

The power of using Segmentation and Personas in marketing and defining the role of both

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The rise of digital media and the demand for personalisation by the ever-evolving connected consumer has put pressure on brands to become more specific in their advertising efforts.

Customers have more choice and control in which brands they choose to engage with and companies are now forced to take a less product-centric approach and favour the customer-centric approach to reach the same goals as before.



Valuable insight tools such as Personas and Segmentation have been instrumental in helping brands understand customers and their needs.

As little as even five years ago, marketing had a lot more of a blanket approach. Ads were placed where the masses were assumed to be – billboards, newspapers and other print media, and radio. As communication platforms began to evolve, segmenting the audience to ensure the right messaging hit home began to become a priority.

What are Segmentation and Personas?

Segmentation and Personas are both critical marketing tools used to appropriately organise, categorise and target audiences. That being said, they're not always the easiest for organisations to grasp and implement on a long-term basis, more often due to the fact their value tends to get lost down marketing department policies and pipelines.

Personas, in particular, is often seen as a marketing tick-box exercise that fights to have its validity recognised by clients, despite being exceptionally effective for business when applied correctly.

Segmentation and Personas as terms are often used interchangeably. Structurally and strategically, they can appear to be very similar because a lot of the work that goes into defining them is almost the same.

- **Segmentation can be defined as taking your audience and dividing them into smaller and more manageable groups of people with common traits, challenges and/or needs.**
- **Personas are fictional sketches of your key market segments. They provide a more in-depth view of your audience's pain points, needs, lifestyles, attitudes and so forth.**

Segments help to forecast market interest for a product or service, while Personas help to understand the emotional and behavioural triggers behind individual customers within that market. Used together, they can act as a powerful complementary set of marketing tools for more in-depth and accurate customer targeting.

When should you use each?

The approach to Segmentation depends on your strategic goal and who you're really trying to target. You can use Segmentation to understand and outline:

- Your customer's needs.
- Your customer's pain points.
- Your customer's motivations and expectations.
- Your customer's behaviour and attitudes.

Personas help you create a better connection with your core audience, as well as give you a realistic view of your end users. They are great tool for:

- Developing your value proposition.
- Defining a realistic customer journey.
- Designing new services and customer experiences.
- Getting your business to empathise more with your customer and think more about them.

Harnessing the power of Personas in your marketing strategy

Personas allow a brand to have true insights into the psychological and emotional wants and needs of their consumers. By designing Personas, brands have a detailed character and associated story that they can apply in real life scenarios. Key things to understand about Personas are:

- Personas bring customer segmentation to life.
- Personas help you walk a mile in your customers' shoes.
- Personas are essential to effective journey mapping and experience design.
- Personas help identify which customers to focus on.
- Personas and their unique attributes can be mapped back to your customer database.

It's important to remember, however, that a Persona is only as effective as the amount of time and effort that is put into creating them. The details outlined in an effective Persona are just the tip of the iceberg compared to the insights pulled out from the research that goes in. To really harness the power of Personas, organisations need to use data and not assumptions. Dig deep into your audience insights, from your website analytics to your social media tools – the more factual and in-depth you can make your Personas, the better informed your strategy will be.

Another key thing to remember is that Personas are not just fluff in a marketing strategy, they need to be analysed and used. Use your Personas pain points and challenges to provide relevant solutions for your audience. Being valuable and relevant to your customers is key to converting them and maintaining a positive relationship. Personas can give organisations great insight into what customers need, how to communicate with them, where to find them and what would make them want to choose you over everyone else.

Tips for creating effective Personas

- Invest the time and money necessary to do it right – they might not look like it on a page, but Personas require an investment into research and analytics. They cannot be made up or created making guesses.
- Combine attitudinal and behavioural insights with quantitative data to make Personas richer.

- **Strategically implement Personas into the organisation – Personas are not just run and done for one project but are a brand and business tool that need to be constantly used and assessed.**

Real people have multiple needs. Segmentation can in turn support Persona development in helping you logically categorise your customer research and create a better view for how to best serve your core markets. Both tools make an organisations marketing strategy more efficient and drives both clarity and success in achieving your marketing goals.

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