



# GUIDE

# PERSONAS, USER STORY, USER JOURNEY TEMPLATE/EXAMPLES

AN EASY HOW-TO FOR PRODUCT MANAGER



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## WHO is this guide for?

This guide is meant for aspiring product managers as well as existing product managers who want to understand and implement agile components in their projects.

## What are Personas?

**Personas** describe specific characteristics of representative users that help teams better understand their end-user.

- **Personas** help understand Customers.

### Persona as:

- Are fictional characters based on your research
- Represent the different people who might use your product or Solution in a similar way
- Convey the problems Customers face in their context (e.g. their work environment) and key triggers for using the product
- Capture rich, concise information (photographs, family stories, jobs, etc.) that inspires great products without unnecessary details.

Example of persona from ExpungeAssist project:



Tasha

"I'm responsible for my own path now."

AGE	46	GENDER	Female
OCCUPATION	Security Guard	ARCHETYPE	Career Hopeful
STATUS	Partnership		
LOCATION	Broader Los Angeles		

### GOALS / NEEDS

- Consistency
- Empathy
- Simplicity
- Transparency

### MOTIVATIONS



Tasha's friend, Nadine, said it was just going to be a job fair, so she arrived dressed to the nines. Her girlfriend got it wrong though, it was an expungement clinic with career services as an area the volunteers there could help out with. Tasha's been out for a few years since her non-violent felony put her away for 15 years, but nothing's stopped her so far from getting jobs as long as she doesn't mention it. Her record *has* been weighing on her all this time though and she's turned a new leaf. She really just wants to work! That record could finally get in the way. You just need another stroke of bad luck, something she's never been immune to. Maybe they can take care of it all today and give her a new start.

## What is a User Story?

**User Story** is a short description of a small piece of desired functionality, written from the perspective of the user.

- “User Stories are a part of an Agile approach that helps shift the focus from writing about requirements to talking about them...”
- “All Agile User Stories include a written sentence or two, and, more importantly, a series of conversations about the desired functionality.”

### Format:

“As a (user role), I want to (activity), so that (business value)”

By using this format, Hack for LA project teams is guided to understand who is using the system, what they are doing with it, and why they are doing it. Applying the ‘user voice’ format routinely tends to increase the team’s domain competence; they come to better understand the real business needs of their user.

- Features are implemented incrementally by Stories
- In the product backlog, stories get refined — we discuss, decompose, estimate, and prioritize them. This is an ongoing process throughout development.

## Invest in Good Stories

The **INVEST model**, developed by Bill Wake, describes characteristics of good user stories:

- I – Independent (among other stories)
- N – Negotiable (a flexible statement of intent, not a contract)
- V – Valuable (providing a valuable vertical slice to the customer)
- E – Estimable (small and negotiable)
- S – Small (fits within an iteration)
- T – Testable (understood enough to know how to test it)

## 3 C’s in User Stories

They stand for Card, Conversation, Confirmation.

**Card**- The story itself.

**Conversation** - The requirements themselves are communicated from the Product Manager to the team via conversation

**Confirmation** - The acceptance criteria for the story. How the delivery team will know they have completed the story.

## How Hack for LA writes user stories?

**Below is the example of a User story from our VRMS project**

“As a general user, I want to log out of the product so I can keep my account secure”

Acceptance criteria:

- Logout button located in Hamburger menu
- Logging out links user to a landing page

## How to estimate Stories?

At **Hack for LA**, we estimate story Points, which are time-bound. One story point is equal to 6 hours

We use the Fibonacci scale: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, etc. If a story is over 3, it should probably be broken up into more than one issue. The most effective projects have the majority of their issues at 1 story point.

## What is T-shirt sizing?

T-shirt Sizing is one of the Story points sizing techniques we use at Hack for LA to estimate user stories usually used in our agile projects. It's a relative Estimation Technique

T-shirt sizes can be

- Small - Good First Issue and Good Second Issue: An issue that is small, like a text change or similar. The majority of the time spent on this issue is about making sure the development/design/working environment is set up properly and they know how to contribute using GitHub/Figma.
- Medium- This is an issue that is more time involved but doesn't involve anything complex technically.
- Large- An issue that probably requires research or technical complexity that will take a long time. This issue might end up being broken down into smaller issues after initial research is delivered.

With effective use of story points. A Product Manager or Team lead, can tally all the outstanding items (prioritized backlog and In Progress) and estimate based on the number of hours of labor (and type of labor) available and how long until a given feature is delivered. This also helps with identifying when it's time to reduce scope or add additional team members in a functional area.

While anyone can write stories, approving them into the team backlog and accepting them into the system baseline are the Product Owner's responsibilities.

The acceptance criteria provide the information needed to ensure that the story is implemented correctly and covers the relevant functional and Nonfunctional Requirements. The figure below provides an example. Some teams often use the confirmation section of the story card to write down what they will demo.

Smaller stories allow faster, more reliable implementation, since small items flow through any system faster, with less variability, and reduced risk. Therefore, splitting bigger stories into smaller ones is a mandatory skill for every Agile team. It's both the art and the science of incremental development and ensures that PMs of volunteer teams can resolve bottlenecks quickly.

## What is the Definition of Done (DoD)?

Having User Stories and Acceptance Criteria are usually not enough to say a story is releasable.

### Definition of Done:

- Set of activities required for features/user Stories to be considered complete so that the increment of product functionality can be "potentially shipped" if desired.
- Some examples of a Definition of Done (DoD) could be:
  - Code/Rules reviewed
  - Unit testing added to automation testing suite and all Unit tests pass
  - User documentation (as required) is completed/updated

## What is a user journey?

**User journey** illustrates the user's experience engaging with a company through products, online experiences, and services

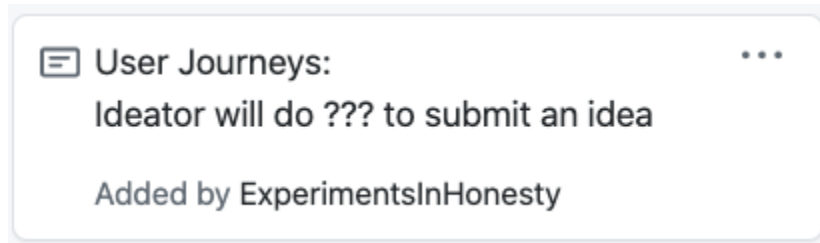
- May document user desires, activities, feelings, questions, pain points, etc.
- Can help identify gaps and opportunities

## How to write user journeys?

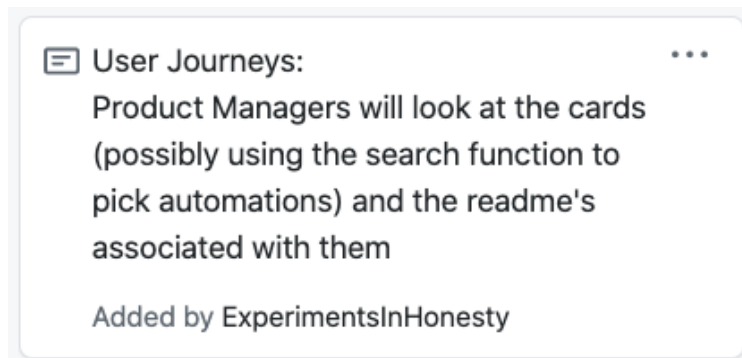
At Hack for LA, we have started creating user Journeys for how those user personas will navigate and use the site. We are still working through this, writing the journey, checking it against the workflows on the site designs, and making design changes to ensure we can address our user journeys. These user journeys and workflow will inform the flows that we will

need to write for Google Analytics to validate how actual users navigate the site. There may be other uses as we continue. We will document those uses here.

## Example of one that is progress:



## Example of one that had been written:



## Templates /Examples from all projects

### 100 Automations

Board: [Personas, User Stories, and Journeys](#)

Details: [WIP wiki page describing the process with example images](#)

## **VRMS**

Board: [Personas w/ Proposed Features](#)

Details: [See our VRMS MVP\(V.04\) document describing the process with an example image](#)

## **ExpungeAssist**

Link: [Personas for Record clearance project](#)

## **Food Oasis**

Link: [User story page](#)

## **BallotNav**

Link: [Ballot nav User storyboard](#)

## **311 Data**

Document link: [User Journey & Key Features Mapping](#)

## **Civic Tech Index**

GitHub project board: [Personas, User Stories](#)

Link: [Persona's](#)

## **Additional Reference material:**

[https://www.scaledagileframework.com/  
User Story Template](https://www.scaledagileframework.com/User-Story-Template)

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This guide was created and contributed to by Iffath Sultana