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Building a StoryBrand 2.0

13. Who Gives Them a Plan (StoryBrand Principle Four)

This chapter argues that even a customer who trusts your brand often stalls before buying because of cognitive dissonance—a fear that change and commitment are risky. The fix is to give them a simple plan: a few clear baby steps that make moving forward feel easy and safe.

Key takeaways

- Customers hesitate not because they doubt you, but because commitment risks their money, time, and self-image as a smart buyer.
- Picture the customer at a rushing creek; a plan lays 'stepping stones' so crossing (buying) feels low-risk.
- Use a process plan: 3-6 clear steps for how to buy your product or how to use it after buying (pre-purchase, post-purchase, or both).
- Use an agreement plan: a list of promises that ease customers' fears and signal shared values (e.g., CarMax's no-haggle, quality-certified guarantees).

- Keep it short—at least three steps, no more than six; too much information reduces buying. Bundle extra steps into named phases.
- Give each plan a memorable title (e.g., 'easy installation plan') to formalize it and raise the perceived seriousness of your offer.

Passages worth keeping

> *"If we don't give them a few simple steps they can take to easily cross from unknowing into knowing, they are less likely to spend money with you."*

States the core problem a plan solves: unaddressed cognitive dissonance kills sales.