

BUILDER

DIGITAL MARKETING 102: CREATING AWARENESS

How to connect your brand with home buyers and to begin to influence their decision-making process earlier in the customer journey.

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Part 2: Understanding the Phases of the Home Buying Journey – Awareness



The start of the customer journey. The top of the sales funnel. It's [where the buying cycle starts](#) and the first opportunity that consumers have to interact with your brand. Some home buyers may already know your brand and some may not. Some may be looking for specific information related to new homes, but not necessarily one of your homes or communities – at least not yet.

This phase of the home buyer journey presents multiple excellent opportunities to connect your brand with these home buyers and to begin to [influence their decision-making process](#) earlier in the customer journey. However, these aren't "selling" opportunities. Rather, they are instances by which to create interest and engagement with home buyers.

Google calls these "Assisting Interactions" that build awareness, consideration, and intent earlier in the home buyer journey or purchase funnel. Content that attracts, entertains and engages home buyers and that fits the context of their journey across channels goes a long way in generating interest and connecting with home buyers at the start of the sales cycle.

Since generic search terms like “home for sale,” or “buy new home” constitute 72% of all searches, it’s clear that brand-related searches aren’t even being considered by most home buyers at this stage of their journey. In fact, only 17% of searches are brand-only. Furthermore, according to Think Real Estate with Google, 75% of home buyers who start with a generic search and end with a generic search convert (that is, fill out an online form or request information) as opposed to 40% that start their search with a brand name.

Message/Content

a. Educate:

- New vs Used – Demonstrate the value and savings of a new home over a used one.
- Rent vs Own – Demonstrate the value and savings owing a home instead of renting.
- Establish Wants and Needs – Help determine the wants and needs of home buyers.

PAID GENERIC SEARCH



- Choose Where to Live – Educate home buyers on the livability of your communities.

REFERRAL



- Infographics – That help explain the home buying journey and the various attributes of buying a new home.

b. Content for calls-to-action (CTA):

- Create account.

- Newsletter sign-up.
- Online chat.

Channels



a. SEO

- Organic search results via SEO, local search matches, images, video, keyword optimized press releases and RSS/XML feeds to news channels.

b. PPC

- Generic search keywords and terms.

c. Blog influencers and other referring sites

- 3rd party feeds to real estate sites, bloggers, news channels and industry-specific sources.

These specific channels may result in different outcomes for your brand, depending on when home buyers interact with each one. In this beginning part of the journey, these channels help home buyers develop an awareness of your brand.

In Part 3, we're going to outline the 2nd component of the home buyer journey: Consideration. Now that more prospective home buyers are aware of our brand – because we're connecting to them further up-stream with informative and valuable content – we stand a greater chance of influencing their journey and experiences along the way toward their outcome. As part of their brand consideration mix now, how can we help home buyers, when looking into different brands? Our next article in this series centers on the Consideration phase of the home buyer journey. We'll demonstrate how to create next-level engagement that further educates and inspires home buyers.