

Scale Your Business: The Ultimate Playbook For Building Your Ideal Customer Profile

Cognism 

Contents

Introduction	3
What is ICP?	4
Why is ICP important?	5
How do you create an ICP?	8
Conclusion	12

Introduction



The question is:
How do you get there?
How do you turn your business
into a revenue-generating
powerhouse?



The answer is simple:
Know your customer!

Every B2B startup founder wants the same things:

- Six-figure deals
- Winning well-known clients
- Generating constant, continuous revenue growth

The question is: how do you get there? How do you turn your business into a revenue-generating powerhouse?

The answer is simple: know your customer!

If you don't know who is going to buy your product or service, you won't know how to position it in a way that appeals to them.

You need to know:

- Who they are
- Where they work
- What kind of day-to-day challenges they face

Only then can you create sales and marketing strategies that are primed to succeed. The best way to do this is to define your ideal customer profile, or ICP. Using this method, you'll be able to work out who your perfect customer is, then bring them to life.

In this playbook, we're going to tell you everything you need to know about ICP:

- What ICP is
- Why it's important
- How you can create your own ICP
- The benefits ICP can deliver to your business

Welcome to the ultimate playbook for building your ideal customer profile.

What is ICP?



Your **ICP** is a comprehensive description of your perfect customer; the kind of customer that can find massive benefits from your product or service, while also being able to give you enough value in return to make your business profitable.

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In B2B, your ICP is a customer that can derive benefit from your product. While in most cases, this will be the ability to use your product to boost their bottom line, there could be other benefits, such as:

- Reducing costs
- Driving efficiency
- Improving the productivity/wellbeing of staff

Regarding your ICP giving you value in return, this is usually in the form of revenue. However, again, it doesn't have to be. It could be referrals, customer insights or testimonials, for example.

BUYER PERSONAS

Don't mix up your ICP and your buyer personas. They're different things.

Your ICP isn't just a target customer – it's your perfect customer – the customer who gets the best value from your product or service.

You should be working with many different buyer personas in your B2B organisation, but there's only one ICP.

Why is ICP important?

It's not just a matter of knowing who your best customers are. Here are ten reasons why your B2B startup needs ICP.

SALES

When you determine an ideal customer profile, then keep it in mind as you formulate your sales playbook, you can be sure everything points in the right direction.



1 – High-quality leads

Your ICP will help you generate better quality leads that are more likely to convert. Whether you're doing your own lead gen or bringing external information into your organisation, your ICP can be your north star to ensure you are targeting the right people.



2 – Better outbound

When you get granular with your ICP, going deep into the pain points, hopes and fears, you can tailor your outbound to be super-effective. Whether it's cold call scripts, outbound email sequences or anything else, you can really focus on your customer pain points and position your product as the solution.



3 – Consistently beat targets

You know the benefits that your ICP will get from your product. This means you can go out and sell them. Whether it's targets such as number of conversations or meetings, or hitting your ambitious revenue goals, knowing who you're selling to is essential.



4 – Save time and resources

Time is precious. Don't waste it trying to sell to people who will never buy. Your ICP allows you to generate leads with businesses who need your product and can pay for it. ICP helps you drive efficiency in your sales team.



5 – More revenue!

When you put all this together, your ICP helps your sales team sell more effectively and efficiently. It all points in one direction - bigger revenue figures! B2B organisations without an ICP are leaving money on the table.

MARKETING

Your ICP will turn your marketing department into a streamlined, lead-generating machine.



1 – Better targeted, more effective campaigns

When you know who your ideal customer is, you can craft a campaign that reaches them and nudges them in the direction of your product. Your ICP will drive efficiency in your marketing, as you will only be trying to reach people who actually need your product.



2 – The right channels at the right time campaigns

Your ICP enables you to select the most effective channels for your marketing more easily. Look at your ICP to decide which social media channel will drive responses. Is your ideal customer likely to spend more time on LinkedIn, Facebook or Instagram?



3 – Better content that delights

When you drill down into what drives your ideal customer, you can craft content that speaks to that motivation. Is your ICP looking to grow their bottom line or fend off competitors? You can create content that shows them how your product helps them achieve their goals.



4 – Build brand awareness

If organisations that match your ICP don't know who you are yet, you can start making sure that they do. Having an ICP helps you allocate your marketing resources in a way that lets you hit your ideal buyers with relevant content, often.



5 – Increase Customer Lifetime Values (CLV)

Use your ICP to help boost retention and drive upselling. If an organisation that matches your ICP gets value from investing more in your product, the chances are that others will too.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ICP

The overarching goal of ICP is to align your sales and marketing operations, so your business performs better. Sometimes, we call this practice 'smarketing'.

- When sales and marketing teams work together, companies achieve 36% higher customer retention and 38% higher sales win rates
- Companies with good smarketing practices in place generated 208% more revenue from their marketing efforts

Source: [HubSpot](#)

When you get everyone in your sales and marketing departments on the same page, working to the same goal of reaching your ICP and turning them into raving fans of your product, you are at peak smarketing efficiency.

How do you create an ICP?

Now you know the benefits that having an ICP can bring to your B2B organisation, here are five steps to creating the right ICP for you.

TOP TIP

A good place to start is looking at your prospects that convert quickly, as well as your longest-serving customers.

1 – IDENTIFY YOUR SUPER-USERS

It's likely that your ICP is already your customer. All you have to do is work out which one it is. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Analyse your data – which of your existing customers are getting the most value of your product?
- Think about the people who don't just use your product, but the people who love it and get more value out of it than the average user
- Ideally, you want to narrow your customer base down to ten super-users for the purposes of creating your ICP

2 – INTERVIEW YOUR SUPER-USERS

How can you find out what your best customers love about you and your product? Ask them!

- Set up a phone call, Zoom or face-to-face meeting with your ten super-users
- Ask them about their experiences with your product
- The end goal is to find out about:
 - Their buying processes
 - How they found you
 - Why they purchased
 - How they're benefitting from your product

TOP TIP

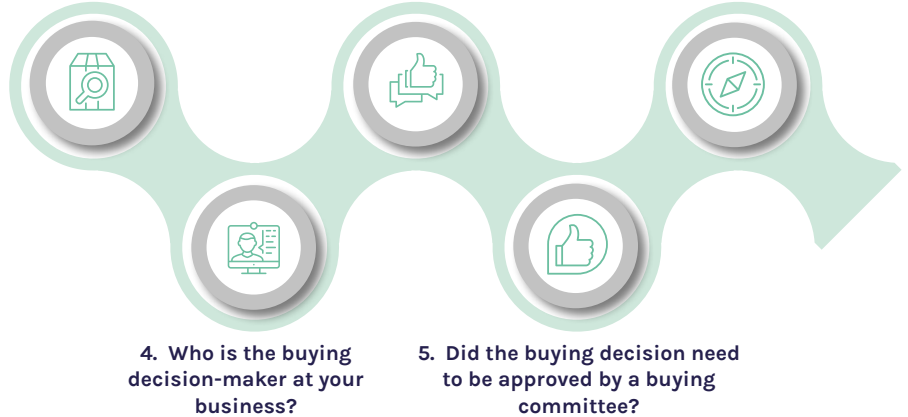
When drafting your questionnaire, focus on the customer's pain points – how does your solution solve them?

At Cognism, we use the following questionnaire when interviewing our super-users:

1. How much research did you undertake before you committed to buying?

2. Were there any referrals that influenced your decision to buy?

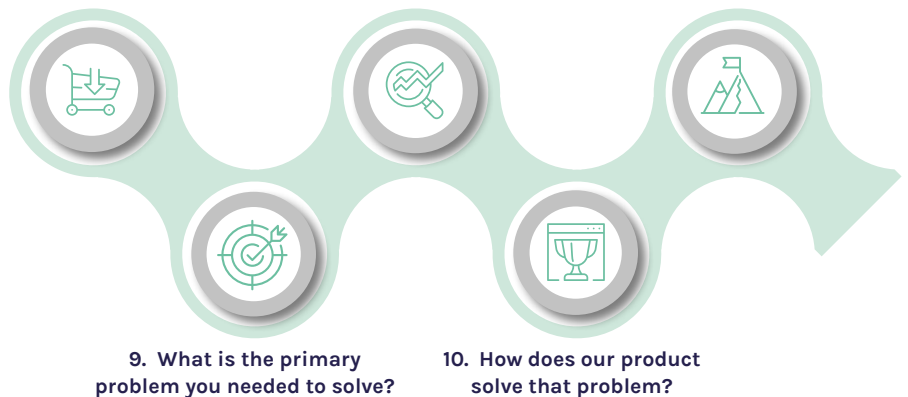
3. How did you first hear about our product or company?



6. Why did you originally choose to purchase our solution?

7. What benefits do you get out of using our solution today?

8. What are the major pain points your company faces?

**TOP TIP**

Add the super-user data to your CRM to make this process easier. Use your CRM to analyse the data.

3 – ANALYSE THE DATA

You've conducted your interviews and collected your answers. Now it's time to find out what it all means.

- Once your interviews are done, gather the data you've acquired
- Study the profiles of your super-users
- Look for common attributes. Are there any recurring patterns or shared characteristics? Is there anything that connects them?
- Identify the correlations and use the insights as you move on to the next stage

4 – CREATE YOUR ICP TEMPLATE

Here's the part where you put it all together.

At Cognism, we use a template to build up a detailed picture of our ICP. Here's an example which you can adapt and start using straight away!

TOP TIP

Once created, check your template against your data. Are there any errors?

COGNISM IDEAL CUSTOMER PROFILE



Industry
B2B Sales, SaaS



Geography
USA



Company Size
50 employees



Budget
\$10,000/month



Buying Process
Reliance on referrals for
buying decisions



Decision Makers
CEO, CRO



Pain Points

- Generating high-quality C-suite leads
- Automating outbound email campaigns
- Increasing sales team productivity



Business Goals

Short term: grow their client base by 20% over the next 3 months

Long term: raise their next funding round and expand their sales team



Technologies
Salesforce CRM
SalesLoft
Chili Piper



Attributes

Primary social media channel = LinkedIn

Gaining a reputation as SaaS industry thought leaders

Uses ABM strategies



You have to keep refining and improving your ICP to adapt to changes in your audience and your industry.

5 – REFINE YOUR ICP

The ICP process doesn't end once you have created it. You have to keep refining and improving your ICP to adapt to changes in your audience and your industry.

Here are some ideas:

- **Look for feedback from your customers** - Talk to the person that deals with customer feedback in your business. If you're in tech or SaaS, G2 is an excellent resource for customer opinion
- **Examine your website traffic** - Which pages on your site are generating the most heat? It can help you find out what your ideal customers are currently interested in. Look into where your visitors are coming from. Information like this can help you refine your marketing channel choices
- **Look at your financial data** - Which customers have the largest lifetime value? Which customers drive the biggest profits? Look for patterns in your figures that can help you improve your ICP
- **Look for patterns in closed-won deals** - Are there patterns in your recent successful deals? Are they coming from one particular channel? Are you doing anything specific during the sales process which is boosting your chances of success?

Conclusion



We're confident that if you follow these steps, you'll be able to discover your ICP and use it as a springboard for success. Make sure you use our free questionnaire and ICP template to help you. Finally, try our top tips and see if they make the process easier for you.

TAKE ACTION

We'd love to hear your feedback on this playbook. If you've got any questions, or anything you want to tell us about ICPs, you can find us on:

Did you know that Cognism's award-winning platform can help your business define its ICP? Our sales acceleration solution provides real-time B2B data that can help you streamline your prospecting and deliver new revenue, faster than the competition.

Contact us today for your free demo!

[Request a demo](#)

Cognism is a sales acceleration platform, using patented AI technology, to provide B2B sales teams with a blend of real-time company, people and event data to streamline prospecting, find and deliver new revenue.

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