

Not Your Father's Buying Decision: How Three Generations of B2B Technology Buyers Decide What to Purchase

Arketi Group asked three generations of BtoB buyers – Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennials – about their role in the technology buying process within their organizations. Some of their responses upturn much of the conventional wisdom about influences and influencers in the buying cycle.



Role in B2B tech purchases

Surveying BtoB tech buyers about technology purchases (or contracts) worth \$10,000+, **22 percent** research potential providers for inclusion on the short-list and **19 percent** evaluate the providers on the short-list and select the best solution, while **32 percent** said they provide input to help the evaluators and decision makers. The remaining **28 percent** of respondents reported having budget and/or final sign-off authority. These numbers break down across the generations – but not necessarily in the way one might expect.

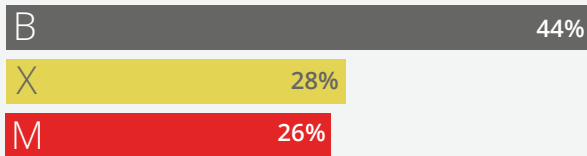


Millennials' tech buying power trumps all

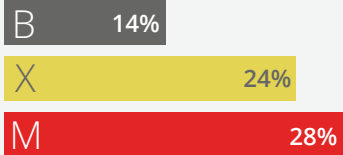
With the rise of Millennials in the workforce, this generation self-reports it's taking the lead in decision-making power. BtoB tech buying roles across the generations look like this:



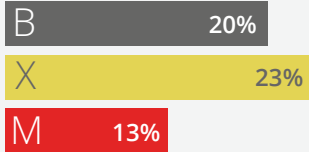
Provide input to help the evaluators and decision-makers



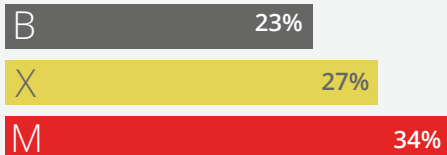
Research potential for inclusion on the short-list



Evaluate providers on the short-list and select the best solution

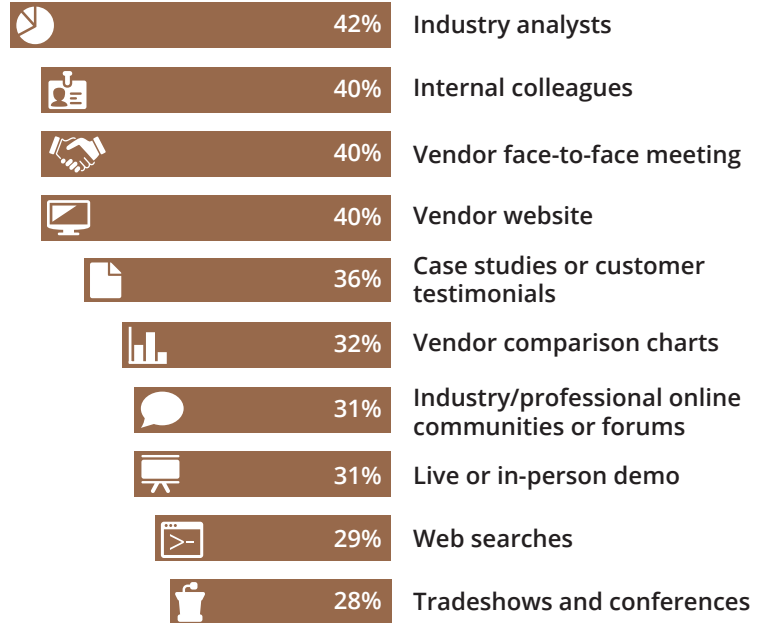


Have budget and/or final sign-off authority

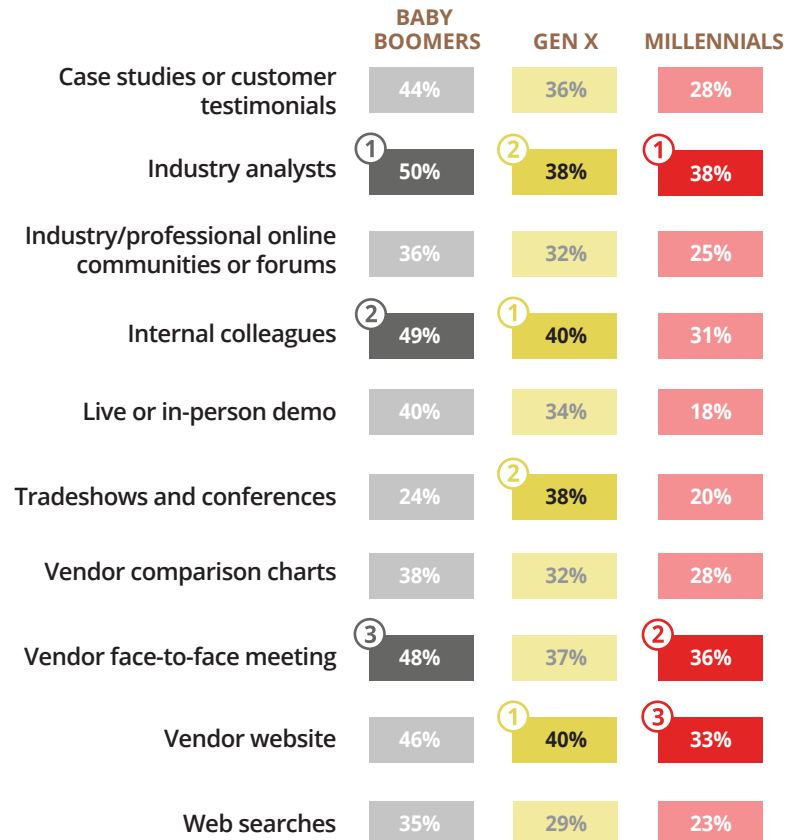


Who do they trust?

When considering B2B tech purchases of \$10,000+, respondents say the top sources of information they use to evaluate technology solutions are:



Across the sources of information used, each generation turns to some tools more than others.



Top of the funnel influencers



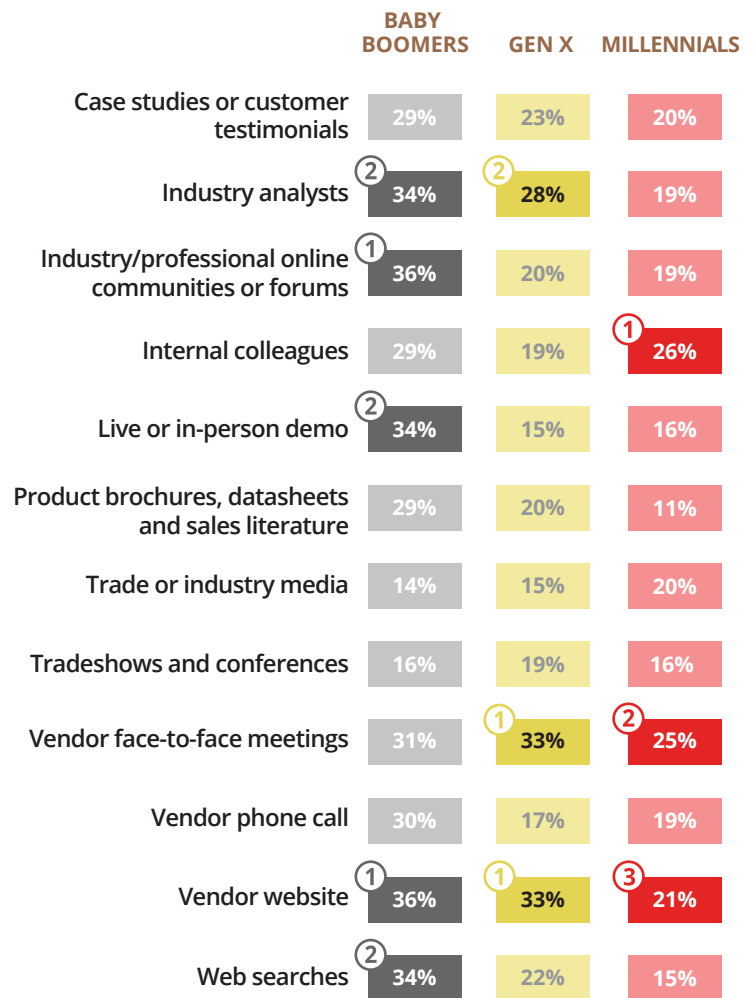
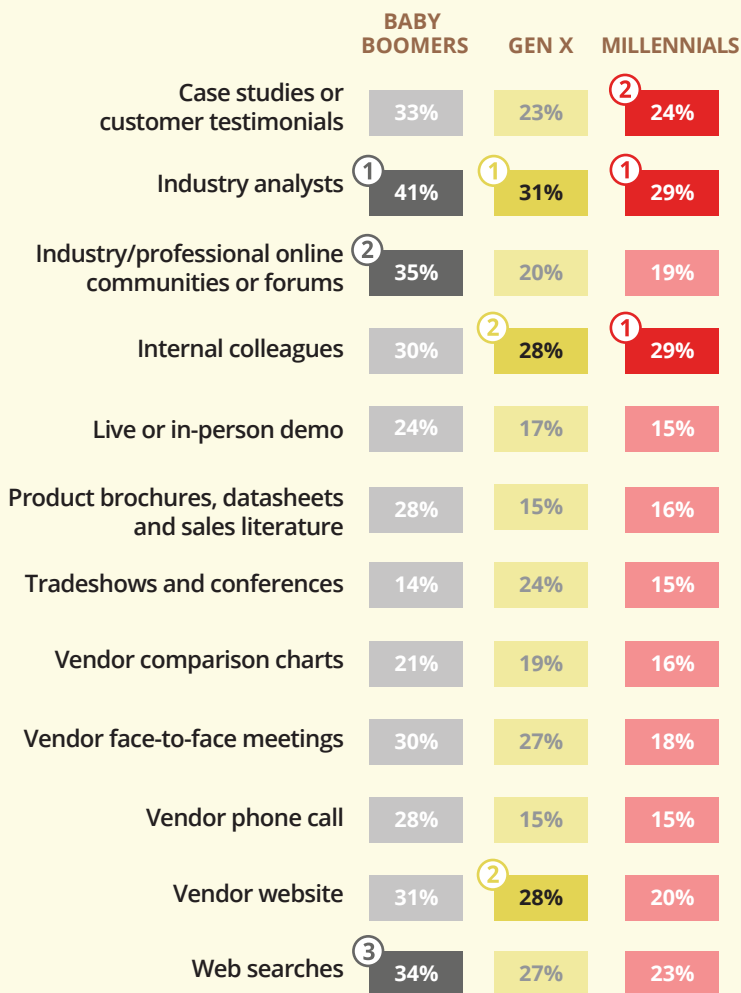
Technology buyers refer to different sources of information at each stage of their buying process. In the early stages – when seeking to understand and explore a possible business problem – it's perhaps surprising that Millennials reported relying most on interpersonal interactions. Here's how the generations approach information gathering...

Middle of the funnel influencers



During the second phase of the B2B buying cycle – when researching the available technology solutions – Millennials are less reliant on social media than conventional wisdom might assume.

Here's how the generations approach mid-funnel information gathering...



The final funnel influencers



In the final phase of the B2B buying process, buyers create a shortlist of solutions to consider and choose between. At this make-or-break point, face-to-face communication – rather than Facebook – wins the day, across the generations.

Here's how the generations approach end-of-funnel information gathering...

	BABY BOOMERS	GEN X	MILLENNIALS
Case studies or customer testimonials	19%	¹ 27%	14%
Industry analysts	34%	20%	20%
Industry/professional online communities or forums	25%	22%	18%
Internal colleagues	31%	² 26%	² 23%
Live or in-person demo	¹ 39%	25%	³ 21%
Product brochures, datasheets and sales literature	19%	16%	15%
Vendor comparison charts	30%	20%	19%
Vendor emails	13%	18%	14%
Vendor phone call	30%	14%	18%
Vendor website	³ 35%	21%	20%
Vendor face-to-face meetings	² 38%	¹ 27%	¹ 24%
Web searches	19%	23%	18%



About This Report

Not Your Father's Buying Decision: How Three Generations of B2B Technology Buyers Decide What to Purchase is based on an online survey fielded in late 2015. Of the 262 respondents, the majority (60 percent) were with organizations with 1,000 or more employees. Approximately 31 percent were in senior management, 47 percent were in middle management, and 12 percent were executives or C-level. Respondents spanned multiple industries including telecommunications, technology, education, finance, healthcare, manufacturing, government and business services. Respondents by age cohorts included 31 percent Baby Boomers, 39 percent Gen X and 30 percent Millennials.

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