

# Making Your Problem Statement Pop!

**Eno MAX**  
Designed by transit agencies for transit agencies

**Eno AIRMAX**

# Agenda

Learning Objectives

What is a Problem/Opportunity Statement?

Why a Clear Problem Statement is Important

Characteristics of an Effective Statement

Activities

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Understand the purpose of a clear problem statement for your business project and why it is *so* important to have one.
- Understand how developing clear, specific, succinct problem statements can serve you now and throughout your career.
- Articulate why your identified problem is a problem worth solving.
- Recognize a powerful problem statement when you hear one.

# What is a Problem/ Opportunity Statement?

A statement that clearly identifies the problem you are solving with your Business Project.

- Clear, concise, specific
- Provides just enough context about *why* it's a problem
- Suggests consequences

# **WHY IS A CLEAR PROBLEM STATEMENT IMPORTANT?**

# IT'S IMPORTANT BECAUSE..

It's the *foundation* for your whole project!

- Clarity saves time, energy, and frustration
- Generates energy, gets attention, attracts allies

Making clear cases for change is a *key leadership competency*.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF AN *EFFECTIVE* PROBLEM STATEMENT



# meh..

(Not effective)

- Vague, confusing, wordy.
- Creates more questions than it answers.
- Low energy
- Normal for the early stage of any project

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**Pop!**

(Effective)

- Clear, specific, and succinct.
- Describes the problem, not the solution.
- Offers clear direction for project development
- Links to existing strategic plan

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**BOOM!**

(Powerful)

- Everything in Pop!, but with a powerful edge
- Includes consequences if not solved
- High energy
- Makes people lean in
- Others can feel its impact

# meh..

A light duty program was implemented in October 2022 and, with the assistance of an in-house physical therapist, light duty tasks were quantified, however, no sedentary tasks were identified.

**meh..**



**Pop!**

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The agency has a light-duty program, but because sedentary tasks have not been identified, people who can otherwise be productive can't return to work until they're cleared for light duty.

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**Pop!**



The agency has a light-duty program, but because sedentary tasks have not been identified, people who can otherwise be productive can't return to work until they're cleared for light duty.

**BOOM!**

Our light-duty program is great, but we could get people back to work in half the time if we had a sedentary-duty program in place.

# REACT TO THE STATEMENT

# STATEMENT #1

*As employees become better trained, gain experience, and become more productive, they often move on to other internal and external positions. Without taking strategic actions to retain employees, we run an increased future risk of losing qualified individuals within our workforce.*



# STATEMENT #1

*“Boom -ified ”*

*We're losing our best workers and it's not only costing us financially and operationally, but also causing safety issues.*

# STATEMENT #2

*By 2027, unless something changes, this transit agency will not have enough bus operators to operate the service, let alone meet the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan.*

# STATEMENT #3

*Accurately monitoring and documenting vehicle mileage and fuel usage by using computer software, compatible fuel pumps, vehicle monitoring software, and other similar methods.*

# STATEMENT #3

*“Boom -ified ”*

*We spend more time tracking down paper than we do maintaining our vehicles.*

# STATEMENT #4

*Journal Bearing failures have happened in our LRVs which caused service revenue interruptions. Code Red is labeled when the LRV's journal bearings overheat and burn parts in the axle assembly. This event typically resulted in LRV derailment and affected passenger safety. With our journal bearings already beyond it's useful limits, such event as journal bearing overheating and/or seizing can happen anytime.*

# STATEMENT #4

POP!

*Journal Bearing failures on our LRVs are causing derailments, service interruptions, legal liability, and risk of injury and death.*

# STATEMENT #4

## *POP!*

*Journal Bearing failures on our LRVs are causing derailments, service interruptions, legal liability, and risk of injury and death.*

## *BOOM!*

*If we don't find a way to detect Journal Bearing failures before they happen, people could die.*

# **ACTIVITY: REFINING YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT**



# IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

- Read your existing project overview and ask yourself:
  - What IS the problem/ opportunity?
  - Write it down
- When you have your problem identified, ask:
  - Why is this a problem?
  - Write: this is a problem because \_\_\_\_\_
    - but why is *that* a problem (repeat as needed)

# LET'S REFLECT

- Were you able to make your problem more clear?  
*If so, how was that experience?*
- Did you have the ingredients in your project overview to land on your problem statement?
- Where on the scale is your problem statement now  
(meh... Pop! or BOOM!)

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Now you know...

- The purpose of a clear problem statement for your business project and why it is *so* important to have one.
- How developing clear, specific, succinct problem statements can serve you now and throughout your career.
- How to articulate why your identified problem is a problem worth solving.
- How to recognize a powerful problem statement when you hear one.

**THANK YOU!**