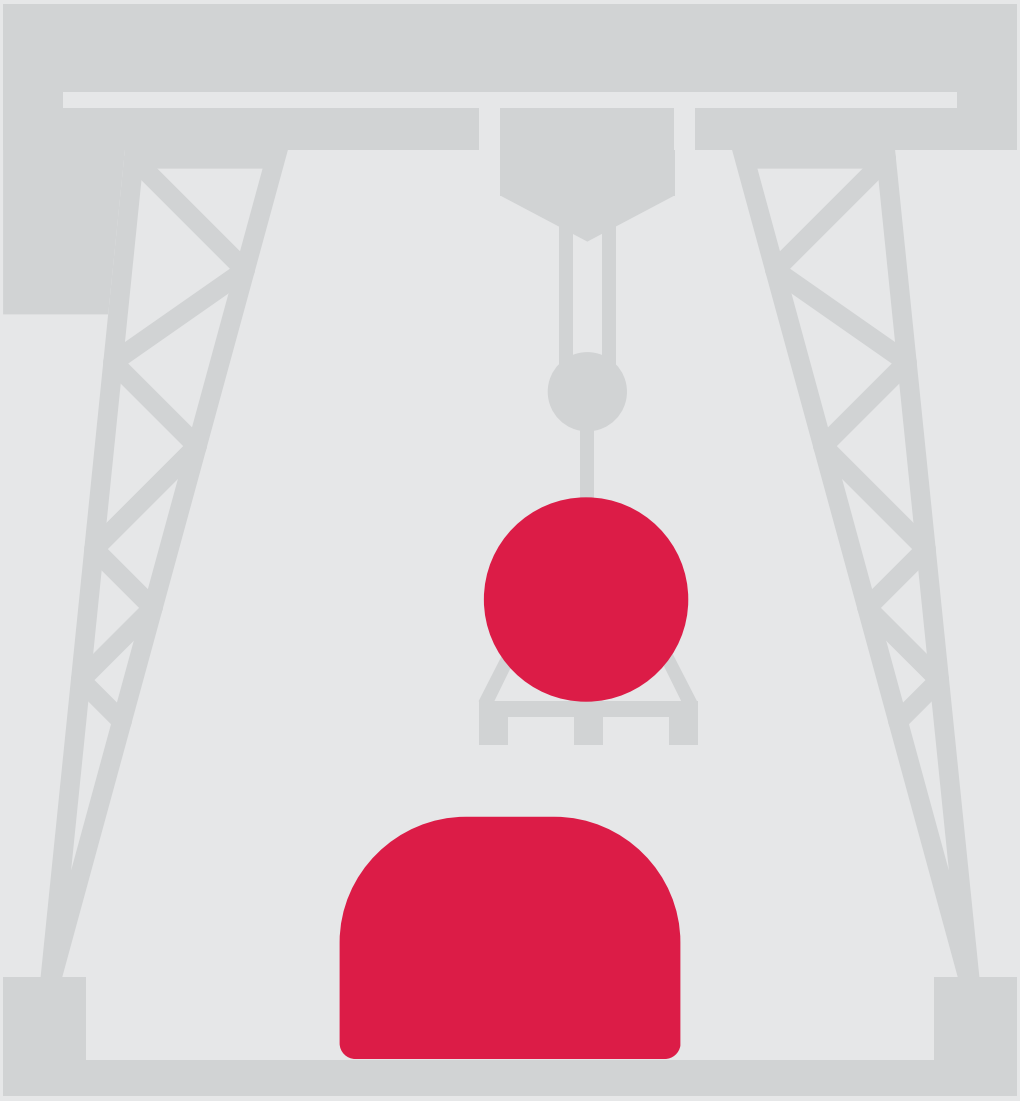
Tomorrow People
Digital Marketing Agency

Ultimate Toolkit: How to Build Out Your Personas and Their Buying Process



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Ultimate Toolkit: How to Build Out Your Personas and Their Buying Process

Learn how to research and create personas that will take your inbound marketing to the next level.

Then...

There was a time when marketers would deploy their messaging with all the sophistication of a blunderbuss; a missive blasted out into the wild, hoping to take down as many targets as possible. And sometimes, it worked.

Now...

Fire off a mass of messaging-shaped buckshot in this digital age and expect it to bounce off your targets. Your prospects are too sophisticated, informed and in control now.

Prospects expect personalisation in this new era of marketing. They want to be spoken to directly, your marketing should be addressing their precise business pains. Success is tough in this new arena though - it is an issue that can throw up real challenges for inbound marketers who must 'lure' customers to their content.

That's why creating incisive personas of your customers is essential to the inbound process. Get them right and, in conjunction with content mapping, you can reach out to the the right person in the right place at the right time. Every time.

"Who are my personas?"

Personas are fictional profiles of your customers. Think of each persona as a detailed biography that details their job, age, income and much more. The real question, of course, is how to actually find them in the first place and define them into manageable persona profiles.

- **Analyse your database** and pull together a list of your existing, lapsed and potential customer types.
- **Curate into different types** of customer, pulling together pertinent and common themes about each so you can create a basic persona profile.
- **Don't ignore lapsed or unengaged customers** because identifying personas who aren't currently engaged with your products or services could reveal where your messaging is going wrong. It will suggest ways in which you can re-engage with them.



"How do I flesh them out?"

You have a basic list but they're looking a little, well, basic, right? If they were movie characters, they'd be in a Michael Bay film, not a Ken Loach movie. Time to drill down deeper into the true nature of each persona – and uncover new ones in the process.

Interviews

For each persona on your working list, contact three existing customers who match the profile and interview them either in person or on the phone for 15-20 minutes. Ask them about:

- How your company helped them them deal with their business pains and challenges in the past.
- How they came across your company in the first place – a referral perhaps or via online research, etc.
- What appealed to them about your company and its products/services.
- What ultimately motivated them to go with your company.
- Who else was involved in the purchasing process and how your service or product was analysed and evaluated.
- What was their overall lasting impression of your company? Is there room for improvement?

Surveys

Send out or post surveys online based on similar questions deployed in the interview process. To drum up responses, consider financial incentives to encourage existing customers to take part. Such an investment is worthwhile – the insights gleaned will aid your persona creation programme.

Team Feedback

Your most valuable resource for uncovering personas are your employees – those who deal with customers day in and day out in sales, support and customer services. Ask them for their insights into what they regard as typical customers to help identify and flesh out personas.

Listen

Conduct research online, listening to customers in social media channels and forums – what are they complaining about? What do they need? What are their wants and most importantly, their pains?

“How do I pull this all together?”

For each persona, use a template to create your personas. A basic template should include:

- Picture of persona
- Name
- Age
- Role
- Location
- Company Size
- Goals
- Challenges/Pains
- Income
- Education
- Backstory

Entries such as backstory may seem unnecessary, but they are ideal for bringing your persona ‘to life’ in the minds of you and your marketing team. Iit makes the persona more ‘human’ and someone that can be identified with more easily.

Also bear in mind that your business and its needs are unique and your own persona templates may differ from the norm – do whatever feels right for you, not the herd.

For examples of pitch-perfect personas, check out Hubspot’s examples.

“What do I actually do with the personas?”

It’s all about the buying cycle – and your new persona list will allow you to create content aimed at their specific journey through each stage of the funnel - matching your content to each and every step they take via content mapping.

Top of the Funnel “Awareness”

The persona is aware that they have a pain that needs resolving and they are starting to hunt for solutions. Using their persona profile, you can create content that will address their particular pains, all while not pushing a specific product or service.

Offer a helping hand; don’t hawk your product.

Middle of the Funnel “Consideration”

The persona has been snared by your awareness content and is now seeking more in-depth information. Deploy eGuides and White Papers to help them drill down into the details.

Make your content expert-driven and long form – but avoid being salesy.

End of the Funnel “Decision”

The persona is ready to commit and you can help them make that commitment by deploying testimonials and case studies to aid them make their final purchasing decision.

Now is the time to push your own specific products/services.

Need a template to help you draw up your content mapping strategy? Head here.

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The Net Result

You have given your company the best possible chance of delivering bespoke content to each of your personas. But don't rest on your laurels – constantly monitor and check-in with your persona types and their journey to ensure that your core profiles remain on target. And expect to tweak and change your personas as they evolve.

Just like real life, persona's pains and challenges shift and change over time. Your persona profiles and content mapping strategy must reflect this never-ending journey.

Grab an Umbrella

By identifying your personas' pains, you can build up an Umbrella Theme that contains all identified pains in one place. This can further inform your persona creation process – and vice-versa. This Umbrella Theme can also be used to create the foundations of your content mapping plan, with each piece of content tailored specifically to addressing key pain points.

Remember:

- Your Umbrella Theme and your customer personas can inform each other, and help create a more incisive breakdown of your content needs.
- The Theme should be reevaluated every quarter because customers' pains are constantly evolving.



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