

HOW TO CREATE BUYER PERSONAS

FOR YOUR BUSINESS





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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. It decreases wasted ad spend by allowing you to focus your marketing efforts on only the highest quality prospects. For example, instead of sending your online display ads to a broad region, you can segment by particular interests, behaviors, age, gender and tailor your messaging according to what you know about those different personas. Buyer personas allow you to map out and create highly targeted campaigns.

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



HOW DO YOU CREATE BUYER 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 you need to develop personas:

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



- Look through your contacts database to uncover trends about how certain leads or customers purchase your products or services.
- When creating forms to use on your website, use form fields that capture important persona information. (For example, if all of your personas vary based on company size, ask each lead for information about company size on your forms. You could also gather information on what forms of social media your leads use by asking a question about social media accounts.)
- 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?)



CREATE YOUR FIRST BUYER PERSONA

Name	Give your Persona a real name that is easy to remember.
Roles	What is their job, title and level of seniority? What does a day in their life look like?
Company/Organization (if B2B)	What industry or industries does their company work in? What is the size of your company (revenue, employees)?
Goals	What does it mean to be successful in their role? What do they value most? What are their goals?
Challenges	What are their most common objections to your product or service? What are their biggest challenges? What are their pain points? What do you help them solve?
Watering Holes	What publications, blogs and websites do they read? What associations, clubs and social networks do they belong?
Shopping Preferences	Where do they go for information? How do they conduct research in the buying process? What websites or resources do they use? What experience are they looking for when seeking out your products or services?
Demographics	Age, Family (married, single, children), Education, Hobbies & Interests



In this example, we created a persona that an RV dealership would create. This example is in a shorter format in a B2C environment:

Name	RV Betsy
Roles	Retired from office job & getting restless. Spends free time with friends, reading, and loves her grandchildren.
Company (if B2B)	Retired. Formerly ranked as a mid-level executive in a fortune 1000 company.
Goals	Wants to enjoy retirement. Longtime “bucket list” dream to travel the country in an RV.
Challenges	Wants to travel but may find an RV uncomfortable. Finds a lot of the electronics and “gadgets” confusing. Wants space with ease of use.
Watering Holes	Travel magazines and websites. Facebook, but only to follow family.
Shopping Preferences	Wants a high-touch sales process. Ideally would like the RV to be a home away from home to host and visit friends and family. Needs to feel she’s buying something reputable and reliable above all else but has expendable income for luxury. Learned of RV brands from ads in travel magazines and Google organic search.
Demographics	Mid 60’s to early 70’s. Lives in suburbs with husband. Children are out of the house and financially independent.



In this example, we created a persona that a Law Billing Software company would create. This is in a longer format in a B2B environment:

Name	Lawyer Larry
Roles	Attorney, Lawyer, Senior or Equity partner in the firm or owner of own practice.
Company/Organization (if B2B)	Specializes in Insurance Fraud, Workers Comp and Personal Injury cases.
Goals	Seeks larger corporations of 750+ employees and/or \$1.5m+ in annual revenue. Would like to add one new client company per month on a retainer basis.
Challenges	Doesn't have the time to deal with sales people and probably doesn't realize he needs to upgrade the firms software. Day is filled with phone calls, client meetings, depositions, happy hour, rounds of golf and managing associates. Very difficult to get on a call. While he is the main decision maker, he will not fully understand the in's and outs of the software. He's gone through years of schooling, makes a lot of money, has success and acts like it! Big ego.
Watering Holes	Periodically reads law publications and journals. Prefers to receive email newsletters with summaries of the most recent happenings in his field. Expects Jr Associates and paralegals to keep him updated on any new case information. Likes to share info and glean information from friends and colleagues over a glass of whiskey. Not a fan of social media.
Shopping Preferences	Expects the sales person to explain why he needs a new software program. Will not do very much research himself. May ask colleagues, associates or assistants for feedback but doesn't have the time or willingness to do a lot of due diligence.
Demographics	Age 40-65, Skews slightly towards male, Income \$100k+, College educated, Juris Doctorate, passed State Bar exam



YOUR TURN!

Name

Roles

Company (if B2B)

Goals

Challenges

Watering Holes

Shopping Preferences

Demographics



CONGRATS! You've just built the foundation for your highly targeted marketing campaigns. To find out more about how to use these personas to decrease wasted ad spend and increase ROI, please contact us at:

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ABOUT US: We know your time, resources and budgets are stretched thin and know that it's hard to keep up with digital marketing. Change is a fixed constant and it gets very complicated. We're here to simplify the process and deal with the headache so you don't have to. Let our experts take care of the nuts and bolts of things so you and your business can focus on being awesome.

One of our clients described us best: "Michael Scott charm with Don Draper expertise." We know you'll only do business with us if we can get you a positive ROI and we're energized that pressure.

