


Personas

Define your ideal customer and reach your target audience

HLO





Our mission: to turn customers into fans. We motivate and inspire people and companies to get the most out of their brands and continue to grow.

And the more fans, the better! We understand that as an entrepreneur, you want to reach the widest possible audience to achieve success. But people won't turn into fans unless your service or product meets their needs. Marketing efforts only really succeed if you focus them entirely on your ideal customer, who forms the foundation for your brand persona.

You can use a brand persona to define your target audience. That allows you to take marketing actions that are specific enough to achieve success. You'll create fans for your brand. Want to know more about the why, how, and what of brand personas? You can read all about them in this document!

Be there for one persona (not for everyone)!

Your entrepreneurial instincts tell you that you should try and reach as many people as possible. That seems to increase your chances of finding new customers. But is this a correct assumption?

If you haphazardly create a brand persona for every nook and cranny of the marketplace, you probably won't accomplish much. After all, those who try to serve everyone end up reaching no one. It's much wiser to clearly define your target audience. How to go about it? Define your minimum viable audience (MVA). Your MVA is the smallest possible audience that keeps you in business.

Sure, opting for the bare minimum may sound risky. But in our experience, it isn't. Often, a company's MVA turns out to comprise a much larger group of people than expected. And they really need your product or service. By building a brand persona based on them, you'll create fans who are eager to tell others about your brand's added value. If you're extremely relevant to your MVA, you'll create lasting brand awareness a lot faster.




Know your target audience: get out of the marketer's ivory tower

Once you've defined your MVA, it's time to create your persona. The overarching goal: to add value. If your product or service truly enriches your customers' lives, you can achieve success.

So, to create a great persona, you should research the ways in which your (potential) customers search for, buy, and use products. It's also paramount that you pay attention to the challenges they face. Based on the information collected, you should determine how, where, and when you can best approach them. Through your brand, you can also optimise their experience.

It's tempting to look at some brand persona examples and quickly complete a template based on *your* vision, goals, and preferences. Perhaps you also believe you already know your ideal customer through and through. But are you sure your reasoning is correct? Or could you be trapped in the marketer's ivory tower? Remember, you're not 'inventing' your ideal customer. You need to find, research, and outline them. Only then, you'll gain valuable insights and create a persona that perfectly represents the target audience. That's useful for marketing purposes *and* for product development. Your findings may lead you to improve, adapt, or expand your product so it meets your target audience's needs even better!

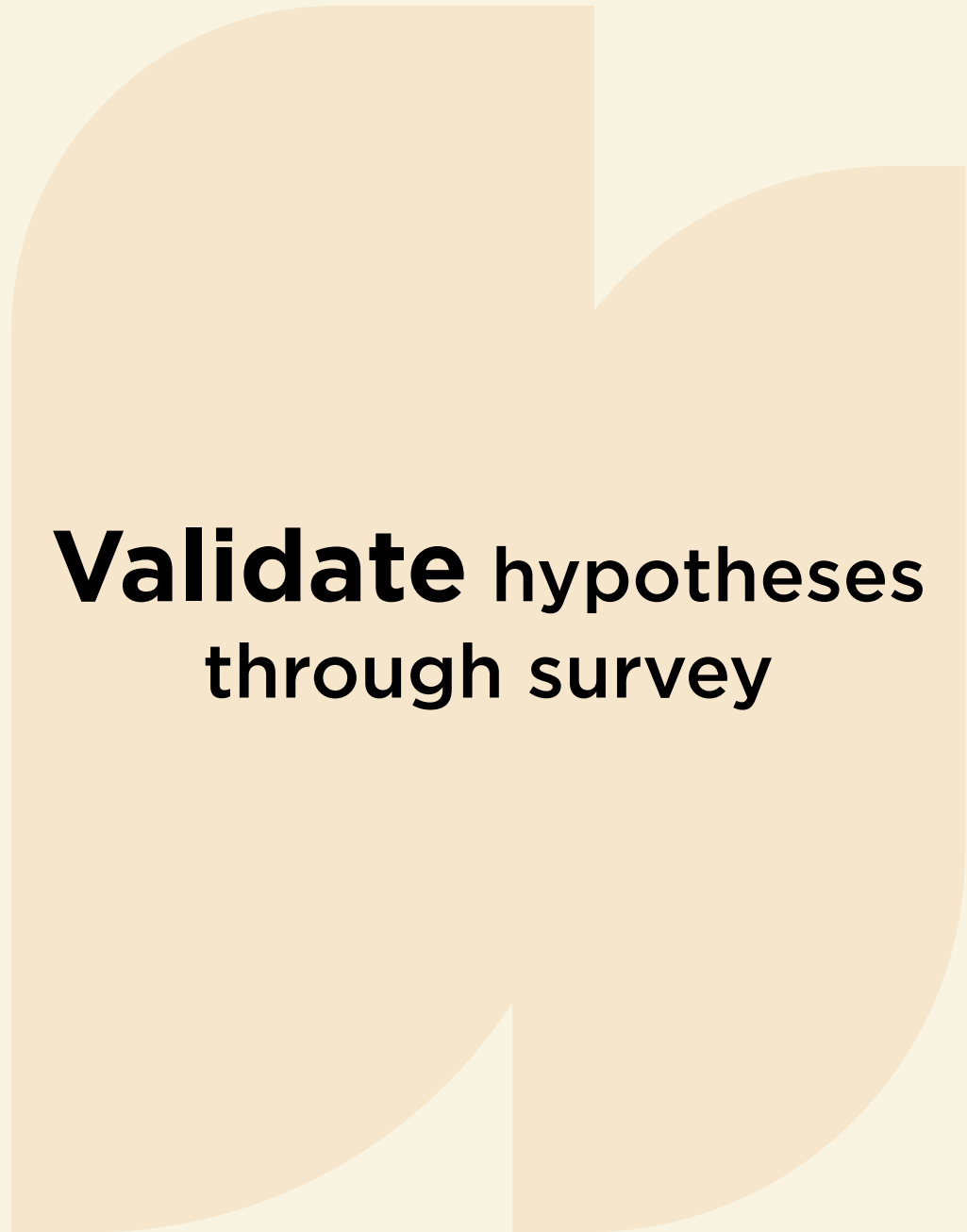
Tools for collecting valuable data



Organise interviews
or focus groups



Perform **statistical analysis**
when researching the market



Validate hypotheses
through survey

How to collect data that's truly valuable?

3 tips

1. Research your potential customer's (personal) background

A common mistake is to create personas with insufficient evidence. If you want to achieve your brand and marketing goals, you should really try to fathom your persona's needs. This requires thorough research — which is complete once the results become predictable. The moment you're no longer surprised by your own findings, you can use the information you've collected to build a brand persona.

2. Be critical when creating brand personas

It's important to delineate your target audience. But you may need more than one brand persona. In our experience, organisations usually start out by creating three personas (on average). These develop as your business evolves. That's completely fine, as long as you calculate the percentage of your customer base a persona represents or should represent. By looking at the extent to which a persona uses your product or service, you'll know if you need this persona.

3. Describe your ideal customer in a concise, powerful persona template

Once you're in the process of mapping out your persona's needs and challenges, you may want to write down all your findings. Try to resist this tendency. You should determine what information is truly relevant to achieving your brand goals. Incorporate the data you've selected into a one-page description of your persona. Create a visually appealing template so your co-workers can see everything they need to know at a glance. Be sure to present the information in the most manageable way possible, so stakeholders can easily use it on a daily basis!

Personas come in all shapes and sizes. Keep an eye on the following 3 types!

1. Antagonists

Some people in your brand persona's environment influence sales. Identify these antagonists and anticipate their objections. That way, you'll increase your chances of selling your product or service nonetheless. Antagonists are mainly relevant if you offer complex B2B products or services.

2. Influencers

Today, everyone is familiar with social media influencers. But the term 'influencers' encompasses much more. It includes all personas that are in a position to significantly influence your brand persona's buying decisions. Another company that uses your product or service and can therefore make statements about it, for example, is also an influencer.

3. Anti-personas

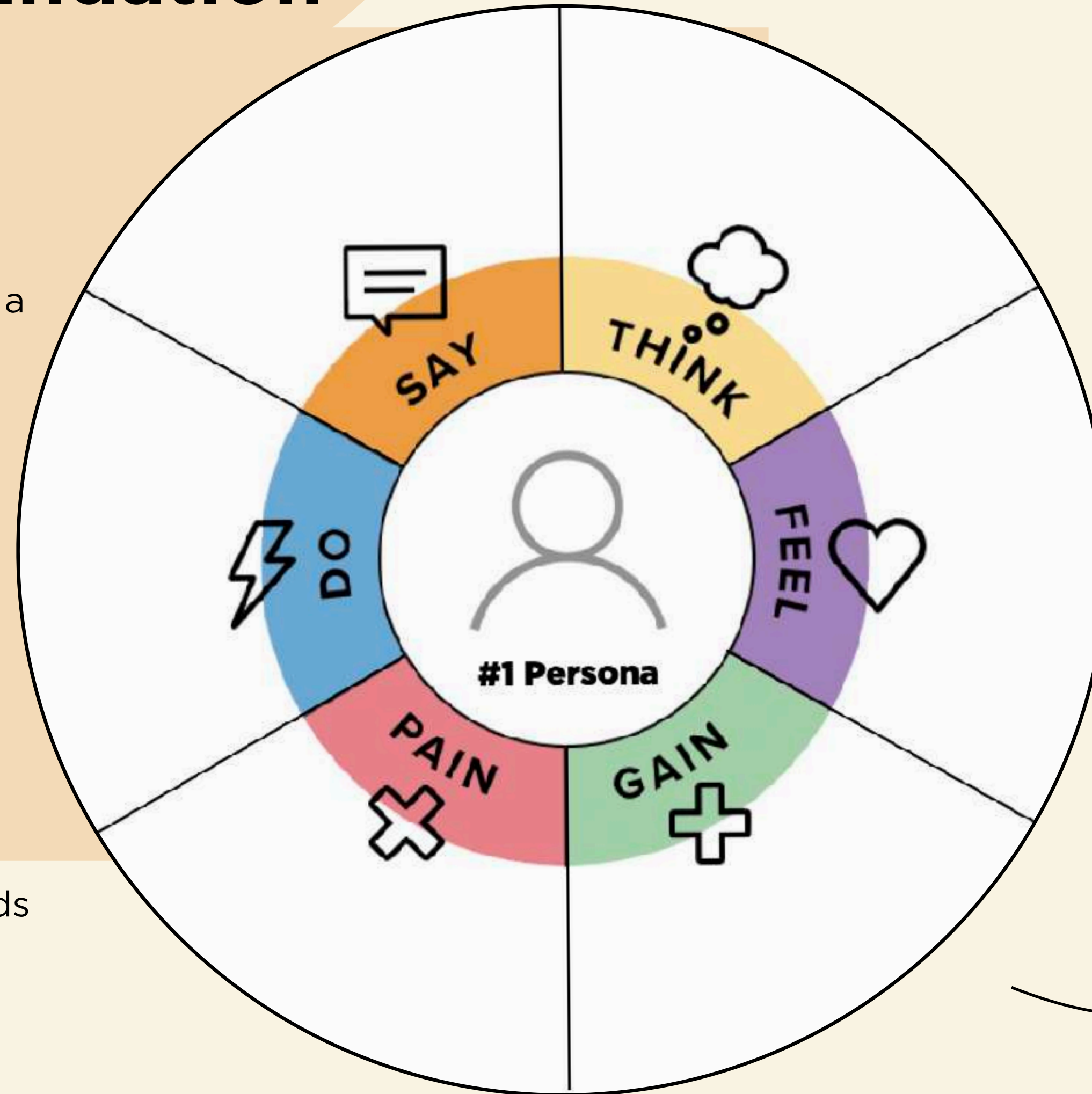
Some consumers interact with your brand, but not for the desired reasons. Students who conduct research, for example. Or, bargain hunters who opt for your product or service whenever you're the cheapest provider but don't hesitate to switch to your competitor next time. You should have a clear picture of these anti-personas, too.

Creating a brand persona: how to lay the foundation

Personality traits and behavior

Here's the rule of thumb when creating a brand persona: focus on one person. So, you should find a picture that matches your persona and include at least the following personality traits in the description:

- Age
- Place of residence
- Job title
- Company
- Goals
- Communication preferences and needs
- Information sources
- Hobbies
- Values



Empathy mapping: map emotions

How does your ideal customer talk and think? What emotions, actions, and decisions do you associate with your brand persona? What pains and gains should you consider? By mapping your persona's emotions, you can respond to them.



A solid foundation for successful marketing communication with the HLO Branding's persona system.

Could you use some help defining your MVA and brand persona(s)? Or would you like to brainstorm your brand strategy and target audience? Request a **free brand consultation session with our brand specialists**. Together, we'll have a look at your brand and audience. You will receive practical tips on steps you can take to create fans.

Interested? Send us your question! If possible, please provide an explanation. The more we know upfront, the better we can prepare for the session. Hopefully we'll see you soon.

I'd like to request a free brand brainstorming session.



