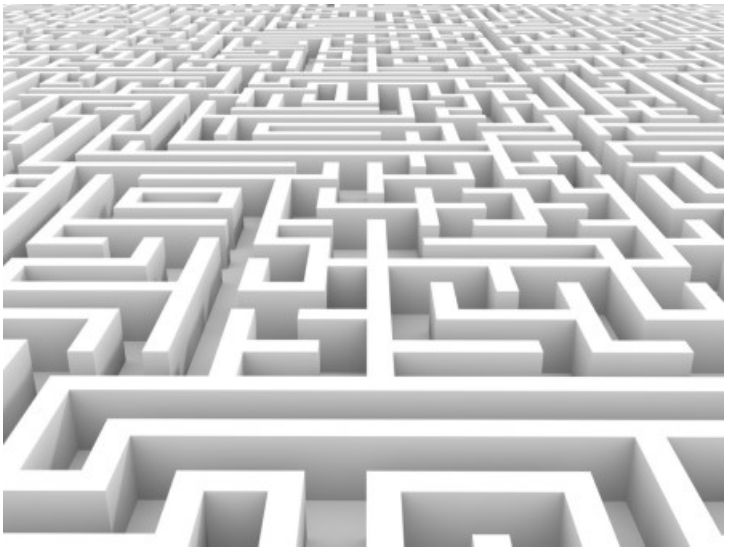
How to market complex propositions well



When marketing a higher value and inherently complex product or solution, the buying cycle tends to be longer and less linear. There are also multiple decision-makers to engage, often in senior roles. Highly-complex propositions such as these require a unique and strategic marketing approach. The communication channels, skill sets and processes you leverage should differ substantially from those used in a more straightforward, transactional marketing scenario.

When a value proposition is complex, buyers need more time to research their options and build confidence. They tend to connect and re-connect through various channels: exploring thought leadership content, joining social media conversations, watching demo videos and webinars, and conversing with sales reps over the phone, among other platforms.

All channels—including SEO, paid channels, social media, content marketing and voice contact—need to work together in a highly coordinated and customer-relevant manner. This means that marketing, sales and other relevant functions need to be closely aligned, supporting each other in creating an effective and engaging customer experience across all touchpoints.

Also, given the seniority of many decision-makers, you need to be confident you have the right marketing skill sets in place to ensure all interactions with customers, whether in the form of content or conversations, are pitched at the right level and deliver value.

When marketing complex propositions, here are five factors for success:

How to market complex propositions well

1. A clear value proposition

Your value proposition must be clearly defined and supported by lucid messaging that aligns closely with customer needs and the language your buyers use day-to-day. To build this value proposition, you need insight into your customers' pain points and the corresponding product/service benefits. You also need a solid understanding of relevant keywords, jargon and industry regulations, so your messaging sounds genuine. Make sure you have the capacity to adapt this messaging to suit each different type of decision-maker in the buying team.

2. Cross-functional integration

Complex propositions require commitment and support from across the organisation, including marketing, sales and senior management teams, as well as technical or sector specialists. These internal and external teams need a collaboration framework that cuts across people, systems and processes with an overarching unified strategy. This makes it possible to manage seamless communication and information sharing between all parties, providing everyone with real-time access to customer data and insight —and a single source of truth on your customer.

3. A customer-focused channel strategy

When selecting channels, it's critical to be aware of the overall customer experience and ensure customer-centricity throughout. While it makes sense to focus on virtual communication platforms during times of social distancing, it's essential not to lose the human connection with your customers.

As Mary Shea, Principal Analyst at Forrester, puts it:
"As B2B buyers and sellers increase their reliance on digital activities, tools, and routes, however – they crave deep, human connections. In fact, during a time when many feel socially isolated, empathetic and highly tailored interactions are now more valued than ever."

4. A consolidated content approach

To ensure a cohesive customer experience, communication on all channels must be consistent. All marketing collateral must be relevant, with the appropriate messages being shared at the right time. To get this right, your content and communication strategy must be informed by the insights gathered during real interactions with prospects. This will allow you to create a scenario where messaging matches reality, creating a logical customer journey.

5. The capacity to build trust

In order to achieve all these goals, you need to select your marketing platforms carefully.

This may mean looking further than your usual approach and exploring new channels. And the platforms you do select must be leveraged cohesively – with all interactions orchestrated for consistency and relevance in the context of the wider decision-making journey.

Each channel has a unique role to play. For example, LinkedIn offers excellent targeting capabilities, while email is effective for more detailed written communications (provided these are tailored to each recipient). Webinars and podcasts remain an effective method for delivering content and reinforcing your proposition at various stages of the buying journey, from panel discussions that take on a more thought leadership style to live product demos or reviews. And instant messaging can be used when prospects require simple, instantaneous feedback.

When it comes to building one-to-one connections with decision-makers, nothing is as effective as human interaction, including voice contact. Voice is one channel that maps well across multiple goals and can add value at any stage of the pipeline. **Here's why:**

The value of voice

- ### It's personal

  Live conversations create a level of trust and understanding that is essential to high-value, complex B2B propositions. Voice contact enables you to tailor your interactions and connect with each decision-maker on a personal level. Human-to-human interaction also provides deep insight to support lead qualification and inform approaches throughout the buying journey.

- ### It offers agility at every stage

  Voice contact is an extremely flexible channel that works across the whole decision making unit, adapting well to suit the length and complexity of each unique decision-making process. It can target any stage of the pipeline, including: cold-calling to identify and engage the right decision-maker contacts; qualifying and nurturing warm contacts through to sales-ready leads; building relationships and guiding buyers through the final stages of purchase with a consultative approach that delivers high value outcomes. Those outcomes could, for example, include appointments with C-suite DMCs, demos with Heads of IT, or bringing together cross-functional department heads on a single call or video conference.

- ### It builds insight

  The rapport achieved through personal contact builds layers of insight to inform the entire buying process. Insight is critical to power and steer your approach in this type of complex scenario. It's impossible to build relationships, understand needs, present the right solutions and secure high value sales without a solid and rich foundation of understanding.

It supports thorough qualification

Additionally, the insight delivered by voice contact, along with the inherent flexibility of this channel, enable you to prioritise the right opportunities for complex high value propositions early on, so you can bring these to the top of the pile and give them the level of attention they deserve. By focusing relevant resources on opportunities that are the right fit and personalising your approach, you can drive them through the purchase process in the most optimal way.

However, to access these benefits, you need to have several key elements in place.

Firstly, in order to market complex propositions well through the voice channel, you need inside sales reps who are mature, experienced, articulate, knowledgeable and confident. Ideally these individuals should have relevant industry knowledge to create a credible impression.

Secondly, you need the ability to identify and engage with senior decision-makers who are generally time-poor and difficult to reach. You therefore need a sound strategy for getting through the gatekeepers. And when you do have an opportunity to engage these senior prospects, your sales specialists need to do so confidently and ensure the interaction is relevant—in order to build trust and nurture relationships with the individuals that matter most.

Thirdly, you need to take the right approach. A complex proposition requires a consultative, solution sales approach that is informed with a rich pipeline of insights.

If you don't have the requisite resources in-house to pull all this off, it may make sense to outsource to a trusted partner with experience in this area.

Why partner with us?

If you are hesitant about whether your proposition can be marketed over the phone, take a look at some of our many customer success stories. A true voice specialist since 1990, our online library illustrates the deep and broad experience we've gained marketing highly complex and sometimes niche propositions. These include advanced engineering and technological innovations, financial services and fintech, healthcare and pharma solutions, and many other highly specialised and disruptive propositions.

We provide a large pool of skilled, experienced, ISM (Institute of Sales Management) trained sales development reps, including native language speakers to support global engagements. And, if you are working in a regulated industry, we can also ensure you remain compliant. We are authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), are PCI compliant and provide 100%call recordings. Our accreditations include ISO9001 quality management and ISO27001 information security management.

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Hopefully this article will have inspired you to think a bit more about telemarketing and the value it can bring to your business. For more information on our services visit our website, or give us a call to discuss your requirements and how The Telemarketing Company can help support your sales and marketing strategy.

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