



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

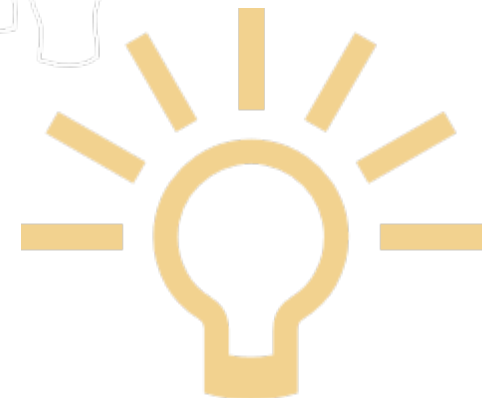
About the authors

[Home](#)

For Compelling Content, Let Your Buyers Be Your Guide

Content marketing is on everyone's mind. "We need more content."
"That's great content." "How can our content be more engaging?"
"Do you think 6 pieces of content will be enough?"

Sound familiar? However, you're probably not looking for these answers from the one expert whose perspective is most relevant. **Your buyers are the source of the insights that will differentiate your content and clarify all decisions.**



The 3 rules of buyer-driven content marketing

There is a reason that buyer personas are becoming a hot topic among marketers. Researching and documenting your buyer persona, a detailed profile of an example buyer that represents the real audience, can help to inform – and transform – your content strategy in ways you may not have thought possible.

We hope you'll enjoy learning about the connection between buyer personas and content and will take advantage of the tips and tricks contained within.

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Rule #1

Your buYer Is the center of Your unIverse

Let's face it, your buyer does not come to work and say, "I don't have any problems. I think I'll read a bunch of marketing material to figure out how I should spend my day!"

When buyers find your content it's because they have become aware of a particular challenge and are evaluating available options. If your content isn't easy to find or doesn't provide the answers they're seeking, your buyers will move on to a different provider who is more helpful.

This is not really new, but an additional trend is emerging, with buyers of even complex B2B products decreasing their engagement with your sales people until they've narrowed their options to just a few solutions.

So now more than ever before, your company's success requires content that is grounded in deep insight about your buyer's decision to choose you, a competitor, or nothing at all. Only then can you help buyers see that your product, service or solution will make their life easier in exactly the way they imagine.

Therefore, content marketing must start with the buyers' perspective. >>

Let's take a look at what happens when content is built **without** the buyers' perspective:



If Christina the marketer builds content without the buyers' perspective, she begins with what she knows – **her product**.



Christina also knows that Matt, the Product Manager, wants to **highlight the latest and greatest features** and functionality that have been baked into the product.



Christina is a wonderful writer and she pens a well-written piece that focuses on the pains the product solves. Matt loves it and the designer pours it into a gorgeous layout. **sounds like a great piece, right?**

Not so much >>



The matrix of how the product fares relative to the competition is up-to-date and **christina and Matt are aligned** around the pain points that the product solves.

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Let's take a look at what happens when content is built **without** the buyers' perspective:



If Christina the marketer builds content without the buyers' perspective, she begins with what she knows – **her product**.



Christina also knows that Matt, the Product Manager, wants to **highlight the latest and greatest features** and functionality that have been baked into the product.



When pain points are generated from the features of the product, the piece is reverse-engineered from **Your perspective, not the buYer's**.



When someone picks up your marketing materials **You have 30 SecoNdS or Less** to convince him or her that you can help. The buyer is saying, “You better tell me something from the beginning that blows my mind, changes my world, or makes me say, ‘Where have you been all my life?’”. To achieve this, you better know your buyers. **Your buYer, not Your soLution, needs to be at the center of Your universe!**

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

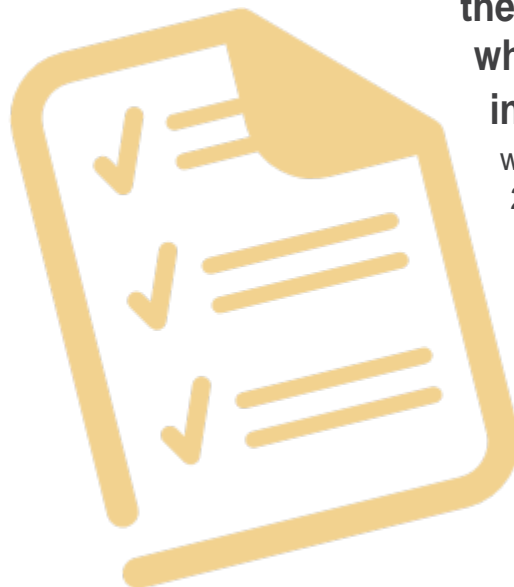
Home

Rule #2

Get everyOne aLIGned
around what the buYer
cares about

The fact is, most B2B products can do a bunch of stuff for your buyers. **so, when you only have a sentence (or even a paragraph) to convey the product's value, which part do you write about?**

It may seem like the only option is to generalize or take the content to a high level, but this is unlikely to impress a buyer who has a very real and specific need.



the answer lies with being completely clear about what each of your buyers wants to know at each step in their evaluation process.

For example, consider the buyer who has an initiative such as “we will have our widgets integrated by 2015.” The poor guy charged with widget integration doesn’t have the full picture yet. He will find out more about the issues he needs to resolve as he moves through each stage in the buying process.

He is looking for information that will give him confidence that he’s on the right track. This is when he comes to you hoping to learn how your technology is going to address his ideas about the problems related to widget integration.



► The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

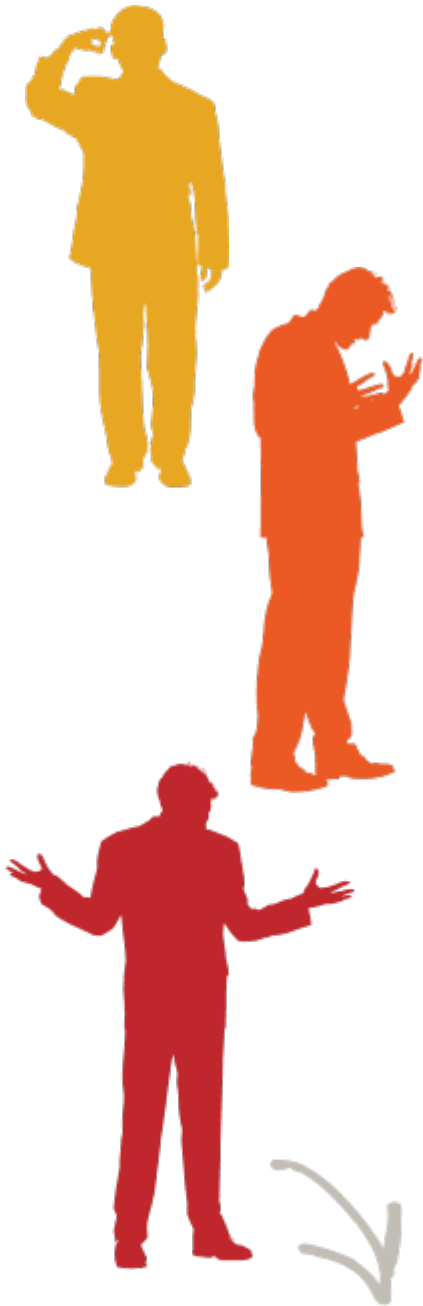
How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

More >>



As content marketers, we've found ourselves in the trap we call "a bunch of smart people agreed on this piece, so it must be good!"

We may be justifiably pleased with our creative prowess. Our abilities for **Making stuff up** (MSU, for short) are top notch. After a long, productive MSU session, we share our writings with the Product Manager, whose version of MSU is somewhat different than ours. We also show it to our boss and a colleague, who both provide feedback. Legal has to give it a once-over and we show it to Sales.

After ten reviews, the end result was defined by the MSU of the loudest person, or stakeholder compromises have watered the content down to generalities. This process virtually ensures that we'll fail to help our buyer learn about our superior approach to integrating his widgets.

Short of having a panel of buyers review every piece of content you create, what are you to do?

**Msu session =
Making Stuf Up**

Buyer personas will get all of the stakeholders throughout your company aligned around critical insights about the buyer you're targeting with your content.

Personas – factual personas based on engagement with real buyers – tell you everything you need to know about how your buyer makes the decision to choose you, a competitor, or to do nothing at all.

They guide your content based on real insights into your buyers' needs for the information to make a particular decision, speaking more forcefully than your product knowledge or the loudest person's MSU.

This result requires something very different from internal agreement about your persona's role and job description.

If you don't engage directly with your target buyers for your persona development, there is no guarantee that it is the least bit accurate. In fact, the persona will probably sound a lot like the MSU you're used to.

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

[Home](#)

Rule #3 >>

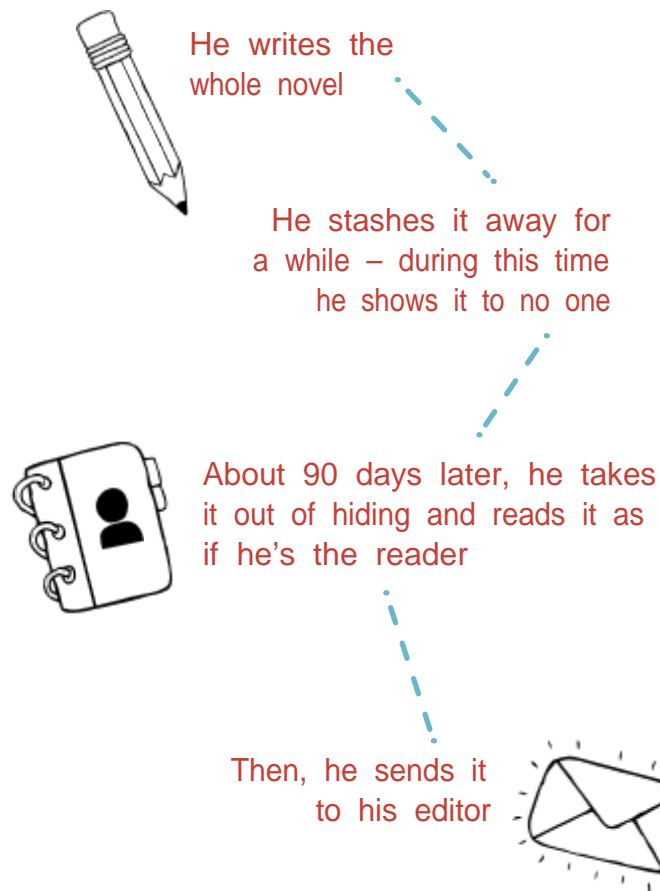
Rule #3

Lose the jarGonese

In 2000, Stephen King, prolific author of thriller novels, penned “On Writing, A Memoir of the Craft”. In it, he tells the story of how his passion for writing helped him recover from life-threatening injuries after a car crashed into the bicycle he was riding.

Relevant to our work as writers and marketers, **his book validates a common problem**. When King writes a novel, he employs a methodology to ensure that he test drives the novel through the lens of the reader.

This is his process:



As marketers, we don't have the luxury of waiting 90 days to publish a new piece of content. Yet, Stephen King tells us that **successful publishing requires someone to assume the role of the reader and take a fresh look at the content**.

It's tough to let go of the writer's perspective on a piece where you've invested a lot of time. When you're the writer and the material is fresh in your mind, you're no longer a credible judge. You can trick yourself by reading your content backwards and find typographical errors, but this doesn't ensure that your writing is something the buyer wants to read.

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

More >>

Avoid Jargon

ROBUST holistic
HIGH-LEVEL
value-added
nimble FLEXIBLE
scalable granular
actionable INTEGRATED
customer-centric
DYNAMIC
innovative
geographically dispersed
RESULTS-DRIVEN
revolutionary seamless
superior
sustainable
THOUGHTFUL user-centric
win-win

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_corporate_jargon



Stephen King notes that when he goes back to read his novels, his goal is to **eliminate at least 10% of the words**.

He peels away unnecessary adjectives, glittering generalities and any extraneous words. His goal is to get to his point using as few

where we were generally praised for flowery vocabulary. In marketing, however, **you don't get points for vocabulary**.

In marketing, jargon makes you sound long-winded and boring. Since your only goal is to have your audience read your content and be persuaded, you want to act like you have a bank account in which you have a limited supply of words that cannot be replenished. Use them up too fast and you'll be overdrawn!

What does your buyer need to hear to be
cp in

thld
t

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

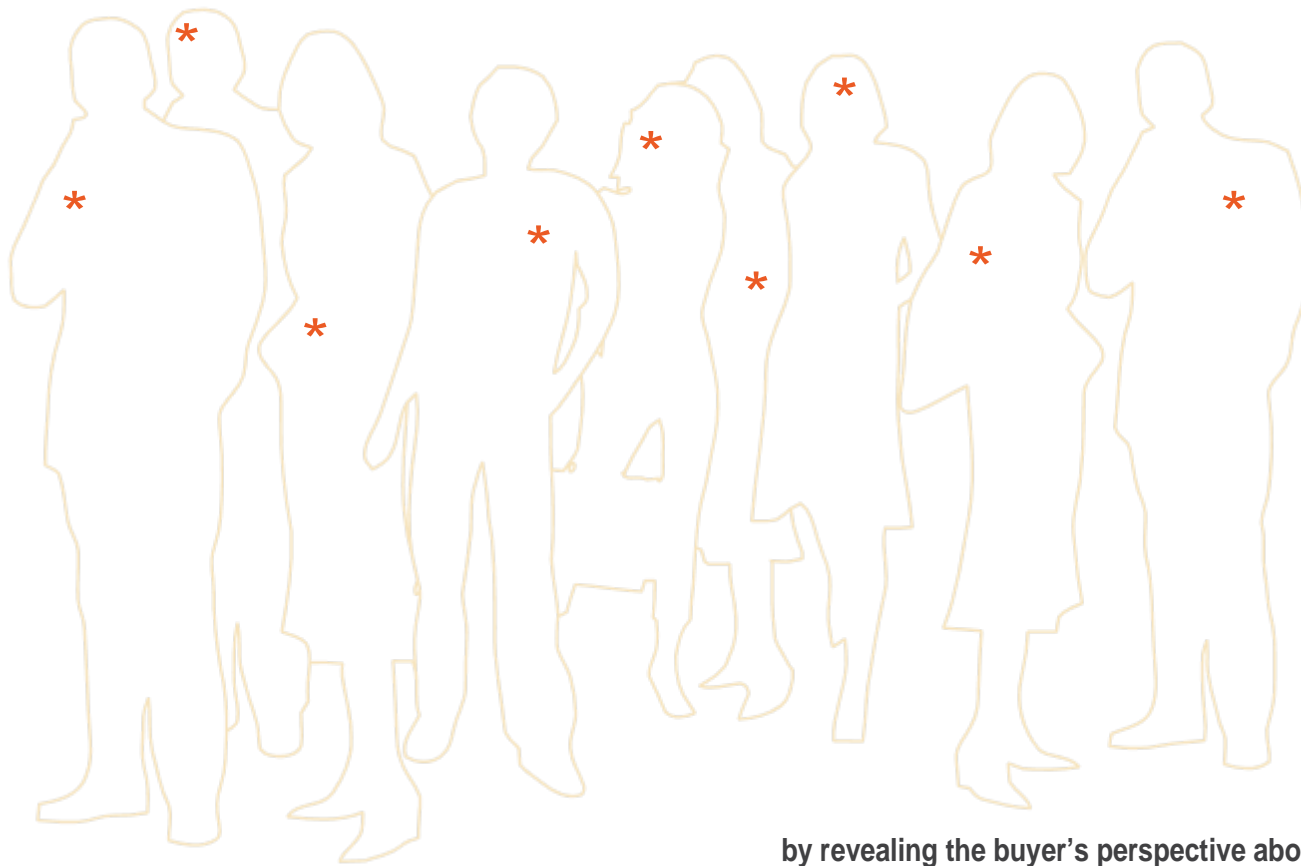
How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home





The answer lies in the buyer persona; an archetype of the buyer that the company hopes to persuade to choose its products, services or solution.

Specific insights into your buyer personas deliver the answers you need.

by revealing the buyer's perspective about what they want to hear from you and when, buyer personas literally take the guesswork out of content marketing. No longer caught in the cycle of endless opinions based on MSU, a content marketer can become very precise about what to say and how to say it, even down to the right words to use.

Imagine working with your buyers' questions right next to you as you write. You hand off your content to reviewers who have that same buyer profile sheet for guidance. Equipped with these tools, your reviewers can focus on a particular buyer's perspective, making changes that would improve the chance that the target buyer would read it and be persuaded.



content writing is like sculpting a piece with the buyer in mind, massaging the thoughts you want to convey into a shape that the buyer will like. with well-built buyer personas, this is relatively easy to accomplish.



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

The 5 insights that help put these rules to work for you

Applying these rules for content marketing requires new approaches to the writing process. Before you begin to write, you will need to research and develop real insights about your buyers.

What specifically do you need to have for such a revealing buyer persona? When marketing teams realize how little they actually know about their buyers, many react by rushing madly off in all directions in search of information. It's all too easy to get distracted by irrelevant, extraneous and even trivial information about the buyers. We've actually seen teams get bogged down in debating whether the buyer persona is male or female.

5 RINGS of BUYING INSIGHT™



© 2013 BUYER PERSONA INSTITUTE

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



While buyer personas can include other details, there are just five insights – we call them the **5 rings of buying insight™** – that you must have to make good decisions about the content you need to develop. Let's talk about each of these and what they entail.



Priority Initiatives

This first of the five Insights identifies the three-to-five problems or objectives where your buyer persona is dedicating time, budget or political capital, without regard to your business or the problems your product solves. Your buyers currently believe that these Initiatives are the most essential areas that impact their job performance or company success.

Do not confuse Priority Initiatives with pain points that you reverse-engineered based on the capabilities of your product or service. For example, your marketing automation product might help the marketing executive measure the activities that have the most impact on revenue. But this is not a Priority Initiative until you've confirmed that this is currently among that buyer's highest priorities for investment, and that this is the way that buyer describes this initiative.

When you capture the Priority Initiative insight, **you can easily focus your demand generation activities on the most receptive buyer personas**, relying on factual data to know which of several different types of buyers should be committed to addressing your solution's problems.

You will gain this insight by understanding what caused recent buyers to evaluate your product/solution. Something occurred at these companies to trigger their search for a solution like yours. When you understand the events or conditions that cause actual buyers to take action, you have a strong foundation for content with scenarios that say **"You may have not experienced this yet, but it's coming soon. here's how to avoid it."**

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Tips and examples: avoid reverse engineering. You know your buyer's priority Initiatives are reverse-engineered when they are...

- 3 Derived from the features and benefits your product delivers
- 3 Filled with jargon words: "Buyers need an easy-to-use, scalable, enterprise wide..."
- 3 Your internal stakeholder's vision for where the market needs to go
- 3 Invented during a team strategy meeting
- 3 High-level, obvious goals such as 'grow sales' or 'reduce expenses'





Success Factors

For every Priority Initiative that you will target in your marketing, this insight identifies the tangible or intangible rewards this buyer persona associates with success. Specifically, Success Factors tell you how a particular buyer describes his or her expectations for the results your solution will deliver.

Success Factors resemble benefits, but benefits are reverse-engineered from the capabilities the product can deliver, while Success Factors are results that actual buyers describe.

Sometimes we find that a buyer has tangible metrics for success, such as growing revenue by X or reducing operating costs by Y. For a B2B buyer, a tangible Success Factor might be about improving the throughput of the company's network by 25%, reducing network latency and increasing people's productivity.

But even if the buyer doesn't have a measurable objective to achieve, there is something at stake for them. For example, for B2B buyers, the wrong decision could result in job loss, while the right decision could enable a promotion or major career move.

For both B2C and B2B buyers, examples of intangible successes include impressing peers, widening their sphere of influence, or increasing their ability to control something specific in their environment. You'll want to understand this in as much detail as possible.



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



Tips and examples:

don't confuse success factors with benefits. they're more specific than that.

When a good sales person first meets with a prospect, he doesn't try to explain each of your solution's benefits – that would annoy the buyer – and it's even worse when you try it in writing.

The Success Factor insight tells you **which outcomes are most valuable to this type of buyer and why**, so that you know how to develop simple, persuasive messaging and content that won't annoy the buyer.

Insight #3 >>



Perceived Barriers

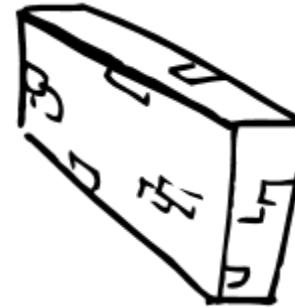
The third insight is about your buyer's Perceived Barriers. It tells you why buyers would choose a competitor's solution over yours and why they sometimes decide to do nothing at all.

The Perceived Barriers Insight is one of the most important for content marketing. It tells you exactly where and how your content needs to reassure a buyer who would question that your solution or company is capable of helping them achieve their Success Factors.

the most useful part of this insight reveals the buyer's perspective about the personal or business obstacles that will interfere with their chance to achieve success. For B2B buyers, examples might relate to the need for business process change, gaining acceptance from end users, or other politically-charged issues. For B2C buyers, a fisherman might be concerned about making a case to his wife that a new boat is more important than remodeling the kitchen.

Other Perceived Barriers may result from this buyer persona's prior experiences with your product or company, or with other products that have similar functionality. Peer or expert feedback about your company or products can feed your buyer's concerns. You should also expect to gain Insights into product or company-specific Perceived Barriers that are no longer (or never were) factually correct.

this tends to be the most overlooked ring of insight because it's the bad news; things that your company may not talk about. Yet, your ability to identify and understand your buyer's Perceived Barriers, addressing them proactively in your marketing content, sets your content apart as a source of competitive advantage.



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Tips and examples: to understand the perceived barrier insight, imagine the scenario that you want to bring home a new puppy.

You really want the puppy and you'll be rescuing it from a tragic situation. What would your spouse or significant other say if you called them and told them you were going to do that?

You'd know in advance what their objections would be and would have prepared a point-for-point plan to overcome their objections. Your content will probably not deliver these exact points, but your overall strategy requires that you know how to "position the puppy" at this same level of detail for your product and buyers.





Buyer's Journey

The fourth insight is about the Buyer's Journey. It tells you what your buyer does to identify alternative solutions, weigh his or her options, and make a decision. It specifically identifies the process your buyer personas will follow to explore and select the product, service, or solution that can overcome their Perceived Barriers and achieve their Success Factors.

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

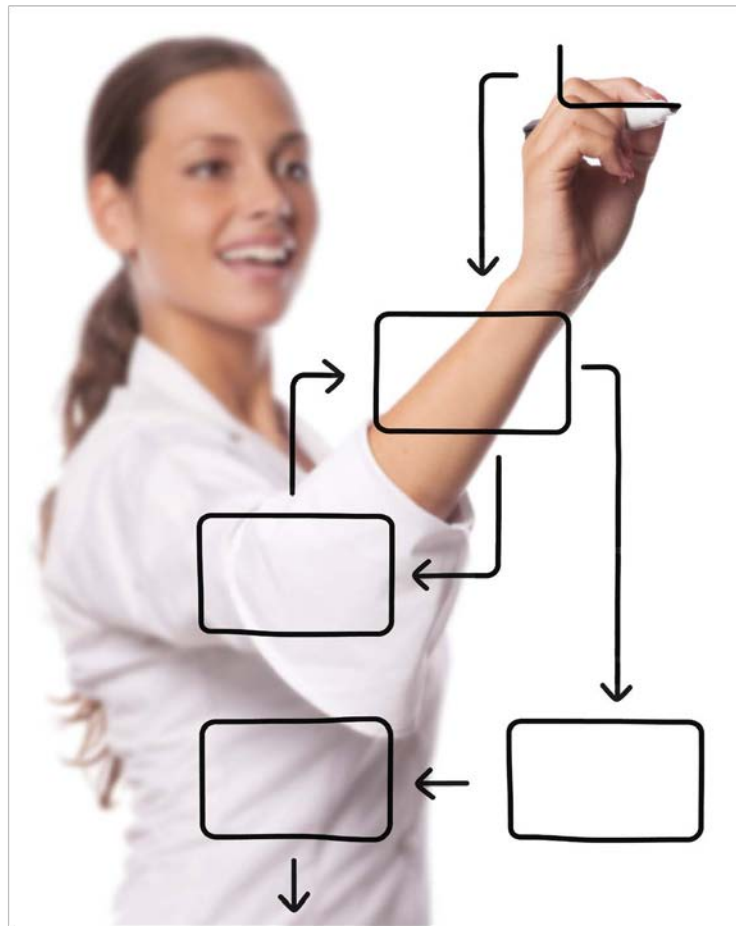
So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



If you're marketing a complex solution, you already know if several buyer personas have an impact on the decision, but...

do you know which type of buyer is most positive or negative about your approach?

do you know what sources each buyer trusts to answer their questions?

All of this is captured in the Buyer's Journey insight.

It is here that you document each step in the journey, identifying each of the buyer persona(s) who are critical to the decision to proceed to the next step, what role each plays, and the resources each consults to find answers to their questions.



More >>



Below is an example of a Buyer's Journey map, completed with fictitious data for a small business that is evaluating its options to purchase new laptop computers.

Insights clarify marketing investments

buyer's journey step	Key personas	conv rate	Key decision criteria	resources buyers consult	sales & Marketing assets
trigger	Small biz owner	75%	Lightweight, Brand name	WSJ article, LinkedIn group	PR and social media
research	Office manager	20%	Battery life, Size/weight	Online reviews, Blog posts	Use case studies, blogger outreach
assess	Office manager	80%	Keyboard feel, Screen resolution	Apple store, Best Buy	POS displays, sales training
negotiate	Small biz owner	65%	Cost trade-offs, Extended warranty	Supplier websites	Comparison pages
Implement	Office manager	40%	Start-up time, Tech support	Using experience	Customer feedback program

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

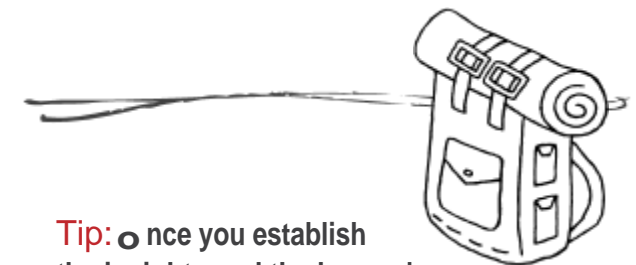
So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



Tip: Once you establish the insights and the buyers' journey, be sure to document the resources the buyers utilize.

This will inform a map of content that will support buyers in their decision-making. You can also use this step to audit your current content's usefulness and identify gaps in your deliverables.



Decision Criteria

The fifth and final insight is Decision Criteria – it tells you which benchmarks each type of buyer uses to evaluate and compare alternative approaches to a problem.

Your buyer begins a search with a specific set of requirements, frequently derived from online research, prior experiences, and conversations with their peers. But as the decision progresses, your buyers will become more educated about their available options, refining and altering their decision criteria. Capturing this information about each stage in the Buyer's Journey helps you to ensure that the answers to the buyers' specific questions are readily available when and where they are needed.

The Decision Criteria insight also helps marketers avoid jargon, such as “interoperable” or “scalable.” The Insight should reveal details about your buyers' expectations for scalability, or any other capabilities they consider most important, plus an explanation of how the buyer arrived at their conclusions that your solution, or your competitor's was the best match for their criteria.



For useful buyer personas, it is critical to include decision criteria insights from:

- Buyers who chose you
- Those who chose a competitor
- Plus those who chose to do nothing at all



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Tips and examples:

For the “flexible” example, the Decision Criteria Insight would specify which aspects of the solution this persona expected to be “flexible”, and the process by which they determined that the chosen solution is the most flexible.



So how do you discover the 5 insights? >>

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

Wouldn't it be nice if all the information you needed for your buyer persona came in a kit? Unfortunately, it does not. The insights you need are at the intersection of your buyers' profile ([see Buyer Persona Profile](#)) and t ([5 Rings](#)). The [as it t market](#).

However, you may be surprised to learn that it is relatively easy to ask your buyers to reveal the insights you need. It takes just a few hours of training to learn how to conduct a specialized kind of unscripted, agenda-driven conversation with your buyer that lets you probe for the details you need. Learn how at the [Buyer Persona Masterclass](#).



After as few as six-to-eight interviews, you will know enough to have confidence in most of the decisions that are currently dependent on MSU.

The image shows a form titled "Buyer Persona Profile" from the Buyer Persona Institute. It includes fields for "Name Assigned to this Persona", "Industry/Company (if applicable)", "Segment", "Functional Title", "Years in Industry", "Job Title", "Age", "Gender", "Education", and "How he/she makes purchase decisions". Below the form, there are sections for "Important Notes", "SECTION 1. JOB DESCRIPTION", "SECTION 2. TOP FIVE PRIORITIES", and "SECTION 3. TARGETED PRIORITIES".

Buyer Persona Profile
Template [Download](#)

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

The image shows a form titled "5 Rings of Buying Insight" from the Buyer Persona Institute. It includes sections for "INSIGHTS FOR BUYER PERSONA", "IN MARKET SEGMENT (if applicable)", "ABOUT DECISION TO BUY (solution category)", "Important Notes", "INSIGHT 1. PRIORITY INITIATIVE", "INSIGHT 2. SUCCESS FACTORS", and "INSIGHT 3. PERCEIVED BARRIERS".

5 Rings of Buying Insight
Template [Download](#)

More >>

You can guess the obvious pain points of your buyers,
but your competitors have this same information.



When you ask probing questions, you will be able to glean a deeper understanding of how they evaluated and compared their options. You will know what prevented them from fixing the problem until now and the real reason they chose your competitor (hint: it isn't price or features). And, you will know what is different about the people or circumstances that allow you to win a particular type of buyer's business.

You'll notice our repeated use of the word "insights." We chose it deliberately. The insights that make a buyer persona so valuable have a remarkable impact. **pieces of the puzzle about how your content can persuade a buyer to choose your solution will suddenly fall into place.**



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



A recent encounter at a business dinner was a fantastic example of the power of asking probing questions.

During the dinner discussion, Wayne, a friend who is a master r,
w
p
o
h"



Effective persona interviews encourage your buyers to tell you a story about what worked, and what didn't, as they progressed through their buying decision.

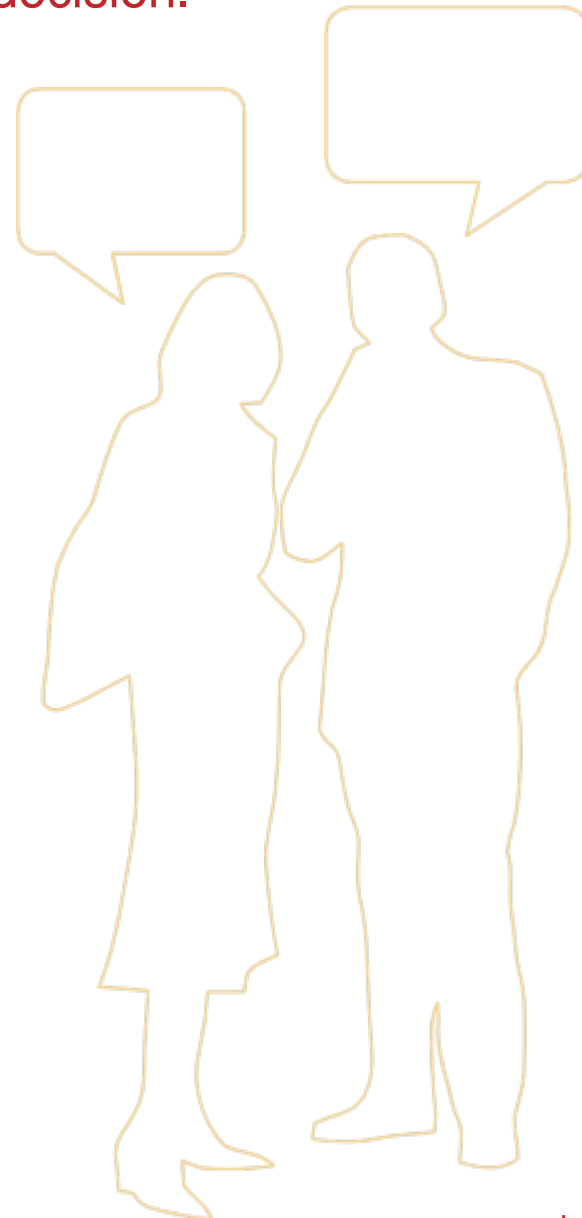
You'll find that the buyer will speak 90% of the time, and, if you guide them with the right type of questioning, you will learn amazing things that the buyer has not yet shared with anyone.

You'll understand how they talk about the various solutions available to them and their perception of each solution's ability to address their problems.

You'll learn the words they use.

You'll know, better than anyone else, how your buyers make the decision to buy your product or not.

Imagine all the ways you can put that to use!



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Conducting the buyer interview >>

Conducting the buyer interview

In interviewing your buyers, you'll find that the buyer's first answer to any question will be the one that you already know. The insights you require will come from your follow-up questions.

Consider this common response to a question about how a buyer selected the solutions to evaluate: "I was looking for something that would be easy to use."

The follow-up questions will get the buyer speaking for perhaps 10 minutes about his perception of your product, and each of the others that he evaluated.

Questions such as these, for example:

What did you expect to be easy?

For whom should it be easy?

How much training did you expect before it would be easy?

How did you compare ease of use for each of your alternatives?

Who in your company was involved in the ease-of-use assessment?



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

these insights are the exact information you want and desperately need!

Plus, each of the buyer's answers to these questions will present options for additional probing questions, revealing additional important details.

More >>

Conducting the buyer interview

The need for probing questions means that you cannot gain insights from your buyer if you approach the conversation with a script or list of questions. You need an agenda, which is clearly focused on the five insights. And then **you need to learn to build your questions from the buyer's previous answer.**

This is a skill set that takes a bit of practice to master. Marketers haven't generally had a chance

to hone these skills, so expect it to be a bit uncomfortable at first. These **seven Key attributes of the buyer persona Interview** will get you started:

1 Follows an agenda
NoT A ScRIPt

2 Engages the buyer in telling
A TrUE STOrY

3 Convinces the buyer to say more,
ENdURES SIlENCE

4 Prior responses
SHAPE THE NEXT QUESTION

5 Does not correct
FAISe IMPReSSIoNS

6 Requires intense concentration,
No dISTRAcTIoNS

7 Seeks **eNdleSS deTAIl**
about how a buyer decides

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

7 Key Attributes of the Buyer Persona Interview

Who should you talk to? >>



Who should you talk to?

Persona interviews are easiest to conduct with buyers who have just recently invested a considerable amount of time in the buying process, or when the outcome of the decision has high stakes for that buyer. It is more difficult to engage buyers about decisions that involved little research, or if the buyer would find it easy to replace the solution if they are dissatisfied.

For example, buying a new business book on Amazon is a relatively low investment and interviewing the buyer about **this decision would reveal little.**



By contrast, the buyer who purchases a new enterprise software solution has **spent months or even years in the decision process**, and will be very happy to tell someone who is not in Sales about the agonies of that experience.



the best place to collect insights is through interviews with recent evaluators because these are people who have just been buyers. The conversation you will have doesn't require the buyer to guess about how a decision might be made. You are simply asking them to tell you what actually happened and how they arrived at the final decision to select your solution, or not. This makes the resulting information **far More reliable** than it would be were you presenting a hypothetical situation and asking the buyer for a reaction.



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

How many personas do you need? >>

How many personas do you need?

Once you've conducted several interviews, you can begin to compare each buyer's responses for each of the 5 Rings of Buying Insight. When you take this step, you will often discover that you need to segment what you thought was one persona into two, based upon a factor that you had not even considered.

Sometimes the opposite may occur. You may learn that two buyers that you had always messaged and

marketed to separately actually make decisions in the same way. In this case it is best to combine the personas, as further marketing investments in differentiated messaging and content will not be more persuasive.

Following is a chart showing the 5 Buying Insights for a company that had always built separate messaging and content for IT Directors in small and large companies. When they did their buyer interviews, they discovered that on two of the insights, Priority Initiatives and Perceived Barriers, the buyers were so similar that they could build and execute a single content strategy.



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Similar insights = one Persona

5 rings of buying Insight™	Small company Steve	Large company Steve
1. priority Initiative	Need to compete with the big guys	Competition gaining on us
2. success factor	Reducing time to market by months	Eliminate excuses from the engineering teams
3. perceived barrier	Can't afford major changes	Need incremental approach
4. buyer's journey	Working with reseller, I make final recommendation	Key to decision on short list and final recommendations
5. decision criteria	Training and implementation	Mixed technology environment

Most people rely on demographic information such as industry or company size to segment their messages. When you research your buyer persona, you have a chance to segment your buyers based on differences in the way buyers can be persuaded to choose your solution. This is a much more effective way to identify and influence the most receptive parts of the market.

Using the information in your content strategy >>

Using the information in your content strategy

Many parts of your company can benefit from the insights you will glean from your buyer persona research. In your excitement about everything you've learned, it will be tempting to put together a bunch of PowerPoint slides to show Sales and Product Management everything you have learned. We caution you to move carefully in this respect. Using personas to guide the work in other departments is beyond the scope of this eBook, so we'll stick with the content marketing issues.

The most important objective for your insights is to use them to improve your marketing content. But before you blast off on writing, there is one more step – **you need to define an overriding messaging strategy**. The messaging strategy isn't your actual copy, it describes your plan to persuade a particular buyer to purchase your product/service/solution.

The messaging strategy template is in the [appendix](#), and is once you've captured the 5 Buying Insights from buyer interviews, but email adele@buyerpersona.com if you're having trouble. The template captures the key factors you learned about what buyers do and don't like about your solution, and why.

With these thoughts in mind, you'll identify the **five points you need to communicate to reinforce what they like and overcome their barriers**.



Mastering Messaging Strategies
T [Download](#)

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

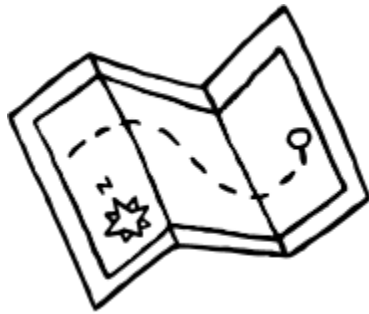
Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



[More >>](#)

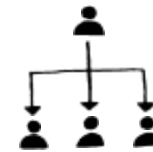


The messaging strategy, in combination with your completed persona worksheets, is now your roadmap for anyone who is writing or reviewing any of your marketing content.

The templates for the Buyer Persona Profile and the 5 Rings of Buying Insight are supplied for your use in the [appendix](#).

Tips and examples: the [essaging strategy template](#) can besource document for a macro messaging map for all of your marketing activities.

This can help to drive alignment across a widely distributed team and help the organization understand your strategy. You will want to identify critical messaging themes and plot them across a timeline, aligning them with your PR activities, product launches, inbound and outbound demand generation activities, as well as in-person events.



The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



We hope that you have taken away new knowledge about how persona research and development provides great value for content creation and some helpful tips for doing this in your own environment.

Understanding how your buyer makes their decision and how to persuade them will make your job easier and more rewarding than you ever imagined.

[About the writers >>](#)

About the authors



Adele Revella

Adele Revella is a marketing keynote speaker, workshop facilitator and author of [The Buyer Persona Manifesto](#).

A career
approache
consultan

Traveling
buyer per
day semin

Through [tBuyer Persona Institute](#), Adele offers on-demand and private workshops for marketers who seek the confidence to say: "This is what really matters to our buyers. So here's the plan."

Contact Adele at adele@buyerpersona.com.



@buyerpersona



Maribeth Ross

Maribeth Ross has over 15 years of experience in B2B marketing. With experience developing award winning programs and sales enablement in organizations both large and small, Maribeth has a keen understanding of the benefits of buyer insights and has been involved in persona research for many different target buyers for several products.

Currently the VP of Marketing at [NetProspex](#), Maribeth has been w
practices
personas.
Maribeth r
company's

Contact Maribeth at mross@netprospex.com.



@MaribethRoss

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

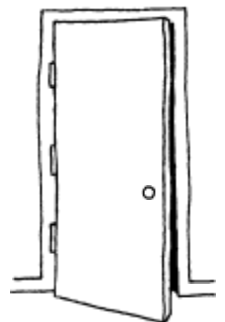
How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home

Appendix



©2018 by Adele Revella and Maribeth Ross. Five Rings of Insight is a trademark of Buyer Persona Institute. Please feel free to post this e-book on your blog or email it to whomever you believe would benefit from reading it. Thank you. Licensed under [Creative Commons Attribution](#).

APPENDIX

The 3 rules of buyer-guided content marketing

The 5 insights that put these rules to work for you

So how do you discover the 5 insights?

How many personas do you need?

Using the information in your content strategy

About the authors

Home



Buyer Persona Profile

NAME ASSIGNED TO THIS PERSONA _____

REPORT TO _____

JOB TITLE _____

AGE _____

EDUCATION _____

INDUSTRY/LOCATION (if applicable) _____

REPORTS TO _____

FUNCTIONAL TITLE _____

YEARS IN THIS ROLE _____

PROF. CREDENTIALS _____

YEARS IN THIS INDUSTRY _____

YEARS IN THIS COMPANY _____

Important Notice: This template describes the buyer, not the buying decision. A buyer persona includes the 5 Rings of Buying Insight™ template, available for download at www.buyerpersona.com/buyer-persona-templates.

SECTION 1. JOB DESCRIPTION
Briefly describe the key qualifications and responsibilities associated with this buyer's job.

SECTION 2. TOP FIVE PRIORITIES
Be specific about up to five problems/challenges that this buyer perceives as most critical to resolve at this point in time. Ensure that this buyer is currently willing to invest time, budget or political capital to address these problems. Do not include priorities that are not within this person's control or influence. Do not limit the responses to priorities that you can address.

SECTION 3. TARGETED PRIORITIES
For problems you will target in your marketing, provide as much detail as possible about the steps this buyer has already taken to resolve the problem, why it persists and why it is on the buyer's top five list.

Copyright 2013 Buyer Persona Institute, Inc. All rights reserved. REV 12.06

Buyer Persona Profile Template

[Click here](#) to download this free template.



5 Rings of Buying Insight™

INSIGHTS FOR BUYER PERSONA

IN MARKET SEGMENT (if applicable) _____

ABOUT DECISION TO BUY (solution category) _____

Important Notice: To obtain useful information for this template, you will need to gather deep insights through interviews with your buyers or their proxy. But you should not use this template as a script or survey. Learn how to conduct the interviews that reveal these insights at www.buyerpersona.com/masterclass.

INSIGHT 1. PRIORITY INITIATIVE
What changes trigger this buyer persona's search for this type of solution? What about this buyer persona's business environment causes this problem to be funded for resolution?

INSIGHT 2. SUCCESS FACTORS
What results or outcomes does this buyer persona expect from the successful completion of the Priority Initiative? Be specific and include tangible/logical outcomes as well as aspirational/emotional goals.

INSIGHT 3. PERCEIVED BARRIERS
Why would this buyer persona be unlikely to purchase this solution? Barriers could relate to prior attempts to solve the problem, negative (and even irrational) perceptions about the suitability of your product or company, or the barriers could relate to internal factors (sales won't let us change our CRM solution).

Copyright 2013 Buyer Persona Institute, Inc. All rights reserved. REV 12.06 Page 1

5 Rings of Buying Insight Template

[Click here](#) to download this free template.