

Paths to Purchase: The Seven Steps of Customer Purchase Journey Mapping

Barry Berman
Hofstra University

Abstract

A consumer purchase map details the decision paths and key interactions customers encounter with a firm or brand as they move throughout the purchase process. This article details a seven-step process that channel members can use to better plan and implement customer journey mapping: (1) developing an organization unit to manage the consumer purchase journey mapping process; (2) mapping touch and interaction points; (3) identifying the characteristics of effective journeys; (4) using maps to identify and reach specific target markets; (5) measuring the strengths and weaknesses of the customer experience through consumer purchase journey mapping; (6) quantifying the benefits and costs of journey mapping and (7) avoiding pitfalls in planning and implementing purchase journey mapping.

The Importance of Customer Journey Mapping

The consumer purchase map details the decision paths and key interactions with a firm or brand as the customer moves through the purchase process from awareness, to consideration, to search, to purchase and to post-purchase behavior. The map identifies the firm's most important customer touchpoints in each target market, shows the different decision paths taken by these audiences, and enables a marketer to measure the overall value of each touchpoint. The mapping process identifies weak points in a firm's marketing strategy by comparing the actual versus desired sequence among devices (PC and smartphone), departments (sales and customer service), and channels (Web and store).

Customer purchase maps were first discussed in a *McKinsey Quarterly* publication.¹ The process outlined by *McKinsey* is similar to the Buyer Utility Map that is part of the Blue Ocean Strategy.² Both the journey map and Buyer

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Utility Map focus on the sequence of stages in the purchase cycle and the customer experience.

The increased use of consumer purchase mapping is associated with the use of omnichannel marketing strategies. Unlike multichannel strategies that focus solely on either Web or store-based strategies, omnichannel marketing recognizes that consumers often channel hop among channels and devices.

Customer journey mapping is an alternative to traditional segmentation and cross-tabulation based studies that confine their analysis to a single touchpoint. In contrast, journey mapping looks at the cumulative customer experience across multiple touchpoints and multiple channels.³ Mapping is an effective technique to analyse a consumer group's sequence of activities and the proper handoff of customers from one touchpoint to another. The purchase map enables marketers and academics to answer a series of questions. These relate to customers' use of an omnichannel strategy, the quality of the customers' experience at each stage of the buying process, and synergies and disruptions at each purchase process stage. Through mapping, touchpoints are viewed as complementary as opposed to being competitive with one another.

Table 1. Major Differences between Consumer Purchase Mapping and Traditional Market Research Techniques to Study Consumer Behavior

Consumer Purchase Mapping Techniques	Traditional Market Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examines touchpoint interaction across channels and devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looks at consumer behavior within a specific channel or device
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assumes that the purchase path can be either linear or curvilinear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assumes a linear consumer purchase path
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looks at the customer's total purchase process experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examines the customer's experience at a single stage of the purchase process
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes an omnichannel perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes a single or multichannel perspective

Table 1 examines the major differences between analyzing consumer behavior using traditional techniques versus consumer purchase journey mapping. While traditional techniques focus on a single channel or device (PC, tablet, iPad) at one point in time, consumer purchase mapping looks at the touchpoint interactions across channels and devices within the entire purchase process. Many cross tabulation-based or segmentation studies

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assume that a customer's decision path is linear, while consumer purchase journeys seek to determine whether linear or curvilinear purchase journeys best describe consumer behavior. Lastly, traditional studies look at a customer's experience at one stage of the purchase process. In contrast, journey mapping looks at the customer's total experience across channels and devices. In summary, journey mapping embodies an omnichannel perspective, while traditional research has a single or multichannel viewpoint.

Table 2. Key Marketing Issues that Can Be Resolved via Consumer Purchase Mapping

Effective Use of Omnichannel Strategies

- To what extent do shoppers use online, store, mobile marketing or social media in various stages of the consumer purchase process?
- Do gaps between consumer expectations and experiences exist between devices, departments and channels?
- What are the potential synergies among touchpoints?
- What types of promotions and product information facilitate customer movement along the purchase process? ... hinder movement?
- Where are the significant defections in the buying process?
- Can a marketer reallocate resources, messages, and the touchpoint sequence to reduce consumer defections along the consumer purchase process?

Response to Changes in Consumer Behavior

- How does consumer behavior change over time as a customer obtains experience with a good or service provider?
- Do mapping results coincide with the growth of mobile phone and APP usage?

Effectiveness of Strategies for Each Major Target Market

- What combination of strategies and touchpoints are most effective for each major target market?
- How effective is a firm's marketing effort in low involvement versus high involvement purchasing contexts?... B2B versus B2C environments?... complex versus commoditized contexts?

Evaluation of the Customer Experience

- Do consumers face very inconsistent experiences and satisfaction levels based on the touchpoints used? ...the sequence of touchpoints used?

Every two years the *Marketing Science Institute (MSI)* asks its member company trustees to list their most pressing concerns. *MSI* listed

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“Understanding Customers and the Customer Experience” as a Tier 1 priority for 2014-2016 for both practitioners and academics.⁴

This paper focuses on purchase journey mapping from a managerial perspective. It develops a seven-step process to better plan and implement journey mapping: (1) developing an organization unit to manage the consumer purchase journey mapping process; (2) mapping touch and interaction points; (3) identifying the characteristics of effective journeys; (4) using maps to identify and reach specific target markets; (5) measuring the strengths and weaknesses of the customer experience through consumer purchase journey mapping; (6) quantifying the benefits and costs of journey mapping and (7) avoiding pitfalls in planning and implementing purchase journey mapping. See Table 2 for a listing of key marketing issues that can be answered via journey mapping.

Customer Journey Mapping: Research Findings

This section summarizes the contribution of customer journey mapping to two important research streams. The first stream questions the traditional linear model of consumer behavior. The second looks at the role of the store in an omnichannel environment.

Prior to consumer journey mapping many academics viewed the consumer purchase process (from awareness, to familiarity, to consideration, to purchase, and to loyalty) as funnel-shaped. The funnel shape suggests that consumers narrow their alternatives as they move from one stage of the purchase process to another. A study of *National Hockey League* membership services found its customers rarely skip steps in their buying behavior. Instead they move in a pattern characterized by increased commitment.⁵ The funnel shape implies that consumers drop out of the purchase for a given brand and choose other brands instead or none at all. This explains why a 50 percent increase in brand consideration does not translate into a 50 percent increase in sales.

In a nonlinear model consumer actions may overlap and be repeated as opposed to being successive. Several studies question the funnel-shaped view of the consumer purchase process. For example, due to conflicting users' reviews the consumer research process can become more intensive.⁶ A *McKinsey* study, based on a sample size of 20,000 consumers across five industries (automobiles, skin care, insurance, consumer electronics and mobile telecom) and three continents, found that the funnel concept failed to capture all of the touchpoints and key buying factors.⁷ The study concluded that the number of brands under consideration expanded as consumers sought additional information during an extended evaluation phase. In addition, two-thirds of the touchpoints during the active evaluation

stage were consumer driven such as Internet-based reviews, word-of-mouth recommendations, in-store interactions, and recollections of past experiences.⁸

Another *McKinsey* report found that, Business-to-Business (B2B) selling had become less linear.⁹ Likewise, a *KPMG* study concluded that the traditional linear purchase path now appears as a cycle or a web. This shows that customers often move back and forth at each stage due to the influence of offline and online factors.¹⁰

Research by *Gartner* found that that most B2B buyers are not clear about how to get from problem to solution via a common series of jobs: finding decision-enabling information, validating the information obtained, and getting approval among internal stakeholders. As opposed to being a rational series of steps, the B2B customer's journey was found to better resemble a maze rather than a linear path.¹¹ Despite these findings, funnel-based models are still widely used.

The second stream of mapping-related research examines the role of store versus other channels in the purchase process. An *A.T. Kearney* study of over 2,500 U.S. shoppers found that the most common of 30 possible purchase journeys is a consumer solely using online for the initial product discovery stage and the retailer's store for trial, purchase, pickup, and return. Stores were found to be the preferred single channel of all age groups.¹² Two-thirds of customers purchasing online used a physical store before or after the transaction. In addition, the returns stage is where consumers demonstrate the highest preference for physical stores as compared with online shopping.¹³

These findings suggest that consumer mapping studies need to be flexible in terms of their linear versus nonlinear shapes. Secondly, despite the heavily publicized store closings and store-based retailer bankruptcies, the store is still a vital channel to many consumers.

Planning and Implementing the Customer Journey Mapping Process

The following section outlines a seven-step process that channel members can use to better plan and implement journey mapping. These steps include: (1) developing an organization unit to manage the consumer purchase journey mapping process; (2) listing and mapping touchpoints and interaction points; (3) describing the characteristics of effective journey maps; (4) using maps to identify and reach specific target markets; (5) measuring the strengths and weaknesses of specific touchpoints; (6) quantifying the benefits and costs of mapping and (7) avoiding pitfalls in planning and implementing purchase journey mapping. See Figure 1.

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Figure 1. Steps in Planning and Implementing an Effective Customer Journey Map



Developing an Organization Unit to Manage the Consumer Purchase Journey Mapping Process

A major challenge to the adoption of consumer purchase mapping is the siloed nature of service delivery that exists at many organizations. In error, many companies focus their efforts on improving existing processes as opposed to of improving the customer experience.^{14,15} With a silo perspective,

retailers and product managers separately examine each element of the customer experience, such as a call center contact, television, Email, store, kiosk, a Web site, an in-store experience, and/or Web forum. In contrast, mapping examines all of the interactions across each touchpoint and device. According to one study, the greatest challenge in creating an excellent customer experience is not in creating separate well-designed touchpoints, but in creating effective linkages across each touchpoint.¹⁶

One way of overcoming a silo mentality is to assign responsibility for purchase journey mapping to a consumer journey product manager. This position leads scrum teams (or specialists across IT, analytics, operations, marketing and other functional areas) responsible for examining synergies across touchpoints, refining existing journeys, and eliminating pitfalls customers encounter as they proceed through the purchase process.

The *Royal Bank of Scotland* eliminated its silo mentality by creating a multi-functional committee to oversee its customer experience program. The committee's responsibilities include overseeing the full range of expertise needed to design experiences at the bank. Previously, each service delivery unit restricted its activities to a limited area.¹⁷

Listing and Mapping Touchpoints and Interaction Points

Many of the steps in the purchase journey involve complex handoffs between multiple internal groups where problems could easily occur. One study of an energy company's customer decision paths found that there were 19 customer interactions with complex handoffs among internal groups.¹⁸ Another study of the mortgage application and receipt process had four high-level services (purchase, administer, pay and redeem), 10 second-level services, and 64 additional granular-level services.¹⁹ One can simplify the data collection and analysis process by focusing on select markets and popular customer journey interactions. According to a *McKinsey* report, targeting about 15 to 20 top journeys generally results in obtaining the most value in the shortest time period.²⁰

The second part of this process lists each product journey mapping stage. These stages are: awareness, evaluation, experiment, purchase use, and brand/store loyalty. Another way to classify these stages is based on need, research, decide, adopt, use, and recommend.²¹ The more stages a firm chooses to study, the more complex the map becomes. One researcher concluded that marketers should target stages in the decision journey as opposed to focusing on the allocation of spending across media such as television, radio, online, etc.²² See Table 3 for a sample of touchpoint strategies for each consumer purchase journey stage.

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Table 3. Sample Touchpoint Tactics for Each Consumer Purchase Journey Stage

Awareness Stage:

- Placing relevant banner ads on mobile phone, laptop, PC
- Using referral marketing programs in-store, and online
- Advertising in traditional print, TV and radio media
- Utilizing the always on, always connected, and personalization features of mobile media
- Providing promotion money directed at retail salespeople

Evaluation Stage:

- Utilizing consumer online product reviews
- Providing product ratings and awards from independent reviewing institutions
- Allowing live chat experiences with customer service personnel
- Making product manuals accessible online
- Developing Web-based videos detailing product set-up directions
- Promoting price matching policy on all channels and touchpoints
- Placing product specification sheets and frequently asked questions (FAQs) online

Experiment Stage:

- Enabling try on, try out, and product demonstrations in-store
- Providing store-based product assistance
- Promoting ease of store return

Purchase Stage:

- Listing in-store inventory on a firm's Web site
- Promoting ease of store return regardless of place of purchase (store versus Web)
- Offering locational-sensitive offers visible on a mobile phone
- Promoting availability of two-day free shipping online
- Providing price matching guarantees that are promoted in-store and online
- Advertising credit availability

Brand/Store Loyalty Stage:

- Enabling consumers to track loyalty program data
- Allowing online tracking and reporting of past purchases and need for product replacement, product servicing, and consumable purchases

One author recommends that the customer journey be constructed in stages with the first stage consisting of sales personnel including inside sales, outside sales, enterprise sales, account managers and sales operations.²³

Additional data for mapping process journeys can come from mobile marketing interactions, consumer surveys, loyalty program data, sales databases, customer service satisfaction scores, panel data, and social media sites. The *Customer Experience Professionals Association & Heart of the Customer* survey found that the top five sources were in-person interviews, in-person focus groups, Web-based surveys, workshops involving customers, and phone-based interviews.²⁴

A number of software mapping firms have developed tools to illustrate the touchpoints used at different stages of the buying process. Mapping vendors include: *Autopilot*, *CustomersFirstNow*, *Smapply*, *SugarCRM*, *TandenSeven*, *Touchpoint Dashboard*, and *UXPressia*. Many of these software applications allow users to develop customized flowchart type maps to examine customer experiences by target market, to show how journey maps change over time, and to determine which messages and interactions are most effective and which need corrective action. According to a consulting firm no single application captures, aggregates and analyzes customer activities in all touchpoints. As a result, marketers need to purchase, and integrate and analyze a number of consumer journey analytics applications and to compare the findings.²⁵

Describing the Characteristics of Effective Journeys

Effective journeys have four characteristics: automation, proactive personalization, contextual interaction, and journey innovation.²⁶ Automation enables customers to quickly execute complex processes such as obtaining specific directions from one's home to a close-by retail store. Proactive personalization customizes the customer experience based on his/her past behavior such as past purchases and customer service interactions. Contextual interaction recognizes where a customer is in the purchase journey such as reading a product's online reviews and then draws the customer to the next interaction (such as a \$10 off limited time coupon offer). Lastly, journey innovation identifies new sources of value for the both the customer and the firm such as integrating multiple services into a single customer experience (like booking an airplane seat, hotel, car rental, and dinner at a hotel with one transaction).

A study of bookstore buying behavior found similar characteristics associated with effective mapping. The study found the three main drivers of excellence: (1) customization (expecting to design specific order and promotions based on their usage profile); (2) making the consumer feel integrated—customers want to be part of the bookstore and to offer a pleasant environment through organizing events and through attractive window displays; and (3) getting consumers to actively participate through

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book presentations, cocktail receptions, and dinners with authors.²⁷ Table 4 provides examples of strategies to reduce dropouts and increase customer flow across channels and devices.

Table 4. Selected Tactics to Increase Customer Flow Across Channels and Devices

Tactics to Increase Customer Flow: Web to Store

- Providing in-store inventory information on a firm's Web site, including aisle location
- Indicating the closest store locations, directions and hours on Web site
- Listing models on display at a retailer's nearest store location on the retailer's Web site
- Accepting Web purchases for in-store returns
- Designating a special in-store pickup location for online purchases
- Listing a store's weekly store-based sales brochure on the retailer's Web site
- Using iBeacons to refer Web customers to closest store

Tactics to Increase Customer Flow: Store to Web

- Referring store-based customers to the firm's Web site for additional product information and/or customer reviews
- Enabling in-store customers to order goods online when goods are not in stock at store
- Providing free Web access to store-based customers to see reviews, obtain additional product information, and to increase customer engagement

Tactics to Increase Customer Flow within the Firm's Web Site

- Listing alternative trade-up models detailing extra features, warranty, etc.
- Indicating store policy of matching prices of select Web-based competitors on each screen
- Incorporating augmented reality in Web site to enable consumers to better visualize product placement and use

Tactics to Increase Customer Flow within the Firm's Store

- Providing free in-store Wifi access for customers to get additional product information and product reviews
- Offering to ship goods from closest store or to reserve goods at nearby location when goods are out of stock
- Incorporating augmented reality in the store to enable consumers to better visualize product placement and use and to increase engagement

Using Maps to Identify and Reach Specific Target Markets

An important aspect of customer journey mapping is its ability to view how different segments progress through the buying process. Large segments, such as the mass market, and profitable segments (such as

relationship customers and heavy users), merit separate study. Different types of content can appeal to different target audiences.

A study of 505 Dutch panel members looked at household purchases of financial services within a 12-month period.²⁸ Researchers identified four different consumer search strategies: information seekers, reassurance seekers, peace-of-mind seekers, and convenience seekers. Each subgroup had different search behaviors. Information seekers focused mostly on the Internet, whereas reassurance seekers were just as likely to use offline channels, as well as the Internet. Peace-of-mind seekers preferred personal contact, while convenience seekers were less likely to consult their personal contacts than the other three groups.

An analysis of over 1,100 bookstore consumers found two segments with distinctly different purchase journeys: curious consumers and planners. Curious consumers visited the bookstore very carefully and were very open to the customer experience. On the contrary, planner consumers acted in a focused manner and were very precise in their activities. Curious consumers spent more time in the bookstores, even if they did not make any purchase, while planners sought a brief visit. Curious consumers interacted with other people in the bookstore, while planners interacted with technology in their desire to be autonomous and independent.²⁹

Measuring the Strengths and Weaknesses of Specific Touch Points

Measures used to evaluate purchase journeys need to change from specific touchpoint-related goals, such as shopping cart abandonment, Web pages viewed per visit, and same store sales growth, to broader journey outcome measures. As an example, a telecommunications firm now holds sales agents, technicians, the call center, and the back-office agents all responsible for a trouble-free installation, as opposed to requiring each person to hand off the customer to the next touchpoint. Likewise, an energy company has adopted new cross-functional measures for each frontline employee that handles address changes.³⁰

It is also important that marketers measure service quality in a similar manner as its consumers. *Royal Bank of Scotland* monitored its service quality using such measures as days from mortgage application to mortgage offer, the number of incomplete applications, and incorrect property valuations. These and other bank key performance indicators were not aligned with consumer views of the service experience.³¹

Marketo, a marketing automation software provider, uses three major classes of analytics. It first looks at the customer journey map to better understand where people are in the journey, how quickly they move from stage to stage, and where they are getting stuck. The second class of analytics

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personalizes the information and interactions. The third class ties analytics to sales and profit impacts.³² *Nokia* uses *Marketo* to obtain statistics as to whether a customer has visited a Web site, downloaded a white paper, or attended a Webinar. *Nokia* claims that this process helps it to better understand customer needs, provide the right content, and nurture the customer.

Analytics that measure the success of touchpoints should look at customer's earlier communications activity, their carryover and spillover effects, and their relative incremental impact. One study found that neither the last click nor the seven-day average metric are good measures for understanding the impact of firm and consumer-initiated channels. These single metrics only consider visits that result in immediate conversion.³³

Quantifying the Benefits and Costs of Mapping

One study argues that the ability to shape customer journeys will become a decisive source of competitive advantage.³⁴ Researchers found that performance on journeys is 30 to 40 percent more strongly correlated with customer satisfaction than performance on specific touchpoints and 20 to 30 percent more strongly correlated with such business outcomes as high revenue, repeat purchase, low customer churn, and positive word of mouth.³⁵

A *McKinsey* study of over 100 B2B sales organizations found that organizations that are ready to meet customers at different points in their purchase journeys are better able to exploit digital tools, allocate sales and marketing resources, and stimulate collaboration between sales and marketing functions. Among the benefits of mapping were an up to 20 percent increase in customer leads, a 10 percent growth in first-time customers, and a decrease of up to 20 percent of the time interval between qualifying a lead and closing a sale.³⁶

A major European bank sought to improve customer satisfaction and reduce its overall costs by 35 percent. The bank mapped its 10 most important journeys including the mortgage process, new business and personal customers, and retirement planning. After an 18 month process, the bank achieved lower operating costs, a close to 20 percent increase in online customers, and an over 50 percent increase in the number of customers using its mobile app.³⁷

Another important financial benefit of mapping is the better allocation of marketing budgets to different consumer buying process stages. Through an analysis of dozens of marketing budgets, *McKinsey* consultants found that 70 to 90 percent of advertising and retail promotion expenditures were incorrectly directed at the consider and buy stages.³⁸ The study concluded that consumers are more influenced during the evaluate and enjoy-advocate-

bond stages. In many categories the single most important impetus to purchase was another consumer's advocacy. A product with weak reviews or without online discussion is not likely to survive the winnowing process.

Likewise, an analysis of the purchase journey of *National Hockey League* ticket holders found several past strategies to be ineffective. Contrary to belief among salespeople with little experience, text-based communications alone had a negative effect on the sale of full memberships. Individuals that purchased single game tickets were found to be less likely to buy season tickets. Data from customer purchase mapping suggests that moving customers first to smaller plans is more effective in selling bigger ticket subscriptions.³⁹

Accurately estimating the costs for delivering each service element can be difficult. The *Royal Bank of Scotland* found that its accounting system did not accumulate costs for each customer journey. As a result, the total costs of service delivery were not visible to those making customer management-based decisions. To correct this problem, the bank changed its simple overhead allocation approach to consumption volume cost accounting. This enabled costs to be allocated costs by product, by journeys within each product, and finally by individual services in each product journey.⁴⁰

Traditional Web-based measures (such as shopping cart abandonment, acquisition rate, bounce rate) and store-based measures (such as sales per square foot or same store sales growth) need to be replaced by measures that look at the interaction of touchpoints, the flow of consumers from trial to purchase, and consumer satisfaction throughout the purchase process. Interaction-based measures include net promoter scores, customer loyalty measures, and customer satisfaction measures. These metrics measure a customer's overall experience as opposed to their experience at one stage of the overall customer journey.

Avoiding Pitfalls in Planning and Implementing Purchase Journey Mapping

There are a number of pitfalls firms need to avoid in planning and implementing purchase mapping. These deal with treating each touchpoint as a separate experience, ignoring the customer's omnichannel experience, errors in data collection and analysis, and not recognizing that the consumer purchase map is subject to rapid change.

A common error is for a firm to look at each touchpoint as a separate experience rather than as the interaction of a series of experiences. A consumer defection, for example, can be the culmination of a series of unsatisfactory experiences as opposed to the most recent negative experience. The customer experience also needs to be evaluated from a

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holistic perspective and include contact with personnel connected to billing, scheduling of service calls, and service delivery.

Another set of pitfalls involves management policies that interfere with an omnichannel-based purchase process flow. These include an omnichannel retailer's having different prices in-store versus online, using different SKU designations in different channels, and/or a Web site's having a different look and feel on laptops, mobile devices and tablets.

Managing the complexity of data collection and analysis related to touchpoints, channels, and customer satisfaction is quite difficult. Some of the data are quantitative, while others are qualitative. One study of 350 executives found that 41 percent of respondents did not feel confident that they have all of the information to understand their consumers and to deliver better experiences.⁴¹

Lastly, mapping needs to be continually updated to reflect changes in competition, technology, and consumer behavior. As an example, the role of geofencing in mobile marketing can have a drastic effect on consumer behavior. Similarly, solutions suggested by journey mapping need to be validated. Firms need to be aware that clearing up one problem area may lead to issues involved in another.

Conclusion

Consumer purchase mapping is an important technique to better understand consumer behavior in the current omnichannel environment. It is not uncommon for a consumer to become aware of a product from a specialty magazine, to evaluate the product based on an in-store demonstration, to read product reviews online, to research in-store product availability online, and to purchase the product at the nearest store.

Much current research looks at the role of selected devices and touchpoints and not their interaction, or evaluates marketing based on the accumulation of experiences as opposed to individual paths.⁴² In contrast, the mapping process enables marketers and academics to see the interaction among touchpoints, to determine the most relevant message for each stage and device, and to better visualize and more fully understand drop-outs within the purchase process.

The transition to mapping requires firms reexamine their organization format, seek synergies and reduce drop-outs across multiple touchpoints, and develop appropriate broad-based marketing objectives. The firm's organization format needs to look at consumer behavior that spans multiple touchpoints, devices and channels.

A good mapping process recognizes that customers will not always follow the same path. Due to these distinct paths a customer can use, marketers

need to make sure that the appropriate follow-up interaction is available between all channels and touchpoints.⁴³ Lastly, journey mapping enables firms to assess their performance based on the journey's outcome and total customer experience, instead of looking at specific satisfaction metrics based on single touchpoints.

A firm's readiness to utilize purchase mapping can be characterized into one of three stages. In Stage 1 a firm begins to recognize the importance of journey mapping and is exploring its usefulness. Stage 1 firms have conducted little planning in conjunction with mapping beyond looking at very preliminary cost-benefit analysis. In Stage 2 firms begin to utilize journey mapping on a limited basis scale (perhaps studying the shopping behavior of heavy product users or looking at the most popular sequence of activities pursued by their customers). Firms in Stage 2 may decide to initially outsource selected aspects of journey mapping. Stage 3 firms demonstrate the greatest commitment to journey mapping as evidenced by the complexity of their models. Many Stage 3 firms have gone through the sequence of Stages 1 and 2. While some Stage 3 firms have developed their own infrastructure for implementing journey mapping, others have chosen to outsource selected aspects of journey mapping.

Author

*Barry Berman is the Walter H. 'Bud' Distinguished Professor of Business and the Academic Director of the E.M.B.A. program at the Frank G. Zarb School of Business, Hofstra University. He is the author of textbooks in retailing and marketing and articles in such journals as Business Horizons, California Management Review, and the International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management. He is also author of Competing in Tough Times (Financial Times Press). Dr. Berman has consulted for a variety of organizations including Frankemuth Insurance, Duane-Reade, NCR, Simon Properties, and Tesco Ireland. Dr. Berman has served as President of the American Collegiate Association (ACRA) and was co-founder of the American Marketing Association Special Interest Group in Retailing and Retail Management. He is the recipient of the Hall of Fame Award from ACRA, Teacher of the Year Award from the Hofstra M.B.A. Association, and Alumni Achievement award from the Ph.D. Alumni Association of C.U.N.Y.
email: barry.berman@hofstra.edu*

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