

After messaging fragmentation comes messaging consolidation

 By [Warren Mbss](#)

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At the start of every year, we sit down with our B2B clients and take some time to think about what the year ahead will bring for us - personally and professionally. Some of our thinking is idealistic and some is based on our experiences. After the last two years, both those types of thinking have their own unique challenges, with unpredictability influencing them far more than it did when we sat down to plot the way forward in 2019.



Warren Mbss, CEO of Demographica

That said, I think that we're seeing some stabilising – particularly in the B2B space – as organisations become more accustomed to disruptions and have more robust, but also flexible, plans.

Time for messaging consolidation

In the B2B space, we're seeing a lot of our clients across industries – from financial services to manufacturing and telcos to ICT – increasing the amount of communication with their customers. The flexibility that has become a necessity has resulted in B2B companies launching many new products, services and solutions to cater for the new context of their customers.

Companies have then been bundling these newly created products and services into solutions in an effort to cover new bases and this has meant that marketing and sales departments have had plenty of new offerings to both communicate and to sell – but the problem has been that marketing budgets haven't increased to accommodate these increased communication needs.

This has therefore fragmented the communications offering – instead of communicating in a meaningful way, B2B marketers have been forced to put together lots of smaller plans which ultimately have struggled to land with their target markets; there's just too much to take in with not enough budget to communicate all the “new” meaningfully.

The focus has shifted to an inside-out communications focus as marketers have struggled to communicate everything with the same money – meaning that many have lost sight of the fundamental goal: communicating solutions to customers' problems, rather than telling them about products or services. When a company communicates a product, the buyer often struggles to associate that product with the problem that they need to solve. As Prof Theodore Levitt said, people don't buy quarter-inch drills, they buy quarter-inch holes.

My prediction then is that marketing communications will be consolidated in 2022 to focus on fewer elements, with a return to solution-driven communication. That consolidation will bring with it more focussed messages, communication types and channels so that the impetus shifts away from price points and features and back to solving customers' problems.

Less and more focused communication instead of trying to communicate everything to everyone, a return to outside-in marketing – reducing complexity and better understanding how the customer experiences communication and understands what your product or service can do for them.

Enabling customers is as important as enabling sales teams

From there, the next prediction is to focus on more B2B sales enablement from a marketing perspective. All B2B sales teams, key account managers or call centres now need to communicate this plethora of new offerings to customers, in a meaningful way. Brands will have to create tools using various marketing technologies to enable sales teams to do this – but not in isolation of tools that help buyers, too. With so many complex offerings, the buyer also needs to be enabled to sell the product, service or solution to the many internal stakeholders who are part of the decision-making process.

Better bang for budget buck

I'm glad to report that one of my major predictions for 2021 came true – that a pandemic was the right time for B2B marketers to not cut their spend. While B2C budgets were slashed, B2B marketing budgets remained largely constant.



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Though the effect of that was diluted by the fragmentation of so many offerings, it changed the focus on communicating for brand awareness, to better serve the needs of existing customers. What sprang from that was the start of the inevitable cycle which I've predicted will reach the consolidation stage in 2022 – industries fragment, consolidate, fragment again and consolidate once more, all the time. It happens in all industries and in all disciplines of every business – and marketing

communications isn't immune to it.

The consolidation is going to improve awareness, engagement and remind B2B marketers how to most effectively communicate with - and enable - buyers at all stages across the sales funnel.

ABOUT WARREN MOSS

Warren Moss is the founder & CEO of Demographica, a full-service specialist agency focusing on Business to Business (B2B) and niche consumer markets. What makes Demographica unique is the fact that anthropology (the study of human societies and cultures and their development) is at the heart of all of their strategies. Warren and Demographica have been recognised by winning some major business and marketing awards. Warren is also currently the Chairman of the Direct Marketing Association of South Africa.

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