

▶ Your Customer Has Changed

BY KIM LONGETEIG, FRBMA

My two young children find it very entertaining to play “eenie meenie miney moe” when it comes to making decisions that are important to them. In the face of a paradigm shift, however, playing games is no way to make decisions about your target audience. Patients have become much more involved in their imaging-related care by having to shoulder increasing costs through high deductibles and a variety of media messages that have informed them of their choices.

This shift means turning our attention from only focusing on referring physicians as our target audience to identifying with our patients as influencers and decision makers. Too often, we see our target audiences as being like us in the field of imaging—tailoring marketing messages based on what we THINK they will want to hear, or what might appeal to us, instead of targeting messages based on their unique needs and wants.

The patient as the target audience is different. They are more likely to want to connect on a different level than our traditional target audience. Patients want to be informed, educated, consulted, be able to conveniently fit your services into their lifestyle, and must be able to equate cost with value ...all-in-all, walking away with an experience they can feel good about and that they want to share as ambassadors of your brand. It's the shift from B2B to B2C marketing and from Push to Pull strategies.

Buyer Personas

If you attended the RBMA Fall Educational Conference in Seattle, you may have heard about using buyer personas and of “Multi-tasker Mary”; she is just one of many buyer personas that could be created to help you better identify consumers as your target audience. Buyer personas are real examples of your target audience based on the needs and wants of real decision makers. Through the exercise of creating buyer personas, you will be able to identify more than broad-stroke demographics. You will learn about the values, desired experience, problems they have that need solutions, pain points, what their role in life is, where and when they get their information, and what their common objections may be. From this, you should be able to ascertain a targeted marketing message that will speak directly to them.

As an example, if you assign attributes to Multi-tasker Mary, you may find that she is 43-years-old, a human resources director, wife, and mother of three. She may have a family history of breast cancer and be concerned about paying for her oldest son's college education. She likely works 40+ hours per week and has little to no quality time. Because of this, she is going to be driven by location and cost of your services. She is the primary decision maker when



it comes to healthcare for her family and she turns to Facebook, LinkedIn and a Mom Blog to get information—generally around the 11 pm hour right before she falls fast asleep.

Chances are, staff within your organization can help you create buyer personas based on their own attributes or those of their family and friends. Involve them in the process to increase the level of detail you put into your buyer personas. Once identified, consider adding strategies to your marketing mix that will position your organization to participate in a natural, two-way conversation with your patients. Create content that is relevant, meaningful, and allows you to repurpose your marketing message in places where your target audience is seeking information.

You remember how “eenie meenie miney moe” ends, don't you? “And you are NOT it!” Remember that YOU are NOT your target audience. Take the time to learn who they are, where they are and what types of communication they most likely respond to. Focusing on targeted marketing will help increase your marketing/advertising success rate—producing more trackable results and a more effective use of your marketing budget.



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