Empathy Map: example

Illustrative example, not customer data. The same canvas, blank, follows.

Persona	Business traveller staying one or two nights at a city hotel
Situation	Arrives late after a flight, works from the room, has an early meeting
Evidence	312 reviews from business travellers last quarter, 8 guest interviews, 46 front-desk notes

Says

Their own words: quotes from reviews, tickets and interviews

- "The Wi-Fi kept dropping during my video call."
- "Check-in took 20 minutes after a red-eye flight."
- "The staff remembered my name. Small thing, big difference."
- "Breakfast queue at 7:30 meant I skipped it."

Thinks

What they think but may not say. Mark these as assumptions

- Will I make my 9:00 meeting?
- Is this worth the price for one night?
- I just need a quiet room and a desk that works.

Does

What they actually do, step by step

- Books on the phone the night before
- Arrives after 22:00 and wants to go straight up
- Works from the room until late
- Skips breakfast when there is a queue
- Writes the review on the way to the airport

Feels

Their mood at key moments, as the team reads it

- Tired and impatient at a late check-in
- Anxious when the Wi-Fi drops before a call
- Relieved when things just work
- Valued when staff recognise them

Pains

What gets in their way

- Waiting at check-in after a late arrival
- Wi-Fi that drops in the room
- Noise from the corridor or the street
- No time for breakfast before an early meeting

Gains

What success looks like for them

- Room key ready on arrival
- Wi-Fi good enough for video calls
- A quiet room with a proper desk
- Breakfast to take away from 6:30

Build the map from every customer, not five interviews. Pivony groups all of your reviews, tickets and survey comments by topic, sentiment and root cause. Get a free root cause audit on your own data: pivony.com/free-rca-audit

How common is each theme?

Theme in business travellers' reviews	Reviews	Share	Tone
Staff friendliness and recognition	89	29%	Positive
Wi-Fi in the room	74	24%	Negative
Check-in wait after a late arrival	58	19%	Negative
Noise	41	13%	Negative
Breakfast timing and queue	36	12%	Mixed

312 reviews from last quarter. A review can mention more than one theme.

From map to action

Pain	Action	Owner	Due
Wi-Fi drops in the room	Upgrade the access points on the two business floors; test a video call in every room	IT manager	31 Jan
Waiting at a late check-in	Pre-check-in link the day before; key ready at the desk after 22:00	Front office manager	15 Jan
No time for breakfast	Grab-and-go breakfast in the lobby from 6:30	F&B manager	15 Jan
Recognition works	Keep it: note returning guests' names and preferences at booking	Front office manager	Ongoing

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Empathy Map

One persona, one situation. Fill it from evidence: quotes, reviews, tickets and interviews.

Persona	
Situation	
Evidence	

Says

Their own words: quotes from reviews, tickets and interviews

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What they think but may not say. Mark these as assumptions

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Interview questions for each part of the map

Part	Question to ask
Says	Tell me about your last stay. What would you tell a colleague about it?
Thinks	What was on your mind when you arrived? What worried you?
Does	Walk me through your stay, from booking to checkout. What did you do at each step?
Feels	Which moment was the most frustrating? Which was the best?
Pains	What nearly made you book somewhere else?
Gains	What would make this the hotel you always book?

Tips

• Ask about what happened last time, not about what they would do.
• Write down their words, not your summary.
• Five to eight interviews per persona usually show the main patterns; reviews and tickets show how common each one is.
• Keep Thinks and Feels as assumptions until the evidence supports them.

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