

HOW TO CREATE

Buyer Personas

FOR YOUR B2B TECHNOLOGY FIRM



Plus **Buyer Persona Interview Questions
& Buyer Persona Templates**

BRIGHT ORANGE THREAD

“Effective messaging emerges at the intersection of what your buyers want to hear and what you want to say.”

Adele Revella

Buyer Persona's Institute CEO, Author, Speaker

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What Are Buyer Personas?

Buyer personas are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal customers. They help you understand your customers (and prospective customers) better. Personas make it easier for you to tailor your marketing to the specific needs, behaviors, and concerns of different groups.

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 as few as one or two personas, or as many as 10 or 20.

(Note: If you're new to personas, start small! You can always develop more personas later if needed.)



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, small firms that don’t have the budget for your level of technology services, or large firms who require a more sophisticated level of service, or 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).



Negative Personas represent the types of customers you don’t want.



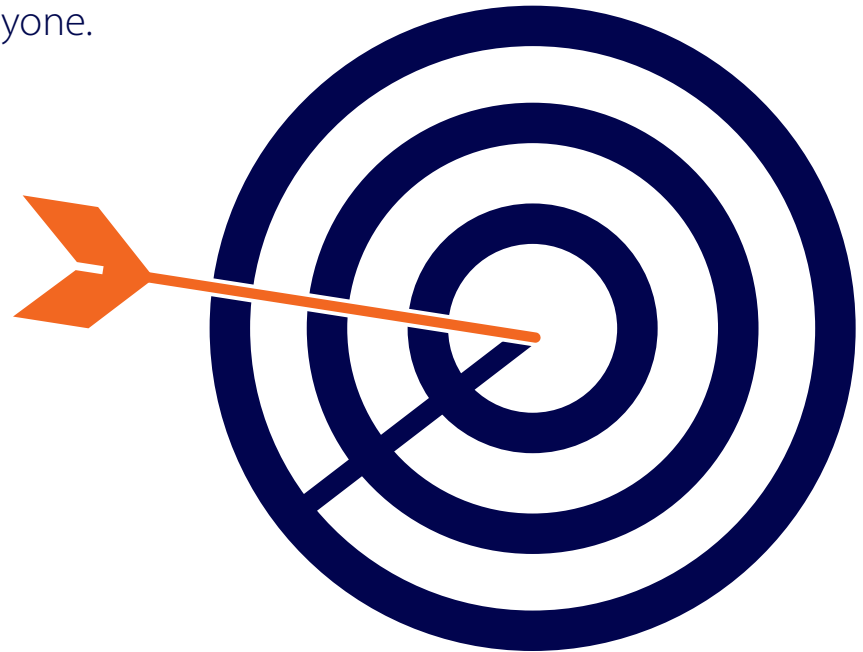
Why Buyer Personas Save Your Marketing

“Buyer personas save you from spending time and budget on misdirected marketing pursuits that are doomed to fail.”

Without buyer personas, technology firms are more likely to create blog posts, content offers, and website content that are targeted to everyone, and therefore don't resonate strongly with anyone.

Buyer Personas Help You:

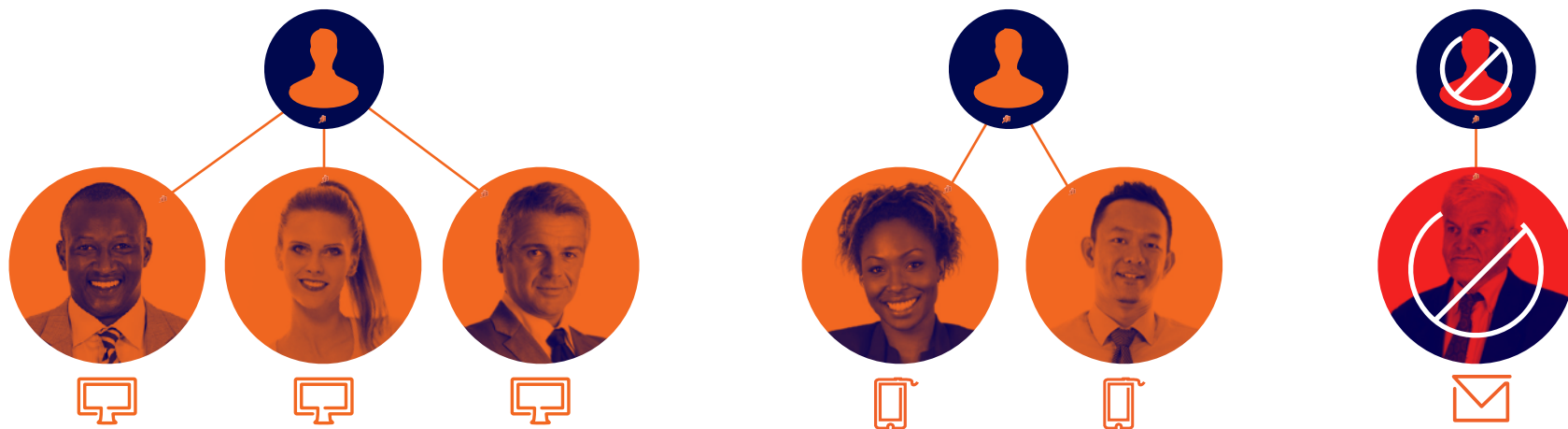
- ➔ Avoid arbitrary marketing efforts
- ➔ Create hyper-targeted content
- ➔ Differentiate yourself from competitors



How You Can Use Buyer Personas In Marketing

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).



How You Can Use Buyer Personas In Marketing *(Continued)*

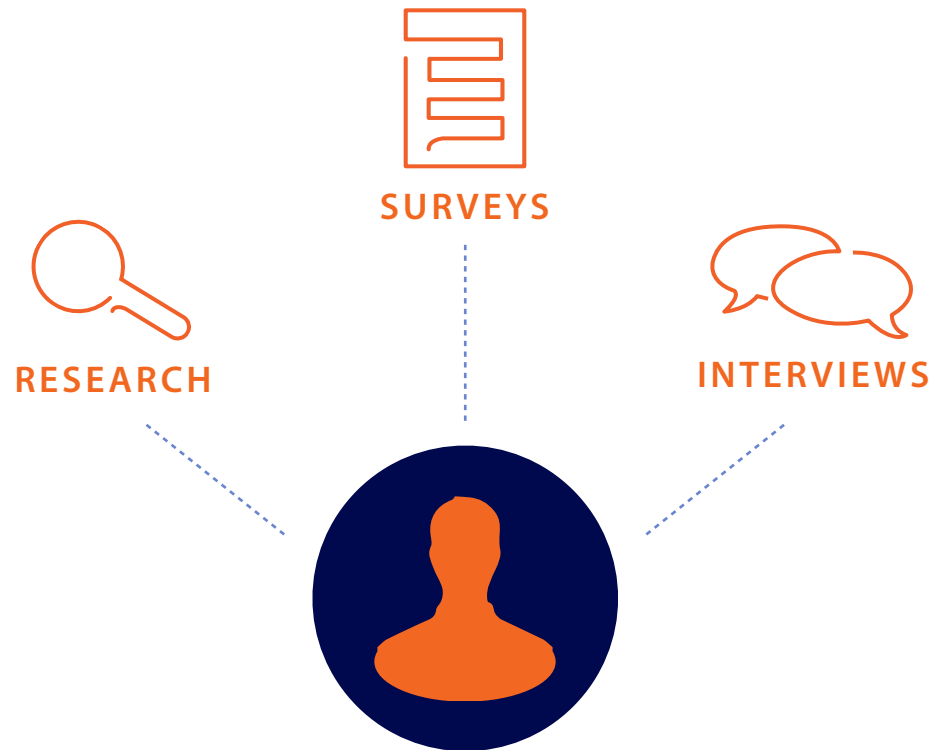
Buyer personas allow you to map out and create highly targeted content tailored for where your prospect is in the buyer's journey. For example, you might not want send someone who has only viewed one blog post a software demo offer. They're just getting to know you! But if they've viewed your blog, subscribed to your email list, and downloaded a few offers, they might be ready for a demo of your software!

THE BUYER'S JOURNEY



How To Create Buyer Personas

Buyer personas are created through research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience. That includes a mix of your internal team, customers, prospects, and lost opportunities. You might also interview those outside of your contact database who align with your target audience.



How To Create Buyer Personas *(Continued)*

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

LOOK INSIDE

Interview your own sales and marketing teams. Ask your team questions about leads and customers 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?)

Look through your contacts database. Uncover trends about how certain leads or customers find and consume your content.

LOOK OUTSIDE

Interview customers. Ask customers for a 30 minute call to uncover their pain points. Ask them what challenges your product or service helps them solve, how they shop, where they look for information, what types of keywords they use, etc.

LOOK AT LOST OPPORTUNITIES

Interview lost prospects. Use losing a bid as an opportunity to improve your buyer personas. Ask former prospects for a short interview so you can uncover what needs they had during different points of the buyer's journey. Not only will you dive into their pain points, but you can use the insights to improve your sales process.

How To Create Buyer Personas *(Continued)*



Interview your sales and marketing teams



Make a list of 10 **ideal customers** to interview and send emails asking them for a 20-30 minute interview



Make a list of 10 **lost prospects** to interview and send emails asking them for a 20-30 minute interview



Use the questions on the next page as the outline for your buyer persona interview

Interview Questions For Buyer Personas

Role <i>Job? Career path?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your job role?• What is your title?• Who do you report to?• Who reports to you?
Company/Organization <i>Size? Revenue? Structure?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the size of your company?• What is the revenue of your company?• How is your company structured?• In which industry/industries does your company work?
Goals <i>Individual? Company Wide?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does it mean to be successful in your role?• What are your individual goals this year?• What is the company's goal this year?
Challenges <i>Pain Points?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your biggest challenges?• What are the biggest challenges facing your industry?
Watering Holes <i>Where do they find information?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you learn about new information for your job?• What publications or blogs do you read?• If you were to search for (your service), what phrase would you search?
Shopping Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you prefer to interact with vendors? (phone, email, in person)• Do you use the internet to search for vendors or products?• Who makes the decision to purchase a new service or product at your organization?

Tips On Your Buyer Persona Interview

- Be respectful of their time. They're doing you a favor!
- Keep an open mind. Don't try to confirm previous biases.
- Ask open-ended questions that encourage the person to elaborate.
- Gently tailor questions to your services and the person's individual industry.
 - ex: Instead of asking "What are your biggest challenges?", you might ask "What are the biggest challenges you face around your accounting software?"
- Send a Thank You note! An email or a card is a personal touch that lets them know you appreciate their time.

Name Your Persona & Create A Buyer Persona Story

Your customers are more than a list of demographics and facts.
Your personas should be too.

Naming your buyer persona will make it easier for you to talk and think about personas in your everyday marketing.

Creating a buyer persona story will help you get to know your buyer persona better.



Example Buyer Persona

Name: **HR Rebecca**

Short Bio:

HR Rebecca is the Head of Human Resources at a 54 person professional services firm in Philadelphia. She is responsible for keeping employees happy, managing payroll benefits, and new hires. She is challenged by clunky HR software that makes it difficult to manage employee data.



Personal Background <i>Male or female? Age? Income? Location?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Female• 40• Married with children
Role <i>Job? Career path?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head of Human Resources in Philadelphia office• Promoted from HR assistant• Manages staff of 3 people
Company/Organization <i>Size? Revenue? Structure?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 54 people• \$5M Revenue• 2 offices, one in Philadelphia, one in Boston
Goals <i>Individual? Company Wide?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep employees happy and turnover low• Payroll, benefits, talent management• Support legal and finance teams
Challenges <i>Pain Points</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tracking information on employees difficult with system• Tons of spreadsheets with employee data
Real Quotes <i>About goals, challenges, etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "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."

Example Buyer Persona



Name: **HR Rebecca**

Common Objections <i>Why wouldn't they buy your product/service?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "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."
Watering Holes <i>Where do they find information?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member of HR Society Philadelphia, US HR Assc.• Gathers information from Google Searches, LinkedIn
Shopping Preferences <i>How do they search? Buy?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relies on colleagues for referrals• Will do independent Google search• Makes decision with CFO , CEO
What Can We Do? <i>...to help our persona achieve their goals? ...to help them overcome their challenges?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement Software to make it easy to manage all employee data in one place• Integrate with legal and finance team's systems
Potential Blog Topics <i>What topics would be relevant to them?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 Ways to Get Your Team Onboard With New Technology• Top 10 Things Your HR Software Should BE doing For You
Elevator Pitch <i>Sell your persona on your solution!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We give you an intuitive database that integrates with your existing software and platforms and lifetime training to help new employees getup to speed quickly.

Your Turn!

We've provided blank templates for developing three personas on the following pages so you can print them out and fill them with your team. These persona templates are also available as PowerPoint and Keynote slides that you can fill in on the computer.

Name:

Short Bio:



Personal Background <i>Male or female? Age? Income? Location?</i>	
Role <i>Job? Career path?</i>	
Company/Organization <i>Size? Revenue? Structure?</i>	
Goals <i>Individual? Company Wide?</i>	
Challenges <i>Pain Points</i>	
Real Quotes <i>About goals, challenges, etc.</i>	

Name:



<p>Common Objections <i>Why wouldn't they buy your product/service?</i></p>	
<p>Watering Holes <i>Where do they find information?</i></p>	
<p>Shopping Preferences <i>How do they search? Buy?</i></p>	
<p>What Can We Do? <i>...to help our persona achieve their goals? ...to help them overcome their challenges?</i></p>	
<p>Potential Blog Topics <i>What topics would be relevant to them?</i></p>	
<p>Elevator Pitch <i>Sell your persona on your solution!</i></p>	



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Name:



<p>Common Objections <i>Why wouldn't they buy your product/service?</i></p>	
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Bright Orange Thread is an inbound marketing agency that helps
B2B technology firms turn more online leads into customers...
and look good doing it.