

D2C Case Study Description



COMPANY OVERVIEW:

CHANGEMAKERS MEDIA GROUP

Changemakers is a branding, advertising, and media agency with offices in major global cities. The agency currently employs a team of 25 staff members. Changemakers provides advertising, branding, media planning & buying, social media marketing, and web design services. Most of their clients are enterprise or mid-size companies.



Customer Need : MAXIMIZE COST SAVINGS

B2B Product(s) : vPayment

Audience : SME, Existing Relationship

Industry : Advertising & Media

Opportunity Type : New Product Expansion

PCV : \$ 12,000,000





GTM Manager

Case Study Packet



CUSTOMER NEED:
Maximize Cost Savings

B2B Product Focus:
vPayment



Opportunity
SME Existing Relationship

Using This GTM D2C Case Study Packet

The primary goal of the case study and our D2C learning labs is to give learners an opportunity to apply and practice new concepts using real-life business situations. This GTM D2C Case Study Packet gives GTM Managers all the information and tools needed to conduct a meaningful and engaging learning lab experience.



D2C CASE STUDY PACKET COMPONENTS:

Facts of the Case

Provides customer key information, Amex relationship background and associated activities.

[GO TO](#)

Discovery Recap

Summarizes key findings uncovered during the Discovery conversation with the customer.

[GO TO](#)

Financial Analysis Recap

Provides analysis of customer transaction data and financial information.

[GO TO](#)

Role Play Guidance

Guidance on how to prepare for and conduct a meaningful role-play experience.

[GO TO](#)



Facts Of The Case

FOR USE BY:

LEARNER

LEADER/COACH

Who Uses This:

LEARNER

Provides case detail about the company to be analyzed in the upcoming DISCOVERY Learning Lab.

LEADER/COACH

Review Discovery case detail to prepare for acting as the “customer” in the DISCOVER learning lab and role-plays.

How to Use This:

Simulating an opportunity in One.Force, this case study provides you with the Customer detail and history you will need to leverage in the upcoming D2C Learning Labs.

The Case Study components include:

- Customer Key Information
- Amex Relationship Background
- Activities Related to this Opportunity

Using the Facts Of The Case, you will be able to:

- Formulate Key Insights
- Identify Potential Customer Key Drivers and Customer Cues



Account Name	Type	Potential CV	Stage	Products
CHANGEMKRS	New Product Expansion	\$12,000,000	3 – Needs Assessment	Proprietary Business Cards

Details Amex Relationship Status Research Data

▼ Customer Key Information

Name of Business: Changemakers Media Group	Total Revenue: \$50 MM	Competitors: Moburst, Manifesto Agency, Hub, Commcreative, Rule29, Lyfe Marketing
Primary CM Name: Ryan Malhotra, CFO	Gross Profit Margin: 10.5%	
Sector/Industry: Advertising & Media	Days Payable Outstanding (DPO): 28 Days	Top Suppliers: The Creative Haus, Kensington Stylists, IMG Models, ShootingStar Productions, Adastra, Epinote
Full Time Employees: 25	Days Sales Outstanding (DSO): 98 Days	
ERP: None	Working Capital Days: 109 Days (industry average is 22 days)	

Company Profile:
Changemakers is a branding, advertising, and media agency with offices in major global cities. The agency currently employs a team of 25 staff members. Changemakers provides advertising, branding, media planning & buying, social media marketing, and web design services. Most of their clients are enterprise or mid-size companies.



Opportunity

Changemakers Media Group

Facts of the Case

Details

Amex Relationship Status

Research Data

Amex Relationship Background

Tenure: 4 Years of Membership

Potential Charge Volume: \$12,000,000

AXP Charge Volume: Rolling 12 charge volume of \$4M, decline of 3% from previous year

AXP Products: Proprietary Business Cards

Changemakers Media Group & Amex Background:

In the past year, revenue has decreased by 5% and AXP charge volume is at 6.4%. The customer is enrolled in Classic MR. Amex has a good relationship with the customer, and they have been happy with the service provided thus far.

Key Business Stakeholders:

Jacob Parsons, Finance Manager: Jacob is responsible recording transactions such as income and outgoings, and posting them to various accounts, processing payments, conducting daily banking activities, producing various financial reports and reconciling reports to third-party records such as bank statements. He also manages the relationships with their external accountants.

Ryan Malhotra, CFO: Ryan has primary responsibility for the planning, implementation, managing and running of all the finance activities of a company, including business planning, budgeting, forecasting and negotiations.



Activity

Activity History

Open Activities



All Activities

My Activities



Call with Jacob Parsons, Senior Finance Manager

During this call, Jacob shared concerns with lack of controls and fraud exposure. He is interested in possibly expanding their Amex program to address some of these challenges. He has provided the CFO's contact details to further explore potential solutions.



Ryan Malhotra, CFO

An initial development call has been scheduled with the CFO to better assess opportunities for new product expansion.



Account Name	Type	Potential CV	Stage	Products
CHANGEMKRS	New Product Expansion	\$12,000,000	3 – Needs Assessment	Proprietary Business Cards

Details Amex Relationship Status Research Data

▼ Key Data Uncovered in Pre-Call Planning

C

Current Changes occurring in the customer's industry

- Industry spending has reached 70 billion U.S. dollars. Television ad spending, however, is projected to lose its top position in the industry soon. Digital advertising spending has seen an unprecedented growth in the last few years and is expected to become the biggest ad medium.
- Automated, or programmatic, advertising technologies will replace manual media planning and buying processes enabling companies to direct resources towards the creative side of the house, and toward engaging and effective advertising that drives commerce.

R

Something **Relevant** going on in the customer's business

- Changemakers is a privately held company.
- Customer has hired a new Senior Finance Manager, Jacob Parsons
- AP productivity issues and manual payments processes

T

Changes are impacting the customer **Today**

- The pandemic disrupted the steady flow of investments, and estimates did not look good for traditional media spending - digital was to be the only medium to survive spending cuts.
- A certain stabilization is expected to settle in, and the industry is believed to return on a growth path again.

M

Metrics that show pain points or opportunities.

- Digital advertising spending was forecast to surpass 200 billion within the next 2 years, with the pandemic only slightly slowing it down.
- Despite the pandemic, ad spending is expected to rise by 14.4%
- Marketers started taking different actions to counter the effects of the coronavirus – 29% said they explored new channels for new businesses and another 29% offered new services to clients, while 17% even ventured into new industries.
- 97.0% marketers noticed lower in-person marketing engagement (e.g., sales/store visits, trade shows) and 84% increased value placed on digital experiences

Review the Facts of the Case



Post Case Study Findings to Slack | 5 minutes

1. Once you have reviewed the case study, draft your observations below.
2. Go to your SLACK GROUP and post these responses.
3. Participate in Slack Polls (if available).

1. Based on the facts of the case, what potential drivers might be prompting the customer need and why?



2. What probing questions might you ask the customer to better understand their need?



Discovery Conversation Recap

FOR USE BY:

LEARNER

LEADER/COACH

Who Uses This:

LEARNER

Review this recap of the DISCOVERY conversation to prepare for CREATE learning lab.

LEADER/COACH

Review Discovery conversation recap to prepare for participating in the CREATE learning lab and role-plays.

How to Use This

This recap summarizes the key insights uncovered at each stage of the Discover Conversation Funnel. Use this summary to prepare for the upcoming CREATE lab.

Contents include:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 1 | LEARN THE BUSINESS | Describes state of the customer's business, goals, priorities and obstacles. |
| 2 | RECOGNIZE CUES | Lists what concerns surfaced from high level probing |
| 3 | IDENTIFY NEED | Provides detail on customer current processes, methods and challenges that lead to a specific need |
| 4 | MOTIVATE TO ACTION | Describes the urgency for change |
| 5 | CONFIRM | Describes customer's expressed explicit need(s) |

Key Findings From Discovery Conversation

Provided is a recap of the discovery conversation with the customer key contact. This recap follows what was captured at each step of the Discover Conversation Funnel model.



Meet Ryan Malhotra, CFO Changemakers Media Group

Ryan is friendly and idealistic. He has been the CFO for the past 2 years and has a good relationship with Amex. He is committed to growing his organization and positioning themselves as a key player in their industry. He has a firm grasp of his company's the day-to-day operations and is focused on improving accounting processes and uncovering cost savings opportunities.

[VIEW FACTS OF THE CASE](#)

Company Key Background:

- The customer is currently using Amex proprietary business cards
- In the past year, revenue has decreased by 5% and AXP charge volume is at 6.4%.
- Rolling 12 charge volume of \$4M, decline of 3% from previous year
- The customer is enrolled in Classic Membership Rewards program.
- Amex has a good relationship with Ryan, and has been happy with the service provided thus far,
- Ryan always takes the appointment because he likes Amex, yet he believes there is no room for program growth because he says he is already paying all the vendors that will accept Amex.

1. LEARN THE BUSINESS:

State of the business:

Changemakers Media Group, and the advertising and media industry, has seen a great deal of change and disruption due to the pandemic. Although they have experienced a decline in revenue, they are looking to grow their business. Their primary goal is to increase their capabilities to deliver cutting edge digital marketing solutions and position themselves as a leader in that space. To achieve this, they are laser focused on acquiring, contracting and building in-house talent that specialize in the key digital trends driving their industry.

Where do you want the business to be in 3-5 years? What are your main priorities to achieving that goal? What are your biggest obstacles to overcome?

There are four main priorities with the business:

1. Acquisition of a digital video production firm to strengthen the customer's ability to deliver innovative digital marketing solutions.
2. Invest in long-term contract talent and technical consultants who specialize in programmatic marketing and artificial intelligence (AI).
3. Develop robust enterprise-wide strategies for talent recruitment, development and retention.
4. Improve and streamline photo shoot production and client billing process.

Key Findings From Discovery Conversation , cont.

Name of Business: Changemakers Media Group

Customer Contact: Ryan Malhotra, CFO

2. RECOGNIZE CUES:

Customer Cues:

- “We are looking to acquire a small firm that specializes in digital video production. Although we have seen some impacts to revenue due to the pandemic, growth in digital advertising continues to grow by double digits on an annual revenue basis. Consumers have grown increasingly more jaded when it comes to traditional advertising. Its imperative that we stay on top of new developments to understand what audiences want and need. Increasing our digital capabilities will help drive our consumer reach and overall effectiveness with our campaigns.”
- “To remain competitive and allow us to move into new business, we are looking to adapt to the rapidly evolving changes in digital marketing. AI and programmatic advertising are the key trends dominating the ad industry. Investing in these initiatives will give us a competitive advantage and help us deliver individualized ads and campaigns via any given channel. We have been contracting this talent to augment our current staff. Ultimately, our goal is to bring these capabilities in-house.”
- “Finding good talent and keeping good talent has become increasingly more challenging. There is a skills shortage in the industry and its very competitive right now. We need to look for creative ways to attract and retain talent and incentivize current employees.”
- “We have had some real challenges with our photoshoot production and client billing process. Whenever we start planning for a shoot, we begin with a set budget from the client. Throughout the process, multiple vendors are engaged, and multiple payments are made that are ultimately pass throughs to the client. We continue to have challenges with control and visibility of spend and it has, at times, had an adverse impact on our clients.”

3. IDENTIFY THE NEED:

Describe AP Processes. What are your current payment methods? Are you satisfied or feel there are problems? Anything you are hoping to change about the process? How do you use your Amex products right now?

- Customer has 15 clients/brands and 32 accounts.
- On average, operating costs are about \$175K a month. This includes, but not limited to salaries, rent, payroll, equipment and software, insurance.
- Current spending is done by physical check, ACH, and business card via phone, mail or online. The customer is not optimizing a any rewards program.
- Campaign and photoshoot production costs are pass thru costs to the respective clients/brand. The current process lacks controls and real-time visibility into spend.
- The customer has primarily manual processes in place and is concerned about reconciliation delays.
- Currently working with independent contractors who submit invoice and expenses each month and are paid with a physical check.
- Customer is concerned about unauthorized spending and exposure to fraud.
- Talent recruitment, development and retention is a top priority.
- Customer is looking for non-traditional sources of supplemental compensation to incentivize employees and promote engagement.

What are your monthly expenses? Who are your biggest vendors, and what are the amounts?

Salary: \$95,000	Insurance \$2000
Taxes: \$4,000	Office Supplies \$5000
Rent: \$4,000	Software & Equipment: \$2000
Utilities: \$3500	Contract Talent: \$60,000

Key Findings From Discovery Conversation , cont.

Name of Business: Changemakers Media Group

Customer Contact: Ryan Malhotra, CFO

4. MOTIVATE TO ACTION:

What is the urgency for change?

- “If we could fully digitize this process and have real-time visibility, insights and analytics into our spending, we can better budget, forecast and capture hard dollar savings. It is critically important that we are able to lower our operating costs before scaling.”
- “Having better control and security, and the ability to easily match and reconcile transactions billed would greatly improve our AP processes and mitigate our risk exposure and potential fraud.”
- “We could use that increased cash flow and put it towards key initiatives to attract and retain specialized talent. We could also leverage points reward employees individually and hopefully encourage compliant spending.”
- “Without having to wait for the day of expense data, we will be able to invoice our clients faster, get paid faster, which then allows us to pay our suppliers faster. This would improve our supplier relationships and ensures we maintain access to the best talent.”

5. CONFIRM:

What is the Customer's explicit need(s):

Address Manual Payments Process

- “We are interested in a simple digital payment solution that enables us, in real-time, to assign transaction limits, control spend and automate approvals.”
- “If I can get real-time visibility into my highest spend areas, I could make quicker decisions on the expense areas that we can reduce. Is that something you can help me with? “
- “If I had better insight into spend, I would be able to make more strategic budgeting and forecasting decisions.”
- “We need easy reconciliation that enables us to track, match, and allocate spend.”

Earn a Return on Spend

- “We have big initiatives to fund this year, I think if we can reduce processing costs and fees, extend payables, and improve staff productivity, we can use the cost savings and float to invest in these initiatives..”
- We want to see a return on our business spending by earning rewards or a financial rebate each time we pay our suppliers.

Control Unauthorized Purchasing

- “We want better control of contractor spending and have procedures, policies and mechanisms in place to ensure only authorized purchasing is reimbursed.”

Review the Discovery Recap



Post Discovery Conversation Findings to Slack | 10 minutes

1. Once you have reviewed the recap of the Discovery conversation with the customer, draft your observations below.
2. Go to your SLACK GROUP and post these responses.
3. Participate in Slack Polls (if available).

1. How does the customer define success and what is their vision of the future state?



2. Given the customer's explicit needs, what potential AXP solutions would you explore with the customer and why?



Financial Analysis Recap

FOR USE BY:

LEARNER

LEADER/COACH

Who Uses This:

LEARNER

Review this analysis of customer financial data and information to prepare for CREATE learning lab.

LEADER/COACH

Review customer financial analysis findings to prepare for participating in the CREATE learning lab and role-plays.

How to Use This:

Once the Discover Conversation has been conducted, transaction data and financial information is provided to the Amex representative for analysis. This Financial Analysis Recap provides you with the data and a high-level analysis of the data provided.

This information should be used in preparation for the CREATE role-play and inform how learners “Set the Vision”, “Explore Options” and “Anticipate Barriers”.

Financial Analysis Recap components include:

- Customer Transaction Data & Information Request
- Customer Transaction Findings & Analysis



Activity

Activity History

Open Activities



All Activities

My Activities



Customer Transaction Data & Information Request

After a request for transaction data and general financial information, the Customer has provided the following.

AXP Average Transaction Sizes: \$2,000
Weighted Average Cost of Capital: 10.06%
Days Payable Outstanding (DPO): 28 Days
Days Sales Outstanding (DSO): 98 Days
Working Capital Days: 109 Days (industry average is 22 days)

Customer Monthly Transaction Data

Bad Debt

Annual Bad Debt or Write-off Rate 0.13%

Back Office Efficiencies

Invoicing Costs (per invoice) \$9.00

Credit & Collection Costs (per invoice) \$11.00

Errors and Reconciliation cost (per invoice) \$1.10

% of Check transactions 80%

Check processing fee (per invoice) \$1.57

Check Average Transaction Size \$2,000

% of ACH transactions 20%

ACH processing fee (per invoice) \$0.56

% of Wire transactions 0%

Wire processing fee (per invoice) \$11.89

Non-AXP Bankcard

Non-AXP Credit Card Avg Transaction Size \$2,000

Non-AXP Credit Card Discount Rate 2.05%



All Activities

My Activities



Customer Transaction Findings & Analysis

To help you conduct the financial analysis, You input the average customer transactions into a calculator or partnered with the appropriate teams to define the below financial assumptions. This analysis will be used to drive a data driven value proposition for your customer.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS ASSUMPTIONS

Annual Sales/Revenues	\$50,000,000.00
Total AXP Sale	\$12,000,000.00
AXP Average Transaction Sizes	\$2,000.00
Net Est. Blended Rate	2.50%
Changemakers Media Group Gross Margin	11%
Changemakers Media Group Tax Rate	21%
WACC	14.06%
Estimated Write-Off Rate	0.13%
Changemakers Media Group Days Sales Outstanding (DSO)	98
Potential DSO on AXP Transactions	30
Potential DSO Improvement (includes AXP 3-day settlement)	65
Back Office Costs per Invoice	
Invoicing Costs (per invoice)	\$9.00
Credit & Collection Costs (per invoice)	\$11.00
Errors and Reconciliation cost (per invoice)	\$1.10
Check processing fee (per invoice)	\$3.00
ACH processing fee (per invoice)	\$0.56
Wire processing fee (per invoice)	\$11.89

ADJUSTED COST OF AXP RELATIVE TO INVOICE/CHECK, ACH, WIRE

American Express Net Est. Blended Rate ¹	2.50%
Tax Savings on Net Est. Blended Rate ²	0.53%
Calculation: 21% Tax Rate * 2.5% Net Est. Blended Rate =	0.53%
Days Sales Outstanding (DSO) Float Cost Savings	2.50%
Calculation: 65 DSO Improvement * 14.06% WACC / 365 =	2.50%
Reduction in Credit Losses ³	0.13%
Improved Back Office Efficiencies	1.18%
Calculation: Weighted avg. Invoice Cost for each payment type/\$2000 AXP Avg. Txn)	
Estimated Potential Savings	4.34%
Estimated Net Benefit of American Express vs. Invoice/Check, ACH, Wire	1.84%

Review the Financial Analysis Recap



Post Discovery Conversation Findings to Slack | 5 minutes

1. Once you have reviewed the recap of the Discovery conversation with the customer, draft your observations below.
2. Go to your SLACK GROUP and post these responses.
3. Participate in Slack Polls (if available).

1. What key insight would you glean from the monthly transactional data provided by the customer?



2. What key assumptions can be made and how would it inform a data-driven value proposition?



Role Play Preparation Guidance

FOR USE BY:

GTM MANAGER

LEADER/COACH

Who Uses This:

GTM MANAGER

Prepare leaders/coaches to act as “customers” in the Discovery and Create role-plays.

LEADER/COACH

Guidance on how to act as the “customer” in the Discovery and Create role-plays.

Why Use This:

Role plays allow participants to apply new skills in situations that simulate real-life situations. They are required to react to situations in the moment and apply the behaviors they have learned.

The Discover and Create role-plays provide opportunities to:

- Practice in a safe, non-threatening environment where it is permissible to make mistakes
- Become confident using the ASF models
- Receive targeted feedback and support

This guide provides guidance, structure and scripting for delivering a comprehensive role-play.

Select the Role Play you wish to prepare for:

DISCOVER
ROLE PLAY

CREATE
ROLE PLAY

DISCOVER

ROLE PLAY DETAIL

What is the goal of the role play:

Use the ASF DISCOVER Conversation Funnel to identify the primary needs of your customer.

YOUR ROLE AS THE CUSTOMER

What you will be doing?

In this role play, participants will execute each step of the **Discover Conversation Funnel** while you provide responses based on the details of the case study. The facilitators will provide feedback and guidance for the participants at each stage.

1

ROLE PLAY PREPARATION

Describes key activities leaders or designated coaches should do prior to conducting a role-play.

2

CUSTOMER PERSONA OVERVIEW

Provides description of the customer with links to Facts of the Case, and Discovery Conversation Recap.

3

DISCOVER ROLE PLAY SCRIPT

Provides guidance on how to execute each stage of the Discover Conversation Funnel as the “customer”.

4

B2B PRODUCT BEST FIT RECOMMENDATION

Describes recommended B2B solution and how it aligns with the customer’s explicit needs.

Discover Leader Role Play Preparation Steps

In this role play, participants will execute each step of the **Discover Conversation Funnel** while you provide responses based on the details of the case study. The facilitators will provide feedback and guidance for the participants at each stage.



1. Familiarize yourself with the Discover Conversation Funnel

- ☐ Study the prework eLearning to ensure you are confident in proper execution of each stage in the funnel:
 - Discovery Funnel e-learning
 - Customer Need e-learning

2. Familiarize yourself with the client

- ☐ Carefully review the [Customer Persona Overview](#).
- ☐ Learn the history and current state of the business - [View Discovery Conversation Recap](#)
- ☐ Fully understand the client's need, and business reasons that support this need.

3. Prepare your role play responses

- ☐ Using the sample responses provided in this guide, practice giving these answers in your own words.
- ☐ Have a plan for answering questions you are unprepared for, or questions that are not relevant to the role play.

4. Practice

- ☐ Conduct a mock role play with the facilitator to spot any problem areas.
- ☐ Be creative and have fun!

Customer Profile & Discover Conversation Mindset

Thank you for volunteering to play the part of the Customer!

Provided is a description of the customer, opportunity details and link to the *Facts of the Case*. Familiarize yourself with these documents as you prepare to play the role of the customer.



Meet Ryan Malhotra Chief Financial Officer *Changemakers Media Group*

Ryan is friendly and idealistic. He has been the CFO for the past 2 years and has a good relationship with Amex. He is committed to growing his organization and positioning themselves as a key player in their industry. He has a firm grasp of his company's day-to-day operations and is focused on improving accounting processes and uncovering cost savings opportunities.

[VIEW FACTS OF THE CASE](#)

Customer's Story: Background Information for Leaders

- The customer is currently using Amex proprietary business cards
- In the past year, revenue has decreased by 5% and AXP charge volume is at 6.4%.
- Rolling 12 charge volume of \$4M, decline of 3% from previous year
- The customer is enrolled in Classic Membership Rewards program.
- Amex has a good relationship with Ryan, and has been happy with the service provided thus far,
- Ryan always takes the appointment because he likes Amex, yet he believes there is no room for program growth because he says he is already paying all the vendors that will accept Amex.

[Review scripted guidance on how to execute each step of the Discover Conversation Funnel in the role-play](#)





STEP 1: LEARN THE BUSINESS

Use high-level probing to gain an understanding of the Customer's strategic priorities, challenges and current projects.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- These questions should be designed to ask you about the business as a whole – the goals, priorities, strategies, and challenges of the business.
- If the questions are pointed toward Amex solutions (for example, asking about cash flow or payment processes, or even current use of Amex products), we are not able to get a holistic view of the business.

WHY IT MATTERS:

- Our competitive advantage is that we are **business partners**. When we co-create with our customers, we discuss how our solutions can help them reach their business goals, whether it be increasing market share, expanding into a new location, or withstanding a downturn in revenue.
- If we don't learn what is important to the business, we're not able to tie our solutions to the company goals. Our value proposition may be weaker this way, and we don't demonstrate our full capacity as a business Amex Rep.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED:

- *"Tell me, how is business going?"*
- *"What are your key projects for the rest of the year?"*
- *"What is the business focused on right now?"*

HOW TO DESCRIBE THE BUSINESS

What is the state of the business?

Changemakers Media Group, and the advertising and media industry, has seen a great deal of change and disruption due to the pandemic. Although they have experienced a decline in revenue, they are looking to grow their business. Their primary goal is to increase their capabilities to deliver cutting edge digital marketing solutions and position themselves as a leader in that space. To achieve this, they are laser focused on acquiring, contracting and building in-house talent that specializes in the key digital trends driving their industry.

Where do you want the business to be in 3-5 years? What are your main priorities to achieving that goal? What are your biggest obstacles to overcome?

There are four main priorities with the business:

1. Acquisition of a digital video production firm to strengthen the customer's ability to deliver innovative digital marketing solutions.
2. Invest in long-term contract talent and technical consultants who specialize in programmatic marketing and artificial intelligence (AI).
3. Develop robust enterprise-wide strategies for talent recruitment, development and retention.
4. Improve and streamline photo shoot production and client billing process.



STEP 2: RECOGNIZE CUES

Determine question path to identify which of the top 5 B2B Customer needs requires additional probing.

WHY IT MATTERS:

- As the customer provides answers to the high-level probing questions, Amex Partners will be listening for cues that point to potential needs in the customer's business.
- At this stage, Amex Partners are seeking cues that point to one of these top 5 B2B Customer Needs. This will help them know what types of probing questions to ask next.

EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMER CUES & YOUR RESPONSES

Below are sample responses to use when you are role playing the Customer.
Please change the wording to match your style but be sure to hit on the following cues.

Driver	Customer Cue	Your Sample Response
Monetize Spending	Acquisition of a small digital video production firm	"We are looking to acquire a small firm that specializes in digital video production. Although we have seen some impacts to revenue due to the pandemic, growth in digital advertising continues to grow by double digits on an annual revenue basis. Consumers have grown increasingly more jaded when it comes to traditional advertising. Its imperative that we stay on top of new developments to understand what audiences want and need. Increasing our digital capabilities will help drive our consumer reach and overall effectiveness with our campaigns."
Mitigate Risk and Non-Compliance Costs	Outsource long-term specialized marketing and technical capabilities.	"To remain competitive and allow us to move into new business, we are looking to adapt to the rapidly evolving changes in digital marketing. AI and programmatic advertising are the key trends dominating the ad industry. Investing in these initiatives will give us a competitive advantage and help us deliver individualized ads and campaigns via any given channel. We have been contracting this talent to augment our current staff. Ultimately, our goal is to bring these capabilities in-house."
Monetize Spending	Develop enterprise-wide strategies for talent recruitment, development and retention	"Finding good talent and keeping good talent has become increasingly more challenging. There is a skills shortage in the industry and its very competitive right now. We need to look for creative ways to attract and retain talent and incentivize current employees."
Mitigate Risk and Non-Compliance Costs	Streamline photo shoot production and client billing process	"We have had some real challenges with our photoshoot production and client billing process. Whenever we start planning for a shoot, we begin with a set budget from the client. Throughout the process, multiple vendors are engaged, and multiple payments are made that are ultimately pass throughs to the client. We continue to have challenges with control and visibility of spend and it has, at times, had an adverse impact on our clients."





STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE NEED

Ask detailed probing questions and explore indicators to validate if the customer has a true need. If not, consider going down another question path.

PURPOSE OF DETAILED PROBING:

- The goal of this layer of questions is to validate or exclude one of the top 5 customer needs.
- Based on the cues provided, the Amex Rep should dig deeper into 1 need category to fully understand if this is a true need for the customer.

PREPARING FOR CUSTOMER RESPONSES TO PROBING QUESTIONS:

- While you can prepare for many detailed probing questions, it's not possible to cover all potential questions a Amex Rep may ask during the role play.
- Prepare your responses based on this chart. Change the wording to match your style but be sure to provide the relevant clues.



VIEW HOW TO RESPOND

WHEN ASKED A QUESTION YOU ARE UNPREPARED TO ANSWER:

- There may be times you won't have a plausible response for the questions asked in this section of the role-play. Prepare yourself with the deflected responses below, and use them as needed:
- That's not my area of expertise – I'd have to ask a colleague and get back to you.
- I don't have that data available right now.
- You really should talk to _____, they are more familiar with this than I am.

FINDINGS FROM DETAILED PROBING QUESTIONS

Describe AP Processes. What are your current payment methods? Are you satisfied or feel there are problems? Anything you are hoping to change about the process? How do you use your Amex products right now?

- Customer has 15 clients/brands and 32 accounts.
- On average, operating costs are about \$175K a month. This includes, but not limited to salaries, rent, payroll, equipment and software, insurance.
- Current spending is done by physical check, ACH, and business card via phone, mail or online. The customer is not optimizing a any rewards program.
- Campaign and photoshoot production costs are pass thru costs to the respective clients/brand. The current process lacks controls and real-time visibility into spend.
- The customer has primarily manual processes in place and is concerned about reconciliation delays.
- Currently working with independent contractors who submit invoice and expenses each month and are paid with a physical check.
- Customer is concerned about unauthorized spending and exposure to fraud.
- Talent recruitment, development and retention is a top priority.
- Customer is looking for non-traditional sources of supplemental compensation to incentivize employees and promote engagement.



What are your monthly expenses? Who are your biggest suppliers, and what are the amounts?

Salary: \$95,000	Insurance \$2000
Taxes: \$4,000	Office Supplies \$5000
Rent: \$4,000	Software & Equipment: \$2000
Utilities: \$3500	Contract Talent: \$60,000



Probing Questions: Customer Cues & Responses

Prepare your responses based on this chart. Change the wording to match your style but be sure to provide the relevant clues.

Sample Customer Cue	 Probing questions you might hear from rep:	Why a rep would ask this question?	 Your Answer as the customer:	Customer Insight
Acquisition of a small digital video production firm PRIMARY DRIVER: Monetize Spending	<i>"It's great to hear that you are focused on growing your business! On average, what does your current spend look like and how are you currently tracking that spend?"</i>	Understanding the customers current levels of spend and degree of visibility into that spend, might provide insight into how they might monetize and see a meaningful return.	<i>"On average ,our operating costs are about \$175K a month. This includes, but not limited to salaries, rent, payroll, equipment and software, insurance. We have fixed budgets associated with each client and their respective accounts .As we execute campaigns, all associated costs incurred are billed to the client. Much of our purchasing is done by business cards or check. Its is, for the most part, manual. We have no real-time insight to what is spent. Our Finance Manager runs reconciliation reporting at the end of the month. We are not proactively or strategically analyzing spend right now."</i>	Insight into spend would enable strategic budgeting and forecasting as well as identification of cost savings opportunities.
Outsourcing specialized marketing and technical capabilities. PRIMARY DRIVER: Mitigate Risk and Non-Compliance Costs	<i>"How are you handling payment and expense management for your contract talent?"</i>	Uncovers customer's payment processes for contract talent and any potential irregularities or unauthorized spending.	<i>"For the past year, we have been working with independent contractors to build out our AI capabilities and programmatic strategies. These consultants invoice us monthly for their services and incurred expenses and we pay them with a physical check. This process is manual and there is minimal control over their level of spend ,time period for that spend, or approvals in place. I am concerned about unauthorized or even excessive spending. I am also concerned about exposure to potential fraud."</i>	The Customer wants digital payments, transaction-level spend controls and to automated reconciliation.
Develop enterprise-wide strategies for talent recruitment, development and retention PRIMARY DRIVER: Monetize Spending	<i>"How are you monetizing spend to incentivize your employees?"</i>	Determines if customer is seeing a return on their business spending and fully optimizing their current program..	<i>"Talent recruitment, development and retention is a top priority for us. Given the current climate, it is challenging to recognize our employees through traditional sources of supplemental compensation, and we are actively looking for alternative ways to incentivize and promote engagement. We have no specific strategies on how we can monetize our spending. We would need a better understanding of our current spend to truly understand where the opportunity lies".</i>	The customer wants to earn an incentive on every dollar of spend to increase cash flow and improve margins and is not optimizing their MR program.
Streamline photo shoot production and client billing process PRIMARY DRIVER: Mitigate Risk and Non-Compliance Costs	<i>"Can you describe your photoshoot production and client billing process and the challenges you have been experiencing?"</i>	To assess and gain insights into customer's payment processes and key challenges.	<i>"For a photoshoot, all expenses are managed by an external photoshoot producer. Most of the expenses come to our agency first and then we seek approval from the photoshoot producer. There are numerous challenges, namely expenses that suppliers cover the day of the shoot. We generally don't know what these are, and it takes time to get them in and approved, causing delays in sending the final invoice to the client. Because these are all pass-through expenses, these delays impede our ability to pay our suppliers on time."</i>	Improve controls, establish a real-time approvals process, and make faster payments.



STEP 4: MOTIVATE TO ACTION

Show the urgency of the problem by using questions that highlight the difficulties that stem from the need or the benefits of solving the problem.

WHY IT MATTERS :

This step of the Discover conversation encourages the Amex Rep to use insight questions to highlight the importance of addressing the need or the potential risk of ignoring the problem.

When the customer sees the problem is big enough, they are ready to look for a solution (explicit need). This is where we want to be by the end of a Discovery conversation.

EXAMPLES OF URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM BY USING QUESTIONS

Below are sample responses to use when you are role playing the Customer. Please change the wording to match your style but be sure to hit on the following cues.

Customer Insight	Question you might hear from rep:	Your Answer as the customer:
<i>Insight into spend would enable strategic budgeting and forecasting as well as identification of cost savings opportunities.</i>	<i>"What would happen if you could have real-time visibility and key insights into your business spending?"</i>	<i>"If we could fully digitize this process and have real-time visibility, insights and analytics into our spending, we can better budget, forecast and capture hard dollar savings. It is critically important that we are able to lower our operating costs before scaling."</i>
<i>The Customer wants digital payments, transaction-level spend controls and easier reconciliation.</i>	<i>"How might your business be impacted if you are unable to control contractor spending and streamline reconciliation?"</i>	<i>"Having better control and security, and the ability to easily match and reconcile transactions billed would greatly improve our AP processes and mitigate our risk exposure and potential fraud."</i>
<i>The customer wants to earn an incentive on every dollar of spend to increase cash flow and improve margins and is not optimizing their MR program.</i>	<i>"If you could earn rewards, rebates or financial incentives with every purchase and automated payments, how would that impact your business?"</i>	<i>"We could use that increased cash flow and put it towards key initiatives to attract and retain specialized talent. We could also leverage points to reward employees individually and hopefully encourage compliant spending."</i>
<i>Improve controls, establish a real-time approvals process, and make faster payments.</i>	<i>"If you were able to control transaction amounts, establish real-time approvals and get monies into the hands of your suppliers faster, how might that improve your business?"</i>	<i>"Without having to wait for the day of expense data, we will be able to invoice our clients faster, get paid faster, which then allows us to pay our suppliers faster. This would improve our supplier relationships and ensures we maintain access to the best talent."</i>





STEP 5: CONFIRM

Establish an explicit need by probing until the customer has stated the problem in their own words and expressed a desire for a solution.

WHY IT MATTERS:

As the Amex Rep asks you probing questions, put yourself in Andreas' mindset. Has the partner fully developed the problem and all of its implications? Have they motivated you to action?

Provide a confirmation when you believe the answer to both of these questions is "yes."

EXAMPLES OF CUES & EXPLICIT NEED STATEMENTS

Below are sample explicit need statements to use when you are role playing the customer. Please change the wording to match your style but be sure to hit on the following cues.

Business Situation Cue	Your Sample Explicit Need Statements
Manual Payments Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We are interested in a simple digital payment solution that enables us, in real-time, to assign transaction limits, control spend and automate approvals." "If I can get real-time visibility and insight into my highest spend areas, I could make quicker decisions on the expense areas that we can reduce. Is that something you can help me with?" "We need easy reconciliation that enables us to track, match, and allocate spend."
Return on Spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We have big initiatives to fund this year, I think if we can reduce processing costs and fees, extend payables, and improve staff productivity, we can use the cost savings and float to invest in these initiatives.." We want to see a return on our business spending by earning rewards or a financial rebate each time we pay our suppliers.
Unauthorized Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "We want better control of contractor spending and have procedures, policies and mechanisms in place to ensure only authorized purchasing is reimbursed."



B2B Product Best Fit Recommendation

Provided below is an alignment of the customer’s business situation and expressed explicit needs with the recommended B2B product benefits.

B2B Recommendation: vPayment

Amex vPayment is a simple digital payment solution that assigns a specific Virtual Account Number to each transaction. Good for companies with typically unmanaged spend, low dollar and high frequency transactions, that want better control and security, and the ability to easily match and reconcile transactions billed to their account.

	Manual Payments Process	Return on Spend	Unauthorized Purchasing
EXPLICIT NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “We are interested in a simple digital payment solution that enables us, in real-time, to assign transaction limits, control spend and automate approvals.”• “If I can get real-time visibility and insight into my highest spend areas, I could make quicker decisions on the expense areas that we can reduce. Is that something you can help me with? “• “We need easy reconciliation that enables us to track, match, and allocate spend.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “We have big initiatives to fund this year, I think if we can reduce processing costs and fees, extend payables, and improve staff productivity, we can use the cost savings and float to invest in these initiatives..”• We want to see a return on our business spending by earning rewards or a financial rebate each time we pay our suppliers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “We want better control of contractor spending and have procedures, policies and mechanisms in place to ensure only authorized purchasing is reimbursed.”
PRODUCT BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More Control: set the pre-authorization spend limit, date range, and allowable industries for each account number with transaction-level controls.• Enhanced Details: easier invoice reconciliation with additional expense details provided for each Virtual Account Number. Use a VAN at any stage of the procure-to-pay process.• Specific use virtual account numbers with transaction-level controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upgrade manual processes with automated reconciliation: systematically capture and reconcile ordered data to paid data and have payment confirmation files easily upload into financial systems• Pay suppliers on time (or even early for potential early pay discounts) while also extending DPO.• Earn points and get rewarded for your supplier spend at the company level from multiple enrolled Corporate Cards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection: reduce risk of fraud by using a one-time and Virtual Account Number in place of a physical Card.• Reduce exposure to fraud with virtual account numbers, which are payment tokens with no direct ties to sensitive company information

Thank you



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