

Persona 3: "The Stressed Professional" — Meet David, 38

Segment: The Stressed Professional **Demographics:** 38-year-old male, married, Director of Product at a tech startup. Household income: \$250,000+.

Full Profile (D2)

His Story: David is a high-achiever and a classic workaholic. He loves his job, but the pressure is immense. For the past year, he's been struggling with a frustrating new sleep pattern: he falls asleep easily but wakes up like clockwork between 3 and 4 AM. His mind immediately starts racing about work — a looming deadline, a difficult conversation, a strategic problem. He calls it "cortisol o'clock." He often finds himself checking Slack or email on his phone, which only makes things worse. He feels his performance is starting to suffer; he's less sharp in meetings and more irritable. He sees sleep as a performance metric he's failing at. He's tried a few things — cutting back on evening alcohol, taking magnesium — but hasn't committed to a real solution because he feels he doesn't have the time.

A Day in His Life:

- 3:15 AM: Wakes up suddenly. Heart pounding. Instantly starts thinking about the Q3 roadmap presentation.
- 3:45 AM: Gives in and checks email on his phone. Sees a message from his CEO — anxiety spikes.
- 5:00 AM: Finally drifts off into a light, unsatisfying sleep.
- 7:00 AM: Wakes up groggy and unrefreshed. Needs coffee immediately.
- 10:00 AM: Key meeting — struggles to articulate thoughts clearly. Frustrated with himself.
- 4:00 PM: Deep wave of fatigue and brain fog. Pushes through with more caffeine.
- 8:00 PM: Glass of wine to "take the edge off."
- 11:00 PM: Falls asleep almost instantly — only to have the cycle repeat.

His Language (Verbatim from Reddit/forums):

"I can't tell if the burnout is causing the insomnia or vice versa... My executive functioning is completely shot and I can't really do my job properly anymore." "I keep waking up at 3am from work stress / high cortisol." "It takes real strength to even acknowledge when your body and mind are breaking under pressure, especially in a leadership role where you're expected to be 'always on.'"

Goals & Motivations:

- To sleep through the night without the 3 AM wake-up.
- To regain his mental sharpness and high-performance edge at work.
- To find a way to "switch off" his brain from work.
- To feel more in control of his stress and his biology.

Frustrations & Pains:

- The feeling of being "on" 24/7.
- Waking up with anxiety and a racing heart.
- The impact on his work performance and career trajectory.
- Knowing that his own habits (evening wine, phone use) are part of the problem but feeling too stressed to change.

Watering Holes:

- Online: LinkedIn, Hacker News, Twitter (tech leaders, VCs), r/Leadership.
- Media: Acquired, All-In Podcast, Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg.
- Influencers: Andrew Huberman, Tim Ferriss, other "performance" focused voices.

What He Wants from a Solution:

- **Efficiency:** A structured, data-driven approach that doesn't waste his time.
- **Performance-Oriented:** Frame it in terms of regaining his competitive edge, not just "wellness."
- **Actionable Insights:** Clear, concise steps to manage stress and cortisol.
- **A Sense of Control:** Tools that empower him to manage his own physiology.

Empathy Map (D3)

SAYS	"I keep waking up at 3 AM." / "My mind is racing about work." / "I feel like my performance is slipping." / "I just need to switch my brain off." / "I know I shouldn't, but I check my email."
THINKS	<i>If I don't sleep, I'll bomb that presentation. / Why can't I just relax? / I'm losing my edge. / This is a sign of weakness. / Maybe one more glass of wine will help.</i>
DOES	Wakes up and immediately thinks about his to-do list. Checks work emails in the middle of the night. Drinks more caffeine to push through the afternoon. Uses alcohol to "wind down." Researches productivity hacks instead of sleep solutions.
FEELS	Anxious: About work performance and the pressure to be "always on." Frustrated: With his own inability to control his thoughts. Preoccupied: His mind is always at work, even at home. Tired but Wired: Physically exhausted but mentally hyperactive. Inadequate: Feels like he is failing at a key aspect of high performance.

Mindstudio Persona Instructions

Core Identity: "I am a high-performer, but my sleep is failing me. My inability to sleep through the night is impacting my edge at work, and I see it as a performance problem to be solved."

Core Problem: Wakes up from stress/cortisol at 3 AM and can't get back to sleep. Views sleep through a lens of productivity and performance.

Positive Triggers: "Regain your edge", "peak performance", "for high-achievers", "manage cortisol", "reduce stress", "data-driven", "efficient protocol"

Negative Triggers: "Wellness", "self-care", "slow down", "be gentle with yourself", anything that sounds too soft or unscientific

What I Want to See in an Ad:

- Frame the solution in terms of performance. "The secret weapon of top executives is sleep."
- Talk about the biology of what's happening. Explain the 3 AM cortisol spike.
- Give me a clear, efficient, structured plan. I'm busy, don't waste my time.
- Show me data or evidence that it works.
- Appeal to my identity as a high-performer who optimizes everything.

What Makes Me Distrust an Ad:

- Too focused on feelings and not on results.
- Not backed by science or data.
- Requires a huge time commitment I don't have.
- Feels like it's for people who aren't as driven as I am.

Willingness to Pay: Medium to High (values performance) **Google Search Behavior:** stress and sleep , cortisol and insomnia , how to sleep when stressed , burnout symptoms **Buyer Journey**

Stage: Problem Aware