COLLECTIVE MEASURES®

2026 Trend Predictions

Key industry-specific trends that will shape the marketing landscape next year

B2B

B2B buyers bring their consumer expectations *with them*

84%

of B2B buyers consider emotion in their decisions. Even with multiple stakeholders and lengthy deliberations**, the human element shapes how buyers perceive solutions**, weigh options, and choose products and partners.

59%

of B2B tech buyers are Millennials, and nearly a third of them are lead buyers within their organizations. These decision-makers are **highly comfortable with technology and expect seamless, digital-first experiences in every interaction.**

71%

of B2B decision makers prefer **remote human interactions or digital self-service**, indicating a blend of personal touch and digital convenience.

Source: Forrester, 2024

2026 TRENDS

B2B

1

Strong brand presence delivers a *competitive edge*

2

Don’t just explain, also *entertain*

3

Experience is *everything*

1

Strong brand presence delivers a *competitive edge*

A strong brand presence keeps products or services top of mind when buyers are ready

Most B2B audiences are not ready to buy... now.

Due to long buying cycles and multiple stakeholders, only about 5% of your audience is ready to purchase at any given time, requiring brands to maintain a continuous presence to influence the remaining 95%.

Buyers bypass brand websites for fragmented sources.

As content consumption becomes increasingly fragmented across digital platforms, buyers often bypass brand websites, relying instead on social media, AI, and other sources for guidance, making a cross-channel strategy essential.

B2B buyers expect omnichannel.

Most decision makers use **10 or more** distinct channels along the path to conversion, **2x more than previous years.**

Sources: John Dawes, Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, McKinsey B2B Pulse Survey 2024

Strategies for success

Brand efforts drive both short & long-term impact.

Leads convert when there is trust. Branding campaigns help build your brand's personality, humanizing it for buyers and earning their trust. Long-term awareness efforts increase sell through while short-term pulsed campaigns increase demand ahead of key buying windows.

Introduce storytelling into marketing to demonstrate value over features, showing how your products or services help businesses solve problems, operate efficiently, and achieve goals.

Adopt a holistic video-first approach

Video is a powerful way to build a strong brand presence, bringing your company story to life and keeping buyers engaged even when they bypass your website.

Leveraging connected TV, online platforms, and social channels, offer short and long-form formats to tell your company story on your customers' terms.

Video lives across the funnel and each stage helps build your brand; not only can it tell your story, but it's also great for product demos, thought leadership, and even testimonials.

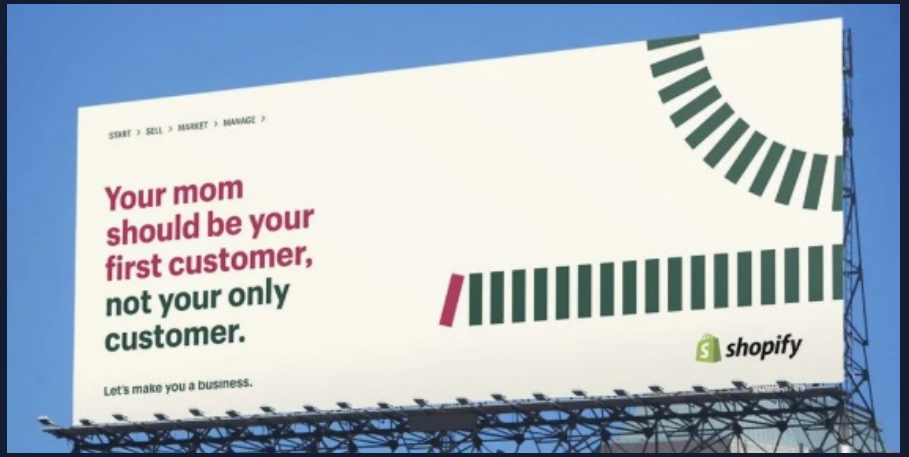
Showcase impactful full-funnel measurement

The most effective campaigns deploy a well-thought-out measurement strategy and ensure alignment is gained from stakeholders. Deploying these measurement strategies not only showcases results but can also generate insights across creative messaging, audiences, and formats.

Despite its reputation, upper funnel media does NOT mean unaccountable. A full complement of tools can showcase impact beyond the usual last-click metrics B2B advertisers often chase. A mix of incrementality testing, multi-touch attribution, and media mix modeling can showcase how upper-funnel media can drive real business results.

2

Don’t just explain, also *entertain*



B2B marketers must shift from explaining to entertaining, making creativity their new competitive edge

B2B ads must be more memorable.

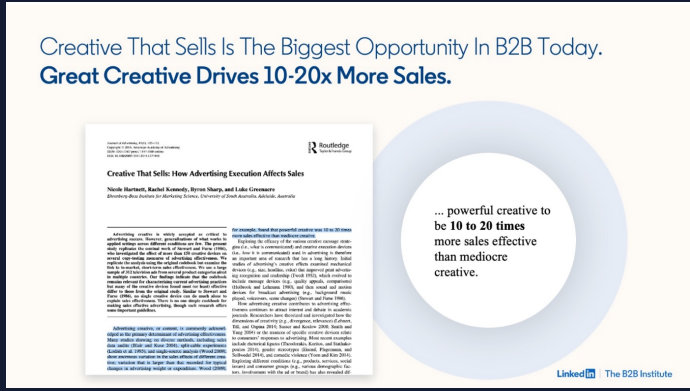
With 81% of B2B ads failing to gain attention or drive recall, brands must move beyond simply explaining their value.

B2B brands are increasing budgets for influencer marketing.

More than half of B2B brands are increasing budgets for influencer marketing, with U.S. spend in this area projected to exceed $13 billion by 2027.

Consistent branding is far more effective than short-term tactics.

Consistent and distinctive brand expression delivers 10x–20x greater effectiveness than relying on short-term campaign tactics.



Sources: LinkedIn B2B Institute 2025, EMARKETER

Strategies for success

Connect with B2B buyers as humans, not just decision makers

B2B buyers are people first, with the same media habits, interests, and content preferences as consumers. They scroll social feeds, watch video tutorials, stream content, and engage with communities outside of work.

Don't be afraid to extend media beyond traditional B2B channels and meet buyers in the everyday environments where they spend time. Not every communication needs to be in a business context. Treating buyers like real people builds credibility and lasting engagement.

Lead with emotion and creativity to build brand affinity

Communication planning can uncover the emotional driver behind your brand story and translate it into a creative platform that connects with buyers. Buyers don't only buy features and benefits; just like consumer brands, B2B buyers buy brands that reflect their styles and ideas and that have emotional benefits.

This approach provides differentiation by rejecting the typical B2B sea of sameness, avoiding predictable visuals and tired phrases in favor of dynamic storytelling through short-form video, animation, and photography that entertains as much as it informs.

Harness influence to entertain and engage B2B buyers

Influencers aren't just for consumer brands. B2B brands have an opportunity to collaborate with credible industry voices, from niche experts to micro-influencers, to bring their brand story to life in a way that's both credible and entertaining.

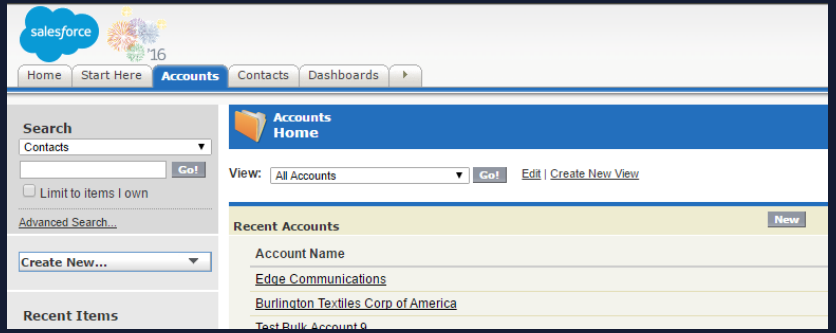
B2B buyers respond to peer-driven storytelling that blends insight with human relatability, making content memorable rather than just informative. Think about TED Talks; while these are primarily informational, they can be wildly entertaining.

By combining entertainment with authority, you build awareness, trust, and long-term consideration.

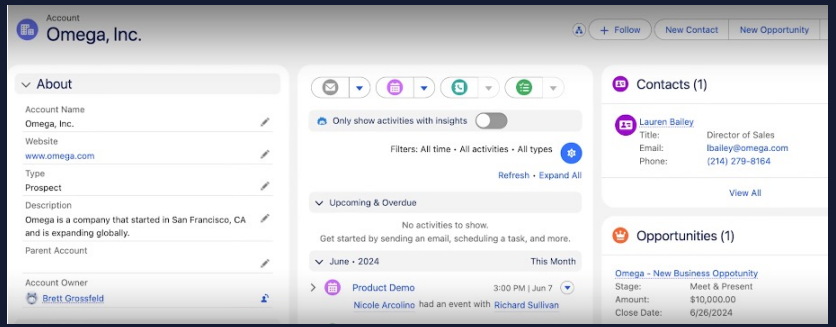
3

Experience is *everything*

OLD



NEW



Source: EMARKETER

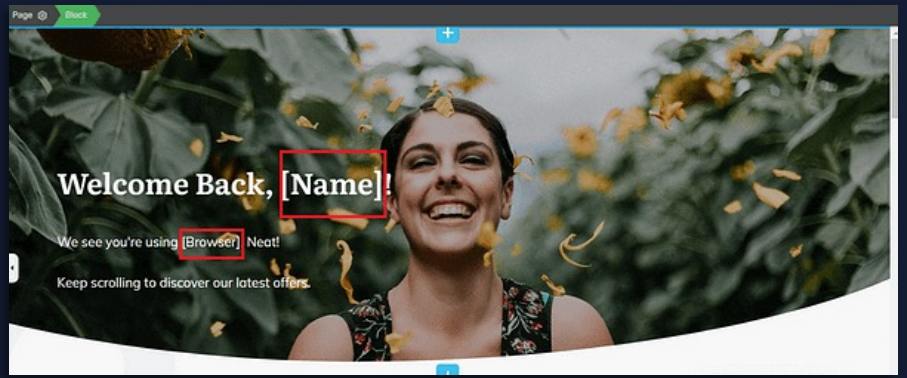
B2B buyers expect brands to recognize them and deliver seamless, personalized experiences

B2B customers expect recognition and personalization.

86% of B2B customers expect companies to recognize their information during interactions and provide tailored, relevant experiences when they are actively searching for solutions.

A poor online experience can cost a B2B supplier a customer.

As B2B online buying becomes mainstream, 74% of buyers say they would switch suppliers for a better web store experience.



Source: B2B Marketing 2025

Strategies for success

Deliver value wherever buyers search

B2B buyers are evolving, turning to AI summaries, alternative platforms, and social search such as TikTok, YouTube, Reddit, and Instagram for early research. While Google clicks remain important, what matters most is delivering meaningful, actionable experiences wherever buyers engage with your brand.

By adopting an "SEO everywhere" approach and optimizing content for search engines, social platforms, and AI-driven discovery, marketers can influence decisions, build trust, and convert high-value prospects while ensuring a seamless experience across every touchpoint.

Leverage technology to deliver seamless, personalized B2B experiences

Leverage AI to anticipate buyer needs and deliver personalized, timely interactions across the journey. Use predictive analytics to recommend content, products, or solutions based on behavior, engagement, and role-specific context.

Automate routine inquiries with chatbots while dynamically adapting landing pages, emails, and resources for individual accounts or industries. This ensures buyers feel recognized and allows human teams to focus on higher-value interactions, creating a seamless and efficient experience.

Activate sales representatives as personalized advisors

Empower salespeople to **act as guides rather than just sellers.** Provide them with insights from CRM, intent data, and previous interactions so they can deliver highly tailored recommendations. Align sales outreach with marketing campaigns to ensure messaging is consistent, relevant, and personalized at every touchpoint. Consider equipping sales with digital content they can share that speaks directly to individual buyer challenges.

COLLECTIVE MEASURES®

Let's chat

Collective Measures is a 100% employee-owned media agency specializing in full-funnel connections strategy and advanced analytics. With origins rooted in search and an expertise in understanding consumer intent, we are a collective of media strategists, brand engagement experts, and data scientists who make the complexities of modern marketing simple. With numerous accolades for our client work across paid media, content marketing, search engine optimization, and marketing analytics, we are simply accountable to driving results.

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