



(Why and) How to Create Your Buyer Personas





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What is the Buyer Persona?

The buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and actual data about your existing customers.

Depending on the size and scope of your business you might have just one or two personas or many more. Don't let the potential number of personas overwhelm (or discourage) you. Just start with one or two and add to them as you go.

The Buyer Persona is sometimes called the Marketing Persona.

Why Are Buyer Personas Important?

It's tempting to skip this step and to jump right in with creating marketing materials and campaigns. However, without a clear picture of your ideal customer you won't be able to answer these key questions.

- Who are you going to talk to?
 - Why are you talking to them?
 - What are they saying to you?
 - What will you say that is relevant to them?
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- Why will they listen to you?

Each persona is an essential tool for everyone in your organization.



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Tips for Creating Personas That Your Teams Will Appreciate and Use

1. Persona name

Rather than an actual person-name, create a short descriptive name that everyone in the organization will immediately recognize. It gives this persona a unique personality. Go ahead and have some fun with this!

2. Day-in-the-life scenario

Staring at this question can feel more than a little overwhelming. You might even think it's just plain ridiculous. "How on earth do I know what his day is like?" Don't let the temptation to skip this one win. Once you start thinking like your customer, the story becomes easy to tell.

This should be a well-constructed narrative that engages the reader. I recently saw a persona that one of our clients had written. A very brief two sentences isn't a day in the life of anyone. Put some thought into this because it will become the story you refer to often.

Write your persona's story in the first person. Let your buyer speak to you and tell it in his or her own words. Use "I" instead of "her" or "she"

3. Persona's objectives



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Make the buyer's objectives specific, not vague statements. For example, it's easy to say "I want to increase our revenue", but that doesn't tell you what the customer is really thinking and why. A more targeted answer might be "We want to expand our customer base by launching these three new services this year."

Your team will be able to more clearly speak to your target buyers when they have more quantifiable insights.

4. *Problems the buyer wants to solve*

Again, make the description specific. For example, "the software doesn't work right" is more meaningful when stated as "the lack of efficiency and repeatable tasks leads to delays and unnecessary errors".

Listen to the words your customer is using. It's tempting to use words and lingo from your vocabulary, but they might not be what the customer understands. For example, we think "inbound marketing" when our customer may not know what that means. Translate the customer's vocabulary to yours, not the other way around.

5. *Place in the organization*



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This is a critical piece of the buyer persona. Having clear specifics about the buyer's connection within the organization will help your teams more accurately speak to your buyer.

This goes beyond the job title. What you want to understand are such factors as the buyer's commitment to his or her organization, leadership qualities, how he or she influences others. The typical org chart doesn't do justice to the roles that many buyers assume without specific assignment.

For some unexplainable reason, it is often suggested that you include kids, marital status, pets and income. . Unless you're selling homes, this seems like pointless fluff.

6. *Where does the buyer go for information*

Knowing this will help you more accurately segment your buyer into the most effective communication channels.

Expand this to include sources he uses for information unrelated to your products and services. You may discover channels you hadn't considered before.

Uncovering a little-used channel that your buyer prefers and few are using can be a real competitive advantage.



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7. *What are the expectations for your product or service?*

Be careful with this one. It's easy to assume internally-spun features and benefits are the big winners. You really want to tell this from the customer's perspective using her words. This is where real-world research and feedback are critical. Take time to ask some of your valued customers why they do business with you. If you actively listen without assuming you know the answer, you might be very surprised.

I was working with a client recently, and we began the "what value does your organization deliver to your customers question." The client was quick to say they knew exactly what they delivered and why. After an hour or more of being sure, they literally said "Wait...this is exactly what we do! It's not that at all." Those are the real moments of discovery that make this so rewarding.

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

This is where both the sales team and customer support can provide valuable insights. Don't let pride-of-ownership cloud your perception. Again, go to the source and ask your customers. None of us wants to hear the negatives when we're so closely invested in what we deliver every day. The surprising upside to asking is a renewed sense of loyalty from your customers. We all need to be asked and listened to.



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Let's Get Started

We've created this free, simple-to-use [Buyer Personal Template](#) for you.

To keep things organized as your personas change and grow, here's the [Buyer Persona Workbook](#) for you. As you begin building marketing campaigns, this will be a valuable reference for your entire team.



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