

Insights snapshot:

Customer Journey

Influencing decisions at
key touchpoints



radius



How can you influence the final **decision**?



That's a strategic question that can keep even the most seasoned marketers up at night. Thinking about it is not unlike a teen worrying about a first date and all those nervous, butterfly-inducing worries that run through your head →

Will they like me?

Do they think I'm interesting?

Will they see me again?

Customer Journey insights: **Process + People**

For your brand to meet its growth targets, understanding the purchase triggers, touchpoints, channel usage, and product considerations is critical to thriving in an ever-shifting landscape. Customer journey mapping delivers a thorough understanding of the pre-decision through post-purchase process along with the emotions and influencers along the way.

What Customer Journey uncovers:

- Customer engagement in your category
- The decision-making process
- Key touchpoints and moments of truth
- How to deepen the brand connection at key points

How it impacts the growth journey:

- You can determine what aspects of the journey will drive brand selection.
- You can understand successful brand positioning at key points in the journey.
- You can develop strategies and tactics to drive initial and repeat purchase.



CUSTOMER JOURNEY IN ACTION

A lot has changed in people's shopping behaviors since March 2020 when COVID hit. As we emerge from this period of stay-at-home and social distancing, understanding how the customer experience is changing—or staying the same—is more critical than ever. That is why customer journey insights are more important than ever.

Here are three examples of how we've helped clients navigate a deeper understanding of shopper journeys.



Uncovering the CPG Shopper Journey

BUSINESS ISSUE

Our client was seeking a detailed picture of the CPG consumer journey in the ever-changing shopping landscape to build upon previous learnings and showcase their thought leadership with retail partners.

APPROACH

We embarked on three phases of research to uncover the critical storylines in this space. The three phases provided a 360 view of the shopper landscape and a roadmap for growth:

- In-The-Moment Shopping
- Passive Metering
- Quantitative Online Survey

GROWTH OUTCOME

Our analysis painted a detailed picture of the CPG Consumer in terms of their general digital footprint, their shopping journey, and how they engaged with opportunity categories during their last shop for each. With a robust sample size, we were also able to break down this information further into key subgroups, using index scores to highlight where each of the various groups stands relative to all CPG consumers.



Connecting with Game Purchasers

BUSINESS ISSUE

A leader in the development and manufacturing of board and card games was seeking a better understanding of purchase scenarios and drivers to help them align their portfolio and their marketing efforts around key decision patterns and criteria.

APPROACH

Starting with immersive qualitative methods, including shoppalongs and small group discussions, we incorporated that learning into the creation of a comprehensive survey that was implemented across US and Global markets addressing all facets of the game purchasing process. We also captured the complete picture of how consumers in this category approach the game category.

GROWTH OUTCOME

Based on the use of Decision Pathways™ analysis, we arrived at seven different purchase patterns within this space. Our client was able to understand the unique decision criteria and shopping patterns that defined each pathway. Critically, we were able to determine the size of the opportunity of each pathway to prioritize efforts for merchandising, marketing, promotions, and product development. As a result, our client was able to target three key pathways for building their business.



Identifying Triggers for Consideration and Purchase

BUSINESS ISSUE

Our client needed to understand the triggers that influence consideration and purchase in the Ready To Eat category (RTEC).

APPROACH

To decipher and clearly layout customer journey we analyzed:

- › Triggers for initiating the purchase
- › Selection of the retailer/channel
- › Selection of the product type
- › Selection of a specific brand (messaging, ads, etc.)
- › In-store triggers (end-caps, store circulars, promotions, etc.)
- › Category needs (occasions, value, etc.)
- › Category involvement overall (frequency of purchase, basket size, shopping list, etc.)

GROWTH OUTCOME

By clearly laying out the customer journey, the team was able to work better with their retailers by generating the most meaningful product and in-store related materials to maximize impact on shoppers.



CUSTOMER JOURNEY BEST PRACTICES



Keys to Putting a **Holistic Customer Journey** in Action

The requirements of customer journey and path-to-purchase initiatives have evolved considerably over the past few years, due in large part to the “always-on” reality we live in. Digital disruption is entrenched in most industries, and as customers use and experience different purchase models, we have to be right there with them, with the right tools and approaches.

Customers can switch almost instantaneously between different behaviors, acting as an “evaluator” one minute and a “shopper” the next. As a marketer, it’s critical to understand what is important to them in this collapsed period. We cannot, however, understand customers simply from these key “moments-that-matter.” We must know what influences, experiences, informational sources, and technologies shaped these more intensive interaction points.

The Holistic Journey approach addresses these nuances and can be applied to almost any industry or category. It is built to be a nimble and flexible solution that accommodates evolutions in the market. The four stages of the Holistic Journey, while not necessarily sequential, are distinct in the characteristics that people display:

- Researcher is the stage when a customer is gathering information on products and services.
- Evaluator is the stage when a customer is making an active assessment.
- Shopper is when the customer is starting down the narrower path-to-purchase.
- Consumer/Experiencer is when someone is in the mode of using the product/service and sharing behaviors.



Customers can shift fluidly between these stages throughout the journey, with varying degrees of emphasis on a particular stage at any given point. For instance, customers typically spend more time Researching and Evaluating when shopping for a high-ticket item like a piece of technology (mobile device, computer, etc.) versus when buying snacks or beverages (where they are mostly in the Shopping phase). The Holistic Journey approach is adapted accordingly to dig deeper into those stages that matter most.

Purchase channels influence types of shoppers

The expansive, and ever-growing variety, of purchase channels results in numerous types of shoppers with different needs and behaviors. Some prefer the convenience of online and others the experience of in-store (with a healthy degree of overlap). Regardless of shopper type, the Holistic Journey solution will help you optimize the customer experience across a widening range of online and physical touchpoints.

How can a brand activate against increasing numbers of touchpoints?



- **Connect the “why.”** Taking a holistic approach to the purchase journey allows you to link the why to the what, who, and how. In order to create deeper connections with customers and inform strategies in a complex space, it’s essential to know why people behave as they do.
- **Identify the themes.** Journeys can be categorized into core themes that offer you the chance to present your brand as the most compelling it can be at every touchpoint. Furthermore, themes can be sized, helping to determine where to prioritize content and communications-mapping efforts.
- **Understand motivations and triggers.** It’s critical to determine the reasons behind the purchase decision. Recent work in the children’s merchandise category shows that a trip to buy a toy one day can be very different than a trip to buy a toy another day, due to the underlying needs (perhaps of the occasion). These needs impact the what, where and spend on the toy.

The Holistic Journey is becoming the primary way for brand marketers to develop the information to make sense of the most complex piece of the marketing puzzle — people.



Evolving your brand to meet the new customer journey.

Customer journeys have shifted dramatically in many categories as COVID-19 has created an entirely different set of needs and behaviors for shoppers. The simple fact is that most shoppers are spending more time at home which allows for more browsing online, but less urgency to purchase. They are likely to be shopping during completely different time periods, including taking a break from remote working schedules, as well as shopping more for the entire family, especially if college age children or young adults are now at home for an extended period of time.

In the near-term, social distancing and protective requirements are upending the entire customer journey process from the pre-shopping phase through shopping itself, and then the post-purchase and usage phase.



For your brand to meet its growth targets, understanding the purchase triggers, touchpoints, channel usage, and product considerations is critical to thriving in this new reality.



Motivating the need trigger.

Customers are reassessing what really constitutes a true need, and may limit non-essential or premium/luxury purchases. During today's uncertainty, customers may forego new products or specific categories. Successful brands will take the time to analyze what will motivate their customers to act on a need and actively embark on the path to purchase.

Connecting to the trip mission in-store.

Exploration or discovery trips to stores have dramatically reduced in frequency as customers are limiting their missions to primarily restocking household items.

Shoppers may shift preferences to a different retailer if there are perceived or real risks around safety protocols or issues. Proactive brands will continue to assess their customers' perceptions to mitigate the potential for shifts to another channel or retailer. In addition, it's smart to evaluate your in-store messaging tactics to capture shoppers' attention in the aisle.

Online purchases are also driving more auto-restocking as customers rely on their previous purchase history. This also reduces the potential to discover new product launches. It is critical for brands to reevaluate new product launch strategies as discovery is limited in digital settings as well.

Touchpoints moving from word-of-mouth to digital.

We've seen from past customer journey work that word-of mouth recommendations are a crucial touchpoint. Customers rely on their personal network of family and friends to guide their decision-making process. Social distancing and size limits for gatherings is reducing the opportunity to share recommendations on brand experiences and new products. Customers now rely more on website and social media reviews for information prior to purchase.

The implication around all this digital education? Now's the time to evaluate digital communication strategies to ensure you are reaching your target audience. In addition, assess and optimize advocacy and loyalty initiatives to promote brand champions in the digital realm.

The purchase channel is increasingly digital, too.

Ease, convenience, and safety are the primary reasons customers are choosing online shopping over in-store. There is a marked increase in customers leveraging "click and collect" or direct-to-home delivery options. Even the automotive market is seeing a significant uptick in online orders and direct-to-home delivery. The digital transformation just sped up exponentially due to COVID, and brands should put a high priority on future-proofing their sales by ensuring their digital strategies create a strong connection with customers.

Is your brand evolving its strategies to meet the changing customer journey? **Contact us** to learn more about how to assess and refine your customer connections.



A few of the companies that have trusted us with their customer journey needs in the past three years:

MARS WRIGLEY
confectionery

WHOLE
FOODS
MARKET

Nestlé PURINA.

Reckitt
Benckiser

Spectrum
Brands | Global
Auto Care

newell
BRANDS



Johnson & Johnson

Coca-Cola

Microsoft



Nutrisystem®



premier
nutrition
THE GOOD ENERGY PEOPLE



Kellogg's



3M

Google

ESTÉE LAUDER

Kraft Heinz

Vitamix

Weight
Watchers

StanleyBlack&Decker



Walgreens



P&G

GP Georgia-Pacific

WESTERN
UNION WU

MARS

HERSHEY'S



STITCH FIX™

flydubai

ROYAL CANIN

USAA



lendingtree

Vanguard®

Customer Journey is one aspect of our Brand Growth Navigator – the model our clients rely on to point them in the right direction in segmentation, targeting, customer experience, and more. Learn more:



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Insights snapshot: Customer Journey

Our 60+ years of brand-building expertise has been honed through our partnerships with Fortune 500 leaders as well as challenger, disruptor, and emerging brands.

These brands come to us for our business growth mindset that starts with one unwavering goal: **Putting your customer at the center of all strategic business and marketing decisions.**

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Guiding your brand on its growth journey.

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