



# Marketing in Crisis

5 Key Steps to Building Buyer-Centric Go-to-Market Motions

STRATEGY | PLANNING | TACTICS | TECHNOLOGY | CONTENT & CREATIVE | DATA | PEOPLE

# FORWARD: 'business as usual'

By LeadMD CEO, Justin Gray

The world can change in an instant, and globally we are all determining how we will respond to this change. Over the last four weeks, we at LeadMD have been dealing with one dominant question from the clients we work with, our partners, and the market in general: "How do we respond to the current global crisis?"

For many, the root of that question comes loaded with the overtone that marketing and selling, at least under business as usual guidelines, feel trite. The traditional go-to-market motions that many organizations have built come with a dependence on some degree of sleight of hand (don't feel bad if you know what I'm talking about).

Acquiring customers still relies on some degree of enticing the buyer with a glitzy promise of "better." How that "better" is achieved, however, is frankly always just behind the curtain. When an organization positions a product as its saving grace or the lifeline for a particular goal, yet doesn't couple that product with



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an actionable and accountable plan for success – it's sleight of hand.

How many times have you made a business decision to purchase a solution and felt like that vendor was truly invested in your success? The answer is likely not all that often. But the purpose of this guide is not to preach from on high about the missteps of volume and velocity sales models, demand generation tactics, or superficial customer success guidance that have failed to provide true customer ROI.

Instead, what we have outlined are the best practices that have been widely recognized, extolled even, as the shared mentality of the modern organization – but never translated into action. With that recognition, also comes the revelation – that it's now or never.

Of course, the reason why these best practices have been largely adopted in concept but not practice is due to the fact that they are incredibly difficult to operationalize and achieve at scale. It's flat out hard to do and even harder to do while growing teams at a breakneck speed. And up until a matter of weeks ago, there was

an alternative. There is now no other alternative to buyer centricity – in the blink of an eye it is now the rigid status quo, and nothing else will do.

Buyer centricity is now the only road to customer acquisition and customer retention.

A few important points to note here. First, brand perception does not change overnight. Behaviors matter; consistent behaviors matter even more. And in times marked by buyers making decisions that will impact their organization's wellbeing, the stability of their job and the financial health of their families, trust is more critical than ever. Trust takes time to build, but frankly the old adage is true: the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time? It's now.

The second and even more critical caveat is this: effort and results now bear a different correlation than they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Some organizations will not weather this storm, and as such, they are simply not capable of making the financial investments they would have made prior to it.

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If the only reason you're looking to invest in strong and genuine buyer and customer relationships is to entice them to write a check (yes, I know no one uses checks anymore), you will not see the returns you are expecting. Traditional KPIs have to be adjusted in order place value on elements like trust, sentiment and appreciation.

This is still business, and a business must make money to meet that definition, but the more relevant KPIs right now are rooted in how buyers and customers view you and the organization for which you work. Those looking for guidance on how best to invest, in order to ensure they not only weather the storm but continue to grow in the process, will cut that proverbial check - but that can't be the sole optic of success.

Third, thank you for your interest in this resource. The best practices contained within will help you help others. Beyond any software, service, or solution, help is what the world needs right now. In the process, we can change how the world views the role of corporate America in general. Businesses and professionals who make the investment into change, and make a true commitment to value, customer experience and community involvement won't be those asking themselves time and time again why they didn't plant that tree.

## 5 Keys to Buyer Centricity

1. Human to Human Interaction
2. Make Value the Centerpiece
3. Understand Your Unique Success Proposition
4. Align the Organization
5. Reforecast for Success

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The BIG  
**QUESTION**

HOW DO MARKETERS AND SELLERS ENGAGE BUYERS WHO ARE  
RESPONDING TO CRISIS?

The Answer  
**HELP THEM.**

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# 1. Human to Human Interaction

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The only decisions being made during times of turmoil or crisis are mission critical decisions. Critical decisions can take the form of either investment or cost-cutting measures. Your goal in engaging buyers and retaining customers is to align your product and even your brand as an enabler of both.

But first, **we must form a conversation.**

Everyone is being bombarded with superficial inquiries looking to “check in” or “understand how they are coping with recent changes.” A human interaction leverages true compassion to first genuinely understand the concerns and priorities of an individual and then allow buyers to open up via a free exchange of information and ideas. To make this happen, you must gather deep insights to facilitate a valuable exchange. The buyer is investing their time, which is in short supply.

Even if your organization has established Account Profiles and Buyer Personas, these insights must be refreshed in order to form a relevant conversation. If you have not previously conducted a persona building exercise or need guidance in refreshing these, we have included a workbook within this resource to rapidly assemble insights to ensure your messaging aligns to buyer needs.

## All conversations must be built upon a foundation of the 3 C's.

**Complete:** A comprehensive understanding of both market trends and the impact of those trends on both the organization and the individuals within.

**Current:** Information must be timely and relevant. In crisis, situations often change daily if not even more frequently.

**Common:** The same insights should be gathered across all accounts to create a repeatable Account Planning framework. You can steal LeadMD's at the link below.

[LeadMD.com/best-practices/blog/account-planning-like-a-rock-star](https://LeadMD.com/best-practices/blog/account-planning-like-a-rock-star)

# Conversation Starters

'I saw that {competitor} recently {took x step} in response to COVID-19. How has it affected you guys?'

'Most of our clients are concerned about the ability to hit their original revenue targets for 2020. What steps have you taken so far as a response to the global pandemic?'

'What impact do you foresee the coronavirus crisis having on your current customers? Have you formulated a plan to help them navigate those waters? I ask because we are helping a number of organizations do so and I wanted to offer my assistance to you as well.'

'Did you see what {expert} predicts for the sector this year?' 'Were you at the {recent webinar} where they suggested {x steps}? What did you think?'

'Can I share with you a few examples of what our other customers are doing to respond to and succeed in the current environment?'

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## 2. Make Value the Centerpiece

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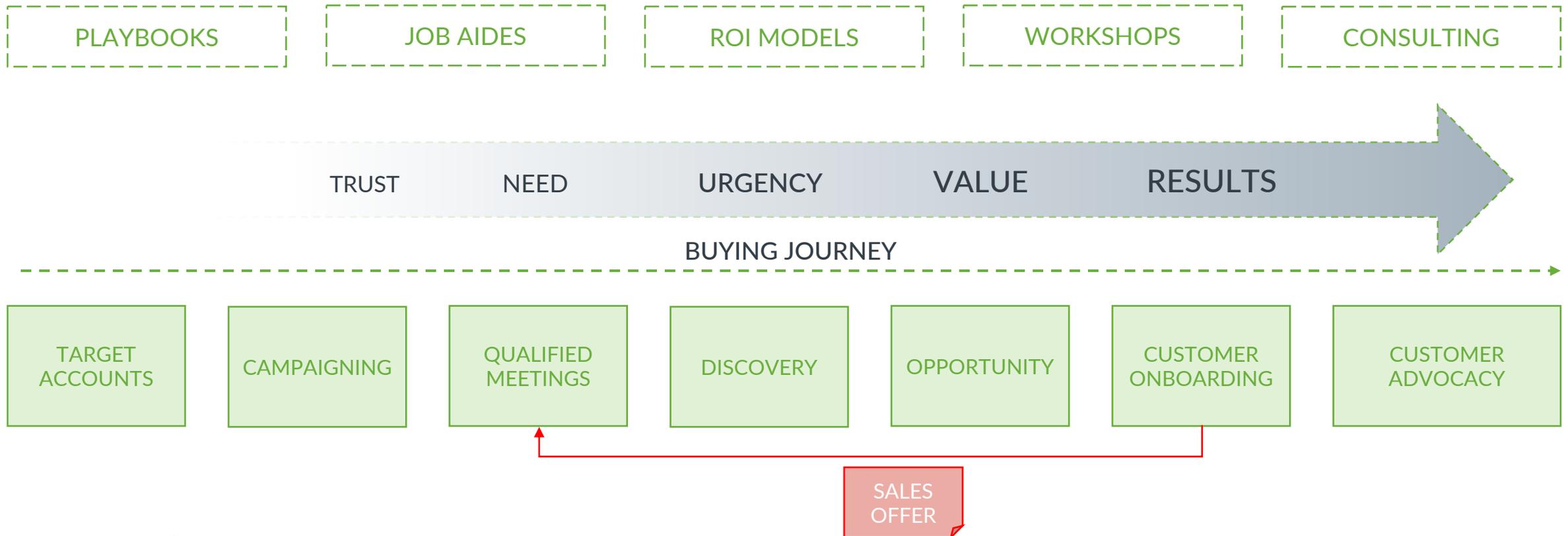
Understanding the buyer's challenges is the first critical step. However, quickly translating learnings into an actionable plan is where most organizations fall down. The payoff to the buyer needs to deliver on your communicated desire to help. Simply offering to sell another tool or service will not yield results to either party. For these purposes, the best approach is often right under our noses.

Enter the **hyper-value sales offer**. These value-forward offerings are different in each business, but one commonality lies in the propensity for their pre-existence. They simply reside far too late in the marketing and sales process.

The majority of business value often resides in the post-sale process, within customer success. This is where vendors or providers truly dig into client goals and map out a strategic and actionable roadmap for success. In this exercise, we will move that offer much earlier in the buying process. Simple, yet incredibly effective.

By implementing a hyper-value sales offer earlier within the buyer journey, we are able to effectively uncover the buyer's needs, while also constructing an actionable roadmap that illustrates how our solution will enable the buyer to accomplish mission critical goals that have a tangible impact on problems or goals the buyer is responsible for.

### Examples of Successful Hyper-Value Sales Offers:



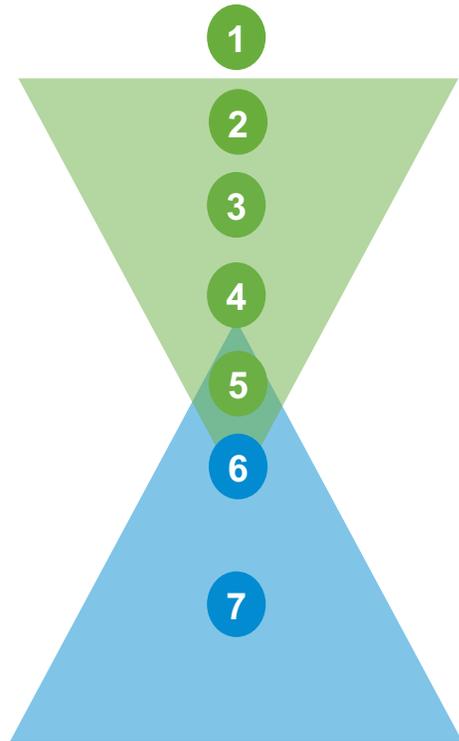
# REAL WORLD SAMPLE

The following two pages contain an example of LeadMD's own hyper-value sales offer, a full-funnel revenue performance audit. Both industry benchmarks, as well as LeadMD client benchmarks, are used in the assembly of this model for each client. The result is an audit of current performance as well as a forecasted revenue performance lift in conjunction with LeadMD recommendations.

The model provides immediate value in terms of performance insights and serves as a ROI justification for LeadMD services. It's not uncommon for these models to become staples within board presentations, annual budgeting proposals and quarterly performance projections.

All at no cost to the client.

# Hyper-Value Sales Offer: Business Case



		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Solutions 2019 Impact	Marketable Database	Engagement Rate	Marketing Qualified	Sales Accepted	Sales Qualified	Closed Won	Advocacy & LTV
Objectives and KPIs	High		X	X	X	X	X	X
Audience Program	MASSIVE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Go-to-Market Strategy	High		X	X			X	X
Center of Excellence	MASSIVE		X	X	X	X	X	X
Process Development & Optimization	Medium		X	X	X			X
Tech and Data Alignment	Medium	X	X			X		X
Full Funnel Marketing Strategy	High		X	X	X	X	X	X
Training and Enablement	High		X	X	X	X	X	X

# Hyper-Value Sales Offer: Business Case

	Current State Assumptions	1 Hiring Growth	2 Engaged Rate	3 Qualified Rate	4 Opportunity Rate	5 Closed Won Rate	All Up
Total Addressable Market	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Prospected against TAM %	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
<b>Targets - TAL (Marketable Database)</b>	22,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000
Engagement Rate %	3%	3%	10%	3%	3%	3%	10%
<b>Discovery Call (Engaged)</b>	600	3,300	11,000	3,300	3,300	3,300	11,000
Qualified Rate %	96%	34%	34%	40%	34%	34%	40%
<b>Qualified Discovery (Qualified)</b>	580	1,122	3,740	1,320	1,122	1,122	4,400
Opportunity Rate %	17%	17%	17%	17%	30%	17%	30%
<b>Business Profile (Opportunity)</b>	100	190	635	224	336	190	1320
Closed Won Rate %	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	20%	20%
<b>Closed Won</b>	11	21	70	25	37	38	264
<b>Average Deal Size</b>	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$5,500,000</b>	<b>\$10,500,000</b>	<b>\$35,000,000</b>	<b>\$12,500,000</b>	<b>\$18,500,000</b>	<b>\$19,000,000</b>	<b>\$132,000,000</b>
<b>Potential Lift in Revenue</b>		<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>\$29,500,000</b>	<b>\$7,000,000</b>	<b>\$13,000,000</b>	<b>\$13,500,000</b>	<b>\$126,500,000</b>

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# 3. Understand Your Unique Success Proposition

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When assembling your Hyper-Value Sales Offer it's important to also understand **how your organization is uniquely positioned against the competition or other potential approaches** that would compete for the focus of the buyer. We term this the Unique Success Proposition.

Currently, the choice to simply 'do nothing' is a heightened competitive force for all businesses due to time and budget constraints. The sales offer, and it's surrounding messaging, should deal with these variables explicitly. This is where supporting content and an orchestrated approach to message delivery is critical.

Once you have introduced the solution to the buyer's problem, you must now illustrate how you are uniquely positioned as the only or 'best fit' partner to influence the success of the buyer and their organization.

# The Role of Social Proof

Social proof is always a valuable marketing and sales tool. However, in times of crisis this need is amplified.

Organizations want to understand what other organizations are doing.

To address this need, solution providers can build further trust by facilitating these conversations and the flow of insights that otherwise would not be possible.

PEER CONVERSATIONS

ANALYST REPORTS

ACCESS TO EXPERTS

ROUNDTABLES

CUSTOMER STORIES

WEBINARS



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## 4. Align the Organization

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The bedrock of an Account-Based go-to-market approach is a well orchestrated engagement strategy. Orchestration is the sequenced coordination of different activities, programs and campaigns across marketing, sales development, sales and customer success to drive engagement with multiple stakeholders in target accounts. In crisis situations, we see buying committees widening and budgetary oversight tightening. By leveraging alignment across the buying and selling organizations we ensure that we are prepared to help our buyer make their internal case.

This is also a critical time to break out the different areas of value uncovered in the hyper-value sales offer and customize those findings for different audiences by delivering them in a peer-to-peer setting. CEO to CEO alignment for example, is a great way to frame the unique challenges and perspectives felt by an individual through a peer conversation.

People want to talk to people who understand their position and are working through the same challenges.

# Orchestration in Action



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## 5. Reforecast for Success

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COVID-19 is going to impact your business. Regardless of the specifics there, no one will be unaffected – and planning for that impact is absolutely critical. If you haven't been part of a quarterly re-forecasting process in the past, it's time to start. Every organization should be evaluating different revenue impact scenarios– and because marketing owns the relationship with the customer, you should be on the front lines of that process. Use this resource to determine where your budget should get reallocated:

<https://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2020/42688/how-to-fill-the-marketing-void-created-by-coronavirus-and-get-the-budget-to-pay-for-it>

There are obvious changes that need to be made, such as investment in face-to-face events, travel costs and team gatherings – but there other considerations to be made. As everyone shouts for attention, capturing the eye of buyers will require more investment. Search volumes are spiking, folks are inundated with webinar invites and everyone is feeling the pressure to pivot. Now, more than ever, the need to create truly helpful content, like that we have outlined here, is paramount. We need to understand our buyer's challenges and meet them with resources. **It's time to become a content marketing machine.**

# Critical Reforecasting Considerations

**Benchmarks have never been more important.** Every business has a baseline for financial performance, rarely the case in marketing. If you have reliable benchmarks, they will be your north star in terms of where to invest. If not, forming them can not be an option.

**Sales and Marketing must work together.** Now is not the time to disagree on go-to-market focus and motions. Your best friend in the trenches is your counterpart.

**When the going gets tough, buyer experience wins.** Nothing, and I do mean nothing, should compromise the buyer and customer experience. Invest whatever it takes to stand out here.

**Efficiency is the best cost cutting strategy.** If you need to cut costs, leverage your teams to understand what they're not using. Tech debt is the first stop with the red pen. The next is any initiative or project that doesn't contribute to creating great experiences or revenue.

**New world, new KPIs.** Albeit harder to see on a dashboard, buyer and client perception of value must become a key optic. In turn, conversations play an enormous part in success and yield critical insight. Remember, churn reduction adds revenue just as quickly as top line, but more efficiently.

# We're here to help.

After over a decade on the front lines of digital marketing and sales, helping over 3,500 hyper-growth to enterprise level organizations from B2B to B2C, the constant that has remained is the need to form meaningful conversations.

**That has not changed.**

Our role remains, as it always has been, to enable you to have those conversations effectively, leveraging people, processes and technology.

If you have questions, need help, or simply want to kick ideas around,  
**we're here to help.**

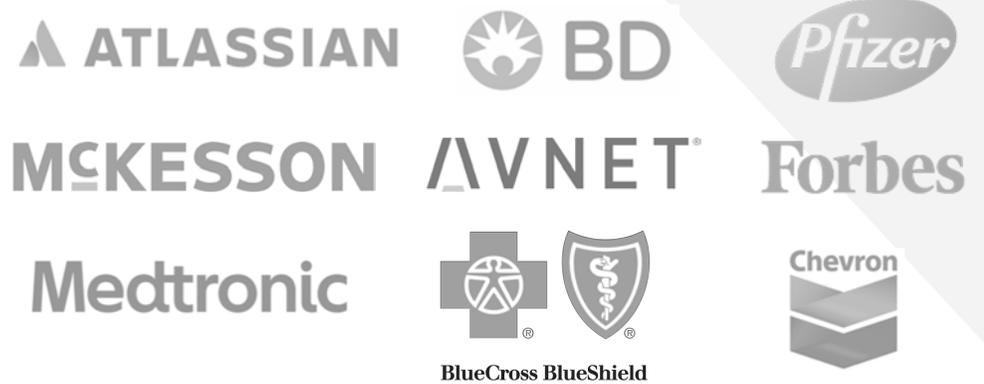
# About LeadMD

LeadMD is a revenue performance consultancy that leverages our experience with over 3,500 implementations to make your **vision actionable** and your **outcomes measurable**.

*How?* By breaking down the typical siloes of technology and strategy, LeadMD collaborates with clients to make their vision of excellence operational.



## LEADING THE WAY THROUGH **BEST PRACTICES**



## OUR **EXPERIENCED** LINEUP



## **BEST IN BREED** PARTNER NETWORK





# Hyper-Value Sales Offers

A worksheet for value communication

# 1 Assess Your Buyer Journey

This worksheet will help you analyze your buyer journey to identify their pain points, gaps, unique needs and areas of opportunity for your offering to improve that experience. At the end of this exercise you should have a good understanding of your hyper-value sales offer.

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## The Journey

First, let's outline your buyer journey. What steps do prospects go through as they move through their decisions, and what are their needs at each stage? This should cover both interactions with your brand, as well as other activities they engage in during their search and decision making.

### Your Prospects

What activities are your prospects doing as they start to seek out options? What are they thinking and feeling at this stage?

### Research & Need

What sources are your buyers consulting to learn more about what they need? What are they thinking and feeling at this stage? What do they need most?

### Consideration & Trust

How are your buyers comparing options? What sources do they consult? How do they build trust in a solution partner?

### Purchase & Process

As they're making a final decision, what actions are they taking? Who do they need to loop in? How do they make decisions?

# Build a Better Human Experience

How can you make this experience better for your potential customers? First capture any experience gaps, pain points, or unmet needs. For each of these, brainstorm ways that your team can engage with buyers to improve their experience.

Pain points or unmet needs:

Ideas to improve the experience:

## ② Offering Value

It's time to make value the centerpiece. Now that you've mapped the buyer journey and identified pain points and unmet needs, you're prepared to design campaigns and experiences that better meet their needs.

### The Problem & USP

What is the main problem your key buyer is trying to solve in considering your product or brand? How will you meet it with a Unique Success Proposition?

### Competition

Define your key competitors and how you compare. Remember the potential for 'no decision' or nontraditional competitive forces.

Competitor	Value Proposition	How We Compare

## The Market

How is the buyer and their organization responding to the current market dynamic? Are there any other market dynamics to consider as you build your strategy?

## Hyper-Value Offer

What unique value can you offer them that would have significant value to solving their pain point?

## Key Message

What is the single most important thing you'd like your prospect to know about the way you solve their problem? This is the time to highlight that hyper-value.

## Supporting Messaging

How can you support this message in each stage of the buyer journey? How will you orchestrate the delivery to ensure the message lands across the buying committee?

Acquisition Key messages:

Research Key messages:

Consideration Key messages:

Purchase Key messages:

# Variations

Are there any variations based on your buyer groups that you should consider? This can be based on persona, segment, vertical, or buyer stage.

Variation 1:

Variation 2:

Variation 1:

Variation 2:

## 3 Build a Campaign Around Buyer Needs

Building around your buyer's preferences and needs will ensure their experience with your brand is aligned to their needs and desires.

### Audience

Who are the target buyers for this campaign?

### Campaign Goals

What do you want your potential buyer to do based on this campaign?

How will you measure success?

# Channels and Tactics

How can you engage with this audience? Consider their buyer journey, how they prefer to research, and who they may consider most influential. List out the channels that you'd use, and the tactics you'd use to offer value and move them through your buyer funnel.

## Acquisition

How can we attract and keep the attention of our prospects?

Channel	Tactic	Goal for this Tactic

## Research

How can we offer valuable information as they explore their options?

Channel	Tactic	Goal for this Tactic

## Consideration

How can you support their decision making?

Channel	Tactic	Goal for this Tactic

## Purchase

As they're making a final decision, what actions are they taking? Who do they need to loop in?

Channel	Tactic	Goal for this Tactic

## Process and Timing

You're almost there! As you move to building your offer, message and campaign, you'll need to define the resulting tactics, technology and required operations.

Now, as you solidify your plan, you should:

- Define timing and roles and responsibilities.
- Align your tech stack to your goals to ensure you can operationalize your campaign.
- Loop in sales and customer success teams to ensure everyone is clear on what comes next, and how you can support each other.

The time you've spent defining what's valuable to your buyer, what they need at each stage of their decision will position you to deliver a stellar experience as they consider your offer and interact with your campaigns.



**Thank you!**

STRATEGY | PLANNING | TACTICS | TECHNOLOGY | CONTENT & CREATIVE | DATA | PEOPLE