

Putting the Audience First with an Empathy Map

An industry-agnostic tool for developing an audience or customer profile — because you don't want to be just a thingmaker, you want to be a maker of relationships.

Every day we go to work, and while we're at work, we create many things. Marketers create content. Designers create assets. Strategists create strategies. We make briefs for these things. We make revisions to these things. We make more revisions to these things.

As a result, these things tend to be pretty. They tend to be useful. We use them in blog posts for audiences, or emails to customers, or decks for executives. And that's how we go about our day: creating thing after thing after thing.

So it may come as a surprise that the things that we create are not the point. The people we're creating those things for, is the point. The audience. The customer. The butts-and-bones people who we're trying to reach.

Don't Be Just a Thingmaker

Because if you forget about them? If you don't put their needs and wants and pains above your own? Then they'll see you for what you are. Selfish. Thoughtless. Transactional. That means you, your agency, your marketing team, whatever — you're just gonna be a thingmaker.

You don't want to be just a thingmaker. You want to be a maker of relationships.

The Empathy Map Tool

The empathy map is a wonderful tool for empathizing with your audience. Use it at the beginning of a project to put the audience/customer/user first, and to get your team aligned on who they're creating for.

Originally developed as a 'big head doodle' by the talented folks at XPlane, this map exists in many variations out in the wild. The map is a great complement to content strategy and helps teams focus on making relationships, not things.