A process developed by the leading global innovation and design firm, RKS Design.

With content adapted from *Predictable Magic*, by Ravi Sawhney and Deepa Prahalad, published by Pearson Education.
It’s not how you feel about the design; it’s about how it makes you feel about yourself.

— Ravi Sawhney, creator of Psycho-Aesthetics

INTRODUCTION

As Industrial Designers, we are no longer the unsung heroes of innovation. Design matters now more than ever as it rapidly climbs to the top of the executive priorities in business, with its ability to add competitive advantage across all industries. We’re trained to see through the smoke and mirrors, the traditions and superstitions, through all the noise, right to people’s needs and aspirations and into their heads and hearts. We fuse technology with user experience to create new worlds and foster deep emotional connections to brands that we choose to bring into our lives.

This handbook will show you the power of Psycho-Aesthetics (P/A) and how you can use it to conceive and bring to life new innovative technologies, brands, digital experiences, environments, and businesses; to create design solutions that remain fresh, inspired, and relative.

For over forty years, I’ve been designing and innovating for start-ups, from KOR Water to some of the largest, well-known brands including Pepsi, Sharp, and Unilever. In every case, this repeatable, scalable, and universal tool has guided the RKS team to connect with the audiences it serves. Design is no longer just about winning awards and creating great portfolios—it’s much more. So often we help improve the quality of people’s lives and provide levels of self-esteem that can only be created through insights into the “self.” P/A helps us as designers connect and relate to our global audiences and their environments in ways that may be impossible by other means.

Throughout this handbook, Predictable Magic, and the other reference sources, you’ll see how and why we call P/A “Advanced Design-Thinking Methodology.” It stands on some very tall shoulders: those of the psychologist Abraham Maslow and the scholar Joseph Campbell. And in taking their work to a new level, we found that we could predict the future, foster brands and markets that never existed, and create decades of successes. You’ll find—as we do—that P/A will serve you as a cornerstone, as a collaborative tool to create shared vision, and as a litmus test for design and innovation. You’ll also see how P/A provides you with a new language, with objectivity and pragmatism that non-designers can visualize, understand, and connect with.

Congratulations on opening your mind to the powerful possibilities of Psycho-Aesthetics.

Ravi Sawhney
Today, most industries find themselves competing on design. The importance of creating emotional connections comes as no surprise for business leaders engaged in strategy, innovation, and design processes. Design resonates emotionally, but observing this phenomenon is much easier than creating it.

Companies invest vast resources into innovation and strategy and often find themselves frustrated in confronting two major hurdles:

POOR COLLABORATION

Fostering collaboration between executives and creative teams brings special challenges. Differences in tools, education, and perspective frequently lead to delays, battles of unsatisfying compromise, and uninspired results.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Although information from market research is abundant, insight can be in short supply. Traditional market research and financial data reveal very little about consumers’ emotional triggers in the decision process in a way that can inform design and business strategy.

Adapted from Predictable Magic, by Ravi Sawhney and Deepa Prahalad, published by Pearson Education.
The design process can be distilled into distinct phases that can be easily remembered with this acronym:

- Enable your stakeholders
- Personify your consumer
- Work the design process
- Reward your consumer
- Map the future
- Own the opportunity
- Engage emotionally

The EMPOWER framework further expands the core tools that bind all P/A into a comprehensive seven-step approach that reduces the risks associated with innovation and development. Development and innovation are fraught with challenge and risk, and all too often, much-anticipated success is met with dismal failure. This framework ensures reduced risk of failure.

Adapted from Predictable Magic, by Ravi Sawhney and Deepa Prahalad, published by Pearson Education.
About Psycho-Aesthetics

The roots of Psycho-Aesthetics (P/A) come from a uniquely pivotal time in which its founder Ravi Sawhney worked with dozens of cognitive and industrial psychologists developing the first touch screen interface at Xerox PARC, the birthplace of many of today’s technologies, including the Macintosh. During this challenging time, he found that several facts created barriers to its success:

1. People were not yet familiar with computers;
2. People related to CRT screens as TVs and thereby knew only to never put their finger prints on the screen;
3. They knew to stand back far enough to avoid its radiation. A button on the screen saying “touch to start” was met with great resistance, in part due to the presentation of the technology.

Imagine a foot-deep display with a 5-inch by 7-inch display buried inches inside a dark bezel. It was anything but intuitive. Success was finally attained after months of exploration, playing with various designs on screen, and working to reduce the perception of depth and darkness, all of which eventually allowed users who were new to the concept to immediately accept and interact with it. That was 1978.

Over the decades spent developing and evolving P/A, it has continually progressed into a highly advanced design-thinking tool that allows designers to create shared objective, pragmatic, and insightful approaches to everything from name development, branding, environments, mission and vision statements, User Interaction, product deuce, and so forth. It provides an open framework under which the key understandings of mapping onto a consistent framework combined with the creation of a “hero’s journey” for all stakeholders, from consumers to members of our own teams.

P/A is a universal tool that is only limited by individuals’ openness to working within frameworks and their own talents. Combined with “design doing,” success is exponentially advanced when created through this framework.

Oxford’s definition of Psycho-Aesthetics:

“The study of the psychological aspects of aesthetic perception.”

[Diagrams and visual content are not translated into text.]

Maslow

Campbell

Psycho-Aesthetics
**Psycho-Aesthetics**

**Process Overview**

1. **Research**
   - Conducting Desktop Global Research
   - Curating Trends
   - Generating Research Hypothesis
   - Creating Hypothetical Concepts
   - Conceiving Ethnographic Studies
   - Interviewing Stakeholders
   - Creating Stimuli
   - Co-Creation Sessions
   - Creating Research Plan
   - Screening Criteria and Discussion Plans

2. **Synthesis**
   - Generating Insights
   - Creating Go-to-Market Strategies
   - Benchmarking Competition
   - Developing Personas
   - Identifying Consumer Triggers
   - Mapping Opportunity Zones
   - Developing Customer Experience Journey

3. **Key Attractors**
   - Identifying Company Attractors
   - Defining Solution Criteria
   - Defining Core Product Attractors

4. **Hero’s Journey**
   - Outlining Hero’s Journey for Key Personas
   - Delivering Moments of Truth
   - Defining Arrows of Consumer Attraction
   - Engagement and Attaction / Purchase
   - Creating Viral Demand

5. **Design**
   - Brainstorming in Creative Immersion Sessions
   - Ideating and Conceptualizing
   - Creating and Aiming Concepts
   - Development of Wireframes
   - Mapping Proposed Solutions
   - exploding Colors, Materials and Finishes
   - Prototyping
   - Validating of Proposed Solution
   - Developing the Brand
   - Developing Creative Pitch

6. **Execution**
   - Developing the Product / Service
   - Integrating Partnerships
   - Engineering Programming the Product
   - Creating Go-to-Market Solutions
   - Creating Real Fails
   - Iterative Testing of Prototypes
   - Testing of Beta Versions
   - Cycles of Design Engineering Improvements
   - Debugging
   - Testing, Press Check, and Producing
   - Conducting Pilot Studies
   - Ramping Up Production

7. **Moments of Truth**
   - Empowering Consumers
   - Rewarding Customers
   - Creating Heroic Evangelists
   - Generating Viral Demand
P/A maps are a scalable design-strategy framework. They are a center point to Psycho-Aesthetics, providing a consistent lens to see the world through. By adopting P/A maps, we as designers develop relevance and understanding of how people see the world, resulting in our ability to empathize with them and their perceptions. Additionally, we find that using P/A maps trigger recall at a higher level than occur otherwise. Viewing visuals trigger recall of process and insights that allow communication with higher levels of depth, clarity, and conviction. The maps become a new shared language between stakeholders and ourselves.

It is used to map personas, brands, and offerings against the consumer’s Hierarchy of Needs, Desires, and Aspirations on one hand and levels of interactivity on the other. Once these entities are mapped, opportunity zones (White Space / Blue Ocean) can be identified and design directions can be defined and communicated.

The vertical axis of the P/A map is a translation of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs into a consumer’s Hierarchy of Needs, Desires and Aspirations. The most meaningful experiences provide the highest level of empowerment. By “empowerment,” we mean the emotional connection we make with products and services and how those emotions empower us to do things we couldn’t or wouldn’t do without them.

The horizontal axis of the P/A map is based on levels of interactivity, from passive interactivity (like a paper clip) to highly immersive interactivity (like a skip loader). Although function can be a part of a design’s level of interactivity, this axis also serves to measure how many senses are activated and how deeply engaging the interactivity is overall.

**RELATIVE** The initial quadrant positioning and subsequent repositioning of entities on a P/A map are relative to one another through a qualitative assessment of the individual entities. The mapping of entities has to be seen through the lens of consumer experience. The mapping method uses a visual rather than textual approach to help establish direction.

**SCALABLE** The positioning of the entities can be used to convey micro-level perspectives of subtle design nuances of a product. At a macro level to convey the overarching snapshot of a certain market or category.

**ADAPTIVE** The levels of interactivity on the horizontal axis should be understood in the context of the category of the solutions being designed. The number of interactions does not necessarily equate to the quality of the consumer experience. Emotion and interactivity combine to form the overall experience.
From Maslow to Psycho-Aesthetics

“What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself.” – Abraham Maslow

From Maslow to Psycho-Aesthetics

“Need to Know & Understand”

Aesthetic Needs

Estem Needs

Belonging & Love Needs

Safety Needs

Physiological Needs

NARROW’S

Self Actualize

BASIC

VERSATILE

ARTISTIC

ENRICHED

Dynamic

Dynamic Environment

Creative

Intelligent

Personal

Coherent

Natural

Essential

Basic functionality

Passive

Interactivity

Immersive
Psycho-Aesthetics can be used in every category of design and even provide clarity and context when innovating business models or developing marketing strategies.

When developing broad-reaching solutions with many interlinking aspects, such as product, service and brand, it’s helpful to break out each of these into its own P/A map category to help identify the opportunity areas and define and refine the blend of these that will be unique to your solution.
The Psycho-Aesthetics Steps

"Design is our tool, we master it, study it, evolve it as designers, creators and innovators."
- Ravi Sawhney
INTRODUCTION

This booklet is your introduction to the world of Design Thinking at an advanced, comprehensive, repeatable and scalable level. It provides an introductory understanding of how and why P/A works combined with examples from RKS’s development of the iconic KOR water bottle. It will also serve as a reference tool for your continued design thinking development as you expand on P/A in other course work and professionally.

CASE STUDY

KOR Water came to RKS to create a sustainable and healthy solution to the vast amounts of waste created by disposable water bottles and the threats its BPA posed to health combined with a growing garbage patch in the Pacific that threatened the Ocean’s life and our environment. The story of KOR and how P/A became an experience shared between RKS and KOR’s founders will show you how insights and the P/A process created their brand and products.
The foundation of all success comes from insights into people, their needs, their aspirations, their challenges, how they work, live and play. Recently, RKS has been challenged to re-design soft-drink packaging in India and China; to reduce the time associated with laundry (second only to agriculture in water consumption) in India and Europe; and to create solutions to replace wheelbarrows used as human-powered ambulances in Africa and much of the world. At the same time, the RKS team develops medical products, appliances, and consumer electronics for the developed world. In most cases, the designers are not the consumers and, without deeper understandings and insights into people’s behavior and psychological patterns, RKS would be unable to create deep and lasting benefits.
01.1 Consumer Research

Often, you will start with the client’s research into who their consumers are, how they live their lives, their surveys, ethnography and so forth. It is important to mine their research and augment it with your interviews, ethnography, testing and desk top research, etc.

The variety of the research approaches used to establish the holistic and important understandings, lay the foundation to be later synthesized into actionable consumer insights.

MARKET SEGMENT #2: URBAN ASPIRANTS

Primarily indoor athletes – athletic aspirants – who work out almost exclusively at health clubs, water bottle in hand;
Performs 20-30% of physical activity outdoors, weather permitting.
Takes a new bottled water each day, or reuses an existing one.
Uses fitness to stay in shape and feel centered (i.e., look good and feel good);
Resides in urban areas;
Focused on getting the latest gear (Dri-Fit, Under Armor, running shoes, etc.)

PAINPOINTS

The bottle is good for drinking at gym but not in office and home.
Refilling is sometimes a challenge.
When cleaning, it is hard to be sure that the bottle is thoroughly clean;
This bottle needs to be large enough to last through a long workout. (Volume and weight are only an issue outside the gym.)

ATTRACTION TRIGGERS

Makes me feel like a trend-setter.
Draws attention at gym.
Sensual delight to touch, look at, and use.
Self-expression via personalization options.
Elevates the necessary act of hydration into a special ritual.
A product or service’s success is usually measured by its performance against its competitors.

To outperform you must first understand the landscape of your competitors, how they position themselves, and what their key differentiators and attractors are in the market place.

While some businesses focus on functionality and ease-of-use, others appeal to consumers with a highly developed and refined aesthetic.

**Benchmarking**

To better understand the market, a breakdown of the top competitors has to be created. For KOR, these competitors include Klean Kanteen, Sigg, Camelbak, and Nalgene. Each player markets their products differently to appeal to particular consumers.

**Klean Kanteen**
Klean Kanteen primarily creates stainless steel water bottles and focuses on sustainability as a selling point. It has a simple design and offers a variety of colors.

**Sigg**
Sigg water bottles are lightweight aluminum drinking vessels that are considered vital equipment for adrenaline-hungry mountaineers.

**Camelbak**
Camelbak differentiates itself through functional innovation, focused on ease of use and easy access to water on the go.

**Nalgene**
Nalgene was the original reusable water bottle that ignited the concept of a reusable water bottle.
The concept of the P/A word bank is to create a library of common descriptors to use when benchmarking and developing a brand or product’s look and feel. The P/A word bank is a living list that can be tweaked and adjusted to respond to project needs.

Adorable
Accessible
Adventurous
Aggressive
Artistic
Athletic
Attractive
Bold
Bright
Busy
Calm
Casual
Cheerful
Chic
Classic
Clever
Colorful
Conservative
Contemporary
Conventional
Creative
Custom
Delicate
Detailed
Dramatic
Dry
Earthly
Eccentric
Efficient
Elegant
Energetic
Ethereal
Familiar
Fancy
Fashionable
Festive
Fierce
 Formal
Fragile
Fresh
Friendly
Fun
Functional
Futuristic
Glamorous
Industrial
Informal
Innovative
Inspiring
Intense
Inviting
Lightweight
Lively
Majestic
Minimal
Modern
Natural
Nostalgic
Organic
Playful
Quirky
Radiant
Rebellious
Relaxing
Reliable
Retro
Revolutionary
Romantic
Secure
Simple
Sharp
Sleek
Soft
Smart
Sophisticated
Stable
Strong
Stylish
Sustainable
Tasteful
Tranquil
Trustworthy
Unconventional
Unique
Urban
Versatile
Vintage
Whimsical
Wild
Youthful
Below are the word bank descriptors applied to KOR’s main competitors. When applying the descriptors, it can be helpful to discuss and debate them to ensure accuracy in capturing the brand essence. Descriptors should be limited to three or four to aid clarity and understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KLEAN KANTEEN</th>
<th>SIGG</th>
<th>CAMELBAK</th>
<th>NALGENE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Functional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Clean</td>
<td>Sharp</td>
<td>Efficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By further breaking down the characteristics of each competitor by listing positive and negative attributes, we can gauge what are considered benefits in the market. These benefits act as guidelines for design. The positive and negatives of each product can be established through first-hand interaction, interviews, and by researching on-line reviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KLEAN KANTEEN</th>
<th>SIGG</th>
<th>CAMELBAK</th>
<th>NALGENE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSITIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>Versatile</td>
<td>Insulated</td>
<td>Durable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Lightweight</td>
<td>Measuring Tool</td>
<td>Measuring Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavorless</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Lightweight</td>
<td>Lightweight</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-insulated</td>
<td>Fragile</td>
<td>Dirty</td>
<td>Foul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delicate</td>
<td>Faded Color</td>
<td>Leaks</td>
<td>Difficult to Wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint Chips</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scratch Prone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASE STUDY

RESEARCH
Transforming research into maps, journeys, personas, opportunities, etc., is critical to setting the stage. If research is our foundation, synthesis is our floor. We like to think of synthesis as the stage and creation as the performance. The visuals are best served when printed poster size or larger and placed into a “war room” in which an immersive environment is created. This evokes higher levels of empathy and facilitates creative immersion sessions that combine the creative team with other disciplines, from engineering to marketing to manufacturing and shipping. Some of the most brilliant ideas come from latent creativity of non-designers who stimulate us with their ideas and insights that are often dormant until brought together in a team setting, surrounded by the P/A tools.
02.1 Competitive Mapping

Once there is a general understanding of the market, the next step is to map the competitors on the P/A map to work out how they relate to one another. In this way, the P/A map is used to help make sense of all the initial research that has been collected up to this point.

ALIGNING THE INFORMATION

Using the understanding of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, its translation to the Consumer Hierarchy of Needs, and its assistance in scaling the Self-Actualization axis, we are able to map the competitors on the P/A map.

The process of mapping competitors is oftentimes considered group collaboration, because while this is a process, it is a soft process, and a rather subjective one. So collaboration and discussion are often important for accurate and appropriate placement of the competitors on the map.

The Nalgene bottle has a simple design with limited durability and longevity.

The Sigg bottle has an edgier look with bold colors and a sleek design.

The Klean Kanteen has a minimal design with soft color options and brushed metal.

The Camelbak bottle is dynamic, with its double wall container and multiple color offerings.

CASE STUDY SYNTHESIS
Along with understanding who your competitors are and where they lie on the P/A map, you also need to understand who the potential consumers are and what elements of design they most identify with, based on their personalities.

**02.2 Triggers & Personas**

Along with understanding who your competitors are and where they lie on the P/A map, you also need to understand who the potential consumers are and what elements of design they most identify with, based on their personalities.

**PERSONA: WHAT IS IT?**

A persona is an abstract personality type of a potential user. It is a highly empathetic format that humanizes and contextualizes the opportunity space in order to support the development of user-centered concepts.

**TRIGGERS: WHAT ARE THEY?**

Triggers are the intangible interactions, touch points, and haptics that a product delivers. The triggers are created and placed on the spectrum by the designer. Triggers run a spectrum from strictly rational to completely emotional.
Trigger Breakdown

Triggers are the intangible things a product delivers. They are the aspects and characteristics of a product that resonate the most with any given user—what’s most important to them. First the designer has to determine what triggers might be associated with the product category, and then the triggers are placed on a spectrum from strictly rational to completely emotional. How important any given trigger is to a particular user is displayed graphically, by varying the scale of each graphical icon that represents a trigger. Understanding which triggers are most important to your users will help in knowing where to focus design effort.

Persona Breakdown

Information Entered
Simple information that is discovered when doing interviews and general research will result in a better understanding of the persona. Information that is typically entered includes the demographics, ethnography, market research, and analytics.

Information Departed
From the information put into the persona, you are able to get a general understanding of who the persona is. The information that comes out of the persona study includes their lifestyle expression, “help-me” statements, the general dashboard, and their triggers.

Scenario
The scenarios act as a deeper dive into the lives of the personas. Understanding the constraints and usage scenarios that are likely to take place creates an intimacy with the consumers and helps to identify “pain points.”

Pain Points
The pain points are the source of challenges and discomfort in usage scenarios. These pain points are expressed as “help-me” statements and represent key opportunities for innovation and design improvements. Almost all innovation stems from solving a particular pain point.

Help-Me Statements
Help-me statements are a reframing of the pain point in a way to create better empathy with the users and help focus on the actual source of problems.
Creating Personas

WHAT GOES IN

- Ethnography
- Demographic data
- Market research
- Consumer analytics

WHAT COMES OUT

- Dashboard
- ‘In-the-life’ scenarios
- Key attractors
- Triggers
The triggers in this spectrum were chosen based on feedback from consumer reviews and persona breakdowns, where we were able to determine what was most important to each persona when making their purchasing decisions. The most common concerns with the product were then ranked along the spectrum. By evaluating the different aspects involved in a water bottle project, you are able to determine the different triggers relating to the design of the container. The triggers will vary with each project, but the spectrum from rational to emotional will always stay the same. The KOR trigger spectrum begins with the most rational concerns (price sensitivity) and ends with the most emotional (self-expression and personalization). (Triggers vary challenge-by-challenge and require thought in designing a breakdown.)

This example of a persona and its triggers will guide as you design and innovate for consumers other than yourself. The depth of a persona is dependent upon the amount and quality of research conducted. In many cases, RKS has leveraged dozens of interviews and observations that combine into a single persona that may be one of a multitude of personas used in the P/A process. It is important to develop diverse and opposing personas. Importantly, they all must have relevance and must be known well enough that you can project their evolutionary trajectory through insights into their intent and motivations.

Name: Matthew
User: College Butterfly
Age: 19
Occupation: Student
Salary: $14,400 yr.
Location: Boston

Scenario
I spend most of my week traveling from class to class on my bike, and when I’m not doing homework, I’m usually playing sports with my friends. I’m always needing to rehydrate but lately I feel like I should invest in a refillable bottle instead of wasting so much plastic. It would also save me money and it would be nice to know that it’ll be easier to carry around since it will fit more securely on my bike than a thin, flimsy plastic bottle.

Pain Points
“I waste money on bottled water.”
“I can’t hold a single-use bottle on my bike.”
“I don’t like harming the environment.”

Help-Me Statements
“Help me access the bottle easily.”
“Help me feel like it’s personalized.”
“Help me feel proud to own it.”
PERSONAS

**ON-THE-GO WARRIOR**

**SUMMARY**

With Jason’s busy schedule, he needs a water container to replenish himself throughout the day. Working in a traveling professional environment requires a bottle that cannot only assimilate into the workplace but allow for easy handling for his days on the go.

**PAIN POINTS**

- “It’s hard to carry.”
- “Single-use bottles look cheap.”
- “I can’t see inside what I’m cleaning.”

**KEY TRIGGERS**

- Basic functionality
- Price of ownership
- Sustainability
- Health
- Personalized value
- Price sensitivity
- Health
- Pride of ownership

**TRENDY MOM**

**SUMMARY**

Being a mother of two can be stressful, and with a third on the way, Sophie’s water bottle needs to work with her, rather than against her. Having easy access to hydration is important to her, whether it’s a quick sip for her kids or quenching a thirst after a long yoga session.

**PAIN POINTS**

- “My kids spill drinks easily.”
- “I’m concerned for my kids’ safety.”
- “I’m thirsty after yoga.”

**KEY TRIGGERS**

- Basic functionality
- Price of ownership
- Sustainability
- Health
- Personalized value
- Price sensitivity
- Health
- Pride of ownership

**COLLEGE BUTTERFLY**

**SUMMARY**

Matthew’s interest in sustainability—combined with his love of sports—requires a water vessel that will keep him hydrated throughout the day, and that he will feel good about owning and reusing.

**PAIN POINTS**

- “I waste money on bottled water.”
- “I can’t secure a bottle on my bike.”
- “I don’t like harming the environment.”

**KEY TRIGGERS**

- Basic functionality
- Price of ownership
- Sustainability
- Health
- Personalized value
- Price sensitivity
- Health
- Pride of ownership
02.3 Opportunity Zone

Identifying emerging opportunities requires understanding gaps in which consumer emotions and desires are not met by current industry offerings. When the offerings are evaluated as a group, the opportunity zone becomes a space that signals an area where improvements in the market can be made.

Mapping Opportunity Zone

The criteria of mapping the product come from the previously established benchmarking analysis. Using the range of interactivity and self-actualization, you are able to project the approximate location where the competitors lie on the map. Once the map is populated, you gain an instant visual understanding of where the aspirations of the personas lie and where there is white space representing opportunity.

Mapping Personas

The criteria for mapping personas is based on their needs, lifestyles, and consumer triggers. While these personas may initially be placed in one quadrant, their aspirations towards a higher or lower self-actualization will result in a transition towards a new quadrant that better suits their needs in that particular category of design.
Examine and Identify

**EXAMINE**
Examine the positioning of personas on the P/A map. Their preliminary positioning is based on an initial understanding of spaces and personas. If you wish to reposition them, feel free to discuss it with your group members. The purpose is to make the consumer’s knowledge more explicit and encourage discussion across multiple disciplines.

**IDENTIFY**
Opportunities can exist in and across multiple quadrants. For example, they can target new customers, provide enhanced experiences, create new platforms, or allow for superior differentiation from competitive brands. Choosing one opportunity area that satisfies currently unmet needs and defining that unmet opportunity will position you to further reinforce and validate the decisions you made throughout your design process.

Define and Forecast

**DEFINE**
While choosing your opportunity zone, be sure to ask yourself the following:
- Who are the target consumers and stakeholders?
- What are the pain points that this opportunity zone might alleviate?
- How valuable is this opportunity territory from a business perspective?
- What are the emotional benefits that solutions would need to deliver?

**FORECAST**
By mapping and creating insights into the personas, their needs and aspirations, their history and future, you are now challenged to project their trajectories. Knowing who they are where they came from, combining with your own experiences, you can identify what will connect with the audience going into the future. This predictive modeling is critical for innovation and product development. Providing it from a design and experience perspective is one of the greatest values that can be harnessed by applying Psycho-Aesthetics to the strategic design process.
Once the opportunity zone has been identified and the help-me statements have been evaluated. Now the key attractors need to be created. This can be done simply by pulling the pain points gathered from the personas and turn them into considerations to motivating your design.

**WHAT ARE KEY ATTRACTORS?**

Key attractors are specific design features, touch points, haptics, and emotional responses that engage particular target groups. They provide guidance throughout the design process and can be evaluated against competitive offerings to ensure the creation of unique products and services that successfully differentiate in the market.
IDENTIFY
Through our in-depth research process, we are able to define what is most important to each individual. While they will often vary, finding repeating patterns of desire in the personas, reviews, and research, you can define what your key attractors are. The key attractors will give you a better understanding of what the most important features of the design are.

The question then becomes, how do we achieve the ideal form? How do we make the experience easier, better, or richer?

DEFINE
The solution criteria become the final answer because the solution criteria are informed by the key attractors.

For the KOR project, the final key attractors became: Intuitive Operation; Form Factor; Ease-of-Use; and Quality, Sustainable Materials.
The path to empowering consumers depends on you and your ability to guide them past hesitation and doubt and into a rich, inviting series of experiences that leave them feeling good about themselves. To achieve this, Psycho-Aesthetics employs our interpretation of the *Hero’s Journey* by Joseph Campbell.

The *Hero’s Journey* is used to frame the process by which consumers bond with the products and experiences they seek out in the marketplace.
Defining The Hero’s Journey

1. ATTRACT
Attraction is that moment we first become aware of something with which we form a connection. As we identify with our consumers or audience, we see how the attraction phase of the journey varies for different personas. This forces us to develop a palette of attraction that will facilitate interaction and engagement, rather than prescribe it.

2. ENGAGE
When attracted, your audience will respond to the invitation. They touch, smell, or interact in varied ways with the offering, testing to see if the promises made in the attraction phase are valid.

3. ADOPT
When the buyer reviews the competition, the value proposition should be matchless. A product or service designed using Psycho-Aesthetics should make differentiation easier for the consumer and make the decision clear.

4. MOMENT OF TRUTH
The Moment of Truth comes after the purchase, when the consumer interacts with the offering and affirms their decision or receives affirmation from others. By the time someone has completed a purchase, they have already demonstrated their faith in the brand and look to see if their trust is well-placed. This is the point in the Hero’s Journey at which people either embrace a brand and become evangelists or suffer disappointment.

5. HEROIC EVANGELIST
When the consumer feels empowered, they’ll feel compelled to share their experience of that product or service with others. They become evangelists for the brand. Although much of a consumer’s purchasing research is conducted online, nothing can replace one-to-one evangelism. The creation of such Heroic Evangelists is an incredibly complex process, but the payoff is tremendous. The message is spread for you less expensively and more credibly.

6. GENERATION OF VIRAL DEMAND
Within the chain of viral demand, companies focus on word-of-mouth, where business practices are specifically tailored to create connections and communities. The final stage in the Hero’s Journey occurs when the Hero returns to share their learning with the community. This shared learning will spread through social media and word-of-mouth to ultimately become a viral demand.
The KOR ONE Story

Our passion for bottled water has had a heavy impact on our environment. To understand the hidden energy costs associated with packaging, processing, and transporting bottled water, experts suggest we imagine filling up a quarter of every bottle with oil. To make matters worse, only one in five of these bottles is recycled. With the unfriendly environmental facts escalating, KOR Water sought out a better way to consume water.

Through a collaborative effort with RKS Design, KOR teamed up in designing their story, brand, packaging, and bottle – the total P/A experience. The RKS Design team understood that in order to attract the user, the bottle had to be more than just a drinking vessel. The KOR ONE water bottle would act as a luxury product to elevate the user’s lifestyle. This was achieved through designing a distinctive obelisk, minimal shape, with eye-catching packaging, glass-like clarity and simplicity in materials to make the engagement more easily received.

In regards to its durability, reusability and lasting impression on the user, several key challenges were set forth to ensure its longevity. Through further examination of the KOR ONE Bottle, you get a sense of the rich tactile properties implemented in the design to enhance the perceived value of the water, the bottle and the experience. This was achieved through the “big gulp” feature that was created as the ideal mouthpiece size that made the flow of water a perfect pour. This created an easy drinking operation that allowed the water to flow freely while also providing room for the addition of ice. It also provided an intuitive, one-handed operation that features a latch release using a simple press of the thumb that frees the lid to hinge back 180 degrees and stays put to give a clear, unobstructed access to the mouthpiece making it easier to drink from. In addition, closing the lid will automatically engage the latch making the user experience as intuitive as possible; making it easy to hold and open. Furthermore, the soft, built-in gaskets will aid in keeping the bottle securely sealed, even when the bottle is lying flat on a table or in a bag. The final frame treatment is of a semi-translucent white that evokes a glacier-like quality – liquid water surrounded by the most pure ice found in nature. The frame extends above the cap to provide additional points of engagement. Having observed that people often carry water bottles by grasping them from the top, the designers created openings in the frame that provide finger holds, making the KOR ONE easy to handle, even when your hands are full. Just loop a finger through the top, and you’re good to go.

Throughout the design process the KOR Water P/A instilled the need for a healthy, sustainable, environmentally sound way to stay hydrated and challenged our design team to create a reusable water bottle as innovative and inspirational as it was healthy and environmentally sound. Both KOR and RKS maintained the promise that the bottle materials and construction had to support a long product life to be in keeping with the goal of sustainability. The bottle had to be made of materials that were as healthy for consumers as they were for the environment. The polycarbonates used in most reusable bottles contain Bisphenol-A (BPA). More and more studies are linking BPA to potentially harmful hormone disruptions. Glass doesn’t carry the risk of BPA exposure, it breaks easily and aluminum does not break, but its been linked to health problems including Alzheimer’s. More and more studies are linking BPA to potentially harmful hormone disruptions. Glass doesn’t carry the risk of BPA exposure, it breaks easily and aluminum does not break, but its been linked to health problems including Alzheimer’s disease. Charged with this knowledge, the design team contacted Eastman Innovation Lab in search of a viable alternative to polycarbonate. Eastman had been exploring a new plastic which had a rich feel, terrific clarity, and could handle variable wall thicknesses until KOR stimulated their interest in the market opportunity. This versatile plastic was extremely impact resistant, could be used in molds designed for polycarbonate and would be dishwasher safe. In fact, it was BPA-free. Eastman Tritan™ copolyester debuted in time to become a key part of the KOR ONE development. Tritan’s feel and clarity promised to deliver the premium luxury perception required. These features all combined to make Tritan the right choice for the KOR bottle.

Upon using the bottle, the consumer can find reassurance and comfort in knowing that the KOR ONE Water Bottle will make them feel good on at least three levels: they’re doing something healthy for themselves, they’re doing the right thing for the planet, and they’re treating themselves to a premium product they can be proud to display in their homes, in their offices, and on the road. The inspiration felt from using an environmentally sound product can be experienced time and time again from its dishwasher safe feature, the drinking experience, and the intuitive lid operation. Never again will users have to steer their car with a knee while using two hands to twist open a water bottle. A surprise feature is hidden within the cap of the KOR ONE. A clear window inside the lid is designed to hold a KOR Stone. Designed to be seen only by the user, KOR Stones are small disks printed with an affirmation chosen by the user. The idea of this private affirmation is to empower users to shape their own hydration experience by using the rituals of hydration to remind them of their goals, their dreams, and their purpose in this world. To insert a KOR Stone a person can just lift the soft, flexible end cap and slip the KOR Stone into place. Several KOR Stones affirmations come with each KOR One Hydration Vessel. Both KOR and personalized KOR Stones can be printed and shared through the KOR WATER website. As you insert the KOR Stone, the KOR wordmark imprinted on the end cap will become visible. Designed of straight lines and circles, the KOR wordmark adds to the sense of purity of intention and hints at the purity of what lies within. The structural ribbing of the end cap takes on the subtle form of a semi-transparent white that evokes a glacier-like quality – liquid water surrounded by the most pure ice found in nature. The frame extends above the cap to provide additional points of engagement. Having observed that people often carry water bottles by grasping them from the top, the designers created openings in the frame that provide finger holds, making the KOR ONE easy to handle, even when your hands are full. Just loop a finger through the top, and you’re good to go.

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ATTRACT
Where we get to know and learn about KOR One. In this case, the main points of exposure were:
Eye Catching Packaging
Glass-like Clarity
Distinctive Obelisk Shape
Pure Design

ENGAGE
It is the first interaction. Where you learn from the first interaction with the product. This could be a physical interaction or an informative interaction through a magazine or a website, for example.
“Big Gulp” Feature
Durable
Reusable
Easy to Hold
One Handed Lid Operation
Finger Holds
Secure Carrying

ADOPT
How to help or drive people to choose KOR One.
BPA Free
Sustainable
Environmentally Sound
180 Degree Lid Function
Dishwasher Safe
Minimal Residue Build Up

MOment of Truth
For KOR One, the Moment of Truth can be broken down in two: the first time someone actually experiences using the bottle and the first time they bring it to the outside world, to be seen by others.
Ability to Add Ice Cubes
Realization that you are doing the right thing for the planet
Realization that you are doing something healthy for yourself
Feeling inspired by the healthy choices you are making

HEROIC EVANGELIST
This is about the people who not only use KOR One but also recommend it. Here, we are looking for as many opinion-influencers as possible.
Pride in displaying it in the home, office, or on the road
Sense of pride of ownership and raised self-esteem
Spreading the word of KOR’s ability to recycle the materials at the end of the bottles life cycle
Spreading the word of the bottles ability to make a positive change in the consumers lives and our world

CASE STUDY
THE HERO’S JOURNEY

GENERATION OF VIRAL DEMAND
This is the primary evidence of successful design. When people start showing the product and actively talking or asking about KOR One.

Iron Man movie
Lifestyle magazines
Fashion magazines
Design magazines
Advertising
Sustainability books
Once the Moments of Truth have been established, the process of physically designing can commence. The collective P/A insights that you have gained become the tools you need to make sure you are making a design / experience that is worth being made.
Mapping Design Concepts

P/A maps are essential as we develop concepts and ideas. By being able to visually refer to the maps, and then by using them to test our alignment with the opportunity zone, they become working tools that guide us to drive design forward through relevance and objectivity combined with our design expertise.
The transformational challenge and experience of creation, design, and innovation from an idea into reality is one of the richest experiences in which all designers immerse themselves. Understanding your P/A frameworks serves as a cross-check mechanism by which concepts themselves can be held up against the P/A and visually measured as to their relevance. The assets of your P/A will drive you toward new relevance and design levels of aesthetics and interaction at a higher level. The effort involved in execution is time-consuming hard work, and having a guide to help you though the tens, hundreds or thousands of decisions that need to be made will serve you well. “P/A is a road map to a new location—one that’s never been seen before.”
Designing Moments of Truth serves us in several ways. It is of the utmost importance if we are to create senses of self and attain affirmation though others, something we all do whether we recognize it or not. A great example is our design of smart phones for the blind. These are full-function phones that can take a picture of writing and translate it into active braille, provide music, provide active maps, and more. The CEO/Founder and stakeholder was blind, as was his marketing head. As they sat in our conference room, we handed them physical models of three design concepts. As we watched the founder feeling the designs, he placed the one he liked up to his ear. We presumed he was testing the feel of the phone against his ear when he asked: “How do I Look?” This is the essence of the Moment of Truth. Although they may not have vision, they are seeking acceptance of others. In the case of today’s technology that we carry or wear, we seek to convey empowerment. “We’re all looking to be more something more tomorrow than we are today… that is the human condition.” Moments of Truth are essential to our needs of self-actualization and acceptance.
MOMENTS OF TRUTH

The first part of the Moments of Truth is about how users will feel about the design, how people will experience design. Is the design really helping to solve people’s problems?

In the case of KOR One, the execution of design should support the users’ needs for a bottle that is easy to use, easy to clean and to carry.

The second part is about how this product makes consumers feel about themselves. In the case of KOR water bottle, there was also the idea of self-fulfillment through the agenda of sustainability. Our goal with KOR was to make people feel good about themselves not only because of the bottle’s practicality and design, but also because they were helping the planet by not using disposable plastic bottles.

CASE STUDY

“The movie is what made me want to get one. Now I own several and love them! @korwater”

“I had been eye balling the KOR Water Bottle since early January. Of course my only concern at the time was the price, but after finally buying one, I wish I would’ve bought one months ago!

I love this thing! Not only is it ergonomic, but it’s really stylish and functional. The top clicks into place and a has a silicon seal for the lip of the bottle, so there are no leaks. And best of all, the base has a silicon bottom so it’s less likely to tip over.

However, my favorite part is its iconic design. Something about it just makes you want to consume MORE water. Since I’ve bought one, I’ll fill my bottle at least 4 times a day. It’s really a great way to stay hydrated.

All in all, if you’re in Florida, you NEED this. This is an extremely iconic, durable, and superior water vessel that’s unlike anything in its category. I’ll definitely recommend this.”

“Seriously the COOLEST water bottle I’ve ever had! I’ve had so many compliments on it, everyone notices it! Not to mention the great customer service and warranty! Thanks KOR!”

““The movie is what made me want to get one. Now I own several and love them! @korwater”
Once you have finished reviewing the snapshots of the KOR project, it is time for you to design your own work of art. Use the following templates to create a travel coffee mug using P/A with the Harvard Exercise.

**Things to keep in mind are:**
- Examine existing travel coffee mugs and their adaptable uses.
- Review and create personas and brainstorm help-me statements.
- Define the opportunity zones on the Psycho-Aesthetic map.
- Brainstorm solutions and identify key attractors and the solution criteria.
- Communicate the solutions in an elevator pitch using the Hero’s Journey.

### Benchmarking

Scout the landscape with your product offering and identify the key competitors that you think will be beneficial to benchmark and learn from. Once you have identified the competitors, write brief descriptions of their attributes and offerings.

**Competitor 1**

**Competitor 2**

**Competitor 3**

**Competitor 4**
Use the word bank or create your own to list the words that you believe describe the competitors. Either will provide a helpful reference, allowing you to compare your design with other products in the market. How can you achieve a more aggressive or minimal design? How are your competitors expressing that feeling?

### Competitor 1

### Competitor 2

### Competitor 3

### Competitor 4

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### Imagery

### Description

### Name

### User

### Age

### Occupation

### Salary

### Location

### Scenario

### Pain Points

### Help-Me Statements

### Triggers
The triggers will vary with each project, but the spectrum will always stay the same. Review your personas and identify which triggers you’ve discovered are most important to the consumers you are targeting. Put them on the spectrum in the order you find most appropriate. Use the trigger examples on this page to assist in labeling triggers.
Have fun with the map. Start using it by using your insights into the people reflected as personas and the competitive landscape including brands, home screen messaging, etc... 

What you are doing with the maps has multiple functions: 1. You are mapping within consistent scales of interactivity vs. self-actualization and developing the ability to reference past mapping as you go forward; 2. You are looking for “White Space or Blue Ocean” meaning that you are looking to create solutions where others aren’t; 3. You are using your understandings of connection with personas to map them in their current role (for example, a nurse wears different personas at work and at home with their family or significant other); 4. With the personas map, use your insights and understandings to project where they will be in the future as opposed to where they are today and explore it anyway you think possible. You may surprise yourself!
Key Attractors

From the research you’ve collected, enter the key attractors you believe are most represented as high-priority features in the design you are trying to achieve. Once you have established the key attractors, discuss with the group what you believe will be the answer to achieving those features in the solution criteria.

Does creating an object where cleanability is a vital feature mean making a modular design where the parts separate easily? Or does it mean creating an object where minimal design with soft edges is preferred to make the task of washing easier? These are the questions you must ask yourself to ensure you are responding to the attractors.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE BRAINSTORMING KEY ATTRACTORS

1. Review each help-me statement and brainstorm two ideas for each.
2. Align ideas with touch points on the key attractors chart.
3. Shortlist which ideas could have significant impact on the user experience.
4. For each touch point, envision what solutions would best address your target’s unmet needs.
5. You could transform the existing category or business by considering spaces, software, and services.
6. Provide new methods of interaction between people and spaces, people and other people, and people and products/services.
Develop a journey for your stakeholders, your consumers, and even yourself on your current project. Use “design” as your tool to attract and create interest, and to provide micro-tests that trigger a single or series of affirmations of expectations. For example, a door handle that looks inviting, should also feel great when you grasp it. This puts you on a path by which a consumer will make a purchase decision, adopt an idea, or proceed to interact. These are the critical steps that need your careful attention and ability to empathize and project events that are within your control. Forecasting the “Moments of Truth” forces us all to conceptualize how others will react to our decisions and provides a critical test. Once this test is successful, you or your consumer find affirmation of your attractions and decisions to buy or buy in, this results in a change in body language and the ability to share your positive experience with others... creating the magic of viral demand!

The Hero’s Journey

ATTRACTION
ENGAGE
ADOPT
MOMENT OF TRUTH
HEROIC EVANGELIST
GENERATION OF VIRAL DEMAND
We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

— Albert Einstein

One of RKS’ first successes came soon after its founding in the development of the production design of the animated Teddy Ruxpin, one of the greatest disruptive success stories in the history of toys.

The 1990s brought RKS new challenges and successes, such as working with Alan Kay on early explorations of tablets and how they could affect learning, RKS’s innovation of Pocket Arcades for Sega, and the innovation of a disruptive dental whitening system for Discus Dental that transformed dentistry by offering its patients better, happier smiles. Turning around MiniMed was an important milestone at the time, using design to overcome stigmas attached to their diabetic infusion pump and increasing sales from a falling 40MM to 270MM in revenue three years later, which triggered an acquisition by Medtronic of 3.6B! The ’90s were also a time of deep introspection about design and humanity leading to RKS’s discoveries of how the world could leverage Joseph Campbell and Abraham Maslow’s work. This thinking lead to the development of RKS’s Psycho-Aesthetics methodology.

After 2000, RKS saw great transformation in who it was, how it worked, and with whom it worked. The firm moved to its new 18,000 sq. ft. facility and became prolific in delivering a stream of award-winning, results-driven, and planet-friendly designs and innovations using Psycho-Aesthetics. At the same time, RKS began incubating and spread its entrepreneurial wings by taking equity positions and starting new companies such as RKS Guitars, famous for making the cover of BusinessWeek as the “Best Product Design” and later became one of the more popular Harvard Cases. RKS has earned hundreds of awards and achieved global recognition by helping companies emerge with meaningful and disruptive design and innovation in any category. The team has evolved and emerged as a unique hybrid of diversity and talents. Engagements have evolved from innovating for an opportunity to identifying new opportunities through thousands of face-to-face interactions with audiences globally, expanding clients abilities to leverage design thinking and market themselves globally. Research has become extremely valuable for identifying people’s needs and aspirations. This methodology has developed highly creative immersion sessions in which clients simultaneously learn about the RKS way of design thinking and can innovate within a team environment. The awards continue to stream in, but what the team finds exciting is its ability to disrupt, differentiate, create new meaning and value, and build enriched brands that enhance shareholder value in the process.

About RKS Design

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