Interactive Content & The Buyer’s Journey

The Marketer’s Guide to Delivering a First Class Trip
Table of Contents

Introduction: Navigating The Buyer’s Journey

01: Interactive Content & The Buyer’s Journey

02: Awareness Stage: Deciding The Vacation Type

03: Evaluation Stage: Identifying Possible Destinations

04: Decision Stage: Booking The Trip

05: Travel Checklist: Where To Go, What To Pack & How To Get There

Conclusion: The Journey is Just Beginning
Navigating The Buyer’s Journey

The last time you booked a trip, did you use a travel agent? Probably not!

Most of us don’t use agents anymore. We prefer to research, plan and book travel ourselves using the tools available to explore ideas, review other’s opinions, identify options and compare prices. This phenomenon – of doing our own research and evaluation without the help of an agent – is not unique to travel.

According to Forrester Research, most technology buyers are 90% of the way through their buying journey before they ever talk to sales. That has huge implications for marketers.

As part of helping buyers navigate that 90%, marketers are also moving further down the sales funnel, taking on more of a sales function. No longer responsible solely for lead generation and high level nurturing, modern marketers are educating prospects, sharing specific solution information and cultivating relationships.
So how can marketers more effectively generate leads and push them toward sales?

Is it possible to really understand each prospect’s unique requirements, share relevant information in a timely manner, and build credibility and trust as a marketer without ever even talking to prospects? And what about all of the noise as more and more companies produce content?

These are the marketers’ challenges. Interactive content can help.

Interactive content such as apps, assessments, calculators, configurators and quizzes generate conversions at a 2x higher rate than passive content.

– Demand Metric, Enhancing the Buyer’s Journey

What Is Interactive Content?

Interactive content talks with audiences, not at them. It engages prospects and audiences, encouraging them to share information about what they need and what is important to them.

In return for their engagement, participants receive real-time, relevant results and information. It is the marketer’s equivalent of a sales “conversation”.

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>> To Table of Contents
The steps you take to plan a vacation are a great example of a buyer’s journey – and the role that content plays in helping you decide your destination. You have to decide on the vacation type, research possible destinations, and make a decision. Imagine receiving information on vacation destinations that perfectly fit the type of vacation – relaxing, cultural, or adventurous – you are envisioning.

**Talk about an experience!**

In this white paper, you will learn how interactive content can:

- Improve the buyer’s journey
- Work at specific stages
- Enhance your existing marketing mix

By the end, you will have the knowledge you need to provide your prospects with a first class experience!
Interactive Content & The Buyer’s Journey

**Awareness Stage** (Deciding the vacation type)

The buyer acknowledges and communicates signs of a problem or opportunity. They are in “research mode” and are looking for vendor neutral information.

**Interactive Content Types:**
- Polls/Surveys
- Self-Assessments
- Knowledge Tests
- Interactive Infographics

**Evaluation Stage** (Identifying possible destinations)

The buyer has specifically outlined and named their problem or opportunity. They are working to understand all of the available approaches and methods to solving their problem or opportunity.

**Interactive Content Types:**
- Benchmark Assessments
- Interactive White Papers
- Persona Assessments

**Decision Stage** (Booking the trip)

The buyer has defined their strategy or approach. They are researching data sheets, benchmark reports and/or testimonials to make their final decision.

**Interactive Content Types:**
- ROI Calculators
- Galleries
- Product Pickers
- Surveys
Figuring out where to go on vacation (or what product or service you need to help you solve your problem) takes some work. Will it be a “sit on the beach” trip or a “bike the Swiss Alps” vacation? Are you traveling far or staying close to home? Your prospects are asking their own questions as they think about their challenges and the range of possible solutions. As a marketer, your job is to support and educate them as you guide them toward a purchase.

Traditional ways of providing information to your buyer – webinars, slideshares, videos, and blog posts – are great tools, but none of them provide the opportunity to have a conversation with your buyer, and that can be a missed opportunity.
Building a dialogue through an interactive experience encourages your prospects to answer questions and share information that helps you – and them – better define and clarify their particular pains, challenges and priorities.

As the marketer, you can use these insights to provide relevant, targeted information based on what they have shared. This builds credibility and creates trust, which is critical in the early stages of the buyer’s journey.

Polls and surveys allow you and your prospects to articulate and clarify challenges and goals (“Would you rather go on a safari or relax poolside in the tropics?”). Knowledge tests and quizzes give your buyers the opportunity to categorize themselves as they answer a series of questions on a particular topic (“What type of vacationer are you?”).

“The Company:
BIZO - Data Management & Targeting Technology.

The Opportunity:
Generate new leads through new channels.

The Solution:
Embedded knowledge tests and interactive infographics in blog posts.

The Results:
400 new leads in the first 90 days.

“The Company feels that interactive content is effective in educating the buyer, and 88% feel it enabled them to differentiate from competitors.”

– Demand Metric, Enhancing the Buyer’s Journey

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>> To Table of Contents
“Only 25% of buyers reveal their interest to vendors early in their journey.”

– Demand Metric Benchmark Report

Not only do both you and your prospect gain valuable information from these exchanges, but also, these shorter, more engaging formats are better at drawing prospects in during the initial research stages than longer form content.

When creating content in this stage you might make your content standalone for lead generation purposes, or it might be the very beginning of a nurture campaign. The key is that you are listening and taking cues – using the information you are gaining from responses – to guide the buyer and to provide the appropriate response in the form of relevant follow-up content.

The Company:
Atmel - a $1.43 billion manufacturer of microcontrollers.

The Opportunity:
Engage end users and build brand.

The Solution:
Built UGC contests to drive social sharing.

The Results:
Campaign averaged 30% click-through-rate and generated over 11,000 social shares.

Read More Here!
Evaluation Stage

Identifying Possible Destinations

You’ve done the hard part by cutting through the noise – vacation type, check! Now it’s time to get information relevant to your specific needs.

Prospects in the Evaluation Stage are looking for personalized and relevant content. The good news is that the content that you shared with them during the awareness stage provided them – and you – with great insights. You now know much more about your prospect. But could you know even more?
Benchmarking assessments and knowledge tests help buyers – and you – understand more of what they need and enable you both to consider additional information relevant to the decision process. Interactive white papers and interactive infographics are a great source of information, allowing buyers to continue to educate and explore various options while actively engaging with the content.

The primary benefit of interactive content in the evaluation stage is that it enables buyers to refine their needs and criteria, and allows you to build better profiles. With the information collected from assessments or as buyers answer questions in interactive whitepapers, you are able to build profiles that traditional lead generation forms simply do not allow.

The Company:  
DDI - Global leader in talent management solutions.

The Opportunity:  
Use thought leadership to direct prospects to relevant follow-up content.

The Solution:  
Deployed wide range of benchmark and persona assessments on website and through email campaigns.

The Results:  
700% lift in engagement rates with long form content following interactive experiences.

“Only 5% of buyers say they will provide detailed information in exchange for a white paper. With interactive content, the whole experience yields detailed information which the user willingly shares.”

– DemandGen Report, Content Preferences Report
By enabling the information you collect to flow into your marketing automation platform in real time, you are able to quickly follow up with the next piece of targeted content. No more “Spring Break in Cancun” offers when you are booking a family trip to Europe.

By providing relevant information sooner, you are likely to move prospects through the funnel faster. For example, imagine meeting someone at an event and being able to send them targeted messaging before they even leave the booth.

Or how about giving your sales team a list of your buyer’s pain points, as outlined by your prospect during a self-assessment, before they get on a call?

The Company:
EMC - Leader in enterprise content management solutions.

The Opportunity:
Capture traffic at events to promote their community network.

The Solution:
Developed persona assessments promoted through email before events and used on iPads during events.

The Results:
Campaigns achieved a 73% click-through-rate and drove a 60% opt-in rate to their community network.

50% Engagement Rates
40% Lead Conversion Rates

By adding interactive content to their marketing mix, SnapApp customers average:

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>> To Table of Contents
Booking The Trip

*Vacation type – check! Vacation destination – check!* Now it comes down to making the decision and booking the vacation. Throughout their journey, the buyers have assessed themselves, tested their knowledge and engaged with you by giving their personal opinions through a poll or survey.

They now know more about what they want and need than they did at the outset. Now it’s time for them to make their decision. *Will they book their vacation through you, or will they opt to go through someone else?*
Interactive content allows you to guide potential buyers to their decision by presenting business cases. With the travel example, it might mean showing them how great the overall vacation experience is with a quick video gallery, or calculating how much they can save on their vacation package. Overall, it’s about continuing to share even more pointed, relevant, and compelling information.

**Galleries and calculators** help buyers evaluate and reinforce their decision. They provide strong visuals and tangible data on cost savings and ROI potential. This type of content is extremely powerful when a buyer is in the final stages of their journey and is making hard choices about what, when and how much to buy.

“67% of buyers say customized content helps them make better purchase decisions.”

– OneSpot, Content Marketing Statistics

**The Company:**
SilkRoad - Leading HR software solutions provider.

**The Opportunity:**
Share best practices and enable prospects to scope product value.

**The Solution:**
Built an ROI calculator to help prospects determine their annual talent acquisition costs.

**The Results:**
285 new conversions in the first two months, 3% share rate though LinkedIn.
“Customers will manage 85% of their relationships with the enterprise without interacting with a human by 2020.”

– Gartner Customer 360 Summit

If you are handing leads over to sales at this stage, you don’t have to abandon interactive content. Quick surveys and assessments forwarded by sales execs to their prospects are a way to fill in any holes and provide a jumping off point for a phone call or meeting.

What is important is that the prospect feels understood and is continuing to receive the information they are seeking regardless of channel. This means that the account executive has access to and an understanding of what content the prospect has already reviewed and how they have responded.

For example, simply knowing that someone downloaded a white paper is not nearly as helpful to an account executive as knowing how they responded to the five questions asked in an interactive white paper.

The Company:
Rockwell Automation - World’s largest company dedicated to industrial automation.

The Opportunity:
Engage prospective buyers post major industry events.

The Solution:
Sent prospective buyers a “Thank You” email post-event followed by a call to action that linked directly to their photo gallery.

The Results:
On the five galleries that were created, Rockwell achieved a 40-60% click-rate and enabled buyers to interact post-event.

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>> To Table of Contents
Travel Checklist

Where To Go, What To Pack & How To Get There

Now that you’ve learned about the benefits of interactive content throughout your buyer’s journey, you might have some concerns about how to properly leverage it.

Here is the good news – interactive content doesn’t have to be hard.
Interactive Content & The Buyer’s Journey

**Repurpose Existing Content**

You don’t need to start from scratch when going interactive. Turn key points from your last white paper into a quiz or knowledge test, map personas to personality tests or survey your prospect’s pain points.

**Augment Existing Campaigns & Channels**

There is no need to stop current campaigns and the channels where they are promoted. Blog posts, data sheets and webinars are important, so layer interactive content into your nurture paths to enhance, supplement or replace what is not working. Create an assessment that lets the potential buyer download a white paper at the end, and use the data collected to generate a new blog post or webinar idea.

**Leverage New Technology**

Use a content marketing platform that allows you to be more agile by easily creating and customizing your interactive content, without the need for a team of designers and developers to produce and implement your content.

**Integrate With Your Current Marketing Software**

Integrate your interactive content solution with your marketing automation and CRM platforms to capture data, build prospect profiles and score leads. Modern marketers are tying it all together with the systems they have in place so they can automate and capture important data.

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>> To Table of Contents
The Journey is Just Beginning

Interactive content works because it empowers both prospects and marketers. No matter what type of product you are selling, what type of buyer you are targeting or where that buyer is in their journey, interactive content provides better information in a more engaging format. This is true whether you are a family of five planning a vacation or a marketer driving revenue.

By adding interactive content into the marketing mix, modern marketers are creating new, engaging and educational experiences at each stage during the buyer’s journey. They are turning their information monologues into dialogues as they replace static content with dynamic exchanges. They are having conversations and closing customers. They are replacing the travel agent.
About Oracle Marketing Cloud

Modern marketers choose Oracle Marketing Cloud to build customer obsessed cultures, create and manage ideal customers, and power revenue performance. They use award-winning technology and expertise to transform marketing by truly knowing the customer, engaging with cross-channel marketing, and achieving data driven accountability. Integrated information from cross-channel, content, and social marketing with data management and hundreds of AppCloud apps enables these businesses to target, engage, convert, analyze, and use marketing technology to deliver a better customer experience.

About SnapApp

SnapApp’s content marketing platform gives companies the power to drive engagement, generate leads and increase revenue by easily creating, publishing promoting and measuring interactive content that works across any channel. Marketers can select from a range of customizable content types including assessments, knowledge tests, polls and surveys, interactive white papers and infographics, calculators and contests that average click rates of over 50% and conversion rates in excess of 40%.
Interested in what interactive content can do for your organization?

Get Started Now!