

Key Questions to Ask When Creating a Candidate Persona

Before you start

1. Define Your Parameters

What is the key criteria for your candidate? These will help you hone in on the type of person you need to define. Education, years experience, hard skills and location are all rudimentary factors that can help you lay a base. While these are essential, make sure not to pigeon-hole yourself by being too restrictive.

2. Define the Business Objective

Talk to internal stakeholders, including hiring managers, to understand exactly who you're looking for.

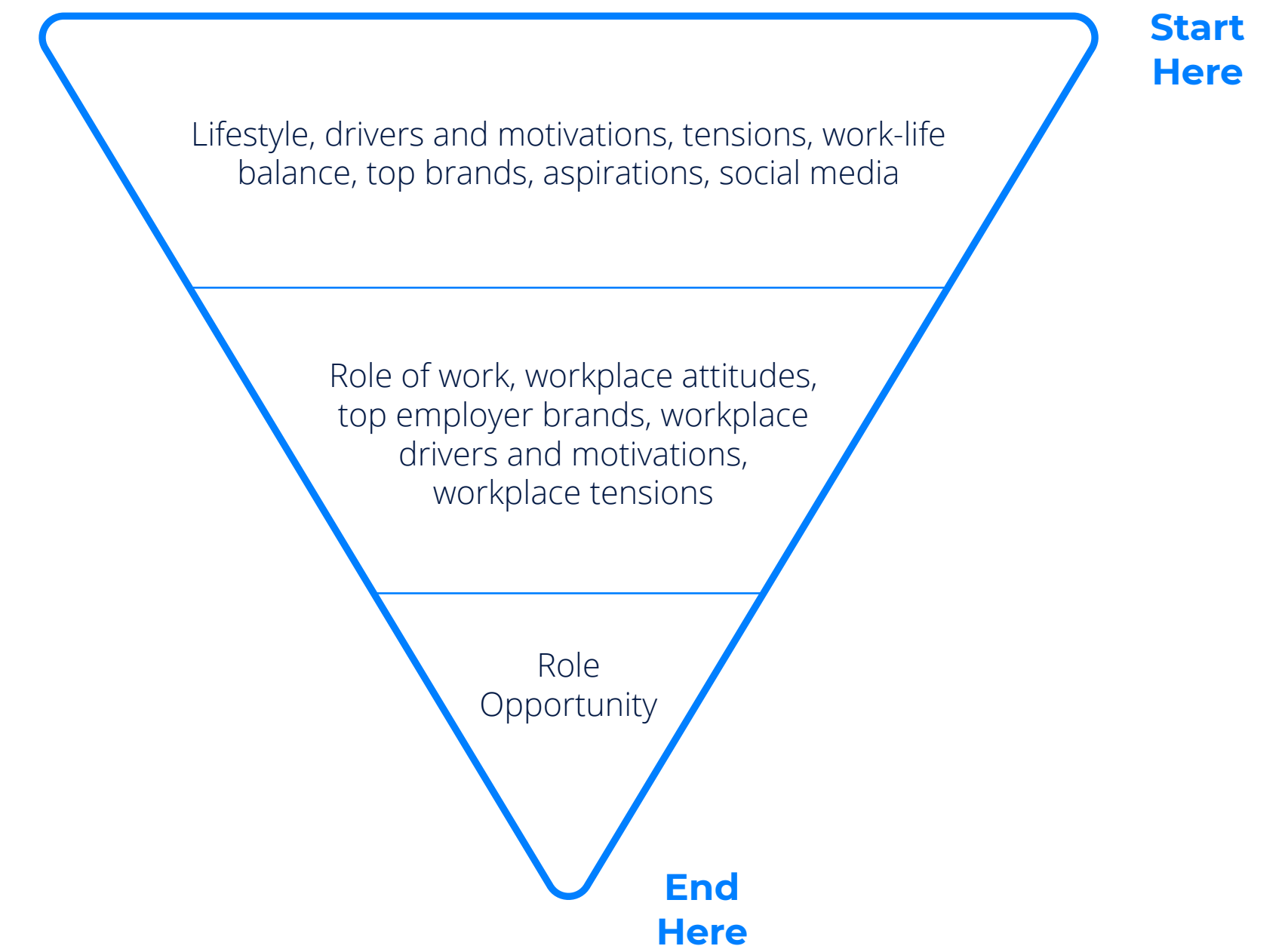
3. Check in Your Biases at the Door

Your own personal and professional drivers may not be the same as the candidate. This disparity can sometimes impede the persona creation process.

4. Adopt a Funnel Approach to Get the Full Picture

Your talent isn't just a potential candidate or your next hire. Give life to your candidate persona beyond the workplace. Understand the role their job plays within the broader context.

A Holistic Approach to Candidate Persona Creation



We know that sourcers and recruiters already have a lot on their plate. To make candidate persona creation easier, here are the essential questions to ask. ***They are based on a behavioral science marketing methodology.***

We've also included additional questions on the following page, for when you have more time or feel more confident with the process. These will help to build an even more dynamic and rich picture of your target audience, and can help get the creative juices flowing when creating recruitment marketing content or job ads.

Defining Your Parameters and Business Objectives

- What core requirements are essential? E.g. Education, years experience, specific skills
- Are there other types of candidates who fit a similar criteria that you could also target?
- What hard and soft skills would the perfect candidate have?
- Why are you looking to attract, engage and hire this type of candidate? Think about the role itself and your broader employer values and culture.

Understanding Their Life and Drivers

- How would your candidate describe their life and lifestyle? What are their hobbies and activities?
- How does your candidate spend their time online? What are their top sites and why?

- What are your candidate's top brands and why?

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Understanding Where and How Their Job Fits In Their Life

- How does work fit in the broader context of their life e.g. means to an end, part of their identity, growth and development, etc.?
- What do they want from their next job?
- What does the candidate want their job to say about them?
- What does the candidate see as their strengths that will help them achieve their work and career goals? Any obstacles or weaknesses?

Identifying What They Want From Your Organization

- What are inspirational employer brands for your candidates and why?
- Why is the candidate looking to leave/open to changing organizations?

- What does your candidate want from an employer? What is a nice-to-have and what is a must?

Identifying What They Want From the Role

- Why is your candidate looking to change role?
- What motivates your candidate to work?
- What makes it difficult for your candidate to get the job done?
- What is their most proud moment from their previous role? What are they less proud about?

Reviewing the Candidate Experience and Processes

- Thinking about your employer brand, culture and candidate experience, what would make this candidate want to work for you? What are the turnoffs?
- How are you currently interacting with the candidate? What are your strongest touchpoints? What are your weakest touchpoints?
- What is the candidate's preferred channel of communication? Are you visible?
- What do you need to do to get on their radar?

What Next?

Factual information is important, but anecdotes can help too in bringing to life candidate personas.

Go and talk to your employees in this role and those who you think are the ideal candidate for your organization and that best fit your culture. Talk to them about these questions and start to build your persona. Talk to their managers and hiring managers too to get new layers of understanding and what to look out for.

Do a bit of online research to see where they are. How they project themselves online? Explore what they like and what they follow, including brands and how these and companies fit in their online lives.

Repeat this task for every role that you create and start building a candidate persona library that is supported by an effective and streamlined process. Think about how you can consistently bring the candidates to life, for example, with a mood board to help your team really get a sense of who is your target and top talent for your organization.

In all of this, it's very important to be mindful of hiring bias. Make sure that your research aligns with your diversity objectives and that you are using behavioural insights rather than demographics to build your candidate persona.

Output

- Real and dynamic candidate personas that you can work with
- A tangible output that makes it easy for you and your team to think about and create attractive and engaging content for your target persona
- Effective recruitment marketing campaigns that lead to real results
- High quality talent pipelines filled with the right type of candidate for your organization

Appendix: Additional Questions to Consider

These additional questions are designed to help you get not only a more in-depth and realistic depiction of who your target persona is, but also what drives them so that you can create strategic content that is will not only standout, but attract and engage target candidates and help you build your employer brand.

Understanding Their Life and Drivers

- How satisfied is your candidate by life at the moment? What are they happy about? What do they feel could be improved?
- Who are the famous people (celebrities, influencers, politicians, authors, etc.) that they look up to, envy or wish they emulated more?
- What are your candidates personal strengths and weaknesses?
- What does your candidate see as their hard skills? Their soft skills?

Understanding Where and How Their Job Fits In Their Life

- What do they want from their job over the next year?
- What do they want to be doing in five years time? Personally and professionally.
- What are your candidates' professional strengths that will help them reach these goals? Any obstacles or weaknesses?

Identifying What They Want From Your Organization

- What would make your organization stand out to the candidate over competitors? Think about candidate relationship management and when a role arises.
- What does a good office culture mean look like for the

candidate? Generally speaking and day-to-day

- What are the candidates' top desired hard benefits? Top soft benefits? Which are the ones that don't matter as much for them at this moment in time and why?
- If your candidate was in charge of your company for the day and could review any processes and benefits, what would they do and why?
- What do they see as the thing that makes your organization stand out versus other companies they know?

Identifying What They Want From the Role

- What is the candidate's drivers and tensions for changing their current role?
- What makes a good manager for the candidate?

Reviewing the Candidate Experience and Processes

- What journey do you want to take them on?
- What can your organization do to stand out versus competitors?