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MECHANICA BEST PRACTICES

# BRAND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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Restless marketers understand that in today's chaotic media universe, **Brand Engagement** is the Holy Grail. Mechanica's Brand Engagement Strategy approach helps brands create, deepen, and extend relationships with prospects, customers, and consumers. Based in data-driven understanding of a brand's target audiences, Brand Engagement Strategy suggests the ideal media mix and cadence of brand experiences that capitalize on fast-changing marketplace realities and opportunities, including:

- Customer and prospect insights
- Market, seasonal, and media usage trends
- The brand's products and stories
- Competitors and competitive white space



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MECHANICA

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Forrester reports, “In 2015, Customer Experience (CX) rose to the number one priority for business and technology leaders. In 2016, it will be among the top ten critical success factors determining who will win and who will fail in the age of the customer.” Mechanica’s Brand Engagement Strategy approach fuses Customer Experience methodologies with Paid/Earned/Owned/Shared media mixes to create comprehensive plans to drive engagement across the entirety of the customer journey.

It’s hard to overvalue a relevant and distinctive customer experience. The sum total of positive and negative brand/customer interactions is the heart and soul of a brand relationship. However, what’s less clear is the seemingly dark art of tuning, maximizing or even transforming a customer experience into one that maximizes a brand’s potential opportunity. Embarking on such an endeavor can overwhelm even the most experienced marketing teams. The challenge is the ever-growing complexity of today’s cross-platform, cross-channel and multi-segment consumer ecosystem. Everything is dependent upon everything else. Attribution is necessarily multivariate, never merely last-click. Budget lines are crossed left and right. And profitable revenue models can be turned upside down if you’re not careful.

However, relying on past successes or doing nothing certainly isn’t an option. Great (and highly profitable) brand experiences achieve their vaunted status through managing a combination of customer experience innovations and brand consistency. The customer experience innovation part of the equation creates news, word of mouth, and competitive advantage. The consistency side of the coin allows the brand to scale quickly, market efficiently, and drive up margin.

The trick to sustaining growth is striking the right balance between periodic customer experience refreshes while never losing sight of the need to optimize for scalability and profitability. Companies who err on the side of customer experience innovation —without getting the consistency side right—fall prey to the trap of failed execution. Companies who err on the side of consistency above all else never manage to break out of the competitive pack, failing to realize the brand’s true potential.

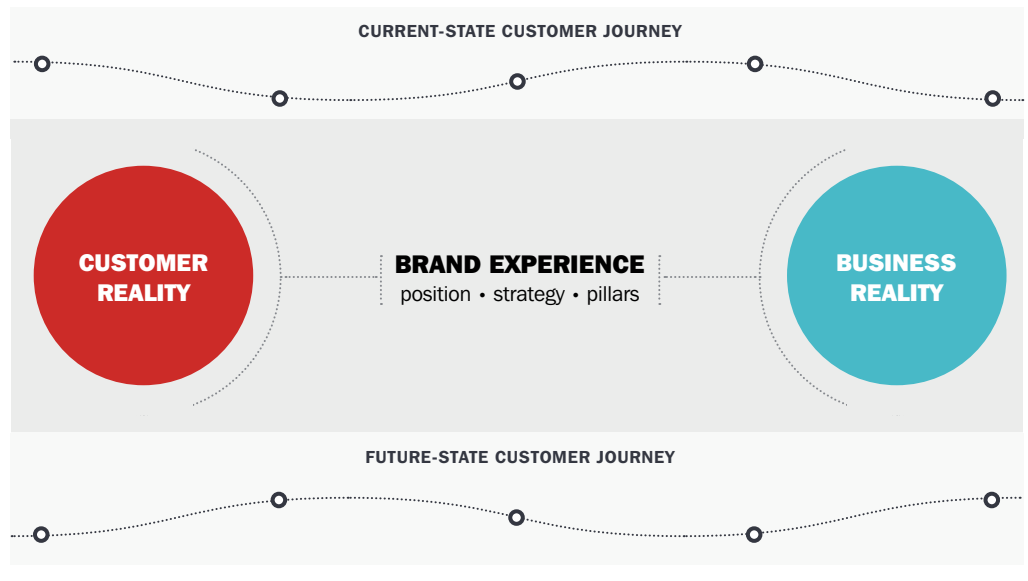
## CLOSING THE CUSTOMER REALITY VS. BUSINESS REALITY GAP

The role of a brand in creating a profitable customer experience is to bridge the gap between customer reality and business reality.

If we start with the customer reality, the needs, behaviors and expectations of the customer are often defined by a collection of moments that span and converge the on- and off-line worlds. Importantly, experiences outside the brand's category are frequently setting a high bar for what customers expect from all brands. For example, the immediacy of Amazon creates a "Buy Now with One Click" craving across all transactions, both digital as well as physical. This is why our client Staples sees great success in their "Buy Online, Pick Up In Store" program.

Next up is the business reality, specifically the internal challenges that hinder customer experiences. In our experience, channel initiatives are often developed in silos resulting in touchpoints that can work against each other. In addition, we've found that legacy workflows and systems such as scheduled code freezes become burdens to go-to-market efficiency and response times. As a result there is typically a gap between what businesses have on their road map and what their audience actually wants and needs.

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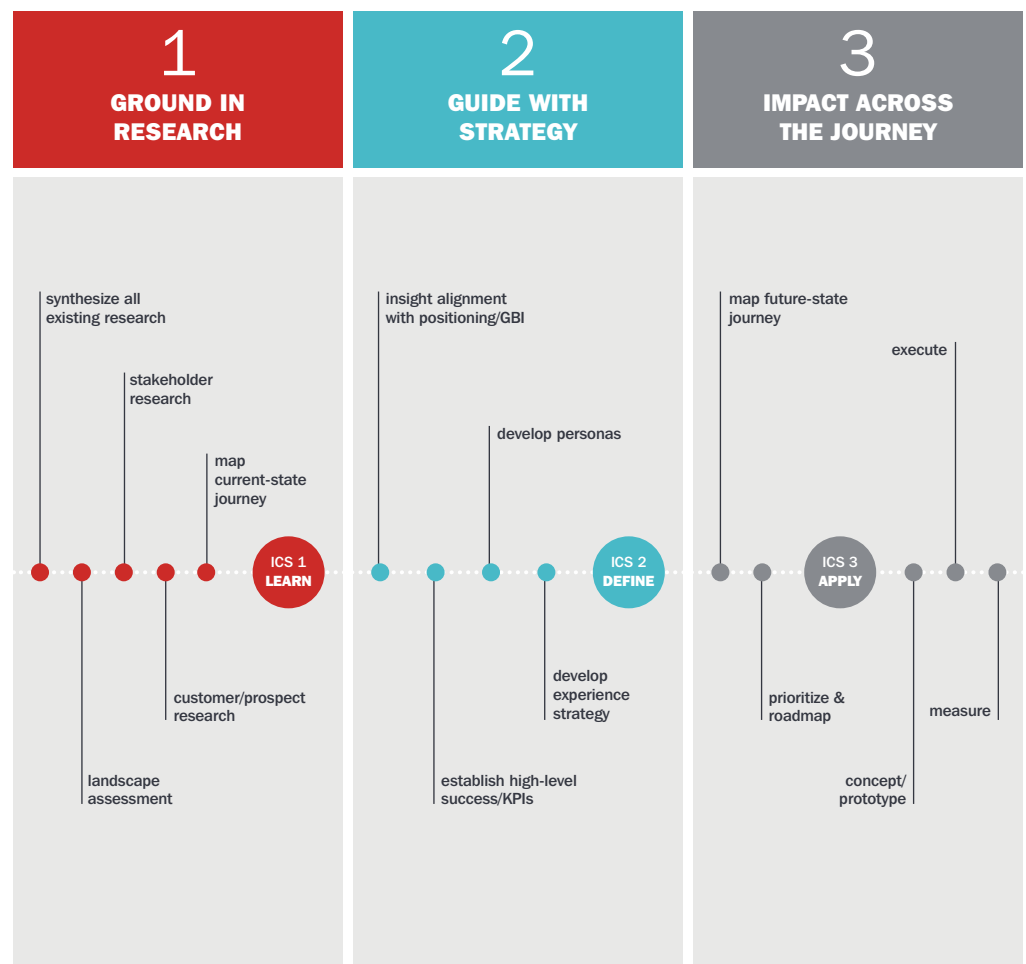
BULLHORN®



## A PROVEN, 3-STEP APPROACH

Mechanica has helped clients tune, optimize and transform their customer experiences for over a decade, working in both B2B and B2C, and both offline and online worlds.

Core to what we've learned is that the customer journey, both current-state and future-state must serve as the backbone of the discovery and implementation process. Mechanica customer journeys encapsulate opportunities to win in micro-moments as well as in conceptually bigger home runs. Frequently the leapfrog move comes in successfully aligning a cascading series of micro-moments in ways that pay off the brand position AND create true customer delight, again and again.



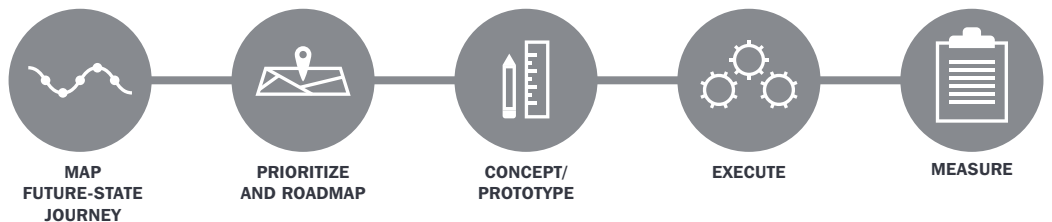
In the **Ground in Research** phase, we map the current-state context across your brand's ecosystem through uncovering customer pain points, expectations and opportunities.



In the **Guide with Strategy** phase, we distill key insights into opportunities that inform the brand positioning. Positioning then guides overarching brand experiences, as well as more tactical marketing activities.



During the **Impact across the Journey** phase we develop engagement strategies and tactics that work across all paid/earned/owned/shared channels, as well as benchmarks and testing plans for key success metrics.



Critical to the success of our process is the way in which we've engineered highly interactive Insight Driven Collaboration Sessions into each of the discovery and implementation phases. In these sessions we break data into fifteen-minute downloads, focusing on key insights with value to advance the state of thinking and drive decision making. We use pre-generated "Potential Implications" and "Thought Starters" to drive dialog around different aspects of the problem to explore possible solutions. Our collaborative F.I.T. (Fix, Improve or Transform) approach surfaces a multitude of opportunities, and we get buy-in from all stakeholders before anyone leaves the room. The result is that we're able to break through the daunting complexity and operational realities that so often challenge customer experience projects. By bringing the cross-functional stakeholders together under the umbrella of this carefully structured worksession framework, we're able to identify and act upon decisions that meaningfully advance the customer experience.

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## OUTCOMES

Effective customer experience methodologies provide brands with a number of immediately actionable (and monetizable) benefits. For starters, all thinking moving forward is anchored in a comprehensive on/offline brand audit considering the brand's story, the category landscape, the competition, and customer expectations. This provides an actionable anchor point for all cross-functional decision making.

Next, team members are equipped with a clear understanding and ability to measure the linkage between business objectives and customer experiences. This ROI-accountable linkage is absolutely critical to justifying the investments required to tangibly advance the customer experience.

The resulting engagement strategy translates opportunities to F.I.T. (Fix, Improve or Transform) the customer experience into opportunities for brand differentiation (experiences, messages, programs, marketing). These efforts are guided by a road map of prioritized recommendations against customer needs and ROI. The result is better alignment across functional groups from product development to delivery—ultimately driving brand engagement, momentum, loyalty, and EBITDA.

### Engine90

Finally, it's sometimes discovered that broader organizational issues are impeding the ability to fully deploy F.I.T. (Fix, Improve or Transform) opportunities. It's for these instances that Mechanica has jointly, with partners, developed the Engine90 [process](#). Engine90 represents a fast, efficient and innovative approach to helping companies connect brand experience strategy to holistic execution (beyond marketing and branding silos). By harnessing the power of appreciative inquiry and agile collaboration, companies gain a clear, cross-functional view of opportunities to drive growth. Partners then help the brand implement the various organizational programs needed to achieve these opportunities.

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We'd jump at the opportunity to share more with you and your team about our approach to creating actionable Brand Engagement Strategies. For more information, please call Ted Nelson, CEO and Strategy Director, at 978.499.7871 x101 or email [tnelson@mechanicausa.com](mailto:tnelson@mechanicausa.com).

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