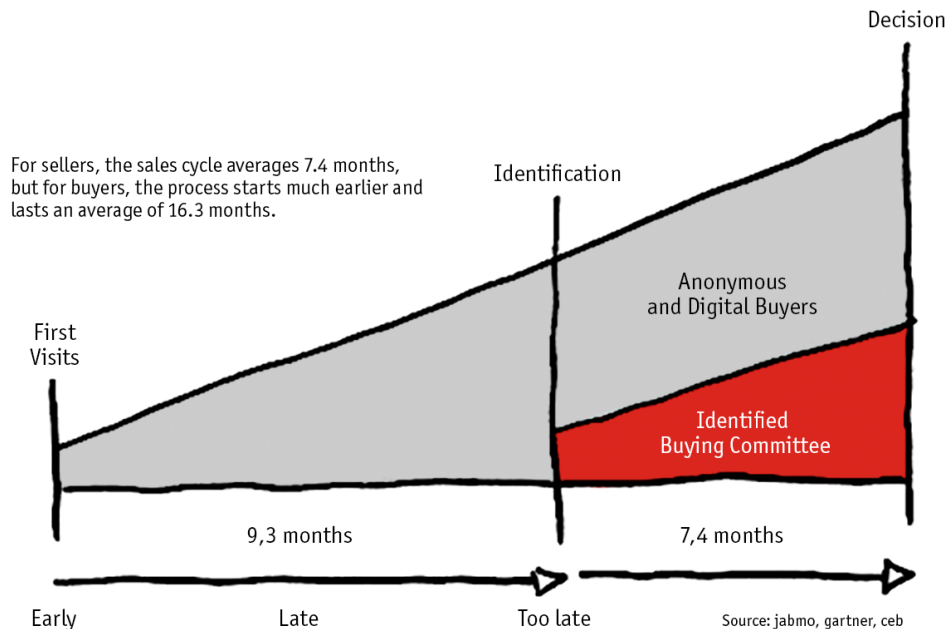


# WHAT DIGITAL LEVERS FOR INDUSTRIAL AND B2B MARKETING?

*In the b2b and industrial sectors, aligning sales, marketing (and communications) to achieve better deals has always been a tricky business. This is becoming increasingly important as B2B buying cycles grow longer, more fragmented, involve larger teams, and follow less linear patterns. Additionally, salespeople are entering the buying cycle at increasingly later stages. At the same time, a whole range of digital marketing tools is available, enabling us to create an optimized match between supply and demand.*

## ■ b2b markets: what's changing?

Industrial purchasing is undergoing a revolution. Your buyers are more numerous, more connected and more demanding than ever. They do their research online and want to remain incognito. They are reluctant to consult your sales staff until they have all the information they need to put together their purchasing file. Many decision-makers participate in the buying cycles, and the majority of them will remain anonymous. They consult numerous sources of information before making a decision. All these factors make sales cycles more complex, more opaque and more uncertain. Your sales staff, meanwhile, run the risk of arriving late - or even too late - in the buying process. The following graph (thanks @jabmo) well illustrates the situation.



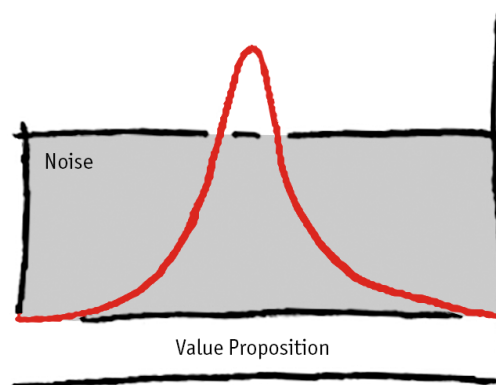
At the same time, a whole panoply of new techniques is emerging, profoundly transforming the sales function and the way we create and address a target audience. The marketing jargon (inbound marketing, account based marketing, sales enablement, programmatic advertising, etc.) and three-letter acronyms (SEM, SMM, ABM, etc.) can easily annoy, but they are in fact only the tip of the iceberg and represent an essential turning point in sales management. The change brings together the sales, marketing and communication functions around a single objective: to manage prospecting effectively in the digital age.

The key question is no longer whether to take the plunge, but rather how to allocate resources wisely without spreading yourself too thin. How do you select the most effective tools and channels? This crucial question is at the heart of today's strategies. Let's explore some of the answers together.

### ■ Branding and positioning: the keys to standing out from the crowd

Digitalisation rhymes with technology, but technology isn't everything, far from it. The digitalisation of communication has simply multiplied the potential reach of messages. But if everyone's voice is more powerful, that automatically translates into an intrusive din for the receiver. In a world full of communicators and communication, how can we make ourselves heard? Before speaking louder and saying the same thing, we need to ask ourselves what we have to say that's different. When the public arena is cluttered, it becomes imperative to differentiate yourself in order to get noticed. In other words, in today's b2b marketing, precise positioning and careful brand management are essential if you are to stand out from the crowd. A clear, credible brand makes it easier to cut through the noise. This is the basis of all effective digital marketing.

Working on your brand platform is not rocket science. We recommend a full brand audit to help you identify your strengths and areas of differentiation.



### ■ Content marketing: the sinews of war

The website remains the central hub of all your communication efforts. It's the first-place anonymous buyers turn to when they're looking for new products and new suppliers. It's your digital shop window and the hub of your marketing activities.

For a site to be successful, it must not only be referenced by search engines but also provide an irreproachable user experience. Rich, original and relevant content is a sine qua non for attracting and engaging your audience. Editorial content is of prime importance and should not be neglected. This is known as content marketing.

Content can take a variety of forms: themed articles (white papers, case studies, etc.), videos, webinars, podcasts, and much more. Adding interactive content such as quizzes or simulators can enrich the user experience. Once created, this content needs to be distributed via appropriate channels: social networks, newsletters or video platforms.

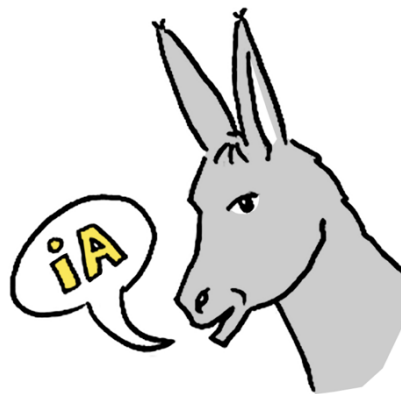


### ■ Artificial intelligence: a shortcut to personalisation and efficiency

Artificial intelligence (AI) is playing a growing and strategic role in b2b marketing, transforming traditional approaches by offering smarter and more effective tools. AI in b2b marketing offers innovative ways to target, engage and convert prospects, while making marketing operations more agile and data-driven. Its role will become even more central as the complexity of customer buying journeys and expectations increases.

One example is the use of personalised videos for mass prospecting. Thanks to AI solutions, it is now possible to create bespoke videos incorporating the name, function or even specific information of each prospect, while maintaining a professional and engaging appearance. These videos are generated automatically from CRM databases or marketing automation tools.

While the opportunities seem immense, it is worth remembering a fundamental law of marketing: value always evolves in inverse proportion to availability. It is therefore preferable to use artificial intelligence to improve quality rather than increase quantity. Applications evolve at the speed of light. We're keeping an eye on everything that offers real added value in b2b marketing.



### ■ Search Engine Optimization: shining a light

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a sub-discipline of SEM (Search Engine Marketing) and is of crucial importance in B2B marketing. The yellow pages are out, search engines are in. Nowadays, everyone searches the Internet, mainly via Google. But how does Google (or Bing or ...) choose to display certain results rather than others? In other words, how can I increase the likelihood of my page being displayed (and not that of my competitors)? This is what search engine optimisation, or SEO, is all about. The aim of SEO is to make relevant content appear higher up the search results. While SEO can target various search engines, it's most effective to begin with the dominant one—Google.

There is no limit to the effort you put into search engine optimisation. The first question to ask is what value you attach to it. If you run an online business and your customers come to your site through search

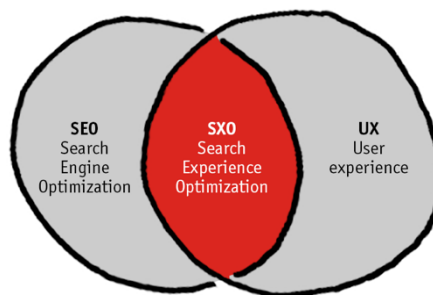
results, SEO is an absolute priority and an integral part of your business model - with a budget to match. But if you have long-term relationships with your customers and are operating in a niche market, the situation is certainly very different. That's why we start by looking at your business. We then carry out an audit to determine the strengths and weaknesses of your website. Based on the results, we draw up concrete proposals. These usually include technical and content improvements. If necessary, we can offer you a SEO maintenance contract.



### ■ Search Experience Optimization: beyond SEO

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) remains crucial, but it is evolving towards SXO (Search Experience Optimization). The aim is no longer just to appear at the top of the results, but also to offer an optimal user experience from the moment they arrive on the site. For example, loading speed and mobile-friendly navigation are now essential. The Core Web Vitals, a set of metrics defined by Google, are key indicators to monitor in order to improve the overall performance of your site.

Artificial intelligence is profoundly changing the way people search the Internet. Rather than selecting from a search engine results page (SERP), users now expect direct answers to their questions. How can we take these new trends into account? One thing is clear: a site that has been well thought out for humans is more and more likely to be favoured by AI.



### ■ Buyer intent detection: augmented vision

Who wouldn't like to know whether a potential new customer has already taken the bait and is perhaps looking for further information on your website? For Account Based Marketing, this information is even decisive for success: the sooner it is available, the sooner the sales team can intervene. But prospects like to keep a low profile. They prefer to remain incognito during their decision-making process and are unlikely to complete traditional lead forms. Typically, less than 5% of visitors complete them. However, it is now possible to compare the IP address and other invisible electronic signatures, left behind by visitors to your website without their knowledge, with well-stocked databases. This often enables identifying the visitor's company and gauging their interest in your brand (via scoring). The sales team has thus taken a major step forward in its detective work.

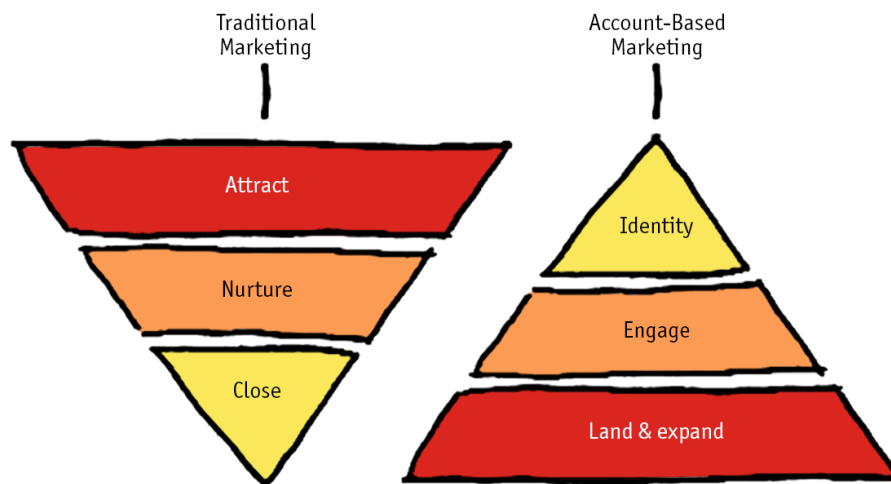
Buyer Intent Detection (or Intent Recognition) is a relatively new tool specific to b2b digital marketing. We examined a whole range of intent detection software. Data quality and user-friendliness were the decisive factors for us. Together with our partner, we offer to integrate their Intent Detection solution into your website. We can also advise you on data evaluation and its use in digital marketing (ABM and SMA).



■ **Account Based Marketing: the secret boots**

Account Based Marketing (ABM) is a strategic form of b2b marketing. It involves looking at relevant business customers, known as target accounts. These are identified, qualified and approached in a personalised manner. ABM is generally used to win customers among large and medium-sized businesses. It is useful for approaching clearly defined target groups with high-priced products or services. The prerequisites for success are the early identification of relevant prospects using appropriate techniques (buyer intent detection) and optimally coordinated marketing and sales activities. If they are combined, ABM can be a powerful lever for business development.

Account Based Marketing is demanding, both in terms of technical resources (SMA, Marketing Automation, Intent Detection, etc.) and organisation. In particular, the close interweaving of marketing and sales activities is not always easy for companies to handle. We can help you manage the change and implement the necessary technical infrastructure.



■ **Search Engine Advertising: meeting demand**

SEA stands for Search Engine Advertising, another sub-discipline of SEM (Search Engine Marketing). This refers to the distribution of paid text advertisements in search engines (Google, Bing, Baidu, etc.). It essentially involves defining certain keywords. As soon as these are consulted on the Internet, a text ad appears in the search results - if Google wants it to and your budget allows it.

In reality, however, the matter is a little more complicated. Inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, extensions, target groups, bids, data management, retargeting via display ads, etc. make search engine advertising a demanding area of b2b digital marketing.

As always in b2b marketing, the first step is to use common sense: what do you have to offer and who is it aimed at? What is the competition doing? Analysing your product, its environment and the competition provides us with information about the semantic field in which searches are conducted. On this basis, we define the positive keywords. Negative keywords (i.e. exclusion criteria) are used to eliminate non-specific requests.

Based on your value proposition, we develop different text ads that we place online and that we continually optimise. We build the landing page based on the value proposition and the objective. Trackers keep us (and you) informed of the target's activity on the landing page. When everything is ready, we launch the campaign and then optimise it on a weekly basis to achieve the best possible results.



### ■ Social Media Marketing: everything you need to know about your target audience

SMM stands for Social Media Marketing. It is becoming increasingly important in b2b marketing. The reason is technical: social media collect a lot of data and know more about us than many people want to admit - and can imagine. But that's what makes it so interesting for advertising, because intelligent algorithms can be used to create target profiles and compare them with existing data sets.

By skilfully using this method, SMM makes it possible to target very specifically those users who are most likely to be interested in a product. Over time, it is possible to collect extraordinarily powerful data and profiles of target groups. Retargeting and remarketing make it possible to target user profiles on a recurring basis via different channels and according to their activity. This is known as programmatic marketing or programmatic advertising.

A campaign on LinkedIn or Instagram is quickly created. But this has little to do with programmatic advertising. And it's far from being an effective strategy. Today, anyone who wants to use social networks to advertise is faced with a complex and ultimately costly machinery. A healthy return on investment requires technique, patience, creativity and strategic skills. And that's exactly what we can offer you! Starting with your value proposition, through ad creation and right up to programmatic advertising, we'll guide you through the digital jungle while keeping an eye on your KPIs.



### ■ Social Selling: building authentic relationships

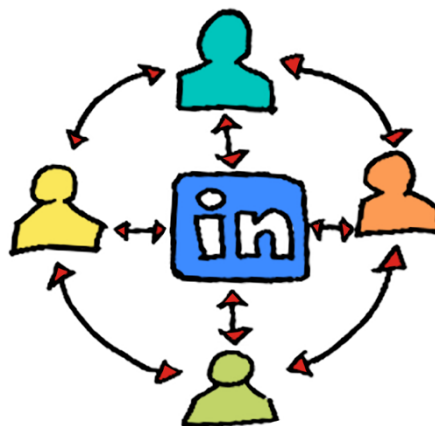
To maximise its effectiveness, Social Selling can be reinforced by a broader Social Media Marketing strategy. While Social Media Marketing aims to increase a brand's overall visibility by reaching a wide audience and generating opportunities, Social Selling focuses on more personal and targeted interactions with specific prospects. By combining these two approaches, you create both a strong presence on social networks and deeper relationships with your key prospects, optimising your sales efforts.

Social Selling has become an essential lever for sales teams. It's about using professional social networks, such as LinkedIn, to identify, understand and engage prospects in an authentic way. By sharing relevant content, participating in discussions and building trusting relationships, your sales team can position itself as experts and reinforce your company's credibility. Social Selling requires a strategic and consistent approach if it is to bear fruit.



### ■ Social media: or how not to get lost in it

Social networks blossom and fade at their own pace. Who is still talking about six degrees, Myspace or even Viadeo? With limited resources, a conservative approach is the way to go. TikTok and WeChat can wait. Even established networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, while certainly useful, require active community management to be effective, and therefore resources. LinkedIn, however, has become a cornerstone of the global professional landscape, invaluable for networking, prospecting, and showcasing expertise. It is the logical and tentacular extension of the institutional presence on the web to the personal and private space. It's time to fully leverage its potential.

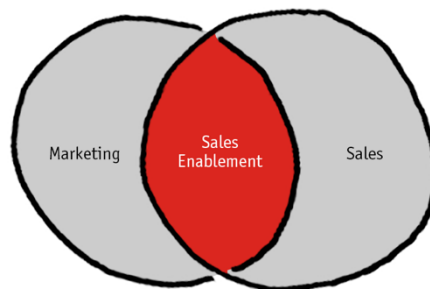


### ■ Sales enablement: closing the deal on the first meeting

In B2B marketing, 'Sales Enablement' refers to digital sales tools designed to support the sales team. Today, a laptop with a sales presentation is about as chic as a filing cabinet with presentation slides was twenty years ago: frontal, slow, obsolete. The digital revolution has not bypassed the sales function. A Sales Enablement App on a tablet can now be used to create elegant presentations that involve the

customer in a tactile way. Content is created centrally by marketing and distributed worldwide in the blink of an eye. Updated in real time, it ensures that messages are consistent. Integration with CRM systems and analysis of engagement data provide valuable insights for continually improving sales processes. Booting up the computer, fetching the files, establishing the connection, making room on the table: That was long ago. Just hold the tablet or, better still, put in in the hands of the person you're talking to.

We adapt your Sales Enablement App to your design rules, structure the data architecture, populate the App with relevant content and train your sales staff. We also integrate your interactive content, such as calculators and configurators. Of course, we're also on hand for maintenance. If required, we can link the application to your ERP, CRM or PIM systems.



#### ■ Online catalogue: how to multiply hooks

The online catalogue is a digital communication tool par excellence. It enriches your site and makes it more attractive, contributing to better organic referencing. As well as improving visibility, the online catalogue streamlines updating efforts. Managed from a back office, or better still, connected directly to your PIM (Product Information Management) tool, or even your ERP, much of the management can be automated. As well as saving time, this also benefits your brand image. Quote request forms, online currency calculators and configurators can complete the package. The step up to a fully-fledged e-commerce site is then easy to take, if required. Advanced content (3D files, drawings, technical manuals, etc.) can encourage spontaneous visitors to sign in or open an account. This is known as "gated content".



#### ■ Trade fairs: still relevant in the digital age?

Why talk about trade shows in a digital context? Because, like print advertising in the 90s, they are now subject to digital competition. Popular with many salespeople, trade shows are a sinkhole where no one wants to measure the real cost and return on investment: time spent, opportunity cost, direct and indirect costs, etc. So it's legitimate to wonder whether the money might not be better invested elsewhere. With the pandemic having taken its toll on the sector for two years, trade shows should today be seen more as a means of nurturing existing relationships, and much less as a means of establishing new contacts in a rapidly changing market. This raises the question of budget allocation. Post-pandemic digital marketing strategies have been devised, such as interactive 3D online experiences, immersive videos to engage



audiences remotely, the use of social networks and influencer marketing, not to mention the rise of webinars. But let's not forget one fundamental element: in an increasingly digital world, the human relationship is becoming increasingly rare... and therefore highly valuable.



#### ■ Webinars: how to escape boredom

Webinars are now ubiquitous in B2B marketing. They are an excellent way of engaging in conversation with remote target groups. What's more, they offer the potential to collect valuable new leads and receive direct feedback. Webinars can therefore be an important step prior to personal contact. And they are considerably cheaper than a video or attendance at a trade fair. So it's hardly surprising that webinars exploded during the pandemic. However, their success depends on quality: strong technical execution, engaging presentations, and interactivity are critical to minimizing drop-off rates. If a presentation is under-prepared and has only a few participants, it soon finds itself on its own.

A good webinar starts with the participants: Where does our value proposition lie, what do we have to say, why is it worth participating? To attract listeners, you then need to plan, advertise and invite them in a targeted way. Now comes in the preparation: a good presentation needs to be well thought through and attractively designed. Style is also important: why not an interview with a speaker rather than a monotone presentation? We also pay attention to the right technique, because poor acoustics spoil the best presentation.

If required, we can turn your webinar into a virtual trade fair, with group rooms, stands, round tables and plenary sessions.



#### ■ E-commerce in b2b: the train not to be missed

The digitalisation of the sales process (e-commerce in the broadest sense) is becoming an established feature of b2b marketing, even in areas where it seemed unthinkable just a few years ago. From request

for quotation through configuration to a complete offer, many sales processes are now managed digitally, directly via the website. Product data management using product information systems (PIM) and ERP connections for production and customer data represent a real competitive advantage and hold no secrets for SMEs. Online shops are not only profitable, they also make a massive contribution to search engine optimisation (SEO).

We create your website, from identifying your needs and drawing up the specifications through to full integration and provision of all content. By connecting your site to your databases and systems, we can automate some or all of your sales processes. And we always keep a close eye on user experience.



#### ■ **Conclusion... tomorrow has already begun**

The aim of this whitepaper is to present current digital techniques in B2B marketing and industrial communication. It is based on numerous discussions with our customers and on observation of market trends. It does not claim to be exhaustive or to answer all your specific questions. Every industry, every market, every company operates in a unique environment that needs to be carefully considered. Technologies and practices continue to evolve rapidly, ensuring digital marketing remains a dynamic and ongoing journey. Let's continue this conversation by exploring how these trends can apply to your business.



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