

Project 2: Persona & Scenario

1. Identification of the target user.

Hiring Manager (Design Industry)

This is adjusted from my Project 1 target user, since the project I proposed was too large in scope. For this project, I plan to develop a portfolio website template (utilizing Wordpress) for web designers and graphic designers. Most hiring managers working with graphic designers or web designers will have to have some knowledge of what the company is looking for, and this can vary from hiring managers looking for candidates to present for consideration, to other professional designers looking for specific talent for a certain project. The portfolio website needs to be easy to understand and navigate for both novices to the world of design and experts who are looking for something specific.

2. Interview questionnaire or cue sheet.

Interview Questionnaire

- What do you expect to see on a portfolio website?
- What do you NOT want to see on a portfolio website?
- What makes a portfolio website a good website, in your opinion?
- How would you decide whether a candidate is worth moving forward with or not based on their portfolio or resume?
- How many examples of a designer's work would you expect to see in an online portfolio?
- Why do you think a portfolio website is crucial for hiring?
- How do you usually find prospective employees for design work?
- Would you be more likely to consider a candidate if they had a well-designed portfolio website?
- Do you prefer simple websites or complex websites more?
- What are your preferences regarding color on websites?
- Do you have a portfolio website, or have you created a portfolio in the past? What did you learn from it? What improvements did you make?

3. Raw data: What people said and how they reacted to your questions.

Participant 1

- What do you expect to see on a portfolio website?

Examples of different types of work showing the range of the artist. The artist's Contact information. Mission statement. An idea of pricing. Not specifics but it's nice to know a general ballpark.

- What do you NOT want to see on a portfolio website?

Advertisements, music. I hate websites that have music playing in the background and you can't figure out how to turn it off.

- What makes a portfolio website a good website, in your opinion?

Good design. Easy to navigate. Reflective of the artist.

- How would you decide whether a candidate is worth moving forward with or not based on their portfolio or resume?

I'd want to see if the style is what I'm looking for. If their contact information shows their location of being reasonable. If their pricing is in my range.

- How many examples of a designer's work would you expect to see in an online portfolio?

At least 8 to 12 in each category. Two or three if it's more specialized.

- Why do you think a portfolio website is crucial for hiring?

Art and design is very subjective. People need to get a visual insight into the artist's work.

- How do you usually find prospective employees for design work?

N/A

- Would you be more likely to consider a candidate if they had a well-designed portfolio website?

Yes

- Do you prefer simple websites or complex websites more?

It depends on the site.

- What are your preferences regarding color on websites?

Not so much that it's distracting, but a simple color scheme is good.

- Do you have a portfolio website, or have you created a portfolio website in the past? What did you learn from it? What improvements did you make?

I didn't have enough samples of my work. And I really didn't have a target audience in mind.

Participant 2

- What do you expect to see on a portfolio website?
Good Typography!
- What do you NOT want to see on a portfolio website?
I do not want to see EVERYTHING a designer has ever done. Highlighting the best work is ideal.
- What makes a portfolio website a good website, in your opinion?
A good portfolio website invites the viewer in and allows them to explore the work effortlessly. There should be descriptions added so the viewer understands the scope of the work presented. A novel is not necessary. However, the viewer needs key information to understand the projects shown.
- How would you decide whether a candidate is worth moving forward with or not based on their portfolio or resume?
It's all about the presentation. Do they consider details? Are things consistent? Does information match? I think of this person as if they were a brand - how are they marketing themselves?
- How many examples of a designer's work would you expect to see in an online portfolio?
Depends on their work experience. The more experience one has, the more work I would expect to see! Again, I do not want to see everything...just the good stuff :)
- Why do you think a portfolio website is crucial for hiring?
In the design community, one will never get a job without showing what they are made of...
- How do you usually find prospective employees for design work?
Word of mouth - professional connections (LinkedIn)
- Would you be more likely to consider a candidate if they had a well-designed portfolio website?
Absolutely!
- Do you prefer simple websites or complex websites more?
Simple. Most working professionals do not have the time to dig through piles and piles of nonsense. If a candidate cannot catch the eye of the viewer in 5 mins, the purpose of the portfolio has failed.
- What are your preferences regarding color on websites?
Busy portfolios are annoying... let the work be the star of the show! I don't mind color but I want to see the color have a purpose. Whether it is to create visual hierarchy or to separate different design styles, use it wisely.

- Do you have a portfolio website, or have you created a portfolio in the past? What did you learn from it?

What improvements did you make?

Unfortunately, due to the work in my portfolio, it cannot be published publicly to a website. I have an interactive PDF. A website is ideal because the viewer does not have to download anything and is so much more convenient.

Participant 3

- What do you expect to see on a portfolio website?

The portfolio website you build should say a lot about you in the first few seconds. Portfolio examples should be labeled, indexed, and presented attractively and professionally.

- What do you NOT want to see on a portfolio website?

Anything unnecessary. Avoid long intros.

- What makes a portfolio website a good website, in your opinion?

It should be customized according to what you specialize in. For example, if you specialize in mobile-optimized websites, your own site should be optimized for mobile!

- How would you decide whether a candidate is worth moving forward with or not based on their portfolio or resume?

Does the website give an information into how they work? Does it demonstrate all-around experience?

- How many examples of a designer's work would you expect to see in an online portfolio?

I would include at least 30 examples for an online space, and only include appropriate examples.

- Why do you think a portfolio website is crucial for hiring?

There's nothing more important to your career than presenting your best work in an attractive, professional and accessible way.

- How do you usually find prospective employees for design work?

Professional networks like LinkedIn, Indeed, and Behance.

- Would you be more likely to consider a candidate if they had a well-designed portfolio website?

Yes.

- Do you prefer simple websites or complex websites more?

Simple websites. The work should be the focus.

- What are your preferences regarding color on websites?

For a portfolio website, an appropriate color scheme is crucial. You can't expect someone to think you're a good designer if you can't design a website.

- Do you have a portfolio website, or have you created a portfolio in the past? What did you learn from it?

Think about the goal of your design portfolio. When I started out, I just wanted constructive feedback, so I'd only post one image of the core work.

- What improvements did you make?

Nowadays I try to showcase different usages of a design or placement on products, and give some insights into the process.

Other Responses

Simple, direct, accentuates the work and doesn't draw attention to itself.

4. Characteristics of the target user: What was common among the target users?

All of the target users expressed a desire for simplicity, directness, and for the focus to be on the work. They regretted the missteps of their first portfolios or portfolio websites, and wished that they had included more examples of their work. Each of them emphasized the importance of making the portfolio easy to browse through and eye-catching. Five minutes seemed to be the general limit for how long someone should have to spend finding the important information and good examples of the designer's work.

5. Persona (concise and complete)

Paula Summers is a graphic and web designer with experience at a few high-profile apparel companies. She is 32 years old, married with two children, and lives just outside Seattle. She has a BFA from a reputable university, as well as an MFA from an online university. She has approximately 10 years of industry experience, and has experience teaching at her alma mater. She is currently overseeing catalog production at a growing apparel company specializing in sustainable clothing. Paula has become very familiar with the Adobe Creative Suite and online platform websites like Behance during her college education, and relies on them heavily in her profession. She has her own portfolio created as an interactive PDF, but does not have experience building or creating websites. Paula doesn't have any technical knowledge regarding websites, but will notice the components of a website's design and can tell if a website takes too long to load or includes too many unnecessary aspects.

6. Scenario (concise and complete)

The apparel company she is currently working for is escalating its business, and she has been assigned to find three new designers to assist with finishing the newly expanded spring catalog. She needs to find designers who are skilled with Adobe InDesign, photography, print work, and professional experience. Paula is responsible for the overall design and look of the spring catalog, so she doesn't have much time to spend on finding additional designers. She's having her assistant look through LinkedIn for designer profiles, but she needs to review these websites herself in order to find someone that fits the company's needs.

Her assistant has sent her a list of designers who list the right kind of professional experience and education on their LinkedIn profiles, but only a handful of them specify a portfolio website in the header of their profile. Paula clicks through on all of the links she can find, but the first website is just a generic Wordpress blog. The second has an About Me and contact information, but the pictures of the designer's work are pixelated and she can't get a good enough idea of the quality. By the fifth, she has a good idea of exactly what she wants, and finds a good range of work, contact information, a detailed biography, and pricing information for freelance and commission work. The website has a consistent design with good attention to detail, and does not include any unnecessary animations or other gimmicks. Paula sends an email to the designer in question inquiring about their availability, and feels confident that this designer can work well with the company and help create the content they need for their spring catalog. If this first freelance position works well, they might even be able to bring the new designer on as a full-time employee.

7. Evaluation criteria (prioritized)

Requirements

1. Featured, curated range of work
2. Contact information, information about the designer

Criteria

3. Consistent design
4. Simple, easy to navigate and find information
5. Invites viewer in, allows them to explore work effortlessly

Features

6. Includes pricing information
7. Includes blog and social media links

8. Evaluation criteria rubric (the rubric version of the evaluation criteria)

	Exceptional (2)	Good (1)	Acceptable (0)	Flawed (-1)	Horrible (-2)
Featured, curated range of work 30%	The designer has several categories of work, detailed descriptions, and excellent photographs of their work.	The designer has at least 8 examples of quality work, which have been photographed and displayed well. Descriptions are included.	The designer has at least 8 examples of their work, but the photographs aren't of great quality and the descriptions are sparse and leave out important details.	The designer has a few examples of their work, but the descriptions only include the title of the work and the photographs of the work are not professional quality.	The designer has very few examples of their work, no descriptions of the work, and the photographs are cell phone quality.
Contact information and information about the designer 30%	A detailed biography and salient contact information including an email and phone number are present.	A biography is given detailing the designer's past work, education, and current location, and an email address is given.	The designer's current location is given, as well as a list of past work and education. An email address is given.	The designer's current location is given, and a contact form is given for information.	No biography or contact information is provided.
Consistent design 10%	Special attention has been given to customization and styling, creating a consistent design with exceptional attention to detail.	The website design is consistent and has good attention to detail.	The website has some good aspects of styling, but many details are left to their defaults.	The website has been styled, but there are some outstanding details that do not match the overall look and feel.	Every page of the website is different, and the only things changed are the background colors and fonts.
Simple, easy to navigate and find information 10%	The navigation includes everything the user will want to see, a search bar is included, and information is easy to find.	The navigation includes the most important aspects of the site and a search bar.	The navigation includes the basic aspects of the site, but further pages have additional navigation.	The navigation includes the basic aspects of the site, but scrolling and searching within the pages is required to find salient information.	Almost no navigation is provided beyond the different pages, and it is difficult to find information.
Invites viewer in, allows them to explore work effortlessly 10%	The design of the website is inviting, including great examples of the designer's work and an excellent overview of the designer's style.	The design of the website reflects the artist's style and is aesthetically pleasing.	The website uses a good template but is not specialized to the designer or the designer's line of work.	The website is difficult to navigate, requires searching to find any of the designer's work, and uses a basic template.	The website is tacky and does not show any of the designer's skills outside of the portfolio page.
Includes pricing information 5%	Specific prices are given for every example of the designer's work, as well as commission rates.	Prices are given for a few products, but the merchandise redirects to a different website.	Only commission rates are given, and the user is encouraged to contact the designer for more information	The user is only encouraged to contact the designer for pricing.	No pricing information or contact information is given.
Includes blog and social media links 5%	The designer's blog is regularly updated and offers insight. Social media links are accurate and easily accessible.	The social media links are easily accessible, and the blog contains a good number of posts.	The designer's social media links are given, but require searching through the website to find. The blog only contains a few posts.	The designer's LinkedIn profile is available, but no other social media links.	No social media links can be found anywhere on the page.

9. Please also make a copy of the assignment rubric (as opposed to the design evaluation rubric) and self-assess.

Grading	Exceptional 100%	Good 90%	Acceptable 70%	Developing 50%	Missing 0%
Questionnaire 10%	“Good” plus one or two great questions	Thoughtful and likely to uncover insights into the user	Gives the user opportunities to communicate to the interviewer	Present but unlikely to yield any insights into the user	No questionnaire or cue sheet present
Summary / Interview 30%	Data collected paints a complete picture about the user	Interview uncovers key factors about the user	Three real users were interviewed	At least one real user was interviewed	No summary or interview data
Persona Quality 20%	Paints a “vivid” picture of the user and every sentence makes a significant contribution of my understanding of the user	Complete, concise, and fully supported by the collected data	Minor parts of the description of the user are missing, small inaccuracies exist, or overly verbose	Not detailed enough to understand the user, aspects of the persona are inaccurate, or large amounts of irrelevant text	Persona is missing
Scenario 10%	The most important use-case was identified and the description paints a “vivid” picture of how the user interacts with the system	Complete, concise, and fully supported by the collected data	Minor parts of the description of the use-case are missing, small inaccuracies exist, or overly verbose	Not detailed enough to understand the use-case, aspects of the scenario are inaccurate, or large amounts of irrelevant text	Scenario is missing
Criteria 20%	Every priority 1 criteria describes the success criteria and none are missing. Several priority 2 & 3 criteria are identified that add value	Every criterion listed is actually a criterion, and not a requirement or feature	One or more criteria is actually a requirement or feature	“Criteria” are actually lists of requirements or features. None are true criteria	None of the criteria help us evaluate the quality of a given feature or the criteria are missing
Rubric 10%	The rubric is an indispensable tool for evaluating the quality of the design	The rubric facilitates assessing the quality of a given design by making it easy to see how the design can be improved	One criteria is not adequately described	Flaws exist in the rubric which seriously degrades its effectiveness as an evaluation instrument	The rubric is missing

In addition to the above criteria, a penalty will be added for write-ups that suffer from usability issues: grammar or spelling errors, overly verbose, poor formatting choice, etc.