

With a Potential Recession Looming, Brands Want More Data: Merkle's Friedberg, Bombora Company Surge®

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-- The economy has been flirting with a

full-blown recession for months, a fear that continues to influence business decision-makers. While the obvious signs, such as hiring freezes and employment stats, get splashed across the media, other indicators are more subtle, and potentially more helpful.



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*Merkle B2B Demand
Generation Practice Leader
Malcolm Friedberg*

Among business service brands with 10,000 employees, interest in "analytics and reporting" has increased 14 percent over the last three months, according to [Bombora Company Surge®](#).

There's no question that of all the core demand-gen functionality, reporting and analytics has had the slowest adoption. The reasons for this seem fairly self-evident and are probably topped by the fact that most marketers don't gravitate toward data because it's hard to do it well. It's relatively easy to run a report. The real question is whether you can leverage the information you capture to make

meaningful changes to your business.

Necessity is the mother of all invention. Intent data also show that across manufacturing companies, interest in "data-driven marketing" is up 616 percent over the past three months compared to the previous three. Recession-like economic conditions may be forcing these firms, traditionally slow to innovate in sales and marketing, to explore new and more effective ways of marketing using data.

What does that mean for marketers as budgets become tighter? It's a little early for New Year's resolutions, but budgeting season is upon us. Here are a few ideas to consider as you think ahead for an uncertain 2023:

Hire an analyst (or someone) with an affinity for numbers. Many marketers are not quant-jocks, neither drawn to nor excited about doing analytics work. (Disclosure: the author is currently subsidizing a soon-to-graduate candidate with a degree in Applied Math from U.C Boulder and would be happy if he were hired by someone. Anyone!)

Reporting and analytics are necessary for success, but they aren't sufficient in and of themselves. It's insights that drive success, and to deliver insights you need to understand how they can impact business. Identify someone on your team that understands the business well enough to leverage the work of an analyst to derive better decision-making.

Consider leveraging external expertise in the development of your data and analytics programs. That includes both the technology infrastructure and also KPI identification and ongoing insights. Working with an agency that provides services to a broad range of industries can bring a perspective to challenge your current thinking.

Marketing ROI/return on marketing investment (ROMI) and validating the contribution of programs have always been important, but 2023 might be a do-or-die year for making it a reality.

This column appeared first in ANA's Industry Insights:

<https://www.ana.net/miccontent/show/id/ii-2022-12-recession-data>

About the data this column cites

Bombora monitors the average weekly interest, by company, in 12,000 topics across highly trafficked, research based B2B sites across the web in the Bombora Data Cooperative. The Data Cooperative enables Bombora to track in-depth content engagement of business professionals in a privacy-compliant way, with direct relationships with business publishers.

The content engagement data covers multiple channels of business research, everything from news and blogs to white papers, directories, and product reviews. The millions of web pages and content types are aggregated into topics, with a Bombora proprietary natural-language processor. These topics incorporate context, meaning, and relationships in words.

All this content engagement, surrounding 12,000 business topics, is aggregated to a company level, then measured against a 12-week baseline. This aggregation allows Bombora to identify when a business professional is simply reading an article, to when a company is signaling intent to buy a product or solution.

Mr. Friedberg's column looks at key advertising topics as they are being researched at the top 500 brands and top advertising holding companies. Mr. Friedberg's industry experience makes him uniquely well positioned to interpret this business research, and to base actionable insights on the data.

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