Increasing Relevance with Buyer Personas and B2I Marketing

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Abbreviated Summary | March 2014

Note: This Abbreviated Summary highlights some of the significant findings from ITSMA Survey: Increasing Relevance with Buyer Personas and B2I Marketing, March 2014. A more in-depth analysis can be found in the full report available for purchase at: http://www.itsma.com/research/increasing-relevance-with-buyer-personas-and-b2i-marketing/
In B2B marketing, relevance means: “Can you solve my problem?”

**#1** Understands my unique business needs

*Top rated services provider selection criteria*

Source: ITSMA, Professional Services and Solutions: 2013 Brand Tracking Study, (N=466)

48% are more likely to consider solution providers that personalize their marketing to address their specific business issues

Source: ITSMA, How Buyers Choose Solution Providers, (N=216)

81% will pay a premium for industry experience and industry-specific solutions

Source: ITSMA, Professional Services and Solutions: 2013 Brand Tracking Study, (N=466)
These are the new marketing techniques to improve relevance and personalization

Buyer Persona

An example (archetype) of a customer who represents a particular group of buyers.

Used to better understand:

- What motivates buyers to choose your solutions
- How to persuade them to choose you rather than a competitor or the status quo

Buyer Personas make your marketing messages client-centric, relevant, and consistent; B2I makes them more personalized.

Why and how they buy Personas

Who they are
Demographic Segments

What they like
Preferences

What they do
Behaviors

B2I

Source: ITSMA
Less than half of B2B marketers today are increasing relevance through personalization.

- 44% use buyer personas
- 29% use B2I processes or tools
- 16% use both

We’re at the start of something big

% of Marketers (N=194)

Now

Next 12 months

Beyond 12 months

Persona Usage

B2I Usage

44%

73%

64%

84%

83%

The majority of marketers believe that they are only slightly or somewhat effective at using personas.

How effective is your organization in using personas in its marketing activities?

% of Respondents (N=87)

- Slightly/somewhat effective: 83%
- Very effective: 15%
- Not at all effective: 2%
- Extremely effective: 0%

Marketers point to a number of reasons behind their less than stellar results

**Just getting started**
“We are still learning how to target the right personas and customize the content.”

**Usage not yet pervasive**
“We have used personas in ABM programs extensively. As a next step we’d like to use it in our thought leadership campaigns.”

**Inconsistent application**
“We have good personas and have organized campaigns for them, but still slip into inside-out marketing too often.”

**Inability to operationalize**
“We don’t know what to use them for... we spent a lot of time on them, but how do we apply the knowledge?”

The research reveals additional obstacles to buyer persona effectiveness

1. Not doing qualitative research with buyers; relying too much on sales for buyer intelligence

2. Emphasizing demographic information rather than deep insights into buyer behavior

3. Creating buyer personas solely based on what buyers do (industry/role), rather than how they decide to purchase

We are just beginning the personalization journey

- Buyers are more likely to do business with solution providers that demonstrate an understanding of their unique business issues
- **Personas** and B2I are two new marketing techniques to improve relevance and personalization

### Personas can improve marketing at every level

- Effective buyer personas come from qualitative research with customers
- Deep insights on how and why people buy are more important than demographics
- Beware of complexity! You don’t need a persona for every market segment

### B2I adds another layer of relevance

- B2I marketing enables more personalized packaging and outbound targeting
- You need human judgment to do B2I personalization well
- B2I, done well, transforms marketing into a value-added service

Study Methodology

Web-based Survey

Survey invitations were emailed during March 2014 to ITSMA member and select non-member companies

194 Marketers, sales, and sales ops professionals

Qualitative Interviews

9 qualitative follow-up interviews with marketers

6 qualitative interviews with industry experts

ITSMA Analyzed the Data Three Ways

Effectiveness in Using Personas
- Very effective
- Somewhat/slightly effective

Company Size (annual revenue)
- Less than $1B
- $1-20B
- More than $20B

Company Type
- Products and services
- Primarily services


Participating Companies (partial list)

- Agilent Technologies
- Alcatel-Lucent
- Amdocs
- AMRT
- Arqiva
- AT&T
- Avaya
- Basware
- Birch
- Black & Veatch
- Bluewolf
- CA
- Capgemini
- CDW
- CGI
- Check Point Software
- Ciena
- Cisco Systems
- Cognizant
- Collaborative Consulting
- Colt
- CompuCom
- CSC
- Dassault Systemes
- Dell
- Deloitte
- Dimension Data
- DocuSign
- DST
- DWA
- EMC
- Everest Group
- Extreme Networks
- EY
- FEI
- FIS Global
- Fortna
- Fujitsu
- GE Healthcare
- Genpact
- Geomatic
- Green Hat
- HCL Infosystems
- HCL Technologies
- HDS
- HP
- IBM
- iGATE
- Ikonomou
- Infor
- Infosys
- Infotech
- ITC Infotech
- KPIT
- Kronos, Inc.
- Lumension
- Microsoft
- Minacs
- Mphasis
- Neudesic
- NICE
- NxTech, Inc.
- Optus Business
- Orange Business Services
- PDS
- Philips Healthcare
- Pivotal Labs
- Polycom Asia Pacific, Pte Ltd.
- PTC
- PwC
- Qlik
- Salesforce
- SAP
- SC&H Group
- SITA
- Softtek
- SunGard
- Swisscom IT Services
- Symantec
- Tech Mahindra
- Unify
- Unisys
- Ventyx
- Verisign
- Verizon
- Wipro
- Wood Mackenzie
- Xerox
Respondent Demographics

Which of the following best describes the audience to which you market?

- B2B: 87%
- Both B2B and B2C: 13%

Which of the following best describes your company?

- Mainly sell products (services revenue less than 10%): 54%
- Mainly sell services (product revenue less than 10%): 44%
- Other: 2%

Which best describes your job title or level?

- Functional or LOB Leadership: 19%
- Director: 35%
- Manager: 33%
- Individual contributor: 13%

What is your organization’s annual revenue?

- $50–99M: 4
- $100–249M: 5
- $250–499M: 5
- $500–999M: 3
- $1–4.9B: 8
- $5–9.9B: 21
- $10–20B: 32
- Over $20B: 32


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Want to learn more?
Here’s what is included in the full study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Slide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology and Respondent Demographics</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed Findings: Buyer Personas</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed Findings: B2I Tools and Processes</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Buy the Study

Member: $295  
Non-member: $495

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Final Report | March 2014
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