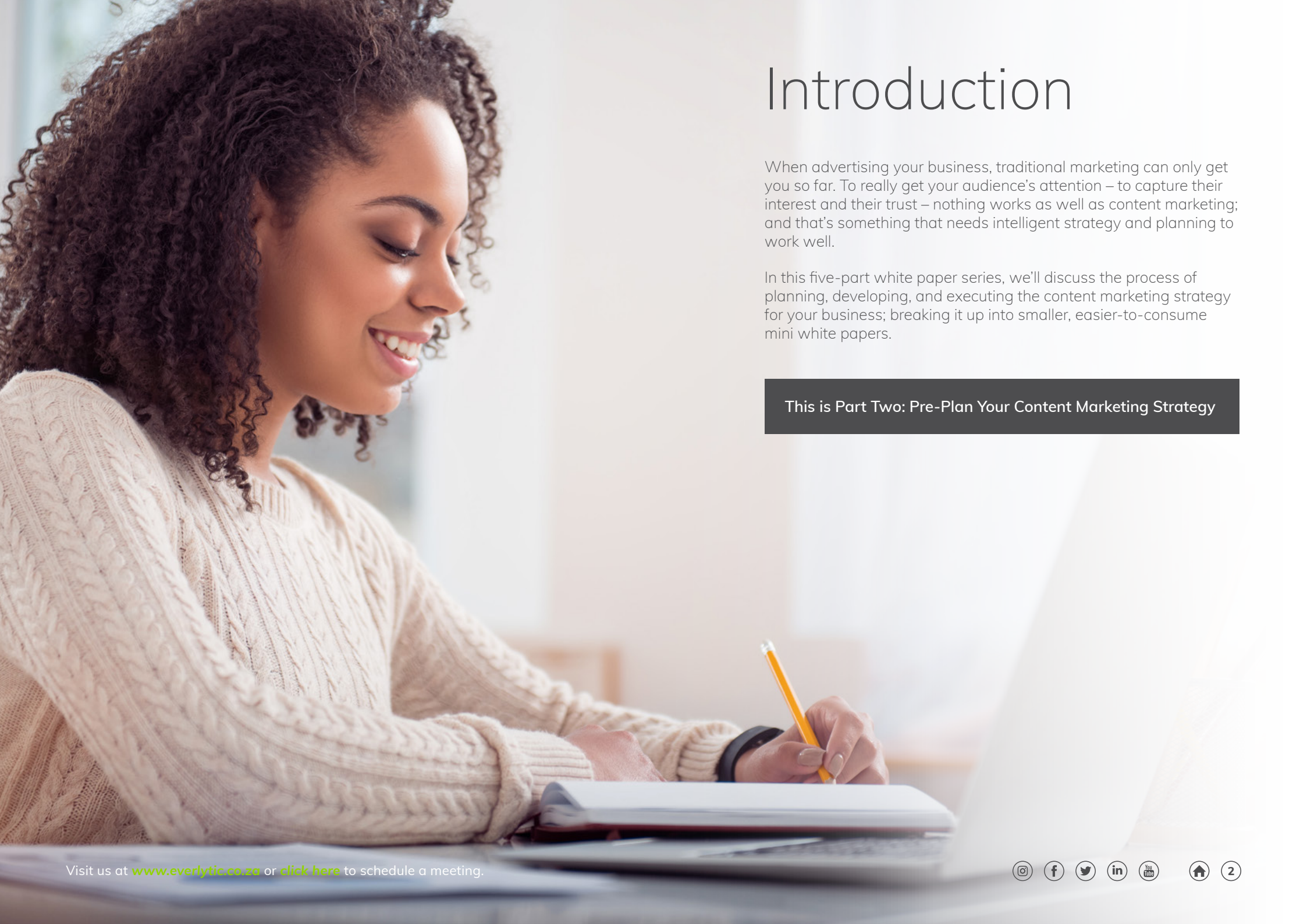# everlytic

Content Marketing Strategy

How to Maximise Your Digital
Content to Grow Your Business

Part 2

Pre-Plan Your Content
Marketing Strategy

Introduction

When advertising your business, traditional marketing can only get you so far. To really get your audience's attention – to capture their interest and their trust – nothing works as well as content marketing; and that's something that needs intelligent strategy and planning to work well.

In this five-part white paper series, we'll discuss the process of planning, developing, and executing the content marketing strategy for your business; breaking it up into smaller, easier-to-consume mini white papers.

This is Part Two: Pre-Plan Your Content Marketing Strategy

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What You'll Find Inside

Enhance Your Content Marketing Strategy with Everlytic

Everlytic is a digital messaging platform that helps your business communicate personally, reliably, and automatically using bulk email, SMS, and voice broadcasting – at scale.

Use it to collect customer data directly into your database using subscription forms. Then send personalised content to this audience using strategic communication workflows.

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The Content Marketing Lifecycle

A content marketing strategy isn't created once. The most agile and effective strategies are constantly refined in line with customer interests, campaign results, and the market. In total, a standard content marketing cycle should consist of seven important steps that you repeat to some degree for every new campaign:

**This white paper addresses part two of this cycle: the pre-planning phase.**

Define What You Want to Achieve
Define what you want out of your content strategy and find its purpose

Step 1 — You are here

Understand Your Audience
Research your target audience and create client personas for better targeting

Step 2

Assemble Your Content Marketing Strategy
Understand your customer journey and map your content into a content calendar

Step 3

Know Your Channels
Understand how the different sharing channels can work together in an integrated campaign

Step 4

Know Your Content
Know how to approach your content formats to stand out from your competitors

Step 5

Launch Your Content Plan
Structure your content workflow and assign roles and responsibilities in your team

Step 6

Analyse the Results
Track consumption, social, lead, and sales metrics to analyse campaign performance

Step 7

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Define What You Want to Achieve

Before you can start fleshing out your content and how you want to use it, you first need to figure out what it is you want to achieve from your content marketing. According to the **Content Marketing Institute**, this should include:

Understanding Your Business Model
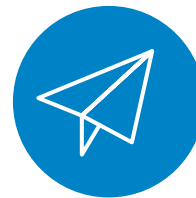
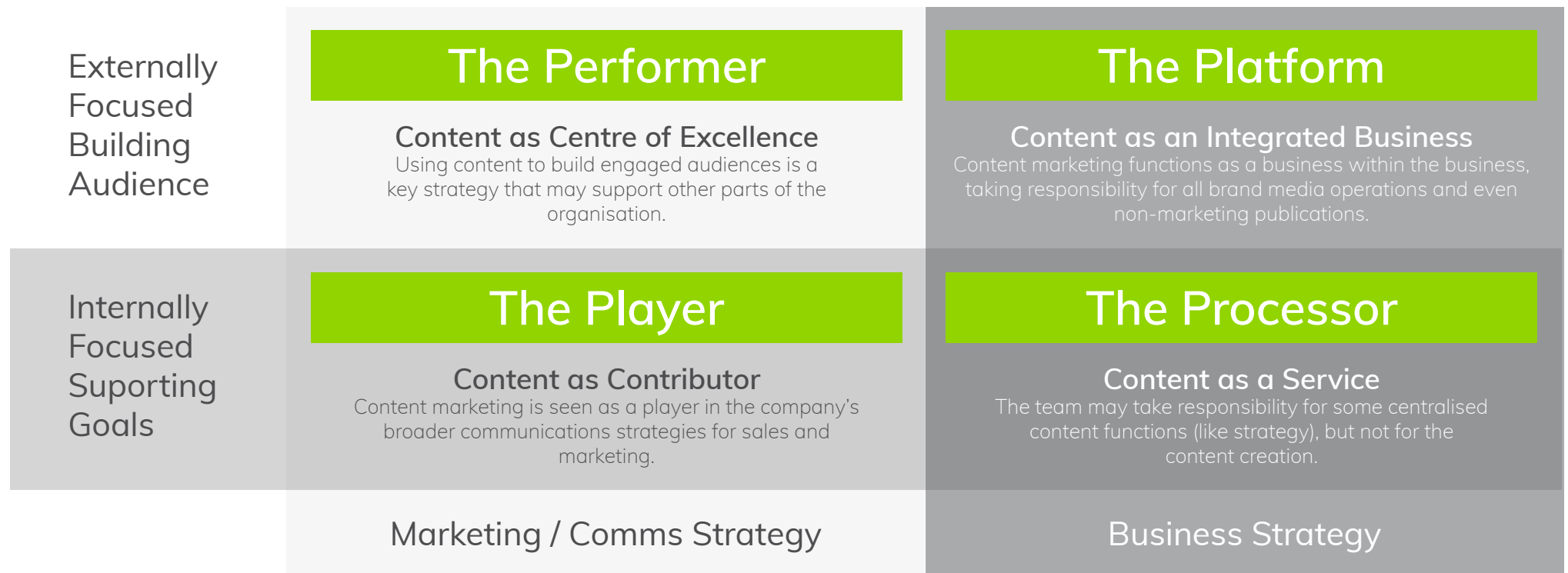Finding Your **Purpose** & **Setting Goals**

Developing Your Content Marketing **Mission Statement**

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Understanding Your Business Model

According to Robert Rose, Founder and Chief strategy officer of **The Content Advisory**, there are **four business models** for content marketing. These are:

Externally Focused Building Audience	**The Performer** **Content as Centre of Excellence** Using content to build engaged audiences is a key strategy that may support other parts of the organisation.	**The Platform** **Content as an Integrated Business** Content marketing functions as a business within the business, taking responsibility for all brand media operations and even non-marketing publications.
Internally Focused Suporting Goals	**The Player** **Content as Contributor** Content marketing is seen as a player in the company's broader communications strategies for sales and marketing.	**The Processor** **Content as a Service** The team may take responsibility for some centralised content functions (like strategy), but not for the content creation.
	Marketing / Comms Strategy	Business Strategy

Which model does your business follow? Which one would you like to use? Do you follow a blended approach? Understanding what business model you use and why may help you to mobilise the right resources for your content marketing strategy.

For more information on these business models, **read this article from CMI**.

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Finding Your Purpose & Setting Goals

Next, determine your content marketing purpose and set sales, cost-saving, or business-growth goals that you want this content to achieve. The easiest way to do this is to address the area where your business has been struggling, like:

Brand Awareness

Try content like guest articles, videos, podcasts, and e-books.

Read more

Audience Engagement

Track conversions, scroll depth, social comments and backlinks.

Read more

Website Traffic

Reoptimise old content with new, relevant SEO keywords.

Read more

Lead Generation

Target decision-makers with gated content that calls them to action.

Read more

Marketing ROI

Try **using marketing content in the sales process** or **starting new revenue streams**. Otherwise **read this** and **this** to understand the real ROI of content marketing.

Customer Retention

Generate trust by taking customers on **consistently relevant content journeys** and implement **a meaningful, experience-based loyalty programme**.

Developing your Content Marketing Mission Statement

Joe Pulizzi, the Founder of **Content Marketing Institute**, suggests piecing your content marketing purpose and goals into a content marketing mission statement – an answer to the question "Why does this exist?"

"People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it."

- Simon Sinek, Author, Motivational Speaker, and Organisational Consultant

What's in a Content Mission Statement?

A content mission statement should include three main things:

1. **Your Target Audience:** Who you're talking to

2. **Your Content Types:** The information and media that you're qualified to share

3. **The Audience Outcomes:** Why they should care about what you say

For example, Inc.com's mission statement is:

"Welcome to Inc.com, the place where entrepreneurs and business owners can find useful information, advice, insights, resources and inspiration for running and growing their businesses."

What to Do with a Content Mission Statement

Publish it where your audience can find it easily

This transparency will help set expectations and promote signups.

Share it with your team to get everyone involved

This will help to keep your team pledged to your higher purpose.

Use it to help you decide what content to create (or not create)

This works as a kind of litmus test to keep your content in line with your goals.

Step 2 Understand Your Audience

The first rule of any content marketing strategy is: Know your audience. If you don't know who you're talking to, what they're interested in, or what problem you can solve for them, your message will be less impactful (if it's impactful at all) and less likely to strike a chord with the right people. The more specific you can be, the better your results.

So, do your market research. These are some of the best ways to do it:

Ask Your Clients Directly
To really understand your target audience's pain points and interests, ask your existing clients – either with an incentivised survey or, ideally, by chatting to them in person.

Use Existing Research
Is there existing research or national census information that can help you narrow down your target audience? Using existing data will help save time on doing the research yourself.

Watch Your Competitors
Keep an eye on your biggest competitors and who they're targeting. What is and isn't working for them? Learning from the successes and failures of your competitors will help you get to the right people without the first-hand learning costs.

Mine People's Reviews
If you're a retailer selling a product or service, **mine through available reviews for the service / product** (or a similar one) to understand what it is that people want. This will help you find relevant and specific content ideas for your audience.

Use Google Analytics
Use Google Analytics to track visitors by gender, age, location, interests, and referral traffic – you may find some interesting overlaps.

Analyse Social Engagement
Pay attention to what people are saying on your social media pages and on any comments that you get on your content. Deeper reporting like that found on **Twitter Analytics** and **Facebook Insights** can offer excellent insight into your audience too.

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Understand Your Audience (cont.)

Another great way to get a sense of what's current on social media is to use social listening tools like **Sprout Social** and **BuzzSumo**. These will help you track conversations around your brand, your competitors, and your broader industry. Here's a list of **some of the top social listening platforms**.

Market research isn't something you do once-off. After all, your target audience is made up of people – and people change. Keep a constant ear to the ground so you can adapt with them.

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Step 2 Understand Your Audience

Create Client Personas

Once you've done your market research, use your findings to compile client personas – personalised archetypes of clients based on actual data from your target audience. These personas shouldn't just be labelled by their overarching traits either – they should also be given real names and be fleshed out with job titles, demographics, and hobbies.

Why? Because putting a name, face, and character to segments of your audience makes it easier to create content that speaks to them personally. It makes your communication with them more authentic. And it means the content you create for them will be relevant, because you understand them better as people – not just nameless, faceless sales opportunities.

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How to Create Client Personas

The best way to create client personas for your business is in groups. If you can, get a few insightful people from key areas of your business, like sales and customer service, in a room together. Then brainstorm three to five types of potential clients that you want to target. **Start with the broader facts and get more specific as you go**.

Buffer recommends including characteristics like:

Name of the persona

Choose something realistic

Job title

The best source for this info is customer surveys

- Key information about their company (size, type, etc.)
- Details about their role

Demographics

Use Google Analytics or online surveys to source this info

- Age
- Gender
- Salary / household income
- Location: urban / suburban / rural
- Education
- Family

Goals and challenges

Results from real customer interviews (like this) can help

- Primary goal
- Secondary goal
- How you help achieve these goals
- Primary challenge
- Secondary challenge
- How you help solve these problems

Values / objections

Use insights from your existing clients

- Primary values
- Common objections during sales process

Marketing content

Create messages tailored specifically for them

Additional persona info

These depend on your industry and business type

- Hobbies
- Real quotes from interviews with customers
- Computer literacy
- Where they get their news
- Blogs they read

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A Persona Example

Name of the persona
Louisa
Johnson

Job title
Head of Marketing
for an online
fashion retailer

Demographics
- 40
- Female
- Married | 2 Kids
- Lives in the suburbs

Goals and challenges

Goals & Everlytic Solutions:
- Goal / target driven – **rich analytics**
- Practical – **drag-and-drop builder & integrations**
- Knowledge of ROI measures – **analytics**

Challenges & Everlytic Solutions:
- Remain on budget – **customisable packages**
- Reach targets – **analytics, heat maps & A/B testing**
- Compliance & security – **POPI compliance tools**

Values / objections

Values
- Integrity
- Performance
- Quality

Objections
- Why should I choose you over cheaper competitors?
- We're already using a competitor and our staff understand the system – transitioning across will be difficult.

Marketing content
- Dedicated account manager
- In-person training
- Integrations with existing software
- Local support
- How our analytics support ROI and marketing targets
- POPI compliance & local relevance
- Customisable, scalable packages
- Multi-channel platform
- Automation features

Additional persona info

Where she finds her information
- Google
- Email
- Social Media
- Conferences
- Bizcommunity

Personal information
- Strong computer literacy
- Studying towards her Masters degree

Expectations for communication software
- Cost efficiency
- Security / Control
- Local support / Escalation
- SLA
- Practicality
- ERP integration
- ROI / Reporting / Relevance

Use Everlytic When Pre-Planning Your Content Strategy

Schedule a meeting today, so we can show you more.

Everlytic's database management tools are a great support in every step of the pre-planning phase.

For instance:

Online Subscription Forms

These capture subscriber information directly from an iframe on your website so you can better understand your audience from the moment they join your list. They integrate directly with your Everlytic database too, so you can start sharing content with them immediately.

Read more

Intelligent CRM Integrations

Our powerful API can connect Everlytic with your CRM system, enabling you to import contacts from existing databases automatically, keeping all your contact data in one place. And if you use Microsoft Dynamics, our Dynamics 365 plugin makes sending targeted messaging even easier as you don't even have to leave Dynamics.

Read more

Segment Lists by Personas

Database segmentation allows you to create groups of subscribers based on almost any variable, including interest, location, or a buyer persona that you've created. This enables you to create hyper-personalised content that's always relevant.

Read more

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Everlytic has helped us to channel, time and schedule our communications to our clients. We can plan ahead, monitor and do the necessary reporting. Everlytic is effective and has transformed the way we communicate to our clients to be truly customer-centric."

- Gillian Loos,
Sanlam

Sanlam