



## The Consumption Chain

The relationship you have with customers is built, not just on your product or service, but the total experience the customer has with you. Ian MacMillan and Rita McGrath (HBR, July-August 1997) have coined the term "consumption chain" which maps a customer's entire experience with your product. According to MacMillan and McGrath, mapping the Chain can uncover valuable opportunities for differentiation.

The authors pose a number of questions which relate to the different links along the chain. Analyse your customers' experience by asking what, where, who, when, and how questions.

For example:

- What are they doing at each point along the chain; what else could they be doing; what problems do they encounter.
- Where are they at each point; where else could they be; where would they like to be.
- Who are they with; who influences the customer; how could you change either of those things to your advantage.
- When (day, night, time of week, time of year) are they at any point in the chain.
- How are their needs being addressed; do they have concerns; how else might you meet these needs.

For a worksheet of questions you might consider, send us an email at [pdennett@me.com](mailto:pdennett@me.com) with Consumption Chain Worksheet in the subject.

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