



How to define your target audience



Knowing your target audience is crucial to successful and insightful testing.

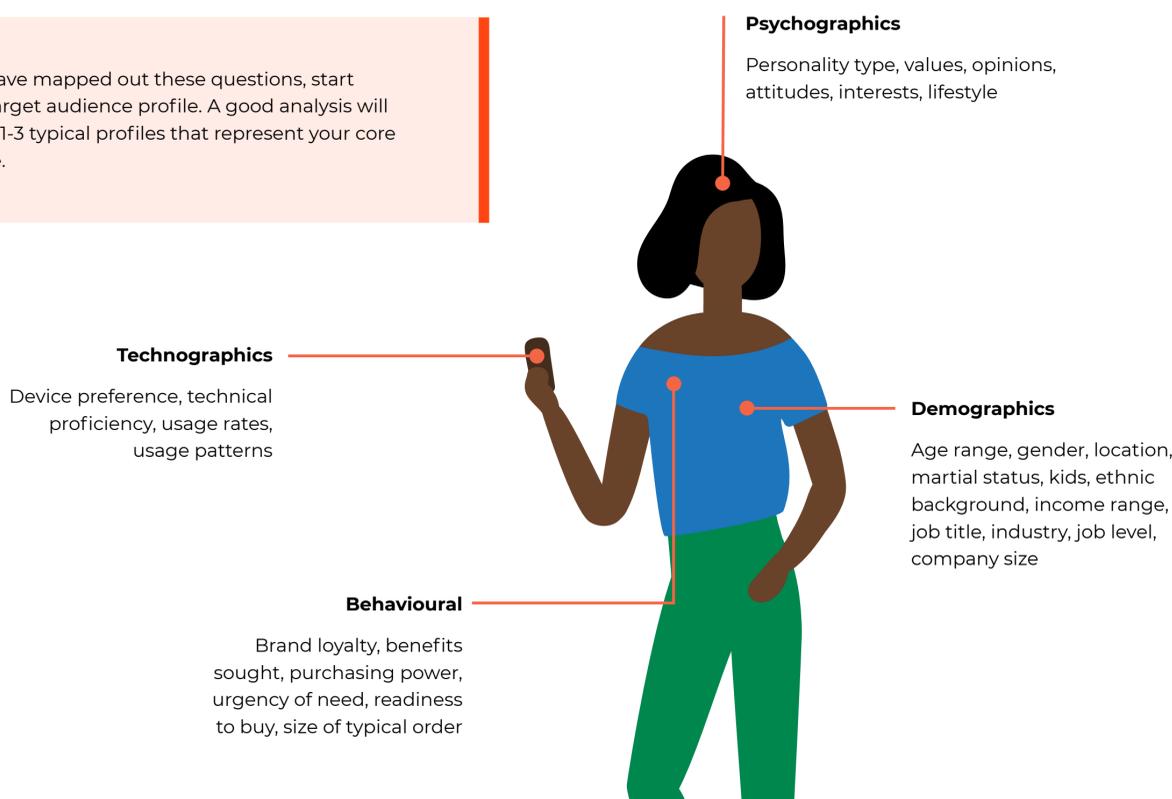
While the audience may change as your product matures, you should not shoot in the dark when it comes to getting the right beta testers. Properly defining your target audience will save you resources, help you get insightful testing, and understand the direction of the product. Most importantly, it will help you trust the information they give you.

Ask yourself:

- Do you know who your target audience is?
- Are you ready to pivot your product if testing says you should?

	ASK	RESEARCH	SEGMENT
PAINS	What pain am I trying to solve for my customer with my product or service?	Dive deep into the problem you are trying to solve. Go to online forums, read case studies and speak to people who share this pain.	What types of profile shares this pain? Are there commonalities amongst the group? Is there a certain profile that stands out?
GAINS	What is my customer gaining when they use my product or service?	Dive deep into the solution you are offering. Go visit blogs, websites and meetup groups that align with the solution you are providing.	What type of profile would have the most to gain from your product or service? What aspect of their life would it have the biggest impact on? How and when will it be used? What's their lifestyle?
COMPETITION	What is my competition doing to solve the pains of my customer? What are they doing to offer a similar or same gain?	Take a look at your competition and analyze who their marketing materials seem to be geared towards. Go to conference websites that highlight major players in your field. Research online competitive products, and look for third party websites that offer reviews on their products or services.	What type of profile is the competition selling to? Who are they targeting? Is it a direct-to-consumer product? Is the person buying the product the same as the one who uses it?
SUBSTITUTION	What are my customers currently to solve their pains without having access to my product or service? What are they using to get the same gain that my product or service offers?	Take a look at products that could be substituted for yours. Start by writing out the main gains and pains your product enhances or solves, and then expand to see what other goods and services could offer the same, in whole or in part, whether they are in the same category as your product/service or not. Visit their websites, go in store, talk to consumers, see why they are using the current substitute product. Ask how satisfied they are with it, and what criteria they would need to be tempted to change.	What type of profile uses a substitute product? Is it geared towards the same target market that I think my product is for? Does it fulfill the same need only in part, or in whole? Is it a product offered in the same format as mine (ex., in store vs online, hardware vs software, seasonally vs year round)? Are the customers satisfied with this product? If so, what would it take to increase their satisfaction and drive them to a new product or service?

Now that you have mapped out these questions, start defining your target audience profile. A good analysis will reveal between 1-3 typical profiles that represent your core target audience.



DO

Refine and Define

Remember Silicon Valley when they tested only with software devs and they ultimately failed? That could have been avoided by testing on people who they were actually their target audience.

Some things are testable by your acquaintances, but not an experiment defining next steps for your product.

Reduce Selection Bias

This means choosing beta testers based on their proximity or with a strong similarity to you, either because it is an easy to access population (asking friends & family) or because you believe this is your target audience.

The reason why this is dangerous is because you may end up getting **false confirmations** and losing sight of your true target end user. Make a point to get beta testers that you do not personally know or have an association with.

DON'T

Go Too Big

Reduce the scope of target users through means of customer discovery interviews, surveys, and smoke tests. This allows you to get a **better idea of who is in need of your product**, and who is not. The step will save you in the long run— so don't rush it.

How to get the right size:

Get enough data to be meaningful, but not so much that you can't analyze the qualitative and quantitative info.

If you have a lot of interest, create beta testing cohorts. Test different features in two groups simultaneously, or use data from your first test to create your second test.