

A Practical Guide

Buyability: Building More Buyable B2B Brands



Become the choice the whole buying group is willing to make.

Why Buyability Matters

B2B buying is a group decision, and getting the group to agree is hard

Most B2B purchases are made by a group. The average deal now involves 22 people across five functions, each bringing different priorities, perspectives, and levels of influence.

That group is navigating more information from more directions. Three in four buying groups seek external advice, while 90% of buyers use AI to research, evaluate, and shortlist candidates.

These sources can help buyers assess their options, but they also introduce more claims, opinions, and criteria the group must reconcile.

As vendors become harder to tell apart, the challenge is no longer persuading one target buyer. It is building enough confidence across the entire buying group for people to agree and move forward.

22

people in the average buying group

5

functions represented in the average buying group

3 in 4

buying groups seek external advice

90%

of buyers use AI to research, evaluate, and shortlist candidates

The Buying Group

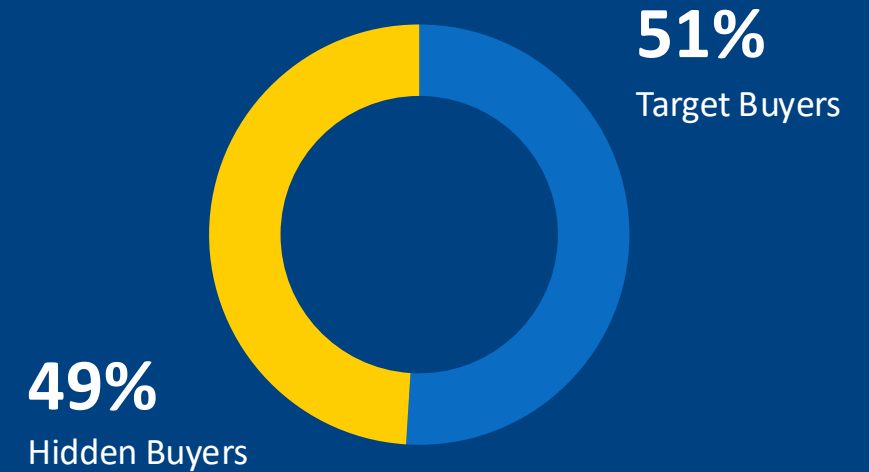
Nearly half of buying influence comes from people marketing rarely sees

The average buying group includes people from five functions. Target Buyers are subject-matter experts who tend to focus on the solution and its performance. Hidden Buyers in Procurement, Finance, and Legal are process experts who evaluate the supplier, its reputation, and the risks of moving forward.

Many marketers focus on Target Buyers because they are easier to identify and more likely to engage with sales. Yet LinkedIn and Bain & Company found that influence over the final decision is divided almost evenly: 51% with Target Buyers and 49% with Hidden Buyers.

Technical superiority may persuade a champion, but it is rarely enough to convince the group.

Hidden Buyers can determine whether the decision feels safe enough to move forward.



95%

of contracts are won by a vendor on the buyer's Day One List

80%

of contracts are won by the pre-contract favorite

Collective Confidence

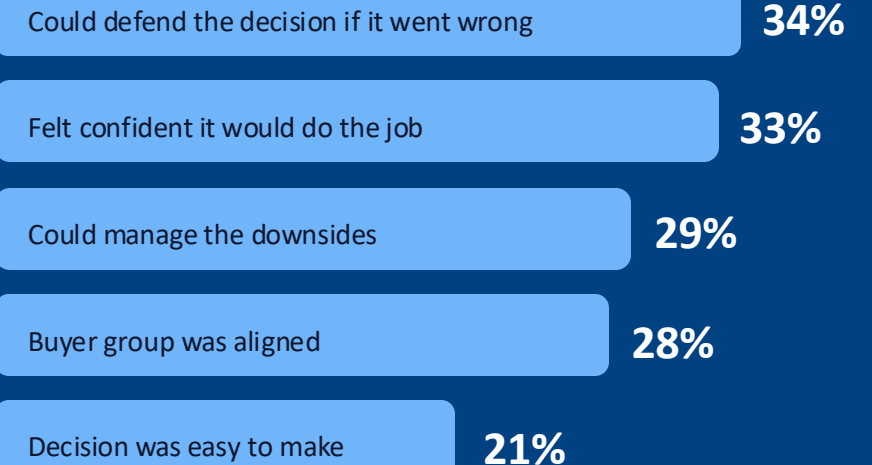
Buyers feel most confident when they can defend the decision

B2B purchases can affect budgets, operations, reputations, and careers. LinkedIn and Bain & Company research found that two-thirds of buyers preferred products offering peace of mind without career advancement over choices delivering business growth with greater career uncertainty.

This helps explain why being able to defend the decision if it went wrong was the leading reason buyers felt extremely confident, ranking slightly ahead of confidence that the product would do the job.

Buyers are not only asking, “Will it work?” They are also asking, “Can I justify choosing it, and can I manage the consequences if it does not?”

Reasons buyers felt “extremely confident” in their final choice



40%

of deals get stuck because the buying group cannot agree

“What separates two vendors is rarely the data. It’s which one feels like a decision that can be explained and justified.”

Wendy Walker, CMO, Global Dairy Trade, and President, IAA Singapore

What Tips The Balance

When vendors seem equivalent, trust and proof tip the balance

When buyers need to defend a decision, product claims alone are not enough.

When competing vendors meet the same basic requirements, buyers look for evidence that reduces uncertainty.

LinkedIn and Bain & Company found that three sources carry the most weight: positive first-hand experience, recommendations from trusted sources, and proof that the solution has delivered for organizations like theirs.

“Trust and proof are becoming far more significant factors in the decision-making process.”

Monique Elliott,
Chief Brand and Communications Officer,
Schneider Electric

37% Positive first-hand experience

“I had previous success with them”
More than four times as influential as a promise of superior performance.

25% Trusted recommendations

“Heavily recommended by customers and colleagues”
More than three times as influential as price.

4x Proof from a similar customer

Video messaging from “a customer similar to us”
More than four times as influential as messaging from a market leader.

The Buyability Pillars

Buyability is ensuring your business is the right choice for the buying group by being discoverable, credible, and winnable.

Discoverable

Will the buying group find you?

You're easily found by the whole buying group, human and machine, and they are familiar with your brand and offerings before they start to actively look. You reliably end up on the Day One long list prospects evaluate.

Credible

Do buyers believe your claims?

Customers, peers, experts, creators, and the AI systems trained on them endorse you. They give buying groups the evidence to trust and defend you, helping you make the short list.

Winnable

Is the whole buying group aligned?

The whole room is confident to say yes. Every stakeholder, including procurement, legal, and finance, has what they need to choose you. Consensus forms in your favor.

Together, the pillars make your business easier to find, easier to trust, and easier to choose.

Turn The Research Into Practice

Put the three Buyability pillars to work

Putting Buyability into practice means helping the whole group become familiar with your business, trust the evidence you provide, and confidently move forward together.

Discoverable

Build familiarity across the whole group

Build familiarity before buyers start comparing solutions.

Reach the full buying group, including Finance, Legal, Procurement, and other Hidden Buyer functions.

Make your expertise visible in search, AI, social, and trusted media.

Credible

Make trusted proof easy to find

Use case studies and testimonials from a wide variety of customers.

Use proof from creators, employees, customers, peers, and experts.

Demonstrate success in organizations and situations like theirs.

Winnable

Give the group confidence to choose you

Show how implementation will work and how potential risks will be managed.

Provide a shareable business case covering expected outcomes, implementation, and supporting proof.

Address the priorities of Hidden Buyers directly.

“Buyability is a full-funnel marketing approach... you need to build confidence on an ongoing basis.”

Cheryl Guerin, EVP of Global Brand Strategy & Innovation, Mastercard



Explore the research and practical guidance for building more Buyable brands.

Research Basis

Buyability is grounded in buyer research and tested against campaign performance

LinkedIn and Bain & Company studied how buying groups make decisions and what builds confidence in a final choice. A separate analysis by WARC, LIONS Advisory, and LinkedIn's B2B Institute examined whether campaigns with more Buyability signals were more likely to report stronger outcomes.

Buyer Research | LinkedIn + Bain & Company

515

technology buyers across seven industries mapped
Target and Hidden Buyer influence

750

B2B buyers in a multi-territory survey ranked five drivers
of confidence

Campaign Analysis | WARC + Lions Advisory + LinkedIn

700

award-winning or awards-entered B2B campaigns analyzed from
2010-2025

7

predetermined Buyability signals coded in each case study

3+

signals classified campaigns as High Buyability; two or fewer as
Low

Research Basis

Campaigns with more Buyability signals were more likely to report stronger outcomes

WARC, LIONS Advisory, and LinkedIn Marketing Solutions analyzed 700 award-winning or award-entered B2B case studies. Campaigns demonstrating three or more of seven predefined communication signals were compared with campaigns demonstrating two or fewer.

The seven signals were customer proof, expert or peer validation, celebrity or influencer validation, long-term relationships, category leadership, customer insight, and brand working style.

Brand Outcomes

1.24x as likely to report increases in brand awareness

1.91x as likely to report improvements in brand health metrics

Business Outcomes

1.62x as likely to report uplifts in ROI

2.09x as likely to report incremental revenue growth

1.70x as likely to be classified as a Strategic Asset, capable of propelling the business into the future



Across the 700 cases, the average campaign showed only 1.6 of the seven signals. 22% showed none and 30% showed only one.

Buyability in Action

ServiceNow built confidence in its AI proposition against better-known competitors

AI created an opportunity and a challenge for ServiceNow. The company needed to establish an enterprise-wide AI position against better-known competitors including IBM, Salesforce, and SAP, whose marketing budgets were typically seven to ten times larger.



Idris Elba in a technology control room as part of ServiceNow's enterprise AI campaign.

ServiceNow unified its communications around one clear proposition:

“Putting AI to work for people.”

Discoverable

Used high-attention moments, placements around AI, technology, and business, its Knowledge events, and the Idris Elba campaign to reach the C-suite across multiple contexts.

Credible

Supported its position with Oxford Economics research, executive expertise, PR coverage, and specific enterprise proof points.

Winnable

Gave leaders one clear enterprise-wide proposition supported by relevant use cases they could justify internally.

What marketers can borrow:

Use one clear proposition throughout the buying journey, while giving awareness, consideration, and demand content distinct roles.

10x
increase in
consideration

13x
increase in unaided
awareness over
three years

23%
increase in subscription
revenue, including
non-AI revenue streams

Put Buyability To Work

Five questions show where to strengthen Buyability

Answer each question with yes, partly, or no. Any answer short of yes shows where marketing and sales can strengthen confidence across the buying group.

Discoverable

1. **Are we building familiarity across the entire buying group, including Hidden Buyers?**

Credible

2. **Can buyers easily find recommendations and proof from people or organizations they trust?**
3. **Does our content demonstrate success in situations and organizations like theirs?**

Winnable

4. **Do we provide a clear, shareable business case with customer proof, evidence of outcomes, and implementation guidance?**
5. **Are we helping stakeholders align and confidently move forward together?**

Become the choice the whole buying group is willing to make.

Methodology

How the campaign analysis tested Buyability

Each case study was coded consistently, classified by signal density, and compared on reported brand and commercial outcomes.

Sample and Coding

700

B2B campaigns from 30+ awards programs, spanning major geographies and sectors

3

data types captured: signals, outcomes, and spend and duration where available

Classify and Compare

3+

Buyability signals classified a campaign as High Buyability

0-2

Buyability signals classified a campaign as Low Buyability

2

groups compared on reported brand and commercial outcomes

Findings show associations, not causation. The sample contains successful awards entries, and commercial-outcome bases were smaller.

Make your business easier to find, easier to trust, and easier to choose.



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