

Publics, Demographics & Segmentation

Steven R. Van Hook, PhD

Video: <http://wwmr.us/support/publics/Publics.html>

Among the most important aspects of any communications campaign is to first figure out who our targeted people are ... and then how we will try to connect with them.

Who Are Our Publics?

It all starts with defining: who are our publics? Among our publics may be anyone directly or indirectly affected by our efforts.

This includes the general public, shareholders, stakeholders such as our employees and their families, boards of directors, government officials with regulatory powers over us, the news media that cover us, the students who study us ...

Also among our publics are the clients and customers we serve, our global target markets, our friends, our allies, our enemies -- even our competitors might be thought of as a public since they may closely follow and respond to our actions.

As we pick out the most important aspects of our public's demographics, we're going to especially focus on dimensions of gender, age, and income level.

Significant Segments

Some significant audience segments including the

- Demographic Segment (including key measures of gender, age and income)
- Benefit Segment (what benefits do they gain from what we have to offer?)
- Occasion Segment (*when* do they tend to be interested in our message?)
- Usage Level Segment (are they high, mid or low quantity users?)
- Lifestyle Segment (are they active, sedentary, adventurous or homebodies?)
- Position Segment: (Do they offer hard support or soft support for a position, are they undecided, or in soft opposition, or hard opposition?)

Segmentation Labels

Marketers love to affix labels on to key segments, since it helps us in a quick phrase wrap our minds around the fundamental characteristics of a target audience we may be trying to connect with. Some of those segments can be summed up with a few descriptive terms such as ...

Cashmere and Caviar segment earning more than \$150,000 per year

Teens with Greens – in the 13-19 age bracket with more than \$75,000 per year to spend – perhaps they're living on a trust fund

Super moms – single women raising children on their own and earning more than \$55,000 per year

The dating game ... unmarried people between the ages of 18 and 34

And the prime DINK demographic ... meaning double-income households with no kids.

Benefits of Segmentation

Even faced with the dangers of oversimplification as we reduce complicated social structures and standing to a few pat segments, we may find there are efficiencies and profits to be gained since it is:

- Easier to get a handle on segmented targets with general descriptions.
- And there are fewer competitors in a well-defined segmented market.
- And we have a better chance to become a “supplier of choice” to a well-defined segment and thus earn larger market share and margins.
- And of course it helps us to custom design our message according to clear parameters