

Personas 1 hr

The goal of this exercise is to build empathy for who you're serving and what motivates them to interact with your organization and communications. Use the template on the next page to create 2-4 fictional characters (personas) that represent the primary constituencies or audiences for your organization's communications and resources. Do this work as a group, brainstorming responses to areas on the template. You can draw inspiration from real people you know, but try not to get fixated on one particular person.

Unlike the more traditional tool of "target audiences," these fictional characters have names, ages, cultural and class backgrounds, primary languages, likes, dislikes, etc. I encourage you to do some image searching (or sketching) and tape a portrait of each person in the upper right corner.

What's so powerful about personas is that we can test our assumptions by asking questions like "Would Lisa really use that resource?" or "Do you think José would be more likely to join our list if we had our mission statement in Spanish as well as English on the home page?" or "Would Margaret get freaked out if we use explicit income-level language on our donation page?"

For more on personas, check out www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/personas.html

NAME

AGE:

CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

CLASS BACKGROUND:

PRIMARY LANGUAGE:

PRIMARY WAY I ACCESS THE INTERNET:

PHOTO

I like...

Values, catch phrases, shows, websites, books, etc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I dislike...

Values, catch phrases, shows, websites, books, etc..

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I'm interacting with your org/website because I want to...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.