

FIND YOUR IDEAL CLIENT



NEW VA ADVICE

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About the Author

Alicia Jay started her journey as a work-at-home mom due to life's crazy twists and turns. In a bad economy, she found herself laid off and pregnant. She developed her own virtual assistant business, [Transcription e-Services](#), specializing in general transcription. She quickly gained the trust and respect of her clients and created a [training program](#) to teach others the skill of general transcription.

Alicia shares her journey at [newVAadvice.com](#) in the hopes of helping other women interested in the virtual assistant industry who want to work from home, make a living, spend time with their families and schedule their work around their lives.



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The “Why” and “How” of Identifying Your Target Market

When you start your virtual assistant business, you are ready and eager to start bringing in those clients. But who exactly are they? Who needs your services and who do you want to work with?

Answering these questions is very important and should be the first step in your marketing efforts. You want to try and narrow down a target audience as best you can. Here’s a question that often comes up once people hear this:

“Won’t narrowing down my target market limit who I can work with and how much money I can make?”

No! In fact, it will help you streamline your marketing efforts when you know who you’re speaking to. You will be able to write your website and blog copy geared towards this specific person. It will help you to think like them and understand the reason that they need your services.

You can focus in on their **pain point** in their business and how you can alleviate that for them. If you work with a specific group of people, you will quickly **become an expert in your field** for that group of people. You will be providing them with **exactly what they need**. They will come back to you repeatedly and refer you to others in your target market.

Let’s work with some examples. Choosing “online business owners” may be a bit too broad of a target market. What kind of online business owner? Have you already worked with a particular kind of client and find that you really enjoy that? You can choose more than one but you don’t want to go with ten.

Let’s say that you narrowed it down to speakers. What’s a pain point that you could alleviate for them? Well, speakers are good at speaking but they often don’t enjoy writing. And they still need the written word in their line of work. Maybe they really hate writing or they always feel stuck when they sit down to write. Perhaps you offer writing services in your virtual assistant business. Now you want to think of ways that your writing skills could help speakers. Here are a few ideas of things that you could do for them.

- Create web copy
- Write blog posts
- Craft social media updates
- Take care of their ezine

Now think about the *benefits* of those services.

- Saves them time- they can focus on their speaking
- Website presence/ social media/blogging reaches their ideal target market, attracting new clients, increasing their business and income

Those are just a few quick ideas. What do those things have in common? They save the speaker **time** and **make them more money** thus alleviating two big pain points with your offered services.

Remember, just because you choose a particular target market doesn't mean that's the only type of client that you will work with. It just helps you to focus and know who you're marketing to so that you have some type of direction.

“What if I still don't really know who I want to work with? I'm new at this.”

That's okay. You still have a couple of options here. Start by choosing a field that you know something about, that you're very interested in or that resonates with you. You want to **enjoy what you do** so that means that you need to enjoy the clients you're working with! You can also search online to see who needs your services. You can use some keyword search techniques that are described in the next section on how to find your target market online.

To be honest, many transcriptionists just starting out feel it's best to take on any and all clients that come along. You might be thinking this way, too. You're eager to get started. You want to make some money. Then get started with the market you'd like to work with and see what kinds of clients you begin attracting. Test the waters. As you start to add different kinds of clients then decide if you want to narrow down your market further and the kind of work that you really prefer.

Over time, your ideal client will change as your business grows and changes. To be prepared for such re-evaluations, take note of who you are really attracting in your business. Who is asking questions, using your services and subscribing to your newsletter? Keep track of these things over time, note the patterns you see and use the information to your advantage when marketing to your ideal client.

Action Step:

Take some time to fill out this Ideal Client Questionnaire to help you narrow down your target market. Just click on the link below to grab it. This will really help you to flesh out your ideal client and then you can move forward with finding them.

[Ideal Client Worksheet](#)

How to Find Your Target Market Online and Offline

So now you've put some thought into who you want to work with and you've narrowed down a type of client. Where do you find them and how do you get them to notice you? First and foremost, you need to go where they are. You may find them online, offline or both places.

Offline

In-person networking really does work when looking to connect with your ideal client. However, you want to make sure that you're attending events that your target market is also attending. Otherwise, you could be spending a lot of time and energy with nothing to show for it. Start researching in your area to find out what kinds of groups or associations they may be a part of. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

- Attend your local **Chamber of Commerce** mixers and events. It's a good way to meet local business people. [Check this site](#) to find information about your local Chamber.
- Become a member of your local **BNI** group, Business Networking International. Get out there and network! Find your local group [here](#).
- Check your newspapers and online for local **business fairs and expos**. Find out the cost to set up a table for your business or just visit one with the intention of making connections with others.
- Speak to local groups like Kiwanis, Rotary or [Meetups](#) in your area about what you do and how it would benefit them. Speaking can sometimes be a bit intimidating but doing this will position you as an expert as well as gaining you a little recognition.
- Investigate [HARO, Help A Reporter Out](#), and pitch a great story about your business. It just might be picked up by the press!

And don't forget, when meeting people in person, you'll want to be sure to have business cards or brochures to share. You can have these printed inexpensively through sites like [Vistaprint](#).

Online

You'll want to spend some time researching to discover where your target market hangs out online as well. As a new virtual assistant, you may feel overwhelmed with all of the different social media avenues and online groups out there. This is where some research comes in. You want to define where exactly you can reach your ideal client and focus on those avenues first and foremost. There are some free tools that can help you do this.

[Google Alerts](#) is a great free tool that you can use to learn about your target market. You can go into Google Alerts and set up searches for certain keywords pertaining to your ideal client. Let's go back to our example of speakers. You can save searches for keywords like "professional speaker", "giving speeches" or "public speaking."

Then you can save those keyword searches in Google Alerts and a summary email will be sent to you each day. Google will find those keywords anywhere on the internet, whether it's a website, blog, forum or group, and provide you with a link to where that keyword was found. This will really help you to learn about your target market. You can find out what they're talking or blogging about, what's important to them and what others are saying about them.

Tip: Play around with these keywords to make sure that they will really yield the results that you want before you save them. You can always change them as you go.

You can do the same thing and set up keywords for the services you provide and related words. This will help you to find out what's being said about our industry and how people are searching for virtual assistant services online. I'll remind you again to make sure that the words you choose to save in a Google Alert will really be relevant. For example, saving the phrase "social media" can yield articles about every social media topic under the sun. Instead, use something like "social media management."

You'll also want to search for your target market on social media sites such as [Google+](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). I know, this seems like a daunting task as there are so many of them out there. Trust me when I say it will be worth your time to figure out which sites your clients frequent. As we mentioned in the beginning, you want to go where they are. It will actually save you time in the long run. Once you find out which sites they like, that's where you can focus on creating your own social media accounts.

For example, let's say that you discover that speakers are hanging out primarily on Google+ and LinkedIn. Now you know that you want to set up an account for your business on Google+ and LinkedIn to connect with them there.

Tip: Don't fall into the trap of thinking you need to start out on every single social media network out there. Start with those one or two places where your potential clients are and

focus in on them until you are really comfortable with how to use those sites to connect with your audience.

Performing keyword searches on these sites is usually pretty simple. They all have some type of search box where you can enter your keywords and see what comes up. There are tons of different tools for searching on Twitter in particular. One that we've found to be really helpful is [SocialOomph](#). With a free account, you can set up a keyword tracking alert. Much like Google Alerts, it will email you a daily digest of your keywords mentioned in any Twitter conversation.

Groups and forums are also great places to find your target audience. Some of these may pop up in your Google Alerts searches. Find out which ones your target audience is active in and get yourself in there. You don't need to belong to 50 different groups. Just focus in on a couple so that you can connect with potential clients. LinkedIn is really big on groups so that's a good place to search.

We've covered why it's important to define your target market, how to do so and where to find them. I hope that you've found this information helpful and that it really helps you to get your virtual assistant business off the ground.

What Next?

- ✓ [Check out the blog](#) for free info about marketing and getting clients.
- ✓ Grab the [Build it Big Marketing Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions on creating a marketing strategy that works for you and your business.
- ✓ Join the [Get New Clients 21 Day Challenge](#) and work with myself and your peers to step things up!