4 Ways to Make B2B Marketing Less Boring

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Traditional B2B marketing content may be data-rich and insightful, but it often falls short on character. When was the last time you heard anyone call a whitepaper “exciting” or a case study “riveting?” Never? Me either. The problem is that most marketers have fallen for the myth that B2B efforts need to have a sterile, practical element. As a result, their output — while inherently valuable — falls flat in the personality department.

While “B2B” means business to business, you’re still writing for other humans at the end of the day. You’re just hoping that your content encourages them to buy your products or services on behalf of their company rather than for themselves. And your content won’t do that if it puts them to sleep.

Today’s workers are busy. The Wall Street Journal recently shared that most professionals lose about 40% of the week to emails and work engagements. What this means for you is, to put it politely, your audience has very little time or energy to care about your B2B marketing outreach. The only way to capture their time-crunched attention spans is to try something new, fresh and unexpected — something far more human than what you are likely doing right now.

This doesn’t mean you have to toss out all your case studies or delete your SEO-rich landing pages. Please don’t. Those items have value. What you should do instead is apply a few strategies to make your marketing more personable and less

dry.

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1. Spice up your storytelling skill set

We all love a good story. We all remember a good story, too. It's much harder to remember a PowerPoint slide filled with numbers than it is to recall a fabulous tale that hits you right in all the feels. Therefore, rethink all your narrative content before shipping it. Is there a hidden story that you could tease out?

With stories, you can create emotional connections with target audiences. You can get them to feel an attachment to you or what you offer. HP did that several years ago with its memorable characterization of a hacker as a wolf. The ad campaign was so successful and pressworthy that the video was entered as a candidate for a Shorty Award. As an added bonus, HP was able to use its one concept to intrigue both B2B and B2C shoppers. That's the power of turning a service into a story.

2. Put a human face on your marketing

You've heard the saying that people don't buy from companies, they buy from people. I believe that to absolutely be the case. As I like to say, the most human brand wins. To capitalize on this truism, incorporate marketing approaches that put names and faces behind your brand. For example, you could always go the route of starting a corporate podcast or video show hosted by one or more executives. We've seen a landslide of brands creating shows for this very reason.

In addition to launching a podcast, you could also try to humanize your brand by spotlighting employees on social media. You might even want to let some of your team members conduct marketing-approved social “takeovers.” This allows your target audience of possible B2B clients to see your company from an insider’s perspective. It might just be the one thing that differentiates you from your competitors in prospects’ minds.

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3. Lean into appropriate emoji use

Did you know that emails that incorporate emojis are opened more frequently than those that don’t contain emojis? The reason is simple: They just look more inviting – more human. It’s the same principle that causes Facebook posts with images to receive more engagement. People tend to tune out text. But they respond to visuals.

This isn’t to suggest that you should cover your next B2B email drip campaign with emojis. Please don’t. Emojis must be used tactically and tactfully. Nevertheless, it might make sense to drop an emoji here or there depending on the content you’re creating and the brand you represent. You can always try an old-fashioned beta test with and without an emoji on a small population segment to see if you get a lift from using digital pictograms.

4. Ramp up the customization with AI

You might think that personalization is something that only matters in the B2C market. Not true. B2B buyers are bringing their B2C buying habits to work. Because business is human, after all. Accordingly, they want to receive individualized attention from companies like yours. Forrester notes that 52%

of B2B leaders are investing in marketing personalization for this reason.

The good news is that personalization has never been simpler. You might already have an AI integration or system in your martech stack that can help you personalize your interactions. From addressing your audience members by name in your interactions to delivering personalized website experiences, loads of customization options are out there. You just need to figure out which ones to try.

Truth be told, most B2B marketing is dreadfully dull. But that’s actually a boon for you. By just switching your marketing approach, you can make sure your brand is hard to forget — and easy to say “yes” to.

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