

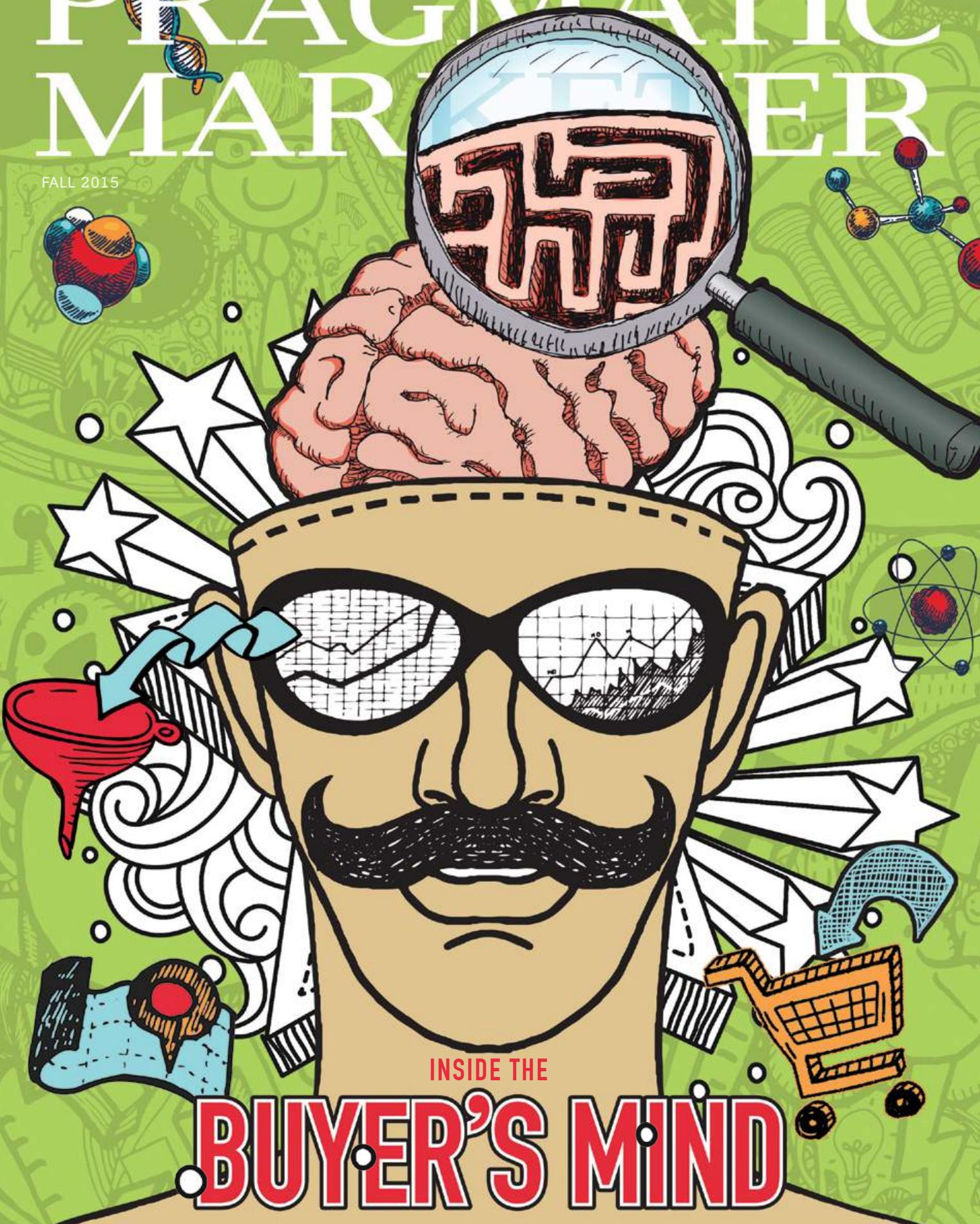
THE PRODUCT MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING AUTHORITY

# PRAGMATIC MARKETER

FALL 2015

INSIDE THE

## •BUYER'S MIND•



# GAIN THE HOUSE ADVANTAGE: THE BENEFITS OF MAPPING YOUR BUYER JOURNEY

BY  
**JUSTIN TOPLIFF**

KNOW HOW MANY PHASES  
ARE IN YOUR FUNNEL

**Y**OU'RE NOT COMMUNICATING IF YOU'RE marketing to someone you don't know. And in today's marketing world, it's easy to get caught up in tactics, things like content generation, social media, nurture campaigns, public relations and more. But if you're marketing to a buyer you don't know, none of these tactics will communicate (let alone resonate) with your prospect.

Buyers have radically changed their buying behavior. Information balances have shifted; vendors no longer own information, word-of-mouth travels like fire and buyers are highly educated. More than half of the buying process is now conducted without the help of a sales rep. In fact, many buyers consider sales reps unnecessary.

Changes in the buying process have also driven change in how companies market. Demand generation, inbound marketing and content marketing didn't exist a decade ago. They didn't need to. All of this makes it more critical to map buyer journeys to ensure coordinated, effective sales and marketing.

Mapping the buyer's journey is no easy task. However, the benefits pay dividends. Mapping yields an understanding of the steps and timeline associated with your buyer's decision process. Capturing these key actions, from start to finish, helps

you recognize the questions buyers ask themselves along the journey. This allows you to deliver the perfect message at the perfect time, overcoming objections before your buyer has a chance to bring them up. It's like cheating at a game. If you know the player's next move, there's no reason why you can't win.

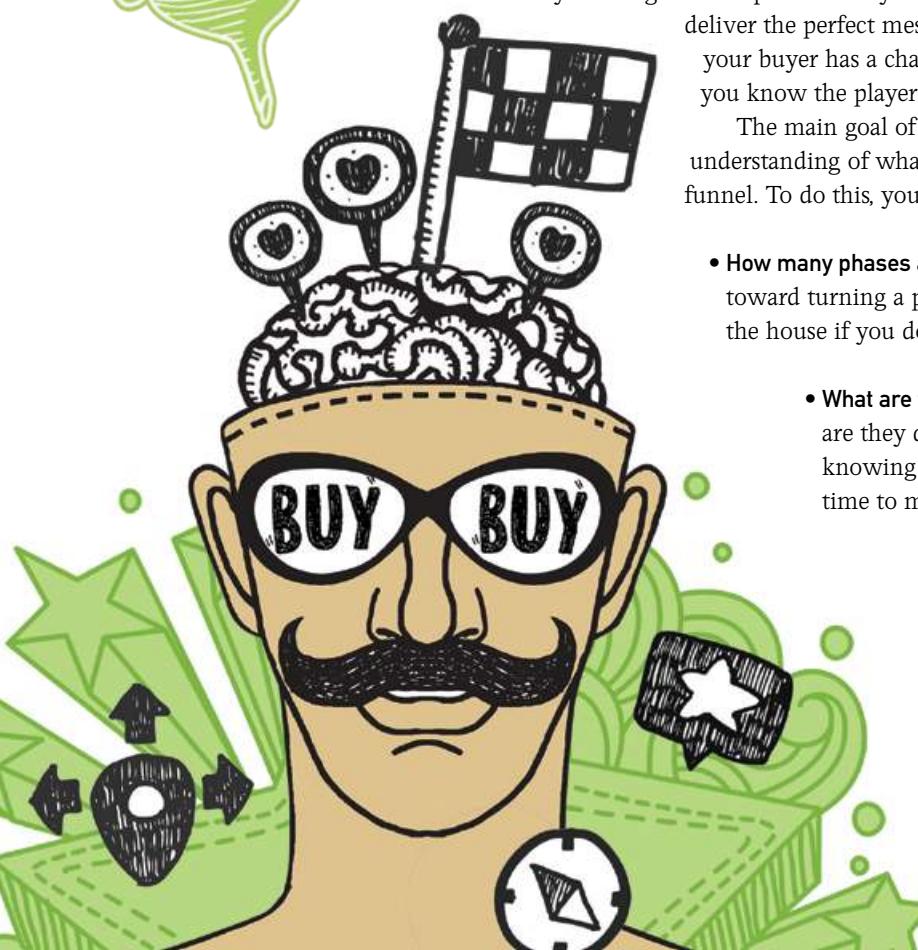
The main goal of mapping your buyer's journey is to gain a deeper understanding of what goes through your buyer's head in each stage of the funnel. To do this, you need to examine four areas.

- **How many phases are in your funnel?** What are they? Each is a milestone toward turning a prospect into a customer via a purchase. You can't beat the house if you don't know how many cards are in the deck.

- **What are the key actions the buyer takes in each phase?** What are they doing in each stage? What are they thinking? Without knowing that, you can't deliver the right message at the right time to move the buyer into the next stage.

- **What are the questions and objections in each stage?** To influence buyers to move into the next stage, you must get inside their heads. What questions are they asking themselves? Who is the ultimate decision-maker? What questions is the decision-maker asking? Your content and messaging should be aligned with the needs and objectives of your buyer in each stage.

WORD-OF-MOUTH  
TRAVELS LIKE FIRE





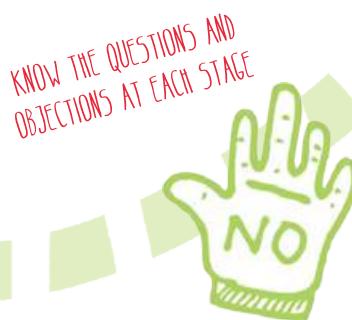
# YOUR BUYER'S PROCESS

- What are the graduation criteria for each stage of your funnel? What actions do buyers take that signal they're moving into the next stage of purchase? What actions trigger new needs that require you to deliver more answers?

Defining buyer stages and the key actions, questions, objections and graduation criteria for each will help you write a winning playbook. You'll have a deeper understanding of the buyer's journey, resulting in improved conversations with buyers, better branding and timely marketing campaigns specific to buyer groups. In short, you will hold all the cards.

But in order to win, you must put it into practice. Take action to discover your buyer's process and stay ahead of changes within it. Research your buyer voraciously. Surveys aren't enough. You must gain a deeper understanding through qualitative research. Aim for four customer interviews per month, per product. Take your qualitative findings and match them to quantitative data to form buyer personas. Share these with your sales team to help them engage more effectively with buyers and use it to audit your marketing content and timing.

Once you map your buyer's journey and audit your materials, make it an annual habit. If you don't update your strategy annually, chances are you're falling behind. Purchasing decisions evolve. New hurdles can arise from changes in policies, processes and technology. Who makes purchasing decisions, how they are made or why they are made can change. Without a clear definition of the buyer's journey, your marketing plan is a guess. Yet even with a clear definition, the buyer



journey can change faster than your marketing adapts. Remain vigilant.

Marketing and selling alongside awareness and understanding of your buyer's journey is a beautiful world of conversions. You find new ways to generate leads and nurture them over the course of the journey. You develop multichannel content strategies that deliver the right message at the right time to properly nurture buyers. Sales has better conversations, resulting in higher conversions. And you constantly discover new buying activities and create tools to satisfy them. Mapping your buyer's journey gives you the knowledge to have the house advantage. Be the casino, not the gambler. **PM**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Justin Topliff** is a product marketing manager at Infusionsoft, where he leads customer research, marketing efforts and new-product launches. He is also the founder of ProductMarketingSummit.com. Launching later this year, the summit will disseminate free knowledge from more than 40 of tech's top product marketers. Contact Justin at [justin.topliff@gmail.com](mailto:justin.topliff@gmail.com).

KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING AT EACH STAGE

## 5 RED FLAGS THAT INDICATE YOU NEED TO MAP YOUR BUYER'S JOURNEY

**1 You're struggling to find and produce leads.** If you don't know where to look for leads, there's a good chance you don't understand your buyer. No target market? Big problem. Not defining your target customer is a crippling blow to the total ROI of your marketing.

**2 Your message doesn't resonate with buyers.** Even if you know where to find leads, if the story you're telling isn't hooking them, are you sure you're marketing to the right buyer?

**3 You're unable to identify the distinct stages of your funnel.** Knowing what information a buyer needs during each stage ensures the right message gets delivered at the right time. Define each stage of your funnel and the criteria that graduates prospects into the next stage.

**4 Prospects who enter your funnel don't buy.** This is a sure sign that you're delivering the wrong message at the wrong time or whiffing altogether. Do you know the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of your buyer?

**5 You don't know why customers buy.** This is scarier than not knowing why prospects don't buy. It's indicative that you don't understand the key strengths of your product. And if that's the case, it's amazing your marketing has yielded any customers at all.

