BUYERsphere™

REPORT 2012

The annual survey of changing B2B buyer behaviour



BASE ONE

B2B Marketing

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

McCallum Layton

research now™

ABOUT THIS **REPORT**

Opinion is cheap.

Which is perhaps a dangerous thing to say if you are, like Base One, an agency that is paid to advise its clients.

But we know that in a digital world where peer opinion is so freely accessible, B2B marketers are keen to find hard facts amongst the gigabytes of opinion that, whilst passionately held, are based on a subjective view – and not a factual analysis of what is really going on.

The Buyersphere survey is designed to rectify this situation and bring some much-wanted rigour to the task of B2B planning because it is based not on the opinions of marketers – but on the actual behaviour of B2B buyers.

This approach is designed to give you confidence that these are concrete, reliable findings. They can be used to convince your clients, persuade your bosses, and defend your decisions. Alternatively, use them simply to give you inspiration.

Either way, we hope you find this report useful, and we are grateful to our partners B2B Marketing, Research Now and McCallum Layton for making it happen.

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WHAT IS THE **BUYERSPHERE?**

Social media, economic uncertainty and an increased appetite for information has a huge effect on buyer behaviour. The Buyersphere is the new world of business to business buying and the behaviours within it. We commissioned this report into the buying mindsets, decisions and processes of buyers across all sectors and in the different economies of Europe, giving us a unique report and invaluable resource for all B2B marketers.

Base One have commissioned a research study to explore how B2B decision- makers are using social media tools and channels to help them in the process of refining their needs and identifying suitable suppliers for major business purchases. The survey was conducted online, administered and analysed by market research specialists McCallum Layton, among business respondents provided by online panel provider Research Now. This is the third survey in a series started in 2010. The initial wave covered the UK only; the 2011 and 2012 reports have also covered key markets in Western Europe.

All respondents have been personally involved in the decision-making process for any type of purchase over £20,000 (or Euro equivalent) that had been completed on behalf of their business in the last 12 months – many of the survey questions focus on this particular purchase, to provide results that are specific to actual experiences and decisions.

Fieldwork was carried out in February 2012. A total of 800 decision-makers took part, comprising 500 interviews in the UK and 100 interviews in each of France, Germany and Italy.

Number of decision-makers surveyed - 2012

UK	500
France	100
Germany	100
Italy	100
Total	800

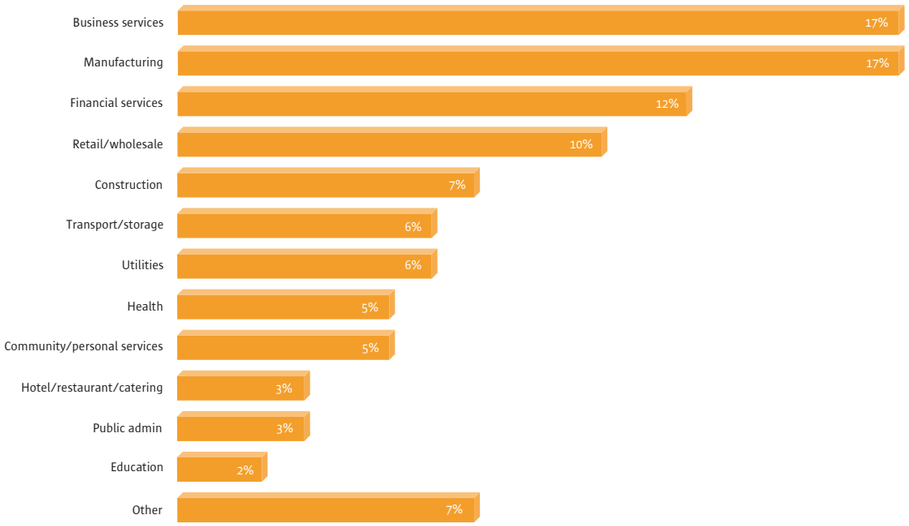
WHO TAKES A SURVEY **LIKE THIS?**

From small companies to massive multinationals, from manufacturing and retail to education and agriculture, we surveyed people of all ages, at all levels, across four different economies in Europe to get the most reflective and robust findings possible. And because we surveyed not just what people thought, but also what they actually did, the discoveries aren't just interesting, some of the findings are game-changing...

Before looking at the results in detail, it is necessary to consider the profile of those answering the survey, as this provides important context when considering the implications of the findings.

The survey sample covered a wide range of business sectors:

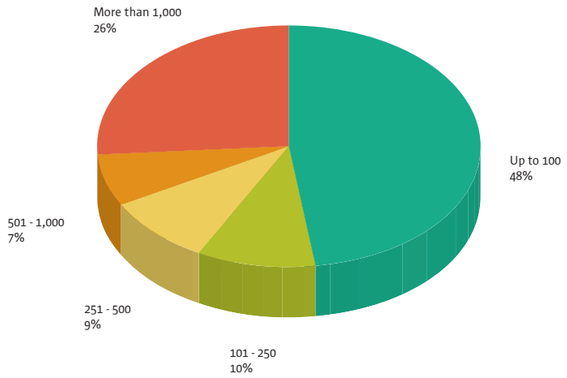
MAIN BUSINESS ACTIVITY



Base: all respondents (800)

The organisations represented by the survey sample varied considerably by size:

EMPLOYEE SIZE



Base: all respondents (800)

Business services, retail and construction businesses tended to be smaller in terms of employee numbers, and those in manufacturing and financial services were larger.

Decision makers

Not surprisingly given the nature of the survey objectives, respondents taking part commonly have finance/purchasing or senior management responsibilities. Other specific functions represented by a quarter of the sample overall were IT and HR.

Respondent job role

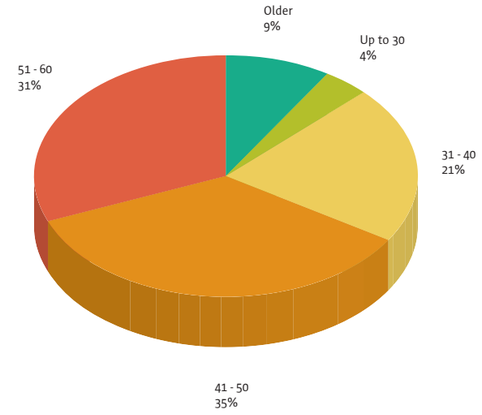
Finance/purchasing	26%
CEO/MD/senior board management	19%
IT	19%
General management	10%
HR	7%
Sales/marketing	5%
Operations	5%
Other	9%
Base: all respondents (800)	

Finance/purchasing and IT managers were particularly common within the financial services organisations. Business services companies (often smaller organisations) were typically represented in the survey by a senior director.

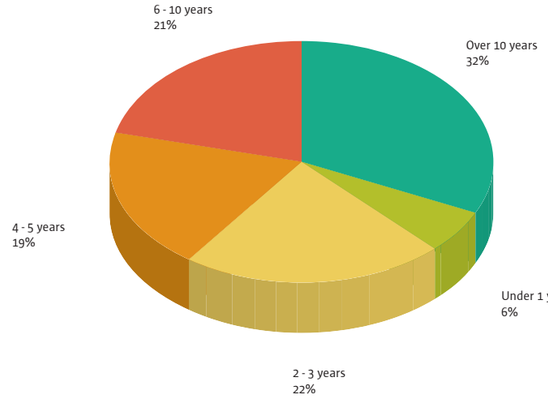
Two thirds of respondents overall were aged between 41 and 60; a quarter were younger than this. The majority had a good deal of experience in their current roles.

Older respondents were most likely to be found in the construction industry, and younger ones in financial services and utilities. Respondents in the retail/wholesale sector tended to be longer established in their job role, and less so in financial services. Those speaking for smaller companies (often senior directors) also tended to be older and longer established.

AGE



TIME IN ROLE



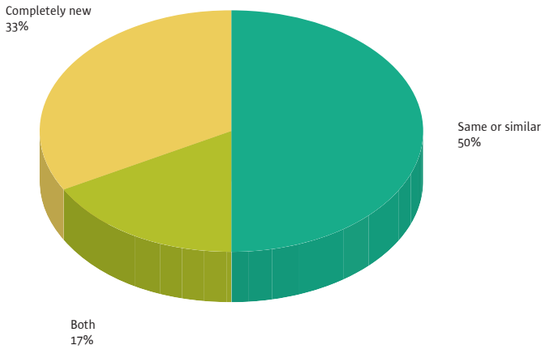
Base: all respondents (800)

THE **BUSINESS** PURCHASE

When asked if the recent purchase made on behalf of their organisation was a product or service that was completely new to their business, or the same or similar to others bought in the past (this could of course have a significant impact on the extent of the research that buyers would need to undertake before signing the order), a third indicated that the whole of the deal was for something new to them. The value of the purchase over £20,000 varied considerably, up to a maximum of £12m..

THE RECENT BUSINESS PURCHASE

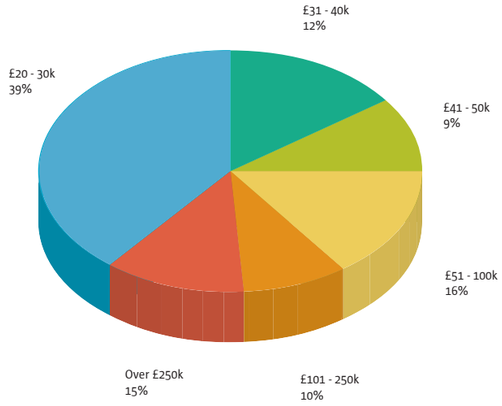
NATURE OF THE PURCHASE



Base: all respondents (800)

Smaller companies were more likely to have bought something new to their business – among those with fewer than 1,000 employees, 36% of purchases were of this nature, while 57% of the largest organisations were buying something the same or similar to previous purchases. Typically, purchases of products or services that were completely new to the business were rather lower value (£150k on average) than those that were more familiar (£333k). Perhaps not surprisingly, purchase value increased in line with employee size. By sector, the largest purchases were to be seen in transport/storage (averaging £777k) and manufacturing (£500k).

VALUE



Base: all respondents (800)

THE **FINDINGS**

1. WHERE DO BUYERS GET **INFORMATION?**

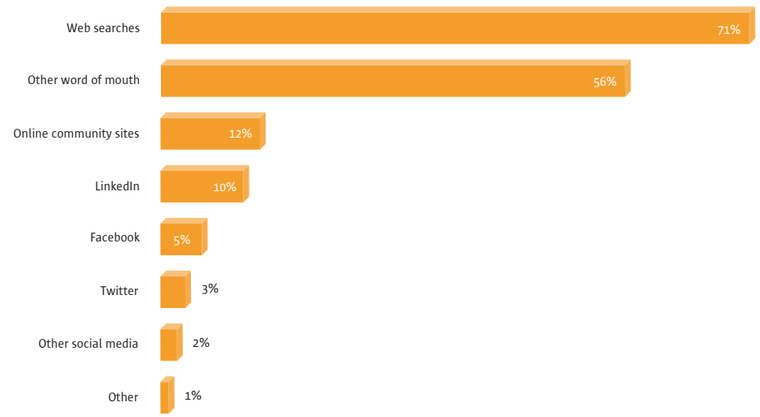
If you want to influence a buying decision you need to start by asking where buyers go for information – because 87% of buyers go out and look for advice before choosing. Social media plays a role but more than two out of three start with a search on Google...

Worth a **tweet?**

21% of B2B buyers use social media at some point in buying process ***#buyersphere12***
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

INFORMATION SOURCES USED AT ANY STAGE OF THE PROCESS

CHANNELS USED TO HELP FIND INFORMATION ADVICE



Base: all respondents (800)

Respondents were asked whether they had made use of any of a given list of channels, to help them find information or advice about the purchase they were planning to make on behalf of their business:

While 13% claimed not to have used any such resources (most likely to be those buying something that was the same or similar to previous purchases), most had actively sought information or advice by a number of means. By far the most common channels were web searches and 'other' word of mouth recommendations – ie, other than recommendations found via social media. Web searches were particularly likely to have been used in connection with products and services that would be new to the business (77%, compared to 65% where the order was the same or similar to a previous purchase).

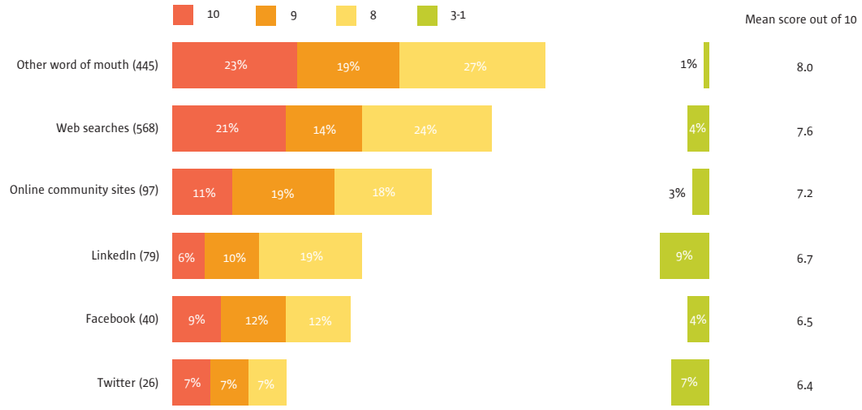
The proportion having made use of any social media channels was 21%. The level was even higher among those with job roles in IT (41%) but much lower (12%) among senior directors. Those making a purchase new to their business were also more likely to make use of any social media channels (30%, twice as many as among those buying something similar to a previous purchase).

2. HOW **USEFUL** DID THEY FIND EACH INFORMATION CHANNEL?

The clear winner is word of mouth. If someone recommends you, that information is considered more useful than any search results...

When asked how useful they felt each channel was to them, in helping them find information and advice to help in their purchase decision-making process, respondents scored each one they had used on a scale of 10-1, as shown below:

RATINGS OF USEFULNESS FOR EACH CHANNEL USED



Base: used each source to help find information or advice (as shown)

Worth a tweet?

Is LinkedIn really 67% more useful than Twitter for B2B buyers? ***#buyersphere12***
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

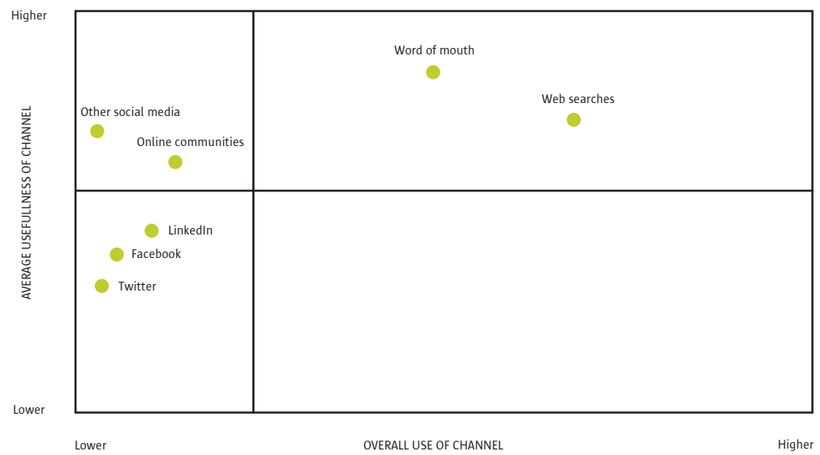
Just over a fifth of those who used personal word of mouth and web searches gave these channels the maximum score of 10 out of 10 for usefulness, and high scores of 8, 9, or 10 were given to these channels by as many as 69% and 59% respectively. Ratings for social media channels were rather lower overall.

Scores for both personal word of mouth and web searches were rather higher in the context of smaller value purchases than more expensive ones. The bases are too small to judge, but the same may apply across the board of all channels including social media – ie, that decision-makers are more likely to be able to find useful help from any source for smaller value products and services which may generally be more common and hence easier to research.

The bases for analysis are too small to conclude the point definitely, but the results may indicate that those who used Facebook and LinkedIn as a means of engaging in direct conversation rated these channels more highly than those who were simply signposted by them to published information (see page 26). This does not appear to apply to community sites and Twitter, where ratings are more similar between those who used these channels for each purpose.

Plotting usage against usefulness of the channels overall shows how the social media options sit in context alongside web searches and personal word of mouth:

USAGE AND USEFULNESS OF CHANNELS



Worth a tweet?

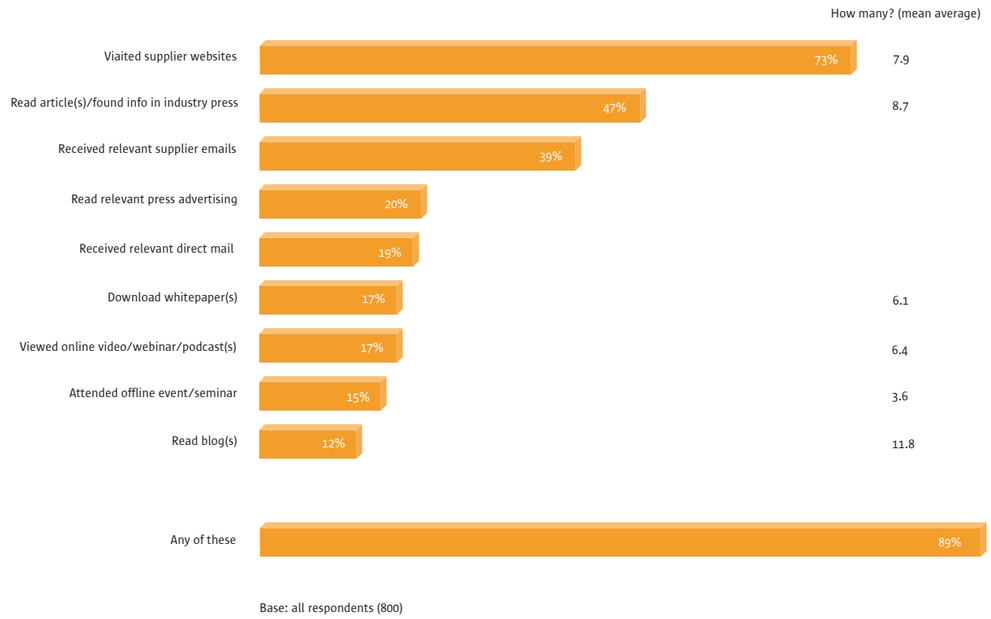
For B2B buyers, word of mouth and web searches are the best ways of finding info. ***#buyersphere12***
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

3. WHAT KIND OF **INFORMATION** DO THEY USE?

So buyers consume information. But what kind? You know that your website is key, but bear in mind how often buyers access other types of information – and whether they should be part of your marketing programme.

OVERALL INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION SOURCES USED

SOURCES USED TO HELP FIND INFORMATION ADVICE



Base: all respondents (800)

Drilling down further into the actions taken by decision-makers when looking for information and advice around a potential business purchase, respondents were asked to indicate which of a number of specific types of source they accessed or used. For some of these, they were also asked to say approximately how many of each they used:

The great majority of respondents had done one or more of these, with the 11% who had not done mostly being those, again, whose purchase was the same as or similar to something they had bought before. Indeed, likelihood of having done most of these was higher among those making a purchase that was new to their business, with the exception of visiting supplier websites, receiving supplier emails and direct mail, where incidence was similar between the two groups.

Respondents working in IT were particularly likely to have downloaded whitepapers (36%), read blogs (28%) and also attended offline events (26%). The use of whitepapers was also noticeably higher among those who have been in their current role for up to 5 years (23%) than those who are longer established (12%).

The numbers of websites, articles, whitepapers, videos etc used varied considerably, with a majority reading/seeing perhaps 1-5 but some using far more. The averages were generally higher among younger respondents, and in relation to higher value purchases of a type that was new to the organisation.

Worth a **tweet?**

Buyers who have been in their role for less than 5 years are twice as likely to download whitepapers. ***#buyersphere12***
http://bit.ly/buyersphere1

Worth a **tweet?**

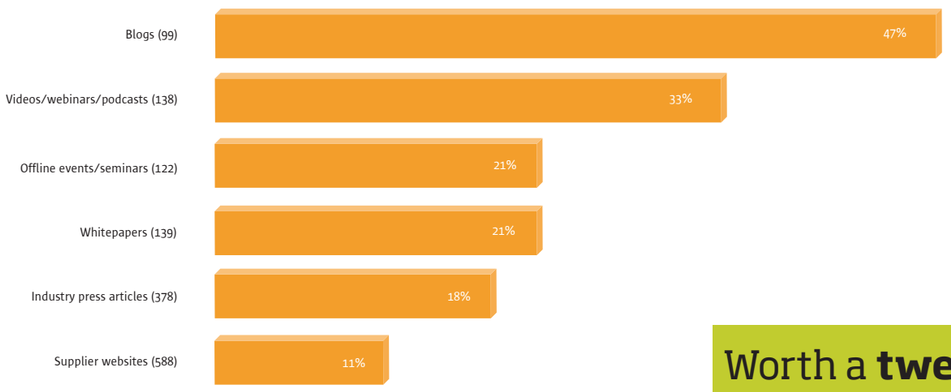
Only 11% of buyers make a purchase over £20,000 without seeking advice ***#buyersphere12***
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

Respondents who have seen, read or used any of the types of information source they would need to look for (as opposed to emails and direct mail that will have arrived unbidden and advertising they will have seen anyway) were asked how they had found out about these sources:

	Supplier websites	Articles	White papers	Videos/ webinars	Offline events	Blogs
Via a web search	74%	71%	**86%**	81%	32%	71%
Through supplier emails	25%	26%	37%	**44%**	**44%**	23%
Personal word of mouth	28%	26%	27%	21%	34%	17%
Through an online community site	5%	9%	13%	18%	9%	22%
Through LinkedIn	5%	6%	8%	11%	11%	**24%**
Through Facebook	3%	4%	6%	11%	9%	**22%**
Through Twitter	2%	3%	5%	10%	6%	16%
Through other social media	2%	6%	7%	6%	5%	8%
Already knew about it	42%	34%	25%	19%	33%	20%
Base: used this	(588)	(378)	(139)	(138)	(122)	(99)

Summarising this, the extent to which respondents were signposted to each of these by any social media was as shown in the following chart:

POINTED TO EACH SOURCE BY ANY SOCIAL MEDIA



Base: used each source to help find information or advice (as shown)

Worth a **tweet?**

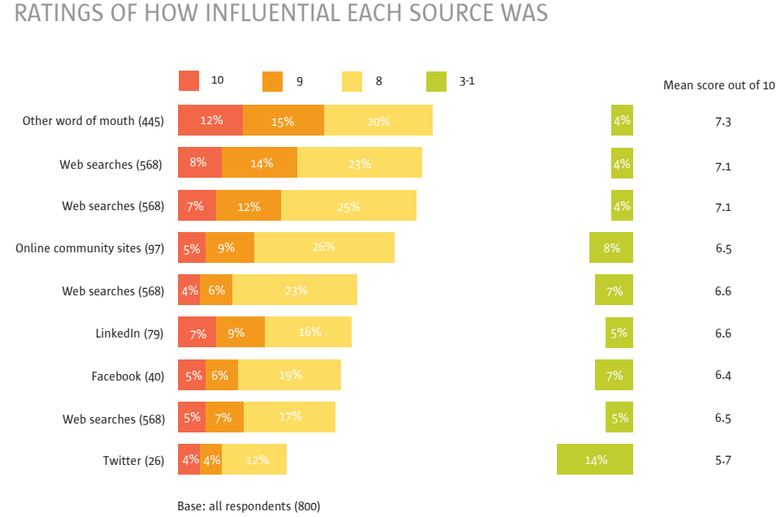
B2B buyers find most whitepapers and blogs via Google, but find out about most seminars by email.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

4. HOW **INFLUENTIAL** WAS THAT INFORMATION?

You know that many of your buyers read your messages – but are you really influencing them? The lowest scores for influence were for advertising – and top of the pile were the real-world events. Does your marketing reflect this?

Users of each information source were asked to rate how influential it was in providing them with information to help in their purchase decision-making process:

RATINGS OF HOW INFLUENTIAL EACH SOURCE WAS

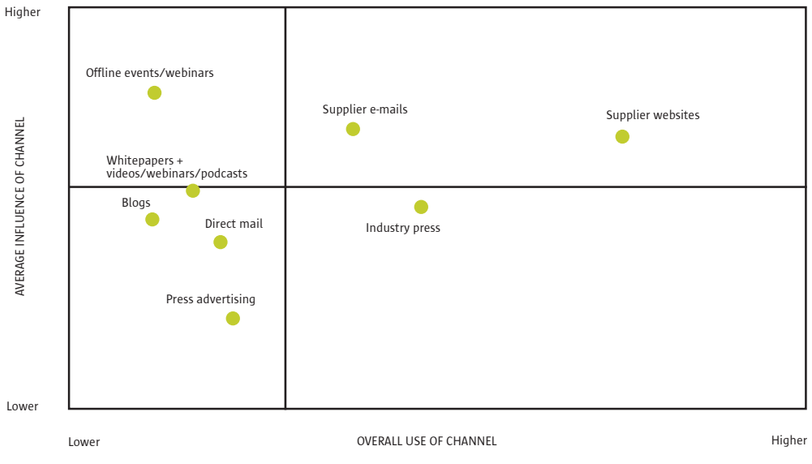


Base: all respondents (800)

Offline events and seminars were accorded the best scores of all of these, closely followed by supplier emails and supplier websites. Press advertising, at the other end of the scale, received almost as many low scores of 1-3 out of 10 as 8-10s.

We can again plot usage against influence for each of these sources:

USAGE AND INFLUENCE OF SOURCES



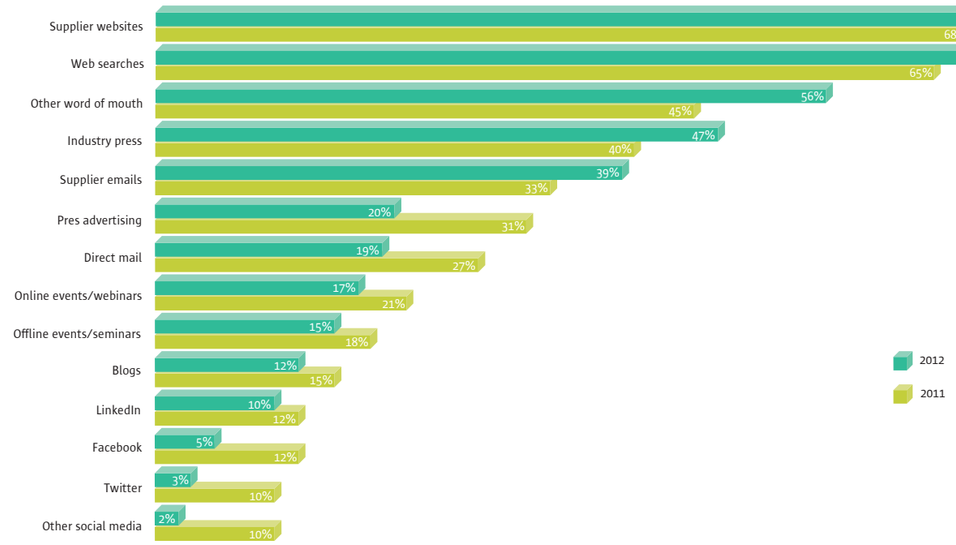
Worth a **tweet?**

Use of Twitter amongst B2B buyers has reduced from 10% to 3% in the last 12 months.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

5. HOW HAVE THINGS **CHANGED?**

One of the most interesting findings of the Buyersphere Report is the change in buyer behaviour noted from year to year. Things are changing more quickly than many of us imagine, and it is the marketers who correctly identify the trends who will be most effective in planning their communications.

CHANNEL USAGE OVER TIME

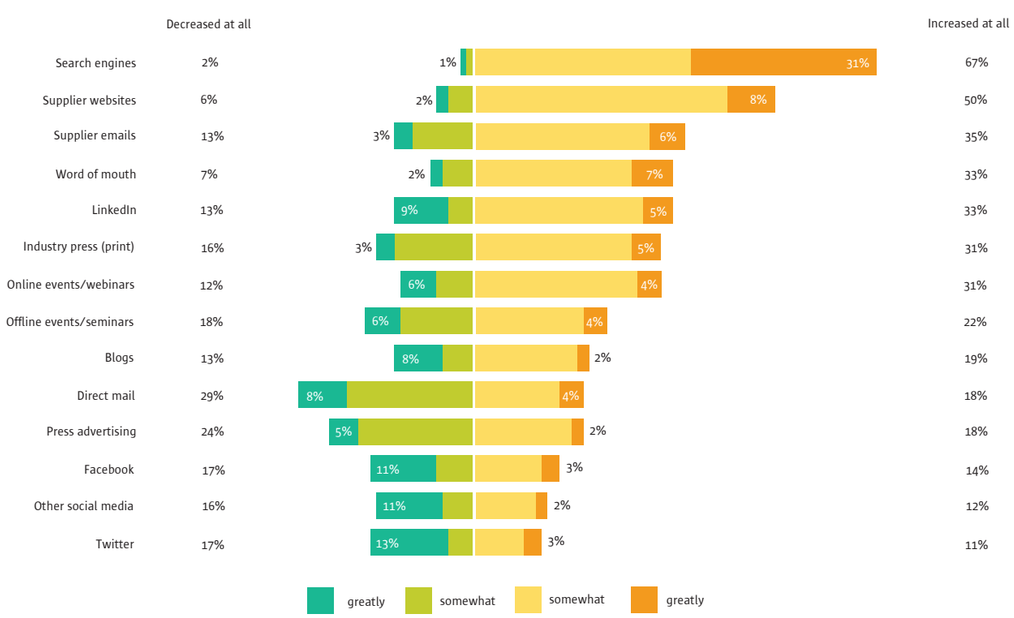


We compared findings in this year's survey with those of 2011 and found some significant movements. The 2012 Report showed a distinct increase on the previous year in terms of the sheer amount of content sought by buyers in the course of the buying process. This is good news for all those marketers who are investing in content programmes and thought leadership campaigns. Buyers want content more than ever and they are increasingly likely to find you via a search engine.

But other key information channels are less popular than in 2011. In particular, social media – as a medium used for gathering information about a business purchase – has reduced significantly.

Business use of Facebook has dropped from 15% to 5%, while use of Twitter amongst B2B buyers has gone from 10% to just 3%. Is this social media burnout? Have people tried it and realised it does nothing for them? Or have they streamlined their activity onto a single social media platform after a period of test driving multiple channels?

CHANGING USE OF CHANNELS/SOURCES OVER LAST 12 MONTHS



Then we asked buyers if their usage of a certain channel has increased or decreased over the last 12 months. Twitter and Facebook showed a similar marked decline. For every B2B buyer who is greatly increasing their use of Facebook and Twitter, around 4 are greatly reducing it.

However, it would be wrong to pull the plug on the social media budgets. There is greater evidence to suggest that social media is here to stay, and it comes from looking more closely at the ages of the respondents, which are revealed in the next part of this report.

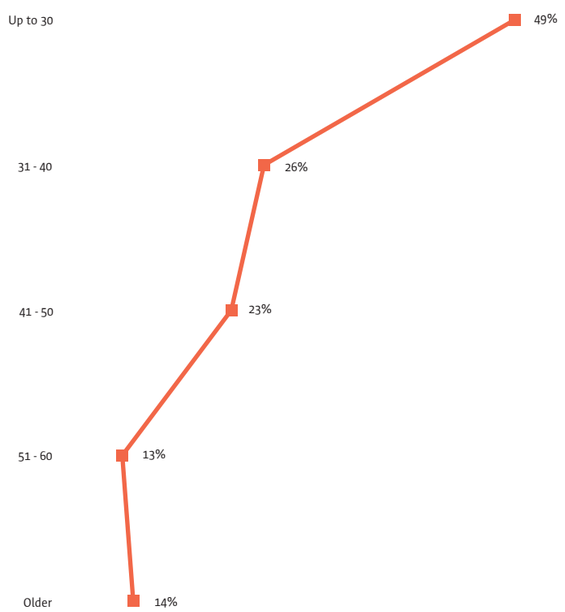
Worth a **tweet?**

For every B2B buyer greatly increasing their use of Twitter, 4 are greatly reducing it.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

6. YOUNGER V OLDER BUYERS: THE **MILLENNIAL** EFFECT.

You don't need a crystal ball to know that younger buyers use more social media. But when we look at the ages of the respondents – and their usage of social media – we can see the sudden and imminent arrival of the Facebook generation.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR INFORMATION OR ADVICE, BY AGE



Base: all respondents (800)

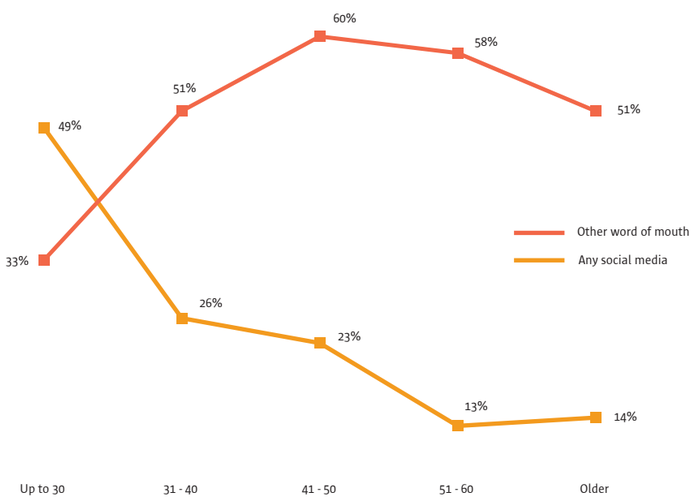
Worth a **tweet?**

Twenty-something B2B buyers are TWICE as likely to use social media as 31-40 year olds.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

One of the most fascinating insights from this year's Buyersphere Report is revealed when we look at the different responses by different age groups. Predictably, the over-30s are not very likely to use social media as a source of information – and it is their weight of numbers that is probably driving the results we saw in the previous graphs. Above the 30-year threshold it varies comparatively little. 14% of the over 60s used it, compared to 26% of the 31-40 bracket. But Generation Y are almost twice as likely to use social media as those born only a decade earlier.

This does not prove that the under-30s are somehow strange or remarkable. They are simply products of their times. What is remarkable is the trend itself. In a short space of time, buyer behaviour has changed drastically. And as Millennials find themselves with greater amounts of corporate money at their disposal, social media campaigns will suddenly start reaping fruit. If we extend these results and consider the people who will be making B2B buying decisions in just 5 years' time, the difference will be remarkable.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY WORD OF MOUTH?



Base: all respondents (800)

Worth a **tweet?**

Under 30s are the only age group of B2B buyers who rate social media more useful than WOM. To them, it is WOM!
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "WORD OF MOUTH"?

The movement of offline events/seminars from the top right segment to the top left has been coupled with an increase in perceived influence of online events/webinars. It is possible that the cost effectiveness of online events is becoming more attractive in the challenging economic climate.

There has been no corresponding move for social media such as Twitter and Facebook however. Both have seen a relative decrease in perceived influence. This could possibly be due to an increased amount of use by sceptics, in response to articles in marketing publications about the rise of these channels. Because it can be necessary to spend time building networks before these channels start becoming useful, those who do not reach this stage may well be writing these tools off as less influential. However, we have no way in this survey of separating out 'expert' users from new sceptics, so this is only a hypothesis at this stage.

Another interesting insight comes from the attitude of different age groups to using "word of mouth".

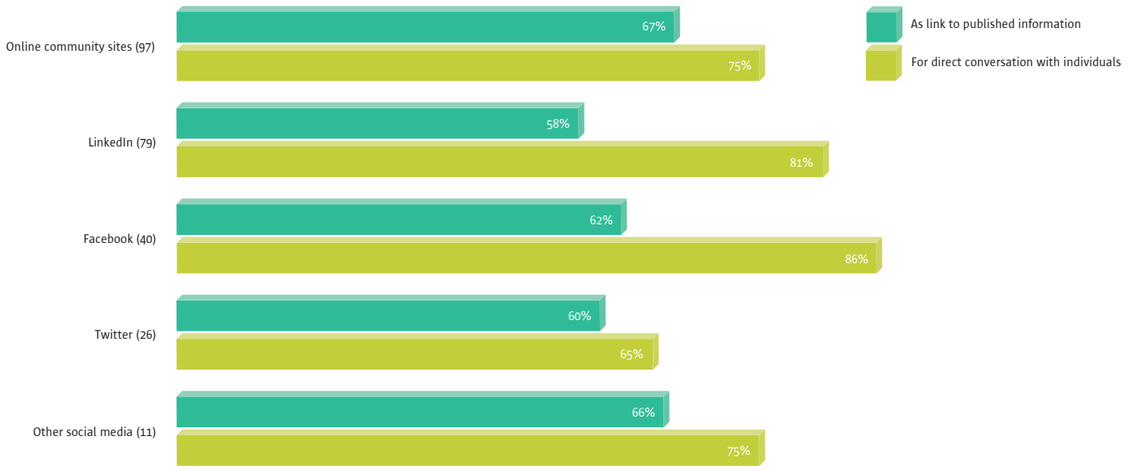
If we look at the overall figures in the first chapter of this report, we see that 56% of buyers used 'other' word of mouth compared to 21% using any social media. However, different groups will define "word of mouth" in different ways, and will therefore answer this question differently.

So when the figures show that older respondents are more likely to rely on word of mouth, but not on social media, this perhaps just describes how they expect word of mouth recommendations to be given. For a 40-something who uses little social media, this is more likely to happen over the phone or in person; a younger respondent, who prefers to communicate online, might seek 'word of mouth' via a social media platform.

7. HOW DO BUYERS **USE** SOCIAL MEDIA?

Do business buyers use social media for direct dialogue? Tweeting, chatting and exchanging online messages? Or is it just a place they go for links to articles? The answer to this question could have a huge influence on the way you plan your social media marketing.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS WERE USED



Base: used each channel to help find information or advice (as shown)

Social media channels could of course have been used in different ways - as a signpost or link to published information or resources (eg following a link found posted on Facebook), or as a direct means of conversation (eg directly asking for opinions or advice. In order to understand more about this, we asked those who said they had used any of these channels what purpose they had done this for:

LinkedIn and Facebook were noticeably more likely to have been used to engage in direct conversations, while the reasons for using online communities and Twitter were more evenly balanced.

Worth a **tweet?**

B2B buyers are far more likely to use LinkedIn for conversation than for just finding articles. This is less true of Twitter
#buyersphere11
http://bit.ly/buyersphere11

8. THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE **BUYING PROCESS**

The Buyersphere survey recognises that buyers act differently at different stages of the buying process. At the earlier stages, they are more likely to be looking for generic advice on how to solve their problem; during later stages, the focus switches to the task of supplier selection, which involves different activities.

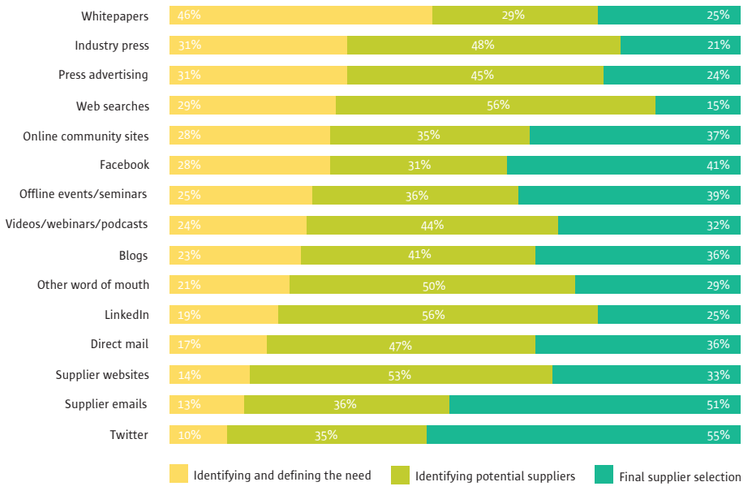
The Buyersphere research series distinguishes between the different types of information that may be needed, and the different sources that may therefore be used, at 3 stages of the decision-making process around a business purchase:

– Identifying and defining the business requirement
– Identifying potential suppliers to meet this requirement
– Final selection of the supplier to be used

Of all the channels and sources that respondents had indicated they used in relation to this specific business purchase, they were asked to indicate at which of these 3 points in the process that channel or source had been most useful. The following chart shows the results sorted in descending order of being picked as most useful at the first stage, identifying/defining the need. The results are then re-sorted in descending order of being felt to be most useful at each of the other two stages.

Just one channel/source emerged as having been most useful most often at the initial stage – identifying and defining the need – and that was whitepapers. This is consistent with the widely held belief that ‘early stage’ buyers are more interested in long-form, issue-based content.

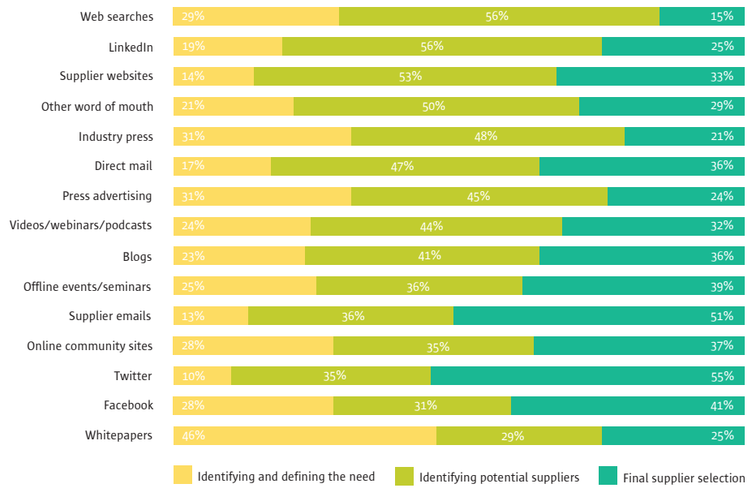
STAGE AT WHICH CHANNEL/SOURCE WAS MOST USEFUL (1)



Base: used each channel/source to help find information or advice

At the stage of identifying potential suppliers, more of the channels/sources came out as having been most useful at this point – web searches, LinkedIn, supplier websites, personal word of mouth, industry press, direct mail, press advertising, videos/webinars/podcasts and blogs:

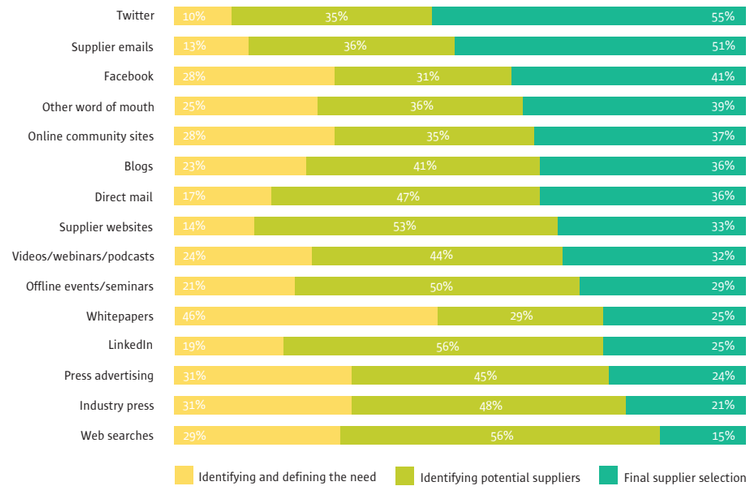
STAGE AT WHICH CHANNEL/SOURCE WAS MOST USEFUL (2)



Base: used each channel/source to help find information or advice

At the final supplier selection stage, Twitter, supplier emails, Facebook, offline events/seminars and online community sites came into their own:

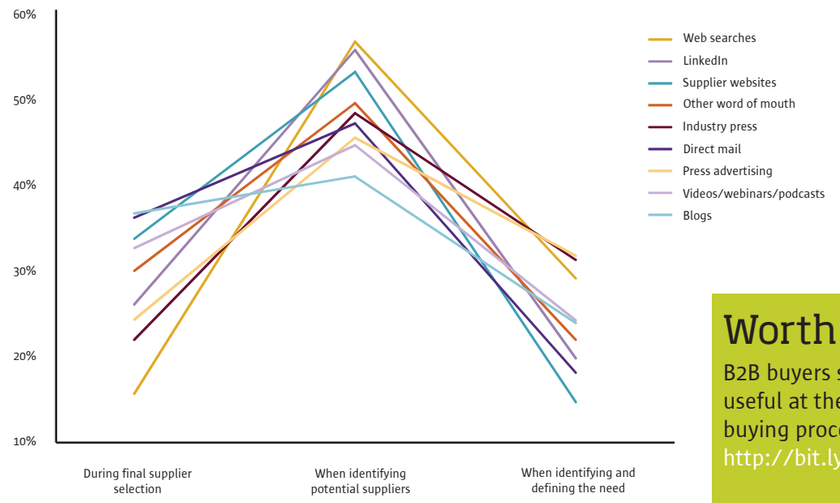
STAGE AT WHICH CHANNEL/SOURCE WAS MOST USEFUL (3)



Base: used each channel/source to help find information or advice

In most cases, where a channel/source was felt to have been most useful at the second stage, the peak in the 'votes' is very noticeable, indicating that the channel/source was very distinctly more useful at this stage than at the others. An exception is blogs, where similar proportions found these most useful at each of the first two stages in the process:

STAGE AT WHICH CHANNEL/SOURCE WAS MOST USEFUL

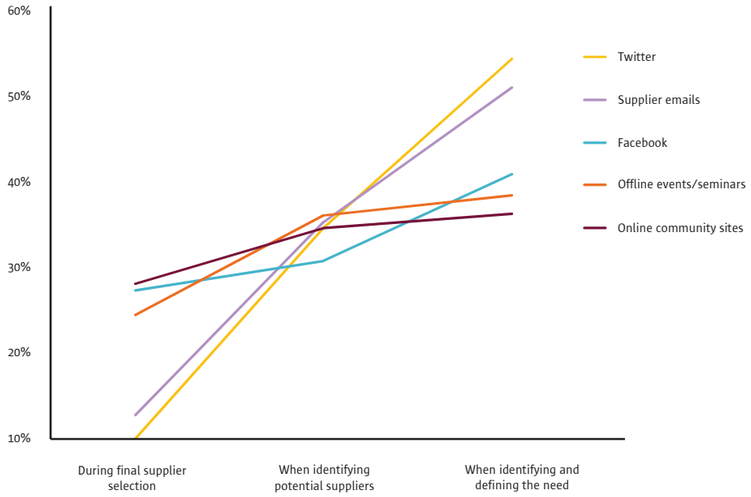


Worth a tweet?

B2B buyers see Twitter as more useful at the later stages of buying process ***#buyersphere12***
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

Of those most judged to be useful at stage 3, Twitter and supplier emails are very clearly more useful as the process goes on, while the distinction is nowhere near as great for online communities and offline events:

STAGE AT WHICH CHANNEL/SOURCE WAS MOST USEFUL

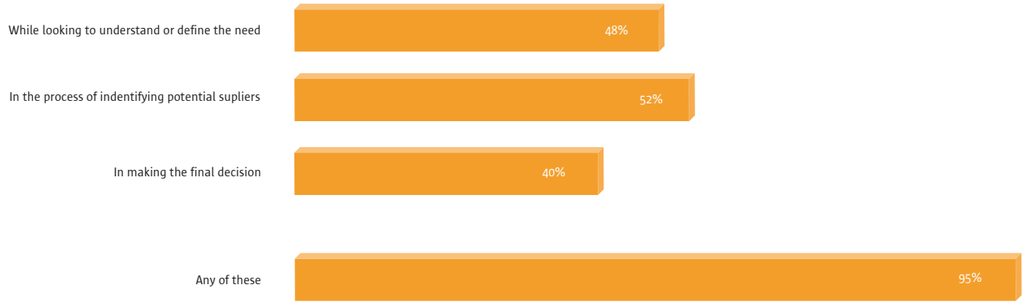


9. WHEN DO BUYERS **GET IN TOUCH?**

Sometimes you find them; sometimes they find you. We were interested to find out if the first contact between buyer and vendor always took place in the later stages of the buying process. Apparently not…

When asked at what point or points in the purchasing process they made direct contact with potential suppliers (direct contact being defined as any contact that could have resulted in the supplier giving a response, so not just looking at a website), nearly half of respondents indicated that they had done this early on:

POINTS IN THE PROCESS WHERE DIRECT CONTACT MADE WITH SUPPLIERS



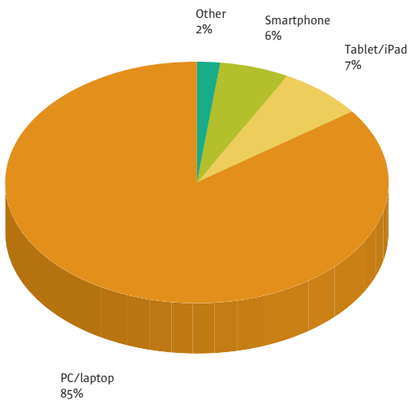
Base: all respondents (800)

Early direct contact was more common where the purchase was something completely new to the business, and on higher value products/services. Those less well established in their role were also more likely to make contact with suppliers at the early stages of the decision-making process.

10. WHAT **DEVICES** DO THEY USE?

We need to know how buyers access our information, and what devices they use – and as we enter the post-PC era, tablets and smartphones are beginning to outsell the traditional laptop.

PROPORTION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION ACCESSED BY TYPE OF DEVICE



Base: all respondents (800)

While the use of Smartphones is undoubtedly on the rise, the bulk of the electronic material seen and read by our respondents was accessed by PC or laptop.

Respondents aged up to 50 accessed a higher proportion of their electronic information by tablet/iPad than older ones. For Smartphones, it was those up to 40 who used this technology more than those who were older. Those working in both IT and HR roles were using tablets/iPads and Smartphones more than others. Respondents who used any social media for obtaining information and advice in relation to the business purchase were also more likely to make more use of devices other than just a PC/laptop.

Worth a **tweet?**

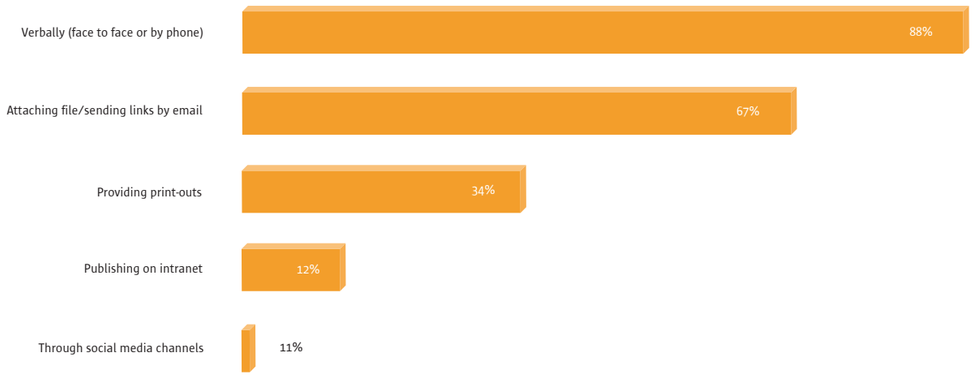
B2B buyers still access 85% of purchase-related info via a PC. Only 6% and 7% by smartphone and tablet respectively.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

11. HOW DO BUYERS **SHARE INFORMATION** WITH OTHERS?

Every marketers wants their campaign to 'go viral'. A more realistic aim is to work to understand how buyers share information to maximise the secondary effect of your communications.

79% of respondents shared any of the information they had found, with other people internally who were also involved in any way in the purchase decision-making process. This was more likely to be the case on higher value purchases and in larger organisations; those who were newer to their current job role were also more likely to have done this. Much of this information sharing was done verbally:

WAYS IN WHICH INFORMATION WAS SHARED INTERNALLY



Base: shared information found, within the business (630)

There was a link between any use of social media channels and the sharing of information electronically – usage of both email and intranet systems was higher among social media users than the rest.

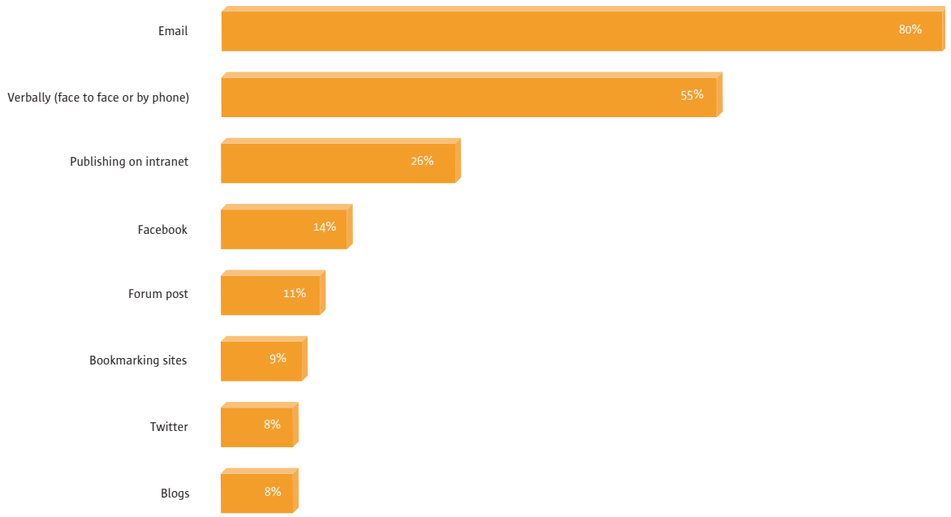
Worth a **tweet?**

11% of B2B buyers say they share information by Twitter. 34% do it via the printer.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

28% of respondents shared any of the information they had found more widely, with people outside of the decision-making process for this purchase. Those who had used any social media channels were over twice as likely to have done so (at 53%) than the rest (22%). Nearly half of those working in both IT and HR had done so.

Email and verbal communication were again the most common means of sharing information:

WAYS IN WHICH INFORMATION WAS SHARED MORE WIDELY



Base: shared information found, more widely (227)

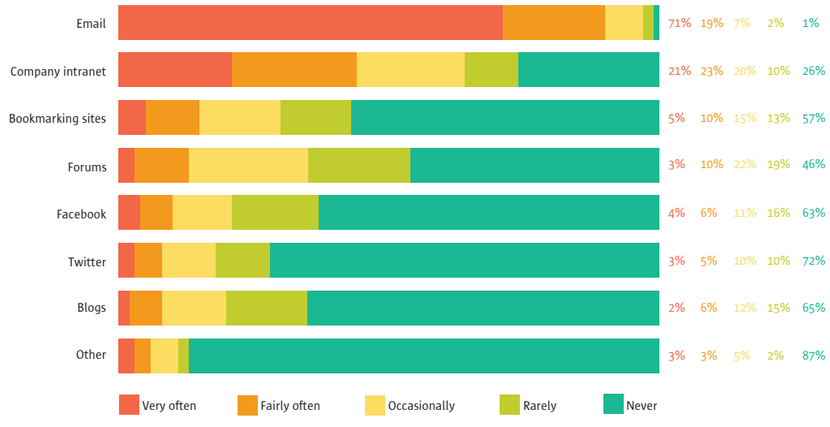
Older respondents (over 50s) tended to have shared information verbally more often than younger ones, while younger respondents (up to 40) were more likely to cite Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

Worth a **tweet?**

B2B buyers share more information on traditional forums than they do via Twitter.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

When asked what methods, if any, they use to share professional content with others that they have found interesting or useful, respondents most often cited email:

METHODS USED TO SHARE INTERESTING PROFESSIONAL CONTENT

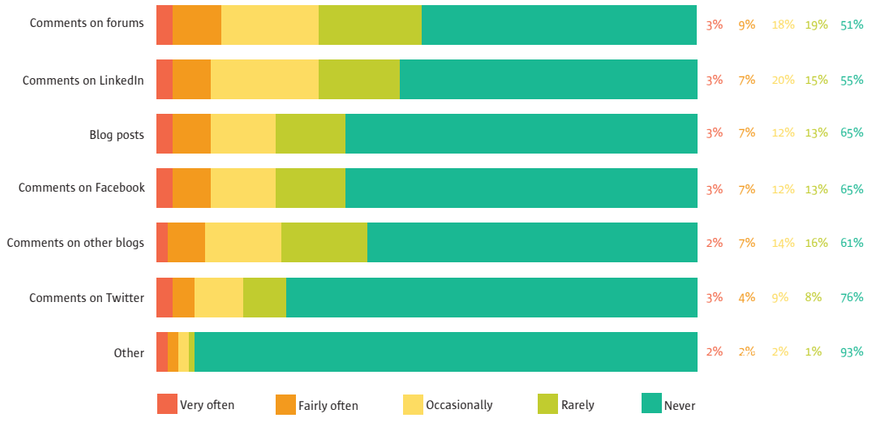


Base: all respondents (800)

Overall, the great majority (93%) mentioned sharing information very or fairly often, by any of these means.

27% create and publish their own professional content very or fairly often:

METHODS USED TO CREATE AND PUBLISH PROFESSIONAL CONTENT

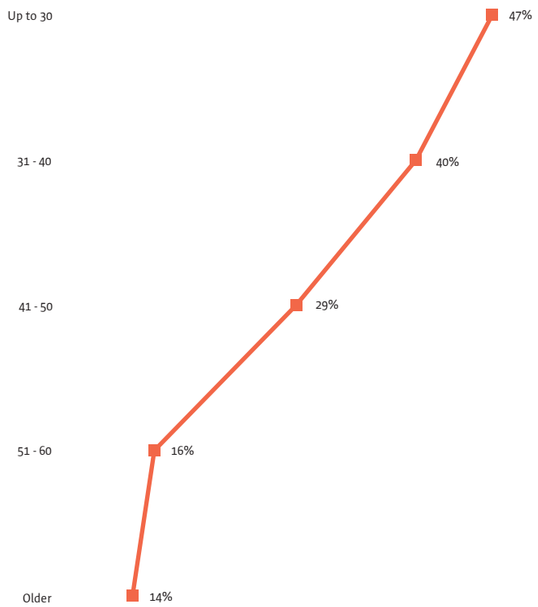


Base: all respondents (800)

Those in HR and IT job roles were the most likely to create and publish their own content (49% and 40% respectively).

Likelihood to create and publish their own professional content by any of these means was far higher among younger respondents:

CREATE AND PUBLISH OWN PROFESSIONAL CONTENT, BY AGE



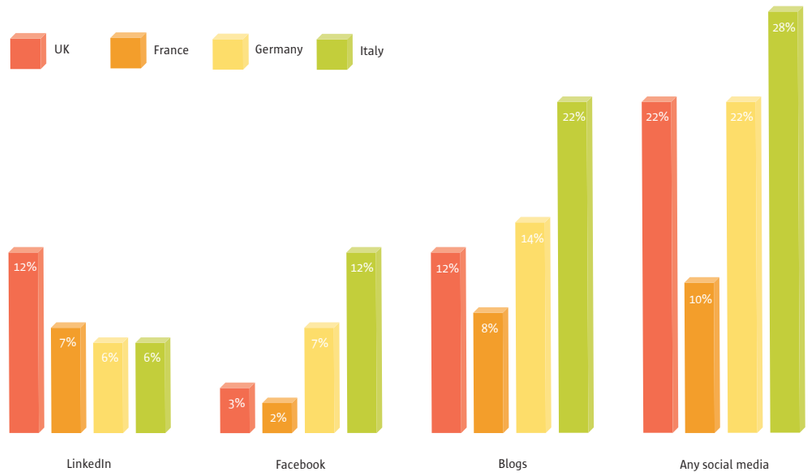
Base: all respondents (800)

There was a distinct correlation between usage of social media channels in the purchase decision-making process, and likelihood of creating and publishing professional content generally. Over half, 57%, of social media users create and publish their own content, and 45% of those who create their own content had used social media channels.

12. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES ACROSS **EUROPEAN** MARKETS?

The Buyersphere Report is conducted across four key European markets: UK, France, Germany and Italy. And while all B2B buyers go through a similar process, it is interesting to note key differences in their usage of social media.

MAIN COUNTRY DIFFERENCES IN CHANNEL USAGE



(Data weighted to adjust for varying proportions of IT and younger respondents in each sample)

The survey showed that, of the four countries surveyed (UK, Italy, Germany and France), it is the Italians who are leading the way in terms of social media usage, while French buyers appear to be the least likely to use social media.

This is of course a very broad picture, and there will be local preferences, eg Germany, where the usage of LinkedIn will be affected by the success of Xing, a local competitor.

Worth a **tweet?**

Italian B2B buyers use more social media than French, British or German buyers.
#buyersphere12
http://bit.ly/buyersphere12

A WORD OF **THANKS**

Thank you for reading

We have done everything we can to make this report as useful as possible. But, while it doesn't claim to have all the answers, we hope it has encouraged you to ask a few more questions.

There's no doubt that B2B buyers are changing the way they seek information, and this of course affects how we, as marketers, try to meet their needs. Whether you decide to invest in your website, in social media, SEO, advertising or any of the other options open to you depends on many factors. We simply hope that you may be slightly closer to the right decision after reading this.

If you have been reading this in print and would like a digital copy, please visit **www.baseone.co.uk.**

And of course, if you would like some help with planning how your brand accommodates changing buyer behaviour, we'd be more than happy to talk.

Regards

The Base One Buyersphere Team
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