



## DRIVING AN IMMERSIVE **Brand Experience**

**Digital brand marketing:** Connecting traditional branding and direct response in B2B; the thought that comes to you when you're not thinking.

Traditional brand marketing is the historical domain of the largest players in any given vertical. The objective of ubiquitous television ad campaigns has always been to get customers to connect with your brand intellectually and emotionally, and, in the end, to choose you.

More than half (55 percent) of the top 20 brands are business-to-business (B2B).<sup>1</sup> The brand story for these companies must speak to and resonate with B2B buyers and customers.

Big brands know the value of this recognition. It is why they invest millions of dollars every year and some invest inordinate amounts for specific events like sporting championships.

That mental connection people have when they think of an industry and your brand in the same breath has value, but connecting it to the moment a B2B customer picks up the phone to call a sales rep is vague and difficult to measure. What if you could make an investment that not only connects the two, but gathers the data to make a case for significant incremental downstream impact?

Digital brand marketing is the connective tissue between traditional brand marketing and direct response marketing. Consumer brands have embraced this approach for quite some time, but the data shows that the space between a big brand splash and the direct response funnel is where you can gauge ROI for B2B in equal measure.

MAKING THE

# digital connection

How does big traditional brand marketing connect to the measurable efforts of direct response marketing? There has always been a gap, and it has always been difficult to assess.

Brands are much more involved in buyers' digital, daily lives than ever before.

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*B2B customers navigate a purchase journey the same way any shopper does.*

In our Navigating the New Digital Divide series, we've written extensively on this phenomenon as it applies to the retail industry. These factors influence the behavior and choices of B2B customers in exactly the same ways.

B2B customers navigate a purchase journey the same way any shopper does. The majority (63 percent) begin their research on the Internet.<sup>2</sup> An even higher percentage (70 percent) say their mind is made up before they speak to a salesperson, yet 60 percent of them say they change the list of brands they're considering after they research for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The overwhelming majority of B2B researchers (76 percent) use a smartphone for business; reaching them on their phones, desktops, and in apps is clearly an opportunity for digital branding.<sup>4</sup>

This is where digital brand marketing begins to have an impact throughout the B2B purchase journey.



**63%**  
of researchers  
begin their journey  
on the internet<sup>5</sup>



**70%**  
of the buyer decision is  
made before speaking  
to a salesperson<sup>6</sup>



**60%**  
of researchers change the  
consideration set following  
research and browse phase<sup>7</sup>

# EMPOWERING THE **self-directed journey**

*"Digital branding unlocks opportunities for marketers that traditional media hasn't been able to; creating an authentic, human connection through personal touch and immersive experience. It goes beyond mass reach and allows for a more targeted approach."*  
- Sarah Travis, Industry Director at Google

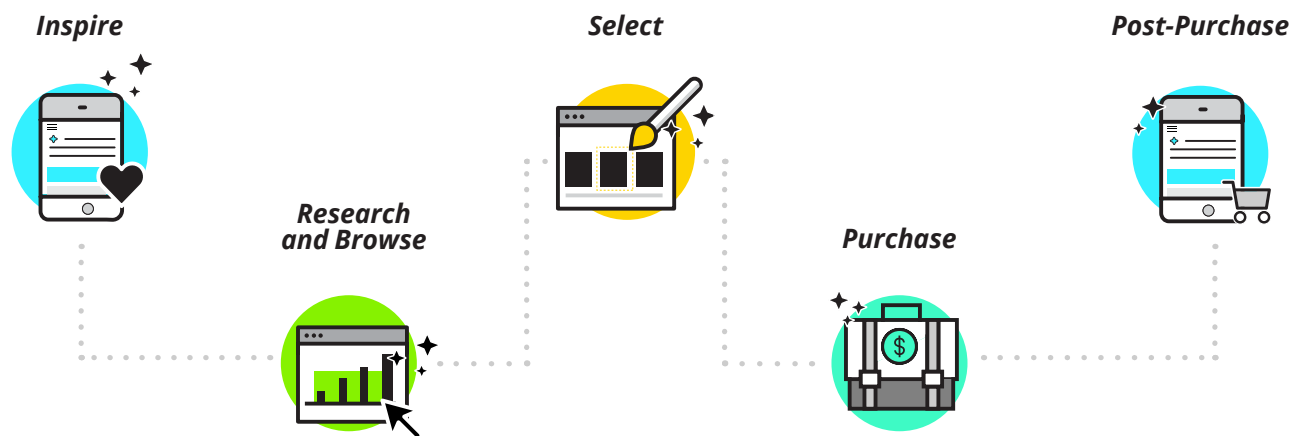
As a result of your consistent and ubiquitous presence in their digital lives (by offering relevant, educational, informative, and useful content), you create a connection between traditional big branding and direct response marketing. This is where you can influence decision makers along their journey.

Sarah Travis, Industry Director at Google stated, "Digital branding unlocks opportunities for marketers that traditional media hasn't been able to; creating an authentic, human connection through personal touch and immersive experience. It goes beyond mass reach and allows for a more targeted approach."

It is this focused and personalized impact that enables digital branding to pull those exposed to traditional branding efforts further down the funnel.

The result is more qualified, ready-to-buy customers entering the direct response funnel lifting ROI across the board.

In short, you become a more influential part of the journey and a go-to resource beyond simply the value of your product or service.



# VOICE OF THE marketer

"Increasingly, digital marketing is actually filling the role of the salesperson, providing everything from inspiration to product education directly to the customer," stated Jay Bowden, Managing Director at Google. Because it comes earlier in the journey, a level of trust carries through the experience and results in a three-pronged approach —traditional branding, digital branding, and direct response marketing— that is better together.

A common misperception is digital is simply "cheap reach." In other words, the unconvinced see it as blasting digital ads to a wide net just to get in front of more eyeballs. In truth, digital branding presents an opportunity for increased personalization and targeting, and is far more interactive than traditional methods. It is a highly effective method of getting into and staying in the consideration set.



Digital Branding has lowered barriers to entry for smaller, less familiar brands, this illustrates its effectiveness and creates a new category of competitor for larger brands.

Digital Branding strategies turn your brand website into one of your most powerful platforms. With it, you can welcome new and existing customers into your community and build a deepening trust with them.

For example, if a brand was initially under consideration, and the buyer recalls seeing that brand's digital ads, they are 1.3 times more likely to visit the brand website.<sup>8</sup>

If the brand **was not** under consideration and the buyer recalls seeing one of that brand's digital ads, they are 3.3 times more likely to visit the brand's website.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, embracing a digitally oriented strategy will require that you redefine your metrics. Instead of measuring across the entire journey, it is more important to measure the "moments that matter" most and focus on the impact in those places.

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# Traditional thinking

## AND THE missing link

While B2B buyers and experts claim they are not overly influenced by brand and traditional brand tactics, we found that after they complete their research, they are **10 times more likely** to select a brand they view positively, and **11 times more likely** to select one they view as familiar or relevant.<sup>10</sup>

While we often like to think of B2B buyers as completely different than consumer shoppers, they still respond to the same types of stimulus. They reward brands they trust, and they trust brands they view as relevant, helpful, and valuable.

### The value of relevance



#### Research

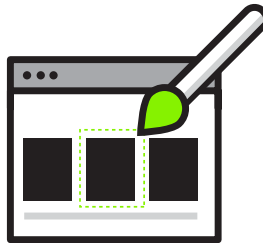
When a researcher meets you along the journey and recalls you through your digital ads, that researcher is:

**2.7x**  
more likely

to visit your site<sup>11</sup>

**1.7x**  
more likely

to have a positive perception of your brand<sup>12</sup>

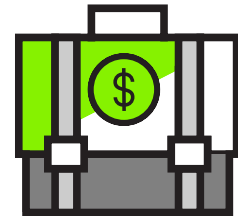


#### Select

When your digital ads are recalled, buyers are:

**2.9x**  
more likely

to add you to their short list for consideration<sup>13</sup>



#### Purchase

When your digital ads are recalled, buyers are:

**3.7x**  
more likely

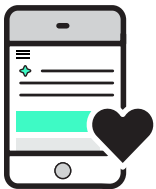
to select your brand for purchase<sup>14</sup>

# THE VALUE OF

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# making the connection

At virtually every step in the B2B buyer's journey, digital brand marketing has an impact. The research shows investing in digital branding attracts more buyers, gets brands into a consideration set (where they might not otherwise be listed), maintains consideration, and helps brands remain top of mind. This is true for B2B buyers and other types of shoppers.



## *Inspire*

On average three brands are initially considered. But as you look at the buyer's journey, those three brands at the beginning are not always the same three brands at the end.<sup>15</sup>



## *Research and browse*

**60 percent** of B2B buyers who recalled seeing digital and traditional brand ads while shopping said they added that brand to their list of possible purchases.<sup>16</sup> This is a significantly higher number than those who said they did not recall seeing brand ads.

Those buyers doing research who recalled seeing digital brand ads are **2.6 times more likely** to visit the websites of brands on their consideration list.<sup>17</sup>

They were also **substantially more likely** to download a white paper or fill out an information request form to reach a sales rep versus those who said they did not recall seeing brand ads.<sup>18</sup>

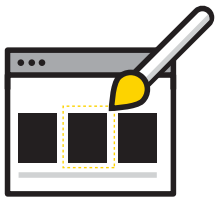
## HOW IMPORTANT

# is your website?

Brand websites that deliver positive experiences to researchers are

**8.5x** *more likely*

to be added to the consideration set<sup>23</sup>



### Select

B2B researchers who said they recalled digital and traditional brand ads while shopping for their most recent product or service were **significantly more likely** to select a brand for purchase versus those who did not recall seeing brand ads.<sup>19</sup>

For example, if a brand was initially in consideration, and the buyer recalls seeing a brand digital ad, they are **1.2 times more likely** to make the buyer's short list.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, if the brand **was not** in consideration and the buyer recalls seeing a brand digital ad, they are **6.7 times more likely** to make the short list.<sup>21</sup>



### Purchase

If conversion is the true measure of success, how B2B buyers respond to digital brand ads in terms of purchase behavior is undeniable. B2B researchers who said they recalled digital and traditional brand ads while shopping for their most recent product or service are **3.7 times more likely** to say they selected the brand for purchase.<sup>22</sup>

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# THE THOUGHT THAT COMES when you're not thinking

It is clear the impact digital has on shoppers is significant, undeniable, and getting more powerful over time. This includes buyers of B2B products and services.

Companies who believe their traditional brand marketing efforts are doing the job, would be well served by paying attention to the impact of connecting big branding efforts to direct response efforts through digital brand marketing.

The cost benefits to smaller brands are extensive and enable them to compete with the biggest, most established players.

The consideration sets B2B buyers use are changing more than ever before. Even if they don't recognize how influenced they are by brand tactics, there is an incremental impact to be made, trust to be earned, and customers to be won through digital brand efforts. By making the connection between big brand visibility and direct response engagement, digital brand marketing empowers B2B buyers and delivers an immersive brand experience that drives higher ROI.

## Takeaways

What can you do? How can you do it?



**Ad strategy**



**Drive to brand website**



**Optimal digital content**



**What can you do on the website to deliver trust?**

(white papers, lead gen, magnet, info request forms)





## Interested in learning more?

Please contact one of the following team members:

### Jeff Simpson

Principal  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
jesimpson@deloitte.com

### Rob Bamford

Senior Manager  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
rbamford@deloitte.com

### David Kearns

Manager  
Deloitte Consulting LLP  
dkearns@deloitte.com

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