



Rethinking **Buyer Engagement** in Modern B2B Marketing



Introduction

B2B buyer engagement is entering a new era — one that caters to self-service research and defined by digital-first experiences, hyper-personalization, and data-driven decision-making. With B2B buyers being more informed and independent than ever, the traditional, linear sales playbook is now emphasized by dynamic, buyer-led journeys shaped by peer validation and multichannel interactions.

In today's ever-evolving B2B landscape, traditional approaches to buyer engagement can quickly fall flat. Modern buyers are increasingly self-directed, digitally fluent, and expect personalized, value-driven experiences throughout the decision-making journey. And gone are the days where engaging a single stakeholder will seal the deal. Modern organizations rely on a dynamic group of buyers ranging from influencers, researchers, end-users and champions.

"In the next one to two years, B2B buyer engagement will undergo a shift toward hyper-relevance, driven by sophisticated real-time signals and AI-powered orchestration," said Anna Eliot, CMO of [pharosIQ](#). "Buyers no longer just seek out content, they expect experiences calibrated to their unique context, challenges, and stage in their journey."

This report will explore how B2B marketing teams can adapt and thrive by rethinking engagement strategies across channels, teams, and technologies. We'll unpack what's working now — and what's next — for B2B buyer engagement.

Topics of discussion include:

- Key trends shaping B2B buyer engagement strategies in 2025 and beyond.
- Making personalization the new baseline with AI-driven insights and intent data.
- How modern teams are leveraging behavioral signals, content consumption patterns and more to keep up with modern buyers.
- Why self-service content and digital experiences are now foundational.
- Metrics that matter most when evaluating buyer engagement success.



Evolving Buyer Needs Shape New Engagement Trends

Despite operating with 25% less budget in a rapidly changing B2B landscape, [*Demand Gen Report's "2024 B2B Buyer's Survey"*](#) found that 77% of buyers still made purchases in the past year — though there's now a greater focus on proving business value and securing internal buy-in before committing. The survey found that 26% of B2B organizations are including more people in the decision-making process, while 20% are spending more time researching.

"The modern B2B purchase involves an average of six to 10 decision-makers across multiple departments, each with distinct priorities and evaluation criteria," Eliot said. "High-performing marketing organizations will approach every campaign as an opportunity to simultaneously engage the entire buying committee, building relevance across multiple personas through parallel engagement streams. This strategic shift requires marketing leaders to develop more sophisticated account intelligence capabilities, including organizational mapping, needs and pain points across multiple personas, and cross-functional buying journey orchestration."

AI-assisted strategies are quickly becoming the new normal, specifically to advise and amplify personalized engagement at scale, according to Eliot.

By leveraging engagement data, anticipating buyer needs, and creating multi-threaded experiences across multiple channels, AI can empower personalized buyer journeys that drive competitive advantage — without overburdening production teams.

"The most successful organizations will use AI to advance rather than replace human creativity and relationship intelligence, allowing marketing teams to operate with profoundly greater agility, precision, and impact as they transition from automation to augmentation," said Eliot.

AI is also accelerating buyers' ability to access information without engaging sellers — but sellers still could become a key source of that self-education with the right approach.

"AI will increase access to information and insights for buyers without having to engage sellers," said Matt Heinz, President of [*Heinz Marketing*](#). "This has been happening since the dawn of the Internet of course, and AI is accelerating it. And just like the past 20+ years, we have an opportunity as sellers to be the source of that enablement and self-education if we approach it the right way."



The Future of B2B Engagement: AI, Intent & Orchestrated Strategy

Q&A with Anna Eliot, pharosIQ

As B2B buyer behavior continues to evolve rapidly, marketers are under pressure to rethink traditional engagement strategies and embrace a more data-driven, buyer-centric approach. In this Q&A, *Demand Gen Report* speaks with Anna Eliot, CMO of **pharosIQ** and a seasoned marketing leader, about the top trends shaping B2B buyer engagement in 2025 and beyond. From the rise of intent-driven targeting and AI-powered orchestration to the tactical shift toward coordinated, multichannel campaigns, Eliot shares insights into what's working now, what to avoid, and how to measure success in a complex, stakeholder-driven sales landscape.

Demand Gen Report: What trends do you think will shape B2B buyer engagement in the next 1-2 years?

Anna Eliot: In the next 1-2 years, we'll see a strategic pivot from legacy demographic-, firmographic- or title-based targeting toward a more nuanced approach leveraging comprehensive behavioral data, decision signals, and intent markers. Teams must reimagine their engagement frameworks to determine not just what content to deliver, but optimize the critical elements of how, when, and where engagement occurs for maximum resonance and impact.

While lead generation maintains relevance in the B2B ecosystem, we're witnessing a decisive move beyond simplistic "lead-based" thinking toward more sophisticated account-centric, buying committee-aware strategies. The ability to identify and engage the full spectrum of stakeholders — from technical evaluators to financial gatekeepers to executive sponsors — represents a critical competitive advantage in today's complex selling environment.

DGR: What engagement tactics are working best right now?

Eliot: The most effective engagement strategies aren't just about selecting individual high performing tactics; it's about sophisticated orchestration of complementary approaches aligned to the buyer profile and journey. Our highest impact programs integrate tactics across four goals: Build the marketable database, identify and accelerate interest, align with sales, and convert to meetings.

Content syndication remains a cornerstone for building pipeline with net-new and ICP-fit contacts at target accounts. Syndication utilizes high-value content to build early-stage engagement with these prime audiences, operating as the foundation for highly targeted and controlled list growth. Many organizations miss valuable opportunities by viewing syndication as strictly top-of-funnel thought leadership. We integrate deep intent signals into our syndication strategy, targeting not just accounts exhibiting market readiness, but specifically the stakeholders actively participating in purchase decisions. This precision targeting establishes the critical foundation for all subsequent engagement efforts, dramatically improving downstream conversion metrics.

When we need to create distinctive moments of engagement that transform passive interest into active dialogue, **direct mail with digital touchpoints** stands out. Whether it's a high-impact invitation to an exclusive in-person event or a well-timed incentive triggered by purchase intent, these strategically designed interventions are immensely successful in turning interest into action. The sequencing of direct mail following content syndication campaigns, reinforced with complementary advertising, has proven especially effective at accelerating buying committee engagement.

Conversational advertising represents a significant evolution beyond traditional display formats, functioning as interactive, persona-tailored engagement points that capture real-time interest signals. These dynamic interfaces not only generate valuable intelligence about buyer priorities but frequently surface sales-ready opportunities significantly faster than conventional lead capture methods. They serve as an intelligent conversion layer, particularly powerful when integrated with broader advertising strategies and sales development follow-up.

Coordinated SDR outreach: The ultimate effectiveness of marketing generated interest depends on disciplined sales activation. Our SDRs run tightly integrated cadences, aligned with content, ads, and direct mail timing. This coordination ensures that when buyers demonstrate intent, our representatives respond with contextually relevant information and offers, creating seamless, personalized experiences that advance relationships decisively.

Individual tactics deliver incremental results. But together, in a synchronized sequence, they create the 360-degree engagement ecosystem that today's buyers expect, and that tomorrow's revenue depends on.

DGR: Are AI or predictive analytics playing a role in how you engage buyers?

Eliot: Absolutely, and not in a theoretical way. We actively use our own proprietary AI models to fundamentally transform how we identify, prioritize, and engage high-value accounts throughout their buying journey. This isn't experimental technology; it's the engine powering our entire demand generation ecosystem.

Our AI infrastructure analyzes complex multidimensional signals in real time – the types of content being consumed, the context around that consumption, who within the organization is engaging, what challenges a buying group is likely facing — to construct predictive intelligence that traditional analytics and automation simply cannot match. This gives us a clear roadmap to align messaging, offers, and outreach strategies to real-time buyer needs.

This has been a game-changer for how we manage budget and resources. We've significantly increased marketing efficiency, cut waste from our programs, and shortened the time to conversion by focusing only on the accounts and contacts that truly matter. AI and predictive analytics have enabled us to move from broad-based engagement to precision marketing at scale, making every touchpoint smarter, faster, and more relevant.

DGR: What's one mistake you see companies make when engaging today's B2B buyers?

Eliot: The fundamental mistake today's B2B marketers make is deploying artificial intelligence tactically rather than strategically. When AI is relegated to isolated point solutions — writing individual emails, optimizing ad creative, or repurposing content assets — it delivers incremental efficiency gains but fails to address the core challenge of engaging complex buying committees effectively. While these tactical implementations may improve specific metrics, they create disconnected experiences that fail to meet the expectations of sophisticated B2B decision-makers.

What marketers need is AI that operates at 30,000 feet. AI tools that give a complete view of the buyer landscape down to the landscape of the individual accounts and specific buyers. They need AI that is predictive and prescriptive in nature, not just reflective and reactive:

- Where are accounts in the buying cycle?
- What challenges are they navigating?

- Who is engaging with what content and why?
- What messaging will resonate with each buyer?
- What business needs can we surface at a buyer and account level?
- What developing industry trends are buyers shifting their focus to?
- What is the speed at which their buying committees operate?
- Which departments are most difficult to engage or convince in the buying process?

Only with this kind of high-level, cross-functional intelligence can teams align messaging, tactics, and timing across systems, tools, and teams — and in the best case, before their competition has figured it out. This will pull them out of trying to force buyers into their own narrative and allow them to adapt to what buyers care about, ultimately driving more meaningful engagements and positive outcomes.





Personalization at Scale: Aligning Intent, Timing & AI for Smarter B2B Outreach

Although many B2B buyers prefer to remain anonymous, 58% still expect hyper-personalized outreach, according to the [DGR's Buyer's Survey](#). To meet this demand, marketers must actively detect buyer intent signals and deliver tailored content and offers. Achieving this level of personalization calls for a robust intent data strategy — one that combines intent insights with firmographic and technographic data to create relevant, compelling messages that resonate with these hard-to-reach buyers.

"By the time you get the intent data, it's possible for it to already be past its prime in some way," said [Pam Didner](#), B2B Marketing Consultant and Fractional CMO. "So, you must gauge if that intent data is still valid. It's absolutely a judgment call a lot of the time. Personalization is always based on some of the assumptions that you must make. We need to understand that if it's a new logo and your salespeople are engaging with

them already, then you can correlate that with third-party intent data, with your company data, to give you additional information to gage the personalization part of it."

However, to earn trust and stand out in a crowded market, sellers need to rethink how they respond to early intent signals. According to Heinz, there are always numbers to hit, but it's important to remember that organizational timelines may not align to the buyer's timeline and marketing and sales teams must accommodate their strategies to meet buyer's needs at the buyer's pace.

"As sellers, too often we try to take a tiny intent signal and convert it into a demo," he added. "Instead, engage prospects with no expectation of anything immediately in return. Start building positive impressions and differentiation. Show that you're noticing the small things — in their profile, in their content, at their company and in their industry. They'll engage when they're ready."

For marketers, this means supporting salespeople every step of the way and taking advantage of AI for additional help.

"Personalization is very hard to scale unless you use AI to help you and but as a human, I'm also working very closely with my salespeople," said Didner. "I always tell my clients in that situation to focus on the top 50 or 100 accounts that their salespeople are focusing on and do a better job supporting them. If you are placing bets, that's the best I would place."

But AI isn't just there to help with content creation, even though that is one of the most common ways marketers are using it. Marketers must go beyond the traditional tactics and leverage AI to brainstorm and ideate new engagement tactics, according to Didner. AI can be a powerful tool for brainstorming and validating marketing strategies. You can use it to generate tailored tactics for specific personas, job titles, industries, and company sizes, or to improve declining email engagement by refining copy. However, it works best when you start with your own point of view — then use AI as a thought partner to test, validate, and enhance your ideas.



B2B Buying Journey Timeline For Max Engagement

[***Demand Gen Report's "B2B Buyer's Survey"***](#) asked respondents to put their buying processes in numerical order. Here are the results to help you better engage buyers based on where they are in their decision-making journey:

1. Conducted anonymous research on potential solutions.
2. Collected preliminary information on pricing/costs.
3. Spoke to and engaged with a sales representative from the vendor they selected.
4. Brought in team members to help with the research process.
5. Sought input from peers/existing users in the community.
6. Evaluated which solutions would fit well with existing partners.
7. Accepted outreach from vendors and engages in calls/demos.



Measuring What Matters: Aligning Engagement Metrics to Revenue Impact

When it comes to evaluating buyer engagement success, experts pointed to a variety of metrics.

Pam Didner emphasized the importance of MQL-to-SQL conversation rates. Marketers shouldn't just focus on the number of MQLs, but on the MQL-to-SQL conversion rate. "That percentage needs to either stay steady or increase," she said. "But if it's decreasing, then it's a signal to investigate and adjust your strategy." She also noted that all engagement data must be segmented strategically.

"Anything that's a high dollar value, you just have to understand the purchasing cycle is low because it's less transactional, so I would segment based on the dollar."

Matt Heinz noted that success is gauged on the stage of the buying process you're focused on. "Middle- and bottom-of-funnel, of course I want to see pipeline creation, velocity and conversion," he said. "Higher in the funnel, I want to measure whether the right people at the right companies are engaging with my content."

For pharosIQ's Eliot, it's important to gauge whether engagement leads to revenue.

"We take a top-down, outcome-focused approach to tracking buyer engagement," she said. "It's not enough to measure just the pipeline, we want to know whether engagement is moving the needle

toward revenue. We are fortunate that our sales team is great at what they do, so we can focus our success benchmarks on conversion to MQLs regardless of where in the buying cycle we initially engaged an account."

Eliot said her teams track all touches that precede that conversion, looking closely at both volume and velocity:

- How many touches did it take?
- What channels or tactics were most effective?
- How long did it take from first engagement to MQL to SQL?

From there, additional metrics, deeper in the funnel, include:

- Meeting completion rates;
- Opportunity rates;
- Strength of opportunities;
- Time to closed-won; and
- Deal size.

"By measuring the quality and speed of progression from first touch through close, we can optimize not just for engagement, but for real business outcomes," concluded Eliot. "Engagement that doesn't convert is just noise; our metrics are designed to keep us focused on what matters most: Revenue impact."



Conclusion

Database quality is the backbone of effective engagement: By actively managing data integrity and preventing decay, organizations can ensure their insights remain sharp and relevant, paving the way for targeted outreach and personalized interactions. A strategic approach to data — from identifying crucial data types to unifying first- and third-party signals — enables teams to gain a more complete understanding of their target accounts. This enriched data ecosystem, supported by accessible infrastructure and cross-departmental collaboration, empowers practitioners to make informed decisions and drive impactful engagement.



pharosIQ is a global leader in first-party intent-driven lead generation solutions, delivering essential insights and demand for B2B organizations' sales and marketing success. With over four decades of expertise, pharosIQ converts buyer intelligence into impactful engagements, driving global revenue efficiently for many of the world's most recognizable organizations. Powered by first-party audience engagement data and its proprietary AI ecosystem, pharosIQ connects B2B technology and service vendors with in-market buyers, transforming sales and marketing strategies worldwide.

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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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