


Cyber Security Marketing Playbook

How to create
trust in your offer
and fame for your
brand



Cyber security marketing is different.

“

Creating a secure organisation is a process, built from controls and infrastructure that can be observed, tested and enhanced.

Ross Haleiuk

Contents

01	Introduction P.4
02	How buyers buy P.5
03	The rise of evidence-led marketing P.6
04	Creating a Go To Market plan fit for modern cyber security marketing P.7
05	The Go To Market deliverables P.13
06	In Summary P.18



Introduction

CISO buyers are assembling a puzzle while at the same time threat actors break the pieces. Security products are parts of ecosystems requiring collaboration and communication. So each vendor must play its part honestly and openly, sharing its strengths and weaknesses and where it best fits into each buyer's unique puzzle.

This means vendors cannot simply promise to keep a customer safe while guarding their 'secret sauce'. Competitive moats exist more in continued trust than technical supremacy, as me-too copy-cats quickly appear after an innovation has been accepted by the market. Microsoft's growth as a security 'platform' of choice owes much more to ease and interoperability than product innovation.

So new vendors can build trust by being more helpful, more personal and more flexible than the behemoth incumbents. New vendor teams can work transparently and flexibly with customers towards their shared goal; the customer's control of their security destiny. In this way service and product offerings converge - a trend that is accelerating.

Understanding that security products are pieces of a puzzle helps us focus our selling efforts on the process through which buyers buy, and the Jobs they are trying to get done.



How buyers buy

There are many buyers and influencers involved in an SMB or Enterprise sale, including:

Decision makers: CISOs, VPs, CTOs, their engineers and their Board are seeking control and visibility of threats, and these must be evidenced.

Advisors: Channel partners seeking new revenue with little effort. Service businesses are targeting an ever greater slice of the security budget pie, becoming proactive trusted advisors as well as resellers and integrators of technology. 90% of security sales go through channel partners.

Influencers: Third party analysts and commentators who seek to be the first with new trends, spot the most promising new vendors and be the trusted source of objective opinion for their clients

All marketing is becoming influencer-led, and security marketing is no different.

As older Millennials become buyers, the ‘top down’ tactics of webinars and white papers, conferences and paid advertising have to work alongside peer-led discovery through communities and niche influencers.

Presence in technical communities is important because alongside discovery of new tools and techniques, peers will share values and philosophies. Younger generations seek like minded vendors, not just the latest technology. Tribal buying becomes even more dominant when security buying is divided by geographical and regulatory boundaries. Quite simply, we trust those like us and we buy from those we like.



The rise of evidence-led marketing

Enterprise customers are expected to have visibility of each emerging threat, know how protected they are and know how to optimise to reduce any risk. They get assessed on surety not promises.

Outsourcing any part of their organisation's security to a third party is risky. Enterprise CISOs are seeking total control and visibility of the security puzzle they are assembling. They are asking vendors to show evidence that their tools can deliver their part of the puzzle, how they do so, and how they are optimising it.

In this way cyber security marketing is moving from a period of trust and promises, to one of evidence and deep collaboration.

Vendors are being asked to:

1. Provide evidence of a product's benefits so the customer can confidently use the product as intended
2. Work with security engineers to help customers assess products with their own data rather than a manufactured 'demo'
3. Allow customers to customise generic solutions to their own specific needs
4. Be open and honest about their strengths and weaknesses
5. Use common taxonomies, standards, frameworks and protocols to make integration easier, including APIs that work with any tool, not just 'preferred' partners
6. Be easily testable, scalable and easy to navigate without the Vendor's involvement

These demands require products to be built in new ways, and marketing and sales to understand their product with ever more detail.

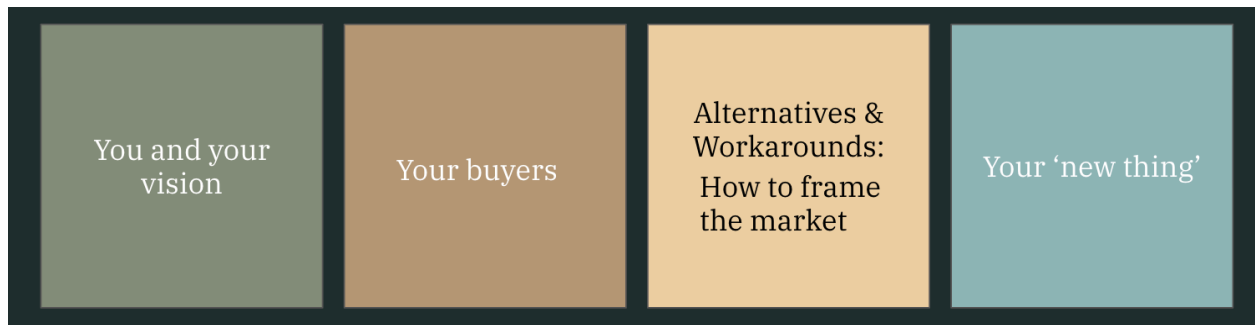
Marketing becomes about helping buyers buy through problem solving and providing honest recommendations. Trust is built through this kind of honesty, resulting in leads through recommendation.



Creating a Go To Market plan fit for modern cyber security marketing

Elysian Fields has many years experience in niche and complex technology positioning, go to market strategy and creative marketing.

Our process gathers insights from 4 key areas



1. YOU & YOUR VISION

Who you are, what you stand for, how you operate, why a buyer should go on their journey with you, when and where you show up best.

Our webinar on our process, including detail on discovering and communicating your vision can be found here

<https://elysianfields.co/webinar-positioning-how-to-stand-out-in-the-market/>



2. YOUR BUYERS

Jobs to be Done

Buyers hire products to get jobs done. The Jobs to be Done methodology helps all customer facing functions, from product to sales and marketing, align their offering with the Jobs buyers are trying to get done.

This allows teams to go deeper into insights and the challenges buyers face than Persona-based marketing. Personas are types of people and roles you can target. So it's useful top level insight. Jobs to be Done goes deeper: understand the Jobs and you understand what motivates each buyer you speak to.

We gather groups of buyers together based on Jobs, and then find the Persona elements that are useful for targeting. For example, we may be targeting security engineers trying to evaluate pen testing suppliers.

There are steps in the process of getting that Job that go far beyond the usual Persona insight. Break down the Jobs into the process of getting it done and you get to specific tasks that either block adoption of your product or service, or accelerate it. You can add value by helping the buyer with each stage of their process.

To discover the stages, speak to buyers in well managed one to one interviews. When on a sales call, or meeting someone in a conference, talk to them about the Jobs they are trying to get done and struggling with ("What are you tasked with this year?", "What's holding you back?"). Ask about alternatives they use to get the Job done, and the people and timings involved.

The steps to getting a Job done is where the real insight lies.

Our webinar on Jobs to be Done goes into this in more detail

<https://elysianfields.co/webinar-positioning-jobs-to-be-done-for-marketers/>



Discovering products

Buyers typically discover new products in a top down, and bottom up manner. CISOs are drowning in cold outreach, so involving the team is not only sensible, it's essential to save time. Cold outreach works, but we find targeted ABM combined with provocative positioning and community involvement makes it work better.

How two example Personas (each with their own Jobs to be Done) discover products and services:

1. Decision makers

As the decision makers, CISOs and their team work top down.

Leaders, aware of business and risk compliance needs, create a shortlist of possible products from peer feedback, analyst recommendations, resellers and consulting firms, integrators and investors. Their Jobs include ensuring their organisation is compliant, providing paper trails of decision making for regulation purposes, ensuring new threats are monitored and protected against, ensuring the human element of risk prevention is invested in, and so on.

2. End users

As the end-users of products, Security engineers work bottom up.

Engineers keep track of emerging threats, play with new methods in their own time and share new technology and methods with their peers in Discords, BSides and DEF CON events.

Their Jobs to be Done include conducting regular risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities in systems and processes, evaluating the impact of potential threats and implementing mitigation strategies, ensuring security infrastructure complies with industry standards and regulations and so on.

Answering the needs of these influencers (who will also use and potentially reject your product later on) is essential.



3. ALTERNATIVES & WORKAROUNDS: HOW TO FRAME THE MARKET

Buyers go on journeys to solve problems and get Jobs done. They buy outcomes not products. They will look at service as well as product companies (the two are now merging anyway). They conduct Build vs Buy analysis and other investigations unique to their organisation.

Consequently 'Decision Journeys' should be mapped and the Jobs at each stage understood. These Journeys should capture needs, research touch points, emotions and concerns, competitor claims and reality, potential messages and the best sales experiences your people and product should create

There are two inputs:

1. The Maturity Stages of buyers in the market.

Maturity Stages reflect where the market is at in its own maturity, and where buyers are in their internal skills, tools and teams.

The maturity of each buyer depends on the Jobs they are trying to get done, and how skillful they are and the resources they have to achieve them. The adoption curve is one way to view this.

The maturity of the market depends on the evolution of the technology and the players within it. The Gartner hype curve is one way of viewing this.

You can have early adopter (mature) experimenters in an immature market, just as you can have laggards (immature) entering a mature market for the first time.

Markets tend to follow three maturity stages:



‘Nascent’ markets will focus on solving a problem that is little understood and has many methods being tested by new vendors (think AI tools).

‘Emerging’ markets have solved the problem and vendors compete over the benefits of solving the problem (think electric cars competing over mileage and features).

‘Mature’ markets are well established and vendors compete over new niches (think charcoal toothpaste, or CRM tools for charities)

2. The Value Gap

The Value Gap is the space between where your prospects are in their journey up the maturity ladder, where they want to be.

Plot where your buyers are currently (their skills, maturity etc), where they want to get to (their Jobs, goals and KPIs) and explore how you will get them there. List how you can help them from A to B. Your ‘how’ will be the critical piece: describe how you solve their problems and how you will get them to where they want to get to, step by step.

Our webinar on Jobs to be Done goes into this in more detail

<https://elysianfields.co/webinar-positioning-jobs-to-be-done-for-marketers/>



4. YOUR 'NEW THING'

Your 'new thing' is the innovation that will help you become newsworthy.

While technical novelty may create your product, how your product or service, evaluation of your offer will rest on how you solve the problems of buyers and get their Jobs done. We see that 'how' you get these Jobs done, not so much 'what' you offer will deliver the leads. Once buyers understand what you offer and where you sit in the puzzle, they will quickly want to know 'how' you achieve the control and visibility they seek.

Our webinar on Value Propositions, covering the concept of the 'new thing' in more detail can be found here

<https://elysianfields.co/webinar-positioning-value-propositions/>



The Go To Market deliverables

1. Targeting

1.1. Selling Direct: targeting CISOs, CTOs and SMBs (virtual CISOs)

Our Value Proposition work uncovers, from the above insight process, the Urgent, Relevant, Novel and Surprising benefits of what you do and how you do it.

Urgent:

We have to push sales along. If you're not Urgent you're a "one day" purchase

Relevant:

When you know the buyer Jobs and OKRs you can be relevant to their needs

Novel and Surprising:

To create fame, reach and frequency we need to be 'new news'. To be news you have to have a story that affects the lives of buyers today and in a novel way. We seek to find novelty that is also relevant and proven. Otherwise it's a gimmick.

1.2. Selling through Channel: working with distributors, integrators, MSSPs and other Channel partners

With several thousand vendors, cyber security marketing is cluttered. Doing the same thing as everyone else won't help. While we help B2B clients build a semi-automated 'Growth Machine' with funnels and data attribution pre-organised, and expert content delivered to all channels regularly, we don't believe this is all they will need to drive qualified leads.



Channel sales make up the vast majority of cyber security sales. We split Channel partners into two groups: 1. Recommenders and 2. Expert Partners

1. Recommenders

These are aligned businesses seeking to make money from being in the right place to recommend a solution. They include cyber insurance companies who are incentivised to reduce the risk of clients, and Venture or PE firms seeking to improve the security of their portfolios.

2. Expert Partners

MSSPs, integrators and other consultancies tread a tightrope: they need to understand the latest technology but they can only recommend those they are expert in and are proven.

So many new vendors struggle to become credible with these channel partners. The route is to offer the consultancy free revenue for little effort. If you've secured a few large clients, you can partner with the consulting business to deliver the strategy and support services. In addition they then have access to those clients to sell further services. Channel sales partners will then need a deep relationship with the new vendor's team to explain the product, and the relationship will need to be close and personal until established.

Other partners include Data platforms that can increase the use of their platforms through additional services, and individual consultant CISOs who service SMBs.

2. Positioning

First your business needs to be found. Fame is a sales lubricant: the better known you are, the safer the purchase. The old IBM adage is still true, especially in security sales



when 90% of sales volume comes through channel partners and they become ‘full stack’ security providers.

The good news is that most cyber businesses are terrible at Positioning. They use acronyms, jargon invested headlines with opaque promises about safety or threat detection. It’s waffle and it annoys buyers.

Good positioning isn’t about your product. It’s about framing the market for the buyer.

Your Positioning needs to help buyers buy, which means three things:

1. Why the problem is serious
2. What you do to solve the problem and How you do it
3. Why now is the time to buy

3. Marketing strategy and Execution

Older millennials are increasingly senior buyers. This generation discover through peers, want to play with tools and find the value quickly, want to qualify themselves and ask social / Discord / Slack / Signal / IRC communities for what’s best, want to go deep on the technology without too many barriers, want honesty, openness and a partnership not just a transaction.

We map out the best marketing tactics to deploy across all channels for each Persona, to get each Persona’s jobs done.

We help you build trust through your industry leadership knowledge, monitor how customers talk about you and help you respond to social discussions. In this way trust can be built through brand and tone consistency across marketing channels.



Once we have the Journey, we can build the Funnel. We understand when in the Journey buyers need to Know, Like and Trust you, what will get them moving to each stage, and how to measure it.

Our data dashboards are built for the funnel and our 'B2B marketing in a box' service loads up all the essential elements of content marketing, advertising and outreach, both paid and earned. Our PR automation service uncovers influencers and topics that will interest them. Then we reach out and build visibility.

These tools are increasingly powered by AI, so our customers get greater quality at greater volume for set fees.

4. Sales enablement for the whole company

Selling is about solving customer problems and understanding how the vendor can help get buyer Jobs done.

Sellers need empathy - to be interested and interesting.

A win-win sales conversation is just that - a conversation not a pitch. If sales cycles take 6 months, that's lots of conversations. In fact, we know we need 11-20 quality engagements where we add value through expert advice, free help, honest recommendations etc, to garner a B2B sale. We see this in data showing how many content and 'free help' touch points prospects engage with, alongside anecdotal evidence from experienced sales people.

Depending on your sales process, sales enablement support can range from onboarding and training reps, to battle cards, BANT (budget, authority, need, timing) qualification and 'exit criteria' expectation setting, and closing support.

There are three types of sales process - each requiring a different sales enablement methodology.



1. Low complexity:

‘Transactional’ sales processes have high volume and lower average selling prices. There is little risk to the buyer and a light touch sales involvement. Cyber security vendors rarely fit into this group.

2. Medium complexity:

‘Advanced’ sales requires more steps, stakeholders and risk than transitional ones. For example, selling analytics software, pen testing services or cyber insurance would fit into this group. The sales stages will be

1. Qualification
2. Evaluation setup
3. Evaluation
4. Proposal
5. Closing

Multiple decision makers will need to be courted, several meetings needed, SDRs, AEs and sales engineers will be involved.

3. High complexity:

‘Complex’ sales processes involve business critical purchases and take the longest time. These might be critical IT purchases like ERP systems, multi-year government contracts or security critical purchases like cloud infrastructure. Many more people are involved on both sides, with sign off at the highest levels. Common stages include:

1. Qualification
2. Preliminary evaluation
3. Executive presentations



4. Proof of concept (POC)
5. Proposal
6. Committee review
7. Closing

For all these sales approaches we help ensure content (for sales people to easily access) has a long half life. Demo's get old quickly. Customer stories and category reframing blogs and thought pieces last a lot longer if targeted at each buyer type.

Using the Jobs to be Done method we help clients create content, scripts and value creating nurture processes that match a) the Decision Journeys of each Persona and b) the Jobs to be Done for each stage of each Decision Journey.



In summary

We strongly believe the whole organisation should be aligned behind the Jobs buyers are trying to get done.

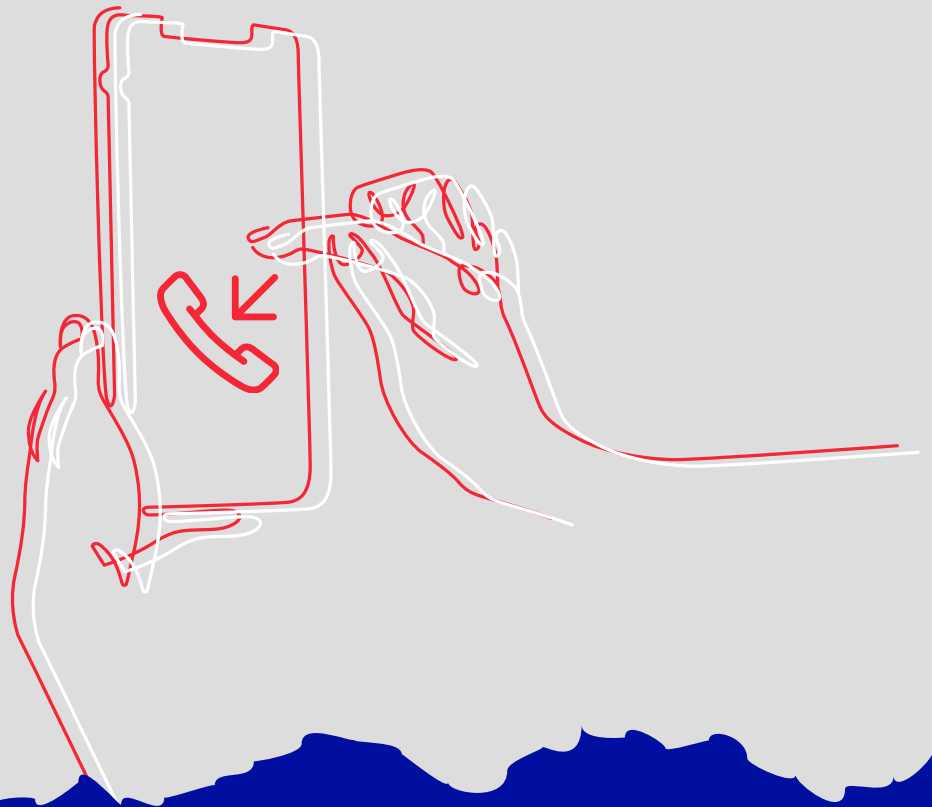
Solve their Jobs by being more helpful and flexible than your competition and you have a chance to make a sale. The insight captured in the above methods is invaluable throughout the Go To Market process, and is catnip for sales people who can talk meaningfully with buyers about the subtleties of their challenges.

This insight is also inspiring for creative ideas that can cut through the noise of everyday Boring 2 Boring marketing and delivers long term competitive advantage for brands. This approach creates significant enterprise value, as the boldness and consistency of marketing that is generated allows investors and corporate buyers to find you, appreciate your difference and value your offering higher than peers. We have several recent case studies of this.

So if you're a CMO or CEO of a cyber security business that is struggling to stand out and get quality qualified leads, we can help. We get you from ordinary to outstanding in 8 weeks.

Get in touch at

<https://elysianfields.co/get-in-touch/>



ELYSIANFIELDS.CO