FUTURE MANTIS

THINK LIKE YOUR CUSTOMERS

A Practical Guide to
Identifying Your Ideal Customers

Why Did We Create This Guide?

We didn't invent the idea of 'Customer Avatars' or 'Personas', but we felt that there were too many templates and guides telling people they need them, but not really how to make them valuable or useful.

Too many focus on asking you to write down what your 'persona' had for their last meal, without really explaining why that can help with your marketing and running your business.

In this guide, we aim to help you to see the benefits of really understanding your ideal customer and to develop a real avatar you can use to achieve more effective marketing.

Who Are We?

We created Thirty Three Percent with a simple mission:
To make marketing simple for business owners, MDs and CEOs so that they can focus on growing their business.

We've worked with brands like Amazon, Hasbro, The North Face, Skype, Sainsburys and JCB and have taken the secrets of big brand marketing and made them work for small businesses.

We've been working in marketing for over 40 years between us and we want to help business owners escape the feeling of being overwhelmed by marketing and make all their campaigns more effective and successful.

THIRTY THREE PERCENT

EVERYONE IS NOT YOUR CUSTOMER

In fact, if you target a net too wide, you damage your chance of reaching any customers.

Let's look at an example to illustrate this.
Mrs Miggins opens a new pie cafe and is looking to build a website for it. She's notices two local options:

- Business A says they 'build lovely websites'
- Business B says they 'specialise in high-converting websites for restaurants'

Person B charges 20% more than Person A, but Mrs Miggins still picks Person B, because they appeal to her exact need.

The same is true when picking your ideal customer. Pick the people that would be ideal for your business.

But doesn't that limit who I can sell to?
Yes. But it does not limit who will buy from you. Most of the general audience you are targeting will not buy from you anyway and all you are doing is making those that will buy, less likely to.

Also, if your marketing is aspirational, people outside your customer group identify with your avatar.

Lululemon
A CASE STUDY IN USING AVATARS

Lululemon make decisions about products & marketing using avatars called 'Ocean' and 'Duke.'

As you can see, Ocean is a successful professional woman who earns a good salary. We have facts about her and an image so we can visualise her.

Duke is her fiancé and an "athletic opportunist" who we can now also imagine and market to.

As Lululemon founder Chip Wilson explains, this doesn't exclude everyone else
"If you're 20 years old or you're graduating from university, you can't wait to be that woman.....if you're 42 years old with a couple of children, you wish you had that time back."

She's an aspirational character. She's what Lululemon's ideal customers aspire to be in one way or another.

- **32 year-old woman**
- **Engaged**
- **$100,000 per year**
- **Owns as condo**
- **Travels, fashionable**
- **Spends and hour and a half to work out**
- **"Ocean is a woman, who all women want to be."**

- **35 year-old man**
- **$100,000+ per year**
- **"Athletic Opportunist -**
- **surfs in summer, snow-boards in winter."**
- **Willing to pay for quality**

Images from Lululemon

Advantages To Thinking Like Your Ideal Customer

What can thinking like your ideal customer do for your business? Look at these 6 advantages they give you...

1. You filter out people you don't want to work with, the time wasters. Save yourself time and money
2. You become an expert. People want to work with experts. People pay more to work with experts
3. Targeted messages get seen by your prospects. Vague messages are seen by no one – Focused marketing
4. Coming up with marketing messages is much easier. You know what your ideal customer wants to read about
5. Your message gets refined and perfected. Imagine just talking to a single person and selling them on your product. You soon get really good at it
6. You will improve your product or service because you'll design it for your ideal customer

"Using avatars made websites 2-5 times more effective and easier to use by targeted users"

- HubSpot

"Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you tell them what they need well before they realize it themselves"

– Apple's mission through the words of Steve Jobs

What Does an Ideal Customer Look Like?

It is important to recognise the attributes that make up your ideal customer and accept it is not the same for everyone.

For some it might simply be the highest 10% of customers they have. For most businesses it's more evolved than this.

Lets look at some of the options:

- Repeat customers - people that return regularly. They are steady income and don't require repeated spend on acquiring them

- High purchases - people that buy one item for a large amount of money. You attract them, you get a good amount of money from them and you won't have to worry about them again

- People that buy the profitable products! You might offer thousands of items, 20 products or 5 courses. Chances are, some have a higher margin to you than others. It might be your ideal customers are the ones that buy the highest margin items

- Advocates - the people that go online and tell the world how great you are. They might not spend the most, but they are getting lots of others to the site, meaning their global value to you is huge

- Life Time Value (LTV) - the more advanced look at spend. These people will spend the highest amount over their lifetime. They might not be the current highest spenders, but over time they will. A lot of big brands spend millions identifying what these customers look like, so they can find more like them

Ideal Customers Create Repeat Customers

Finding new customers is expensive, but you need them to grow a business. Therefore, it's vital that you select a good ideal customer, because they should be coming back to you and buying regularly.

You don't have to spend acquisition cost on them and they are more likely to recommend you to others.

But it all starts by getting the customer right at the start.

> "It is anywhere from 5 to 25 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to keep a current one"
>
> **- Harvard Business Review**

You Can Have More Than One Ideal Customer

Don't be afraid to have a couple of avatars that you gear your marketing towards. As Lululemon showed, by just having a few avatars you can grow your business significantly.

With the information you'll gather on your ideal customer, you'll find it easy to build more than one customer.

The perfect number depends on your business, your sector and what you sell.

A guide is aim for two to five.

Less and you might miss out key information .

More and you are in danger of marketing to everyone!

step one:
WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

If you are a start up with no customers, skip to step 2. If you are already trading, then utilise the information you already know.

- Review the analytics you have now
- What pages are customers using
- What content is in the conversion funnel
- Find customers you already have and love
- What do you know about them?
- How do they consume your marketing?
- Send out a survey to your best customers
- Ask them questions to understand them more
- Offer them something free in return

step two:
WHAT ARE THEIR PAINS?

What are the pains of your customer?

Pain can be the leverage to gain their interest.

People are attracted to brands that that solve a pain or a problem.

Understanding their wound creates a connection / rapport.

If someone is looking to sell old tech equipment they might have a couple of different pains and by understanding them, you can more effecitvely market to them

Limited space
- These people just need to clear space, so they will be drawn to someone saying they can collect all the items quickly and without fuzz, because this appeals to the pain they have.

Lack of money
- For these people, the emphasis should be on how much they can get for each individual item, but talk about how you can maximise the return for the item they want to sell.
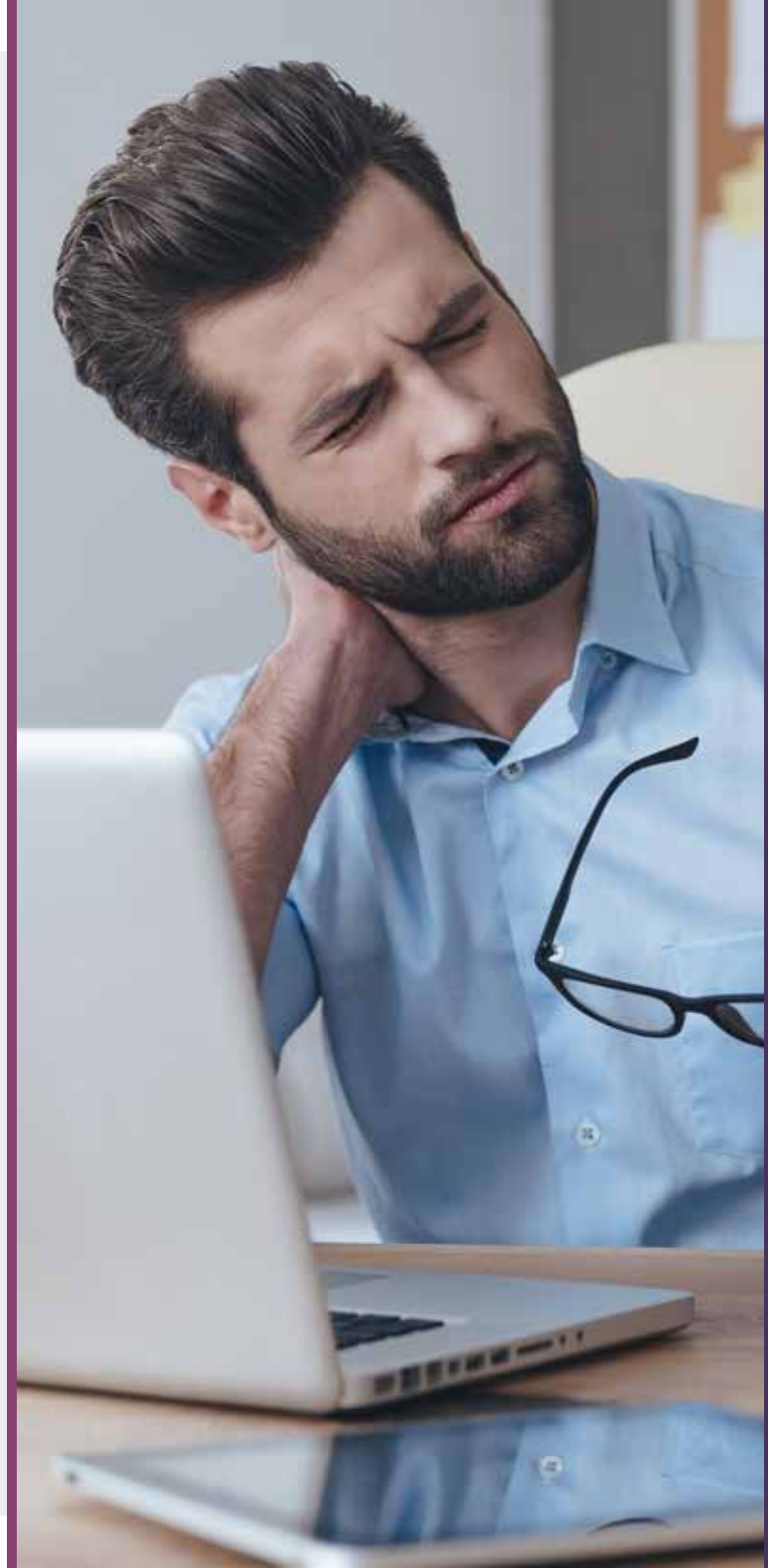
step three:
WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS?

This question focusses on the genuine needs of your customer.
This is sometimes referred to the 'itch', where your product or service provides the 'scratch'. It's a problem a customer absolutely believes HAS to be solved.

The marketing technique here is to show the customer that your product or service will quickly, easily and efficiently (and for the right price) fulfil their need.

So the messaging is very much around benefits and features - and price will always be quite key in need-based marketing.

Some examples:

- If you have the Flu you NEED medication
- A car accident, you NEED a garage
- You're working from home, you NEED a desk & computer

Needs can be subjective too:
- Buying toilet paper is a need for everyone.
- Buying printer paper will be a need for some people.
- Buying art paper will be a need for a smaller niche.
- But all are good examples of a customer need.

DEFINING YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER
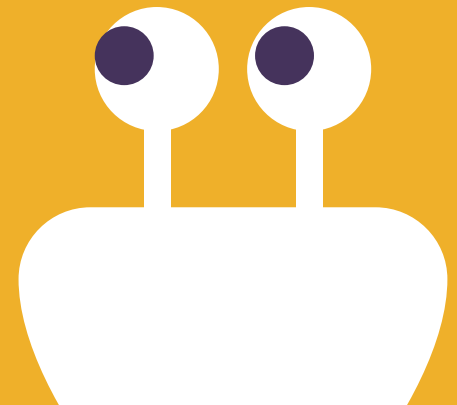
step four:
WHAT ARE THEIR DESIRES?

What does your customer desire?
Desires are usually broader and more general than needs, and they are often more emotional and subjective.

Some people desire to be more appealing to a potential partner - you see that in advertising for perfume or cologne. Others may desire to appear successful and may link that image of success to a brand of clothing or a car.

A desire is often blended with a need

A customer may NEED a car - but DESIRE the image a premium car provides.

Some examples of desires:

- You desire a special meal, so you purchase an expensive steak.
- You desire to look more attractive, the solution may be luxury clothing brands.
- You want to enjoy your environment, the solution could be art, pictures or paintings

Needs, Pains & Desires

Below are some example needs, pains & desires your customers may have.

Needs

A computer to do my work

More people to know you offer your service

Need to buy a gift for their Mum

Need to be able to drive to work

Replace a broken white goods item in the kitchen

Pains

A person doesn't have enough money

Your career is not progressing

You cannot build a website for your business

Out of shape and informed by doctors to get healthy

House is full and you have to find space

Desires

Something to go on the wall to make the room look nice

Want to be the best dressed at the party

Buying a lovely bottle of wine

Buying the latest console

Booking a 3 week trip to Disneyland

step five:
INTERTESTS AND ROLE MODELS

In this section, lets look at the things that interest our ideal customer, the people they look up and the brands they aspire to.

To really understand our ideal customer, lets ask them some questions, almost like we are interviewing them.

Where do you get your information? Newspapers, blogs, books, social media etc...

What are some of your favourite things? Clothes, sports, films, tv shows, music, hobbies, holidays.

What brand or product changed your life and you could not live without it, and why?

Who do you most admire, and why?

step six:
WHAT ARE THEIR PURCHASE DRIVERS?

It is vital to understand how your customer makes their buying decisions. It helps inform your sales funnel and the role that marketing plays in that.

To understand them, try and think about the following factors
- Is price the most important thing to them
- Would they pay extra for better quality
- Is the ease of purchase their chief consideration
- Does this person need a great customer experience
- Shiny marketing
- Status

How do they make the decision to buy? Are they an instinctual purchaser or do they do days of research? Do they rely on friends recommendations or look at reviews?

step seven:
PAINT A PICTURE OF THEM

Demographic information is the starting point of building up a picture of our ideal customer

Age – This is NOT a range, 20-35 is not an age of a person! Pick the age of your ideal customer

Marital status – Are they married, divorced, engaged or single?

Children – Do they have any? How many do they have? What age are they?

Job – What they do and how much they earn are critical factors about a person

Location – Depending on your business, this might be an important factor. Do you only target locally? UK only?

Home – Do they live in a flat or a house? Do they rent or have a mortgage?

Bring Them To Life!

Your ideal customer should be like your best friend.
You know them that well.
If someone asks you questions about your best friend, you can visualise what they look like when answering.
You need to do the same with your audience avatars.

Our audience avatar contains a picture of your ideal customer. Why?
It's for the same reason we tell you to choose an exact age (32) rather than a range (30-40) – you need to visualise this EXACT person, not a group of people.

Ultimately, you should be printing these people off and putting them up on the wall in your office, so you are always thinking about them.

Fiona - 30

Mum of 2 kids
Loves the outdoors
Part time book keeper

Dave - 53

Dad of 3 kids
Loves romantic comedies
Runs a garage for vintage cars

Tracy - 20

Studying English
Loves amateur dramatics

"Customer-centric companies are 60% more profitable than companies that aren't"

- HubSpot

Bring Them To Life!

Take a look at these images.
Who do you most identify with?

You'll find millions more online using platforms
like shutterstock.com or Google Images.

FW ARTISTRY
REPOSITIONING

Defining your ideal customer can do more than just improve your marketing, it can change your entire business focus.

When Faye came to us she was unsure of where to find customers. After just one workshop, she had identified her ideal customers as not general art lovers, but those that were into horror.

This enabled Faye to start finding those customer and in the end, she created an entirely new brand just for this dedicated customer segment.
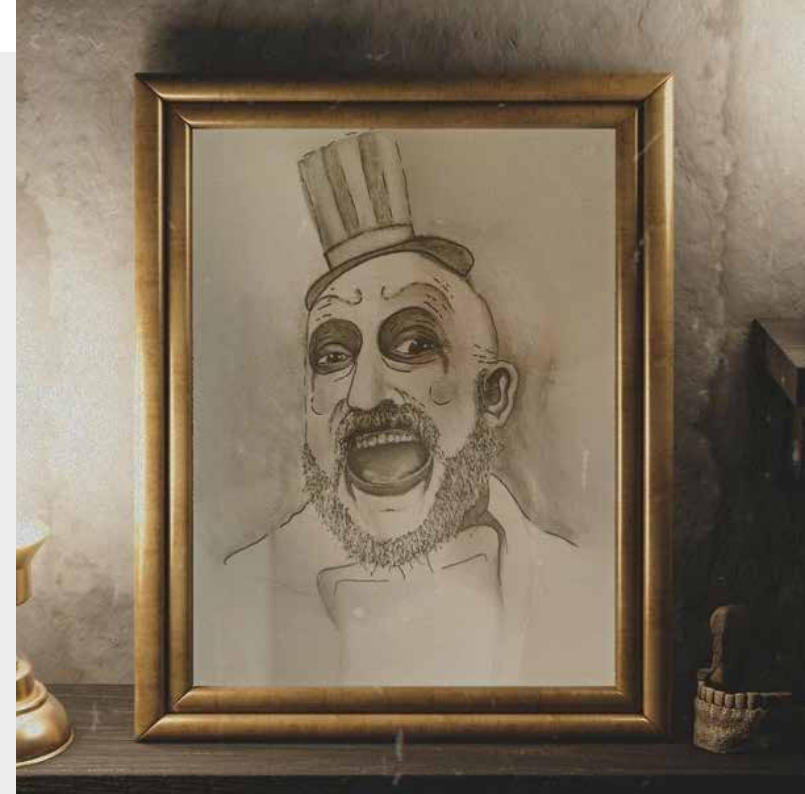
"I wanted to kickstart my business and was looking for inspiration for how to reach a wider customer base. I able to get a great understanding of my customer and where to find them and have now set up a totally new shop alongside my original business"

— **Faye Walker, Owner, FW Artistry**

MW PHOTOGRAPHY
CUSTOMER FOCUS

People buy passion and focussing on the work you love most comes across in your marketing.

Mark is an amazing photographer, he can do interiors, landscapes, food, studio but what he LOVES is photographing people outdoors. He's never happier than when lying in a puddle to get the right angle.

By helping Mark to focus on the customers he most loved working with he was able to attract better clients as well as do more of the work he loves doing (which he also happens to be best at).

"By really focussing on not just who my ideal customer was, but what my ideal work was, I was able to really focus my marketing. It's helped to generate better clients doing work I love as well as to make me an expert in my area. Everything seems easier when you know exactly who you're talking to."

— **Mark Williamson, Owner, MW Photography**

step eight:
WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU?

What does your ideal customer think about you? What do they say to other people about you?
Think about how you describe your favourite restaurant to a friend, you convey an image so that they might go to it as well. This is the description we are looking for. The sentence they would say to a friend.

To really get to the bottom of that, ask yourself these four killer questions:

- What does your product or service accomplish from your avatars point of view?

- What are the specific benefits your avatar gets from buying your product?

- What would this person say about your product that might surprise people?

- What did this person already try that didn't work and is the reason they came to you; or are you introducing something they have never tried before?
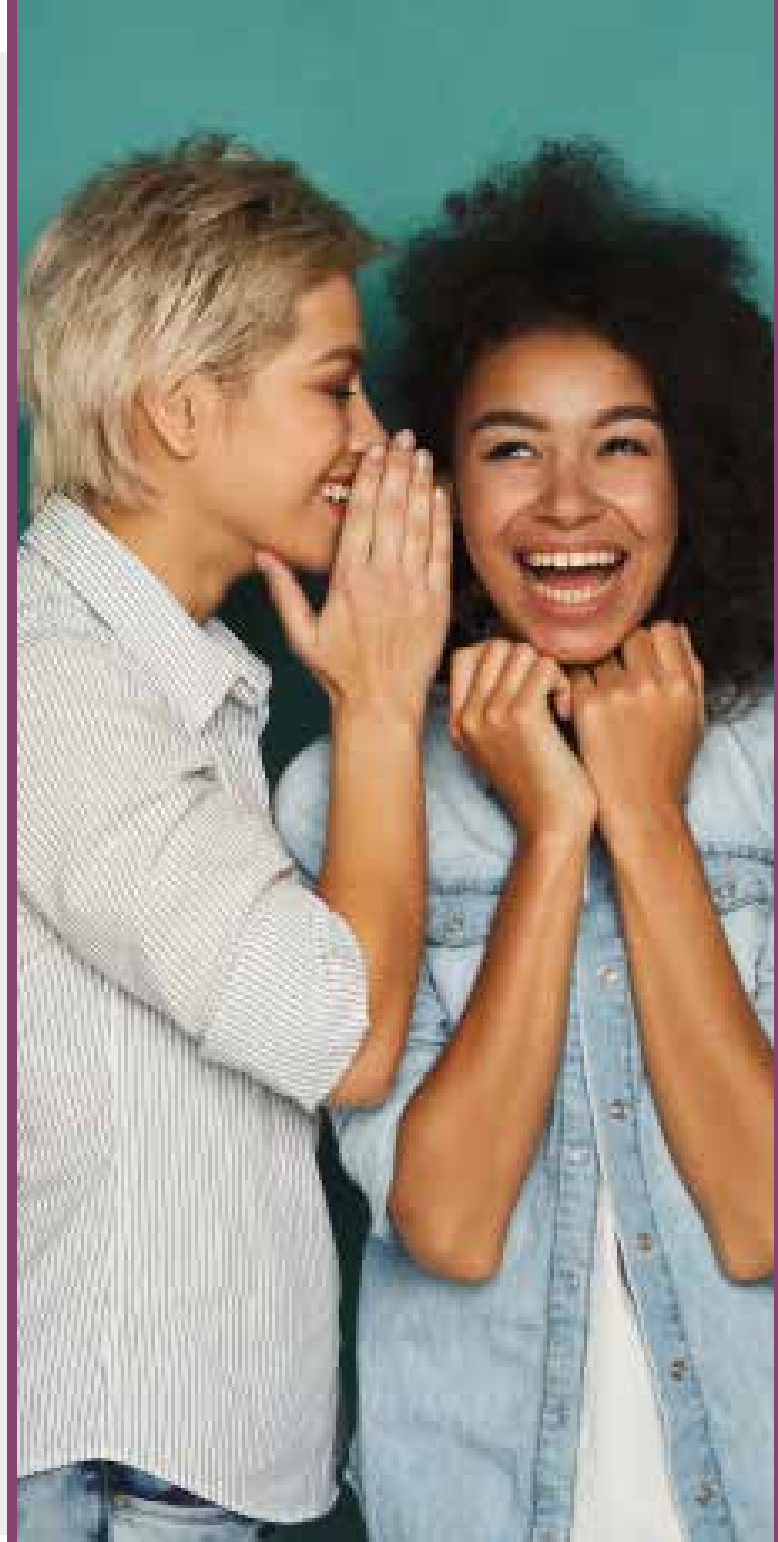
YOUR IDEAL
CUSTOMER
AVATAR
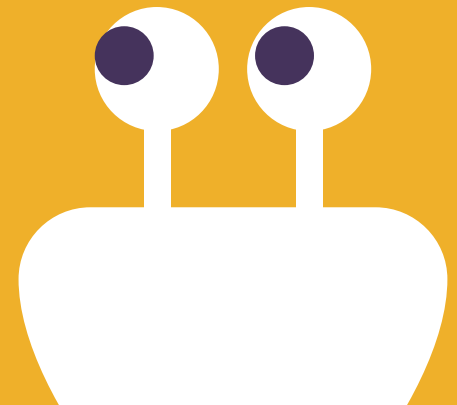
HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR AUDIENCE AVATAR

NAME — This really helps bring them alive and when you talk to people about your avatars you don't refer to these types of people, but an actual person.

AGE — An exact age, NOT a range. This is a person that has a date of birth!

INTERESTS

What do they do for a living? What social media do use; what are their hobbies; do they like to travel or are they a book worm? What is there perfect night out and with who - family, friends, strangers...

PURCHASE DRIVERS

What is driving them to buy from you and what is key to them. Is it price, quality, ease of purchase or the overall customer experience.

NEEDS & DESIRES

What are the key needs in their life, the things they cannot go without that relate to your product or service? What are the desires, the things that some consider luxury but this person wants.

PAINS & FEARS

What are the problems that this person has, that maybe your product or service solves for them?

ROLE MODELS

Who do they look up to, who would they listen to because they recommended you? What are the brands that stand out for them?

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

What is the killer line that this person would say to a friend if they were asked about your product or service?

YOUR AUDIENCE AVATAR

NAME

AGE

GENDER

INTERESTS

PURCHASE DRIVERS

NEEDS & DESIRES

PAINS & FEARS

ROLE MODELS

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

EXAMPLE AVATARS

On the following pages we've produced some avatars to get you going. The following ten examples avatars work for different industries. See if there is one for your sector or if the person feels relatable to the attrributes you've described for your ideal customer.
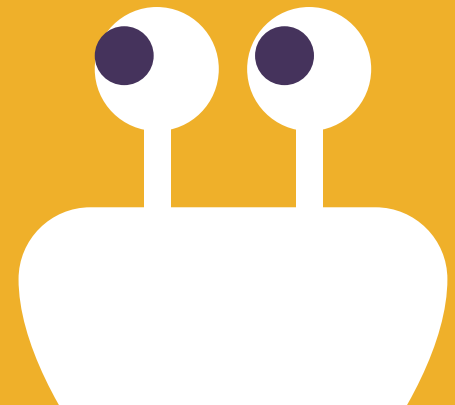
HEALTH & FITNESS AVATAR

NAME

Jean

AGE

53

INTERESTS

Headteacher with a passion for teaching. She likes to meet her friends regularly for drinks. Both kids are now at university. Loves to read and has recently become quite a fan of podcasts, which she listens to whilst doing yoga at home.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

She loves to find a bargain, often buying luxury items because they are on offer.

NEEDS & DESIRES

She always needs to be up to date on the subjects she cares about, like work and politics. She loves having good fitness equipment, often buying items she doesn't need immediately.

PAINS & FEARS

Jean worries about getting old and being out of touch with what's happening in the world, as a result she often gets into a lot of fitness fads.

ROLE MODELS

She likes to have strong and powerful female role models, like Sylvia Plath and Maya Angelou

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

I love these workout tops, they fit brilliantly and feel high quality, I wouldn't swap them for a cheaper version.

eCOMMERSE AVATAR

NAME   Paul

AGE   46

INTERESTS

Family man that is able to continue his love of all things geekdom with his 2 young children.
Paul loves Lego, comics, films and music. He loves to take his family on luxury holidays.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

He believes in planning ahead for a bargain, he is the type of person that buys Christmas decorations and wrapping paper in the January sales. He loves fun things, but always tries to get them cheaply.

NEEDS & DESIRES

He doesn't spend money he cannot afford, purchases for the home and children are his priority. He desires things that will be enjoyable to him and things that make his children happy – he probably spoils them.

PAINS & FEARS

Not having enough money to get everything he thinks the kids deserve.

ROLE MODELS

Loves Disney+ because it has given him and the family a lot of what they love, but for a great price as he was an early subscriber.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

The variety of products is great and this allows me to spot something I like that's at a reasonable price.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AVATAR

NAME

Daisy

AGE

32

INTERESTS

Started her own bakery business from home in Lockdown. Loves what she does and it enables her to spend time with her 5 year-old daughter. Loves films and has discovered she's pretty good at online marketing and selling her business.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

She needs someone to cover the basics of her business to ensure that doesn't slip, like the accounts and contracts with suppliers.

NEEDS & DESIRES

Needs someone to ensure her accounts are up to date and she is making the right decisions. She would love to just bake and have more time with her family.

PAINS & FEARS

Worried that her business slows down and she needs to get a normal job again. Concerned that suddenly she gets a large tax bill she doesn't understand.

ROLE MODELS

Anyone that runs their own business and seems to be in control of it all. Loves Cath Kidston as a brand.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

They just ensure things happen and I don't need to worry about my accounts, they have given me the guidance to follow that is simple. Always easy to talk to.

ARTIST/PHOTOGRAPHY AVATAR

NAME Alexandro

AGE 38

INTERESTS

Runs the creative department of a media agency and loves his job. He would describe himself as a free spirit that loves to take chances. Travels to unusual places and loves cooking. Has converted all his social media spare time to Tik Tok.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Needs to find good quality photographers that can be relied on but also that he can work with. He wants to engage with them and have them as part of the creative process.

NEEDS & DESIRES

He really wants someone that will bring ideas to the process and won't just turn up expecting to be told exactly what to do.

PAINS & FEARS

Hates the idea of unreliable people that forget to turn up or people that are rude to clients on set. He recognises clients are important.

ROLE MODELS

He is a big fan of eco fashion brands SeventyOne and ABLE.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

He turns up and immediately fits into the project we are working on, adding value and putting everyone at ease.

THIRTY THREE PERCENT

TRADESPERSON AVATAR

NAME

Steve

AGE

26

INTERESTS

Lives with his girlfriend and spends all his free time going out for meals, drinks and concerts. Loves to travel and his job as a freelance journalist gives him the freedom to do the things he loves. He uses Instagram and listens to podcasts.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Has never been interested in DIY or doing stuff around the flat. Will always call in a tradesman rather than attempting it himself.

NEEDS & DESIRES

Would love to have an on-call handyman that did everything needed in the house. Has a cleaner because neither he or his wife are around consistently to get things done.

PAINS & FEARS

Hates the idea of a gas leak or the electricity going in the middle of the night and not knowing what to do.

ROLE MODELS

Loves brands like Solomon and Gnu.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

A problem happened, I sent them a message and they responded within minutes and came round within the hour.

ETSY/CRAFT STORE AVATAR

NAME

Rochelle

AGE

35

INTERESTS

Hates big brands so loves to buy local or authentic products. Holidays in the UK, travelling in a camper van. Big supporter of environmental causes. Has a flat full of 'nick knacks'. Hates the idea of social media and would prefer to read a newspaper or listen to the radio.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Always feels there is space for a new item in the house if she see's something that really attracts her and she likes the maker.

NEEDS & DESIRES

She needs to bond with the company or person that makes an item, she will not buy something just because of the item.

PAINS & FEARS

She would be mortified if someone else had the same item as her in their house.

ROLE MODELS

Massive fan of John Lennon.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

You can tell the love and time that was put into making all of their items.

RESTAURANT AVATAR

NAME   Roger

AGE   54

INTERESTS

A traditional guy that watches the football with his mates every week. He visits the same villa in Spain every year and loves to make his own brew at home. He runs his own building firm. He is on various football forums and listens to the radio a lot.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Feels like he should eat out at least twice a week and wants to know that the food will be good, doesn't like to take risks.

NEEDS & DESIRES

He loves to get his whole family together for a meal at least once a week and it is important to him that people in the restaurant know him and he gets treated like someone special.

PAINS & FEARS

He would hate the idea of going for a meal and it being poor quality and people thinking he picked a bad place to eat.

ROLE MODELS

Self made people like Richard Branson.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

Absolute quality food every time. The people that serve me always know what I want and I don't have to wait around for ages.

HOTEL AVATAR

NAME   Aya

AGE   24

INTERESTS

Still lives at home and has a boyfriend of two years. Back packed around the world after university and now studying to be a surgeon. She has wealthy parents that are very supportive of her. She lives on her phone and Instagram is her choice, although she does experiment withTik Tok.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Value to her is a new experience, she does not want to pay for a basic or standard hotel and will look at non-standard accommodation ideas rather than just hotels.

NEEDS & DESIRES

She would be happy if every single time she stayed somewhere it was completely different, from unusual hotels to strange flats or even a castle!

PAINS & FEARS

She fears having to grow up and go for a boring and cheap holiday in a sunny part of Europe. The idea of compromising on her free time scares her, because she works very hard.

ROLE MODELS

She likes Nike for its product and social conscience.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

What an amazing experience, the room was lovely, everyone was really helpful and we'd recommend it to friends.

REAL ESTATE AVATAR

NAME   Arjun

AGE   40

INTERESTS

Married father of three, he runs a dental practice and devotes most of his time to his family and sport. He considers himself a taxi driver for his children, who all have active lives at various clubs. Loves to read blogs online and can be found chatting to friends in various sport Facebook groups

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Children are growing up and he needs a bigger place for them all. He wants to buy a quality house, he won't rush and go cheap.

NEEDS & DESIRES

He needs a new house that will tick all his needs, so he can satisfy his whole family and still leave a little space in the house for him to get some quiet time.

PAINS & FEARS

Moving again. He wants this to be the forever house and fears picking too quickly and regretting it in 5 years.

ROLE MODELS

Doesn't really bother with clothes brands but shops mainly at Next because it feels like good quality for the price.

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

Really listened to what I wanted and didn't try and make me compromise on my needs.

SHOP OWNER AVATAR

NAME   Darren

AGE   38

INTERESTS

Spends a lot of time online, on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs. Some for his job as a marketing manager and some for personal enjoyment. He talks a lot about supporting local causes and has made his wife stop shopping on Amazon. Likes to do weekend walking & cycling and has completed two triathlons.

PURCHASE DRIVERS

Likes to walk into his local town centre and get any product he needs.

NEEDS & DESIRES

He does believe quality is important, so if he can only find a cheap version of what he is looking for, he will avoid it and wait.

PAINS & FEARS

Genuinely struggles with his Amazon ban, as its starting to restrict some of his purchasing and now believes he might be over spending at times.

ROLE MODELS

Likes the brand Merrell as it is good quality, well priced and the brand is steeped in ethics.
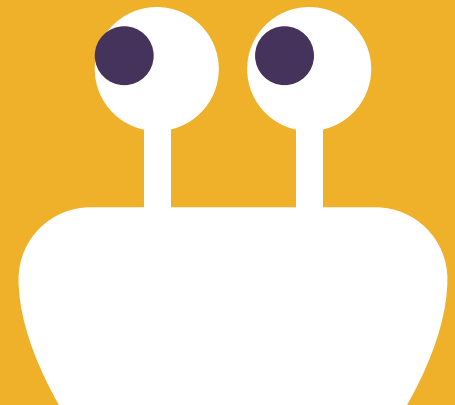
WHAT WOULD THEY SAY ABOUT YOU

This shop is the reason why I go into town, because I know you can get the right product then and there, I don't need to go online and order it.

WHAT'S NEXT?

If you want to take your markting to the next level and achieve massive results in a faction of the time, we may just have the course for you...

FUTURE MANTIS

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