Snakes & Ladders TONIC WIT



Navigating the **anything-but-linear** purchase journey

Brands have always needed to understand the consumer purchase journey and what happens in their consumers' minds as they steer their way through the market. As the digital age lands and adds **layers upon layers** of new channels and touchpoints to consider – social media, apps, mobile platforms, online – the purchase process is looking **more complex** than ever.

For many years, marketers created concepts based on a world where consumers were seen as structured and rational beings. Most economic theories, step-by-step models of trial, purchasing, and even loyalty have been developed based on rational expectations.

But when was the last time you **made a** long-list of brands, conducted extensive research, then whittled it down to a short-list before **finally deciding** on the brand or product that fitted you perfectly?







Admit it: when it comes to decision-making, we're "more like Homer Simpson than Superman"

Something happens to suddenly attract us - we see a friend with a new car, someone on the tube with an iPad, a celebrity on TV wearing a new look - and we spring into the column headed 'potential purchaser' We talk to people around us, absorb information from a wide range of channels, and are influenced by touchpoints along the way which lead us down one path or send us off on another. We don't always know why we do what we do or why we buy what we buy, yet much research insists on asking people to explain just that - when they may not fully understand all the key moments along the way themselves.

We needed a way to uncover these moments in a customers' journey, moments that may be easily overlooked by consumers answering a standard questionnaire. We developed Snakes & Ladders to do just that.

PUTTING CONSUMERS AT THE HEART OF THE STORY

The difficulty with a prescribed set of questions is that they inevitably provide the interviewee with a set of thoughts and ideas that aren't necessarily their own. For example, if we ask the question 'What other brands did you consider?', a value judgement that it's good to consider other brands is implicit in the question. People usually answer with several brands, because that's what they feel they should do. In reality, they may not have considered any other brands at all.

Snakes & Ladders gets
people to tell the story in
their own way, using
their own words.





We don't have a long list of questions. Instead, we use a regressive interviewing technique where we encourage respondents to tell and re-tell their purchasing story in a relaxing and comfortable environment. While they reminisce, we create a timeline map to act as an engram: a neural groove of the story into which they can slot in what they remember, and we can use to prompt the in-between moments they miss out on the first retelling. It allows people to regress to the original mindset pre-purchase, reliving all their feelings and influences that have brought them to where they are today.

SNAKES 📛



These are the things that might stop you considering a brand, move you backwards in your journey, or take you out of the category entirely. These often come from similar sources, like word-of-mouth, or a negative experience with a brand.

LADDERS |



The moments, experiences, and conversations that move you directly or indirectly to your decision. They can come from anywhere, such as brand communications, product sightings, wordof-mouth or chance encounters.



So what can you do with **Snakes & Ladders**?

MEET 'CHLOE'...

"Read a newspaper article about how old cars aren't as 'green', and it got me thinking how long I'd had mine for. That's the first time I'd thought about looking for a new car"

"Was on the internet one afternoon and checked trade-in prices for my car, was surprised at how much I could get towards a new one"

"Told Dad I was going to a dealership at the weekend and he offered to come along. He told me some horror stories about one particular brand, so I decided to give that one a miss..."

"My friend came round with her new hatchback, she said it was great. Decided to finally do a few showroom visits"

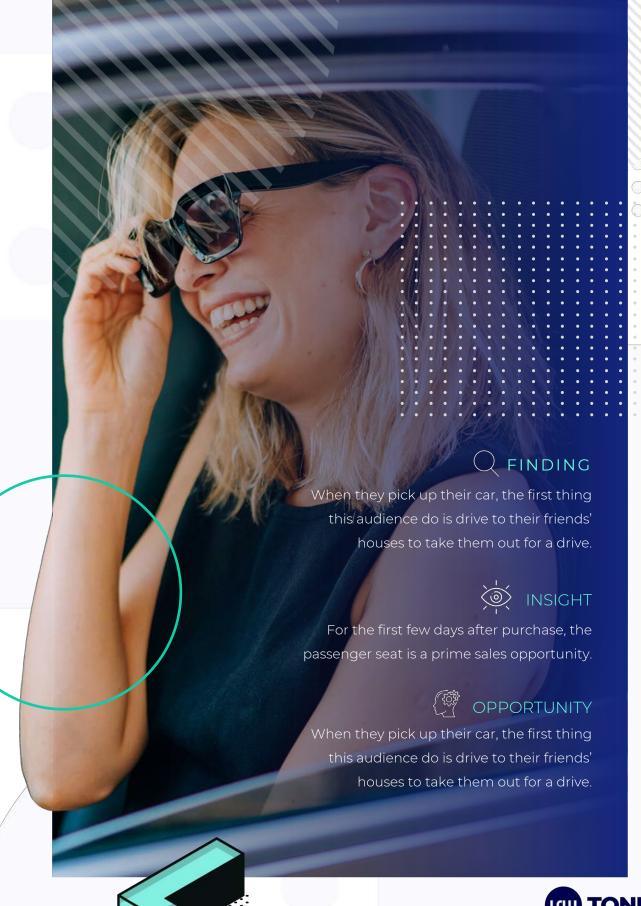
"Went online after the visit and looked at all the manufacturer sites, couldn't get one of them to load so skipped it. I picked a colour I liked and called the salesperson, who had one in stock"

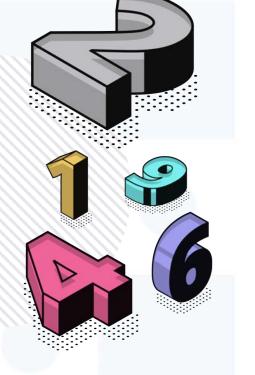
"Once it was ready to be picked up, I drove it straight to pick up some friends and show off my new toy!"





SO WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH SNAKES & LADDERS?





The numbers behind the story

It's not just qualitative, either. Our bespoke online quantitative platform can support the findings with figures. We take our Snakes and Ladders methodology and apply it to an interactive 'build your own' purchase timeline, where respondents can drag, drop, and feedback on the points in their journey.

From this we can identify and measure the frequency and impact of touchpoints, providing a comprehensive map of the importance of influencers during the purchase process.

	TRIGGER	CONSIDERATION	SELECTION	
ACTIONS	LOOKED AT MANUFACTURER WEBSITE	SPOKE TO A FRIEND	READ CUSTOMER REVIEWS	
DECISIONS	CHOSE SIZE	CHOSE PRICE BAND	CHOSE COLOUR	
SAW TV AD	•		•	PURCHASED ITEM
BRANDS	MANUFACTURER A	MANUFACTURER B	MANUFACTURER C	



"This groundbreaking methodology won 'Best New Thinking' at the MRS and the BMRA Innovation award"

Snakes & Ladders can inform advertising, service, promotional strategies and tactics; anything from where to advertise to what you say.

Since Tonic developed the Snakes & Ladders technique in 2005, we've helped countless brands understand the purchase journey across a wide range of sectors. Our clients use this output to better target customers, plan their advertising, promotions, in-store displays, channel strategies, and more.

Identifying your category and brand Snakes & Ladders means you can create marketing, communications, and product strategies to stop Snakes and encourage Ladders, streamlining your customer's journey, and ultimately getting them closer to purchasing your brand.





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