



transforming the *soft side* of your business!



Reboot Your Business: 1.D. Your Ideal Client

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ID Your Ideal Client

Setting the Stage

Identifying your ideal client is a critical step and a must-do marketing exercise. Look at your mission and why your company exists at all and ask, “Whom do I serve?” The hard part is getting as specific as possible to the point of potentially turning off a lot of other people. Don’t worry. The biggest mistake you can make is trying to please everyone. This dilutes your service/product so much that you really don’t strike a nerve with anyone. No one will have a compelling enough reason to buy from you. By turning some people off, you attract others who will bond with you for life. And a final benefit to knowing the specifics of your ideal client is you then have a much better idea of where to look for them. Here are three questions to ask yourself to get started. Looking at past and current clients:

1. Do They Want What I Have?

The first step is taking the time to define your offer. Remember don’t confuse your product with your offer. Your product is selling window treatments or upholstery or space planning. Your offer is enhancing prestige, providing comfort, offering security, etc.

List three things you offer most effectively to your customers.

1.
2.
3.

List the kinds of problems you help these people solve.

1.
2.
3.

2. Do They Value What I Have?

What do you do for your clients? Source exclusive products? Manage complicated projects? Evoke their personality through color and texture? One way to think about this is to ask yourself; what are your key strengths, gifts and talents that come naturally to you, that seem difficult for others to grasp?

List three of your strengths and talents

1.
2.
3.

3. Are They Willing to Pay a Premium for What You Do?

Since your offer is unique and what you create for each client is always unique, believing that you need to compete on price is trap. Take price out of the equation as you start to define your ideal client.

Now Ask Yourself:

What was your favorite project in the last 12 months? 6 months?

What did it entail? Did it involve working with your brains, creativity or your hands? Or what kind of combination of both? What phases of the project did you enjoy most?

Why did you like it? List 3 reasons you rate the project as your favorite.

What do the answers in question 1 and 2 have in common with your favorite projects? What is unique about what you offered them? What did **they** enjoy about the experience? (Call them and ask!) Why did they choose you over the competition in the first place?

The idea here is to not only define your client, but for you to get more of your favorite projects, be more lucrative while being more happy!

Now you're ready to build in your client profile using the following worksheet. You know your best clients and projects feel a certain way. You act a certain way when engaged with them. Once you have filled in the worksheet, put it into words and test it out on others.

My Client's Pain + Problems

My Client's Dreams

My Client is... (Demographics- Age, Family, Income, Gender, Job, Geography)

(Technographics: knowledge, affinity to technology)

Ideal Client

My Client's Personality... How she treats me? She would never _____, She understands _____ about me.

My Client's Characteristics... (Psychographics: values, what they think, likes, dislike, fears, passions, hot buttons)

Work Sheet Example: Home Owners in 5 zip codes with an income over \$150,000. Married, both partner working and owned home for over 5 years, tend to be in managerial positions have done research on product options and styles. Have remodeled/redecorated before and have a deadline or event that dictates completion time. Intend to stay in home for at least 5 more years.

OTHER APPROACHES

The Who/What/Where Approach

Questions to ask yourself about your past and present clients. Compile a client profile based on the most common answers to the questions.

“WHO”

Who are they, What are their particular concerns, Why do they have these concerns, Where can you reach them, etc.

- Is there a particular group of people you'd be excited to work with?
- Would this group understand and appreciate your offer?
- Why would this group want and value your offer?

“WHERE”

- Where are you most credible?
- Where is there the greatest need coupled with the greatest appreciation for your work?
- Where do the people who need your work most often have breakdowns that would cause them to hire you?

“WHAT”

- What do they like about your products and services? Are they brand conscious about them?
- What can/do you provide them with that no one else can?
- What emotional aspects impact their buying decisions?
- What related circumstances play a part?
- What interests do they have?

The Traits List Approach

Make a list of traits or characteristics of your favorite or most lucrative i.e. ideal clients:

Examples:

- Responsible (take responsibility for their success, or lack of)
- Risk-takers (willing to step outside their comfort zone and try something new)
- Genuine (reliable, authentic, positive and open)
- Bright (intelligent, questioning)
- Effective Decision Makers
- Results Oriented
- Collaborative

The Attributes Approach

Answer the following questions about your past and current clients. What attributes do they possess? (creativity, consistency, commitment, etc.) What are they passionate about?

- Where do they live? What types of jobs do they have?
- What types of events or experiences do they enjoy?
- What products and services do they buy?
- How do they learn and where do they like to go to learn?
- With whom do they share their lives?
- What problems/concerns/issues do they face?
- What do they read? When do they read it? Where do they read?
- What shops, Web sites, etc. do they purchase products from?
- What meetings, groups, and classes do they attend?

Putting Your Ideal Client Profile to Work

You may know the demographics of your "ideal client," but can you spot them by the language they use? Being able to rattle off the demographics of that group: age; gender, family size, etc. is not the "ideal client" -- that's the "typical client." There's gotta be something that separates typical clients from ideal clients -- the ones you can help the best. What if the "something" that distinguishes them is expressed in the language they use?

Think about all of your best clients. Isn't there a key sentence or phrase almost all of them have used? A specific angle on their need they have all expressed? Because if you know this, then when you hear it, you will recognize this person as your "ideal client" and pursue them accordingly. Every day, people say to me "I need help with my windows" or "I don't know what to do with my windows." But my ideal clients consistently say, "I really need to get serious about my windows." So that's the key phrase I'm looking for.

What key phrase are you looking for?

Audit Your Marketing Materials: Do your business cards, ads, brochures, website, etc. appeal to your Ideal Client? Are you sending the right message to the right market?

Evaluate Your Marketing Channels: Where would you expect to see your Ideal Client? What media do they read, listen to, etc? How do they share and spread information? Is this where your communications efforts are focused?

Review Your Contracts, Policies, etc.: Are they designed to be friendly and approachable for your Ideal Clients? Do they give you clear avenues for dealing with non-ideal clients? Updating and revising them in keeping with your Ideal Client profile will help further your communications effort.

Commit to a message: How do your values and mission tie into your image? Carefully look at what matters most to you and broadcast that to your ideal client. Once you are clear on your message, stand behind it and don't waffle.



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Enforce consistency: This also relates to your values and mission. Once you are clear about why you are in business, maintain your integrity, from the level of service you provide and your logo and printed materials to the way you follow-up with customers and the stamps you buy. Be conscious of every detail and match it to your values, your mission, and your message.

Create an emotional connection: Every potential customer wants to know one thing, “What’s in it for me” In order to compel someone to pull out their money and buy, you need to connect them to you in an emotional way. How are you going to make their life better? What pain is your product or service going to eliminate? Watch some television and notice how the best commercials create an emotional atmosphere. Which commercials get your attention, which ones stick with you, and how do they get their message across?

Know your product/services inside and out. But instead of just listing the features, describe them in terms of how the client will benefit. Remember, it’s all about creating that emotional connection with your ideal client and telling them how you can make their life better.

Create an experience: Why should consumers buy from you as opposed to any one of your competitors? What makes you unique? Successful companies are now in the business of creating experiences that enrich lives. Starbucks does not just sell coffee. From the music they play (and sell) to the comfortable furniture and inviting decor they offer, they create an atmosphere that people will pay for above and beyond a beverage in a cup.

Have the courage to reinvent yourself: Even (or especially) if you have been in business for a long time, take the time to ask, who do we REALLY want to be? You might have created your business without being clear about your mission, or your mission might have changed. Or because the climate and the market constantly evolve, you might have hit the target five years ago, but have lost your edge since then. Be brave enough to ask if your current image is right. If not, this is the time to reconnect with your current mission.



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