



PENNSYLVANIA VEGETABLE MARKETING & RESEARCH PROGRAM

Build Personas & Serve Your Customers in the Best Possible Way

What is a customer persona?

It is a fictitious model of an ideal customer. It generally includes demographics (age, gender, location, and occupation) as well as psychographics (motivations, likes, dislikes, and pain points).

Why do you need them?

“Some 90 percent of respondents to a 2017 survey said that they find personalization appealing, and 80 percent said that they would be more likely to do business with a company if it offers personalized experiences, according to [“The Power of Me: The Impact of Personalization on Marketing Performance,”](#) a 2018 report from Irving, Texas-based digital marketing firm Epsilon. Moreover, consumers who believe personalized experiences are very appealing are 10 times more likely to be a brand’s most valuable customer — those expected to make 15-plus transactions in one year. And those respondents who believe that companies are doing very well on offering personalized experiences shop more than 3x more frequently.”

Where do I start?

You may already have data collected on your customers. Exercise caution in using data from platforms that can’t track whether a final purchase was made. While data on your audience, regardless of their purchase behavior is not useless, if you utilize e-commerce, online transactions, or record consumer sales in any way, this would be the best place to start.

I have data. How do I look at it?

You want to analyze the data with the intent of identifying different purchasing patterns (see examples below). Digital or not, you need to think of the people you (or your employees) can personally recognize from your current customer base and select individuals who would serve as the “representative” of a type of persona or group of potential customers. Some of these may technically be an estimate if you don’t have the reports to back your decisions up but they’ll likely still be a fair representation of a type of customer if the person choosing them has their finger on the pulse of your operation and sales.

What are some of the purchasing patterns I should look for?

Consider choosing customers based on the following behavior (try to create your own criteria to reflect your unique operation, too):



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- Makes the most valuable purchases.
- Makes the most consistent purchases (still active).
- Made consistent purchases (no longer active).
- Regularly purchases your most profitable products.
- Made one purchase only.
- Abandons cart.
- Visits site (track via email communications) but never purchases.
- Visits and/or makes a purchase for the first time.

I've identified the representatives of my customer personas. Now what?

Now that you've identified the individuals who will serve as the best representatives of a whole customer persona, it's time to contact them and extract data from their responses that will help to guide how you market and communicate to an entire customer group that would display similar behavior and characteristics as the representative. Again, depending on how you operate, this survey may be done in person, via mail, e-mail, social media, etc.

What should I ask them?

This can vary depending on many factors. You should really weave the uniqueness of your operation into every step of the customer persona process, including the survey or interview, especially at the psychographics portion. Demographics should be fairly standard, although you may choose to eliminate some for the sake of completion rate (longer survey = lower completion rate). To clarify, demographics explain "who" your buyer is, while psychographics explain "why" they buy. Here are some questions to consider and help get you started:

Demographics

1. In what state or U.S. territory do you live?
2. In what zip code is your home located?
3. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other (specify)
4. Which category includes your age? (*consider categorizing them internally by generation i.e. GenX or Millennial and use that to seek additional data from credible articles, reports and statistics*)
 - a. 17 or younger
 - b. 18-20
 - c. 21-29
 - d. 30-39
 - e. 40-49
 - f. 50-59
 - g. 60 or older
5. What is the highest level of schooling you completed?



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- a. Less than high school degree
 - b. High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
 - c. Some college but no degree
 - d. Associate degree
 - e. Bachelor degree
 - f. Graduate degree
6. What is your job title?
7. What is your total household income?
- a. \$0 to \$9,999
 - b. \$10,000 to \$24,999
 - c. \$25,000 to \$49,999
 - d. \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - e. \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - f. \$100,000 to \$124,999
 - g. \$125,000 to \$149,999
 - h. \$150,000 to \$174,999
 - i. \$175,000 to \$199,999
 - j. \$200,000 and up
 - k. Prefer not to answer
8. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or some other race?
- a. White
 - b. Black or African-American
 - c. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - f. From multiple races
9. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?
- a. Married
 - b. Widowed
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Separated
 - e. In a domestic partnership or civil union
 - f. Single, but cohabiting with a significant other
 - g. Single, never married

Behavior & Psychographics (consider going “off script” here in an interview format, as a more informal conversation)

1. When you’re not sleeping or working, how do you spend most of your time?
2. How did you hear about our company?
3. What do you like most about our products and services?
4. What are some of your common life worries?
5. What are some of your life goals (short or long term)?
6. What is your opinion on the nation’s current economic status?
7. What steps do you take to maintain a healthy lifestyle?
8. Where do you typically go for information?
9. Would you consider yourself a political activist?
10. What is your average attitude toward life?
11. What factors are most important to you when you make the decision to purchase?
12. Where else do you regularly shop?



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How do we identify the personas?

Give names to each persona. Adding a name will humanize the persona. You can also use the name internally as organizational shorthand for this very specific target.

How do we organize the personas?

Organize data and characteristics with one page or tab for each persona. [Use this template](#). There are many more [available on the internet](#). This article by Optinmonster is quite helpful:

<https://optinmonster.com/how-to-create-a-concrete-buyer-persona-with-templates-examples/#templates>

Remember

The first draft is NEVER the final draft. This is a living document that you will continuously update over time as you learn more about your customers.