Responding to Customer Needs: Empathy

# Empathy: What Not to Do

Whether it is a fellow student, a co-worker, or a customer, the ability to empathize is an important aspect of helping others meet their needs.

[See this example of what not to do](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey4dEjETGZw). While you watch you will be able to identify all kinds of ways that he could have been more supportive.

# Desire Paths

It is difficult to alter customer behavior. Just having a good solution or a better idea does not mean that people will flock to your way of doing things.

Check out this article on desire paths: [*Least Resistance: How Desire Paths can Lead to Better Design*](https://99percentinvisible.org/article/least-resistance-desire-paths-can-lead-better-design/).

So, what ways can you help support people by accommodating their existing behaviors?

# Connection to Innovation

Remember the factors of an innovation:

**Relative Advantage** - Is it better than what it replaces?

**Compatibility** - Is it similar enough to what we are doing that the change isn’t so drastic?

**Complexity** - Is it relatively easy to understand?

**Trialability** - Can it be piloted before it is adopted?

**Observability** - Can we measure the results?

## Compatibility

User experience and design are not just for website and building sidewalks. Let us focus on Compatibility here...

**...***Is it similar enough to what we are doing that the change isn’t so drastic*?

A better way is not better if no one does it.

# Finding Solutions

We help others find solutions when we understand their needs and how they already behave.

* What is the problem that needs to be solved?
* What are people already doing to address that problem?
* What connections can we make to other topics that might help us inform our thinking about potential solutions?

Sometimes it helps to think about it from another point of view. You might ask yourself, what would Apple do? Or Google, or Batman? Yep. Even a silly mental exercise helps with your creativity and problem solving.