

The Company as Digital Persona



About the course

This course was originally developed for **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)** in **Greece**. The course was translated into English to make the course accessible for SMEs in other countries.

In this course, we will explore how a small business owner or entrepreneur can conceive and eventually **represent her/his company online as a persona**. It is about approaching a company in terms of a person with "characteristics", "personality", and "behavior". This approach is not supposed to fit only specific economic sectors in which a company operates. It is thus appropriate at a horizontal level.

However, in the field of **sales, retail, services, and especially in e-sales** where the encounters between company and consumer take place mostly online, it seems to be a crucial approach and tool. This is true because **the ways goods and services are promoted online should reflect the values and attitude, the character of a company as if it were a real-life person**.

What will you learn in this course?

- How can I **represent the values of my company** with the help of the concept of the company (digital) persona?
- How can I **"translate" the values of my company** into the frame of a persona as the "personality" of my company, **exposed in the public space** online and offline?

How long will it take you to complete the course?

We estimate approximately **two hours** of learning time, depending on how much you want to engage. The course can be interrupted at any time and resumed later.

About the authors

This course was created for the project [DigiCULTS](#) by the project partner [Militos Consulting SA](#). DigiCULTS is co-funded by the [Erasmus+ Programme](#) of the European Union.

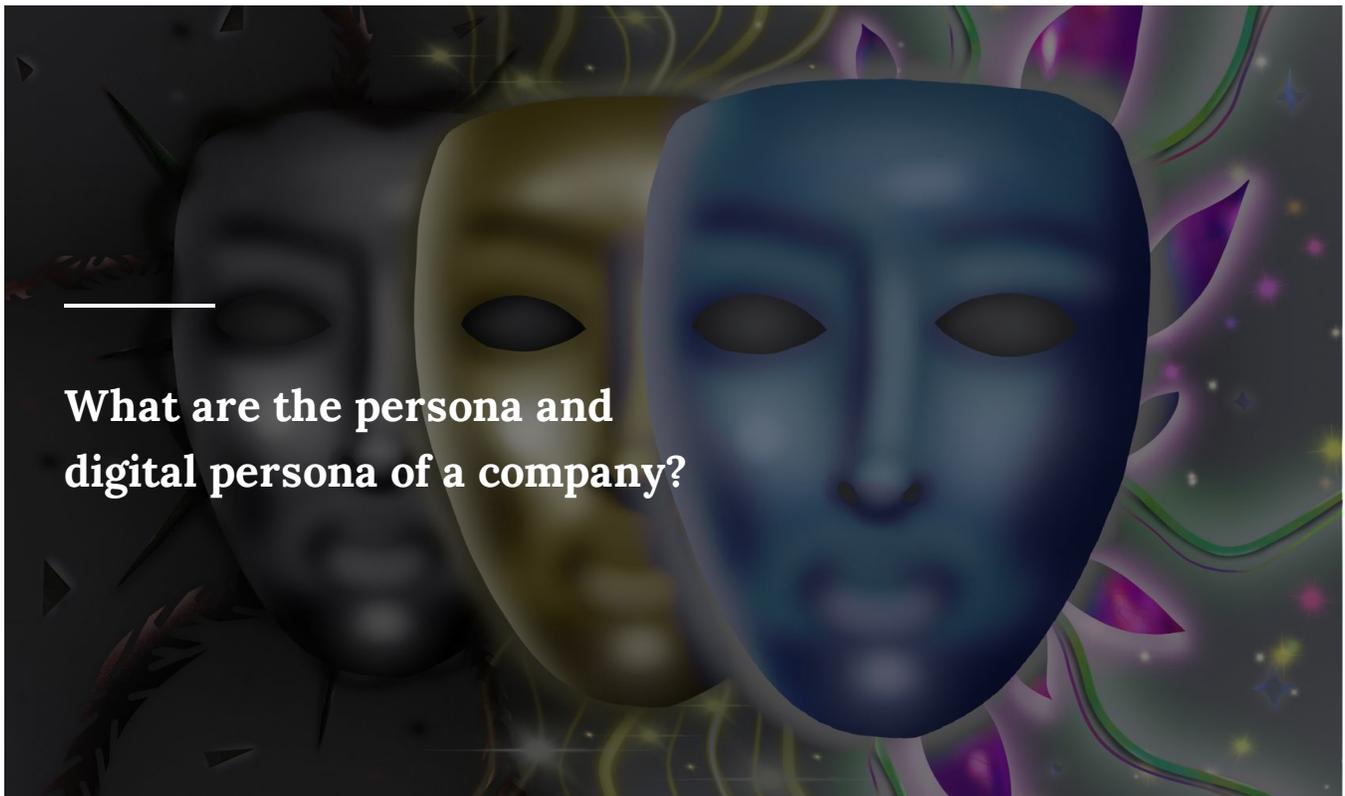
Let's start with the first chapter of this course:

- ≡ 1) The persona as a tool for representing a company in the online world

- ≡ 2) How can we craft a company persona?

- ≡ 3) Simple steps to craft the persona of your company

1) The persona as a tool for representing a company in the online world



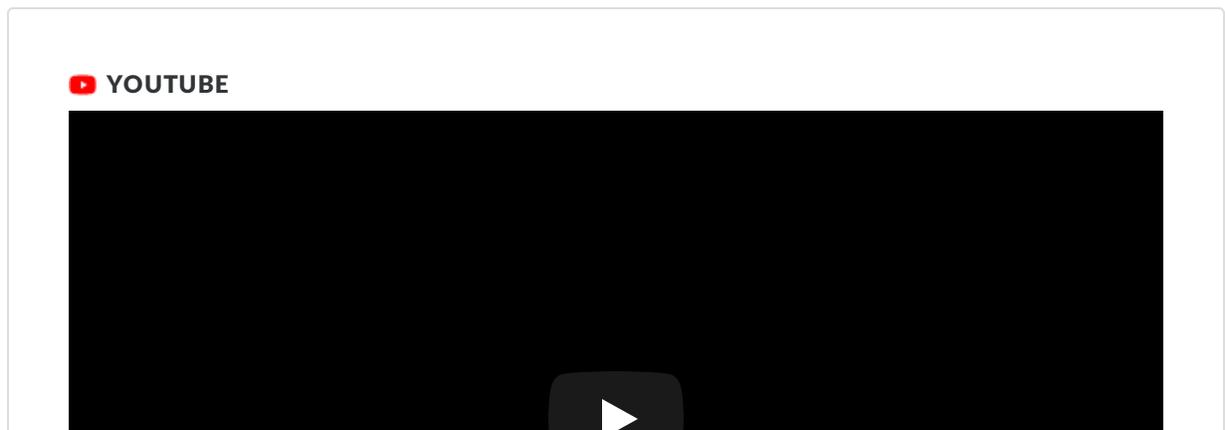
Companies, legally speaking, are considered "legal persons". At a metaphorical level, companies seem thus to act, to get engaged in exchanges, to have rights and obligations towards individuals, society, the legal and institutional framework within which they are born, exist and also seize to exist - die. It is exactly this metaphorical level that is of interest for us here - **the company as a person with values, a personality, and an idiosyncrasy.**

The **elements of this person, such** as presenting and exposing itself publicly, are conceived by others (customers, website visitors, and buyers in virtual and real environments). These elements **construct opinions, images, and representations for and of a company as a "being"**. The personality thus of a company (its persona) should then be created so that it **reflects the personalities of the real persons who are behind it**, but also **principles, "culture", and temperament**. And it should be created in such a way so that it **lives in harmony with what the company stands for and looks like in real life**.

Let's start with what a persona really is

The concept of the persona is used widely in **marketing**. It is used mostly as a tool to acquire a better understanding of the audience to which a company is reaching out. So to achieve this goal, **persona or personas of prospective customers are created, which are representations of the "typical" customer of a company**. They demonstrate or epitomize ways of life, everyday life habits, decision-making processes, but also demographic data. These personas **take more than often the form of a person, or a sketch of a person** complemented by elements that **inform on all that constitute this individual's personality, needs, worries, aspirations, etc.** ([Social Media Today](#)).

In the short **video below** you can see what is meant by the terms "User persona" or "Buyer persona". The concise presentation and explanations **will help you in the next steps to better understand the respective concept of the company persona** or brand persona as also used. Moreover, it will help you when you proceed in the next chapters where we will show you simple steps on how to create the persona of your own company.





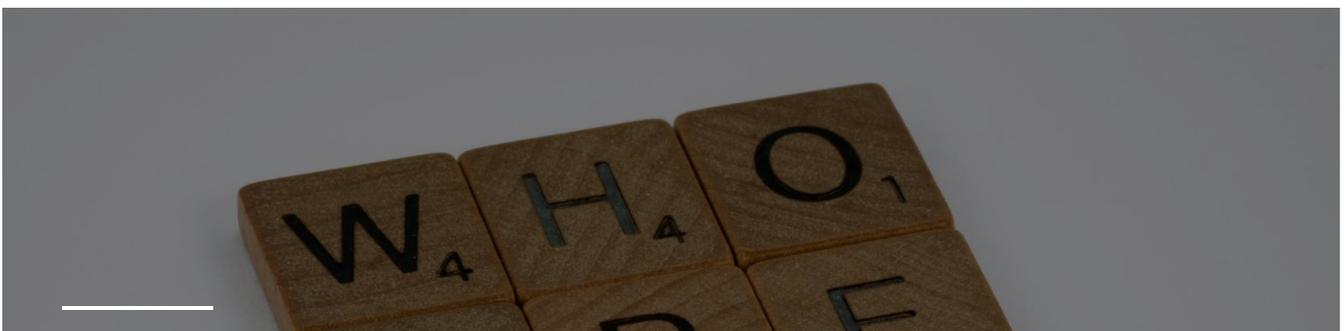
How To Create UX Personas

<http://uxmastery.com> In this video, Gregg Bernstein describes how to perform basic user research, turn that research into personas to inform your design deci...

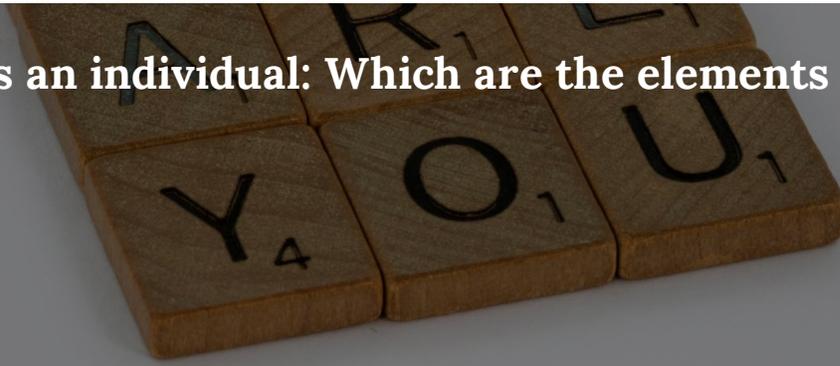
VIEW ON YOUTUBE >

In our effort to create the persona of our own company, and especially to harmonize the persona as it comes through online with that which appears in the real world, we saw in the video what a customer persona is, and what its elements are. So, before moving to the next chapter, **keep in your mind the elements** demonstrated in the video which **help you to understand the customer persona as a tool to better understand your customers**. It is those very elements that **in a reverse way will facilitate the process of creating a company persona** as we want it to appear as an individual with its own personality.

We recommend having a look at material about the customer persona in this DigiCulTS course "[Your social media strategy - Analysing your audience](#)"



Persona as an individual: Which are the elements of a persona



Which are the elements which constitute a persona?

After having watched the short video, let's have a look at **the elements of a persona**, in this case, the **customer persona as our springboard to create our company persona**. Studying those elements, **try to do the reverse move**. Think of those elements of the user persona, that construct, and represent this "anonymous" user as a real person in life. Read the statements below and replace "users" and "customers" with "companies", or even better, "My company".

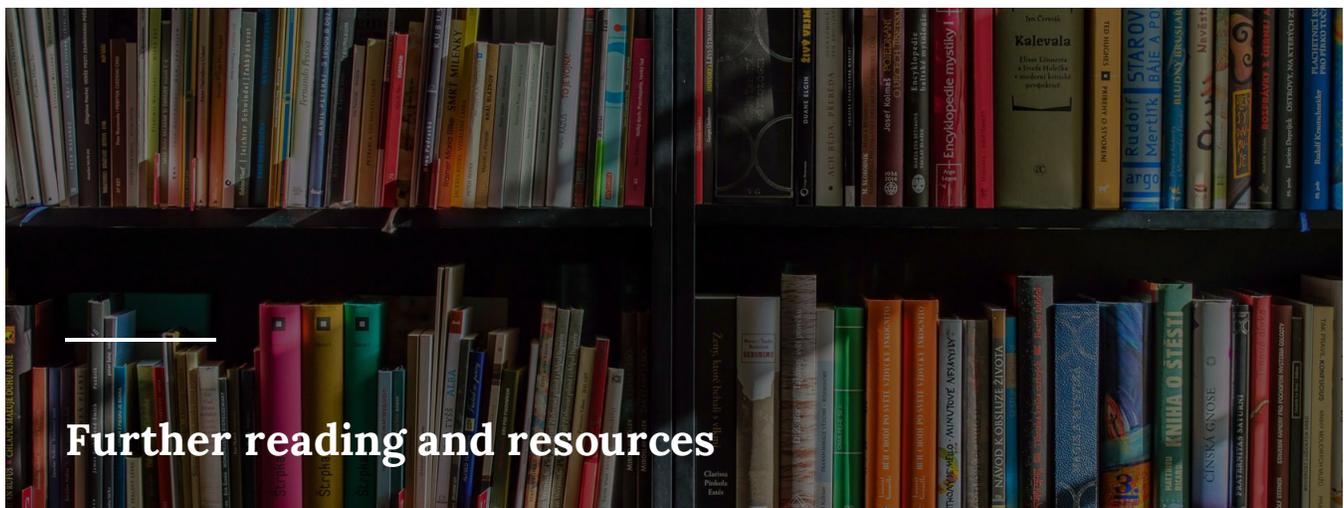
- **Users or customers are not abstract entities...**
- **Users and customers have faces, figures with traits, a character, and a personality...**
- **Users and customers have these faces in the real world and in the public online and offline space...**
- **Users and customers have a real name that reflects their personalities in the real world...**
- **Users' and customers' names and faces are distinct and are revoked in the memory of others in specific terms and ways articulated by characteristics, images, sounds, expressions, expected behaviors, values, principles, emotions...**

The digital persona of a company is the representation of a company as a person that exists in the real world.

Taking a cue from the statement above, think about your **own digital, online profile**. Think of the way you created it to be used for example in social media. You probably pick a picture of yourself or maybe some other image. Whatever you chose it is sure that it **transmits a message to the viewers - known and unknown viewers**, without you actually knowing much about how they perceived or interpreted this message. You probably provided some more information about yourself or omitted certain information that you thought of adding later or even not at all.

Following this, you **started publishing things, text, images, videos, and comments**. You also monitored the reactions of viewers. On their side, **whoever can see you and have access to your social media profiles** or pages, they are **entering into a process of responding**, reacting to it and what you publish. Sometimes they publicly express these reactions and sometimes do not. If they do not know you personally in the real world, something that more than often happens in social media, it is sure enough that they construct an image of you, a representation; **they interpret, they try to assemble the real person behind the profile with all the information they have in their hands**.

Imagine now the moment of a physical encounter with them, that might as well have happened already. What can you say about their **expectations**? To what extent are you **feeling that your online profile is in harmony with you as a person** and personality in the real world? Have you noticed any of the **expectations** of the other having been **verified or not**? What was your situation the other way around about them?





The difference between brand personas and buyer personas.

This short article summarizes the similarities and differences between a customer and a brand persona. It contains useful information to better understand both the content of this chapter, as well as those which follow.

[READ MORE](#)

What are personas?

In this video by Interaction Design Foundation - IxDF you can find a more elaborated approach to the concept of persona. Even if a bit lengthy, the video is highly informative and understandable, despite the scientific references.

[WATCH HERE](#)



Which are the lessons learned in this chapter?

Lessons learned

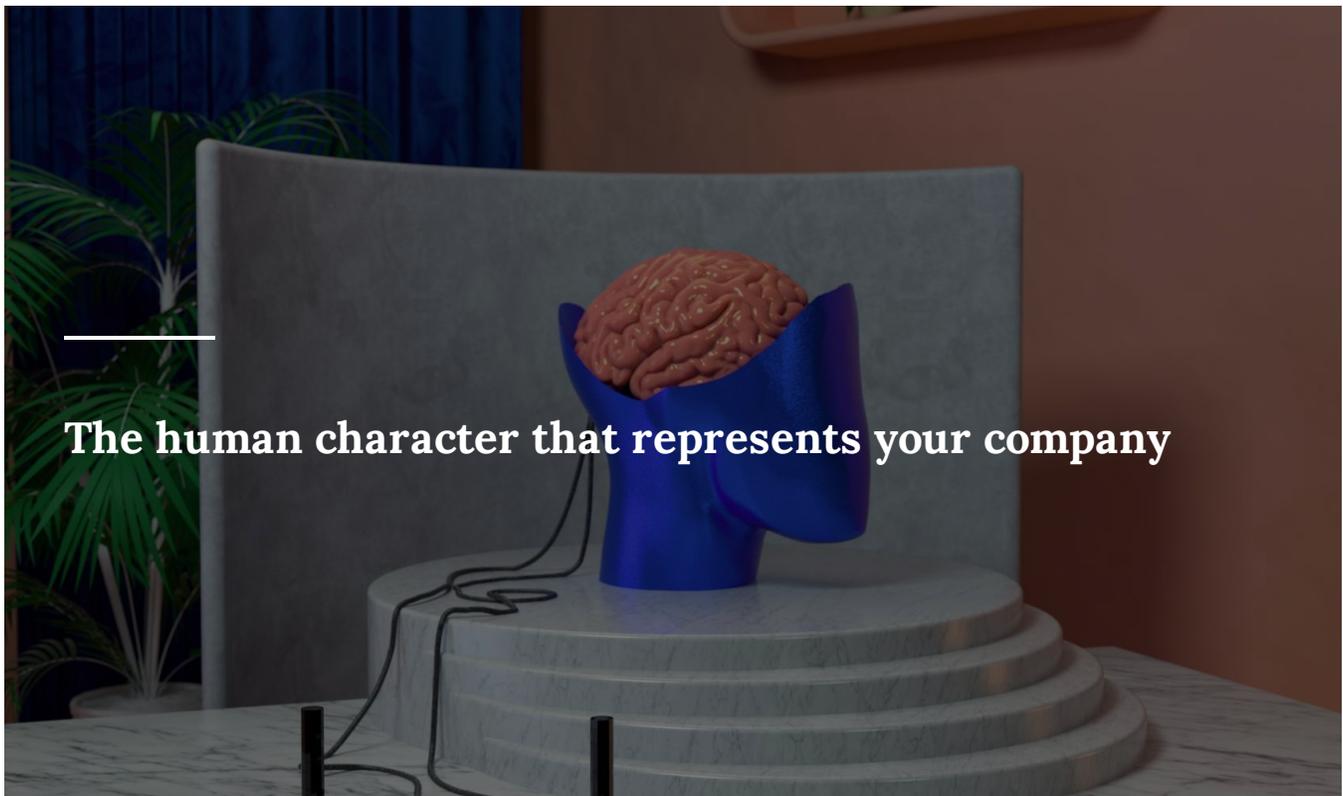
In this chapter we came to terms with the concept of the persona and in particular:

- **What do we mean** when we use the concept of persona?
- **Which are the elements of the customer persona** as used widely in marketing, which **turned around, replaced** by a "company" allows us to talk about the **company persona**?

With these thoughts and insights, we can now proceed to the next chapters to see how we can craft the persona of a company.

Let's see now what crafting a company persona practically means!

2) How can we craft a company persona?



The human character that represents your company

As we have seen in the previous chapter, **a company persona should be created by ideally having a person, a personality in our mind.** The company persona is more than a logo or a motto and the message they convey. Moreover, the company persona is in a way more than the sum of the characteristics, the personalities, the knowledge of those who work in this company. It has an existence on its own!

It is about **your company with the look and form of a human character** in cyberspace (your website, your social media, and e-sales platform may be, etc.), as well as in the real world. **Traditionally, a**

company presented itself to an audience of existing or prospective customers **in the form of a "monologue"** - a one-way channel where the company transmitted messages to attract others.

But **things have changed** and they have done at a quite fast pace. The voice of the consumers became significantly louder. Their decision-making process has changed therefore fundamentally. The **buyer-consumer-customer is engaged in a dialogue** with the company as well as with other consumers. This has been **facilitated by technology and the digital transformation process**. Just think of all the consumer fora online, blogs, and whole websites which host reviews, but also institutional bodies and organizations acting as representatives of the community of citizens as consumers. Engaged in these multi-faceted dialogues, it is more than sure, that the consumers or the customers **will move to the "next company" if their expectations** from the personality and the attitude of a company **are not met**.

Your company is amidst an ongoing dialogue with its customers in a similar way real persons engage in a dialogue. Your customers - as exactly people do - will remain in and nurture this dialogue as long as they feel a certain amount of familiarity, respect, and harmony in the dynamics of this dialogue. This is the exact reason why you should conceive your company as a real person that thinks, speaks, and has certain manners and traits.

Customers are engaged in a dialogue with our company as exactly as people do with each other

In the same way, persons with certain behaviors and attitudes are attracting or repel us in our interpersonal relationships, people are attracted or repelled in their relationships with a company.

In the same way, we retreat when feelings of familiarity and intimacy are absent in a relationship, people will retreat in their relationship with a company.

In creating a company persona in a consistent way, we are providing the representation of a person with whom we call others, prompt them, or propose to them to enter into a relationship with this person.



People choose the company or the companies they feel as appropriate to enter into a relationship and a "dialogue" in similar ways as they do with fellow humans. ([Business News Daily](#))

How can we craft the persona of a company?



How can we create the persona of a company?

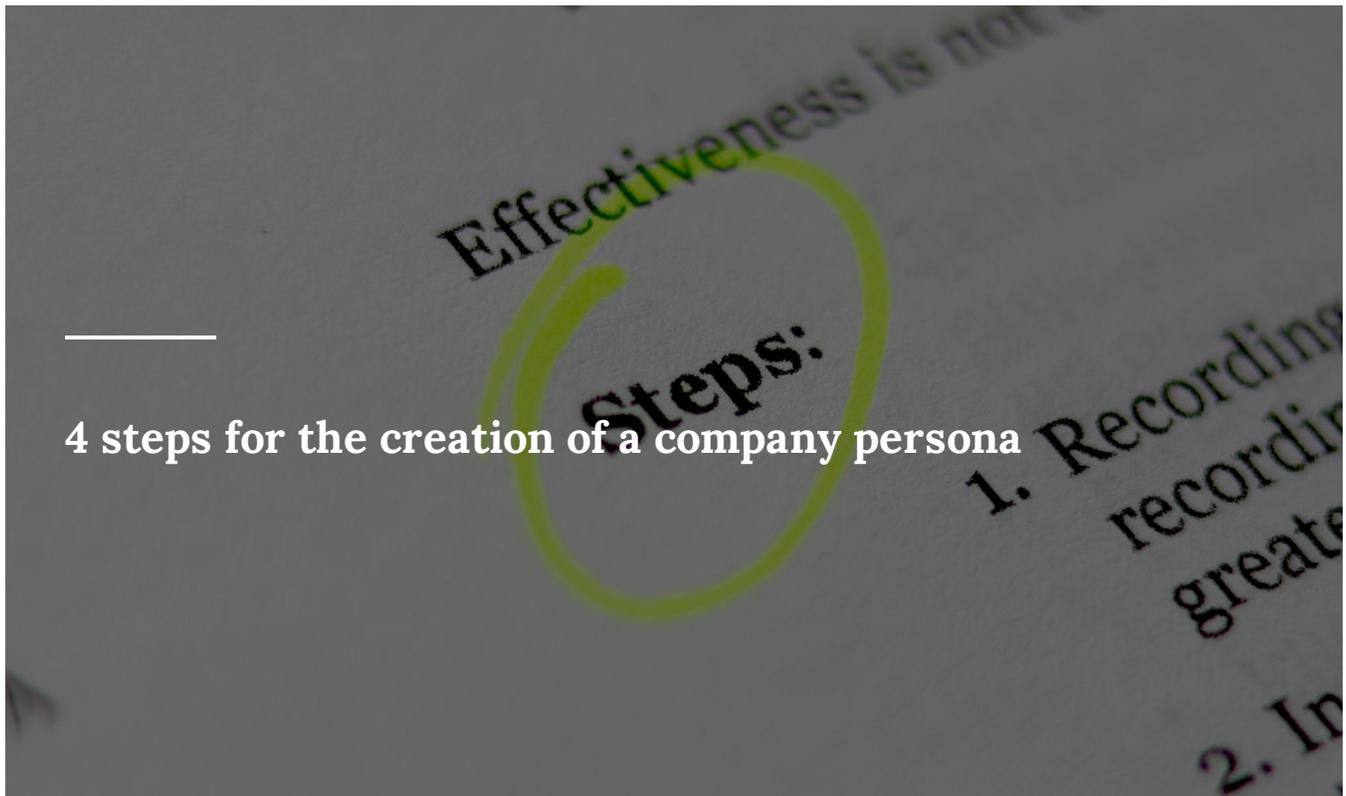
In the following chapter, we are providing you with concrete steps on how you can craft the persona of your company, taking into consideration all that was presented so far. We have gone through diverse sources to identify several materials and come up with the content of the suggested steps as you will see them. Therefore, we strongly suggest having a look at the indicative sources provided by the end of the next chapter in the section "Further reading and resources".

"We would like to point out that in order for someone to create a company persona, creating a customer persona is often a preceding task. This is why we explored to a certain extent the concept of the buyer/user persona in the previous chapter but also suggested **visiting the [DigiculTS course "Your social media strategy"](#)** and especially **Chapter 4** - Analysing your audience.

However, for the needs of this course we can proceed with the creation of a company persona as we will show you in the next chapter, using the elements, the concept, and the approach of the customer persona as shown in this course as a model for it, that is, as approach, way of thinking, and repository of elements of a persona).

Continue with the steps

3) Simple steps to craft the persona of your company



4 steps for the creation of a company persona

Step 1: The statement that "says it all"

It sounds easy but it is not. Start by getting an empty page and a pencil. No matter if your company is around for quite some time or it is a new company, spare some deep thoughts on the following:

Which is really the mission of your company?

Think about the mission of your company at the personal and collective levels. That which the company provides to you, to employees, colleagues, customers, the society. For example, you can ask yourself the following questions: Who is benefitting from the existence of my company? What does my company offer these products or services instead of others? Don't think only about the material or economic benefits! Moreover, avoid limiting your thoughts to short-term missions, which however seem to be necessary for a wider mission. Here is an allegory that can help you in this process: Let's say that you travel by car to some distant city. Your mission is not to fill up your tank whenever is needed, nor to realize what it looks like to cover a big distance by driving a car. These are or might be obvious side-missions, necessary episodes, but definitely not the essence of your mission. **Now take some time and write down in a couple of sentences - preferably one if possible - the mission of your company!**

Which is according to you the promise of your company?

What does your company promise to your customers or prospective customers? This of course is closely related to the goods or services you offer, as well as the people you are offering them to. Here are again some ideas that can help you. Similar ones are to be found in commercials and advertisements: One or more solutions to certain issues, a convenient life, style, status, personality, necessary products, and objects or services which promise something "better" than other, similar ones (why really?), etc. **Continue now with what you started with your mission, adding the promise of your company!**

What are the origin and the footing of your mission and promise?

Missions and promises are not arising in a personal, emotional, or social void. They have their origin in principles, values, beliefs, perceptions, desires, and expectations; the elements that make up a human personality too and define its identity. So, behind missions and promises, there are certain values and beliefs. Which are they for your company? How important is their role in the definition of your company's mission and promise? Examples of values and principles are quality, trust, justice and fairness, consistency, support, understanding, humility, effectiveness, etc. **Identify your values and beliefs and add them to your statement!**



Step 2: The face behind missions, promises, and values

You have your statement that summarises the mission, promise, and values of your company. **Now it is about time to imagine a person, an existing or imaginary personality with a face, gender, age, traits, and characteristics.** Could be as well a known personality, a "hero", even a relative or friend. You might want to imagine this person in a certain environment - nature, a city, whatever. It could as well be an image without necessarily being a person with a face, although a person with a face will work here much better.

Who do you imagine as the ideal "carrier" of your statement so far? Which person's voice would be the ideal one to speak out about what you have written in your statement? To cut it short, if your company was a human being, who would it be? **You don't need any top-notch drawing or**

sketching skills. Just try to come up with a sketch or write even the name of a person if it is about a well-known personality.

Look at it and think about why you have chosen this person. What does it stand for? What does it inspire in others? Peace or tranquility, self-confidence, protection and care, smartness, innovation? With what is this person most connected? Why is that person the right one to articulate and communicate your company's mission, promise, and values?

Step 3: The 'voice' of your persona

This and the next step are connected with the communication profile of your persona. It is about the communication style, the 'tone' of your persona's voice which is either spontaneously connected with a known personality if you have chosen such one, or connected with the personality you have chosen according to how you interpret this personality. In Step 4 you will then describe the way your persona relates to communication channels as you imagine this person would use or prefer certain online communication channels or face-to-face communication.

The voice of your persona is nothing more than **the way you imagine the person you have chosen or sketched would express itself for your company**, its products, or services. This would include **written discourse**, for example on the company website or social media, in a promotional advertisement, and even in company communication of formal or less formal nature. It would also include **non-verbal discourse** and communication as expressed in images, colors, the way the company is graphically and aesthetically presented on- and offline, and in products, as manufactured or presented in physical or virtual environments.

So, think about which **expression modes best reflect the character of your persona**. Consider that expressing oneself through written or oral discourse has two dimensions: One is what one person says, while the other is how it says it. In a similar way to the way a person in real life communicates, so does your company persona. So what you have to do is choose the **tone of your persona's face**. Is it mild, more aggressive, more formal or more informal, conservative, professional, or less professional and personal?

Note down the characteristics, the tone, and the style of the voice of your persona according to what you read above. You could as well try to speak out or have somebody else reading out loud what you

wrote in your statement, trying out voice styles, volume, etc. that fit your persona. Keep notes of your observations and check whether this voice is satisfying you and in harmony with your persona.



Your persona has its preferred communication channels

Step 4: The communication channels of your persona

So far, your persona has an appearance, and a face, it carries values, promises, and a mission. It also has a voice - a distinct way of expressing itself which is in line with all the above. We live in the digital era without meaning that the world beyond the internet and cyberspace has seized to exist as a significant communication environment. Think now about the communication channels your persona would prefer and why. For example: Which social media platforms would be most preferred by your persona? Why? Would your persona prefer face-to-face communication to online

communication and to what extent? In what mix and in which context and instances? **Note down the communication profile and style of your persona including your thoughts and conclusions after reading all the above.**

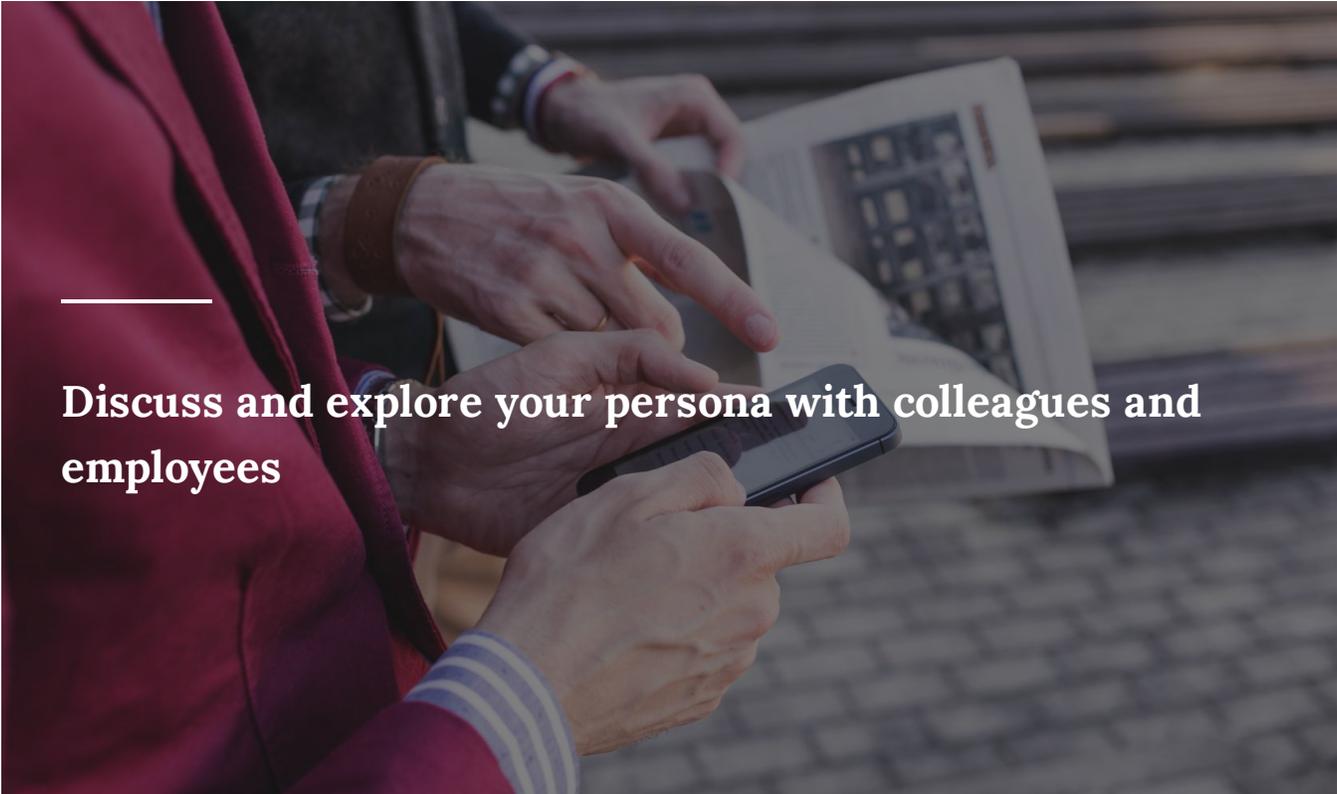


Have a good look at your persona and imagine your company as the sketch, the face, the person you are looking at

Have now a good look at your sketch which stand for the persona of your company

- How much does your persona represent your company or the way you think about your company?
- Think about the company's website and the social media platform you use. Recall a communication with a customer. Do you feel that the persona of your company was really "present" in this communication? To what extent? What was there, and what was absent or different?

- Think of the physical space of your company, its products, or the images of its products or services as they are probably demonstrated and promoted online. Are they fitting the personality of your persona? Are colors, and words in harmony with the elements of your persona?



Discuss and explore your persona with colleagues and employees

We created for you an **online collaboration space using [Padlet](#)**. Here you can **discuss online with colleagues, employees, and collaborators** even from a distance. It is important to exchange views and opinions about the company persona you created, to **check whether all the persons in your company are really tuned in to your persona** and everything it represents. We saw that your company persona had as **reference points similar elements of a customer persona**. Considering the **different ways** your colleagues and employees are **in touch with your customers**, it is certain that you will come across **common but also different opinions** about your persona.

You can add comments by using the button with the + sign on the screen you can see below.

Trouble viewing this page? Go to our diagnostics page to see what's wrong.

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Reflect your practice: How did your industry struggle during Covid19?

What challenges have you and other companies in your industry come across during Covid-19? How did digitization, digitalization, or even digital transformation in your industry mitigate the risk of having to close down your business? Can you recall any

You can open Padlet in a separate browser tab [here](#).

 You haven't used Padlet yet? It is a digital brainstorming and discussion space, where you can write posts, comment, or like other postings. It is pretty user-friendly and intuitive. You don't need to sign in to use it. If you would like to learn more about how to use it, here is a brief YouTube tutorial.





"What Is A Brand Persona? (And How To Create An Engaging One) "

In this video, by Brand Master Academy you can watch an interesting presentation on how to create a company persona.

[WATCH HERE](#)

How to create a memorable brand persona

In this short article from Forbes, you can read how the brand persona is mediating among the key message you want your company to convey, your customers, and the qualities of your company that make it stand out!

[READ MORE](#)



What are the lessons learned in this chapter?

Lessons learned

Following Chapter 1, in Chapters 2 and 3 we provided you with **4 basic steps to craft your company persona**. Moreover, with the help of online collaboration spaces, you could **share opinions** with colleagues and employees, **verifying or challenging views** on your company's persona, leading to **adjustments, changes, or refinements!**

We hope you enjoyed the course about the persona and the digital persona of a company, as well as the process of how to create one for your own company!

We highly appreciate **your feedback**, so **please leave a comment** about this course [in our feedback padlet](#). Thank you!



Contact information

This course has been developed for the Erasmus+ co-funded project [DigiCulTS](#) by [Militos Consulting SA](#) partner of the DigiCulTS consortium.

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