



As we look forward to the year ahead, let's take a moment and look back at the past 12 months in B2B marketing. From tougher privacy regulations to quantum leaps in marketing technology, 2018 has so far proven to be a very exciting year for us marketers.

We scoured a year's worth of events and headlines to compile this collection of industry-defining moments that helped shape B2B marketing. So, without further ado, here are 2018's biggest B2B stories:

## **1. Data breaches continue to break records**

This year, we saw cyberattacks steadily worsen. It seemed that almost every week, different companies had to inform customers and users of a data breach—including compromised databases at Facebook, Quora, Exactis, and Marriott Starwood Hotels, among others.

Source: [Business Insider](#)

## 2. The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica debacle brings data privacy into spotlight



In March, news that third-party data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica allegedly harvested the personal data of some 50 million Facebook users without their consent hit the headlines. This raised questions about privacy rights and the limits of mass data mining for psychographic profiling.

Source: [NY Times](#)

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Related: [How the Cambridge-Analytica Scandal Will Shape Marketing](#)

## 3. The EU's GDPR rules come into full effect

Dubbed as the Y2K of B2B marketing, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) took effect on May 25. The new framework sought to enhance consumers' data privacy

rights and set restrictions on companies' use of personal data.

Source: [Forbes](#)



Here are 30 top-rated resources to help you go over your last-minute GDPR checklist

[Read article](#)

## 4. Major social sites tweak algorithms for tighter engagement



Both Facebook and LinkedIn made significant changes to their feed algorithms this year, causing a bit of a stir among marketers. In January, Facebook announced News Feed ranking updates aimed at promoting engagement among family and friends. LinkedIn also followed suit with its own tweaks to improve the impact of user updates.

Sources: [HubSpot](#) and [Social Media Today](#)

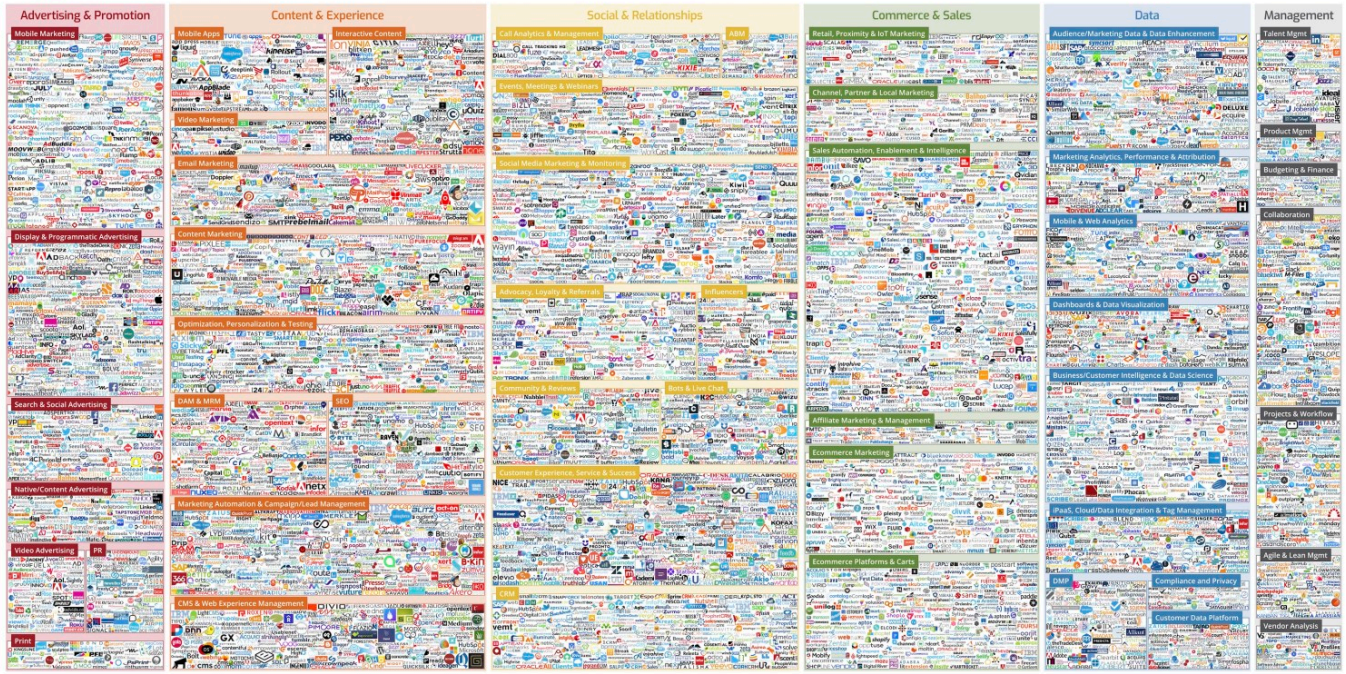
## **5. The digital revolution rages on**

The world gets even more connected. In early December, the UN revealed that half the world's population was already online. Not only that, Mary Meeker also reported that the time people spent online had also increased, while Gartner projected that IoT devices would reach 21 billion by 2020.

Sources: Telegraph, [Recode](#), and [InformationWeek](#)

## **6. MarTech ecosystem maintains double-digit growth**

In April, Scott Brinker published the much-awaited 2018 edition of his Marketing Technology Supergraphic. The visualization showed some pretty staggering figures: 6,829 solutions, 6,242 vendors, 55 categories, 27% year-on-year growth.



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Produced by Scott Brinker (@chiefmartec), Anand Thaker (@AnandThaker), and Blue Green Brands.

Source: [Scott Brinker](#)

## 7. Google’s algorithm updates point to future direction



Moz counted nine “confirmed” Google algorithm updates for 2018. While this was nothing out of the ordinary, many of this year’s changes gave marketers a hint where things seemed to be moving. The tell-tale updates included March’s mobile-first index rollout, July’s mobile page speed ranking, and August’s “medic” core update.

Source: [Moz](#)

## 8. Marketers are Data-driven, but few are data-ready

Despite being data-dependent, many marketers are still far from being data-ready. Forrester found that 82% of marketers struggled with data silos and 80% had a hard time managing data. Radius echoed these findings, citing issues like disparate data (55%), lack of analytical skills (33%), and dirty data (32%).

Sources: [Forrester](#) and [Radius](#)

## 9. Influencers demonstrate their B2B clout

If there had been any doubts about influencer marketing's role in B2B, this year's trends put them all to rest. B2B brands—including LinkedIn, SAP, Microsoft, American Express, IBM, Cisco, HP, and Salesforce—all have launched successful influencer marketing campaigns in 2018.

Source: [Grin](#)



Find out what top marketing influencers are grateful for in their careers and personal lives. Add this expert roundup post to your Thanksgiving reading list.

[Read article](#)

## 10. The Marketing Cloud Wars intensify



Adobe bought Marketo for a cool \$4.75 billion in September, marking Adobe's entry into the B2B space. But, more than just a landmark deal, Adobe's move signaled an escalation of the Microsoft-Adobe vs. Salesforce-Google vs Oracle melee known as the "Marketing Cloud Wars".

Sources: [TechCrunch](#) and [Diginomica](#)

**Conclusion:** Before we wave goodbye to 2018, it's nice to sit back and ponder where we've been in the last 12 months as a B2B marketing community. More importantly, though, it's always rewarding to learn as much as we can from our journey. And so with that, we say:

## Happy New Year!

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