



MAPPING YOUR B2B BUYER'S JOURNEY for Inbound Marketing

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT YOUR BUYER'S JOURNEY

Today, buyers are in control; they have the steering wheel and the throttle. They choose how they move through the journey. They choose where and how fast. They choose when. They choose how.

And, as a result, Marketing now owns a bigger piece of the buyer's journey pie (because 70% of buying process is done before ever reaching out to a sales rep). That means ***Marketing must anticipate what the buyer is thinking and doing at every stage in order to attract them to the website, and convert them into a lead.***

This guide will help you clearly articulate what your buyers are doing and thinking – and how they're behaving – at each stage of the journey so that you can develop content that precisely aligns with what they're looking for.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET

How to use this worksheet. Use the format to understand each stage and use the blank template to develop questions for each of your personas.

THE STAGES OF THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

Every buyer goes through 4 basic stages, starting with the point at which he understands he has a problem to be solved (or opportunity to take advantage of). After that he passes through the Consideration and Decision stages until, hopefully, he's a customer. At each stage, his needs and behaviors are different, and the content you attract him with must align with both.

	Awareness Stage	Consideration Stage	Decision Stage	Experience Stage
State of Mind	The buyer knows he has a problem or opportunity. He may not fully understand the scope of it (why/how it's happening or all the implications), and probably doesn't know much about solutions that are available.	He has clarified/defined his specific problem (or goal) and is beginning to look for and narrow down solution types.	At this stage, he's identified the most appropriate solution category (the right method or approach) and is preparing to make a vendor decision based on what's he's seen online.	Once a vendor partner decision has been made and they're your customer, it's up to you to earn future sales by delighting the customer with your care and additional products and services. Doing so will turn him into an ambassador for your company.
Buyer's Focus	Focus is on learning as much as possible about his problem and potential solutions.	Focus is on evaluating alternative solutions.	Focus is on selecting the best vendor/partner.	Focus is in obtaining the highest value from your product/services.
Actions For You To Take	Get your organization out there so they can find you! Once they find you, convince them you have a solution to their challenge.	Demonstrate how your business can solve their problem...and that your solution category is the best.	Close the deal!	Continue to delight the customer!

HOW TO COMPLETE THE STEPS: PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR PROSPECTS' SHOES!

		Purpose of this step	Explanation
STEP 1	What questions is he asking?	Identifying the questions your prospects are asking will help you get found in search.	Imagine yourself at each stage in your prospect's journey: What information would you be looking for? Remember, the earlier in the buyer's journey, the more basic and broad the information and, as he or she progresses along, more detail and evidence will be required to get on his or her "short list." If you were beginning your journey toward buying an in-ground swimming pool, you wouldn't start your search by Googling "cost of swimming pool replacement pumps." You'd start with "cost of in-ground swimming pool" or "best type of in-ground pool for cold climates"
STEP 2	What does the buying team look like?	To help your buyer "sell" your products/services to the rest of the buying team by educating and providing content with pass-along value.	Most buyers are influenced by another person within the organization (or must get approval from another person). This could be someone "above" him or her in the company's hierarchy, or someone junior who is helping research and provide recommendations. Don't underestimate the power of these people to affect your prospect's decisions.
STEP 3	What content formats make the most sense?	To create content in formats that are in sync with the buyer persona and the stage the buyer is in.	There are two considerations for this step: 1) the type of content that aligns to the stage , and 2) the preferences of the persona . For example, simpler content (checklists, tip sheets, blogs) are best suited for the Awareness stage when the prospect is just starting to understand the problem and do initial research. But you also have to consider the persona...if you're selling to mechanical engineers, a light, image-laden ebook may be less appropriate and less valuable to them than a document that includes technical specifications and detailed analysis.
STEP 4	Where does he look for answers?	To promote your content successfully by being where the buyer is..	Is your persona likely to use LinkedIn to find product solutions or industry/vendor information? What about social media like Facebook and Instagram? Where he or she "hangs out" will determine where you need to focus your efforts. Some personas won't use social media at all and, in that case, your sole focus will be on optimizing for search.
STEP 5	What keywords and terms resonate?	To optimize your content with keywords and relevant terms to ensure good search ranking.	What keywords and terms will he or she be using to find information? Long-tail keywords are going to get you more quality traffic ("best type of in-ground pool for cold climates" versus "in-ground swimming pools") because you're closely aligning with the prospects' specific needs.

EXAMPLE

BUYER JOURNEY MAP FOR INBOUND MARKETING

Acme Storage Tanks. Makes above ground storage tanks (ASTs) for industrial customers in a variety of industries.

Oil Refinery Facilities Manager. Oversees the operations of the refinery and is responsible for understanding the ongoing health/performance of the equipment.

Awareness Stage	Consideration Stage	Decision Stage	Experience Stage
<i>We've added refinery capacity and now need additional storage tanks to hold it all. I'm not sure which type is best for the products we store: welded steel, concrete, polyethylene or bolted steel.</i>	<i>It looks like for our purposes (storing crude oil), welded steel might be the best bet because it doesn't crack and doesn't react with oil.</i>	<i>I've identified 3 welded steel tank manufacturers that seem well-qualified. I'm using an evaluation approach that Company A provided.</i>	<i>Design and installation went well. Now I think I might be interested in a maintenance contract; I wonder if it makes sense.</i>

EXAMPLE

BUYER'S JOURNEY MAP FOR INBOUND MARKETING

	Awareness Stage	Consideration Stage	Decision Stage	Experience Stage
STEP 1 What questions is he asking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's the best type of tank to hold crude oil? How do you determine the right size of storage tank? What's the maximum capacity of an above-ground storage tank? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of tank lasts longest? What type of tank requires the least amount of maintenance? What do different types of storage tanks cost? Who customizes storage tanks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long does it take to build a storage tank? What's the life expectancy of a steel welded storage tank? What are the best above ground steel welded storage tank manufacturers? How do I calculate ROI on a storage tank? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does a tank maintenance contract look like? How much does a maintenance contract cost? What are signs a tank needs repair? How long should a tank last?
STEP 2 What does the buying team look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Manager Field Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Manager Field Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Manager Field Manager Purchasing Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Manager
STEP 3 What content formats make the most sense?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tip sheets Briefs Blogs Guides Overviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eBooks Reports Whitepapers Video demonstrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies Free assessments Vendor features/services comparisons Product literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefs Blogs Guides Overviews
STEP 4 Where does he look for answers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Trade show Peers Industry publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google LinkedIn (LinkedIn Company pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vendor websites LinkedIn (peers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Trade show Peers
STEP 5 What keywords and terms resonate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best storage tank for oil refinery Benefits of different types of storage tanks Life expectancy of storage tanks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of steel welded and steel bolted storage tanks Maintenance requirements for steel welded storage tanks Lifespan of steel welded storage tanks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steel welded storage tanks vendors Connecticut Best steel welded storage tank manufacturers NE Steel welded storage tank vendor reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storage tank maintenance contracts Storage tank maintenance Lifespan of steel storage tank

BLANK BUYER'S JOURNEY TEMPLATE

BUYER'S JOURNEY MAP FOR INBOUND MARKETING				
	Awareness Stage	Consideration Stage	Decision Stage	Experience Stage
STEP 1 What questions is he asking?				
STEP 2 What does the buying team look like?				
STEP 3 What content formats make the most sense?				
STEP 4 Where does he look for answers?				
STEP 5 What keywords and terms resonate?				



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