

## Creating Audience Personas

### The Story Cycle Interview Outline

Use the following outline to understand, appreciate and empathize with your customer and the journey they are on relative to your brand offering. Then you will align your customer journey points with the proper brand stories to communicate your value proposition and connect your shared values.

**STEP 1: Backstory:**

Explain where your customer has been, where they are now, and where they want to go.

**STEP 2: Hero:**

Describe the demographic and psychographics of your customer.

**STEP 3: Stakes:**

Determine what is important to them both personally and professionally, and consider how your offering will help them achieve what they want. Consider where your audience is along the [Adoptive Curve Scale](#): Innovator, Early Adopter, Early Majority, Late Majority or Laggard.

**STEP 4: Disruption:**

Detail what has or is going to change in their environment to turn their ordinary world upside down and make your offering more relevant than ever.

**STEP 5: Antagonists:**

Identify who and what stands in their way - including their own internal dragons - of adopting, using and evangelizing your offering.

**STEP 6: Mentor:**

Outline how your brand's position, promise, personality and purpose will help your customer achieve what they want.

**STEP 7: Journey:**

Portray how you anticipate the journey will unfold for your audience, how they will overcome their obstacles, what short-term success looks like, and how they will be empowered by your offering.

**STEP 8: Victory:**

Describe what initial success looks like through the eyes of your customer.

**STEP 9: Moral:**

Define what your customer values and how they will connect with the shared values of your brand.

**STEP 10: Ritual:**

Describe how your customer will interact with your offering now and in the future to create a lasting brand bond, ritual and evangelism.

## Example:

# Audience Persona

**Backstory:** Sam is the founder and CEO of a seven-year-old healthcare technology firm that he started in a co-working space, which has grown to 30 employees now headquartered in his own 10,000 square foot building. Business has been brisk, but as they emerge as a mid-market tech company, Sam knows that the organization, while focusing on expert delivery of their product and customer service, have neglected defining their brand story and aligning it with their employees and customers. Therefore, he has urgency to create a brand narrative to spur the next level of growth for his organization.

**Hero:** Sam is 37 years old, married and the father of two kids active in sports, with some reluctant piano lessons scheduled in, because the arts are important, too. In fact, he believes coding is a blend of art and science to unlock the potential of users. He is a driven entrepreneur who analyzes every business move, and requires a lot of data and proof in his decision making. He runs four times a week, meditates occasionally, and eats healthy, because he knows it's good for him and he feels it's important to model healthy behavior throughout his organization and industry.

**Stakes:** While focused on outstanding product delivery and fastidious customer service that have led to growing sales, he feels the company is falling short because they have not clarified their brand story. Although an Innovator in some areas of his operations and personal buying habits, Sam is more of a late Early Adopter/Early Majority when investing in professional services for his company. For instance, he has just implemented leadership coaching after considering it for two years.

**Disruption:** Sam knows international growth means being more professional through all of their advertising, marketing and sales, but everyone in his organization seems to be telling their own story about the brand and its offering. If they are going to continue to double growth every year, he knows that he must unify the organization around one central brand story that they can all buy into and prosper from. And it must be accurately and powerfully reflected through all of their advertising and inbound marketing and sales.

**Antagonists:** As an analyzer, Sam has difficulty getting out of his own way to make a decision. He needs proof and recommendations from others before he will invest. He is also concerned about the resources required to get his brand story straight, but is starting to appreciate the importance of making the investment of time and money.

**Mentor:** Results of the epic growth clients have achieved through the Story Cycle process will be critical for Sam's decision to proceed. The systematic approach of the 10-step process with deliverables in each chapter demonstrating tangible progress is important to his analytical mind. Plus, the combination of Hollywood storytelling coupled with brand marketing plays to his art sensibilities.

**Journey:** Sam's awareness of the Business of Story platform comes from a referral. He will adopt the program by first doing a one-on-one session to vet the Story Cycle process, which may mean attending a one-day workshop. He may also use some of the free online storytelling tools to test the quality of the materials. He will then invite his leadership team into the process to develop the overall brand story, because building consensus in his organization is profoundly important to Sam. Appreciation will come following the workshop, and be evangelized once his overall brand story is created.

**Victory:** Sam will be inspired by the workshop and will look forward to getting his team involved in a process that he found and vetted for the company. We will celebrate the creation of their brand story by rolling it out to the organization with great fanfare. Our goal is to make Sam a vocal ambassador of the Business of Story platform and the Story Cycle process, which he will happily share with his peers and colleagues.

**Moral:** Sam values a proven, intentional process that is an enchanting combination of art, science and sales - a process that aligns his leadership, brand, employee and customer stories to deliver real results for his organization and people in a timely fashion.

**Ritual:** We will arm Sam with the story plans and tools to embed storytelling throughout his organization for the growth of his people and enterprise, while also providing the online portal of [businessofstory.com](https://businessofstory.com) for rich content around storytelling.