

The Contract Manufacturers Growth Plan.™



DEFINE



DESIGN



DELIVER

A plan to define, design and deliver the front end of your go-to-market strategy, and why it's time to differentiate your brand.

Equinet
Growth Marketing

The unsung heroes of manufacturing.

We believe contract manufacturers are the unsung heroes in manufacturing. You occupy a space where customers expect you'll operate unseen.

Your names, unknown among the wider public, are some of the most significant drivers of economic growth on the planet. And your industry is growing at a rate of 6% YOY and will be responsible for nearly 4% of the global GDP, or \$3.7 trillion, by 2023 (source: BCC).

Living in a white-label world, it can seem counter-intuitive to focus on marketing. However, the sales environment has changed, and you need a new plan to grow in line with your projections.

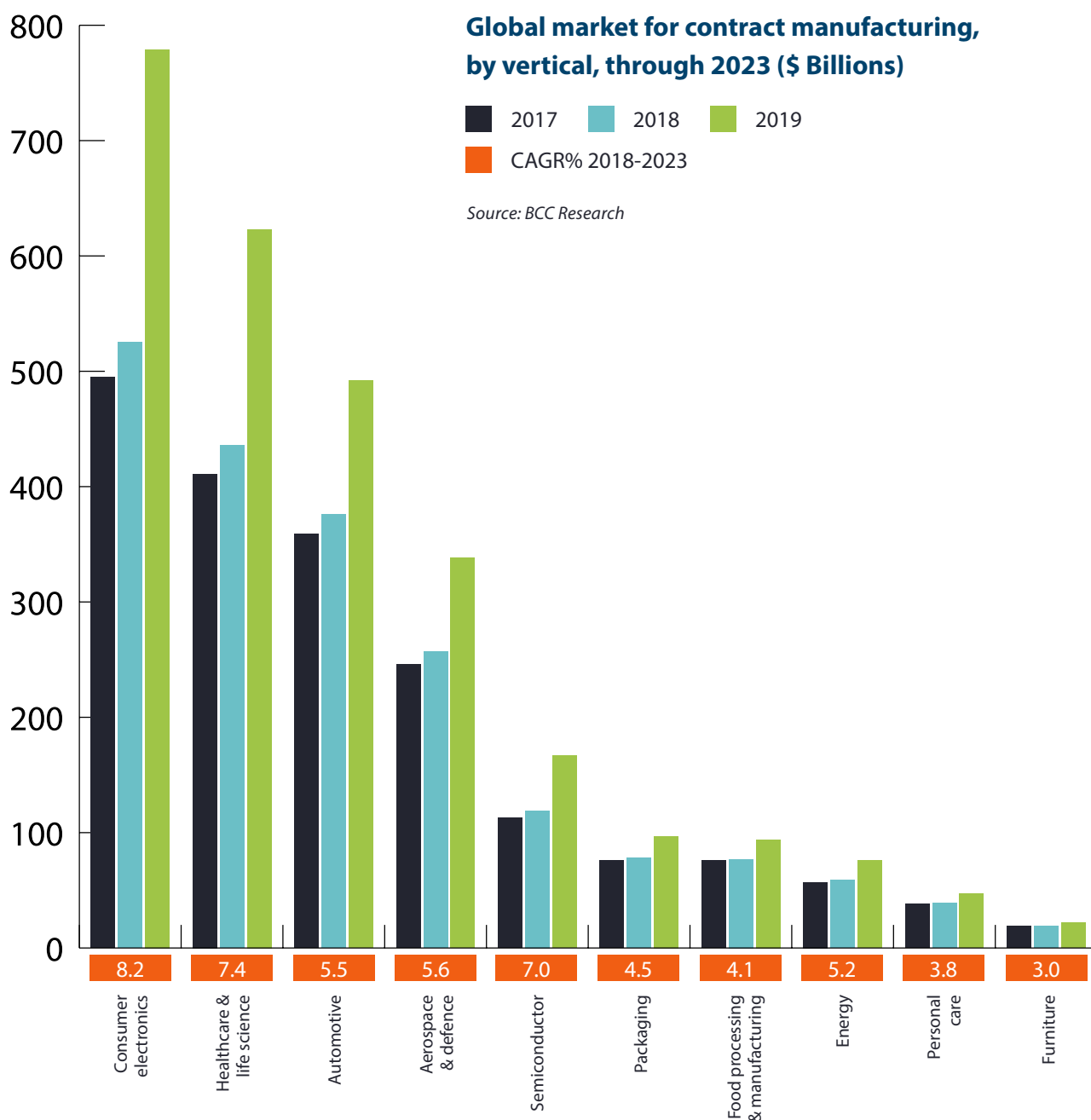
We are passionate about serving the unique needs of contract manufacturing companies committed to scaling growth. Furthermore, we are intrinsically curious about the dynamics of contract manufacturing markets, especially in Healthcare, Mobility, Energy and Packaging.

Evolving from the idea that we could turn clients into publishers, we've been growing since 2009, and we've been a HubSpot Partner since 2011. And we want to show you how to supercharge your CRM, Brand, Marketing, and Pipeline.

This is a guide on how you can do that.

Opportunities in contract manufacturing continue to grow.

The industry remains resilient and innovative, and the outlook across the sector is one of increasing demand.



Since the 1970s, contract manufacturers have helped OEMs lever economies of scale to lower their manufacturing costs. But the model we know today has evolved into a strategic competitive weapon.

Contract manufacturers now offer OEMs design, production, assembly, testing and logistics. From food production to electronics, medical devices and pharma, they're freeing up OEM resources to focus on cutting-edge research, future strategy and sales.

Contract manufacturing remains a route to success for OEMs around the world. Growth is predicted across the whole sector as markets bounce back (post Covid).

Some areas, like pharmaceuticals and medical device manufacturing, have already received a significant boost from investments during the pandemic. Fast-tracked vaccines, testing kits and ventilator construction were all made possible by scalable contract manufacturing models.

Elsewhere, automotive, IT, and consumer electronics growth are driving an explosion in innovation. Miniaturised technology and the potential of IoT is driving new-use cases from automated guided vehicles to smart homes and industrial robotics.

The pressure is intense for OEMs to invest in R&D to serve this surging demand. The complexity of managing supply chains, sourcing materials, mass assembly, regulation, testing and logistics brings innovators to the door of contract manufacturers to free up resources while leveraging specific expertise and economies of scale. Dealing with the everyday realities of running factories may be a distraction.

Contract manufacturers are responding by increasing the range of services they provide. They are bringing sophisticated design services, DFX expertise, procurement and supply chain management capabilities, value engineering, configure-to-order and repair services to the table.

In responding to supply chain challenges, the industry is seeing a new focus on reshoring and distributing production to contain risk, intelligent supply chains powered by artificial intelligence to improve performance, and platforms to bring new visibility around delivery to customers.

But it's not a bed of roses

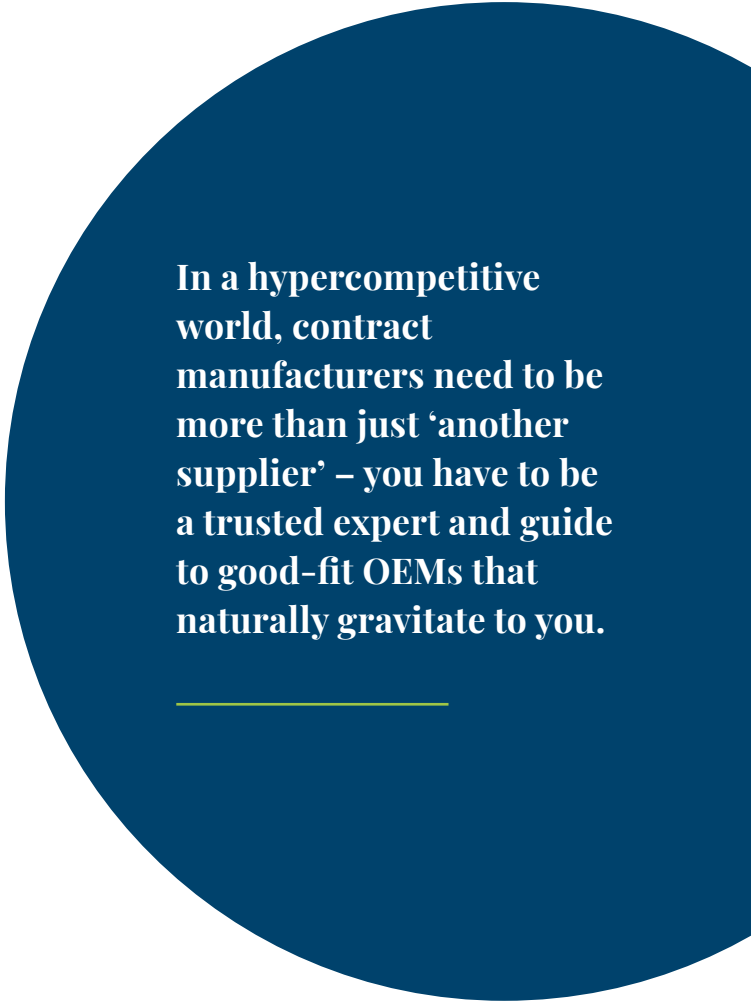
Telling your brand story means recognising that the customer is the hero.

- **Growth without a differentiated brand can be challenging:** Contract manufacturers can still struggle to grow. Finding and keeping 'right-fit' clients is a constant challenge. Why?
- **The absence of IP makes value harder to build:** Clients own the IP of the products you make, and while you add value to the process of making them, you build no value for yourself here.
- **The curse of commoditisation:** Costs are rising, margins are eroding and where OEMs feel no loyalty and see no differentiation, the ease of changing suppliers can fuel crippling price wars, leaving you feeling buffeted by market forces.

- **The supply chain challenge:** Disruption to just-in-time operations has challenged your business models and delivery capabilities worldwide. However, you can struggle to justify this complexity to clients. Trust can erode, and existing relationships can become strained.
- **The risk of customer concentration:** If you're not actively filling your pipeline or growing and widening your customer base, your business will remain vulnerable. And without a differentiated brand, sales can remain static, and you can become too reliant on a small number of clients for most of your revenue. Levels of 20% to 25% client concentration should be enough to make you feel nervous.
- **The impact of global forces:** Since 2016, contract manufacturers have suffered wave after wave of disruption. Extreme weather events and the Ever Given crisis have shown the vulnerability of global just-in-time supply lines. In Europe, new Brexit bureaucracies overturned decades of trading certainty. Then, Covid saw global manufacturing power shrink as production lines and supply chains ground to a halt.

At the height of the pandemic, growth in some verticals shrank by 14%. Material and energy costs are rising while global competitors are forcing prices downwards and eroding margins.

In a hypercompetitive world, contract manufacturers need to be more than just 'another supplier' – you have to be a trusted expert and guide to good-fit OEMs that naturally gravitate to you.



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You have a brand – but do you own it?

You've got no IP, but you do have a brand. It's yours unless you fail to own it. If you do that, your competitors will define your brand for you.

The manufacturing and industrial marketplaces are crowded, with many companies offering similar services and capabilities. So a considered and memorable brand can help you stand out and position you to win more business.

Effective brand marketing establishes an emotional connection. Once you define your brand positioning and what it stands for, you can create messaging that speaks to people's needs and desires.

Developing a strong brand will make it easier to build trust and distinguish you from competitors. And in B2B marketing, it's critical to differentiate. This is where you need a story that sets you apart from competitors. It doesn't need to be complex, but it does need to be unique.

With research, you'll know the audiences you're targeting and where you can connect with them. Your message can be simple and easily relatable, but it also needs to connect to your offering on a human level.

This all becomes more urgent when you consider that generating demand without establishing brand is a much slower route to market.



Define.

**Your brand position &
customer priorities.**

Define your brand position & customer priorities.

Lead with an ideal customer profile

The ideal customer profile (ICP) defines the firmographic, environmental and behavioural attributes of accounts expected to become your most valuable customers.

Unlike 'target customer,' which describes any company that might buy your service, the ICP is about the most valuable customers most likely to buy.

The ICP is integral to marketing and sales strategy in high-growth companies, requiring consultation with critical stakeholders and careful data analysis.

In one sense, an ICP is on the level above your buyer personas (see below). You are looking to create a description of a company (not individuals) that has all the qualities that best fit the services you provide.

When you define a customer profile, you might look at the following characteristics:

- What is the company's likely size?
- In which regions or territories do they operate?
- In what industries are they working?
- What are the company's biggest challenges?
- How experienced is the company?
- What are their main pain points?
- What are their short-term and long-term goals?
- What are their brand values?

Identify companies that are likely to become high-value customers. Objective measures of value like annual contract values (ACV) and lifetime values (LTV) facilitate the segmentation of target accounts and go-to-market alignment.

Quantitative analysis of historical data helps identify common attributes of the most (and least) valuable accounts. Analyse data from your CRM, ERP and other systems to identify firmographic, environmental and behavioural characteristics that correlate to value.

A well-designed ICP is critical to sales and marketing success. Contract manufacturing companies that invest in a well-defined ICP will achieve faster sales cycles, higher conversion rates and greater average ACV and LTV.

Develop your buyer personas

When defining buyer personas, a common mistake is to consider only existing customers and create profiles based on them. However, several dangerous assumptions are at work here.

- These are the customers you have – not necessarily the ones you want – or those you might aspire to have. They may have got you here – to your current level – but will they help you develop and grow your business?
- Are they typical? It may be that you have some outliers, that is, some customers who are unique for some reason, and so basing a buyer persona on them could be disastrous.

Another instance to caution against is reverse engineering personas around your services – be careful to avoid that.

Developing buyer personas requires a deeper level of thinking. Without the broader picture, you cannot possibly know which aspects of your customers are genuinely unique to them and which they share with other potential clients.

Additionally, the issues impacting a persona in quality assurance can differ widely from those in operations. Whilst neither is a decision maker in the context of your services, they can both influence a decision in distinct ways. And as a B2B service, you would expect to be developing multiple personas across the buyer's journey.

Also essential is transcending simple demographics to understand your prospects' challenges, fears and aspirations. You must identify their pain points – what specifically troubles them?

What elements of their weekly tasks are difficult, tedious or challenging? What other people potentially helpful or frustrating to their work exist in their world?

You must also know the answers to the big questions – what achievements are they seeking in their job or role and generally in life?

Reverse engineering buyer personas from existing customers does not trigger the same thought processes or rigorous research and evaluation – it can help, but only as an input into deeper buyer persona development.



Get the Guide to
Developing Buyer
Personas [here](#).

Competitor analysis and brand positioning

The best B2B brands define their ideal space in the marketplace and the brand positioning that helps them stand out from their competitors in the eyes of the right customers. Without this, you risk defining your brand in a way that your prospects don't care about, or your competitors do better.

You need to define your ideal target customer, the competitive set you are competing against, and your core brand strength. And the central benefit promise you should make to your target customer along with supporting reasons to believe that promise.

Do not underestimate a brand's value

A dominant focus on demand generation spend at a cost to brand marketing over the past two decades is problematic. Brand marketing takes longer but provides better returns long term.

Research from the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) on marketing effectiveness shows that while demand generation delivers faster results, it is less effective over time. The best results come when brand marketing and demand generation work together.

The best B2B brands define their ideal space in the marketplace and the brand positioning that helps them stand out from their competitors in the eyes of the right customers.



Gone are the days when B2B executives believed a logo, the right font, and a snappy strapline were all they needed to build a brand. Cutting through the noise, making an impact in the market, and attracting the right attention is all down to your brand. How your brand performs is all about understanding your customers.

The most significant factor in the modern marketing landscape is change, because everything changes all of the time. It would help if you created a brand that will not only have a real impact but stick – one that will work for you through all the changes in the market, evolving customers' needs and the ongoing development of your service offer.

The key to creating steady growth is a well-researched, well-thought-through brand identity that fits your business like a glove and is resilient enough to adapt to changing situations.

Develop brand essence

In a competitive landscape, where you must differentiate from competitors, you need a distinct brand essence – something that helps you stand out and guides the style and character of your content and marketing.

The best B2B brands create an emotional response in their audience. This can be subtle and nuanced but is unique and consistent.

The best way to influence the sentiment of your brand essence is by getting everything else right: by making sure you are both delivering what customers want and delighting them, adding extra value and going above and beyond to create a positive experience. If you can do that, your brand essence sentiment will be positive.

Make sure your company's culture fits your customer's aspirations and that your brand's personality matches theirs. Both of these are part of the 'flavour' of your brand essence, adding something unique to your business.



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Brand narrative and the buyer's journey

Gaining a deep understanding of the issues buyers face – their struggles, their goals and their daily grind – will enable you to create unique and powerful content for them.

Understand and demonstrate your appreciation for the transformation your principal buyer persona wants to achieve. Then establish the contextual problem they have that you can solve. How does that problem make them feel, and why does it matter?

Empathise with their situation and then establish your authority to provide a solution. And only then introduce your plan for how to overcome this problem. Finally, call them to action, describe the stakes involved and extol the benefits of implementing your plan.

In this way, you will position them as the hero in the story you tell.

Use stories to establish your brand as a relatable guide – a trusted companion on their journey. Highlight the troubles they may face and explain and demonstrate how you can lead them through to a better place – a better solution.

Remember it's a story – it needs to be engaging, entertaining even. Your tone of voice should be appropriate, welcoming, friendly, motivating and characterful.

Your story needs to capture the imagination of your audience and transport them to a world of possibilities. And don't forget, B2B buyers are humans too.

It is important to remember that power has shifted from the seller to the buyer. Everyone informs themselves before they are comfortable entering into a sales conversation today. The internet and the social web have made this irreversible, and there is no putting the genie back in the bottle.

So, you must create content and experiences at critical strategic stages in the buyer's journey. Fail in that today, and buyers will not find you when they start their quest to inform and educate themselves.

Enhance your brand identity

Differentiating your brand has never been more important – in your content, offer, culture, brand personality or the way you present that brand. Being different is a proven way to stand out from your competitors.

- **Brand identity is a vital element of that approach** – not only by ensuring that your brand design is distinctive but also by establishing authority and credence through quality design. And it's important because the way your brand looks is the first impression you give – the eye and brain process visual imagery before written content.
- **The design significantly impacts brand perception** – how well your prospects and customers receive your brand. The look and feel of your website, social media posts, packaging, publications and even business cards communicate a wealth of signals to your audience about your brand identity and either add value to your brand equity or damage it.

They all help create a brand. Those signals must be intentional – they must support the brand narrative and the messages you wish to convey.

Naturally, it's crucial to get the basics right. Clean, clear and uncluttered design helps with legibility and ensures that the message shines through.

Ensure that the typographic hierarchy is obvious and that the layouts are easy to follow. Never underestimate the fundamental importance of getting those basics right. Beyond the basics is where you express your character, authority, culture, approach and point of difference through your design.

Brand development is a balancing act that needs a deftly nuanced touch to avoid giving the wrong message or alienating your audience.

Imagine arriving at a meeting and talking in an accent no one can understand, being overly familiar with everyone, being rude or, even worse, not being noticed.

Just as the way you present yourself in a meeting is one of the critical factors that help you achieve your goals in that meeting, the way you present your offering through your brand design is one of the vital elements that help you attract and convert customers.

So, design is crucial and needs thoughtful implementation across every content asset. Getting this wrong risks giving a false impression or even losing the opportunity to present your proposition.



Differentiating
your brand
has never been
more important.

Develop a media mindset

We all face a race for attention in an increasingly 'noisy' world. Additionally, standing out to the people who matter is only getting harder. That is why you need to build an audience or a proprietary list that you own.

Here is the opportunity to become the media at your market's heart – the media your customers find and follow when they want to inform and educate themselves to stay current. They gradually trust the media because it 'speaks their language', understands their perspective and prioritises relevant issues.

Consider marketing from your prospect's perspective: nobody likes being marketed or sold to except on their terms. However, everyone consumes media.

The difference is the perception of value, permission and choice. We spend time with our chosen media because it does not make us feel sold to, and we trust the content because we relate to the media brands.

Think inch-wide and mile-deep

Think 'inch wide and mile deep' and discover an opportunity traditional media lacks (publishers need large audiences to realise value from subscriptions and advertisers).

Think 'inch wide mile deep' to create and repurpose more focused content that is relevant and vital to your ideal customer, instead of such a sizeable, broad audience! Become the media and own your market route.

Media was once the domain of moguls, publishing companies and broadcasters. However, today, B2C brands like Red Bull, Lego and Virgin and B2B brands like IBM, Deloitte and HubSpot are considered media brands. These companies serve big, broad audiences and have significant resources to succeed.

Traditional B2B magazine publishers build a brand and sweat the asset. Initially, a magazine is marketed to convert subscribers and grow an audience large and influential enough to attract advertisers.

They develop new ways of impacting and monitoring that audience while building more authority and a market profile. Usually, this starts with conferences and events, like industry awards and symposiums. With both, they attract ticket sales and sponsors and strike strategic partnerships with industry associations and leading business schools.

If you think like a publisher and act as a media brand, it changes your market dynamics and how you are perceived.

By taking an inch-wide, mile-deep approach to create and repurpose content across multiple media assets, you can come to matter to an audience that will continue to grow – but only in your specific area of expertise, value and impact.

Rather than monetising subscriptions, advertising, ticket and sponsorship income, when a fast-growth brand behaves like a publisher, they monetise their increased authority, extended reach and the opportunity to ‘own the conversation’ with their market.

What is that worth to you? Put another way, what would it cost to buy that level of traction through third party media? Worth it? Then imagine you own the print magazine, the email newsletter, the industry blog, the social influence, the podcast, the webinar series, the workshop, the website, the video channel, or even the annual conference and awards at the heart of your market.

Establish a single source of truth in your CRM.

Managing and maintaining customer data has always been important. However, keeping it clean, updated and helpful has proved a challenge among organisations of all sizes.

The problem is exacerbated because the lines between customer experience, engagement and relationship management are increasingly interconnected.

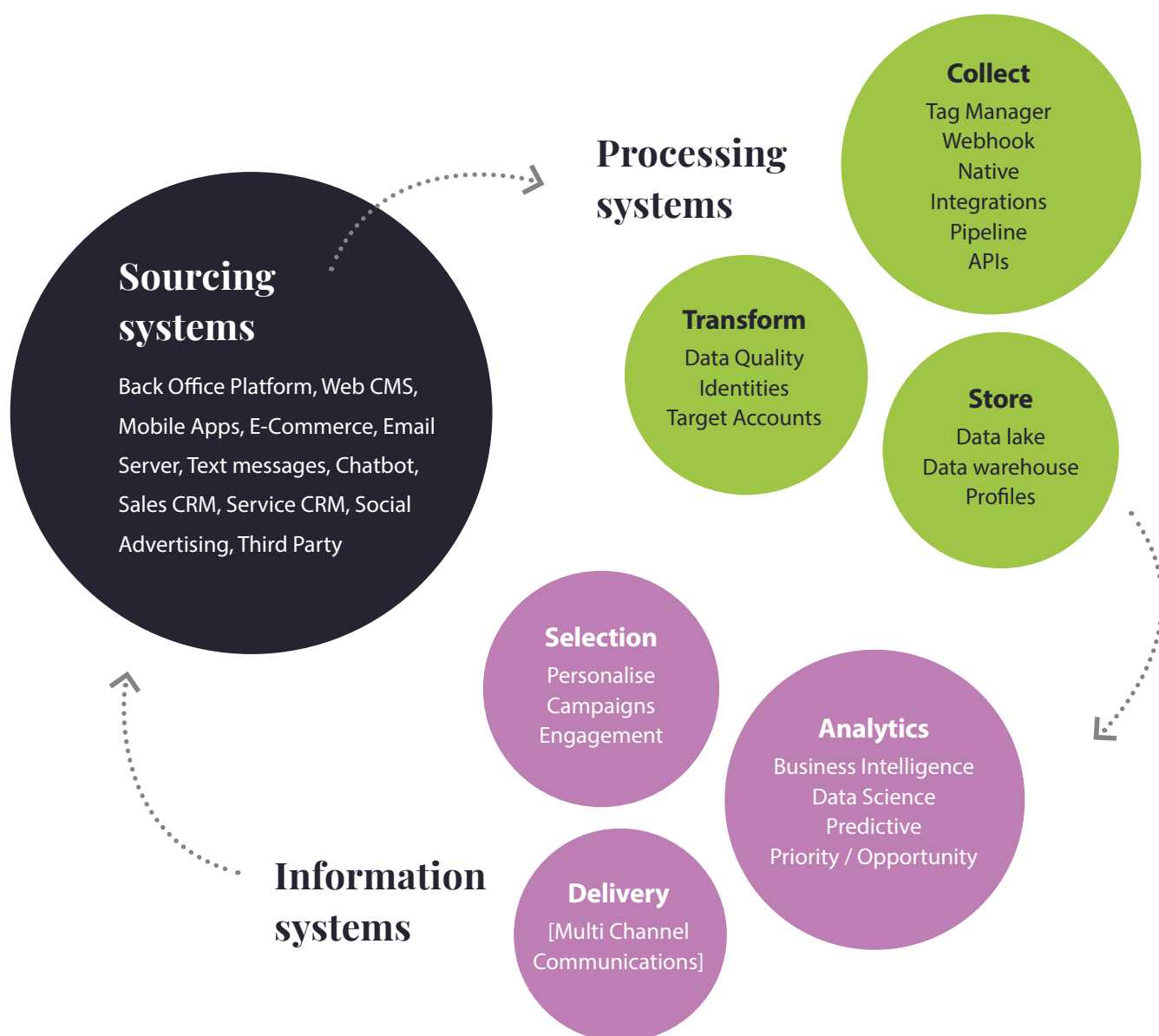
- Data is often manually imported, creating disparate data issues. Data silos are common in many CRMs.
- Marketing, sales, and service team data tend to be transactional, making customer lifetime value harder to analyse.
- Fast-growing companies need to demonstrate data integrity and privacy law compliance across multiple channels.
- OEMs today expect to find answers to their questions online. It would help if you considered the motivation of several key people at each stage of the buyer’s journey (decision makers, influencers, budget holders, blockers, etc.)

Many combined-source platforms include their processing and information systems. For example, an email system can often import large volumes of third-party data, organise data into lists, build profiles, and send and manage campaigns. However, this is an example of a data silo.

Today, most organisations have dozens of systems that process and manage data of varying kinds. These are called Sourcing Systems, Processing Systems or Information Systems. Moving data between two systems requires a connection layer, often an application programming interface (API).

The need to combine data correctly across an organisation is pressing because customers and prospects expect a unified and consistent experience across all channels. Consider where the contact is in the customer journey and the existing relationship.

The best way to manage data, measure the success of campaigns and spot opportunities is to create a single repository where all marketing, sales, service and operations data can be segmented, organised, mixed and analysed in one place.



Source: Customer Data Protection Institute / Equinet

The problems inherent in most CRM platforms is the bolt-on nature of building most of them and acquiring different tools and attaching them into the mix. By definition, each component was constructed on other codebases, making combined operations clunky and even dysfunctional.

By comparison, the HubSpot CRM platform is built on the same codebase as the CRM Hub, Marketing Hub, Sales Hub, Service Hub and Operations Hub, thus creating a viable promise of a single source of truth.

By employing the full HubSpot Growth Stack (all of the tools), you can build your business on your CRM, providing accurate, dependable data and the tools to analyse and act on the data in ways that will help you grow your business.


Data is often the trickiest part of establishing a revenue operations strategy. Success requires a solid data foundation and the sharing of data.

Meaningful KPIs will vary between organisations but may include:

- Key customer order value vs forecast
- A customer's lifetime value
- Marketing-qualified leads
- Sales-qualified leads
- Volume and value of the qualified pipeline
- Major opportunity conversion rate
- Customer service scores
- Net promoter scores (NPS)
- Customer onboarding scores
- Loyalty programme metrics

Over time, you may want to segment opportunities by:

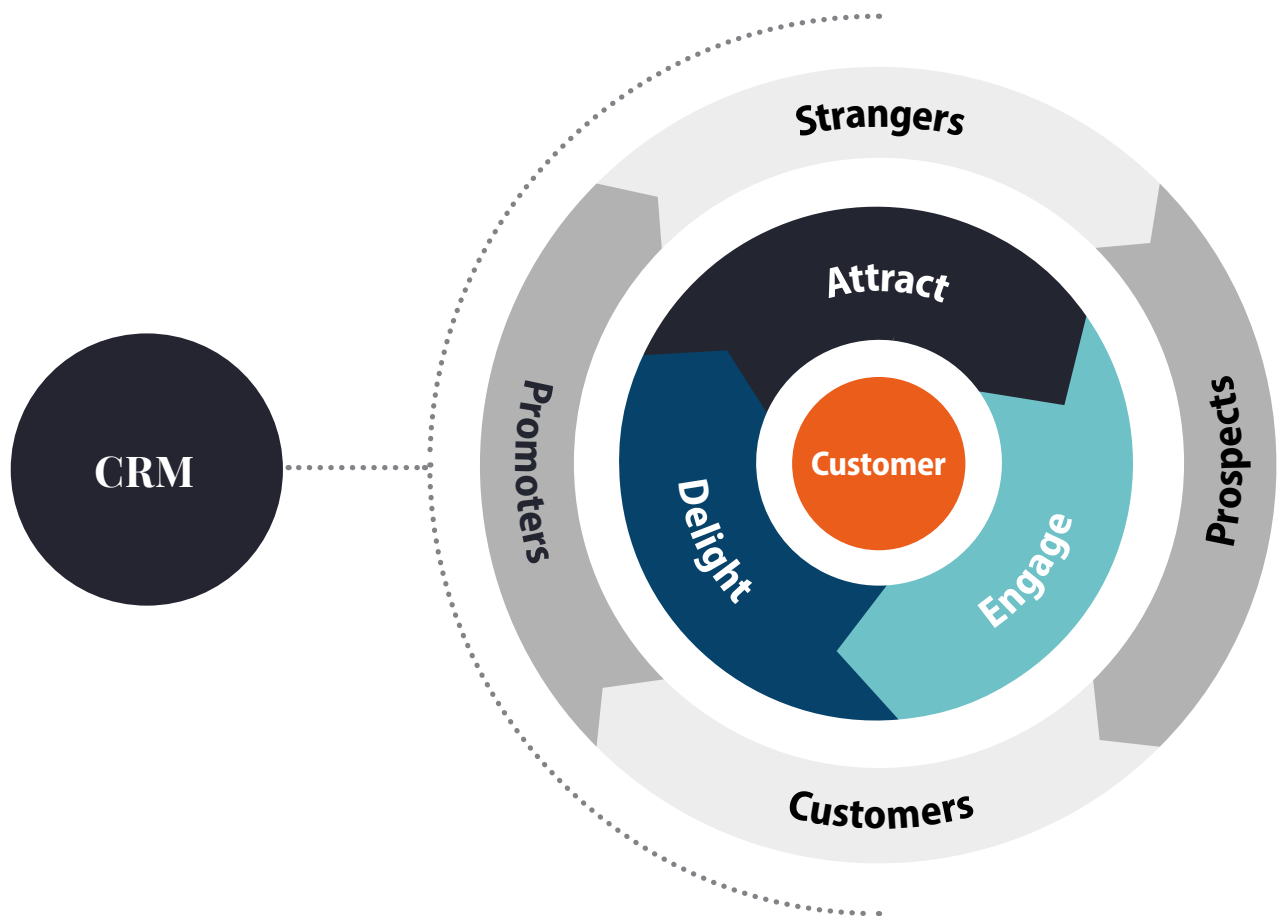
- Strategic opportunities (sales-led and marketing-supported)
- Tactical opportunities (Key target accounts will be marketing-led and sales-enabled.)
- The rest of the addressable market (This will be segmented by service and spend and perhaps 'defend and hold', 'build and develop', 'lapsed' and 'long tail'. All need managing using a CRM.



Data is often the trickiest part of establishing a revenue operations strategy. Success requires a solid data foundation and the sharing of data.

All of your people, processes, technology and data play a role in whether customers buy from you. With sales and marketing alignment and all departments working together, you can focus on customer journeys and lifetime value. And with that come profitability, enduring relationships and customer advocacy.

Good CRMs empower departments and those with P&L and client-facing responsibility to make good decisions. A sound CRM system supports this and utilises critical metrics, dashboards and insights to help revenue operations teams grow your business.





Design.

Create a content strategy
& framework.

Design a content strategy & framework.

Develop a content marketing plan

Adopt a media mindset to repurpose content across customer lifecycles to meet people where they want to be, grow your reach, build trust and improve engagement. By producing content assets across a range of consumable formats, you will engage customers in ways they value. At a time when noise is the enemy, this matters.

- **Blog:** Making your website a valuable resource for customers starts with regular blogging. A well-planned blog can deliver a vibrant mix of original stories, topical analysis and educational content – building a reputation, rapport and authority with a growing audience.
- **Pillar pages and topic clusters:** Develop strategic content clusters around a central topic to improve rankings for essential keyword terms in search engine result pages (SERPs). The heart of this topic is a comprehensive resource page called a pillar page, which covers a topic in detail and links to high-quality content (often blogs) on supporting subtopics.
- **Podcasts:** Podcasting is a huge opportunity. There's a surging interest in B2B audio content as people seek to elevate their insight and knowledge in more digestible formats. How many podcasts exist in your space? Do you have a voice with value to share?
- **Webinars:** Webinars are intrinsically engaging and create a sense of event around your ideas and information. Covid showed how quickly brands needed to pivot to release complex information differently.
- **Research-based content:** Research-based content is highly engaging and can help enhance your authority. It will help to plan, prepare and carry out qualitative and quantitative research and use that intelligence across multiple content assets.
- **Reports and eBooks:** A whitepaper sets out an argument for a particular solution to a problem. Or it can take a solution-agnostic approach, highlighting benefits without being sales-y. An ebook is less formal than a white paper and is more concept-centric and relaxed in style. But it is nonetheless underpinned by sound research and robust propositions.

- **Magazines:** When most content has gone digital, print is now an extraordinary opportunity to cut through. Print is a format that gives us time to think as we consume, without constantly being urged to click away. Done right, it can be a powerful tool for concentrated and deep brand engagement. Some B2B magazines are among the most successful globally – think of John Deere’s Furrow Magazine, which has over a million subscribers in over 43 countries, and General Electric’s ARC magazine, which commands a trade circulation of 350K.
- **Email marketing:** Good email design helps you boost conversions and build long-term relationships with prospects and customers. You need to design and develop templates for your newsletter and for offers and re-engagement emails sent to blog subscribers. These should be tested across all leading email clients and incorporate personalisation as appropriate, maximising your click-through rates.
- **Brand guidelines:** Design is more critical than ever as brands endeavour to stand out from the crowd. Good design will set your content apart. It is an instant indication of quality and value, as it implies levels of care and attention.
- **Video production:** Video is no longer an optional part of a marketing plan. It should be at the heart of outreach and campaign efforts, especially your social strategy. You will need to storyboard, shoot and edit video demos, expert interviews, educational and explainer episodes, case studies, event promotion and sales videos.

According to Hubspot, 85% of businesses now use video in their marketing, and 83% say it’s consistently delivering a tangible ROI.

**Adopt a media mindset
to repurpose content
across customer
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where they want to be.**

Why you need UX design on a website.

Is your website failing to convert visitors to leads? Is it looking tired and outdated, or is the navigation difficult for end users? Is it hard to change and update? Is it delivering a poor mobile or tablet experience? And most importantly, is it all about you rather than your ideal customer? Sometimes, it is easy to see the problems but more challenging to visualise the right solution.

UX (user experience) is about solving problems for the end user. It's about the feeling of using a product, system or service. You want the user to trust your website and feel confident and in control.

→ **Research:** Research crucially underpins UX design. Robust and focused research is fundamental to understanding the user problems you're attempting to solve. Helpful research forms include competitor analysis, stakeholder interviews, online surveys and usability testing.

→ **Analysis:** By analysing the research stage's data, you can articulate the user problems you're attempting to solve. You must create affinity diagrams and customer journey maps (information architecture) and incorporate learning from your ICP and buyer personas.

→ **UI design:** Much work is required before website design can begin. You must carefully consider the structure and intended user flow. Moreover, you must define a clear site structure, a user interface, screen layouts and interactions to provide users with smooth, intuitive navigation and on-brand visuals.

→ **Hi-fi prototyping:** A prototype is a simulation closely resembling the final product; it is used for testing and approval before the build and launch. The goal is to test design ideas before sinking time and money into the build. Prototyping is essential for resolving usability issues before launch. It can also reveal areas for improvement.

→ **Build:** Developers take approved prototypes and code them into the HubSpot CMS, establishing links, metadata, browser testing, speed testing, integrations and analytics tools until they are ready to start ongoing growth-driven design (GDD) cycles.

→ **Growth-driven design:** With GDD, post-launch design decisions use data and customer insight from your ongoing live-website analysis to drive engagement, conversion and growth. Using GDD, you add to (and subtract from) your website in an agile way, planning and developing new functionality in cycles of continuous learning and improvement. It's an agile, customer-focused approach to maximising growth that is increasingly relevant for unpredictable and uncharted commercial times.

Deliver campaigns that drive growth.

It would be best if you had a solid growth plan. The plan is about your customers first – understanding their problems, frustrations and priorities and positioning your company as the guide on their journey.

The plan is also about developing a single source of truth that you can rely on to drive brand awareness, create demand generation, and build a better pipeline.

The plan should be predicated on data analysis. Sales and marketing gather data from their campaigns, research, and technologies and then feed this data back to future campaigns.

There are seven components you need to consider:

1. **Marketing data:** the critical component foundational to all the other parts
2. **Sales data:** The feedback loop from your sales process
3. **Marketing strategy:** The planning phase where you set your direction and goals
4. **Inbound strategy:** The discipline of attracting customers to engage with your brand
5. **Content marketing:** The publication and distribution of compelling content
6. **Marketing campaigns:** The medium for brand promotion and demand generation
7. **Marketing tech:** The tools you use to run campaigns and study the data

The aim is to improve processes and increase productivity, define ideal customers, reach them quickly, and create content that grows your audience and improves brand awareness. To fill your pipeline with right-fit opportunities, you should deliver more intelligent marketing and reduce customer churn. Together, these elements will support the goals of your plan.

The plan focuses sales and marketing efficiently and effectively. You build a better pipeline and continually improve by analysing the data. You create a customer-centric strategy, and your content and campaigns resonate with your target audience.

You should embrace four principal strategies to accomplish this: Inbound Marketing, Sales Enablement, Account-Based Marketing, and Customer Services.



Deliver.

**Campaigns that
drive growth.**

Get found by the right people.

Inbound marketing is a process for getting discovered by people looking for what you do. It is a programme that informs and educates, acquires permission, builds audience and compels prospects to take action.

A buyer-centric methodology

Inbound is a buyer-centric methodology based on customer interests, fears and aspirations at each lifecycle stage in the buyer's journey. By demonstrating your understanding and empathy for the buyer's pain, you layer content and experiences that position your company as the guide to help them solve their problem.

With inbound marketing, continuous improvement is an agile process. Data and experimentation powers the customer insights that inform more relevant and remarkable experiences. It is a mindset that delivers on the growth plan promise – the Kaizen concept in practice: 'Improvement by everybody, every day, everywhere.'

Creating quarterly cycles can generate a pulse on your sales and marketing and develop a continual improvement framework. You need to separate real performance drivers from vanity metrics and set up the tools to track and monitor engagement and conversion at every lifecycle stage. (We recommend HubSpot.)

An agile approach to planning

Inbound marketing works best when it responds to what happens, not simply what was in the plan. So, you always respond to new challenges, solving customers' problems and answering their questions in new and innovative ways. Data-driven experimentation in pursuit of optimal results becomes a reality as you provide a culture of unique content. This collaborative approach helps everyone deliver on their collective goals.

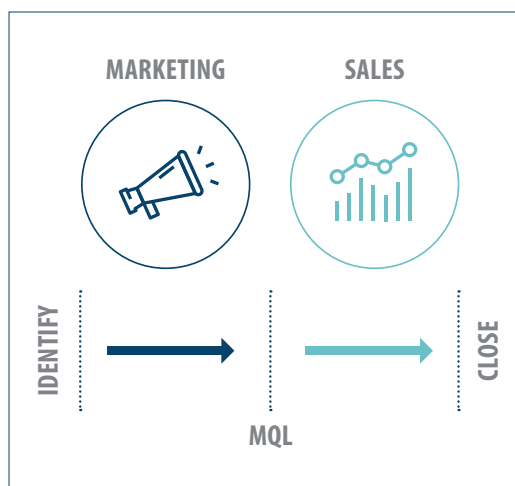
Empowering content for sales at every stage.

Buyer behaviour today has changed how sales and marketing functions need to align and behave. And marketing is more analytical and better equipped to deliver sales enablement services to the sales team.

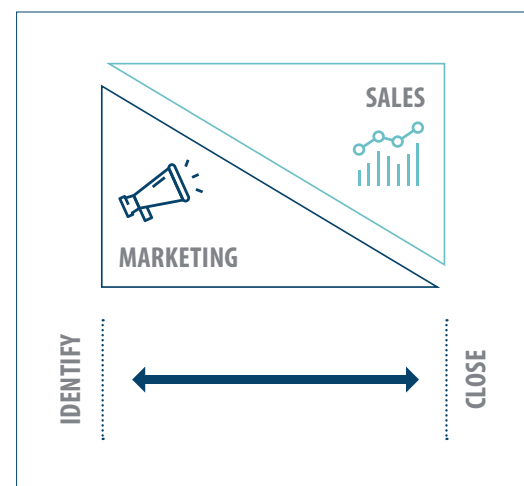
- Capacity to create content across the buyer's journey
- Analysis of content to support the storyline
- Data-driven placement of sales enablement assets
- Appreciation of how to respond to the customer's context
- HubSpot Sales Pro setup for sales

Sales will generate better results from an inbound approach in which they are always helping (not always closing).

Old Model



New Model



Sales process review

Do you have a documented sales process? Is the process functioning as it needs to? Are there any 'disconnects' in the sales process that you should address?


Deliver a data-backed analysis of your company's sales process to discover areas where sales performance could be improved and new sales techniques introduced.

Sales and marketing alignment

Creating a service-level agreement (SLA) between sales and marketing is not always easy. It will help if you establish a common language. Ideally, you will want champions on both sides committed to seeing the process through because it is not a quick fix.

Sales content design

Do you have all of the sales materials to support your sales team at each step of a modern sales process? Working from your sales process review, you need to write and design any missing assets and improve existing materials if necessary.



Sales will generate better results from an inbound approach in which they are always helping (not always closing).

Account-based marketing – targeting key accounts.

Account-based marketing (ABM) is a targeted approach in which marketing and sales teams collaborate to target high-value accounts and win them as customers.

Historically, it has been difficult and expensive to scale ABM initiatives, but technology has made personalisation more scalable today. Everyone is connected, and new channels, systems and technologies allow you to communicate with customers on a new level.

But with information overload, being seen and heard can be a challenge. With larger accounts, the noise is even louder, and breaking through requires extraordinary attention and well-defined sales and marketing alignment.

Discover high-value accounts

Use firmographic data and business intelligence to identify and prioritise high-value accounts in terms of revenue potential, market influence, repeat purchase probability and profit potential.

Identify the decision-maker ecosystem

Identify how target accounts are structured, who decision makers and influencers are and how decisions are made.

Define content and messaging

Address clear and significant business challenges that target accounts face and then shape messaging and content that address the target account's pain points.

Determine channels

Where do target account buyers consume information? Do they prefer to watch, listen or read? At what stage of the buyer's journey do they engage, and why might they fail to do so? Consider which channels are most effective for the roles or industries you target.

Measure and optimise cross-channel engagement

You will need to set up coordinated and personalised cross-channel campaigns and dashboards for revenue-based analytics that support an aligned sales and marketing team.

Customer services that reduce churn & improve margins.

While getting new customers is essential, keeping existing customers is also crucial. It can be expensive to acquire new business, and growing companies prioritise keeping existing customers happy. Happy customers become your advocates.

Process development

Whether you already have a formal customer service function or are considering developing one, you'll need to set up your process and tools to deliver the best experience for your customers.

Process review

How do you currently approach customer service? How do customers get in touch? Who fields those messages? How are they dealt with and tracked? Map out your current process and determine how things could be better at the outset.

Helpdesk design

Your helpdesk is the system that lets you intake, triage, troubleshoot, and solve customer issues. What channels can customers use to alert you to issues? How quickly and efficiently are those issues addressed? A ticketing system helps your team keep track of problems until they are resolved and report on every aspect of your process.

Communication channels

What are the proper channels for customers to reach out to you? Telephone? Email? Live chat? Website forms? Whichever methods you choose, they need to feed into your helpdesk process efficiently. Support team inboxes connected to email, chat and forms can help keep interactions in a central place.

Customer journey mapping

What are the stages that a customer experiences with your company, from initial purchase to becoming a promoter? By mapping that journey, you can identify what they are doing and feeling at each stage to improve their experience.

Knowledge base development

A knowledge base is a collection of articles answering questions about your services. With HubSpot's Service Hub, you can set up a support bot to direct customers to the relevant knowledge base articles. This helps customers get self-service answers to common questions without taking up customer service team time.

Customer feedback and advocacy

Gathering customer feedback can help you understand what your customers are thinking and help you find meaningful ways to improve. Feedback tools like net promoter score, customer effort score, and customer satisfaction surveys give you actionable insights. And these tools can help you unearth potential advocates for your business. Advocacy can take the form of reference calls, testimonials, case studies, online reviews and more.

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In summary.

Most contract manufacturing companies have been slow to appreciate the value of a brand. But with growing evidence that B2B branding works, you may soon lose the opportunity to take competitive advantage. The sooner you take action, the better because, in a hypercompetitive world, you know you need to be more than just another supplier.

Leading B2B brands build their business around the benefits they provide to their customers, not the products and services they offer. This matters even more in contract manufacturing, where you need every opportunity to stand out for the value you deliver to avoid being commoditised.

We looked at brand narrative and the importance of telling stories that position your company as the guide and your customer as the hero. We talked about why you need a content strategy and a framework for delivering the perfect assets to the right people in the ideal format at the optimal time. And the value of building your business on your CRM.

Finally, we discussed the importance of delivering joined-up marketing and sales right across the inbound and outbound spectrum and elevating customer services to improve customer retention and lifetime value.

Next Steps.

Explore the Strategy Workshops, Research and Gameplan we can deliver if the time is right to take the next step.

[TALK TO AN ADVISER](#)