Synthesis Process Overview

Synthesis is a process that uncovers the meaning behind data collected about people’s needs. You will need a large wall surface for synthesis to post lots of sticky notes!   
  
 **Step 1: Extract Data**

* Individually, review your notes and photos, and pull out any comments, quotations, or observations that could be important, and put them on sticky notes—one per sticky.
* Only input the data NOT your personal understanding. Brief your observation notes if needed.
* Draw a sign/shape on the top of each sticky notes per interviewee to later know where the data came from so that you can go back and check your notes. This method also helps to see if the data is originating from one single person or multiple people.

e.g.

|  |
| --- |
| **The challenge:** Improving the lunch experience for the workforce in …………… |
| **Raw data observation:** *Observation: Some people in professional outfits were looking at their watch frequently*. Some seemed nervous. They didn’t have time to interview but they said they were working around. Nearby food venders don’t have salad and the food is mostly fried. |
| **Raw data quote:**  Ali: *“I pick a place that provides the fastest option for lunch. 30 minutes flies”*  *Sara: “I usually need to run errands during lunch and* *one hour isn’t enough. Sometimes I must go back home and feed the dog or there might be some work about the children’s school.” “You can’t take off every day and I’m single handed.”* |

“*I usually need to run errands during lunch.”*

*Errands: children’s school*

*looked at watch frequently*

*Nearby food venders don’t have healthy food*

*“I pick a place that provide the fastest option for lunch. 30 minutes flies!”*

*Errands: go back home, feed the dog*

“ You can’t take off every day and I’m single handed.”

Legends:   
   
Observation   
Ali   
Sara

Page 1

**Step 2: Categorize & Label**

* Individually place your sticky notes together on the wall.
* One person from your group start the process by explaining a single data point and move that sticky note to blank area.
* Then the rest of the team place their similar data points near the sticky note while explaining.
* A new person on the team will post and explain a new data point, and the previous step is repeated.
* The goal is to sort similar data points into clusters or meaningful groups. Give each cluster a label based on the theme that’s emerging.Discuss, rearrange, and re-label as groupings evolve.
* e.g.

*Nearby venders don’t have healthy food*

“*I usually need to run errands during lunch.”*

“*one hour isn’t enough.”*

*“I pick a place that provides the fastest option for lunch. 30 minutes flies!”*

*looked at watch frequently*

“ You can’t take off every day and I’m single handed.”

*Errands: go back home, feed the dog*

Theme:

Errands during lunch

*Errands: children’s school*

Theme:

Shortage of Time

“*I usually need to run errands during lunch.”*

**Step 3: Articulate Insights**

* With your team discuss the deeper meaning and design opportunities suggested by the themes emerging from your data. Distill each into a descriptive statement or “insight”.
* An “insight” is a single phrase that exhibits a deeper understanding of a person, a thing, or situation. Insights embody opportunities for design or highlight important considerations about the design.
* An opportunity-insight reveals a challenge and explains the cause or motivations behind it.

e.g.

*Insight: Some workers think 30 minutes is not enough time to get a healthy lunch because close by food venders don’t have healthy food options.*

“*I usually need to run errands during lunch.”*

“ You can’t take off every day and I’m single handed.”

*“I pick a place that provide the fastest option for lunch. 30 minutes flies!”*

Theme:

Shortage of Time

*Nearby venders don’t have healthy food*

“*one hour isn’t enough.”*

*looked at watch frequently*

“*I usually need to run errands during lunch.”*

*Errands: children’s school*

*Errands: go back home, feed the dog*

Theme:

Types of errands

*Insight: Workers need to multitask during the lunch time to support their family.*

Page 2