# Build the Best Buyer Personas: an Instruction Manual

audiense:

Best Buyer Persona

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Buyer personas have become a check-the-box marketing practice. It's time to eliminate the assumptions and guesses, and create personas based on accurate data. It's time to use your buyer personas to make business decisions and improve marketing.

## Materials Needed:

# When to Start Building Personas

- Before you launch a new product
- Before you launch a new feature
- When you’ve noticed the market has shifted
- When your customer acquisition slows
- When your sales process takes longer than it should

# How to Use This Instruction Manual


This instruction manual takes you step-by-step through the entire process of how to create a buyer persona. You can use this process throughout your organization to help you make better business decisions that impact your revenue, growth, and business relationships.

Read through the entire instruction manual before you begin, and implement each step in order to create your own buyer personas. The Instruction Manual is filled with templates, examples, and materials you need to build your own buyer personas.

# Your step-by-step approach to building the best buyer personas

# Step #1: Start from scratch

If your business is like most, you have a buyer persona document that you don't use.

In fact, Best Buyer Persona and Audiense joined together and surveyed marketers on how they build and use buyer persona's and found 77% of marketers have created personas for their organization.

Marketers know it's essential to understand who their customers are—but the survey also found 77% of marketers said they don't refer to their buyer personas before launching a campaign and 85% don't refer to their personas before launching a product.

In order to create a buyer persona you can actually use to inform marketing and product decisions you need to begin the process by understanding your business goals and questions. That's why step one is to start from scratch.

# Step #2: Identify what you don't know about your customers

When you know your customers, you should be able to answer:

- Who are our customers, or how they self-identify?
- How do our customers behave?
- Why do our customers behave the way they do?

Those three questions will help you identify what you still need to learn about your customers and where you have gaps in your knowledge. Can you answer all three of those questions confidently? Does your buyer persona provide those answers?

Create a list of all questions you have about your customers and audience. Reach out to everyone in the organization and ask them, "what do you want to know about our customers?" or "What questions do you have about our customers?"

## Some of the most frequently asked questions about customer behavior:

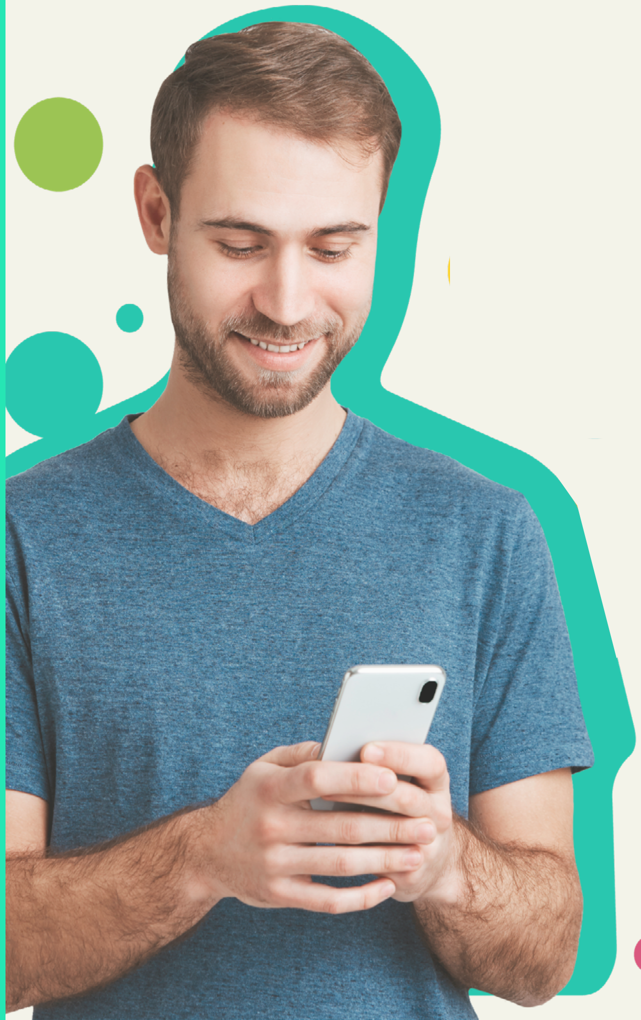
1. What is their tech stack?
2. What do they use our product for 10x a day?
3. How did they decide to purchase our product?
4. Who in their organization decided to purchase our product?
5. Is the person who purchased the same person who uses the product?
6. What “job” are they doing with our product?
7. What are their routines and relationships within the organization?
8. How are they using our product?
9. How do they describe the product to colleagues?
10. What is their largest pain point?

With product, customer success, and sales participating, your list of questions will become the roadmap for your interview and survey questions.

# Step #3: Define your audience segments

Now we can begin to understand the smaller segments of our audience and answer the questions from step two.

Begin buyer persona research with customer segmentation data. Understanding the various segments you have within your customer base will allow you to break your audience into more manageable sections.This process step tells us who your customers are and how they behave.

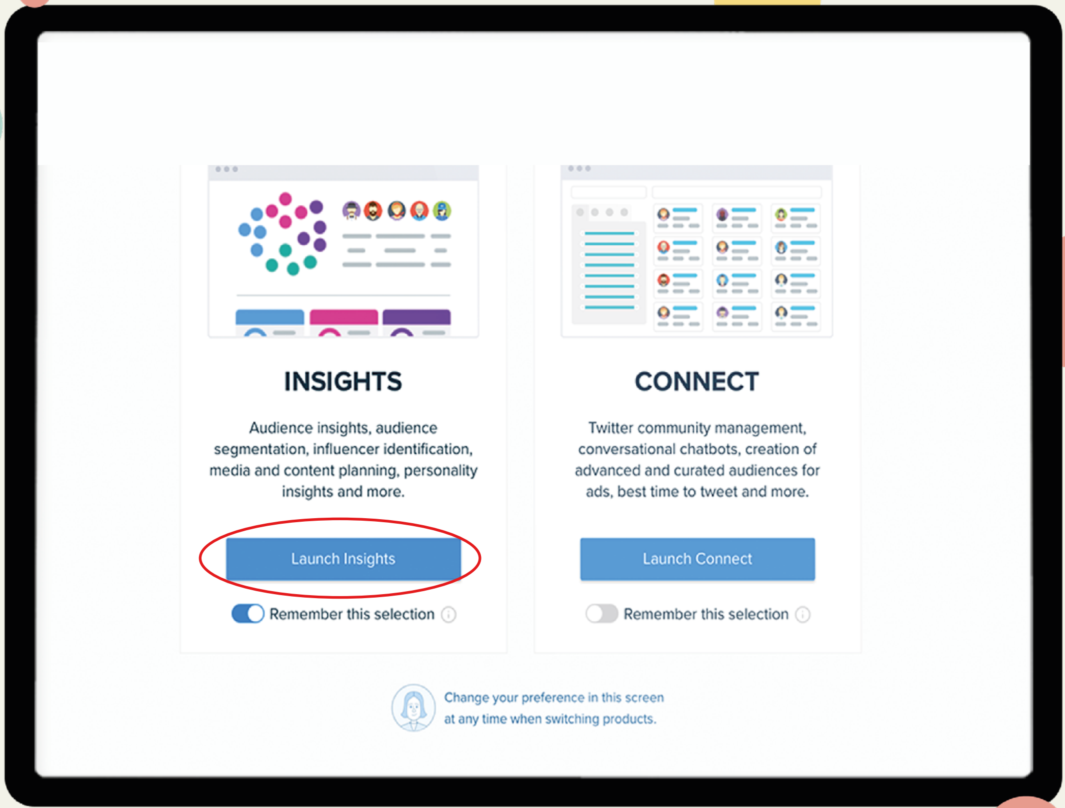


## Begin defining who your audience is with an Audiense Insight Report. Audiense's Insight Report will show:

- Who is in your larger audience
- Who makes up the small segments of your audience
- What are the characteristics of your audience
- What content do they consume
- Who are they influenced by
- Demographics and socioeconomics of your audience

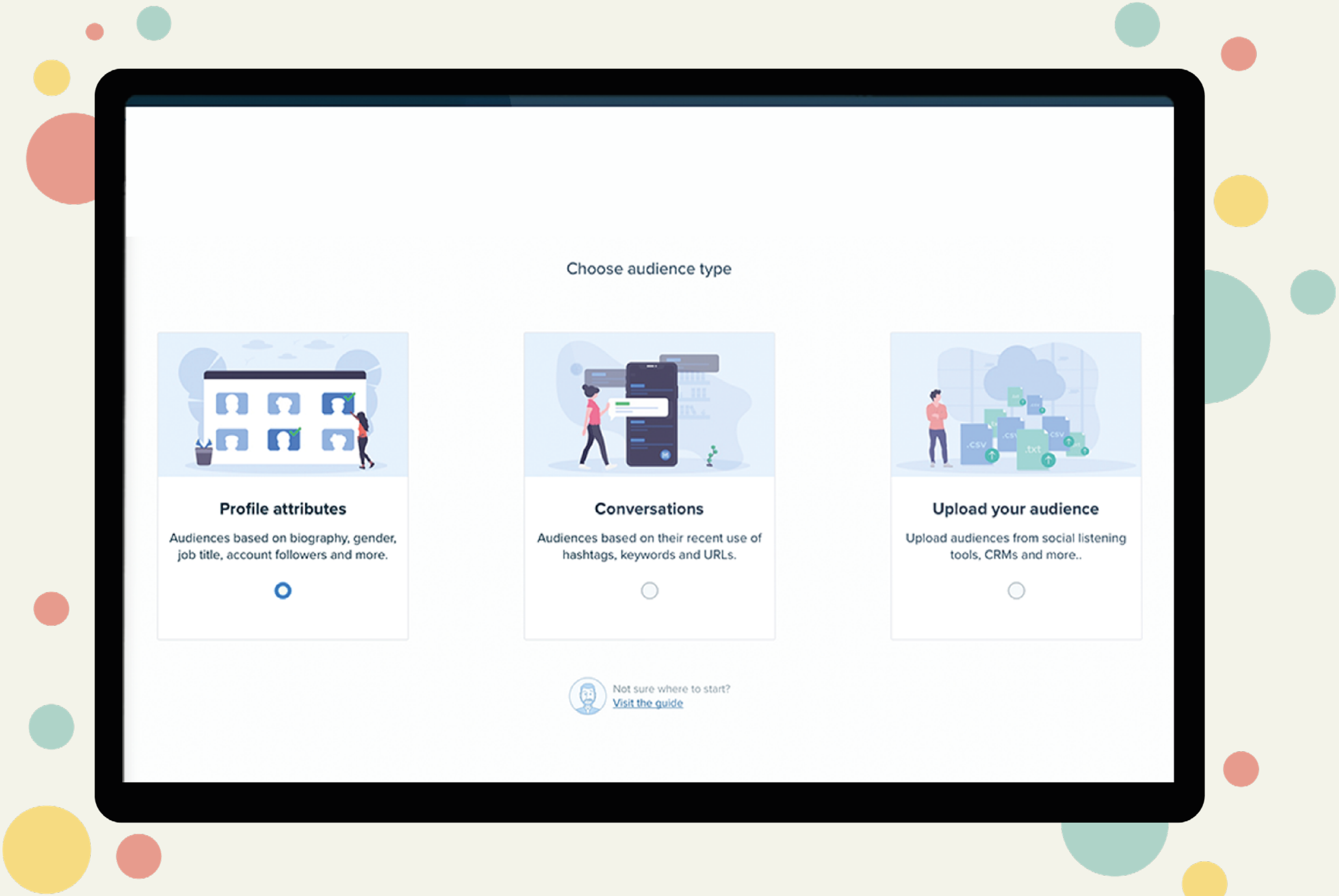
# How to Begin your Customer Segmentation Research

1. Create an account or log into [Audiense.com](Audiense.com)
2. Choose "Launch Insights"




3. Click 'Create New Report'

**4.** From here, you can choose how to build your audience.




**A.** If you have demographics like job titles and potential bio keywords: choose the profile attributes tab to build your audience.

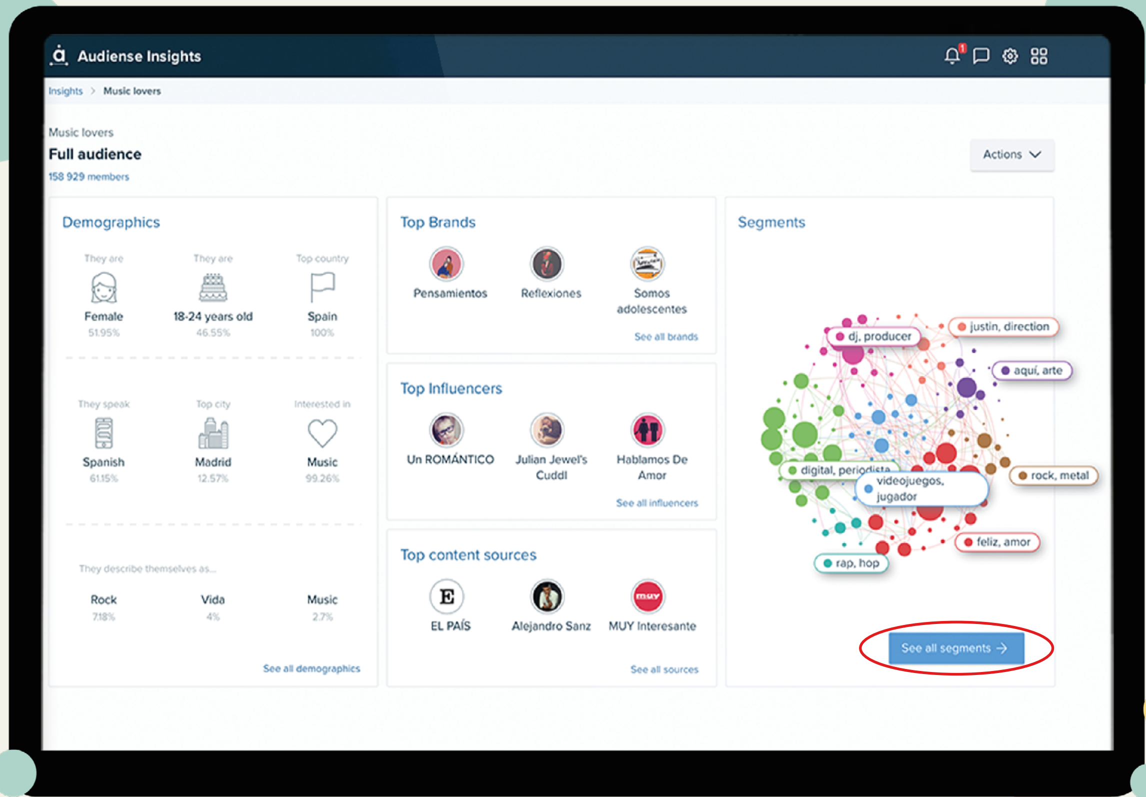
**B.** If you know your audience participates in a particular online event or uses a hashtag for community engagement: choose to build your audience in conversations.

**C.** If you have a lot of social listening data: choose to upload your audience. Audiense integrates with many social listening tools and has made it easy to upload your existing audience into the tool.

5. Define your audience. Provide the hashtags, keywords, or bio phrases, and then generate your report.

6. When you see the report has finished, choose the report in your Insight Report dashboard.

7. Now your large audience has been broken down into smaller segments. Choose “See all Segments” to see each segment in closer detail.



8. Familiarize yourself with the report. The Insight Report can tell you everything from the demographics to sociographcis, to personality traits and attitude. Which you can use to create your buyer persona, but for now, we're using it to determine the smaller segments of our audience within our company.

9. Identify the segments within your customers. The smaller segments will make up your pool of people to survey and interview. A spreadsheet with the columns NAME, EMAIL ADDRESS, INTERVIEW REQUEST SENT, INTERVIEW COMPLETE, INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT is one of the best ways to keep track of the people and process.

# Step #4: Reach out to customers for a chat

Now that we know who we need to chat with we can spend time talking with customers to understand more about their behavior. This is the step that answers the question "why do our customers behave the way they do?" Speaking with customers and audience members is the only way to understand their core buying triggers, feelings, and emotions behind their struggles and learn the words they use to describe their experiences.

The best and easiest way to schedule an interview is to ask your customers over email. Send an email with a calendar link and specifically ask for their time, and you'll be surprised how many customers will sign up to share their stories with you.

To make sure your email is well received it needs to be:

1. Honest
2. Transparent
3. Set expectations for time
4. Provides context for the chat
5. Provide a clear CTA (calendar link)

Include all five aspects in as short of an email as possible,
and you'll have customers filling up your calendar slots in no time.

# Step #5: Interview your customers

Grab your questions, your favorite virtual meeting platform and transcription service, and get ready to chat with as many customers as it takes to have a clear understanding of your audience. The moment you can anticipate their answers and their behaviors and motivations seem obvious to you, is the moment you likely have done enough interviews. You likely begin to notice the pattern around 15-25 interviews.

## 10 Tips for a Great Interview:

1. **Listen to your customers.** You should spend the majority of your time listening to your customer—and they should spend the majority of the chat talking.
2. **Be curious.** If they say something that shows a lot of emotion, whether good or bad, ask follow-up questions to their statement. Saying "Oh, that sounds interesting. Can you tell me more about that?" is a great way to draw out more of the story and experience.
3. **Validate their experience.** If they seem upset, frustrated, or overwhelmed, validating their experience will allow you to address their emotions while still encouraging them to continue sharing. A simple, "That sounds like it was very frustrating" is a great way to keep the conversation going.
4. **Never explain or defend your company/product/service.** The moment you begin explaining how something should work or why it does work well, you've removed the customer from the center of the conversation.The whole point of the chat is to learn about their experience, not to justify or give support.
5. **Record the interviews on your device.** There's nothing worse than losing an interview because something glitched in your recording software. Record your discussions on your device, and you know you'll always have it for reference.

6. **Transcribe your interviews.** Transcriptions help you recall where there are questions or ideas for content. Zoom transcription, Rev, and Fireflies.ai all work great.

7. **Interview greatest enemies, biggest fans, and meh customers from each segment.** When chatting with your customers, make sure you're hearing from people who love the product/service, from people who hate it, and from your average customer. Broadening your interview scope will ensure you're receiving well-rounded feedback.

8. **Spend time on chit-chat.** A little time spent talking about the weather or the latest big game is a great way to make everyone on the call more comfortable. When your customer is comfortable, they're more likely to open up and be vulnerable with you.

9. **Ask open-ended questions.**You want your customer in storytelling mode. Ask them, "imagine the first time they were frustrated with X problem." or "Tell what you can recall about the first time you heard about Y." These types of questions are not only open-ended, but they encourage a memory response. Don't worry if each detail is accurate—focus on getting to the emotions and triggers under the facts.

10. **Let there be silence.**Your interview isn't a normal chat; this is your opportunity to hear your customer. After you ask a question, give it time to pause. Don't feel like you have to fill the space with clarification or a reworded question. Let the customer think and respond.

# Step #6: Send out a survey

We've gathered a lot of data about our customers, from both qualitative and quantitative. Now, we can verify it all with a survey to a larger segment of customers.

1. Only ask the most crucial questions.
2. Ask questions in an easy-to-answer way, such as multiple choice or a rating scale.
3. Allow as many customers as possible to take the survey. Your survey should go out to as many of your customers as possible.
4. Invite via email, social media, chatbots on your website, a CTA in a related blog posts, and promote on social media. Get the word as much as possible so you can survey as big of an audience as possible.
5. tk maybe consider recommending some tools to use here?

# Step #7: Analyze data and look for patterns

This step takes all the data we've learned so far: from the interviews, the survey, and the Audiense Insights Report and filters it into your buyer persona.

1. Remember those questions you asked in step two? Write those as headings in a new doc.
2. Read through your interview transcripts and survey responses. Each time you answer one of those questions, copy and paste it under the heading. These answers became the basis of your buyer persona. You now have the answers to all the questions everyone in your organization wants to know about your customers; now, you need to organize it so that everyone can understand and have access to the answers.
3. Find repeated words, phrases, praises, and complaints.
4. Use a word cloud to make ideas and phrases easier to see. Wordcloud.com and wordart.com are tools to visualize your buyer's most popular words.

Copy and paste the quotes under the headings, and put the quotes into a word cloud. It's a fast and easy way to see the main point of each topic

# Step #8: Create the final draft

The final draft of your buyer persona should be in a well-designed and organized doc that the whole organization can read and understand. It's a living document that's never really done. Make customer research and development a part of your daily, weekly, monthly routine and so you can notice shifts when they happen and modify your persona as needed.

## This buyer persona doc should now answer:

- **Who your customers are:** their demographics, socioeconomics, job titles, their relationships, roles, responsibilities, and rituals
- **How they behave:** content they create and interact with, who influences them on social media, what social media platforms they are on most, and their common interests and buying mindset.
- **Why they behave the way they do:** The "job" they've hired your product to do for them, their core buying triggers, their motivations, and pain points

# Things to include:

Every company that goes through this process will have a unique persona. Every company begins with different questions, has different approaches to advertising, sales, and customer support, and a unique set of customers. But some things should always be included.

- ### The 4 R's

  **Roles:** What is your persona's role in the company?
  Maybe that's a job title or level. But know what role they fill in their company.
  **Relationships:** Who are the people around them in their company? Do they have direct reports? Work on a team? Are they other people's direct reports?
  **Rituals:** What does their average day look like?
  **Responsibilities:** What are the tasks and duties they are responsible for within their company?

- ### Jobs to be Done

  The job-to-be-done is a great way to frame a buyer persona.
  What is the thing this persona is trying to accomplish with our product/service? What are they hiring you to do for them?

- ### Buying Journey

  What is the average buyer journey for this persona

# Things to Omit:

- **People's Names**
  Leave out the Marketing Mary and Sally Salesgirl. These names lead to bias and provide little clarity on who the customers are. Instead, use a name that focuses on their segment or Job to be done. A persona named "Soccer Fanatic" for soccer enthusiasts does more to portray the personality of a persona than "Frank the Fan."

- **Fake headshots**
  Your persona is an accumulation of a large population of people. The more we remember we're targeting a group of people rather than one fake headshot persona, the more we can approach our marketing, product development, and customer support with empathy for all of our customers.

- **Genders**
  Unless 100% of your audience isn't made up of the same gender, then it's best if gender isn't a leading portion of your buyer persona. If it's an essential piece of information to know for marketing and sales, then include the audience percentage in your demographic information. But most organizations don't need to know the gender of their persona, yet they make it a fundamental aspect of their "identity."

# Step #9: Share with the entire company

You have insights, quotes, and digital data that answers all your organization's questions about your customers; it's time to share with everyone!

It's important that your entire company is not only aware of the buyer persona, but also plays a part in contributing to the persona. Each department has their own interactions with your buyers and all of those insights are valuable to your persona information. When your entire company is on the lookout for repeated words, behaviors, and pain points, you'll be able to keep an updated persona that keeps up with your buyers.

Some suggestions on how to create buy-in and interest throughout your organization:

1. Keep a Google Slides draft that the entire organization can view
2. Present the buyer persons at your next all-hands
3. Present the buyer persona to each team or department and take the time to answer questions
4. Set up a weekly cadence email asking sales, product, and customer success teams "What have you heard often or interesting from our customers this month?" Including everyone in this process is a great way to create buy-in and encourage participation.

This instruction manual is the **step-by-step** process of **Best Buyer Persona.**

**To have your persona created, reach out to Adrienne at bestbuyerpersona.com.**

**Audiense** is a partner and tool used to develop every **Best Buyer Persona.**