

POLICY & STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS:

Using Personas to define your target audience

Your target audience is the group(s) of people that you want to reach with your think tank work. This group of people can usually be defined by various common attributes and characteristics. Tailoring your product to the needs of this group will increase the likelihood that your product or service will be used.

A deep understanding of your target audience is therefore fundamental to creating successful products. Personas can help us understand the expectations, concerns, and motivations of our target audience and find the answer to one of the most important questions: *"Who are we actually designing our think tank product for?"*

What are personas?

Personas are fictional representations of your ideal target audience, the users of your think tank work. While they are not real people, they are, as much as possible, based on real data and interviews, and supported by educated speculation.

Each persona consists of a unique set of personal traits, behaviors, and motivations for using your product or service. Personas help us to create understanding and empathy with the end-users of our think tank work. So, how do you create personas?

References:

Patrick Faller (2019): [What are user personas and why are they important?](#) Adobe XD ideas
Talebook (2018): [How to create Personas, a step by step guide.](#) Medium. UX Planet
Maria Rosala (2021): [Using "How Might We" Questions to Ideate on the Right Problems](#), Nielsen Norman Group.

3 steps to creating personas

1. Collect information about your users

The first step is to conduct user research to understand the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of your target audience. The most accurate personas are derived from in-depth user interviews and genuine user observation data; they are based on actual field research. It is crucial to get as much knowledge and data about users as you can by interviewing them and/or observing a large enough number of people who represent your target audience. The more you observe and capture during these interviews, the more realistic the persona will be.

2. Identify behavioral patterns

The next step is analyzing your research findings. Can you identify overlaps, trends, and similarities when you take a closer look at the collected data? The goal is to find patterns in your user research data that makes it possible to group similar people together into types of users. These groupings will then form the basis of each persona.

3. Create a persona(s)

Once you have identified groups within your target audience, it is time to bring your personas to life. To do so, fill out the following template. Include personal information such as their name, portrait/photo, demographics and bits of their personality (e.g. information that captures their personality). Describe also their motivation or desired outcome of their actions, as well as their frustrations, obstacles and needs. Try to be as specific as possible but avoid getting lost in personal details. Personas need to be realistic, not real.

Tip: It may be useful to create more than one persona to distinguish the different groupings of your target audience. In this case, it makes sense to define a primary persona that represents the most relevant group you want to reach.

4. Formulate a specific problem of your persona

The final step of this template includes formulating a specific problem for your persona. For our think tank work to be successful, it's critical that we solve the right problem. With the knowledge and insights from your user research, you will be able to develop solutions to real user problems. Framing your persona's specific problem as a *how might we* (HMW) question can help you generate lots of creative ideas while keeping you focused on the right problem.

Writing HMW questions may seem simple, but there are a few things to keep in mind. Your HMW question should address the root problem you uncovered during your user research. Try to focus it on your persona's desired outcome. However, avoid suggesting a solution in your HMW question, as this limits the pool of possibilities. Your HMW question should be formulated broadly and positively without losing focus on the problem, as this will help you generate more ideas and encourage creativity.

Now it's time for some practice.

Name:

Age:

Job:

Location:

Family status:

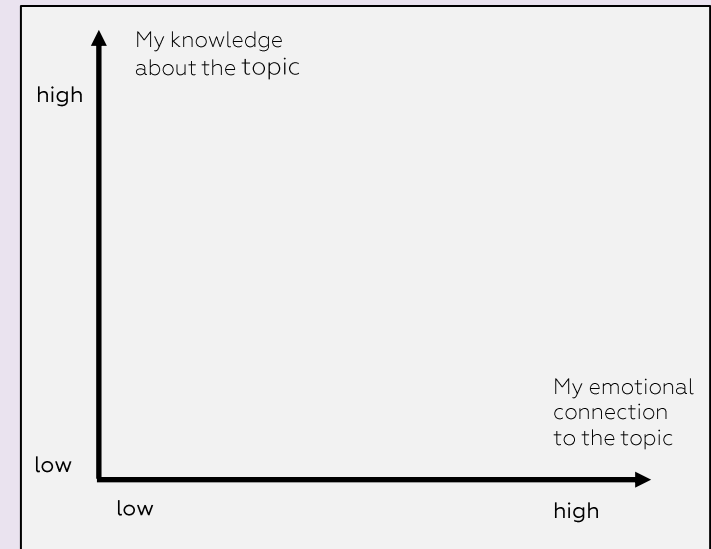
My portrait:

Three hashtags
about me:

#

#

#



Gain: What motivates me?
(motivation, desired outcome of the personas' actions)

Pain: What demotivates me?
(fears, frustrations, obstacles)

Needs: What do I need to do a good job:
(formulated as a verb e.g., "to get a deeper understanding of the effects of XYZ, instead of background information")

Specific Problem:

"How can we help _____(your personas' name, occupation) to _____(your personas' need)

in a world where _____(insights/context of the problem)?"