

Persona Questionnaire

By Richard Neves

Remember the two ears one mouth rule. You ask the questions, but the majority of the interview time should be spent actively listening to the participant.

- The majority of your questions should be open-ended – yes and no answers are good, but it's important to discover the why. Whys are more readily discovered when the participant is free to speak unconstrained.
- Storytelling or examples of scenarios are great for uncovering the key problem, but also other potential issues that may not be obvious to the participant.
- If your participant cannot quite articulate what they mean, ask them to show you, or to draw something to help make it clearer.
- Don't be afraid to say you don't understand and ask the participant to elaborate or explain in plain terms.
- Actively listen to what the participant is saying, repeat what they said back to them, probe things said to 'unpack' them and understand the detail.
- Always start an interview with easy questions and progress to the trickier, more thought provoking subjective detail.

OVERVIEW

- Ask for the participant to tell you about their role.
- Do you have to have a particular academic or experience background to do the role?
- How long have they been in the role, what was their previous role/career progression?
- Describe a typical day.

DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE

- Based on what they tell you about their role in the overview section, probe around the skills employed for their role: do they create reports, do they present or share information, interpret/analyse data etc.
- How do you stay informed on developments in your industry?

GOALS

- What are your key responsibilities?
- What makes your day successful/unsuccessful? Can you give examples?

MOTIVATION

- What is most important to you in your role?
- Why is that important?
- What aspects of your work do you enjoy the most?
- What aspects of your work do you find challenging?
- What motivates you to do a good job – think of a time recently or in the past when you put in the extra effort, why did you do it?

DAY-TO-DAY

- Walk me through a typical working day in your life
 - What do you do when you get into the workplace?
 - Do you ever do anything on the way to work, in preparation for the day ahead?
- Let's go through some of those tasks (if at the participant's desk, ask them to show you what they do)
 - Why do you do this task – is it a company policy or an external body requirement?
 - What's the starting point?
 - How do you know when you have completed the task?
 - How long, typically, would the task take?
 - Do you work alone or in collaboration? If there is collaboration, how is this organised – what's the process?
 - What happens when you have completed the task? For example, do you share it with someone?
 - Have you found any ways to speed up the task?
 - Can you think of any ways this process could be made more efficient?
 - Are these daily, weekly, monthly – other period tasks?

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- What about this office helps you achieve these daily tasks?
- How often do you help or ask for help on something you are working on?
- Do you ever have the opportunity to work from home? If yes, how does that experience differ to being in the office?
- Is there anything about your workspace that could be improved to help you?

CURRENT SYSTEMS (if part of your research is to assess an existing product)

- What aspects of your current work involve using the product?
- How well do you feel you know the product, i.e. the data and functionality available?
- How often would you say you use the product?
- What would you say are the key positives aspects?
- What would you say are the key challenges/frustrations with the product?
- What other products/resources do you use to perform your role effectively?
 - Which features do you use and like?
- What would improve your effectiveness/ efficiency?
- Name one thing about the product you would change today?
- What features would you like to see in the future? Why?

TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

- What tools do you use to accomplish tasks?
- Do you use Office tools, like Excel, Word and PowerPoint? What about websites, databases, other tools? Why – how do you use them?
- Is there anything that you wish you could easily do, but your current tools don't support?

REFERENCES

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/persona/>

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2014/08/a-closer-look-at-personas-part-2/>