

Understanding Audiences: The Key to Your Marketing Campaign's Success

Marketing

Introduction

The key to a successful marketing campaign is knowing who your audience is and which outcomes they are trying to solve for, what motivates them to buy or take advantage of your offerings.

Targeted campaigns have much more success when you tailor the message to specific personas; for example, a business owner isn't interested in understanding feeds and speeds of the latest product you are offering, but instead will want to know how selling that new product can help them be more profitable or how it can help them expand their portfolio.

In this guide, we will give you simple steps to better understand audiences and buyer personas.

Components at a Glance

1. Conduct Market Research
2. Identify Your Buyers Personas
3. Create Content for Your Various Personas
4. Wrap-Up

The more you understand your target audience, the more effective your marketing strategy will be. Why? Because even the most expensive and innovative campaign won't catch the attention of your customers if it's not relevant to them.

If you don't know your audience inside and out, you can't be sure what mediums, platforms, and messaging will reach them most effectively. Having a complete picture of who you're marketing to means you can optimize your content to provide value, create a meaningful user experience, and ultimately gain loyal customers.

Here's three steps you can take to better understand your audiences—and in turn create a successful marketing campaign that enables you to meet your business goals!

Conduct Market Research

The first step towards understanding your audience involves conducting market research. While this may require some upfront investment, it will certainly pay off when the end result is a well-targeted and effective marketing campaign! The goal is to gather as much information as you possibly can about the various groups of consumers you want to target. It's no longer enough to just know basic demographics about your potential customers—having a complete picture of their opinions, personality traits, values, and interests will give you a competitive advantage in a world heavily saturated with advertisements. So how can you gather this information? Luckily, there are multiple approaches, and experimenting through trial and error to find which one best meets your goals is important. A great place to start the search for additional information is within your own organization. It's common for businesses to operate in silos, but various departments will have knowledge you can use to your advantage. For example, the sales team may have valuable insights into what potential customers are looking for, and the customer service department will know the most common concerns your consumers face.

After looking inward, you'll want to widen the search and participate in social listening. This involves monitoring social media activity to understand what customers are saying about your brand, competitors, and industry. You can use this information to identify trends, pain points, and expectations among your audiences. You'll also gain insights into what social networks your target audiences are most active on, the influencers they trust, and what types of content they find to be valuable and shareable.

You may also want to send out surveys or conduct focus groups with both existing and potential customers. Online surveys are a quick and low-cost way to get quantitative results from a large population, but they won't give you deep insights into respondent's personal experiences. While focus groups may be more time-consuming and costly, they will result in qualitative insights that are more specific and personal. You can use the information gathered in these surveys and focus groups to align your marketing campaigns with what your customers have expressed they want from you.

Identify Your Buyer Personas

Once you've gathered the market research necessary to have a complete understanding of your target audiences, you'll be able to build buyer personas. This is more than a simple buyer profile—it's essentially a mock-up of your ideal customer. Some businesses even view each buyer persona as a fictional character with their own name, career, family, and personality traits.

This helps make an abstract idea more concrete so you can actually picture and “talk to” your target customer. It’s perfectly okay to have multiple buyer personas—each will describe a different segment of the market you’re trying to target.

Once you have identified your buyer personas, you should write a detailed description for each. Include basic demographics, as well as any additional information gathered such as their interests, pain points, goals, and personality traits. Be incredibly specific and include quotes for each, which can be taken from the social listening, surveys, or focus groups you conducted. If you’re ever uncertain about what direction to take a marketing campaign or piece of content, you can refer back to them to answer the question, “What would a consumer in this buyer persona do?”

Now would also be a good time to start searching for and identifying influencers for each of your buyer personas. These are real people, not actors or employees, who have direct influence over your target audience. They can drastically increase the visibility of your brand and even impact purchase decisions. Each buyer persona will have their own set of influencers, whom you can identify through social listening or digital tools such as BuzzSumo.

Create Content for Your Various Personas

Now that you’re equipped with buyer personas, it’s time to create content that speaks their language. Marketing is not one size fits all—the exact same content or one big marketing campaign won’t be effective at reaching all of your buyer personas. Depending on your marketing budget and objectives, you can either tweak one piece of content or campaign to fit with your different buyer personas, or create completely separate ones for each.

For example, let’s say you want to create an infographic to target your buyer persona “Adam.” What social platform would Adam be most active on? What type of messaging and imagery would he respond to? What’s his education and income level? Refer back to your research and buyer personas to find out. This infographic could run on a different platform than the blog post you’ve created for buyer persona “Mary” and include a unique call to action. This will depend on the conversion you’re looking for from this type of customer, whether it be to make a purchase, sign up for an email list, or reach out to a salesperson for more info.

Be sure to refer back to your personas every single time you create a piece of content or run a marketing campaign. Think to yourself, “Does this content or marketing initiative align with the needs of the buyer persona we’re targeting?” If the answer is yes, continue! If you find yourself saying no, go back to your buyer persona description and readjust what feels off—you may realized you used the wrong tone in messaging, or were going to run the content on a platform that type of customer wouldn’t be using heavily.

Wrap-Up

Once you’ve conducted market research and identified strong buyer personas, you’ll be able to create well-targeted and efficient content. With an in-depth understanding of your target audiences, you’ll be on your way to conducting successful marketing campaigns that increase customer engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty!

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