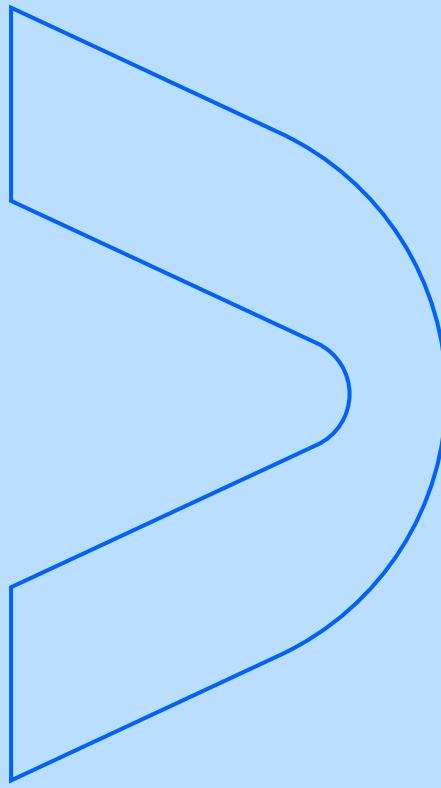


The Guide to
B2B
Marketing



Programmatic Tactics for B2B Digital Campaigns

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B2B Programmatic Advertising Basics

Before you start planning your first programmatic campaign, let's clarify a few things.

What is B2B Marketing?

B2B marketing, short for business-to-business marketing, involves promoting products and services to businesses.

Unlike B2C (business-to-consumer) marketing, B2B marketing focuses on selling to organizations rather than individual consumers.



What is Programmatic Advertising?

Programmatic advertising involves using technology—in the case of B2B marketers, a demand-side platform (DSP)—to automate buying digital ad space across the open internet. It allows B2B marketers to target audiences based on firmographic, demographic, and persona-level data. This includes specific attributes, such as industry, company size, company revenue, job title, and more.

Thanks to precise targeting, automation, and the scale and reach of programmatic advertising, B2B marketers can target high-impact ads to the right decision makers at every stage of the buying journey.





The B2B Buying Process

Sales cycles are typically much longer in B2B than in B2C. Depending on the size of the company, industry, and complexity of the purchase decision, it can take, on average, one to five months (and sometimes up to a year, if not longer) for a business to sign a contract. Compare that to B2C, where a customer can click a display ad, visit a website, and make a purchase in a matter of minutes.

Part of it has to do with the number of decision makers involved. In B2C, the customer is looking for a particular item, or encounters one they hadn't considered before, and decides whether or not to make a purchase.

In B2B, the buying process is more in-depth. The deals are larger, but the target audiences are often smaller and involve more decision makers.

An average of five people—ranging from junior staff members, who may initially research a product or service, to more senior leaders, who ultimately give final approval—are involved in the decision-making process.

The 6 B2B Buying Jobs

According to [Gartner](#), there are six B2B buying “jobs” that customers must complete before making a purchase.

But the path is far from linear. Instead, decision makers bounce from one task to another, asking questions and doing more research before coming to a decision.

Problem Identification	Solution Exploration	Requirements Building
"We need to do something."	"What's out there to solve our problem?"	"What exactly do we need the purchase to do?"
Supplier Selection	Validation	Consensus Creation
"Does this do what we want it to?"	"I think I know the right answer, but I need to be sure."	"We need to get everyone on board."

- 1 Customers think about a purchase more in terms of discrete tasks than as a step-by-step journey.
- 2 While completing some jobs may ultimately depend on finishing others first, customers often work on several at a time.
In fact, two jobs—**Validation** and **Consensus Creation**—are “always on”.
- 3 Buying jobs are broadly shared across decision makers regardless of the specific paths they take to purchase.



The B2B Landscape

B2B Is Big Business

After years of economic uncertainty, decision makers rewarded B2B companies that delivered personalized, multi-channel marketing experiences in 2023. According to [McKinsey](#), 70% of B2B buyers were willing to spend up to \$500,000 USD on a single transaction.

As a result, global digital ad spending will spike in 2024. [eMarketer](#) forecasts a 13.2% increase in spending compared to 2023 and expects total worldwide digital ad spending to surpass \$750 billion USD in 2025. According to [Statista](#), investment in B2B ad spending, in particular, should reach \$37.7 billion USD in 2024.

Buyers are increasingly moving online to conduct research and find products or services that meet their needs. This provides a major opportunity for B2B marketers. But investing strictly in search and social ads no longer cuts it.

That's where a [multi-channel programmatic advertising strategy](#) comes in.

70% of B2B buyers were willing to spend up to \$500,000 USD on a single transaction.



With programmatic advertising, B2B marketers can target their ideal customers and deliver personalized content while capturing their audiences' attention exactly where they're looking for information: online.

By using a DSP, B2B marketers can launch a scalable account-based marketing (ABM) strategy using a variety of channels—including native, display, video, connected TV (CTV), audio, in-game, and digital out-of-home (DOOH)—to reach B2B customers across all of their devices.

In this guide, we'll go through the tactics and strategies B2B marketers should use to share their stories, promote their products, and capture the attention of customers online using programmatic advertising.

But first, let's start with the basics.

Building B2B Buyer Personas and Mapping Their Journey

The first step to building your B2B programmatic strategy is to identify your buyers and their personas.

You want to use specific messaging tailored to your chosen audience and create content catered to the unique needs and interests of your target market.

To help you get started, we've put together a simple three-part guide to building your buyer personas and mapping out the buyer journey.

1

Reconfirm Your Target Market

You likely know who your target market is based on past purchasing behaviour and the success of previous campaigns.

However, you might be overlooking a few segments or targeting an audience that is too broad or too narrow.

Dig deeper into your customer data to confirm the top characteristics of your buyers. Revisit the types of organizations you're targeting and the key participants you're likely to encounter in each stage of the consideration process. Think about what problems they're trying to solve and how your product can impact their business goals. Or, to broaden your target market, pick features from your offering that you believe are the most appealing, either from reviews or customer feedback, and consider who else might benefit from them.

It's best to rely on defined metrics or data points when doing this. See which of your current customers had the highest customer lifetime value (CLTV), lowest churn rates, and shortest buying processes. Take that data into consideration when reconfirming your target market.

2

Build Your Buyer Personas

Next, you want to build generalized representations of your ideal customers for your product or service.

Building a buyer persona involves creating a profile of a person who represents your target audience. Based on the data you collect, give your ideal customer a name, age, job title, and other characteristics. In B2B, you want to build one for each role in the buying process.

To build your personas, find people in your company or network who are involved with the respective industry. Talk to people in customer-facing roles or speak to customers directly. They can provide insights into what resonates most with buyers.

The categories you want to focus on are:



Demographics

- age
- gender
- income
- marital status
- job title



Psychographics

- major life events
- life challenges
- accomplishments



Behaviour and Preferences

- social networks they use
- devices they own
- hobbies



Buyer's Journey

- what product needs they have
- concern for price vs. quality



Firmographics

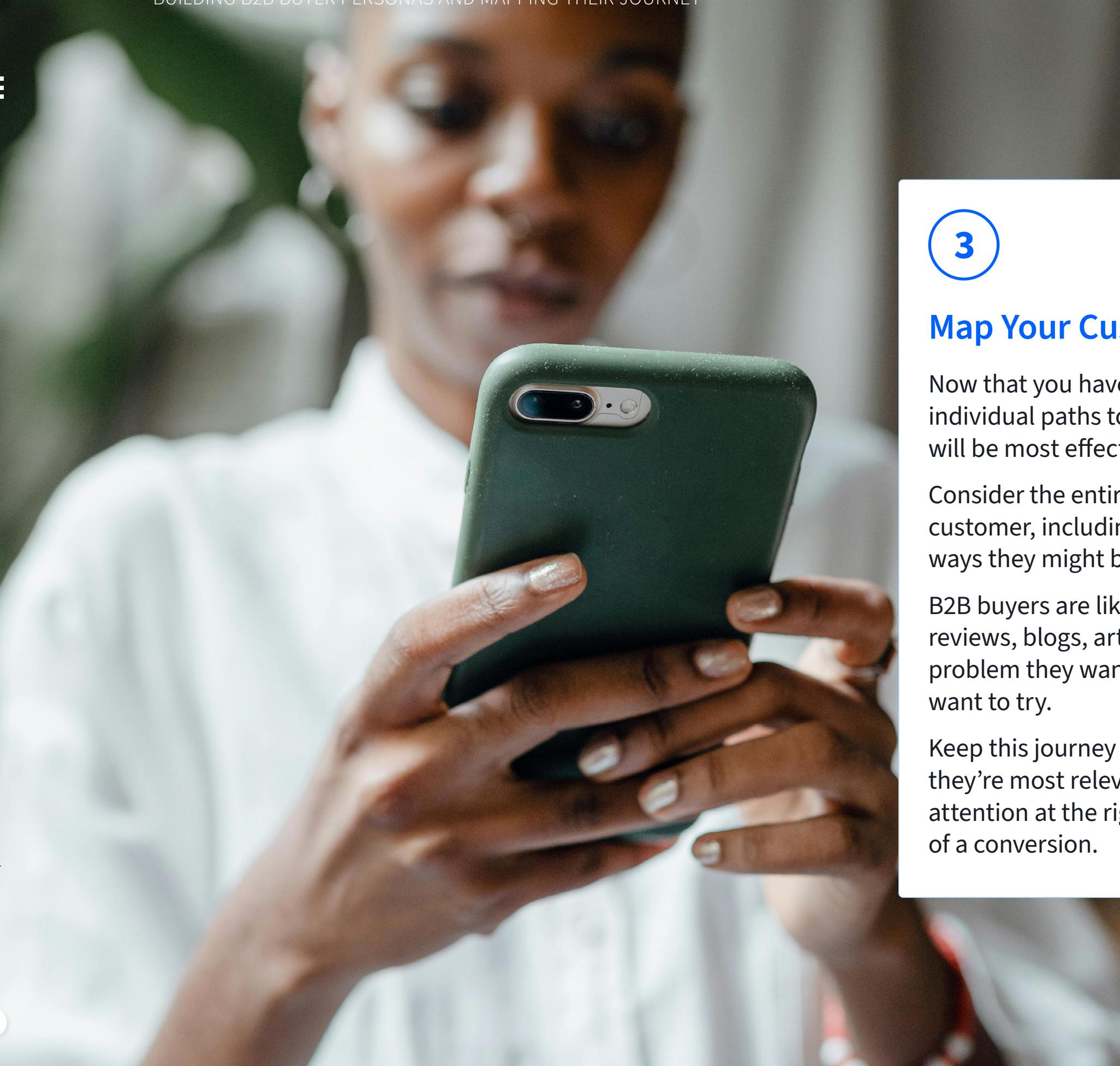
- company revenue
- size
- industry
- location

To go a bit deeper, ask customers more detailed questions, such as:

- What websites do you frequently visit?
- What publications do you read on a regular basis?
- Do you typically conduct research before making a purchase? If so, how many sources do you use?
- What types of content do you prefer (blogs, webinars, explainers, etc.)?
- Are you loyal to certain brands/technologies?
- What key events and/or conferences do you attend?

Personas should be built using data, not hunches.

If you try to answer these questions without actually speaking to customers, you may overlook important information that you hadn't previously considered. This information will help refine your messaging and customer targeting.



3

Map Your Customer's Buying Journey

Now that you have buyer personas built, you can map their individual paths to purchase to determine where your ads will be most effective.

Consider the entire research process for a potential customer, including the purchasing stages, and all of the ways they might be using their various devices throughout.

B2B buyers are likely to search for information by reading reviews, blogs, articles, and other online content about the problem they want to solve or the product or service they want to try.

Keep this journey in mind to ensure you place ads where they're most relevant and capture decision makers' attention at the right moment, increasing the chance of a conversion.

Having the Right Media Mix

When developing your B2B campaign strategy, it's important to take a multi-channel approach by incorporating native, display, video, connected TV (CTV), audio, in-game, and digital out-of-home (DOOH).

Each has its unique benefits, and when combined, you'll have a more powerful campaign that will reach a larger and more targeted audience.

We've broken down the advantages of each to demonstrate how you can build a multi-channel campaign strategy around each of their strengths.





Native

An important part of B2B advertising is educating the audience. That's where native ads come in.

Native ads blend seamlessly with editorial content and have higher click-through rates. Studies also show that consumers trust native ads 13% more than social media ads and can increase purchase intent by 18%.

Native allows you to engage with customers at the top or middle of the funnel and provide them with the types of information they're already looking for.



Display

Display ads are still a top choice for programmatic advertising, with eMarketer forecasting programmatic digital display ad spending will grow three times as fast in 2024 compared to non-programmatic.

Display ads are great for building awareness, driving traffic to conversion-focused landing pages, and retargeting users to influence brand recall.

Use display to increase your overall campaign scalability and effectively stay top of mind with your prospects.



Video

Similar to native, video is an ideal channel for educating and engaging with B2B buyers. Hubspot reports that 96% of people watch explainer videos to learn more about a product, and 89% say they've made a purchase after watching a video.

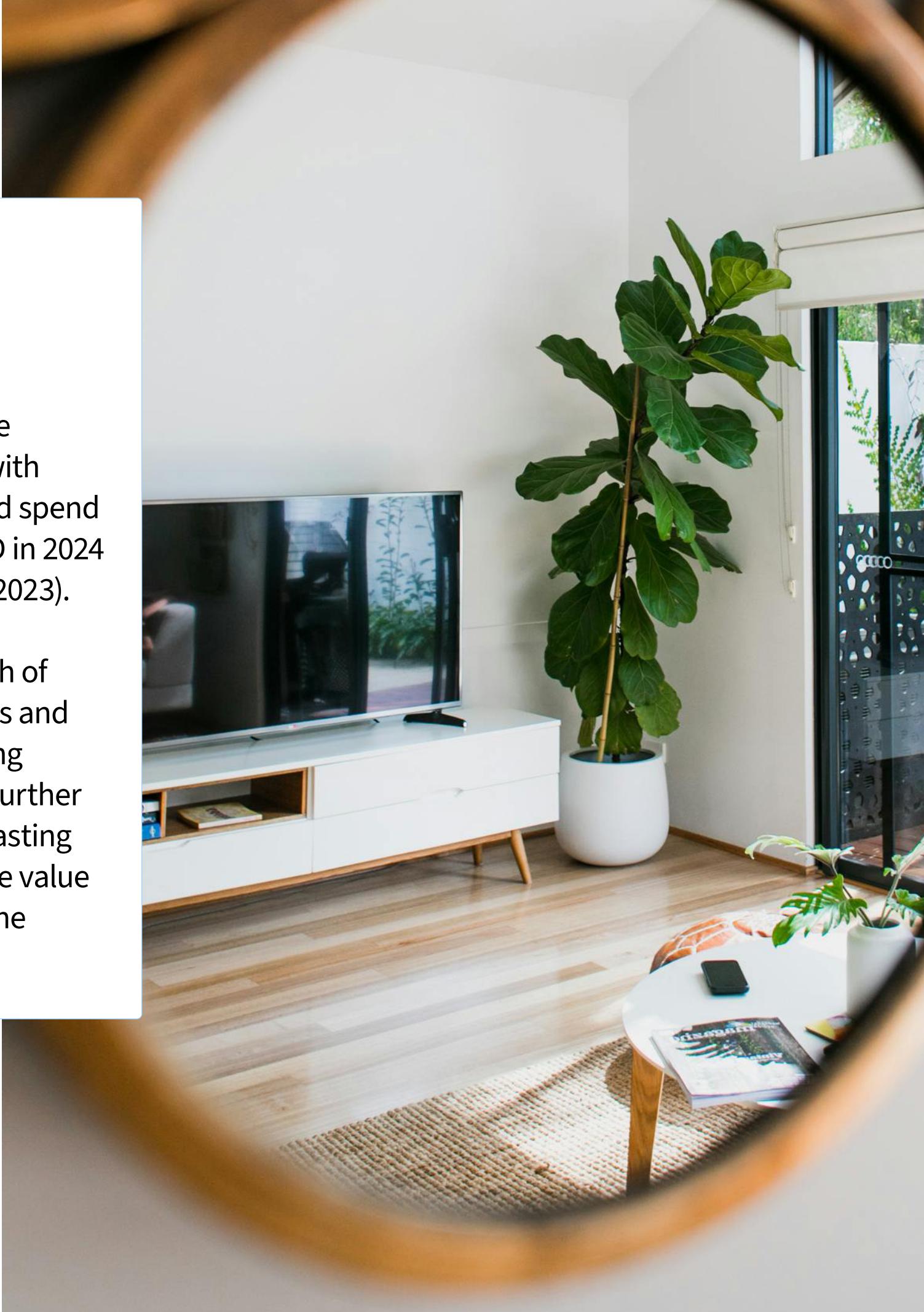
eMarketer predicts US native video ad spending will increase to \$38.30 billion USD in 2024. Use video to reinforce brand messaging and educate buyers at the middle of the funnel.



Connected TV (CTV)

CTV advertising is one of the fastest-growing channels, with eMarketer predicting CTV ad spend will reach \$30.10 billion USD in 2024 (an increase of 22.4% from 2023).

Use CTV to extend the reach of your video ads on Smart TVs and over-the-top (OTT) streaming devices and retarget users further down the funnel by broadcasting your brand story and unique value props in high definition to the comfort of their own home.





Audio

Programmatic audio helps B2B marketers build awareness with bite-sized ads that play in between podcast segments, audiobook chapters, and songs on streaming services.

Unlike other advertising channels, programmatic audio provides a fully immersive, screen-free experience that can hold the listener's full attention and improve brand recall. As a result, US digital audio ad spending is projected to grow by nearly 38% between 2024 and 2027.



In-Game

According to eMarketer, the average daily time spent gaming on a mobile device is projected to increase by 4.8% to 26 minutes in 2024.

In-game advertising allows for advanced targeting based on demographics, location, device type, and player behaviour, making it an effective channel to reach specific B2B audiences.

Consider placing ads in mobile or online games to engage gamers when they're more relaxed and receptive.



Digital Out-of-Home

Digital out-of-home (DOOH) is quickly becoming a preferred choice for marketers due to its flexibility and advanced targeting capabilities. As a result, eMarketer predicts spending will hit \$2.87 billion USD this year and double by the end of 2027.

B2B marketers can use DOOH to influence brand recall and awareness by targeting dynamic ads to customers exactly where they're commuting and congregating, such as airports, subway stations, industry conferences, and events.



B2B Specific Targeting With Programmatic Advertising

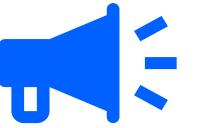
Now that you have your personas and advertising channels figured out, it's time to target your audience.

Programmatic advertising uses behavioural, demographic, device, geographic, and contextual targeting to get ads in front of the right buyers for your business.

When aligned with your overall B2B campaign strategy and business goals, it's one of the most cost-effective, scalable, and efficient ways for B2B marketers to target customers online.

Since B2B products and services have higher-than-average contract values and often require commitment from numerous stakeholders, it's no surprise that most ad dollars in B2B are invested in upper and mid-funnel tactics.

A conversion for this type of campaign would likely end in a signed contract—something that doesn't always come easily. It may take a series of negotiation cycles, with longer wait times. Plus, generating a viable sales lead can take upwards of eight touchpoints. The best way to spend your budget is on awareness and engagement to help push your warm leads to the bottom of the funnel, where your sales team can take over and close the deal.



Brand awareness campaigns pull prospects to the top of your funnel.



Traffic-focused campaigns drive traffic to your website to build highly-specific lists for retargeting.



Conversion-focused campaigns drive prospects directly to downloadable content, free trials, or demo sign-ups.





Types of Audience Targeting

DSPs can provide all the capabilities needed to reach highly-targeted and specific audiences. Here are several ways to target customers more effectively with your programmatic ads.



1st-Party Audiences

B2B campaigns are best suited for awareness and engagement campaigns, making 1st-party data ideal. Your 1st-party audience already knows you in one form or another: maybe they've done business with you in the past, signed up for a newsletter, or stopped by your booth at a conference. Leverage 1st-party data to target customers already aware of your brand, enhancing their knowledge about product offerings and helping move them down the funnel.



Retargeting

Wordstream reports that customers are 70% more likely to convert after viewing an ad from a retargeting campaign. With retargeting, you're constantly nurturing your leads through the funnel. For example, you can retarget users who watched a video ad. They're already interested in your brand, so retargeting them with a tailored message helps move them down the funnel. B2B marketers can use programmatic advertising for their ABM campaigns, retargeting key accounts with personalized ads that address common pain points.



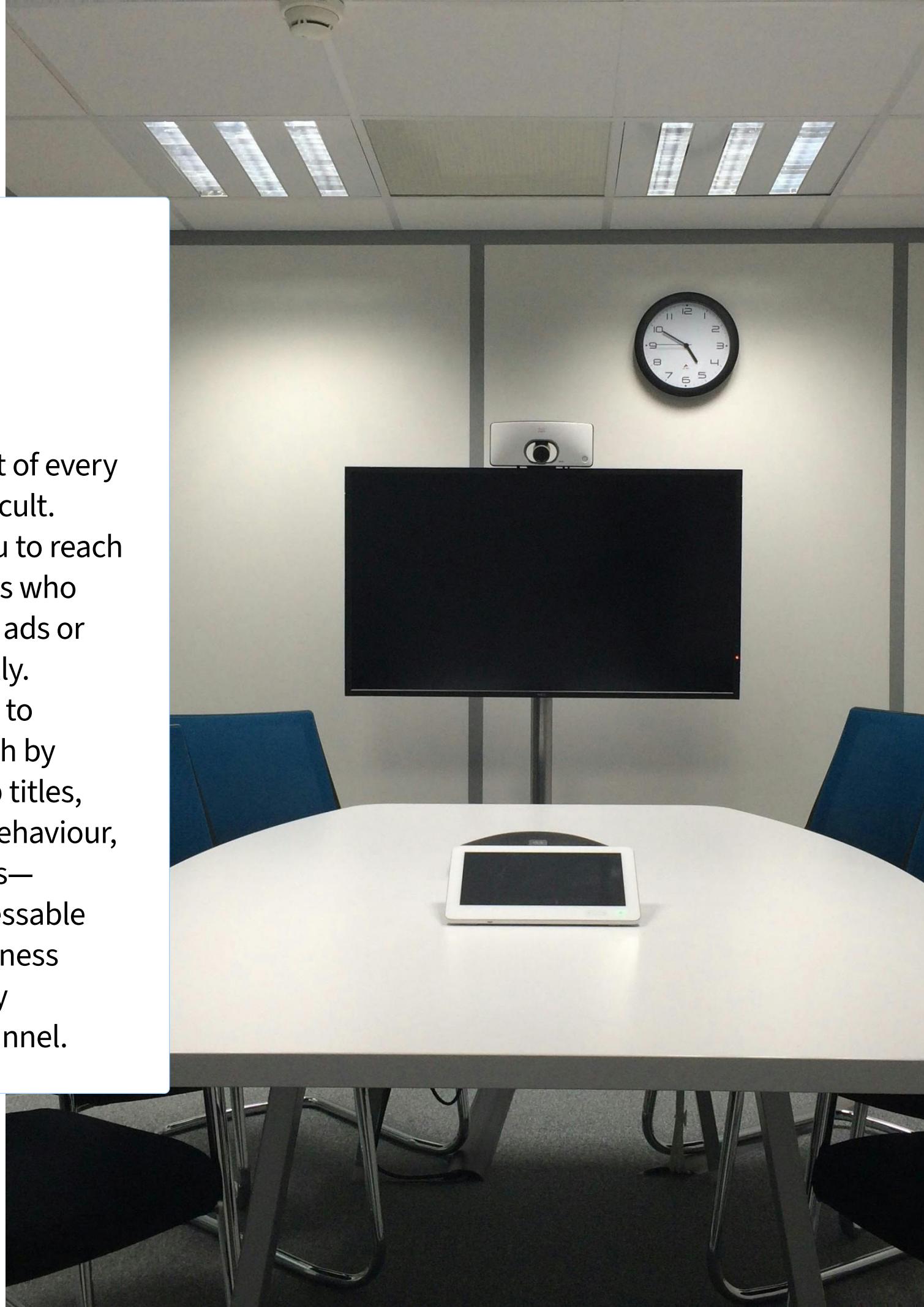
Lookalike Audiences

An offshoot of 1st-party and retargeting audiences are lookalike audiences. A lookalike audience consists of users who exhibit similar online behaviour as visitors to your site. If someone visits your landing page and is pixelated with a cookie, you can leverage this pool of visitors to build a lookalike audience to target. This extends your reach beyond your known visitors and 1st-party audiences and captures new users at the top of your funnel.



3rd-Party Audiences

Sometimes, getting in front of every decision maker can be difficult. Third-party data allows you to reach a more targeted set of users who have yet to encounter your ads or find your website organically. You can use 3rd-party data to expand your audience reach by targeting attributes like job titles, demographics, purchase behaviour, online activity, and hobbies—expanding your total addressable market and building awareness with stakeholders who may appear further down the funnel.



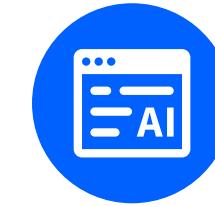


Types of Audience Targeting (cont'd)



Location Targeting

Location targeting techniques work particularly well for B2B campaigns. With geotargeting, B2B marketers can deliver content to specific commercial addresses using information about their geographic location. Some DSPs offer targeting by country, state, US county, city, or zip/postal code. Or, you can target specific addresses and lat/long coordinates with geo radius targeting. This allows you to target your ads to particular businesses or industry events customers may attend.



Contextual Targeting

Rather than targeting ads based on user behaviour, contextual targeting displays ads based on the environment in which the ad appears. Contextual targeting uses machine learning to target ad placements based on keywords, website content, and other metadata. This ensures your ads align with the content your audience engages with and is displayed alongside content that directly relates to their interests, industry, or business challenges, increasing the likelihood of you capturing their attention.

Going Down the Funnel

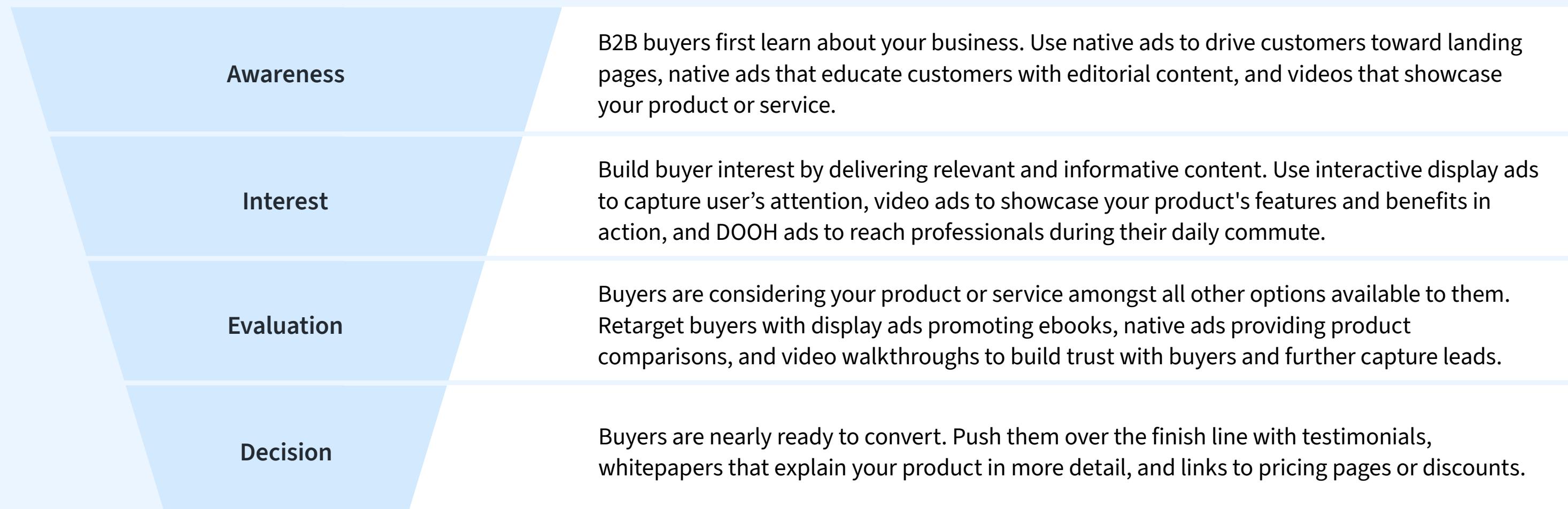
To effectively run B2B campaigns, you want to use all potential channels and targeting options available. You should also consider the entire funnel to ensure you reach decision makers at every step of the buyer journey.

As you explore different channels to promote your product or services, consider what types of content you can use at different points of the funnel.



In a study, [Gartner](#) found that B2B customers who received helpful information across their buying jobs were 2.8x more likely to experience purchase ease and 3x less likely to regret big purchases. How you share the information should also be aligned with their intent—light, relationship-building, and not overly sales-y.

Here are some types of ads and content you should consider using at each part of the funnel:



As you explore different channels to promote your brand, offerings, and content, consider how different content formats are received by prospects at different points of the funnel.

According to [eMarketer](#), content is crucial in shaping brand narratives, educating prospects, and influencing purchasing decisions. Beyond that, content marketing can establish you or your brand as thought leaders in your industry, giving you more authority in the eyes of buyers.

Here are five insights about the types of content that B2B buyers connect with and which channels and content formats B2B marketers should prioritize.

73%

of professionals prefer to learn about a product or service from a short video.

90%

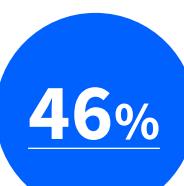
of B2B buyers say online content has a moderate to major effect on their purchasing decisions.

50%

of content created by content marketers in 2023 was video.

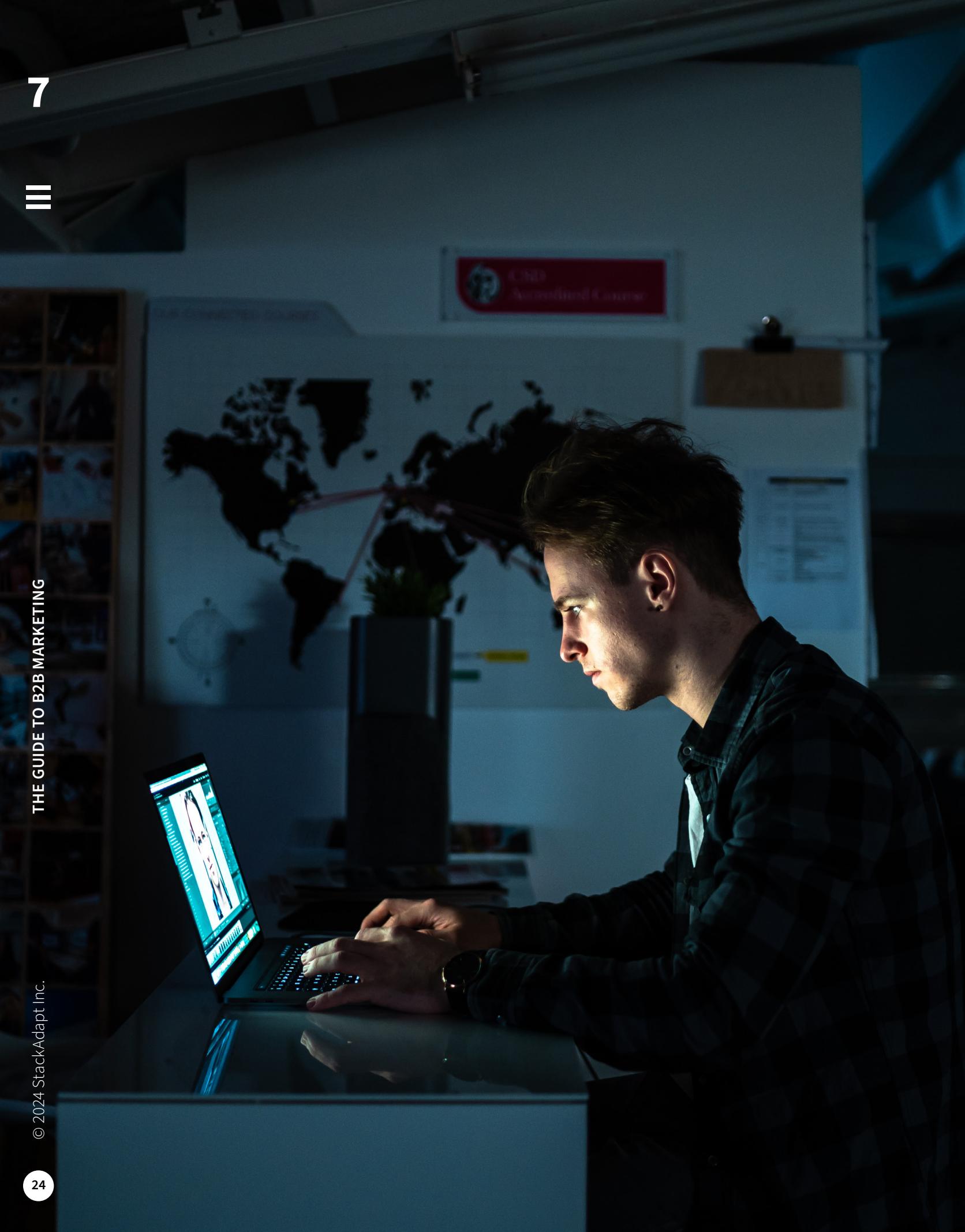
80%

of businesses say that they prefer to research a potential vendor through a series of articles.

46%

of monthly podcast listeners say they don't find listening to ads during podcasts intrusive at all—unlike YouTube ads, which 77% find intrusive.





B2B Ad Creatives

It's important to build creatives that align with your overall campaign strategy and goals. Your digital B2B ad planning should take into account how you can best engage your audience and get customers interested in learning more about your product or offering.

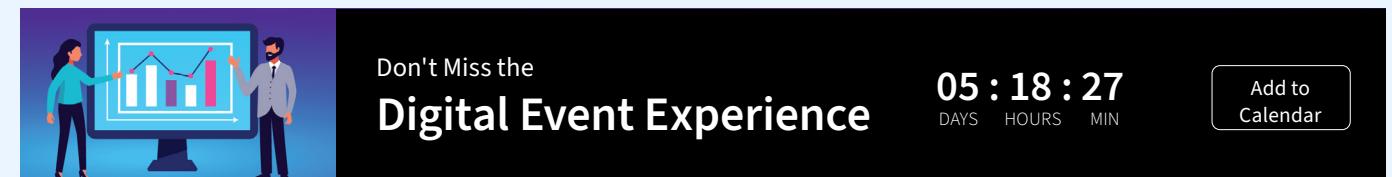
Rich media (HTML5) creatives are an excellent way to say a lot in a small space. They allow you to use creative elements—like video, audio, and animations—that engage your audience to increase views, click-throughs, and conversions.

Here are a few programmatic ad examples to get you started:

- 1 Boost anticipation and attendance for a virtual or physical event like a webinar or conference with a dynamic countdown ad.
- 2 Increase leads and grow your 1st-party data with rich-media (HTML5) ads. You can leverage display ads offering free consultations.
- 3 Personalize creatives for your audiences to highlight how your offering solves their specific pain points. It's best to show personalized creatives to different audience segments to ensure your message is relevant.

Using the right creatives is essential to building brand awareness, capturing attention, and communicating your value to potential customers. Who you target matters, but you need to ensure your creatives will captivate and inspire users to take action.

1



2



3



Putting It All Together

To give you an example of how to really excel with your B2B programmatic campaigns, let's create a strategy for a software solution, leveraging programmatic and paid search.

1 Identify your goals and ensure all appropriate tracking pixels are placed correctly. In particular, you want the programmatic pixels from your DSP on your homepage, including retargeting and conversion pixels. You also want to ensure your paid search pixel is placed correctly, too—this will come in handy later.

2 Now, it's time to use the buyer personas you built. Expand your reach by identifying what 3rd-party audiences are aligned with your ideal customer profile's interests or behaviours. Build a display campaign targeting these audiences to initiate your brand awareness efforts.

3 As the campaign runs, retarget audiences based on their interest in your brand or product with a native campaign. You can target them with unique content and develop creatives based on a specific product, feature, or service they've shown interest in (or because they simply visited your home page). This tactic will drive leads further down the funnel. Also, consider leveraging gated content as part of a landing page to try and capture prospect information to be nurtured by your sales team.

4 Finally, you can integrate your paid search initiatives by retargeting users who have visited your website but haven't completed a form or converted. You can specifically target this subset of users based on the keywords they are searching related to your brand. This is a unique opportunity to capture their attention as they continue their search for the right product or service.



Conclusion

If you take one thing away from this guide, let it be this: when it comes to B2B marketing, there are a number of programmatic tactics you can apply to your campaigns to get the desired results.

You don't need to abandon your current campaign strategy completely. However, using a multi-channel approach with programmatic advertising will extend your reach, improve brand awareness, and target potential customers more effectively and efficiently.



StackAdapt is a multi-channel programmatic advertising platform used by the most exceptional digital marketers. This state-of-the-art platform is where some of the most progressive work in machine learning meets cutting-edge user experience. Ad buyers plan, execute, and manage data-driven digital advertising campaigns across all devices, inventory, and publisher partners.

For more information, visit stackadapt.com.