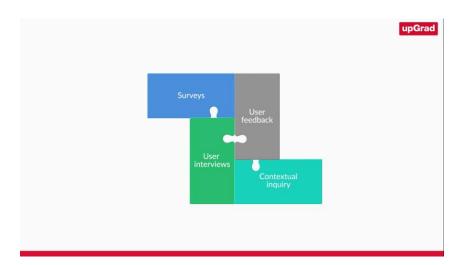


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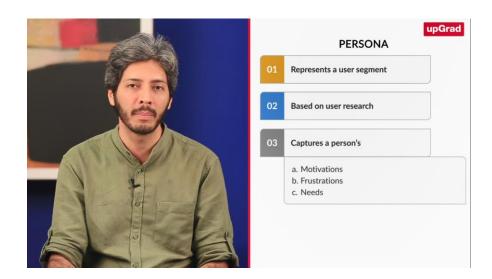
Personas



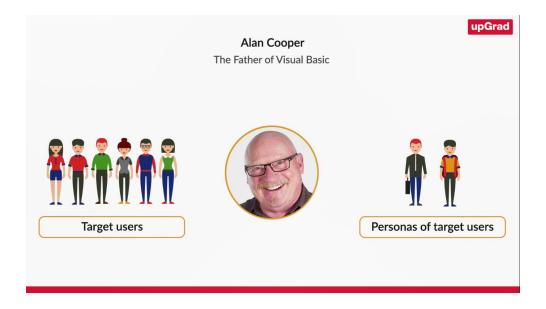
Hey there. Welcome to a fresh new session in which you learn about an important aspect of product management called product artefacts. You are well equipped with the knowledge of collecting user data through surveys, interviews, contextual inquiry, and user feedback. Now suppose you conducted some research for your product, you'd have gathered mountains of data about user, motivation and needs. But you don't know how exactly to put it together. Just like these puzzle pieces here. They are all there, but I just don't know how to make sense of it. And this is what this module will address. How to bring together all your user data and make sense of it through product artefacts?



Let's start off with the first one called personas. Say you have a product idea and you want to figure out who are the people who would use your product. Now you will obviously not go around looking for people in order to identify the best users. So, what's the best thing to do here? Well, here's the answer. You must take all your research data and create what's called personas, which are representations of your product's different user segments. Let's hear more about this from our subject matter expert.



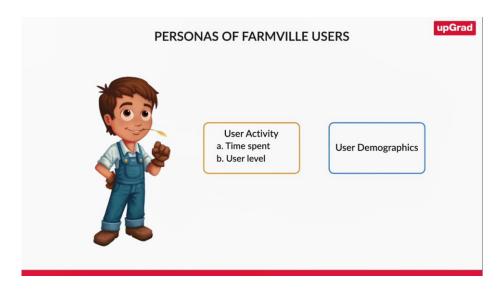
A persona is a representation of a user segment for the product you're developing and is based on the user research done by it. It Captures a person's motivations, frustrations, and their needs. You can create a persona for a user segment by taking all your user research observations and combining them together to make a personality for your user because this persona is a result of your observations. It is assumed to be a individual but does not depict any real person. Understanding the historical context is helpful for understanding the concept of personas.



Personas were introduced by Alan Cooper in 1980s. Alan Cooper was a prominent software developer who invented visual basic and wrote various books on interaction design. While working on software development, Cooper interviewed a lot of users and got to know them so well that he started thinking like them, to evaluate the ideas from their perspective. While working with other stakeholders, Cooper felt the need to have something formal that would help other people see from a user's point of view. Thus, he developed concrete deliverables for personas that help people who did not do any user research themselves understand users. The process has evolved over time, but the motivation remains the same.



How can personas help you as a PM? They help you understand the psychology of your users and can help you to make critical decisions related to design and functionality during the development process. For example, at Zinga, personas were created for all existing Farmville players. This was done at the peak of Farmville.

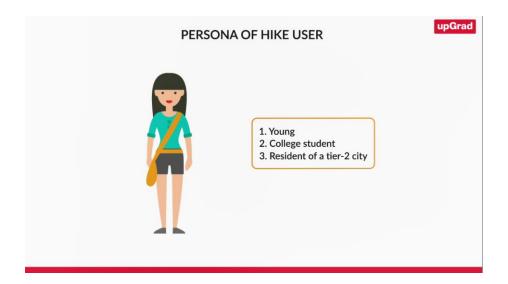


These were based on activity, time spent inside the game, the level of the user, and a deep understanding of user demographics. This help designers and product managers understand the core users and improve the product as per their need.



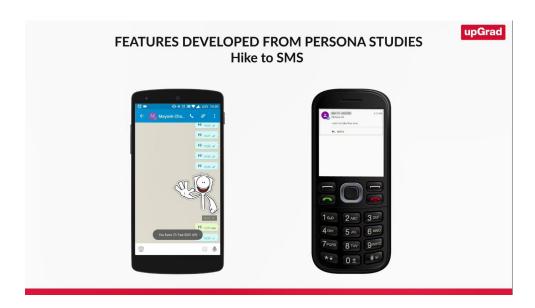


As a PM, personas would help you to communicate what the user experience should be to stakeholders involved like designers, developers and anyone else participating in the product development. They tell us for whom the product is being developed for and whom not to focus on. For projects that have more than one user type or more than one user persona, they help to identify which users are more valuable than others.



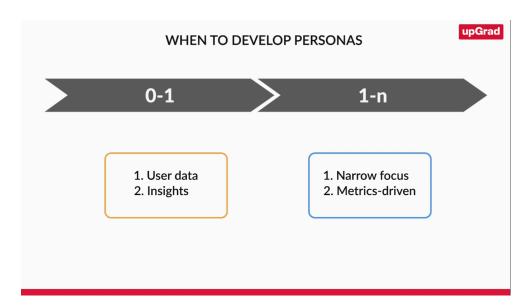
For example, at Hike, personas studies helped in narrowing down the focus of the app and building a roadmap that would turn the valuable persona into a loyal user. The valuable persona that we found was of that of a young college going student in our tier two city. Now, this helped us narrow down the focus because we tried to figure out the problems that young students face while communicating with each other, plus the kind of problems they face while communicating with their parents who might not have smartphones.





Based on this, we were able to develop features like Hike to SMS, where a Hike user could send a message to someone who does not have a smartphone and they will receive it as an SMS and they could respond to it, and that response would still be seen inside hike.

Similarly, hike was able to create features like hiding your chat so that young people could communicate with each other without having their nosy parents or teachers investigate the kind of messages that they were sending. All these features were developed because of a deep understanding of the kind of persona that used hike.



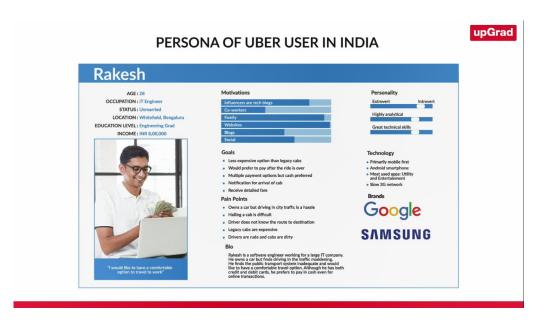
It is critical to define a customer persona type to solve for specific needs. At Practo, personas were built for its clinic management software and are still developed for any new product it builds. So, when should personas be developed? Persona studies can be done both before starting work on a new product or in the later stages of a product's life cycle. During the later stages, it is mainly done to narrow the focus and become more metrics driven. While working on a new project, persona development is done at the early stages itself after you have insights about your user from user research.



Now as an aspiring PM, you should know that if you join a large corporation, you may never have to create personas as these would already exist, but they may need to be updated over time. Also, you should know that not all companies use personas, and it may happen that you may be working at a place where they are not developed and used. But it is good to know that personas can make your product development process easier and creating them would help you in understanding your user better and give them a great experience.



Okay, so now you know what a persona is and how you can make use of it as a PM. To recap, a persona is a representation of a user segment for the product you are developing, but what actually makes up a persona and how do you go about building it from the data you collected to user research? Let's find out.



Well, let's look at a persona to understand what a person looks like. Usually looking at a persona for a user who uses Uber in India, the persona may feel daunting at first with so much information. To understand the various components, we will look at each of these elements individually. The first thing we look at is the profile. This module combines

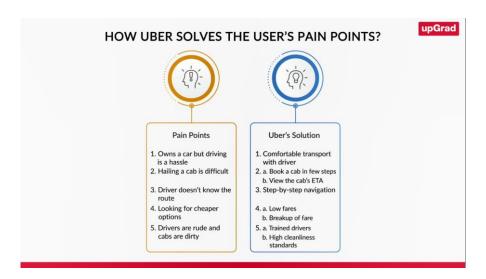


information about demographics, geography, education level and income group. A photo is also added to make the persona appeared more real.

As you can see here, the persona is of a person named Rakesh who lives in Whitefield, Bangalore suburb, is an IT professional with an annual salary of around 8 lakhs. He's an engineering graduate and is currently unmarried. Now, this is a one-liner that summarizes what the person would like the product to do. Here, you can see that it says, I would like to have a comfortable option to travel to work.

This signifies what the user would essentially want from Uber in a single line. The next bit is the bio. This is a large text paragraph that summarizes what the user does, what he feels would make his life easier. It is mainly there to create a story to connect you, the product manager with the user. For the persona of Rakesh, it says, Rakesh is a professional working for a large IT company. He owns a car but finds driving in the traffic maddening. He finds the public transportation system inadequate and would love to have a comfortable travel option. Although he has both credit and debit cards, he prefers to pay in cash even for online transactions.

The next part is the pain points. This element consists of what the user fields are, the real pain points and what he needs the product to solve. This is one of the most important elements of the persona and we'll help you decide if your product will solve the problems of the user and what features to add or remove.

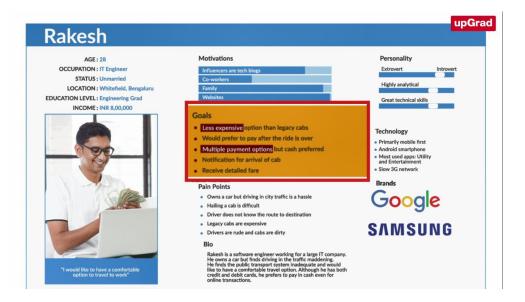


Let's see what the major pain points are for Rakesh and how Uber solves these. He owns a car but finds driving it to work too much of a hustle. Uber solves this problem by providing him with a comfortable transport option. Hailing a cab is difficult. Using Uber, Rakesh can book a cab in a few clicks and even he knows that the ETA of the cab is. Driver does not know the route to the destination. Uber provides the driver with a step by step navigation that adapts the route as per the traffic conditions making the commute of breeze.

Rakesh would also like a cheaper option than legacy cabs, and Uber has low affairs than normal cabs and provides Rakesh with the clear breakup of the fair. The drivers in old school cab companies are rude and dirty and Uber provides training to the drivers and has standards for maintaining the cab, thereby solving the problem space by Rakesh. Hence,



you see that Uber solves all the major pain points of the user, thereby making it a successful product, that it has become.



User goals. It includes what the user hopes to achieve by using the product. These may include essential as well as aspirational goals. For Rakesh, what he hopes to achieve from a product like Uber is less expensive travel options, should have multiple payment options, preferably cash, arrive at a destination in time. Notification of arrival for the cab and fare after the trip is over.

Motivation, this element lists down the factors that would motivate the user to use your product. For Rakesh, the biggest motivation for using Uber like app would be that it makes his commute less anxious and the overall experience is great. It also includes information regarding what or who influences users to use a new product or feature. It could be a tech blog, his coworkers or anyone in his family.

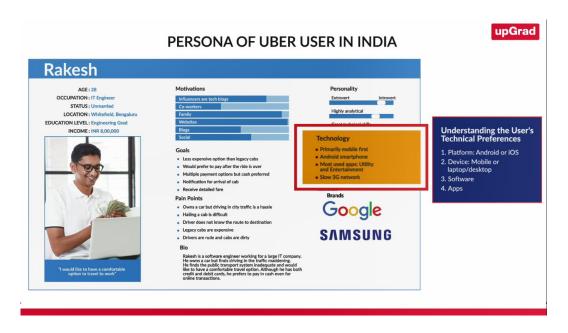
Personality. This element contains information about the personality of the person. That is, how is he in real life? It generally includes if the person is an extrovert or an introvert, the scale of his analytical ability, emotional quotient, etc.





The aim of this element is to get an idea about the psychology of the user so that the product can be tweaked as per that. This element is especially useful for creating the interaction design and addition or deletion of features.

Suppose you find out that the majority of your user personas have a highly social and extrovert personality. It would be good to add social sharing capabilities to your product. As you can see in the Uber persona, Rakesh is a bit of an introvert and not a fan of social media. He's highly analytical and possesses great technical skills.



Brands. This element contains information about the brands that the users connect to the most and frequently used their products. This again helps you in getting to know the thought process of your user better. Rakesh admires and connects with brands like Samsung, Google, etc. These are the brands whose products he uses daily and most of these help him in his professional life.

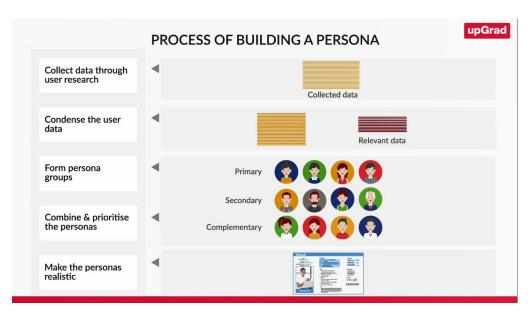


The next bit is very critical, technology. This element contains information about the technology interests of the user. What types of devices does he use to access the web? Which software does he use frequently? The types of apps he uses on his mobile device. This information helps you a lot in figuring out the platform to develop for whether the majority of users are Android users or iOS users. If they use mobile devices more than a laptop or a computer. Knowledge about the types of software and apps they use will help you in figuring out the types of designs, functionalities that attract them.

Here we see that Rakesh majorly uses his mobile device to access the web. His most-used apps are utility and entertainment apps. Also, he uses a mid-range Android device working on slow 3G networks. So, Uber should focus on building for such devices and take the slow internet speeds into consideration and optimize the products for these factors.



As you saw, there are numerous elements that go into building a persona. So, how do you get these elements together and build a persona from scratch?



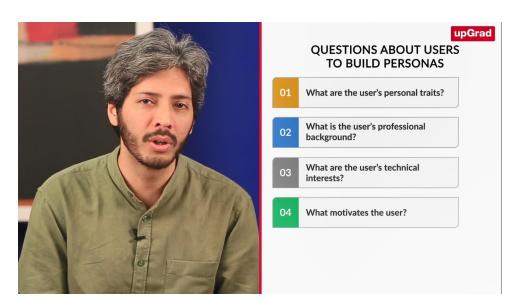
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A persona building process generally follows these steps, a collection of information from all sources. This involves gathering information about your potential users through various methods like interviews, surveys, and contextual inquiry. You already have this information gathered during your user research process.

After you have collected the data, you need to condense your research and look for characteristics that are specific and relevant to the product and users. When you have this condensed data with you, you need to sit together with your team and brainstorm together to organize elements into persona groups that represent your target users.

After this stage, you will have rough versions of personas ready with you. Now you just need to combine and prioritize the rough personas. After you have a set of personas ready, divide them into primary, secondary, and complementary levels. The last thing to do is to make your personas more realistic. Develop descriptions of each persona's background, motivations and expectations. Give a name to your persona and add information to humanize the person.



Some of the questions that would help you in developing a persona and look at the collected user research are defined purpose of the product. What are the goals of the product and what purpose does it serve? For describing the user, you would look for answers to the following questions, personal traits. What is the age of the person, what is the gender, and what is the highest level of education he or she has received?

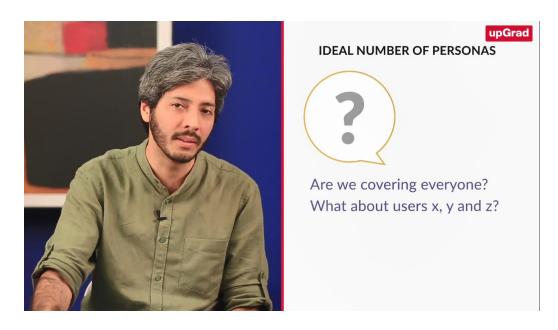
For describing his professional background, how much work experience does he have? Where does the person use your product and what is the need that will cause him to use your product? What does he currently do for the same?

Technical interests, what devices does the person use on a regular basis, which is the primary method used for accessing the web? How much time is spent on web browsing and what are the most used applications and products? For knowing the user motivation. Look for answers to questions like what is the user looking for? What are his needs? What is he looking to do? The answer to these questions will help you to build elements of your persona, and it'll also help in condensing and refining down the number of personas.



So far, you've learned that the persona is the roadmap to understanding your user at a deeper level. It gives you insight into the personality traits and habit of a user segment, such as pain points, user goals and motivation, and also the kind of technology and brands your users are into. But what if your product has distinct user segments which may not fit into one persona? For instance, a shopping app may have many different user groups using it to shop for different things. So, should you make more than one persona and if so, then exactly how many.

Here's another question. Some details of a user persona might change over time. For example, a user's choice of brands might change depending on their location. This means that the persona you create may easily become outdated. What should you do in such a situation? Let's go ahead and understand how you can tackle such issues.



How many personas should a PM consider? The natural reaction as a PM is to have quite a few. Example, one for all the major rules plus a few more to cover the minor roads. This leads to eight or 12 personas often, sometimes more. It feels safe though, though since you feel you have your basics covered. It satisfies the nagging question in your head.



Am I sure we are covering everyone? What about users x, Y, and z? However, personas are most effective when you have only three or four main ones.

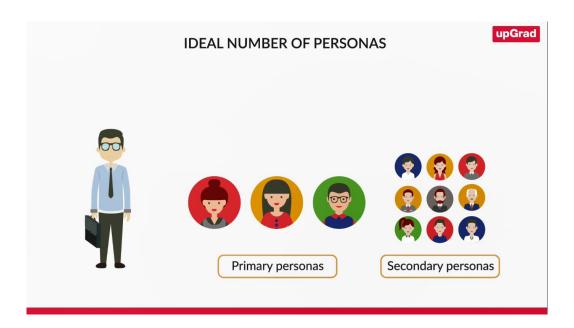


Remember, one of the main strengths of personas is the fact that you get to know them as people, so you think like them and thus make better product decisions. If so, how many different people can, an average product team which is very busy get to know really well.



You may be wondering if it's safe to have only a few personas. It is and here is why. Consider beer and whiskey. Both are made from the same stuff, but a small amount of whiskey packs much more punch than an even larger amount of beer. Whiskey is distilled beer. The essential qualities have been heightened while the rest has been removed. Likewise, with personas, you can distil your personas down to their essential qualities.





To summarize, you take your big bunch of personas and you ask yourself which are the really important qualities we need to bear in mind. Then create a smaller set of personas or select a few to be true primary personas. You can always keep the other persona as a secondary persona. Of course, you can use them when needed, but don't expect people to really get to know a dozen personas well. Personas should be updated frequently. Innovation and competition significantly shift the attitudes and behaviours of a company's customers.

In order to keep personas current, there should be a consistent dialogue with customers and users. As a PM, you should commit to maintaining the personas as living and breathing documents. Create a centralized process for communicating new user research and updating the personas accordingly. Let's see an example of why personas need to be revised.





Previously, we have seen an example of a persona of an Uber app user in India. As you may remember, the Persona was for Rakesh, a user from Bangalore. This persona is actually a revised one. When Uber entered India, it encountered a completely different user and hence the person was revised. The initial persona was for a user from the US called Paul and was completely different. Let's compare both the personas and see how the revision helped Uber adapt to user needs in India and gained success. The major revisions that affect the product are related to the user goals, pain points, technology and motivations.

We will now look at these in detail. As you can see, user goals have changed a lot. The Indian user wants to be able to book a cab easily and wants to travel comfortably. He also wants the travel to be cheaper and also wants to be able to pay by cash, while the user in the US has some similar goals, but instead, he wanted to have payment options other than cash. This difference in goals is what led to the introduction of cheaper Uber go cabs and cash payments in India.

The pain points for both are also different. The Indian user owns a car but finds the driving too stressful. His US counterpart, Paul, however, does not own his own vehicle and is completely dependent on public transportation for his daily commute. Hence Paul will use the service even if he has to pay what he normally pays for the commute. Whereas Rakesh will use the service only if he finds substantial benefit against using his own car.

Revisions also need to be made to the technology element. Indian user is a mobile-first user and majorly uses midrange android devices. The user in the US uses an IOS device, hence more focus is on building for that platform. The feature that Uber added you to this revision in persona has played a large part in its success in India and is a great example of why personas should be revised.

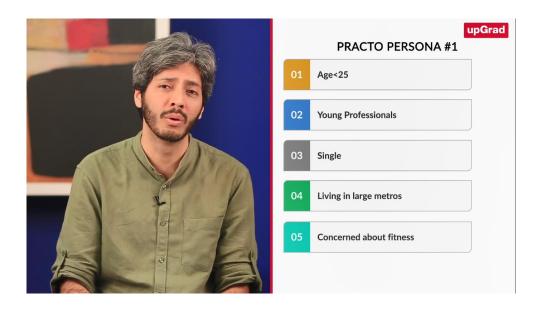


Okay, you now know how to develop and revise a persona and it's used in product development. But it would be interesting to understand the process of personal development through a real-world example. Let's see how they do it at Practo.

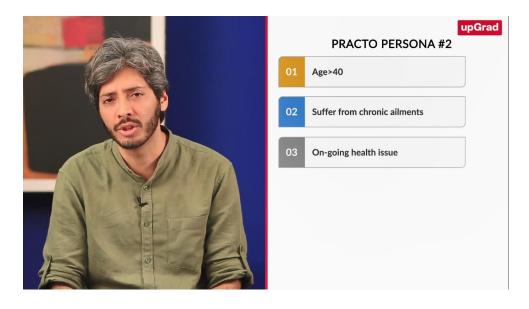


As part of a new initiative, we recently did a persona exercise at Practo. We were looking at our users for our Practo app and we're trying to figure out the different types of people who end up using the app. We broadly came up with three personas.





The first one was people under the age of 25. These are young professionals, mostly single living in large metros like Bombay, Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai. These people typically because they're young, they are healthier, have no health issues, but are very particular about not necessarily the curative health, but preventive health, which means they want to make sure that they don't put on weight, they want to go to gyms regularly, some of them want to follow athletic pursuits like running or swimming. So, this is our first kind of persona. And we typically find that a lot of these users download the app but don't have any significant use for our product because well, they are young, they're healthy, they don't necessarily need to search for doctors.



The second persona that we found was for people above the age of 40. These were people who were suffering from either some sort of a chronic ailment like heart issues or blood pressure or diabetes or had some sort of an ongoing health issue. An ongoing health issue could be something like a broken leg for which you need constant physiotherapy for an extended period of time.



That third persona that we made was very interesting to us. This was people between the ages of 25 and 40. These are essentially people who might be married, might have children, might have parents who are getting a little older. This was the person of a caretaker, somebody who's responsible for other people's health. And this is critical for us because we realized that a big chunk of bookings on Practo happened not by people who were looking for a doctor for themselves, but for people who are looking for doctors for their near and dear ones.

Now, this is critical because, in India, people typically sell Medicaid and are not very good at taking care of their own health. However, they are incredibly good and it's very important to them to take better care of their parent's health, of the health of a spouse or the health of a child. So, these three personas kind of helped us figure out which is the one persona that we should be really focusing on.

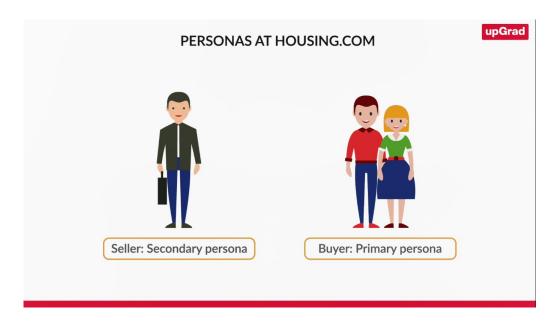
So, that was an example of how personas are developed at Practo. Now let's look at another example of how personas had product development at housing.com.



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I think Personas are very important because every time you build something, you run it through the personas and you try to perceive how these personas will, you know, experience the product and you'll be able to figure out whether it's relevant for your main personas or your secondary personas. And it helps you understand why you need to put what things where right?

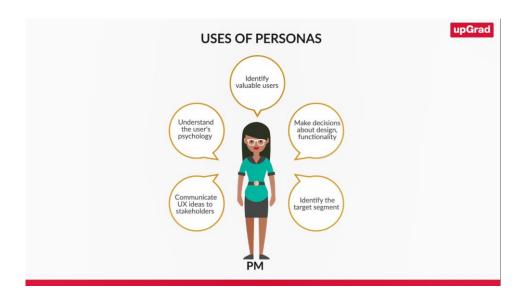


So, if you're looking at something, let's say, if I had to give you an example is, I'd say if you were to look at if even building something for sellers, sellers are a secondary or you know, tertiary personas. We position ourselves as a platform for buyers and we're most concerned about buyers. But then we thought of this building, this feature for sellers, which would tell them the value of their home right now, and we said why not? We're doing this cool new tool and we can do some PR around it and why not put it out there alone page? And we figured that you know if you just simply run this through your persona and say that, okay, five of the personas that we have or seven of the personas that we have, this is only relevant for one of them, which happens to be a tertiary persona.

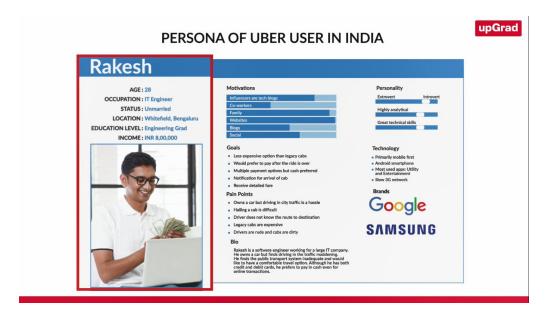
And if you put it out there on the homepage, a lot of other people could probably go down that funnel, which could be your primary personas or your secondary personas. And you don't want that to happen, right? So, if you, if you look at this thing and if you look at, if you look analyze it through the filters of persona, I think you get a lot of answers. And it's something that is just ingrained in you after a while because personas range from what, five to seven.

And if you do it for even a month on everything that you build, I think you don't even need to have those personas in front of you thereafter. And you can just like think about it and in your mind, the swiping happens, this persona, that persona, that persona, and you already understand, you know, if you should be doing this or not.





Wasn't that an insightful session on personas. By now, you should be able to develop personas using data from user research. Let's do a quick recap. We started with the definition of a persona, a representation of a particular user segment for the product you're developing. It's created through user research and helps you understand the psychology of your users. It also helps you to make critical decisions related to design and functionality during the development process.

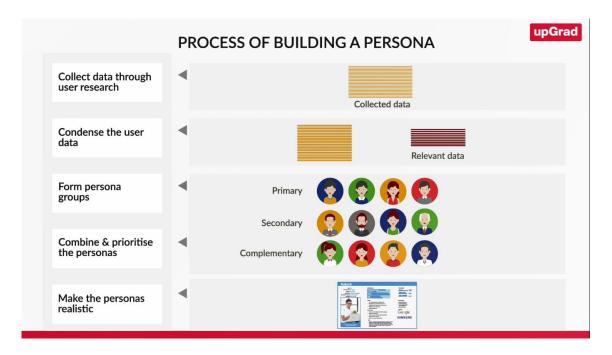


Next, you learned what a persona contains. The profile gives you basic information about the persona. It can also include a photograph to make the persona more realistic. The quote is a one-liner summarizing the persona. The buyer is the bit that connects you to a user. It specifies what the user things would make his or her life easier. The pain points highlight what problems the user has and how your product can solve them.

The user goals show what the user hopes to achieve through the product. The section on motivation gives you information about the factors that would motivate your user to use the product. The personality section helps you the



determine what kind of designs and features your user might prefer and the technology section helps you determine the functionality of your product based on users' circumstances.



Lastly, knowing which brands your user likes helps you understand him or her better. Besides what a persona contains, you also learned how to build a persona from scratch. Collect the data, condense your data, brainstorm with the team, combine the rough personas, and divide them into primary, secondary, and complimentary levels and make your personas realistic by adding personal details.





After this, you learned about the importance of having three or four main personas with distilled user traits, so that you can understand the characteristics of a user better. You also saw how important it is for you to revise the persona through the comparison of two Uber personas, the original American personal Nepal and the revised Indian persona Rakesh.

At the end of the session, you've got a real-world example of how personas are developed at Practo and learned about the three personas that immersed, people under the age of twenty-five, people above the age of forty, and people between the ages of twenty-five and fourteen. You also saw how personas fit into product development at housing.com. With that, you're all prepped to develop personas as a product manager. Until we meet next, ciao.

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