TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview: ......................................................................................................................... 3
Consideration ................................................................................................................. 5
Understand the Landscape & Consumer Conversation ..................................... 6
Differentiate from Competitors .................................................................................. 7
Evaluation ........................................................................................................................ 8
Drivers of Purchase Behavior .................................................................................... 8
Content Analysis and Ideation .................................................................................. 8
Purchase .......................................................................................................................... 9
Targeting Purchase Intent and Removing Buying Friction ............................................ 9
Identifying Cross-Sell Opportunities ....................................................................... 10
Closing ............................................................................................................................ 10

Who this guide is for:

Customer experience, market research, and consumer insights teams looking to
deeper build brand awareness, understand
consumer behavior and/or build demand throughout the purchase funnel.
OVERVIEW

Customer experience is the new frontier driving competitive advantage. Per a McKinsey study, “for every 10-percentage-point uptick in customer satisfaction, a company can increase revenues 2 percent to 3 percent.” Delivering customer satisfaction starts from brand awareness through to post-purchase and building loyalty.

Traditionally, social media analysis has focused on the care element of customer experience and that is a great place to start as it is tangible and creates immediate value. However, the digital experience has altered traditional customer journeys: 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations and 92% of consumers trust peer recommendations over advertising. Increasingly, companies are using social data to inform the entire customer lifecycle (see example lifecycle below—your industry may be slightly different).

With the ever-growing number of touchpoints through the buying cycle, managing the entire customer digital lifecycle is key. When getting started with CX enhancements, take into account:

WHERE IN THE LIFECYCLE TO FOCUS:
- Brand Maturity & Competitive Set
- Conversation Volume by Phase

WHAT’S FEASIBLE:
- Resourcing
- Process/Policy Impacts

WHERE ARE THE GAPS/WHERE CAN YOU MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT:
- Existing Data—what do you already know
- Digital v. Operational—what experiences can you change?

As a quick reference, the chart below provides an overview of ANALYSIS » ACTIONS » MEASUREMENT.
CUSTOMER JOURNEY ANALYSIS

THE JOURNEY EACH CUSTOMER TAKES:
Is it a long buying cycle (automotive)? Are there specific triggers or life events that lead to your products (pharma, financial services)? Or is it more important to be top of mind as part of a transactional purchase (many CPG and retail companies)?

THE WAY YOU CONNECT WITH YOUR CUSTOMER:
Is your company more focused on efficacy, service, value and product reliability (e.g. Wal-Mart)? Or, is there more focus on emotion and brand building (e.g. Coca-Cola)?

While there is obviously overlap amongst each, map your brand on the axis and keep your Brand Type in mind for the remaining analysis:

- Pragmatics are most focused on demand generation and driving activity to their stores, websites, and other points of purchase—how can social help your brand to generate awareness amongst key segments and be at the right place, right time?
- Lifestyle brands are concerned with content generation and build connections—how can social help you talk in your customer’s voice and maintain/evolve your image?
- Product Innovator brands need to educate consumers on the benefits of their goods and services with thought leadership—how can social reveal customer questions and placement ideas to drive consideration?

How can social help your brand to generate awareness amongst key segments?
Experiential brands look to make a connection with customers across all points in their longer, multi-channel lifecycle—how can social reveal opportunities to surprise and delight at each stage in the customer journey?

Lastly, keep in mind existing research. Most companies have extensive focus group, CRM and/or survey data on consumer preferences at each stage in the journey. In some cases, social and other digital data can be the point of inspiration—either leading to an action or to additional research. In many cases, that data is also used as validation. One of our customers calls that—the “social proof.” They triangulate to customer needs using traditional methods—and then always checking the digital world to verify their hypotheses.

This guide will walk through best practices and suggested analyses for the Purchase Funnel—from Consideration through to Purchase specifically.

For additional resources on how to improve the experience for existing customers, please see the Customer Experience: Customer Care Guide.

**CONSIDERATION**

The Consideration phase is particularly important in terms of setting your overall brand perception. Increasingly, customers are using word-of-mouth and online reviews to make purchase decisions. As consumers on constantly bombarded with TV, out-of-home, digital, and social ads, how can your brand break through the clutter? What drives brand love and how can we drive more engagement?

And, there are additional, downstream benefits to improved brand perception. In a recent study, McKinsey found that “companies whose advertising inspires their customers with the power and appeal of their brand or generates word of mouth deliver 30 to 40 percentage points more satisfaction than their peers.” In other words, proper framing during the Consideration phase can actually IMPROVE your customers’ likelihood to judge a Post-Purchase experience as favorable.

The core of the Consideration phase focuses on consumer needs by uncovering:

- **BRAND AWARENESS AND KEY ATTRIBUTES**—highlighting your strengths in your customers words
- **DIFFERENTIATION FROM COMPETITORS**—how should you be talking and where
UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE & CONSUMER CONVERSATION

The goal for this analysis is to benchmark over time—how is my brand perceived/talked about during each period, where are the deviations and why? How can I use those differences in combination with other data (PR, customer surveys, sales, etc.) to understand what works (drives more awareness/share of voice)? We will use the answers to the above to develop an overall understanding of the competitive landscape in the category, understand the category, and consumer preferences for our portfolio of products/services.

For this analysis, consider:

■ How far back should historical analysis go? For some brands, year over year is important to track industry trends and multiple years may be required. For others (e.g. QSR), constantly changing market conditions may make lengthy history less important.

■ How frequently do conversations change? In high volume CPG industries, brand conversations change weekly and benchmarking analysis should be over smaller time periods. For B2B and lower volume B2C brands, monthly analysis (or even quarterly) may be more appropriate.

■ Which segments are we targeting? Using demographics, consumer bios and self-descriptions we can identify differences in the conversation that drive engagement.
  ■ How do brand advocates talk versus detractors? What can be adapted from those differences to improve brand image?
  ■ How is the conversation different by channel?

■ Which influencers drive the highest engagement amongst our brand and competitors? What does that tell us about our audience’s affinities? Who should we target to leverage as influencers?
  ■ Are there brand and/or interest area affinities we can leverage for sponsorship or partnership consideration? If I’m considering a sponsorship, do my customers have an affinity for that interest area?

■ Which categories is our brand in? Example—a coffee company might consider analysis of coffee as a category, but also breakfast, broader beverage conversation, or energy drinks. What is our brand share in those categories and what can we learn about consumer preferences within the category?

■ Are there known attribute to drive awareness (grow share of voice) or to differentiate from competitors (e.g. flavor, price, access)?

To answer each of the questions above, build the following assets:

■ Comprehensive topics on your brand and competitors
  ■ Build themes of each brand and competitor using the primary terms in each topic

■ Attribute themes for competitive comparison (see NB certified themes by industry, purchase funnel, attribute for examples)

■ Author analysis based on bio terms and/or engagements

■ Category topics
  ■ Add additional themes as necessary for your category
DIFFERENTIATE FROM COMPETITORS

With the assets above we can conduct a several analyses to better understand consumer consideration and brand awareness. Specifically:

- **UNDERSTAND THE OVERALL BRAND & COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE**
- **DIVE DEEPER INTO THE CATEGORY**—evaluating emotions/behaviors that drive brand consideration and category interest
- **ANALYZE POPULAR CONTENT AND CHANNEL MESSAGING** to identify opportunities to optimize content/placement strategy

**Client Example:** One CPG company used Brand & Competitive analysis to develop a deep understanding of target consumers by product category. Using that insight and external research, they created category topics related to interest areas for their key segments. When a news item or influencer event happens, the company analyzes which segment is discussing the event and provides content ideas to product community managers based on most shared content & top terms related to the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
<th>MEASUREMENT</th>
<th>HOW TO APPLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary/Landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brands Topic Comparison</td>
<td>Competitive Share of Voice</td>
<td>Measure brand awareness, identify growth opportunities, what has worked for competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brands Timeline Trend</td>
<td>Conversation Share Over Time</td>
<td>Who drove spikes in conversation and when; Consistent growth vs. flash in the pan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category Analysis: Brands</td>
<td>Category Share of Voice</td>
<td>Separate “branded” consideration from category—how can we better re-align brand messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category Analysis: Brands</td>
<td>Category Share of Voice</td>
<td>Identify industry trends driving conversation; Learn from the past to recognize opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category Deep Dive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment Attributes (by period)</td>
<td>Highest Volume</td>
<td><strong>PRIORITY:</strong> when sentiment expressed—what are the objects of that sentiment—what drives positive and negative perceptions in the category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions Analysis</td>
<td>Highest Volume + Qualitative</td>
<td><strong>PRIORITY:</strong> How do consumers describe needs in the category—what do they “want,” “wish for,” etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Attribute Themes</td>
<td>Share &amp; Sentiment by Value</td>
<td><strong>PRIORITY:</strong> While brands are winning in each attribute—what is working for each brand relative to products, service, and pricing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics: Bio Analysis (vs. brand)</td>
<td>Over-indexed terms</td>
<td>Which brands are winning in each attribute—what is working for each brand relative to products, service, and pricing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category Trending</td>
<td>Trend Score by Term, Hashtag</td>
<td>What is emerging over the last week, month, quarter—what consumer trends can we leverage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: see NB PR_10_Brand & Competitive Tracking for additional details on basic brand and competitive set-up/analysis*
EVALUATION

If the Consideration phase is about awareness and differentiation, the Evaluation phase is about effective content. At some point, a trigger event occurs and customers move into the evaluation stage. For “transactional” brands, this trigger event is minor— “I’m hungry, where should I eat?” For “researched” brands, this trigger event is more distinct— “I was diagnosed with a new condition,” “my car is on it’s last legs,” etc. Identifying customer emotions and behaviors during that evaluation process can make your brand top-of-mind and improve conversion.

The core of the Evaluation phase focuses on calls-to-action by analyzing:

■ DRIVERS OF PURCHASE BEHAVIOR—how to convert from evaluation to purchase
■ CONTENT ANALYSIS AND IDEATION—build better messaging for brand engagement during evaluation

DRIVERS OF PURCHASE BEHAVIOR

To build a good understanding of your consumer’s evaluation process, consider several types of analysis on behaviors and attitudes:

■ “SMALL DATA:” rather than broad topics analyzing your entire brand conversation, go to the select blogs, forums and review sites where consumer evaluation is most discussed. This detailed view can bring unmet needs and/or product evaluation into the forefront.

■ DIRECT COMPETITIVE COMPARISON: Using the Brand Topics & Themes created above, analyze the conversation when customers are directly comparing your product to a competitor. What do they like, dislike. What is driving “switching” or “using” behaviors.

Client Example: One CPG company created storage devices aimed at saving space. The product opened to lukewarm sales and the team turned to social to find out the cause. The market research team noticed that conversation was particularly positive around out-of-home storage versus closets and adjusted content & placement to focus on this additional use case—driving significant sales increases in the next quarter.

CONTENT ANALYSIS AND IDEATION

Building engaging content relies on understanding:

■ What is your audience engaging with today
■ What are the differences by social network
  ■ What information is sought (e.g. product efficacy, value, etc.)
  ■ Messaging and voice
■ When is the best time to reach your segment

Keep in mind your customer journey. For B2B companies and longer sales cycles (travel, automotive, etc.), multiple touchpoints and in-depth information is required.
Client Example: Multiple Financial Services clients have focused on industry audiences to understand their specific needs and they create content tailored to those trends. To improve messaging, engagement, and sales, clients have followed a similar process:

- Identify target segment(s) with the goal of building your brand as an expert
- Analyze the category to understand topics relevant to the target segment versus general discussion
- Create content aimed at consistent topics + gaps in industry knowledge

For transactional products, marketing in the moment and convenience are key. Meet your consumers where those trigger events take place. For a coffee company, this might mean mid-morning occasion focus. For a QSR, this might be connecting with core segments during activities like gaming, sports or music.

On the other hand—also remember your branding focus. If more product-based, what are the selling points that will bring customers to your brand? Analyze popular content for the most common attributes. If more brand marketing, how can you build deeper emotional connections with your customers? Use popular content as a “mood board” for inspiration on messaging to build tighter connections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
<th>MEASUREMENT</th>
<th>HOW TO APPLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Analysis</td>
<td>Popular Media and Posts</td>
<td>By Engagements, By segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Category Conversation by Channel</td>
<td>Volume, Sentiment, and Word Clouds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Category; Day &amp; Hour (potentially by theme)</td>
<td>Heat Map of Conversation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PURCHASE

Finally, once you have the customer in your sights and onto your site/in to your store, how can you provide a seamless, smooth experience that improves overall conversion? At its most basic, analysis at the purchase stage is buying behavior and understanding pain points at point of purchase. Additionally, social can be used to benchmark “intentful” mentions across your products—how much conversation (relative to competitors) is your brand driving around purchase behaviors?

Caveat for the purchase phase—there are often many sources of data that contain detailed customer data on purchase habits. For this stage, social is often best used as a validation of other research or qualitative insight to compliment specific findings.

TARGETING PURCHASE INTENT AND REMOVING BUYING FRICTION

When developing strategies for increasing conversion, there are multiple analyses to consider:

- **INDIVIDUAL TARGETING:** Find consumers who have self-identified as advocates of your product. For transactional brands—the key here is sentiment accuracy and reach. For researched brands, the volume will be very low—but the reward can be very high.

- **BARRIERS TO PURCHASE:** What drives a negative experience at your locations or on your site? Analyze behaviors like “not buy” and “wish” to understand what consumers hope your brand can change. Note—many of these fixes are likely to be operational rather than on social.
IDENTIFYING CROSS-SELL OPPORTUNITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
<th>MEASUREMENT</th>
<th>HOW TO APPLY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affinity Analysis</td>
<td>Campaign Cross-Segment</td>
<td>Take response to a given campaign and analyze across other campaigns—are there patterns/opportunities to expand share of wallet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By Engagements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Brand Love” Analysis</td>
<td>Sentiment/Volume</td>
<td>Take those most addicted to your brand—target with specific offers related to new products or additional launches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross-sell analysis depends on shared affinities or needs across segments. To identify these opportunities, consider the analyses below:

CLOSING

Esteban Kolksy, founder of brand consultancy thinkJar (formerly of Gartner), provides an interesting take on how to approach the CX challenges companies face—“the customer experience process is non-deterministic, so one-time generically manufactured experiences ignore the nuances and complexities of actual interactions with customers. Customer experiences must be chosen and validated by the customer; customer experience is not offered by the company.” He further points out that consumers continually generate data about their preferences throughout the customer lifecycle—via social and other digital sources—and leading companies will make use of that data to surprise and delight.

To further validate the need for consistent, ongoing analysis, McKinsey found that those who invest in big data and advanced analytics often achieve up to 10 percent sales growth, up to 5 percent higher return on sales, and a margin uplift of 1 to 2 percent. However, in the same article, they noted “many companies still spend the bulk of their research budget on traditional techniques (e.g., focus groups, interviews, and surveys), or treat insights as an afterthought, which leaves them with a limited and often incorrect view of what customers want. That is a recipe for obsolescence in today’s economy.”

Building a leading analytics capability means evolving experiences rather than a project-based or ad hoc approach. This guide is meant to help arm your insights teams to continually listen to customer feedback. Understanding behaviors, emotions, preferences, and aspirations will help adjust customer communication in near real-time and communicate with authenticity.

Remember these key takeaways:

1. **BREAK THROUGH THE CLUTTER**
   a. Benchmark your brand versus competitors to identify opportunities (including segmenting by core attributes and audiences)
   b. Learn from post-purchase conversation to improve Consideration
   c. Expand to category analysis to evaluate trends and learn from consumer needs

2. **IDENTIFY UNMET NEEDS AND SOLVE CONSUMER PAIN POINTS:**
   a. Maximize success in the Evaluation stage with content aligned to customer needs (transactional v. researched) and your company (product vs. brand)
   b. Understand purchase/switching behavior to increase conversion

3. **REDUCE BARRIERS TO PURCHASE:**
   a. Improve the experience at the "last mile" with analysis of each customer touchpoint
   b. Identify cross-affinities and maximize you opportunities for upsell
NetBase is the social analytics platform that global companies use to run brands, build businesses, and connect with consumers every second. Its platform processes millions of social media posts daily for actionable business insights for marketing, research, customer service, sales, PR and product innovation.

NetBase is recognized by analysts and customers as the leader in Social Analytics. NetBase was rated a category leader by Forrester in the “Forrester Wave: Enterprise Social Listening Platforms, Q1 2016” report. NetBase was also named a top rated social media management platform by software users on TrustRadius and a market leader by G2 Crowd.