The Perspective Map

Your Starting Place for Product Development, Marketing, and Sales
A 10THOUSANDFEET TOOL BY TARA GENTILE
Why?

Businesses in the 21st century must be obsessed with their customers. The only way to leverage the #socialera for all its tools and potential is to know your customers inside and out.

We must reach beyond data to our understanding of our customers as living, breathing human beings. Human beings who are craving meaning, connection, and purpose in everything from the shows they watch on TV to the computers they buy to the socks they wear.

The good news is that we have this information readily available to us. We use it on a daily basis without even thinking about it. Each time we order coffee, strike up a conversation with strangers at the grocery store, or have dinner conversation with our partners.

It’s the information we use to make those interactions—in big ways and small—matter to the people we’re engaging.

And that’s the heart of marketing, sales, and product development today. You’ve got to make your message matter.

Your prospects are bombarded with marketing messages and calls for attention every time they log on Facebook, check their email, drive their cars, or walk down the street.

If you message doesn’t matter, no one will care. And your product will sit on the shelf indefinitely.
But, if you can craft a message that matters, something that appeals at a fundamental level to the people you’re trying to reach, you can create a product that sells itself, a marketing campaign that spreads virally, or a sales process that closes almost every deal.

The information I’m referring to—and the source of your “message that matters”—is social information. Your social brain computes an immense amount of data every time you have an interaction with a prospect, a client, or a colleague. It’s that information we’ll use to craft your Perspective Map and discover insights that allow you create killer products, marketing campaigns, and sales processes.

The Perspective Map has been my go-to tool with clients and in my own business for years. Hundreds of my clients and now thousands of my community members have used this tool to discover insights about their customers’ minds that change the way they approach their businesses. It’s a brief—but powerful—exercise in design-thinking and empathy. It allows you to see the problem you’re trying to tackle from the customers’ point-of-view. It’s a way of extracting the social information your brain stores about the people your business is working to reach.
When?

I get out The Perspective Map whenever I’m curious. That curiosity could be the first indication that a new product or service is looking to emerge. It could be a problem that I’ve identified for my clients that I want to figure out how to solve. It could be a behavioral pattern I see over and over again.

Maybe you’ve identified a marketing angle that seems like it just might work. Or you’ve hit upon a frustration that—if alleviated—would make your customers loyal for life.

Get The Map out and start recording what you know.

I started using this tool with clients when I realized that one of the greatest difficulties that idea people have when creating products and marketing angles is to understand why those ideas would actually matter to the people they want to reach with them. As it stands now, your ideas matter to you. But why do they matter to your customers?

If you’ve ever created something only to see it fall flat, for your prospects to not understand how completely awesome it is, you’ve experienced this problem.

And on top of the blow you take personally when an offer falls flat, often you see this as a reflection on you or your ideas when it is not. It’s just a reflection on how you communicated or positioned that product or idea.

Successful product creation and marketing—and, in fact, the vast majority of business management—is communication. The Perspective Map is the tool you use to ensure your communication is grounded in what truly matters to your
customers because it allows you to have an understanding of what really looks like, sounds like, and feels like for your customers.

The good news is it’s super-simple, which is not to say it’s super-easy. And, The Perspective Map is a tool you can use over and over again. I’ve pulled it out at least 3 times in the last 3 months, each resulting in huge success. You’ll find yourself integrating it into your creative process as you get better and better at using it.
How?

Consider what you’re curious about in your business today. Is it a problem your clients face? A desire your prospects are chasing? A frustration that just doesn’t seem to go away?

Choose one thing you’re curious about and hold it in your mind through this process.

Your next goal is to record the observations and inferences that you’ve made about your ideal client in each of the 4 categories you see on the Map: Say, Do, Think and Feel. I find that it helps to consider 1-3 specific people, not just a profile of who your ideal client might be.

The Perspective Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAY</th>
<th>DO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THINK</td>
<td>FEEL</td>
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Say and Do are things you should be able to readily observe. You can scan social media or your email to find instances of your customers saying or doing things that pertain to the particular thing you have in mind. When you consider the “Say” and “Do” categories, take your own business out of the equation. Instead of thinking about what your customer is saying or doing about this problem or desire with you, consider what your customer is saying or doing about it with her spouse, colleague, business partner, or family member.

If you’re struggling here, it’s helpful to pose social situations where this topic might naturally come up. If you run a dating service, you might consider what your customer is saying to her girlfriend over coffee the day after a date. If you run a health coaching practice, you might imagine what your client is saying to his wife over dinner. If you sell business products, you might consider what your client is saying to his manager in the weekly meeting.

In the age of social media, this has never been easier. You now have access to many people who fit your ideal client profile through Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and other social networks. You can create both a verbal and visual idea of what your customer is saying or doing about any frustration or desire.

To help you out, I’ve done a sample Perspective Map for an imaginary branding & website service.
# The Perspective Map

(Example: Branding & Website Service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say</th>
<th>Do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- My readers seem to love my blog, but no one ever buys.</td>
<td>- I avoid giving out business card.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- I’m not getting the kinds of customers I really want to work with.</td>
<td>- I tell long stories instead of clearly introducing themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Well, I have a website, but it doesn’t really reflect what I’m doing right now.</td>
<td>- I spend too much time answering questions from prospects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I’m struggling to sell to a dwindling list of leads.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Think</th>
<th>Feel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Why do people always ask the same questions in email? I hate how long it takes to close a sale.</td>
<td>- Frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I don’t look as professional as others in my market.</td>
<td>- Excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I just wish my prospects had a been understanding of what I can do for them.</td>
<td>- Unclear</td>
</tr>
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Next, we’ll tackle “Think” and “Feel.” This is where you need to trust yourself and allow your social brain to open up, unlock, and do its thing. What’s happening below the surface? You know what your prospects are saying and doing—but why?

What emotions are fueling their actions? What internal scripts are guiding their speech?

If you feel yourself getting frustrated on any part of this Perspective Map, take a moment and do it for yourself. Think about a product or service you purchased recently and why you bought it. Consider what you were saying, doing, thinking, and feeling in the lead up to that purchase.
Perspective Map Pre-Work

1. My customer is considering how to:

2. The customer that best represents this desire is:

3. Other solutions my customer has tried include:

4. My customer often has conversations about this desire with:
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The Analysis

Once you’ve completed the Perspective Map, you can reengage your analytical brain. Consider:

- Which feelings lead to which actions?
- What thoughts lead to what sayings?
- What are the consequences of the actions that your most valued clients take?
- What thoughts would you like to re-program for your ideal clients? How would you like to do that?
- How would you like your ideal clients to feel instead?

You want to try to connect as many dots here as possible, because that’s what the framework is setting you up to do. You’ve brainstormed all of this out, and now you’re going to take that brainstorm and start connecting dots. Look for those pieces that you can pull together. Rely on your experience, expertise, and social understanding to understand what’s happening below the surface so that you can construct a product, marketing campaign, or sales process that really matters.

This Perspective Map can lead to all sorts of ideas for content, marketing, sales conversations. It can take where you are right now and bump it up to a whole new level and pull you out of the crowd of your market, allowing you to stand apart for the right people.
About Tara Gentile

Tara Gentile is a customer-obsessed business strategist for microbusiness owners. She’s the founder of Kick Start Labs, a micobusiness community and resource library, and the founder of CoCommercial in Astoria, OR, a coworking and education space for independent thinkers.

Find out more at taragentile.com.
Follow her on Twitter: @taragentile