

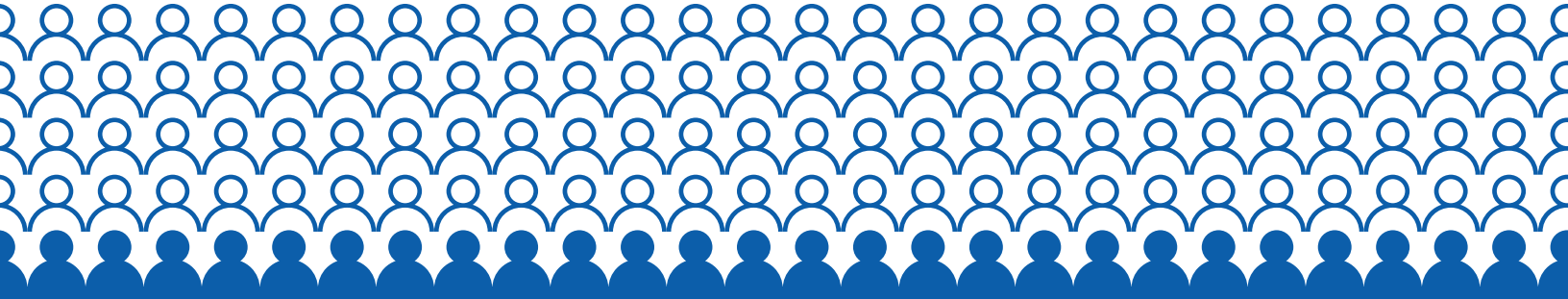
The B2B Marketer's
Guide to

INTENT-DRIVEN MARKETING



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We live in a time where brands are vying for the attention of customers from every digital and physical corner. As a result, many consumers have become resistant to the messages that businesses employ to attract target audiences.

In this environment, intent has become the secret ingredient for creating meaningful relationships with audiences and seeding deep customer loyalty. Research indicates that three out of every four business buyers expect companies to understand their needs and expectations, but only a small proportion expect that companies can identify those needs.

This clearly shows how brands need to understand and leverage buyer behavior to personalize their marketing and deliver campaigns that achieve higher conversion rates and ROI.

In the following sections, we'll examine the basics of intent: what it is, how it is used in a B2B environment, and how to incorporate it into your digital marketing strategy.

WHAT IS INTENT-DRIVEN MARKETING?

Intent-driven marketing helps businesses to focus their resources on prospects that have a proven need for their product or service. This type of marketing goes beyond simple demographic and behavioral data. The aim is to create highly sophisticated (and automated) experiences driven largely by the needs of the audience.

To understand what potential customers need and where they are in the buying process, businesses can track and analyze buyer intent. Using this intel, marketers can determine what the prospect is looking for and then create and serve personalized content that directly appeals to them.

However, before you get to the point where you can capture or generate demand, you need to excel at identifying and understanding the intent signals that your target audience generates.

What are intent signals?

Marketers with SEO experience are probably familiar with intent signals. Every time someone searches for something (for example, "CRM software for digital agencies"), they're demonstrating a specific intent. For years, SEO experts have been using keyword research to create and optimize landing pages to align with audience intent.

Search engines are not the only source of intent data. Website behavior, content consumption (for example, tweet engagements, blog post reads, or whitepaper downloads), queries over the phone, chat, and social media are all signals of specific interest or need.

There are three types of intent data:

- **First-party data** is information collected from direct interactions with customers or prospects.
- **Second-party data** is first-party data from another company.
- **Third-party data** is unsourced data collected from the web.

Given that first-party data is both predictive and unique to your brand, it is the best source of reliable information. However, with the ever-increasing number of connected channels and devices, it's crucial to have adequate technology and processes in place to collect this live data.

WHAT GOALS CAN BE ACHIEVED WITH INTENT MARKETING?

One of the biggest advantages of intent-driven marketing is that it allows marketers to pursue and fulfill very specific and relevant business goals. Rather than casting a wide net, hoping to capture as many customers as possible, they can safely focus on a small segment, knowing that those prospects are more likely to convert.

Understand and engage all decision-makers

There are often several people who influence the final decision in an organization. Using intent allows marketers to understand the varying motivations and needs of all actors that influence the decision-making process at a target company. Furthermore, they can use this information to engage their prospects in meaningful communication and guarantee their buy-in.

With intent-driven marketing, organizations become better at linking prospects (and their behavior) across platforms and understanding the common factors that drive their purchasing decisions.

Knowing the characteristics shared by most of your customers allows you to design a model of your ideal client. This model can be used to identify the leads with the highest potential and focus your resources on converting them into customers.

Identify the best personas/segments in your audience

Existing customers can provide significant and meaningful information about your audience. By analyzing the pre-conversion behaviors and actions of your best customers, you can determine the intent signals of a promising lead. For example, you might discover that one of the signs of high-value customers is that they download and engage with sales enablement content (whitepapers, case studies, etc.) early in their relationship with your brand. Therefore, you can build your nurturing campaigns to focus on converting prospects that have consumed one or more pieces of sales enablement content.

Over time, this type of analysis will help you uncover the most attractive segments within your audience. It will also help you understand how each group's behavior differs and the signals that indicate that they're ready to convert.

Data surrounding buying intent can also help B2B marketers keep their personas up-to-date, as targets and company strategies change.

Identify the best channel for each prospect

To engage with prospects and nurture them through the funnel, you need to be able to reach them wherever they are. However, with numerous channels and devices available today, picking the right mediums can be a daunting task.

Using intent data, you can determine which channels effectively reach your target audience. These insights can show you the channels used by your best customers so that you employ the same combination and reach new prospects.

Optimize messaging and visuals

Observing and analyzing how your audience reacts to brand messaging is central to intent-driven marketing. It presents a unique opportunity to optimize brand communication and how it's delivered to potential customers.

With intent marketing, content optimization is no longer based on trial and error. Rather, this tactic enables you to easily produce content that meets your audience's specific needs. By understanding your prospects' intent, you can identify which stage of the buyer journey they're in and produce compelling, informational content that entices them towards a purchasing decision.

Creating a keyword strategy that aligns with buyer intent is one of the strongest ways to optimize your content. By identifying keyword opportunities and prioritizing them using buyer intent, you can construct a more effective content map.

HOW TO USE INTENT-DRIVEN MARKETING

Now that you understand how intent-driven marketing can benefit your business, let's discuss specific ways in which you can implement this approach.



Data collection and analytics

The first thing you need to do is to make sure you've set up your data analytics in a way that can provide ample information about the intent of your visitors.

Google Analytics, one of the most common tools to analyze user behavior, is a great platform for capturing buyer intent. By defining goals, which are configured at the view level of the platform, you can identify users who have visited a certain page (e.g. your pricing plans), or who have downloaded a specific piece of content (e.g. a price comparison chart, signaling that they're in the decision stage of their journey and considering a few competing products).

You can leverage Google Analytics features, such as Google Tag Manager, for even more robust data collection options. With advanced tracking abilities, these tools provide additional insights into site engagement and interactions.

Multiple third-party tools take this even further and allow you to build comprehensive profiles of your visitors that include demographic and behavioral data (page visits, content consumed, etc.).

Programmatic buying

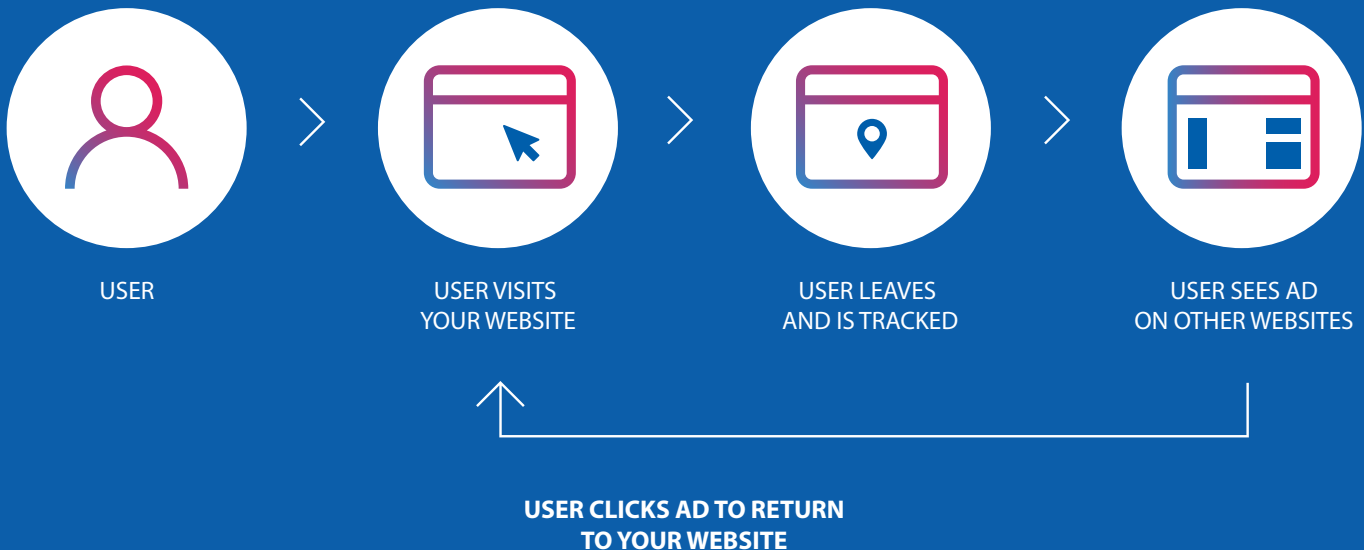
Programmatic buying refers to the process of algorithmic high-frequency auctioning of digital advertising. Every time there's an opportunity to show an ad (such as when someone loads a web page that contains a banner or some other type of ad space), an automated auction determines which ad gets displayed.

Combining programmatic buying with intent data can create a powerful lead generation engine, which feeds your funnel with a significant number of relevant, high-quality leads.

Remarketing

Digital advertising works even better when it's targeting people who have expressed interest in your brand or the product you're offering. Using remarketing allows you to take advantage of this. With this tactic, you can retarget people who have visited your website.

HOW REMARKETING WORKS



For example, a potential customer visits your website, spends 15 minutes browsing the product page of your tool, and then leaves without completing a purchase. By leveraging this behavioral intent data, you can display an ad to remind them about your solution next time they visit their favorite news or social media website.

Remarketing is growing in popularity because it is proven to convert customers at a higher rate compared to traditional display advertising. At its core, it relies on intent signals—namely, expressing interest in a brand by visiting its website.

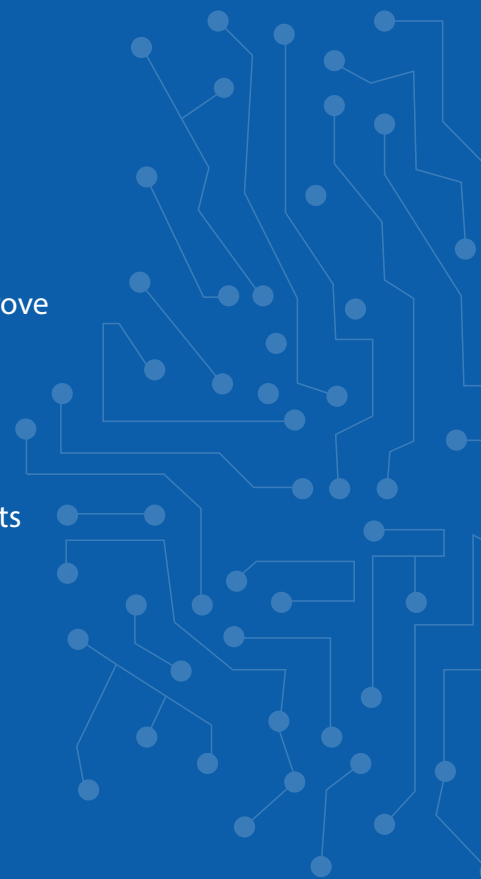
Machine learning

Given the amount of data that marketers have access to nowadays, it's natural for them to use algorithms to uncover insights and optimize the use of marketing channels and tactics.

INFUSEmedia has previously explored how machine learning can be used to improve a website's conversion rate. Much of the optimization is driven by the analysis of past user intent.

For example, by analyzing the behavior of the most profitable customers, an AI-powered conversion rate optimization tool might identify lucrative prospects early in their buying journey. Next, it can provide relevant offers that would make them more likely to convert.

In a broader context, machine learning can be used to identify the best prospects within your audience and the combination(s) of messaging (copy, visuals, etc.) and channels that are best for converting them.

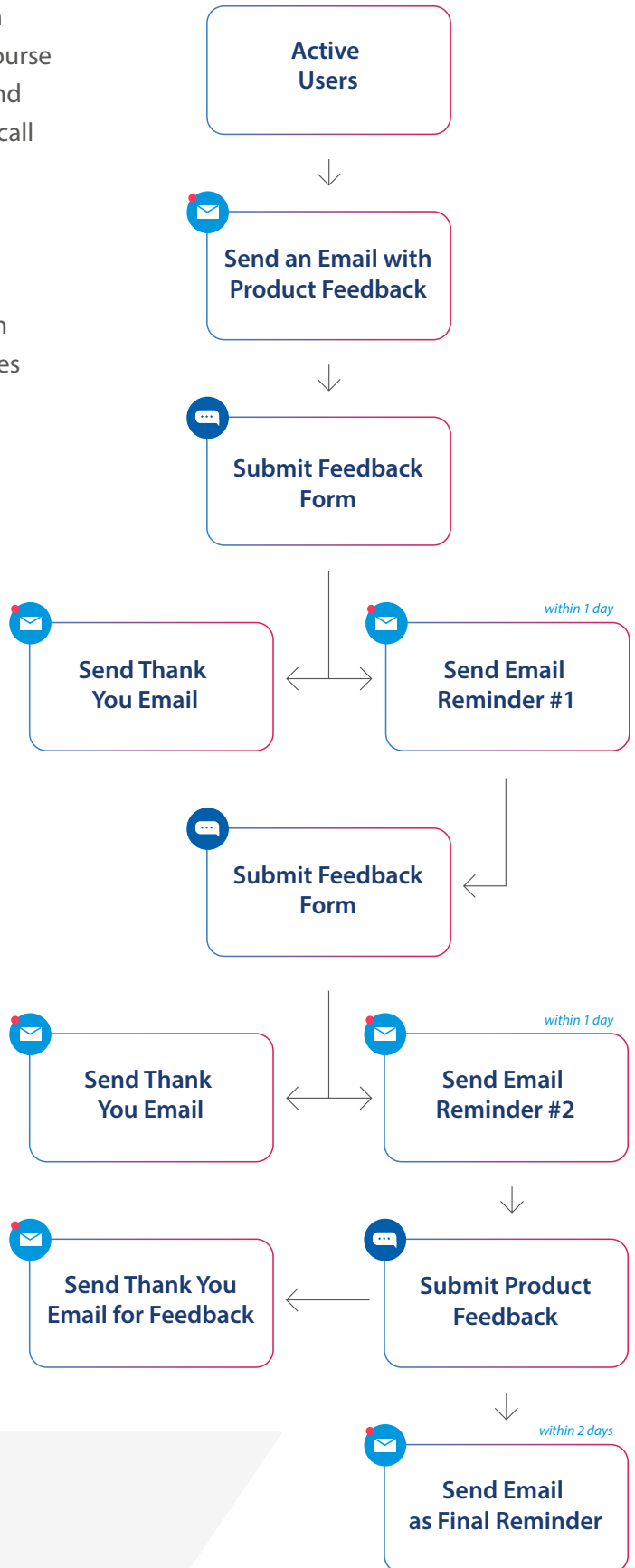


Lead nurturing (with marketing automation)

Lead nurturing is a tactic that reveals the full potential of intent-driven marketing. Over half of all leads are not ready to commit to becoming customers when they first engage with a brand. That's why B2B marketers use specialized tools to take their prospective customers through a series of touchpoints aimed at maximizing the chance of conversion. The intent demonstrated by leads is key when building lead nurturing campaigns.

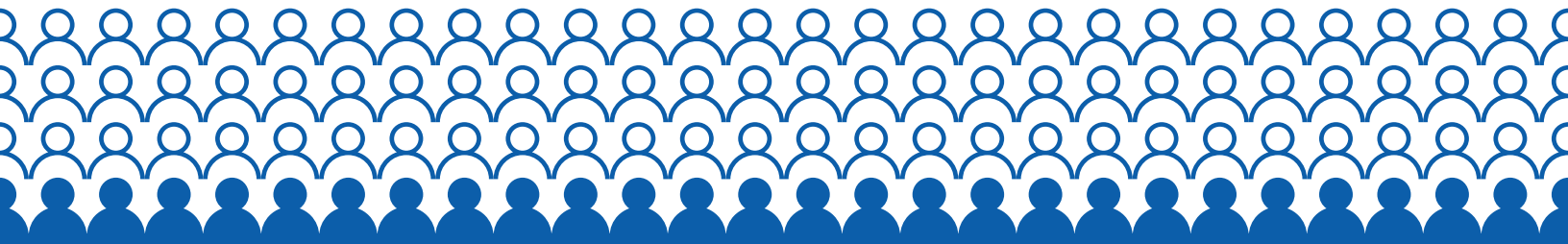
With effective lead nurturing, marketers can account for each leads' behavior, and leverage those insights to decide their course of action. For example, if a lead is actively engaging with brand content, it will be handed off to the sales reps, who will then call the target company/individual and try to close the sale.

If, on the other hand, the lead appears "cold" (i.e., it hasn't demonstrated any intent to adopt the solution offered by the brand), the lead nurturing mechanism might put them into another nurturing track where they're offered case studies of similar companies who succeeded by using the solution.



Align your marketing strategy to your customers

The trend toward making marketing more intent-driven is only going to become stronger. With recent technological innovations, we have access to more intent signals and the ability to apply these insights through automation.



Rather than marketing to customers based on timing and strategies, intent-driven marketing focuses on the buyer's needs and expectations. It's about following the digital footprint of your targets—which pages they visit on your website, which blogs provoke them to read and leave comments, what questions they want to have answered when they engage with your brand on social media—and learning what your prospects or customers care about before communicating with them.

Every action is a signal of current and future intent that can be turned into a powerful weapon for customer acquisition.

ALEXANDER KESLER BIO:



Alexander Kesler is a visionary B2B digital marketer with over 20 years of experience. Focusing on solutions for B2B demand generation, digital marketing, ABM, intent, and AI-driven lead generation, among others, Alexander embraces innovation and turns concepts and methodologies into products and marketing programs that drive ROI.

As Founder and CEO of INFUSEmedia, Alexander leads a global team that executes campaigns across all industries and company sizes. He leads all facets of global marketing, including go-to-market strategy, demand generation, vertical marketing, data management, field marketing, pricing, retention, analyst relations, product management, inside sales, and sales enablement.