

JOURNEY MAP

PRIMER

ONE PAGE

NOBODY WILL ASK IF YOU READ IT

The augmentation frame applies: where the model helps, where it is plausibly wrong, and what a trained eye catches.

WHAT IT IS

A time-ordered account of what one person actually does to get through a situation, including the parts that happen outside your product. Stages across the top; what they do, think, feel and touch underneath.

WHEN IT EARNS ITS PLACE

When the problem is sequence — something is fine in isolation and bad in order, or the failure happens in a gap between two systems nobody owns.

Not worth making when you already know the sequence and nothing surprising lives in it.

HOW TO MAKE ONE

- Pick one real person, from your research. Not a composite. If you cannot name the interview it came from, you are inventing.
- Bound it. Start before they knew they had the problem. End after they think it is over. The interesting material is almost always outside the bit you control.
- Lay out stages — five to eight. Use their words for the stage names.
- Fill the rows: doing / thinking / feeling / touching (which system, person or object).
- Mark the drops — where they wait, repeat themselves, ask someone, or give up.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

- You can point at the interview line each stage came from
- At least one stage happens somewhere you do not control
- The lows are specific: not “frustrated” but “read it four times before realising it assumed a care plan existed”
- It loops or abandons somewhere. Real journeys do.

THE COMMON FAILURE

A smooth five-stage arc where the person moves calmly from awareness to satisfaction. Nobody has ever had that experience. If your map has no loop, no wait and no exit, you have drawn a process diagram of your own product and labelled it a person.

WITH A MODEL IN THE LOOP

LIFT

Expanding a skeleton you supply — you give it your five stages and it proposes what might sit in each row, fast.

LIE

Cold, it invents a smooth five-stage journey nobody takes, in confident detail. It will not tell you it has no idea who this person is.

CATCH

Real journeys loop, abandon and re-enter. You know that from your interviews; the model has only the average of everything ever written about journey maps.