

CONTENT STRATEGY

A ROADMAP TO CONTENT THAT ATTRACTS AND CONVERTS



WHY CONTENT STRATEGY?

Your success with marketing is tied to how well your content connects with prospects and moves them through the buyer's journey. Your content strategy is the map that will get you there.

While it's tempting to jump right into creating content, without a strategy, your content may not do the job it's supposed to do. A smart strategy based on your personas and value propositions will ensure the content you create will perform. This workbook will walk you through four steps to craft your own content strategy.



PERSONAS

Your personas form the foundation of your content strategy. Without a thorough understanding of your market segments, you can't create content that will resonate with them.



CONTENT TYPES

Planning a mix of content types ensures you have content that will resonate with each persona at each stage of buyer's journey.



TOPICS

Knowing your personas means you know what questions they're asking at each stage in the buyer's journey. Your content topics should answer those questions.

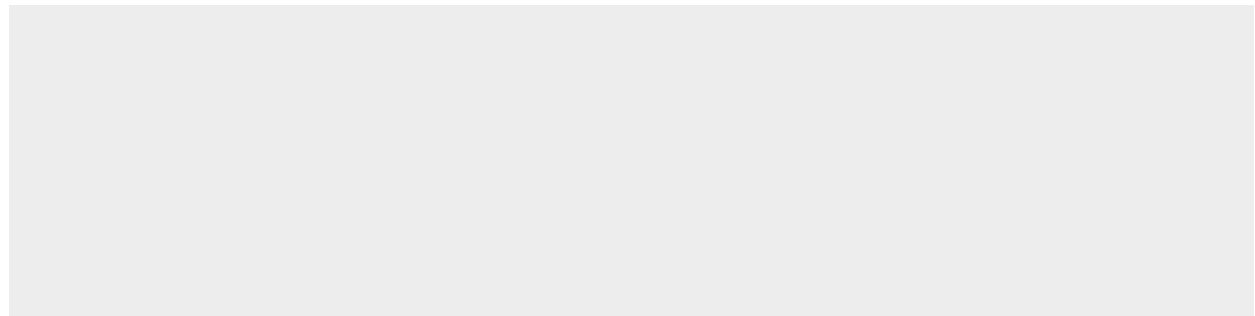
PERSONAS

A persona is a composite of all of the people in a market segment — a visual representation that describes the audience in detail. Personas give you a way to easily visualize who you're trying to reach. They summarize a market segment's motivations, behavior, and preferences.

To build your personas, follow these steps:

1 List your primary market segments

The first step is to separate your prospects into market segments based on pain points and preferences. Demographic characteristics may affect where you distribute the content, but pain points and preferences are what really differentiate each market segment. When your personas are based on pain points and preferences, you'll be able to better determine what topics to cover and what formats of content to create. Aim for no more than five.

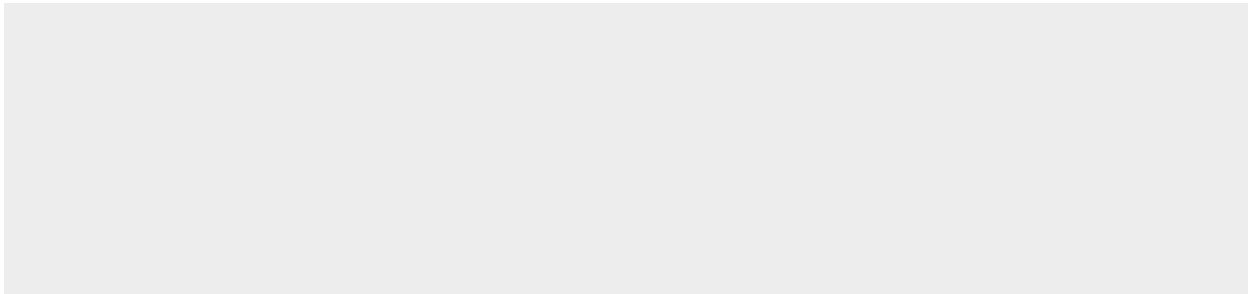


2 Identify what you want to learn about each market segment

Get clear on the information you need to gather about each market segment. Beware of trying to gather too much information or getting impatient and not gathering enough — both extremes will end up wasting time in the long run. Here's a list of the information that's most helpful to have:

PERSONAS

- Job titles and primary responsibilities
- Demographics (age, education, etc.)
- Role in the buying process
- Frustrations
- Pressures
- Needs
- Goals
- Aspirations



3 Create a list of questions

To find the information you listed in Step 2, you'll need to survey and interview people who fit your ideal client profile for each market segment. It would be great if you could simply share the bullet-pointed list above and ask people to fill in the information. But you won't get very valuable insight that way. To generate validated personas, create a list of questions that will allow people to open up and share specifics. Here are some ideas by category:

Demographics

- Describe your age and gender.
- What is your educational background?
- What level of education did you complete, and what did you study?
- Share your career path. How did you come to be where you are today?

PERSONAS

Job

- What is your job title and what role do you have in your company?
- What's the size of your company?
- What industry does your company work in?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- How is your performance measured?
- What's most important to you in a vendor relationship?
- What does the buying process look like? Who's involved?
- What steps do you typically go through when making a decision?
- How do you come to a decision?

Challenges

- What are your biggest challenges when it comes to x?
- Can you share what happened the last time you experienced those challenges?
- What was frustrating about the situation, specifically?
- What impact has the problem had on your work life?
- Have you already tried to solve the problem? If so, how?
- How have the solutions you've tried been deficient?

Goals & Aspirations

- What goals are you working toward in your career?
- Where do you hope to be in two years?
- Who do you admire who's in a similar role? Why do you admire them?

Behaviors

- How do you find information?
- When considering a buying decision, who do you talk to?
- What publications or blogs do you read?
- Which associations are you a member of?
- What social networks are you on? Who do you follow on social media?
- What types of content do you tend to use the most (select all that apply: blog posts, in-depth articles, downloadable e-guides or white papers, short downloadables like checklists or tip sheets, case studies, videos, podcasts)

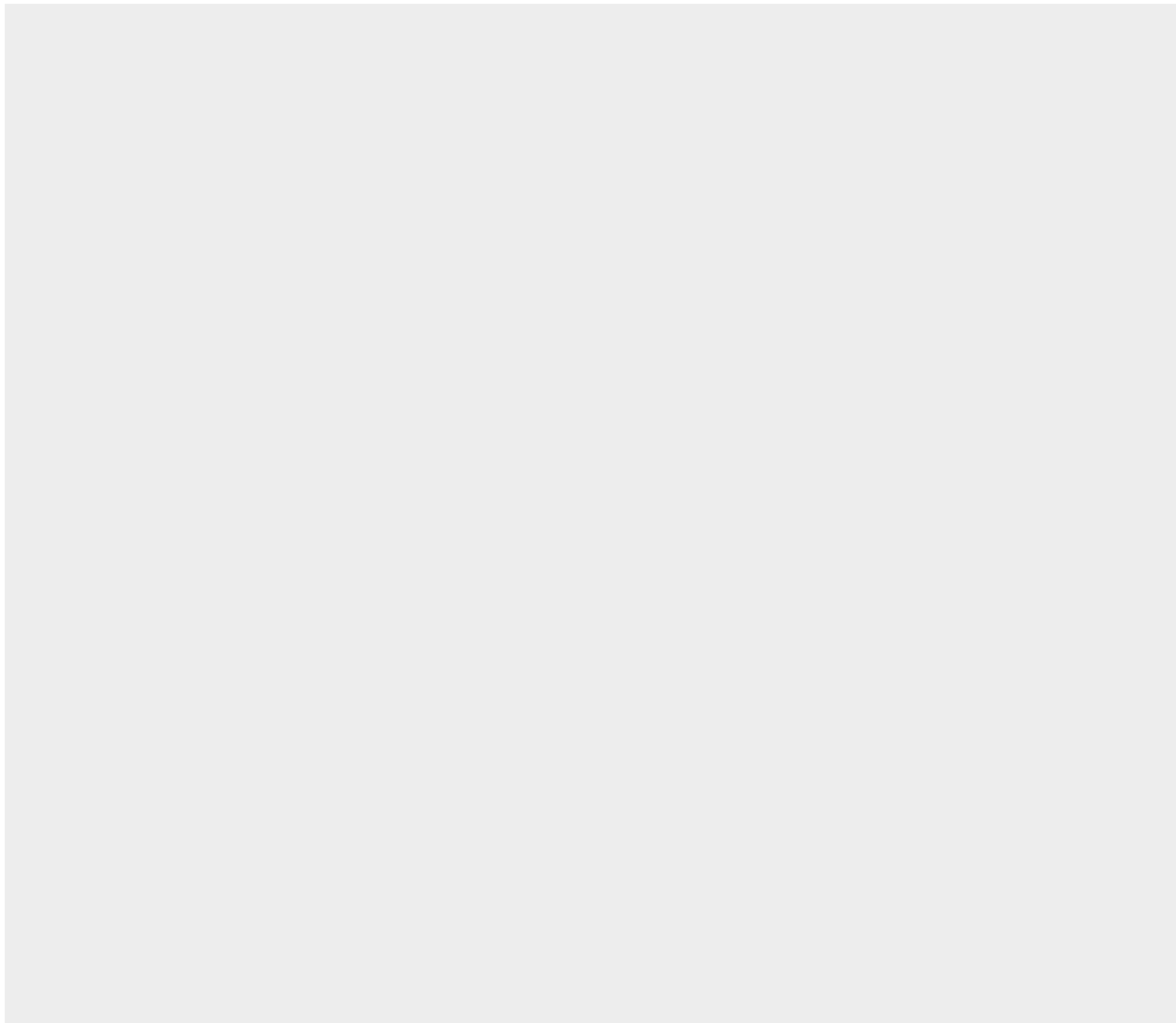
4 Now look for overlap and patterns

At this point in the process, you'll have survey responses and interview transcripts for each persona. Go through the data, looking for overlap in the survey responses and transcripts. What do you keep seeing over and over? Where are the similarities? Repeat this process for each persona. you can record your insights below.

CONTENT TYPES

In your persona research, you discovered what types of content (or content formats) each market segment uses most often. If you identified strong preferences, you'll need to include these types of content in your strategy. But you can also get creative based on what you know about each persona. Be sure you're including content formats that are appropriate for each stage of the buyer's journey.

Brainstorm a list of content types for each persona below. (Need help? Visit [25 Content Types to Engage Reason and Emotion](#) for a list of ideas.)



TOPICS

Now you're ready to outline the questions each persona is asking at each stage in the buyer's journey. This outline will help you identify which topics to cover for each persona at each stage. (This step is a fun one because you get to dig into the psychology of what's going on in each persona's mind at each stage.) It's helpful to view the buyer's journey in the context of the marketing funnel, as presented below.



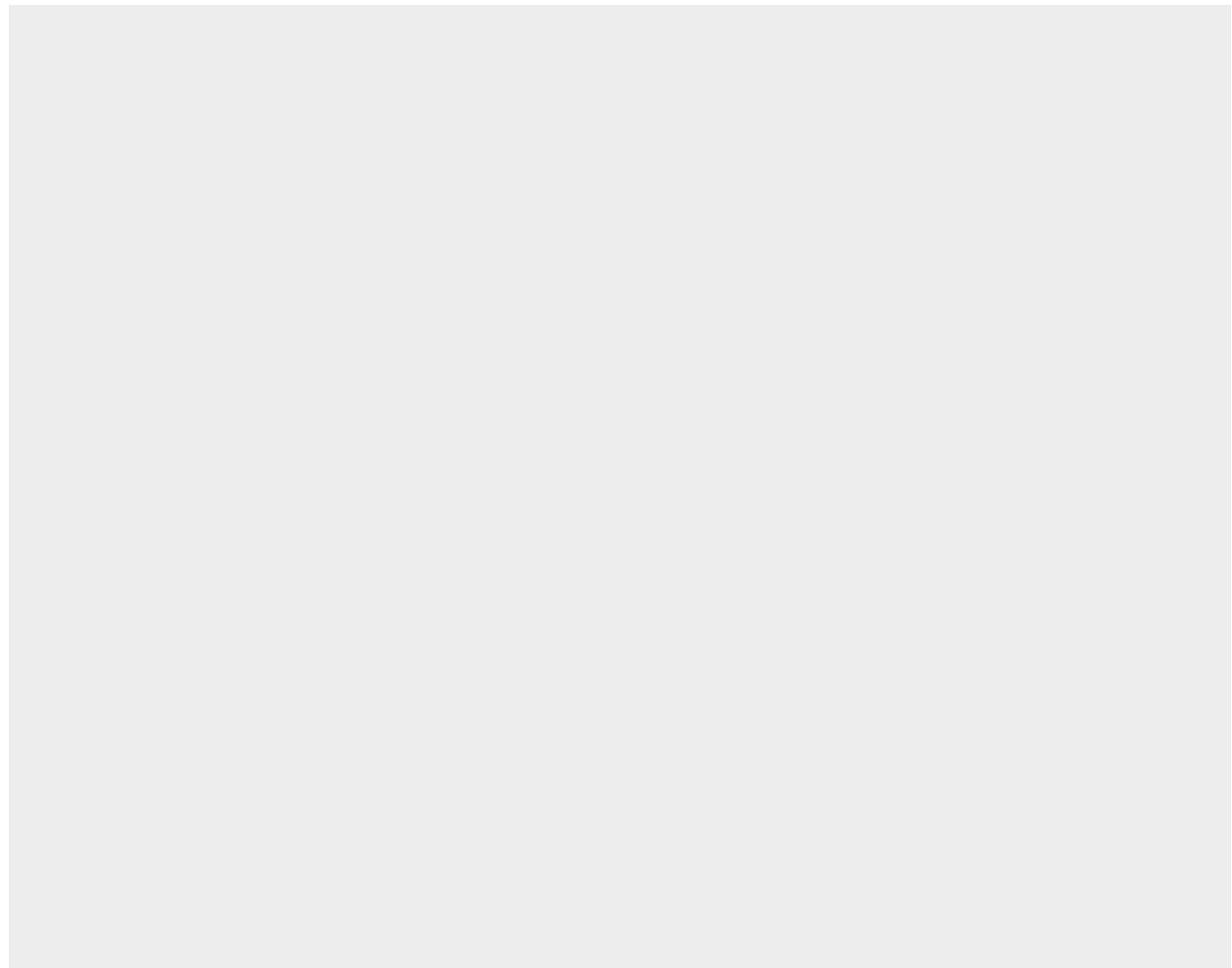
The buyer's journey is made up of five primary stages: Discovery, Trigger, Search, Buy, and Stay. (Discovery and Trigger together make up the Awareness stage — but it's helpful to think of the action or situation that triggers the search for a solution separately).

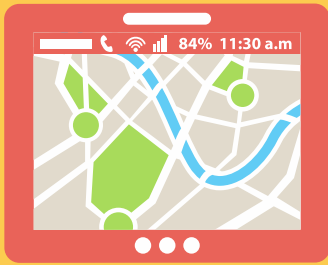
How to map your content topics

To generate content topics for each persona at each stage in the funnel, answer the following questions:

- What are the main issues or concerns that each persona has at each stage in their journey?
- What questions is each persona asking at each stage in their journey?

Finally, you'll brainstorm topics or headlines based on what you uncovered from answering the questions above. These topics are the ones most likely to capture each persona's attention at each stage in the journey.





A CONTENT STRATEGY ROADMAP

After completing all the exercises in this workbook, you have a roadmap to create a content strategy. You can now create a content plan and nurturing plan for each persona with the content types and topics for each quarter, as well as a promotion plan for your content.

Need help with your content?



TAKE A QUIZ

Not sure how your content strategy stacks up? Take [this free online quiz](#) to find what's missing.

[Take the Quiz](#)



EXPERIENCE A WORKSHOP

The Content Refinery Workshop walks you through the full process and comes with a customized content plan, nurturing plan, and promotion plan.

[Learn More](#)



GET HELP EXECUTING

Quality content that resonates isn't easy to create. Schedule a call to chat about your needs and get information on done-for-you content packages.

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