

## RESEARCH CASE STUDY

# How one fast-food company is using empathy to improve the ordering process.



Mental model diagram exercise led by Indi Young.

**The problem:** A rapid-serve multi-national restaurant chain engaged Indi to help them inspire innovative ideas for in-store menus and drive-thru mobile connectivity features. Instead of focusing on menu design or mobile phone features, Indi re-framed the inquiry from solution-facing to problem-facing:

*"How do people decide what to grab for a quick lunch?"*

**The research solution:** This re-framing augmented and balanced the client's conventional solution-focused approach and allowed the client team to gain deeper understanding of their users' reasoning, regardless of the "product" or "service" chosen. It went a little deeper than what is defined in design thinking.

Instead of focusing on questions about food or mobile phone features, problem-facing research emphasizes the capability to explore outside the solution space, allowing the team to access broader, deeper knowledge to guide its product strategy and innovation.

**The results:** The data gathered from re-framing in this manner was represented in a room-wrapping mental model diagram. The team also gained common language, better collaboration, and the capacity for future exploration outside the solution space--to study something else, without any reference to solution, like how people decide to cut calories, and then apply that understanding of different segments' thinking styles to design and offer food that encourages healthier habits.