



Build an awesome Buyer Persona

Learn how to interview buyers to gain insights that help you attract and convert more customers.

Module 2
Exercise 2.7

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1. Introduction



Listen to customers and you'll build insightful Buyer Personas

How often do you have the opportunity to listen to your customers describe their problems? And, do you know what questions to ask to make this conversation valuable for you and them?

The art and science of asking probing questions in an interview, and listening carefully to customer responses, is the core to creating an **insightful Buyer Persona**.

Who wouldn't want to know what buyers are looking for, what they consider when signing a new contract or why they were dissatisfied with previous providers? And suppose these actionable details are things that neither you, your sales people, or the competition has ever heard before.

Hearing and relating customer stories is the foundation of understanding them as a buyer.

Create a Buyer Persona that works

The Buyer Persona concept has been around for many years, yet it's not always used effectively. Some businesses over do it, segmenting into too many personas they could not effectively market to. Or, they create ones that don't capture the important stories of how customers make buying decisions, so they are worthless.

A valuable Buyer Persona is built around the story behind customer considerations that reveal **Buyer Insights** into their expectations and concerns as they decide whether to do business with you, a competitor, or do nothing at all.

You may be weighing up whether the time and effort of interviewing and collating verbatim quotes to add to your Buyer Persona will be a valuable exercise. Well, relying on data, surveys or group forums will only tell part of the story. And using your intuition or guesswork for your marketing decisions isn't a smart choice either.



"When Buyer Personas evolve from authentic stories from actual buyers...then, and only then, can you truly stand in your buyers shoes and consider the buying decisions from the buyer's point of view."

Adele Revella, leading authority on Buyer Personas and CEO of Buyer Persona Institute

We can't tell you what you will find out from your buyers, but we can tell you this is based around a proven methodology developed by Adele Revella in her book *Buyer Personas - How to gain insights into your customer's expectations, align your marketing strategies, and win more business.*

Adele goes beyond a typical **Buyer Profile** – that of using geographic, demographic and psychographic information to describe a fictional archetype of a buyer. Although these are useful segmentation tools, her premise is that real insights that capture buyer expectations and the factors that influence them, can only be gained by doing non scripted one-on-one interviews over a phone call.

The 5 Drivers for Buying Insights

Extracting these expectations and influence factors from phone interviews is accomplished by using the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights as a guide. These are things you need to know about your buyers as they make a decision – one that you want to influence.

When you combine **Buyer Profile** information with **Buying Insights** you create an insightful Buyer Persona that guides the decisions you need to make to win more business.



1. Introduction



An interview technique that reveals real insights

In traditional market research, interviews are conducted as part of a “qualitative” study. A researcher would spend time to make sure the wording or order of questions doesn’t affect the responses. However, the interview methodology described in this guide is uniquely different.

There is no script to follow or prepared questions in advance – although we have given some pointers on the types of probing questions to ask.

The objective is to listen as real buyers tell their own stories – to capture their mind-set in the act of making the decision you want to influence.

The idea is to hang on every word and encourage buyers to reveal exactly what they saw, heard and did as they decided which solutions to continue to evaluate, and which they decided to exclude. And, by asking probing questions you’ll learn amazing things that the buyer has not shared with anyone.

Interviews can reveal **Buyer Insights** such as:

- > Which buyers are receptive, and which will ignore you no matter what you say.
- > Which aspects of your solution are relevant to them, and which are irrelevant
- > What attitudes prevent buyers from considering your solutions
- > What resources your buyers trust as they evaluate their options
- > Which buyers are involved in the decision and how much influence they wield



How will a Buyer Persona help my business?

- **Marketing strategies** – understanding your buyers journey can help you prioritise activities and deliverables, thereby reducing the number of assets required
- **Effective Messaging** – buyer insights help you write marketing messages that are the crossroads between ‘what they want to hear’ and ‘what you want to say’. You increase your ability to cut through the flood of information they receive by telling them something specific that clearly delivers value.
- **Building trust** – by understanding your buyer, you can focus on creating useful information that builds trust and inspires buyers to initiate a relationship with you. Jay Baer (marketer and best selling author) once said *“There are two ways for companies to succeed in this era: Be amazing or be useful. The latter is much more reliable and viable”*.
- **Increase sales** – Since the GFC, the relationship based sales model has radically transformed. Those who succeed today are ‘Challenger’ salespeople who tailor their message to the customer’s specific needs, educating and teaching them new ways to their solve problems. Having real buyer insights can give your sales people an edge over your competition.
See: *The Challenger Sale* by Mathew Dixon
- **Product strategy** – have you ever added a feature or solution that you thought was a fantastic addition but didn’t increase sales? Building a Buyer Persona that includes perceptions, concerns and consequences can bring focus on how to persuade buyers that your new feature/solution will work for them.
- **More control over change** – with buyer knowledge and insights you have the power to quickly effect change in your business. All stakeholders would need to come on board and use this knowledge to guide messaging and align activities intended to convince buyers to choose your offering.

1. Introduction



What type of purchase is this methodology useful for?

Medium to high consideration purchases



This is useful for complex buying decisions that involve many variables and multiple influencers or decision makers. Any business that wants to understand the story behind a 'medium to high consideration'

solution will find this valuable. An example purchase for B2B could be an investment in capital equipment, or for B2C, the purchase of a new car.

Low consideration purchases



For businesses that have 'low consideration' solutions (e.g. buying a food snack from a grocery store) the interview method is probably not for you. Low consideration purchases are more impulsive and

reside in the realm of the unconscious and therefore more difficult to recount a 'quick' decision made.

People involved with medium to high consideration purchases evaluate and analyse more and therefore it would be easier for them to remember the steps they took to reach their conclusion.

Can I use the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights to help me understand buyers of low consideration purchases?

Although we do not recommend interviewing buyers of low consideration purchases, the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights can guide your thoughts about what buyers needs, desires or concerns are. Your answers will be based on your own knowledge or research, internal/external data, surveys, or any focus group results you may have.

The information will be used as reference in Module 3 – Stake your position.

Where do we start?

To make the decision to invest in this type of research is a mind-set change for any business.

We recommend you go slow and start with one critical project, goal or campaign that is of strategic importance to all stakeholders.

What will this guide explain?

- The 5 Drivers for Buying Insights to reveal what is important to your buyers and how you can use this information
- The best ways to find buyers to interview – how to approach them and how to prepare yourself for interviews
- How to interview using Adelle Revellas listening and probing technique
- How to collate, analyse and compile the most insightful interview content to use to build your Buyer Persona.



“ When you really listen to someone from their point of view, and reflect back to them that understanding, it's like giving them emotional oxygen. ”

Stephen Covey was an educator, businessman, keynote speaker and author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

2. The 5 Drivers for Buyer Insights



The “Know Your Customer” rule has been redefined

Customers are in control. They are choosing how and when to engage with your sales or marketing, so it is with some urgency that many businesses are being forced to rethink their approach to discovering and applying customer insights.



Customers now have resources and networks to make buying decisions without your input – and are happy to do so. This change in customer decision making is a game changer for businesses who are continuing to guess at what their customers want to hear.

Creating a Buyer Persona based on real insights, from real interviews is a valuable exercise you should consider.

The impact of the insights you gain is that the pieces of the puzzle of **how your marketing content can persuade a buyer to choose your solution** will fall into place.

The climate of social & tech change favours businesses that embrace a culture of buyer understanding, thus adapting to their needs

The goal of your Buyer Persona is simple:



- They become the centre of your universe, as opposed to your solution
- Everyone in your business aligns around what your buyer cares about
- Your marketing content is to the point without jargon, fluff or generalities and what the buyers want to hear
- Avoid reverse engineering, where the ‘pain points’ of buyers are generated from the features of your solution rather than from buyer’s perspective

2. The 5 Drivers for Buyer Insights



Does this sound familiar...

- > Your marketing content always starts without the buyers perspective – you start with what you know, your product.
- > You decide that you want to highlight the latest and greatest features that have been put into the product.
- > Your team is aligned around the pain points your product solves and how it fares against the competition.
- > You write a well-written piece that focuses on the pains the product solves and everyone loves the gorgeous layout of your brochure/landing page/ad.

Sounds good? Not so much...

When pain points are generated from the features of your product, your content is written from **YOUR PERSPECTIVE, NOT THE BUYER'S**.

Buyers take 30 seconds or less to work out if you can help. You don't want them to think *"these guys just don't get me, I'm off"* but rather, *"Where have you been all my life?"*

You need to convey your products value to buyers but what do you say or write about?

Your marketing should not be about using jargon, generalities or an over abundance of adjectives, as you'll sound boring, long winded and won't impress buyers.

The answer to knowing what to say or write about lies in your ability to be **completely clear** about what your buyers want to know at each step of their evaluation process.



“ Clarity comes from engagement, not thought ”

Marie Forleo, life coach, motivational speaker, author and web television host.

When buyers are evaluating solutions, in each stage of the buying process they are looking for answers.

They may have been tasked with a goal or initiative (for themselves, their family or the business they work for) and need information to give them the confidence that you have the ability to address their needs.

Specific insights from your buyers own words deliver the answers you need

When you unearth things from your buyers perspective (through interviews) and learn what they want to hear from you and when, it takes the guesswork out of your content marketing. You are more precise in what you say, even down to the right words to use.

Whenever you, your team or copy writing partner create content from your buyers perspective, you have a much better chance of them reading/listening/watching and being persuaded by it.

The 5 Drivers for Buying Insights

As stated in the introduction, your Buyer Persona is made up of your **Buyer Profile** – a composite picture of the person you need to reach and **Buying Insights** – revealed by interviewing buyers.

The following “5 Drivers for Buying Insights” make up all the information you need to discover. Think of it as a study tool for an exam – the 5 Drivers encompass everything you need to know in order to pass with flying colours.

You'll have a multi-dimensional, high definition window into your buyers world that makes it easier to align your marketing strategies with your buyer's expectations.

2. The 5 Drivers for Buyer Insights



Solution Triggers

What business conditions or personal circumstances trigger the buyer to look for a new solution?

Identify the 3-5 objectives or problems they are dedicating time to.

What's really on your buyer's radar?

You don't want to arrogantly presume, just because your solution fixes something, that your buyer will also be obsessed with this. They may have other priorities that are keeping them awake at night and you need to find out what they are.

When you capture their Solution Triggers, you will begin to see which Buyer Personas are most receptive so you can **focus your demand generation activities on them.**

You will only gain this insight by understanding what caused recent buyers (less than 6 months) to evaluate your product/solution, or one like it.

When you understand these triggers you can define, defend and execute strategies that resonate with buyers at the earliest stages in their decision. Your content can tell them **"You may not have experienced this yet, but it's coming soon. Here's how to avoid it"**

You avoid reverse engineering Solution Triggers when:

- you don't derive customer pain points from the features and benefits of your solution
- your team doesn't make them up
- you stop filling your content with jargon words e.g. 'scalable' – they don't impress buyers anyway



Critical Must Haves

What top 3-5 benchmarks does buyer use to evaluate/compare alternative approaches to a problem?

What features are critical to achieve their Desired Outcomes?

Your buyer has a specific set of requirements but as they go through the evaluation process and become more educated, they begin to refine or alter their decision criteria.

You'll learn about the specific attributes of your solution they evaluate and compare to others. And, you'll understand **which buyers care about specific features and why.**

For example, if the buyer wants an "easy-to-use" solution, you dig further to find out what they mean by that. Where do they want "ease" and how do they go about evaluating which solution is "easiest"?

For useful Buyer Personas you need to include Critical Must Haves from buyers who chose you, those who chose a competitor and those who chose to do nothing at all.

You may learn things like:

- your newest or most distinctive capabilities have the least impact on their decision
- to trust you, they prefer facts over benefits-orientated content



Desired Outcomes

What results or outcomes (rational or emotional benefits) does the buyer expect from a solution such as yours?

These can be tangible or intangible.

2. The 5 Drivers for Buyer Insights



Desired Outcomes are the specific results the buyers describe. They resemble benefits, but not like the ones that can be reverse engineered from the capabilities your solution delivers.

These benefits are the tangible (rational benefits) or the intangible (emotional benefits) that buyers desire.

A tangible outcome might be based around a metric such as grow revenue by X or reduce costs by Y. Even if there isn't something tangible, there will be something at stake.

A wrong decision could result in a job loss, they may want to widening their sphere of influence or control something in their environment to feel empowered.

This insight tells you which outcomes are **MOST VALUABLE to this type of buyer and why.**

You'll stop reeling off a list of your solutions benefits and develop simple, persuasive messaging and content that won't annoy your buyers.



Likely Roadblocks

What attitudes or concerns prevents the buyer from investing in a solution?

Or why would they buy from a competitor instead of from you?

This can be overlooked because it's the 'bad news' insight – the things your business doesn't talk about.

Where are the barriers or negative impressions coming from? Their perceptions may come from a peer, an expert or a prior experience they had. You'll understand the buyers perceptions of your company or products even if they no longer (or were never) factually correct.

The most useful part of this insight reveals the buyer's perspective about the personal or business obstacles that will interfere with their chance to achieve their Desired Outcomes.

As a result of knowing these barriers and whose behind them, your most valuable content will focus on overcoming and addressing objections that your competition didn't even know were there.



Buyer Journey

What process do they follow and resources used to explore and select a solution?

What is the buyers role and impact of others in the purchase decision?

This insight reveals the behind-the-scenes story about the work your buyers do to evaluate and eliminate options to settle on their final choice.

Who is involved and how does the process unfold as decisions get made? There could be a complex ecosystem of characters who have a hand in the decision. And, it's often not the 'lead' decision maker who will have the most clout.

Do you know which type of buyer is most positive or negative about your approach? Do you know what resources each buyer trusts to answer their questions?

As you document each step of the journey – identifying who is critical to proceed to the next step, what roles they play and the resources they use – it will give you a map of content that supports buyers in their decision making.

Armed with these insights you can:

- Audit your current content's usefulness and identify gaps
- Commit your marketing and sales resources to where they have most impact/influence at each stage of the Buyer Journey
- Be supportive, with readily available information that answers buyers specific questions when and where they are needed

3. Prepare for interviewing



Who should be the interviewer?

You want your buyers to be completely open with the interviewer about what did and didn't work when they evaluated solutions.

Anyone who has helped with demos or been involved in a sales call with the interviewee should not be the interviewer. They may be reluctant to tell their story to someone who has tried to sell them something.

You are looking for someone with an innate sense of curiosity and who has an open mind to possibilities not known or considered. Sometimes the less a person knows about a product, the greater ability to respond to a buyer's answers with probing questions. They have no preconceived opinions or knowledge.

If there is no one in your business who is willing to learn new skills you may want to work with a seasoned professional interviewer as this will be critical to success.

Who to interview?

Think about people who would most likely be "doing the work" to evaluate options and recommend/persuade others involved in the decision. They are more likely to be the person who has interacted with your sales team.

To make sure your Buyer Persona is useful, it is critical to include insights from the following types of interviewee who have considered a solution like yours in the last **3-6 months**:

1. Buyers who considered and chose you
2. Those who considered you but chose a competitor
3. Those who considered you but chose to do nothing at all
4. Those who never considered you but chose a different way to solve their problem

One set of buyers you should **not interview** are those that are **currently considering your solution**. It's unlikely that anything you say would influence their final decision, but your sales people need to maintain exclusive control over these interactions.



Did you know...

Surprisingly, buyers who chose a competitor are not only the most useful buyers to interview but can be the most amenable.

You might think they would not want to talk to you but the opposite is true – these buyers are usually most willing to tell you what happened. It's akin to a personal relationship that ended badly and they are anxious to tell the whole colourful story!

Where to find interviewees?

Your internal database

The easiest people to arrange interviews with are those people who have bought from you, but don't focus too heavily on them because you want insights from all types of buyers.

Your database should also have people who did consider you but chose not to do anything e.g. they may have downloaded a white paper. These are the least likely to interview with you. They haven't invested any time on the decision-making process and as such are unlikely to invest time talking to you. Also they would only be able to tell you initial stage evaluation information.

Qualitative research recruiters

Do a Google search for 'qualitative research recruiters' and for a fee they will locate interviewees and set up appointments for your interviews. This saves time and you can have the opportunity to interview buyers who have never considered your solution.

You would need to provide some idea of demographics and ask them to screen participants to only include those that have considered a solution category like yours in the last six months.

3. Prepare for interviewing



If it's difficult to define your solution, the question could be posed like this:

"Have you, in the past six months, evaluated one or more of the following solutions?"

– and you would list competitor solutions similar to yours.

How many interviews and how long?

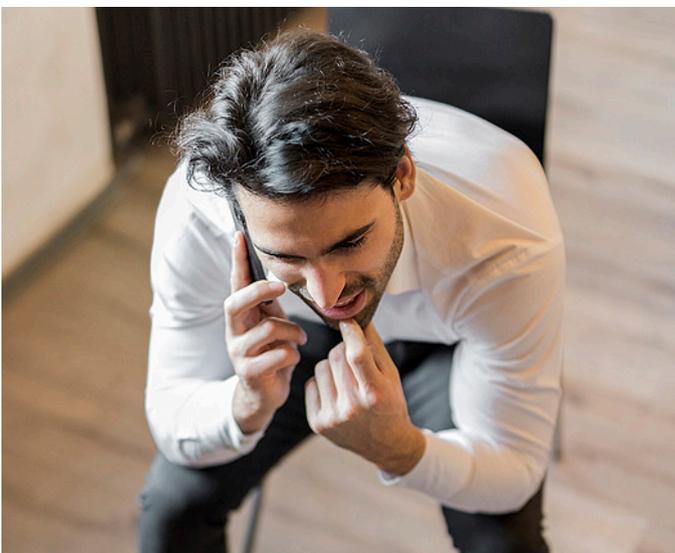
You don't have to do hundreds – you should start to see similar insights from doing approximately **8-10 interviews**.

The interview should be roughly **20-30 minutes**. You should request this amount of time, even if the conversation eventually runs for longer.

How often?

Buyer Insights do not generally change, but when there is a trigger e.g. a major upturn/downturn in economic conditions, a new significant competitor on the scene or advances in technology, then you may need to invest in a new round of interviews.

If you use a third party to conduct your interviews then you might consider a few new ones every six months or a year. It's unlikely there will be too many changes but it will confirm if your current buyer insights can be relied upon.



Setting up interviews yourself

First contact – a phone call

If you are contacting people yourself, then a phone call is the most effective strategy. If you manage to speak to buyers on the first attempt you don't want to interview them then and there. You want to be able to **record your conversation** and this might be off putting to someone you have only just introduced yourself to.

Your first phone call is to arrange a convenient time for the interview. Look at the voicemail message below as a guide of how you can convince them to do the interview.

You may feel guilty asking for someone's time but many buyers will engage and enjoy this kind of conversation, often keeping you way past the allotted time.

Voicemail

If you don't initially get to speak to the buyer then a message followed up with an email is the next best thing.

- Be open and transparent about the purpose of your call
- You want to sound both professional and appreciative of their time but you don't want to sound apologetic
- Record yourself leaving a message and listen to the playback to check your tone of voice
- Don't follow a script as it will sound artificial

Here's an example;

" My name is (xx), and I'm from (xxx). I'm calling because you recently evaluated our/a (specific product or service) and I'm hoping I can get a few minutes to talk with you about your experience as you went through your evaluation.

This isn't a survey or sales call, I'm looking for your candid feedback about what worked and what didn't work as you went through the process.

I'm hoping you'd be open to a 20 minute time slot in your calendar within the next week. My telephone number is (xxx). I realise it may be easier for you to respond to me via email so I'll follow up this call right now with an email. I look forward to hearing back from you and hope we can talk soon. "

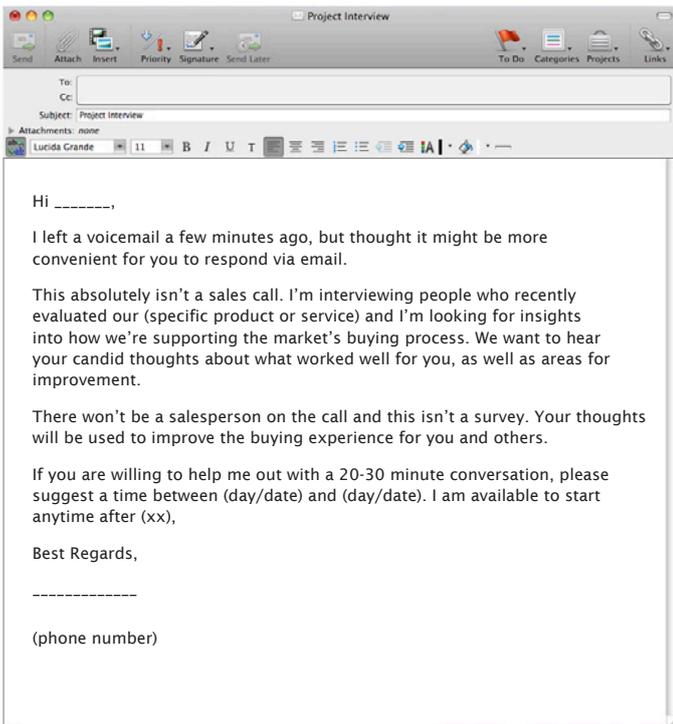
3. Prepare for interviewing



Email

Immediately after leaving your message, follow up with an email. It's more likely they will open it from the fact that you called first to introduce yourself.

It could read something like this:



If they reply by email rather than calling then make sure you create a meeting in you email program and send back with an invite and thank you note.

Administrative assistant (B2B)

If you are speaking to this person, your odds of getting an interview increase. You have the opportunity to uncover any objections, explain the purpose of your call and enrol their help. It's a good idea to:

- Use first names "Sam, I would like to talk to Peter about..."
- Include your job title - if it helps
- Speak in the same tone as you would a peer
- Follow up with an email to the assistant if they were responsive to asking their boss.

No response from your messages?

If you don't get a response and you only have a short list of contacts, you may need to persist. Try to reach the buyer directly by phone again, don't leave another voicemail. If no joy after 2-3 attempts, move onto other names or think about utilising a qualitative research recruiter.

I don't have time to do interviews

Does the following sound familiar?

"We need leads, deliverables and everything in gear asap."

When you encounter resistance to doing interviews - because there is another high priority goal in mind - you need to point out that this is not a massive study involving scores of buyers.

Try doing a mock interview with a stakeholder to demonstrate what's possible to discover. These are the insights you need before you can succeed with that other high priority goal.

Viewed as a simple ROI analysis, the time and effort to conduct buyer interviews is minimal.

As you become more experienced and hone your abilities to listen and follow up on interesting information, you will begin to see that marketing based on intuition and guesswork is like a blunt axe whereas insights dissected from a small group of interviews is like using a swiss army knife.

3. Prepare for interviewing



Interview day tips and preparation

- **Research** – scan the LinkedIn profiles of your interviewees or other online sources. For B2B, spend a few minutes on their website to familiarise yourself with what they do and specific terminology they are likely to use.

You don't need to be an expert on the product or service they considered, but you may want to do a little research or ask a product expert if specific terminology or features may come up.

- **Eliminate distractions** – turn off phones and email alerts. Your total focus should be the interviewee and what they have to say.
- **Two heads can be better than one** – invite a colleague or partner to listen in so you can reflect, bounce ideas/ opinions around after the call has finished. Introduce them at the start of the interview.
- **Ask permission to record your interview** – Most buyers will be fine, but even if they say they can't be as candid as you'd like, they'll often forget about the recording and the impact on the quality of the interview will be minimal. Even if they say no, don't pass up the opportunity to hear what they have to say.



Only ask for permission on the day of the interview, not before, as the buyer may get anxious or feel the need to ask permission from senior management (B2B) to proceed.

- **Have a lined note pad handy** – jot down key phrases you wish to return to later in the conversation. Short notes help you retrieve important facts without feeling stressed or having to interrupt the buyer. You'll have their exact words when you take them back to that part of their story. Put each interviewees name and details at the top of each set of interview notes.
- **Don't use the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights to structure the interview** – While you should be mindful of these, don't structure your interviews around them. They are only used later to help you build your Buyer Persona.

- **Show empathy** – sometimes the interviewee may give up information about a pressured situation and it's always good to be able to show empathy to build rapport
- **Try and keep a logical flow** – work on the interview flow so that new questions logically follow a given statement. Concentrate on the earliest stage of the buying process first (where you have inadequate insight) and when you think they have covered that stage, move on to the next chapter in their story.
- **Return to things of interest if buyer skips ahead** – feel comfortable in slowing the pace down by saying things like “(Name), I would like you to return to what you said a few minutes ago about (topic). What you said was really interesting, but I wondered if you could tell me a bit more about that...”

• **Don't assume the answers to your questions** – failure to probe a buyers statements with follow up questions is common. Don't be in the ‘I hear this all the time; I already know what they'll say’ mind-set. Your buyers verbatim quotes are what everyone in your business should hear as it's them speaking their thoughts. They offer the possibility of clarity in your understanding of the decision-making process.

- **Use the power of the pause** – not filling all the dead space in a conversation works in your favour. Interject with a few “uh-huhs”, or “Well, that's interesting...” and pause. They'll pick up the slack and offer some information that could be pretty good. There's nothing wrong with letting them sweat a little!
- **Never ask direct questions about you** – your website, campaigns or solutions. When you make the conversation about the buyer's experience, you'll be rewarded with more information than you could ever obtain through direct questions.
- **Be curious!** – All these tips are tried and true, but they don't really work unless you have one particular human quality – curiosity. A true passion for learning more about those around you goes further than any trick or even the most polished communications skills.
- **Be a respectful listener** – Make it as easy as possible for the buyer to do the talking.
- **Buyer Profile information** – Keep any questions about the buyer's profile to the end of the interview as you want them to keep their attention on their story.

4. Interviewing



Practice makes Perfect!

Once you've completed your preparation, you are now ready to interview. It can be a bit daunting at first, but the more you practice, the more you will feel comfortable and hone your listening skills.

The interview technique you will use, comes from Adele Revella's book *Buyer Personas - How to gain insights into your customer's expectations, align your marketing strategies, and win more business*.

As you interview buyers, your task is to lead them through their story of the time when they evaluated a solution like yours. You won't follow a script but instead use a listening and probing question technique. You will hear something of interest and most probably unearth information they might not have otherwise given out. It's a conversation where you listen intently and allow the buyer to speak freely without interruption.

Firstly, ask permission to record the interview

An audio recording of your interviews is incredibly valuable but it can be illegal not to ask permission, so you must ask!

After your interviews, you can use a transcription service (there are many online where you can upload your files) to provide you with the whole conversation to sift through for your Buyer Persona insights later on.

"I really appreciate you're able to take the time to do this today. I'd like to capture everything you have to say, but I'm afraid if I try to take notes I'll miss something.

Before we get started, I would like your permission to record this interview. It won't be shared with salespeople or anyone else except the small team working on this project with me. Would that be ok? ..

Get insights... "Take me back to the day"

Now, your task is to walk the buyer slowly through every phase of their evaluation. This is the only scripted part of the interview to focus your buyer on the story of the evaluation and decision making process.

You are attempting to get them to relive the moment they realised **there was a problem that needed fixing**.

Your buyer may list benefits they wanted followed by a short sentence on how they found that solution. However, they may not have told you what **the trigger** was – the moment when living with the pain became too much and they decided to invest time and budget on a solution like yours.

TIP: Use any benefits they mention to probe further. You'll likely get more information here about what was happening in the company/in their lives. Jot a few words down about any other things they mention were involved so you can probe later on about their specific expectations and how this impacted on their decision.

"(Name), thank you for agreeing to this interview. I know you are busy and your time is valuable.

To start us off; take me back to the day when you first decided to evaluate a (solution/category of solution) and tell me what happened. ..

"I'd like to go back to what you said about needing (state benefit 1 and 2 etc). I'm sure that was a goal long before you started looking for a solution. What changed to make it a priority to start looking? ..

4. Interviewing



Get insights... by pulling the thread

Unravelling your buyer's story can be difficult, but there are techniques you can use to keep the conversation flowing, especially when they stop talking.



" Ok, (name), so once you and the other executives/your family/your partner decided it was time to look for a (solution), what did you do first to evaluate your options? "

Let's say the response was an internet search. This is not an insight but an opportunity to find out how much the internet search impacted choices at this point in the story.



" How many vendors did you identify as a result of that search? "

This anchors them to this point in the story so you can define this stage of the evaluation. You can now ask questions like these;



" What information were you hoping to find through this search? "

" Were there any websites that were particularly helpful? "

Get insights... on other information sources

Once you've explored the internet search experience you'll want to find out about other sources of information that were consulted. Buyers tend to use three different ways to identify solutions and you'd be missing critical insights that reveal how they find solutions like yours.



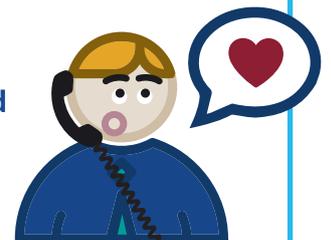
" Tell me more about... "

" What was important about... " "

At this stage it should feel like you are just having a chat, but hopefully the buyer will reveal insights about the resources they trust, attitudes when doing web research and possibly even some specific expectations they have about what they are looking for.

A very interesting thing occurs at this initial probing stage. No one before has ever asked your buyer to talk at length about their experience.

As you ask questions **using the same words and phrases the buyer voiced** moments earlier, you build a level of rapport that encourages them to **engage with you at a deeper level**. They realise this is not another marketing survey, you are actually listening to them and interested in the details of their story.



4. Interviewing



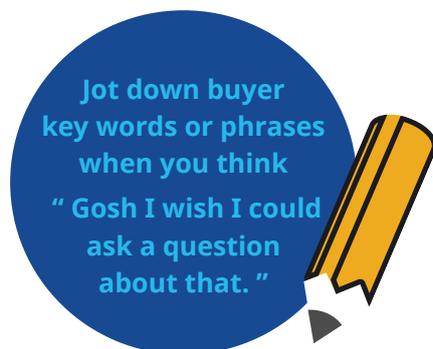
“ The more comfortable you make someone feel, the better interview you’re ultimately going to get. ”

Katie Couric, US TV interviewer

Get insights... on solutions they include

Once a buyer has talked about their search, ask how many solutions they decided to include. This is not included in your Buyer Persona but is a useful transition point in the story you can use in subsequent questioning.

The buyer is likely to remember things out of order but you can reference this transition moment to return them to that point in their story.



“ So, once you decided you needed a (solution) what was the first action you took to figure out which possible solutions might meet your criteria „

“ How many (suppliers) did you have top of mind that you wanted to look at. A dozen, less than a dozen? „

“ Ok, and with your web search, there must have been a few options you found. How many did you find that you didn’t know about before but thought, these guys look interesting? „

“ So, some were too (xxx e.g. big) and some were too (xxx e.g. small). On the too (xxx) side, what would too (xxx) look like? „

Get insights... when they use jargon

A great probing opportunity comes when your buyer uses jargon to substitute for a more detailed explanation about an aspect of a solution. Listen for words like *cutting edge*, *flexible*, *market leading*, *industry standard*, *world-class*, *scalable*, *easy-to-use*.

This is a chance to uncover insight that explains what capabilities impressed them. To cut through in your messaging you want to know how to specifically address your buyers concerns.

You can also find out their perceptions of your product and the other ones they evaluated.

“ So, you mentioned that you need a solution that is (xxx eg easy to use). Can you talk for a few minutes about what you evaluate around (xxxx e.g. ease of use) „

“ What steps did you take to evaluate that? „

4. Interviewing



Buyers will sense that you want to hear them out as they explain what they found out. You'll need to determine how much time you want to spend drilling down into an aspect of their decision.

TIP: If a buyer isn't particularly engaged about an aspect of their story, it's best to move on. Your job is to listen to their story and if it doesn't include certain things don't persist. You will most likely get this from a different buyer interview.

" How did you compare (xxx e.g. ease of use) for each alternative? "

" How will (xxx e.g. ease of use) help you achieve your goals? "

" How much training did you expect before it would be (xxx e.g. easy to use)? "

" For whom should it be (xxx e.g. easy)? "

Get insights... on the impact of marketing resources

When a buyer mentions things they looked at e.g. website, whitepaper or demo, you can learn about what the buyer experienced in this interaction. You get some of the best insights at transition points and a demo is usually the place when this happens.

Probing questions here can reveal what made them decide to eliminate a solution, or why they thought alternative vendors had a better approach. There could be resistance from a person of influence, or a negative impression of your business, whether accurate or not.

The second question here asks *"How did you decide"* to reveal the actions they took rather than *"Why did you decide"* which can be heard as a bit confrontational. *"How"* allows them to go deeper into this aspect of their story and reveal insights that are invaluable such as;

- the actions they took
- the information they evaluated
- the criteria that got your solution or your competitors eliminated from consideration.

TIP: Don't ask for your competitors names as this might ruin the mood. They are more likely to reveal more information if they haven't shared names with you and you may be able to guess who they are anyway.

" How did the information you found there impact your choice of vendors? "

" You mentioned you started with three solutions, but ended up with two coming in for a demo. How did you decide to eliminate that third party from consideration? "

" How difficult was the decision for you or your team to eliminate one of the solutions that was under consideration. "

You'll discover issues or challenges that would never be revealed in an active sales situation.

4. Interviewing



Get insights... on who influences the decision

Many medium to high purchase decisions involve multiple decision makers. As your buyer talks about their story they may reveal who these people are.

You can begin to ask questions about how they factored in subsequent phases of their story and how these people impacted the outcome.

Sometimes you can actually learn more about these people and their perceptions through the buyer's eyes than if you interviewed them yourself.

" You mentioned 'we' were evaluating the xxxxx. Who else was involved? I don't need names, just the roles/relationship to you of the other people. "

" Were there any members of the 'selection team' who voiced a different opinion when they saw a demo? How did that affect the decision to continue the evaluation? "

Get insights... on perceived value of your competitive advantage

Tread carefully with this line of questioning. You may be speaking to someone who chose an alternative solution to yours. An example would be a buyer who said your solution was not chosen because it was *'too expensive'*.

The answer to this first open ended question will tell you:

- if they can recall anything that would justify a premium pricing
- if your competitive advantage was known and whether it was deemed important or disregarded during evaluation
- if your sales and marketing communicated the value, but wasn't important enough to justify the price
- if your message simply didn't get across

" Do you recall any capabilities that are included in our product and not in the product you purchased? "

During the interview, you're listening for attitudes and opinions that influence their thinking process.

This next follow-up question can give you insights into how they perceive your competitive advantage. You will want to have one or two statements prepared in advance to test with buyers. (You can change them for different interviews especially if the buyer is not reacting well).

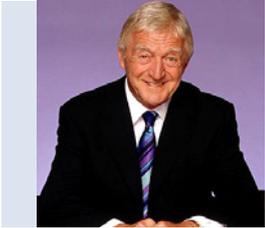
Tip: These questions need to be framed right, otherwise they could sound like a sales pitch, which must be avoided. Don't fall into the trap of talking about your advantage even if the buyer was not aware of it before.

Remember, the objective is to understand how buyers arrive at these conclusions.

" We are hearing from buyers that they are willing to pay more for our solution because it (aspect of your solution that is perceived as competitive advantage) . What are your thoughts on that? "

" Buyers tell us that X is unimportant because we have Y. What are your thoughts? "

4. Interviewing



“ The best lesson I ever learned was from interviewer Alan Whicker... after an answer he'd pause and look. The person opposite, less used to the interview process, will say something first. Often what they say isn't what they intended, because its not in the script in their mind. ”

Michael Parkinson, TV presenter and veteran interviewer

Get insights... when features affect decisions

It is always useful to know if a missing feature from your solution is a decisive factor. If you are interviewing a buyer about a product that you are not familiar with, you may need to do a little competitor research or talk to a product expert prior to interviews. Use this question when a buyer says “Your product does not have x”.



“ What consequences might result if you selected a solution that didn't have (missing feature)? .. ”

Your solution may not include this feature because you have a work around solution already in existence. You can use this question (similar to one on previous page) to gauge:

- if the buyer was aware of the work around
- if it was evaluated, and if so whether it was considered a viable or unacceptable approach



“ We are hearing from buyers that (work around solution) is important to them because they can do (intended outcome when using missing feature). What are your thoughts about that? .. ”

Get insights... by going slowly to capture the whole story

As you listen to your buyers they may jump around in their story. As an inexperienced interviewer, you may start probing at random moments which blurs the whole story. Don't forget to use your pad to jot down anything you want to bring them back to later.



“ You know, (name), returning to what you said a few minutes ago about (insert their words/factor they mentioned), what was important about that? .. ”

As you practise interviewing, you'll learn how easy it is to ask the buyer to expand more on a comment you have jotted down.

“ That's interesting, (name), what you said about (e.g. something about the solution criteria) earlier. Tell me more about that.” .. ”

Once you have gathered information from your interviews, the next step is to mine it for insightful quotes to build an effective Buyer Persona.

5. Post interview analysis



Cut through the clutter to reveal your Buying Insights that inform your Buyer Persona

Following your buyer interviews, you are going to do an exercise that has some parallels with the work of a police detective! Your task will be to sift through your interviews to capture key elements of your buyers narrative that has been a mystery until now.

You want to create a single narrative that represents your buyers in a story that captures expectations, thinking and the decision making process – the stuff you want to be able to influence. This is the **Buyer Insight** part of your Buyer Persona.

Any **Buyer Profile** information from your interviews is added in Module 2, Exercise 7, where your final Buyer Persona will take shape. You can tweak it whenever you want and print it out too.



How to capture the key elements of your buyers narrative

Step 1:

Mark up your interview transcript

Highlight and mark each buyer 'quote' you find with one of the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights.

Step 2:

Organise quotes based on the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights and write Key Insight Headlines (KIH)

- Choose the most insightful buyer 'quotes' and copy, along with buyers name and 'Buyer Type' (job/demographic), into the excel worksheet provided.
- Write short statements (KIH) that capture the essence of the insight in each quote and group the same KIH's together to see how many insights you have.

Step 3:

Check grouped KIH's have quotes from different buyer sources

If you have two or more quotes from a buyer, only keep one (most compelling). You want to have more than one buyer quote to support a KIH, but no more than four.

Step 4:

Split 'over represented' KIH's, to create even more detailed headlines

If you have lots of quotes from different people under a single KIH, look to see if you can split them in two to create more detailed insights.

Step 5:

Check if you have more than one Buyer Persona

Copy 'Buyer Type' information into last column and group using sort function. Look for differences of opinion – you may have more than one Buyer Persona.

Step 6:

Map out Buyer Journey to help you prioritise and align your marketing assets

Look at your Buyer Journey Insights to help map out the key steps, people involved and when resources are consulted. Include in excel worksheet

Step 7:

Copy final Buyer quotes and KIH's into Module 2, Exercise 7 – Build Your Buyer Persona.

5. Post interview analysis



The 5 Drivers for Buying Insights



Step 1. Mark up your interview transcript

As soon as you finish your interviews send them to a transcript service to convert into a written document (in word).

Don't skip this step!

Your interview transcripts contain 'from the source' quotes that voice the real concerns and attitudes that you need to hear from buyers.

Read each interview from the beginning, and when you find a quote that answers one of the 5 Drivers, use the comments feature of your word processing software to highlight and label.

Example transcript (in word) for evaluating an email marketing platform

Jane:	Well there were some tools where, there are email marketing platforms that don't really have the logic built in to do email marketing automation, so even though they might be easy to use, low cost, they don't have the complexity of being able to setup behaviour rules to automate your marketing, so those were out. Then there was really only maybe one or two I came across that were very basic versions of what we do, but they were tied to a specific platform. For example, there was one that was \$99 a month and looked awesome, but you have to use it in WordPress. So right there it is limited, even though WordPress is widely used, it wouldn't apply to all our clients, or it wouldn't have the integrations we want with some of the CRMs our clients need. So it was limited feature wise, or tied to a certain platform, or something like that.	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Comment: CMH</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;">Comment: LR</div>
Interviewer:	So, you didn't want to go with a WordPress Plugin, because not every single small business has a WordPress site, and then, what did you say about CRM? It needed to integrate with just any CRM? What did you mean about that?	
Jane:	Well, we definitely need to integrate with Salesforce, that's one our clients use, but then we had a certain client that we were looking at and they had NetSuite, so we also need it to integrate with that one, which was sort of a specific requirement for just one client. I was trying to keep an eye out for ones that had integration available for multiple CRMs. So we have clients on Salesforce, NetSuite and SugarCRM, there's only a handful of big players but we do get clients that have very specific industry CRMs that only relate for financial services. I can't really plan for that, but I at least try to plan for one that has at least a handful of integrations for the big guys that are used across industries. One of the main things we were also wanting is something that isn't complicated to set up and operate so that if our clients want to do a little bit more themselves, that should be an option, you know it has to be simple to use for an untrained marketer.	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Comment: CMH</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Comment: CMH</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px;">Comment: DO</div>

5. Post interview analysis



Finding quotes that match the 5 Drivers for Buying Insight

Solution Triggers – At the beginning of the interviews you would have asked buyers about the **trigger events or high priorities** that would have made them start to search for a solution, so you are likely to find these quotations there.

You're looking for the top 3-5 problems or objectives where they are dedicating time and effort, without regard to your business or the problems your solution solves.

Marks these 'ST' for 'Solution Triggers'.

Critical Must Haves – The questions you asked buyers on how they eliminated options or why they kept certain solutions under consideration will also give you quotations for Critical Must Haves.

These differ from other insights because they describe the **specific features or capabilities of the company or solution that were the most important.**

You will also get these insights from anything the buyer tells you about what they learned from:

- Reading marketing material, such as a whitepaper
- Visiting a website
- Attending a demo.

Marks these 'CMH' for 'Critical Must Haves'.

Desired Outcomes – As you continue to read your interviews you will find quotations about the changes buyers expect to gain from this solution. These sound like benefit statements and the insight tells you **exactly what outcomes are the most valuable** to this type of buyer. Some things to look out for are:

- A tangible metric for success such as revenue growth, reduce costs or increase people's productivity
- Intangible outcomes of success such as impressing peers/others, widening sphere of influence, improving status or increasing ability to control something in their environment.

Marks these 'DO' for 'Desired Outcomes'.

Likely Roadblocks – You will find these throughout the interview, especially in places where you probed about how the buyer eliminated a few solutions from consideration. These are the **concerns that cause your buyer to believe your solution or company is not their best option.**

They will also speak early in their stories about roadblocks that prevented them from addressing this problem much sooner. Some things to look out for are:

- People who got in the way or were resistant to the idea
- Previous negative experiences (with you or competition)
- Capabilities that are missing from some solutions

Marks these 'LR' for 'Likely Roadblocks'.

Buyer Journey – These insights are when your buyer describes who was involved in the decision and what the buyer did to identify and evaluate alternative options and making a decision. It specifically **identifies the process your buyer will follow to explore and select the solution** to overcome their Likely Roadblocks and achieve their Desired Outcomes.

Marks these 'BJ' for 'Buyer Journey'.

Quotes that straddle more than one insight

Some of your quotes may not fall easily within these 5 categories, some may encompass two insights. Often Desired Outcomes and Critical Must Haves can cause confusion.

Think about Desired Outcomes as benefits – scenarios that the buyer believes will change after they have purchased the solution. For example enabling a more personalised experience in online customer transaction to improve revenue.

By contrast, Critical Must Haves are about the potential solutions capabilities and the insight tells you what tips the balance in favour of a particular option. These are the *'what'* and *'how'* factors, where as Desired Outcomes answers *'why'* an aspect of a solution is important to the buyer.

As you go through and scrutinize your buyer interviews and how the insights revealed define the buyers mind-set, you will become better attuned at distinguishing the important, yet subtle differences, between these two crucial insight categories.

5. Post interview analysis



Step 2. Organise quotes based on the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights and write Key Insight Headlines (KIH's)

- Choose which of the many highlighted quotations will best communicate the insights from your interviews to put in the excel document. Think about which ones disclose the details and emotions that had the greatest impact on their choice.
- Put the name/job title/demographics of the quote source in column B as this will be used in a future step.
- Click around the 5 tabs to insert the quotes in their respective Buying Insight areas. You may notice some of your marked up quotes (in word) are not as useful as other – feel free to skip these or insert all your quotes and cull as necessary.
- Each tab includes the main prompter questions at the top to remind you of what your buyer quotes are meant to answer.
- Once all your quotes are in, write a short Key Insight Headline (KIH) in column C that communicates the salient point in each quote.
- When you see quotes that are related insights, write **exactly the same phrase** in your KIH. You'll want to be able to use the sort function next to see how many insights you have for each of the 5 Drivers, and this will help you see this.

BUYING INSIGHTS

Use the excel spreadsheet downloaded with this guide.

Fill in columns A and B first... then create Key Insight Headlines in column C

A 1	B 2	C 3	D
Critical Must Haves			
What top 3-5 benchmarks does the buyer use to evaluate/compare alternative approaches to a problem? What features are critical to achieve their Desired Outcomes?			
The Buyer's Words (quotes)	Buyers Name	Key Insight Headline	Type of Buyer
There are email marketing platforms that don't really have the logic built into them for email automation. They may be easy to use and low cost but they don't have the complexity to set up behaviour rules, so those options are out.	Jane Agency marketer	Combination of easy set up and automated marketing	
A large enterprise, maybe the process changes in terms of proper branding guidelines etc, but just having a lot of templates and adding new templates, that's the first thing I would look for.	Chris In-house marketer	Easy to use	
These guys were the appropriate choice because they charged more - they charged \$99 per year. We felt they would provide more support because they were being paid more. They also had an option to use their own servers, because what we were doing was that it was being transmitted through our servers.	Paul Agency marketer	Ability to send from our own or others' servers	
I don't want to spend money having someone else build us templates. I want to be able to repurpose something that's already there, make it look like ours, but I want something there that I like and be able to easily customise it.	Irene Agency marketer	Easy to use	Quotes with related insights have exactly the same KIH wording
Very little complication in terms of the back end work that you have to do to configure it. Having it hook into other systems seamlessly means we don't have to worry about integration.	Jake Agency marketer	Easy to use	
One of the things that was important to us was that we wanted a really easy solution and we also wanted autoresponder.	Wayne In-house marketer	Combination of easy set up and automated marketing	

5. Post interview analysis



Step 3. Check grouped KIH's have quotes from different buyer sources

Before you choose your final quotes and headlines to form your Buyer Persona, you want make sure you have quotes from different sources for each insight.

If two or more quotes are from the same buyer for a KIH then only keep one (most compelling). You don't want to use multiple quotes from one buyer to support a KIH.

Step 4. Split any 'over represented' KIH's, to create even more detailed Insight Headlines

If you still have four or more quotes from different buyers under a KIH that are all compelling, you might want to think about whether you could write an even more detailed headlines by spitting them up a bit more.

You don't want any more than four quotes to represent any of your KIH's as this amount should get the insight across.

Key Insight Headline with more than four quotes from different buyers

A	B	C	D
Critical Must Haves What top 3-5 benchmarks does the buyer use to evaluate/compare alternative approaches to a problem? What features are critical to achieve their Desired Outcomes?			
The Buyer's Words (quotes)	Buyers Name	Key Insight Headline	Type of Buyer
A large enterprise, maybe the process changes in terms of proper branding guidelines etc, but just having a lot of templates and adding new templates, that's the first thing I would look for.	Chris In-house marketer	Easy to use	
They had templates, but they also had ones that were integrated into the plugins. One could just create the newsletter witin their plug-in and just format it quite easily, and add a photograph. That was quite a big thing because it meant that at some point they wouldn't need to reply on me to do it for them.	Lisa Agency marketer	Easy to use	
Of course it's easy to use. Everyone's saying theirs is easy to use. So it is a major criteria for me to see which one allows me to get to my goal before I have to consult help or call anybody. If it's easy to use, then I should be able to ficure it out.	Pam Agency marketer	Easy to use	
Very little complication in terms of the back end work that you have to do to configure it. Having it hook into other systems seamlessly means we don't have to worry about integration.	Jake Agency marketer	Easy to use	
When I want to add a new piece of content, add an image or a video, I want to simply drag and drop.	Frank Agency marketer	Easy to use	
I don't want to spend money having someone build us templates. I want to be able to repurpose something that's already there. Make it look like ours, but I want to take something that's there that I like and be able to cutomise it, if you will.	Tom In-house marketer	Easy to use	

The same KIH has more than four quotes, and from different buyers

5. Post interview analysis



'Easy to use' quotes are split up into two groups with more detailed Key Insight Headlines created

A	B	C	D
<p>Critical Must Haves What top 3-5 benchmarks does the buyer use to evaluate/compare alternative approaches to a problem? What features are critical to achieve their Desired Outcomes?</p>			
The Buyer's Words (quotes)	Buyers Name	Key Insight Headline	Type of Buyer
A large enterprise, maybe the process changes in terms of proper branding guidelines etc, but just having a lot of templates and adding new templates, that's the first thing I would look for.	Chris In-house marketer	A lot of high quality, easy to update templates	<p>Two new sets of KHI's with more insight - not just 'Easy to use'</p>
They had templates, but they also had ones that were integrated into the plugins. One could just create the newsletter within their plug-in and just format it quite easily, and add a photograph. That was quite a big thing because it meant that at some point they wouldn't need to reply on me to do it for them.	Lisa Agency marketer	A lot of high quality, easy to update templates	
I don't want to spend money having someone build us templates. I want to be able to repurpose something that's already there. Make it look like ours, but I want to take something that's there that I like and be able to customise it, if you will.	Tom In-house marketer	A lot of high quality, easy to update templates	
Of course it's easy to use. Everyone's saying theirs is easy to use. So it is a major criteria for me to see which one allows me to get to my goal before I have to consult help or call anybody. If it's easy to use, then I should be able to figure it out.	Pam Agency marketer	I should be able to figure it out on my own	
Very little complication in terms of the back end work that you have to do to configure it. Having it hook into other systems seamlessly means we don't have to worry about integration.	Jake Agency marketer	I should be able to figure it out on my own	
When I want to add a new piece of content, add an image or a video, I want to simply drag and drop.	Frank Agency marketer	I should be able to figure it out on my own	

5. Post interview analysis



Step 5. Check if you have more than one Buyer Persona

As stated earlier, you would have already defined the demographics you wanted to use to define the types of buyers you were interested in interviewing, so you should have this information in your document.

Do the following to check if you have more than one Buyer Persona (see examples on page 27):

- Copy/type demographic information into the last column 'Type of Buyer' for each of the 5 Drivers and use the sort function to group your types of buyers together
- Look at the Key Insight Headlines to see if there are any that stand out and are only 'owned' by one type of buyer
- If you are unsure, create a simple table with KIH's for each type of buyer. Some will say exactly the same, while there may be others that stand out

Now assess your opportunities:

- Are their attributes you offer that would impress one particular audience that is big enough to justify a second Buyer Persona?
- And, do you have the resources to market effectively to more than one buyer?

The only reason you would need to think hard (resources wise) about whether you need to market to two Buyer Personas would be if you find two very different points of view/opinions/attitudes from your interviews.

In the example for an email marketing platform (page 27), the ability to integrate with a wide range of web and customer relationship management (CRM) platforms, would definitely impress the agency marketer. Not so much the in-house marketer.

If agency marketers represent a large market opportunity and the integration story is stronger than the competition, then this would justify having a second Buyer Persona. However, it would also be wise to continue to invest in additional research to make sure this was a persistent finding.

Your business may have a compelling way to address the unique insights of different buyers, but if there are more insights that align to both sets of buyers then you would be better off creating one persona and avoid additional cost.



A good example of how to use insights from interviews to determine type of buyers is that of the company Caterpillar.

Their marketing department were tasked with creating Buyer Personas for their compact and small cat equipment.

Management assumed they would segment by industry and thus create five buyer personas for Commercial Construction, Concrete Construction, Agriculture, Landscape and Snow & Ice Removal.

From their interviews, the team found there were several differences in buyer expectations, but just a few insights revealed they could engage in persuasive, useful marketing by focusing on just **two Buyer Personas**.

The team found two common personas across all industries. They created the **"high detail persona"** who was very experienced, had a long list of specs to be addressed and wanted side-by-side model comparison to weigh up their options.

The second was the **"results-orientated persona"** who searched for machinery to allow them to do a particular type of work to grow their business. They had little experience with the equipment and wanted someone to help them understand options and recommend machinery best suited to their needs.

So, a fundamental question here isn't how many Buyer Personas are required, but rather how many ways do you need to market to persuade buyers your solution suits their needs.

This can only be achieved if the way you define your Buyer Persona makes it easy to know when a different version of your story, to a different set of buyers, will result in more business.

One of the main things to consider is – would having two buyer personas win more business?

5. Post interview analysis



How to check if you have more than one Buyer Persona

A	B	C	D
Critical Must Haves What top 3-5 benchmarks does the buyer use to evaluate/compare What features are critical to achieve their Desired Outcomes?			
<i>Copy 'Type of Buyer' to final column. Use sort function to view each Type of Buyer's KIH</i>			
The Buyer's Words (quotes)	Buyers Name	Key Insight Headline	Type of Buyer
They had templates, but they also had ones that were integrated into the plugins. One could just create the newsletter with their plug-in and just format it quite easily, and add a photograph. That was quite a big thing because it meant that at some point they wouldn't need to reply on me to do it for them.	Lisa Agency marketer	A lot of high quality, easy to update templates	Agency marketer
I don't want to spend money having someone build us templates. I want to be able to repurpose something that's already there. Make it look like ours, but I want to take something that's there that I like and be able to customise it, if you will.	Pam Agency marketer	A lot of high quality, easy to update templates	Agency marketer

Copy all KIH's for each type of buyer into a table

Same KIH's of the two buyers are in black. Different are bold and in blue.

5 Drivers to Buying Insights	All KIH's for: AGENCY MARKETER	All KIH's for: IN-HOUSE MARKETER
Solution Triggers	New customers or newly targetted market segment	New investment in digital marketing
Desired Outcomes	Infrequent users won't need training Single, comprehensive view of customers Solution grows with changing needs Control over automated response content	Single, comprehensive view of customers Solution grows with changing needs Control over automated response content
Likely Roadblocks	Not sure we can trust you Templates require users to know HTML Object to opt-in + first email response Concern about being blacklisted Can't manage another system	Not sure we can trust you Templates require users to know HTML Object to opt-in + first email response Concern about being blacklisted Can't manage another system
Critical Must Haves	Works like other software I know/own Lots of high quality easy to update templates Easy-to-use automated response	Works like other software I know/own Lots of high quality easy to update templates Easy-to-use automated response
Buyer Journey	Clients defer decisions to us We prioritise solutions that we know Need to see/use before I decide Calling to test your responsiveness	A team evaluates, but I decide We prioritise solutions that we know Need to see/use before I decide Calling to test your responsiveness

Could this be a good reason to create two Buyer Personas to market to?

Integrates with most CRM & Web platforms

5. Post interview analysis



Step 6. Map out Buyer Journey to help you prioritise and align marketing assets

Once you have established the insights of your Buyer's Journey, it's a good idea to map out the step by step process in a table that shows the journey your buyers typically go through.

Why? Because it means you will have a **clearer idea about where to prioritise and align your marketing activities**. You might find an important part of the journey is being missed or not fully explored by your team. Your Buyer Journey should be able to tell you:

- Which type of buyer is most positive or negative about your approach
- What sources each buyer trusts to answer their questions

For example, if you found out that your buyers learn about your type of solution through conference attendance and LinkedIn groups, you would give priority to speaking engagements, conference sponsorship and participate in those groups. Also, if your Buying Insights reveal strong peer influence during the research phase then you would monitor social media, user forums and customer service records for early warning signs of customer dissatisfaction or downturn in brand reputation.

Not all buyer journeys will be the same, but every one will have something new to tell you.

Any marketing collateral from demos and Powerpoint presentations to website content can be updated to focus on the **Critical Must Haves** and the **Desired Outcomes** that your buyer and their influencers want to know.

You may be using a standard set of marketing tools for each of your solutions. But, if you found out from your Buyer Insights that your various solutions required different marketing activities, you could align internal teams by solution, which may reduce workloads.

A Buyer Journey table has been provided in **Exercise 2.7 – Your Buyer Persona**, so you can add your insights along with your sales and marketing asset alignment.

Example journey for a small business evaluating the purchase of new laptops

Laptop brand's tactics for each buyer step

Buyer steps taken	Key Personas Decision makers, influencers, users	The 5 Drivers for Buying Insight: Critical Must Haves, Desired Outcomes & Likely Roadblocks	Resources buyers consult	Sales & Marketing Assets
Trigger	Small biz owner	Sales Team growing, out of office work, need light weight.	Techwiz article LinkedIn group	PR and social media
Research	Office manager	Size/weight, brand name, ask peers advice	Online reviews, Blogs	Use case studies, blogger outreach
Evaluate suppliers	Office manager	Battery life, Keyboard feel, speed, hard disk, screen res	Apple store, JB Hi Fi, Harvey Norman	POS displays, sales training
Negotiate/ approval	Small biz owner	Cost trade-offs, Extended warranty	Supplier websites, contact supplier	Comparison pages on website
Implement	Office manager	Technical support, Start-up/ set up time	Using experience	Customer feedback program

5. Post interview analysis



A universal truth about the Buyer's Journey

Everyone consults with peers, family members or friends (face-to-face, local/online network groups, conferences) **before making a decision**. You can be fairly confident, that how these people refer to you, will affect the decision to include or exclude you from the list of potentials the buyer will decide to evaluate.

Step 7. Copy final Buyer quotes and KIH's into Module 2, Exercise 7 – Build Your Buyer Persona

- Once you have documented, analysed and refined buyer's answers in the 5 Drivers for Buying Insights, copy them across to exercise 7.
- Take a moment to check you are happy with the KIH's you have created as these will form part of your Buyer Persona that will guide your marketing messages and activities.
- Add your Buyer Profile information which will include giving them a face and name too.

What if I haven't interviewed anyone?

If for whatever reason you are not ready to interview buyers, you'll need to complete **Exercise 6 – Get inside your buyers head**. Prompter questions and examples will help your brainstorm about what your buyers are seeking when evaluating a solution like yours. Any insights you already have will greatly help you here.

Once you have completed this exercise your workings will be copied into **Exercise 7** where you will complete your Buyer Persona profile.

Please note:

The Key Insight Headlines you create will be used as reference in Module 3, Stake your Position.



Buying Insights:

Include 2-5 KIH's for each of the 5 Drivers with up to 4 quotes from different buyers per KIH.

SOLUTION TRIGGERS

1	2	3
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Think, Act & Grow like a Brand