IDEATION PHASE

EMPATHIZE & DISCOVER

Date	02 NOV 2025
Team ID	NM2025TMID06943
Project Name	Streamlining Ticket Assignment for efficient support operations
Maximum mark	4 marks

Empathize & Discover: Understanding the Human Element and System Realities

The **Empathize & Discover** phase is crucial for developing a deep understanding of both the human-centered aspects and the operational mechanics of the current ticket assignment process. This stage goes beyond analyzing what the data shows — it seeks to understand *why* the data looks that way, focusing on the real experiences of agents, customers, and other stakeholders. Rather than simply treating the symptoms of inefficiency, this phase aims to uncover the *root causes* of assignment challenges by combining human insights with system-level analysis.

1. Agent Interviews & Shadowing
Go Beyond Metrics:
Conduct one-on-one interviews with a diverse group of support agents — including new hires, experienced team members, top performers, and those facing challenges. Use open-ended questions to uncover the nuances of their daily workflows, frustrations, and coping mechanisms, such as:
- "Walk me through how you typically receive and process a new ticket."
- "What are the biggest frustrations you face with ticket assignments?"
- "How do you decide if a ticket isn't for you, and what's your process for re-assigning it?"
- "What makes an assignment 'good' or 'bad' for you?"
- "Do you ever feel overloaded or underutilized due to the assignment system?"

Shadowing:
Observe agents as they work in real-time to capture genuine behaviors and informal practices ("tribal knowledge") that might not appear in formal documentation. Key focus areas include:
- Time spent reviewing and categorizing new tickets.
- Frequency and reasons for ticket re-assignments.
- Manual steps taken to locate the right agent or queue.
- Communication patterns during re-assignment.

2. Customer Feedback Analysis
CSAT/NPS Review:
Analyze customer satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Score (NPS) comments for recurring complaints about slow response times, being "passed around," or needing to repeat information.
Resolution Time Deep Dive:
Examine tickets with unusually long resolution times to identify whether multiple re-assignments or incorrect initial routing are common factors contributing to delays.

3. Workflow Mapping & System Audit
Workflow Visualization:
Create a current-state workflow diagram that maps the entire lifecycle of a ticket — from submission to resolution. Highlight every decision point, handoff, and potential bottleneck in the assignment process to pinpoint where tickets get stuck or diverted.
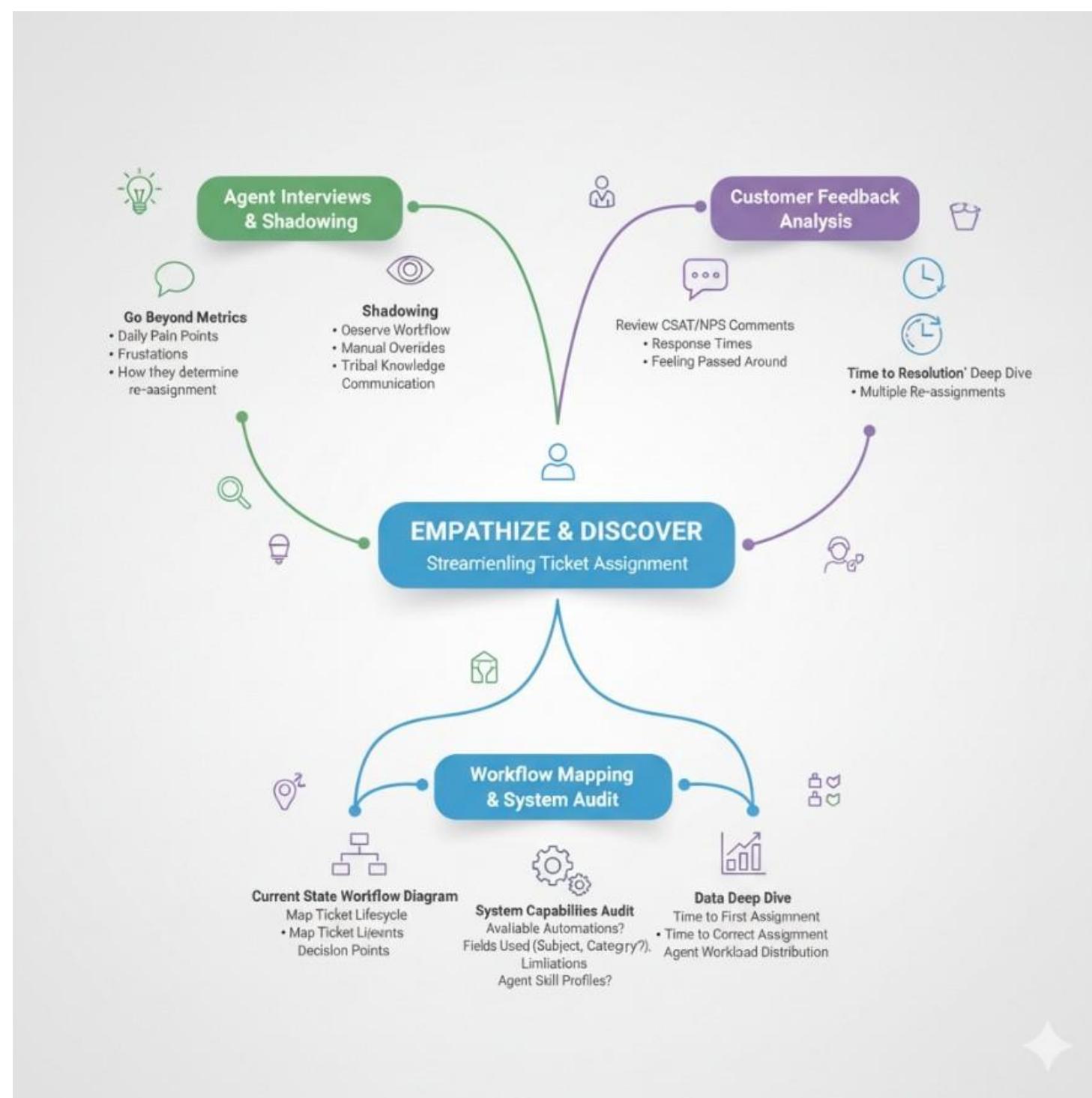
System Capabilities Audit:
Assess the existing ticketing system to understand how assignment logic currently works and what features may be underused or missing. Identify:

- Automation features that are available but not leveraged effectively.
- Fields currently used for routing (e.g., subject line, category, requester).
- Limitations in current configurations.
- Existing agent skill profiles, queues, or routing rules that could be optimized.

Data Deep Dive:
Augment qualitative findings with data-driven insights:

- **Re-assignment Rates:** Analyze by agent, team, ticket type, and initial assignment method.
- **Time to First Assignment:** Measure how long it takes for a ticket to be initially assigned.
- **Time to Correct Assignment:** Track how long until the ticket reaches the right agent.
- **Agent Workload Distribution:** Assess whether workload is balanced or uneven across the team.

Outcome of the Empathize & Discover Phase
By combining agent insights, customer perspectives, workflow mapping, and data analysis, this phase provides a **holistic and empathetic understanding** of the ticket assignment ecosystem. The resulting insights ensure that future solutions are not only technically sound and efficient but also **practical, user-centered, and genuinely impactful** for the people involved.