

How to Build Your

Buyer Personas Workbook



Why Buyer Personas Are Important

Let's start with a very basic business revenue principle: **The only opinion that matters is from someone who is in a position to write you a check for your products or services.** Your opinion doesn't matter. Your spouse's opinion doesn't matter. Nor does the opinion of your neighbor, dentist, or consultant.

This is a tough principle to master, as it requires that we put our ego aside and accept taking the risk that we are wrong. Getting "inside" your prospect's head, and seeing the world through their eyes, while critical to success, is not natural.

Everything starts with your "who." Understanding your customer's DNA provides a tremendous marketing and sales advantage. I've found that the number one reason that executives seek so many opinions is that they don't clearly understand who their customer really is.

Further, the knowledge that they do have about their customer has not been filtered down throughout the entire sales and marketing organization. The creation and distribution of buyer personas is the most effective way to do this.

What is a Buyer Persona?

Buyer personas are fictional representations of your ideal customers. They are based on real data about customer demographics and online behavior, along with educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations, and concerns.

While personas are fictional, they are based on real data, behaviors, experience and demographics learned through customer interactions, interviews and other forms.

It's also important to note that when defining your personas, you should focus on your current best customers/clients if they represent the business you are seeking for the future.

Buyer Personas Help You:

- Determine what kind of content you need
- Set the tone, style and delivery strategies to succeed
- Target your topics to drive traffic
- Effectively nurture your targets
- Align the marketing and sales functions
- Develop sales strategies that win

How are Buyer Personas Created?

Buyer personas are created through research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience. That includes a mix of customers - both “good” and “bad” -- prospects, and those outside of your contact database who might align with your target audience. You’ll collect data that is both qualitative and quantitative to paint a picture of who your ideal customer is, what they value, and how your solution fits into their daily lives.

If you’re beginning your journey, we recommend that you start by creating three primary buyer personas, two secondary and one negative persona. This is just a recommendation - adjust the numbers to work for you and your target audiences.

Primary Persona: These are the key people you want to connect with and influence. A primary persona represents someone who is directly involved in making the decision to buy your products and services.

Secondary Persona: These are the people that either influence your primary personas, have the ability to effectively introduce you to a primary persona or both.

Negative Persona: These are people who are negatively oriented to your products or services. For example, at Imagine our negative persona is Oscar Old School who is steeped in “old school” tactics to sales and marketing.



Let's Get Started

Start with companies – It is just as important to identify and understand the ideal types of companies that will help you achieve your growth goals as it is to understand the individuals within those companies.

Things to think about:

- **Overall description of the ideal company**
- **Demographics**
- **Growth profile**
- **Competitive environment**
- **Competitors**



Building Your Buyer Personas

Let's talk about who – once you've identified the companies you need to reach, it's time to figure out who within those companies can help you achieve your goals – who are your buyer personas. Things to think about:

- **Basic description**
- **Demographics**
- **Buyer role**
- **What dominates their days?**
- **What are their high priorities?**
- **What is on their worry list?**
- **How can you impact them?**
- **What products/services do we offer that will solve their issue?**
- **Where do they go for information?**
- **What experience do they have looking for your product/service?**
- **What are the five most important questions on their mind every day?**



Let's Get to Work

We've created the following worksheets to help you organize your thoughts as you complete your research.

Instructions

We've created these fillable forms to make it easier for you to focus on creating your personas. Simply fill out the worksheets, save the document and print them out.



When creating buyer personas for the B2B world, you should first define your key customer segments. An important rule when qualifying leads is that you always want to qualify the company, not the contact. So while most attention is paid to the individuals you want to attract, don't forget to first define the company.

In the worksheets that follow, you'll see that we start with an overview sheet for you to define both your company profiles and your individual buyer personas. For additional personas simply reuse the worksheets. If you're looking for inspiration, feel free to use the sample at the end of the workbook.

ADVANCED TIP: If you want to take the effectiveness of your personas up a notch, turn your worksheets into a narrative. Give your persona a name, a picture and write their "biography" using your notes from the worksheet.



Company Persona Overview

| Company Persona | Name | Brief Description |
|--------------------|------|-------------------|
| Company Persona #1 | | |
| Company Persona #2 | | |
| Company Persona #3 | | |



Company Persona

Provide a brief description

Describe their demographics

Company Persona (Continued)

What dominates their growth profile?

What is their competitive environment?

Who are their competitors?

Buyer Persona Overview

| Company Persona | Name | Brief Description |
|----------------------|------|-------------------|
| Primary Persona #1 | | |
| Primary Persona #2 | | |
| Primary Persona #3 | | |
| Secondary Persona #1 | | |
| Secondary Persona #2 | | |
| Negative Persona #1 | | |



Buyer Persona

Provide a brief description

Describe their demographics

What is their buyer role?



Buyer Persona (Continued)

What dominates their days?

What are their priorities?

What is on their worry list?



Buyer Persona (Continued)

How can you impact them?

What products/services do you offer that will solve their issues?

Where do they go for information?



Buyer Persona (Continued)

What experience do they have looking for your product/service?

What are the five most important questions on their mind every day?

Examples of Completed Worksheets

Here are completed examples for one of Imagine's company and buyer persona worksheets.

Company Persona Overview

| Company Persona | Name | Brief Description |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Company Persona #1 | Mid-sized Fast Growth B2B Service Orientated Companies | These companies are \$4 - \$50 million in revenue. It is imperative that they double revenue in 36 months, with the goal of doubling again over the next 36 months. |
| Company Persona #2 | Small businesses committed to growth | These companies are typically \$2-5 million in revenue. They've begun growing their sales efforts and their looking for the game plan do get them to \$10MM and above. |
| Company Persona #3 | Experienced startups | These companies are started by experienced executives who have learned lessons and are looking for a sustainable growth map. |

Company Persona

Provide a brief description

These B2B companies find themselves between \$5 and \$50 million in revenue (with a heavy focus \$5 - \$25). They're extraordinarily good at what they do. Their strength has always been their ability to deliver on their promise to the customers. The sales and marketing puzzle has always been a drag on their growth efforts. They've always been good enough to overcome the challenge.

Today because of their size and the nature of how customers go about buying they realize they need to solve the sales and marketing puzzle to achieve predictable, sustainable and scalable growth.

Describe their demographics

These companies are typically young (under 25 years). They've got sales teams between 3 and 15 people and have small marketing departments (typically less than 5 people).

The owner is actively involved in the organization (typically in the role of president or CEO) and they've always been the rainmakers of their company.

Company Persona (Continued)

What dominates their growth profile?

Historically these companies have grown consistently (and typically fast). The last 12 – 24 months has changed that profile. Their size has introduced a level of complexity making continued growth more difficult. They're often facing bigger, stronger competitors and the entire way that buyer has changed how they buy has made growth more difficult than ever. Additionally, they've come to realize the benefit of predictable, sustainable and scalable approaches to growth.

What is their competitive environment?

These companies typically work in relatively competitive markets, and occasionally intensely competitive markets. The company often provides a unique take on solving problems and therefore offers solutions that the market isn't fully familiar with. This provides a meaningful advantage in differentiating the company, but they've struggled with breaking through the noise and getting their markets to understand.

Who are their competitors?

These companies typically find themselves in "No Man's Land." They're too big to be small and too small to be big. As such they tend to compete against much larger competitors on one hand and much smaller ones on the other. The traditional nature with which they go to market often leaves them to be defined by their weakest component.

Buyer Persona Overview

| Company Persona | Name | Brief Description |
|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Primary Persona #1 | Eric Entrepreneur | The owner (and typically CEO) of a mid-sized business. He's been successful in his life and is now working to figure out how to sustain that success and increase equity value. |
| Primary Persona #2 | Victor VP Sales | Victor has been a successful salesperson and now leads a sales team. He's looking for ways to increase revenue growth without increasing his cost structure. |
| Primary Persona #3 | Morgan Marketing | Morgan is the Director or VP of Marketing and oversees all things marketing related for his/her firm. Typically in his/her late 30s-50s with experience in marketing communications from a traditional perspective. |
| Secondary Persona #1 | Sam Sales | |
| Secondary Persona #2 | | |
| Negative Persona #1 | Oscar Old-School | |

Buyer Persona

Provide a brief description

VP or Director of Marketing

Typically traditional focus - starting to recognize the need to change approach. Pressure from leadership to demonstrate value of marketing and provide qualified leads to the sales force

Describe their demographics

Male or female; late 30s to 50s; educated

What is their buyer role?

In some cases they can make the buying decision on their own.
In others they are very influential in the decision.

Buyer Persona (Continued)

What dominates their days?

Preparing reports for leadership, marketing research, managing staff

What are their priorities?

Demonstrating return on investment for marketing initiatives, providing qualified leads to the sales team

What is on their worry list?

Generating more business. Being able to demonstrate results on marketing initiatives. Representing the company consistently in the marketplace. Reaching the correct target audience.

Buyer Persona (Continued)

How can you impact them?

Educating them on inbound marketing, how results can be easily tracked and measured, showing them a better way to drive business and provide qualified leads to the sales force.

What products/services do you offer that will solve their issues?

Inbound marketing

Where do they go for information?

Google, peers

Buyer Persona (Continued)

What experience do they have looking for your product/service?

Very little. They're just figuring out that they need it.

What are the five most important questions on their mind every day?

How can marketing drive more business for the company? How can marketing demonstrate ROI on all initiatives? Are we using the right platforms to reach our target audience? Are we providing value to our prospects? Are we staying within budget?

Buyer Persona - Narrative

Morgan Marketing

Segments At Play:

Mid-sized fast growth companies.
Occasionally experienced startups



Description:

Morgan is the Director or VP of Marketing and oversees all things marketing related for his/her firm. Typically in his/her late 30s - 50s with experience in marketing communications from a traditional perspective. Inbound marketing is something he/she is becoming increasingly interested in pursuing.

Identifiers & Mindset:

Morgan's background is in marketing and while there's empathy to sales, Morgan does not think from a sales perspective. While we often talk about the conflict between sales and marketing, it is not unusual that Morgan has not experienced that. This, however, has more to do with the that (s)he has not been involved at a company that had an aggressive sales and marketing effort being implemented, and that lack of aggressiveness has kept the conflict/misalignment fairly mellow.

Challenges:

Morgan fully understands and identifies with our "flat funnel" message. (S)he gets that they are not entering the conversation early enough or nurturing effectively. Morgan has worked, but struggled, to get Eric and, when present, Victor to articulate (and stick to) a clear message that is consistently implemented across all channels.

In larger (\$20MM+) companies, Morgan is increasingly dealing with the challenge of keeping up with all of the various platforms, channels and demands a modern day sales approach requires.

Among Morgan's biggest frustrations is justifying the role of marketing. The traditional challenge of directly measuring the impact of marketing efforts has led Morgan's company to underinvest in sales. This underinvestment contributes to the inability for marketing to demonstrate the value in plays and thus get the resources it needs.

Buyer Persona - Narrative (Continued)

How We Help:

We provide Morgan the tools, insights and support to connect the actions of the marketing department to revenue contribution. Our depth of expertise and team-based, collaborative approach complements the work that Morgan is already doing and multiplies the lead generation results they are achieving.

The Intelligence/Value We Can Share:

Morgan wears many hats and while (s)he is very interested in staying up-to-date with what is going on, it's quite difficult. We can share best practices, recipes insights and tools to make Morgan's job more effective and to support Morgan's ability to communicate with senior management.

Our Message To Them:

We leverage the current efforts from marketing to multiply lead generation results, enhance conversion and directly connect the actions of marketing to sales and revenue outcomes.

Where They Go For Information:

Google, blogs, HubSpot (and other platforms), associations and their peers in the industry

Common Objections/Concerns:

Morgan is often concerned that his/her industry is not ready for an inbound approach. (S)he argues that their buyers do not use the internet or social media in their buying decisions even though they themselves use those avenues on a regular basis. (S)he may be resistant to letting go of some of the traditional methods.

The biggest concern we hear from Morgan is justifying the investment to the senior team.

Let's Talk About Your Marketing & Lead Generation

Studies show that when sales and marketing efforts are highly aligned, organizations achieve an average of 32% revenue growth; and a decrease of 7% when they're not (source: Aberdeen Group). **But what does that mean?** How can you tell if your efforts are aligned, and, more importantly, how do you develop the roadmap to ensure they are aligned today...and in the future?

If your sales and marketing efforts aren't producing predictable, sustainable and scalable sales growth then we need to talk. Our free sales and marketing assessment will provide you:

- An analysis of your current marketing, lead management and sales situation to identify areas in need of improvement
- An in-depth look to figure out which lead generation tactics will work best for you
- An analysis of your sales structure to identify the best way to maximize growth opportunities
- An analysis of your website
- A written report providing the roadmap to make your growth predictable, sustainable and scalable

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Website Resources

Subscribe to The Demand Creator Blog: <http://blog.imaginellc.com>

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