

CREATING COMPREHENSIVE PERSONAS

MELANIE TOPCHIK



PROJECT SUMMARY

I will be designing personas based on Canva to better understand the different types of users and how they interact with the platform. I will be creating two detailed personas: one that represents who I am as a user, a 20-year-old college student studying communications, and another representing a hypothetical user, a 35-year-old small business owner who also relies on Canva for professional and personal content creation.

Both personas will explore goals, motivations, challenges, typical design journeys, and the influences that shape their decisions. The personas offer a clear representation of common Canva users and highlights how different people approach design in unique ways.

PERSONA #1

MELANIE TOPCHIK



“

Working in a visual industry is stressful when design isn't my strength.

QUOTES

“

I want to feel proud of what I create and share with others.

“

I need something I can figure out easily.

DEMOGRAPHICS + ROLE

AGE 20

GENDER Female

OCCUPATION Student

ETHNICITY White

PERSONALITY Creative, efficiency-driven, impatient

ROLE The College student:
Creating social media posts and class projects

GOALS

Need For Ease:

Wants to create professional, visually appealing content without struggling with complicated design software

Less Stress Experience:

Wants to have the creation process to be as smooth and stress-free as possible, without obstacles or overwhelming challenges.

Built-in Confidence

Content can be created confidently, without second-guessing design choices or creative skills. I start to overthink, especially when there's nothing to work off of.

Done in No Time:

Wants content creation to be quick and efficient, without wasting time on unnecessary steps. I get frustrated when projects take longer than expected.

JOURNEY

Canva Usage:

I use Canva when I need to create content quickly. It makes me feel confident when I can produce polished designs without much hassle.

Starting From Scratch:

Without access to helpful resources and a clear starting point, designing feels stressful, and I tend to overthink every choice, worrying about how each element will come together.

Using Templates:

Pre-made resources make designing easier. I feel more confident and less stressed when I can start with something structured, letting me focus on customizing instead of starting from scratch.

Simple by Design:

Canva's easy layouts make designing simple. I feel confident and in control because the process is clear, letting me focus on creativity instead of complicated tools.

MOTIVATION VS. ABILITY

Motivating Factors

- **Adobe Difficulties:** Adobe can be complicated and overwhelming, especially without much design experience. Canva makes it easier to create professional-looking designs quickly, without the stress or frustration.
- **Templates:** Templates make it easy to get started. I can take a design, make adjustments, and end up with something that looks polished and professional.
- **Easy Accessibility:** I can start designing anytime, on any device, opening a project on my laptop or phone without dealing with complicated setups.

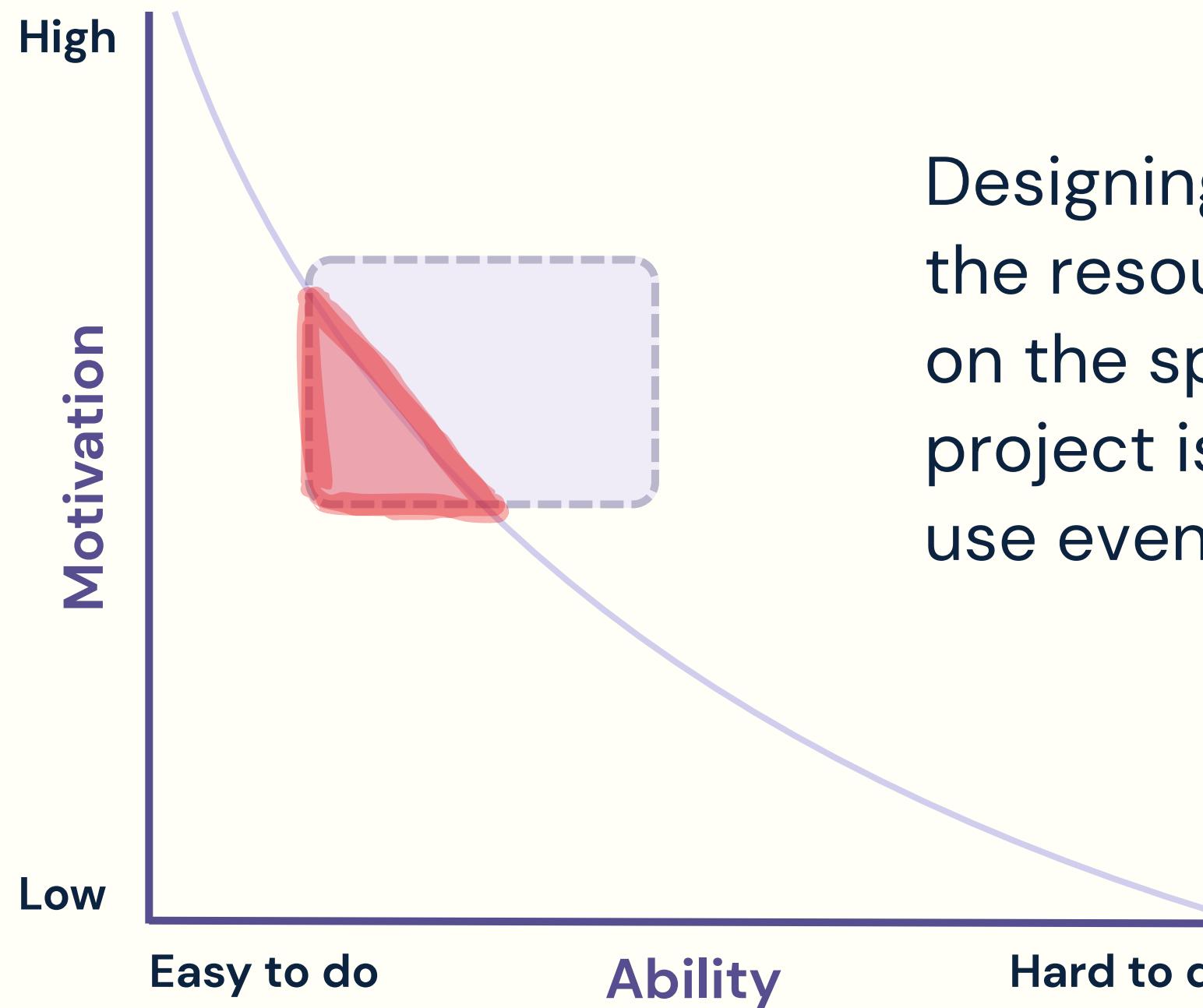
Inhibiting Factors

- **Subscription Limits:** The free version of Canva restricts access to many templates, graphics, and tools, making it challenging to fully bring my ideas to life.
- **Not As Advanced:** Canva lacks many of the advanced features found in other design tools, which can limit what I'm able to create or customize.
- **Self-Doubt:** Canva feels "less legitimate" compared to some of the more complex graphic design software

Possible Triggers

- **Coursework:** Assignments and projects push me to open Canva and start designing quickly. The need to submit polished work on time can make me feel stressed if I'm not prepared.
- **Work Projects:** During my internship, I often needed to create social media content and other graphics. Canva made it easier to get these projects done efficiently.
- **Personal Branding:** When I need to update my LinkedIn banner, profile picture, or resume, I turn to Canva. Having professional-looking designs is important for making a strong impression.

MOTIVATION VS. ABILITY CHART



Designing on Canva is easy to do (especially with the resources they provide,) but it also depends on the specific project being worked on. If the project is challenging, it might still be difficult to use even with high levels of motivation.

INFLUENCERS

Role: The Sorority Girl



Emma

Friend & Sorority Sister

- 19, college student and close friend, same classes, runs our sorority's social media page
- Creative, Aesthetic-focused
- Uses and recommends Canva templates and content ideas, gives feedback on layouts and designs

Role: The Competitor



Adobe Software

Another Option

- Adobe Photoshop is widely recognized as a professional design tool in the Communications field.
- I learned how to use Photoshop in courses, and many people prefer using its advanced features.
- I often feel frustrated and overwhelmed by Photoshop's complex layout and look for a simpler, less stressful design process in Canva.

ENVIRONMENT

SCENARIO 1

- I'm sitting in my dorm room, going over my class schedule for the week.
- I realize I need to create graphics and fix the presentation's visual appearance for a group project presentation that's due soon.
- I open Canva to quickly design a polished and professional slide deck that will meet the assignment requirements.

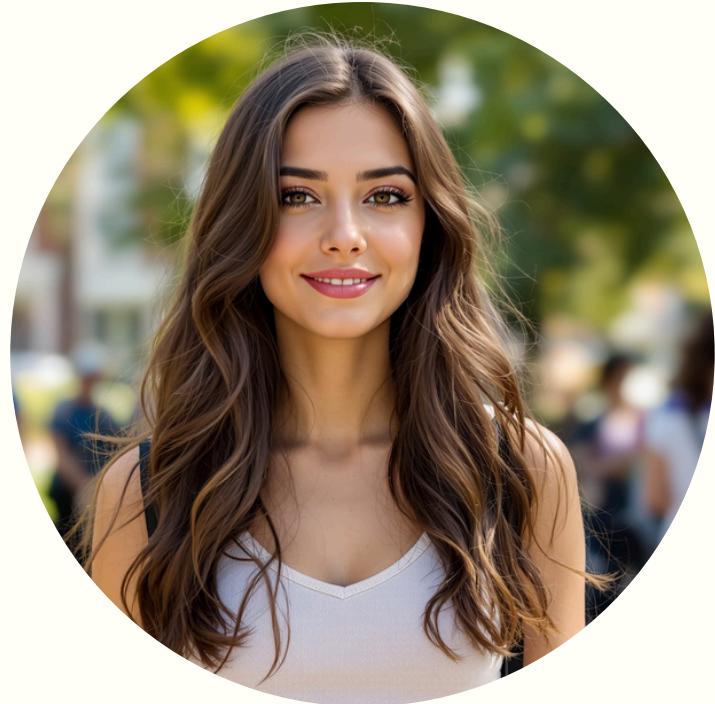
SCENARIO 2

- I'm at my internship, reviewing the week's content calendar and realizing we need several social media posts for upcoming campaigns.
- I want the posts to look professional, engaging, and on-brand, but I don't have much time to design from scratch.
- I open Canva and use templates to create visually appealing posts quickly, making sure each one fits the company's style and message.

SCENARIO 3

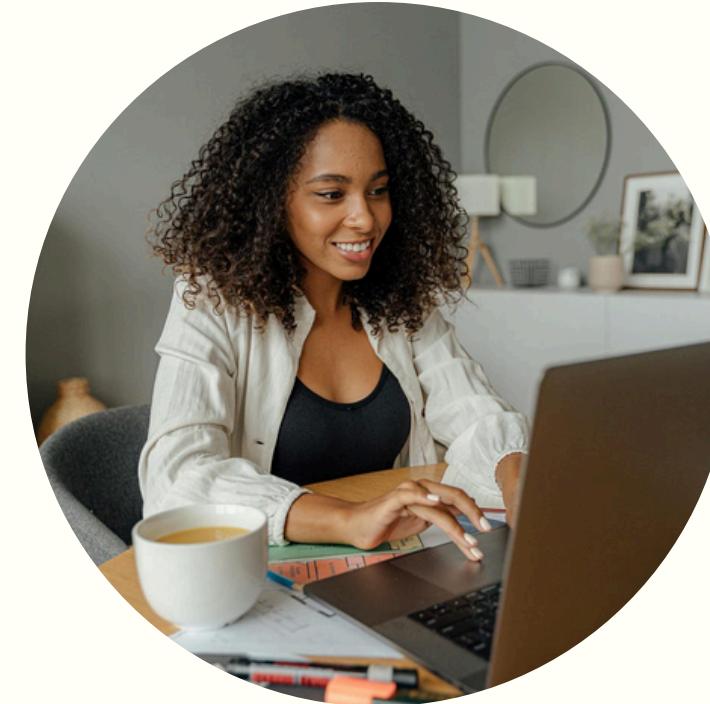
- At home in the evening, I check my to-do list and see a visual project that still needs graphics.
- I want it to look creative and polished without spending too much time on that specific part of the project.
- I open Canva and customize a template so I can finish the design quickly.

SIMILAR PERSONAS



The Sorority Girl

The Sorority Girl persona is a social, outgoing student who uses Canva to create event flyers, social media posts, and group materials for her sorority. Emma represents another college student who also relies on Canva for creating and sharing content.



The Side Hustler

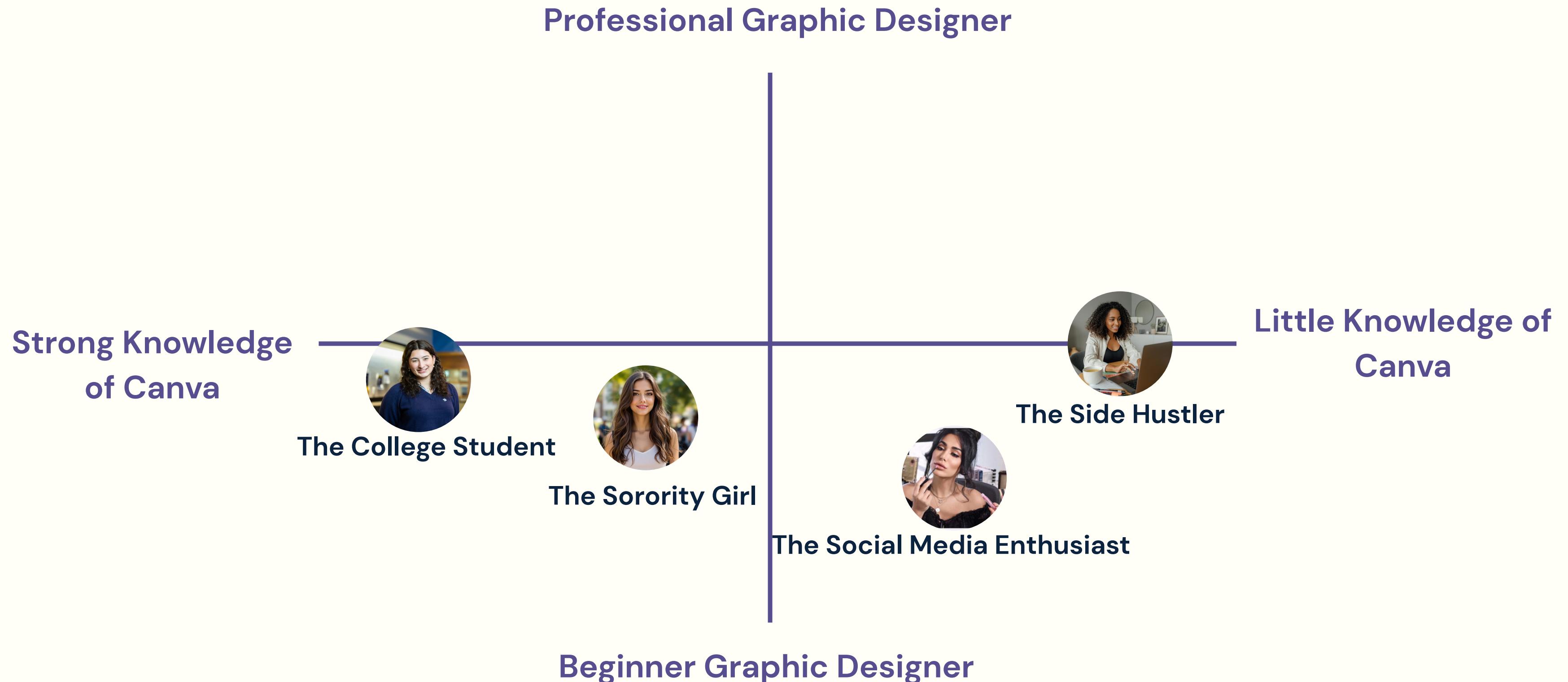
Like me, the Side Hustler is a busy student who uses Canva for work projects, personal projects, school assignments, and sometimes volunteer work. They rely on Canva to create professional-looking designs quickly and effectively.



The Social Media Enthusiast

Similar to my approach, the Social Media Enthusiast enjoys creating content that connects with others. They make posts that are fun, eye-catching, and relatable, and want their work to stand out and get engagement without spending hours on complicated design programs.

PERSONA MATRIX



PERSONA #2

MARCUS REED



“

I like it when I can just plug in my info and move on.

QUOTES

“

If it takes more than a few minutes, I'll probably give up.

“

I just want it to look like I actually know what I'm doing

DEMOGRAPHICS + ROLE

AGE	35
GENDER	Male
OCCUPATION	Small business owner (runs local coffee shop)
ETHNICITY	African American
PERSONALITY	Practical, goal-oriented, resourceful
ROLE	The Small Business Owner: Designing social media posts, flyers, menus, and in-store signage while managing daily coffee shop operations

GOALS

Customer Attraction:

Marcus wants to create visually appealing social media posts, flyers, and menus that help his coffee shop stand out.

Save Time and Energy:

Wants tools that let him create marketing materials quickly so he can focus on running the shop and simultaneously advertise the business

Consistent Branding

Aims for all of his designs to share a consistent style, colors, and overall look so that they are instantly recognizable and reflect a professional, cohesive brand identity.

Self-Sufficiency

Marcus wants to handle all design tasks himself, avoiding outside experts to save money while keeping full control over how his materials look.

JOURNEY

DIY Marketing:

Marcus is surprised that other small businesses can easily create marketing materials and sees an opportunity to save time and money by doing the same.

Trial and Error:

He has been trying multiple ways to create graphics but gets frustrated when the results don't match his vision, often feeling overwhelmed or realizing he'll need to spend money on better resources.

Online Research:

He reads articles, watches tutorials, and explores design tools to find an easy, affordable solution.

Rinse and Repeat:

To simplify creating marketing assets, Marcus reuses graphics that have worked well and edits them like customizable templates.

MOTIVATION VS. ABILITY

Motivating Factors

- **Professional Results:** Can create marketing materials to look polished and professional, giving customers confidence in his brand. Canva's templates make this possible and easy.
- **Cost-Efficient:** Marcus can avoid extra costs and save time on creating materials. Canva can help him produce high-quality, professional content quickly and affordably.
- **Easy As Possible:** Canva makes it simple to create social media posts, flyers, and other marketing materials without complicated steps or design training.

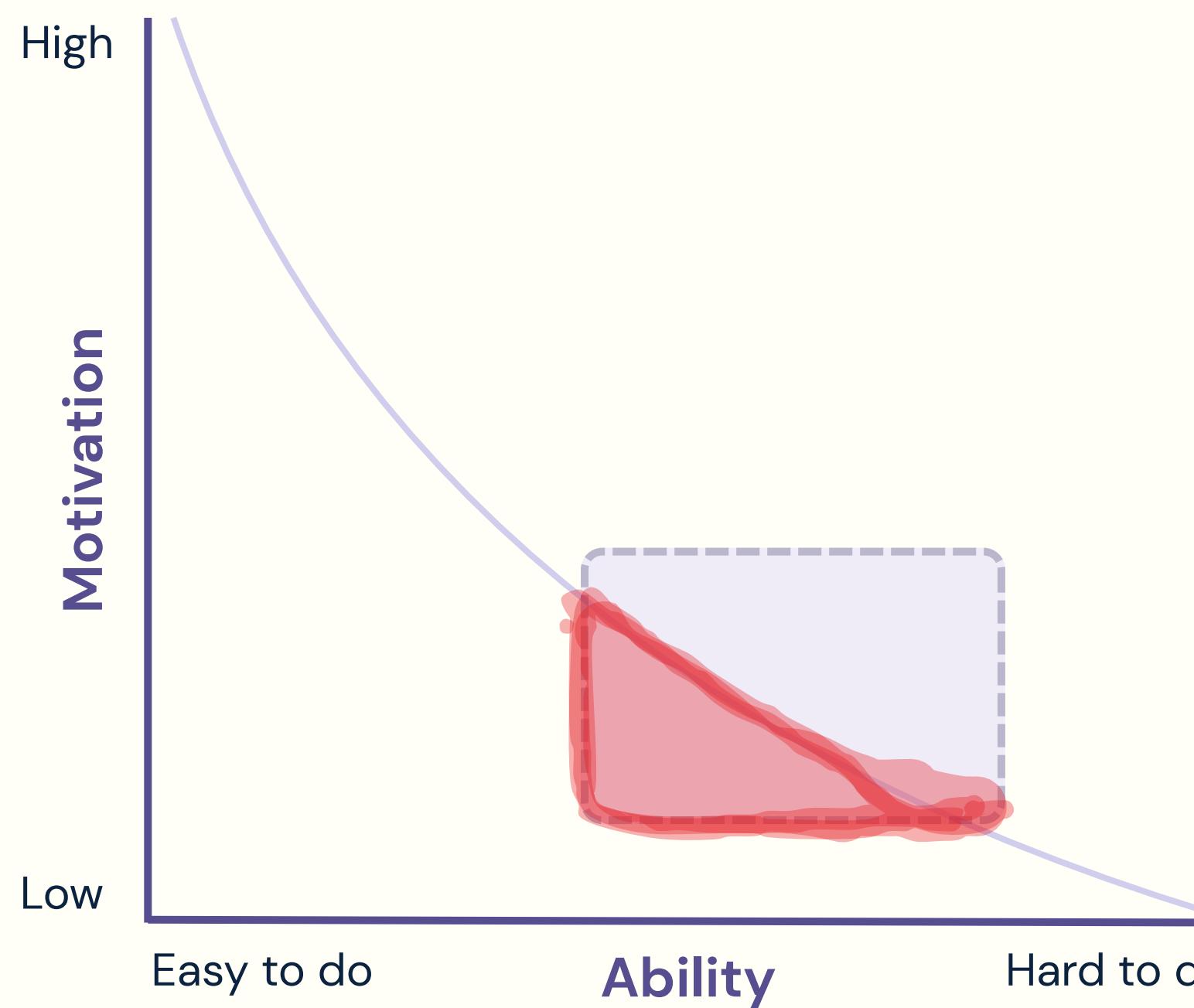
Inhibiting Factors

- **Limited Design Knowledge:** Since Marcus lacks design experience, he might still struggle to create materials that match exactly what he envisions, even with Canva's help.
- **Overwhelming:** Too many design options, templates, or features can feel confusing, and could make it hard for him to decide what to use.
- **Time Management:** As a business owner, Marcus has many responsibilities, and adding design tasks can feel overwhelming and add extra pressure.

Possible Triggers

- **Positive Influence:** Other small business owners recommend Canva to Marcus or show successful examples from their companies.
- **Upcoming Promotion or Events:** He needs to create marketing materials on short notice to promote a sale, special event, or seasonal campaign and wants to ensure they look professional
- **Sudden Ideas:** If Marcus ends up having a creative idea, he may want to bring it to life as a design right away and will need to start with finding resources.

MOTIVATION VS. ABILITY CHART



For Marcus, balancing so many responsibilities can make using Canva more challenging. He may not always have the focus or motivation to create marketing materials, which can make the design process feel more stressful.

INFLUENCERS

Role: The Neighbor



Adrian

Business Owner, Store Neighbor

- 28 years old, also is a small business owner, sells vintage clothing, frequently buys coffee from Marcus
- Trend-conscious, social, and detail-oriented.
- Has recommended that Marcus try using Canva to create marketing materials, seeing it as a simple, affordable way to make professional-looking designs

Role: The Employee



Ashley

Store Employee

- 17 years old, high school senior, works for Marcus at his coffee shop after school
- Tech-savvy, energetic, and quirky
- Always makes jokes about Marcus being “old” and “out of touch,” has mentioned his store’s lack of digital presence and suggests using Canva for social media help.

ENVIRONMENT

SCENARIO 1

- Sitting at his desk on a weekday morning, reviewing his upcoming promotions.
- Realizes he needs a flyer for a weekend sale and marketing materials for a new menu item.
- Opens a new tab on his computer and logs into Canva to start creating the designs quickly.

SCENARIO 2

- At the coffee shop during a slow afternoon, Marcus noticed the shop could use updated signage.
- Wants to make an eye-catching poster for a new product.
- Uses Canva to design a polished flyer in minutes.

SCENARIO 3

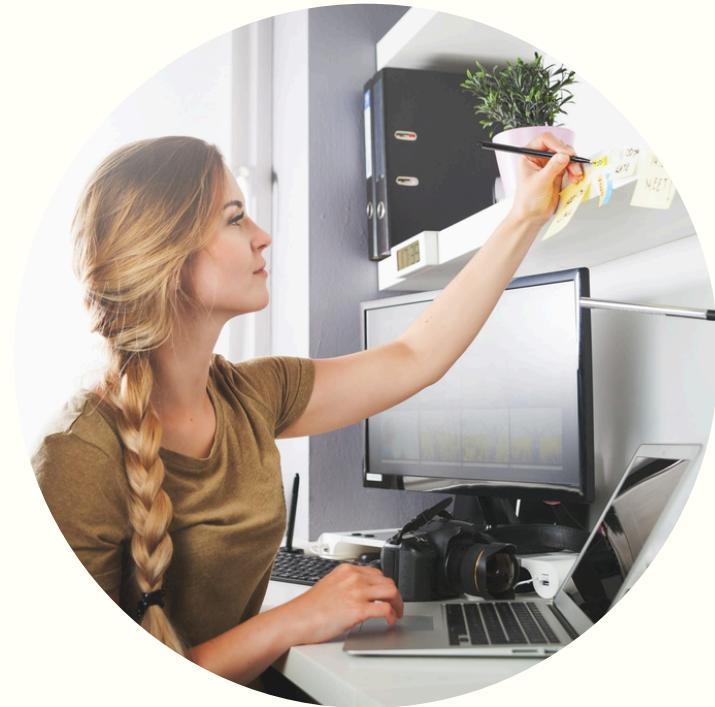
- Preparing for a seasonal campaign, brainstorming ideas for posters and flyers.
- Wants all materials to have a consistent, professional look.
- Uses Canva to customize templates and create all assets efficiently.

SIMILAR PERSONAS



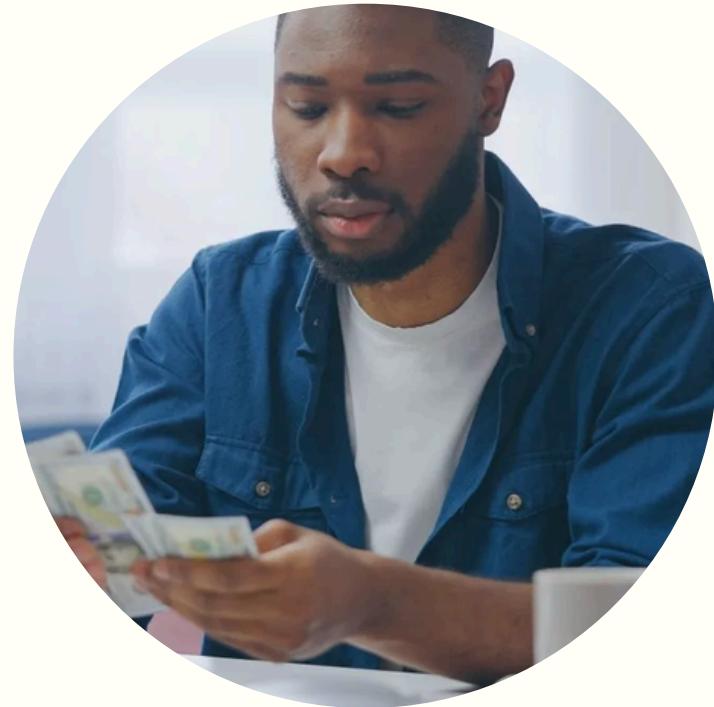
The Neighbor

Like Marcus, The Neighbor is a small business owner who is detail-oriented, trend-conscious, and socially connected. Adrian balances multiple responsibilities, values efficiency, and seeks practical ways to manage and grow his business.



The Organizer

The Organizer is similar to Marcus because they both value structure, efficiency, and planning in their work. They manage multiple responsibilities, need to keep tasks and projects on track, and rely on tools and resources.



The Budgeter

Focused on cost efficiency, the Budgeter is similar to Marcus because they prioritize saving money while still producing professional results. They value tools that allow them to handle tasks independently.

PERSONA MATRIX

