



EXECUTIVE INSIGHTS

Is Your B2B Marketing Strategy Obsolete? Here's How Leaders Stay Ahead

Could your sales and marketing strategy be unintentionally compromising revenue growth? Many organizations remain tethered to outdated tactics such as cold-calling, generic email blasts and static lead lists, despite their reduced efficiency. Today's sophisticated decision-makers prefer personalized digital interactions, often conducting extensive online research and navigating multiple digital touchpoints before contacting sales directly. By holding on to conventional methods, businesses risk missing crucial opportunities and inadvertently sacrifice market share.

In contrast, leading organizations clearly embrace the new digital-first reality. According to L.E.K. Consulting's research and analysis, 88% of decision-makers revisit vendor websites multiple times before finalizing purchasing decisions, and 53% rely heavily on social media for critical insights. Companies proactively responding to this shift with strategic clarity, precise targeting and personalized digital-first go-to-market (GTM) approaches consistently outperform their competitors — achieving greater lead generation, shorter sales cycles, improved conversion rates and higher overall revenue growth.

Navigating the new B2B reality

Understanding the significant shift in business-to-business (B2B) purchasing behaviors is essential to effectively engaging today's sophisticated buyers. The modern decision-making process has clearly evolved from historical linear models into one characterized by:

1. More people

- Today's purchasing decisions typically involve **an average of six to seven stakeholders**, representing diverse functions such as information technology, finance, operations and end users — each bringing distinct priorities and perspectives.

2. Increased touchpoints

- Decision-makers typically engage with **around 13 pieces of content**, spending roughly **20 hours researching** before finalizing a purchase.
- Approximately **77% of decision-makers** describe their buying journey as **complex and cyclical**, frequently revisiting earlier stages.

3. Heightened complexity

- Approximately **75% of stakeholders** highlight **thought leadership** as a critical factor in vendor selection.
- Technological advancements are extending decision timelines, with around **70% of decision-makers** noting that these developments significantly increase purchasing complexity.
- About **75% of B2B** companies report that acquiring a new customer now requires **at least four months**, with more-complex deals taking even longer.

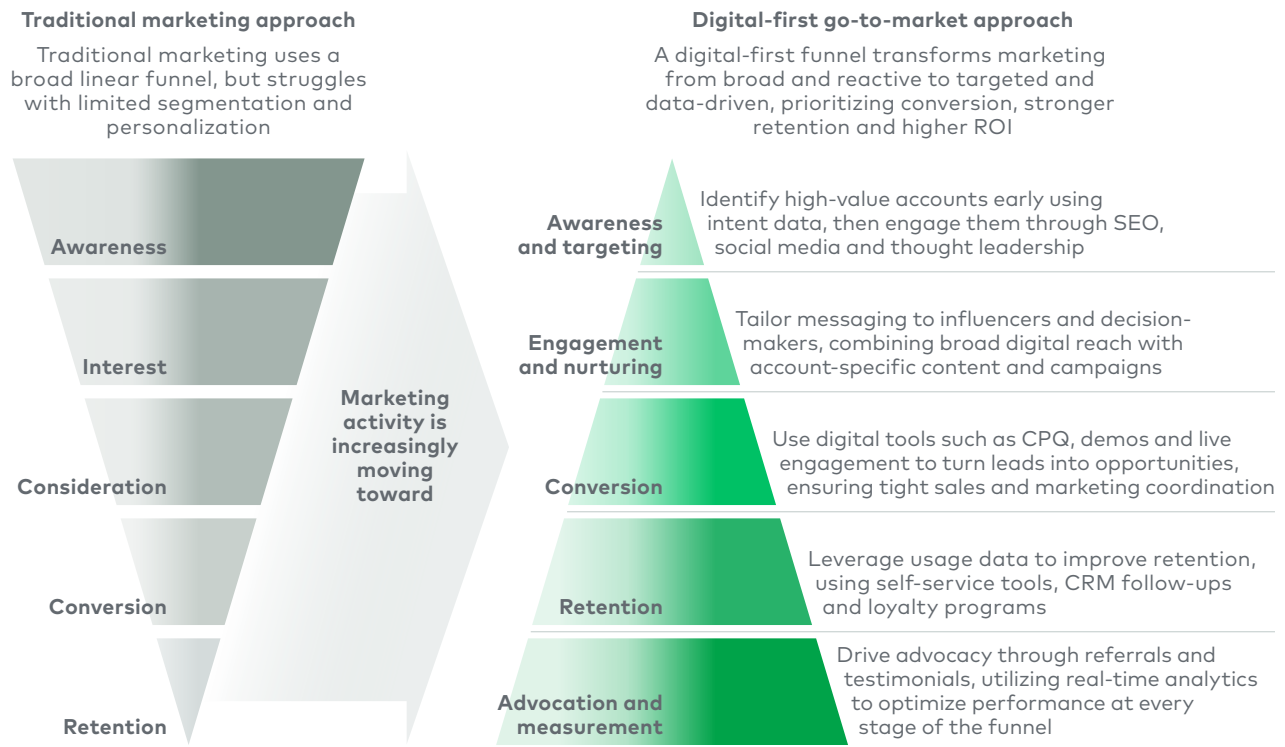
Organizations that are slow to adapt to these evolving dynamics risk immediate revenue loss and diminished long-term market relevance. Clearly recognizing and proactively addressing these three critical realities — more stakeholders, increased touchpoints and heightened complexity — are essential for competitive success.

What good looks like: The digital-first GTM advantage

What sets successful digital-first GTM strategies apart? They begin with strategic clarity, precise audience targeting and the leveraging of real-time insights to foster deeper, more relevant buyer engagement. To accomplish this effectively, successful B2B organizations invert

the conventional marketing funnel, prioritizing highly targeted and personalized interactions from the earliest touchpoints in the buyer journey (see Figure 1). This method allows them to engage decision-makers proactively, address specific buyer needs accurately and streamline their purchasing processes.

Figure 1
The digital-first inverted marketing funnel



Note: SEO=search engine optimization; CPQ=configure, price, quote; CRM=customer relationship management
Source: L.E.K. research and analysis

Companies implementing digital-first GTM strategies report substantial measurable outcomes, including:

- Qualified leads increasing by over 70%
- Sales cycles shortening by approximately 31%
- More-predictable and higher conversion rates
- Enhanced customer lifetime value
- Lower customer acquisition costs

These quantifiable successes stem from using advanced analytics, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven personalization and dynamic content strategies. Real-time data enables organizations to anticipate buyer behaviors accurately, respond rapidly and effectively to market changes, and allocate marketing and sales resources more efficiently.

Beyond measurable metrics, digital-first GTM strategies significantly improve organizational alignment, spur innovation and enhance overall operational efficiency. This clarity of purpose and action ensures companies not only achieve immediate revenue growth but also sustain long-term competitive advantages.

Digital integration in action

To see the tangible, transformative effects digital-first GTM strategies can deliver, consider the following real-world examples of clients that successfully implemented these methods:

- **Life sciences company:** Facing complexity in its brand portfolio and challenges with customer engagement, a life sciences company refined its brand architecture and upgraded its marketing and ecommerce platforms. These changes streamlined customer journeys, significantly improved commercial effectiveness, accelerated revenue growth and enhanced market differentiation.
- **Residential and commercial services provider:** A national provider struggled to demonstrate its digital strengths during a critical sell-side evaluation. By enhancing digital marketing capabilities, the company achieved approximately 20% lower costs per qualified lead and roughly 75% higher organic traffic compared to competitors. These targeted digital improvements clearly established market leadership and laid a foundation for sustainable growth.
- **Global healthcare company:** A global healthcare company faced challenges in meeting rapidly evolving market demands and executing its ambitious digital strategy. By implementing a comprehensive digital roadmap, the organization quickly validated essential initiatives through pilot programs. These efforts allowed immediate responsiveness, measurable business impact and enhanced competitive advantage.

These examples underscore how a well-executed digital-first GTM strategy translates directly into measurable business outcomes, enabling companies to capture market leadership and sustain growth.

Operationalizing your digital-first GTM strategy

To fully realize the potential of a digital-first GTM strategy, organizations must undertake deliberate, well-executed actions:

- 1. Clearly define ideal customer profiles:** Utilize detailed analytics and customer research to precisely segment and target your highest-value prospects.
- 2. Own the digital journey:** Implement digital engagement across the customer journey, including advanced analytics and AI technologies for timely, relevant messaging tailored specifically to individual buyers.
- 3. Ensure marketing and sales alignment:** Create seamless collaboration (including elevating key capabilities such as content creation and account-based marketing) between your marketing and sales teams through unified platforms, shared objectives and collaborative workflows to ensure cohesive buyer experiences.
- 4. Optimize continuously with real-time analytics:** Establish robust, real-time analytics and feedback loops. This approach allows your organization to quickly refine marketing strategies, swiftly adapting to changing buyer behaviors and market dynamics.
- 5. Build a culture of experimentation:** Regularly test innovative strategies and swiftly implement successful initiatives. Foster an organizational environment that actively embraces measured risk-taking and prompt adaptation based on results.

Why conventional methods fall short

Despite clear digital trends, conventional sales and marketing tactics such as cold-calling, generic outreach and static content continue to struggle. According to our research, approximately 75% of senior decision-makers indicate that traditional static marketing content significantly delays their purchasing decisions.

Additionally, these conventional methods often result in operational inefficiencies, misalignment between the marketing and sales teams, and poor visibility into campaign effectiveness. Ultimately, conventional strategies are ill-equipped to address modern decision-makers' nuanced, digitally driven decision-making processes, placing organizations at a distinct competitive disadvantage and jeopardizing revenue opportunities.

Your digital-first path forward

Recognizing the strategic value of digital-first GTM approaches demands immediate action. To translate this recognition into results, your organization must initiate targeted internal discussions, honestly evaluate current capabilities and promptly address critical gaps.

Though many organizations understand the significance of digital transformation, relatively few execute it effectively. This creates a valuable opportunity for proactive companies ready to lead. Embracing a digital-first GTM strategy today ensures increased market share, improved customer loyalty and sustained revenue growth.

The opportunity is clear, and the moment to act decisively is now — your organization's long-term success depends on your commitment to digital-first GTM transformation.

For more information, please [contact us](#).

About the Authors



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Chuck Reynolds is a Managing Director and Partner in L.E.K. Consulting's Boston office and a member of the Digital practice. Chuck has extensive experience in digital strategy across various areas, including digital commerce, customer engagement, agile, direct-to-consumer sales, data and the application of AI/machine learning. He has particular expertise in digital strategies that enhance growth and profitability through customer engagement.



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