

# Inbound Marketing & The Path to Purchase

**Customer Journey? Sales Funnel? Either way, it's all about the right tactics at the right stage.**

This graphic superimposes the Customer (or Buyer) Journey and the Sales Funnel over a hypothetical path to purchase, and shows the channels and tools that are most important at each stage.

While they can seem interchangeable, there is one key difference between the Customer Journey and the Sales Funnel: the Journey sees things from the buyer's point-of-view, and the Funnel takes the seller's perspective.

Which one you use is a matter of context. The Funnel is useful as an indicator of timing or probability in a sales setting, while the Journey is useful for 'getting inside your target customer's head.'

SALES FUNNEL

1

ATTRACTION

2

ENGAGEMENT

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

A

AWARENESS

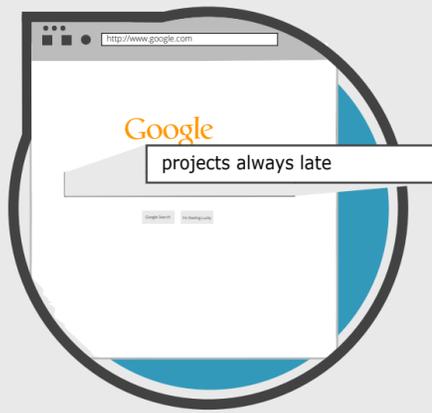
B

CONSIDERATION



A potential customer recognizes a problem or opportunity.

CHANNELS & TOOLS



...and turns to Google to conduct a vendor-neutral search for solutions.

SEO



The search leads to helpful tips on a project management software vendor's blog.

blog

3

CONVERSION

4

CLOSE

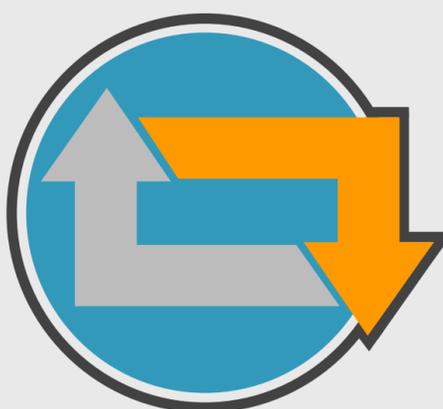
C

DECISION



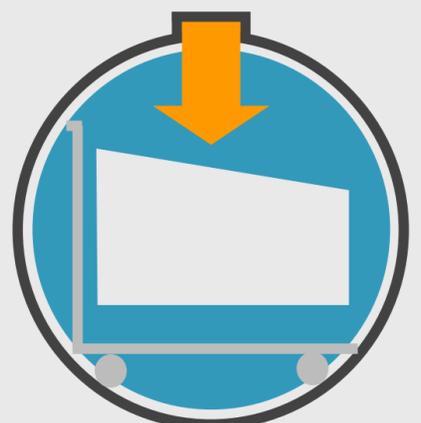
The prospect provides contact information in exchange for access to an ebook on estimating complex projects.

premium content



The prospect has become a lead. The vendor can now use data to nurture the relationship.

CRM automation social media email



The lead has formed a connection with the vendor through content and lead nurturing and buys the software.

It doesn't end here. The tools and channels used in lead nurturing help maintain the relationship and enable brand advocacy.