

The Path To Purchase Model

(Explained in dating advice by Taylor Swift)



Sure, Taylor Swift has a collection of six Grammy Awards. And yes, her most recent album's opening sales were the highest recorded in a decade. When she was 11 she high-fived Jay-Z at a Philadelphia 76ers game. She was even on CSI. So, after dating a Jonas Brother, Twilight's favorite werewolf, John Mayer, Jake Gyllenhaal, and finally Conor Kennedy, son of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., we thought the country star could throw some dating advice our way.

The path-to-purchase model is usually explained in a linear fashion. But we know that shoppers don't think in straight lines. If the new iPhone maps app has taught us one thing it is that there may very well be a direct and blatantly easy way to get where you are going, but that doesn't mean that somebody won't knock you onto back roads and U-turns to get there. So linear? It just doesn't exist anymore.

With the ability to carry a computer that's the size of half of a Pop-Tart, we research everything we do, buy, see, hear, read. It's easier than thinking for yourself, really. This constant access to information makes it more important than ever for retail marketers to make sure they are delivering the same message across all platforms. So, with instantaneous access to all the knowledge your fingertips can click, you better have a digital and social communications plan from the get go. When customers go searching for info about you, the content that YOU wrote is the best there is. Otherwise it would be like Taylor Swift without all the hits: just plain wrong.

These are the 5 (nonlinear) steps to the path-to-purchase model, explaining shopper behavior. What gets them from step 1 to step 5 is a lot like dating. Trial and error, approval and denial, I don't like you, I like him. We'll let Taylor take it from here.



1

"Cory's eyes are like a jungle, when he smiles it's like a radio"

Notice it.

SUCCESS! That guy you have been checking out just winked at you from across the mall food court. This is the start of the process, when a customer becomes aware that you exist. Some type of stimulus causes your customers to find you. Maybe they saw an ad on the television. Or maybe it was printed on the side of a bus passing by. However they find you, they find you. And they probably think you are a cute 20-something celebutante.

OMG how cute is he?!

Research it.

So far so good, but you need to find out who this guy really is to make sure you aren't setting yourself up for a John-Mayer public breakup and endless pints of Ben and Jerry's therapy. This is the moment of truth. You can't hide from this. 81% of consumers do pre-purchasing research before taking the leap to buy.* This is not just true of consumer goods. They also look for reviews on services and ratings. You want to drive your product to the top to stand up against the competition.

2

"His love is like driving an old Maserati down a dead-end street"

Research has become the most important step for any purchase model. It's where all the awards are shown off, as well as the dirty little secrets. You want to influence the consumer to take the next step to actually purchase the product. Consumers will compare everything here. Maybe his love should be more like driving a new Beamer and less like a Maserati. But then you found out that a Maserati comes in your favorite color. Either way, if you are a high-end car company (or any company for that matter) you probably don't want potential customers to go searching for you and find content written by somebody that isn't you. Make sure you've got it all together on the web before they even get to this step.

Are you compatible? Find out about him.



3



"Drop everything now. Meet me in the pouring rain"

Buy it.

Alright he passed the parent test and you love his dog. Now you think he might be a good match for what you're looking for so you're going to take a chance and go on a date. The purchase driving worked! This is where the decision to buy is made, where the consideration is turned into a clear definitive "yes" between the consumer and you.

Make it official!

4

Evaluate it.

This stage is where the shopper will either approve or deny the product or decision to purchase

He's a keeper!

Accept It. Thumbs way up! You two have been going steady for a while and there's been nothing but good vibes and happiness between you two. For a company, this is exactly what you have been looking for. The consumer is satisfied and hopefully will support the brand or product that they love. Job well done.

"You were the best thing that's ever been mine"



Reject It

Thumbs down? There is no such thing as a thumbs down. Unless you are upside down doing a handstand, therefore actually giving a thumbs up.

He's a loser!

"We are never ever ever getting back together"



"We are never ever ever getting back together"



5



Talk about it.

You start posting lovey mushy pictures of you two on Facebook for everyone to see. This is where the consumer will engage in social media to voice their opinions, causing your product to either gain demand or lose it. Make sure you know what your customers are saying about you so that you can respond when appropriate or make changes to your product to be more consumer-friendly.

"You go talk to your friends, talk to my friends, talk to me"

Girl-talk time!



*SheSpeaks Shopper Marketing 3.0 Survey; n = 3,600 respondents