



How to Narrow Your Target Audience

By now you're well aware that content is king. However, for content to successfully reign over your marketing program, you must have a clear understanding of your target audiences.

Taking the first steps in defining, and refining, your target audiences is critical to any marketing strategy, and will drive everything from content creation to new business outreach to product development. So, where do you start?

Define

Audiences such as “homeowners,” “moms,” “teenagers” and “Hispanics” are too broad ... one common trait or ethnicity does not define an entire group. Nor will one piece of content appeal to the masses. Narrowly define your audience by considering demographic information such as:

- Age
- Relationship status: Married, single, in a relationship, widowed
- Children or without? If with children, what ages? A new mom has a different world view than one with high school-aged children.
- Education level
- Geographic region
- Income
- Employment status: Unemployed, part-time, full-time
- Religion

Segment

You'll likely uncover multiple demographic segments within each broad audience. For example, the “homeowner” audience may be segmented into different cities and further by income and family status. Each segment may have different information needs and communications preferences.

Personify

Once you've identified segments, it's time to create personas. Like it sounds, a persona “personifies” your audiences by adding psychographic data (personality, values, opinions, attitudes, interests and lifestyles) to your existing demographic data.

By having a deeper understanding of your audience, you can better create relevant messages (and content). Here's an example persona:

Mary is a 35-year-old married mother of two children under the age of five. She lives in a Cincinnati eastside suburb and works full-time as a sales manager. Time management is critical. Her mornings start early. She is checking email before the kids wake up, getting kids dressed and fed, packing lunches and fighting traffic to get to daycare. Once she arrives at work, she spends her day in meetings, and then eats lunch at her desk while doing a little online shopping. Once she leaves work, she is back on mom duty, making dinner and carving out family time before bath and bed. After the kids are in bed, she enjoys a glass of wine with her spouse, watches comedies on Netflix or scans social media on her iPad, preferably Pinterest or Facebook. Weekends are spent running errands and connecting with other parents at t-ball games or at neighborhood block parties.

Target

Once a persona has been created, it's time to pinpoint the best ways to target said persona. For Mary, our sample persona from above, it's likely not with broadcast television or print media, though perhaps through social media or online. Since she has little spare time, Mary is likely looking for short reads that are packed with helpful tips or advice. She spends a lot of time in her car, which makes advertising on radio or streaming music platforms solid options. She appreciates humor, so content could be a bit more playful. Lastly, other moms are likely important influencers ... easily sharable content and testimonials are key.

Take a look at your content with a fresh set of eyes. Has it been created with a target audience in mind? Is it being distributed via the right channel and at the right time for said audience? Are there ways to take existing content and produce multiple versions to increase its relevancy for different target audiences? A quick audit of your existing materials can provide a jumping off point for perfecting your target audiences.