

# Your Target Audience – Who Are They & What Do They Want?

By Karon Thackston

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It still amazes me. When I write copy for a company, I always ask about their target audience. I have to know who I'm writing to in order to create a message that will bring a response. But about half the time, the client is absolutely stumped about who their target audience is and what they want.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I'll say it again: "You have to know your target audience before you can advertise effectively."

It just makes sense. How can you deliver what the customer wants unless you know what that is? How can you present a message in a way the customer will respond to unless you know their communication style? Bottom line... you can't.

So exactly how do you find out who your target audience is and what they want? It's actually easier than you might think. Here are my top seven ways to define a target audience. Each is quick, simple, and free/cheap.

1. Ask. Devise a survey or questionnaire and send it out to those people who you think \*might\* be interested in your product or service. Take a week or two to write a list of questions that you'd love to have the answers to; then create an online survey, and send out the link. Be honest. Tell the people why you want the information and what you plan to use it for. Also remind them that the survey is completely anonymous.

If you really want to boost responses, offer a prize drawing. Perhaps you could give away an Amazon gift certificate to one lucky winner.

TIP: I use Survey Monkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>) because they have the easiest and most flexible tools I've found. Not to mention, for surveys that only need 100 responses or less... it's FREE!

2. Read. Pick up some industry trade magazines or newspapers from your local newsstand (or read them online). Especially look for the Letters to the Editor section. This is normally where folks "sound off." It's a great place to get some fresh insight on what your target customer is thinking.

3. Lurk. Visit online forums that are directed at people in your target audience. No need to post a message... just hang out and see what others are saying. This is another wonderful place to get insights on what people in the real world are thinking.

4. Visit. Stop by some of the places your target customers might visit. Are you selling back supports to truck drivers? You might need to visit a few truck stops. Just sit back, order the lunch special, and keep your ears open!

5. Talk. Want to know the biggest complaint about retaining wall contractors? I actually had to find this one out for a client! Talk with those who would hire a retaining wall contractor. I jumped on the telephone and made a few phone calls. Amazingly enough, almost everyone I spoke with had the same complaints. I was able to use that information to position my client in the best possible light before his target audience!

6. Join. Local associations create a tremendous environment for people to express their opinions, discuss pressing issues, and solve problems. Don't join the ones that fit YOU best, however. Join the ones that your target customers would join!

7. Think. Put your thinking cap on, and come up with more ways to get to know your target audience. Perhaps you could visit a company that falls within your target customers' line of work, and observe them for a few hours. Maybe you could host a free conference call where people within your audience could voice their opinions. With a little creativity, you'll have all the ins and outs of your target customer nailed in no time!

Want to know the four personality types and how to get each to respond to your copy? Karon can show you! Get that information and tons more at <http://www.copywritingcourse.com> . Also subscribe to Karon's FREE ezine: Business Essentials at <http://www.ktamarketing.com/ezine.html> .

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