

Harness the Power of Personas for Social Media Marketing

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Personas are not new. They have been around since the 1990s. What is new is taking personas and applying them to **social media**.

A persona is a tool to summarize research about a target audience and help marketers and advertisers see the world from a single target person's perspective. A great tool, it is often used by **Web developers, user experience designers, and B2B marketers**.

This article provides four approaches to creating personas to increase the relevancy of your **social media marketing** methods.

Personas: From Usability to Social Action

In Web design, personas help in creating a digital experience that optimizes usability; in **social media marketing**, personas are about delivering more customized messages.

Communicating the right message at the right time in the right channel improves the performance of the one-on-one personal **communication** that happens in social media.

Understanding consumer **personas** can help content creators produce more meaningful day-to-day, one-on-one social media communication. Personas help marketers take a customer-centric approach that connects with consumers in meaningful and relevant ways.

Brand message, voice, and promotions still matter, but **social media engagement requires** customizing messages for specific situations.

How to Create Personas for Social Media

There is no one right way to create a persona. Here I will present four approaches, and you can decide to use one or a combination of them.

1. Based on Social Media Use

One approach is [from WOMMA, based on social media use](#), in accordance with a study of US

Internet users. These general personas emphasize the differences between the types of social media participation via six classifications:

1. **No-shows:** These are consumers who are the least involved with social media, if involved at all. Yes, they still exist; so, if they are part of your target market, you need to reach them with other methods of marketing.
2. **Newcomers:** These consumers have recently joined social networking. They are the most passive users, usually on a single social media network. Newcomers need a lot of coaxing and education.
3. **Onlookers:** These are consumers who simply observe others via social channels, but they do not have their own social media profiles. For these people, you want to create content they are able to access.
4. **Cliquers:** Many consumers are active users on just one network. Focus is key for engaging these customers.
5. **Mix-n-Minglers:** Consumers who regularly share and interact with a diverse group of connections via social media. If your target market has a lot of these people, you need a multipronged approach.
6. **Sparks:** These consumers are the most active on social media, and they are potential brand ambassadors to their favorite brands. To engage this group, you'll want to practice outreach and encourage user-generated content creation.

2. Based on Social Networking Motivations and Habits

Another approach to personas is [proposed by](#) the Coca-Cola Retailing Research Council and the Integer Group. This method categorizes consumers based on social network motivations and habits:

1. **Bonders:** These consumers love to create and cultivate relationships with family, friends, and work colleagues. They are fun, sociable, and connected and want to keep up with what's happening in others' lives, share their thoughts and ideas, and introduce people to each other.
2. **Sharers:** These people want to be the one to spread the word on what's going on in their lives and to provide helpful information. They find value in sharing their discoveries so others benefit, and they want to build stronger relationships by commenting and sharing.
3. **Professionals:** Consumers considered professionals are career-focused, using social media for professional networking or knowledge, but they also like to share and spread their opinions and relevant information on both professional and more personal social networks.
4. **Creators:** These consumers are outgoing and use social media to express themselves by creating and sharing content. They are bold and enjoy continually learning while showing people who they are.

3. Based on Your Own Research

A third approach is to create personas based on your own research. Creative agency [Elevator](#)

[suggests](#) each business create custom personas, offering five ways to research and create your own buyer personas:

1. **Capture data:** Set up surveys on your website or using in-store feedback cards to gather demographic and psychographic information.
2. **Consult staff:** Collect the experiences and feedback from front-line employees, and categorize their insights on customer needs, preferences, and attributes.
3. **Study behavior:** Gain insight into customers by visiting online forums, doing keyword research, and following social media activity.
4. **Use internal data:** Mine existing customer data and purchase history to identify trends on how, when, and why customers are coming to your business.
5. **Ask customers:** Field a quick online survey; or ask customers to participate in an in-person or phone interview or take part in a focus group.

4. Based on a Marketing Perspective

A fourth approach to personas keys in on insights related directly to marketing messages. Creative consultancy [Riggs Partners suggests](#) creating buyer personas in three categories:

1. **Solution:** Here you want to describe the main solutions that the target is looking for. Include all aspects. Many times, a solution isn't simple and focused.
2. **Interests:** What are the broader interests of your consumers that cause them to need the more specific solutions? What grabs their attention and keeps it?
3. **Pain:** Home in on your consumers emotional needs by understanding their pain points. Every job and profession has them. Understanding them will create an immediate bond between marketer and audience.

Use Personas to Deliver More Personal Social Media

No matter which buyer persona creation method you use, it will enable you to take your general brand messages and make them more effective. Think of the persona as a tool for getting to know your audience better so you can talk to them in a much more "**social**" way.

Even in a narrow target market you will probably find several **buyer** personas. Each will give you ideas for more social media content, and each piece of content will be more relevant to that persona.

In the end, taking the time to create personas for social media will lead to more relevant content, increased **engagement**, and more **conversions**.