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Product Promotion and Awareness Primer for 2019



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Building awareness, creating and nurturing opportunities, and prompting engagement are vital to grow revenue with existing and new accounts. Technology product marketers must develop inbound and outbound strategies that fuel demand generation programs aligned to the strategic goals of the company.

Scope

This initiative covers approaches to creating awareness, generating demand and accelerating high-quality leads through the funnel that marketing should apply to improve promotion efforts.

The topics covered within this initiative include:

- Manage and enable SDRs
- Develop content strategy
- Generate high-quality leads
- Nurture and accelerate leads through the funnel

Analysis

Figure 1. Product Promotion and Awareness Overview



SDR = sales development rep

Source: Gartner (February 2019)

It is not uncommon for technology providers to struggle to balance creating awareness and generating the demand necessary to build the pipeline for the portfolio against the expectations for individual products. This often occurs because the demand generation efforts are created to meet a single need, without clarity on how the effort will contribute to the business. For example, marketing activities get disconnected from sales goals when:

- A single thought leadership piece of content is created without clearly defined campaign use cases; or
- It focuses on investing in a specific channel, such as a goal to have a large social media presence, without clarity on the expectation of how that will drive awareness with target buyers

Providers can gain a competitive edge by developing awareness and demand generation strategies that clearly articulate objectives and align to the strategic goals of the enterprise, and using those as a guiding foundation when planning campaigns. Technology product marketers must ensure they

are capturing and keeping new buyer attention. Through inbound and outbound marketing strategies, technology product marketers must reach prospective buyers with compelling, impactful storylines that resonate. Providers must use channels where buyers are willing and able to engage in order to create awareness, drive demand and accelerate leads through the marketing funnel. And, increasingly, it's critical to keep customers engaged throughout the life cycle to retain them, expand their use of your products and prompt them to advocate.

Top Challenges and How Gartner Can Help

Effective demand generation programs start with building a highly focused segmentation strategy that clearly identifies enterprise and buyer personas. Starting with each key segment, technology product marketers must develop a content strategy that maps content to target buyer profiles, needs and questions at the right time within buying activity streams when buyers are ready to hear the messaging. Leveraging this content, providers must implement a multichannel campaign approach, including utilizing SDRs, marketing technology and data strategies to effectively capture interest from target buyers.

However, capturing interest is not enough. Providers must also continue to engage buyers to keep their attention and accelerate opportunities through the marketing funnel. Gartner assists technology product marketers in developing, launching and optimizing demand generation strategies to drive business growth by addressing the most pressing questions facing the role:

- How do I ensure SDRs are integrated into my demand generation programs and equipped to be effective?
- How do I map content to audience profiles, needs and buying streams for buyers to find it valuable and engaging?
- What channels and calls to action should I leverage to reach technology buyers?
- What types of nurture campaigns are needed to meet my demand generation objectives?

The topics covered within this initiative include:

- **Manage and enable SDRs:** Deploying sales development reps to complement inbound and outbound demand generation programs to qualify and engage buyers
- **Develop content strategy:** Designing and creating content that interests, engages and guides buyers throughout their journey
- **Generate high-quality leads:** Executing inbound and outbound multichannel approaches to reach buyers in earned or paid channels to capture attention and move buyers through the funnel
- **Nurture and accelerate leads through the funnel:** Continuing to generate interest and engagement throughout the buying cycle through informative campaigns, content and programs

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Our research addresses the following common client questions:

How do I ensure SDRs are integrated into my demand generation programs and equipped to be effective?

SDR teams are often the first direct contact with a prospective buyer. And yet SDRs are primarily entry-level roles, where the reps have limited experience or training. SDR teams must be able to effectively communicate value to buyers and adapt to the situations at hand. Developing and managing an SDR team that delivers qualified leads requires providing ongoing guidance and a robust training and enablement program and connecting SDRs directly into inbound and outbound demand generation approaches. It also requires focusing SDRs on opportunities that have a higher probability of engaging and providing tools to keep SDRs engaged and effective over time.

These actions lead to lower turnover, growth opportunities for the employees and higher demand generation success rates.

Planned Research

- Strategies to Improve Prospect Outreach and Interactions
- Emerging Uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Complement SDR Approaches in B2B Demand Generation
- LinkedIn Proficiency for SDRs

How do I map content to audience profiles, needs and buying streams for buyers to find it valuable and engaging?

Content fuels awareness and promotion strategies. But to have impact, it must be helpful to the buyers' roles, context and needs. More is not necessarily better. For content to drive interest and engagement, technology product marketers must understand how buyers research their products and services and their decision-making and buying process. They must then develop a content strategy targeted to the needs of specific market segments and buyer profiles, with an understanding of where these buyers are in their buying and owning life cycles. This will lead to the generation of higher-quality leads and more engaged customers.

Planned Research

- Landing Page Strategies That Drive Conversion
- Content Creation and Mapping Alignment to Segments and Buying Streams
- Defining a Content Amplification Strategy

What channels and calls to action should I leverage to reach technology buyers?

Buyers show interest in marketing efforts for many reasons, not all of which lead to opportunity. A prescriptive approach to understanding target segments and buyer profiles (i.e., where buyers spend their time and what captures their interest) generates demand at the top of the funnel. For large technology providers, Gartner research shows that use of 10 or more channels and six calls to action increases the conversion rate of demand generation programs.¹ Technology providers must execute on a targeted, multichannel approach to reach buyers in owned, earned or paid channels to capture attention and move buyers through the funnel.

Planned Research

- Toolkit: Building a Demand Generation Plan
- Setting Demand Generation Goals That Meet Business Objectives
- Focus Your Website on the Needs of Your Target Audience
- Tradeshow Strategies to Fuel Demand Generation Success

What types of nurture campaigns are needed to meet my demand generation objectives?

A balanced effort focused on buyer needs and behavior results in creating highly qualified leads that are engaged throughout the buying cycle. Ongoing nurturing of those engaged at the top of the funnel requires planning with regard to data collection and management. Keeping an up-to-date, clean and segmented database is critical to success of demand generation programs. It then requires detecting buyer behavior coupled with a flexible campaign and channel strategy that incorporates helpful content to keep their attention as they progress through their journey. Campaign performance metrics should be used to drive resource allocation and optimize campaign performance that will accelerate deal velocity.

Planned Research

- The Five C's of Quality Customer Data (Capture, Cleanse, Connect, Categorize and Consume)
- Cross-sell Like B2C to Open Up More Opportunities in B2B
- Best Practices in Upgrading Free Customers to Paid Customers
- Strategic Role of Advocacy in Demand Generation Strategy

Related Priorities

Table 1. Related Priorities

Priority	Focus
Product Marketing Leadership	This initiative provides best practices for optimizing the budget, resources, technology, intra- and intercompany collaboration, and KPIs to drive an agile and impactful product marketing function.
Product Marketing Impact	This initiative covers product marketing contribution into critical functions and programs that drive customer interest and engagement throughout both the buying and owning cycles.
Planning and Segmentation	This initiative covers insights about the markets, competitive environments, targeting approaches and customer profiles that you should incorporate to improve planning and segmentation efforts.
Product Messaging and Differentiation	This initiative provides guidance and best practices for creating differentiated positioning, messaging and storylines for both individual products and entire portfolios.

Source: Gartner

Suggested First Steps

- Read “Use Outbound Sales Development Reps to Supplement Other Outreach Approaches” to learn how using outbound SDRs can cost-effectively supplement traditional demand generation and underpin account-based marketing campaigns.
- Read “Content That Builds Trust and Delivers Value Can Influence Shortlist and Vendor Selection” to see how creating content that is consistent with the messages customers see and hear elsewhere plays an important role in demand generation, building trust and providing value.
- Use “3 Keys to Successfully Launching Demand Generation Campaigns for New Products” to develop targeted demand generation campaigns utilizing a balanced marketing mix and continually track results to ensure product launch success.
- Read “Create B2B Technology Buyer Personas in the Context of the Extended Buying Team” to develop relevant, impactful personas by taking the enterprise role of the buyer into account.
- Attend [Gartner Tech Growth & Innovation Conference 2019](#) to gain firsthand insight and pragmatic advice to help you develop and execute your go-to-market strategies.

Essential Reading

- “4 Ways to Improve the Effectiveness of Inbound Sales Development Reps.” Increase the number of sales-accepted leads generated by inbound SDR teams by narrowing the focus, delivering consistent training and enablement, leveraging data and tools, and adopting broader success metrics.

- “Create Demand From Technology Buyers Who Are Not Planning a Purchase to Drive Growth.” Develop a multichannel demand generation approach that captures and keeps buyer attention to drive growth from buyers who are not actively seeking a solution.
- “Use Inbound Marketing Techniques in Demand Generation Efforts to Respond to Technology Buyer Behavior.” Include inbound marketing techniques in demand generation efforts to reach buyers who ignore outbound marketing messages in favor of online research.
- “Modernize PR to Increase Market Awareness.” Modernize your public relations strategy by expanding scope to include key market influencers, and leverage your content marketing strategy to maximize impact and reach.
- “How to Build an Advertising Plan to Generate Demand for Technology Products.” Create more effective demand generation programs by knowing the basics of what goes into defining a measurement plan, and how to develop and prioritize ad target audiences.
- “Create B2B Technology Buyer Personas in the Context of the Extended Buying Team.” Design personas for demand generation to deliver more effective targeted messaging, content, communication channels and calls to action.
- “Implement Role-Specific, Data-Driven and Tools-Based Strategies for Successful Sales.” Treat sales enablement as an ongoing process, tailored by specific customer-facing roles with content management tools to help sales throughout the buying cycle.

Evidence

¹ From September through November 2018, 500 respondents in the U.S., Canada and Western Europe were interviewed online and through computer-assisted telephone interviewing. Participating organizations were technology and service providers with annual revenue of \$10 million or more, with primary product offerings for software, services and hardware (for the U.S. only). Respondents were personally knowledgeable of the organization’s marketing budget, campaigns and tactics.

The results of this study are representative of the respondent base and not necessarily the market as a whole.

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Gartner helps technology providers make the right product, marketing and sales decisions by providing insight into markets, customers, competitors and technologies.

Product and Service Innovation

- Drive innovation through your business model, products and services
- Inform your decision life cycle, prioritize investments and identify new opportunities (product, geography or market)
- Anticipate and manage economic boom/bust cycles, and identify and leverage disruptive technology trends

Go-to-Market Strategy

- Identify how to meet your business goals
- Position marketing operations and campaigns by properly positioning solutions competitively for the right target segment
- Drive increased sales effectiveness by better positioning your solutions

Positioning and Messaging

- Differentiate your messaging and enhance your unique story for your customers
- Get visibility into what your customers care about and where they are struggling
- Get visibility into where your competitors are succeeding and where they are falling behind through Gartner Magic Quadrants®
- Access Vendor Ratings for profiles of key competitors

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