

# Creating successful persona before designing a product -

It is vital to know your customer before developing a product for them. Understanding the user in terms of needs, limitations, behaviour, reasons, goals, etc. help shape the product around the real requirement. The product must be focused on the customer.

Persona refers to the character built after thorough research and analysis of multiple customers based on various metrics such as age, profession, income, habits, industry, etc. Knowing the customer aids the designer in creating personas as close to reality as possible. Gaining knowledge about the customers' mindset helps create better products that serve the requirement in the best possible manner. UX designers often face the challenge of developing the right persona before designing a product.

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## Here are a few reasons why persona development goes wrong

1. Lack of research to gain deep understanding of the real customer leading to wrong persona development.
2. Ignorance about various kinds of personas such as design and marketing personas lead to wrong analysis which in turn hampers the product/ content strategy.
3. Sticking to a persona throughout the design and development phase without revisiting the current customer demographics.
4. Miscommunication between the design team and business analysis team leads to poorly constructed personas marring the real purpose behind creating the persona.
5. Depending solely on proto-personas (not based on real research).
6. Focusing only on customers' needs without gathering knowledge about customer limitations or pain areas give incomplete knowledge.

Once the importance of creating a right persona is acknowledged, the next big question is how to create a persona. A user-centered design process demands building a correct persona that is based on field research. It includes real customers who are approached, clustered into different groups based on metrics and analysed based on their behaviour. If everything is done in the right way, such as choosing the right metrics, approaching a minimum number of customers to gather enough information, etc., then personas are a great tool for product design.

## Below are a few steps that can help understand the process of creating a persona

1. Use your knowledge and past experience to create a list of everything you already know about your customers.

2. Group your customers into clusters based on metrics such as age, location, income, and other metrics relevant to your product.
3. Interview the customers in real using intelligent questionnaire to understand the customer requirement. Keen observation is needed to find patterns and similarities in different customer groups.
4. Once the data is collected, put it through intense analysis to find out information about the customer expectation and pain areas.
5. Once you identify different groups, it is possible that you need to create more than one persona. However, having too many personas may confuse the design team. So, if there are more than 2 personas, then repeat the process by approaching more number of customers until you can find patterns to group them in one or two personas.
6. Give your persona a name, image and short description explaining the goal of the customer, problems faced and a background.

**After the persona is ready, share it with your design team and ensure that it is used effectively during the entire development process. In-depth understanding of persona helps your team in building better products.**

In order to create a reliable and realistic UX persona, it is necessary to ask the right questions to reach the inner realm of customers' mind. Divide your questions into different categories that help you understand the users past experiences with similar products, any disappointments while using the product, etc.

1. **Personal data:** Ask customers name, age, location, profession, hobbies, education, etc.
2. **Background:** Questions revolving around customers' professional background, family background such as native place, place of education, etc. will aid in gaining knowledge about the reasons for particular behaviour.
3. **Goals and Motivators:** Prompting customers to talk about their reasons for using a particular product help in understanding the ultimate goal expected out of a product/ service.
4. **Disappointments:** When customer answers questions regarding any frustrations or disappointment while using the product, it helps the design team focus on creating better features thus eliminating scope of losing the customer.
5. **Experience:** Let customer talk about their experience of using a product in their own words.

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All the above information gives great insight into customer behaviour that helps the design team develop a product based on customer experience. Creating UX personas need not be a complicated process. It is actually quite simple as customers also get to know the people making their product and appreciate the efforts of the brand. You can create a persona using any kind of tools, such as a simple spreadsheet or word doc. The important thing is to

understand the reason behind creating a persona and accordingly decide if you need to create a marketing persona or a design persona.

### **How to get Maximum ROI from Personas?**

Companies can get multi-fold advantage by creating a UX persona. Persona is built after interviewing or recruiting customers and it adds to overall organizational budget. It is thus important to use this rich information in the best possible way. Persona can be used across multiple departments such as marketing, development, content, and sales. The product development team can use the persona to develop the product based on customer requirement. Any product or service developed keeping customer in mind has a much higher chance of success. The sales and marketing teams can use information from persona to understand customer behaviour and create strategies around it.

The decision making people of the organization must be on the same page when it comes to creating personas and using them to the best possible advantage. As important as a persona is, it is even more important to constantly revisit and update it. Personas are based on the information collected via real people and we must not forget that peoples' behaviour and habit change with time and circumstance. If the persona is not updated time-to-time, it loses its value and instead acts as a negative persona.

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