

Persona interviews.

The key to developing effective buyer persona profiles is to understand the aspects that influences each persona's behavior and choices as it pertains to your industry. Interviewing customers – and potential customers – either in person or over the phone, is a great way to discover what they like about your product or service. Ask questions about their job role and title, what a typical day-in-the-life looks like (both at work and outside of work), what tools they use in their job, what their challenges are, how they learn new information or acquire new skills, where they're from, how they search for information on the internet, and so on.

One of the most critical steps to establishing your buyer persona(s) is finding some people to speak with to suss out, well, who your buyer persona is. That means you'll have to conduct some interviews to get to know what drives your target audience. But how do you find those interviewees? There are a few sources you should tap into:

existing customers.

Your existing customer base is the perfect place to start with your interviews, because they've already purchased your product and engaged with your company. At least some of them are likely to exemplify your target persona(s). Reach out to both "good" and "bad" customers. You don't just want to talk to people who love your product and want to spend an hour gushing about you (as good as that feels). Customers who are unhappy with your product will show other patterns that will help you form a solid understanding of your personas. For example, you might find that some of these "bad" customers have bigger teams and thus need a collaboration element to the product. Or you may find that "bad" customers find your product too technical and difficult to use. In both cases, you learn something about your product and what your customers' challenges are.

Another benefit to interviewing customers is that you may not need to offer them an incentive like a gift card (a typical incentive for participating in surveys or interviews). Customers usually like being heard, and interviewing them gives them a chance to tell you about their world, their challenges, and what they think of your product. Customers also like to have an impact on the products they use, so you may find that, as you involve them in interviews like this, they become even more loyal to your company. When you reach out to customers, be clear that your goal is to get their feedback and that it's highly valued by your team.

EXISTING CUSTOMERS
PROSPECTS
REFERRALS
THIRD-PARTY NETWORKS

referrals.

You'll probably also need to rely on some referrals to talk to people who may fit into your target personas, particularly if you're heading into new markets or don't have any leads or customers yet. Reach out to your network – co-workers, existing customers, social media contacts – to find people you'd like to interview and get introduced to. It may be tough to get a large volume of people this way, but you'll likely get some very high-quality interviews out of it. If you don't know where to start, try searching on LinkedIn for people who may fit into your target personas and see which results have any connections in common with you. Then reach out to your common connections for introductions.

third-party networks.

For interviewees who are completely removed from your company, there are a few third-party networks you can recruit from. Craigslist allows you to post ads for people interested in any kind of job, and UserTesting.com allows you to run remote user testing (with some follow-up questions). You'll have less control over sessions run through UserTesting.com, but it's a great resource for quick user testing recruiting.

prospects.

Be sure to balance out your interviews with people who have not purchased your product or know much about your company. Your current prospects and leads are a great option here because you already have their contact information. Use the data you do have about them (i.e. anything you've collected through lead generation forms or website analytics) to figure out who might fit into your target personas.



20 questions to ask during a persona interview.

role.

- 01 What is your job role? Your title?
- 02 How is your job measured?
- 03 What does a typical day look like?
- 04 What skills are required to do your job?
- 05 What knowledge and tools do you use in your job?
- 06 Who do you report to? Who reports to you?

company.

- 07 In which industry or industries does your company work?
- 08 What is the size of your company (revenue, employees)?

goals.

- 09 What are you responsible for?
- 10 What does it mean to be successful in your role?

objectives.

- 11 What are your biggest challenges?

watering holes.

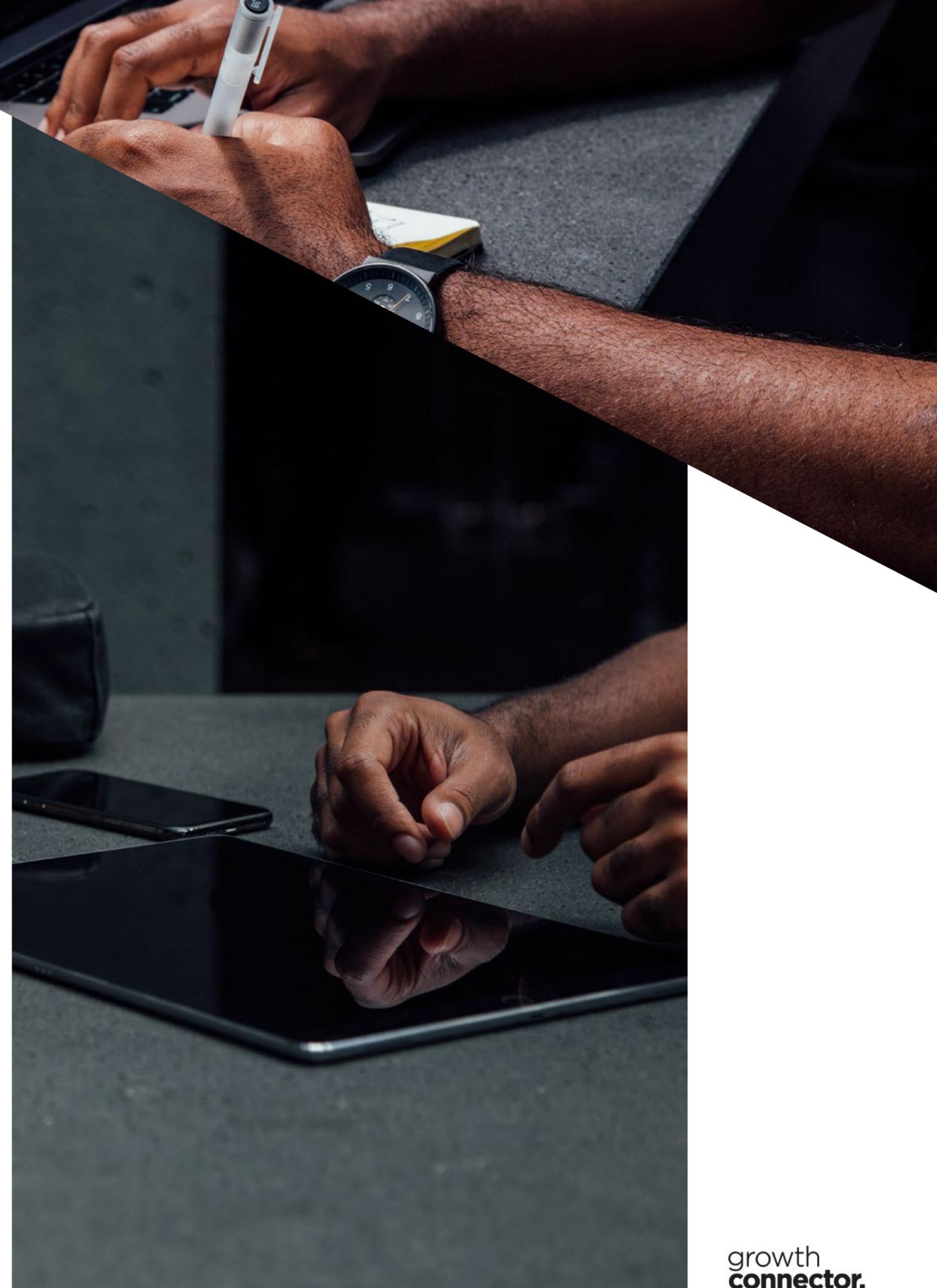
- 12 How do you learn about new information for your job?
- 13 What publications or blogs do you read?
- 14 What associations and social networks do you participate in?

personal background.

- 15 Describe your personal demographics (if appropriate, ask their age, marriage and/or children).
- 16 Describe your educational background. What level of education did you complete, which schools did you attend, and what did you study?
- 17 Describe your career path. How did you end up where you are today?

shopping preferences.

- 18 How do you prefer to interact with vendors (e.g. email, phone, in person)?
- 19 Do you use the internet to research vendors or products? If yes, how do you search for information?
- 20 Describe a recent purchase. Why did you consider a purchase, what was the evaluation process, and how did you decide to purchase that product or service?



Operationalizing personas.

Most marketers see personas as powerful concepts, but experience has shown they may not be deployed sufficiently often since scenarios, journey or content mapping aren't completed. Personas can exist without scenarios, but often these stories are a useful first step toward actually using personas.

Understanding the risks in the process of persona creating and operationalizing them on site should be thought through with any new project by defining steps and capabilities. Use the steps on the right as a checklist.



"I design with all my heart, thinking about the users"

AGE 21
JOB TITLE UX Designer
STATUS Single
LOCATION Atlanta, GA

PASSIONATE **EMPATHETIC**
CURIOS **ADVENTUROUS**

FAVORITE BRANDS


USER PERSONA

Jane Doe

ABOUT
 Jane is a UX Designer that works for a Fortune 500 company in Atlanta, GA. Ever since she was a child, she loved to make stuff on her own and show them to her parents, friends and classmates. Over the course of her childhood and throughout her school, she won numerous design prizes at various well known competitions across the United States and Canada. Due to her passion for design, she decided to pursue a Master's degree in Human Computer Interaction and learn more about User Experience (UX) and how she can become a better designer.

GOALS

- Become a designer who communicates well of her ideas at any place
- Easily explain her design ideas to other designers, researchers and engineers

PAIN POINTS

- There are too many tools that forces her to spend time learning them
- Cannot rely on other people's opinion because they are highly subjective
- Certain situations require different tools to communicate her thoughts

NEEDS

- Looking for a design tool that helps to cut down unnecessary time and effort
- Receive feedback on her progress whenever needed before presentation

PERSONALITY

Introvert Extrovert
 Analytical Creative
 Busy Time rich
 Messy Organized
 Independent Team player

what can we do.

..to help our persona reach their goals?

- Make it easy to manage all employee data in one place
- Integrate with legal and finance teams' systems

real quotes.

About goals, challenges, etc.

- "It's been difficult getting company-wide adoption of new technologies in the past."
- "I don't have time to train new employees on a million different databases and platforms."
- "I've had to deal with so many painful integrations with other departments' databases and software."

common objections.

Why wouldn't they buy our product/service?

- "I'm worried that I'll lose data transitioning to a new system."
- "I don't want to have to train the entire company on how to use a new system."

elevator pitch.

Sell them on our solution!

- "We give you an intuitive database that integrates with your existing software and platforms, and lifetime training to help new employees get up to speed quickly."

Journey Map John Doe **Grocery Shopping**

STEPS	RECIPE NOTE-TAKING	DRIVE TO STORE	FIND PARKING	ENTER STORE	FIND ITEMS	PAY AND EXIT
EMOTIONS & THOUGHTS	<p>"I'm excited to cook some delicious meal for myself at home!"</p> <p>"Although writing down the stuff to buy is tedious, it's fun!"</p> <p>"The traffic is great! It's only taking me 5 minutes to get there!"</p> <p>"Here it's tough for me to find a parking space. It's packed!"</p> <p>"They, I was going to take that space! He cut in front of me..."</p> <p>"The store staff who just greeted me is really nice. She always smiles at me!"</p> <p>"Okay let's do this! I'm ready to get everything without forgetting!"</p> <p>"Here, I can't seem to find this item but there are no one around me who can help!"</p> <p>"It's really hard to make a decision on what brand of item I should purchase..."</p> <p>"There's too much line at the cashier. Some people are taking too long..."</p>					
ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover ingredients that is needed to cook the meals • Write down all the recipes and ingredients that are necessary for future meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the shortest route with least amount of time needed • Find out if the store is open • Remind oneself of the things to buy and think about the shortest route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for store entrance as well as certain restrictions that are present in some parking spaces (disabled, time restriction) • Try to park as close as possible to the store entrance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for a shopping cart • Take out the shopping notes and look/think about the shortest route around the store • Greeted by the store staffs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare some items from different brands (nutrients, calories, expiration date etc) • Ask store staffs for items that cannot be found • Look up ratings for items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for the shortest line for the cashier • Put items on the conveyer belt • Take out wallet and pay • Check the receipt for prices
KEY POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes take physical notes or cut-out recipes from magazines but often use the mobile apps • Although the note seems perfect, almost always, there are items that are forgotten to be purchased at the store • Writing down quantity and weight for items are challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the store visit happens quite frequently, knowing the store opening/ closing hours and holiday hours by heart is not present • The time to get to the store varies by time and day • Time willing to spend inside the store could somewhat depend on the how long it takes to get to the store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, it's annoying because there isn't enough parking and people rush into spaces without waiting • Indication of vacant spaces are not present which makes it hard to locate a free space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, the shopping carts are wet, dirty and full of trash • The items written down in the notes are not generally ordered to optimally pick up items around the store • Sometimes, the store staffs are too busy, unfriendly or are not able to answer questions well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's tough to compare items well because it depends on so many things • Sometimes, the layout of the store is too complicated and it takes time to navigate around the store • Going from notes to finding and reading the details of the item is taking too much time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes, people who have more than 25 items are lined up in the express lanes • Some lanes have people who bag items but some don't which takes longer to check out of the store