

## Client Pipeline Mastery

### Identify Marketing Channels

#### Homework

In this week's homework, you'll continue laying your marketing foundation by creating your ideal client profile, and then identifying and beginning to explore marketing channels.

As you go through the homework and begin collecting data on marketing channels and prospects, remember that your main goal for now is to learn more about your niche and your prospects. Don't overcomplicate your data collection; using a Google doc or spreadsheet to store your prospecting and market channel info is sufficient for now.

#### 1. Create your ideal customer profile.

Based on last week's homework, you've identified at least 1 viable consulting niche. As part of that work, you may already have a fairly good idea of what your ideal customer looks like. Here, we're going to flesh that picture out a bit more so you can better understand your target market.

##### Techniques:

- Based on your niche research from last week, create a basic profile for your ideal customer, including key demographic, geographic, and psychographic characteristics.
- Find a websites, magazines, or publications that target your niche. Look at the style, wording, headlines, types of articles (opinion, how-to, product reviews, etc.), and graphics and photos used. Who is the publication aimed at? Describe that person, and maybe even give that person a name and an avatar or photo so you can visualize your ideal customer.
- Explore demographics and psychographics.
  - For consumer segments, you can peruse [Nielsen's PRIZM, P\\$YCLE, and ConneXions tools](#) to get an idea of your segment, and their profile.
  - Imagine your ideal customer as a character in a novel or movie. Describe them. What are their interests, hobbies, personal profile (age, marital status, education, # of children, urban/suburban/rural, etc., job position/title, etc.), values, activities, at what kinds of places do they dine or shop?
- If you're targeting businesses, answer questions like the following:
  - annual revenue
  - # of employees
  - reach (local, regional, national, global)
  - industry (e.g., pharmaceuticals, residential real estate, etc.)
  - buyer/purchaser role (e.g., CIO, CEO, etc.)

Next, create a list of 5 key criteria that **best** describe your ideal customer. You'll be looking for people who meet at least 3 of your 5 criteria—ideally all 5 criteria, since those are likely to be the most targeted. Prospects who meet only 2 or 3 criteria may eventually become customers,

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but it's probably going to take you a lot more effort and time to convert them from a prospect to a customer. It's usually better--and less frustrating--to target prospects who meet nearly all your key criteria.

Examples of key criteria might be:

- a prospect who's already researched potential solutions to their problems (i.e., an educated prospect)
- small business owners who understand the monetary benefit that a solution could provide (i.e., not a manager or CIO)
- small businesses in a growth mode
- people who are empowered to make or strongly influence the final purchasing decision

## 2. Create a list of marketing channels.

Review your target niche and ideal client profile, and then brainstorm a list of at least 5-10 potential marketing channels. (See the list below for a sampling of marketing channels).

For each marketing channel, do some preliminary research to gauge how easy it is to find prospects. In some marketing channels, it may take a lot of legwork to find prospects, while in other channels, prospects are easy to find.

Similarly, as you spend time marketing, selling, and talking to prospects, keep a running log of your prospects, where you found them (i.e., the channel), and any other useful details. Again, don't go overboard on logging this info--a simple spreadsheet is all you need for now.

Some channels might reveal prospects easily but may not convert to clients; other channels might require more work to identify prospects, but those prospects might convert more easily or generate more revenue.

In any case, be mindful of your results, test your marketing channels, so that you can identify the best channels, which ones produce the most qualified prospects, your best-fit prospects, etc.

Here's a sampling of marketing channels you might consider exploring. Keep in mind that some channels (e.g., TV) might be ones you use to identify & find prospects, but you'll likely use other channels (e.g., email or phone) to reach out to them.

- trade shows
- direct mail
- phone
- TV
- Radio
- print/newspapers/magazines
- trade publications
- local, regional, or national trade or professional associations
- local, regional, or national business groups (e.g., chambers of commerce, local realtor groups)
- referrals & networking

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- email
- online advertising (e.g., pay-per-click or display ads, retargeting)
- forums
- LinkedIn
- Quora
- Twitter
- Meetup
- Pinterest
- blogs
- advertising within your niche (i.e., advertisers in your niche may also be your prospects)
- public announcements (e.g., notices of mergers & acquisitions, commercial real estate announcements, etc.)
- related service providers (i.e., customers, suppliers, service providers for your prospects in your niche)
- Craigslist
- job listing sites. such as [Monster.com](http://Monster.com)
- business data websites, such as [Manta.com](http://Manta.com)

### 3. Experiment with your marketing channels.

Once you have a list of 5-10 marketing channels you think will work for your niche, experiment with each channel to see what kind of information you can get, how easy it is to find prospects, how well those prospects match your ideal client profile criteria, etc.

You can even begin reaching out to leads to find out more about their biggest challenges. Generally, this is easiest with online channels, such as LinkedIn groups. At this point, you are NOT selling; you're only learning more about your market and prospects.

### 4. Decide whether to create a lead magnet.

After you've done some preliminary research on your niche and potential marketing channels, you can decide if creating a lead magnet might be worthwhile at this point. You don't need to do this yet, and depending on your niche, you may not need to do it. But in general, having one or more lead magnets will help you automate your marketing and bring prospects to you instead of requiring you to seek out the prospects.

Commonly used lead magnets are short reports and webinars on a focused topic of interest to your target market, or a critique (e.g., "5 ways your website turns away customers").

There are a number of ways you could publicize your lead magnet, and common ways are via your website, email, posting to forums and/or LinkedIn groups, etc.

For now, you might only want to generate a list of potential topic ideas for lead magnets. If you aren't sure how you'll reach prospects, do NOT spend a ton of time creating lead magnets; instead, you need to spend more time learning about your market and prospects.