



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Here are a few exercises to help you find your “who” and your “how.” In order for your marketing and communications to be effective, you must understand not only who your audience is, but how to best communicate with them.

**WHEN YOU IDENTIFY OR CREATE A PERSON
TO REPRESENT YOUR AUDIENCE,
YOU CAN SPEAK TO ONE WHILE SPEAKING TO ALL—
AND ACTUALLY BE HEARD.**

FIND YOUR WHO:

1. Think about your ideal buyer or donor. If you have a real-life example, list the qualities that make them an ideal fit for your organization. Get as specific as you can. Enlist others on your team to help you fill in any blanks you may have or provide any additional detail. If you don't have any real-life examples, no problem! Just make someone up. (But don't forget to give them a name!)
2. Don't stop there! The more detail you have, the more it'll benefit you in the long run. That way, when you're stuck, you can just focus on this persona, and that should help provide you with direction and clarity. If you're thinking of a real person, feel free to interview them about why they support your organization and cause. If you're making someone up, the sky's the limit! But be sure to include demographic (age, location, gender, ethnicity, employment, etc.) and psychographics (values, personality, lifestyle traits, preferences, hobbies).
3. Once you have your “who” in mind, get feedback. Find someone on your team or that knows your organization well to confirm, push back, or help you go deeper. Then refine as needed.
4. Test it out! The next time you have write, design, produce or ask, think about your ideal customer, or persona. See if this helps provide new insight, and of course, new sales or donations.

**KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE DETERMINES HOW
YOU COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGE.**

FIND YOUR HOW:

Note: There will likely be multiple answers, especially if you're communicating to your audience over an extended period of time, like a website or blog. For launches and events, you may only need one or two "how's." But nonetheless, it's an important question to keep coming back to on a regular basis.

In light of your “who,” ask yourself or your team these questions:

1. Where do these people, or this person, hang out online? This will help you know which social media channels to focus on.
2. Does this person prefer text or video? The answer is likely a mix, but those of us (hand raised!) more uncomfortable with video need to start making some steps in this direction.
3. What kind of information about our organization or cause is important to them?
4. How do they typically acquire the information? (books, podcasts, word-of-mouth, social media, websites, etc.)
5. Do they prefer a more creative, or fact-based approach?
6. Is going to events part of their regular life, or only for special occasions?
7. What gets them excited, and makes them want to share?
8. Are there times of the year or seasons of life where our cause is more front-and-center for them?
9. How frequent should we be communicating with them to keep our message in front of them, but not be annoying?
10. Have we provided them with next steps to stay engaged?

These are just a few questions and exercises to get you started. Feel free to tailor, edit, or add to the content to make it fit your organization.

BONUS: One more quick thing that I'll say is that **I love a survey!** And it works in both instances. I think surveys are invaluable tools. The really good news is that a survey works with any audience size. If you have a small list, personalize your survey, or even ask it over the phone or Skype. For a medium or large list, a survey can help develop a persona by shaping a bunch of answers into one made up person! Either way, if you're struggling to identify your ideal customer, a survey may just do the trick!

**WHEN YOU TALK TO YOUR AUDIENCE IN A WAY THAT COMMUNICATES
YOU UNDERSTAND THEM, BOTH IN WHAT YOU SAY AND HOW YOU SAY IT,
YOU CREATE A RELATIONSHIP.
AND RELATIONSHIPS TURN FOLLOWERS INTO FANS.**

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