

Point of View - Problem Statement

A problem statement, commonly known as a Point of View (POV), clearly and coherently explains what problem your design process aims to solve. It defines the user, their need and why the need is important to that user. A problem statement identifies the gap between the current state (i.e., the user's problem) and the desired state (i.e., the goal) of a product or service. When you successfully design a solution that meets this need, you will satisfy the users defined in your problem statement and provide them with a better user experience.

You should always base your POV on a deep understanding of your specific **users**, their **needs** and the most essential **insights** you have about them. In the design thinking process, you will gain those insights from the research and fieldwork you carry out in the Empathize phase.

Your Point of View is Your Guide

- Your Point of View (POV) defines the RIGHT challenge to address in the design thinking process.
- A good POV will allow you to ideate and solve your design challenge in a goal-oriented manner in which you keep a focus on your users, their needs and your insights about them.

- Your POV should never lead towards a specific solution; nor should it contain any indication about how to fulfill your users' needs in the service, experience or product you plan to design. Instead, your POV should provide a wide enough scope for you and your team to think about solutions which go beyond the status quo. However, your POV should also remain fairly narrow, as this will generate a greater quantity and higher quality of solutions when you and your team start to generate ideas in the ideation phase.

How Do You Define Your Point Of View?

1 | User, Needs, Insights

- Define the type of person you want to design for: your user. For example, you could develop one or more personas, use affinity diagrams, empathy maps or other methods to help you understand and crystallize your research results (observations, interviews, fieldwork, etc.).
- Select the most essential user needs to fulfill. Again, extract and synthesize the needs you've found in your observations, research, fieldwork and interviews. Remember that user needs should start with a verb.
- Relate the needs to specific users, and express any insights relevant to each user need. The insight should typically not be a reason for the need, but rather a synthesized statement of insights from your research you can leverage as you design solutions.

2 | POV Template

Write your users, needs and insights into a Point Of View table like this one:

| User | Need | Insight |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| An adult person who lives in a city | To use a car for 10-60 minute trips 1-4 times per week | The user does not want to own their own car as it is too expensive compared with the scope of their needs. They would like to share a car with others who have similar needs; however, there are no easy and affordable solutions for them. It's important for the user to think and live green, and to not own more than they truly need. |

Your Point of View template:

| User | Need | Insight |
|------|------|---------|
| | | |

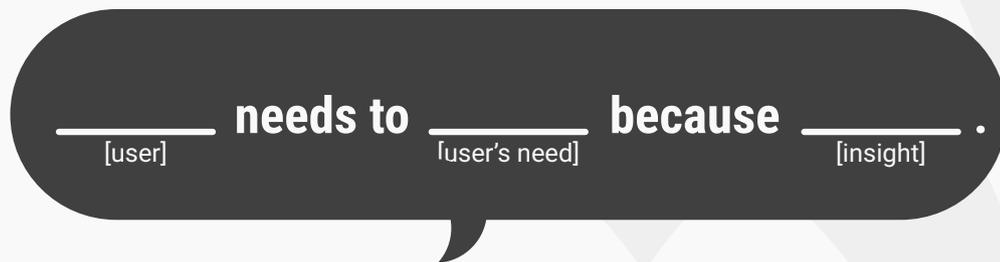
3

POV Madlib

You can then articulate your POV by combining these three elements—user, need and insight—as an actionable problem statement that will drive the rest of your design process. It's surprisingly easy to form strong, actionable POVs when you insert your findings in the POV Madlib template below.

Insert the information about your user, the needs and your insights in the following sentence:

[User . . . (description)] needs [Need . . . (verb)] because [Insight . . . (compelling)]



Use this POV Madlib to precisely define your Point Of View.

Example: An adult who lives in the city **needs** access to a shared car 1–4 times for 10–60 minutes per week **because** they would rather share a car with more people as this is cheaper and more environmentally friendly.

4 | Make Sure Your Point Of View (POV):

- Provides a narrow focus.
- Frames the user problem as a precise problem statement.
- Inspires your team.
- Guides your innovation efforts.
- Informs criteria to evaluate competing ideas.
- Captures people's attention.
- Is valid, insightful, actionable, unique, narrow, meaningful and exciting.

Yay! You're now well-equipped to synthesize your insights from the Empathize phase and create a precise, actionable POV statement. It's then time to use the design thinking method where you ask "How Might We...?". You can find more details about how to do this in our How Might We template:

<https://www.interaction-design.org/templates/how-might-we-questions>.

Do you want to learn more?

Learn how to use this template to your best advantage in our online course [Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide](#). Sign up for it today and learn how to apply the Design Thinking process to *your* project if you haven't already started the course.

Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide

■□□ Beginner course

The world's leading companies, such as Apple, Google and Samsung, are already using the design thinking approach—because they know it's the way forward when it comes to innovation and product success. Through [Design Thinking: The Beginner's Guide](#), you will deep dive into the five phases of this paradigm-shifting approach to problem-solving—empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. By receiving detailed guidance on problem-solving activities ranging from ideation techniques—such as brainstorming and using analogies—to ways of gathering feedback from your prototypes, you'll be able to download the other templates involved and effectively use them in your work. Get ready to unpack, explore, and master design thinking—using it to set yourself apart and unlock the next stage of your professional life.

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