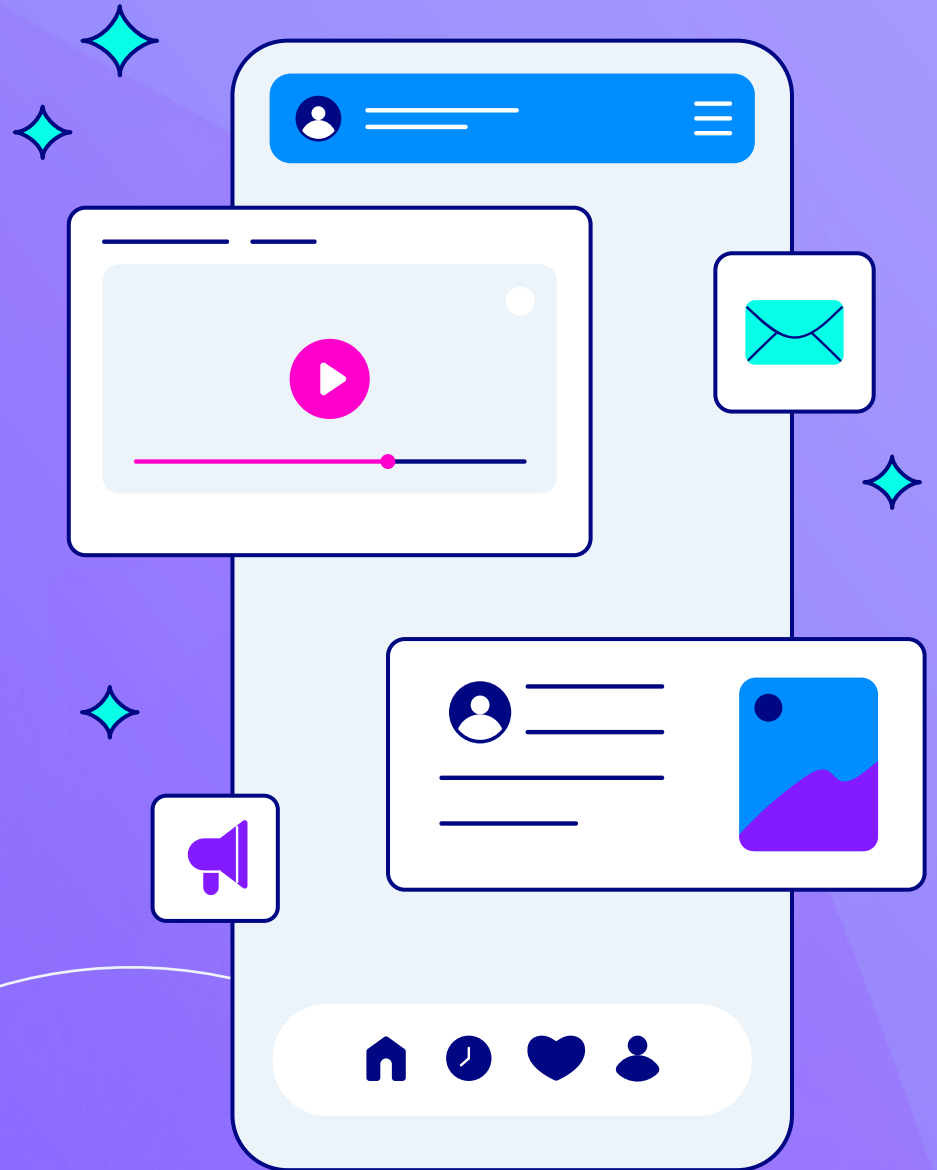


THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO

B2B Demand Generation Content



The new rules of B2B demand generation

B2B marketers are up against it. Economic uncertainty is putting cost pressure on marketing budgets: 63% of marketers are seeing decreasing or flat budgets for the year ahead, according to Pipeline360's [2025 State of B2B Pipeline Growth](#) study. Additionally, the B2B buyer journey is more complex than ever, defined by larger and more diverse buying teams, longer sales cycles, and an increasingly “rep free” buying experience.

Collectively, these challenges shine a spotlight on content marketing: specifically, how marketers are evolving their content strategies to attract, engage and generate demand from an increasingly hard-to-reach target audience. It's a big hurdle: Just 53% of companies in the Pipeline360 study rate their content as good or exceptional.

In a non-linear buyer journey, content provides the connective tissue between awareness, engagement and conversion. It's vital for establishing credibility and building trust — two critical precursors to demand generation.

How can marketers modernize their approach to demand-generation content? Read on to find out.



75%

of B2B buyers prefer a rep-free sales experience

([Gartner](#))

Content across the funnel

(or whatever it's called these days)

B2B demand generation content doesn't exist in a vacuum. It works best when it's aligned with the buyer journey. "Full-funnel content" has become table stakes, but it often doesn't address how varied buyer journeys have become. There's no single, linear path anymore. Buyers jump in and out, get distracted, loop in colleagues, disappear for weeks, and return with a completely different priority.

So, the job of demand gen content isn't just to fill the lower stages of the funnel — it's to create *continuity*. Think of the buyer journey less like a funnel and more like a map:

- Early-stage assets should focus on awareness and education. Think high-level insights, vendor-neutral problem framing and industry trends — assets that are designed to build trust with your audience.
- In the middle, you can introduce more brand-focused assets: ROI case studies, product comparisons and real-world applications of your solution that establish credibility.
- At the bottom, content assets are about decision making: how you compare against competitors, what problem your solution solves, and why you're worth their consideration and budget.

At each point on the map, you're providing additional connection points and recommendations to lead them to the next part of the journey. But even the best map won't help if your audience doesn't follow it. That's where the "to gate or not to gate" question comes in.

There's no perfect rule here. But here's a guideline:

Gate for value, not vanity.

If a content asset helps your audience do their job better, build a business case, or learn something truly new, then sure, ask for an email. But if you're gating a two-page brochure or an overproduced brand video, you're just adding friction to your budding relationship.

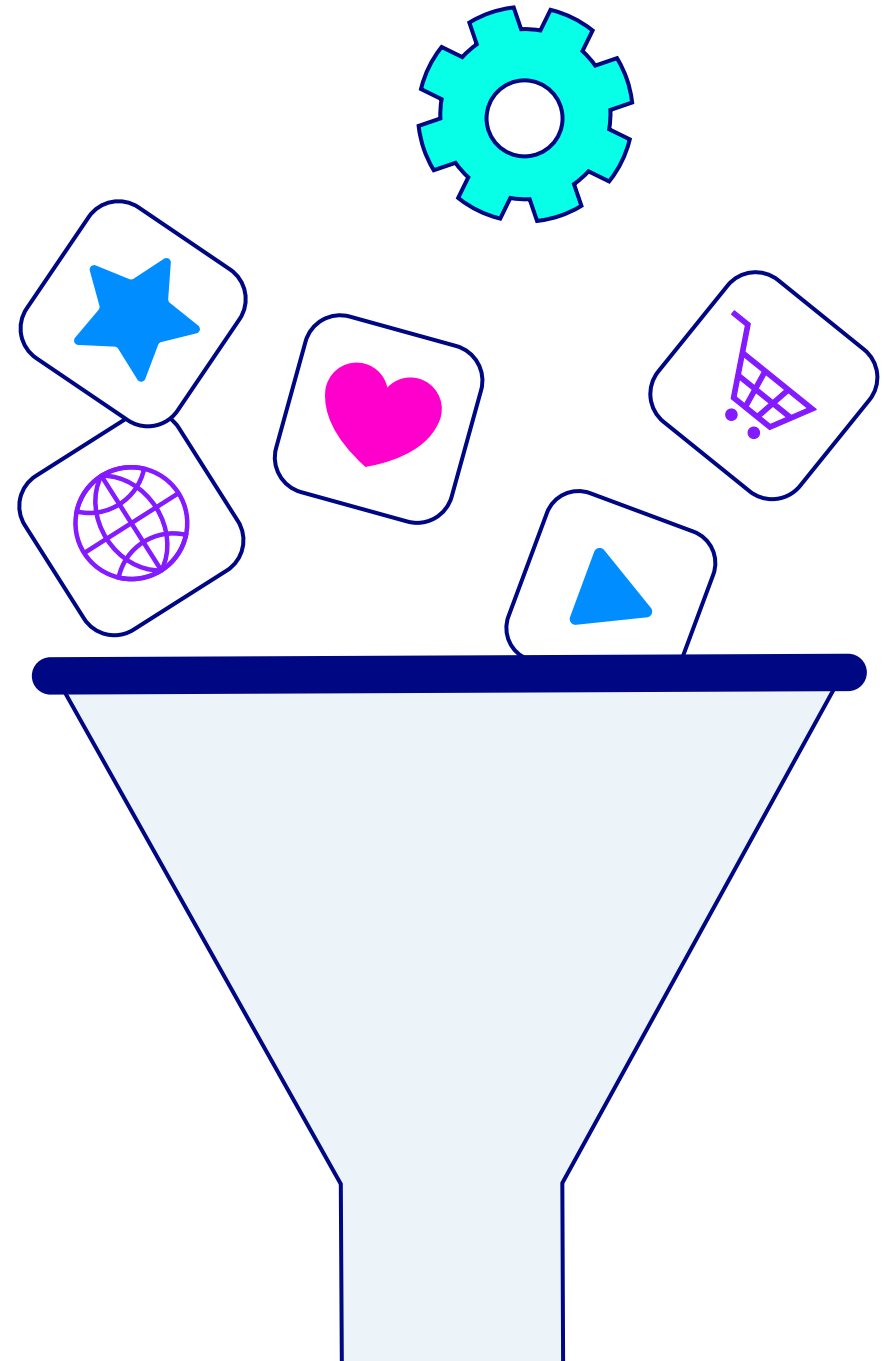
Trust is the real currency of B2B marketing. Gating too much too early can erode trust.

Use ungated content to build momentum, and then gate something that recipients will perceive as worthy of the information they provide to access it. Bonus points if the landing page clearly spells out what the reader will get, and why it matters.

Ultimately, demand gen content needs to strike three chords:

- guide the buyer
- respect their time
- earn their interest

The rest — form fills, lead scores, MQL debates — should come second to delivering value.



Content that drives engagement

There's a simple rule when it comes to creating engaging content marketing — it's not about you. Building a relationship with a target audience segment requires a level of empathy, focusing on what matters to that audience and showing that you understand their needs, wants and pain points. That empathy and understanding is the foundation on which trust is built, and when it comes to brand affinity, trust is the most valuable currency.

This doesn't mean that your brand, products and services shouldn't be mentioned, rather that the balance should lean heavily toward the needs and issues facing the target audience. Once you've established a level of trust, highlighting how your brand, products and services can help deliver on those needs or overcome those issues is a natural thread for the audience to follow.

Showcase your expertise and knowledge

In-house subject matter experts can further build that level of trust. With the core needs of the audience laid out, SMEs can directly address those needs, providing insight and advice while building brand authority. Whether through a selection of expert quotes and observations placed throughout the content, or a direct Q&A that discusses the key points raised in the main

narrative, insight from an expert elevates both the content and the brand behind it.

It's also important to remember that one size does not fit all. Understanding who you're trying to reach is key to ensuring engagement. In the B2B world especially, the decision-making unit is broad, and the different personas within that DMU have different priorities. Consequently, a white paper aimed at IT decision makers should be framed differently than one aimed at business decision makers, even if the underlying focus is the same.

Find the right format

A clear understanding of your audience and the personas therein can also help dictate the right format of content. A highly technical audience will likely respond to a well-researched and in-depth report or white paper, whereas a top-line infographic on the same subject might resonate more with a less technical line-of-business audience.

Regardless of the format utilized or personas targeted, the goal is for the audience to come away feeling as if they've learned something, or perhaps had their existing insight reinforced by engaging with your content. Delivering that positive experience will begin to build a positive brand association.

Distribution and promotion: The value exchange

Even the best content in the world won't make an impact if no one finds it. It's therefore vital to ensure that the right avenues of engagement are utilized effectively. For demand generation, content syndication promises to deliver your content, and the messaging it conveys, directly to a defined target audience segment. But for content syndication to be truly successful, there are rules to remember.

Make them want it

If you want those forms filled and those contact details gathered, you need to make a compelling case for your target audience to do so. A well-designed landing page, with convincing, highly detailed copy, is paramount. Make every user aware of what they'll gain by downloading and engaging with your content — fresh insight, vital education, even a competitive edge!

Your landing page and the story it tells should drive form fills. The content on your landing page should be of the highest quality, presented in an engaging and easily digestible format. Think of the landing page as a shop window for the gated asset, giving users that final push they need to sign up and download.

The value exchange is key

As already highlighted, if you want to build a strong relationship with your target audience, you need to give them something truly valuable in return for their details. While it's true that you'll already have those details by the time they've downloaded your asset, if that content doesn't live up to their expectations, you can't expect your new lead to pan out when you contact them.

That old saying about only having one chance to make a good first impression is highly relevant here. This first touchpoint will frame how your brand is perceived and steer the ongoing relationship — get it wrong, and that relationship could end before it starts.

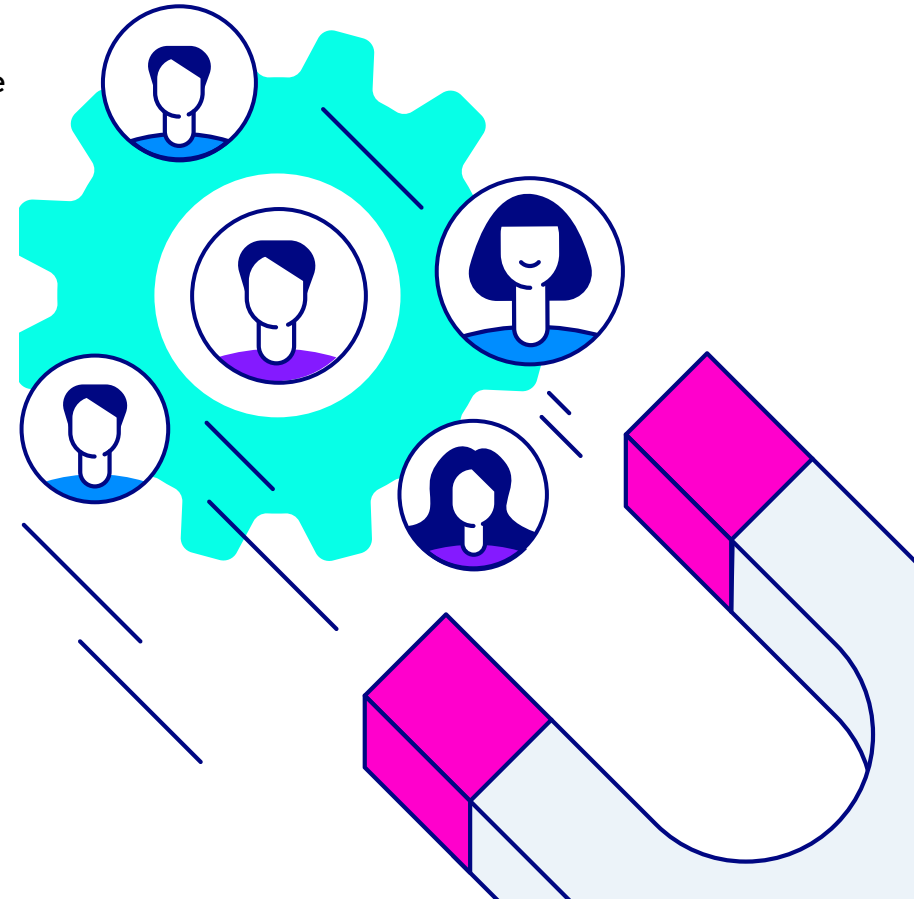
The value exchange must be positive for your audience — deliver a true “hero asset” that's tailored to the personas you're targeting and provides tangible benefit.

The lead is the start of the journey

A common misconception when it comes to demand generation is that receiving quality leads is the goal. In reality, receiving the leads is just the beginning; they must be tended and nurtured if they're to grow and flower into sales conversions. This is particularly true in B2B environments, where it could be months before a potential client is in a buying cycle.

It's therefore crucial to plan out a compelling nurture strategy, building on the initial value exchange and continuing to deliver high-quality insight, advice and education to your audience. Monitor what type of content your nurture list is engaging with — what subject lines are encouraging opens, which topics are driving more clickthroughs — and adjust the strategy accordingly.

Over time, the relationship and trust between your brand and your audience will grow stronger, increasing the chance of consideration and conversion when the time comes.



Measuring what matters

In today's complex B2B environment, traditional lead-scoring models don't cut it. Intent signals and behavioral insights are more likely to help you identify the best prospects, wherever they are on their buyer journey. When someone revisits your pricing page three times in a week, downloads a product comparison guide, and watches a customer testimonial — those aren't soft touches. They're breadcrumbs pointing to real buying interest.

We need to get better at following those clues.

Too many B2B marketers still rely on vanity metrics — downloads, opens, generic conversions — without connecting them to meaningful buyer behavior. The result? A demand gen engine that looks active but doesn't actually accelerate pipeline.

Start with this: What actions signal genuine interest? What role on the buying committee does the recipient play? Are prospects spending time with mid- and bottom-funnel content? Are they sharing it with peers? Are they returning with specific questions for sales?

These are the insights that help separate casual browsers from serious buyers.

Demand-gen content shouldn't be set-it-and-forget-it.

Test subject lines, design layouts, CTAs, and even thematic messaging. If version A consistently drives more qualified traffic to your product demo than version B, don't just take the win — dig into why it worked, refine further, and apply the learnings to other campaigns.

Engagement is another key performance indicator. Not the old-school definition of clicks and views. Think about dwell time, content completion rates and post-engagement actions. Did your explainer video drive a next step? Did your eBook prompt a sales inquiry?

B2B buying is rarely linear — but your measurement framework can still be intentional. To improve the “Q” in your MQLs, focus on buying group dynamics, content pathways and the behaviors that forecast revenue, not just response.

The goal isn't just to track content performance — it's to optimize continuously. That's how you move from content that informs to content that converts.

AI's growing role — and the importance of human intelligence

AI is reshaping content marketing in ways we couldn't have imagined just a few years ago. Automated content generation, predictive analytics, and personalization at scale are now the norm. But as powerful as AI is, human intelligence still plays a critical role in crafting stories that resonate with human emotion — and drive demand.

60%
of marketing teams are piloting
or scaling AI, and 26% of
marketers said AI is already
infused into daily workflows
([2025 State of Marketing AI Report](#))

Generative AI, despite its impressive capabilities, still struggles with original thought and nuanced storytelling. In the Content Marketing Institute's [2025 B2B Content Marketing study](#), 81% of marketers said their teams are using GenAI tools, but just 17% rate the quality of content generated by AI as excellent or very good.

The most successful content marketing still relies on experienced professionals who can think strategically, challenge assumptions and inject a brand's unique perspective into the content they're creating. The future of content marketing isn't AI versus humans — it's AI enhancing human creativity.

To get there, we need to rethink how we use AI — not as a shortcut, but as a strategic partner. That means training our teams to prompt effectively, but also to critically evaluate and refine what AI generates. It means building content frameworks that marry machine speed with human judgment.

AI has many roles in content marketing. For example:

- AI can surface trends faster than any analyst, generate outlines in seconds, and even propose headline variations worth testing.
- For personalization, AI can analyze behavioral data across channels and dynamically tailor content experiences to individual buyers — serving up relevant topics, formats and timing based on where someone is in their journey. That kind of scale and precision is impossible to achieve manually, and it plays a powerful role in boosting engagement and conversion.
- AI also excels at generating promotional content: copy variations for ads, email subject lines, and social posts — ideal for A/B testing and accelerating campaign cycles. When human creatives layer in brand tone, positioning and insight into what actually resonates, the results become exponentially more effective.

Content marketers who thrive in this new era aren't trying to automate everything. They know when to lean in on the machine while falling back on their own experience, intuition and empathy.



Common pitfalls and how to avoid them

Content marketing can be a difference maker for any business, building strong relationships with audiences, positioning the brand as a thought leader and driving effective demand generation — but only when it's done right. There are many hurdles to overcome and pitfalls to avoid when embarking on a content marketing journey. Here are four to watch out for:

1. AI will solve all our problems!

The explosion of GenAI has made this assumption all too common. On the surface GenAI seems like the obvious solution – you can create content at scale with minimal resource and cost. However, as discussed above, while GenAI can undoubtedly help with the content creation process, it can't produce the kind of quality necessary to deliver that all important value exchange for your audience.

It's also important to remember that the content you produce is a reflection of your brand, so ensuring the highest possible levels of quality and accuracy is crucial. That's not

to say that AI shouldn't be part of your content marketing plans, rather that experienced content strategists and creators are necessary to use it effectively.

2. Random acts of content

Don't start creating content without developing a balanced strategy. Pushing out content with a scattergun approach or chasing the latest trends as they appear and fade will never build the thought leadership that your brand wants and needs.

- What core topics do you want to align with?
- Who are you targeting and why?

- What formats do you plan to produce?
- What avenues of engagement will you leverage?
- What does a deliverable content schedule look like?

All these questions should be considered and implemented into your content marketing strategy before a single piece of content is produced. Get the strategy right and the content you create will work hard for you.

3. Misaligned metrics

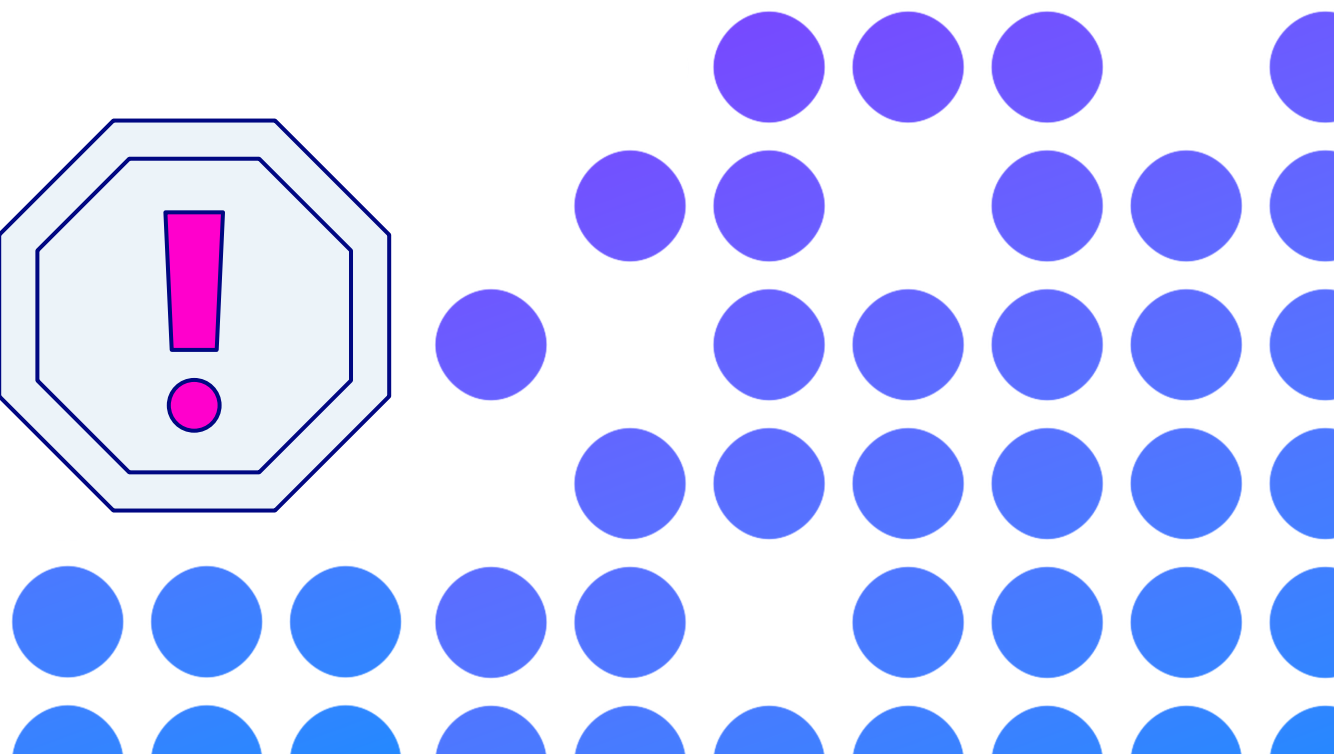
Throwing content into the wild without fully defining what you want it to achieve will make it difficult to judge how effective it is. Defining clear success metrics is key, but it's also important to ensure that those metrics align with your overarching marketing goals.

If your goal is to position your brand as a thought leader, dwell time on your content is an important metric, showing high levels of engagement. If the goal is to drive users to a landing page with a form fill, then clicks from that content are what matters.

4. Spray and pray

There's no point creating a library of top-quality content if no one can find it. Content strategy and creation are obviously vital, but it's equally important to invest in your distribution and promotion strategy

Define your target audience and identify where best to engage with them, then leverage those avenues of engagement, ensuring that your content is designed and adapted accordingly.



Building a sustainable content engine for demand generation

Effectively implementing a content marketing strategy for demand generation requires investment in both time and resources. But should you build that resource internally or outsource the capabilities you need? Both options have pros and cons.

Working with a content agency can get the ball rolling quicker, helping you to develop a viable strategy and providing the resources needed to start building a content library. By contrast, building an internal team means complete focus on your brand and its needs over time.

Arguably, the best option is a combination of both. An experienced content agency can build out your content marketing strategy, while also working with internal teams to effectively deliver that strategy.

This hybrid approach provides a balance of external expert strategy and support combined with internal process management. The balance may shift and adapt over time. You can lean on the external resource for short-term blasts into new audiences or around new product launches, while your internal team slowly builds high-value thought leadership for your brand.

However you choose to structure your content team and resources, be prepared to adapt and evolve. Audience landscapes, avenues of engagement, content types and formats, and even industry regulation are constantly changing, so your content will need to reflect those changes.

An effective, flexible and sustainable content engine will fuel demand and accelerate pipeline, establishing a foundation for long-term success.





About Pipeline360

Pipeline360 is the trusted partner for B2B marketers seeking predictable, scalable pipeline growth without added complexity. Our Demand-as-a-Service model, fueled by our powerful B2B marketplace, streamlines the entire pipeline generation process, delivering Branded Demand, advanced content syndication, targeted digital advertising, performance insights, and leading content and creative services.

Through data-driven intelligence and enabling technology, Pipeline360 takes a strategic, end-to-end approach tailored to today's evolving B2B buying journey. Leading global brands, including Adobe, Red Hat, and Splunk, trust Pipeline360 to fuel their revenue and growth. Learn more at www.pipeline-360.com.



About The Expert Network

The Expert Network (TEN) is a fully managed network of content strategists, creators, producers, designers and project managers, accessible via one global partner. TEN specializes in premium, insight-driven content that creates awareness and builds demand for clients. Backed by a rigorous vetting process and hands-on editorial oversight, TEN delivers reliable, high-quality content at scale – without the overhead of a traditional agency. The flexibility of our model allows TEN to manage the entire content process or augment and enhance in-house content marketing capabilities. Learn more at www.globalexpertnet.com.