

A portrait of David Edelman, a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred.

# Identifying the Micro-Moments Within the Customer Journey

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Mobile is changing how brands communicate with customers—from the way they identify key moments of opportunity to how they create a great user experience. Google's VP of Marketing, Lisa Gevelber, spoke with McKinsey's David Edelman about micro-moments and how they fit into the customer journey.

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David Edelman has spent 20 years helping business leaders understand the implications of the evolving digital consumer landscape. Now, in his role as [global co-leader of digital and marketing & sales practices at McKinsey & Company](#), he is recognized as a leading expert on the evolution of the customer journey in the era of mobile.

**Lisa Gevelber, Google: You've helped many companies keep up with the dramatic impact mobile has had on consumer behavior. How has the customer journey changed?**

**David Edelman, McKinsey & Company:** Consumers now have the power to get information or get something done immediately. Because people have a computer in their hands at any given second, the individual moment they're in is now the most important part of the customer journey.

So, that's one thing. The other is that the customer journey is continuing after the purchase. People keep up on new ways to use a product or what accessories they might get. They also want to validate their purchase and read reviews even after they've bought a product.

**So what are you seeing as the best ways for companies to engage with these consumers along the path?**

We break up the path into a set of general stages. The first is when they're just starting to consider a category or a product. The second is when they're evaluating and actually making comparisons. Third is when people buy something. And last is the time after a purchase.

The key for marketers is being present in the kinds of environments that somebody might be in during different stages of the journey—whether it's in a search engine, in a video environment/YouTube, on a retailer site, on your own site, or on social media. Each stage needs to be thought

through pretty carefully to determine the kinds of content people might need.

At key moments along this journey, consumers are demonstrating their intent very clearly—in what have been dubbed “[micro-moments](#)”—and these are the most compelling opportunities along the new journey path.

### **How do marketers connect effectively during micro-moments?**

Brands can identify micro-moments by recognizing times when someone has a particular type of need. Someone may need to learn something, somebody may need to get something done, or someone may need to buy something. It’s about creating the content or tools to enable people to accomplish whatever they want in that particular moment.

Let me give you a very clear example of that. A micro-moment when you’re traveling is wanting to get into your hotel room and not have to wait in line to check-in. With the Starwood app, you can check-in right on the app. As soon as you enter the property, beacons recognize that you’re there. You verify your identity with a fingerprint (if you’re on an iPhone), the app provides your room number, and then you simply hold your phone up to the entranceway to the room, and go right in. That’s an amazing way for a brand to help you in a micro-moment.

There could be even more micro-moments throughout this experience. Once you’re in the room, if it’s late and you’ve just gotten in, the app could offer room service options. If you’ve ordered through the app before, it could suggest your favorites.

It takes careful thinking through the compromises people face in different stages of their journeys—when they can’t get something done or can’t get information—to provide solutions that enable people to get access to functionality or content in the moment.

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#### **How does mobile fit into this new world of micro-moments?**

Mobile has basically caused everybody to demand things now. People are saying, “We want it now; we want it simple.” The functionality of the phone (things like location, picture, orientation, or movement) can be used to generate a capability, and to personalize that capability based on all that data in the moment—to figure out what kind of tool somebody might need immediately.

For example, L’Oréal created a personalized mobile app called “[Makeup Genius](#),” which is being used by millions of people around the world. When you take a picture, it can use all that data about your face to customize recommendations for different styles of makeup, render those on the screen, and then allow you to actually buy that makeup on your phone. It can do that all using the functionality of the phone, wherever you are, by just simply turning a picture of you into 64 points of data and figuring out the right makeup recommendations for you.

#### **What’s the one thing you’d recommend marketers do to take advantage of this new environment?**

I think the thing is to reconceive the journey from end to end. Let me give a great example that I personally went through. Sungevity is a company that has reconfigured the entire journey using all of these tools in an incredibly seamless way. They use a Google Maps API to locate houses that have roofs of adequate size, situated in the right latitude and longitude to be able to support a certain minimum amount of solar power.

They then send a direct mail piece, which I also received, to the homes that fit that bill, with a personalized message saying, "If you're interested in solar energy, type in this URL, because we think you're a prime candidate." That URL took me through a very personalized experience. I saw images of my home on Google Maps with solar power superimposed, including calculations of how much money I'd save based on assumed energy consumption. I could also click to talk to someone who sees that exact same information and could walk me through my specific process. When I logged back into the site, it remembered where I was in the journey and immediately adapted. Sungevity has completely thought through all the different moments in the journey and used the functionality and data available to make my experience personalized, simple, and relevant to my context.

**My last question is, how have you seen organizations change their structures to focus on understanding and investing in this updated customer journey?**

A number of companies we work with are actually realigning themselves around journeys, physically changing their organization structure to a journey-management approach. One of our clients, a large financial services company, looks at its business in terms of the 13 major journeys that customers take, some of which vary by product, some of which vary by type of customer.

Take the journey of somebody changing jobs. That's not a financial services journey, but there are a lot of financial service needs people have when they're changing jobs: rolling over their 401Ks, obtaining new insurance, or even changing geographies (which might trigger them to think about changing banks). This client is thinking about managing a whole set of customer journeys around changing jobs; another set of journeys revolves around changing family structures, like getting married or having a baby.

The company has journey managers who are just focused on all the different marketing, service, and product issues associated with each journey. Journey managers focus on these different areas and lead teams dedicated to marketing, analytics, UI, and IT; they also work with product managers. We're seeing more and more companies thinking explicitly about journeys as an organization dimension, aligning teams to deliver on the journeys, and then measuring how those teams are doing in capturing someone in the journey.