

PERSONAS

A. Definition and Concept: *Personas are fictional characters, which you create based upon your research to represent the different user types that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way. Creating personas will help you understand your users' needs, experiences, behaviors and goals. Creating personas can help you step out of yourself. It can help you recognize that different people have different needs and expectations, and it can also help you identify with the user you're designing for. Personas make the design task at hand less complex, they guide your ideation processes, and they can help you to achieve the goal of creating a good user experience for your target user group.*

As opposed to designing products, services, and solutions based upon the preferences of the design team, it has become standard practice within many human-centered design disciplines to collate research and personify specific trends and patterns in the data as personas. Hence, personas do not describe real people, but you compose your personas based on actual data collected from multiple individuals. Personas add the human touch to what would largely remain cold facts in your research. Creating persona profiles of typical or atypical (extreme) users will help you understand patterns in your research, which synthesizes the types of people you seek to design for. Personas are also known as model characters or composite characters.

Personas provide meaningful archetypes which you can use to assess your design development against. Constructing personas will help you ask the right questions and answer those questions in line with the users you are designing for. For example, "How would Peter, Joe, and Jessica experience, react, and behave in relation to feature X or change Y within the given context?" and "What do Peter, Joe, and Jessica think, feel, do and say?" and "What are their underlying needs we are trying to fulfill?"

B. Personas in Design Thinking

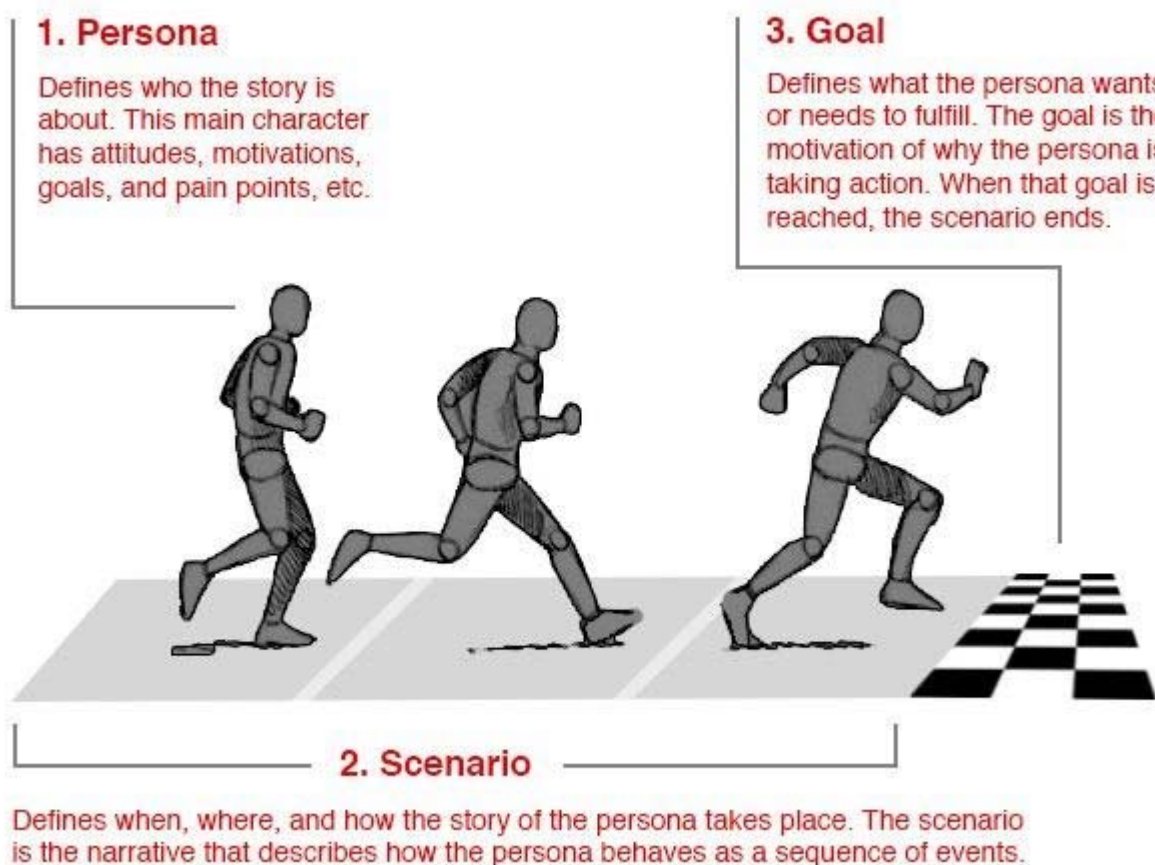
In the design thinking process, designers will often start creating personas during the second phase, the Define phase. In the Define phase, Design Thinkers synthesize their research and findings from the very first phase, the Empathise phase. Using personas is just one method, among others, that can help designers move on to the third phase, the Ideation phase. The personas will be used as a guide for ideation sessions such as Brainstorm, Worst Possible Idea and SCAMPER.

C. Four Different Types of Personas

In her Interaction Design Foundation encyclopedia article, Personas, Ph.D. and specialist in personas, Lene Nielsen, describes four perspectives that your personas can take to ensure that they add the most value to your design project and the fiction-based perspective. Let's take a look at each of them:

1. Goal-directed Personas

This persona cuts straight to the nitty-gritty. “It focusses on: What does my typical user want to do with my product?”. The objective of a goal-directed persona is to examine the process and workflow that your user would prefer to utilize to achieve their goals in interacting with your product or service. There is an implicit assumption that you have already done enough user research to recognize that your product has value to the user and that by examining their goals, you can bring their requirements to life. The goal-directed personas are based upon the perspectives of Alan Cooper, an American software designer and programmer who is widely recognized as the “Father of Visual Basic.”



2. Role-Based Personas


The role-based perspective is also goal-directed, and it also focuses on behavior. The personas of the role-based perspectives are massively data-driven and incorporate data from both qualitative and quantitative sources. The role-based perspective focuses on the user's role in the organization. In some cases, our designs need to reflect upon the part that our users play in their organizations or wider lives. An examination of the roles that our users typically play in real life can help inform better product design decisions. Where will the product be used? What's this

role's purpose? What business objectives are required of this role? Who else is impacted by the duties of this role? What functions are served by this role?

3. Engaging Personas

"The engaging perspective is rooted in the ability of stories to produce involvement and insight. Through an understanding of characters and stories, it is possible to create a vivid and realistic description of fictitious people. The purpose of the engaging perspective is to move from designers seeing the user as a stereotype with whom they are unable to identify and whose life they cannot envision, to designers actively involving themselves in the lives of the personas. The other persona perspectives are criticized for causing a risk of stereotypical descriptions by not looking at the whole person, but instead focusing only on behavior."
– Lene Nielsen

Engaging personas can incorporate both **goal** and **role-directed** personas, as well as the more **traditional** rounded personas. These engaging personas are designed so that the designers who use them can become more engaged with them. The idea is to create a 3D rendering of a user through the use of personas. The more people engage with the persona and see them as 'real', the more likely they will be to consider them during the process design and want to serve them with the best product. These personas examine the **emotions** of the user, their **psychology**, **backgrounds** and make them relevant to the task at hand. The perspective emphasizes how **stories** can engage and bring the personas to life. One of the advocates for this perspective is Lene Nielsen.

 <p>Peter</p>	<p>Works as product manager for a mid-sized company.</p> <p>Is 35 years old, holds a marketing degree.</p> <p>Has got experience working as a product owner on software products with agile teams.</p> <p>Has had some Scrum training.</p>	<p>Has managed mature products successfully. Now faces the challenge of creating a brand-new product.</p> <p>Wants to leverage his agile knowledge but needs advice on creating innovative product using agile techniques.</p>
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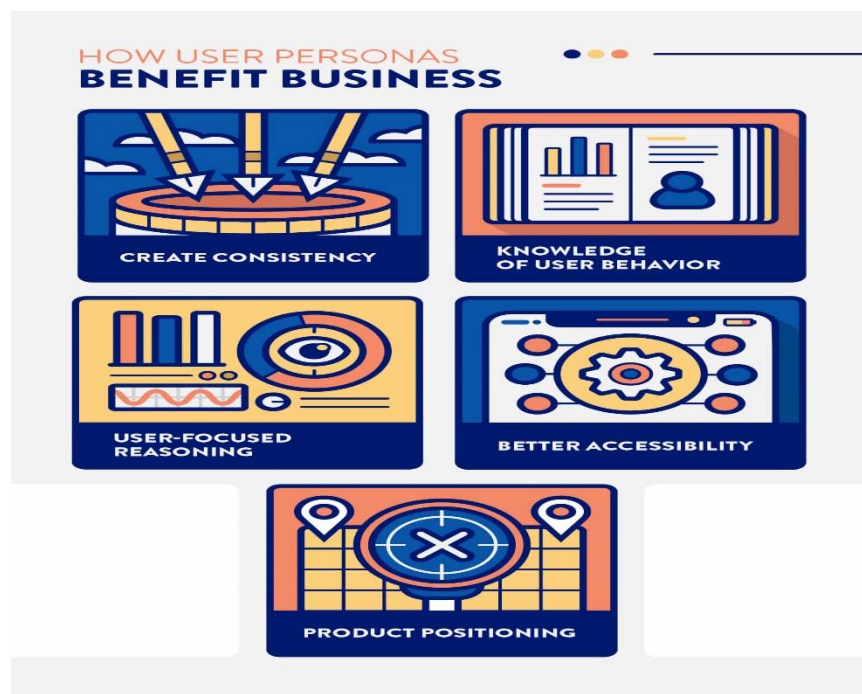
4. Fictional Personas

The fictional persona does not emerge from user research (unlike the other personas), but it emerges from the experience of the UX design team. It requires the team to make assumptions based upon past interactions with the user base and products to deliver a picture of what, perhaps, typical users look like. There's no doubt that these personas can be deeply flawed (and there are endless debates on just how flawed). You may be able to use them as an initial sketch of user needs. They allow for early involvement with your users in the UX design process, but they should not, of course, be trusted as a guide for your development of products or services.

D. How User Personas Benefit Business:

User personas are extremely useful to grow and improve a business. They help uncover the different ways people search for, buy, and use products, so you can focus your efforts on improving the experience for real people through real data.

User personas benefit a business in several ways:



i. **Build empathy for the end-user.**

To build a product that's actually valuable for the people, empathy is your go-to resource. With a user persona, you can understand and empathize with the end-user by:

- **Understanding or realizing the users' perspective.** It helps marketers step out of their own viewpoint and recognize the needs and expectations of other people.
 - **Identifying with the user they are marketing to.** The more you refer to the user personas and see them as real people, the more likely you will put them first.
- ii. **Create consistency across the business:** User personas offer a company-wide understanding of your users, putting everyone on the same page. Across the board, personas create a consistent and specific understanding of each target group of customers within your company.
- iii. **Signal user behavior:** By gaining insight into the backgrounds of user personas, you'll have a better understanding of where your real users spend their time, where they obtain information, and which social networks they thrive in. This information allows you to target and promote your products or services in places where they will actually be seen.
- iv. **Help with user-focused reasoning:** So, you and your team have brainstormed a service or offer that you think will be valuable to your users, but is it really something that they want? You might think your idea is genius, but what if you spend time brainstorming and it's not something that's actually in demand? User personas help eliminate wasted time and resources by clearly focusing on the needs of the user.
- v. **Improve design and development workflow:** Not only do personas allow you to gain knowledge of user behavior and create consistency across your business, but they're incredibly valuable in enabling design and product managers to create better products, services, designs, and UX. Better development guarantees your ability to suit the needs and preferences of your real users.
- vi. **Define product positioning:** Because you've utilized user personas in the brainstorm and developmental phases, you'll be in a better place to position your product when it comes to promotion. User personas arm you with research to face the challenges and problems that come with product positioning.

In short, user personas allow you to operate more effectively as a business all the way down to clearer decision making and positioning.

E. How Do You Make a User Persona?

Here are some basic features to include in every user persona:

- **Name:** User personas should feel like a real person. Giving them a name is the first step. Avoid general denominations like “John Doe” or “Sally the Thrifty Shopper.”
- **Photo:** You always want to put a face to a name. Some companies choose to use fictional characters and celebrities as their persona photo but we advocate against this in order to create a new and original identity that’s free of stereotypes or preconceived traits.
- **Personal motto:** Just like a photo, this helps build out your persona to make them feel more realistic.
- **Bio:** Everyone loves a good back story. Give your persona a little history. Where did they grow up? Why did they choose their current job? How do they spend their free time? Include some details that help make them unique.
- **Demographics:** Of course, you’ll want to target users with specific interests, wants, and needs, rather than your perception of those things. Including demographics will help improve your understanding of and relationship with users, so you can relate to them in the way they want.
- **Personality traits:** Does your persona have a short attention span? Are they cautious? Do they make impulsive decisions? Assigning personality traits might help you understand if you need faster site designs or the option to comparison shop.
- **Motivations:** The goal is to get inside your user’s head and understand how they think. More importantly, what motivates them to use your product?
- **Goals and frustrations:** While the scope of a person’s goals and frustrations should directly relate to your business needs, it’s worth highlighting goals that your persona may have outside of those your product or service directly impacts.
- **Preferred brands and influences:** You can learn a lot about a person by diving into brands they like and influencers they follow. Chances are the marketing tactics used by these brands and influencers will likely apply to you as well — allowing you to craft your outreach accordingly.



F.
Personas – What is a persona and how do I create one? (2019)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNvLpfXCge8>