



# Understanding Your Competition: Lessons from the Avengers

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# What is a persona?

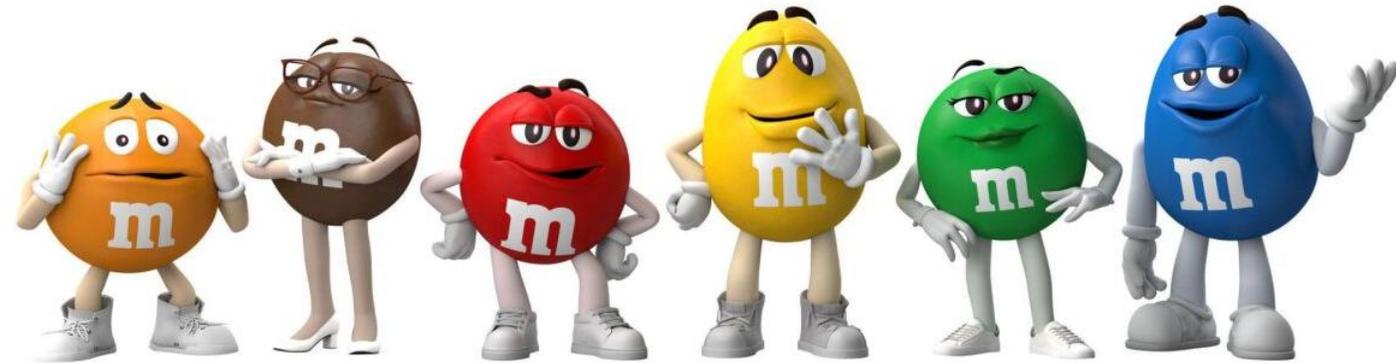
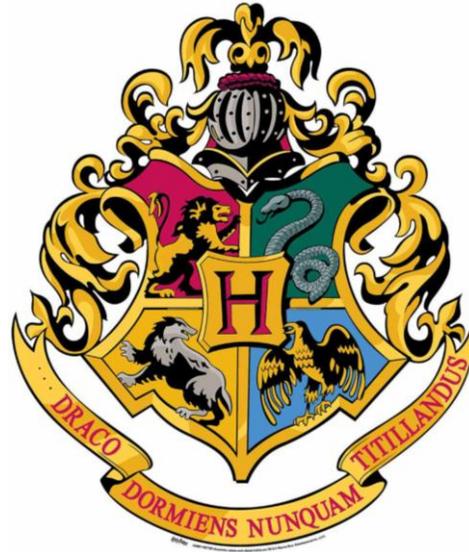


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# No, really – what is a *persona*?

- **Traditional definition:** a realistic profile that represents a key segment of a brand's audience, used to guide marketing strategy and messaging
- For our purpose today: fictional or semi-fictional characterized representation of a company's audience, client, or **competition**
- Easy way to frame how we think



# What is a Persona?

A typical marketing persona will have:

- Specific information
- A name
- Usually a picture
- Often include a character's desire, may include likes or dislikes, key stats, goals/motivations
- Based on as much real data as you have/can get a hold of

## UX Research Tools: User Persona



<b>Personal Details</b> Demographics: Family, language, HHI Work Experience: Years, training, staff Devices: Phone, browser, IoT	<b>Tech Exposure</b> 1 Low    2 Medium    3 High
<b>About</b> Include a short description of your user persona. Summarize who they are and how they're connected to your experience. Treat it like an elevator pitch and avoid adding imaginary details you haven't observed first-hand.	
<b>Patterns &amp; Behaviours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patterns are UX-relevant habits</li><li>• They can be physical or digital</li><li>• They are typified by "desire lines"</li><li>• Look for shortcuts, common phrases and other relevant reflexes</li></ul>	<b>Goals &amp; Motivations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Goals are the most important aspect</li><li>• And should always be actionable</li><li>• Motivations are what drive personas</li><li>• Akin to personal KPIs</li><li>• Be careful to avoid assumptions</li></ul>

**Persona Name**  
Age, Role / Title (if relevant)  
City, State  
**QUOTE**  
*"Quotes bring additional realism to your users. Include verbatims collected in UX research."*

Image Credit: Konrad



# Where does this information come from?

- You 😊
- Them
- The internet
- The Government (FOIA)
- Public/word of mouth
- Incredibly expensive research and data



# Why is this important to proposals & strategy?

- Used by marketing teams to help understand the audience, users, customers, and **competitors**
- Purpose to better understand goals and behaviors – to win business
- Proposal teams and sales team need to be **on the same page** with understanding competition, clients, and own position



# Why Marvel?

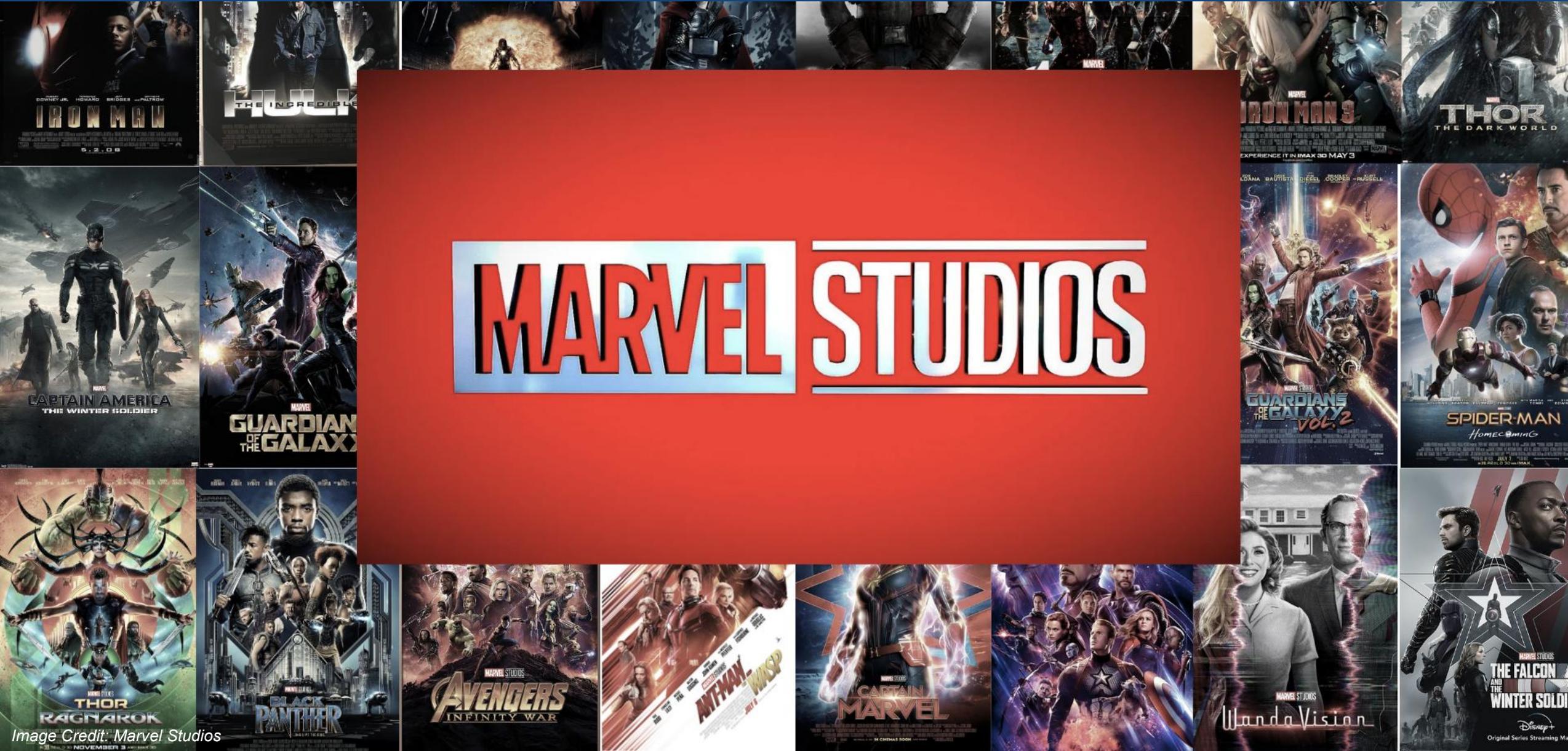


Image Credit: Marvel Studios

Disney+ Original Series Streaming Ma

# Guess who?

- Genius
- Billionaire
- Playboy
- Philanthropist
- 5'6"
- Doesn't play well with others



# Guess who?

- Captain
- American



# Guess who?

- Single-handedly saved the multiverse
- Made of rock
- EXCELLENT storyteller
- Most important Avenger



# Why did we do this?

- Have you ever been in a room where no one is on the same page when it comes to strategy? Yes, you have.
- Fundamental disagreement on what our client wanted
- Fundamental disagreement on what the competition was going to offer



# Persona #1 – Iron Man

The competition:

- Innovative
- Recognizable
- Cutting-edge
- \$\$\$



*Image Credit: Marvel Studios*



## Persona #2 – Captain America

The competition:

- Been around forever
- Industry favorite
- Trustworthy
- Good reputation



*Image Credit: Radio Times*



## Persona #3 – Loki

The competition:

- Always doing something weird
- Proposal includes a far-out solution
- Overpromises



*Image Credit: Marvel Cinematic Universe Wiki Fandom*



## Persona #4 - Thanos

The competition:

- Wins at all costs
- Can't take them on alone
- Invincible



*Image Credit: Marvel Movies Fandom*



## Persona #5 – Black Widow

The competition:

- Assassin and tactician
- Deceptive
- Stealthy (you didn't even know they were competition)



*Image Credit: Marvel Cinematic Universe Wiki Fandom*



# But what if I don't know any superheroes?

























# Applying to your proposal process

1. List your competitors
2. List likely competitors for the RFP
3. Gather the data you have on the competitors
4. List unknowns (do you NOT know who you're bidding against?)
5. Pick a competitor, brainstorm qualities (general things)
6. Assign that competitor its proper "villain"
7. Once persona is chosen, now you get to build the considerations and strategies against that character

*You aren't building a strategy to fight everyone. You are focusing only on this competitor.*



# How can you do this, too?

Step #	Action	Our Team's Notes
1.	List your competitors	(*Redacted) Industries, (*Redacted) Solutions, (*Redacted) Professionals
2.	List likely competitors for the RFP	(*Redacted) Industries
3.	Gather the data you have on the competitors	Based on previous experience and a FOIA request, we already know basic company stats and that they are likely to bid.
4.	List unknowns (Do you NOT know who you're bidding against?)	Have they had contact with the client yet? How much they want to win? What is their pricing strategy? What is the pedigree of their team?
5.	Pick a competitor, brainstorm qualities (general things)	Impressive, generally expensive, recent and heavy focus on AI, not as well-known
6.	Assign that competitor its proper "villain"	Ultron
7.	Once persona is chosen, now you get to build the considerations and strategies against that character	AI isn't new and flashy. If that's their "win theme," it's not going to win against us anymore. This is no longer a Loki.



# Handout & Explanation

Things to include in building your own competitor persona:

- Time in business, size, services
- About:
  - Strengths/Weaknesses
  - Industry presence
  - Things you don't know?
- Goals & Motivations
  - Sales Strategy & Tactics
- Known X-factor or wildcard attributes
- Status Effects
  - Hidden factors
  - Temporary factors
  - Unfair advantages
- Win rate

The worksheet is enclosed in a black border and contains the following elements:

- Rank:** A circle for rating.
- Name:** A text field.
- Alter Ego:** A text field.
- Reputation:** A circle for rating.
- Capability:** A circle for rating.
- Innovation:** A circle for rating.
- Wealth:** A circle for rating.
- Add:** A circle for rating.
- Time in Business:** A text field.
- Company Size:** A text field.
- Core Services:** A text field.
- About:** A large text area.
- Goals & Motivations:** A large text area.
- Wildcard Attributes:** A large text area.
- Status Effects:** Three circles for rating.
- Chance to Bid:** A square for rating.
- Win Rate:** A square for rating.



# Avengers Assemble!

If you remember one thing from this presentation... your proposal team will be stronger and more successful if you actually work as a team.

You don't need superpowers to win proposals – you just need everyone to stop speaking in different origin stories.



*Image Credit: Marvel Studios*



# Questions?

