

Exploring Audiences

Interview individuals

Define each niche audience

Take one niche audience, and join their conversation

Develop a cast of personas within each niche audience

Interview individuals

Ask a lot of questions.

Ask about work:

- What's your official job title?
- What kind of content do you really use at work?
- What tasks do you have to accomplish using that content?
- Where did you learn to do your job? (School, training, on the job training, stand-up classes, Web courses, gossip, whatever).
- Where does work come from, when it arrives on your desk, and where does it go after you get through with it? (Workflow)
- What is an average day like? A crunch day?
- How much leeway do you have to decide what you do when?
- Where do you turn for general news relating to your work, organization, or industry?
- What kind of Internet connection do you have at work?

Focus on tasks at work:

- What are the main tasks you do on the job?
- What are the little tasks within the big ones? (Hierarchy.)
- In what sequence do you usually do all these tasks?
- Which ones do you do by yourself? With other people?
- How long have you done each of these tasks?
- How did you learn to do each task?
- How have the tasks changed over the years?
- Which tasks currently involve using our site?
- What tools do you use to perform those tasks?
- How comfortable are you with those tools?

- Which of your tools do you like most, dislike, and why?
- What problems come up when you are working on a task?
- How do you generally solve the problems?
- How do you describe the process of analyzing and solving one of these problems?
- How well does our content match what you need to complete the task?
- What is missing?
- What other sites do you use in performing your tasks?

Probe motivation and free will:

- What are your main goals at work? How do particular tasks relate to those goals?
- Is it your idea to come to our site, or are you required to do so?
- Do you feel you have the power to affect the culture of your workplace?
- Are you regularly involved in decisions that revolve around our kind of content?
- What do you most like to do when exploring our site?
- Do you feel eager to learn new information that relates to your tasks, your job, your organization, or your industry?
- What are the consequences if you do not find the information you need on our site?

Ask about home, if appropriate:

- What are your aims in life?
- What do you do for fun?
- How much time do you spend on the Internet at home? TV? Radio?
- What kind of hobbies do you have?
- What kind of neighborhood do you live in?
- What kind of Internet connection do you have at home?
- How close are you with your family? Friends?
- What languages do you speak at home? Read? How familiar are you with languages other than the one you consider your primary language?
- What is your highest level of education, and how do you think that affects what you do now?

Ask about mental models:

- How would you describe the content we provide?
- How should it be organized?

- What terms do you use for the key concepts?
- Which pieces of content are the most important for you?
- What other content do you need, for your job?
- Is that something we can help you with?
- What topics are associated with other topics?
- Do you learn better from a diagram or from text?
- If you want to learn, do you turn to another person, TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, or books?

Explore personal differences:

- How do you prefer to learn new material? (For instance, trial and error, asking others, formal training, reading ahead of time, self-paced interactive training, online courses).
- What special needs do you have?
- Are you color blind?
- Do you have difficulty reading small type, or making small movements with your hands?
- How do you feel when you have to change the way you do your job?
- When do you prefer working together with a team, or by yourself

Explore group identities and affiliations:

- How would you describe your organization's culture to an outsider?
- What are the aspects you like most or least?
- What groups do you belong to, formally or informally?
- What volunteer organizations do you occasionally work for?
- What ethnic and racial cultures do you identify with, and how do you describe those? How would you describe my own ethnic and racial background?
- Do you have a preference for a certain way of organizing information, or carrying out tasks, based on the way you were raised in another country?
- How would you describe your socio-economic status? Mine?
- Do you belong to any trade association, professional group, or union?

Define each niche audience

Name of the group:

Work

Type of work

Content used on the job

Tasks

Major tasks

Little tasks

How do you learn to do them?

Problems when working on the tasks?

What content matches these tasks?

Motivations

Main goals

Outlook

Attitude

Home

Aims in life

Idea of fun

Media favorites

Languages

Education levels

Mental models

For our content

Which content is most important?

What other content must you have?

How should the site's content be organized?

Personal characteristics

Preferred learning style

Special needs

Average age

Gender proportions

Geographic locations

Group identities and affiliations

Description of the organization culture

Aspects liked, disliked

Subgroups participated in

Income Range

Other criteria that identify that audience group

Take one niche audience, and join their conversation.

Name of niche audience:

Demonstrate you are a member

What are the major divisions in the community?

What are the boundaries: who is in, who is not?

What is hip, what is not?

What are some widely held attitudes, values?

What topics are important today?

What topics do people disagree on?

What would be a really new idea for this group?

How should you position your self in relation to this community?

What are key slogans?

What is some insider jargon?

What activities are common to the community?

Develop a cast of personas within each niche audience.

Persona Name:

Goal

Niche Audience

Age

Work area, department

Routine

Car

Therefore:

What kind of content should be brought to this person's attention?

What topics are most important?

What topics should we create for this person?

What tone would work best for this person?

Key slogans:

Key jargon:

Key concerns: