

# the persona exercise

In the heart of this exercise, we embarked on a journey guided by prophesizing Nereus himself – the original Old Man of the Sea. Here, we delve into Buyer Persona, a place where revelations await.

## What is a Buyer Persona?

Listen closely, for this is the essence of our quest. Buyer personas are not mere abstractions; they are the living, breathing representatives of those who hold sway over the products, services, and solutions you offer. These ethereal guides grant us the power to understand the intricate dance of decision-making.

**Gone are the days of superficial demographics, job titles, industries, or geographical borders. Nereus teaches us that true wisdom lies in the depths of insights. Those who delve deep possess the keys to unlock the gates of persuasion.**

## 5 Buying Insights for Buyer Personas:

### Priority Initiatives

What motivates certain buyers to seek solutions like yours, and what distinguishes them from those content with the status quo? Delve deeper into understanding guided by Nereus, the original Old Man of the Sea.

#### Guidance:

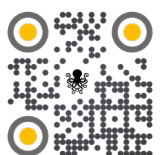
- Do not confuse Priority Initiatives with pain points that you simply reverse-engineer based on the capabilities of your solution.
- You want to understand the personal or organizational circumstances that cause your buyers to allocate their time, budget, or political capital to resolve the pain.
- For example, you could guess that the safety executive buyer persona has pain in the area of marketing metrics and campaign automation. But an insightful buyer persona would tell you which marketing executives are most (and least) receptive to your marketing automation solution and why.

### Success Factors

What operational or personal results does your buyer persona expect to achieve by purchasing this solution?

#### Guidance:

- Success Factors resemble benefits, but this insight is far more specific and written from the buyer's perspective.
- For example, you might currently emphasize your solution's impact on cost reduction, but an insightful buyer persona would identify the category and degree of cost reduction that buyers anticipate.
- Examples of personal outcomes include impressing peers, widening the buyer's sphere of influence, or increasing their ability to control something about their environment.



## Perceived Barriers

What concerns cause your buyer to believe that your solution or company is not their best option?

### Guidance:

- Expect to gain insights into product or company-specific barriers that are no longer (or never were) factually correct.
- These perceptions often result from negative experiences with similar solutions, online interactions, or direct feedback from peers.
- Other barriers relate to personal or business obstacles that prevent your buyer from investing in change. Examples include the need for business process change, gaining acceptance from end users, or other politically-charged issues.

## Buyer's Journey

This insight reveals details about who and what impacts your buyer as they evaluate their options and select one.

### Guidance:

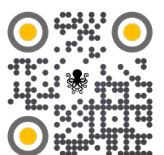
- To help you target the most influential buyer personas, this insight identifies which personas have the most impact on the decision to continue to evaluate your solution at each step in the process. (Tip: the economic buyer or decision maker isn't as influential as you think.)
- To help you prioritize your marketing investments, you need to know which resources the buyer trusts at each step of their evaluation for this decision. For example, a marketing executive would not rely on the same resources for decisions about web conferencing and off-site event planning.
- For persuasive messaging and content, the Buying Process insight specifies the Decision Criteria, Success Factor, and/or Perceived Barrier that has the most impact on the buyer's choice at each step.

## Decision Criteria

Which aspects of the competing products, services, solutions or company does your buyer perceive as most critical, and what are their expectations for each?

### Guidance:

- You will know which of your capabilities has the most impact on your buyer's choice to do business with you. (Tip: this is unlikely to relate to what is newest or most unique).
- This insight informs messaging and content marketing decisions, clarifying both the buyer's questions and the answers they want to hear.
- For example, if the buyer wants a solution that is "easy-to-use", the Decision Criteria Insight specifies which aspects of the solution this persona expects to be "easy to use" and how they determine which solution is the easiest.



## Persona Template

Name Assigned to this Persona:

Industry/Segment(s):

Job Title(s):

Reports To:

Age Range:

Years in this Role (Total Career):

Years In this role (Avg. Company Tenure):

Education:

1. Job Description

Briefly Describe the qualifications and responsibilities associate with this persona.

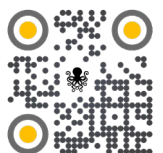
2. Priority Initiatives:

**Identify the 5 problems or objectives that this persona designates as highest priority.**

Ensure these initiatives are within the buyers control or influence and that s/he would allocate time, budget or political capital to achieve them. (Be sure not to allow our capabilities to influence this section.)

3. Perceived Barriers:

For each initiative in Section 2 that you can address with a product, service or solution, detail out the steps the persona has already taken towards achieving this initiative and why those steps failed.



## Persona Connection Template

Insights about the Buyer Persona:

In Market Segment:

**Attitudes About Product, Service, Solution, etc:**

- 1. Why We Win/Buyer's Success Factor:**  
Describe the tangible and/or intangible rewards this buyer persona believes they will achieve by purchasing this solution.
  
- 2. Why We Lose/Buyer's Perceived Barriers:**  
Describe this buyer's reasons to question whether this product is not positioned to achieve their Success Factors.
  
- 3. Buying Triggers:**  
When is this buyer looking for this type of product, what business circumstances trigger this buyer persona's decision to initiate the buying process.
  
- 4. Decision Criteria:**  
Which three aspects of the product does this buyer persona assess for each competitor as they evaluate the alternative solutions?
  
- 5. Buying Influencers:**  
What role does this buyer persona play in the buying process? Who else in the org. will be involved in the buying process, what is their role?
  
- 6. Resources Buyers Consult:**  
Identify the 2 or 3 most influential resources this buyer persona relies upon at each stage of the buying process. For each answer be as specific as possible about the name of the resource (conference, blog, website, etc.) the buyer consults at this stage.

