

Scenarios

SI 538 | Group 8

We used three out of the four personas to create the scenarios below. We picked Andy (primary), Michelle and Cathy.

Scenario 1: Andy

Andy is a Software Engineer and has always maintained a good exercise routine, going to the gym or jogging every few days before COVID-19. He also loves climbing. He loves to meet new friends and socialize with them. Andy usually goes to hang out with his friends on weekends, and he enjoys spending time with them. Besides that, he sometimes likes to meet new people in other ways, such as using social media: Bumble.

But after the COVID-19, his life changed a lot.

When going to the gym, one day, he was told by the instructor, "Sorry, we now require masks for all indoor workout activities." Andy felt very uncomfortable. Wearing a mask for fitness made him feel a little suffocated. He was also irked by the distance between people in the gym. People maintained social distance, everyone did their own exercise, and there was little communication and interaction, which made him feel as if he was alone. He felt disappointed. So he thought he might just choose to work out at home, but he found that he needed to buy a lot of fitness equipment to do all the workouts he normally needed, and he couldn't fit so many pieces of equipment in his house. Thus, he gave up on this idea.

Andy felt that socializing was also more difficult than usual, and friends seemed to like staying at home. After coming back from the gym, Andy felt uncomfortable, so he contacted his friends to ask them to go out together, but they were not very motivated and the places they wanted to go had a limitation on gathering sizes due to the COVID-19, so they had no choice but to cancel the plan. He couldn't have enough communication and interaction with people, and he felt that he lost the mood of the day. Having had multiple similar days has led him into feeling low.

He did, however, find that there were still many people on Bumble who were willing to chat. After chatting for a while, he found that chatting across the phone screen did not make him feel satisfied, so he tried to go to the app store and download a new app. This app was different from the apps he had used before. This app allows him to meet and interact with his new friends, and they can also complete some fitness and exercise activities together, as well as various incentives. He also noticed that the app has some mental health support. "It's great!" Andy thought, he immediately downloaded and opened the app, and tried to chat with the users. These people have relatively similar interests. They are happy to meet together to exercise or participate in activities, and the app provides a variety of ways for them to get together, such as: posting activities on the board, forming small exercise groups, exercising together to complete tasks to gain rewards, etc.

Andy then posted the exercise he wanted to do on the board and used the app's function to turn it into a long-term goal. Within half an hour, a lot of people had replied to Andy and joined his group, asking to go hiking together this weekend. "I can finally exercise with friends together as easily as I did before, great!" Andy said.

Scenario 2: Michelle

Michelle is a graphic designer who mostly works from home. Pre-pandemic, she would have gone into the office to get some work done but now chooses to stay at home. She lives alone and has a room in her condo as her dedicated office space. She also has a space equipped with gym equipment in her garage so that she can work out safely at home.

Although Michelle has taken all the necessary steps to go on with her activities in a safe manner, she does not prefer doing so. She works during the day in her home office, in the evening she will either go on a run or work out in her garage and then retire in for the night. Previously, Michelle would hang out more with her friends and also be able to socialize with other people at the gym.

Since Michelle is also an avid social media user and prefers to keep her followers updated with new trends and new things she has tried, she has been having a hard time with new content. Most of the friends she would hang out with have also been out of touch and she doesn't know how to reconnect or make new friends.

To try and go back to safely working out with other people, she opted for doing outdoor workouts. However, she still had trouble connecting with people and felt isolated. "None of them wanted to stay connected or hang out after the workout," she thought.

Michelle is searching for the connections she used to have. She wants to feel motivated and also wants similar support she has when she used to work at the gym. She wants to be able to create newer content for her social media but she also wants to be safe while doing so.

Scenario 3: Cathy:

Cathy is a server at a restaurant in Ann Arbor. She shares her space with another girl and they live in a 2 bedroom apartment. She works six days a week and usually works from 9 in the morning until 3 in the evening. She sometimes works overtime when she feels like it. The pandemic has definitely affected the business and she sees a lot fewer customers than she was before the pandemic.

During the pandemic, she lost her job and stayed at home most of the time. Although she loved to binge-watch Netflix shows during the excessive free time that she had, she still missed interacting with people beyond her roommate. She did sometimes have friends over for dinner, but that was a risky business since the virus was spreading like wildfire. She also realized that staying at home had made her put on some weight. The weight wasn't her primary concern though. Because of a total lack of physical activity, she was concerned about her health and how lazy she had become.

To fix this, she tried establishing a workout schedule for herself. Her roommate also actively worked out with her. "Working out in closed spaces is no fun" she said to herself. This routine lasted a month before both of them got tired of working out in closed spaces. More than anything she craved going to an open space where she could meet other people as well and feel motivated by virtue of seeing other people workout too.

After the pandemic, she now wants to get her life back to normal. She still hangs out with her friends and goes out to restaurants and cafes for meals. She still feels that she wants to find newer friends because of the toxic relationship she has with her current friends. She's still a little hesitant about meeting new people as covid isn't exactly over and meeting complete strangers during this epidemic isn't a smart idea. She also finds herself to be a little socially awkward since the pandemic brought down her social interaction to a near zero. Because of this lack of social interaction, she also isn't very confident in approaching new people.

She now hopes to work on her health, both mental and physical. She prefers doing so during the weekend when she's free. She wants to find herself some "gym buddies" whom she can work out with. She is also open to working out alone as long as the routine is interactive and involves going outdoors. She would also love to meet new people during the process or in general. She thinks it is fine if she gets to know people online first and then meeting them in person if she finds the person fit to be friends with.

Scenario Reflection:

Scenarios helped shed light not just on the problem at hand, but also on what people of different walks of life faced during the pandemic. They essentially helped humanize the problem. The scenarios helped shift our focus from looking at the problem to create a corresponding solution to creating a solution with people in mind, where their struggles are given utmost importance. For instance, Cathy had to deal with losing a job during the pandemic and that greatly affected her mental health and could have induced some sort of negative thoughts. On the flip side, she also got a lot of time to herself where she could figure out what changes she wanted to make in her life. For Andy, he has a strong need to socialize and exercise, so it was important for us to provide him with a variety of exercise options and effective social features in our design. Scenarios like these help us look at the bigger picture and thus help in generating more humanly solutions instead of prescriptive or mechanical solutions.

We also feel that scenarios help to look at the problem at hand with a newer lens every time. This in turn helps us in scoping out different issues. For example, through Michelle, we were able to see how a female who not only wants to be connected to other people but is also relevant through social media would want in comparison with Cathy who is just looking to stay healthy and connect with people. Scenarios help us in breaking down the problem into little pieces only so we can piece them together and form a unified solution.

Contribution Report

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