

# The content road less traveled

**How technology has changed buyer behavior**

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In today's hyper-connected world, customers are actively researching companies, management, employees, products and services online. Long before contacting a salesperson they're reviewing high-profile and trusted independent industry forums and consumer review sites for unbiased information.

Many are looking beyond simple pricing structures, closely examining customer service and support, efficiency, compatibility with existing products and product training. They're also seeking transparency, product source tracing, authenticity, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices.

This has made it more challenging for marketers to engage potential customers and help navigate them through their decision-making process. But for marketers with the right strategy and content, it opens up numerous opportunities.

The average consumer needs to be presented with 15 to 25 pieces of content before you gain their attention. The quickest way of getting and holding their attention is providing relevant information.

Consumers spend 90% of the sales cycle looking at online content, so they may have already decided to buy your product or are contemplating a similar competitor offering. What they need is validation for their final decision.

A video testimonial or case study presented at just the right time could sway that decision in your favor.

To enhance the sales conversation, marketing and sales managers are taking a multi-tactic, multitouch approach to meet changing consumer habits.

A marketing automation platform that provides real-time lead alerts enables you to keep pace with a potential customer's level of interest. It enables you to continually offer relevant content that educates customers on the solutions you provide that is beneficial to their business.

Although the buyer's journey may have changed substantially, this year particularly, there's still three fundamental stages:

## **AWARENESS**

The buyer acknowledges they have a need or problem that requires a solution

## **CONSIDERATION**

The buyer clarifies the problem and conducts research to find the ideal solution

## **DECISION**

The buyer selects the best option available.

# AWARENESS

The global economy is in uncharted waters, which has led to business moving at a frenetic pace to adjust. To remain competitive, companies are constantly assessing their current and potential future needs and marketers need to do more with less.

When commencing the journey to purchase, customers are most likely unaware of two things: your company, and your range of solutions.

Once potential customers identify a particular pain point, they start looking for solutions. Potential customers will also seek out product specification brochures, white papers, data sheets and videos to educate themselves on the options available. This helps systematically narrow down multiple choices to a select few. The better the content you can provide the more engaged a potential customer will become.

**Common Mistake:** This is where most companies focus their attention, trying to make potential customers aware of their products and services. They do a straight product sales pitch. With the changes in buyer awareness and behavior, you need to effectively nurture and guide potential customers through the other stages.

# CONSIDERATION

Once the choices have been reduced, potential customers start closely examining the options available. Delving deeper into each company's offerings to determine how they address specific pain points is essentially a second round of research.

It's usually around this stage when customers connect with the sales team for further information or to request a personalized product demonstration. This provides the ideal opportunity to test the product in a real scenario and assess if the features meet or exceed the specified criteria.

**Opportunity:** Consideration is the starting point for a good brand or product solution story. One that will engage potential customers and take them further into the consideration process. A good story will guide customers through the process of pain point resolution and make them feel more confident that your solution is an ideal choice.

# DECISION

Depending on the product or service required, the decision to purchase can vary from days to months.

Procurement is a cyclical process. Buyers continually evaluate product and service performance and best practices to ensure they're able to make an informed decision to address the next pain point.

Being aware of the various elements, the evolution in buyer behavior and importance of the buyer's journey should form an essential part of any sales and marketing strategy.

**Opportunity:** Never underestimate the value of a good video or client testimonial at this stage of the buying cycle. Real people respond to real reviews.

Elastic Digital has an experienced team of copywriters, designers, animators, and campaign strategists. We can create a range of content collateral and effective channel-ready campaigns to engage potential customers and help your sales team guide them along the buyer's journey. Contact us at [hello@elasticdigital.com](mailto:hello@elasticdigital.com)

Elastic Digital is a creative agency that understands the complex challenges of channel marketing. We help you develop great content to make your channel partners successful.