

## VIDEO 1: WHY YOU NEED BUYER PERSONAS

Hi there! It's Lindsay from HubSpot Academy.

Welcome to an introduction to buyer personas.

Buyer personas are one of the most important components of a successful inbound strategy.

Why? Because buyer personas are who you create your content for and they're who you're trying to reach. And it doesn't matter if your organization is business-to-business, business-to-consumer, nonprofit--anything: any and all organizations can and should have personas because EVERYONE is trying to reach SOMEONE.

So personas are a pretty big deal, but what is a buyer persona exactly? Here is a definition:

Buyer personas are semi-fictional representations of your ideal customer based on real data along with some select educated speculation about customer demographics, behavior patterns, motivations, and goals.

Buyer personas are often created by researching and analyzing the customers who are already be buying from you -- this helps you determine your ideal customers.

Buyer personas aren't just target markets or job titles. They aren't based on specific products, but they are based on why they use them. And of course, personas are not specific, real people. Real people, individuals, have things about them that make them unique. Personas, on the other hand, are fictional characters you create to represent a subset of your customers.

So why do you need personas? And how does developing them benefit your business or organization?

First of all, buyer personas are essential in every stage of the inbound methodology.

You don't want to attract just any strangers to your website, you want to attract the right strangers! You want to attract the people who are going to be most interested in what your organization has to offer. These "right" strangers are your personas. Every single piece of content on your website should be aimed at attracting, converting, closing, and delighting your personas.

Second, your personas will help you to identify where your ideal customers are hanging out on the internet and, therefore, where you should be hanging out, too. If you know where your

personas spend their time online, you can fine-tune the focus of your marketing efforts on those specific areas.

Third, personas can guide product and service development. If you know what your personas actually want, you can create something they'll actually use. And if you know what your personas are trying to achieve, you can create things to help them reach their goals and overcome their challenges.

And, most importantly, your personas are who you're creating your content for. Personas help you create the right content, and content fuels your inbound strategy. The right content will most effectively attract your ideal visitors, convert them into leads, and close them into customers.

The content you create, the marketing campaigns you launch, the way sales deals with customers, and even the products you create, should all be tied into your buyer personas. Anyone who's trying to reach someone can and should have a persona, and everyone at your business will benefit from you taking the time to create them.

Excited to get started on researching and building out your buyer persona? The next video will provide the necessary steps for creating your very own buyer persona.

## VIDEO 2: HOW TO CREATE BUYER PERSONAS

Hi, this is Lindsay with HubSpot Academy.

Buyer personas are a critical piece of understanding your inbound strategy. This video will cover how to research and build your buyer personas. This will go into great detail about how you actually research and create your persona. Now, in order to get this right, you'll have to get the full picture those details provide. So pay close attention!

Before diving in, here are a couple of important things to note:

Details matter when it comes to buyer personas. It's important to take a thorough look at who your ideal customers are when you're researching and building your personas.

As you're going through the questions here, keep in mind that you don't need to have all of the answers before getting started - start with what you know and build from there.

Personas are a continual process and can be refreshed, tweaked, and changed as much as needed.

And lastly - keep in mind that everything you do with your inbound marketing strategy moving forward should tie back to the personas you create. Taking the time to create them will help your marketing excel.

Creating personas is a 4 step process. Those steps are identifying questions to ask to develop your persona, determining how you'll research your personas, compiling research and answers to your paraphrased version of questions, and finally using the buyer persona-building best practices to transform your notes into a complete persona.

First, identify questions to ask when developing your persona.

The "persona profile checklist" provides generic phrasing and questions to ask when building your personas. Feel free to tailor the questions as much (or as little) as needed to match your industry and the language used in it.

This checklist, which you can download in the resources section on the class page, covers the 7 categories you'll need information about to build your personas. On the right-hand side are some specific questions you should ask to discover this information.

Examples of persona-building questions are:

What does a typical day look like for your persona?  
What does success mean for them? What are they trying to accomplish?  
Where on the Internet do they go for information?

Although it may be tempting to skip over some of the questions (or entire categories) listed on the persona profile checklist, don't do it! You need to get a complete, unbiased view of exactly who your persona is. Picking and choosing questions can result in you creating a persona you ASSUME you have--not the one you actually have.

And tailor questions to your organization and industry. Make the questions more specific for your industry. Asking broad questions, will get you broad answers. Keeping your questions specific will help you better understand your persona and start noticing trends.

Buyer personas can seem intimidating, so to best understand how to build out a persona, we'll use an example to see how the buyer persona process works. The example we'll look is for a dealership that sells RVs, otherwise known as a camper van or mobile home.

To create this persona, the RV dealership took a few of the recommended questions from the persona profile checklist and begin tailoring them to their industry.

Rather than asking, ‘What’s your role?’ or ‘Where do you go for information?’ they asked:

- What is your role in life? Are you a parent? Grandparent?
- What does a day in your life look like?
- How do you plan a vacation? Do you read any travel publications?
- How do you research an expensive purchase?
- What do you look for in an RV?

Using these specific questions, they’ll get answers that are related to the RV industry.

The second step to creating a buyer persona is determining how you’ll research your personas. Once you’ve identified your questions, you’ll then begin thinking about how to ask those questions.

Although you may be able to answer some of those persona-building questions yourself, creating a valid persona requires research. There are several different ways to go about researching a buyer persona. You can:

- Interview current customers
- Survey your customers
- Talk to your co-workers
- Use HubSpot lead intelligence

Speaking of HubSpot’s lead intelligence, remember that you have access to a lot of data on your contacts! Use HubSpot to help with your persona research: browse through some of your customers’ or qualified leads’ contact records. You can gain a lot of insight simply by looking through some of your contact’s timelines! What topics of content are your personas gravitating towards? What are they most interested in on your website? Maybe they click on every message you post to twitter, but never anything to Facebook. That’s good information to know, and is something you can glean by looking for trends in data you already have.

And here are some more ways to research your persona:

- Search for your keywords on various social networks
- Check out the comments section on key industry blogs
- Review LinkedIn profiles
- Ask questions on social media

Although there are several methods, the best and most important one is to start by interviewing your customers, clients, donors, or students. After all, these people are your customers for a reason. They're going to have some great insight into who your personas really are.

So how many customers should you interview or talk to? There's no perfect number. Talk to as many as it takes to start to discover trends in their answers.

So what if you don't have customers yet? That's okay! That doesn't mean you can't create personas. You probably know your business, product, or services pretty well. For the time being, you can use educated assumptions about the answers to those questions. You can refine your persona, later on, as you gather customer data.

Once you've selected your questions and have started researching your buyer persona, you're ready to move on to step 3 - compiling research and answers to your paraphrased version of questions.

As you do your research, collecting the data in one place reveals trends and similarities in the types of responses people give. These trends or common responses are what should make their way into the beginning of your buyer persona story.

You can use whatever is easiest for you - Evernote, Google drive, Microsoft excel, Apple numbers, Trello, or whatever you prefer.

Let's look at that example again for an RV company. After they selected their questions, did some research, they started noticing trends about this one particular buyer persona, called RV Betty.

Here is what they came up with:

RV Betty is retired from an office job and getting restless. She spends free time with friends, cooking, and reading.

She doesn't have a company/organization since she's retired, but used to work at an office job where she was a low/mid-level executive.

Her goal is to enjoy retirement and has a longtime dream to travel in an RV.

But her challenges are logistics – she wants to travel comfortably, needs access to utilities, and wants space and ease of use.



As far as watering holes go, she enjoys reading travel magazines and websites. She spends time on Facebook, but only to keep up with family and she relies on organic search to find company names.

For persona background, she's in her mid-60s to early 70s, lives in the suburbs with her husband, and has children but they are out of the house and financially independent.

Finally, for shopping preferences, she has expendable income, wants an RV to be a home-away-from-home to entertain family and friends, needs to feel she's buying something good/reliable/reputable, and wants a high-touch sales process.

What do you think? There's quite a few details, but do you now have a better idea of who RV Betty is? If you were on the marketing or sales department for this RV company, would you have an idea how to market or sell to this persona?

There's still one step to take this further. Once you've compiled your research, it's time to transform your notes into a complete persona using the persona-building best practices.

What exactly are those best practices? There are four best practices to follow when combining your research to build out a complete persona. They are:

- Focus on motives behind behaviors
- Keep your personas fictional but still realistic
- Choose one primary persona
- And tell your persona's story

Let's start with the first on our list.

Always focus on behaviors: don't pay attention to what someone is doing, pay attention to why they're doing it. Understanding those motives is essential to creating a great persona, and it also gives you some predictive power!

Second, keep your personas fictional but realistic. Your persona should be a thorough description of who your ideal customers are, but you want to be sure you're not describing one or two customers who actually are that persona.

If possible, give your persona a face: use an image to represent them! And don't use an image of an actual customer. Instead, consider using stock images or clip art to represent your persona.

The third persona-building best practice is choosing a primary persona.

Chances are, your business will have more than one persona, but you probably don't have time to focus on all of them equally. Deciding on a primary persona will help you understand which one to focus on first. You can even use this persona with your content efforts and website design.

How do you determine which of your personas is 'primary'? That depends on what's most important to your business. Generally, the persona that brings in the most revenue becomes the primary persona.

And lastly, the fourth persona-building best practice is to tell your persona's story. Your buyer persona shouldn't be just be a fact sheet about your ideal customer. That's not a persona, that's a list. Instead, take those bullet points and weave them into a story that provides context and paints a relatable picture about who your persona is.

The easiest way to go about building a persona, regardless of what business or industry you're in, is to tell a five-chapter story.

Compile all of your persona research into a story that touches on 5 main topics about your persona. Those 5 topics, or chapters, are:

1. Job and demographic information
2. What does a day in their life look like?
3. What are their challenges or pain points?
4. Where do they go for information?
5. What common objections do they have to your products or services?

Let's pull up that example of RV Betty one last time. As you'll remember, you saw a list of the trends that the RV dealership was able to pull from their research process. But to make this persona seem like even more realistic, they turned these notes into a story following the five chapter format.

Here's the story of RV Betty.

Betty has recently retired from an office job where she worked as a lower to mid-level executive. She is in her early 70's and lives with her husband. They have children, but they're all out of the house now.

Betty lives in a suburb of a city. Her husband is also retired. For years, they have been talking about traveling in an RV after retirement – this is a long-time dream of theirs. The kids are self-sufficient and have been out of the house for long enough that Betty doesn't have to worry. She's been retired just long enough to be bored. While she doesn't consider herself as wealthy, she and her husband have a substantial savings and are prepared to enjoy their retirement.

Betty is worried about the logistics of travelling in an RV – how easy will it be to find utility hookups, where are the best places to stay if you have one, etc. She also wants something comfortable; she plans on spending a lot of time in it. She has other retired friends so she wants additional sleeping space and she wants to make sure they have plenty of room for food and even cooking. She wants as much ease as possible when traveling.

Betty likes to look at travel magazines and websites. She likes to plan destinations. She is on Facebook, which she checks once in a while to keep up with the kids and friends. She set up a LinkedIn account 3 or 4 years ago, but hasn't touched it since.

Betty prefers to buy from someone she trusts. She takes her time making purchases, especially large ones. She feels like she makes smart purchase decisions and wants to feel like she's buying a good reliable brand. Betty needs to see, feel, touch, and tour the actual model of RV she's buying.

And there you have it, the complete story of a buyer persona.

So what do you think? There are quite a few details, but do you now have a better idea of who RV Betty is? If you were on the marketing or sales department for this RV company, would you have an idea on how to market or sell to this persona?

Don't forget there are four important steps when creating your persona – identifying questions, determining the research process, compiling your research and answers into a paraphrased version and transforming your notes into a complete persona.

Ready to get started? There's a lot that goes into a buyer persona, so remember to put in the time and effort to better understand your ideal customers. Now, get started researching and crafting your own buyer personas!

## **VIDEO 3: TOOL WALKTHROUGH**

View the user guide or additional resources on the class page for a text version and instructions on how to use the tool.