

MARKETING TO C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES HURDLES AND SOLUTIONS

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Executive Summary

In a marketing circuit that is highly determined by fierce competition, the position of all C-level executives become tougher. They have to continually work hard to ensure that their company stays in the top stratum of the industry. Their days are long, hours are hard and life busy. Numerous B2B marketers bombard them on a daily basis with various types of business prospects; however, only a few get the opportunity to form an ally.

But, how do you market to the C-level executives? How do you reach out to the most coveted section of the audience in the world of business? How do you put forth your business scope to the people who matter?

Yes, there are several hurdles, but so are the solutions. This white paper discusses in details that most B2B marketers face when marketing to a C-suite, the obstacles that come across their path when doing business with C-level executives, and the obvious solutions.

YOU GET AN INSIGHT INTO:



Introduction

There is no denying the fact that C-level executives hold a critical position in the world. Well, they are at the top of the food chain, and to be honest, it is not easy being on the top.

The C-Suite is responsible for a lot of things that goes down in an organization, from the absolute top to the bottom. Their responsibility is much more than that of a decision-maker; they are in charge of managing all the operations that take place in an organization. Their objective is to ensure the growth of the business, evolve it into a successful venture.

A lot of weight lies on their shoulder! Thus, rendering most C-level executives integral to the success of an organization.

But with limited time to spare, how can B2B marketers even reach out to top management? They will have to make their presence felt even before getting the opportunity to put forth their marketing pitch.

Even though time poses to be the biggest hurdle for a B2b marketer, there are literal human barriers, who ensure only the exceptional pieces land the inbox of their bosses. With hundreds of B2B marketers trying to contact the top-level management and them consuming a vast number of media channels, ensuring that your message reaches your coveted target audience might seem confusing.

However, you should always remember this that the C-level executives are human as well who are great at what they do. So, it is not entirely impossible to communicate and engage with them. You need to carefully analyze what engrosses them and find the best method of communication. You need to judge how your product/service will add value to them or the organization.

Your B2B marketing strategies should be able to answer every question raised.

How to Reach the Right Audience?

The elite audience that makes up for the C-level executives has changed along with the shifting dynamics of the business world. The top management is made of men and women from different spheres of life, which introduces a great deal of heterogeneity to the entire scenario.

Earlier the executive hierarchy contained a few core positions including Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO), who were expected to fulfill more than their job description.

As the landscape furthered, so did the positions available. The tasks got divided according to the business function and the business system in short got more structure. Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), Chief Security Officer (CSO), Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO) and Chief Compliance Officer (CCO) are some of the current positions added to the existing hierarchy.

This development in the business structure only means that communication becomes more targeted. You deal with the person responsible for overlooking the functions of that particular department. It also indicates that your marketing purposes reach the right decision-maker, rendering the process more efficient.

Even though the process of communication has become more comfortable, it will take place only when you can convince the decision-maker about the efficiency of the B2B marketing campaigns you are running.

Hence, from the very beginning, you need to get your campaigns correct. And further, support it with documented evidence. And how to do so?

By finding the right data!

Whenever you aim at the C-suite as your target audience, you need to ensure that you are thorough in interacting your intentions. As a B2B marketer, you need to get under the skin of the campaign and have all the data you can collect to support the same. To persuade the C-level executives, you need to be prepared.

For instance, TechDataPark, a California-based company that excelled in collating business email database for its customers decided to target the C-suite and convince at least 60% of the executives to try out their service, which enabled other businesses to purchase email list and find potential customer/leads in them.

The campaign launched was prepared by collecting hardcore data. However, the experts at the company ensured that the information for all the targeted audience was updated. Not only did the professionals collect the names and email addresses, but also the designation was restructured.

Sending out incorrect personal information is irksome, and the experts knew that it could hamper their one opportunity to crack a deal. To ensure that they had launched a proper communication system with the C-suites, they worked hard to collect all the info required.

This important discovery was the breakthrough that the company was looking for. With a vigorous campaign to support their cause, it was easy to get attention to the service that they were offering.

Targeting the elite audience at the right time can be done using various types of channels. Be it press releases or social media feeds, collecting the accurate information ensure that you are reaching out to the right people. And this is what will help you reap all the sweet rewards.

Eliminating All the Hurdles to Emerge Victoriously

Targeting other B2B audiences using marketing channels is more comfortable as compared to C-suites. When targeting the latter, you need to plan your campaign cautiously. Just sending emails won't cut. It will be abandoned in a huge pile of nothing. It's like throwing a needle in a huge collection of a haystack.

And the email you send will be first scrutinized by the personal assistant of the executive or someone in a similar job role. Acting as a gatekeeper, their position is to ensure that their boss doesn't get bombarded with unwanted calls, messages, and emails. They check the relevancy of the content you are sending. As the first person who comes across the message you send, it is necessary to include them (in a worthy role) when crafting your B2B marketing strategies as well.

While challenges such as crafting an exciting marketing campaign and finding the right content can take a lot of thought, you need to pay attention to the biggest hurdle you have- getting past the gatekeeper to allow your message reach the C-suite.

You will have to cut through all the noise. You have to make sure that whatever content you direct to the executive, it should be informative, well-crafted and remarkable.

How to do the same? Well, you need to be tactical here. From impactful messages included in emails to high-quality content published on various social media channels, you need multiple types of content that resonate the issues your target audience is facing. It should fundamentally address why the executives should opt for your product/service. In short, the content you create should allow you to stand out

To come across all the massive hurdles, be it the immense competition or passing the gatekeeper, you need to be seen, heard and noticed. That should be your priority when it comes to connecting with C-level executives.

Finding the Right Communication Channel

In reaching out to the C-suite, you need to understand the simple trends that have been doing the rounds. Most executives nowadays rely heavily on the digital mediums for procuring information. They search online to find answers to the issues that they have been facing.

Thus, it is safe to declare that any marketing campaign that is not backed up by proper content and social media strategy is doomed to fail. You can't just expect the C-suite to pay attention to you, not at least without getting their attention first.

As digital marketing is on the rise, it is only apparent that the executives at the top management level are taking the route to find answers to their problems. With the changing medium of content consumption, the communication pathway is changing as well. And the primary source of communication for the C-suite is the internet. All C-level executives use the internet as the primary source of information for all of their business needs.

Now the internet is filled with noise; it is filled with half-baked, boring information. Many of the content available is not proper in conveying its intentions, thus leaving the executives unsatisfied. Creating content, any content for the C-suite audience not only has to be well-researched, but it should also contain info that proclaims you as an expert in certain areas.

The content created for the top management audience needs to be engaging, yes definitely, but it should also put you in the favorable light by identifying you as an expert in the topic of discussion.

Educational videos and interactive e-books are some of the best ways to draw your coveted audience into the sales cycle.

When talking about such informative pieces of content, you need to analyze every minute info that is being included. Your content should market the brand itself. And sharing such content on social media can allow you to reach out to your target audience.

It is not only about offering your top management audience with a solution but also to show them that you know about the things that you are suggesting.

Now, the information you offer in the content plays an immense role in convincing the C-suites about investing in your product; however, the type of material you pan out also has a fair-share in deciding the same. As mentioned, educational videos and interactive eBooks, even a well-written whitepaper can do the bidding. All of these content types have a certain appeal about themselves. According to different studies, 80% of the top executives are watching videos online as a part of consuming content.

Your aim should be to create a strong and though-evoking leadership piece. Given that YouTube gets more than 1.5 million business-related searches every day, it is only apparent that to reach to the business moguls; you should use engaging videos.

The Art of Networking & Following Up

You might have launched an incredibly successful marketing campaign that has successfully captured the interest of the C-suite. Yes, everything feels right, but in all this, you need to understand something as well- the executives will not follow up with you. You need to take the initiative and achieve the same.

In simple words, you need to follow-up with the C-suite that you want to get into a business with. The executives, with their busy schedule, will not be proactive in following up with you. You, as a brand trying to get their attention, have to meet the part.

One of the smartest tactics would be to involve the sales team from the very initial stages of the campaign. You need to include them in every step of the campaign. A study revealed that a vital ingredient to a successful marketing campaign would be a sales team following up within 48 hours of the initial pitch made — the response rate increases when the brand undertakes this small yet meaningful gesture.

The C-suite is not the typical run-in-the-mill customer base. Crafting proper content and sending it out to them on emails will only partially allow you to crack the hard surface.

To build an ever-lasting relationship with the executives, you need to start networking and include face-to-face meetings in your strategic decisions.

Be it as an attendee in an event or an exhibitor in a high priority gathering, meeting face-to-face with the executives give you an advantage. It allows you to make your case effectually.

When dealing with C-level executives, it is more than just building leads. It is about creating real-time value for your brand.

However, make sure that even when following up and networking, you should be discreet and genuinely express your desire to collaborate with the executives. Showing off your talents will not do you any favor. You need to offer a solution to all the issues out there effectively.

Build your network and follow-up as soon as possible to ensure that you can drive a profitable deal from the association.

Keeping the Communication Flowing

Engaging the C-level executive is not easy. However, by creating the right content, using the right channel to connect with the C-suite and networking appropriately, you can keep the audience engaged.

However, you need to ensure that the communication keeps flowing. You need to nurture the relationship you develop with an executive continually. The need to establish yourself as a strategic partner can be extremely beneficial for your business in the long-run.

While making regular marketing pitches, sending emails and publishing thought-provoking content on different social media channels are strategic as always, you need to keep continuing providing solutions, and ensure that both the businesses move forward.

You need to keep in mind that your audience is not like the regular audience. These are knowledgeable people who want practical solutions only.

A good marketing campaign will tell the C-suites what they know and will answer their problems in the subtlest of ways. And it is indeed not a one-time venture either. The communication will go on, and the relationship formed will be one that is lasting.

Since this is a high-powered audience, you need to improvise your marketing tactics and approach them using a unique strategy. Hence, you need to keep the communication flowing.

What Did We Learn?

Effectively communicating with the C-suite and pursuing them to rely on your business is a task that is indeed not easy. However, you need to persevere and believe in yourself. You need to channelize your efforts in the right direction.

By understanding that your audience is a coveted group of people, you can make your efforts more targeted. From finding the right communication channel to dealing with various hurdles, crafting the right content to initiating follow-ups, you can build a meaningful relationship with the C-suites.

Let the executives know your intentions of helping them. Highlight your struggles that essentially answer their pain points, and half the job will be done.

Yes, it is not easy to cut through all the noise and get to the front of the line, but consistent efforts can help you achieve your goals.

Don't take any additional means to impress the C-suite. Keep it straight and keep it simple. Marketing to the C-level executives is easier when you know who to chase and how to go about it.

Reference

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