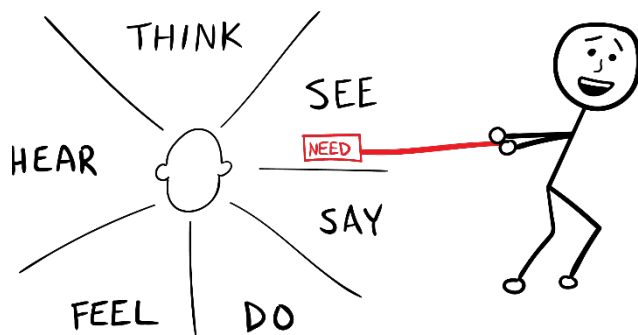


NEEDS EXTRACTION



WHY IT MATTERS

People aren't great at telling us what they need. Sometimes they don't even know themselves. If we just ask people what they need, we don't often get great information. Needs extraction allows you get richer and more meaningful information.

WHAT IS IT

Needs extraction is a technique used to pull data out of an empathy map so that you can work with it in different ways. It takes the data and brings it to life in a powerful way with simple statements that start with "I need". It is typically done as a group using sticky notes and a sharpie markers, but can also be done by yourself.

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE IT

This technique is most often used after you have completed empathy mapping. It is a way to pull out the needs of people you engaged with so that you can work with them to build solutions.

HOW YOU DO IT

STEP 1: Get a completed empathy map.

Have the completed empathy map in front of you as you start. If you are in a group, make sure everyone can see the empathy map and read it.

STEP 2: Pick a statement to start with.

It doesn't matter where you start, as you'll repeat the process for all of the statements on the empathy map.

Example statement of a person's experience of waiting in a waiting room:

Thinking: "Have they forgotten I'm here?"

STEP 3: Dig underneath the statement to figure out what the person might need

Using empathy and intuition, ask yourself (or the group) what needs are underneath that statement. Using a sharpie, write each possible need on a sticky starting with "I need...". Be sure to put one need per sticky.

Example:

- I NEED TO KNOW THEY SEE ME
- I NEED THIS PROCESS TO GO FASTER
- I NEED TO KNOW HOW LONG THIS WILL TAKE

"Have they forgotten I'm here?"

- I NEED TO NOT BE FORGOTTEN
- I NEED TO FEEL LIKE I MATTER
- I NEED TO SEE MY DOCTOR

This isn't an exact science. Just get as many needs as you can down for the statement. The more needs you have to work with the more likely you are to design good solutions. You may also notice that you have opposite or conflicting needs from the same empathy map. That's ok! People are complex and sometimes have a lot going on at the same time.

**Some people get worried they are making assumptions or speaking on behalf of people. That's actually part of the task: to put yourself in someone else's position and empathically experience what they might experience. Any words that you use are coming from a place of empathy, not arrogance. Even if you are wrong for one person, chances are you're right for others. Trust the process and keep going.*

STEP 4: Repeat the process for every statement on the empathy map

If you come across the same need just write on a sticky note once to represent it. If a need is similar but slightly different, be sure to capture it separately on a sticky note. Put all your sticky notes up on a wall or on a table so you can see them all at once.

STEP 5: Cluster needs that are related.

Start by finding a pair of sticky notes that are related. Put them next to each other. Then find another pair of related sticky notes (different from the first pair) and put them next to each other. Keep doing this until you have moved all of the sticky notes into a cluster. Some needs will overlap, and that's ok. Just pick the best cluster for them to go in for now. Keep going to see if you can reduce the number of clusters overall.

**Typically you will have no fewer than 3 clusters and no more than 10 clusters. Any fewer than 3 and you tend to lose meaningful information. Any more than 10 and you haven't synthesized the information enough.*

STEP 6: Give each cluster a name.

Start by finding words that stand out in the cluster. Write those down. Using those words as your inspiration, make a title that represents all of the sticky notes in the cluster. The title should start with "I need..."

Example:

**I NEED TO KNOW THAT I
MATTER**

- I need you to say hi to me when you see me
- I need you to remember I'm here
- I need you to be happy to see me, even if I sometimes make things hard for you
- I need you to ask how I'm doing
- I need you to be kind when I'm upset

I NEED SOMETHING TO DO

- I need to have something to listen to
- I need something to look at
- I need access to something I want to read (not just preachy pamphlets)
- I need something for my kids to do
- I need free wifi
- I need you to change what's on the tv

STEP 7: Capture your clusters.

You can do this by writing a bulleted list or just taking a picture. The goal is to capture the title and the detailed needs underneath the title. It allows you to explain what is in the cluster to someone who didn't participate in the activity.

WANT TO DO NEEDS EXTRACTION BY YOURSELF?

Just use the same process. Try actually using sticky notes and writing all of your ideas out instead of just making a list. This allows you to get a wide variety of needs out before clustering them. If you jump to clustering, you tend to find needs that fit into clusters, and miss other ones.

NOW WHAT?

There are many different ways you can launch into designing solutions. The easiest way is to simply ask a "How might we" question based on your need.

Example:

NEED:

I need to know I matter

HOW MIGHT WE QUESTION:

How might we show people they matter?

Try generating as many ideas as possible first, then pick the ones that fit best.