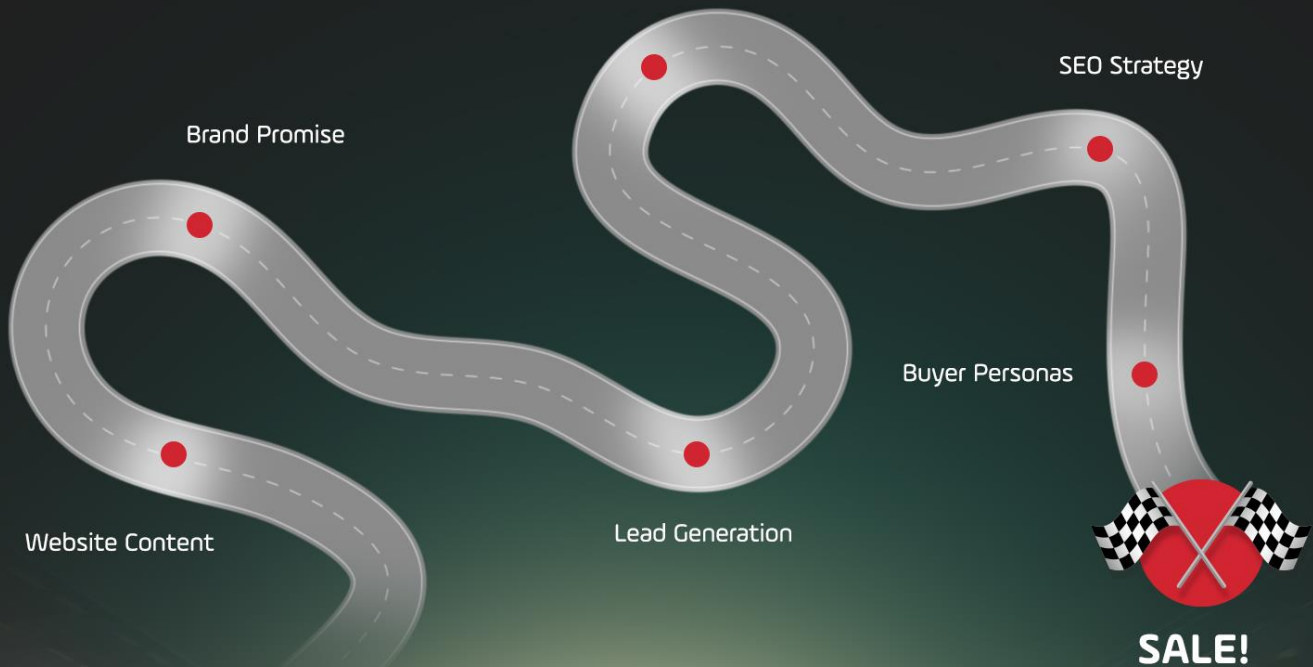


THE B2B MARKETER'S JOURNEY

The Buyer Journey



BY

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THE B2B MARKETER'S JOURNEY

THE 10-STEP ROADMAP FOR B2B PRODUCT MARKETING
By Derek Little

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Learn more about Derek Little and Trailblazer Mastery at:

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Dedicated to my dad, an expert on great books.

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PRE-RACE ADVICE

HOW TO AVOID BUSINESS FAILURE

Did you know that Formula One race car drivers are among the highest paid athletes in the world? Some make as much as 46 million a year. But it's a risky job.

If you were a driver in the early 1960's and 70's your odds of getting killed in a race were around 20%. Can you imagine the pressure you'd be under? Crashes happened because of mechanical failure, lethal track design, fire or incompetence. And they were broadcast to millions on TV. While Formula One racing has become a lot safer over the years, being in business hasn't.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the risk of business failure is increasing. They claim only 50% of new businesses survive 5 years or more, and about one-third survive 10-years or more. Companies fail because they can't attract enough paying customers in a cost-efficient manner.

IT'S GETTING HARDER TO SURVIVE

Google now indexes 30 trillion web pages, 100 billion times a month and growing. The average human attention span has been reduced to that of a goldfish, 8 to 9 seconds. All that clutter makes it hard to stand out.

It can be fatal to assume your marketing will succeed by blindly pushing out a lot of content. Audiences now ignore anything that's remotely irrelevant to them. So, how do you stand out? That's the question *The B2B Marketer's Journey* will answer.

You'll learn why you must have an effective marketing strategy and what that must include. Further, the book describes the prerequisites to creating high-performance B2B copy and content. So, grab a refreshment, buckle in and get ready for *The B2B Marketer's Journey*.

INTRODUCTION

*“THAT WIND YOU CAN FEEL IS ME BREATHING
DOWN YOUR NECK. NEXT TIME I'LL HAVE YOU.”*

- Formula One race car driver James Hunt in the movie RUSH (A true story)

As any Formula One driver will tell you, road racing all comes down to cornering. The car with the highest speed through the turns has the lowest lap times. This is what drivers call “the line.” It’s the best way to enter a turn, cross the apex, then exit at the highest possible speed.

While there are many excuses for not handling a curve properly, cornering mistakes all come down to bad driving. And going off the road at a bend can be disastrous at 180 mph. To prepare for a race, drivers are known to walk every inch of the track. Further, champion drivers know that cornering involves a series of steps that must be mastered:

- Braking and downshifting
- Trail braking
- Pedal transition
- Balancing throttle
- Increasing throttle
- Maximizing throttle

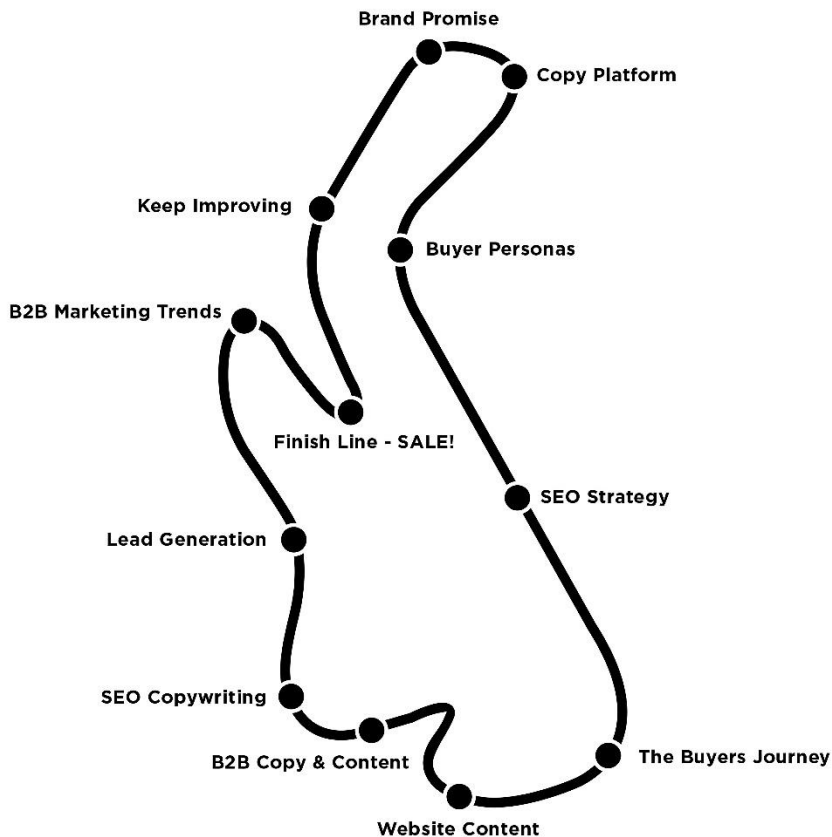
Like a Formula One racetrack, B2B marketing involves a series of challenging curves. As the director of your marketing initiatives, you must carefully analyze and master each one. And like a Formula One driver needs a high-performance car to win, B2B marketers need high-performance B2B copywriting.

START YOUR LEAD GENERATION ENGINE

GET READY TO LET OUT THE THROTTLE, REACH YOUR BUSINESS GOALS AND WATCH YOUR COMPETITORS IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR.

Have you made the B2B Marketer's Journey? It's a great challenge, no doubt. Some of the largest companies in the world struggle to make any impact at all. One of the greatest challenges is the length of time it takes for B2B buyers to decide to buy. And, at any point you could lose them to a competitor. Their journey as a buyer is part of your own journey as a marketer.

THE B2B MARKETER'S JOURNEY



Most B2B (business-to-business) marketing all comes down to copywriting. Generating leads takes a blend of marketing strategy and tactics that let you plan and implement an effective B2B marketing effort. The first five chapters of the book are dedicated to strategy. Without this direction to your marketing there is no foundation for creating effective copy.

Marketing direction starts with your Value Proposition. This defines the overall direction of your marketing strategy. It lets you develop a Copy Platform that serves as the guide for all your copywriting. This leads to your Buyer Personas, the model of your most likely customer. The keywords they use form the basis of your SEO Strategy. Then your Buyer's Journey sums up all the elements of your marketing strategy.

Next, chapters 1 to 6 explain the tactical work of copywriters. This includes website copy, sales copy, educational content, and SEO Copywriting. These can be organized into a predictable Lead Generation System that keeps you in step with the latest B2B Marketing Trends.

This book takes you on the B2B Marketer's Journey to effective product marketing, so you can *stay ahead of the curve*.

CURVE 1 - VALUE PROPOSITION

PUT YOURSELF IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT WITH A MASTER PLAN FOR DIRECTING ALL YOUR MARKETING ACTIVITIES.

Does your marketing end up having no real impact because it lacks direction? Do you find that you're so overwhelmed with marketing options that you overspend and still under-perform? If so, your marketing is out of control.

A Value Proposition is an overall strategy that keeps you pointed in the right direction. This article explains how to create one in six steps.

VALUE PROPOSITION BASICS

An often-heard piece of marketing wisdom is that your customers don't want drill bits; they want the holes they produce. In other words, they're attracted by value, not products. So, for your marketing to have the most impact, it must start with your customers' point of view.

Described below are six ways of examining your Value Proposition. You can write it out as a one- or two-paragraph strategy not shown to customers, or as a three-sentence caption used in your messaging. For example:

- Problem (your market's big challenge or overarching question)
- Promise (the main benefit you're promising them)
- Total fulfillment experience (everything they get)

1. Target Market

The more you know about your ideal customer, the better the rest of your marketing will be. Therefore, understanding which specific group of customers you're targeting, such as industry, size and other factors, is the first step in the value discovery process.

2. Customer-Defined Value

For the purposes of marketing, what your customers perceive to be true about your products is more important than what you know to be true. Therefore,

understanding their needs, challenges and interests, as well as their beliefs about your product, is the second step.

3. Customer-Desired Benefits

Before making a purchase, prospects carefully weigh their options. More than just assessing your price or product features, they're considering their risks and the total value being offered. This could include product functionality, sensory impact, emotional associations, reasons to buy, price, value or convenience.

4. Product Offerings

Step four is where you redefine your products from your customers' point of view. This could mean categorizing or renaming products or packages to make them more appealing to customers. And this could be done over your entire product life cycle too.

5. Differentiation

Having a unique selling point explaining why you're better than the alternative lets you stand out. This could include owning an attribute, innovation or heritage, or your production process.

6. Proof

Since B2B buying is typically done by committee, backing up your claims with proof is a necessary part of the process. This could include case studies, testimonials or industry research. You'll have a stronger argument for winning their business.

GET STARTED — CREATE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Your value proposition is more of a planning exercise than an actual document. In fact, all the steps in the B2B marketer's journey should be considered works in progress. Keep revisiting your Value Proposition and eventually you'll have a compelling brand promise that lets you stand out in the marketplace. The next step is to use what you learned to create your Copy Platform.

CURVE 2 - COPY PLATFORM

DEVELOP A SINGLE PLATFORM FOR ALL YOUR CORE MARKETING MESSAGES AND STOP REINVENTING THE WHEEL FOR EACH NEW ASSET.

A Copy Platform is a marketing tool that gives structure to and direction for your marketing. Specifically, it lets you create consistent messaging that creates repetition that builds your reputation. And this is important because marketing is only effective when it's cumulative.

Another benefit you get from a Copy Platform is that you save time and effort. This guide explains what a Copy Platform holds, how to use one and how to get started. Your Copy Platform is based on your Value Proposition.

COPY PLATFORM BASICS

Above all, you want your marketing messages to be clear, concise and consistent. Once created, your Copy Platform can be used to develop all your marketing materials. It's a working document that changes when you get more information.

In larger firms, you may have lots of existing marketing materials to factor into your Copy Platform. In smaller startups, your Copy Platform will be a basic document with information on target markets, expected buyers, product features and benefits.

During every stage of growth, your platform can be revised and adjusted over time, and your existing ideas will serve as a reference point. To create your platform, start thinking about the following marketing concepts.

COPY PLATFORM ELEMENTS

A Copy Platform may consist of many types of copy. But unlike the content you'd add to blogs, it has highly strategic copy. Here's a list of some core marketing elements to get started with.

- Descriptions of your targeted markets (ideal customer profile)
- Overview of your target audience (buyer personas)
- The problem your product solves

- How your product works
- Product features and benefits
- Product taglines
- Market research facts and statistics
- Positioning strategy
- Positioning statement/unique selling proposition (USP)
- Emotional selling proposition (ESP)
- Testimonial champions
- Selling statements
- Others

COPY PLATFORM WRITING PROCESS

After gathering all the necessary background materials, you may still end up with gaps in your information. In this case, you may need to conduct interviews before writing and completing your platform.

1. Collect and review background information

The first step in writing your Copy Platform has nothing to do with writing at all. In fact, it has more to do with assembling your content rather than writing it. And a wide range of marketing materials can help.

For example, earlier digital and print marketing collateral, as well as R&D and marketing group memos, can give insight. Further, technical specs and diagrams, speeches and PowerPoints, annual reports, and competitive information can all add value.

2. Conduct interviews and fill in any gaps

You may find you don't have enough background information. To fill in any gaps, you can conduct a live recorded interview to gather more data. A typical interview is 30-60 minutes. Further, a transcription will make your recording easier to work with.

3. Write your Copy Platform and make revisions

The third step in the process is itself a three-step process. First, create the first draft and gather feedback. Next, create the second draft and gather feedback. Finally, create a polished draft.

GET STARTED — CREATE YOUR COPY PLATFORM!

Still not sure where to begin your Copy Platform? Contact Trailblazer Writing for details. Once you have your Copy Platform developed, the next step is to develop your Buyer Personas.

CURVE 3 - B2B BUYER PERSONAS

GET UNDER THE HOOD ON HOW YOUR PROSPECTS THINK SO YOU CAN MOTIVATE THEM TO BUY.

There's a hard truth you should know about content marketing. While you want to use it to reach a wide audience, each person who reads your content has unique needs. If it doesn't satisfy his or her needs, they won't be interested. And there's no point in creating content that doesn't get read.

A Buyer Persona solves this problem by serving as a composite sketch of your target audience. While it'll never be perfect, it will help create marketing materials that are more relevant to more buyers. This B2B Buyer Personas Guide explains what types of information you need. It's based on the overview of your buyers outlined in your Copy Platform.

B2B BUYER PERSONAS OVERVIEW

It takes a deep understanding of your customers' goals, motivations and many other factors to create copywriting that gets results. And the only predictable way to achieve this is with B2B Buyer Personas. Here are the three most key factors to consider:

- Who's on the buying committee?
- What questions need to be asked about them?
- What information and content do they need?

WHAT PERSONAS SHOULD YOU DEVELOP?

There's usually more than one person involved in making a B2B buying decision. Who makes the final decision? Who are the influencers? Who are the recommenders? Your marketing will only have the right impact when you have Buyer Personas directing your content. Otherwise, you're guessing.

QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING B2B BUYER PERSONAS

Since a persona is not an actual person but is instead a composite of your most likely customers, questions need to be asked to create personas that are most relevant to most of your target audience. For example:

1. Who?
2. What?
3. Why?
4. How?
5. When?
6. Where?

Who are your buyers?

The first step in creating B2B Buyer Personas is finding out who your buyers are. Are they in a leadership role? Management role? Technical role? Here are some areas to inquire about:

- Roles
- Areas of focus
- Responsibilities
- Background and education
- Experience
- Work/Life balance
- Personality traits
- Alliances
- Their high-profile influencers
- Keywords and phrases

What do they want?

Buyers have a split personality. While their priority is achieving their business goals, their personal goals are not far behind. Here are some factors to consider:

- Organizational goals
- Business goals
- Personal goals
- Initiatives, programs and projects

- Industry factors

Why do they buy?

Are they excited about growing their business or worried about the future? Are they trying to increase company efficiency or avoid blame? Do they want to achieve peak performance, or are they worried about being wrong? What prompts them to want and buy your product or service?

- Objections
- Needs, challenges and interests
- Risks and rewards
- Attitudes, feelings and beliefs
- Patterns of behavior

How do they buy?

Business purchases are methodical, pragmatic and process-oriented. What are the steps your buyers follow to get to the sale?

- Buying process
- Buyer's journey
- Questions
- Procurement factors

When do they buy?

Complex B2B purchases are often planned well in advance. This lets you know how soon you must start marketing your products.

- Seasonal factors
- Budget planning
- Buying cycle

Where do they buy?

B2B buyers need sources of information they can rely on to make a purchase decision. Knowing where they go for information gives you a road map for finding them.

- Preferred communication channels
- Social interactions
- Trusted sources of information

WHAT INFORMATION DO YOUR PERSONAS NEED?

Now that you have a good understanding of your target audience's needs, challenges and interests from asking the above questions, you know what content to create. Not only that, you know when they need it and where they go to find that information.

GET STARTED — DEVELOP YOUR B2B BUYER PERSONAS!

Creating B2B Buyer Personas is the fast track to attracting the kinds of customers you want. Your content could be irrelevant without them. Now that you have your Buyer Personas developed, the next step is to use the buyer keywords you've found in order to develop your SEO Strategy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Derek Little, the founder of Trailblazer Mastery, assists companies with complex sales processes in navigating the buyer journey to attract buyers and generate leads. Connect with him on [LinkedIn](#) or learn more at [Trailblazermastery.com](#).

CONSULTING AND SERVICES

Is your marketing out of control? Derek Little provides B2B business coaching based *The B2B Marketer's Journey*. He'll help you develop strategies that accelerate your growth. Book your *FREE Assessment*: derek@trailblazerwriting.com.

ONE LAST THING...

If you enjoyed this book or found it useful, post a short review on Amazon. Your support really does make a difference and I read all the reviews personally, so I can get your feedback and make this book even better. For example:

- What sections of the book should be expanded upon?
- What would you like to learn more about?

Here's your link to [post a review of *The B2B Marketer's Journey*](#).