**Case Study 1: Attracting students to the Postgraduate Leadership Development Program**

The Federal Ministry of Commerce in a developing country entered a joint working contract with a leading university in the United States to help develop their next generation of senior managers and head of departments. This will be achieved through participation in the Postgraduate Leadership Development Program, to be delivered in partnership with a local university.

Two years after signing the agreement, the program has not been able to attract enough students to justify its existence. The Ministry is trying to understand why uptake is so low, and colleagues at the US university suggested using personas to explore the needs and motivations of the target group.

Members of the project team from the Ministry interviewed three men and three women who would qualify for the program but have not yet applied. One of the men has complicated and demanding family commitments that are making it difficult for him to hold down his job and would prohibit him from taking on any additional commitments. Among the other five, though, there are three common threads to their responses:

1. they were only vaguely aware of the program and did not think they qualified to participate
2. they thought it would cost them money
3. they didn’t believe their participation would be supported by their line managers, particularly allowing them time away from their desks to study.

These common points, along with other general information (including the restrictions on who qualifies for the program), were sufficient to start building a persona. The draft persona, named Doris, is shown in Figure 1 below. (Please note that the team has used a stock photo to represent Doris.)

**Q. If you were a member of the project team, what would you advise the Ministry to do next? State five points.**

| **Awareness:**Organizing seminars, webinars or using promotional techniques to ensure complete awareness to the users like cost, time, support by other stakeholders, enrollment procedures and benefits of course. |
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| **Providing Job incentives or rewards:**working professionals and university users must be provided with some incentive in the form of job-security, scholarships, certifications or some related rewards so that they should willingly take time to ensure their enrollment. |
| **Ensuring active participation of line managers:**Briefing the line managers and related stakeholders about their responsibilities and to make their support to the users ensure. |
| **customizing communication regarding personas:** Interviewing at least 40 users to get detailed reasons for joining or not joining the program and then customizing the personas addressing a large audience and consequently engaging a larger community of the users. |
| **Providing flexibility:** Those working in university or on a job outside must be provided with the hours flexibility so that they can easily ensure their enrollment even if it is for a part time as if they have their family commitments. |

