

Empathy Map

Exercise developed in partnership
with Suzi Sosa, Executive Director of the
Dell Social Innovation Challenge at UT Austin



Empathy Map Exercise

The most meaningful innovations come from deep and precise understanding of the circumstances and needs of the client. Used in the Inspiration stage of the Design Thinking process, the Empathy Map is a tool for compiling and analyzing information about the people you want to serve.

Take a look at the slides below, then work with your team to create your own map.

Empathy Map Exercise

Use and disclaimer

This exercise is a great way to test and gain new insights into a specific stakeholder group. You likely already know a great deal about your constituencies and might even think you can complete the map without further research. However, the Empathy Map is best approached fresh, free of any preconceived notions. Try one-on-one interviews, focus groups, or simply listen and observe to gather your data.

Who should be involved

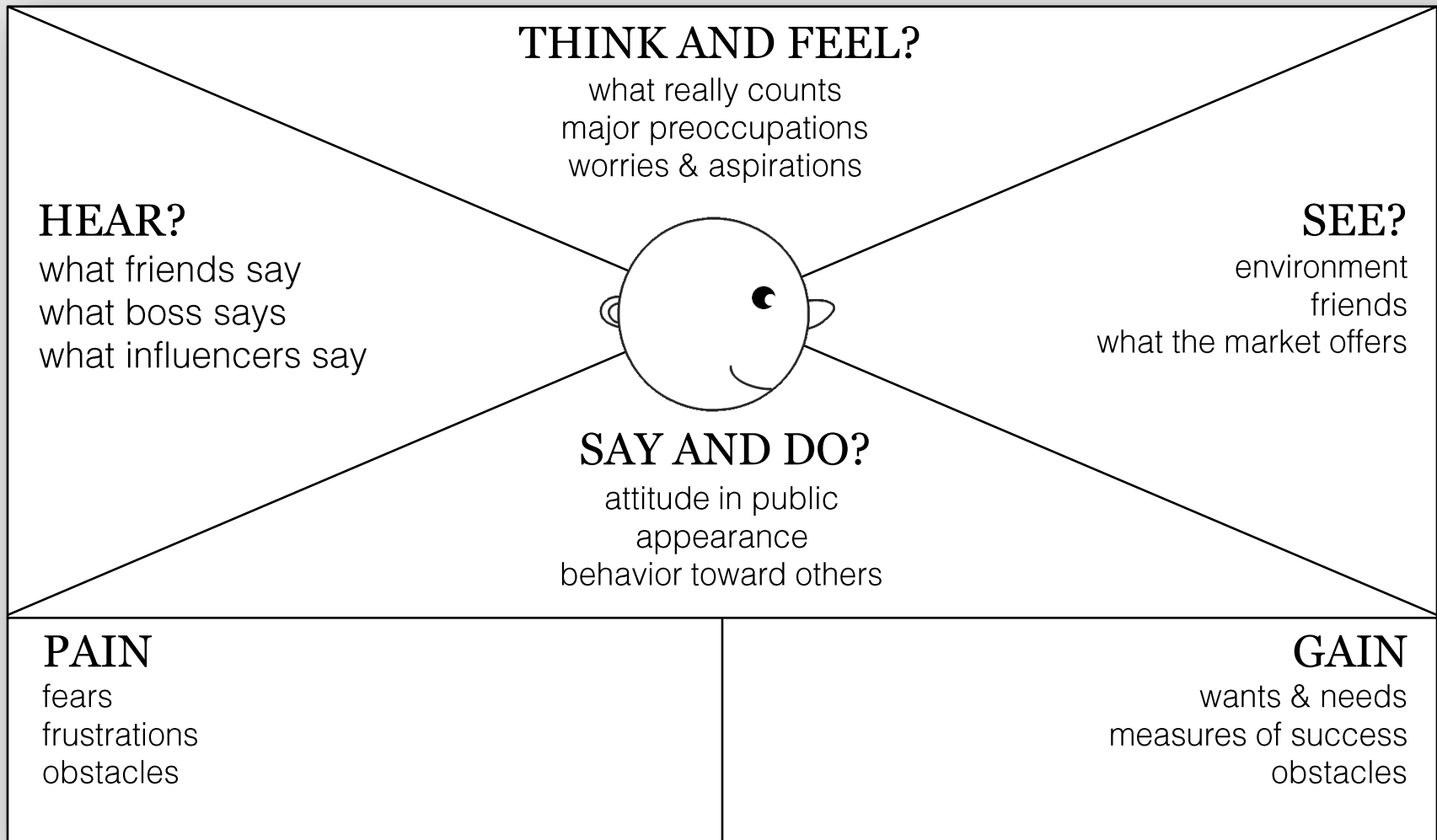
All team member. Remember to involve those with unique vantage points, such as facilities or ticket sales staff.

Time to complete

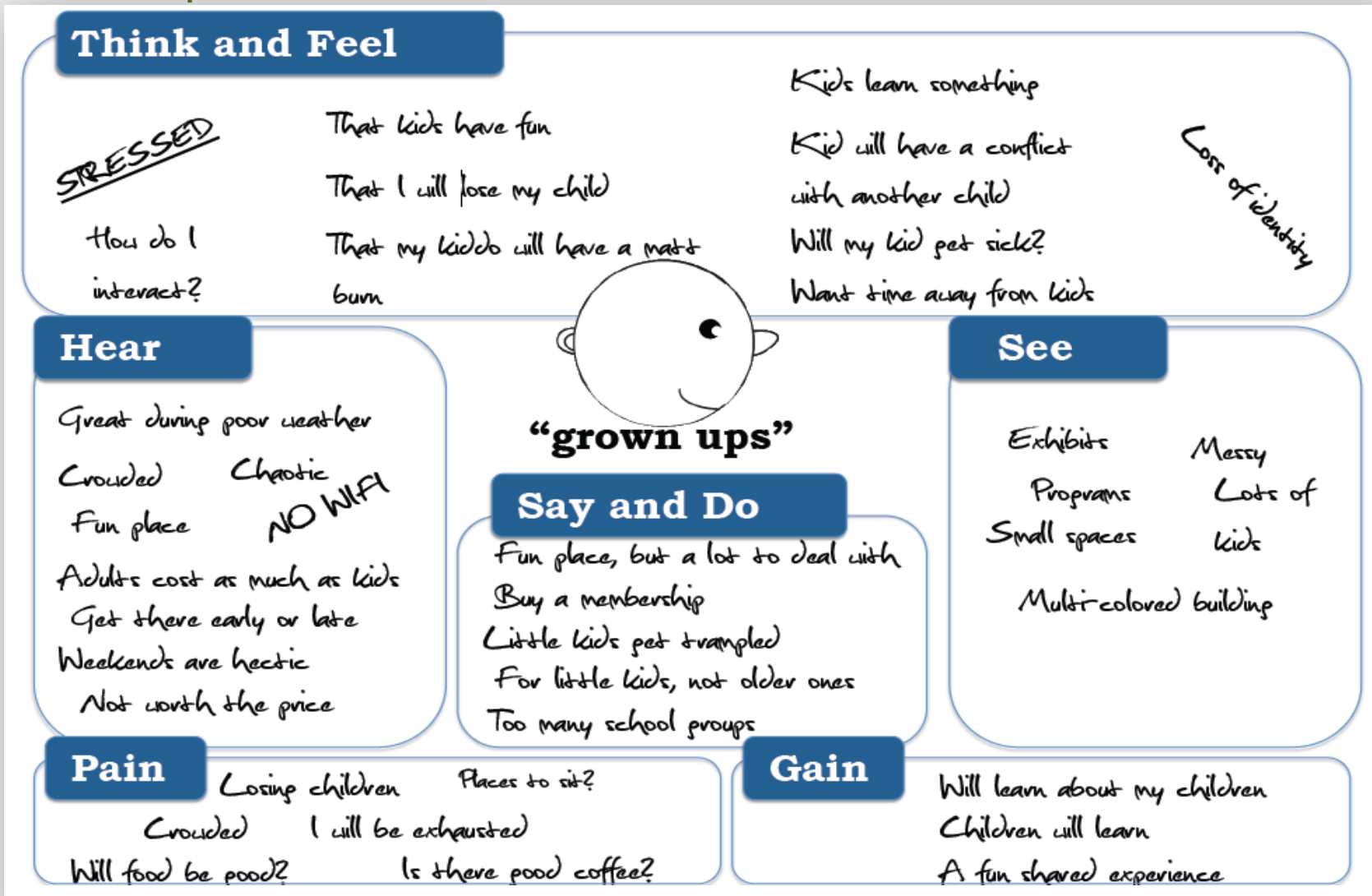
The information gathering phase of the innovation process will be time consuming, but it is critical to the success of your project. You will want to get away from your desk and out into the community to make observations. Seek out those you are trying to serve and take time to really listen to them.

Empathy Map

Put yourself in your customer's shoes. What does she...



Example: The Children's Museum of Denver



Creating your own Empathy Map

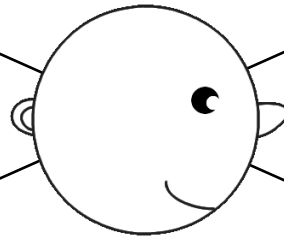
1. Draw or post the Empathy Map framework on a large whiteboard in your office, where it is accessible to you and your colleagues.
2. Decide on a problem you are trying to solve. Identify the group of people your innovation will serve. Is it parents? Major donors? Teenage patrons?
3. Have team members engage in interviewing, observing, and listening to members of the target group.
4. As you gather data, write observations on post-it notes and affix them to the Empathy Map in the appropriate section.
5. Analyze the completed map with your team. What have you learned about this stakeholder group? What patterns do you see? With this new knowledge, how can you best serve them?

What about your stakeholders?

THINK AND FEEL?

HEAR?

SEE?



SAY AND DO?

PAIN

GAIN

Additional resources

- Susi Sosa's videos on the Design Thinking process:
 - [What is Design Thinking?](#)
 - [How do cultural organizations, particularly established ones, use Design Thinking?](#)
 - [How can leaders balance bold leadership and crowdsourcing?](#)
- NAS' video on brainstorming techniques:
http://www.artstrategies.org/leadership_tools/videos/2012/06/20/brainstorming-effectively/

Thank you for taking the time to work through this exercise with your team. These online lessons are a bit of an experiment for us. As we learn more, we will continue to adapt and refine them.

Your feedback is vitally important. Please [let us know](#) how you used this tool. What was unclear? What would you add?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,
The NAS Team