

Creating Content for All 4 Stages of The Buyer's Journey



In recent years, the importance of content marketing has grown significantly.

With so much competition for shoppers, it's crucial marketers understand the buyer's journey and how it should guide their content strategy and development.

In simple terms, the buyer's journey is the process a prospect goes through leading up to a purchase. It can vary from one product to the next, but the fundamentals remain the same: consumers become aware of a problem, consider their options, make a decision and then judge the outcome.

For marketers, the challenge becomes providing relevant content at the right time to shoppers at various stages.

Understanding your buyer's journey gives you a framework that can greatly help in the delivery of relevant and engaging content that ultimately turns more prospects into loyal customers.

Here's an overview of the different stages of the buyer's journey and what content often works well for each. We'll explore each stage in depth.

The Four Stages of the Buyer's Journey

1. Awareness

At this stage, potential customers are realizing some kind of problem or need and are open to solutions. They often perform research to better understand the issue and to define it in clearer terms.

As buyers are likely unaware of your company when they start their search, you need to show how you can help with your product or service. Ultimately, the content needs to focus on the buyer's pain points and should present your company as an expert in your field.

Content types that are typically found at this stage in the buyer's journey include:

- Blog posts
- Social posts
- Research studies
- Analyst reports
- eBooks and eGuides
- White papers
- Educational content

2. Consideration

Buyers have now clearly defined their need and are considering available options. Although they may be aware that your business offers a solution, they're not yet ready to make a commitment. They are still evaluating potential options, comparing prices and determining which are most likely to be able to fulfill their need.

In this stage, the most relevant types of content include:

- Comparison papers and articles
- Expert guides
- Case studies
- Podcasts
- Videos

3. Decision

This is the point at which buyers will choose which product to proceed with. As they may gather information to reinforce their preferred option, content can now be more brand-specific, highlighting your unique value proposition and competitive advantages.

Typical content at this stage includes:

- Vendor and product comparisons
- Product literature and demonstrations
- Case studies
- Testimonials
- Product reviews

4. Loyalty

Finally, your customers have made their purchase. However, this is not the end of your content marketing. Most buyers will be interested in best practices and guides to make sure they continually get value out of your product or service.

To develop better relationships with your customers, encourage loyalty and generate brand advocates, you must try to stay top-of mind by continually demonstrating your expertise through content. Customer advocates (those who speak positively about your company, product or service) are one of the most powerful marketing resources you can have, so your content should build trust and a sense of community.

The ideal types of content to keep customers engaged include:

- User guides
- Product-focused articles
- Product updates
- Customer newsletters

- Promotions and loyalty programs
- News and event details
- Surveys

The Right Content at the Right Time

The key to delivering more effective content is knowing the needs and interests of your audience at each stage of the buying process. Providing a variety of content tailored to each of those stages can help you engage and convert the most prospects possible.

Creating Content for the Awareness Stage

To start, we'll focus on the first phase in the customer lifecycle – awareness. This is where marketers use content to make potential customers aware of their product and push them towards considering potential solutions.

Who are You Targeting?

In the awareness stage, people may be experiencing a pain point and are looking for information to solve it, or they may need to know about a product that will provide value to them. At this stage, potential customers probably haven't heard of your company, let alone its products or services. This is where you need to step in and help them find you.

Where to Connect

Improving your organic search engine rankings remains one of the most effective ways to build brand awareness and drive potential customers to your website. According to a Pardot study, 70% percent of buyers turn to Google while in the research stage. This makes it incredibly important to create content that will improve your Google rankings and overall search engine presence.

At this point, you should be building up your content assets across various online platforms, including your website, blog and social media channels.

Effective Types of Content

Educational content is essential to develop initial interest and trust in your company. Your pool of prospects can be broad at this point, so produce content that appeals to as wide an audience as possible and establishes your company as a credible source of information. Specifically, create intriguing content that attracts attention rather than making it a hard sell.



Ideally, your content will answer questions most asked by your target audience. The ultimate goal is to introduce your brand's personality and help buyers become more informed, leaving them wanting more.

Educational content can be:

- Social media posts
- Infographics
- How-to blog posts
- Articles
- Videos and podcasts
- FAQ pages
- Research studies
- Industry reports
- Cheat sheets
- eBooks and eGuides

The more types of content you have, the better chance consumers can find it through search engines and recommendations on social media channels. This can then lead to more backlinks to your website and even more shares on social media. Increased engagement results in higher search rankings, which is crucial for building awareness and moving buyers closer to considering a purchase.

For best results, ensure that these resources are not only available on your website, but also linked to your social channels.

Optimizing Copy for Awareness-Stage Buyers

The first step in creating awareness-stage content is to define your target audience. One effective strategy is to create two or three buyer personas – fictional representations of your ideal customer. Think about what problems they face, their goals and the terminology they use. Then, create an editorial calendar with a variety of content that aligns with the needs and interests of each persona. Every piece of content should be relevant to one of the personas, answering questions they may have.

Compile a list of topics related to your industry, products and services. Then use this list to come up with corresponding keywords and keyword phrases buyers would type into search engines, such as:

- How to
- When is
- What is
- Where can I
- Best way to

Check out this great example of awareness-focused content from Lenovo. For this campaign, Lenovo teamed up with Instagram crafting celebrity, Amy Tangerine, to create a fun video how-to video that introduces viewers to their product.

You can then create landing pages around these keywords in relation to the products and services you sell. Keywords should be placed in titles, meta tags, landing page copy and CTA buttons.

Create Awareness and They Will Come

Creating awareness-stage content is key to building brand awareness and engaging prospects in the early stages of the buyer's journey. Content should focus on general topics and be able to answer common questions in a compelling way (try visual or video content!). After optimizing for search engines, this content can be promoted via online marketing channels and be ready for when a potential customer starts searching.

Creating Content for the Consideration Stage

The next stage in buyer's journey is the "consideration" stage. This is the point at which a potential customer is evaluating their options before committing to a purchase.

During this stage, smart marketers make effective use of the brand awareness they built by using content tactics that clearly differentiate their business from the

Need content for your blog or website?

Our content writers specialize in creating high-quality content for your website, blog, or online store.

[Learn More](#)

competition and build stronger relationships with a more defined group of potential customers.

Target the Right People

Effective targeting can be summarized simply: It's not just about who to target... it's about who to exclude.

In the consideration stage, shoppers are usually re-searching and comparing several companies that offer similar products or services. Therefore, your aim is to differentiate yourself to the extent that you deliberately exclude a subset of the market to appeal more strongly to another. Target marketing is inherently exclusionary – and that's a good thing.

Put Your Content Where it will Have the Biggest Impact

According a Pardot study, 70% of buyers use Google at least two or three times while researching during the consideration phase.

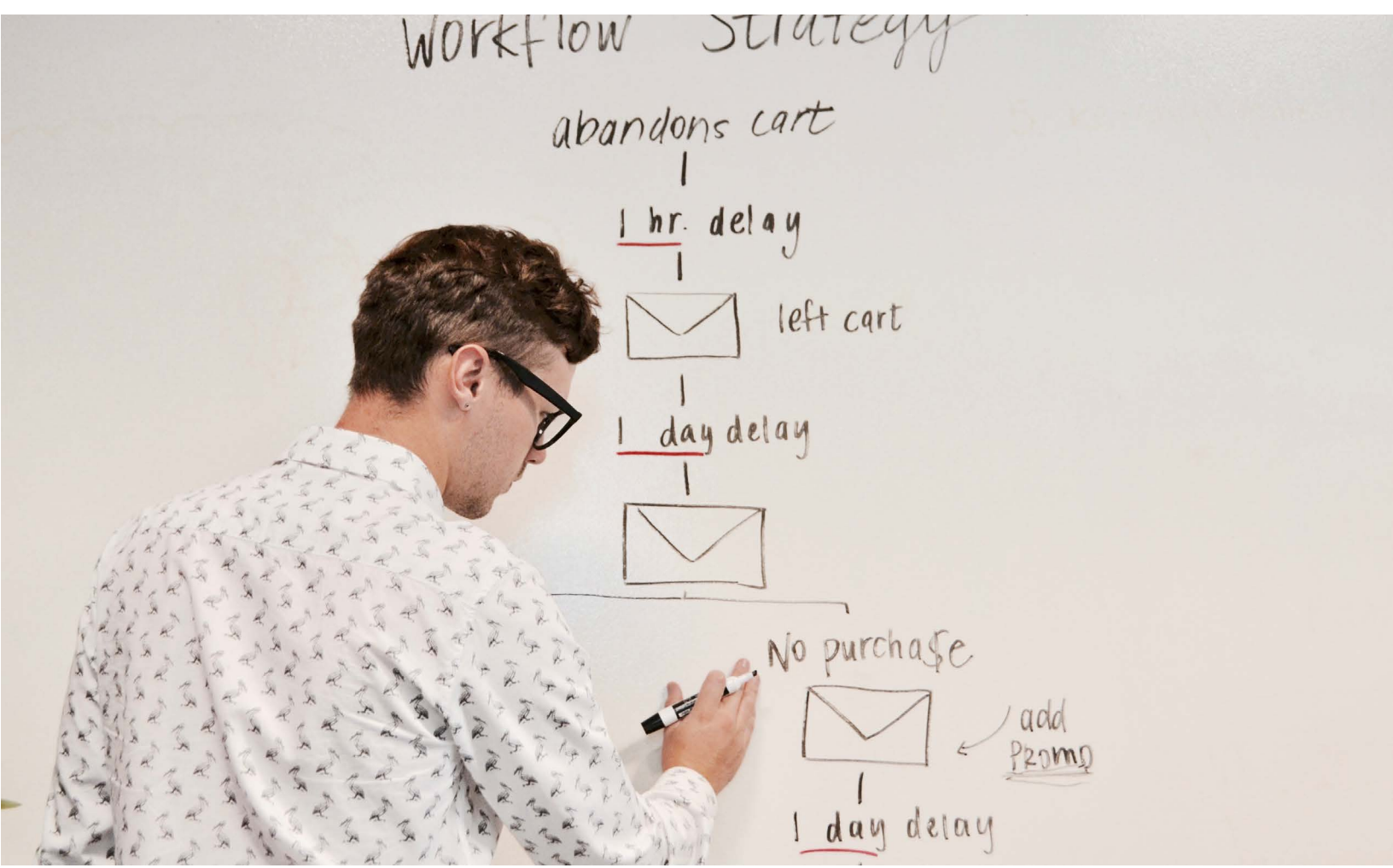
- Be super-clear and concise about how your offering addresses your prospects' pain-points. While you want to allow these researchers to easily find feature-rich info, it's important to lead with the solution you are offering.
- Provide transparently-fair comparison charts and

commentary on your site to effectively engage potential purchasers by building their trust in your content and your brand.

- Incorporate side-by-side demos of your product and those competitors that are the best real and perceived alternatives. Although this may be considered a bold move, consider testing this approach. The results may surprise you.

An eConsultancy survey tells us that 61% of consumers are influenced by peer reviews. Naturally, it follows that review-rich landing pages hyper-focused on reasons to believe will resonate with consumers during this stage of the purchase decision.

- To effectively take advantage of the power of reviews, you need to proactively acquire and utilize them.
- Consider using email and post-sales cart messaging to request them, then drive willing customers to a mixture of possible rating and review sites for submission (including your own).
- For example, if you offer a B2B service, heavier, more detailed customer testimonials and case studies offer more tangible reassurance to prospects, and are worth their weight in gold.
- For more complex products or service heavy offerings, FAQs are invaluable.



- Once you've gathered your reviews and testimonials, take full advantage by leveraging them aggressively across your owned channels and sales collateral. Test them in your paid and sponsored ads – both text and imagery – especially through retargeting and paid social.

Other excellent types of content to reach and inform prospects during the consideration stage are gated (lead gen) white papers, detailed blog posts leading to landing pages, and eBooks.

Optimize Your Content

SoLoMo (Social Local Mobile) requires optimizing your content for findability on social platforms and mobile devices. The 'Lo' is the uncontested fact that location-based searches are carried out during this phase of the buyer's journey.

Therefore, ensure that your site is optimized for mobile (responsive preferably), and that you employ effective geo-targeting (and hyper-local targeting) best practices. Consideration-stage content should include phrases that researchers are likely to utilize when seeking a solution on a search engine. For example:

- Product
- Service
- Reviews
- Pros and cons
- Versus
- Compare
- Solution
- Provider
- Supplier
- Agency

When thinking about the seven best practices of digital marketing – all of which are part of the big elephant that is 'usability' – the practice of ensuring 'findability' is often considered to be the most important.

Leverage the Power of Psychology

Psychology is a powerful motivator.

The psychology of persuasion at its best. When it is unconsciously 'tangible' that not deciding in your favor is actually a terrible decision.

In ALL your content, position your offering – whatever it may be – in a way that makes deciding against it, or decisively saying "No" to it, an intuitively unwise choice. While the example below is a cart upsell, it illustrates this point beautifully by its simplicity:

Creating Content for the Decision Stage

The next stage is the always critical "decision" stage. This is the stage where a customer chooses which product or service they prefer and makes a purchase. Although this is step where business is won (and lost), a lot of the hard work was done in the previous two stages. If you have done a good job of educating a prospect and presenting them with potential solutions in an engaging and respectful way – there's a pretty good chance they're going to strongly consider your company when it comes time to vote with their wallet. On the other hand, if a prospect has never even heard of your company before the decision stage, even best designed landing page will have trouble converting them into a customer.

Convincing Content

During the decision making phase, shoppers are right on the verge of completing their journey and are ready to buy. This is where your content needs to convince them beyond a shadow of a doubt that your product or service is the very best available solution to address whatever need, want or pain point they have. This is particularly important if your product comes at a steep price.

Therefore, the goal of each and every piece of content at this stage is to instill confidence through positive reinforcement as to exactly why your offering is the best choice to addresses their concerns and needs.

A great way to begin to build this content is to consider Marketing Experiment's conversion heuristic where each variable can be leveraged to create compelling decision-driving content:

$$C = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a \text{ ©}$$

M = Motivation

This is frequently driven by external factors, which is why it's crucial to have someone on your team who is aware of changes in the market, trends and other macro impacts to your business. It's not always as simple as a hurricane causing a run on bottled water; it can be a lot more subtle. Motivation can be driven by life events, unexpected endorsements and lifestyle changes (like the sudden increase in gluten-free food interest over the past few years).

Clearly, motivation is critical to any purchase decision.

The formula for repeat business is ensuring every touch-point of your customers' journey is frictionless and has added value. You do this by:

- Building positive emotional connections at each stage
- Teaching prospects about your offering, the industry, their options, your business and related topics as transparently and objectively as possible
- Building trust – not only by effectively executing on the first two points, but by creating added-value ongoing channels of communication

V = Value Proposition

The importance of the value prop cannot be overestimated. It is used to tell prospects:

- Who you are
- What your key benefits are
- How you are different from (and better than) the competition

Each element of this bite-sized snapshot of your business, your key differentiators and your competitive advantage needs to be user-centric in tone and intent. In other words:

- Who you are – tell users about who you are in terms of the high-level pain point your overall business solves
- What your benefits are – tell them about your key benefits by laser focusing on 'reasons to believe' in your brand and your product
- How you're different – differentiate yourself by clearly and convincingly positioning your competitive advantage as a deal breaker in their decision-making process

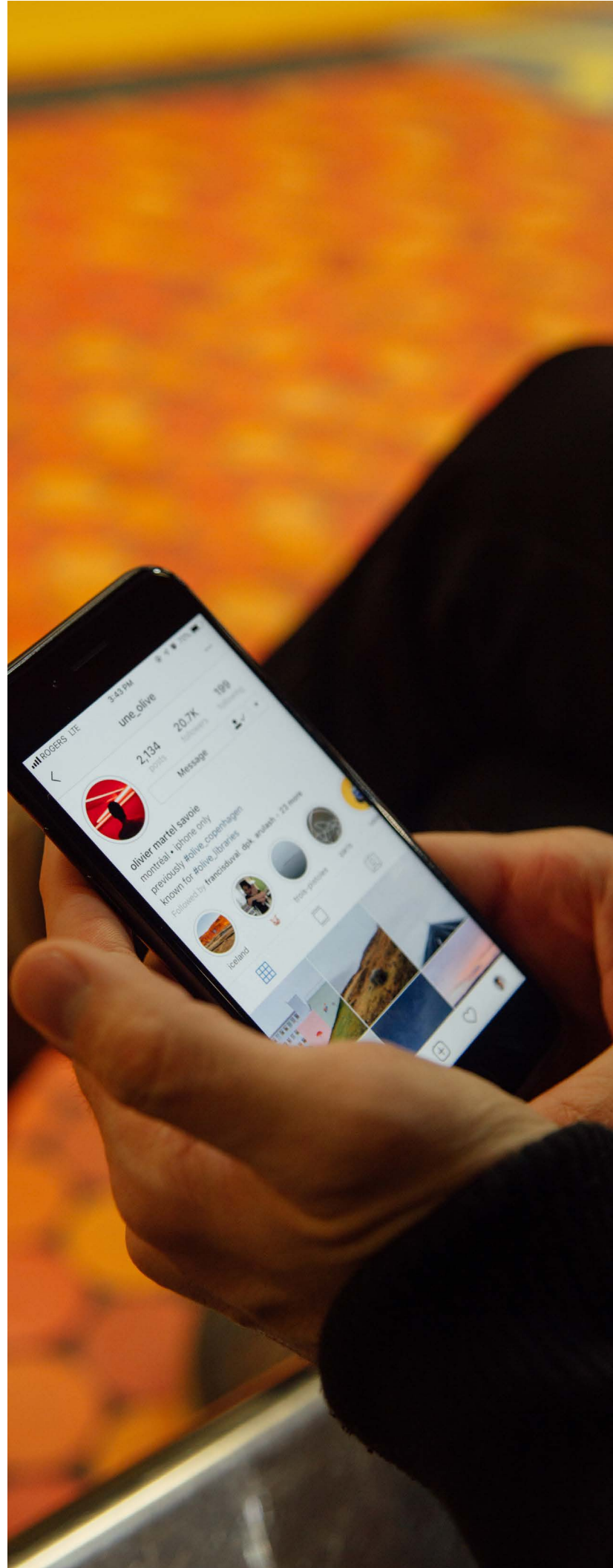
I = Incentive

Incentives contribute to maintaining motivation inside the purchase funnel and help push users towards the final decision to buy.

Incentive-based content focuses on three core themes:

1. Financial incentives (discounts, specials, free shipping, etc.)
2. Moral incentives (ethically-based, convincing prospects that investing in your products is simply the right thing to do)
3. Coercive incentives (highlighting the potential negative consequences of not getting your product or service)

F = Friction



Friction has a negative impact on the decision-making journey and reduces a prospect's motivation to complete a purchase.

This usually means ignoring best practices when it comes to usability (especially with respect to online transactions). Specifically, friction can be:

- Overwhelming users with too many choices resulting in the 'dilemma of choice'
- Long paragraphs of text-based content that are not skimmable
- Poor navigation and broken links reducing findability
- Too much clutter, meaning that a minimum viable experience was not considered
- Not designing to build emotional connections meaning a dull, dry, non-compelling visual experience
- Lack of the 4 Cs (compelling, concise, clear content)

A = Anxiety

Anxiety also has a negative impact on the decision-making journey. The impact of anxiety is significant as it frequently only occurs at the cart stage once all other variables have already affected the user with a net positive effect. Anxiety, if it arises at this point, nullifies all the other good that has been done – a very powerful de-motivator.

When it comes to purchasing online, there are two predominant types of anxiety:

1. In-purchase anxiety – fear
2. Post-purchase anxiety – remorse

Here we'll focus on the former. In order to dilute (or mitigate against) fear, you need to include clear, highly visible, image-backed content around:

- How much you value your prospects and their privacy
- Specific security information and privacy policies
- Refunds, returns, warranties and guarantees
- Positive customer reviews and rating scores (social proofing)
- Positive authority proofing (certifications, awards, industry mentions, etc.)
- The common pain points you're going to solve
- Your contact information

The perfect mix of the types of content mentioned above will depend on your product and the preferences of your customers. If you're selling an enterprise software solution, you'll likely need detailed product comparisons and case studies, among other things, so



that potential customers can justify the expenditure to their boss. If you're selling a more consumer-focused product like kitchen supplies, product reviews and clear return policies may be more effective and appropriate to get shoppers to hit the "buy" button.

Testing, Always with the Testing

Test, test, test! Optimize, optimize, optimize! With the overload of options and information out there, you've got keep the attention of customers or they will quickly move on.

You need to know what content appeals to them, what content motivates them, what content incentivizes them, what content diminishes anxiety and what content builds positive emotional connections most effectively. To figure out all these moving parts, you need to test the following elements of your landing and cart pages:

- Design and layout
- Headlines and messaging
- Types (and placements) of fear-combatting content
- Images and CTAs
- Colors and trust seals

Last-minute Price Panic – Don't Derail the Sale

Be up front about everything, especially the price. An unexpectedly higher price is the most cited reason for abandoning a sale. If your product costs a little more than the competition, explain how you provide more value and why you're still the best choice.

We're Almost There!

The creation of compelling content for each of the buyer stages we've discussed so far (awareness, consideration and decision) has resulted in a shiny new batch of happy customers.

But, wait! This isn't the end of their journey, or ours. It's crucial to your long-term success that those happy buyers stick around, and that means you need to build loyalty.

Creating Content for the Loyalty Stage

Far from being the end of the trail, this milestone in our relationship with our customer marks a whole new beginning in the creation of engaging content to build loyalty and promote retention. The first three stages of the buyer's journey play a vital role in nurturing leads and driving sales, but there's one final stage to which

many marketers fail to devote enough time in their content marketing efforts: the loyalty stage.

Just because the consumer has made a purchase, it doesn't mean their relationship with your business is over. In fact, strengthening this relationship is key to the long-term success of your business. Content at this stage is more focused on customer retention, brand advocacy, and referrals.

The Reality About Retention

The data doesn't lie; it's cheaper to maintain an existing customer than it is to find a new one, cites one source, while another states how it costs 7x more to get a new client than to sell to an existing one. There's also the somewhat obvious fact that if you don't retain customers, they'll migrate to someone who will.

If we think about the timeline right after a purchase (the honeymoon phase), it's a time of happy expectation, but it's also a vulnerable time for the purchaser. They may be second guessing their decision, and you need to nip that in the bud. This is how:

- The very first thing to do is to email a 'thank you' as part of your post sales communication. Reiterate the top reasons to reaffirm the buyer's decision, and compound that affirmation by including additional social and authority proof.
- Don't dilute the 'thank you' message; it clearly says 'we value you'. Let them know that you'll be shortly following up with their invoice, support or service contact details and links to necessary resources such as guides, demos, instructions, etc.
- In the follow-up email, include a link to a short survey to ask for feedback on their experience so far. While this can be good for market research, the intention is more a psychological play to begin to encourage these 'new to the world' customers to become willing collaborators in your efforts to make your brand better.

Everything you say in these first communications need to reassure the buyer that they made the right choice, that you care, that you're adding value to their purchase decision, and that you will not abandon them but rather welcome them into the fold with open, supporting arms.

It's also time to target your customers with content that encourages them to share their experiences with your brand, and ultimately tell other potential customers about your product or service. Word-of-mouth marketing is, after all, one of the most persuasive forms of marketing.

Ongoing Touch Points to Stay Connected

There are many objectives tied to pieces of content collateral in the post-sales phase, which ideally is a long-term relationship. Each piece should ideally focus on one core long-term goal and one short-term goal:

- Long-term goal: promote brand recall or build deeper relationships that will ultimately drive word of mouth referrals.
- Short-term goal: encourage repeat business, request a review, or simply provide added value in the form of a white paper or a beta invite.

Whatever medium you use, keep your tone personal, friendly, and easy to understand. These are people who have committed to your brand and spent money indicating this intent. Value them as highly respected friends, and offer them a number of places to stay in touch with what's happening. For example, most buyers will continue to research best practices, guides, and more to make sure they get the most out their purchase. The challenge is to make sure they continue to find your content without difficulty, and can access your content whenever they're ready.

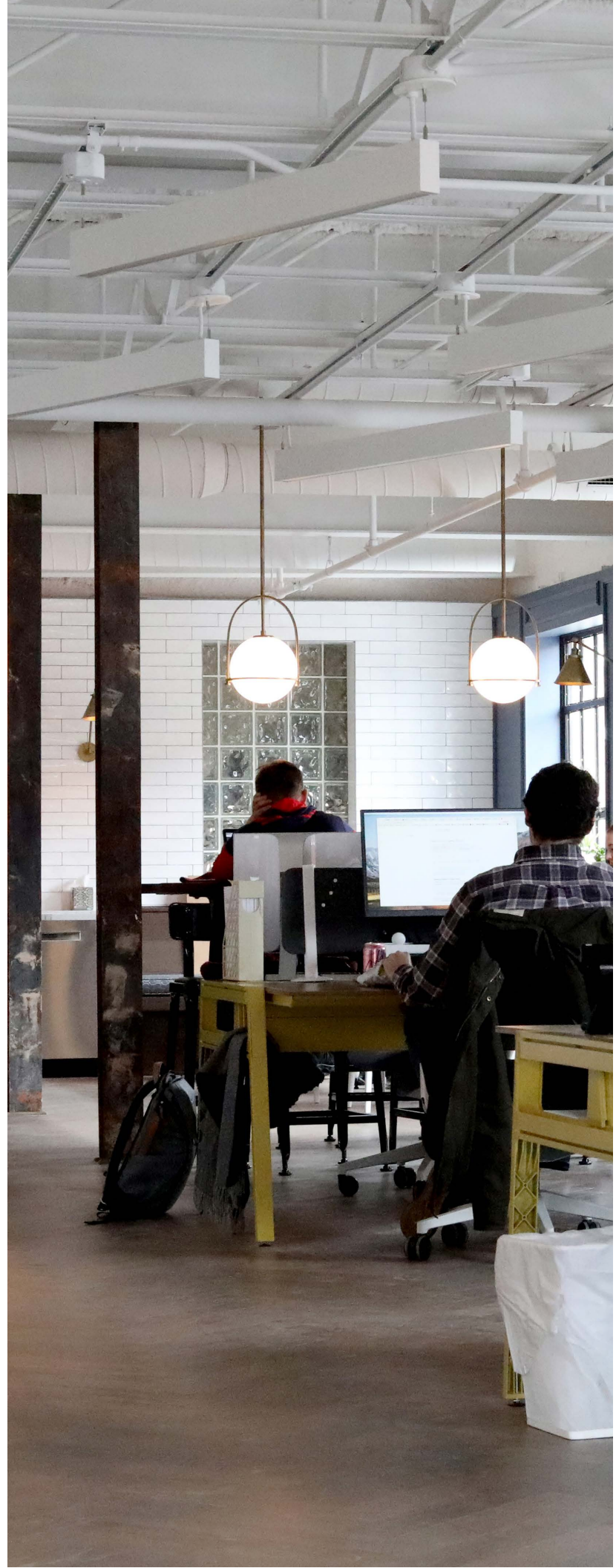
In the loyalty stage, blog posts, email marketing, and social media marketing are even more important for customer retention. Personalized content aimed at existing customers also gives you the opportunity to promote other products and services relevant to them. Primary loyalty stage content includes:

- Blog content. Perfect for staying top-of-mind with content that is specific enough to make sense for your business, but broad enough to keep readers engaged.
- Email newsletters. The medium for nurturing with newsletters, exclusive offers, cross-selling and short-timely updates. Consider a drip nurturing program campaign for your customers with helpful content on more advanced features of your product or service.
- Social platform content. These can be great for showing customers the human side to your business and for encouraging customer interaction.

In all of your content, consistently ask customers for opinions or feedback on your products and services.

Mix It Up (And Keep It Real)

Your content should not only be helpful and easily accessible, it should be available in different forms to appeal to varying preferences, as not everyone learns the same way. For example, some people prefer short



video guides, while others will prefer long-form articles. You can always repurpose content to suit different content formats. And, it's not only about helping customers gain maximum benefits from your product or service, but also about giving away free, genuinely helpful information that keeps your brand front of mind. Most customers respond positively to reward programs, so make sure these are also a part of your content mix.

For loyalty stage content, focus on providing the following kinds of content:

- User guides
- Infographics
- Tips and tricks
- Product-focused articles
- Product updates
- Company newsletters
- News and event details
- Surveys
- Blog posts
- Reviews
- Customer service insights
- Social media questions
- Special offers and coupons
- Contests

Final Thoughts on Loyalty

Here's a quick recap of our main points:

- Loyalty-stage content is crucial for retaining existing customers and increasing LTV (life time value).
- This content is also foundational in the development of positive behavioral intentions towards a brand, and the resulting acquisition of additional new customers via word of mouth referrals.
- Your customers need to continually receive value from your brand, or the value they place on your relationship will diminish and may fizzle out entirely in favor of a more aggressive competitor. For businesses that rely on recurring revenue, that means an increase in churn rate. And, that's not a good thing.

When it comes to content in this lifetime phase, think: advocacy. If your content marketing strategy is only focused on the initial stages of the buyer's journey, you're missing out on a huge opportunity to engage your existing customers and increase customer loyalty. Content consumed after the purchase stage has incredible value in terms of customer retention, cross-selling, and brand advocacy.

At every stage of the buyer's journey, marketers

should seriously consider the purpose of their content. A clear content plan will make it a lot easier to turn prospects into customers, and turn customers into brand advocates, which is key to the success of any business.

Creating an Engaging and Content-Rich Buyer's Journey

Creating an engaging and content-rich buyer's journey is the key to content marketing success. While every business will have their own unique customer journey, the key is to create a strategy that aligns the right content with the right people at the right time. While it's no easy task for companies to create this amount and quality of content, the benefits to your sales funnel and customer experience is well worth the investment.



Constant Content is a content creation service that specializes in creating high-quality, unique content for businesses. Our easy-to-use, collaborative platform and managed enterprise services allow us to help businesses of any size to scale and improve their content creation. Constant Content connects you with thousands of professional writers able to create articles, ebooks, product descriptions and other assets to tell your brand story, drive SEO and win sales.