

5 Tips for Creating Personas that Drive Sales





Engagement Starts with Empathy

We often find when it comes to personas people fall into one of two categories.

- 1 Either you know well how personas can help you connect with prospects and drive sales,
- 2 or you have no idea what their role is or how they benefit your company.

Whichever camp you fall in, we're here to break down our top 5 tips to create personas that actually help you and your company succeed.

Here's a hot take. The way most companies are creating personas right now, "the traditional way." I.e. placing all visitors into generic categories which may or may not be specific to your particular brand...IS. NOT. WORKING.

As we explored in a previous blog, ["There's Power in Personas Done Well"](#), B2B companies that take the time to understand the pain points of their target audience and empathize with them, drive engagement

and outperform their competition. And yet so few companies are taking the time to build out strong buyer personas—arguably one of the most foundational pieces to a successful campaign.

Buyer personas, built well, take a concerted effort to produce. Businesses in the B2B space are especially known to skip the buyer persona process. In fact, only 44% of B2B marketers use personas, and 83% of these marketers say they are only slightly or somewhat effective at using them. What a colossal waste of time, effort, and investment.

– Upland

So if you are leaning in and saying, "heck yes, I want to learn more" and want to know how to build truly game-changing personas, just keep on reading.

Know Your Prospects AND Their Pain

The foundation to building personas into your sales and marketing processes is to understand exactly who your best clients are and what pain points they have that you can specifically solve for. It starts by looking at your prospects—

- what are they searching for,
- what content of yours are they engaging with,
- and where are they going on your site.

Web research and analytics are the foundation to investigating what your prospects are interested in to understand their pain, but actually *listening* to prospects and hearing directly from them can often be the game changer. Sit in on sales meetings and hear first hand what their challenges and goals are and how they are attempting to solve them today. It's also a great practice to hold frequent meetings with your sales teams to hear the feedback they're getting from the leads they receive—what pain points they're struggling with, how does your product/service help, where are they finding gaps in your messaging or offering.

How likely are you to recommend us to a friend or colleague?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all Likely

Extremely Likely

SUBMIT



PRO TIP: CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Try creating a customer survey you can send to your clients. How often you send will depend on the work you are doing for them. Some clients send them after a several month project is complete. Some clients send annually. We do find that if you send too often, most clients start to disengage. So finding the right frequency is a bit of an art and a science. Many of our clients use a traditional Net Promoter Score [NPS] survey. There is one key question you ask in an NPS survey, “How likely are you to recommend us to a friend or colleague?”

Here are some great additional NPS survey question examples that WordPress writes about in their article [Great NPS Survey Questions](#):

- What is the primary reason for your score?
- What's the one thing we could do to make it better?
- What could we do to improve your experience?
- Which features do you use the most?
- What do you like the most about (your company name)?
- What do you like the least about (your company name)?
- Was anything missing from your experience?
- What could we do to make you say ‘WOW’?
- What did we do well?

This is an outstanding way to let your clients keep you informed of what you are doing well and where they see opportunities for improvement.

Spending a lot of time with [your] target audience, interviewing them, getting to know them is what helps us develop that empathy. And when we do that and we develop that empathy for that person, that's what the muse is.

The muse is that person that you are creating for, that you hold inside of yourself as you are in flow, as you're going through that creative process. So many marketers nowadays just don't go through that process of spending that time with their audience.

– Joe Lazauskas, formerly of Contently

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, TALK to your clients directly. Joe Lazauskas suggests that to develop true empathy for your prospects, you must begin to see them as a muse. In a recent article “[How to Go Beyond the Persona and Find Your Muse](#),” he explains how the ancient Greeks’ understanding of the muse and how creating for someone specific inspires creativity.

RECAP:

- Research prospect engagement
- Sit in on sales meetings
- Send customer surveys
- Talk to clients directly



Develop Content for Your Top Personas

Especially in today's digital age, content is the primary way your target audience experiences your brand and begins to engage with you. With that in mind, crafting content that speaks to each specific persona's pain-points, personality, and overall vibe will be critical, as well as where they are in the buyer's journey.

In the [Hubspot](#) RevOps training they speak about a really critical issue that marketing needs to always be thinking about: **what content does sales need throughout the buyer's journey to help them sell?** A content framework can be a great way to help narrow focus, so you're sure you're getting the most out of your content strategy. This framework starts first with your personas—the real-type of personas that we discuss in Tip #1 above. Once you have those personas, you need to identify each persona's pain points. Next, write the features your product or service offers that solve for each of those pain points. Only then is marketing ready to write the content that is needed to address those features.

This process will make your sales teams much more productive and you should see not only your engagement but also your close rates go up.

RECAP:

- Craft custom content for each persona
- Set up a content framework
- Focus content on specific persona pain points

Keep Personas Relevant

The success of personas lies in their relevance to your offerings. So, as your product and/or services continue to grow and change, so too might your personas. That is okay!

As [Joe Lazauskas](#) puts it, sales is an ever-evolving process. In fact, he stresses:

“When you go past bland platitudes and actually capture what ideas your company stands for, you’ve gone a long way toward creating a culture of intellectual curiosity within your brand.”

Therefore, make sure that your personas will always benefit from your products and/or services, and then be sure your marketing highlights how your target personas will benefit from working with you. It’s this laser focus that drives engagement.

Also by keeping an eye on your web site, your digital ad campaigns, and your social media metrics, you will be able to see what messaging is connecting with your personas. And because some of your best persona feedback can come from your sales department (who often know best what is resonating in the market and what is not), meet with them regularly. This insight and feedback allows marketing to adjust your campaigns accordingly.

RECAP:

- Update personas as your offering change
- Ensure all marketing content speaks to persona pain points
- Track metrics
- Gain insights from your sales team



4 Measure Engagement as a Leading Indicator

As you refine your personas it is important to shift your mindset away from the general idea that more leads is better. Reaching as many people as possible is not the end-goal when you have developed the right personas. Instead, it is more about attracting your ideal target market AND more importantly, seeing those you have identified as your ideal personas engaging with your marketing efforts through your website, digital ads, social media, and emails, as well as the outreach your sales teams is doing.

Monitoring who is engaging with your marketing and sales efforts—all the way from the top of the funnel through to close—is where you want to focus. The number of visitors (who match your identified ideal personas) visiting your site doesn't matter unless they choose to interact. That's why it's important to look at data to see which personas you should be targeting your brand towards.

RECAP:

- Remember: more isn't necessarily more
- Monitor engagement at every stage of the funnel
- Track which personas are engaging with your brand

Invest the Time to do Personas Done Well

Compiling the information you need in order to create personas (meeting with teams, collecting customer surveys, following up with current clients, etc.) takes time—so, don't rush the process.

We think [Rand Fishkin](#) says it best:

“Marketing journeys are long, complicated, multi-channel paths.”

Understand that it will likely take several weeks to compile all the data needed to fully develop your personas. Don't be afraid to take the time to make sure you're really making your personas accurate and strong, so your entire company is aware of who your product and/or services are developed for and what pain point of theirs your company is solving for. This allows everyone to clearly see when a prospect is a good fit or one that you would benefit to pass on. When you work with your ideal personas, it is a win-win for everyone.

RECAP:

- Take time to develop personas
- Make sure everyone on your team understands your personas

Begin or Enhance Your Personas

There are many shortcuts to building great personas. How do you know if it is a shortcut? If you don't know without a doubt who the person is, what is keeping them up at night, where they're turning to now to fulfill their needs, and how your product and/or service could help specifically them. Following the 5 steps above is a great way to start.

And for an additional resource, read our post [There's Power in Personas Done Well](#) that speaks to why personas can be so valuable across your marketing, sales and customer experience teams.



Smarter, Together

For even more tips and tricks on helping your business grow and thrive, head over to [SalesAmp](#).