



Buyer Persona Development Tool

Buyer persona: A fictional character representing a targeted demographic type—a typical customer or prospect; usually most effective if 'humanized' and brought to life with rich details.

The Buyer Persona Development Tool is a template that guides you through the process of creating a buyer persona, setting up questions to help you describe your ideal buyer. It's a basic format, allowing you to make it as simple or as complex as your needs require.

We've filled out a couple of examples to help you understand how to use the template. For our examples, we used the personas of a mortgage broker and a loan processor, which might be used by a developer of software for the mortgage industry.

We like to start by giving our imaginary person a name and supplying a (stock) photo. This really helps make this persona feel real, allowing us to more easily endow him or her with skills, experience, education, thoughts, and feelings.

The Profile Overview

In the overview, imagine that you are telling a friend about this person. Is it a man or woman? About what age? What's his role? How does she spend her workday? Depending on your product or service, you may want to look at different kinds of attributes. The goal here is to build up a solid picture of this person that everyone can recognize.

Pain Points

What does your prospect worry about? What does she wish she could change? Be sure to create your list from the prospect's point of view.

Key Drivers/Motivators

These are the issues that mean the most to this person: the things that are behind every decision he makes, with particular emphasis on issues relating to your product/service.

Role in the Buying Committee

Is this person the decisionmaker? An influencer? Who might influence this person?

Effective Influences

What kind of content and information is most effective in communicating persuasively with this person? Are there particular kinds of information he is most likely to want? Is any one kind of media more effective than another? Is she likely to take advantage of any particular kinds of offers?

Buying Stage Table

This simple grid makes it easy to see how your messaging needs to change based on your prospect's stage in the buying cycle. First, you define your persona's motivation at each stage and what questions are being asked at that point. Then, you look at the right messages and value propositions that should be communicated at that stage, and what medium is best.

Working Through the Exercise

Persona development is a fascinating exercise to do with your team. You'll discover all kinds of new ideas and insights as you think about each facet of your buyer's personality.



Maria | Load Processor

DATABASE FIELDS & VALUES

Role:
Loan Processor

Type:
Prospect

Number of offices:
>2

Loans per month:
>5

Number of
loan officers:
>5

Region:
Segment X

Profile Overview

Loan processor Maria serves an administrative function in the mortgage brokerage. In her role, she is responsible for taking each loan through a complex process to achieve a complete, accurate loan file that is suitable for approval. Strict adherence to the established loan process is paramount. These processes are established by the broker in line with legal requirements and industry guidelines.

Maria deals with a tremendous amount of paperwork: taking in forms and sending papers out for review and signing are key parts of her job. Maria's hectic workday involves heavy interaction with the loan officer, the client, and at least half a dozen different service providers including credit agencies, appraisers, and title companies. Busy loan officers and emotional clients are constantly interrupting her for updates on the status of their loans. She must cheerfully maintain close communication with each client throughout the process, which typically takes 30 days or longer.

Maria is compensated per loan, so getting her loans done efficiently means more personal income. Like the majority of loan processors, Maria is a young woman aged between 25 and 35. She has a couple of years of experience in her field, and a minimal amount of advanced education (AA degree).

Maria spends all day using the mortgage software: it is the key tool with which she does her daily work. Although she does not make the final decision on what software to buy, she is one of the key influencers in the buying committee. If she does not see the benefit of using a particular software tool, she will either simply go on using the old tool, or she will stand in the way of change by making life difficult for the broker and loan officers. If the tool means that she can get her job done better, her influence will heavily influence the broker to purchase. Ultimately, her vote of confidence is essential in the broker's decision to buy.

Pain Points

- I am constantly being interrupted.
- I've got to have all the information I need at my fingertips, including scanned documents, secure email, and people's private financial data.
- I have to interact with multiple vendors.
- I work with loan officers that can be remote or work in different offices.
- I have to adhere to very stringent compliance regulations.
- My job involves many individual tasks and steps that have to be tracked.
- My job is very manual and very labor-intensive.

Key Drivers/Motivators

- I want to get loans done faster so I can do more of them and make more money.
- I want to adhere to defined processes and compliance guidelines so that I don't risk my job or my boss's brokerage license.
- I want to keep everyone informed and out of my hair.
- I want to do fewer manual tasks.

Role in the Buying Committee

- Primary user, heavy influencer
- Not the decisionmaker

Effective Influences (Read/See/Do)

- "Show and tell": seeing how the application does a better job than what she is using today
- Product demos and videos: visuals and examples
Seeing how she can automate repetitive tasks: demos, mini-tutorials
- Testimonials from others like herself: videos, mini-profiles
- Understanding how using this product can improve her skills and make her more marketable/valuable: information on available training, testimonials, case studies



INQUIRE



LEARN



EVALUATE

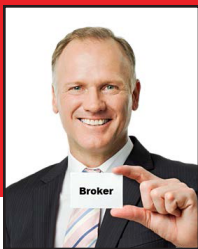


JUSTIFY



SELECT

Define the persona's motivation at each stage.	I wish I could get more done, faster and easier.	I want to see what other options there are to make this better.	I want to know the pros and cons.	I want to make sure this is a good idea.	I want this product.
What questions is your persona asking at each stage?	Is there some way to improve my workflow and make things easier?	What does this product do?	How is this product different from what I do today?	How hard will this be for me to use? How much learning is involved and what help is available? What about my current loans—how do I move my data?	How do I get training and support?
Define the key messages and value propositions	There are better tools than what you're using today, so you can do more loans and make more money.	Here's how easy it is to use, faster to transact with your vendors, all data in one place, keep everyone updated automatically in real time.	Feature comparisons, detailed how-to demos.	Migrating is easier, training is free.	N/A
What offers do they respond to?	Short simple online demos geared specifically to the processor.	Short videos showing key usages with tool. Webinar taught by professional loan processors who know old and new tools. Larger brokerages will require live demos.	They will participate in the free trial to a minor degree. Offer matrix comparing the features.	Free training on use. Knowing import of data is automated. Process/how-to guides.	Little to no involvement. Broker may solicit processor's feedback/input on likely adoption.



Gary | Mortgage Broker

DATABASE FIELDS & VALUES

Role:
Broker/Owner

Type:
Prospect

Number of offices:
>2

Loans per month:
>5

Number of
loan officers:
>5

Region:
Segment X

Profile Overview

Gary is a licensed mortgage broker and is the owner of the business, similar in role and responsibilities to a CEO. He has responsibility for the overall company strategy, operations, and process establishment, and is typically heavily involved in sales and marketing activities for the firm.

Most brokerage firms are relatively small, so Gary is much like a traditional small business owner: concerned with the day-to-day activities, personnel, and the bottom line. He also functions as a loan officer, generating new business and serving his own set of clients. In common with the majority of mortgage broker/owners, who are male aged 30-55, Gary has about 15-20 years of experience in financial services.

Gary spends a portion of his workday networking with potential clients and driving new business. He also communicates with current clients, especially high-profile or high-value ones. He stays in touch with the loan officers and processors, monitoring their pipelines and ensuring that each loan is progressing as it should, stepping in to help with necessary.

Pain Points

- I'm concerned about having data spread out on local PCs—it's hard to manage and secure.
- Our loan management process is not consistent.
- It's hard for us to adhere to strict compliance regulations.
- I don't have instant visibility into the sales pipeline and current status of each loan.
- I worry about the privacy of my clients' data.
- Some of my loan officers/processors need remote access.
- Our office staff has a relatively low level of education (such as AA degrees, or high school diplomas only).
- We have high staff turnover, and the new people have to be able to get up to speed fast.
- The complex loan process requires interaction with multiple vendors.

Key Drivers/Motivators

- I want to make more money by doing more loans and generating higher profits per loan.
- I need to keep costs low.
- I want to run an efficient business: time is money.
- I'd like all our data to be securely maintained in one place.
- I want to sleep well at night, knowing we're in legal compliance.

Role in the Buying Committee

- Makes the final purchase decision
- May be influenced by processor and loan officers

Effective Influences (Read/See/Do)

- Gary wants to see a product demo. Because he will use the application himself, he can relate to how it is used and see the benefits it will provide both to him and his staff.
- He is likely to make use of a free trial offer that allows real-world experience with the application.
- Recommendations from his staff do have an impact. Gary won't invest in something that his staff doesn't like.
- Gary values other brokers' opinions, and is influenced by what other successful brokers are using, so testimonials and case studies are good offers.
- As a business owner, he is influenced by the opinions of industry analysts and other experts.
- He will look for tools that help him define the ROI of this system, and to plan for migration and deployment



INQUIRE



LEARN



EVALUATE



JUSTIFY



SELECT

Define the persona's motivation at each stage.

My current system is outdated and isn't working for me.

I want to see what's out there.

I need to compare the options.

I am leaning toward this product and want to make sure it's right.

I want this product and I want it up and running quickly.

What questions is your persona asking at each stage?

How can I make my business run smoother and more profitable?

What tools are available? How much do they cost (roughly)?

Will this product work for us? What does life with the product look like? What will it take to migrate and deploy it?

Are the people using it successful? How are they using it? How has it impacted their business? What is total cost of ownership and can I afford it? Does my staff want it?

How will the vendor support us? What process changes are needed? Who in my organization will manage the migration? How long does it take?

Define the key messages and value propositions

A better tool will let you get more loans done faster and make more profit per loan.

The key benefits to you, the business owner; how it supports you and your staff; it is affordable for your size of business.

The features and benefits specific to each member of your team; how it will improve the workday; easy migration and deployment.

This solution is very popular and makes a lot of other businesses successful. It is a good investment.

You can take advantage of excellent deployment tools, service and support offerings, training availability.

What offers do they respond to?

Online product info/demo, brochure.

Webinars, online product demos, online videos, downloadable case studies, analyst info/reviews.

Free trial, side-by-side comparisons.

Case studies, testimonials, videos from both business owners and their staff, ROI calculator.

How-to guides, implementation tools, training curriculum.








DATABASE FIELDS & VALUES

Field:

Value:

Field:

Value:

Field:

Value:

Field:

Value:

Profile Overview

Create a 100- to 200-word overview describing this person. Include responsibilities, personal profile such as age, gender, and experience, daily activities—anything that will help you get into this person's mind.

Name | Role/Title: _____



Pain Points

List the challenges and concerns that commonly affect this person. It's helpful to use "I" phrases:

- I'm concerned about... _____
- I don't have... _____
- I worry about... _____
- I wish... _____

Key Drivers/Motivators

List the challenges and concerns that commonly affect this person. It's helpful to use "I" phrases:

- I want to... _____
- I need to... _____
- I must... _____

Role in the Buying Committee

Is this person a decision maker? An influencer?

Effective Influences (Read/See/Do)

What influences help this person to make a decision—materials, actions, others?
