

Book
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Building Your Buyer's Journey

A
**Zoho
Academy
Workbook**

- Know the buyer's journey
- Learn best practices for CTA copy
- Map your best CTAs for all three buyer stages
- Understand the importance of CTA placement

What is the Buyer's Journey?

If you have a business website, you probably see a variety of visitors who come to your site with a range of intentions—from journalists, to job-seekers, to investors. And of course, your website should offer a little something for *all* of them.

But the *monetizable* traffic—and thus some of the most *important* traffic—comes from your customers and prospects. So when you're thinking about how to curate your site content, you've *got* to have these visitors in mind at all times if you plan on seeing returns.



Of course, not every prospect arrives on your site with the intent of immediately making a purchase. Prospects come in a wide range of commitment levels. Some of them will need more information than others; some will require more trust signals or social proof. In other words, they'll be at different stages in the buyer's journey.

The buyer's journey recognizes the subtle differences between three types of prospect: those in the *awareness* stage, those in the *consideration* stage, and those in the *decision* stage.

The Awareness Stage

Prospects coming into the awareness stage recognize they have a problem that needs solving. They may not be able to articulate the *exact* nature of the problem yet... but they *do* know, in some vague way, they have a need. They may not yet know about your business and what it offers in the way of a solution.

During the awareness stage, the prospect both clarifies the nature of their problem and recognizes that your company (and perhaps many *other* companies) has an answer to their need.



What this means for your website is you need to offer calls to action (CTAs) that broadly educate awareness-stage prospects *about their problem*. Visitors at this stage might be looking for CTAs such as “Send Me Great Weekly Content” ([your blog](#) should be full of educational content, after all), “Check Out Our Educational Podcast,” “Watch Our How-To Video,” or “Access My Free Industry Guide.”

These CTAs are in the business of: 1) educating prospects about their problem; and 2) letting them know the range of solutions out there (including yours—though you’re *hardly* selling yourself at this point). After all, the more you look like an authority on these issues, the more they’re bound to trust your solution when you show it to them.

CTA Copy: Best Practices

You'll be considering your *own* CTA copy in a moment; but first we want to give you a few best practices when it comes to the language on your button:

- **Keep it brief, but make it descriptive.** You've got about 3 to 7 words. Make them powerful... and be sure they tell users *exactly* what'll happen when they click.
- **Use action words.** Take the "A" in "CTA" seriously. Action words motivate... which means they prompt more clicks.
- **Run your verbs through the "I Want to ____" Test.** The action words you employ should be actions users actually *want* to take. No one *wants* to "Buy," "Submit," or "Sign Up"; but they *do* want to "Get," "Try," "Start," and "Increase."
- **Focus on the benefit.** What does your prospect want or need *most* at this stage? Give them *that* in your CTA copy.
- **Create a sense of urgency.** "Now," "Today," and "Immediately" are all as good as action verbs. Try them out.
- **Experiment with using the first person.** Speaking for your user ("I," "me," and "my") can have a powerful effect. It helps prospects visualize the value they're about to receive.

Exercise: Mapping Your Awareness-Stage CTAs

[Note: As you answer this set of questions, remember you're NOT selling your product or service yet! Your only job right now is to educate.]

My awareness-stage prospects would broadly describe their concern as

The top three questions they're asking right now are _____

A Google search for my awareness-stage prospects might look like _____

Why is this problem an important one to solve? What are the risks of not taking the problem seriously? _____

What content can I offer that would validate my prospects' challenges?

What content could I offer that would help my prospects *understand* their challenges? _____

The most valuable content I can offer my prospects at this stage is _____

A CTA for this content might say _____

The Consideration Stage

While the awareness stage entails problem-recognition and initial information-gathering, by the *consideration* stage, prospects are diving into research mode. By *now*, they've clearly defined their problem, recognized the consequences of failing to resolve it, and are firmly committed to finding a solution.

In *this* stage, they're exploring their options to ascertain how each company's methods, approaches, or offerings will address their pain points, and, ultimately, solve their problem. Through this process, they're also discerning which of these methods is best for *them*.



Here's where you begin the soft sell (note the word *soft*!): Prospects *are*, after all, *beginning* to compare and measure you against the competition. That's why CTAs for informational content such as case studies are great for consideration-stage prospects: They show how your company has solved the same clearly-defined problem that these prospects have specified for themselves.

"Take the Quiz Now," "Send Me My Free Checklist," "Sign Me Up For a Demo!" "Take a Look at Our Products," or "Take Me to Your FAQ" are also great consideration-stage CTAs. Of course, the information you offer will depend on the nature of your product, service, and industry.

Exercise: Mapping Your Consideration-Stage CTAs

Now that my prospects have identified their pain points, the solution-oriented keywords they're typing into Google Search are _____

A compelling description of what my prospects' lives would look like once their problem is solved is _____

The most outstanding features of my solution are _____

The (shareable) proof I have of this is _____

The most valuable content I can offer my prospects at this stage is _____

This content prioritizes what's most important to prospects at this stage because

This content offers value to my prospects by *beginning* to solve their problem in that it _____

A CTA for this content might say _____

The Decision Stage

By the beginning of the decision stage, your prospect has determined the best possible *approach* to solving their problem; and they've got a shortlist of businesses who offer that approach. Throughout the decision stage—which involves more research into individual businesses' *solutions* than into the nature of the *problem*—that shortlist gets smaller.

The decision stage culminates in the narrowing of that shortlist to a single choice. So naturally, this stage is where the hard sell has to happen for you. You've already helped your prospect recognize and clarify their problem, educated them on the pros and cons of solving it, and offered them some small step toward a solution. Now let them know (or further *experience*) why *you're* their best option.

CTAs for decision-stage visitors might range anywhere from “Watch Video Testimonials” to “Start My Free Trial” to “Get a Free Consultation” to “Request an Estimate” to “Buy Now.” Case studies continue to be of use in this stage... as do all other forms of proof (studies, data, etc) that your product or service is as good as you say it is.

Exercise: Mapping Your Decision-Stage CTAs

The ROI of my product or service is _____

Compared to my competitors, my product's/service's *features* are _____

Compared to my competitors, my product's/service's *prices* are _____

Compared to my competitors, my customers' *experiences* are _____

Of all possible solutions, *mine* best solves my prospects' pain points because

The (shareable) proof I have of this is _____

The biggest questions my prospects have at this stage are _____

The most valuable content I can offer my prospects at this stage is _____

A CTA for this content might say _____

The Importance of Placement

The CTAs you offer will send different prospects to different pages, with different kinds of information to assist them in their journey toward making a purchase. But *where* you place your CTAs—especially on your site’s homepage—is of utmost importance.

After all, you’ll be trying to move each of these three “types” of prospect deeper into your site content, so you *will* need a CTA designed for each of them on your homepage. But you certainly don’t want to put them all next to each other.

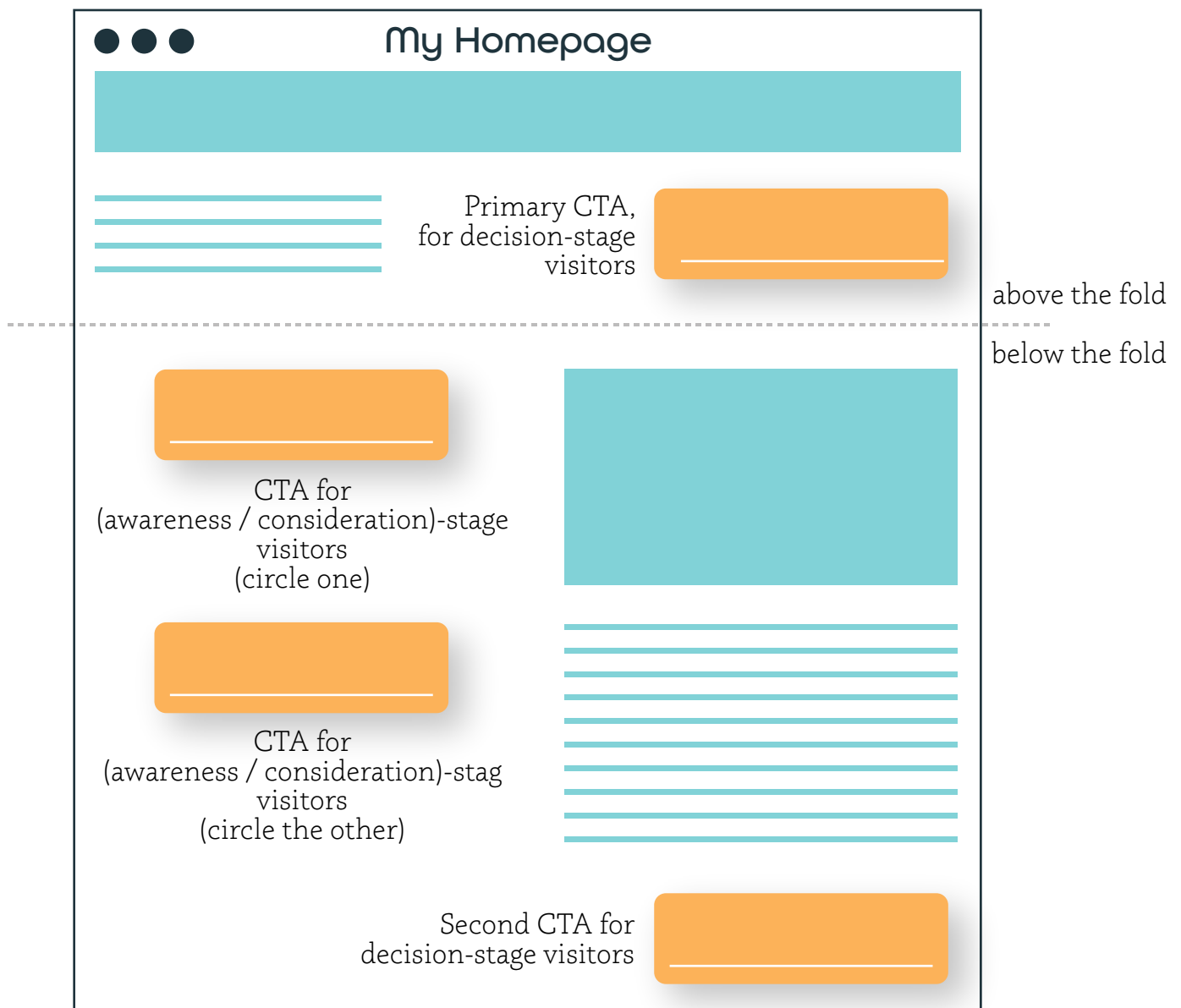
Best practices suggest that *decision*-stage CTAs be located above the fold: The visitors who arrive on your website certain that they *want* what you have to offer shouldn’t have to scroll down to get it. A *second* decision-stage CTA can be placed at the *bottom* of the homepage, for visitors who moved *into* that stage while they were reading your homepage.

The CTAs for visitors in the *awareness* and *consideration* stages should be placed somewhere between these two. *These* prospects will have to scroll down the page anyhow, in order to learn more... and you don’t want to force the CTA too early, or else you run the risk of scaring them away altogether.

So take a look at your homepage with a clear sense of what prospects in each of these stages *still* need to know before buying, and position those buttons appropriately... and beside the appropriate copy.

Exercise: Fill in Your CTAs

Now it's your turn. Consider the content on your own homepage, and [the best way to appeal to users](#) at each step of the journey. Remember that your awareness and consideration-stage CTAs can appear in whatever order... and that the second decision-stage CTA doesn't have to say the same thing the first one does.



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