THE FOUR PEOPLE FREIDA IS FOR

PERSONAS · OVERVIEW

MATCH JOURNEY · EXPLORE · BUILD LIST · APPLY · RANK



★ PRIMARY

Priya Raman

The Overwhelmed List-Builder

Conversion: save → compare → member



SECONDARY

Omar Haddad

The High-Stakes IMG

Data trust: highest cost when data is wrong



SECONDARY

Marcus Bell

The Time-Starved Fellowship Applicant

Retention and mobile continuity



SUPPORTING

Linda Okafor

The Trusted Advisor

Adoption channel; recommends, doesn't buy

PRIORITY ORDER

1. **Priya first.** Largest segment, carries the 30% membership-conversion goal, and her core need is FREIDA's core promise.
2. **Omar is the stress test.** Non-US IMGs matched at 56.4% in 2026. If the data fails him, it fails worst.
3. **Marcus is retention.** Often already a member; continuity on mobile keeps him renewing.
4. **Linda is the channel, not a user.** She decides which tools a whole class adopts.

User personas for the FREIDA redesign: the primary list-builder, two secondary users with high-stakes and time-starved needs, and the advisor who shapes adoption. Together they cover the Match journey from exploring specialties to submitting a rank list.

These are proto-personas. They draw on project discovery workshops, FREIDA's public site and FAQ, and NRMP 2026 Match data. They have been validated with a small sample of applicant interviews.

WHO THE DESIGN MUST SATISFY FIRST

Design for Priya first. She is the largest group, the most likely path from Public to Free account to Member, and her need for fit, trust and list-building is exactly what the AI recommendation direction promises. **Omar is the stress test:** his filters and data needs sit on top of Priya's flow, and he pays the highest price when data is missing. **Marcus is the retention engine:** the same flow, on a phone, in five-minute gaps. **Linda is the channel:** she needs Priya's list to be shareable and the scoring to be explainable.

A feature test for the whole set: if it doesn't give Priya a clearer list, give Omar data he can trust, save Marcus a step, or give Linda something she can defend, it's probably off-strategy.

FREIDA FOOTPRINT · WHO USES WHAT, BY PHASE

PERSONA	EXPLORE	BUILD LIST	APPLY	RANK
Priya	Specialty + state filters on public FREIDA	Saves 60–80; hits the compare gate	Tracks ERAS status in a spreadsheet	Needs compare and notes to rank
Omar	Visa and IMG filters before anything else	100–150 programs, verified off-site	Residency Calculator for fees	Ranks every interview; SOAP prep
Marcus	Programs his PD mentions, on his phone	25–40 programs; loses his place	Fellowship ERAS; calendar	Ranks with spouse on the laptop
Linda	Demos FREIDA in workshops	Reviews students' lists	Checks at-risk students apply broadly	Talks through rank lists

RESEARCH GAPS: VALIDATE FURTHER

1. **Applicant interviews** with 12–15 people: about 6 US MD/DO, 4 IMGs, 3 fellowship applicants and 2 advisors.
2. **FREIDA analytics:** device split, session length and the Public → Free → Member funnel.
3. **Segment sizes** from registration data or an intercept survey, to confirm Priya as primary.
4. **Membership drivers and price sensitivity,** especially for IMGs and residents.
5. **Trust in compatibility scoring:** concept tests of explained versus unexplained scores.
6. **Advisor, DO and couples-match needs,** folded into existing personas for now.

PRIYA RAMAN ★ PRIMARY PERSONA

THE OVERWHELMED LIST-BUILDER · M3 MEDICAL STUDENT



"I don't need more data. I need to know which 40 of these 700 programs are actually right for me."

AI-generated portrait

PERSONAL

Gender	Female
Age	26
Location	Columbus, OH
Education	BS Biology; MD candidate at a state medical school
Role	Third-year medical student applying to Internal Medicine next cycle
Finances	Projected $200K+ in student loans
Household	Partner (software engineer); geography constrained

TECHNOLOGY

Desktop	★★★★★
Mobile	★★★★★
Tablet	★★☆☆☆

Lives in Google Sheets and Notion. The gap is decision support, not tooling.

ONLINE CHANNELS

Reddit · Instagram · Student Doctor Network · Discord

FREIDA FOOTPRINT

EXPLORE	Browses specialties and states on public FREIDA; reads AMA residency articles
BUILD LIST	Saves 60–80 programs; wants to compare and hits the member gate
APPLY	Tracks ERAS status in her own spreadsheet
RANK	Needs side-by-side compare and notes to build her rank list

BEFORE THE REDESIGN

Priya started with a spreadsheet an M4 shared with her, FREIDA open in one tab and Reddit in another. She built her first list by specialty and state, then spent weeks copying program details field by field. When her advisor asked why a program was on her list, she couldn't say, except that it had matched her filters.

DAY IN THE LIFE

MORNING

Pre-rounds at 5:30. Between patients she skims a Reddit thread on "how many programs is enough."

AFTERNOON

On a break she checks a program on her phone. The salary field is blank and there's no update date.

EVENING

Filters IM in two regions: 186 results. Copies fields into her spreadsheet, hits the compare gate, adds 11 programs.

GOALS

- Build a balanced reach / target / safe list of ~50 programs — High
- Match somewhere her partner can build a career too — High
- Track every application in one place — Mid
- Understand the real differences between programs — Mid

MOTIVATIONS

- Control: turning 500 options into a plan — High
- Partnership: a match that works for two — High
- Reassurance that she hasn't missed anything — Mid
- Advice from people one year ahead — Low

NEEDS

- Fit-based results, not a raw count — High
- Program data she can trust, with a date on it — High
- Compare and rank without a spreadsheet — High
- A timeline that shows where she should be now — Mid

FRUSTRATIONS

- Program data scattered across five or more sources — High
- Filters return a count, not a fit — High
- Paywall before she understands the value — Mid
- No way to tell how current the data is — Mid

AI: TODAY AND IN FREIDA

HOW SHE USES AI TODAY

- Quizzes herself for shelf exams with ChatGPT and uses it to summarize long program websites
- Asked ChatGPT for couples-friendly IM programs and got invented names, so she re-checks everything
- Uses OpenEvidence on rotations for quick clinical questions

AI FEATURES WANTED IN FREIDA

- Plain-language search: "mid-size IM programs near Chicago with strong cardiology placement" — High
- A fit score that explains why each program is a reach, target or safe — High
- An AI summary comparing her saved programs side by side — Mid
- An "is my list balanced?" check before ERAS opens — Mid

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

- **She is the conversion moment.** Save → compare is where a public visitor becomes a member; the gate should preview her own programs, not a generic benefit list.
- **Trust signals are table stakes.** Last-updated date, completeness and source on every program, or she keeps her spreadsheet.
- **Fit is the product.** Compatibility grouping turns 186 results into a plan and is the core of the AI direction.
- **Design for two.** Geography and couples constraints belong in the primary filters, not advanced ones.

OMAR HADDAD

SECONDARY PERSONA

THE HIGH-STAKES IMG · INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATE



"Every application costs me money I don't have. I can't afford to apply to programs that will never look at me."

AI-generated portrait

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	31
Location	Houston, TX (observership)
Education	MD, international medical school (2022); ECFMG certified
Role	IMG applying to Internal Medicine and Family Medicine; second cycle
Visa	Needs J-1 or H-1B sponsorship
Finances	Self-funding applications, about $4,000 per cycle

TECHNOLOGY

Desktop	★★★★★
Mobile	★★★★☆
Tablet	★★☆☆☆

Methodical and data-savvy; builds his own models. The gap is reliable eligibility data.

ONLINE CHANNELS

IMG forums · WhatsApp groups · YouTube · LinkedIn

FREIDA FOOTPRINT

EXPLORE	Filters on visa and IMG history before specialty or location
BUILD LIST	Tracks 100–150 programs; verifies every field off-site
APPLY	Calculates fees by hand; a natural Residency Calculator user
RANK	Ranks every interview; preps for SOAP in parallel

BEFORE THE REDESIGN

In his first cycle Omar applied to 130 programs from a forum list of "IMG-friendly" programs. Dozens turned out not to sponsor his visa or to cap graduation year. He got four interviews, didn't match, and spent SOAP week refreshing his email. This cycle he trusts nothing he hasn't verified himself.

DAY IN THE LIFE

MORNING

Observership rounds at a community hospital. At lunch he asks an IMG WhatsApp group which programs sponsored H-1B visas last year. Three people give three different answers.

AFTERNOON

Presents a patient to the attending and asks, carefully, for a letter of recommendation. Checks his inbox between tasks. No interview invites yet.

EVENING

At 9 p.m. he filters Family Medicine, H-1B, graduated five years or less: 94 results. "% IMG" is blank on the first program. Two hours verifying 15 programs; he cuts 6 and updates his cost spreadsheet.

GOALS

- Match this cycle — High
- Spend his budget only where he has a real chance — High
- Find programs that sponsor his visa type — High
- Build a US career his family can be proud of — Mid

MOTIVATIONS

- Security: a path to practice in the US — High
- Efficiency: every dollar and hour counts — High
- Proving himself after an unmatched cycle — Mid
- Helping the IMGs coming after him — Low

NEEDS

- Complete visa, % IMG and graduation-year fields — High
- Clear flags when program data is missing — High
- An IMG timeline: ECFMG to observership to ERAS — Mid
- Transparent membership value and pricing — Mid

FRUSTRATIONS

- Missing or stale IMG and visa data — High
- Screening requirements programs don't publish — High
- Membership cost on top of ERAS fees — Mid
- Content written for US seniors only — Mid

AI: TODAY AND IN FREIDA

HOW HE USES AI TODAY

- Uses ChatGPT to decode US GME jargon and rehearse interview answers
- Has asked AI tools which programs sponsor H-1B visas; the answers were outdated or invented, so he never trusts them on eligibility
- Drafts emails to program coordinators with AI, then rewrites them in his own voice

AI FEATURES WANTED IN FREIDA

- An eligibility check that flags visa, graduation-year and IMG fit, with sources — High
- AI answers that cite the program's own reported data and the date it was updated — High
- Alerts when a saved program changes its visa or IMG fields — Mid
- A cost estimate for his whole list inside the Residency Calculator — Mid

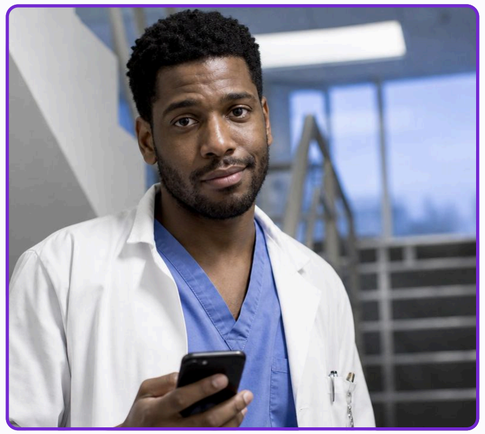
DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

- **Honest data beats more data.** Missing visa and IMG fields must be flagged, not silently filtered. A false negative can cost him a cycle.
- **A different path, not an edge case.** IMG timelines and requirements deserve first-class content.
- **The Calculator is his gateway.** A metered preview of cost planning shows member value to the most price-sensitive user.
- **Never overpromise.** Any likelihood signal must show its inputs and a caveat when data is thin.

MARCUS BELL

SECONDARY PERSONA

THE TIME-STARVED FELLOWSHIP APPLICANT · PGY-2 RESIDENT



"I have ten minutes before sign-out. Just tell me which cardiology programs fit and let me save them."

AI-generated portrait

PERSONAL

Gender	Male
Age	30
Location	Nashville, TN
Education	MD, Midwest state medical school
Role	PGY-2 Internal Medicine resident applying to Cardiology fellowship
Income	About $68,000 (resident salary)
Household	Married, one-year-old; spouse is a teacher

TECHNOLOGY

Desktop	★★★☆☆
Mobile	★★★★★
Tablet	★☆☆☆☆

Phone-first for everything outside the EHR. The gap is continuity between five-minute sessions.

ONLINE CHANNELS

X (#CardsTwitter) · Doximity · Podcasts · Group texts

FREIDA FOOTPRINT

EXPLORE	Checks programs his PD and fellows mention, on his phone
BUILD LIST	Shortlist of 25–40; loses his place between sessions
APPLY	Fellowship ERAS; tracks interviews in his calendar
RANK	Ranks with his spouse on a day off, on the laptop

BEFORE THE REDESIGN

For residency, Marcus had a whole M4 year to research programs at a desk. Fellowship applications arrive in the middle of PGY-2, alongside 70-hour weeks. He started a note on his phone called "cards programs" that now holds 31 names, no context and three duplicates.

DAY IN THE LIFE

MORNING

6:40 a.m., before rounds. Opens FREIDA on his phone to look at a program his PD mentioned. He has to log in again and his filters are gone. He gets paged before he can save it.

AFTERNOON

Clinic and admissions. Between patients a senior fellow recommends two more programs. He texts himself the names so he won't forget.

EVENING

After the baby is asleep he opens the laptop and can't find this morning's program. He rebuilds the search, saves three programs and emails himself the links as a backup.

GOALS

- Match into a strong cardiology fellowship — High
- Keep applications from eating his days off — High
- Choose a program that works for his family — High
- Show research productivity — Mid

MOTIVATIONS

- Mastery: an interventional-track career — High
- Family: stability for his spouse and child — High
- Efficiency: getting it done in the gaps — Mid
- Mentorship: following his PD's lead — Low

NEEDS

- Stay signed in and resume where he left off — High
- Sticky save and recently viewed on mobile — High
- Fellowship data: procedures, research, placement — High
- Family details: parental leave, childcare — Mid

FRUSTRATIONS

- Filters and history reset between sessions — High
- Save and compare are clunky on mobile — High
- Fellowship feels like an afterthought — Mid
- Family details are hard to find — Mid

AI: TODAY AND IN FREIDA

HOW HE USES AI TODAY

- Uses OpenEvidence and an AI scribe in clinic every day
- Dictates voice notes between patients and has AI turn them into a to-do list
- Would ask a chatbot about fellowships, but only if he can see where the answer came from

AI FEATURES WANTED IN FREIDA

- Voice or chat search on mobile: "cardiology fellowships in the Southeast with high cath volume" — High
- An AI shortlist that remembers his last session and his preferences — High
- One-line summaries of each program's research and procedure profile — Mid
- An interview-day prep brief built from his saved notes — Low

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

- **Continuity is the feature.** Persistent filters, recently viewed and cross-device sync matter more to him than more data.
- **Mobile-first isn't optional.** Save, compare and notes must work one-handed in five minutes.
- **Fellowship needs its own template.** Procedure volume, research expectations and graduate placement belong on the Overview tab.
- **He is a retention opportunity.** He is often already a member, so show what his membership includes for fellowship.

LINDA OKAFOR

SUPPORTING PERSONA

THE TRUSTED ADVISOR · ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

FREIDA · AMA



"My students trust what I send them. I need tools I can stand behind, and that don't make them panic."

AI-generated portrait

PERSONAL

Gender	Female
Age	52
Location	Kansas City, MO
Education	MD; MEd in Health Professions Education
Role	Associate Dean of Student Affairs; advises about 180 students per cycle
Experience	14 years advising students through the Match

TECHNOLOGY

Desktop	★★★★☆
Mobile	★★★☆☆
Tablet	★★★★☆

Comfortable, not a power user. Prefers outputs she can print, share and present.

ONLINE CHANNELS

LinkedIn · AAMC networks · Email newsletters · Zoom workshops

FREIDA FOOTPRINT

EXPLORE	Demos FREIDA in group workshops before ERAS opens
BUILD LIST	Reviews students' program lists in one-on-one advising
APPLY	Checks that at-risk students apply broadly enough
RANK	Talks students through rank lists; tracks Match outcomes

BEFORE THE REDESIGN

Linda's office keeps its own spreadsheet of programs that took past graduates, updated by hand each spring. She points students to FREIDA as a starting point but gives every class the same warning: check the program's website, because the data may be a year old.

DAY IN THE LIFE

MORNING

Reviews last year's Match results for her school and flags 12 students she thinks are applying to too few programs.

AFTERNOON

Advising block. A student brings 72 saved programs. Linda can't see them in FREIDA, so they squint at a spreadsheet export with half the salary column blank.

EVENING

Drafts the class email for next week's workshop, then hesitates before linking a tool whose "fit score" nobody can explain.

GOALS

- Every student matches — High
- Point students to accurate, current data — High
- Help at-risk students apply realistically — High
- Teach the timeline early — Mid

NEEDS

- Shareable, read-only student lists — High
- Scoring she can explain and defend — High
- Equal access across her whole class — Mid
- Views that work in a workshop — Mid

MOTIVATIONS

- Care: less anxiety for her students — High
- Trust: tools she can stand behind — High
- Reputation: her school's match rate — Mid
- Efficiency across 180 students — Mid

FRUSTRATIONS

- Can't see a student's saved list — High
- Opaque rankings that mislead anxious students — High
- Members-only features create unequal access — Mid
- Data gaps she has to explain away — Mid

AI: TODAY AND IN FREIDA

HOW SHE USES AI TODAY

- Uses Microsoft Copilot to draft class emails and workshop slides
- Worries students take AI program advice at face value, without checking sources
- Gets asked what AI help is appropriate on applications and wants clear guidance to share

AI FEATURES WANTED IN FREIDA

- Explainable fit scores that show their inputs and limits — High
- An advisor view that summarizes a student's list: breadth, balance and risk — High
- AI answers clearly labeled as guidance, with sources and dates — Mid
- A class-level view of how students' lists compare with Match outcomes — Low

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

- **She's a channel, not a buyer.** Institutional or group access could convert a whole class at once.
- **Explain the score.** If she can't defend how compatibility works, she won't recommend it.
- **Sharing unlocks advising.** A read-only list link makes FREIDA the working document of the advising session.
- **Presentation-ready matters.** Views that project cleanly in a workshop drive adoption.