

OUTLOOK 2024

KEY STRATEGIES TO EMPOWER GROWTH
IN TIMES OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

HOW TO TACKLE BUYER
SCRUTINY WITH DEMAND

2024 is set to be a year of optimistically mild expectations. Buyers are likely to remain scrutinous yet obligated to purchase solutions that deliver ROI and enable better tech stack integration and alignment between teams.

In a modest growth market, engaging buyers with outreach that effectively speaks to their unique concerns is key to setting a brand apart and establishing trust. Futureproofing with demand generation as well as lead nurturing strategies that keep your brand top of mind until buyers are ready to purchase will also be critical for successful strategies in 2024.

In this article, we discuss *the defensive buyer of 2024* and include a 5-step playbook on how to drive quality engagement that fuels your performance metrics in a year of modest growth and evolving buyer expectations and behavior.

THE RISE OF THE DEFENSIVE BUYER

After a year of economic uncertainty, buyers in the second half of 2023 shifted to a defensive position, one which is most likely to endure in 2024—thereby marking it a year of [“modest” growth and expectations](#) (Forrester, 2023).



“This forecast indicates that buyers will spend more than previously—an optimistic forecast as tech layoffs decrease. Even so, continuing buyer scrutiny sets solutions that are revenue-focused and support overall organizational objectives as a top priority. This means that the always-present pressure to prove ROI remains and will continue to be a powerful driver of B2B purchases in 2024.”



— **Alexander Kesler**,
Founder and CEO

The increasing number of younger decision makers in buying committees means that the preferences of millennials and Gen Z decision makers will influence purchases. Indeed, cohorts of these generations already make up [66% of global senior B2B buyers](#) (Forrester, 2022).

The rise of these buyers also fuels the increase of cloud purchases, given the seamless nature of low-code/no-code solutions that allow decision makers to effectively “buy at their own pace,” (especially millennials and Gen Z according to the same [Forrester 2023 guide](#)).

Finally, the emphasis on accelerated AI spending places these younger buying committees at the center of the arguably biggest purchase decisions of this century thus far.

KEY OBJECTIONS OF BUYERS IN 2024

Below is a grid of common buyer objections likely to remain prevalent in 2024, along with their respective solutions organizations must address in order to gain momentum.



BUYER 1

Marketing Operations
Manager/Director

Pain point

“My budget is limited and I need to ensure the functionality of this solution with my teams”

Solution

Ensure a streamlined product that will not bloat tech stacks and offer tiered pricing alongside referral programs.

BUYER 2

Marketing Operations,
C-Suite

“I am concerned about the risks of this purchase”

Showcase proof of functionality and results to ease common “fears of messing up.”

BUYER 3

Marketing Managers/
Directors, C-Suite

“How can I ensure this solution will deliver ROI?”

Demonstrate concrete evidence of revenue attainment/influence with custom-tailored case studies.

BUYER 4

Marketing Managers/
Directors, C-Suite

“How do you measure up against competitors?”

Share tangible results and benchmarks of your solutions against competitors in your market.

BUYER 5

Marketing Operations,
Managers/Directors/C-Suite

“Is your solution up-to-date and AI powered?”

Facilitate AI integration and collaborate with leaders in your industry.

PLAYBOOK TO COMBAT BUYER SCRUTINY IN 2024: 5 COMMON PAIN POINTS

This playbook includes strategies to address the most common pain points of buyers in 2024, which can also inform future approaches as the market shifts and challenges evolve.



#1 Limited budgets, ensuring performance

Given the pressure on buyers to demonstrate performance and the subsequent fear of messing up, ensuring a perfect fit and feasibility is likely to remain a common pain point for buyers. In this scenario, organizations must showcase compelling evidence of their solution's performance.

Leveraging content, such as case studies, that demonstrates its success with companies that have a similar tech stack, challenges, and organizational structure to those being targeted can be a powerful tactic.

Implementing ABX best practices can also be beneficial in tailoring lead nurturing cadences that seamlessly build trust in the viability of solutions, showcasing its feasibility and particular benefits over time in regards to the client's technology, processes, and teams.

4 tactics to address this objection

- **Launch a [lead nurturing](#) campaign with touchpoints centered on different benefits** of your solution. This should have a focus on the functionality of the product in line with key aspects and needs of their organization (for example, a data analytics dashboard that integrates with their sales outreach tool).
- **Create a custom-tailored product demo** to showcase the integration of your solution (if possible, this can be a pre-recorded video or showcased via a SaaS onboarding tool).
- **Offer a free trial or discounted test period** to resolve objections and demonstrate results. This will facilitate their buying committee's buy-in of your solution and address tech stack/integration concerns.



Of note, this PLG motion has become a particular favorite with many SaaS solutions vying for limited budgets.

- **Develop tiered pricing per persona and referral programs** to cater to the budget they have available, as well as encourage current clients to generate demand with incentivized campaigns.




#2 Concerned with risks of the purchase

In this scenario, the buyer is concerned about making a critical mistake that will cost them precious budget, take away limited resources, or worse, jeopardize their career.

As such, the mistake can be anything that negatively impacts the organization from a technical point of view or regarding performance (not delivering on ROI and KPIs). Thus, understanding buyers' concerns and the challenges they face within their organization is key to crafting messages that address this objection. Leveraging lead intelligence and market segmentation data such as psychographics can be a key way to inform your approach.

5 tactics to address this objection

- **Implement long-term nurture strategies by asking questions and addressing common pain points:** Informed by audience research, ask questions via omnichannel nurture, sales outreach, or market surveys; collect intelligence on buyer concerns; and strategize ways to counter them. If the prospect is unresponsive, consider pausing outreach before restarting nurture with touchpoints that address common pain points of their industry segment.
- **Create engaging content that details the solution:** A long-form asset, such as a playbook or webinar, featuring the minds behind the solution can increase its credibility and address objections regarding its quality and usage. This is a particularly effective tactic early in the sales cycle as two out of five millennial buyers will demand access to B2B product experts according to [Forrester 2024 predictions](#). Consider repurposing content into a variety of formats to meet the strengths of different channels in your marketing mix, as well as the preferences of your target buyers.
- **Craft seamless buyer's journeys:** Meet expectations by providing buyers with a high-value, seamless, and personalized experience that spans the entirety of their engagement with you. This will help to address concerns by establishing credibility while also supporting retention by building stronger relationships with buyers across their lifecycle with your brand. Although certain elements of these experiences should be automated to free up capacity, it is important not to prescribe journeys. For experiences to be effective, each buyer must be treated as unique, with journeys remaining flexible enough for them to navigate as they wish, across the channels and touchpoints they prefer. [Leverage lead intelligence](#) to fuel optimizations to your adaptive buyer's journeys.
- **Develop a free tool:** Launch a free tool that facilitates a challenge that your prospective buyers face in their work, and highlights the type of outcomes they can expect your brand to deliver. This tactic is more efficient if the tool can be paired with your solution to enable better results.

 *When you give away something for free, it must be of value to users, and better yet something they are used to paying for.*
- **Book a demo or call to discuss final concerns:** Rather than a sales-oriented call, book a session to explore and resolve remaining concerns. If the prospect is unwilling to schedule a call, consider recording a demo or a step-by-step guide of your solution that can be shared via nurturing sequences.



#3 Commitment to ROI

In this scenario, prospective buyers are seeking reassurance that their investment will drive the outcomes they need to reach their performance goals. Although this is an ever-present buyer concern, tightened budgets in 2024 create further pressure on buyers to make the right purchase decision, and therefore a greater emphasis on the importance of achieving optimum returns on their investment.

Therefore, the key is to showcase concrete evidence of ROI from respected peers in the same industry as target buyers. This is where custom-tailored case studies, which highlight a similar set of challenges to those that prospects are facing, are essential for proving the ROI possible with your solution. Consider compiling multiple case studies and the most relevant information in an asset for buyers.

Testimonials as well as webinars on core topics further cement this proof, allowing the prospect to understand how your product or solution functions to deliver the ROI they expect.

4 tactics to address this objection

- **Compile your ROI data:** Gather the ROI data on your current clients, preferably of the prospect's same industry, to create a compelling report. These insights can then be leveraged to inform your content creation process and your sales outreach messaging.
- **Craft a case study:** Find a client in the same or similar industry and develop a case study focused on how the solution enabled ROI and the challenges that were resolved.
- **Create additional touchpoints:** Launch webinars, reports, datasheets, and more assets to showcase potential return on investment. When evaluating the set of content materials you need, remember to map your available content against gaps in your sales funnel and ideal customer profiles.



Writing content with an end goal in mind is always a preferred strategy.

- **Launch a brand evangelism program:** Build processes to guide and support clients in the post-purchase stage. Brand evangelists can provide valuable insights that can be utilized to craft content designed to address objections such as case studies, social proof, and datasheets that showcase verifiable ROI outcomes.



#4 Performance against competitors

This objection establishes the need to benchmark your solution against the competition and prove that your offering delivers the highest return. Similar to the ROI objection, the solution requires tangible results on the business growth of your clients, as well as any other critical performance metrics that demonstrate the unique value you bring to your prospects.

4 tactics to address this objection

- **Create competitor comparison reports/datasheets:** Benchmark your product against competitors on the features of most concern for your prospect. Scannable assets, such as short reports and datasheets are best suited to enable quick takeaways on your pros against competitors' cons, and are most valuable assets in competitor takeover campaigns.
- **Create a lead nurturing cadence across multiple channels:** Launch a cadence focused on the unique features of your solutions and how they can deliver better outcomes compared to competitors.
- **Leverage thought leaders and influencers:** Drive credibility by contacting notable figures in your niche to comment on your solution and its unique benefits to clients. This can be a valuable touchpoint that can move prospects toward a sales conversation.
- **Drive long-term brand awareness:** Leverage partnerships to [promote key content pieces](#) that showcase your brand to a greater share of your audience and build interest over time in your solutions.





#5 Leveraging AI and futureproofing

The significance of AI has considerably heightened the attention and decision-making timeframe for buyers since the introduction of next-generation AI solutions like [ChatGPT](#) in late 2022. This has spurred increased interest in utilizing these solutions to expedite and amplify the production of content and advertising materials, among various other elements currently under assessment.

“Buyers who are inquisitive when it comes to AI-powered solutions wish to ensure easy integration with other technologies, as well as check that they are up to date. The already widespread prevalence of AI in the tech stack means products that integrate seamlessly with genAI gain a competitive advantage, as well as those that utilize AI to analyze outcomes at scale and fast-track data reporting.”



— **Andrew Sambrook**,
Global SVP of Demand Generation

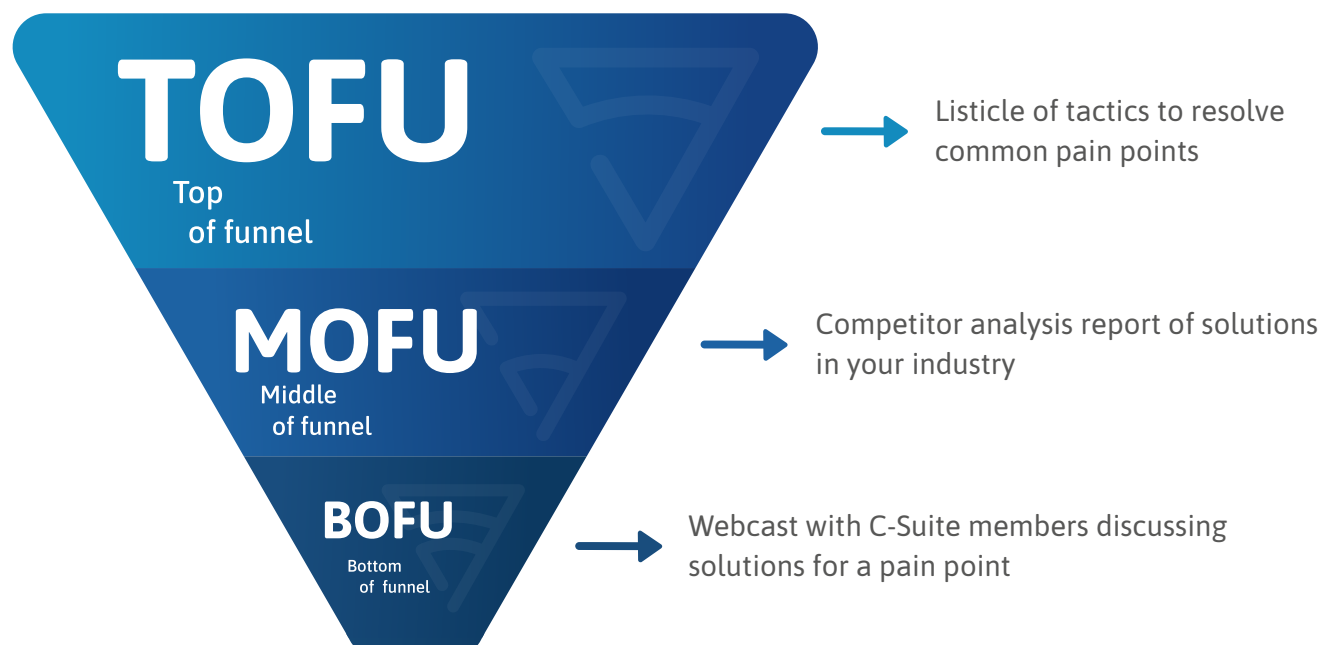
4 tactics to address this objection

- **Ensure integration with AI tools:** [ChatGPT and other AI solutions have APIs](#), which allow integration between your platforms and their service. If applicable, enabling built-in AI through these products in your solutions allows your clients to leverage AI in a product you fully direct (which enables behavioral data collection). The prevalence and strategic approach of AI-driven solutions in marketing makes this a priority to meet buyer expectations and allow for integration with AI tools that already feature in their tech stack.
- **Collaborate with already existing AI solutions in your industry:** If an organization in your niche already offers an AI solution of value to your audience, partnerships or co-marketing efforts can be beneficial to both parties in enabling your end clients with AI.
- **Develop content to pair your solutions with AI for better outcomes:** Guides, how-to's, and other educational assets that showcase how AI can be utilized alongside your product or solution to streamline tasks can be highly beneficial in showcasing your knowledge and expertise with AI.
- **Book a call with a member of staff knowledgeable on AI:** Book a call with the prospect led by a member of your team who is well-versed in AI and can showcase its compatibility with your solution. This can address any remaining questions while securing credibility by demonstrating how your brand is at the forefront of technological advancements.

Playbook wrap-up: the importance of activating multiple strategies

Buyers will often present a combination of multiple pain points, requiring you to implement agile strategies to address them in a seamless and engaging manner. Below are key takeaways to consider when leveraging the tactics above to ensure consistency and the best outcomes for your 2024 goals:

- **Launch lead nurturing to encourage movement down the sales funnel:** Develop omnichannel cadences with assets tailored to evolving pain points for each stage of the funnel (top, middle, and bottom). This will keep your brand top of mind until buyers are ready to commit to making a purchase, as well as enable you to track lead behavior.



[Learn best practices to encourage lead progression from the MOFU to BOFU stage](#) →

- **Strike partnerships:** Seek out companies in your industry that can scale your outreach to qualified audiences, as well as add value to your offerings (such as demand generation, AI integration).
- **Showcase expertise to qualified leads in a timely manner:** Especially for bottom of funnel leads, make sure to promote webcasts, case studies, and have team members available to elucidate questions via a sales call, email, or online chat.

HOW TO INFORM YOUR DEMAND GENERATION STRATEGIES WITH DATA

Engaging buyers in a year of modest growth requires exceeding expectations. This means that positioning your solution as one that can genuinely surpass outcomes (in a way that is honest and transparent) will be crucial to engage buyers.

However, this is easier said than done, as strategies also need to remain agile ahead of evolving trends. Any market shifts can signal changes in buyer attitudes that you must cater to in your marketing and sales outreach. Therefore, collecting data on evolving trends and buyer behavior is paramount to ensure the relevance of your solutions.

Here are some actionable ways to inform your demand generation strategies with data to futureproof your solutions in 2024:

Collect lead intelligence

[Lead intelligence](#), a compilation of data points on your prospective buyers, is crucial for futureproofing your approach in 2024. Based on a foundation of testing and iterative optimizations, lead intelligence allows your organization to form a clear picture of evolving buyer behavior and the ways to address their new, changing concerns.

By building up your first lead intelligence dataset, you can then track performance per quarter, and make timely adjustments as required to inform pivots and new strategies for engaging your audiences in 2024.

Ideally, the demand tactics from the playbook above should be informed by a lead intelligence dataset you build beforehand to guarantee better accuracy.

[Learn how to drive outcomes with lead intelligence with 4 real-world examples](#) →



2 Leverage social listening and establish partnerships with thought leaders

Social listening is a method to gauge digital conversations in your industry and about your brand, as well as to keep track of pain points in the space and identify trends.

By following these conversations with sentiment analysis tools, you can have a more accurate view of the topics that concern your buyers, and craft content that touches upon these themes. This can also inform sales messaging for higher-performing outreach and more engaging touchpoints.

Thought leaders allow you to gain a deeper understanding of these conversations, as well as keep track of what happens “behind the scenes” in your niche, allowing you to stay ahead of trends. This can also help you anticipate notable updates in the space being planned by competitors.

[Discover 10 best practices for engaging your buyers on social media](#) →

3 Survey your audience and clients

“Surveying your audience is crucial for gaining the most timely and relevant insights on your buyers’ concerns. By launching surveys with questions on purchase priorities, budgets, and organizational challenges, you can evaluate the most pertinent objections to address in your campaigns in 2024 and engage your buyers better.”



— **Andrew Sambrook**,
Global SVP of Demand Generation

Clients are particularly valuable as sources of real-world feedback on your products or solutions, and can help inform updates to drive better outcomes for themselves and your future buyers. Of course, it also helps reduce churn by supporting regular updates that can improve client satisfaction.

Lastly, surveys are paramount for uncovering details on the buyers' journeys of your existing clients, including how they discovered your solutions and the challenges that your teams addressed. Keep in mind, however, that you may require an incentivization strategy, such as gifting, to encourage participation in surveys and [foster brand loyalty](#).

[Learn 7 ways to drive actionable insights from B2B surveys](#) →

4 Modest growth, honest promises

In a time of modest growth, hyperbolic language and promise of exceptional ROI & off-the-charts results can seem ingenuine. Therefore, adopting an organization-wide approach to highlight what your solution delivers and its potential outcomes honestly can be empowering for defensive and scrutinous buyers who are often seeking lowest-risk options.

An optimal way of delivering this message is through your business leaders, who can comment on the challenges of the space and the possible approaches your audience should adopt to find success.

[Discover 3 steps to drive growth during economic uncertainty](#) →

Key takeaways

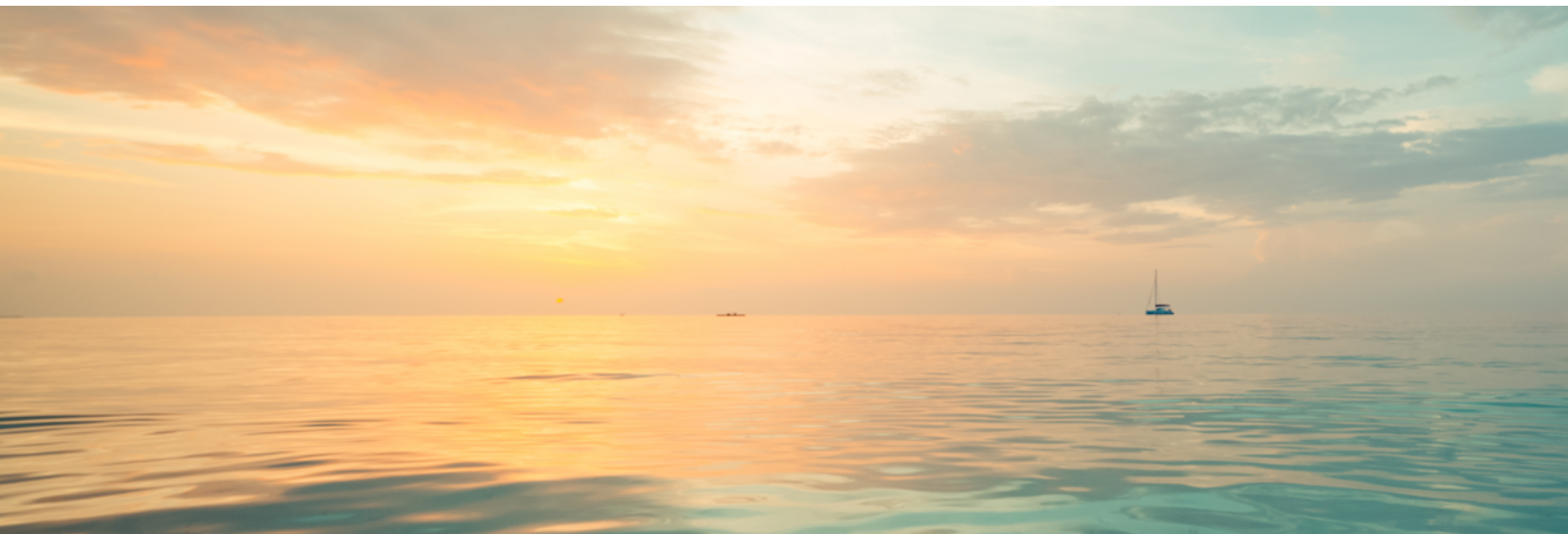
When planning your strategies for 2024, ensure that your teams are mindful of these key takeaways:

- **Research and address the challenges of defensive buyers:** In 2024, getting to know what the defensive buyers in your niche are concerned about will be crucial for driving conversions. Survey your market, engage clients, and field prospective buyers before launching your long-term nurture strategies and other outreach efforts.
- **Futureproof with honesty to drive credibility:** In times of modest growth, it is paramount to establish a pipeline of sales opportunities. Be honest about the possible outcomes of your solution and you will be rewarded with the trust of your prospects for when they are ready to buy.
- **Uncover ROI with relevant social proof:** Gain social proof of relevance to the prospect's industry and their unique set of challenges, to ensure that the pain points they face are adequately addressed in your content.

DRIVE DEMAND FROM YOUR TARGET BUYERS

Plan your next demand generation strategy with the support of our demand experts, who are available 24/5 to craft strategies that exceed your expectations in 2024 and beyond.

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