BUYER PERSONAS

and HOW TO CREATE THEM

by åsa magnusson

WHAT IS A PERSONA?

Working with a persona is a bit like having an imaginary friend. But the big difference is that this friend will help you make money!

It's simple really: Your business needs to make sense to the person you are talking to. It needs to have clear, relevant messaging that addresses the issues your customer – and your prospective customer – is facing. And to achieve this, the customer needs to make sense to you.

VISUALISE YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER

Visualising your ideal customer will help you do two very important things:

• **Identify** with their needs and challenges
• **Understand** how to successfully communicate with them

By mapping out the most common traits, behaviours and demographics of your customer base, you will be able to narrow them down into a set of generalised representations of people. Some call these **avatars**, but we will use the term **persona** throughout.

HOW CAN PERSONAS BE USED?

Personas make it possible to create dynamic marketing communications that are highly personalised and targeted. It allows you to send different messages to different types of customers, based on their job role, their preferences and their typical challenges.

By tailoring messages like this, you will be able to be much more specific and relevant to your audience and they will be more likely to respond positively to your marketing.

> ## " PERSONAS HELP YOU TO DEFINE THE RIGHT OFFERING, THE RIGHT COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS – AND THE RIGHT LANGUAGE TO REACH THEM. "

Many marketers use personas to sanity check messages and tactics before launching a campaign. The easiest way to do this is to name your personas, make them real, and define as much as possible about their preferred behaviour and their challenges.

HOW ARE PERSONAS CREATED?

The best way to build personas is through researching your target audience using surveys and interviews. The best audience cross-section is made by speaking to active customers and prospects as well as people outside of your current network who may need your services.

1. ASK QUESTIONS

There are various online survey tools you can use, but the best way to get useful, accurate information is through conversation. Talk to people, face to face or over the phone, asking questions on what they think about your product or service. Most people will be helpful and forthcoming, if you explain that you will be able to create even better products and services as a result of their input.

2. FOLLOW THE SNAIL TRAIL

Make an effort to always find out how your customers found you to begin with. Then make sure you know how they access and consume your content on a regular basis. This can be done using tracking software on your website, or simply by asking customers when they first sign up.

3. LISTEN & LEARN

Your sales team will be able to give you very useful input on their active leads. Take time to review these together and learn from their interactions with prospects and clients, so you can discover relevant behaviours that way.

4. CAPTURE DATA

Contact forms are great tools for getting snippets of information from your leads. Use them to ask for a piece of key information like company size, age, gender — whatever is relevant to help differentiate your messaging to different personas.

Now it's time for the fun stuff. Let's create some personas!

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Start by looking at your research and breaking down your findings into overlapping or common denominators. See how many distinct differences and similarities you can find! Depending on your business, you may only have a couple of personas – perhaps even just one. But with a complex or diverse set of products or services, there may be up to 10 or 20.

When starting with personas, you don't need to have them all defined from the beginning. You may want to start with one or two and go from there.

THE NEXT PAGES SHOW AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A PERSONA CAN LOOK LIKE.

TRY IT YOURSELF, USING THE TEMPLATE AT THE BACK OF THIS GUIDE!

PART 1: THE WHO

EXAMPLE SUSAN SMITH

A	**BACKGROUND** Job? Career path? Family?	• Operations Manager • Been with employer for 5 years, after being promoted from shop floor associate • Married with two teenaged children
B	**DEMOGRAPHICS** Male/Female? Age? Income? Location?	• Female • 45 years old • Earns £66,000 • Lives in East London
C	**IDENTIFIERS** Behaviour? Communication preferences?	• Calm and easy going • Works in an open plan office • Filters bulk emails heavily, prefers direct mail • Uses LinkedIn and Facebook but not Twitter

PART 2: THE WHAT

EXAMPLE SUSAN SMITH

D **GOALS**
Primary goal?
Secondary goal?
- *Motivate teams and keep them productive*
- *Keep maintenance costs down*

E **CHALLENGES**
Primary challenge?
Secondary challenge?
- *Manage the workload without enough staff*
- *Identify cost-sharing facilities across the business*

F **WHAT CAN WE DO?**
...to help this persona reach their goals?
...to help this persona overcome challenges?
- *Provide productivity-monitoring software*

- *Give an overview of used and available facilities*

PART 3: THE WHY

G	**QUOTES** About goals, challenges etc.	*"I want to make sure my team knows exactly how to deal with each new task."* *"I don't want to spend time trying to fix broken systems and inconsistent software."* *"I never have time to sort out all my paperwork."*
H	**COMMON OBJECTIONS** Why wouldn't they buy the service/product?	*"I don't have enough budget for a massive system overhaul."* *"I don't want to lose all our legacy data."*

PART 4: THE HOW

I	**MARKETING MESSAGING** How should we describe the service/product to this persona?	*You can perform time-critical tasks more efficiently with the help of the complete staff workload management system STAFFO.*
J	**"ELEVATOR PITCH"**	*Our software provides a flexible solution for team operations to run faster, smoother and more closely aligned with the business – keeping maintenance costs firmly under control.*

AND NOW – OVER TO YOU!

The following pages are to be completed by you and your colleagues. And remember to take plenty of time to assess who your audience is and get this information as accurate as possible.

ENJOY!

PART 1: THE WHO

PERSONA   NAME: _____

A
BACKGROUND
Job? Career path? Family?

B
DEMOGRAPHICS
Male/Female? Age?
Income? Location?

C
IDENTIFIERS
Behaviour? Communication
preferences?

PART 2: THE WHAT

PERSONA   NAME: _____

D	**GOALS** Primary goal? Secondary goal?
E	**CHALLENGES** Primary challenge? Secondary challenge?
F	**WHAT CAN WE DO?** ...to help this persona reach their goals? ...to help this persona overcome challenges?

PART 3: THE WHY

PERSONA   NAME: _____

G

QUOTES
About goals,
challenges etc.

H

COMMON OBJECTIONS
Why wouldn't they buy
the service/product?

PART 4: THE HOW

PERSONA   NAME: _____

MARKETING MESSAGING

How should we describe
the service/product
to this persona?

I

"ELEVATOR PITCH"

J

WANT TO LEARN TO CREATE THE RIGHT CONTENT FOR YOUR PERSONAS?

Join a group of like-minded ambitious marketers in my Facebook community where you will get access to all my latest training on content marketing.

You will also get the opportunity to share your own challenges and successes as part of a greater learning experience. Check it out!

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