



## **Buyer Personas:**

**Make your marketing communications personally relevant to every customer.**

Today's buyers are a lot different from the buyers of previous decades. With the power of the Internet on their side, they've grown accustomed to controlling the way they receive information and marketing messages. To appeal to them, we must switch from a homogenous, mass-marketing approach to a personal approach that speaks directly to each individual buyer.

A good way to learn how to better communicate with your customers is to use Buyer Personas. This paper provides an introduction to using this important marketing tool.



## REACH EVERY BUYER PERSONALLY.

Today's buyers are a lot different from the buyers of yesterday. Empowered by the internet, social media, mobile devices and an explosion of available sources of information and entertainment, buyers are no longer the homogenous bunch that marketers used to reach with passive, one-way, advertising via a few mass media vehicles. Today, buyers expect, even demand, a one-to-one, two-way dialog with the companies they buy from. And now, it's the buyer, not the company, who controls the conversation.

In this new age of marketing directly to individuals on numerous channels (versus the obsolete approach of mass marketing on a few channels), personalization is the key to winning a buyer's heart and mind. This requires understanding buyers much more intimately than ever before.

In response to this shift, a more personal way to define our target customers has emerged in recent years called the buyer persona. As the name implies, personas help us go beyond quantitative descriptors to actually get personal with our customers and understand who they are as emotional human beings.

Incorporating personas into our thinking is key to our success as marketers, because we sell to individuals – real people – not numerical descriptors. These individuals have:

- A distinct personality
- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Motivations
- Problems they want to solve
- Pains they want to relieve
- Personal goals
- Preferred ways to gather information about products and services
- People they trust for opinions
- A specific way they like to go through their buying process

The buyer persona discipline helps us get to know each type of person who is in the market for our products and services. While your entire target market may be generally described by one set of demographic descriptors, the individuals in your market might be more specifically described by several different personas. For instance, when marketing baby products to women of a certain age, income level and geographic location, you might be able to describe several different types of female purchaser, each with different concerns, motivators and buying habits.

Becoming truly intimate with the different buyer personas in your market will help you refine your marketing strategies and messaging to deeply resonate with each type of person your are trying to connect with.



## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

There are several steps to building useful buyer personas. At the end of the day, what you're trying to do is really get to know your buyers. And what's the best way to do this? Go out and talk to them! One conversation with a customer is worth a hundred internal brainstorms in a vacuum.

### If you already have a customer base:

- Speak to your customers personally. Ask them questions about their experience with your offerings and about their lives.
- Listen in on customer calls to your service department.
- Conduct customer surveys.
- Read customer comments on your blog (you do have one, don't you?), and your social media pages. Interact with your customers in these forums.
- Interview your sales and customer service people about what they've learned from your customers.

### If you are just starting out and don't have customers yet:

(Adapted from "[How to Determine Your Buyer Personas](#)" by Tracy DiMarino at PR 20/20)

- Read the publications your customers read. What do they write about? How do they present information to their readers?
- Read industry blogs. What are the industry pundits writing about?
- Scan social networks for groups and forums with the types of people who are your potential customers. What are they sharing with each other? How are they sharing it?
- Do a keyword analysis of terms used to describe what you offer (Google offers a free tool for this). What are the most popular terms?
- Read news and reports about your market segment. What are key market and legal trends in your industry? What appears to be foremost on customers' minds?
- See if there are other companies already in your market. Read their websites, brochures, white papers, blogs and annual reports. How are they addressing their customers?



### Questions to ask

To know your customers personally, you've got to ask some personal questions about them. The exact questions to ask will depend on what you're offering and to what kind of buyer (for instance, B2B vs. B2C). Here is a starter list of questions taken from some excellent blogs on the subject.

#### Example: B2B buyer persona questions:

(taken from "[9 Questions You Need to Ask When Developing Buyer Personas](#)" by Corey Eridon on the HubSpot Blog and "[5 Tips for Developing Strong Buyer Personas](#)" on the Fearless Competitor website)

- What is this person's job and level of seniority?
- What's this person's role in the buying process? Decision maker, champion or influencer?
- What does a day in this person's life look like?
- What are this person's pain points?

- What issues keep this person up at night?
- What phrases does this person use to describe the issues he or she is facing?
- What does this person value most? What are his/her goals?
- Where does this person go for information and daily news?
- Does this person seek advice from colleagues, industry peers and/or unbiased third parties? If so, from whom?
- Does this person prefer high-level details or a deep dive into a topic?
- What types of organizations does this person belong to and what events does he or she attend?
- What experience is this person looking for when shopping for your products and services?
- How familiar is s/he with the solution you offer?
- How does this person make business and/or purchase decisions?
- What motivates this person to take action?
- What are this person's most common objections to your product or service?
- What prevents this type of buyer from choosing your company?



## CREATING YOUR PERSONAS

Once you've asked all the right questions and sifted through the answers, you should see patterns emerge that allow you to segment your customers into specific buyer persona groups. Give each group a personal name, like "Opinionated Oliver" or "Indecisive Ingrid." List the qualitative characteristics of each "person." Describe that person in terms like the ones we've outlined in the sample questions above. Once you've created your personas, distribute them to your sales, marketing and customer service departments so everyone can get to know your buyers. Now you can start to craft messaging and customer relationship strategies that will personally resonate with each type of persona, as if you are talking directly and only to them.

## Q RESOURCES

There is a wealth of resources on the Internet to help you learn more about buyer personas. Here are links to a few to get you started:

- ["How to Determine Your Buyer Personas" by Tracy DiMarino at PR 20/20 »](#)
- ["9 Questions You Need to Ask When Developing Buyer Personas" by Corey Eridon on the HubSpot Blog »](#)
- ["5 Tips for Developing Strong Buyer Personas" on the Fearless Competitor website »](#)
- ["Beyond the Customer Profile: Crafting Buyer Personas in 2012" by Karen Marchetti on the ResponseCoach® Blog »](#)
- ["Humanize Your Marketing With Buyer Personas" by Jeremy Victor on B2Bbloggers »](#)
- ["Understanding Buyer Personas" on the Pragmatic Marketing website »](#)
- ["Buyer Personas: Where \(and How!\) to Start" by Jeremy Victor on the Boston Product Management Associate website »](#)
- [Buyer Persona Insight Content Resources: eBooks + Briefs \(downloadable\) »](#)



## ABOUT ZUZA

ZUZA supports marketers to be Marketing Champions with creative printing solutions for all kinds of marketing materials, full-service mailing, and a powerful web-based platform that automates creating, producing and fulfilling customized campaign materials at the local level with full corporate brand control. ZUZA makes marketing a lot easier, more agile, and more profitable with higher ROI. See how ZUZA can enhance your marketing by visiting [zuzamam.com](http://zuzamam.com) or calling 858.350.9411 to speak to a ZUZA representative.



Marketing **A**sset **M**anagement

**zuzamam.com**

©2012 ZUZA | Marketing Asset Management. All rights reserved.