

How to create Buyer Personas - For your business -



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Get closer than ever to your customer. So close that you can tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves

– STEVE JOBS

What are Buyer Personas?

Buyer personas are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal customers. They help you understand your customers (and prospective customers) better, and make it easier for you to tailor content to the specific needs, behaviors, and concerns of different groups.

The strongest buyer personas are based on market research as well as on insights you gather from your actual customer base (through surveys, interviews, etc.). Depending on your business, you could have as few as one or two personas, or as many as 10 or 20.

Note: If you're new to personas, start small! You can always develop more personas later if needed.

What are Negative Personas?

Whereas a buyer persona is a representation of an ideal customer, a negative -- or “exclusionary” -- persona is a representation of who you don’t want as a customer.

This could include, for example, professionals who are too advanced for your product or service, students who are only engaging with your content for research/knowledge, or potential customers who are just too expensive to acquire – because of a low average sale price, their propensity to churn, or their unlikeliness to purchase again from your company.

How can you use Personas?

At the most basic level, personas allow you to personalize or target your marketing for different segments of your audience.

For example, instead of sending the same lead nurturing emails to everyone in your database, you can segment by buyer persona and tailor your messaging according to what you know about those different personas.

If you take the time to create negative personas, you'll have the added advantage of being able to segment out the "bad apples" from the rest of your contacts, which can help you achieve a lower cost-per-lead and cost-per-customer (and see higher sales productivity).

How can you use Personas?

When combined with lifecycle stage (i.e. how far along someone is in your sales cycle), buyer personas also allow you to map out and create highly targeted content

Creating relevant, valuable content is a major tenet of inbound marketing. The content you're creating should be in line with the goals and challenges of specific segments of your audience.

It all boils down to: You need to create the right content, for the right people, at the right time. And the best way to do that? Through mapping out your content according to buyer persona and lifecycle stage.

How do you create Personas?

Buyer personas are created through research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience. That includes a mix of customers, prospects, and those outside of your contact database who might align with your target audience.

Here are some practical methods for gathering the information to create personas:

INTERVIEWS

- Interview customers either in person or over the phone to discover what they like about your product or service.

CRM

Look through your contacts database to uncover trends about how certain leads or customers find and consume your content.

CTA FIELDS

When creating forms to use on your website, use form fields that capture important persona information. You could also gather information on what forms of social media your leads use by asking a question about social media accounts.

FEEDBACK

Take into consideration your sales team's feedback on the leads they are interacting with most.

(What types of sales cycles does your sales team work with? What generalizations can they make about the different types of customers you serve best?)

Persona Name: Sample John

BACKGROUND

JOB? CAREER PATH? FAMILY?

- Head of Human Resources
- Worked at the same company for 10 years; worked her way up from
 - HR Associate
 - Married with 2 children (10 and 8)

DEMOGRAPHICS

MALE OR FEMALE? AGE? INCOME? LOCATION?

- Skews female
- Age 30-45
- Dual HH Income: \$140,000
- Suburban

IDENTIFIERS

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES?

- Calm demeanor
- Probably has an assistant screening calls
- Asks to receive collateral mailed/printed

Persona Name: Sample John



GOALS

PRIMARY GOAL? SECONDARY GOAL?

- Keep employees happy and turnover low
- Support legal and finance teams

CHALLENGES

PRIMARY CHALLENGE? SECONDARY CHALLENGE?

- Getting everything done with a small staff
- Rolling out changes to the entire company

WHAT CAN WE

DO

...TO HELP OUR PERSONA ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS OR CHALLENGES?

- Make it easy to manage all employee data in one place
- Integrate with legal and finance teams' systems

Persona Name: Sample John

REAL QUOTES

ABOUT GOALS, CHALLENGES, ETC.

- "It's been difficult getting company-wide adoption of new technologies in the past."
- "I don't have time to train new employees on a million different databases and platforms."
- "I've had to deal with so many painful integrations with other departments' databases and software."

COMMON OBJECTIONS

WHY WOULDN'T THEY BUY YOUR PRODUCT?

- I'm worried I'll lose data transitioning to a new system.
- I don't want to have to train the entire company on how to use a new system.

Persona Name: Sample John

MARKETING MESSAGING

HOW SHOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SOLUTION TO YOUR PERSONA?

- Integrated HR Database Management

ELEVATOR PITCH

SELL YOUR PERSONA ON YOUR SOLUTION

- We give you an intuitive database that integrates with your existing software and platforms, and lifetime training to help new employees get up to speed quickly.

Persona Name:



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