

Need a hand fine-tuning your marketing funnel?

Ahead of the Curve (AotC) can offer support for the first three stages of the typical marketing funnel. Your sales team should excel at the last two!

The stages of **Awareness, Interest, and Consideration** are often overlooked by sales teams. The reason is simple: the pressure to generate monthly revenue means that high-potential closing opportunities (**Intent, Purchase**) consume all available sales bandwidth.



Effectively managing the first three stages can be beneficial for several reasons:

- Understanding your customers' buying criteria:** With the leverage of even minimal content explaining your offer and its associated benefits, you can begin to build a typical customer profile.
- Validating your customers' buying timeline:** When a customer engages with your website, you gain early visibility into their purchasing horizon and decision conditions—well before they interact with your sales team. This enables you to qualify intent more accurately and hand off the right leads at the right time, ensuring sales efforts align with genuine readiness to buy.
- Your best advertising to reach customers:** Even if they're not ready to buy immediately, customers engaged at this stage will move more quickly and efficiently toward the point where your sales team can take over and optimize the close.
- Fundraising support:** The most compelling arguments for investors include intellectual property, recent sales, and marketing funnel data. In this last case, every layer counts!

Actions by Funnel Stage

PRELIMINARY PREPARATION	AWARENESS	INTEREST
<p>1. Validate the customer message—it must be benefit-oriented to be effective!</p> <p>2. Evaluate existing contact lists (databases, trade show contacts, website inquiry forms/inbound).</p> <p>3. Clarify and define target audiences and segmentation.</p> <p>4. Identify additional desired targets (LinkedIn, association lists, etc.).</p> <p>5. Identify the minimally viable content needed to initiate email exchanges with customers.</p>	<p>AWARENESS</p> <p>The challenge is to maintain frequent communications to guide prospects through their buying journey. Content development—tailored to your means and resources—will help establish a nurturing communication channel. Each interaction improves your understanding of customer needs and helps accumulate valuable data for your CRM. Sales team involvement is optional at this stage.</p>	<p>INTEREST</p> <p>It's often easy to tell when a customer isn't ready to buy—but it's more important to understand when and what they plan to purchase. If they're not ready, they'll often find a quick way to disengage from a sales call. If the company chooses to manage this stage through marketing rather than sales, that's entirely feasible. Many cloud-based tools are available to automate CRM data collection and track how targeted customers interact with your website content.</p>



CONSIDERATION	INTENT	PURCHASE*
<p>Customers may request a budgetary quote. If the request is specific, the sales team must be involved. If the request is general, an automated clarification form can be used before forwarding a more detailed request to sales. The goal is to reduce email volume between the customer and sales team while still delivering a valid and effective quote.</p>	<p>At this stage—following an initial quote—the sales team takes full control and must properly qualify the customer's requirements, budget, and timeline. Discussions here should also uncover as many details as possible about the application, selection criteria, and competitive alternatives. All relevant information should be documented in the CRM.</p>	<p>To secure a Purchase Order (PO), a formal sales proposal is typically confirmed with the customer. After sending the proposal, close follow-up is essential (within two weeks, with monthly follow-ups until the customer confirms new conditions or the opportunity is marked as lost). Monthly PO reviews between sales and operations are critical to ensure delivery commitments are met. Realignment is always possible—but not always at the last minute! A won customer is easier to retain and grow than acquiring a new one. A satisfied customer will re-engage more easily; a frustrated one may quickly look elsewhere.</p>

*Each company can formalize its own sales forecasting method; generally, it's based on submitted proposals and/or recurring sales evaluations.

A Targeted Approach to Maximize Your Marketing Funnel Impact

The offer from **Ahead of the Curve (AotC)** is not about duplicating your organization's efforts, but rather about addressing a commonly overlooked blind spot: the **first three stages of the marketing funnel — Awareness, Interest, and Consideration**.

This proposal draws on **over 30 years of sales and marketing expertise** and aims to conduct an audit of your current practices. We leverage the latest tools, ensuring compatibility with your existing methods, to design a **highly automated, efficient, and cost-effective approach**.

Our goal:

To help you **quickly internalize** this process while **maximizing the performance of your sales team**. By structuring the early stages of the customer journey, you free up valuable time, improve lead qualification, and boost your conversion rates.

Boosting your capacity for high-impact content

I collaborate with your team to craft hyper-personalized technical-commercial content that drives the early marketing funnel and seamlessly transitions qualified leads to your sales team—accelerating conversion and revenue growth.

Let's discuss. Contact me at nicholas@aheadcurve.co



Drive traction, validate value, and accelerate results!

Ahead of the Curve helps accelerate and optimize your revenue journey, enhancing both process efficiency and performance (Audit, Optimize, Accelerate).

1	Message Development <i>(Website adjustment)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft clear, compelling, and technically sound messaging aligned with customer needs and strategic positioning. Tailor tone and content for relevance across technical, procurement, and executive audiences.
2	Audience Definition & Segmentation <i>(Build list of contacts)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and segment potential customers: technical evaluators, procurement officers, decision-makers. Map influence and decision authority to guide outreach and engagement strategy.
3	Proposition Framing & Feedback Loop <i>(Value proposition test)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the format: presentation, narrative, RFI, RFQ, or tailored proposal. Integrate customer feedback iteratively to refine the value proposition and ensure alignment with expectations and priorities.
4	Target Contact Management <i>(CRM)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and maintain a dynamic contact matrix: roles, influence level, engagement history. Prioritize outreach based on strategic fit, responsiveness, and decision-making authority.
5	Quote Development <i>(SOW response)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translate Statement of Work into a detailed, value-driven quote. Include scope, deliverables, timelines, pricing, and risk mitigation strategies. Ensure traceability to customer requirements and internal capabilities.
6	Follow-Up & Feedback Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct structured follow-ups post-quote submission. Capture and analyze customer feedback to adjust scope, pricing, or delivery terms. Maintain momentum and reinforce value through targeted communication.
7	Purchase Order & Revenue Capture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize transaction via PO issuance. Validate terms, delivery schedules, and payment milestones. Align internal systems for revenue recognition and forecasting.
8	Execution Readiness & Operational Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess production capacity and resource availability to fulfill commitments and leverage customer urgency. Implement steering mechanisms for execution oversight and adaptive planning.