CONTENT
SQUARE

THE
MINDSET
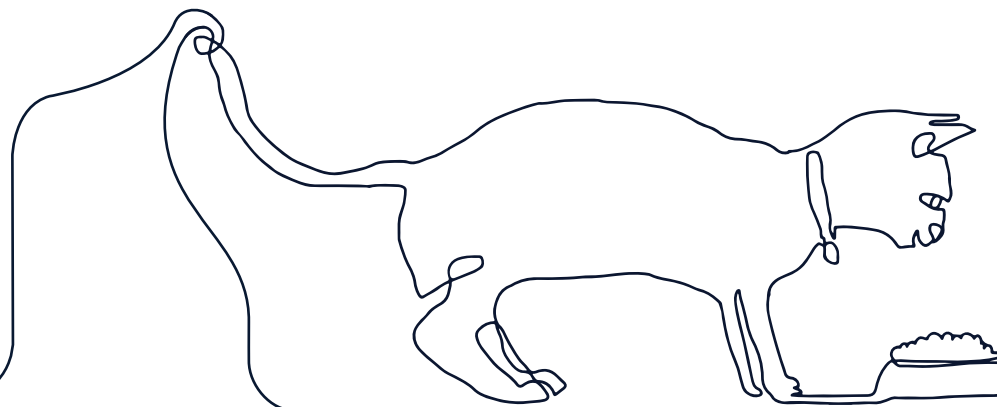# MANIFESTO

Why Personas Are
No Longer Enough

"In 2018, there really shouldn't be any excuse for treating families, couples, and single travelers all the same. Your digital experiences should be evolving to treat these customer groups based not only on segment level categorization, but on their behaviors and mindsets, and address their needs on a one-to-one basis."

Neil Morgan
HEAD OF DIGITAL TRADING, **AVIS**

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INTRODUCTION

THE EMOTIONAL SIDE OF ANALYTICS

Personas – semi-fictional profiles of ideal real-life customers – have long helped digital teams step into their prospects' shoes. And while the method is a good starting point for understanding why consumers behave the way they do, it doesn't tell the full story. Nor does it reflect the shifting patterns of consumer behavior within a category.

Because **digital behavior and digital journeys are anything but static**. And digital experience, like any experience, is driven by more than a set of predetermined variables, such as those assigned to personas.

Age, marital status, location, and preferred media can tell you a lot about how someone behaves online – but it can't tell you everything.

User intent and context also impact experience, and bear tremendous influence on navigation.

Browsing for weekend getaways on a tablet in bed, for example, will trigger different feelings in a user than searching for a store locator on mobile while walking down a busy street. And while no one is saying *persona non grata* just yet, **traditional marketing tools do need to catch up to the ways in which consumers engage with online content, which is essentially emotional.**

This report highlights the emergence of mindset, a concept that adds layers of intent and context to persona for **a 360-degree understanding of consumers**. The mindset approach allows digital teams to get up close and personal with the reality of their users, and to address the nuances and changing nature of consumer behavior.

This in turn fosters a deeper connection between businesses and their audiences - one that is built on a sophisticated awareness of everything users are looking for in a digital brand experience.

Because consumers today take the convenience of digital activity for granted, and **expect the technology to adapt to their busy, mobile lives - not the other way around**. Disruptors like Amazon have changed the rules of the game, and keep raising the standards for ease and experience.

In this report, we show you how focusing on user mindset - as opposed to only persona – enables you and your teams to **create highly intuitive digital experiences, whatever the device, circumstances or end goal**.

CONCEPTS

- PERSONA - **WHO**
- CONTEXT - **HOW**
- INTENT - **WHY**
- MINDSET - **ALL OF THE ABOVE**

PERSONA
(WHO)

> "The real revolution today is that our customers expect from us to adapt our human computer interfaces to themselves. To obtain this, we really have to observe and analyze their behaviors online."

Pascal Lanoo
HEAD OF DIGITAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE,
OUI.SNCF

WHAT IS A **PERSONA**?

Personas are fictional beings with real characteristics, devised to help marketing teams categorize consumers by type. They are generally characterized by a combination of factors – such as demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic variables – but also by their habits and interests.

The idea behind personas is to **humanize traditional market segments to better understand consumer behavior**. Splitting a target market into personas allows brands to tailor their products and experiences to specific consumer needs and interests – including their preferred touchpoint.

MEET KAYLA, A PERSONA

PERSONA

She's a 33 year-old researcher who lives in Brooklyn with her boyfriend and their cat, Toona. On Sunday she orders the week's groceries online, to be delivered Monday. In her shopping cart, you'll typically find two bottles of wine and a six-pack of beer, organic produce, farm-raised meat and wild-caught fish, everyday household items, and of course, cat food.

Other things we know about Kayla: she has a Master's degree, she gets her news from social media and The Guardian, loves watching documentaries, and tries to go for a run at least three times a week. She shops responsibly, and is addicted to her smartphone.

Her motto: Don't waste time doing things you don't enjoy doing.

Here's the thing.
Personas are not real. Well, not exactly.

Because as much as you'd like to think you know how Kayla behaves, **Kayla, like most people, behaves differently in different situations**. Her behavior online (and offline) changes frequently and substantially, depending on her mood, priorities, and immediate circumstances.

So while defining Kayla may bring us closer to understanding how she is prone to behaving online, it only helps us solve part of the puzzle.

CONTEXT
(HOW)

"Context is always king, because it allows us to see the 'why' surrounding what's happened on our site."

Clarks
CONTENTSQUARE CUSTOMER SINCE 2017

WHAT IS **CONTEXT**?

Context is a combination of all the external factors that will influence user behavior, including immediate location and surroundings, date and time of day, device, internet connection, etc.

It also factors in other circumstances, such as user mood, whether a user is acting on a recommendation, and so on.

Context impacts user experience. Understanding different contexts and their influence on behavior helps digital teams respond to user engagement with the brand at each touchpoint.

For example, **Kayla waiting for the subway at rush hour** browses differently to **Kayla on a Sunday morning after her first cup of coffee**.
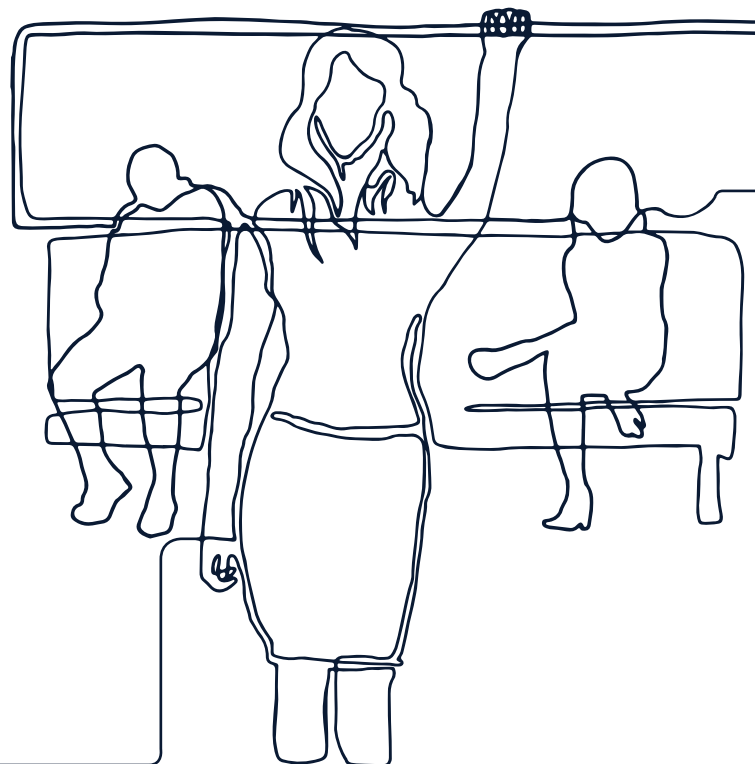
Here's some context:

- Device and connection (ex: mobile with poor connection)
- Time of year (ex: week before Christmas)
- Time of day (ex: evening)
- Browsing history (ex: first-time user)
- Acquisition source (ex: Facebook)
- Location (ex: on the subway)

WE'VE JUST ADDED A LAYER TO KAYLA

PERSONA + CONTEXT

Trust us – after a long day's work and with no sitting room on the train, Kayla is a whole different person... For one, she's not going to have much patience for buggy store locators, never-ending forms, or epic load times.

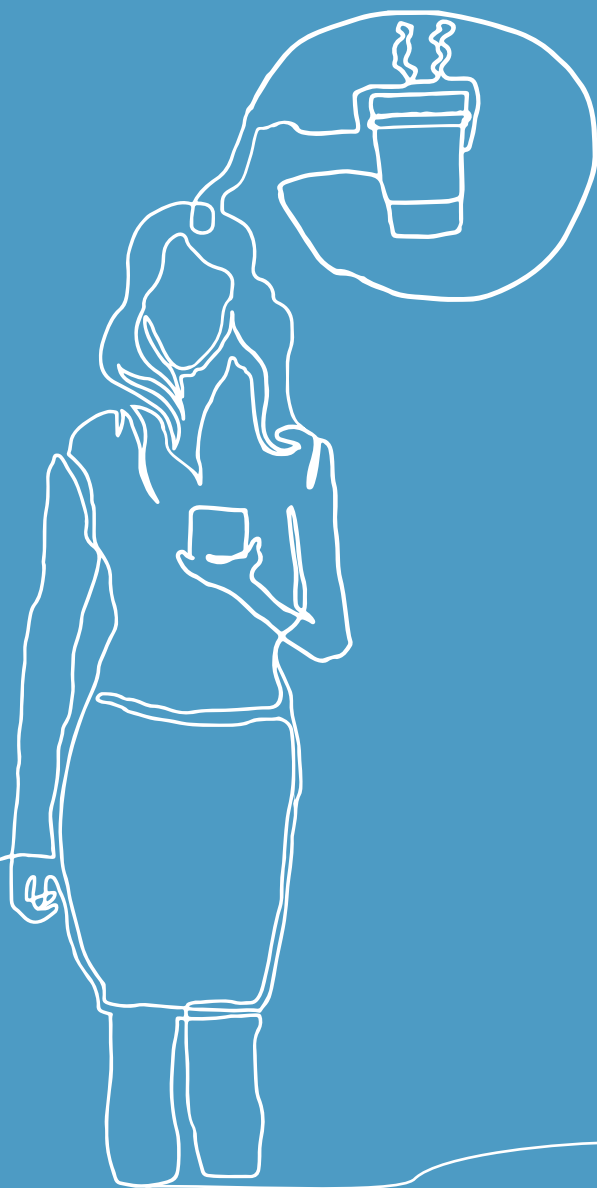**With context, not only do we have a clear idea of who Kayla is, we are now aware of what factors will impact her interaction with your site**. But the puzzle still isn't complete.

INTENT

(WHY)

"A data-driven read of user intent is the first step towards developing digital experiences that help consumers accomplish their navigation goals."

Jonathan Cherki
CEO AND FOUNDER, **CONTENTSQUARE**

WHAT IS **INTENT**?

It's quite simply **the reason behind the user visit** – whether a user is on your site to complete a quick purchase, to research and compare products, to find inspiration, to sniff out a good deal, or just to pass the time.

Understanding consumer intent helps businesses measure if and how their digital platform allowed the consumer to achieve their goal – whatever that goal may be. In turn, this knowledge allows them to develop paths that will lead users to their objective.

And let's not forget – conversion, while desirable, isn't the be-all and end-all of the online experience. If a user finds a product online only to convert in-store the next day, that initial visit can still be considered successful.

 For example, Kayla might spend her lunch break looking up dresses on her phone with the intent to snag a deal in-store later that day.

Here are some examples of intent:

- I want to quickly reorder my usual shampoo.
- I want to find out what the weather will be during my trip to Cancun.
- I want to find the cheapest/shortest flights to Paris.
- I want to check my savings account balance.
- I want to find out where the nearest branch of a clothing retailer is.

So, now we know what she wants.

Kayla, like most consumers, browses for a reason. Knowing what she wants is the first step towards developing journeys that can help her succeed in her goal.

We know a lot more about Kayla now. We know who she is, what context she finds herself in, and what she's trying to get done.

KAYLA JUST BECAME THREE-DIMENSIONAL

PERSONA + CONTEXT + INTENT

MINDSET
(ALL OF THE ABOVE)

"It is interesting to measure the bounce rate of a page, but what is more helpful is to understand the user's state of mind, and what causes them to cut short their visit."

Frédéric Gaillard
FOUNDER OF **AXANCE**, COORDINATOR OF UXALLIANCE (AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF UX SPECIALISTS)

Mindset is what you get when you combine context, intent and persona. Mindset drives the way people feel and behave in a given situation. Depending on who they are (persona), what they are trying to achieve (intent), and the circumstances they find themselves in (context), a person will experience different mindsets, running a gamut of emotions.

HOW IS IT HELPFUL?

As we have seen, **a person's behavior online is influenced by a combination of three factors - two of which change fast and often**.

Putting consumer mindset at the heart of their strategy helps digital teams adapt interfaces to changing environments and fluctuating user moods. It allows them to **move beyond the composite sketch of persona to address real-life situations and the feelings they trigger**.

For example, when Kayla orders sushi on her tablet from the comfort of her couch, she reacts differently to when she's paying her credit card balance on mobile during her lunch break.
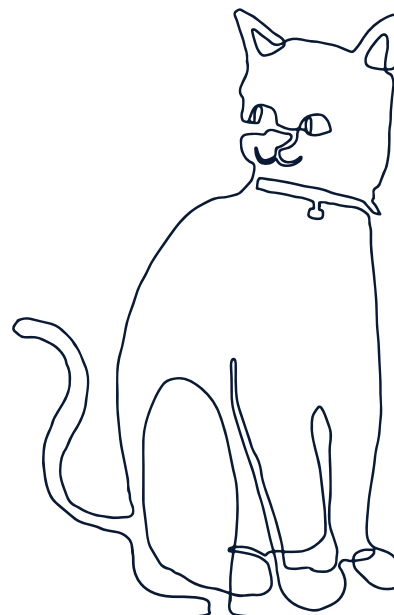
THE MAKING OF A MINDSET

PERSONA + CONTEXT + INTENT = MINDSET

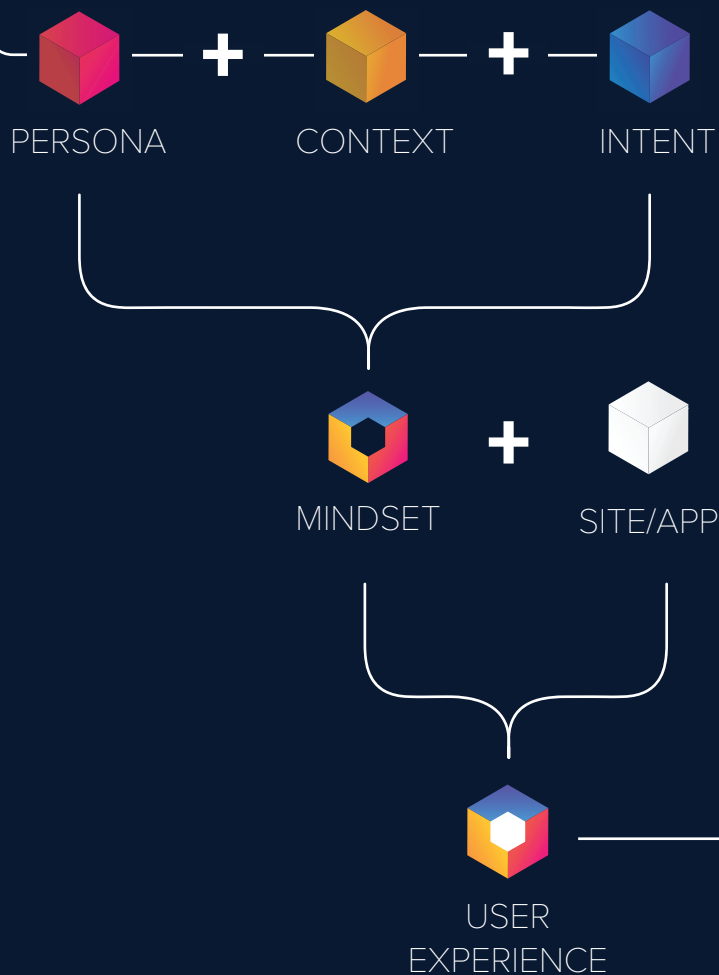**PERSONA**: Kayla is a city-dwelling woman in her 30s with a live-in boyfriend and a cat.

CONTEXT: Kayla has followed a link from social media to a clothing site she's never visited before. It's lunchtime, and she's browsing on mobile.

INTENT: She's looking for inspiration.

WHAT IS KAYLA'S
MINDSET

PERSONA + CONTEXT + INTENT

MINDSET + SITE/APP

USER
EXPERIENCE

Kayla's mindset could be social, determined, focused, confident, etc — only data can tell.

There are many, many possible mind-sets, but for this report we have focused on six, representing a breadth of common consumer outlooks.

— CAUTIOUS   — CONFIDENT
— DISTRACTED   — DETERMINED
— FOCUSED   — PRODUCTIVE

What matters about a mindset is the type of digital behavior it results in.

By segmenting your audience according to persona, intent and context, you can access a sharper understanding of users' state of mind.

This deeper interpretation **unlocks a whole new level of UX analysis**, allowing brands to identify the behavioral patterns of their most profitable mindsets, to ultimately **put user reaction at the heart of experience development**.

PEOPLE,
NOT PERSONAS

As we have seen, fluid circumstances and evolving user objectives mean that **one consumer does not equal one digital behavior**.

In fact, two different personas with matching mindsets will display similar behavior online. In the same way, you can attribute different behaviors to the same persona depending on their mindset.
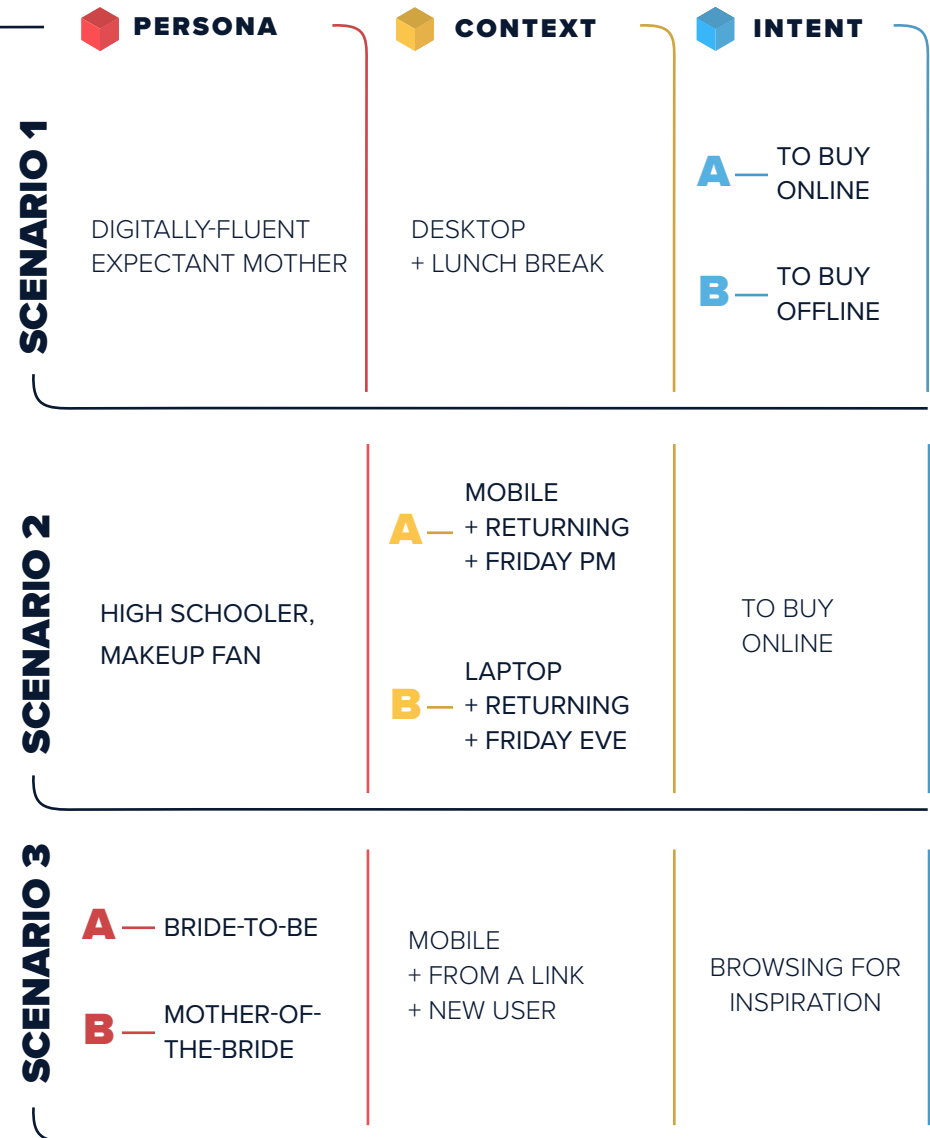
For this report, we zoomed in on three distinct combinations of persona, intent and context. Within each of these case studies, we looked at what happened when one of the variables – persona, intent, or context – was different.

First we analyzed the behavior of one persona in one context, with two different intents.

Next we analyzed the behavior of one persona with one intent, in two different contexts.

Finally we analyzed the behavior of two different personas sharing the same context and intent.

The data in this report was collected over two months, during which ContentSquare tracked over 11 million user sessions across 9 different sites internationally.

	PERSONA	**CONTEXT**	**INTENT**
SCENARIO 1	DIGITALLY-FLUENT EXPECTANT MOTHER	DESKTOP + LUNCH BREAK	A — TO BUY ONLINE B — TO BUY OFFLINE
SCENARIO 2	HIGH SCHOOLER, MAKEUP FAN	A — MOBILE + RETURNING + FRIDAY PM B — LAPTOP + RETURNING + FRIDAY EVE	TO BUY ONLINE
SCENARIO 3	A — BRIDE-TO-BE B — MOTHER-OF-THE-BRIDE	MOBILE + FROM A LINK + NEW USER	BROWSING FOR INSPIRATION

METHODOLOGY

ContentSquare captures and analyzes all digital behavior across devices:

PERSONAS: Data for items reached and from integrated sources
CONTEXT: Device, localization, acquisition source and time-related data
INTENT: In-site path tracking data

Combined through Artificial Intelligence, this data enables the definition and labeling of segments by MINDSET.

SCENARIO 1
DIFFERENT INTENT

Mariam is a 32 year-old, digitally-fluent expectant mother, who lives in St Paul, Minnesota. She's an overworked marketing manager at a tech startup, and this will be her first baby.

During her lunch break, she likes to check out baby items on her work desktop.

Sometimes, Mariam researches items online but prefers to buy in-store.

Other times, Mariam researches and purchases items online.

WHAT IS THE DATA-DETERMINED MINDSET?

PERSONA + CONTEXT + INTENT = MINDSET

● — PERSONA

MARIAM, 32 YEAR-OLD, EXPECTANT MOTHER

● — CONTEXT

BROWSING ON DESKTOP DURING LUNCH BREAK

● — INTENT

A

TO BUY ONLINE

B

TO BUY OFFLINE

● CONFIDENT

Mariam trusts the brand and products and prefers to buy online rather than drive to the store. Besides, if she doesn't like an item, she can always send it back.

● CAUTIOUS

Hesitation over a product, uncertainty about the quality or sizing all contribute to Mariam's decision to buy offline. She still visits the website to locate the nearest store and make sure the items are in stock.

THE INSIGHTS

When confident, Mariam spends **5 minutes and 40 seconds longer on a site** than if her mindset were cautious.

A cautious mindset is associated with a **shorter navigation time**.

When Mariam is confident, she is almost **50% more likely to reach a product or category page**.

A confident mindset is **more product-oriented**.

When Mariam is cautious, she has more than **double the chance of reaching the homepage** during navigation. She also views **2 fewer product pages per visit** than confident Mariam, and **1.5 fewer category pages**.

A cautious mindset focuses on **familiarizing itself with a brand**.

Cautious Mariam spends **19 seconds less on the homepage** than when she is confident. However, she **interacts with it 80% more**. She is quicker to click on informational content **by 8 seconds**.

The function of the homepage varies from one mindset to another.

Whether she's cautious or confident, Mariam interacts with category pages more or less the same way – seeing an average **5 pages per session** and spending an average **50 seconds** on those pages.

Category pages are still a key part of the shopping journey for cautious users wanting to know what is available in-store.

A cautious Mariam will spend **32 seconds longer on a product page.** She also **scrolls 16% more on product pages** in this case. She clicks on pictures **10% more** than when she's confident, and consumes more product information – **clicking 70% more on the product info** than if she were in a confident mindset.

CAUTIOUS

70% more clicks on product info

CONFIDENT

50% more likely to reach product or category page

Product pages need to cater to different mindsets, including those seeking extra reassurance, or those who are unfamiliar with a brand.

Cautious Mariam, who does not reach the cart page, is **2.5 more likely to be a first-time visitor** to the site.

For some mindsets, the digital journey is a step towards an in-store purchase.

THE STORY **BEHIND THE DATA**:

In this example, the same persona and context produce two different mindsets when given two different intents.

How Mariam browses for baby items varies greatly depending on her mindset, reflecting different visit durations, different navigation patterns, and different ways of interacting with in-page content.

CATERING TO **MINDSETS**:

Confident mindsets want quick and easy paths to conversion, which also facilitate browsing. They are willing to commit time to product and category pages, so make sure these contain all the elements for seamless navigation and pain-free conversion.

Cautious mindsets need reassurance elements, and their behavior online indicates these should appear throughout the navigation. And when it comes to users with an early-stage relationship to the brand, remember that first impressions matter.

Make sure your homepage is adapted to the information needs of both online buyers and those who prefer to convert in-store, with clear paths to products and physical store information. Ensure category pages are adapted to both online and in-store buying goals.

SCENARIO 2
DIFFERENT CONTEXT

Jade is a 16-year-old high school student who lives in San Diego, California. She loves to watch makeup tutorials on Youtube and follows tons of influencers on Instagram. She's addicted to her mobile phone, and doesn't miss an episode of Keeping up with the Kardashians.

Inspired by all the tutorials she's seen and by product reviews she's read online, Jade has made a wishlist of the makeup she wants for her birthday.

It's Friday afternoon and Jade is hanging out at her friend's house. She browses a makeup site on her smartphone, adding products to cart. She gets distracted by incoming Snaps, and can't be bothered to fill out all the fields at checkout. She puts off the purchase for now.

It's Friday evening and Jade is at home, browsing on the family laptop. She's filled her cart and with her mom's credit card in hand, is ready to head to checkout and click the purchase button.

WHAT IS THE DATA-DETERMINED MINDSET?

PERSONA + CONTEXT + INTENT = MINDSET

PERSONA
JADE, HIGH SCHOOLER, MAKEUP FAN

CONTEXT

A
MOBILE
+ RETURNING
+ FRIDAY PM

B
LAPTOP
+ RETURNING
+ FRIDAY EVE

INTENT
TO BUY ONLINE

DISTRACTED

Jade is distracted by her friend and by incoming Snaps. She's ready to click Buy, but can't be bothered to fill out all the fields at checkout. She puts off the purchase for now.

DETERMINED

Jade has filled her cart and with her mom's credit card in hand, is ready to head to checkout and click the purchase button.

THE INSIGHTS

When determined, Jade is **twice as likely to land on the cart page** than when she is distracted. Distracted Jade is **23% more likely to land on a product page** than if her mindset is determined. When determined, however, she has **8% more chance of landing on a category page**.

DISTRACTED

23% more likely to land on product page

DETERMINED

twice as likely to land on cart page

Determined users are **quick to make up their minds up about the products** they wish to buy, and head straight to where they can find them.

Distracted Jade is **17.6% more likely to reach the checkout on mobile** than determined Jade on desktop. Despite this, determined Jade has **59% more chance of reaching the checkout confirmation page** than distracted Jade.

Distracted users shopping on mobile encounter enough friction at checkout that it defeats their initial purchasing objective.

Distracted Jade has **18.8% more chance of reaching the homepage** during navigation than determined Jade.

Mobile journeys need to guide users through the journey to prevent them from getting lost and starting over again.

When Jade is in a determined mindset, she **sees the cart page 82% more times** during her navigation. Jade spends **1.7 times longer on the cart page** when she is determined than when she is distracted.

Determined mindsets are **more focused on the purchase objective**.

In the distracted mindset, Jade has **23% more chance of landing on a product page**, and **sees these pages 22.3% more** than when she is determined. She is also **18.8% more likely to reach the homepage** during navigation than determined Jade.

Distracted customers have longer and more chaotic sessions than determined users.

DISTRACTED

- 8% chance of landing on category page

DETERMINED

1.7 times longer spent on cart page

THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA:

In this example, the same persona and intent produce two different mindsets when given two different contexts.

While Jade's intent was to complete her make-up purchase on mobile, there were simply too many obstacles at checkout. It's not that she doesn't want to buy on mobile – on the contrary, all the data indicates she embarks on her journey with a view to completing a purchase.

What mindset Jade is in, and whether she ends up fulfilling her buying objective depends largely on what context she finds herself in – in this example, what device she is using.

CATERING TO MINDSETS:

Determined mindsets want the shortest path possible to checkout. They want easy access to the cart, from wherever their navigation begins. They also want to be able to easily review and edit their shopping cart.

Distracted mindsets need very clear and focused journeys, and brands still have some way to go to capitalize on consumers' willingness to shop on their smartphones.

Streamline the path to conversion, remove any friction points that may deter distracted users from completing their purchase objective, and allow users to pick up where they left off when in a more conducive mindset.
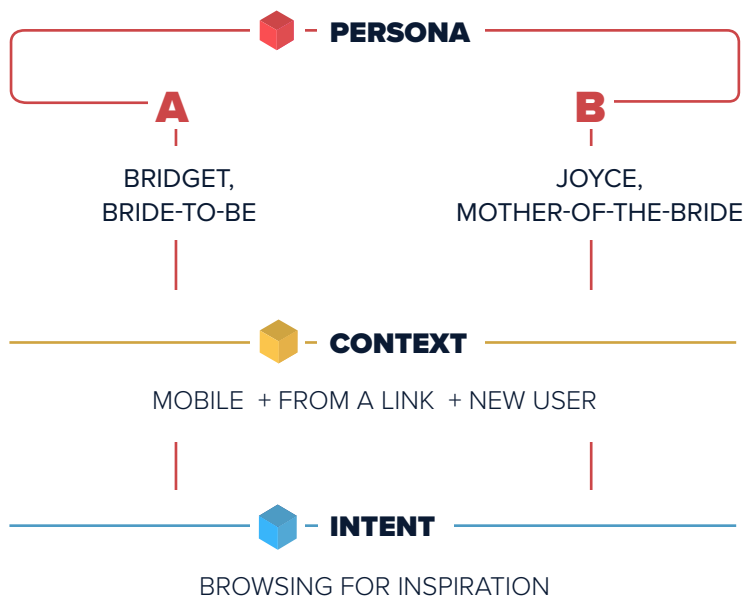
SCENARIO 3

DIFFERENT PERSONA

- Meet Bridget, a 31 year-old restaurant manager with a passion for the slow food movement and a subscription to the New Yorker. She lives in Brooklyn with her girlfriend, Sam, and their rescue puppy, Charlie. Last month, Sam proposed, and Bridget said yes. They haven't set a date yet, but they've discussed a late summer wedding.

- Meet Joyce, a 55-year-old journalist who lives in the Upper West Side. She has subscriptions to the New York Times and the Atlantic, and a Met opera membership. Emma is Bridget's mom.

- It's Saturday morning. Bridget and Joyce are both looking at jewelry sites on their phone, having followed links forwarded by friends.

- Neither is in a rush to buy – they're just looking for inspiration at this stage.

WHAT IS THE DATA-DETERMINED MINDSET?

PERSONA **+** CONTEXT **+** INTENT **=** MINDSET

PERSONA

A
BRIDGET,
BRIDE-TO-BE

B
JOYCE,
MOTHER-OF-THE-BRIDE

CONTEXT

MOBILE + FROM A LINK + NEW USER

INTENT

BROWSING FOR INSPIRATION

FOCUSED

When she lands on the website for the first time, Bridget goes straight to the page that tells her about the brand, its history, etc. She scrolls through the collections and product pages, and if she likes what she sees, she'll go to the store.

PRODUCTIVE

It's Joyce's first visit to this website. She enjoys browsing for nice jewelry but she's also not one to waste time, so when she comes across a piece she likes, she adds it to a wishlist.

THE INSIGHTS

When her mindset is focused, Bridget is **137% more likely to reach pages that feature inspirational content** than her mom, whose mindset is productive. She also tends to spend **twice as long consuming this type of content**.

Focused users are **hungry for information about a brand** and its values.

Productive Joyce views **156% more product pages** than Bridget, whose mindset is focused. The **likelihood of her reaching a product page during her visit is 77% higher** than it is for Bridget.

FOCUSED

+ 55.9% scrolling on homepage

PRODUCTIVE

+ 26.6% chance of viewing wishlist

Productive users are **more product-focused**, actively researching their options.

Focused Bridget scrolls **55.9% more on the homepage** than productive Joyce, and **returns to it 18% more** than Joyce during her visit. Once she's on the homepage, Joyce is **quicker to click on the menu by 5 seconds**.

Focused users see the **homepage as a window into the brand** and are happy to engage with the content there. A

FOCUSED

returns to home-page 18% more during visit

PRODUCTIVE

clicks on menu 5 seconds faster

productive user, on the other hand, will **head straight to the product pages**.

Focused Bridget **reaches the about page three times more** than her mom does, and **scrolls 8% more on this page** than productive Joyce. Meanwhile, Joyce **views the wishlist 26.6% more** than Bridget does, and **spends an average 9 seconds more on this page** than her daughter.

Focused users want a 360-degree view of a brand, whereas productive users zone in on their choices.

FOCUSED

+ **137% chance of reaching inspira-tional content**

PRODUCTIVE

views 156% more product pages

THE STORY **BEHIND THE DATA**:

In this example, two different personas sharing the same context and intent produce two different mindsets.

When it comes to browsing for jewelry, Bridget and Joyce both exhibit very different behavior online and this, despite sharing the same intent and context.

They are both looking for inspiration on mobile, but the information they seek and the journeys they follow are worlds apart. Their definitions of what constitutes a successful digital experience also vary.

CATERING TO **MINDSETS**:

Productive users are time-sensitive, and expect sites to help them get things done. Wishlists are helpful when the immediate goal is not to purchase.

Focused users want all their questions about a brand answered before they make a purchase. Brand values, customer service information and terms and conditions should be clear and easily accessible.

Ensure your inspirational content is appropriately designed for the page it is housed on – users who engage with inspirational content on the homepage have different expectations than those who seek inspiration on product pages. Either way, for both mindsets, keep load times minimal.

CONCLUSION
BECOME A MINDSET READER

Successful digital journeys are the cornerstone of digital growth today. Understanding what a successful digital journey looks like implies an in-depth understanding of your audience, and how it measures satisfaction against needs and goals.

As we have seen in this report, audiences are complex and ever-evolving, and their behavior online is open to a multitude of influences at any given time.

So how do you understand something that is dynamic? How do you create experiences that can cater to so many moods, prerequisites and biases at the same time? How do you identify which mindsets have the most potential for your brand, and optimize your digital experiences to address their needs?

Easy. Become a mindset reader.

Equip your digital team with the right solution to understand not just how consumers behave, but why they behave the way they do.

Behavioral analytics have come a long way since the inception of personas. Next-gen, AI-powered analytics can dig deep into the nuances of digital interaction, enabling teams to add a level of customer understanding to their segmentation.

With actionable insights and customized tracking of their KPIs, teams have all the tools they need to visualize underperforming content at an elemental level, and to optimize the digital experience so it meets the demands of today's fluid audiences.
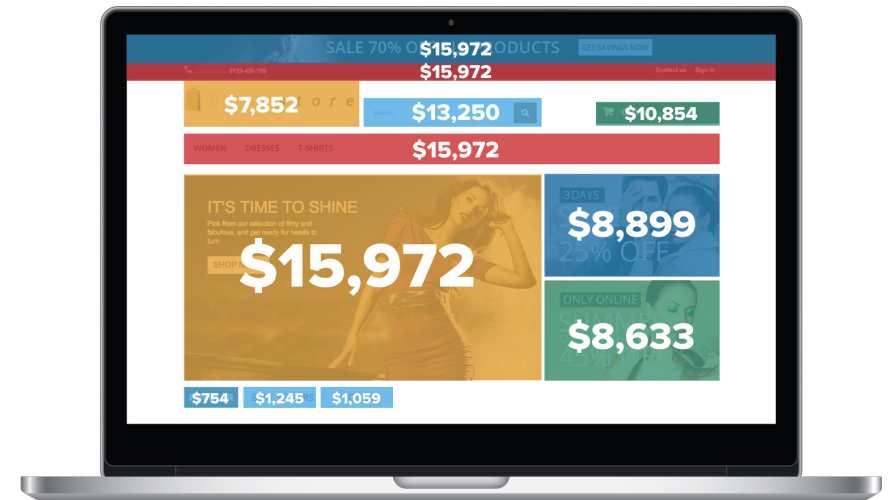
ABOUT

CONTENT**SQUARE**

ContentSquare is a digital experience insights platform that helps businesses understand how and why users are interacting with their app, mobile and web sites. We compute billions of touch and mouse movements, and transform this knowledge into profitable actions that increase engagement, reduce operational costs and maximize conversion rates.

Using behavioral data, artificial intelligence and big data to provide automatic recommendations, ContentSquare empowers every member of the digital team to easily measure the impact of their actions, and make fast and productive data-driven decisions to optimize the customer journey.

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