

Mini eBook Series

# Painting Your Perfect B2B Picture

The Best Platforms and Content Types for B2B  
Marketing



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# PAINTING YOUR PERFECT B2B PICTURE

## INTRODUCTION

A picture is worth a thousand words. When you are marketing B2B, you know that your audience won't have time to read a thousand words. The content marketing picture you put together needs to be bright and vivid, but it also needs to be succinct. You want to make it easy for your prospects or clients to focus on the key information and details they are looking for.

The content types and platforms B2B companies publish needs to be interesting, human, and clear—just like other marketing content. It also has to be focused, direct, and utilitarian. Your clients will not be thrilled by bright packaging if they can't find the information they're after, fast. In the competitive B2B market, it is important to showcase your products and talents, stay true to your brand, and facilitate communication and discovery from new businesses.

The content marketing pros at MintCopy Inc. have put together this mini eBook, "**Painting Your Perfect B2B Picture**", to direct your B2B efforts where they will count the most. We understand the unique challenges of marketing to other companies and can help you cut through the noise with marketing content that connects when and where it should.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Your audience is just like every other marketer's, right? Wrong. B2B marketers know that their audience has less time and patience for the online user. They know that these users are seeking information, products and services that will make their jobs easier, more efficient, and stress-free. The buying process is part of their job – so the marketing that supports it needs to take this into account.

Mastering the unique space and overcoming the specific challenges associated with B2B marketing can be difficult. Luckily, you don't have to do it blindly.

**This mini eBook will outline the best channels and techniques B2B marketers can take advantage of:**

1. **The Big Picture – Strategically Choosing Content Types**

A bird's-eye view of your marketing efforts will help you understand what is working, what is missing, and what needs to go.

- a. **Designing Your Perfect Mix:** One channel or content type is not enough! Put your unique marketing puzzle together by taking into account your company's (and customers') particular concerns.

- b. **Strong Content Contenders to Consider:** Not sure what other elements could make your picture complete? Consider these channels to get your marketing message seen, heard, and shared.

## 2. **Beyond the Blue – Understanding the Facebook Problem**

Facebook can be a great tool in your marketing arsenal, but it is not the end all and be all – especially for B2B.

- a. **Facebook-Friendly Isn't Always Brand-Friendly:** If you want your content to perform well on Facebook, that typically means it will be short, snappy, and likely unrelated to your brand, product or service. That is fine for lifestyle brands and larger companies, but B2B companies and agencies need to focus efforts where they can attract clients, not just empty 'Likes'.
- b. **All Work and No Play Makes Facebook a Dull Space:** You need to speak to your audience when and where they will be considering your product or service. If your clients and prospects are using Facebook to escape their daily work grind, it might not be the best space for your marketing messages.
- c. **Tips for Keeping Blue Front and Center:** If you cannot imagine a marketing plan that excludes Facebook, be sure to keep it in-house. If you need to outsource content creation, be sure that it is carefully reviewed and edited as necessary. There are few things as disappointing and obvious as a company that is distanced from their Facebook profile!

## 3. **Shades of Grey – Shifting the Spotlight to White Papers**

If you are ready to start experimenting with long form content types and make an impact across your industry, consider publishing a white paper.

- a. **Why White papers?:** White papers shore up your brand and business by supporting the pillars of B2B lead generation: thought leadership, trust and consultation.
- b. **Find Out if You Are Ready for a White paper:** White papers are powerful, but only if your company is prepared and ready to publish one that is high quality. Use this list of questions and checkpoints to determine if it is time to tackle your first white paper.

**Read on to learn more about how to perfect your B2B marketing strategy and start using the platforms and content types that will serve your brand and clients today.**

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## CHAPTER 1: THE BIG PICTURE – STRATEGICALLY CHOOSING CONTENT TYPES

The digital marketing space is abundant with exciting channels and opportunities to connect with your prospects and existing clients. Options are wonderful. Unfortunately, this abundance also creates a large margin for error, wasted efforts, and misguided attempts to get your message heard.

As B2B marketers, you need to be engaging while focusing on brevity and practicality. You can't forget your humanity but you do need to get to business and demonstrate your company's expertise. Remember that your clients are not looking for a leisurely shopping experience. They want efficiency and results, so the channels you choose need to line up with this attitude and provide straightforward benefits.

Most people say they prefer "useful" brands.<sup>1</sup> In order for your content to be useful, though, it needs to be published where it can be seen, used, and acted upon. For that reason, a content strategy is crucial to determine the right mix of social profiles, native content, and media types to get your message across.

### DESIGNING YOUR PERFECT MIX

Gone are the days when marketers could focus on a single channel. Your digital strategy alone needs to be multifaceted, yet cohesive. Different platforms call for different messaging and content, for example images and shorter text, but they should come together to tell the same story. Your brand does not need to be everything to everyone. Figure out the best voice for your brand and its unique position of value in the market, and communicate that with gusto, repeatedly.

Check out the [MintCopy eBook series](#) to learn more about finding and defining your audience. Once you have an idea of who you are speaking to, the content types you should be investing in may seem more obvious.

**If you need somewhere to start and are looking for a recommendation, consider this assortment of content types:**

- The Bulk
  - White papers
  - eBooks
  - E-Newsletters
- The Basics
  - Blog Posts
  - Social Content (Tweets, Facebook Posts, LinkedIn Posts, Instagram Posts, etc.)
  - Articles

- Press Releases
- The Bonuses
  - Webinars
  - Videos
  - Infographics
  - Interactive Presentations

Start publishing 'the basics' while you work on 'the bulk.' The long-form items will give you clout in the marketplace, but they do not need to be updated as frequently as the basics. Move on to 'bonuses' once you have the first two categories optimized and fine-tuned to your audience's needs and to meet your marketing and sales goals.<sup>2</sup>

## DO YOU NEED AN APP?

Many people hear 'mobile' in a meeting and think the next logical step is to produce an application. This could not be further from the truth for many companies. It can be hard to distinguish "need" and "improvement" from "noise" and "excess" when it comes to apps. Companies around the world seem to be getting them for their services, big and small, and no one likes to be left behind.

**If you have come to a cross road and are considering an app, take the following questions into consideration:**

- Do you have a lot of website traffic for online product orders?
  - 'A lot' means different things to different companies, but if your servers are fine and clients have not expressed the desire for an app, you can probably hold off on development. Consider investing in some time with a designer who specializes in user experience (UX) or e-Commerce to optimize your mobile website and make ordering online as easy as possible.
- What functionality will the app offer beyond your website?
  - Will people have a reason to download your app? It needs to offer more use and value than simply providing a cut and paste version of your website.
- How frequently will it be used?
  - If your clients access existing information, products, or services less than twice a week, downloading an app probably will not be worthwhile for them.

Think carefully before sinking time, effort, and resources into producing an app. Only certain business structures warrant it, so be thoughtful before focusing too heavily on seeing your logo in the App Store.

## STRONG CONTENT CONTENDERS TO CONSIDER

We have discussed how your audience is unique from other companies. B2B marketers need to constantly prioritize facts, figures, and get to the point. They also need to speak to their audience while they are clocking hours at work.

**Certain platforms have become a gathering place for reliable, engaging, and useful B2B content and industry conversations. These channels are widely regarded as some of the best for B2B marketing content:**

- **Company Website:** With the right digital assets, you can make your website content move beyond function and become a destination for industry peers, clients and prospects.
  - **Blog:** Demonstrate your knowledge, company culture, and perspective. Have fun with it!
  - **Exclusive or Invitation-Only LinkedIn Groups:** Conversations are a great way to engage existing clients, and educate and engage new ones. Find your angle and start inviting.
  - **Twitter:** Do your research, stay professional, and be timely to get in on the conversation when it counts.
  - **Channel Partner Portals:** Take advantage of your network for a layered conversation.
  - **Webinars:** Go beyond being a service provider and become an educator.
  - **SlideShare:** These decks can become a valued resource for people in and outside the industry.
  - **Email Newsletters:** Regular, tailored updates put a spotlight on what is happening and can call attention to relevant events and products.
  - **EBooks:** Focus on an area where you excel and work with leading copywriters for the best results.
  - **News Media:** Do not forget about 'traditional' media. Journalists, PR agencies, news wires and other outlets still play an important role. Just keep in mind that they are also online, so save your "release" efforts for the really BIG newsworthy announcements.
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## CHAPTER 2: BEYOND THE BLUE – UNDERSTANDING THE FACEBOOK PROBLEM

Facebook made a huge splash when it launched and it continues to have a stronghold on conversations about social media and digital marketing. While it is no doubt an important piece of the puzzle, this behemoth network is not the end-all be-all for digital marketing and should be considered carefully, especially for B2B marketers.

You would think this was a no-brainer. Yet, some companies are so hypnotized by the hype around Facebook success that they ignore this killer fact. You may end up throwing money around an empty room using Facebook for distributing your B2B content.

### FACEBOOK-FRIENDLY IS NOT ALWAYS BRAND-FRIENDLY

Ask yourself if your audience uses Facebook to find content aimed at the C-Suite. Are they looking for articles meant to educate and inform executives and managers? Will they pause to read white papers you have worked so hard to produce? Are they going to watch a 10-minute executive presentation or an archived webinar? It's unlikely.

Facebook users are active and loyal. On average, each spends more than 50 minutes on the site each and every day.<sup>3</sup> Even with all that time logged, the reality is that they are engaging with a specific type of content. Any posts that are longer than a sentence or two or lack a cute photo of a kitten may not be getting as many 'Likes.' Content that is long-form, industry-focused, and serious in tone may be misplaced on Facebook.

The average Facebook user is not there to read a long post detailing the features and benefits of your latest best-selling product. The majority will also run, un-friend, and un-follow an account that features any hint of a hard sell. Advertising that has not come directly from a brand they already love or are actively researching will be deliberately tuned out or removed from their feeds.

You need hard hitting, short, possibly even off-topic content to attract attention to your brand. These short posts can require just as much time and energy as the long-form, serious ones. It is up to you to determine if that is what you want your team spending their time on – and if those posts really match up with your brand identity.

### ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES FACEBOOK A LONELY SPACE

Your prospects and clients probably won't be surfing Facebook during the work day ... and if they are, it will usually be for a distraction or break, not for research! When your target is B2B, networks like LinkedIn, SlideShare and Twitter are usually a safer bet for your content marketing resources.



Building a community or fan following is a real challenge, even with more than 1.5 billion active monthly users.<sup>4</sup> Smaller companies are in a big pond, and they need loyal evangelists and influencers to even reach other people's timelines to be noticed. Niche products and industries will need to put in additional work (and dollars) to grow that community and reach beyond the "preaching to the choir" point. Without that dedication and commitment, you look like a small company (regardless of your actual size) that has just not mastered social media. And that will make you very few friends.

Find a place where your brand can speak authentically and connect with your clients and prospects where and when they are seeking your services. If your product appears at 9pm, while they are sitting in front of the TV scrolling through their newsfeed, they may be less inclined to take action than if they came across it while in the office, in need of the solution you are providing.

### REASONS TO KEEP IT CLOSE

There are agencies that will run your social marketing for you, or even just take over Facebook. It can seem like a convenient solution, but take caution when outsourcing such an intimate part of the content marketing picture.

It is quite obvious when a company's voice has been taken over by a third party. It becomes distorted and distanced, and can come across as insincere, no matter how flashy their content or well-researched their hashtags are. No outsider can ever fully mimic your company's marketing efforts or get your voice across day after day to a receptive audience.

If you decide that Facebook is definitely where your target audience is and it is where you want to speak to them, why not train in-house personnel who can represent your brand in the space?

No one suitable? If a content agency is your only solution, get them to provide the content for you to review, approve, tweak and then post. Do not take a hands-off approach!

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### CHAPTER 3: SHADES OF GREY – SHIFTING THE SPOTLIGHT TO WHITE PAPERS

While Facebook gets a lot of attention and hype, less popular content types, such as white papers get a lot less time. They are certainly more involved, can seem less flashy, and can be more difficult to master. They need a clear focus, benchmarks and strong copywriting to get them off the ground. The result, however, will be worth it.

## WHY WHITE PAPERS?

White papers enjoy a special place in the B2B content marketing world. They are viewed as particularly useful and have come to be a respected and anticipated part of many company's marketing plans.

The reason is simple; they provide the necessary factors of thought leadership, trust and consultation that feed the B2B lead nurturing and buying process.

**There are three simple reasons white papers have been given so much respect:**

- **Thought Leadership:** Whether you work within a single industry or serve companies across specializations, everybody wants to work alongside a pro. A well-done white paper demonstrates knowledge, innovation, and visionary thinking. No matter how simple or complex your product is, you can demonstrate an understanding of your clients' problems and offer solutions through an informative white paper.
- **Trust:** Along with respect and admiration, clients and prospects will trust in your company's reliability and expertise. Knowledge is powerful, and sharing that knowledge only makes you more powerful.
- **Consultation:** Networking and relationship management are crucial steps of lead nurturing and accelerating the buying process for B2B marketing and sales departments. White papers provide more resources for both to share, answer questions, and start conversations. Arm your team with the information your clients want and the content your prospects don't even know they need yet.

Need more evidence? The B2B Content Marketing: 2013 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends report by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs in partnership with Brightcove showed that 61% of content marketers use white papers. That statistic only stands to rise as more content marketers shine a light on their company's expertise and voice.<sup>5</sup>

## FIND OUT IF YOU ARE READY FOR A WHITE PAPER

Just like an app, not every topic warrants a full-blown white paper. They do not have to be overly involved projects, but they should be done with care and consideration in order to yield the best results.

**Before you commission a white paper for your organization, consider the following questions with your team<sup>6</sup>:**

- Have you nailed the right subject and verified that your target audience is interested in knowing more about it?

- Do you have in-depth knowledge to create a compelling document that genuinely offers NEW, RELEVANT and ACCURATE information?
- Will your white paper present tips, best practices, practical advice and solutions to help solve critical problems your audience is challenged with?
- Does your copywriter or content writing team know how to effectively organize and develop a white paper that takes the reader step-by-step through a logical thought process?
- Are you convinced that your white paper can deliver value to your organization without directly selling products/services within your copy?
- Can your audience benefit from at least 3-5 key takeaways by reading your white paper?
- Do you know how to effectively promote and position your digital white paper online?
- Will your audience feel inclined to share your white paper with others?
- How often can you create and publish a white paper? Or is this only a one-time activity?
- Have you identified the outcome you want to achieve from publishing this white paper? Do you have metrics in place to measure your return on investment?

If you answered “no” to any of the above questions, take a few steps back. Whether you decide to take the white paper on in-house or hire a professional copywriter, the early stages of the project are critical for its success. Define clear goals, do your research, outline a proven approach and only then can you begin to create your company’s white paper.

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## CONCLUSION

B2B marketers occupy a challenging and exciting space in the digital marketing industry. Unique obstacles, special considerations and profitable opportunities await those who are willing to put the time and effort into designing a cohesive plan.

Start by creating your own palette. You want a variety of content types that your audience can engage with, rely on, and easily navigate. They should complement, not compete with one another while providing your clients and prospects with useful information about your company’s attributes.

Find them where they are working so that your value will be connected to their daily work, instead of getting lost in their leisure time and social surfing. Look behind the Facebook giant and see what other productive options are hiding in its shadow. Experiment with different networks and content types, and you may be surprised how your business grows its online presence. Increasing your industry impact on Twitter, connecting with specialized groups on LinkedIn or becoming more active on SlideShare can push your products and services further than a few 'Likes' on Facebook.

Don't feel obligated to spend your time, money and energy on every social space, especially ones that aren't designed for B2B engagement. Moving towards long-form content can help enlighten clients and prospects about your industry, expertise and experience, while also making it easier for them to find your company. Whether you run a small agency or offer a large product line, growing your client base and consistently building the reputation of your company can be achieved through a simple, well-researched, and refined white paper.

Speak to the experts at [MintCopy](#) for help making your [content marketing](#) picture a reality. With years of experience working closely with B2B companies (and being one ourselves), we know how to make your content pop. We understand that B2B marketing is about connecting people across and throughout industries. Our copywriters are experts in SEO, brand marketing, and maintaining the human touch and personality that makes your company a unique pleasure to work alongside.

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