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# HOW TO CREATE & USE BUYER PERSONAS

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# INTRODUCTION

Buyer personas are at the heart of any marketing strategy and throughout every part of the inbound methodology.

By forensically analysing trends, behaviours, similarities and patterns amongst your target audience, you can create a marketing and sales strategy built around their objectives, day-to-day challenges and 'pain points'.

If you can't engage with your potential customers in a relevant and contextual manner, you will lose their trust and interest. Once you have lost someone's trust and interest, it's hard to get that back.

In this value packed guide, we will share how to get started building these valuable business assets, and how you can effectively use them to hit the ground running when building your campaigns.

# WHAT ARE BUYER PERSONAS?

Buyer personas are semi-fictional representations of your ideal customers based on data and research. They help you focus your time on qualified prospects, guide product development to suit the needs of your target customers, and align all work across your organisation from marketing to sales to service.

As a result, you'll be able to attract high-value visitors, leads, and customers to your business who you'll be more likely to retain over time.



**Having a deep understanding of your buyer persona(s) is critical to driving content creation, product development, sales follow up, and really anything that relates to customer acquisition and retention.**

## What are negative buyer personas?

While a buyer persona is a representation of your ideal customer, a negative or exclusionary persona is a representation of who you don't want as a customer.

For example, this could include 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 unlikeliness to purchase again from your company).

## The importance of buyer personas

Buyer personas help you understand your customers (and prospective customers) better. This makes it easier for you to tailor your content, messaging, product development, and services to meet the specific needs, behaviors, and concerns of the members of your target audience.

For example, you may know your target buyers are caregivers, but do you know what their specific needs and interests are? What is the typical background of your ideal buyer? In order to get a full understanding of what makes your best customers tick, it's critical to develop detailed personas for your business.

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



# HOW BUYER PERSONAS CAN BE USED

## Segment by buyer persona

Perhaps one of the most important ways you can take advantage of personas is segmentation. Segmentation is the key to delivering more personalised experiences to your leads and customers. Once you've segmented your list by buyer persona, you'll be able to do all sorts of stuff.



## Create content with specific personas in mind

At the most basic level, developing personas allows you to create content and messaging that appeals to your target audience. It also enables you to target or personalise 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 to what you know about those different personas.

## Combine personas with lifecycle stages

In addition to targeting content according to personas, you can target content according to another dimension: lifecycle stage. Lifecycle stage 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.

## Use dynamic content to tailor messages

With dynamic content, you can display different messaging to different people based on what persona you have them assigned to.

With this element of personalisation, you can provide a better user experience and see higher engagement and conversion rates on web and landing pages.

## Segment out negative personas

If you take the time to also 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, therefore seeing higher sales productivity.



# HOW TO CREATE YOUR BUYER PERSONAS

## Where to start

Buyer personas can be created through research, surveys, and interviews – all with a mix of customers, prospects, and those outside your contacts 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 types of sales cycles does your sales team work with? What generalisations can they make about the different types of customers you serve best?)

Once you've gone through the research process, you'll have a lot of data about your potential and current customers. The next step is to use your research to identify patterns and commonalities from the answers to your interview questions, develop at least one primary persona, and share that persona with the rest of the company.



## Use a buyer persona template

For HubSpot customers, you can create and manage your personas within the Contacts tool.



### What Is a Buyer Persona?

Learn what a buyer persona is and how to conduct research, surveys, and interviews to build your own.

[Learn More](#)



### Make My Persona Tool

Create a buyer persona that your entire company can use to market, sell, and serve better.

[Build My Persona](#)

If you aren't a HubSpot customer, you can use the templates in the following sections to organise your persona data.

## 1. Fill in basic demographic information

Ask demographic-based questions over the phone, in person, or through online surveys.

It's also helpful to include some descriptive buzzwords and mannerisms of your persona that you may have picked up on during your conversations to make it easier for people on your team to identify certain personas when they're talking to prospects.

Here's an example of how you might complete Section 1 in your template for one of your personas:

👤	PERSONA NAME: <b>1</b>	SECTION 1: WHO?
<b>BACKGROUND</b> <small>Job? Career path? Family?</small>	<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Human Resources</li> <li>• Worked at the same company for 10 years; worked her way up from HR Associate</li> <li>• Married with 2 children (10 and 8)</li> </ul>
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b> <small>Male or female? Age? Income? Location?</small>	<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skews female</li> <li>• Age 30-45</li> <li>• Dual HH Income: \$140,000</li> <li>• Suburban</li> </ul>
<b>IDENTIFIERS</b> <small>Demeanor? Communication preferences?</small>	<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calm demeanor</li> <li>• Probably has an assistant screening calls</li> <li>• Asks to receive collateral mailed/printed</li> </ul>

## 2. Share persona motivations

This is where you'll distil the information you learned from asking "why" during those interviews. What keeps your persona up at night? Who do they want to be? Most importantly, tie that all together by telling people how your company can help them.

PERSONA NAME:	Sample Sally	SECTION 2: WHAT?
<p><b>GOALS</b> Primary goal? Secondary goal?</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep employees happy and turnover low</li> <li>• Support legal and finance teams</li> </ul>	
<p><b>CHALLENGES</b> Primary challenge? Secondary challenge?</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting everything done with a small staff</li> <li>• Rolling out changes to the entire company</li> </ul>	
<p><b>WHAT CAN WE DO</b> ... to help our persona achieve their goals? ... to help our persona overcome their challenges?</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it easy to manage all employee data in one place</li> <li>• Integrate with legal and finance teams' systems</li> </ul>	

### 3. Help sales prepare for conversations with persona

Include some real quotes from your interviews that exemplify what your personas are concerned about, who they are, and what they want. Then create a list of the objections they might raise, so your sales team is prepared to address those during their conversations with prospects.

PERSONA NAME:	Sample Sally	SECTION 3: WHY?
<p><b>REAL QUOTES</b> About goals, challenges, etc.</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "It's been difficult getting company-wide adoption of new technologies in the past."</li> <li>• "I don't have time to train new employees on a million different databases and platforms."</li> <li>• "I've had to deal with so many painful integrations with other departments' databases and software."</li> </ul>	
<p><b>COMMON OBJECTIONS</b> Why wouldn't they buy your product/service?</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm worried I'll lose data transitioning to a new system.</li> <li>• I don't want to have to train the entire company on how to use a new system.</li> </ul>	

## 4. Craft messaging for your persona

Tell people how to talk about your products/services with your persona. This includes the vernacular you should use, as well as a more general elevator pitch that positions your solution in a way that resonates with your persona. This will help you ensure everyone in your company is speaking the same language when they're having conversations with leads and customers.

PERSONA NAME:	Sample Sally		SECTION 4: HOW?
<p><b>MARKETING MESSAGING</b> How should you describe your solution to your persona?</p>	<p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated HR Database Management</li> </ul>		
<p><b>ELEVATOR PITCH</b> Sell your persona on your solution!</p>	<p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We give you an intuitive database that integrates with your existing software and platforms, and lifetime training to help new employees get up to speed quickly.</li> </ul>		

## 5. Name your personas

Finally, make sure you give your persona a name (e.g. Finance Manager Maggie, IT Ian, or Landscaper Larry) so everyone internally refers to each persona in the same way, allowing for cross-team consistency.





# FINDING INTERVIEWEES FOR RESEARCH

One of the most critical steps to establishing your buyer persona(s) is finding some people to speak with to suss out, well, who your buyer persona is!

That means you'll have to conduct some interviews to get to know what drives your target audience. Here are a few sources you should tap into:

## 1. Use your current customers

Your existing customer base is the perfect place to start with your interviews because they've already purchased your product and engaged with your company. Some of them are likely to exemplify your target persona(s).

Don't just talk to people who love your product; customers who are unhappy with your product will show other patterns that will help you form a solid understanding of your personas.



For example, you might find that some of your less happy customers have bigger teams and need greater collaboration functionality from your product. Or, you may learn that they find your product too technical and difficult to use. In both cases, you learn something about your product and what your customers' challenges are.

Another benefit to interviewing current customers is that you may not need to offer them an incentive to do so. Customers often like being heard, so interviewing them gives them a chance to tell you about their world, their challenges, and what they think of your product.

Customers also like to have an impact on the products they use. So, as you involve them in interviews like this, you may find they become even more loyal to your company. When you reach out to customers, be clear that your goal is to get their feedback, and that their feedback is highly-valued by your team.

## **2. Use your prospects**

Be sure to interview people who have not purchased your product and don't know much about your brand, too. Your current prospects and leads are a great option here because you already have their contact information.

Use the data you do have about them (i.e. anything you've collected through lead generation forms or website analytics) to figure out who might fit into your target personas.

### 3. Use your referrals

You'll probably also need to rely on some referrals to talk to people who may fit into your target personas, particularly if you're heading into new markets or don't have any leads or customers yet.

Use your network, such as your coworkers, existing customers, or social media contacts to find people you'd like to interview and be introduced to. It may be tough to get a large volume of people this way, but you'll likely get some very high-quality interviews out of it.

If you don't know where to start, try searching on LinkedIn for people who may fit into your target personas and see which results have any connections in common with you. Then, reach out to your common connections for introductions.



## How to Recruit Interviewees

As you reach out to potential interviewees, here are a few ideas to improve your response rates.

### 1. Use incentives

While you may not need them in all scenarios (e.g. customers who already want to talk to you), incentives give people a reason to participate in an interview if they don't have a relationship with you. A simple gift card or a donation to charity are easy options.

### 2. Be clear that this isn't a sales call

This is especially important when dealing with non-customers. Be clear that you're doing research and that you just want to learn from them. You are not getting them to commit to a one-hour sales call; you're getting them to commit to telling you about their lives, jobs, and challenges.

### 3. Make it easy to say yes

Take care of everything for your potential interviewee. Suggest times but be flexible, allow them to pick a time right off the bat, and send a calendar invitation with a reminder to block off their time.

### 4. Decide how many people you need to interview

Start with at least three-to-five interviews for each persona you're creating. If you already know a lot about your persona, then that may be enough. You may need to do multiple interviews in each category of interviewees.

The rule of thumb is when you start accurately predicting what your interviewee is going to say, it's probably time to stop. Through these interviews, you'll naturally start to notice patterns.

# NEXT STEPS

Go out and start personas of your own! You are now well equipped with all the information you need to research and create your own buyer personas.

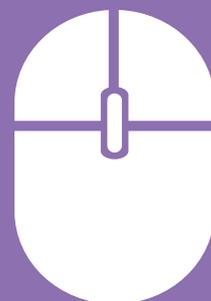
If you keep the sections above in mind as you pursue your mission to create targeted campaigns, you will have no issues finding the right audience and eventually engaging with them.

Using your buyer personas, you can create personalised content for your audience and start generating high-quality, highly engaged leads.

To find out how BBD Boom can help you to create and make the most out of your buyer personas, [click here to get in touch with our solutions experts.](#)

If you would like to find out how buyer personas fit into the entire Inbound Marketing methodology, click here to download our ebook:

[Everything you need to know about Inbound Marketing](#)



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