

THE BATTLE FOR B2B ATTENTION HAS CHANGED. DISTINCTION WINS.

Standing out in B2B is not about producing more content. It is about building a connected system for earning attention, authority and trust.

B2B brands do not have an attention problem. They have a distinction problem.

AI-generated content, changing buyer behaviour and increasingly complex buying journeys are making it harder for organisations to be seen, remembered and trusted.

For brands operating in print, packaging, visual communications and industrial manufacturing, the challenge is particularly acute. Complex products, long sales cycles, multiple technical stakeholders and increasingly competitive markets mean visibility alone is no longer enough. Brands must build authority long before a buying decision is made.

Our new **Be Outstanding** report examines what has changed and identifies seven priorities for brands that want to remain visible, credible and influential.

The rules of attention have changed

Getting the attention of the right audience has always been a challenge. Today, however, the challenge extends far beyond visibility.

B2B marketing and communications teams are under increasing pressure to create more content across more channels, while audiences are becoming harder to engage. Buyers conduct more research independently, purchasing decisions involve larger stakeholder groups and privacy regulations have made familiar targeting techniques less reliable.

The problem is not that buyers are seeing too little content. If anything, the opposite is true. They are surrounded by a constant stream of information that all too often looks and sounds the same.

In buying journeys that can span months and involve dozens of interactions, isolated campaigns and a steady flow of undifferentiated content rarely create meaningful influence. Simply producing more is no longer enough.

The brands that stand out are those that give buyers a reason to remember them. So, what do B2B businesses need to do to earn attention, build preference and drive meaningful engagement from motivated buyers?

Be Outstanding: Winning the Battle for B2B Attention is our response to that question.



Why we created Be Outstanding

We created Be Outstanding in response to challenges we repeatedly encounter – an emphasis on output over impact, fragmented communications, pressure for immediate results and uncertainty about how brands will be discovered in an increasingly AI-mediated world.

Many businesses also struggle to build trust before a prospect ever speaks to sales. Having worked with organisations across print, packaging and manufacturing for more than four decades, we have seen the same pattern emerge repeatedly. The organisations that earn the greatest visibility and trust are not always the largest or the loudest. They are the ones that communicate a distinctive point of view, consistently demonstrate expertise and connect every activity around a clear narrative.

Our report brings these challenges together into a practical framework built around a simple premise:

The brands that win attention are not necessarily the loudest or the most prolific. They are the ones that become more distinctive, credible and memorable.

What's making it harder to stand out?

The first challenge is an explosion of content combined with a shortage of genuine insight. Generative AI has accelerated content creation, but it has also made generic, interchangeable material easier than ever to produce. Buyers no longer need more information. They need informed perspectives that help them understand change, risk and opportunity.

The second challenge is the growing complexity of B2B buying.

In sectors such as packaging, print and manufacturing, buying decisions often involve technical specialists, operations teams, procurement functions, sustainability leaders and finance stakeholders. Each requires different evidence, different reassurance and different reasons to believe.

Decisions are increasingly shaped through peer communities, private conversations and industry networks that conventional analytics cannot fully capture.

The third challenge is the rise of AI-assisted discovery.

AI tools are becoming part of how buyers research categories, evaluate suppliers and compare solutions. Visibility increasingly depends on authority, factual accuracy, structured information and a consistent representation of the brand across both owned and third-party channels.

We see these challenges every day. Whether it's a packaging technology brand differentiating its approach to circularity, a materials supplier seeking to lead conversations around innovation, a manufacturing technology provider driving productivity improvements, a production print business helping customers automate workflows, or a SaaS company



enabling digital transformation and AI adoption – the challenge is rarely a lack of marketing activity. More often, it is a failure to connect that activity around a distinctive market position and a compelling point of view.

Standing out requires a connected system

PR, marketing, thought leadership, social media, digital content, advertising and sales enablement can no longer operate as isolated workstreams.

The most effective organisations treat communications as a connected system, where every channel, interaction and asset reinforces a consistent and credible story.

That system begins with a distinctive point of view and a clear messaging framework. It then translates those ideas consistently across channels, adapts them for different stakeholders within the buying committee, earns independent validation and maintains visibility throughout the entire decision-making process.

The objective is not simply to generate activity. It is to build recognition, credibility and trust over time.

The seven priorities for becoming impossible to ignore

The report translates this approach into seven practical priorities.

First, brands should **build a distinctive point of view** by turning internal expertise and executive knowledge into defensible thought leadership. For packaging businesses, this may mean taking a clear position on circularity, material innovation or packaging performance. For manufacturers, it may mean providing informed perspectives on automation, productivity or supply chain resilience.

Second, they should **integrate PR and marketing** around a single narrative that connects earned, owned, shared and paid activity with the resources used by sales teams.

Third, strong ideas should become **multi-format content ecosystems** rather than one-off assets, extending across articles, social content, video, presentations, email communications and sales materials. A single research report, technical study or customer success story should work harder across every relevant channel.

Fourth, organisations should **optimise for AI discovery** through accessible, accurate and well-structured content supported by independent authority and consistent messaging.

Fifth, they should **invest in audiences they can reach directly** through newsletters, events, communities and other valuable channels.

Sixth, they should **activate credible advocates**, including customers, employees and sector experts, within the communities where opinions are formed.

Finally, they should **measure what matters**, looking beyond impressions and last-click attribution towards account engagement, pipeline influence and brand demand.



The answer isn't more content. It's more distinction.

Most organisations already recognise the importance of many of these activities. The greater challenge is bringing them together consistently while balancing limited resources, competing priorities and pressure for short-term results.

This is where specialist B2B communications expertise can deliver the greatest value – not by increasing activity for its own sake, but by creating alignment around stronger messages, more compelling campaign narratives and clearer expressions of expertise.

The instinctive response to declining attention is often to produce more.

A better response is to become more distinctive, more credible and more connected.

For brands in the print, packaging and industrial sectors, that means moving beyond product specifications, service claims and corporate messaging. The organisations that stand out are those that combine technical expertise with a clear market perspective and a consistent presence wherever buyers seek information, validation and reassurance.

The battle for attention is no longer won by the brands that publish the most content. It is won by the brands that provide the most value, demonstrate the strongest expertise and create the clearest reason to choose them.

Standing out does not mean being everywhere.

It means being worthy of attention wherever buyers look for information, expertise and reassurance.

Be Outstanding: Winning the Battle for B2B Attention explores the evidence behind these changes and presents the full seven-part framework for building brand visibility, authority and influence.

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