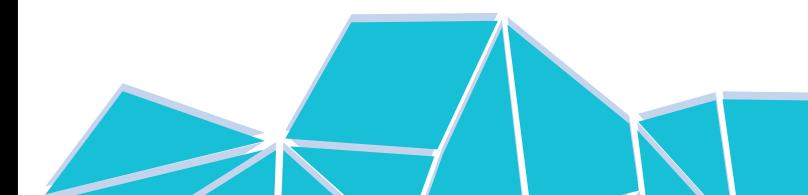


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## INTRODUCTION TO

### THE RESEARCH

Welcome to our 9th annual State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report.

There's quite a bit to get to in these pages, so I'll make my comments brief.

Again, this report is not a summary of survey findings.

Instead, these are insights into what B2B professionals actually want. We know this because their first-party behaviors suggest it.

This year, we're sharing real user insights from 8 million first-party content registrations.

Beyond revealing the true needs and intentions of B2B buyers, you'll discover:

- Why the Consumption Gap must guide your nurturing programs
- How much Al-related content is being consumed
- What the surge of C-Level consumption means
- Why Playbook registrations signal high intent

We are eager to learn which stats and insights you find most impactful.

Share your breakthrough moments by tagging NetLine on LinkedIn.

Cheers,



### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### CONTENT CONSUMPTION

- Appetites for gated content continue to rise, as user demand for gated B2B content resulted in 8M first-party registrations.
- Demand grew 27% from 2023 and 84% since 2019.
- C-Level consumption increased 27% YOY, representing 13% of total demand.
- The Consumption Gap widened by 7 hours—a 23.3% slowdown.

#### **PURCHASE DECISIONS**

- 34% of professionals expected to make a purchase decision within 12 months, down 3% from 2023.
- Playbooks drove the highest purchase intent, with registrations 115% more likely to signal a buying decision within 12 months.

#### CONTENT FORMATS AND TRENDS

- eBooks dominated with 53% of all demand—with registrations up by 71.4%.
- White Paper registrants were 31% more likely than in 2023 to make a purchase decision within a year.
- Webinars saw a 29% YOY increase in registrations; Live Webinars were the tenth most popular format of 2024, growing 3%.
- Demand for Al-related content grew 186% YOY.

FIRST-PARTY REGISTRATIONS Gated content demand surged.

OF ALL DEMAND eBooks remained the top format.

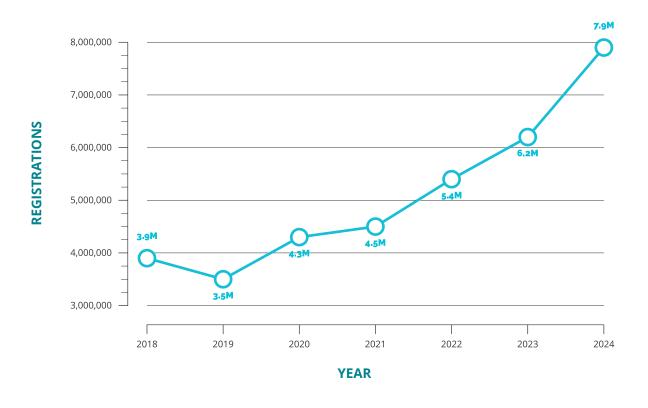
MORE LIKELY
Playbooks
signaled strong
purchase intent.

1 8 6 YOY GROWTH
Al-related content skyrocketed.

### **TOTAL REGISTRATIONS**

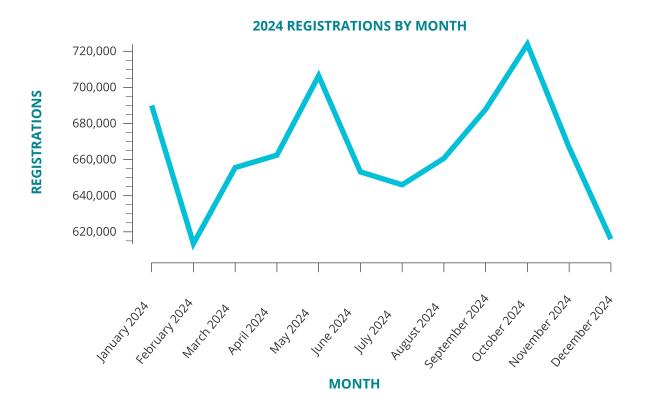
NetLine delivered 8 million fully permissioned, first-party leads in 2024—a 27% YOY increase in total registrations and NetLine's largest total ever.





### **CONTENT SEASONALITY**

Over 12 months, content consumption has its ebbs and flows.



NetLine's four most active months represent all four quarters. Below are our estimations as to why each month generated as much activity as it did.



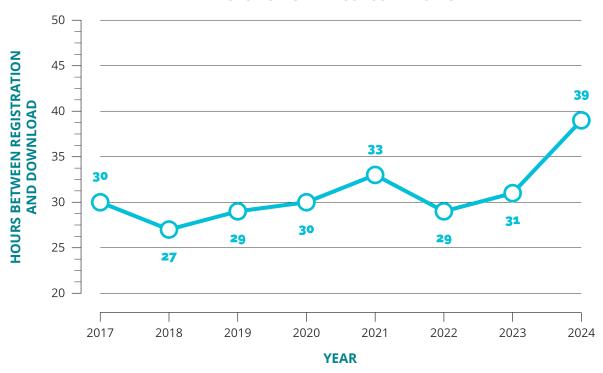
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### THE CONSUMPTION GAP

The Consumption Gap measures the time between when content is requested and the moment it's opened for consumption.

Between 2023 and 2024, the Consumption Gap widened from 31 hours to 39 hours—a 7-hour increase and 23% YOY rise.

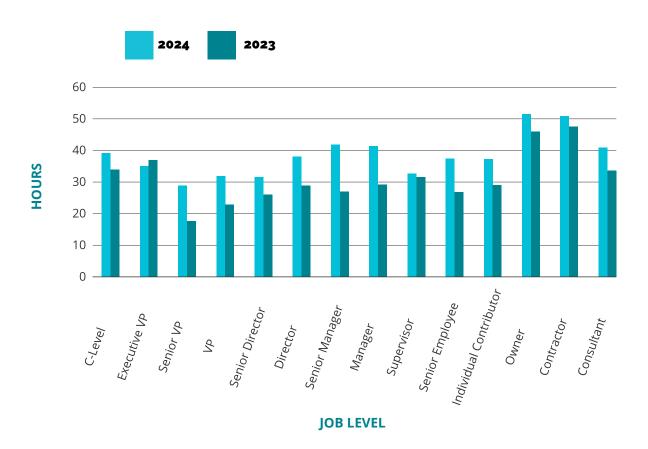
#### **EVOLUTION OF THE CONSUMPTION GAP**







# THE CONSUMPTION GAP BY JOB LEVEL



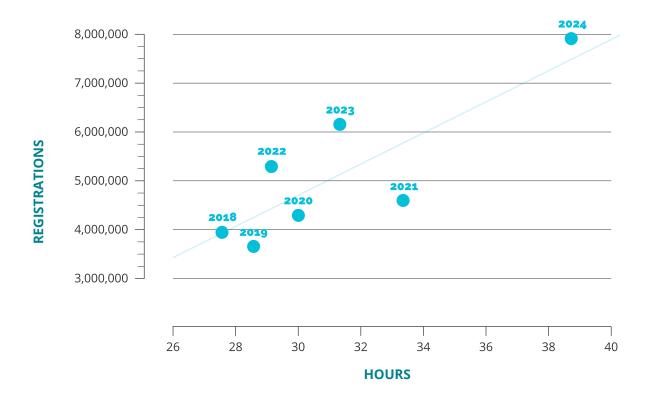
### THE CONVERGENCE OF

### **CURIOSITY AND ACTION**

B2B registrations have increased every year since 2020.

At the same time, the Consumption Gap has also widened.

This indicates a direct correlation: as registrations rise, content consumption slows.



A delay often exists between curiosity (content request) and action (content consumption).

Longer gaps suggest potential hesitation or shifts in priority, caused by environmental factors or go-to-market obstacles.

### THE CONVERGENCE OF CURIOSITY AND ACTION

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS—EXTERNAL ELEMENTS LARGELY OUTSIDE A MARKETER'S DIRECT CONTROL, SUCH AS:

- Budget cycles: Organizations may delay decisions due to financial planning.
- Competing priorities: Teams focused on higher-priority projects or urgent deadlines.
- Decision-making complexity: Multiple stakeholders with varying priorities slowing the process.
- Economic uncertainty: Hesitation due to broader market conditions.
- Industry disruptions: Shifts in trends or unexpected market changes influencing priorities.

## GO-TO-MARKET FACTORS—ELEMENTS MARKETERS AND SELLERS CAN DIRECTLY INFLUENCE, LIKE:

- Content relevance: Misaligned topics or generic content.
- Length and format: Content that is too long or difficult to consume in one sitting.
- Timing of outreach: Following up too soon or too late.
- Content accessibility: Complicated download processes or requiring excessive user information.
- Follow-up quality: Ineffective follow-ups that don't reflect the user's needs or behaviors.

# KEY TAKEAWAY

DECISION-MAKING COMPLEXITY – MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS SLOW THE PROCESS, IMPACTING MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS.

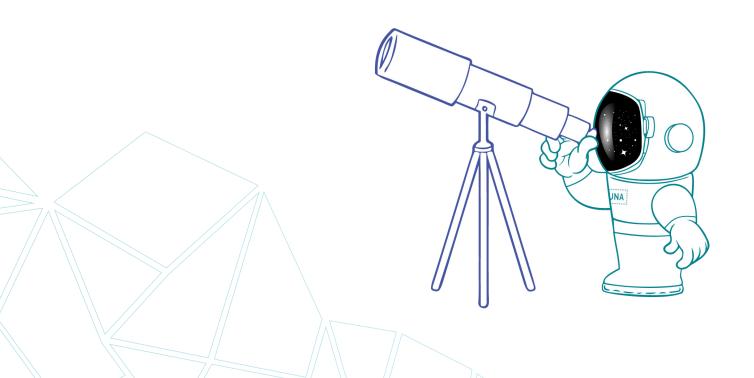
### THE CONVERGENCE OF CURIOSITY AND ACTION

#### **HOW MARKETERS AND SELLERS CAN RESPOND**

- Recognize: Assume the asset hasn't been opened within the first two days. Remember: a lead requested content, not contact.
- Summarize: Offer condensed, actionable summaries to bridge the gap and encourage quicker engagement.
- Optimize: Ensure content is timely and valuable. Use intent data to tailor messaging to immediate problems.
- Incentivize: Nurture leads over time. Intent does not guarantee immediate action, and registrations don't always equate to engagement.

# KEY TAKEAWAY

WHILE CONTENT CAN SPARK CURIOSITY, REAL ENGAGEMENT DEPENDS ON THE EXPERIENCE—TIMING, ACCESSIBILITY, AND RELEVANCE—SURROUNDING IT.



### **AI: ABSOLUTELY INTERESTED**

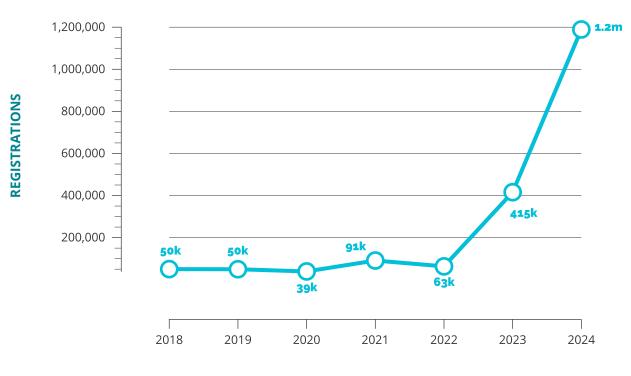
If 2023 was the year AI went mainstream, 2024 was the year AI became embedded in the foundation.

186%

YOY GROWTH
Al-related content
demand continued
its upward trend.



#### **TOTAL AI CONTENT DEMAND**



**YEAR** 

### **NOTABLE INSIGHTS**



YOY INCREASE Content registrations for "Generative AI" surged.



BIOTECH PROFESSIONALS LED Highest consumers of NLP-related content.



**LEGAL PROFESSIONALS DOMINATED** 

Most engaged with AI Risk/Regulation content.

### WHO'S LEADING THE

### **AI REVOLUTION?**

From Banking to Biotech, different industries are shaping the future of Generative AI, Chatbots, Robotics, and ChatGPT. See which job areas are driving demand for AI-powered content.

# JOB AREAS MOST LIKELY TO REQUEST "GENERATIVE AI" CONTENT

## JOB AREAS MOST LIKELY TO REQUEST "CHATBOT" CONTENT

Banking/Mortgage	Agriculture
Marketing	Creative/Design
Logistics/Transportation	Banking/Mortgage
Executives	Journalism/Media/Entertainment
IT/Computers/Electronics	Biotech

# JOB AREAS MOST LIKELY TO REQUEST "ROBOTICS" CONTENT

## JOB AREAS MOST LIKELY TO REQUEST "CHATGPT" CONTENT

Banking/Mortgage	Journalism/Media/Entertainment
Marketing	Creative/Design
Logistics/Transportation	Education
Executives	Marketing
IT/Computers/Electronics	Agriculture



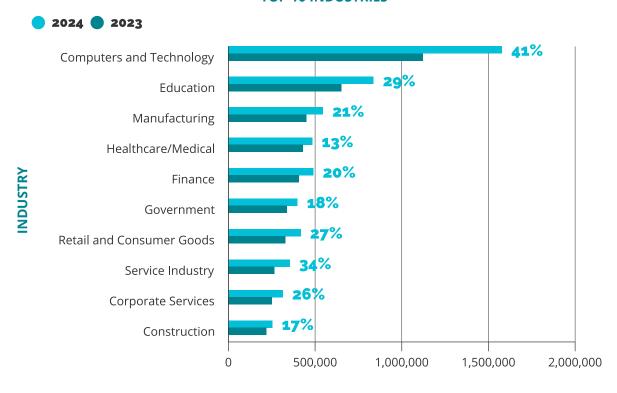
### **CONSUMPTION ACROSS**

### **JOB PARAMETERS**

#### **Technology Dominates Registrations**

Technology-related topics consistently accounted for the largest share of audience registrations across Job and Industry categories.

#### **TOP 10 INDUSTRIES**



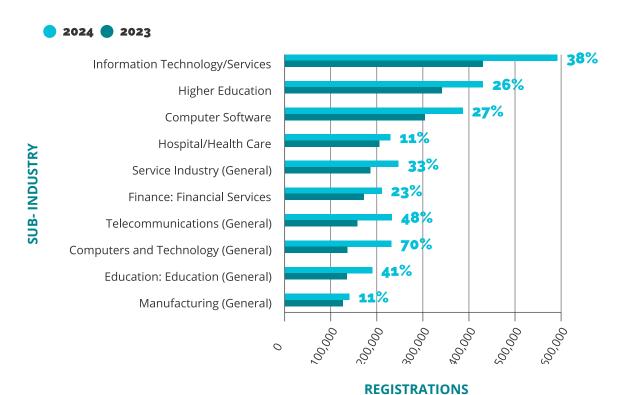
#### **REGISTRATIONS**





OF TOTAL AUDIENCE
Computers and Technology led
engagement.

### **TOP 10 SUB-INDUSTRIES**



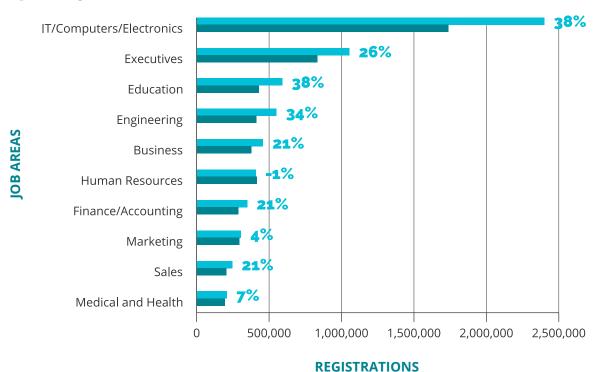
### **REGISTRATION TRENDS BY SUB-INDUSTRY**



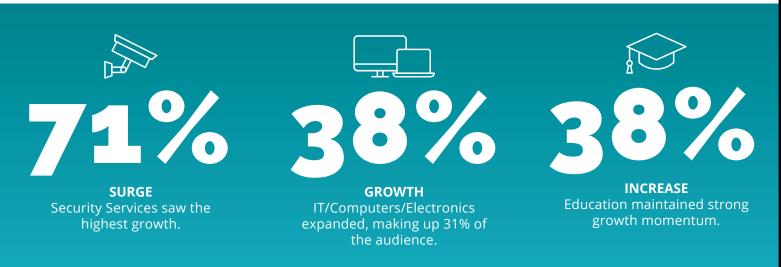


### **TOP 10 JOB AREAS**



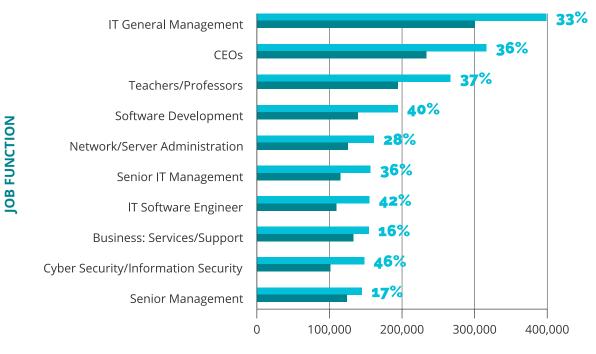


### **REGISTRATION TRENDS BY JOB AREA**



### **TOP 10 JOB FUNCTIONS**





**REGISTRATIONS** 

35% INCREASE

CEO registrations saw strong growth.

4%

**OF TOTAL AUDIENCE** CEOs represented a key segment.

### **BY THE JOB LEVEL**





28%

INCREASE
Individual Contributor
registrations accounted for 31% of
total registrations.

27%

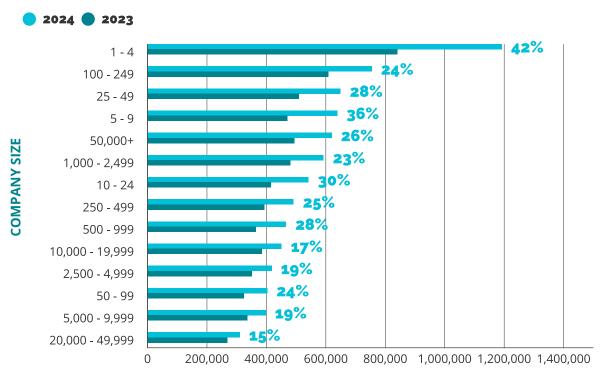
**GROWTH** 

C-Level registrations rose to second overall since 2022, representing 13% of the audience.

#### **OVERALL PROFESSIONAL DEMAND**

53% of all demand came from C-Level executives, Executive VPs, Senior VPs, VPs, Senior Directors, Directors, Senior Employees, Senior Managers, Managers, and Consultants.

### **BY THE COMPANY SIZE**



#### **REGISTRATIONS**

### **REGISTRATION TRENDS BY COMPANY SIZE**

YOY GROWTH
Small businesses
(5–9 employees) showed the highest engagement increase.

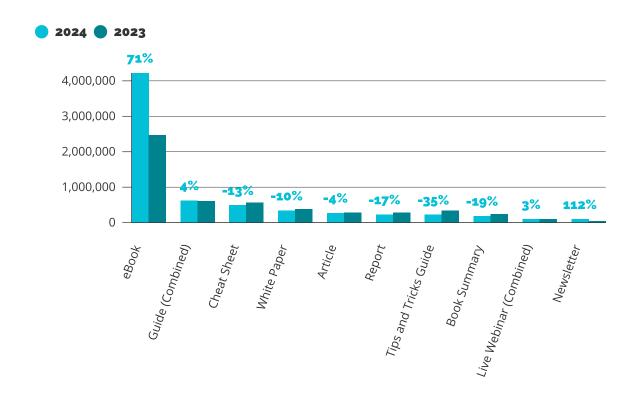
26%

YOY GROWTH
Large enterprises (50,000+ employees)
maintained strong demand.

### **FORMAT FINDINGS**

#### **CONTENT TRENDS**

2024's Top 10 Formats highlight a balance between quick, easy-to-digest content and more substantive, in-depth resources.





Tips and Tricks Guides saw the largest drop among the Top 10 formats.



Newsletters had the greatest increase within the Top 10.

### THE EBOOK EMPIRE

There's no other way to say it: eBooks are slowly conquering the entirety of B2B.

Presently, the format effectively owns more than half of B2B format share.

The figures on this page give you an idea of just how outrageously dominant the format was in 2024:

### **KEY TAKEAWAY**

eBooks didn't just perform well—they outpaced most other formats by a staggering margin, solidifying their position as the go-to resource for professionals seeking both depth and accessibility in their content.

Some may continue to claim that the differences between eBooks, Guides, and White Papers are nothing more than semantics.

We know of 4M B2B professionals who believe otherwise.

48x

**MORE LIKELY**Preferred over On-Demand Webinars.

MORE LIKELY
Requested over Playbooks.



**MORE LIKELY**Requested over Guides.

**8**x

**MORE LIKELY**Preferred over Cheat Sheets.

**12**X

**MORE LIKELY**Favored over White Papers.

38x

**MORE LIKELY**Selected over Webinars.

### **WEBINAR WATCHING**

### TOTAL REGISTRATIONS FOR WEBINARS AND YOY DELTA







- Combined demand for live and ondemand webinars grew 29% YOY.
- On-demand webinars declined 18%, following a 12% growth in the previous year.
- Webinar registrants were also 16% more likely to make a buying decision within the next 12 months.

### **PURCHASE READINESS FOR USERS REQUESTING WEBINARS**





REGISTRATIONS

### **SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

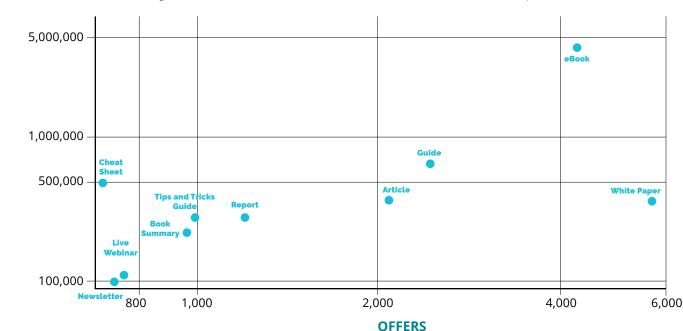
### eBooks dominate B2B content not just in popularity but also in efficiency:

For every eBook asset uploaded to NetLine, 983 registrations are generated.

Comparatively, White Papers, the most uploaded format, generate only 60 registrations per asset.

#### REGISTRATIONS VS. OFFERS AVAILABLE | TOP 10 FORMATS

Registration volume relative to the number of offers available on the NetLine platform.

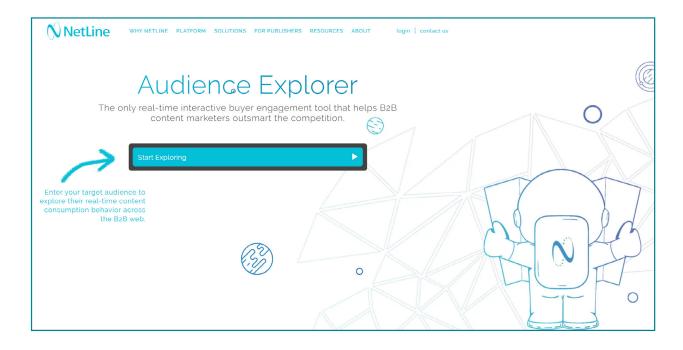


While eBooks reign supreme in popularity, they fail to spark purchase intent.

Despite the overwhelming popularity of eBooks, marketers must balance between the formats prospects prefer to consume and the content that drives conversions and sales dialogue.

Successful content marketing programs require both.

### **ANALYZING YOUR TARGET BUYERS**

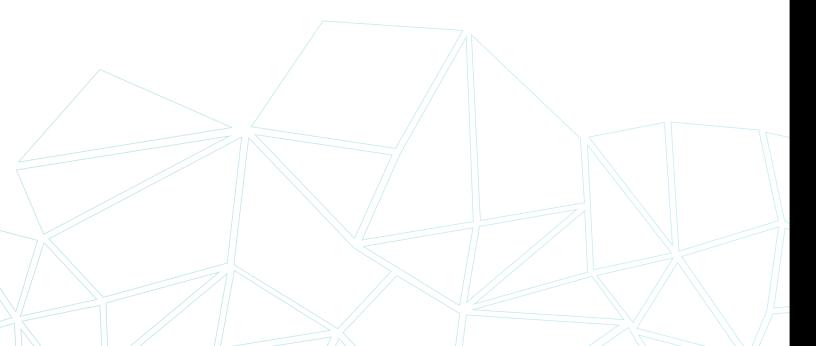


As much as we would love to cover each and every audience, we simply can't do it.

Fortunately, you can uncover exactly what your prospects are consuming (right now) with Audience Explorer.

Audience Explorer allows you to break down audience content consumption by Job Area and Industry with real-time data from the past 180 days.

**Start exploring your ICP today.** 



### **INTENT FINDINGS**

Knowing what's coming next is a superpower. It's like having the answers to a test or predicting an opponent's move.

While not a cure-all, intent data—especially buyer-level intent data—offers a tangible way to understand WHO your prospects are, what they want, and when they want it.

With NetLine's audience intent data, B2B professionals have access to real-time insights into 'Who' is showing intent (along with 'What,' 'When,' and 'Where'). NetLine taps into billions of data points to forecast B2B buyer behavior.

Here's what NetLine's audience intent data revealed in 2024.



#### **PURCHASE READINESS DIPPED**

Global ad spending was expected to exceed \$1 trillion in 2024. All reshaped budgeting, as up to 40% of traditional spend was reallocated. Digital ad spending grew across retail media (+21%), paid search (+6%), and social (+13%), with steady conversion rates.

Overall, the year saw measured growth in B2B marketing spend, with a strategic focus on resource allocation amid economic uncertainties.

This measured approach is reflected in NetLine's audience intent data.

	Under 3 Months	3 - 6 Months	6 - 12 Months	Over 1 Year
2022	9%	10%	15%	67%
2023	9%	9%	17%	65%
2024	8%	10%	16%	66%
DELTA	-12%	15%	-7%	1%

15%

INCREASE
Mid-term intent (3-6 months)
rose compared to 2023.

12%

**DECREASE**Short-term investments (next 3 months) declined.

3%

**DECLINE**Overall investment likelihood within 12 months dropped from 2023.

While Forrester states only 5% of B2B buyers are actively in-market at any given moment, NetLine's 2024 audience intent data paints a different picture—with 16.5% of users having indicated they're planning to invest in a project over the next year.

Thanks to our audience intent data, we're identifying in-market buyers at a rate 230% higher than the industry standard.

### WHO IS READY TO BUY?

Percentages are nice but they don't tell us the story about the people.

Who across the B2B landscape is most likely to make an immediate buying decision?

### JOB LEVELS **MORE** LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH IMMEDIATE BUYING DECISION

### JOB LEVELS *LESS* LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH IMMEDIATE BUYING DECISION

C-Level	Senior Employee
Executive VP	Consultant
Owner	Senior Manager
Supervisor	Senior VP
Director	VP

# JOB LEVELS MORE LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH A BUYING DECISION IN UNDER 3 MONTHS

# JOB LEVELS MORE LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH A BUYING DECISION IN 3 - 6 MONTHS

Executive VP	C-Level
Individual Contributor	Supervisor
Owner	Owner
C-Level	Individual Contributor
Senior Employee	Executive VP



### WHO IS READY TO BUY?

### JOB AREAS **MORE** LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH IMMEDIATE BUYING DECISION

### JOB AREAS *LESS* LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH IMMEDIATE BUYING DECISION

Manufacturing/Production/Operations

Quality Assurance/Safety

Executives

**Human Resources** 

Banking/Mortgage

Medical and Health

Finance/Accounting

Sales

Logistics/Transportation

Engineering

### INDUSTRIES **MORE** LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH IMMEDIATE BUYING DECISION

### INDUSTRIES LESS LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH IMMEDIATE BUYING DECISION

Aerospace/Aviation

Government

Retail and Consumer Goods

Non-Profit/Organizations

Finance

Education

Biotech and Pharmaceuticals

Media

Real Estate

Corporate Services



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUYER'S JOURNEY & CONTENT FORMAT

There is a strong connection between a user's choice of format and their readiness to buy.

Based on our first-party buyer-level intent data, we categorized 12 unique content formats with two Immediate Buying Decision Association groups: *More Likely* and *Less Likely*.

# CONTENT FORMATS *MORE* LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH A BUYING DECISION WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

CONTENT FORMATS *LESS* LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH A BUYING DECISION WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Playbook	Tips and Tricks Guide
Infographic	Course
Case Study	eKit
Trend Report	Report
Buyer's Guide	Article



#### **TOP PURCHASE-INTENT FORMATS:**

- As was the case in 2023, Playbooks and Case Studies remain two of the top three formats most strongly associated with a buying decision within 12 months.
- Surprisingly, Infographics have joined this group, being 110% more likely to be associated with a buying decision within the same timeframe.

# CONTENT FORMATS MORE LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH A BUYING DECISION IN UNDER 3 MONTHS

CONTENT FORMATS MORE LIKELY ASSOCIATED WITH A BUYING DECISION IN 3 - 6 MONTHS

Guide	Playbook
Live Webinar	Trend Report
Best Practices	On-Demand Webinar
White Paper	Case Study
Live Virtual Event	White Paper



### **OVERALL PURCHASE INTENT (12 MONTHS):**

- Overall, Playbooks led all formats, with registrations 115% more likely to be associated with a buying decision within 12 months.
- eBook registrations were 12% less likely to indicate purchase decisions over the next 12 months.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM

### **NETLINE'S 2024 INTENT DATA**

#### THE CONSUMPTION GAP: A SIGN OF OVERLOAD AND DELAY

Buyers are buried under a mountain of content, and the 39-hour Consumption Gap is the canary in the coal mine. This isn't just about timing—it's about breaking through the noise. Marketers need to simplify, summarize, and deliver upfront value to cut through decision (and even consumption) fatigue.

### **FORMAT = INTENT, NOT JUST PREFERENCE**

Playbooks and Infographics aren't just trendy—they're purposeful. Playbooks are 115% more likely to drive a purchase in the next 12 months, and Infographics are up 110%. Marketers should focus on what works instead of what's flashy.

### **TIMING IS (STILL) EVERYTHING**

With intent surging in the 3–6 month range (+15%), it's time to rethink your nurturing strategies. It's not just about staying visible; it's about delivering insights that hit when buyers are actively weighing their options.

#### **ROLE-BASED ENGAGEMENT IS A MUST**

C-Level leaders dominate the "ready-to-buy-now" group, but don't sleep on Individual Contributors—many of them play a crucial role in mid-term decisions. Tailoring your approach based on a buyer's influence level can make or break your outreach.

#### **URGENCY VARIES BY INDUSTRY**

If you're targeting industries like Transportation and Logistics, Finance, or Manufacturing, get ready to move fast—these buyers need quick answers and concise, actionable content. On the flip side, education and HR require more patience and longer decision-making cycles.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Intent data isn't just a filter for leads—it's your GPS for knowing when to act, who to engage, and how to make an impact. Forget blanket approaches; it's time to get hyper-focused on **relevance**, **timing**, **and the buyer's journey**.

#### THE GOAL?

Show up at the right time, with the right message, to the right buyers, and turn curiosity into action.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

### **B2B MARKETERS AND SELLERS**

#### **FOR B2B MARKETERS:**

#### MATCH CONTENT TO BUYER INTENT

Leverage high-intent formats like Playbooks, Case Studies, and Infographics to determine who in your ICP is truly serious.

Balance top-of-funnel awareness with bottom-offunnel action by pairing eBooks (53% of demand) with these more purchase-oriented formats.

#### ADAPT TO THE CONSUMPTION GAP

With the gap widening to beyond a full day and a half, Building nurture campaigns that respect this delay is essential.

Follow up after 48 hours, offering summaries to reengage slower-moving leads.

#### PRIORITIZE ROLE-BASED PERSONALIZATION

Target decision makers with strategic insights while providing Individual Contributors and Supervisors actionable content that addresses their immediate challenges.

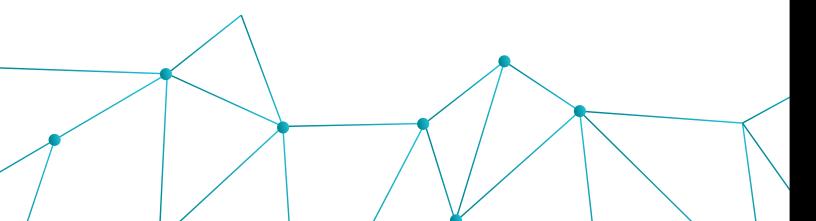
#### **USE INTENT DATA TO PINPOINT TIMING**

ICP isn't interested immediately? No problem. Focus on the 3–6 month purchase window (+15%) for tailored drip campaigns. Prioritize your efforts towards roles that could be your internal champion or those showing greater urgency or decision authority.









#### **FOR B2B SELLERS:**

## ALIGN OUTREACH WITH ROLE AND INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Engage C-Level executives and owners for immediate buying decisions with tailored solutions, messaging, and content related to their goals, challenges, and industry.

## BRIDGE THE CURIOSITY-TO-ACTION GAP

Re-engage unresponsive leads by offering clear next steps tied to their requested content, ensuring value without rushing the decision process.

### **OPTIMIZE FOR TIMING AND SPEED**

For high-intent formats, act swiftly on leads showing immediate need (e.g., Playbooks with 0-3 month decision timelines) and nurture leads associated with longer buying cycles.

#### **COLLABORATE WITH MARKETING**

This applies to both groups, but being in lockstep allows you to take advantage of seasonal spikes and mid-funnel intent signals for seamless handoffs and consistent engagement.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

By prioritizing precision, empathy, and timing, both marketers and sellers can convert curiosity into action, fostering stronger connections and driving predictable revenue outcomes.

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **C-LEVEL & OWNERS**

Engage them with tailored messaging for immediate buying decisions.

# 0-3 MONTH DECISION TIMELINE

Act quickly on high-intent leads, especially from Playbooks.

# MID-FUNNEL INTENT SIGNALS

Align sales and marketing to capitalize on seasonal demand shifts.

### WRAPPING UP A

### YEAR OF CONSUMPTION

#### **GATED CONTENT MUST BE DEPLOYED PROPERLY**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, NetLine has observed an 84% increase in demand for gated content. Users are more than willing to engage with gates. They simply need a reason to do so.

### A CONTENT REQUEST ≠ A CONTACT REQUEST

"Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet." - Aristotle

Speed is the name of the game—until it's not. While it may pain your pipeline, there are additional steps necessary before a user can truly be called a lead. Be patient.

### **CONTENT IN CONCERT: THINK IN ALBUMS, NOT SINGLES**

Stop thinking of your content program being a collection of hit singles. What your ICP really craves is an outstanding album. B2B sellers and marketers must work in concert to create intentional, journey-aligned content experiences that guide buyers seamlessly through their decision-making process.

#### **KEY DECISION MAKERS SERIOUSLY INVOLVED**

The C-suite is responding—but this success may make them harder to reach in 2025. To keep—and hold—their attention, focus on creating concise content formats that respect their time. And ensure your content delivers on the promises it makes to maintain credibility.

#### **HUMANIZE YOUR CONTENT AND INTENT STRATEGIES**

In a world where automation and AI threaten to commoditize relationships, human connection is your greatest differentiator. Leverage this data to foster connections, loyalty, and trust. Ultimately, your job is not just about making your brand known—it's about being the brand buyers can't live without.



# ABOUT **NETLINE**

NetLine is the #1 Programmatic B2B Lead Generation Platform, empowering marketers to engage in-market buyers with targeted content and accelerate revenue growth. With unmatched access to thousands of Tier 1 media sites, NetLine connects brands with decision-makers actively researching solutions—delivering content where and when it matters most.

Trusted by over 17,000 customers to turn content into pipeline, NetLine is the leader in demand generation. Always-on content across the digital publications your target audiences trust fosters true organic engagement. First-party data, advanced targeting, and real-time lead delivery generate only high-quality prospects for immediate activation and faster conversions.

Founded in 1994 now part of Informa TechTarget, NetLine provides unmatched access and transparency, helping marketers cut through the noise and connect with the buyers who matter most.

Your buyers are everywhere. Now you can be, too—all in one platform.

Successful B2B Marketers Start with NetLine. Visit www.netline.com