



FULL DISCLOSURE;
**THE B2B CONTENT
INTELLIGENCE REPORT**



InboxInsight 

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As B2B demand generation specialists, digital insights form the core of our operations. Therefore, we have made it our mission to gather key intelligence over the current state-of-play in the B2B marketing landscape.

- **What intelligence is available for constructing accurate ICPs and high priority lookalike segments?**
- **What is the perceived threat level from emerging competitors leveraging new forms of Content AI?**
- **What type of knowledge around B2B content consumption will help identify key performance drivers?**

This report sets out to identify current threats, opportunities and best practices around the discipline of Content Intelligence gathering and strategic application.

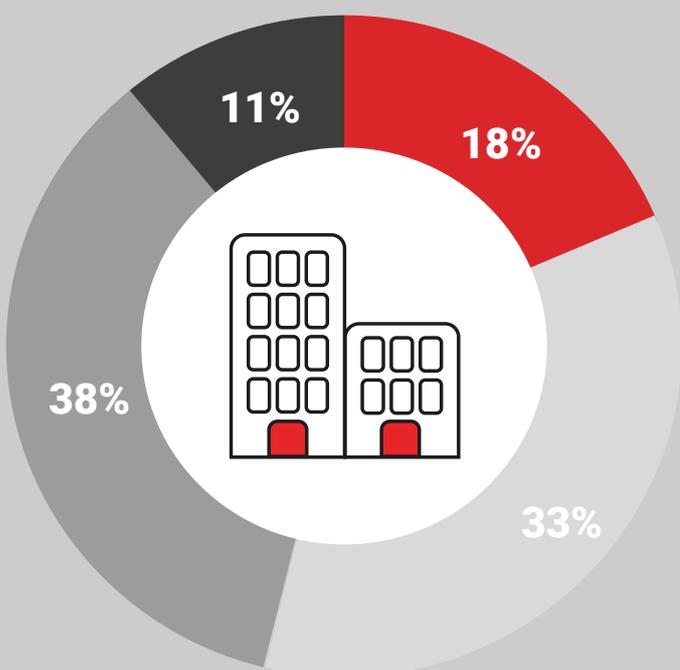
RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The following research was conducted among senior B2B marketing professionals within the Insights for Professionals (IFP) community.

IFP is a centralized knowledge platform that brings together professionals across multiple disciplines and sectors through the common goals of professional development and knowledge acceleration.

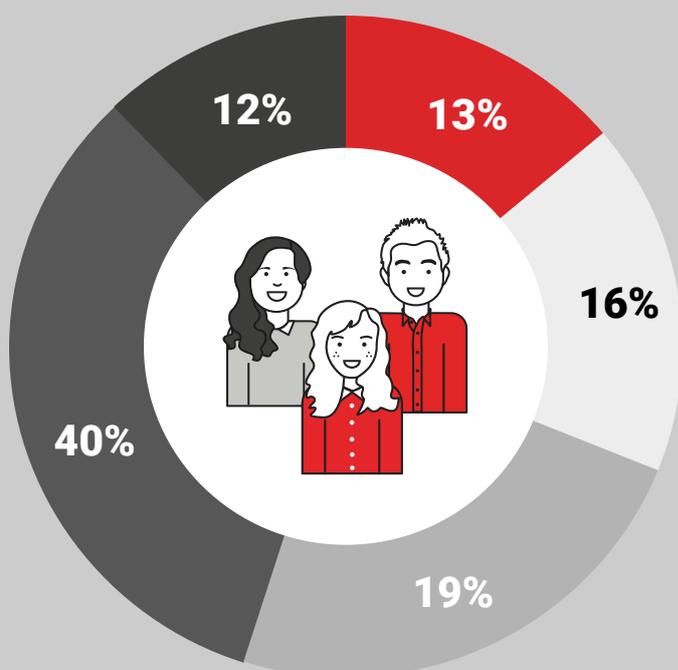
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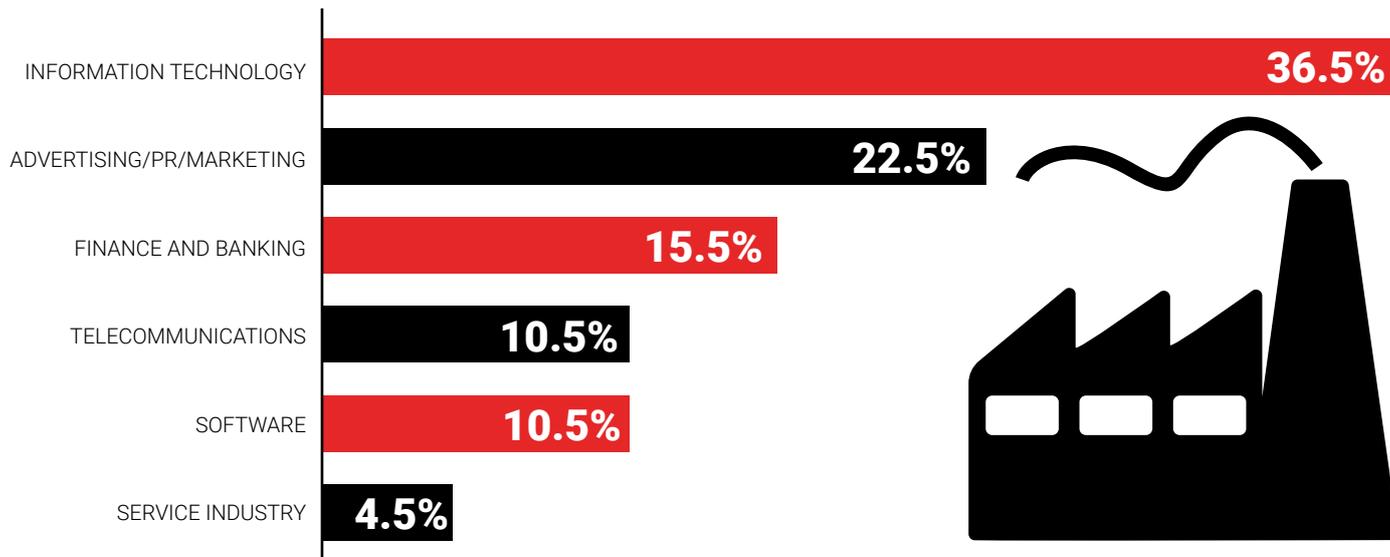


Sample:

Senior Manager Head of Director VP C-Suite



Industry Split:



In order to derive the most value from our research, we've arranged our findings into the following key B2B marketing areas:

Section 1: Targeting

Section 2: Content Strategy

Section 3: Personalization

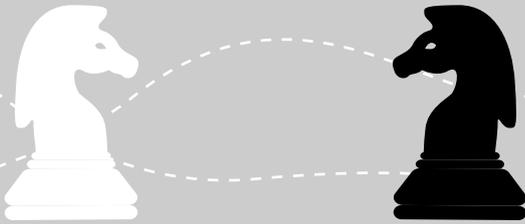
Section 4: Performance Analysis



SECTION 1: ADVANCED TARGETING CRITERIA & LOOKALIKE STRATEGIES

How are B2B marketers using Content Intelligence to facilitate accurate data-driven decision making around the prioritization of target segments?

The proliferation of digital buying signals driven by the effects of Covid-19, provides new opportunities for forward thinking demand gen practitioners to step up their targeting strategies.

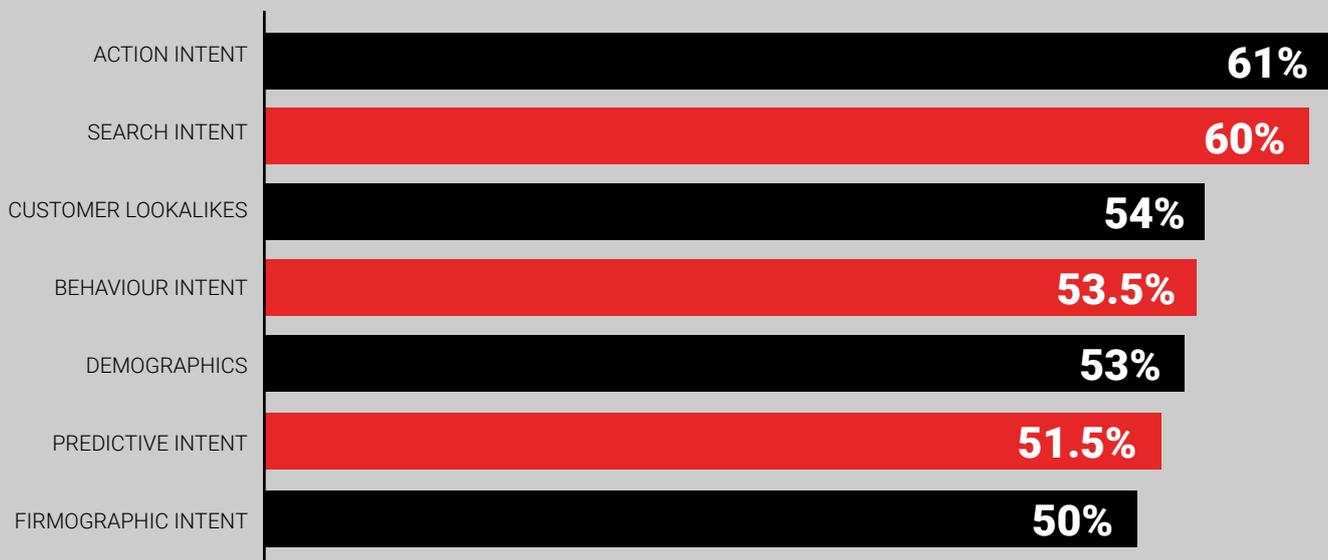


In short, more data points mean:

- Better evaluation of Total Addressable Market (TAM)
- More accurate Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) identification
- Better prioritization of target accounts
- Increased opportunities to identify accurate lookalikes

However, our research reveals some interesting discrepancies...

Which insights do you use to inform your audience segmentation criteria? (tick all which apply)



From the above findings, we can see segmentation criteria is becoming more complex, incorporating different layers of data to interrogate the market and identify the most relevant ICPs.

However, 56% of B2B marketers say obtaining the right audience intelligence to create ICPs is one of their biggest challenges.

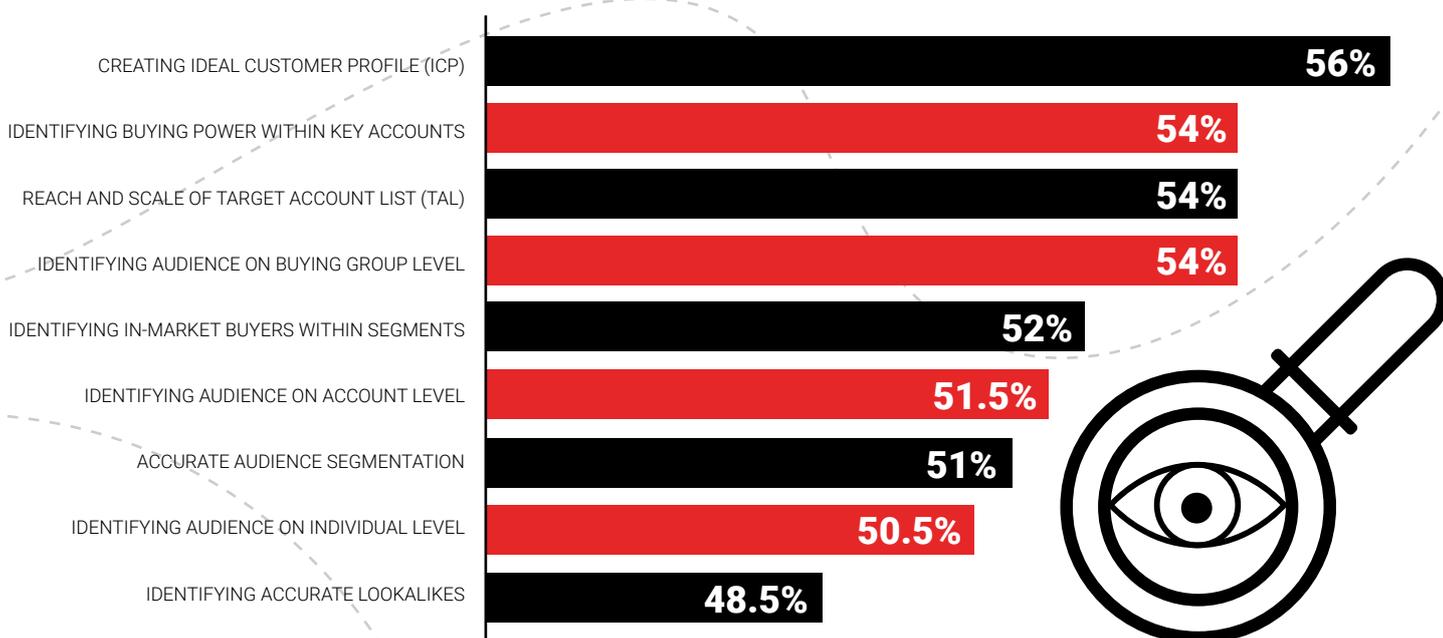
When asked to identify challenges around data acquisition and management of data; reliability of data (35%), cost implications of 3rd party data (33.5%) and restrictions of 1st party data (28.5%) were all cited as issues.

This suggests that despite increased access to multiple sources of audience intelligence, there are external factors preventing its true value being realized.

What's more, further evidence suggests there is a lack of strategic know-how to apply the data in the most effective way to achieve advanced practice, as 38% say transforming data into actionable knowledge is a key challenge.

Other circulating issues around the challenges of audience intelligence include:

Which areas do you struggle the most in obtaining the right audience intelligence? (tick all which apply)



HOW CAN YOU USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE?

Interception of in-market buyers (30.5%), more sophisticated ABM strategies (29.5%) and better targeting (27.5%) are all threats perceived by our senior B2B marketing panel, from competitors applying intelligence to gain competitive advantage.

Unlocking the following knowledge could be your key to joining the forerunners dominating the market...

Content Intelligence gathered through AI used in conjunction with intent data, could be the missing link, providing the potential to fill in the gaps in your audience intelligence.

It does this by:

- Sense checking your ICP against real-life accounts
- Uncovering your competitor's content strategy
- Accurately identifying the best fit opportunities
- Upscaling your Target Account Lists (TAL) with credible lookalikes
- Prioritizing opportunities through identifying in-market tendencies

Where to start

71% of our B2B marketing panel conduct over half of their intelligence gathering inhouse. This suggests that access to first party data via CRMs, marketing platforms and owned channels is readily available.

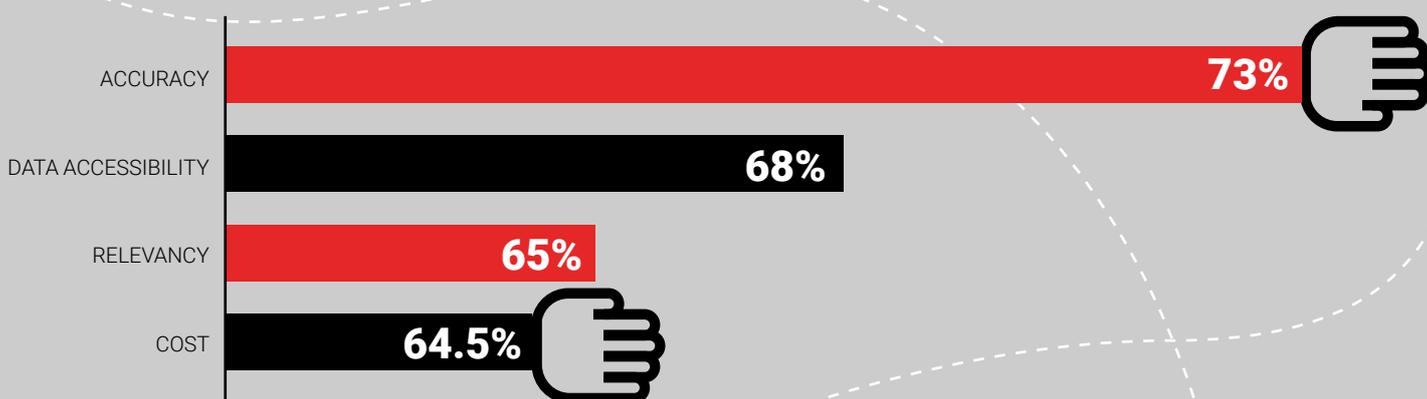
First party is a great basis from which to build your ICP, with 59.5% of B2B marketers analyzing their CRM, insights around your best customers provides clear justification for your chosen segmentation criteria. However, this is just the start.

Relying solely on customer data to form the focus of your targeting strategy can leave you with an

exhaustible list of accounts. Restrictive audience counts can deem campaigns unviable, especially if there is a lack of reliable evidence to suggest these accounts are actively in-market.

When looking to scale audience reach, our research presents further obstacles:

What are your biggest challenges when trying to scale audience reach? (tick all which apply)



HOW YOU CAN OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS TO DELIVER A SUPERIOR TARGETING STRATEGY

Our research revealed growing insecurities around the late adoption of AI technologies to gain better intelligence, with only 55.5% utilizing AI to uncover lookalikes.

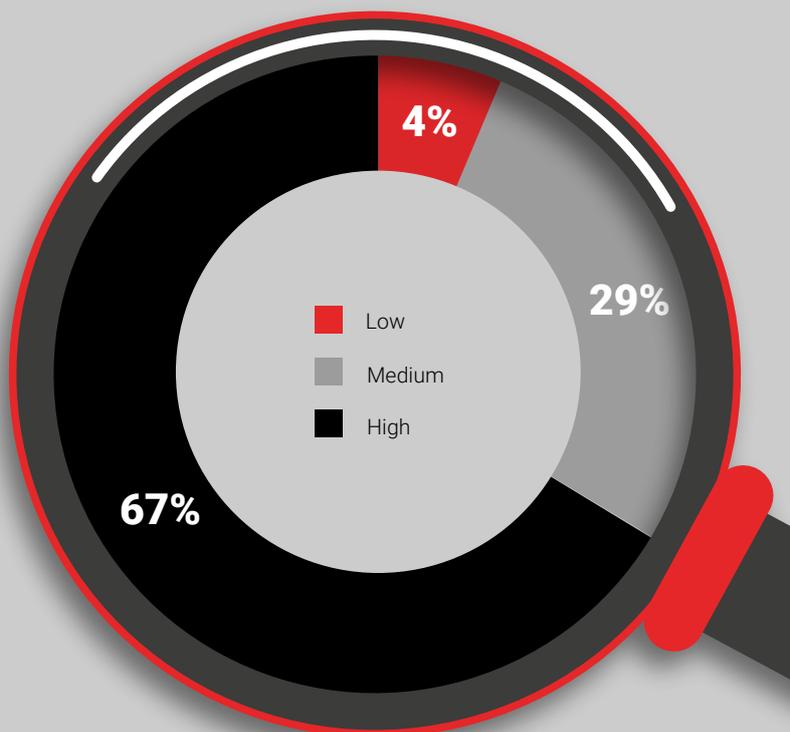
The use of AI via Natural Language Processing (NLP) can provide superior visibility over your TAM, along with your available market and target market.

This includes which product/service and topic categories your competitors are dominating over.

Having this intelligence will enable you to discern every opportunity available to you, giving you access to a plethora of lookalikes that expand outside your existing customer base and limitations of your first party data.

For B2B marketers looking to deliver growth strategies, this intel is hugely significant.

What is your perceived threat level from new market entrants using emerging AI to identify and apply better intelligence to gain competitive advantage?



But the sophistication continues...

Through layering intent data over your newly expanded TALs, you can then segment your lists further according to digital in-market behavior. This will enable you to prioritize accounts, increasing your likelihood of reaching them at crucial touchpoints in their decision making journey.

THE 2 KEY BENEFITS OF THIS APPROACH INCLUDE:

1. **Better focus as you build hyper relevant TALs**
2. **Greater efficiency as you better allocate resource towards accounts displaying the greatest buying propensity**

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THIS APPROACH

Natural language processing (NLP) is a field of artificial intelligence in which computers analyze, understand, and derive meaning from human language in a smart and useful way.

But more importantly it's a form of Content AI that can be leveraged to uncover opportunities within your TAM.

One of the ways it can achieve this is through scanning thousands (and in some cases millions) of websites and online platforms, mapping key data against a defined data list such as your ICP criteria.

When this knowledge is combined with firmographic intent data, it's possible to find other companies that deliver the same products, serve the same customers, and create similar content; and thereby have the same need of your product.

To go one further, overlaying this newly augmented TAL with other forms of intent that relay real-time content consumption intel, it's possible to derive a hyper relevant and highly engaged list of in-market prospects.



SECTION 2: AGILE CONTENT STRATEGY TECHNIQUES

How are B2B marketers using Content Intelligence to keep their strategy aligned with real-time content demand?

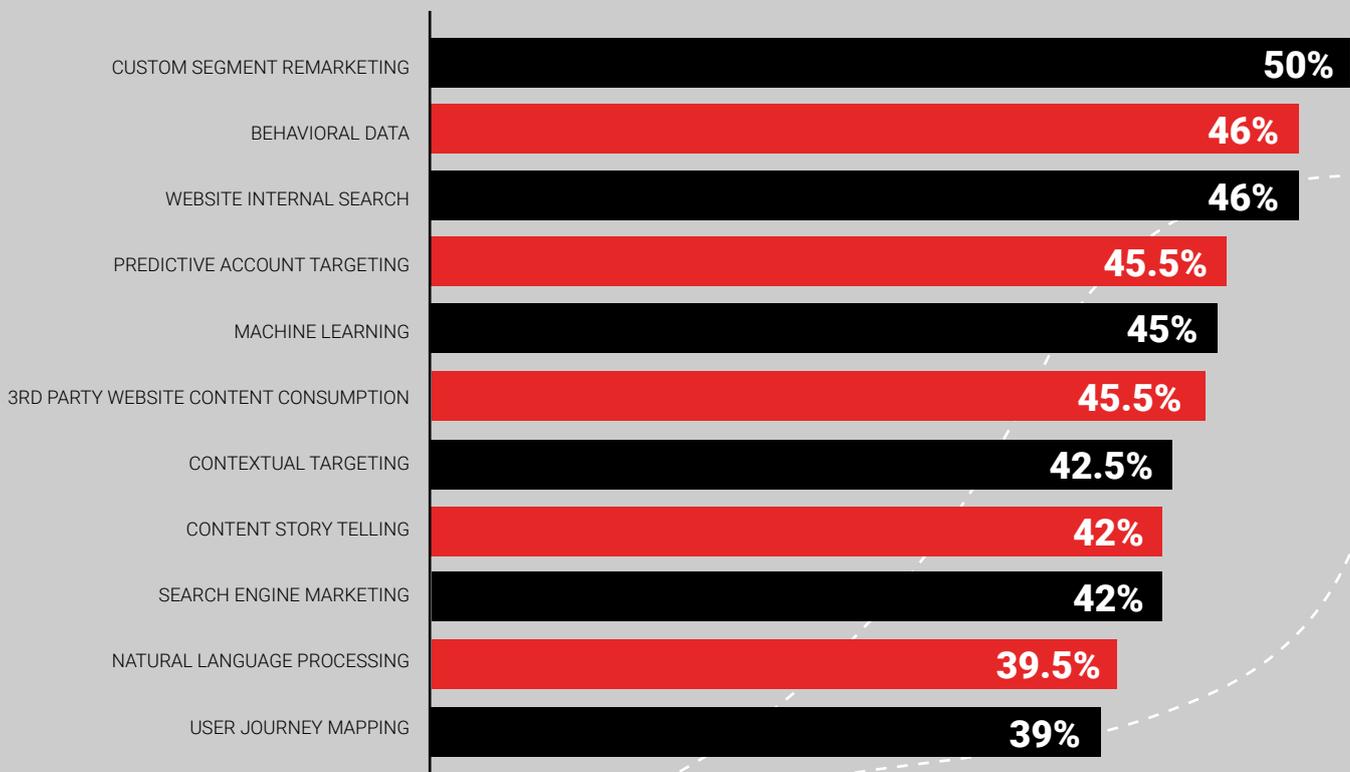
Marketers need to constantly develop market understanding, to ensure their content is relevant and current to the needs and desires of their target audiences.

We have seen how Content Intelligence exposes the most relevant and best fit opportunities but what impact is it having on the types of content B2B marketers are using to engage – and ultimately win them?

Key to designing an effective content strategy is to identify digital behavioral signals around content consumption and preferences.

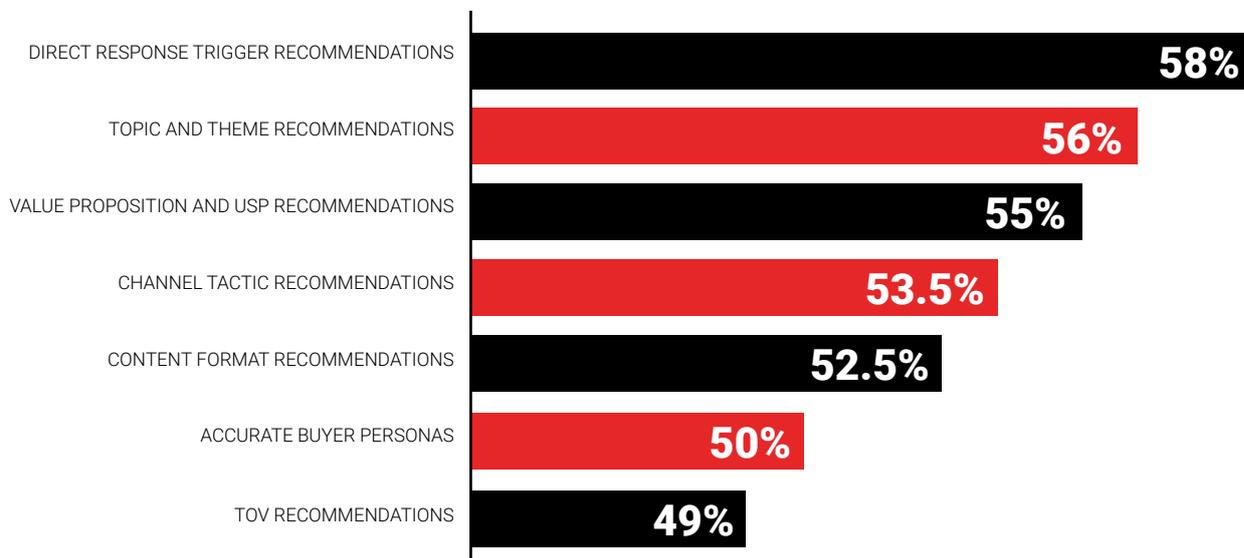
However, despite even splits, we would have expected to see higher numbers of marketers adopting each of the following techniques for uncovering content consumption intelligence:

**What type of knowledge around B2B content consumption do you use?
(tick all which apply)**



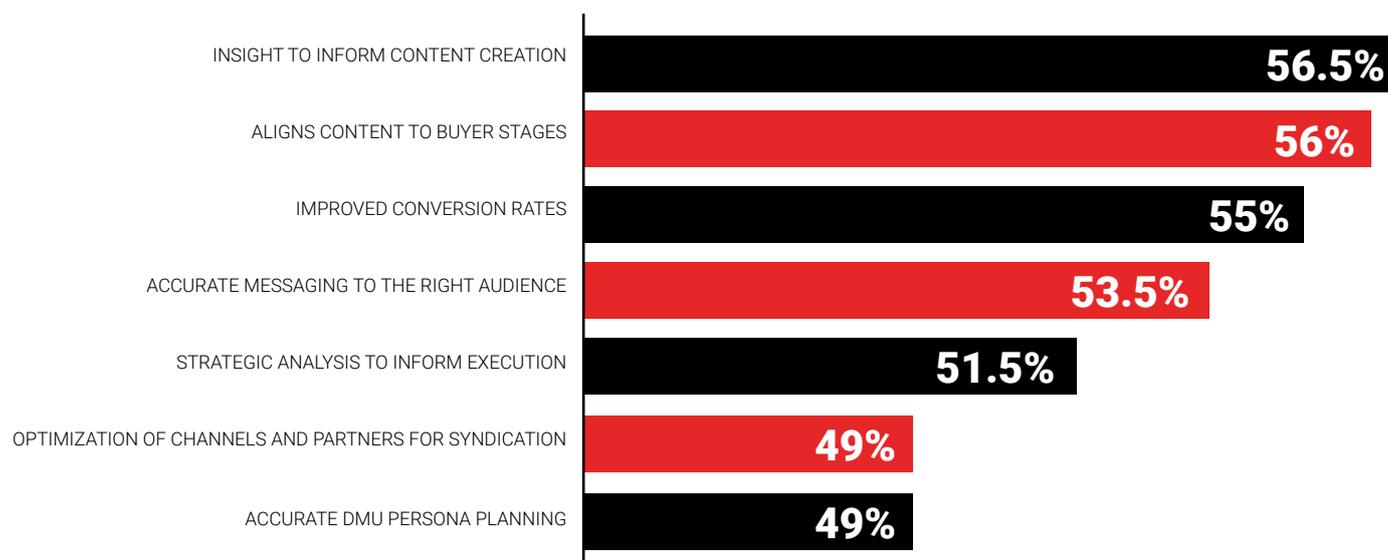
Furthermore, other key areas where Content Intelligence could be feed into content planning to facilitate data-backed decision making, appear not to be fully utilized. For example 50% of marketers do not use audience insights to create accurate buyer personas, while 46.5% do not use it to inform channel tactics and 44% create topic and themes without applying it.

How do you translate audience insights into knowledge to inform content strategy? (tick all which apply)



Likewise, when asked which areas Content Insight brings value to, we would have anticipated higher response rates for each of the following options:

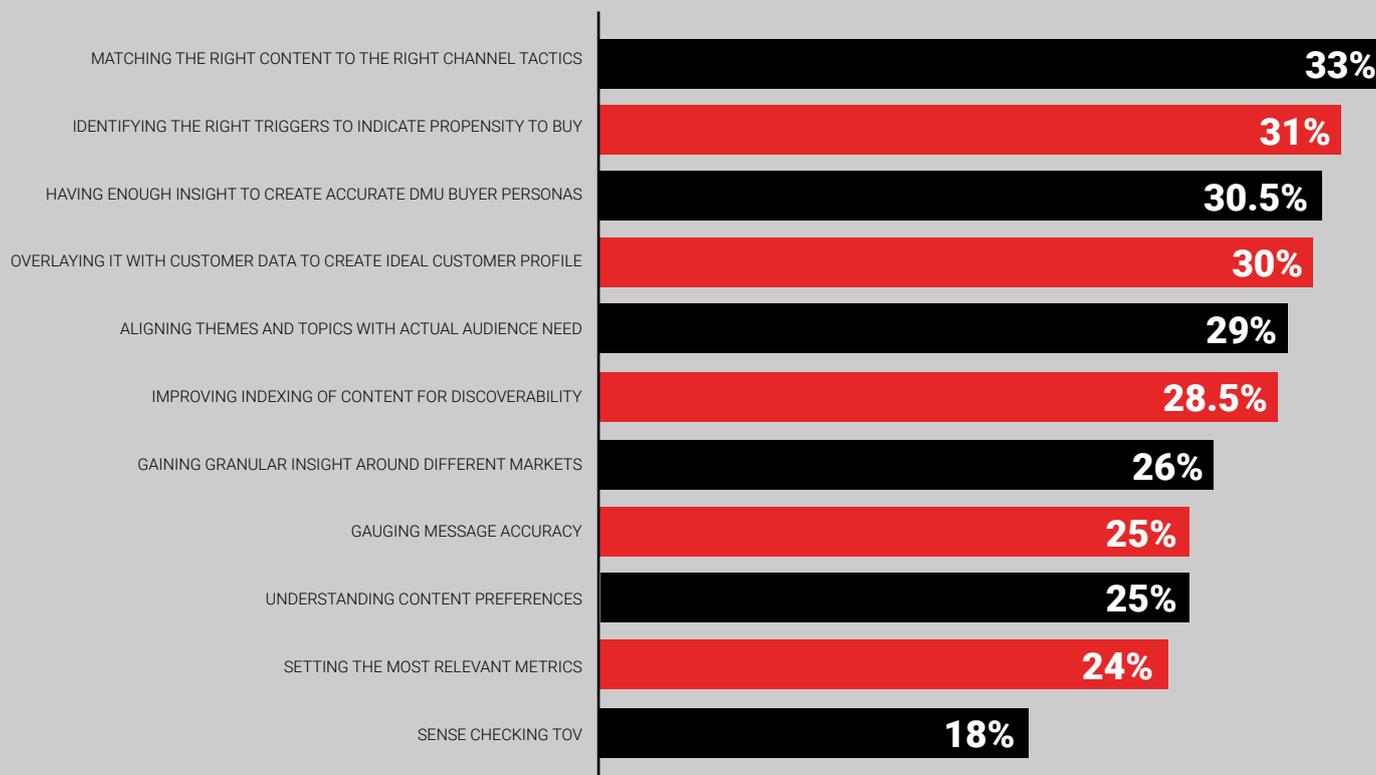
What value do you get from content insight? (tick all which apply)



98% of our survey panel say they have medium to high confidence levels in getting the most value out of their intelligence gathering efforts. This suggests that it is not B2B marketers' competency that is driving the lack of data-driven decision making.

Diving down deeper, we can discern some key challenges that may instead account for the apparent gaps in the application of Content .

What are the key challenges for content knowledge? (tick 3 most relevant)



THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CONTENT INTELLIGENCE

When Content Intelligence is effectively applied, campaigns deliver better engagement, faster ROI and accelerated market growth. This is because resources are better focused towards building deeper audience learnings which can be translated into better content, disseminated across accurate multi-channel tactics that drive superior content experiences.

This agile approach, enables marketers to adapt their strategy at the same pace as real-time demand – constantly monitored through their Content Intelligence feedback loops.

This shows how Content Intelligence drives real business value and therefore needs to form a core element of your content strategy. This often demands a shift in mindset – those who are quick to adapt, will gain significant competitive edge.



HOW AND WHERE CAN I APPLY CONTENT INTELLIGENCE TO GAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE?

Having tightly defined audiences implies you can channel your efforts and resources towards building deeper understanding and learnings around specific topics areas that matter to your target audience the most.

The right application of NLP will uncover core topic areas and themes that repeatedly occur across your target segment. This forms key strategic knowledge for identifying crucial areas to position your brand as thought leaders while informing how to categorize content for indexing and which topics to push budget behind.

Building your content strategy around specific categories backed by data, will also ensure you have the depth and breath of content needed to superiorly satisfy your target audience's information needs, keeping them orbiting your brand.

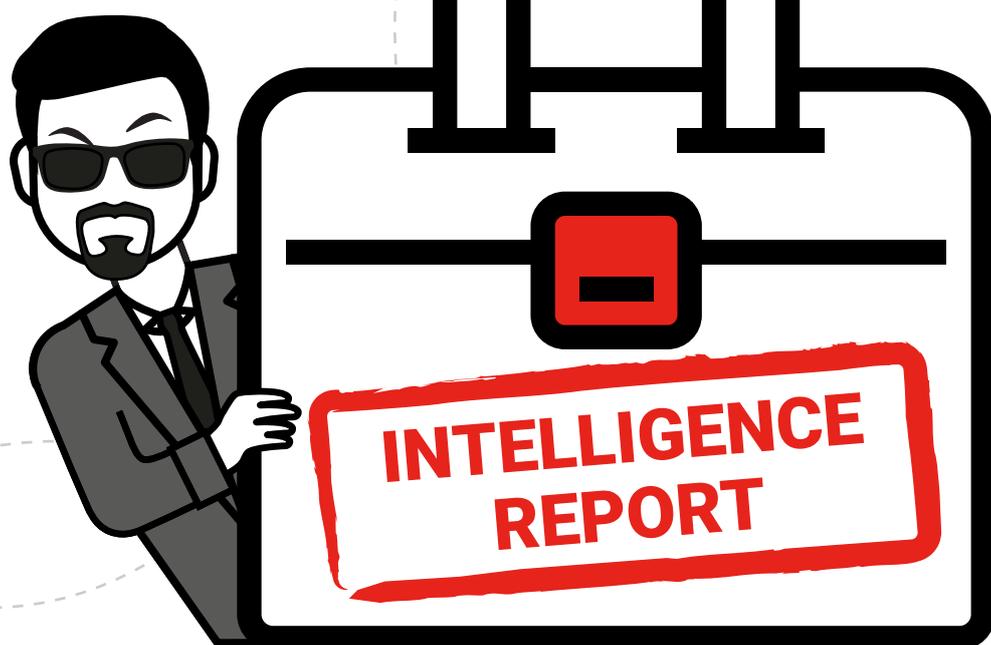
NLP can also expose your competitor's content strategy, identifying keywords and topics underpinning their tactics. This Content Intelligence can give you a critical advantage by enabling you to craft your value propositions to articulate why and how you deliver superior value to your target audience. This can result in better content cut through, as your content creation teams develop stand out titles and compelling copy that trigger your audiences to resonate more strongly with your brand.

While NLP presents a multitude of opportunities to excel, leveraging intent data will provide a crucial additional dimension to your strategy through identifying real-time content consumption patterns.

Combining intent data across different first and third party sources will give a 360 of both your audience and performance, giving you vital intelligence over what's resonating in real-time and which performance triggers are yielding the best responses.

Further visibility over format preference and channel engagement facilitate better content marketing decisions. The most advanced players will be capturing intelligence on an individual, buyer group and account level, using this intel to build out multifaceted content journeys that cater for the differing needs and preferences of the most influential stakeholders within key target accounts.

But perhaps Content Intelligence is most powerful when it is used to infuse every element of your content strategy – from content creation right through to campaign analysis and improvement. By keeping an agile approach, the best practitioners will use Content Intelligence to develop a resilient strategy with the means to adapt at the same pace as real-time demand.



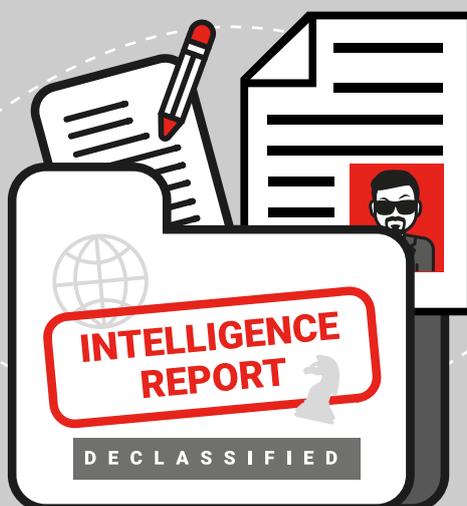
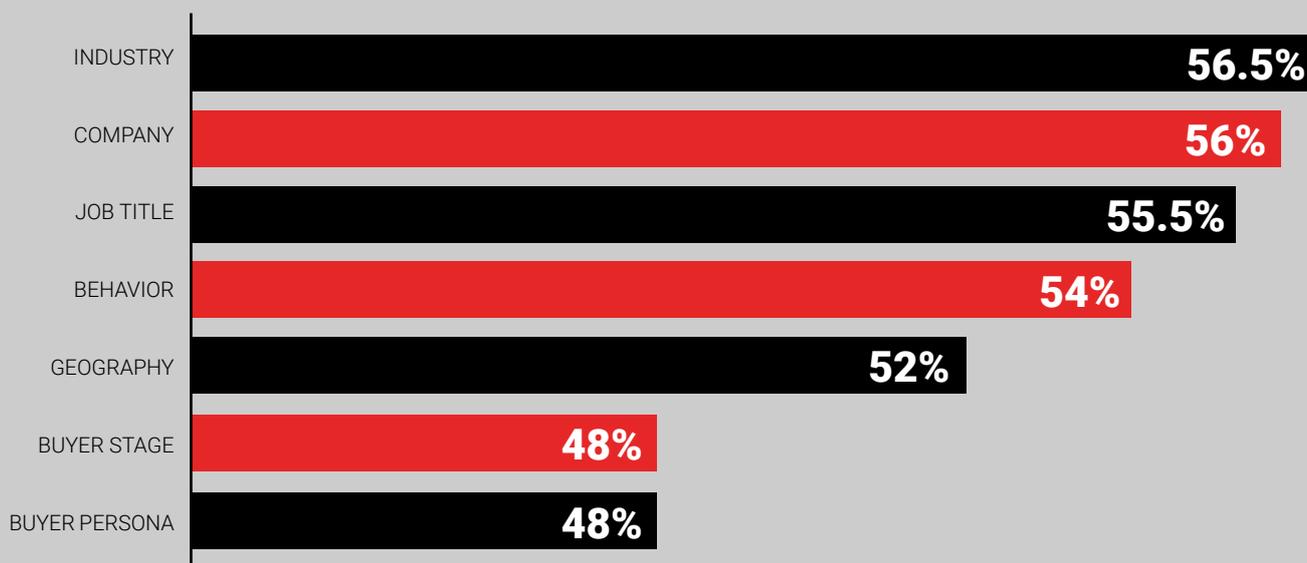
SECTION 3: TECH POWERED PERSONALIZATION

How are the best B2B marketers using Content Intelligence to deliver personalized content experiences?

The benefits of personalization are well cited – better engagement - shorter sales cycles - faster revenue.

But in practice, how mature are B2B marketers' personalization strategies? Our survey findings reveal some interesting findings...

What level do you personalize content? (tick all which apply)



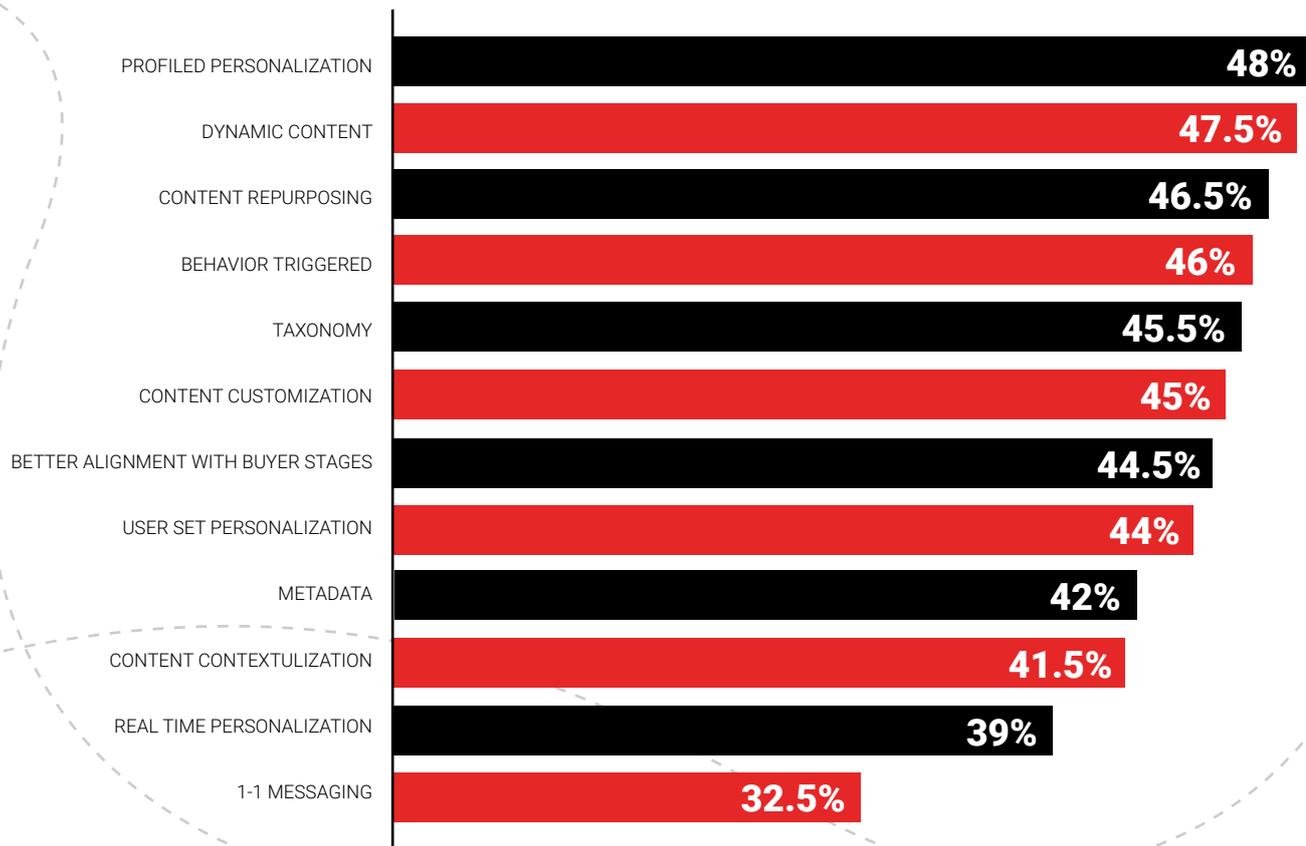
Our research suggests that half of B2B marketers have not developed their strategies at the same pace as opportunities offered by readily accessible technological means.

43.5% of marketers are not personalizing content by industry, while a startling 52% are not personalizing content by buyer stage.

When asked which areas our senior B2B marketers were planning to improve, we can see even splits between all the key areas.

However, without radically readdressing the levels they target personalization, we predict many challenges standing in the way of achieving the stated improvements.

Which areas do you plan to improve personalization? (tick all which apply)



HOW TO USE CONTENT INTELLIGENCE TO PULL AWAY FROM THE CROWD

Personalization requires quality data – and lots of it.

If you have applied the Content Intelligence recommendations outlined in section 1 and 2, you will have a clearly defined audience with a rich set of data that display clear characteristics, preferences and behavioral tendencies.

But which data should you use to drive your targeting decisions?

With longer, more complex, nonlinear buyer journeys, there are many different factors that impact how you should personalize the content journey to improve audience relevancy. This in itself can be hugely problematic to marketers wanting to personalize on scale without diluting the quality of their communications. For example, buyer stage, industry and job title are all variables that can significantly impact the type of communication you want to deliver next, as does real-time intent data such as content consumption patterns and browsing terms.

So how do you integrate all these different data points to determine the best fit one-to-one personalized communications?

Thanks to accessible tech platforms, decisions over how to personalize content have been greatly advanced through the adoption of AI, machine learning and predictive modelling. Such technologies collect, analyze and translate vast amounts of data into actionable insights that identify the most accurate triggers for personalizing content. This means multiple levels of personalization can be rolled out with greater ease and at larger scale, including on an account and individual level.

AN EXAMPLE OF CONTENT INTELLIGENCE FUELLED PERSONALIZATION

As with previous described methods of Content Intelligence leveraging NLP, it's possible to identify - with accuracy, the most relevant topics that will resonate with your target audience. This same intelligence can be used to strategically tag and categorize your content within a centralized content platform. If this platform is supported by an AI recommendation engine and machine learning capabilities, it will use algorithms and statistical models to analyze, interrogate and draw inferences from patterns in the platform readership's first party data layered against real-time digital signals around content consumption.

Through automatic content contextualization, analysis and continuous learning these inferences will trigger intelligent content journeys to direct informed messaging at specific audiences displaying an active interest in your defined topic areas. Therefore, the more accurately you categorize

your content through applying reliable Content Intelligence, the better the match between content and audience.

In short, this AI aided capability means you can personalize content, at scale, to deliver highly relevant content journeys that fast-track decision making and drive superior brand value.

HOW TO USE LEAD SCORING TO PERSONALIZE ON BEHAVIORAL LEVEL

Event based triggers are another method for delivering personalized content at key touchpoints in the buyer journey. However, 46% of our survey panel do not personalize content on a behavior level. This flags yet another great opportunity for creating market differentiation through delivering superior content experiences.

Lead scoring is one effective technique for translating user actions into indications of buyer intent. This intelligence can be used to trigger corresponding workflows that deliver a sequence of personalized communications.

If you have the marketing automation technology in place, you can track multiple clicks and content downloads and attach a 'lead score' based on the activity of that prospect. Scores can be set against different prospect behavior across your website and marketing channels, as well as fields held against the data that denote company fit.

Each marketing automation system might have slight differences in how it measures actions or allows you to count the score, but overall it most often fits into two types of data:

1. IMPLICIT DATA		2. USER ACTIVITIES	
Prospect fit vs your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) / Audience Persona	Score	Engagement with your content marketing materials or website	Score
Target industry where we have case study	20	Visits blog page	5
Seniority level is manager or higher	10	Downloads whitepaper	10
Job title indicates works in right department	10	Register for webinar	20
Company has over 1000 employees	10	Clicks nurture email	5
Owns a certain technology already (e.g. Salesforce CRM, SQL database)	10	Filled in a contact form	50

Marrying together both implicit data with user activity, provides a whole new level of sophistication that will enable you to dial up your personalization capabilities.

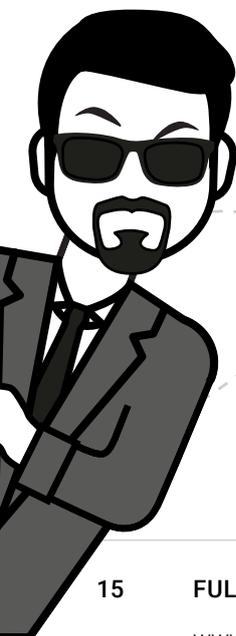
MATCHING FORMATS TO THE BUYER JOURNEY FOR FURTHER LEVELS OF PERSONALIZATION

Different formats generate different value according to where your lead sits in the buyer journey. By mapping your content and formats to your content

funnel, you are better prepared for anticipating your lead's information needs and subsequently delivering better personalized content experiences. You can also build this into your scoring model, allowing you to apply a weighting to the prospect's buying intent based on which content they are consuming.

JOURNEY	FORMAT	SCORE
Top of funnel / Initial touch	Blog article read	5
Top of funnel / Initial touch	Video view	5
Top of funnel / Initial touch	Product webpage visit	5
Middle of Funnel / Researching stage	Guide download (tactical resource with tips and advice)	10
Middle of Funnel / Researching stage	Whitepaper download (research backed, longer resource with more detail)	20
Middle of Funnel / Researching stage	Webinar registration / on-demand view	30
Bottom of Funnel / Buying signal	Pricing webpage visit	15
Bottom of Funnel / Buying signal	Request for information form page visit but abandon	10
Bottom of Funnel / Buying signal	Request for information form completion	50

This is by no means an exhaustible exploration into all the personalization capabilities available to savvy B2B marketers. However, it does highlight the critical role Content Intelligence plays in delivering personalized content experiences, at scale, while driving your target audiences deeper into your brand.



SECTION 4: NEXT LEVEL CONTENT ANALYTICS

How does Campaign Intelligence give B2B marketers a clearer insight into buyer behavior?

While many brands are producing well crafted content, specific triggers to content engagement are often unknown.

Our research reveals 62.5% of our survey panel do not use intelligence gathered from content engagement metrics to inform their strategy.

Without adequate performance tracking, are B2B marketers missing opportunities to gather crucial intelligence that would help them evolve and improve?

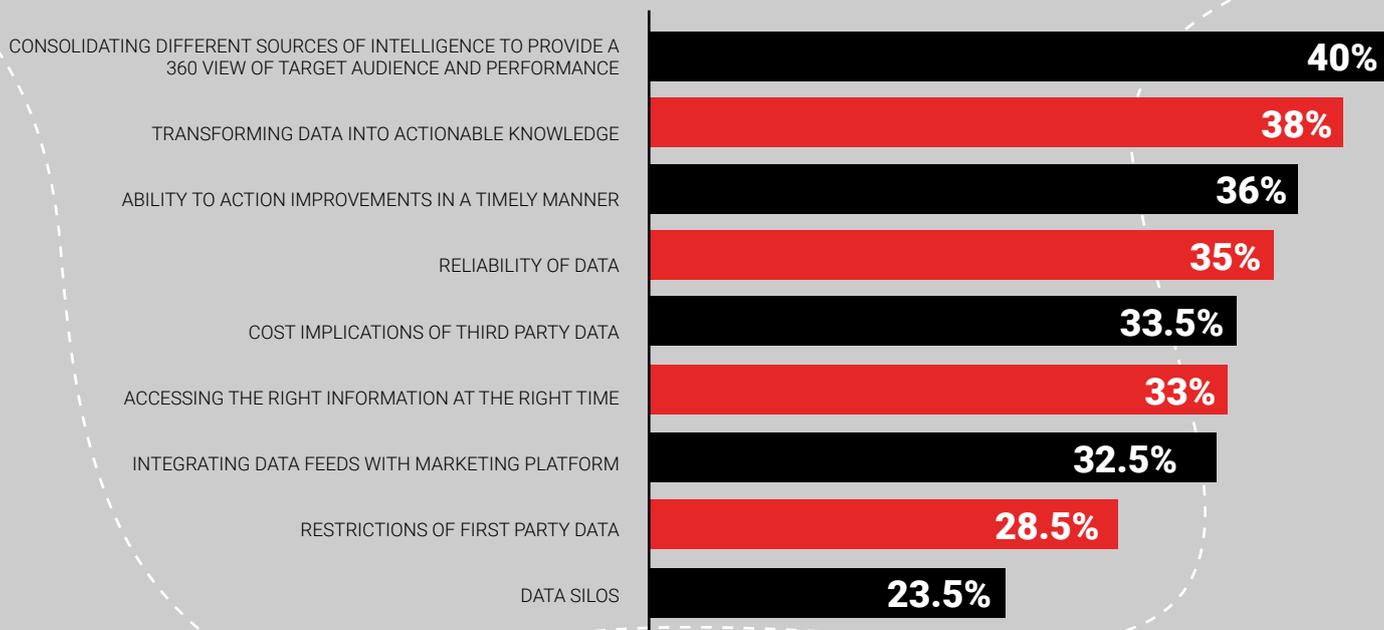
47% of our surveyed B2B marketers say more granular insight around real-time pain points and

needs would enable them to progress their ABM strategy. A further 47% say more granular insight around content preferences is required.

This suggests without accurate content tracking, crucial intelligence around audience behavior and the identification of triggers that impact it, are being left untapped.

We asked the following question to try and better understand why crucial opportunities to gain better intelligence are not being leveraged. The following insight suggests there key challenges around data that need immediate resolve if lagging marketers are to catch up.

Which are your greatest challenges surrounding the acquisition and management of data? (tick 3 most relevant)



HOW SUPERIOR CONTENT ANALYTICS ANTICIPATE TRENDS – BEFORE THEY BREAK...

First party content environments supported by an opted in readership and accurate metadata tagging, are the secret weapon for advanced demand practitioners looking to develop a 360 understanding of content engagement to track and interpret data at the user, account, format and topic level.

Such environments enable you to drill down to a granular view by Intent Tag of how people with a challenge around that area are engaging with content. Building up a database of real-time metrics against content such as dwell time, CTR, number of pieces consumed on a topic and mapping this against user profiled intent, provides a constant feed of granular campaign intelligence.

This intelligence can be used to control the user experience, heightening relevancy and message

accuracy. It can also be used to uncover patterns which, when fed through AI and machine learning, can be used to predict the likelihood of future behavior with growing accuracy.

Having this transparency means isolating key behavior triggers is no longer a case of guesswork or costly trial and error. Instead, this enhanced capability extends far beyond traditional engagement metrics, providing superior insight over how audiences engage with content on all levels – in real-time.

This potential unlocks an abundance of new opportunities to shift to an agile approach. With immediate access to insight that enable marketers to pin point key performance triggers along with real-time trends, it is possible to detect the nuances of behavior that have been traditionally notorious to uncover.

CONCLUSION

In short, Content Intelligence supported by the right tech, has the potential to extend the frontiers of knowledge around how different B2B decision makers consume and interact with content.

This marks a seismic shift in the way B2B marketers can plan, execute and improve the multitude of components that impact performance, in order to deliver more relevant, more meaningful and more impactful engagements that fast-track ROI.

From our research learnings, we predict the most effective techniques for its application are as follows:

- **Identifying best fit audiences and their lookalikes**
- **Creating stand out content that resonates more profoundly**
- **Building hyper relevant content journeys**
- **Acting on real-time insight to keep pace with real-time demand and predict future trends**

However, in order for the above, B2B marketers need to overcome challenges around data acquisition and management. There is also a pressing necessity to embed Content Intelligence at the heart of digital marketing, enabling the right feedback loops to sustain accumulative fact based decision making.



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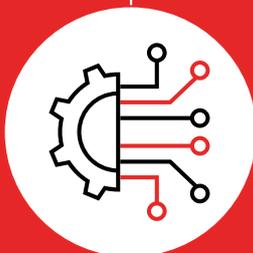
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Identify your audience, activate their interest and generate qualified engagements through our optimized multi-channel campaigns.



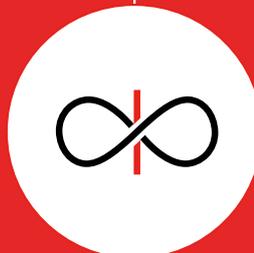
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Inbox**INTEGRATE**

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