



The Changing Face of the Technology Buying Committee

Who are the decision makers in B2B technology
and how can marketers get ahead?

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Introduction

It's no secret that the **B2B technology buying process** has significantly shifted in recent years. In fact, it's been widely researched and reported on within the industry. However, the changes in buyer behavior have also meant a **huge shift for B2B technology marketers and their marketing strategies**, which this eBook will heavily focus on.

As a tech marketer, not only do you need to reach traditional IT job titles, you also need to promote your products and solutions to a **much wider buying committee**, all with different priorities, interests, and agendas.

Introduction

Data from our own [IT Corporate](#) and [Cybersecurity Corporate](#) audiences shows that only **14% of the C-Suite IT and Cybersecurity professionals we surveyed would describe themselves as the budget holder in the IT decision-making process**, more accurately describing themselves as the decision-maker or influencer in the process. Within this example alone, it's clear to see that more departments are now involved when purchasing new technology, and shifts have been made which affects who you need to reach, and at what stage.

Increasingly sophisticated technology combined with a strong preference for independent research, and a greater focus on ROI are just some of the contributing factors as to why the technology decision-making unit has expanded and evolved, transforming the buying process.

This eBook explores how and why the technology buying committee has shifted in recent years, focusing heavily on what's important for B2B marketers: [understanding who the right decision-makers are for your technology solutions, and how best to reach them.](#)

A man and a woman are sitting at a desk in an office, looking at a laptop screen. The woman is smiling and wearing glasses. The man is also wearing glasses and is looking at the screen. The background is a blurred office environment with a desk lamp and some office equipment.

Chapter One:

How & Why Has the Technology Buying Committee Changed?

Technology Decision-Making Trends

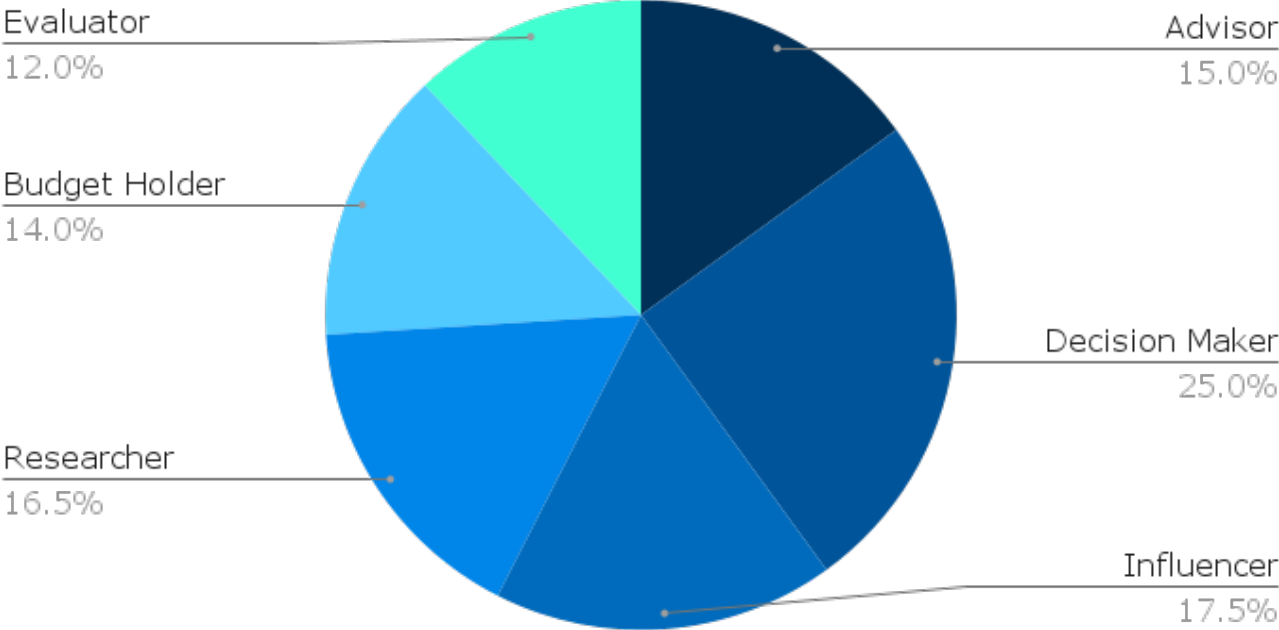
As technology solutions continue to evolve and grow, B2B technology purchasing decisions are, understandably, more complex. The tech buying process is now much longer, typically taking between **9-18 months** according to [Gartner](#), and split between “exploring, evaluating and engaging”.

There are many factors at play contributing to the expansion of the technology decision-making committee, or “buying matrix” ([Raconteur](#)), and the increased length of the buying cycle. Technology is more established within businesses and therefore harder to change, so naturally, the process takes longer due to the impact on the wider organization.

Some of the most notable trends include:

- 1 More complex technologies ingrained within businesses.
- 2 A more cautious, risk-mitigation mindset.
- 3 A bigger focus on return-on-investment (ROI).
- 4 A self-serving economy with a greater focus on independent research.
- 5 An increased emphasis on collaboration between departments.

How would you describe your role in the IT decision making process?



Source: Headley Media and IT Corporate’s survey of 746 C-Suite IT Professionals.

When surveying over 700 audience members from Headley Media’s IT Corporate and Cybersecurity Corporate brands, only 14% of the C-Suite IT and Cybersecurity professionals we surveyed described themselves as the budget holder in the IT decision-making process.

So, who are the other 86%?

Technology Decision-Making Trends

When you break it down, the changes to technology buying make sense.

Referred to as a buying matrix, recent research by [Raconteur](#) found the **“average number of stakeholders contributing to a purchase decision is 11.4”**. As a result, influencers from different teams span far wider than IT departments.

Finance, Operations, Legal and depending on your solutions, wider teams like **HR, Sales and Marketing** are typically now involved in the decision-making process to ensure the technology aligns with their respective needs.

We asked **Thomas Van der Staaij, Senior Marketing Manager at AWS**, if he'd seen a change, he said “Now, it's not just IT calling the shots. Teams like Marketing, Finance, and Operations are planning a bigger role, armed with their own budgets and decision-making authority”.

As a result, B2B buyers are now forced to focus more heavily on proving and reporting on the ROI delivered by the solutions they want to implement, if they are to have any chance of the new technology being signed off by senior stakeholders.

This shift requires the involvement of decision makers who can evaluate the potential impact of the technology on the organization's bottom line, namely senior management and crucially, **the Finance department**.

How & Why Has the Technology Buying Committee Changed?

"Budget decision-making does not always fall on the C-level exec. Traditionally, decision-making used to be concentrated in the hands of a few execs - in our case, the CIO or IT department. Now I'm seeing the democratization of decision-making especially to the Manager and Director level.

Organizations are now identifying their biggest tech priorities before every quarter starts (or sometimes even year). They're only going to buy technology or services that they've already identified will align with business priorities. The C-level executive approves the overall budget and then cascades carved-out budgets to different teams. This means that, in large organizations, the decision-making can fall to the Managers or Directors. So, these are ideal profiles to target - not always the CIO."

Zohria Nunis,
Lead Account Based Marketing Manager, Freshworks



How & Why Has the Technology Buying Committee Changed?

We also asked **Mike D'Agostino, General Manager, at CyberTheory** to share his experience.

"Clients today are realizing the need to market to the entire buying committee, not just the unicorn (e.g. CIO/CISO job titles).

At CyberTheory, we used to see requests asking for just one contact from each company, however we're now seeing a shift toward clients valuing and accepting more leads and contacts per company."

When thinking about the future of tech buying, Mike goes on to say, "I think at some point we'll see that turning from a request into a demand as clients realize that the more contacts they can engage with from a company that are showing interest in their products or services, the more potential in-market/buying signals they have at their disposal."

Mike D'Agostino,
General Manager, CyberTheory



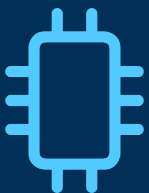
How & Why Has the Technology Buying Committee Changed?

When you combine how many people are now involved with the amount of information and research available at buyer's fingertips, it's not surprising we are in an era of self-service.

When buying technology, **"100% of buyers want to self-serve all or part of the buying journey"** according to [TrustRadius](#)' 2023 research of over 1600 technology buyers.

As reported by [G2](#), in today's technology market 'everyone has the power to purchase the tools they want for their business' and **80% of B2B companies now have buying committees that influence software purchasing decisions.**

However, identifying who the buying committee is for your products and services is only the first step, you also need to understand **what they care about, how to reach them and importantly, when to target them within the buying cycle.**



In Chapter Two, we're taking a deeper dive into the different **departments and roles involved in technology purchasing**, before exploring some **practical advice** around who you need to reach, when and how in Chapter Three.



Chapter Two:

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing?

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing?

“The technology decision making unit is expanding into finance, HR, and even more so, cybersecurity. There's a lot of change happening right now, and it's affecting how B2B marketers plan their strategies to reach the right people.”

Freya Ward, Global Sales Director, Headley Media



As we uncovered in Chapter One, the size of technology buying committees has multiplied, but **who now gets involved in the technology purchasing decision?** What departments are they in, and what individual role do they play?

It's clear that technology usage and adoption is something that spans cross-department, and sometimes even company-wide. Therefore, the modern buying committee can involve many roles within a business.

There are two ways to explore the roles within any technology buying committee. You can break it down by **types of buyers**, and you can break it down by **job roles**.

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Types of Buyers



Types of Buyers

Firstly, let's explore how the buying committee can be broken down by types of buyers.

Buying roles aren't anything new, and although they have developed and evolved over the years, they have always played a vital part in successful, large-scale business purchases.

If we go back over 40 years and look at the [Harvard Business Review's article](#) on the B2B buying committee, originally published in 1982, much of the information within the report is as relevant today as it was back then.

The findings talk about the importance of a buying committee, or 'buying center', and understanding the multiple roles involved. Essentially, the report explores the need to identify who the '**powerful buyers**' are within the committee; in other words, **who is the decision-maker?**

Although new ideas have since been developed, and the HBR's framework wasn't created with technology purchasing in mind, the findings continue to be a useful way to examine types of buyers and can be applied directly to technology buying today.

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: **Types of Buyers**

The Harvard Business Review's types of buyer includes:

✓ **Initiator:** Those who identify there's a problem in the business that can be solved with a purchase.

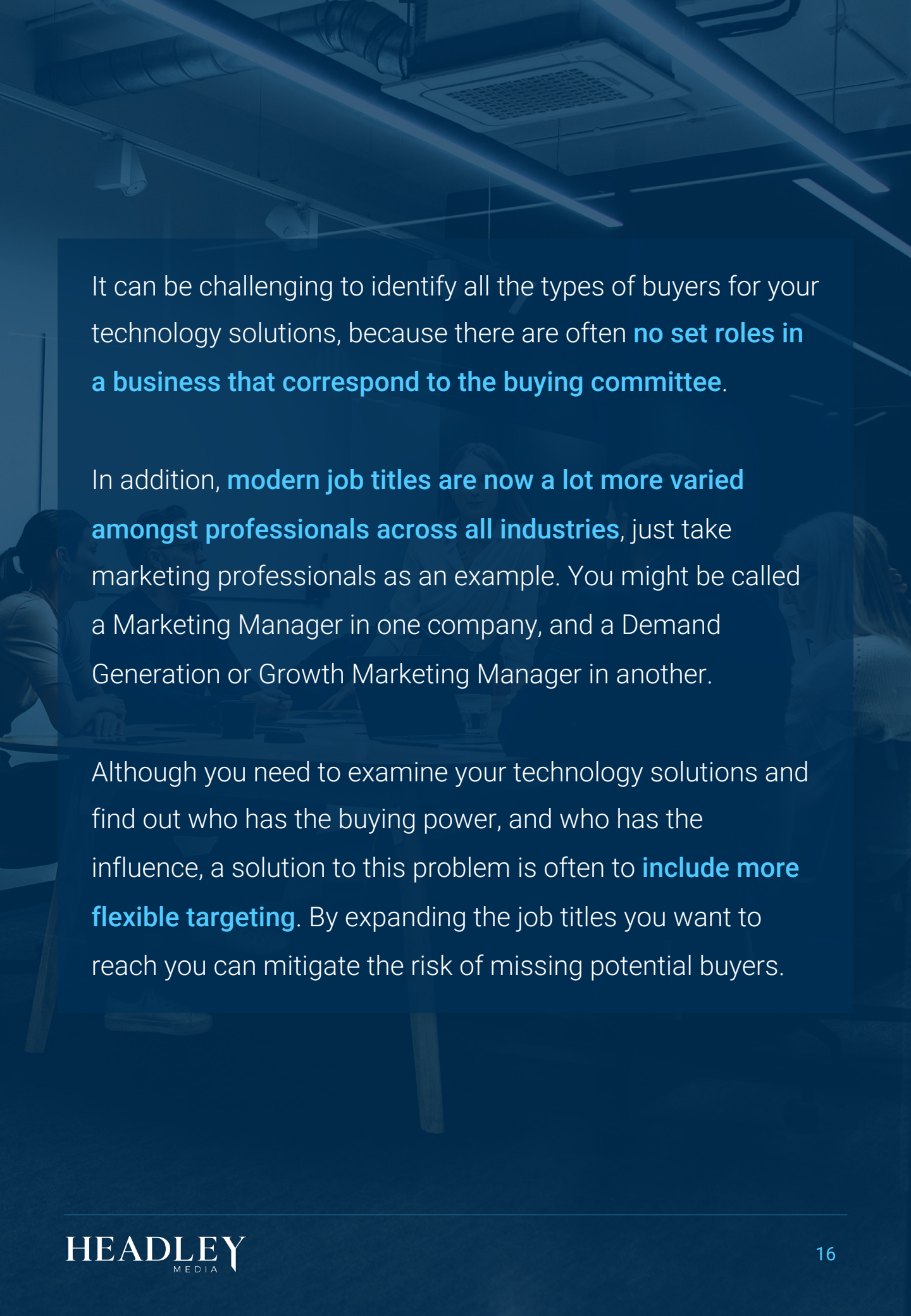
✓ **Gatekeeper:** Product experts, often with a 'buyer' or 'purchase manager' job title, who research vendor solutions and control approved vendors.

✓ **Influencer:** These can be a range of people, from high-level stakeholders and board members, to staff 'on the ground'.

✓ **Decider:** This person says yes or no, often as the representative of the collective buying committee, but is not necessarily the same person as the purchaser.

✓ **Purchaser:** The one who negotiates the final sale with the vendor.

✓ **User:** The employees who will use the solution purchased.



It can be challenging to identify all the types of buyers for your technology solutions, because there are often **no set roles in a business that correspond to the buying committee.**

In addition, **modern job titles are now a lot more varied amongst professionals across all industries**, just take marketing professionals as an example. You might be called a Marketing Manager in one company, and a Demand Generation or Growth Marketing Manager in another.

Although you need to examine your technology solutions and find out who has the buying power, and who has the influence, a solution to this problem is often to **include more flexible targeting.** By expanding the job titles you want to reach you can mitigate the risk of missing potential buyers.

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Types of Buyers

The marketing tactics used for each type of buyer will depend on their role. Is it any use sharing a discount with a user, or an influencer? Is there any point marketing your product specifications towards a decider?

Different buying roles require contrasting experiences with your brand. The marketing strategies, messaging and content you choose will depend on not only their needs but what they care about, and why.

Therefore, understanding who you're trying to target, and why, is equally as important to get right as the how.



At Headley Media, one of the major changes we've seen within the expanding B2B tech buying committee is the broader selection of job roles



now involved; and the increased input from Finance and Cybersecurity teams, in particular.

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles

“As we know B2B marketers spend roughly 92% of their budgets chasing 5% of their customers*. Marketers tend to ignore the enormously-more-valuable segment of future buyers.

Many marketers typically over-invest in short-term sales activation and under-invest in brand building. With this in mind, we have implemented a range of effective strategies to reach our target audience at the right time in their buying journey.

Firstly, we have redefined our ideal customer profiles (ICP) to align within the evolving technology decision-making unit. This includes targeting specialist titles and a wider range of job roles across departments, ensuring we reach the entire cybersecurity decision-making unit.”

Helen Gillbe,

EMEA Demand Generation Director, Proofpoint



*Source: [Marketing Week](#)

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles

Now we've examined the type of buyer, let's look at who's involved by department, and how they usually fit into the B2B technology buying committee.



The Role of Finance

Firstly, it used to be that Finance were shown the figures and simply expected to sign off the purchase, but that's not the case anymore.

With tighter budgets, financial officers have more control and buy-in than ever before, and they're often C-suite people too.

Finance professionals, traditionally in 'decider' roles, can now come under the 'influencer', 'user' and even 'gatekeeper' headings.

Therefore, it's often important for technology marketers to educate, influence, and engage with Finance from the offset, and not wait for prospects to be handed over to your sales department, because you might find it's already too late to engage them.

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles

"We've seen the democratization of decision-making to include other departments like finance and procurement.

Firstly, CFOs and their teams are now more tech-savvy and financially astute, understanding the direct impact technology investments have on the company's bottom line.

They are keenly aware of the need for efficient IT Service Management solutions to optimize operational costs and streamline workflows."

Zohria Nunis,

Lead Account Based Marketing Manager, Freshworks



Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles

IT departments are, of course, still vitally important to the technology purchasing process.

After all, IT professionals understand the in-depth details and the technical knowledge needed to support a new technology's scope, migration and implementation.

However, the digital-savvy business world now means that big technology buys are no longer IT-specialist, which means IT professionals sometimes have less sway on the final decision.

One finding from [G2](#) suggests that **only 33% of buyers see the IT department as having the last word.**

Despite this, IT professionals still often fulfil 'initiator', 'gatekeeper', 'influencer', 'user' and 'purchaser' roles, so they continue to play a crucial part of the buying committee.

“Technology purchasing, once the sole domain of IT departments, is changing. Now, it’s not just IT calling the shots. Teams like marketing, finance, and operations are playing a bigger role.”



Thomas Van der Staaij,
Senior Marketing Manager, AWS

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles



The Role of Cybersecurity

Technology is the main reason buying committees are so much bigger. With more software used company-wide, more stakeholders have a say in what software is needed. Consequently, cybersecurity also has a bigger role, because businesses and their individual employees rely so heavily on technology now.

Think about how the pandemic forced businesses to adapt to home-working: that's more software dispersed across more locations and more disparate types of hardware used across the business, resulting in an increase in potential cyber-attacks and a corresponding need for more cybersecurity. The cybersecurity department, as a result, now has a bigger role to play in the buying committee.

One estimate is that **97% of B2B software purchases** now include a security stakeholder on their buying committee ([G2](#)).

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles



The Role of Marketing, HR, Legal, Operations, BDM

The level of interest in roles such as Marketing, HR, and Legal will of course depend on your technology solutions, but all of them will likely have a part to play.

As we've just explored, more technology is used business-wide than ever before. And SaaS and other technology products have a lot of crossovers in departments.

For example, a company buying SaaS to manage employee expenses will not only have the Finance team involved, but the HR team, and most likely interest from Operations and Legal departments, too.

You can also see within this example how all employees across the business become represented in the buying committee in some way: they will all have to learn how to use the expenses software, as a 'User', so a collaborative and democratic business will give them a say.

In addition, it's also easy to see that how adding interest from multiple departments can make the technology buying process much longer, 9-18 months on average according to [Gartner](#).



Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Growing Trends

We live in a fast-changing world where your marketing strategies can quickly become redundant. Other growing tech buying trends include:

1. **Cross-region committees**
2. **"Hidden" buyers**
3. **Changing demographics**



Cross-Region Committees

Bigger companies have bigger buying committees – more representatives from more branches of the business. When parts of the buying committee are in different territories, it makes sense for technology marketers to run their marketing campaigns across different countries, because more of the buying committee will be familiar with their products and services.

Running a campaign in different countries isn't as hard as it may first appear. Your marketing and lead generation providers should be able to help you localize a campaign, which includes native translation services, proving in-depth local market understanding and cultural differences to consider, as well as promoting your content via [content libraries in different languages](#).



Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Growing Trends



"Hidden" Buyers

Most buying committee members will leave digital, trackable signals and insights you can follow, such as cookie and intent data, that show they are actively researching new solutions, indicating their business challenges and priorities.

However, some people won't. "Hidden" buyers, also known as the "dark funnel" within B2B marketing, are harder to reach.

These buyers are likely still doing a lot of their research online, however, without leaving a digital footprint. For example, their organization's firewall may restrict their ability to view certain websites or emails, or they may choose to opt-out of marketing communications and reject website cookies.

[Google's Privacy Sandbox](#) project is also set to roll out from early 2024, which aims to 'protect people's privacy online' through the removal of third-party cookies. Although this initiative will take time to phase cookies out completely, harder to reach buyers are only going to become more of a challenge for B2B marketers, so it's important to prepare your marketing strategy for these future changes now.



Growing Trends Within Technology Buying: "Hidden" Buyers

Many people still use offline research methods too, such as attending events and relying on their existing network for recommendations, as a highly influential source.

As these "hidden" tech buyers are harder to find, we recommend focusing on demand generation tactics. Striking the balance between your inbound and outbound activity is at the core of any successful strategy. For longer-term demand gen you should focus on letting the right buyers come to you, such as publishing ungated content on your website, running [targeted display ads](#), and utilizing LinkedIn tactics such as employee advocacy.

Outbound strategies, such as content syndication and lead generation remain equally as important when trying to reach hidden buyers.

However, it's vital to work with external lead gen specialists you can trust; experts who are not only experienced in reaching the right people for your tech solutions, but who are also transparent in their lead generation and validation methods.



Stakeholders within your business will often find outbound results easier to understand when attributing ROI. Not only is the data richer, but the successes, such as conversions, often take less time than your inbound strategy.



Growing Trends Within Technology Buying: Changing Demographics

Next up, let's look at the changing demographics of tech buyers.

Buyers are getting younger, and according to [Forbes](#), 65% of the workforce are now millennials or Gen Z. That means it's increasingly likely they'll be on the buying committee you're trying to reach either now, or in the not-so-distant future. And these people have grown up with the internet: they're digital-first buyers.

Older generations have now followed the trend of younger people by being more 'self-serve' in their buying habits and doing their own, online research, partly thanks to the pandemic. However, it's simply ingrained in younger buyers' mindsets.

Ungated, educational content, review sites such as G2 and Capterra, and no-obligation product demos or free trials are high on the agenda for today's modern technology buyer.

In fact, **77% of technology buyers stated that free trials and accounts have been the most influential resource for technology buying in 2023** ([TrustRadius](#)), up 10% from 2022. A close second is product demos at 74%, with other influential resources including user reviews, information based on previous experiences, and recommendations from a consultant.

Chapter Two Summary:

As we've explored in this chapter, there are often several different groups involved in modern day technology purchasing and various reasons why, but one size doesn't fit all.

Although you need to do the groundwork when understanding your ICP and their needs, the time you invest in getting to know your buyers and their roles within the decision-making process will ensure your campaigns resonate with all the right people at the right time in their journey.

When planning your marketing strategy, it's a combination of the types of tactics we've discussed that will help you drill into the right accounts, helping you reach more of the buying committee at different times with different messages.

So many reports of this style don't delve into the practicalities and the implementation of findings, but that's exactly what Chapter Three aims to do.



Chapter 3:

Practical Guidance: Who Do B2B Tech Marketers Need to Reach & How?

How Do You Reach Multiple Decision-Makers Across Several Departments?

[Acceleration Economy](#) states the shift in buying committees needs a “wholesale change in marketing and sales strategies”, with customer-driven, go-to-market tactics that are relevant to each committee member.

Although this strategic advice may seem daunting at first when deciding where to focus your efforts and, more importantly, your marketing budget, there are some practical steps you can take to ensure you're reaching as many potential buying groups as possible.

We've broken down our advice into the following three stages for you to employ directly into your marketing strategy:

1 Stage One: Identifying your buyers

2 Stage Two: Expanding your targeting

3 Stage Three: Meeting buyers at the right time



Stage One: Identifying Your Buyers

B2B buyers are now more empowered to make their own decisions without the need for countless sales meetings before purchase. In fact, Gartner found they now spend most of their buying time doing independent research - **45% of their time, compared to just 17% meeting potential suppliers.**

Although buying committees, types of buyers and buying roles will differ from company to company, you will likely find some common themes and trends based on previous experiences, both internally and externally.

Looking at internal opportunities first, identifying your existing buyers and prospects is the best place to start.

Even if you know your audiences inside out, the chances are the people involved are continually changing. If you're struggling to identify who the right people are to target, you're not alone, many B2B marketers are facing similar challenges.

We asked **Zohria Nunis (Freshworks)** about the challenges she's faced when trying to reach the right tech decision-makers, she answered: "The state of the economy, decision-makers leaving the company, and the complexity of identifying key decision-makers amidst layers of management."



Our advice is to work with sales, customer success, and other customer-facing teams to identify any internal buyer trends.



Stage One: Identifying Your Buyers

By working with your sales team, you can dive into the data they have available on closed-won leads, but also closed-lost deals and previous marketing leads that perhaps didn't go anywhere, exploring the reasons why; such as poor fit or bad timing. You may also need to collaborate with wider teams internally, such as finance and operations to understand the bigger picture.

Externally, you also have a wealth of information available, if you know where to search. Firstly, your competitor's testimonials and case studies will give you a good indication of the variety of job titles getting involved in the purchasing decision for similar solutions.

In addition, review platforms such as Capterra and G2 can help. Who's providing the reviews for similar solutions to yours? You should make a note of all the different job titles involved, the size of the companies, and the location of the individuals. It may feel like a colossal task, but it will give you a great picture of who's involved.



Another great tool to use is LinkedIn. Who's talking about you the challenges your technology solves? **Use LinkedIn groups, trending posts, comment sections and competitor's pages** to identify who's engaging and interacting in your world.



Stage One: Identifying Your Buyers

It's important to regularly revisit this kind of activity before you look at expanding your target audiences and creating your next marketing campaigns.

Below is a set of key questions you can use to help you identify all the buyers involved within the decision-making process for your technology solutions.

- 1 What data can you access about your existing customers and their buying habits?
- 2 Speaking with your sales teams, who attends meetings? What range of job titles do they have within their CRM that you can analyze?
- 3 Speaking with your customer-facing teams, who are the clients contacting customer success the most? And which companies are the easiest to work with, and why?
- 4 Which companies or accounts are the easiest to close for sales? Are there any trends with who's involved in the process?

Once you've answered 1-4, revisit the **Harvard Business Review's buying roles** from earlier (head back to **page 15**) and identify who fits into the Initiator, Gatekeeper, Influencer, Decider, Purchaser and User roles. When completing this task, it's important to remember that you may find certain people or departments fit into more than one role, so you need to account for that in your strategy research and planning.

Answering these questions will help you to not only get a greater understanding of all the buyers involved in the decision-making process, but also **who to prioritize**.



Stage Two: Expanding Your Targeting

Moving Away From IT-Only Job Titles

[Gartner](#) found that 67% of people involved in technology buying decisions are not in IT, highlighting the need to expand your targeting even further.

Understanding what parts of your product are likely to appeal to different departments, and creating content and messaging around those elements, is a good place to start.

Another clear trend is the important role of cybersecurity specialists. One estimate is that 97% of companies now include a security expert on their buying committee (G2). With so much technology within modern businesses, across potentially thousands of locations thanks to home working, plus fast-moving ways for cybercriminals to target businesses, cybersecurity needs to be airtight.

Highlighting your product's security credentials in your marketing and specifically targeting the cybersecurity department will go a long way.

“We have redefined our ideal customer profiles (ICP) to align within the evolving technology decision-making unit. This includes targeting specialist titles and a wider range of job roles across departments, ensuring we reach the entire cybersecurity decision-making unit.”

Helen Gillbe, EMEA Demand Generation Director, Proofpoint



Stage Two: Expanding Your Targeting

Promote Your Content Via Industry-Specific Brands

[TrustRadius](#) found that half of all buyers won't even talk to a sales rep. So, it's essential to ensure you have resources available across the web for these buyers to get to know your brand.

Your content should cover the entire marketing funnel, with potential to meet every stage of the buying process. That means hitting all the different departments involved too.

Both [pricing and product experience](#) are important in the self-serve method. That means reviews from other customers, and transparent pricing models. Product demos are also a top resource.



Whitepapers, eBooks, case studies and research reports are other examples of valuable types of content that can help you build your audience across many departments.



Stage Two: Expanding Your Targeting

We've seen a lot of the technology marketers we work with now running their content syndication campaigns across several of our brands simultaneously, depending on the buying committees they are trying to reach.

For example, we've seen our clients **promote their content** to IT Corporate's audience of senior IT professionals **alongside a combination of Cybersecurity Corporate, FinTech Corporate, MarTech Corporate, HRTech Corporate, and Electronic Pro**, depending on their technology solutions. This approach has helped many of our clients to **reach their wider buying committees** via content syndication campaigns across several of our brands.



As we've explored throughout this report, it's not always easy to identify exactly who sits on the buying committee, so this is often an area of a campaign's set up that our expert team provides insight into, based on our experience of what's worked well previously for similar cases.



Stage Two: Expanding Your Targeting

CFOs Hold The Keys

To reach financial decision-makers, you need to know how they're involved in the buying process. As we mentioned in Chapter Two, they wield more power than they used to.

Most big technologies now are driven by ROI: cost vs. benefits. Even if you offer the best ROI in the business, you need to make sure that's clearly communicated, and in the right places so that finance professionals can see it.

"With the increased need to reach CFOs, I now craft messaging for finance departments in organizations we are targeting, to penetrate these complex buying centers and win bigger deals."

Zohria Nunis,
Lead Account Based Marketing Manager, Freshworks





Stage Three: Meeting Buyers at the Right Time

Identifying the different buyers involved in your technology solutions and expanding your targeting to reach them are important steps, but tackling how to meet the right people at the right time during their personal buying journeys can be a challenge.

That's where **Stage Three** comes in. This stage is crucial because **identifying the right point to engage** with each individual committee member or department is equally as important as **identifying who the right people to target** are to begin with.

There are several strategies you can adopt to help you perfect not only the targeting of your campaigns, but the timing.

This is one of the reasons content marketing is more important than ever. It's one of the main opportunities you have to capture the attention of your target audiences at the exact time they are actively doing research for business challenges that your technology solutions can address.



Stage Three: Meeting Buyers at the Right Time

"Aligning assets with the buyer's journey is rooted around the decreased emphasis on having sales get involved until the lead or contact is ready. Instead, to learn about solutions, **buyers are researching on their own terms**, and they are turning specifically to **digital assets to conduct that research**.

Sophisticated marketers are realizing this shift and will create a program with **multiple assets where each asset is meant to "nudge" the lead down the sales funnel**. In simple terms, the more branded assets a user, lead or multiple contacts from the same company interact with, the stronger the buying signals."

Mike D'Agostino,

General Manager, CyberTheory





Stage Three: Meeting Buyers at the Right Time

However, when it comes to content marketing, simply creating content and promoting it via your existing audiences and channels isn't enough.

You need to engage with the different segments you've identified, many of which are unlikely to be in your existing marketing ecosystem. You must ensure your brand is out there for the whole buying committee to see as part of their research, giving them helpful and educational information, while increasing awareness of your products and services.

One important piece of the jigsaw is not only choosing the right content and messaging for your potential buyers but also choosing content for the right stage of their buyer's journey.

“Reaching the right decision-makers at the optimal time in the sales cycle is a critical objective for every marketer, especially in the B2B realm. In today's digital landscape, where approximately 70% of research is conducted online before engaging with a salesperson*, understanding the evolving nature of technology purchasing and vendor evaluation processes is essential. These processes have become more extensive and intricate than ever before.”

Helen Gillbe, EMEA Demand Generation Director, Proofpoint



*Source: [Deloitte](#)

“We often find the technology marketers we work with have extensive examples of high-quality content and messaging they want to use within their demand and lead generation campaigns. However, they often look to us to advise them on what messaging to use, and what content to promote at the different stages of their campaigns.

Given Headley Media’s experience, we can provide them with industry and audience insights gathered from our six technology brands. Our team is well placed to help support them with meeting people at the right time on their buyer’s journey and importantly, sharing the right messaging”. [Headley Media's Global Sales Director, Freya Ward](#).

We also asked [Helen Gillbe \(Proofpoint\)](#), to share her team’s approach. Helen said: “On average, we have observed that there are 7-10 prospects involved in the buying team, each interacting with at least 12 pieces of vendor content over several months. After an extensive evaluation process, these prospects typically shortlist only 3 or 4 vendors. Our strategy must focus on positioning ourselves as part of that select group and providing unwavering support throughout their vendor selection journey.”



Stage Three: Meeting Buyers at the Right Time

Enhancing Your Strategy with ABM & Intent Data

Account-based marketing (ABM) and intent data targeting techniques are two of the most talked about targeting solutions within B2B marketing, and for good reason.

As the technology buying committee has expanded, there's more of a need to engage with different groups of people at different times, and both ABM and intent targeting can help you do this.

Firstly, [ABM](#) is one of the most effective methods for reaching the whole buying committee. By combining your ABM campaigns with [intent targeting](#), a technology lead generation specialist like Headley Media can also advise you on the best times and frequency to run your campaigns, based on content and consumption trends, to meet your target audiences at the right time in their research process.

Thomas Van der Staaij, Senior Marketing Manager at AWS agrees; "reaching our target audiences hinges on four evolving strategies: partner marketing, using AI and first-party data for personalized messaging, applying intent marketing to identify buyers, and blending online and offline channels for broader reach".

Who's Now Involved in Technology Purchasing: Departmental Roles

“We have embraced highly targeted techniques, such as Account-Based Marketing, which has proven to be particularly successful in reaching decision-makers when they are most receptive during their buying journey.

In 2023, we have implemented a comprehensive demand generation strategy that encompasses the entire sales funnel. This approach takes prospects on a journey, starting with building awareness within their organisation, educating them on key trends in the Cybersecurity industry, and showcasing how Proofpoint can effectively address their challenges. To achieve this, we have syndicated valuable content throughout the research phase. By sharing informative and insightful resources, we provide ongoing value and establish ourselves as a reliable resource they can turn to for guidance.

Not only does this full funnel approach ensure the longevity of our data and content, but it also positions us as a trusted and invaluable resource when prospects transition into an active buying cycle. By nurturing their journey from awareness to consideration and ultimately decision-making, we maximise our chances of converting them into loyal customers.”

Helen Gillbe,
EMEA Demand Generation Director, Proofpoint





By concentrating on a select list of leads, ABM gives you more time to refine your content marketing and messaging, personalizing your campaigns to each of your buyers.

Expanding your campaigns to multiple contacts per company will also give you an increased sphere of influence.

The Changing Face of the Technology Buying Committee: Closing Thoughts

Throughout this guide we've delved into the changing face of technology decision-makers today, and the practical guidance you should implement as a B2B marketer to reach the right decision-makers for your technology solutions. As we discussed, it's important to identify all your potential buyers and work out the best ways to expand your targeting before creating your campaigns.

By putting in the groundwork and revisiting your existing ICP, you'll be much better placed to meet your buyers at the right time on their buyer's journey, taking into consideration highly targeted techniques such as ABM and intent data targeting.