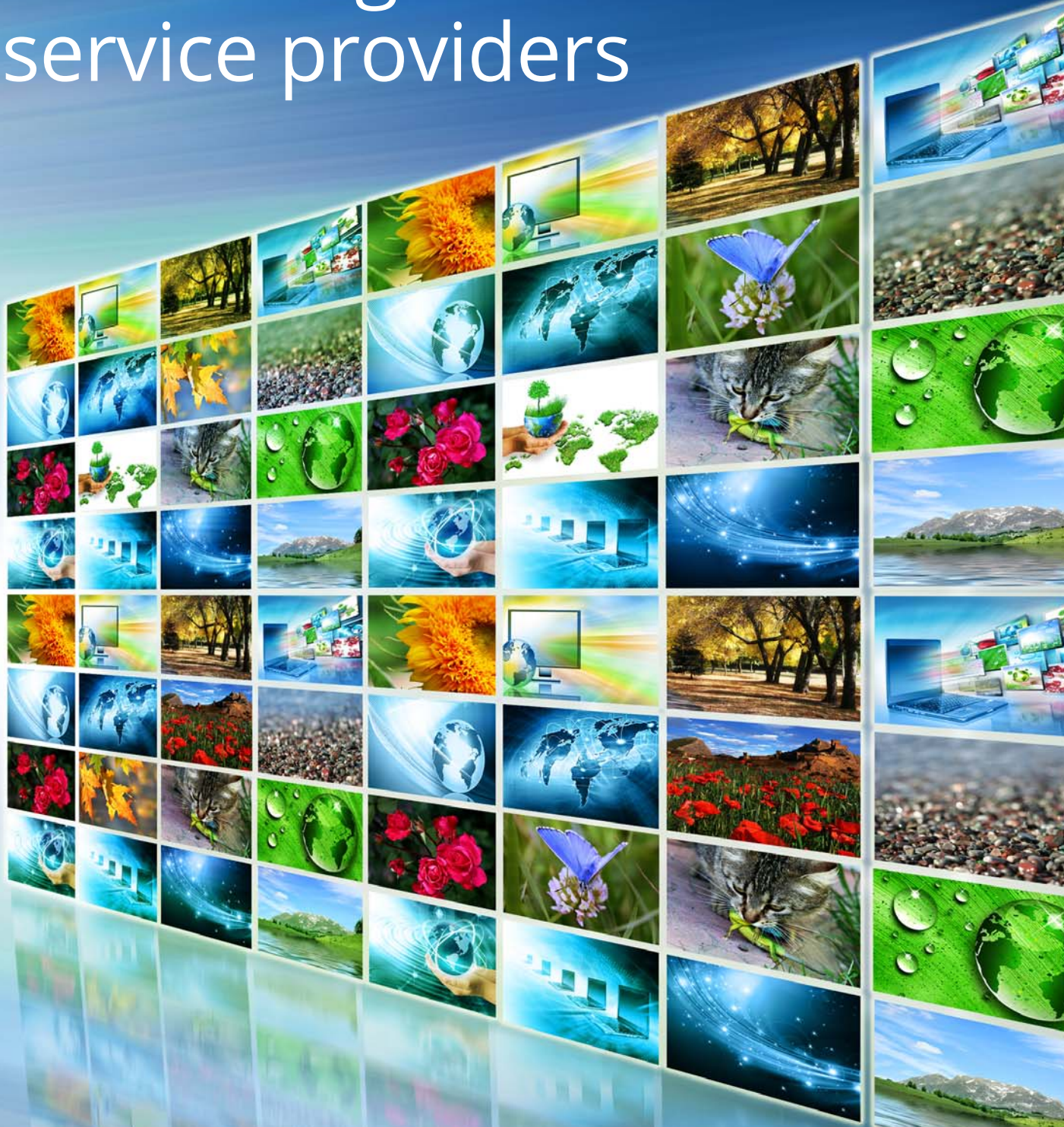


Successfully marketing and selling to broadcast service providers



ccgroup
outstanding communication

Successfully marketing and selling to broadcast service providers

1 The changing buying environment

It's becoming increasingly difficult for technology providers to effectively market and sell their wares to broadcast service providers. A number of factors have complicated the process to a point where sales and marketing success is no longer predictable; new technology needs, business models, and market consolidation all combine to create an incredibly noisy environment in which it is harder for vendors to be heard.

This short whitepaper analyses the results of a study conducted by CCgroup and Digital TV Europe into how broadcast service providers identify and purchase from technology vendors. Armed with that understanding, it explores how vendors can increase their sales and marketing effectiveness. Specifically, it analyses:

- how broadcast service providers longlist technology vendors;
- how broadcast service providers shortlist technology vendors;
- what finally tips the balance to make a purchase.

Critically, it shows how vendors can use this knowledge to influence the broadcast service provider technology purchasing process.



2 The vendor sales and marketing challenge

“Selling” has never been harder. To improve sales and marketing effectiveness, vendors must know more about how service providers identify technology partners, and how purchasing decisions are ultimately influenced. At a high level, analysis of CCgroup’s industry survey revealed that:

- to begin to identify and **longlist** technology partners, existing relationships and opportunities for direct contact and conversation (for example at trade shows or via industry analysts) have the greatest impact (see section 3.);
- to narrow longlists to **shortlists** for purchasing consideration, service providers seek verifiable proof points and references (for example customer case studies) and insightful, issues-driven content that helps frame the need to purchase (see section 4.);
- to finally convince service providers to **buy**, vendors must demonstrate an understanding of the service provider’s business, articulated through messaging and content that addresses their specific challenges and issues (see section 5.).

3 Longlisting: Establishing inclusion in RFPs

Winning service provider awareness of a vendor’s technology and services is the first step in achieving more effective sales.

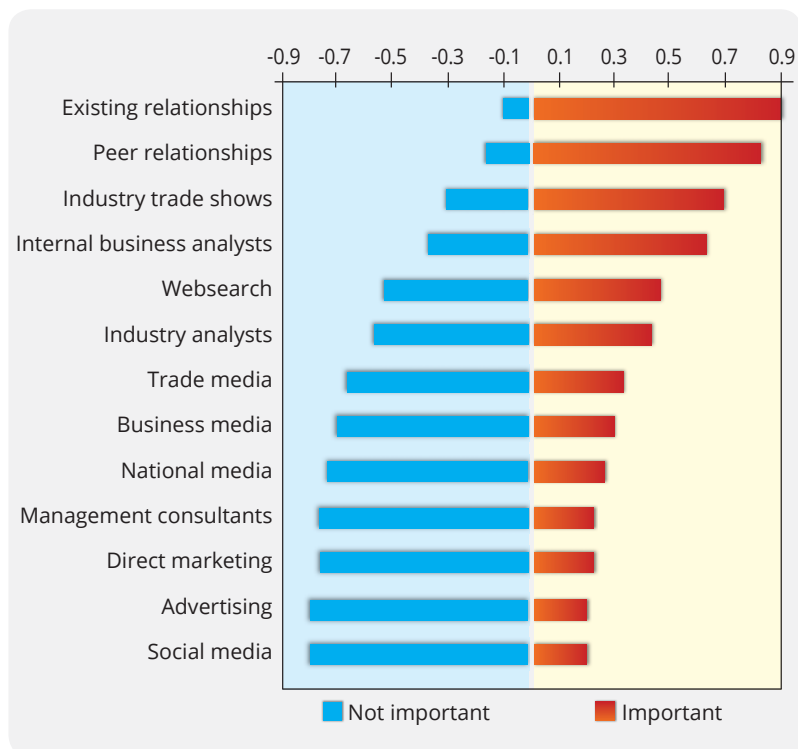


Fig 1. “When creating an INITIAL LONGLIST of potential suppliers, how much influence do each of the following channels have on your selection?”

“influencing one customer may well influence another”

Trusted sources; Up close and personal

It's clear that existing vendor relationships and relationships between service provider personnel are highly influential when creating a longlist of suppliers. These results strongly suggest that influencing one customer may well influence another. In this regard, customer reference and referral programmes are a vital tool in a vendors' armoury for spreading their influence across key customer groups. Trade shows and other industry events also feature highly. These key findings suggest that purchase decision makers relish the opportunity to talk face-to-face with potential suppliers, scrutinising and forming opinions on the value they may bring.

As such, service providers' own internal business analysts have a key role to play in helping purchasers build supplier longlists. Just two places on in our findings is the influence of external (industry) analysts. Combined, both groups wield considerable influence in identifying potential technology partners. Purchasers rely on the value that analysts can bring in helping filter the important from the irrelevant.

Both groups digest vast quantities of market data, news, analysis, and other content such as vendor whitepapers. While some of this content might arrive in long, academic, and dry reports and analysis, PR-driven content in the form of media articles, blogs, infographics, and so on can help analysts very quickly identify significant pieces of insight and encourage them to delve deeper.

Websearch and the media; Direct marketing, advertising, and social media

Websearch is not the most influential factor in longlisting, but it does have a role to play in the dissemination of content on which analysts rely. Here, “link-building” – creating links from multiple influential sources back to a vendor's own content and website – is critical. Publishing media play an important role here, particularly industry trade media which are often viewed by Google as independent, authoritative sources of information and insight. Media carrying referral links have a substantial impact on a vendor's search ranking. Much further down we find direct marketing, advertising, and social media. Service providers felt that these had little impact on their decision making as primary channels. While their primary influence may not be felt, they might be considered supporting channels for other activities and ought not be discarded entirely.

“...purchase decision makers relish the opportunity to talk face to face with potential suppliers”



4 Shortlisting: Making the cut

Whilst selecting the most impactful channels is important in establishing visibility and awareness for the longlisting process, what forms of content move customers along the consideration pipeline to shortlist potential technology partners?

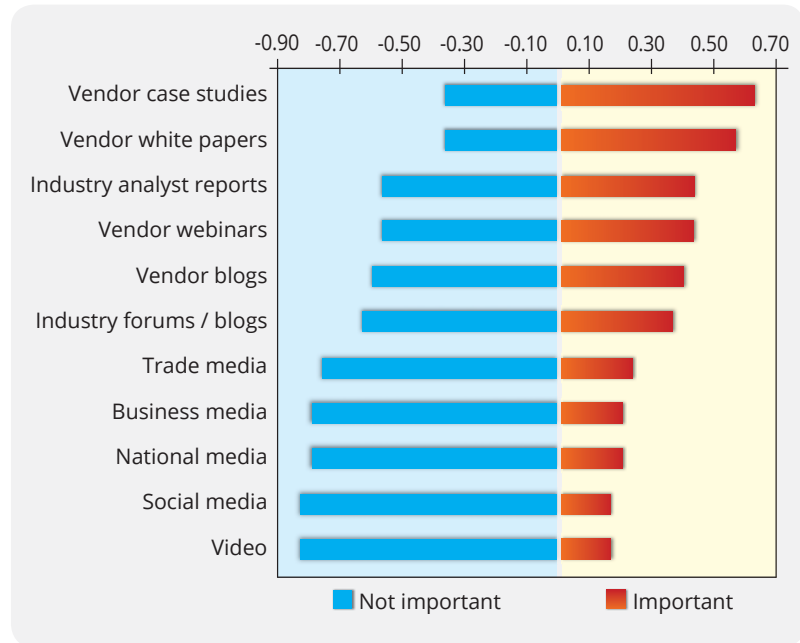


Fig 2. "When creating a SHORTLIST OF SUPPLIERS, how would you rate the following types of content for their level of importance?"

"Analyst relations is a key component of any successful broadcast and media technology marketing strategy"

Proof and substantiation

The top three responses tell us that "proof" of a vendor's claim is absolutely vital in becoming shortlisted. Here, customer references, such as case studies, award wins and other testimonials offer the greatest influence, backed by whitepapers from vendors which set out the market and business case for a specific technology. Reports from industry analysts serve much the same role as vendor whitepapers except they also provide independent validation, which is vital to building differentiation and demonstrating leadership. Analyst relations is therefore a key component of any successful broadcast and media technology marketing strategy.

An alternative way of working with analysts is to create custom research reports that develop a unique insight on a specific industry issue, problem or challenge. The resulting content can be used as foundational material for webinars and blogs, created and conducted independently, or in partnership with the analyst.



5 Decision time: The purchase influencers

While selection of channels and content are of course key considerations in the marketing and sales process, they are useless without the right messaging for purchase decision makers.

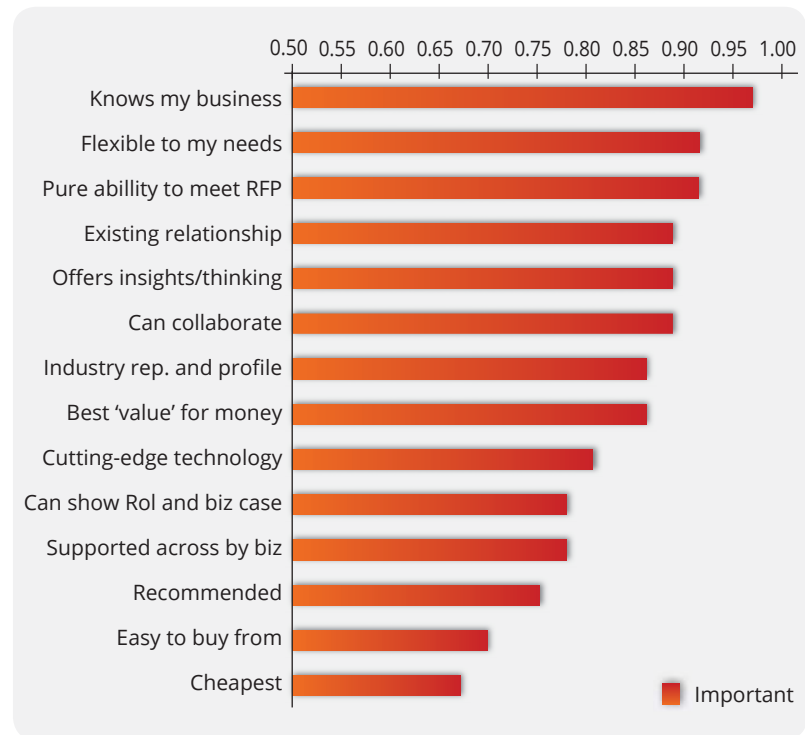


Fig 3. "When making your FINAL PURCHASING DECISION, how would you rate the following factors for their level of importance?"

"purchasing decision makers have a strong appetite for content"

Demonstrate understanding

The single most influential factor that triggers a purchasing decision is a vendor's ability to demonstrate an understanding of a service provider's business. This includes showing empathy for what a customer is trying to achieve and the barriers that must be overcome. Reflected further in the second most influential factor, 'flexibility' requires a vendor to not only identify unique customer challenges, but also adjust offerings and propositions accordingly. In both cases, purchasing decision makers have a strong appetite for content that can clearly articulate the depth and breadth of a vendor's understanding of the challenges at hand, and solutions that are specifically tailored to solving those challenges.



Tick the boxes

Where tailored thinking is required for the first two factors, the next focuses on a more traditional matter – meeting the RFP requirements. This is followed next with the all-important “existing relationships” factor again. In both cases, vendors should ensure that key messages related to RFPs, and appropriate references to previous successes, are baked into testimonials, case studies, whitepapers, and other influential material.

Insights and influence

In the middle we find reference to insights, industry reputation, and profile. We have previously discussed customer reliance on analysts for market insight, so vendors should bring insightful thinking to bear which provides market context for their customers alongside the positioning of technology solutions. This may be done through powerful, ‘big content’ – for example, research reports – but also by delivering insight in profile building environments such as speaking engagements at industry events and their allied award schemes. Factors such as price, return on investment, and an ability to demonstrate cutting edge technology do not play a role in influencing purchasing decisions *on their own*.

6 Conclusions

“it is critical that vendors have a very clear understanding of how their customers operate”

In our increasingly complex and ever-evolving technology and business landscape, vendors are finding it harder to be heard, and harder to sell. At the same time, broadcast service providers are increasingly reliant on independent, external sources for information and insight. Vendors stand to gain significantly if they can exploit this knowledge gap by providing powerful content to broadcast service providers through the right channels with the right messages.

But before they can do that effectively, it is critical that vendors have a very clear understanding of how their customers operate, what drives their businesses and what strategic goals they’re trying to achieve.

Influencing the longlisting, shortlisting, and decision cycles in the RFX process relies on a deep and thorough understanding of what customers need and expect, and needs the combined, synchronised efforts of a vendor’s marketing and sales teams. The sales organisation provides a direct interface with the customer, and can take time to understand business imperatives, pain points, and strategic goals. The marketing organisation can develop content that articulates market insights, incorporates proof points and references, and demonstrates business value.

Our research reveals that opportunities for direct, in-person interaction and reference across and between buyers builds the greatest awareness for technology vendors during the longlisting process. In the shortlisting process, vendors must concentrate on building content that validates technology and market leadership, whilst also providing powerful, original insight. Ultimately, vendors that can demonstrate a thorough understanding of, and empathy for, a customer’s challenges, along with a willingness to work collaboratively and flexibly with a customer, will most successfully cross the purchasing chasm.



7 About CCgroup

CCgroup is a technology PR agency based in London. We're relentlessly focused on making PR and communications support the commercial objectives of our clients.

Too many B2B tech companies are "marketing blind" – they don't know for sure what content, channel, or message works for their audience. Effective B2B PR relies on only a few things – putting great content into the hands of the right people at the right time. But creating that great content relies on knowing exactly what the audience wants and needs to see.

CCgroup's "Catalyst" insight initiative unearths the sources audiences trust, the content audiences prefer and the messages audiences want to receive. As a result, we know better than anyone what content, channels and messages have the greatest impact in your industry.

We have dedicated practices focused on specific industry verticals: Broadcast & Media Technology, Mobile & Telecoms, FinTech, Business Technology and CleanTech. We are peerless in our industry knowledge, influencer networks and experience.

CCgroup in Broadcast & Media Technology

The landscape for broadcast and media technology is incredibly complex, with an enormous variety of organisations offering everything from content distribution systems and digital rights management to IP delivery platforms and more. Client PR and marketing campaigns might target traditional broadcasters, multi-system operators, the new wave of internet TV delivery players, or cinema exhibitors. We understand these audiences and how to influence them.

The broadcast and media technology industry is characterised by a wide range of influence channels. As well as traditional editorial, customers also engage actively around trade events such as IBC and NAB, with industry analysts, and through powerful digital communications. CCgroup ensures all client programmes are unique and customised to business objectives, providing quantifiable and positive return on investment.

If you want to change how you market and sell to broadcast service providers, please call us:

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