

# To B2C, or Not to B2C – The 5 B2C Strategies B2Bs Should Steer Clear of in 2016



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So will marketing managers take the ‘new year, new me’ approach to B2B social media strategies in 2016? , Let’s look at the five top social media trends in 2016 and why B2B marketers should steer clear from using them.

There’s no doubt that social media is a powerful tool for businesses. The ability to reach out directly to large audiences at very little expense is a huge advantage for B2B organizations. In 2016, it is predicted that [90% of B2B marketers will raise their content marketing budgets](#), but the same research shows that only 30% said their organizations found content marketing effective.

The reasons are clear to me as I will explain but, in a nutshell, [B2B marketers](#) must steer clear from B2C content marketing strategies if they are to cultivate high quality leads.

## **Insta-buy?**

Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and other social media sites introduced a ‘buy’ button late last year to start turning audience browsing into buying and social into commercial. The idea is to add an option for instant checkout on an advert and

for the customer to be instantly directed to the companies website with the item in their basket. Directly fulfilling orders could give B2Cs a slice of the [\\$3.5 trillion consumers will spend online in the next five years](#).

The problem with the click and buy option in the B2B world is that B2B sales take time. [According to research](#), the average time taken for a lead to become a deal is over 3 months on social media and could take up to [6 months](#) if generating leads through other means such as webinars, events or email marketing. There isn't a 'checkout' option because in B2B it's all about the relationship between you and your potential client.

The process for B2B marketers is all about guiding potential customers through the decision-making funnel, addressing their pain points and proving that your business is right for them. Having the right social media strategy can be crucial in both generating and cultivating leads.

### **The real B2B channels**

New social media platforms spring up every year that offer new ways to promote brands and reach out to large audiences. Platforms such as Snapchat and Vine are becoming very popular among B2C companies as a fun or informal way to place their products front of mind for the viewer – much more of a brand builder than a sales driver.

But these platforms just don't work for the B2B market. B2B marketers should not be using Snapchat or Vine to search for new leads because it's not a platform top-level management figures and decision-makers will be using to find new opportunities. [71% of Snapchat users and 51% of users on Vine](#) are under the age of 34. So which social media platforms should B2B marketers be using?

Your first port of call should be LinkedIn – [58% of B2B professionals](#) believe LinkedIn is the most effective social

media platform, and they would be right in thinking so. LinkedIn is a portal full of high-level decision makers, marketing managers and CEOs who use the site as a search engine for new business opportunities. One of our clients recently realized half their yearly sales target in one deal. The initial point of contact? A LinkedIn discussion post.

Social media platforms can be just as important as the content posted on them, and B2B marketers will have to choose their platforms wisely in order to generate and cultivate new leads in 2016.

### **Informative content versus storytelling**

One of the main aims of B2C content marketing is about engaging with their audience by trying to create an emotional response from them. Visual content is the [second most used tactic for](#) B2C social media marketing because of its effectiveness to engage audiences, but is it something that would work in the B2B arena?

I don't think so for a couple of reasons. B2B marketers care more about how you will help grow their business development pipeline, not about how content makes people 'feel'. B2B marketers should steer away from emotions and towards productivity and efficiency. In B2B, more appropriate forms of content come in the form of blogs, thought-leadership articles, white papers or webinars – content that places their organization as a market leader in a certain industry. In B2B social marketing, high quality – informative – content is the key to cultivating new leads.

### **Content fatigue – quality over quantity**

There is more content than ever being tweeted, posted and published online. B2C's constantly post content and images in order to push their brand front of mind – quantity over quality. The aim is to make their content light-hearted and full of humour in order to make it go viral.

With 27 million pieces of content flying around on social media, it can be hard to tell what's important and what isn't, let alone cut through the noise. Even if you have something new and important to say, people's engagement can often get distracted by newer, shiner bits of information.

In B2B, a quality piece of content can be a breath of fresh air from those suffering content fatigue. A prospect will want to know specific details on how your company can help them, so well-written and well promoted thought-leadership is key.

### **Activity or productivity – it's a journey**

62% of B2C marketers measure content marketing success through web traffic, just above sales on 54% – a strange statistic as not every person driven to a company's website from their social media account will make a purchase. These metrics also align to organizational objectives and goals for B2C's – sales was 4<sup>th</sup> on the list of top objectives for B2C's, way behind customer loyalty, engagement and brand awareness. Their main aim is to drive the brand first, with the hope that the sales will follow later, but just because you're active on social media and driving traffic to your website, doesn't mean your strategy is working.

In B2B, the measure of success is through high quality lead cultivation and conversion rates, since there is no point driving traffic to your website if no one is buying what you're selling. In B2B, the buying price is high, but the audience is small, so B2Bs should be more interested in building a list of potential prospects they can nurture during a long buying journey, rather than in building a brand. However, driving those potential customers towards your website is still important, since this is where their interest will become a serious consideration. All of this is made possible by pushing thought-leadership articles, blog posts and webinars through your social media account.

In 2016, B2B social media managers should make it their top priority to change the way they approach social media in order to cultivate quality leads rather than generate numbers of leads. Starting with the right strategy will be key.

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