



How to Build a Content Marketing Plan for Your Top-value Buyers

All the steps you need to take to identify content that will generate interest from your top buyers, inspire them to trust you, and convince them to buy from you.



Introduction

You're a big believer in content marketing. You know that content marketing drives 6x higher conversion rates than other forms of marketing and costs 62% less to launch than any other type of campaign. You may well have gotten started creating and distributing content to bring your target buyers closer to your brand.

But you probably have a couple of issues if you downloaded this book.

- You don't really know the most ideal, highest-value candidates to target with your content
- You know who your buyers are, but you don't know how to match content to who they are, how they buy, and what's important to them
- You might be churning out content but not getting any traction and so you suspect that your content is not reaching the right buyers with the right topics at the right time.

The fact is that ONLY if you have a deep understanding of your customers and know how to apply that knowledge to define content types and topics, will you attract high-value visitors, leads, and customers to your business.

This book will simplify the process of understanding your top-value buyer personas, learning what they care about, and planning the most effective content for them. Specifically, after reading this book you will know:

- Who your top-values buyers are
- The characteristics and preferences that affect the way you market to them
- The topics they most want to read about
- How to create a content calendar
- How to distribute that content

You will have the knowledge to start creating focused, relevant, and timely content to draw potential customers closer to your brand.



What is a buyer persona and why are they important?

This is the starting point for our work in building great content for your top-value target customer.

What is a buyer persona?

A buyer persona is a representation of your ideal customer...

...founded upon data from market research, customer interviews, and sales team members

...generating insights that can be used by marketing, sales, and product teams to make informed decisions and build smarter strategies

...to get the highest possible share of attention from high-value potential customers, attract strong leads, and facilitate their conversion and retention process.

There are common characteristics—such as major goals or pain points, or the places they go to find information--across a group or category of buyers such as Chief Marketing Officers or Head of Product Development. It's these common characteristics you are interested in. You are, essentially, creating a dossier of this ideal customer, formally noting the characteristics they have that influence how they interact with you and that will influence how you interact with them.



Buyer personas are semi-fictional representations of your ideal customers based on data and research. They help you focus your time on qualified prospects, guide product development to suit the needs of your target customers, and align all work across your organization, from marketing to sales to service. – [HubSpot](#)



Why are buyer personas important?

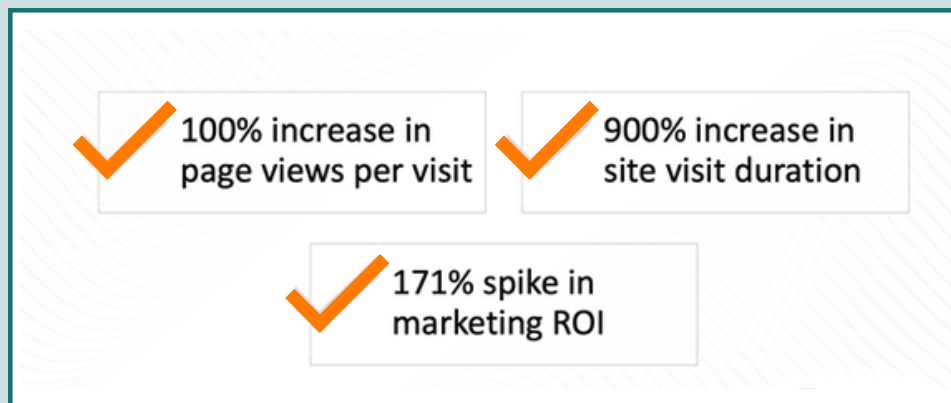
Buyer personas are foundational to your content program because only by knowing them can you create content that inspires, educates, and converts them into buyers.

Buyer personas help you understand what makes your customers tick so you can decide:

- What topics to talk to them about – their pain points and areas of interest
- What kinds of content to create – i.e., ebooks, blog posts, infographics, or videos
- How to personalize messaging, content, copywriting, and design
- Where to deliver content so your audience will find it – i.e., your website, on social, or via a newsletter

For example, you may know your best buyers are start-up founders, but do you know their specific needs, interests, and struggles? Do you know who influences them and how they make decisions? If you don't, then you've got some major gaps in your strategy for marketing to them.

Customization of your content works! It is the end game for buyer persona development. According to SEMrush, it generates:





Developing your personas

Now that you understand what personas are and why you need them, it's time to go find the characteristics of your personas and create the persona document.

Finding out who your buyers are

Here you figure out the job titles you should target, and you likely already have this information. This is what you'll need to do:

- Look through contact databases or Customer Relationship Management software (CRM), like Salesforce, to uncover trends about who your leads and customers are.
- Talk to your sales team to get the job titles they are targeting and having the most success with.
- Talk to your leadership. Who did they build the product for in the first place? Who do they WANT to target or THINK the best targets are?

Pick the top 2-3 personas. Don't take on more than 3 to start.

Reminder

These personas are not anyone who uses your product and services, but people with the money and the influence to buy them. It's ok to have a practitioner as a buyer persona if they are an influencer, but it's important to remember that they are not usually the ones who buy.

Your buyers will usually be senior-level people with VP or Chief titles.

Your influencers will be practitioners with Manager, Director, and Lead titles.

Where to get your data

Now you'll go gather the data you need to build out the characteristics of the 3 buyers you've identified. Where does this information live?

- Existing customer data in a Customer Relationship Management software (CRM), like Salesforce
- Account and client service managers
- Sales team members
- Business/digital data (like Google Analytics, and Facebook Audience insights)
- Market research
- Job descriptions. These are a gold mine. They often tell you the goals of the role, responsibilities, and how success is measured for that role.

And your actual customers! Your sales and account teams should be able to identify who would be good candidates to speak with and they should agree to introduce you to them. Set up an hour, record the call, and generate a transcript so you can go back to it.

You can find a list of questions to ask in persona interviews at the end of this ebook.

Here's an email template for customer interviews

Hi [Customer],

We're thrilled that we have been able to help [your company] reach their goals and we are proud of the success of our relationship. One of the most important parts of our business is to deeply understand our customers so we can customize our products and services for them, provide the best support, and create the most useful and relevant content. Would you be willing to speak to us for half an hour about your challenges and goals so we can improve our understanding of our ideal customers?

Let us know and we'll send an invite right over.

All the best,

[Your name]

Five tips for customer interviews:

- **Do your homework.** The interviewer must go into this call with knowledge of the person and the business relationship history, including which of your products they are using, any outcomes of the work, and any information about their challenges. Research before you get them on the phone so you don't ask any obvious questions or things you should already know.
- **Have the customer account manager** join you for the interview; they already have built trust with the customer and that can ease the conversation.
- **Never send the questions list to your customer.** An interview is better than scripted answers and you can ask clarifying questions in a conversation.
- **Record it and generate a transcript** (most meeting tools like Zoom and Teams have this feature). No need to take notes while having a conversation with anyone anymore.
- **Send a thank you.** An email at least, but, if you can, send them a company t-shirt or mug afterward as a thank you.



What about using AI for buyer personas?

If you need to get moving faster and plan to iterate later, or if you don't yet have customers available to speak with you, you can turn to AI. A prompt would be as follows: You would swap out the colored text for information specific to your business and your target market.

I am the owner of a **social media marketing company**. Build a buyer persona for a **Marketing Director of a \$10M non-profit in the Midwest US** who needs to provide **better access to healthcare resources in under-served communities**. The goals of this person are **to find translators for the non-English speakers in the community and to create more effective fundraising campaigns**. Include specific details about this person's goals, pain points and decision criteria for selecting a **social media marketing company**.

OR


I am the owner of an **organic dog food company**. Build a persona for an **urban middle class mom with kids who want to make sure their dog stays healthy**. The goals of this person are **to extend the dog's life, keep him free from illness and pain and feed him food with healthy, organic ingredients**. Include specific details about this person's goals, pain points and decision criteria **for selecting a dog food brand**.



Consolidate your findings into one visual slide or page

By now you'll have pages of information on each buyer, but that isn't your final output. You need to consolidate and summarize that information so people can easily digest it, refer to it, and use it in their jobs.

For each of the 2-3 identified buyer personas, your end result should look something like this:

 <p>Sales Buyer Persona</p> <p>Common job titles: Business Development Director Solutions Development Rep</p>	<p>Job Duties and Responsibilities</p> <p>What is this person responsible for day to day? (Look at a JD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here	<p>Measures of success</p> <p>What are the top metrics they track? What are they expected to achieve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here	<p>Goals</p> <p>Professional and personal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here
<p>Demographics and details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age• Education• Location• Decision maker or influencer?• Where they go for info? They read...• Who influences them? They listen to...	<p>Challenges and pain points</p> <p>What does this person struggle with in relation to meeting goals? What roadblocks do they have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here	<p>Common Objections</p> <p>Why wouldn't they buy your product/service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here <p>Your text here</p>	<p>Marketing Messaging</p> <p>How can you describe your solution to have the biggest impact on your persona? What resonates most with your persona?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here• Your text here

And voila! You now have documented buyer personas. Be sure to:

- socialize and share the results
- tell your colleagues how these should be used
- welcome feedback
- store them in a place your colleagues can access.

You might also consider doing a formal training to present these buyers to the people in your organization who need them—sales, marketing, product, and customer service people—and give them concrete information about how to use these in their jobs.



Figuring out the topics that matter to your top-value buyer

When you interviewed your customers, you got a good sense of what keeps them up at night and the problems they are trying to solve. They may have even given you topics that they would like to understand and learn more about.

Use that insight to generate a strong list of topics for the content pieces you'll create. You only need 15-20 topics to work with in the next steps. You'll start by reviewing the interview notes and brainstorming subjects to cover in your content. This is a fun, live meeting (in-person or virtual): get everyone on the team to write down 6-10 topics each on Post-it notes, put them up on a wall, gather them, and then select the best.

If this meeting doesn't get you the breadth of topics you need, there are other places you can go to find those exact topics your buyers may be interested in. Pick a few of the below sources to go searching.

Competitor's websites

Look at competitor content-often in their resources center-including ebooks, blog posts, quizzes, customer stories/case studies, and videos. See what topics they are covering and assess if you can cover them better or with a deeper focus. Don't forget to check out their FAQs to see what questions they felt they needed to answer for customers.

Search terms being used

What search terms bring people to your site and your competitors' sites? Long tail keywords are topics.

Keyword explorer tools

First, identify your main keywords, then plug them into [Moz's free keyword explorer](#). You'll get lots of choices to think about. The longer tail keywords are GREAT topic ideas.

Google auto-populate feature

You know the 10 or so other choices that come up when you type in a search? Gold.

Trending topics tools

There are a number of tools you can use to learn which topics are trending

- **Quora** is a massive forum where people ask questions about anything you can think of. You type in the topic your readers might be interested in or the name of your industry, and you will start finding questions to turn into content. Search for your niche and find the most popular threads.
- **AnswerThePublic**, a tool from NP Digital, maps out in a cool-looking circle what other topics people ask about when they type in a search. It makes it easy to find specific, pressing concerns that many users have.
- **Use Google Trends** to learn what people in your target market are searching for information about.
- **Reddit can be helpful.** Gather a list of subreddits relevant to your business, sort by top posts, and then dive deep into the comments!

Your product, sales, account, or customer service teams

These people are closest to your customers and will be well aware of what the customers are struggling with. They can be a great source of content ideas. Also, your product marketers are often involved in solving client problems and/or often have an opinion about how to (or not to) get something done. Connect with these people from time to time to see what they have learned, are thinking about, or are working on.

Your C-level

What do they want to talk about? Connect with them and find out what's on their minds for the industry.

Narrowing down your topics and defining pillars

Once you have a solid list of topics that are of interest to your buyers, you need to categorize them into four pillars, which are the themes your topics will fall under.

Your pillars (themes) are general areas of discussion of interest to your buyers, the top things you want to talk about, and are aligned with your core service offerings. Think of them as the legs on your table holding up your content strategy. You need to decide what these pillars are for your business. The trick is choosing only four and sticking to those. Chances are you generated a lot of topics and ideas that are not central to your business and customer goals – not bad topics, but you should set them aside. Your pillars should also be unique in the market – if you can see that they are covered to death then move on.

Why only four pillars?

- you simply cannot create content on all these topics
- this allows you to niche down and focus your thought leadership and efforts on areas where you can really make a difference to your audience
- this means you can be known as experts in just a few things (not everything) and the go-to for content on those topics



For example, using the organic dog food company example, the team came up with the below 15 topics.

1. How to see signs of illness in your dog
2. How to extend the life of your dog
3. What are the most common dog allergies?
4. What are the best foods for older dogs?
5. What are the best organic dog foods?
6. What are the best all-natural dog foods?
7. What foods should dogs avoid
8. What are common illnesses that can be helped with diet?
9. What are ingredients to look out for in dog food?
10. What are some allergy friendly dog foods?
11. What dog foods have the best nutritional balance?
12. What dog foods can help with arthritis and joint pain?
13. What are the worst dog food brands?
14. What is a well-balanced diet for a dog?
15. Should a dog's diet change as they age?



From these topics, the four pillars could be:

**Dog aging and
longevity**

Dog illnesses

Dog nutrition

**Organic
ingredients**

Each of the 15 topics above falls under one of these pillars.

Using these topics you will create multiple content pieces, essentially creating 'content clusters'. Content clusters are great for SEO and allow you to fully explore one pillar. Full coverage of topics under one pillar could even be an ebook. Moving forward, you continue to develop topics under these pillars to claim those topics online on behalf of your brand.

Note: you may get sick of these topics, but that means you're just getting started. Your audience needs to hear a message over and over before they see you as the expert and then engage with you.

How content maps to each stage of the buyer journey

You now understand your buyer personas and the topics they care about. You have organized those topics under the pillars that best represent what your buyer is interested in and what you want to talk about. However, you are not quite ready to create your content. It's time to talk about the buyer journey, which is the path customers take to purchasing your product. It's critical to understand what the journey looks like and the activities happening in each stage because this knowledge influences the type of format you use and the way you talk about your topics.

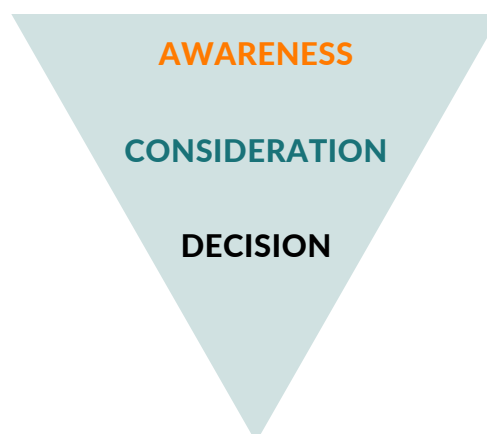
What you need to know about the buyer's journey

The buyer's journey is nothing more than a series of questions that must be answered.

-Michael Brenner, Marketing Insider Group

In other words, your content will need to match the types of questions your specific buyer is asking, and the stage at which they are asking them.

The buyer journey is comprised of three phases: awareness, consideration, and decision.



The goal is to move the buyer down the funnel with your content. There will be fewer and fewer people at each stage in the funnel until your potential customers are winnowed down to the small percentage of your audience that will actually buy from you. It looks like this:



Awareness stage

The buyer is 'problem-aware'.

A buyer in the awareness stage is experiencing a problem and needs help understanding, researching, and identifying solutions. He/she is searching online to more clearly understand, frame, or give a name to their problem. This is the stage where people look for answers, resources, education, research data, opinions, and insight.

This is also called Top of Funnel (TOFU) and is where most of your audience is.

Consideration stage

The buyer is 'solution-aware'.

People in the consideration stage know their problems and are looking for a solution. By now, they have clearly defined and given a name to their challenge. This is the stage where they are doing heavy research on services, products, or methods to solve the problem and trying to find which product or service is a good fit for them.

This is also called Middle of Funnel (MOFU).

Decision stage

The buyer is 'provider-aware'.

They have now decided on the solution or approach to their problem. They are researching to create a shortlist of vendors or products and ultimately make a final purchase decision. They are visiting the websites of specific vendors and viewing demos, features lists, and comparisons.

These people are ready to buy.

This is also called Bottom of Funnel (BOFU), and there are fewer people here.

Identifying the best content to create for your buyer: types and titles

Once you know your buyer, the topics that interest them, and the questions they are asking, you can make strategic choices about content that aligns with their interests in different phases of the journey.

Content mapped to each stage of the journey looks like this:

Stage	Content Types	Sample Titles
Awareness (20% of your content)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blog posts • roundups and interviews • infographics • social media posts • checklists • videos • high-level ebooks • webinars • quizzes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 10 reasons for (topic) • What you need to know about (topic) • Top 5 problems in (topic) • Top challenges of (topic) • What is (topic) • Who does (topic) help • Statistics about (topic) • When is (topic) needed
Consideration (40% of your content)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blog posts • social media posts • comparison guides • case studies • webinars • tip sheets • whitepapers / research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to do (topic) • Why do (topic) • How this client did (topic) • Top tips for resolving (topic) • Expert guide to doing (topic)
Purchase (40% of your content)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comparison guides • your story • case studies • price and features lists • free trials • testimonials • demos • free consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our approach versus their approach • Top product features of (your tool) • What (your company) believes in • How to choose an xx vendor • What xx client had to say about us • How xx client succeeded with us • A quick tour of our product • How to get started with (your product)

How much content is awareness?

20% of your content should be for the awareness stage, or TOFU.

This is a departure from traditional content marketing practices. Lots of TOFU is 2023; focus on BOFU is 2024. Why? AI is creating TOFU at the speed of sound and SGE is helping people get their basic questions answered. The place your business can best stand out and add value is middle and bottom of funnel.

Plus, you want sales right?
That's BOFU, or conversion content.



Creating a content calendar

Now you need to build the plan to get it done! You do this by creating a content calendar (also known as your editorial plan) which is a big-picture overview of all your content and when it will be published.

A content calendar includes:

- The list of content pieces you are going to create by the week
- The author, the date you want to publish it, the content type, keywords, call-to-action (CTA), and the title
- Important metadata like the target buyer, the pillar it falls under, the stage in funnel

You can access our editorial calendar template [here](#).

One tab per month will help you keep it organized.

Driving Process with a PM tool

You can build a content calendar in Excel or Google Sheets. But even better, you can create it in a project management tool such as Asana, Monday.com, or ClickUp. In that case, your content calendar would be one board or space.

The free versions of these tools are adequate.

Distributing and promoting your content

Creating great content is just the first step. Getting it out there so your top-value buyers can see it is critical. Distribution and promotion together are about providing your content to the right buyers in the right place at the right time. Some experts say that you should spend of your time 40% creating content and 60% of your time distributing it and promoting it.



The difference between content promotion and content distribution lies in the objective. Content distribution is about publishing your content in the best channels for your target audience, while content promotion is all about sharing your content with them in the broadest way possible.



Distribution channels

Choose the channels on which you will distribute your content, based on where you know your top target buyers hang out and go for information. Your tactics could include:

Email. B2Bs often have an email list, and they will email new content to that list of subscribers. Consider what types of emails will you send to distribute content. Newsletters? Long-form content offers? Nurture campaigns?

Social. Promoting on social such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and so on is mandatory in this day and age. Define the social channels you'll use, what you'll post, how often you'll post, and how social media engagement ties to revenue. To start, do not choose more than 2.

Website. It's common to post content on your website, often in a resources section, or as tiles on your home page, or an offer in your global footer. Consider NOT gating – make it frictionless for people to get your content.

Forums. Many business post content in forums such as those on LinkedIn.

Amplification tools. There are many options for amplifying your content, including services like [Boca](#), [Converge](#), [GaggleAMP](#), and [Outbrain](#). If you have the budget and resources, check these out.

Third-party distribution. This could be paid or organic. For paid, you can use sponsored content opportunities with trusted industry publications. Organic would be working with a partner to create mutually beneficial content.

Promotion tactics

Promotion is broadcasting to your audience that your content exists. First, you put your content out there in the channels where your target audiences search for information, and now you are making it visible wherever you can. While you don't want to post or email the same thing repetitively, you should promote multiple times to distribute and extend the reach of your content. It is ok to repost on social—there is no chance your entire target audience read the first promotion. If you send multiple emails, you should vary the copy.

Also, keep in mind that no content piece is 'one-and-done' – it's your content to reuse, recycle, and repurpose as you wish. And, as mentioned before, if your content is good then your audience is nowhere near sick of you yet.



What's next?

Now that you have the knowledge you need to create a buyer persona and define the best content for them, you can gather your team and do the work to:

- create those buyer personas
- find out their interests
- develop the pillars and topics
- build the calendar

However, you don't have to do this alone. With expert help you can do it more precisely and quickly. If you would like someone to work with your team on content planning, you can connect with us here. We also create 3-month content calendars and build processes for getting it all done.

Globia Content Marketing can help you build the foundations for your content program by pinpointing what your top-value customers care about and then serving them with great content.



Template: Top Questions to Ask in Persona Interviews

You can use this template to guide you when asking questions in live customer interviews.

Question	Answer
What are your job responsibilities?	
What does a day in your life look like?	
What challenges is your company/department working to resolve right now related to [your industry]?	
What are your biggest pain points related to [your industry]?	
What are the goals of your department?	
What are your personal goals related to work?	
How does the C-level measure your success?	
What is your role in purchase decisions? Who assists in decision-making?	
What are your decision criteria when looking to buy a new service/product?	
What are the topics of most interest to you in the industry?	
Who do you go to or where do you go for business advice or information?	
What was your path to purchasing a product (and eventually ours)?	
What are common objections or obstacles to making a change or purchase in your organization?	
What drew you to our company in the first place?	
What outcomes did you expect to get from our service? And what outcomes did you get? (Any surprises?)	
What do you like about working with us?	



Globia Content Marketing is a full-service global content marketing agency helping B2Bs with expert content marketing strategy, precise editorial planning, top-notch content development, and comprehensive translation planning so people all around the world can learn, be inspired, and solve problems with your content.

If you have not fully explored the power of content marketing, have only just gotten started and want to do more, or are creating content ad hoc without an overall strategy, Globia will help put the pieces of the puzzle together to drive growth for your business.

Most important, Globia can take on the important work your marketing team may be too small or not have the expertise to handle.

www.globiacontent.com