



Nurturing the IT Committee Lead

Is marketing helping or hurting?

Trust + Credibility

must be

EARNED

Today's modern tech marketer knows the importance of nurturing leads and building trusted relationships with the IT Committee -- the broad group of decision makers who influence tech purchasing decisions. But in the process of gathering leads, many marketers are actually hurting relationships by asking for contact information too often or too soon.

"Anxious", "annoyed", "hate" - these are some of the common responses we heard when we asked the IT Committee how

they felt about lead generation forms in exchange for content. In fact, nearly 3 in 5 IT Committee members said they provide fake information at least some of the time when faced with gated content.

Building trust and credibility is the best defense against this. But how do you build that trust? We surveyed over 2,300 IT Committee members on LinkedIn globally to answer that question. This is our guide to help IT marketers understand how.

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Gating content too early and too often is counter-productive



The Growing IT Committee

The IT Committee: rapidly growing and influential.

The concept of the IT Committee, which was first introduced in our [“Social Bridge to the IT Committee”](#) research with comScore in 2013, stresses the importance of influencing decision makers beyond the IT department. Purchasing decisions are now made by a cross-functional group that includes marketing, sales, and finance departments.

To reach this group, LinkedIn created a custom segment of IT Committee, which contains over 10 million members globally, across a variety of departments and seniorities. 74% of the IT Committee works outside of IT. 33% of those people are individual contributors or managers, and 58% control part or all of the IT budget.



10+ million globally

Growing **1.25x**
faster than general
LinkedIn member
growth

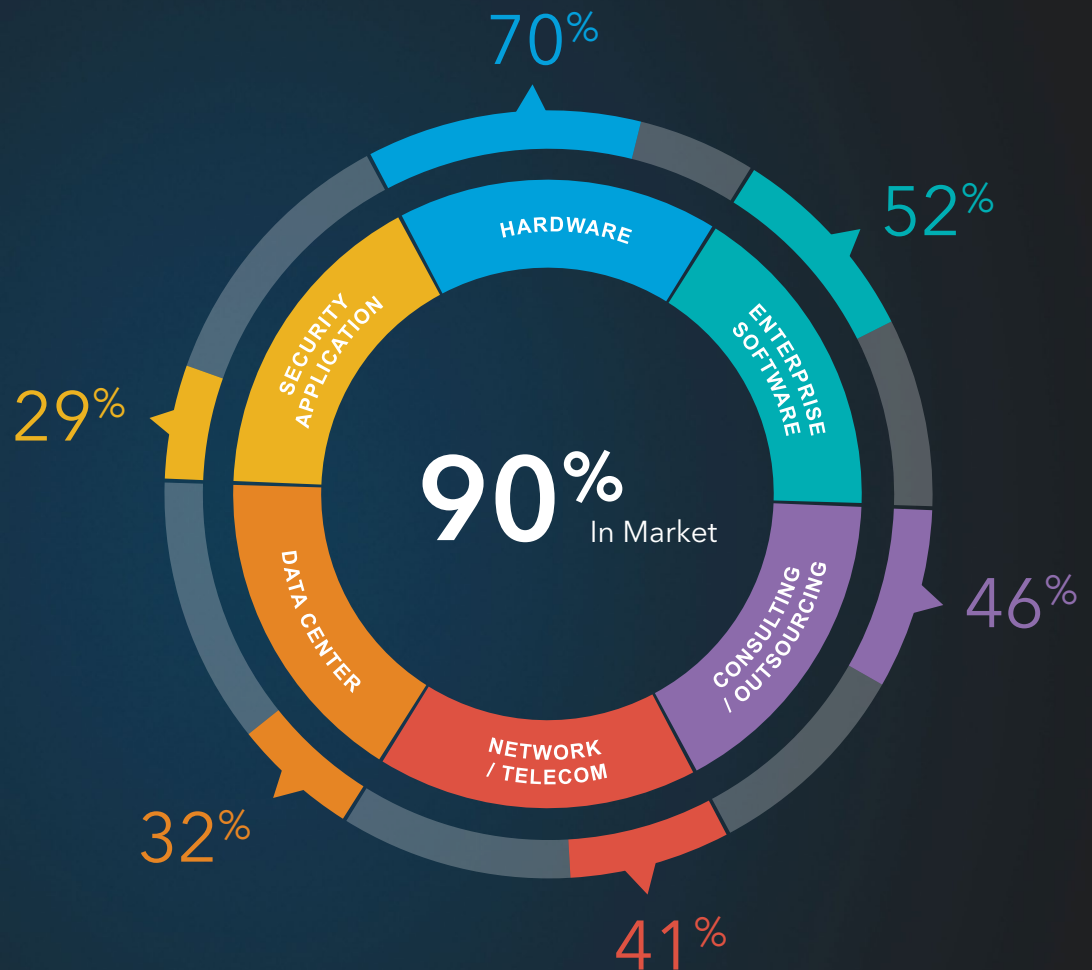


By 2017, CMOs will spend more on IT
than CIOs.

- Laura McLellan,
Research VP, Gartner

IT Committee members on LinkedIn are ready to buy.

9 in 10 are in market for an IT solution in the next 12 months. The top 3 products and services they are in market for are hardware, enterprise software, and consulting/outsourcing.



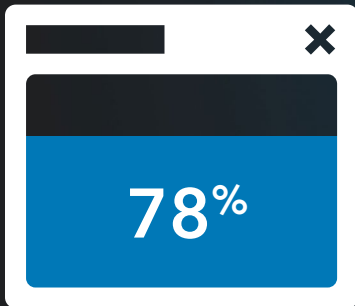
Top IT products and services the IT Committee are in market for

How does the IT Committee make purchase decisions?

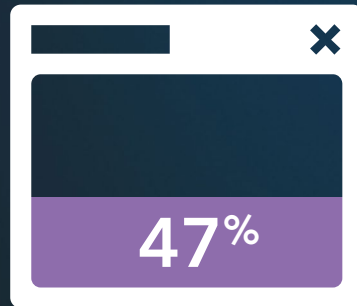
They turn to trusted sources of information, such as their social networks, to inform and validate their decisions. It's no surprise that with its professional context, LinkedIn is the most trusted platform for IT-specific news and information.

85%
use social media
for IT News and
Information each
month

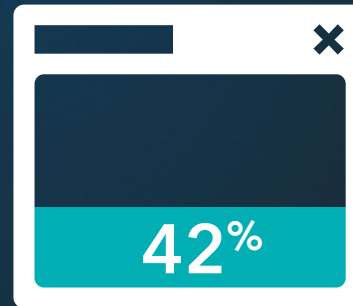
Sites they visit for IT news and information



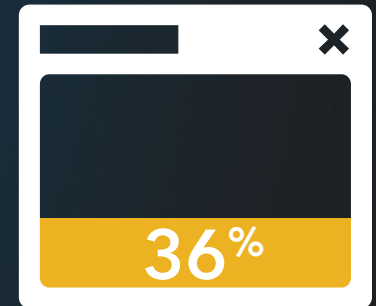
LinkedIn



Facebook



Google+

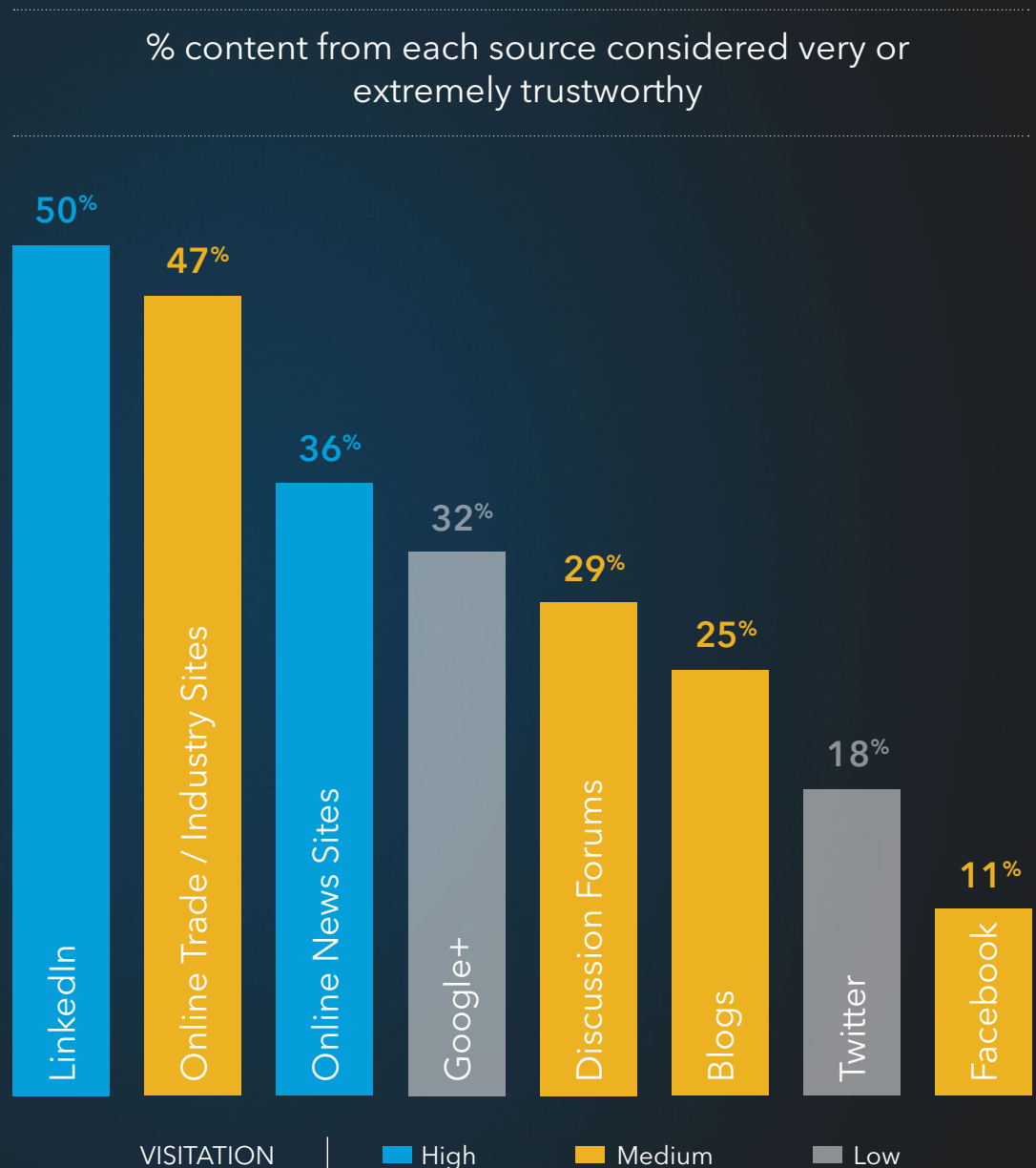


Twitter

The IT Committee trust content on LinkedIn more than any other source.

LinkedIn is 3 to 5 times more trusted than other social platforms.

In the past, industry and news sites were the main sources for IT information. Today, social networks have grown the pie, allowing IT Committee members immediate access to their networks to validate decisions. Among all online sources, LinkedIn has emerged as a primary resource for trusted industry information.

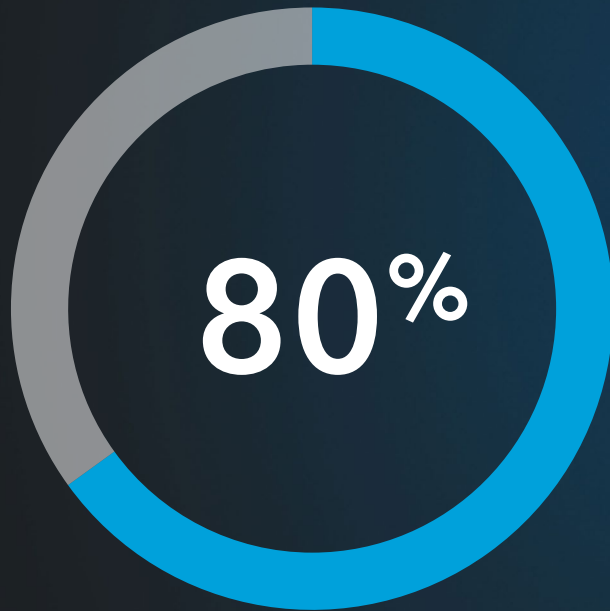




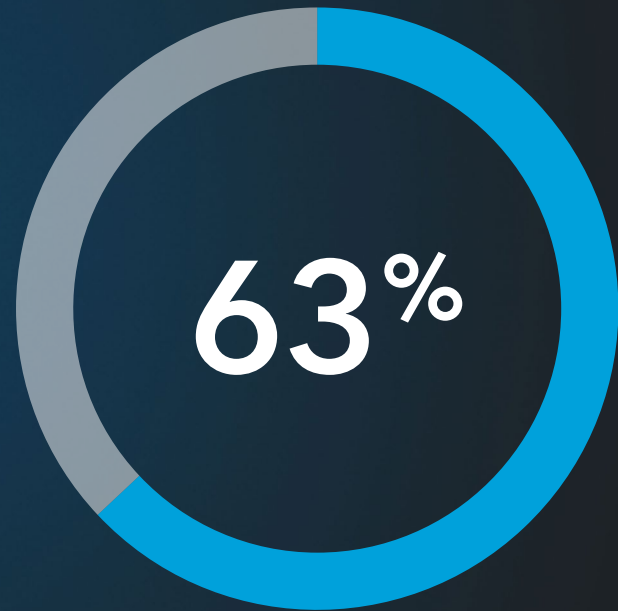
The Power of Education without Bias

Always-on education throughout the purchase funnel improves lead generation by building credibility early on.

Whether changing vendors or buying a new solution, IT Committee members need to educate themselves before making such an important business decision. And they are more likely to consider vendors who provide the information they seek along the entire path to purchase.



of the IT Committee require education to **sustain** or **make a change** to their ecosystem



are more likely to consider an IT vendor **that educates them** through each stage of the decision process

Focus on helping, not selling.

At any given moment, only a certain percentage of the IT Committee will be in market. For those that are not, you still need to deliver content that engages and builds the relationship with your brand. Our research shows that the best way to do this is with content that focuses on their needs and interests rather than promoting your company and products.



55%

More likely to consider an IT vendor who publishes content about my industry and topics of interest



51%

More favorable toward an IT vendor who publishes content about my industry and topics of interest

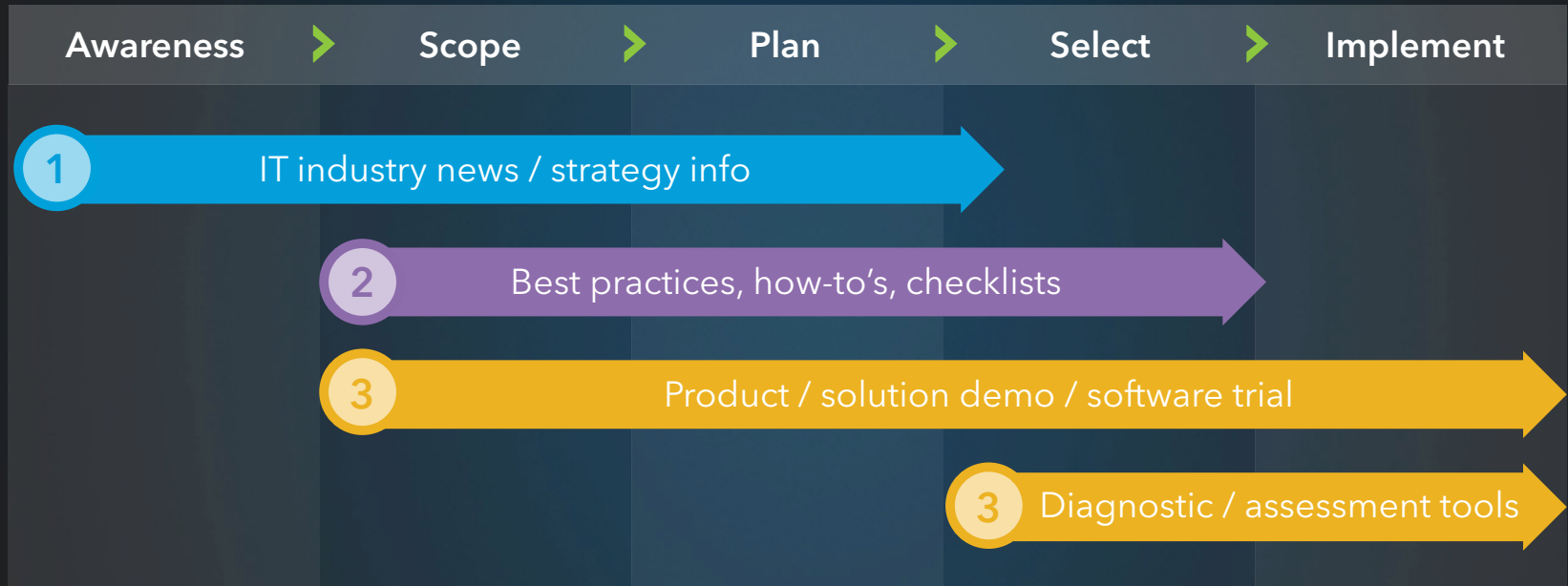


50%

Most interested in non-branded / non-sales focused content

Earn more interest with a variety of content.

Top types of information sought in each stage of IT decision-making process:



THREE TYPES OF CONTENT

- 1 General industry topics, prioritized for your audience
- 2 Expert content on the direction and use of your industry's products
- 3 Product-specific content, such as user reviews and case studies, to drive consideration for your company

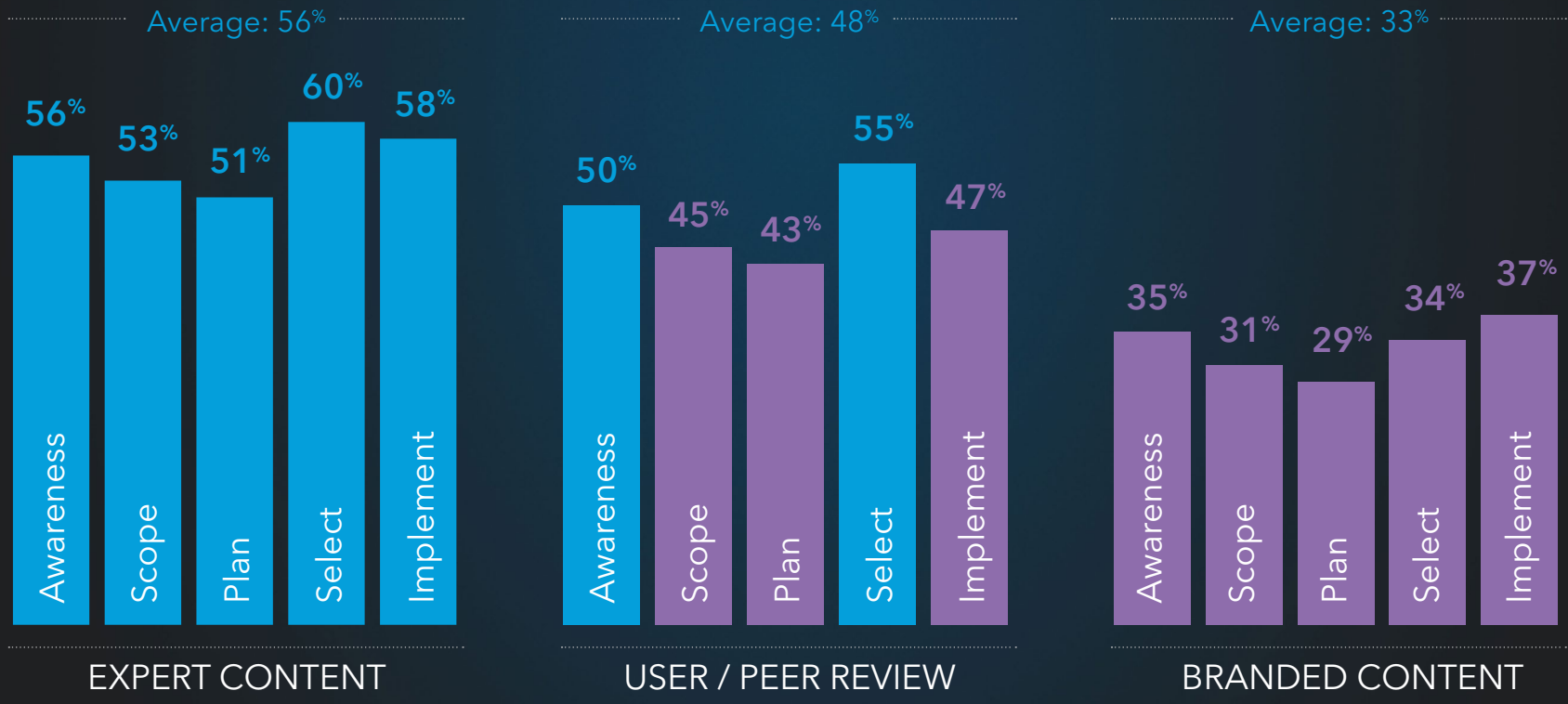


The Expertise You Don't Know You Have

Content from experts is the most influential.

For the first time, content from experts is the most influential overall, especially during the selection and implementation phases of the purchase cycle. A key reason for this rise in expert influence is that peers have been broken into groups, peer and expert peer. Social media has enabled access to content from these expert peers, combining trust and expertise to create a very relevant and reliable source of information.

Influence on tech purchases (by content source)



Who is an Expert?

Marketers often think that subject matter experts must be senior executives in their organization. However, we found that the IT Committee defined expertise not based on rank, but reputation and social proof.

% Who Believe Each Statement Defines an Expert



The IT Committee is positively impacted by the actions of your employees.

Enable your company's internal experts to publish on trusted social channels like LinkedIn to develop your brand's relationship with the IT Committee. Although it may be difficult to get internal employees to share and publish content, marketers who can make it happen find that it is incredibly worthwhile for the credibility and trust that it fosters -- which ultimately helps lead generation efforts.



27%

Are more favorable toward
a vendor whose employees
participate in LinkedIn
Groups

LINKEDIN GROUPS



25%

Are more favorable toward
a vendor whose employees
share content on LinkedIn

EMPLOYEES



27%

Are more likely to consider
if vendors have experts
publishing on LinkedIn

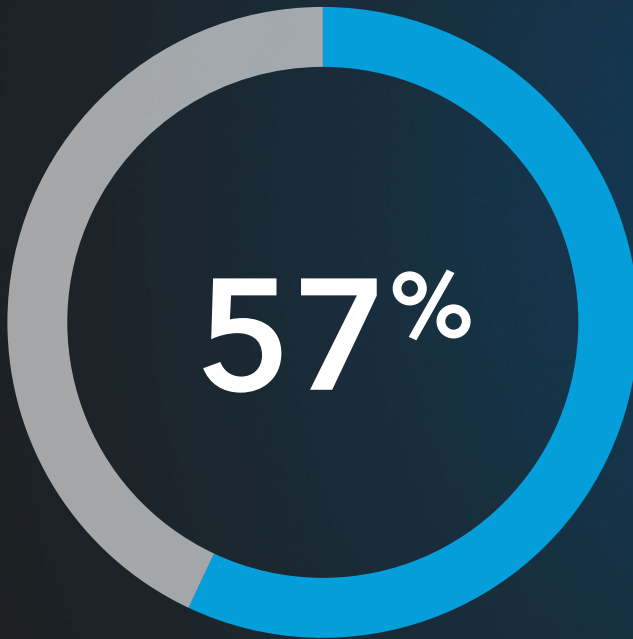
EXPERTS



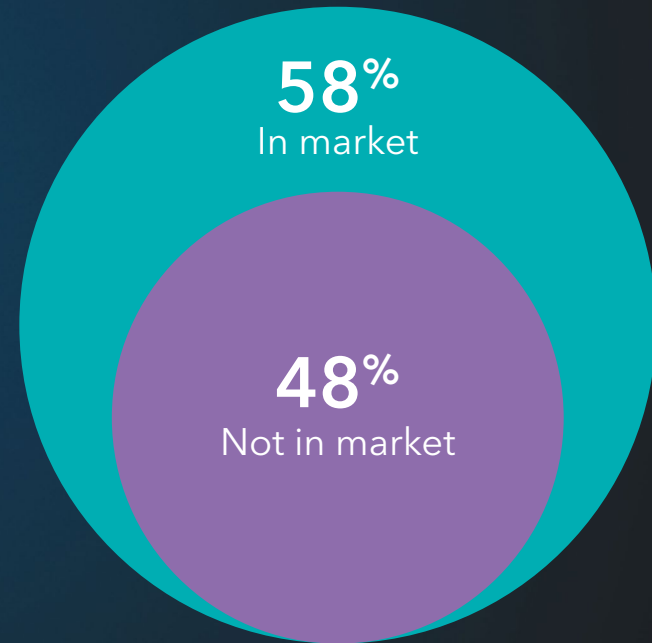
Nurture, don't Disrupt

In-market leads are worthless if lead data is inaccurate.

Marketers often pay a premium for in-market leads. But the IT Committee is anxious about gated content and many fill out lead forms using false information. Those in market for IT solutions are even more likely to provide fake information. That's why it's critical to build credibility and gain their trust early on.



of the IT Committee provides fake information when they complete a lead capture form

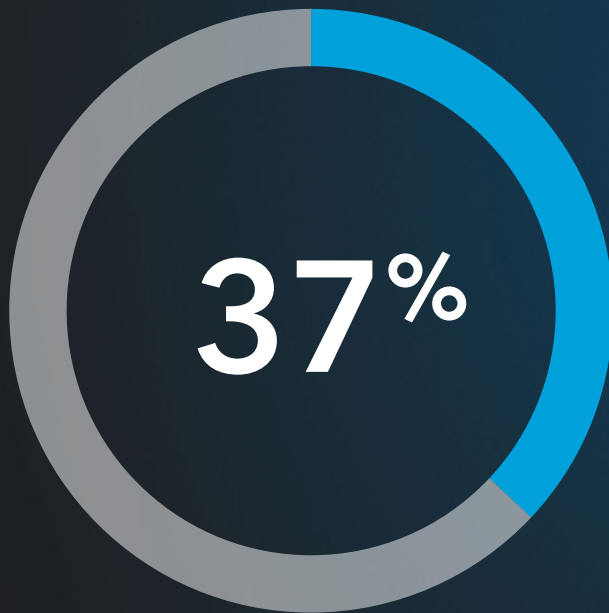


At least sometimes provide info

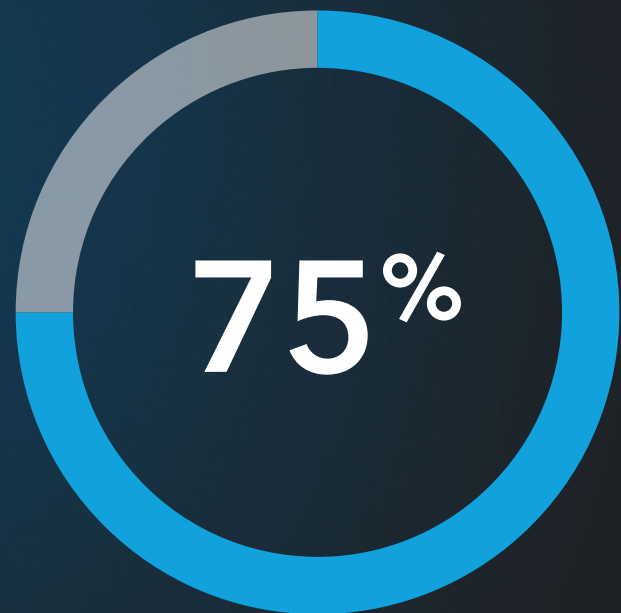
So don't lose them by gating content too early or too often.

Asking for contact and purchase-interest detail too early or too often can actually hurt lead-generation efforts. Instead, post both gated and un-gated content covering a variety of topics -- from broad industry trends to customer case studies. Focus on educating prospective customers and you will earn their trust -- and generate more high-quality leads.

% less likely to consider a vendor (among in-market members)



When gating **FIRST** piece of content



When gating **ALL** content

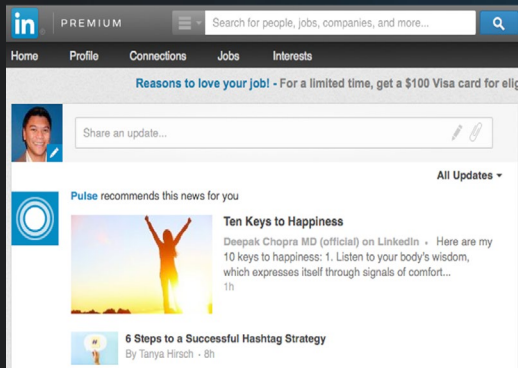
Nurturing leads through content is vital.

Most are not ready to talk to sales until a relationship is made through relevant content.



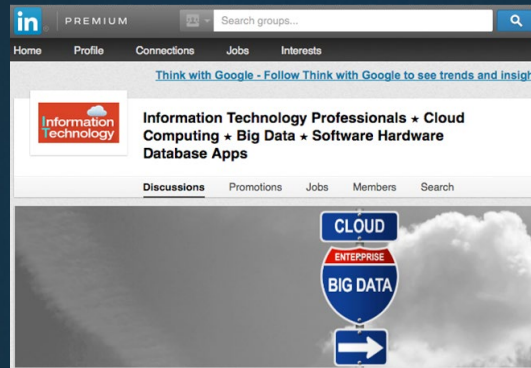
The average IT Committee member needs to consume **5 PIECES** of content before they are ready to talk to someone in sales.

Publish and promote your content in places on LinkedIn where the IT Committee is engaging the most.



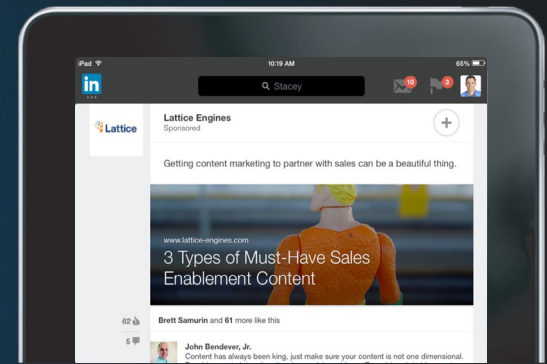
THE FEED STARTS THE CONVERSATION

2x as active on desktop in the feed than members¹



GROUPS FOR EXPERT ARTICLES

2x as active in groups than members¹



ENSURE CONTENT IS MOBILE FRIENDLY

25% more active on mobile than members¹

Use LinkedIn to connect your brand with the IT Committee.



ACCURATE TARGETING

Geography



Function



Industry



Seniority



PERSONALIZATION

Sponsored InMail



Spotlight Ad



LEAD CAPTURE & NURTURING

Sponsored Updates



SlideShare



Custom API

Marketer Implications

Marketers play a big role in helping their organizations win IT business deals these days. To contribute, they need to engage and convince everyone on the IT Committee that their company is the preferred vendor. But it's not about a hard sell -- it's about providing educational content of interest to prospective customers at every stage of the buying cycle, in the channels where they spend time. Here are four ways to do just that:



- Earn trust with broad-based content that goes beyond your brand's self-interests
- Incorporate an "always on" content strategy with a variety of content - gated and un-gated
- Leverage your employees and company specialists as experts
- Focus on educating prospective customers in the short term to generate higher-quality leads in the long run.

Methodology:

We surveyed over 2,300 IT Committee members globally



1. N. AMERICA

Canada, N=152
US, N=404

2. EMEA

UK, N=204
The Netherlands, N=204
Germany, N=203
France*, N=202

3. MIDDLE EAST

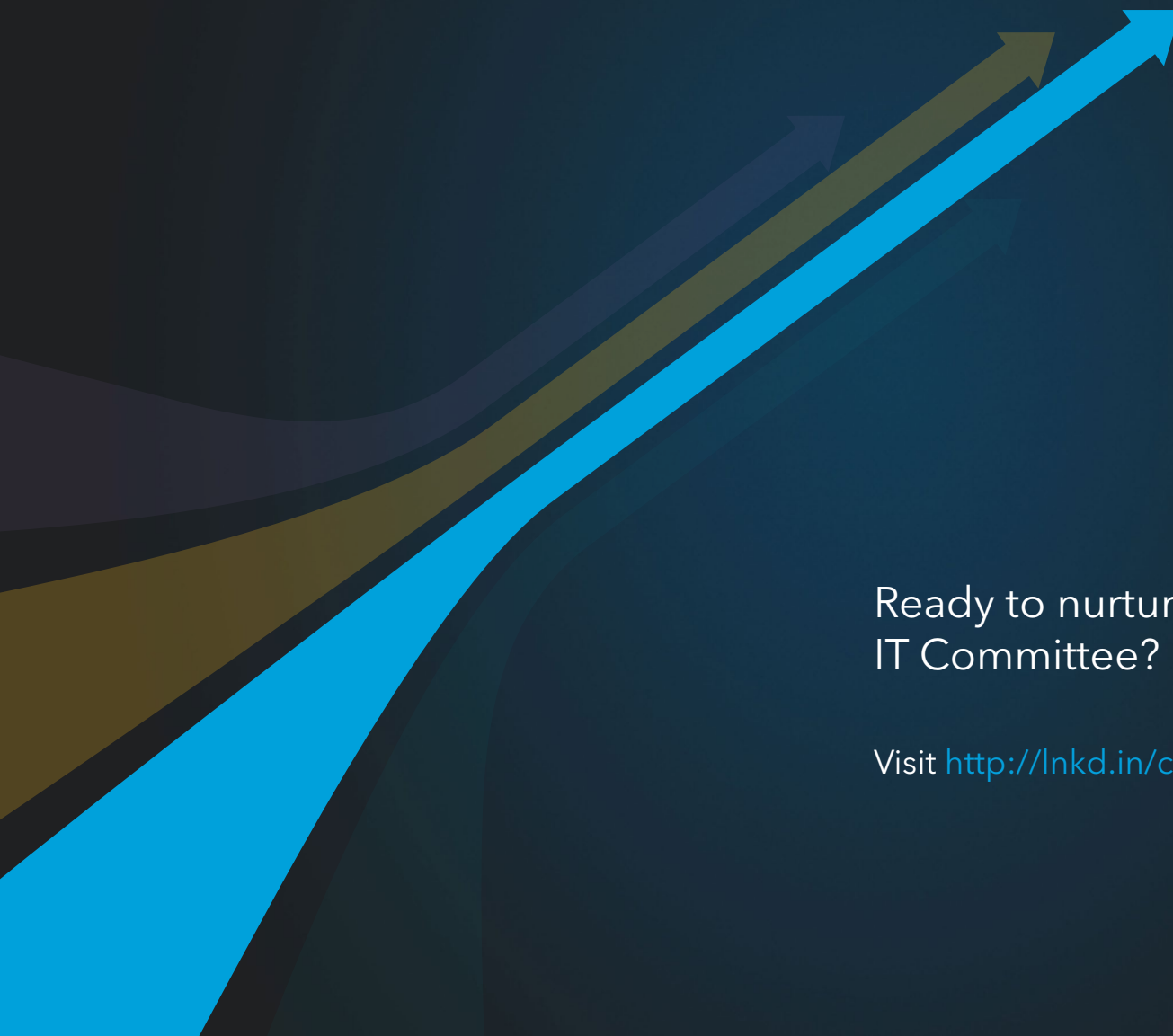
UAE, N=154
Saudi Arabia, N=155

4. APAC

India, N=202
Hong Kong, N=155
Singapore, N=104
Australia, N=104

5. BRAZIL*

N=155



Ready to nurture leads from the
IT Committee?

Visit <http://lnkd.in/contact>