

Spring, 2021

Navigating the Age of Anxiety

Why enterprise buyers have been hit harder by the pandemic than anyone anticipated – and how vendors can instil confidence in a wary audience



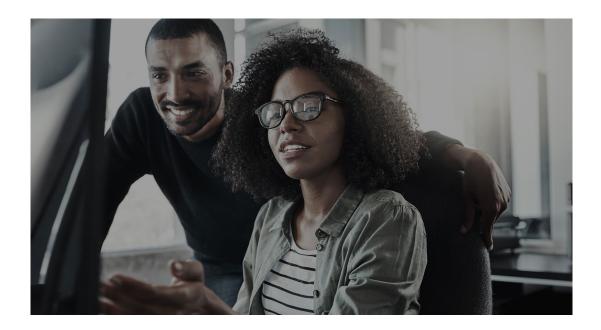
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Methodology

The Momentum Customer Buying Index® codifies a decade of our work helping clients grow revenue in enterprise accounts, and is used every day in our work to increase success rates.

150 global respondents
All C-Suite decision makers
\$3m IT purchases or greater
Firms with >\$30bn revenue
Rolling pulse to spot trends over time





The state of play

Despite countless discussions around the "unprecedented disruption" caused by COVID-19, new data from the Momentum Customer Buying Index® suggests sales and marketing teams across the globe have underestimated the impact of the pandemic on IT buying behaviour in large businesses.

Almost all (92%) respondents said their most recent technology investment was "a direct response to changes in the business as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic". For financial services CxOs, that number rises to 100%.

So, one year on, what is the sentiment in the business community? How optimistic are leaders about the future, and what keeps them awake at night?



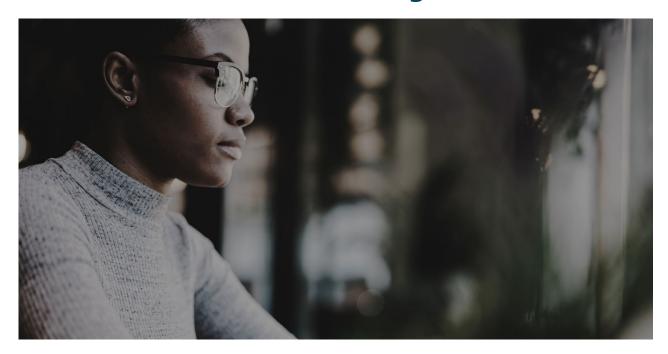
92[%]

of recent technology purchases were a direct response to the Covid-19 pandemic





The Great Worry



Perhaps one of the most intriguing findings from the CBI® is that while 87% of leaders say their business is more resilient to future economic shocks as a result of their most recent technology purchase, just over twothirds (69%) say they are "very concerned" about potential security breaches in the business compared to 12+ months ago. A quarter say they are "extremely concerned".

The threat of a security breach takes many different forms depending on the sector and job role of those asked. For instance, financial services and utilities firms fear the customer trust and reputational damage of a security breach, retailers and automotive manufacturers are more likely to worry about the associated costs.

The C-suite's concerns about a security breach differ from role to role. While loss of trust in the customer base, monetary fines and operational downtime are the top fears, COOs and CFOs are more like to worry about the reputational damage of a breach and the loss of customer trust in the organisation. CIOs and CMOs are more likely to fret about the monetary fines from incurring a breach.



"Two-thirds of firms are "very concerned" about a security breach compared to 12+ months ago"



Regrets? We've had a few

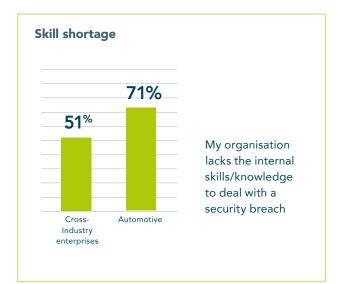
Given that almost all enterprises made a substantial technology investment in direct response to the sudden fallout of COVID-19, it's no surprise to learn that over half (56%) of business decision-makers didn't fully consider or understand the potential security risks when initially implementing said technology. This is particularly true for retailers, 62% of whom agreed with the statement. As a result, the latent security issues arising from quickly acquired new technology are only becoming evident now according to half (53%) of executives – and 62% of financial services leaders.



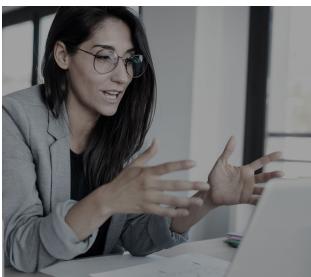


Talent wanted

With enterprises becoming increasingly more concerned with security as a result of adapting quickly to the pandemic, what is holding them back from feeling confident?

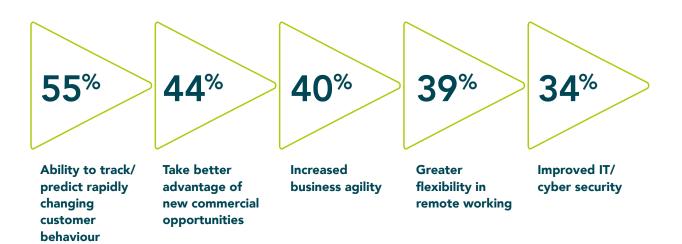


51[%] of enterprises believe their organisation lacks the internal skills/knowledge to deal with a security breach if one happened. Incredibly, that number soars to 71% of automotive businesses.



The many faces of resiliency

Despite rampant security concerns, 87% of leaders report their business is more resilient to future economic shocks as a result of the technology purchase. But, how does that renewed resilience manifest itself in the organisation? In many different ways, according to our survey respondents.

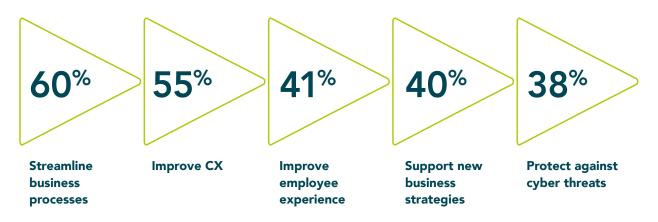


Get to work

While our research has highlighted many of the key challenges enterprise decision-makers face today, it also highlights the opportunities sales and marketing teams have to hone their approach and set themselves up for success. Here are our tips for sales and marketing to get their messaging and approach right in the Age of Anxiety.



2021 technology priorities



The top drivers for large technology purchases in 2021 and beyond largely focus on better experiences and fine-tuning internal functions, with executives hoping to streamline business processes and improve customer and employee experiences.

But, regardless of the motivations for investing in technology, **price matters**. Roughly half (49%) of enterprises cite "better cost" as more important than before the pandemic – with 58% of CFOs agreeing.





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- Get insight into the process bottlenecks and C-sat scores to highlight opportunities for selling in solutions geared toward the top priorities.
- Tailor your message to fit the unique set-up of your customer. Use cases are essential.
- Include cost-effectiveness throughout your messaging.
- Communicate the **value** of your solutions at every touchpoint. Case studies, white papers and research reports are useful ways of showing ROI.

Well-implemented **martech** will allow for better reporting and rich data across your customer journeys. An audit of your martech sheds light the efficacy of your tech stack, mapping it across customer touchpoints and optimising the technology that underpins every part of customer lifecycle – from readiness to reach, from outcomes to impact.





Honesty is the best policy

It appears decision-makers will be more reasoned in their approach to tech investment going forward than during the "panic-buys" of 2020 – at least if the disruption continues to level out – perhaps in an attempt to avoid the hidden security pitfalls from their current tech investment that have recently come to the fore. This explains why half (51%) of enterprise buyers say that "open and honest" communication that "fosters deep trust", has become more important in the last 12 months, as has authenticity, cited by 39% of respondents.

Building trust is no easy feat, but appealing to the "human" side of stakeholders is one way to cut through the cold corporate messaging CxOs are used to receiving, as is leveraging so-called "soft" skills such as empathy. For example, "good listening skills" and "demonstrating [you] have my best interests at heart" are cited by customers as two of the top five most important characteristics during the buying process.



- Collate a comprehensive handbook for each key account, which includes insights and findings from every interaction you have with the client, plus industry news.
- Leverage sales' knowledge of the client to build a unique value proposition for your customer that speaks directly to the challenges they face and the value you can bring to their business. Use this as a benchmark to measure all content created for the audience to ensure relevancy and usefulness.
- Schedule regular calls and organic communications, including face-to-face meetings, that will help you build rapport with your clients outside of sales negotiations.
- Provide value outside of sales discussions through thought leadership content or advice. Could the executive sponsor offer a new perspective on cybersecurity, for example?
- Invest in an emotional intelligence (EQ) training course to develop your team's interpersonal skills.



No account handbook is complete without **audience**, **market and competitive intelligence** shape your engagement strategy.

Diane Borska, Momentum's SVP of Consulting, spoke at length about the importance of CI in your accountbased marketing programme.

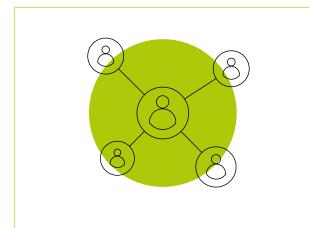
Read the summary <u>here.</u>



Live by your values

Values like diversity and inclusion (32%) and environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues (29%) are highlighted as important factors for enterprises this year – and are likely to get more important as time goes on. 41% of enterprises are also taking into account strong brand reputation increasingly over the past year.

Highlighting your credentials and stand-out initiatives across these areas will likely be an attractive proposition for customers and can help to build trust. Relevant case studies and positive recommendations from peers, cited by 39% and 32% of peers as important factors, respectively, will go a long way to elevating your messaging.

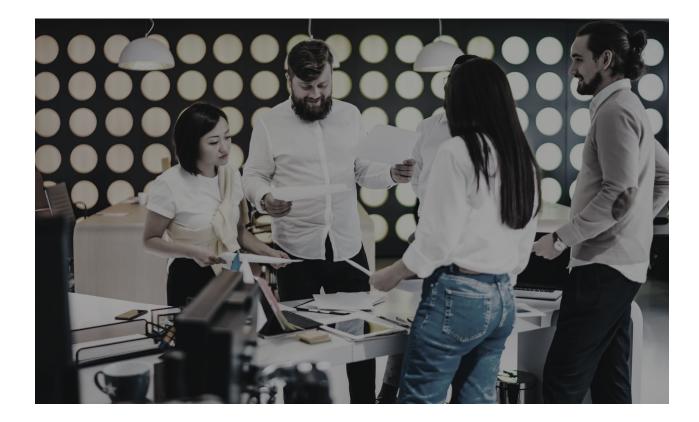


32% of enterprises view diversity and inclusion as an important factor this year.

- Marketing must ensure your ESG/D&I brand narrative and values are articulated across all messaging, including product-centric content.
- Create simple but compelling **"battlecards"** that sales (and executive sponsors) can use to communicate your story clearly and consistently across every touchpoint. This should include your value proposition, FAQs, and recent milestones and 'moonshot' goals.
- Keep ESG- and D&I-related content factual and informative, not promotional.
- Link your brand values and solutions to clear business outcomes. E.g. how might upgrading to the cloud reduce environmental impact and internal costs?
- Build a bank of case studies that solely focus on ESG/D&I to demonstrate your credentials and empower sellers to tell a more compelling – and human – story to customers

Battlecards are quick-read slides designed to help you answer any client FAQs, differentiate your proposition from competitors', handle common objections (e.g. "I already use a competitor's technology. Why would I switch?"), and start conversations. This is an internal resource – i.e. not client-facing – that can be invaluable to sales.





Innovation is king – but tread carefully

As well as clarity and authenticity, innovation stands out as a desirable vendor quality for 43% of enterprises. However, interesting trends are emerging that could be used to shape your engagement approach. For example, 40% of CIOs and 70% of CFOs see innovative solutions as more important than 12 months ago.

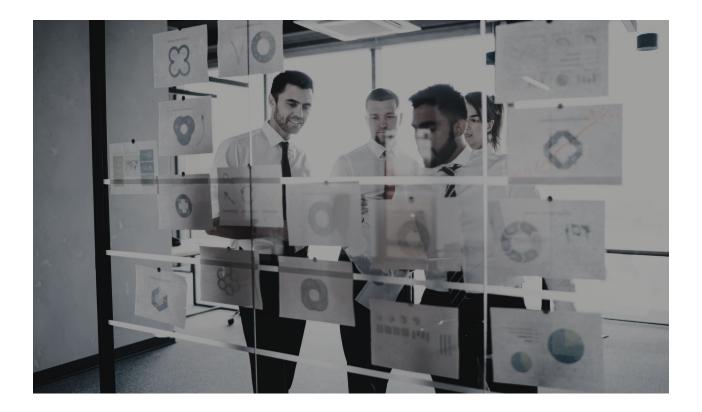
But, before you revise your messaging to speak to this ostensibly ripe and ready audience, note that a desire for innovation is coupled with a new conservativism. 57% of enterprises are less willing to buy from a new vendor, rising to 75% of US companies, and two-thirds (68%) of all CFOs. 70% of CFOs see innovative solutions as more important than 12 months ago.





- Show the commercial benefit of your solution through case studies and third-party research. Innovation is useless without proof that it works.
- Focus your primary efforts on garnering more internal advocates for your firm. Positive recommendations and word of mouth are second only to cost as a reason for switching to a new IT provider, so reinforce your value.
- Research the primary stakeholders most interested and vocal about innovation. Echo their language and tailor your messaging to fit their narrative.
- Run workshops and webinars that discuss industry challenges and how your business is uniquely tackling them. Develop a strong narrative that separates you from the pack.
- Conduct a content audit of all the press releases and research that shows your business in a positive light – for example, Gartner Magic Quadrant accolades. This makes it easy for sales to share news with customers.

Content audits are time-consuming but necessary resources. Collating recent news stories, assets, papers, pdfs, videos and such on an Excel spreadsheet and creating a punchy blurb/summary for each one means sales teams can easily find and share content on social media or directly with contacts.

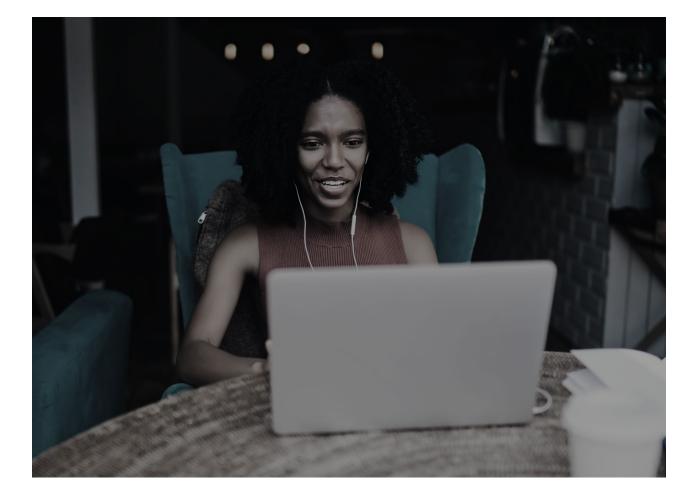




Your checklist for success

The Age of Anxiety is characterised by security woes and a drive for innovation, coupled with a rising consciousness for ESG-related issues. To appeal to this new sentiment, sales and marketing should keep the following front of mind:

- Your brand matters: highlight the values, achievements and unique culture that defines your business. You earned them, and stakeholders are hungry for reasons to trust you.
- Dial up your innovation narrative: focus on the innovative components of your proposition to show the impact on relevant businesses. Weave innovation into your brand story in a way that will appeal to the remit of CxOs.
- Proof matters: it's never been more important to show the value of your product suite through reallife testimonials and case studies. In an age where vendor scepticism reigns and trust is difficult to build, these proof-points are invaluable.
- Land and expand: this is not a time for risk-taking. Enterprises are more likely to invest with existing vendors, so invest your time and effort into nurturing these relationships and seeing where new value streams exist.





The Age of Anxiety



Tamsen Galloway US General Manager, Momentum



Robert Hollier Director of Consulting and Partner, Momentum



Guest Claire Darling CMO of Skybox Security

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<u>Watch</u> our expert panel dive into the latest Customer Buying Index data, and get their top tips to empower your sales and marketing teams to help your customers navigate the age of anxiety.



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