



Media Contact:
Marge Bieler
CEO, RareAgent
(678) 771-8010

Developing Personas: The Road to More Thoughtful Conversations

In the world of teleprospecting, the goal is to get potential buyers on the phone and keep them there long enough to get them interested in your product. But if you can't speak their language, you're dead in the water before you even pick up the phone.

Developing and using personas is key to any successful marketing campaign. In today's Web 2.0 marketplace, you have to know who you are selling to, what their specific pains are and their communication preferences, and how they get information before they buy.

Every buyer has a different set of business challenges and each requires a specific messaging strategy. Getting them on the phone is just the first step. The hard part is getting them to listen.

What is a persona?

In its simplest terms, a "persona" is a profile of a buyer's decision-making process and communication style. The key elements to a traditional marketing persona typically include the buyer's title, function, role, responsibilities and business challenges.

For example, when developing a persona for a prospective buyer who is a VP of sales, you need to clearly understand the function of the job and his specific business challenges before you can match value-added solutions your company offers to solve these pains.

And in the Web 2.0 world, you must not only define who it is you are talking to and what they care most about, but also understand how to best engage them.

"A Web 2.0 persona basically takes everything in a traditional persona and then adds to that specific online behaviors," said Debbie Qaqish, principal of The Pedowitz Group, a leading provider of digital and database marketing strategies. "You have to understand where the prospect goes to get content and then how they use it. Then you can leverage this to segment your target audience based on individual characteristics."

For example, says Qaqish, you would speak to a CEO differently than you would an IT director. Each has different pain points and business challenges and each has specific places they go for information and ways they prefer to communicate. A CEO may join executive groups on LinkedIn to research management topics

relevant to his industry, where an IT director may frequent specific blogs to validate a purchasing decision.

The more you understand about these individual roles and preferences, the more likely you are to reach prospects with your message.

“If you truly understand a buyer’s pain points, you can message to them in a way that is meaningful to them whether you are sending a brochure or an e-mail, talking to them on the phone or speaking with them face-to-face,” said Qaqish.

Developing Personas: It Takes a Village

There is no magic formula to follow when building personas, but one thing is certain: it takes collaboration.

Where do you start?

“Not with a marketing meeting behind closed doors,” said Qaqish. “You have to start with sales and inside sales and whoever else has direct day-to-day contact with your prospects. They are the ones getting immediate feedback on what is important to buyers.”

In addition to client- and prospect-facing people in your organization, you can also utilize focus groups, says Qaqish. If you are trying to develop a persona for a VP of sales, for example, go into the market and talk to other VPs of sales. Uncover common business challenges and determine which messages are ultimately the most impactful to this group.

And once you have developed a persona, beware: one size does not fit all. Because executives have industry-specific business challenges, different industries require customized personas that speak to the individual’s specific pains.

“Persona building is not just industry specific, it’s everything specific,” said Qaqish. “With each prospect, you may be selling your solution to five different buyers in the organization, all with different pain points and challenges. You have to look at each person involved in the buying process and build a persona for every influencer and buyer because each needs to be marketed to in a unique way.”



Media Contact:
Marge Bieler
CEO, RareAgent
(678) 771-8010

Step 1: Who are you selling to?

The first step in the persona-building process is getting everyone – including sales and marketing – in a room and defining exactly who the buyer is. Who is involved in the decision-making process? Who influences the deals? Define each of these buyers by title, function and role and then define what your solution provides to each of these decision makers. Ask your clients. Enlist the help of focus groups. Take the time to understand their sales cycle and how they buy. Who is involved in what part of the buying process and what content lines up best with them?

Step 2: What are their communication preferences?

In the world of marketing automation and social media, you not only have to understand who your buyers are, but also how they like to communicate. Some buyers like face-to-face conversations while others prefer e-mail. Research their online activity and focus on those avenues with which they are most comfortable.

Step 3: Where do they get their information?

Once you know who you are selling to and how they want to be engaged, determine where they go for information before making a purchasing decision. Do they ask their friends and peers? Do they look to social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook? Do they read industry-specific blogs? If so, where in the decision-making process do they use these tools? If your prospects aren't reading industry blogs, for example, then it doesn't make sense for you to be there either. Once you know where they go and who they trust, you can speak directly to them.



Media Contact:
Marge Bieler
CEO, RareAgent
(678) 771-8010

The Power of Personas

The use of personas helps you quickly identify who you are selling to in the prospect's organization and then target your message to those specific influencers. If you can speak the buyer's language, you can identify what will best resonate with them and address their unique business challenges.

Bottom line: personas help you gain access.

“When you call a prospect, you have about ten seconds to grab their attention,” said Qaqish. “If you don't lead with the right message, you won't keep them on the phone. Whatever channel you use, the more personalized you can make your message, the more buyers will feel that you understand their challenges and the more likely they are to engage with you. If you say the same thing to everyone in the same way, you won't be successful.”

About Debbie Qaqish

Debbie Qaqish is a principal at The Pedowitz Group, a leading provider of digital and database marketing that specializes in helping B2B marketing organizations design, automate and optimize processes that drive demand and increase revenue. With over 30 years of experience, Debbie is a revenue-focused marketing strategist and leading authority on designing programs and systems that align sales and marketing around what it takes to get, keep and grow profitable client relationships.

For more information, visit www.pedowitzgroup.com

About RareAgent

RareAgent converts expired or unworked sales leads into revenue and profit for your business. Our seasoned sales professionals have decades of experience in a broad range of industries and know how to qualify leads, navigate a prospect's organizational chart, overcome gatekeepers, and research past behavior to drive relevant conversations. RareAgent's research-driven, qualitative marketing feedback and sales coaching provides a high degree of value beyond setting appointments, generating leads and filling your sales pipeline. With RareAgent on your team, salespeople can focus on what they do best – closing business – while RareAgent keeps your pipeline stocked. For more information, visit www.rareagent.com