

BUILDER

DIGITAL MARKETING 104: INTENT

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Part 4: Understanding the Phases of the Home Buying Journey – Intent



On the fence? So is your home buyer in this phase of their journey. It's come down to their top choices and this is where your brand's competitive differentiators (and maybe an incentive) will make or break the deal. They are [focused on researching and engaging](#) with their top-choice home builders. Here is where your brand needs to clearly stand apart from the others.

Content at this phase of the journey should highlight the [reasons why](#) your brand is a better fit for home buyers. From energy-efficiency and builder process, to personalization and warranty; this is where home buyers are making decisions about the brands that truly connect with them, provide value, and deliver inspiration.

By this time, home buyers are most likely on your email list and should be receiving content that helps them to shape their expectations about your homes and communities and how your competitive differentiators add even more value.

Google calls these instances “Last Interactions” that act as the last points of contact, prior to a purchase decision. *(Editor's note: In the old media world, a similar concept, from media-planning expert Erwin Ephron, was called "recency," which basically meant reaching the consumer right before or as a purchase decision was made.)*

Creating content that helps educate and inspire and that fits the context of home buyers’ journeys across appropriate channels directly helps home buyers review and decide on which brands to focus on, during the intent phase of the sales cycle.

Message/Content

a. Inspire/Differentiate;

- Builder vs Builder – Demonstrate why your homes and communities are better than the competition.
- Personalization – Inspire home buyers with personalization offerings.
- Location – Show how your communities are connected to jobs, schools, shopping, culture and transportation.
- Price Point – Leverage the price points of your communities and homes.
- Energy-efficiency – Clarify how your energy-efficient homes reduce the cost of home ownership.
- Builder Process – Explain how your builder process enhances the home building process and experience.
- Warranty – Define your warranty process in basic terms that will make home buyers feel comfortable and have trust in your brand.
- Floor plan options, amenities, etc – Engage home buyers with deep information and interactive content.
- Post-purchase Value-added Services – Package and promote any services and/or

offerings that will help create additional value after the sale.

- Assessments, Configurators, Polls – Help create affinity with home buyers by giving them the tools they need to make their decisions.
- User-generated content – Leverage appropriate content created by users to help create brand evangelists and viral activity.
- [Mobile](#) app/mobile experience – Ensure content is consumable via mobile devices.

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

- Create account.
- Newsletter sign-up.
- Online chat.
- Schedule appointment/On-site tour.

Channels

a. Social media platforms

- Create engagement with home buyers. Likes, click-thrus, shares, etc, interact with users and leverage user-generated content.

b. Social media ads

- Post coupons/specials/add-ons and other incentives.

c. Display ads

- Evoking achievement and lifestyle.

d. Remarketing (with incentive)

- Focusing on value and competitive differentiators.

e. PPC Brand – relative

- Brand-centric, community and/or differentiator-specific contextual ads.

f. Email

- Community and division-specific emails, highlight blog content and differentiating and inspiring content, with proper CTA's leading to conversion processes.

g. Direct, as a result of brand awareness

- Including website URL in offline marketing (i.e, flyers, billboards, brochures, etc).
- Encouraging visitors to bookmark the website.



These specific channels (left) may result in different outcomes for your brand, depending on when home buyers interact with each one. In this middle part of the journey, these channels help create inspiration, desire and cultivate interest from home buyers engaging with your brand.

Next, we'll be going into the final component of the home buyer journey: Decision. It's down to the wire. We've clearly demonstrated our competitive advantages, we've also demonstrated value in our brand and we've created a relationship with our prospective home buyers, whereby we've educated, inspired and informed them. What's left to do? Will they now buy a new home from us? Our final post in this series will discuss some tail-end actions that home builders can employ to help move prospective home buyers toward a purchase and create advocates for your brand.