They Get Me: How to Sharpen Your Publishing Strategy with Personas

Presented by Bates Creative

Amanda McCarthy, Director of Marketing
Danielle Moore, Content Strategist, Copywriter
PERSONAS (n.):
Semi-fictional characters who represent the various drivers, values, goals, challenges, and behavioral patterns among a brand’s target audience segments.
Personas: Why Do You Need Them?

Personas help create alignment throughout your association by helping all departments understand what it takes to delight each member group.

**Personas can help improve member your:**

- Acquisition
- Engagement
- Retention
- Satisfaction
IT’S OK TO HAVE MULTIPLE PERSONAS — IN FACT, YOU PROBABLY SHOULD!

They provide associations with key insights needed to create content and experiences each member persona craves and keeps them coming back for more.
HOW TO GET STARTED
Bates Creative’s 5-Step Persona Development Plan

1. **Define Your Purpose:** this will help determine if you’re profiling current members or prospective audiences

2. **Conduct Audience Research:** primary, secondary, demographics, psychographics

3. **Extract Themes from Data:** review and distill all research into patterns and themes — this will take time!

4. **Build Out the Persona Profiles:** the who, what, why, and how

5. **Put Your Personas into Action:** use them, share them, evolve them
LET'S GET STARTED
Persona Development Workshop
And Without Further Ado, We’re Proud to Introduce:

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CARNIVALS
The American Association of Carnivals: **Background**

**Brand Guide**

**Mission Statement**
To promote the safety and excitement of carnivals for families of all generations across America.

**Vision Statement**
To provide an innovative and entertaining modern carnival experience that keeps the carnival legacy alive.

**Brand Pillars**
Safety, Fun, Community, Innovation

**Members**
Amusement companies and providers
Carnival staff
Ride safety officials
Food vendors
Performers

**Member Benefits**
Publishes a monthly print newsletter: The Carnival Circular
Publishes a quarterly magazine: Carnival Times
The American Association of Carnivals:

Challenges

**Industry Challenge:**
There’s a decline in popularity of carnivals among American consumers who believe carnival entertainment is outdated and unsafe.

**Organization Challenge:**
There’s a decline in membership due to the rapid closure of carnival-related businesses.
Step 1: Define Your Purpose

Refresh the American Association of Carnivals’ publishing efforts to better provide members the information they need to regain customer trust and attract the next generation of carnival customers.
# Step 2: Conduct Audience Research

## Demographics

- **70% male members**: represent amusement companies as CEOs, carnival staff, and ride safety officials.
- **30% female members**: represent amusement companies, food vendors, and performers.
- Members typically in their late 30s through early 60s.
- 40% of membership are amusement companies & providers with a $50,000 marketing budget.
- Amusement companies and providers create independent contracts with carnival staff, food vendors, performers, and ride safety officials.
- 55% of members are from the Midwest U.S.

## Psychographics

- One of the largest values for members is creating connections for employment.
- Members want to know how to market the carnival experience in a modern way to positively draw families to carnivals.
- Right now, members feel like the quarterly publication doesn’t offer a strong value in defining a modern carnival experience. They want to learn how to shape the public’s perception of carnivals.
- Many members don’t have marketing experience, but need to market/promote carnivals in a positive way that shifts the growing negative perception of carnivals in America.
- 63% of members prefer to consume digital content over print to accommodate their busy, traveling lifestyles.
Step 3: Extract Themes

- A majority of AAC’s membership are male amusement company decision makers, specifically CEOs.
- Changing perceptions is a marketing effort, but amusement companies don’t know how to maximize their marketing budgets ($50,000/year) to create an impact.
- CEOs have limited marketing knowledge and don’t know what it means to be innovative and modern, specifically through digital channels.
- CEOs tend to skew more senior, and have a deep understanding about the carnival industry and operations.
- Because AAC’s publications aren’t sharing timely and relevant content to members, members are still unsure about how to modernize the carnival experience.
- A majority of members are driven professionals who want to foster a positive, safe, and fun carnival experience for customers, but don’t know how to communicate this through specific channels.
Step 4: Build Out the Primary Persona Profile

At this stage, you can name your persona to keep track of them. Let’s fill in the details!

**The Who**
- **Background**
- **Key demographics**

**The What**
- **Goals:** Primary? Secondary?
- **Challenges:** Primary? Secondary?

**The Why**
- **Common Objections:** Why would/wouldn’t they renew their membership with the association?

**The How**
- **Marketing Messaging:** How should you position the value of the association? Through which channels?
Step 5: Put Your Personas into Action

Use them! Craft your content, publishing, and marketing strategies with your personas in mind.

Share them! Send your persona profiles to other departments within your organization & share them with vendors/partners.

Evolve them! Be prepared to keep the pulse on your personas and continuously evaluate them so you always have an accurate reading on your audience.
Step 5: Put Your Personas into Action

How can the American Association of Carnivals rejuvenate its publications to better align with the primary persona’s interests, values, and drivers?

What type of content do they need? (i.e. new magazine content sections, high-level content categories, how else should the association share content with members?)
TIME TO SHARE
QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

AMANDA MCCARTHY
Director of Marketing
Bates Creative
amanda@batescreative.com

DANIELLE MOORE
Content Strategist, Copywriter
Bates Creative
danielle@batescreative.com