

Tech B2B buyer survey reveals what's **hot** and what's not in content marketing



Tech B2B buyers rely heavily on content to influence their purchase decisions, but what types of content work best?

We spoke to tech B2B decision-makers around the world to understand how they consume content.

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The back story

Over recent years, tech B2B buyers have been living through an unprecedented era of technological change. From IoT to machine learning to blockchain, they are being forced to upskill even as they make crucial purchasing decisions.

Buying habits and the tech B2B purchase cycle is changing significantly. Tech purchase decisionmakers are under more pressure – and scrutiny – than ever to ensure they get it right and the solutions they pick deliver ROI. And this means they need to get up to speed fast on new technologies, new approaches, new solutions and more.

The good news is that there is plenty of help around in the form of content. We've observed that content is playing a more and more important role within the overall tech B2B purchase cycle, and we know that B2B decisionmakers are spending more than 70% of the purchase cycle engaging with content before they ever reach out to sales representatives.

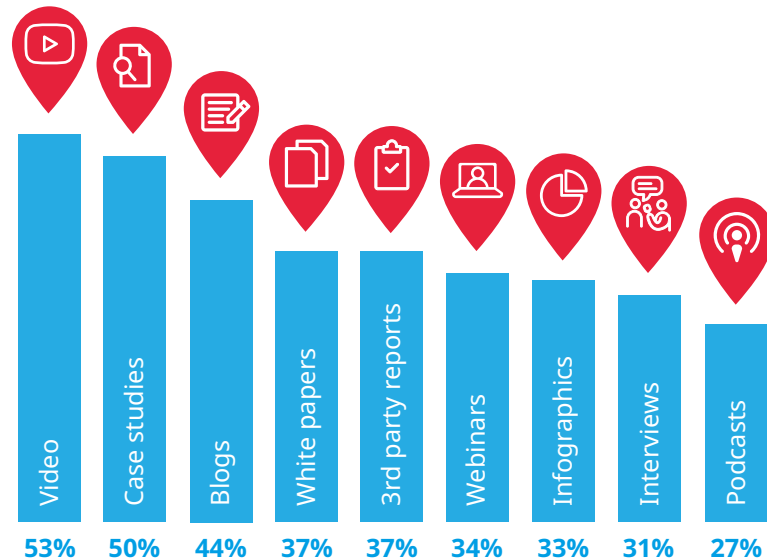
We wanted to understand what the picture was in tech B2B specifically. Earlier this year, we spoke to tech B2B influencers and decisionmakers in Europe and the US who play a role in purchasing decisions, from IT Managers to VPs. (Good news: 57% of these critical decisionmakers were women!).

So, what are tech B2B buyers really looking for from content?



What type(s) of content do you find most **useful**? **Video content is king.**

I.



53% of respondents said that video was the most useful form of content

While its popularity in B2C is unquestioned, it is interesting to see that video is becoming more and more important among tech B2B buyers too. They aren't all serious engineers who want to look at pages of text and graphics! A 2019 report on Video in Business by Vidyard found that businesses in high tech and professional services industries are publishing the highest volumes of new videos on a monthly basis.

Tech B2B marketers – invest in video content! Your competitors are!

Case studies – **evergreen**

II.



50% of respondents stated that case studies (after video) were the most effective content assets in influencing their purchase decision

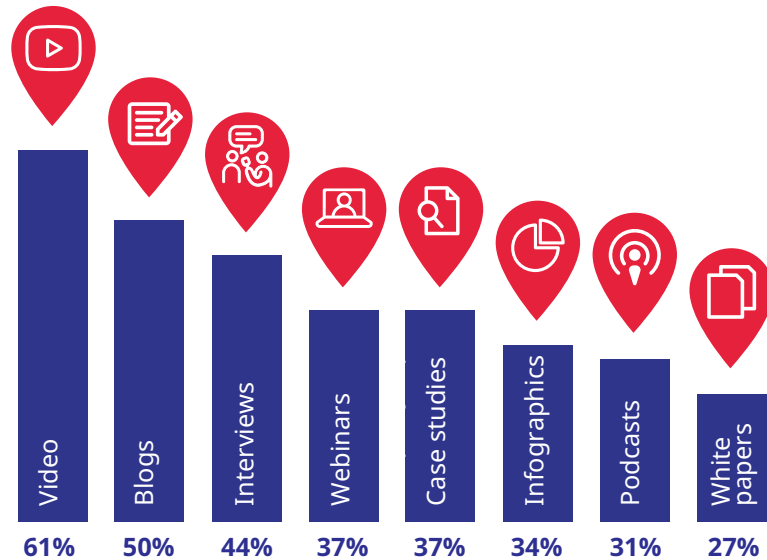
Case studies are notoriously the hardest piece of content to develop, requiring both internal and external approvals, plus the involvement of multiple teams that range from sales to legal.

Here are a few ways that marketers can ensure that case studies do happen:

1. Include case studies within the sales contract
2. Incentivise salespeople who persuade clients to agree to case studies
3. Keep it short and compelling. Focus on results.

What type(s) of content are you most likely to **share**? **It's video again!**

III.

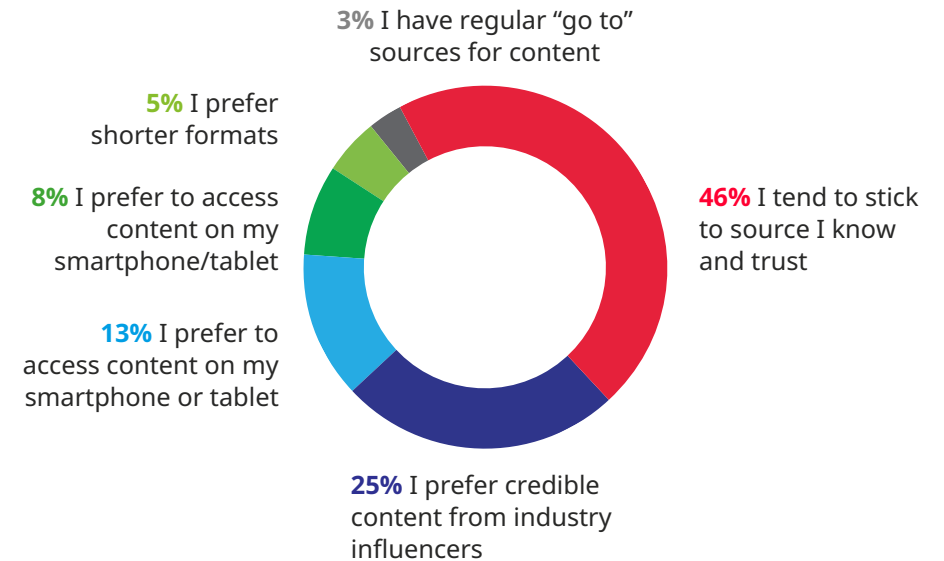


61% of respondents stated that the content they were most likely to share would be video

Another point that leads us to conclude that video is undoubtedly the direction that content marketing is headed in.

How have your content **consumption** habits changed over the past year? **People trust what they know.**

IV.

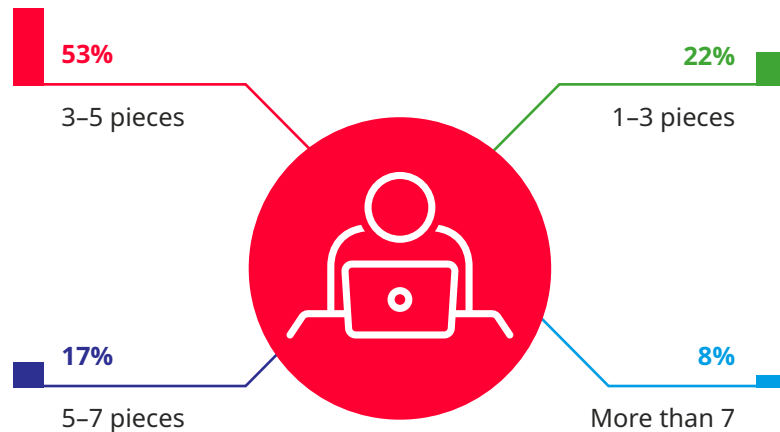


46% of our respondents said they tended to stick to the sources they knew and trusted

Tech B2B buyers go back again and again to the sources they know and trust – and these don't just include influencers or industry leaders. For brands, it's essential to keep content marketing sustained and systematic.

Before contacting a supplier, how many pieces of content will you typically **consume**?
Strength in numbers.

V.



53% of those surveyed responded that 3-5 pieces of content was typical before contacting the supplier.

Tech B2B content marketing is a long game. It is important to have a wide range of content to appeal not only to different audience preferences but also to build a coherent content journey for each audience member. Mix it up – not only in terms of content type (white papers, case studies, testimonials, video, blog posts and social media) but also in terms of the message and information conveyed.

What is the **role** of content in your purchasing process?
Knowledge is power.

VI.

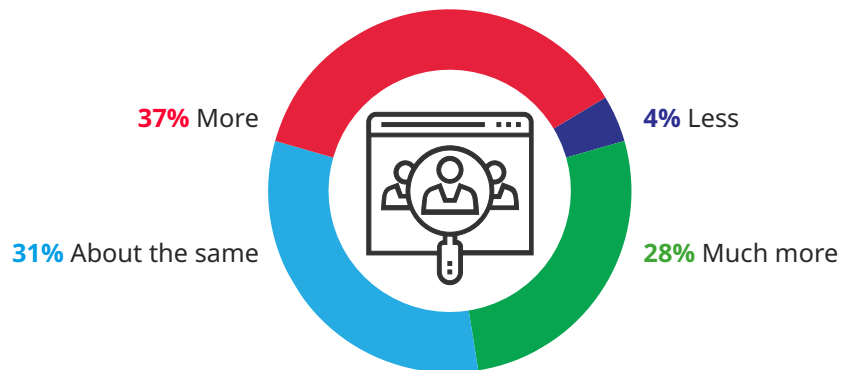


66% of respondents were aiming to learn about technology and deployments

The largest percentage of respondents use content to educate themselves about the options they have in the marketplace prior to speaking with a specific vendor. They are looking for current, relevant information about different technology options on the market now and what is poised to emerge in the near future.

Are you spending more or less time **researching** potential suppliers than you were 12 months ago?
Consumption of content is on the rise.

VII.

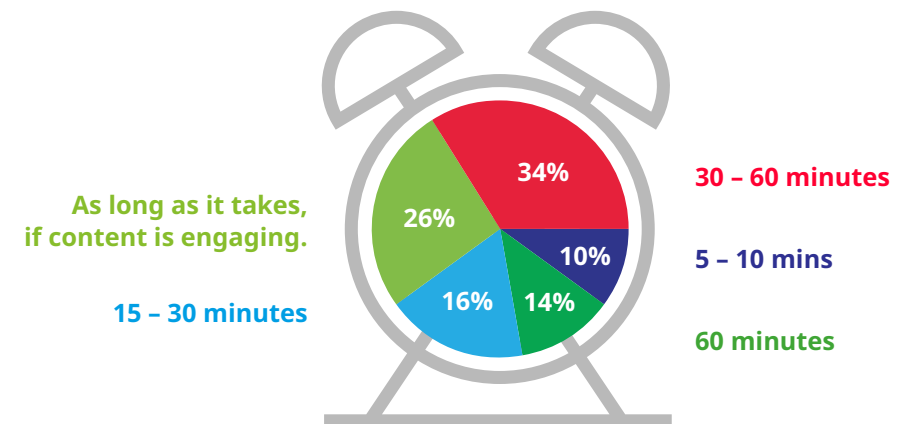


37% of respondents are spending more time on research.

70% of those who responded are spending at least as much, if not more, time reading and understanding content than they were just one year ago. This is good news for content marketers: while buyers are busy and have a lot of pressure on their time, buyers are willing to invest the time needed to understand and evaluate.

How much **time** are you willing to invest in consuming content related to a potential purchase?
The more time you put in the more you get out.

VIII.

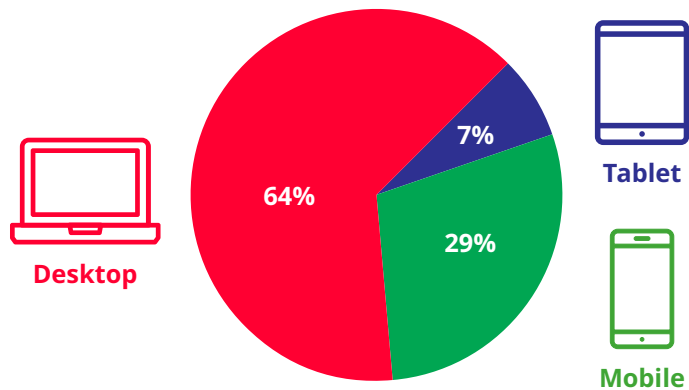


26% will spend as long as it takes if the content is great.

More good news for tech B2B content marketers: tech B2B buyers crave information and are happy to put in the time needed to gather the answers they seek. They are willing to search out quality content that will make their buying journey easier, quicker and more informed.

What is your **primary device** for consuming content on?
Mobile on the rise.

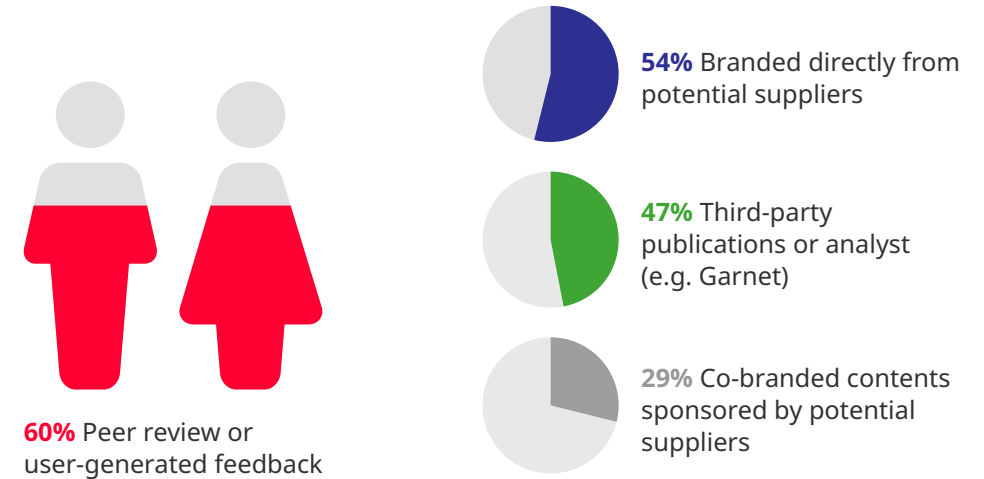
IX.



Mobile users should not be overlooked. While the vast majority of tech decision makers still look at content on their desktops and laptops, the proportion of those who do it on their mobiles is too significant to ignore: and set to increase. So whether you're producing video content, graphics or text-based content, ensure it is easy to consume on mobile.

In your opinion, what is the most **trustworthy** content?
People trust their peers.

X.

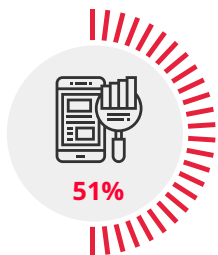


60% of respondents said peer reviews/user-generated feedback are the most trustworthy form of content

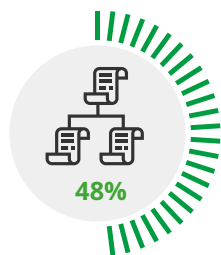
Peer reviews and user-generated feedback led the pack when it came to most trusted content sources. In this space, user reviews are not easy to generate – making case studies even more important. Content marketers must think of ways to incorporate user feedback like testimonials on websites or sales presentations, awards, collaborative content development and more.

How could technology vendors **improve** the content they produce? **Numbers don't lie.**

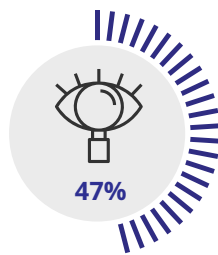
X.



Use more data and research to support content



Content organised by specific pain points and topics.



Add more insight from industry thought leaders/analysts



45% Focus less on product specifics and more on value.



44% Package relevant content together



34% Add in relevant customer examples or case studies to support content



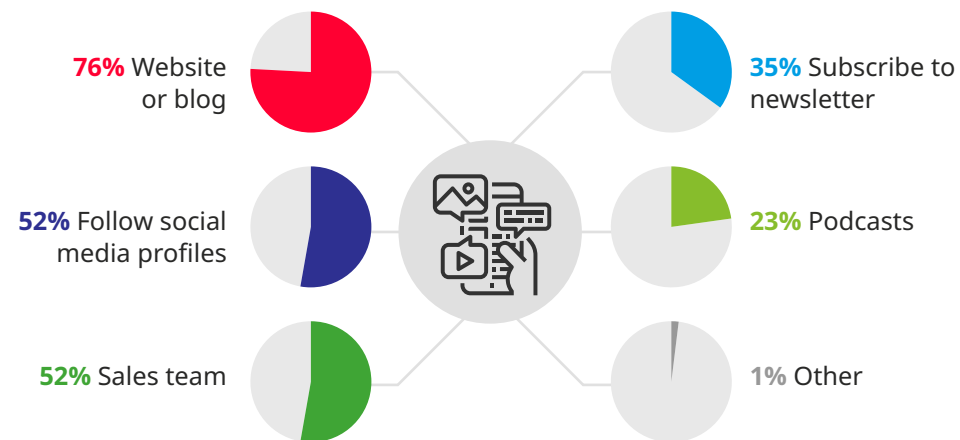
33% Provide more benchmarking data

51% of respondents said vendors should use more data and research to improve their content

Tech B2B buyers audiences demand attention to detail and facts to back up any assertions that content might make. Tech investments take a lot of time, mandate in-depth knowledge, require a lot of energy, and even more money. These buyers want to learn about a company's offering but need the information to be backed up by data – think not just market research but also test results in different deployment scenarios, ROI facts and calculators, and more.

How do you keep **up to speed** with relevant content from potential suppliers and influencers? **Keep your website up to date.**

XII.



76% said they keep up with websites or blogs

Tech B2B buyers seem to like staying in touch! They tend to go back time and again to company websites and blogs to stay updated. So content marketers need to stop thinking of their websites as static online brochures and instead treat it like a living, breathing company asset, frequently updated and ensuring repeat visitors stay interested.

Adapting future strategies to produce high quality content that **increases conversions**

Ultimately, it is clear that tech B2B buyers are placing content at the heart of their decision making process. While they are willing to put in the time that's needed to read the content that matters, a crowded arena and time pressures have created the need for highly targeted and thought out content. Making it more important than ever that content marketing strategies are focused on providing target audiences with relevant information based on facts, along with a deep understanding of the issues these buyers face daily.

So, there you have it. We hope you found the results and insights useful to inform your content marketing strategy moving forward.

If you would like to discuss our findings or need help on creating a highly effective B2B content marketing strategy, please get in touch at: hello@isolinecomms.com

