



MEGASTRAT

**Making Megatrends Applicable For Individual
Opportunity Forecasts And Strategic
Development**

Future Persona



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Future Persona

Introduction to Future Persona

Future personas are fictional individuals living in a specifically envisioned future and are based on future trends and developments. The fictional character is created from the synthesis of research data and is intended to assist in understanding the future needs, behaviours, experiences, and goals.

Description

What is this tool about

Future personas are fictional characters living in a specifically envisioned future. They are used to predict how the behaviour and needs of target groups will change in the future. Future personas take into account factors such as:

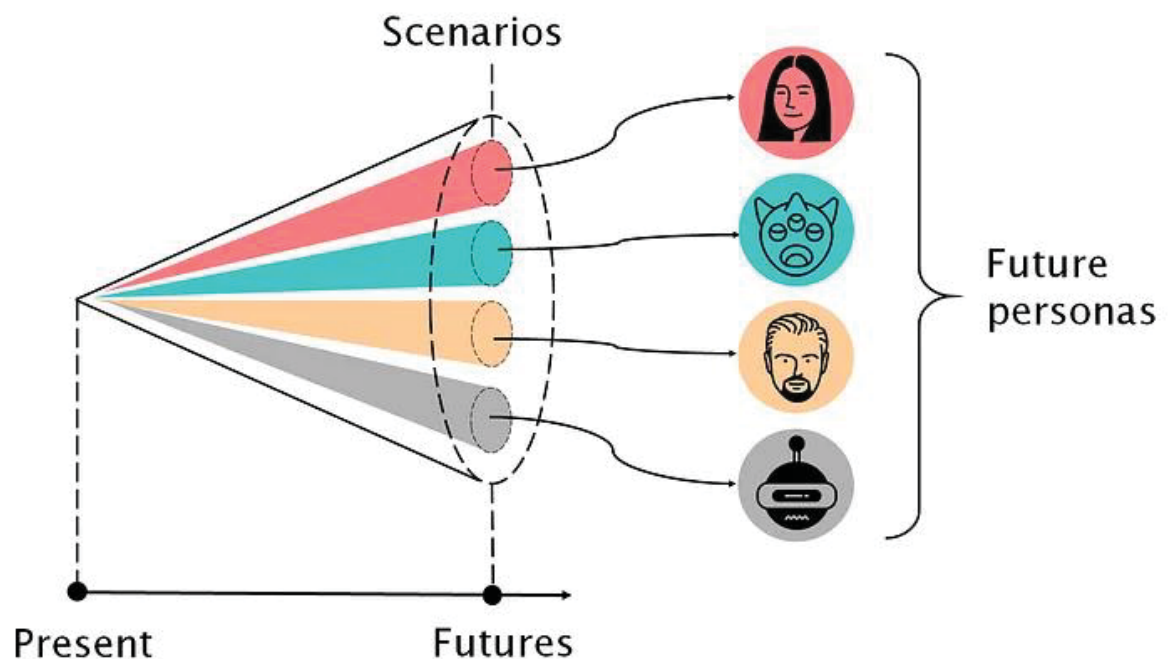
- Technology and tools
- Demographic changes
- Social trends
- Political developments

The fictional character is created from the synthesis of research data and is intended to assist in understanding the future needs, behaviours, experiences, and goals. Typically, personas are created to recognise the needs and expectations of future persons, users or customers. Personas are typically used in four different perspectives based on the objectives to be attained:

1. Goal-directed personas – The objective of a goal-directed persona is to examine the process and workflow that a person would utilise to achieve their goals while using a specific product or service.
2. Role-based personas – They focus on a user's role in the organisation and help generate insights for better product design decisions.
3. Engaging personas – They incorporate both goal and role based personas. To quote Lene Nielsen, "The engaging perspective is rooted in the ability of stories to produce involvement and insight. Through an understanding of characters and stories, it is possible to create a vivid and realistic description of fictitious people. The purpose of the engaging perspective is to move from designers seeing the user as a stereotype with whom they are unable to identify and whose life they cannot envision, to designers actively involving themselves in the lives of the personas."
4. Fictional personas – Unlike the other personas, the design team creates a fictional persona from their experience and does not involve user research. They are useful during initial sketches but may be flawed as it depends entirely on the design team's experience with interaction with users and not on user research.

Future personas can be elaborated in two ways.

- Future Personas are generated by transposing present personas based on future trends (Kasper et al., 2018). The first step is research and analysis. The most common approach is to observe and interview the users to learn about them and their needs. For collecting the required data for the analysis, different methods such as usage analytics, survey and focus groups or data collection through social media may be used. In the second step, persona descriptions are created based on the data collected and analysed. A persona description may include the user's education, lifestyle, interests, values, goals, needs, desires, attitudes, actions, etc. Giving Personas specific names and making it realistic to an actual person is also essential during this step.
- Future Personas are created from scenarios (Fergnani, 2019). With their cognition and behaviour, they embody the scenarios. They are the living essence of the future.



Future personas breathe life into scenarios, forging a powerful connection with audiences. Imagine a group of corporate leaders needing a nudge to tackle potential disruptions. Or a large community grappling with a new sustainability challenge. By following the lives of well-crafted future personas, their choices, struggles, and triumphs, we're transported into the scenario itself:

- We see them as real people, their experiences feel authentic.
- We connect with them, we share their hopes and anxieties.
- We empathise with them, their decisions become our own.

These emotional connections allow understanding complex scenarios naturally, a feat dry, impersonal descriptions cannot achieve.

For which purposes is it used in LTOFS

When future scenarios are elaborated, Future Personas can assist in understanding the future needs, behaviours, experiences, and goals of people, users or customers. By imagining a future persona, including her social and demographic background, values, beliefs system, lifestyle and purchasing habits or other factors of interest, scenarios can be set up in which the environment and the personas interplay in a meaningful way. Also, scenarios can be validated if they fit the respective persona.

Example from Zukunftsinstitut:



For 46-year-old Marlene Gutleut, ecology and indulgence are no longer mutually exclusive – in the true spirit of the neo-ecology megatrend. She dreams of a healthy environment and an environmentally conscious world. Marlene is convinced that the economy can and must reorient itself to this vision. Health and social engagement also play a central role for this persona, and she strives towards this in her life with her two children.

You will reach this persona through an honest and comprehensive sustainability strategy. You can activate the eco-hedonist for your scenario by creating spaces of engagement and stand up with her for social and sustainable topics.

When and how to use this tool

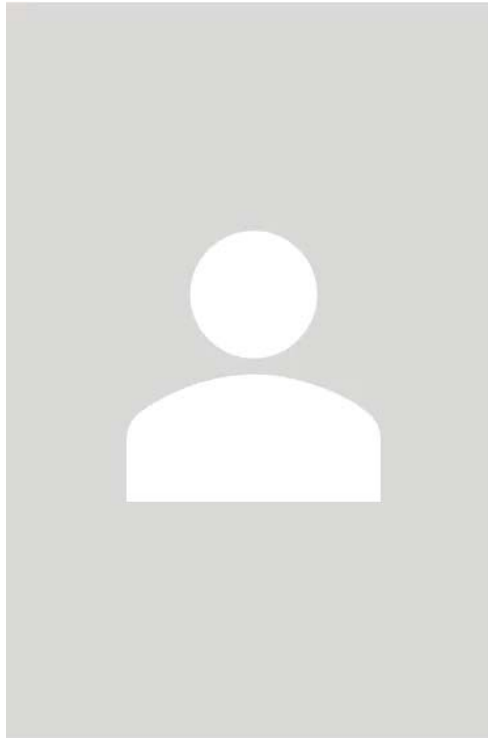
A general roadmap for creation of Future Personas involves these steps:

1. Research and Analysis - The first step involved is the research and analysis. What are the potential future trends impacting the field of interest? Technological advancements, social shifts, and environmental changes, etc. should be analysed. From this, relevant behavioural variables can be derived: what is important in relation to the imagined future?
 - Activities: What is being done? Frequency & volume of activities
 - Attitudes: How do people think about the important characteristics of the future (eg. future products/services, technology, environmental or social changes)
 - Competencies: What education, training, ability to learn, etc. is needed
 - Motivation: Why is the future relevant? What goal is being pursued?
 - Skills: Knowledge in relation to a specific domain, technology, product category or other characteristics
2. Target Audience - Who is trying to be reached with this persona? Corporate leaders, a specific demographic, or a general audience?
3. Persona descriptions – Persona descriptions are created based on the data collected and analysed. A persona description may include education, lifestyle, interests, values, goals, needs, desires, attitudes, actions, etc. Giving Personas specific names and making it realistic with a picture to an actual user/customer is also essential during this step. The templates in section 5 can assist.
4. Scenario integration - The future persona is placed within a specific scenario. How do the personas react to the challenges and opportunities presented by the scenario? Their decision-making process and the consequences of their choices is of special interest to be shown.

Material needed

There are plenty of templates on the internet. Two examples are shown here.

Basic template from Ferganini, 2020:

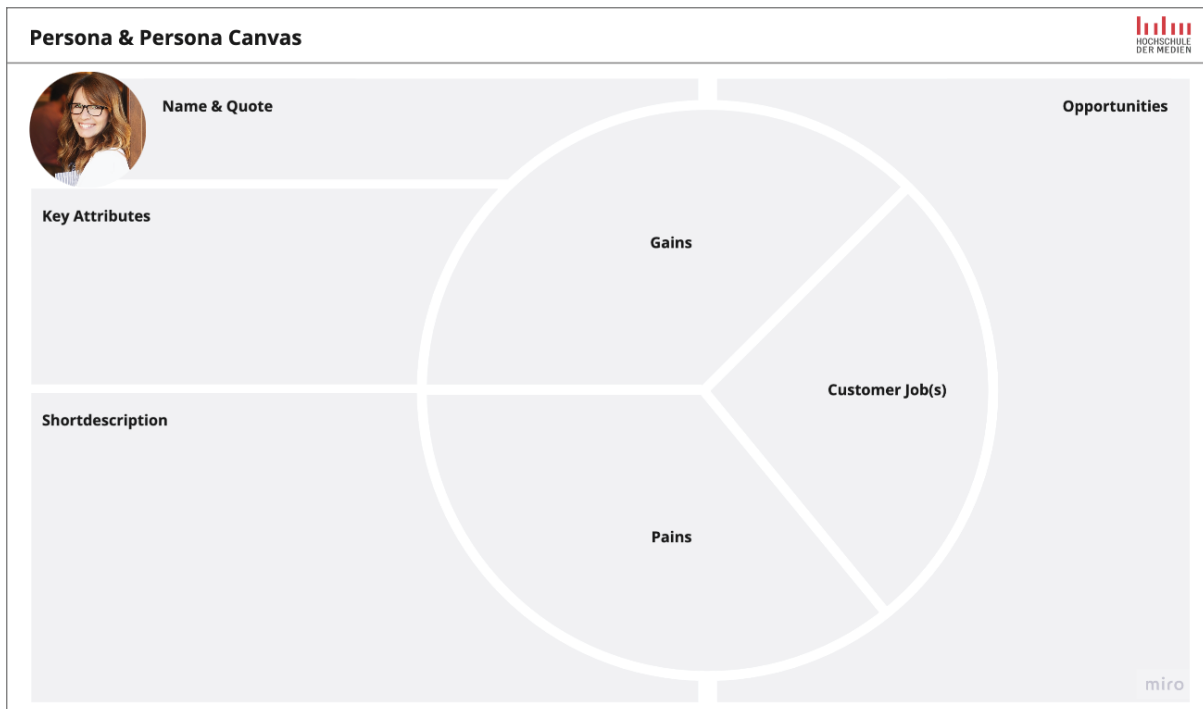


DEMOGRAPHICS
Name, age, gender, nationality

BASIC FACTS
Appearance, social background, Job position, lifestyle, pain points, health status, habits

MINDSET
Dreams, aims, values

Persona canvas of Hochschule der Medien:



Resources

Links:

- Ferganini, A. (2020). [The End of Boilerplate Scenarios: Let Your Scenarios Come to Life with Future Personas | by Alex Ferganini | Predict | Medium](#)

Videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4G3bR-YyLHM>

Papers:

- Kasper, Harriet & Kintz, Maximilien & Kochanowski, Monika & Anette, Weisbecker. (2018): Future Personas als Werkzeug zum Entwurf von Produkten und Dienstleistungen für den Kunden der Zukunft.
- Ferganini, A. (2019), "The future persona: a futures method to let your scenarios come to life", Foresight, Vol. 21
- Kohn, S., Schembera, B. & Stelzer, B. (Hrsg.). (2020). [The development of Future Personas for Design Thinking processes: The ISPIM Innovation Conference – Innovating in Times of Crisis.](#)