

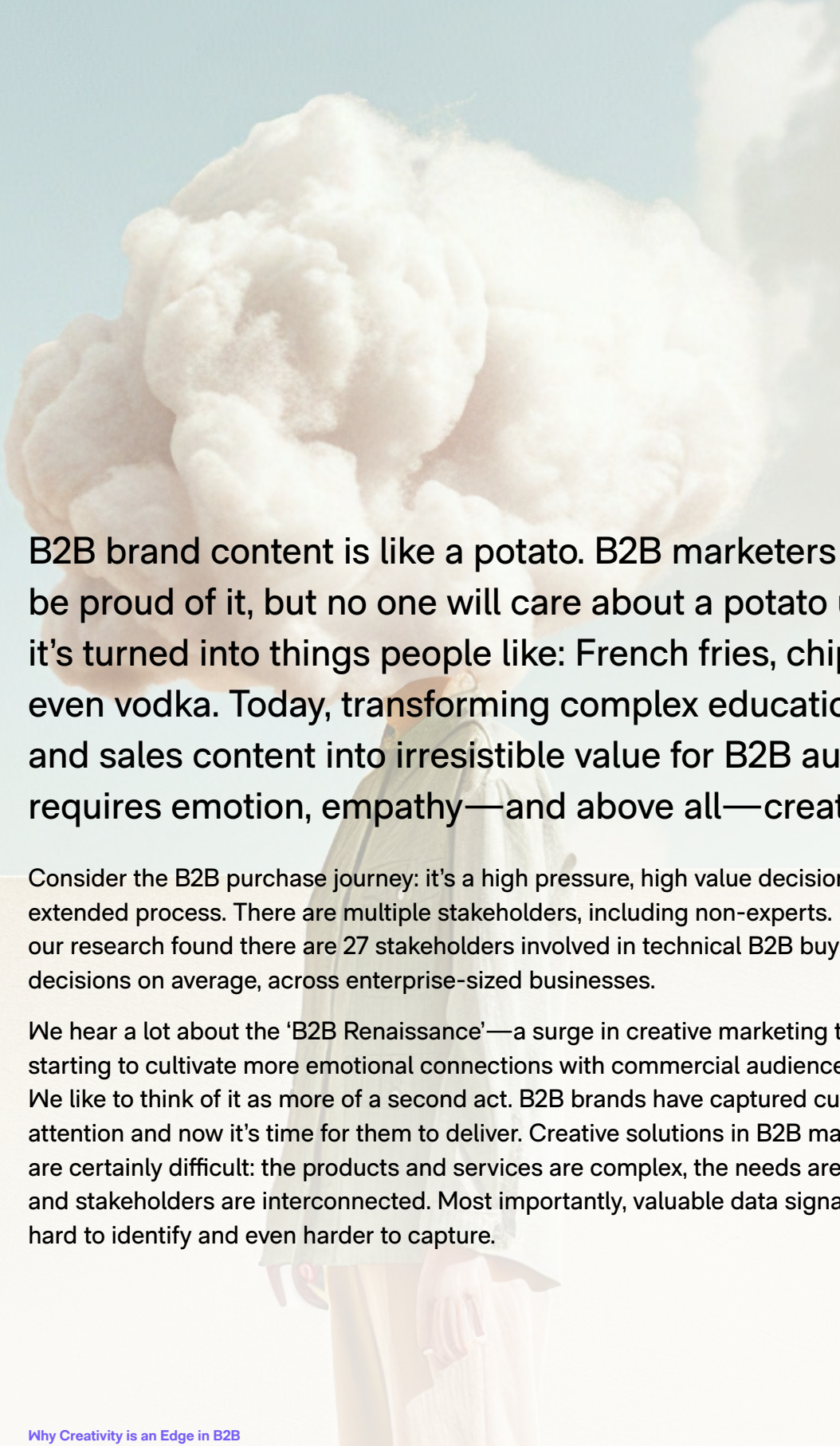
MRM
MRM
MRM



— PERSPECTIVE

Why Creativity is
an Edge in B2B

Why Creativity is an Edge in B2B



B2B brand content is like a potato. B2B marketers might be proud of it, but no one will care about a potato unless it's turned into things people like: French fries, chips, even vodka. Today, transforming complex educational and sales content into irresistible value for B2B audiences requires emotion, empathy—and above all—creativity.

Consider the B2B purchase journey: it's a high pressure, high value decision with an extended process. There are multiple stakeholders, including non-experts. In fact, our research found there are 27 stakeholders involved in technical B2B buying decisions on average, across enterprise-sized businesses.

We hear a lot about the 'B2B Renaissance'—a surge in creative marketing that is starting to cultivate more emotional connections with commercial audiences. We like to think of it as more of a second act. B2B brands have captured cultural attention and now it's time for them to deliver. Creative solutions in B2B marketing are certainly difficult: the products and services are complex, the needs are specific, and stakeholders are interconnected. Most importantly, valuable data signals are hard to identify and even harder to capture.

These days, the secret to great B2B marketing is not just “data-driven creative.” Instead of asking how to produce more data-driven creative, B2B marketers should be asking how to get more creative with their data capture. Nobody wants to fill out a survey or get email blasts. So how do we creatively capture the data required for personalization and building emotional, enduring relationships with B2B decision makers?

We are seeing **3 shifts in B2B marketing** that unlock exciting creative opportunities for data capture:

#1 From Qualified Leads to Buying Networks

B2B marketers have placed a big bet on delivering marketing qualified leads (MQLs). But MQLs don't make purchases; buying networks do. In reality, B2B decisions are made by networks of individuals within the same company: individuals within these networks may not carry the same weight and the same messages may not be relevant to all individuals in a given network. So, rather than blasting everyone at the same company or industry with the same message, B2B marketing leaders create personalized journeys based on job function.

As example, Microsoft for years has deepened relationships with enterprise audiences by creating advertising, sales enablement, and thought leadership not only by industry, but also by job function. Microsoft events like the AI World Tour take this even further: Microsoft works to create personalized journeys for individual attendees through breakout group assignments, post-event content, and training materials. Most importantly, it helps Microsoft paint a detailed picture of buying decisions within an organization. This gives Microsoft an edge in today's environment, where 29% of B2B buyers trust salespeople, but 90% trust the opinions of their peers (Forrester).

#2 From Thought Leadership to Service Design

For a long time, B2B marketing has focused on delivering value through thought leadership content. That's no longer enough. Rather than talk about the value they can provide, most sophisticated B2B marketers have moved toward delivering tools and services that provide repeatable and scalable value beyond transactional decisions. Diagnostics, pricing tools, customer service, and personalized learning pathways provide value from the outset, and help profile and nurture leads more efficiently.

Brands like Four Seasons and the US Postal Service (USPS) have embraced this shift. Four Seasons entered the booming yacht market with ambitions to build a 'booking and dreaming engine' that made planning a voyage thrilling like travel itself. The result was a progressive profiling engine that understood consumers and travel agents based on the content they engaged with, creating personalized journeys, services, and outreach for each potential buyer. This helped **Four Seasons Yachts increase leads by 742% and create an impressive CRM list by any standard.**

USPS similarly focused on developing B2B services by developing USPS Connect, a suite of tools to help small businesses keep up with rapid fulfillment and better compete in our on-demand world. USPS Connect became the largest retail network in the country, enabling small businesses to affordably deliver same-day or next-day for the first time. In both cases, these brands realized that thought leadership content was not enough to stand out in a crowded B2B landscape. Instead of talking about value, they led with value.

#3 From Product Benefits to Emotional Connections

B2B marketing has a reputation for being creatively dull, functional, and emotionless. The brands that stand out are creating work that challenges this perception by doing more than just talking about product benefits and solutions, they're connecting emotionally and building relationships with people.

For example, Microsoft is standing out on social by making people smile, while showing them how to “chat their way to the top” at work with the help of Microsoft 365 Copilot Chat. The LinkedIn campaign is closing the AI knowledge gap by showing them how to work smarter, not harder, with familiar scenarios that are exaggerated through humor and over-the-top AI-generated images. It's a bold approach that will get people's attention and demonstrate how Copilot Chat can help them incorporate it into their work routines, which will ultimately help organizations achieve more.

Creativity is critical to win in today's rapidly evolving business world, and B2B marketers need to quickly learn how to turn those potatoes into truffle fries and pair them with a vodka martini.

Why Creativity is an Edge in B2B



Kyle Boots

SVP, Executive Strategy Director, MRM New York

Kyle leads global brand, experience, and business strategy for some of MRM's largest and most complex B2B and B2B2C clients. His expertise spans strategy, consulting, and digital transformation, with a focus on building marketing and business solutions that deliver measurable impact. Kyle holds a BA from Columbia University and studied computational linguistics for his MA at NYU, fueling his passion for content and experience engines that drive tangible business results.

About MRM

MRM is a modern relationship marketing agency that builds enduring relationships between people and businesses.

MRM's core capabilities help grow relationship lifetime value, and span across CRM & Loyalty, Customer Experience, Commerce and MarTech, underpinned by Data & Analytics.

MRM operates in a borderless, integrated way, to allow for greater collaboration and velocity. MRM is part of McCann Worldgroup and the Interpublic Group of companies (NYSE: IPG), and spans 35 offices across North America, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific.

For more information, please visit www.mrm.com