



Are Customer Journey Maps Part of Your Marketing Toolkit?

What is a customer journey map? It is a step-by-step guide to how customers ultimately arrive at a purchase decision for your specific product or service. Understanding how to create these maps will help you sell more.

Customer journey maps are important because buyers don't simply wake up one day and decide to buy a specific product or service.

The process includes:

- 1 discovery of the product,
- 2 education about the product,
- 3 potentially trying the product,
- 4 purchasing the product, and
- 5 using and advocating for the product.

For maximum effectiveness, marketing will look different at each stage. By crafting a plan for each stage individually, then integrating all of these stages into a larger strategic plan, you will achieve better results than using a siloed approach focused solely on the product.

Discovery of the Product

Discovery starts with understanding buyer motivations and meeting customers right where they are. This might include direct mail, print ads, in-store signage, web banner ads, social and media marketing. To get the right message to the right buyers with the right channels at the right time, the multichannel approach is critical.

Potentially Trying the Product

Next, you want people to move to the "try" stage. This might include providing product samples or allowing prospects to register for a trial period.

Using and Advocating for the Product

You might think that the purchase is the final stage, but in a best-case scenario, you want your customers to become advocates for your brand. You want them to encourage their friends and family to try it, too. This is where customer-loyalty and customer-retention marketing pick up—where lead nurturing left off.

Education About the Product

The education stage can take many forms. It could include drip marketing via print and email. It could include QR Codes on packaging. For more complex, high-value services, it may require a drip of high-quality print collateral. Studies have shown that print provides a level of trustworthiness critical for purchases like financial services or healthcare.

Purchasing the Product

Ultimately, you will make the pitch for the customer to make a purchase. That should be multichannel, too. It's not unusual for customers to make a purchase only after the second, third, or even fourth attempt. People are busy, so gently remind them by email, text, and print. Make responding as easy as possible. Don't assume that delay means no. Be persistent, but not annoying.

