Personas – Reference, Tips & Examples

Personas are more about why …they are less about what.

Use all available data "what" for each profile to understand individual's specific goals, behaviors, and attitudes → "why".

Persona Creation:

Squiggles help find personas

http://www.gurtle.com/ppov/2007/06/14/squiggles-help-find-personas/

Remember, the key is for the resulting persona to have attributes that are a *common* subset of the attributes possessed by all the users it represents, whilst still being *accurate* for each of them. So in effect you need to 'knock the corners' off the data and **look at the overlap**, to make something that fits all users in the group.

The Venn diagram shows multiple overlapping circles, each of which represents the information we know about an individual. The intersection of the circles represents the commonality between them.
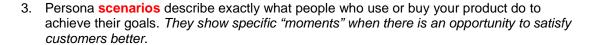
Poor fit persona

Good fit persona

Nice Persona, But Is It Useful?

http://www.personacreation.com/persona_creation/2008/05/
nice-persona-bu.html

1. Personas describe the distinguishing **attributes** of the group of people who will use or buy your product. *They narrow the field (market), define the market, and describe it in detail.*

2. Personas describe the **goals** of the people who use or buy your product. *They focus employees' attention on relieving any frustration that customers experience when they use or buy your product.*

3. Persona **scenarios** describe exactly what people who use or buy your product do to achieve their goals. *They show specific "moments" when there is an opportunity to satisfy customers better.*

- Although personas represent customers by translating customer data, they are fashioned and formed from the goals of the employees who must use them.

- Personas are only useful if they are crafted out of the organization's goals.

- Personas must be a useful tool in the hands of the employees who are charged to innovatively close the gap.

- Persona scenarios must show details (based on customer research) about typical customers engaged in typical activities:

    o how a user sets up a new account;
    o how a buyer gathers pricing information;
    o how and why a user determines when to charge a draining battery;
    o or how and why a buyer decides to place an order on your web site versus over the phone.

- Personas and their scenarios must illustrate customers' goals so that your employees can work within the limitation of having to satisfy those goals.

If a persona or set of personas does not **elicit better messaging**, sales processes, product designs, or web site navigation (to name a few kinds of innovation), then the personas have failed. If employees don't find the personas useful, then they are just another "interesting" customer profiling effort destined for the round file.

Persona Types

http://www.personacreation.com/persona_creation/2008/04/persona-types.html

User Persona *(could easily represent a prospective student)*
This persona uses the product (software, web site, physical item) or service to achieve a goal… User personas can be further classified into:

- Novice user persona
- Intermediate user persona
- Perpetual intermediate user persona
- Power user persona

Buyer Persona *(could easily represent a parent of prospective student or Business & Insustry/Workforce individual who needs to get employees trained)*
This persona buys the product or service and may or may not actually use the product. This is true both in consumer family situations where, for example, a parent makes buying decisions for a child, or in a work environment where a manager buys a product for other employees... Buyer personas can be further classified into:

- **Evaluating Buyer:** gathers information about purchase options…
- **Economic Buyer:** controls the ultimate decision to release funds for...
- **Technical Buyer:** has technical expertise that influences the …
- **Orderer:** actually orders the product or service.

Stakeholder or Influential Persona *(represents individuals who have strong opinions or experience some affect from the use of the services NVCC provides)*
This persona represents an important player who neither uses nor buys your product or service. In the family example, a mother may have strong opinions about types of video games that are appropriate for a 7-yr-old, but the father buys the product and the son uses it. In a corporate environment, a buyer persona may be a manager, a user persona may be an employee, but an end consumer may have a stake in the results of that employee's use of the product. ...stakeholder persona …who have strong opinions or experience some affect from the use of your product.

Web Site Persona *(website functionality related)*
Web sites satisfy many different types of goals and sometimes must consider visitors as both users and buyers. These user-buyer personas have layered goals that require special attention and handling.

Organizational Persona *(represents Partnership personas)*
An organizational persona is a fictional representation of a customer that is an entire company. If you provide B2B products and services, then your personas are customer organizations with identified key role personas (user personas, buyer personas, and stakeholder personas) inside them.

Giving Personality to Your Personas

http://www.emarketingperformance.com/:/1338/
marketing-methods-providers/giving-personality-to-
your-personas/

Persona = motivation (what the visitor needs, why they are on your site)
Personality = temperament (how they navigate, what they need to see or read to find what they want)

Here are a few common personas that we've developed:

The "how-to" Persona
This person is an information seeker…

> **Example:** Person goes to a baby products site looking how to properly install a car seat. They may or may not be looking to buy a car seat, but if they find the information they want they could return frequently and become a customer in the future.

The "I care" Persona
These people are usually thoughtful about what it is they are looking for. They are passionate about the topic and want to know more about how your product or service is going to meet their needs.

> **Example:** Person goes to a baby products site looking for a car seat that is safe and reliable. They've been reading about the importance of car seats, how to install them properly and want to make sure that the seat they buy for their child will be top quality.

The "Just get it to me" Persona
These people don't really know what they want. They have a need but are unsure on how best to fill that need. They just want a product or service that gives them the desire result.

> **Example:** Person needs a car seat. To them, all car seats are the same and don't understand why one is more expensive than the other. They are just looking to get a seat and get it installed so they usually pick the least expensive one. They can be convinced to upgrade, given the right information.

Focusing on the Audience

Confirm Audience Stereotypes Before Marketing to Them

http://contextrulesmarketing.blogspot.com/2005/08/confirm-
audience-stereotypes-before.html

There's a huge difference between marketing to Personas and marketing to stereotypes of what we think an audience looks like. Persona marketing is based on data and critical insights. Stereotyping is based on opinion (often wrong).

Persona-lizing a site

http://www.internetretailer.com/article.asp?id=24243

"The idea is to get into the heads of customers and start to put a face to the experience,"

"People use web sites to get things done," says Moira Dorsey, principal analyst at Forrester Research.

"It's different from designing other marketing materials. You have to understand what your customers' goals are and how they go about accomplishing them in order to design a system that supports those goals."

The Library as the User Sees It

http://www.imakenews.com/sirsi/e_article000627222.cfm?x=b5dRbWJ,b2rpQhRM,w

- Personas are one way to make sense of what library patrons, and non-patrons, want.
- Personas are characters created from a composite of data…
- A persona comes together in the context of an overarching goal.
- Personas enable the ability to look at library services and products from the outside in.
- **Personas get at the important issues of motivation, discovery, expectations, and relationships.**

Defining New and Improved Products

http://www.imakenews.com/sirsi/e_article000660145.cfm?x=b5dRbWJ,b2rpQhRM,w

…done well, personas clarify **who the product customer is**, **what the customer expects and considers significant**, and **how the customer can benefit from the product**.

> …we established seven primary personas for the public library user-base within the northeastern United States and part of Canada. While all seven personas had some unique needs in content, features, and functionality, **there was a set of common expectations** such as online collaboration or social networking; email updates on events, including notification of materials availability; staff knowledge; improvements in search functionality; and easy access to electronic materials – such as e-books, RSS feed, and news.

Personas – Support Information

Long Live the User (Persona):
http://www.boxesandarrows.com/view/long-live-the-user

 …personas are only as good as they are actionable, and that means **creating realistic details that will actually inform decision making**. If I say that *Francis the First-Time Home Buyer* loves Billy Idol, that's an interesting detail that makes her persona more realistic, but it doesn't help me make critical decisions about the real estate site I'm working on. On the other hand, if I say Francis is embarrassed by her ignorance of real estate and unlikely to ask friends for advice, that's helpful information for deciding what content the site could offer and how that content should be provided.

With personas, the right kinds of details matter, and they typically involve goals, behaviors, and attitudes.

…using very specific photos to represent the personas. Isn't a more general photo better?

 Ahh, but remember …that generalized sketches work well in comics because they better enable us to see ourselves in the comic. With personas, however, the whole point is to see real people as our users and not focus on ourselves. Choosing very specific photos forces us outside of the habit of thinking about ourselves. Suddenly there's a very real person staring back at us with specific goals, behaviors, and attitudes that we must address.

Three Important Benefits of Personas

http://www.uie.com/articles/benefits_of_personas/
Next time you have a chance to watch someone reading a map, look for the first thing they do. They'll likely do the exact same thing everyone else does: find themselves on the map.

Psychologists call this 'grounding'—the natural behavior of initially finding a known reference point in a foreign information space. Once the person has grounded themselves, they can then use the starting point to understand the rest of the space.

While grounding helps people adjust to complex situations, it can be detrimental when it happens during the design process. If, while conjuring up an interface, designers ground themselves in the design, they run the serious risk of creating an interface that only they can use.

The teams we interviewed used personas as a way to avoid the grounding problem. Instead of asking, "How would I use this system?" they asked, "How would Mary use the system?" They found their persona's (Mary) initial reference point instead of their own, making judgments about the design from the persona's point of view.

Personas don't automatically get the benefits of **preventing grounding**, **encouraging story telling**, and **enhancing role playing**. They have to be carefully crafted to get those benefits.

**Create Personas to Bridge the Gap
with Target Audiences**

http://www.nancyschwartz.com/nonprofit_
persona_development.html

Is Persona Just Another Word for Market Segment?

No, ...Market segmentation is a great tool for identifying the groups of people you are trying to reach, and why. …market segmentation can't shape your marketing messages or choice of strategies.

What Does a Persona Look Like?

Here's a sample persona checklist. The precise details you'll want to include depend on your organization's marketing. Are you aiming to increase use of a new health care clinic, motivating volunteers for your mentoring program or build the number of visitors to your nature preserve? No matter your goals, here's what you'll want to include in your personas:

- A one to two page narrative profile, for each persona.

- A few fictional details about the persona's life – an interest or a habit – that makes each person unique and memorable. When you start here, the hypothetical constructs spring to life.

- Brief outline of a daily work day or day at home (depends on who you are trying to reach), including specific details, likes and dislikes.

- Name, age, photo and personal information.

- Work environments if you're trying to reach professionals, rather than individuals, including length of time in the job, professional development habits (if marketing services such as training for social workers on public benefits), information- seeking habits and favorite resources, personal and professional goals, colleagues with whom the persona works most closely, etc.

- Personal and professional goals.

Video:

Environment Agency: Personas Pack

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mO-qSdUg_oY

Case study about developing and working with Personas and using them for maximum effect.

Environment Agency: Personas Pack

Examples of Personas in Use:

Microsoft – Winning Against Linux The Smart Way

http://www.sublimemedia.com/usCSI/uscsi_web.swf

Extreme marketing - this car made just for you

http://www.cnn.com/2006/AUTOS/10/20/car_profiles/index.html

Some companies, like Ford, take all this one step further, creating a composite person - complete with a name, a job, clothing and design preferences, even tastes in food.

SUVs with personalities

http://money.cnn.com/popups/2006/autos/
ford_personalities/index.html

Ford Escape   **Details and photos**

Target buyer: Greg, 30
Regional store manager for Rite-Aid

Education: Community College degree

Lifestage: Married, transitioning to family

Household income: $60,000 (dual income)

Activities: Socializing, physical activities (biking, team sports)

Spending: Shops at Gap and Target

COURTESY: FORD / PORTRAIT: STOCK PHOTO

**Sample Persona creation
…from worksheet to narrative**

http://blockquote.be/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/poster.png

Persona of a Cognetics Design Specialist

http://web.archive.org/web/20030412062633/
http://www.cognetics.com/about/team/people4.html

This persona is an example of a typical Cognetics designer.

Web Design Personas - samples

Support for personal interviews when creating personas:

Persona-lizing a site

Forrester's Manning says there's no substitute. He recalls an interview with a customer in a store who had just bought a flat screen TV. "He described himself as someone who always gets a good deal, but in fact, he never got one," Manning says. The customer saw the TV, decided to buy it without any research (even though he described himself as a person who always does research) and at the last minute asked the clerk for a better price. The clerk knocked off 10% from the full list price, which brought it down to a few hundred dollars more than he would have paid if he had gone to a shopping engine and ordered from the low-price web site.

"His real goal was to feel that he got a good deal," rather than to actually get a good deal Manning says. "He will probably never understand that about himself. He has margin written all over him." And a face-to-face interview is the key to understanding that particular nuance and many others.