Affinity Diagram (aka Highlighting)

Purpose:
1. To make sense of a lot of data (at least 20 pieces) at the beginning of the process. Can be particularly useful to create common knowledge when every team member has different knowledge and expertise. To summarize all the data from the understand and observe phases of the process and help create insights.
2. To better understand the essential insights after an ideation session and to help narrow down the areas of interests.

Steps:
1. Capture the information you have gathered on Post-it notes.
   a) Include just one item per Post-it
   b) Write with a pen that can be read from 6 feet away
2. Share the information, post it on one or more easle sheets, and cluster using one of these two processes:
   a) Random placement and silent clustering:
      • Place the Post-it notes randomly on the wall or paper
      • Without talking, engage all participants in silent clustering. Each person moves Post-it notes around to place them with other notes with which they fit. If one participant does not agree with the position in a cluster, he/she can move the note. If the disagreement persists, the information can be duplicated on another Post-it note and be then clustered in two places.

   Tip 1: Clustering silently helps speed the process and makes it more efficient by avoiding over-rationalization.

   Tip 2: Do not try to fit everything in large clusters; smaller more specific clusters and loners are useful.

   b) Discuss placement in the cluster as you share. Avoid extensive conversation, however.

Outcome of a typical affinity diagram generally contains five to ten clusters with a summary sentence.

Source: http://baran-systems.com/Products/Affinity%20Diagram%20for%20Excel/index_concept.htm
Achieving Dynamic Balance between Diverging and Converging (con’t)

3. Create a name for each cluster that summarizes the essence of it
   a) If the cluster is composed of data, identify insights that show a deep understanding of the situation, user needs or pain points.
   b) If it is cluster if composed of ideas, identify the core or essence of the idea
   c) Create a title that is interesting and memorable: think about a book title or the headline of a newspaper or magazine article
      • For example: rather than “saving water” use “tap water is the new coke”
      • Or rather than “older people are scared of using a computer” write “overwhelmed by technology”
   d) Shift post-its among clusters, combine clusters or create new clusters as you discuss the labels

   Tip 1: If there are too many clusters and time is short, focus on a few either via discussion or with a vote if necessary.

   Tip 2: Use several charts or a long piece of butcher paper to be sure you have enough space.

4. Optional: When done, you may want to write down a summary of the clusters on a clean sheet. If you do so, however, keep the old papers with the details on them as you may want to refer back to them or use them in another way.

“Don’t be afraid to take a big step when one is indicated. You can’t cross a chasm in two small steps.”
- David Lloyd George, Welsh Statesman

Understand
Observe
Extract Insights
Ideate
Experiment