Research finds B2B audiences discover content through search

Clutch's survey of 384 consumers of online business content found that 87% of respondents frequently encounter business content using search engines, slightly more than the 85% who find business content through social media and 75% who encounter content most frequently on company websites.

The study indicates that B2B audiences are avid consumers of business content online and use content to inform their purchasing decisions.

By optimizing content for SEO and for their target customers, companies can engage B2B audiences online and work to transition them through their sales funnel to conversion.

B2B audiences consume content frequently and according to their purchasing intent

Clutch's survey supports industry research that B2B customers extensively research companies and products online as part of their purchasing process.

The survey found that 88% of B2B audiences consume business content online at least once a week.

For the most part, the reasons why B2B audiences consume business content online reflects their buying intent and determines the type of content they prefer.

For example, 45% of B2B audiences read business content online to stay informed about industry trends, the most common reason

cited among respondents.

This broad reasoning for consuming content demonstrates low purchasing intent. Thus, this group likely fits in the “awareness” stage of the conversion funnel and consumes content to learn more about a business or an industry before moving forward in their purchasing process.

As a result, they reported blogs and articles as their preferred type of content, since blogs and articles are more likely to focus on broader topics such as industry trends.

On the other hand, B2B audiences that read content to further research a company’s products or services, or to help them make a final purchasing decision, gravitate towards content that speaks to their high level of purchasing intent. Fittingly, this group prefers product descriptions and reviews more than other forms of online content.

SEO services allow businesses to engage B2B customers

The frequency at which B2B buyers use search as part of their purchasing journey, combined with the need to engage potential customers with broad content preferences, underscores the importance of effective SEO for B2B companies.

Investing in SEO helps B2B companies engage their target customers where they are: search engines. If companies are able to optimize their site and content for key search terms, they increase their chances of engaging their target customers through search.

“SEO remains an important way for B2B audiences to find content. Don’t forget, though, that it involves optimizing content not just for search engines, but also for the people behind the queries,” Kim Moutsos, vice president of editorial for the Content Marketing Institute, said in the report.

To optimize for specific audiences, businesses need to optimize their content according to their various sets of target audiences. To do this, they need to have a very solid understanding of their target customers and how they consume online content.

Customers at the bottom of the funnel, for example, are very intentional when they consume content online: they are specifically looking for content that discusses products, services, and providers that best fit their needs.

Diverse content marketing strategies help maximize engagement

As B2B audiences demonstrate such a broad range of content

preferences, both in terms of topics and format, businesses that want to engage them online need a wide-ranging content marketing strategy.

For example, creating a "state of the industry" report for a site blog helps to engage B2B buyers at the top of the funnel – those who read business content online to learn about industry trends.

To engage buyers near the middle of the funnel – who read business content online to review whether a company's products can benefit their business – B2B companies need to create and maintain product pages and descriptions on their websites.

Finally, encouraging reviews from former clients and actively maintaining and populating listings on third-party directories helps businesses engage B2B customers at the bottom of the funnel – those who read content to make a decision about whether to purchase products or services from a business.

Understanding how audiences engage with content provides benefits for B2B companies

Clutch's research ultimately underscores the value businesses can achieve when they understand how B2B audiences engage with content online.

Specifically, understanding the online channels and type of content that B2B audiences prefer, in addition to the reasons why they consume business content, can help companies create a content marketing strategy optimized to engage their target customers at different stages of the buying journey.

In addition, B2B companies also need to optimize their content for SEO to ensure that their target customers encounter it through search, their online channel of choice for

finding business content.

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https://searchenginewatch.com/2018/08/15/research-says-b2b-audiences-find-business-content-most-often-through-search/