

Key steps to Defining your Core Customer

Pulled from [3HAG Way](#), Based on Robert Bloom's *Inside Advantage* and adapted for investment firms.

The goal of this exercise is to write a statement that clearly characterizes your core customer (or client). As an investment firm, you may need to do this by strategy if the core customer differs for each.

1. Start with a list of existing clients in the selected strategy. If your clients are businesses, include your main contact (or buyer). This should be a list of people, not businesses.
2. Add to this list your competitor's clients.
3. Of these clients you've identified, which are most valuable to your firm and why? Highlight these individuals.
4. Which additional clients would you like to add to this list?
5. Which clients are your highest priority? Put an asterisk next to any clients you wish to keep.
6. Looking only at these highest priority clients, do the following:
 - a. Define these individuals using two or three specific words or phrases.
 - b. What are their specific, individual traits or characteristics?
 - c. Why are they a high priority for you?
 - d. What makes them a good fit for your company's culture or specific product/service offering?
 - e. Does the team like working with these clients? Why?
 - f. At this point, list as much information about the client as you can, then pull it together in a definition that's about 20 words long. Your definition won't be perfect, but that's okay.
7. Come up with a list of 10 things that the core client you've identified desires.

*You may want to get insight from those on your team with the most client-interaction or spend the time to directly ask your clients.

**You may want to take it one step further to analyze whether your highest priority clients are profitable.

Who is your Who?

1. Define your Core Client as a person, not an industry or market segment (you may need to do this by investment strategy if your strategies target different clients). Who are you selling to? Is it a retail investor or the CIO of a large institution? Keep it to 20 words.
2. What are some characteristics of your Core Client? Do they have a family? Are they trying to add your strategy to a large, diversified portfolio? How big are they in terms of assets? What are their goals?
3. What are some of your Core Client's personal characteristics? Are they progressive thinkers? Are they process-oriented or numbers driven? Do they care about the details or do they simply want to trust that you're going to help them achieve their long-term goals?
4. What are your Core Client's needs (not wants)? What problem does your Core Client have that you can solve? Is there something your Core Client needs that others won't or can't do?