

Empathy Map

Cultivating Empathy

What it is

User Empathy Mapping is a great way to visualize what your users' need to help ground your team. Cultivating empathy, and putting ourselves in the shoes of our users is the best first step to impactful product design.

This exercise could also be flipped to instead better understand the needs of a team, or key stakeholder on a project that needs some TLC, etc.

How to use it

People: 2 - 10+

Length: 20 - 30 minutes

Steps:

1. Ahead of your workshop, define what user group you will focus on
 - a. Select a visual that portrays them
 - b. Add details of what you know up-front so your team has the same mental model of who you're defining
2. Gather together cross-functional key people who have insight into this user group and work together across each quadrant to answer what they're saying, thinking, feeling, and doing
3. Take a step back and analyze / synthesize what you see - are there gaps, patterns, trouble spots to address?

Tips:

- Front-loading an empathy mapping session with known research can help bolster your workshop exercise. This also helps to ensure your user isn't defined with just adhoc knowledge.
- This can be a great jump-start to defining your users, but don't stop with this exercise - seek to validate / invalidate what you've identified, and as you refine your understanding consider creating a user persona as a next step to really rally your teams around.

User focus

Having a visual representation of your focus user really helps

AVATAR - Select an illustration that represents your user group (we use the built-in IconFinder in Miro)



DETAILS - What are the basic things that define this group?



Quadrants

Bubbles were sticky notes from here if you used them



SAYING - What the user **says** about the experience. Use real **quotes** from users where you can.



THINKING - What is the user **thinking** about when interacting? What occupies their **thoughts**? What **matters**?



FEELING - How does the user **feel** about the experience? What **worries** or **excites** them? What is **painful** / **frustrating**?



DOING - What **actions** does the user take to reach their goal? What **behaviors** have you noticed or are aware of?

What are they SAYING?

how much does this cost?

i was expecting something different

this is too expensive

do you have any special deals?

What are they THINKING?

is there any customer support available?

is this is really worth it?

easier application

What are they FEELING?

Fear

Safety

this was a great idea

Happy

inadequate

What are they DOING?

Compare products

do more research

list pros and cons



Completed Example



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DETAILS - What are the basic things that define this group?

Ricardo

Prospective small business customer

In the research phase of decision making

Needs tech consulting

Aspires to grow into a business

Needs to hire staff

Wants a small business

Needs a small business

Needs a small business

Quadrants

Grab more sticky notes from here if you need them



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FEELING - How does the user **feel** about the experience? What **worries** or **excites** them? What is **painful** / **frustrating**?



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Marcus

What are they SAYING?

Prove our expertise

Need customer to understand my small business

Need the very best small business insurance

Provide clear value props

What can they do for me?

Need to know what they can do for me

Be transparent of the process

I shouldn't see this

Need to know what they can do for me

Future planning

I'd like to retire in 8 years

I'd like to know what they can do for me

Kenbra

What are they THINKING?

A sense of pride

My job is hard work, but I'm proud of it

My job is hard work, but I'm proud of it

Time is of the essence

I don't have time for this

There's something about this that I don't like

Employee concerns

Good help is hard to find

I have 8 employees to care for

Bring down the price

Bring down the price

Bring down the price

Ricardo

What are they FEELING?

Lack of knowledge

I'm not sure if I can do this

I'm not sure if I can do this

Confused with current bank account

I'm not sure if I can do this

I'm not sure if I can do this

Curious about H&R Block

I'm not sure if I can do this

I'm not sure if I can do this

Need to know what they can do for me

I'm not sure if I can do this

I'm not sure if I can do this

Scott

What are they DOING?

Accounting

Payroll

Customer support

Business development

Marketing

Tax prep

Sales

Time tracking

Operations

Project management

Accounting

Tax prep

Angela