What is the Problem to be solved?

You can't boil the ocean. What problem are you trying to solve with this project?

Needs to be a manageable size and it needs to be understood by the entire team.

Teams often start thinking everyone is solving the same problem and they have very different visions.

Mission Statements

"Why do we exist?"

A declaration of an organization's core purpose. The core that all of their objectives will be drawing direction from.

Virgin Atlantic Airways: "To embrace the human spirit and let it fly."

Vision Statements

"Where are we going?"

An organization's future state. The vision is the ambitious future Point B to the current Point A. Generally short and inspiring.

Virgin group: "In the future we will be able to enjoy healthy & fulfilling lifestyles whilst minimising the negative impact we have on the world."

Problem Statements

What are we doing?

A clear concise description of the issue(s) that need to be addressed. It is used to focus the team at the beginning, keep the team on track during the effort, and to validate that the effort delivers an outcome that solves the problem statement.

We have observed that seating process isn't meeting **our efficiency goals of 30 minutes**, which is causing **unhappy customers**. How might we improve so that our service is more successful based on increased customer feedback and repeat ticketers.

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Task Statements

How will we do it?

Define what specific actions or outcomes must be accomplished to satisfy a requirement.

The system will offer free check-in baggage option to 12% of passengers.

Properly framed design challenges drive toward **ultimate impact**, allow for a **variety of solutions**, and take into account **constraints and context**.

Framing the Problem

Write down the problem you are trying to solve. It should be short and easy to remember, a single sentence that conveys what you want to do. *e.g. Make people less stressed.*

Now try phrasing this as a design question. This can set you and your team up to be solution oriented and to generate loads of ideas along the way. *e.g. How might we reduce stress?*

State the ultimate impact you're trying to have. *e.g. eliminate all unnecessary stress.*

What are some possible solutions to your problems? If you can come up with 3–5 possible solutions in just a few minutes, you're likely on the right track. But remember to think broadly, and allow for surprising outcomes. *e.g. urban garden, flexible hours and tele-commuting, mediaation apps*

Write down some of the context and constraints that you're facing. They could be geographical, technological, time-based, or have to do with the population you're trying to reach. *e.g. stress in cities, commuting = stress.*

Tweak and rewrite your problem statement. It may seem repetitive, but the right question is key to arriving at a good solution. *e.g. How might we create an environment to reduce stress amongst urban workers?*

Assess your statement against these 3 criteria: ultimate impact:, allows for a variety of solutions, and sufficiently takes into account constraints and context.

Generally allow around 90 minutes to complete exercise.

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