Introduction

Segmentation may not be the shiny new marketing tactic getting all the buzz, but it’s certainly one of the most important tactics that marketers have at their disposal. While many marketing trends come and go, segmentation remains a tried and true tactic for helping companies identify and target their most valuable customers and prospects.

Segmentation is all about knowing who your audience is, understanding how they differ, and having a meaningful message that speaks to their unique needs and challenges. A well-planned segmentation strategy can be the difference between winning customers and alienating prospects. According to user data from email company MailChimp, segmented campaigns get 14% more opens and 59% more clicks than non-segmented campaigns.

That said, knowing where to start on the road to segmentation can be a daunting task. For B2B marketers, the data needed for segmentation may not always be there (or can get quite complex). The chart below shows the scarcity of data collected from leads, making it difficult to segment appropriately. The good news for marketers is that a little research can go a long way in helping streamline and perfect B2B segmentation.
The Roadmap

To try and simplify segmentation, we’ve created the following roadmap for you to consider when thinking about your segmentation strategy. By following these simple planning activities, you’ll be able to create stronger marketing campaigns in just four simple steps. Get ready to embark on the journey to better segmentation.

All Aboard!

1. MESSAGE STATION

2. BUYERSVILLE

3. PERSONA CITY

4. BEHAVIORAL DEPOT

Now Approaching:

Next stop...

Final Destination:
Think about your customers and prospects. Should they both be receiving the same message? Chances are, you’d want to have a different conversation with your prospects than your customers. Your messaging can be the easiest place to start. Think about how your messaging demonstrates value to your prospects.

**EXERCISE**

**Put Together the Strongest Message for Prospects**

**WHAT ARE YOUR COMPANY’S KEY DIFFERENTIATORS?**

List the attributes that make your offerings stand out against your competitors. You’ll want to cite the elements that are important to your prospects and unique to your company’s product. Start with 5 key differentiators.

1. ____________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________

Use content strategy to educate your audience as to why they might need your services, rather than hard-sell your offerings. Map the content to each stage in the buyer’s journey. You’ll gain the respect and attention of your target buyers by serving up helpful and relevant content at key points along their journey.
Marketing to existing customers often requires a more personal touch. Use messaging to develop a relationship with them, demonstrating that you know and understand their business needs.

EXERCISE

Put Together the Strongest Message for Customers

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER YOUR CURRENT CLIENTS?

List new offerings or features that might be appealing to current customers:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

According to Malcolm Gladwell, your messaging to customers needs to break through the status quo barrier. “The real challenge in the customer’s story is what we call the ‘status quo barrier,’ which keeps prospects from wanting to change. You need a message that not only differentiates you from competitors, but also convinces the decision-maker that he/she needs to do something different.”

Your message needs to be about how the customer’s current story is changing, and how your strengths line up in response to those changes. Your story needs to be a little challenging, dangerous, and fearless rather than safe and self-satisfying.

Source: MarketingProfs
Ask yourself “who buys from my company?”
Then, make a list and back it up with data. You’ll want to extract data from your CRM system to determine what contacts from which companies are making the buying decisions. Make sure you look at enough data; a year’s worth would be great. You can segment in many different ways, but here are some starters:

**TITLES**
Is your product being purchased by more than one title? For example, in the case of Dun & Bradstreet, we sell to both sales and marketing decision makers, and we use different messages for each of them.

**COMPANY/SIZE REVENUE**
What size are the companies you are marketing to? Small businesses have very different needs than large enterprises. Consider segmenting your buyers this way so that you can target them appropriately.

**INDUSTRY VERTICALS**
Similarly, buyers across industries will have distinct needs. They may use your products differently and have varying pain points, so you’ll want to be sure to address this in your messaging.

**GEOGRAPHY**
Factor in any geographic strengths or weakness of your offering. Also look at how your sales team is aligned to the geography you serve, and if there are any differences in what you can offer potential customers based on location.

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**EXERCISE**

List the Most Prominent Features of Each Segment of Your Target Audience

**WHAT DO YOUR TOP BUYERS LOOK LIKE?**

**TITLES: ___________________________________________**

**COMPANY SIZE/REVENUE: ________________________**

**INDUSTRY VERTICALS: __________________________**

**GEOGRAPHY: _________________________________**
4. Once you determine the types of companies buying from you, you’ll want to better understand the people behind these decisions, their pain points, and how to communicate with them.

The key is to obtain information directly from buyers, meaning you’ll want to conduct interviews or focus groups to refine your understanding of the personas. You should select customers as well as prospects for your research.

EXERCISE
Dive Deeper to Understand Who Typically Is Behind Your Targeted Title

KEY FACTS ABOUT YOUR TARGET PERSONA:

TITLE/AGE RANGE: ____________________________

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: ____________________________

REPORTING HIERARCHY: ____________________________

PAIN POINTS: ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

MOTIVATORS & GOALS: ____________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
The evolution of marketing technology to capture increasing behavioral insights has allowed marketers to think more strategically about how they segment. By leveraging the behavioral insights to further understand your buyer, you will be able to better predict their actions and continuously optimize your go-to-market plan. Behavioral insights such as web visits, content downloads, and email opens are all activities that can work in your favor.

For example, you may learn from website activity tracking that when a prospect downloads content about a particular topic, they are more likely to buy. As a result, you may decide to follow up with those prospects with a more assertive call to action. Once you know who is converting from a prospect to customer quickly, you can focus on finding more of that segment.

**EXERCISE**

**Inventory Your Best Potential Conversation Points**

**WHAT ARE YOUR POTENTIAL BEHAVIORAL TRIGGERS?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Widgets pricing guide</td>
<td>e.g. Send email from sales rep</td>
<td>e.g. “Need help making a decision about widgets?”</td>
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These are just a few of the ways that B2B marketers are segmenting. There are certainly others, and perhaps different strategies as well that will work for your business. But as you know, marketing efforts often require some level of experimentation. Given the results that other organizations are realizing from their segmentation strategies, it makes sense to engage in some test-and-learn activities.

When building a targeting and segmentation plan, use this handy checklist to ensure you’re organizing your contacts effectively:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HAVE IT</th>
<th>NEED IT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CUSTOMER VS. PROSPECT: Is there an opportunity to speak to your customers and prospects differently? What is your strategy to upsell or cross-sell customers additional services? Or, have you added new functionality to your product that your customers should be made aware of?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEMOGRAPHICS &amp; FIRMOGRAPHICS: Who buys from you? And, what are the patterns in what/how much they buy? Do companies in certain industries or of certain sizes tend to spend more or buy different things? To understand these elements, you will need billing data. Keep in mind that the billing contact is the person the bill goes to, not who said yes to the contract. You’ll need to marry these two data sources to maximize your learning about buyers and their spends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIN POINTS: Now that you know who buys what, knowing why they buy it is critical to developing the messaging for that target. Many companies are building personas and playbooks that get into the details about why a certain buyer purchases a product. The key is to organize your marketing targets by the challenges they face that you may be able to help solve. This is a highly effective method of segmentation for both customers and prospects alike.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BUYER’S JOURNEY: Segment contacts by their position in the buyer’s journey, making sure that you’re sending them content appropriate to their stage. For example, contacts in the consideration stage will need product information, whereas contacts in the ready-to-buy stage will need content that encourages them to close.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEHAVIORAL INFORMATION: As customers are browsing, their behavior can signal whether they are ready to buy, or if they still have questions that need answers. How much time did they spend browsing your web site? What products did they view? Segmenting by this type of information can give you clues on how to best target these individuals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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