

## How to Refine Your Target Market and Increase Sales

Knowing your target audience is the key to small business growth. Your target audience, however, is an ever-changing one. It requires refinement over time. Without it, you cannot ensure you are reaching your most ideal audience as your business continues to evolve. If you notice slower growth than normal, sales declines, or simply wish to improve sales at any given time, try refining your target audience.

Here are three highly effective ways to refine your target audience and improve sales.

### Perform a Needs Analysis

Every small business is solving a problem or addressing a need. What are the needs your target audience requires help with or struggles to meet? Each of your prospective customers is searching for value. They seek solutions. They want products that will do something for them. How are you addressing their needs? Do you feel confident that what you're offering is what they need? Are you communicating the value of your products and services effectively?

Perhaps there are prospective buyers outside of your initial assessment who can use what you're selling in a different way. Or, are there some people in your target audience who do not truly belong there despite your desire to market to them? Sometimes, the audience who makes the most sense on paper is not actually the right fit.

Take a look at your current customer list and try to identify patterns and trends. Is there a certain industry you have begun seeing more traction with than others? Does a specific feature speak to one type of customer over another? If so, how can you leverage that in your marketing? This type of exercise is a great one and may uncover some valuable metrics for you to leverage as your small business grows.

### It's All About Location, Location, Location!

Through the internet, we can reach anyone, anywhere, and even any time. Therefore, we feel as though location is often irrelevant – but is that the truth? Strategically, it actually makes sense to refine our audience based on location to a certain extent. This is even more so the case in terms of what social platforms we use, events we attend, and settings we select in our ad campaigns.

Start by checking any relevant analytics like Google Analytics and AdWords to see who is engaging with your brand. Are they located in the United States or across the globe? Are they primarily coming to your site through a single social media platform or several different ones? Then check your competitors' sites. Are they on the same social networks? Do they offer multiple languages on their site?

Finally, think about mobile versus desktop settings. Is your target audience one that shops on the go, or are they coming to you from a fixed location? This may impact the design of your website, emails, and other marketing materials. The trick is to evaluate your current audience and prospective buyers through any data you have access to in order to reach them in the most effective way.

### Leverage Your Experience

Your knowledge and experience is a powerful tool. Despite all of the research and analysis you can do as a small business owner, your understanding of your target audience is certainly worth something. You began your business for a reason. You are solving a pain point for people, so you have to have some idea of who they are and what they want.

Consider this when refining your target audience. What does your true demographic look like? Did you think it was more or less broad than it actually is? Has your ideal customer evolved with your business? Are your unique differentiators still unique? Do you have additional differentiators that your current customers have helped you identify?

Do not be afraid to use your current customers a bit more in this process, too. Offer a gift card in exchange for their participation in a brief survey. Gauge their current preferences, or features or additional products and services they need that you may be able to offer. Think outside of the box. They are an incredible resource and source of inspiration for you as your company continues to change and evolve.

Source: Justine Beauregard, Mirelle Marketing