

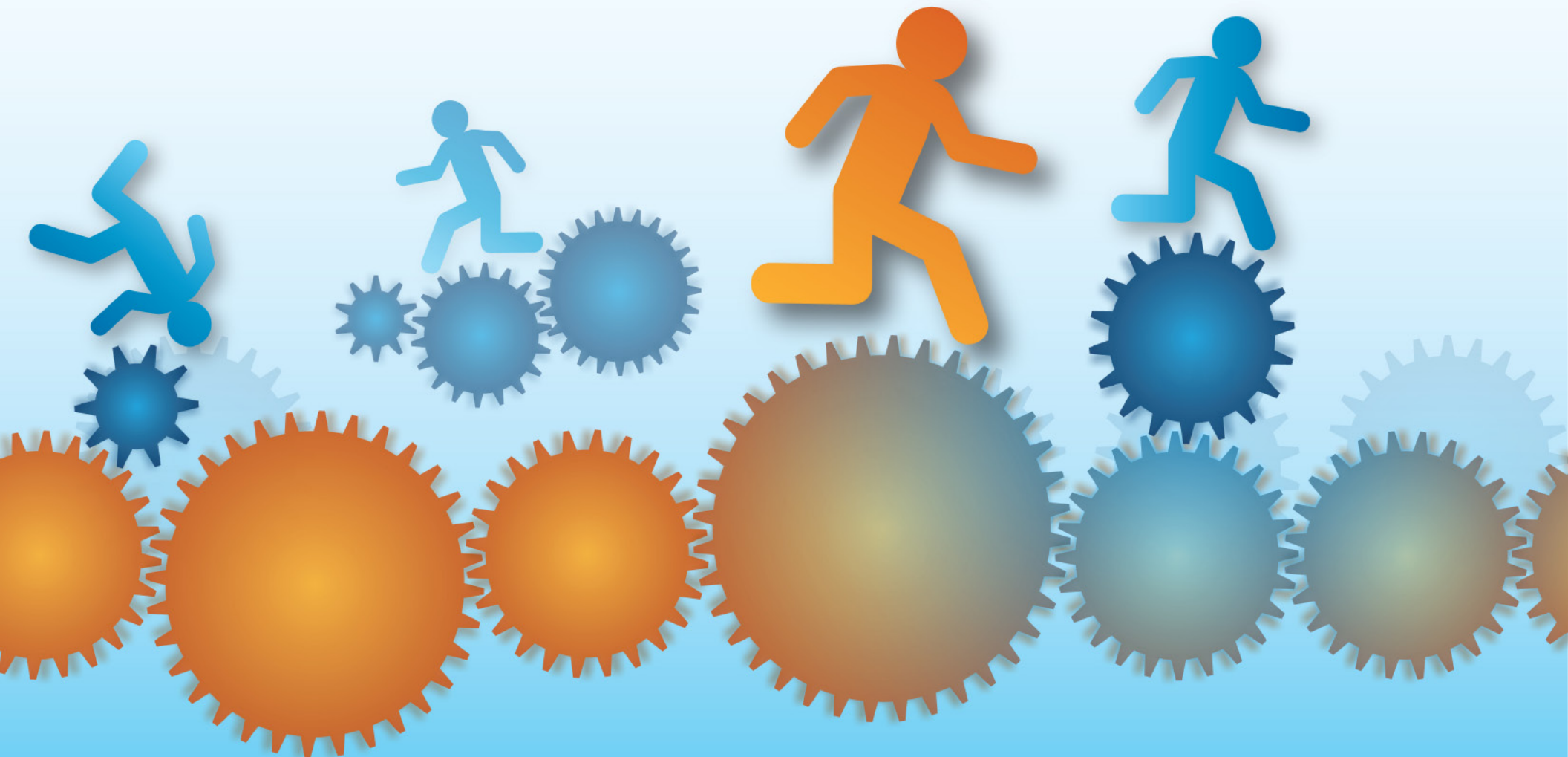


*Where serious technology buyers decide*

A TechTarget Media Consumption Comparative Research Brief

# Marketing strategies vs. IT buyer demands

Identify where your strategies are parallel, lagging or in reverse



## Marketing strategies vs. IT buyer demands

### Providing marketers the right mechanics to align with IT buyers

A large amount of information is being leveraged by IT buyers to make well-informed decisions about technology solutions and vendors. Because of this, marketers are constantly competing to ensure they are aligning the preferred content in the correct venues during the appropriate stage of the IT buy cycle. To understand the content and information source preferences as well as the behaviors of IT buyers when researching technology providers, marketers rely on TechTarget to produce its annual Media Consumption Report.

#### The Media Consumption Report

Recognized by various experts as an informative resource for examining IT buyer trends, TechTarget's Media Consumption Report is an annual research report that investigates the research and purchasing behaviors of IT buyers. This annual report has been published since 2008 and can be found at [www.techtarget.com/research](http://www.techtarget.com/research).

#### About the study

*Marketing strategies vs. IT buyer demands* examines the current buying dynamics, behaviors and preferences of IT buyers and how the strategies of technology marketers stack up. Comparing responses from more than 1,800 IT professionals and 525 marketers worldwide, this study reveals key trends in the research and buying process that can enhance go to market strategies including:

- The accelerated buy cycle and how marketers need to adjust their strategies
- The many components of the decision-making team
- Effective content alignment that guide buyers through process
- Detailed intelligence that will help monitor buyer's activity
- Factors that indicate high-quality leads and need for sales engagement

The research brief does not include every question that was asked in our survey, to receive the full report data, please contact the [TechTarget Market Research Team](#).

#### Technology buyers and professionals rely on us

TechTarget gives technology professionals and executives the information they need to perform their jobs—from developing strategy, to making cost-effective purchase decisions and managing their organizations' technology projects.

Our editorial focus is on creating independent resources, sharing expert advice, facilitating peer communities, and distributing information from technology providers according to the buyer's active projects, specific technical priorities and business needs.

#### Marketers and technology providers get more from us

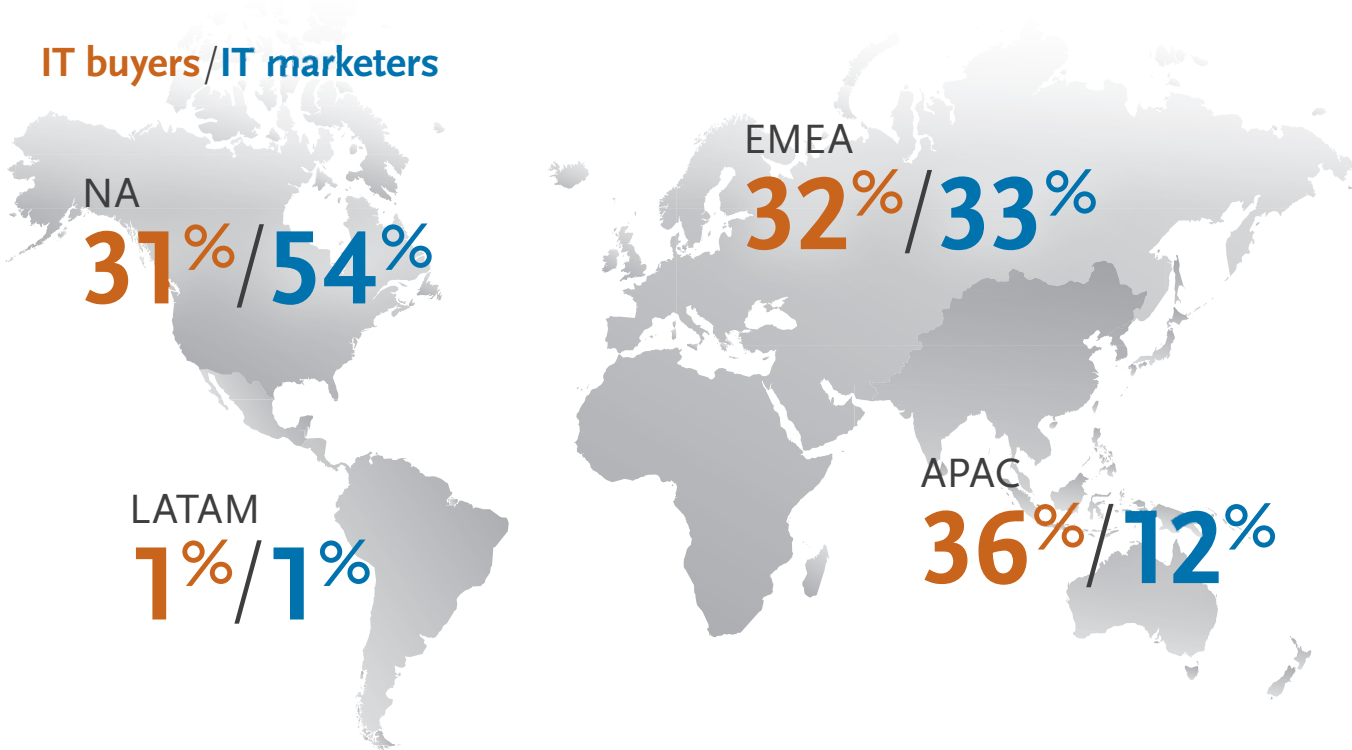
TechTarget connects technology providers with targeted, qualified communities of buyers by offering relevant editorial content as well as active online communities in the [TechTarget universe](#), delivering measurable results that help marketers generate leads, shorten sales cycles, and grow revenues.

Our unmatched branding and lead generation [media solutions](#) are built on an extensive network of online and social media, and the proprietary [Activity Intelligence™](#) platform.

## Global study demographics

The study was fielded in Q4 2012 and features 2,326 completed respondents, 1,801 IT professionals and 525 marketers.

### IT buyers/IT marketers



## In-depth IT buyer demographics

### IT buyer company size

Small	25%
Midsize	34%
Large	41%

### IT buyer roles

IT staff	34%
IT management	44%
Senior IT management	16%
Other	6%

### IT buyer industry

Financial	13%
Government	9%
Education	7%
Healthcare	7%

### IT area of expertise

Application development	33%
Business intelligence	31%
Cloud	23%
Data center management	31%
Disaster recovery/compliance	23%
Networking	42%
Security	34%
Storage architecture	23%
Virtualization	31%
Healthcare technology	8%

# IT buyers are making decisions more quickly than you think

Over the last two years, we have observed that the length of time IT buyers are identifying a problem, researching competitive solutions and providers, and making their final decision has shrunk from 12 to 6 months and this still holds true today.

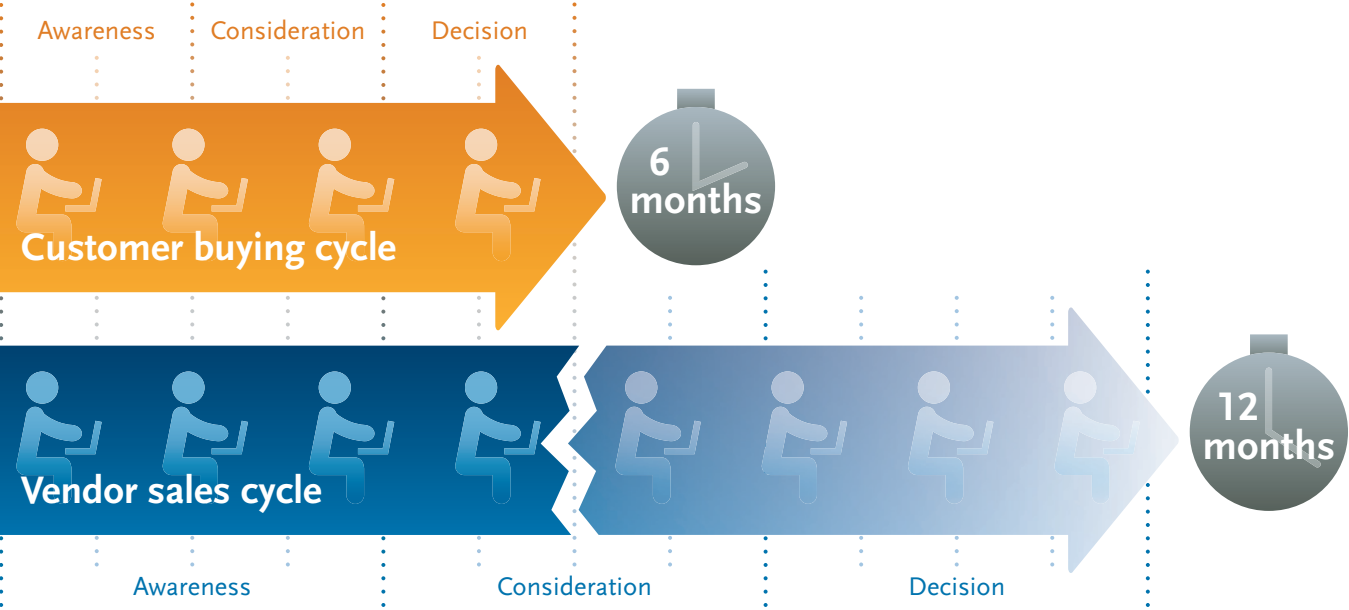
However, the majority of marketers we surveyed indicate their sales cycles of are 12 months long. Because these cycles are not always aligned, it presents potential missed opportunities to provide buyers what they need based on where they are in the buy cycle. As buyers' needs shift through different stages, marketers

may not be matching their content as efficiently as they could be.

While the length of time to make decisions has decreased, the need for information has not. Study findings have shown that IT buyers need to have as many as six interactions during the buy cycle with vendor-content and messaging to consider that vendor for their short-list. This stresses the need to provide the best and most helpful content quickly and often.

## The accelerated timeline of IT buyers

Vendors are unaware of the stage the IT buyer is in, forcing misaligned strategies and ineffective engagement



## What does this mean for you?

### Adjust your strategies to accommodate quick decisions

IT buyers need your content quickly, make sure your campaigns are always on and continuously providing useful information that will help buyers make decisions faster. Make sure you converge your efforts across platforms to make content convenient and easily accessible.

### Provide many types of content

Enable buyers to self-nurture by providing enough content geared toward different stages of the buy cycle. Also, set up nurture streams that allow them to attain more content that can guide them through the process quicker.

### Know the stage of your target audience

IT buyers have preferences in regards to content types and information sources during each stage of the buy cycle they are in. Being able to identify the stage of your users helps you create and promote content to engage buyers through the buy cycle.

## Decisions are being made at all levels of the IT organization

We have learned that there is a team approach to researching, evaluating and purchasing technology products involving all levels of the IT organization. In fact, 96% of decision-making teams feature more than 1 person, 51% with more than 4 people. There is a common perception that many decisions related to these technology products are made by senior managers.

While senior IT managers certainly make many decisions and are often responsible for setting budgets, 65% of the decision-making for specific products and services (71% for companies with more than 500

employees) is done at the IT manager and staff level.

In an accelerated buy cycle, it is essential that research and decisions need to be made quickly so it is imperative for senior IT managers to include their staff in the decision-making process. In fact, 96% of senior IT managers say they trust the insight and research of their team to collectively make a final decision.

Missed opportunities: Approximately 50% of marketers only develop materials for senior IT managers and only 21% are focusing on all members of the IT department.

### CIOs and Senior IT management are not the only ones making decisions

Only 35% of IT decision makers are senior managers. Many IT managers and staff consider themselves decision makers.

65% of decisions are made by IT Staff and IT Management

IT Staff



IT Management



35% of decisions are made by Senior Management

Senior Management



## What does this mean for you?

### Redefine a high-quality lead

Lead quality should no longer be categorized only by titles. IT staff and management are significant players in the decision-making process and provide the information that is used to determine the best technology solution and vendor. It's time to reevaluate the leads you receive from your campaigns and identify the ones you should take a second look at.

### Develop content for the entire decision-making team

Marketers need to develop content that is focused on all the decision-makers to ensure they influence the IT team's discussion and short-list. Assess your content portfolio to identify opportunities where you need to tailor your current content and build new content that will appeal to different roles of the IT organization.



# IT buyers seek specific content in each stage of their buy cycle

Consuming multiple pieces of content is required for an IT buyer to move through the three stages of the buy cycle and make a decision about a vendor's solution.

In the awareness stage, buyers understand they have a pain point but do not know what is available for them. They seek out content that will help educate them on products such as white papers, product literature and case studies. While not used throughout the entire cycle, they also rely heavily on online videos, eBooks and webcasts in the early stages.

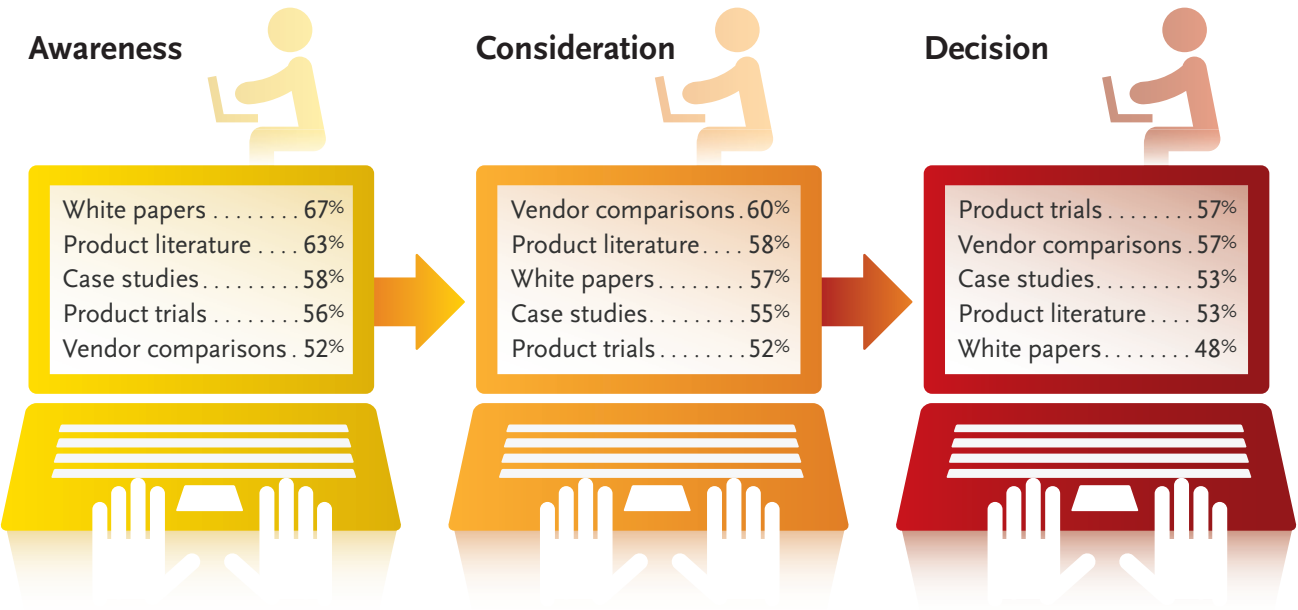
In the consideration stage, buyers have some

knowledge of solution types but require more targeted information to help build their short-list. They turn to technically-oriented materials and content that help narrow down their list of vendors such as technical white papers, product literature and vendor comparisons.

After short-list has been created, buyers seek the answers that will allow them to make a final decision. To determine which solution is the best fit, product trials are very effective as well as content that showcases product usage and success such as case studies and vendor comparisons.

## Top 5 content types leveraged throughout the entire buy cycle

While varying in preference and effectiveness per stage, IT buyers use white papers, case studies, product literature, vendor comparisons and product trials when researching technology products and solutions.



## What does this mean for you?

### Correctly align content to maximize influence

Different types of content vary in use and effectiveness based on the stage of the IT buyer. Make sure your nurturing strategy is aligned and promoting the content that buyers seek in each stage. After downloading a white paper and case study (awareness stage), promote content comparing you to other vendors (consideration stage), and follow-up with a product trial or demo.

### The value of content in the accelerated buy cycle

The accelerated buy cycle has affected the content consumption of buyers. Traditionally, product literature and trial downloads have been used primarily in the later stages. Now, these content types are being leveraged throughout all stages. Marketers must now develop these content types to attract prospects, not just to nurture them.

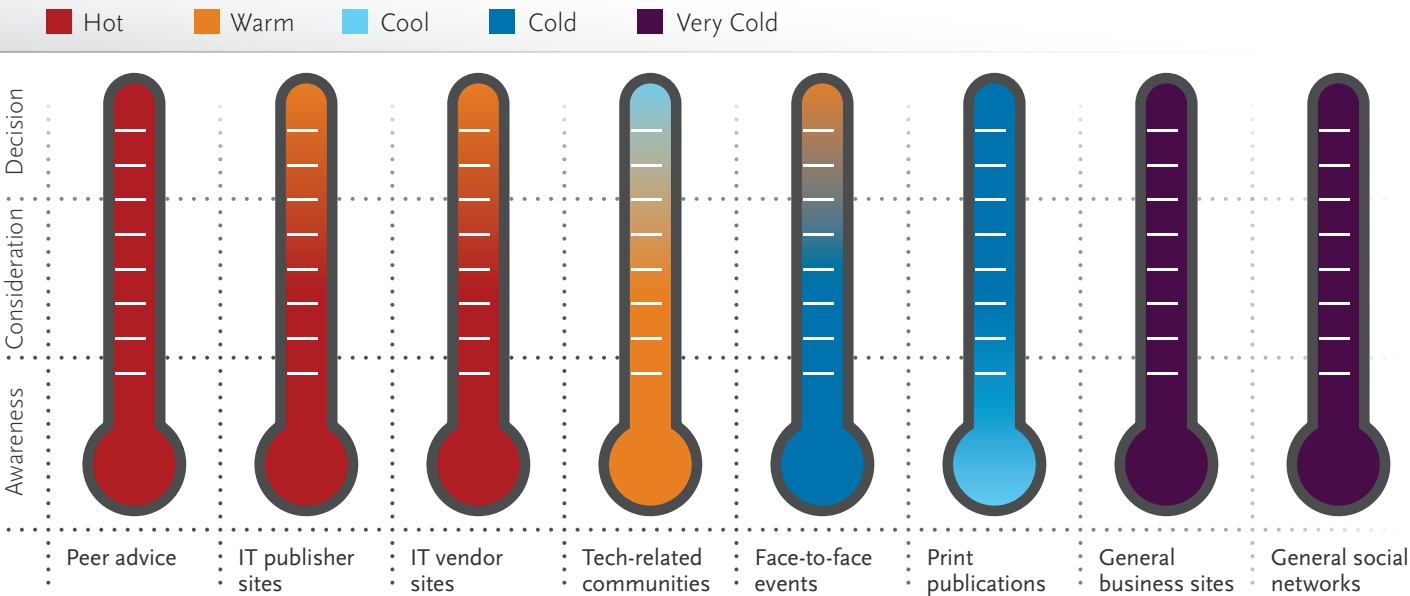
## Information sources vary by stage

Along with consuming various types of content in each stage, IT buyers also have a preference in regards to where they find information while researching technology solutions and vendors.

When progressing through the awareness and consideration stages, buyers rely heavily on independent 3rd party websites and peers to attain the insight needed to make a vendor short-list. Upon receiving information about vendors and solutions from these sources, buyers will turn to vendor websites to validate this information and build their short-list.

### The information source heat index

IT buyers have clear preferences for information sources by stage.



## What does this mean for you?

### Monitor the IT buyer journey and identify stage

Knowing where IT buyers are consuming your content allows will you to identify what stage of the buy cycle they, and their team, are in. Based on this, one can align their strategies accordingly. Use the intelligence from your website and 3rd party websites to make those distinctions. For instance, activity on your website and 3rd party websites can indicate that the IT buyer is in the awareness or consideration stage.

### Social communities are important, if contextually relevant

Technology-focused social communities are a reliable source of information in all stages of the buy cycle. There has been a 33% increase in use of these communities during the consideration stage from last year's study. Make sure you incorporate these social communities into your media mix.

“Don’t call me, I’ll call you”

Buyers are highly reliant on content as they research and create their vendor short-lists. Once their short-list is created, the engagement and interaction with the sales teams of vendors is needed and preferred.

27% of IT buyers worldwide believe much interaction with a vendor sales team is needed to consider that vendor for their short-list. While 48% of marketers believe this interaction is necessary prior to short-listing. This can cause marketers to stop providing nurturing content as buyers enter the final stage. However, IT buyers indicate that their consumption of content

increases as they progress through each stage, leading to a final decision.

Marketers have a misaligned follow-up strategy after a buyer completes a registration form to download vendor content. Only 7% of IT buyers prefer to be passed onto a sales person following the completion of a registration, 39% of marketers take this action rather than provide more content. 28% of buyers indicate that if they receive and accept additional content from the marketer, this would be a sign that they would like to be contacted by the vendor sales team.

IT buyers and marketer differ on the value of sales engagement

Most IT buyers indicate they mainly rely on vendor content, and not sales interaction prior to establishing a short-list.



What does this mean for you?

Nurture, nurture, nurture

Regardless of the fact that IT buyers are making a decision at an accelerated pace, there is still a need for a nurturing strategy to influence their final decision. The true influence comes from the multiple pieces of content in the information sources they find most effective while conducting their research and building their short-list. So make sure that one engagement with your content is quickly followed up by providing additional, and relevant, content.

Look for the signs that tell you to pass on leads

When completing a registration form to download your content, IT buyers have preferences in regards to appropriate follow-up. Over 50% want more relevant information to help educate themselves about your solutions. Provide more information and monitor their response to determine if they are ready to engage with your sales team.



## Key takeaways

### Keeping pace with today's IT buyers

#### Provide the convenience IT buyers need in an accelerated buy cycle

The timeline for IT buyers to research solutions and make a final decision about vendors is 6 months. This accelerated timeline forces IT buyers to seek convenient methods for consuming multiple types of content and make a well informed decision quickly. Marketers have not aligned their strategies accordingly, causing the production and promotion of content that is not matched to the needs of buyers.

#### Promote information and content for all parts of the IT organization

There is a perception that only senior IT managers make decisions related to technology solutions and vendors. This study found that all members of the IT organization are considered to be decision-makers and are included in the decision-making process. This is a trend that marketers have not yet discovered as 79% of marketers indicate that they only develop materials for one part of the IT organization.

#### Align the right content to the stage of the IT buyer

During the research and buying process, buyers consume multiple pieces of content to guide them through each stage. There is a strong affinity to white papers, case studies, product literature, vendor comparisons and product trials throughout the entire process. Online videos, webcasts, and podcasts are viewed as early stage content to educate buyers on products and vendors, where product trials and demos are most used in later stages. Understanding what content types are being used can help identify a buyer's current stage and allow marketers to align their nurturing strategies accordingly.

#### Monitor activity to anticipate environments throughout buying process

Independent 3rd party websites, peer/colleagues, and vendor websites are the initial sources of information IT buyers leverage to learn about vendors and solutions and to create their short-list. There is a need for human interaction at the end of the process, as buyers will turn to face-to-face events and their peers to help make a final decision about a vendor. Technology-related communities have become a key source of insight and advice for buyers, while social networking websites like Facebook and LinkedIn are viewed as ineffective.

#### Know when to have your sales team engage

Buyers are heavily influenced and build their short-lists based on the content and information they find on a vendor. The interaction with the sales teams of vendors is not needed, nor requested, until after the short-list has been developed. Marketers must nurture their prospects with the content they need to guide them through the buy cycle. When buyers have shown evidence that they have completed their short-list, engagement with the sales teams of vendors is appropriate and most effective.

## Contact Us

We did not include every question and response from our study in this report. For the purposes of this report, we have focused on the most important takeaways. However, we are happy to share the full report data.

For more information about this study and to receive a copy of the full report data, please contact [The Market Research Team](#).

## About TechTarget

TechTarget (NASDAQ: TTGT) is the online intersection of serious technology buyers, targeted technical content and technology providers worldwide. Our media, powered by TechTarget's Activity Intelligence™ platform, redefines how technology buyers are viewed and engaged based on their active projects, specific technical priorities and business needs. With more than 100 technology specific websites, we provide technology marketers innovative media that delivers unmatched reach via custom advertising, branding and lead generation solutions all built on our extensive network of online and social media.

TechTarget is based in Boston and has locations in Atlanta, Beijing, Cincinnati, London, Paris, San Francisco, Singapore, and Sydney. For more information, please visit: [www.techtarget.com](http://www.techtarget.com).

## Resources for marketers

Compiled of best practices and white papers, market research reports and ROI driven case studies, TechTarget's Resources for Marketers provides technology marketers the information and insight they need to enhance their strategies.

- Understand international IT buyers and how to enter global markets effectively
- Uncover where IT budgets are being allocated year by year
- Discover the latest strategies your marketing peers have leveraged to deliver higher-quality leads
- And much more...

Visit [www.techtarget.com/resources](http://www.techtarget.com/resources) and understand the IT buying market and how to appropriately engage with the IT audience for optimal ROI.