

OVERVIEW

Buying decisions are complex, so getting your buyers to progress their journey needs to be more than driving single interactions. Improving their experience requires assessing the whole journey. Follow this playbook to improve the sum of your touchpoints, driving increased conversion rates, faster buying cycles, and a larger contribution to marketing pipeline.

OUTCOMES OF THIS PLAY



Increased Conversion Rates

From form completion rates to the conversion of leads to opportunities.



Faster Buying Cycles

Proactive improvements across the buyer journey will reduce the time needed to close deals.



Increased Contribution to Marketing Pipeline

Convert a larger share of prospects to active opportunities to lift your contribution to the bottom line.

PROCESS

1. Map out the buyer journey

Within B2B organizations, the division of responsibilities can lead to siloed views of the buyer journey. Separately, each contributor may feel that their area of responsibility is of high quality—whether it's an email marketing manager crafting a newsletter, or a salesperson reaching out to a newly qualified lead. But buyers do not consider these differences, and when there is a disconnect in their engagements with your brand, you may not be aware of this. To address this, ensure you have mapped out your key buyer journeys across the touchpoints they are likely to encounter. This will allow you to assess both the quality of individual engagements and how they work as a whole.

2. Audit current touchpoints and CTAs

With your buyer journey map at hand, first investigate each touchpoint to build up a picture of the buyer experience. Collate screenshots or video recordings of each touchpoint and identify how your buyer can interact with each one. Ask whether your touchpoints allow for the buyer to choose the interaction that is best for them. For example, do your key CTAs accommodate different stages of the buyer journey, or different use cases for your product or service? How does this differ based on device usage, browser or location? Second, complete each stage of the buyer journey by interacting with these touchpoints to see what follow up engagements they receive. Is the branding consistent? What email messages land in the inbox and what happens on the clickthrough? Which engagements come through from sales? All of these may identify improvements. Third, look at your own internal systems to identify the data you collect as a result of these interactions. Is the data correct, properly structured and connected with the key technology systems that power the buyer experience?

3. Identify improvements to the buyer experience

From auditing your buyer journey and building a picture of all the interactions, you will likely have already identified aspects of the experience that can be improved. However, to gain a genuine view on the buyer experience, collect feedback from them directly. This can take many forms, ranging from a simple survey delivered to a site visitor, to comprehensive user experience testing. These will uncover areas that you may have overlooked. Your customer support teams or social media manager may also have a record of previous complaints or feedback suggestions. You may also wish to ask an external expert to conduct a heuristic valuation of your buyer journey. This may surface actionable suggestions and may be faster than recruiting potential buyers to provide detailed feedback.

4. Prioritize and deploy improvements

With issues and potential improvements identified, rank the most important areas based on their impact on the experience and difficulty of addressing them. You may find creating a 2×2 action priority matrix helpful, by which you can separate improvements into four areas:

- Quick wins — High impact on experience, easy to implement.
- Major projects — High impact on experience, difficult or costly to implement.
- Fill-ins — Low impact on experience, easy to implement.
- Thankless tasks — Low impact on experience, difficult to costly to implement.

Delegate the highest-priority changes accordingly so they can be implemented as soon as possible.

5. Monitor and measure improvements

The expectations and needs of buyers are far from static, so improving their experience is not a one-off event. Look to continually solicit their input, whether via NPS or feedback scores, or further user experience testing. You may also wish to ask your buyers for feedback on any proposed major changes before investing significantly. Consider assigning this responsibility to a named individual and schedule regular check-ins. Also, look at your other key metrics with the buyer experience in mind—if engagement or conversion rates decline, this might indicate an area of poor experience. Similarly, your organization will change. You may receive new strategic goals or priorities, revitalize your brand and communications approach, or implement a new technology platform. Use these occasions to reassess the buyer experience to make sure it is the best it can be.

DATA

Inputs

- Quantitative buyer feedback, such as NPS or survey responses.
- Qualitative buyer feedback, such as comments from user experience testing, open-text survey data or comments given to social or customer service teams.
- Assessments of the buyer experience by your own team or a third-party expert.
- Conversion or engagement rates at key touchpoints.

Outputs

- Impact on performance and engagement at key buyer touchpoints (e.g. CTA conversions, ON24 Engagement Score).
- Improvements in key marketing performance metrics e.g. contribution to pipeline.
- Changes in NPS or other quantitative buyer feedback.
- Qualitative feedback from buyers.

NEXT STEPS

Collecting and actioning improvements to the buyer experience can have myriad benefits, from increasing marketing's contribution to revenue, to softer areas such as brand perception. It can also have impacts for those who are already customers. However, the data collection possibilities of digital channels mean that a quantitative approach to optimization and improvement is an opportunity that should not be missed. For further reading, read the next playbook in the series.