GUIDE

Core Principles

The sixteen principles of The Marketing Helix. The funnel shows where a customer is in the company's process. The Marketing Helix describes how a customer in motion gives a message attention, and how changing trust, relevance, and timing then influence customer decisions during that process and after purchase.

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Attention is a principle of its own: Principle 06, Being there is not being noticed. Marketing surrounds the customer (Principle 05), and being there gives a message its chance. Before the principles on trust, relevance, and timing (07 to 10) can apply to a message, the customer has to notice it. Attention is named again in Principle 11, on paid media, and is explained in full at Attention in the Marketing Helix.

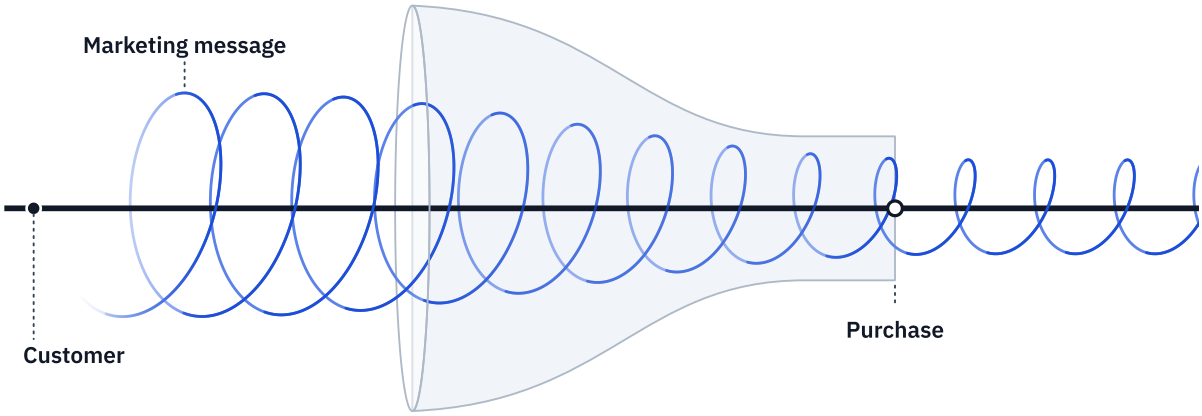
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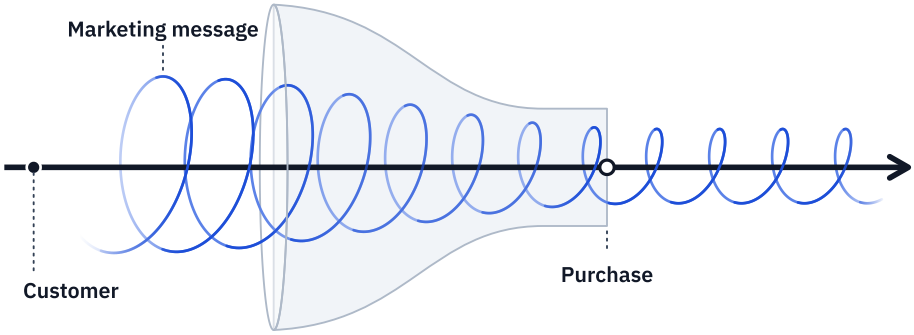
The Marketing Helix describes what happens inside your funnel.

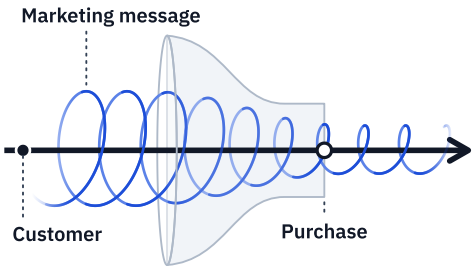
The funnel tracks your process. The Helix helps explain the customer moving through it.

A marketing funnel is useful. It organizes a company's stages of awareness, consideration, and conversion. But knowing a stage does not tell us everything changing for the person within it. Trust may strengthen or weaken. A need can become urgent. A competitor can alter the choice. The Marketing Helix gives these changing conditions a place in the explanation, from before the first encounter through purchase and beyond. It does not replace the funnel or select tactics for the company.

ImplicationKeep the funnel to measure progression. Use the Helix to investigate what influences it.







The funnel tracks the process. The Helix shows marketing drawing closer to a customer as trust, relevance, and timing align.After the purchase: experience, retention, reviews, referrals.

02

The customer is already in motion.

The customer had a life before your funnel began.

Customers do not begin moving when a brand notices them. Needs emerge, priorities change, and attention shifts before the first search, recommendation, advertisement, or conversation. A funnel begins when the company can identify or classify an encounter; the person was already moving. Marketing must account for that continuing change rather than treating the first recorded touch as the beginning of the customer's story.

ImplicationPlan for changing customer conditions, not one assumed starting point.

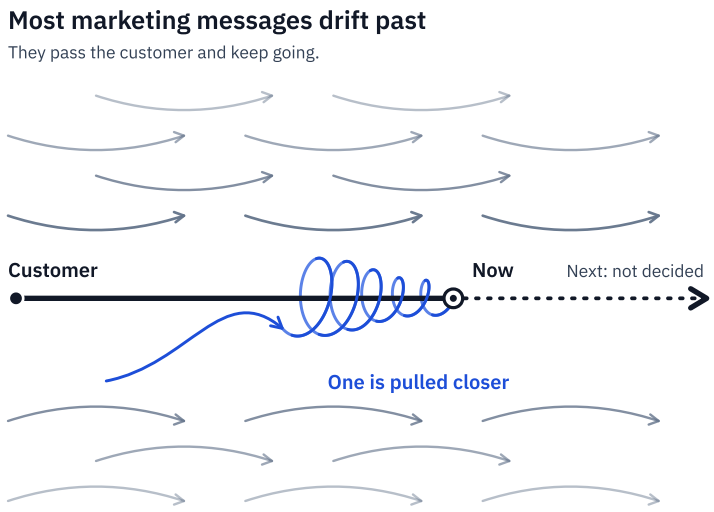
03

The customer is in control.

A company can define stages. It cannot force decisions.

Funnel stages are the company's way of organizing activity and evidence. Customers retain the ability to notice, ignore, compare, wait, leave, return, or choose a different solution. A person can revisit information or act earlier than a standard sequence predicts. The model begins with the customer's agency, not an assumption that messages move people obediently from stage to stage.

ImplicationUnderstand what customers are doing before choosing how to respond.



Customer in Motion

The customer is never stationary. They are the straight line, moving left to right through time, while a marketing message moves around them. The solid line shows where they have been; the dashed line ahead is not decided.

04

The customer is at the center.

One customer is the reference point for the entire picture.

The centerline represents one person moving through changing circumstances. Around that person are information, experiences, recommendations, competing claims, and other signals. The model asks how those influences relate to the customer's present needs and beliefs rather than treating the company's channels as the center of the story. The centerline is a visual reference, not a promise of uninterrupted progress toward purchase.

ImplicationStart with the customer's context, not the company's campaign calendar.

05

Marketing surrounds the customer.

A customer encounters more than the messages a brand sends.

Advertising, search results, social posts, reviews, referrals, past experiences, and competitors all contribute to the information environment around a customer. Many messages are never seen; others are noticed and then dismissed. Some become useful evidence at the moment they matter. The Helix depicts these changing encounters around one customer rather than treating marketing as a single message sent down a tube.

ImplicationEvaluate the quality and effect of customer-facing signals, not only their quantity.

06

Being there is not being noticed.

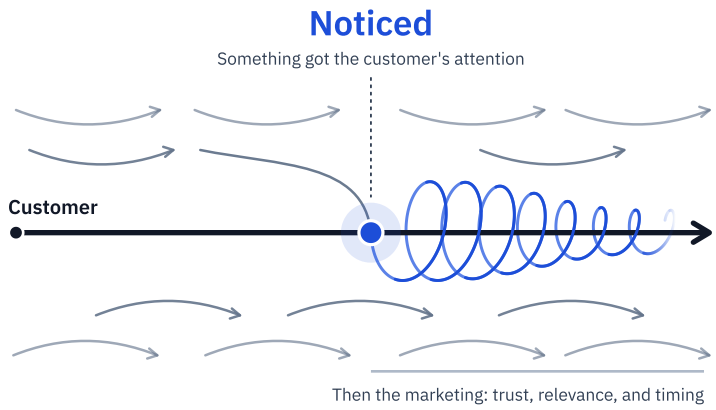
A message has to be noticed before it can be trusted, found relevant, or arrive on time.

Being around the customer gives a message its chance. It does not get the message noticed. A customer in motion decides what gets attention. Most marketing messages, whether paid, earned, or organic, pass without it. Something has to make the customer look: a need that just sharpened, a recommendation from someone they trust, a search they started themselves, a message that matches what they are already doing. Exposure is not attention, and attention is not a sale. Once a message is noticed, trust, relevance, and timing shape what happens next.

ImplicationAsk first whether the message was noticed. Measure attention separately from delivery and from conversion.

Being there is not being noticed

The customer is moving. Most messages pass. One is noticed.



Being There Is Not Being Noticed

The customer is moving. Something shakes them. It gets their attention. It hooks them. Most marketing messages pass without that; one is noticed, and only from that point can trust, relevance, and timing matter. Being noticed is not being chosen.

07

Trust is the first test.

Once a message is noticed, credibility affects whether the customer takes its claim seriously.

Once a message has the customer's attention, the customer judges whether the business, source, or promise appears credible. Reviews, proof, consistency, transparency, and past experience can influence that judgment before the customer compares offers in depth, which is why trust comes before relevance and timing. Distrust can interrupt consideration even when an offer is relevant. Trust is therefore a first-order management concern, while still interacting with attention, relevance, timing, price, and need rather than working as a fixed rule that applies in every case.

ImplicationBuild evidence and credibility before assuming more exposure will solve weak response.

08

Relevance depends on the customer, not the message.

The same message can matter today and miss tomorrow.

Relevance is the relationship between an offer or message and the customer's current situation. An explanation for someone ready to compare suppliers may mean little to someone who has not recognized the need. Customers differ, and individual needs change. The goal is not a supposedly universal message; it is evidence and communication suited to the conditions real customers encounter.

ImplicationMatch communication to customer needs and context; revisit those assumptions as conditions change.

09

Timing cannot be manufactured.

You cannot reliably schedule a customer's readiness.

A customer's readiness depends on circumstances the brand can only partly observe or influence. Needs may emerge suddenly, budgets may shift, and decision-makers may change. Consistent, credible presence increases the chance that a relevant message is available when someone is ready. Effective timing is not simply sending more messages or predicting one perfect day.

ImplicationBuild useful presence across realistic decision moments instead of relying only on volume.

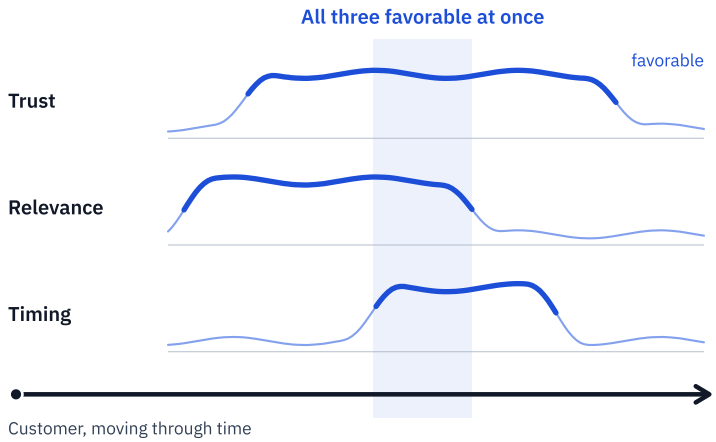
10

Trust, relevance, and timing work together.

A message can be seen and still fail to move the decision.

A trusted company can reach someone who has no current need. An urgent need can meet a message the customer does not believe. A useful offer can arrive after the customer has already chosen. Trust, relevance, and timing interact with attention, alternatives, and practical constraints. The model helps a company ask which conditions may be limiting response, rather than assuming all weak conversion problems have the same cause.

ImplicationDiagnose which conditions are limiting response before increasing activity across every channel.



Each condition has its own scale. The thick stretch is when it is favorable. Stylized, not measured. It does not last: all three keep changing.

Alignment Moment

Each condition has its own track and its own scale. What matters is the stretch of time in which trust, relevance, and timing are all favorable at once, not a point where three values are equal. It is rarely engineered. It is recognized and acted on, and because all three keep changing, it does not last.

11

Paid media buys distribution, not the decision.

Buying more exposure does not guarantee more customers.

Paid media can place a message in front of more people and increase the opportunity to earn attention. Exposure is not attention, and attention is not a sale. An advertisement may strengthen familiarity or interest, but greater spend does not guarantee credibility, personal relevance, readiness, or a winning offer. When results disappoint, the answer may be better targeting, clearer evidence, a better experience, or a stronger offer rather than simply buying more impressions. The Helix helps frame that diagnosis.

ImplicationMeasure distribution, attention, consideration, and conversion separately. Spend more only when the evidence supports it.

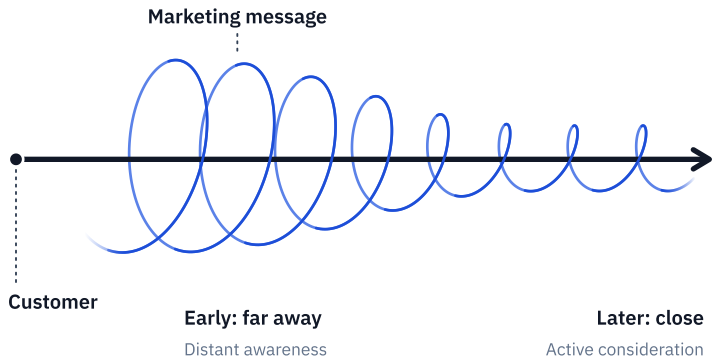
12

Alignment is temporary.

A brand can lose relevance without changing its own campaign.

A customer's circumstances change while competitors, search systems, cultural expectations, and available evidence also change. A familiar message may no longer fit. Strong past results do not guarantee future response. What the Helix calls alignment is therefore a changing condition that needs observation and renewed evidence, not an asset permanently secured after one campaign succeeds.

ImplicationMonitor customer response and market conditions rather than treating previous alignment as permanent.



Orbit Tightening

While credible signals reinforce one another, the orbit contracts and the message moves closer to alignment. Early orbits are wide. The same diagram runs in reverse when the signals weaken: the orbit widens and the distance returns.

13

Trust can compound or decay.

Each experience can strengthen or weaken the next judgment.

Credible promises supported by consistent experience can reinforce the customer's confidence over time. Contradictions, poor service, outdated claims, or neglected relationships can erode it. Compounding is possible, not automatic. The Helix includes both strengthening and weakening trust because responsible marketing must account for outcomes that move in either direction.

ImplicationProtect accumulated credibility as carefully as you seek new attention.

14

The purchase is not the end.

The sale changes the relationship. It does not stop customer movement.

Purchase creates a new kind of evidence: the customer experiences whether the promise was fulfilled. Delivery, service, communication, support, and subsequent needs influence retention and future decisions. The Post-Purchase Helix is the same behavioral model continuing beyond the acquisition funnel. Some full-funnel systems also measure post-sale stages; the teaching diagram uses purchase as the illustrative boundary, not a universal definition of every funnel.

ImplicationObserve the customer after conversion, not only before it.

15

One customer's experience reaches the next customer.

Reviews and referrals become evidence other customers encounter.

An experience can influence people who have never dealt with the business. Public reviews, referrals, recommendations, complaints, and repeat purchasing can affect the next person's trust and consideration. This is the bridge from one customer's post-purchase experience to another customer's decision environment. The Review Window is one aspect of this connection; Customer-to-Review Rate and Time-to-Review can help measure verifiable review participation and timing where suitable customer-cohort data exist, without pretending they measure trust directly.

ImplicationTreat customer experience and credible third-party evidence as inputs to future demand.

16

Marketing must adapt as the customer moves.

Keep the promise stable where appropriate; update the response when evidence changes.

Customers, competitors, and information environments keep moving. A plan made once cannot reliably describe the market indefinitely. Adaptive Brand Management turns the diagnosis into an operating discipline: Observe, Interpret, Decide, Adapt, Verify, and Learn. The goal is neither constant reinvention nor rigid consistency. It is to protect what matters in the brand while adjusting communication, evidence, channels, offers, and experience when changing conditions warrant it.

ImplicationMake adaptation a measured, accountable responsibility rather than an occasional campaign reset.

marketing helix

marketinghelix.com

A customer behavior model describing how a customer in motion gives a message attention, and how trust, relevance, and timing then shape whether it draws closer, drifts away, or returns.