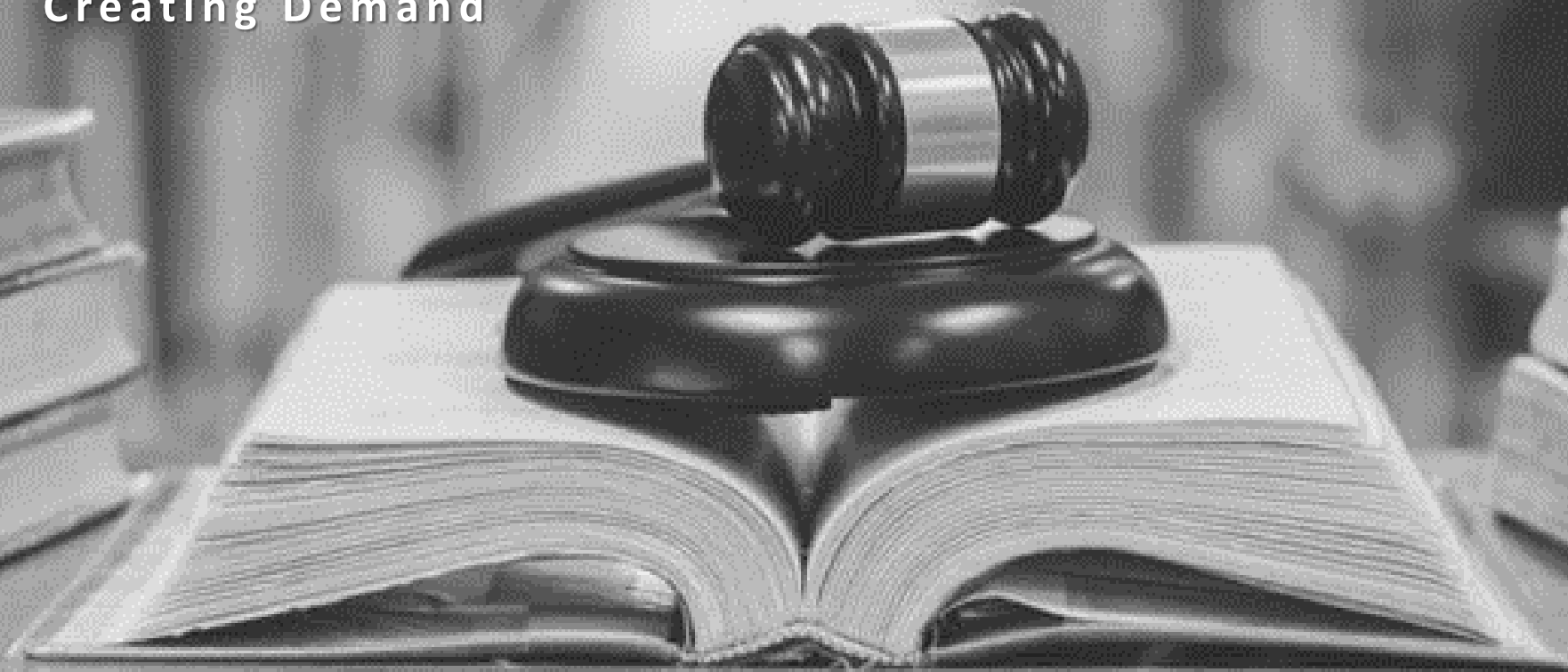


THE VERTO BRIEF

JULY | 2020

The Case of Using Buyer Intent Vs
Creating Demand



Why Using Buyer Intent Technology is More Effective than Creating Demand (Part 1)

In a time of change and uncertainty it's important to communicate with as much clarity as we can. In this current environment in B2B we should be clear about *who* we are selling to (our target audience), *why and how*. This helps us agree *when* the sales team should engage with a "prospect." In part this will be determined by deciding whether we are pursuing *active, or passive demand*. In other words, whether we are looking for *existing (active) demand* and then managing it, or whether we are going to *create* passive (or inactive) demand. In plain English the former are those already starting to look for a solution to a problem they've identified, the latter, are those that don't even realize they have a problem. Whichever we decide dictates fundamental marketing and sales strategies, right down to who you recruit in both sales and marketing. Our decision is also influenced by the availability of technology that delivers on a promise to succeed...Buyer Intent is just that.

“Leaders recognize that their companies will live or die based on the speed at which they adopt new technologies and new mindsets.”

LAST YEAR'S MODEL

What is your demand type? This was one of the first questions Sirius Decisions asked B2B companies back in the early 2000's. They encouraged firms to ask this question of themselves, to identify what type of demand they are dealing with. It's a foundational question, and while it remains as valid today as twenty years ago, in most cases it also remains as unanswered as it was twenty years ago.

SiriusDecisions Demand Spectrum

DEMAND TYPE	KEY CHARACTERISTICS	KEY REQUIREMENT
New Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disruptive product/service - No budgetary line item - Requires issue creation 	Market Leadership
New Paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retools existing process - Solves current problem better - Replaces current line item 	Process/Solution Change
Established Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Necessary product/service - Highly contested market - Trying to steal market share 	Competitive Positioning

Courtesy Sirius Decisions, Inc.

Sirius maintains that "all b-to-b demand creation is not created equal; there are three core demand "types." Determining the demand type drives several fundamental marketing and sales decisions. If sales and marketing can't agree on-demand type, systematic demand creation is impossible."



According to Sirius, – “...all demand is not created equal. If sales and marketing can't agree on-demand type, systematic demand creation is impossible.”

In the **Established Market**, the dynamics look more transactional and commoditized. Nearly all companies have already made a choice with an entrenched supplier and must see the value in switching. Because value and feature-benefits are premium here, differentiation is vital. Differentiation is challenging these days, so while we used the word transactional earlier, (implying buying and selling here is all about price and delivery) this category could be most dependent on relationships as they might be the only way to achieve any differentiation.

In the **New Paradigm** "offerings must show how their approach is better than solutions currently being employed." Companies need to compete with the existing model as opposed to specific competitors. Sellers must focus on disrupting the status quo with confident sellers able to reassure wary buyers.

[According to Sirius "New Concept" offerings require work to get buyers to recognize a need they didn't know they had.](#) This takes longer and requires engaging external advisors to spread the word and POC's for beta customers. Companies must be willing to assume a thought leadership role and act accordingly to raise awareness, attracting interest in problems companies didn't know they had. Sellers must be evangelists, willing to lead with insights and challenge conventional thinking.

It's obvious where we fit in some cases, but confusing when we fit into multiple categories. Then you must consider recruiting and managing a hybrid sales force where some sellers are comfortable creating demand (by providing insight to prospects thereby provoking reflection and reaction) and other sellers that are deployed to manage existing demand. [The Sirius Demand Type](#) grid is an excellent tool to frame the problem and guide your thinking, but it doesn't provide any easy answers (here's the news...there aren't any). It does help you ask a different set of questions, however. The reality is that most companies don't fit neatly into one area, and therefore neither do the answers.



THE JURY'S IN...AND SO'S THE VERDICT

The Jury's in and so's the Verdict. Other than those companies firmly in Sirius' "New Concept Demand Type" (like the iconic consulting outfits) most of the rest of us should stop kidding ourselves and find better ways to find existing demand, harvest it and engage with it in an optimal fashion. Challenger Selling is generally a failure and trying to adopt it for most of us is an exercise in futility. No one will admit this, and everyone will claim they're doing it and it's a righteous solution. This is mostly aspirational smoke, nothing more. The only place it exists is when we go back to the Sirius Demand Model in the New Concept area. We have no choice but to create demand in that part of the market, but for the rest it remains impractical.

Early stage buying activity has been happening on the down low for some time now. We're all painfully aware that according to Sirius Decisions **"67% of the buyers' journey is now done digitally."** If this is so, why are we advising sellers to engage "before buyers have embarked on their journey? This seems like strange advice. Surely sellers should be preparing better to engage when buyers are "enroute", in what would look more like the latter stages of the "old" sales process.



Start to embrace the buyer intent and social listening technology out there, so you can detect, track, and Begin to market to emerging demand (buyers already on their “journey”). We’ve called this “trawling the waters” in the past, knowing that the waters are vast and deep. Buyer intent and social listening technology is to selling what sonar was to submarine detection. So now, you not only have a bigger boat, but it’s crammed full of “detection” technology.

Buyers are looking for guides these days to help them make sense of all the shouting and increasingly exaggerated claims out there among the seemingly homogeneous products. **They’re looking for guidance on “how” to buy. Sellers need to start to act as these guides.** When buyers are confronted by almost limitless choice (as it appears these days), the most popular outcome is to do nothing. A Paradox of Choice has resulted from the availability of seemingly identical products and services. Software can be created quickly and cheaply. Vendors relinquished the task of information gathering to the “internet enabled” buyer, who has now become the victim of the internet's success. **When confronted with the vast choice that results from the “self-guided” journey, people will do nothing at all.** The Paradox of Choice preserves the dreaded “status quo.” According to see CSO Insights “70% of buyers fully define their needs on their own before engaging with a sales representative and 44% identify specific solutions before reaching out to a seller.” Modern sellers need to be prepared to engage later than they used to and need to be ready to act differently.



Don’t fall for the argument that just because someone searched for something or mentioned it in a tweet, this means they’re in the market to buy, and if they don’t buy then this approach is flawed. Don’t let yourself be pulled into this trap of *extreme thinking*. What we’re recommending you do is to think probabilistically. **Someone who’s searching on certain keywords and terms or mentioning things in social media is more likely than less likely to be a person of interest, at a time of activity.** When you add them together, you get something *intriguing*? This approach helps you convert “suspects” to “persons of interest”. What we then recommend you do is provision A.I. enabled, automatic campaigns that will turn those “persons of interest” into “interested people.” If you want to know how to do that, let us know.



A top-down view of a dark grey desk. In the upper right corner, there is a white smartphone with a black screen, a silver pencil, a white laptop with a black keyboard, and a pair of black-rimmed glasses.

**MINDING THE GAPS IN B2B SALES AND
MARKETING INVOLVES FINDING THEM FIRST**

The gaps in sales and marketing have gotten wider. As a result - B2B leadership needs to do *more* with *less*. Demand generation, digital marketing, and sales enablement should work together, be simpler, cost less, and produce more.

We make it happen.

