

———— HOW TO CREATE ————

BUYER PERSONAS

———— FOR YOUR BUSINESS ————



Table of Contents

What Are Buyer Personas?	Page 3
What Are Negative Personas?	Page 4
Why Bother With Buyer Personas?.....	Page 5
How Can You Use Personas?	Page 6
How Do You Create Personas?	Page 8
Example	Page 11



What Are Buyer Personas?

Buyer personas are fictional, generalized representations of your typical customers. They help you understand your customers and prospective customers better, and make it easier for you to tailor content to the specific needs, behaviors, concerns, and buying scenarios of different groups.

The strongest buyer personas are based upon market research as well as on insights you gather from your actual customer base (ideally through informal interviews, or surveys, etc.). Depending upon the nature of your business, you could have as few as one or two personas, or as many as 10 to 20.

What Are Negative Personas?

Whereas a buyer persona is a representation of an *ideal* customer, a negative – or “exclusionary” – persona is a representation of who you *don’t* want as a customer.

This could include, for example, professionals who are too advanced for your product or service, students who are only engaging with your content for research/knowledge, or potential customers who are just too expensive to acquire (e.g. because of a low average sale price) or unprofitable to keep (e.g. their needs outweigh their capacity/willingness to pay which translates to excess service needs and/or scope creep).

Why Bother With Buyer Personas?

The days when you could productively blast a message to a broad, undefined audience are all but gone. Today, even those who qualify as viable, interested prospects are so much more savvy, skeptical, and informed that, at best, they will decide to research a topic or product online rather than respond directly to the preferred call-to-action.

Buyer personas provide an opportunity to identify, understand, and relate to your ideal customers in such a way as to provide insights into the language, platforms, and informational circles that open the door to true meaningful communications that ultimately have the potential to result in a trusting relationship... and profitable business. Today, business is much like business 200 years ago, i.e. it is based largely upon relationships rooted in respect, trust, and/or friendship.


How Can You Use Personas?

Personas allow you to personalize or target your marketing for the unique segments of your audience. For example, instead of sending the same lead-nurturing emails to everyone in your database, you can segment by buyer persona and tailor your messaging according to what you know about those different personas. Personas allow you to develop messaging and content for each of your personas individually, so that you are speaking their language... which translates to increased conversion rates.

If you take the time to create negative personas, you'll have the added advantage of being able to avoid the costs associated with attracting and communicating with undesirable or unprofitable leads, which can help you achieve a lower cost-per-lead and lower customer acquisition cost (and see higher sales productivity).

How Can You Use Personas? (continued)

When combined with lifecycle stage, buyer personas also allow you to map out and create highly-targeted content and calls-to-action that are appropriately correlated to prospect's current stage within the sales cycle, e.g. evaluation.

Persona	Awareness	Evaluation	Buy-In	Agreement/ Adoption	Promote & Delight
 <p>Lee District Assistant Superintendent</p> <p>Lee Walter Nate/Natalie Karen Julie Brianna Gina Sawyer</p>	<p>1. How can I give my district a leg up on test scores? ●●●●</p>	<p>1. Who are you and how are you different? ●●●●</p> <p>2. What about the money? Who pays? How much do parents pay? Government subsidies? Who gets the money, the school or the district? Why? ●●●●●</p> <p>3. What are my added costs and risks associated with this decision? What do I need to do? ●●●●</p> <p>4. Are your employees background checked? ●●●●</p> <p>5. Will my insurance cover this or do you have your own insurance? ●●●●</p> <p>6. Where will you perform these services? ●●●●●</p> <p>7. How does this make life better for me, my district, my school, the kids, and their parents?</p> <p>8. What are the district requirements?</p> <p>9. What do we have to give to get____?</p> <p>10. Is it an all or nothing?</p> <p>11. Is it customizable? Are you open to a test?</p> <p>12. Who else is using your program and what do they think? Do you have references? ●●●●●</p>	<p>1. Can you give me a formal proposal? ●●●●</p>	<p>1. Okay, sounds good, so what's next? ●●●●</p>	

How Do You Create Buyer Personas?

Buyer personas are understood best through research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience. This includes a mix of customers, prospects, and those outside of your contact database who might align with your target audience.

Here are some practical methods for gathering the information you need to develop personas:

- Interview customers either in person or over the phone to discover what they like about your product or service.
- Look through your contacts database to uncover trends about how certain leads or customers find and consume your content.

How Do You Create Buyer Personas? (continued)

- When creating forms to use on your website, use form fields that capture important persona information. For example, if all of your personas vary based upon company size, ask each lead for information about company size on your forms.
- Take into consideration your sales team's feedback on the leads they are interacting with most. What types of sales cycles does your sales team work with? What generalizations can they make about the different types of customers you serve best?
- If you don't have real, quantifiable data on your customers, no worries. While not ideal, more often than not you know enough about your customers to get started building out your buyer personas. All buyer personas should be improved upon over time anyway as you acquire better data.

How Do You Create Buyer Personas? (continued)

Let's look at an example of a persona. It is important to go about persona identification in a structured manner, making sure you are gaining an understanding of the way each buyer persona thinks and feels. It is important to understand, for example:

- how he/she makes decisions
- what constitutes success for her/him
- what the potential barriers are that would keep her/him from choosing your product or service
- what her/his priority initiatives are
- what sources of information and influence she/he uses

Persona name

1

District Assistant Superintendent - Lee

Background

2

- Masters degree in History
- 8 years as a principal
- 18 years as a classroom teacher, including a few years as a counselor and department head
- 2 years as Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Demographics

3

- Male
- 50 years old
- Family income: \$250K
- Married, with two teenage kids
- Technically savvy

Daily tasks

4

- Often represents the superintendent in meetings or with the press
- Heavily immersed in educational leadership
- Often assigned to leadership teams, collaborating with other team leaders
- He monitors student enrollment, attendance, health and safety, performance evaluations, curriculum benchmarks, and standardized test results



Lee

District Assistant
Superintendent

Info sources

5

- Internet
- Superintendent
- Other assistant superintendents
- Principals
- Other district admins

Priority initiatives

6

- Making sure policy is implemented in the district
- Making progress on standardized test scores across the district
- In-service training is occurring as planned
- Ensuring budgets are being monitored
- Guarding the perception of “fairness” across all schools in the district
- Collaboration with teachers and principals to ensure accountable for outcomes

Success factors

7

- Increase/maximize enrollment
- Find additional sources of revenue
- Year-over-year advancements in test scores, enrollment, goals, etc.
- Career advancement
- Public image/opinion of the district



Lee

District Assistant
Superintendent

Potential barriers

8

- The district already has a district-run before/after school program
- Concern over the costs and risks associated with this kind of decision
- Lack of quantifiable data/research that shows the impact on students
- They have had an experience or have heard about a disastrous experience with a competitor
- Push-back/backlash from parents (or indirectly kids)

Decision criteria

9

- Stream of revenue
- Ease of implementation
- Analytics/research on effectiveness
- Track record of success
- Will this positively affect the district (and my) reputation
- Support for other initiatives/goals
- Potential negative affects to our risks or liability
- Impact on the schools

Buying scenario

10

- How can I give my district a leg up on test scores?
- Who are you and how are you different?
- Who pays? Are there government subsidies available?
- What are my added costs and risks associated with this decision?
- Who else is using your program and what do they think, i.e. do you have references?



Lee

District Assistant
Superintendent

Free Consultation

Because consumers now exercise much more control over the buying process than ever before, we see the critical importance of an increased focus on the inbound customer experience.

The inbound customer experience is significantly impacted by the degree to which the buyer persona is understood and catered to.

If you would like help with your buyer personas, please don't hesitate to contact one of our Inbound Customer Experience Specialists for a free consultation.



For a **free consultation** to determine if buyer personas are a good fit for your business, [click here](#). We'd love to learn about your business.