

# Optimize Your Website & Internet Marketing Strategy

By Establishing & Cultivating  
Your Buyer Personas



# Table of Contents

<b>I</b>	An Overview: What is a Buyer Persona? Why Do You Need One? How Do You Start Creating One?	pg 2
<b>II</b>	Constructing Your Buyer Personas and Putting Them to Use	pg 8
<b>III</b>	The Critical Components in Your Buyer Personas	pg 10
<b>IV</b>	Strengthening Your Online Marketing with the Use of Buyer Personas	pg 15
<b>V</b>	Centering Your Buyer Personas Around Key Marketing Insights	pg 20
<b>VI</b>	Creating Buyer Personas That Are True Winners	pg 24
<b>VII</b>	Who is the Ideal Buyer or User for Your Products and Services? Getting Clarity!!	pg 28
<b>VIII</b>	What are the Best Practices for Developing Effective Buyer Personas?	pg 32
<b>IX</b>	What are the Ins and Outs of Buyer Persona Development?	pg 34
<b>X</b>	Getting to the Plain Language and Practical Application of Creating Buyer Personas	pg 44
<b>XI</b>	Your Buyer Personas are Ready - Now What Do You Do With Them?	pg 47

## Introduction

Are you looking for ways to take your marketing efforts to a new level? If so, listen up.

The first thing you should consider doing is giving your website and internet marketing strategy the advantage of Buyer Personas. Did you know that Buyer Personas can make a real difference in your marketing efforts? With a Buyer Persona, you can focus your website and marketing efforts. Without one, your efforts are not going to give you the results you expected.

## Part I.

### An Overview: What is a Buyer Persona? Why do you need one? How do you start creating one?

#### First of all, what is a Buyer Persona?

Answer this question first: Who is your ideal customer? That is the question you seek to answer when you develop a Buyer Persona.

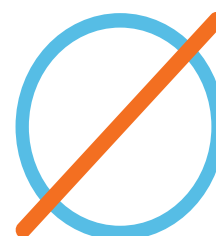
A Buyer Persona is a profile that captures the essence of your ideal customer. That profile comes from real data and educated guesses about demographics, behaviors, motivations, and goals. You are creating a fictional character based on those facts and guesses.

#### What does a Buyer Persona give you?

A well-defined persona helps you identify and attract the people who can influence or make decisions to buy what you are marketing. Think of the persona as a tool. It helps you build confidence in these people and persuade them to choose your company's products or services. Another way to think of Buyer Personas is that they identify the people who buy your products or services.

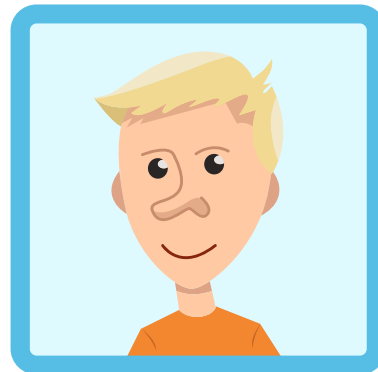
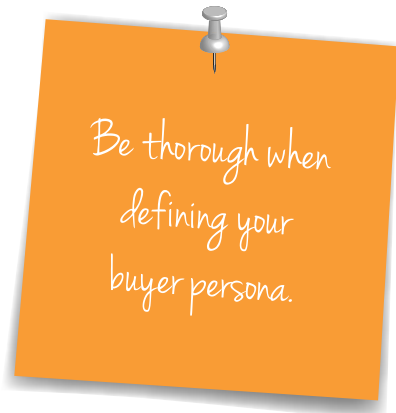
#### Buyer Personas are NOT:

- Specific people
- Target markets
- Influenced by technology changes
- Professional roles
- Not fluff pieces



*A well-defined Buyer Persona includes:*

- Demographic and biographic information
- Common behavior patterns
- Shared pain points, both professional and personal
- Shared goals, wishes and dreams



## **Why are Buyer Personas so important?**

These personas represent your customers. Everything you do and your business's reasons for doing them must tie back to your customers. Buyer Personas help you keep that focus. They are not optional for successful businesses.

*What advantages do you get with good Buyer Personas?*

- You know where your customers spend their time.
- You know what your customers are looking for. That helps you create better and more desirable products.
- You know which direction to take the company.
- You know how to keep your company departments aligned with your customer's needs.
- You can relate and connect with your customers better.
- You can attract the right website visitors, leads, and customers through your marketing efforts.

## **How do you start creating a Buyer Persona?**

The first step in creating a Buyer Persona is to gather pertinent information from your customers and leads. With this information, you will have the data you need to create a persona.

## What Information Do You Need?

- Demographic information (age, education level, gender, etc.)
- Job title and level of seniority
- What a typical day looks like for them, both personal and professional
- The challenges and pain points they deal with each day. Part of this is identifying what your product or service will help solve for them.
- What they value most
- What are their goals
- Where they get their information
- Who do they trust to give that information
- The experience they want when looking for your products and services
- Their objections or reservations about your products and services.

The following represents a typical list of categories and relevant questions that will help you put that information together:

### *Buyer's role*

- What is your job role?
- What is your job title?
- How does your company measure your job performance?
- What is your typical day like?
- What skills do you need to do your job?
- What knowledge do you use routinely in the course of your work?
- What tools do you use in your work?
- To whom do you report?
- Who reports to you?

### *Buyer's company*

- In which industries does your company typically work?
- How much revenue did your company bring in last year?
- How many employees does your company have?

### *Buyer's goals*

- What are you responsible for?
- How do you define success in your current role?

### *Buyer's challenges*

- What are your biggest challenges?

#### *Buyer's information gathering preferences*

- How do you learn about new job-related information?
- What blogs, magazines, and other publications do you routinely read?
- What associations and social networks do you belong to?

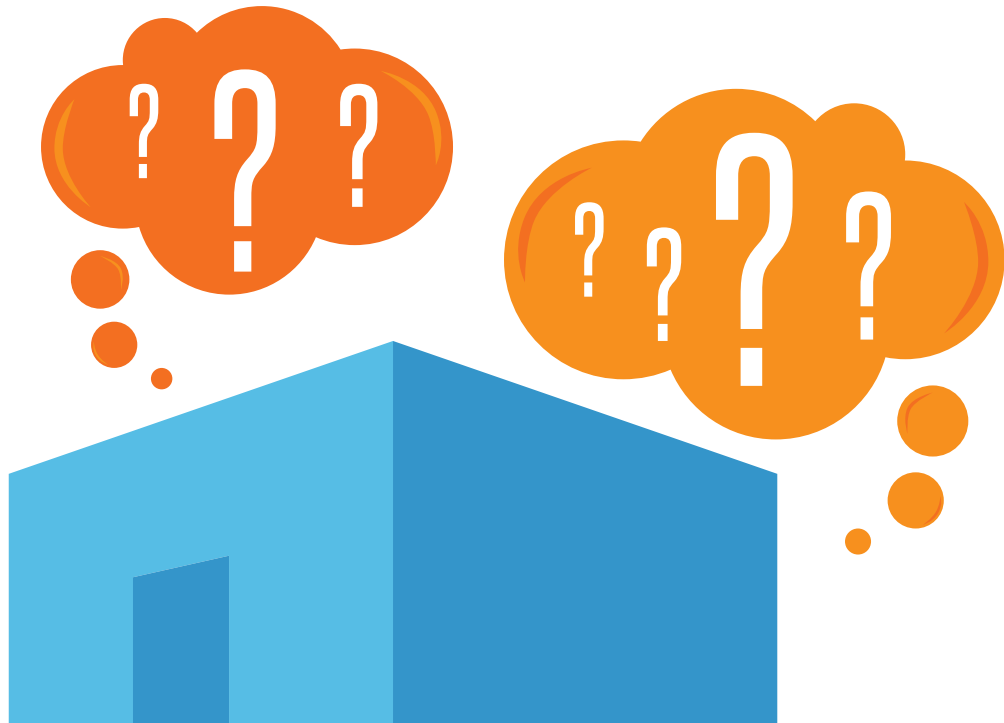
#### *Buyer's personal information*

- Age
- Marital situation
- Whether they have children or not
- How old their children are?
- Education level
- Hobbies

#### *Buyer's shopping preferences*

- How do you like to interact with vendors? By email? By phone? In person?
- Do you use the Internet to research products, services, or particular vendors?
- If so, how do you search?

You may want to take some questions out and add a few others, depending on your industry.



### Who Do You Need to Ask the Questions Of?

Current customers are your first line of information. They are the ones currently purchasing from you.

- Set-up in person one-on-one meetings. This is the best choice.
- Set-up focus groups filled with customers
- Use an electronic meeting forum like GoToMeeting or JoinMe for conferencing
- Do telephone interviews.
- Send surveys out to customers and ask them to respond.

Another way to gather pertinent information is using lead intelligence. This allows you to segment contacts, leads, and customers by their interests. You can also create groups based on their buying stages.

### MAIN INTEREST IS:



You can use data gathered from online forms you ask people to fill out.

Another source of valuable information is LinkedIn at linkedin.com. If you know your Buyers, you can look up their LinkedIn profile and see how they describe themselves. This information can be worth its weight in gold when it comes to information gathering.

Talk with your sales force and ask some critical questions:

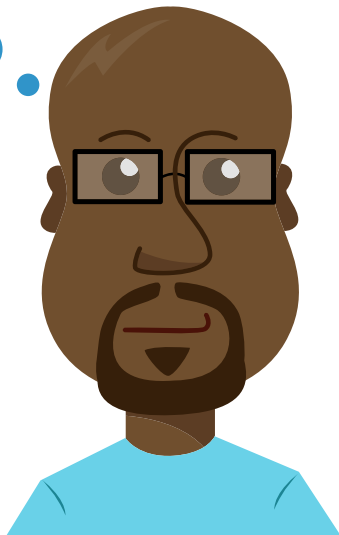
- What are the biggest objections raised by customers and leads?
- What are the common goals these people share?
- Do they have common problems they are trying to solve?
- What is the most effective communication form: phone, email, in person?
- Does a particular demographic seem to be better or happier customers?

If you can think of any other method to extract information from your customers and leads, think about how you can use it.

Information gathering is the first step to creating well-defined Buyer Personas. The next step is creating those personas and learning how to use them.



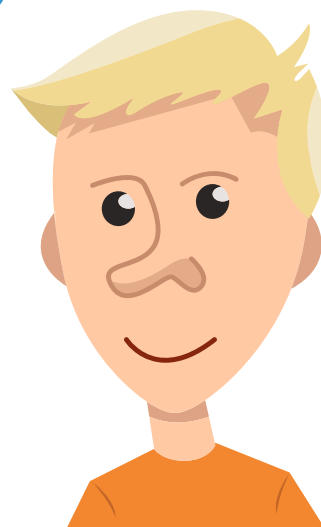
## Valuable Information



SALES FORCE



LEAD



CUSTOMER



## Part II.

### Constructing Your Buyer Personas and Putting Them to Use.

You have asked the questions of your customers. You have gathered your data for your buyer personas. Now what?

#### Constructing Your Buyer Personas

*Here are the best practices for constructing your buyer persona:*

- The persona should focus on behaviors.

Example: Mabel is the Chief Marketing Officer at a B2C company that recently opened its doors. She is always on the lookout for new leads with the goal of bringing more revenue to the company. She is the one who does all the company's marketing and she is in charge of creating the company's brand.

- The Persona Should be fictional, but realistic.

Create a fictional person who embraces your target audience. Do not choose a specific person for this purpose.



*This is good:* Sam, VP, Director, or Manager of Sales at small to mid-sized aviation company



*This is not:* John Rutherford, Senior Sales Director at Flying Company, Inc.

- The persona should include pictures.

As the old saying goes, a picture is worth 1,000 words. Most people embrace visual information. When you can give a picture that embraces part of your persona, it helps develop a better picture of this fictional character.

*Here are the best practices for constructing your buyer persona:*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workspace</li> <li>• Working condition</li> <li>• Food preferences</li> <li>• Travel preferences</li> <li>• Hobbies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Clothing choices</li> <li>• Car preferences</li> <li>• The persona profile should tell a story.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

*Here is one example.* Your company may need more than one buyer persona depending on the products and services you offer.



Mary is the marketing manager for a mid-sized clothing company. She is 38, married, and has three kids, ages 10, 6, and 3. She lives in a upscale suburban neighborhood outside a major metropolitan city. Mary drives a two-year old Dodge Charger. Her typical commute is 45 minutes one way in normal traffic. In her downtime, Mary enjoys hanging out with her girlfriends, taking in movies, and spending the occasional weekend away with her husband and family at the beach.

Mary is a savvy marketer in the real world but finds the world of online marketing overwhelming. She is looking for an agency that specializes in online marketing to act as the company's team in this area. She needs a high level of trust before she will endorse any external partners. Mary must seek approval from and get funding from the company's executive board for this type of decision.

*One last note:* Your first run at the persona may not be perfect. You can tweak it as you gain more insight to your customer base. Getting one defined is what is important to start with.

## **Putting Your Buyer Persona to Good Use**

Now you have an idea of who your persona is, what he or she likes and is looking for, and what your company can do to answer his or her needs. This is when you can start using the persona.

- Create content focused on your persona

Your content should attract, convert, close, and delight your customer. With the persona at hand, you know exactly what your customers are looking for.

- Create all forms of content based on the persona

This includes marketing campaigns, blog entries, landing pages, email campaigns, and online brochures.

Once you know what they need and are able to develop a profile of who they are, you can address their needs with a practical solution. Developing your Buyer Personas is the most effective way to accomplish this goal. Your company will see the rewards.



## Part III.

### The Critical Components in Your Buyer Personas.

Inbound marketing success depends on the quality of your Buyer Personas. Your marketing team uses the personas to focus their marketing efforts. The sales team uses the personas to craft their sales strategies. With the wrong personas, their efforts will not have the impact they should have.

You know how critical these personas are. But, where do you start? It is not uncommon for someone to stare at their computer screen with no clue about how to begin.

#### The Critical Components

The best way to start is to first focus on the critical components of the Buyer Persona. All the data you gather will help define the full picture. However, these critical components will give your sales and marketing teams a solid starting point. In fact, with this information, you can make critical sales and marketing decisions with a good level of confidence.

Let's look at the critical components in detail to see why they are important and how you use the information in your persona.

##### *1. What is the customer's demographic profile?*

Demographic information includes answering questions like:

- Is this person male or female?
- Is this person married?
- Does this person have children? If so, how old?
- How old is this person?
- How much does he or she make each year?
- Where does this person live?

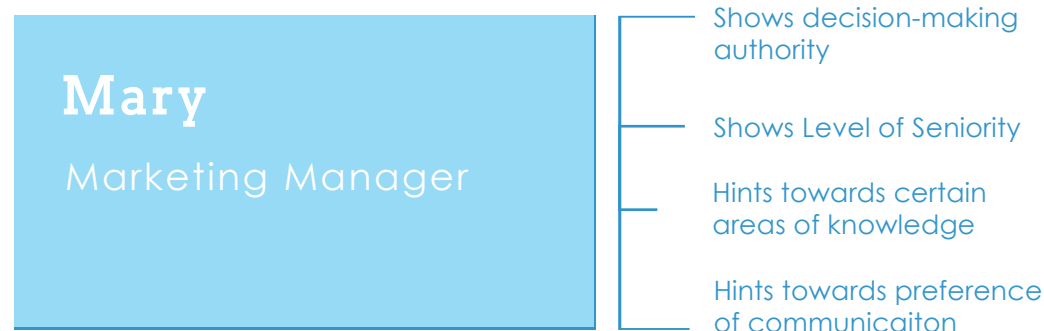
This demographic information gives you an outline on which to start building your persona. It is easier to get than most other information. It provides a personal picture of your customer. This information is valuable because it helps you focus your offline and online marketing efforts. For example, if your target is a college-aged male still living at home, your marketing and sales efforts will differ than if the target is a woman in her 40s working a white-collar job, married, with five kids.

## 2. What is this person's job, the title, and his or her level of seniority?

A major part of many people's lives is their job. When it comes to creating a persona, this information can have different levels of importance, depending on what your company offers.

If you are a company that sells to consumers, this information helps you understand the details of the customer's life. It helps you understand if your products appeal to professionals or blue-collar workers. Do your customers come from the same industry? That information gives a clearer picture of what drives this persona.

If you are a company that sells to companies, the customer's job becomes critical. Your customers hold a certain position and decision-making authority within their company. Is this person an executive or at a high level of management? Is this person at a lower level? Knowing the person's title and level of seniority helps you understand the customer's preferences for communications and marketing. It helps to show the decision-making process within the company and what this person goes through to purchase products or services.



## 2. What does a day in this person's life look like?

A person is more than his or her demographic data and job. This person lives life. Your persona needs to capture what a typical day looks like for your ideal customer. This will integrate the personal and professional aspects of life into one comprehensive picture. Here are some examples of the type of details your persona needs:

- Does this person spend more time at home or at work?
- Where would he or she rather be?
- What does this person like to do for fun?
- Which person or persons matter most in this person's life?
- What vehicle does he or she drive?
- What TV shows, if any, does this person watch?
- What type of clothing does this person feel most comfortable wearing?

Now, you can add or subtract as much detail as you want. The idea is to get a good mental picture of this person. If you have any remaining fuzzy areas, get more information or make educated guesses.

Once you have a good outline of your persona, browse through some stock photos. Pick out a few that represent what makes your persona come alive. You can find a picture that looks much like your persona. Add one for the vehicle they drive. Add a picture representing what they like to do for fun. Add others that seem to fit. These photos help clarify the image to your marketing and sales staff. It humanizes the fictional character.

#### *4. What challenges and pain points does your customer have? How can your product or service solve them?*

Your product or service helps to solve a problem in your target audience. You need to understand how this problem affects daily life. Your persona needs to detail how this problem makes the customer feel (frustration, intimidation, fear of doing something wrong, etc.).

For example, let's say your company offers website templates for sale to small businesses and individuals.



One of your personas is a person just opening a small business who needs a website up quickly. What are the pain points for this type of customer? If they are not a website designer, the idea of designing their own website is intimidating. They may be overwhelmed at the technical details involved. They have no idea where to start.

The pain points for another persona is entirely different. For example, let's say a technically savvy teenager is looking for a fun template to use on his or her blog. The pain points for this persona would be frustration in not finding templates that show his or her personality. They have found templates geared towards younger kids and those geared towards young adults, but nothing for their age group and interests.

### *5. What does this customer value most?*

When you know the customer's pain points, you will get clarity in what that person values most. You also get insight into what they do not care about. What gets the customer excited about your product or service?

For example, using the website template example, for the start-up business owner, an easy-to-install template is more valuable than a highly complicated one. If your website offers simple-to-use instructions for installation and customization, then you offer that person even more value.

For the tech-savvy teenager, creative, leading edge design is more valuable in their eyes. They want something that will make their personal presence online something that will impress their friends.

### *6. What is this customer's preference for getting information? Where do they go? Who do they trust?*

You need to understand your persona's preferences for consuming information. Some people use the Internet for information gathering. Others do better in face-to-face meetings. Still others are comfortable with reading newspapers, magazines, and journals. You need to delve even deeper into the details. For example, if the person prefers to go online, does he or she use social networks? Do they prefer Google or Bing?

Which sources does this person trust? Common answers include friends, family, co-workers, or industry experts. However, knowing which one is their preference will influence your marketing message and focus.

When you know their information gathering preferences and who they trust, you can place your marketing message in the right spot at the right time.

### *7. What kind of experience does this person want to have when purchasing and using your products and services?*

Each person has certain expectations for their sales experience. What should the sales experience feel like? Does it feel like a consultation? How much time should the transaction take? Is this a face-to-face experience, or solely online? The customer also has expectations for when he or she uses this product or service. What features do they want to see?

This information helps you align your product and service as well as your marketing message with your persona.

*8. What is the customer's most common objections to your product or service?*

No product or service is perfect for every customer on the planet. If you can anticipate potential objections from your customers that fit the persona, you can address them during the sales process. You can educate your target audience with your marketing.

What makes this person hesitant to buy your product? Is he or she a first-time Buyer of this type of product or service? If not, why are they looking to switch products or services?

Okay, at this point, you have a deep understanding of what makes your persona tick. Now you have the ability to tailor your communications to your audience. You can focus your marketing and sales messages.

You also have the ability to spot a potential customer faster. When you know their job title, their demographic information, and their typical forms of communications, spotting a new lead becomes much easier. You and your employees will have no problems communicating with this person. Plus, you will have a consistent voice in how your company presents itself. And that is a smart thing for any business.

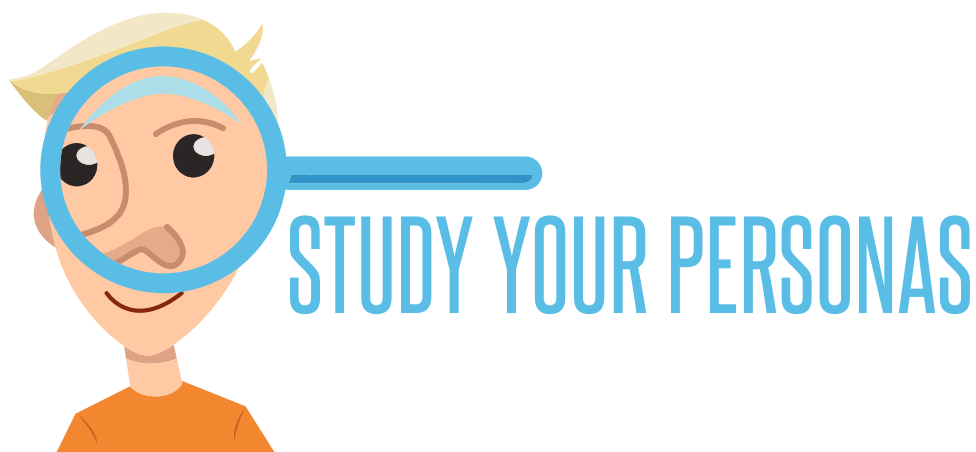
## Part IV.

### Strengthening Your Online Marketing with the Use of Buyer Personas.

How well do you know your best customer? This means more than knowing their name. You need to know this customer inside and out. For example:

- Does your customer live in an urban loft or a suburban split level?
- Is your customer married, living with someone, or happily divorced?
- Does your customer prefer the business reports on CNBC or to watch a comedy like Modern Family?
- Is your customer an active member of the PTA or head of their local business association?
- Does your customer have to have the latest iPhone or do they rely on their trusty landline?

If you have no clue to the answers, you need to do some research. Information like this helps to clarify your business personas. That helps you make smarter decisions about your marketing and sales messages. You will also have focus for new product development and introduction.



You must market your company with a message that people will love. To tap into this love is to understand what that which already enthralls your ideal customer. That means understanding your customer's needs, interests, and loves. With that information, you can make smart decisions to direct your marketing strategies now and in the future. This will make you happy with success and it will make your customers happy. They will have the same love for your company.



## How Do You Use the Buyer Persona to Make Smarter Marketing Decisions?

You can do this in many ways. Here are a few to consider:

- Create blog content that rivals his or her favorite magazine
- Post social updates that speak to your customer
- Hang out where your ideal customer hangs out
- Focus your SEO strategy to use the phrases your customer uses
- Use humor in a way that your customers find funny
- Put together an offer to solve your customer's problem
- Make your landing pages appeal to your customer
- Use technology that meets their technology comfort level
- Collaborate with external partners that your customer will love
- Align your marketing timing with your customer's lifestyle
- Mold your sales process to your customer's decision-making style and process

Let's look at each of these ideas and how they can make your marketing into something your customers will love.

### *Create blog content that rivals your customer's favorite magazine*



Have you ever read an article in a journal or magazine that you thought might have been written just for you? It is so relevant to your current situation that you had to save it or commit it to memory.

That type of content is the goal of all your content. You can offer the answers that your prospects need at that moment. You do this by knowing what they want to read and writing it in articles and blog content. You will start building a following of avid and loyal readers. Those people have an interest in what you have to say and what you have to offer.

### *Post social updates that speak to your customer*



Choose language that relates to your customer. Using showy words or adding too much fluff can alienate your audience. Your social updates need to be easy to relate to. By using language your customer uses, you open the door for your readers to relate to your company and brand. This will make your marketing flourish and expand your company's appeal.

*Hang out where your ideal customer hangs out*

This does not mean finding their favorite bar and going out for a drink. It means finding where they hang out online. Professional networking happens in places like LinkedIn. Some people love Twitter. Others loathe it. Facebook may be a personal preference, but some may avoid it for business purposes. Is there a special social network in your customer's niche that they live for?

Your business needs to hang out in the online communities where your customer hang out. Look for trends in web traffic. The channel that attracts the highest visit-to-lead conversion rate is the network where you need to be.

*Focus your SEO strategy to use the phrases your customer uses*

What phrases are your customers using to find your company or more importantly your company's services in search engines? You may be surprised at the way people think. A classic example of this is television remotes. If you were to look for keywords for selling that type of device, you would need to add one for "clicker." Many people call TV remotes, "clickers." You need to know the terminology your customers use and make sure your website content use those keywords.

*Use humor in a way that your customer finds funny*

Humor is a great way to connect with your customers. It humanizes your brand and your marketing. The problem can come if you use humor that is not funny to some people. You have to make sure your humor is not insulting or demeaning to your audience. What may seem funny to a 21-year-old college co-ed might not be to a 45-year-old housewife who works in a factory.

You must know what entertains your customers before you try humor. You do not want to inadvertently upset your prospects while attempting to make your brand more relatable and your content more engaging.

### *Make your landing pages appeal to your customer*

Remember, your prospects have certain ways they like to get information and to communicate during the sales process. Your landing pages need to appeal to these aspects of your target audience. You want content that tells how your offer will give your prospect what he or she wants. That will make your offer compelling and appealing. You will see a higher conversion rate with this type of targeting.

Not sure what will work? Try different landing pages and see which ones work and which ones do not.

### *Use technology that meets their technology comfort level*



Create content and offers that work at your customer's technology comfort level. If your target audience uses their mobile devices for much of their communication, asking them to download an app is a perfect option. If your audience relies on a 5-year-old flip phone without browsing capability, a downloadable app would be the wrong fit. You want your customers to be comfortable from the first moment they find your company and its marketing.

### *Collaborate with external partners that your customer will love*

If you have never heard of co-marketing, you need to read up. Partnering with a compatible company to market your products or services together will expand your audience. You will have the power of two companies' resources working towards a common goal.

Find companies that your Buyer loves, big or small. See if a partnership would be beneficial. You can do webinars together. You can create a campaign where a certain percentage of sales goes to a certain non-profit that your customers love. You can package your products or services into a discount offer.

This kind of partnering develops the authority of your brand and places you in a position of leadership. The best part is you earn major points in the likeability column with your potential customer base.

### *Align the timing of your marketing with your customer's lifestyle*

You need to know your Buyer Persona's schedule. When does this person go on vacation? What are his or her normal working hours? Do they work at home, in the office, or spend most of the time on the road? Are they in a different time zone? Do they like to catch up on emails in the morning or evening?

This information allows you to cater your marketing efforts to when your customer is likely looking. For example, some people get up early in the morning to catch up on emails and social media. For that prospect, your social updates need to go out by 5:00 AM.

### *Mold your sales process to your customer's decision-making style and process*

If you remember only one of these tips, this is the one you want. People need different levels of information to make decisions. They need different information at different stages of the sales cycle. You need to understand what information and details your Buyer needs and when they need it. That is how you get them to sign on the dotted line.

These are only a few ways you can use Buyer Personas in your marketing efforts.

## Part V.

### Centering Your Buyer Personas around Key Marketing Insights.

How many Buyer Personas do you need to develop? The answer will depend on which part of the personas you focus on. A common mistake made by many marketers is centering their personas around demographic information like industry, job title, or company size.

A more efficient way to do this is to create Buyer Personas centered around key marketing insights instead. This method means you will need to develop far fewer personas. Also, this method allows you to form strategies for effective messaging, content marketing, product launches, marketing campaigns, and sales alignment.

#### Key Marketing Insights

What are the key marketing insights you need to understand?

- Buyer Priorities
- Expectation of Successful Results
- Obstacles and Barriers - Real and Perceived
- Stages of the Buying Process
- Critical Selection Criteria

Let's look at each of these key marketing insights in detail.

#### *Buyer Priorities*

You need to answer a couple of questions:

1. Why do certain Buyers choose to invest in the solutions like those you offer?
2. What sets those Buyers apart when compared with people who are satisfied with the status quo?

This information is important because you need to know the difference between someone having a pain point and someone acting to solve that pain point. Many people choose to live with a pain point and never do anything about it. You need to know what would drive an individual or company to spend time, money, and effort towards solving and eliminating that pain point.

For example, let's say your Buyer Persona is the marketing director of a small company. A pain point for this persona may be lack of insight in how certain online marketing campaigns are contributing to lead generation and conversion rates. A Buyer Persona that has insight into what drives a person or company into solving a pain point would outline which customers would be most receptive (and least receptive) to your marketing software solution and for what reason.

### *Expectations of Successful Results*

What results do your Buyer Personas expect to have by purchasing your product or service? These results can be operational or personal. They can be physical or non-tangible results.

Your Buyer Personas' expectations need to be very specific and written from the perspective of a potential customer. They will resemble a list of benefits you expect your customers to receive. However, this is a personalized focus, not a general one.

For example, let's say you offer a specific smartphone with a long list of features. Your Buyer Persona is a teenage girl with a busy social life. For her, the expectations of successful results might read like this:

- The phone offers easy texting.
- The user can download fun apps, backgrounds, and ringtones for personalization and customization.
- The phone doubles for listening to music.
- The phone is compatible with her parents' cell phone plan.
- The phone is new enough to impress her friends.

Remember, the expectations will be unique to each persona.



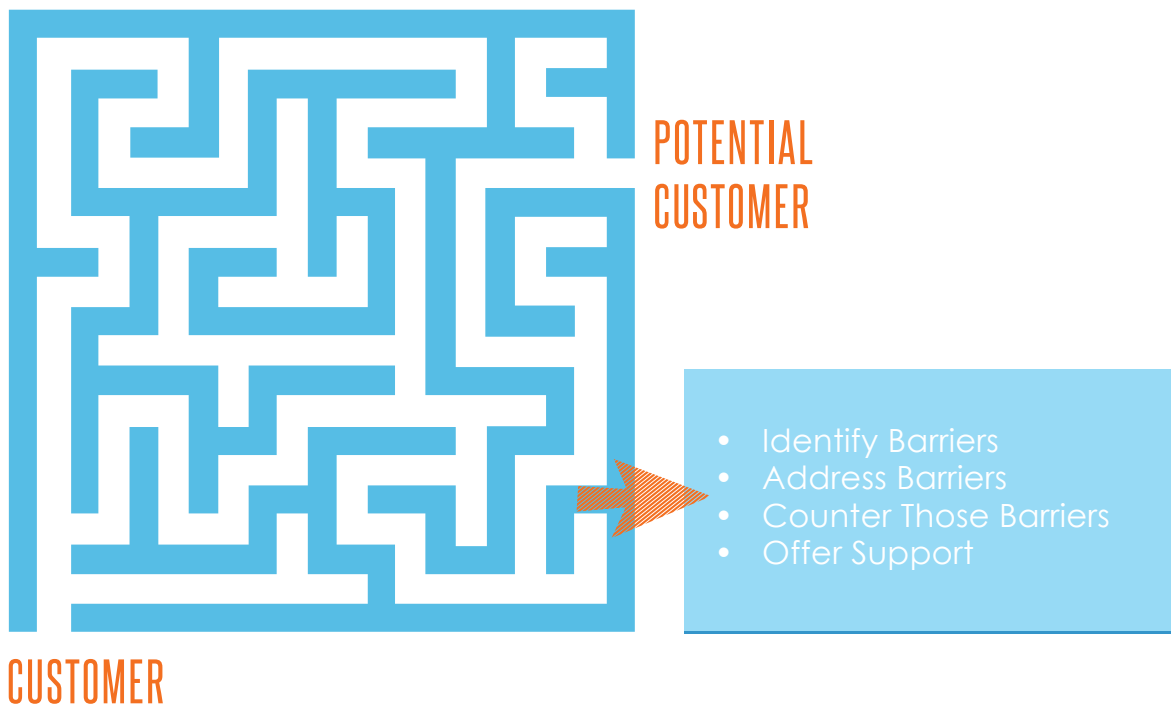
### *Obstacles and Barriers - Real and Perceived*

What could cause your Buyers to believe your product or service is not their best option?

First, identify which barriers are no longer fact or were never fact. Those are the easy ones for your marketers and salespeople to address.

Next, identify those barriers which come from a Buyer's negative experience with a competitor or the sharing of experiences from the Buyer's peers. For example, your competitor may be known for using hard sales tactics from the time a customer walks in the door. That may give your entire industry a bad name. Your marketing message needs to counter this by showing a customer-friendly experience.

Finally, identify the barriers that come from the Buyer's reluctance to make the changes needed to adopt your solution. This can include making business process changes, working to get end-user acceptance, or challenging the status quo and dealing with the potential fallout associated with it. Your sales staff needs to offer support to help the Buyer work through these issues.



### *Stages of the Buying Process*

Making the decision to buy has distinct stages. It begins with someone identifying a need they need to fill. Then, they start looking for options. Once they know their options, they begin evaluating those options. Finally, they will select one and make a purchase.

Your Buyer Persona needs to find what will keep your customers engaged and what will encourage them to keep evaluating your solution. You also need to know what will earn the highest levels of trust from your customers during each step in the buying process.

### *Critical Selection Criteria*

What features of your product or service is most important from your Buyer's perspective? Which features are critical and which ones are not? What does your Buyer expect from each attribute?

Determine which feature or capability has the most impact on why a Buyer would choose your product or service over your competitor.

Your marketing and sales always need to stay focused on the Buyer's questions and problems. Give them the answers they want to hear and the solutions they need.

By focusing on these key marketing insights, your Buyer Personas will be better than those of your competition. Your personas will embrace the Buyer's perspective in motivation, urgency and selection criteria. That allows you to focus your message and keep it on track.



## Part VI.

### Creating Buyer Personas That Are True Winners.

In the past, knowing your customer demographics was enough. People were predictable enough that marketing and sales could focus easily. With the global marketplace and the increasing diversity in people, jobs, and family, that is no longer the case.

What smart marketers today have adopted are Buyer Personas. These personas offer the information and detail you and your team need to start a successful marketing and sales campaign.

What turns some people off about Buyer Personas is the fact that they take work to assemble. And these personas are not static. They change as your business changes. When markets change, your personas will change and evolve. Sometimes one persona will become useless while another one emerges as one of your biggest customers.

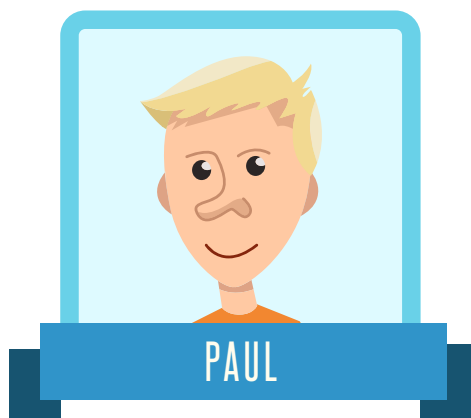
The work it takes to put together a persona is well worth the time it takes to create and support it.

#### **How do you create a comprehensive and winning Buyer Persona?**

- Give the target an identity
- Gather buying experience
- Map out the workflow
- Nail down the plan
- Anticipate questions and find answers for them

Let's look at these areas in depth:

#### *Give the targets an identity*



When you give your persona an identity, you are creating a fictional character based on facts you gather from your customers. This character is not a flat two-dimensional character with a label like "Senior Marketing Manager of Large Company who Wants Easier Access to Marketing Data". It needs to have enough detail to create a full picture of your ideal customer. It must have enough information so you can reach your prospects and grab their attention.

### *Gather buying experiences*

You know that your persona buys product X. But, what motivates him or her to do so? That is the critical piece of information that will help you focus your marketing. This will tap into the personality traits that are specific to your customers, not into generalized character traits.

Look at these examples to get your thought process started:

- Does this person follow the chain of command or is this person a maverick?
- Is this person a member of Gen Y, Gen X or a Baby Boomer? Is this person a Millennium Baby?
- Does this person like face-to-face meetings or does he or she feel comfortable doing everything online?
- How much value does this person place on personal customer services versus lower-cost products or services?

### *Map out the workflow*

You need to find what your customers' habits and motivations are. You can do this by evaluating their communication methods and making online observations.

- Do they work from home a lot?
- Do they spend a significant amount of time on the road?
- Are they in meetings all day?
- How many hours a day do they typically work?
- How much time do they spend online?

With a bit of detective work, you can see how this person works. Check when they are sending emails. When do they make orders?

Now, what are the reasons behind what they do?

Look at the way this person handles emails. Is the tone quick and brusque? Is the email positive and thoughtful? You can tell a lot from this type of information.

If a person has only a few minutes to skim emails, you need to meet this communication style head on. You offer quick, hard-hitting emails without any fluff involved. You can give the bare minimum of information in a way that meets this person's need for communication. On the other side, someone who has the time to create a positive, thoughtful email likely has more time. They may take longer to make a decision. They want more information to look through.

By studying how a person works, you can gain insight into their personality and what will give that person the information desired in a way that will attract and not repel.

### *Nail down the pain*

You need to get to the root of a Buyer's challenges and pain points. These will tell you what kind of content you need to create for them.

Realize that people will not spend their time on anything that does not make their lives easier or better. Focus your message on how your product or service will solve your customers' problem. With a couple of interactions with your offering, the prospects will see that your solution will improve their particular situation.

You need to take the pain point from your customers' lives and turn it into content for your website. Address the challenges they face directly. Provide insight and resources on how they can tackle the challenge and take it down. With this information, you can segment your target audience at a deeper level so your message has a rich target to hit.

For example, if someone is looking for ways to manage their email in the shortest amount of time possible, your marketing content will give tips on how to manage email efficiently and how your software addresses his or her need. Another person is looking for an email program that also includes a calendar and time scheduling features. The message to this person is different.

By targeting each person individually, you are reinforcing the message that you care and want to help.



### *Anticipate questions and find answers for them*

Look at each Buyer Persona. What kind of questions might that persona have? You need to think proactively about this. It will allow you to expect their questions and handle concerns with your marketing and sales messages. Walk through every aspect you have collected and consolidated in this persona. Each aspect may trigger a new question. When you answer these questions preemptively, you have the advantage. You can craft your message and address their concerns before they can speak them. It will give you a better chance at lead conversion and increase the chances of creating a return customer.

As you get used to examining your customers and their work habits, you will get even more insights into their lives, loves, and habits. This will enrich your Buyer Personas even more.

**Remember, your personas evolve as your company evolves.**

## Part VII.

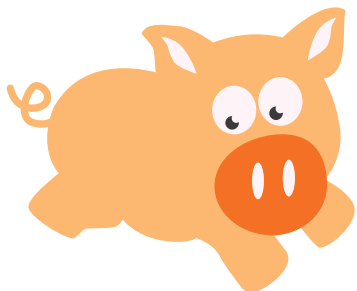
### Who is the Ideal Buyer or User for Your Products and Services? Getting Clarity!!

If someone was to ask, "What is the best movie out this summer?" the answer received would depend on who is being asked. Each person has their own opinion about movies and what appeals to him or her. If you were to ask that question of a factory worker, an international business executive, and a teenage student, the answers would likely be different.

*Each person defines "best" as the one that meets their needs, desires, and wants.*

#### Throwing Out the Old for the New

To develop products and services that appeal to your ideal user or Buyer, your marketing experts need detailed personas. These personas offer insights into the minds of the people who buy and use your company's products and services. These profiles offer a clear focus on who the target is. This makes programming and communications easier for everyone involved.



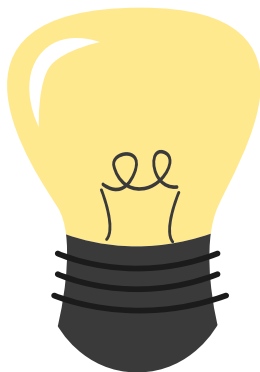
The old approach to product development was to slap a list of features together and hope they sell. The marketing guys would come up with a campaign to make the features look good to as many people as possible. That approach is known as "**perfuming the pig.**"

That technique doesn't work any more. With so many companies out there competing for consumer money, people are very picky about what they buy. Just slapping some features together will not work. No amount of marketing will get people to buy products they don't want. The old approach of "creating the need" for a product is dead.

#### Develop Products and Services Your Customers Want

*The Buyer Persona helps product developers find what appeals to the target customers.*

What features appeal to your target customer? For example, on a smartphone, should you include a book reader, a currency converter, or a music player? Does your Buyer want access to business apps or games? Your Buyer Persona helps show the features that will satisfy your target customer's needs.



Your Buyer Persona helps your development teams focus on what problems your products and services can help a particular customer solve. Once the product or service is ready, the persona helps your marketing people connect with the particular customer and grab that person's attention when he or she is ready to buy.

## **Extend Your Personas into Sales and Marketing**

Development teams have used personas for a while now. They are relatively new for marketing and production teams though. In the past few years, the power of personas have become clear. Today, marketing and production teams use personas in developing and refining marketing campaigns and messages in industries and niches of all sorts.

For example, what form of marketing would best reach the target customer? Twitter, blogs, webinar, trade show, or traditional print ads?

You can extend Buyer Personas to include all the influences on a typical sale. For example, the purchase of a particular product may include a decision maker along with several technology reviewers. For larger ticket items, a full evaluation team may be involved. In some cases, an IT reviewer checks products for compliance, security, and technical fit into the existing technical environment. When you take this extended approach, you will need a Buyer Persona for each person in this evaluation process.

Some companies think if they focus solely on their end users, they will have all the Buyer Personas they need. However, that is not so in larger companies. You must meet the requirements of the decision makers and the technology evaluators before your product will ever get into those users' hands.

It is important to realize that the technology profile of each company and even each department within a company is different. The technical profile of an executive will differ from that of someone in the IT department. The computing platform in a bank will be different from that in an engineer's office.

## Buyer Personas: Your Archetype

A common way to refer to Buyer Personas is as an archetype. According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of an archetype is that it is the original model from which all others of the same type are mere copies.

*A Buyer Persona is an archetype of that ideal user and Buyer of your products or services.*

How many personas do you need for each product or service you offer? Typically, a product or service will need three to five personas. These represent the people who regularly buy and use the product. It may also include personas of those who support and repair the product. Each persona needs to include a name, age, sex, technical environment, education, and job scenario.



When you move through various market segments, you will see the titles and profiles of your personas change. You may have the same sales rep for most of your segments. However, when you start looking at the technical reviewers, your personas may change greatly.

For example, for a small implementation, you may be dealing with a single reviewer who will handle all aspects of the review. In a bigger implementation, you may be dealing with three to five reviewers, all from different disciplines. You might have a couple from the IT department, another one from the business process side, and others from any number of other disciplines or departments. You will need to create personas for technical reviewers and make variations when a reviewer deviates greatly from your archetype.

In a real life case, one computer vendor identified four general Buyer Personas in their initial effort. However, when the company delved into the individual market segments, they ended up with over twenty-five personas.

They found that the Buyer in a large company is very different from one in a small company. The larger company will have several employees working on their IT hardware. In a smaller company, the IT expert may be the owner or a family member. The approach to each type of Buyer is significantly different.

## Avoid These Mistakes When Creating Buyer Personas:



1. A major mistake made by product designers in the U.S. is to assume that the technology infrastructure found in the United States is the same as it is in other countries. Instead, smart companies know that they can design products to fit into each persona's technical environment. Something that may be considered antiquated in the States may be state of the art technology in the heart of developing regions in Africa or Asia.



2. Avoid making the mistake of thinking your employees are good representatives of your customers. For example, your software developers may be advanced users of your programming tools. Don't think that software developers in your target audience have the same level of skill. You need to look at your customers, not your employees, when developing your Buyer Personas.



3. Do not make the mistake of thinking your Buyer Personas are static. With the ever-changing marketplace, your business will continue to grow and change. That means your personas need to continue to grow and change as well. Always look for ways to further enhance the information in your personas for the best results.



## Part VIII.

### What are the Best Practices for Developing Effective Buyer Personas?

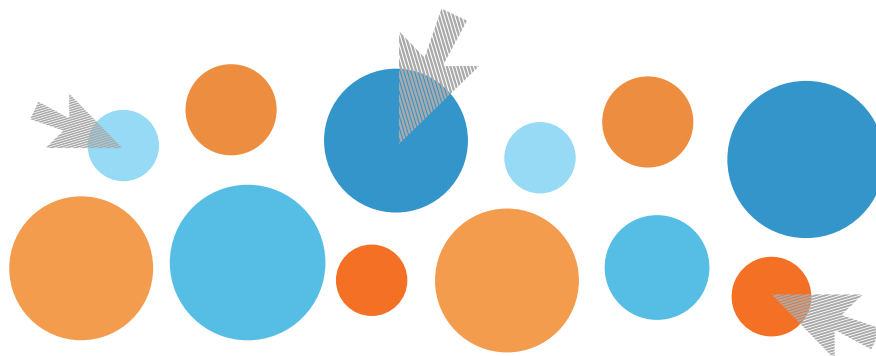
You have seen why you need Buyer Personas. You have learned about how to create Buyer Personas. How do you make sure that your personas are the best they can possibly be?

#### The Three Best Practices You Need to Follow

Here are a few simple, but very powerful, practices that will give your Buyer Personas the edge when it comes to your company's strategies and planning:

##### *#1 - Identify and Use Key Insights*

You can easily capture and integrate facts about your customer's job, market segment, and include a couple of paragraphs related to his or her goals. However, that information is not the core of what you need in an effective Buyer Persona. That information is known by your competitors and you need to know it for your company's success. That information comes from your key insights.



These insights allow you to get inside the head of your customers. You will know how they weigh options when making a buy. You will know how they will compare your product with that of your competition. When you have these insights, you can position yourself as an expert they can trust. This accurate insight gives you the focus to accurately identify the Buyer's motives, create a strategy, and deploy tactics to persuade the customer to choose your product or service. In fact, the accuracy with which you can do this can be a bit scary.

That is the power of a well-defined and tested Buyer Persona.

## *#2 - Develop the number of personas you need*

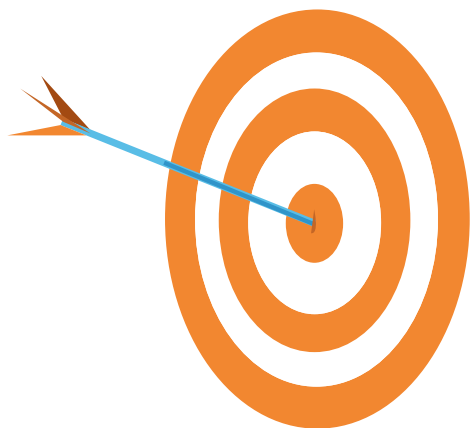
Don't make the mistake in assuming the number of Buyer Personas you need equals the number job titles you deal with. You will end up with way too many personas to create and manage. They will overlap a great deal. When you multiply that by the number of industries or company sizes you deal with, the problem escalates to something that is completely unmanageable. Do yourself a favor and avoid that approach.

What is the right number of personas for your company's products and services?

A couple of factors come into play. First you need to evaluate what your capacity is to execute multiple marketing strategies. Then, you need to look at the significant differences between Buyers in different situations who you want to influence. For example, what would an executive of a large company need for making a purchase decision in comparison to what an executive at a small company would need.

By using key insights to develop your Buyer Personas, you will come up with the right number of profiles for your company's marketing, sales, and product development departments. You will also be able to identify when you need a new persona to get more traction in a particular market or to expand into a new one.

## *#3 - Keep the Goal in Mind*



Why are you developing Buyer Personas in the first place? This reason is often lost because the creators are focusing on ways to build PowerPoint slides and posters, instead of a quality Buyer Persona. It ends up being a checklist approach and not a true persona development effort.

The reason you are developing each persona is to become an expert on what your Buyers are looking for. You need to have confidence in saying "This is what our Buyers want. This is what they are telling us. Here is our plan on how to tap into this market."

Once you target the right personas and get the insights you need to nail down their profile, your marketing efforts will start to take off. Your product launches, your sales targets, your revenue goals, and your messaging and content will be on target to deliver results.

## Part IX.

### What are the Ins and Outs of Buyer Persona Development?

Because the popularity of Buyer Personas is on the rise, there are tons of people out there creating them. That means there are tons of people getting them wrong.

To get your Buyer Persona right, you need to follow and adhere to a few rules. These rules will guide your efforts and make sure that your persona is successful and useful. If you do not follow these rules, you are going to have a useless document with no value to your company's development, marketing, or sales departments.

#### The 10 Rules You Need to Follow

*Rule #1 - A Buyer Persona is not something you can imagine out of nothing.*

One mistake commonly made by many online marketers is thinking that a persona is something they can create with a minimum of information. They will look through their customer data, talk to a sales rep or two, and start creating their persona from that limited information.

The problem is that the persona that gets created is not based on facts. These profiles look nice, but after a bit of time, prove to be completely useless. Actually, using such a profile can damage your efforts.

*Rule #2 - A customer profile is not the same as a Buyer Persona.*

Customer profiles have been a common tool in the world of marketing and sales for a long time. They offer data on demographics, customer purchasing data, geographic patterns, and other characteristics found in a population of customers. All of this helps to draw up a profile of the targeted customers. However, they are not the same thing as a Buyer Persona.

A Buyer Persona can include data that is also included in a customer profile. However, Buyer Personas go far beyond the scope of any traditional customer profile. A persona goes into deep insights about your Buyers and your customers.

Many executives have experience with customer profiles from working back in the 1980s when profiles came into popular use. Due to the misconception that Buyer Personas are just amped-up customer profiles, these executives fail to give a persona the value it represents. They dismiss Buyer Persona creation efforts. When this mindset is in place, it is difficult to get executive buy-in.

*Rule #3 - Put the right people, with the right skills and attributes, on your Buyer Persona creation team.*

Like any team effort, a good deal of the success you have in creating effective Buyer Personas comes from the people on your team. You need the people who have the right skills and attributes.



Many people fall for the marketing scheme that you can go to a short workshop and come out being able to put together great Buyer Personas. Some of these workshops say you can get the expertise you need in an hour or a half-day. The reality is that you will gain some limited skills from these workshops. However, to put together an effective Buyer Persona, you need more than that.

You need a team of people who have the skill set and attributes to do the work needed. Everyone needs training in how to create Buyer Personas. They need to have the ability to distill what they learned and use those skills to create personas that show your true Buyer goals. They need to create personas that are meaningful.

Choosing the wrong people means your personas will not turn out with the in-depth detail that you need. Most of these teams are made from the people who volunteer and those who are volunteered. The team is not made up of people with the skills needed. That is a recipe for disaster. Not everyone is cut out for creating the in-depth Buyer Personas your business needs to succeed.

*Rule # 4 - Buyer Personas offer a translation of customer goals.*

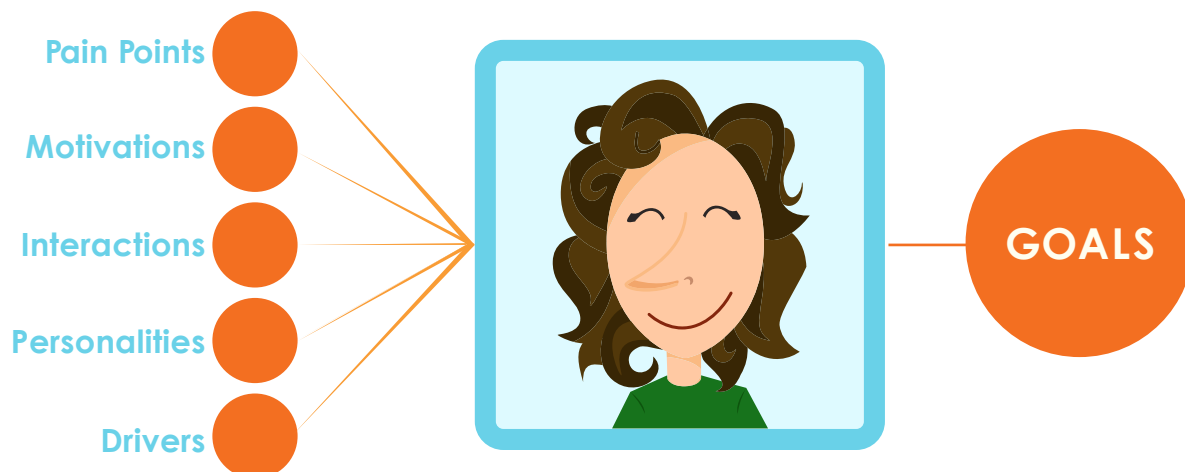
For many years, sales training has emphasized the need to understand your customers' pain points. These help your sales team craft their strategies to effectively market to customers. When you get a solid grasp on motivations, personalities, drivers, and who your Buyers interact with, you get clues on how to grab your customers' attention, sell your products effectively, and close the deal.

Modern sales training stresses the essential nature of understanding your customers' needs and wants. It also focuses on adapting selling style to different personality types, like analytical and intuitive Buyers. The challenge lies in putting all this information together and making sense of it in a way that everyone on your team can understand.

A Buyer Persona captures the customers' goals. That sounds simple, but it really is not. You have looked at their pain points, motivations, interactions, personalities, and drivers. You have synthesized this information and used it to identify what drives this customer and what their goals are.

Now, getting a Buyer to articulate their goals is not always easy. The problem is that many Buyers are not able to articulate their personal goals or the goals of their organization clearly. That is why research and analysis is so important in creating Buyer Personas. You need personas that will give everyone in your organization the insights to make sound decisions on sales, marketing, and customer service strategies.

By focusing on goals, you and your organization will create Buyer Personas that are meaningful and useful for winning strategies.



*Rule # 5 - Buyer Personas offer insights into that which is not said and that which is not obvious.*



Have you ever walked off a plane into a foreign country where you cannot speak the language and do not understand the culture? You are lost in a foreign land. It is a very exciting experience, but can be trying, at least at first. You want to communicate with the locals, but have no idea where to begin. You may have no clue where you are going and have no map.

Every culture has its own array of gestures, facial expressions, and responses to strangers. Walking into a strange culture is more than just language differences. Knowing how to interact with people is another set of differences to overcome.

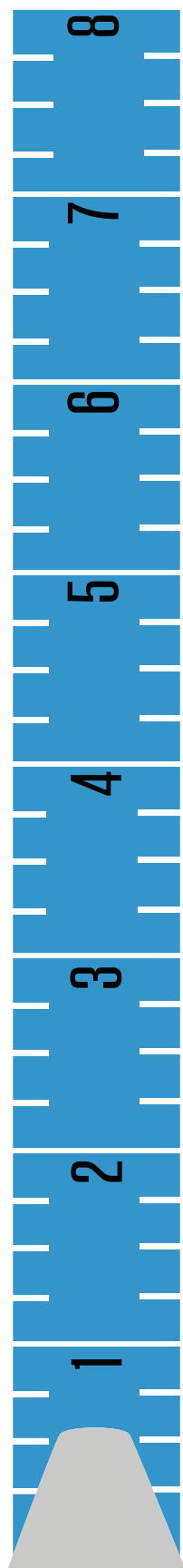
When you are there more than a few days, the culture and its intricacies will start to become easier to handle and to understand. You will start to make sense of the gestures, facial expressions, and laughable moments that allow you to communicate effectively. You will learn how to ask, or at least gesture about, common requests. There will be no more desperate searches for rest rooms.

Just as a person visiting a foreign land needs to understand the unspoken clues about the people he or she meets, your Buyer Persona needs to capture the information about your customer that is not spoken and is not so obvious to the casual observer. This is a critical part of your persona development that serves you well during customer strategy formulation.

Capturing this type of information is a real challenge. It is often tough to translate what your Buyers really want. They may say one thing, but really mean another. They may not even be able to say it at all. It is easy to capture demographic data and insights into motivations, pain points, and desires. What is not easy is capturing the unsaid insights and the not-so-obvious goals that your customers hold.

If you can capture these unsaid clues, you will have the data you need to create a winning customer strategy and a competitive differentiator. This depth of information is what separates a customer profile from a Buyer Persona. It provides the deep insights that allow executives to make effective decisions about customer strategy.

*Rule #6 - Developing Buyer Personas is a qualitative process, not a quantitative one.*



Quantitative analysis is the cornerstone of modern business. Organizations incorporate the need for information and analysis into their corporate culture. Every decision must have a quantitative part related to it. It is addicting in some ways.

This approach is already well entrenched into analyzing and understanding markets and customers. You may have been in meetings where someone was presenting the latest online survey results or cumulative industry data released after the last quarter. Surveys, pie charts, graphs, and data tables are a part of modern business reporting and culture.

The reality is that Buyer Personas are the result of qualitative, not quantitative, analysis. The true value of a persona lies in the insights found in the customers' experiences, wants, and goals.

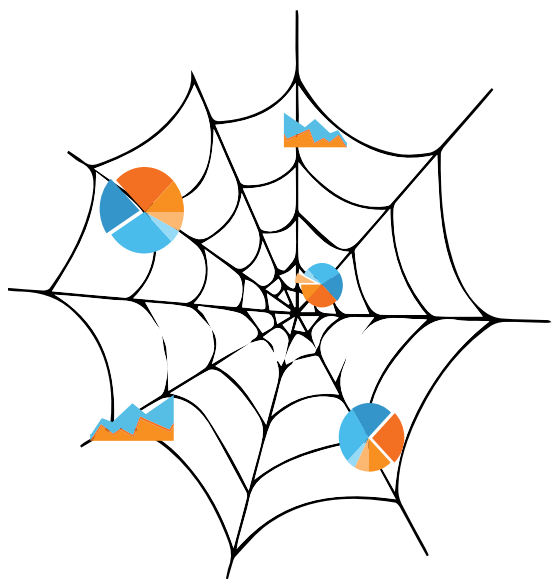
A major problem happens when the marketing department is asked to create Buyer Personas in an analytical focused organization. Instead of approaching it as a qualitative exercise, the analytical types naturally try to make it into a quantitative exercise. This is not a natural fit. It will cause all kinds of questions about sampling sizes and how to analyze survey results.

When a quantitative approach is taken to data gathering, the problem arises that the reams of data gathered likely have few of the critical insights needed for good Buyer Persona development. Those kinds of insights come from qualitative and experiential analysis instead of quantitative. The results of quantitative analysis lack context so determining goals is very difficult.

Now, quantitative analysis complements the qualitative analysis you do for Buyer Personas. When you have critical insights into your Buyer Personas, you can use quantitative analysis to explore and confirm this insight. A good example of this is finding a potential new market for your products while doing your qualitative analysis. You can have the marketing team go out and explore this new market to determine its size and confirm its potential.

Going the opposite way, qualitative analysis can clarify the Buyer Persona found in a potential market. Quantitative analysis can find new markets, but not give enough insights into the Buyers. That is where experiential and qualitative analysis comes into play. This humanizes the Buyers, gives clarity to the Buyer's goals, and helps find the best strategies for engaging the customers in this new market.

*Rule #7 - Don't make the mistake of building a web of data points.*



With the development of modern software programs like MS Excel and PowerPoint, businesses have taken the mindset that everything can be reduced to a set of data points. The more data points you have the better in many cases, or so they think. Many businesses would not know what to do without a regular dose of graphics, charts, matrices, and data tables. People have gotten in the habit of organizing everything into tables and lists.

When you are putting together a Buyer Persona, the data point approach is the wrong one to take. If you use this approach, you are accumulating data. You are creating a web of data points. You may have a web containing

almost every conceivable bit of information on “what” makes up your Buyer Persona. It creates a layer upon layer effect. What is lacking is qualitative and experiential insights that are so essential to good Buyer Persona development. What you are not doing is developing a useful Buyer Persona.

The web of data points may seem like a good approach. You are gathering a ton of information about the customer base and their buying habits. A problem with this approach is that it tries to categorize Buyers and Buyer segments into neat boxes. People are not data points. They have human feelings, experiences, and desires. That is the information that you want to capture to make your Buyer Personas useful.

The world of B2B and B2C companies is changing rapidly. With emerging competition at a global level, smart companies are looking for every advantage they can get to stay ahead of their competitors. Buyer Personas based on a web of data points are a foundation for failure. Those built on qualitative marketing insights first and foremost backed up by quantitative analysis are a foundation for success.

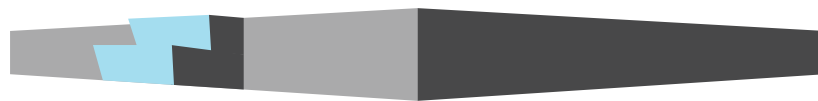


*Rule #8 - The foundation of good persona development is qualitative and experiential analysis.*

When you look at a run-down house, the kind you see on a home makeover show, you need to look beyond the decorating problems and the finish issues. The strength of any home is the foundation. Without a strong foundation, the house above, no matter how old or how new, will collapse eventually. Shoring up the foundation will only go so far. Razing the house and starting over is often the best way to make sure the house is sound for decades to come.

When you are putting together a Buyer Persona, you have to use the same thinking. Your persona must be based on a strong foundation to stand the test of time. That foundation must be based on qualitative and experiential analysis.

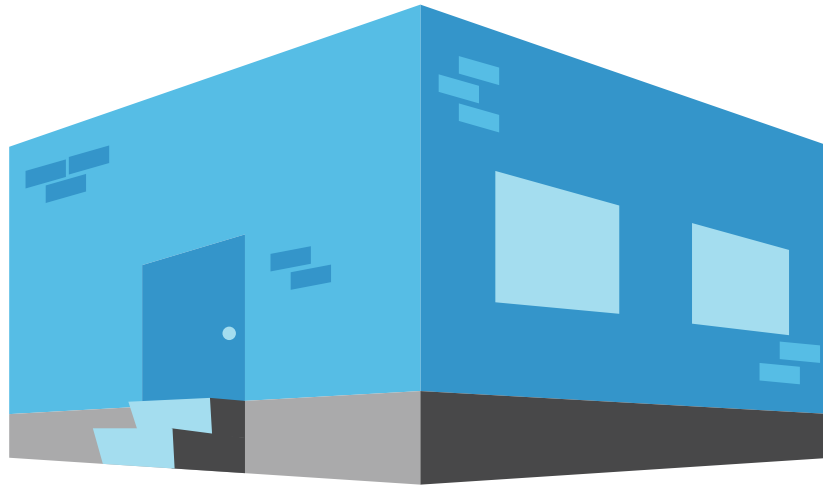
Putting together a house begins with the foundation. You cannot put the roof on the house until the foundation and walls are up. There are stages to the home construction process. There are also steps in developing Buyer Personas. It begins with gathering information and data from existing customers and Buyers. This data ranges from demographic facts to personal preferences in communication and the customer experience.



With that information at hand, the company can begin to derive insights into the Buyer Persona. That is the mortar that holds blocks together. That is the screws and nails that hold boards together. That is the drywall that takes a frame wall and makes it into something seen in a house. With that information, your customer profile turns into an effective Buyer Persona that your sales and marketing team can use.



The value of well-researched Buyer Persona cannot be overstated. These personas can show the evolving patterns of Buyer goals and behaviors. They can show when one persona is losing interest and moving on. They can show the potential for new markets as well. The kinds of insights your company can get with Buyer Personas can direct marketing and sales strategies now and in the future with confidence.



*Rule #9 - The goal of Buyer Persona development is to create goal-centered customer strategies.*

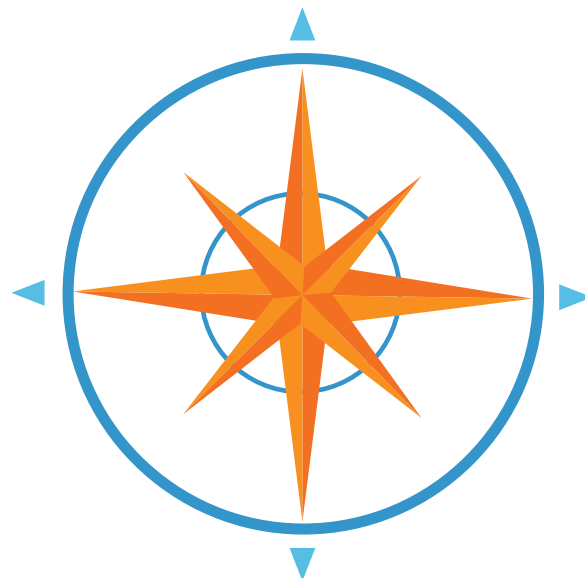
How radically did the invention of the compass change the course of the world? While it was first invented during the Qin Dynasty of the third century B.C in China, its real power showed up when the Age of Exploration began in the 15th century A.D. The compass gave people a way to navigate without the need for heavenly bodies for reference. The compass provides information on what direction they are traveling with great accuracy. It allowed for contact with other civilizations and opened up new trade routes.

What does a compass have to do with Buyer Personas? The Buyer Persona offers direction on which way your company should head in regards to product development, marketing, sales, and customer service strategy. It informs the executive ranks of what Buyers are thinking and it allows them to create goal-centered customer strategies.

In today's rapidly changing market, online and offline, Buyer behaviors and goals are changing rapidly. Every day innovations are influencing the thinking and buying habits of consumers around the world. This new world requires new methods of navigation. The Buyer Persona offers guidance on which direction to head. As it evolves, it provides information on making course corrections. The persona provides glimpses of new areas to explore ahead and to all sides.

In the real world, a few years ago, a company was puzzled about why one of their key customer segments was seeing a significant drop in revenue that was not reversing. They did not know what is going on. With a bit of research and gathering insights, they found the underlying cause was the fact that the way this particular customer segment gathered information as part of the buying process had undergone a fundamental shift. Customers were using online resources to look for options, explore them, and to make purchasing decisions. This was not common at the time. In response, the company implemented an online content creation campaign that gave their potential customers useful and helpful information. Within a few months, the decrease in revenue reversed itself. Within a year, the company had gained the leadership position among its competitors in this market segment. The company had positioned itself as an expert in the field with its online content.

These kind of insights into your Buyers is just what you need in your Buyer Personas. You need to know what they are thinking now. You need to be able to spot changes in their behaviors so your company can adjust and get ahead of the trend. Your Buyer Personas will become your compasses going forward. You will have the knowledge you need to craft strategies that will meet your Buyer's goals and anticipate what they want before they know it. That is how Buyer Personas allow you to develop goal-centered customer strategies.



*Rule #10 - Your Buyer Personas serve as a conduit for telling stories about customers.*

The best stories come out of a deep knowledge of people and historical context. The best orators of the past had the ability to communicate in a way that wove together stories into the speech they were trying to deliver. These speeches rallied nations during war and turned the tide in people who felt despair. Martin Luther King's speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 was one such speech. He drew on the hopes and dreams of African-Americans and wove those into a speech that reached out to people beyond his normal audience. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech invoked a future filled with hope.

Executives and entrepreneurs of today do not need to be great orators. However, smart ones learn the power of storytelling. People can look at graphs and charts every day until their eyes cross. When they hear a story about a customer, instead, their eyes light up and their ears perk up. It is the perfect way to communicate your customer's needs to your employees.

Telling a story about your customers offers a way to humanize the people you are trying to market and sell to. Smart executives and entrepreneurs can see the power of a well-researched Buyer Persona and using it as the way to tell the story of a customer to employees and other executives. This type of storytelling helps focus all efforts towards meeting the needs of these customers. It also makes them easier to relate to.

## Part X.

### Getting to the Plain Language and Practical Application of Creating Buyer Personas

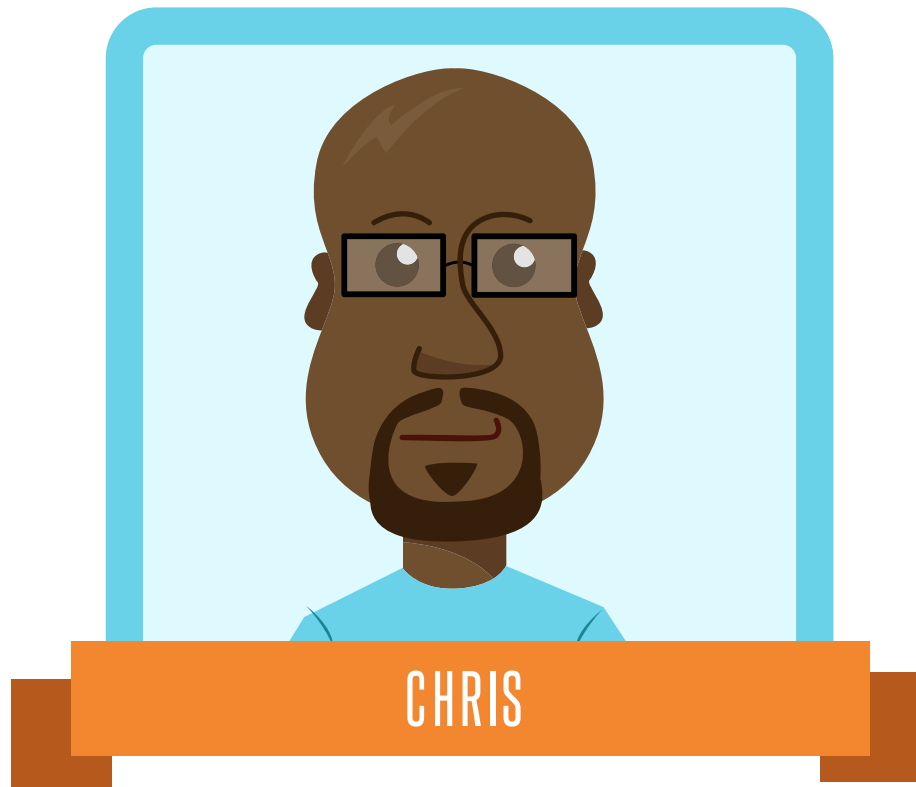
Okay. You need to remember one thing: Not everyone who visits your website or store is going to buy. A high number of visitors does not equate to a high number of leads generated or leads converted. That is why it is so important to base your Buyer Personas on your paying customers. You do not want a persona based on you, your employees, visitors, friends, or thieves. Your Buyer Persona needs to define that person in plain language that you and your employees can understand.



**There is not an all inclusive checklist that will give you every answer you need. However, here are some things you need to relate to when creating and developing your Buyer Personas:**

- **Gender** - Some personas will be very specific to one gender, while others will become quite androgynous. You need to delve into your profiles deeply to decide which is the case for your product or service. Making an assumption at the beginning about gender may bias what you find. Start out thinking the persona could be either and let the data you gather steer you to the right answer.
- **Age** - While the age of your Buyer Persona is the simplest piece, it tells you a lot about that person. You know that person views the world. You know that person's priorities. You know about where that person is in their career. All of those facts, plus many more, come just from knowing the person's age.
- **Profession** - Figuring this out in a B2B customer is not all that difficult. However, for B2C customers, it is not so easy in many cases. It is not obvious. However, this information is quite revealing about your customers. If you can find a common profession or a common job status, you can make your Buyer Persona more accurate and much more effective. This helps you understand how well your customers understand your product or service: Are they professional users or laypersons?

- *Financial situation* - Remember you want people to buy your product or service. That means their financial situation is critical for your Buyer Persona. You have to get this right. Now, this does not mean you concentrate on their bank accounts. You need to know how much your customers are willing to pay. Also, you want to know how easily they make a decision. That information will tell you how important your products are to them.
- *Purpose* - Why would your customers want to buy your products or services? You need to know this because it will drive your market message and sales methods. Remember, some products have more than one application, like paint. Other products have very specific uses, like asthma medications. The reason someone would buy your product is the core of your marketing. If you do not know why your customers buy your product, you are lost when it comes to coming up with an effective marketing campaign.
- *Education* - Knowing your persona's education level makes your profile that much richer. So, how much education does your Buyer Persona have? This information helps you understand how this person processes information. Does this person like to use graphs, statistics, and study results to make decisions? Does this person rely more on customer testimonials and simplified features?
- *Free time* - How does your customer spend his or her time? If you can even get a bit of information on common hobbies, favorite TV shows, and eating habits, you will get a lot of information on what makes this person tick. This information is some of the hardest to gather, but it is invaluable for your marketing and sales efforts.
- *Buying decision* - What does your customer consider when they are deciding to buy a product or service? Some of the common considerations include price, features, resale value, ease of use, and customer service. Each person places a higher value on different considerations. If you fail to gather this information about your customers, your marketing will not work as you expect.
- *Shopping habits* - Besides the fact that you want this customer to buy your product or service, you need to know what else they buy. This allows you to start creating your own business network. You may find opportunities where you can sell something else they have an interest in. You can expand your business and still use the same business personas.



All of this information will make your Buyer Personas rich and very useful in your marketing and sales effort. Once you have a working persona, keep your eye out for even more information to keep your personas working and effective.

## Part XI.

### Your Buyer Personas are Ready - Now What Do You Do With Them?

You have put the time and energy into creating comprehensive Buyer Personas. Now what do you do? If you are smart, you are going to start using them in your product development, marketing and sales efforts.

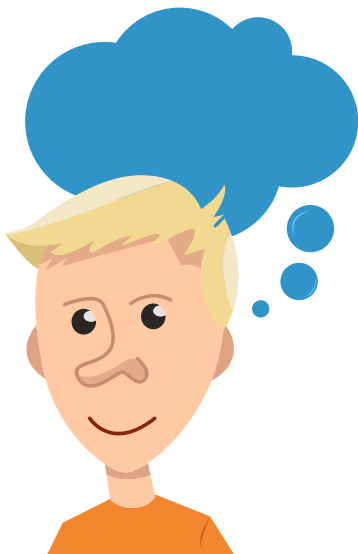
#### A Few Ideas

Need some ideas on how to use them? Here are a few things to start your brain thinking:



- *Start talking directly to specific people* - You know your Buyers now. Use that information and insights to start addressing this person in your target audience. You will no longer be addressing them as “Hey, you.” You will be addressing them as “35-year old woman, living in urban loft, married, no kids.”

- *Address specific problems identified during your persona development* - You have identified very specific problems that your potential customers are facing. You need to start addressing those problems head on. You can engage your audience quickly with this specific topic and grab their attention immediately.



- *Address specific ideas and beliefs your persona holds* - Talk directly to your customers. You know them well enough now to make personal statements. For example, you may sell a formula of vitamins and minerals geared towards growing teenagers. If you use a marketing message such as “this product helps teenagers grow”, it is not very engaging and really doesn’t talk to your customers directly. If you take the same message and focus on talking to your customers directly, your message will have a lot more power: “Your teens are growing fast. They need a special formula to grow strong. Our product can help your kids.” See the difference?





- *Pinpoint where you find your customers*  
- With your persona, you know where your customers hang out and frequent. Since placement is critical to effective marketing, you need to have your company and brand in place to catch their attention.



- *Pinpoint the right price range* - Your product or service has to fit into your Buyer's budget. If they cannot afford it, they will not buy it. It is that simple. If you present your product at an inflated price, not only will they not buy it, they will have the belief that your company and brand are over-priced for their budget. That belief can have long-lasting implications for your company and its future profits.

### **One last note...**

Buyer Personas will help you create an effective marketing campaign. But it is not enough. You need to understand your own story first. Second, you need to understand your customers. That means you need to know them more than just through your Buyer Personas. With that information, you can frame your story in a way that allows you to create an effective marketing message that connects you to your target audience.