



What's In & What's Out: A GTM Playbook For 2023



Let's face it, 2023 will be a decisive year for technology companies, determining whether companies flourish or fail. Tech buyer behavior has changed significantly over the last several years—a reality that will continue. Go-to-market (GTM) teams must adjust their strategies to deliver the non-linear experiences buyers demand.

What's changed?

We learned in our 2022 survey report, *B2B Buying Disconnect: The Age of the Self-Serve Buyer*, that today's technology buyers want to control each step of the buyer's journey, from research to purchase. They do most of their research anonymously, and don't want to engage with a salesperson until they are the majority of the way to a purchase decision.

To yield the best results, engage with your prospects in marketing channels where buyers are conducting research. Hint: it's not only your website.

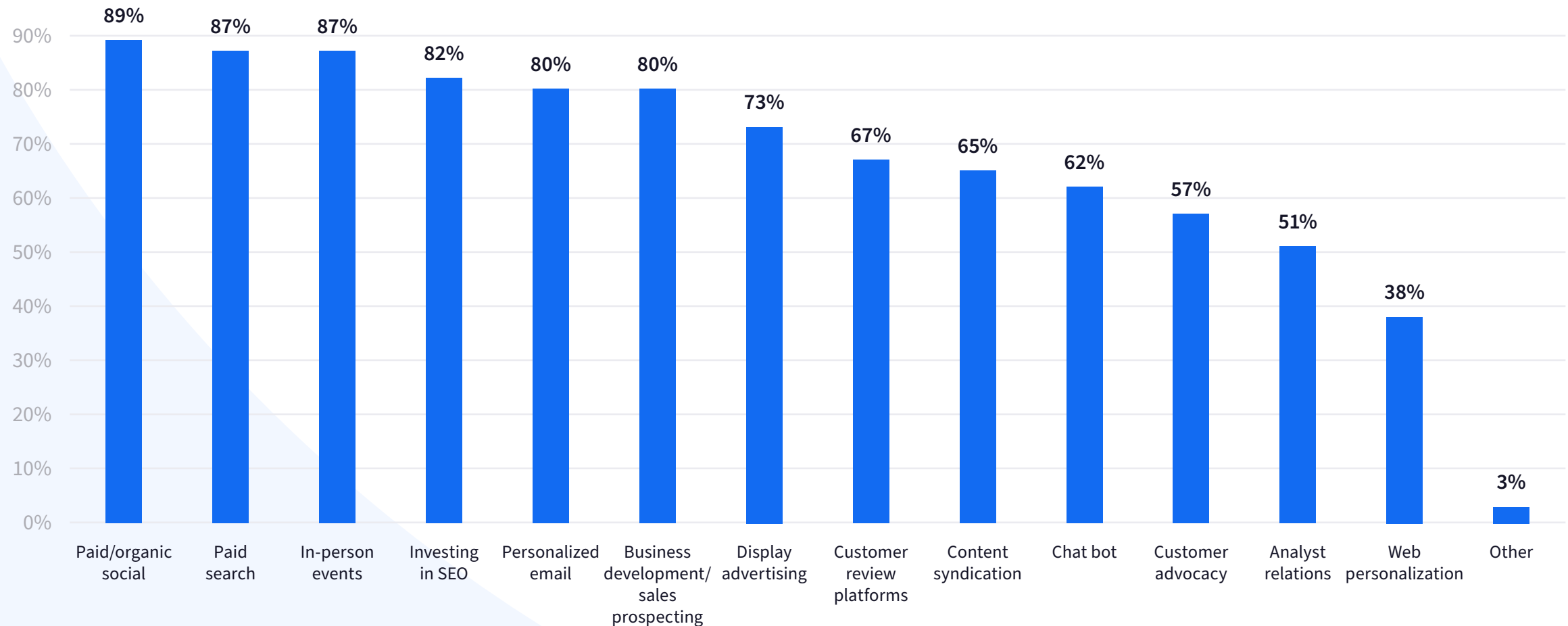
Trying to create and capture demand

Savvy marketers invest in cutting through the noise and connecting with prospects on their terms. Teams are juggling multiple programs, platforms, and technologies as they work to uncover untapped channels to gain a competitive edge. This means delivering up relevant content in every channel at every stage. The broad usage of multiple approaches by respondents in our 2022 marketer survey shows the volume of tactics most teams are managing.



To make the most of 2023, pause to consider the changes in the buyer's journey and see where other technology marketers are having success. In this report, we've identified overarching themes discovered from the combined data of multiple TrustRadius surveys of both technology buyers and marketers to bring you a what's in and what's out for B2B marketing in 2023 and beyond.

Which Marketing Tactics Does Your Company Employ?



Source: TrustRadius 2022 Marketers Survey



1

Shift your marketing and sales teams toward buyer enablement



What's in:

Enabling self-service by providing up front and easy-to-find product information, including pricing, specs, demos, and free trials.



What's out:

Sales reps acting as gatekeepers to product-specific information.



Analysis:

In our 2021 buyers report,¹ 87% of buyers reported wanting self-service options for part or all of the buying journey. That number jumped to virtually 100% in our 2022 report. Buyers now expect to readily find user feedback, specs, pricing, and product demos—all without engaging with a salesperson. This preference for self-service is true across all generations, so we can safely say it's a reality rather than a trend.

Give buyers what they want

When asked which three things vendors can do to make them more likely to purchase technology, buyers in our 2022 report said:

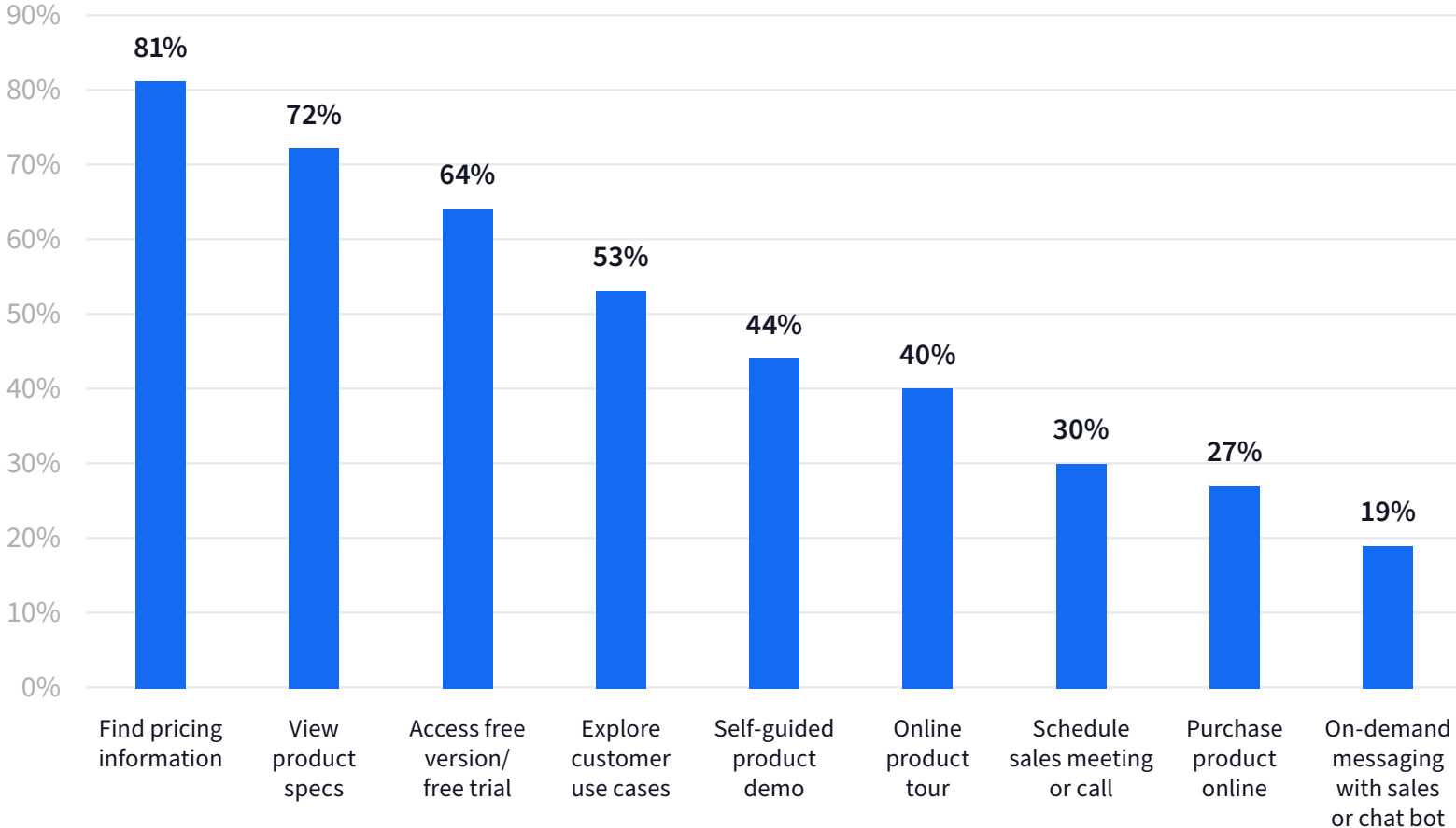
- Publishing pricing on the website (71%)
- Making demos or free trials available (70%)
- Showing customer reviews on the website (35%)

¹ 2021 Buyers Disconnect: Forecasting Radical Changes in Tech Buying Behavior

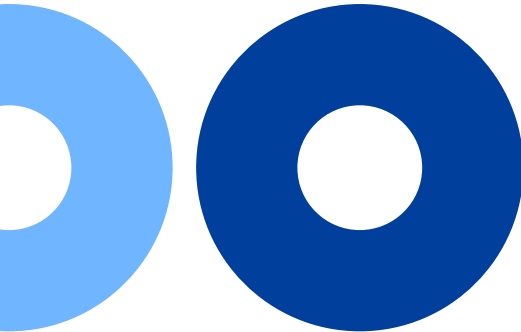
When asked which things technology buyers want to find on their own, a large majority of buyers said they prefer self-serve pricing (81% of buyers in 2022 report) and some form of self-guided demo (69% of buyers in 2022 report), among other things.

However, only 33% of marketers surveyed in 2022 say their company posts pricing on their website and only 40% offer self-guided demos.

What Buyers Want to Self-Serve



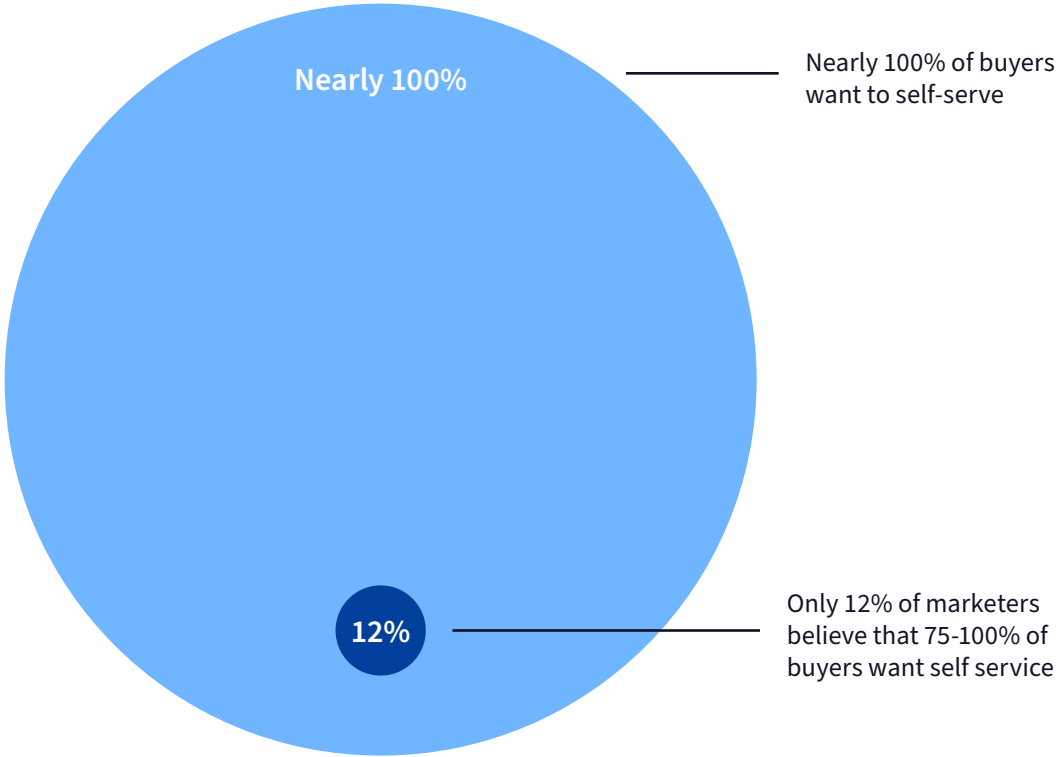
Source: TrustRadius 2022 Buyers Disconnect



The disconnect

There is a significant disconnect between buyer preferences and self-service options offered by vendors. In our 2022 survey, marketers significantly underestimated overall buyer demand for self-service. In fact, only 12% correctly gauged the nearly 100% buyer demand for self-service options and 56% estimated that no more than half of buyers preferred self-service. While it's possible that marketers in our survey did not understand the breadth of options in question, there is still a substantial gap between perception and reality when it comes to self-service.

What Percentage of Your Buyers Want Self-Service Options?



Source: TrustRadius 2022 Buyers Disconnect

Winning strategies



Expand your online reach

Either as a competitive advantage or to keep up with other vendors who have already begun facilitating self-service, marketers should rethink their content marketing distribution strategies. Think more broadly than your own website and search third-party review sites to gauge customer sentiment. Prospects will want to validate your marketing claims with user feedback, so enhance your profile to educate technology buyers about your product early in the game.

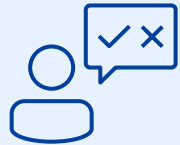
Share liberally the pieces of your overarching narrative across the web. When buyers do eventually visit your website, it's a good bet that including educational materials, customer stories and quotes, transparent pricing, and the ability to test-drive the product without engaging with a sales rep on vendor websites will help close deals.

In their own words

When asked why they publish pricing, respondents in our 2022 survey of marketers told us:

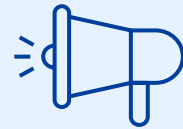
“Our developer persona is big on trying first and understanding pricing up front, without speaking to sales.”

“Our prospects want and expect some level of pricing information without talking to a rep, and additionally, many competitors in our space publicly provide pricing information, so it's become parity for prospects in the early research phase.”



Flood the market with the customer voice

Along with product information, be sure to include the customer proof wherever your brand is present. You can do this by capturing customer voice wherever possible, whether via digital channels, review platforms, or in-person events, and then share on your website, social media, or in your paid ads. The customer voice captured by a third party like a review platform, carries more weight if it's a truly trusted source for buyers.



Get rid of marketing jargon

Shift language and tone to help buyers feel an emotional connection with your brand. 59% of technology buyers in our 2022 survey said user reviews were among the most impactful resources they consulted before a technology purchase. The simple, straightforward language in these reviews, relatable and conversational, is preferred by buyers. Avoid overly technical descriptions, jargon, and product-first language.



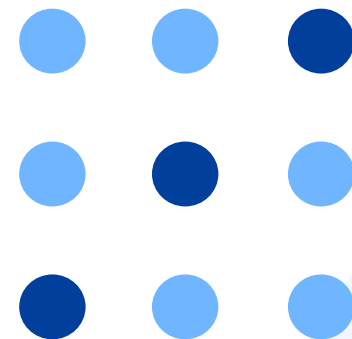
Turn pricing into a positive

By simplifying pricing models and using pricing as part of an overall brand story, marketers and sellers can really dive into the value of a solution. This helps develop the overall product narrative, and it can be an edge over companies clinging to outdated pricing models. If competitors are already posting pricing, that is a disadvantage for you. This is echoed by research from the [Nielsen Norman Group](#), which found “participants go to competitors’ sites when websites do not show prices.”



2

Focus on brand differentiation





What's in:

Differentiating through third-party forums or channels and elevating customer voice.



What's out:

Relying on your vendor website to do all the work of attracting and selling to buyers.



Analysis:

Our research in 2022 confirms what we all already knew—millennial and Gen Z buyers do their own research before visiting a vendor website or contacting a vendor sales rep. As a result, review platforms, message boards, and analyst reports are having a greater impact on the buyer's journey than ever before. These buyers prioritize information from others over vendor-generated content as they research and shortlist technology solutions.

Reputation is market differentiation

For five years, TrustRadius research found that vendor sales reps were in the top five resources buyers most often consulted before making a technology purchase. In 2022, they dropped out of the top five, with only one in four buyers reporting having consulted sales reps during their evaluation. Additionally, buyers reported that vendor reps were less impactful on their decision than demos, free trials, prior experience, user reviews, consultant recommendations, and referrals.

The drop in usage of vendor resources was not limited to sales reps. Five out of six vendor-provided information sources decreased from 2021 to 2022, including vendor-produced blogs, case studies, and marketing collateral. Buyers are far more interested in what other users are saying about a product than what a company shares about its solutions. But that shouldn't be too surprising.

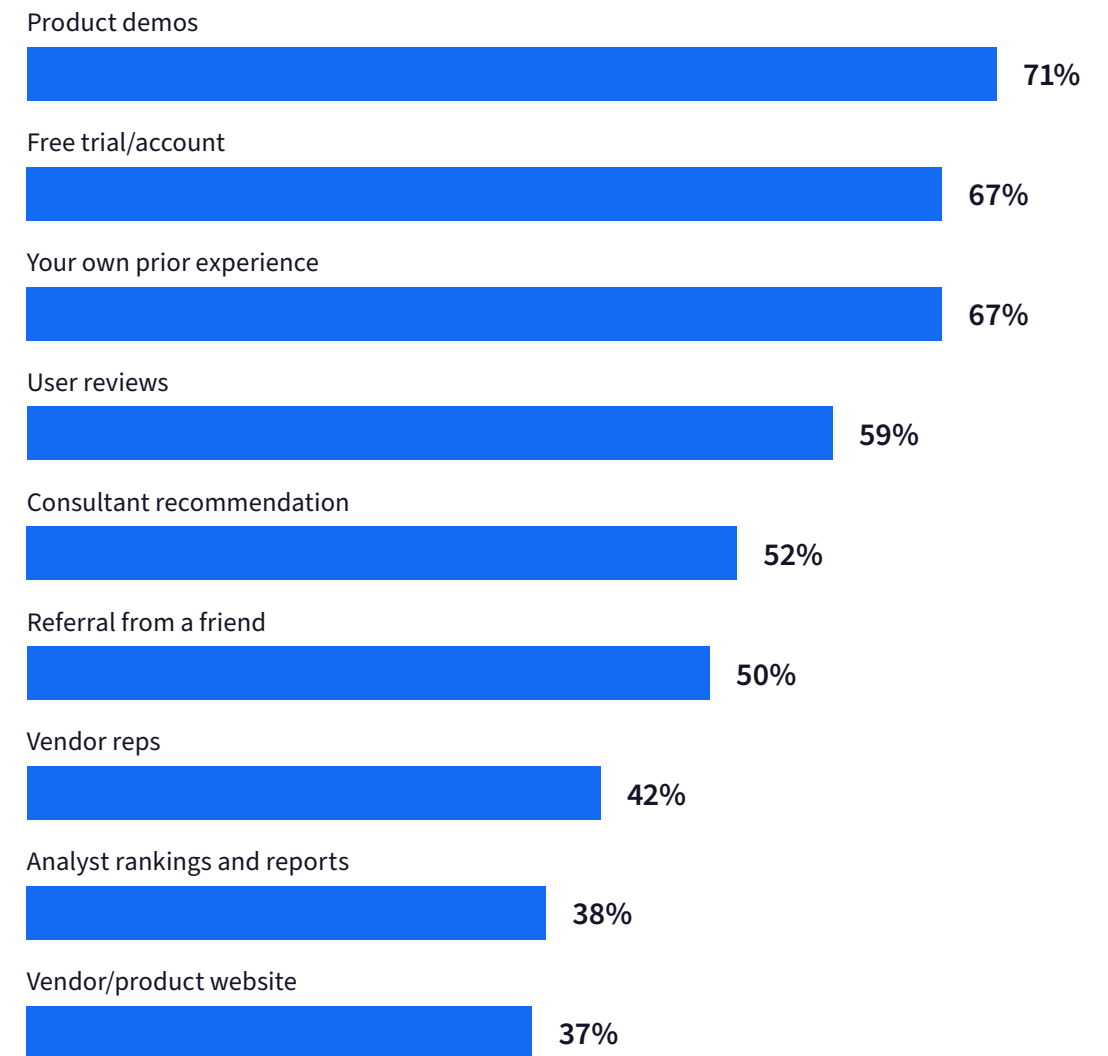
Who's on third (party sites)?

Where are buyers going instead? Third-party websites, including user reviews, communities, and forums, top the list. Some of the most compelling numbers from our 2022 buyers report include:

- The use of review sites increased from 2021 to 2022 for companies of all sizes.
- Buyers increased their usage of communities and forums from 2021 to 2022 for all technology price points, company size, and demographics.

In fact, 77% of technology buyers in our 2022 survey said that once they identified a need, their first step was to do their own research: whether checking review sites, conducting a Google search, or reaching out to a peer. Only 23% said they would contact a sales representative at this point in their journey.

Which Three Resources Were the Most Impactful When You Were Making Your Decision?



Source: TrustRadius 2022 Buyers Disconnect

Winning strategies



Invest in third-party sites and forums

Marketers will continue to shift investment and attention to third-party sites to ensure their messaging is part of early and late-stage research and conversations with and among buyers. Know what is being said on third-party forums and make sure it aligns to your brand narrative. Whether this means partnering with review sites or engaging with online communities, forums, or social media, successful marketers will build new pathways to engage buyers where they are.



Gain perspective

Third-party sites can also help marketers understand their buyers' pain points and capture the customer voice. In the quest for compelling content that speaks to and meets the needs of buyers, marketers should spend time reading what buyers are saying about them, about competitors, and how they prefer to be engaged. This can inform company positioning, messaging, product road map, and sales processes.



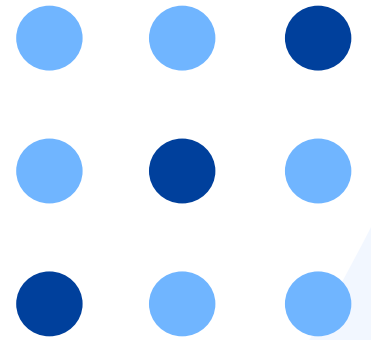
Tell a consistent story

Across all sites and with every marketing asset, tell buyers a straightforward story about how your product can support their use case(s). From problem-solving to pricing, make sure your messaging is consistent and ubiquitous so buyers understand your product's value proposition long before they they speak to a sales rep. You'll find it's much easier to impact your bottom line when you have a primed buyer in the sales cycle.



3

Invest in buyer intelligence





What's in:

Using intent data at every stage of the buying and customer journey.



What's out:

Only relying on first- and third-party intent data.



Analysis:

What is intent data?

B2B buyer intent data is a set of behavioral data points that indicate someone may be interested in buying your product. Websites collect intent signals from users—including keyword searches, the pages they visit, the links they click, and the resources they download—then gather and analyze that data to increase account intelligence.

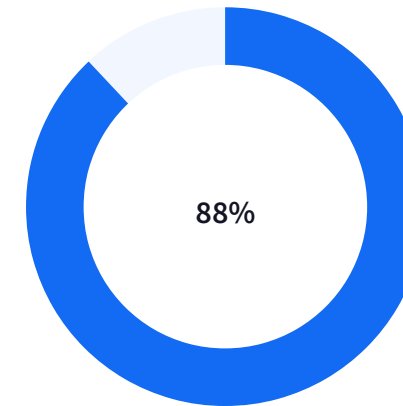
In essence, intent data allows brands to identify people who are most likely to buy their product or in-market—instead of relying on broad marketing campaigns and cold outreach.

Knowing how to leverage intent data is a critical skill for B2B marketers today. Top brands are already using intent data to identify and target prospective buyers more quickly and effectively. To keep up, marketers must understand what intent data is, the different types, and how it can accelerate all stages of the buyer journey and drive revenue more efficiently.

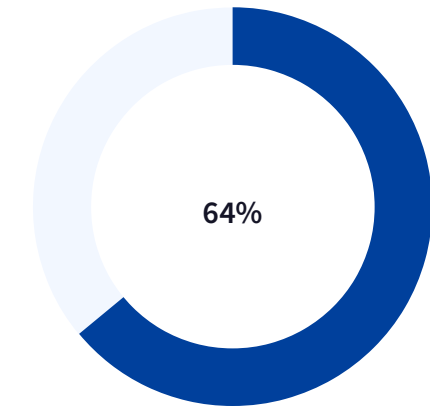
Intent data is not just a tool for ABM and demand gen. It can be used across the entire customer journey, helping to capture buyer activity and understand customer behavior. Are buyers researching you or your competitors? Are your customers churn risks? Are they researching more of your products? Using intent data helps sales and marketing teams develop a more detailed picture of customer activity, opportunities, and trends over time.

While intent data may be a trending topic and rapidly gaining in popularity, marketers are still learning the most effective applications for this relatively new tool. 72% of respondents in our 2022 marketer survey reported using intent data and 28% said they are not ... yet. But maturity and delivering results vary. The bottom line is that if you are not using intent data, you can bet your competitors are and they are learning to leverage that tool more effectively every day.

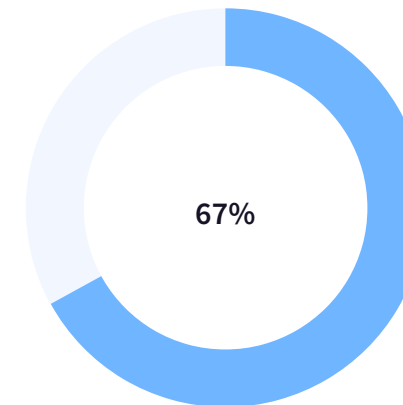
How Many Marketers Are Using Intent Data?



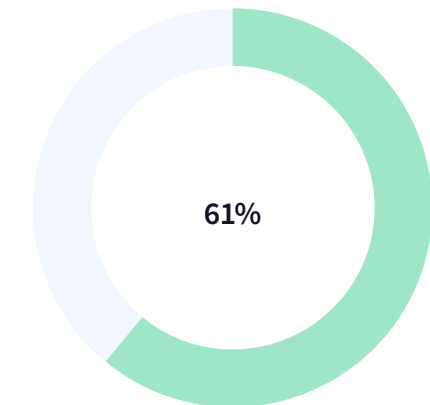
Sales/business development prospecting



Identifying new in-market accounts



Targeting high-intent accounts in advertising



Retargeting

Source: TrustRadius 2022 Marketers Survey

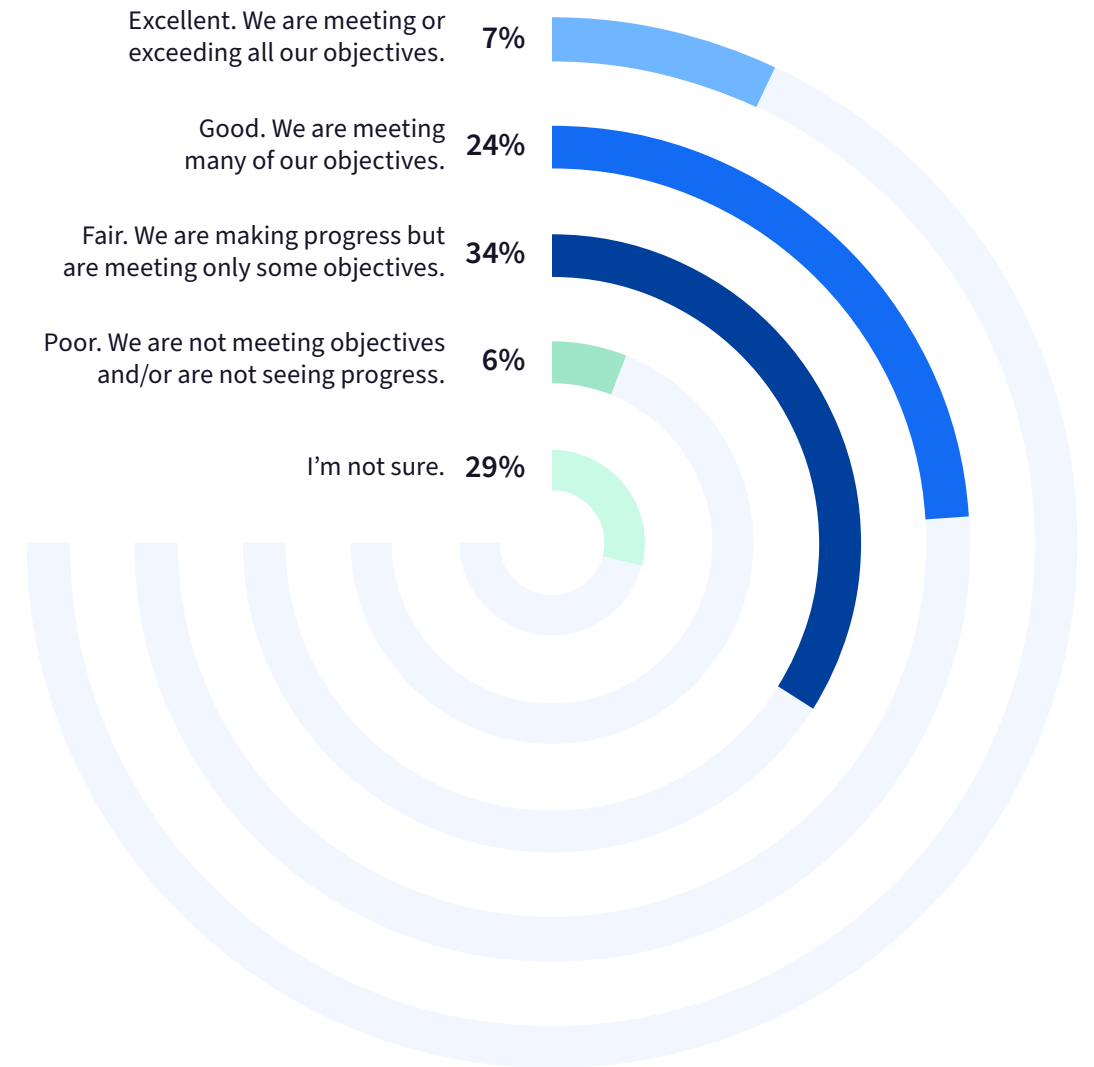
Using data to drive growth

As buyers continue to research, intent data will become table stakes. Currently, marketers are using this tool for a variety of purposes, but [account-based marketing \(ABM\) is the primary application for most intent data](#).

When asked about the most effective uses of intent data, marketers in our 2022 survey told us they were using intent data for:

- Sales/business development prospecting (63%)
- Targeting high-intent accounts in advertising (50%)
- Identifying new in-market accounts (35%)

Intent Data ROI

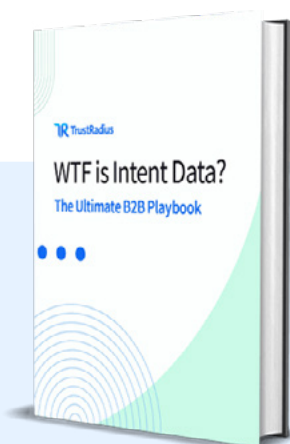


Source: TrustRadius 2022 Marketers Survey

Are we there yet?

Only 31% of marketers reported their intent data ROI is “excellent” or “good” and that “many or all objectives are being met.” Nearly as many (29%) say they don’t know what kind of return they are getting on their intent data investment.

Intent data has enormous potential, but a deeper understanding of what it is, the different types, and how it can be leveraged can help ensure marketers are reaping the benefits.



Another resource for upping your intent data game

[What is Intent Data? The Ultimate B2B Playbook](#)

In their own words

When asked how they’ve seen intent data used most effectively, respondents in our 2022 survey of marketers told us:

- “We use intent data for personalizing sales outreach emails based on intent, website personalization leading to an increase in leads and downloads, and targeted ads on LinkedIn based on high intent.”
- “Intent data is good for defining our most profitable segments, identifying new business opportunities within specific segments, personalizing the accounts qualification, and prioritizing inbound leads.”
- “It’s been effective in targeting large accounts that are engaging with us or competitors.”

Winning strategies



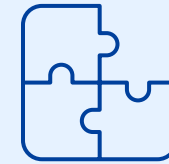
Discover new opportunities

Intent data uncovers when your products are being considered or maybe when they aren't being considered by an account in your ideal customer profile (ICP). Especially as the buyer's journey shifts toward reputational sales and self-service, intent data will grow in importance, since it can help marketing and sales see which accounts are actively engaging in research and discovery.



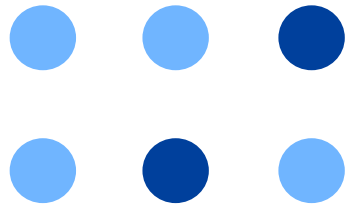
Develop account intelligence

In today's economy, marketers are challenged with doing more with less. Combining intent data from multiple sources and creating a holistic understanding of their buyers and their research behaviors will be the difference between winning and losing deals. Teams from all over the organization—product managers/marketers, customer success teams, sales, and marketing to name a few—can all benefit from this deep account intelligence.



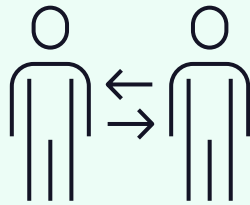
Invest in understanding and technology

An excellent opportunity exists here. Marketers should prioritize learning about intent data, how it works, and what it can do for growth. But the data is only as good as the activation of it. Invest in technology partners who can help you collect different types of intent data and activate it for your sales and marketing efforts. The time and technology investment will increase your ROI and improve your bottom line.



Conclusion

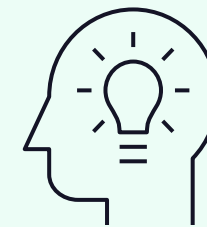
Based on shifts in buying behavior and compiled data from recent surveys of both buyers and sellers, these three trends will make for a successful 2023 GTM strategy:



Shift your marketing and sales teams toward buyer enablement.



Focus on brand differentiation.



Invest in buyer intelligence.



What's in:

- Enabling self-service by providing up front and easy-to-find product information, including pricing, specs, demos, and free trials.
- Differentiating through third-party forums or channels and elevating customer voice.
- Using intent data at every stage of the buying and customer journey.
- Adapting to buyer preferences to improve your go-to-market strategy and outcomes.



What's out:

- Sales reps acting as gatekeepers to product-specific information.
- Relying on your vendor website to do all the work of attracting and selling to buyers.
- Only relying on first- and third-party intent data.
- Executing tired marketing and sales strategies that have lost effectiveness and are losing you customers.



Analysis:

Buyers want to self-serve most, if not all, of their buying journey. 65% of the workforce are millennials and Gen Z, and their preferences transcend older generations. Raised in the digital age, these new buyers are skeptical of marketing and sales. Instead they want to learn from their peers and only engage with a vendor when they are ready to make a purchase.

To optimize their efforts and ensure buyers shortlist their products, marketers must invest in third-party validation and the customer voice to differentiate, use intent data to know more about their buyers, and ultimately help buyers make confident purchase decisions. When successful, this approach shortens the sales cycle and reduces waste, thus driving company growth.

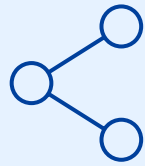
Room for improvement

In our 2022 survey of marketers, only 42% of respondents told us that their marketing, business development, and sales efforts are very aligned. That means the majority of companies need to consider how information and ideas flow between these departments. In 2022, only one in four technology buyers reported that they consult vendor sales reps, so every step of the buyer's journey needs to be considered and coordinated between internal teams.

Go-to-market teams have to align to the way buyers want to buy like providing self-service options, posting pricing, being discoverable on third-party sites, and using intent data to know when to engage a buyer. Demand is captured and sales can target accounts with all of the information they need to close deals, prevent churn, and drive customer growth. And when that first touchpoint with sales feels like guidance from a subject matter expert rather than overly promotional or salesy, customers are more inclined to engage with their sales rep long after the initial sale.

Winning strategies

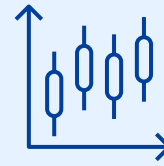
These three strategies can help your team succeed in 2023 and beyond:



Consider new and emerging technology for connecting the dots

At the same time, new technologies and opportunities for connecting with prospects continue to grow. Intent data is an example of emerging technology that can help vendors connect with buyers by offering the right content and information to the right persona at the right time.

AI is another way B2B marketers can gain perspective. New ways of leveraging AI to help streamline messaging, better target digital ads, and rethink website content are gaining traction. Since these technologies give companies the ability to test and learn and then take those lessons and apply them at scale, marketers will want to keep an eye on this space.



Mind the gaps

Better communication and coordination between marketing, business development, and sales teams can help organizations understand and meet the needs of prospects and customers. The potential for increased revenue and efficiency that comes from optimized alignment should top the list of your priorities in 2023.



Foster buy-in

Many of the trends and recommendations in this report run counter to traditional marketing beliefs. Keep in mind that the marketer's first job is understanding and connecting with buyers, so consider treating internal stakeholders as an audience to be won. Using TrustRadius research as a starting point for these conversations can help. Once your team prioritizes the ways your buyers want to engage, the growth will speak for itself.

Reports referenced

This marketing playbook represents TrustRadius' perspective on what lies ahead for marketers in 2023. The insights included have been gleaned from the TrustRadius' surveys and associated reports.

[The 2022 B2B Buying Disconnect: The Age of the Self-Serve Buyer](#)

TrustRadius conducts an annual survey of technology buyers from TrustRadius' global network of contacts via an online survey. The 2022 report was based on analysis of 2,185 responses from professionals who helped buy new software or hardware for their organization in the last year.

[TrustRadius 2021 B2B Buying Disconnect: Forecasting Radical Changes in Tech Buying Behavior](#)

The 2021 report was based on analysis of 1,134 responses from professionals who helped buy new software or hardware for their organization in the last year.

[TrustRadius 2022 Marketers Survey](#)

The responses of 156 marketers of technology solutions from TrustRadius's global network of contacts via an online survey.



About TrustRadius

TrustRadius delivers the most credible technology decisioning platform, helping buyers confidently make a decision with comprehensive, vetted product information and customer-generated content. Technology providers are empowered to tell their unique story, engage high-intent buyers, and gain customer insights. Founded by successful entrepreneurs and headquartered in the technology hub of Austin, Texas, TrustRadius is backed by Mayfield Fund, LiveOak Venture Partners, and Next Coast Ventures.

To learn more about how TrustRadius can help you supercharge your tech marketing efforts, [start a conversation with us today.](#)

