

State of Developer Marketing

Trends & Reports

The past couple of years have seen accelerated innovation in almost every industry – the developer community included. While some of the innovation within the developer community was born out of necessity, other advancements were brought on by the emergence of developer-first communities and their desire to derive more from the tools and resources at their disposal. This, coupled with the rising influence of developers in purchasing decisions and the rapidly evolving state of the tech industry, has made it clear to software vendors that forging authentic, strong relationships with their developer audience is now a must.

The shift towards bottom-up decision making, where front-line developers are the ones informing technology purchases, as opposed to business executives, has made one thing obvious to software marketers: developer marketing is no longer a nice-to-have – it's a must-have.

As it stands, developer marketers are cobbling together disparate tools and resources to build a hodgepodge solution, as opposed to a unified and comprehensive one. While developer marketing is still in its infancy, the most innovative developer marketing teams are starting to forge the recipe for effectively attracting, educating, and retaining developer audiences.

The developer community is bigger than ever before, and their influence over purchasing decisions cannot be ignored. Suffice to say, figuring out how to systematically attract developers to products will be the key that shifts developer marketing from the nascent profession that it is today, into a strategic contributor in a company's commercial functions.

Let's take a look at the current state of developer marketing to get a sense of where it is today, and what the future looks like.

The Need for Developer Marketing Can No Longer Be Ignored

Within your developer audience exists a wealth of opportunity. Looking at market trends and recent data, we can glean a few important points about the developer community at large.

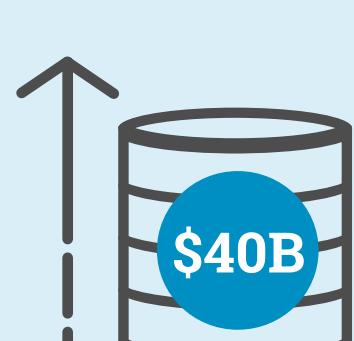
From 2019-2030, the developer population is expected to grow 67%

Growth Expectation (Worldwide)



Source

Their Opinions Hold Tremendous Value



Developers are expected to consume or influence \$40 billion in product purchase decisions.

Source

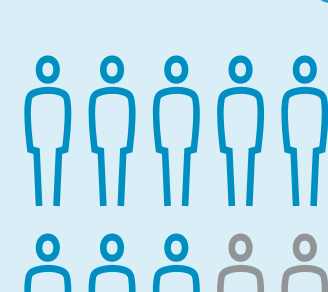
The Number of APIs is Continuing to Climb

By 2035, there will be 1 trillion APIs.



Source

Developers Want to Know About Your Technology



81% of developers participate in developer communities/programs to discover new technologies or techniques.

Source

The way software is purchased has changed rapidly and in a short period. While purchasing decisions were historically made by senior-level leadership, today's buyers are largely comprised of end-users and developers.

Product-led growth that places end users and developers at the center of your marketing efforts is the modern approach. More and more, marketing organizations will need to adapt this approach in order to keep up with the new way that software is being purchased.

The success of market leaders that have adopted a developer-centric and bottom-up mindset speaks for itself. More on their successes below.

Exciting Developers Starts with Educating Them

When it comes to driving product adoption within developers, let your product do the talking. Taking a superfluous, vague approach to how you communicate with and educate your developers will inevitably lead to subpar results.

Consider that many developers have ad blockers installed that will prevent your ads from ever reaching them. On top of that, developers rarely open emails from unfamiliar companies or contacts.

These signs suggest that using traditional marketing methods to attract developers is a surefire way to turn them away, let alone the negative ROI that your marketing budget will experience. To deliver a straightforward, streamlined, and informative experience that caters to the developer's needs and wants, embracing educational developer marketing is a must.

Developer marketing is an undeniable driver of success for software companies. As an off-chute of product-led growth, which relies on your offerings as the main vehicle to acquire, excite, and retain customers, developer marketing has the power to create a ubiquitous and frictionless experience for your audience that prioritizes education over forced adoption.

As the following data demonstrates, the positive impact of developer marketing can no longer be ignored.

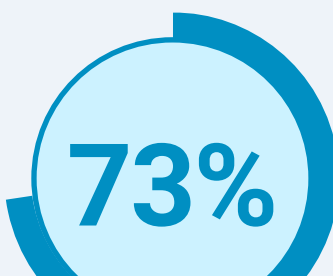


“Engineers are naturally curious people who will be far more interested in content that teaches them something rather than just trying to get them to buy.”

– Ashley Smith, former CMO at GitLab



Developers Want Hands-On Learning Material



73% of developers want software vendors to provide how-to articles, tutorials, APIs, SDKs, and a self-help knowledge base

Source

Developer Marketing Teams Don't Know How to Justify Their Efforts

Only,



27% of DevRel practitioners justify their developer program with a calculated dollar gain per developer, and only



21% justify the developer program with how developers directly contribute to revenue.

Source

Market Leaders Are Forging the Path

- Atlassian sold \$320 million of software in 2015 using a low-touch sales model (as opposed to the high-touch, high-cost traditional sales model). (Source)
- Stripe, Snyk, and MongoDB are killing it with developers as their core audience (we're talking more than \$100 billion in market value). (Source)
- After embracing a developer-first marketing approach, Cybereason grew to 9000+ course enrollments and 2500+ course completions in 12 months. (Source)

The success and potential of developer-led growth is no longer in doubt. As the developer community continues to grow and gain more decision-making power, the time to embrace developer marketing strategies is now. Investing in a proven turnkey solution helps you go to market quicker while increasing the success rate of your developer marketing initiative.

So how can you make it happen?

There's a Better Way to Attract, Excite, and Retain Developers

A developer-focused product requires a developer-centric marketing approach. We've covered this extensively in our [What is Developer Marketing? guide](#), but it's worth repeating – understanding the nuances of your developer audience and knowing what learning material will resonate with them will ultimately determine if your developer marketing program succeeds or fails.

Now, you have two main options when it comes to building out the technology stack for your developer marketing program:

1 Use your internal resources to build, maintain, optimize, and potentially bootstrap several technologies into a developer marketing tech stack

2 Purchase a turnkey developer marketing platform that can be quickly implemented

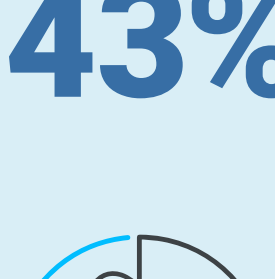
If you go with Option #1, keep in mind that building your developer marketing tech stack will also require that you identify (at a minimum) which technologies you'll use to deliver learning content to developers, how you'll create and host your [product sandboxes](#), how you'll integrate your platform data with your CRM and marketing automation software, and building the reports to show the ROI from your developer marketing initiative.

Needless to say, it's a significant undertaking to build or bootstrap a developer marketing tech stack from the ground up.

Developers Are Willing to Hear Your Sales Team Out



43% of developers would work with sales while trying to figure out a product.

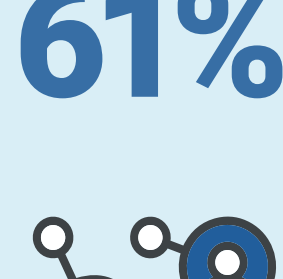


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Effective Developer Marketing Forges Stronger Developer Relationships



61% of developers say that software vendors who provide access to testing tools and test scenarios (hands-on labs) will deepen their relationship with developers



Source

Still, Developer Marketing is Hard to Execute On



16% of developer marketing leaders are struggling to find the right arguments to support their program,

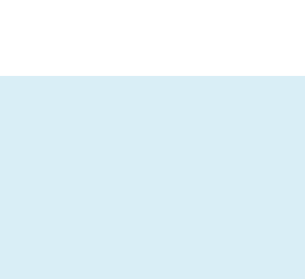


19% feel that their program is being taken for granted.

Source

They're Also Not Being Measured Properly

When asked what the lifetime gain was from an onboarded developer that converted through their developer marketing program, 38% of respondents said they simply didn't know.



Source

A turnkey solution, on the other hand, enables you to go to market faster with a proven and trusted developer marketing platform. An established developer marketing platform can get your developer university built in weeks – complete with all of the core features and tools to drive product awareness, product adoption, and product education within your targeted developer audiences.

Relying on a tried-and-true developer marketing platform – used by several leading software companies like Redix, Dremio, Chef Software, Snowflake, Kong HQ and others – will allow you and your developer marketing team to remain focused on your most pressing responsibility: driving product adoption within developers.

Ultimately, the decision on how you build your developer marketing tech stack is yours. As long as your efforts are built around educating and empowering developers to better understand and engage with your product, you will be well-positioned to forge strong connections with developers.

There's Never Been a Better Time to Embrace Developer Marketing

Developers are gaining more influence over software purchasing decisions, their population is growing, and it's clear that their product evaluation process differs from other audiences – yet only 43% of software companies have dedicated developer marketing initiatives. Putting these pieces together, there's never been a more important and opportune time for software companies to launch a developer marketing program and reap the benefits it can offer.

Whether you opt for an in-house or turnkey solution, making effective developer marketing a priority for your organization today will inevitably lead to increased product adoption, awareness, and engagement in the years to come.

[Learn More](#)