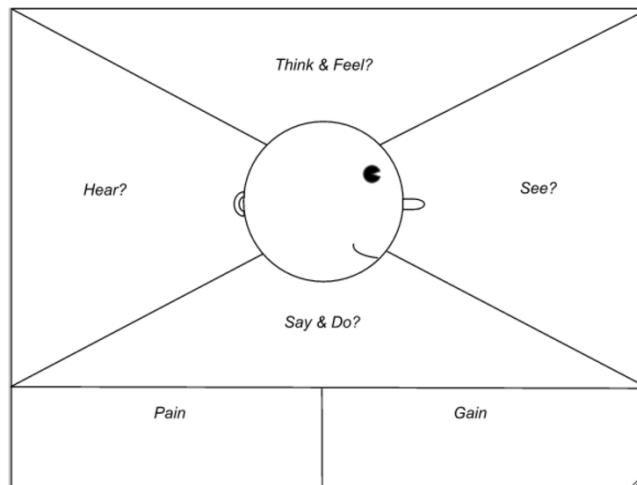


What is an Empathy Map?

An empathy map is a collaborative tool teams can use to gain deeper insight into their customers' experiences. An empathy map helps teams conceptualize a group or segment of customers to help determine customer needs. A photo or visual representation of the customer is at the center of a diagram (example below), and after the facilitator reads a brief customer scenario out loud, participants try to imagine the feelings and thoughts the customer may be experiencing. The empathy map invites participants to internalize parts of the customer's experience in ways anecdote or data may not convey.



Basic Empathy Map Example

When should I use it?

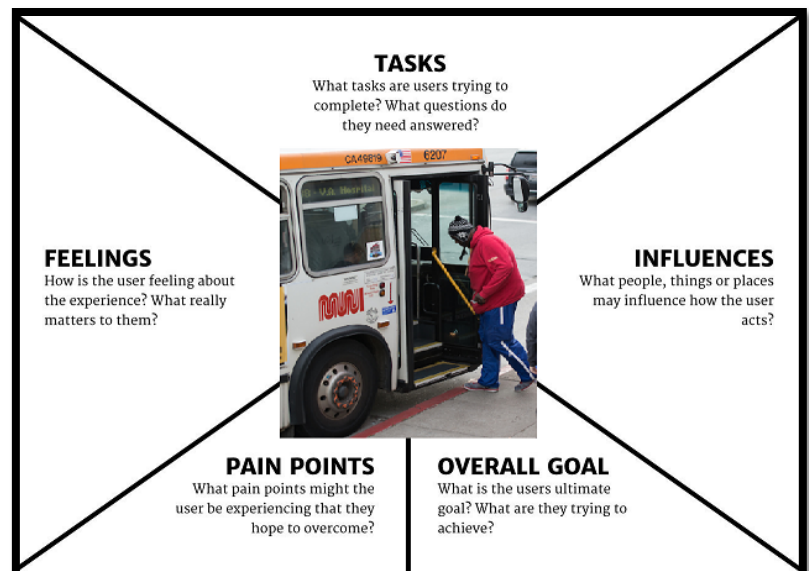
- When team members are jaded or defensive about their customers' complaints.
- When team members want to blame the customer for process problems
- When team members have difficulty understanding what the customer is thinking or feeling.
- When you need to know what pain points a customer experiences during a process

How do I facilitate or create it?

1. **Gather materials.**
 - a. Large flip chart of an empathy Map (examples below)
 - b. Sharpies and sticky notes
 - c. A completed empathy map as an example for participants to know what the end result should look like.
 - d. Customer's scenario written in large font and printed out beside each empathy map.
 - e. Photo of a customer in the center of the map
2. **Allocate 15 minutes plus report-out time for the group to develop and present the empathy map.** . This will include 10 minutes to post answers to the map, and 5 minutes to internally discuss the map before report out.
3. **Write several distinct customer scenarios for the group to use in the exercise.** Create scenarios that accurately address the pain-points/challenges in your customer's journey through the process. Using real-life scenarios will help the participants better empathize with the activity. Several example scenarios are given below.

- 4. Explain the task.** Inform the group that their task is to immerse themselves in the customer scenarios. This isn't a sterile tick-the-box exercise, but one where you truly imagine how the customer feels. As a facilitator, it is important to convey the customer's emotion as you introduce the distinct scenarios to empathize the pain-point/stress. Encourage the group to recognize and detach themselves from their biases about customers.
- 5. Show the group an example.** Pick an unrelated topic/customer to your process as an example to show the group. Choose an example that everyone relates to, such as:
 - a.** You went to the DMV to get your license renewed. You waited in line for an hour. When you reached the front of the line, the DMV employee told you that you don't have the correct papers and need to return at a later date with those papers. . Run through the exercise with the example scenario, putting one sticky note in each category.
- 6. Break into small groups if necessary.** If you have multiple scenarios to cover or a large group you may want to break into small groups to go through the exercise.
- 7. Read the scenario to the group** The scenario should be posted next to the empathy map and written in large print. . When reading the scenario, try to convey the feelings of the customer.
- 8. Have participants review each section of the empathy map.** Ask participants if they have any questions about any of the sections. Remind participants there is no "right" answer, and to try to imagine being in the customer's shoes when answering the below section questions.

- a. Tasks** – What tasks are users trying to complete? What questions do they need answered?
- b. Feelings** – How is the user feeling about the experience? What really matters to them?
- c. Influences** – What people, things, or places may influence how the user acts?
- d. Pain Points** – What pain points might the user be experiencing that they hope to overcome?
- e. Overall Goals** – What is the users ultimate goal? What are they trying to achieve?



SFMTA Customer Complaint - Discourtesy

- 9. Have participants write the customer's Tasks, Feelings, Influences, Pain Points, and Overall Goals for the given scenario on individual Sticky note notes, and have them place the sticky notes in the corresponding section of the empathy map.** Encourage participants to write quotations based on what they imagine the customer might say or think in the scenario. One idea/quote per sticky note.. Give 10 minutes for participants to write sticky notes. . Use the question list below to prime participants' thinking.
- 10. When the maps are complete, have small groups report out to the whole group.** Give sufficient time for each group to show the whole group what they discovered.

Questions to ask participants as they write stickies

1. Ask a broad question to help unpack everyone's thoughts and assumptions ("Why would someone go to the DMV?")
2. What environment are the users in when using your product / in this scenario?
3. Are they having fun, or do they want to get it over with?

4. What's their life like outside of using the product today?
5. What kind of day might they be having?
6. Specific to Pain Points:
 - a. What keeps my customer up at night?
7. Specific to overall goals:
 - a. What motivates my customer to get up in the morning?
8. To help clarify a participant's answer to your questions, ask, "Is this a positive or a painful experience for the customer?"

Hints

- Define empathy to your client.
 - Empathy is vicariously experiencing someone else's feelings, thoughts, or attitudes.
 - Empathy is stronger than sympathy, because you are putting yourself in the other person's shoes to understand their feelings.
- If possible, use an actual customer in your process to be at the center of the empathy map. For example, use stock MTA photos of customers boarding Muni buses along with actual customer complaints.
- If you do not have the time/supplies, you can quickly hand draw empathy maps on flip chart paper or a white board.
- Pay special attention to pain points in the exercise. Do not get stuck on participants' answers to other empathy map categories as long as it is close, but DO pay attention to all pain points. This is where you will see future process improvements being made.

Example scenarios

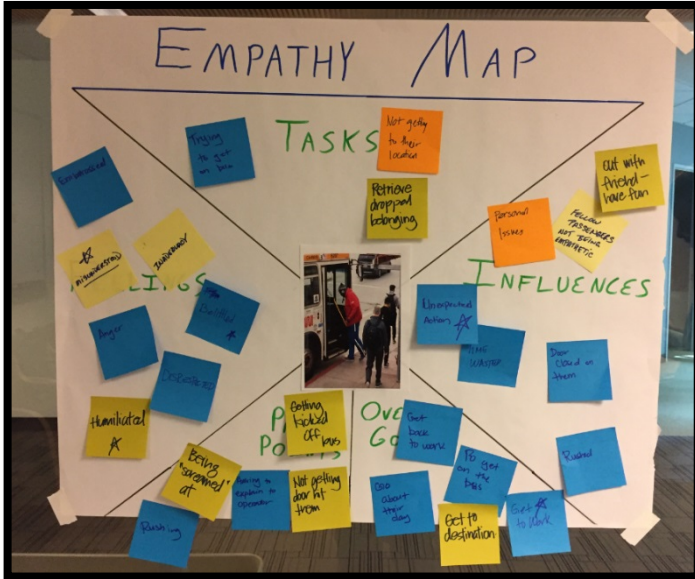
- **SFMTA Customer Complaints.**
 - SFMTA vehicle did not stop: "The bus passed me, he hesitated, he passed me up, I'm sitting right at the bus stop with a walker. He noticed it, and I was walking to him and he kept going. He did slow down, and he sort of slowed down a bus length past the bus stop. I yelled at him and he probably heard me. Rather than electing to wait for me he proceeded on."
 - Discourtesy from employee: "My friend and I were getting on the bus and I thought I dropped something so I turned around and the driver slammed the door on me. I told him he slammed the door on me and he said that I was taking my time getting on the bus and he started screaming at me. He stopped the bus and told us to get off and he was calling Muni."
- **CalFresh clients**
 - Amanda is a first time CalFresh client who is also a single mom of 3 and working full time. She is calling about the status of her application, as she recently submitted her application in person and did not receive any confirmation about where it is in the approval process. It has been two weeks since Amanda submitted her application and she doesn't know what to do next to make sure her application was received.



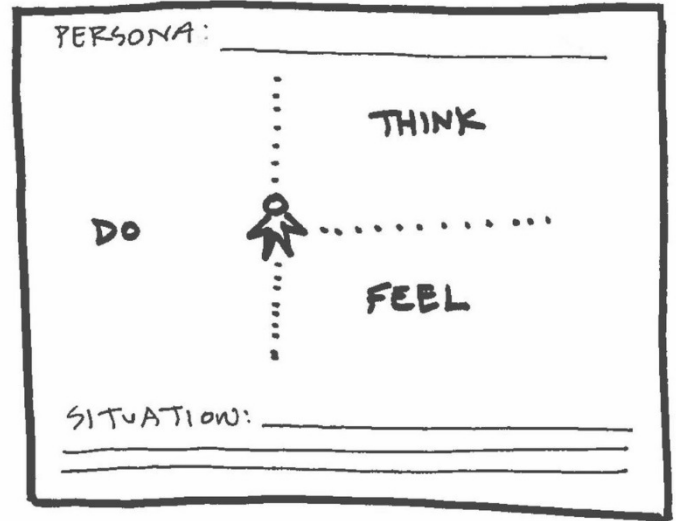
Client picture from CalFresh example (Amanda)

Empathy Maps Formats

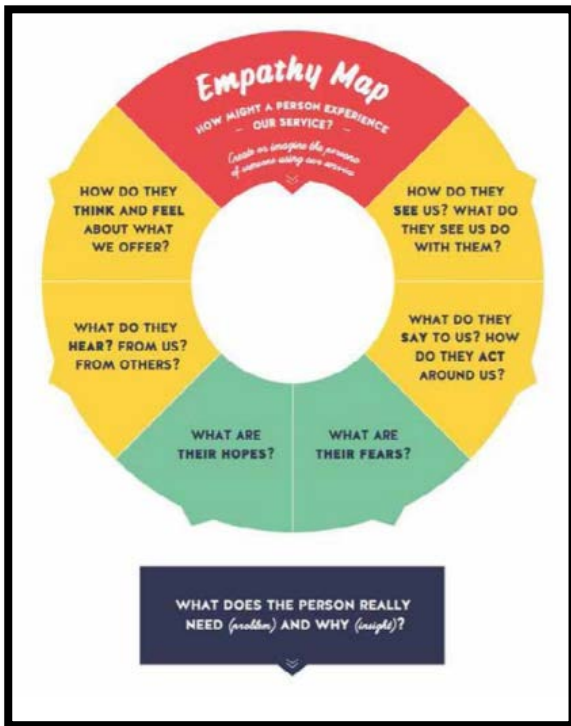
The shape, topic areas, and questions on an empathy map can all be adapted to specific project needs.



SFMTA Customer Complaint - Discourtesy (Completed)



Simplified Empathy Map



Circle Empathy Map



Circle Empathy Map - Completed