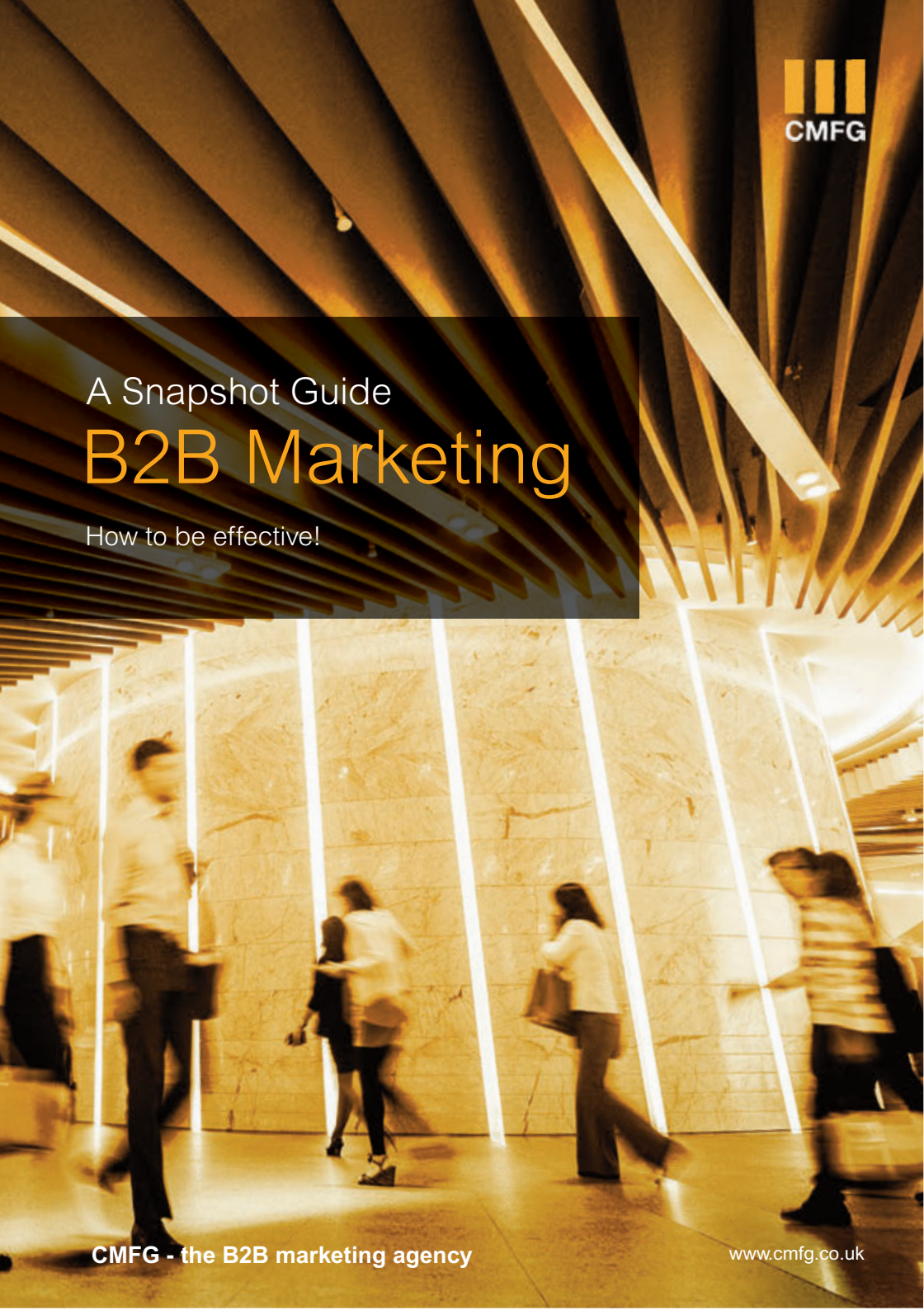

A Snapshot Guide

B2B Marketing

How to be effective!

CMFG - the B2B marketing agency

www.cmfg.co.uk

Marketing that sells

CMFG is a B2B marketing agency; a great team of creatives, planners, techies, writers, and project managers that help create and deliver standout marketing. We help clients sell!

If you are looking for a marketing agency that understands business-to-business and will help you achieve your targets, get in touch with us now.

Brand Strategy Content Campaigns Outsource

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Think differently about your marketing

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Do you need to think about B2B marketing

differently?

Some B2B marketers get marketing fundamentally wrong! There, we said it. Too often, marketing is seen as a short-term fix, an expense that can only be afforded in good times, or a nice to have support for sales. It is none of those things. Effective marketing is the permanent orientating of an organisation, its outputs, and its communication around customers and prospects.

Most prospects aren't looking to buy most of the time - and you can't make them. So effective marketing is a long-term endeavour to drive sales and growth. It drives the majority of the customer buying process. Without it, organisations lurch from one short-term tactical initiative to another, always wondering why marketing isn't working for them!

DIAGNOSIS | STRATEGY | PLAN | COMMUNICATIONS

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Marketing is an orientation, a process, and a way of thinking that puts the customer first. It isn't the same as marketing communications and it isn't about producing 'stuff.'

Whatever you heard from 'gurus', there is very rarely a 'hack', 'short-cut' or 'silver-bullet' that will get you the results you want fast with minimum effort. Effective B2B marketing is planned, consistent, constant – and creative!

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A model for your buyer's journey

Like an iceberg, most of the B2B buying process happens unseen. Today's buyer has probably completed 75% - 85% of their buying journey before you, the vendor, is even aware they are in market. It's marketing's task to ensure you're on the shortlist when prospects decide to actively engage with potential suppliers.

There are a number of buyer models for B2B marketing but one of the most useful is Huthwaite's ©. It's a series of buying stages equally applicable to new prospects and existing customers. Lead nurture, lead development, loyalty and Account Based Marketing (ABM) can all use the Huthwaite model. Though the journey looks linear, in reality, it is anything but. It is long, typically three to five years for a major purchase, and at each stage, the prospect's interactions can be complex. So when planning your marketing and lead generation, your time horizon should be three years plus!

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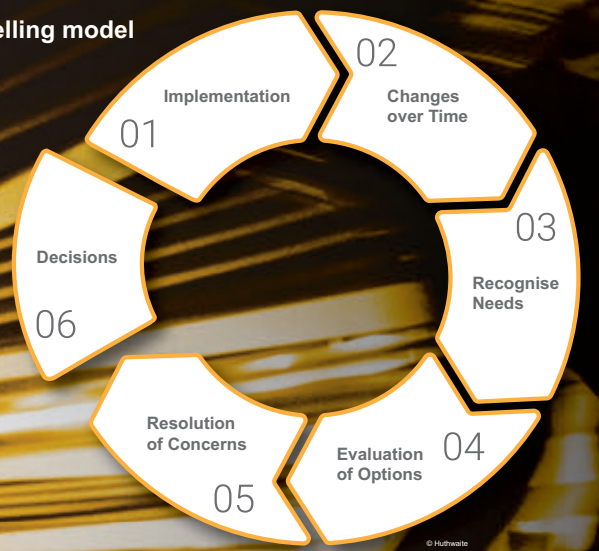
Huthwaite B2B selling model



Marketing-led phases

75%-85% of the entire buying process in terms of time.

Prospects can take 3 - 5 years to progress through these stages.

If you never hear about an RFP, you lost out during these phases.

Sales-led phases

15%-25% of the entire buying process in terms of time.

Sales-led investigation and negotiation phases are at the end of a longer process.

How your customers **really** buy

From the options available to them, why should a customer choose you? It's a big question and the answer might not be what you expect.

Major purchases tend to involve complex products and services. If it all goes wrong, the impact on the business can be significant. This leads to a very specific type of buying behaviour. Do buying teams choose the best option available to them? No!

So how are decisions really made? It is very difficult for buyers to know the best solution until after the purchase and implementation. When assessing their options, typically some key features are a 'must have' but rarely is there a clear winner across all criteria. So buyers go through a rigorous process of trying to eliminate risk.

The obvious elements of risk reduction are rational factors. However, the single most important factor for risk reduction is a strong brand. This allows everyone involved in the buying process to justify their selection credibly.

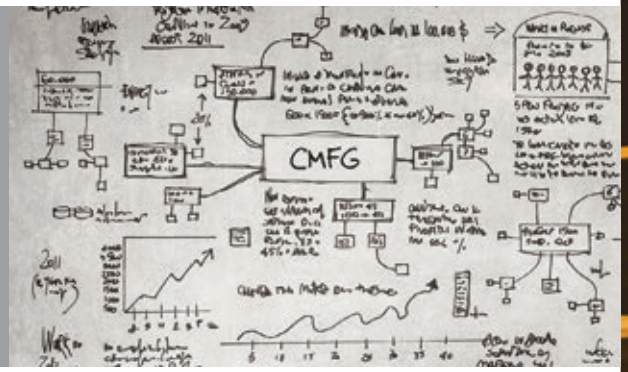
How should you engage prospects?

If your objective is to migrate a cold prospect through to the point they'll have a face-to-face meeting with your sales team, it will take time! If you are continuously asking for a meeting or attempting to close the sale in your communication, you'll rapidly create very unhappy prospects.

Successful lead development delivers real value to your prospects over the long term. That means providing them with quality content that is directly relevant to their role and their sector.

By providing consistent, quality content, your company can become the go-to destination for knowledge in your sector. As the conversation develops and trust builds, you can progress prospects to webinars and face-to-face meetings where the opportunity exists for your sales team to actively engage with them.

For success think longer term



In B2B buying, marketing's role is bigger and more critical than ever before. Marketing has to plan to talk to more prospects, from more departments, for longer as buying teams continue to grow in size. It has to address multiple buyer issues at each stage of the buying journey using a greater variety of channels than ever before.

So ignore the pressures for a quick fix. Instead, think longer term and build your marketing plans to reflect how your prospects really buy. Plan how your communication can develop trust and ensure your organisation is perceived as the low risk option to buy from. In 12 months, your results will speak for themselves.

15% - 25%
of the buying process is sales led with an identified prospect

75% - 85%
of the buying process will be unseen by the vendor

6 channels
on average used by a prospect to gain info on a supplier

B2B Buying

3-5 years
years is the average length of time for buying decisions for large ticket / complex items

83%
of a buying groups time is spent researching the vendors without ever engaging with them.

5.4
people on average are directly involved in the buying process but up to 20 can be indirectly involved

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When they are ready, will they come to you?

Today's B2B buyer is in the driving seat. Marketing's job is to influence and persuade prospects before they ever actively signal they are in market - then when they make the switch, support the sales team in closing the deal.

Close cooperation between sales and marketing is critical but marketing should drive the process. This Snapshot Guide outlines the essential information you need to start planning your marketing to reflect how buyers really buy. Be brave and think longer term. It will pay dividends!

For other Snapshot Guides from CMFG visit our website www.cmfg.co.uk

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