

# HOW WE BUY: FOUR GENERATIONS REVEAL HOW THEY MAKE B2B PURCHASING DECISIONS

Marketers know to tailor their communications and campaigns for the right audience – but do they know how to tailor them for the right generation?

Arketi Group asked four generations of B2B technology buyers – Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers – about the role they serve when their organization identifies a challenge and begins its search for a technology solution.

Their responses revealed each generation's B2B tech buying habits, preferences, and trusted resources utilized throughout each phase of the sales funnel, from top to bottom. Our report brings it all together to help you better reach and engage B2B technology buyers across the generational spectrum.

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Arketi Group asked four generations of B2B buyers – Gen Z, Millennials, Gen Xers and Baby Boomers – about their role in the B2B buying process. Their responses revealed emerging trends as one cohort steadily exits the workforce and confirm some expectations as others continue to grow into leadership roles within their organizations.

We also asked each generation about their B2B buying habits, preferences, and what resources they turn to throughout the buyer's journey. Use them to inform your own B2B sales and marketing strategy.

## YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MUCH MARKETING

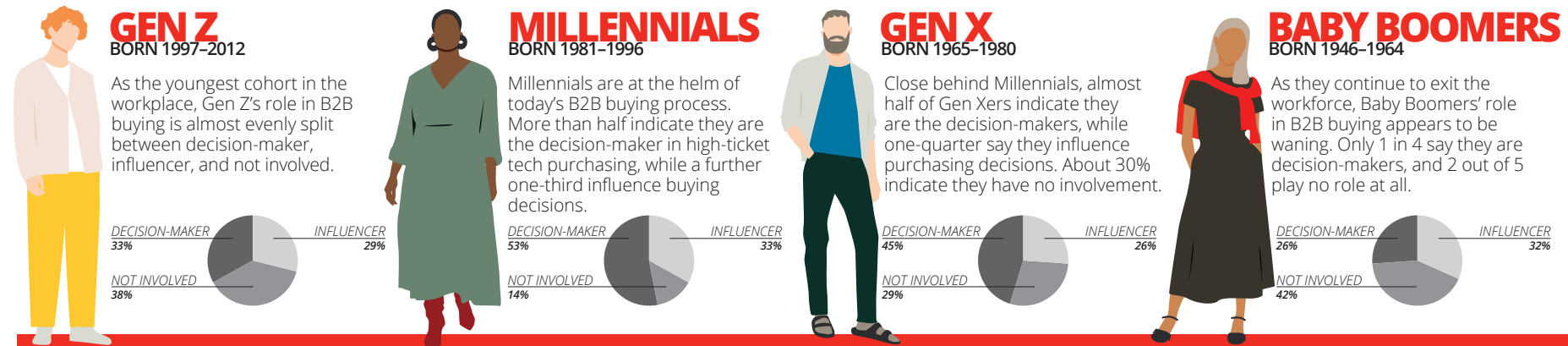
This study asked buyers to select from a total of 45 different information resources they utilize at each stage of their buying journey. As the chart shows, a handful of resources dominate – but every generation used every resource in at least one stage of the funnel. Which goes to show that, in marketing, as in life, variety is the spice!

## DON'T CALL ME, I'LL CALL YOU

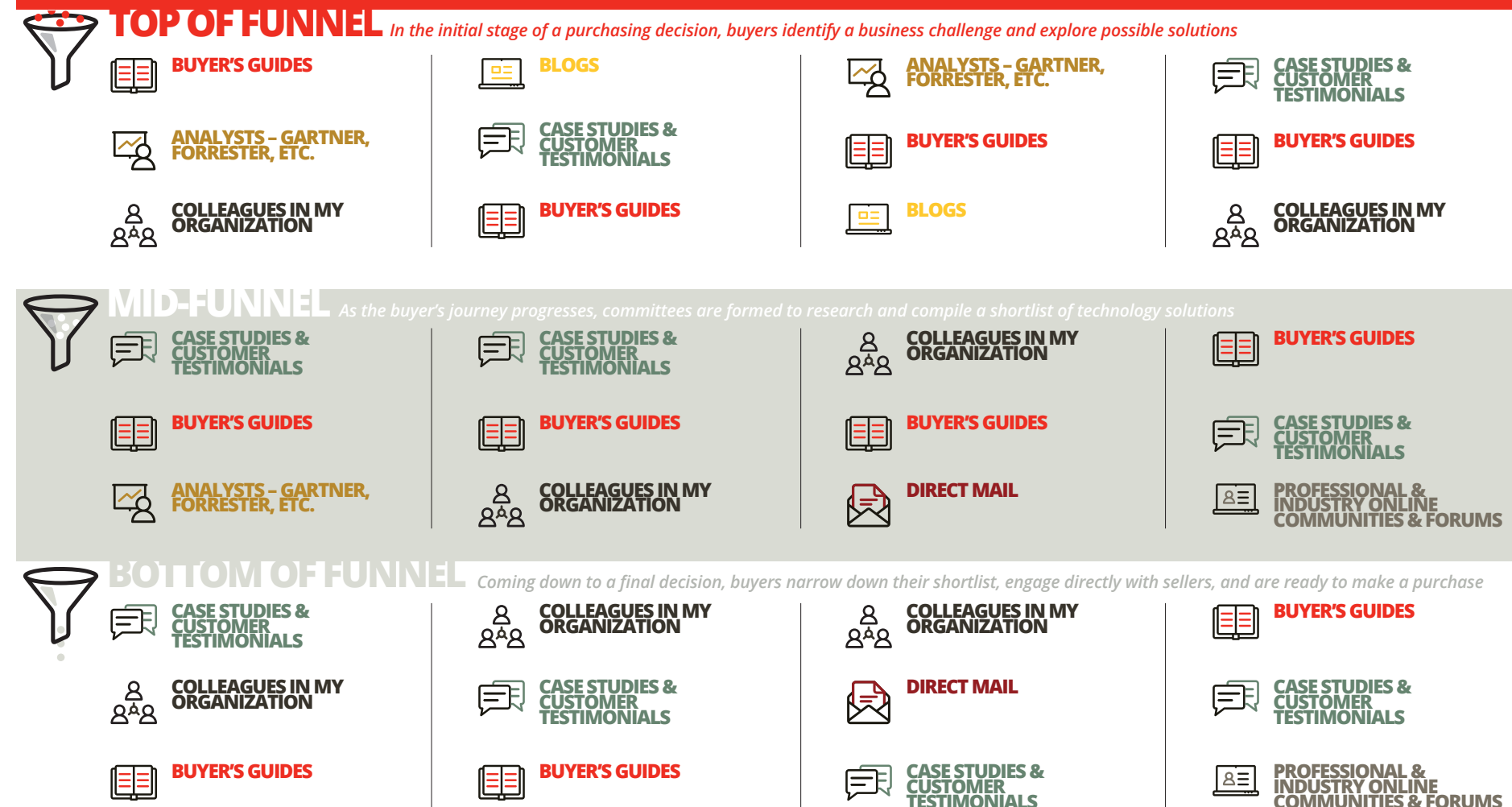
When it comes to interacting with a vendor – phone calls, texts, live chats, face-to-face meetings, and so on – the generations differed, perhaps predictably, in their preferences. But all agreed that direct vendor interaction is welcome only late in the buying journey.

## BUYERS DIG IN AND DO THEIR HOMEWORK

While every generation utilizes multiple resources at every stage of the funnel, Millennials are the information omnivores, consulting an average of seven resources throughout the buyer's journey. Compare that to Gens X and Z, who average just over five. Across all generations, more resources were tapped at the top of the funnel than further down, as buyers narrow their selections.



When evaluating an enterprise technology purchase, what are your top three sources of information?



## TOP TAKEAWAYS

**BUYER'S GUIDES** The standout resource across all generations of B2B buyers – especially at the top and middle of the sales funnel – buyer's guides help buyers jumpstart their search and develop a shortlist of solutions.



**COLLEAGUES and PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES** B2B buying decisions are often committee-driven. It's natural for buyers to seek insight from colleagues and peers – and they do, at every stage of their journey.

**ANALYSTS** For high-ticket purchases especially, expert opinion can be invaluable. Analysts are consulted mostly early in the funnel, when buyers are exploring a broad range of possible solutions.

**CASE STUDIES** As ever, benefits and outcomes trump features and specs. Buyers want to know how your technology solved the challenge they're facing. Case studies are a powerful way to demonstrate value.



**SOCIAL MEDIA** No social platform ranked in any generation's top three information sources – in fact, not in any of the top 10. The closest contender was Gen Z's bottom-of-the-funnel use of Reddit – which is arguably more of a forum anyway. Overall, it seems social media leaves B2B buyers uninfluenced.

## WANT MORE?



Explore the complete dataset and interactive drill-downs at [arketi.com/fourgens](https://arketi.com/fourgens)



**WHERE  
MARKETING  
GENERATES REVENUE**

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

*How We Buy* is based on an online survey of 263 respondents, the majority of whom (60%) were employed at organizations with 100 or more staff. Approximately 27% worked in senior management positions, 32% were in middle management, and 19% were executives or C-suite members. Respondents spanned multiple industries including telecommunications, technology, education, finance, healthcare, manufacturing, government, and business services. Respondents by age cohorts ranged between 20 to 30% each. The survey qualified enterprise B2B technology purchases as technology expenditures of \$10,000 or more.

Arketi Group is a public relations and digital marketing firm that helps business-to-business technology organizations accelerate growth through intelligent strategy, messaging, public relations, digital marketing, branding, and lead generation and nurturing. Consistently recognized by BtoB magazine as one of nation's "Top BtoB Agencies," Arketi's core belief is that marketing generates revenue.

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