**Mission 3 – Creating EPOs**

**Mindset**

“Precision for me means primarily three things:

1. A well-defined and well-calculated design of the work;
2. The evocation of clear, incisive, and memorable visual images;
3. A language as precise as possible, both in terms of vocabulary and in capturing the nuances of thought and imagination.”

— Italo Calvino

**General instructions**

Since you began working on the project, you’ve discovered many interesting areas. You’ve likely also realised that you’ve only scratched the surface and there’s much more to learn and discover. However, time is a limited resource. There is no perfect opportunity or magical insight, only “the time to decide!”

This phase is dedicated to narrowing the scope of the project by identifying two areas of opportunity (Note: not solutions but needs!) to focus on for deeper understanding. To do this, you need to reorganise what you have discovered and make decisions on what is most relevant: reorganising does not mean discarding the rest of your research or that the research phase is over. Keep planned activities in parallel and start the convergence process. Collect the research elements that seem most promising; you will use them in the “Evidences” section of the EPO tool.

No learning is wasted in a design research process, and you may revisit what you set aside later in the process. Additionally, continue to conduct research if necessary.

TIP: Remember to take photos and document everything, especially the reasons behind your choices.

**Tools:**

**Activity 1: Identify themes and recognize relationships**

Now is the time to review all your research from the first activity to organise your space and mind. Look at your research from two perspectives: (1) the people and their needs, (2) the role of discipline in facing the challenge. Use these perspectives to trace connections through your research to identify recurring patterns.

Step back and view all your discoveries from a higher perspective. Try to notice where patterns might emerge. What quotes, ideas, or other thoughts have repeated themselves? These are likely starting points for interesting themes. Prioritise the information and organise it into clusters.

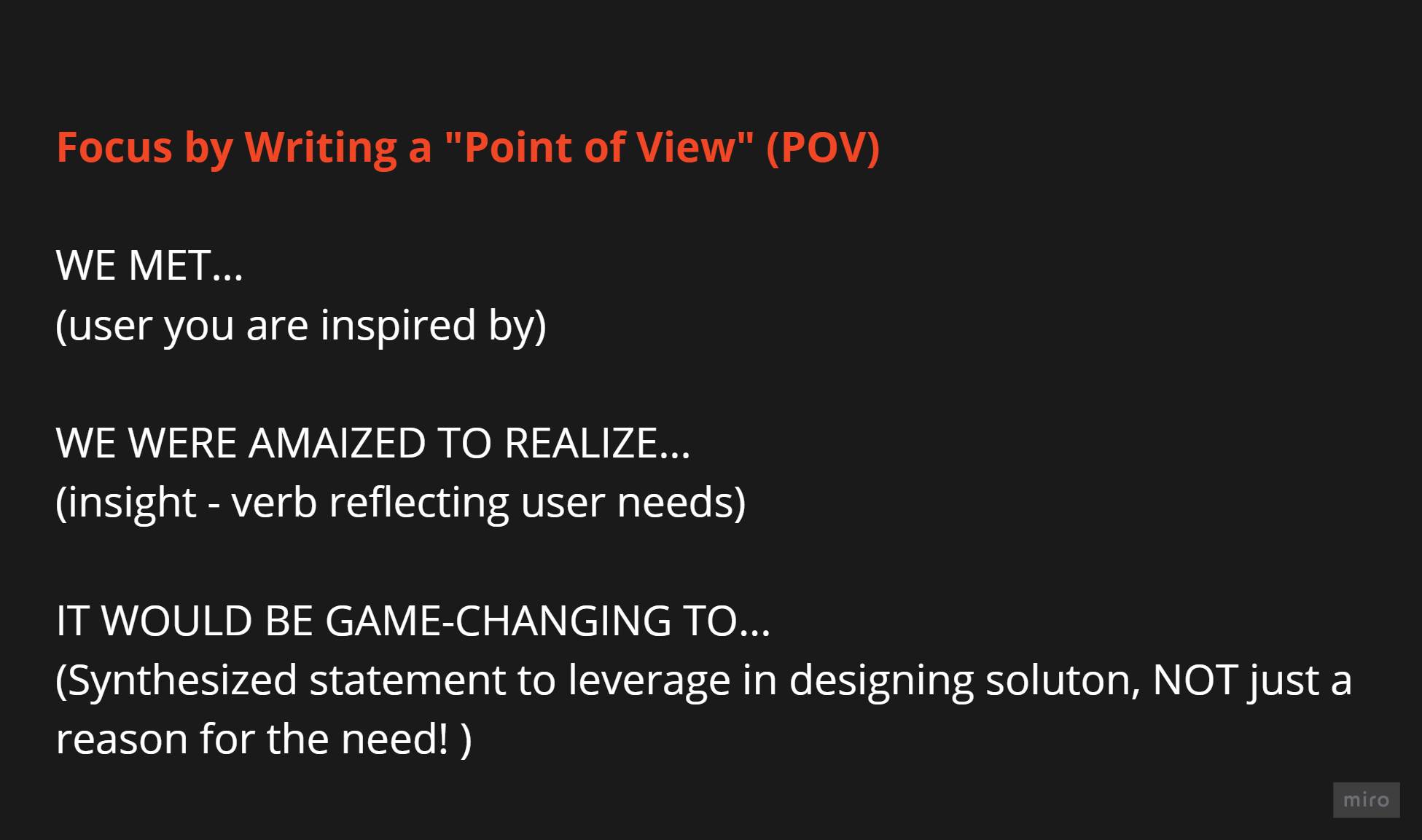
* What has been mentioned by many people?
* What is most important to the organisation?
* What are the recurring themes?
* How are they connected?
* What is the common thread?

Don’t be afraid to group and reorganise your categories; this is a non-linear process and relationships will change as you continue to process and organise the information. You are practising interpretation and dancing with ambiguity, so it’s important to view your research information non-literally and try to uncover new meanings through intuition.

Insights are concise expressions of what you have learned that is interesting and new from your research activities. They combine observation with inference (abductive thinking) to create new meaning. Insights highlight an understanding of the problem and are unexpected, not obvious, and above all, interesting.

**Attention:** Convergence, sense-making, and synthesis are challenging mental tasks. Try to be fully present, focused, and concise in your discussions.

**Activity 2: Trust your instinct**

You might feel like you need another hour to continue your research. But the problem with not focusing is that if you keep working on different topics, your knowledge will continue to diverge and increase. You’ll end up with a lot of data but no concrete actions. Once you identify an opportunity, you need to delve into it, rather than waiting for an imaginary “perfect opportunity” still to be discovered. Even if the opportunity doesn’t turn out to be useful, you can learn much more from a bad decision than from not making any decision at all. 

TIP: A useful tool for focusing is the POV (Point Of View) framework.

**Activity 3: Redefine the challenge**

Now that you have a better understanding of the users and the design context and have discovered a range of interesting needs and opportunities to address, look back at your design challenge. What are the 3-5 main insights that best address your challenge? Have you found the root cause? Express your point of view. Ask yourself:

* Where does it make the most sense and have the greatest impact to intentionally focus our efforts?
* What is the best story you can tell, inspiring and supported by your research?

Be brave!

Identify which topics seem to generate the most energy in your team. Which topics generate the most enthusiasm and questions? Topics with more momentum often have the greatest potential.

**Activity 4: From problem to opportunities, showing the evidence**

It is important to support your challenge-reframe with relevant evidence that demonstrates the rationale and reasons behind your choice. In this case, “*Show, don’t tell*” is your mantra.

Use the problem-opportunity-evidence matrix to show the potential of your new research focus. Try to create two opportunities for each EPO to facilitate the next convergence phase, for a total of two EPOs.

