

Finding the best target audiences for your art

SOUTHERN ARIZONA SCORE WORKSHOP
[HTTPS://SOUTHERNARIZONA.SCORE.ORG/](https://southernarizona.score.org/)

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About me



- My name is Carol Booton
 - Volunteer SCORE mentor since 2019
 - Writer, editor, researcher, publisher, book designer, artist, illustrator, educator, and blogger
 - Former college instructor
 - Ph.D. in Business Administration (marketing and management)
 - Pronouns: she/her/hers
 - Instagram: carolbooton13

Got Questions?

- Unmute and ask your questions
- Put your questions into the chat
- Write down your questions and ask them at the end of the session
- Email me with your questions
carol.booton@scorevolunteer.org
- Sign up for a SCORE mentor
<https://www.score.org>

Assumptions

- You know what art product you are selling
- You have a pretty good idea of how to price it
- You are pretty sure there is a market for your art product
- You are willing to “adapt” your art to meet the needs of your potential buyers

Signs that you might not be marketing to your best target audiences

- Disappointing website pageviews
- Inadequate sales
- Low ad response rates
- Low customer engagement
- Poor reviews

Agenda

- What is a target audience? What is a niche?
- How do you choose your best target audiences?
- What is an ideal buyer persona?
- What is an intermediary?
- Who are your intermediaries?



What is a target audience?
What is a niche?

Who do you
think is your
best target
audience?

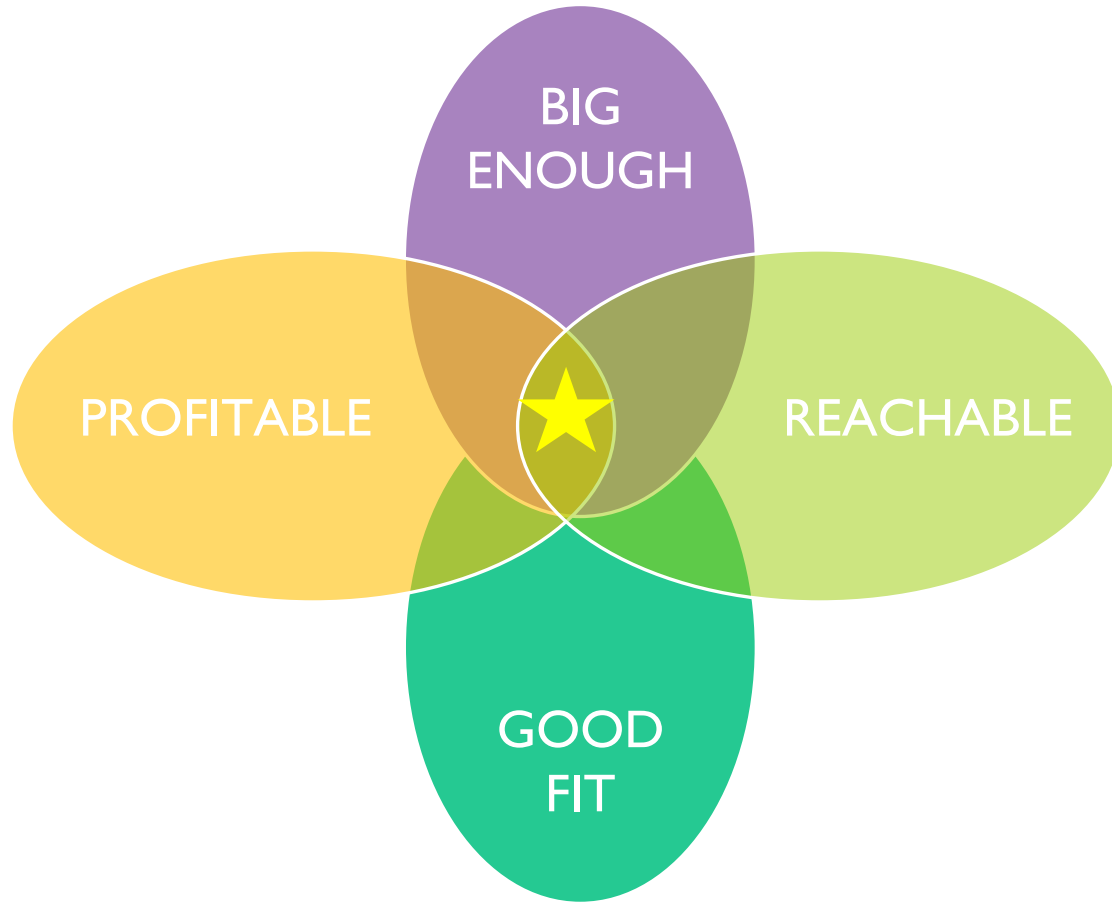
- Take a moment to put your answer in the chat

What is a
target
audience?

What is a
niche?

- We can't sell all things to all people
- Instead, we seek to occupy a niche
- When you choose your art product, you are choosing a niche
- A target audience consists of people who are similar in ways you can identify and who are most likely to want to shop in your niche

A viable niche is . . .



- Big enough (not just a few people)
- Profitable (they can afford you)
- Reachable (you can communicate with them)
- Good fit for you (you can tolerate doing this)

Examples of target audiences & niches

- Women seeking empowerment experiences through **underwater photography sessions**
- Corporate investors building **collections of art by emerging Black artists**
- Authors seeking illustrations for **children's comic books**
- Yoga practitioners seeking **abstract art that inspires meditative prayer**
- Interior designers seeking customized **mosaic tile staircases**
- Landscape architects seeking unique **metalwork garden sculptures**
- Older people interested in exploring their creativity through **online art classes**
- Bereaved pet owners seeking custom **painted pet portraits** of their beloved pets

How big should your niche be?

■ This niche is too big

- Photography
-

- Illustration
-

- Knitted sweaters

■ This niche is right sized

- Underwater photography

- Pet photography

- Nature photography
-

- Children's book illustration

- Fashion illustration

- Animation
-

- Knitted dog sweaters

- Knitted baby sweaters

- Knitted doll sweaters

Why should you choose a niche?

- Choosing a small niche does not mean you cannot make other kinds of art
- Choosing a small niche makes it possible for you to build an **art brand** around a recognizable product or service
- You can always offer other products, but you won't typically promote them as part of your niche brand
- You can choose a target audience first, then refine the niche to suit the audience



Who is your best target audience?

Who is your best target audience?

- A target audience consists of a group of people who are similar in ways you can identify
- Most likely, people in your target audience are similar to you in many ways
- But you can't assume that just because you like something, everyone else likes it
- People are unique and complicated—categorize them with caution

How do you choose a target audience?

- Can you identify actual buyers by name?
- Are your buyers anonymous?
- Can you guess some of their characteristics?
 - Are they consumers or businesses?
 - What are their demographics? (not all demographic characteristics will matter—it depends on what you are selling)
 - What are their attitudes and preferences?

Using market research to find your target audience

■ Demographics

- Gender
- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Location
- Education
- Income
- Political/religious affiliations
- Own or rent
- Occupation
- Single/not single
- Kids/no kids

■ Attitudes and preferences

- Product usage/purpose
- Product knowledge
- Usage and style preferences
- Favorite websites
- Favorite television shows
- Favorite newspapers and magazines
- Favorite music
- Favorite celebrities
- Social media platforms
- Preferred purchasing methods

■ Industry roles

- Management/leadership status
- Decision making authority
- Spending authority
- Company size and status

Using market research to find your target audience

- Talk with people about your art
- Have conversations with your followers
- Gather subscribers and communicate with them
- Observe shopper and buyer behavior, in person and online
- Always be talking with lots of people, especially your customers

Using market research to find your target audience

■ Questions to ask your buyers

- Where do you find art to buy?
- What are the main reasons you buy art?
- How often do you visit artists' studios?
- Do you follow artists on social media? Which platforms do you like best?
- What do you like about my art?
- Did you install the art in your home? How difficult was it to install the art?
- How often do you commission a piece of art made to your specifications?
- What is your preferred communication method to find new artists/art shows/new work?
- If you wanted to find art like mine to buy, where would you expect to find it?

Using market research to find your target audience

- Watch and listen for keywords and phrases
- Capture the words and use them in your marketing content
- Read all buyer reviews
- Review all social media interactions
- Interact with buyers, ask questions
- Watch customers interact with your product and listen to what they say
- Create a buyer persona



What is a buyer persona?

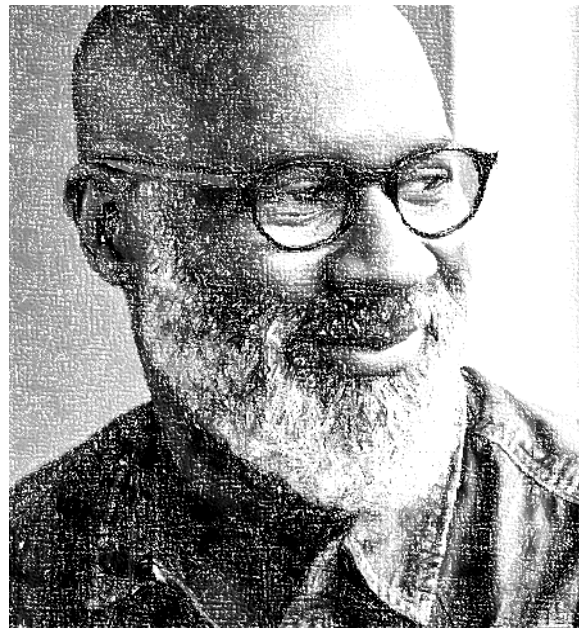
Buyer personas

- Some marketers find it helpful to design an “ideal client,” sometimes called a “buyer persona”
- Your marketing research can help you design a persona
 - Choose a representative photo and give this fictitious client a name
 - Refer to the photo and profile often
 - Aim all marketing content to this fictitious person
- Keep in mind this is a marketing strategy—categorizing people based on general characteristics can be dehumanizing



■ BROOKE: Your ideal buyer for handmade ceramic tea sets

- Needs functional art for home
- Female, age 29-64, Master's degree, lives in the American west, \$60,000+ per year, professional job, single, no kids
- Shops at art festivals and shows, visits galleries, prefers decorative and functional art, uses Instagram and Facebook daily, follows regional artists, enjoys reading literary fiction, donates to social causes, supports the arts



■ RAY: Your ideal buyer for African influenced metal art

- Just bought a new home and needs to fill empty wall space
- Lives in your zip code, age 25-49, likely male, likely African American, income \$65K to \$200K, college+, professional occupation
- Interested in African-inspired design, new furniture, visual enjoyment, wants to impress friends, uses social media, shops online for art and home furnishings

How to use a buyer persona in your marketing

- Knowing your target audience's needs and wants gives you an opportunity to create and offer art that fulfills their needs and wants
- Creating an ideal buyer persona can help you focus your art making and art marketing to reach your target audience
- Use consistent messages across all your platforms, aimed at your ideal buyer



Do you have
intermediaries?

What is an intermediary?

- An intermediary is a person or company who facilitates or mediates the interaction between you and the end-user of your product or service
- Intermediaries sometimes help promote as well as sell

Examples of intermediaries

- Art galleries
- Retail spaces
- Art consultants, advisors, and agents
- Juried art shows
- Art events and markets
- Online art platforms
- Social media platforms
- Creative directors
- Interior designers, architects

Art galleries

- There are many types of galleries, ranging from “fine art” to craft galleries
- Some galleries specialize in representing emerging artists
- Galleries are in business to make money
- Galleries are a consignment operation
- Galleries usually take 50% of your retail price—you can negotiate
- Does your target audience shop in galleries?

Art fairs and art shows

- Local and regional art and craft fairs and shows
- Farmers' markets
- Popup art shows
- Local restaurants and cafés
- Does your target audience go to art fairs and shows?

Online art platforms

- Online art sellers, portfolios, and printers
 - Etsy
 - Amazon Art
 - Artfinder
 - Art Brokerage
 - Artspace
 - Fine Art America
 - eBay
 - Zatista
 - The Tappan Collective
 - 1stdibs
 - Saatchi Art
 - FASO
 - Society 6
 - Threadless
 - Bēhance
 - Artsy
 - Printful
 - Printify
 - Redbubble
 - Zazzle
 - GicleeToday
- Does your target audience shop on these platforms?

Interior designers and architects

- You can reach out directly to local interior designers and architects
- Creative directors hire artists for product illustration
- Real estate agents and home staging services rent or purchase art
- What problem do you solve for them?



Closing thoughts

Key takeaway

- Understanding the needs, wants, and characteristics of your best target audiences will help you figure out the best ways to reach them

Consider . . .

- If you have more than one target audience, list their characteristics and compare them
- How similar are they?
- Can you focus on all groups at one time in the same way? Or do they require different approaches?
- Write a marketing plan and design an annual, task-based marketing calendar

Remember...

- Effective marketing is about building authentic relationships with real people
- It works best when you remember your art solves a problem for a group of people
- Targeting that group of people intentionally is a better marketing strategy than posting randomly and hoping the right eyes see your work

Caution

- Segmenting people into groups is a classic marketing technique; however, segmenting people based on arbitrary factors is prone to bias and can lead to exclusionary marketing strategies
- Use caution when segmenting human beings into categories

Resources

- *Art/Work*, by Bhandari, H. D., & Melber, J. (2017). New York, NY: Free Press/Simon and Schuster
- *The Practical Handbook for the Emerging Artist* (3rd ed.), by Margaret R. Lazzari. (2021). Thames & Hudson
- Start a business in Arizona
<https://azcc.gov/corporations/ten-steps-to-starting-a-business-in-az>
- Sign up for a SCORE mentor
<https://www.score.org/>
- *Online tools for customer research*
 - Values and attitudes | VALS
<http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/business/>
 - Survey Monkey
<https://www.surveymonkey.com>
 - Google Forms for Business
<https://workspace.google.com/products/forms/>
 - Hubspot buyer personal template
<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/buyer-persona-research>

Q&A

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