



Understand your audience

Customer Interview Guide



Advisory Services

Why is it important to understand your audience?

Schools that understand what their students and prospective students want and expect can work on designing the customer experience for increased loyalty and repeat business. The more often your students and their families engage with you, the more chances you'll have to create a positive experience and a strong relationship.

Listen to their feedback and offer sound advice, even if you have to refer them to another source on occasion.



Knowing your customer is essential for any business venture, and schools are no exception.

Successful education institutions understand what their prospective students want and how to make their program or service available in the most effective way. The breadth of knowledge is also important; knowing more than their names, ages, and incomes is required. Knowing your potential students' hobbies, tastes, and interests, as well as what they watch, listen to, and read, can give you a competitive advantage.

Understanding your prospective students' purchasing and learning habits is also critical as it will help you understand who is most likely to require or desire the program or service you offer and how they prefer obtaining it.



Tools to better understand your customer

Conduct Surveys

Surveys conducted online, through social media, by email, or in person, provide valuable insights. However, you should focus on creating a survey strategy that has defined objectives - paying close attention to what your school needs input or feedback on. Combining quantitative data responses and qualitative customer (student) feedback will give you the best insights.

Use Social Listening

Identify your followers and who they follow, as well as where they live. Keep an eye on their interests to find out what kind of brands they like and what keeps them engaged.

You can use social media analytics tools to gain key insights into your customers, such as understanding the impact of your messaging and what interests, engages, and inspires them.

Sentiment analysis

Based on the emotions detected in voice and text data, sentiment analysis uses artificial intelligence to identify opinions about a brand and institution, services, programs or products.

Speak with your recruitment and admissions teams.

Regularly communicating with the respective teams helps you identify and understand your students' and parents' pain points, complaints, objections, as well as your brand's attributes.

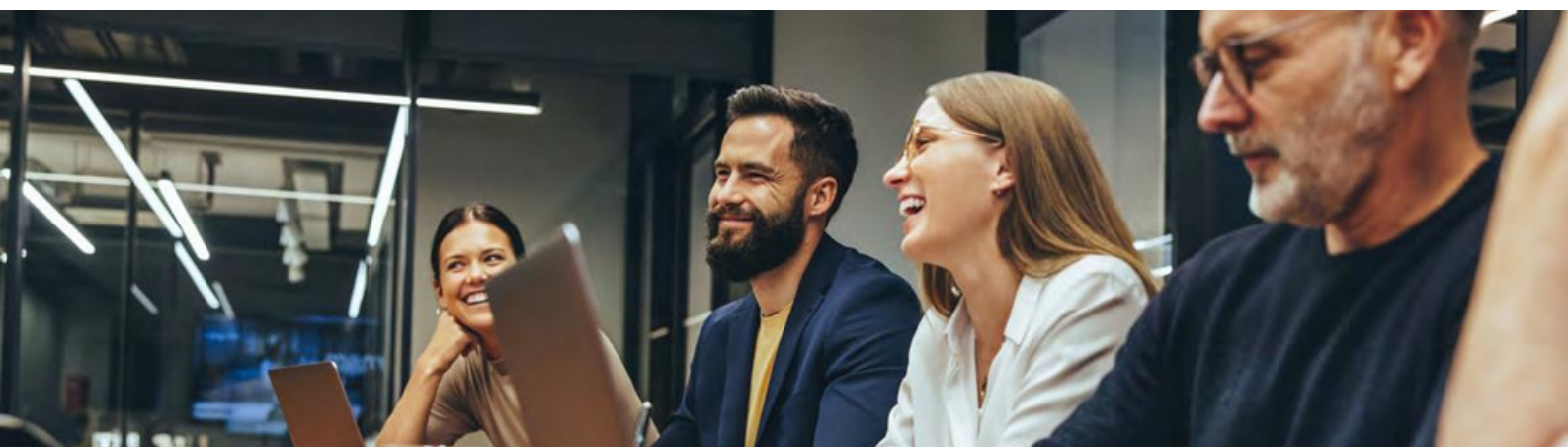
Test the customer experience

By following your students' touchpoints, interactions and transactions, you will gain insight into the routes they take and identify ways to simplify their lives at your institution delight them.

Customer Interview

Students (parents and alumni) interviews not only provide insight into where you can improve to stay current with trends, but they also function as a starting point for a genuine conversation.

With a live chat, for example, you can make it easy for people to share their opinions.



Check your team's knowledge



Checklist: Recruiters' Knowledge

- ☐ What types of prospective students do you typically meet? (Describe in details)
- ☐ Why do different types of students typically choose your field of education?
- ☐ What reasons do prospective students give you for selecting your school over a competitor?
- ☐ What are the most common objections about your school you hear?

Checklist: Marketing's Knowledge

- ☐ What information do you have about your website visitors?
- ☐ What are the phrases that prospective students search to reach your site?
- ☐ What is the most viewed content on your site?
- ☐ Where are your prospective students located?
- ☐ What are the most frequent questions you receive via email/chats/calls?
- ☐ What was the most and the least successful marketing campaign so far?
- ☐ What have you learned from customer surveys?
- ☐ What are students and alumni saying about your school?



Customer Interview Guide

Before you begin, it is important to provide some background information and outline the purpose of the conversation, as well as acknowledge and address any privacy concern that people may have.

- Select people with different roles and views target based on your persona. Select both existing and potential students (and their parents). Mix alumni, current and future students if feasible.
- Do the interview face-to-face if possible.
- Make interviews at least 30-45 minutes, but not much longer.
- Design your interview questions in advance and use simple language.
- Create a good environment: comfortable and relaxed.
- Start the conversation with a little small talk, it will help everyone feel more comfortable.
- Do less than 50% of the talking.
- Understand the interviewee state of mind by looking for a "Quote of the day" with each interview.
- Validate the customer problem you are trying to solve, not the product or service you are trying to sell.
- Focus on understanding your customer. Use different forums to discuss your ideas and solutions.
- Do not ask hypothetical questions and do not make guesses.
- Keep the questions as open as possible

Few things to remember

- Pay attention to body language and tone of voice.
- Record the interview in addition to taking notes.
- Be sensitive to privacy concerns. If customers are uncomfortable answering some of your questions - simply make a note and move on.
- Document all your interviews and send a follow-up thank you note.

We have put together sample Customer Interview questions in the following pages.

Make sure to adapt it, so you can collect the information relevant to your institution and audiences.

How to research a school's audiences?

Interview at least 15 students with a standardized questionnaire

ABOUT YOU
Age, country/city of residence before school, gender, secondary school attended
Do you have family members in the food / catering / gastronomy business / chefs?
What is your typical day like? What do you do for fun?
Where do you get news/informed? What do you watch?
What are your favorite social media and who you find most inspiring?
YOUR DECISION TO JOIN xxx
Where did you go/what did you do to get info about your future education?
What devices did you use most to research your future education/school?
Who did you ask for advice about choosing your studies? Who was part of the final decision?
What were your concerns before joining SCHOOL? What other schools/programs did you consider?
What did you type into Google when you were researching schools and programs?
How and when would you have preferred to be contacted by recruiters? (chat, email, phone.....)
How long did it take you to decide for SCHOOL since the 1st time you thought about further studies?
ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE
What is the best and the worst part of a typical day at SCHOOL?
What do you worry about? What are you most proud of? What are your top 3 dream activities?
What parts of SCHOOL makes you happy?
What would you like to do after graduation?





Customer Interview Question Bank

This document includes a collection of questions you might want to ask to learn more about your potential students and their decision-making behavior.

Note that not all questions might fit your institution or the purpose of your customer interview. Feel free to remove or add questions as you see fit.

Get inspired!



Demographics

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Age	Ranges: 10-12, 13-15, 16-19, 20-24, 25-29
Gender Identity	Use your judgement on whether to ask this one - politely ask if necessary
Location	Country, State, City, etc. if not already known
Education	High school diploma, Bachelor's degree, etc.
(Family) Income	Ranges: < 30k, 30-50k, 50-100k, >100k
Family Status	Single, Married, Divorced etc.
Job/Role	Prospective student, Parent, Alumni, Entrepreneur, Founder, Manager, Director, etc.
Company	Name, Size, Location, Website, B2B, B2C, Industry, etc.

Information & Technology

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What device do you use most and for what purpose?	
What social media platforms do you use?	
Where do you mostly search for information?	
Are you the type of person that eagerly awaits and updates to the latest technology as soon as it comes out or someone that waits?	
What publications, blogs or social media networks do you pay attention to?	
Do you belong to any social, professional or networking groups?	
Do you attend any events, conferences or trade shows?	
What information formats do you engage with the most (mobile, online, print, etc.)?	
How do you do your research on new products and/or services (internet, word-of-mouth, etc.)?	
How did you find out about our school/company/product/service?	
How do you prefer interacting with a school/brand like us? - when looking to buy	
How do you prefer interacting with a company/brand like us? - after you have purchased a product/service?	

Lifestyle & Influencers

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What matters most to you outside studies/work?	
What do you most enjoy doing to relax?	
Who are the people who most inspire you?	
When you plan to make an important decision who do you seek advice from?	
What are your favorite brands? What brands have you been loyal to over the years?	

Goals & Objectives

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What are the goals you are trying to achieve with your studies?	
Why are these goals important? What's at stake?	
What steps are you taking to achieve these goals?	
What are the biggest challenges that prevent you from achieving these goals? Why is it a problem for you?	
What help would you need to achieve your goals?	

Timeline

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What's prompting you to do start your future studies research?	
What is your timeline for making a decision?	
How long have you been researching schools?	
How soon would you be open to apply?	

Closing & Follow-Up

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What's the best way to communicate with you moving forward?	
Do you have any concerns I can address at this time?	



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