

## Building a Buyer Profile to Create Great Web Content

Web content is like any other marketing content- it must be clear, targeted and solve the potential buyer's problem

**W**riting marketing content for websites is no different than any other written work, marketing or otherwise. To be successful—that is engaging enough to read—it must have a goal and an audience in mind.

Successful writers ask two questions before sitting down to write:

- who is my audience
- what do I want them to do (be informed, be entertained, or act in a certain way)?

Writing without a goal and *specific* audience in mind hoping to please anyone or everyone that happens by creates unfocused drivel that pleases no one.

This same principle holds for writing marketing content for a website. No organization's goods or services will suit everyone so focusing your message specifically for your true potential buyers is the best strategy for creating engaging, successful content.

### Websites Need to Solve Problems

Most organization or business websites target their content to sell a product or service, and in doing so they miss their true marketing opportunity: **to solve the buyer's problem**; the problem that has them on the internet seeking a solution. Websites focused solely on selling also miss the opportunity to build relationships with potential clients and/or buyers.

A website (or blog) that offers information in a way that makes your organization the “go-to” expert builds trust with potential buyers. Giving away information needed to solve a problem may be the most direct route to a sale. Buyers may visit your site multiple times before deciding to buy. You may need different pages with information targeted for each step of their search or buying process. But when they're ready, they are committed buyers. No sales pitch necessary.

When preparing to market goods or services through your website, it is important to know

exactly who your audience is and what the problem or concern is that they need to resolve. If your content meets their initial needs, they will dig deeper into your site or contact you by email or phone for more help.

### Buyer Profiles—Your Website's BFFs

In order to properly focus your content, you must know your audience inside and out, forward and backward, and even upside down. Building a buyer profile will enable you to understand your audience clearly.

If you are targeting more than one type of buyer or audience, create a separate profile for each one and then segment them based on their needs and goals or concerns and problems so you can write content based on each segment's issues.

### How Many Profiles Do I Need?

As many as necessary. For example, a university will have several buyer profiles: potential students, potential students' parents, current students, current students' parents, alumni, local community, and friends/donors. Each profile requires information written with its specific interests, needs, and concerns in mind.

It is often helpful to give buyer profiles a name. Politicians do this well, for example Soccer Mom, Security Mom, and NASCAR Dad were some of the profile-personas politicians courted in elections over the last decade. Campaigns targeted specific messages to each of these profile personas to win votes. Though the practice can be politically divisive, as a marketing strategy it works.

### Targeted Audience + Goal = Great Content

Once you determine who your buyers are (your audience) and what problem they need to solve, decide what you want them to believe about your organization, product, or service (your goal).

Now you're ready to write content that gets results and engages your targeted audience of potential buyers to give them the information they need to choose you.

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### Questions to Ask when Creating a Buyer Profile

To create a buyer profile, answer the following questions with as much specificity as possible:

- Who is your buyer (sex, age, income, education level, location)?
- What are their goals and aspirations?
- What is important to them (be detailed)?
- What stresses or problems do they encounter and how can your product/service relieve them of their stress or solve their problem?
- What media do they rely on for answers to their problem?
- What words and phrases will they likely use when doing research on the Internet to solve their problem?
- Which search engines will they likely use?
- Do they use blogs, chat rooms, online news sites (if so, which ones)?
- What sorts of images and multi-media appeal to them?
- Do they prefer short, snappy sentences or longer, more detailed explanations?
- What print publications and websites do they read?
- How can you reach them?

Some ways to get the answers to these questions are:

- interview people (past, present, and potential clients/buyers) who fit the demographic in your target market
- brainstorm with colleagues
- do internet research on your closest competition

Being clear about the needs of your specific buyer(s) and focusing the content on your website or blog only on the subset of people who are truly potential customers or clients (information you've learned from your buyer profile), will yield better results than an untargeted, shotgun marketing approach that only seeks to sell product.

*Many thanks to David Meerman Scott and his book, The New Rules of Marketing & PR (first edition) for the essence of the buyer persona questions*

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