

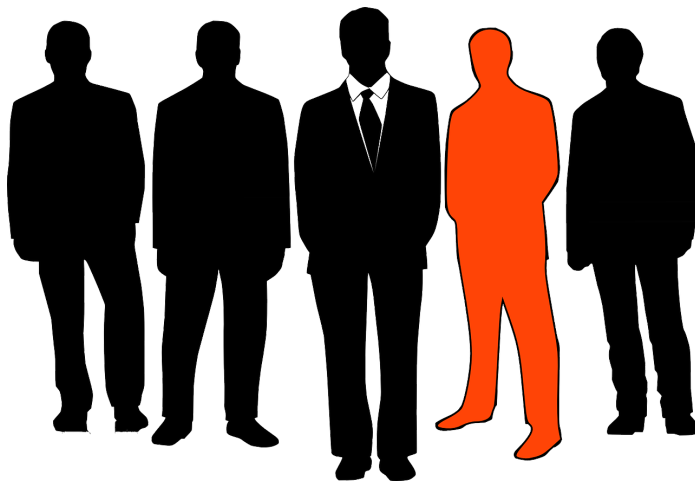


Workbook

Defining your customer personas

What is a customer persona and why should you care?

Customer personas are a crucial component of any successful sales & marketing campaign. After all, it's about creating genuinely valuable and interesting content for your customers, and if you don't know who you are selling to then how can you produce targeted messages?



The first step to creating a customer persona is to come up with a mental model to physically represent a segment of your customers. You should aim to have between 2 -4 customer personas that represent 80% of your market place (remember, you are not trying to define every single person that could buy from you!)

For example, a hotel's personas may include (among others) Fussy Fiona (a woman planning her wedding and seeking a venue), Business Brian (a business traveller just passing through) and The Walkers (a family on holiday). Each will have a different set of needs and expectations, and will want to focus on different things. Fussy Fiona will be most interested in the menu and the ballroom facilities, while Business Brian wants to know if there's free wi-fi and whether or not someone can iron his shirts overnight.

To help you start to define yours, here's a list of 8 questions to ask yourself about your target audience. The answers will help you create your personas.

1 What is their demographic information?

Demographic information will help you to paint a picture of who your customer personas are. Are they male or female? How old are they? Where do they live? Are they married? Do they have children? What's their annual household income? Go on, create a personal picture of your customer.

2 What is their job and level of seniority?

This is especially important if you're in the B2B market, but can be interesting for B2C companies as well. Their job and level of seniority may give you more clues about their background, education and interests – it will help you firm up that personal picture you're building.

3 What does a day in their life look like?

What time do they start work? Is every day different, or do they follow a set routine? Thinking about their daily habits may give you some insight into the next questions...

4 What are their pain points?

Answering the previous question may have given you a head start on thinking about this, but now really focus in on what else might be making your customer persona's life difficult. How does your product or service address their pain points? And, if it doesn't – could it?

5 Where do they go for information?

We've assumed that your customer persona is interested in your current product or service. So where might they be going to find out more now? A simple Google search could help you see through your customer's eyes, and will show you who you'll be compared to.

6 What experience are they looking for when shopping for your products and services?

OK, you're not a mind reader and there's no way of knowing for sure, but use your experience of talking to customers and try and put yourself in your persona's shoes. If we go back to our hotel example, and we put ourselves into Business Brian's shoes, he probably just wants things to be simple, quick and easy. He's looking for a supportive environment while he is focused on his business responsibilities. For this reason, he needs to be treated completely differently to the other personas, who may want more of a fuss made of them.

7 What are their most common objections to buying your product or service?

You've probably heard these a hundred times. Now, list them and really think about them from your persona's perspective. Once you've articulated them, you might be able to spot which of them are caused by a simple lack of information and then think about how to provide that extra education.

8 How do I identify this persona?

Now that you have developed an understanding of what makes your persona tick, you have to be able to identify them so you can tailor your communications. How will you know when you're talking to this persona? Is it their job title? Something about the way they talk or carry a conversation? Or is it their pain points? Or how they found your company? Once you've established not only who your personas are, but also how you can identify them when you encounter one or another, you will be able to maintain a consistent voice that is still customised to each person you talk to. In other words, you won't treat Fussy Fiona like Business Brian and vice-versa – you'll have the tools to make sure you can meet their different customer expectations.



Spending time now answering these questions will help you on your way with creating your customer personas.

Now think of some articles/content you could write

Once you've defined your list of personas, the next step would be to brainstorm a list of blog topics that might interest each of them. So now list 3-5 article or blog titles you could write about, that would appeal to each persona.

Once this work has been done, you are ready to take the next steps in your sales and marketing campaign.