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Business marketers are increasingly striving to reach specific key decision makers with their marketing activity, rather than appeal to broader audiences, according to new research by *B2B Marketing* and Quantum TM

## GOING STRAIGHT TO THE TOP

**B** 2B marketers are becoming increasingly focused on targeting activity to key decision makers, such as board directors or heads of department, according to new research by *B2B Marketing* in association with telemarketing agency Quantum TM. Seventy seven per cent of respondents said their focus on specific decision makers had increased during the previous 12 months, whilst 84 per cent predict it will increase in the coming year.

The MD and marketing director (predictably) were the two most popular decision makers targeted by respondents, with chairman, sales director and HR director the least popular.

Surprisingly, telemarketing was found to be the most effective medium for targeting key business decision makers, ahead of DM, email and events (see figure 2). Telemarketing attracted the second biggest investment by B2B brands in terms of targeting key decision makers (see figure 1).

Ironically, the effectiveness of telemarketing for this objective is not matched by its popularity, with just over half of respondents actually using it for this purpose, compared to 70 per cent using DM.

However, the effectiveness of telemarketing as a means of accessing this hard-to-reach audience suggests that either the Corporate Telephone Preference Service is, in practice, having little effect on companies' ability to reach senior decision makers, or that companies are flagrantly flouting the rules.

### Dumbed-down marketing

Intriguingly, the survey revealed that B2B marketers are ignoring some of the more sophisticated targeting mechanisms available, including data variable print (DVP) and personalised landing pages on websites, despite the hype that has long surrounded them.

Forty per cent of respondents had 'never' used DVP techniques to

**39%** OF B2B MARKETERS HAVE NEVER USED DATA VARIABLE PRINT WHEN TARGETING KEY DECISION MAKERS

personalise their mailings. Only 17 per cent said that they 'always' use DVP for campaigns, whilst 44 per cent said that they used it 'sometimes'.

However, this lack of faith may be the result of experience when expectations were not met: of those respondents who had used DVP, only 14 per cent described it as 'extremely effective', whilst 37 per cent said it was 'no more effective than non-variably printed DM'.

With regards to personalised landing pages, 35 per cent have never used them and only nine per cent use them 'always'. In terms of effectiveness, almost one third described them as 'no more effective than general websites'.

It seems that the enthusiasm for the potential of these techniques may be overshadowing reality and that they are not the panacea that they are often touted as.

However, it is not just the newer techniques that B2B marketers are ignoring when it comes to targeting key decision makers. Over one

**77%** OF B2B MARKETERS HAVE BECOME MORE FOCUSED ON MARKETING TO SPECIFIC DECISION MAKERS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

## MULTI-TASKING MEDIUM

There's more to telemarketing than just a very effective way to reach key decision makers, says **Niaz Rahmani**, marketing co-ordinator at Quantum TM

“ Accurate data has long been the bedrock for marketing, especially in B2B, with a rapid churn of key decision makers who often take their trusted suppliers with them when they leave. It is therefore vital that relationships are maintained and nurtured whilst future contacts are identified.

Managing both processes concurrently is not easy and whilst the audience has proliferated, the variety of mediums available has also increased dramatically. When co-ordinated strategically, a collaborative

approach will optimise the effectiveness of marketing.

However, when isolated, the consensus is that telephone marketing remains the most effective and reliable means of targeting decision makers. It provides the opportunity to network within companies as well as reinforcing messages and managing inquiries on both a personal and direct basis. When co-ordinated effectively, key relationships can be developed over sustained periods - this allows quality information to be profiled and lead opportunities to be nurtured to optimise the likelihood of them reaching pipeline.

The biggest obstacle was cited as the gatekeeper. Conversely, our experience demonstrates that building relationships with all individuals involved - especially gatekeepers - creates significant advantages. After all, gatekeepers may understand more about the differing needs of the organisation than decision makers and can therefore provide valuable insight.

Therefore, the potential of the telephone is huge, but it's the training and knowledge of those using it

that can unleash this. Telephone contact staff should be professionally trained and possess in-depth knowledge of the client's products and wider business objectives.

On top of this, data is more important than ever. Once data is cleansed it can be analysed to identify which prospects have the propensity to buy, and which customers are likely to terminate their contracts.

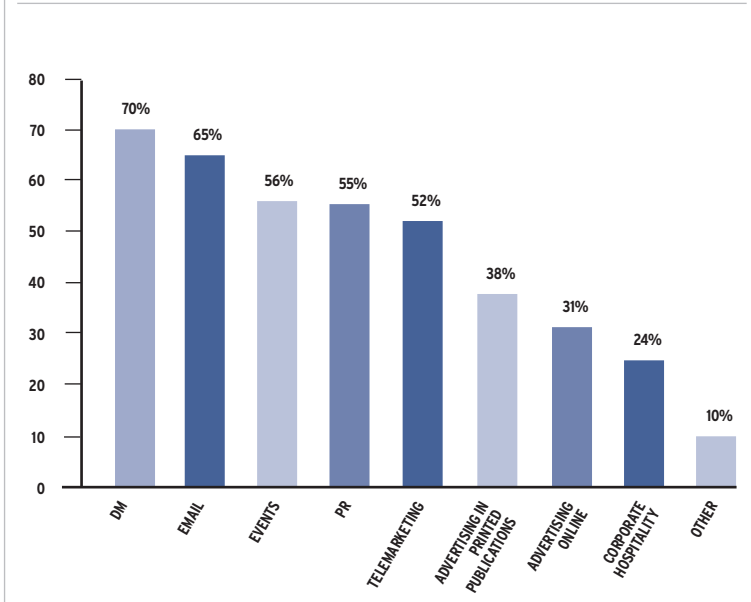
So, whilst predicting the results of your marketing campaign may not yet be an exact science, there are certainly key foundations that can be laid to optimise the effectiveness of your communications and ultimately deliver a good return on your marketing investment.



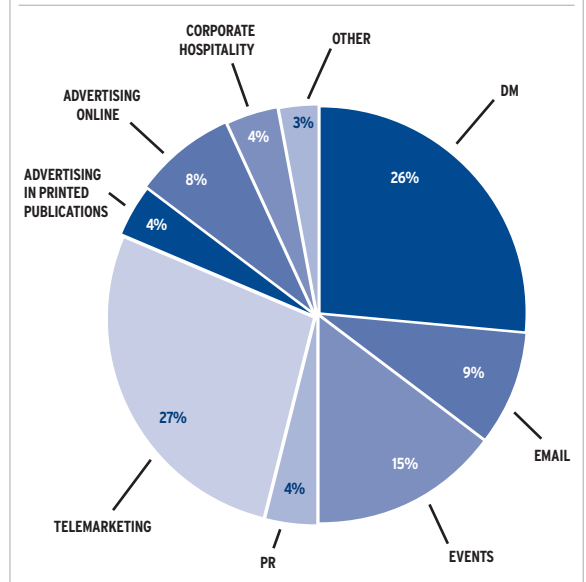
**NIAZ RAHMANI**, Marketing co-ordinator, Quantum TM



**FIGURE 1. WHICH MEDIAS DO YOU USE TO TARGET DECISION MAKERS?**



**FIGURE 2: WHICH MEDIA IS MOST EFFECTIVE IN TARGETING KEY DECISION MAKERS?**



quarter of respondents never conduct research into their target audience, whilst only 14 per cent use research 'regularly'.

**Influencing the influencers**

The survey also examined the extent to which B2B brands were seeking to target 'influencers'; i.e. those within an organisation without final purchasing decision, but with the power to influence. Over 90 per cent of respondents said that the impact on influencers was considered when designing campaigns for decision makers.

The most popular influencer group was 'other directors or senior decision makers', cited by 55 per cent, which is logical given their status within the organisation. 'Team members within specific departments', meanwhile, was cited by 35 per cent, whilst secretaries or PAs were only the focus of marketing activity for three per cent of organisations. This was reinforced by the fact that 'gatekeepers' (as

they are sometimes called) were found to be the single biggest obstacle when targeting decision makers, cited by 39 per cent of respondents, ahead even of 'availability of data' (29 per cent) and 'accuracy of records' (15 per cent).

**Other findings**

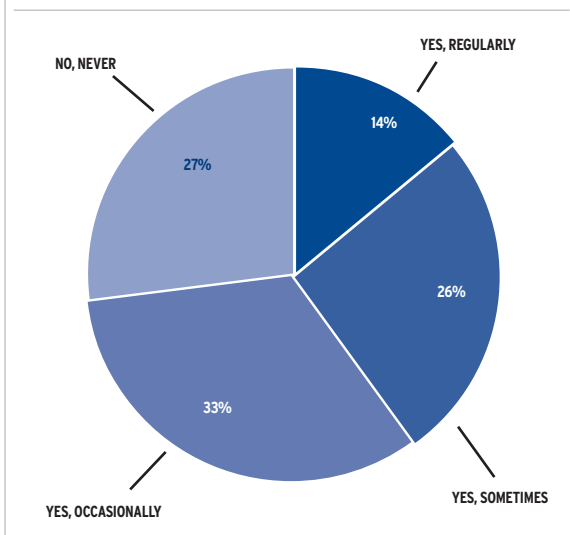
- Of those B2B marketers who do use market research, a significant majority (60 per cent) spend less than five per cent of their overall marketing budget on it. All but seven per cent spend under 10 per cent.
- Over one-third of respondents spend less

than £1 per mail piece on DM to target key decision makers.

An approximate further third spend £1-2 per mailer, with the remainder spending at least £2.

- The cost-per-mailer for non-decision makers is generally much lower, predictably, with 62 per cent spending less than £1 per mailer.
- Forty per cent of DM campaigns to decision makers get a response rate of under two per cent, whilst only 14 per cent generate a response rate of five per cent.

**FIGURE 3. DO YOU CARRY OUT MARKET RESEARCH TO SEEK TO UNDERSTAND KEY DECISION MAKERS BETTER, AND TO GENERATE INSIGHTS THAT CAN SUBSEQUENTLY BE USED FOR BETTER TARGETING?**



**FIGURE 4. DO YOU USE DATA VARIABLE PRINT WHEN DIRECT MAILING DECISION MAKERS?**

