TechTarget

Where serious technology buyers decide

2015 TechTarget Media Consumption Report

Guided by content:

How IT buying teams navigate through the research and purchasing process

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There are many paths buyers can take when purchasing technology. It's up to marketers to guide them in the right direction.

When presented with a technology problem at their organization, IT professionals are tasked with selecting the right solution and evaluating all the vendors that best meet their specific technology needs. This process often involves a thorough assessment of the market landscape, discussions among internal stakeholders, in-depth analyses and comparisons of solutions, direct engagement with vendors, and a final purchase decision.

Over the years, IT buyers have sought out guidance to make well-informed decisions from the large quantity of content assets (product literature, white papers, etc.) readily available to them through various online sources. This has made buyers less reliant on live conversations with vendors during the buying process; making it more difficult for vendors to directly impact their final purchase decision.

To serve as a true guide, marketers must understand the different dynamics of this process and align their content and messaging to the research needs of each IT buyer. To assist technology marketers and their sales teams with this strategy, TechTarget produces its annual Media Consumption research study.

About the study

This report focuses on key findings from TechTarget's 2015 Media Consumption study to provide a complete perspective of the buying process for enterprise IT organizations.

The key findings featured in this report include:

- The amount of members involved in the buying process often varies by company size and by type of purchase

- Those involved in making purchase decisions do not all have senior titles

- Information needed for purchases is collected from a variety of information sources, many of which are not owned by vendors

- Content is consumed across the entire buying process and through a variety of media types

- The selection of content assets is driven by relevancy and utility, not by authorship

- Information and/or additional calls to action featured in white papers are often missed by buyers

- When viewing non-mobile content on mobile devices, buyers will often save, collect and view the content later on a desktop or laptop

- Thought-leadership and comparative content is key for lesser-known vendors to influence purchase decisions

- Well-informed buyers expect consulta-tive, technically-focused engagements from sales reps

This overview report does not include all survey questions asked in this year's study.
To receive the complete data set, please contact the TechTarget Market Research Team at marketresearch@techtarget.com.

Buying team

The amount of stakeholders involved in the buying process often varies

5+ member buying teams

Company size (number of employees)

Less than 250	**20%**
250–1,000	**22%**
1,000–10,000	**41%**
10,000+	**50%**

Purchase size

Less than $100,000	**23%**
Greater than $100,000	**56%**
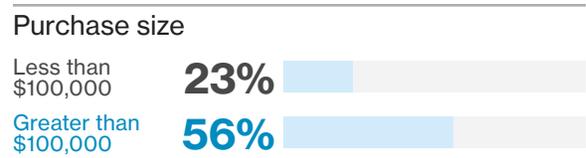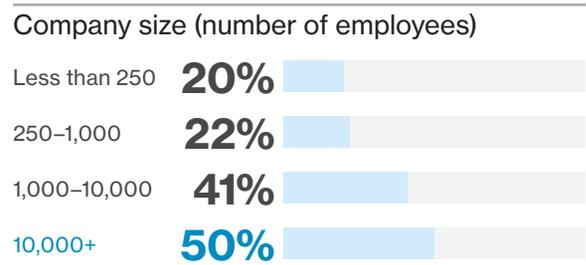
Buying team size by purchase type

Networking

2+ members	**94%**
5+ members	**29%**

Cloud Computing

2+ members	**93%**
5+ members	**40%**

Big Data

2+ members	**97%**
5+ members	**47%**
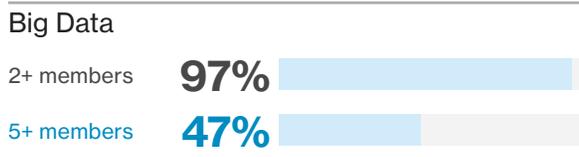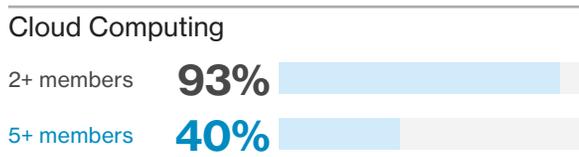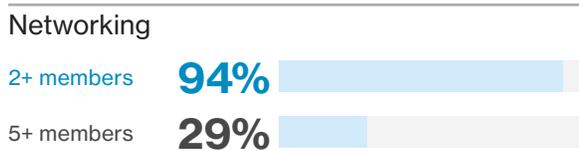
Key takeaways

Identify the number of buying team members by monitoring research behaviors of all titles and roles at an account

Customize your content to the various roles and members of a buying team

Buying team

Job titles do not always indicate role in purchase decisions

Roles within buying process

Decision maker
Senior IT Management	**71%**
IT Management	**46%**
IT Staff	**31%**

Decision influencer
Senior IT Management	**19%**
IT Management	**34%**
IT Staff	**49%**

Implementer
Senior IT Management	**10%**
IT Management	**17%**
IT Staff	**14%**
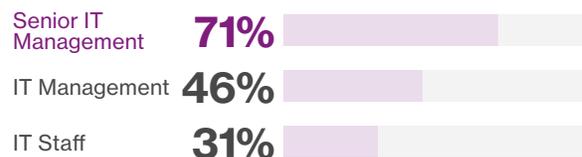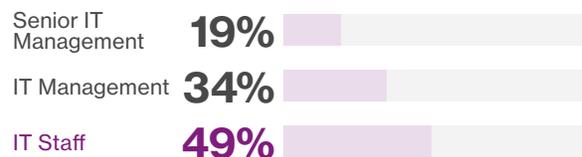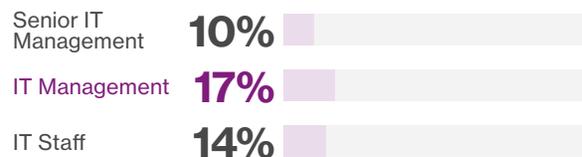
Decision maker role by vendor familiarity

New, unfamiliar vendor
Senior IT Management	**84%**
IT Management	**53%**
IT Staff	**50%**
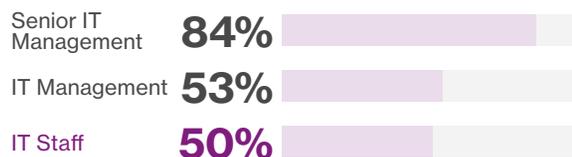
Previously-purchased vendor
Senior IT Management	**66%**
IT Management	**46%**
IT Staff	**32%**

Key takeaways

Decide   Influence   Implement
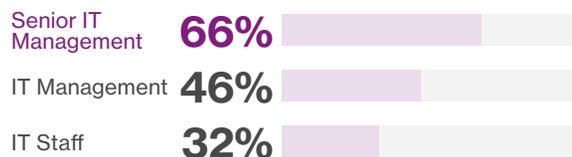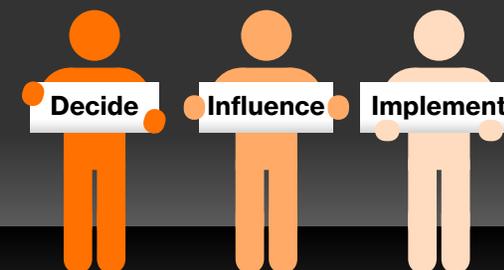
Build your personas based on job functions, not job titles

Lead filters exclude key buying team members and can create missed opportunities

Buying process

Vendor-owned, influenced and agnostic environments are used to research solutions

Information sources

Vendor-owned
Vendor websites
VARs

Vendor-influenced
IT-related online communities
Face-to-face technology events
IT publisher websites
General business websites

Vendor-agnostic
Search engines
General social networks
Peers and colleagues
Industry analysts/published research

IT buyers don't generalize

Use of information source for IT purchases

IT-vendor websites	**89%**
IT-publisher websites	**76%**
General social networks	**40%**
General business websites	**48%**

Evaluating the marketplace

Vendor-agnostic **43%**
Vendor-owned **20%**
Vendor-influenced **37%**

Comparing vendors

Vendor-agnostic **39%**
Vendor-owned **25%**
Vendor-influenced **36%**

Short listing vendors

Vendor-agnostic **38%**
Vendor-owned **30%**
Vendor-influenced **32%**
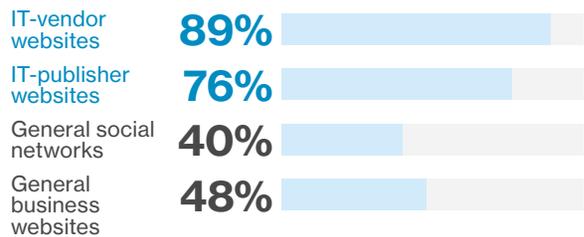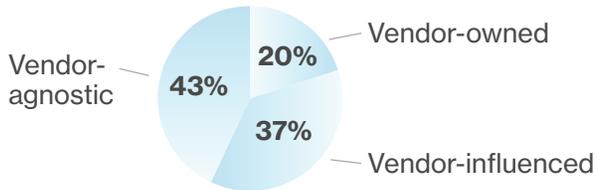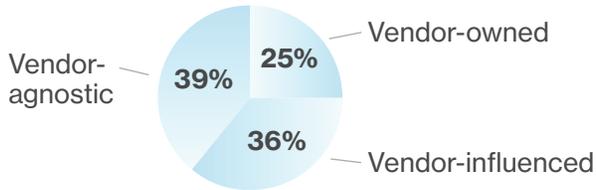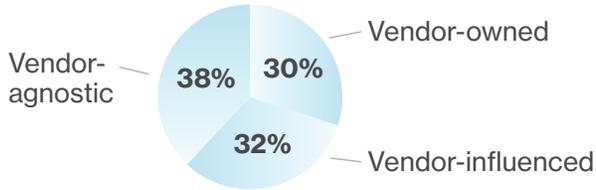
Key takeaways

Align outbound marketing efforts to IT-focused venues since general business and social websites are viewed as ineffective during the process

Develop a fair balance of inbound and outbound marketing efforts to influence the buying team throughout the process

IT

Inbound

Outbound

TechTarget
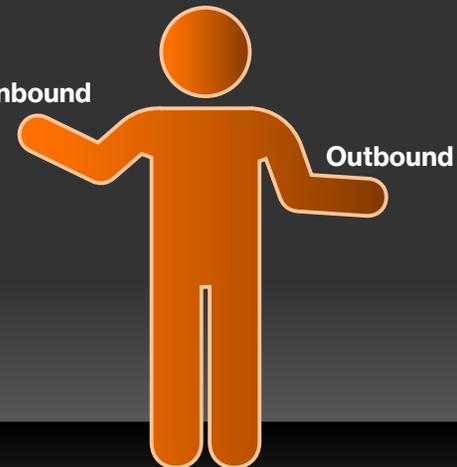
IT buyers consume the most content during the early and middle stages of the process

Early stage
91%
of buyers are consuming content during this stage

Middle stage
85%
of buyers are consuming content during this stage

Late stage
42%
of buyers are consuming content during this stage
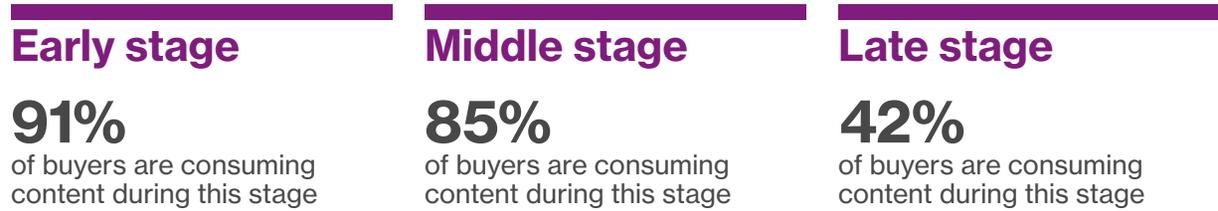
Effective media types by stage of buying process

Most effective

Early stage	Middle stage	Late stage
Product literature	**Vendor comparisons**	**Vendor comparisons**
White papers	**Product literature**	**Product literature**
		Trial software downloads
Vendor comparisons	White papers	Customer case studies
Videos	Customer case studies	Online vendor demos
Customer case studies	Trial software downloads	White papers
	Online vendor demos	

Key takeaways

Don't hesitate when it comes to deploying your marketing messaging; broadcast it via any content and media type

Be sure to build a large content portfolio that features a variety of content types in order to guide buyers through each stage

Content

IT buyers select content based on relevancy and utility

Key characteristics when selecting content

#1 Relevant to my IT purchase

#2 Featured on a IT-related website

#3 Endorsed by peers

#4 Produced by familiar vendor

#5 Media format

## The information that is needed from content

73%
Technical details and functionality information on a solution

63%
Comparative information on vendors

49%
Expert insight and guidance

48%
Implementation tutorials and success stories

Content selection is not limited to author

25% — Downloaded only vendor white papers

59%

16% — Downloaded only third-party white papers

Downloaded both vendor and third-party white papers

Information preferences for white papers by source

Technical details and functionality information of the vendor's solution

Vendor **78%**

Third-party **65%**

Information on how the vendor and their solutions compares to others

Vendor **54%**

Third-party **72%**
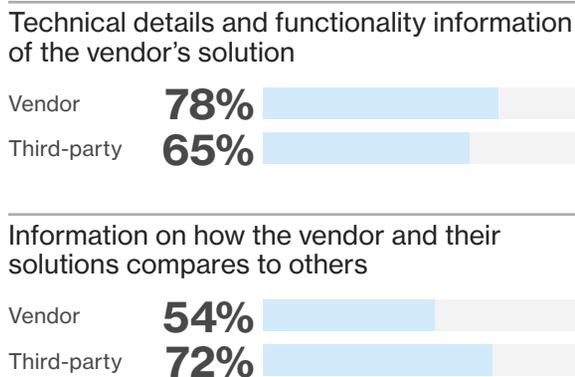
Key takeaways

Make sure your content strategy addresses the IT buyers' needs for technical and comparative information through your content strategies

Focus your white paper efforts to highlight the technical and functionality information of your solution

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Longer white papers are less influential and engaging for IT buyers

60%
do not always read an entire white paper
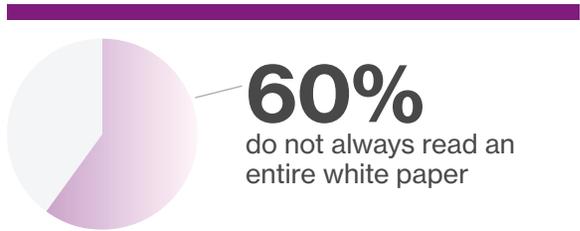
Preferred length of an IT-related white paper

2 pages or less
9%

3–6 pages
52%

7–10 pages
31%

10+ pages
8%

Key takeaways

Make sure key messages and next steps are featured throughout your white paper
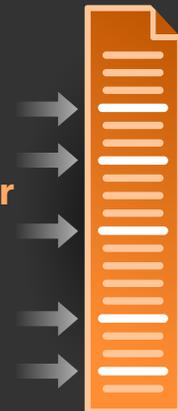
Break longer white papers into multiple content pieces or chapters to nurture and keep buyers engaged
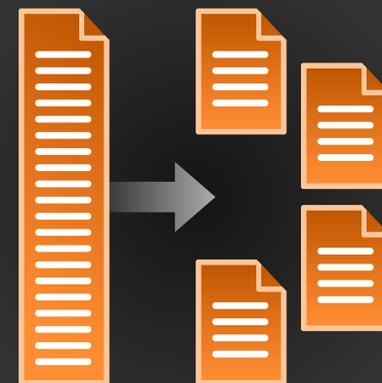
IT buyers consume content on mobile devices, but they do not demand it

Devices used to view content during the buying process

Laptop **94%**

Desktop **77%**

Tablet **55%**

Smartphone **48%**

Viewing non-mobile content on mobile devices

Will save non-mobile content and view later on laptop or desktop **64%**
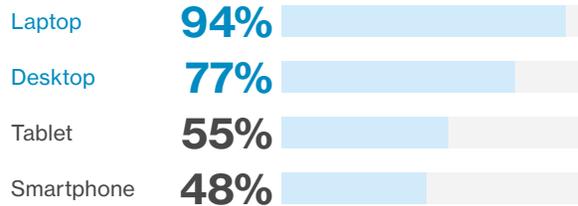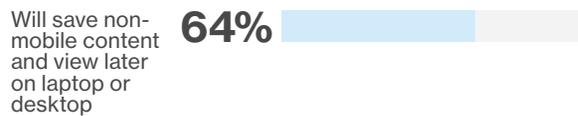
Media formats preferred by mobile device

PDF documents

Tablet **89%**

Smartphone **49%**

Videos and webcasts

Tablet **79%**

Smartphone **51%**

Online learning environments

Tablet **60%**

Smartphone **27%**

Online vendor demos

Tablet **60%**

Smartphone **28%**
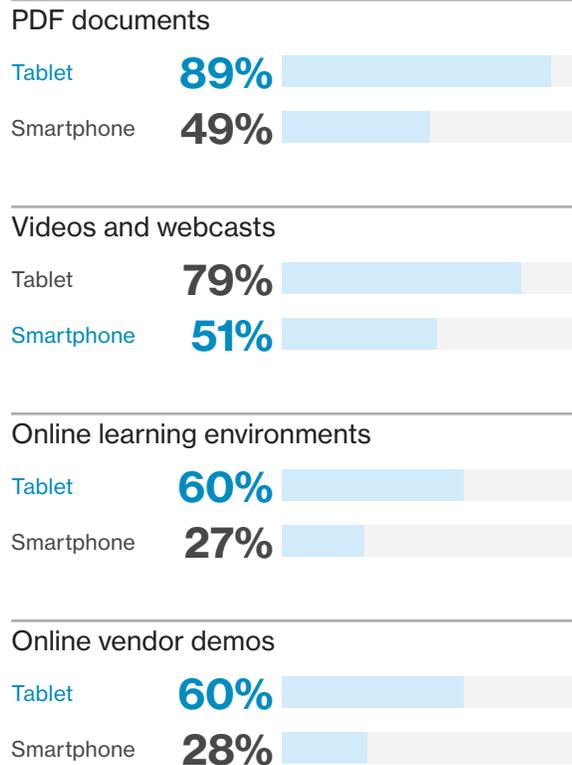
Key takeaways

Don't allow the time constraints of making all content mobile-friendly stop you from producing non-mobile content

Prioritize PDF and video formats when mobilizing content

Strength of content from lesser-known vendors will dictate consideration

Lesser-known vendors are still considered

86%
had interactions with lesser-known vendors during last IT purchase

28%
downloaded content; but did not engage in conversations

41%
engaged in conversations; but did not select for purchase

17%
selected lesser-known vendor for purchase
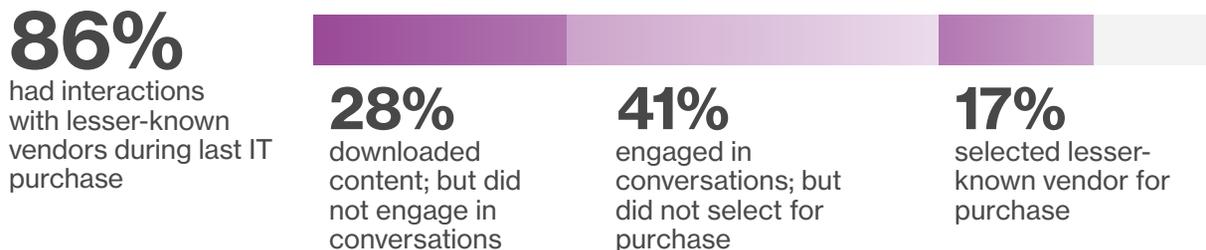
Key drivers of consideration for lesser-known vendors

61%
Content that describes solution

59%
Content that showcases leadership in market

56%
Content that compares vendor to competition

43%
A presence in IT-related information sources

Key takeaways

Produce content that showcases how your solutions are better alternatives to legacy vendors

✔ You
✔ Competitor 1
✔ Competitor 2
✔ Competitor 3
✔ Competitor 4

Be aggressive with your leadership positioning in order to get onto the short lists of IT buyers

Content consumption is a key indicator of vendor preference

Buying team members consume multiple assets from selected vendor

	2+ assets	4+ assets	7+ assets
Purchases greater than **$100,000**	**91%**	**58%**	**30%**
Purchases less than	**87%**	**43%**	**17%**
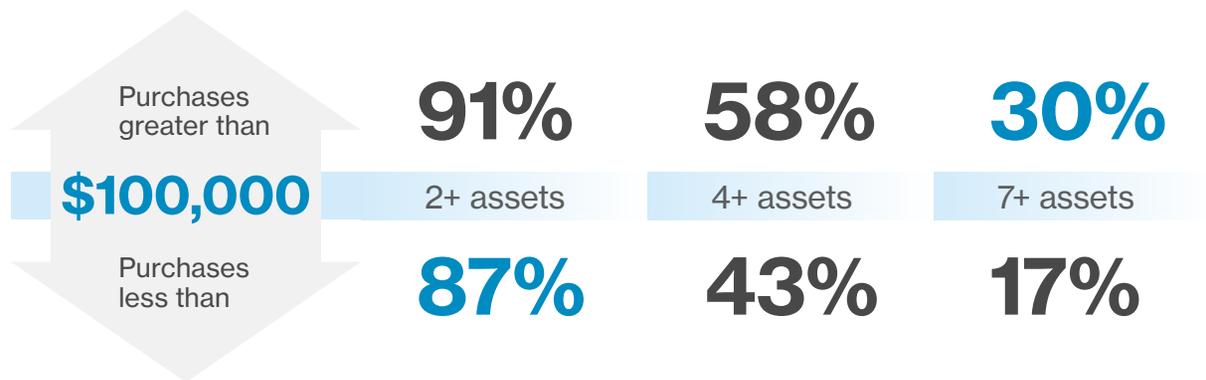
Buying team members engage with online advertisement(s)

52%
clicked ad created by selected vendor

There is rarely one vendor considered during the early and middle stages

Amount of vendors considered

4+
when evaluating the marketplace

2–3
when comparing specific solutions

Key takeaways

Monitor the amount of content an entire buying team consumes

Understand which competitors are also being considered and direct buying teams with comparative insights

Vendor choice

Self-educated buyers demand more technical expertise from sales reps

Preferences for first conversation with sales rep from technology vendor

57%
include implementation expert

51%
present information to distinguish from competition

34%
reference information featured in content consumed

25%
address the concerns of the entire buying team

> **Instead of the sales rep, a sales engineer should be the first contact.**
>
> **Senior IT Management**
> United States

> **Sales reps should provide detailed, specific technical details.**
>
> **Network Management**
> China

> **Sales reps should have an adequate level of technical knowledge.**
>
> **IT Management**
> France

> **It is important that the sales rep calling me has participated in or led several implementations.**
>
> **Systems Management**
> Colombia

Key takeaways

Buying team

Build a more detailed profile of each buying team, including their specific technology needs, in order for sales to engage early and close more deals
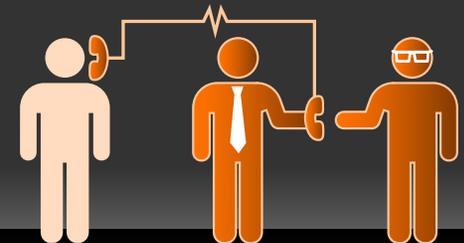
Transition the first engagement with buying teams from a sales call to an implementation discussion with a sales engineer

Key takeaways

Build an accurate profile of the IT buying team and customize your content to the various members

Build your content portfolio and deploy your messaging through any media format

Avoid using lead filters as they may eliminate key decision makers from targeted accounts

Emphasize technical and comparative information when developing content

Inbound
Outbound

Don't rely only on inbound environments as many buyers leverage a variety of information sources for IT-related research

Break longer white papers into chapters with actionable next steps throughout

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Key takeaways continued

Prioritize your mobile content strategies so it doesn't take away from overall development efforts

Monitor the content activities of buying teams to see if you are among those being considered

Be aggressive and position yourself against the competition if you are a lesser-known vendor

✓ You
✓ Competitor 1
✓ Competitor 2
✓ Competitor 3
✓ Competitor 4
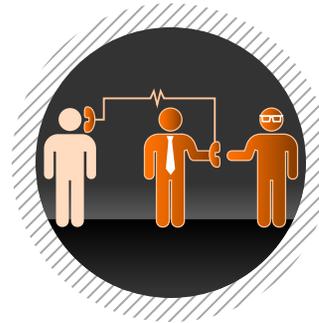
Recommend that sales reps include a sales engineer in the first engagement with IT buying teams

To receive the complete data set, please contact the TechTarget Market Research Team at marketresearch@techtarget.com.

2,430 IT professionals worldwide

Regions

104
Countries

8
Languages

350
North America
repondents

580
Asia-Pacific
repondents

620
Europe, Middle East,
Africa repondents

880
Latin America
repondents

Job titles

11%
Senior IT
Management

38%
IT Management

3%
Senior Non-IT
Management

21%
IT Staff

Company size

37%
Less than 250
employees

18%
1,000–10,000
employees

36%
250–1,000
employees

9%
More than 10,000
employees

Industries

14%
Manufacturing

7%
Government

10%
Financial/Banking

6%
Education

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Contact us

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About TechTarget

TechTarget (NASDAQ: TTGT) is the Web's leading destination for serious technology buyers researching and making enterprise technology decisions. Our extensive global network of online and social media, powered by TechTarget's Activity Intelligence™ platform, allows technology sales and marketing teams to leverage real-time purchase intent data to more intelligently engage technology buyers and prioritize follow-up based on active projects, technical priorities and business needs. With more than 120 highly targeted technology-specific websites and a wide selection of custom advertising, branding, lead generation and sales enablement solutions, TechTarget delivers unparalleled reach and innovative opportunities to drive technology sales and marketing success around the world.

TechTarget has offices in Atlanta, Beijing, Boston, London, Munich, Paris, San Francisco, Singapore and Sydney.

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