

Optimize Azure Marketing

Define your target
customer



BUYER PERSONAS

WHO IS YOUR CUSTOMER?

If you had an unlimited budget and unlimited sales staff, you could market to everyone. But that's not real life.

Every campaign you run, your digital marketing, and your events will be based on engaging and delighting your ideal customer.

As you develop your personas, remember that people do not buy products. They buy to solve a pain point or fulfill a need. Though you may think you know what those pains and gains are, you may be surprised.

We suggest interviewing current customers to create a clear picture of who your target customer is. You can also interview prospects to find out why they didn't buy from you. This will help you find out what you need to change. We've provided two pages of questions to use for interviews.



People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill. They want a quarter-inch hole.

Theodore Levitt, Harvard



CREATE A PERSONA

Persona creation helps you:

- Define the customers who will gain the most value from your offer
- Understand the problem that your offer solves
- Identify how your customer buys
- Identify the influencers for your audience

Later, you'll combine your personas with your unique value proposition.

As a result, instead of pursuing any customer, you can focus on exactly the customer, vertical, and solutions that fit your market niche.

You won't spend money you don't have on lists of customers who aren't interested, or try making phone call after phone call to someone who isn't ready to buy.

You'll work with your buying persona and build it into every interaction. Even if you've done this work before, chances are your persona is outdated or isn't being fully understood or used within your company.



INTERVIEWING PERSONAS

PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Before you pick up the phone or show up at their office, for the interview, research your customer to find out what you do know about him/her. That way, you won't spend a lot of time asking 'what is your job,' or 'how many people are in your company.' Basic information should already be in your customer database or list.

Spend time looking over their company website or Facebook page. You can even look them up on LinkedIn.

Bring a notepad, a co-worker to help you take notes, and a way to record the conversation. Be sure and get permission to record the conversation.

HOW TO CONTACT THEM

You can send an email requesting an interview, but you may get a better response if you call them.

You'll likely have to leave a message on their voice mail, so prepare what you will say in advance.

INTERVIEW TIPS

- Focus on facts, ask clarifying questions such as 'how often do you need to..'
- Understand their motivations, ask them questions such as 'Why do you need to...'
- Don't talk about your product as a solution when they bring up a problem.
- Listen more than you talk.

GETTING STARTED

The hardest part of interviewing is asking the first question. Adelle Revella, an expert in creating buyer personas, recommends using a phrase such as 'X, take me back to the day you first decided to purchase [solution here].'

This type of question can work well, as it will immediately focus on what problem or need triggered the decision to purchase your solution.

You may not get the answers you need right away. Use phrases such as 'Tell me more about...,' and 'What was important about...,' and 'who else was involved in....' to bring out the full story.

RESOURCES

Since this is an overview workshop, we cannot cover every aspect of customer interviews. We encourage you to seek out other resources for the most success in creating your buyer personas.

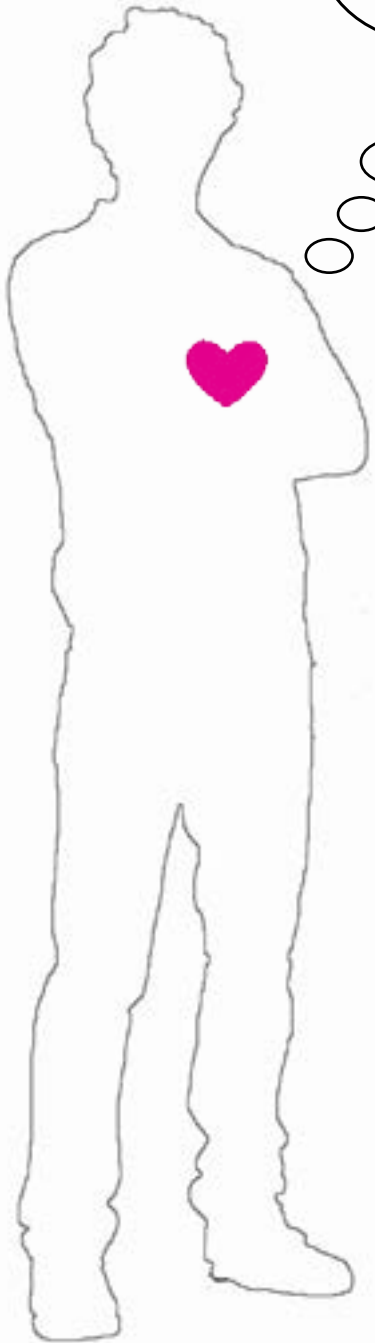
A few good resources include:

- [Value Proposition Design](#)
- [Buyer Personas](#)

The Buyer Persona book is especially helpful. We have used several suggestions from this resource.



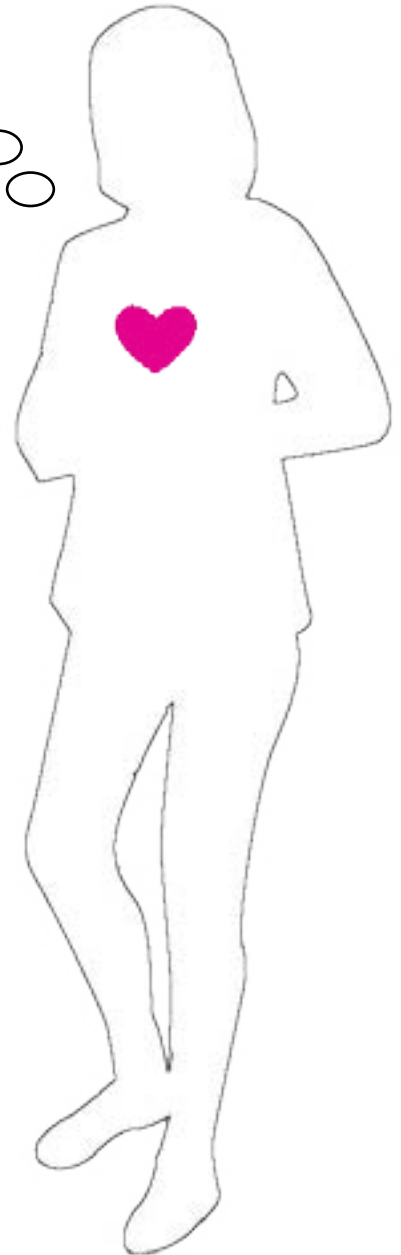
My top 3 problems



My greatest needs/wants



How I research before I buy





1 Interview past and prospective customers. Make sure they know that this is not a sales call.

2 Go to networking events and ask prospects about their problems, goals, perceptions, and challenges.

3 Attend industry events, join online forums to get involved in industry associations

4 Create a client advisory council and meet quarterly to discuss how they buy, learn their perceptions and goals.

5 Ask the sales team if they have found patterns in their interactions with customers.

5 ways to research your target personas



PERSONA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

BUYING JOURNEY

- Where or how do they start shopping?
- What question(s) do they ask when thinking about buying?
- What is the decision-making process?
- Who's involved in the decision?

PERCEPTIONS

- What are their beliefs and biases about what you sell or about your type of company/person?
- What are the top 3-5 most important factors or criteria they look for in a solution or provider when buying what you are selling?
- Why are those factors or criteria important to them?
- What are key acronyms or buzzwords they use?

TECHNOLOGY STATUS

- What applications, data or systems are critical to them delivering services/products to their customers?
- What are all the critical applications they use to run their business?
- Are they technology-savvy?

COMPETITION

- Who else is selling to them, and how are they selling it?
- Who do they compete with?

INFLUENCERS

- What trends are going on in their industry?
- What are the top 3-5 events they attend?
- What are the top 3-5 web sites they visit, or publications they subscribe to?
- Who are the key influential people in their industry that they respect and follow?

EMOTIONS

- What are they angry about or who are they angry at (can be government regulations, trends, other competitors, their clients, etc.)?
- What are they most afraid of?
- What are the top 3 biggest frustrations they have about their job/company overall?



MORE PERSONA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

IDEAL CUSTOMER

- Who is most likely to buy?
- What's their situation right now?
- What is the current market size you to sell to?
- Is it growing or shrinking, and why?

KNOWLEDGE

- Do the prospects already buy and/or understand what you sell?
- Would education be a deciding factor in purchasing?

DEMOGRAPHICS

- What industry association(s) do they belong to?
What's their average annual revenue?
- What's their annual growth rate?

JOB/ROLE

- What tasks does the stakeholder do day-to-day?
- What tasks do the people who will use the software do?
- How educated are the employees on the software?
- Are there hidden or unique needs for the business, such as data/customer analysis or graphics/marketing that the Microsoft solution could address?
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PROBLEMS AND EVENT TRIGGERS

- What are the top 3-5 problems or events that trigger your customers to start looking?
- What are their top 3 biggest problems that you can solve or impact?
- What have they typically tried to do to solve the problem in the past?
- Has it been successful? Why?
- What do they think the solution is?
- How would your ideal target client describe their problems or dissatisfactions?
- How would they articulate what they want instead?
- What are the key problems and disappointments they have with other vendors like you?
- What regulatory/government actions impact how they do business?
- What KPIs are they worried about?



CUSTOMER PERSONA LITE



Add a description such as 'IT Decision Maker'

Customer:

Vertical:

Healthcare	Manufacturing	Other
Professional Services	Retail	

Buying Stage:

Explore	Purchase	Renew
Evaluate	Expand	Advocacy

Tech knowledge:

Low Old tech	Average Office 2010	High Office 365
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Customer Pains:

This describes fears/frustrations/problems they are having

Customer Gains:

This describes what they need—and may be something they don't know they need if they are low tech.

Customer Summary:

Example: "Business decision maker in retail who needs to save time and get more data but has low tech knowledge and is just learning about cloud."