



MODULE 3: FOCUSING ON YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER AND CLIENTS

Welcome to Module Three in the **Red Slice Brand Bootcamp** series:
Focusing on Your Ideal Customer and Clients

SLIDE 2: This is probably the most important module you can take in this entire course and I'm excited to share this advice with you, as it will make a world of difference in your marketing and communication efforts!

In this session, you'll IDENTIFY the most relevant target audiences to pursue with your limited time and resources. You can't boil the ocean so we're going to be talking a lot about focus. You'll DISCOVER how to build a detailed customer character sketch and how it makes your brand more attractive as well as how it makes investment decisions easier and less stressful. Finally, you'll GAIN clarity and focus around your target markets to save your sanity – and your wallet.

SLIDE 3: So who and where is your ideal audience? Who should you be targeting? Who needs what you've got to offer? I can't stress enough that this is the single most important aspect to a strong Brand Strategy. Doesn't matter what you do: sell products, write books, raise money for a non-profit, offer consulting, even just trying to attract an audience for your blog or web TV show. **If you don't know your audiences intimately and make them real, you'll be shooting at a moving target.**

And I say "ideal", not "average," on purpose. If you go with simply an *average* customer, your range will be so broad, you'll pretty much be targeting a vanilla, generic, faceless person who doesn't exist in real life. Think about it: if you say your target is something huge, like "women between the ages of 25 and 60" how is that going to help you attract the right people? A 25 year old single graphic designer in L.A. has very different needs and tastes than a 45 year old stay at home mother of four in Des Moines, Iowa. Perhaps you do sell something that can appeal more broadly, but defining some ideal customer "archetypes" will help you make decisions such as pricing, packaging, even copy tone or visuals. Having a specific person in mind will make your message and brand much more connective and relevant to a specific group.

PS: If you sell through others, than those businesses are also an "audience" to whom you need to speak so you'll need a profile for them, too.

I want to stress this is not about who can *buy* from you – you are free to see your products or services go to anyone who comes to your door and is willing to pay. But **it's about where you will spend your precious and limited resources and time on trying to ATTRACT.** Others may get caught in your net, or your message and value may resonate for them, of course, but where's your target, your bulls eye? Aim for that. Those are the people to whom you need to speak.

SLIDE 4: It's time for one of the most fun exercises in putting together your Brand Strategy. It's time for a casting call. Pretend you are a Hollywood casting agent, and you get to pick your ideal customer from thousands of hopefuls for your "movie" (which in this case, is your

business, or your book, or your project or your non-profit – whatever it is). Of course, you may still cast others as “extras” but if there were one or two stars, who would they be? What type of person would you absolutely love to serve, love to represent your brand, and who would benefit the most from what you offer? Get creative and imagine this person or you can even use an existing customer whom you love as a role model for this. I know I’ve done this with my business. When I’ve had a great client experience and think, “Wow, if only all my clients were like this person,” I pay attention and write down the traits they embody so I can try to go after more people like them. I want you to create a detailed character sketch of this person.

Now, you may say, “Maria, I have a few different segments that I serve.” That’s okay. But you are no Apple or Microsoft. You don’t have the budget or bandwidth to market to twenty different segments effectively all the time! So, as a small business or as an author, artist, coach or non-profit, you’ll want to have no more than two to three ideal segments. This way, you can market deeply and consistently to this focused group over time. When I say “segments”, I mean overall descriptors of that audience type. Big companies do this all the time – they may have a segment called “Young Up and Comers” or Trendy Teens or Empty Nesters. So your segment names will be something more generic about that category of customer. For example, for my business, I have two segments: Solopreneurs and Small to Midsized Growth Businesses/Start-Ups. What are yours?

SLIDE 5: You will find this sheet in your exercise packet but I just want to walk through this with you. You’re going to be creating a detailed character sketch of one person within each segment. This is where you get detailed about talking to one specific individual. Again, these won’t be the only people to whom you *sell*, but they are the people to whom you will *market*, the ones which your brand should attract easily. Give this person a name, an actual age (not an age range), tell me what city or town they live in (not just “The suburbs” but “Redmond, WA” or “San Carlos, CA”), what do they do for a living, what is their family and home life like, what are their hobbies or the websites/TV shows/magazine they follow? Again, this is about getting creative, using both your imagination and your knowledge of the value your product or service offers and what their pain points might be for which you provide a great solution. Which clubs do they belong to? Maybe you can discover an unexpected way to market to them that you never thought about before, as happened to one of my clients when he did this exercise. He never realized that his ideal customer was most likely a woman too busy to watch TV but who commuted in her car to work every day, listening to local NPR. He had never thought about local NPR sponsorship as a viable way to promote his business services before having this epiphany. So while this exercise might seem crazy, it will get you to see your ideal client or customer in his or her natural habitat, and thus, ensure you understand the context of what they want or need so you can discover little gems like my client did. It also helps you see what might be a waste of time and money to invest in. For example, maybe you do this exercise and realize that your ideal client is not really big on Twitter, so you can avoid wasting too much time and effort there. Also, get into the meat of this person’s psyche: what they value, what they despise, what keeps them up at night - especially as it relates to your product or service. You will find messaging gold in doing this because then you can ensure you’re speaking to their needs.

Now I always get the question, does this apply to B2B sales? Absolutely! You are selling at the end of the day to a real person who signs the contract. You can think about this person's needs both in life and at the office and how your solutions can address this. For example, I've had B2B clients with whom I've done this exercise and we talk about what this person's life is like at work: stressed, too much work being put on them, they value anything that saves them time and can make them look good to the boss. But they also care about not cutting corners and want to do right by their team. Again, there is much insight and gold to be found when you understand who you are talking to. With B2B products or services, the only thing that will be different is that you also need a general description of the types of companies that are best suited for your solutions: how big are they, what industries, what is the company culture like? If you have a bleeding edge product, your ideal company profile is probably more progressive and open to risk taking, not one that plays it safe and often avoids trends or new technologies. This might rule out, possibly, government entities or financial services, for example.

Have fun with this one. Maybe do this over a glass of wine or something! Use your imagination and your knowledge of the market.

SLIDE 6: You're then going to take your answers and build a narrative for these people. This is an example from one of my clients. She had three segments she was going after, and this was one of the profiles we built. We even found a stock photo to represent her, which I highly recommend for your final Brand Strategy document. You can see we called this one The Plate Spinner and described what her life is like so that ultimately, my client's products and services could directly speak to her needs and she knew exactly what to emphasize in her brand messaging.

SLIDE 7: Now it's your turn! This module's Homeplay is for you to determine the one to three most relevant market segments on which you will focus your time and money. Which segments need what you've got, or want to read your new novel or require your technology solution or coaching services? Which segments would be most interested in your content or art? And then create your ideal customer profiles and narratives for each segment. Who is Jane? Who is Gregory? Get to know them AND GET CREATIVE! Please do all this before you move on to Module Four, in which we'll build on this and be talking about the type of brand personality that will best authentically reflect what you offer, as well as best attract these people. Any questions, please drop on over to the private Facebook group that is part of your course....Red Slice Brand Bootcamp. If you haven't already requested to join the group, please do. Enjoy, good luck and I look forward to seeing you at Module Four!