



MARKETING TIPS

Optimising The Customer Journey

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HERTFORDSHIRE'S GROWTH MARKETING AGENCY

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The Customer Journey Defined

When we talk about the customer journey, we are referring to the entire customer experience from the first interaction with a company or brand, right through to purchase and thereafter. Mapping the journey needs to consider everything the customer sees, hears, thinks and feels at each stage.

This process of documenting the full customer experience helps business owners to understand customer needs and expectations throughout the buying process, which in turn will help to formulate marketing strategy. The benefits of optimising the customer journey can be realised in the outcomes of marketing efforts across all digital outlets (website, social media, email, mobile, telephony).



Customer behaviour is more dynamic than ever. Today's customers have:

- More complex lives and more complex needs
- Demand for transparency (no hidden costs or small print)
- Shortened attention spans (E.g., 10 sec. videos)
- More channels and touchpoints (E.g., social media)
- Less patience with disconnect and wanting to be in the loop

Therefore, it is crucial as a business owner to understand:

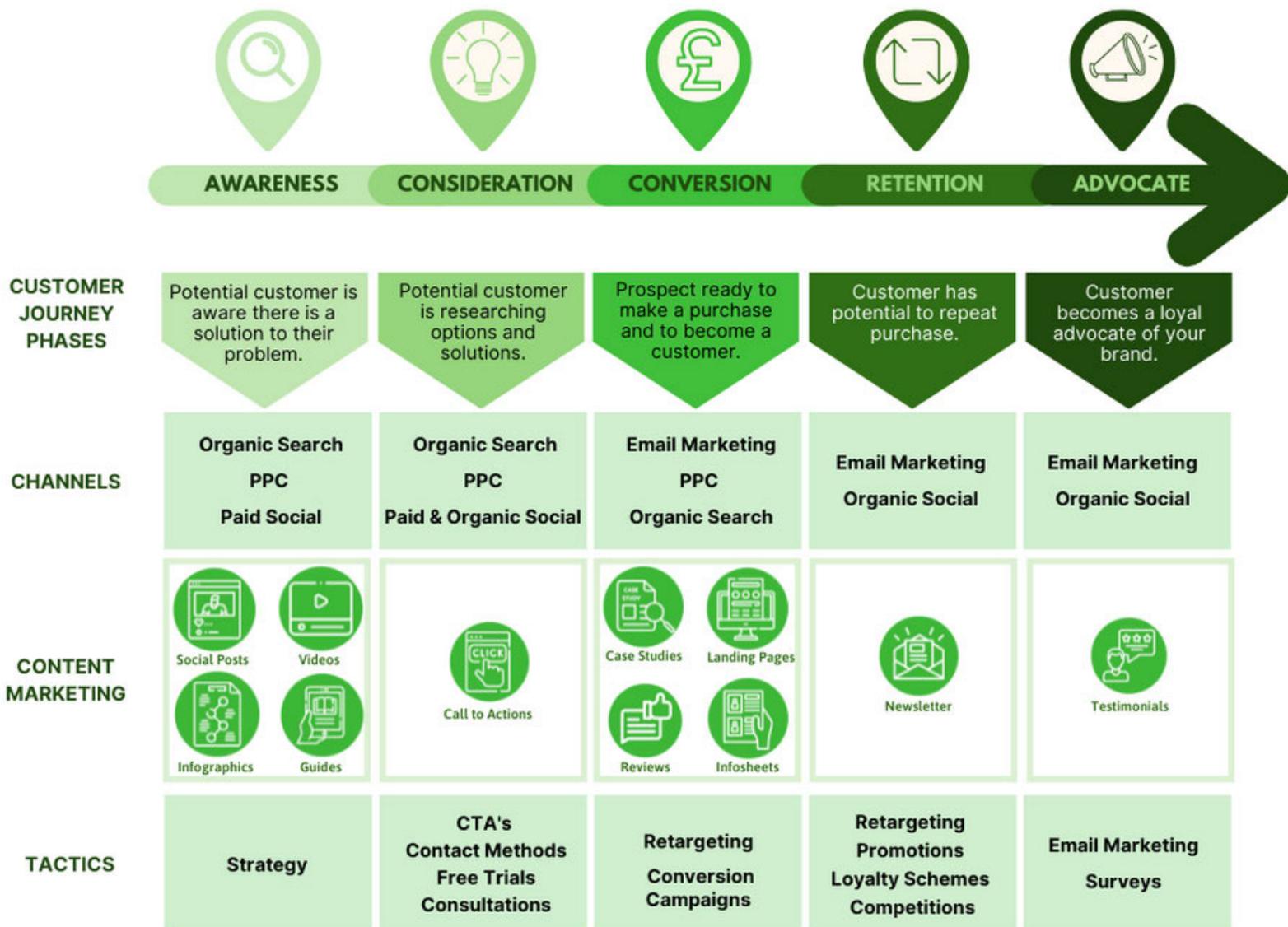
- What it is doing well (so it can keep doing it)
- When, where and why customers get stuck in their decision-making process
- Where disconnect happens and why?
- Where it can make positive interventions which could help change outcomes

Customer Journey Mapping

refers to Customer Touchpoints, which are defined as any way consumers can interact with a company or brand, for example, word of mouth, via the website, social media, or any other form of communication. The value of great Customer Experience (CX) rests on each stage of the customer journey.

The 5 Phases of the Customer Journey

It is generally acknowledged that there are **5 phases of the customer journey**. These are **Awareness, Consideration, Decision (Conversion), Retention (Delight) and Advocacy**.



Delving deeper in the stages of a customer journey

The aim should be to deliver value at every stage of the customer journey.

STEP 1:

Awareness

At the initial awareness stage, customers have identified that they have a need or a problem that they need a solution for. At this early stage, customers will be actively researching information. When journey mapping, it is important to understand where your potential customers are coming from, what are the customer touchpoints, and what channel(s) are driving the most valuable traffic to your business. During the awareness stage, the first interaction with your company, is the first impression and therefore it is crucially important to offer value to prospects and build trust.

Most importantly, at this stage a company should demonstrate that it understands the customer's needs or problems, providing enough information to help them find what they are looking for.

STEP 2:

Consideration

The next stage in the customer journey is the consideration stage. At this point, prospects have been researching options and solutions, but will continue researching. During this stage, prospects will likely be doing competitor comparisons, reading customer reviews, and digging deeper into your products or services. At this stage, prospective customers will reach out for more information through contact forms and other methods of communication (E.g., telephone, social media). **Methods to maximise the journey at this stage includes new trial sign ups, product sales, activation after app download.**

The goal should be to ensure these prospects learn the benefits and value of your product or service and why they should choose you over your competitors.

Delving deeper in the stages of a customer journey (cont.)

STEP 3:

Decision

At this stage, a prospective customer is ready to select from their options and make a purchase. It's at this stage of the customer journey map when **customer reviews, case studies, testimonials, awards** and any relevant accreditations or certifications are crucial.

Since buyers are beginning to rely on peer-to-peer reviews more now than ever before, not having any reviews for your product or service could potentially have a negative effect.

Showcasing case studies to your prospects at this stage is very beneficial. **Social proof** that your product or service does what you say it will do is imperative during the decision stage. Solicit testimonials from previous customers and showcase them on your website and other places where prospects will be visiting to find out more information about you, your company, and brand.



Mama Bamboo

1 review

★★★★★ a year ago

Positive: Professionalism

The team at On Brand offer a premium, professional service to support your business. They have helped us with the full range of marketing skills and expertise from social media management, to web design, graphic design, and print media. The recent team expansion has also brought us a really valuable client reporting capability which has given us more insight and understanding.



Kate Lindeman

6 reviews · 1 photo

★★★★★ 10 months ago

OnBrand are such a brilliant team and welcoming group of people who really know their stuff. I had brilliant support from Wendy and she helped me get my brand story straight. She was hugely constructive and I am really enjoying implementing ... [More](#)



Jo Lovell

1 review

★★★★★ a year ago

Positive: Professionalism, Responsiveness

Love working with the team at OnBrand - they've really helped our small business find it's feet in the digital marketing space.

Delving deeper in the stages of a customer journey (cont.)

STEP 4:

Retention

Once customers have made the decision to purchase products or services from your company, the most important stage of the overall customer journey is retention. It is widely acknowledged by business owners that it is much easier, and around five times cheaper to retain an existing customer than it is to acquire a new one. Once a prospect has been converted to a customer, a reasonable amount of trust has been built in the previous stages of the customer journey. However, you now need to work extra hard to keep building on and maintaining the trust.

A crucial element of the retention strategy should be developing **good two-way customer communications, gathering feedback, and ensuring you adapt to ever evolving customer needs**. It is important to assess your retention and churn rate take learnings from what is working and what isn't to reduce churn. Acknowledging and rewarding loyalty will also form a key component of your retention strategy.



STEP 5:

Advocacy

The final stage of the customer journey is often thought of as the hardest to achieve. If your customers become active advocates of your brand, the ultimate achievement is realised. Advocates will say great things about your company and refer others via word-of-mouth to friends, family, colleagues, and business associates. Referrals are often thought of as the most powerful kind of marketing your company can ever have. To encourage this level of advocacy, business owners need to nurture customers at every step of the way along the customer journey.

Ensuring that you deliver on all your promises and provide over and above customer expectations, gives the best chance of creating brand advocates. There is no shame in asking happy customers to spread the word. Tools such as Net Promoter Score, referral email campaigns and social sharing can all be used effectively to achieve this. Some of the most successful companies today are built on powerful referral and word of mouth marketing.

Mapping the Customer Journey

An important process with any marketing strategy involves mapping out each stage of your existing customer journey, walking in the customer's shoes, and examining touchpoints, processes, systems architecture, and data flows to identify how to optimise the customer journey. Customer journey mapping shows how and where customers make decisions and identifies which information is useful to them. Through the process of mapping, businesses can identify ways in which to educate customers to take the steps you want and helps businesses to design the content marketing strategy.

Identifying who your existing customers are and comparing this to your target audience enables the creation of customer personas. It would be typical to create several different customer personas for each of your target groups which serve like fictional resumes based on factual analysis of real, typical clients to profile the typical demographics, including lifestyle and behaviour of each persona.

Once these customer personas have been created, the process of mapping the journey can begin. An effective way to do this is to arrange a workshop with company staff from different areas of the business (marketing, sales, customer service etc).

The workshop should aim to establish personas, and then identify touchpoints at each stage of the customer journey, with discussions forming around what is currently working, what isn't - and how to alter touchpoints to improve experience and enable certain behaviours. Using large wall space to map out visually with post-it notes, is an effective way to illustrate the entire journey and makes for an interactive and productive session.



Summary

Understanding the customer journey is critical to perfecting the sales funnel and gaining advantage over competitors. Dissecting and perfecting the customer experience at every stage of interaction will determine your content marketing strategy and help to form all marketing digital campaigns.

Conducting the process on a regular basis enables businesses to cater to and nurture its customers vigilantly, adapting where market conditions change or where the business is looking to change direction.



OnBrand - What we can do for you



At OnBrand, we work to truly understand your target audience so that the right strategy is in place to deliver on your business goals.

With our extensive understanding of the customer journey, we can help with messaging and content creation so that your target audience is engaged at every step and ultimately drives sales.

To find out more, visit our website or contact one of the team directly to speak with you about your business goals.

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