

Empathy Mapping Undercover Boss



Ray Blanchette | CEO
Brittney | Bar Manager

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February 2021

INTRODUCTION

TASK

user. It is important to understand the user's feelings, thoughts, and experience things as they would. In other words, a designer must empathize with the user. An excellent way to gain this knowledge is through empathy mapping. This exercise helps organize all of the data collected to share with others.

This presentation will showcase two empathy maps created from watching the television show 'Undercover Boss.'

Background

'Undercover Boss' films senior managers or owners of large corporations who go 'undercover' within their own companies. The bosses perform their subordinates' duties to understand what their employees deal with daily. Often, the boss is looking to make improvements from what they've learned to better the company.

The episode I watched featured Ray Blanchette, the CEO of TGI Fridays, a global restaurant chain known for its fun atmosphere. Blanchette is looking to find out how the restaurants are run and to find ways to increase traffic and improve business.

INTRODUCTION

Ray Blanchette | CEO

All through middle school and high school Blanchette worked on a farm. He liked working hard and making money. He started at TGI Fridays as Manager-in-Training and worked his way up. He was with the company for 18 years, left for 12, and came back as CEO—his grateful for all of the opportunities TGI Fridays has given him.



INTRODUCTION

Brittney | Bar Manager

Brittney is a very friendly, welcoming person. She is always smiling, and she's a great teacher. Before starting at TGI Fridays, she battled drug addiction. She is thankful the company supported her when she needed to attend meetings or miss work for other personal reasons. Overall she has a very take-charge attitude.



EMPATHY MAP | RAY



Think & Feel

- Concern for how the restaurants are run
- Proud of his hardworking nature
- Eager to learn
- Pleased that Brittney does everything by the book
- Cares about his employees

See

- Smile warm smiles from employees
- Concern for lack of management at the restaurant
- Shock regarding Brittney's hard past
- Disappointment that there is no help from the corporate office to fix a roof issue

Pain

- People favor food delivery over dining in
- Restaurant to corporate communication is broken
- Restaurants are not managed well

Hear

- Encouraging words from Brittney: "That's exactly what you're looking for"
- Laughing
- "I got faith in ya"
- Frustration with corporate office

Say & Do

- "Liked working and getting paid for it"
- "Felt like home"
- "Repairs and maintenance get bottlenecked at corporate"
- "Want Brittney to thrive"

Gain

- More profitable business
- Better run company
- Loyal employees
- trained staff

EMPATHY MAP | BRITTNEY



Think & Feel

- Very patient with Ray but thinks he slow
- Frustration with lack of corporate support
- She can take charge of her life and the restaurant
- Grateful for a promotion

See

- Happy welcoming person
- Ray's sympathy
- Nodding in agreement
- Tears of joy

Pain

- She received no training and there is not restaurant General Manager
- The corporate office lack of communication to necessary repairs
- Tough past

Hear

- Ray trying to learn
- Ray acknowledgment "You've dealt with hard stuff"
- "You come across as the boss"
- "Powerful Story"

Say & Do

- "Looking for someone who can multi-task and has a good memory"
- "Pick up the pace"
- "Main part is dealing with people and jumping from one thing to another"
- "Waiting for corporate approval is a pain in the ass"

Gain

- Career growth
- Opportunity
- Second Chance

CONCLUSION | UNDERCOVER BOSS

Every day people follow the same routines and repeat the same patterns; it is easy to only concern yourself with the items you see every day. Undercover Boss is an opportunity for higher-level management to become grounded in the company's day-to-day processes and the company and the lives of its employees.

Blanchette transforming into "Keith" to be a bartender or kitchen help gave him the insight he needed to help his company grow. His practice in empathy has led him to provide additional support to the employees who helped him in the forms of promotions and monetary gifts. However, Blanchette plans on providing all employees with improved training, more communication, and support.

Even though Blanchette rose through the ranks to become CEO, it took him thirty years to do it. His day to day responsibilities prevent him from working with the staff at the restaurant level. This show helped him remember where he came from, and it gave him the guidance he needed to make the changes necessary to improve the business.

CONCLUSION | EMPATHY MAPS

Watching the episode unfold- listening to both Blanchette's and Brittney's comments made me realize empathy is a powerful tool. At the beginning of the episode, Blanchette thought a menu change and new promotions would help the business bring more traffic. In the end, he realized the simple marketing tactics would not help, instead, he found the solutions he needed to implement from his employees.

The exercise in empathy mapping helped pull out critical pieces of information about each person. It honed in on her challenges, motivations, and how they sometimes coped. From the map, it was clear that TGI Fridays is a company that supports their employees to a point- for example, they gave Brittney the time off she needed to attend support groups. However, employee training and corporate cooperation were lacking. When my maps were complete, I felt I understood Blanchette and Brittney. I felt what they felt and was able to infer their past experiences.