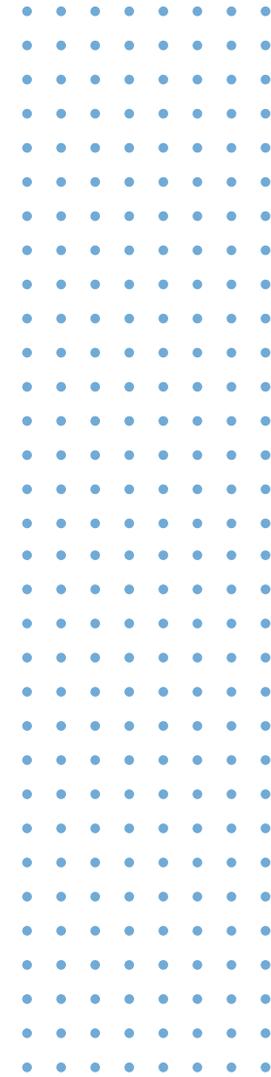
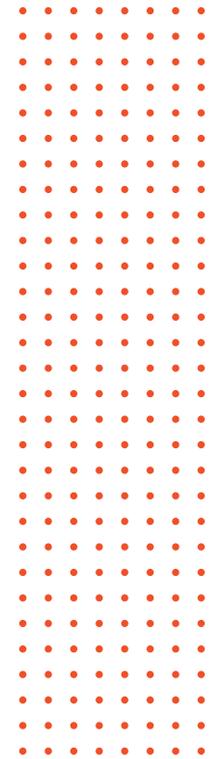


THE  
**Inbound  
Marketing**  
PLAYBOOK



# How To Use This Guide.



One of the biggest issues that modern businesses run into is a question of translation.

You offer great products. Your services are fantastic. Your solutions are just what your prospects need.

But, how do you communicate it in a way that people will understand?

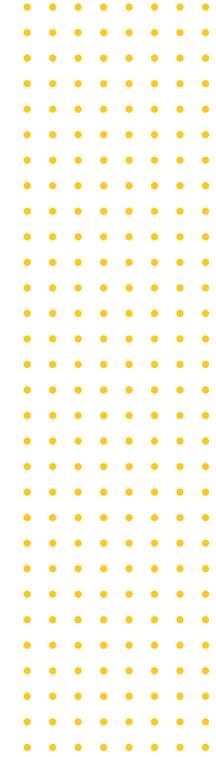
Which is to say: How do you market it?

This playbook is intended to walk you through that entire answer.

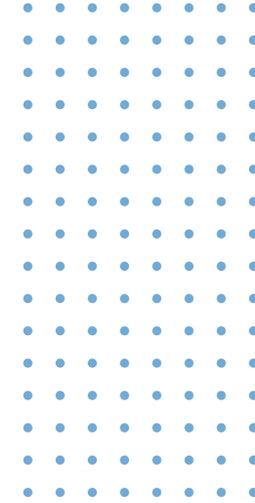
From knowing your ideal customer, to understanding where they are in the buying process, to understanding what their problems are, and figuring out how to articulate how your products or services solve those problems—this guide takes you through all of that... and more!

At the end you have a robust, clear plan on how to communicate with your prospects and how to get them from where they are now back to you.

So, let's dive in!



# 01 The Hero's Journey

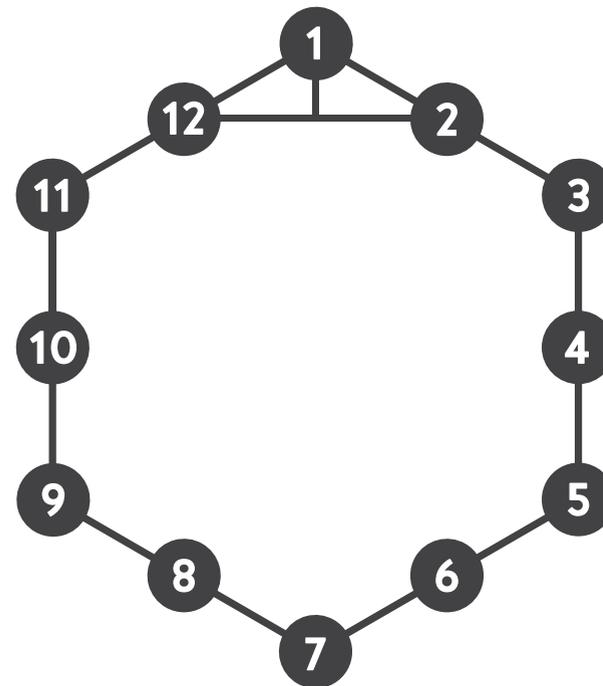


**You can't address your prospects if you don't know WHO they are. This section allows you to figure this out.**

Step 1 is called **The Hero's Journey**, adapted from Joseph Campbell's theories about story and myth.

There are twelve phases to The Hero's Journey. What's interesting about this process is that most clients enter the process seeing themselves as the Hero. What we get them to see, however, is that they aren't the Hero of story. **They're the Guide.** They aren't Luke Skywalker. Nope. They're Obi Wan. Then who's the hero? You guessed it, your buyer.

So, here's how it works: You'll go through each step and fill out the necessary information.



- 1 THERE'S A HERO
- 2 ORDINARY WORLD
- 3 HERO PROBLEMS
- 4 CALL TO ADVENTURE
- 5 REFUSAL OF THE QUEST
- 6 ENTER THE UNKNOWN WORLD
- 7 MEETS A GUIDE
- 8 THE PLAN
- 9 CALL TO ACTION
- 10 TEST AND THE SUPREME ORDEAL
- 11 DEFEAT
- 12 REWARD AND RESTORATION

# 1. There's A Hero

Every story needs a hero. And the hero of this story is the first Buyer Persona you pick to start with. Next, just fill out all the appropriate info: Name, age, job, what a day in the life looks like... you get it. Go deep. Really figure out who your buyer is.

**NAME:****JOB ROLE**

- 1) What is their job role? Title?
- 2) How is their job measured?
- 3) What does a typical day look like?
- 4) What skills are required to do their job?
- 5) What knowledge and tools do they use in their job?
- 6) Who do they report to? Who reports to them?

# 1. There's A Hero

## THE BIZ

- 7) In which industry does their company work?
- 8) What is the size of their company (revenue, employees)?

## GOALS

- 9) What are their responsibilities?
- 10) What does success look like for them?

## CHALLENGES

- 11) What are their biggest challenges?

## INFORMATION SOURCES

- 12) How do they learn about new information for their job?
- 13) What publications or blogs do they read?
- 14) What associations and social networks do they participate in?

# 1. There's A Hero

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

- 15) Describe their personal demographics (if appropriate, ask their age, whether they're married, if they have children).
- 16) Describe their educational background. What level of education did they complete, which schools did they attend, and what did they study?
- 17) Describe their career path. How did they end up where they are today?

## SHOPPING PREFERENCES

- 18) How do they prefer to interact with vendors (e.g. email, phone, in person)?
- 19) Do they use the internet to research vendors or products? If yes, how do they search for information?
- 20) Describe a recent purchase. Why did they consider a purchase, what was the evaluation process, and how did they decide to purchase that product or service?

## 2. Ordinary World

What's their ordinary world like? What stresses them out? What does a day in their life look like for them? What are they looking for that your product or service might fix? This is Luke as a young farmer on Tatooine.

# 3. Hero Problems

What keeps your hero up at night? Dig deep into this area. It's a huge source of info you can use to understand who they are. Keep in mind, their problems aren't limited to the tech you've developed. Meaning, don't just look at their problems through your lens.

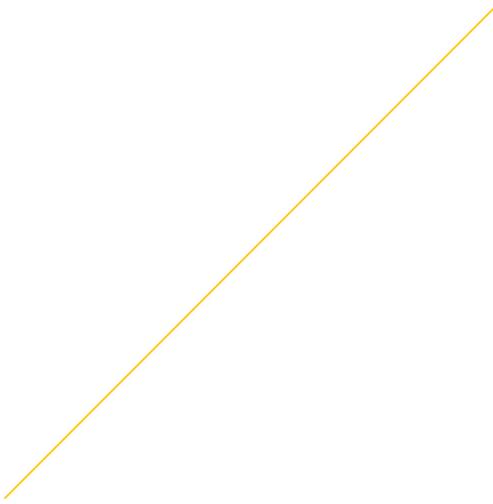
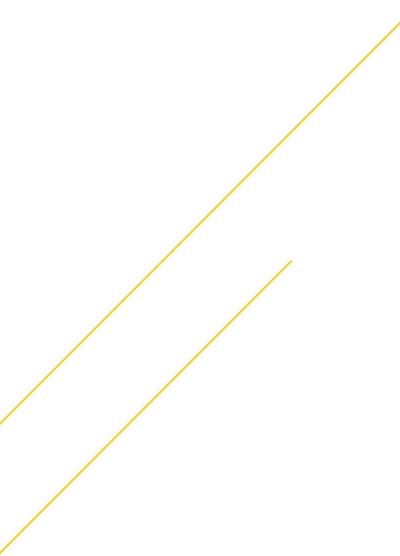
# 4. Call to Adventure

This is the jumping off point. This is where Luke finds R2-D2... and sees Princess Leia's message about the Death Star plans. That moment is what called Luke to adventure. What would prompt your hero to consider making a change in their ordinary world?



# 5. Refusal of the Quest

There are a lot of reasons that your hero could come up with as objections to taking that next step toward a solution. Write them down here.



# 6. Enter the Unknown World

What's this new world look like? What are the new elements? Are there new rules? For Luke, it was learning more about the Force, The Rebel Alliance, etc.

# 7. Meets a Guide

You are the guide. At this stage you are going to answer two questions about your role as the guide as it relates to your hero. Specifically, how do you show **compassion** and **trust**? First, **compassion** allows you to demonstrate that you as the guide understand the hero's problems and emotions, and you have the ability to lead them through their journey. Secondly, you demonstrate trustworthiness.

$$\text{TRUST} = \frac{\text{CREDIBILITY} + \text{RELIABILITY} + \text{INTIMACY} +}{\text{SELF-ORIENTATION}}$$

WORDS & AUTHORITY
ACTION
EMOTIONS

MOTIVES

Measuring the levels of credibility, reliability and intimacy are important, but the single most important factor to building trust is **self-orientation** — the more selfless the guide, the more trustworthy they are.

# 8. The Plan

The plan is how you're going to serve your hero. There are two parts:

## THE PLAN:

This is how your process works. Don't overthink this. It could be as simple as:

- 1) Give us a call.
- 2) Pay
- 3) We'll kill it for you.

List yours here:

## THE PROMISE:

This is where you state the benefits that you're offering. You can also include your guarantees.

List some benefits here:

List some guarantees here:

# 9. Call To Action (CTA)

**This is what you want your hero to do.**

You'll want to narrow your list to a single **Primary Call to Action**. This is what you really want them to do. Like, buy something. Or give you a call.

Next, you'll need to come up with a few **Secondary Calls to Action**. These are intended to keep the hero engaged if they aren't ready to take action on the Primary CTA. It could be to sign up for a free account. Or give you their email address. Or read a blog. Or download an ebook. Again, don't overthink this.

List primary CTAs here:

List secondary CTAs here:

# 10. Tests & the Supreme Ordeal

We don't live in a perfect world. Because there could be problems even after your hero buys from you, you need to account for it.

Make a list of the things that could go wrong. Maybe, for instance, there could be an issue with on-boarding. Or getting the hero's team to buy in.

## THE SUPREME ORDEAL

The biggest hurdle the hero will have to climb over, post-sale. This is Luke defeating the Empire and restoring balance back to the Force. This one might seem a little abstract, but you would be surprised at how many previously unanticipated problems—and the solutions to those problems!—come up while working through this.

What's your buyer's biggest hurdle after the sale?

# 11. Defeat

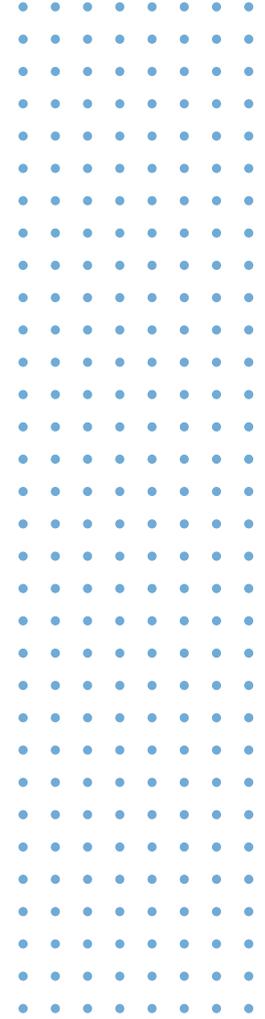
What does defeat for the hero look like? What if they don't solve their problem?

Do they return to the status quo (bad), or does it get even hairier for them (worse)?

# 12. Reward & Restoration

Oppositely, what does winning look like for your hero? They push through, do what you want them to do, implement it, get buy-in... all that jazz. What does their world look like then? What is the reward they receive? What gets restored?

# 02 The Buyer's Journey



You could have a perfect prospect for your solution, but the big question is: Are they ready to buy?

Where are they in the Buyer's Journey?

You're going to have both current and potential customers at varying degrees of "ready to buy-ness," and your marketing needs to reflect that. Your job is to make sure that your marketing is speaking directly to your audience right where they are. And no matter what industry you're in or what you happen to be selling, your audience is going to be in one of the four following categories: **Awareness**, **Consideration**, **Decision**, or **Delight**.



## **AWARENESS**

The first thing you need to identify is whether or not your potential customer understands their own situation. Do they even know they have a problem?

In your marketing, the messaging here is “Hey guys, don’t know if you know this, but you’ve got some pain here.”

What’s the message your buyer needs to see, hear, or know that this stage?

## **CONSIDERATION**

This is the stage where the potential customer is aware of their problems. They haven’t chosen a solution yet, but they’re starting to check out potential options.

What’s the message your buyer needs to see, hear, or know at this stage?

**DECISION**

Here's where the buyer knows their problem, is aware of your solutions, but haven't yet chosen you—or your competitors—yet.

What's the message your buyer needs to see, hear, or know that this stage?

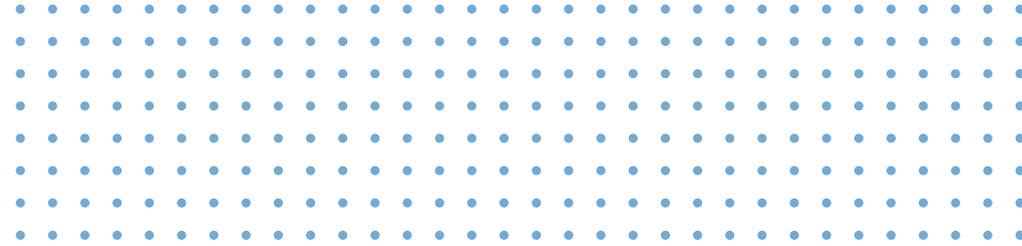
**DELIGHT**

Your buyer has bought. But your job still isn't done.

You need to provide great follow up service, help, and education.

What's the message your buyer needs to see, hear, or know that this stage?

# 03 Ideation



The idea behind this step is to create space for ideas in order to come up with and then nail down your core message.

Note: This third step HAS TO be the third step. A lot of companies start here, before nailing down **who their customers are** and **where they are in the Buyer's Journey**. That's an excellent way to set yourself up for certain failure.

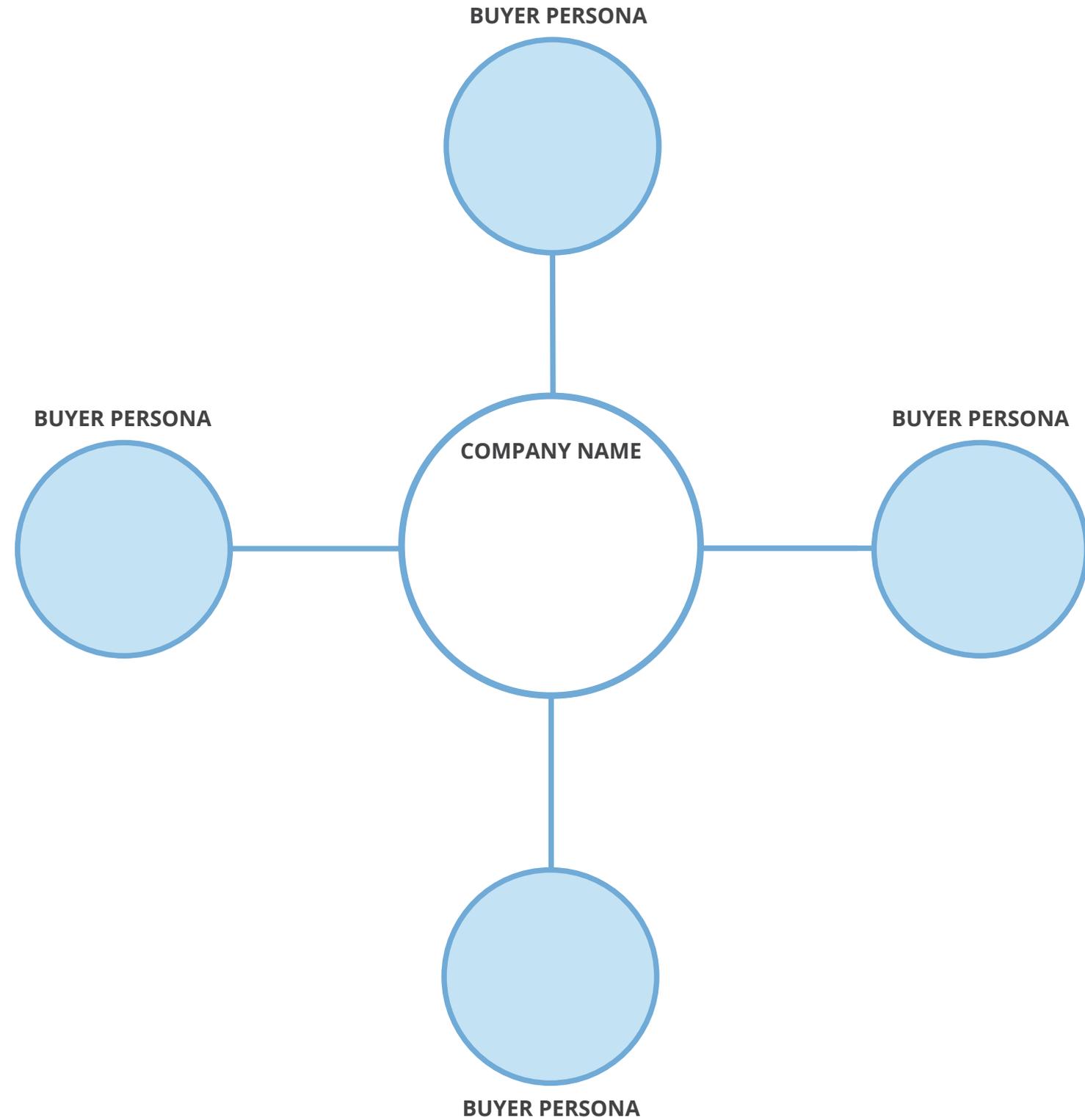
It simply won't work.

After all, the worst problems to solve are the wrong ones.

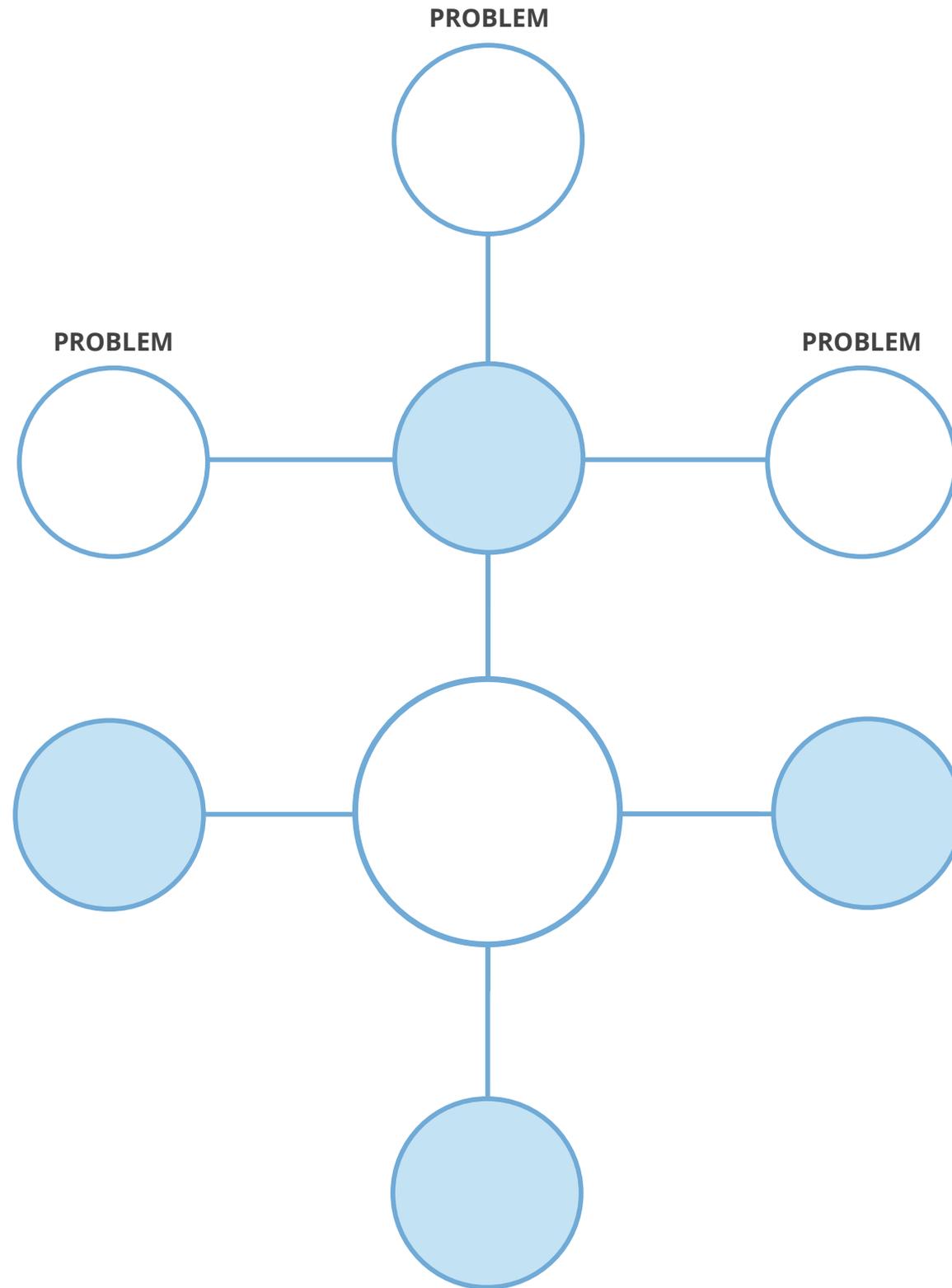
So, assuming you've gone through the first two steps, here's what to do next:

### MIND MAP

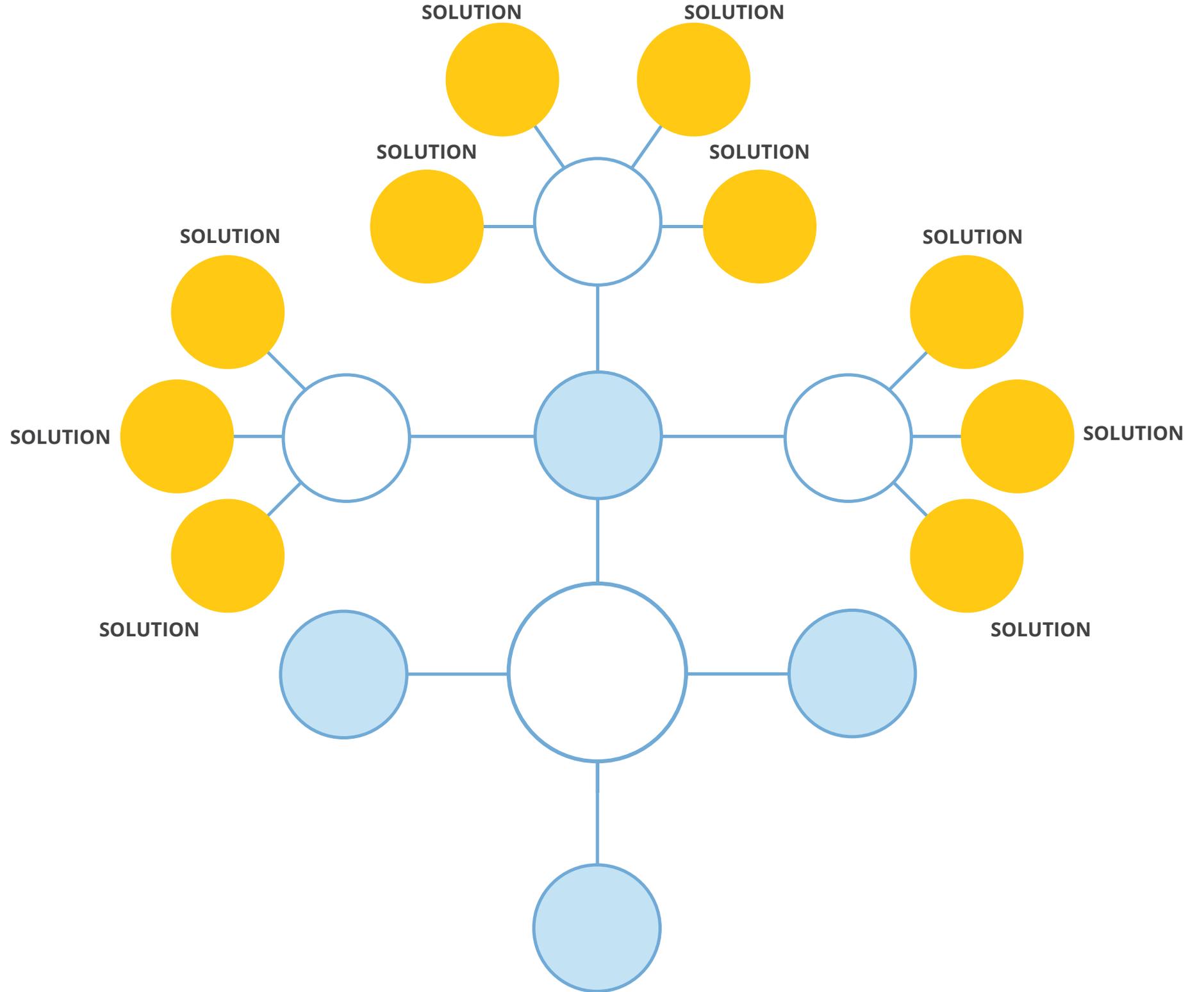
- 1) Start with your company name at the center. Draw a circle around it.
- 2) List out every single Buyer Persona as the next ring out. Four buyer personas, four bubbles.



3) Then, take **Step 3** within the **Hero's Journey** and start listing out all the problems that they're experiencing.

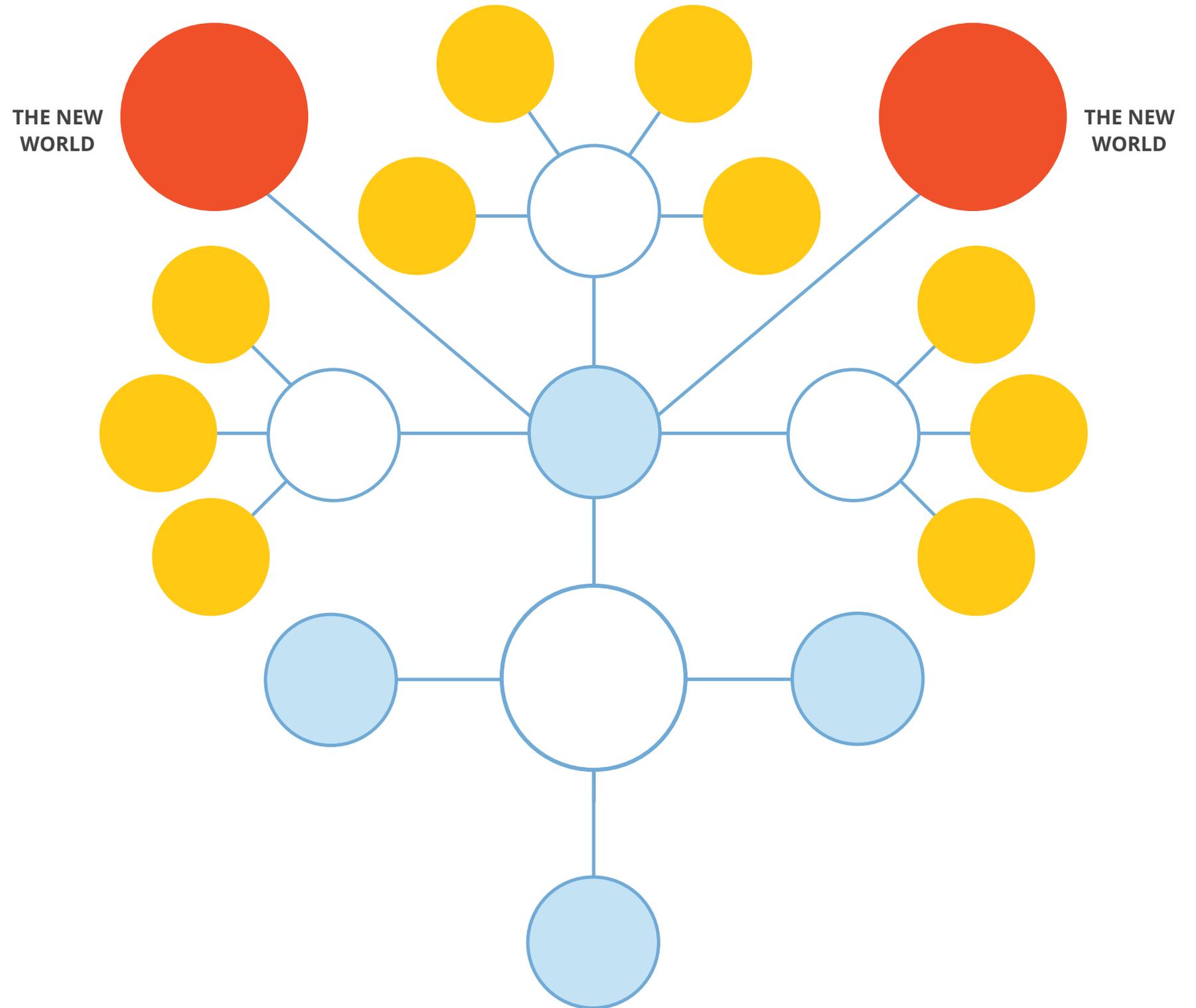


4) The bubble out from that is the solution to each problem that's NOT BRAND FOCUSED. You might find that there's an overlap between those two things, and that's okay. If there is one, just draw in those connections. (There may be an overlap between the solution and the **Unknown World**.)



5) Now, go to **Step 6** of the **Hero's Journey**. List out all the new things in the world, along with what's unique about your Buyer Persona's problem. (These will go on the same level as the problems, so use two different colors.)

**Steps 3** and **6** are going to be similar (although the stuff from **Step 6** may be more universal.)



- 6) Then revisit more problems. **Spend some real time at this stage. The big mistake most companies make is that they don't spend enough time in the "Problem Space."** Problems are the keys to your kingdom. Is there anything you missed?

Where you'll probably miss stuff is in the **Unknown World** (at which point the **Buyer Persona** will be in the **Consideration** stage.) Your solutions won't be tied specifically to what your company does: It's "Why cars are better than horses," not "Why Ford is better than Dodge." **Position the idea, not the brand.**

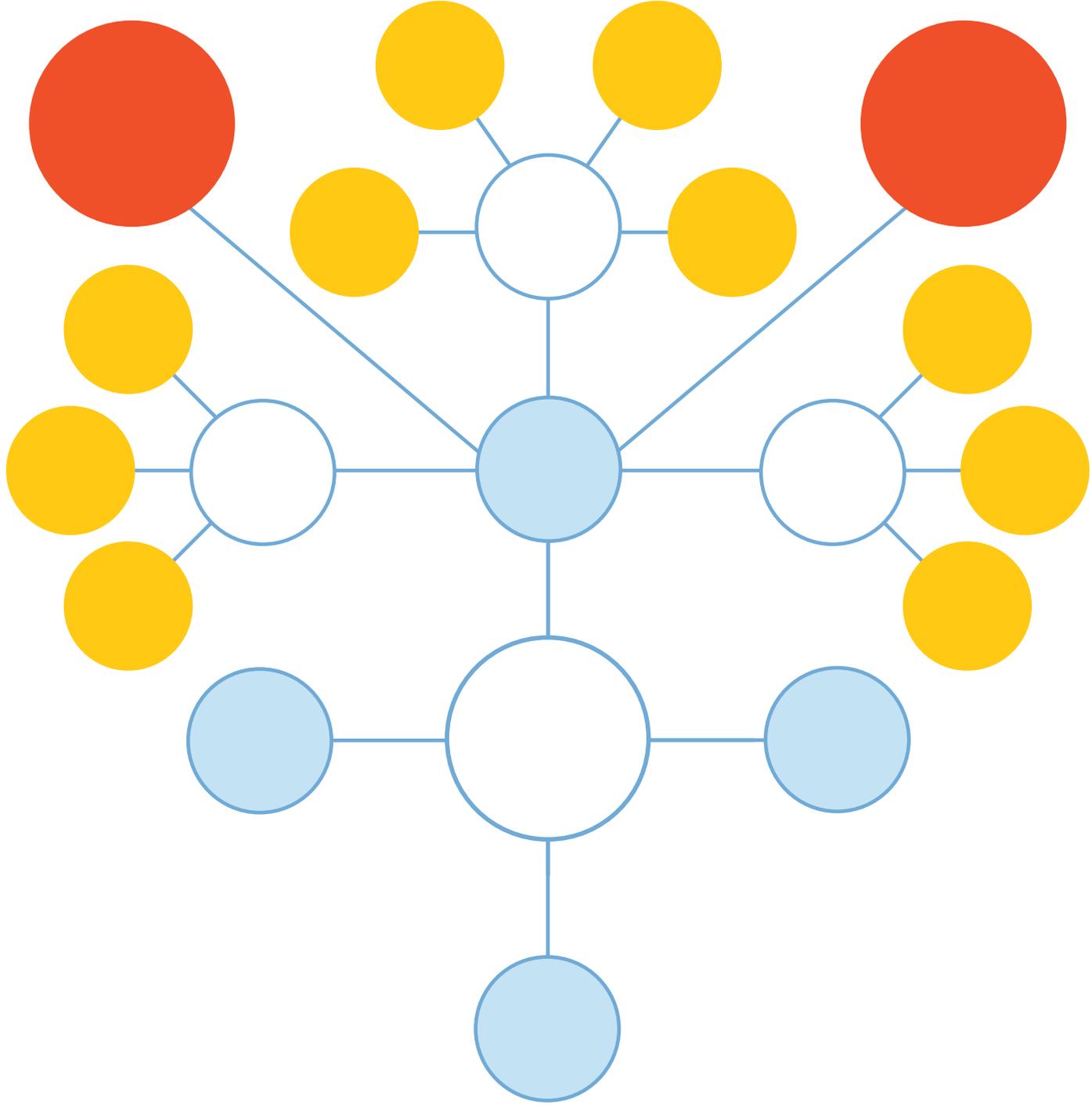
So list out everything in that new world. Position that world.

For example: What does a world with cars look like as opposed to the current horse-only world?

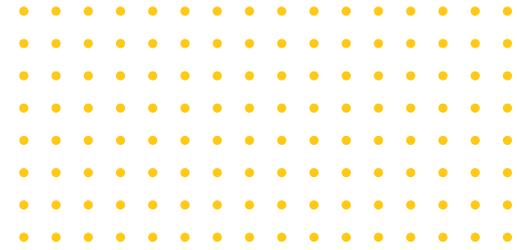
Or: If you're in the SaaS space, why is it better to have stuff in the cloud as opposed to downloading the stuff to your computer?

Once you have the **Mind Map** done, now it's time to talk about **Format**.





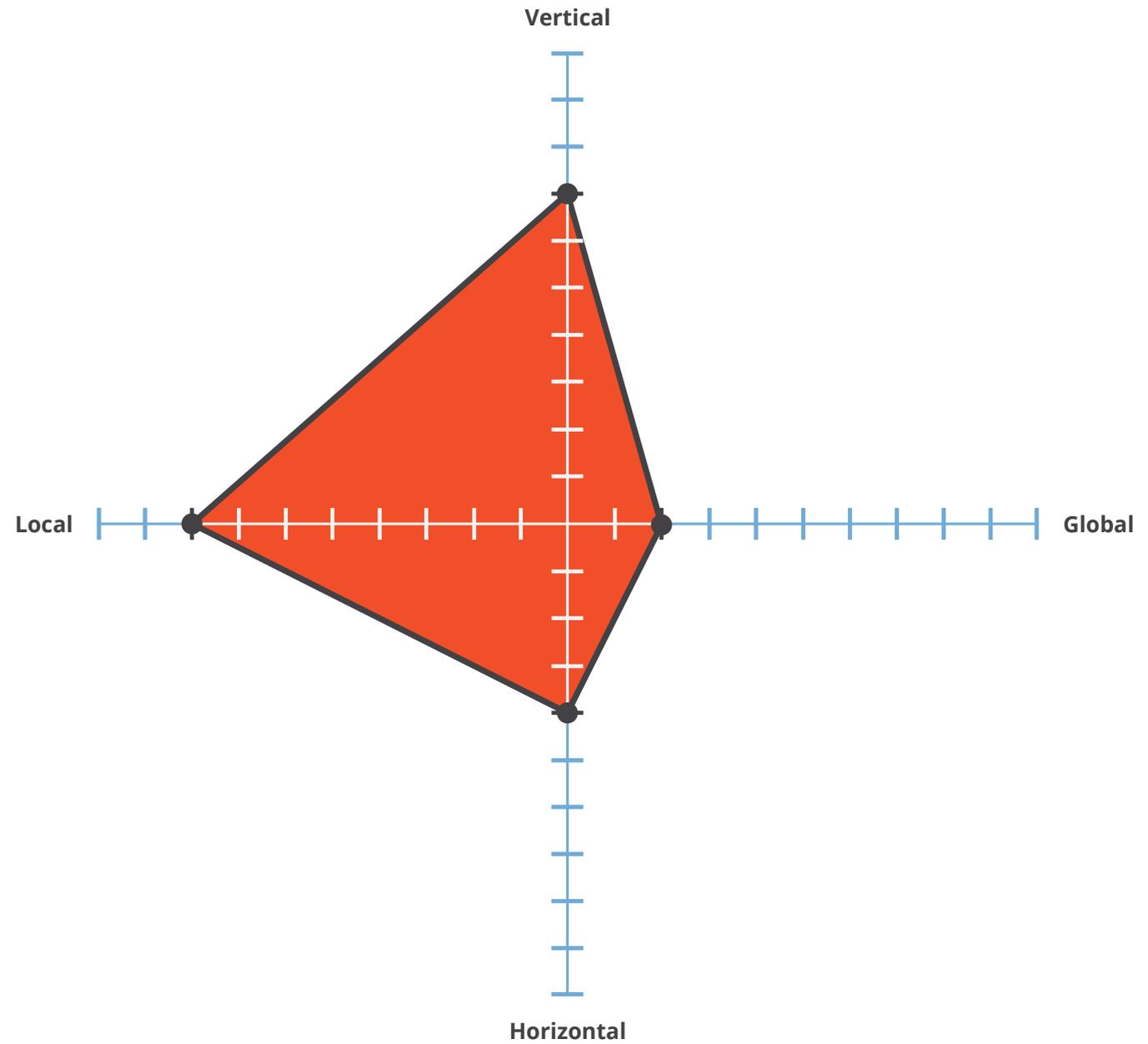
# 04 Where in the World Are They?



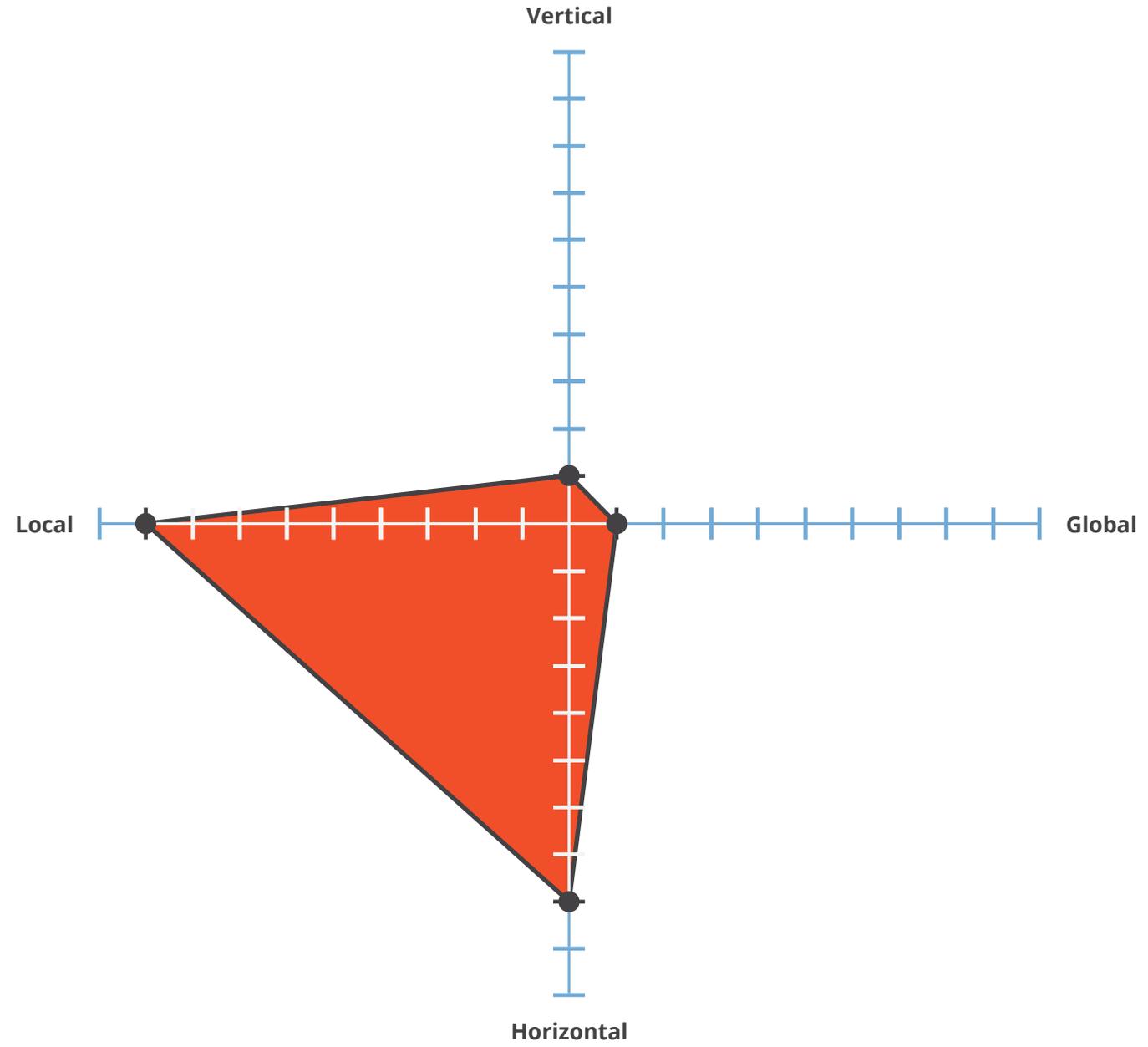
If you know **who** your audience is, then you should know **where** your audience is.

A great exercise for this is to find out where your target market sits on an x/y axis, with x going from “**Local**” to “**Global**,” and the y axis showing “**Vertical**” on the left and “**Horizontal**” on the right. Each line segment coming out from the center will have ten notches to designate your company’s ranking from one (the least) to ten (the most).

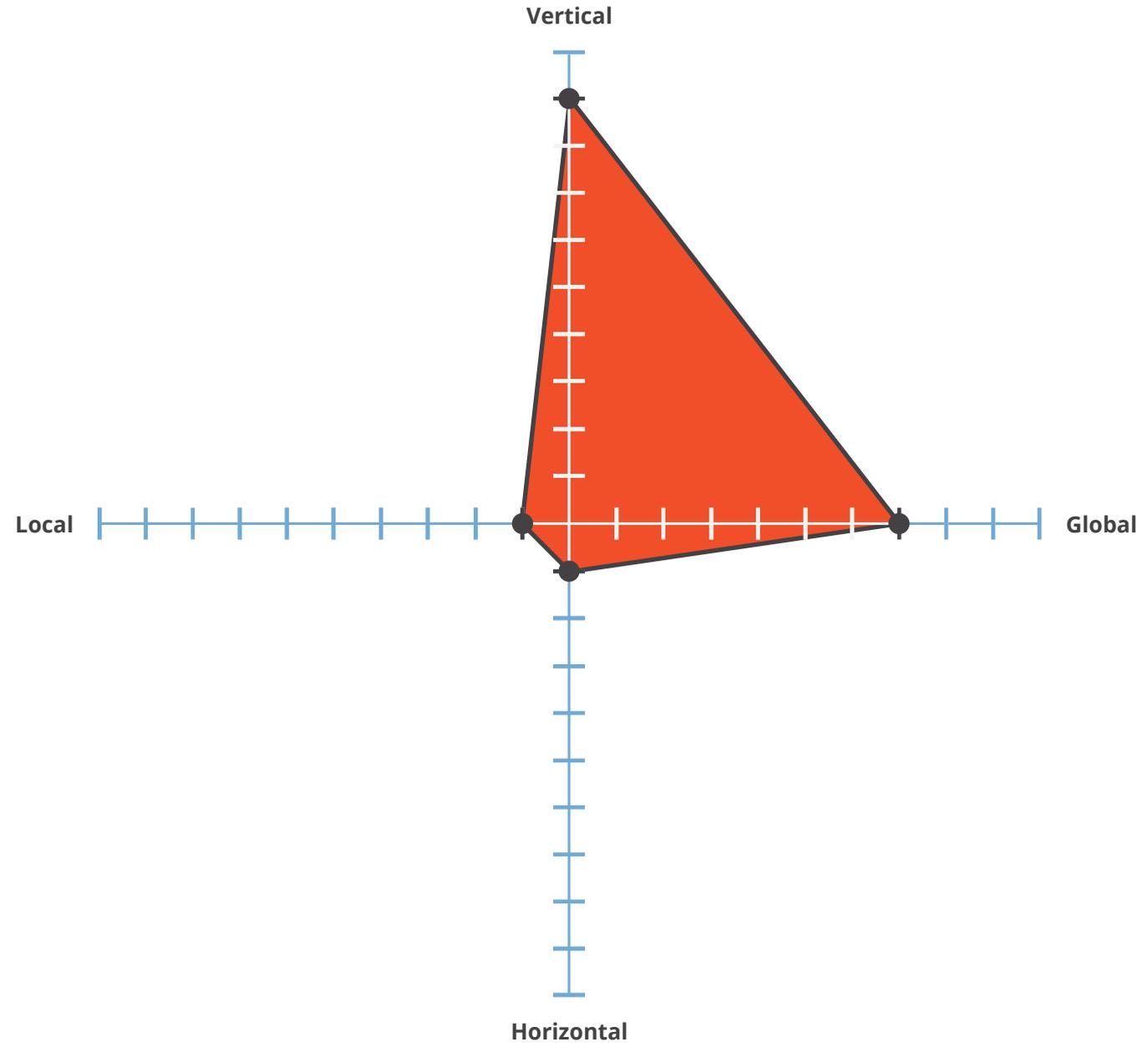
After you mark the four particular spots, you’ll connect those points with four lines and shade in the areas.



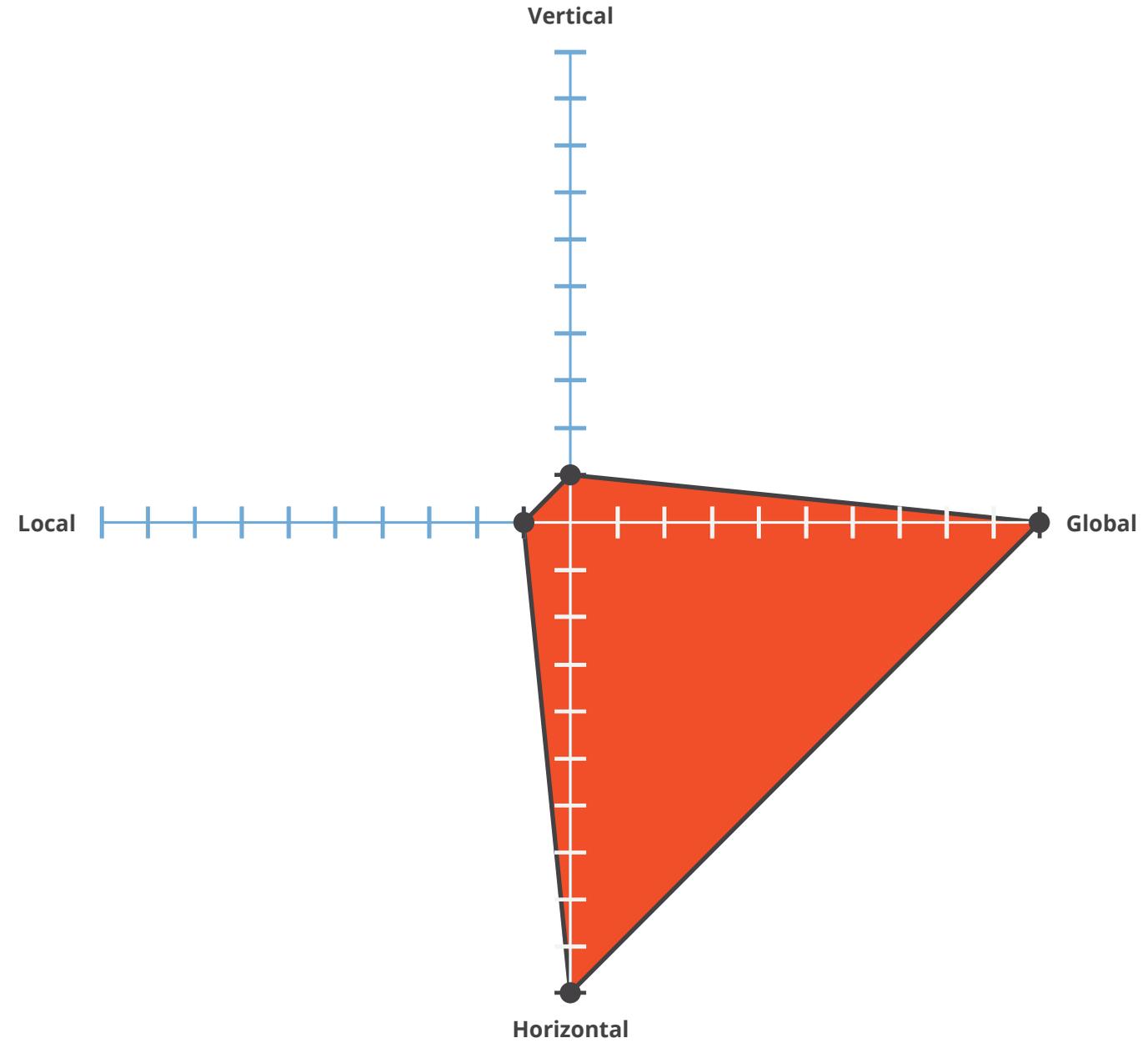
So, let's say you are a frozen yogurt shop. Everyone could potentially want fro-yo. But it's pretty hard to ship your product across the Atlantic. So, you would put yourself somewhere in the Horizontal + Local quadrant.



Let's say you sell parts for making toilets. Your only buyers would be people who build the toilets. But toilets are pretty universal, at least in developed countries. So, welcome to Vertical + Global.



If you're Coca-Cola, first, why in the world are you reading this? And secondly, everyone drinks Coke. You're therefore Horizontal + Global. And if you're not Coca-Cola and you think you're in the Horizontal + Global category, I can almost guarantee you that you're not. You're either misunderstanding yourself and your audience, or you're truly a multi-national corporation. Here's an easy test: Have you ever had a Super Bowl commercial? No? Cool. You're in the wrong quadrant.



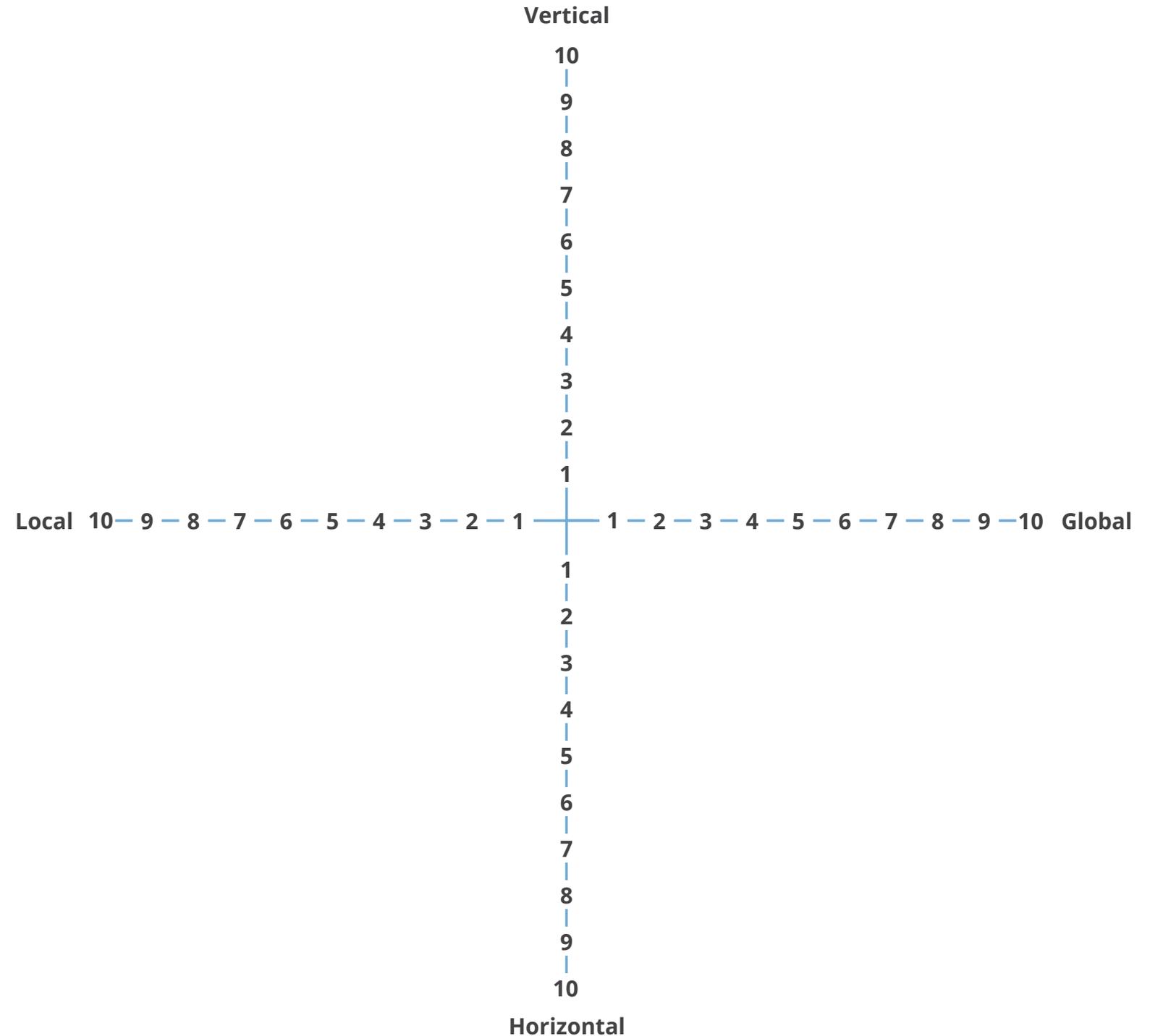
So, where are you?

And where are your customers?

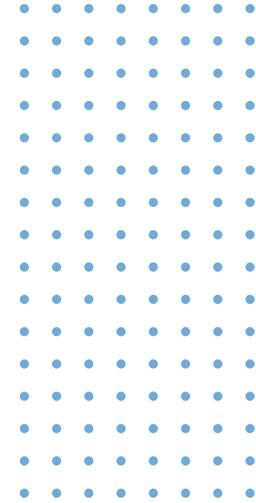
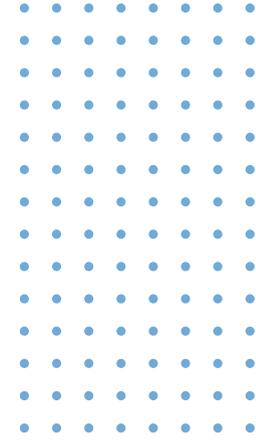
So, now we need to figure out where your business falls on the grid.

Knowing this is going to help you target your prospects with a laser focus. It will also let you know what marketing content will be the most effective for your audience (check out pages 37- for ideas).

Feel free to print this page out. Just plot the points on each arm of the grid (1 through 10), and then draw lines between them. On the next few pages are content creation and delivery ideas for each quadrant.



# 05 Distribution Methods



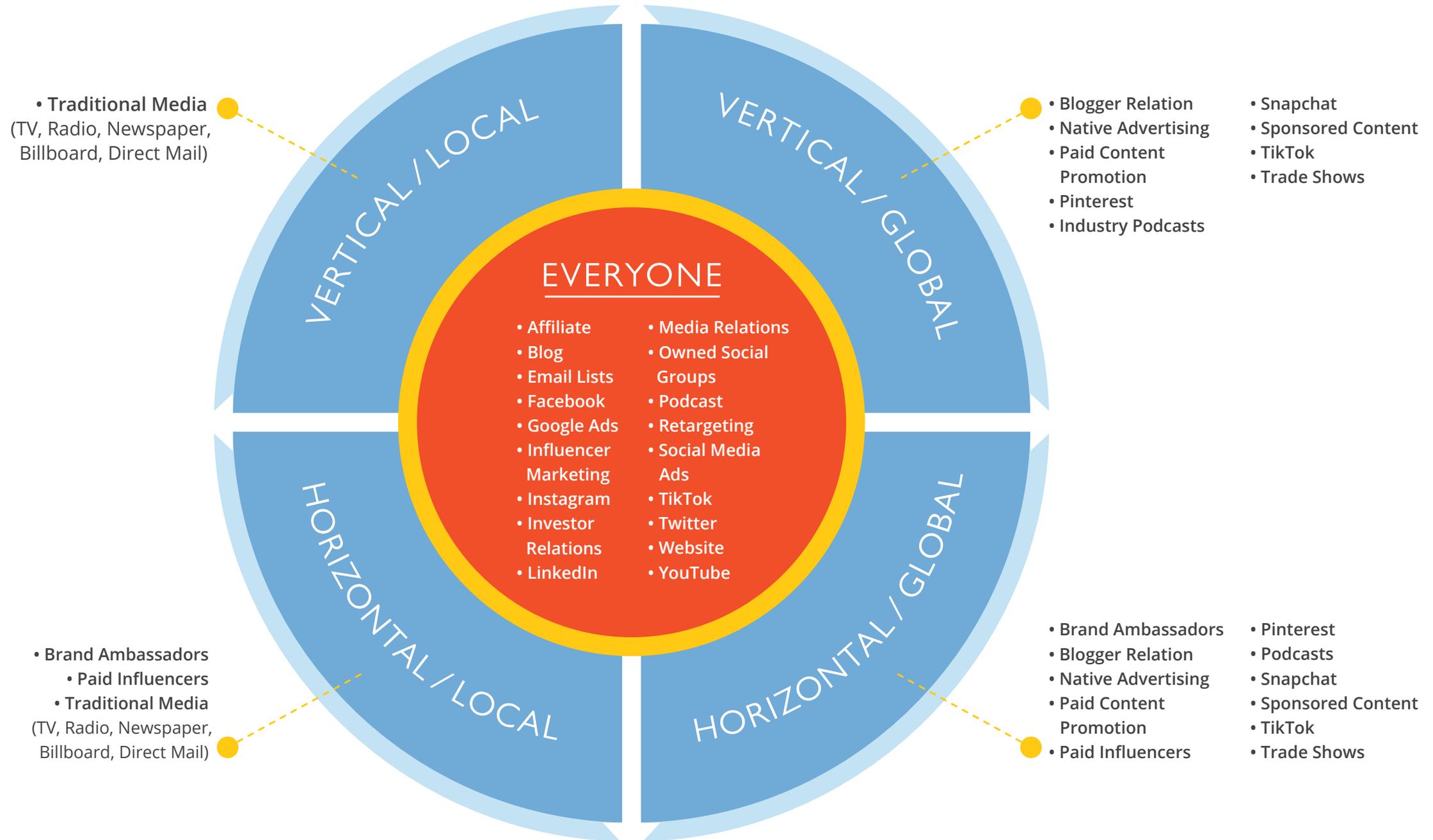
Now that you've determined what quadrant best describes your business, are you B2B or B2C?

B2C? Go to the next page.

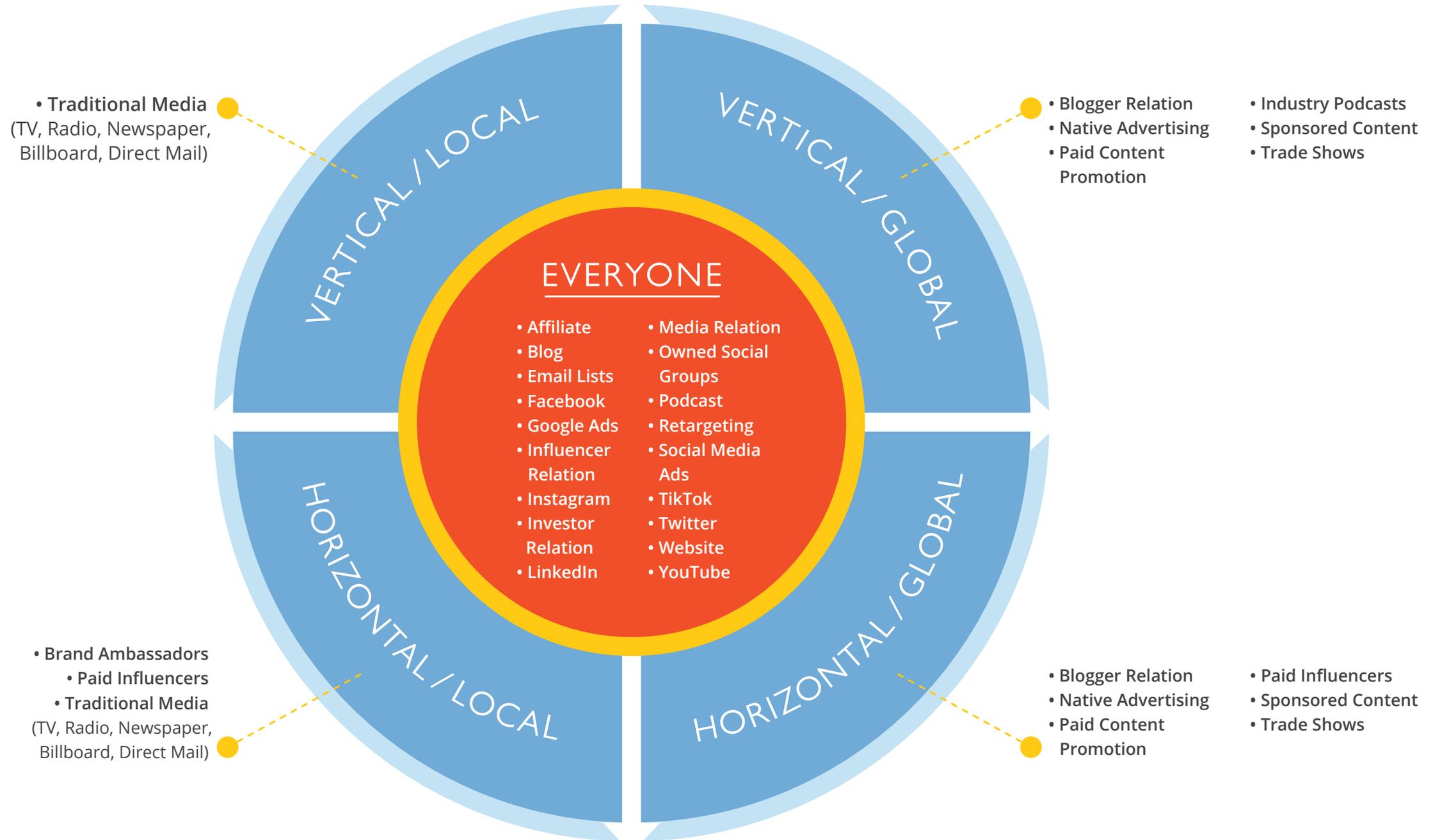
B2B? Skip the next page.

When you get there, look at the center of the graphic. Those are distribution channels that apply to pretty much everyone, no matter the quadrant. Facebook advertising, for instance, works for most everyone. Then, look at your quadrant. While this list certainly isn't exhaustive, you will find a fantastic list of distribution options.

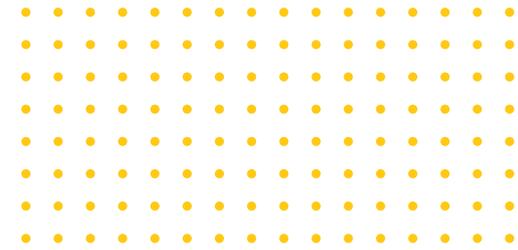
# Business to Customer



# Business to Business



# 06 Putting It All Together



Congrats, you now have all the information you need to craft both your marketing plan, and the your marketing implementation strategy.

If you don't want to take all of this and do it on your own, however, we'd be happy to chat with you about your marketing. We specialize in marketing for businesses just like yours, simplifying their message, streamlining their processes, and helping to create an entire marketing engine that serves to drive their business forward.

Whatever option you choose, there's one thing you can't do if you want to survive in an industry as competitive as yours.

You can't do NOTHING.

So, which one is it?

**Reach Out**