

Decision Process

Identifying and influencing the people involved in the buying decision is a prerequisite to any successful sale. To help with this, we use a buying center. It brings together those members of an organization who become involved in the buying process for your solution – those with purchasing and financial expertise, those with technical expertise, top-level management, and those who actually use the product.

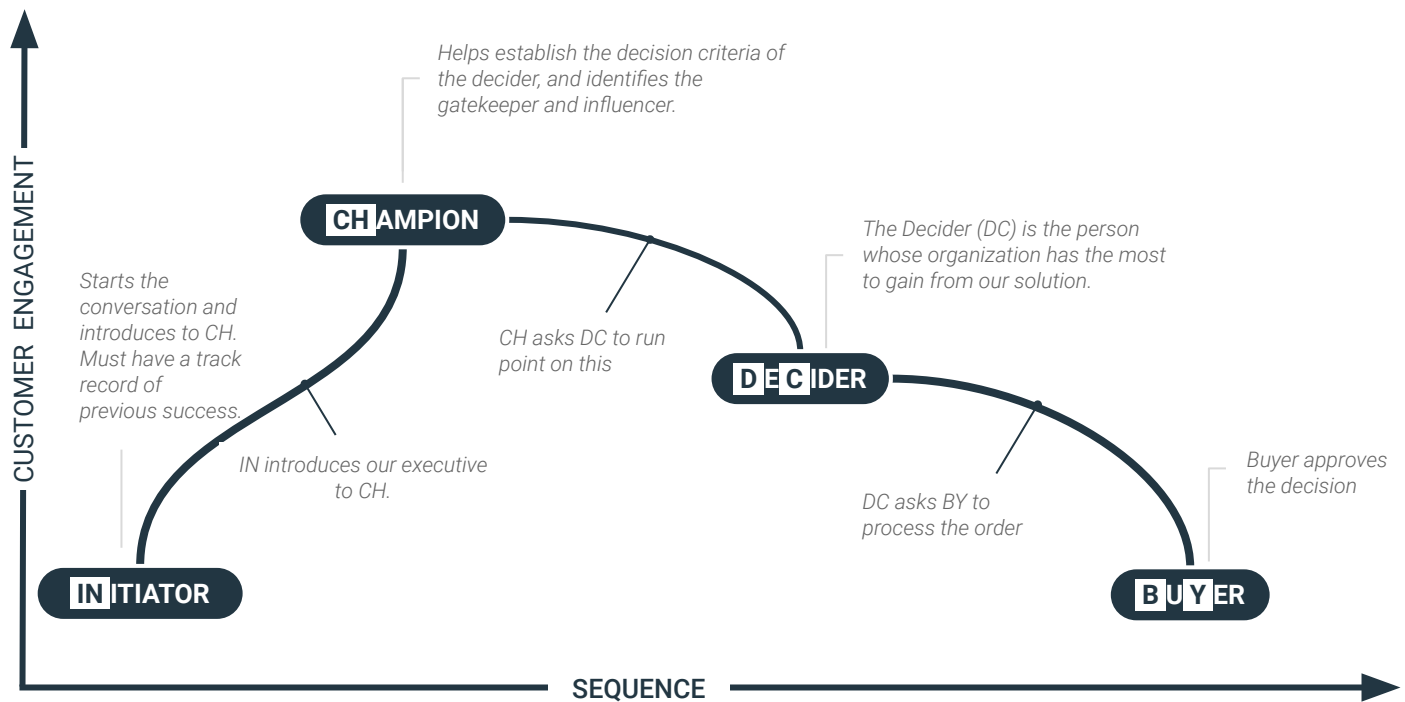


Figure 1. Consensus mapping using simple buying center roles

➤ Buying Center Roles (Simple)

Each company has a certain group of people who make decisions. When we look at the roles they play, we often find the same roles forming a very similar decision process:

- 1 The **Initiator** recognizes your offering on its merits and matches it to a need or pain.
- 2 The **Champion** makes a request to purchase the solution or recognizes the problem; with this action, they start the decision-making process.
- 3 The **Decider** makes the actual purchase decision. Typically, deciders do not have or need formal authority, but they have sufficient weight within the buying team to decide if a solution will be purchased.
- 4 The **Buyer** selects the suppliers and manages the buying process.

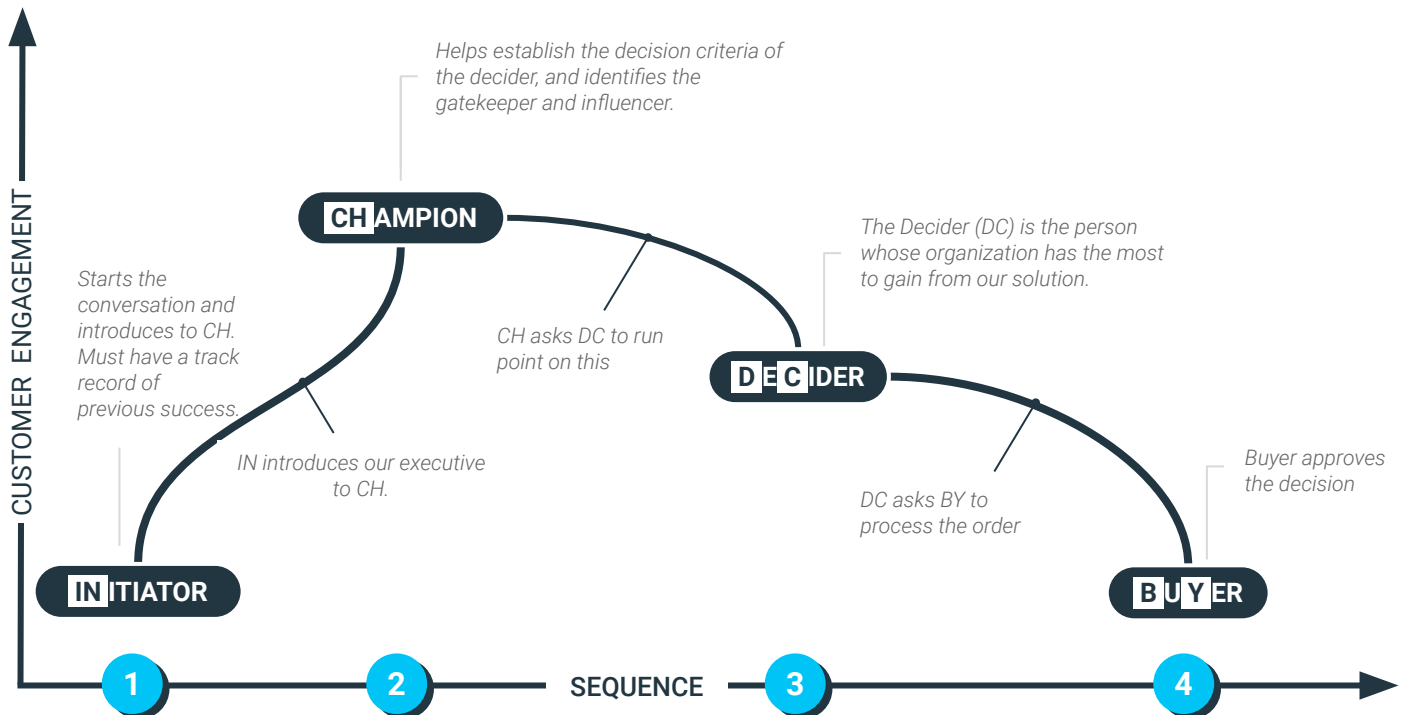


Figure 1 (Repeated). Consensus mapping using simple buying center roles

➤ Buying Center Roles (Complex)

In many cases, however, buying processes are not that simple. There are either more people playing additional roles or the same number of people playing multiple roles at the same time. This can get very complicated quickly, as depicted in Figure 2 below.

In more complex buying processes, three new roles commonly appear:

- The **Gatekeeper** controls the flow of information in and out of the company and its buying center.
- The **Influencer** contributes to the formulation and determination of the specifications for the solution. The influencer evaluates and recommends which potential supplier satisfies specific needs.
- The **Users** are the people who actually use the solution. Users are not always involved in the buying process, but they have a critical role in the evaluation of its performance and providing feedback.

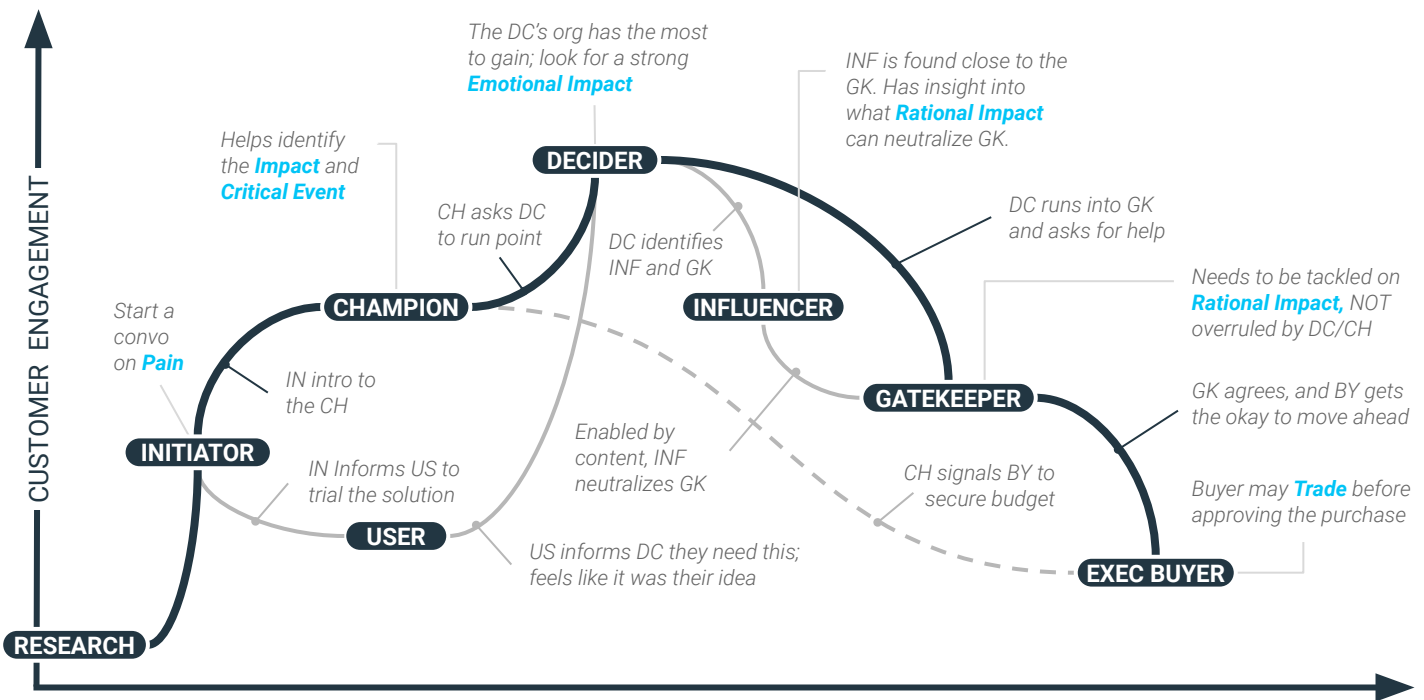


Figure 2. Consensus mapping using buying center roles to influence the Decider and Gatekeeper

➤ Account Research

Be consistent with your preparation across each of your accounts. This consistency will help you keep track of trigger events, which will help to determine when it's a particularly good time to connect with your customer.

Set Up Alerts - Trigger Events

Research

- Company website
- Company blog
- Product video / trial account
- LinkedIn company page
- LinkedIn Sales Navigator
- Industry trend articles

- In the news
- Recent press releases
- Key execs / board members
- Funding
- Competitors / alternatives
- Investor calls
- Public documents (e.g., 10-K Statements)

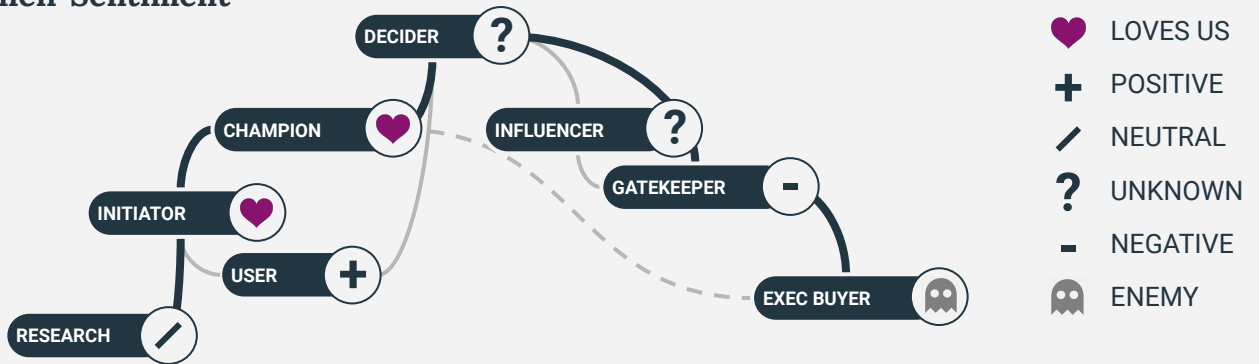
-
- Twitter
 - Facebook
 - Google News / Alerts
 - Quora
 - Owler

How to Develop an Account Plan

1 Map the Buying Center Roles:

Champion	_____	Influencer	_____
Initiator	_____	User	_____
Decider	_____	Gatekeeper	_____
Buyer	_____		

2 Map Their Sentiment



3 Establish A 3 X 3 Of Contacts

Customer Champion	_____	Contact Owner from your Company	_____
1.	_____	1.	_____
2.	_____	2.	_____
3.	_____	3.	_____

4 Choreograph a Simple Plan:

1. We will keep _____ happy by _____.
2. Talk to _____ to identify the impact that _____ wants.
3. We will develop a 3 x 3 by asking _____ for an intro to _____ and I'll have my manager reach out to them with an invite to _____.
4. Leverage upcoming webinar on _____ and ask _____ to be on the panel.
5. Send research report to _____ to develop a relationship.

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