

HOW TO CREATE YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER AVATAR

Before you can market your product or service effectively, you have to know who your ideal customer is and that means building a customer avatar.

Long gone is the mentality of “If I build it, they will come.” Instead, it’s replaced with the far more effective idea of finding an underserved market and building a product or service for that audience.

But to do that effectively, you first need to know who “they” are. By the end of this post, you should have a solid grasp on how you can create your avatar for use across your entire business.

With your customer avatar, you’ll see a significant boost in your conversions because your marketing will feel more like a one-on-one conversation than a mass pitch.

Your customer avatar will affect what content you make, which ad platforms you’ll use, what type of products you’ll create, and how you’ll talk to your audience.

■ DOWNSIDES OF NOT USING CUSTOMER AVATARS

Unfortunately, I see a lot of companies that skip creating customer avatars. Instead, they rely on a few people at the company having a vague idea of who their audience is based on demographics found in Google Analytics. The worst part is that they usually don't even write these few details down.

But without formally writing down these details you run into some major issues. First off, each person in your company will have a different idea of who your customer is. This leads to incoherent marketing and less revenue.

The second issue is that whenever new people or consultants start working with your company they have almost no data to go off of. Descriptions like business owners looking to grow their revenue or women who want to feel beautiful are vague and unhelpful in actually representing your customer segment.

This sort of limited information is usually just enough to get that new person in trouble when they have to blindly assume who they're talking too.

Just like any good [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\)](#), A customer avatar creates clarity in your organization.

I'm going to show you the process to create your avatar and give you a customer avatar template so you can avoid confusing your coworkers and most importantly your customers.

FINDING YOUR MARKET SEGMENT

Before you can begin to build your individual customer avatars you must first discover your general audience. This requires you to look at both internal and external factors in order to find your market segment.

Why would you help for free?
Think of the long haul (20 years)
What are you and your team good at?
What comes easy?

AFFINITY

Is there an explicit need?
Is there search volume?
Is the market growing?
Can you solve it better, cheaper or faster?

REACH

How easily can you target online?
Which social channels do they use?
List interests, experts, publications, associations
and groups?

PROBLEM

LEADERSHIP

Can you be seen as the "go-to" provider?
How competitive is the niche?
What messaging is being used in the market?

VALUE

Can they afford your solution?
What's the size of the niche?
Can you quantify the ROI?
Is there potential for recurring revenue?

AFFINITY

First, you have to pinpoint what your business is the most passionate about. If you've put together a [mission statement](#), you should already have the answer to this question.

For instance, Salesforce has an affinity for building custom solutions to meet their client's specific needs. They love to help salespeople do their job better.

Filling out this worksheet should also help you pinpoint your [unique selling proposition](#) (what you're best at). That combined with a strong mission statement, should give you a unique brand identity.

PROBLEM

Are people looking for a solution to a problem that you can solve? The answer is probably yes, and to find these underserved markets you can use Google Keyword Tools and Quora. But don't dive into that market segment until you answer these questions:

Is the market growing or declining?

Can you solve the problem better, cheaper, faster?

Is it a proven problem with an explicit solution?

Getting the answers to these questions will save you from investing into a saturated or dying marketing, with no hope of turning a profit.

VALUE

Everyone wants to solve their customers problems but first, you have to make sure it's profitable to do so. You have to know that your audience can afford your solution.

Imagine you have a high-ticket product that could mass filter polluted and wastewater, making it drinkable. There are huge global markets that would love that product, but which segment can actually afford it?

You also have to reach a minimal niche market size for your marketing segment of at least 100,000 people. Anything smaller and you'll struggle to scale your business after a short time.

Lastly, you need to look at the potential ROI and see if it's worth the time and resources you'll need to build a solution.

■ LEADERSHIP

You have to be able to stand out in whatever niche market you're in. That means if you can't be seen as an authority or the best product in your category, you should avoid that segment.

If you're in a broad category like graphic design, you are unlikely to be the authority in that field. You should niche down in that market segment. So you could be the graphic design firm for banner ads. If that's too broad, you can go one level further and be the graphic design firm that builds the best banner ads for financial services.

■ REACH

Is there a clear way to reach this target audience?

Discover where each marketing segment hangs out online. Find their groups, interests, experts they follow, publications they read, and who they associate with online.

With that information, you'll have a better idea of how you're going to target each segment.

Now that you have a general idea on how to find your market segment, use this worksheet to quickly build out each niche market:

NICHE 1

NICHE 2

NICHE 3

AFFINITY

Why would you help for free?

Think of the long haul (20 years)

What are you and your team good at?

What comes easy?

PROBLEM

Is there an explicit need?

Is there search volume?

Is the market growing?

Can you solve it better, cheaper or faster?

VALUE

Can they afford your solution?

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Can you quantify the ROI?

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LEADERSHIP

Can you be seen as the "go-to" provider?

How competitive is the niche?

What messaging is being used in the market?

REACH

How easily can you target online?

Which social channels do they use?

List interests, experts, publications, associations and groups?

After you find your niche market segment, you're ready to discover what customer avatars exist within each one.

WHAT IS A CUSTOMER AVATAR?

Before you can create your avatar, you need to have a clear understanding of what a customer avatar is and isn't.



In the most basic sense, a customer avatar is the broad representation of each segment of your audience. It's a collection of goals, values, and mindset that large portions of your audience share.

It isn't just a set of demographics. Ideally, you'll have a general understanding of each avatar's ultimate desire. Because each customer avatar has unique desires, most companies have at least 2-3.

For instance, you could have a global news product that has the main customer avatar of 45+ white male business professionals who make \$100k+ a year. But more importantly, this customer avatar doesn't want to be told what their opinion is, preferring to be presented with all the facts and deciding for themselves. They want to grow their businesses using the information you provide to build strategies for a global market.

Now compare this example with the generic example of business owners looking to grow their revenue. The longer description paints a very distinct picture and gives you helpful insight on how to talk to them in your marketing.

A full customer avatar will have a lot more to it but hopefully that gives you a an idea of how in depth you can get using our customer avatar template.

GOALS AND VALUES

Robert Research goals:

- Automate as much of his business as possible
- Increase revenue earned
- Have a efficient and focused team

Robert Research values:

- Constantly learning and growing professionally
- Keeping up with industry trends
- Providing his customers with the most value for their money

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CHALLENGES & PAIN POINTS

Robert Research's Challenges:

- Being able to try various marketing tool because of budget
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Robert Research's pain points are:

- Fear of wasting his budget on tools that don't work
- Fear of missing on the newest marketing techniques

OBJECTIONS & ROLE IN PURCHASE PROCESS

Objections to purchase:

- Will the marketing solution give enough more value back then money invested?
- Is the marketing tool proven by viable third party sources?

Role In Purchase Process:

Robert Research has a set budget that he is expected to train his team and grow the revenue with. He is price sensitive and needs a guarantee solution to his problems.

Now that you have a good understanding of what a customer avatar is and why you need it, let me show you how to create your avatar.

TIP #1

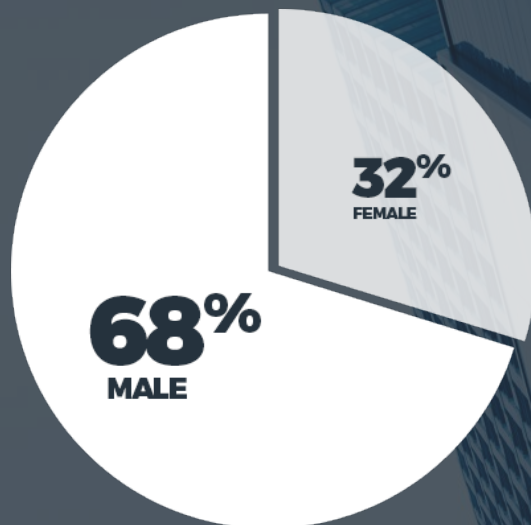
Create your avatar as soon as possible. A lot of businesses want to wait for absolute data via interviews and surveys, this leads to the customer avatar never actually being made. Use what assumptions and data that you have on hand to give you the broad stroke and then refine your customer avatar once you do have more qualitative information. Using the customer avatar template laid out in this article, you should be able to quickly create a few customer avatars.

HOW TO BUILD A CUSTOMER AVATAR IN 5 PARTS

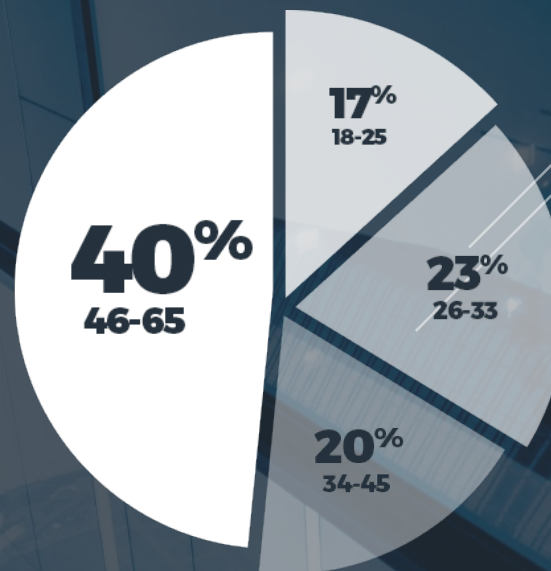
The following is a five-part recipe for putting together a great foundation for a customer avatar. I would highly suggest creating one for each major segment of your audience.

One easy starting point when you create your avatar is to use demographics and split your audience into pie graphs. For instance here are a few common metrics that could give you a strong starting point.

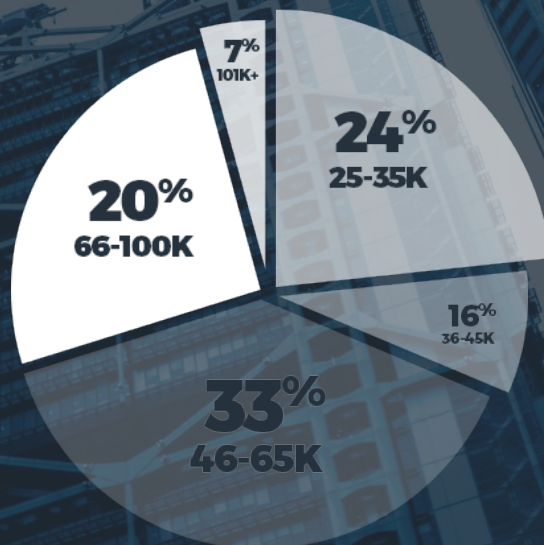
GENDER



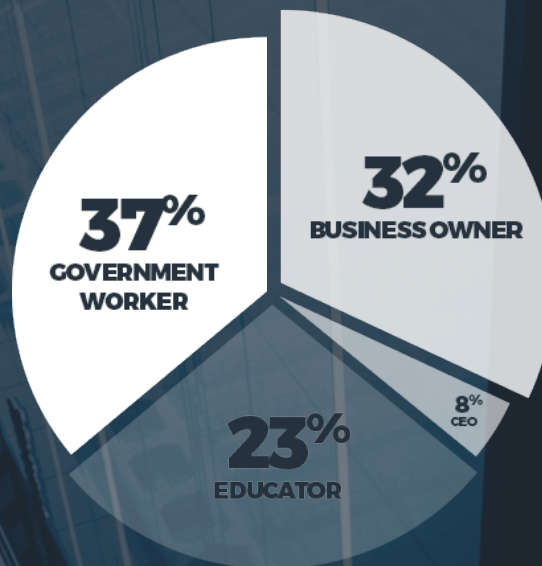
AGE RANGE



YEARLY SALARY



PROFESSION



Once you've done a few of these breakdowns, you'll be able to figure out which customer segment makes up the majority of your audience and then proceed onto determining more about them.

This article and free customer avatar template offered below will give you a great foundation for your avatar but you should definitely consider fleshing them out further with information like preferred words and interests. You'd be surprised at how useful it is to know whether your audience is mostly dog lovers, cat lovers, or don't like animals.

TIP #2

Every avatar should have a unique name to make it easy to identify them. The name should reflect your ideal customer. For instance, if you have a customer avatar that's male and their defining characteristic is that they prefer to do a bunch of third-party research before purchasing, you could name them something like Robert Research.

PART 1: GOALS AND VALUES

The first qualitative metric used in building customer avatars is based on goals and values. This will include both long-term and short-term goals. You combine both of goals and values because you need to know how your customer avatar defines success.

You may have two drastically different segments in one audience. One portion may value the size of their bank account above all else and another segment values their free time.

Ideally, you'll help them reach all their goals but their value determines which they prefer to have first. That's why it's important to not only figure out their goals but what priority the place each one.

Here's an example of a goal and value run-down:

GOALS AND VALUES

Robert Research goals:

- Automate as much of his business as possible
- Increase revenue earned
- Have a efficient and focused team

Robert Research values:

- Constantly learning and growing professionally
- Keeping up with industry trends
- Providing his customers with the most value for their money

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CHALLENGES & PAIN POINTS

Robert Research's Challenges:

- Being able to try various marketing tool because of budget
- Having time to train his team while maintain his KPIs
- Keeping up on the latest in marketing technology

Robert Research's pain points are:

- Fear of wasting his budget on tools that don't work
- Fear of missing on the newest marketing techniques

OBJECTIONS & ROLE IN PURCHASE PROCESS

Objections to purchase:

- Will the marketing solution give enough more value back then money invested?
- Is the marketing tool proven by viable third party sources?

Role In Purchase Process:

Robert Research has a set budget that he is expected to train his team and grow the revenue with. He is price sensitive and needs a guarantee solution to his problems.

With this information, you can build new products, create highly targeted content, and write higher converting copy.

For instance, with the above goals and values, we could create a product that shows this audience a course about email automation that can increase monthly revenue by 30%.

Then you can use messaging like, “Want to automate your sales process while increasing revenue?”

Their opinions, behaviors, and events are crucial to understanding what their goals and values are. This is where you can really deep dive by using surveying tools and [Facebook Audience Insight](#).

PART 2: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Knowing where your audience finds their information is the best way to determine how to reach them. It also helps you figure out how to entice and thrill them.

For instance, if your customer avatar spends a considerable time reading books, then a free eBook would be an excellent [lead magnet](#). You could also offer a free Kindle book as a bonus when they buy your product or service.


To find your audiences information sources, you need to think about sources that are exclusive to them. The best way to do that is by qualifying each information source with ‘only they would do this’ statements.

Here are some examples:

- Only Robert Research would get information from the Advertising Age magazine.
- Only Robert Research would religiously listen to the Marketing Over Coffee podcast.
- Only Robert Research attends the annual American Marketing Association conference every year.

The more specific you can get about how your customer avatar finds information, the easier it is to get your message in front of them. With this knowledge, you can avoid being broad and speak only to your audience. That will [increase your conversions](#) while lowering your ad cost.

Here are Robert Research's Information sources:

GOALS AND VALUES		CHALLENGES & PAIN POINTS
<p>Robert Research goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Automate as much of his business as possible-Increase revenue earned-Have a efficient and focused team <p>Robert Research values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Constantly learning and growing professionally-Keeping up with industry trends-Providing his customers with the most value for their money	<p>Name: ROBERT RESEARCH</p> <p>Age: 45+</p> <p>Status: MARRIED</p> <p>Household: 2 CHILDREN (AGES 12 & 17)</p> <p>Location: UPSTATE NEW YORK</p> <p>Education: MBA</p> <p>Employment: MARKETING DIRECTOR</p> <p>Household:</p> <p>Income: \$100,000</p> 	<p>Robert Research's Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Being able to try various marketing tool because of budget-Having time to train his team while maintain his KPIs-Keeping up on the latest in marketing technology <p>Robert Research's pain points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Fear of wasting his budget on tools that don't work-Fear of missing on the newest marketing techniques
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Another example of information sources in action is if you had a company that sold computerized telescopes. If your audience loves experts, you might want to use a notable expert like Neil DeGrasse Tyson to reach your customer avatar. But since most people know about him, he's too broad of a choice resulting in you wasting ad spend to reach an unrelated audience.

A better choice for that audience is NASA astronaut and notable Astrophysicist Michael Foale, because he would be known in that community but not widely known elsewhere.

- Some examples of sources are:

- Books
- Magazines
- Conferences
- Thought Leaders
- Television
- Live Streaming
- Forums
- Social Media
- Websites
- Blogs
- Brands

This information is particularly helpful when buying paid traffic. With this information, you should be able to very specifically target your customer avatar on platforms like Facebook.

PART 3: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics are essential to bringing your customer avatar to life and are found in the center of the accompanying worksheet.

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Role In Purchase Process:

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You'll fill in all the usual metrics including: gender, age, marital status, household size, location, education, profession, and household income.

One of the most powerful parts of having accurate demographics is giving your customer avatar a defined look and feel. This helps you visualize who you're talking to in your messaging and with your products or services.

There are numerous ways to find demographics, but some of the [more powerful tools](#) are advertising and social media platforms. Facebook, Google, Youtube, and Twitter all provide multiple ways to gather demographic data on your audience.

PART 4: CHALLENGES AND PAIN POINTS

Knowing your audience's challenges is just as important as knowing their goals. With this information, you'll be able to convince your ideal customer to take action by highlighting how awful their issue is and how amazing it will be to solve it.

It's also one of your best sources for new product and service ideas. This section pairs well with the market segment research you did prior to building your customer avatar. Think of the 'problem' section of your marketing segment research as the big picture while challenge and pain points are very specific issues that you can solve.

Like if Robert Research only has a small marketing budget, so he can't afford to try every new marketing tool. Robert Research wants to grow his business but lacks the budget to make mistakes. This leads him to avoid testing new tools and slows down the growth of his company. You express their pain points and challenges like this:

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Some of the best places to find these pain points are by looking at what your audience is searching for on [Google](#). You can also find common challenges on forums and question sites like Reddit, Quora, and many Facebook groups.

PART 5: OBJECTIONS & ROLE IN PURCHASE PROCESS

Once you've figured out the first four parts of your customer avatar, you're ready to answer two very important questions. First, what would stop them from buying your product or service? And what decision power do they hold in their company?

If you take Robert Research as an example, he won't use a service or product unless it is proven to work with a ton of third-party proof.

So a good message for Robert would be something like, "Get the #1 email automation training according to Forbes."

Here's Robert Research's Objection & Purchase Role:

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EXPANDING ON YOUR FOUNDATION

After you fill out the five parts above you'll have a strong foundational customer avatar that will help every part of your business.

Congratulations! But you're not done yet. Now you can follow up your initial creation with survey driven details. That way you can capture the thoughts and opinions of your customer avatar in their own natural language.

GOALS AND VALUES

NOW

CHALLENGES & PAIN POINTS

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

**OBJECTIONS & ROLE IN PURCHASE
PROCESS**

EVENTUAL



This worksheet will help you flesh out your customer avatar and give you a good idea of what type of follow up questions to ask your audience.

SHORT TERM QUESTIONS:

■ PAINS & FRUSTRATIONS

The key to dealing with pain and frustrations is to ask “why does that matter?” and drill down on the real issue. This also helps with figuring out the long term and short term goals of your customer avatar.

In your survey, you can ask your audience questions like, What is your biggest roadblock that slowed you down this month? OR *What’s the biggest factor slowing down the growth of your business in the next few years?*

These questions are specific yet open-ended to let your audience respond while not leading them.

After the initial answer you can ask, “Why does that matter?” This should get you closer to discovering the underlying pain beyond the symptom.

■ GOALS & DESIRES

You already have some idea of what your customer avatar wants, but with a quick survey, you may find the deeper reason for those desires. This also gives you the exact phrasing they use which will be indispensable when you’re writing copy for them.

TIP #3

Using the customer avatar’s natural language increases conversions drastically. That’s because it conveys a familiarity with their desires in terms that they understand. It’s based on the same principle of wanting to work with people you like and helps your customers trust you quicker.

LONG-TERM QUESTIONS:

FEARS & IMPLICATIONS

Take their pain and frustrations and ask what the long-term result would be if all their fears came true. It's essentially the answer to, *What's the worst that can happen?*

Some good questions to fill out this section with are:

"What happens if your business becomes last in your industry?"

"What happens if you continue to use outdated strategies and tools?"

These kinds of questions should elicit a response that shows you both their fears and what the implications are if they came true.

DREAMS & ASPIRATIONS

These are your customer avatar's ultimate goals. With the right questions, you can design beautiful transformation stories that show your audience how they can go from where they are to the best possible outcome.

Asking your audience some direct questions can be good for this section as well as looking at what they're searching for on Google. With these final details, you'll have a thorough understanding of your who ideal customer is so that you can talk directly to them in your marketing.

You'll be able to create desired products, convincing messages, and problem-solving content. But because we want to make creating your customer avatars super easy we're including a customer avatar template:

This tool will let you quickly create accurate customer avatars using the principles shown in this article.

Do you use customer avatars? What did you think of this article? Leave any questions or comments below, we love talking about customer avatars!



FOUNDER OF PERFORMANCE MARKETER **MEET ANTON**

Anton is an eCommerce expert, digital marketing maverick, and is featured in numerous articles and podcasts including Forbes.

Over the the past decade, Anton has helped 5,500+ people build digital businesses with his proven methods. From eCommerce to membership sites, he's created result driven processes that help people from any level build profitable businesses.

Anton's mission is to empower people to build and grow their own business by leveraging the best technology and marketing strategies. He believes that you can rapidly grow your business with minimal mistakes by combining proven paid and organic business tactics.

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TOTAL VALUE \$6417



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