

Define Your Prospective Buyers -- for More Sales

By Brian Jud

You could sell more of your books if you can answer two questions honestly. First, how often do people think about your book? Second, how often do people think about their own problems? You will probably agree that people think more about how they can solve their problems, learn something, improve themselves or be entertained than they do about your book. However, if you can show them how they can help themselves in some way by reading your book you are likely to increase your sales and revenue.

Defining your target reader.

When asked who their target reader is, many authors reply, “I do not know,” or “everybody who likes (their topic).” Either answer will reduce your sales and profits. If your book is for everybody, how much would it cost you to reach them frequently enough to make an impact -- if you could find a way to do so?

Consider Gloria Boileau’s title, *Stop the Fear! Finding Peace in a Chaotic World*, a book about ways to resolve fear (<http://www.gloriaboileau.com/>). Her premise is that everyone is afraid of something, at some level. But how can you tell “everyone” the ways in which your book will help them? One way is to divide your target readers in categories. Using these techniques, Gloria might address the people who are afraid of flying, dying, being in a relationship or other types of fears.

Remember that you are marketing to *people*, not to segments. So who is the typical person in each segment who will actually purchase your book? If you can describe those individuals and the problems that consume them, you can communicate the ways in which the content of your book can help them.

Continuing with the title *Stop the Fear!*, what if “soccer moms” were singled out as a target segment? These mothers might be fearful for the safety, health and future of their children. In this case, Gloria would define the typical “mom” who will benefit by reading her book, in terms of age, education, life style and geography. She would seek answers to the following questions, defining the “typical mom” and creating a composite of the person to whom she will market.

- What is her average level of education? That will dictate the vocabulary you choose to use.
- About how old is she?
- How much money does she make? This could influence your distribution choices. Should you have your book available in Walmart or Neiman Marcus?
- To what ethnic or religious groups does she belong? Sell your book to churches?
- In what leisure activities does she participate or watch? Could Dick’s be a potential outlet?
- What magazines and newspapers does she read? Send your book for a review, or submit articles for publications in the print media.
- In what current events or issues is she most interested? Use examples in your articles and releases.
- Is there a particular life event she is facing (e.g., divorce, career balance, childbirth)?
- What makes her happy? Unhappy?
- What are her problems or ponderous issues?

- What organizations or associations does she join? If it has a bookstore on its website, have your book in it.
- To what radio and television shows does she listen/watch? Choose these to perform on the air.
- Are there geographic concentrations of prospects?
- How can you reach her?

Knowing who buys, and why, will help you more effectively position your brand in the minds of your customers. Then implement your advertising, trade dress, publicity and selling strategies so they interact and consistently project this image favorably.

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