

Problem Brief

Illustrative sample for portfolio use · generalized product-operations scenario

FRAMEWORK NODE	DOCUMENT ROLE	USE
Signal & Discovery	Clarify the problem	Before solution shaping

Sample topic: merchant payout status visibility. The content below is intentionally generalized so it can be used as a portfolio artifact without exposing company details.

Signal summary

Merchants can submit a payout request successfully, but after submission they have limited visibility into what is happening next. Support tickets increase when the payout remains in a pending or manual-review state for longer than expected. Internal teams can inspect the state, but merchants do not receive enough structured feedback inside the product.

Problem statement

The current workflow confirms payout submission but does not explain progress, waiting states, or likely next steps in a way that reduces uncertainty for merchants. This creates avoidable support load, lower trust in the payout flow, and weak operational transparency.

Who is affected

ROLE / GROUP	EFFECT
Merchant operations users	Unclear whether the payout is delayed, blocked, or still processing normally
Support team	Repeated status questions that should not require manual handling
Risk / compliance operations	More ad hoc requests for case checks and context explanation
Product team	Limited visibility into where user uncertainty is created

Observable friction

- Support receives repeated questions of the type: “Has the payout failed or is it still being checked?”
- Merchants cannot distinguish between normal processing time and an exception state.
- Manual review cases feel silent from the merchant side.

- Status language is too technical internally and too thin externally.
- There is no consistent explanation of what the merchant should do next.

Desired outcome

TARGET USER UNDERSTANDING	• whether the payout is still processing • whether it is waiting for an internal check • whether any action is required from them • when they should expect another update
PRIMARY SUCCESS SIGNAL	Lower volume of support demand caused by simple status uncertainty.

Scope boundary for discovery

IN SCOPE	• Current payout journey after successful submission • Visible status labels and supporting copy • Internal reasons for the most common waiting states • Operational handoff points that affect merchant clarity
OUT OF SCOPE	• Redesign of the full payouts area • Changes to payout risk rules • SLA commitment changes • External email notification redesign

Constraints and unknowns

KNOWN CONSTRAINTS	• Existing payout engine statuses remain the source of truth • Operations needs to avoid exposing sensitive internal review logic • Copy must work for both normal processing and review-based cases • Initial change should fit into a limited delivery slice
UNKNOWN TO RESOLVE	• Which waiting states create the largest support volume • Which internal statuses can be safely grouped into merchant-facing states

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether delay perception differs by payout type or merchant segment• Whether in-product clarity is enough for release one |
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Discovery recommendation

- Map current payout states and internal transitions
- Cluster support requests by uncertainty type
- Define a first merchant-facing status model
- Identify the smallest viable clarity improvement for release one

Suggested next artifacts: Decision Brief · Shaped Brief · Outcome Review