

# Successful customer engagement management demands planning, personalisation and optimisation



By [Bianca Quinn-Diavastos](#)

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In a digital world, marketers have access to the tools and channels that allow us to engage with customers and prospects in increasingly personalised and relevant ways.

But to harness these touch points in a manner that will deliver the best possible return on investment, we must map out customer journeys for our target markets and then gather data that allows us to understand each customers' preferences, needs and behaviours.

I'd like to show, by means of a practical example, how marketers can smoothly transition a customer through the various phases of the journey - awareness, consideration, engagement, conversion, retention and advocacy. This will illustrate the power of the tools we have at our disposal as well as the importance of creating integrated digital strategies that use each tool and channel to serve the customer's personal needs at a given time and in a particular context.

Our hypothetical customer for this article is a mountain-biking and outdoors enthusiast called Mike. He's a 38-year old father of two and a sales manager earning a fairly decent income. Aside from reading general news sites and watching sports on the TV, he spends a lot of his time browsing specialist mountain biking sites.

## Understanding the persona

As an aside, creating customer personas such as the one I have for Mike is a great place to start with a customer engagement study. However, your understanding of who your customers are will evolve as you gather more data about them and build a clearer picture of who they are and how they behave.

So, imagine you are running a specialist bike store. To reach Mike for the first time and let him know you exist (or remind him of your existence), you might place a few display adverts in the sports and leisure section of a big portal or with specialist bike shops. He might see your ad for a helmet, and think, "Hey, I need a new one."

Later during the day, Mike will have a moment to consider his helmet purchase, but might not remember the name of your shop. He'll do a Google search. If you have invested in Google pay per click ads and invested some effort into search engine optimisation, he'll find your store easily.

The next step is the moment of truth. Mike will click through to your website and the user experience he finds there will determine whether he eventually converts or not. If you are going to invest in digital marketing advertising, it thus is

important to make sure that your website is attractive, easy to navigate and responsive (designed for desktop and mobile browsing).

## Hello, stranger

At this point, you won't know much about Mike besides the search query that brought him to your site and, perhaps, his exposure to your display advertising. You could perhaps infer that he is an avid cyclist. His presence on your website is an opportunity to learn more, even if he doesn't register or buy something straight away.

You could, for example, ask him to sign up for your email newsletter or to download your app if you have one. We could also remarket the helmet to him, for example, targeting him with advertising on Facebook. With each interaction, we build a more detailed profile of his needs and behaviour.

Eventually, all the marketing activity pays off with Mike registering to shop on the website or via the app. He buys the helmet he has been eyeing, and we begin a hopefully long relationship with him. We now have a detailed user profile of Mike, how to contact him, and ways to reconnect with him. We have also seen what his interests are and which items he likes in our store.

With that information, we can start enticing Mike to shop with us more often. We could see, for example, that he has had a R25,000 mountain bike in his wish list for a few weeks. Could he be shopping around for the best price or is he perhaps nervous to buy such an expensive item online?

We could send him a 5% discount voucher through our marketing automation tools to give him an incentive to visit our real-world shop. He visits one Saturday, and gets a notification via the app that the bike is available in store. Thanks to [iBeacon](#) technology, the sales associate in the store could get a notification that Mike is in the shop, along with information about his browsing history.

## From customer to brand advocate

Mike leaves the store a happy man and shares a snap of his new bike on Instagram and Twitter. Because we're monitoring social media, we could congratulate him on his purchase. If he has any questions or complaints, we can quickly respond. And if he has any feedback, we can act on.

As this example shows, digital marketing allows us to rethink the ways in which we engage with our customers, striving to become more relevant and efficient with every engagement. By mapping out a customer engagement journey, we can interact with customers in a highly personalised manner. We can today achieve the scale of mass marketing, thanks to the reach of the Internet, along with the intimacy of one to one marketing, thanks to customer data.

## ABOUT BIANCA QUINN-DIAVASTOS

Bianca Quinn-Diavastos is the managing director of the digital marketing agency Jetweb - "Digital on Demand". She has worked in media and publishing since 2006, and has gained a diverse range of experience spanning the marketing and strategic digital industries.

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