



Don't be Late to the Party:

A Data-First Strategy for Marketing to Buying Groups



By the time a B2B buyer talks to a vendor, they're already more than halfway through their decision.

They've researched, they've compared, they've formed a shortlist. **And they did it all as a group.** In fact, according to Gartner, 67% of B2B buyers now prefer a rep-free experience, doing their own research and evaluation long before anyone from your team enters the picture.¹ That means the window to influence the right people, with the right message, is narrower than most marketers realize.

Buying cycles are longer, committees are larger, and the cost of misaligned marketing has never been higher. The organizations winning today aren't just generating more leads, they're reaching the right group of people, earlier.

Buying group marketing includes all stakeholders in a purchase decision, so larger than a single lead, but not so broad as an entire account, which would include many irrelevant people not responsible for the purchase. Ultimately, the buying group approach accurately focuses on the people who matter to close business.



FORRESTER[®]

Forrester estimates² that for B2B purchases, a buying group typically includes 13 internal stakeholders and 9 external influencers, each playing a distinct role in the decision-making process. Focusing on the entire group is a smart and realistic approach as 89% of B2B purchase decisions require two or more groups to sign off.

Success requires a fundamental shift in data strategy to make sure every marketing activation reaches the intended audience with relevant messaging. Marketing teams used to MQLs or accounts will have to transition their approach to gather the right data to reach buying groups. Sales teams will have to coordinate the roles, interests and objections of each stakeholder. But the shift is worth it because buying group marketing most closely resembles the actual decision-making process.

To get buying group marketing right, the most important element is recent, accurate data, because stakeholders, goals and dynamics within a buying group change frequently. This eBook explores how to navigate the volatility of buying groups and build a data-driven system that turns complex group dynamics into a competitive advantage.



Mapping the Group—Beyond the Org Chart

For marketers just getting started, the first step is identifying the different stakeholder roles. This goes beyond simple job titles. You need to understand the role each person plays in the buying decision:



Champion

Your inside accelerator. They believe in your solution, have the credibility to rally support, and open doors to the decision-makers who matter.



Decision Maker

The one who signs off. Senior leaders with budget authority who need to see real business impact, not just features.



Influencer

The opinion shaper. They evaluate solutions, flag risks, and weigh in on fit. They don't hold the final vote, but they can fast-track or stall your deal.



User

The people your solution has to work for every day. Their feedback carries weight during evaluation and their adoption drives value after the deal closes.



Ratifier

The deal enabler. Finance or procurement steps in to confirm budget, contracts, and compliance. They may never use the product, but nothing gets signed without them.

These aren't theoretical archetypes. They're the exact roles Anteriad uses to build and activate Buying Group Profiles, mapping real titles and functions to the people who actually drive purchase decisions at your target accounts.

But identifying the group is only the starting point. Buying groups shift. People leave, roles change, new stakeholders gain influence mid-cycle. The map you build today has a shelf life, and that shelf life is shorter than most marketers expect.

The "network effect" of a buying group means that if your data is wrong for even two or three key stakeholders, the entire account strategy can go off track. These roles don't operate in isolation. When a Champion leaves, the internal momentum they built leaves with them. When a new Decision Maker steps in, the criteria that were already settled can get reopened. When an Influencer changes, the risks they were comfortable with may no longer be off the table. One change anywhere in the group creates a ripple. That's why accuracy across the entire buying group matters, not just the contacts you're actively working.



The Cost of Data Decay

At Anteriad, we see meaningful contact and role changes occurring within months, not quarters or years. Our B2B Data Solutions team, which builds and manages some of the largest B2B data sets in the industry, observes that data degrades at a rate of 2-5% per month on average. This isn't a sudden failure; it's an erosion. The data fails in layers, where role relevance and buying group alignment deteriorate long before an email address actually bounces.

In high-growth industries like tech and marketing, our team sees an even more pronounced churn rate: **25-40% of buying group members can change within just six months.**

Consider a marketing team targeting a mid-market tech company. Their campaign is reaching the VP of IT and the director of operations, both legitimate stakeholders. But their data doesn't show that a new CFO joined three months ago and has since taken ownership of the vendor evaluation. That deal stalls. Not because the product was wrong. Because the buying group had changed and the marketing program hadn't.

This isn't an edge case. It's the default state of most buying groups. Here's what it looks like in practice:

- **The Vanishing Champion:** Your internal advocate leaves the company, leaving your deal without a voice.
- **The Silent Shift:** Decision-making authority moves to a new hire or a promoted colleague, but your marketing continues to target the former seat-holder.
- **The Internal Migration:** People move between departments. Tracking internal movement is often more important than tracking employer changes, as a shift in responsibility immediately alters a person's influence on the buying group.

The antidote isn't a better list. It's a different relationship with data: one that treats buying group intelligence as something you maintain continuously, not something you set up once and trust.

Not all roles change at the same rate. When building your data strategy, pay extra attention to these three high-volatility functions:

1

Marketing

(Demand Gen, Growth, RevOps)

Characterized by rapid team reorgs, title inflation, and constant tooling shifts.

2

Sales & Revenue

(SDRs, AEs, Sales Ops)

These performance-based roles have high turnover rates, leading to frequent territory and coverage changes.

3

Technology & Engineering

(DevOps, Cloud Architects, Security)

Characterized by rapid team reorgs, title inflation, and constant tooling shifts.



Managing the Buying Group as a System

Static assumptions drive waste. Treat buying groups as living systems because that's exactly what they are. To stay ahead of the change, monitor these five patterns:

- **Buying group volatility:** How frequently does the composition change? (30, 60, or 90 days)
- **Role stability:** How often do individual titles shift within the group?
- **Core composition:** Which titles are consistently involved, and which "surprise" titles (like Legal or Security) frequently appear?
- **Industry variations:** Does a manufacturing buying group look different than one in healthcare?
- **Geographic patterns:** How do group sizes vary by region or country?

Buying groups also mean different things at different companies; B2B marketers must pick up on these nuances to fine-tune their approach with each target account.

Hey, DTC Marketers!

If your brand also sells to businesses (think corporate gifts, branded merchandise, bulk orders, employee programs) your buying group looks nothing like your consumer audience.

The person who wears your product and the person who buys it for the company are rarely the same person. The decision to place a corporate order typically runs through an HR lead, an office manager, or a procurement contact. These are people who care about vendor reliability, pricing terms, and fulfillment consistency, not the consumer story that built your brand.

That's a different buying group with different priorities and a different decision process. Mapping it accurately and keeping that map current as contacts shift is the foundation of any B2B growth strategy that actually works.



Buying Groups in Action: A Tale of Two Industries

Consider two target accounts, one in healthcare technology, one in enterprise software. On the surface, both fit your ICP. Both have budget. Both have a stated need. But their buying groups look nothing alike.

In healthcare tech, the buying group is larger and more budget-complex. A technology purchase typically requires alignment across IT, clinical operations, legal, and procurement, making the Economic Buyer harder to pin down. A single stakeholder change in clinical leadership can reset the entire evaluation.

In enterprise software, the group tends to be leaner and more performance-driven. The VP of IT and CFO carry significant weight and decisions move faster, but role volatility is high, particularly in growth-stage companies where reorgs are frequent.

Treating these accounts with the same buying group model, with the same stakeholder map, messaging cadence, and volatility assumptions, means you're optimized for one and misaligned with the other. Monitoring group composition by industry is how you avoid showing up to the wrong conversation with the wrong message.

Hey, Healthcare Marketers!

Not all healthcare tech deals are built the same. The composition of your buying group shifts significantly depending on the solution type:

Clinical Software / Health IT Platforms: Expect a broad group: IT, clinical operations, compliance, and nursing leadership all have a seat at the table. HIPAA and interoperability requirements mean regulatory stakeholders often appear earlier than you'd expect.

Healthcare Data & Analytics: The group can look very different deal to deal. Watch for shifts in the use case (clinical quality vs. revenue cycle vs. operations) — they signal which stakeholders will gain influence mid-cycle.

Medical Device & Hardware: Procurement and Legal carry significant weight, especially as deals mature. Don't underestimate how late-stage role changes in these functions can stall or reset a deal.

Tap Into Intent and Multi-Dimensional Data

Maintaining an accurate picture of each stakeholder requires access to high-quality, frequently updated data. While firmographics tell you who they are, intent data tells you what they are doing right now.

Buying groups expand and contract as deals mature. A CFO may not be involved in the first month but becomes the primary gatekeeper in month four. **That's what makes intent data so valuable and so perishable. Signals from last quarter tell you where a buying group was. Fresh signals tell you where they are now.**

Interest spikes and shifts by persona and topic must be monitored continually. Signals from last quarter are often unreliable indicators of today's needs.





Intent Is Your Early Warning System

Buying groups don't announce themselves.
They research. They compare. They signal.

Quick tips to amp up your buying group approach:

- Prioritize accounts with multi-stakeholder intent spikes
- Align messaging to what the group is actively researching
- Equip sales with context, not cold outreach
- Shift spend to accounts already showing momentum
- Engage early, before the shortlist is set

Turn buying signals into revenue opportunities with Anteriad Intent Data. Uncover real-time research behavior across the digital ecosystem and spot high-value accounts while they're in-market.

Precision intent, scored and delivered to drive smarter targeting, sharper campaigns, and faster pipeline impact.

11K+
topics

50B
weekly signals

20M+
locations

1-100 Intent Score Scale

Let Data Drive the Buying Group Strategy

Buying group marketing works when the data behind it does. When your stakeholder map is accurate and current, you stop guessing which accounts are worth prioritizing. You stop sending the right message to the wrong person. And you walk into pipeline reviews with numbers you can actually defend — because your targeting reflected the real decision-making structure, not an outdated org chart.

The shift isn't just tactical. It changes what you can promise to leadership, and what you can deliver.

Hey, Agency Marketers!

Buying group intelligence isn't just for your clients — it's also a competitive advantage for your agency:

Win more pitches: Showing that your campaigns reach every stakeholder in the decision — not just the obvious titles — is a powerful differentiator.

Prove impact across the group: Single-contact reporting undersells your work. Buying group coverage gives you a richer, more compelling performance story.

Stay ahead of client-side change: Stakeholder turnover at target accounts affects campaign performance. Fresh buying group data keeps your programs on target as contacts shift.



Buying groups don't sit still—and neither should your strategy.

Anteriad's AI-Driven Buying Group Profiles reveal the real decision network behind every deal. Inside the Anteriad Marketing Cloud, our AI identifies the right stakeholders, adapts to changing roles, and fuels smarter segmentation. But identification is only the starting point. Anteriad connects data to execution: activating buying groups across every channel, surfacing members who engaged but weren't originally on your radar, and building the kind of pipeline visibility that compounds with every campaign.

A decorative graphic featuring several colorful starburst fireworks in purple, yellow, and pink, and several orange streamers with curly patterns, all set against a dark background.

Get Started



¹ Gartner Sales Survey Finds 67% of B2B Buyers Prefer a Rep-Free Experience, March 2026

<https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-03-09-gartner-sales-survey-finds-67-percent-of-b2b-buyers-prefer-a-rep-free-experience>

² Forrester's 2026 Buyer Insights: GenAI Is Upending B2B Buying As Leaders Face Mounting Pressure To Justify Every Dollar Spent

<https://www.forrester.com/press-newsroom/forrester-2026-the-state-of-business-buying/>