

JOURNEY MAP

PURPOSE:

To gain empathy for a person or understanding of one's process through an experience, consider the details of that process to illuminate areas of potential insights. Creating a journey map is an excellent way to systematically think about the steps or milestones of a process. A journey map can be used for your own empathy work, or to communicate your findings to others.

DIRECTIONS:

Create diagrams that capture multiple observations, (e.g. a map of a user's day, a map of a user's experience, or a map of how a product moves through space and time from manufacturing to store shelf to user's hands). Consider a process or journey that is relevant to your problem space. For example, you could consider your user's morning breakfast routine. You could capture every event of one person's exercise in a month - and consider who she was with, where she came from, where she exercised, and where she went afterwards. Or perhaps you are developing a dating service website; you could document every communication between two people before the first date. One important concern is to be comprehensive within the variables you choose to capture. (Don't overlook the opening of the window shades in the morning breakfast routine.) What seems meaningless, could actually be the nuggets that develops into a stunning insight. You can create a journey map based on observation and interview - or you might ask a user to draw a journey map and then explain it to you.

Organize the data in a way that makes sense: a timeline of events, a number of parallel timelines that allows for easy comparison, a series of pictures, or a stack of cards. Then look for patterns and anomalies and question why those themes or events occurred. Push yourself to connect individual events to a larger context or framework. It is often the pairing of an observation with the designer's knowledge and perspective that yields a meaningful insight.

