalev Kask knew for sure, was that he will not establish a company by Estonian legislation and establishing a company in Estonia will only obstruct the deal making in high-tech, because nobody knew about the country and it was far from everywhere. You can do local business, - says Kalev Kask – but if you want to go bigger you must have representative who is considerable, respected or you have to develop your own resume so high, that you could easily talk to people, your reputation is very important in business. What helped me, - is Kalev Kask assured - was that I have worked with Prof. Peter Seeburg, that helped me to start negotiating with Tom Kyle, the first vice president of Jnet Tech, who was very respected in San Fransisco Bay area, through him I got lots of needed contacts and that the way sales operate up there.

What is also very important in B2B marketing is promotion. Kalev Kask has attended to many conferences and events and that was also where he found his first client. The first deal was very successful, the results came really fast and the client liked it – that is one way how to get clients – you satisfy their needs, rather better and faster then expected and the information will spread. The second big deal that EGeen had was thanks to the first one, the results of the first deal was press released and they found it somewhere in the internet, so it is very important to publish your success. Of course the conferences had still to be attended, you had to be on the market, communicate with people...You look through your budget, pick out the conferences where you may get desirable contacts and the more you move around the more visible you get and more seriously you are taken. What is also important, no matter where you go, but especially in America, you have to talk in right lingo, -says Kalev Kask – in America for example, everybody wants a person with sense of humor, you will not go far there with serious Estonian attitude, because people are different, culture is different. You just catch somebody by the hand, start to talk about something and finally reach the part where you introduce what biotechnology company it is, what do they need, offer them how you could help them and observe whether the person takes in the bate or not. Usually on conferences the meetings are set up, but also can approach more creatively and catch your potential client on the move, introduce yourself and what you can offer and let him also digest the information on the move. You have to be on the spot, in Europe it is quite easy, you get from one point to another with few hours, you may never make a problem out of it, if client wants to see you – you just have to get there.

All companies are engaged in selling, receiving capital is also selling in order to get money from people. If you do not have people in the market area, than you don’t exist in principle, you have basically declared that you do not sell anywhere, - says Kalev Kask – with pharmaceutical companies, if you do not sell in the U.S., then you do not exist, except when you’re developing some kind of genetic product.

What is also important in Kalev Kask opinion, is to listen to your client, and the more you communicate, the better you are able to establish links and figure out how you can help, is there enough capacity and if not then usually you can predict will you be able to get it done. What also helps in B2B is your knowledge in different aspects, competence is of great importance. There is no better salesman for the company than a person with high competence, who knows what to say and understand when they move in the wrong direction – no one expects that. The other thing is that “No” is not a bad thing, sale process is dynamic and in lot of cases “ No” means “Not right now” and you move on to another person. You just need to choose so that you won’t get to many “No-s” in a row – then you really need to check if what you offer really is valuable to anybody. Greg Venter is a good example of grate salesman, he also jumps headfirst to the empty pool, knowing that be the time he will be there, the pool will be filled with water. That is what you have to consider – the technology is developing really fast and the competence is also available, so when you make a deal you have to be sure what your client needs, about your organization ability and will you get the thing done. If you fail you will become history really soon.
Actually it is really hard to find a good salesmen, - admits Kalev Kask – even in America. With small companies it is easier, you go and ask what is the problem, who should you talk to and the deal might be done by one phone call. In big company there might work thousands of people, 30 people are in Sales Department, most of whom are not probably even needed and then the sales process lasts for month. Usually EGeen closes a deal within 7 days, but with large companies it might even take 12 month and it is not the limit.
It usually depends on organization to whom to turn to in the company, - explains Kalev Kask – if you get a CEO, it is very good, but usually this task is delegated to someone else and in fact you also understand, that if he says that he does not deal with clinical trials, nothing will come out of there, and he usually refers to a person who knows about that thing. Also the offer may come from simple clinical worker, who will say: “I like those guys!” The key is, that if you know the system, anything is possible, all roads are open and all possibilities should be used. Look at any organization: the first thing – look if you know somebody, then send to your contacts - look at this web-site, who do you know? And then look at how to get in, decide who should create the contact. Call and say that you looked at the web-site, analyzed the business and you are in such a situation that you think you can help him and ask to think about it. Some will thank, some will send very far and some will say: “OK, we will think about it”, and all answers are good. At least you will know what to do. The first thing I heard when I started, was that the second best answer is a Quick No, then you can go ahead and not waste more time on that, -shared Kalev Kask.
He never used any databases, he believes that internet is one huge database on its own and usually is just waste of time. Market researches are done on everyday basis, EGeen offers itself everywhere there is possible, as much as budget allows to do. Usually clients find

EGeen on somebody recommendation or it is remembered from conferences or other events. What is also important is that you exist as a company for some time; it means that you are trustworthy.
In USA all contracts are basically the same, pharmaceutical business is global and mostly USA-based. In the USA the system is well placed, if someone will try to cheat, the senate will react and most probably this person will be soon in jail.
Kalev Kask also pointed out some other important aspects: Sales are important but management is also very important, you have to be able to do what you promised, he says. You need also ask for the feedback from your clients, and then you will know if something is wrong. You always have to learn and gather new experience. You have to use all possible contacts. You have to keep up with tendencies. You should not use social media in pharmaceutical business, it will not add any value, it is useful only when somebody refers there on your product. You have to always be out there to understand when the right time to sell is. You have to take risks. Everything that you do reflects on your company, you always have to prove why anybody has to choose you. You have to understand that if you really have something to offer, then you will always get all contacts you need. It is good to know that you can do it, but you always have to add something new and the first thing you need to do, is to satisfy your first client. If you have the reputation, the clients will come to you.

CLINIC "ELITE"

Clinic "Elite" was opened in 2001 in a house built to be a comfortable and modern private clinic. Our mission is to provide high quality medical service in a private atmosphere, so the patient stays relaxed. Elite Clinic offers only proven assisted reproduction techniques for infertility treatment and shows very good results in egg donation, embryo adoption and IVF. Head of Elite Clinic and IVF department Dr Andrei Sõritsa, PhD, is very experienced and well-known IVF specialist. First IVF baby in the Baltic countries was born in 1995 as a result of our Elites team work. The field of infertility treatment in Estonia is regulated since 1997 by a law "Assisted Fertilization and Protection of the Embryo" and Dr Andrei Sõritsa was a part of a workgroup compiling the law.
Andrei Sõritsa took time to discuss with us how he stared his clinic, what are the obstacles and what must be considered in Business-to-Business Marketing.
In B2B all the knowledge comes with practice. You might have a have a good product or service, but if you do not how to sell it, if your clients need or are ready to pay for it then it is hard to make through in this market, -says Andrei Sõritsa.
When I started to implement IVF technology in Estonia, no one really cared about it at first, it sure was praised, but nobody wanted to allocate the money to develop it, - recalls Sõritsa -

first we tried to start as Non-profit Organization to see how it works and how to incorporate money. We did not have any business knowledge, so it was the easiest way to start, we did not earn profit, but, saw how the system works, how to search sponsors, where the money comes and how you have to declare it etc. Unfortunately when you study medicine, nobody teaches you how to make business. That is why many researchers are stuck with their inventions; they simply do not know where to start. By the time we have developed the technology and adjusted according to possibilities that we had in Estonia, we already had clients interested in our technology, but the place where we worked did not compliment the modern technology that was used.

When I decided to set up a clinic, all kind of questions started to emerge: Where to get the money? How to write a business plan? Is it better to buy the building or to build? etc. –says Sõritsa. Any researcher who wishes for his product or service to earn money, must make it clear whether he wants to learn something beside medicine, biotechnology etc., in private business there is a lot of things that are by far not related to science, but economics, law, entrepreneurship, etc.. The doctor, who just wants to make his job, should not start as an entrepreneur. You need to understand that this other part takes probably the same amount of time than your job as a doctor; basically you have to have to learn another profession. You have to risk to start business, you have to understand all things that it requires, -says Dr. Sõritsa, -sometimes you have to give up something, sometimes face obstacles that you could not even imagine. Starting a business suits those people, who are willing to take charges, make own decisions and take responsibility for something. You make decisions and take responsibility for them. In some cases you will have to admit your loss and move on and not to keep bumping in to the wall, for instance when trying to establish subsidiary in Russia for six month, I had to admit that the bureaucracy is to high.

When you make business with other companies, even if it is a Bank that loan you money, may not meet their obligations. You have to have legislative knowledge behind you, if you do not have your own Legal Department , you might have to find a law firm and sign a contract, so you would always have someone who helps you with legislative issues and who is aware of your business. Because juridical advisory was really expensive, I did not use it, but I would not advise that kind of approach if you have researcher on your team, where patent and other issues may appear, - says Dr. Sõritsa, – the problems that may follow might bring even more expenses.

To find and keep clients you must provide added-value to them, you have to make clear that the service you provide or the product you sell, are better than your competitors. If you can not provide your clients what they need, you have to develop and complement existing products or find something additional, that would make you stand out in front of your competitors, - adds Andrei Sõritsa, - In order to compete with public authorities, we had the

offer better opportunities to our clients, than a state facility. In business you have always think up something new, to remain competitive, you must always keep on going.
You have to follow customer perspective, understand what they want and what they are willing to pay for, not to think which way is optimal for you. You have to examine clients and partners feedback, research international market on how is that services provided there, is there something that you could implement to provide added-value, you have to try different ways and solutions and watch how clients react, it is like putting together a puzzle, - concludes Dr. Sõritsa. To reach clients from abroad, Elite provides information on their web-site in 5 different languages, we have hired people who negotiate with Swedes in Swedish etc..
The place to find partners, suppliers and clients are medical conferences and fairs, but in my opinion there isn't any written rule that would apply to all organizations, - thinks Sõritsa, - It depends on every single company there is. I have no experience in ordering databases or market research, because I think that personalized research is the best way to find exactly what you need. Some companies say that they will prepare for you a grate marketing system, but they do not guarantee that your sales will increase. Entrepreneurs should consider very well on where they should advertise themselves to reach the right target groups.
One way of advertisement is social media, but I personally do not trust it, and do not think that it suitable for a clinic to advertise itself there, because there are several unethical schemes that are used in social media, - presumes Dr. Sõritsa, - we stay away from it and instead collect feedback from our customers and lots of them are willing to share their experience in our clinics and add it to our web-site. I think that this is the most reliable and strong source of information.
You always have to look further and think about the future and if you have some ideas you have to develop them.

STEL LAT

Zvezda-Don was founded in Kiev in November of 1993 but in June of 1999 all the company and its branches together with few patents and know-how was acquired by a Latvian newly started company STEL LAT. Old company got renamed and incorporated to STEL LAT as part of it. Later whole Company got one name.
Being himself an inventor and wealthy businessman an owner knew what kind of the future revenues if properly developed this bio-tech business will possibly deliver.
STEL LAT currently employs 66 specialists worldwide and some 12 associates in 7 countries.

Business needs was to create unprecedented, ultra effective B2B marketing communications environment in four languages: Russian, English, Spanish and Chinese. Engage with a rapidly growing number of bio-tech scientists worldwide, while promoting a catalogue of seven of own products alongside with various projects in different stages of development.

Main objectives were: to increase campaign deliverability, relevancy, reactivity and sales efficiency. Reduce complexity, timescales and cost ratios. Improve adherence to preferred techniques and procedures.

Expected results were following:

- Reduced new campaign creation time by minimum 25 percent, saving minimum 14 staff days/year as campaigns are in progress.
- To achieve email opening rates of 12 percent and click-throughs of circa 3 percent as a modest goal.
- Email deliverability rates now typically exceed 89 percent and are a must.

STEL LAT decided to join efforts with professionals from ITDEALS Ltd in order to win healthy B2B marketing results by using their unique methods of newest IT technologies in combination with very progressive web solutions. The first question on the first meeting was to identify who is the client of company, what products / service and how do they look for.

Apparently this had to be yet crystallized, there was a basic speculation, only a vague idea of how do people look for what STEL LAT can offer. Work begun in order to find essential answers to these, basically simple questions.

STEL LAT itself is a producer and distributor of research-grade Bio Tech solutions with offices located in the Latvia and Ukraine. The company produces and monitors distribution of its own and many third party produced Bio Tech solutions to academic and commercial users in 15 countries. With an online catalogue of so far over 133 products, STEL LAT covers many of disciplines including cancer, immunology and neuroscience. The company's vision is to build the largest online Medical Bio Tech solutions resource in Latin America while also ensuring that the all products are of high quality and commercially viable. Some 120 new products are expected to be added to the catalogue every year for next 3-4 years.

Asked, what was the first challenge?

"Each of our customers is a specialist and our challenge is to generate timely content that's specific to their field of activity," said owner of STEL LAT. "Only by seeing the subject matter as directly relevant to them, will an individual open it, read it and perhaps click-through to the STEL LAT website. That is exactly what we need at stage one. In due time we will find system how to attract this particular individual. No matter what, a forthcoming customer wants to read on other fields on our website. Information has to be properly "injected" and not let to hang somewhere. On stage two an interaction begins to form. Stage three is communication and first feedbacks for system and monitoring tools."

STEL LAT main channel of outbound customer communication is email. Rarely do they use Registered Mail or phones. Customers can opt-in via the website to receive newsletters on their area of research, product updates, and other marketing content such as regional news of the field, promotions and invitations to STEL LAT sponsored scientific conferences and other professional events.

What was the problem?

In its early days, the company developed a proprietary email marketing application which allowed marketers to semi-automate rudimentary segmented campaigns. Requiring SQL database query skills for any advanced segmentation and the ability to write HTML code, a professional IT support was often if not permanently required. As the company increased its product range, customer base and the number of campaigns it needed to run, it began to reach the limits of its in-house capabilities tools, the shortage of assigned professionals became obvious.
Reporting was limited too. Although all clicks and IP were both measurable, open rates and deliverability could at best only be roughly estimated, making it hard to direct improvements. Real-time statistics were vague in nature, lacked analytics and additional info's.

Additionally, the email application could not support the marketing best practices STEL LAT wanted to introduce, such as highly refined content personalization, campaign testing and in time event-triggered emails.

We have been frequently asked - how and where did we find the solution provider for such a complicated business?

"We needed a smarter, more user-friendly and scalable solution to meet our requirement for delivering personalized content to our rapidly expanding customer base," said owner of STEL LAT. "We evaluated a number of offers, special tools, but were at first disappointed by their inflexibility and lack of sophistication. Then, after months of research we discovered ITDEALS and their solutions, it happened on an IT conference in Lecco, Italy. Negotiations started immediately while in Italy and continued for several months as basis for the selected cooperation model was B2B scheme.

ITDEALS was the only platform to meet company needs on functionality and scalability and it offers impressive one-to-one personalization capabilities rather than just simple segmentation and ITDEALS is highly configurable and while very sophisticated, its user friendly for marketers. It also uses a minimal data for web traffic – thus letting to quickly read messages with 3-50 pages of MS Word or different attachments on say: Smart Phones, Laptops and Tablets.

For STEL LAT, there was also its data management policy to consider. Data is accumulating and piling-up by a day. The company maintains a central database in Riga offering a high quality and very detailed single customer view serving multiple enterprise applications and tasks. STEL LAT wanted its marketing automation solution to draw upon that existing data source for advanced segmentation of its customer base.

“We found that most marketing automation tools mandate use of their own proprietary data mart and servers, which would have meant undertaking a complex integration exercise,” said owner of STEL LAT. “ITDEALS offered us the freedom to couple directly with our existing customer database; saving considerable expense and the potential risks of data integration should it ever go wrong.” This also made possible to mirroring servers – if necessary even worldwide. Next step will be Cloud-Solutions for registered users and associates.

So, how did STEL LAT act?

They took the risk of being a pilot for newly made applications and open code software. From first hours of cooperation developers learned from people from Bio-tech Company that even the tiniest mistake or misspelling is not an option here. Either there is the 100% quality or nothing at all. Also IT developers had something to be thought to Bio-tech people e.g. that there are at least a few more options to do the same thing good or even better.

Local implementation was phased over period of eighteen months starting with the Russian region and progressing across the company’s worldwide operations and separately for China and India. STEL LAT engaged ITDEALS Professional Services to help them to optimize more complex processes such as automated one-to-one content personalized product updates. Translation department was created to avoid any outsourcings (they always went wrong) for scientific linguistics that was capable of Trans-translate from/to 10 languages at the same time. For example: usually it takes 2 to 5 days to have document originally written in Russian to publish on web in 6 languages keeping style and most importantly the contents intact. STEL LAT also committed to develop a senior e-Commerce employee skilled in campaign process design towards becoming a ‘ITDEALS super-user’ entrusted with building workflows and supporting the company growing team.

If asked; was there any benefit at all?

Captured as workflow elements, STEL LAT’s marketers can now simply build a performance optimized, one-to-one campaign by selecting the relevant workflow items. No input from IT is ever required. Finalization of a visual, textual, grammar and stylistics is a matter of few work shifts not weeks as it easily could have happen before. “We now have a central point of control over all of our campaigns,” said STEL LAT owner. “ITDEALS enables us to define, capture and enforce best-practice available for process workflows including for proper proofing and final authorizations. Clients do appreciate all new options offered as available to them.

The STEL LAT’s campaigns now run on ITDEALS developed “Stella Beta” platform and its web versions with following to name the few features:

- Automated one-to-one personalized product updates to enable customers to keep up with products that are relevant to their research
- Research field updates: 7-14 different newsletters per month, with personalized, multilingual relevant news and offers per segment and region.
- Monthly regional updates and feedback message board.
- Specific only promotions targeted to key accounts and specialists.
- Event-triggered messages: e.g. new customer welcomes and purchase follow-ups
- Event invites and member discounts for: STEL LAT presentations and conference/seminar alerts to the specific customers that would find them relevant and schedulable in advance.

At STEL LAT, high-level personalization variables include the individual’s discipline, specific area of expertise, and their geography. STEL LAT’s international offices and audiences are supported by ten language options and reflect cultural preferences. Much finer personalization is achieved through analysis of each customer’s clicks while surfing on our web resources and history of purchases. Some very special techniques were implemented here help both client and to “feed” our databases. Considered essential by STEL LAT, campaign reporting is another of ITDEALS strengths. The accessibility and ease-of-use of campaign reports has enabled STEL LAT to analyze overall campaign performance and trends guiding continual improvement, also used it to test the effect on deliverability and reactivity of using different variables for the same email. Results were impressive.

What results were achieved?

STEL LAT is enjoying many benefits from its *ITDEALS* investment:

- Now e-mail deliverability rates typically exceed 86 percent, which on its own is a good result. STEL LAT's deliverability rates with several very large organizations employing thousands of customer contacts are up by 400 percent though using a technique known as 'throttling' to control the number of emails sent hourly to any one domain name.
- Improved targeting and one-to-one personalization of subject titles and content and better formatting are also stimulating campaign opening rates of 18.4 percent. Click through rates now average 9.6 percent.
- The manual input to prepare one-off campaigns such as the regional, product and research field updates has fallen by some 39 percent. While it took perhaps 8 hours to create a campaign before, it takes around 3 hours now; saving 48 staff days per year. Resulting in tens of thousands of saved money. Flexibility is priceless, no time is wasted – all works as clockwork. So, in other words this is very positive collaboration.

What's next?

In the near future STEL LAT will improve marketing return on investment further. For example, finer personalization and 'next-best-offer' features will be enabled by utilizing further degrees of intelligence gleaned from very recent interactions and case studies. More event-triggered campaigns will be run too, linked to interaction behavior of customers and maybe, just maybe also to implementation of versions of artificial intellect that will be used in near future to utilize ultimately complicated tasks on big data massive such as "Stella Beta" is going to grow to be in 3 to 5 years from now.

B2B marketing options will eventually play a lead role in future interrelations between new businesses and establishment on the web.

CITSONGA

„CITSONGA" Ltd is a company that was founded in early 1995 in Riga, Latvia by a group of young and then yet unknown enthusiasts. All three of them had come from different countries, mentalities and different fields of specialties; one from Medical Equipment Engineering, one from Economics and the other one from Medical Research Institute. Probably, needless to mention that each of them were and still are very perspective scholars in its own field. Interest in development of Biotechnology was uniting them and providing grounds for joined efforts to create and develop unique products.

Creation process and description of product:

By working on various projects with colleagues from various countries, step by step they came across some interesting scientific facts that were somehow forgotten, not used and even unfairly suppressed. Newly obtained and later for years cross-examined knowledge combined with hard work and dedication made unique "TMT"* (Technology for Medical Treatment) possible for future development and a gradual implementation. TMT stands for: a super progressive method of anesthetically and Bio-technologically operated body treatment with almost zero risk for health of even seriously ill patients. Since a risk is so low, practically it is only a theoretical. Over the time there was none of lethal outcomes, injuries or complications during application of TMT. On the contrary, all patients reported immediate relief from pains and overall better feeling. A special system for diagnostics were created and implemented. The system uses the ultra modern Bio-technological methods of scanning, testing and multilevel 72 hour evaluations to determinate if patient is fit to undergo TMT or not. CITSONGA keeps a track record of caring, human and never risking patient's life. For those who are accepted for TMT procedure, a few and relatively inexpensive TMT procedures did much better and safer effect on patient, rather than many years on prescription drugs spent in expensive hospitals followed by rare or insignificant improvement in general condition.

All together, for creation of TMT it took 15 years in making, 10 years in development and 5 years in clinical and deepened testing.

The first plan:

Owners of TMT though, that with product that is so special and so cheap in operation to sell it there would be no problem at all. It was intended and planned to sell all exclusive rights and patents to local Ministry of Health and Commonwealth.
It was not so at all. There was no adequate information on TMT, even specialists did not know anything about it. So, for some strange reasons certain opposition was there. However, all the obligatory licensing and certification went smoothly. It all took four years

of bureaucracy. Clinical tests with involvement of numerous of independent laboratories and strict follow-up of all medical histories later provided a 96% positive decision in voting of licensing commission. CITSONGA obtained all legal licenses to use TMT in European Union. For ten years owners of CITSONGA was investing considerable resources into development of TMT, built a small but 100% their own clinic, selected and trained a professional medical staff, participated in many scientific conferences and exhibitions.

Modesty and discipline:

Owners themselves leaded a modest life, never traveling in first class, driving simple but safe cars. Never borrowed money and never took bank credit. For communications using only the cheapest mobile operators and internet providers, today VOIP (voice over internet protocol) is a normal way of their communication too. One thing surprised many e.g. at CITSONGA they never have had a Fax machine – from day one only e-mails were in use. Should somebody want to send a fax – it was to be done through PC. Not that they could not afford a kind of luxuries but that were the discipline and a tool for progressive team relationship build-up within CITSONGA. Their slogan was: Thinking ahead of 21st century.

At the same time the wellbeing of all the employees were at the highest level. CITSONGA employed about 32 highest level professionals and one handicapped person as a minivan driver. Positive attitude was what kept all processes rolling. No “Team Build-Up” events or funny seminars ever were attended by those 32 men and woman. Self-sufficient individuals are what made a team.

Creation of product awareness and restructuration of projects:

Then during fast development at certain point it become also important to create a positive Product Awareness, but how to properly do that. Company with exception to local State Revenue Service and few other institutions is basically unknown to wider public. So are owners and for the most part management. Unrecognized company with product called TMT cannot go to TV, Radio and printed media as all it is wrong. A Dozen publications in different magazines took place. To say that it made a resonance would be wishful thinking. One short clip on YouTube gave a hundreds of times more feedback than more 21 articles in printed media in Baltic States. Questions, critics and patients came in.

Then strategic decision was made in early 2008 e.g. to close all activities on researches for two other products and to concentrate only onto international sales of TMT as a real life saver and affordable solution for patients that otherwise are incurable or fatally ill. By that time already over 2000 clinical trials were performed all safe and all with good results. Other two products: "ALE"* (Active Limb Enhancements) and "EOE"* (Enhanced Ophthalmology Equipment) got stopped and offered still not finalized for sale to some mediators that previously helped CITSONGA to buy special precision equipment from Canada. Set price did not attract any buyers, then in negotiations CITSONGA's advisor found an unexpected solution – he advised to take the risk and to lose-off immediately many of interested in buying companies and to tenfold the price for each of offered products and to set deadline within 9 months or a deal will be concluded with Chinese Company, that was bargaining already for a year for EOE product. This made the unexpected surge in interest, immediately requests for detailed description of both products came in. Representatives begun to arrive to meetings in Riga and Tallinn within three months already 4 purchasing offers came in. Final deals got concluded with Canadians, financial situation for year 2009 was very good indeed.

As for owners, now with enough resources and free hand they had similar views on how to contribute their expertise to this unique discovery of TMT and as they themselves call it "a project of a lifetime". Fact assessment shoved, that according to statistics, own analysis and experience it appeared that for next two to seven years in Baltic States there are only about three to four hundred diagnosis are expected to be made as also to be suitable for one or repeated TMT procedures.
In terms of absolute figures it is about or less than 0, 00933 percent of annual patients in China alone.

Strategic decisions:

In late 2008 the begun work on the product name. Substitute for abbreviation "TMT" was needed and pricing policies needed to be calculated. Decision was taken to go on international sales only. Good personal and excellent marketing skills were needed to move forward with TMT. With product so unique, cheap, and simple to apply and with enormous benefit for patient – it was difficult to choose the right way to promote the product and suitable policies for marketing of it. Any regular e.g. usual marketing system just did not work in any way it was expected to work. This duality of situation where on one hand we have a unique product but on the other hand absolutely zero of marketing tools to develop interest from potential buyers and/or developers.

CITSONGA hired marketing PR and Business Communication Company with a well known name. Nevertheless, as time passed marketing results were poor, involved big additional costs and purchasing services from these well known companies appeared to be totally useless. Annual and monthly consultancy fees soon become too hard to bear. Thousands and tens of thousands got spent but over the time there were only two of more or less perspective contacts added to the list of potential buyers. In fact it, owners concluded: is very hard to sell technology that can be and often are compared to a miracle. Using ambitious PR Company employing overpaid, vainglorious “want to be” freshly cooked “specialists” just did not align with a product that is made to save lives.

After years in making and “polishing” the technology itself was finally completed, branded with a new name and secured with several international patents. All calculations done, prices known and books closed. Intensive testing took place even while paperwork for patents was still in process. Clinical tests were giving excellent results both in Latvia and Russia. During tests one more discovery was made, subsequently it was also secured by Local Patent. Patients came from all the Europe and even from Japan. Only few came from Baltic States.

Going own way:

Without any advertisements, publicity or future cooperation with so called “Marketing Specialists” and/or *pushers and movers* from big name marketing companies, CITSONGA on its own, using existing Canadian contacts, managed to attract patients to their clinic in Riga from many different countries mostly for a single TMT procedure. Market research showed that similar but by far simpler compared to TMT medical methods from 1985 are actually Federal Drugs Administration approved in United States of America, which alone gave a huge boost for negotiations with potential buyers from PRC, Brazil, Qatar and Venezuela. The simple fact that basically FDA has beforehand approved all the principles that are laid in foundation of TMT opened US market too.

A generous success fee (real game changer):

Owners offered 7, 9 percent share from final selling sum to a person or a company that will find exclusive buyer for TMT. In this scenario - deadline was not set also a magnitude of offered on sale product was unprecedented. In doing so the word got spread and one fine day the proposal came in to attend informal meetings in London with representatives of Venezuelan and Qatar business elite. Later a special agreement was signed; parties expressed their views on details of transferring TMT to group of foreign entrepreneurs. All meetings were held behind closed doors and in strictly secured confidence. As the result, CITSONGA sold all exclusive rights for distribution of TMT to entrepreneurs that wished to remain anonymous.

Attitude and Sensitiveness (evaluation of risks):

In fact and since the channeling of all information was done via already established contacts - this deal was B2B Direct Marketing in action. Reliance on marketing expertise and ability of some outsourced company is probably normal and good enough for many businesses but as we reviewed above it is not for unique technology. Even distinguished specialists failed to understand the complexity of matter and seriousness of subject. Their ridiculousness in offered interpretations and optional marketing strategies even harmed the movement of project as such. It is worth to admit here that a lot of Sensitive information is circulating during process, even partial disclosure of which would jeopardize success of continuous development and realization of project in whole, sale of product would be in danger. Hired marketing people would have to agree to very serious standards of non disclosure and consequences if failed to be loyal. Most of them cannot provide and sustain such an attitude in general. Their common sense discipline was far lesser than was expected from a grown people.

BIOTEST BALTIKA

In the beginning of the story of Biotest Baltica one must say: this company has had nothing – just a humble beginning. Founded in 2005 in Riga, Latvia, in a one rented room with LVL 1000 in start-up funds, today Biotest Baltica is serving some 25 institutes' researchers, and various Biotech Companies, Hospitals, Clinics, Service companies, across Scandinavia and former Soviet Union states.

Goals for the future:

While commendable, Biotest Baltica focus on aiming to becoming the Scandinavian best biotest company could not prevent growing consumer preference for traditional, e.g. well established and common options. As it had done to hundreds of other industries before, advancing technology that Biotest Baltica represented did in fact threatened the future of old school biotest labs. Consumers increasingly used mail-in option for sending samples, online bill pay, wire transfers, and other electronic methods to pay Biotest Baltica practical and/or analytical services. The calculated result: Demand for conventional labs began to decline, shrinking at the rate of 2%-3% a year with no ever going back.

Though, most consumers represented the ultimate end user of Biotest Baltica test results to customers in clinics, institutes and other non-specialized labs. Historically, consumers ordered checks and analysis of samples for personal and business needs through the several specialized labs. The consumer and the one who actually require the checking of particular sample never interacted. While biotech checking and report printing represented for a most part a basic lab service their customers required, Scandinavian own labs generally viewed it as unimportant, boring, and a commodity; they saw little difference between Biotest Baltica and its competitors. Except for price that was 3-4 times lower in Riga than in for example in Denmark. Decision makers at hospitals and private clinics looked for service providers who would provide mistake-free checks, easy to read reports and layouts for their customers at the best prices and in due time - end of story. They certainly didn't view their checking programs as a vehicle freighted with local labs going out of business and loosing of potential profits. With an industry in a state of new implementations and regulations which will make global changes and primary customers who check analysis as a commodity, the first years of twenty-first century did not look all that bright for competitors.

Unprecedented approach:

Starting from scratch, egger to change what, at the time, seemed certain and unpleasant future, Biotest Baltica director, and her senior management team took an unusual step: They decided to throw everything they thought they knew about the lab business—its customers, its end users, the best marketing approach—out the window. Driven by a relentless pursuit of new ideas, they refused to allow old thinking and entrenched habits to box them in and even went so far as to scrap the company's long-standing policies. New level of business understanding came in circulation. Some employees who could not adopt had to leave, others blended-in, and newcomers had to do both e.g. leave some box-thinking behind and blend-in.

From the very beginning, management team first acknowledged that Biotest Baltica could not stop the decline of the lab check industry in general. Growing number of mostly basic (not complicated) checks faced competition not only from Scandinavia, as well as from new member states of EU to use old methods, so lab usage wasn't likely to grow, no matter what, all because, there was not enough facilities to accommodate modern labs. That conclusion, however, begged the question: Was there something that Biotest Baltica offered (or could offer) consumers?

Attracting more by organized feedbacks:

Next, the team wondered, given the gradual decline in the core checking products, how could they help to solve issues larger than just running a strong check/analysis merchandising program—improving the Healthcare image in the eyes of their clients, for instance, or improving their customer's satisfaction—and thereby move Biotest Baltica up the value chain? They knew that, like any other business group, its customers wanted their companies to grow, thrive and lower costs. They wouldn't think of Biotest Baltica as anything more than just another lab vendor unless the firm offered a solution to a significant problem. So management team wondered how they might work on behalf of their clients to solve problems beyond just sample checking, analytics and reports.

After great debate and discussion, the entire team unanimously resolved to channel the energy and passion of the division toward answering these questions and more in a relentless effort to make its customers more robust competitors. Their vision: We will not rest until we have become the most trusted, valued business partner for Medical, Scientific and Analytical services in Baltic, Scandinavia and modern hospitals in West region of former USSR. With this new *raison d'être* as inspiration, Biotest Baltica set about the next phase of transformation.

It took the courage of convictions to do the following.
Most companies, both B2B and consumer, tend to make assumptions about customers' wants, needs, problems, and motivations to buy. Some get lucky and their assumptions hold true. Most don't, however, and their businesses falter and fail. Unwilling to leave anything to chance—the future of the division and hundreds of jobs relied on making the right decision, after all— Biotest Baltica decided to test its assumptions by talking to consumers and Healthcare representatives, and really listening to what they had to say.

Working with marketing consulting firm Cesinex, Biotest Baltica launched one of the largest and most sophisticated strategic marketing studies ever undertaken in the lab services industry among consumers and Healthcare. Biotest Baltica learned as much as it could about what consumers want when it comes to lab checks and other analytical service opportunities. This research uncovered a sizable group of consumers who were very excited about buying more services, do more checks with different pictures, colors, layouts, and prints that allowed them to express their unique mentalities and conditions.

Meanwhile, research among competitors revealed that, while most didn't feel particularly excited about "world-class checking and analysis," a large group of decision makers could barely contain themselves regarding their need for assistance in creating unparalleled customer experiences. Many clients of different labs also admitted they struggled with customer relationship management.

What about results?

The results of this study overturned years of conventional wisdom about the commoditized state of lab operation. A proportionally large group of consumers wanted more than just the standard checks and report experiences offered by their clinics and Doctors. And a large group of individual clientele wanted a vendor kind quick-in/quick-out system, which could help them deliver exceptional customer experiences. Biotest Baltica realized it could leverage its knowledge about consumer's expertise and put an infrastructure in place to help customers with their biggest want—creating better customer experiences. Biotest Baltica believed it could handle more than just lab testing and reporting, the fulfillment needs of customers. It could "create" the entire customer relationship when it came to lab checks, delivering an experience so extraordinary that it forever influenced the consumer perception of dedicated lab. Delivering what customers wanted with a phenomenal experience would bring in higher profits for the clinics and ultimately win more business for Biotest Baltica - all while simultaneously increasing the end users' satisfaction and perception of their financial institution's brand.

A new, improved customer experience:

Biotest Baltica immediately set a Strategy in Action about transforming itself from a check lab and report "printer" to a sophisticated lab check "retailer." The company maintained its methodical approach to transformation, deciding to test new service concepts before a real-world launch. Biotest Baltica presented a breakthrough concept dubbed with Premium Services to a sample of client. Powered by the richly detailed consumer segment profiles that included information about what kind of check/analytical products different consumers wanted, how they wanted to order them, how they wanted to be communicated with, and what price they were willing to pay, Biotest Baltica would handle consumer orders and the entire customer lab check purchase experience. The concept explained how Healthcare institutions could streamline their operations by letting Biotest Baltica provide "the right check products, through the right channels, and at the right price." It also demonstrated how the service would increase the profitability of the customer service buying program and improve the customer experience with the service provider.

Reaction:

Clinics greeted Biotest Baltica Permium program with open arms during the testing period, so Biotest Baltica rolled out the service in 2009. Premium Program contained additional checks from the same one sample (be it a Toxicology or other field). By adding one more test to report – the whole report got 30 to 60% more information for the same money. The company planned a series of expos featuring talks by leading thinkers in marketing and change management to underscore the importance of understanding customer needs. There was also a multimedia presentation that introduced the consumer segment profiles, including check needs and proclivities, as well as their profitability to the institution. A comprehensive explanation was given of how Biotest Baltica Premium program worked and the benefits it provided to Healthcare institutions, such as increasing profitability. Clients felt so confident in Biotest Baltica capabilities after attending an expo, they signed up for the service and allowed Biotest Baltica to speak directly to customers on their behalf—an impressive first in the Healthcare services industry. Biotest Baltica Premium program quickly exceeded sales objectives and today exceeds the LVL 2 million marks.

Of course Biotest Baltica didn’t stop there and if, by some miracle, a B2B firm develops a compelling positioning, the marketing communications program usually falls flat. Usually the program includes a new trade show booth with brief description of know-how and “can do” approach, new collateral materials (e.g., brochures, fact-sheets, and the like), and a training program for sales reps—pretty ho-hum for the customer or prospect. There are also millions of B2B case studies, containing usually 300 to 500 meaningless words. Biotest Baltica, however, was determined not to let the strategy fall flat because of a business as usual marketing communications program.

Once again, Biotest Baltica senior management threw out everything they thought they knew about marketing communications including B2B.

Building a community:

Taking an entirely new approach to B2B marketing, Biotest Baltica decided to produce a gripping array of events exclusively for its Healthcare customers where they learned about building better customer relationships. Biotest Baltica Knowledge Exchange Forum (KEF), launched in late 2010 as the cornerstone of the company's B2B marketing program, combining an ongoing series of events and hands-on activities, including insightful articles, web seminars, and quarterly Skype conferences written and given by leading marketing authors and customer experience consultants. „Biotest Baltica is committed to making your brand the best it can be in the eyes of your consumer," explains the KEF Web site where customers can download articles, mp3 files of speeches, some videos and register for the seminars.

Building on KEF, in March 2010, Biotest Baltica held the first Knowledge Exchange Collaborative, bringing together a select group of customers and leading academics to discuss approaches and tools for improving customer experiences at Lab services. Held at medical schools and leading universities around the country, and hosted by leading academics in marketing and service quality, the collaborative will tackle different customer experience issues, develop solutions, and even do some in-market testing of solutions before sharing findings with the larger Biotest Baltica client base.

Results again exceeded expectations. After attending a KEF event, 87% of customers have indicated they view Biotest Baltica as a strategic partner, as opposed to a commodity vendor, and 89% report they are more likely to do business with Biotest Baltica or similar Company.

Final words:

Certain business Transformations took place. Thanks to brave, forward-thinking managers, Biotest Baltica Lab Services transformed itself from a lowly check lab to a powerhouse of analytical lab check, report retailer and valued partner to Healthcare industry across the country and former USSR. The willingness of company management to start with a completely clean slate is truly something for the record books. Biotest Baltica could easily have become yet another casualty of a shrinking and commoditizing industry, but instead it's driving the future of the company and becoming the great stuff of business legend.

SUMMARY

The B2B Marketing community has been humbled by the recent recession. This economic crisis has forced marketers to operate with limited resources, while facing a need to produce a higher level of quality leads than ever before. Through budget cuts and increased expectations, the organizations that persevered were the ones who effectively applied the most efficient marketing tactics for every stage of the sales funnel, from lead generation to sales conversion, and then closed the loop with sound marketing analytics for continual improvement.

B2B organizations face buying cycles of varying complexities, but at the core of all buying cycles lay three distinct commonalities: Prospects, leads and customers. In the prospective phase of the buying cycle, it is essential to efficiently identify the most effective inbound and / or outbound marketing strategies for your audience and execute these tactics efficiently. In the lead stage of the buying cycle, organizations must learn to define, automate and improve on their marketing processes of communications, nurturing and lead scoring in order to enable optimal sales efficiencies. A marketer's job is not complete in the final stage of the buying cycle, where customer retention and creating brand loyalty are essential practices in maximizing the lifetime value of each customer.

Today, the B2B marketing community is encompassed by optimism. With signs of a potentially improving economy, organizations are taking the lessons they've learned during the recession and are applying them with increased budgets for various marketing tactics. The key to success for these organizations will be improving their marketing efficiencies in every stage of the buying cycle, from prospects to leads to loyal customers, and then closing the loop with sound marketing analytics for continued improvement.[18]

[18] Jen Doyle, Senior Research Analyst, MarketingSherpa
http://www.scribd.com/doc/47092436/2011-B2B-Marketing-Benchmark-Report-Excerpt

SOME LINKS FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF B2B MARKETING

http://www.europages.org/

http://www.b2bmarketingzone.com/

http://www.b2binternational.com

http://www.b2bmarketing.net

http://www.btobonline.com

http://www.silverpop.com/index.html

HANDBOOKS AND WHITE PAPERS

http://books.google.ee/books?id=JfPVXQOLAWsC&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22business+to+business+marketing%22&source=bl&ots=cLN6YCCmFp&sig=ttcd74iO9J0K5eqDpq1MvD1z3rg&hl=et&ei=fENITJ6nCMugsQbelLW3Dw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CCwQ6AEwBjgK#v=onepage&q&f=true

http://www.bly.com/content/B2BMktgHdbk.pdf

http://www.1stdirect.com/goldmine/Premium/Docs/B2B-eBook.pdf

http://www.b2binternational.com/assets/whitepapers/pdf/b2b_marketing.pdf

http://www.silverpop.com/downloads/white-papers/Silverpop-FromNamesandSubjectLines.pdf

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MarketingSherpa handbooks provide research-supported best practices for improving the performance of marketing programs, and to provide a curriculum for self-instructed and professional career advancement training programs. Handbooks include case studies, methodologies, best practices, worksheets and data to support recommended practices.

http://www.marketingsherpa.com/exs/BtoBHandbookExcerpt.pdf

http://www.marketingsherpa.com/B2BMarketingExcerpt2010.pdf

http://www.marketingsherpa.com/Wisdom2010.pdf http://www.scribd.com/doc/47092440/2011-Email-Marketing-Benchmark-Report-Excerpt

http://www.scribd.com/doc/47092436/2011-B2B-Marketing-Benchmark-Report-Excerpt

etc.

VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nTkBhsUIRQ&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCJBL4YCgEM&NR=1

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOpmQbmKChA&feature=related

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WocwZMYrdM

etc.

CASE STUDIES; BEST PRACTICE:

http://www.b2bm.biz/knowledgebank/More-Insight-and-Analysis/

SOCIAL MARKETING

http://www.b2bento.com/

http://www.socialmarketingforum.net/2010/11/a-good-reason-to-invest-in-b2b-marketing-content-sales/

http://www.socialmarketingforum.net/category/social-media/

http://www.aggregage.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/B2B-Blogging-Trends-in-2011.pdf

http://www.designdamage.com/how-to-use-google-and-twitter-to-find-your-customers/

http://www.designdamage.com/how-to-integrate-email-marketing-seo-and-social-media/

http://www.designdamage.com/5-keys-to-incorporate-social-media-in-your-business/

etc.

TRAINIGS/EVENTS/CONFERENCES

http://www.sherpastore.com/B2BMarketingSummit11.html

http://www.b2bmarketingforum.nl/

http://www.b2bento.com/b2bento-event-riding-the-social-media-wave/

http://isbm.smeal.psu.edu/professional-development/social-media-for-b2b-leveraging-social-tools-and-networks-for-stronger-customer-connections-and-accelerated-sales

http://www.forrester.com/events/eventdetail/0,9179,1491,00.html

http://www.istrategyconference.com/

http://www.istrategyconference.com/events/melbourne/