



HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCH A NEW B2B PRODUCT

HUDSON
FUSION

Congratulations! You're officially ready to expand your product line or service offerings, one of the most effective ways to grow your business and expand your clientele. The only question left to ask is **how to bring it to market**.

For B2B companies, launching a new product or service is no small feat. It's important to take the time to plan out the launch of your new offering one step at a time. That being said, the hard part is over—your new product or service is officially finalized—and the fun is just beginning.

In order to avoid wasting time and effort on content that doesn't quite hit the mark, you need an effective content marketing strategy in place that pushes you towards your ultimate goal: **attracting qualified leads**.

Before we get into the complete guide to launching a new B2B product or service, let's take a step back to see [what goes into the most successful product launches](#):



Essentially, if you're working together, doing your research, and sticking to an organized strategy, you're bound to come out on top.

Ready to dive in? Here's how to position your business for success when launching a new B2B product or service.

1. Buyer Personas: Get to Know Your Target Audience

Here's the beauty of launching a new product: You're opening up potential business opportunities to a wealth of new customers. Time to meet your next big buyer.

The strongest campaigns are fueled by deliberate, data-driven strategies—especially when launching a new product—and the most important part of said strategy is knowing who you're aiming for.

So, how can you get a greater understanding of your target audience? The best way to get to know your new potential clients is by developing [buyer personas](#).

Depending on your industry, you'll want to determine which factors are important to your customer's decision-making process. Based on your experience with current customers, and on who you'd like to target, here are a few pieces of information that will help you discover their needs and who they are:

- Their Relationship to Decision Makers
- Their Role in Their Company
- Preferred Social Platforms
- Wants & Needs for Their Business
- Industry Watering Holes
(we'll get into more on this later)
- Pain Points
- Reason for Contacting Your Company

HubSpot has a great [buyer persona building tool](#) you can use to get started. The tool can help you develop at least the foundations of an effective buyer persona, but if you're looking to take it to the next level (which we highly recommend), you'll want to do some more research.

Here are some additional sources to turn to when refining your buyer personas:

- Clients of Competitors
- Market Research
- Firmographic Details
- Demographic Details
- Job Descriptions
(LinkedIn is always a good place to start)

Now that you have an idea of who potential new customers are, what about your current clients?

New products mean new [upsell opportunities](#). Now's the time to start identifying who among your current clients shares the goals, challenges, or needs of your target buyers. When you introduce your new product to the world, you don't want your customers to miss out on the fun.

2. Competitor Research: Identify the Competition

Here's the downside of launching a new product: You're opening up your business to a slew of new competitors. That's okay—who doesn't love a little healthy competition?

In order to face them, it's important to know exactly who you're up against.

Start with a list of all of your current competitors. You may be launching a new product, but you're likely still operating in the same industry.

Chances are you have this list tucked somewhere in your file system (or brain space), but when's the last time you updated it?

There are [countless tools you can use](#) to conduct comprehensive market research. With a brand new B2B product on the table, now's the time to re-evaluate the marketplace. You want to be able to enter the ring swinging.

Here's what you need to know about your competitors:

- Company Names & Affiliates
- Geographic Location
- Web Presence
- Advertising Strategies
- SEO/Keyword Standing
- Leadership Team Members
- Target Customers
- Product & Service Offerings
- Unique Selling Propositions (USPs)
- Weaknesses

The list can vary according to your industry, so you may find you need additional details for your particular competitors.

Our advice? When it comes to competitive analysis, less is *never* more.

3. Industry Watering Holes: Meet Your Customers Where They Are

Identifying your target buyers is only half the battle. Now that you know who they are, you need to know *where* they are.

Consider the idiom “He could sell wood to a forest.” Chances are, if you’re marketing wood to a forest, you haven’t done enough market research to see who needs your product—let alone where they operate.

Here at Hudson Fusion, we talk about “industry watering holes” a lot—a *lot*. You’d think our clients were all operating in the Sahara. However, watering holes are more than desert oases.

“Industry watering hole” is marketing slang for
“where your customers look for information.”

To find where your right-fit customers are, you’ll need to answer the following questions:

- How do they want to purchase your product or service?
- Where do they want to purchase your product or service?
- What information do they need to inform their purchase?
- Do you provide them with that information?
- How do they conduct their research?
- Where do they conduct their research?
- What tradeshows or conferences may they be interested in?
- What methods of communication do they prefer?
- What topics are they interested in?
- What keywords do they use when researching solutions online?
- What other businesses do they work with?

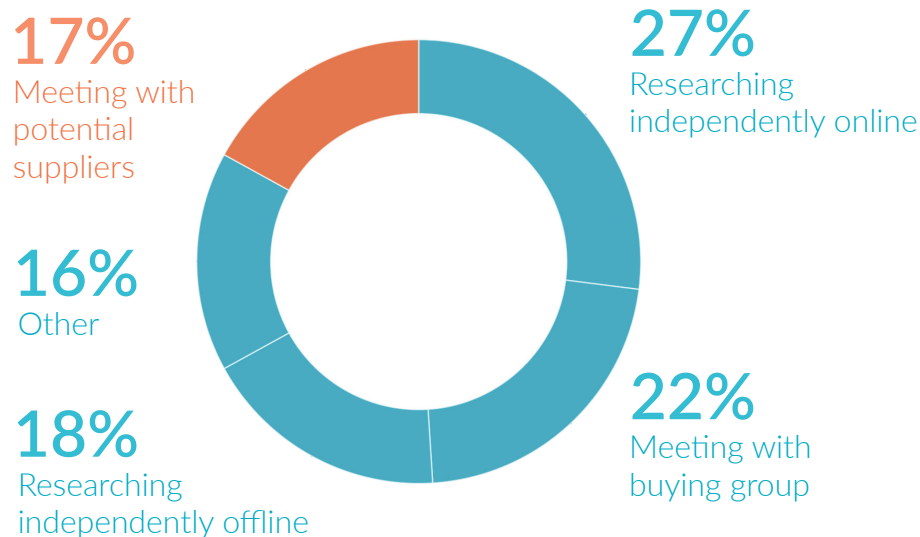
Determining where, when, and how potential customers would stumble across your product is important. Understanding their purchasing behavior is a fundamental part of the launch process.

That being said, here are a few fun B2B lead generation facts for you!

DID YOU KNOW...

- ...that word of mouth still dominates lead generation for B2B? In a recent survey, an astounding [62% of B2B companies](#) listed word of mouth as their primary sales acquisition channel.
- ...that B2B buyers are spending more time researching than ever before? In fact, [45% of B2B buyers stated](#) that they “are spending more time researching purchases compared to last year.”
- ...that more team members are getting involved in the purchasing process? In 2015, an average of 5.4 people were involved in B2B solutions purchases versus [6.8 people in 2017](#).
- ...that your next buyer will likely utilize digital channels throughout the entire buying process? Believe it or not, [83% of B2B customers accessed](#) digital channels even in the late purchasing stages.

Distribution of buying groups' time by key buying activities



Source: [Gartner](#)

4. Unique Value Proposition (UVP): Focus on What Makes You Stand Out

Now that you know exactly who you're selling to—and where to find them—you need to nail down exactly why they should want to go with you in lieu of a competitor.

So, what makes you stand out from the competition?

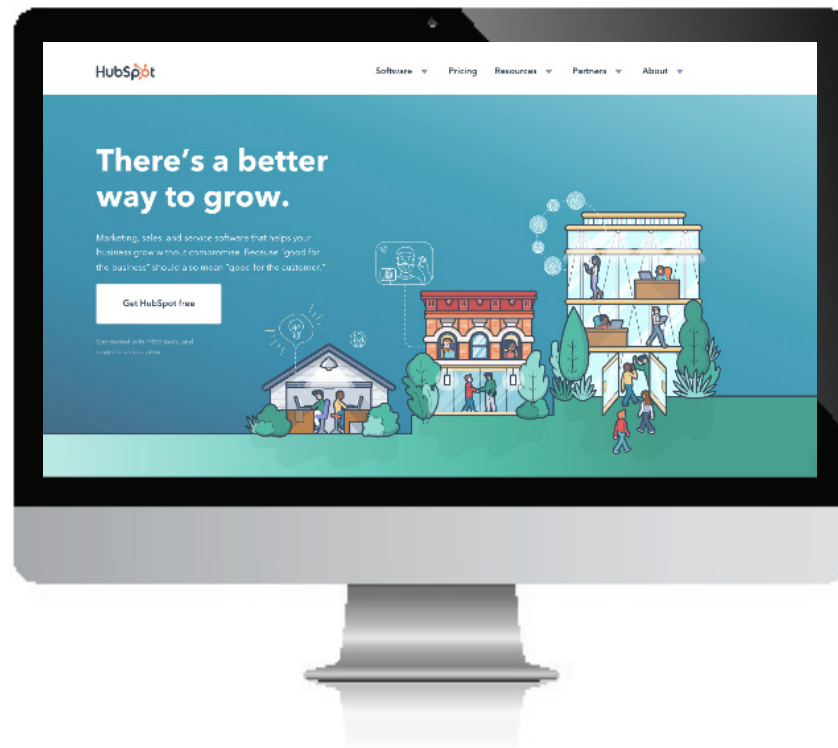
There may be dozens—if not hundreds—of competitors offering comparable products in your niche, but it's impossible for two businesses to offer exactly the same service experience.

You need to be able to sum up your Unique Selling Propositions (USPs) in succinct, compelling messaging to help give your product launch that extra *oomph*. Here's how to nail down your "it" factor:

1. **List your top three benefits.** Take the elements of your product that will be most beneficial to your target audience and start from there.
2. **List all of the things that make your product unique.** Whether it's your brand, your team, or your service package, there are inevitably elements of your new product that stand out from your competitors.
3. **List the solutions your product provides.** When we talk about any kind of marketing messaging, we want to be able to target specific pain points that your products or services address for right-fit buyers.
4. **Combine each of the three elements into engaging, hard-hitting messaging.** This is no easy feat, but you want to try to sum up the sentiments you've listed out into a single sentence. If you can't cram them into one sentence, don't try to force a round peg into a square hole. Try to come up with the most succinct way to bring all of those elements together.

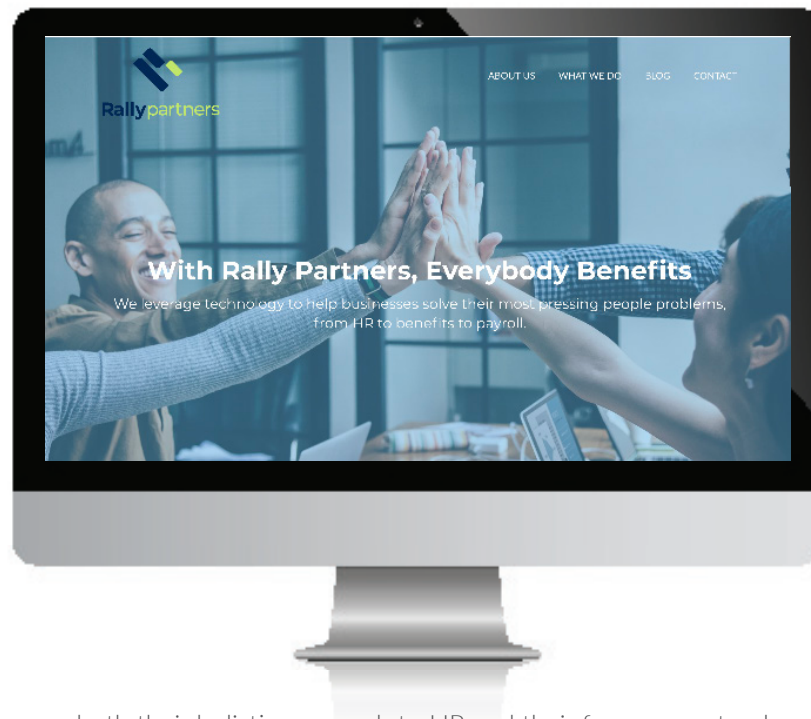
This may be the most difficult stage of the entire launch process. There's a reason why a lot of [SMBs turn to a marketing agency](#) to help them establish these all-important brand assets: The experts know what they're doing.

So, what's an example of a really great UVP? Take HubSpot for example:



They manage to sum up their benefits, USPs, and solutions in a simple sentiment: that *there's a better way to grow*.

Here's another B2B example for you. Rally Partners, a full-service HR support firm (and full disclosure, one of our clients), has a particularly impactful UVP:



They manage to sum up both their holistic approach to HR and their focus on not only employers, but their employees. The messaging they use is consistent across their entire website, including each of their product offerings: Technology Solutions, Benefits, HR Support & Services, and Business Development Services.

Once you've developed your UVP for your new service, make sure it's aligned closely with your universal messaging. It's important to [establish a distinct brand voice](#) to get your business noticed.

5. Brand Assets: Building Up Your Marketing Collateral

Now that you know who you're speaking to, where they operate, and the message you want to convey, you're ready to start working on the building blocks of your launch strategy: your marketing collateral.

There are countless forms of collateral you can use for an effective product launch, but before you figure out which digital and printed assets you need, you have to establish where exactly you're planning to reach your audience.

You've already determined the industry watering holes you'll be targeting. From there, figure out what types of collateral will best serve each of those areas.

For example, if you're announcing the launch of your new service at an upcoming tradeshow, you may want the following:

- **Web Page:** This is arguably the only indisputable must for your launch campaign. If you're launching a new service, you'll need to include a web page on your website. The page should describe the service with clear user pathways directing visitors to set up a consultation, learn more, or access additional information to feed your nurturing efforts.

- **Sell Sheets:** Describe your company and the new service you plan on providing with clearly communicated contact information for those interested in inquiring. These could be your run-of-the-mill A4 PDFs, brochures, or rack cards.
- **Digital Ads:** Run paid ad campaigns in the run up to the tradeshow focusing on “an exciting announcement” you have to make on the day of.
- **Business Cards:** For the organic conversation-seekers, be sure to have clearly branded business cards with your contact info so they can reach out directly.
- **Blog Posts:** The same way you tease the launch of your new service in the paid ad campaign, you can double-down your efforts with altruistic content centered around the upcoming tradeshow and your “big announcement.”

That being said, we can’t emphasize enough that there are countless forms of collateral your marketing can take. This is just a sample set for a specific situation, but the list of potential assets is infinite depending on how creative your marketing team can be.

6. Launch Strategy: Schedule Where, When & How You’ll Introduce Your Service

You’ve set the stage for a successful launch, and now, all you have to do is execute it.

Unlike B2C product launches, you’re in much more control of your go-to-market date when you’re launching a new B2B service. Once you’ve solidified what your service entails, developed the tools/tactics you’ll use to provide it, and finalized the fine print in your service agreements, all you need to do is determine how—and when—you’ll introduce it to the world.

Here’s a starting timeline to help you get started:

- **Define Your Goals** When it comes to any marketing campaign, the best way to trace the finish line is by coming up with a set of SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, Time-Bound). HubSpot has a great, [free template to help you establish your own SMART goals](#).
- **Establish Your Buyer Personas** We already talked about how to do this, but remember this is one of the first and foremost steps in a successful B2B product launch campaign.
- **Conduct Competitor Research** Go back to Step 2 of this guide. You need to know the market you’re introducing your product to so you can guarantee an effective launch strategy.
- **Conduct Audience Research** Go back to Step 3 of this guide. Determine who your audience is in Step 1, then determine where they go and how they operate.
- **Develop Messaging** Step 4 will help you develop the messaging you’ll use throughout your launch campaign. Remember to focus on your UVP to make the most impact.

- **Identify Your Platforms** What kinds of platforms will you be promoting your product on? Using all of the research you've done, you'll need to figure out where and how you'll be promoting the launch of your new service. Whether you're attending an upcoming tradeshow, planning a paid PPC campaign, developing social media buzz, or utilizing any other marketing platform, you'll want each of your channels to be accounted for in your launch timeline.
- **Build Up Your Marketing Collateral** Once you establish what channels you'll be utilizing in your launch strategy, you can figure out what kind of collateral you'll need to fuel the fire. Whether you're working with [an in-house marketing team or an outsourced agency](#), make sure all of your marketing masters are aware of not only what assets need to be developed, but when, to meet your SMART goals.

If there's any advice we can give you before you get started, it's not to rush. Too many B2B launch campaigns fall flat due to poor planning, and there's no way you can promise successful execution if you don't put in the foundational work.

Worried about a failed product launch? Here are [five frequent, fatal flaws](#) you'll want to avoid:

PROBLEM: *Your business can't support rapid growth.*

HOW TO AVOID IT: Be sure to plan for a sudden spike in client sales.

PROBLEM: *Your product doesn't provide the quality you promised.*

HOW TO AVOID IT: Don't rush! Be sure you have all the means necessary to deliver your product at the highest quality on a consistent basis.

PROBLEM: *Your product isn't distinguished enough.*

HOW TO AVOID IT: Don't try to reinvent the wheel by breaking off a few spokes and calling it something it isn't. If you're launching a new product or service, make sure it's a distinctive offering that doesn't overlap with existing offerings.

PROBLEM: *Your new product is confusing for your target buyer.*

HOW TO AVOID IT: Build onto your UVP with an educational campaign explaining what it is, how to use it, and why it's worth investing in. You may be addressing a problem your buyer doesn't even realize they have yet.

PROBLEM: *You don't have the means to develop a successful launch campaign.*

HOW TO AVOID IT: Turn to the experts. Find [an agency that specializes in B2B marketing](#) to help you bring your product to market the right way.

No matter where you are in the process, it doesn't hurt to bounce a few ideas off of other professionals. Whether you're in the beginning of planning or you're deep in the pre-launch phase, we're here for you.

Schedule a time to talk with one of our marketing experts to see what we think. We love hearing about growing businesses, and we know exactly how to take that growth to the next level.

[I Want to Talk About My B2B Product Launch](#)