



So today we have a gift for you ... a little sample of what you'll need to know when you step into the role of Content Marketer.

The job of the content marketer is pretty simple: to learn what the customer wants ... and give it to them.

One of the best ways to drill down into the mind of the customer and put yourself in their shoes is to create a Customer Persona.

This tool is so important ... and useful in so many ways ... that content marketing legend Russ Henneberry, creator of AWAI's Content Marketing Mastery Certification program, has dubbed it "the Swiss army knife of marketing".

And the Customer Persona is such a crucial tool that companies will pay big fees just for someone to create one for them.

Why?

One study reported by ContentWRX shows that 71.7% of people feel that the content they read is too general, and not relevant.

And a separate study showed that companies who created more personalized content outsell the companies that have not by more than 30%.

Creating content that feels more personalized to the customer requires a knowledge of the customer's needs and wants on a deeper level. Understanding the frustrations of the customer, and where they are in the buying journey, is critical to reaching and communicating well with that customer.

This customer connection may be the most important part of the entire process.

After all, if the content isn't appealing to the customer, they'll simply move on the next shiny piece of content they can find.

When done properly, the customer will feel like every piece of content was created just for them.

And the Customer Persona is crucial when creating this highly targeted content.

## The Customer Persona can help your content stand out in a crowded space

Did you know that there are currently 4.4 million blog posts published every single day?

There are more than 500 million stories shared on Instagram daily.

And the number of emails sent per day has reached an estimated 320 billion.

And Facebook users watch 100 million hours of video content on Facebook per day.

We are bombarded by content every single day. There is so much information coming at us from every direction that we are forced to filter out anything that doesn't seem to pertain to us.

And if the content doesn't connect with the customer right away, it will probably be ignored.

This is where the Customer Persona can help turn your content from something that gets lost in the crowd to something that shines brightly and catches the attention of the customer you want to reach.

So how do you build the Customer Persona?

### Start with a template

A quick search on Google will turn up dozens of templates for creating your Customer Persona. There are free and paid options from multiple providers. Check them out to see which one fits your needs.

Or you can try one of our free downloads. They are designed by professional marketers to help you organize the information about your customer in an efficient, easy-to-understand format.

Now, let's turn that template into a persona ...

## First, meet your customer



So many content creators seem to assume that all customers are created equal. After all, a great product should appeal to everyone, right?

But if you think about it, you may not have the same wants or needs as a 61-year-old grandfather who is nearing retirement, or a 23-year-old new mother.

You may not be in the same stage of the buyer's journey as the busy entrepreneur or the recent college graduate.

And even if you happen to be exactly like the customer you are targeting, you can make the content you're publishing feel like a solution that has been personalized just for that customer ... with the help of the Customer Persona.

By the time you ask these questions, the customer will start to feel like an old friend.

The most obvious starting point is to ask your client (the provider of the product or service that you are marketing).

Is there a particular group of buyers the client wants to reach? Are they just beginning to look for solutions, or are they ready to buy?

Is there a new product or service your client wants to offer to current customers?

Is the customer the same as the person the product or service is created for? (For example, the customer for a tutoring service may be the parent of the child the service is intended for.)

Once you know the customer segment you'll be targeting, you'll want to ...

## Name that Buyer



Creating a descriptive name for your Customer Persona will help make the buyer feel like a real person.

Once the “person” has a name, it’s easier to appeal to the needs, wants and desires of the potential customer.

Keep the name short, but descriptive. Writing for “Jim the Jogger” – a 30-year-old accountant who has recently started jogging in the morning before going to work - will be much easier than writing for “someone who may need some sports gear”.

Some writers even find it helpful to put a picture of a person who matches the description on their Customer Persona.

Get to know the buyer. Spend some time thinking about this customer, and how they will feel when they consume the content you create. Picture yourself looking him or her in the eye as you write.

Make “Jim the Jogger” (or “Alice the Accountant” or “Banker Bob”) as real as you can in your imagination.

Now you can begin to uncover any information that the client may have about the customer. Ask the questions, even if you think you already know the answers.

Find out:

- Who currently needs or wants the product or service?
- Who has purchased the product or service in the past?
- Are there reviews available from past customers?
- Can you get permission to interview past customers?
- Do you see any comments and insights on your client's social media accounts?

It may be helpful to talk with your client's customer service representatives or sales representatives, if possible. They speak with customers and prospective customers daily, and they'll be able to share some valuable insight into the challenges, needs and wants of the customer.

They are also an excellent source for learning about the values of the customer, as well as the features of the product or service that the customer likes the best.

Starting to picture the customer yet?

## Become an undercover agent



The next step is to “spy” a little bit on the competition.

Does any other company offer something similar to your client's product or service? Can you find online reviews about the competitor's product or service? What did they like, and what were the disappointments.

And one of our favorite go-to sources for information is Amazon.

You can find so much valuable insight by checking out the reviews of similar products.

If you are marketing a service, it can be especially helpful to check out the books section of Amazon. If a problem exists, someone else has probably found a way to solve it. See if you can find books that address the same problem that your client's product or service solves.

Use the "Look Inside" feature to take a peek at the Table of Contents. How did the author try to connect with customers?

The Customer Reviews section is a treasure chest of information. Read the 5-star reviews and the 1-star reviews. Why?

- You'll see the language the customer uses.
- What goal was the customer trying to reach?
- Did the competitor's product/service meet the goal, or did it disappoint?
- You'll learn what resonated with customers (and what didn't).

And you might notice that the customer is begging for something more ... perhaps something that your client's product or service can provide.

## Are you listening?

Are you noticing a common theme with potential customers? Are there questions that they are asking over and over? Do they seem to share a common problem, fear or frustration?

If you're encountering these words you've found someone with a problem:

- "I wish ..."
- "I'm worried ..."
- "I need ..."
- "If only ..."
- "I hate ..."
- "I don't trust ..."

Why is the potential customer using these words? Whatever the problem, there is a reason it's bothering the customer.

"I wish I knew how to invest in the stock market ..."

"I need a new car ..."

"I'm worried that my business isn't doing well enough ..."

But what is the customer really saying? Can you add a "so that ..."

"I wish I knew how to invest in the stock market *so that* I could make my savings grow for retirement."

Are they expressing fear?

"I'm worried that my business isn't doing well enough, and *I'm afraid* I could lose everything."

Or "I need a new car *so that* I can get to work, but *I'm afraid* I'll buy the wrong one."

Understanding what the customer is really saying when they state a need or a want will make it easier to present your client's product or service as the right solution for the customer.

Do you feel like you're inside the mind of the customer yet?

**Now, get out your shovel**





It's time to "dig" a little deeper.

Is there a common trait that your target customers share?

- Are they raising kids?
- Is career advancement important to them?
- Are they concerned about their health?
- Is there a common belief or value that unites them?
- Do they dream of being rock stars?

Are they often members of the same types of organizations or clubs?

Are there apps or software programs that are popular with your target customers?  
(These can reveal other needs or problems the customer has attempted to solve.)

What are their interests and hobbies? Are they consumers of podcasts, magazines, or streaming services?

What types of books do they read? Do they like to cook, or are they busy professionals with no time?

Do they live in the suburbs? Do they travel? Are they pet lovers?

What do these answers tell you about the buyer's motivation?

Dig as deep as you can to get into the mindset of your potential customer. Try to understand exactly how your client's product or services will provide a solution to the customer.

Now put the information you've collected into your Customer Persona template.

Get to know it. Understand it. Talk to it, if you want, and imagine what the customer might say to you.

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Now comes the next step: creating content that will speak directly to your Customer Persona.

And now that you've "met" your target customer, the content you create will be far more effective than ever!

Go ahead and try it ...

You'll be the content marketing hero your client has been dreaming of.