

MAPPING YOUR CURRENT SALES TOOLS

STAGE

1 AWARE



At this earliest stage, sales tools should help the customer become aware of the problems, issues and challenges that your product addresses. Such sales tools should help the customer evaluate their situation, identify the need, and understand that this is an issue that deserves further investigation because it can help overcome a major challenge or accelerate a key business goal.

AWARE TOOLS

External Audience

- White papers
- Business/technical articles
- Industry reports
- Infographics and statistical fact summaries
- Business issues/challenges articles
- Technical issue guides
- Seminar/webinar support tools
- Educational presentations
- Educational videos

Internal Audience

- Sales-readiness training guides and sales playbooks

2 INFORM



At this stage, effective sales tools help inform customers who are generally aware of their overall need and will benefit from advice and guidance relevant to their specific environment and challenges. It is important to simply make customers aware that there are third-party products available to address their specific issues—without veering into any sales-oriented specifics.

Sales tools that support this stage of the customer journey are educational in nature and do not push or sell products. In fact, the most effective sales tools may not even mention your products. By providing useful information free of any obvious sales pitch, effective sales tools will subtly establish your experience and expertise.

INFORM TOOLS

External Audience

- White papers
- Business/technical articles
- Customer stories
- Executive guides/business primers
- Technology guides
- Infographics
- Industry/business insight reports
- Informational/tutorial videos
- Case studies
- Seminar/webinar support tools
- Industry conference presentations

Internal Audience

- Sales messaging maps
- Sales playbooks and sales guides
- Sales training and readiness presentations

3 CONSIDER



At the *consider* stage of the customer journey, you will deploy sales tools that position your product as the ideal solution for addressing the business challenges and goals at hand. This is the stage for most traditional tools, such as company or product brochures.

CONSIDER TOOLS

External Audience

- Corporate overview brochures
- Product/solution/service brochures
- Data sheets
- Solution guides
- Product comparison data sheets and infographics
- Product/solution articles
- Live event/webinar support tools
- Customer success stories and case studies
- Customer testimonials (written and/or video)
- Campaign mailers (direct or email)
- Campaign landing pages (web)
- ROI/expense/TCO calculators
- Product/solution videos

Internal Audience

- Sales/product positioning maps
- Sales playbooks and sales guides
- Sales battle cards
- Campaign sales portals for field sales and/or resellers (internal or partner)
- Sales-readiness training presentations

SALES TOOLS

TOOLS TO THE TOTAL CUSTOMER JOURNEY

4 EVALUATE



In this stage, the customer has a clear understanding of the issues and recognizes the need to pursue a solution. They are now looking for the product that will best fit their needs based on their identified purchase criteria.

At this stage, effective sales tools help to convince the customer that your product is superior to the alternative choices (which include not only third-party competitors, but also the status quo).

EVALUATE TOOLS

External Audience

- Product/solution benchmark results reports
- Product comparison data sheets and infographics
- Competitive comparison guides
- Product evaluation checklists
- Product cost (TCO) comparison calculators
- Product evaluation and comparison videos
- Industry analyst reviews
- "Why outsource?" presentations and articles
- Demo center support tools
- Interactive product demonstrations/tours
- Executive liaison invitations and collateral
- Customized assessment offers

Internal Audience

- Field sales competitive positioning and attack guides
- Sales training presentations on competitive selling
- Competitive pricing plan

5 DECIDE



When it is time for customers to make their purchase decision, there are typically fewer but highly focused sales tools in use. The tools you use should help push the customer over the decision fence. They tend to focus on special offers and incentives that assist in that final push to closure.

While many marketers will focus on just the buyer's journey—which ends with the purchase—it's important to recognize that the full customer journey continues. You don't stop communicating with people once they become customers; you adjust the nature of what, when and how you communicate.

DECIDE TOOLS

External Audience

- Special incentive offer collateral
- Pricing sheets/lists
- Competitive product trade-in program collateral
- "Why act now?" presentations and supporting collateral
- Add-on product sales collateral and bundle offer sales tools

Internal Audience

- Proposal-building sales tools



6 USE



Communicating to new customers is vital to building strong customer relationships and loyalty. Sales tools developed for this stage of the customer journey typically focus on helping the customer get the maximum benefits from your product and recognize those benefits as a significant contributor to their total return on their investment.

USE TOOLS

External Audience

- Product usage guides
- Articles on getting the most out of their new product
- Customer success stories and/or videos
- Invitations to join customer forums or user groups
- Invitations to customer conferences, workshops or events
- Product application guides (targeting specific applications of the product)
- Product industry guides (targeting specific industry uses of the product)
- Product technical tuning guides

7 RETAIN



Once a customer has become a mature user of your products, the right sales tools can help encourage future purchases by promoting product upgrades, add-on products or other offerings. Sales tools are used to help keep customers loyal and engaged with your brand. Often such tools are designed to invite and encourage participation in customer loyalty programs, satisfaction surveys, customer forums, conferences or workshops, or even to request testimonial statements or referrals.

RETAIN TOOLS

External Audience

- Add-on or new-product sales brochures and data sheets
- Upgrade program offer guide ("Why upgrade?") and videos
- Upgrade program ROI calculator
- Upgrade or add-on product/solution videos
- Customer conference and event support materials
- Customer forum, advisory board or user group promotional tools
- Product end-of-life migration support tools
- Special pricing offers/promotions for customers

Internal Audience

- Customer retention sales playbook
- Product end-of-life transition/migration plan