

Marketing Personas

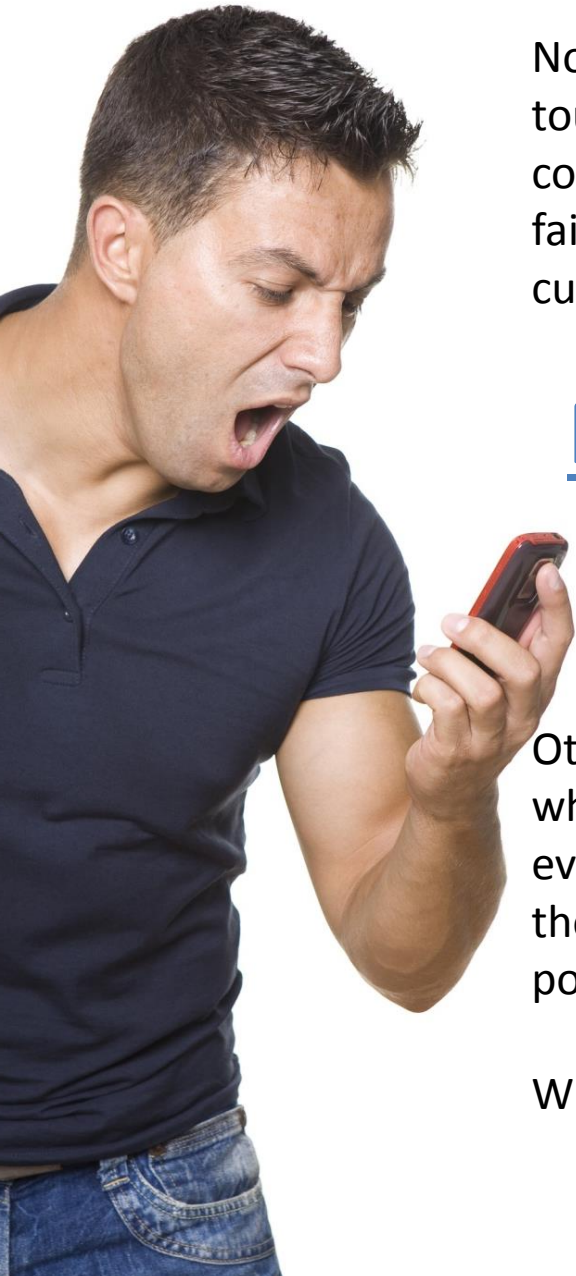
How To Develop Clarity About The **Ideal Buyer**



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Not everyone is your customer! For most business owners that is a tough statement to accept. We love to believe that everyone could benefit from our product or service but the surest way to failure is trying to please everyone. Think about your own customers.

Not everyone is your customer!

Some are anxious to buy, great to work with and happy to tell others what a great company you have.

Others take forever to decide to buy and, once they do, no matter what you do they are never happy and they bad mouth you to everyone. You vow never to sell to these customers again. But then they buy something else and you find yourself in the same position - scrambling to make them satisfied.

Why the variance? The reason: **Not everyone is your customer!**

When we help companies build sales strategy and marketing programs a key goal is getting more of the right people to buy and less of the wrong. All sales are not created equal. Bad customers might buy your products or services, but when you factor in the extra time in servicing, the cost of making them happy, and the potential for them to poison other prospective customers against you, the cost of doing business with them is much greater than you can imagine.

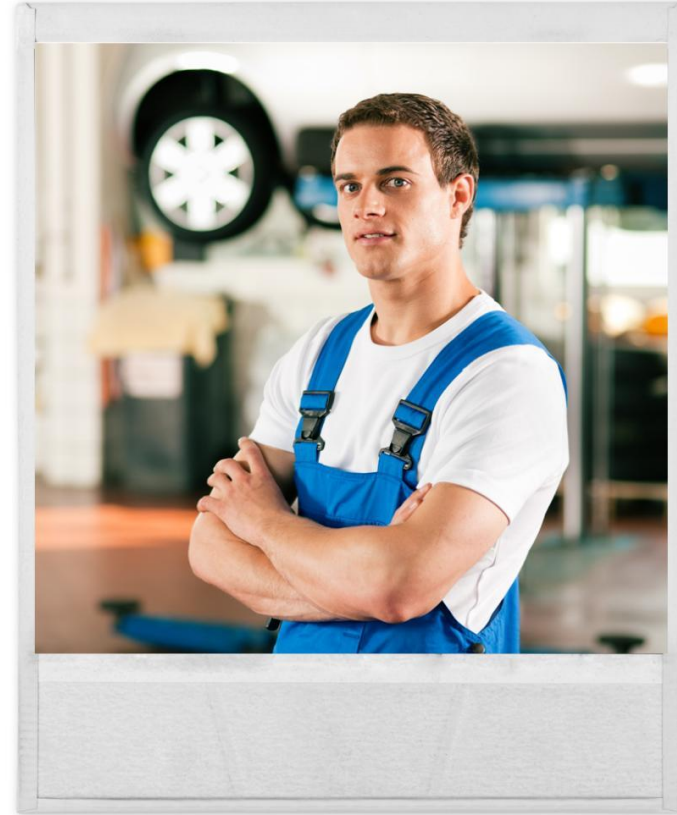


It is critical to identify key characteristics of your best customers and use that information to design your marketing to reach them, with a targeted and relevant message in the best marketing or advertising venues they frequent. Taking the time to develop who is part of your ideal target audience will make your life a lot easier. Relevant marketing specific to your ideal target market is cheaper and more effective at turning prospects into customers.



Meet Murray

To illustrate this point, let me give you an example of how this might work. Murray is a mechanic who works with German cars. Murray used to think that everyone who drove a German car was a good prospect for his business. He decided that he would run advertising on the popular local radio station and in the local high-end lifestyle magazine. Murray thought both the magazine and the radio work well because they catered to upper income people who might own expensive German cars. The advertising did bring in some new customers but never as many as Murray wanted for his business.



Our analysis of the ideal customer for Murray quickly showed him that not all German-car customers are created equal. One segment of Murray's customer base came in for twice as many visits to the shop and spent, on average, **10 times more money in a calendar year**. This market segment was also the greatest source of referrals for Murray's shop and very rarely ever complained. We classified them as the car enthusiast group, they loved their cars, they were fanatic about bringing in their cars every 5,000 KM for oil changes, and followed the recommended service intervals from the manufacturer to the letter.

They also loved to drive their cars, so they drove much more than the average customers which meant they need to get them serviced more often. They also loved to add expensive after-market parts and accessories to personalize their cars. As cars were their passion, they also loved to talk cars and their friends and family considered them as a trusted source when it comes to anything automotive.



The profile for this **ideal** group looked like this:

- male
- average age 49
- professional in upper management or business owner
- income over \$150,000
- university education
- personally owned 2 cars (on average)
- read enthusiast magazine (Road & Track & Motor Trend)
- have been to a car show once in past twelve months
- high percentage belong to a car club
- love driving
- watch motor sports



When we looked at the profile of the people that visited the shop from the advertising we noticed that their demographics was different. The advertising was drawing the less profitable customers whose demographics looked like this:

- female
- average age 40
- professional
- income over \$80,000
- university education
- own 1 car
- read life-style magazines
- view car as transportation



The money Murray was investing was bringing him customers, but they were the lower valued customers who often complained about the cost of parts for a German car, tended to delay maintenance, and often did the minimal amount of repairs to get the car going again.

With a profile of his ideal customer in mind, Murray would have made very different decisions on where to place his advertising money. Murray had spent over \$10,000 advertising and when we analyzed the return on that investment we determined that he made a small profit of about **\$1,600**.

Armed with this new information on his ideal customer profile, Murray has made some very different marketing choices. He now advertises with local car clubs, on enthusiast websites and magazines. Murray's new advertising has delivered a profit of **\$46,000** based on the same \$10,000 investment. As these new clients are very loyal and tend to refer other enthusiasts to the shop, their lifetime value is going to continue to grow year over year.



Knowing your ideal target audience for your business is critical.

The first question we need to ask is: “Who is **your** ideal client?”

“Who is **your** ideal client?”

We recommend you approach this by developing a **persona** of your ideal customer.

The term **Persona** refers to all of the characteristics of your ideal customer. It is a way of segmenting your market by identifying the goals and behaviors of the group of people with whom you want to interact, and then creating a fictional user that includes all of those characteristics.

Instead of thinking of your audience as nameless and faceless people, building a persona for each market segment can help your marketing be more effective.

Take a piece of paper and list all of the considerations that are relevant to making this person the perfect customer for your business.



First list the tangibles such as sex, age, height, weight, marital status, financial considerations, and other measurable demographics. Building a persona goes beyond simple demographic data, but I suggest you start there. They are the obvious things.

Then, persona building gets inside their head. How do they feel about the economy? What keeps them up at night? What is their education? What do they like to do for fun? Do they travel? What are their passions? What are their goals?

Building this persona will help you develop a vivid and tangible profile of your best prospects and will equip you to create marketing messages that are relevant and pertinent and will move them from prospect to customer in as short of a period as possible.



As complete of a persona as you can create will go a long way to helping you identify what you have to offer that this person would be interested in. Let's get back to the example of Murray's ideal customer. We would create a persona for "Eric the Enthusiast" which will allow Murray to make some tactical marketing decisions. Should Murray advertise on the local radio or should he consider sponsorship at the local car show? Should he spend money on radio advertising or should he be host a track day at the local racetrack?

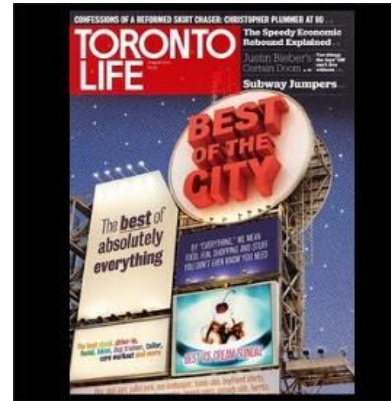
Because Eric is in senior management (or a business owner) he is often pressed for time, so opening early and having a complimentary shutter services are important. He gets the majority of his information on-line so running advertisements using Google Adwords could be effective.



This fictional persona can help guide decisions about small matters such as what size font to use on your website or how much information to put in your monthly newsletter.

Now Eric is not a real person, but a composite of a group of your best customers. Referring to him when creating your marketing materials will provide you with a host of benefits.

Making The **Right** Choices



Now we are often told by a lot of small business owners that they can't justify marketing to just one or two personas when they know their customers are made up of a large variety of people. Yes, you might have some buyers in other categories who buy from you, but to chase them would be business suicide. Marketing guru Seth Godin summed it up really well when he said:

***“Sell nuts to squirrels,
don't try to persuade dolphins
that nuts are delicious.”***

Great thought. You might find a dolphin, who loves nuts, and he could be a good & happy customer, but can you afford to market to dolphins and try and change their worldview view on nuts? No, it would be expensive and likely not too successful.

Spend your **money and time** trying to sell to the squirrels!



Remember the **Pareto Principle** (named after Italian economist Vifredo Pareto) which states that 20% of your efforts will likely result in 80% of your rewards. Check your own business and see if 80% of your sales are coming from only 20% of your clients.

“The value of the Pareto Principle for a business owner is that it reminds you to **focus** on the 20 percent that matters. Of the things you do during your day, only 20 percent really matter. Those 20 percent produce 80 percent of your results. Identify and focus on those things.”

The more **focused** you can make your marketing on that highly profitable 20%, the better off you will be.

Creating A **Persona** For Your Company

Here are some of the areas you should consider.



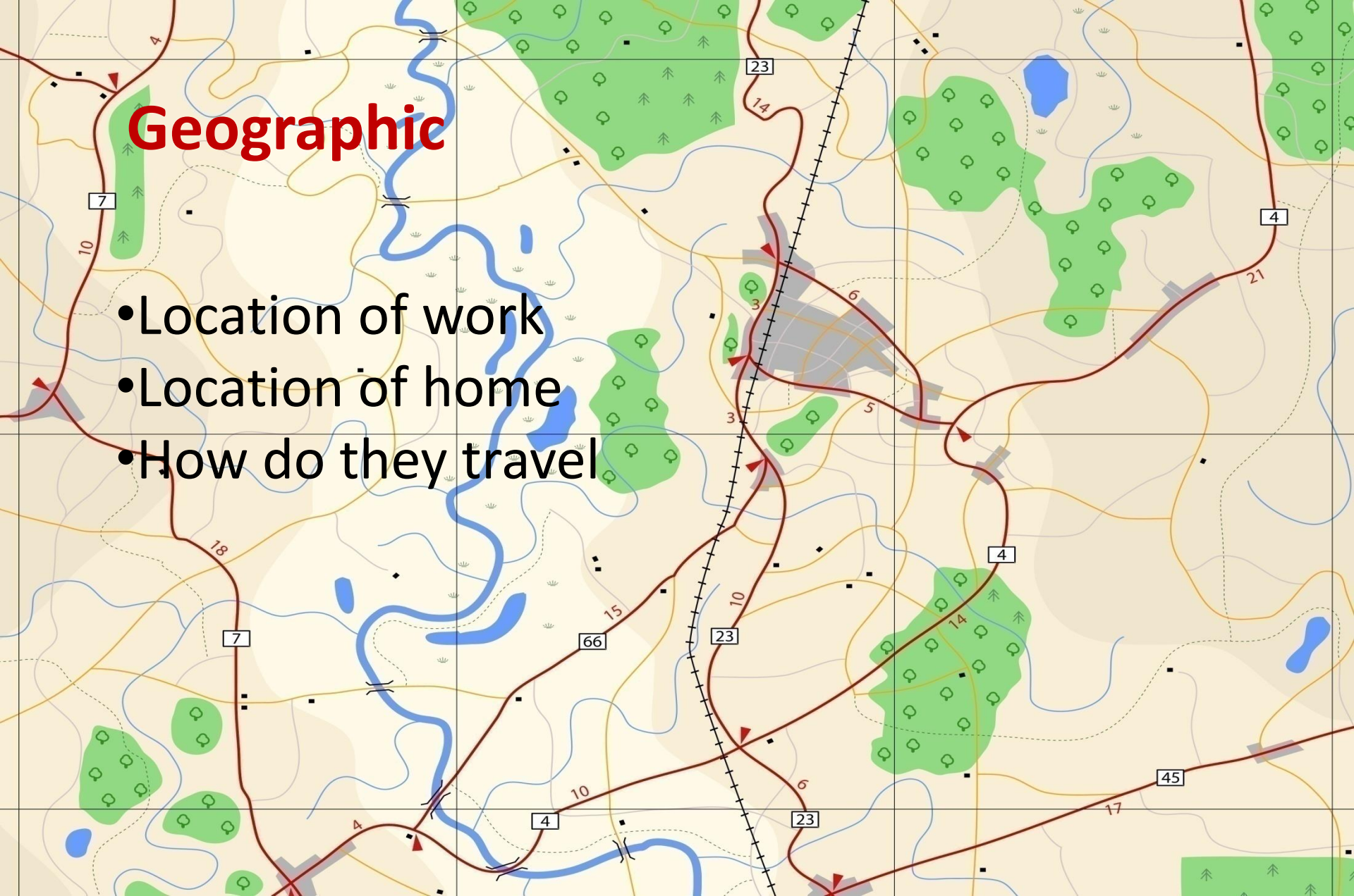
Demographics

- Gender
- Education level
- Income
- Martial status
- Occupation



Geographic

- Location of work
- Location of home
- How do they travel



Psychographics

- Attitudes
- Culture/Social Class
- Values
- Religion



Interests

- Hobbies
- Travel/Holidays –
Where/Frequency/Mode
- Sports – Participate/Watch



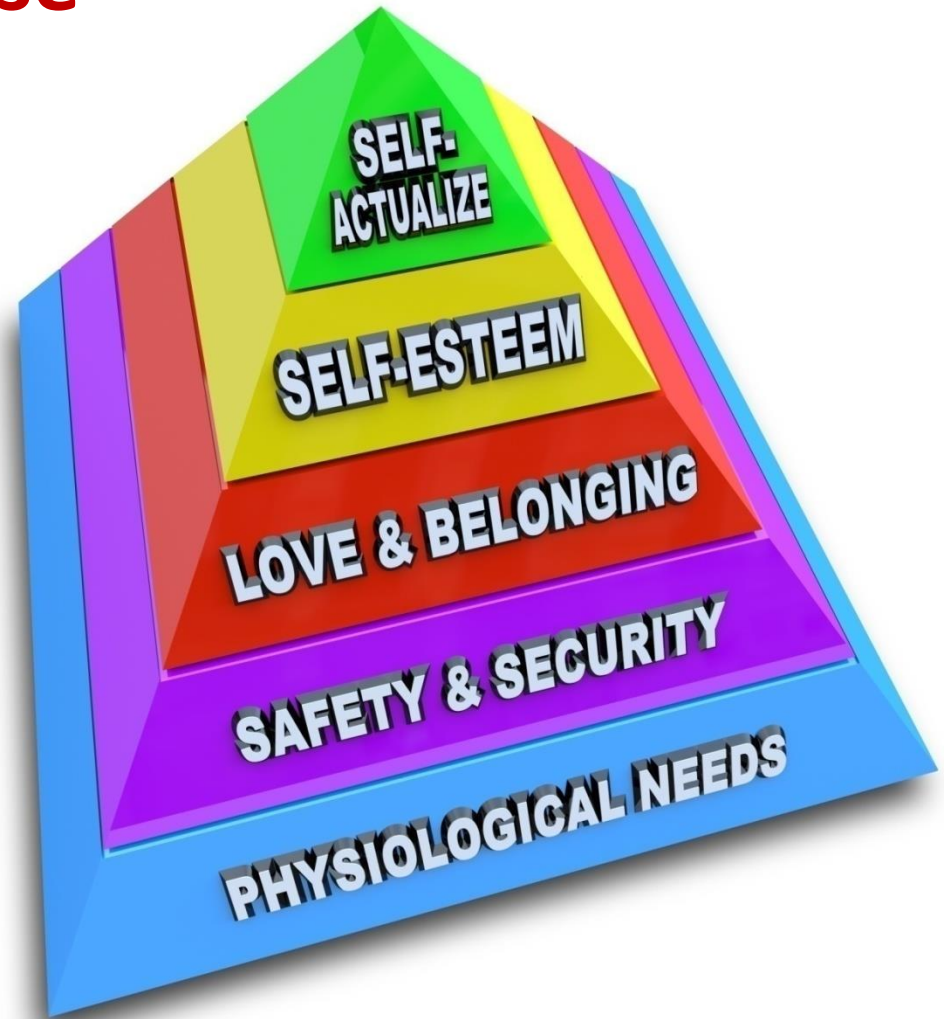
Influences

- Prime purchaser in home
- Who do they consult with about purchasing
- Opinions



Why Do They Choose

- self-actualization
- esteem
- social
- safety
- physiological



Buying Trigger

- When are they looking for your product
- What business circumstance trigger this buyer to take action
- Where are they looking for this solution



Past Behavior

- How do they buy
- Where do they buy
- What price did they buy at
- How many do they buy
- Have they purchased from a competitor
- Buy full solution from you or are you just a piece of the solution
- Do they use coupons



How Do They Find You

- Search on-line
(what terms did they use)
- Visit your location
- Call a sales person
- Social media
- Referrals



Information Needed

- Product details
- Product comparisons
- How to information
- Customer reviews
- e-books, white papers, webinars



When Are They Looking For Information

- At work
- At home
- On their smart phone
- Retail locations

How Do You **Get** The Information

The best way to get this information is to interview your best customers who are a part of your ideal customer profiles. You want to get as much insight as you can from them. As these are often your best customers, they already like you, so it shouldn't be too hard to speak to a number of them to get the information you need. Now you don't have to do a statistical significant sampling of your customer base to get the data that will be helpful. Most people need to **speak to about four to five customers** to get enough information to develop a good persona.



Try to interview your **customers face-to-face**, maybe over coffee or lunch. Ask questions and let your customers talk. Good interviewing skills will be really useful as you want to ask lots of open-ended questions and let the conversation go where the customer takes it. You don't want to appear like this is an interrogation so try and make the interview conversational. I also suggest that you record the conversation so you can be fully engaged in the conversation and not trying to scramble to write your notes.

Starting Blocks

Once you have created your profile, you now have the starting block for all your tactical marketing and sales decisions. Think of what it will mean to your business when you can focus your marketing on an individual group of ideal prospects.

Marketing Personas will allow you to:

Create marketing messages geared towards what motivates your target audience
messages can focus on the products/services value to the buyer persona
write in the appropriate tone and voice of your prospects
write content that is both interesting and relevant to your target audience
pick the right advertising venues to reach your target audience

Over time as you develop more information on your buyer personas you can start to make changes. Those changes will make your buyer persona more accurate and more powerful. A great buyer persona will give you the confidence to know what really matters to your buyers. Personas give you a great lens to view all your marketing through.

Examples





Rockstar Pink

Rockstar Energy Drink launched the first energy drink to be targeted specifically at women (age 17-24).

Rockstar Pink, which contains only 10 calories, is being launch in a bid to drive incremental sales in the category.

Adrian Troy, Head of Marketing for A.G. Barr, said: "Many females are put off by the high sugar content of 500ml cans.

Rockstar Pink will be backed by extensive marketing support, including sponsorship of leading female extreme sports stars and sampling at key female events throughout the year.

Dodge Grand Caravan

Chrysler's Grand Caravan advertising campaign aims to position the minivan as the "ultimate family vehicle." Chrysler will promote the vehicle through a Mom Test-drive program, blogs and a Christmas carol contest culminating in a Grand Caravan giveaway on "The View" talk show. Print advertising has been target at magazines like Ladies' Home Journal, Parenting, Cooking Light, Self and Working Mother.

Chrysler will run television commercials will run during "Desperate Housewives," and "Dancing with the Stars." The ads portray the minivan as a safe "family room on wheels" and highlight features such as Backseat TV.



Captain Morgan

Captain Morgan targets young men 21 to 35 years old. The campaign 'Got a Little Captain in You?' shows how Captain Morgan can help you take those everyday moments and transform them into extraordinary experiences. Captain Morgan uses Facebook, television sports programming and in-bar events to reach their young male demographic.



The Author



Colin Parker is the CEO of Lonestar Sales Performance. He has successfully led sales and marketing teams for over 20 years as President and Vice President of global organizations. As a business coach and sales and marketing strategist, he helps companies to differentiate themselves from their competition. His understanding of how to turn social media into valuable business media strategy is industry-leading.



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