

Problem Statements

Starting with your research data

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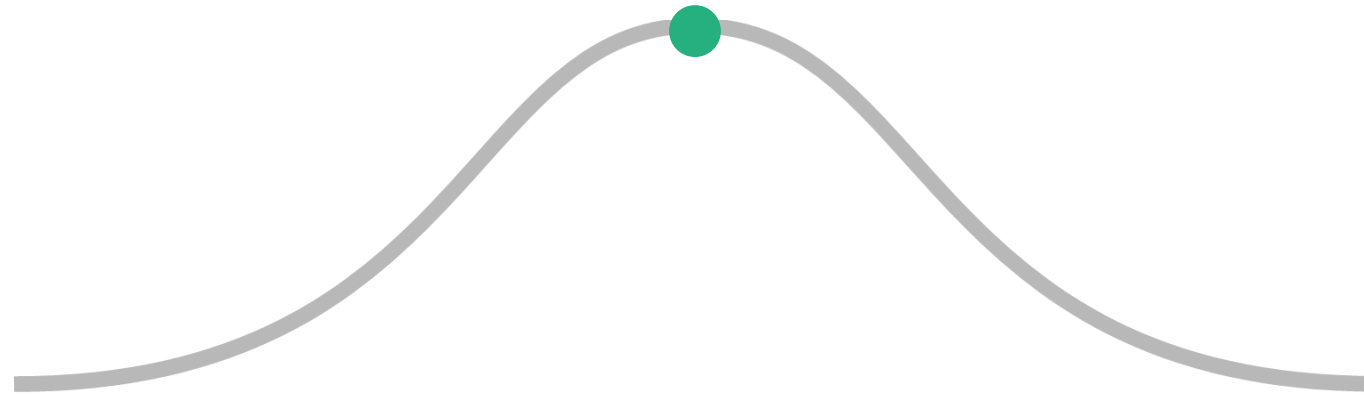
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So much data!

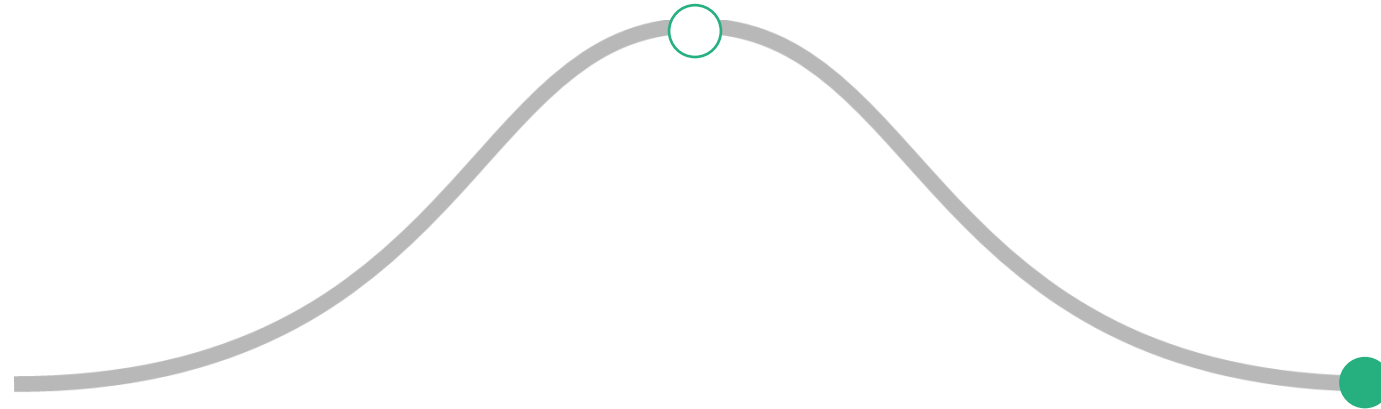
Problem statements

Simplicity is on the other side of complexity.



Problem statements

A problem statement kicks in to get over the complexity curve.



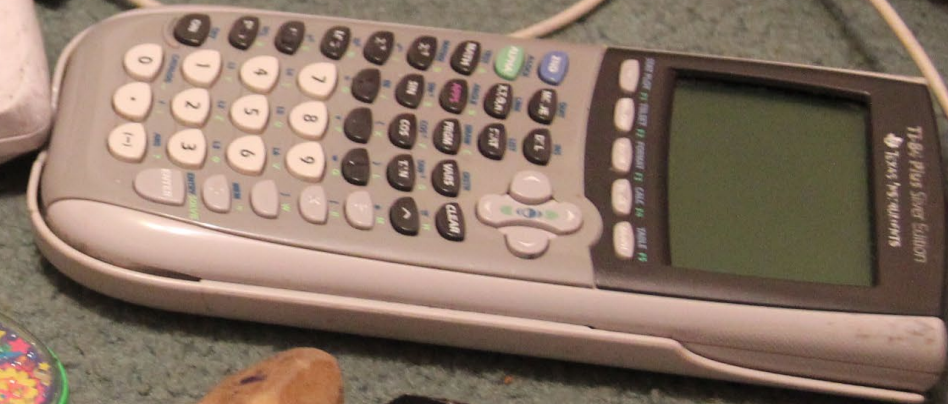
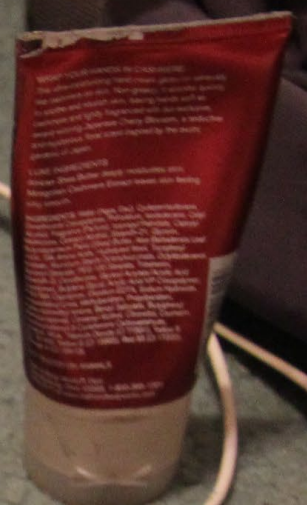
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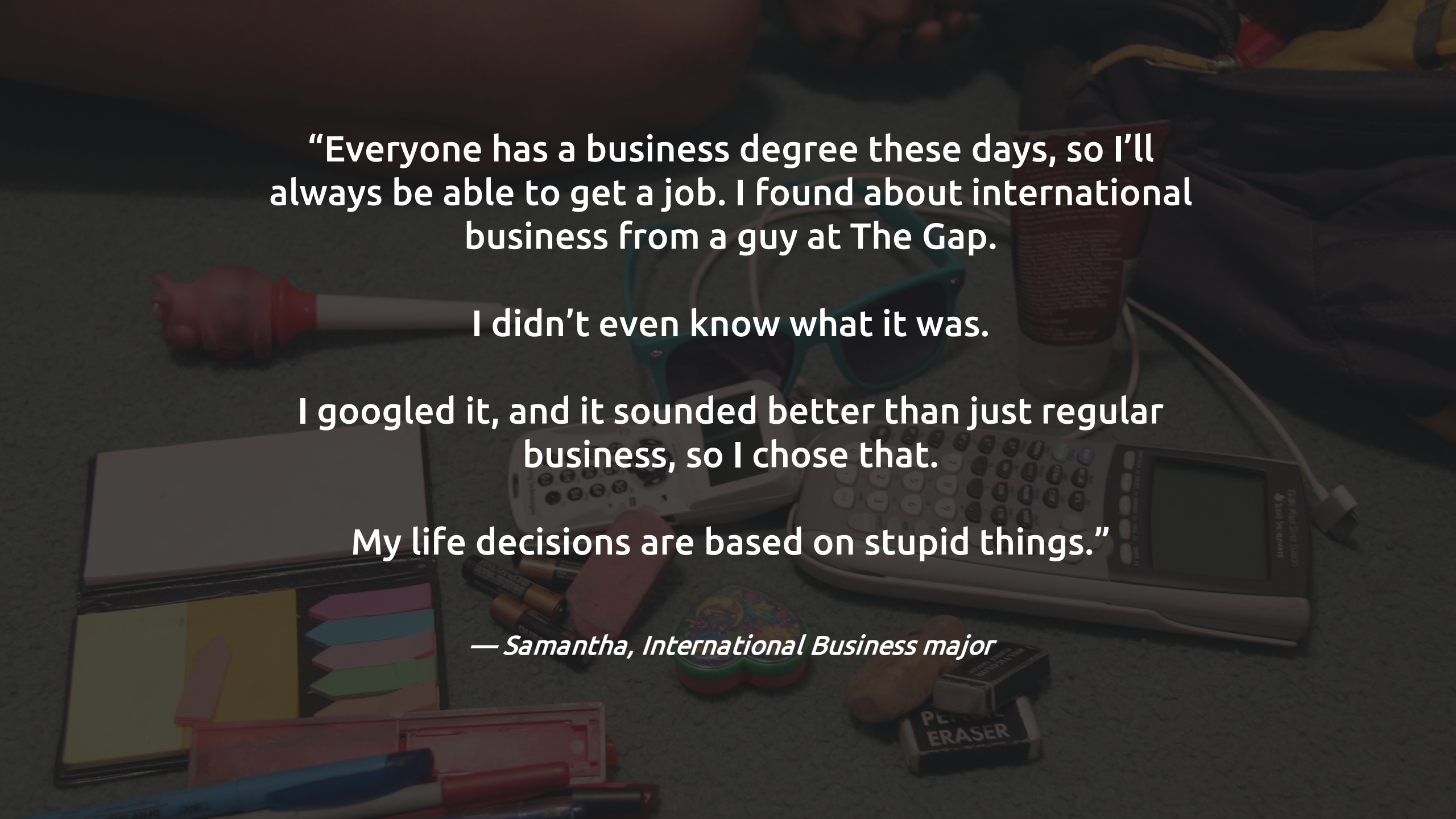
A problem statement is a succinct description of the issue that needs to be addressed, or the latent need that needs to be filled.

A problem statement:

- Forces us to consider the connection between the problems identified during synthesis and the ability we have to deliver value.
- Helps us identify which stories and insights best build a persuasive argument.
- Describes an unmet want, need or desire.
- Presents an opportunity space for new or revised designs.

For example...



A desk with various items including a keyboard, mouse, sunglasses, a cup, a pen, and sticky notes.

“Everyone has a business degree these days, so I’ll always be able to get a job. I found about international business from a guy at The Gap.

I didn’t even know what it was.

I googled it, and it sounded better than just regular business, so I chose that.

My life decisions are based on stupid things.”

— *Samantha, International Business major*



WANTED



“That? That’s a purple squirrel. It’s really rare. Like a good candidate.

“Students say ‘I could do anything—I think I could do this, I think I could do that.’ You couldn’t say something worse to a recruiter.

Show your skills. Be specific. And don’t apply to five of my jobs, because you aren’t going to get any of them.”

— *Meg, Recruiter*

Student Insight

Students think they have an idea of what employers want in a candidate, but they are often wrong.

Employer Insight

Recruiters make snap judgments, directly impacting a candidate's chances of success.

It's important to be viewed as having a broad set of interests and being open for anything.

I don't really understand what happens during the hiring process.

The key to getting a job is having a resume and cover letter.

I don't know how to show specific skills. I'm not sure I *have* specific skills.

Student Insight

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Recruiters make snap judgments, directly impacting a candidate's chances of success.

Problem Statement

Students do not know how to identify their skills and present them to employers in a credible way.

Student Insight

Students think they have an idea of what employers want in a candidate, but they are often wrong.



Employer Insight

Recruiters make snap judgments, directly impacting a candidate's chances of success.

How to write problem statements

The qualities of a well-written problem statement

- Is succinct
- Uses plain language
- Identifies a problem for *the people that we serve*, not for our business
- Can be traced back to the data
- Does not describe the solution

How to write problem statements

For example...

✓ GOOD

Students do not know how to identify their skills and present them to employers in a credible way.

✓ GOOD

Students make poor decisions about which major to select, and regret those decisions later.

✓ GOOD

Students have no clear advice on the best way to interview for a job.

✓ GOOD

Students do not know where to turn to find help when they get stuck with the job application process.

How to write problem statements

For example...

✗ BAD

Students need a website that lists the different careers they can get.

✗ BAD

If we buy a tutoring company, we can open new lines of revenue.

✗ BAD

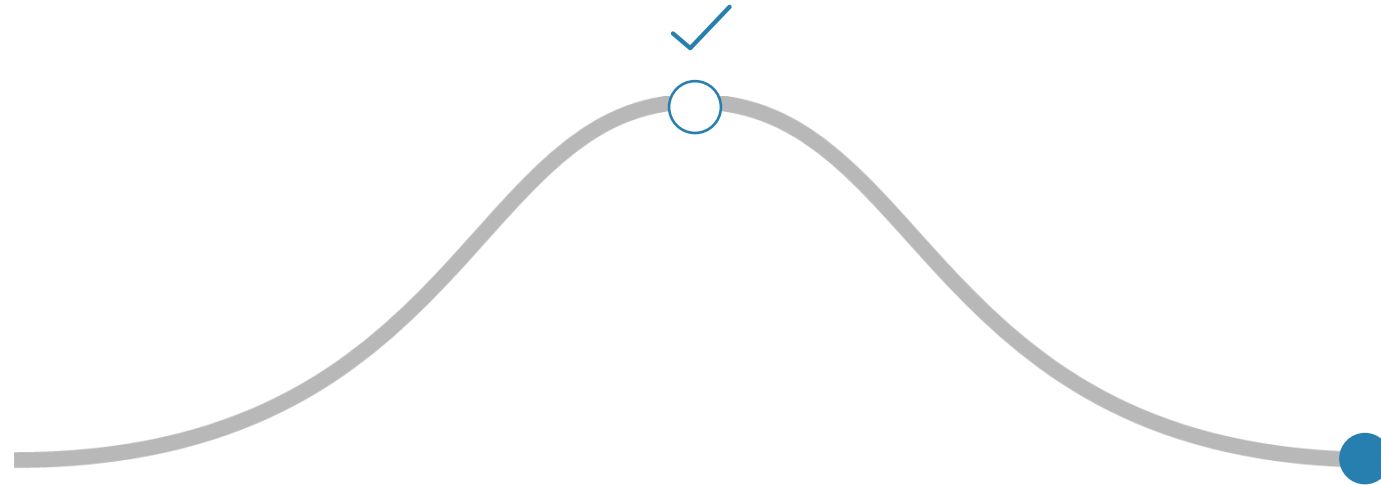
Our business is leaving revenue on the table by not charging for student services.

✗ BAD

We should make a mobile application so students can video chat with advisors when they apply for jobs.

Problem statements

A problem statement frames the design activities that will follow.



Students do not know how to identify their skills and present them to employers in a credible way.

Thank you!

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