



REAL Ideal Customer Personas

Interview Questions

***** This is important! It takes about 2 minutes to read and is REALLY important to taking the next step. Invest the 2 minutes – it will be worth it before you begin the questions. *****

Once you've thoroughly identified who your ICA is (walked the daily life in her shoes) it's time to chat with some real people - customers. The goal is to have actual conversations (not email, not via a survey – actual phone or in-person conversations) with at least 5 people that you believe to be your ideal customer. If you have existing customers and there is 1 or 3 PERFECT customers for your business, chat with them (again, not via email or survey – over the phone or in-person).

This doesn't have to be anything formal – or scary or intimidating. If you pick people you already thoroughly enjoy working with, it will make the conversation easy peasy.

The goal of these conversations is to LISTEN – yes, ask questions but don't make it seem like they are on trial (direct Q&A). Just have an idea of what you want to accomplish and focus on the conversation. You should make them feel comfortable, make it engaging and you are a compassionate and focused listener. And if you need something to keep track of, make sure they are doing most of the talking (not you). So put your phones, mobile devices, computers, pens, and anything else that might distract you away, turn it off, keep it in the car or office. You need to be present to make the time with each customer valuable and effective.

Remember: the goal of this exercise is to really understand your customer's wants, needs, fears, frustrations and desires. Having such insight into the emotional level of who your existing perfect customers are, will help you generate new business of similar customer types. That makes for a happy business! It also helps with product and service creation. The only way to make this a reality to become a research detective (OK, well, not detective – but a passionate researcher – even if it's for a short time. Time to put that acting hat on and become a character in YOUR business!)

Armed with this highly insightful and valuable information will help you become a better marketer and sales person. Why, you ask? You will know what the problems are and ideal solutions, what makes them act and what they don't like. You can incorporate your learnings – including exact language to use - into your messaging and let the emotional side of business do the work for you – PEOPLE BUY ON EMOTION. If you're relatable to what they need, when they need it, guess what? They buy from you.

To sell is to be human. People do business with people. Be kind, caring, interested and you'll naturally uncover what you need to better serve your audience.

ONE LAST THING: The below questions should be used as a guide of what to use – you do not need to use all of these.

Once you have your list of 5 customers/prospects, choose the questions that are most relevant to your goals. Keep the amount of time you have in mind as well. You want to respect any time restrictions you've committed to the conversation and any time constraints they may have.



Sample Questions to Consider

Walk me through a typical day. What does it look like?

If I were to walk into your office right now, what projects would be on your white board?

I'm working on a new idea for _____ [you product/project/service] and I'm curious... Who do you currently use for _____ [solution]?

What's working for you currently? What do you like about _____ [current provider, product, approach, current situation]? Based on their response, consider following up with: 'That makes sense. Tell me more about why that's important to you...'



ALWAYS support the solution they are currently using (which is most likely a competitor). *Especially* if they're using a competitor. NEVER talk bad about the competition. Ask more insightful questions to find out what they value about their current solution or situation. The goal is to find out 'why' they've chosen their current provider. Then ask the 'magic wand' question: in a perfect world, what would this product/solution look like? (Look for what's missing or what should be improved. This will help you identify where the gaps are with their current solution and help you identify how your solution might be a better decision.)

These questions will help you dig deeper into their 'why':

What would you like to change about how things are today or how you anticipate the future?

What are your top 3 frustrations? What's not working?

What 3 things do you believe could be improved?

What does this _____ [problem, frustration, issue] cost you in terms of lost time, money or aggravation?

What's the biggest pain for you around _____ [problem, frustration, issue]?

How important is this for you to handle right now?

What would get better in your life if this was a non-issue?

Have you ever paid for a product or service like this before? If so, what did you pay for products or services like this?

What did you like best about it?

What frustrates you about this kind of product or service?

What's a dream solution for you in this area?

Have you researched this product/service in the past? If so, when? Why did you not move forward?

What methods did you use: Google, social media (which ones?), friends or something else?

What prompted you/the key motivator for you in looking to purchase this kind of product/service?

What criteria will you use for whether the product/service is good/bad or right/wrong for you?

What social media sites do you spend the most time on? Why?

What are your favorite email subscriptions, websites, magazines, stores and brands? Why?

Finish this statement: 'I wish companies/brands/providers understood _____ about me.'

If money were no object, what brand or kind of product/service would you buy?

After your time together, send a hand written follow-up thank you card (and be specific about what you're thankful for – not just a general 'thank you for your time').