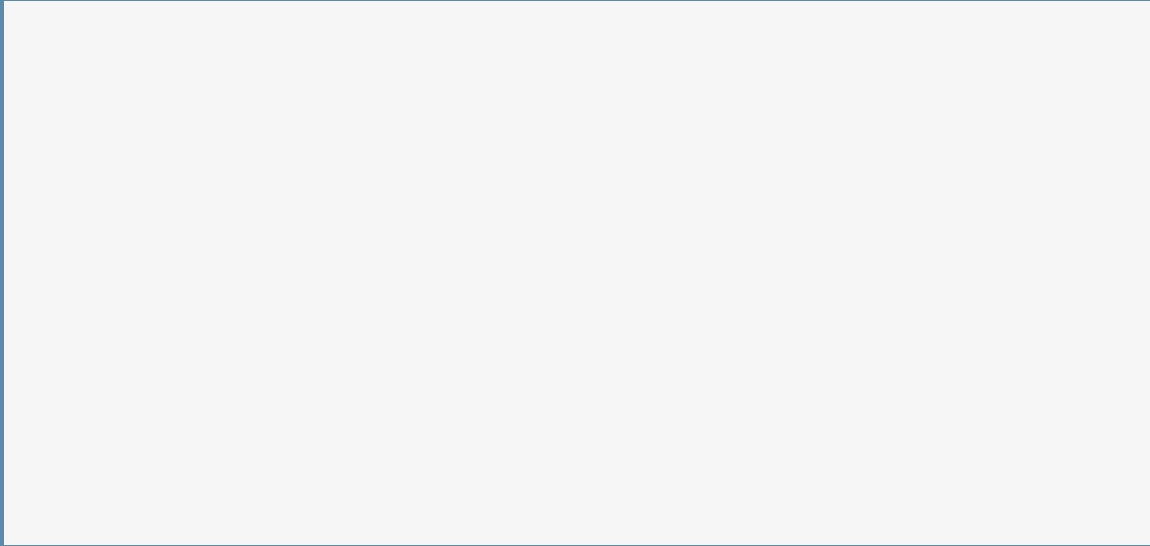




How To Write a Problem Statement Workbook

The word 'lift' is written in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letter 'i' is stylized with a light blue circle above it and a light blue triangle below it. The letter 'l' is also stylized with a light blue triangle below it. The letters 'f' and 't' are solid blue. The entire logo is set against a white background within a white rectangular frame.

Initial Problem Statement





A good problem statement can save your life. It will not make a hazardous job less hazardous nor will it give you life saving insights during a dangerous situation, but it will keep you from wasting days, weeks and months solving a problem that does not need to be solved. This workbook accompanies the instruction provided at the 12 September 2023 TSA Lift Summit. This pdf document is fillable so you can type your answers in the space provided.

The specific problem statement format taught during this event focuses on defining a problem at the very beginning of the 'Search' for 'Fit'.

We will focus on four specific elements of a problem statement with the goal of giving each element of the problem a title and a paragraph long description. There is no specific order these four elements must follow nor are there specific verbs, adverbs or adjectives to connect them in a sentence. You can collapse them into three elements or expand them into five or more but you always need to be able to define these four things:

- The Beneficiary
- The Job
- The Pain
- The Impact

The Beneficiary

A Beneficiary Segment is the 'who' of a problem statement. We cannot 'know' if we have the beneficiary segments correct until we know we have the right business model, but we can use the techniques of Beneficiary Segmentation to make a good guess at defining the different groups we are trying to help. Of the four segmentation methods shown here, Psychographic Segmentation is the most likely to help define the beneficiaries for our purposes.

Segmentation Methods

- Demographic (Age, Gender, etc...)
- Geographic (Continent, State, etc...)
- Behavioral (Spending Habits, Brand Loyalty, etc...)
- Psychographic (Habits, Hobbies, Values, etc...)



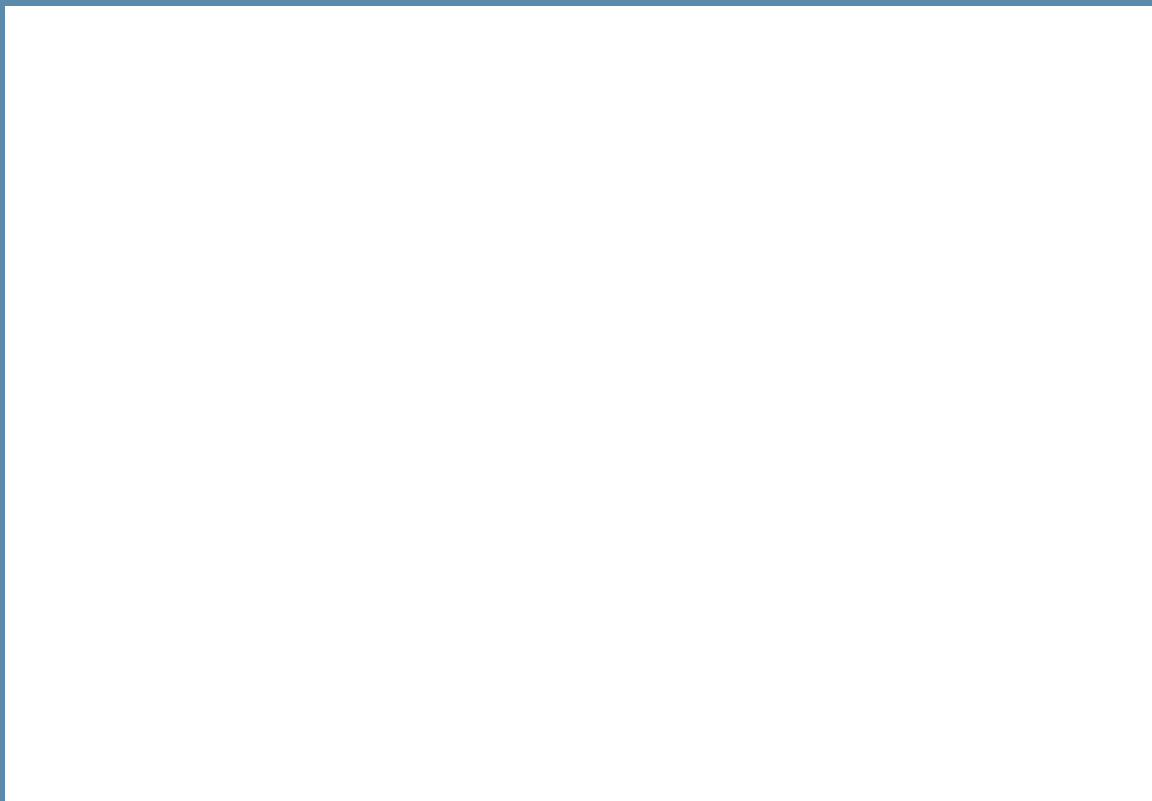
Beneficiary Segment Title

The Beneficiary Segment Title is important but no title can completely describe the group of people you are trying to help. Avoid jargon and keep it simple.



Beneficiary Description

Using multiple segmentation methods to describe your beneficiaries is a good practice, but focus first on Psychographic Segmentation to describe the habits and values of your beneficiaries.



The Job



We use 'job', 'task', 'role' interchangeably here to describe what someone is trying to do. It is important to understand both the actions the person is taking as well as the desired outcome of those actions. A problem exists when a person is trying to do a job and something is making that job difficult or impossible. To truly understand the problem we have to understand what our beneficiary is trying to accomplish.

Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) do many different jobs. A problem statement that lists 'TSOs' as the beneficiaries but does not specify which job the TSOs are performing is missing a critical component for defining the problem. The person checking identification and the person searching identified bags are both TSOs but a person wearing a face covering is challenge for the former but irrelevant for the latter.

Job Title

The Job Title is important but we could just as easily call it a 'task' title. Job titles that have formal definitions everyone can reference are ideal.

Job Actions

Describe the literal actions the beneficiary is taking as they do their job. 'Checking photo identifications of passengers' is an example.

Job Desired Outcomes

Describe what the beneficiary is trying to accomplish when they do the job. 'Ensure each passenger's photo identifications matches their physical appearance'

The Pain

This is what makes the job difficult or impossible to accomplish. Expect to iterate on how you define this and also expect those iterations to help you better scope the problem. For example, if the beneficiary is 'Baggage Scanner Operator' and the job is to 'screen carry-on baggage' it is insufficient to describe the pain as 'backpacks'.

A better description might be 'backpacks with unsecured straps', but is the pain the 'unsecured straps' or is it the gaps between the conveyor belt and the walls of the scanner? Is it all unsecured straps or just those on backpacks?

These iterations may cause you to revisit your description of the beneficiary and/or the job. This is a good thing and it means you are making progress.

Progressing through these iterations will accelerate your learning which will help you rapidly experiment with potential solutions as you continue to 'search' for 'fit.'




Pain Title

This title typically has the most words of any component of the problem statement because it is where you define the bounds or scope of the problem.



Pain Description

Describe what is currently making the job difficult or impossible to accomplish.



The Impact



So What? That is the question you are answering when you define the impact of the problem. More specifically, what happens if the job does not get done on time and to standard or what happens if the performing the job has negative consequences for the beneficiary? You can describe the impact in terms of 'Likelihood' and 'Consequence'. Problems that are very unlikely to occur but have catastrophic consequences when they do occur are why the insurance industry exists. Conversely, problems that are very likely to occur but have negligible consequences are probably not problems worth solving.

Impact Title

Keep the focus on words that describe what happens if the job does not get done on time and to standard or the beneficiary is harmed.

Impact Likelihood

Probabilities that the problem will occur are great but a range from 'Very Unlikely' to 'Very Likely' may be the best estimate you can make.

Impact Consequences

Quantifying the impact is normally best so if you can say '23% increase in wait time at the checkpoint' that is very helpful, but you only be able to define the consequence with qualifiers such as 'catastrophic'.

Final Problem Statement

