

Personas and product positioning

Today's to-do list

We will do a bit of market research. We are going to focus on customer personas and funnels. It's about how people look for and use the information in front of them and how it can help you create better sites.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this session, you will

- Understand customer personas
- Identify ways to create a better visitor journey
- Know what moments are and how they affect your sales funnel.

Personas

As a web designer, you might not think it's relevant to you to run market research on your client's business. That's for big companies with big budgets, right? Nope.

Every business needs to understand its customer base, its competitors, what the market is like and what new opportunities are available in it.

Basic market research questions any business should ask itself include:

How big is the market?

Who are my competitors?

What market share do they have?

What are my competitors' products like compared to mine?

What opportunities are there for growth in that market?

What are my customers like?

What would my customers be willing to pay for products?

How can I attract new customers?

How can I reconnect with my old customers?

Now you look at it, it looks obvious, doesn't it? These questions offer key insights for any business on where customers are, and how they interact with the brand or business.

We aren't going to go into depth on market research and the data you need to collate, that a different Skills Bootcamp. We are going to take a look at customer personas and how their demographics will impact the way they collect and use information online.

Different people buy in different ways. It doesn't matter if they are buying shoes, chocolate or a conservatory, each type of audience will go about that journey in a slightly different way. Understanding that journey and where people drop in and out of it will help you create a more effective website.

A Persona in marketing is that key customer information. They help you create that marketing message, what to write, what will appeal to them, how to talk to them and how to drive them to buy your product. From our point of view in Web Dev we need to think about the journey too. How are they looking for us, what route are they going to take through the site, and how can I make that easier to navigate? We can group people into basic target markets, and bundle them all together, but are we going to give them

everything they need in the way they need it? Have a look at my little example on the screen, get my point?

Our demographics can only take us so far, then we need to look deeper to get real insights. We need to take the information we already have and build on it.

To create our Persona – our business customer/end-user we need to look in detail at how we can find and attract them. Who exactly is our market? Can we expand and tap into other markets and customer bases?

Trying to target everyone results in targeting no one effectively.

There are lots of elements to help build up a good, in-depth persona.

Think and Feel – What really matters to these people? What do they worry about, and what do they aspire to?

Goes a long way to helping us be found and making sure the information we are putting on our website is what matters to the viewer rather than us.

See – What is their environment like, and who are their friends? Where do they hang out and look for information? Do we need to be mobile-friendly, social sharing, and ask for recommendations?

Gains – What do they desire and what do they need? That's going to help us plan our content and the site journey, is it a quick fix with an easy route from Google to cart or are they researching and asking questions?

Pains – What are their frustrations, and what obstacles are in their way to stop them from buying? We need to make sure that our site relieves some of these frustrations either by the information we are providing or the ease of use of the whole system.

Say and Do – Their behaviour, the things they do, how they appear and the attitude they have. Just like our gains, it's a quick fix like finding the information easily or the research they do before they commit.

I really like these persona examples from a SurveyMonkey article on using customer personas. There is a link to it in your useful links doc. They are not fully formed personas but good starting points to categorise sets of people.

1. **The Value Hunter** is looking for the best deal. They respond to marketing that promotes a compelling value proposition with the benefits of your products. Coupons, flash sales, and exclusive offers appeal and create a sense of urgency to buy.
2. **Researchers** take their time learning about your products. They respond to reviews and case studies that build trust in your brand with social proof.
3. **The Brand Devotee** is a loyal brand customer. They know your products, are repeat customers, and often are brand ambassadors. Appeal to them with an engaging customer experience and a loyalty program.

4. **Social Butterflies** are the customers who like to share their finds with friends and family. Place links for social sharing prominently on your website for ease of use.
5. **The Replenisher** is an avid repeat customer. To keep them on board, you need to offer convenient, personalised reordering experiences. This can include a subscription service or free shipping.
6. **The Mobile Shopper** is on the go and makes purchases on their mobile device. They need a convenient, streamlined buying process. Ensure your website is mobile-friendly.
7. **The Gifter** buys for friends and family. If you sell products that appeal to this type of buyer, focus on the value and benefits of gifting. Offer gift guides, gifting services, and promotions.

Creating a customer persona is fundamental to working out your product positioning. The examples from Survey Monkey show quite clearly that these categories of people look for things and approach their buying from very different places. Knowing who those people are and understanding where they get their information is knowing where to be found and what they want from our website.

Product Positioning

Product/service positioning can make or break a business. Get it wrong and it's expensive and damaging to sales – think a hog roast stand at a vegan food festival. Get it right and it can be lucrative and self-charging. Thinking ahead and identifying the needs and desires of customers is the key to being successful.

We also need to look at the product. The people are important, but we need to think carefully about what we are selling, we use a similar process when we are looking at e-commerce and the best platforms to use to sell from.

Where does your product sit price-wise? Is it a premium product or a lower price? Is it high quality or lower quality? Where does that sit you against your competitors? What marketplaces do they use to sell from? Product positioning can have an impact of the look and style of the site and where its promoted meaning when we create our initial plan, we need to be considering how this is all going to work, which platform is best for our customer type and what functionality we need to include.

We need a strategy for the website. Knowing where it is going in both the short and long term will help you define how you are going to build, promote and maintain it.

To create a good overall strategy, you need to ask questions like:

Where are you heading? – Your shorter-term goals 3, 6 or 12 months

Where are you heading? – Your long-term goals in 3-5 years

What is your vision for the business?

What are your objectives – what do you want and need to achieve?

The client's idea of what they want from a website now can be totally different from where they want to be in 3 years. As the designer that can leave you with massive headaches and potentially complicated conversations in the future. Giving it all a bit more thought at the

start, you can future-proof the site and make sure it can expand to give you all the client's requirements in the years ahead.

Media & Moments

Let's finish by looking at how we can adapt this information. Let's just touch on media and moments, although these are more of a set of considerations for a full marketing strategy, they shouldn't be overlooked from a design point of view. Remember you can do all the marketing and social media in the world but if that final link in the chain is broken then it's all wasted. We can have all the clever stuff going on to draw visitors to the site, but if the information they need or the route to buy is too difficult they will leave and go somewhere else. We need to be just as aware as web designers of these moments and how people journey through the buying cycle as any social media manager.

We have what we called media types: earned, paid and owned. All these have benefits and contribute towards the marketing strategy. The idea is not to pick one and just use that, but to use them together like ingredients to bake the perfect cake.

Earned Media is essentially word of mouth. Reviews on sites like Trip Advisor, recommendations on Facebook or it might be utilising influencers and bloggers.

Owned Media is anything you can control, part of your brand. Blogs on your website, your social media, video, and employee stories.

Paid Media is anything you pay for, sponsored posts, social ads, pay-per-click, sponsorship, and paid ambassadors.

These elements should be used together, they should overlap. One helping the other. It's all about gaining exposure and brand awareness. A good content strategy on its own is pointless without a good SEO strategy. It's down to you as to where you want to focus your efforts and budget, once you have worked out where your customers are and how to reach them you can decide which of these media types are going to be the most relevant and in what order of priority. Making sure they are landing in the right places to find the right piece of information.

Micro-Moments

Micro-moments are device-driven, intent-rich moments when people decided they want to do something.

Google calls micro-moments, "**the I want-to-know moments, I want-to-go moments, I want-to-do moments, and I want-to-buy moments**" and says that they're "game changers for both consumers and brands."

I want-to-know moments – when someone is exploring or researching but not necessarily in purchase mode.

I want-to-go moments – when someone is looking for a local business or considering buying at a nearby location.

I want-to-do moments – when someone wants to try something new or needs help to complete a task.

I want-to-buy moments – when someone is ready to make a purchase and might need help deciding what to buy or how to buy it.

We know our audiences are unique and each specific audience will have its own set of micro-moments. Understanding your customer's audience and their journey will help you identify what those moments might be and ensure you are there to target those questions. It's estimated that a third of smartphone shoppers buy from a brand that wasn't their first choice because that company/website gave them the information they needed when they needed it. Ultimately, you want to be in the right place, at the right time.

The Customer Cycle

Any research into your customers is valuable, what they like, where they are, and how to attract them. Every transaction has a lifecycle, from the initial idea – that I want-to-know moment to the money landing in your account. It is important to understand this lifecycle so you can target your efforts at not just making the initial sale but turning those one-time buyers into loyal customers.

1. Customer decides they want to buy something. They consider various brands based on their existing knowledge and exposure to recent touchpoints.
2. They research and review adding and subtracting brands as they go.
3. They pick the brand they want at the moment of purchase.
4. After purchase they form expectations based on the experience to help them decide on the next part of the journey – repeat purchase or new brand.

These steps from how they find you to how good your customer service is all need to be considered. Acquiring the sale is maybe the simplest part, the information you offer, how easy it is to buy. Being in the right place when they want to buy.

Managing those after-sale expectations is harder but just as important. It is much easier to sell to an existing customer than to find new ones. You want to make sure the journey is smooth and hassle-free. Do you make it easy to re-order, do you personalise the experience and give them recommendations based on their initial purchase? How do you inspire loyalty? Do you ask them to follow your socials, chat with them and reply to comments, offers and discounts?

Allowing your customers to take their market research further and follow up with customer surveys and feedback. Use their experiences to tailor the customer journey. It all creates one continuous cycle of research and sales to evolve and grow a business.

Practical Brief

For the rest of the session, we are going to do some planning and design. I want you to take the four moments “**the I want-to-know moments, I want-to-go moments, I want-to-do**

moments, and I want-to-buy moments” and think about how you could target the viewers in each moment. You can use Canva or Jamboard or just good old-fashioned pen and paper, but I would like you to draft up a layout for each of the four and explain where you would expect the traffic to come from and where you would send the on to from that page. It might be a product from a Facebook ad that you create a landing page for with a special offer. Or it might be an information page with FAQ and downloads. You can use the Stir Well product from our first sessions or you can design page for your portfolio site its totally up to you.

What we want to see:

- An understanding of the customer cycle and how it will impact the site structure
- Tell us how you are going to target these visitors and the journey they might take
- Tell us which articles/resources you used. You can use as many as you like and find others you think will help you too. If you find anything else to help, just share the URLs with us so we can see your research.

There is no set worksheet for this task, just email your notes to dms4alltrainers@gmail.com. You have until the end of the session to ask me anything and then you are free to carry on working on your own.

Extra help

If you need any help with anything from today's session, feel free to message me in the WhatsApp group. If you have any other issues or problems related to the course or the tools speak to Andrew and Irfana, they are here to help you.