



Marketing trends
and how they
impact sales

Empowering Trust™

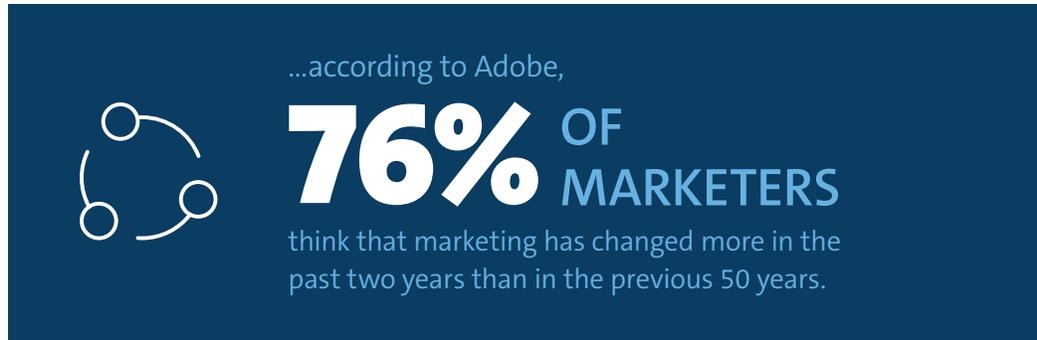
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Chemical marketing is changing fast

Over the past few years, chemical marketing — including plastic, materials and industrial marketing in general — has undergone a revolutionary change. Customers are no longer buying the way they used to.

In fact, according to Adobe, 76 percent of marketers think that marketing has changed more in the past two years than in the previous 50 years.ⁱ



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76% OF MARKETERS think that marketing has changed more in the past two years than in the previous 50 years.

In this e-book, we will look at how chemical marketing and chemical selling have both changed over the past few years — and how you can leverage new trends in three key areas in your marketing plan to boost sales and meet company performance goals:



How has chemical marketing changed?

The basic goal of materials marketing is still the same today as it has always been: Find new customers for your business and sell new products to your existing customers. However, customer preferences for how and where that happens have changed significantly.



62% of customers prefer to use a search engine to get answers to their questions

48% of customers would rather visit a company's website to learn about their products

Buyers prefer search to salespeople as a first step

Today, 62 percent of customers prefer to use a search engine to get answers to their questions — and 48 percent of customers would rather visit a company's website to learn about their products.ⁱⁱ Only 22 percent of today's customers trust a salesperson to help make a buying decision.ⁱⁱⁱ

While salespeople are still vital to plastics, industrial and manufacturing marketing, it's important to understand that buyers today will most likely initiate their own contact. Customers reach out through the process of doing research and will not contact a salesperson until they are ready. This is valuable intelligence for understanding how to best utilize the time and energy of your sales staff.

Prospects are less responsive

It's also harder to get prospects to respond to communication, even in business-to-business (B2B) marketing campaigns. In a 2018 study of 6,200 sales and marketing professionals in 99 countries, HubSpot reported that getting a response from a prospect is now 40 percent more difficult than it was two or three years ago — while connecting by phone is 29 percent harder than it was a few years ago.^{iv}

This makes it important to have articles, research and other content readily available on a website when prospects make a buying decision.

New digital developments

With continuous innovations, customers prefer finding products through newer technology. Artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots, “smart” search engines, rapid downloads and omnichannel marketing are just a few of the new B2B marketing techniques that have a strong impact on sales and account management.

In fact, according to Braffton, 80% of people say “speed, convenience, knowledgeable help and friendliness are most important to positive customer experience.”^v

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Why is marketing changing so much right now?

Why has industrial and manufacturing marketing changed so much over the past few years? New technology is driving many of the changes, especially to chemical selling and chemical marketing.^{vi vii viii ix x}

1 Desire for a consistent user experience

- Customers want — and expect — best-in-class digital technology
- They want to have the same experience at a trade show, on a website and in sales
- According to Braffton, 80% of people say “speed, convenience, knowledgeable help and friendliness are most important to a positive customer experience”

2 Need for personalized marketing

- As marketing has improved, customer expectations have increased
- Customers don’t respond to “scattershot” marketing
- They want extremely personalized industrial marketing and advertising, tailored to their individual needs

3 Value of search engines

- Google gets up to 3.5 billion searches per day (Internet Live Stats)
- Specialized search engines, like UL’s Prospector®, now help buyers find chemicals and raw ingredients
- Voice search is now increasing in importance and currently generates \$1.8 billion sales in the U.S. (Cardinal Digital Marketing)

4 Increasing role of video

- Cisco reports that by 2021, 82% of internet traffic will be through video
- Advertisers will spend \$20 billion on mobile video in 2019, which is up from \$2 billion in 2015 (Cardinal Digital Marketing)



Important trends that will impact your chemical selling today

With all of these changes in technology and consumer preferences, there are many new trends presently shaping chemical selling, and materials and manufacturing marketing.

Let's focus on three B2B marketing trends in particular that are currently influencing how raw ingredients and chemicals are marketed and how they will impact your future efforts in chemical selling:

- **Organic search** requires an expanded online presence, even with a search-optimized site
- **Account-based (ABM) marketing** is paying off and often delivers the highest return on investment for marketers' budgets
- **Omnichannel marketing** is becoming more widely adopted due to advances in marketing automation

Organic search: A very crowded space

Search engines have become a critical part of marketing strategy. In fact, 62 percent of buyers prefer to use a search engine to learn more about a product.^{xi} And 81 percent of buyers perform an online search before making a large purchase.^{xii}

Not only that but search engine leads are more effective than traditional leads. Search engine optimization (SEO) leads currently have a 14.6% close rate, which is much higher than the 1.7% close rate of more traditional outbound marketing formats, like print ads.^{xiii} And 61% of the 6,200 companies surveyed by HubSpot in their "State of Inbound" report for 2018 said that growing their SEO and organic search presence was currently their top marketing priority.^{xiv}

The big challenge here? Search results are getting more and more crowded, and it's becoming more difficult to get your website listed on the first page of search results — and 75% of users will never click past the first page of results, according to Social Media Today.^{xv}

But even with a search-optimized site, it can be difficult to be seen in the crowded field of organic search results. Here are a few strategies to help buyers find you.

Tips for boosting search engine marketing

Speed up website loading time

If a website takes 5 seconds to load, the customer bounce rate increases to 90%, which means 90% of people will leave the website before it finishes loading.^{xvi}

Faster websites are also ranked higher in Google searches. As a website's load time increases, its bounce rate also increases, so Google ranks it lower in search engine results.^{xvii}

Increase keyword count

Use high-quality, long-form content on your website, e.g., blogs, e-books and white papers, that utilize your customers' most popular search terms. Research keywords in plastics, materials, chemicals or industrial marketing that your users will actually use to find your site and incorporate those into your content.

Leverage technical SEO

Technical SEO simply means making sure that your website plays well with the constantly evolving crawlers and indexers used by search engines to rank websites. It deals with the infrastructure of your site, instead of the content. A few ideas for improvement:

- Optimize your URL structure
- Add breadcrumb menus so users can navigate quickly without pressing the back button on their browser
- Optimize your 404 page using a plugin or theme template; suggest other related pages



Improve the quality of your content

In the past year, Google has made significant updates to its algorithm that gives priority to websites that have “breadth and depth” of content quality.^{xviii} This includes content that establishes and grows your credibility with customers.

“Sites that provide exceptional depth in quality content coverage literally soared in rankings throughout the year,” Eric Enge of Perficiant Digital said.^{xix}

Industry-specific search engines: The two-fold benefit

Even if you are using SEO tactics to improve your organic search ranking for industrial marketing manufacturing, it can be difficult to get raw ingredients or chemicals listed on the first page of Google search results. For example, a search of L-ascorbic acid 2-glucoside yields more than 810,000 results. Without the proper tools, it will be difficult for searchers to find your products.

The good news is you can utilize an industry-specific search engine to enhance your Google rankings.

An industry-specific search engine, such as UL’s [Prospector®](#), has a large presence within Google and utilizes its high ranking to make chemicals and raw ingredients more accessible to potential customers. Prospector is able to invest more time and resources in SEO to help ensure the materials listed in its search engine rank higher on Google.

For example, by searching L-ascorbic acid 2-glucoside, a company promoting its products on Prospector could appear on the first page of Google results through Prospector’s page, making it more likely for your company’s product to be seen.

Another key benefit of listing your chemicals or raw materials on an industry-specific search engine is having access to product developers around the world. Many raw material buyers start their searches on an industry-specific search engine. By promoting chemicals or raw materials on Prospector, thousands of product developers can directly view your products.

More than 360,000 engineers, buyers and formulators around the world use Prospector not only for the quality of search results but because it provides detailed technical specifications and information about products.

Simply put, promoting raw materials or chemicals on industry-specific search engines will increase your visibility both to product developers using the specialized search engine or on sites such as Google.

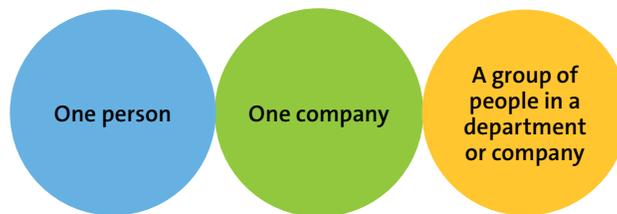
Account-based marketing: Offers exceptionally high ROI

ABM is not a new concept, but it is gaining traction in the B2B marketing world especially in the industrial marketing world. This is mainly due its extraordinarily high return on investment (ROI).

In fact, 87 percent of marketers who've tried ABM report that it offers a higher ROI than any other marketing investment (ITSMA Benchmark Report).^{xx}

Creating a marketing campaign around one prospect

ABM is when you create a highly personalized marketing campaign around a single prospect. This prospect could be:



Instead of spending large amounts of money on scattershot marketing for an entire region or industry segment, you spend a smaller amount of money on a highly targeted, personalized campaign for one individual or company to get a better ROI.

Benefits of ABM

There are many reasons to explore ABM at your company. Here are a few of the payoffs: ^{xxi xxii xxiii}

Higher ROI	{ 87% of marketers who've tried it report an ROI than any other form of marketing (ITSMA Benchmark Report)
Customers love it	{ A more personalized marketing experience makes their job easier, capitalizes on the trend of personalization in B2B marketing
Buyers spend more money	{ 48% of buyers spend more when their marketing experience is personalized (Cardinal Digital Marketing)
Easier to track ROI	{ Easy to see payoff in a customer relationship management (CRM) system. For example, when you spend \$1,000 on marketing to a single company or individual then receive a \$3,000 purchase eight weeks later.
Your competitors are using it	{ More than 60% of companies are currently planning to launch an ABM campaign in the next year (HubSpot)

Steps for implementing ABM at your chemical or raw ingredient company

Align your sales and marketing

According to HubSpot, only 22 percent of companies report that their sales and marketing departments are aligned around the same goals.^{xxiv} ABM helps by bringing sales and marketing together to set goals, choose targets, and confirm ROI.

Choose your targets

- Identify the new or existing prospects that you want to sell more products to
- Define who to focus on within those accounts and the specific actions you want them to take

Determine which tools are needed to accomplish and measure your goals

Platforms that can provide high-quality and specific data on your target accounts will produce better results. You'll need a robust customer relationship management (CRM) system that can show a detailed history of your interactions with a specific prospect and track dollars spent on marketing versus prospect purchases.

Also, consider using a lead generation system for the chemical and raw ingredient industry, e.g., UL's Connect, that can show real-time information on individuals who are viewing your products, including their contact information, company name and job title. This will make it easier to identify and target valuable prospects.

Design a marketing campaign

- Create a personalized marketing campaign to your individual(s) or company
- Create messaging for each account and relevant stakeholder, include calls to action that help facilitate the sale
- Use digital ads, targeted emails, personalized offers and webinars to reach your individual prospects

Measure the results

Return to your CRM regularly, after three months, six months and 12 months, and measure total dollars spent on marketing versus total dollars generated in revenue.



Omnichannel marketing: Now more feasible with advances in marketing automation technology

Customers expect omnichannel marketing today

Omnichannel marketing is a technical term for a pretty simple idea. With omnichannel marketing, you create a highly personalized customer experience by making sure that all of your customer contact points, such as your websites, social media, phone calls, emails, mobile apps and trade shows, recognize your customer and can intelligently share information between each other about their searches, preferences and buying history.

In other words, all of your many marketing systems speak to each other and share data, so the customer has a uniform buying experience no matter where or how they interact with your business. Whether they're at your trade show booth, on your website or receiving a call from your salesperson, the customer receives a tailored experience.

This is becoming an important part of the customer experience and a standard expectation of buyers.

More feasible with new technology

With new advances in marketing automation in recent years, it has become much easier to create a consistent user experience across platforms — by using a CRM that intelligently captures customer purchase and search history, and shares that information with all platforms, such as digital ads, your website and your sales staff.

Omnichannel marketing is a clear improvement over multichannel marketing, where a customer could interact with all your systems. But multichannel systems would not recognize your customer or share information about past purchases, so the personal touch was missing.

Why omnichannel marketing is so important today ^{xxv xxvi}

Better user experience { Gives buyers smooth, consistent communication across all platforms; less frustrating

Improves customer retention { Companies who use omnichannel marketing retain an average of 89% of their customers (Invesp)

Customers are more profitable { These customers are 15% more profitable than digital-only buyers and 25% more profitable than buyers who only talk to salespeople (Braffton)



Tools for successful omnichannel marketing

Use an omnichannel-friendly CRM

Make sure you have a robust CRM software that can facilitate/track customer interactions across various marketing systems, e.g. web, Twitter, LinkedIn and trade shows.

Use marketing automation

Managing the customer journey across various channels isn't feasible without marketing automation. So, it makes sense that, according to Braffton's Demand Gen Report, 54% of B2B brands now use marketing automation in 2019.^{xxvii}

Use targeted paid channels

In addition to creating a customer-centric journey across your owned marketing channels, you can augment your presence with targeted paid channels to reach prospects that aren't currently in your CRM.

And since it can be hard to get in front of new prospects, using paid media, such as [Prospector](#)[®] digital advertising, can allow you to reach a highly targeted audience in multiple channels.

Data and analytics: The foundation of these trends

What is the foundation for these trends? Data analytics, which tells your sales and marketing teams about:

- Who is searching for your products online
- What products they are searching for
- How well your products are performing
- Which marketing strategies and tactics are driving results

Today, only 52 % of B2B marketing decisions are made based on data, but that number is expected to rise significantly over the next several years as companies discover the value of using data analytics to boost their sales.^{xxviii}

In fact, the American Marketing Association estimated that the average amount of marketing budgets dedicated to analytics will jump from 6.7% in 2018 to 21.3% in 2021.^{xxix} In other words: The sooner you incorporate it into your daily operations to help with decision-making, the better.

Data analytics can boost operations and sales performance

A good data analytics program can drastically improve your sales performance and even your profits. In fact, when McKinsey & Company surveyed 700 companies worldwide, they found that businesses that invest in data analytics actually increase their operating profit by a solid 6%. These companies also outperformed their peers by 85% in sales growth and 25% in gross margin.^{xxx}

By studying who is looking at your products and which products they are interested in — and then adjusting your marketing, sales, production and distribution accordingly — you can make production and forecasting more accurate, find new leads, and increase your overall bottom line.

Want to learn more about data analytics?

To learn more about data analytics, including how you can use it to boost your marketing, check out our recent e-book, "[Converting Data into Action](#)."



Let UL take your chemical marketing into the future

Connect

[UL's Connect](#) helps generate leads and data for your marketing and sales teams. With an easy-to-use web interface that can be accessed on any smartphone, tablet or PC, Connect helps you perform data analytics and facilitate your industrial marketing by showing you: helps you perform data analytics and facilitate your industrial marketing by showing you:

- How well your products are performing
- ROI of your marketing
- Who is viewing your products online
- New leads for your business
- Opportunities for ABM

Prospector®

[UL's Prospector](#) is a specialized search engine used by more than 360,000 engineers, formulators, product developers and buyers from 100,000 different companies in the chemical and raw ingredient market. Prospector offers comprehensive chemical marketing solutions to boost your personalized, ABM and omnichannel marketing, including:

- Lead generation
- Content marketing
- Digital ads
- Newsletter advertising

Let [Prospector](#) and [Connect](#) help with your:

Chemical marketing and chemical selling

Raw ingredient marketing

Manufacturing marketing

Plastic marketing

Industrial marketing

Materials marketing

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Contact your account representative or send an email to sales@ulprospector.com.
Visit us at <https://s.ul.com/MSCMarketing>.



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