

# The Essential Buyer Persona Guidebook:

*How to attract your ideal customer*



*Provided by*

**matter.**  
Creative Group

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# Buyer personas

At **Matter Creative Group**, we believe brands that relate to consumers on an emotional and human level have unshakable staying power. This level of connection can only be made if the brand has a deep understanding of not just themselves—their why—but also of their ideal customer. Without these insights, a brand will not thrive in today's buyer centric market.

Taking the time to listen and fully capture each of your buyer personas is a critical part of the success of your marketing plan; we view this process as the foundation for all marketing and branding initiatives we create for our clients.

Every project created by Matter Creative Group copywriters and designers starts with our client's specific buyer persona in mind. This targeted approach results in the best possible ROI for our clients.

In our experience, many marketing problems are simply undiagnosed customer insight problems. It makes sense; marketing can't be exceptional, or even competent for that matter, if it's chasing after the wrong target audience.

Content that does not speak to your buyer persona, but just aims at self-promotion will inevitably fall into this 60-70% category. So avoid this mistake by taking the time to thoroughly create your buyer personas, sharing them across company departments and commit to tailoring all content and strategy for each of your personas.

**60-70%**  
of content churned  
out by B2B marketing  
departments today  
sits unused.



# Why spend the time to create a buyer persona?

Corporations don't buy products or services—people do, so it's vital to the success of your business to understand who those people are to better market directly to them. The more aligned your content is to your customers' interests, the more effective your content marketing efforts will be in increasing sales as well as customer satisfaction. Relevant and solution-driven content has a better chance of being shared with other potential customers and be more appealing to search engine's algorithms.

Making your buyer persona work for you requires buy in throughout your organization.

*Don't keep them in the dark. Personas should be made available throughout your company, referenced quickly and easily to guide the direction of marketing, sales, and product decisions.*

Here are 4 key reasons every organization should be on board with adapting strong buyer personas.

- Enables you to anticipate how your ideal customers think so you can react with a well-crafted strategy to guide them through the buyer's journey. This level of preparation to overcome objections and relieve pain points at the right time will foster interaction and propel them through the journey skillfully and with confidence.
- Helps you best structure your campaigns for maximum impact.
- Beyond the sales/marketing cycle, personas provide a blue print for all the resources needed to help make a purchase decision. Establishing alignment and common understanding improves communications and expectations from all departments, and contributes to a coordinated sales process that is efficient and relevant to your buyer.
- May greatly improve the return on investment and help to refine the strategy of your marketing activities.



# What exactly is a buyer persona?

*If you're new at buyer personas, start small. You can always develop more personas later as needed.*

Simply put, a buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer.

It's based on customer demographics (e.g. age, annual income, geographic location) as well as behavioral patterns, goals and motivations.

The more detailed you are when creating buyer personas, the closer you'll come to honing in on the exact target audience. Buyer personas are more than just a collection of characteristics however; these personas are also about motivation and action.

Buyer personas answer two questions:

- Who is my target customer?
- What does it take to convince/motivate them to become a customer?

The strongest buyer personas are based on market research as well as on insights you gather from your actual customer base (through surveys, interviews, etc.). Depending on your business, you could have only one buyer personas or as many as twenty.



# Creating a buyer persona

Buyer personas are created through research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience.

That 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.
- 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 on company size, ask each lead for information about company size on your forms. You could also gather information on what forms of social media your leads use by asking a question about social media accounts.
- Take into consideration your sales team's feedback on the leads they are interacting with most. What is the typical sales cycle? What generalizations can they make about the different types of customers you serve best?

*Buyer Personas are never finished; they're always evolving and taking in new information... just like people.*



## Creating a buyer persona / *Example*



### REAL QUOTES

*“It’s been difficult getting company-wide adoption of new technologies in the past.”*

*“I don’t have time to train new employees on a million different databases and platforms.”*

*“I’ve had to deal with so many painful integrations with other departments’ databases and software.”*

### Sample Sally

#### Background

- Head of Human Resources
- Worked at the same company for 10 years
- Worked her way up from HR Associate
- Married with 2 children (10 and 8)

#### Demographics

- Skews female
- Age 30-45
- Dual Household Income: \$140,000
- Suburban

#### Identifiers

- Calm demeanor
- Probably has an assistant screening calls
- Asks to receive collateral mailed/printed

#### Goals

- Keep employees happy and turnover low
- Support legal and finance teams

#### Challenges

- Getting everything done with a small staff
- Rolling out changes to the entire company

#### How We Help

- Make it easy to manage all employee data in one place
- Integrate with legal and finance teams’ systems

#### Common Objections

- I’m worried I’ll lose data transitioning to a new system
- I don’t want to have to train the entire company on how to use a new system



# Creating a buyer persona

## Persona Questionnaire

*Using this questionnaire, fill in the Buyer Persona Snapshot on the next page and share with staff.*

### Role

- What is your job role?
  - Your job title?
  - How is your job measured?
  - What is a typical day?
  - What skills are required?
  - What knowledge and tools do you use?
  - Whom do you report to? Who reports to you?
- 

### Goals

- What are your responsibilities?
  - What does it mean to be successful in your role?
- 

### Challenges

- What are your biggest challenges?
  - How do you overcome these challenges?
- 

### Company

- What industry or industries does your company work in?
  - What is the size of your company (revenue, employees?)
- 

### Watering Holes

- How do you learn about new information for your job?
  - Which publications or blogs do you read?
  - Which associations and social networks do you belong to?
- 

### Personal Background

- Age
  - Family (single, married, children)
  - Education
- 

### Shopping Preferences

- How do you prefer to interact with vendors (email, phone, in person?)
  - Do you surf the web to research vendors or product solutions?
  - If yes, how do you search for information?
  - What types of websites do you use?
- 

### Marketing Messaging

- How do you describe your company's solution to this buyer persona?



# Creating a buyer persona / *Worksheet*

## Sample Sally

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### Background

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### Demographics

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### Identifiers

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### Goals

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### Challenges

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### How We Help

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### Common Objections

# Understanding negative personas



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

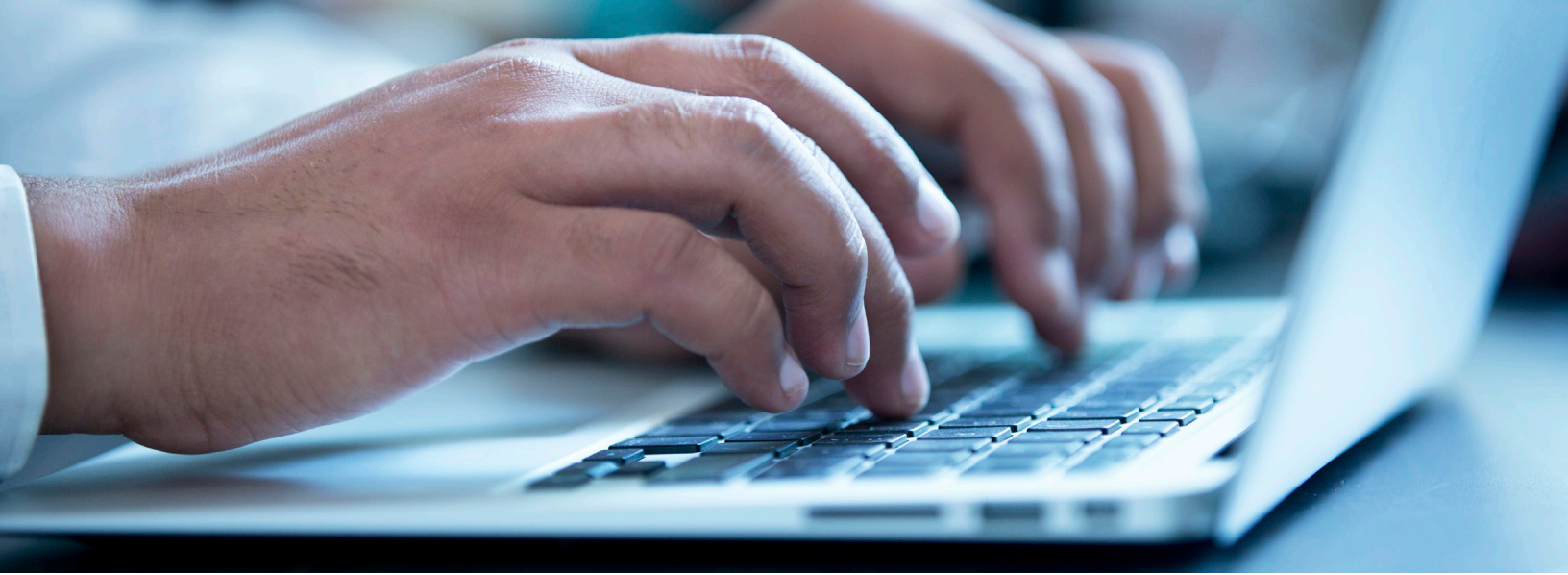
This could include, for example, professionals who are too advanced for your product or service, students who are only engaging with your content for research/knowledge, or potential customers who are just too expensive to acquire (because of a low average sale price, their propensity to churn, or their unlikelihood to purchase again from your company.)

So while you can still engage with those who fall into your exclusionary persona bucket (and absolutely should—they could still be influencers, after all), you don’t want to spend significant sales and marketing budget converting them

into leads and customers. If you have identified whom these people are, however, you can quickly segment them out from the rest of your buyer personas, achieve a lower cost-per-lead and cost-per-customer, and see higher sales productivity as a result.

*Stop the mindset of casting your net as wide as possible to catch as many of your demographic as possible. This dilutes your message, losing clarity and fewer people will be reached.*

## Segmentation and the buyer's journey

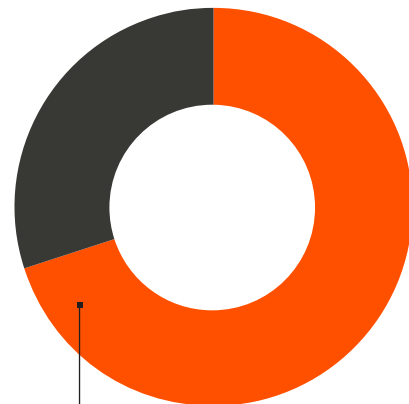


At the most basic level, personas allow you to personalize or target your marketing for different segments of your audience.

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.

If you take the time to create negative personas, you'll have the added advantage of being able to segment out the "bad apples" from the rest of your contacts, which can help you achieve a lower cost-per-lead and cost-per-customer (and see higher sales productivity).

In addition to targeting content according to personas, you can target content according to another dimension: the buyer's journey. The buyer's journey refers to how far along someone is in your sales cycle (and how close they are to making a purchase). By adding this dimension to the mix, you can ensure that you're not only creating the right content for the right people, but that you're also creating it for them at the right time.



60%

of the buying decision is made online before your customer ever speaks to a sales representative.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Corporate Executive Board's (CEB) Marketing Leadership Council 2012



# Attracting your buyer persona



*Look for trends in your web traffic from social networks. The channel that has the highest visit-to-lead conversion rate will most likely be the network that works best for you.*

So you've created all your buyer personas and shared them with everyone in marketing and sales...now what? Follow this 8 Step Guide and you'll be attracting, converting and retaining your ideal customers in no time.

## **1. Create solution-based content.**

Have you ever read an article that was so relevant to your life, right at that moment, you thought it must have been written just for you? That should be the goal of ALL your content for your buyer persona. By knowing what your buyers want to read and not just giving them your sales pitch, you'll generate leads and customers that become your biggest advocate.

## **2. Gate your content to generate leads**

What does your buyer persona want help with? If you can create a document that helps your target audience solve that problem put it behind a form to help with your lead generation, of course. It's a true win-win, your target audience gets the help they need and you generate some seriously high-quality leads.

## **3. Become a thought leader**

Aligning yourself with key publications that your buyer persona respects is a great strategy. Research which news outlets your buyer persona likes to follow and try to build a relationship with those outlets. Remember to link back to relevant resources on your website to convert them into a lead.

## **4. Use the right format.**

Does your buyer persona prefer digital or tangible content? Does he or she love videos, text or a colorful infographic? Understanding the content format that your buyer persona prefers will help ensure your content is enjoyed and shared.

# Attracting your buyer persona

*Customize your SEO strategy to target the phrasing your persona uses. Be sure to optimize your website content based on the way your buyer persona speaks and by extension, the way they search online.*



## 5. Hang out where your buyer persona hangs out.

Does your network live for Linked In, but hate Twitter? Is there a specific niche social website that your persona can't live without? That's where your business should be most

## 6. Timing is critical

Ask yourself... is your buyer persona a morning person or an evening person? What is the day-to-day schedule of your buyer persona, and when would he or she be most likely on-line? Does your buyer persona go on vacation every August? Stop work at noon? Live in a different time zone? Read emails from an iPhone when waking up at five in the morning? Schedule your social media accordingly.

## 7. Speak their language.

Be relatable to your buyer persona by using the language your buyer persona uses. Striking the right tone will make your network relate to your brand and your marketing will flourish. For example, B2B companies might speak differently than B2C organizations. Educational institutions will speak differently than nonprofits. Do your research and learn their language.

## 8. Collaborate with partners that excite your persona.

Co-marketing is an amazing way to make your marketing soar; after all, two heads (and resource sets) are better than one. When choosing your co-marketing partners, try to think of companies that your buyer idolizes, whether they're small or big and consider if a partnership might be beneficial. From launching co-marketing webinars to simply making a donation to a non-profit your persona cares a lot about, you'll develop your brand's authority as a thought leader and earn some major likability points with your target audience.

# Taking your buyer persona to the next level

Educating and inspiring our clients and those in the industry is at the heart of what we do as a creative agency.

By taking the time to listen to our clients, we provide relevant content and strategies that speak to their unique buyer personas. Our commitment to learning our clients' why and each of their buyer personas produces on-point creative with exceptional marketing results. We strive to keep our clients delighted and at the forefront of their industry.

We welcome your questions about buyer personas and would be happy to work with you using our proven methodology.

Wish to learn more about how we can help you create and market to your specific buyer persona? Reach out to us and let's continue the conversation.

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