Enterprise
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Thinking
by IBM

TOOLKIT

Needs Statements

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INTRODUCTION

Why do we do this activity?

When we outline what users need, we can better focus on ideas that help achieve their goals.

INTRODUCTION

When should you use this activity?

Use this activity after research and when you want to reframe your thinking to be more user-centered. Ask yourselves, "What does our user actually need?"

We suggest **30 minutes** for this activity. How much time you spend is up to you!
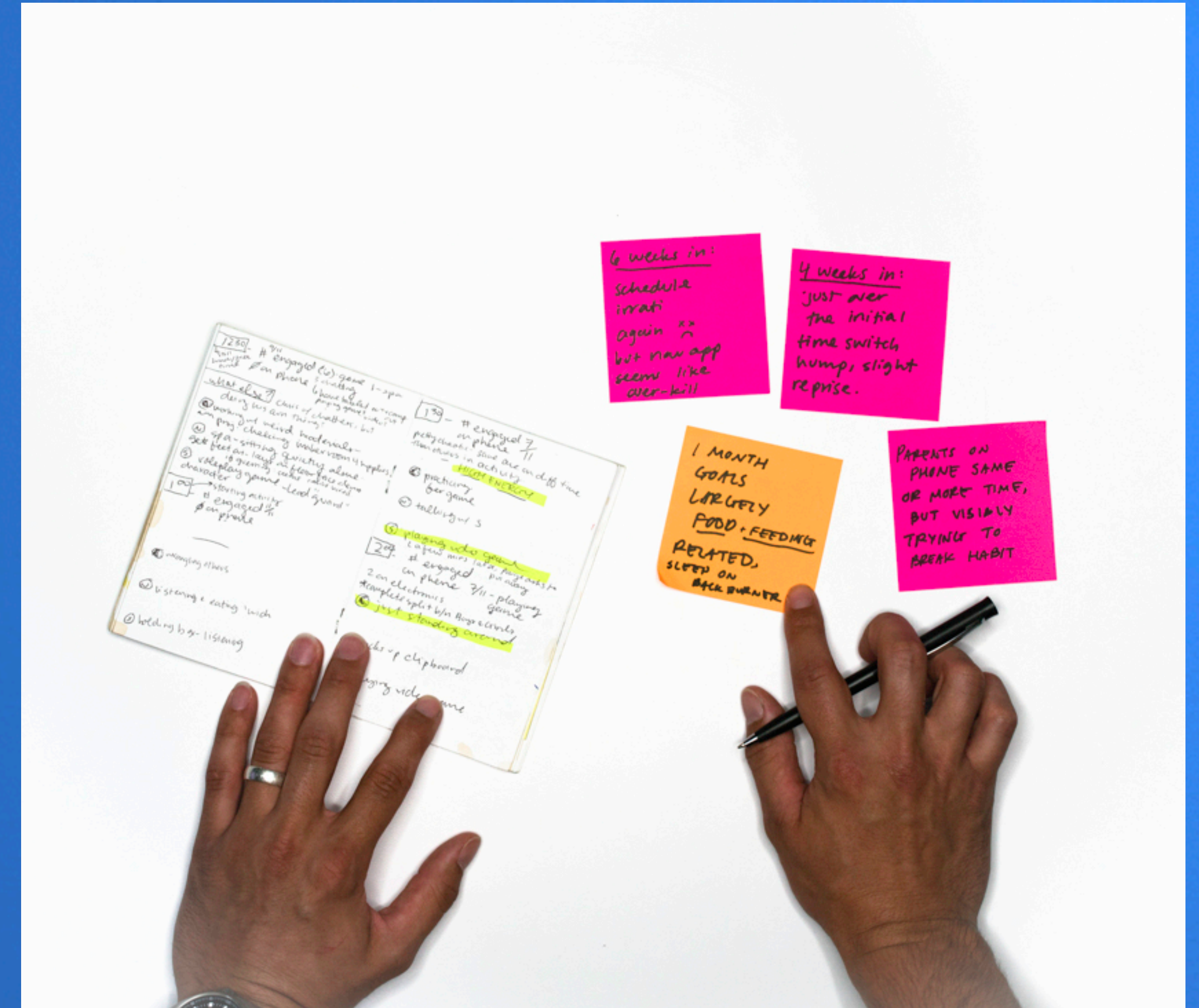
- **Write before you talk.** Write or sketch lots of your ideas on sticky notes *before* talking about them. During discussions, capture the main points on sticky notes and post to the wall.

- **There are no bad ideas.** Start big. Diverge to get everyone's ideas out there. Come back together to discuss, cluster, and seek patterns. Then, converge to determine the strongest ideas.

- **Stay focused on your users.** Tell stories about users to keep them at the center of your attention.

- **Everyone participates.** Everyone has a marker and a pad of sticky notes.

- **Stay engaged.** Avoid side conversations. Use a "parking lot" to capture issues that are off-topic.

- **Start on time, stay on time.** To meet our goals, we need to watch the clock and stick to the plan.

- **Yes, and...** Instead of dismissing the ideas that your teammates suggest, push yourself to build on them.

Ready, set, go!

GATHER

Come prepared. Needs Statements are only as reliable as the data you have, so make sure you have defensible data based on real observation.

- When you can, invite users or Sponsor Users to participate.

SET UP

Frame the activity by writing the following prompt:
[Our user] needs a way to [addresses this need] so that they [benefit in this way.]
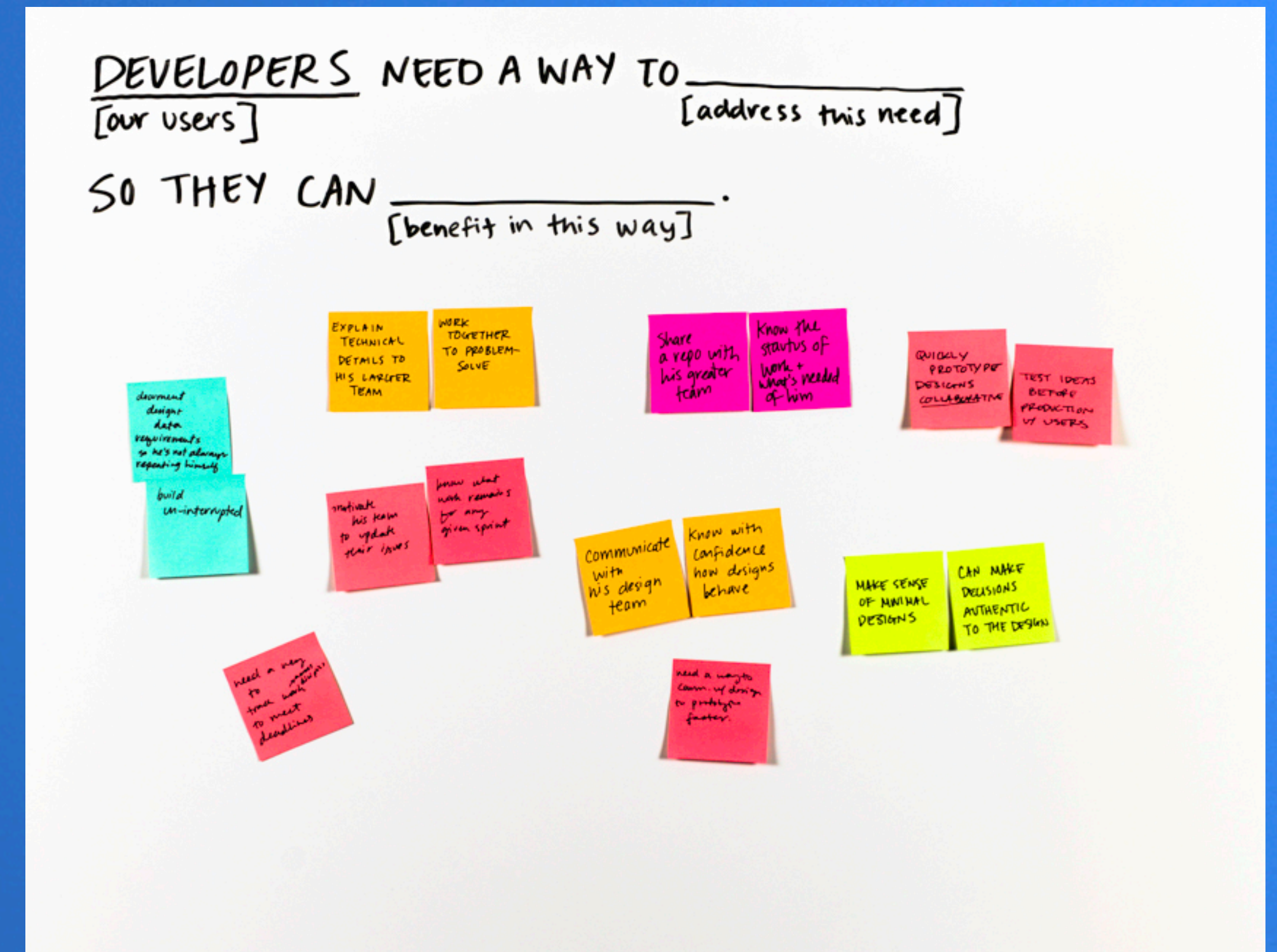
DEVELOPERS NEED A WAY TO _____
[our users]   [address this need]

SO THEY CAN _____.
            [benefit in this way]

DIVERGE

Diverge on the needs and benefits you believe you're solving. Stay away from writing features as best as you can.

- If an idea is expressed in terms of the machine ("dashboard," "click,"), that's a clue that it's a feature.

CONVERGE

Cluster similar ideas and discuss. As you converge, try writing a few Needs Statements that represent key elements. Make sure you use the same format as the original prompt.

PLAYBACK

Choose one person to play back the converged Needs Statements.

- What new questions do you have based on this exercise?

- Consider immediately following up with an ideation session.

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