# How do I create effective user personas?

**Questions addressed:**

Page 1:
- What is a user persona?
- What are the benefits of user personas?
- What are the steps to build user personas?
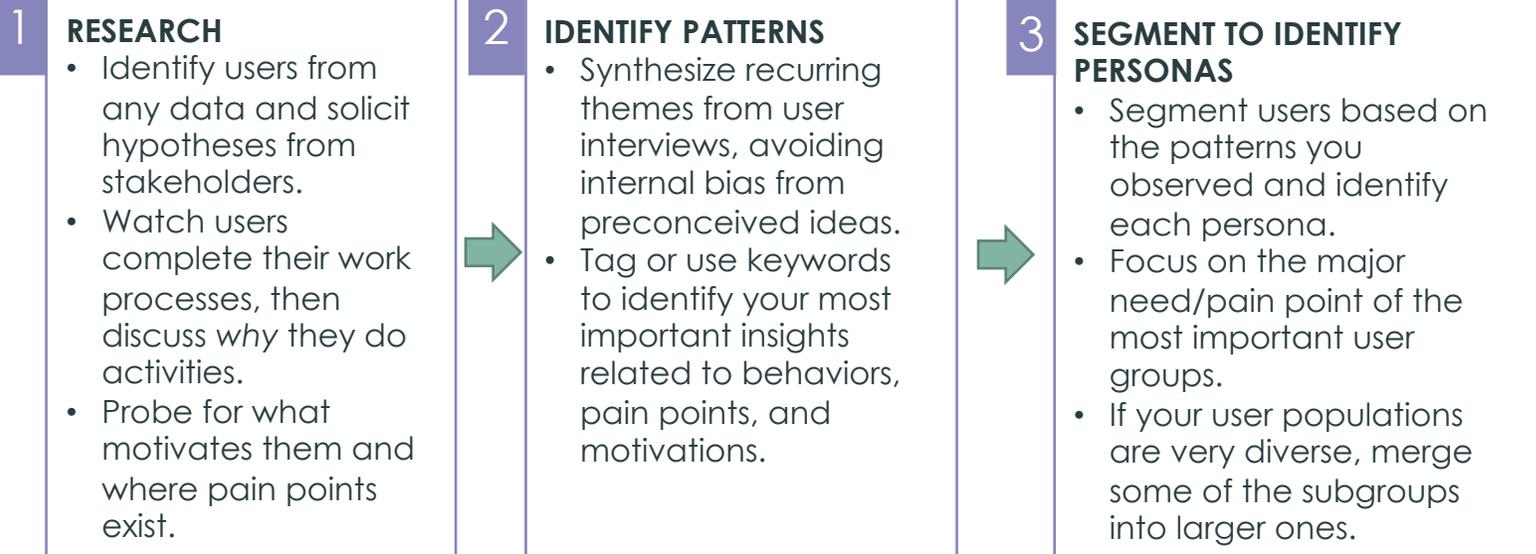- How should I ensure user personas are successful?

Page 2:
- What should be included in user personas?
- How should I use personas?

**What is a user persona?** User personas are fictional but realistic characters that represent an entire group or audience with a set of traits and characteristics that unite them. User personas are role based and focused on responsibilities. These personas identify who your users are, what behavior patterns they currently exhibit, their needs and goals, and the issues or pain points they currently face within a given context (i.e., a task or process).

**The benefits of user personas include:**

- The ability to develop a deeper understanding of users' current processes and needs

- Guidance for creating features that help users achieve their desired outcomes

- Guidance for prioritizing where to invest time and resources

- Data to drive alignment across the organization and rally other teams around a user-centric vision

**The three steps to building user personas:**

**1 RESEARCH**
- Identify users from any data and solicit hypotheses from stakeholders.
- Watch users complete their work processes, then discuss *why* they do activities.
- Probe for what motivates them and where pain points exist.

**2 IDENTIFY PATTERNS**
- Synthesize recurring themes from user interviews, avoiding internal bias from preconceived ideas.
- Tag or use keywords to identify your most important insights related to behaviors, pain points, and motivations.

**3 SEGMENT TO IDENTIFY PERSONAS**
- Segment users based on the patterns you observed and identify each persona.
- Focus on the major need/pain point of the most important user groups.
- If your user populations are very diverse, merge some of the subgroups into larger ones.

**Three tips to ensure your user personas are successful:**

1. Keep each persona to one page. Use design and infographics to make the layout concise and visually pleasing.

2. Be concise and avoid adding extra details that won't help you to make decisions. Avoid fluff or humor. It could undermine the influence that strong personas offer.

3. Involve stakeholders from across your organization—including leadership—to ensure their buy-in into the personas you created.

# How do I create effective user personas? (Continued)

**What should be included in user personas*?** Take a jobs-to-be-done approach (JTBD) and focus on activities, goals, pain points and successes.

**Persona name:**
Personalize your persona by giving it a fictional name.

**Photo:** Give your persona a photo to make it relatable.

**Major activities:** Include details into a typical day, including what technology is used.

**Job goals:** What goals and tasks does the user need to achieve?

**Success criteria:** How will you measure that goals are achieved?

---

**Persona name:** Tabitha

Age: 28
Title: Tech support
Years experience: 6
Location: San Francisco
Family: Married, 1 child

Dependable

Motivated

Tech savvy

**Major activities:**
Installing and configuring computer hardware operating systems and applications, monitoring and maintaining computer systems

**Job goals:**
Optimize support timeline and develop deeper IT skills

**Pain points:**
Logging the calls manually, multiple steps to completing and documenting a task

**Success criteria:**
Eliminate paper redundancy and use digital channels to be more efficient by connecting workflows, including delegating app dev so we can be more innovative.

**Quote:**
"Success means happy stakeholders. I want our stakeholders to be happier faster."

---

**Demographic and personality information:** Include age, gender, title, years of experience, highest level of education, work location, and any other relevant demographics and personality insight.

**Pain points:** Identify where users have difficulty or frustration. What are the obstacles that keep them from achieving their goals?

**Quotes:** Choose a quote that captures the typical user's attitude and motivation from your user research.

---

**How should I use personas?**

Ask "What would Tabitha do?" to help guide your teams on a customer-centric approach as:

1. A starting point to design for real-world usage scenarios

2. Characters on journey maps

3. Characters for usability reviews

4. A focal point for ideation sessions

5. Context to agile user stories

*If you have any questions on this topic or you would like to be a contributor to future ServiceNow® best practice content, contact us.*

---