



Find Your Prospect

How to generate leads in the new era of b2b marketing



Convoy
GLOBAL PR NETWORK



Red Lorry
Yellow Lorry





Look closely.

Look even closer.
Can you find the prospect?

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Still no luck?

Identifying the right prospects for your b2b brand can sometimes feel a bit like the **'Where's Wally?'** book series. You're trying to pinpoint the right person (or group of people) in an increasingly crowded and competitive business landscape.

But where do you start? How do you know if you're looking in the right place? How do you connect with those prospects once you've found them?

These are the challenges facing today's b2b brands. And solving them isn't getting any easier.

Featuring insights from in-house marketing experts and our global agency network, Convoy, **this eBook provides a guide to navigating b2b marketing in the digital era.** Discover how you can **identify and engage the right prospects** to generate leads and drive business growth.



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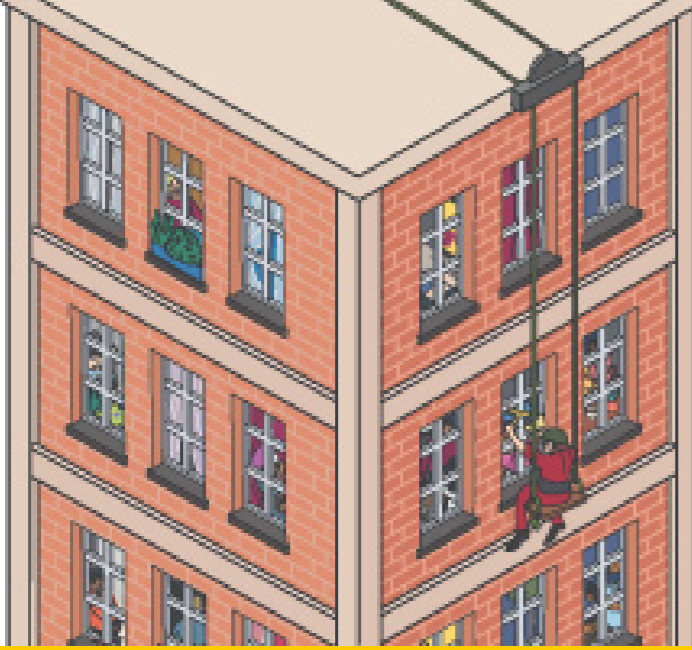
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The state of play



When it comes to identifying prospects and driving leads, b2b brands are facing more challenges today than ever before – with many intensified by Covid-19.

There's more competition. The **lack of physical tradeshows, face-to-face meetings and networking events** makes it harder to get in front of customers. **And buyers are facing digital fatigue.**

Many marketing teams are simultaneously facing reduced budgets and increased expectations. They have to achieve more with less. They're also under pressure **to prove ROI and demonstrate value for every campaign.**

“With increasing volumes of buyers active across a multitude of digital channels, campaigns are becoming much more complex. This places greater demands not just on marketing teams to produce more innovative, dynamic content, but also to work faster.”

Warren Daniels, vp of worldwide demand generation, Bynder





“Digital platforms and data are critical. It’s important to have a full funnel view of how to generate insights and data at every touchpoint so we can continuously optimise the go-to-market investment, making every interaction with the prospect count.”

Winnie Palmer, head of marketing EMEA, Seismic

This all drives the evolution that’s currently taking place. The accelerating technological landscape is forcing b2b brands to adapt, driven by technologies **such as AI, data analytics and machine learning**. Digital tools and platforms are now central to informing impactful campaigns, which must combine data-driven insights with **creativity, tailored messaging and engaging content**.

The link between sales and marketing has also become increasingly important. **Brands must find ways to remove departmental, functional and operational silos** if they want to drive the most value from their marketing and lead generation activities.

It’s certainly a complex time to be a marketing professional. But, although the challenges are greater, there are plenty of rewards available for those brands ready to embrace **the new era of b2b marketing**.





STEP 1: **Identify**

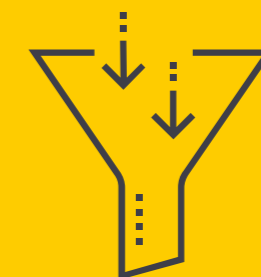
Each b2b brand has a different challenge and opportunity. **The key is to build a deep understanding of your specific market and audience.** This will inform the messages, tone and tactics for a successful campaign.

Start by gathering as much information as possible. **This will help you identify the right prospects and start moving them through the sales funnel.**

First, monitor the conversations and themes that relate to your brand. There are four main pillars involved:

“Many brands struggle to locate the customers who will effectively fund their expansion into the market and provide the local case studies that are absolutely critical to credibility.”

Stephen Cox, TrainTracks, Japan





“Data and digital platforms are vital for identifying prospects at different stages of their buying journey, providing intelligence in sufficient time to act on it, and showing which channels and content types should receive more investment.”
Paul O’Leary, Pursuit PR, New Zealand

1 Data mining

Goal: analyse publicly available data to pinpoint prospective buyers. Uncover prospects based on key criteria (eg target company, turnover) and relevant buying triggers (eg new leadership investment, M&A activity).

Example tools: Dealroom, Crunchbase

2 Web analytics

Goal: track and score leads. Examine the data from website visits, pages visited, dwell times and downloads to separate the best prospects from the rest.

Example tools: Lead Forensics, CANDDi, Exact Visitor

3 Social listening

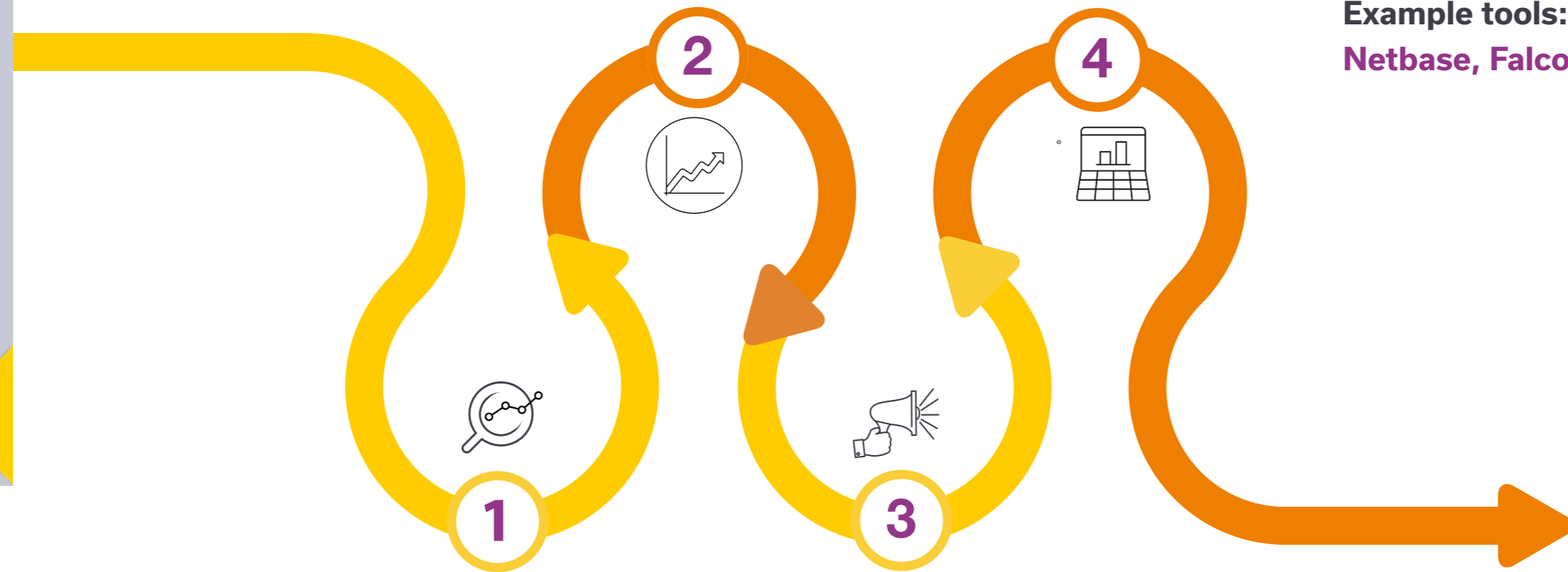
Goal: track online mentions and signals around relevant conversations to guide your marketing strategy. Monitor trending topics, interest spikes, buyer-intent keywords and sentiment to get the most valuable insights.

Example tools: Brandwatch, Netbase, Falcon

4 Media monitoring

Goal: keep track of mentions in online and offline media, coverage and share of voice. Use data to inform the conversations that are most likely to resonate with prospects.

Example tools: Signal, Meltwater, Cision

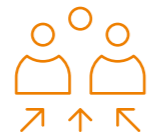


Bear in mind that the martech landscape is vast. There is a plethora of digital tools available, which are becoming increasingly sophisticated and better at uncovering insights through AI and machine learning. These technologies can also help you manage any potential data overload.





Define your target audience



FIND THE CLUES

Background and demographics: job, career path, sex, age, income etc

Goals and challenges: primary and secondary

Marketing messages: how to describe your product/service to them



Key identifiers: such as behaviour and communication preferences

Common objections: why wouldn't they buy your product/service?

Elevator pitch: sell your product/service in one or two sentences

Use the insights generated from the data you collect to inform your brand messaging and help shape your target audience – ie the people you're trying to reach and the topics they care about.

This is where you must work together with sales **to decide what the ideal lead profile looks like.** Agreeing on key company targets/personas up front will result in less friction throughout the rest of the lead generation process.



Next, start thinking about the messaging strategy. You should by now have a clearer idea of the talking points that resonate with your target audience – the challenges they're facing, their pain points, the things that keep them up at night. **Use these insights to craft messages that directly address their needs and concerns.** And remember that this is an ongoing process. **Continuously re-evaluate and update your messaging based on the data you collect.**

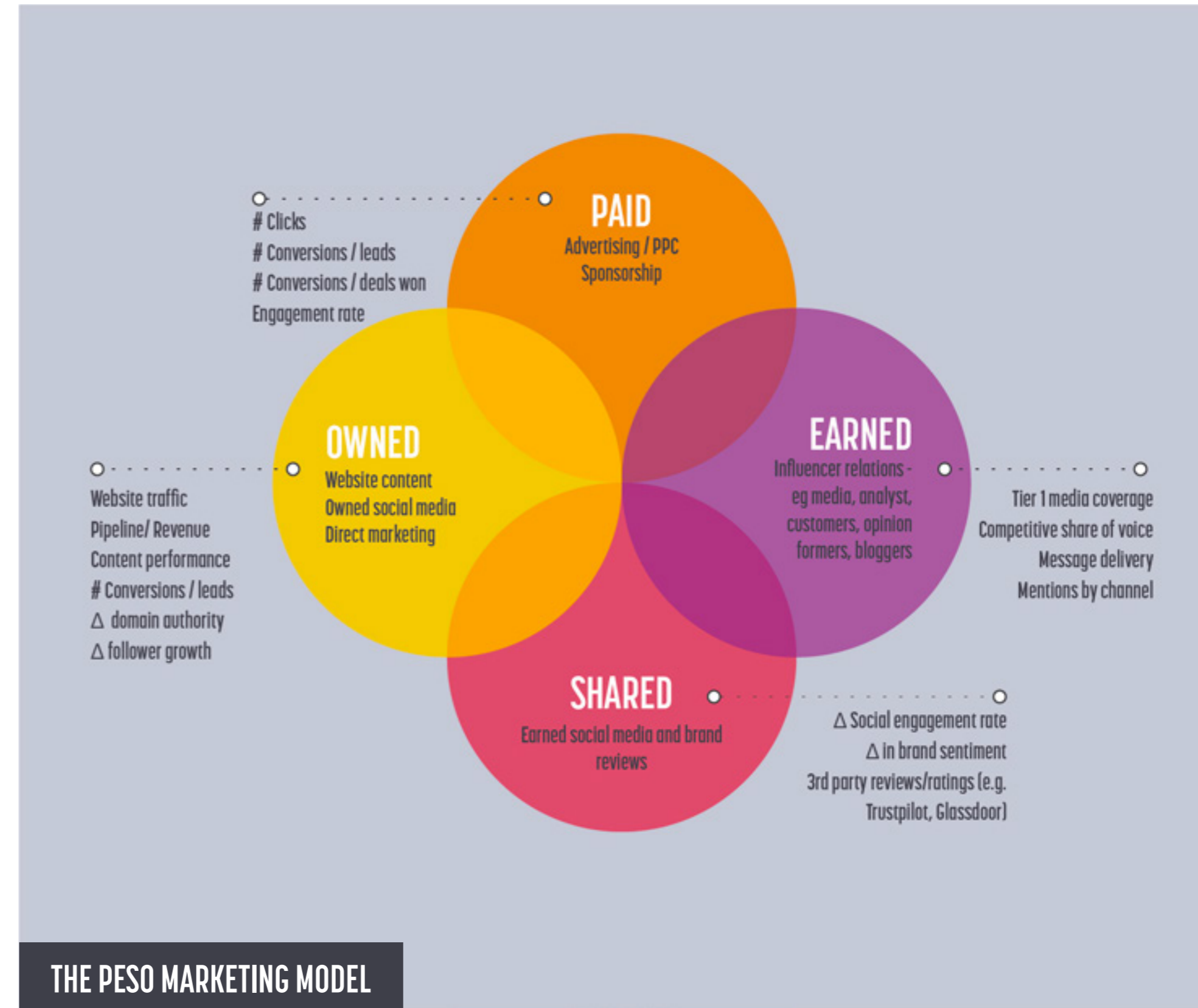


What is the metric for success?



Finally, define the metrics that are most important to you. **Ask yourself: "What does success look like?"** With so many metrics now available, narrowing the list down to the key data points is vital. This will help you prove ROI and value.

Look across all media pillars – Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned – as part of an integrated strategy. **Whether it's clicks on a pay-per-click (PPC) advertising campaign, tier one media coverage, brand sentiment or website traffic, understanding which metrics matter will help you define and monitor success.**





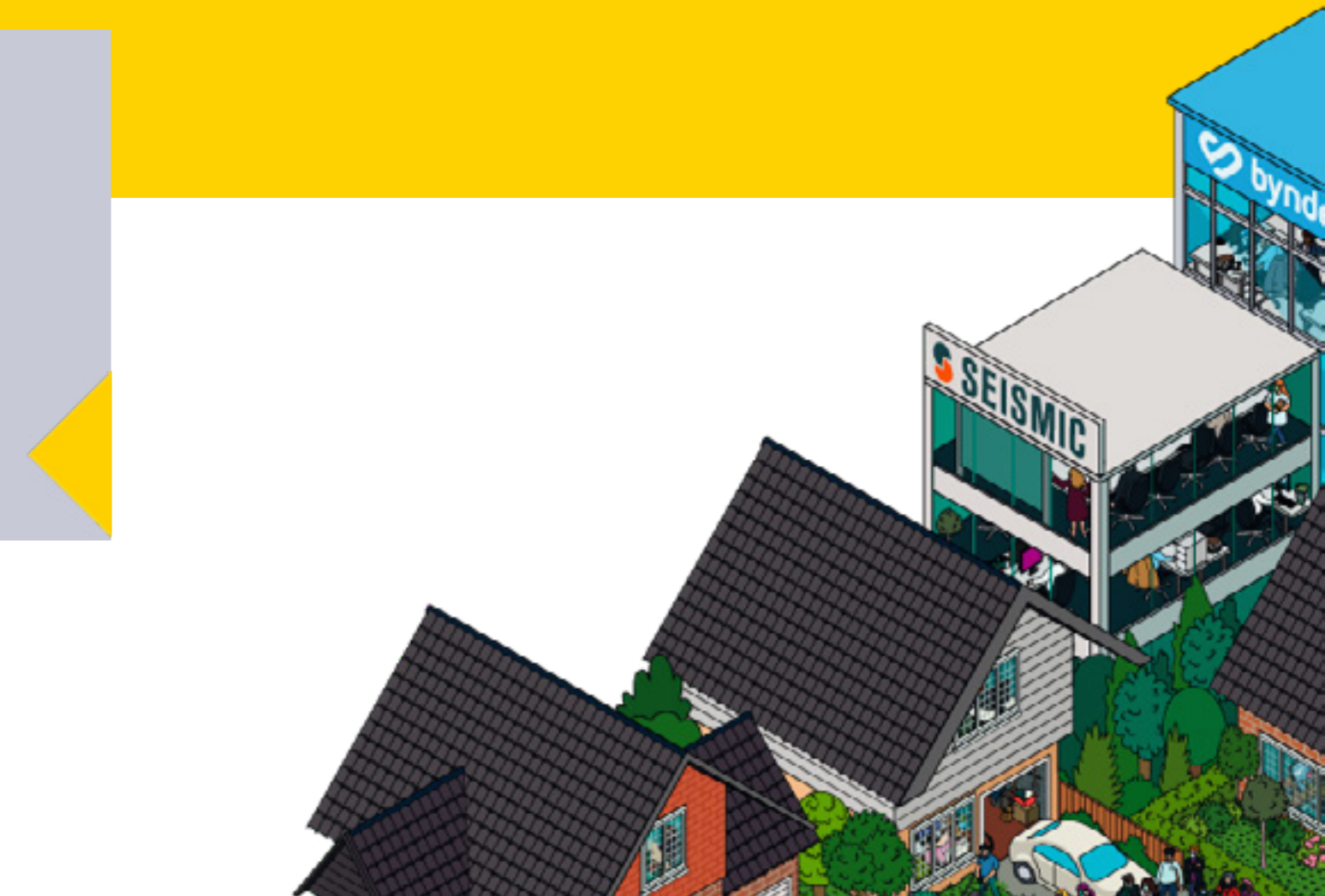
Takeaways

- **Identify** the most valuable digital tools and platforms.
- Use these tools to **monitor** relevant conversations and themes.
- Use the **data to shape buyer personas and develop messaging** that will resonate.
- **Define** the most important **metrics** you want to track.
- Constantly **re-evaluate and refine**.



“The ability to sense changing conditions and adapt in real-time has become more critical. Success is dependent on your ability to quickly pivot based on data insights and learnings. While campaigns should be built to last, sales and marketing teams must be agile enough to quickly rethink and adjust.”

Warren Daniels, vp of worldwide demand generation, Bynder





STEP 2:

Engage

Taking the time to identify your prospects is worthless if you can't then connect and engage with them to push them through the sales funnel. **This is where effective content marketing comes into play. It has the power to influence audiences, drive conversations and deliver sales leads.**

The b2b market is full of brands that focus on product features and push out content that isn't engaging at a human level. **If you truly want to make an impact with prospects, create emotive content that connects with the audience's pain points and challenges.**

"Match your messaging to your audience. So often brands are not able to clearly say how they will solve the problem the customer is facing. And replicating messages from other regions won't work – messages must be localised."

Nick Leighton, NettResults, Middle East





“Content is instrumental in any engagement. It’s about telling the story and how it creates value for the prospect. With data now readily available, understanding what prospects are interested in gives you an added advantage in customising the right content at the right time.”

Jane Prior, Priority Consultants, SE Asia



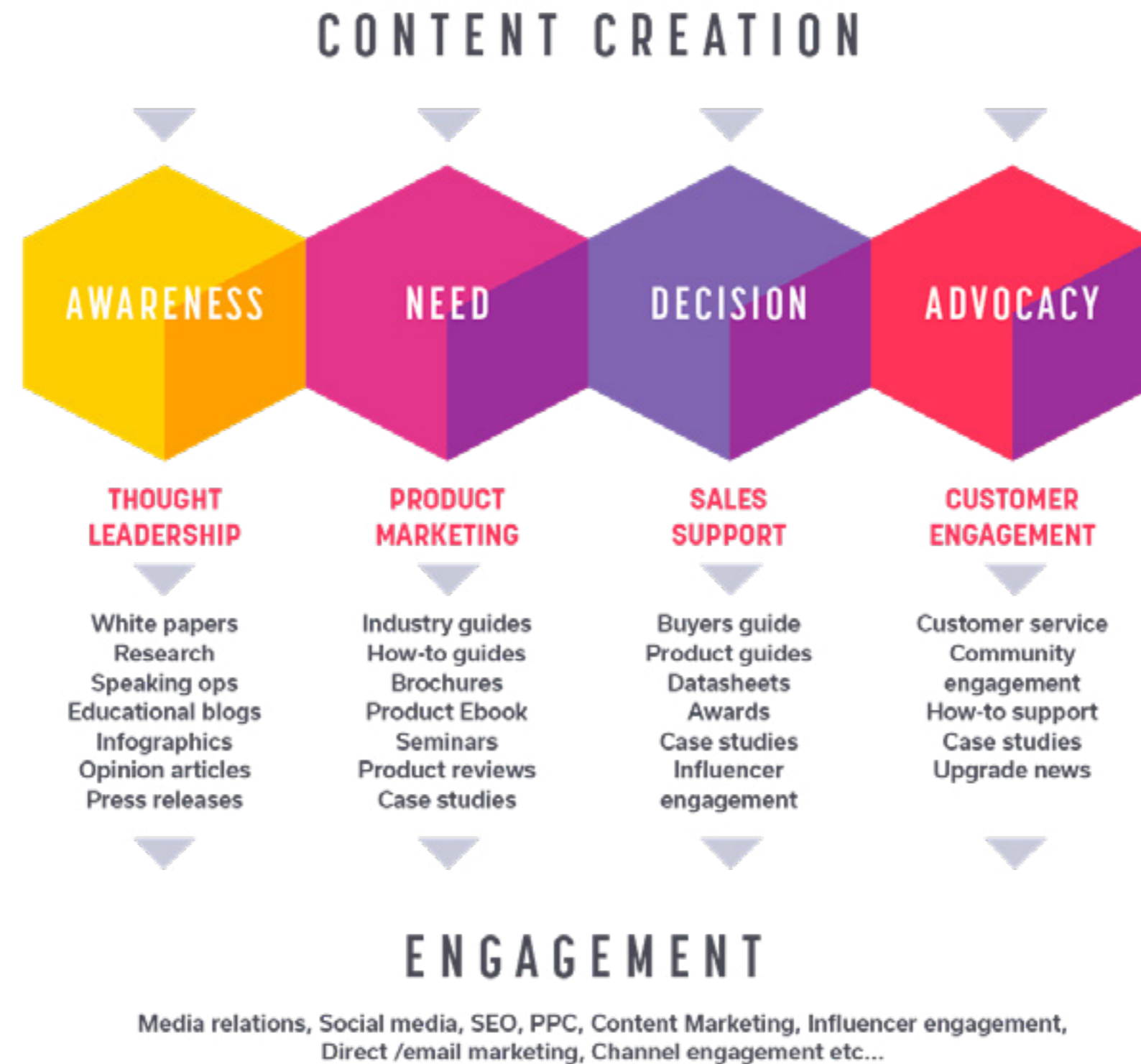
PLUTCHIK'S MODEL

Source: <https://visionone.co.uk/market-research-news/wheel-of-emotions/>

The thought that b2b marketing can't generate an emotional response is a myth. Emotions such as fear, uncertainty, risk, reassurance and trust are all at play in the b2b world – exploit them to drive a response from your target prospects. **Focus on telling stories, rather than selling product features.**



Effective content



An effective content creation strategy balances multiple content formats, as different content types work best at different stages of the sales cycle. For example, create educational content (eg blogs and thought leadership articles) for top of funnel engagement – the awareness stage. This will build brand recognition among potential customers.

Then, make content more specific and product-focused the further down the funnel you go. Create buyer guides, product reviews and datasheets to nurture leads and give them all the information they need to make a purchasing decision.

But don't forget engagement is a two-way street – it's not just about outbound. Involve industry analysts, influencers and customers in your campaigns to add credibility and build trust among prospects. Content such as case studies, joint speaking opportunities and contributed articles will do the trick.



“Top-of-the-funnel investment is critical to build trust, education and drive inbound inquiries. Brands need to articulate and demonstrate their value-adds and use cases.”
Winnie Palmer, head of marketing EMEA, Seismic



Engagement channels



You must also understand which channels to target. **Use a data-driven approach to engage the right people, through the right channel at the right time – this will maximise the impact of content with your customers and prospects.**

There are many different engagement activities. Traditional media relations, speaking opportunities and industry awards, through to digital methods such as podcasts, webinars and social media.

Each activity is a valuable cog in a broader strategy to reach and engage the people you want to talk to. **Build brand awareness and position your spokespeople as industry experts through media relations**, or use industry awards to provide proof-points on the quality of your products or services.

“Brands seeking to engage prospects need a strategically sound engagement strategy and a multi-channel approach. Brand awareness is vital in engaging prospects. It makes the top of the funnel wider and the sides steeper, lowering the overall cost of user acquisition.”

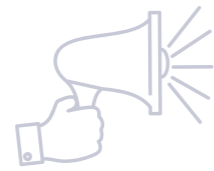
Caroline Shawyer, The PR Group, Australia



And these channels don't work in isolation. They must form one integrated marketing and communications strategy. This will enable you to tell stories and deliver consistent messages to prospects through multiple points of engagement. By knowing your customer, the talking points that will resonate and where they consume their content, you'll put yourself in the best position to build trust, awareness and engagement.



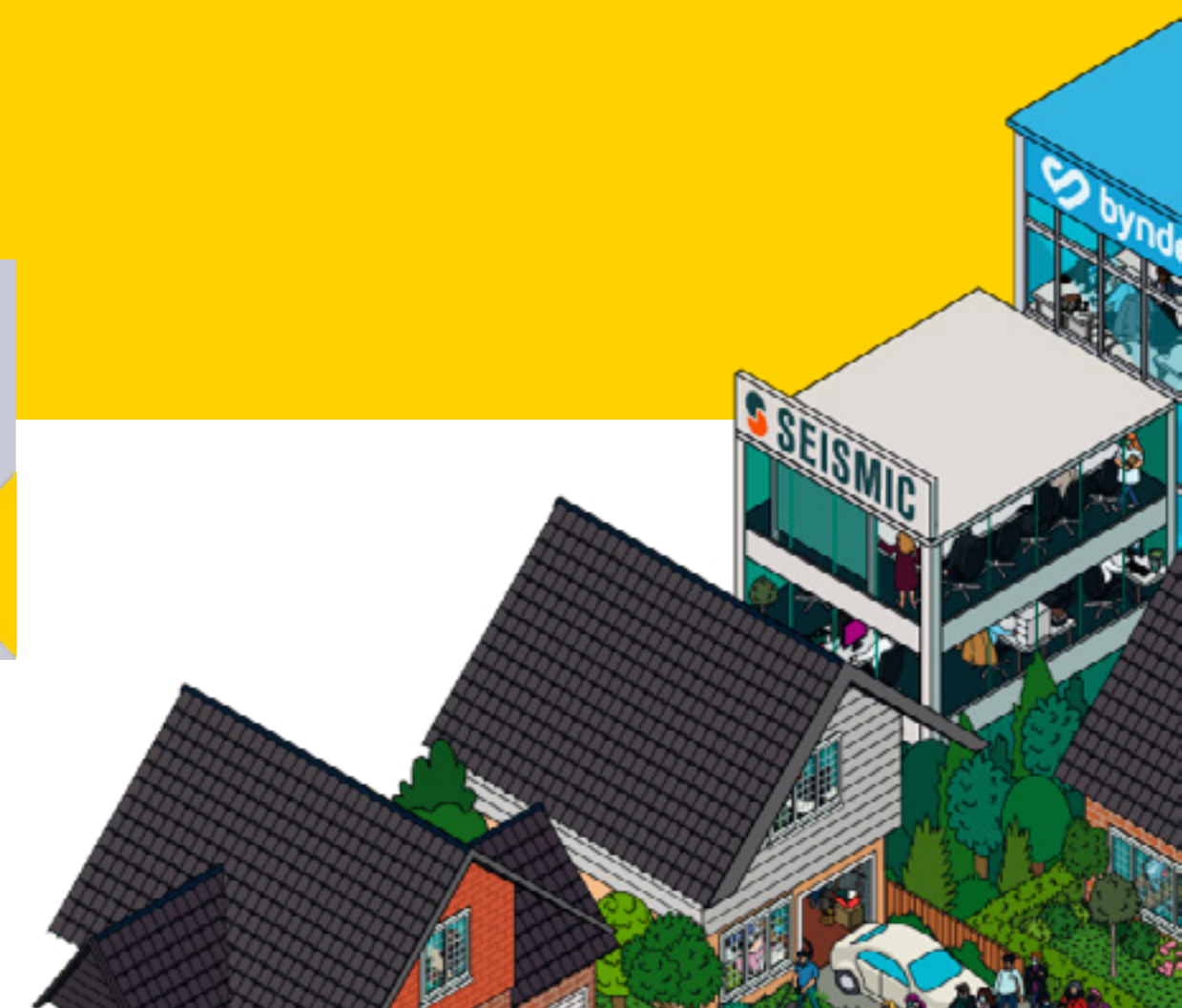
Takeaways



- Develop content to **connect and engage** with your target audience – put emotion at the centre.
- Focus on **different content formats** at different stages of the sales funnel.
- Work out **which channels to target** to maximise the impact of your content.



“Build in the ability to customise content and assets, and refine ‘in the moment’ for delivery through a multitude of channels simultaneously.”
Warren Daniels, vp of worldwide demand generation, Bynder





STEP 3:

Convert

So, you've identified who you're targeting. You've engaged them with some quality content. **But how do you close the loop by converting them into a new customer?**

This is undoubtedly the hardest part of the process and is dependent on close collaboration between marketing and sales teams. Marketing teams must hand over leads with enough information to inform the salesperson. **Share key data gathered during the engagement phase in a format that sales teams can use to make that final push.**

"A close working relationship between sales and marketing is vital. Both are working to generate business growth and the available toolset has evolved to help them do so collaboratively."

Mauricio Figueras, IMS Marketing, LATAM





“Sales and marketing teams are becoming increasingly collaborative. They must unite to generate not only leads, but also sales and profit. Marketing teams know how to use the tools to forecast trends and monitor clients’ behaviours, while sales teams know their clients’ needs and what they want to hear. It’s a win-win combination.”

Vânia Gracio, Sing Communications, Brazil

1 Offer a free trial or demo

In the world of b2b software, getting hands-on with the software/platform can make a big difference.

2 Respond quickly

It might sound obvious, but a slow response time is one of the biggest barriers to lead conversion. Don’t make them wait.

3 Stay in contact

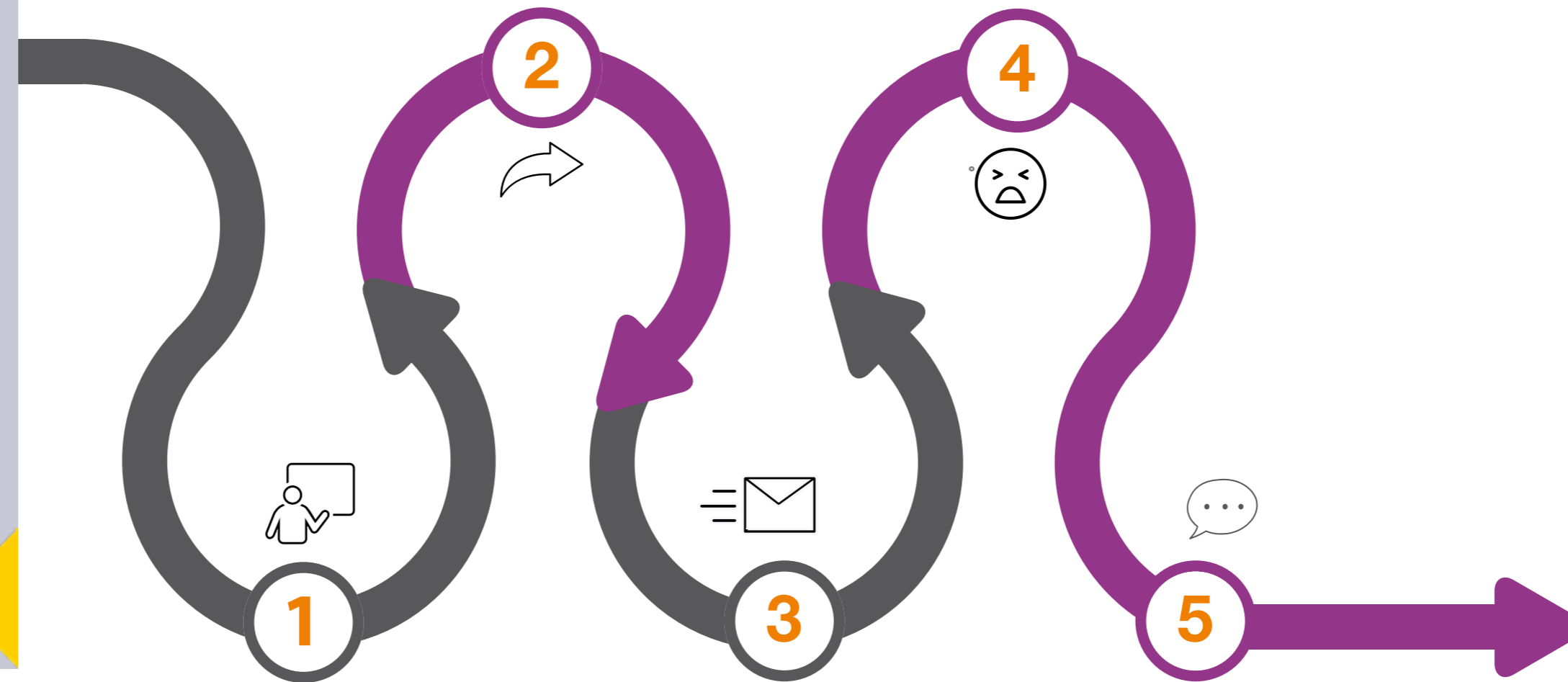
Don’t let a hot lead turn cold. Keep following up with content you think will resonate (eg case studies) until you get a clear “yes” or “no”.

4 Focus on pain points

Clearly illustrate how your product/service can solve your prospect’s biggest concerns.

5 Tell stories

The hard sell doesn’t usually work. Instead, take a storytelling approach by illustrating how you can make the prospect’s life easier.



There are also regional differences to consider. Sales triggers and processes can differ considerably between countries. Localise your approach using digital tools and local experts to ensure success.





Takeaways

- Develop a close relationship between sales and marketing.
- Use different tactics to help push leads over the line.
- Consider regional nuances.



“Innovative solutions can now directly enable sellers to deliver personalised buyer experiences at scale across teams, geographies, languages and time-zones, giving sales and marketing the tools to truly integrate at the content level for consistent storytelling.”

Winnie Palmer, head of marketing EMEA, Seismic





Build your brand



As the level of competition continues to grow, you'll have to work harder to build connections with prospects. Understanding your target audience at a deeper level to tailor content and campaigns to their specific needs, challenges and concerns is now vital.

This is where we can help.

We're experts at building brands, combining audience insights with creative storytelling to drive sales leads across international markets. We'll get you to where you want to be.

Get in touch to find out how we can help engage your prospects, build your brand and grow your business globally.

Visit us at rlyl.com | Email us at hello@rlyl.com



Can you find
Lottie and Laurie?
