

*A contribution to Unique Speaker Bureau's theme for January- "Setting up for Success." Lynn Baker a Professional Speaker on Customer Experience Trends & Insights, a Certified World Class Speaking Coach and successful business woman.*

## **SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS IN 2018**

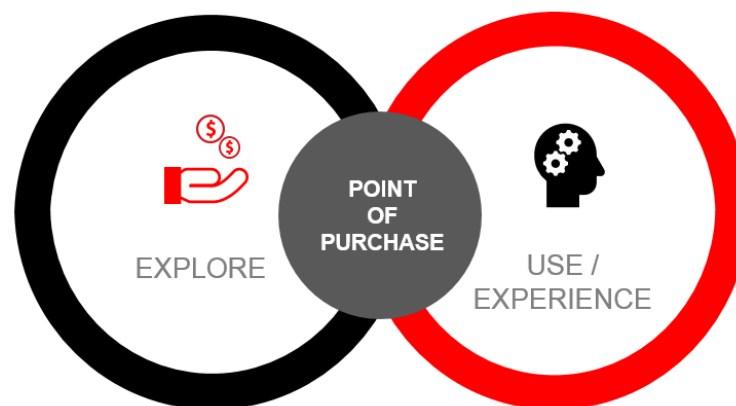
### **6 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES YOU MAY BE MISSING IN 2018!**

*Looking at the customer buying cycle through a Customer Experience lens, opens up a multitude of engagement opportunities, which in turn can create returning customers!*

Every person, in every business today is looking for something that sets them apart in highly competitive markets. Often, we're looking so hard, we forget to look in the most obvious places. Revisiting the customer buying cycle and looking at it through the lens of Customer Experience, considerably increases our opportunities to engage with customers, decrease churn and drive loyalty.

The customer buying cycle is often considered an outdated model, but this is far from the truth; it's not the cycle that's outdated, it's our perspective about it! Traditionally, sales and marketing efforts have focused primarily on the 'point of purchase' to engage with customers, but this perspective limits us to one engagement opportunity. The customer buying cycle clearly indicates that customers go through 3 key phases, first the 'explore' phase, second the 'point of purchase' and finally the 'use or experience phase, as indicated on the diagram below.

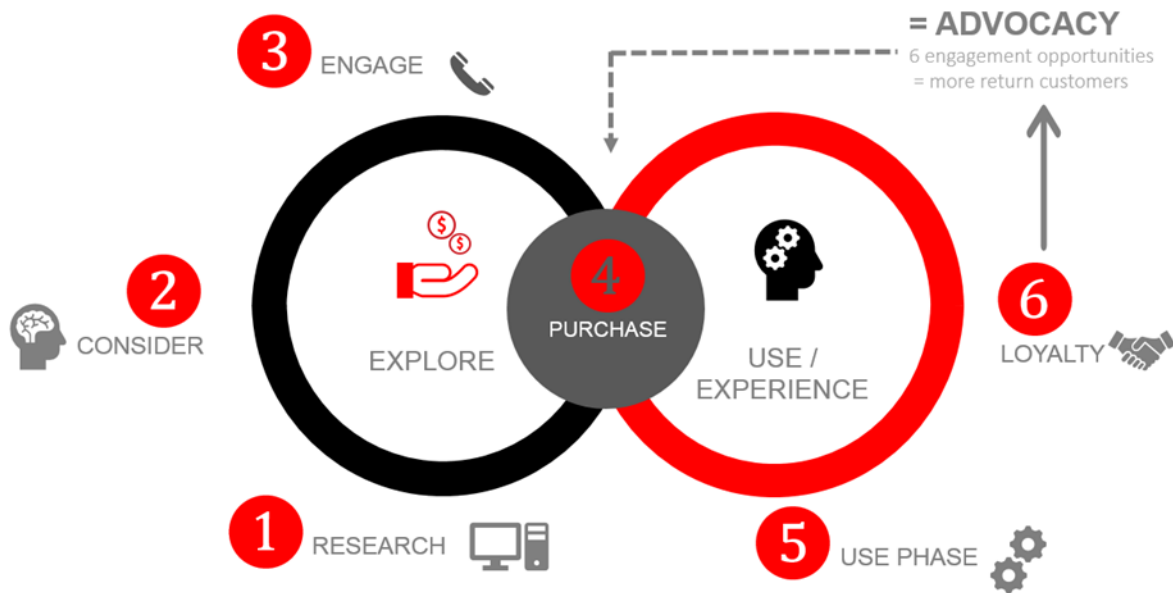
### **CUSTOMER BUYING CYCLE – CURRENT FOCUS IS ON THE POINT OF PURCHASE:**



If we change our perspective and look at the buying cycle through the eyes of a customer to scrutinize the journey they travel when considering purchasing our products and services, a multitude of engagement opportunities arise. The concept of Customer Experience is about identifying touch points where a customers' interact with a product or service; whether online, via email, retail outlet, call centre, social media channel or through a sales representative to uncover obstacles to a smooth experience and identify opportunities for improvement.

If we look at customer buying phases through the lens of customer experience, we find that there are in fact, at least 6 opportunities to engage during the buying cycle:-

## CUSTOMER BUYING CYCLE THROUGH A CX LENS, CREATES 6 OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE



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### EXPLORE PHASE

- 1 Research** Customers almost always research products and services before buying them, whether online or in-store. Take that journey yourself; find out what customers are seeing, feeling and finding when looking for your products / services. Check your SEO and key words, we all know that if we're not on the first page of Google, it is unlikely customers will click through to the next page and we risk losing them. Check all the details on your website to establish if there is sufficient information available to satisfy the common questions of customers considering your business for a forthcoming purchase.
- 2 Consideration** At this stage, customers are actively looking for information and pricing to validate why they should purchase your product or service; rather than that of your competitors. Investigate the channels they would use to find this information and ensure that the answer to every possible question is ready available. A pdf with answers to Frequently Asked Questions on your website is invaluable at this stage of the buying cycle. There is also a good chance that customers will engage with employees at this stage, so ensure that employee product knowledge is up to date and employee engagement programmes have been implemented, to ensure a positive outcome during the consideration process.
- 3 Engage** During this stage, customers engage with your business via an online option, a front-line sales person or by phone call to the company; ensure that online response forms are working, chat bots are available for online chats and front-line employees are adequately prepared with valuable knowledge and information that could strongly influence

customers at this stage. Creating a strong 'call to action' or sense of urgency at this point has proven too convert many prospects into sales.

## **PURCHASE PHASE**

- ④ **Purchase** The 'point of purchase' is where the all-important role of efficient and effective customer service comes in and most companies and staff are well aware of the importance of delivering exceptional service at this stage. From a retail perspective, the point of purchase provides an ideal opportunity to collect customer information, but to date, this opportunity has not been taken advantage of as much as it could be. Retailers would be well advised to explore the opportunities to engage at this stage, because if customers purchase and leave, it eliminates the opportunity to re-engage and encourage them to return. B2B should use this opportunity to confirm client details are correct on the master database and design targeted and relevant communications to these clients on a regular basis in the future to increase retention.

## **USE OR EXPERIENCE PHASE**

- ⑤ **Use or Experience** Once customers have purchased a product or made use of a service, explore opportunities to re-engage with them either via phone, email or social media to establish how smooth the purchase experience was and how the product or service is serving them. After sales engagement presents a unique opportunity to timeously identify and correct any problems that may arise; as well as build stronger relationships with customers. If relevant procedures are not put in place that alert the business to problems a customer may be experiencing soon after purchase, they run the risk that customers will detach and disappear, which is a costly mistake.

- ⑥ **Loyalty** Many B2C businesses are successfully capitalising on the opportunity to increase customer retention by implementing loyalty programmes, but not nearly enough. In B2B situations, loyalty is created by developing relationships of trust and following through on promises made. After sales calls to establish levels of client satisfaction are a critical component of establishing trust and driving loyalty, but many businesses are still not capitalising on this opportunity. It's quite simple really, just ask yourself why your customers should come back and how you could influence them to do so.

**LYNN BAKER** is a Professional Speaker on Customer Experience Trends & Insights, a Certified World Class Speaking Coach and successful business woman.

During her varied business career, Lynn has worked for large corporates both locally and internationally, with a specific focus on Sales, Marketing and Customer Service. In 2006, she attended a Disney Quality Service course at Disneyland in Florida and implemented many of their Customer Service philosophies at Montecasino Corporate Events in Johannesburg, which she ran for 10 years.

In 2010, she returned to her passion of Public Speaking and completed a course with World Class Speakers in the USA, where she qualified as the only 'Certified World Class Speaking Coach' in Africa.

Lynn now combines her passion of Public Speaking and Customer Service by delivering fast paced and fascinating presentations on the trends and insights into the fascinating concept of Customer Experience.

*For more information on the Customer Experience conference presentations and Customer Journey Mapping workshops delivered by Lynn Baker, please visit [www.uniquespeakerbureau.com](http://www.uniquespeakerbureau.com) / Tel # 011 465 4410*