

EMPATHY MAPPING || FACILITATION GUIDE

3 to 10 people || 1 to 3 hours

By Renata Mann, Creative Strategist

OBJECTIVE || Identify new opportunities and ideas for a content program, a campaign, or an experience.

HOW || Delve into the personal experience and perspective of your audience.

This activity is all about understanding your audience. It is great to use when your final product needs a more meaningful connection to your audience, or any time you need to 'revisit' audience needs. This exercise can be applied very widely--anytime you need to understand a person or a group of people. Try thinking beyond end-user audiences--a quick empathy map can help you better understand the perspective of your client, co-workers, superiors, etc.

SET UP

Draw out your Empathy Map on a whiteboard or use giant post-it notes. Empathy Maps have 5 categories: Hear, Say, See, Do, and Think/Feel. Provide fine point sharpies and extra sticky 3x3" post-its for your team. Choose a name for your audience (person or group of people), if they don't already have one.

HEAR	SEE	SAY	DO	THINK/FEEL

(giant post-its)

STEP 1 || ACCESS THEIR PERSPECTIVE

Get into the mindset of your audience. Have a conversation reviewing what you already know about your audience and personas--follow up that convo with a quick exercise (choose one from below or make it up). Skip the exercise if the whole team already has an intimate understanding of the audience. For example, a room of female UX designers in their late twenties doing an empathy map for 'millennial women in creative professions.'

RECOMMENDED EXERCISES TO ACCESS AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVE:

- Bring in a person (friend, coworker) who exemplifies the audience, ask them pertinent questions to understand their perspective on life in general, as well as the subject at hand.
- Find a character in film or TV who exemplifies the audience, show a revealing film clip to your team and ask them to imagine themselves as this character.
- Write out a character description that gets to the essence and lifestyle of this person, ask your team to close their eyes and imagine themselves as the character while you read to them.
- Bring in a person (friend, coworker) who exemplifies the audience, ask them to empty their pockets or their purse, then describe each item, its origin, what it means to them, etc--surprisingly revealing!
- Ask your team to pull someone up in their minds who exemplifies this group of people. "Who is this person? Remember them. Remember your interactions with them. Remember everything about them. What are their lives like? Who they are, how they act, how they respond to things, their choices, priorities, beliefs, etc. Pretend you are them."

STEP 2 || POST UP

Name a timekeeper to keep the group on track during Step 2.

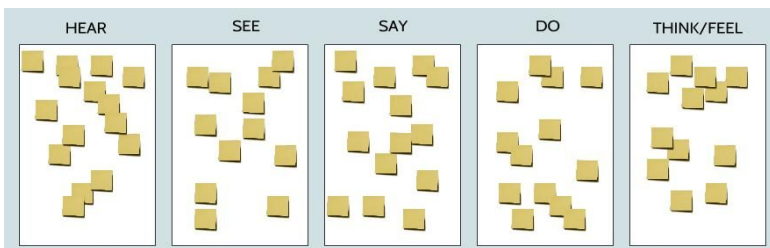
REPEAT STEPS A-C FOR EACH BOARD

Move through categories in succession, starting with HEAR and ending with THINK/FEEL. Use Guiding Questions (see examples below) to introduce each category.

A. **INTRO** | Facilitator introduces the first category (HEAR) by posing guiding questions to the group, and doing a few example post-its (see Guiding Questions below).

B. **POST-ITS** | Everyone in the group gets **two minutes** to silently generate 'hear statements' on post-its.

C. **POST UP** | If time allows, each person reads their post-its out to the group as they post up. If time is short, the team can come up to the board and read silently, or facilitator can read off highlights.



Note: Each post-it has an empathy statement written on it.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

HEAR: What are they hearing? What voices are speaking to them? What are their colleagues saying? Their friends? Neighbors? Family? Peers? Social Media? Celebs? Influencers? Music? Media? Podcasts? Advice? Rumors?

SAY: What are they talking about? What stories do they tell repeatedly? What are they excited to talk about? What do they complain about? What do they declare? What do they say to their boss? Their mom? Their friends? The people they date? What do they post on social media? Different in different spaces: FB vs Twitter vs Snapchat?

SEE: What do they see around them? On a daily basis? What are they looking for? What does their house look like? Their office? Their wardrobe? What does their inbox look like? What does their news feed look like? What do they see their friends doing? What do they see celebs doing? What do they see going on in their communities? In their country? In the world? What are they reading and where are they reading it? What trends? New technology?

DO: What are they doing? What actions? How do they spend their time? At work? At home? At play? How do they relax? How do they celebrate? What do they do when they are alone? With friends? With family? What are their social lives like? What are their hobbies? Habits? What does their To-Do List look like? What do they do when the list is all crossed off?

THINK/FEEL: Based on what they are hearing, seeing, saying, doing--What do they think and feel? What do they think about their family, community, themselves, the world at large? What are their wants? Their needs? Their secret desires? What are their biggest fears? Their little fears? Daily concerns? Long-term concerns? What are their secret dreams? What are their concrete goals? Where do they see themselves in 10 years? What do they believe?

STEP 3 || COMBOS & IDEAS

Now, the experience/perspective of the audience has been broken down into parts. When two or three parts (post-its) are put together, they start to relate to each other, the combos begin to point to and inspire ideas. Make random, intentional, or tough combos to ideate off of. These combos are just jumping off points for conversations, so don't worry if the ideas start to evolve away from the combo at the top of the page.

Allow the natural flow of conversation to drive ideation. Make a list of 'idea starters' on a giant post-it. Write down half ideas, bits of ideas, anything with potential should go on the ideas list.

Even when a combination seems impossible, push the team to find new ways of looking at the post-its and how they could relate to each other. Play with their intended meaning, look at the words metaphorically. For each combo, aim to fill up one giant post-it with ideas.

STEP 4 || SYNTHESIS, FILTERING, BUILDING IDEAS

This is an essential last step, be sure to complete during the brainstorm, or **as soon as possible** after the brainstorm. In Step 4, you will weigh the needs of your client and end-product (your campaign, program, or experience) against the ideas generated in the brainstorm. Make a list of 3-4 criteria to use to filter your ideas--Criteria IS KEY for being able to quickly decide if an idea works or not. Your criteria should be clear and easy to apply. **Predetermined criteria is best.**

Example Criteria

Needs inspire a behavior change or a desire for one

Must be truly valuable for work and home life

Must make the audience/end user smile

Must be possible to execute with low budget and in 3 mos

As you narrow down your list of ideas build on the ideas that need something, tweak ideas to make them better, flip them on their heads, combine them, alter them, do whatever you can do to make them the best they can be.

Thank you for downloading this exercise! If you have questions about Actors & Artifacts, or would like to learn more about these methods, please contact Renata Mann at rmann@skyword.com.