

## WHERE IS YOUR CUSTOMER IN THE BUYING CYCLE?

Effective selling comes from understanding how and why your customers make purchasing decisions and creating value at each stage of their buying process. By understanding these stages and how to influence them, you'll find it easier to form practical marketing strategies that move sales forward.

### CHANGES OVER TIME

At this point, prospects have not yet recognized a need for change. Sellers (and their marketing departments) can help jump start the buying process by delivering provocative and compelling prospecting messages that help buyers appreciate potential challenges and opportunities.

### RECOGNITION OF NEEDS

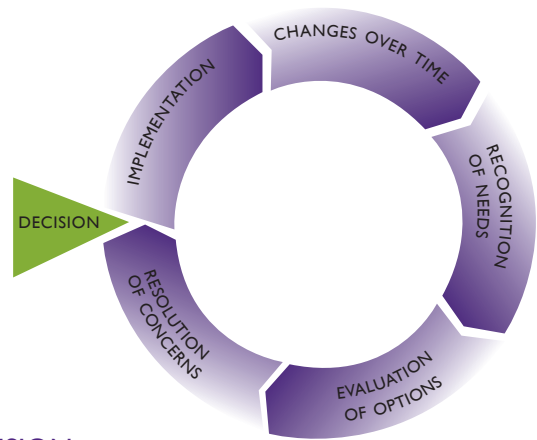
During this stage, potential buyers become dissatisfied with their existing situation and look to solve a problem or exploit an opportunity. The role of the seller is to uncover the source of dissatisfaction and increase the buyer's perception of its intensity and urgency.

### EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

Once they've agreed on the need for change, buyers begin considering alternatives for resolving their dissatisfaction. Here, the seller's job is to help buyers understand why their organization's products and services are the best solution to meet their needs. The excellent seller will influence the criteria the buyer uses to evaluate competing vendors in his or her favor.

### RESOLUTION OF CONCERNS

Next, buyers tentatively select a vendor, but before signing the contract they will assess any associated risks and consequences. Sellers need to uncover these concerns or fears and help resolve them.



### DECISION

At this point, the deal is agreed upon and the contract is signed.

### IMPLEMENTATION

After the sale is made, the customer begins to introduce, test and install the seller's solution. Buyers expect to receive the value promised by the seller and to realize a return on their investment. The seller's responsibility is to help the customer adopt the solution and overcome any implementation challenges.

### CHANGES OVER TIME

The cycle does not end just because the customer is implementing a solution. Inevitably, there will be changes in the account—contacts may turn over, company strategy may change, reorganizations or mergers may occur. Each of these changes offers opportunities for the seller to strengthen the relationship by helping buyers anticipate and address additional problems and opportunities.

I to I Marketing can provide the critical feedback data you need to understand where each prospect is in the buying cycle. This information becomes the foundation for establishing a long term relationship with the prospect that ultimately concludes in a sale.

Learn more about I to I Marketing by visiting [www.strategicguru.com](http://www.strategicguru.com) or call 919.459.4200.

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