

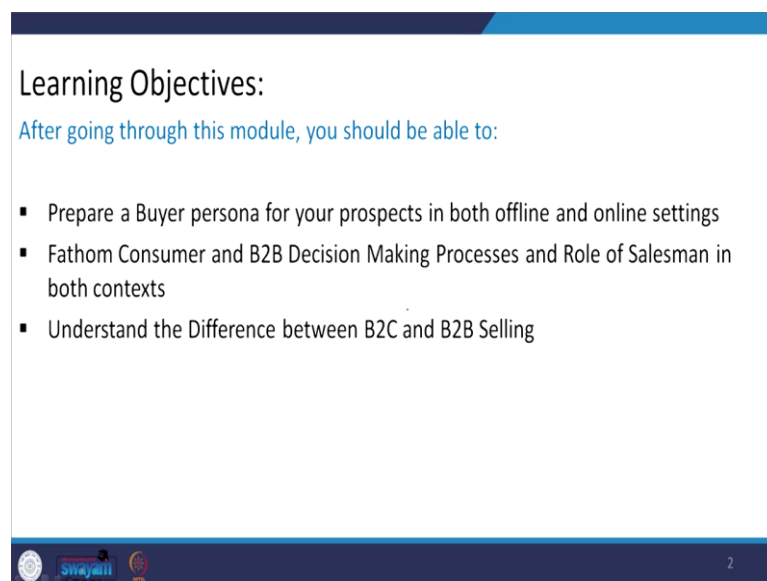
**Strategic Sales Management**  
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**Lecture - 17**  
**Buyer Persona and Consumer and B2B Decision Making Processes Selling and Consumer Behaviour**

Welcome back everyone, today we will be beginning with the week 4 of the core Strategic Sales Management. If you remember in the last week, we precisely had a discussion about the key influences as per the Miller Heiman's approach, in which we have discussed starting from the buying influences to the sales funnel.

So, as far as today's session is concerned, we will be discussing about the Buyer Persona and Consumer and B2B Decision Making Processes. So, as far as this module is concerned; once we are done.

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**Learning Objectives:**

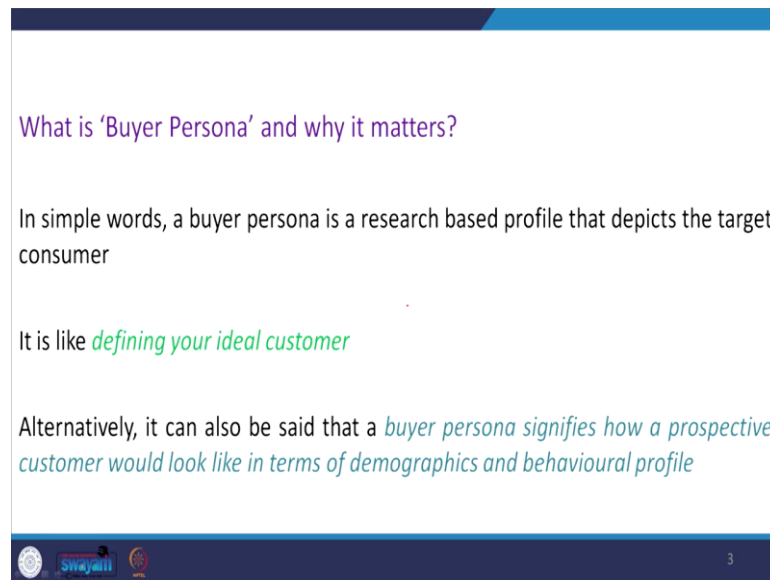
After going through this module, you should be able to:

- Prepare a Buyer persona for your prospects in both offline and online settings
- Fathom Consumer and B2B Decision Making Processes and Role of Salesman in both contexts
- Understand the Difference between B2C and B2B Selling

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You will definitely be able to prepare buyer personas for your prospects in both offline and online settings. Apart from that you will also be able to fathom consumer and B2B decision making processes and what is the role of salesmen in these processes and finally difference between B2C and B2B selling.

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What is 'Buyer Persona' and why it matters?

In simple words, a buyer persona is a research based profile that depicts the target consumer

It is like *defining your ideal customer*

Alternatively, it can also be said that a *buyer persona signifies how a prospective customer would look like in terms of demographics and behavioural profile*

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Now, when you start understanding the concept of buyer persona; if you ask me in a very simplistic way, we can say it is all about defining your target consumer. And even if you go back and look at the Millers Heiman's key influences or the factors that impact strategic selling, they had a factor called as building ideal customer profile.

So, buyer persona can be treated as synonymous to that, it is more about understanding whose your ideal customer is going to be and you start defining them in terms of; let us say if you start writing what will be their characteristics, you will precisely write their demographics like what is their income level, what is their gender, what could be their you know educational qualifications or what could be their marital status, whether they are single or married.

Because in some categories even this could make a difference; like let us say if Zomato and Swiggy are trying to identify their ideal customers, a major chunk could be those people who are single not married and living alone, because they might be into more of ordering the food online.

As well as you define their behavioral profile, which basically comes from the fact how they have been behaving actually with respect to their buying behavior, like if they went to a grocery store; how would their basket look like or what have been their actual preferences of the products and services which they have been buying.

Even when you talk about segmentation, the class of predictive segmentation which is actually built on the you know actual behavior of shoppers with respect to what they buy or what they consume. Even when you talk about recreational activities, what is it that they like most; you might have a certain category who could be more glued to OTT platforms and you might have a certain category who could be more into you know adventurous stuff or maybe you can say hiking trips or something like that.

So, the product requirements for these, even the sales effort or sales pitches are going to be entirely different. So, to put it in a very simplistic way, a buyer persona is a research based profile that depicts the target consumer. As I just said, it is more like defining your ideal consumer and alternatively we can also say that you know whenever you are preparing a buyer persona, you are going to attach utmost importance to their demographics and behavioral profile.

Now, one thing again which becomes important is why do we actually need to understand buyer personas or maybe in other words we can say why do they matter. If you ask me personally, primarily it has only been in digital domain; because see you might have a certain consumer who could be you know an ideal target if you are talking about their preferences, which could be more aligned with let us say LinkedIn.

You might have someone who could be more aligned with respect to Facebook if you want to reach out to them, like someone could be more suitable on Instagram. Suitable as in not with respect to what they prefer, for the product which we want to pitch them; like for more of recreational products or let us say the products which are very high on aesthetics. Let us say a branded apparel we would more prefer to reaching out to people who are on Instagram, rather than people who are on LinkedIn, right.

Maybe you come up with a specific product category let us say which is only suited to CEOs or it is of for very elite class or very expensive, in that case LinkedIn might work. So, this is another thing which we need to understand that buyer personas primarily matter; because they help you to one prepare effective content strategies for your targeted audience or maybe coming up with content, which could be very effective for the target audience and it helps you identify your profitable prospects or customers.

As again I would say we had primarily discussed about the ideal customer profile, which in sales or strategic selling is always prepared after taking account of your most

profitable customers; you look at their key characteristics and then you try to map the others which could be included as the part of in the funnel or who do you think are going to be profitable in long term and will help in creating a win-win situation.

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**Why Buyer Personas matter?**

Helps you personalize and assist in designing effective content strategies based on highly targeted content

Provides basis for targeting profitable prospects/ customers

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Now, as we move forward, we will definitely look at certain factors which could be more aligned with buyer personas in selling.

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**How Buyer Personas can be truly beneficial for Salespeople?**

- Helps them understand the prospects and customers on a deeper level, you learn why your customers buy?
- Helps in identifying unique pain points
- Customized phone calls, face to face interactions and presentations
- Helps in training sales team effectively
- Saves precious selling time
- Increases win rates and sales conversions, Assists in appealing different type of customers
- Helps in better understanding of the prospects and customer's motives

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So, how buyer personas can be truly beneficial for sales people? So, the first is they help you understand prospects and customers on a deeper level; it is more like understanding

why is it that your customers buy, why they buy certain products in a way we can also put a cross like that. So, see when you have prepared a ideal profile of your customers, you are definitely going to dig deep what is it that motivates them to buy your products.

Then this will help you understand and devise strategies to preparing sales presentations that what is it that you include and what is it that you should not include or how you should be pitching them, maybe you can say what could be your unique selling proposition. Let us say if you have a certain prospect who is more fussy about pricing; then his whole discussion is going to be about that and your role as a sales person is also going to be making him understand how this product is going to be price friendly for you in long term, even when the initial investment could be high.

The other thing is when you prepare very concrete buyer personas after doing right kind of research and investing a lot time, it will again help you identify the unique pain points. Let us say prospect could be bothered about or a existing customers could be you know; maybe let us say they were in this problem and then they purchase your product right, then when you go ahead and pitch further prospects, this is something which is going to be very useful and beneficial for you.

As I was just telling you when you have understood your prospects or customers on a deeper level and you know their pain points; it is again going to help you a great deal even with respect to what you speak to them on phone, face-to-face interactions and definitely presentations. See if you remember the earlier sessions with respect to the presentation and demonstration part when we were understanding the sales process and if you recollect the objections part, you will understand how important this is going to be.

When you know your buyer personas very clearly, very concretely and in great depth; you will definitely also have an idea about what are the kind of objections that they might have and then you can handle them quite well or quite efficiently in your presentations. Now, the benefits are not just related to taking advantage of this information while pitching or selling products right, this is also going to help you a great deal in training the sales team better, right.

Let us say if you prepare a certain sales team, whose only going to maybe we can say interact with people who have a very high net worth; then one thing which we can prepare them for is making the clients feel special or the prospect feel special, if it is

going to be the first interaction or they have not purchased from us till now about making them feel special.

The other thing could be pricing may not be a pain point for them; so the focus has to be on giving them the best quality of services and eventually making them feel that it is only you that metaphor us or maybe you can say giving them an extra special treatment, because you know when it comes to the net worth, how this particular prospect or customer could be important for us with respect to our future selling propositions also.

Another thing is when you have understood who your ideal customer will look like; it is definitely going to help you exclude those people who may not be profitable in long term or with whom you will not be able to create a win-win situation. So, this is another benefit; because now you are only investing your precious selling time on people who you know are going to be a win-win case for you, then spending it on people who could be burdensome for an organization or who could just suck up the resources and may not contribute much.

And as in when you follow all these factors, it is definitely going to enhance your win rates, sales conversion and will also help you understand how you can appeal to different customers; because it is entirely going to be on the basis of different buyer personas or maybe when you are targeting different segments, you will be able to understand ok this is something which is going to work with this segment and this is something which is going to work with this segment and this might not work for these segments.

So, in a way you also understand what are the inhibitors that might not work for them or maybe you can say if you have this element; this could be a deal breaker, so something like that. And any way to put it or to sum up, we can say it eventually helps you understand your customer's motives well and this information again is going to be very beneficial for a sales person at different stages starting from when we start interactions with them.

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Now, what are the points you should keep in mind while creating buyer personas, even as a salesman your contribution is going to be very very high in that. So, the first is goal, this is more about understanding what is it that your prospect or customer is trying to achieve in life. Now, achieve in life this could be literal also or maybe you can give it a meaning which can be aligned with business.

Because when we are dealing with customers; if Myntra is thinking about sales, then they might also consider what is it that the person is trying to achieve in life. Let us say if he wants to be an influencer or he or she just wants to stand out in the crowd; then they might come up with more of products for them and sales pitches for them, which will have more of communication aspect, which may make them feel ok if you wear these clothes, you are definitely going to be noticed in that room or people are going to look at you or notice you something like that.

If you translate it into business aspect, you might have someone whose core objective or goal in life is to increase the production efficiency as far as their organization is concerned; then that buyer persona is going to have more aspect of that. You are also required to understand the psycho graphic profile; which simply means you will try to understand the activities in trust and opinions. Now, you might say how this is going to matter? I think I will give you one example which might put a lot of things in perspective, maybe we can talk about the opinion.

Now, you get this information, there are two segments of people right and they have this particular income level; let us say maybe 1.5 lakhs a month or may be more than that and you think of coming up with the restaurant for them if their population is quite high or the segment is quite notable in respect of future profitability, right.

Now, let us say you are wondering whether the restaurant is going to be a non-veg, veg or both with respect to the food items that you are going to have in your menu. Now, let us get to the opinion part and understand how this is going to make a lot of difference. Now, you have one segment who is more aligned towards veganism.

Now, just imagine how the food preferences are going to be very very different; you might even realize if the count of people who are more oriented towards veganism is very high and they are even willing to spend more or maybe beyond a certain price point, then you might consider them more profitable and you might go ahead with them.

So, the whole idea is about understanding; you might have people who could be very similar in different demographics, but their activities in trust and opinions could bring in a lot of different. Apart from that you are also required to understand their personal background like with gender they belong to, their age group; because see your consumption or your preference for products is definitely going to change with respect to which age group you are in.

Your occupation level, income level; income level as in if you have a higher segment of income, then that particular segment is definitely might be interested in buying products which are certain price point. Like let us consider the example of Chik shampoo; it was basically developed or kind of became popular for people who were not able to afford the expensive portals.

Apart from that their educational qualifications, their marital status all these things are again going to make a lot of difference. As I just gave you the example how for Swiggy or Zomato the people who are single could be a more often attractive target audience; because they know that people things are going to work more with respect to the number of orders that they might place in a day, in a week or in a month.

Apart from that you are also going to consider what is their contact preference, whether they prefer you know first that the appointment should be taken on call or you can reach



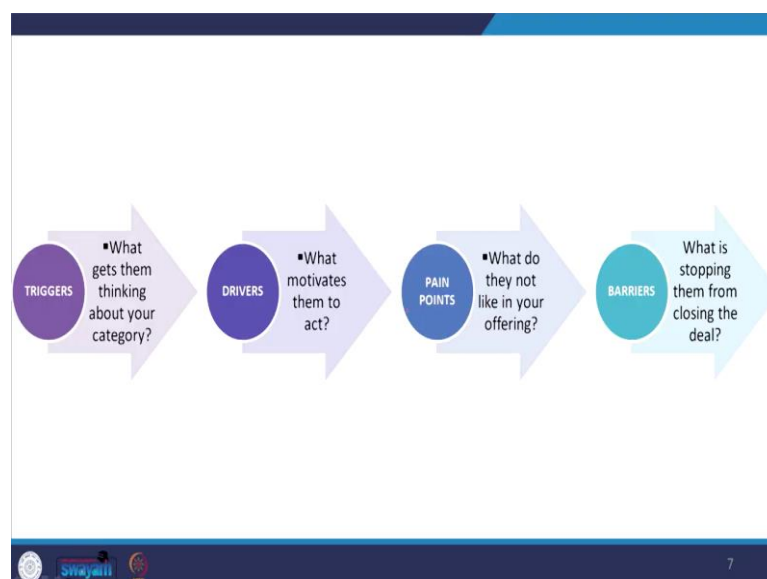
out to them on mail or maybe they would be preferring a personal visit and finally, what is their shopping preference offline or online; because in this case again the ways you reach out to them are going to be entirely very different.

In case of online, they might prefer buying on Instagram; then again everything with respect to what is your product category, what are the communication mechanisms that you are using are going to be entirely different with respect to the offline segment. The people who prefer purchasing offline, in a way also indicates they might have a preference for handling the product right; they may prefer ok I want to touch and feel the product.

Now, even if you have such customers, you know who might prefer purchasing online and they might have a very high need for touch; then for those customers we definitely need to build the platform where the product diagnosticity is going to be very high, then again virtual reality or maybe how they can look at products with respect to in 3 D formats it is going to be a solution.

And see even if you look at all these online platforms let us say Myntra, Amazon, Flipkart; now what they have started doing is, they have started putting product videos, they even encourage the buyers to put product videos in with respect to the comments where reviews are given, so that the people are able to see and evaluate the products in a better way. So, this is another thing which is going to make a difference.

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Now, apart from that, these are four factors which again you need to understand while building buyer personas triggers, what gets them thinking about your product category. Let us say if I ask you about food, then some and I then I tell you what is the first thing that comes to your mind; someone might say ok this restaurant comes to my mind, someone might say even Zomato and Swiggy, this again indicates how much they could be dependent upon ordering online right, drivers what motivates them to act.

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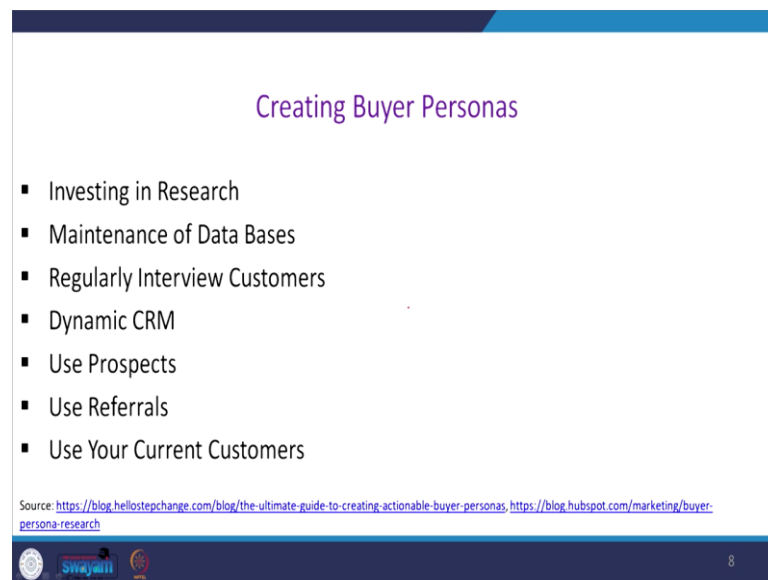
Now, when you identify what is it that motivates them to go ahead and buy a product? Let us say if you ask people who usually use iPhone right, they might say ok price is not something that stops them or inhibits them from buying an iPhone; they might say the services that the product offers or maybe high screen resolution or security of data the that it provides is going to be one of the drivers that drives me, right.

Then this information can again be used by the salesmen or maybe by the organizations in the integrated marketing communications that they have to pitch the prospects or customers. Then the third thing is when you are able to identify what they do not like in your product; one thing is you can work on them to kind of include those customers also into your prospects, otherwise you can come up with a better version who could be a little more improved.

The last is what is it that stops them from buying your product or closing your deal. Now, this is again one thing which you need to work on, because this in a way is going

to be very very beneficial for salesmen; let us say this could be a psychological barrier right, not something which is actual. Now, the sales person can use this information when they are interacting with prospects and customers and can definitely break this barrier, which can eventually be a way to towards closing the deal.

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So, another thing which you really need to understand is how you can actually create buyer persona; we are basically trying to understand this perspective from an organization stand point, like one thing is they should definitely be investing in research. They should try to kind of you know do a lot of interviews with their customers, even the past customers maybe let us say who left them or definitely the ones who are more profitable for them, so that they can know, these are their key characteristics and they can use them for further building buyer personas.

The other way could be maintenance of databases. See if you are recording each and every move of your customers or even the prospects, let us say who are taking a lot of time, asking you a lot of questions with respect to the offerings, your products and your services; this if this is regularly updated in databases, then this information again is going to be very beneficial for you in creating buyer personas.

Apart from that regularly interview your customers; ask them questions what is it you know that they like in the product, what is it that they like in the organization or even

what is it that made them buy the product with respect to competitors and now you can definitely think about the perspective how beneficial this is going to be.

Other thing is you should always have a dynamic CRM, which means that you should always encourage your sales people to update it regularly; it is not like in the last one year it has only been updated once or twice, then this information again it is not going to be very useful in kind of creating buyer personas.

Because see with time, with respect to let us say changing economic conditions or new competitors entering into the market; even changing social fabric or some technology which you are selling going obsolete, because competitor has come up with something which is very very advanced, things are definitely going to change for you also as a seller.

So, if your CRM is very very dynamic and it requires regular update of information, only then it is going to work. Apart from that use your prospects, the current prospects that sales person is kind of interacting with; try to get an idea about ok what is it that stops them from buying or what is it that they like you know in the current offering or how even this can be improved.

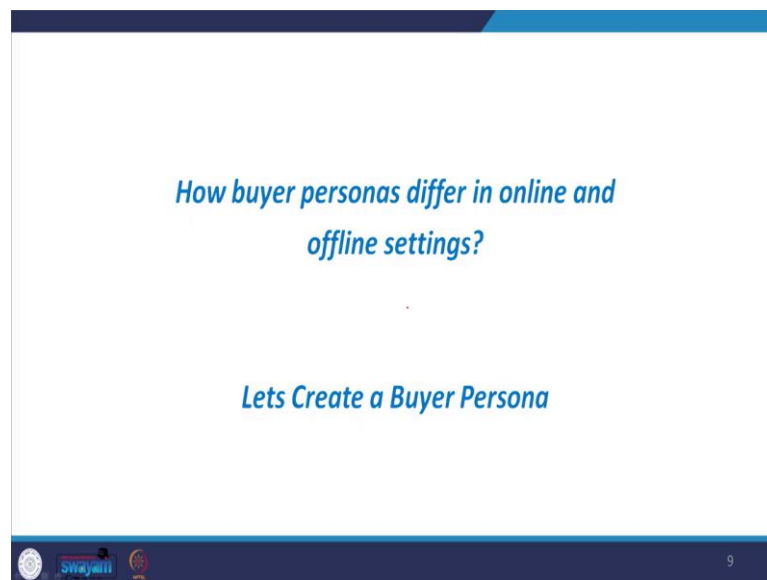
Now, this will also help you in creating buyer personas. Use referrals, the party which you were interacting with he knew someone in the same industry, who was a kind of a prospect for you; go and interact with them, use different referrals, meet different people and try to find out what is it that is working for your offering. And you are also required to sketch a profile of your buyers of prospective buyers with respect to how much profitable they can be, right.

Because see you worked out on a profile; but later on you realized everything is on point that deals are being closed on time rather faster, but the profitability is very very low. Now, this again is something which is not going to work for you right and finally, use your current customers specially the ones who are profitable; because the whole idea of creating a buyer persona is you are trying to create an ideal customer profile with respect to demographics, behavioral information, but keeping profitability in mind.

As I just told you if you are making a lot of tails and that too they do not turn out to be profitable in long term; this is definitely a bad business for you as well as your

organization, right. So, this is another thing which you need to keep in mind; a buyer persona should be you know identifying the characteristics of someone who is profitable for you or in a way as we have been talking in technical language with whom you are able to create a win-win situation, if not now currently definitely in long term.

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Now, another question which might trigger you is how buyer personas might differ in offline and online settings? See if you look at it from a very fundamental perspective, whether it is offline or online; the only difference which it might make is about their preferences with respect to the buying platforms right, someone might prefer placing the order online or through the mechanisms which is entirely online or someone might prefer we will come and take the product it want to be delivered in a different way something like that.

But buyer personas usually are very product specific right; you are trying to identify the ideal customer for your product or service or maybe whatever offering you have for the prospects of customers. So, this is one thing which you should keep in mind, it definitely is product specific. Now, you might have a product which could work more or maybe you know might work well in online settings; like let us say if you come up with the new apparel brand, right.

And you might not prefer opening the stores in different cities, because you know that it is definitely going to be a lot more costly and you might not even touch up those profits

or might not even touch breakeven point in the initial years or months or days no matter how you want to look at it.

In that case you might prefer ok, let us first launch it on Instagram or maybe let me start selling it through an online platform whether it is Myntra, Flipkart or Amazon. So, these things might make a difference, but you always have to be sure it is primarily going to be product specific. And even when you are looking at online and offline settings, then again will depend upon what is your product and the customer or the prospect. See if your customer is not having the skill set to place an order online, then again it is not going to work.

Let us say if an organization comes up with a specific product which is meant for senior citizens in India; when we know they might not have that skill set to look for information or buy that product online, things may not work. So, these are a few things which I want you to keep in mind.

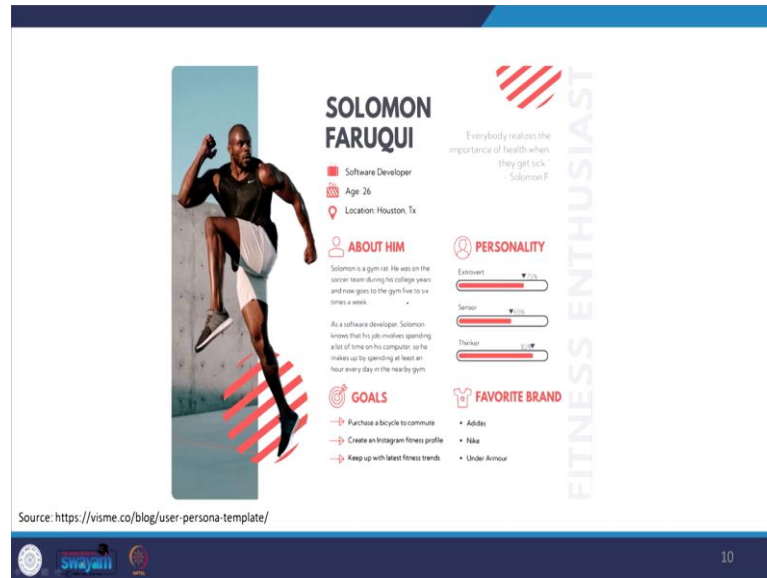
Apart from that let us work towards creating a buyer persona, maybe let us create it for someone as I have talked about it once or twice in ongoing session. May be if you are trying to let us say you come up with a competitor for Swiggy or Zomato; then how do you think your ideal customer will look like. See we might specify on the skill set to place orders online right; we will say ok the person definitely has a smartphone and has the consumer skills to place or does online, make payments and do all these things.

Apart from that you might also see their income level, then you might also see their marital status; as I was telling you if they are single, they might have more of you know in terms of numbers of orders place that could be more or you might also see the job demand. Let us say if you have someone whose job demands them to be from let us say 9 am to 8 pm or something like that; then in a way it also indicates they might have some kind of dependence maybe you know on these online delivery service providers.

Apart from that we also need to see their goal in life, because this again would differentiate what is it that you are going to pitch them on platforms. Let us say if the person is very very health conscious, then you will definitely try to come up with the menu for them which will keep all these factors in mind; like maybe let us say salads or something which is more healthier, whereas if you have someone who is more into junk food, you will definitely have that kind of palate for them.

So, these vectors are definitely going to make a lot of difference with respect to the audience or prospects that you are going to reach out with respect to selling your products.

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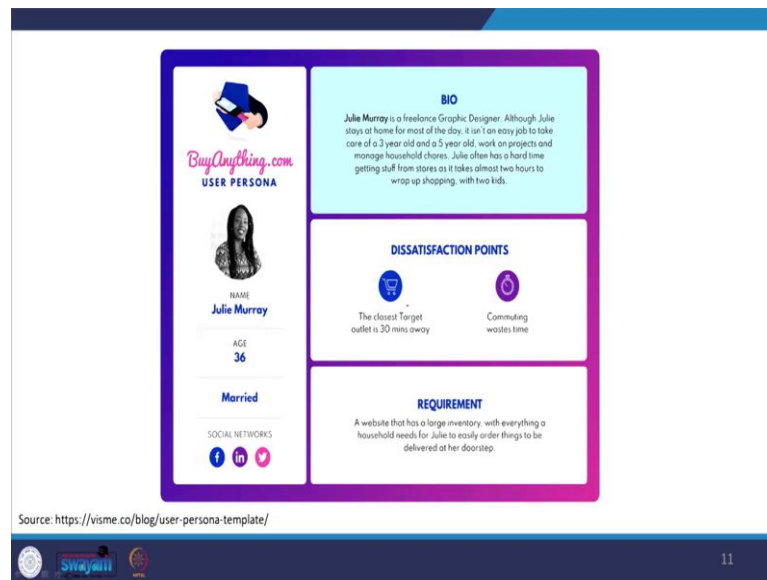


So, see maybe you can look at this buyer persona of a person Solomon Faruqui; what it says is software developer, age 26. Now, if you look at goals, it is to purchase a bicycle to commute, create an Instagram fitness profile, keep up with latest fitness trends, extroverts, sensor, thinker; these are the favorite brands. So, the point is this information definitely indicates that he is someone who is very health conscious.

Now, just imagine how companies can use this; specially those companies who are coming up with this online gadgets or maybe you can say these watches which also track fitness parameters. So, this is one thing where it can be used. Apart from that let us say if there is a particular brand which is trying to come up with options for you know very healthy breakfast or that kind of a product line or product range.

Now, these information again is going to be very very useful for them. Now, if you come up with the product which anyway could be very good in taste, but might have less of elements with respect to health; you definitely know that this particular buyer persona is not going to fit in that particular category.

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Now, look at the next snapshot which you can actually see on the screen which is of Julie M, 36, married; she is a freelance Graphic Designer and it also specifies that she stays at home for most of the day, it is not an easy job to take care of 3 year and 5-year-old. Now, see this anyway indicates; if you look at a buyer persona that she does not have time much time in the day, even when she is staying at home.

Now, if you look at the further information with respect to the dissatisfaction points; it is it says that if she has to commute it is a time wastage for her and the closest target outlet is 30 minutes. Now, she can be a very good you know prospective for all those apps who could commit ok we will be making 10-minute deliveries or faster deliveries and you do not even have to come to our stores or something like that.

See, so the whole idea of building a buyer persona is about checking what kind of people could be the best prospects for your product or services that you want to offer them. As a part of an assignment or maybe just to make you think more about it, maybe you can take any particular product idea which could be futuristic and then you can start working on the buyer persona for that.

If you are interested, you can also share that with us or maybe put it across the forum and we will be definitely happy to read about it. But to sum up, buyer personas are very essential not just in sales, but even for companies who are into different businesses; because it eventually helps you understand who is going to be profitable for you in long



term precisely and only when it is prepared after doing the right kind of research or maybe deeply understanding the profiles of your most profitable customers.

Now, when you look at it precisely from sales, it is definitely going to help them design best of their sales pitches and when they are going from demonstrations, it will also help them understand what is it that they should present as their unique selling proposition and what is it that they should kind of down play or what is it that they should try should not come up across as the bigger, maybe you can say discussion point if it is not much related with the buyer persona.

So, as far as this session is concerned, I really hope you found it quite enriching and interesting; specially with respect to understanding the part of buyer personas and how they can make more of an impact with respect to the sales dynamics. So, as we move forward or maybe in the next session, we will be definitely talking about the consumer and B2B decision making processes.

So, thanking you for now.