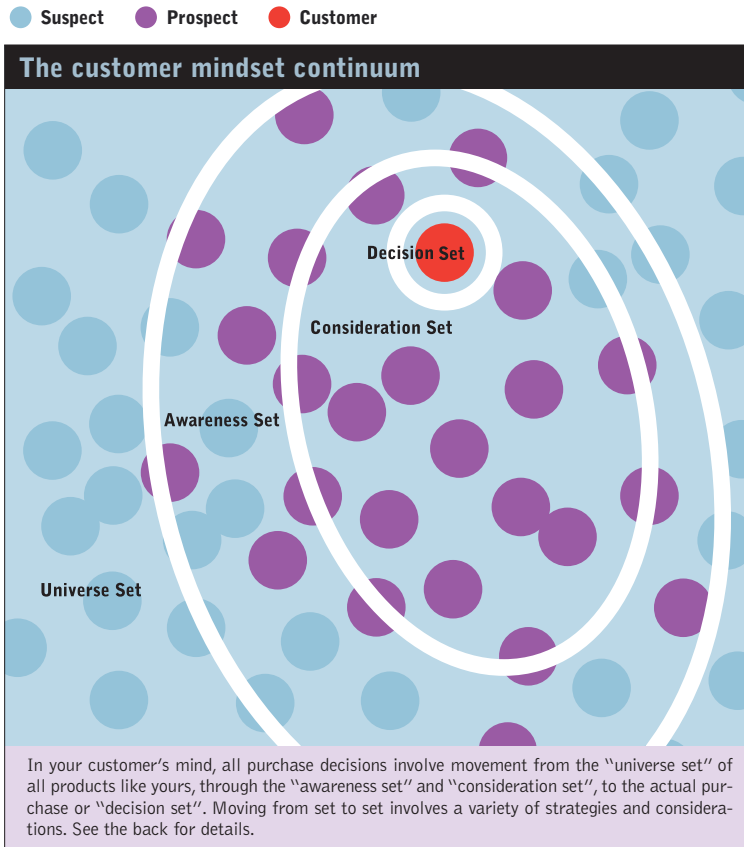


Getting considered: a prerequisite to making the sale

Marketers categorize people. Working from their own perspective, they place these people into buckets or groups with labels such as suspects, prospects, influencers and on and on. Buyers use groups or buckets too. You might think of your customer's mind as a continuum of ever-narrowing "sets": from the "universe set" of all companies (including you and all your competitors) that can provide what the customer wants...to the "awareness set" of products the customer has heard of...to the "consideration set" of products the customer will evaluate further...to the "decision set," or the product the customer actually chooses.



Executive Summary:

- To achieve the ultimate goal of making a sale, your customer must first know about you (awareness) and be willing to investigate your product further (consideration).
- Marketers should first focus communication efforts on becoming part of the consideration set, then on getting to the decision set.
- Marketing is about communicating to groups. Selling is about communications and interaction between individuals. Knowing which "set" you fall within in your customer's mind will help you determine the most effective tools to reach the next level.
- As you move in your prospect's mind from just awareness to decision, you reach a point at which you should exchange the reach and efficiency of mass communications for the persuasiveness and effectiveness of personal selling.

From awareness...to consideration...to decision

Marketing is about communicating to groups. Selling is about communications and interaction between individuals. As you advance from initially gaining awareness for your product to an actual buying decision, it makes sense to also move from the more efficient reach of mass communications to the personal interaction of one-to-one selling. Here are some things to consider regarding movement from set to set:

From the universe to awareness

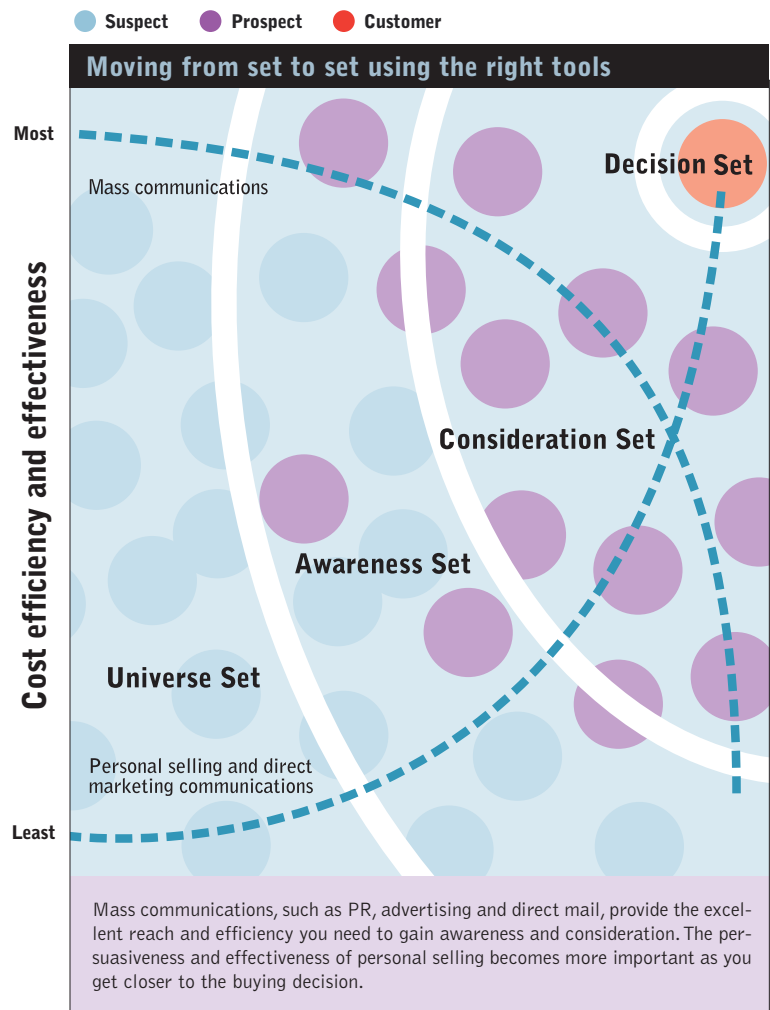
- Determine and target your audiences.
- Refine your position so your audiences understand you have something of value for them.
- Create a simple message that is believable and easy to understand.
- Consider using direct mail, media advertising, and public relations to reach "suspects" most efficiently.

From awareness to consideration

- Keep your message consistent. Remember, simple and believable is best.
- Continue using advertising, direct mail and PR for frequency and efficiency.
 - Research shows that people exposed to product ads were nearly twice as likely to consider purchasing those products as subjects not exposed to ads.¹
 - According to a 2004 study of technology purchases, 43.8% of decision-makers will strongly consider buying a product with high brand awareness, versus just 18.6% who would favorably consider buying a brand they've hardly heard of.²

From consideration to decision

- Support your sales force by equipping them with effective training and marketing communications so they can maintain a prospect's interest and foster more in-depth evaluation.
 - Introduce more details of your offering, which now become more important and could influence a decision.
 - Deal with economics directly by communicating the value of your solution versus the cost of the problem—it can move prospects beyond the price and keep them focused on benefits.
 - Rely more on personal selling and less on mass media to establish trust, leverage relationship potential and show your commitment to service.



In summary

Understanding your customer's mindset with regard to the purchase continuum can help you gain efficiency and effectiveness in your marketing and sales efforts. Since consideration must precede the buying decision, it makes sense to first aim for consideration using cost effective mass communications. Then you can use more personal, direct selling techniques to target the decision set.

¹ Shapiro, S., MacInnis, D. J., and Heckler, S. E. The Effects of Incidental Ad Exposure on the Formation of Consideration Sets. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 24: 94-104, June 1997.

² Latzman, A. IT Marketing Metrics Guide: 2004 Data for Software, Hardware, & Services Marketers. *MarketingSherpa: Practical Know-How & Case Studies*, May, 2004.