Why More B2B Brands Are Investing in Owned Media

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Executive Summary

B2B brands are making a noticeable shift — moving away from rented platforms and short-term ad spend, and instead building long-term value through owned media. Whether it's blogs, newsletters, resource hubs, or branded video series, companies are realizing that controlling their own channels isn't just smart — it's essential.

This shift is driven by a few big changes. First, the numbers make sense: content marketing delivers significantly better ROI than outbound tactics. Inbound leads cost up to 61% less, and consistent content creation compounds over time, drawing in more organic traffic and leads.

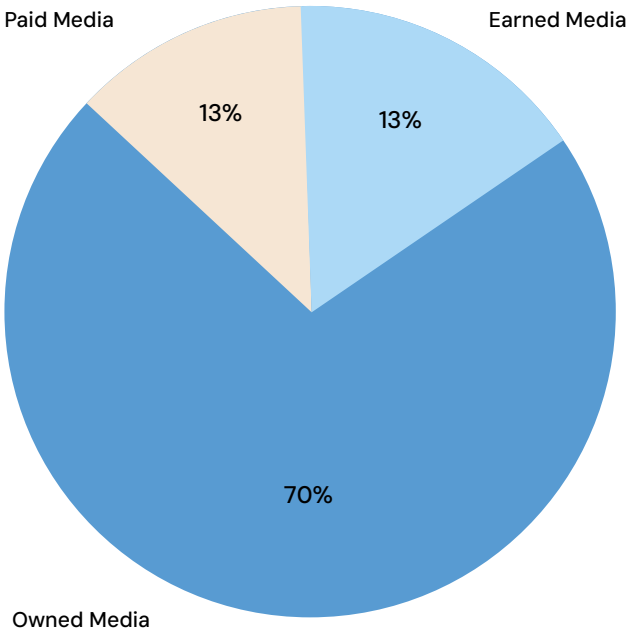
Second, trust is at a premium. Buyers no longer tolerate generic, promotional messaging. They're researching on their own, consuming helpful content, and making decisions without ever talking to sales — which means your content has to do the heavy lifting.

And finally, first-party data is now gold. With cookies disappearing and privacy regulations tightening, owned media has become the best way to build a sustainable data strategy.

This trend isn't limited to one market. In the US, content ecosystems are central to B2B strategy. In the UK, content is increasingly seen as a consultative tool. In the EU, privacy-driven personalization is driving the rise of gated resources and content libraries. But the takeaway is the same: wherever you operate, owning your media is no longer optional — it's how you stay relevant, visible, and trusted.

What exactly is owned media?

The days of relying only on ads and PR to reach your B2B audience are fading fast. More and more companies — especially in SaaS and professional services — are pouring resources into their own content engines. And for good reason. According to Statista, 70% of B2B companies now rely on owned media as their main content distribution channel. Compare that to just 17% for earned and 13% for paid media — it's clear where things are headed.



It's not cost or convenience, but survival. Buyers today don't wait around for your sales team. In fact, 92% of B2B journeys start with an online search. And they're doing deep research — reading articles, watching videos, comparing tools — long before they fill out a demo form. That means if your content isn't showing up during that research phase, you're invisible.

So what exactly is owned media? In B2B marketing, owned media refers to any content that a business creates and publishes on channels it fully controls. This includes websites, blogs, email newsletters, gated tools, podcasts, customer portals, and digital publications. Unlike paid media (such as Google Ads or LinkedIn Sponsored Posts) or earned media (such as press coverage or social shares), owned media allows you to build and maintain direct, lasting relationships with your audience. This distinction is more than semantic—it's strategic.

Owned channels are now critical to long-term growth, especially for industries like SaaS, fintech, consulting, and professional services, where content plays a core role in educating buyers, reducing friction, and nurturing trust. As HubSpot points out, top-performing B2B marketing channels include websites, blogs, and SEO — all owned channels. Done right, owned media becomes your best salesperson: always-on, helpful, searchable, and scalable.

"If you build your house on rented land, you're always at risk. But if you build on land you own—your blog, your site, your list—you've got staying power."

— Jay Baer (Convince & Convert)

Market Trends: The Rise of Owned Media

Across global B2B markets, investment in owned media is accelerating. According to the Content Marketing Institute, nearly half of B2B marketers plan to increase their content marketing budgets in 2024, while just 6% anticipate any cuts. In parallel, a Statista study found that 70% of B2B organizations now cite owned media as their primary content distribution method—far surpassing paid and earned channels.

This pivot reflects multiple forces:

- Digital ad fatigue: Increased competition and rising costs are making paid media less efficient.
- Privacy-first regulations: GDPR, CCPA, and cookie deprecation have made audience targeting harder through third-party channels.
- Buyer-led journeys: 92% of B2B purchases now begin with an online search, increasing the need for high-quality, SEO-optimized owned content.

Owned media supports the new reality where B2B buyers prefer to self-educate. Instead of relying on vendors for early insights, buyers conduct deep research online, reading blogs, watching demos, attending webinars, and consuming peer reviews—often anonymously.

Budget and Channel Allocation Trends

The shift in channel priorities is also visible in budget allocations. CMI reports that owned content channels like websites, blogs, and email newsletters are receiving increased investment. Meanwhile, reliance on paid channels is falling due to diminishing returns and stricter targeting policies.

Content Format	% of B2B Marketers Using
Blog posts	84%
Newsletters	71%
Case studies	75%
Webinars/on-demand	55%
Research reports	40%

As content consumption habits evolve, formats like in-depth guides, tools, short-form video, and interactive assets are growing in importance. Brands that invest in content hubs, microsites, and learning centers are building scalable ecosystems of value that draw repeat engagement.

Owned Channels as Lead Engines

More B2B teams are treating owned media as a performance channel, but a well-optimized blog can become your top lead source. A gated playbook can outperform a LinkedIn campaign. A free tool or template library can reduce reliance on outbound sales.

Unlike rented channels, owned platforms let you:

- Personalize user journeys
- Capture first-party data compliantly
- Build relationships at scale

A Strategic Shift in B2B Culture

Marketing teams are no longer just supporting sales—they are building pipelines. According to HubSpot, SEO, blogs, and email are the top three highest-ROI channels for B2B in 2024. This data is driving a culture shift where content teams are increasingly aligned with revenue goals.

In summary, owned media is growing not just because it's cost-effective, but because it's strategically aligned with how modern B2B buyers evaluate and engage. It's a response to platform risk, an answer to privacy constraints, and a competitive advantage in the age of self-service buying.

The Business Case for Owned Media

Return on Investment (ROI) and Cost Effectiveness

One of the biggest reasons B2B brands are shifting to owned media is simple: it works better for less money. Inbound content — think blogs, guides, and case studies — isn't just more helpful to your audience, it's way more cost-effective than outbound tactics like ads or cold outreach. Up to 62% less, per HubSpot and DemandMetric.

Companies that commit to inbound see their cost-per-lead drop by up to 80% within five months. That means instead of burning through budget on short-lived ad clicks, you're building a content library that keeps pulling in leads day after day.

And it's not just about cost. Owned content often converts better, too. Teams that blog frequently see nearly double the site conversion rate compared to companies that barely publish anything. When you give people value — instead of just pitching them — they tend to stick around, engage, and trust you. And in B2B, trust is the first step to revenue.

So, yes — content takes effort. But when you stack up the ROI, the lead volume, and the long-term value? Owned media wins by a mile.

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2X SITE CONVERSIONS

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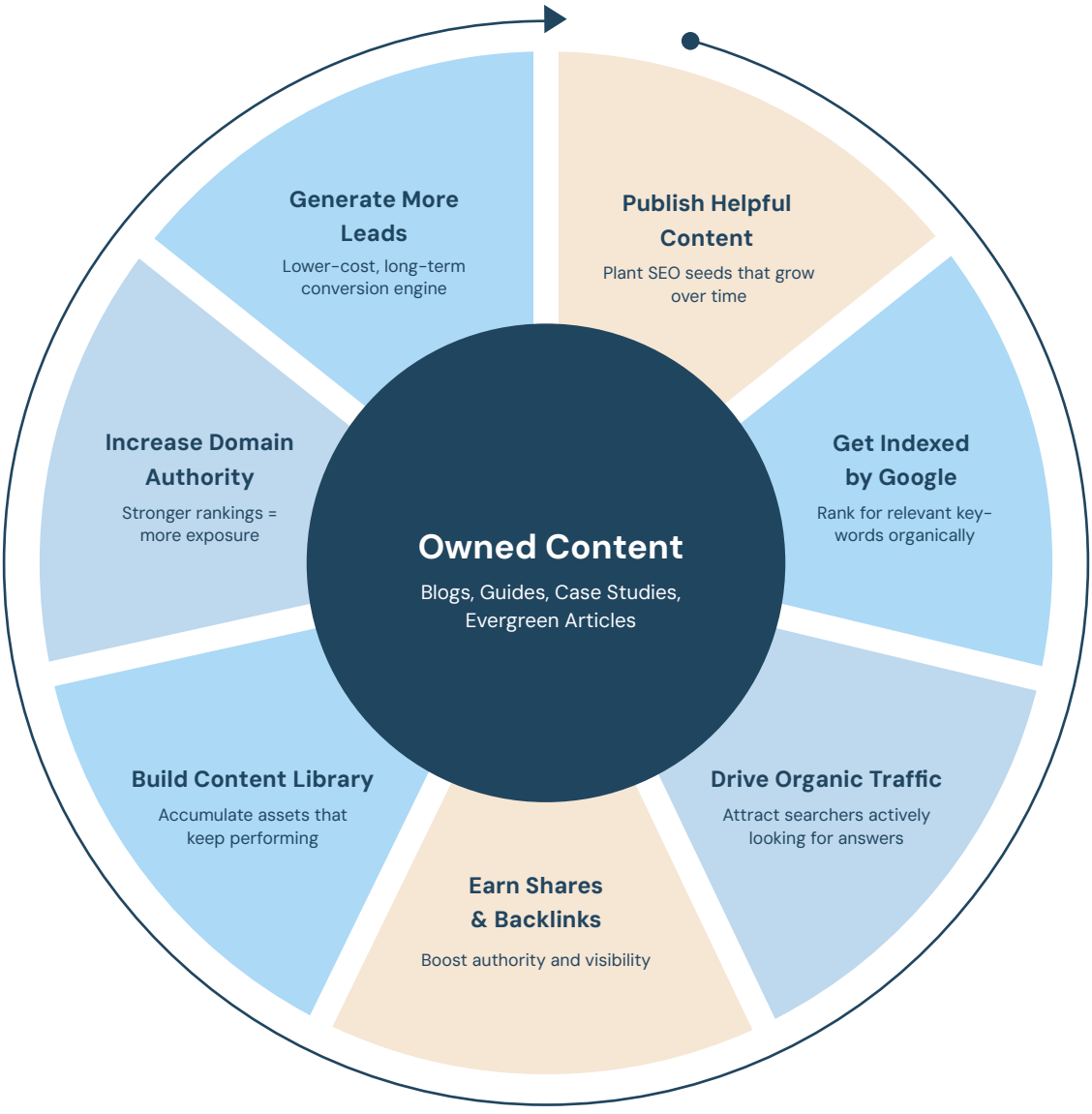
Long-Term SEO and Organic Traffic Value

Owned content is the gift that keeps on giving — especially when it comes to search visibility. Unlike ads that vanish the second you stop paying, a well-written blog post or guide can keep showing up in search results for months or even years. That's what we mean when we say it "compounds" over time.

Think about it: every time you publish a helpful article, you're planting a seed. That content gets crawled by Google, ranked for relevant terms, shared on social, linked by other sites, and discovered by prospects who are actively looking for answers. Done consistently, this creates a growing content library that drives steady, low-cost organic traffic.

HubSpot confirms that SEO and blog content are top ROI drivers for B2B brands. And according to Forrester, 92% of B2B buying journeys start with a search engine. If you're not showing up early in those journeys, you're probably not showing up at all.

On top of that, Seobility points out that in-depth content naturally earns more backlinks — a key factor in search rankings. More visibility, more authority, more traffic. That's the flywheel owned media sets in motion.



Conversion Benefits and Funnel Impact

When someone lands on your blog or downloads a guide, they're qualifying themselves.

Educational content turns attention into trust. Let's say someone reads a how-to article, watches your explainer video, or downloads a whitepaper — that shows intent, if not to buy then at least to learn more. It also gives your brand a chance to demonstrate credibility and expertise without being pushy.

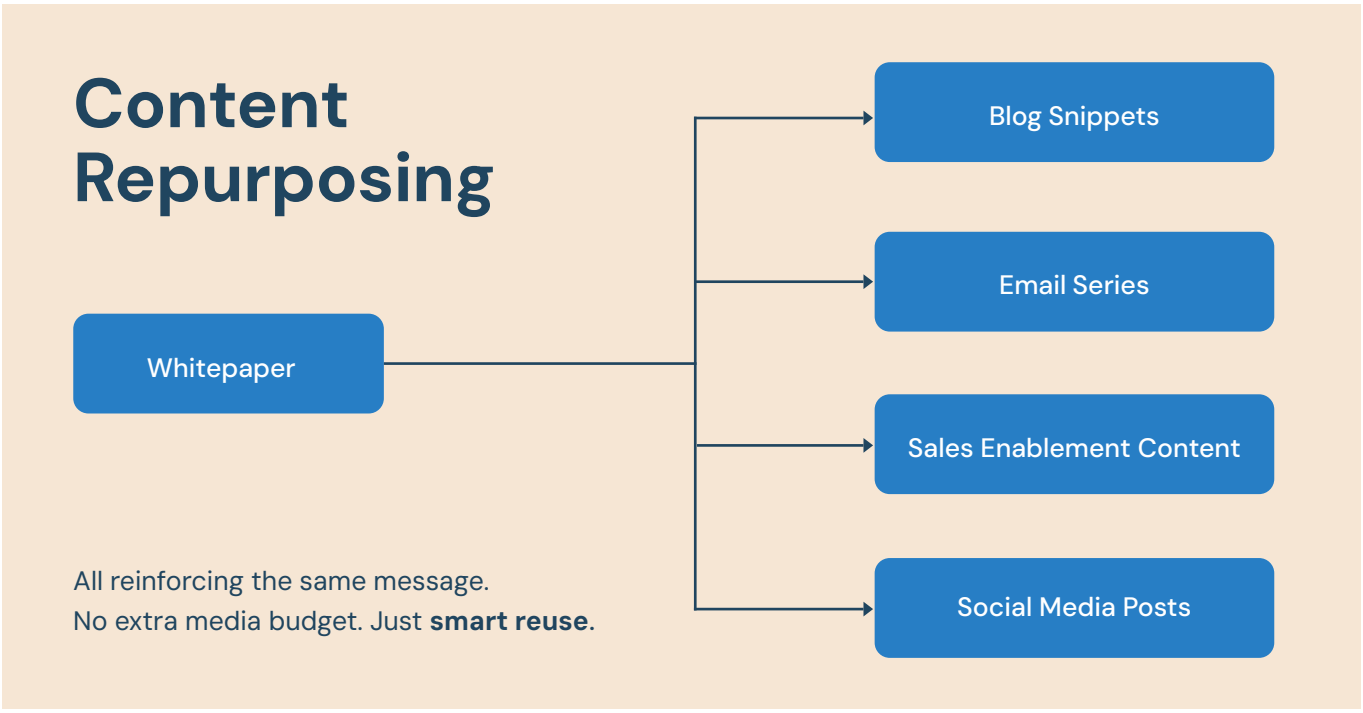
And it works. According to Invespcro, inbound content marketing can be up to 10× more effective at converting leads compared to outbound methods. That's because you're not interrupting — you're empowering. When prospects feel informed and in control, they're more likely to move forward.

A good content journey starts with awareness pieces (like blog posts and infographics), then follows up with deeper middle-of-funnel content (case studies, product comparisons, ROI calculators). By the time they're ready to talk to sales, they already trust you.

A Business Asset, Not Just a Channel

Treating owned media as an operational asset changes how B2B organizations view marketing. It's not just a campaign, it's infrastructure. Like a product or CRM system, your content and owned platforms become something you can build on quarter after quarter.

Owned media also enables scale without linear cost growth. Once you create a high-performing whitepaper or webinar, you can repurpose it into blog snippets, email series, sales enablement content, and social cuts—each reinforcing the next, without needing new media spend.



> **"Owned content is the one part of your marketing that actually appreciates in value over time. Ads depreciate the moment you stop funding them."**
>
> — Rand Fishkin, SparkToro

Alignment With Sales and Customer Success

Because owned media educates, clarifies, and reassures, it supports both sales teams and customer success workflows. A customer-facing knowledge hub can reduce ticket volume. A blog series can accelerate lead qualification. A gated playbook can deepen post-sale engagement.

For revenue teams looking for more than just MQLs, this matters. When content answers actual buyer questions—specific to industry, stage, and need—it accelerates the pipeline. It's no coincidence that companies like Salesforce, Adobe, and McKinsey all invest heavily in research hubs and branded media platforms.

Strategic Drivers: Data, Trust, and Long-Term

While ROI and cost-efficiency are compelling on their own, the shift to owned media is also being driven by deeper strategic forces. B2B organizations are aligning content with larger business goals—like improving data compliance, earning buyer trust, and creating sustainable marketing systems that scale without scaling cost.

Return on Investment (ROI) and Cost Effectiveness

Data privacy regulations like GDPR, CCPA, and Google's phase-out of third-party cookies are forcing a reckoning in digital marketing. The ability to target, personalize, and measure using third-party data is shrinking. As a result, brands are turning to first-party data—collected directly through their owned assets.

A Gartner report notes that marketing leaders must accelerate efforts to gather and activate first-party data. Owned media makes this possible. Whether through newsletter subscriptions, gated content downloads, or user activity on a company blog or community, B2B brands can now build clean, permissioned data sets for retargeting, segmentation, and personalization.

AdExchanger also reports that 82% of marketing leaders now prioritize first-party data to create better customer experiences. Why? Because it powers everything: personalization, segmentation, account-based marketing, and performance tracking.

Owned content is more than just a way to educate your audience — it's your most strategic source of insight. The more value you provide, the more people willingly share their info. It's a win-win.

Building Trust and Thought Leadership

Owned content plays a critical role in building trust prior to the sale. Thought leadership articles, how-to resources, case studies, and data-driven reports help position a brand as not just a vendor, but a credible advisor. According to CMI's 2024 research, thought leadership content now ranks as one of the most effective formats for lead generation and sales enablement.

Reports show that buyers overwhelmingly value content that is educational and evidence-based — not promotional. Demand Gen found that 87% of B2B buyers said content influences their buying decision when it speaks directly to their challenges. And The Drum highlighted that B2B buyers trust publishers and authoritative brand content more than typical marketing assets.

It's no surprise then that platforms like LinkedIn's B2B Institute and McKinsey Insights have become go-to destinations for business leaders. They don't just share content — they shape the conversation. One marketing lead even noted that high-value reports enable "conversations we've never been able to have before."

If you're serious about trust, stop chasing attention and start earning authority. Become the brand people learn from — not the one they scroll past.

Brand Independence and Resilience

Reliance on paid media puts B2B brands at the mercy of fluctuating CPMs, algorithm updates, and changing ad policies. In contrast, owned media gives you independence. You control what's published, how it's distributed, how it's optimized—and how it converts.

This independence is especially important for long sales cycles, niche markets, or high-ticket deals where timing and message control are critical. It also ensures you're not locked out when a platform changes the rules or raises the price.

Enabling Lifecycle Marketing

Owned media supports marketing beyond just acquisition. It improves onboarding, expands customer education, and enhances retention. From learning centers and help docs to community portals and product tours, owned content becomes an extension of the product experience.

This long-term value is difficult to replicate in rented channels. Instead of restarting your relationship every time you need to reach a customer, owned channels allow you to deepen it steadily, creating continuity from first click to renewal.

This setup is also more profitable. Research shows that brands with strong content ecosystems enjoy higher customer lifetime value, better retention, and more word-of-mouth referrals. And as CMI points out, a loyal audience is one of the biggest benefits of consistent content marketing.

Internal Collaboration and Enablement

Owned content doesn't just benefit marketing—it fuels alignment across the go-to-market team. Sales can use blog posts to handle objections. Customer success can point to tutorials or thought pieces. Product teams can build launch campaigns around owned webinars or guides.

That kind of cross-functional leverage is only possible when the brand owns the messaging and delivery infrastructure. It turns content from a siloed initiative into a system of shared enablement.

Changing Buyer Behavior

Self-Service Research

B2B buyers are increasingly self-directed, research-driven, and channel-agnostic. Instead of waiting to be nurtured by sales, most begin their journey by searching online, consuming content, and forming opinions well before they reach out. According to research, 89% of B2B buyers actively download and consume content during their journey — and they prefer doing it on their own time, not when someone's trying to pitch them something. In fact, 46% discover content via social media and internal shares, while 72% share it with colleagues as part of their decision-making process.

And most of this happens before they fill out a form or click a demo button. That means if your content isn't showing up during that discovery process — or worse, if it's buried behind a gate or a clunky signup — you're missing the moment. Buyers want helpful, relevant, ungated content that answers their questions without making them jump through hoops. They'll reward you with time, trust, and eventually, a sale. The brands that win are the ones who make it easy to explore, not hard to access.

Demand for Relevance and Value

Buyers are tired of fluff. They've seen enough bland, promotional content to last a lifetime. More than half of B2B buyers say the content they encounter is too generic or sales-focused, and that's a problem. If your blog post or eBook doesn't solve a real problem or answer a burning question, they're moving on, fast! That's why detailed how-to guides, data-backed whitepapers, and real-world case studies outperform vague, keyword-stuffed articles every time.

Write like a human, solve real problems, and stop trying to impress with buzzwords. High-quality, relevant content builds trust — and trust leads to engagement, conversation, and ultimately conversion.

Case Studies and Success Stories

From SaaS pioneers to global consultancies and ecosystem leaders, companies are investing in content platforms, newsletters, and educational hubs that not only engage buyers but also align with business outcomes like trust, lead quality, and data ownership.

HubSpot

HubSpot is widely recognized for turning owned media into a full-funnel growth engine. Their blog generates over 10 million monthly visits, driven by SEO-optimized posts, guides, and tutorials. These assets fuel lead capture via gated tools and templates. HubSpot Academy then nurtures those leads with free certification courses, enhancing brand trust and product familiarity.

Slack

Slack's owned content strategy leans into storytelling and practical education. Their Slack Blog and "Slack Tips" center focus on productivity, team communication, and remote work—making their content both searchable and sharable. Rather than relying on heavy gating, Slack emphasizes intuitive UX and discoverability to serve product-led growth.

Mailchimp

Mailchimp uses a hybrid approach that blends emotional resonance with tactical content. Through initiatives like Mailchimp Presents, they deliver video documentaries spotlighting creative entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, their blog and help center offer step-by-step instructions, email marketing templates, and campaign walkthroughs—serving both inspiration and execution.

Mailchimp's model reflects how brand storytelling and performance content can co-exist within a unified owned ecosystem.

Professional Services Firms

McKinsey & Company

McKinsey & Company has mastered the art of thought leadership with its Insights hub — a massive library of original research, articles, and case studies that positions the firm as a global authority on everything from sustainability to digital transformation. Their reports are cited everywhere, and their SEO presence is unmatched for a consultancy.

Deloitte

Deloitte takes a similar approach. Its Insights platform serves as a publishing engine, offering in-depth reports, interactive tools, and industry forecasts. These aren't sales pieces — they're decision-support resources that live permanently on Deloitte's domain and deliver ongoing value to clients and prospects alike.

Both firms use owned content to win early mindshare. Long before a pitch or proposal, they've already educated the client — and positioned themselves as the go-to expert. That's the power of showing up early, consistently, and credibly.

Ecosystem Leaders

Some of the most influential content strategies are coming from the ecosystem players — the companies that serve other marketers.

LinkedIn's B2B Institute

LinkedIn's B2B Institute. It's a research think tank that produces insight-rich reports, playbooks, and data-driven studies aimed at helping marketers understand long-term brand building. Their work is freely accessible and consistently referenced in marketing conversations. This isn't about pushing ads — it's about influencing strategy at the highest level.

Adobe's CMO.com

Then there's Adobe's former CMO.com, which has now been folded into Adobe's main site under its Insights section. It started as a standalone publication for marketing leaders and now serves as a hub for expert commentary, trend reports, and customer case studies. The platform helps position Adobe as not just a technology vendor, but as a partner who understands the challenges CMOs face.

These brands show that thought leadership doesn't have to be dry or product-centric. When you use owned media to elevate the conversation — not just your product — you become a magnet for the very audience you want to reach. It's smart, sustainable, and deeply effective.

Company	Sector	Strategy Focus	Channels Used	Key Outcomes
HubSpot	SaaS	Lead Gen & SEO	Blog, Academy, Templates	Inbound engine, 10M+ visits/mo
Slack	SaaS	Product Enablement	Blog, Tips Center	Organic activation & sharing
Mailchimp	SaaS	Brand + Performance Blend	Blog, Mailchimp Presents	Brand equity + SMB acquisition
McKinsey	Consulting	Thought Leadership	Insights Hub	C-suite trust, long-term value
Deloitte	Consulting	Public & Private Alignment	Research & Sector Forecasts	Market authority
LinkedIn B2B Institute	Ecosystem Provider	Research & Advocacy	Reports, Partnered Papers	Industry influence
Adobe (CMO.com)	Ecosystem Provider	Marketing Thought Leadership	CMO.com, Adobe Blog	

Recommendations for B2B Marketers

As owned media moves from trend to necessity, the challenge shifts from "why" to "how." The most effective B2B marketers are taking a deliberate, scalable approach—one that aligns content efforts with buyer needs, data strategy, and business goals.

1. Start With the Buyer

Map your buyer journey before publishing a single post. What questions are prospects asking at each stage? Where are they searching for answers? Use this intel to develop content formats that support decision-making—from SEO blog posts for early-stage discovery to case studies, calculators, and playbooks for later-stage consideration.

Avoid jumping straight into tactics. Strategy must guide production, distribution, and measurement.

2. Build an Owned Content Stack

Successful teams build durable content infrastructure:

- A well-structured blog with topical clusters for SEO
- A lead-generating newsletter or subscriber base
- A gated asset library (e.g., tools, guides, templates)
- A learning or onboarding center for customers

This stack creates a continuous loop of discovery, education, and conversion—controlled entirely by your team.

3. Make SEO and Email Your Priority Channels

SEO and email remain the two most effective owned media channels. According to HubSpot, they lead all others in B2B ROI. Optimizing for search and investing in consistent, high-value email newsletters helps you attract and retain your audience over time—without paying for every click.

4. Use Content to Collect First-Party Data

Gated tools, resource libraries, and interactive assets not only provide value—they also allow you to build privacy-compliant data assets. As Gartner advises, you must "earn" the data you collect. Owned content is the most sustainable way to do it.

5. Think Beyond Awareness

Owned content isn't just for lead gen—it's a tool for sales enablement, onboarding, customer education, and lifecycle marketing. When content is shared across GTM teams, it becomes a system of alignment and shared value—not a siloed campaign.

Most importantly, start where you are and use available resources. You don't need a large budget.

Conclusion

Owned media is no longer optional—it's crucial for B2B growth. As third-party data erodes, digital ad efficiency declines, and buyers become more independent, owned content gives brands what they urgently need: control, trust, and sustainability.

Throughout this report, we've seen how owned media outperforms in cost efficiency, buyer engagement, and long-term ROI. We've examined how brands like HubSpot, McKinsey, and Slack use content platforms to educate, convert, and retain customers. And we've heard from experts who agree: content that lives on platforms you control isn't just safer—it's smarter.

But the value of owned media goes beyond performance metrics. It offers a foundation for future-proof marketing. It enables cross-team collaboration, builds compliant data sets, and nurtures prospects throughout the entire lifecycle—from first search to customer expansion.

B2B brands that treat their websites, blogs, and newsletters like assets—not afterthoughts—will own the conversation, the relationship, and the pipeline. They'll stop renting attention and start earning it.

So: invest in content you control, build systems that scale, and align every asset to the needs of your modern, research-driven buyer. In doing so, you'll build the backbone of your growth strategy for the next decade.

About the authors

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Column is a content and research studio that helps founders, executives, and public leaders turn expertise into influence. Our work spans research reports, messaging development, campaign strategy, and thought leadership—all built to resonate with your audience and advance your goals. With a team that blends deep experience in writing, design, and media, we turn your ideas into clear, credible content that gets results.

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