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## New Media and Your Target Audience: Making the most of your B2B marketing media plan

It is increasingly difficult for companies to reach large groups of business decision-makers through traditional B2B channels. Today, B2B marketers need to think beyond tried-and-true marketing methods in order to ensure that an opportunity to engage with their target audience is not missed. In this way, the Internet has forever changed the rules of engagement for B2B marketers.

Historically, marketers could rely solely on the trade press or a well-attended tradeshow. If they could not reach the target audience effectively in these environments, marketers would host a lunch-and-learn seminar, or the sales rep would entice them with a nice dinner.

Yet, according to Exhibit Surveys, Incorporated, the number of "buyers" (percent of attendees planning to purchase one or more products exhibited as a result of the show) on average was cut in half between 1992 and 2002 (see Figure 1). Although tradeshow attendance has rebounded somewhat in more recent years, the numbers are

still well below those of the early- and mid-90's.

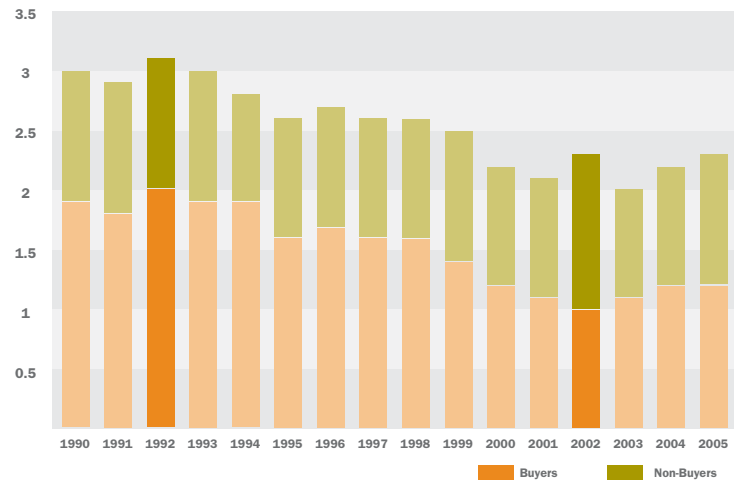
One of the fundamental arguments for participating at a tradeshow is that these forums historically provided a unique opportunity for buyers and sellers to come together because they could not (as cost-effectively) find each other on their own. This may still be very true, but the impact that any one tradeshow can have on an organization's ability to develop new leads has diminished.

At the same time, the Internet is creating new complexity, as well as opportunity, for marketers in the B2B mediascape. Marketers must learn how to take advantage of the Internet, which has revolutionized the ability to communicate, search and execute transactions – for business buyers as well as consumers. B2B marketers must remain diligent in understanding how to leverage emerging media—specifically, new online tools and strategies—to effectively reach their target audiences.

To simplify the challenges of effectively reaching target audiences online, many B2B marketers have turned to Search. According to Jupiter Research, more than 40% of the average marketer's budget is devoted to Search. Primarily, this is due to its attractive Pay-Per-Click models.

**Search is a great tool, but as marketers, we must also understand its limitations.** Online behaviors can vary dramatically from one user to the next – two users searching for similar information may not visit the same sites or conduct online research in the same way. By relying solely on Search, marketers are missing users who may not know they have a need for the product/service, who are loyal to the competitors' brand or who simply are not aware of the appropriate terms to use. Therefore, marketers need to seek ways to

Traffic Density (# of attendees per sq. ft.)



Source: Exhibit Surveys, Incorporated

broaden their reach, so that they are impacting new audience segments that may not be searching "on their terms."

**Marketers should consider both Search and Behavioral Targeting to reach the target audience.** Taking advantage of their complementary relationship is critical to gaining maximum value from each strategy. Search deals with pages or words and their relationship with other words, while Behavioral Targeting looks at people's interest in specific topics. By combining strategies, advertisers can reach consumers at the moment they express their intention (i.e. during a search) and then re-market to them throughout their online experience.

**B2B marketers must continually challenge assumptions about the media consumption habits of their target audiences.** Online media are ever-changing, and we need to remain informed about new advertising models, new technologies and new creative capabilities. We need to be ready to re-evaluate our media strategies on a regular basis and continue to meet our customers and prospects on their terms, which is the next step to getting there.

### Did you know?

A recent study conducted by Reed Business Information concluded in December of 2005 that Engineers are on the Internet 7 hours a week for business, visiting 12 different industry sites monthly, on average (not to mention other personal online media consumption habits).

The lines between "at home" and "at work" are blurring, and many B2B targets are switching mindsets frequently between "at home" and "at work." According to Reed Research, 92% of Design Engineers in North America have access to the Internet both at work and at home – and many find it helpful to spend time at home on the Internet for work.



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