

Mentor Sheet Module 3

Helping Teens Identify the Ideal Customer

Today your teen will begin defining their ideal customer. We will be calling this person, their 'new friend.' We want to set the patterns early that tell them that their customers are friends that need to be taken care of when they do business. Your teen will need your guidance a lot on this part of their project unless their customer is a similar age. This is where your experience comes in handy as you guide your teen to notice things about their ideal customer. Don't do it for them, but help them as they search online to define their ideal customer.

I would suggest sitting along with them as they research blogs. You may notice things that go unnoticed by their untrained eyes. Since this is their 'ideal' customer, they should have a good idea of what this person is like. They should notice patterns and colors pretty quickly, but if they don't point out similarities to them. It is exciting when they start noticing the patterns for themselves and the light bulbs start going off in their head.

What if my teen has a large 'pool' for an ideal customer? Take them back to their worksheet and ask them to focus on ONE age grouping . . . "to start." Ask them who would be MOST LIKELY to buy, a male or a female? You want to gently guide. If their target market is too big, it will be hard to focus their business and many of the upcoming steps will be frustrating. To help this process, make sure they have clearly answered all of the checked off sections in the "defining my new friend" questionnaire.

What if we can't find a blog that relates to my teen's business idea? Look at other webpages. Scour the internet to find out where this type of person may hang out online. Would they go to certain magazine pages (remember your research from module 2)? Look around online to find pages the best represent the ideal customer.

What if we can't find a picture? It is OK. Having a picture keeps the idea firm in your teen's mind. It is a visual reminder. You can look for photos online, in magazines, or even in comics. A visual image just helps your teen keep the customer in mind. Teens tend to think better if they can visualize so do your best to find something that is representative of their ideal customer.

What if my teen can not define their ideal customer? Ask them questions like, "If you create your product and put it in a store, who do you imagine would be the first person to pick up your product and buy it? If your service was being offered and you put up flyers, who do you imagine would pick up those flyers and call you? If you had to sell your product to only one person, who would it be?"

What if my teen gets stuck? Sometimes, you can base your ideal customer on someone your teen knows. Look around your neighborhood, and go talk to one of your neighbors. Hopefully, your teen is thinking outside of your neighborhood and have started deciding how they can make a difference in the world around them, but you have to keep pace with where your teen is. Don't get ahead of them or it will be frustrating to them. Also, don't talk down to them. Teens have a way of picking up on our tones in what we say.

What if my teen is not getting into the research or the bio? Take into consideration who your teen is. Have fun with this step. They can make up a song. They can go to the mall and people watch. They can surf through TV channels or youtube videos to find someone who fits their ideal customers. The key is to get them aware of people around them and who might want to buy from them. You can even help write a diary/journal entry with them and even make it a funny day. Start with the ideas from "defining your new friend" on their page and start with this line: "A funny thing happened to me today..." Then, create a fun crazy day that your ideal customer may have had. Did they get caught in the rain, on a train, foot stuck in a drain . . .