

Persona Development How-To Guide



Effective use of Personas in your business can lead to a stronger brand, increased conversions, a decrease in cost per acquisition, an increase in customer lifetime value, and increased team morale.

If that's not enough to get business owners interested, I don't know what will.

This guide goes hand-in-hand with the Fairhead Creative blog post, "[Your Profitable Path to Powerful Personas](#)". Be sure to check that out, as it'll undoubtedly answer any of your questions about Personas, and how to benefit from them.

Here, we're going to go through the process of creating your very own Personas.

You're welcome to share this PDF within your business. However, it might prove even more beneficial if you instead share the article this PDF came from, "[Your Profitable Path to Powerful Personas](#)". Doing so will allow them to gather a great deal more information about why your business is on this journey, get this PDF, and get other great content that will help better their skills in this field.

I'm going to break down the process of creating Personas into key sections, so that you can refer to them easily in the future.

Like the saying goes, if you're given six hours to cut down a tree, spend four sharpening your axe. Having the right processes is an important part of creating effective Personas, so we'll go into detail about how to prepare, organize and visualize your data. Finally, we'll show you how to create the persona file itself, and what to do with it once it's made.



Before You Start

The first step in creating an effective persona is knowing when to create them at all. If you have no customers, it's going to be harder to make them than if you have an established customer base. It's still possible, though. Just be ready for those personas to change.

The purpose of your personas is to lead you to work smarter on your product, so be sure that the data you gather will be able to apply to your product's future.

User interviews are a great place to begin. Just picking up the phone and talking to happy (or unhappy) customers will prove massively helpful. Learn about their lives, what they're into, where they want to go in life. What movies they watch. What hobbies they have. Get to know them like you would anybody else.

Your product's analytics may also prove helpful. You may be able to determine where most of your customers come from from your

analytics alone, and which of those demographics appear to have different behavior.

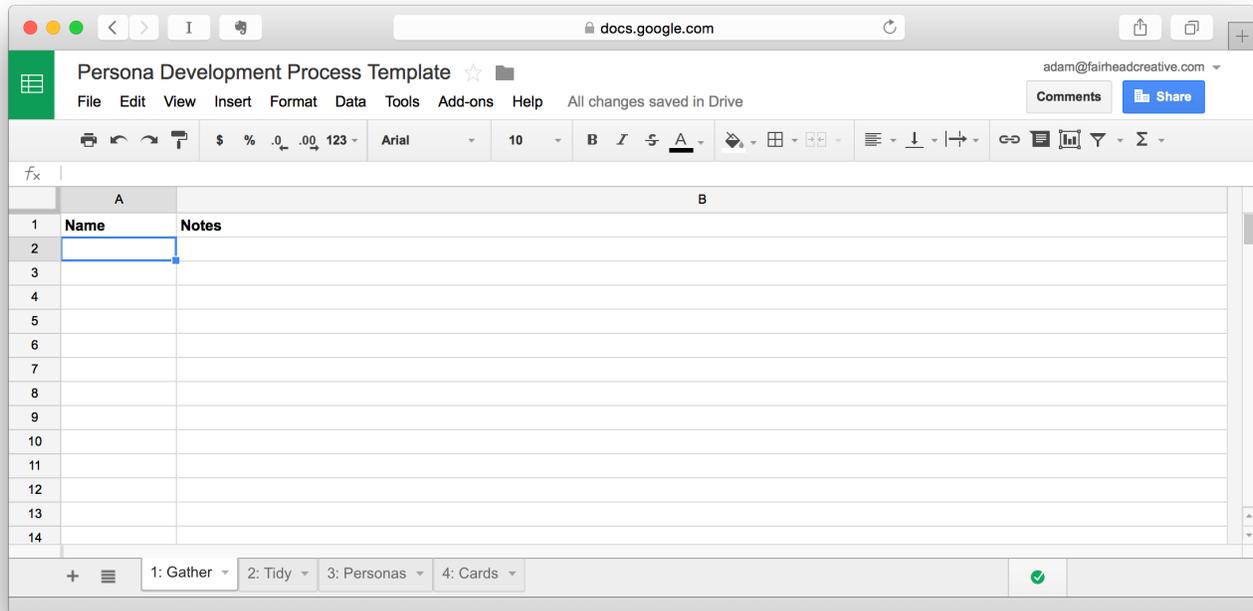
Surveys are another simple way to reach out for some quick feedback about your customers as people. A corner pop-up that says “Which of these movies is your favorite?” may seem a bit odd, but it’ll give you insights nonetheless.

Diary Studies are more complex of a technique, but they’re massively helpful in designing Personas. Check back on the [FairheadCreative blog](#) to get clued up on what different techniques are available, and how to use them.

We outlined the types of data you’d do well to gather in this PDF’s accompanying article, “[Your Profitable Path to Powerful Personas](#)”. Be sure to keep that list of data to hand as you go through your data gathering.

Gather your data in any way you choose. I use various tools, ranging from Evernote, to Google Sheets, to Stickies.app on my Mac.

Gathering all of this data together when you're done helps in the process. We use a sheet like the one in this image:



Choose two of the techniques above. Commit to them and bring back their data across to Step 2 in this PDF.

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Deciding on the Data

tidying it up, looking for patterns, put into groups, represent each group

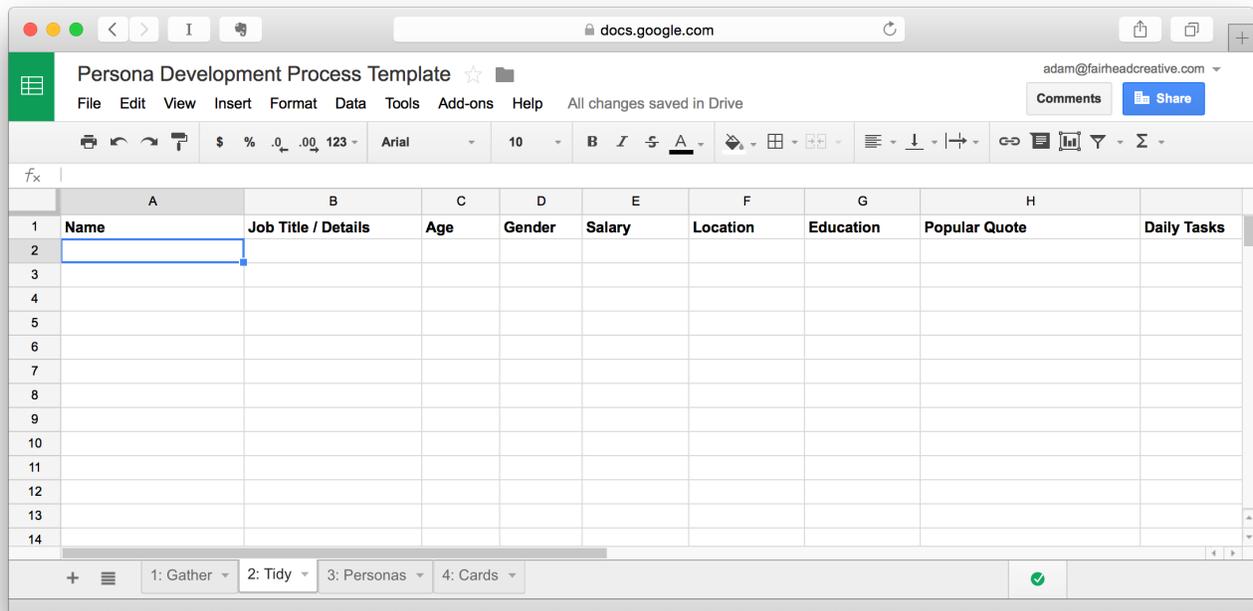
Smashing, so now we have some raw data. You've got (most) of the things from the list in this PDF's accompanying article, "[Your Profitable Path to Powerful Personas](#)". That's great!

Next, we need to make sense of that data.

Tidying it up

The data you've gathered is probably all across the place. It's a good thing, really, because it means you've been focused on capturing what comes, rather than on spending time organizing as you go. You've been drinking from a firehose.

We tidy our data to begin with by using a spreadsheet. A Google Sheet, Excel sheet or Numbers sheet will do, there's no fancy specifics that require you to use any particular tool.



As you can see, nothing complicated. It's simply a case of tidying up the notes you've received from the previous section, and putting them nice and tidy in a spreadsheet

Note that these "Names" we're capturing are not your personas. They're the people you interviewed. The personas come in the next section.

Looking for patterns

Once you have your interviews organized neatly in your spreadsheet, it's time to take a hard look at what you've gathered. Look for patterns in your data.

For example, you might notice certain trends between location and salary, job titles and daily tasks, and so on. The more obvious stuff. You may also start to notice less obvious things, such as trends in fears and values. Perhaps a whole bunch of your customers value the same things and have surprisingly similar tastes in music.

Whatever it is, try to spot trends.

Put into groups

Once you've spotted one or two, restructure your sheet so that people who have things in common are in rows next to each other. Leave an empty row between each group so you can visualize easier.

Represent each group

Give each group a name. It doesn't matter what it is, as long as it's somehow related. A group of people who love music that value saving money over saving time could be called "The Buskers", for example..

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Creating the Persona

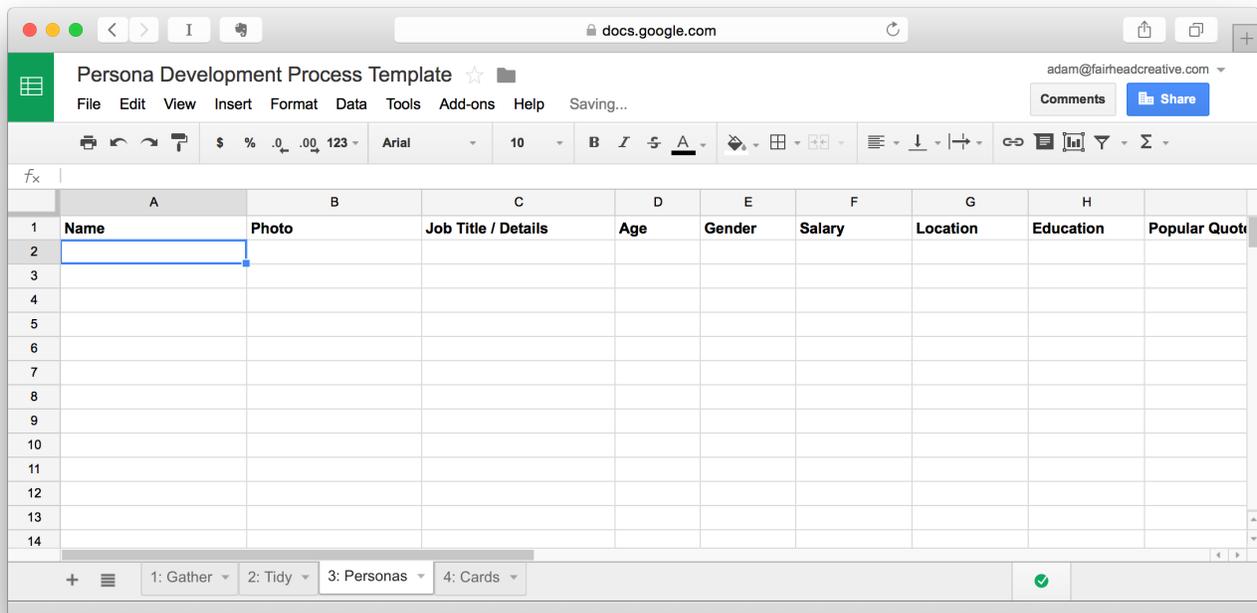
visualize the group data, find a photo, choose a name, make it pretty

The hardest part of this process is done. At this point, you've gathered all of your data, you've made sense of it all, and you've organized it into groups that will now become your personas. Nice job!

In this stage, we're going to create fictional characters based on the grouping you did in the previous step.

Take each of the groups in your sheet one at a time, and make a single person out of them. If most are female, make it female. If most like music, make it a music fan.

Some parts will need you to get creative. The name and the popular quote, for example, will require you to come up with something that you could imagine this new person saying, in light of what the others said.



List out these fictional characters in another sheet of your spreadsheet. All the same fields, but with the addition of the photo, which you'll select in the same way as you will the name and quote.

You may only end up with one. Perhaps you'll have 2-3. Maybe more. It all depends on the number of groups you created in the last section.

Congratulations, you've got your persona data! At this point, you could close your spreadsheet, and force yourself to check routinely. I don't know many people that are quite so into spreadsheets that they'll routinely open one up just to appreciate it.

That's why visualizing them is so important. These are supposed to be fun to look at, to encourage yourself and your team to include them in your business activities. If they're boring looking, or overly verbose, or a spreadsheet tacked to the wall, they're unlikely to get such attention. And without that integration, they won't work.

Have your team create beautiful personas for you all to work with. Or work with UX specialists or even a graphic designer or illustrator to pretty up your data.

At Fairhead Creative we go through the whole process from start to finish for our clients, and this final step of prettying up the results is most questioned step. Again: you must make them fun, or they won't get used.

Once your personas are alive and kicking in visual form, it's time to move on to the last step in this process.

Getting your personas out there, and integrating them into your business.

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Getting it out there

We covered this part in the article this PDF came from, “[Your Profitable Path to Powerful Personas](#)”, but it’s worth mentioning again.

Stick your personas on your office walls

Make them visible, make them unforgettable. If you have an office, post them up on the walls. If your team works remote, consider printing in your home offices. Keep them around like real people.

Print cards with personas on them

Physical cards on your meeting table or work desks will keep them to-hand when you need them. Physical cards can’t be ignored in the same way as a file tucked away in some folder on your computer can be.

Share the files with your team

Cards may work for me, and perhaps they work for you too. Let your team use the personas however they prefer. Perhaps they prefer

desktop wallpapers, or just keeping them on their desktops. In any case, freely share them so they can be used effectively by everyone.

4. Bring personas along to meetings

Your personas deserve a place at the meeting table. What would they say to the things you're discussing? As weird as it may feel, try to include them in your conversations. They have valuable things to say. Even if they're just pieces of card.

5. Let personas sign off on development ideas and execution

Think of them as you go through your development ideas. Include them in the sign-off of new developments. They're who you're working together to serve, so keep them close and make sure they're happy in every stage of development.

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Conclusion

Congratulations, you've successfully led your business through persona development! It's not easy, but by using this PDF as your guide, your team and your business will reap big rewards. Brand loyalty, increased conversions, decreased CPA, increased CLV and increased morale are all potential outcomes of this process.

If you've enjoyed this article, or found it helpful, please head back over to the article this PDF comes from, "[Your Profitable Path to Powerful Personas](#)" and leave a comment letting us know it was valuable to you. We'd also really appreciate any social shares you can give that article, to let your colleagues and peers know you loved the content.

There's lots more content coming over on FairheadCreative.com. As a team with experience in both online business and user experience, the site's blog teaches business owners how to create engaging, memorable experiences between their businesses and their target audiences, in language they'll understand. It's a world of knowledge that you, as a

business owner, may never have encountered before. Your competition may never have encountered it, either.

If you're interested in continuing to give your business an edge with this content, make sure you're subscribed to our VIP list and I'll let you know when there's more content ready for you. It's all free, and hopefully priceless to you at the same time.

Until next time!

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