

What are personas? *An Introduction*

Tens of thousands of volunteers, donors and supporters advance the Make-A-Wish® vision to grant the wish of every eligible child diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition. This simple, but powerful belief has driven everything we do.

As we've grown, so have our volunteers, donors, and wish referrers. In order to reach our goal of granting 17,000 wishes by 2020, we need to be more diligent than ever about telling the story of Make-A-Wish in ways that resonate with these unique audiences.



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Learn more about these supporter personas at:
wish.org/contentstrategy

The Hero's Journey

Embracing Our Role as Mentor

Audience personas enable us to help people see themselves as the hero of our story. When people see a role for themselves in a story they are likely to be motivated to act. The most effective stories will show our target audience changing the world through wishes.



In these stories, Make-A-Wish becomes the mentor, showing them the way they can make a difference. We're not Luke Skywalker. We're Yoda. It's the audience that's going to do all the hard work so that we can attain our objectives.

We're just a voice that can help them get unstuck on their journey.

If you alter your stance from seeing Make-A-Wish as the hero to accepting the role of mentor, your viewpoint will change. Remember, the nature of a mentor is to be selfless and willing to make personal sacrifices to help the hero obtain his reward.

As a result, we will make our supporters the heroes of their own stories. It takes many people to make granting a wish possible, and we want them all to know just how vital they are to our mission.

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How to Use these Personas

Audience personas are intended to help Make-A-Wish understand the people it is or should be messaging to in order to achieve three key goals:

GOAL 1

Increased wish referrals

GOAL 2

Increased volunteer recruitment

GOAL 3

Increased donations

The personas described here were developed through extensive research, stakeholder interviews, and reviews of existing content and digital channels.

Personas are meant to guide storytelling and messaging efforts. If, for instance, you are looking to connect with a potential donor from Generation X, you should consider Gina the Gen X donor's traits when developing that message. **Ask yourself the question, "What would Gina think of this message?"**

Each persona is a fictional character and is based on several points of data. Personas capture a snapshot of each target audience they represent, but are not intended to describe all members of that group.

As you interact with the personas, more nuance and clarity about each persona will become apparent and how they can be adjusted for use in your specific circumstance.

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How's Your Storytelling?

Before developing content intended for one of these personas, **ask yourself these questions:**

1. Which persona(s) are you trying to reach, and at what stage in their journey are you trying to reach them?

2. What platforms are they active on?

3. Is the intended audience the hero of this story?
If not, why not?

4. What do you want your audience to walk away thinking/feeling?
Will your story accomplish that?

5. What do you want your audience to do and how will you overcome their barriers / hesitation to engage with Make-A-Wish?

6. Do you communicate the impact Make-A-Wish has on donors, volunteers, or wish referrers in your story? How?

7. Do you communicate the commitment our donors, volunteers, or wish referrers have to Make-A-Wish in your story? How?



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Vanessa

The Young Professional Volunteer Persona

She is young and idealistic and cares deeply about making a difference. She has grown up volunteering, being involved in service activities in high school and college, and is looking for a meaningful opportunity to give back. She is establishing herself in her career, and wants to connect with people who will help her achieve her goals.

My Traits

Moving from place to place

Always online

Looking for new friends

Hopeful

How to Connect

- ★ Tell her how Make-A-Wish volunteers are heroes. She wants to know that she can play a vital role in helping wish kids and their families gain experiences that change their lives and help them heal.
- ★ Show her that by volunteering at Make-A-Wish, she'll make strong connections with other like-minded people in her community and be able to build career skills that are difficult to find at other organizations.
- ★ She is interested in connecting to corporate partners through the lens of employee engagement. Her interest in giving back drives her career and workplace decisions.

Values

- ★ Concerned about building her career and network.
- ★ Looking for opportunities to meet new people.
- ★ Needs flexibility with her schedule to accommodate the demands of her career.
- ★ Like many of her peers, she wants to be involved with causes that have impact and make a difference. She isn't interested in busy work.

“After moving to a new city, volunteering at Make-A-Wish gave me a chance to make an impact — and to make new friends who have helped me feel at home.”

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Learn more about these supporter personas at: wish.org/contentstrategy

Demographics

age
25

family
Single

education
College graduate

career
Marketing, sales, teaching, legal, medical

income
\$35,000 - \$40,000

neighborhood
Urban/suburban

where I shop
Target, Amazon, Macy's

what I buy
Starbucks, Apple, Nike

top social media sites
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram



Eddie

The Empty Nest Volunteer Persona

His children have grown, and now he can do more than provide for his family. While his career and family will always be important priorities, he has the time and desire to give back. He has built a career, been in a committed marriage, and been active in organizations centered around his children, serving as a youth sports coach or scout leader.

My Traits

Successful career, but wants more
Eager to take on responsibility

Stays connected to adult children
Loves playing and watching sports

How to Connect

- ★ Talk about the experience of working with the organization — being a volunteer is a fantastic, energizing experience in itself.
- ★ Tell him how important the role of volunteers is to the Make-A-Wish mission — much more so than many other charities.
- ★ Show him that volunteering at Make-A-Wish has tangible results. When you help grant a wish, you can see its impact immediately through the people you are helping.
- ★ Let him know that volunteering at Make-A-Wish is a challenge. He will learn new skills, push himself in new ways and be able to network with people.

Values

- ★ Wants to give something back to his community.
- ★ Concerned about having enough money invested for retirement.
- ★ Wants to participate in activities he couldn't find the time for when his children were younger.

“If I’m going to give my time to something, I want to know that it matters. I want to see that human result.”



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Demographics

age
57

family
Married – children have either reached high school or have moved out of the house

education
College graduate or post-secondary trade school

career
Management, sales, skilled trade, manufacturing

income
\$100,000 – not combined with spouse

neighborhood
Suburban

where I shop
Lowe’s, Home Depot, Cabela’s

what I watch
HGTV, ESPN, History Channel

ways to reach me
Email, direct mail



Sarah

The Social Worker Persona

She works more than full-time at a busy pediatric hospital, staying past her shift to do paperwork and meet with families. She works closely with children with life-threatening conditions. Often unsung and overlooked, she is the day-to-day champion for her patients — and she plays a powerful and important role in their treatment.

My Traits

Overworked

Compassionate and caring

Unsung hero, patient champion

Has close relationship with families

How to Connect

- ★ Tell her how social workers are a vital part of the wish process.
- ★ Show her how wishes can help families cope with a very stressful experience.
- ★ Make it clear that wishes aren't just for terminally ill patients. They can play an important role in helping all children with life-threatening conditions during their treatment.
- ★ She wants to know how helping a child receive a wish will pay off in terms of improved outcomes and outlook.

Values

- ★ She sees herself as her patients' primary advocate, and plays an important role in helping them understand their treatment.
- ★ Empathy is a necessity. She must be able to intimately understand her patients' needs.
- ★ She is often protective of her patients and will keep away influences that she believes will interfere with their treatment.
- ★ Doctors often get the lion's share of the credit, so she often feels underappreciated.

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Learn more about these supporter personas at: wish.org/contentstrategy

Demographics

age
50

education
Master's Degree in Social Work

median income
\$50,000

where I shop
JC Penney, Kmart, Payless
ShoeSource

where I eat
Chipotle, Applebee's,
Pizza Hut

top social media sites
Facebook, LinkedIn

“Helping a child receive a wish is one of the most rewarding things I do. It gets them away from their machines and gives them a fun experience at an otherwise difficult time.”



Dinesh

The Doctor Persona

He entered pediatric oncology because he wanted to help children. But his job isn't just about diagnosing and treating children. Instead, it's a stressful role that is as much about business as it is about patient care. He struggles to reconcile modern medicine's reality with the ideal that led him to become a doctor in the first place.

My Traits

Overextended, overworked
Deeply cares for his patients

Focused on improving outcomes
Enjoys the prestige of his job

How to Connect

- ★ Tell me how wishes can improve a patient's outlook, giving him or her an important incentive during treatment.
- ★ Show me that doctors are heroes because of the care we provide to wish kids and their family through Make-A-Wish.
- ★ Show me doctors reporting improved treatment compliance because of wish experiences.
- ★ Make it clear to me that referring children to Make-A-Wish does not mean that they are terminally ill.

Values

- ★ Medicine is always evolving — and he needs to stay current on the latest research and developments in his field. As a result, he is processing a lot of new information, and it is easy to get overwhelmed.
- ★ He thrives on being stimulated intellectually and seeks out new knowledge.
- ★ Recognition by peers and the public is highly valued.

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Demographics

age
48

family
Married with children

education
Doctor of medicine degree,
board certified

income
\$300,000

what I do for fun
Golf, attend sporting events
(season tickets or box seats)

what I drive
Toyota, Honda, Lexus

news sources
NPR, medical journals

top social media sites
Facebook, Doximity

“The biggest thing Make-A-Wish needs to clear up in the medical community is the misconception that wishes are only for terminally ill children.”



Margaret

The Major Donor Persona

She has a strong connection to Make-A-Wish through personal experience, and is willing to champion the organization at every opportunity. Now that her children have grown, college educations have been paid for, and retirement plans are underway, she and her husband are able to devote more money to supporting their favorite causes together.

My Traits

Philanthropist

Mother of adult children

Board member of a local charity

Fiscally conservative

How to Connect

- ★ Tell her that she is an important voice for Make-A-Wish.
- ★ Show her how her philanthropy is making an impact in the lives of children facing life-threatening illnesses.
- ★ Continue to thank and acknowledge her for the contributions already made.
- ★ Provide her with non-financial opportunities to get involved with Make-A-Wish.
- ★ Share exclusive, behind-the-scenes content that makes her feel like an insider.
- ★ As a discerning shopper and big supporter of Make-A-Wish, she is an ideal target for corporate partners.

Values

- ★ Philanthropy is a big part of her and her husband's life — they try to give as much as they can to causes they care about.
- ★ With her children grown, she spends time with her grandchildren whenever possible.
- ★ She has aging parents and is concerned about making sure they are taken care of.
- ★ She is eager to find purpose as she approaches her retirement years.

“As a donor, I can see it, feel it, touch it. I can look into that child’s eyes and I can see that I’ve made a difference.”



Learn more about these supporter personas at: wish.org/contentstrategy

Demographics

age

62

family

Married with children and young grandchildren

education

College graduate

income

Affluent

neighborhood

Suburban

where I shop

DSW, Nordstrom, Target

what I buy

Volvo, Hallmark, Dyson

what I watch

NCIS, The Blacklist, The Good Wife

ways to reach me

Phone calls, direct mail



Elizabeth

The Events Donor Persona

She is educated and active in her community and church, and is eager to show her support for organizations like Make-A-Wish. She wants to show her friends and colleagues that she is engaged, and she is willing to solicit others to join her at social events such as galas, networking happy hours and breakfasts.

My Traits

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Involvement in her kids' school groups | Prioritizes fitness and fashion |
| Attends church regularly | Driven by acknowledgment |

How to Connect

- ★ Show her the impact that Make-A-Wish has had on the lives of families with children who are facing a life-threatening illness.
- ★ Make it easy for her to donate at events by providing opportunities for mobile and online giving.
- ★ Thank her for her donation and give her opportunities to share news of her support with friends on social media.
- ★ Contact her before and after Make-A-Wish events to share stories about wish kids and their families, and let her know that there is an urgent need that she can address.

Values

- ★ Cares about giving back to her community.
- ★ Children and children's causes are likely to earn her support.
- ★ Cares about being a great mom, and having other parents see her as a great mom.

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Demographics

age
46

family
Married with children

education
College graduate

income
Middle class and upper class

neighborhood
Suburban

where I shop
Dick's, Hobby Lobby, Michael's

what I watch
HGTV, Hallmark Channel, TLC

ways to reach me
Friends involved with Make-A-Wish, Facebook, email, Pinterest

“When the family stood up and told us their story, I was incredibly moved. Once I saw what Make-A-Wish does, I knew I had to support it.”



Amy

The Annual Donor Persona

She is a working mother in her 40s who was connected to her local Make-A-Wish chapter after a classmate of one of her children had received a wish. She has been making a small annual gift to the organization ever since. She is proud to support Make-A-Wish and habitually gives whenever she receives her annual mailing asking to continue her support.

My Traits

Working mother

Emotional ties to Make-A-Wish

Habitual giver

Strong ties to her community

How to Connect

- ★ Ask her to increase her donation. She gives every year, and might consider giving more if you ask.
- ★ She loves traditional wish stories. Seeing the impact of a wish on a child builds a strong emotional connection.
- ★ Though she likes hearing how Make-A-Wish has impacted her local community, she is moved by the best wish stories from around the country.
- ★ She is attracted to established and affordable brands, making her a high priority for Make-A-Wish corporate partners. She can also serve as a brand ambassadors for corporate partners whom she trusts.

Values

- ★ Attracted to helping causes that provide a personal connection to the charity.
- ★ Sees giving as a religious responsibility.
- ★ Has a more traditional world view.
- ★ Wants to be seen as having a positive impact on the world.

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Demographics

age
44

family
Married with children - both parents work

education
Attended college

income
Over \$100,000 – combined with spouse

neighborhood
Suburban

what I buy
Old Navy, Nike, Lululemon

what I watch
The Big Bang Theory, Parenthood, Scandal

top social media sites
Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest

“That personal message, that personal connection, no matter what the medium, is what gets me to give.”



Gina

The Gen X Donor Persona

Once branded as part of the slacker generation, she is educated, ambitious, and family focused. She is part of a busy, upwardly-mobile, dual-income family in which she and her spouse both work in order to make lives better for their children. Still, she strives for work-life balance, making sure her family is the top priority.

My Traits

Educated and ambitious
Attentive mother

Tech savvy
Part of a busy, dual-income family

How to Connect

- ★ Show her that Make-A-Wish provides stability and hope to families of all backgrounds during times of intense turbulence.
- ★ Share what Make-A-Wish has learned about making sick kids feel better to provide advice, resources and inspiration she can use with her kids.
- ★ She can really relate to the devastation of parents with sick kids, and the positive impact of the wish on the parents and their relationship. Tell her stories that fit that narrative.
- ★ She is eager to support causes that are supported by and help people of color. Provide stories and examples that align with her background.

Values

- ★ She is most likely to purchase products and donate to organizations that strive to connect with people of color.
- ★ She strives to eat a healthy diet and hit the gym. She makes sure her children do, too.
- ★ Giving back is an important value for her family. She involves her children in the family's giving choices.
- ★ She values charities that make an impact and wants to make giving decisions that get results.

“We like to give to organizations that can show they are making an impact.”



Learn more about these supporter personas at: wish.org/contentstrategy

Demographics

age

42

family

Married with children – both parents work

education

College graduate

income

\$70,000 - \$100,000 – not combined with husband's income

neighborhood

Urban/suburban

what I watch:

Empire, Scandal, How to Get Away With Murder

what I enjoy:

Movies, media, family gatherings

where I eat:

California Pizza Kitchen, P.F. Chang's, local restaurants

top social media sites

Facebook, LinkedIn, iHeartRadio



Manuel

The Millennial Donor Persona

He grew up digitally connected, with a diverse set of friends and the belief that he can have a significant impact on the world. He graduated college and is living in a city while carrying heavy student loan debt. The voices of his peers are important to him, and he often gives to organizations or campaigns that involve an appeal by friends or coworkers.

My Traits

Digital native

Difficult to earn his attention

Looking to meet new friends

Values authentic brands

How to Connect

- ★ He wants to know how even small donations add up to make a meaningful difference for children facing life-threatening illnesses.
- ★ Let him know that his friends are donating to Make-A-Wish, and that he could, too.
- ★ Connect him with former wish kids who can offer perspectives on life that were formed from their uniquely challenging circumstances.
- ★ He is interested in supporting Make-A-Wish corporate partners that communicate authenticity. He wants to feel like brands see him as an individual.

Values

- ★ Grew up in a world where marriage equality and marijuana legalization are not controversial, and holds progressive social views.
- ★ Looking for opportunities to meet new people and build connections in his community, particularly if he has moved to a new place for work.
- ★ Like many of his peers, he wants to be involved with causes that have impact and make a difference.

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Demographics

age
27

family
Single

education
College graduate/student

income
\$50,000 – \$70,000

neighborhood
Urban/suburban

where I shop
Target, Amazon, Macy's

what I buy
Nike, Apple, Samsung

what I watch
Walking Dead, House of Cards, Key & Peele

top social media sites
Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook

“I don't want to give to institutions. I want to give to solve problems.”

Resources

By using these personas, you can help Make-A-Wish connect with the volunteers, donors, and wish referrers who make our mission possible.

For more information on how to use these personas, visit wish.org/ContentStrategy



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wish.org/contentstrategy