

F02 / CUSTOMER PROBLEM DISCOVERY

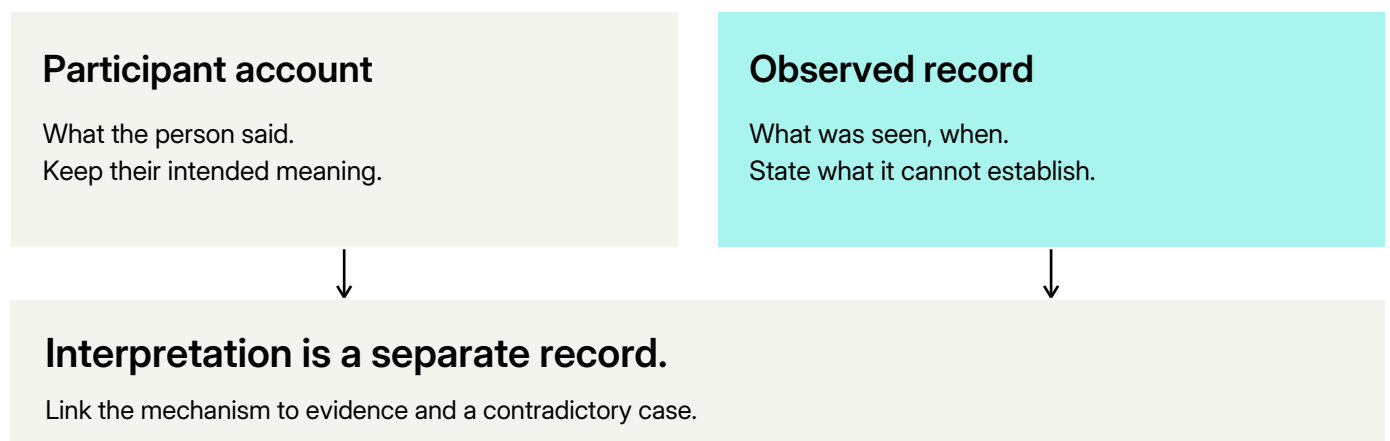
Discover the problem through real work

Reconstruct specific episodes, compare contradictory cases and choose the next question to investigate.

SESSION	TEAM	OUTPUT
45 minutes per interview	Researcher + frontline user	One problem to investigate

01 RECONSTRUCT ONE RECENT EPISODE

Trigger > sequence > workaround > consequence



Reported / observed / corroborated / inferred describe provenance.

NEXT DECISION

Choose the next question to investigate.

A few useful interviews do not establish market prevalence or purchase intent.

Record provenance, not a confidence score. Sources and limits: page 5.

EPISODE RECORD

Reconstruct one recent episode

Keep the participant's words, inspected evidence and researcher interpretation in separate fields. Use anonymous participant codes.

PARTICIPANT CODE / ROLE / CONTEXT

EPISODE DATE / PERMISSION CONDITIONS

TRIGGER / INTENDED RESULT

WHAT COUNTED AS FINISHED?

ACTUAL SEQUENCE / OBSTACLE / WORKAROUND / WHY IT WAS ACCEPTABLE

PARTICIPANT WORDS / REPORTED ACCOUNT

OBSERVED ARTEFACT / WHAT IT SUPPORTS

RESEARCHER INTERPRETATION / MECHANISM TO INVESTIGATE

CONSEQUENCE / WHO EXPERIENCES IT

WHEN DID THIS NOT HAPPEN?

Record provenance: reported / observed / corroborated / inferred.

COMPARISON AND NEXT QUESTION

Keep the counterexamples visible

Compare episodes without turning comments from one firm into independent market evidence. Recruit next to resolve the largest gap.

Episode / context	Mechanism / consequence	Support / corroboration	Counterexample / unknown

RECRUITMENT COVERAGE / MISSING ROLES / SELECTION OR TIMING BIAS

BOUNDED PROBLEM STATEMENT / WHAT THE EVIDENCE CAN SUPPORT

NEXT INVESTIGATION / DECISION / OWNER / DATE / STOPPING CONDITION

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

The problem is upstream of writing

Eight exploratory interviews at a hypothetical Sharjah packaging supplier cover estimation, sales, planning and commercial management.

Observation in reconstructed episodes	Records
Waiting for material specifications	3
Rework after changed quantities	2
Nonstandard margin awaiting one manager	1
Ordinary quotes supported by existing templates	2

These are reconstructed records from one firm, not an estimate of prevalence across all quotations or UAE businesses.

NEXT INVESTIGATION

Test a structured intake checklist for one quotation category.

The working explanation is that missing specifications prevent reliable costing. A redacted email supports one case, but the planner's interpretation still needs further evidence.

Keep the two ordinary cases: existing templates already support quick preparation.

FACILITATION AND SOURCES

Run the session

Prepare the inputs in the research companion. Retain evidence, unknowns and counterexamples with the decision record.

BEFORE	Define the uncertainty Keep the preferred answer separate from the research question.
BEFORE	Recruit contrasting participants Include different roles, ordinary cases and effective workarounds.
20 MIN	Reconstruct a recent episode Follow the sequence without presenting the proposed solution.
10 MIN	Inspect permitted evidence Record what each artefact can and cannot establish.
10 MIN	Explore consequences Ask why the workaround was acceptable.
5 MIN	Check your interpretation Invite correction and ask when the problem did not occur.
AFTER	Compare records Resolve different interpretations against the notes.
DECIDE	Choose the next investigation Record the evidence that would change direction.

SELECTED SOURCES / ACCESSED 16 SEP 2026

Steve Blank / Customer Development Manifesto / 2009

IDEO.org / Design Kit: Interview

Design Council / Framework for Innovation

Original episode and contradiction protocol. Combined method not field validated. A small discovery wave does not estimate market prevalence or prove purchase intent. No proprietary toolkit or Test Card is reproduced.

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