



How to Develop Marketing Personas

Why a Buyer Persona is So Important

Personas are a well-established marketing technique to help produce more customer-focused communications.

Do you know background info, demographics, and identifier words for each persona? What are their goals and challenges? How can you help each persona reach their objectives?

A persona, or group of personas will assist you in creating relevant content that is attractive to your specific audience. Your content will be completely meaningless unless you add personas, as there will be no relevance, engagement nor sharing. As there is no real reason why your audience would be interested otherwise.

1. Relevancy:

If you don't consider your buyer persona, your content is not going to be as relevant to your audience.

Miss out on relevancy and you'll miss out on a couple of other things too: Engagement and Social Sharing.

2. Engagement:

If your content is not relevant, your audience is not going to be very engaged.

3. Sharing:

Your audience is not going to share content that isn't relevant.

Don't Underestimate the Power of Social Networks

When you produce your content (be that a video, or a podcast, or a written piece of content), if you provide truly relevant content, it will be shared and will attract more of your audience.

In this worksheet, there are two separate methodologies to defining a Persona. The first is a 'Quickstart' Persona, which can be used in the case that you have already identified what you are doing and who you are targeting. The second methodology is a much more in-depth process, that helps you through an in-depth analysis of identifying your personas.

The QUICKSTART PERSONA: How To Build A Quick Persona In 10 Minutes or Less

If you have already identified your target audience and persona, it is still important to clarify who it is, and what they mean to you and your business.

Ideally, your content marketing should be crafted to benefit one audience at a time. To do this, you will need to identify your primary personas and ask some key questions to uncover the value that you are delivering you can provide through your content.

Start by describing the ideal customer who might benefit most from the content you create:

WHO is the persona?

WHAT traits characterize him / her?

WHAT roles does he / she play?

WHAT does his / her typical day look like?

WHERE is there a gap in his / her needs/wants (beyond our products/services)?

WHEN does he / she need to close this gap (i.e., where is she in the purchase funnel)?

WHY would he / she care about us, as a company (aside from our product)?

Place your persona's picture here and give him / her a name, to help your content team keep her top-of-mind.



Identify Your Persona

TARGET PERSONA: _____

Job title/Role: _____

Typical challenge: _____

Needs Gap: _____

Funnel position: _____

What he / she cares about: _____

The Traditional Persona Development

Step 1: Research & Introductory Questions

How To Research Your Buyer

Start with research. You need to have a crystal clear picture of who you're talking to so that you can speak to them in a way that resonates. There are a number of places to research your buyers.

1. Talk To Your Existing Customers

If you have customers already, the best way to do your research is to pick up the phone and call them. Since they have purchased from you, they are the type of customer you want more of.

2. Audience Jacking

If you don't have many customers yet, you can use what I call audience jacking.

Basically, this involves visiting your competitors' blogs and delving into the people who are commenting on the posts. You can click through to their websites and learn a lot about them.

3. Research Facebook Profiles

Your audience's social profiles also provide clues as to who they are. Check out pages they like.

4. Look at Twitter Streams

When looking at their Twitter profile and Twitter Stream, note who they are following and retweeting. This will tell you a lot about their interests.

5. Research LinkedIn Profiles

LinkedIn also has a ton of data available for you to mine, as far as interests, groups, connections, etc.

6. Use some analytics Tools – Quantcast, Quicksprout

This is a free resource that gives you insight into your competitors and their traffic.

Quantcast provides a ton of demographic information about a site's visitors, and is a great way to check basic demographic data.

Quicksprout is great to find out what your audience is most interested in.

Simply enter your competitor's website on Quicksprout, and you'll get a list of the most shared pieces of content on that site. This will tell you not only what your audience is interested in, but will give you ideas of what you should be writing about!

NOTE: There are more analytics now – these may be out of date !

Step 2: Framing Questions

1. What is their demographic information?

Collecting demographic information about your personas will help you perform more targeted offline and online marketing, but it also helps paint a picture of who your personas are. Are they married? What's their annual household income? Where do they live? Are they male or female? How old are they? Do they have children? Collecting demographic information is a great place to begin drafting your personas because it's easy to obtain and starts to paint a clearer, more personal picture of your customer.

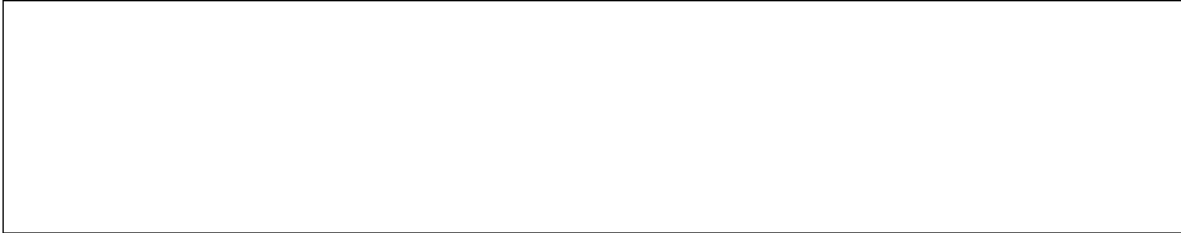


2. What is their job and level of seniority?

The importance with which you should regard your persona's job and seniority level certainly depends on the product or service you're selling. If you're a B2C company, you may simply consider this information as another way to better understand nuances of your persona's life. You may uncover some interesting information, too, like large portions of your target audience skewing toward certain industries or seniority levels.

If you're a B2B company, this piece of information becomes more crucial. Is your persona at a managerial or director level, and well versed in the intricacies of your industry? They'll need less education than someone at an introductory level, who may need to loop in other decision makers before making purchasing decisions. Even working with C-level executives presents unique challenges; they might have shorter attention spans, spend less time learning and

researching, and have different goals than a lower level employee. Companies that take the time to understand their persona's career aspirations will likely enjoy more effective communications from both the sales and marketing teams.



3. What does a day in their life look like?

Now that you have an idea of some of your persona's personal characteristics, try to piece together how a typical day in their life runs. Are they spending more time at work, or at home? Where would they rather be? What do they like to do for fun? Who are the people in their life that matter most? What kind of car do they drive? What TV shows do they watch? Heck, what outfit are they wearing?

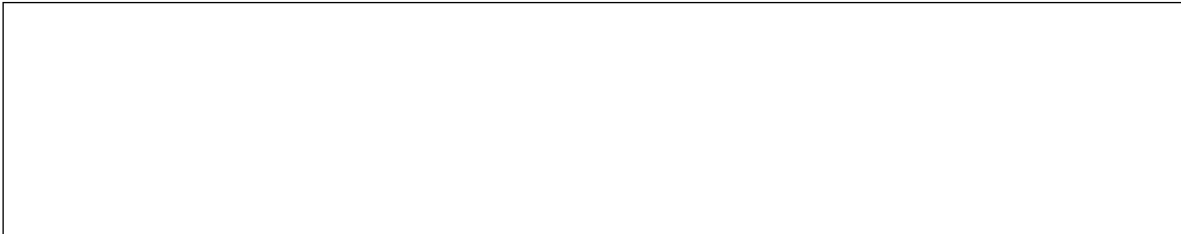
Once you've gone through this exercise and worked out any lingering questions about what makes your persona tick, browse through some stock imagery and find an actual picture to associate with your persona. Going through this exercise forces you to clarify an image of your target audience in your entire organization's mind that will help keep your messaging consistent.



4. What are their pain points?

You're in business because you're solving a problem for your target audience. How does that problem affect their day to day life? Go into detail, and focus on the nuances that illustrate how that problem makes them feel. For example, let's say your company sells personal tax software to consumers (tis the season, right?). One of your personas may be a first time tax preparer.

What are the pain points of first time tax preparers? They're probably intimidated by the prospect of doing their taxes by themselves for the first time, they're feeling overwhelmed by a tax code they don't understand, and they're not sure where to start. These pain points differ from those of a seasoned tax preparer, whose pain points may be not knowing how to maximize the amount of their return and find creative loopholes for deductions.



5. What do they value most? What are their goals?

Now that you know their pain points, it's a little easier to understand what they value (and just as important, what they don't care about). Ask yourself what would make your persona get really, really excited about your product or service. For example, that first time tax preparer probably values a product that educates, that is simple, that is user friendly, and helps them achieve their goal of quickly and successfully completing their taxes.



6. Where do they go for information?

If you're going to market and sell to these personas, you need to understand how they consume information. Do they go online, or do they prefer to learn in-person or by reading newspapers and magazines? If they're online learners, do they visit social networks? To Google? Which sources do they trust the most; friends, family, coworkers, or industry experts? If you know how they prefer to gather information, you can make yourself present in those spots and work on establishing credibility in those communities.

7. What experience are they looking for when shopping for your products and services?

The experience of purchasing your product should align with your persona's expectation. What kind of features do they expect your product to have? What should their sales experience feel like? Is it consultative? How much time do they expect to spend with a sales person? Do they anticipate an in-person meeting, or would they rather conduct the sales process online or over the phone? The nature of your business and the personality and needs of your persona will dictate their shopping experience.

8. What are their most common objections to your product or service?

If you can anticipate the objections your persona will have, you can be prepared for them in the sales process and perhaps even educate them in your marketing collateral to help allay fears right away. What might make them reticent to buy from you or any other provider in your industry? Is this their first time purchasing a product or service of your kind? If not, what caused them to switch products or services.

9. How do I identify this persona?

Now that you have a great understanding of what makes your persona tick, you have to be able to identify them so you can tailor your communications. How will you know when you're talking to this persona? Is it their job title? Something about the way they talk or carry a conversation? Their pain points? How they found your company? Once you've established not only who your persona is, but also how you can identify them when you encounter one or another, your employees will be able to maintain a consistent voice that is still customized to each person they talk to.



Step 3: Specific Questions to Create Your Buyer Persona

Background and Early History

- 1) What is his/her name?
- 2) What is his/her age?
- 3) What is their gender?
- 4) Where was he born?
- 5) Where did he grow up?
- 6) Did he grow up in a rural, suburban, or urban area?
- 7) What kind of house did he live in growing up?
- 8) What did his mom do for a living?
- 9) What did his dad do for a living?

- 10) Are his parents still married?
- 11) Did his parents have a permissive parenting style, an authoritarian parenting style, or somewhere in the middle?
- 12) Does he have any brothers or sisters?
- 13) Where does he fall in the birth order?
- 14) What is his racial/ethnic heritage?
- 15) What were his favorite activities as a child?
- 16) What are his favorite childhood memories?

Education

- 17) What type of elementary, middle, and high schools did he attend?
- 18) What was his favorite subject in school?
- 19) What types of grades did he get in school?
- 20) Does he enjoy learning new things?
- 21) Did he have a lot of friends, a few close friends, or no friends at all?
- 22) Did he get in trouble at school?
- 23) Did he attend college?
- 24) If so, where did he go?
- 25) What did he major in?
- 26) Did he enjoy his college experience?
- 27) If he did not attend college, what did he do after high school?

Employment History

- 28) What was his first job?
- 29) What is his current job?

- 30) How did he arrive at his current position?
- 31) How long does he stay in a given job, on average?
- 32) What is his current salary?
- 33) Does he feel he's compensated fairly?
- 34) Does he like his boss?
- 35) Does he like his coworkers?
- 36) Does he like the work he's assigned?
- 37) What challenges does he face in his current position?
- 38) What is his dream job?
- 39) How does he plan to pursue this job (if he plans to do so at all)?
- 40) When does he plan to retire?

Current Situation

- 41) What city does he currently live in?
- 42) What type of housing does he currently live in?
- 43) Who lives in his house with him?
- 44) Is he happy with his current arrangement, or does he wish it was different?
- 45) Is he close to his extended family?
- 46) Does he have any pets?
- 47) Is he single, dating, or married?
- 48) Is this the relationship status he would prefer? (For example, is he single by choice or because he hasn't yet found a suitable partner?)
- 49) Does he currently have many friends, a few friends, or no friends at all?
- 50) Does he enjoy traveling?

Finances

- 51) What is his net worth?
- 52) Does he have debt? (If so, what type?)
- 53) Does he make purchase decisions carefully or is he loose with his money?
- 54) How does he feel about his current spending habits?
- 55) What factors drive him to make a purchase?
- 56) Is he a financial decision-maker in his current job?

Personal Life

- 57) What is his sexual orientation?
- 58) Is he religious?
- 59) What is his political orientation?
- 60) Does he make an effort to stay fit and healthy?
- 61) Does he care about his personal appearance?
- 62) What hobbies does he currently pursue?
- 63) What is his favorite TV show?
- 64) What is his favorite movie?
- 65) What type of music does he listen to?
- 66) Is he a morning person or a night owl?
- 67) What does he do first thing in the morning?
- 68) Does he cook at home or eat out?
- 69) Is he a neat freak or is he okay with messes?
- 70) How does he spend his weekends?
- 71) Where does he shop?

- 72) Does he read for fun?
- 73) Does he drink?
- 74) Does he smoke?
- 75) Does he experiment with recreational substances?
- 76) What does he wish was different about his weekly routine?
- 77) Is he tech-savvy?
- 78) What social networks does he spend time on?

Thoughts, Feelings, and Motivations

- 79) Is he an introvert or an extrovert?
- 80) Is he optimistic or pessimistic?
- 81) Is he more right-brained or left-brained?
- 82) Is he quiet or boisterous?
- 83) Is he practical by nature or prone to flights of fancy?
- 84) Does he prefer to follow the rules or enjoy situations where he can challenge boundaries?
- 85) Does he like to take risks or play it safe?
- 86) Is he an innovator or somebody who tends to go with the flow?
- 87) Is he flexible or rigid in his thought patterns?
- 88) Is he spontaneous or does he prefer pre-determined plans?
- 89) Is he motivated by his own achievements or by what others think of his efforts?
- 90) How affected emotionally is he by other people's judgments?
- 91) What would it take for him to deem his life a success?
- 92) What would make him think his life was a failure?

Business Insight

- 93) What objections does he have to your product?
- 94) How can you help solve his unique challenges?
- 95) How does your product help him become his ideal self?
- 96) How does he prefer to communicate?
- 97) Is he comfortable making online payments?
- 98) Is he concerned about online privacy?
- 99) How can you meet his needs through onboarding?
- 100) What factors might make him choose a competitor's product over your own?

Step 4: Creating the Persona Description

Use this information to help you isolate and summarise who your persona is. Don't forget to give them a name that either describes them and their behaviours, or identifies them with a personal "name"

Persona 1 "Name"	
Persona Description	

Persona 2 “Name”	
Persona Description	

Persona 3 “Name”	
Persona Description	

Some Sample Personas

Persona “Name”	<i>Estate Agent Changers</i>
Persona Description	<i>Looking for a solution that might help them. They are understanding that issues exist internally for them, but not sure how to actually and actively act upon it. Their inherent skepticism of the business and industry can be swayed with sound knowledge and processes.</i>

Other Persona Notes