

Navigating Complex Sales In Today's Mobile Age

How To Guide Multiple Stakeholders Through The Buyer's Journey Together

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All conclusions and recommendations are solely the responsibility of Porter Consulting.

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Executive Summary

Technology has irrevocably changed the seller/buyer experience. While the end goal is still the same—attracting and retaining customers to increase sales—how to do this effectively in today’s market has changed. B2B sales, in particular, are significantly more difficult to guide. Crafting just the right messages and getting them to the appropriate audiences can be quite challenging.

Today the enterprise customer is more sophisticated than ever before. Most B2B purchase decisions involve a web of stakeholders or decision teams. The teams do their own research and establish their preferences long before reaching out to a vendor. Finding each stakeholder can be difficult. Today’s flatter organizations make it difficult to pinpoint exactly who each one is.

In addition, each stakeholder needs to be engaged, as the decision-making process has evolved into even more of a group effort. The constant connectivity afforded through mobile solutions streamlines their ability to collaborate and reach decisions faster than ever before. To succeed, you must get your messages heard early in the sales process.

Fortunately there are technology-based, advanced techniques available that can help. Using the right tools and resources, you can efficiently identify and engage each stakeholder in the decision-making process. By providing role-specific, focused information, you will move them along the Buyer’s Journey as a team.

The recommendations in this paper reflect [Porter Consulting’s](#) decades of experience enabling enterprise technology sales, coupled insights from [Vision6](#), an emerging leader in the digital marketing space.

Introduction: Buyer’s Journey Complexity In B2B Sales

Making a sale is always dependent upon how successfully you can bring your customers through the Buyer’s Journey. To sell your product, you must first convince your customer that it fulfills a certain need and is the best option. You need to build awareness of your offering and help the customer view it favorably during their consideration process. Ultimately, you must convince them that it is worth their investment.

You know how important it is to harness their attention, help them in their research, and convince them that your solution is the best fit to ultimately win the sale. With so many customers doing their own research today, the emphasis on marketing has shifted heavily towards gaining attention at the start of the Buyer’s Journey.

THE BUYERS’ JOURNEY



B2B solution sales usually integrate products and/or services, and are challenging because you have to take multiple decision makers through this process. Each player has different needs and concerns. A single, simple message won’t always sway each stakeholder. You need to take into account and address the issues and concerns of each audience.

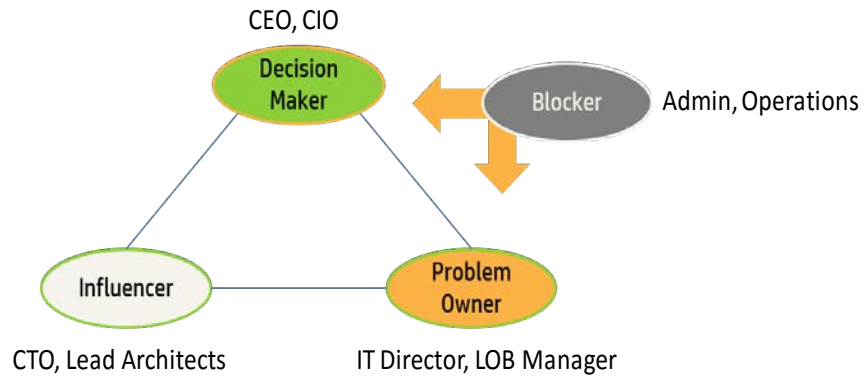
The **Influencer**, sometimes referred to as the “door opener”, is your first target. This person is an important recipient of your message because he or she can get you to both the **Problem Owner** as well as the **Decision Maker**. The Influencer can even help you decommission the **Blocker**, someone internal to the organization who has another agenda, possibly aligned to a competitor. A key strategy for successful B2B marketing is to engage one stakeholder and use that person to promote your solution to others pertinent to the purchase decision.

Thanks to the Internet, social media and other online and offline influences, buyers are more empowered than ever to independently research products and services, and this independence has enabled them to make close to final purchase decisions well before a brand sales rep can intercept the opportunity.

– Sigma Group¹

(1)

<http://www.sigmagroup.com/blog/the-new-b2b-buyer-and-how-brand-marketers-need-to-adapt/>



Each stakeholder has unique concerns and issues that need to be addressed. They each consume information in different ways through assorted channels. Some enter into the sales cycle later than others, possibly cropping up only at the decision point. For instance, often the Decision Maker knows more about the brand of the solution provider than the solution itself having been exposed via broad-based awareness campaigns. He or she may look on the vendor with favor or not, simply due to common perception.

Within the decision team, finance, business, and operations all have different decision criteria. The table below illustrates the variation. Each stakeholder needs to hear how your solution addresses their concerns.

Business Group	Key Concerns	Message Focus
Line of Business	Time to market, revenue growth	Market opportunity, competitive advantage
Finance	Cost, cash flow	ROI, reduction in capital outlay
Operations	Staff efficiency, facility operational costs	Alleviating concerns

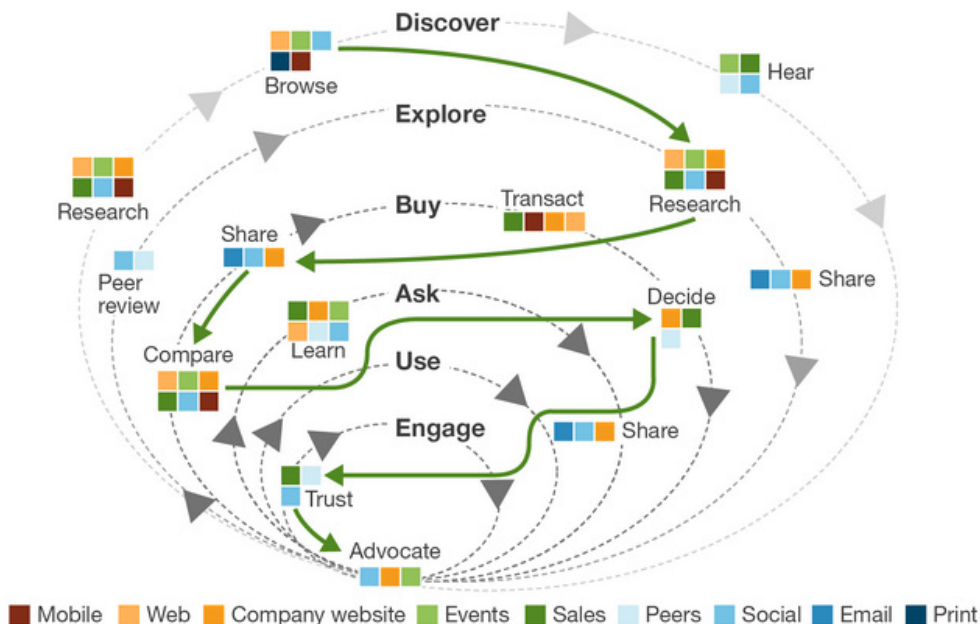
Reaching Each Stakeholder In The Digital Age

Understanding who all the players are can be an expensive and time-consuming process, made all the more difficult with teams distributed and on the go. In years past there were certain “norms” you could count on. You developed relationships with companies who had organizations that were pretty consistent with one another and who had similar decision-making flow charts. They relied heavily upon you for information. The time you spent educating the purchasing department was time well-spent.

But things have changed. As pointed out by the Sigma Group, the days of cold-calling, in-person relationship nurturing are now gone since buyers are more self-sufficient. No longer relying on sales reps to get their information, they often independently research what they need and only bring the sales rep in to close the sale. The B2B buyer has evolved into a digital savvy, internet-adept professional with a strong taste for social media.

In a 2015 survey, Forrester discovered that 74% of business buyers conducted more than half their research online before making an offline purchase.² Referring to them as the “always-addressable” customer, Forrester notes that they “weave and bob their way” through the digital information available, researching, developing relationships with and staying connected to the brands and people that matter to them.

(2) http://blogs.forrester.com/lori_wizdo/15-05-25-myth_busting_101_insights_into_the_b2b_buyer_journey



If you can stand out amongst all the other marketing noise creatively and efficiently, you will win more business and grow faster. The key to doing this efficiently and cost-effectively is understanding your customers and knowing how they receive their information. This approach can help you propagate your message from a single contact, broadening your reach and improving sales.

Getting To The Right Person At The Right Time

Today's device obsession has permeated consumers' lives. According to Deloitte's 2015 Global mobile consumer survey, 97% of respondents aged 18-24 look at their phone within 3 hours of waking up and 83% of those aged 65+ have as well. ⁴

(4) <http://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/global-mobile-consumer-survey-us-edition.html>

Forrester's research indicates that 90% of the decision-making process is complete before a B2B stakeholder even engages with a salesperson³ so information now needs to be available for the intended audience earlier in the Buyer's Journey.

But how do you ensure that you get the right messages to the right person who is involved in the decision-making process when you are faced with:

- geographically dispersed organizations
- flatter organizational structures with less definition on where decisions lie
- businesses that don't even have a physical presence

While connecting all of us, the Internet has, to this point, also served as a barrier to getting to know people personally. It has made it more difficult to navigate the process in determining who all the stakeholders are and reaching them.

Fortunately, solutions now exist to help you get over that hump. Today's advanced technology better equips us to know our customers and build relationships in new and deeper ways than ever before. As the always-connected model matures, we can fine tune our messages and bring them directly to the correct audience. The power of analytics helps you cut through the noise and provide each stakeholder with messages that are fine-tuned to their specific concerns, gaining your attention, consideration, and helping to move them along the Buyer's Journey to a positive end.

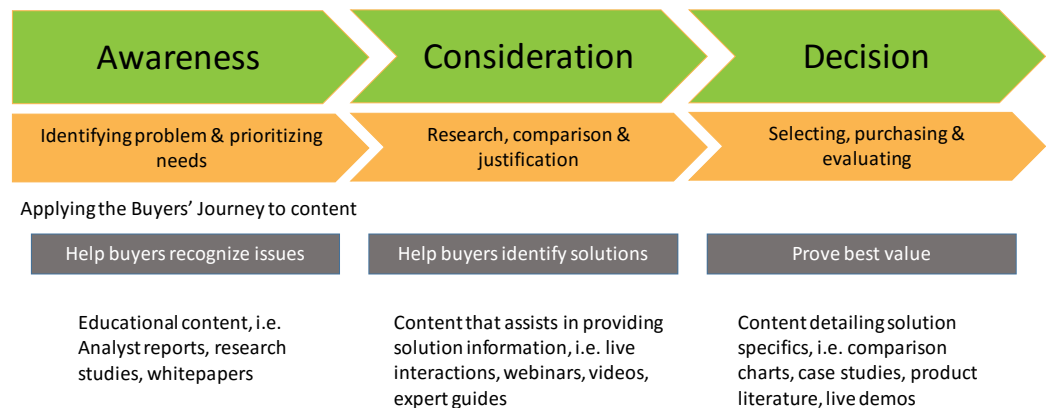
(3) "Buyer Behavior Helps B2B Marketers Guide The Buyers' Journey", Forrester 2012

Tailoring Messages For Each Stakeholder

Key to courting a stakeholder is helping him or her through the Buyer's Journey with crisp materials designed to capture attention early and help move that individual through one phase to the next. Consider how your content can be tailored to each stakeholder at each stage of the Buyer's Journey.

To score the greatest impact with each message you deliver at every point, you want to ensure that they:

- highlight each individual's specific concerns
- illustrate how value is delivered through your product
- are powerful enough to grab attention
- are well-timed to hit specific decision points



It is critical to first identify the profile of each of your stakeholders. In doing so, you can create a value proposition for each one and create tools that can help drive these messages home.

The chart below illustrates how different messages address the unique needs of each stakeholder in the B2B decision-making process.

Stakeholder	Position	Concerns	Key Message Focus
Influencer	CTO, Lead Architects	Focused on innovation to meet business objectives and improving TCO	Industry knowledge and expertise
Problem Owner	IT Director, LOB Manager	Time to deployment, predictability, ROI	Solving the problem
Decision Maker	CEO, CIO	Cost & risk reduction, regulatory issues	Value, reliability
Blocker	Admin, Operations	Comfortable with status quo, fears change	Alleviating concerns

Remember that each stakeholder receives their information from a variety of sources, often different than those consumed by the others. For instance, a Lead Architect may subscribe to open source forums while the CEO gets Twitter feeds from Forbes.com.

Everyone gets email. It is a powerful marketing tool that has a far wider reach than other channels. Not only will it get you directly to your target audience but it will do so in a timely manner. A creative approach can encourage your initial contacts to promote your content across an organization so you can get just the right information into the hands of each of your stakeholders. They will navigate the Buyer's Journey together to come to a positive consensus.

Today's Email Marketing—Targeted, Timely And Relevant

Marketers consistently ranked email as the single most effective tactic for awareness, acquisition, conversion, and retention.

- Gigaom Research, 2014 ⁵

(5) <https://www.extole.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Gigaom-and-Extole-Research.pdf>

Email has always been an effective marketing tool. Its integration with complimentary and newer marketing channels including Social Media and SMS make its impact even more effective. Its ubiquitous nature means that consumers can access email wherever they go. In fact, over 50% of email is now opened on a mobile device.⁶

With a good list, particularly one where subscribers have opted in to receive notifications, you can be assured that the messages you send out are reaching your target audience. You know first and foremost that they either have or are interested in your product because they requested information to be sent. Your content will be relevant to them. Products like [Vision6](#) are designed specifically to enable this type of marketing.

A simple Vision6 example illustrates what we mean:

A hardware retailer was faced with the challenge of retaining customers and boosting sales. With custom-branded email templates, they executed an email marketing campaign designed to move some high dollar products in time to make their monthly budget.

A few days prior to the sale, the company sent out three different emails to their customer database. Each email contained a different personalized and relevant message. As a result of the campaign, the company was able to exceed their sales quota in under 10 days.

Why was it so successful? Unlike traditional advertising, the retailer directed their messages to people who they knew were interested in their product and were familiar with their brand. They were able to time it specifically with a sales event and deliver content that was relevant to their audience. It was a cost-effective method of marketing that didn't involve graphic designers and could be done quickly in-house.

Integration Of Instant Messaging

Informal communication between colleagues often includes text, chat, and email. SMS is an ideal way to push short informational messages to contacts—with the advantage that they can be just as easily forwarded on to others. For example, you might include information on webinars or events and consider sending a reminder message shortly before the event, with the addition of an invitation to forward to a colleague. Complete digital marketing solutions, such as [Vision6](#), enable integrated workflows like this that combine email and texting to provide a complete communications framework.

Building B2B Contacts Through Organic List Growth

Consider how simple emails can help you navigate through a B2B environment, getting the right information to the right people. You can actually begin a referral process when you bring richness into the content that is interesting to others in the organization, such as embedding links to pertinent white papers, cost of ownership studies, and webinars.

Imagine an email, short and to the point, articulating a particular message for one targeted audience. Embedded links could point to information that would be relevant to others in the decision-making process. The email encourages the recipient to forward it on so that the other party will open the link. The simple act of forwarding is akin to a referral as the next recipient is receiving it from a trusted source.

When the next party goes to click on the link, the gated item requests information to unlock the marketing tool. At this point, information is acquired about the previously unknown stakeholder resulting in organic list growth.

(6) <https://litmus.com/blog/53-of-emails-opened-on-mobile-outlook-opens-decrease-33>

Consider the example below:

Subject: How XYZ Systems helped ArcGen Motors implement secure mobility affordably

Dear _____:

I want to share with you an excellent example of how XYZ Systems' SecureKynnex helped one of our customers bootstrap an important new business initiative.

Faced with rapid growth, ArcGen Motors had just opened two new facilities – one to house their expanding IT data center and another to warehouse their growing inventory. Their sales force was growing, too, and needed real-time access to data to ensure products would ship as scheduled. Using XYZ's SecureKynnex, they were able to connect the field reps to the required data securely and efficiently.

Get the whole story. This [infographic](#) will give you the facts on how ArcGen Motors was able to deploy this mobile application and excel in customer relationship management while lowering their total cost of ownership.

Your financial team may be interested in our [Financial Analysis Tool](#). Please let me know if you would like more information on how our SecureKynnex product line can assist your organization with similar opportunities.

Regards,

Account Manager

The first link is meant for the Influencer. It includes an additional link which may be an important tool for the returns-driven Decision Maker. In a sense, you are helping the stakeholders to collaborate, consolidating information on your company and laying out the pieces important to each stakeholder so that they have easy access. Whoever is interested in addressing financial concerns can quickly recognize which material is pertinent to them and access it easily.

The right tools bring success. Platforms like [Vision6](#) help marketers segment their databases and use dynamic content to personalize messages for different recipients. You can include blogs, newsletters, white papers, and other targeted deliverables that will generate interest in your products and solutions through email marketing. Vision6 lets you:

- Queue up a series of automated messages that encourage interaction with customers
- Build a robust engagement process, including text messages
- Provide tips, advice, and special offers to show a unique understanding of a customer's needs
- Tailor messages to that unique stakeholder and encourage that person to forward information on to key colleagues
- Grow your own database organically
- Keep your brand and product top of mind through consistent communication
- Use in-depth reporting tools to optimize future emails

Developing your communications plan to take advantage of tools like this is an important step in helping you navigate the decision-making process in today's B2B sales.

Targeting Content Along The Buyer's Journey

Digital marketing can be a powerful tool. You can use it all along the Buyer's Journey. Use it to build awareness of your product, introduce content that helps in the consideration process, and even to provide tools that help close a deal.

When developing content, think about emails that are short and tailored to cover the role and pain points of the initial stakeholder being targeted. For a lead architect or similar Influencer, how does it help them understand you are an expert in this area? For the LOB manager or other Problem Owner, show them how it addresses their ROI. Different pieces of collateral are made to address each stage in the Buyer's Journey. Map these pieces to your target audience at the appropriate time.

An offer gets a prospect's initial attention. Whitepapers or analyst reports are low overhead and build credibility. Welcome offers can be extremely successful. Studies show automated coupon emails, such as "welcome" discount vouchers, have an open rate of almost 70% and effectively increase sales by 15%.⁷

Reference your social media locations in the email. Make sure the reader gets a chance to see what else you have done. Remember to follow up on all activity. Prospects can move fast; they just need help to get to the next level. Most important, measure your results. Follow the analytics and act on them.

We Can Help You Get There

Getting content in the hands of potential customers early in their decision cycle is a very smart way to develop credibility. Using digital marketing to advance a complex B2B sale can be very effective, especially when you combine it with a deep understanding of your customer stakeholders and their needs.

At [Porter Consulting](#), we specialize in using solid, proven marketing methods to ensure your messages reach their target audience. Deeply knowledgeable in multi-national B2B marketing and sales, we have extensive experience in demand generation programs.

[Vision6](#) is a leading email marketing and automation platform purpose-built for marketers and agencies. Vision6 helps companies seamlessly enhance their customer communications and engage new leads. Vision6 integrates enterprise-grade email marketing automation, forms and social media with an easy-to-use interface for the greatest impact with the least amount of effort.

Porter Consulting can arm your company with the tools—new and traditional—that help reach your customers and help your customers find you. Combining our best practices selling model with innovative techniques and the specifics of your solution, we can show your sales teams how to overcome objections, close deals more quickly, and establish new clients using new and innovative tools like Vision6.

(7) Vision6 case study of HipKids

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