

*Experts in  
Business to  
Business  
Customer  
Engagement*

# Customer Engagement: The New Frontier in Market Research

Customer engagement research goes beyond the basics of workflow, customer archetypes, and buyer profiles to uncover the buying process itself.

**Signorelli Consulting Group, Inc.**

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**SIGNORELLI**  
Consulting Group

# Customer Engagement: The New Frontier in Market Research

*It is good to know what people need; it is better to know how they buy.*

## How Customer Engagement Research is Different

Traditionally, most market research in the B2B space focuses on two things: identify customer needs for efficiency and productivity, and validate messaging in your marketing. The first drives product or service development, while the second helps you bring it to market. Both goals are essential for marketers who target the business market.

**Customer engagement research is different.** It goes beyond the basics of workflow, customer archetypes, and buyer profiles to uncover the buying process itself. Good customer engagement research will tell you:

- ❑ Stages in the customer buying process
- ❑ Customer criteria for moving to the next stage
- ❑ Customer questions at each stage
- ❑ Internal customer needs to move the sale forward
- ❑ Customer concerns—logical and emotional—as they move through the process

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When you are selling technology or services to corporations, this buying process is usually very complex. In the past, marketers empowered sales people to walk customers through the complicated decision making process. With recent research showing that customers have already moved 55-70% of the way toward a decision before even talking to sales rep, it is clear that customers have shifted the burden to marketers. Customers want information to help them long before they spend time with reps, and marketers have to provide it to them.

When you have the knowledge customer engagement research can provide, you can target your content to reflect the exact stage, needs, questions, and concerns of the customer buying process.

## What You Will Learn From This White Paper

**You'll learn the basics you'll need to design a customer engagement research program for your organization, including:**

- ✓ How to Conduct Customer Engagement Research
- ✓ The Focus of the Research
- ✓ Budget Parameters
- ✓ Finding a Research Vendor



## How to Conduct Customer Engagement Research

Customer engagement research usually requires a few key ingredients:

- ❑ Clear focus on a product or service line buying decision
- ❑ List of customers or potential customers
- ❑ Appropriate budget
- ❑ An experienced, trusted research partner

### Ingredient 1: Focus

Customer engagement is specific to a single customer problem. Your solution may involve more than one product or service, but it is a single decision making process related to that one problem your customer experiences. You want to make sure you focus your research project on that one solution.

### Ingredient 2: List of customers

As the client, you will need to provide or obtain a list of customers to contact for your research. The best lists are those of existing customers who have recently purchased from you. If you don't have that, and many don't, then you need to profile that person and recruit them from more general lists. This works, but it is more expensive and time consuming as a general rule.

### Ingredient 3: Appropriate budget

The budget for this kind of research varies widely depending on several key factors:

- ❑ Number of interviews
- ❑ Quality of the list
- ❑ Length of interviews
- ❑ Honorarium paid to participants

That said, most initial projects can be completed within a range of \$10,000 to \$50,000. Appropriate budgeting is required because this kind of research must be done by a third-party vendor.

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### Ingredient 4: Experienced, trusted research partner

The two key ingredients for selecting a research vendor for this kind of research are experience and trust.

- ❑ **Trust** is essential because the vendor is going to be talking with your customers, maybe your best customers. Often, this research is conducted with transparency, meaning that the interview subjects are provided with the identity of the sponsor. Trust and professionalism are of utmost importance.
- ❑ **Experience with customer engagement research** (as opposed to other market research) is essential in order to ask the right kind of questions. Market researchers who have not done this kind of research before will often ask the wrong questions or fail to follow up where they should, and that results in lost insight at high expense to you. Researchers experienced in customer engagement know the difference and will not make those mistakes.

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## Conclusion

To undertake the unique power of customer engagement research for your company, think about your focus, how you can get a list, and the appropriate budget. If you are stuck on any of these, contact a research vendor with experience in this kind of research—they should be able to help you find the answers you need. If you have any questions on how to proceed at all, feel free to contact us at Signorelli Consulting Group—we’ll be glad to help you prepare for a successful customer engagement research project.

## Learn More

At Signorelli Consulting Group, we specialize in customer engagement research that opens the doors of perception into your customer’s mind and experience. Then, where appropriate, we guide you in the process of aligning your content strategy to those insights. To learn more about the cutting edge in content marketing strategy, please contact Tony Signorelli at:

[tony@signorelli.biz](mailto:tony@signorelli.biz).

## About the Author

Anthony Signorelli is President of Signorelli Consulting Group, Inc., an innovative leader in customer engagement, marketing effectiveness, and sales optimization. Using tools such as customer research, field organization assessment, process mapping, workflow analysis, customer journey mapping, and industry leading sales training methods, Signorelli helps corporate leaders get the most out of their sales force. From executive sales leadership, to product marketers and call center managers, clients rely on Signorelli to bring the insights necessary to keep their sales forces in line with the needs of a rapidly changing market. Find us on the web at: [www.signorelli.biz](http://www.signorelli.biz).

