

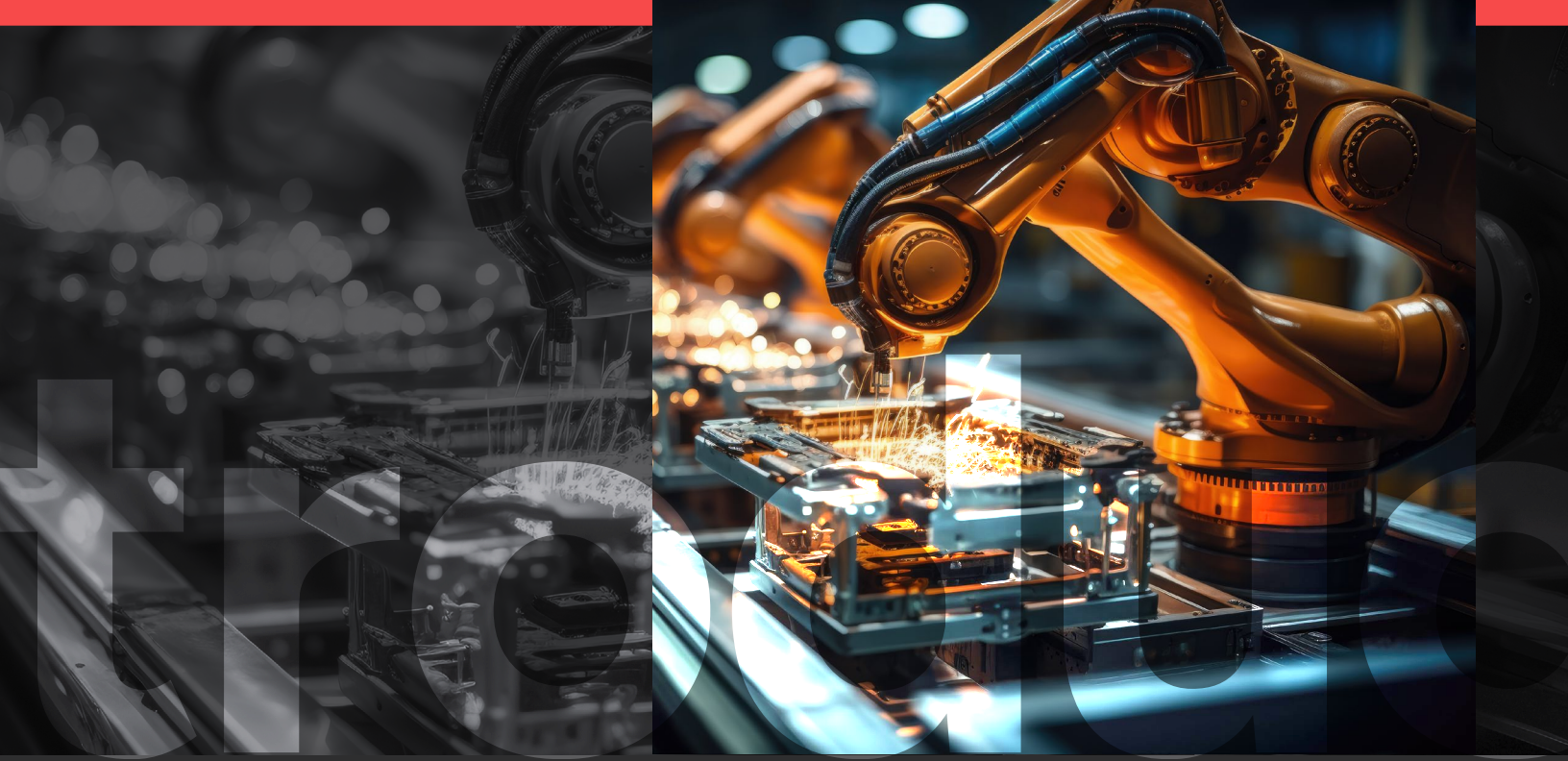
# INDUSTRIAL MARKETING PILLARS

How industrial companies should leverage marketing to drive business results

 **TribalVision**







## Introduction

Industrial companies are the foundation of the American economy. They employ great people and provide invaluable products and services that help America and Americans prosper. Their resilience has shown them how to succeed through multiple downturns and technological advances. However, what got you where you are today won't get you where you need to be tomorrow. 2024 and beyond will require a more strategic and intentional approach to growing your business.

We can help. After more than a decade of serving both small and large companies along the industrial value chain, TribalVision has developed our Industrial Marketing Pillars to help companies build a best-in-class industrial marketing capability. At the heart of our pillars is the concept that your marketing strategy must be an extension of your business strategy. Our pillars are designed to help you achieve that alignment.

The pillars are not dogmas that can be applied blindly. The hard part isn't understanding the pillars; it's applying the concepts to your specific business and executing the right way. After all, the industrial value chain is diverse—from raw material providers to component manufacturers, and from industrial parts distributors to downstream value-added resellers and service providers. Each business operates within a unique sub-niche of the value chain and navigates diverse economic environments. The pillars can be adapted, sequenced, and tailored to each company to drive results. However, after more than a decade of producing marketing results for our industrial clients, we're confident that the pillars form a sturdy foundation on which you can build a best-in-class industrial marketing capability.



## Summary of Pillars

- 01 STRATEGY BEFORE TACTICS**  
Don't jump right into tactics. Slow down and ask yourself, "What marketing strategy will help me accomplish my business goals?"
- 02 PREPARE YOUR FOUNDATION**  
Ensure your positioning strategy, logo/brand, website, tech stack, and assets are strong enough to support your goals.
- 03 CENTRALITY OF SALES ENABLEMENT**  
Leverage marketing to help your sales team build relationships, increase its close rate, and improve its sales velocity.
- 04 MULTI-FUNNEL MARKETING**  
Your business is a series of funnels and your approach to marketing should reflect the funnels your business is prioritizing.
- 05 OMNICHANNEL IS TABLE-STAKES**  
Embrace the emerging reality that today's digital-savvy industrial buyers are dispersed across multiple marketing channels.
- 06 EMBRACE THE AMAZON EFFECT**  
More and more industrial buyers expect digital and easy access to specs, pictures, shipping, inventory, pricing, and other key information.

# 01

# STRATEGY BEFORE TACTICS



Your marketing strategy needs to flow from your business strategy, otherwise it's aimless. Only then can you back into the tactics to support that marketing strategy. Slowing down to see the forest through the trees, before jumping headlong into implementing tactics, is the best path to marketing ROI.

In the fast-paced world of marketing, the temptation to dive straight into tactics is strong. There are thousands of tactics (emails, social media, Google ads, radio ads, etc) for thousands of problems, all competing for your attention. The allure of quick wins and the perception of progress being made can lead businesses to jump headfirst into tactical execution without a clear direction. This might feel effective at the start, but ultimately results in low ROI.

Our experience working with industrial companies has led us to recommend a simple 3-step framework to drive alignment between business strategy, marketing strategy, and marketing tactics.



**A forest of these trees is a spectacle too much for one man to see.**

- David Douglas



# 01

# STRATEGY BEFORE TACTICS

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## **FIRST:** **Start with clarifying your business strategy.**

Industrial companies need to have a clear business strategy to succeed in a changing world. Are you focused on entering new geographies? Prioritizing growth through expanding within your current clients? Bolstering your partner and distributor network? Increasing the top of your sales funnel? There's no right answer, and you likely have a multi-pronged strategy. The important part is that you have a clearly defined and thoughtful strategy.

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## **SECOND:** **Move on to developing your marketing strategy.**

Once your business strategy is set, we have a good starting point to ask the question, "How can marketing strategy support those goals?" The marketing strategy will (or should) differ significantly based on your business objectives. For example:

**Increase Close Rate:** If your lead flow is strong but you want to prioritize closing more of the deals you already have, your marketing strategy will center on sales enablement and nurture.

**Up/Cross-Sell:** If your goal is focusing on expanding wallet share within your current client base, your marketing strategy will center on arming your account management and/or technicians with the appropriate tools, content, data, tech, and resources to accomplish that goal.

**Close Skilled Labor Gap:** If your goal is maximizing your current capacity by recruiting & retaining team members, your marketing strategy will center on developing and launching a full funnel employee-centered marketing strategy.

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## **LAST:** **Bring your strategy to life with tactics**

Now that you've answered "What do we want to accomplish" by clarifying your business strategy, and "How can marketing support that goal?" by building a marketing strategy, the marketing tactics should flow relatively easily from your business and marketing strategies. Which marketing channels will allow you to reach your target audience? What message do you want to deliver to them? What technology and data is required to achieve your goals?

# 02

# PREPARE YOUR FOUNDATION



By the time a potential customer reaches out, data shows they are 70% through their buying journey. Oftentimes, they've already done their homework and now just need to validate their findings before purchase. You are less likely to make it into their research in the first place if your positioning, logo/brand, website, technology, and content don't form a sturdy foundation. That means you've lost a sale and don't even know it.

**82%** of B2B buyers are using more sources today than 3 years ago to research and evaluate products and services.

**62%** of B2B buyers say that a web search was one of the first three resources they use to learn about a solution.

**71%** of B2B buyers start with a generic search — rather than searching for a particular company.

# 02

# PREPARE YOUR FOUNDATION

You can have the best business and marketing strategy in the world, but you need to make sure you're building it on a strong marketing foundation — e.g., your positioning strategy, logo, website, technology, and assets & collateral. Without a strong foundation, even the best-executed strategies can result in a low ROI.

## What makes a marketing foundation effective?

**Positioning Strategy:** What is your unique selling proposition that sets you apart? How does that proposition cascade through your key personas so that it resonates with each of them in a unique way? You need to dig deep to surface these key details and avoid relying on the all-too-common differentiators of “quality and service”. The reality is that it only takes seven seconds to make a first impression, and you need to convey a lot of information within those seven seconds to generate and maintain attention.

**Logo & Brand:** Let's face it, people are visual. A strong logo & brand is crucial for any company as it creates a memorable impression and helps differentiate the brand in a competitive market. It fosters trust and recognition, ensuring that customers can easily identify and connect with the company. Consistent visual elements across all marketing channels reinforce brand messaging and contribute to a cohesive brand experience.

**Website:** We sometimes hear, “My business is relationship-based and driven by word of mouth, so who cares about my website?” But the data says otherwise — 62% of B2B buyers lean on a Google search to launch their research efforts. In industrial, your website doesn't need to be especially expensive or flashy, but it needs to effectively communicate your positioning, guide your key personas through a thoughtful user journey, and build confidence and trust that you're able to solve the challenges your website visitors are facing. This is especially true when you are trying to capture new eyeballs who are not yet familiar with you, but it's increasingly true for retaining the relationships that you've worked so hard to develop.

**Assets & Collateral:** Your effective positioning strategy, logo/brand, and website need to be reinforced by and consistent with your assets & collateral — one-pagers, sales presentations, trade show materials, blogs & white papers, proposals & quotes, etc. This will help you educate & inform B2B buyers who are spending the lion's share of their buying journey researching online. And by carefully mapping unique content to each stage of the buying journey, you'll streamline that journey and arm your sales team with the right material and the right message at the right stage of the sales funnel.

# 03

# CENTRALITY OF SALES ENABLEMENT



In relationship-driven and long/complex sales cycles, many of the highest ROI opportunities involve sales enablement strategies. These include upgrading outdated tech stacks, implementing account-based marketing, intent signals, automation, creating custom collateral, and personalization. These strategies can help increase the close rate of your existing leads by empowering your sales team to optimize the buying journey.

## 8x

The average ROI of implementing a modern CRM, like Hubspot or Salesforce.



Relationships matter in industrial sales and marketing, but the most sophisticated industrial companies are adapting to the rise of a new generation of industrial buyers by embracing sales enablement to supercharge their sales team.

Sales enablement focuses on the important KPI of Close Rate. It asks, “How can we help our salespeople close more deals faster?” Through the use of technology, automation, personalization, content, and data, you can enhance your sales team’s relationship-building ability by increasing automation without losing personalization. Or you can clarify the “dark funnel” of a long, complex sales cycle using data, reporting, and intent signals.

### **How sales enablement can support your business strategy**

- Deliver content tailored to where the prospect is along their buying journey to keep them engaged and informed.
- Provide your sales reps with insights into their prospects’ buying intent signals to help them prioritize leads with the highest potential.
- Build engaging and informative sales dashboards to gamify the sales process, offer insights to leadership, and drive accountability.
- Build sales playbooks that outline common objections and their responses that map to each stage of the buying journey.
- Increase the volume and quality of touchpoints for each prospect through retargeting, custom content, and other means to increase engagement and mindshare.
- Create tailored presentations for each persona that educate & inform while also showcasing your expertise.

# 04

# MULTI-FUNNEL MARKETING



Marketing's power extends well beyond generating new leads for the top of your sales funnel. Take advantage of the dynamics within your value chain by leveraging marketing for all of your key "funnels" -- supercharge your supplier relationships, enable your third-party sales channels, co-market with supplies, and deploy marketing to support your recruiting effort.

## 1.7x

Companies who employ personalization in their marketing are 1.7x more likely to grow market share than those who don't.

# 04

# MULTI-FUNNEL MARKETING

A common mistake many industrial companies make is only thinking of marketing as a way to generate new business leads. As important as that often is, if you think about it, your entire business operates as a series of funnels: customers who pay for one service convert into customers who pay for two services; applicants convert into new hires; new suppliers convert into a resilient supplier network; new partners convert into allies; and new distributors convert into reliable revenue sources.

The reality is that marketing can and should support any or all of these funnels, depending on your priorities. The key is determining which funnel(s) you're prioritizing and building your marketing strategy to support that effort. This unlocks the real power of marketing.

## **How marketing can support a broad array of business objectives:**

- Enhance up/cross-selling by providing high-impact leave-behinds for account managers and technicians, and email automation workflows based on services clients don't yet use.
- Nurture your independent sales agent network with email updates on new capabilities and annual swag to stay top of mind.
- Create training videos and desktop guides to help your distributors effectively communicate your value proposition and differentiators.
- Build a recruiting-focused micro-site (e.g., [careers.yourbusiness.com](https://careers.yourbusiness.com)) to clearly articulate your employee value proposition.
- Deploy an omnichannel marketing campaign to generate new dealers, installers, or other partners.
- Co-develop a value-add webinar with your largest supplier to co-market to each other's clients.



# 05

# OMNICHANNEL IS TABLE-STAKES



You should continue to optimize the marketing channels that have historically produced the strongest ROI, but embrace the emerging reality that today's digital savvy industrial buyers are dispersed across multiple marketing channels and buy in unique ways. Leverage technology, integrations, data, and each of your core marketing channels in an integrated way to increase the volume and quality of the touchpoints you have with your audience.

## 287%

Omnichannel marketing campaigns can achieve a 287% higher purchase rate compared to single-channel campaigns.

# OMNICHANNEL IS TABLE-STAKES

Industrial companies often hesitate to depart from or supplement their tried-and-true marketing channels, but the world of sales & marketing is rapidly evolving, including within industrial. Each situation is unique, but generally, industrial buyers are more scattered across more platforms than ever before — e.g., trade shows, Facebook, review sites, Instagram, directories, LinkedIn, trade publications, YouTube, and the list goes on.

An omnichannel strategy is about communicating with your audience where and how they prefer to communicate. Streamline their buying journey by using tech & data to coordinate your marketing across the platforms where your audience is most likely to engage. Ultimately, this will increase the volume and quality of touchpoints, which leads to higher engagement, conversion rates, and ROI.

## Client example:

**Top of Funnel:** Use audience match and lookalike technology to advertise an ungated “how-to” eBook on LinkedIn and trade magazines. Host the eBook on your website, and ensure your website has strong SEO and content that reinforces your expertise. At this stage, avoid sales pitches; instead build trust by providing actionable value.

**Middle of Funnel:** Engage those who interact with your eBook and other digital content as well as your database of current and past prospects. Capture their email addresses in lead forms and then use email automation workflows to deliver relevant content based on their activities. Retarget them with ads on Facebook and Instagram to increase touchpoints. At this stage, focus on demonstrating value to help them understand your unique selling proposition and how you can support them.

**Bottom of Funnel:** Leverage all that you now know about your prospects. Facilitate a consultative sales process with highly-targeted, use case-specific content on your website. Nurture your prospects with consistent messaging through email automation integrated with your ERP/CRM systems. Capture high intent buyers with targeted Google ad campaigns using AI and intelligent bidding. At this stage, focus on convert prospects into customers.

# 06

# EMBRACE THE AMAZON EFFECT



The savviest industrial companies are embracing the “Amazon Effect” – i.e., easy & digital access to information – to streamline their customer’s buying journey. The data clearly shows that this effect extends well beyond someone’s personal shopping habits and has officially arrived in the industrial value chain — e.g., specifications, shipping, inventory, pricing, capabilities, calculators, and other key information. This is reflected in the new data that B2B buyers complete 70% of their buying journey before they speak with a sales rep.

**75%**

of B2B buyers prefer digital self-serve and remote human engagement over face-to-face interactions.

**70%**

of B2B buyers said they were open to making fully self-serve purchases in excess of \$100,000. 27% were open to purchases above \$500,000.

**80%**

80% of B2B buyers hope they don’t have to return to primarily face-to-face interactions in the future.



# 06

# EMBRACE THE AMAZON EFFECT

Before reaching out to a new potential partners, industrial buyers spend significant time researching on websites and directories, validating capabilities, reviewing specs and sell sheets, and gathering other available information. They use this research to narrow down their preferred options before contacting sales reps.

This reality underscores the need for a strong online presence with accessible, detailed information. TribalVision has observed this accelerating trend and helped clients capitalize on it by ensuring the right information is available in the right places with the right messaging.

## Examples

- Consider what assets, tech, web functionality, and other foundational items are required to embrace the Amazon Effect (Pillar #2).
- Develop a robust FAQ section, powerful website search function, and resource center to address common customer inquiries and provide detailed product information.
- Provide detailed and comprehensive product & service descriptions with high-quality images, transparent pricing, and real-time inventory.
- Enable online quoting and eCommerce purchase options to streamline the procurement process.
- Integrate customer reviews and ratings to build trust and credibility with potential buyers.
- Offer live chat support and readily accessible contact information for immediate assistance.
- Provide detailed order tracking and automated updates to keep customers informed throughout the purchasing process.



**At TribalVision, we're more than just a marketing agency  
—we're a dedicated partner in your growth journey.**

Based in Boston, our firm has been at the forefront of marketing innovation for over a decade, specializing in transforming the marketing strategies of industrial companies.

Our team of seasoned professionals brings a wealth of experience in developing and executing effective marketing strategies tailored to the unique challenges of the industrial sector. From optimizing sales forces to creating compelling content and driving demand, we have the skills and knowledge to meet your specific needs.

We believe that every client deserves a customized approach, which is why we offer free consulting sessions to understand your unique challenges and craft strategies that align with your business goals. Whether you're launching your first marketing campaign or enhancing existing efforts, TribalVision is here to help you achieve new heights of success.

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