

When you run a business, you want to seek out the customers who are the best fit for you. These people are not only the ones most likely to need your goods or services, they're also the people *you* would most like to work with.

For a lot of businesses, though, they have more than one type of ideal client. That's where the concept of buyer personas comes in. It can help you define each type of customer you hope to target, which in turn allows you to create content that speaks specifically to their needs. When you marry great, meaningful content with the right audience, you can generate hot leads and drive them down the marketing hourglass quickly.

Let me walk you through everything you need to know to build your own buyer personas and create content for each of them.

What is a Buyer Persona?

Essentially, a buyer persona is a composite sketch of your [ideal customer](#). Based on research and interviews with your existing best customers, you can begin to create a portrait of your fictional ideal client of the future.

Buyer personas should include demographic information, like age, location, and gender, as well as patterns of behaviors, goals, and motivations.

How Do I Establish Personas?

Creating detailed buyer personas takes a little bit of legwork, but it's well worth it in the end.

Check the Data

Start by taking a look at the data you already have on existing customers. In today's digital world, most businesses have a lot of data stored up across their CRM and email marketing tools, social media and website analytics, and sometimes even via good old fashioned methods like hard-copy sign-ups for a mailing list in your store.

In looking at all this data, do you notice any trends? Are there people with certain attributes who tend to buy certain products or services? Are there actions that most buyers take on your social channels or website before they become customers? Establishing patterns among the demographics and behaviors of existing customers is the first step to creating meaningful personas.

Ask Your Team

Your team is interacting with your customers each and every day. Why not get their feedback on what they see? Often, they can quickly identify patterns in behaviors that you might not see based on data alone. Maybe your sales team gets the same set of objections over and over again from customers in a certain age bracket. Or perhaps your in-store associates have been chatting with customers and noticed an uptick in traffic from your neighboring town.

Go Straight to the Source

Once you've done some digging on your own, it's time to reach out to your customers to see what they have to say. Hopefully by this point in the process, you're already starting to see some strong persona categories emerge. The number of personas you have really depends on the size and type of your business. Some businesses will only have one or two personas, while others might have dozens.

When you begin talking to customers, you want to do so either in person or on the phone, rather than relying on a survey. You should aim to speak with a handful of customers that represent each persona, and go for a mix of happy and not-so-enthused people. Speaking to similar customers who have differing opinions of your brand allows you understand what pain points you might not already be addressing with your goods or services.

Your interview questions should cover a variety of areas, from demographic information to their thoughts on interactions with your brand. Come up with a list of 10-20 questions for each interviewee. Consider the following categories:

- **Who are you?** Ask your customers to tell you more about themselves. This can be demographic information like age, location, annual income, job title and role, number of children, or marital status. Hone in on the categories that are most relevant for your business (i.e. if you run a B2B, things like job title will be more relevant; if you're a wedding photographer then age could be important).
- **How do you shop?** You want to better understand the process your customers take to discover and interact with new businesses. Where did they first learn about your business? What was their journey like leading up to their first purchase with you?
- **What keeps you up at night?** People come to your business because you solve a problem for them. What is it that worries your customer, and how does your offering eliminate that worry?
- **What is a win for you?** Your best customers who will go on to buy from you again and again go to your business because you provide win after win for them. Ask them what that win is, and why you're able to provide it.
- **Anything else?** Give your customers the chance to share any additional feedback they might have on your business. Sometimes you'll hear a comment repeated a number of times that you wouldn't have thought to ask for.

Bring it All Together

Once you've analyzed the data, spoken to your team, and interviewed your customers, you're ready to create your personas! It's likely that you'll have a handful of personas, although some very niche businesses will have less and some bigger businesses will have more.

If you're unsure what constitutes a clear persona, start by grouping together like behaviors and attributes. Hopefully a clear pattern emerges. For example, let's say you run a lawn care business. Maybe your first persona is young professionals who are busy at work and don't have time to tend

to their yards. Another persona might be retirees who are not well enough to handle the heavy-lifting of yard work on their own.

Now with your personas in hand, it's time to move to the next step.

Next Up: Content Segmentation

In establishing your buyer personas, you've identified different segments within your larger customer population. Armed with this information, you can begin to create content that speaks to each of their needs.

Take the lawn care company example above. The way that you market to a harried 30-something looking for assistance keeping their lawn in check will be different from the way you approach the senior citizen who needs a helping hand with their yard.

For the busy professional, ease of scheduling is probably a concern, so your marketing messaging might highlight things like your online calendar, which makes it easy to book and confirm appointments with your team. The older folks likely living on a fixed income might be worried about the cost of your services, so you can target them with messaging that allows them to bundle services—say, leaf raking and lawn mowing—for an overall 10 percent discount in pricing.

You can use these personas to segment your content everywhere. Create blog posts and explainer videos that speak to each segment of your audience. [Use your CRM to direct different email campaigns](#) at appropriate customers based on their attributes and behaviors. Tailor your calls to action on your website to speak to the most pressing needs that each of your personas expressed in interviews. Create ad campaigns that speak to each individual persona, and then [build customized landing pages](#) that cover the pain points addressed in the ads.

Understanding your customers is the critical first step in marketing to them successfully. But it's also important to acknowledge that you might not have just one type of customer. Creating buyer personas helps you to better understand what your business offers to *all* of your best customers, and helps you create messaging that speaks to customers and prospects alike, no matter what segment of your audience they fall into.