

# CREATING CONTENT FOR EACH STAGE OF YOUR BUYER JOURNEY

How to reach your buyers where they are, from prospect to post-sale



liongard

# INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation and created a rapid adoption of remote employees and distributed teams that left many managed service providers drinking from the proverbial firehose of current customer needs and new customer requests. The changing business landscape is creating impressive growth in the MSP industry—by 2025 the global managed services market is expected to grow to \$329.1 billion, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.1% between 2020 and 2025.

In the new normal of hybrid workplaces, MSPs are becoming an essential part of most business operations, with 75 percent of SMBs already outsourcing some of their IT to a managed service provider. And it's easy to see why when you look at the numbers—it's estimated that managed services reduce IT costs by 25-45 percent and increase operational efficiency by 45-65 percent.

## PART 1

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE  
MARKETING FRAMEWORK

## PART 2

CONTENT AND MESSAGING  
FOR EACH STAGE OF THE  
BUYER JOURNEY

## PART 3

USING DATA TO GENERATE  
MORE QUALIFIED LEADS AND  
CLOSE MORE DEALS

With service in such high demand, competition becomes stiff as more providers flood the market—in 2019 ConnectWise estimated there were 40,000 MSPs in the US alone—and MSPs looking to gain an edge are focusing on marketing and messaging that speaks to the unique needs of their target audience. And a more personalized approach to marketing your MSP can be powerful—in 2020, customer experience beat out product and price as the key brand differentiator.

But what's the ideal experience for your unique customers? In this three-part guide, you'll learn how to make your MSP stand out from the competition and build a marketing plan that covers the buyer journey from prospect through post-sale.



# CONTENT AND MESSAGING FOR EACH STAGE OF THE BUYER JOURNEY

At its core, being an MSP is all about building and growing relationships—from evaluating a potential customer's fit through onboarding to ongoing engagement and reporting, your MSP should provide strategic insight and direction that helps turn potential customers into loyal partners. But how do you know what to say to your customers, and when should you be reaching out? The answer lies in your buyer journey.



# UNDERSTAND YOUR BUYER JOURNEY

The buyer journey consists of four main stages, each with specific needs. It's important to understand each stage of the buyer journey to be able to target your outreach with the right message to grab attention and convert customers.



## **AWARENESS**

# **GET THEM TO NOTICE YOU**

Buyers at the Awareness stage are searching for answers—they have a problem to solve and will give priority to sources that help frame their issue, contextualize it in terms of their job function, and provide possible solutions. At this stage it's important to educate buyers about the benefits of your service. For instance, security is a top concern for many companies so you might write a blog or email on security issues facing IT departments post-COVID or make a security checklist for companies to use when evaluating an MSP.



## YOUR WEBSITE

90 percent of B2B buyers research up to seven sites before they make a purchase decision, so the content of your website is critical to catching and keeping attention. Your website should educate, engage and inform your audience about thorough content and callouts that speak to your strengths and clearly convey your ideal customer and value proposition.

When writing for your website, you should consider things like search engine optimization (SEO) to maximize your impact and results if you are marketing locally versus nationally. SEO drives 1000+ percent more traffic than organic social media, so staying on top of keywords and trends is crucial for a winning web strategy. Think about things your customers might search for, like “Does my company need an MSP?” or “MSPs for law firms” and then tailor a page, a blog, or other content that speaks directly to that topic. There are a number of applications available that can help you identify keywords, and some will allow you to see how your SEO compares to your competitors.

## BLOGS, CHECKLISTS AND HOW-TOS

Providing a buyer with actionable insights is key to positioning your MSP as a trusted partner and getting potential customers to take the next step in the buyer journey. Blogs, checklists and how-to guides help solve a prospect’s immediate need—they might be looking for a new employee IT checklist or tips on finding the right MSP for their business—and help position your MSP as the solution to their problem. They also give you an easy way to generate and track leads. You can ask visitors to subscribe to your blog with their email address or create a simple form to gate some of your checklists so that you can turn your helpful content into lead generators.



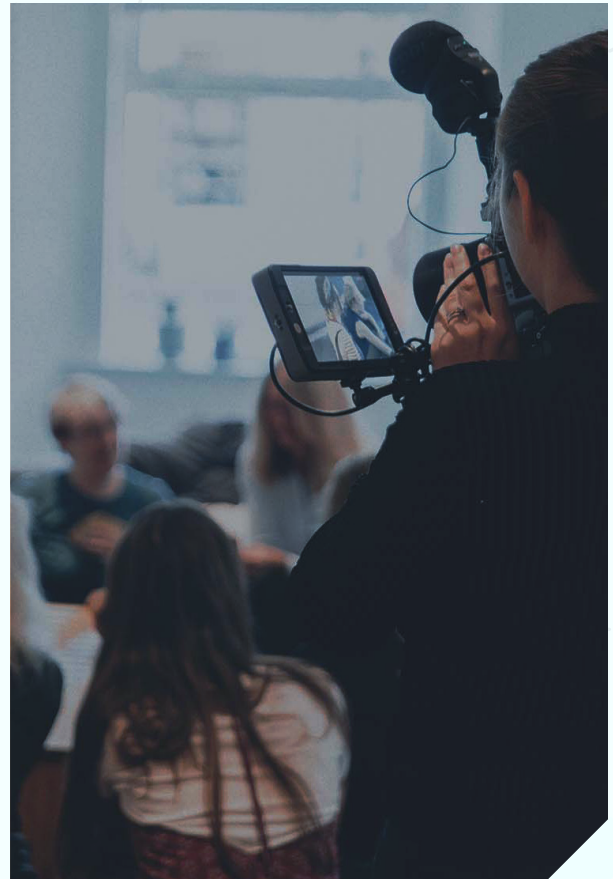


## SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to connect with qualified buyers, you need to meet them where they are active. Today's B2B buyers are using social media as a main tool in their purchase process, with **84 percent** consulting social media before making purchasing decisions. Your social posts should feature content that specifically addresses your target audience and how your MSP rises to meet their needs. You might highlight customer testimonials for each of your target verticals, share your latest company news or product and service updates, or promote your company culture with employee spotlights. Social media also provides valuable data on audience behavior and trends that you can turn into insights that help improve your future post performance.

## VIDEO & PODCASTS

The rise of video as a sales tool continues, and the Covid-19 pandemic saw a surge in video content as businesses adapted to at-home buyers and Sales teams. How important is video in the B2B buying process today? **More than half** of tech buyers think video is the most useful form of content when it comes to making a purchase decision, and **93 percent** of brands got a new customer because of a social media video in 2020. Your video content can include helpful how-to videos, customer testimonials, and personalized intro videos from your Account Managers or Sales team placed in emails.



## EVALUATION

# TIME FOR SHOW AND TELL

The next stage of the buying cycle is evaluation, where buyers have identified their finalists and will be doing a more in-depth review of your service offering. For this stage, case studies and other customer testimonials or reviews can give you an edge. Buyers want to see how your solutions have worked for other companies and if your current clients are happy with your services. If you don't have a stash of case studies or testimonials you can access, try setting up a meet-and-greet with you, your prospect and one of your current, happy customers for a live referral.





## CASE STUDIES

Case studies demonstrate the value of your organization and the type of financial or other ROI your buyers can expect. Make them customized to your target audience. It's OK to have more than one version of a case study if it addresses more than one pain point or buyer group. Include a customer quote or testimonial whenever possible for authenticity and authority, and be sure to keep your case studies updated with new developments as they become available.



## WHITE PAPERS & INDUSTRY REPORTS

B2B buyers are particularly drawn to thought-leadership content—88% say it increases their respect for an organization. If your goal is to position your organization as an authority in your field, white papers and industry-focused reports will help. This content allows you to flex your experience and show buyers you are thinking about their future goals as well as their current needs. Data-driven insight into your buyer's job and industry showcases your company as a strategic partner instead of just another vendor.



# NURTURE EMAILS

B2B leads that go through a nurtured email program are 20 percent more likely to make a purchase. Instead of creating one-off emails for promotions, create full campaigns that lead your prospect through the purchase cycle. Your email nurture campaigns should have a theme—maybe you want to focus on your security offering or your HIPAA compliance—and each email should reflect the theme and also offer your prospect a piece of helpful information or content. For instance, if your focus was security, an email sequence might look something like this:

## EMAIL 1

### TOPIC

Why security should be a top focus at your organization

### LINKS

A security-focused blog post on your website or third-party article

## EMAIL 2

### TOPIC

The new changing needs of security in the new hybrid workplace

### LINKS

Your recent podcast on hybrid workplaces or a hybrid worker security checklist

## EMAIL 3

### TOPIC

Managed service providers increase security

### LINKS

A case study highlighting your security capabilities or a white paper on MSP security services

## EMAIL 4

### TOPIC

Get your free security consultation

### LINKS

Demo link or consultation landing page



## DECISION

# SEAL THE DEAL WITH DATA

Seventy-seven percent of B2B buyers conduct an ROI analysis before making a purchase decision. Demonstrating the value of your service in terms of dollars and budget can help you upsell your current customers and earn new business. One way to do this is to perform a proactive analysis of customer systems, using a tool like Liongard, to pull information on users, licenses and applications that will help you identify opportunities for cost-savings and budget optimization.



# CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

Never underestimate the power of word-of-mouth. Your reputation is invaluable when it comes to prospective buyers. If you don't have a bank of customer testimonials, now's the time to get some! If you have regular meetings with your customers, or if you know of a few accounts that are happy with your service, it's a good idea to reach out and see if they'd be willing to do a short interview or a written testimonial. You can use these on social media, on your website and in Sales emails as proof points to your value proposition.

# CONSULTATION

When it comes to making purchase decisions or expanding existing services, buyers are looking for more than just tech recommendations. With most of the sales process now taking place entirely online, when buyers engage with salespeople, they are looking for someone who can add value beyond just recommending a product. Nearly **90 percent** of buyers say they are only willing to make a final purchase if they view a salesperson as a trusted advisor, making strategic services a critical offering for MSPs.

One way to establish trust early in the relationship and demonstrate your strategic value as an MSP is during your initial customer consultation or evaluation. Many MSPs focus initial evaluations on technology upgrades or other low hanging fruit.

A more strategic approach would be to use a platform like Liongard to gather historical data on customer systems which allows you to identify technology issues at their root and provide forever solutions, not just break-fix band-aids.

## LEARN HOW

Learn how to use Liongard data to create comprehensive customer evaluations—check out our blog on [using automation to transform your initial sales assessment.](#)



**POST-SALE**

# **THE KEY TO GROWING ACCOUNT VALUE**

You've booked new business, but now what? The first weeks of a new managed services contract are the most critical. If done correctly, onboarding serves as a springboard into a mutually beneficial, comfortable and reliable relationship between your MSP and your customer. Over the long run, this relationship will result in greater revenue and higher satisfaction for your customer—and your team. Here's how to stay engaged with your customers to build trust and grow account value.



## QBRs

Quarterly business reviews (QBRs) are a great opportunity to build long-lasting partnerships—they give you a way to build trust by showing your contributions to your customer's organization. It's also a chance to increase monthly recurring revenue (MRR) with service increases or new projects—but only if you're able to demonstrate your value. We've put together a checklist to help you create QBRs that maximize your impact.

### LEARN HOW

Crush your next QBR with data-driven insights from Liongard.  
[Watch our on-demand reporting webinar to hear from our experts.](#)





# QBR CHECKLIST

- ☒ **Executive summary:** A high-level, easy-to-read report of recent events, successes and issues that occurred in the past quarter, along with opportunities for the future. Colorful charts, graphs and numbers make a huge visual statement in just a glance.  
**Liongard tip:** Run a Liongard Report of the most important datapoints you want to highlight to create a snapshot decision-makers can easily understand and refer to.
- ☐ **Service ticket review:** Review how your team has handled the volume of tickets coming in.  
**Liongard tip:** Have a huge outlier for time to resolution and can't remember what happened? Use Liongard's timeline feature to go backwards in time and see what happened.
- ☐ **Service Level Agreement (SLA) review:** Compare the service you agreed to provide to the actual service you provided over the last quarter, highlighting higher performance levels or discussing issues or disputes.  
**Liongard tip:** Liongard's automation will help you address problems before they become big issues and our unified visibility will empower your team to resolve issues faster and improve your SLA performance.
- ☐ **Technical review:** This is where you really show your MSP's value, discussing what you've done to "earn your keep," including major issues you've thwarted or problems you've solved for your customer.  
**Liongard tip:** You have the data from Liongard's Inspectors, so use it here; but explain the real-world effects of your services and actions in a way that non-technical attendees can understand.
- ☐ **Endpoint management review:** What has your MSP done to ensure endpoint devices remain secure and up to date? Your customer probably doesn't know (especially if you're doing it well), so now's the time to share details.  
**Liongard tip:** Viewing endpoint data is a cinch in Liongard. Simply select the environment, then the Inspector for your RMM and the data you want to see and run the report. You can even make templates to use across all customers to save even more time.
- ☐ **Network security and management:** With security more top-of-mind than ever, your customers want to know exactly what you're doing to manage and protect their networks from security breaches.  
**Liongard tip:** Setting Actionable Alerts helps catch security concerns before they become fires. Just choose the data point, set the parameters, apply it across customers, and your team will be notified when any deviation from your standards is detected, creating a ticket in your PSA automatically and adding a little extra peace of mind.
- ☐ **Looking ahead:** A QBR shouldn't be the first time your customer hears about an issue, so this is the time to start discussing solutions and options—including projects currently underway—along with related budgetary and timeline details.  
**Liongard tip:** The data you've provided in the QBR eliminates the need for a 'hard sell,' so focus on how proposed projects or services will ultimately help the customer grow and bring them a return on their investment.





## CUSTOMER CALLS AND SURVEYS

Follow-up calls and surveys keep customers engaged beyond the sale and provide you with valuable feedback about your product and service. With 92 percent of customer interactions taking place over the phone—from prospect through to post-purchase—it's important to have a plan for regular calls with current accounts. Are they happy with your service? Are their tickets being handled promptly? Is there anything you can help them with immediately or projects for the future? Regular calls can keep you in-the-know about important customer issues and help you plan for future projects in advance.

Surveys can cover the onboarding experience, motivations behind the purchase, product differentiators, roadmap testing, customer service, and more. The data these surveys provide can help you refine your messaging and content strategy moving forward.

## EMAIL OUTREACH

We covered nurture emails in the Evaluation section of this guide, but post-sale emails can be a powerful tool to upsell and increase MRR. Emails keep the conversation going and are an easy, low cost, effective way to communicate with your customers about product updates, new service offerings, and more.



## NEXT STEPS

# POWER YOUR MARKETING PLAN WITH LIONGARD DATA

MSP marketing starts with understanding your customers and their needs. Liongard helps you gather insights about your clients you can use to demonstrate your value and differentiate yourself from competitors at every stage of the buyer journey. A personalized customer experience, from prospect to onboarding and beyond, is crucial to developing a partnership with your customers enabling you to go from vendor to strategic partner.

Liongard was founded by former MSP owners who understand the struggles today's firms face in attracting new customers, growing client relationships and scaling their business. We built our platform with MSPs in mind, offering unified visibility across all your customer systems—taking you from data to actionable insights as quickly as possible.

Standardize, secure and scale your IT Managed Services with Liongard, the only automation platform that delivers unified visibility across the stack. With a global partner base, Liongard is changing the way MSPs manage and protect thousands of businesses worldwide. Ready to manage modern IT with confidence? Learn more at [liongard.com](https://liongard.com).

Discover how Liongard can support your MSP marketing strategy. [Schedule a demo today](#) for a custom walk-through of our platform.

