

Business-to-Business Marketing

Most marketing is business-to-business (B2B) marketing even though textbooks and business magazines devote most of their attention to business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing. The disproportionate attention to B2C has been justified by saying that (1) B2C is where most of modern marketing concepts first arose, and (2) B2B marketers can learn a lot by adopting B2C thinking. While these two statements are true, B2B is having its own renaissance, and maybe B2C marketers have a lot to learn from B2B practices. B2B, in particular, has focused more on individual customers, and B2C is increasingly moving into one-to-one customer thinking.

The sales force is the main driver in B2B marketing. Its importance cannot be overestimated, especially when selling complex customized equipment such as B-47s or power plants or selling to large national and global accounts. Today's companies increasingly assign national and global *account managers* to manage their largest customers. Account management systems will grow in the future as more of the world's business becomes concentrated in fewer but larger companies.

But today B2B companies also are driven to replace high-cost sales calls with less expensive contact channels such as tele- and videoconferencing and Web-based communications, where possible.