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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BUYER PERSONAS



Learn how to build revenue-generating marketing and sales campaigns like brands such as Adobe who saw a 53% increase in web revenues with a persona based launch

OR R T N

Hello there!

I want to take the time to thank you for downloading this Ultimate Guide to Buyer Personas 2018. This is a guide that looks at the 5 pillars that bring a complete buyer persona together and discusses the real actions that you need to go about collating the information you need for success..

Most information that you read generally covers the focus of the buyer journey as the ultimate pillar of understanding. But the reality is you are operating on 1/5 of the required knowledge by following this single pillar.

The full 5 pillars* are as follows:

1. Priority Initiative
2. Success Factors
3. Perceived Barriers
4. Buyers Journey
5. Decision Criteria

This guide will cover the pillars individually, giving you a rounded perspective and then the answers you need to deep dive your customers for the most significant return.

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch with us at BIAS Digital!

Kind Regards



Paul Sullivan
Customer Obsessive

*The original 5 rings of insight are copyright of The Buyer Persona Institute

PRIORITY

THE PRIORITY PILLAR

The Priority Pillar explains the single most compelling reasons that a buyer would decide to invest in a solution like the one your business offers.

The insight that this pillar gives you covers the details of the personal or organisational circumstances that push buyers to allocate their time, budget or political influence into purchasing a solution like yours.

Remember, these insights are typically gained for high ticket purchases like cars, software, property etc. Lower consideration items like toiletries for example, are typically less likely to have such intense focus and are usually socially referred or socially habitual, like learned from friends or family.

By gathering the right information around this pillar, you will learn when potential customers are open to hearing from you and which personas trigger the buying decision in this investment.

Your marketing and sales team (or you) would put focus on this pillar to help define strategies that resonate with buyers at the earliest point in the decision-making process.



THE SUCCESS PILLAR

The Success Pillar is about discovering the operational or personal results that your persona expects from purchasing a product or service like yours.

Success pillars will look like benefits, but once you explore this properly you will see that they may resemble benefits, but they are not. The insight gained here will stop you from second guessing, assuming or trying to reverse engineer your marketing messages based on your solutions capabilities.

An example of this would potentially be to emphasise your solutions capacity to cut costs, but the results of pursuing this pillar may reveal that the customer is impressed by the reduction of business risk. It could also tell you that your persona is impressed by your solutions capacity to help them control something about their environment.

By mastering this pillar, you would know exactly which risks are most worrisome and how your buyers describe the rewards of reaching control.



SUCCESS

PERCEPTION

THE PERCEPTION PILLAR

Capturing the information to master the Perception Pillar will give you the understanding of what your persona considers “bad news”.

It gets its name because it helps you understand what prevents your persona from considering your solution as a viable choice. It will also tell you why your buyers consider your rivals a better choice or why they have a better approach.

This pillar when properly explored will define what internal resistance from decision makers you can expect to have to overcome. This can tell you what if any, prior bad experiences with similar solutions your persona has had and why that can place a negative perception on your product or company whether correct or not.

If you can arm yourself with the knowledge in advance of what the negative barriers are and who is supporting them, you can set your messaging to reassure your persona that your company or solution will help achieve their Priority Pillars and Success Pillars.



THE BUYERS JOURNEY

The Buyers Journey, the one part of buyer persona development that the world seems happy and comfortable to discuss in-depth. Around 64% of companies that have adopted an Inbound Marketing approach to product sales, report that their content strategy often leaves them underwhelmed and under-delivers.

No wonder when the approach to helping companies identify who their customer is flawed.

Understanding this pillar helps you develop the behind the scenes story about the work your buyers do to evaluate their options, eliminate contenders and settle on their ultimate choice.

This insight helps you define which influencers is involved at what stage of the decision-making process, what they do to arrive at each conclusion and how much influence which persona has at each stage of the journey.

Use the data gained from this pillar to align your sales and marketing activity to target the most influential decision makers at each stage of the journey. Create resources and media that help them see your approach as the unique fit for their needs.



BUYERS JOURNEY

CONFIRMATION

THE CONFIRMATION PILLAR

The Confirmation or Decision Pillar helps you understand what exactly appeals to the buyer about your product or service. It clarifies what the buyer is evaluating between your solution and others and why they consider alternative approaches.

The Confirmation Pillar often delivers surprising information to marketers as it reveals that buyers are not satisfied with benefits-oriented marketing materials, and that companies that communicate facts are more likely to gain their buyers trust.

You may learn that your newest or most distinct capabilities have the least impact on their decision making and final choices.

This is one of my favourite pillars. When clients finally understand that “gut feelings” and “assumption” or “what worked” last year no longer matter, it’s a true epiphany.

This is the “ego removing” Pillar and enables my clients to really move their businesses forward. I’m unsure why people need to be “right” and don’t simply accept, like I do, that I don’t know everything and that’s why other staff or service providers deliver things I cannot.



GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Let's face it, the only reason most of us care about our personas is to create better, more effective messaging in the hope we can increase our marketing qualified leads (MQL).

Remember that buyer personas are suited mostly to high-ticket purchases and not for low cost products. Therefore, it's far more important and far more of an in-depth process when selling and buying products of this ilk.

The messaging required to market these products cannot be easily broken down into a few words or a single paragraph. However, the messaging must be clear and succinct, available to all, for everybody to easily understand.

The fall out of this is that marketers often try and break this down using words like "market-leading", "scalable", "easy-to-use" and "flexible". None of these inspire me personally and whilst I write this, the voice in my head is saying where's the social proof, or any proof at all? We're no longer easily persuaded by these statements as they're often not backed up by facts or stats.

When you compile the data collected with all five pillars covered, you have all the insight you need to understand your buyer's expectations and can deliver the right messaging utilising the right attributes of your product or solution to the right recipients at each stage of the journey.

Ultimately, the goal is to clarify where you can pinpoint the space between your buyers needs and your solutions capability.



ACCELERATE HIGH QUALITY LEADS

The goal of any marketing activity is to improve the quality of the leads they generate for their sales team or online platform and then to scale that up to a high-volume funnel.

Many marketers focus on over-elaborate funnels covering the whole of the buyers' journey, but with many buyers around 60% of the way through the buying decision when their search activity starts taking place, you should be optimising funnels to convert and close. I say this because the rise of inbound marketing has diluted the quality of a lot of attraction stage content and therefore, you need to be deliberate with your marketing funnels.

Treat this like a competition, your solution will potentially be one of several options, so optimise for the 40% and forget the 60%.

Utilising the data that you collate from the Priority Pillar, you'll know exactly what priorities, expectations or preferred resources your potential buyers are using to help finalise their decision-making process. The questions, guidance and answers can be easily talked to making that lead more inclined to trust you and ultimately convert.



SHORTEN YOUR SALES CYCLE

These days most accept that Sales and Marketing teams should be far more aligned in delivering results for your organisation. The term **SMARKETING** springs to mind!

If you can align the goals of the two teams to one defined outcome, you will soon see an increase in output and productivity. The expectations across the two teams will bring about a closer partnership. When the two teams share a common goal, they become a more cohesive and effective team.

The truth is that your sales people are full of the best information for marketing messaging as they receive the most obstacle driven communications from potential buyers on a consistent basis.

Imagine the possibilities of allowing marketing unrestricted access to winning and failed sales calls to analyse and create the most effective marketing content possible.

Not only can they analyse the data, they can pinpoint the emotional triggers from the conversations which can add an extra 8-10% to the conversion funnel.



YOU VS THE COMPETITION

If your business operates in a competitive or established marketplace, you see pressures arise around pricing as differences between your products and services and your rival's products and services erode.

Having to compete on an almost flat landscape is difficult but this is where your messaging needs to be even clearer and extremely targeted to your buyer's priority and success pillars.

This is where interviews with your buyers and non-buyers win the battle. Knowing what works and doesn't work is important, but even more so in mature markets. You need to learn/understand how your buyers investigate and evaluate the cost vs value proposition, which persona is involved and what they see your competition doing differently to you.

Learn what perceptions and concerns they have, real or not, to gain market share.



WHO TO INFLUENCE & HOW TO REACH THEM

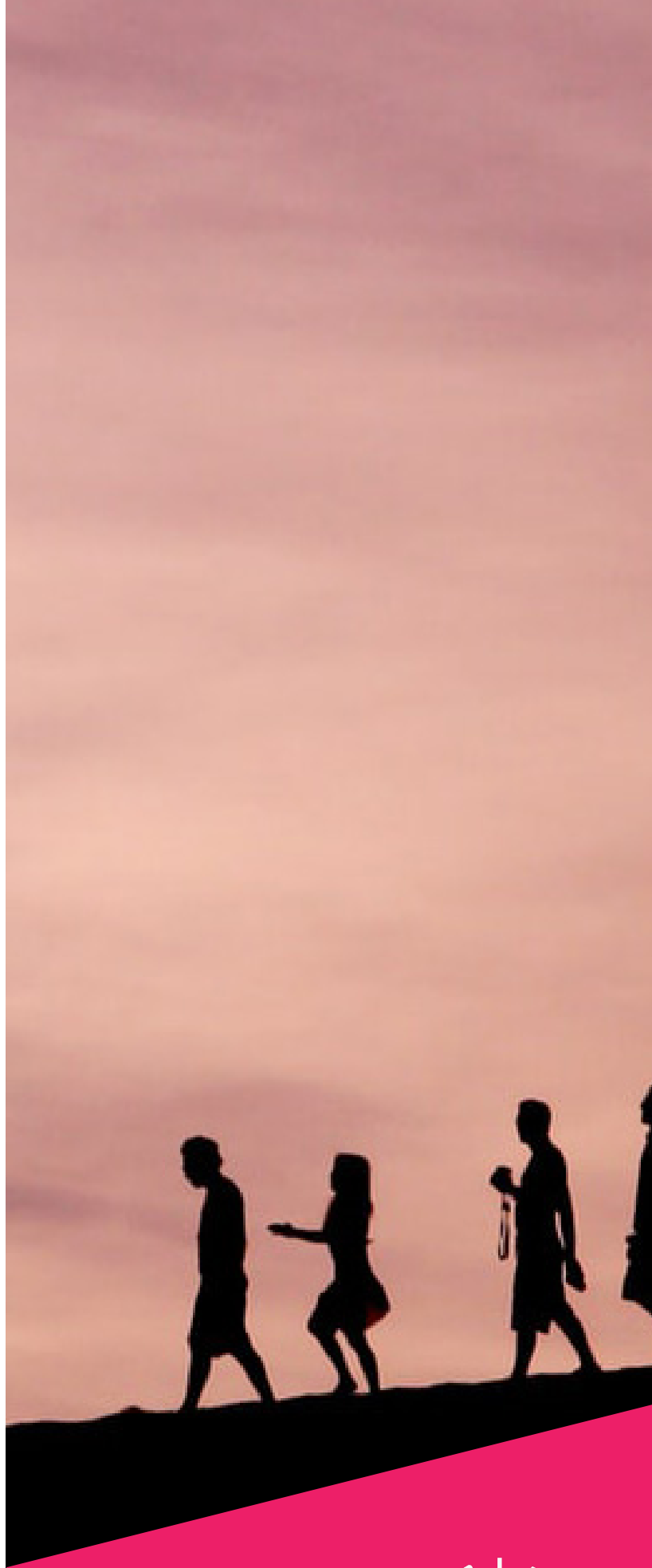
When marketing your business, you need to know who is involved in the buying decision and plan strategies to entice all of them.

Typically, marketing and sales professionals are told that they need to aim for the C-Suite and executives when thinking about their buyer's companies. But often, business owners or their marketers have little to no understanding of the subject matters that will resonate and ultimately make them (the client) engage

When buyers recall the story of their decision-making process, they reveal who triggered the need to solve the problem and what steps were followed that led to their conclusion to purchase the solution. They will reveal which decision makers held sway over what part of the selection process, revealing which factors, internal or external, exerted an influence. Finally, they will let you know which resources they relied upon to influence and cement their decision.

When you bring insights from your buyers into your marketing and sales funnels, utilising real stories from real people, overcoming the points raised in the **Perception** and **Confirmation Pillars** is far easier. Raising the possibilities that your messaging will become far "stickier" and resonate across the board.

If you can communicate in your buyer's language effectively, you will win the day.



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The misconception is that your marketing messaging should mainly engage the C-Suite because they have the power to sign off a purchase of your solution.

WRONG!!

Most C-Suite execs are so far removed from the line, that the recommendation or proposal comes from a lot further down the pecking order. SAAS delivered software is often referred up from an end user, such as a graphic designer or web designer.

However, as this booklet will lead you to understand, the right messaging to the right people at the right time is what's important. Understand what it is about your solution that appeals to which user in the buying journey, enables a slick passage through levels to the C-suite, where they will simply insist on good solid competitor analysis – so have it prepared!!!

C-Suite need answers to **Priority** and **Perception Pillars**, remember that.



THINGS TO DECIDE WHEN COLLECTING BUYER INSIGHTS

Every individual involved in sales and marketing are looking for the same result regardless of budget. They simply seeking to gain the knowledge of customer buying decisions and reach the personas that make them.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews underpin the buyer persona. You cannot simply build a profile based on a few demographics and some general interests and a job description and hope for success. I see plenty of this happening all the time.

In the purchase of high ticket items, like software, the buyer's decision and evaluation period can often take weeks, months or years. I wrote an article titled **Marketing Automation Requires Subject Matter Experts** and one of the people I mention is Claire Wood, Marketing Manager at Deloitte UK. Claire explained that their adoption of Marketing Automation took two years, multiple stakeholders and rewrote multiple procedures and communications. This goes to show how much of an impact purchasing a marketing automation platform had on their internal process flows.

Buyers will often release pertinent information about the obstacles, successes and issues involved in getting to the final decision, all fantastic for applying to your future messaging.



MARKET RESEARCH

According to Adelle Revella, CEO of the Buyer Personas Institute, market research in the form of qualitative research can also provide dividends from your buyers.

“She reveals that the researcher should expend a considerable amount of time and effort to build a guidebook that reduces the risk through the wording or the order of the questions in the interview that may affect the responses and accordingly skew the final research conclusions.”

Buyer persona research should not follow a script, have questions prepared in advance and should avoid introducing new ideas during the interview.

All sounds a little complex right?

Not everybody can engage in every activity to collect buyer’s insights, so be choosy in what you select to undertake.

UTILISING YOUR SALESPERSONNEL

Earlier in this handbook I stated that allowing marketers full access to recordings of successful sales and failed sales would give them added insight to the messaging for your product or solution. This is correct.

However, you shouldn’t engage your sales people to perform the interviews.

It may seem like a great idea because they have a great rapport with your customers, but that is also a barrier for you.

Understand that typical human emotion will not allow you to criticise something that is delivering success. It’s at odds for the customer to criticise the sales process or person unless of course something is very wrong. Often you will be told what they think you want to hear rather than what you need to hear, so avoid this option.



SHOULD YOU USE SURVEYS?

A widely adopted form of research by brands and businesses alike. You can set them up for next to nothing and some data providers like [Hotjar](#) have them in-built to allow website owners to ask their visitors if the information or products they were looking for was available, for example.

The best time to use this form of research is to ask for validation of information gleaned from other forms of research. This could be points from an interview or to qualify something from a group with similar responses in other research formats.

Surveys can also be used to qualify assumptions from demographic data which can also be useful.

They cannot however be used to clarify expectations in decisions that are considering multiple options.

STRENGTHS

- *You can collate information from large audiences*
- *You can collect a large amount of data in a short period of time*
- *Surveys can be continually repeated over time*

WEAKNESSES

- *Writing a useful survey is time consuming and complex*
- *You need to test the questions with small groups before releasing them to a larger audience*
- *It can be difficult to get engagement from your target audience*
- *Long surveys typically result in smaller response numbers*
- *Too many surveys are intrusive to your audience*



CAN YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Part of developing your persona is to establish which social media channels they operate in so that you can focus your messaging in the right place.

However, what you really need to establish is whether the persona uses that channel to educate themselves regarding their functions at work.

Human activity on social has become so focused on pleasure that quite often people use their channels to catch up on current affairs, engage friends and family and to share personal content. If your persona is using social for self-gratification, it's highly likely your solution-based content will go unnoticed.

Most B2B marketers agree that the best channels for these types of engagements are Twitter and LinkedIn (B2B Solutions).

STRENGTHS

- *You can set up lists to follow users mentioning yours or rival solutions*
- *You can follow conversations and content produced by users of your own or rival solutions*
- *You can take part in groups where your buyer would be active*

WEAKNESSES

- *You may not find conversations regarding your solution or a rival solution*
- *The conversations you find may be too short or infrequent to validate collecting the data*
- *You may not get responses to your questions or content you post*



CAN YOU UTILISE WEB ANALYTICS?

The answer is yes. There is a theory that only low consideration products have personas that spend time on websites. Personas procuring high value items follow a far more offline decision-making process.

My problem with this theory is that you can utilise web analytics well if you know what you are looking for.

For example, you are going to spend time creating content on your company blog intended to capture your personas attention. The only way to see how well your content is being read is by analytics and by using heatmaps.

Heatmaps will show where those are clicking on pages, scrolling through content and often provide videos showing how users are utilising your blog posts.

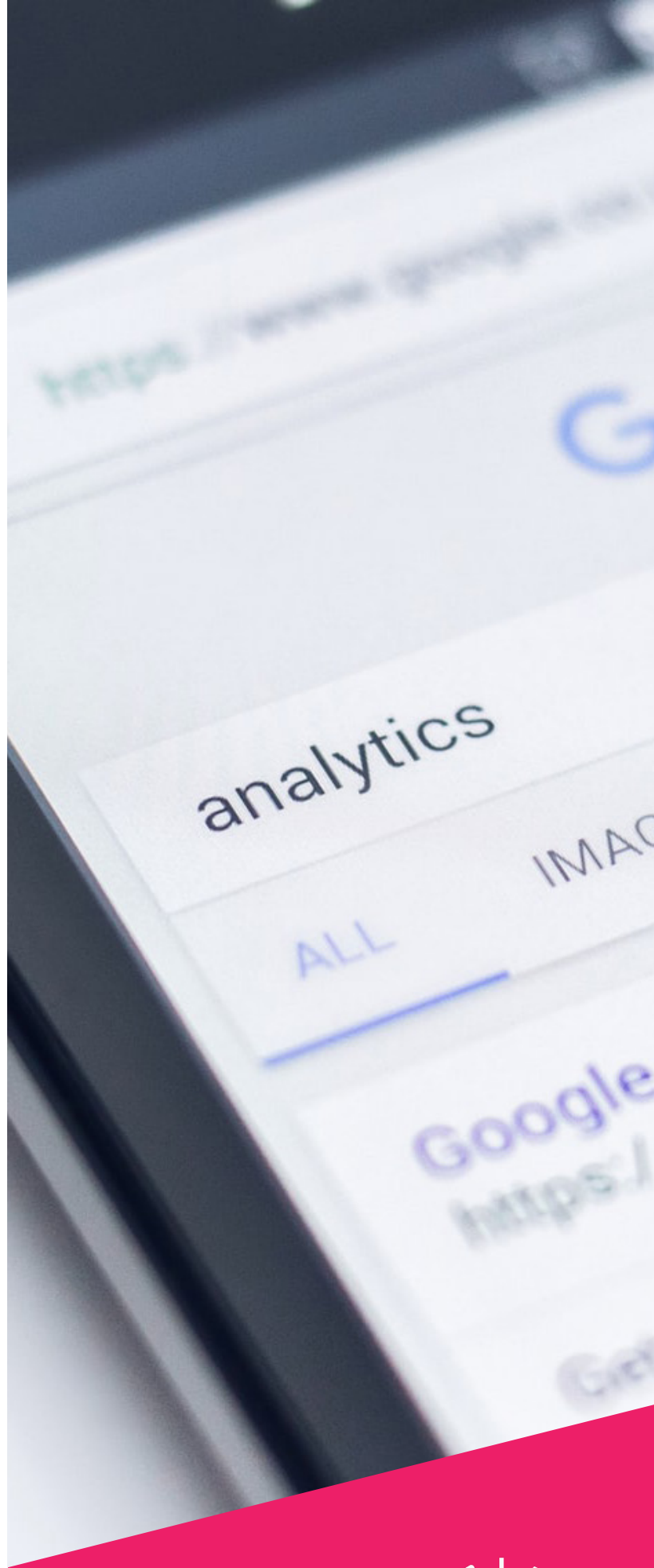
No direct benefit to the buyer's process, but extreme benefit in finding what in your content resonates and what doesn't.

STRENGTHS

- *Enabling heatmaps on individual pages gives you an indication on what works and what doesn't from a buyer's perspective (persona vs content type)*
- *You can work out which information gets your persona to engage with lead pages*
- *You can optimise the user/persona journey according to the data*

WEAKNESSES

- *It can be costly to consistently change the website according to the data*
- *It doesn't give you usable data for messaging purposes*
- *It doesn't give you any emotional clue into why someone behaves the way they do on any page on your website*





WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE INTERVIEWS?

Anybody directly involved with the sales and or marketing processes should not be allowed to undertake the interviews. It allows for bias and leading questioning.

Ideally you should bring in a third party to perform this on your behalf and this directory lists many agencies in the UK and the US, for broader results search for “qualitative research recruiters”.

This allows you to utilise the specialists who will remain indifferent throughout the interview process, giving you the best chance of gleaning true honest data.

Interviews can provide invaluable insight into the behaviours, attitudes, and preferences of your personas.

STRENGTHS

- *A flexible method that is easily adaptable*
- *You can cover off a variety of subjects*
- *You can vary the length according to the persona and stage of the buyer's journey*
- *You gain a in depth insight into individuals perspectives and their behaviours*

WEAKNESSES

- *They can be time consuming due to the one-on-one system*
- *The interviewer could struggle to build a rapport with the interviewee*
- *If you only interview a small number or persona representatives, you could get skewed results and findings may not be typical of a larger percentage of that persona type*



WHAT TO ASK YOUR PERSONA IN INTERVIEW SITUATIONS

So, we've finally arrived, the information that you have been flipping through the pages of this guide for. Understanding that you need to interview customers is one thing, understanding what questions to ask is quite another. The following pages will cover buyer profiles and list questions you need to ask to extract the information that you need.

Some great tips to remember is that you should always record your interviews but note that you must legally qualify this with the interviewee to ensure that this is acceptable. Recording the interview allows for uninterrupted conversation flow enabling your interviewee to relax and deliver the quality information that you need.

The first thing we need to do is build your buyers profile. That should be pretty easy, but on the following pages we'll do that and then get into questions you should ask your persona to extract the in-depth information that you will need.



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE

EXAMPLE B2B BUYERS PROFILE

MARKETING & SALES PERSONA



BRIAN HASTINGS

CFO | Practical Insurance

“Jumping in without getting your feet wet is the easiest way to drown”

BACKGROUND

- Married, 2 kids in high school
- Bloomington, Illinois
- CPA and MBA
- Risen through the ranks of the finance department

COMPANY PROFILE

Independent insurance agency helping individuals and small businesses find the best insurance for them.

PROFESSIONAL ROLE

- Second in command, behind CEO
- Manages the financial risk of the organisation
- Ensures business decisions are grounded in sound financial criteria
- Has a holistic view of the company, which is used to help develop corporate strategy
- Tries to balance revenue growth, managing talent and increasing regulatory climate

KEY BRAND AFFINITIES

- Accuracy
- Functional

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF BRIAN

- Working 50+ hours a week in the office, plus checking email at night and on weekends
- Spends most of his time in meetings and on conference calls
- Pressured by increased compliance requirements
- Uses his personal influence to get things done

FRUSTATIONS

- Pressure to produce faster closes, cleaner audits, smarter revenue management and deeper data analysis
- Still using spreadsheets to manage corporate performance which means reports are labor-intensive, time-consuming and error-prone

ASPIRATIONS

- Improve planning process, providing better forecasts and more transparency
- Stepping stone to CFO at larger organization and then retirement

MAKE HIS JOB EASIER

- Provide clear data on how to manage assets, liabilities and risks
- Make collateral shareable- either through email or easy to read printable formats
- Speak to him in his language

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE

- Uses Facebook for personal use
- Active LinkedIn profile
- Twitter. Uses account to monitor news feed but does not actively post

WHERE HE GETS INFORMATION

- CFO Daily Alert, LinkedIn PULSE, Forbes, Wall street Journal

This is a typical example of a B2B buyer profile – you may see it referred to as a buyer persona. It's made up of the typical details you expect to have on file for your “X” stage persona in the buyers' journey.

However, on closer inspection, this isn't such a great example. It's flat, it's not geared up to show where he fits in the buyers' journey (**as in decision making**), it's a profile of an ideal client or just a man in a job at an insurance company.





Brian Hastings, is the CFO at an independent insurance company.

You know:

- What his home life is like
- His educational background
- What he gets up to at work
- You know what a typical day looks like
- What frustrates him
- What he aspires to
- You've noted what would make his job easier
- Where he spends his time on social media.

What you don't know is:

- Who his direct reports are?
- What the hierarchy is in the firms' corporate structure underneath him?
- If he is indeed the person to approach with your solution.
- What the process of weighing up a solution like yours would be in a firm like Brian's.
- If they have the capital to invest in a solution like yours.
- Is there political sway to update their internal procedure or is it an aspiration for Brian to improve internal processes with a solution like yours without political backing.

You see, some of the data is obvious, anybody working at largish firm utilising spreadsheets in today's world of SAAS solutions can make that connection. He needs to update his internal systems, but is there a demand for it? If so, why hasn't it happened yet?

You need to question and re-question to get the information that you need!

Some of the information captured in this profile is enough to give you a basis upon which to make observations about what type of companies would be interested in approaching someone in his position. Both in their position and on a needs basis because of their incumbent internal procedures.

However, a recruitment consultant could also use this to try and prise Brian out of this job and place him somewhere else.

IT'S TOO GENERIC!

It mentions that the company uses spreadsheets, but do you think the CFO is sitting around compiling them? Of course not, somebody lower down the hierarchy is fulfilling that role! (buyers journey)

If you build a generic persona and create messaging, you think will resonate with that person without knowing a fuller deeper picture. There is a huge chance your content will go unnoticed and blend into cyberspace. Also, consider this, approaching the wrong persona at the wrong stage of the journey could in fact blow you out completely, preventing you getting any further, being viewed as interruptive (perception pillar).

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE

EXAMPLE B2B BUYERS PROFILE

MARKETING & SALES PERSONA



HANNAH HEATH

“I want what is best for my kids, but sometimes it hard to know what that is”

BACKGROUND

- 30 years old
- Married
- Lives in Greenville, South Carolina
- Earned her degree in Psychology, which she used as a school counselor before deciding to stay home with her kids, now ages 3 and 1

FINANCES

- Household income is \$120,000
- Makes most of the purchasing decisions, and does most of the buying
- Misses the discretionary income she had before becoming a stay-at-home mom

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE

- Facebook is her life-line, especially the 3 private groups
- Active on Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest
- LinkedIn profile hasn't been updated since she left the workforce

TECHNOLOGY

- Accesses the internet from her smartphone, which never leaves her side
- Uses video chat and social media to stay connected with friends and family

A DAY IN LIFE OF HANNAH

- First to get up in the morning and last to go to sleep
- Responsible for taking care of the kids, the house and all of the family errands
- Despite saying she needs to take care of herself, her needs seem to come last
- Tries to plan an outing each day so she doesn't go stir crazy
- “Mom” parody videos seem to capture her life in a nutshell

BRAND AFFINITIES



HOPES & DREAM

- Meet another mom with kids approximately the same age, and on the same nap schedule
- Find more time to take care of herself
- Stop feeling guilty for missing the life she had before kids
- Finding homeopathic solutions that treat her children holistically

WORRIES & FEARS

- Questions whether she is a good mom
- Paranoid that her kids are behind on their milestones
- Lack of independence from not making her own money
- Wondering what she will make for dinner

WHAT INFLUENCES HER

- Parenting book, blogs and magazines
- The women in her life, like her mom, mother-in-law, grandma, sisters and friends

MAKE HER LIFE EASIER

- Allow her to make informed decisions for her family
- Help her balance between being a mom and her former self



This example is of a B2C buyer profile.

Hannah Heath is a stay at home mum. She's a professional who's taken time out of her career to raise the children. She manages the home finances, but misses having her own income stream.

She spends her time on social media on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, using her smartphone to chat on video messenger and stay in touch with friends and family.

Slightly frustrated and tired with her role, feeling lonely and wanting company of other mums in her position.

Her focus on healthcare is a holistic one and she has the normal day-to-day concerns of a typical mum in her position.

Hannah likes reading up on parenting through books, blogs and magazines and uses the women in her life as an inspiration (mum, mother-in-law, grandmother, sisters and her friends).

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?





Again, this persona gives you insight into which type of companies would find this data useful. Such as a holistic medicine company, parenting blog/book/magazine publishers, places that entertain young children, parenting groups and maybe a sell from home business.

However, none of this tells you the emotional triggers that would entice this buyer to engage your product or solution. Magazines can be broad in their content, so is it niche parenting magazines? Holistic medicine to a degree is palatable by a lot of people, but what specifically interests her?

The information about where to engage her is there, just like Brian, but there is nothing in the persona that will tell you why she behaves the way she does and indeed if she has the inclination for example to swap Starbucks for Costa Coffee or Café Nero.

B2C personas are influenced differently than B2B personas.

Brian won't buy a particular piece of software, because his friend Bob at the club says he should try it. He may put it into a position of consideration amongst other software that can fit the bill, but Brian must consider far more in his buying process than Hannah does.

Brian must consider the impact to the whole company and the cost of that purchase. He probably has multiple stakeholders to engage with, who may have different political ambitions within the workplace. Whereas Hannah typically has herself and maybe the kids and her husband to consider.

The children will possibly be given what her choice is, as well as her husband to a degree as she makes the buying decisions. But to find out they don't like a brand of gravy, condiment or beauty product has less overall impact to their lives.

If Hannah's sister tells her to try Costa Coffee and she doesn't like it, she's maybe wasted £2-£3 pounds. If Brian makes the wrong choice in software, it could be the end of his career. The outcomes and responsibilities for the two types of persona are miles apart.

So, several B2B personas typically complete the **buyers journey**, which means identifying and defining messaging suitable to each persona at each stage of the decision-making process. B2C personas are singular, far more susceptible to standard demographic data to influence messaging and are more influenced by social factors.

Let's build your persona!



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE

IDENTIFY YOUR PERSONA

PERSONAS NAME

PERSONAS JOB TITLE

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

CHILDREN

LOCATION

EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

COMPANY PROFILE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF YOUR PERSONA



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE

PROFESSIONAL ROLE & DUTIES

WHO REPORTS INTO THIS PERSONA

WHAT DOES THE CORPORATE STRUCTURE LOOK LIKE?

WHAT IS THIS PERSONAS BUYING/DECISION MAKING POWER?



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE

HOW MANY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS NEED TO AGREE TO A PURCHASE LIKE THIS?

KEY BRAND AFFINITIES?

WHAT IS THIS PERSONAS FRUSTRATION?

WHAT IS THIS PERSONAS ASPIRATION?



BUILD YOUR BUYERS PROFILE

WHAT WOULD MAKE THEIR JOB/DUTIES EASIER?

WHERE DOES THIS PERSON GET THEIR INFORMATION?

SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

LINKEDIN

INSTAGRAM

PINTEREST

OTHER

Did you know that most clients, companies and micropreneurs will opt to not do the proper persona research? You will be told that they know their customers well enough (so why aren't you smashing sales then) that they need leads and not research (well how can I improve leads without research) and they don't have time to wait to get the research process finished (but you have another £30k for example to blow, not getting the right leads on a consistent basis).



POINTS TO QUESTION IN THE INTERVIEW

START WITH WHY

Set your objective for the interview process. Remember, you're not setting goals for a particular outcome, typically you would be looking for information about your solution or certain aspects of your solution. You may even be looking for what made the persona choose an alternative solution.

An example may be that you need more qualified sales leads in your funnel. Your interview topics would cover

- What are the factors that enabled a decision to consider a solution of this type?
- What are the factors that prevented a decision to consider a solution of this type?
- What functions of the solution are attractive/ useful and why?
- What functions of the solution aren't attractive or useful and why?

These types of questions will help your sales team to prepare rebuttal information for potential objectives and your marketing team to streamline their messaging.

NOW CHOOSE WHO

Once you have your objective set, you can decide which persona or personas you are going to interview. At this point you can choose by demographics, think:

- Position/Job Title
- Size of Organisation
- What Business Sector
- Where the Business is Based

Tip: Make sure that you qualify your interviewee hasn't been involved in a similar activity within the last 6 months.

A question to use to qualify this could be:

"Have you been asked to evaluate any of the following solutions (list your solution and your competitors and market leaders) in the past 6 months?"





THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. Make sure you have researched your interviewee and have their details to hand. Their name, role, company etc, try to find them on LinkedIn and connect with them so you can get some facts about them to ease the initial conversation. Getting an interviewee to relax of topic first will gain you the best results, but ensure the topic is of the nature of your call, not idle chit chat.
2. Make sure you have details of when your product or solution was purchased or trialled.
3. It's important to use the language that the interviewee would be used to. Check out their website and read a few pages, see how they communicate with their own readers so you use the same terminology.
4. How can you record the call? If your business systems allow it then all is well and good, if not use your landline phones loudspeaker and record it on your mobile phone voice notes, making sure you edit each note with the interviewee details. The other alternative is to get a digital Dictaphone for around £30 and use the loudspeaker on either landline handset or mobile handset and record from there.
5. Try and have a "listener". Like any event, having a different perspective is exceptionally effective in these scenarios. Quite often those not directly involved in the process "hear" differently to the interviewer and that perspective can be critical in the first few moments an interview is finished.

Tip: When the interview is finished, don't switch off your recording device straight away, let it carry on whilst you discuss the output with your "listener".

ANYTHING ELSE TO CONSIDER?

If you feel I've missed a point and you see something haven't covered, make a note below and feel free to email me at paul@biasdigital.com about it



STARTING THE INTERVIEW?

It's extremely important to start your interviews on a professional basis. To open, you could start with something along the lines of

“(Customer name) I appreciate that your time is valuable, so if you're happy to start, I'd like to get into our first question”

Q1) Can you think back to the point in time, your company realised it needed a solution like (name your solution purchased)? If you can run me through the events from realisation to the decision to search for a solution like ours?

If the client lists the benefits of your solution, thank them and then say that's great to hear, but what was going on internally that pressed this issue to the fore?

Q2) Let's focus on the (item that pressed the issue), potentially this issue was in the pipeline for some time before it was actioned. Why did you decide at that point, to engage in an activity to pursue a solution like (name the solution)? What triggered that?

Although your interviewee is talking, and you have it recorded, take notes about who they may mention that was also involved in the decision-making process. Note their job title and how they interacted and listen out for any reservations or sponsorships of the idea to purchase a solution like yours.

If possible, note down key words or names and story titles – for example if you are selling marketing automation software and a persona has a story mentioned into the conversation. Rather than interrupt the speaker, make a reference so you can potentially revert to it later.

Q3) (Customer name), I noted earlier you referenced (position/title) who said they had heard that marketing automation software was expensive as not only do you bear a cost of software, but training and possibly agency involvement would bring additional costs, can you run me through that story?





Q3 is an example of the types of question you need to keep asking to extract as much information about every persona support, objections and pain points within the buyers' journey. You should keep making notes as the recording will enable you to catch up post conversation if you feel you misheard something.

As with any line of questioning in this space, you need to let the interviewee speak, people like to do that.

Ensure that you don't interrupt, remain fully focused on the question that is currently being answered and not focus on your next question. Again, if a topic is raised during the answer that piques your interest, make a note and when the interviewee is finished, pause, reflect and then choose the question you want answered from your notes and continue in that fashion.

WHAT IF THE INTERVIEW STALLS?

What happens if the interview stalls? Good question. From time to time the interviewee will run out of things to say or may veer of topic (**please be very direct in bringing them back to the initial question, or what they were revealing before they veered off course**). If your interviewee stalls, here are some questions help you get back on track:

Q1) So (customer name), once the decision was made to purchase a new email marketing solution, how did you go around finding contenders, solution providers just like us?

Q2) How many suppliers did you find and how many of the group made the final elimination process and why?

Q3) What information were you trying to establish from this search of potential suppliers?

Q4) Were any of the suppliers you found unknown to you prior to the search?



If you find that these questions are relevant or cannot be altered for your use, then think about asking your questions in a particular way. Such as “Tell me more about..” and “What was important about..”

This line of questioning will always force the interviewee to think and rethink their answers and you often are presented with nuggets of information that were overlooked before.

My ideal solution is to ask the same question twice at different stages of the interview in a slightly different way. That way you can double check you have gleaned all the information possible.

Below is an example to help you work this out

- Can you tell me about the employment gap between 2005-2006? (open-ended)
- So 2005-2006 is blank because you were unemployed, correct? (leading, negative)
- What type of work were you engaged in between 2005-2006? (leading, positive)

IN CONCLUSION?

In conclusion, it seems that I believe this to be the most in-depth resource to buyer personas outside of the book Buyer Persona, by Adele Revella. I believe I have adeptly and succinctly broached all the subjects and topics you need to fully understand what it takes to build a buyer persona. Shown why most people operate on buyer profiles and not personas and given you the tools to help you define and build your own buyer persona through profiling and interview.

We covered what options you have available to help gain the knowledge to proceed.

Over the page are two more aides to help you book your interview appointments.



REQUEST AN INTERVIEW FORMAT?

Voice message

My name is _____, and I'm the (your position) with (your company). I'm calling because you recently evaluated our (specific product or service), and I am hoping that I can get a few minutes to talk to you about your experience as you went through that evaluation.

This isn't a survey; I'm looking for some frank, honest feedback about what worked and what didn't as you went through your trial/purchasing process. I'd need around 15 minutes of your time next week, if that's possible?

Here is my phone number (phone number). I understand you may initially wish to revert by email so here is my email address (provide email address), and look forward to hearing back from you, I hope we can talk soon.



Email

Subject:

Re: (your product or product/service) Interview

Hi (Name),

I left you a voicemail just now but thought it prudent to follow up by email.

Can I please reiterate that this isn't a sales call, I am interviewing people who have recently evaluated our (specific product or product/service), to gain feedback into how we perform in the markets buying process. Ideally, you can provide your open, honest and candid thoughts on what worked for you as well as where and how you feel we can improve.

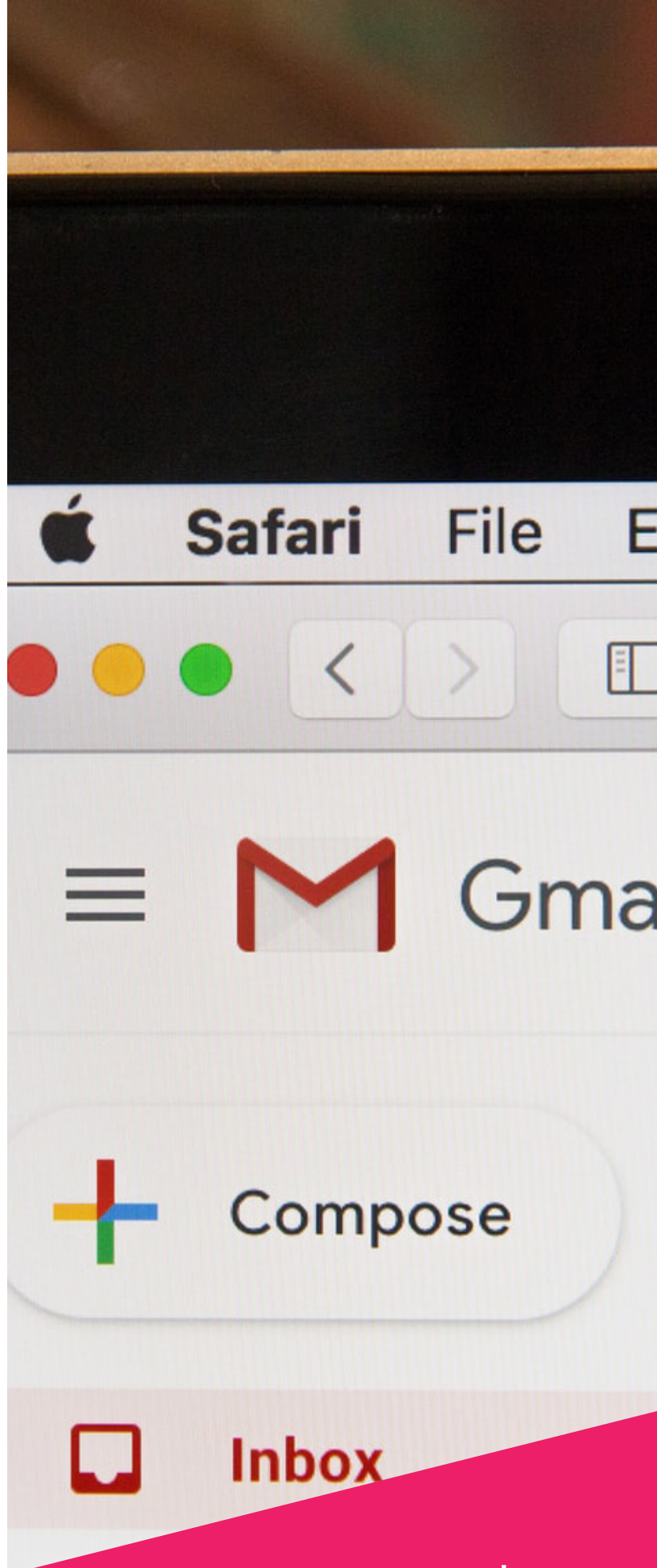
Be assured that no sales personnel will be on the call and this is not a survey. We will use your insights to help improve the buying experience for you and others in your role.

If you are willing to provide me with 15-20 minutes of your time, please suggest a time next week or alternatively click here and book a slot in my calendar, whichever is easiest for you.

Best Regards

(Your name)

(Your number)



THANKS FOR ENGAGING

Thanks for engaging in **The Ultimate Guide to Buyer Personas**

Did you know that by developing your ultimate persona, you can build all your marketing funnels and strategy!

By identifying just who your personas are you can:

- Perfectly target your paid search ads
- Correctly define your Facebook Audience
- Understand what social media channels you should operate in
- Know what messaging needs to be targeted at which persona at what stage of the buyers' journey
- Know what emotional triggers inspire your persona to purchase a product/service like yours
- Understand what your rivals do better than you and enable you to counteract that or better develop your sales strategy or improve your product/service
- Focus on developing Brand Intimacy

This guide really should leave you with no reason not to try and work out who your best customer is. All the "click funnel" experts you see around these days, don't focus on this. How can you honestly put a funnel in place if you don't know who the messaging in that funnel is targeted at. You can't buy a product/service without knowing what underpins it.

Once you have the basis of your marketing nailed, your return on your marketing investment should skyrocket too!

Better leads, better results, happier boss, happier bank balance!

If you are still unsure how to utilise the information given in this e-book, contact me paul@biasdigital.com

