How to Use Empathy Maps in Your B2B Tech Marketing

Effective marketing largely depends upon the understanding of people. The businesses who grow, have a unique ability to connect with their customers on a personal level - understanding their beliefs, feelings, fears and more.

Introduction

What are Empathy Maps?

Empathy maps are the key to getting to know your audience on a completely new level. Have you ever heard "you need to get inside the head of your target audience"? Well, empathy maps are a very effective way to accomplish this goal.

Why would you use an empathy map? The primary reason for using this approach is because sometimes as a marketer, it's very easy to forget that you're connecting with actual people. For example, one of the most common approaches to segmenting an audience involves the development of customer personas. The typical customer persona has attributes such as the following:

- Job title
- Job function/responsibilities
- Age
- Company Size
- Income level
- Family life
- Challenges

Although customer personas are a great start to segmenting your audience, the folks that actually buy your products & services are real people. So if you're looking to create offers that really resonate with your different audiences, it's crucial to go a bit deeper with this part of your marketing process. Essentially, an empathy map helps create a bridge between your personas and the content you develop.

But, what approach do you take to get beyond typical attributes and into their head? How do you think about what these people are and who these people are or what they're thinking about? Read on a bit further to **uncover a simple approach to Empathy Maps**.

How to Create an Empathy Map

One of the biggest problems we have come across over years when working with technology companies has to do with target audiences. In so many cases, we have been tasked with projects without a clear picture of “who” we are reaching.

In today’s day and age, customers expect you to understand their mindset, have a major understanding of their challenges and a good idea of “where” they are in the journey to a solution. So, here’s a breakdown of the process you can use to develop an Empathy Map for each of your major types of customers.

1 Set a time & date for a session

The very first thing that you should do to get a complete set of empathy maps is to create an actual meeting. The meeting might be internally or it might also include some other partners (agency, consultant, etc.). In any event, if you mark a time & date on the calendar, this will ensure you’ve properly scoped out the time to dedicate towards this effort.

Remember, getting into your audience’s “head” is one of the best things you can do to get the most out of your marketing. So, make sure you have involvement from the appropriate stakeholders from the beginning.

2 Conduct your research

Any research you can bring to the session will be helpful and will allow you to connect a bit more with the different types of customers. The process works best if you have real data to share. So, if you have time and budget, perform as much upfront user research as you can. This may involve surveys, interviews or informal discussions.

But, what if this isn’t possible or you don’t have time? You can still proceed. Empathy maps can be developed using the team’s anecdotal knowledge of the audience and stakeholder input.

3 Identify participants

The group should include anyone who will possibly create content for your target audience. Participants could include everyone from copywriters and designers to marketing assistants.

In addition, include any team members who know your customers really well. This group of individuals could include sales professionals or customer support roles.

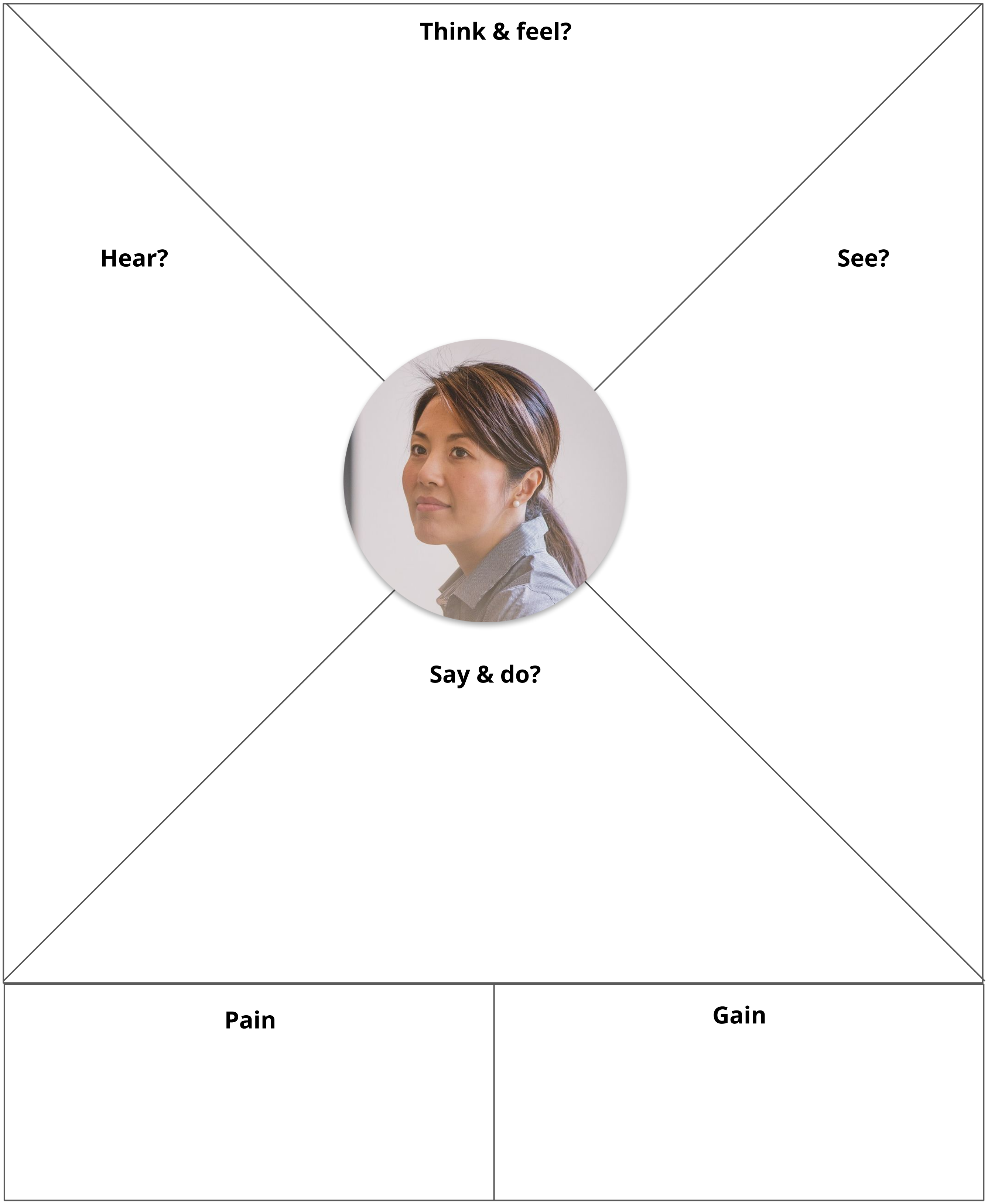
4 Conduct the session

The session should feel like a brainstorming session. It should be fun and the environment should allow for individuals to share their ideas and feedback. Make sure you have a space or room booked with either a whiteboard or a really large area to draw (flipchart, etc.).

For the agenda, here's a breakdown on how to run the meeting:

- State the purpose of the meeting
- Provide a quick overview of empathy maps
- Discuss why empathy maps are important for the company & marketing efforts
- Review the main sections of the empathy map (review the sample on next page)
- Go around the room, allowing each person to brainstorm different ideas or responses to each question within the map (repeat this process for all main customers)
- Summarize results and document for future reference

Empathy Map: Sample



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