AdRoll

How to Find Your Target Audience: A Guide

Who is your target audience? How old are they? What are their interests? Where do they spend their time online?

Knowing your brand's target demographics can help you [create better audience profiles](#) and reach potential customers on the platforms and in the places they frequent most.

This group of people, known as a target audience, is often the focal point of marketing campaigns. Understanding the importance of target audiences can reduce costs, inspire confident decisions, and drive results. This means your brand needs to know not only whom to target, but how to find your target audience in the first place.

If you've been struggling with defining your target audience or even how to reach them, it's time to dive in.

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What Is a Target Audience

A target audience describes a group of consumers or people you want to influence with your marketing. A target audience is similar (and related) to your target market, but they're not identical concepts. A target market is the entire group of consumers a company wants to buy its product or service, while a target audience is a smaller subgroup of a target market that often shares traits, values, or other demographic qualities.

What does this look like in practice? For example, a target market might be "digital marketing professionals aged 25-35." The narrowed-down target audience example could be "digital marketers aged 25-35 who live in San Francisco."

Characteristics to Group By

The first step in targeting your audience is identifying your desired customer characteristics. A company can segment a target audience via various factors, but some are more common than others. The most popular types of target audience segmentation tend to come from the following places:

- Buying intent, such as looking for specific products
- Shared interests, including hobbies
- Subcultures, including the types of content/entertainment they consume

Other forms of segmentation include age, gender, and location.

How you target your audience might differ depending on their information and the goal of your campaign. For example, some target audiences might respond better to email campaigns or social
media ads. Other audiences might prefer an in-person event.

Audience Categories

Target audiences can generally be divided into two categories — demographic and psychographic. Demographic target audience categories include age, gender, location, family status, occupation, and income level.

Psychographic target audience categories focus on behavioral traits such as interests, attitudes, and lifestyle choices. Identifying which of these characteristics best defines your ideal customers is key to developing an effective marketing strategy.

Chapter 2:

7 Ways to Find Your Target Audience

How do you begin the process of identifying your target audience? There are many ways to dig into the demographics of your current website visitors and customers. In fact, you may already have tools installed to start mining this data for valuable insights.

Here are seven ways you can learn more about your current visitors, customers, and the audience you want to attract.

1. Social media analytics

If you've already got a Facebook page, Meta's Business Manager offers tools to view insights about your audience. If you have an Instagram, you can use Business Manager to view data from both platforms – if they are linked. If you prefer to view Facebook and Instagram metrics separately, you still have that option.

On Facebook, you can go to your business page, and under the "More" drop-down menu, click on "Insights." Then click on "People" on the left side of the page, and you can view basic demographic information like age group, gender, and location for fans, followers, people you're reaching, and people engaging with you.

On Instagram, go to your profile page and click on the three bars in the top right corner of the screen. Then click "Insights." If you go to the "Audience" tab, you can see the location, age range, and gender information for your followers.

This demographic information tells you what kind of viewers you're attracting with your content — and you may be surprised by the results. For example, some brands may think their primary audience is Baby Boomers but learn it's mostly Gen X-ers who follow their Facebook page or Instagram feed.

This information can help you tweak your messaging to appeal to your ideal customer profile (or ICP) and make your marketing more effective. Partnering this knowledge with other tools like our social media advertising platform can increase your ROI exponentially.

2. Website analytics

Your website analytics can also provide valuable information about your current audience, which you can use to learn more about your brand's target demographic.

For example, Google Analytics has an entire audience tab that provides the basics, like your visitors' geographic location and language. Under "Demographics," you can see the age range and gender of
your visitors.

But it gets better. The "Interests" tab provides data about what your visitors are interested in:

- Affinity categories like shoppers/value shoppers and technology/technophiles
- In-market segments like home & garden/home décor and apparel & accessories/women's apparel
- Other categories like food & drink/cooking & recipes

You can dive deeper into these categories to understand your ideal customers better: what they like, what they buy, and where they shop, for example. This information can also help inform new products or service offerings and where to sell them.

As with demographic information, your users' interests may come as a surprise and present opportunities to improve your marketing. For example, if you sell camping gear, you may learn that 30 percent of your visitors are technophiles.

Knowing that these visitors will likely buy the latest gadgets, you can serve up ads for camp stoves that also charge devices or cell phone signal boosters through retargeting ads.

3. Your own CRM Platform

Storing information about your customers in a customer relationship management (CRM) platform offers an excellent jumping-off point for analyzing their data.

Direct-to-consumer brands often have a leg up on the competition because they own all their customer data and don't have to rely on a go-between like a reseller. Even if you don't use a CRM platform, you can leverage customer data stored in your e-commerce platform. Your customers' wish lists, abandoned shopping carts, loyalty program data, and net promoter score (NPS) help you identify customer behaviors and satisfaction. You can combine this information with cookie data or third-party marketing insights to learn about the type of neighborhoods they live in, how they find your brand, and how they interact with your website.

For example, as a home goods retailer, you may learn that many of your highest-value customers live in suburban neighborhoods with a median annual income of $70,000.

Based on this information, you can target audiences in similar locations.

You may also learn that your customers tend to place smaller-value items, like jar openers or garlic presses, on their wish lists as they shop for more expensive things like slow cookers or bread machines. This kind of data can help you when creating promotions, like a "buy a stand mixer, get 25 percent off spatulas" deal. With a marketing tool that integrates with your CRM or e-commerce platform, such as Shopify, you can easily turn your customer insights into targeted marketing campaigns.

4. Surveys

Another way to flow more demographic information into your CRM platform is by conducting surveys of your highest-value customers.

Beauty companies are fantastic at this kind of data collection. They ask about hair color, eye color, and skin type so they can recommend certain cosmetic shades and products, for example. Surveys that collect information specific to your brand can provide even more insights into your target demographic that can then help you recommend products and generate more sales.

If you survey your customers regularly or encourage them to update their information, you can also get ahead of any marketplace trends. For example, your home goods customers may start indicating that their preferences for room decor are shifting from earth tones to bold jewel tones. With this kind of survey data, you can re-prioritize the products you promote accordingly.

5. Advertising platform look-alike tools

If you use an advertising platform, look for a tool that provides a way to find customers with a "lookalike" feature. These tools analyze your current customers in order to target people who are similar but not yet familiar with your brand/products. Some tools will offer interest-based targeting that lets you use the information you've gleaned about your existing audience to find new visitors that will likely become customers.

A lookalike targeting tool eliminates most of the guesswork when finding new customers. Instead of having to come up with demographic information for your ideal audience, the tool can use your existing data to serve your ads to visitors who are most like your current customers.

AdRoll's lookalike tool, for example, also features act-alike technology that looks at how visitors behave online, including what products they're viewing, to help you target and tailor your message to them.

Your customer insights and demographic information can help you better serve your customers and give them what they want, thus boosting your revenue. Start using the information you already have to learn more about your target demographics. This can help you refine your messaging and marketing to better reach your audience and turn visitors into customers. If you're not using one of these tools, it might be time to take a second look.

6. Social listening

Social listening is a valuable tool to help you learn more about your target market. It differs from social media tracking because it tells you why your audience says certain things about your brand or related businesses on social media.

Through social listening, you can learn more about trending topics your customers follow, the brands they interact with most and why, and where they spend their time engaging. With this information, you can learn more about your audience and structure your marketing campaign messages to reach and engage them better.

Social listening tools let you monitor multiple social platforms from one dashboard, where you can check brand mentions, keyword searches, tags, and DMs. Your social media management tool may have social listening as an added tool or feature — look for data where it exists!

7. Your competition

Finally, market research is valuable for learning more about your target audience. Identify industry competitors with the same target audience as you and spend time researching their strategies. Start on their social media pages and evaluate their techniques and methods. What is their brand tone and messaging? What types of advertisements are they serving their audience? Most importantly, is what they're doing working?

Suppose your ideal audience is engaging with a specific brand. In that case, you can learn more about your audience — their demographics, interests, and behaviors — by researching how and why they engage with your competition. On the other hand, if your competitors don't see success, research to find out why and tailor your marketing to do the opposite.

Social media isn't the only place to learn more about your target market via industry competition. Take your market research a step further and dive into case studies, psychological analyses by marketers in your niche, and examples from successful businesses like yours. This information can give you a broad understanding of your audience insights, which you can then use as you dive into specific customer data details.

Benefits of a Well-Defined Target Audience

Taking the time in advance to nail down a target audience for your marketing campaign is a worthwhile investment that can pay some major dividends. Before you embark on a campaign, consider the following benefits of establishing a target audience:

1. Maximize your time and resources

Targeting a specific audience helps businesses maximize their time and resources by focusing their marketing efforts on the people most likely to be interested in their products or services. This saves money and increases the impact of their advertising and outreach.

Additionally, understanding the behaviors, preferences, and pain points of a target audience enables businesses to design products and services that meet the target's needs more effectively, thus maximizing the return on their investment.

2. Reach the right audience

Digital marketing offers significant advantages over traditional models, and reaching the right audience is one of them. By targeting the proper audience, your content or campaigns end up in front of the people who need to see them most. Contrast that with a billboard approach that costs more to reach customers without concern for demographics or buyer intent.

3. Confident decision making

With a target audience in place, you'll be able to make confident choices about what kinds of campaigns to run and the messaging you need to succeed. Target audience segmentation relies on data that you likely already have.

Chapter 4:
How to Reach Your Target Audience With AdRoll

There are various ways to reach your target audience, depending on who they are and what channels they frequent. Effective marketing campaigns use multiple channels to ensure their message reaches the right people.

These channels might include digital methods like email, social media, and search engine optimization (SEO), or traditional offline tactics such as print advertising and direct mail.

It's clear that knowing your target market is key to the success of your marketing efforts, but many business owners struggle with it. AdRoll can use your data to help understand your target audiences and how to segment them. If you're struggling to maximize your marketing budget, learn more about our tools and how to reach the right people for your product or service.