

GATHERING SME STORIES TO CRAFT RELEVANT AND ENGAGING SCENARIOS

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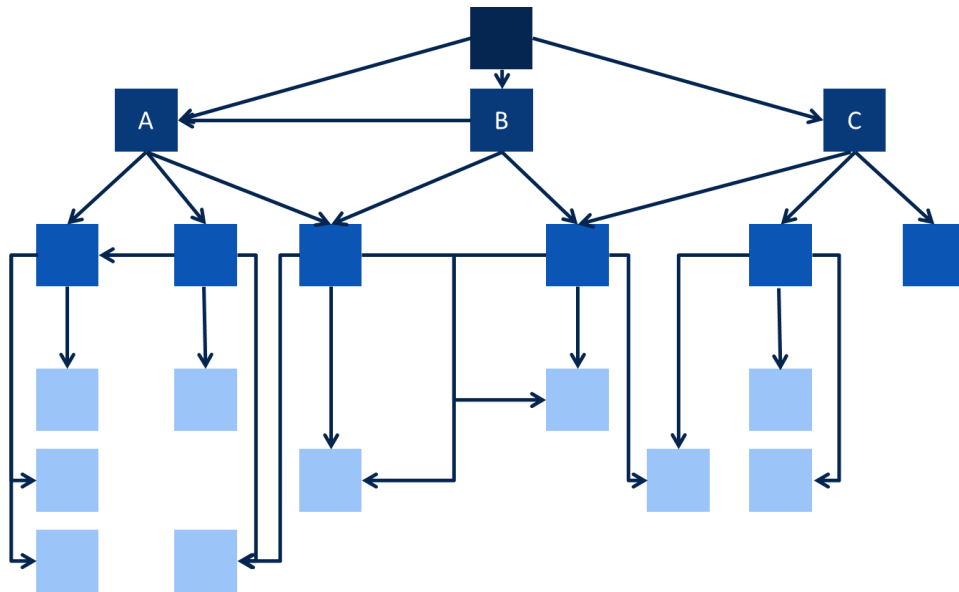


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Identify the need

Start with a bit of needs assessment. It doesn't need to be extensive, but this helps with the scoping as well as pointing to where you might follow up for stories from the SME.

1. What is the problem?
2. How will you measure success?
3. What are people doing that they shouldn't?
4. When does the problem happen?
5. Where is this a problem?
6. How big is the problem?
7. What else should I have asked?

Adapted from "[How to Conduct a Lightning-Fast Needs Assessment Clients Will Love](#)" by Sardek Love

Identify the desired behavior

This clarifies what you identified during the needs assessment.

- What do you want people to do differently as a result of this training?
- If this training is successful, what will that look like in their day-to-day work?
- What is happening right now that shouldn't be happening?
- What isn't happening currently that you want to happen?

Gather details about the behavior

Keep drilling down to get more details on that desired behavior. SMEs will often start with general ideas like “provide quality customer service” or “improve communication.” That’s not enough, especially for a branching scenario. You need to continue to ask follow-up questions until you get more concrete information.

- If you took a photo or video of that behavior, what would it look like?
- What would it sound like in a conversation?
- Can you give me an example of how someone used this technique successfully? What were they able to accomplish by doing it right?
- Tell me about a time when you saw this happen in a real situation.
- Walk me through this process. What would it look like if they did everything perfectly?
- Are there any exceptions or edge cases where you might handle it differently?

Uncover mistakes and problems

Besides talking to the SMEs, it’s also helpful if you can talk to actual users (or people who have learned this skill recently). They will often identify other issues than what the SMEs might think are the primary problems.

- What are the common mistakes people make?
- Tell me about a time where someone got stuck in this process.
- Tell me more about that mistake. What do you think is going through people’s heads when they do that?
- What does it look like when they make this mistake?
- What problems do users report?
- What makes this hard for newbies?
- How do you know when it hasn’t been done correctly?
- How are people doing it wrong currently?
- What is most confusing about this to people doing it for the first time?
- Why do people do this behavior wrong?
- What are the most common issues reported to the help desk?

Identify the consequences

In addition to the mistakes and problems, you need to identify the consequences. You can also flip these questions around to get the consequences and effects of good decisions. For example, “What results do you see that tell you that things went well?”

- What happens if someone makes that mistake?
- Can you give me an example of a time when someone did this wrong? What happened because of this mistake?
- In that situation, what happened next?
- If someone [makes a specific mistake], what happens? What’s the effect?
- What does that consequence look like in practice?
- What results do you see that tell you something went wrong?

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For further reading, check out the full collection of my posts on [Storytelling and Scenarios for Learning](#).