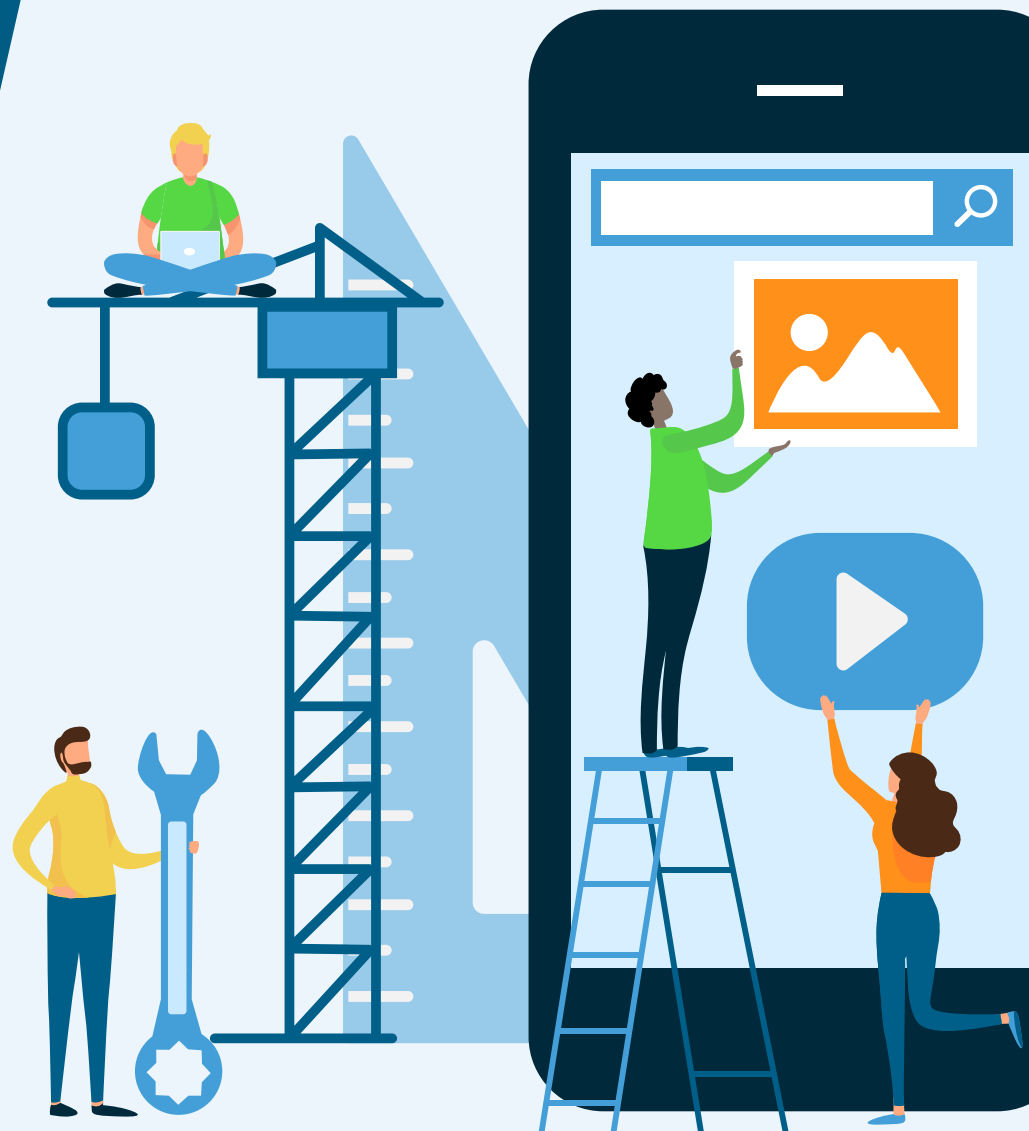


 CONTENT PREFERENCES  
BENCHMARK SURVEY

# Navigating The Attention Economy Via Snack-able & Shareable Content

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# Executive Summary

Independent, collaborative and communicative are the three primary adjectives attributed to B2B prospects and buyers, as the “2024 Content Preferences Benchmark Survey” revealed that content preferences are shifting away from long-winded, gated pieces into shareable, social-friendly assets. When asked about how they used content to inform their research/decision-making over the past 12 months:



**89%** of survey respondents downloaded and consumed assets they found themselves;



**72%** shared content with relevant team members and, of the colleagues who received content, **57%** downloaded and consumed those assets; and



**46%** reviewed more content on social media.

Interestingly, despite buyers' marked preference for self-service journeys, it appears that B2B practitioners backslid into old (read: bad) habits. For example, 51% of buyers said content was too generic and irrelevant to their needs in 2024, while just 38% had the same grievance in 2023. Similarly, another 51% indicated there were too many steps involved to access content, which only 30% griped about in 2023.

When asked to dive deeper into their content consumption peeves, respondents pointed to:

## An overwhelming amount of available content

56%

## Content is not objective/too much of a sales pitch

54%

## Uninformative or boring content

39%

But here's the good news: Practitioners who might have missed the mark in 2023 are primed to hit the bullseye by adapting their content structure to better align with prospect and customer demands. Throughout this report, we'll discuss the evolution of content preferences over the past 12 months, with a focus on:

- Buyers' preference for shorter content formats that concisely convey relevant information;
- Why buyers value content that can be easily shared with colleagues and across social media platforms;
- How the increasing reliance on mobile devices for consuming content requires optimizing content for mobile viewing and sharing;
- The role of visual elements such as infographics, videos and images to make content more digestible; and
- How to leverage actionable insights or valuable takeaways in a condensed format to help buyers quickly grasp content.



# The Shift Toward Shorter, Digestible Content

Perhaps one of the most unique nuances of the self-service buyer is the speed they consume content — as prospects and buyers put the bulk of the research and decision-making processes on themselves, they're opting for quick content that's easier to digest. Specifically, when asked about the content formats that they found most valuable in their decision-making process, the top two answers were short-form content (67%) and webinars/digital events (65%). Webinars, in particular, experienced significant growth over the past year, as only 52% of buyers found them valuable in 2023.

Further rounding out the preferences for smaller content include:

- **55%** found case studies, user-generated content and product reviews helpful; while
- **49%** pointed to audio and video content.

Moving beyond value and into appeal, respondents' penchant for snack-able content were nearly mirrored, as:

- **30%** found short-form content most appealing; and
- **62%** were drawn to video/audio content.

Notably, influencer and user-generated content grew in appeal, as more than one-third of buyers sought out third-party content in 2024, compared to less than one-fourth in 2023.

Diving deeper into user-generated content, specifically, the respondents indicated they're most likely to access third party-created assets via:

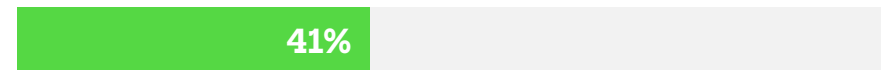
## Social feedback



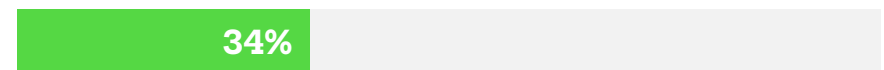
## Analyst reports



## Community groups/professional networks



## User review sites



# Keeping Pace With Accelerating Buyers' Journeys

Further reflecting buyers' haste in their journeys is the lack of appeal toward interactive content, as just 38% found it to be a draw — compared to 49% in 2023. Specifically, the features and functions that engaged buyers the most include:

The ability to expand into relevant/specific topics



Embedded links that make it easy to share



Mobile-friendliness



This is where the increased importance on shareability starts to emerge, as just under half of respondents in 2023 were concerned about embedded, shareable links. When asked about the key drivers that would encourage them to share content, the respondents pointed to:

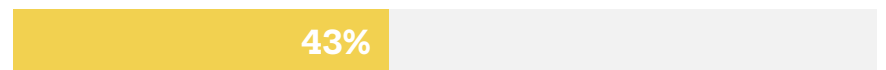
Assets packed with shareable stats and quick-hitting insights



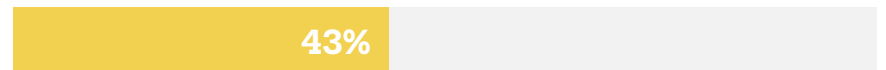
A strong story that resonates with the buying committee



Content that's ungated and easier to share with colleagues



Relevant links that can be shared immediately



After ranking at just 33% in 2023, content with relevant/shareable links experienced major growth. Diving deeper into sharing, the top channels buyers likely to share content on include:

**LinkedIn**



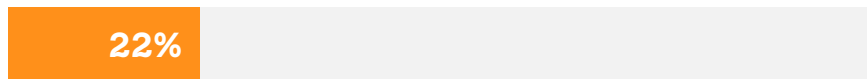
**Email**



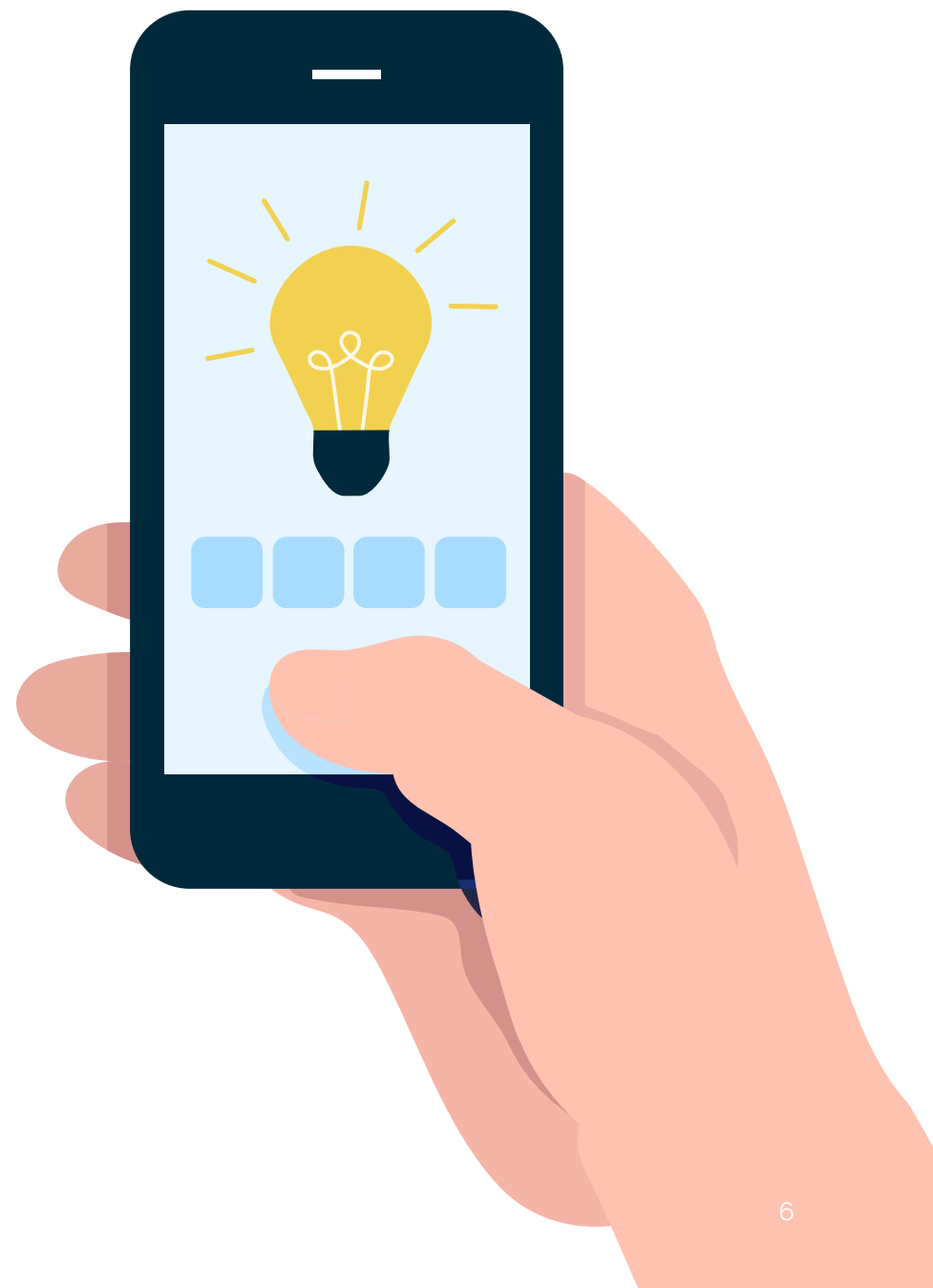
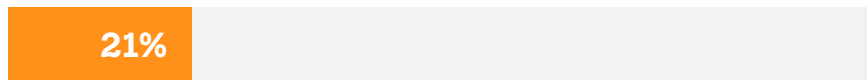
**Internal collaboration platforms**



**Instagram**



**Twitter**



# Understanding What's Resonating Across Stages

Of course, buying journeys are never one size fits all — but one size does fit most. While the needs of individual prospects and buyers will (obviously) vary, there are some guidelines in place that marketers can follow. For example, when asked about the content that's most valuable in the early stages of the buyer's journey, respondents pointed to:

Blog posts/news articles



Webinars



Research reports



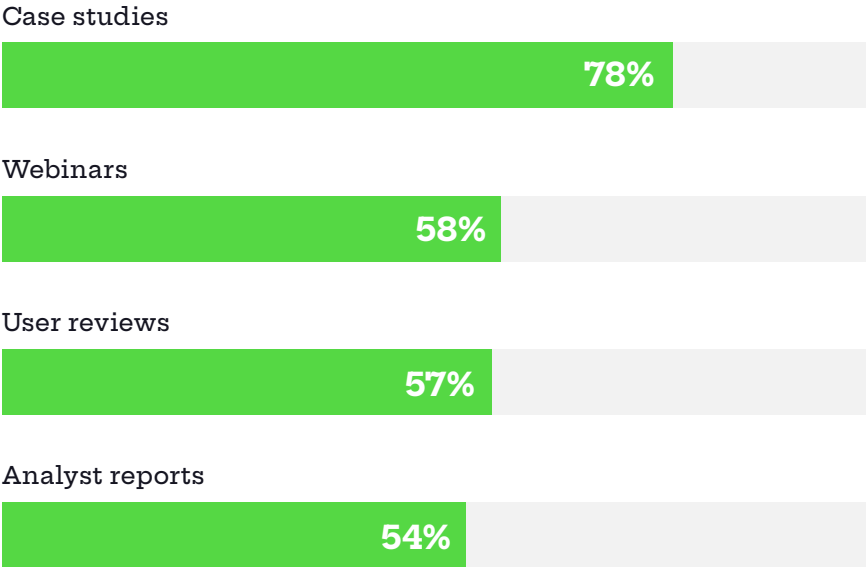
Infographics



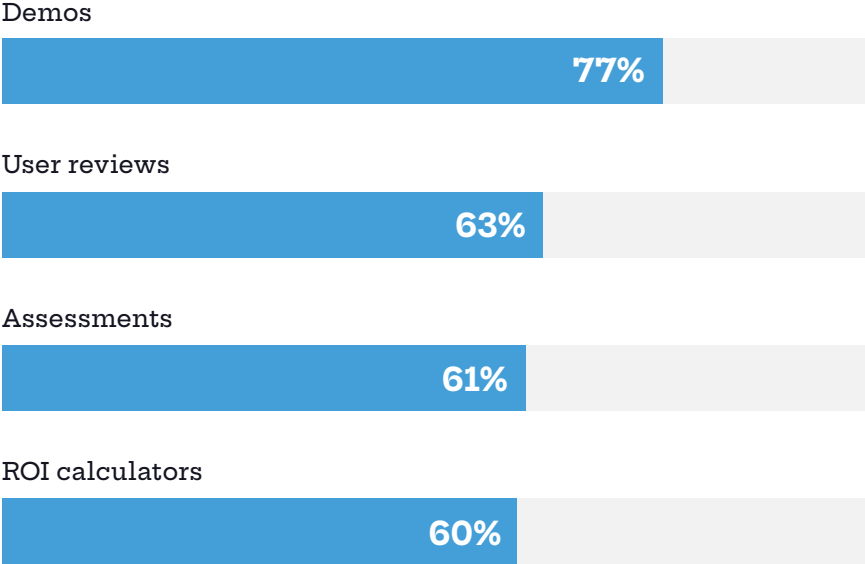
It's important to note that historically, white papers often broke into the top three of early-stage content — and this year, they didn't even make the top five.

Instead, the content that saw notable increases at the start included blog posts and news articles, which skyrocketed from **52%** in 2023, while infographics also saw a modest rise, as they only pulled in **42%** of the vote last year.

As buyers progress down the funnel, they're moving beyond merely familiarizing themselves with a company and its offering, and, instead, focusing more on tactical use cases. For example, in the middle stages of the funnel, practitioners mostly rely on:



Finally, as the buyer's journey reaches its crescendo and buyers look to finalize their decisions, they're prioritizing late-stage content such as:





# Understanding & Implementing Feedback

Okay, it's time for constructive criticism — while it's always nice to know the content preferences of buyers in a general sense, it's also important to determine what's resonating with them and what's not. When we handed the survey respondents the microphone to share advice with our readers, the first area they tackled was organization. According to those surveyed, the ideal way to organize content on-site is by:

## Issue/pain point



## Topic



## Industry/vertical



## Business role



## Solution/product



Beyond organization, respondents also touched on one of the hottest debates in marketing right now: To gate, or not to gate? According to the results, it's still a gray area — 45% of survey respondents were somewhat likely to fill out a form for a gated asset, while 38% were very likely if the content was of high value. And to define that high-value content, the most common gated assets that prospects and buyers will register for are:

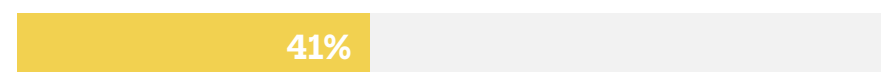
## Webinars/digital events



## Long-form/foundational content

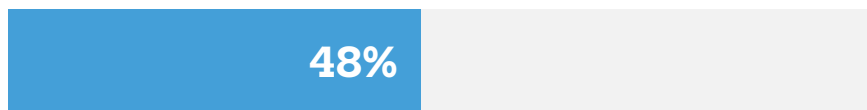


## Serial content delivered on a cadence

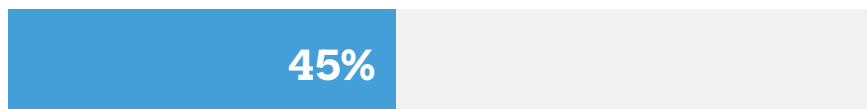


Finally, let's talk quality — aka what makes buyers click. The No. 1 piece of feedback from buyers was that content needs more insights from industry thought leaders and analysts, closely followed by making content easier to access. Rounding out the top five recommendations are:

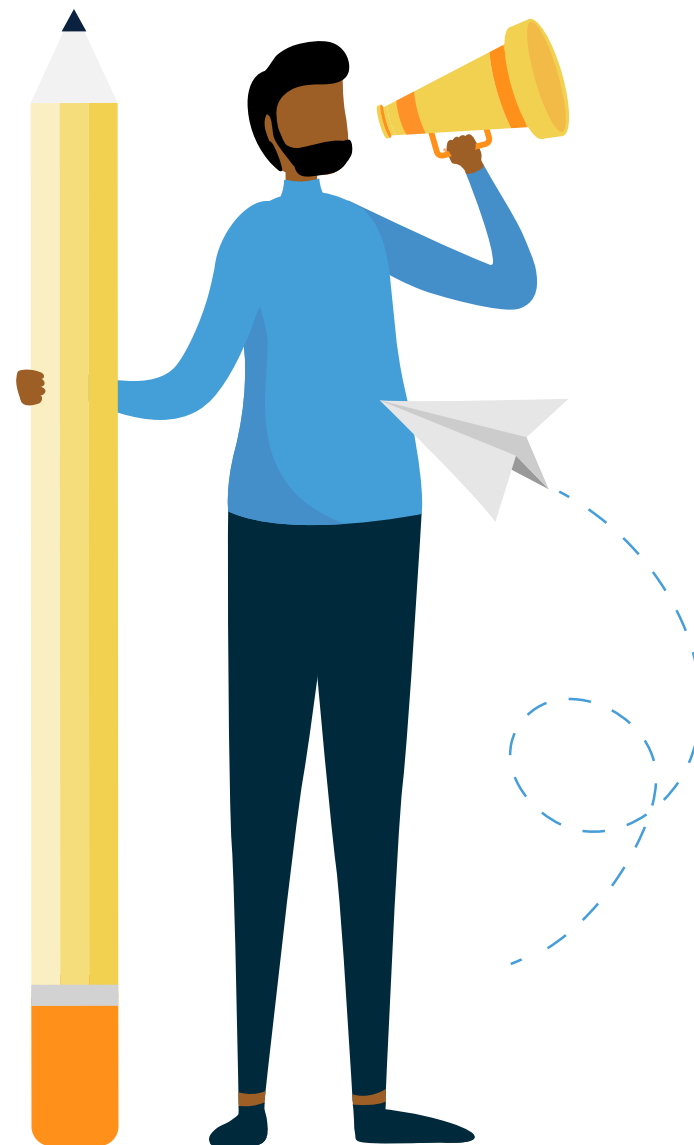
**Curbing the sales message**

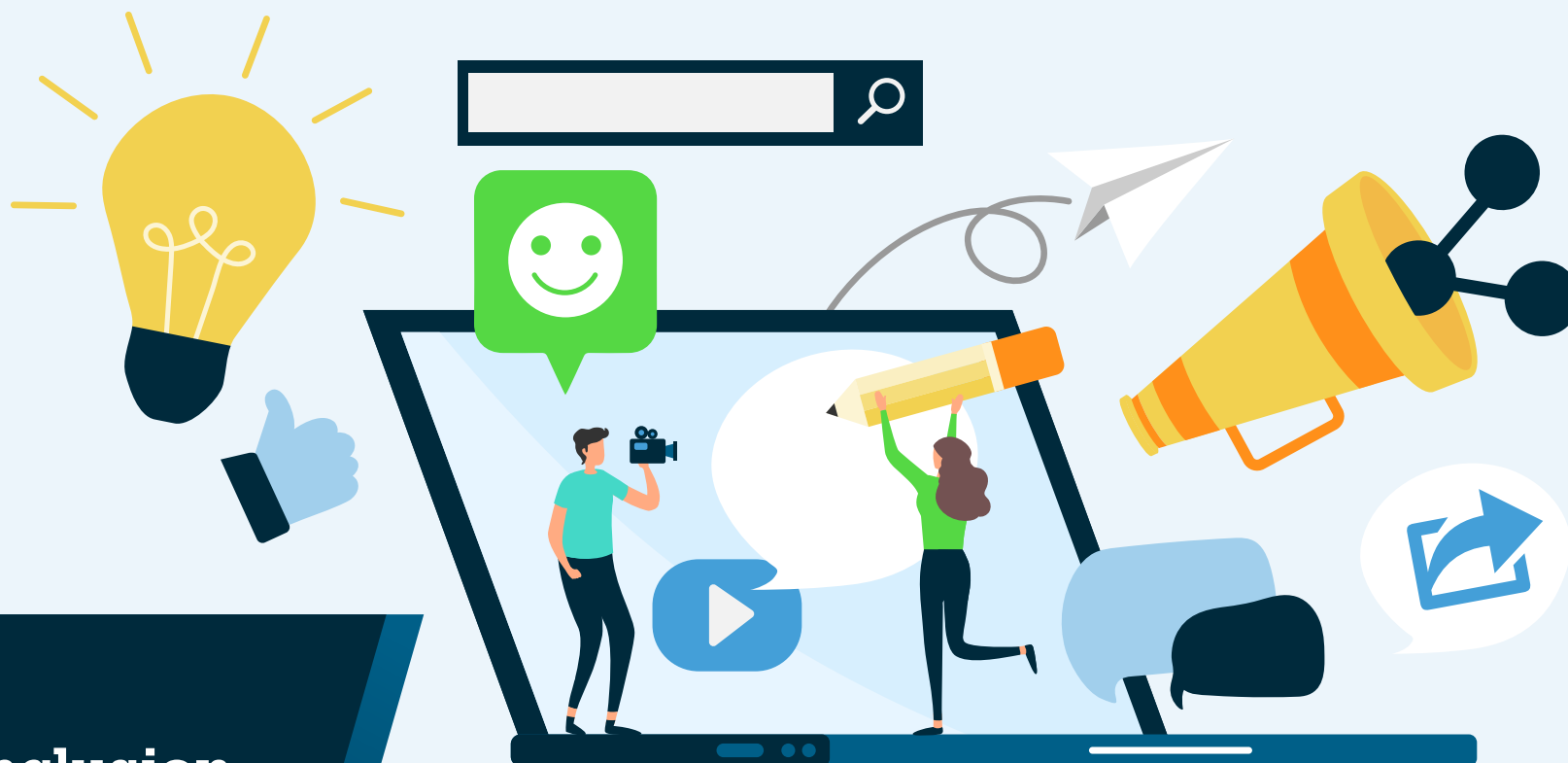


**Using more data and research to support claims**



**Focusing less on product specifics and more on business value**





## Conclusion

The modern buyer is savvier than ever — and more strapped for time. As prospects and customers consume content throughout their buying journey, it's clear they're prioritizing content that's shorter and easier to consume, as well as optimized for sharing. As customer journeys continue to evolve, practitioners are tasked with refining their content strategies to keep up.



Emerald Studio, formerly Content4Demand, turns buyer complexity into smart strategies, compelling stories, and engaging content experiences. We are a full service B2B content strategy and creation agency that works with a select number of organizations to deliver a high degree of responsive, hands-on service and attention to detail.

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