

crownpeak

THE
ULTIMATE
MARKETER'S
GUIDE
TO MAPPING
YOUR BUYER'S
JOURNEY

And How to Influence Your Prospective
Customer's Decision at Each Stage

In recent years, changes in consumer behavior have caused a paradigm shift in the buyer's journey, adding complexity to the approach marketers must take to reach prospects.

Historically, customers relied largely on brands to provide them with answers to their problems. Today, buyers are becoming increasingly independent when it comes to understanding their pain points and finding solutions.

These days, once you've been contacted by a new customer, they're well-informed and often they've already made a decision. They may have questions about logistics, but they're not looking for recommendations. It's sometimes even too late in the process to change their mind.

This shift from depending on human touchpoints to sell products, to relying on digital touchpoints to influence purchase decisions makes it increasingly challenging for brands.

The financial services industry in particular is seeing more customers move away from requesting assistance from a financial advisor or banker (the human touch), to finding it on their own (self-guided).

The inherent risk of the new pathway is that your relationship with potential customers often begins (and sometimes ends) before you even have a chance to make a case for your brand or product. That's because they have already formed opinions of what they need and who is best suited to provide it to them.

➔ **HOW CAN
YOU THROW
YOUR HAT
INTO THE RING
EARLIER?**



How can you get prospective customers to consider doing business with your company when they're not reaching out to you?

THIS IS HOW:

By mapping the customer journey and making sure your company is in a position to nurture prospects along the way with relevant content no matter where they are in the funnel.





How to Convert Prospects to Customers At Each Stage in the Buyer's Journey

Only by understanding the steps that make up your buyer's journey, can you routinely convert prospects to customers.

This instructional guide is intended to help you **map your customer's journey from consideration to purchase**, and stay top-of-mind along the way utilizing relevant content.

We've simplified the process to include 3 steps:



1

Identify and Develop Customer Persona



2

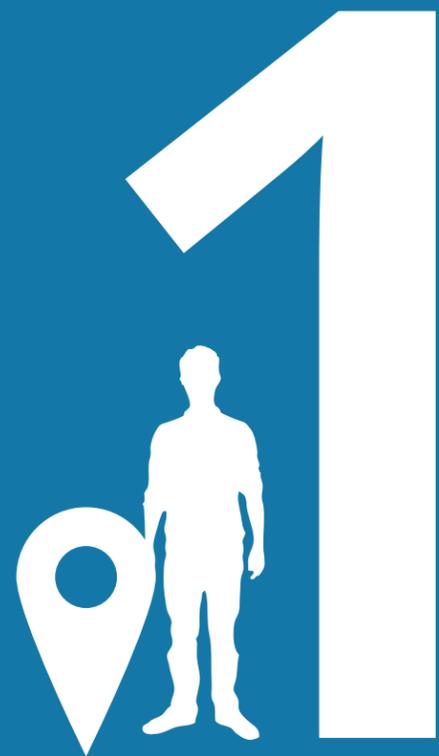
Map the Selected Persona's Buying Journey



3

Determine How to Influence the Buyer During Each Stage of the Journey





Determine How to Influence the Buyer During Each Stage of the Journey

There are multiple journeys a potential customer can take, depending on the individual's needs, demographic and behavioral characteristics.

The only way to determine the journey your customer will take is by figuring out who your customers are, and creating personas for them.

As an example, we're going to develop a single persona of a fairly typical customer shopping for a retirement plan.

We'll name this persona **Family Man**.

You can use this framework and repeat the process until you've covered the most common customer profiles for your customer.

PERSONA

FAMILY MAN



ATTRIBUTES

- Head-of-household
- Career professional, white-collar
- College-educated
- Married with minor children
- Between 35 and 50 years of age
- Average household income between \$125k and \$250k
- Technologically savvy

TAKEAWAYS

Because **Family Man** is technologically savvy and uses a computer at work, he prefers self-guided research, and will only reach out to a company representative if he has a logistical question or is ready to purchase.

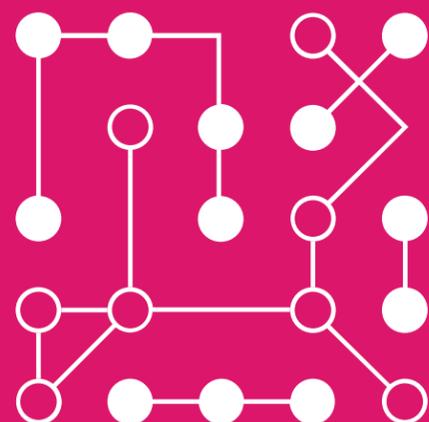
With a family and career, Family Man is busy. He will conduct his research on-the-go, late at night and when he has brief breaks during the day. Therefore, he'll respond best to information that's mobile-friendly, easy to find, and straightforward, no fluff.

GOALS

A comfortable retirement income comparable to his family's current lifestyle

To determine the right balance between his retirement contributions and saving for his childrens' college educations

2



Map the Selected Persona's Buying Journey

Every buyer's journey includes multiple touchpoints, some human, some digital. The mix is informed by a combination of the persona and the product being marketed.

If you research "buyer's journey" online, you'll see different iterations of the same concept. There is no single right way to create a customer journey, so you can adopt this one or find another one that works best for your particular situation. This is simply meant to get you started.

THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

Awareness of Need
& Interest in Solution

Research Solutions

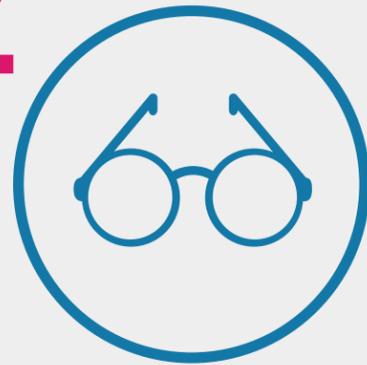
Evaluate Provider

Select Provider

1



2



3



4



Now that we know more about **Family Man**, we can begin to map his buying journey.

Here's the template we'll be using, which will start to take shape as we move through each step. The section of the buyer's journey titled "How to Influence" is where we'll eventually add tactics on how to reach this customer at each stage of his journey.

	 Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution	 Research Solutions	 Evaluate Providers	Select Provider
Human Touches				
Digital Touches				
How to Influence				

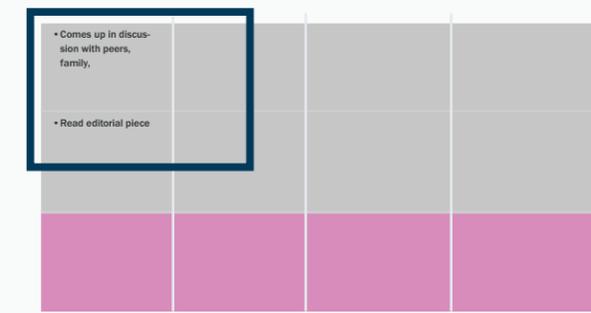
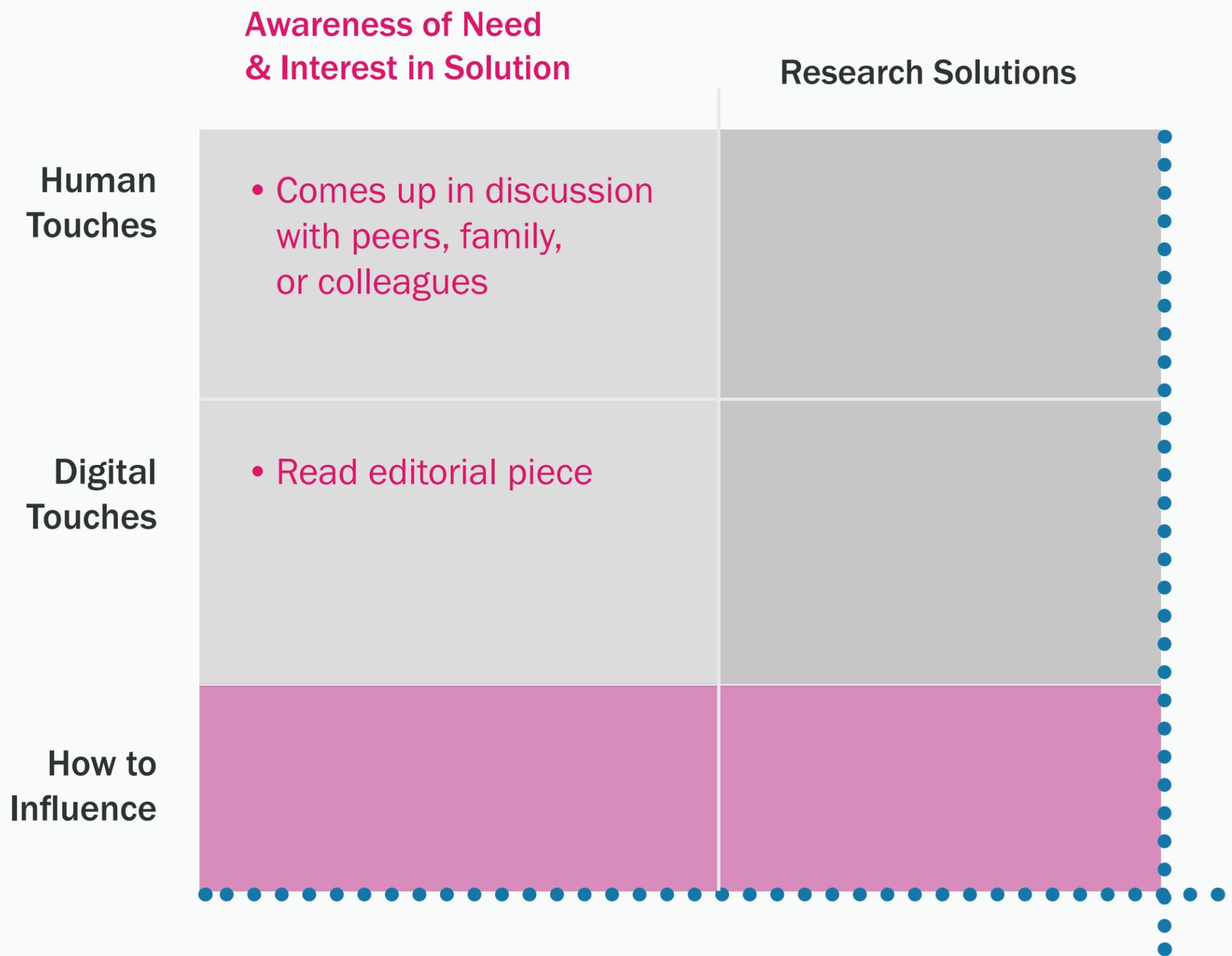


Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution

The first step in the journey begins when the customer acknowledges that he has a need he is interested in addressing.

In our example, Family Man knows that he should have developed a formal retirement plan ten+ years ago. But between a growing career and family, he hasn't made it a priority.

After a **conversation with a colleague** and **reading an article from the New York Times** that landed in his Facebook feed about Gen Xers being behind in their retirement savings, he's newly motivated with a sense of urgency.





Research Solutions

Because Family Man has been busy keeping the lights on at home and putting food on the table, he has done little research on the subject. **His immediate goal is to understand the retirement planning landscape and what his options are.**

Since Family Man is an educated, busy professional who is comfortable with technology, he will do most of his research online.

He'll likely initiate his search with Google, entering a query like "How to Plan for Retirement", "Retirement Investment Options" or "Retirement Planning."

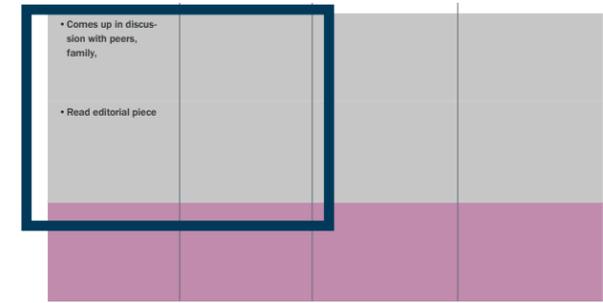
He'll be drawn to **"How-To Guides" and whitepapers** on IRAs, annuities, stocks and bonds, etc.

As he educates himself on the subject, Family Man will begin to form opinions on what approach makes sense for his income, lifestyle, family and appetite for risk.

72%

of product research for a future business purchase begins on Google.

(Source: Pardot.com)



Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution

Research Solutions

Human Touches

- Comes up in discussion with peers, family, or colleagues

Digital Touches

- Read editorial piece

How to Influence

- White papers
- How-to Guides
- Product Comparison Charts with Pros + Cons

He'll be drawn to "How-To Guides" and whitepapers on IRA's, annuities, stocks, and bonds, etc.

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Evaluate Providers

Once Family Man has an understanding of the difference between an IRA and a Roth IRA, annuities and cash-value life insurance policies, etc., he will begin comparing providers.

He'll start familiarizing himself with financial institutions that offer retirement planning services by **visiting their websites**. In order to assess their specific offerings, what differentiates one provider from another, and their expertise on the products that most interest him, he'll be looking for tools and more detailed information.

During this stage, if he hasn't already, he may begin to employ tools like **retirement calculators** and **online planning worksheets** to get an idea of what he'll need to reach his goal.

It's likely that he'll simultaneously be seeking **recommendations from friends and colleagues**. He may even attend a **workshop, convention or informational session** to learn more before he makes his decision.

• Comes up in discussion with peers, family,		• Word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends • Workshops, con-	
• Read editorial piece	• White papers • How-to Guides • Product Comparison Charts with Pros + Cons	• Company website • Retirement calculator • Planning templates and worksheets • Checklist	

Research Solutions

Evaluate Providers

Select Provider

- White papers
- How-to Guides
- Product Comparison Charts with Pros + Cons

- Word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends
- Workshops, conventions, informational sessions

- Company website
- Retirement calculator
- Planning templates and worksheets
- Checklist





Select Provider

Family Man is now ready to make a shortlist of providers and contact them with concerns or logistical questions, to help move him towards a final decision.

It's important to note that this is the **FIRST** time Family Man will interact with a company representative, and he's already at the bottom of the funnel!

At this stage in the process, Family Man will look for **case studies and online reviews** to help inform his decision.

• Comes up in discussion with peers, family.		• Word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends • Workshops, con-	• Contact short list of providers
• Read editorial piece	• White papers • How-to Guides • Product Comparison Charts with Pros + Cons	• Company website • Retirement calculator • Planning templates and worksheets • Checklist	• Case Studies • Reviews

Evaluate Providers

Select Provider

Human Touches

- Word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends
- Workshops, conventions, informational sessions

- Contact short list of providers

Digital Touches

- Company website
- Retirement calculator
- Planning templates and worksheets
- Checklist

- Case Studies
- Reviews

How to Influence



3



Determine How to Influence the Buyer During Each Stage of the Journey

Now that we understand this particular persona's buyer's journey, it's time to influence his decision. Because so much of the buyer's journey is self-guided, a company competing for this customer's dollar must insert themselves into the process by meeting the customer's need at every stage.

Let's look again at the Family Man's buyer's journey and determine the best tactics for reaching him each step of the way.



Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution

TACTICS

It's easy to skip over this stage with the assumption that a customer must come to their own conclusion that they need something before you can market to them.

However, a strategic PR approach can establish a need by bringing a situation or crisis into view.

In the case of **Family Man**, developing a news angle that brings to the forefront an issue regarding retirement can help create or accelerate the awareness of a need.

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Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution

Research Solution

How to Influence

Public Relations

- Develop PR strategy (potentially fear-based) that reminds people of the importance of retirement planning



Research Solutions

TACTICS

As we know, Family Man is looking for unbiased, educational information at this juncture. In other words, vendor-neutral information.

Your goal is to gain credibility with him by demonstrating thought leadership and knowledge through content that aligns with his needs.



CONTENT CREATION

Some content offerings that might earn Family Man's click during this stage of research include whitepapers covering topics such as:

- Retirement 101: Overview of Options
- The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement
- 5 Strategies for A Comfortable Retirement on A Modest Income
- 7 Common Retirement Planning Pitfalls to Avoid
- Which Retirement Plan Is Right For You? A Comparison Chart

PROMOTION OF CONTENT

Once you've developed a content offering, the next step is to promote it. Remember the old adage, "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"

The same is true for content. Just because you've created it, doesn't mean Family Man is going to find it.

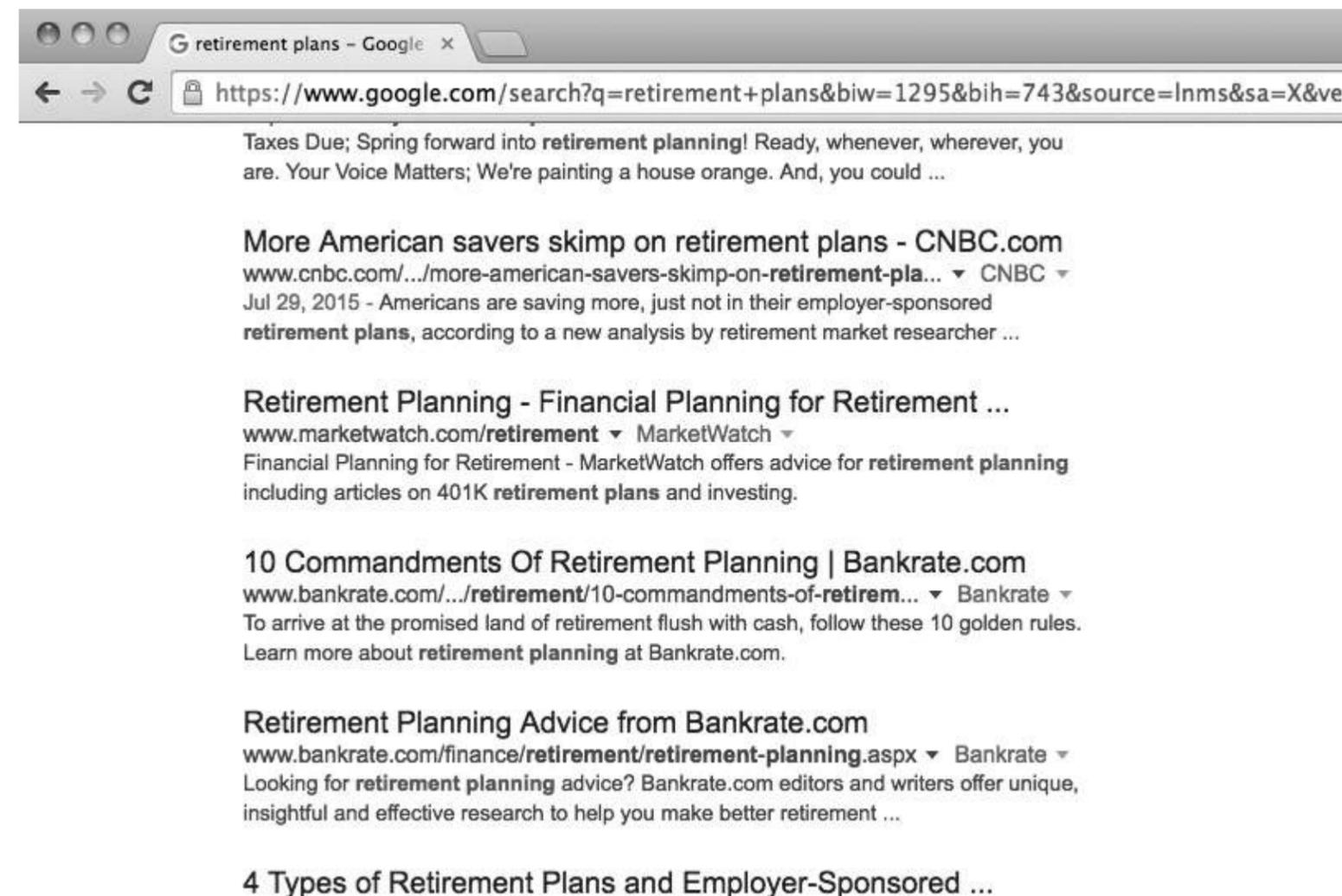
So now you have to get the content into [Family Man's](#) hands. Your best avenue for doing so is by running a [search engine campaign](#) based on [search queries](#) Family Man will use in his research.

TIP

Use the Google Adwords free keyword tool to identify the most commonly searched phrases that a customer reasearching information about your category might use.

Some examples may include:

- Retirement planning
- Retirement investing
- Retirement advice
- Retirement strategies
- Best retirement plans
- Retirement planning for 40 year olds
- How to retire in 20 years





CAPTURING THE LEAD

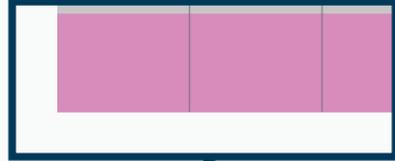
Your next step is to make sure that when Family Man clicks on your search engine ad, he lands on a page where he can easily see and access the content he's seeking. In other words, don't take him to the home page of your site.

Most likely, you'll want to gate your content. That simply means creating a [lead form that Family Man will need to complete in order to gain access to your content](#). This enables you to get Family Man's email address and potentially his phone number (depending on which fields you require).

His contact information can then be added to your database, so you can begin nurturing him toward conversion.

This information can also be used to personalize Family Man's experience during the next stage of his journey.

• Comes up in discussion with peers, family,		• Word-of-mouth recommendations from family and friends • Workshops, con-	• Contact short list of providers
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How to Influence

Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution

Public Relations

- Develop PR strategy (potentially fear-based) that reminds people of the importance of retirement planning

Research Solutions

Create Content

- The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement
- 5 Strategies for A Comfortable Retirement on a Modest Income
- 7 Common Retirement Planning Pitfalls to Avoid
- Which Retirement Plan Is Right For You? A Comparison Chart

Promotion of Content

Run Search Engine Campaign Based on Retirement Planning Keyword Queries

Capture Leads

Create CTA and lead form that when submitted gives access to downloading “The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement”

Evaluate Provi



Evaluate Providers

TACTICS

Now that Family Man has a clear picture of what makes sense for his retirement plan, it's time to begin evaluating vendors who offer what he's looking for, and eliminating those who don't fit the bill.

WEBSITE ENHANCEMENTS

Personalization

If you managed to get on Family Man's radar through your content offering in the previous stage, at this juncture you may be a contender. That means he'll be spending time on your website.

Assuming you gated your content and Family Man gave you his information in order to access it, you now have two tools at your disposal (depending on the sophistication of your website management solution):



1 You can personalize your messaging and graphics when he visits your website. For example, when he lands on your home page, you can feature an image of a man his age with his wife and children, and a headline that pertains to retirement planning.

2 Within minutes of Family Man visiting your website, you can have an email sent to him from a financial planner offering assistance.

Tools

As Family Man evaluates providers, he will be interested in tools that give him a better understanding of the return on investment he can expect from your company's offerings.

To address his needs, you'll want to make sure your website offers tools such as:

- A retirement calculator
- Interactive planning worksheet designed to help estimate monthly living costs during retirement

Search Solutions

Evaluate Providers

Select Provider

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How to Influence

Enhance Website

Personalization:

- Utilize personalization on website

Tools:

- Add Retirement Planning Calculator to website
- Create online worksheet to help estimate monthly living costs during retirement

Create Content

- Retirement Planning Checklist
- A webinar on “The Next Generation of Retirement Plans”
- Video on “How Much Will You Need to Retire?”
- Product literature

Promotion of Content

- Email content offering to database of prospects who downloaded “The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement”



Select Provider

TACTICS

With a shortlist of providers in hand, Family Man is well-versed on retirement investment options and ready to make a final decision. His next step is to finally pick up the phone or submit online forms requesting that someone contact him from each company he's considering.

CONTENT CREATION

At this point, Family Man will require assurance that your company has experience and a history creating successful retirement plans for people like him.

Some offerings proven to be effective in establishing trust at this stage are:

- A case study of someone similar to the Family Man persona
- Reviews
- Customer testimonials

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Evaluate Providers

Select Provider

How to Influence

Create Content

- Case study featuring the retirement plan of a man in his forties and his projected income during retirement
- Customer testimonials

THE FINAL CUSTOMER JOURNEY FOR FAMILY MAN

	Awareness of Need & Interest in Solution	Research Solutions	Evaluate Providers	Select Provider
HUMAN TOUCHES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comes up in discussion with peers, family, or colleagues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word-of-mouth recommendations from family & friends Workshops, conventions, informational sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact short list of providers
DIGITAL TOUCHES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read editorial piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White papers How-to Guides Product Comparison Charts with Pros + Cons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company website Retirement calculator Planning templates and worksheets Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Studies Reviews
HOW TO INFLUENCE	<p>Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop PR strategy (potentially fear-based) that reminds people of the importance of retirement planning 	<p>Create Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement 5 Strategies for A Comfortable Retirement on a Modest Income 7 Common Retirement Planning Pitfalls to Avoid Which Retirement Plan Is Right For You? A Comparison Chart <p>Promotion of Content</p> <p>Run Search Engine Campaign Based on Retirement Planning Keyword Queries</p> <p>Capture Leads</p> <p>Create CTA and lead form that when submitted gives access to downloading “The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement”</p>	<p>Enhance Website</p> <p>Personalization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize personalization on website <p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add Retirement Planning Calculator to website Create online worksheet to help estimate monthly living costs during retirement <p>Create Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retirement Planning Checklist A webinar on “The Next Generation of Retirement Plans” Video on “How Much Will You Need to Retire?” Product literature <p>Promotion of Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email content offering to database of prospects who downloaded “The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Retirement” 	<p>Create Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study featuring the retirement plan of a man in his forties and his projected income during retirement Customer Testimonials

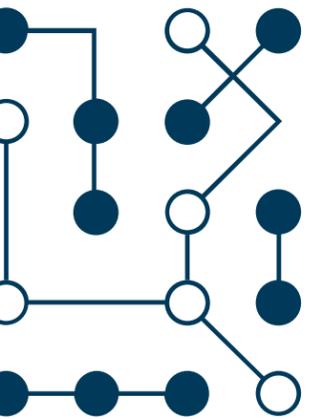


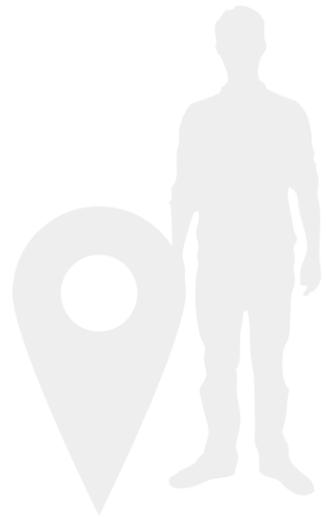
If you've followed each step of the process by...

- Defining your customer personas,
- Tailoring your content to where the buyer is at each step in the journey
- And paying special attention to the order in which your content is delivered,

...you have a strong chance of winning your prospect's business.

Now it's up to your company representative to bring him over the finish line with that good old fashioned human touch!





IN CONCLUSION

This is just one example that illustrates how the number of digital touchpoints now exceeds the number of human touchpoints in most purchase decisions.



Understanding how to reach potential customers in this new climate is the biggest challenge facing brands today, and the speed with which marketers adapt will prove critical as we move beyond web 2.0 & into more complex realms of digital connectivity.





About Crownpeak

Founded in January 2001, Crownpeak was the first company to offer web content management through a SaaS solution. Today, leading brands trust Crownpeak's cloud-first Digital Experience Management (DXM) platform to quickly and easily create, deploy and optimize customer experiences across digital touchpoints at scale. Crownpeak provides a complete solution for DXM featuring content management, personalization, search and hosting, in addition to fully integrated Digital Quality Management (DQM) to ensure brand integrity and meet compliance requirements. More than 180 customers including Unilever, BNY Mellon, Thomson Reuters, Eli Lilly, and Aflac rely on Crownpeak to deliver engaging experiences that delight customers, promote loyalty and deliver results.