

# *A Call to Action*

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This is the first in a series of blogs focused on effective marketing, written by branding and marketing authority, W. Edward Pierce, expressly for executives who want to do the best possible job in connecting and influencing targeted decision-makers.

Having just eclipsed 40 years of marketing on both the agency and corporate sides, I can confidently say this is the most exciting time to market your company, products and services to fleet decision-makers. As fast as technology is changing the fleet products and services you are promoting, it is changing the media that you use to promote them.

Twenty years ago, Marketing supported sales by creating awareness. No sales rep wanted to make a cold call or go to a meeting and hear, "Who is (name of company)?" Today, studies show that about 71 percent of enterprise purchase decisions in the U.S. begin with research conducted online. More so, business buyers do not contact suppliers directly until 57 percent of the purchase process is complete.

Obviously, awareness is now just the first of several critical marketing goals. In this age of the well-informed buyer, earning a great reputation, creating a differentiated position, providing quantifiable value, building a strong base of customer "advocates," and delivering those messages effectively through multiple channels are your other important marketing goals.

## Multiple Channels

Not that long ago, there was just one media channel, that was, "earned". Companies either paid (advertising) for access or earned editorial coverage based on newsworthiness (public relations). Yes, you could disseminate a customer newsletter, but distribution was limited to customers and possibly a prospect list.

In today's digital world, "earned" media has expanded to include banner advertising, Google Ads (AdWords), native advertising and more. Fleet Management Weekly was one of the digital media pioneers in any industry, and it is still a great example of how "earned" media must be an important part of your marketing mix. But the web has ushered in a second media channel, that is, "owned." The "owned" channel includes your own corporate website, microsites, landing pages, video, blogs, social media presence, back links, and content marketing. The "owned" channel provides completely new opportunities to effectively reach fleet decision-makers.

In the next "Call to Action" blog, we'll take a look at trends and opportunities related to the "earned" media channel. I welcome feedback, questions, suggestions, experiences and differing points of view from business product and service providers as well as from department heads, corporate buyers, consultants, trade association and media representatives who want to help build better connections. Just send an email to [EdPierce@ItsTheArts.com](mailto:EdPierce@ItsTheArts.com).