

The Customer Journey

Sales, in its simplest form, is about influencing a purchasing decision. The easiest way to influence that decision is to understand how your customer is evaluating it. Whether we're deciding what to have for dinner or whether to buy that new sports car, we all go through 5 clear stages of decision making. The same is true in sales, and the job of the sales person is to guide their prospect through this journey.

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Risk Level</u>	<u>Opportunity to Influence</u>
<u>Awareness</u>	They are aware of your business or products	They've seen your advertising campaign for low cost printer ink	The risk level for the customer is high: if they purchased now it would be rash and ill-informed. The risk level for you is also high: there is a strong chance the customer will not progress beyond this point	A polite introduction with minimal information
<u>Interest</u>	They like the sound of your product and are considering if it's right for them	They know they use a lot of printer ink and so could benefit from a new supplier	Depending on the service/product, the risk is still fairly high for the customer: they may need the product but have no evidence that you are the right supplier. Because the risk is still high for the customer there is still a strong risk for you that they will not proceed	A more detailed discussion with further information. Consolidating the conversation with a brief email will help to aid your influence when they are no longer with you. However, information should still remain brief
<u>Evaluation</u>	They know they need your product and are considering	They know of lots of suppliers and so are comparing your	The risk is reduced for the customer: they know they need your product and the	More detailed information can be provided here. They are evaluating every

	whether you are the right supplier	costs, services and quality of ink	only issue is who the most suitable supplier is. Because of this the risk for you has also reduced, although there's still a strong chance they will choose a competitor or decide not to purchase at all	possibility and so you must make them aware of the all the benefits of choosing you as their supplier
<u>Commitment</u>	They've made their decision	They prefer your prices and think your USPs meet their requirements and so will purchase from you	Until they experience the product there is still a risk that the customer made the wrong decision. For you, the only risk is that following their purchase they have a poor experience and do not purchase again	This can be the most important stage to influence: by ensuring your customer is entirely satisfied with their purchase you can encourage further sales. The key is to continue the level of service and communication you demonstrated before they made the decision to buy
<u>Loyalty</u>	They love you	They would never consider using an alternative supplier, they make repeat orders from you, order a range of products and frequently refer you to other customers	As long as you retain the level of service and communication they expect, there is no risk to either party	By gaining feedback and continuing to work for their business you are able to ensure their expectations are met and they remain loyal