



lifecycle marketing



## Contents

Put your strategy before tactics.	4
Establish a lifecycle baseline	6
Begin with the end in mind	6
The journey as behavior	7
The hourglass framework	9
As marketing strategy	9
As a campaign	11
As a product or service launch	11
As an internal initiative	12
Map the journey's touchpoints	13
Set goals for the journey	14
Reverse engineer your marketing hourglass	15
Engage your team in the journey	16
Overview of the lifecycle stages	17
Marketing, sales, and service	18
Use content to guide your journey	20
Fill the hourglass	22
Customer experience in the first 90 days	22
Retention is the key to momentum	23
Get customers to re-enter the journey	24
The CRM connection	25
Use the 80/20 ladder with customers	26



## What is **lifecycle marketing**?

Well, essentially it's marketing that is customer centric. But more than anything, it's a point of view that places the customer at the center of all of your decision making. It's developing a culture that begs to answer the question: is this good for the customer? I know a lot of companies make this claim - I mean, we all strive to be customer-friendly or some sort of thing - but the proof lies in paying attention and executing on every little detail, every single day.

Here's the part nobody tells you. In order to be customer centric, you have to actually care about your customers. You can't fake this, it'll eventually come out. Even if you do care deeply about helping your customers solve their problems, you must intentionally infuse every interaction with that care, throughout the life of your customer relationship.

And here's the payoff - true momentum in a business comes from finding, not just new customers, but from retaining, reselling, and thrilling existing customers and maybe, just maybe, turning a few of those customers into advocates or raving fans.

It's like compound interest at the bank and that's the promise of a fully functioning, lifecycle marketing point of view. Want more motivation? A customer centric lifecycle mindset will help you increase revenue and profitability, and probably open new opportunities with a great understanding of your customer.

Increase customer satisfaction metrics. You'll increase brand equity and marketing campaign ROI. You can turn customer service into a profit center, rather than an expense, and dramatically increase employee satisfaction and retention. When it comes to gaining momentum in your business, these are all good things, I think.

## Put your strategy before tactics.

Before you can develop any marketing initiative or strategy, you must have a pretty good idea of who you're building it for - who you want to wow. Let's start with three very basic questions. Maybe you know the answers, maybe you don't.

Number one: who is your ideal client or customer? Now, by ideal, I certainly mean who needs what you do but also how would you describe them? What demographics - such as age or job title or industry - and behavior make them ideal? For example, I found in my business that business owners who participate in their association, their industry group, who want to invest in their industry as a whole, who believe in giving back to their community, in my case, that makes an ideal client and I can identify them based on that behavior. Another key is look at your most profitable clients who already refer. What are the characteristics of that group? That can give you a very good indication of your ideal client.

Number two, why do people buy from you as opposed to your competitors and why do they continue to buy from you? I've actually found there are two great ways to find that information. Number one, get on the phone and ask them. Take some of those ideal clients, sit them down or call them up and ask them, why do you buy from us, how did you

find us, why do you stay with us, what do we do that nobody else does? Now, listen deeply for the answers because some are going to say you provide great service. Well, that's probably not going to be very helpful so probe a little farther. What does good service look like to you? Tell me a story about a time we provided great service. You'll start to hear themes and nuggets that really does start to describe your value and your unique deliverable. Now, another thing, it's kind of a pro tip that you might want to look at is if you are getting reviews on third party sites like Yelp or Google Plus, go through those reviews because in many cases, that happy customer who voluntarily takes their time to go review you will give you snippets and ideas and themes about the things that you actually do and experience tells me it's not always what you think they value.

Alright, the third question, how are you uniquely suited to solve their problems? What's your promise that nobody else is making? I'll give you a quick little exercise. Pick out your top four or five competitors, go to their websites, copy off about a paragraph of text that you find there, include yours as well, put that on a document and then black out the name of any reference to any company. Pass it around your company and see if anybody can identify one company from another including your own. Experience tells me that most of us are saying the same things. Take that exercise where your customers told you here's what we really value and make that your promise. Oftentimes, a customer experience breaks down not because you haven't designed a great experience but because you are applying that experience to the wrong customers. That's why it is so important that you understand who makes an ideal client and how you're able to serve them.

Now, let me give you a dose of some hard medicine. No one wants what you have to sell. They want what they think they will gain by working with you or applying your solution, what problem they will solve, what disaster or loss they believe they will avoid when they buy your product or service. That's what they care about and if it's true then you must find ways to understand the problems your potential customers are experiencing and trying to solve and help them connect your products and services with solving those problems. Here's a good exercise. Think about the things that some of your

clients maybe whine about, some of the things that they talk about all the time. I can't get enough of this, why doesn't anybody do this? Those are the things that you need to address and until you make that shift in all of your marketing, until you find a way to promise to solve your customers' greatest problems, you'll struggle to be heard above the noise of every other business that says they do what you do. So let me ask you this. What problems do you solve for your customers?

## Establish a lifecycle baseline

- I'm going to get kind of real with you, or maybe it's going to be a little odd. We're going to take a romp through your business. So, imagine turning yourself into an order or whatever the customer buys. So, a customer orders something from you. Now pretend that you are that order and take an imaginary flight through your business. What's it like? Is it first class experience or decidedly low rent? You have to think about creating a map of the customer journey, their goals and their objectives. Here's what I suggest you do before we go too deep into this program. Let's get a baseline. Let's establish just how much work we have to do. Sit for a moment and brainstorm every way in which your business comes into contact with a prospect and then a customer. Marketing, sales, customer service, onboarding, delivery, implementation, even finance. Now ask yourself, have you intentionally created an awesome experience at every turn? How about the handoffs? Sales to service. What happens when a customer says, "Yes, I want to buy"? Do you exceed expectations, or is there a gap? Can you create a brand promise that attracts? That's what lifecycle marketing asks you to do.

## Begin with the end in mind

- While we tend to view the customer journey from start to finish, awareness to raving fan, I want to suggest that you begin with the end in mind. Begin with the assumption that every customer that becomes a customer also becomes an advocate or referral source. So,

how do you do that? The first key is you must measure what matters. Understanding something called Customer Lifetime Value or CLV is key to understanding the impact of a lifecycle marketing approach. Okay, now it's time for some math. CLV is the calculation of what a customer is worth to your business over the lifetime of the relationship. So, for ease sake you sell a \$1,000 service and the client renews that service on an average of four years, the CLV of that customer could be said to be \$4,000, but of course you have costs involved so revenue isn't the best measure. If possible, gross margin is better. So, you make \$500 after costs and CLV then is actually \$2,000. Does that make sense? So, CLV equals your margin times some sort of factor of return or repeat or renew. So, gross margin multiplied by the amount of time somebody repeats a purchase or renews. So, it could be time based or in some cases just transaction based. The trick is to get a sense of what it means to your business to not only get a client but to keep them. When you focus on the impact of CLV, you'll understand how much you can and should invest in customer experience and in adding value. The key to measuring this is to find what I like to call your north star goal. What is it that you're going to track? What is the key performance indicator that is going to show that you're on track? There's so much data that we have out there now and we're overwhelmed and swamped by it so often. The key is figuring out what to leave out, what you shouldn't be that concerned about and to narrowly define what makes a difference. In some cases, reviews or referrals might actually be more important than traffic to your website so don't get bogged down in the minutia, measure that north star thing that is making a difference on your customer lifetime value.

## The journey as behavior

- Do you feel like a lot has changed in marketing? The last decade or so, has produced a massive shift in marketing. But, the main thing, it's not marketing that has changed that much. The thing that has changed the most, is the way people buy. Many marketers today still focus on getting a sale like it's a combat. Thus, we've created terms like demand creation, and triggers, and marketing funnels, and even the decidedly war-like term

such as tripwires, and lead capture. A lifecycle marketing approach is less about demand creation, and more about organizing behavior. The buyer is in charge, everything is customer experience. I mean, search engines like Google even reward you for customer experience. Your website, how people can move through it is customer experience. Your content is customer experience. Your sales process is customer experience. You have to figure out now, what the journey for your buyer looks like and I guarantee you, it's not linear. It looks a little more like, do you remember that game called Mouse Trap? Maybe some of you remember that, it's still available today, but it was this just crazy journey that you would build that would go all over and you would have no idea where it was going to start and end. Today the buyer journey is much like that and many of the ways in which they come into contact with us, many of the ways in which they decide to buy from us, are actually out of our control. But know this, we have to get involved in the customer journey, as early as possible, and we have to stay as late as possible if we're going to maximize the lifecycle approach. There was a recent survey done by the Conference Executive Board, 2,200 B2B buyers, 57% of them said, that they made a decision about who they were going to buy from before they ever contacted that company or that supplier. Now what's interesting, in the same survey, 53% said it was the customer experience that made them remain loyal. We have to get involved early in the journey, we have to stay late in the journey. Your job is to organize behavior, and not create demand. So instead of marketing, and sales, and service, having their own departments, today we have to think about what's the outcome? How can we organize the outcome by removing all of the friction? I want to introduce to you and we're going to go deep into this, something that we call, the marketing hourglass, and these are the seven stages of behavior that I believe all of our buyers want to go on to do business with us. These stages are know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer. Now I'm calling them stages, but they're actually behaviors. People want to come to know companies that can solve their problems. We certainly aren't going to move forward, if we don't like something about that company, and we're not going to buy from them, if we don't trust them. We don't trust that they can get us a result. I don't know about you, but I love it when I can try a company, I can experience them, with maybe not having to go all-in. And then of course, we all want the buying experience to be just as high

as everything that lead us to that. And if I find a company that solves my problems, that serves my needs, I just check it off, I go back, I don't look around anymore. I buy from them again. And we're all wired as human beings, to refer, or to at least talk about experiences or companies that exceed our expectations. So we have to build a lifecycle marketing approach intentionally, that organizes those seven behaviors.

## The hourglass framework

- The beauty of the marketing hourglass and thinking in this way is that this is a framework with many applications. This guided journey of Know, Like, Trust; Try, Buy, Repeat, and Refer can be applied in so many situations. You can use this to create your overarching customer strategy. You can use it to create a campaign. You can use it to create a specific product launch. You can even use it as a way to get a new initiative going internally. The marketing hourglass is all about customer experience. I say this a lot. I'm going to continue to say it because it is the central element to a life-cycle marketing plan. Now customers aren't objects. They need to be romanced, to be made feel special, to feel as though you are speaking directly to them, and only to them. It takes time, really, and commitment to embed hourglass thinking. But the payoff is immeasurable. Think about all the ways that you can apply this framework and it will grow and evolve inside of your business.

## As marketing strategy

- Let's unpack this idea of the marketing hourglass a little more. The stages of know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer. This is that journey that we want to guide our customers on can be applied as a framework. I want you think about that as a framework. It's not just a process. It's not a tactic. It's something that can be molded to almost any situation that you want. So, let's think about your overarching approach to the experience of your brand which is really your marketing strategy. So, if you think about know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer; what are the things that you're going to have to do to move people

through your business so that they experience your brand in the way that you want them to? What are all the ways that they can come to know about your promise, the brand promise, the promise to solve their problems? What are the things that you can do to start signaling that you're a company they can like, you're a company that they can do business with, that they can trust? And boy trust, that's number three on there, and I hate to have a favorite, but that's one that you have to absolutely nail today. In a lot of ways, people experience your brand maybe only through your website or maybe only through meeting one salesperson in your organization. What are you doing to intentionally show that you have gotten results for other companies, that you are a brand or a company that can be trusted, that you will keep your promises? Those are things that are so important today and a one bad review might actually erode all of that trust so that has to be an intentional focus of trust. It might be in your content. It might be in your processes. It might be in your campaigns. And we'll talk deeper about that as we continue, but that has to be an element that is intentional. Try, now, a lot of companies think about say the freemium model of software so that try might be a free version of your product, but it doesn't always have to be but you do have to have a way I believe today for people to get an experience for what it would be like working with you. That might be an evaluation. That might be actually hearing you deliver some educational content. There are many ways in which people can try before they buy. Now, the buying experience and this is one that has to be baked into the DNA and this is the one that I find most people skip. We're going to get to yes I want to buy and then the experience erodes. You have to make it a part of your brand promise to keep that experience just as high so that the communication stays there, the orientation stays there, the nurturing stays there, that you exceed their expectations in that component and that is a key, key bridge to these next two of getting repeat business and getting referrals and those have to be built in. A lot of times if you do a good job, people will come back and they will buy, but imagine if you amplified that incredible experience. How often would they buy? How often would they tell their friends about your products and services? So, your overarching marketing strategy needs to have each of those stages considered as a part of your brand promise.

## As a campaign

- You can use the marketing hourglass approach for your overall brand strategy, but you can also apply this framework to very specific things, like as a campaign or a way to introduce your spring sale. So what you want to do is you want to back up and think about, you know, don't just put that out into marketing and let sales do their thing. It's something you really want to get some momentum about, so consider those stages again. Know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer. Now, in a campaign people might go through the stages very quickly, but you want to make sure that you have mapped out the touchpoints. You want to map out the experience. You want to map out the things that you want them to do. Now, with campaigns and specific approach to using the hourglass, I find that if you flip it over, if you do it in reverse is a great way to plan. A lot of people want to start with, okay, how do we get the click? What's our ad going to look like? What's our email copy going to look like? Here's what I want you to do. Again, this is with beginning with the end in mind. I want you to think in terms of what do you want to that customer who came into your spring sale thinking, doing, saying, feeling 90 days after they purchased? You want them talking to other people about it, right? That's your objective. So what is it going to take to make sure that they did that? What are you going to have to build into your nurturing, to your follow-up, into the way in which you go back and see if they got a result, for example, after they bought from you in that sale? Obviously we want to think about what is the email copy going to say? How is going to make them want to know more? How are we going to get them involved in the story about what result they're going to get from participating in this campaign? All of those elements can be mapped out as either processes or complete campaign steps, but you have to intentionally design this just like you would your overarching strategy but for this very specific use.

## As a product or service launch

- You can also apply the Marketing Hourglass approach to a product launch. Again,

this is a very specific use for a specific application, but it is a tremendous way to think about anything new that you're going to do in your business. So again, the stages know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer. Our ultimate goal is we want everybody who is buying our new product to be telling their friends to be referring us to be giving us testimonials. And so, you have to build that objective into every stage of the product launch. And again, this is another great place where beginning with the end in mind and working backwards is always great. What I find is that again, we are so wired to get that sale, to get somebody to say yes that we sometimes have a tendency to skip the what happens after they buy? What's our follow-up? How do we continue to train them? How do we make sure that they get the value out of what they bought? And those are the parts that if you start with the end in mind and work backwards, you will probably do a much better job of building not only a better customer experience, probably a better product or a better experience. So, one of the things that I would suggest you do is start this thinking before you even build the product or the service. And what I mean by that is get your customers, if you have them existing customers, if not, maybe a group that looks like your customer that you want to target, and start talking to them about the product. Start building it with them. And, what I find is that in many cases, you will not only find things that you didn't think of, you'll find ways to enhance the experience. You will get buy-in for the language that you're going to use in each of these stages. And, this will help you build a better product, but it will also help you build a better hourglass for your product launch. Get those customer's involved in how you could exceed their expectations, how you could surprise them, what the customer experience all across the stages could look like, and you not only will have a better product, you'll have a better, more successful launch.

## As an internal initiative

- In effort to demonstrate how flexible this marketing hourglass approach and framework is, I want to show you how to use it as a way to get internal buy-in for some initiative or some change that you want to make at your organization. Let me ask you this, have you

ever been in a situation where you were either trying to make a significant change, get people on board with something? Or you've been, had that done to you and somebody came to you and said, here's the way it's going to go, here's the new thing, here's the new software. I think we've all been through that. Well, think about the way that you might use these stages, know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer; to get internal buy-in, to get some people to know about this new initiative, but also to understand why they should trust that there's value in it for them. Maybe get some early adopters to start using it and understanding, and maybe giving you feedback so that you can alter the approach or the change, and then get total buy-in and get those early adopters to start selling other people and getting repeat people in and getting referrals in. So, you see how that approach actually is a marketing approach. So you apply those stages much like you would to a campaign, but for an internal buy-in. I once worked with a large accounting firm that had been through several CRM systems. They just couldn't get anybody to get on board with it. And when we applied this approach of know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer; essentially a marketing process to this internal buy-in, they were successful finally in getting this important internal change made.

## Map the journey's touchpoints

- Let's get into designing your lifecycle hourglass. Now, you might be able to sit around in your office and design the perfect hourglass or touch points, but it's extremely difficult to experience your business the way a new customer does. You spent countless hours on your website. You know how to find everything, but put a customer down and you'll find that they might get confused. I want you think about this weird example. I want you to think about flossing with each of your customers once a quarter. Now, I know that sounds really bizarre, but stay with me on this. I once worked with a group of orthodontists and I asked them what was the key to success? If someone got braces, in each case, what was the biggest thing that was going to guarantee that they would experience success? And they said, "Well, they have to floss" while they have their braces on." That's really the key. If they don't do that, they're not going to be happy. So, the followup question then

was, well, what stops people from having that success? Well, they hate to floss. Everybody hates to floss. So, what I suggested to this group and I'm suggesting to you is that you take at least once a quarter, go out and take a customer and go through your business. Have them experience your business with you. Give them a discount to do it. Have them take notes on their experience. Have them sit down in front of your website and go through it and tell you what they find and can't find. Give that person incentive to really be on your team for helping you design a better customer service. That's number one. Now, another thing I would suggest is go to a business that you've never visited and pay attention to how you experience it, all the weird things, the sights, the sounds, the smells, the look, the feel, the people, the colors. Get a sense of what impression everything you encounter has on you because that's what happens when a new customer comes to your business. They're having that same experience and you can't really have that experience over and over again because you're inside your business. So, last little tip I want to give you is to buy something from some of your competitors. Experience their sales process. It may seem a little weird, but I think you want to get a sense of what they do with their customers. I think you want to experience their business as a new customer. So, go out and find some of your existing customers that you want to bring into the fold, that you want to help, you want to floss with them once a quarter so that they can help you design the perfect customer experience.

## Set goals for the journey

- One of the keys to designing the perfect customer journey is to understand your customer's goals along that journey. When a prospect goes out there looking to solve a problem, they may have significantly different questions and goals at each stage. Remember, they don't see it as stages; only we do. Now, the buyer's questions and goals change throughout each of those stages, and we have to actually understand that the first goal for us is to think about solving problems that in many cases people don't even know that they have. See, they don't start at the buy stage; only we do. I mean, they don't end at the buy stage. Sometimes only we do. And that's what you have to understand. They

many times don't know what their real problem is. They just know that they have something that's not working. So we have to build the intention of addressing those questions and those goals for each stage. And of course the first step is to understand what those are. I had a tax planner client one time. They sold this amazing tax planning solution, but it was hard to understand. In fact, some accountants actually said, "It might not be legal what they're doing." Of course, it certainly was, but any time you're having to address that, you don't have people necessarily going out looking for exactly what you sell. So what they had to do was they had to actually address the fact that the overarching problem was their business owner customers didn't have, weren't making enough profit essentially for their business. Now, they also were able to tie that to the fact that they could cut expenses, and only then could they start addressing the idea that actually tax planning was a way to cut expenses. So when that person went out there just looking, how do I make more profit? They weren't looking to buy. They were looking to understand what was possible, what was available. And so in this case, the customer journey had to address that stage first before we could move people to the part where they saw what this company sold as the solution to their problem. And that is really a challenge for most businesses to get involved that early. Now, of course then we would build the stages in there where that person would come back and buy other services and that person would then be proud to tell their friends about how much more profit they're making in their business because they got this, and those are the referral stages. So it's essential that you get on the customer journey as early as possible, and then you plan for staying on the customer journey as late as possible so that you can maximize every stage in the journey.

## Reverse engineer your marketing hourglass

- Okay, now I want to flip this hourglass completely over. I want you to begin with referrals as the goal. I'll probably repeat this throughout this program. You'll hear it again maybe in this video. This is so important because we are so aligned as marketers to think with the copy, the ad, how do we get the click and we have to actually map out with your entire team what we want people thinking, feeling, doing, saying 90 days after and work back to



awareness. So collect your team, get your sales folks, get your marketing folks, get your service folks, get your finance folks even involved in this and start understanding how all of the handoffs work, where are the gaps, are there elements that you need to add, how do you define a metric for each? So in other words, how do you know when somebody has moved from know to like to trust? How can you signal that? How can you track that? How can you gauge where they are? My experience is that those gaps exist most often in those handoffs between departments or even between people inside of a smaller organization and that's where the opportunity is to really create a better customer experience but start with referrals. In fact, that's going to be my challenge to you. What are you doing now to generate referrals with existing customers? Experience tells me that we could spend a lot of time on just that element because even organizations that deserve lots of referrals are doing nothing to amplify that referability. So get your team together, spend half a day understanding exactly what happens when somebody becomes a customer, when somebody refers you, another customer, every single element of those stages and let's work on those gaps.

## Engage your team in the journey

- One the keys to installing hourglass or lifecycle thinking is, to get everyone on board, you've probably been in organizations where somebody'll bring a new initiative in to a department, everybody'll get excited about it, but if leadership isn't excited about it, if it doesn't come from the top in some cases, it's hard for it to really take root. Now, that doesn't mean that this has to be the CEOs' idea, but certainly lifecycle thinking and hourglass thinking is very aligned with culture, that it has to be something that everyone believes in, everyone understands, everyone knows is part of their job. From leadership, to sales, to marketing, to the service departments, to really any other department in your organization. What we like to do is think about this as a workshop, that we can have a brainstorming, we can certainly have a kick-off. We might come back in 90 days, or maybe every 90 days and talk about this topic, because it's the only way to cement it. It's the only way to keep people involved. It's the only way to make people know you're serious about this thinking. Plan half a day, go out and get all the donuts, and the bagels, and the

healthy snacks that you need, to get everybody involved, and have different teams that are maybe working on different components of the customer experience, explain what they do, and why they do, and how they do it to create a great customer experience. Look for those handoffs, those are where the gaps are. When somebody says, yes, I want to be a customer, and that salesperson takes the contract and puts it in the bin, and somebody then takes it over, what happens in there? What does the customer feel in there? What kind of communication goes on? I know many times I've purchased from companies, and boy that sales presentation was great, all their marketing materials were great, their website was great and then I bought and I didn't know what was next. I didn't hear from anybody for a while. It doesn't mean that they didn't ultimately come around and do what they had promised, but it left me kind of lingering and wondering what was going to happen, and wondering if I had made the right decision. And let me tell you this, those are the moments when referrals and repeat orders happen, is when that person says yes and then the experience stays high. Maybe it's actually, exceeds their expectations, that's when somebody decides to make a referral. That is a key, key component to this idea of lifecycle thinking. Make it a big part of your business. You can't plan this, you can't make this happen in one afternoon, or one morning meeting. Think about doing it as a workshop every 90 days, is a great way for you to talk about, where there maybe are gaps. Many times, that's going to be the kind of meeting, that said, "Oh I thought you guys were doing this?" And, "I thought you were doing that?" That is where you can then start solving your customers problems, by creating a better customer experience. Lifecycle marketing involves continuous optimization. This is not something you build once and forget about it. It also involves one secret ingredient, you have to care about your customers getting a result, and there's no better way to do that then to make it a primary focus every 90 days in your business.

## Overview of the lifecycle stages

- Now we're going to start to really get our hands dirty. We are going to work on the stages of your hourglass, of your lifecycle. So imagine those seven stages as boxes. Know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer. And to the right of those boxes you have some

lines that I'm just going to simply fill in those boxes. What are you doing to get people to know about your business? And don't forget a referral might fit into that box. What are you getting people to do to like or respect or want to know more about your business? How are you building trust? What is your try, your buy, your repeat, your refer? Now, you may not have all of these. At first we just want to acknowledge that they exist and that we need to start filling in those boxes. Now, a couple things. Buyers don't always go through these stages in linear fashion. They don't always jump from one to the next. Sometimes they consume several stages in one setting. And that's okay, so don't get too caught up in, gosh, what box does this really fit in? It's really more about do we have an intentional way to try to move people? Do we have several intentional ways to try to move people through each stage? For example, I do a lot of public speaking, and in many cases people at those talks decide they want to do business with my organization. Well, that might be the first time they come to know me, and they like what I have to say. They trust me because the presenter or the sponsor put me up there, and they found me trustworthy because of that. Maybe I gave 'em some special offer in that presentation. So I moved people through a lot of stages in maybe a 45-minute talk. So that can happen, and you will have types of processes or campaigns that do that. But let's get used to at least seeing where we have the gaps and filling out that marketing hourglass.

## Marketing, sales, and service

- Now let's build your marketing hourglass. Depending upon your organization and structure, this might be something that you can sit down with a couple people. You can maybe bring in a couple clients and brainstorm a little bit. If you have departments, this might be something that you would divide and conquer but obviously come back together. But if you think about marketing, sales, service, the typical structure, and it doesn't really matter the size of your business, you do have those three functions, we can put the hourglass stages into each of those. So, marketing is really know, like, and trust. That's the job of marketing. Sales is try and buy. That's pretty obvious. And to a large extent, the service component of your business has to really to do with getting repeat business and refer business. Now, there's a lot of overlap in all of those, but that

can be a great way to divide up the responsibility of who might be in charge of and who might be running those particular stages in the journey. So, bring those folks together or divide and conquer; it doesn't really matter, but let's talk about each of those seven stages individually. Some examples of know. Now that one is usually pretty easy for most people. That's our advertising. That's our email marketing messaging. That in many cases is our social media. That's how people come to know about your business or to know about your products and offers so that one is really easy for a lot of people. However, referrals are also how somebody comes to know about your business. It's just they come to know about your business from somebody who has already experienced it so think about that. Is that person different than somebody who read an ad? I would say yes and so you have to actually have different experiences for them. The like component in many cases might be experienced from your website. It might be experienced by the way in which you answer the phone. It might be experienced by the way in which people experience your sales people. So think about the various components there and they don't have to be one. In many cases, you should have three and four and you should think about this as you go on and you next quarter add more and next quarter add more. It's all about continuous optimization. Now let's go to trust. In many cases, trust is all about what your customer say about you. It's all about the proof that you can provide so case studies and testimonials and reviews. I mean, would you stay at a hotel that had two-star reviews? Probably not. That is true of many types of businesses today. So, what about try? What are you doing so that somebody can experience what it might be like to work with you? Do you have some starter offers? Do you have some discounts? Do you have some coupons? Do you have some evaluation process? Can you build something for them so that they can experience what it would be like to work with you in a very full blown way? If you sell 30 or \$50,000 engagements, is there a way for them to try working with you for \$799? Think about what those might look like. They don't always have to involve money, but they should involve some way for them to experience you. Now, the buy is of course what that actual process of the transaction is customer experience. Have you ever had, even on a website, an experience where it's very difficult to check out? That's a really bad experience. Even if you want that product or service, that needs to be something that

you're continually working on. But also when somebody becomes a customer, what's the orientation process? What does the transaction look like? What does the communication look like? How do they know what's going to come next? These are all things that should fit in to your buy stage. Repeat and refer. In many cases, this will happen because of everything that happened before, but you certainly need to think about processes and campaigns that you can put in place for repeat and refer. So in many cases, a repeat process comes about by, here's a secret, just asking. So often folks don't even have a process to go back and follow up and say, "Hey, we'd love to do more business with you." To have a way where you're actually getting feedback from the customers to say, "Hey, did we get your result?" Those are things that can be built in as steps in this stage. And then finally, refer. Again, this happens not because you had some magical way of asking. It happens because you deserve the referral, but if you don't ask, if you don't have a way to keep that top of mind, you probably won't get as many referrals as are available to you. So, bring your team together or do this in a room all by yourself to take the first stab at it, but design the elements of your marketing hourglass as they exist today and start thinking about ways in which you can improve each stage.

## Use content to guide your journey

- One of the key elements today in marketing, and certainly in guiding the customer journey is content. Now, you're probably tired of hearing about content, because we've been talking about it for so many years, content is king was kind of the buzz word. But I'm here to tell you, it's much more than that. Content is air. It powers every channel in marketing today. It's the voice of strategy, and quite often, it's the tool that powers the customer journey.

But here's the key, more isn't better. Intentional is better. Your content must match the goals and questions at each stage of the customer journey. If you think about the typical journey, awareness, trust, education, nurturing, informing, getting referrals, these are all forms of content, that we need to have. Think about awareness, blog posts create awareness and many times, somebody will go out to a search engine with a problem you've

written a blog post about it, they'll find you, they'll learn about you. That's know. In many cases your credentials, and testimonials, and things that they find on third party review sites, that's content that will build trust. Now, some of that content will happen, but you need to make some of that content happen. At some point, during the journey, people are going to want to be educated.

Now, does this company really know how to do what they're talking about? eBooks, webinars, those forms of content are a great way to create that trust and maybe even try component. Now at some point, somebody's going to decide, what would it look like if I bought from this company? So case studies and road maps that show, here's how we work, here's how we get you a result, when somebody's goals are about, hey is this the right company for me to hire? They need that kind of content. Now, not everybody buys the first time you talk with them or maybe present to them. So what is the content that you can use to nurture, to keep that relationship alive, showing them the benefits or personalizing content for them, so that they do get to the level of trust where they want to buy. Now, content also should be a tool that you use to convert. So, evaluations and case studies are great forms of content to get somebody to realize, yes, it's time for me to buy. Now one thing that many people underestimate, is the value of content to generate referrals.

If you've spent the time to create amazing content, eBooks, checklists, forms, they're many times, strategic partners that you can actually go to and offer that content, they'd love to share it with their folks, with their community. They know they need to be producing more content, you've done it for them. That can be a great way to effectively use content, to get referred. So if you've already spent the time, and energy, and money, to create content, make sure that you're thinking about using it for that stage as well. Content powers the journey and many of your stages of know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer, will benefit from you thinking about strategic the kind of content that you can use to help answer the goals and questions, but also move people through each of those stages.

## Fill the hourglass

- So we have a lot of boxes, a lot of things to fill in the stages of the hourglass, know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer; but what can go in those boxes? Actually, a lot of things can go in those boxes. There are some pretty obvious things if you want to get somebody to know you, advertising can go into that box. But you can also have processes in those boxes. Think about when somebody buys from you, is there an orientation process that needs to be implemented so that that experience stays very high? You can have campaigns in boxes. Certainly when somebody buys from you, or when they don't buy from you, is there something that can be kicked off to reactivate them, to reengage them, to get them excited about something else? Touch points go in those boxes. A lot of times a 90-day checkup, for example, is a touch point where you just want to touch base, you want to make sure they're happy, you want to make sure they're getting value. Those are examples of things that can go in any of these boxes. So it doesn't have to just be content or something that's actively going to move somebody to the next stage, it just has to be something that keeps the process, that keeps the experience high. So all of these boxes may have a mix of all of these types of things that can go in them. So it's not just a one and done. You'll have continuous optimization. Continue to talk to your customers. Continue to find out if something's working. Go back every 90 days and reopen your hourglass so that you can find where you have gaps and fill those gaps.

## Customer experience in the first 90 days

- I once heard someone say that if you exceed someone's expectations in the first 90 days, they'll remain a friend forever. Well, the same is true of a business. If you exceed a customer's expectations in the first 90 days of them becoming a customer, they will remain loyal for a very long time. So let's drill down to a very specific component of the hourglass, and that is that experience when someone first becomes a customer. Map out the perfect experience in the first 90 days, and you will make them a loyal customer forever. So what happens when somebody says, "I want to become a customer"? How do you orient them? How do you let them know what's going to happen next? Here's everyone in our

organization that you need to speak with if you have this problem or this challenge. Here's how we're going to deliver more value and more value. Give them a process that lets them know all of that information upfront. Continue to nurture them. In some cases, while you're doing the work that you've promised to do, you can continue to send them more value. You can continue to sell the value of the work that you're actually doing for them in those first 90 days. Overcommunicate. Tell them every time you've done something. Tell them why you've done it. Tell them what the value is in the fact that you've done that. Continue to teach. In many cases, they will need to know how to get more value. Have you ever bought software or signed up for a service and you use about 10% of it? Well, think about the ways that you can continue to teach and continue to make them get really connected to the value that they get from your products and services. Here's one I love to do. Plan some sort of surprise. Do something they were not expecting, and you will get them talking. People love surprises. They love to tell other people about companies that exceed their expectations. And finally, make sure that you have a process to report on the progress that they are getting, the progress that you are doing. There are many different types of engagements. Maybe somebody buys a product and you're building it. Tell 'em about it. Tell 'em how it's coming. Tell 'em what's going to happen next. Tell 'em when you're going to ship it. Report on every element. Thrill them in the first 90 days, and they will remain loyal forever.

## Retention is the key to momentum

- It's very difficult to build much momentum if every time one customer comes in the door, another one goes out. Retention is the key to making lifecycle marketing work. And if you think about it, a happy customer is the best source of lead generation so you have to focus on keeping and making those customers happy. One of the key processes in lifecycle marketing is to have a step or a stage where you measure results. What I mean by that is that you actually create a results review process. So, when somebody becomes a client, you have built into the entire process that you are going to go back and you are going to make sure that they are getting the results. You're going to ask them. You're going

to review. Now, a couple things happen in this process. One, you're going to find that they aren't necessarily getting the results so that's your opportunity to fix it, to maybe turn around a possibly negative situation. Another thing that might happen is you're going to find out they're getting amazing results and you want to document that. You want to make sure that they understand that. You want to get maybe some referrals or some testimonials in that situation. I'll tell you the other thing that I've found about this results review process. It's also a way for you to get a better posture about your pricing. What I mean by that is if you realize that you are getting or your products or services are getting an amazing result for somebody, you're probably not going to look at that next client and waffle over pricing because you are sure about the value that you're delivering. I will tell you also that this is where referrals come from. They happen during this process. Now, you also want to think about planting the seed ahead of time. So often if you talk about this process in the sales process, so in other words, when somebody's thinking about becoming a customer, that you actually start saying, "Look, we know you're going to be so thrilled "by the results that we promised you today. "We're going to come back after 90 days. "We're going to make sure that you're thrilled "and at that point we're going to ask you "to maybe introduce us to a handful of people "who could use that result." I can almost guarantee you that every single person will say yes, but think about the positive marketing message you're also sending with that. We know you're going to be thrilled. We're going to make sure you're going to be thrilled so that's how you create this customer experience and this lifecycle marketing as a part of retention.

## Get customers to re-enter the journey

- So we go out there and we work really hard to get a customer. We sell 'em, they're in our hourglass, we think everything's good. And then we look up one day and we wonder, "What ever happened to that customer?" In many cases, we let customers fall away because we haven't built into a stage where we go and we check and we create the value, we understand the value, but we also re-engage them. There are many reasons that

you need to have as part of your re-engagement stage, processes where you find out what's going on, you find out what else somebody needs. You have an opportunity to actually sell them other products and services or create maybe a larger engagement. But if you don't have that process and you simply wait for the client to say, "Hey, I know you sell other stuff, "come out and sell it," it's probably not going to happen. So part of your hourglass has to have a focus on re-engaging, and in some cases, starting over a client. Sometimes, we drop the ball and we lose a client, and they don't come back. They didn't have the greatest experience, so we almost have to start them over. We have to reactivate them in their own little mini hourglass again so that we can get them enthused about buying from us again. We can focus attention on them. We can say, "I'm sorry, we dropped the ball. "We can fix what happened." And in many cases, people just want to be able to give their feedback. Maybe there was a miscommunication, so if you reach out to them, you make a point of staying top of mind, you're going to get the opportunity to reactivate them and put them back into your hourglass.

## The CRM connection

- Isn't technology a wonderful thing? So many of the tools and software and ways to automate processes have really made our life so much better. But we still have to think about this high tech, high touch approach, and that's what makes the hourglass work. So using, say, a CRM system, a customer relationship management piece of software, is a given really today so that we can keep track of where our clients are at each stage. So the traditional awareness, consideration, evaluation, and purchase, those are stages that many people have built into CRMs. Heck, half the CRM systems come with those as default stages. I want you to consider the hourglass as stages in your CRM. So what if instead of awareness, consideration, you started focusing on know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat, and refer? So you actually started tracking referral customers. You actually started tracking folks that are taking actions that tell you they are in the trust stage. Now, the real key, and there are two of them, is that you have to know what is a transition key. What designates that somebody moved from one stage to the next? And

you have identify a metric that would trigger that transition so that people, whether they're salespeople or marketing people, can have a really good sense of where people are. Now, this isn't perfect. Not everybody goes through these stages in the same fashion, but what it will do is allow you to focus on where you have gaps. If you have a lot of people that tend to move from like to trust and then stall, they won't get into the try phase, in many cases what that will allow you to do is drill in and say, "Okay, what are we doing before that "or slightly before that that is not creating the experience "that we want?" But it also allows you to then have a pretty good sense of what your pipeline is going to be all the way through those stages. And one of the things that I love about it is so often CRM systems end at, well, yeah, this is a customer, and now we have customer data on them and buying history. But if you build the stages that also focus on repeat, focus on refer, those customer experience stages, as part of using the software, you will be able to build a much more personalized and highly profitable CRM use.

## Use the 80/20 ladder with customers

- Once you've fully developed a marketing hourglass, the fun can really begin. See, here's the good news. You're never done. This process of continuous optimization never goes away. But now that you have a handle on the stages and on organizing the behavior, your job is to find a way to create even more opportunities for profit for your business. And here's what I mean by that. Now that you're moving people into the repeat and referral stages of your business, you will be able to identify something like 20 to 25% of your client base that is thrilled. They're advocates. They love you. They want more from you. Your job now is to start thinking about ways that you can offer more products or that you can build a service around your products. Because experience tells me, and there's this 80/20 rule out there that says that 80% of your profit comes from 20% of your customers. We can apply that to so many situations in business and in life. So experience tells me that if you built a product that was 10 times bigger than what your existing product is, some percentage of your client base would buy that product. And then again some percentage of

that group would buy even more. So, one of the ways to clearly create a highly profitable business using the lifecycle approach is to help your customers or at least some segment of your customers climb the stairs, go up the ladder with you by offering them more products, more services. Now, you can ask them what those are. You can build those products and services with them. But once you have those advocates, that community of champions, your job is to find more ways, better ways, bigger ways, more profitable ways to serve them.

