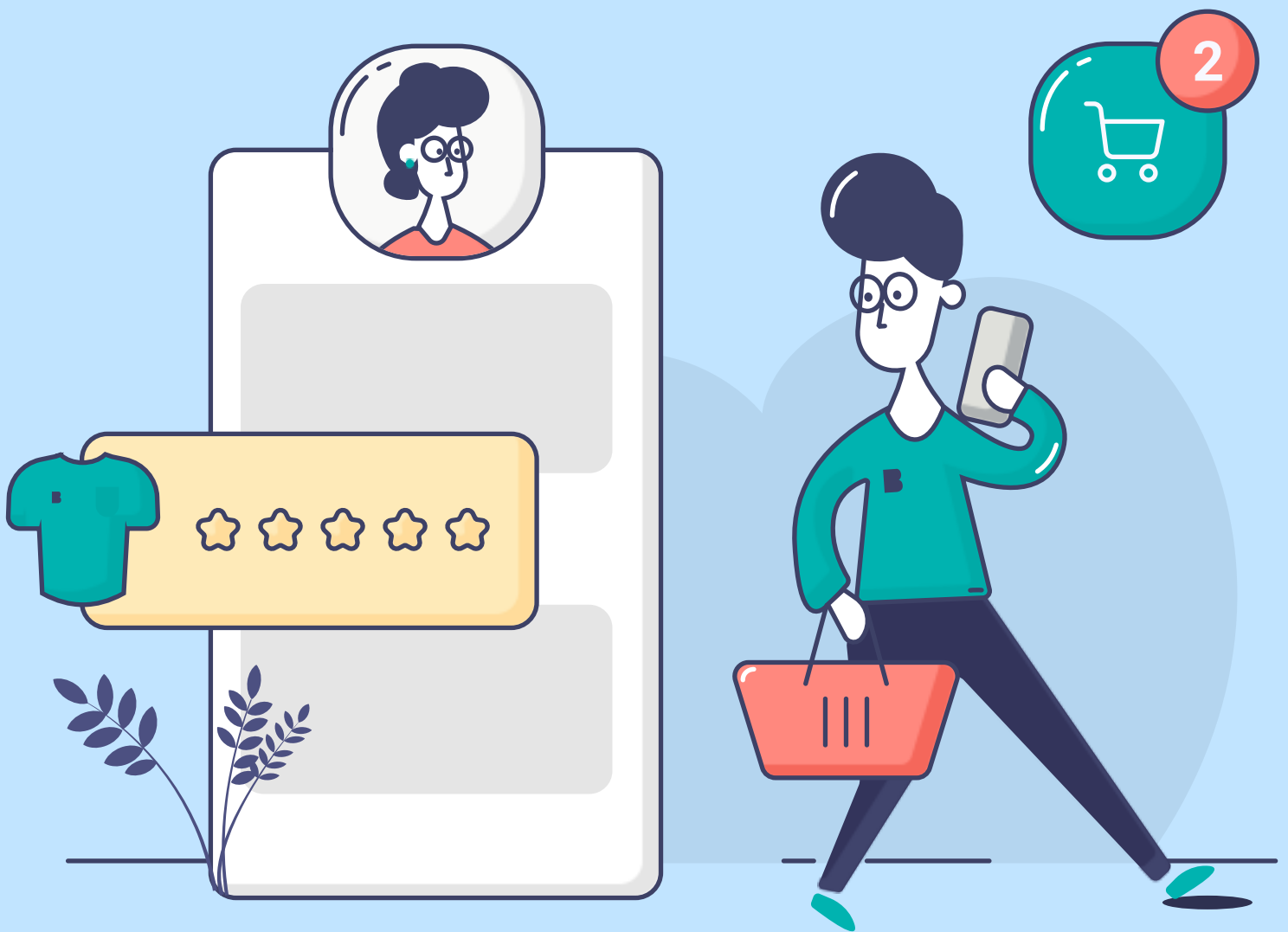# storyblok

Customer journeys and personalized experiences

Have you ever looked back on how you purchased something? What made you want to buy that specific product or service? Was there research done before? Were there any pain-points?

These are the essential questions to ask when creating and understanding the customer journey. It's an integral part of understanding the steps and thought processes a customer may have throughout their user-experience and most commonly, their buying experience.

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Understanding your customer is vital, and in turn, helps in maintaining or increasing your customer retention, maximizing profits for your business, and adding value to both your customer and business

A 2019 Salesforce study found that: [1]

- In 2018, 87% percent of shoppers begin their purchasing hunt from a digital channel

- 67% of shoppers say they feel retailers don't truly know and understand them

Let's explore the customer journey, how to map it in understanding the process and experience from beginning to end.

What is the customer journey for?

Most commonly used in eCommerce, a customer journey can simply start using personas, going through an experience of purchasing and interaction with a product or service. approach with the main goal of bringing in more visitors, site traffic, awareness and thus, more online purchases.

Get to know your different types of customers; think of the typical marketing persona made up of demographics, where they live, their income, their hobbies, and/or interests. Different customers have different journeys - for example, a millennial buyer personally would typically become aware of a product through social media, research it on a mobile phone, and then make their purchase through a desktop computer.

It is worth mentioning that there are some different frameworks and concepts that define the stages of the customer journey under different names such as the AIDA model[2] or the "See-Think-Do-Care Framework" as promoted by Google. For the purpose of this chapter, we will follow the journey based on customer touchpoints.

Using that, the customer journey can be made up of 4 distinct stages with several touchpoints along the process:

- Awareness
- Consideration
- Decision (Buying)
- Post-Purchase Reflection

When mapping, make sure to involve your stakeholders in the process to gain different perspectives, from marketing to sales, to UX/UI and tech-development. With this, you will be able to better empathize, understand, and meet a customer's expectations before, during, and after the sales. The goal is to gain insights into common customer pain points, allowing you to better optimize and personalize the overall customer experience to your brand or business.

So where does it all actually start and end?

These include in-process KPIs and output KPIs as indicated from Google's KPI framework:

• In-Process KPIs: This is useful as an indicator or milestone mark in your customer journey mapping - it's good to put in the plan or map itself, however, is not ultimately what you are looking for as an outcome as a brand.

• Output KPIs: These are the most important KPIs, being the end-goal and results your brand wants to achieve.

What are the four stages of a customer's journey?

When going through the customer journey and mapping it; some moments might last seconds, whilst others can continue for days, weeks, or months depending on each customer.
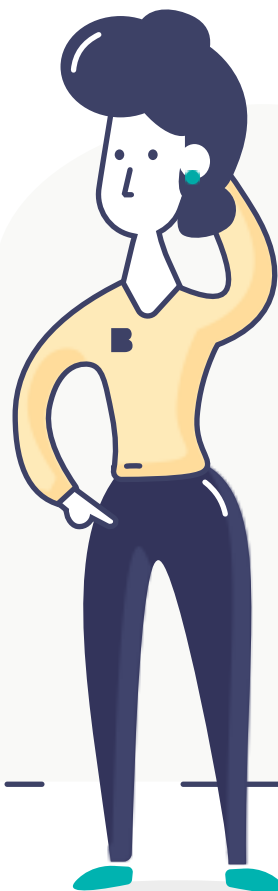
1. Awareness stage

Keep in mind that consumers are now gaining awareness through multiple channels (omnichannel), whether that be from social media, search engines, reviews, blogs, or ads. In your role as a brand, you must take into account the in-process KPI of your ability to reach people with your message and its view ability, as well as consequently your Share of Voice (SoV - the percentage of reach you are able to obtain compared to your competitor).

The first step, before even stepping foot into your website, begins outside. Most typically, customers start their journey visiting and searching on Google (or other search engines) and through social media. 51% of customers say they conduct pre-purchase research via Google, whereas 54% of customers[4] conduct pre-purchase research through social media. This means that the first step in awareness begins from a simple search. If your website has been optimized accordingly (or purchased ads for specific search terms), it's most probable your product will appear at the top of the Google Search listing, thus, being at the front of a customer's search and awareness. The **output KPI** here is awareness - being at the top-of-mind with your customers, to think about your brand and the benefits you provide, therefore increasing your likelihood of sales.

2. Consideration stage

From there, hopefully, your customer has clicked through to your website! The next step involves consideration and research, such as debating your product vs. another,

considering prices, and weighing the features and benefits between you and your competitors. The in-process KPI is to consider the reach of people with some commercial content as well – i.e. a list that compiles signals you as a brand deem suited for commercial interest and intent in your brand and products. This can include anything from those visiting your website, downloading an application, or choosing to watch a video on social platforms.

The key important factors here are brand awareness, quality, usability, design, and customer service. Look to increase brand awareness in your product space; whether that be through improving customer relations, brand storytelling, reviews that solidify your brand, advertisements, or even considering the usability and design of your website geared towards a good first impression and authenticity. Consequently, the **output KPI** as a result of the key important factors mentioned, are people gaining that commercial intent to browse and look around in your industry. The point is for potential customers to look for you rather than the competition, increasing your share in branded searches for example.

3. Decision (buying) stage

The customer is buying your product! Make sure to not leave the customer unattended - it's important to acknowledge their transaction and time in purchasing your product or service. Include things like an automated welcome message, keep in touch, or sign up to establish a relationship between you and your customer, while continuing on the customer journey.

Just like the 'Consideration Stage' the **in-process KPIs** is to focus on signals for your customers with commercial intent; from those who have gone through the customer journey and are ready to make a purchase or those who may have abandoned their purchase, as well as those who search key terms such as "buy [term]" etc.

Think of it as a cycle, your customers and potential leads will continually be in the loop of (re-)consideration and buying until they make the purchase itself. It is important again, to not leave the customer unattended. Design and usability additionally come into play here, with the need to ensure the customer journey from accessing your website to payment are as seamless and convenient as possible.

The ultimate **output KPI** in this stage is financial, specifically as the 'most important financial KPI'. This needs to be revised internally with your business' owners within your brand to distinguish whether it is top-line revenue growth, bottom-line profit, or the two. Whichever one it is, all efforts must go towards what is considered the most important financial KPI.

4. Post-purchase reflection

Often overlooked, the post-purchasing stage, or reflection phase, is key to retaining your customer. Considered as an in-process KPI of reaching out to your existing customers, this involves maintaining customer satisfaction in continuing to solve their problems in anticipation of future issues that may arise, communicating to develop

customer loyalty, and advocate their voices, all post-purchase

If you've passed through all the phases successfully, your customers are surely becoming fans. Your customer's voices are the best marketing in advocating and influencing further purchases and sales. As a brand, you can tap in by asking them for feedback, and in return, the output KPI, provide rewards or affiliate/referral schemes (if appropriate) as a driver to improve sales and the repeat purchase rate.

How do I measure overall success?

As mentioned above, a key measure is looking towards that aid in setting a bar in which your brand can achieve for both your customers and business.

To summarize the KPI points from each stage, we can look to this table as an overall indicator (adapted from Google's KPI Framework):

Stages	In-Process KPIs	Output KPIs
Awareness Stage	Reach & Share of Voice (SoV)	Awareness
Consideration Stage	Reach of people showing some commercial interest	Searches of brand
Decision (Buying) Stage	Focus on signal reach for people with lots of commercial interest	Whichever financial KPI your brand owners are committed to
Post-Purchase Stage	Reach to existing customers	Repeat purchase rate

Mapping the customer journey is only the first step. Putting the journey into practice, in measuring success, is the reflection of the overall satisfaction of your customer with your brand and the overall experience you are providing. In doing so by using the phases we explored above, we unite these phases together to see the overall willingness of customers recommending your product/service to others and repurchases, using a measurement such as a Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Feedback is king! Reach out to your customers and ask about their overall experience and impressions.

Do I need a customer journey for my business?

Yes! Mapping the customer journey helps you not only understand your customers, but also realign with your intentions, KPIs, and purpose as a brand - ultimately to align your marketing and website accordingly to provide the most seamless experience possible.

if you feel that your current eCommerce set up and marketing website is minimal, take a look at Storyblok.

Storyblok helps you organize all your content in one place for all your digital channels, along with features alongside to best optimize your customer's eCommerce website experience.

Key Takeaway

Take time to research and getting to know your customers to create an effective customer journey map. Only then, are you able to distinguish and identify key relationship-building points, capture attention-points, and move with your customers in creating an experience that reaps the benefits and creates value. The absolute main point is to **always place and consider your customer at the center of everything.**

Key Takeaway

Endnotes

1. Salesforce, Nine Stats About the Retail Customer Journey in 2019. Apr. 2019. https://www.salesforce.com/blog/customer-retail-statistics/

2. Hubspot, The AIDA Model: A Proven Framework for Converting Strangers Into Customers. https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/aida-model

3. Google, KPIs: An Essential Framework. Oct. 2015, https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-145/future-of-marketing/creativity/kpis-essential-framework/

4. Google. https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-strategies/search/product-research-search-statistics/