

# CREATING THE ULTIMATE BUYERS' JOURNEY

for Your Print Buyers



Marketing Ideas For Printers



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# The 1-2-3 for Keeping Print Buyers on the Path to You

You've probably heard of a buyer's journey, but have you ever stopped to consider what the ideal journey would look like for your print buyers?

While there are so many nuances to creating the perfect buyers' journey, there are some key steps you can take to ensure you've paved the way nicely for your buyers. In this ebook, we'll explore some common stages of your print buyers' journey and how you can be prepared to meet them wherever they are with the content and online ordering capabilities they need and desire.

You'll learn what a typical buying path of a print buyer would look like, what types of content would be the most impactful in every stage of the journey, and how to capitalize on continuing the journey even after they've purchased.

Ready to get started?



# What is a Buyer's Journey?

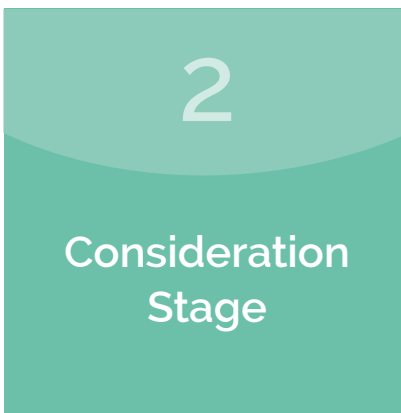
To start, you'll need to understand what a buyer's journey is. A popular definition from HubSpot says it this way,

*"The buyer's journey is the process buyers go through to become aware of, consider and evaluate, and decide to purchase a new product or service."*

Within this journey, your print buyers will typically make their way through three different processes or stages. These include:

- The Awareness Stage
- The Consideration Stage
- The Decision Stage

It's important to recognize and understand these different stages because then you can use them to cater to your print buyers more specifically, depending on the stage of the journey they're in. Let's break it down a little further.



# The Three Stages of a Print Buyer's Journey

## 1. AWARENESS STAGE

This is the part of the buying journey where your print buyer starts to experience symptoms of a pain point or an opportunity. In the awareness stage, your print buyers haven't yet been able to put their finger on their specific problem; they just know something is amiss.

*Your print buyers' goal in this stage is to recognize if they have a problem or opportunity that needs to be addressed.*

Sometimes it helps to think of this medically. Imagine you're sitting at your desk one afternoon, and all of a sudden, you get this ringing in your ears that won't go away. The symptom doesn't feel urgent, just annoying. You're not sure if it's just a fluke or will go away on its own. So, what's your next step? Most people will research their symptoms before jumping in and spending money going to a doctor. They hold off a bit because they want to define the problem and determine if the problem is big enough or painful enough to solve.

## 2. CONSIDERATION STAGE

Your buyer reaches the next stage in their journey, or the consideration stage, after they've clearly defined what the problem or opportunity is. Remember, though, it doesn't mean your print buyers are ready to buy yet.

*Your print buyers' goal in this stage is to define their problem and research ways to solve it.*

For this one, let's use a printing example. Let's say a print buyer has recognized they have a problem: they own a small business, but no one knows about them yet. In the awareness stage, they recognized that their problem was they hadn't done any advertising. Now that they know the problem, they've decided that they need to boost their brand recognition through print. In the consideration stage, this print buyer will spend their time researching different print options and providers that will eliminate their problem.

## 3. DECISION STAGE

It should be fairly easy to deduce what happens in the decision stage.

*Your print buyers' goal in this stage is to decide on a solution.*

Now that your print buyer has been able to define their problem and has researched potential solutions, here your buyer will start to narrow down their list of solution providers and are the most likely to move forward and make a confident decision.





## Why Does a Buyer's Journey Matter?

There are several reasons that building content based on your buyers' journey matters.

For one, you can make sure that your print buyers are getting content from you for each stage. By doing so, you'll be able to meet their need whenever they might enter the journey with you. Here are some other key reasons to keep in mind:

- A buyer's journey helps you increase the value of what you have to offer them. (Right content + right person + right time = success!)
- A buyer's journey can help you better sell your products and services without actually "selling."
- A buyer's journey helps you create content that sells for you before a human interaction takes place. (Consider that 80% of the buying process will occur without direct human interaction.)

You'll learn what types of content work best for each stage of your print buyers' journey later on in this ebook, but for now, let's dig into each stage a little further.

# The Awareness Stage: 101

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If you recall, the awareness stage is the part of the buying journey where your print buyers start to experience symptoms of a pain point or opportunity.

While they can't quite put their finger on the specific problem from the symptoms they're experiencing, it's in this stage that your print buyer's goal is simply to recognize and "become aware of" the problem.

As the name implies, you'll need to work on creating an overall awareness of your product, service, or company at this stage. Your goal is to get your print buyers to begin to understand what you do and how you can help them. Remember how you've learned previously to focus on addressing your buyer's pain points? This is precisely when your content should focus on calling attention to your print buyer's pain points and not your product or brand.

## UNDERSTANDING THE AWARENESS STAGE: CHECK YOURSELF

If you're struggling to get in the mind of your print buyer in the awareness stage, consider reflecting on questions like these:

- ✓ When speaking to your print buyers, how would they describe their goals and challenges? *(e.g., they want to grow their mailing list; no time to market themselves)*
- ✓ What would your print buyers typically do to learn more or educate themselves on achieving their goals and challenges? *(e.g., they research and look for easy solutions that offer the greatest return)*
- ✓ If your print buyers do nothing, what consequences would that inaction create? *(e.g., they might experience a lack of business growth or fall away from being top-of-mind for their clients)*
- ✓ Are there common misconceptions you've picked up on that your print buyers have about addressing their pain points or opportunities? *(e.g., they mistakenly think direct mail is too expensive, too hard, or unpredictable)*
- ✓ How do your print buyers decide whether the pain point/opportunity should be prioritized? *(e.g., they might wait till it's too late or fail to see the urgency of gathering new sales opportunities)*

The good news is that your business can present a resolution to these print buyers' problems by creating content that identifies and directly addresses the issues.

## What Types of Content Fit Best in the Awareness Stage?

If you're looking to reach buyers in the Awareness Stage with content that fits well, include the following:

- ✓ **Blog Posts:** Blogs are great for making yourself known to the world in a non-pushy format. Each blog helps increase your organic website traffic using keywords and helps your print buyer to learn about you and the problems you solve.
- ✓ **Infographics:** These stunning and informative visuals are quickly and easily sharable and can increase your chances of being found and shared on social media.
- ✓ **Short videos:** Videos help tell a visual story and make it easy for your brand to get found on platforms like YouTube.

You might also include things like:

- Podcasts
- Social Media Ads
- Google Ads

Remember to include a call-to-action within these pieces of content or keep some of your content gated. This means you offer the content in exchange for their email address. This technique will help you move these potential customers into the consideration stage.

### YES, YOU'RE GREAT, BUT NO SELLING (YET)

One important thing to remember about the awareness stage is that you do NOT want to sell at this point.

While it may seem counterintuitive, there are very few customers who will buy a solution they've never heard of from a brand they don't know after the first initial touchpoint.

Remember that the awareness stage is merely laying the foundation of knowledge before you would even consider or push for the 'hard-sell.' Although it may be tough when selling is your ultimate end goal, laying this foundation will ensure that when the time comes for them to order printing, you will have made it a lot easier for them to do so.



## The Consideration Stage: 101

The next stepping stone in your print buyers' journey is the Consideration Stage.

If you recall, in the Awareness Stage, your print buyer is just coming to the realization that they're experiencing symptoms of a pain point or opportunity, but they haven't quite defined what it is yet.

Once they move into the Consideration Stage, however, your print buyers have been able to put words behind the issue and define the goal or challenge they're experiencing. Now that they've recognized the problem, they're committed to addressing it.

*Simply put, the consideration stage is when your print buyer has defined their problem and is researching options to solve it.*

### UNDERSTANDING THE CONSIDERATION STAGE: CHECK YOURSELF

Even though your print buyers have clearly defined their goal and are committed to finding a solution, how they go about that could vary from one print buyer to another.

The following questions are important to ask yourself, so you can have targeted content that will satisfy their needs when looking for a solution.

- ✓ What different categories of solutions do print buyers typically look into for solutions? *(e.g., If your buyers are looking for more exposure, they might be looking into digital marketing solutions as well, such as social media, email, or online ads. Or, they may be exploring different print options, such as a flyer versus a poster.)*
- ✓ How will your print buyers educate themselves on those various categories mentioned above? *(e.g., If your print buyer searches online for the benefits of flyers and posters or how to integrate online and offline content, do you have content and information to meet that need?)*
- ✓ How will your print buyers consider the pros and cons of each category? *(e.g., How can you showcase the pros and cons for your buyers so that they can come to a researched and educated decision?)*
- ✓ How will your print buyers decide what solution is right for them? *(e.g., This is your opportunity to present facts and information through your content, so choosing your solution is a no-brainer.)*

Remember that whatever the reason may be that your print buyer came across you, you've now captured their interest! Now that you have it, it's your job to keep that attention by having some valuable content in place. Whatever avenue your initial communication with your prospect takes, be sure to make it a good one!

## Content for Your Print Buyers in the Consideration Stage

While you can still make use of all the educational and informative content you created for the Awareness Stage, in the Consideration Stage, you want to add content that will help you close the deal, such as:

- ✓ **White Papers:** These are great for lead generation because they're more comprehensive than a blog post or short article. White papers provide such great information that print buyers are more likely to exchange their contact information to receive it.
- ✓ **Research Reports:** What data do you have regarding the power of printing or direct mail that you can share with your print buyers? Research reports or statistic sheets are high-value pieces of content that are great for lead generation.
- ✓ **Customer Testimonials:** During the Consideration Stage, it's highly likely that your print buyers will be researching your competitors as well. Be sure to highlight what sets you apart. What is your key differentiator? Use the answer to that question in your testimonials and then share, share, share!
- ✓ **Case Studies:** Start by asking, "How is [product/service] helping [print buyer] solve their [pain point or challenge]?"
- ✓ **Product or Service Demos:** Could you offer a demo for your online design software or your Private Label Website service?

Other things to include during the Consideration Stage:

- Pricing Guides
- Webinars
- FAQs

### COME OUT ON TOP BY FOLLOWING UP

Keep this in mind: No matter how you communicate with your print buyers through content, don't leave them hanging!

Be sure to follow-up with them and be prompt, friendly, and helpful in your response. Every touchpoint adds to the overall image your print buyer has of your printing firm, and you want to come out on top during the Consideration Stage and move them forward in their buyer's journey.

## The Decision Stage: 101

By the time your customer reaches the Decision Stage, they will have compared solution providers, perhaps whittled down a list, and will soon be making a purchase decision.

In this stage, your print buyers will be trying to decide which of the companies they've researched will offer the best product or service, with the best features, and at the best value. And it will be your job to persuade those print buyers that it's your printing firm that is the best place to solve their challenge and get a solution.

### UNDERSTANDING THE DECISION STAGE: CHECK YOURSELF

The best way to rise to the top of your print buyers' research list is to understand the things your buyers will be looking for. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to see if you're hitting the mark:

- ✓ What criteria will your print buyers use to evaluate the services/solutions you have to offer? (e.g., *Will they compare price, quality, delivery time, etc.?*)
- ✓ When a print buyer examines what your printing firm has to offer, what offerings do you think will stand out compared to their alternatives? Will your print buyers have any concerns about what you have to offer? (e.g., *You're small enough that you can treat your customers like family, but some might be concerned that you're too small and not up to the task of what they're asking.*)
- ✓ When targeting B2B businesses, who will most likely be involved in the decision making regarding print marketing needs? (e.g., *Different buyers within the same company will have different perspectives on the purchase decision. Something like your Private Label Website offering may be appreciated differently depending on the buyer.*)

If you keep these questions in mind and target them in your content at this stage, you'll have a solid foundation to build upon.

## Content for Your Print Buyers in the Decision Stage

✓ **Customer Case-Studies & Testimonials:** A recent study from Spiceworks found that 97% of people said they rely on peer recommendations and ratings/reviews during the buying cycle.

✓ **Customer Reviews:** Your buyers will be expecting reviews at this point, so be sure not to let them down.

✓ **Discounts and Offers:** Sometimes, your prospects might need a little extra “nudge” to become a paying customer. Offering a first-time buyer discount is a great place to start.

Other things to include during the Decision Stage:

- Live Product Demos (e.g., Ordering through your website, your online design solution, or private order portal offerings)
- How-To Tutorials
- Comparisons (e.g., Competitor comparisons, paper comparisons, quality comparisons, etc.)

### THE ULTIMATE CONTENT GOAL

If you keep your eye on the target of having content that is as helpful as possible to your print buyers at every stage of their buyers' journey, you will see results.

Anytime you provide value to your print buyers, your content will drive more traffic to your website and ultimately lead to selling more printing – exactly what you want!

While you may be tempted to think that's the end of the road, it's not. Stay tuned to your inbox where next week you'll learn how to continue relationship-building even after the point of a purchase decision and keep your buyers coming back again and again!



## Flywheel vs. Funnel

At this point, most people might think, “We brought our print buyer from the Awareness Stage, nurtured them through the Consideration Stage, and they’ve placed an order with us. There you have it... one, two, three, and we’re done!”

But, hold up a second. That line of thinking holds an essential piece of your print buyers’ journey that you cannot afford to overlook:

*When does your print buyers’ journey end, and what happens then?*

### THE END OF THE LINE: FALLING OUT THE BOTTOM OF THE FUNNEL

Did you know that the purchasing funnel concept has been around since 1898? Created by Elias St. Elmo Lewis, the sales/marketing funnel defined a buying journey by breaking it down into distinct stages: awareness, interest, desire, and action.

Today, you’ll see many varieties of these funnels with differing amounts of stages or levels and with different names. Still, the concept is generally the same: marketing leads come in through the top of the funnel, and sales come out through the bottom. If you don’t have enough sales coming out the bottom, you simply need to “widen the funnel” and get more leads pouring in.

Seems easy enough, right? So, what’s the issue?



## Technology

The biggest change to the funnel concept is how customers, including your print buyers, interact with brands today.

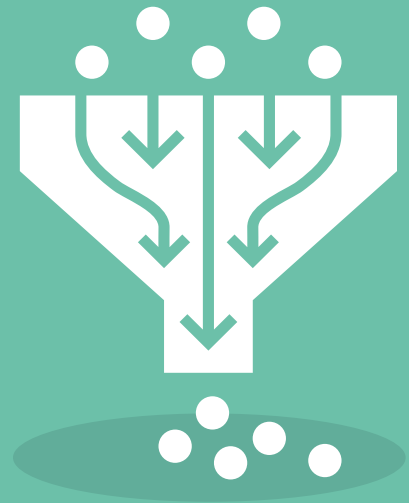
Technology has affected everything from how consumers become aware of and interact with your brand to how they gain information about your products and services.

And, if Suzie Q. has an opinion to share about your products or the service she received with you, she's no longer limited to sharing her thoughts with only her friends, family, or neighbors. Today's Suzie Q. can almost effortlessly broadcast thoughts and opinions regarding your business anywhere in the world (both to your praise or detriment).

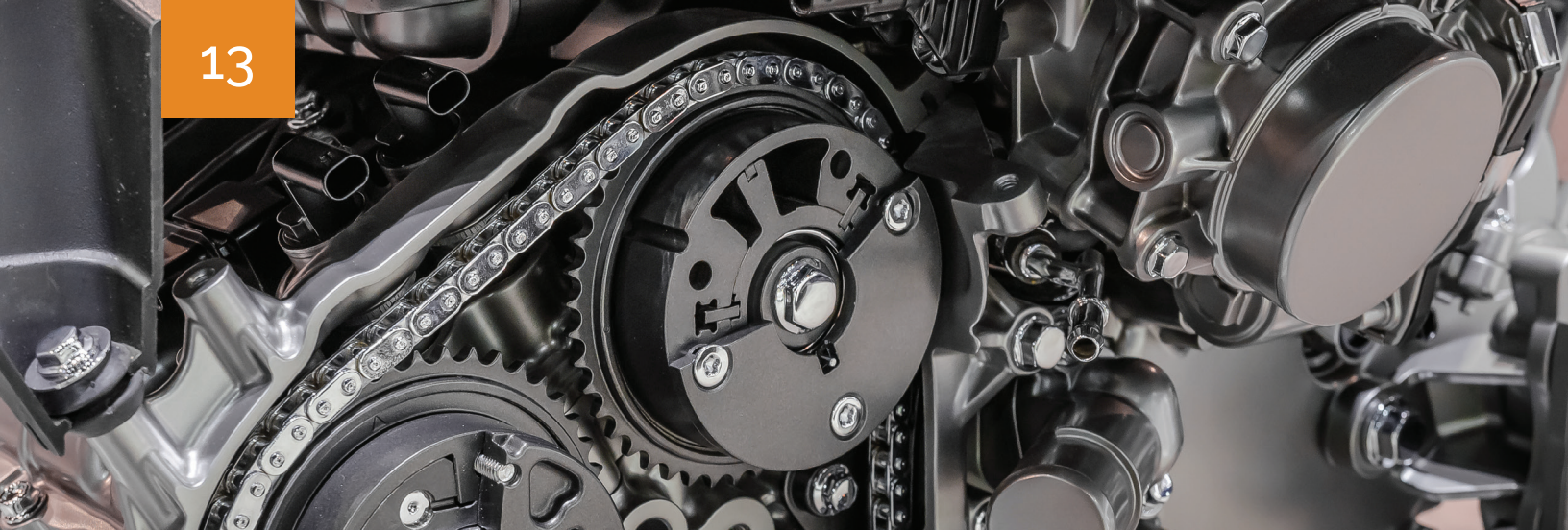
## Distrust and Lack of Human Connection

Another blow to the funnel concept is that while online customer reviews continue to increase, there has simultaneously been a growing distrust of both marketers and salespeople.

This means people are looking more to word-of-mouth endorsements and recommendations from those they know and trust and to independent research instead of consulting with a company's sales personnel. It also means that most touchpoints your business has with a potential client will be outside your control.



*The biggest thing to remember about a funnel ideology is that the output of the funnel is paying customers. Once they leave the funnel, they are often forgotten about, leaving your print buyers to feel like they're just another number and leaving you missing out on repeat sales.*



## Enter theFlywheel: A Relationship-Building Approach

Today's print buyers need a printer they can have a relationship with – a printer they can communicate with, and they can approach – an actual human being.

Consumers are tired of being dumped into a symbolic funnel and thought of as mere money in the bank or sales figures on a spreadsheet. This is where building and nurturing relationships before, during, and after an order is placed will be a fresh and welcomed approach by your audience. But how do you do that?

You change your mindset and approach from the funnel to a flywheel.

### **WHAT IS THE FLYWHEEL APPROACH FOR A PRINT BUYERS' JOURNEY?**

First off, if you're unfamiliar with the term 'flywheel,' here's a basic way to explain it:

A flywheel is a mechanical device designed to use momentum to store energy for future use.

In your car, for example, your flywheel helps to smooth out the delivery of power from your engine to your wheels. As Britannica.com states, "The inertia of the flywheel opposes and moderates fluctuations in the speed of the engine and stores the excess energy for intermittent use."

But let's get out of the car and get back to printing.

Just as your car engine needs a flywheel to store energy, marketers use the flywheel concept to gain the momentum of loyal customers. In other words, once your print buyer has made a purchase, they don't fall out the bottom of the funnel. Rather they continue to be the center of every other process. Everything revolves around your print buyers' experience in a flywheel, and it's that energy that fuels all of your continued growth. What's more, your print buyers are never lost energy because they never fall out of the loop.

Here's a simple way to see the difference between a funnel and a flywheel approach to your buyers' journey:



## Funnel

Print buyers are an output.

Print buyers are lost energy (many come in the funnel, only a few come out).

Has an end-point causing a "start from scratch" mindset with each new effort.

Focuses on "widening the funnel" (shotgun approach that filters through many).

Large investment into brand awareness for acquiring customers.



## Flywheel

Print buyers are the most important input.

Print buyers are stored energy that will drive continued future growth.

Is ongoing and focused on using existing assets (stored energy) to keep growth moving.

Focuses on delighting customers for repeat purchasing (rifle approach that focuses on relationship).

Efforts placed on things that bring joy to your print buyers, making them your brand ambassadors and reaping greater ROI.

# How a Flywheel in Action Might Look for Your Print Business

Let's put the flywheel approach into a real-life example.

Since we used Suzie Q. earlier, let's pretend Suzie Q. is your potential print buyer and you want to get her into your marketing flywheel. What steps would you need to take?

## 1. ATTRACT SUZIE TO YOUR BRAND

Your first step is to draw Suzie into your brand through engaging and useful content that's just right for her. This could be through traditional methods such as word of mouth, paid ads, reviews and testimonials, or inbound marketing. The main thing to remember here is your content needs to be interesting to Suzie and be helpful to her. And trust us in this; Suzie is not looking for clickbaity, toot-your-own-horn kind of content.

## 2. ENGAGE SUZIE AND SEEK TO UNDERSTAND HER

Next, your focus should be on creating a meaningful relationship with Suzie by seeking to understand what motivates her, what her pain points are, or what upcoming opportunities she has. Your goal here is to genuinely empathize with Suzie so you can provide a solution(s) that will truly satisfy. For example, offering helpful, how-to blogs or social media content she would benefit from reading.

## 3. BRING SUZIE JOY (A.K.A. DELIGHT)

Lastly, focus on bringing Suzie joy in her continuous journey with you. If you focus on delighting your print buyers before, during, and after printing, they will enjoy an impactful experience and want to promote your brand to other print buyers. They will become ambassadors of your brand and customer advocates who will then bring even more print buyers into your flywheel.

How do you bring a print buyer joy? It's simpler than you think. It could be as simple as your return policy, shipping options, reward programs, superior customer support, or even just regular check-ins to remind them that you're a real-live human that cares about their success in this world.





## From Content to Online Ordering

As we come to the end, it's important to remember that "the buyer's journey is nothing more than a series of questions that must be answered," and it's your job as the printer to provide the content that answers those questions.

And, it's important to look beyond the content and see how everything works together to achieve your goal: more print orders for your printing company.

### **CONTENT IS YOUR FIRST STEP, BUT DON'T STOP THERE**

If your only strategy for growing your print business was to focus on content, you might be extremely valuable in the way of providing knowledge and information to your audience, but you'd probably still be struggling to sell printing.

You see, the thing about content is it's only the first step in acquiring and keeping prospects and customers.

*Content is the invitation that helps to open the doors to create relationships and build trust.*

But, remember, that content invitation is useless if it can't be translated into sales, or you never actually get a return on investment from all of your content.

This is where online ordering comes in. their success in this world.





## Content + Online Ordering = More Sales!

Content is what will bring your print buyers in, but it's your e-commerce solutions, your offering of online ordering, that translates that content into more sales.

Think of content and online ordering as two prongs of the same plug-in. You won't get any power with only one prong. You need both to complete the circuit and get the results you're looking for.

If you have content without online ordering capabilities, you're probably credible, trustworthy, knowledgeable, and... struggling! You could be missing out on all of those potential customers you snagged in with your content because you have a massive roadblock in their way: no way to order from you online.

On the other hand, if you have online ordering capabilities without content, you're providing a way for customers and prospects to order printing, but they have no compelling reason to want to order from you or ever return to your website. They don't know you, they haven't built up any trust with you, so they have no desire to take a risk and order online from you. It's those things that are accomplished through your content.

Like peanut butter and jelly, salt and pepper, and bacon and anything, content and online ordering work best when they work together, helping you to sell more printing and increasing your bottom line.



## Putting it All Together Through the Eyes of Your Print Buyer

Let's walk through what the complete buying journey could look like in real life through the eyes of a print buyer.

Meet Parker, the Print Buyer. Parker recently opened his own dental clinic and isn't sure where to start in getting the word out to potential new clients.

Parker's buying journey might look something like this:

### AWARENESS STAGE

- **Parker's thought process:** My last direct mail campaign didn't get near the results I expected
- **On-site content provided by you, the printer:** 3 Ways to Sabotage Your Next Direct Mail Piece (And How to Market Smarter)
- **Your content offer:** Drive Exponential Growth Through Omnichannel Marketing (white paper)

## CONSIDERATION STAGE

- **Parker's thought process:** I need to make my direct mail campaign more effective. But how?
- **On-site content provided by you, the printer:** 6 Rock-Solid Strategies to Improve Your Next Direct Mail Campaign
- **Your content offer:** 10 Simple Tips for Effective Direct Mail (downloadable checklist)

## DECISION STAGE

- **Parker's thought process:** Working with a professional printer would help me maximize my direct mail campaign's results.
- **On-site content provided by you, the printer:** How Working with a Professional Printing Firm Tripled My Results (case study/testimonials)
- **Your content offer:** Request Your Free Custom Estimate/Order Now

This is a key milestone in your print buyers' journey.

Do your print buyers have the ability to place that order with you online the minute they've decided to purchase from you? Or, is there a giant no-way-to-order-online-from-you stumbling block in their way? Online ordering capabilities paired with your content, make this step in the journey as smooth and effortless as it can be.

## KEEPING PARKER IN THE FLYWHEEL

- **Parker's thought process:** None. His order is complete, and he's stopped thinking about you, unless...
- **Content provided by you, the printer:** Follow-up email that asks how his latest direct mail campaign went.
- **Your content offer to keep them in the flywheel cycle:** 3 Opportunities for Better Customer Follow-up (blog)

## Ready to Bring Your Print Buyers Full Circle?

As you've seen, being ready with the right content at the right time will not only maximize your sales, but it will ensure you satisfy the needs of your print buyers as well.

If your print buyers' journey could use some content and online ordering help, be sure to reach out to us below for help to build your library of content and online ordering resources instantly!

*This e-book is presented by:*

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