

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

by Laura Ramos

October 5, 2017

Why Read This Report

Today's B2B marketers say they understand customers but often lack empathy for buyers' real motivations — and the trials they face during the purchase journey. Based on research that examines the specific differences between customer-obsessed marketers and their less mature peers, this report outlines four key approaches to cultivate a more empathetic mindset. It also shows why focusing marketing efforts on post-sale customer experiences is essential to developing your empathy.

Key Takeaways

Mature Marketers Offer Insights Into How To Start Your Obsession Transformation

Becoming customer-obsessed pays off in significant ways. Marketers struggle to get started because the extent of necessary companywide change in strategy, operations, skills, and process is daunting. Those furthest along respect privacy to establish trust, value advocates as much as leads, and foster engagement with current customers.

An Empathetic Mindset Is Required

More than performing specific actions, becoming customer-obsessed requires empathy — the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Three rules shape the B2B empathetic mindset: Be human, be helpful, and be handy. Post-sale customer engagement is essential to learn how to empathize with your ideal customers.

Four Objectives Help Develop Your Empathy

Through post-sale customer experiences, obsessed marketers learn how to put insight into action and use emotion to shape decision making. They also prioritize the necessary work to establish a community that extends your brand reach and motivates advocates to tell their stories.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook



by [Laura Ramos](#)

with [Caroline Robertson](#), [Steven Casey](#), [Shar VanBoskirk](#), [Lori Wizdo](#), Alexander Bullock, and Kara Hartig

October 5, 2017

Table Of Contents

2 Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketers Create Advocacy Through Trust

Customer-Obsessed Marketing Requires An Empathetic Mindset

8 Use Post-Sale Experiences To Develop Empathy

Make Customer Insight Accessible At Every Interaction

Encourage Customers To Share Stories

Develop Community Through Thought Leadership

Embrace The Emotional Side Of Customer Relationships

Recommendations

14 Translate Your Brand Promises Into Empathetic Customer Experiences

15 Supplemental Material

Related Research Documents

[The B2B Marketer's Guide To Benchmarking Customer Obsession Maturity](#)

[The CMO's Guide To Emotion](#)

[The Model For Modern Marketing](#)



Share reports with colleagues.

Enhance your membership with Research Share.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketers Create Advocacy Through Trust

Customer-obsessed companies report having happier employees, more loyal customers, and increased likelihood to exceed revenue growth expectations.¹ To reach this apogee, you must focus your strategy, operations, and budget on enhancing your firm's knowledge of, and engagement with, customers.² Customer-obsessed B2B firms place a spotlight on customers', employees', and partners' behaviors that put customers first, make obsession a corporate differentiator, and measure marketing performance against customer-focused results.³

Conceptually, becoming customer-obsessed makes sense, but deciding which steps to take, and in which order, can be daunting to the B2B marketer facing the practicalities of generating demand and building the brand. To find out how top marketers directly improve their company's customer obsession, we surveyed 191 B2B marketing professionals and assessed their maturity against four levels. We then looked at what marketers in the most customer-obsessed organizations do differently. We found that these marketers are significantly more likely to:

- › **Build trust by respecting privacy and regulatory protections.** Customer-obsessed B2B marketers comply fanatically with privacy rules and regulatory laws everywhere they operate (see Figure 1). Compared with their less mature counterparts, obsessed marketers, by a wide margin, preserve customers' identities and contact preferences in their communications and never make exceptions to achieve a one-time campaign or sales enablement objective. This customer-first practice creates a strong bond of trust, and trustworthiness is one of the three dimensions that define a stellar B2B customer experience (CX).⁴
- › **Value customer advocates as much as new leads.** Think about this: B2B customers spend most of their lifetime in the post-sale stages of the customer life cycle.⁵ But marketing and sales dedicate most of their attention and resources to the presale phase. Customer-obsessed marketers know that retaining buyers — and turning them into fans who help advocate for their company's products and services — is as important as acquiring them in the first place (see Figure 2). Obsessed marketers are also more likely to use advocacy-based metrics along with pipeline attribution to evaluate marketing's impact.
- › **Foster customer engagement across the entire life cycle.** Customer-obsessed marketers use their technology to do more than simply run campaigns. Their tech investments let them track customers' existing behaviors, use insight to better plan and manage interactions, and create exceptional lifetime experiences (see Figure 3). They also dedicate time, money, and attention to programs that support and help customers — not just to programs that simply close deals with them.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

FIGURE 1 Customer-Obsessed Marketing Respects Privacy And Complies With Regulations

Our marketing does not violate any regulatory laws or rules governing customer engagement.

Our data management policies comply with all privacy regulations in all the countries where we operate.

94%

Customer-obsessed B2B marketers



49%

Average of remaining B2B marketers

88%

Customer-obsessed B2B marketers



34%

Average of remaining B2B marketers

Base: 191 B2B marketing professionals

Source: Forrester's Q2 2017 B2B Customer-Obsessed Operating Model Online Survey

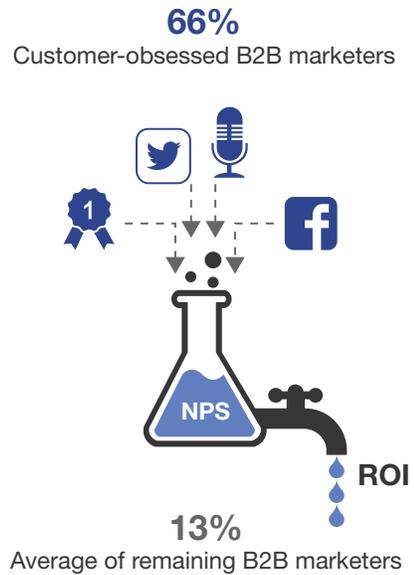
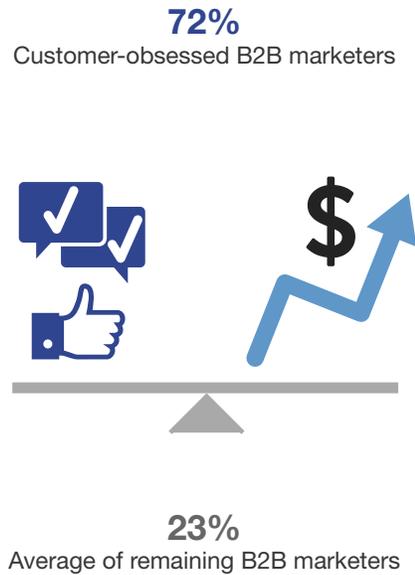
Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

FIGURE 2 Customer-Obsessed Marketers Emphasize Post-Sale Engagement

Our execution places as much importance on customer retention and advocacy as on acquisition and growth.

We use metrics that reflect customer advocacy, such as Net Promoter Score (NPS), to evaluate marketing ROI.



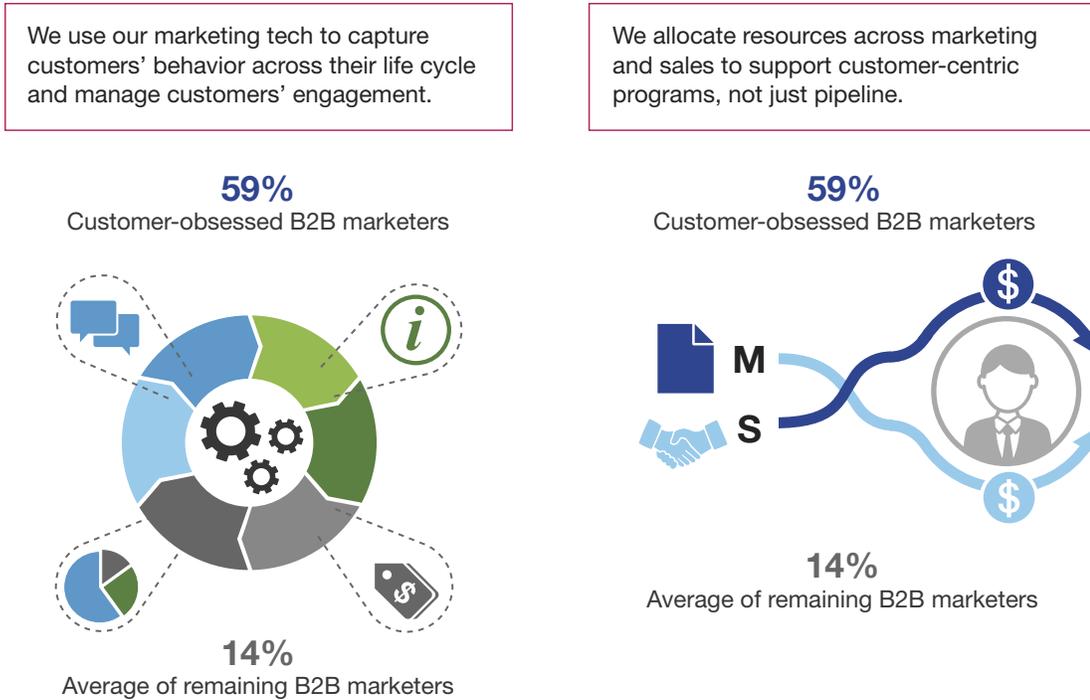
Base: 191 B2B marketing professionals

Source: Forrester's Q2 2017 B2B Customer-Obsessed Operating Model Online Survey

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

FIGURE 3 Customer-Obsessed Marketers Apply Technology And Resources To Engage Buyers



Base: 191 B2B marketing professionals

Source: Forrester's Q2 2017 B2B Customer-Obsessed Operating Model Online Survey

Customer-Obsessed Marketing Requires An Empathetic Mindset

It takes more to become customer-obsessed than just following a list of best practices. Consider two customer marketing managers who support sales: One delivers a ready supply of references and testimonials, while the other struggles to get customers to take a phone call. Give both the same resources, objectives, and timeline, and the first achieves much better results because he or she possesses a fundamental advantage — an empathetic mindset that prioritizes clients' success over internal demands (see Figure 4).

Empathy — the ability to understand and share another's feelings — is an easy concept to describe but difficult for B2B marketers to put into practice. While most consider customer understanding to be a strength, their actions belie this belief.⁶ Forrester recommends that marketers adopt three rules to develop the needed empathy to lead a customer-obsessed reformation (see Figure 5).⁷ B2B marketers who follow these rules develop a more empathetic mindset because they:

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

- › **Make marketing interactions more human.** Customer-obsessed marketers place a premium on customer voices and storytelling to create content that is authentic and empathetic — two key values for creating trust and loyalty. Riversand Technologies' marketers ask customers to shoot selfie-inspired video case studies — the type of content buyers find most valuable when making purchase decisions.⁸ Obsessed marketers also use marketing communications to connect with buyers as people, not as faceless companies or statistics. For example, marketers at both Dow Chemical and Evergage personalize communications that include details about individuals or firms. And Yext once sent Cinco-de-Mayo-themed miniature piñatas to current customers as part of seasonal celebrations that make their CX more fun.
- › **Help address the issues customers want to resolve.** Obsessed marketers focus on issues buyers care about, not on peddling products. They design helpful experiences that let customers easily explore possibilities and solutions. They also work tirelessly to ensure that their firm delivers its brand promise in everything it does and in every customer-facing interaction. As Sherri Brouwer, director of digital solutions marketing at Avanade, explains: “Three years ago, we ran individual campaigns in each of 42 solution areas. Now our marketing themes focus on needs related to modernizing IT, digital, and managed services, as we talk directly to the personas involved and describe the outcomes we can deliver to their businesses.”
- › **Are handy, taking a fast and lean approach to getting marketing done.** Obsessed marketers plan, test, and revise ideas and campaigns quickly. They thrive in dynamic conditions by hiring people with aptitude and creativity, tearing down boundaries, and putting a premium on learning something new. Like Janet Rubio — CMO at marketing tech and services company True Influence — they also know when to leverage outside resources to extend their capacity and output most efficiently. Rubio supplements her staff with UpWork freelancers to piece together a broader and larger creative department than True Influence could support at its current size. Geographically distributed freelancers let Rubio keep marketing work going around the clock.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

FIGURE 4 A Customer-Obsessed Mindset Delivers Better Results

Situation: Both have identical resources and are tasked to produce testimonials

Mindy: obsessed marketer



“What type of reference do you need?”
 “Our customers talk about us a lot.”

Connor: conventional marketer



“Sales references take too long.”
 “No one gives me case studies.”

Category	Description	Category	Description
Focus	Outside-in	Focus	Inside-out
Strategy	Deliver value first; testimonials and content will follow.	Strategy	Pester customers for testimonials, case studies, etc.
Metrics	Number of engaged customers	Metrics	Number of customer-delivered assets
Approach	Give customers a hand-up.	Approach	Ask for a handout.
Mindset	Empathetic	Mindset	Self-centered
Customer's attitude	Engaged and excited	Customer's attitude	Reluctant and disinterested
Avg. time to fill request	Minutes to hours	Avg. time to fill request	Days to weeks
Avg. # of advocates	Dozens to hundreds	Avg. # of advocates	A few to a dozen

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

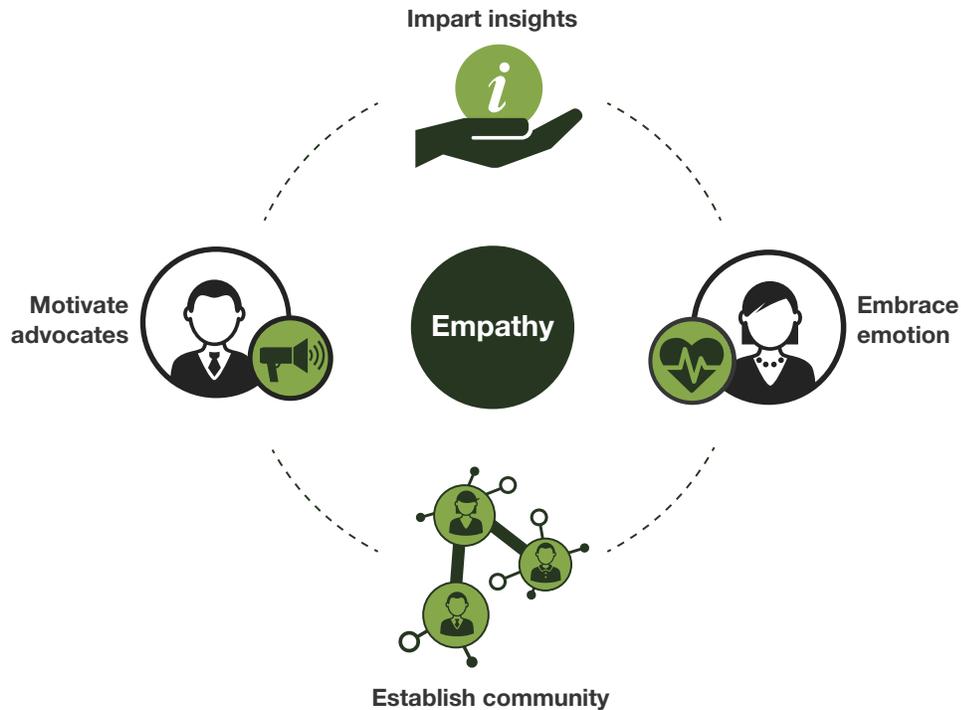
FIGURE 5 Three Rules Define The New Customer-Obsessed Mindset

Use Post-Sale Experiences To Develop Empathy

Today, company leadership measures B2B marketers more by their impact on the sales pipeline than by the quality of customer relationships. But existing customers represent significant revenue potential to marketers who invest more energy, strategy, and resources in programs that engage with current accounts.⁹ By focusing on the post-sale experience, customer-obsessed marketers develop empathy for how customers experience their products and services. They learn to create marketing interactions that breed loyalty and advocacy. Along with a particularly acute focus on the post-sale life-cycle stages, B2B marketers we studied develop their customer empathy in four key ways (see Figure 6).

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

FIGURE 6 Empathy Is A Key Driver In The B2B Marketer's Transformation To Customer Obsession**Make Customer Insight Accessible At Every Interaction**

B2B marketers are maturing their customer intelligence to help customer-facing employees and business partners deliver the cross-channel experiences buyers value.¹⁰ By shifting from simply gathering facts to developing empathy, B2B analytics turn from operational systems that focus on reporting activity and managing sales coverage to ones that distill meaningful CX insights and present them in a readily consumable format. To kickstart this overhaul, customer-obsessed marketers:

- › **Lead cross-disciplinary CX practices.** Modern marketers own three key responsibilities: customer understanding, brand strategy, and solutions to customers' problems that demonstrate the brand promise.¹¹ Today, this typically requires marketing to coordinate, rather than assume sole responsibility for, delivery. Kirsty Traill, Hootsuite's VP, customer, established a 15-person CX team that periodically rotates members from functional areas for weekly 1-hour meetings to focus on the customer. The team's exclusivity and prestige focus everyone on CX, heightening customer empathy across the company. The team piloted a closed-loop program that resulted in a 30-point before/after increase in Net Promoter Scores (NPS) among select customers who received communications about their suggestions within 24 hours.¹² This result gave Hootsuite leadership the green light to automate this process for its entire NPS audience.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

- › **Benchmark information that delivers true customer insight.** Sales software provider Mediafly developed an evolved-selling index that tracks how well sellers at its customers use interactive tools to get input from buyers and to pivot sales conversations to buyer-relevant topics in real time.¹³ It monitors this benchmark to understand if customers are becoming more sophisticated in the use of its software and to report any net changes to the board. Riversand Technologies regularly helps customers review their technology-adoption decisions by reporting on their accomplishments against their original business cases and Forrester's value framework.¹⁴
- › **Use insight to personalize every relationship.** Developing a clear understanding of why buyers buy requires new analytic techniques that get support from predictive marketing analytics or contextually aware information coming from digital browsing behavior, smartphones, and transmitters. Just as Rolls-Royce uses aircraft engine sensors to individualize airline customer maintenance schedules, obsessed marketers use customer intelligence to develop microlevel segmentation, customize interactions by persona and outcome, and embed data into tools that raise the entire firm's buyer empathy.¹⁵ Dow Chemical supports account-based marketing efforts by delivering account-specific analytics so that reps know exactly what's changing in their accounts, who to contact, what accounts are buying next, and what content to put in front of them.¹⁶

Encourage Customers To Share Stories

Business buyers most value information about customer, industry, or peer case studies as they explore and make technology purchase decisions.¹⁷ To be credible, this information must cover both the difficult aspects of a buyer's journey as well as the successes — details that only arise through careful examination of the post-sale engagement. Customer-obsessed marketers use authentic customer stories to evolve their approach from descriptive to sympathetic. To hasten this transition, these marketers:

- › **Create a tradition of sharing customers' campfire stories.** Hearing how customers struggle — and sometime fail — to find the right solution makes their stories more memorable and relatable. Obsessed marketers share these hard-won achievements within their company to promote customer familiarity. At Brandwatch, Dinah Alobeid, director of communications, and Hannah Tregear, customer marketing manager, task customer success managers with submitting success stories to an internal panel of judges who recognize and reward the ones that best typify a customer-first approach. Celebrating post-sale successes internally helps everyone — from engineers to finance and HR — recall what the best Brandwatch customers do to succeed.
- › **Establish a customer advocate marketing program.** Customer stories and testimony are among the most powerful tools at the disposal of B2B marketers.¹⁸ But only 30% claim to run a formal customer advocate marketing program.¹⁹ Obsessed marketers design advocate programs around serving the interests and aspirations of specific customers to turn happy buyers into ones that amplify their brand. Dynamic Signal sets face-time goals for all its employees to encourage 1:1 engagement. Rather than talk directly about the product, staffers ask, "How can we make more good days at work happen for you?" to learn how the employee communication software helps firms better align their culture with their goals.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

- › **Make customer events more personal and less promotional.** In-person events are the most common, time-consuming, and expensive tactic that B2B marketers use.²⁰ Obsessed marketers effectively balance this significant investment between generating demand and engaging deeply with current customers. For example, Spiceworks hosts onsite sessions at its key accounts and brings experts, other customers, new ideas, and data to bear on creatively solving problems or thinking through issues (see Figure 7).

FIGURE 7 Spiceworks Brings Experts And Advice Onsite To Share Solutions

The figure consists of three main visual elements. On the left is a promotional flyer for an event titled 'UNPLUGGED' in Austin on February 24th. The flyer features a video player and three key details: 'When?' (Wednesday, February 24 at 5:30PM), 'Where?' (MAX's Wine Dive, 207 San Jacinto Blvd, Austin, TX 78701), and 'Cost?' (FREE - all info, drinks and food are on us!). On the right are two photographs. The top photo shows a panel discussion with three men seated on stools in front of an audience. The bottom photo shows a table with a red sign that says 'SPICY!' and a laptop with 'Spiceworks' branding.

Source: Behance website

Develop Community Through Thought Leadership

In today's post-digital world, communities play a critical role: They drive everything from building brand equity through increased humanness, credibility, and trust to increasing utility through support, product exploration, cocreation, and more.²¹ Customer-obsessed marketers share big ideas through

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

thought leadership — and positive experiences through success managers — to cultivate a crowd of prospects, customers, and influencers who engage on a topic and form a social network not limited to their brand exclusively.²² To create an enduring community that thrives both online and offline:

- › **Listen to your customers and then join the conversation.** While many B2B firms still treat social media as an extension of public relations, obsessed marketers boost their company's social intelligence by using monitoring tools to understand customers', industries', and partners' concerns and desires.²³ Social engagement platforms from firms like Adobe, Lithium, and Salesforce let marketers manage efficient social teams that engage with customers honestly, thoughtfully, and in a brand-consistent manner.²⁴ Because obsessed marketers speak like regular people and foster business connections, these teams build lasting relationships with customers by creating a digital experience that scales the personal touch.
- › **Own a big idea that captivates your audience.** B2B marketers struggle to produce effective content because they talk more about what they do and not enough about why buyers should care.²⁵ Obsessed marketers address buyers' concerns by producing a large pool of interesting marketing assets based on a foundational topic that takes two or three years to develop.²⁶ LinkedIn launched the *Sophisticated Marketer's Guide to LinkedIn* in January 2014 as a 15-page eBook that it built upon to encompass the breadth of its advice on advertising, content sponsorship, and content strategy. A steady stream of traffic and leads from the infographics, SlideShares, 1,500-word blog posts, and videos generated from this core idea consistently outperforms reports of similar size and scope.²⁷
- › **Direct your firm's post-sale customer experience.** For many B2B firms, selling to current customers is an important pathway to growth. Customer success management (CSM) is an emerging discipline aimed at reducing customer churn by ensuring that the promises businesses make to prospects in the presale period don't fall into a post-sale transition gap.²⁸ While seven of 11 B2B marketers referred to their CSM function during our interviews, most admit this team reports to executives outside of marketing. Dictating the direction of the CSM function is essential to not only retain customers but also ensure they become vocal advocates. As more marketing organizations improve their customer obsession maturity, we expect to see the responsibility for CSM strategy — and eventually delivery — shift to the CMO.

Embrace The Emotional Side Of Customer Relationships

Emotion is the strongest predictor of post-sale CX outcomes like loyalty.²⁹ A stellar B2B CX depends on whether the solution meets business objectives and serves the decision maker's personal interests.³⁰ New research shows that emotion tells our reasoning facilities what to pay attention to and how we should feel about it.³¹ Based on our prior experiences, emotion also helps our reasoning facilities predict which emotions we are likely to feel next so that we can anticipate and initiate the right behavior. Customer-obsessed B2B marketers tap successfully into emotions' impact on business buying and long-term customer relationships when they:

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

- › **Ensure messages appeal to the emotional mind.** Emotion and reason are intertwined. So sales and marketing messages succeed by conveying an understanding of the worry or frustration prospects feel about business problems, the emotional state that they desire, and a rational reason to value the benefit associated with a positive outcome.³² An endpoint security software solution can describe the fear and uncertainty associated with a lost or stolen device and the emotional comfort that IT decision makers receive from reducing the business risks associated with this incident. It can also convey the rational value of having technology in place that is objectively easier to set up, manage, and recover if such an event occurs — including detailed emotional responses gleaned from post-sale study.
- › **Commit CX to delivering on both rational and emotional promises.** Effectiveness, reliability, and trustworthiness are the key dimensions of a superior B2B customer experience. Forrester can also tie a superior B2B CX to improved post-sale factors such as customer retention, enrichment, references, and advocacy.³³ Because emotion largely directs the creation of long-term memories, obsessed marketers work with functional peers to ensure that customer experiences regularly and consistently reinforce positive emotions like trust and confidence. Outside of marketing and sales, ongoing experiences with delivery, technical service, legal, and procurement should put the customer's interests first to prevent negative associations with the company's brand promise from forming.
- › **Use stories to create empathy.** Buyers want most to hear about and learn from other customers' experiences. Obsessed marketers recognize that the emotions associated with these stories create enduring memories that make their brand more salient — and help it stand out in a crowd of competitors.³⁴ They tell stories to connect with business buyers and produce content that draws an audience.³⁵ Browbeating a potential buyer with requests to take a phone call, watch a demo, or conduct a trial immediately triggers a defensive response. But storytelling activates mirror neurons that create empathy between the storyteller and the listener, helping the listener remember your point of view and brand promises.³⁶
- › **Institutionalize customer appreciation.** Customers' goodwill and loyalty increase in proportion with experiences that demonstrate that you value their time, attention, and participation.³⁷ Obsessed B2B marketers emphasize not only checking in and spending time with customers to increase empathy but also formally appreciating their decision to entrust an important part of their business with you. Evergage complements its digital interactions with the occasional greeting card or small gift just to say, "Thank you for being our customer," and to underscore the relationship part of doing business. Hootsuite's CEO Ryan Holmes posts an internal video every week that showcases how individuals or teams have gone above and beyond to champion a personal bond, which is a notion so important that "championing the power of human connection" is the company's stated purpose.

Recommendations

Translate Your Brand Promises Into Empathetic Customer Experiences

Making B2B marketing more empathetic will require both skill and cultural change — with culture having the most impact.³⁸ Marketing leadership must support the adoption of rules like being human, helpful, and handy with necessary exemplars, recognition, and resources to motivate and support behavior changes. While firms will have much work to do to alter the necessary systems, processes, and governance to lead the transformation to a customer-obsessed organization, marketing's responsibility is ensuring that customer experiences deliver on the brand promise.

To prepare for this journey, B2B marketers should start by assessing their current maturity level to learn how much reinvention they require and determine the next steps to most effectively advance toward customer obsession.³⁹ Regardless of where you land, certain strategy, budget, and process changes must ripple throughout the company, allowing the entire organization to become more nimble, flexible, global, and connected. To get the process started, B2B marketing leadership should:

- › **Embrace the four operating principles of a customer-obsessed organization.** Becoming customer-led, insights-driven, rapidly iterative, and interconnected is not easy, but top marketers use culture and values to articulate a way of being that emotionally engages customers. Their actions express values that are relatable, human, and important to delivering exceptional customer experiences.⁴⁰ Marketers walk this more empathetic walk when they remove barriers, model the desired behavior, hold their team accountable for meeting set standards, and reward customer obsession when it happens.⁴¹
- › **Connect the dots between brand and customer experience metrics.** Instead of clicks, fans, tweets, and brand lift, shift your marketing metrics to focus on how your customer experiences drive loyalty, advocacy, and business value. Track and analyze why one campaign results in three times as many registrations or why certain clients are more likely to recommend you. Follow the lead of obsessed marketers who construct customer engagement scores based on business-specific behavioral, demographic, and historical factors. They can range from training courses completed to number of products deployed, participation in events, reference calls taken, and meetings that key influencers take to test how your customer experience is faring in customers' eyes.⁴²
- › **Use digital smarts to monitor usage and best practices.** Stop talking about customers as things to harvest like low-hanging fruit. Follow the lead of B2B firms that are adopting CSM practices and cleaning up their customer data management practices.⁴³ Explore solutions from vendors like Gainsight, ServiceSource, and Totango to help customer success managers streamline implementations, inspect usage, and communicate best practices. Investigate social engagement and enterprise communications solutions — tools that build interaction, community, and trust among employees and partners — to bring out what we call the “teaching gene” in employees. And that “gene” is the positive release of endorphins when a customer finally says, “Oh, now I get it.”

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

- › **Tie compensation to customers' engagement.** Turn customer interest into obsession by tying performance appraisals and annual incentive programs to customer reviews, engagement metrics, and advocacy. From executives to administrative staff, Intel ties a portion of employees' annual bonuses to satisfaction scores.⁴⁴ This changed everyone's tune from, "That's sales' job," to, "Just say yes," when it came to customer interactions. To figure this out, sit with HR counterparts and look for ways to link bonuses and commissions to customer retention, adoption success, advocacy, and enrichment rather than internal milestones like contracts signed or trouble tickets resolved.

Engage With An Analyst

Gain greater confidence in your decisions by working with Forrester thought leaders to apply our research to your specific business and technology initiatives.

Analyst Inquiry

To help you put research into practice, connect with an analyst to discuss your questions in a 30-minute phone session — or opt for a response via email.

[Learn more.](#)

Analyst Advisory

Translate research into action by working with an analyst on a specific engagement in the form of custom strategy sessions, workshops, or speeches.

[Learn more.](#)

Webinar

Join our online sessions on the latest research affecting your business. Each call includes analyst Q&A and slides and is available on-demand.

[Learn more.](#)



Forrester's research apps for iOS and Android.

Stay ahead of your competition no matter where you are.

Supplemental Material

Survey Methodology

Forrester's Q2 2017 B2B Customer-Obsessed Operating Model Online Survey was fielded to 191 B2B marketing professionals. For quality assurance, we screened respondents to ensure they met minimum standards in terms of content knowledge, job responsibilities, and budget insight.

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

Forrester fielded the survey from June 7 to June 28, 2017. Respondent incentives included a summary of the survey results and a copy of a previously published report using Forrester's Q3 2016 Customer-Obsessed Operating Model Online Survey results. Exact sample sizes are provided in this report on a question-by-question basis.

This survey used a self-selected group of Forrester contacts knowledgeable about B2B marketing and is therefore not random. This data is not guaranteed to be representative of the population, and, unless otherwise noted, statistical data is intended to be used for descriptive and not inferential purposes. While nonrandom, the survey is still a valuable tool for understanding where users are today and where the industry is headed.

Companies Interviewed For This Report

We would like to thank the individuals from the following companies who generously gave their time during the research for this report.

Avanade	Hootsuite
Brandwatch	Mediafly
Cxense	Riversand Technologies
Dow Chemical	Spiceworks
Dynamic Signal	True Influence
Evergage	Yext

Endnotes

- ¹ See the Forrester report "[The Customer Obsession Assessment.](#)"
- ² See the Forrester report "[Top Five Imperatives To Win In The Age Of The Customer.](#)"
- ³ See the Forrester report "[The B2B Marketer's Guide To Benchmarking Customer Obsession Maturity.](#)"
- ⁴ Great B2B customer experiences derive from a series of positive, individual interactions with stakeholders aggregated across the account. See the Forrester report "[Introducing The B2B Tech Customer Experience Index.](#)"
- ⁵ See the Forrester report "[The Perspective Problem In The Customer Life Cycle.](#)"
- ⁶ In 2016, we reviewed 60 B2B websites belonging to 12 different industries to understand how well the content attracts attention, engages buyers, and shows empathy for the buyers' issues and interests. Fifty-four of 60 failed our simple engagement test, leading us to conclude B2B marketers generally lack real empathy for their buyers. See the Forrester report "[Empathetic Content: The Key To Engaging B2B Buyers.](#)"
- ⁷ See the Forrester report "[Thriving In A Post-Digital World.](#)"
- ⁸ See the Forrester report "[Use Third-Party Content To Attract And Persuade Elusive B2B Buyers.](#)"
- ⁹ See the Forrester report "[Make Your B2B Marketing Thrive In The Age Of The Customer.](#)"
- ¹⁰ See the Forrester report "[Customer Success Management Is The Key To Outstanding B2B Customer Experiences.](#)"

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

¹¹ See the Forrester report "[The Model For Modern Marketing.](#)"

¹² Net Promoter and NPS are registered service marks, and Net Promoter Score is a service mark, of Bain & Company, Satmetrix Systems, and Fred Reichheld.

¹³ For a full definition of "evolved seller," refer to the following report. Source: "Evolved Selling: How B2B Sellers Win In The Age Of The Customer," Forrester Consulting report prepared for Mediafly, Mediafly website, October 2016 (<http://www3.mediafly.com/TLP>).

¹⁴ See the Forrester report "[PIM Is A Cornerstone Of Your Digital Business.](#)"

¹⁵ See the Forrester report "[Big Data's Big Meaning For Marketing.](#)"

¹⁶ See the Forrester report "[Retro Yet Revolutionary: Demystifying Account-Based Marketing.](#)"

¹⁷ See the Forrester report "[Peer Stories And Credible Data Attract And Engage B2B Buyers.](#)"

¹⁸ See the Forrester report "[Advocate Marketing Creates B2B Customer Relationships That Last A Lifetime.](#)"

¹⁹ Based on current client interactions, Forrester believes this number over-represents current practices and sees many programs underperforming against potential. See the Forrester report "[Turn B2B Customer Goodwill Into Gold.](#)"

²⁰ See the Forrester report "[Conflicting B2B Marketing Priorities Threaten To Derail Program Progress.](#)"

²¹ See the Forrester report "[Share Community Management Beyond Marketing For Maximum Impact.](#)"

²² See the Forrester report "[How To Design Communities For B2B Marketing.](#)"

²³ See the Forrester report "[The Forrester Wave™: Enterprise Social Listening Platforms, Q1 2016.](#)"

²⁴ In June 2017, Aurea completed its acquisition of Jive Software and turned around in August 2017 and sold its external online community business to Lithium. Source: "Lithium to Acquire External Online Community Business from Jive," Lithium press release, August 29, 2017 (<https://www.lithium.com/company/news-room/press-releases/2017/lithium-to-acquire-external-online-community-business-from-jive>).

See the Forrester report "[The Forrester Wave™: Social Depth Platforms, Q2 2015.](#)"

²⁵ See the Forrester report "[Peer Stories And Credible Data Attract And Engage B2B Buyers.](#)"

²⁶ See the Forrester report "[Nurture Thought Leadership To Nurture Your Brand.](#)"

²⁷ See the Forrester report "[Peer Stories And Credible Data Attract And Engage B2B Buyers.](#)"

²⁸ See the Forrester report "[Customer Success Management Is The Key To Outstanding B2B Customer Experiences.](#)"

²⁹ See the Forrester report "[Understanding The Impact Of Emotion On Customer Experience.](#)"

³⁰ See the Forrester report "[Introducing The B2B Tech Customer Experience Index.](#)"

³¹ See the Forrester report "[The CMO's Guide To Emotion.](#)"

³² A good summary of the relationship between emotion, attention, and memory in light of the most recent emotion science can be found in the following article. Source: Tobias Brosch, Klaus Scherer, Didier Grandjean, and David Sander, "The impact of emotion on perception, attention, memory, and decision-making," Swiss Medical Weekly, May 14, 2013 (<https://smw.ch/article/doi/smw.2013.13786>).

³³ See the Forrester report "[Introducing The B2B Tech Customer Experience Index.](#)"

³⁴ See the Forrester report "[The Rise Of Intelligent Branding.](#)"

³⁵ See the Forrester report "[Tell Stories To Connect With Business Buyers.](#)"

Empathy: The Hallmark Of The Customer-Obsessed B2B Marketer

Vision: The B2B Marketing Playbook

³⁶ Mirror neurons activate when you are exposed to something that happens to someone else. For example, if you watch a movie with a love scene, the same pleasure regions in your brain will be activated as if you were vicariously involved in the act. This is the foundation for empathy. For more information, check the following site. Source: Lea Winerman, “The mind’s mirror,” American Psychological Association, October 2005 (<http://www.apa.org/monitor/oct05/mirror.aspx>).

³⁷ See the Forrester report “[B2B Loyalty, The B2C Way](#).”

³⁸ We found culture to be the strongest predictor of customer obsession maturity in our survey assessing the customer obsession maturity of 468 companies that sell primarily or exclusively to businesses. The most obsessed firms demonstrate widespread cultural commitment to customers from executives on down. See the Forrester report “[The B2B Marketer’s Guide To Benchmarking Customer Obsession Maturity](#).”

³⁹ See the Forrester report “[The Customer Obsession Assessment](#).”

⁴⁰ See the Forrester report “[Five Secrets Of Customer-Obsessed Cultures](#).”

⁴¹ See the Forrester report “[Leadership In The Age Of The Customer](#).”

⁴² See the Forrester report “[Metrics That Matter For B2B Marketers](#).”

⁴³ See the Forrester report “[Vendor Landscape: B2B Marketing Data Providers, Q3 2017](#).”

⁴⁴ For further information, refer to the following site. Source: “Compensation,” Intel, 2017 (<https://iiwisdom.com/intc-2017/compensation>).

We work with business and technology leaders to develop customer-obsessed strategies that drive growth.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- › Core research and tools
- › Data and analytics
- › Peer collaboration
- › Analyst engagement
- › Consulting
- › Events

Forrester's research and insights are tailored to your role and critical business initiatives.

ROLES WE SERVE

Marketing & Strategy Professionals

CMO

- › **B2B Marketing**
- B2C Marketing
- Customer Experience
- Customer Insights
- eBusiness & Channel Strategy

Technology Management Professionals

CIO

- Application Development & Delivery
- Enterprise Architecture
- Infrastructure & Operations
- Security & Risk
- Sourcing & Vendor Management

Technology Industry Professionals

Analyst Relations

CLIENT SUPPORT

For information on hard-copy or electronic reprints, please contact Client Support at +1 866-367-7378, +1 617-613-5730, or clientsupport@forrester.com. We offer quantity discounts and special pricing for academic and nonprofit institutions.