

Task 2.4 | UX Immersion

# User Persona

FlowR Pod  
Expert App





**FlowR**  
**Pod**

Start-Up  
Growth  
Community

# Outline

- Problem Statement
- Empathy Map
- Design Persona
- Templates

# FlowRPod

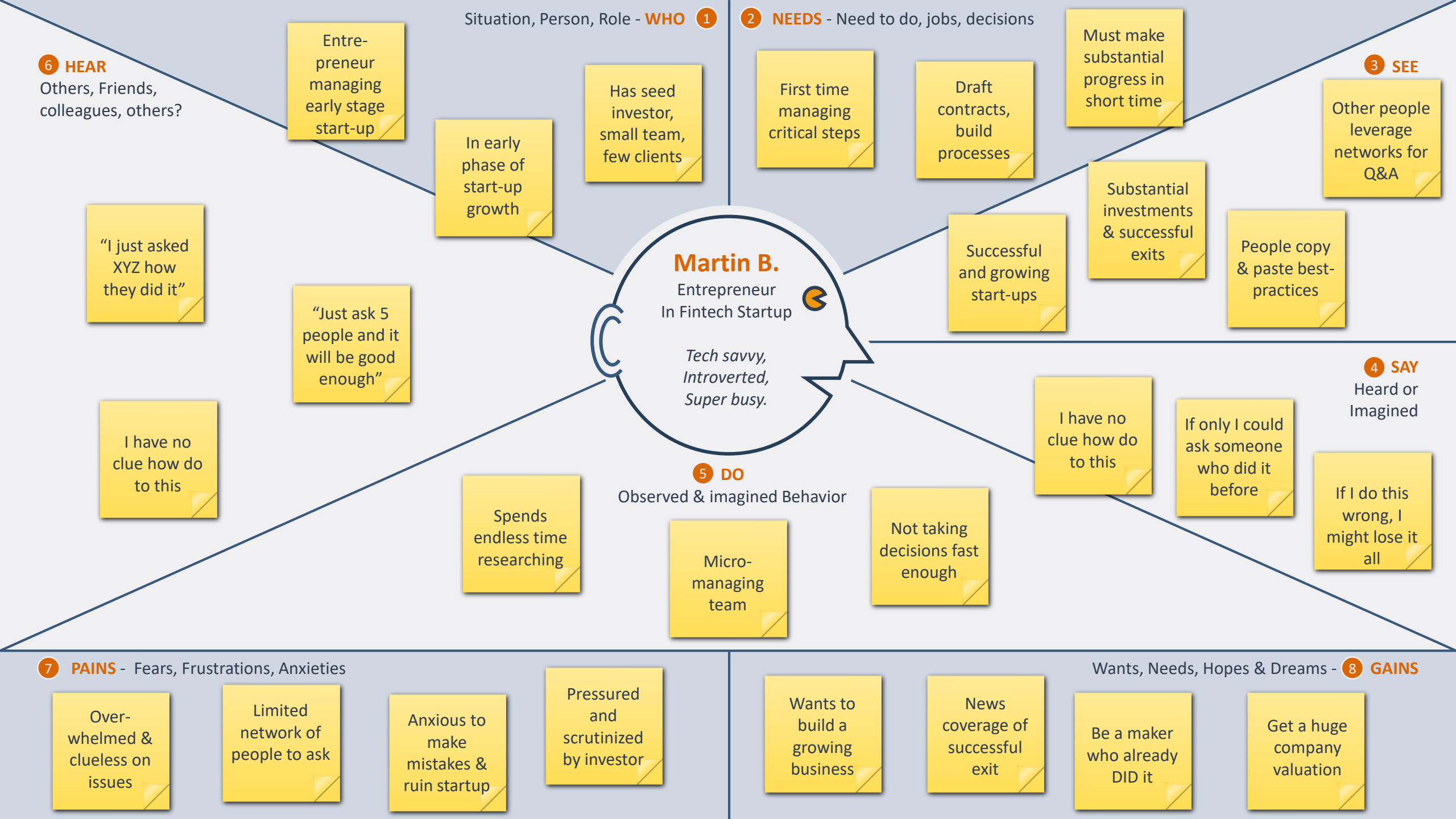
Expert App for Start-Ups

*Goal is to provide an App that helps  
**Entrepreneurs and Start-Up employees** find and directly  
connect with qualified experts to answer questions specific to  
the **challenges of launching, managing and growing a start-up**  
which otherwise are difficult or expensive to obtain.*

*The App shall provide all means necessary for communication  
needed to solve their problems and to facilitate expert payment.*

*We will know this to be true when users sign-up and post  
questions in various categories seeking out expert advice.*

## Problem Statement





*"Setting up processes for a start-up is an Art, not Science – advice can't be found in books but in people"*



## PROFILE

- Paul is a 26y old male working in Berlin's vibrant start-up ecosystem
- Paul holds an economics degree and worked in start-ups for 2 years
- As entrepreneur in residence Paul is responsible for various projects



## SKILLS

- |              |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expertise    | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Network      | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Extraverted  | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Mobile Use   | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Social Media | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

# Paul | THE MOTIVATED JUNIOR EMPLOYEE

## Venture Developer and Account Manager



## JOBS & ACTIVITIES

- As Account Manager in a Fintech Start-Up, Paul is responsible for customer satisfaction and customer service.
- He designs and sets-up various processes in Sales and Customer Service from scratch.
- Paul is a fire fighter like most in his team and must solve many new problems as they come, often in terrains unknown to him.



## GOALS & NEEDS

- Paul wants to learn and grow and become a capable Start-Up Entrepreneur himself some day, best by learning from seniors.
- To solve his challenges, Paul often needs to consult with experienced people to solve his business individual challenges.
- His network is still small and he often doesn't know whom to ask, spending hours online researching for solutions.



## MOTIVATIONS

- Paul is thrilled by execution, setting things up and putting them in action.
- He desires to efficiently build first good-enough solutions to move things forward.
- As an extravert, he loves feedback & praise for having done things well and fast.



## FRUSTRATIONS

- Paul hates to waste time researching or speaking w. people who can't solve his issue
- He is anxious to make mistakes or be judged for his tendency to over engineer



## QUOTES

- *"Speaking with start-up Veterans is so helpful. Experienced people just know what to do in a pragmatic way, where online research doesn't yield anything. Setting up processes is an Art, not Science"*



„I’m always out looking for new talent and opportunities to invest in promising start-ups & Entrepreneurs“



## PROFILE

- Maria is a 36y old female living in metropolitan Berlin
- She holds an engineering degree & MBA and exited 3 start-ups already
- She now acts as privateer and board advisor in several start-ups



## SKILLS

- |                |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Expertise    | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| • Network      | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| • Extraverted  | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| • Mobile Use   | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| • Social Media | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

# Maria | THE ACCLAIMED EXPERT

## Series Entrepreneur & Start-Up Veteran



### JOBS & ACTIVITIES

- As Co-Founder of a B2C Start-Up, Maria spends a lot of time managing her team, fighting fires and fundraising
- As board-advisor she helps steering her portfolio companies, particularly during the early wild phases of growth.
- As seed investor she is always on the watch to identify talent & business to invest in.



### GOALS & NEEDS

- Maria needs to find and attract talent for her businesses.
- She also builds and grows her personal brand in order to build business gravitas and to support her fundraising activities.
- Despite her expertise, Maria often encounters new challenges in new fields and seeks out expert to discuss solutions.



### MOTIVATIONS

- Maria is a coach and mentor by heart. She loves to develop and build talent.
- As she too was a mentee and some point, she feels proud if able to give advice.
- As an extravert she seeks out feedback often and is conscious about her reputation.



### FRUSTRATIONS

- Maria despises show-offs and people talking big without the required expertise.
- As such she hates wasting time connecting and speaking with just “the wrong people”



### QUOTES

- “Once I had a hugely important issue and sought out advise from a self-proclaimed expert. I followed his advise only to discover later on that the solutions was not thought through and it cost me dearly. Never again.”

# Interview Responses





# Quotes

*„Trust is key. I must get the feeling that I found an expert I can trust with my problems and who's capable and trustworthy enough to find a good solution for me“*



**Sven G.**  
Engineer &  
Consultant



**Flo W.**  
Product  
Manager

*„I want advise on things that bring real value or cost me otherwise. The right expert should come to me - I don't want to waste time reaching out and be disappointed.*

*„I came across many problems during my early phase start-up that required one-off expert advise that would have saved hours of work and potential failures“*



**Vera P.**  
Series Entre-  
preneur



**Sven G.**  
Autom. Engineer  
& Consultant



## BIO

- **Bio:** Male, German, 33
- **Ed':** Engineering and Economics
- **Job:** Consultant in Automotive industry
- Has many passionate hobbies
- Loves building things
- Engages actively online

### 1) Last time you had questions to consult w. an expert online? (example)

- Last weekend, mechanical design question on light switches
- Google or browsing through forums didn't help (too specific)
- Solutions: going to a hardware shop or electric expert visit

### 2) Suitable problem categories for online experts? (context, time, category)

- Urgency: not too low (use Forums, I can wait), not too high (emergency call)
- Importance: nothing too critical (would seek out a trusted expert personally)
- Examples: Admin work (Tax advice), legal questions (dispute at work) or local leisure advice (recommended bike tours in Berlin)
- An Expert app is somewhere between online forums and real expert agencies

### 3) Use of existing tools, likes and frustrations (features, situations)

- During E-Com purchase needed advice on product details (custom post-its): engaged w. chat-bot who categorized my request & connected me to expert
- I liked the chat bot engagement that helped me specify my question in the right category – felt very engaged which and created trust (get the right help)
- Forums has experts deep into subjects. Direct exchange helps build trust, but its hard to identify sharlatans that shout loud opinions but have no real clue

### 4) How to establish trust for qualified experts? (qualif., payments)

- Avoid pretenders, best by expert (user) reviews, tiered pricing (pay more for more qualification) or certified trust backgrounds (car mechanic -> car expert)
- I want to choose the expert myself after assessing their qualifications
- Platform transparency is key: how did he become expert? Clear pricing?

### 5) How to engage and establish expert contact in a way that creates trust?

- Platform recommendations or options of **“tagging” my questions while typing questions** give feeling of engagement and “active processing of my input”
- Want to understand **how the platform recommends experts** based on my input: Transparency on „Why is this expert good for me“?
- Want **more insights on the expert for my review** before selecting them: trust he is qualified, has good ratings, has relevant background.
- Experts should **first apply to my questions w. proof that they can solve it** (e.g., draft proposal), only then would I assign the mandate to speak with expert

### 6) How urgent do you need answers, or how would you like to schedule Q&A?

- Depends on problem, but between 0.5-2 weeks is enough. Not super urgent (emergency), not too unimportant either (> weeks)
- Don't need to be connected *now*, but scheduling support would be great

### 7) How do you think about a fair way to pay for the advise?

- Price should be proportional to work or effort, but transparently
- Price depends on scope of work, complexity and type of problem
- Payment via credit card, PayPal etc. – the usual suspects

### 8) What means do you need to exchange relevant information once connected?

- Text (email, sms, chat), Data (images, documents), and speaking (audio, video)
- Skype would cover all essential features



## Flo W.

IT Product Manager



## BIO

- **Bio:** Male, German, 32
- **Ed':** Engineering and Economics
- **Job:** IT Product Manager

- Doesn't have many hobbies
- Spends a lot of time online
- Is rather lazy, also online

### 1) Last time you had questions to consult w. an expert online? (example)

- Never consulted with experts directly. Barely connects to anyone for his questions but rather reads-up on issues himself to solve problems.
- Only memory: after desperately looking for complicated details on an insurance plan he consulted with a trusted insurance advisor via friends
- Does not like direct peer-to-peer engagement or phone calls unless he really knows its worth the time and energy (doesn't like calls)

### 2) Suitable problem categories for online experts? (context, time, category)

- General: anything where I can save money or get real value out of a call, e.g. gain tax refunds w. advice, enable to fix something w/o having to find and seek out a professional – **Opportunity Cost principle**
- Professional (Start-Ups): Anything that causes high work load once, but could be shortened with an experienced advisor (e.g. tax declaration)

### 3) Use of existing tools, likes and frustrations (features, situations)

- None really except Quora & Gute Frage etc. but only for reading up and redirected from google searches
- Stackoverflow & Github for real tech expert advise – own microcos,

### 4) How to establish trust for qualified experts? (qualif., payments)

- Absolutely crucial. Want to know advisor is qualified before calling; time (and money) invested for disappointment is total downer
- Sources of trust: references of people I know, LinkedIn Profiles & Reviews, history with or references from companies he knows

### 5) How to engage and establish expert contact in a way that creates trust?

- I want to stay passive as long as I have the right expert matching guaranteed"
- Advisor should come to me (and apply), not me to advisor
- Don't want to write to people and get no answers – good pre-selection is MUST
- I want to know that I really WANT to speak with this person, best would be 3-4 chat messages to exchange and confirm suitability

### 6) How urgent do you need answers, or how would you like to schedule Q&A?

- Nothing too urgent, never ad-hoc
- Roundabout 1 week ahead scheduling

### 7) How do you think about a fair way to pay for the advise?

- Payment only when satisfied
- A subscription tariff could work if quality is high throughout
- I'm willing to pay a lot for difficult and costly questions that could impact my start-up success significantly

### 8) What means do you need to exchange relevant information once connected?

- The usual vide conferencing features should suffice



**Vera P.**  
Entrepreneur



## BIO

- **Bio:** Female, German, 40
- **Ed':** Chinese and Economics
- **Job:** Co-Founder in Start-Up

- Hustles a lot with start-up issues
- Doesn't like networking too much

### 1) Last time you had questions to consult w. an expert online? (example)

- Not that she can remember, but she had a lot of questions throughout her start-up career where she relied on expert input to overcome problems
- Typically activates her network to identify and connect to experts in fields for specific problems in her start-up development, mostly early stage

### 2) Suitable problem categories for online experts? (context, time, category)

- Anything really that needs to be done 80/20 in a pragmatic way that I have never done before and only need a nudge or starting point to begin with
- There are many one-off issues in the beginning: setting up pricing, managing an office, filing employee taxes, starting up customer service etc.
- These issues rely on experience rather than knowledge. An experienced advisor could add a lot of value within an hour

### 3) Use of existing tools, likes and frustrations (features, situations)

- Mostly using linked in to screen and see where I or my direct peers know people that I could connect to and who bring the required expertise

### 4) How to establish trust for qualified experts? (qualif., payments)

- I mostly rely on peer-to-peer reviews or direct referrals
- Also the LinkedIn Bio or work history (careers, exits, successes etc.) helps me form a picture of a person I trust or don't trust

### 5) How to engage and establish expert contact in a way that creates trust?

- I'd like to see a proposed list of people that should be suitable for my problem and transparency on WHY the App suggests these
- Transparency on pricing and the expert bio gives me insights to form my own opinion. I need to double check the system recommendations before connecting
- I need proof that the expert can add value on my particular problem, this often only can be clarified in a direct exchange, chat or phone or any other

### 6) How urgent do you need answers, or how would you like to schedule Q&A?

- Somewhat urgent but never the same day
- Should be scheduled conveniently, maybe 1-7 days ahead

### 7) How do you think about a fair way to pay for the advise?

- Should pay only for success and satisfactory answers
- Could imagine a base-rate and a second half success fraction that is paid only or in shares of my satisfaction

### 8) What means do you need to exchange relevant information once connected?

- Phone typically is enough, but sometimes I need to share documents and information
- Any of the usual video conferencing systems and software should suffice

# Templates



