

Are Buyer Personas Effective or Overrated?

Buyer personas are a popular go-to solution for not just content strategy but overall marketing direction. Like a solid [content strategy](#) itself, buyer personas are crafted using a mix of data science and intuition-- or so they should be.

Depending on the size and type of organization in question, marketers gravitate towards buyer personas to center a marketing strategy or particular campaign. However, many site owners tend to be hesitant to this approach and consider buyer personas overrated or not as reliable as a data science based approach like keyword mapping.

So, are buyer personas effective at building out a content strategy?

Yes, Buyer Personas Are Effective...

Research definitely says so: large and small companies alike tend to experience stronger sales than those that don't utilize personas of some type. But what does "getting to know your audience" really entail without making some kind of model regarding the content they're most likely to respond to? What would drive someone to buy your product? What can they also expect after purchase?

The prospect of creating buyer personas can be overwhelming if you're working with a limited budget or you haven't quite figured out how exactly you're going to sell the product. But essentially, you need an idea of the following to get started:

- **Markets.** A market is the actual location your prospects are located in. It can be as broad as a continent or as refined as a zip code.
- **Demographics.** These are characteristics of people that can be easily defined such as age, marital and family status, gender, and income level.
- **Psychographics.** Psychographics are much harder to define than demographics and depending on the product or campaign, may be what your personas or overall strategy are largely based on. Behaviors, values, circumstances, and preferences are all psychographics and important to note in any campaign.

You can create as many or few personas as needed and there may be some overlap. But in general, the psychographics like behaviors and preferences may split apart what seems like a monolithic target customer.

...So Long As They Have Incredibly Strong Targeting

What makes buyer personas ineffective for many organizations are two key factors: [confusing target audience with targeted buyers](#), and not doing enough research to back up the personas created.

Relying on markets and demographics alone is too broad to produce personas that will be highly effective. Your ideal buyers actually aren't a monolith and it's really that psychographic aspect that will set them apart: what kind of behaviors do they engage in now, and what kind of content would be relevant based on those behaviors? Would they change after purchasing?

There are many methods to getting that necessary market, demographic, and psychographic information such as analytics, social media observations, as well as formal surveying and focus groups. However, taking note of behaviors, values, and other characteristics that are more difficult to define is ultimately what creates an effective buyer persona rather than relying on markets and demographics alone.

Buyer Personas Play a Key Role in Marketing Automation

[Personalization and segmentation paving the way for success](#) with digital marketing campaigns and even best practices. Buyer personas come in handy for content planning purposes, but also for [automated marketing](#) and the two can go hand-in-hand.

Depending on the level of marketing resources that you're working with, you may be more reliant on scientific approaches like keyword research when it comes to content creation. But when it comes to successful automation campaigns, buyer personas really shine.

Having solid buyer personas helps with segmenting customers based on both easily measurable characteristics like markets and demographics, as well as behaviors and types of products purchased. With this segmentation, automated marketing is a snap to execute! Content can be created based on what each segment would find the most relevant for their preferences and purchasing habits.

Buyer personas definitely aren't overrated. They can seem that way if you haven't had success with them due to not creating adequate segmentation resulting from laser-focused targeting. Remember that your audience won't always be the target buyer and vice versa in order to create personas that best reflect who is most likely to make a purchase.