

Your Guide to Targeting Your Marketing

Introduction

Do you target your marketing or are you simply shooting in the dark?

Without seeking to understand your target customer, you adopt a scatter gun approach and your marketing is unlikely to hit its mark.

When you target your intended audience, you generate a bigger return on investment from your marketing time, resources and money.

Targeting your marketing starts with creating unique marketing personas for your business. Marketing personas are semi-fictional portraits of your ideal customers. They capture the backgrounds, motivations and behaviours of the people you seek to serve.

You can then use this information to adopt a focused, more effective marketing approach which strengthens and grows your business.

There are many more reasons why you should create marketing personas for your business:

- They provide information to enable you to align (or realign) your business – it's offerings, key messaging and marketing communications – with those you wish to work with.
- They highlight where to focus your marketing so you can use your marketing budget more wisely.
- They help improve the return on your marketing investment by delivering more ideal new business leads for your business.
- They help you attract customers who are more likely to stay with you over time. A more cost-effective approach than repeatedly finding new customers.
- They provide direction on enhancing your relationships with your ideal customers and help you retain them.

This guide shares the five-step process to create your marketing personas and put them to work.

Already developed marketing personas for your business? Do it again! The needs and motivations of your audience may have changed. Revisiting your personas on a periodic basis ensures your marketing messages remain aligned with your audience.

Your Marketing Support

You may not be aware that Clear Vision Accountancy's marketing specialist can also help you with your marketing.

For a discussion on how we can help you target your marketing content and make it effective for your business, call Dee Gerrish on 01249 712074 or email dee.gerrish@cvag.co.uk.

There are also many more areas Dee can help you with:

- Business development and growth
- Marketing strategy including inbound and digital
- Copywriting, editing and proofreading
- Customer communications
- Mystery shopping your business and your competitors
- Branding and brand awareness
- Social media management
- Lead management
- Website review and enhancement
- Video marketing incl. customer videos

Your Persona Template

There are many marketing persona templates in existence. Most are a variation on the following theme:

Persona Name:



Background & Demographics

Age
Level of education
Family
Gender(s)
Job role / salary / career path
Location
Type of business / employer

Personality and Attitudes

Demeanour
Values
Communication preferences

Goals

Primary goal
Secondary goal(s)

Challenges

Primary challenge
Secondary challenges(s)

Questions and Objections

Key questions they ask

Why wouldn't they buy our service or product

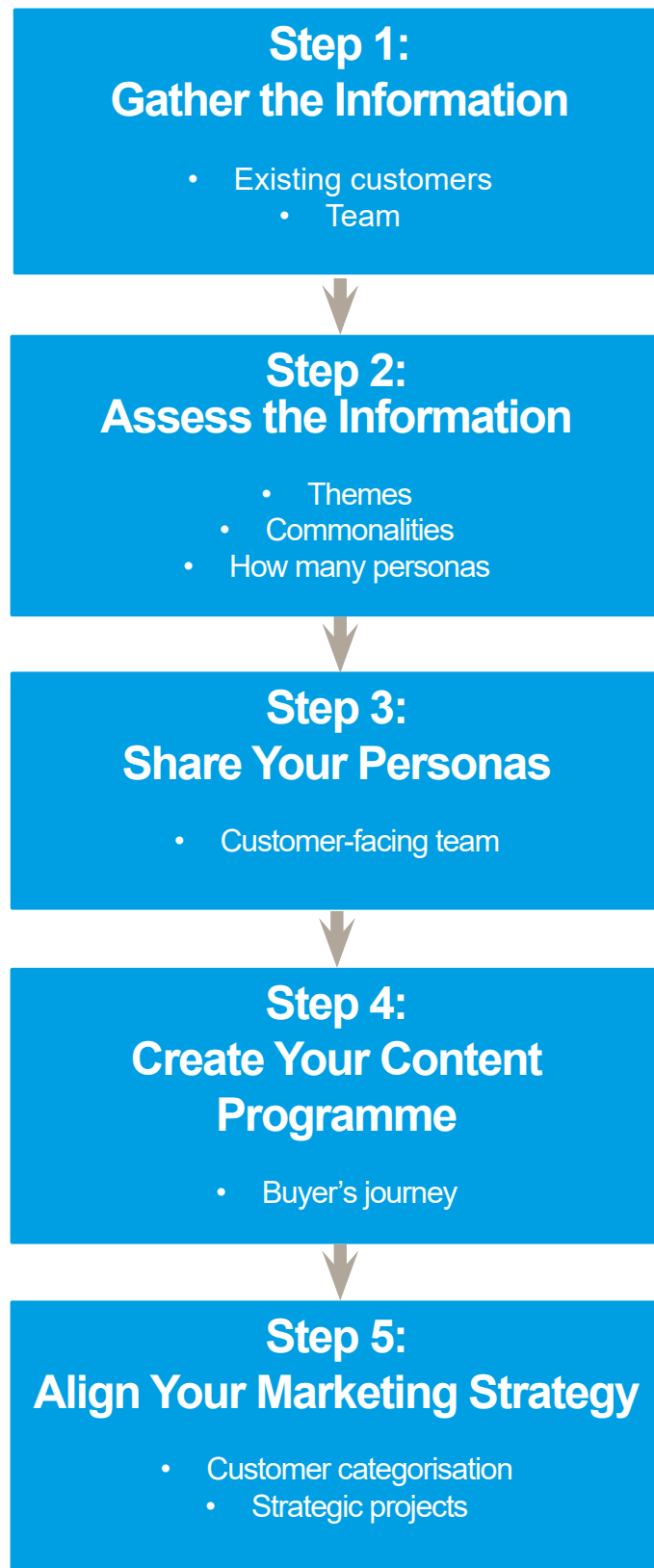
Our Role

What we can do to help them achieve their goals and overcome their objections

Key Marketing Messages

How your service/product should be presented

The Targeting Process



Guidance on each of these steps follows.

Step 1: Gather the Information

There are a number of sources from which you can gather the information you need to develop your marketing personas. We recommend you start with the following:

- **Ask your team**

Questions to ask your whole team:

Who do they think are your ideal customers? Why?

Who do they think are not ideal customers for your business? Why?

What questions are you often asked?

What issues do you often discuss with your customers?

Questions to ask your sales team:

What questions are you often asked?

What common objections do you encounter when discussing our services/products?

- **Ask your customers**

Make sure you ask a range of customers, not just those who you know to be your raving fans. The difficulties less positive customers can share will also be of help to you.

The questions you ask your customers depend on whether you have business customers or serve consumers, and whether you sell services or products.

Here are some example questions you can tailor for your specific business. Remember you are looking to capture information on your customers' motivations and behaviours:

Business-to-Business (B2B)	Business-to-Consumers (B2C)
What do you look for/value from our type of business? Why do you value this?	What do you look for/value from our type of business? Why do you value this?
What frustrates you about our type of business? Why does this frustrate you?	What frustrates you about our type of business? Why does this frustrate you?
What goals do you look to our type of business to achieve?	What goals do you look for our type of business to achieve? Why do you choose to buy our product/ use our service?
What is your biggest challenge in your role? Why is this your biggest challenge?	What challenge(s) are you looking to solve with our service/product? What benefit(s) are you looking for from our service/product?
What does it mean to be successful in your role?	What makes you happy with our service/ product?
What influences you in your work? Where do you go for new information about your job? Why are you influenced by these sources?	What or who influences your decisions? What social networks are you part of? Why are you influenced by these sources?

- **Assess your past/current potential customer database**

You can assess this data to uncover trends such as:

- Demographic trends
- How they found you
- What marketing content they responded to
- What services/products they were/are interested in
- Why they stopped buying from you
- Why they chose not to buy from you
- Conversion rates
- Conversion timescales.

Step 2: Assess the Information

Organise the information you have gathered according to the different sections in the persona template.

Look out for themes and commonalities in the data.

Insert these themes into the persona template.

Complete your template by assessing what your key role(s) is for your persona and also consider the key associated marketing messages.

As you assess the information captured, you are likely to identify pictures of more than one typical customer type. Most businesses have more than one target marketing persona, depending on what they sell and who they sell it to.

In fact, owners of smaller businesses tend to be close enough to their customers to recognise particular existing customers as personas start to emerge.

Step 3: Share Your Personas

Every one of your customer-facing team members should be aware of who your business is trying to attract. This will influence how they speak about your services and products.

In the case of your sales team, it will help them improve how they discuss and overcome common objections.

Step 4: Create Your Content Programme

Tailored, effective marketing content to attract your ideal customers can be planned by aligning your marketing persona(s) with the different stages in the buyer's journey.

This process helps you deliver the right content, to the right people at the right time.

There are four key stages of the buyer's journey:

1. Awareness

The buyer is experiencing or expressing symptoms of a problem or opportunity. They may be doing educational research to more clearly understand, frame and give a name to their problem or opportunity.

2. Consideration

The buyer has clearly defined and given a name to their problem or need. They are committed to researching approaches and methods to solve their problem or opportunity.

3. Decision

The buyer is deciding on a solution method/approach, has compiled a list of associated providers and is researching further to whittle down this list to a shortlist and subsequently choose their preferred provider.

4. Retention / Advocacy

The buyer is committed to the provider, who delivers consistent value.

Create a grid and record your ideas for each of your personas at each of the different stages:

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Retention
Persona Name 1				
Persona Name 2				
Persona Name 3				

You can also consider how you can repurpose existing content to serve particular stages in the buyer's journey.

Step 5: Align Your Marketing Strategy

Alongside aligning your marketing content programme with your personas, you can use them to direct your marketing strategy and activities as follows:

- **Customer categorisation**

Categorising your existing customers accordingly to how 'ideal' they are for your business, helps you adopt a more commercial approach and use your limited time, money and resources more effectively.

- **Strategic projects**

Your marketing personas may also highlight other strategic projects that will strengthen your business. For example:

- They may show that key marketing tools, such as your website, are out of step with your target audience and need updating or redeveloping.
- The development of new products or services your target audience are now looking for.
- The adoption of new marketing channels to reach your target audience.
- Segmentation of your marketing database according to what stage each person is at on the buyer's journey.

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