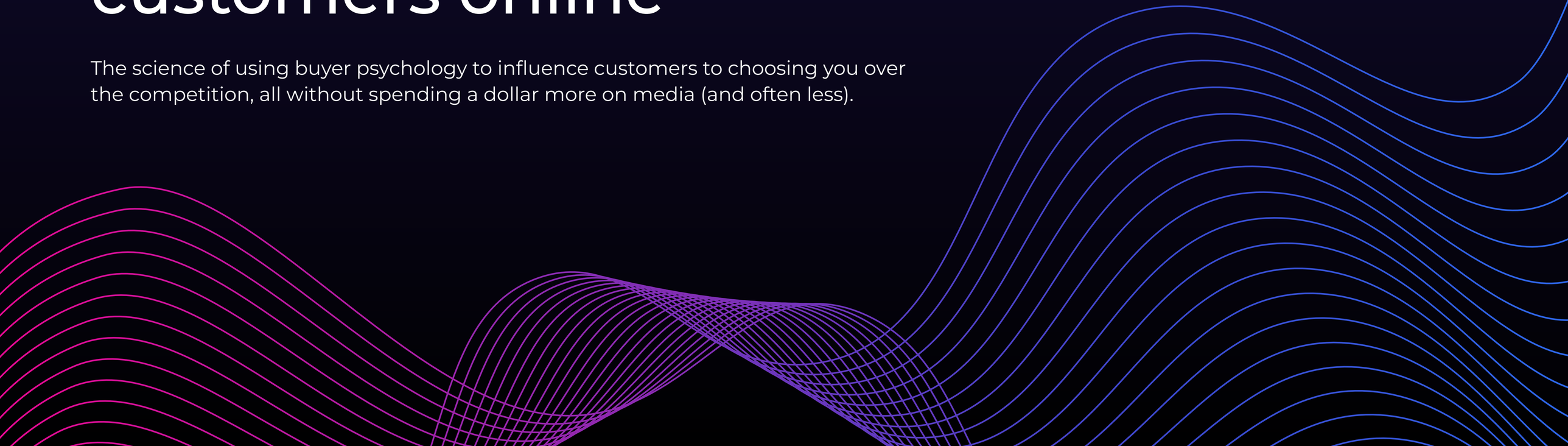
ANALYST REPORT

The subtle art of influencing customers online

The science of using buyer psychology to influence customers to choosing you over the competition, all without spending a dollar more on media (and often less).



The subtle art of influencing customers online

Imagine having a crystal ball that reveals exactly what your customers are thinking and what they truly desire. This isn't just a fantasy; it's the essence of effective digital marketing and how we influence customers' decisions.

Science has proved humans aren’t as sophisticated and logical as we believe we are. Small, deliberate changes in your digital marketing approach will make profound overall differences to your business.

In this excerpt from our upcoming book, we share the science of influencing consumer decision-making online. Our scientific methodology feeds the brain the information it craves, removing the subconscious frictions to a purchase decision. With these frictions removed, your leads and sales will skyrocket.







For over 15 years, we've used our scientific influence model to benefit clients from every major industry. The results are always instant and obvious. Those owners and marketing managers that embrace science, and dare to be bold always prosper. In this book I’m going to teach you the secrets of Influence, the formulas we use, and how to apply them to your business. Moreover, you’ll gain the clarity to:

- ✓ Understand what’s happening in your customer’s mind
- ✓ Know how to overcome the 9 trigger points decimating your advertising & sales
- ✓ Critically analyse your existing marketing and cut the waste in half
- ✓ Discover the words your clients want to hear to capture their attention.
- ✓ Gain control over your marketing, moving away from reliance on agencies' recommendations and false promises and towards a more empowered, science-driven approach.

Gain control over your marketing. Don’t blindly trust your agencies' recommendations and false promises. Take control with a more empowered, science-driven approach.

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So what is the science of influence?

From the moment a user lands on your page, the clock starts ticking. Instantly the subconscious mind starts making powerful assumptions that will frame the way they ‘feel’ about your site. Influencing customers in this situation is about ensuring that these first impressions are positive. Hold your customer for 10 - 20 seconds and your changes of converting them skyrockets.

The process our minds work through looks like:

1. Visitors form their first impression of a website in only 50 milliseconds. This is driven primarily by design professionalism.

2. Next (within 2.6 seconds), the eyes fixate on what they deem most important for further evaluation, normally the headline.

3. Past this stage and they begin scan the content, with 22% of users scrolling right to the bottom of the page. This is the critical evaluation phase where the user's attention is captured or lost.

This entire process lasts for about 10 seconds, during which time the visitor is deciding whether to stay or go. This snap judgment stems from a history of navigating through countless disappointing web pages. Users have honed their ability to quickly discern a page's value, eager to avoid wasting precious moments on a page unlikely to provide the solution being sought.

When comparing options, if the product/service being evaluated doesn’t feel right, logic says the customer will simply select the second-best option. However, in most cases customers won't make a purchase decision at all.

Humans are not dissimilar to animals -- once spooked we feel apprehensive about the entire process and will often retreat to "lick our wounds" before starting the process over again.

The concept of how easily scared customers are is best explored through a Google-sponsored research paper titled “How people decide what to buy lies in the ‘messy middle’ of the purchase journey.”

What the research uncovered was that the purchase decision cycle of your customer is easily disrupted, which explains why around 97% of website visitors leave without taking any form of action on your website. Customers are highly sensitive to how they ‘feel’ about a website, and these feelings are easy influenced if we understand how the mind and body are making that snap decision.

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Analysing the crucial first seconds of a website visit

Surviving this initial, brutal assessment is just the first hurdle. Even if your page makes a favourable impression, the next 20 seconds are still crucial. Users remain on high alert, ready to abandon ship at the slightest hint of irrelevance. It's only after the 30-second mark that you'll notice a shift. The likelihood of a visitor leaving drops significantly. If you've managed to engage them for this long, chances are they'll stick around for a while longer, potentially dedicating two minutes or more to your content—a lifetime in the digital world.

In essence, web pages face two fates: the swift exit reserved for the "bad," and the extended visit awarded to the "good." And what determines their fate? The user's rapid evaluation upon arrival. The takeaway for web design is straightforward:

To secure a spot in the coveted "good" category and earn minutes of engagement, your page must immediately demonstrate its value within those first 10 seconds. The formula we use for this called the “9 frictions of resistance”, best thought about as the 9 red flags your brain is ultra-sensitive to when not immediately obvious. In the subsequent pages, we are going explore what they are and how we use them to capture attention and influence decision-making.

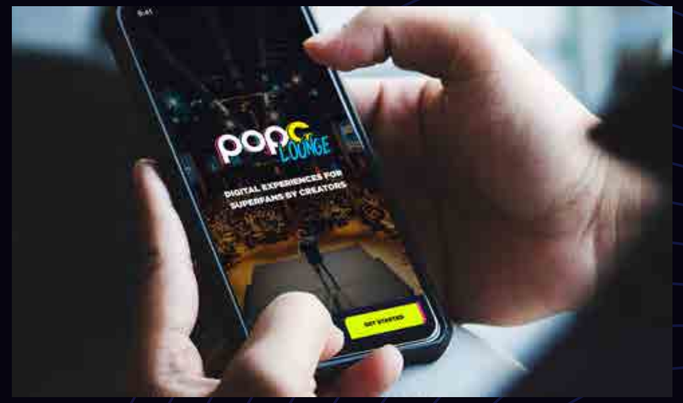
The truth about the 9 frictions is that any smart marketer will use these for every critical decision they make, be that planning a website or deciding key messaging.

If you want to learn more, get in touch for a chat.













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‘The 9 Frictions’ explained

The most powerful motivator in marketing is the removal of doubt and the quelling of the fight-or-flight reaction. The reason people don’t enquire or purchase right away is fear. Our mind is geared to protect us. Overcoming these 9 frictions are what it deems essential before it will permit you to proceed with an important purchase enquiry, be that personal or B2B. Emotion drives it all.

So, how do we identify where the frictions are and how to remove them? There are 9 of them in total, and without fail, these represent the information the mind is seeking. When these 9 frictions are effectively addressed, the resistance disappears and is replaced with a strong feeling of desire to act, often without fully understanding why.

We’ve applied this scientific model to websites and marketing for over a decade, and the results are always the same. We see more engagement, more sales, and more leads without spending a dollar more on advertising.

On the subsequent pages, we dive into each of the 9 frictions and the common website modules we use to overcome them.

friction [frik-shuhn]

An obstacle that is put in place in order to make a decision more difficult. Friction is an impediment that dissuades people from making a certain choice.

abrasion | grating | strife | conflict | disunity | discord | disharmony | disagreement

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1. Completeness of solution

The prevailing concern with any product is the fear that it may only solve a part of the problem, or, in some cases, introduce new challenges.

Customers are in search of holistic solutions that address their full range of needs within a business context, not just a single desire. Consider the example of seeking offshore tax advice. The appeal isn't solely in the tax savings; there's also the worry about legal changes that could pose future risks. Do the provided solutions anticipate and cover such eventualities?

In the technology sector, the fear of learning new skills looms large. The complexity of a product amplifies this anxiety, making 'free trials' less effective. They often spotlight the learning curve, deterring rather than welcoming users.

Best solutions

- Detailed case studies
- Powerful text & video testimonials
- Explainer videos
- Process map/steps



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2. Expertise

The probability of a purchase or inquiry skyrockets by 86% when customers feel they've received expert advice tailored to their needs. This principle holds true in both consumer and B2B contexts.

Naturally, we seek assurance that a solution is crafted by specialists familiar with our unique requirements. The stakes are higher with larger investments, as perceived risk escalates. Relying on expert guidance mitigates our risk, embodying the wisdom behind the adage "nobody got fired for recommending IBM."

Highlighting your expertise emerges is a potent strategy to foster trust and diminish risk perceptions. Websites that employ multi-stage forms or quizzes as an initial engagement often excel, offering customers the sense of receiving personalised advice. Similarly, comprehensive blogs, videos, and content enhance the sense of security, effectively drawing in a more confident and willing audience.

Here’s how we can do this:

- Detailed blog articles
- Display real data/results
- Industry reports
- Videos/webinars
- Multi-stage forms/quizes

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3. Long term value (durability)

What is the long term value I will receive from this product/service?

Buyers want to know how long a product will work optimally. Our mind is always performing an equation of cost to benefit (specifically the ongoing benefits they will receive from this solution). A few examples include:

Software
Will this product continue to be supported? Will our infrastructure change and render it useless?

Sales or Staff Training
Will sales training help only one staff member for a month, or will it have residual value for all future salespeople?

The marketing solution is showing the long-term value customers can expect, and reducing the risks of it becoming outdated/outmoded.

Impactful ways to demonstrate durability:

- ✓ Customer testimonials & case studies
- ✓ Warranties/Guarantees
- ✓ Detailed product/service description
- ✓ Process/system displayed

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4. Product pricing (or comparison)

Encountering websites that hide pricing until you inquire is common in the tech industry, often deterring potential inquiries. This practice clashes with how customers prefer to make decisions.

The core of our hesitation is to avoid discomfort or the awkwardness of discussing budgets mismatched with high starting prices. It's an inefficient scenario for both customer and company.

Transparency in pricing has proven to boost performance. Working with service businesses initially resistant to listing prices, we found that introducing a preliminary pricing stage significantly increased sales.

While revealing the exact price isn't always necessary, providing a ballpark figure or showing a case study of what other people paid gives customers what they need to feel comfortable enquiring.

Here’s how you can show price levels:

- ✓ Pricing tables
- ✓ Case studies (with the amount this customer spent)
- ✓ Comparison to competition (not exact price)
- ✓ First stage pricing (i.e, scoping price)

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5. Production capacity

Showcasing a company's capability to fulfil orders and meet demand significantly alleviates customer apprehensions, especially with larger and costlier orders.

This concern is closely related to the 'timely delivery' friction. Customers need assurance that their orders will be completely fulfilled, regardless of circumstances, ensuring the company's reliability in delivery.

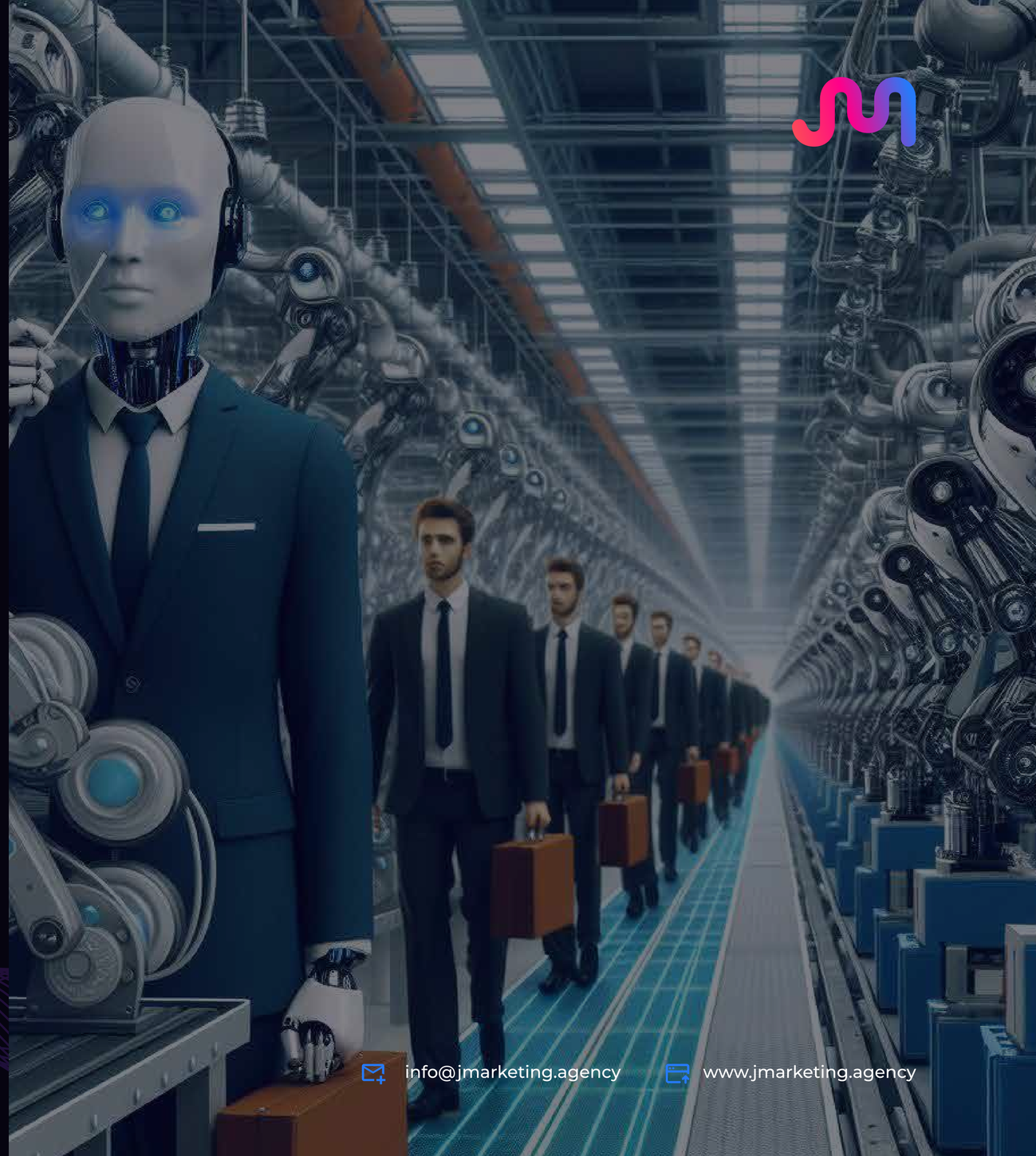
Consider the scenario of bulk orders: Is a supplier capable of delivering 50,000 units? This question also extends to services with limited availability, such as public speaking. For instance, if booked in a remote location, can the speaker guarantee their presence?

In essence, the question is whether we can demonstrate to customers they can depend on your company. their ability to depend on your company. This concept of reliability forms a recurring theme across the 9 frictions.

How to best demonstrate capacity:

- ✓ A testimonial from a client who received a large order
- ✓ Info about your company’s efficient production process
- ✓ A case study about successfully filling a large order on time
- ✓ An ‘About Us’ module illustrating the company's history of successfully filling orders

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6. Timely delivery

The prevailing concern with any product is the fear that it may only solve a part of the problem, ‘completeness of solution’, introduce new challenges.

Customers are in search of holistic solutions that address their full range of needs within a business context, not just a segment. Consider the example of seeking offshore tax advice. The appeal isn't solely in the tax savings; there's also the worry about legal changes that could pose future risks. Do the provided solutions anticipate and cover such eventualities?

In the technology sector, the fear of learning new skills looms large. The complexity of a product amplifies this anxiety, making 'free trials' less effective. They often spotlight the learning curve, deterring rather than welcoming users.

Showcase your delivery timelines through:

- A detailed timeline graphic
- An estimate for long it takes from order to delivery
- A customised timeline based on a customer’s specific needs
- Testimonials mentioning delivery timelines



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7. Similar clients

Throughout history, humans have relied on observation and mimicry as a means of learning. Once someone else has taken the initial risk, the decision becomes much easier for us to follow, and even creates a fear of missing out.

The effectiveness of this approach hinges on the concept of similarity. We are most influenced by the actions of those we consider our peers. For instance, if a major corporation like McDonald's adopts a specific software, a small startup in the same industry might not see it as relevant to their needs, even if it could be beneficial.

Successful marketing strategies understand this dynamic. They target their audience precisely and highlight the successes of their clients, especially those that mirror the prospective buyer's profile. This not only diminishes the perceived risk but also fosters a sense of trust and comfort among similar businesses contemplating the same decision.

Provide social proof of similar clients through:

- ✓ Logos of well-known clients
- ✓ Quotes from happy clients
- ✓ Testimonials from clients
- ✓ Case studies featuring past clients
- ✓ Industry adoption rate stats

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8. Customer service

Perceiving a product or service as complex or laden with unfamiliar features often triggers anxiety. Doubts about our own ability, or that of our team, to effectively use it and the time required for learning are common. This anxiety acts as both fear and friction, halting the decision-making process.

The antidote to these fears lies in the assurance of accessible support. Companies such as Apple allocate significant resources to offer free classes and support, addressing this need directly. Similarly, other organisations provide live chat, comprehensive FAQs, and maintain dedicated YouTube channels for support.

The question then becomes, how can you assure your customers that they will have the support they need, when they need it?

Several great ways to demonstrate your dedication to customer service:

- A live chat
- A ‘Contact Us’ page
- A ‘Contact Us’ module at the bottom of every page
- A prominently displayed ‘Help’ email address

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9. Return policy or guarantee

Certainty plays a pivotal role in the buyer's decision-making process. The fear of making a wrong choice looms large when certainty is absent, perceived as a risk of being left at a disadvantage. Yet this concern dissipates with the assurance of a guarantee or an easy return policy.

AppSumo, an online software marketplace, effectively eliminates the apprehension of post-purchase regret. They offer customers the option to test a product for up to 90 days, with the convenience of returning it via a single click, ensuring an immediate refund. This policy encourages users to experiment with new and emerging technologies without any financial risk.

Reducing the perception of risk involves various strategies. By assuring customers of your support and demonstrating a genuine interest in their success, you encourage them to try your product. Once customers experience your product firsthand, the likelihood of retaining them significantly increases.

Provide a return policy or guarantee through:

- A money-back guarantee
- A straightforward return policy
- Satisfaction guarantees
- A mission statement that includes a commitment to customer satisfaction

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Scientifically review your digital marketing today!

If you aren't 100% sure why your digital marketing efforts aren't working as they should, now is the time to find out. Our digital audit is designed to review your website and digital marketing (even if run by an agency) and give you the clarity you need to confidently focus your next steps.

Through this audit, you'll learn where your current digital efforts are failing and how you can rapidly improve them and start the journey to world-class digital marketing alongside valuable customer insights.

Book your Digital Audit

- Understand where and why your business is wasting money
- Let an expert deep-dive into your digital marketing data and analytics
- Receive a 10-minute video explaining the results of the digital audit
- Plan the easy next steps you can take to improve your metrics

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Creating the JM influence system©

Sparking a revolution in digital marketing

Our founders, Joshua and Martyn, sparked a revolution in Melbourne over 15 years ago, driven by a shared vision and a steadfast friendship. Unimpressed with the industry's standard approach, where nearly every agency churned out similar, unremarkable campaigns, they saw an opportunity for change. These traditional campaigns, often led by guesswork rather than data, might flash briefly with success but typically fizzled out, leaving clients in the lurch without insights or clear next steps. The common solution? Pour more money into yet another hit-or-miss campaign.

But Joshua and Martyn believed there was a better way. With the inception of JM Influence Agency, they broke the mould. Our philosophy is simple yet revolutionary: blend human psychology and scientific principles with award-winning UX and creative design. This unique approach ensures not just immediate traction but sustained success, all while optimizing ad spend. At JM, we don't just create campaigns; we craft experiences that resonate, engage, and deliver. Join us in redefining what's possible in digital marketing.



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