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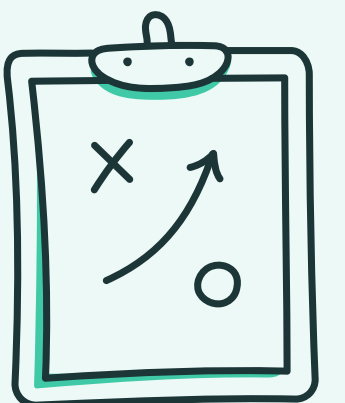
The B2B tech ad playbook

Insights from tech buyers on how to
create messaging that *moves*



“I think the challenge with a lot of tech adverts is they don’t really tell you anything.”

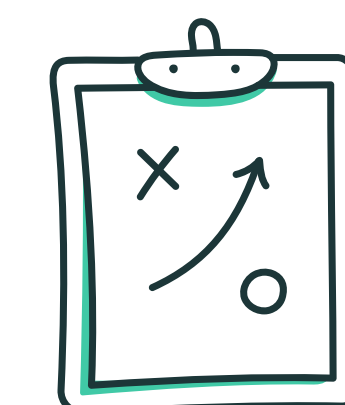
Head of IT and Corporate Systems | Consumer services sector | 500–1,000 employees





Today's B2B tech advertising environment is more crowded and competitive than ever. Buyers are bombarded with messages across multiple channels, often featuring complex jargon and generic promises.

Yet, these decision makers are increasingly discerning – expecting personalisation, clear evidence of value, and proof of impact. Successful B2B marketing hinges on authenticity, relevance, and trust-building, with content that cuts through noise and speaks directly to business priorities.



Using a dual methodology approach, we conducted both a quantitative survey and in-depth focus groups with senior IT decision makers (ITDMs) to better understand how B2B tech buyers engage with advertising. The goal was to uncover what captures their attention, builds trust, and ultimately drives them to act.

These conversations highlighted frustration with generic messaging and a clear desire for more tailored, actionable, and transparent communication.

We found that around half of senior IT leaders encounter B2B technology advertising 'often' or 'very often', but only 18% would engage with it to the same extent.

So why the disconnect? And most importantly, what can B2B marketers do to cut through the noise with their tech advertising, and inspire action instead?



We've identified ten insights from the findings to help B2B marketers build more effective communications – and outline how comms testing can help:

Click below to explore each one

Don't be an answer looking for a question

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Generic messaging is risking relevance

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They want pricing, not guessing games

3

They're not reading your jargon

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Proof beats promises every time

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If they can't tell it's you, it won't work

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Nevermind the buzzwords

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Don't be an answer looking for a question

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Our senior ITDM respondents were very clear about the fact that wishy-washy language and vague claims about what a solution can do were direct turn-offs. In fact, clearly stating the business problem that a solution addresses was the single most important factor in getting their attention – it was the top-rated element overall. A massive 73% included it among their top five ways to make a B2B ad stand out.

Seven in ten

say that a *clear and relevant statement of the business problem it solves* would make them more likely to pay attention to a B2B tech ad



“It’s very much...you must buy it because it’ll be brilliant for your business. You’re like, well why will it be brilliant for my business?”

“I don’t know how they do it, but understand what the priorities of the business are and target solutions at those priorities”

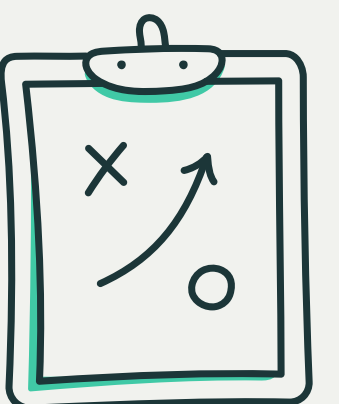


Top tip for marketers:

Be clear on the business problem you solve. Avoid vague claims. Show how your solution solves specific, real-world challenges.

How comms testing can help:

Test different ways of framing the business problem to find out which resonates most strongly with your audience.



Generic messaging is risking relevance

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Respondents expressed frustration at receiving irrelevant communications that didn't reflect their industry or needs. They highlighted that generic messaging was quickly deleted or ignored. A quarter said that messaging that isn't relevant to their industry is one of their biggest frustrations with B2B advertising, and 59% included personally relevant messaging among the top ways to make a B2B ad more attention-grabbing.



“At least if anything, target the advert at my industry”



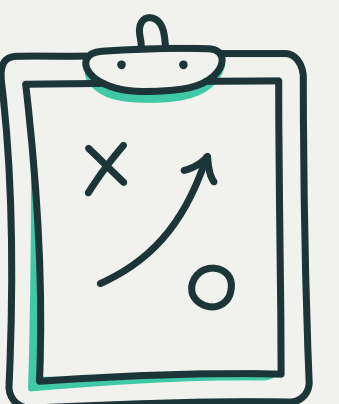
“Trying to sell a company like ours petabytes and petabytes (...) of storage is not going to work because we don't need that and (...) I see that and just think this is just garbage”

Top tip for marketers:

Tailor messaging to the recipient's industry and role. Speak directly to the business context and sector. Generic messaging gets ignored.

How comms testing can help:

Check that your messaging feels relevant and personalised to the right industries and roles – before you launch.



They want pricing, not guessing games

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Respondents consistently pointed out that hiding pricing is frustrating and a waste of time. 60% of respondents included pricing information in their top factors to make a B2B ad stand out, and over half said a lack of transparent pricing is a frustration. Clear, upfront figures help decision makers quickly assess viability and move forward.

60%

say that *transparent pricing or cost estimates/guidance* would make them more likely to pay attention to a B2B tech ad



“I emailed them and said, how much? They said, £27 per machine. That was it. Fantastic.”



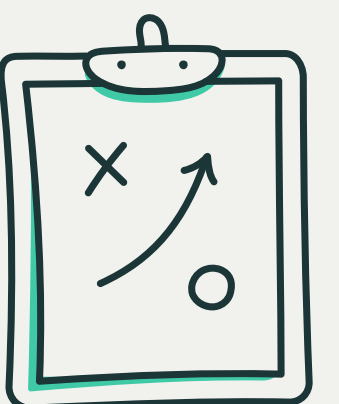
“Give me a ballpark figure... it’s like getting blood out of a stone. And after three or four calls, look, you need to give me a rough ballpark... if you’re going to tell me it’s a million dollars, forget it, we can’t afford it.”

Top tip for marketers:

Be upfront about pricing. Provide indicative figures. It helps buyers quickly assess feasibility.

How comms testing can help:

Gauge whether including pricing (or price ranges) improves engagement and trust – without alienating prospects.



They're not reading your jargon

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Lengthy, jargon-filled communications are an instant barrier. For half of senior IT leaders, simple, direct and buzzword-free language is a top way to get their attention. Respondents expressed that simplicity and brevity makes messaging more accessible and more likely to be read.

50% say that *simple, direct, and buzzword-free messaging* would make them more likely to pay attention to a B2B tech ad

“If somebody sends you a big long, wordy email, frankly you’re not going to read it.”

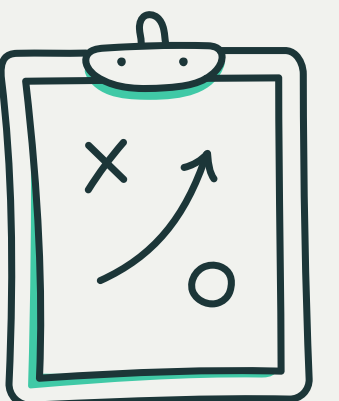


Top tip for marketers:

Use simple, concise language. Keep copy punchy and jargon-free to avoid immediate dismissal.

How comms testing can help:

Identify jargon or unnecessary complexity that could confuse or turn off your audience – and refine your wording.



Proof beats promises every time

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Decision makers want to see specific outcomes or measurable benefits, not broad promises. Nearly half would want to see a specific use case or case study to pique their interest, while 44% want measurable business outcomes and 34% want to see compelling statistics. Data points, stats, or customer case studies provide that much-needed credibility.

Top tip for marketers:

Include clear value propositions with proof. Use data, case studies or customer stats to back up claims.

How comms testing can help:

Test which proof points (e.g., stats, case studies) make the biggest impact and build the most credibility with buyers.

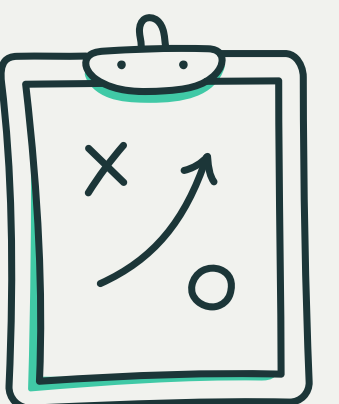
What would grab attention in a B2B tech ad?



48% say a specific case study
44% say measurable outcomes
34% say compelling statistics



“If this said...we’ll free up 20 hours of staff time a week, I’d look at it.”



If they can't tell it's you, it won't work

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Respondents expect to immediately recognise the brand and feel reassured by consistent visuals. Lack of clear logos or inconsistent branding caused confusion and reduced impact. Four in ten placed seeing 'a strong brand presence that they recognise and trust' as a top way to make a B2B ad attention-grabbing. And while less critical, one in five also would want to see eye-catching design.

Four in ten

say that *a strong brand presence that they recognise and trust* would make them more likely to pay attention to a B2B tech ad



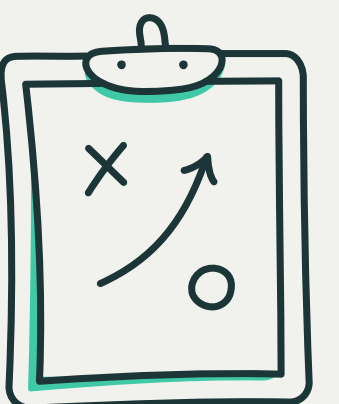
“The [redacted] logo isn't there... I wondered who it was about.”

Top tip for marketers:

Make ads visually distinctive and on-brand. Use brand colours, clear logos and strong contrast for instant recognition.

How comms testing can help:

Validate whether your creative is recognisable, memorable, and clearly associated with your brand.



Nevermind the buzzwords

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Frequent, unsubstantiated mentions of trends like AI without context are off-putting. 66% felt that overuse of generic buzzwords like AI were one of their biggest frustrations. Respondents noted that these felt superficial and undermined trust.



“All adverts look similar. They’ve all got the word AI in them. That’s a turn-off.”

“[Mentioning AI] is a big turn off, feels like jumping on a bandwagon just to grab attention. Makes me more likely to dismiss the advert.”

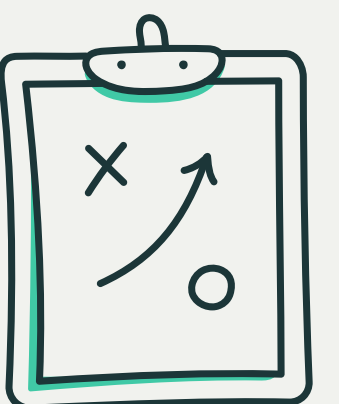


Top tip for marketers:

Avoid relying on buzzwords. Focus on outcomes. Explain what it will do and how you can help.

How comms testing can help:

Find out if your messaging sounds authentic – or if it risks being dismissed as hype or meaningless noise.



They want to be supported, not scolded

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Aggressive or accusatory messaging triggered negative reactions. 43% are frustrated by ads that feel too salesy or aggressive. Buyers prefer collaborative, solution-oriented tones that invite engagement rather than imply failure.

43% are frustrated by ads that feel too salesy or aggressive

“The question (in this advert) is accusational... I wouldn’t want to be asked that.”

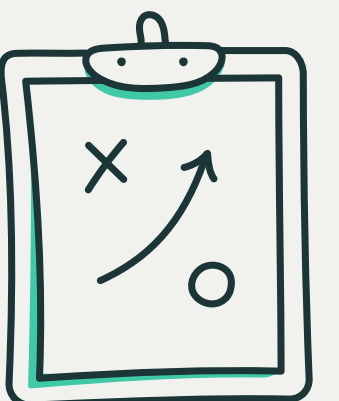


Top tip for marketers:

Strike a supportive tone. Be collaborative and helpful. Avoid fear-based or accusatory messaging.

How comms testing can help:

Test the emotional response to your messaging to ensure it feels helpful, collaborative, and customer-centric.



Plot them a clearer path forward

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Two in ten place having a direct or easy to follow call to action as an important factor in getting their attention. An engaging ad without a clear follow-up action was seen as a missed opportunity. Respondents emphasised the need for contact details or simple paths to learn more. When buyers are ready to engage, the most prominent way to do that is via the company's website (57%) so ensure that your campaigns are consistent and connected across your site.

Nearly six in ten visit the company's website after actively reading an ad – only 23% say they click on the ad directly



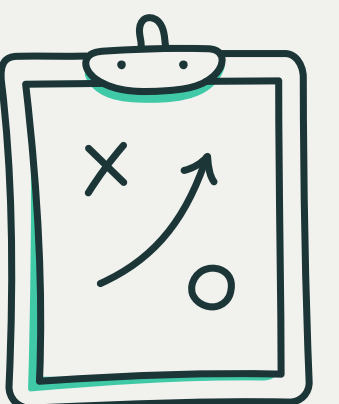
“There's no contact details or anything on it... what am I supposed to do?”

Top tip for marketers:

Include a clear next step. Add clear CTAs: 'Find out more', pricing tools or links to case studies.

How comms testing can help:

Check whether your call to action is clear, motivating, and easy for buyers to act on.



Focus where trust travels faster

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Building trust was repeatedly linked to working through familiar account managers or peer referrals.

Three in ten preferred B2B tech vendors to communicate via direct contact from a knowledgeable account manager (32%) or via a reseller or partner (31%), beaten only by emails with relevant insights, reports or case studies (51%) and the top preference of industry events and webinars (57%). Vendors who understand this dynamic will gain more traction.



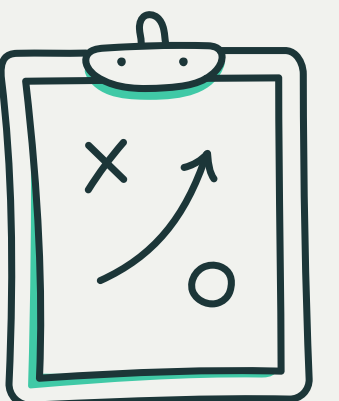
“I have a very good relationship with our account managers and when they come and introduce something to me then I pay a lot more attention because I’m thinking these guys know my business, they know me, they know how I like to work and they also know roughly what our budget spend is.”

Top tip for marketers:

Identify and use channels your audience trusts. Reference resellers, partners or peer endorsements in your messaging.

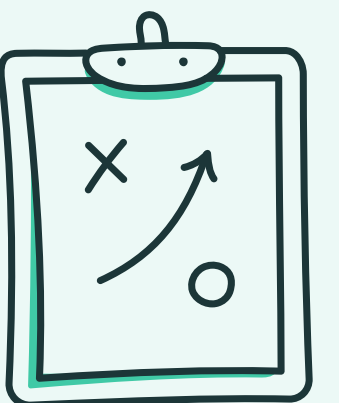
How comms testing can help:

Explore which channels, partnerships, or endorsements your audience finds most credible to boost your messaging impact.



Why does all this matter?

B2B tech advertising needs to connect with buyers who are overwhelmed by choice, short on time, and looking for clear solutions. Marketing communications that cut through will speak their language, deliver transparent information, and build credibility through trust and relevance. Use these insights to refine your campaigns and make your next advert the one they notice – and act on.



How comms testing can help

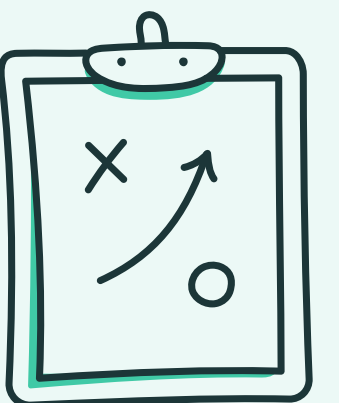


Kelsey Parish

Associate Director - Research

Communications testing allows marketers to validate messaging, creative concepts, and positioning with their target audience before launching campaigns.

By gaining direct feedback from real decision makers, brands can ensure their communications resonate, avoid wasted investment in ineffective messaging, and refine content to drive stronger engagement and conversion. Ultimately, testing helps marketers **move** from assumption to certainty.



Create messaging that moves
with comms testing built for the tech sector

Find out more



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Stronger insights. Smarter strategy.