

2022 STATE OF B2B CONTENT CONSUMPTION & DEMAND REPORT

Research by NetLine Corporation

2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers

letLine Corporation

TABLE OF

2

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH
HOW TO READ THIS REPORT4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY6
WHAT WE LEARNED FROM 20218
BY THE PEOPLE10
Consumption Gap Profiles16
C-Level: Roll Tide
Answering the Question of Time
BY THE ASSET
Keyword Trends40
By Format43
How Have Content Trends Evolved?47
Juice for the Squeeze50
Content Data Delivery Visualized55
BY THE COMPANY
BY THE INDUSTRY
ANALYZING YOUR TARGET BUYERS64
ABOUT NETLINE CORPORATION

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

After a year of chaos, 2021 was a year of transition for us all. (And a bit more chaos.)

So how did B2B professionals respond to the encore of one of the strangest years ever? As our new sister company CMI put it in their *12th Annual B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends: Insights for 2022*, "the pandemic awoke a sleeping giant—content marketing."

From 2020 to 2021, overall B2B content consumption increased more than 9% YOY—meaning that total demand has increased more than 33% since 2019—that's 4.6 million leads in total. Beyond the top level data, additional content consumption accelerated once again, live, virtual content production grew, and we learned just how closely content consumption and buyer intent are related.

One of the early hopes of the pandemic was that it would force society to reflect, recalibrate our priorities, and slow down. What our research has made clear is that work is shifting and moving faster than ever, something we're all feeling the effects of one way or another. Reflection occurred. Lives were recalibrated. But the slow down? That didn't last long, if it even happened.

We are used to a world moving a mile a minute, yet somehow over the past two years, the pace of life has quickened. According to research from **The Hartford**, 61% of U.S. workers are burned out, with 37% of those likely to search for a new job in the next six months. People are strained. Our own first-party data tells us that the interest in Lifestyle and Career content from our B2B audience has never been higher.

The trends are spelled out in the pages of this report, supported by more than 23 petabytes worth of data. You'll better understand why Marketers and buying committees still need more and why they need more room to breathe than ever. You'll learn that B2B marketing's favorite content format is old news. You'll also probably learn way more about how to plan for the rest of 2022 with this research than anything else around.

Here's to data!

David FORTINO

Chief Strategy Officer, NetLine Corporation

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

However you want.

Δ

Read all of it in sequence or jump to your targeting sweet-spot for first-party data on what happened over the past 12 months in that cross-section of the total audience.

By the People 10
By the Company57
By the Industry 59

2 With questions.

To get the most from this data, we suggest going into the content with a few questions in mind for yourself or your team:

- What does your target audience look like? If you haven't defined personas yet, spend some time with this data to assemble audience profiles.
 - Is your target prospect limited to a single industry or does their job area span verticals?
 - What types of content formats perform best for you and for your prospects? Sometimes your best volume performing asset might very well be your worst latestage converting asset.
- How much do lifestyle preferences factor into your B2B strategy?

One more thing...

Every datapoint analyzed in this report was voluntarily provided by B2B buyers as they were actively researching content aimed at addressing their various business and technical challenges.

In doing so, they opted to share their first-party data as they registered for content on the largest distributed library of technical and business content on the web.

All told—and by powering the registration process for this content—NetLine is uniquely positioned as the central clearinghouse for first-party sourced Buyer-Level Intent at scale.

First-party data is data that's been explicily provided by a user actually taking a cognizant action. Usually that's a form or gate that prompts the user to provide some information about themselves.



As you study the data in this report, it's crucial to understand your buyer's intent and what they're truly seeking. This intent influences the internal buying committee and, ultimately, the purchase decision.

In short: the best way to get to know your audience is by understanding what they're looking for.

Alright, Explorers—let's dig into the data!

EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

6

Key Findings that Shaped the Year:

- eBooks were 4.8x more likely to be requested compared to White Papers.
- Buyer-Level Intent Data: ~31% of professionals expect to invest in the next 12 months; 15% expect to invest in the next 6 months.
- Pandemic was the #1 Keyword Rank across all content titles.
- The 5 Most Active Job Areas: IT, Executives, Education, Engineering & HR.
- The average time it took for professionals to consume content rose by over three hours, increasing from 29.7 hours in 2020 to 33.3 in 2021.
- Overall time to consume additional content accelerated by 19%.
- Senior VPs were the fastest to consume content; Owners the slowest.
- Engagements by day of the week are nearly identical Monday Wednesday.

NETLINE DELIVERED OVER

4.6 MILLION

FULLY-PERMISSIONED, FIRST-PARTY LEADS IN 2021.

Key Findings that Shaped the Year:

- Overall B2B content consumption increased more than 9%.
- eBooks represented more than 43.3% of all registrations.
- The 10 most requested content types accounted for more than 87% of all requests.
- Webinar promotion increased 69.8%.
- C-Level consumption rose 15.8% YOY.
- Desktop consumption represents nearly 93% of engagements.





C V WEBINAR PROMOTION INCREASE



WHAT WE LEARNED

8

HOW SHOULD 2021'S TRENDS INFLUENCE YOUR 2022 STRATEGY?

If 2020 was about adapting (and it was), then 2021 was about adopting.

In our analysis of more than 4.6 million registrations, B2B professionals were clearly looking for guidance on how to navigate this new frontier. B2B pros couldn't get enough how-to guides, step-by-step walkthroughs, and 101 content for subject matter outside of their profession.

Here are some of the larger trends we've observed from our analysis.

The Need for More

Double it, double everything

Appetites for B2B content have never been greater. This demand is directly connected with the needs of the Buyer Committee and how much information it requires to be satisfied.

Research from **FocusVision** states that as many as 13 pieces of content are required before a purchase decision is made. (That's 13 pieces of content before a prospect wants to be engaged by Sales.)

The commitment to learn is fundamentally different from profession to profession. Information Technology Job Areas, for example, are more voracious than others, as more than 25% of them consume 10 or more assets. Marketing Job Areas, conversely, start out as eager consumers, representing nearly 8% of the audience consuming a second piece of content, but peter out as they reach the 10th asset (4.4%)

However much content you believe your organization should produce in 2022, you might want to augment that figure. Don't be afraid to repurpose legacy content as new assets.

Simple is Sophisticated

"I apologize for such a long letter—I didn't have time to write a short one."

Mark Twain's quote about brevity is rather appropriate for today's content consumer and Content Marketer alike.

Consumers want information delivered to them in the most forward way possible without it being too rudimentary. Marketers, meanwhile, are constantly juggling the demands of their audiences and internal stakeholders—all while aiming to keep their content as straightforward.

So, in an effort to follow our own research, here's what you need to do in 2022:

- Simplify the complex without talking down to your audience. Leverage the 7 Key Questions: Who, What, Why, When, Where, How and How Much? in your titles.
- Be thorough without being overbearing or verbose.
- TL;DR needs to be the epicenter of your content strategy. There's a reason why the iconic Dummies brand continues to resonate after all these years.

Patience and Persistence

Hurry up and wait

There's often a disconnect between the people creating the content and those consuming it. Marketers mistakenly believe that consumers are clamoring to engage with everything we do. Reality says otherwise.

While overall volume might be increasing, the time to consume the initial content asset is also expanding. In 2020 it took users ~29.7 hours, on average, to open a piece of content they'd requested vs in 2021 it took users ~33.3 hours. That's 12% longer than the prior year. (More on this **here**.)

This finding further highlights the pivotal roles nurture programs and the timing of Sales follow-up play in modern marketing. It requires our data to be clean, organized, and ready to work for our (and our prospect's) benefit. Without arming and leveraging our nurture programs, Marketers will continue to be stymied by confused and frustrated leads, causing consternation on all sides.



BY THE **PEOPLE**

THE "WHO" IN CONTENT CONSUMPTION

Information Technology pros are always at the top of every B2B consumption list. With how often the IT landscape innovates, their heightened registration rates almost need to be at the top by rule. Let's take a look at consumption trends.

Top 10 Active Job Areas



JOB AREA TRENDS

- The **Executive** job area (13.12% of the total audience) had a sizable gain in demand, topping it's 2020 totals by 19.41%.
- Conversely, Marketing (4.17% of total audience) saw a 4.07% drop in consumption by job area.



Increase in Executives Consumption

4.1%

Decrease in Marketing Consumption

INSIDER INFO

 With the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccines in 2021, professionals working in
Biotech job areas were quite busy to start the year. While they don't make the Top 10, this job area requested 25.9% more content than the prior year. **^25.9%**

Increase in Biotech Consumption

Top 10 Active Job Functions

12



NetLine recognizes more than 400 job functions. This chart looks at the top 10, led by IT Systems Management.

Their appearance at the top of the pile is remarkable, considering that this job function saw a 26.83% dip in overall consumption. Faculty job functions had the largest loss (-30.76%) while Executive Senior Management had the greatest gain (+116%). IT Systems Management Keeps #1 Spot Despite a



Decrease in Consumption

Top 10 Active Industries



Of the 24 industries NetLine tracks, all but two groups (Advertising/Marketing -6.09%, Agriculture -12.07%) had more registrations in 2021 than in 2020.

Much like the Job Area chart, consumption from the Biotech field saw the greatest YOY gains (+22.42%). As the world faced a shipping crisis, Manufacturing (+12.86%) and Transportation and Logistics (+12.15%) each saw significant increases in B2B content consumption.

Manufacturing saw a



Increase in Consumption

NetLine Corporation

Top 10 Active Sub-Industries



One of the sub-industries more affected by the calamity of the past two years has been the Service Industry.

YOY, this sub-industry saw a 10.42% growth in overall registrations, as professionals in this field raced to keep up with the breakneck pace and overwhelming demand placed on them and their colleagues.

> Increase in Service Industry Consumption

2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers

15

INDUSTRY TRENDS

The 5 Most Active Company Industries (+YOY% Increase)

Healthcare/Medical **+15.7%** Manufacturing **+12.86%** Education **+9.11%** Finance **+7.96%**

Computers and Technology +7.10%

The 5 Most Active Company Sub-Industries (+YOY% Increase)

Higher Education **+11.18%** General Service Industry **+10.43%** Information Technology Services **+7.57%** Computer Software **+4.79%** Financial Services **+2.96%**

CONSUMPTION GAP PROFILES

16

How do we know when prospects are ready?

NetLine is rooted in the real-time analysis of first-party content consumption data being collected, voluntarily, in mass across our platform. Because of this, we are fortunate to have the ability to review an unparalleled number of signals.

By evaluating user signals like content resonance and user bandwidth from our own data, we can provide perspective on the sales-readiness of different prospects. We call this the Consumption Gap.

To define this further, **The Consumption Gap** is the time between the moment content is requested and the moment it's opened for consumption.





On Average, professionals took



Longer to consume requested content, YOY

Individual Asset Consumption Time Increased

The average time it took for professionals to consume content grew from 29.7 hours to 33.3 hours—a 3.6 hour increase.

For the third year in a row, the Consumption Gap widened. 2019 and 2020 saw increases of just over an hour, growing from 2018's low of 27.1 hours; **2021 saw a 12% increase, as the Consumption Gap grew from 29.7 hours to 33.3 hours—a 3.6 hour increase.**

Generally, we view the speed at which someone consumes content they've requested as an indicator of how excited they are about a given topic, industry, solution, or company. However, as more content is consumed, this rule isn't as hard and fast as it once was.

Hypothetically, consumption can increase infinitely. B2B professionals, on the other hand, have a finite amount of time to dedicate to consumption. **Therefore, as registration volume grows, the more likely it is that the consumption gap will widen.**

While the majority of Job Levels had a considerable jump upwards in time between request and download, EVPs shaved nearly 4 hours off their 2020 performance. Supervisors had the greatest improvement, reducing their 2020 performance by more than 7 hours. And while VPs saw their consumption time grow by nearly 5 hours, they were the Job Level most likely to consume their requests first.

HOURS BETWEEN REQUEST & DOWNLOAD





Additional Content Demand Grew

18

Overall time to consume additional content accelerated by 19%.

In 2020, the average time between the first registration and the second was 16+ days. This year it was 13+, meaning 2021 saw a 3+ day improvement in greater consumption acceleration.

What we can glean from this data is that the need for more has never been greater. In the past 24 months, NetLine has observed a nearly 33% increase in overall consumption on our platform.

With the absence of in-person events and other collegial connections in the real world, professionals have sought out new ways to replace both these interactions and these learnings. Given this context, it makes a great deal of sense why more and more content is being requested. We are only at the beginning of how this will play out for B2B Content Marketers.

As registration volume increases, the Consumption Gap widens.

C-Level **Executive VP** Senior VP VP Senior Director Director Senior Manager Manager Supervisor Senior Employee Individual Contributor Owner Contractor Consultant ō 20 15 25 5 Days Between 2nd Request

2019 2020 2021

19%

QUICKER TO CONSUME ADDITIONAL CONTENT NetLine Corporation

2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers

Nurturing Is Necessary

As registration volume increases, the Consumption Gap widens.

This reaffirms the need for Marketers to create content which is focused on every stage of the consideration and buying journey.

Takeaways

- Executives saw a 19.41% increase in demand
- Consumption at the local levels of Government rose 62.52%
- As supply chains tightened, Manufacturing saw a 12.86% increase
- And Transportation and Logistics also saw a sizeable +12.15% increases



Increase in Demand for Executives

62.5%

Increase in Consumption for Government

UNDERSTANDING **BUYER-LEVEL INTENT**

ADDING RICHER CONTEXT TO THE "WHO" AND THE "WHEN"

Discovering "who" a prospect really is—and whether they're actually a potential customer—has been a mystery to B2B Marketers and Sales professionals for years.

What businesses want from their leads, ultimately, is to understand intent at the buyer- (or contact-) level. Thanks to NetLine's exclusive use of first-party data and the introduction of our **B2B Buyer-Level Intent Discovery**, we've unearthed the Holy Grail of sales acceleration.

In short, Intent Discovery reveals a buyer's true intentions and provides transparency within an otherwise anonymous void in the market.

We analyzed nearly 25,000 individual responses from the past year to better understand where B2B professionals actually are in their buying cycle. The results yielded 72k first-party buyer-level intent insights from a variety of industries in a myriad of categories. Equally diverse were the Buyer's willing to share their first-party intentions. All told, we collected feedback from Senior Leadership across 14 functional roles within their respective organizations.

Fundamentally, the biggest takeaway from NetLine's Buyer-Level Intent Data is this:

Content consumption is directly driving investments within the next 12 months. The more your audience consumes, the more likely they are to be closing in on a purchase decision.

Beyond this nugget of gold, there is still a vast ocean of Buyer-Level Intent insights waiting to be explored—and not all consumption is "created" equally.

Let's begin with Purchase Intent.

EXPECTED INVESTMENT TIMELINES

Through our analysis, we learned that ~31% of all respondents expect to make purchases within the next 12 months, with 15.2% of all respondents stating they were looking to make additional investments within the next six months.

Knowing that roughly a third of your target buyers will be in-market this year is the kind of data that CFOs swoon over.

To put this in perspective using an example from **our analysis of Artificial Intelligence investment trends**—where nearly 6% of a \$62 billion market is ready to make a move in the next quarter—that means there's potentially \$3.72 billion just waiting to be spent.

Regardless of market size, the fact remains: Buyers are ready, so long as you're studying the right signals.

EXPECTED INVESTMENT TIMELINE WITHIN 12 MONTHS



31%

LOOKING TO MAKE INVESTMENTS IN NEXT 12 MONTHS

The Not-So Silent Majority

Let's also not forget about the remaining 69.2%. Although they may not be looking to make any additional investments within the next 12 months, these folks are still your future buyers.

Eventually, these respondents are going to have shortterm decisions to make. Aside from further underscoring the importance of nurture programs, this group should highlight the importance of having different levels to your content that appeal to consumers in the awareness, consideration, and conversion phases of their buyer's journey.

If you're not speaking to your target buyer, they'll be making key buying decisions without you.

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BUYER ATTRIBUTES AND BUYER-INTENT

Despite the fact that purchase intent is the number one insight B2B professionals want to know, it's only one conclusion from 72k individual insights.

For instance, we wanted to know what significant patterns might be hiding within this data; specifically, could there be any possible correlation between a user's buying timeline and their defining parameters (Job Level, Industry, Content Format, etc.)?

These realities are pivotal in understanding the underlying signals associated with content consumption when matrixed with buyer-level intent insights.

The Relationship Between Buying Journey and Content Format

eBooks, historically, are the most popular content format (by registration volume) regardless of profession, industry, job function, etc. But simply knowing that eBooks are the most popular content type doesn't tell us whether eBook registrations (or any other format) directly correlate with greater buying intent.

In order to draw reliable conclusions, we excluded content formats with less than 50 registrations and showed the percentage of users in the four buying stages (Under 3 Months, 3-6 Months, 6-12 Months, Over 12 Months) for each format in each category analysis.

Based on our initial analysis of responses collected, we expected that eBooks would also be the top format by those expecting to make a purchase decision within the next 12 months. Therefore, seeing that 68.9% of eBook registrations originated from respondents who weren't looking to make additional investment doesn't mean much because it states what we already know to be true: Most users aren't immediately in-market and eBooks are the most popular content format.

However, in comparing each of the percentage numbers in the same date range column across all offer types, we formed a potential hypothesis.

If a certain content format has a relatively high percentage in a more immediate date range (i.e., Under 3 Months) AND if that content format has a relatively low percentage of registrations in the longer term date ranges (i.e., Over 1 Year), registrations of that content format may imply immediate purchasing intent.

In plain English, if a certain format is being consumed within an immediate buying window while simultaneously being ignored by those who are "just looking," chances are, that content format is a strong indicator of buying intent.

This is a major discovery for B2B Marketers and Sales pros alike.



Content Format	0-3 Months	3-6 Months	6-12 Months	Over 1 Year
eBook	6.7%	7.9%	16.6%	68.9%
Tips & Tricks Guide	6.5%	6.2%	12.3%	75.0%
Cheat Sheet	6.5%	7.1%	14.8%	71.7%
White Paper	8.8%	9.4%	16.0%	65.8%
Guide	6.5%	7.5%	17.6%	68.4%
Report	7.1%	6.3%	15.3%	71.3%
Research Report	7.1%	6.3%	15.3%	71.3%
Article	8.3%	9.7%	16.2%	65.8%
On-Demand Webinar	7.6%	10.0%	20.3%	62.2%
Live Webcast	7.1%	12.4%	18.6%	61.9%

Based on this data, we can suggest that

professionals who register for Webinars are 29% more likely to have a purchase decision within six months of registering for the content vs. any other content format. In the same vein,

White Paper registrations are a greater indication that a user is in a late stage of a purchasing decision.

From this correlation, we've categorized 14 unique content formats with two distinctions of Immediate Buying Decision Association.

Content Formats More Likely Associated with Immediate Buying Decision	Content Formats Less Likely Associated with Immediate Buying Decision
White Paper	Tips & Tricks Guide
Survey Report	eKit
Tool	Course
Research Report	Newsletters
Analyst Report	eBook
On-Demand Webinar	Book Summary
Live Webcast	Cheat Sheet

What should jump out immediately here is that the formats in the More Likely designation are formats that are traditionally quite weighty. These are information-rich formats; no one is expecting a Research Report, Webinar, or White Paper to be something consumed in passing. The Less Likely Association, conversely, features the opposing format styles, meant to be consumed and absorbed quickly.

The further buyers get into their journey, their needs become more specific and detail-focused. White Papers, Survey Reports, and Webinars fill this need perfectly. WEBINAR REGISTRATIONS ARE

29%

MORE LIKELY TO PURCHASE WITHIN 6 MONTHS

The Relationship Between Buying Journey and Job Level...and Company Size

In an initial sampling of responses from our ERP Intent campaign, it appeared that there was a correlation between content registrations from Individual contributors and the late stages of a purchasing decision. We theorized that Job Levels, paired with an Immediate Buying Decision weren't correlated with higher levels (C-Level). On the contrary—it appeared the more strategic the Job Level, the less likely an immediate decision was on the horizon.

However, Company Size does impact this data more directly than other parameters. In the table below, C-Level's 0-3 Months registration share is not low, which is a bit contradictory to the ERP data. As we investigated further, we looked at the relationship between Company Size and time frame dimension. With this inclusion, we noticed that organizations of 25-99 employees have relatively high pct in 0-3 Months and low pct in Over 1 Year.

This implies SMB companies are more agile and tend (read: need) to make immediate decisions. It also reaffirms that C-Level titles aren't always paired with multi-million dollar organizations. Ultimately, the effect from Job Level and Company Size on stage of decision offset each other to some extent.

Job Levels Less Job Levels More Likely Likely Associated with Associated with **Immediate Buying Immediate Buying** Decision Decision Senior Employee Director Supervisor VP **Executive VP** Senior Director **C-Level** Senior Manager Consultant Owner

Relationship Between Buying Journey and Job Area

Immediate outcomes often come from the areas of an organization that need answers ASAP (hello, Executives). While Sales would love nothing more than to have answers right away, they're far too familiar with the long game.

Job Levels More Likely Associated with Immediate Buying Decision	Job Levels Less Likely Associated with Immediate Buying Decision
Manufacturing/Production/Operations	Human Resources
Banking/Mortgage	Sales
Engineering	Quality Assurance/ Safety
Executives	Medical & Health

Relationship Between Buying Journey and Industry

What might be most obvious here is the speed at which each industry must (or chooses to) operate. Computers and Technology professionals, for example, are constantly pushing the limits while Government professionals are required to consider more than their fair share of variables and departments before making any kind of purchase decision.

Job Levels More Likely Associated with Immediate Buying Decision	Job Levels Less Likely Associated with Immediate Buying Decision
Computers & Technology	Government
Advertising/Marketing	Non-Profit/Organizations
Manufacturing	Legal
Service Industry	Insurance

Digging Deeper into Buyer-Level Intent

Our Buyer-Level Intent Data is built to identify and understand how decision-makers use or intend to use specific softwares and services and whether they intend to increase their investment any further within the next 12 months and beyond.

IT BUYER TRENDS

• Information Technology professionals making an ERP purchase decision within the next 3 months, are **435.85%** more apt to consume "Special Reports" than any other format of content to help inform their purchase decision.

• Leaning into that buyer population more closely shows us that Senior Employees in the Information Technology field are **718%** more likely to seek out Special Reports when they're looking to make immediate decisions vs other content formats when self-identifying that they plan on making a purchase decision within the next 3 months.

• On the other side of the spectrum, we can report that IT leadership within the Education field requesting eBooks are the **least likely** to make a purchase decision within the next 12 months. IT PROS 435%



MARTECH TRENDS

• Marketing Professionals in the Manufacturing industry were **42.1%** more likely to state that Marketing Automation & Campaign/Lead Management was their top Marketing Technology Software priority they were allocating resources towards.

• CEOs within the same field were found to be **44.7%** more likely to say that their timeframe for additional investment in Marketing Software is 6-12 months compared to the rest of respondents.





AI BUYER TRENDS

• Incredibly, only **3%** of all respondents prioritized the responsible and ethical use of AI.

• What's this mean? That more than half **(54.16%)** of all responding industries didn't even consider this option a priority. Considering the power and potential of AI, the lack of concern in regards to ethics is distressing.

Truly, we could be here for the rest of 2022 breaking down the insights we've unlocked from our firstparty buyers. Hopefully this section has piqued your interests and further whet your appetite about the power of Buyer-Level Intent Data.

For ongoing analysis of buyer-level intent data, please visit our blog.

NetLine Corporation

2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers



of all respondents expect to make purchases within the next 12 months,

Takeaways: Your Audience Tells All

- The more your audience consumes, the more likely they are to be closing in on a purchase decision within the next 12 months.
- White Paper registrations are a greater indication that a user is in a late stage of a purchasing decision.
- Professionals registering for Webinars are 29% more likely to have a purchase decision within six months.
- Aim to have a diversified mix of content speaking to all stages of the **buyer's journey**. Failing to do so is failing your future customer. They will most certainly find another vendor who is filling that void with content aimed at progressing the prospect towards engagement.

CONSUMPTION BY

40% OF ALL CONSUMPTION FROM C-LEVEL, MANAGERS, AND DIRECTORS.

Improving your marketing performance starts with better understanding your target audience. Having the facts makes this much easier to navigate. By reviewing the most active groups within every audience section you'll gain a clearer picture of just who you should be engaging.



TOP 10 ACTIVE JOB-LEVELS

JOB-LEVEL TRENDS

- Surprise! Individual Contributors are once again the most active Job Level category for the 6th consecutive year.
- **C-Level, Managers, and Directors** all carved out large pieces of the pie for themselves, as well, accounting for more than 40% of all requests combined.
- **Directors** consumed 27.8% more content YOY.

Takeaway: Remember the Buying Committee

- Much like the Holiday card you get from your dentist, this is your reminder to make sure your content library addresses and appeals to multiple levels of the organization.
- Each professional has an opinion of what they and their business needs to succeed. Is your content meeting that expectation?

NetLine Corporation

Job Area Consumption

YOY, the top of the food chain remained largely unchanged. Information Technology, Executive Management, and Education Job Areas held onto their positions within the top 3, respectively, while Engineering swapped the 4 and 5 spots with Human Resources. Executives had the largest YOY consumption gain, seeing a 24% increase from 2020. Conversely, Creative/Design saw a 25.66% drop in consumption demand. The best news here, however, is that just shy of three quarters of all industries saw their respective Job Areas gain volume.

TOP 5 MOST ACTIVE JOB AREAS

2020	Audience %	2021	Audience %
IT	28.6%	IT	28.0%
Executives	13.0%	Executives	14.8%
Education	6.7%	Education	6.6%
HR	6.3%	Engineering	6.5%
Engineering	5.9%	HR	6.2%



OF ALL INDUSTRIES SAW A JOB AREA INCREASE IN CONSUMPTION

Last year, Human Resources professionals were pulling their hair out trying to better understand how remote work might impact company policies, performance, and well-being. In 2021, professionals in HR Job Functions clearly took a breather, as HR Directors and Managers fell from fourth and fifth to ninth and tenth, respectively. With General IT Management roles consuming more content in 2021 (a nearly 143% rise in overall consumption from this group), the sheer volume of registrations from IT pros pushed them back to the top. The most encouraging sign from this activity is that businesses are now clearly back in growth mode.

TOP 5 MOST ACTIVE JOB AREAS BY JOB LEVEL AND JOB AREA

2020	Audience %	2021	Audience %
Executive Mgmt: CEOs	11.5%	Executive Mgmt: CEOs	12.6%
HR: Individual Contributor	9.6%	IT: Individual Contributor	9.5%
HR: Senior Employee	4.7%	IT: Senior Employee	4.0%
HR: Manager	4.3%	IT: Manager	3.8%
HR: Director	2.8%	Edu: Individual Contributor	3.2%



C-LEVEL: ROLL TIDE

34

C-Level consumption rose 15.8%.

As we shared in the 2020 report, C-Level consumption in the year 2019 had risen in an encouraging way. 2020, however, saw a 3% YOY decline in total C-Level consumption. Naturally, 2021 was bound to keep the rollercoaster trend going.

The past 12 months saw a major upswing in overall consumption at the C-Level, as the top dogs were once again requesting content in a big way. The C-Level represented 14.8% of NetLine's total audience in 2021—a 15.8% jump in volume.

Based on the research we've done over the course of these annual reports, it's clear that C-Level consumption is cyclical. Perhaps, after a year of being extremely hands-on in their businesses, C-Level professionals found themselves in a position to focus on larger, big-picture pieces.



C-LEVEL CONSUMPTION BY ORG SIZE



C-Level leaders from companies with 1,000-2,499 employees were the most active sub-set within the Company Size group. Aside from IT executives, C-Level professionals working in Finance, Service Industry, and Healthcare fields generated the most activity.

While it might seem like a brilliant idea to target the top of the food chain with your Marketing efforts, remember that they're only one part of the Buyer Committee. More than 85% of all content consumption occurred outside of the C-Suite. Sure, their opinions may weigh heavier than most, but the data is clear: Don't limit yourself to the top.

Historically, when C-Level consumption rises then consumption from Directors and Managers dips. In 2021, this was not the case. Managers upped their overall consumption by 3% while Directors upped their registration by 27.82%, the second largest YOY jump behind Individual Contributors. 2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers

NetLine Corporation

TOP EXECUTIVE TRENDS

Industry & Sub-Industry Information Technology and Services

Job Area Executive Management

Job Function

Takeaway: Executive Increases Across the Board

- The C-Level had a **15.8%** YOY increase.
- Historically, an increase in C-Level consumption leads to a dip from Directors and Managers—but not in 2021.
- Managers had a 3.0% YOY increase while Directors had a 27.8% YOY increase.



INCREASE IN C-LEVEL CONSUMPTION

27% INCREASE IN DIRECTORS CONSUMPTION
TIME HAS COME TODAY

Does the "when" even matter anymore?

Wednesdays remain the day most professionals are reviewing content, though Mondays and Tuesdays are not far off. Thursdays are when we begin to see the weekend slide, as there's a million session drop from Wednesday to Friday with the weekends being naturally quieter. Ultimately, the day of the week doesn't really matter when it comes to maximizing content engagement or consumption.

PERCENTAGE OF ENGAGEMENT PER DAY OF WEEK



OF CONSUMPTION OCCURRED ACROSS WORK WEEK

The World Comes Alive in Spring...

The Spring and early Summer (Q2) saw an incredible swell in demand for content, post-the-most-stringent-COVID restrictions. This is staggering, considering Q2 2020 accounted for the least amount of engagements. Conversely, Q4 2020 accounted for 43% of the most active days for Content Consumption. 2021? 21%.



THE "WHAT" IN CONTENT CONSUMPTION

Information Technology oriented content represented 31.5% of all available assets on the NetLine platform in 2021. Given that 28% of all **Job Area demand** was generated by IT professionals, this supply and demand matches rather nicely.



TOP 10 MOST UPLOADED TOPICS

In 2020, professionals consumed content directly correlated with the long-term realities of having the majority of their workforce operating remotely. 2021's most popular subtopics overwhelmingly dealt with IT issues related to equipping, securing, and bolstering the needs of respective businesses and employees.

The non-IT subtopics that reside within the Top 10 also fit the WFH theme, as those in management and HR roles sought ways to lead their teams effectively while still being empathetic and understanding (see Productivity and Stress Management) to what work looks like in a new environment.



10 MOST REQUESTED CONTENT SUB-TOPICS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS THE YEAR'S MOST POPULAR SUBTOPIC

Takeaways: IT & WFH for the Win

- 2021's most popular subtopics revolved around IT's needs relating to equipping, securing, and bolstering the needs of remote work.
- Lifestyle content saw a massive surge as professionals sought out content to improve their well-being both at work and at home.

KEYWORD TRENDS

40

Which words get people to click?

Understanding which words compel users to take action is always a good thing to know. By using an algorithm our data science team created, we uncovered which words and short phrases ranked highest.



Unfortunately, the pandemic still has our attention, literally and figuratively.

KEYWORD TRENDS

- Two years in, information about the pandemic (not the virus but the relative fallout) appears both on most new uploads and drives registration behavior.
- What's most interesting? Each of these keywords is tied together at the hip.
- The pandemic has caused the world to invest further into webinars, virtual, and Al technologies, leading B2B professionals to continue to educate themselves on what these opportunities can offer their businesses.
- Similarly, as we've learned more about the pandemic, businesses have become far more comfortable investing into **new construction** (as well as renovation) projects, especially in the residential market.

WORDS AT WORK

The Most Common Words in the Top 100 Titles Registered for.

learning solution better practices build modern value steps virtual key development automation manufacturing case top digital use new design vs data workplace trends project know tips ultimate free compliance system planning enterprise world building report SoftWare employee healthcare services transformation pricing future customer marketing health crm 🖌 risk systems sales engagement Ways time erp best security using challenges benefits cloud service solutions bb work growth managemer performance covid microsoft success company right need experience technology hr strategy checklist content analytics financial intelligence ebooks study strategies industry network global research center help

WORDS MATTER

While more people are downloading eBooks than Guides when it comes to format, users are still drawn to the word "guide". This further supports our hypothesis that professionals are seeking out more straightforward, "how to" content than ever before.



EBOOK REGISTRATIONS MORE THAN DOUBLE GUIDES & WHITE PAPERS COMBINED

Each year, more than 350 content types are uploaded into our platform. Once we dedupe the data and merge commonalities, we're left with roughly 140 unique formats. From this list, we analyze the 10 most requested content types, which in 2021 accounted for more than 87% of all registrations.

TOP 10 CONTENT FORMATS



Overall eBook registration volume grew 15.5%, accounting for 43.3% of all downloads. To emphasize just how popular eBooks are across the B2B content ecosystem among users, Guides, Cheat Sheets, Tips & Tricks Guides, White Papers, Research Reports, Kits, Webinars, and Checklists combined still represent a smaller number of registrations than eBooks.

Guides remained in second place, while White Papers—even with a nearly 8% increase in request volume—dropped to sixth in the Top 10. Cheat Sheets consumption grew by nearly 150,000 downloads—a 56.5% YOY increase.

56% INCREASE IN CHEAT SHEET REGISTRATIONS



8% INCREASE IN GUIDE REGISTRATIONS



WEBINARS REMAIN STRONG

Total Webinar registrations increased 63%.

After a 103% increase in uploads to the platform from 2019, 2021 saw a 63% increase in total Webinar registrations. On-Demand Webinars increased by 45%, generating 41% more registrations than Live Webinars. Virtual Event registrations were the big winner, however, seeing a 139% YOY increase. Each is an indication that both virtual and hybrid events have a growing market.

While 2021 did see the return of in-person conferences and face-to-face meetings, Webinars are proving their worth and demonstrating their holding power. And while there is something to be said about webinar burnout, multiple factors still benefit Webinars:

1. COVID-19 is still here.

Regardless of vaccination status, there is still a large segment of the population that is hesitant to gather in unfamiliar and/or large groups, especially indoors. This dovetails directly into the next point.

2. Return on Investment

Events, whether in-person or online, are geared toward building relationships that translate into Won business. Research from our friends at ON24 and Heinz Marketing found that online events provide 79% more data than physical events. Additionally, 85% of marketers agree "virtual events contribute significantly to pipeline."

TL;DR: Events have a significant place in the Marketing landscape, but when we're looking at the return on your time, quality of data, and pipeline generation, Webinars hold the upper hand.

63%

INCREASE IN WEBINAR REGISTRATIONS

139%

INCREASE IN VIRTUAL EVENT REGISTRATIONS

45%

INCREASE IN ON-DEMAND WEBINAR REGISTRATION

HYBRID TRENDS

- Hybrid is Here. With 2020 being...2020, virtual and hybrid events were introduced to B2B companies—and now they're here to stay.
- ON24's survey revealed that one in four respondents are planning a brand-new strategy for hosting hybrid events, while 78% of tech service providers plan to increase their use of virtual prospecting events vs. in-person events over the next 24 months.
- Digital marketing is now table stakes and for your marketing to break through, it needs to not only be extraordinary, it needs to be multichannel.





Takeaways: Content Formats to Watch

- Overall **eBook** registration volume grew 15.5%, accounting for 43.3% of all downloads
- Total Webinar registrations increased 63%; Virtual Event registrations increased 139% YOY
- Online events yield 79% more data than physical events further proving the worth of Hybrid events in 2022

HOW HAVE CONTENT TRENDS EVOLVED?

Last year we reviewed the past 15 years of content uploads into the NetLine platform and their evolution over time.

What we discovered was that White Papers have long been the medium of choice for Content Marketers. Based on last year's trends, we believed eBook production might overtake White Papers uploads by the end of 2021. This was not the case.

10 MOST UPLOADED CONTENT FORMATS 2017-2021



ARE MARKETERS LISTENING TO THE DATA?

48

White Paper uploads bested its 2019 watermark by more than 13% (and more than 22% YOY), proving that claims of the death of the White Paper (from a Content Marketer's POV, at least) are greatly exaggerated.

It's clear that B2B professionals have moved on from White Papers. Marketers, however, still have an affinity for the format. White Papers represented 20.3% of all available content, but only garnered 7.4% of all registration activity. Conversely, Cheat Sheets and Tips and Tricks Guides accounted for less than 1% of all uploads, combined, while generating 16.3% of all registrations.

While White Papers far surpassed our expectations, Webinars once again proved to be one of the sharpest weapons in a B2B Marketer's toolkit. 79% more Webinars were uploaded to the NetLine platform than in 2020.



All-in-all, Content Marketers uploaded more content in 2021 than ever. Make sure that the content you are creating meshes with what your ICP is actually consuming. NetLine's Audience Explorer tool shares what your target buyers at the Industry and Job Area level are interested in and can be quite helpful in identifying the formats your audience wants.

Content Format	% of Total Reg	% of Total Uploads	# of Reg/Asset
eBook	43.3%	16.9%	500.8
Guide	8.8%	12.9%	133.8
Cheat Sheet	8.7%	0.3%	5213.6
Tips & Tricks Guide	7.5%	0.6%	2665.6
White Paper	7.4%	20.3%	71.2
Research Report	4.5%	9.4%	92.6
Kit	2.5%	0.3%	1868.3
Webinar	2.3%	12.8%	35.0
Checklist	1.4%	1.4%	202.6



2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers



JUICE FOR THE SQUEEZE

Research from **PathFactory** shared that the average B2B content asset in 2021 cost \$2,791 to produce. Knowing this, B2B Content Marketers are perpetually curious about whether or not the juice is worth the squeeze; as in, how much attention and demand will each asset produced garner?

But just how many registrations should each industry or topic expect per asset produced?



REGISTRATIONS PER ASSET BY TOP 10 TOPICS

LIFESTYLE AND CAREER CONTENT OUTPACED EVERY OTHER TOPIC

In 2021, Lifestyle content had the greatest Registration/Asset ratio

across the 24 major content topics we analyze, averaging 5,434 registrations/asset. Lifestyle content, along with Career content (3,266 registrations/asset), so far outpaced every other topic that we wanted to share a chart without these two outliers.



REGISTRATIONS PER ASSET (ADJUSTED)

52

While Information Technology holds the largest share of overall audience, it finished sixth with 183 registrations/asset. Life Sciences content had the lowest ratio, averaging ~40 registrations/asset. Of course, while these ratios are good metrics to evaluate, they don't tell the whole story.

With 2020 and 2021 being years that forced a slew of changes on the world, B2B professionals responded by seeking out content that was outside of their day-to-day responsibilities. They turned to resources on how to reset priorities, mindsets, personal expectations, and even how to pivot into new careers.

While there was a significant amount of demand, the supply didn't match. Established topics like IT, HR, Marketing, and Manufacturing—all with consistent reliable audiences—feature a great deal of variety from which B2B professionals can choose. Perhaps, with consumption ratios like these, we'll see more content producers focus on Lifestyle and Career materials to meet this demand.

EBOOKS WERE REQUESTED **484%** MORE THAN WHITE PAPERS.

One of NetLine's philosophies is to let the data speak for itself. There might be nowhere else in this report where the data speaks louder than within the following stats.

eBooks were 4.8x more likely to be downloaded in 2021 compared to White Papers—yet Marketers promoted 20% more White Papers than eBooks.

eBooks generated 501 registrations/asset while White Papers generated only 71 registrations/asset. (Guides, the second most consumed format type, generated 185 registrations/asset.)

Marketers always want to make data-based decisions whenever they can. Based on this information, B2B Marketers should pivot away from White Papers and focus exclusively on eBooks for text-based content (unless the content is scientific in nature).

Granted, each of these terms are often used interchangeably in Content Marketing, but each medium has its own unique set of differentiators and use cases. Here is the definition of each format. **eBooks** are the ultimate utility in content marketing offering a wide range of uses. From client featurettes to thought leadership, they can be used to present anything a business wants to feature.

White Papers are the closest things Content Marketers have to scientific studies. Where eBooks have room to be casual, White Papers are designed to present data and other vital information as directly as possible. Unfortunately, the term "white paper" has been warped a Marketers have injected brand-forward content vs. delivering real value.

Guides are primarily positioned to establish authority. This format is designed to walk a reader through a topic or procedure step by step from start to finish.

FORMAT TRENDS

- "Explain it to me like I'm 5. Michael Scott may have been America's jester, but he was right about a lot of things. People like good content...but we love good, simple content even more.
- Look no further than Cheat Sheets and Tips and Tricks entering the Top 5, besting White Papers. Your audience wants answers immediately. Indulge them. That's the key to engagement.



Takeaway: The Format Frenzy

- Marketers love White Papers.
 Consumers prefer eBooks, Cheat Sheets, and Guides.
- Good content, presented simply, is the key to success with your audience.
- Each content asset averaged 470 registrations during 2021.

CONTENT DATA DELIVERY VISUALIZED

WAIT, HOW MUCH DATA?

Each year, NetLine's platform processes petabytes worth of content for B2B professionals. To refresh your memory, a petabyte (PB) represents 1,000 terabytes (TB) or 1,000,000 gigabytes (GB).



OF CONTENT PROCESSED ON THE NETLINE PLATFORM

What's a petabyte again?



gigabytes (GB)

23.5 PETABYTES IS EQUIVALENT TO





SET THE SCALE BY EVALUATING COMPANY SIZE AGAINST OBJECTIVES

REGISTRATIONS BY COMPANY EMPLOYEE SIZE



Content Consumption by Company Size and Revenue

After a 53% drop in demand volume in 2020, organizations of 1-4 employees saw its consumption volume surpass 2019 levels, finishing at the top of the pack with a greater than 14% audience share. Businesses employing 100-249 people and 50,000+ were the second and third most active audiences, respectively.

The pandemic clearly handcuffed small businesses last year, as they lacked the manpower to focus on anything but what was directly in front of them. With a full year under their belts, these SMBs requested more content to help them adapt to the new realities in front of them.

While the smallest companies drove the most volume (~82% of total demand), businesses employing 20,000 - 49,999 professionals had the greatest YOY increase at 27.15%. Considering how this Organization Size still finished dead last, this is a testament to the overall growth of registration volume.

20,000 - 49,999 company size had

THE GREATEST YOY INCREASE AT 27.15%

yet took up the smallest audience share, showing the overall growth in volume



BY THE **INDUSTRY**

CONSUMPTION DATA FROM OVER 300 INDUSTRIES

With nearly 13k pieces of content across our industry-agnostic platform, we analyze the professional interests of millions each month. categorizing and capturing insights from each request. After reviewing the data from our audience and publisher partners, these are the trending industries, as reported by users who are actively consuming content.



Aside from **Advertising/Marketing**, each industry saw its consumption increase. It's possible that Advertising/Marketing's drop can be attributed to the natural pullback from pandemic communications/messages needed to clearly spell out what was occurring within a given business.

Biotech and Pharmaceuticals pros

were 22.42% more likely to consume YOY. COVID-19 vaccines were introduced to the public in Q1 of 2021, meaning that a considerable amount of information was being distributed by those in this industry.

The Computers and Technology

audience (despite a relatively minor increase relative to percentage growth at 7.1%) had the largest increase in total registrations—and still holds the largest percentage of total audience share by a longshot. **Education** professionals accounted for the second largest share of total audience, likely driven by the mad scramble COVID brought upon the field. 22.4% Increase in Biotech & Pharma 6.1% Decrease in Advertising/Marketing

EXPLORATION DOESN'T STOP HERE

Beyond this research, Audience Explorer is an excellent resource for studying niche audience sets. While it's great to have yearly data that covers the entire B2B landscape, Audience Explorer gives you custom, real-time data specific to your vertical.

Mobile Traffic Borders on Irrelevant

If we're being honest with ourselves, we have our phones by our side nearly 24/7. We're constantly checking our email, Twitter, and texts to our detriment. One thing that we're not doing with our phones? Engaging with B2B content.



Between 2018 and 2019, mobile traffic increased by a full 10%. Last year, we noted a 7% drop. This past year, mobile traffic represented less than 8% of sessions. With the increase in Tips and Tricks content and the emphasis on delivering more information in tighter packages, it's shocking that mobile has fallen this far this fast. But while it may be a shock, it's no surprise.

Given the working circumstances of so many B2B Marketers, our desktops are getting more work than ever. While our phones are in our hands at all times, B2B professionals clearly aren't researching with these devices. Given that it accounted for 91.53% of all sessions, don't be afraid to go all-in on content that will appear at its best on desktop.



INCREASE IN DESKTOP CONSUMPTION

INDUSTRY TRENDS

- All but one industry saw its consumption increase
- Advertising/Marketing's drop in consumption can be attributed to the natural pullback from pandemic communications/messages
- Computers and Technology's increase led them to represent 17% of the total audience

COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY ACCOUNT FOR 0F THE TOTAL AUDIENCE

INSIDER INFO

The **Real Estate** industry consumed 13.17% more content YOY; with the remarkable surge the residential housing market saw over the past two years, this increase might come as no surprise. Since 2019, the Real Estate Industry has seen a more than 50% uptick in consumption. Sure, this is pandemic related, but what isn't?

个13%

INCREASE IN REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY CONSUMPTION 2022 State of B2B Content Consumption and Demand Report for Marketers

63

RECAPPING A YEAR'S WORTH OF CONSUMPTION

SO, WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

USERS NEED MORE INFORMATION

Consumption rose 33% in the past two years. Are there any signs of this reversing course? Survey says....no. Buying decisions are difficult and everyone wants to make the best choice possible. While having a lot of content is terrific, it's not as good as having assets that are clear, concise, and directly addressing a pain point.

SIGNAL VS. NOISE

Having the ability to separate prospects from pretenders used to be a skill that only the best of us possessed. Now, with buyer-level intent data, we have the ability to decipher whether a user is serious or not.

EBOOKS VS. WHITE PAPERS

Speaking of intent data, the connection between purchase intent and White Paper registrations recolors the narrative on which format is most effective. While eBooks may have all the registrations, White Papers seem to have the bottom of the funnel covered. Don't get it twisted: Each of these formats matter...they simply need to be deployed correctly.

THE RIPPLES OF REMOTE

Interest in Lifestyle and Career content ballooned in 2021. This is likely due to the blending of work and life. With the rise in WFH-related consumption, professionals are looking to keep their businesses secure and themselves sane. Is your content accounting for this shift?

THE 2023 REPORT

2021's most used word in content titles was Pandemic. However, we fully expect to see more usage of keywords like Virtual and AI (which were two and four, respectively) across the board in Marketing. If we thought the shift to remote work was a doozy, the pivot to Web3 is going to be transformative.

ANALYZING YOUR TARGET BUYERS

"BUT WHAT ABOUT MY TARGET BUYERS?"

As much as we would love to cover each and every audience, we simply can't do it. Please accept our deepest apologies. Fortunately, though, we have a no-cost tool to help you out: **Audience Explorer**.

Powered by the more than 4.6 million registrations across the NetLine platform, Audience Explorer becomes a living, breathing tool, offering Marketers the opportunity to discover tangible insights throughout their ideal audience segments. Audience Explorer allows you to break down audience content consumption by Job Area and Industry. All of this real-time data is reflected in the tool and is ready to start slicing and dicing with you.

Start exploring all of the wonderous interests of your ideal buyers now through Audience Explorer.



ABOUT NETLINE CORPORATION

NetLine Corporation empowers B2B Marketers with the reach, technology, and expertise required to drive scalable lead generation results and accelerate the sales funnel. Operating the largest B2B content syndication lead generation network, NetLine reaches 125 million unique visitors and processes more than 700 thousand leads monthly across 300 industry sectors. NetLine's AudienceTarget™ technology drives prospect discovery, quality customer lead acquisition, and buyer engagement from real prospect intent as professionals consume content directly across the network. Superior quality, on demand access, and advanced campaign reports enable all clients to achieve lead generation success. Founded in 1994, NetLine is a part of Informa Tech, a FTSE100 leading provider of market insight and market access to the global technology industry. Successful B2B Marketers Start with NetLine, visit www.netline.com.

OUR COMMITMENT

As the#1 B2B Buyer Engagement Platform, we feel that it is important to share with you how we do business. NetLine operates according to five core values: innovation, teamwork, integrity, customer satisfaction and accountability. Our advanced technology and massive scale are uniquely positioned to achieve the results Marketers are looking for. NetLine's performance-based Portal and our dedicated team of experienced lead generation experts ensure that you will only pay for leads that meet your assigned campaign criteria—nothing less. Expand your footprint and competitive market share. Read more about our commitment to you.