

How to Develop Buyer Personas

What are buyer personas? Who are the individuals that consist of your product or service's buying unit? Is the consumer the same person as the customer? These are all important questions that marketers keep in mind when thinking of their target customers.

What is a buyer persona?

A buyer persona is a detailed description of an ideal customer in your target market. However your persona shouldn't just describe a customer, rather marketers should humanize their problems. For example, your buyer person shouldn't just be Wendy, a middle aged mother who doesn't have enough hours in the day to get all her errands done. Marketers should take it one step further by expanding on what makes Wendy, Wendy. Try this: Wendy is a middle aged mom of three, who deeply cares about her children even after working her corporate job. She's a mother 24/7, so she ensures that lunch boxes are always packed and that she's never late to a soccer game.

The best advice is make sure your buyer persona has a fun catchy name, such as Working Mom Wendy or Bachelor Bryan. These buyer personas remind marketers, even when they are not interacting with the customer face-to-face on a regular basis, that it is their goal to help them make the changes that they are looking to make. They help clarify the age-old questions marketers always ask: "who is our customer" and "how will our products/services solve their problems"?

Customers don't buy products/services just because, they buy products/services because they specifically address their needs or wants.

What is included in a buyer person?

Buyer personas should include all the characteristics of a target customer. The basic categories include their demographics, including age, gender, psychographics, and geographic location. However there are also more personal categories to include such as interests, pain points, behavior patterns, motivation, and goals.

What is a buyer unit?

A buyer unit or center refers to all of the individuals and business units involved in a purchase decision. These units are especially important in B2B purchases but also carry weight in B2C purchases.

For example, when a parent is out buying a Thomas the Tank Engine train set, it's probably not for their own entertainment, rather for their child to play with or maybe it's a gift for a friend. Therefore in this situation, the buyer or customer is the parent while the end user or consumer is the child that plays with the train set.

This is important to keep in mind when building buyer personas, as marketers should generally prioritize the persona of the buyer over the end user, since the customer is ultimately the individual making the buying decision.

Are there other types of personas?

Buyer personas have variants such as micropersonas, negative personas, and look-alike personas. **Micropersonas** are meaningfully different variations on an already existing buyer persona. Essentially, these personas are more detailed in regards to where the persona is in the timeline of the purchase decision. For example, this might be the same persona but in a different situation or time of the year.

Lastly there are **negative personas** that represent customers who explicitly fall outside of your target segment. Although classified as the anti-customer, these are still helpful to marketers to solidify the company's mission and help weed out possible look-alike personas.

Possible **look-alike personas** can come in all shapes and sizes, so it's important to identify them amongst your marketing team to not waste resources on them. An example of a look-alike persona is a customer who initially shows interest in the company, buys in bulk, but ends up returning their entire purchase... repeatedly. This customer is not reliable, but at a glance can look like a target customer.

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Keeping buyer personas in mind is crucial for marketers in all industries, especially in B2B contexts. Whenever you think of your product/service, always consider who your customers are. Working Mom Wendy needs your help!