

# commonsku Buying Process Map

## Buyers

The basics

**Type:** Promotional Products Distributor

**Buyer Titles Include:** President, Owner, CEO, COO, Senior Account Director, Brand Manager

**Size:** 4+ people

**Buyer:** Owner

**Industry:** Promotional Products

**Other Stakeholders Involved:** Accounting, Finance, Sales Representatives

## Buyer Psychographics

Our ideal buyers believe that:

- There is enough business to go around for everybody.
- The promo products industry is going through a generational shift and we want to make it more fun (commonsku is leading the charge!)
- Community (i.e. events) is a key opportunity to share with like-minded people, learn from mentors and level-up your business.
- Software should evolve responsively as users (and their businesses) change and grow.
- Providing a modern, seamless buying experience to our clients is key.

They are:

- Not order in order out, turn and burn distributors.
- Ever-evolving, creative, fun, young-at-heart businesses.
- Abundance, growth and progress-oriented mindset: How can we do better?
- Gut-first, details-later people (some exceptions).
- Learning how to run and scale a business as they go.

## Buying Triggers

Organizational changes or trigger that precipitates the need for your service:

- **Have outgrown old system (s).** Frustration with inefficiencies of first-generation solutions and hobbled together tech stack comes to a head.
- **Want to grow but have hit a wall.** Many feel that they can't scale the business when their processes are such a mess.
- **Found out an industry-specific tool exists.** Hearing about commonsku from a colleague, Facebook group, or the commonsku community/events.
- **Realized the importance of working in the cloud during the pandemic.** Understand that they need to enable their future workforce to work remotely.
- **Wished they'd pulled the trigger sooner.** Put off making a change as long as they could, waiting for breathing room to consider a transition. But now realize that they lost valuable time.

| PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| Challenges                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Goals                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Key Buying Hurdles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Wasted Time and Missed Growth Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their current workflow involves so many workarounds and patches together multiple platforms= time-consuming and prone to human error.</li><li>• Buyers are aware of the disconnect in asking reps to work harder and to be more efficient on an old, slow system.</li><li>• Buyers lack visibility and control over the entire process and this is holding them back from expanding to take on more business.</li></ul> | <p><b>Transforming the Business from the Inside Out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve efficiency of internal workflows.</li><li>• Scale number of orders they can take on with a lean team.</li><li>• Enable the entire team to work remotely seamlessly.</li><li>• Become more attractive to clients who are looking for a more modern buying experience.</li></ul> | <p>1. Many buyers (even those who knew the commonsku brand) <b>lacked awareness</b> that there is a promo industry-specific platform that solves the challenges they are experiencing.</p> <p>Where can we identify high-visibility opportunities to leverage problem-messaging that connects commonsku as a solution to these key challenges?</p> |

| SOLUTION EXPLORATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| Which Solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | How Buyers Explored Solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Key Buying Hurdles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Previous tech stack included:</b> ADP Profitmaker, Epromo, SmartBooks, Artera, Quickbooks Enterprise, Excel, Intuit HQ, SAGE.</li><li>• <b>New solutions considered:</b> NetSuite, Avalara, Essent, Facilio, BigCommerce, Zoho, HubSpot, Shopify, OpenCart, Salesforce.</li><li>• <b>"Doing nothing"</b> for a few years was also a common alternative. Some buyers noted that, while they'd known about the commonsku for some time, if they'd understood what it did sooner, they would have pulled the trigger earlier.</li></ul> <p>How can we take advantage of the fact that buyers are already talking about commonsku and there is significant positive momentum for the brand?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buyers navigated between <b>customizable solutions that mold to their processes (Facilio) vs out-of-the-box solutions</b> that require them to transform their workflow (like commonsku).</li><li>• <b>Buyers often asked colleagues and friends for recommendations</b> via Facebook, Ripple Initiative or other forums, calling/emailing industry contacts for an honest take.</li><li>• When possible, buyers called vendor-provided references, which they noted was a huge help in getting the full picture of commonsku.</li></ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Facilio offers up a long list of current customer references whom buyers can call for a candid review.</p> | <p>1. Buyers are confused about what functionality will be covered by their <b>old tech stack vs new solution?</b> Which platforms can they get rid of?</p> <p>2. Buyers are looking for an honest take on vendors and platforms <b>-warts and all.</b></p> <p>How can we help buyers compare old tech stack vs commonsku?</p> |

| SUPPLIER SELECTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Why Buyers Chose commonsku                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Big Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Key Buying Hurdles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Built by industry people</li><li>• Time and cost savings</li><li>• commonsku brand affinity</li></ul> <p><b>Budgeting:</b> Most buyers justified budget based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time efficiencies that they anticipated.</li><li>• Parts of their tech stack this would allow them to get rid of (servers, etc).</li><li>• Some struggled to figure out how many licenses they needed.</li></ul> <p>How can we help buyers estimate ROI?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How many licenses do we need for our team?</li><li>• What if it doesn't work for us? And all our data is lost/in another system?</li><li>• When should we transition?</li><li>• What does the onboarding process look like?</li><li>• How should we manage the finance transition?</li></ul> <p>How can we proactively address these implementation-related concerns so they don't slow down the sales cycle?</p> | <p>1. The cost seems high to some buyers. To justify the cost, buyers need to understand the return on investment they can anticipate.</p> <p>2. Some were paralyzed by the anticipated confusion of the transition and related challenges, ie working in two systems.</p> <p>3. Buyers were freaked out because they weren't sure how to help accounting manage the financial transition, and anticipated (and experienced) significant disruption to "the books".</p> |

| CONSENSUS CREATION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Best Practices                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Key Buying Hurdles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nearly all buyers exposed accounting, finance, sales and any admin team members to the software through the demo or trial or both before making a decision.</li><li>• But in most cases the decision was made by the owner/CEO, regardless of the team response.</li><li>• On one occasion, there were enough nay-saying team members that the software decision was delayed for a few years.</li><li>• "Nobody likes change" is how buyers described the response to a new platform. Some teams had been through messy implementations in the past and anticipated huge disruption to their workflow.</li></ul> | <p><b>Relying the Frogs</b></p> <p>To work through the resistance to change, buyers shared a few strategies for bringing their team around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Illustrating with specific examples how the new tool would change their day-to-day and help them squeeze more info into less time (sales).</li><li>• Bring in a Quickbooks expert, consult a CFO or commonsku to provide guidance through the transition (accountant).</li><li>• Appoint (either officially or unofficially) an internal change agent to lead the change and rally the teams around it.</li><li>• Blocking off time to do training and onboarding together.</li></ul> | <p>1. Everyone anticipated resistance to change and challenges building new habits.</p> <p>How can we help give buyers a heads-up on the potential roadblocks they may encounter when selling through this change to their team? And how can we create strategies and resources to help them build consensus?</p> |

| REQUIREMENTS BUILDING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| Common Requirements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | The Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Key Buying Hurdles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Most commonly mentioned</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remote-work friendly (cloud-enabled)</li><li>• A system that would help them grow</li><li>• Production tracking/visibility</li><li>• Sales order management</li><li>• Web store/online shop</li><li>• Quickbooks integration</li><li>• Purchase order info package</li></ul> <p><b>Honorable mentions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A system that would fit their current processes</li><li>• Sales commission tracking</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most buyers <b>had no idea what they needed</b> until they got onto a call with commonsku or another vendor.</li><li>• As they started to think through how the solution would fit into their business, some developed a <b>spreadsheet of requirements</b>, and began cross-referencing with vendor capabilities.</li><li>• The general sentiment was that <b>commonsku offers more than distributors realized they need.</b></li><li>• Whether or not buyers performed a detailed analysis, many noted that they just went with a <b>"gut" decision</b>, based on a big picture feeling and/or understanding of the platform's capabilities.</li></ul> | <p>1. Buyers often get overwhelmed <b>comparing functionality between new solutions</b> and end up just going with their gut.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lots of happy buyers noted that they felt alignment with commonsku in how they think and this enabled them to justify minor technical deficiencies.</li></ul> <p>How can we capitalize on this gut-feeling decision-making process, and help buyers understand with more clarity which solution feels like the "right" fit for them and why?</p> <p>Rather than comparing new solutions side-by-side, how can we attract buyers to commonsku based on differentiators that competitors cannot claim?</p> |



The Feedback form is available on the commonsku website and is a great way to share your thoughts and suggestions with us. We value your input and will use it to improve our services.