

# Episode 112: What are personas and how can I use them?

Recently, people have been using personas in their marketing plans.  
In this episode we are going to explore what they are and how to use them.



## 1. What are marketing personas?

Personas are fictitious characters used to represent your various segments. The idea is that by giving them personalities they will be easier to market to. Sometimes you see completely different adverts on TV for the same company. One is maybe a little risqué and funny, one maybe sweet and homey. The chances are they are talking to two different types of persona. In this case, a younger person and say, a housewife. Personas help both understand your segments and explain your marketing.

## 2. How do you build personas?

In the end you want to do enough that you could interview them and get answers. It's actually like hiring people who look like a stereotype of your customers. Here are 6 steps to building personas for your market.

1. For your market, describe the critical segments and give them fun names.
2. Describe them factually – Who are they? Where do they live and what do they drive?
3. Describe their values – Describe what they believe or care about.
4. Get under their skin and work out what motivates them.
5. Define the value they receive from you and the emotional connection they have.
6. Give them a face and show them graphically.

It is important to make sure you give your personas real personalities. Names like Roger-Racecar or Sally-Hybrid makes them easy to understand. Create pictures or cartoons of them and get their clothes right. The more real they feel the more use they will be.

## 3. Problems with personas.

As useful as building personas are, remember they are not real people. At some point the only real way to understand real customers is talk to them. The more data you get the better they will be. I have found good personas come from good market research they don't replace it.

Bottom Line: Sometimes our customers are too abstract; making personas can bring your segments to life.