

5 VITAL CLASSES OF CONTENT

*A Framework for B2B
Content Success*

akoonu

Contents

In the B2B world where long buying cycles mean that the role of content is stretched over a wide length of time, it's absolutely essential for marketers to employ the full spectrum of content, each with its own specific purpose, or desired effect on your buyer.

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Content Drives Buying Decisions

Content is the vehicle in which a company tells its story. It highlights the product, the team, what they have to offer, and ultimately does or does not drive conversions.

The role of content cannot be ignored – it is solely what prospects engage with during the majority of the buyer's journey.

That means that if content doesn't do its job, buyers are out the door and onto the next vendor before even speaking to a sales rep.

70%

of the Buyer's Journey is
complete before engaging
the vendor

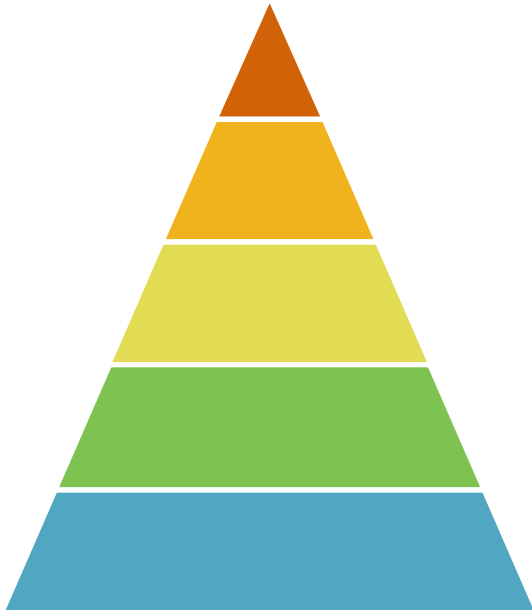
SiriusDecisions

87%

of B2B Buyers say that
content has an impact on
vendor selection

Social Media Today

Introducing a Framework for Content with a Purpose



In order for content to successfully engage and convert buyers, it must tell the entire story of a company. Only then will content both educate and connect with buyers in all the ways they need to be throughout their long buying journey.

Effectively telling the entire story of a company is not simple – rather, there are multiple layers to achieving this, and as such requires employing multiple classes of content.

In fact, there are five essential content classes, and employing them altogether is the most successful way to tell the full story. Think of these content classes as a pyramid with five layers moving from the base to the tip. At the bottom of the pyramid is the foundational content that highlights the product and company, and moving up the pyramid is content that engages audiences on a deeper level, motivating them to act.

Each content class in the pyramid is defined by its purpose, or the specific effect on the buyer that it is aiming to achieve. Why define class by purpose? One: content is developed more effectively when you know its end goal. And two: defining content classes by purpose will help ensure you're engaging the buyer on all necessary levels, which will ultimately keep them moving through the buying cycle and on to conversion. The pyramid, therefore, acts as a framework for content with a purpose.

Informational

Purpose: *Build confidence and knowledge in your product*



Informational content includes the facts, figures, details, and explanations of a company and its offerings.

Successful informational content helps your buyer understand how your product fits their needs, how it works, and how it resolves their problems.

CONTENT CLASS #1

Informational

Types of informational content include [data sheets](#), [product pages](#), [case studies](#), and [press releases](#).

Example:



Clickability Features & Functionality

Architecture

Clickability was architected from the ground up to deliver all the benefits of a true SaaS solution in combination with powerful WCM features and the industry's most robust platform for Website Delivery.

Scalable Multi-Tenant Architecture Clickability's delivery infrastructure is built with redundancy in mind and there is no single point of failure. Application components are deployed in pools of web and application servers, and databases run in replicating pairs or groups. Both our connections to the internet and the internal network are redundant at each layer, including all routers, firewalls, load balancers, and switches.

Dynamic Content and Page Generation Website pages are "assembled" dynamically from the server when requested, in contrast to other WCM systems that generate decoupled, static pages. With true dynamic content and page generation, Clickability pulls in the latest content for publishing each time a page is rendered, enabling dynamic features such as social media, membership and personalization without the need for third-party services.

Security

Clickability employs a "Defense in Depth" approach in order to safeguard your website. Our application architecture and database design ensure the security and integrity of your data, including personally identifiable information, and we strictly enforce the physical security of our two SAS-70 Type-II datacenters. Automated server provisioning, robust firewall zones, restricted network traffic and more, help to prevent unauthorized access to your website. And, with constant third-party scanning, we stay on top of emerging threats and

Redundant Data Centers

Clickability is hosted in two active/active SAS-70 Type II certified data centers. Failover is nearly instant and either data center could support the entire platform in the event of a failover. All systems, hardware, and network connections are redundant within each data center and across the data centers.

Content Editing

Clickability makes it easy for non-technical users to create and edit content.

Content Creation

Clickability is designed for non-technical users to easily create and manage content items. The Platform specifically supports recent versions of Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox and is both MAC and PC compatible.

Bulk Edit Features

The timesaving bulk edit feature allows content producers to edit, target or categorize several content items at once.

Figure 1. Clickability's user-friendly interface enables non-technical users to create and manage content items easily



Contextual

Purpose: Build confidence and respect for your company and its position in your industry



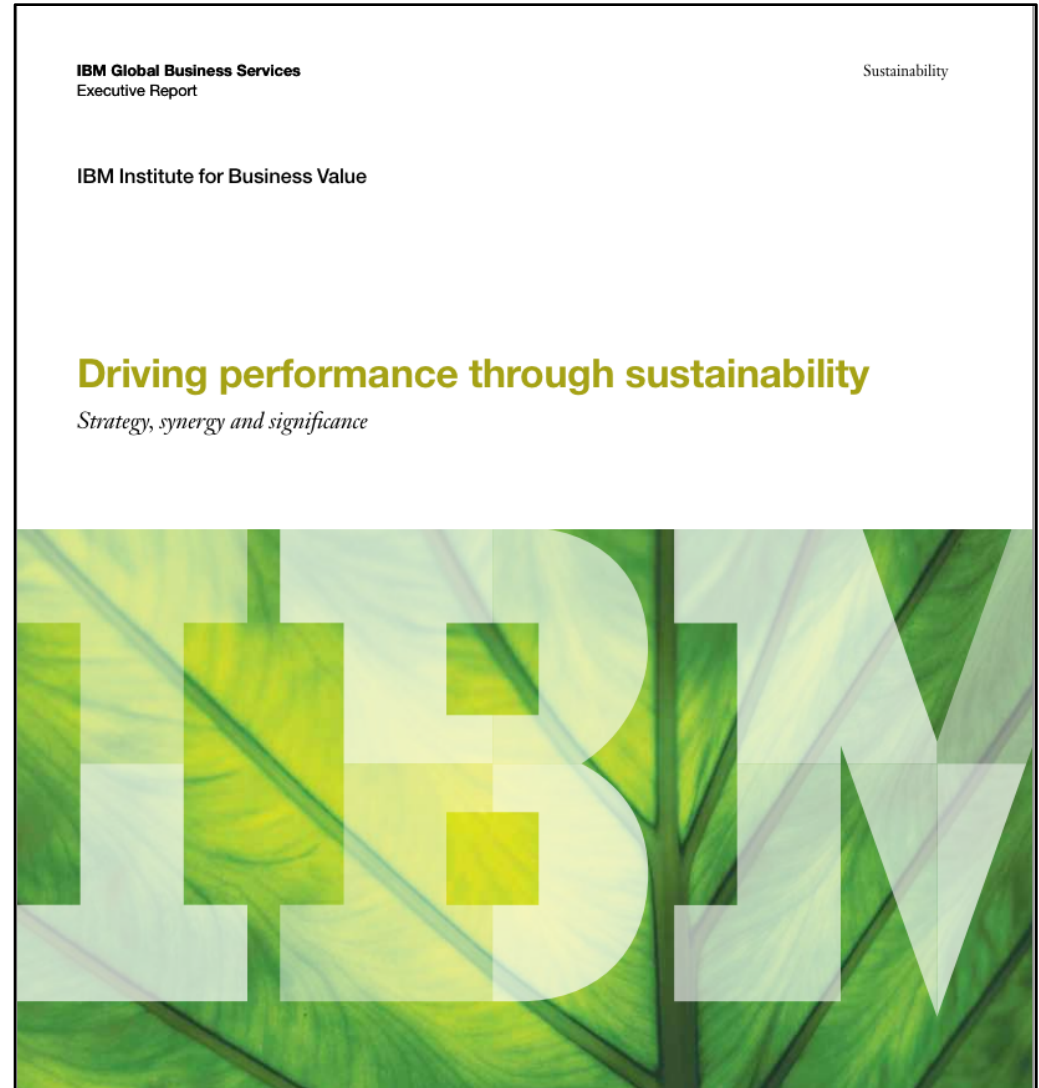
Contextual content includes thought-leadership, best practices, and market trends, insights, and analysis. It shows that your company is the industry expert.

Effective contextual content proves to your buyer that they can trust you for the best innovations and for reliable advice. Not only does your product meet the buyer's needs, but your team behind the product understands the market and how best the buyer can tackle their challenges.

Contextual

Types of contextual content includes **blogs**, **whitepapers**, **solution pages**, **webinars**, and **contributed articles**.

Example:



Emotional

Purpose: Create feelings of goodwill and affinity in your buyer



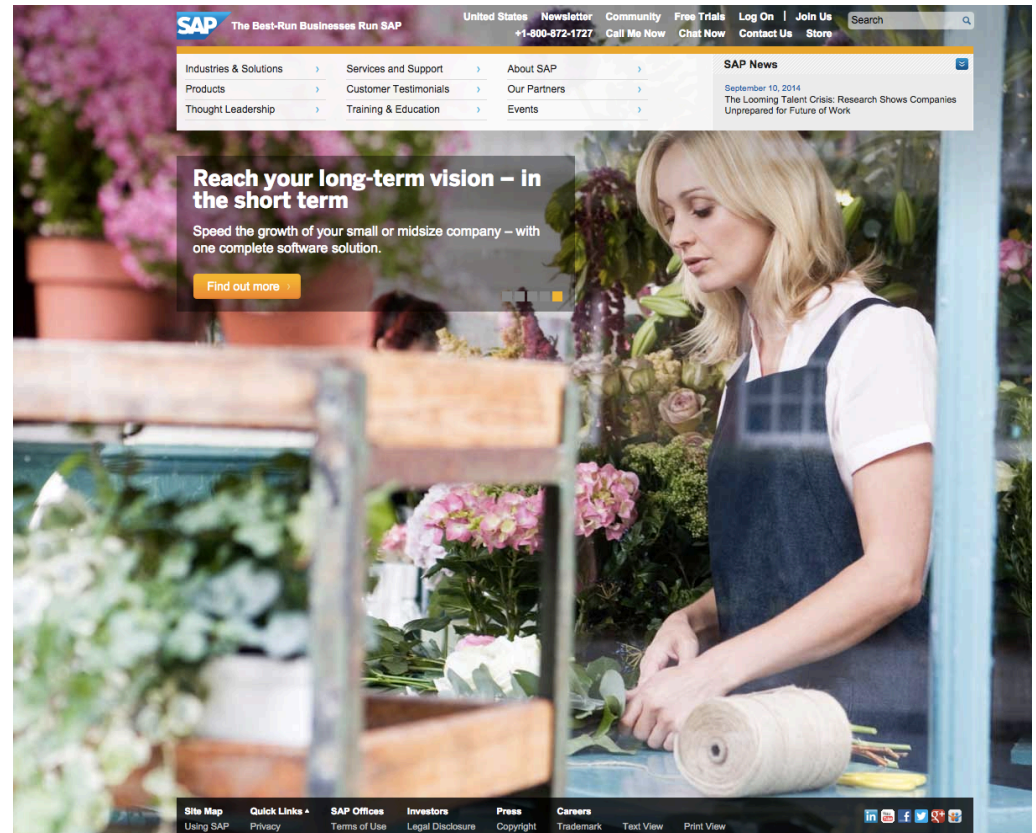
Emotional content includes anecdotes and imagery of everyday life and successes and situations that people can relate to and connect with.

Emotional content is a big leap from highlighting the company and its product to focusing more on the audience. It causes buyers to feel good about the company – not in that they can trust and rely on them, but in that they feel the company can relate to them. Emotional content drives positive vibes.

CONTENT CLASS #3

Emotional

Example:



Types of emotional content include
images, videos, and blogs.

CONTENT CLASS #4

Motivational

Purpose: Incite your audience into taking a desired action



Motivational content includes stories of courage to pursue the new and different and pushes buyers to take on big challenges, and to push the boundaries.

Successful motivational content propels buyers into motion by showing them the impact they can make.

CONTENT CLASS #4

Motivational

Example:

Types of motivational content include **case studies**, **research reports**, and **industry stories**.



The screenshot displays the American Red Cross website. The header includes the logo, navigation links (WHAT WE DO, RED CROSS STORIES, NEWS & EVENTS), and utility links (Sign In/Sign Up, Cart: 0). A secondary navigation bar contains buttons for DONATE FUNDS, DONATE BLOOD, TRAINING & CERTIFICATION, and WAYS TO HELP.

The main content area features a large article titled "Red Cross Specialist Assists Syrian Refugees" with a photo of a smiling child holding fruit. Below the photo, text states: "ince the Syrian conflict began almost 3 years ago, millions have fled to Jordan has opened its borders to the Syrian people with an estimated 1."

A sidebar on the right contains motivational content:

- Join In** (with Red Cross logo icon): "See how you can help. Everyone can make a difference." with a red "Get Involved" button.
- Make a Donation** (with dollar sign icon): "Provide people in crisis today with hope for tomorrow."
- Share a Story** (with person icon): "Join others who have given and received help."

At the bottom of the article, a quote is visible: "...caring for both Syrian and Iraqi refugees". A small bio snippet for Wendy Brightman is also present: "Posted June 10, 2014 Wendy Brightman is an American disasters around the world and is as they help refugees arriving from".

Inspirational

Purpose: Influence your buyer's beliefs on what is possible



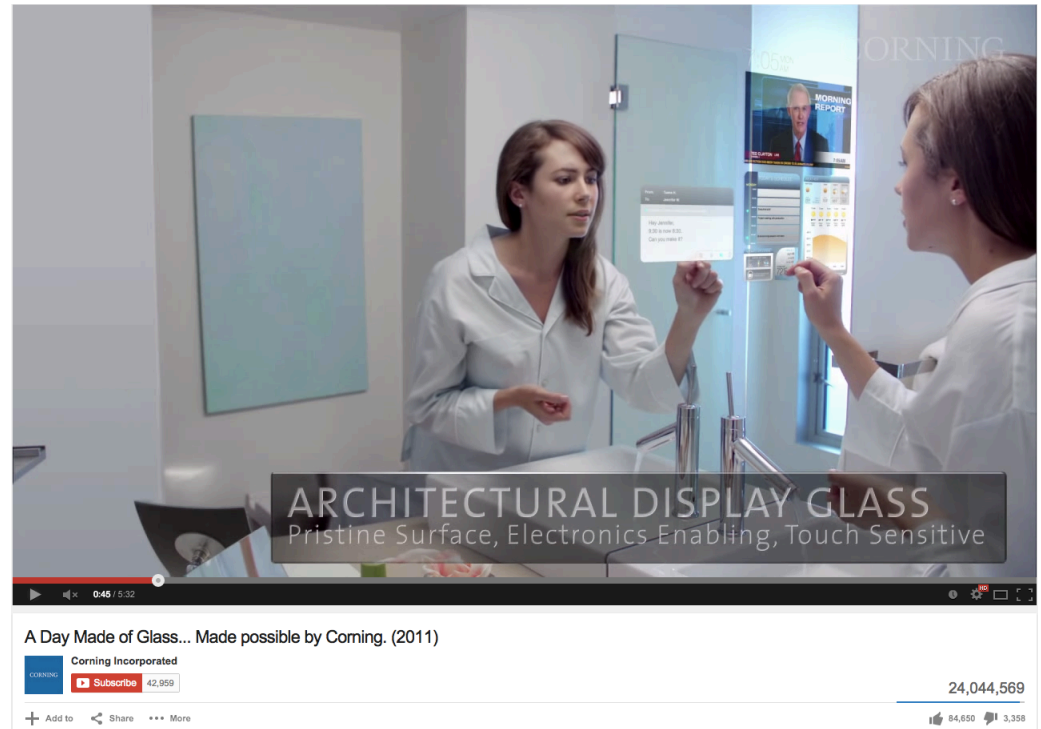
Inspirational content includes novel perspectives and stories of dreams and visions. It focuses on the human condition and changes how we think, what we do, and how we relate to others.

Inspirational content drives the buyer to think beyond their direct role and impact to how they can bring significantly larger benefits to their company and their own customers as a whole.

CONTENT CLASS #5

Inspirational

Example:



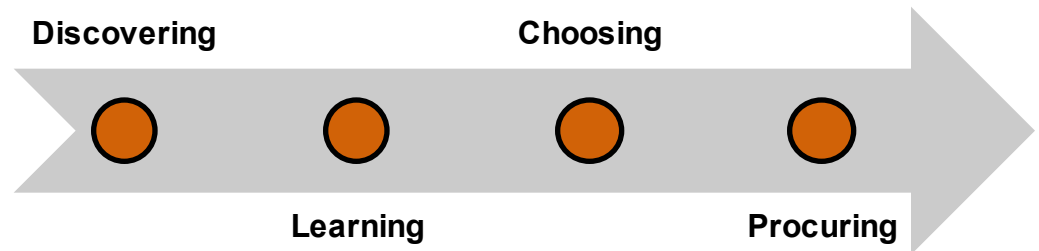
Types of inspirational content
include **videos**, **blogs**, and
microsites.

Content Purpose in the Buyer's Journey

The stages of the buyer's journey typically include: *Discovering*, *Learning*, *Choosing*, and *Procuring*.

By leveraging a framework for content with a purpose, you can provide a balanced content approach that ignites intellectual, emotional, and passionate engagement with your buyers – all of which are imperative to keeping prospects moving through the buyer's journey. Conversely, if you do not employ all classes of content, you will lose prospects at some stage.

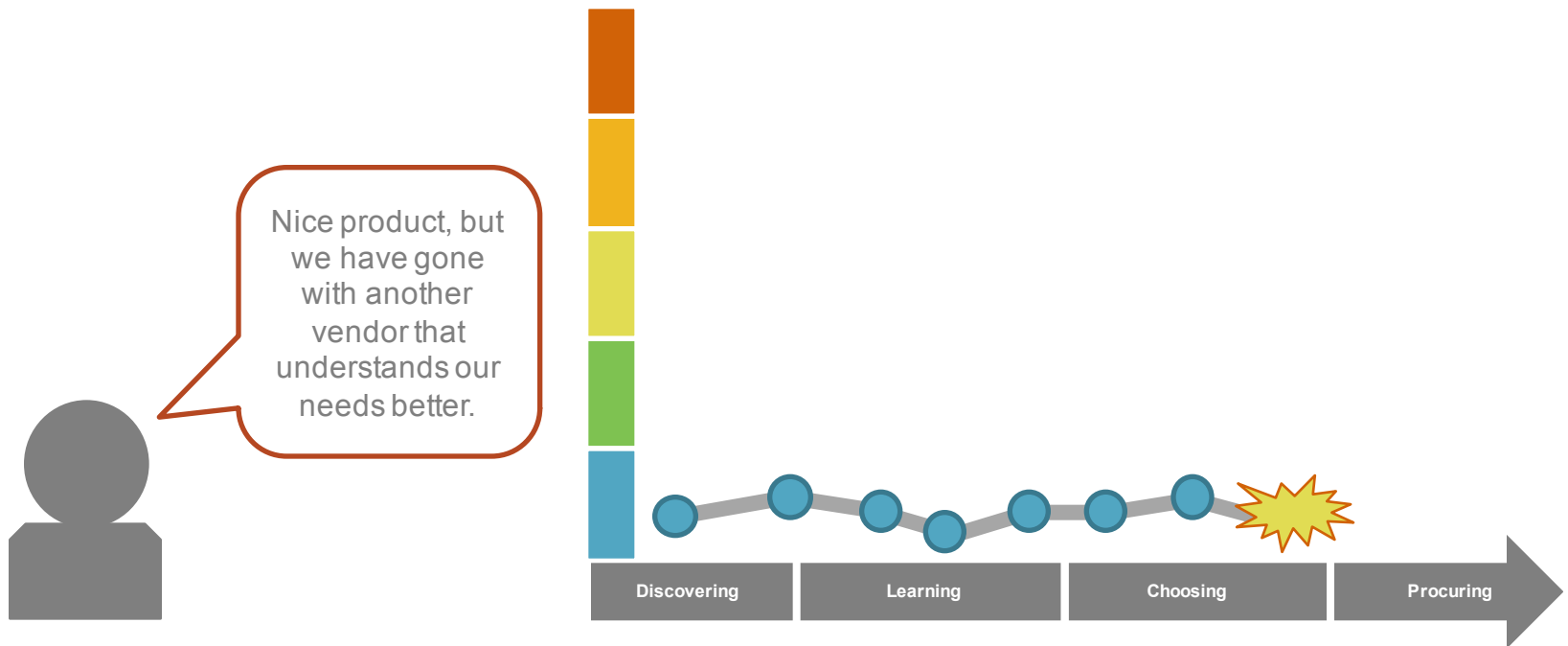
Indeed, every marketer and sales rep has suffered three common content pitfalls with buyers that result in losing them at some stage in the buying cycle to a competitive alternative. Likewise, successes can come in multiple forms as well.



Pitfall #1

Only Information Content

You may focus purely on informational content, so your product may sound great to the buyer, but they leave in Choosing as they find another provider that appears to understand their business challenges and market place better.



Pitfall #2

No Emotional Connection

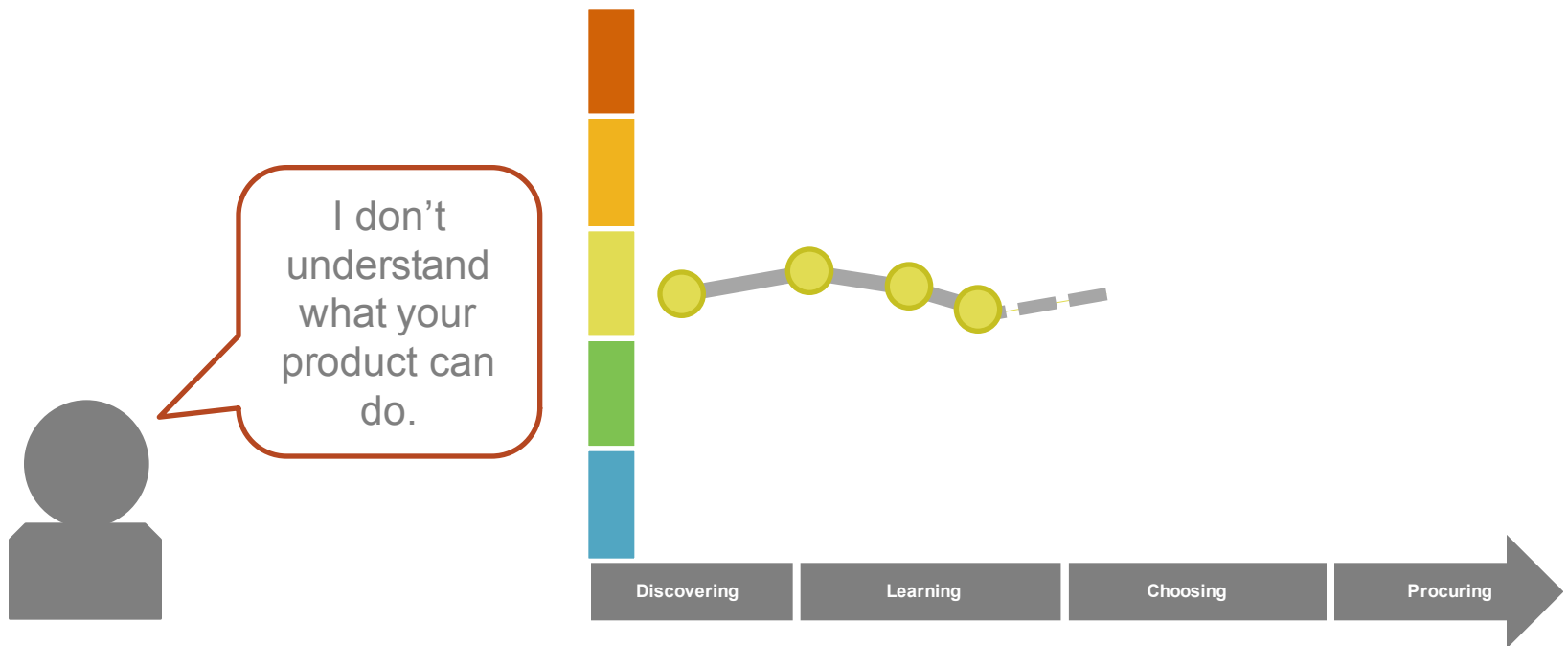
You provide both informational and contextual content, but you have no emotional connection to the buyer so they exit very late in the sales process. In fact, you may be left guessing as to why they chose a different product because they simply disappeared.



Pitfall #3

All Fluff

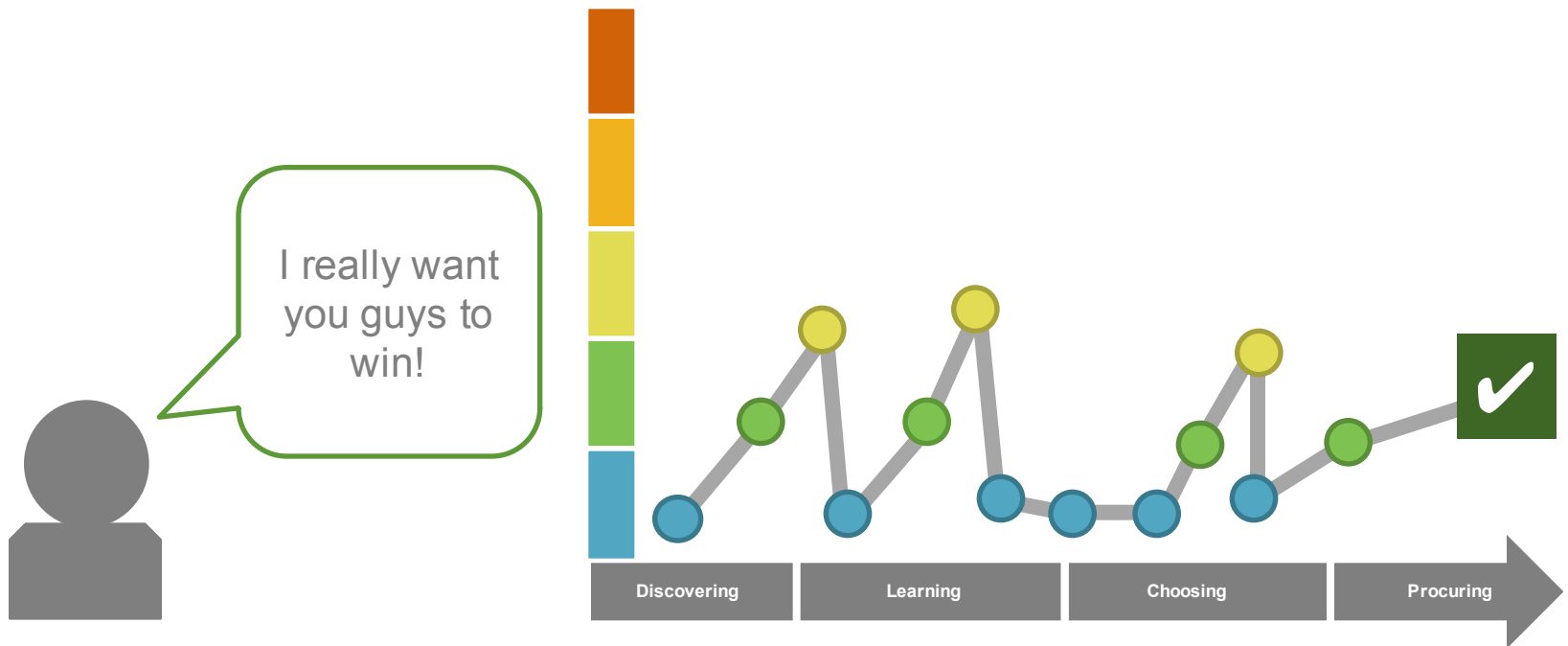
You provide too much fluff content, and your buyer immediately leaves in Learning because the content lacks specificity and product details. In fact, you will likely never even know this buyer exists because they will not choose to engage before looking elsewhere to solve their business needs.



Success #1

Connecting Emotionally

You provide buyers with informational and contextual content and start to establish an emotional connection as well.



Success #2

Unlock the Status Quo

You provide motivational content on top of establishing an emotional connection and a foundation of trust and credibility, thereby spurring buyers into action that were previously stuck in their buying process.



Success #3

Content Nirvana

You engage your buyer leveraging every class of content up through motivational and inspirational, and the buyer gloriously declares that they are ready to work with you.

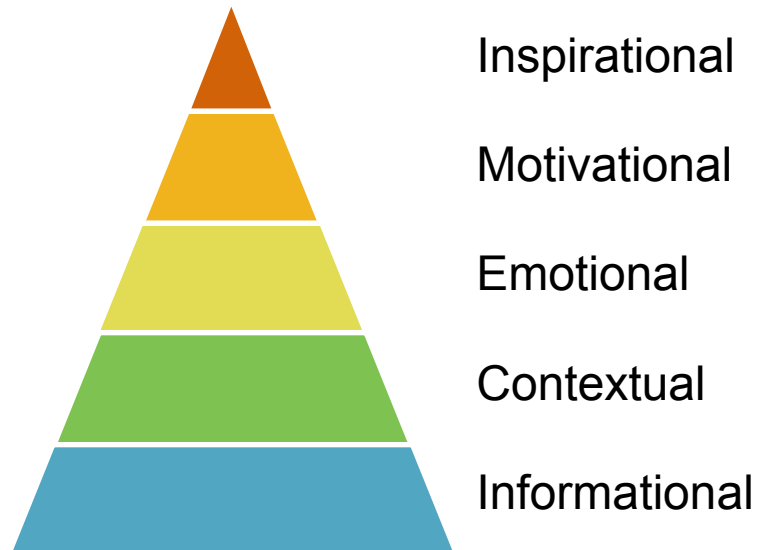


Let's find a way to do business together.



Summary

Especially in the B2B world where long buying cycles mean that the role of content is stretched over a wide length of time, it's absolutely essential for marketers to employ all five classes of content, each of which has its own specific purpose, or desired effect on your buyer. When used in its entirety, the content with a purpose framework ensures that you engage with prospects in all the ways you need to engage with them in order to convert them. As a result, you establish a more relevant and powerful connection with buyers, from understanding your product and company to feeling good about your company, and finally to being motivated and inspired to act.



About the Author




Jeff Freund

Jeff Freund is a 15+ year veteran of the content industry. He is currently founder and CEO of Akoonu, a strategic marketing platform for B2B enterprise companies. The Akoonu Platform helps marketers deliver high quality buying journeys through a deep understanding of their audience and the production of engaging, buyer-centric content.

Previously, he was a founder of Clickability, the leading SaaS Web Content Management platform, and served as the company's CTO and CEO.

Throughout his career, Jeff has worked closely with customers to truly understand the needs of marketers and technologists in industries such as High Tech, Financial Services, Media, and Manufacturing. He has been active in the Digital Marketing ecosystem through extensive M&A experience and as a thought leader speaking at conferences and on panels.

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