# Buyer Personas

A buyer persona is a research-based profile of a typical customer, written as if it were one real person. Alan Cooper, a software designer, popularised the persona technique in the late 1990s to design products for real users. Marketers and sales teams later adapted it into buyer personas. A persona is not a guess about everybody, but a summary of patterns found in real customers. Rami, a marketing officer at a software company, wants to build one for a new product.

## 1. Research First

A good persona starts with evidence, not imagination. We interview recent customers and also people who chose a competitor, because both teach us why people decide. We study sales records, support questions and survey answers. We look for patterns that repeat across several people. A small number of honest conversations can already reveal the main themes.

**Example:** A bakery owner wants to launch a new birthday cake line. Using research first, the owner asks ten recent customers why they bought, and most mention the same worry: guests with allergies.

**At work:** Rami interviews eight customers and two people who chose a rival tool. Using research first, he finds that most of them care about easy setup, not about extra features.

## 2. Build the Profile

The next step is to write the profile. A persona usually includes a name, a job role, goals, challenges, how they make decisions and where they look for information. It also lists objections, which are the doubts that stop them from buying. We use real quotes from the interviews to keep it honest. One page is enough, and a short, vivid summary is easier to remember than a long report.

**Example:** The bakery owner writes a profile of Nora, a busy parent: she needs a cake that is safe for allergies, ordered online in minutes. Building the profile, the owner adds her main doubt, which is whether the cake will arrive on time.

**At work:** Rami writes a one-page profile: Omar, an operations manager at a mid-size company. Building the profile, he lists Omar's goal of fewer manual tasks and his objection that switching tools may disrupt the team.

## 3. Use the Persona

A persona only helps when people use it. Marketing teams write messages and choose channels based on what the persona reads and trusts. Sales teams prepare questions and



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answers that match the persona's goals and objections. Product teams can ask whether a new idea would matter to this person. The persona turns arguments about opinions into decisions based on customers.

**Example:** The bakery owner decides where to advertise by asking where Nora looks for ideas, and the answer is a parents' group on her phone. Using the persona, the owner posts photos of allergy-safe cakes there.

**At work:** Rami's team debates a new webinar topic. Using the persona, they ask what Omar would want, and they choose a session on reducing manual tasks instead of a feature tour.

## 4. Keep It Updated

Markets and customers change, so personas should be reviewed. We check them against new interviews and data regularly, perhaps once a year, or after a big change such as a new product. We keep the number small, because too many personas make decisions harder. Different segments sometimes need separate personas, but each one must be backed by real research. A living persona stays useful for years.

**Example:** After a year, the bakery owner talks to new customers and learns that many parents now order for school events. Keeping the persona updated, the owner adds school events to Nora's profile.

**At work:** Rami's company launches a mobile version, so he interviews new users. Keeping the persona updated, he changes Omar's profile to include working from a phone and removes an outdated detail.

## Conclusion

In summary, a buyer persona is a research-based profile of a typical customer. It begins with interviews and data, becomes a short profile with goals and objections, and then guides marketing, sales and product choices. Alan Cooper's persona technique gave marketers a way to keep real people in view. A persona stays useful only when it is kept updated. Rami's team now asks, what would Omar think, before every campaign.

### Sources


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