

# Designing for Growth:

a design thinking tool kit for managers

By Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie



Columbia University Press  
*Publishers Since 1893*  
New York Chichester, West Sussex  
Copyright © 2011 Columbia University Press  
All rights reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Liedtka, Jeanne.

Designing for growth : a design thinking tool kit for managers / by Jeanne Liedtka and Tim Ogilvie.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-231-15838-1 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-0-231-52796-5 (ebook)

1. Creative ability in business. 2. Organizational change. 3. Success in business. I. Ogilvie, Tim. II. Title.

HD53.L543 2011

658.4'063—dc22

2010053277



Columbia University Press books are printed on permanent and durable acid-free paper.

This book is printed on paper with recycled content.

Printed in the United States of America

c 1 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

References to Internet Web sites (URLs) were accurate at the time of writing. Neither the authors nor Columbia University Press is responsible for URLs that may have expired or changed since the manuscript was prepared.

## CHAPTER FOUR: JOURNEY MAPPING

**Journey mapping** is the representation, in a flowchart or other graphic format, of the customer's experience as he or she interacts with your company in receiving its product or service. These maps can depict the customer's actual or ideal journey. Either way, plotting its stages forces you to focus on your customers, rather than on your organization. As you map their journey, you're walking a mile in their shoes. Along the way, you are looking for the emotional highs and lows and the meaning that the experience holds for the customer. These are the key to identifying value-creating innovations.

During **What is**, journey mapping leads you through your customer's current experience, facilitated by data gathered through observation and interviewing. In doing so, it seeks to shift how you understand that experience. It provides a compelling description of unmet needs and helps you group the differences among customers and, in the process, identify opportunities for improvement. It is never about "proving" that your ideas are worthwhile (journey mapping is a no-selling zone). Instead, this tool is aimed at exploration that will yield ideas for future prototyping.

**When to use it:** Create the journey map as one of the first activities during **What is**, to document the existing customer experience and isolate the highs and lows. In the **What if** stage of a growth project, the journey map can help you generate ideas during brainstorming. During concept development (also part of **What if**), maps of ideal rather than actual experiences can be created to identify the novel elements of the concept and determine how to create them. Finally, during **What wows**, the journey map provides the elements for prototyping the new experience.

**Why journey mapping de-risks your growth project:** If we could add only one design tool to a manager's repertoire, it would be journey mapping. The number one reason growth ideas fail is that we misjudge what customers want. The surest way to de-risk a project is to develop a deeper feel for that. Journey mapping gets you closer to

customers' lives, to their problems and frustrations, as you seek to understand how to create value for them. This knowledge is the most important input to the search for profitable growth.

As recently as a decade ago, we would invite groups of customers into an air-conditioned room with a one-way mirror, where they would succumb to groupthink and inexact memory. Today, designers have adopted the methods of anthropologists, observing customers in their natural settings and using techniques like journey maps to capture what they see and hear. Focus groups conducted with the users of Tide laundry soap, for example, reported high satisfaction with the packaging. When researchers went into their laundry rooms, however, they found quite a few washing machines with soap-encrusted screwdrivers nearby. "I use that to get the box open," the subjects said.

The journey map is a powerful tool to shift your focus from "What does my company want?" to "What is the customer trying to do?" It invites problem-solving teams to form a strong empathetic connection with the customer, not as a data point or a demographic, but as an individual with hopes and challenges worth considering. This field is sometimes called *social research* or *design research*, and it rewards patience, thoughtfulness, and reflection. An experienced social researcher encouraged us to "listen gently" and resist the temptation to declare a quick victory.

Emotions are a central focus here, offering powerful clues to what is really going on inside our heads (and hearts). Dr. Jill Taylor, a former Harvard Medical School brain researcher, noted:

*"Sensory information streams in through our sensory systems and is immediately processed through our limbic system. By the time a message reaches our cerebral cortex for higher thinking, we have already placed a 'feeling' upon how we view that stimulation—is this pain or is this pleasure? Although many of us may think of ourselves as thinking creatures that feel, biologically we are feeling creatures that think."*<sup>7</sup>

Operations experts advise managers to "staple yourself to an order" to understand the flow of activities within your firm.<sup>8</sup> We're suggesting that you instead "staple yourself to a customer." It may change what you believe about his or her order.

## Getting Started

Here’s how journey mapping typically works, illustrated with a recent journey mapping project undertaken at the Darden School of Business:

1. **Select the customers whose experience you want to understand more fully.** Spend some time investigating the context in which they do the “job” that your offering contributes to. Secondary data sources like websites and blogs are often a good place to begin.

A faculty/student team undertook the mapping of the MBA student’s journey at Darden. The aim was to improve the educational experience and increase student satisfaction. As team members began the project, they reviewed a wealth of published information about this generation of students.

2. **Lay out your hypothetical view of what the customer’s journey looks like from beginning to end.** Be sure to include all steps in the journey, not just the ones in which your firm participates.

The MBA mapping team identified 11 key steps in the MBA journey, beginning with the decision to investigate getting the degree and ending with graduation.



## TIPS FOR INTERVIEWING

1. Put the interviewee at ease. Let him or her ask you questions.
2. Ask for stories and examples. Capture memorable quotes.
3. Be curious. Look for surprises and inconsistencies and probe these.
4. Use silence. Don't be afraid of it.
5. Pay attention. Gesture and tone can say more than words.
6. Paraphrase. Don't lead the witness.
7. Listen hard for inefficiencies, overexertion, and workarounds.

## WATCH THIS! BEHAVIORS TO LOOK FOR DURING ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography involves observing users in their natural context. That sounds clear enough. But what are we looking for? As you watch users interacting with your products or services, here are some behaviors to look for:

**Confusion:** Watch the users' facial expressions. A confused look signals an opportunity to make the experience more intuitive.

**Overexertion:** Notice moments when people must work too hard (even if they don't realize it) as they seek to solve their problem.

**Pain Points:** Look for moments that are acutely unpleasant or annoying. You will see it in users' facial expressions and body language.

**Appropriation:** Appropriation is the use of a product for a new purpose. Plastic milk cartons are often appropriated by college students to serve any number of functions.

**Skipped Steps:** If users skip a step, it might signal that they don't need, want, or understand the value of that step.

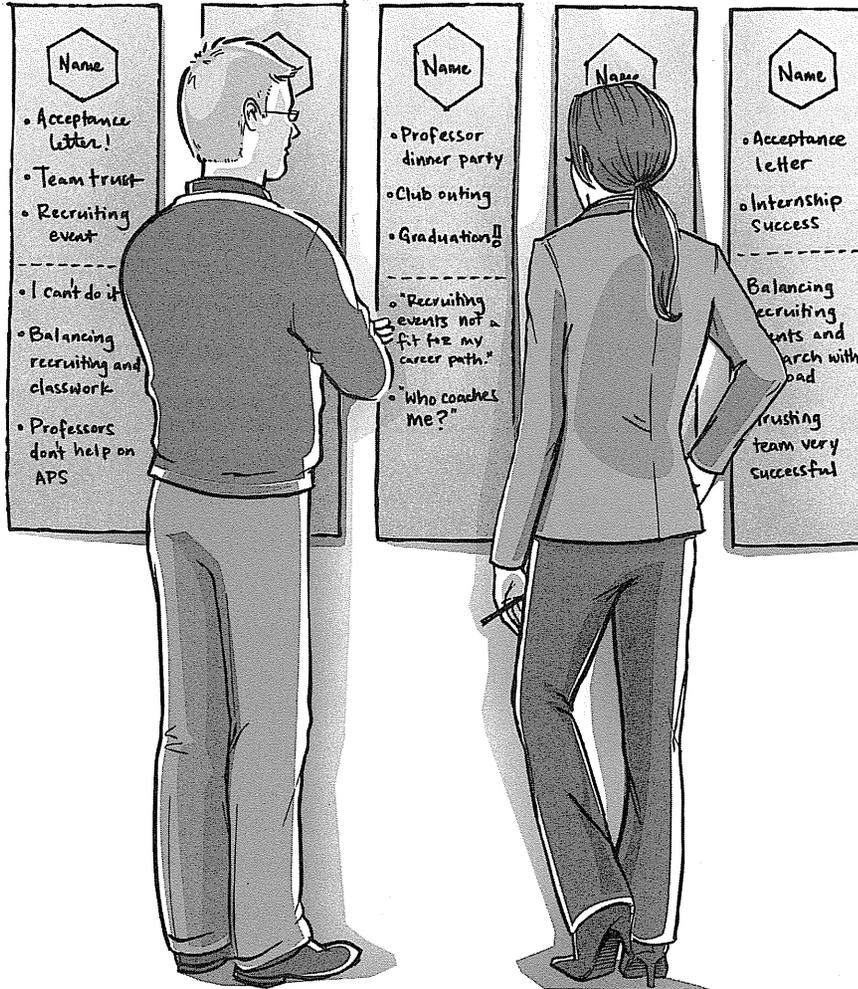
If you don't understand what you saw, you can always ask. Just save the asking for later, because your observation is often more valid than users' explanations; they are often unaware of their behaviors.

3. **Identify a small number of customers (generally 12 to 20)** representing the range of demographic attributes of interest to you.

16 Darden students, representing a cross-section of age, gender, nationality, marital status, and educational background, were identified.

4. **Conduct a few pilot interviews.** Using your hypothesized steps, ask the customer to walk you systematically through the journey to be sure that you are accurately capturing the steps and getting the kind of data you need. This is hard work—harder than you think. It is often necessary to probe a single step repeatedly in order to get your interviewee to reflect more deeply on what they were thinking and feeling and why. Don't settle for superficial answers. Keep pushing (gently).
5. **Finalize the questionnaire** on the basis of what you learned from the initial interviews and conduct the remaining interviews, focusing on the emotional highs and lows of the experience. We find it best for two researchers to interview one subject together. This allows the interviewer to give the interviewee his or her full attention while the second researcher takes notes.
6. **Identify the essential moments of truth and other themes from the interviews.** This is an intense phase of sense making. You begin by asking interviewees to summarize what they learned during each interview on a single template. Then you rip a sheet of flip chart paper down the middle and write the name of each interviewee across the top. As a team, you summarize the key emotional highs and lows as bullets on the flip chart. You then post these on a wall so that you can begin to look for themes.

The Darden mapping team prepared summaries of all interviews and began searching for patterns and insights.



7. **Study the themes you have uncovered** to identify a number of dimensions, usually psychographic rather than demographic, that you believe help reveal the differences in your data. We find a list of universal human needs, compiled by the Center for Nonviolent Communication, to be very useful in generating dimensions and have included it in the Appendix.

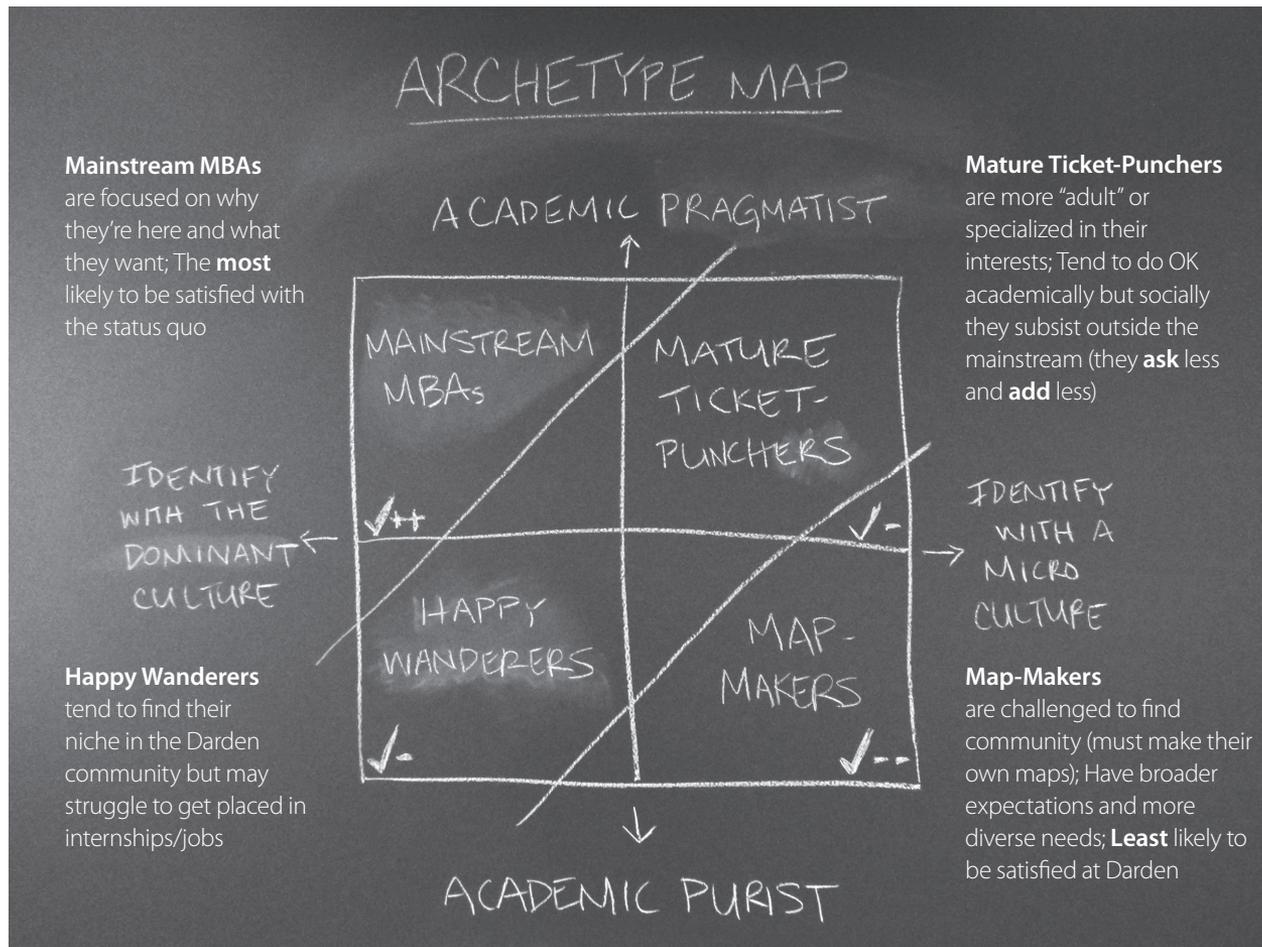
The Darden mapping team identified the following potentially differentiating dimensions:

- introvert ↔ extrovert
- footloose ↔ outside obligations
- embrace debate ↔ avoid debate
- culturally malleable ↔ culturally rigid
- ask for help ↔ help yourself
- high confidence ↔ high humility
- laser focus ↔ open exploring
- extension of college ↔ extension of career
- ▶ identify with dominant culture ↔ identity with micro culture
- ▶ pragmatist (career advancement) ↔ purist (holistic learner)

A more-sophisticated version of journey mapping continues by creating a set of personas:

8. **Select the two dimensions that you feel are most revealing.** This will create a 2x2 matrix, in which each quadrant represents an archetypal persona.

The Darden team created the matrix using the two dimensions selected:



9. **Position each interviewee into one of the quadrants.** Describe the archetype as fully as possible, focusing on the demographics and psychographics that make this archetype unique.

Here is one of the personas the MBA team invented, using the bottom left quadrant:



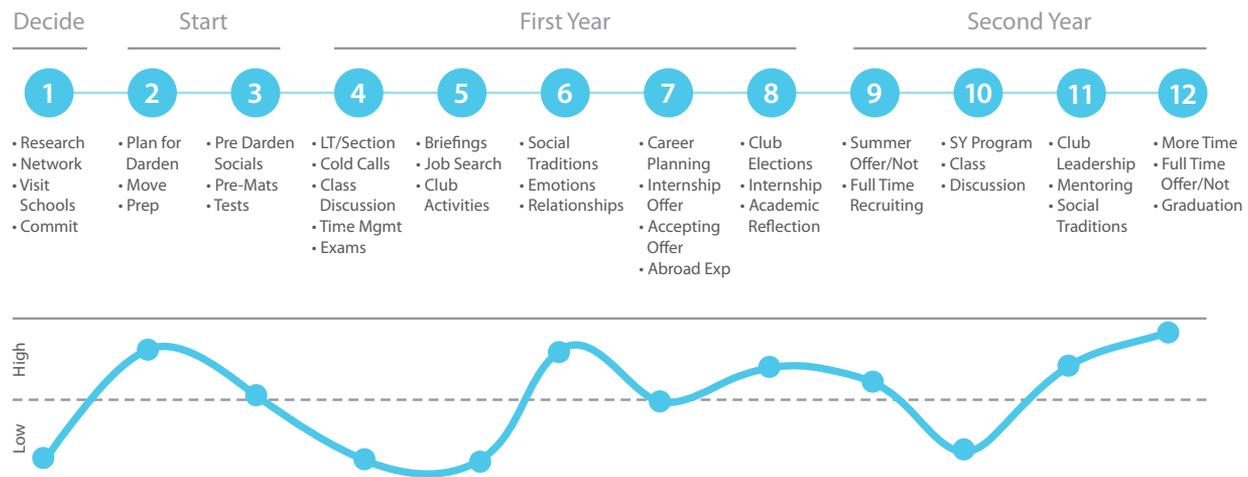
## Scott, the Happy Wanderer

- Scott enjoys Darden and assumes that getting a job will be easy with a degree from a top-tier school—as long as he does well in his courses.
- Scott has a BS from Cornell in mechanical engineering.
- After two years at a rewarding engineering job, Scott was told by the head of his department that he'd need a graduate degree to advance in the company.
- Scott applied to top-tier business schools and was accepted by several. He chose the one with the best weather and facilities.
- Scott focuses on his course work and enjoying club activities with peers more than on job-search activities.
- Scott is an extrovert, which occasionally helps him do well at recruiting events, but he doesn't have a strategic approach to the events; he mostly goes for fun.

Managers often want to know what percentage of the market a given persona represents. That is not the purpose of personas: They are not meant to represent actual target market segments. They are *devices*, meant instead to reveal deeper insights into the various kinds of experiences that customers are having and to help generate innovative ideas about how to improve those experiences.

**10. Map the journey of each persona.** Each persona should reveal its own set of low points. These are the “pain points” that represent the most valuable innovation opportunities for that customer type. Some low points may be shared across personas, making them a particularly fruitful target for innovation.

Here is Scott, the happy wanderer’s, Darden journey:



Looking at Scott’s journey map, we can make many observations. For example, his three most significant pain points involved his decision about what school to attend (too many choices), the job search (again, too many choices and not enough time to pursue all of them *and* study), and some classroom issues (other students are not as committed to their studies). All suggest fruitful innovation opportunities.

The MBA journey mapping project gave faculty an insight into the lives of students that profoundly altered many of their beliefs about the Darden experience. After a presentation by student members of the mapping team, one long-tenured faculty member commented, “I’ve learned more about the real lives of our students in the last hour than I have in the last 20 years!”

Faculty began, in particular, to appreciate that the experience was holistic yet very different for different students. For all students, what happened in the classroom, on the job market, or at a happy hour party were part of the same overall experience. This drew attention to the significance of the work of non-academic colleagues in areas like Student Career Services. Having previously dismissed the job search as a necessary evil, faculty began to see it was perhaps *the* most significant factor in students' experience at Darden—and that the disconnect between classroom activities and those related to the job hunt was a prime source of dissatisfaction. They also saw that different students needed and expected radically different things from that search process. Scott, for instance, needed a lot of upfront counseling to help him set some priorities. The “mature ticket-punchers,” on the other hand, entered Darden focused on a particular career and needed a very different kind of attention. This new understanding of students' current experience—as seen through their eyes—laid the foundation for significant innovation and ushered in a new level of collaboration between faculty and Career Services staff.

Journey mapping differs substantially from market research tools such as focus groups and surveys. Managers trained in those methods are often uncomfortable with the findings of ethnographic data because the number of subjects is much smaller. But a small sample is a deliberate choice, because the data gathering is deep and intense. The process uses observation and intensive interviews (ideally done in real time, while the customer is in the middle of the experience), in which the researcher walks the customer through each element of an experience, using open-ended questions. These may be supplemented by photo diaries and videos.

Like visualization, journey mapping does not produce generalizable or statistically significant results; it does not “prove” anything. Instead, it spurs creative thinking about the unarticulated needs of customers, often inaccessible using methods with larger sample sizes. Its aim is not to produce a set of recommendations for action; rather, it is to produce a set of *hypotheses* for testing.

## Try This at Home

Pick an everyday process, such as taking your child to school in the morning. Follow these steps to map the journey. Remember, the focus is on representing **What is**, not on brainstorming new possibilities.

1. List eight to ten steps in the process, starting with “Child wakes up” and ending with “School day starts.”
2. Take an 8 1/2-by-11-inch sheet of paper and orient it horizontally in front of you. Draw a horizontal line across it, towards the top of the page. Plot the eight to ten steps as points on the journey represented by numbered circles. Above each step, label the person or institution that is primarily responsible.



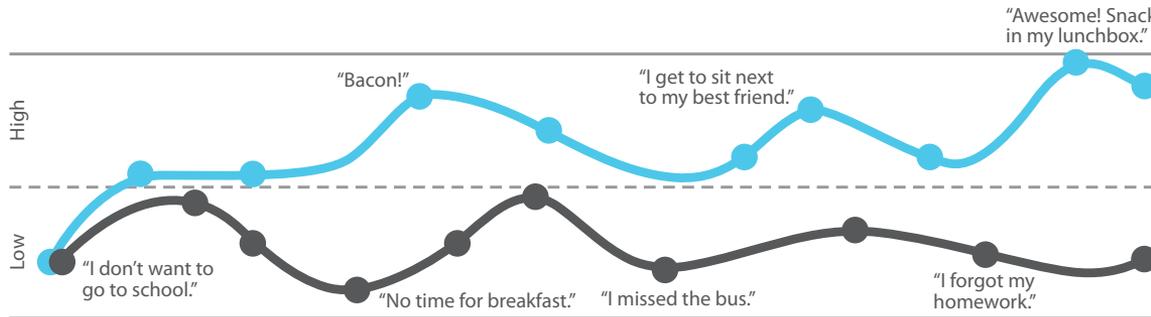
The resulting map contains the full sequence of steps but shows the entire journey as neutral. Now we can make some judgments about the experience.

3. Start by drawing a large rectangle below the journey map that runs the length of the journey. Divide the rectangle in half horizontally. On the left side of the paper, label the area above the horizon line as emotional high points and the area below as low points. This will let you capture the range of emotional highs and lows.

Now you will map the emotional highs and lows of the journey from your child’s point of view.

4. Draw the best case scenario of the emotions that your child would experience throughout the journey. If everything went smoothly, what would be the best parts? Which parts would still be negative emotionally? Make a list of three or four emotional high points you have observed (or heard about from your child) and plot those points along the journey in the “emotional highs.” Label each high point with a short description, such as “gets to sit next to friend.” Connect the dots of the best case scenario with a smooth blue line.
5. Next, draw the worst case scenario of the emotions that your child would experience throughout the journey. If everything went wrong, what would be the worst parts of the journey? Which parts would still be positive emotionally? Start by making a list of three or four emotional low points and plot those points along the

journey in the “emotional lows” box. Label each low point with a short description, such as “misses the bus.” (Note: A key step can often contain emotional highs and lows.) Connect the dots of the worst case scenario with a smooth black line.



6. Reflect on your work. Now the journey map reflects multiple dimensions: Sequence, responsible party, and emotional variability. Look at the entire map and see what jumps out at you. Which steps have low points but not high points? What might be some unmet needs for your child? For you? Where do *your* emotional low points occur?
7. As the final step in the process, make a list of two or three possible unmet needs for you and for your child. As a reference, consider these ten needs from Center for Nonviolent Communication’s list of universal human needs:

Connection	Physical Well-being	Peace	Autonomy
Affection	Rest/sleep	Ease	Choice
Consideration		Harmony	Independence
Inclusion		Inspiration	
Safety			

The goal isn’t to nail it; the goal is to identify new hypotheses that may help you reinvent the process. For what it’s worth, an acquaintance told us her daughter came up with the idea of wearing her clothes to bed in order to have enough time in the morning to wake up gently and eat a proper breakfast before school. An unorthodox solution, but one that met the needs of that family!