

IDEATION PHASE

EMPATHIZE & DISCOVER

Team ID	NM2025TMID04990
Project Name	Streamlining Ticket Assignment for efficient support operations

The "Empathize Discover" phase is critical for truly understanding the human-centered aspects and underlying mechanics of the current ticket assignment process. It's not just about what the data says, but *why* the data looks that way, focusing on the experiences of the agents, customers, and other stakeholders involved.

Empathize & Discover: Understanding the Human Element and System Realities

This phase involves deep diving into the actual experiences and workflows to uncover the root causes of assignment inefficiencies, rather than just treating symptoms.

1. Agent Interviews & Shadowing

- | **Go Beyond Metrics:** Conduct one-on-one interviews with a diverse group of support agents (new hires, veterans, top performers, those struggling). Ask open-ended questions like:
 - o "Walk me through how you typically receive and process a new ticket."
 - o "What are the biggest frustrations you face with ticket assignments?"
 - o "How do you determine if a ticket isn't for you, and what's your process for re-assigning it?"
 - o "What makes an assignment 'good' or 'bad' for you?"
 - o "Do you ever feel overloaded or underutilized due to the assignment system?"
- | **Shadowing:** Observe agents in real-time as they work. This provides invaluable insight into their actual workflow, manual overrides, "tribal knowledge" used for assignments, and the tools they interact with. Look for:
 - o Time spent on initial ticket review and categorization.
 - o Frequency of re-assignments and the reasons cited.

- o Manual processes used to find the right agent.
- o Communication patterns when re-assigning tickets.

2. Customer Feedback Analysis

- | **Review CSAT/NPS Comments:** Look for recurring themes in negative customer feedback related to response times, feeling passed around, or having to repeat information.
- | **"Time to Resolution" Deep Dive:** Analyze tickets with unusually long resolution times. Are these often linked to multiple re-assignments, or starting with the wrong agent?

3. Workflow Mapping & System Audit

- | **Current State Workflow Diagram:** Visually map out the entire ticket lifecycle from submission to resolution, paying special attention to every decision point and hand-off involved in assignment. This reveals where tickets get stuck or deviate from the intended path.
- | **System Capabilities Audit:** Thoroughly review the existing ticketing system's features related to assignment. Identify:
 - o What automation features are already available but perhaps underutilized?
 - o What fields are currently used for routing (e.g., subject, category, email sender)?
 - o What are the limitations of the current system?
 - o Are there existing agent skill profiles or queues that could be leveraged?
- | **Data Deep Dive:** Complement qualitative insights with quantitative data.
 - o **Re-assignment Rates:** Track by agent, team, ticket type, and initial assignment method.
 - o **Time to First Assignment:** How long does it take for a ticket to get to *any* agent?
 - o **Time to Correct Assignment:** How long until it reaches the *right* agent?
 - o **Agent Workload Distribution:** Is it balanced or are some agents consistently handling too many or too few tickets?

By combining these perspectives, you move beyond surface-level observations to gain a holistic and empathetic understanding of the assignment challenges. This rich discovery phase ensures that any proposed solutions are not just technically sound



but also practically implementable and genuinely helpful to the people involved.