



RIPPLER GROUP

[Mapping Your B2B Buyer's Journey for
Inbound Marketing]

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[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.

And, as a result, Marketing now owns a bigger piece of the buyer's journey pie (because 70% of the buying process is done before ever reaching out to a sales rep). This means that *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 every stage of the journey so that you can develop content that precisely aligns with what they're looking for.

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

[The Stages of the Buyer's Journey]

Each 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 to 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 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 and/or recurring sales by delighting the customer with your care and additional products and services. Doing so will turn him into an advocate for your company
Buyer's Focus	Focus is on learning as much as possible about this problems and potential solutions.	Focus is on evaluating alternative solutions.	Focus is on selecting the best vendor/partner	Focus is on obtaining the highest value from your products/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 for their challenge. Introduce yourself, acknowledge pain points and/or issues.	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 Prospect's Shoes!

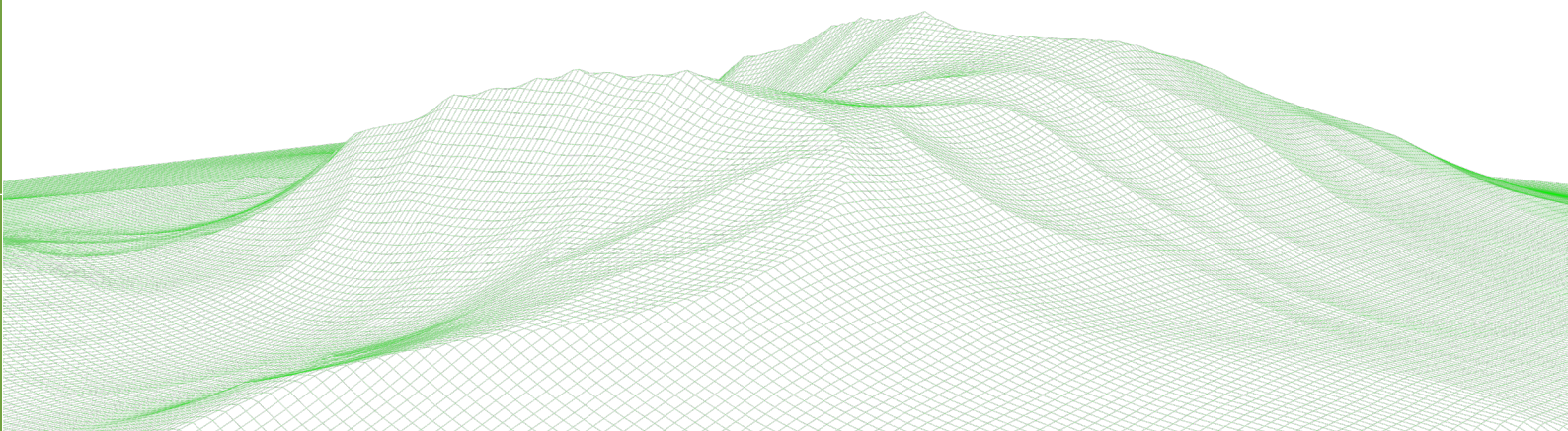
		Purpose of this step	Explanation
Step 1	What questions is he asking?	Identifying the questions your prospects are asking will help you get found in search	<p>Imagine yourself at each stage in your prospect's journey: What information would you be looking for? Remember, the earlier in the buyer's journey, 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 shortlist.</p> <p>Example: If you were beginning your journey towards 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"</p>
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	<p>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.</p>
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	<p>There are two considerations for this step: 1) the type of content that aligns to the stage, and 2) the preference of the persona. For example, simpler content (checklists, tip sheets, blogs) are best suited for the Awareness stage when the prospect is starting to understand the problem and do initial research.</p> <p>Tip: 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 specs and detailed analysis</p>
Step 4	Where does he look for answers?	To promote your content successfully by being where the buyer is	<p>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 hangs out will determine where you need to focus your efforts.</p> <p>Example: Some personas won't use social media at all and, in that case, your sole focus will be on optimizing for search</p>

[Example: Buyer Journey Map for Inbound Marketing]

Acme Email Marketing Automation Software. Makes SaaS product to manage email marketing for customers in a variety of industries

VP, Marketing. Oversees marketing operations and is responsible for the strategy and execution of email marketing campaigns

Awareness Stage	Consideration Stage	Decision Stage	Experience Stage
<p>We've got some basics and have enough volume to find a solution to automate our time-intensive email process. I'm not sure which type of product is best for our marketing strategy.</p>	<p>It looks like an inbound marketing tool might be the best bet, since it matches our marketing strategy and resources</p>	<p>I've identified 3 email marketing automation products that seem well-qualified. I'm using an evaluation approach that Company A provided.</p>	<p>Implementation and set-up went well. Now I think I might be interested in a higher-feature package or a supplementary product ; I wonder if it makes sense</p>



[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 marketing email solution? How do you determine what features you need? What's the cost of a marketing automation product? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of email marketing tool is the easiest to learn? What's the difference between different features/packages? Can my instance of the product be customized to my needs? What does training look like? Does this marketing tool integrate with my other applications? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long does it take to implement the product? How do I calculate ROI on a marketing automation product? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What other feature sets are available? How much does having a consultant optimize the tool for me cost? Are there other supplementary tools that work for my strategy?
Step 2	What does the buying team look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP, Sales CEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP, Sales CEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP, Sales CEO VP, IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Team (Users)
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 demos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies Free assessments/sandbox Vendor features/services comparisons Product literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefs Blogs Guides Overviews Demo videos
Step 4	Where does he look for answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Peers Industry publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Linked (LinkedIn company pages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vendor websites Linkedin (peers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Peers

Buyer's Journey Map Template

		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				



The mightiest wave starts with a ripple

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