# Most projects fail because they build the right solution to the wrong problem.

We jump to features, code, and design. But great products aren't built on answers. They're built on the right questions.

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# Start with Empathy. End with a Solution That Matters.

Introduce the Design Thinking process as the North Star for our approach. This isn't a checklist; it's a mindset. It ensures we focus on human needs at every stage, from discovery to delivery. Our journey starts in the 'Understand' phase, with Empathy and Definition.



EMPATHIZE · DEFINE · IDEATE · PROTOTYPE · TEST · IMPLEMENT

UNDERSTAND · EXPLORE · MATERIALIZE
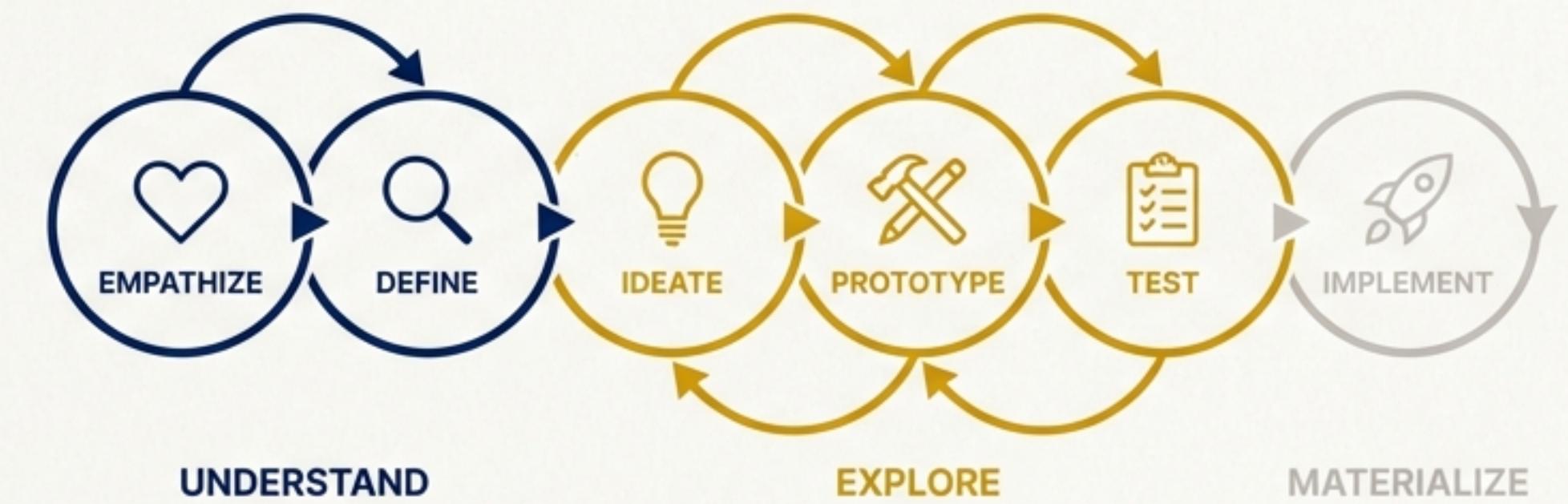
# Are You Solving a Problem or Seizing an Opportunity?

## PROBLEM

**Definition**

An issue that is preventing the achievement of goals and objectives.

**Think of it as**

A barrier to overcome. Something is broken or inefficient.

## OPPORTUNITY

**Definition**

Initiatives that will assist in reaching goals and objectives if implemented appropriately.

**Think of it as**

A chance to innovate. Creating something new or better.

*Knowing which you're pursuing shapes every question you ask next.*

# Your Compass for Navigating the Unknown

To truly understand a problem space, you need to look through four distinct lenses. Each provides a critical piece of the puzzle, but the real insights are found where they overlap.

The users, their needs, motivations, and pain points.

The workflows and steps people take to accomplish tasks.

**People**

**Data**

**Processes**

**User Experience (UX)**

The information that is created, consumed, or needed.

The overall feeling and interaction with the current system or situation.

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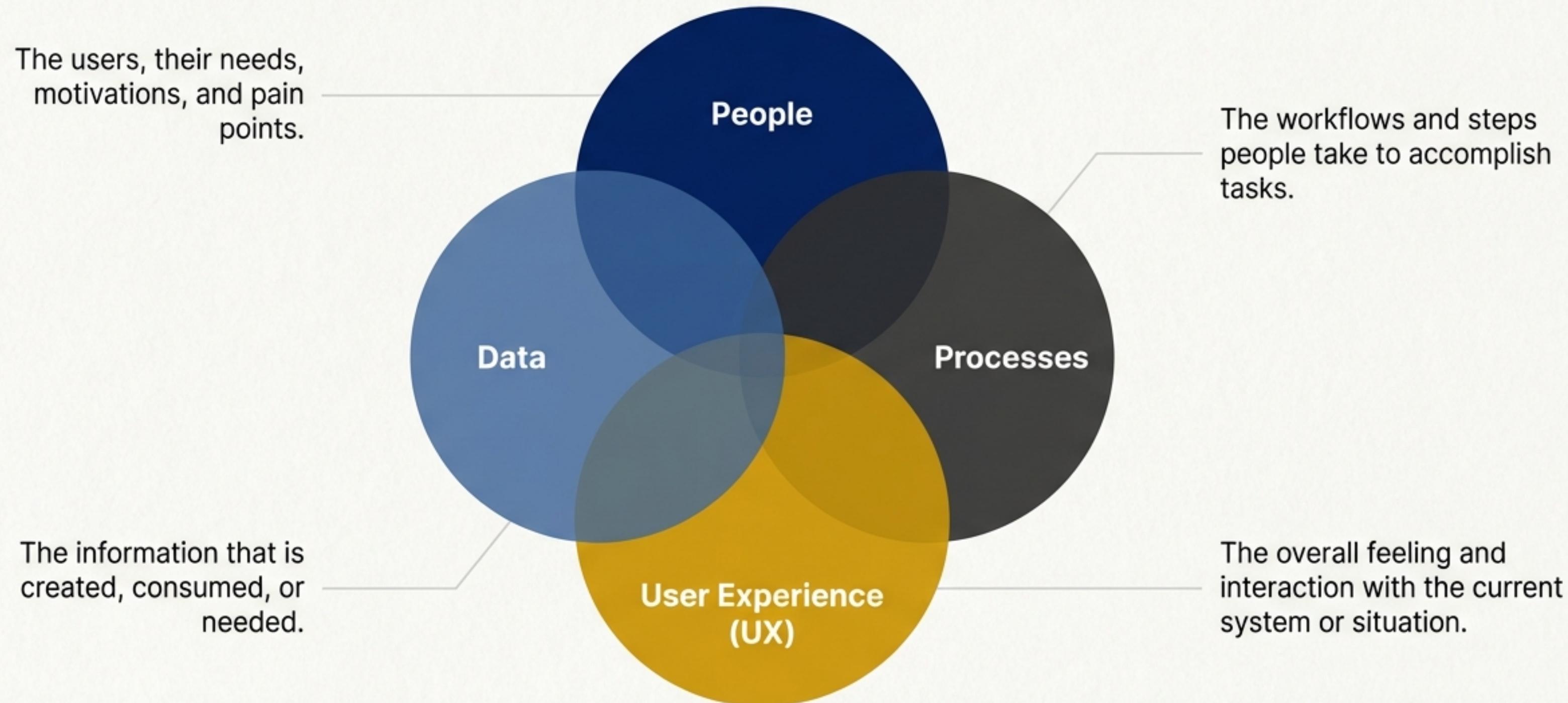
# Everything Begins and Ends with People.

Technology, processes, and data are meaningless without understanding the people they serve. Your first and most important job is to learn about their world.

**Who should we study?**

- Customers: The end-users of the product or service.
- Leadership: The stakeholders who define business goals.
- Competition: To understand your users' alternatives.

**How do we learn?**

- Interviews
- Observations
- Secondary Research (e.g., LinkedIn, Social Media)

*The goal is to synthesize this research into a clear, empathetic portrait: a **Persona**.*

# Building a Persona: A 360° View of Your User

A persona is not just a demographic profile. It's a rich, narrative tool that brings your user to life, guiding every decision your team makes. What should be included?



What does their day look like?

What frustrates them?

And more... including comfort with technology.

What terms do they use?

What are their goals?

What drives their buying choices?

What do they like or dislike?

What content do they consume?

How do they speak?

Who do they listen to?

DAILY ROUTINES

PAIN POINTS

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

ASPIRATIONS

FACTORS IN HER PURCHASE DECISIONS

PREFERENCES

READING AND SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS

LANGUAGE/ LINGO USED

KEY INFLUENCERS

# Mapping the Journey (Processes) and the Information (Data)

## Understanding Processes
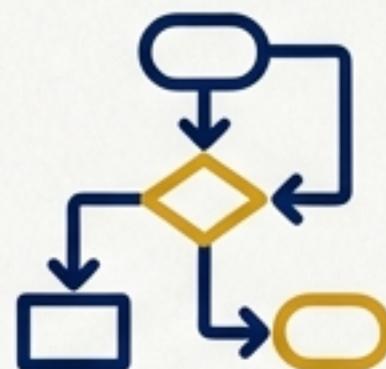
- **What it is:** The steps, workflows, and tasks users currently perform. The "how" behind their actions.
- **How to learn:** Primary & Secondary Research, Observation, Interviews.
- **Visual tool:** Simple process flowcharts help visualize the user's journey.
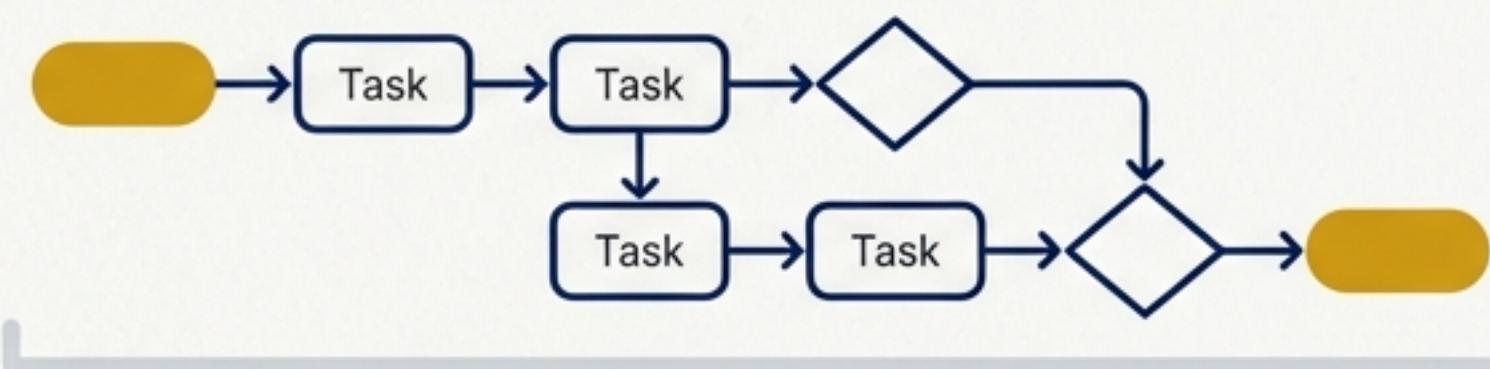
## Understanding Data
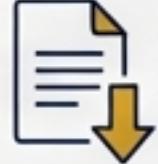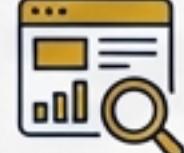
- **What it is:** The information required to complete a process or make a decision.
- **How to learn:** Analyze the site/app, sign up for mailing lists, infer from processes what data is needed.
- **Visual tool:** An ERD (Entity-Relationship Diagram) can document data requirements.

# From Research Chaos to a Single, Powerful Statement
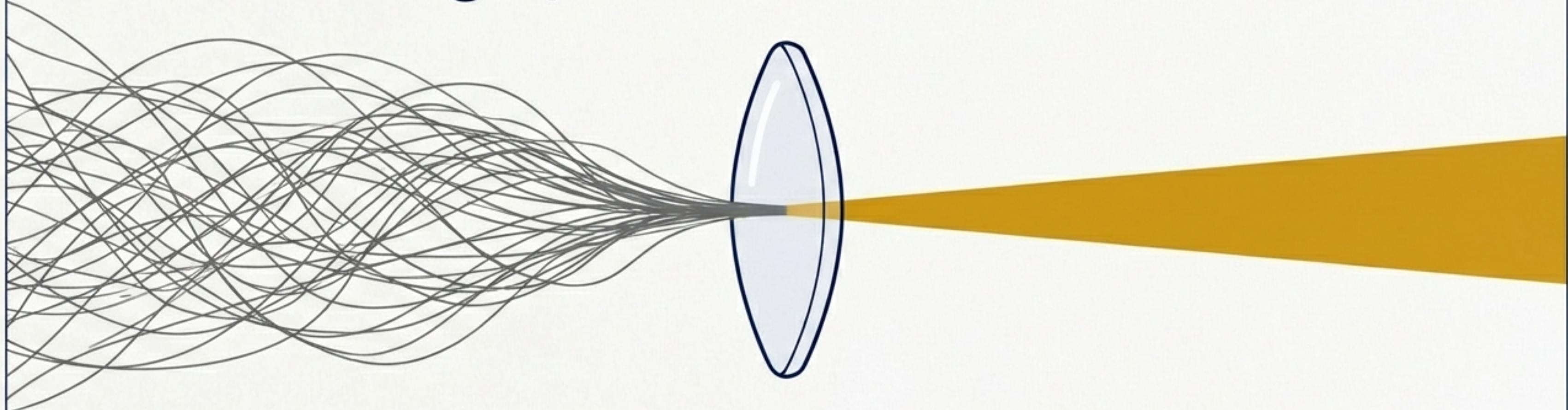


You've interviewed users, mapped processes, and analyzed data. You have a mountain of findings.

**But... no one wants to read a long report!**

The final step of the 'Understand' phase is to distill all your insights into a concise, actionable, and shareable artifact that defines the work to be done.

# The Business Opportunity Statement: Your Project's Foundation

The Business Opportunity Statement (BOS) is a concise description of a user issue or unmet need that needs to be addressed. It's a simple template that forces clarity and aligns everyone on the 'what' and the 'why'.

| | |
|---|---|
| **We will improve the experience of** | What problem needs solving or improvements? |
| **for** | Which person is most effected by this? |
| **The user struggles today because** | What are some of the pain points? |
| **Solving this will be good for our business because** | What is motivating the company to solve this problem? |

# Deconstructing the BOS:
# The FourQuestions You Must Answer

| | |
|---|---|
| **We will improve the experience of** | |
| **for** | |
| **The user struggles today because** | |
| **Solving this will be good for our business because** | |
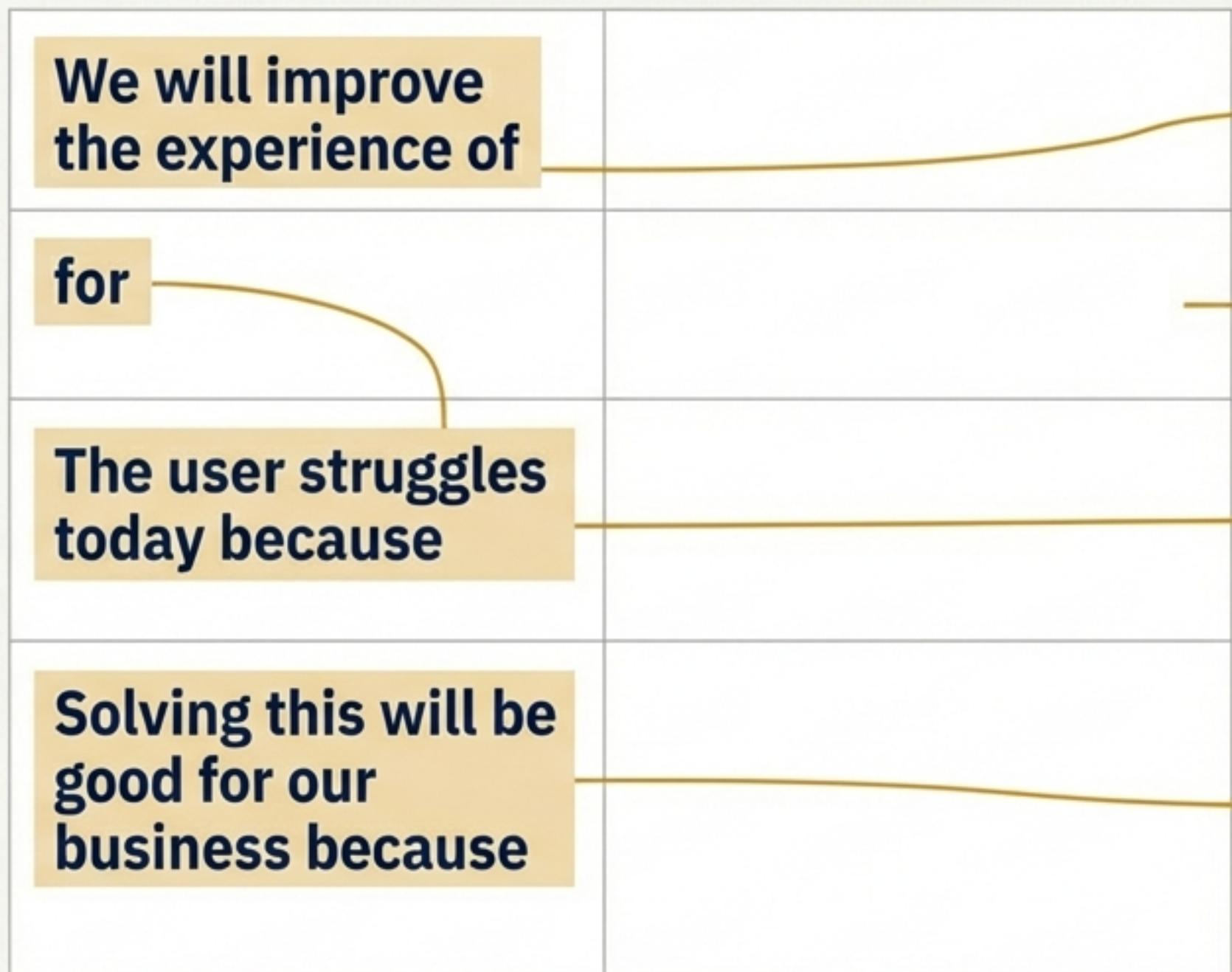
This defines the core activity or problem space. What process or task needs fixing?

This **identifies your user.** Who is the specific persona most affected by this problem?

This **details the pain points.** What are the specific barriers, frustrations, and unmet needs you discovered in your research?

This connects the user need to **business value.** What is the motivation? How does it help achieve organizational goals?

# The Business Opportunity Statement in Action

Let's see how this works with a real-world example: improving the experience of filing taxes.

| | |
|---|---|
| **We will improve the experience of** | Getting the right income tax forms from the Federal Government. |
| **for** | Non tax savvy individuals looking to file their personal tax returns. |
| **The user struggles today because** | Finding the right form requires you to understand tax-code terminology and form numbers. Getting simple to understand answers to simply stated questions is near impossible. |
| **Solving this will be good for our business because** | Our department's mandate is to make it as easy as possible for people to correctly file their taxes. The easier answers are to find, the fewer people need to call our call center, meaning lower wait times. People accurately filing their taxes means lower auditing costs for the government. |

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# Now, It's Your Turn.



**Brainstorm**     **Analyze**     **Articulate**
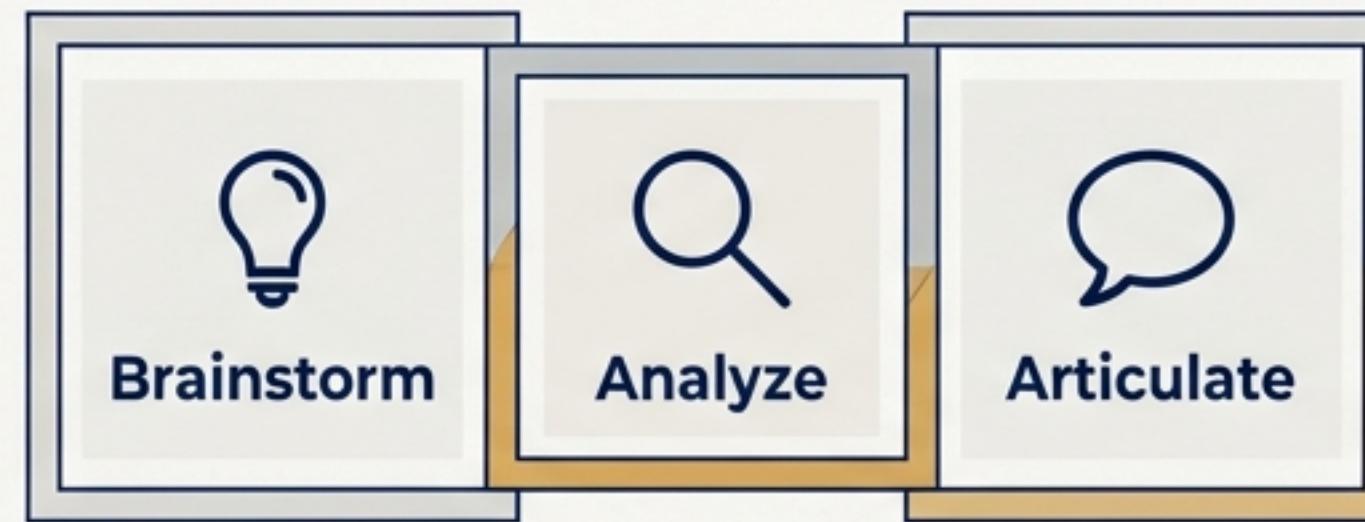
The best way to learn this process is to use it. **Find a problem or opportunity** you know well and frame it with the BOS.

**Your Challenge:**
1. **Brainstorm:** Choose a problem or opportunity that could make Temple University better. (e.g., course registration, finding study spaces, dining hall experience).
2. **Analyze:** Use the four parts of the Business Opportunity Statement to outline how you would address it.
3. **Articulate:** Craft a clear, concise statement that captures the core challenge.

# Getting the Big Picture is Critical to Reaching Your Goals

*"The quality of your solution is directly proportional to the quality of your problem definition."*

Before you build anything, invest the time to truly understand the people you serve and the challenges they face. That is the foundation of every successful project.