

Understanding your customers

Whether you are new to business or an established tourism brand, having a deep understanding of your customers is essential to operating a sustainable and profitable tourism experience.

Understanding your customers is the process of working smarter, not harder. This process allows you to:



Refine your experience

Deliver the best possible experience for your customers. This means they are more likely to become word of mouth advocates of your experience - the most trusted, effective and low cost form of marketing.



Focus your marketing efforts

Refine your marketing time and dollar investments, say no to more things, guide your website, emails and social media copy writing and optimise your website for conversions.



Increase your yield

Attract higher value customers who see the value in your experience offering and are less price sensitive.







Who is visiting the Canberra region?

Before looking at the customers in your own business, it is important to understand who is currently visiting the Canberra region and the market opportunity for your tourism experience.

Traditionally, 90 per cent of the visitors to Canberra are Australian travellers (domestic visitors). Of those domestic visitors, the majority come from regional or metropolitan NSW, followed by VIC and QLD.

Canberra is ideally placed for travellers looking to get away on a short break. The region is positioned within a 3-hour drive of regional cities and towns that are home to close to 950,000 people, and the metropolitan population of Sydney of nearly five million people.

There are a number of segments within the domestic market who typically visit Canberra for various reasons including holidays, education, work, and visiting friends and relatives. Some examples of segments visiting Canberra are:

-  Families
-  Empty nesters
-  Grey nomads
-  Younger couples
-  School groups
-  Special interest travellers – such as arts/cultural/events/sports

To learn more, read the Tourism in the ACT Snapshot:

tourism.act.gov.au/insights/research/

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Customer trends

Shifting society values, changing booking and travel patterns, market disruptions, accelerated digital disruption, changing media consumption and the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 are examples of customer trends which need to be considered in your business plan, marketing and experience delivery.

Adapting and evolving your experience and adjusting your marketing to support customer trends will ensure your business remains relevant to your current and future Ideal Customers. As an example, current market trends mean that customers are looking for:



Personal, authentic experiences in the destination e.g. local food and wine



Exceptional service that makes them feel valued



Interaction with locals e.g. meet the maker



Businesses doing the right thing by the environment and local communities



Supporting local – booking direct with businesses, buying from local businesses



Mobile-friendly websites for researching, booking and sharing



Positive reviews and advocacy of your business (people they know or opinions posted online)

Who are VisitCanberra's Ideal Customers?

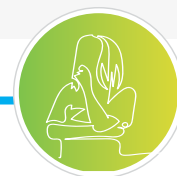
VisitCanberra has developed a series of audience personas to outline the different motivations, behaviours and media consumption of people when they take domestic short break leisure travel. Each persona is based on extensive market research.



Variety Seekers



Memory Makers



Discoverer

Key audience personas

An Ideal Customer Persona is a semi-fictional person who represents your Ideal Customer. An example of VisitCanberra's Personas are:



Variety Seeker

The variety seeker (single or couple) leads an action-packed life and loves nothing more than packing up the car for a weekend away doing fun and interesting things. They are career-driven, but always make time for social activities like eating out, entertaining and spending time with friends and family. The variety seeker (single or couple) doesn't need much of an excuse for a short break and thinks nothing of adding getaway days to a business trip or saying yes to a spontaneous trip with their partner or friends. They enjoy a life that is rich and fulfilled.



Memory Maker

The memory maker's household revolves around the kids and work is a way to provide for the family. They think it's important to value experiences and share happy times together like they did as a kid. Going away on a short break is a chance to stop what they've been doing and come together to bond as a family. The memory maker is often budget conscious but will spend on things like short breaks that create happy, life-long memories for the entire family.



Discoverer

Discoverers have an innate sense of curiosity and desire to experience the world and understand its people. As an avid reader of books and watcher of documentaries, discoverers are interested in a wide range of topics. Discoverers have a list of dream destinations to travel to and save money to be able to afford longer trips and short breaks. Travel is a way to experience new and different things and engage with the world, while still finding time to relax. Discoverers travel not to escape life, but so life does not escape them.



Identifying your Ideal Customers and Ideal Customer Personas

It is important to identify which customers will bring the most value to your tourism business. These people represent your 'Ideal Customer'.

The first step in identifying your Ideal Customer is thinking about the type of customers you are wanting to attract more of in the future.

Your tourism experience is not for everyone. It's only for those who love your experience offering

Your Ideal Customers are not necessarily going to be the customers that you mostly see in your business. They are the customers you may see a few of already, however would like to see more of in the future.

Specifically, Ideal Customers share the following traits:

- Love your experience and recommend it to their friends.
- Are less price sensitive. Experience trumps price.
- Are conscious consumers. They care about their travel impacts and where their dollars go.
- Are united by motivations and challenges, not where they live, their age or their income.

Answering the following questions will help you to identify your Ideal Customer:

- What are their travel aspirations?
- What are their challenges/needs as it relates to your experience?
- What experiences are they interested in?
- Who are they travelling with?
- How do they plan and book travel?
- What are their digital/offline touchpoints?
- How do they get to and around the Canberra region?

This process can also help you to take a deeper dive and develop your Ideal Customer Persona - a semi-fictional person who represents your Ideal Customer.

Use the **Ideal Customer Template** (coming soon) to develop your own Ideal Customer Personas for your business.

Journey Mapping

Once you have an idea of who your Ideal Customers are, the next step is mapping how they move through their travel purchase journey. This helps you become clear on what and where the opportunities are to engage with this persona in the most effective and efficient way, helping you stay clear on your messaging and also your medium, to get the most from your marketing spend.

Completing a Customer Journey Map for each Ideal Customer Persona will help you clarify key problems and questions a customer has, identify how you can solve them, and where you can share this information.

Use the **Ideal Customer Template** (coming soon) to map your Ideal Customers.

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION

How many Ideal Customers should my business have?

For small businesses with a single product (such as accommodation, café, tour) you may only need to identify and profile one Ideal Customer. For larger businesses such as national attractions or those with different product offerings (e.g. accommodation and a venue space), you may find it helpful to profile an Ideal Customer for each experience/event/product offering, so you may end up with two or three personas.

TIP 1: *Every Ideal Customer will need their own distribution, pricing, product and communication strategy, so be strategic on how many you choose.*

TIP 2: *Each time you run an event or launch a new product, it is recommended you profile a new customer if they are different to your existing Ideal Customers.*

QUESTION

Does my Ideal Customer differ for domestic and international audiences?

As noted above, travellers are united mostly by their travel motivations and challenges, and to a lesser degree, where they live. This means the motivations of your Ideal Customer may be the same for your domestic visitors as they are for your international visitors.

Understanding where your Ideal Customer lives is important in the implementation of your marketing activities, especially geo-related opportunities like social media advertising. So when you profile your customers, it helps to take into account their location for strategic implementation purposes, but not for changes in messaging.

QUESTION

How do I find out information about my Ideal Customers?

If you have a good understanding of customers in your business, you can profile customers using business owner/manager/frontline staff insights. Inviting colleagues to complete the **Ideal Customer Template** (coming soon) independently and combine results for a more robust profile is also a good idea. You could even interview past customers who you know would fit the profile.

QUESTION

What about other customer segments?

One of the biggest opportunities in identifying your Ideal Customer is the ability to market your business to new audiences, rather than marketing to people who are already coming.

The good news is your other customer segments should still be attracted to your tourism experience based on your offering. By focussing on your Ideal Customer, you will be attracting more of the people who you know will bring you the best business. Also, being specific with your messaging, you may also find that you will attract people who aspire to visit your business.