

## 6.3: The Consumer Journey

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What is a **consumer journey** (Court et al., 2009)? It is the experience of a consumer across the different stages of their buying process, which then extends to phases of relationships with a company. For example, let's imagine you want a new pair of sneakers. You might have an existing pair. How satisfied were you with that pair? If you were highly satisfied and you still love the brand, you might go buy the same pair. This is partly why companies try to build loyal customers: to foster repeat sales. If you were unsatisfied, or if this model is not available anymore, or if you want some variety, you might go and look for another pair of sneakers. You will then go through different stages: You just recognized a need you want to address, you will move to discover options to address your need, you will then evaluate these options, you will make a choice and buy a new pair of sneakers, and you will then evaluate how much you like or dislike this pair.

Pre-empting the next chapter, these transformations and the new digital ecosystem in which consumers are evolving have led to a drastically different way to enter into relationships with brands. Consumers now discover brands rather than being discovered by them, and they often start their relationships with online searches aligned with their needs, goals, and problems. The objective of companies doing marketing online is thus to be there when consumers need them. In the next chapter, we will talk about how we can conceptualize such changes and transformations in the journey consumers take when buying the products they want.

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