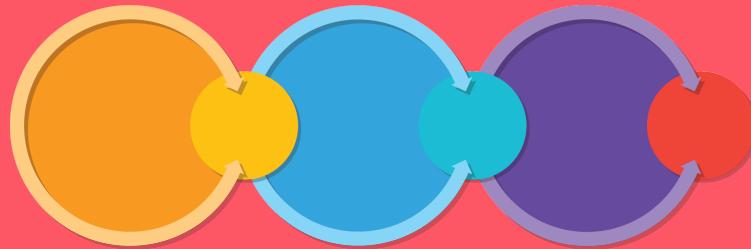


# Design Sprint Methods



Playbook for start ups and designers

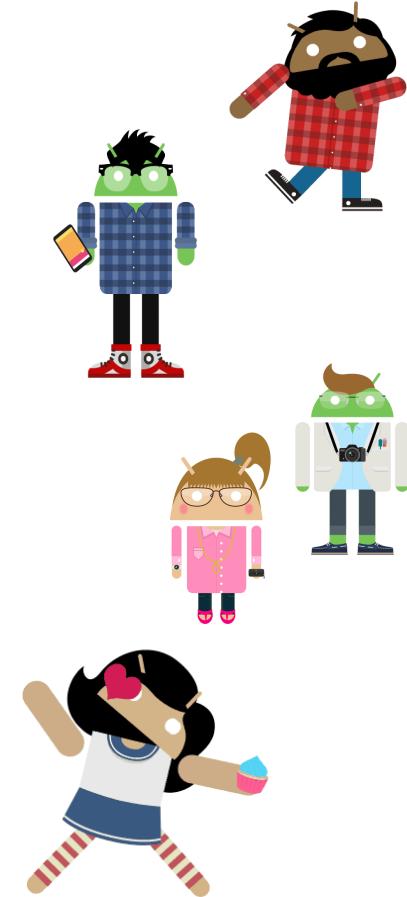
# Welcome!

Design matters. Speed matters. What if we could have both? In this handbook, we have collected industry best practices that allow teams to run design sprints: rapid prototyping and testing sessions. The best practices will be familiar to UX experts from fields such as Agile, Design Thinking and Gamestorming. At the same time, we hope the practices are easy to adapt to teams who are just beginning their design practice.

We hope you enjoy this book, and that it inspires you to create fun and productive sprints for your team.

*Nadya Direkova  
& the Google Sprint Masters*

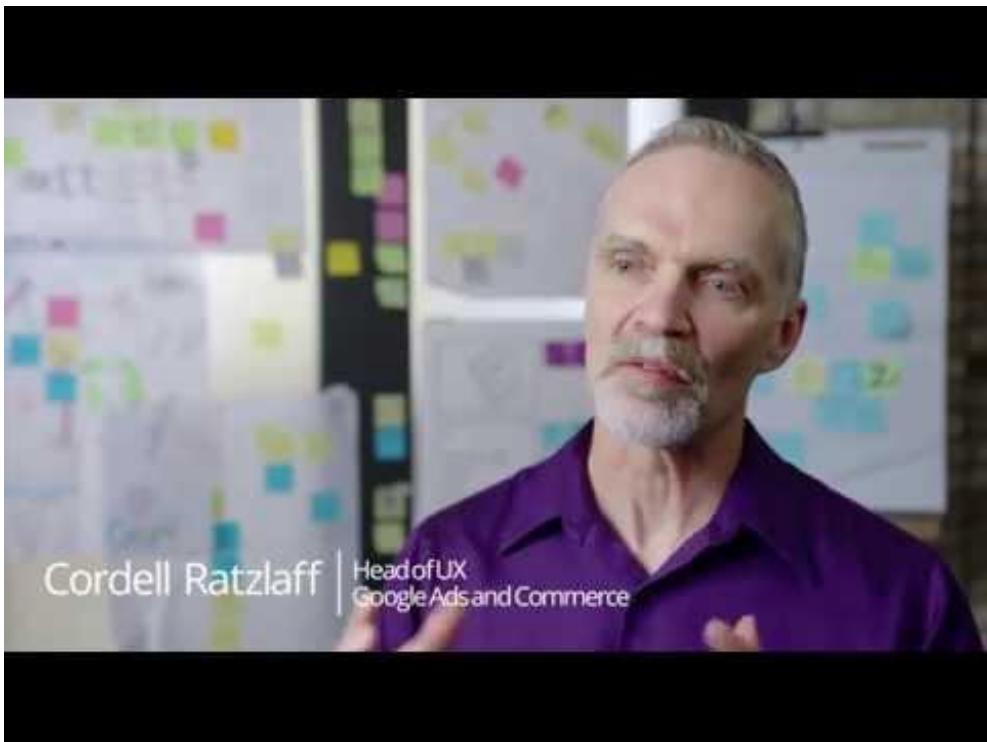
Mountain View, March 2015



# What is a design sprint?

Design sprints are a framework for teams of any size to solve and test design problems in 2-5 days. The idea of sprints originates with the Agile framework. The idea of design thinking was developed at IDEO and the d.school at Stanford. These frameworks were adapted to the idea of “design sprints” thanks to the Google UX teams, Google Ventures and Google [x] and teams across the industry.

While sprints are popular at Google, they are also used by startups and companies of any size.



*“Design sprints at Scale” 4 min video  
about the largest sprint to date.*

# What is a Sprint Master?

A Sprint Master is the lead of the team. This is the person who identifies the design challenge for the sprint, brings the team together and takes them through all sprint stages. This is a special role that requires deep understanding of UX methods, strategy, facilitation and negotiation. It takes time and practice to develop these skills, but we've learned that this role makes a critical difference in aligning the team and ensuring great results.

Typically, Sprint Masters are UX Researchers and Designers: leaders who have deep knowledge of the design process and are not afraid to challenge their team to collaborate and win together quickly.





What do Sprint Masters do?

# Planning the sprint

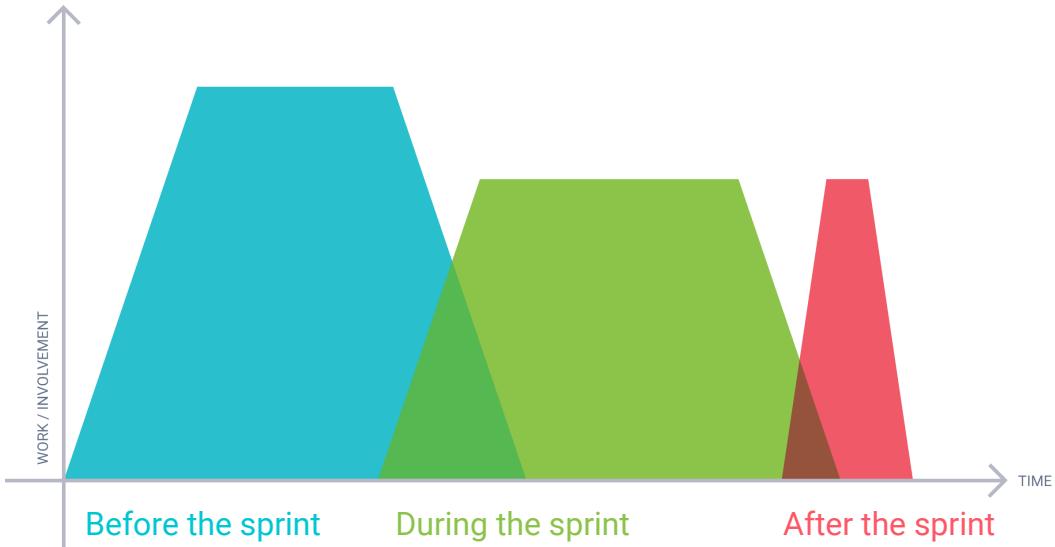
# Typical Sprint Master workflow

The Sprint is something to design.  
This is the job of the Sprint Master.

A good Sprint Master follows a workflow of task to do before, during and after the sprint.

Their success depends on their ability to lead the team, project manage and understand UX methods that work in short time frames.

This work takes time. Plan 1 day of prep work for every day of sprint time.

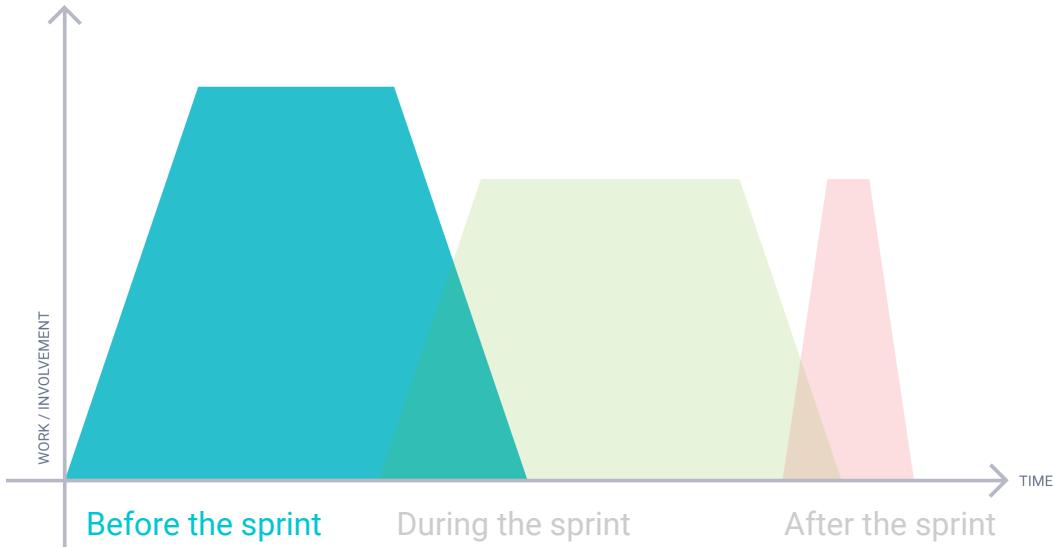


## Before the sprint

The critical task before the sprint is to formulate a meaningful design challenge that the sprint will center around. A great design challenge is inspiring, short and specifies the target use groups and deliverables of the sprint.

Second to that, the Sprint Master has to invite the team, and schedule lightning talks and user studies for the Understand and Validation sections of the sprint.

Lastly, preparing a facilitators deck and booking a room help make sure the sprint goes smoothly.



### Write a design brief

- Define challenge
- Timeline to launch

### Invite the team

Schedule lightning talks

Schedule user testing

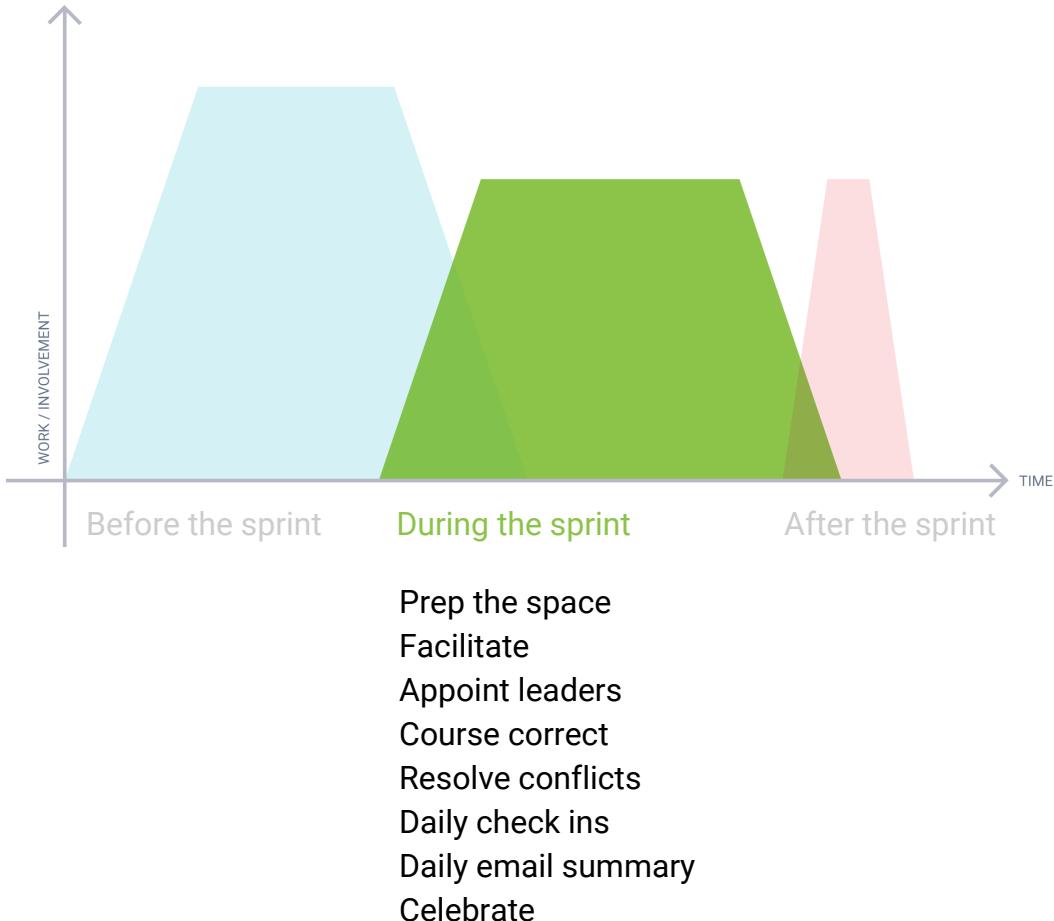
Prepare a facilitator's deck

Prepare the room

## During the sprint

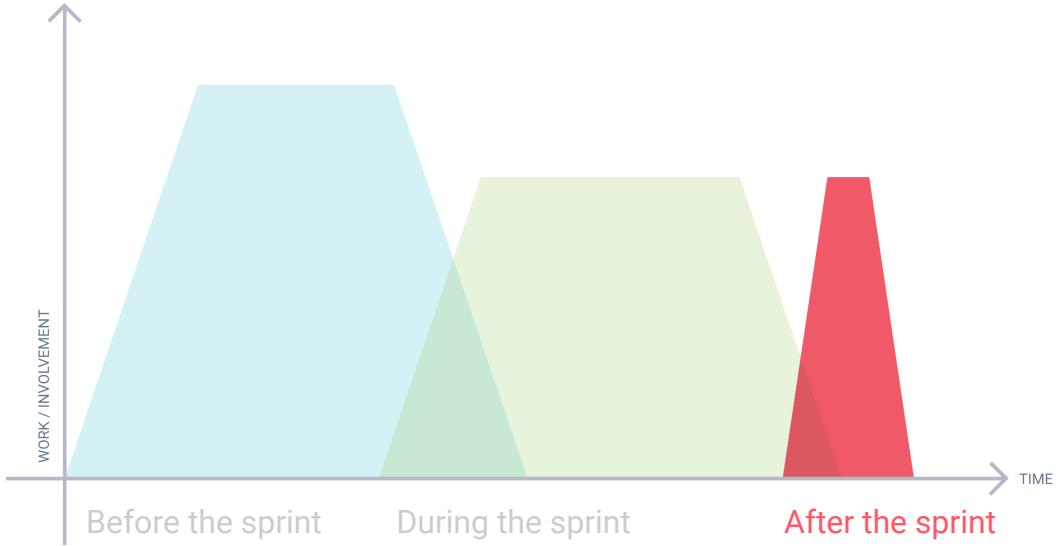
When the sprint starts, the Sprint Master assumes a facilitator role. They announce the schedule and exercises, keep time, and invite everyone to participate.

Often the team has to change course from the initial plan; the Sprint Master ensures the team makes decisions quickly and gets to meet their goal on time.



## After the sprint

Sprints typically end with much excitement and joy: the team has created the impossible in 2-5 days. A good Sprint Master keeps that great energy going by creating a follow up plan, sharing the results and surveying participants to learn how to keep making sprints better in the future.



After the sprint

- Create a path to launch Document
- Summary email
- Survey to sprinters
- Next sprint planning

# Before the sprint

# Sprint Challenge Statement

Before the sprint starts, the Sprint Master has to select the key challenge for the team. This will drive all the work and testing. A good challenge statement is:

- 1 Relevant  
Tied to the team goals  
Concise
- 2 Inspiring
- 3 Focused on a target audience or target segment

## Example / Chrome Kids Challenge

Design an intuitive tablet reading experience app for children age 4-7, focused on Q4'14 launch.

## Deliverables

Polished mocks and a clickable prototype for testing

## Select and invite the sprint team

The sprint team should include designers, engineers, product managers and experts.

The ideal team size is 5-8 people.  
Larger teams should be split into smaller teams working on the same challenge or separate challenges depending on your desired deliverables.



Designer



Designer



Engineer



Prototyper



Sprint Master



Researcher

# Lead a design audit on the current product

A design audit allows Sprint Masters to learn about the product and validate that they have chosen the right challenge to focus on. This step is especially helpful for existing projects, or if you are joining any team where prior work has been done.

An effective design audit will include

- 1 Interviewing key stakeholders, people leading the project
- 2 Reviewing all existing documents
- 3 Reviewing all relevant user research
- 4 Reviewing the current designs
- 5 Identifying or reviewing core use cases



## Prepare the sprint deck

The sprint deck is used to facilitate the sprint. It includes a schedule and the set of methods that are part of the sprint.

You can select the right methods by reviewing this handbook, or use your own methods.

An example of a sprint deck for Material Design

# Product Design Sprint

## 5 day sprint

## Prepare the supplies

Sprints require a set of simple but useful supplies: sharpies, paper, tape, sticky notes, voting dots, a timer, and a chime bell or kitchen timer.

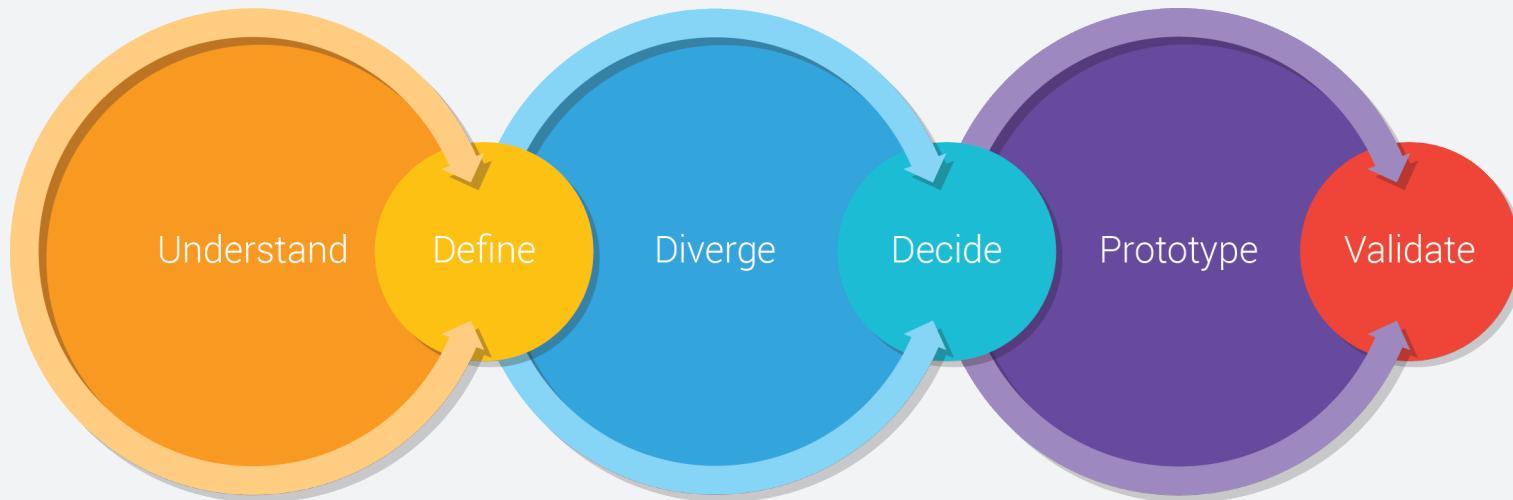
Snacks and coffee are useful, but not required :)



How to build your own sprint process

# Sprint Methods

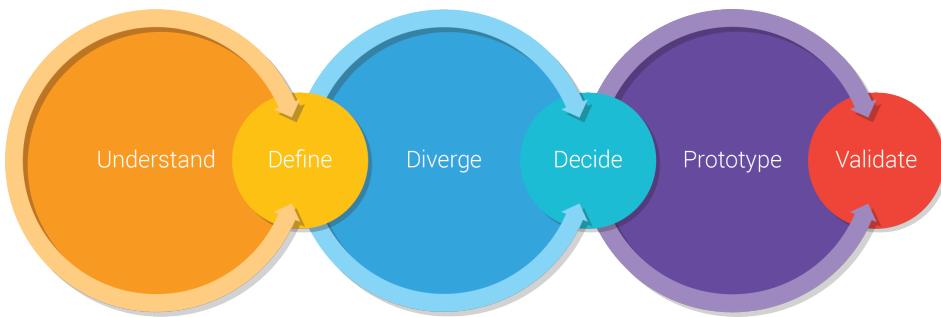
## The 6 sprint stages



# The 6 sprint stages

Each sprint goes through the 6 stages of design thinking. The idea of Design Thinking was created at IDEO and expanded through the Design School at Stanford. It's incredibly useful for solving problems.

Understanding the 6 stages helps Sprint Masters build a great sprint.

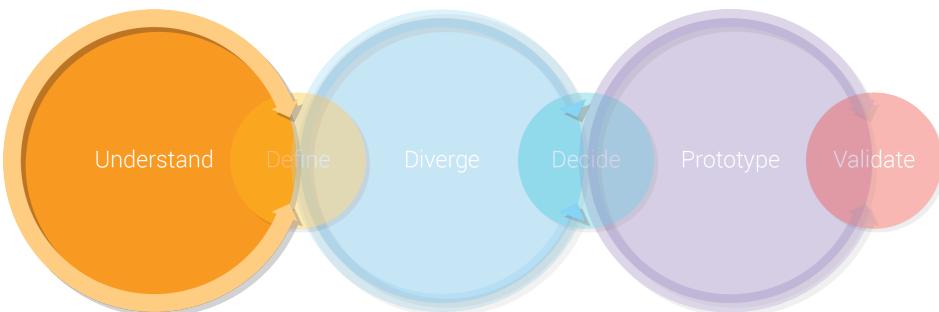


- 1 **Understand:**  
*What are the user needs, business need and technology capacities?*
- 2 **Define**  
*What is the key strategy and focus?*
- 3 **Diverge**  
*How might we explore as many ideas as possible?*
- 4 **Decide**  
*Select the best ideas so far.*
- 5 **Prototype**  
*Create an artifact that allows to test the ideas with users.*
- 6 **Validate**  
*Test the ideas with users, business stakeholders and technical experts.*

# The methods for each stage

Each of the stages can include design best practices, known as methods, such as “user interviews” or “competitive reviews.”

There are more than 40 possible methods, and you never need to use all of them. Select the right methods for your sprint, or add and invent your own best practices.



## Understand Methods

- *Lightning talks on business goals*
- *Lightning talks on technology capacities today and over time*
- *User interviews*
- *Visiting users in the field where the product is used*
- *Stakeholder map*
- *Competitive overview*  
+ more

# Understand Methods

360 lightning talks on business goals, technology and user research

User interviews

Visiting users in the field where the product is used

Stakeholder map

Competitive overview

Summarize the learnings

# 360 degree lightning talks

Lightning talks allow the sprint team to understand the problem from many different points of view. The talks should include

- 1 Business goals and success metrics / 5 min
- 2 Technical capacities and challenges / 5 min
- 3 Relevant user research / 5 min



# Competitive overview

What other products and services can inspire the team work? A brief review of 3-10 similar projects can be a great way to kick start the sprint.

For example, if a team is working on a online store experience, they might want to visit the sites, such as Google Play and list what they like and dislike.

The screenshot shows the Google Play Store interface. On the left, a sidebar menu includes links for Store, Apps, Movies & TV, Music, Books, Newsstand, Devices, My Play activity, My wishlist, Redeem, Buy gift card, and Buy Google Play credit. The main content area features several sections:

- New + Updated Games:** Displays five game icons with titles: Smoothie Swipe, BLOOD & GLORY: IV, Sniper 3D Assassin, GAROU: MARK OF T, and Two Birds word game. Each entry includes a star rating and a "FREE" or "\$3.99" price indicator.
- Popular Apps + Games:** Displays six app/game icons with titles: Duolingo: Learn Languages, SIMCITY BUILDIT, YouTube Kids, Frozen Free Fall, A&E, and Bejeweled Blitz. Each entry includes a star rating and a "FREE" or "\$3.99" price indicator.
- Movie Gift + Deals:** A pink banner at the bottom featuring a gift box icon. It lists three deals: Transformers Action & Adventure, Thank Me Later by Drake, and Morning Phase by Daft Punk.

## User interviews

Users are the ultimate judges of whether a product is good or not. This is why it's a great idea to start a sprint by finding and interviewing users.

The user interviews should include questions about how users use a particular product, and what they like and dislike about it.

When designing a new product, the interviews can focus on what alternative ways users employ to solve their problem.



## Field visits

In some cases, interviews by themselves are less useful than visiting users in the context where they use the product.

For example, if making a product for technical support teams, it's useful to visit the offices where they work and the space where they meet clients.

Field visits include all the best practices of a user interview, but additionally allow the team to understand the context.

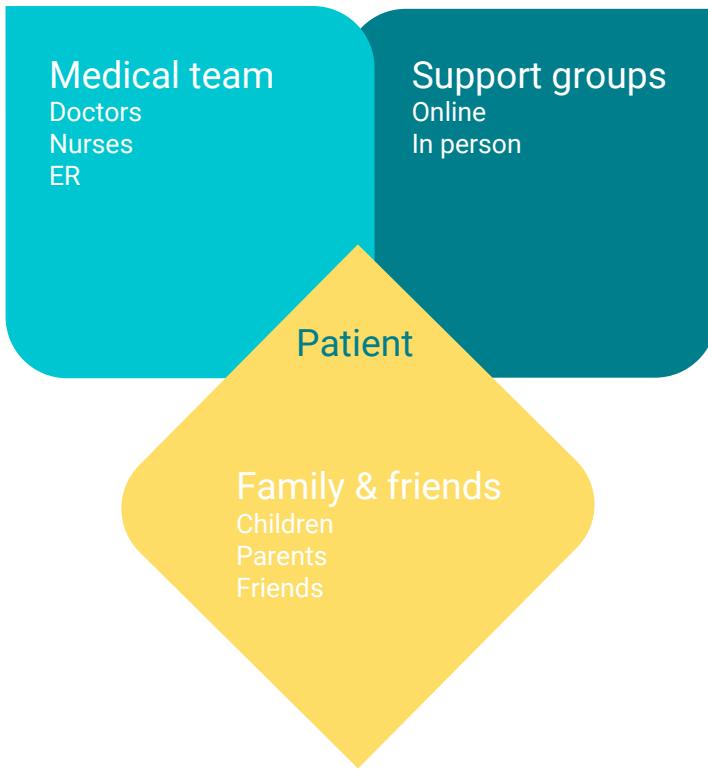


# Stakeholder map

Products and services often have multiple types of people they are designed for. The stakeholder map lists all the possible people concerned in a situation.

## 30 minute how-to

- 1 List all possible stakeholders in a project / 10 min
- 2 Group the stakeholders in meaningful sections / 2 min
- 3 Decide what stakeholders you will design for during the sprint, and in what order.
- 4 Plan need finding activities and consider creating a team to work on each group.



*An example of a stakeholder group in a Medical setting.*

# Summarize the learnings and first ideas

It's useful to conclude the Understand section by sharing the first set of ideas and insights people generate.

Use sticky notes to share the ideas, and group them into themes. Vote on the best ideas, the ones that bring the most insight and should be pursued. This exercise is a "first check" and not a final decision on a direction. The team will continue to learn and decide in the later stages, so nothing at this point is final.

For more information, read more about the "How might we?" method attributed to by IDEO and described a number of articles online.



# Define Methods

User journeys

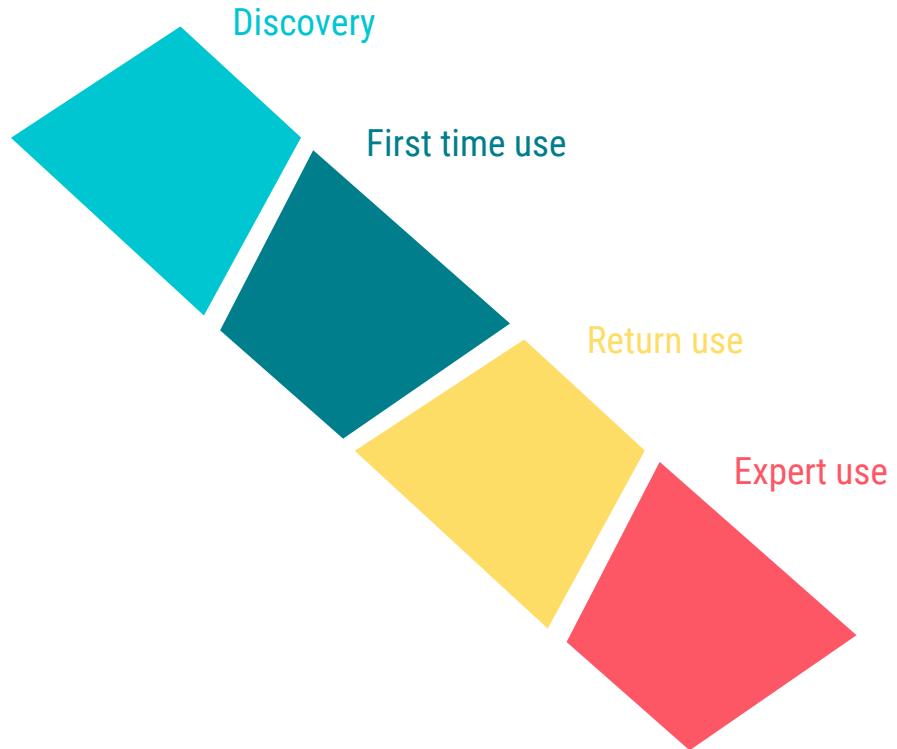
Design principles

First tweet

# The central User Journey

The define stage of the sprint is about breaking down the ideas into meaningful categories and defining strategies.

One of the ways to do that is to create a user journey: a map that lists all the stages that someone goes through from learning about the product to becoming an expert user.

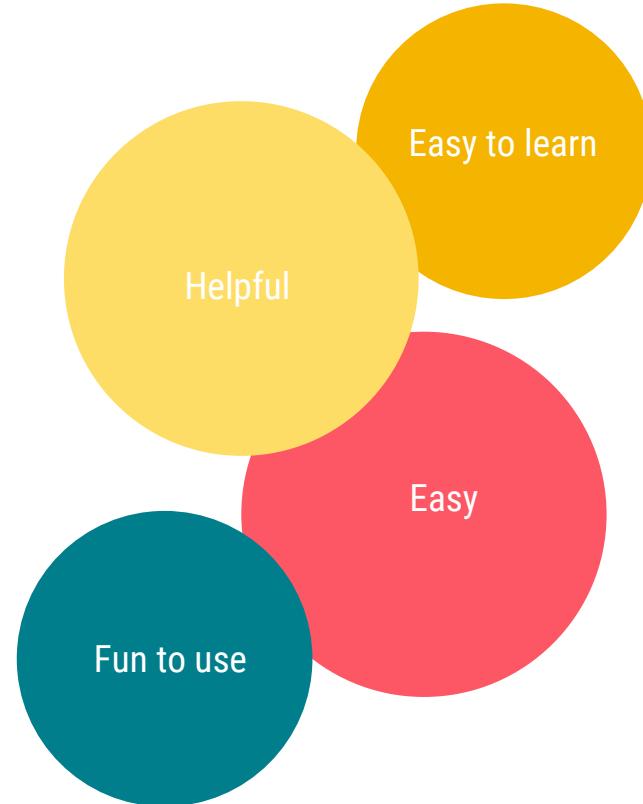


# Defining design principles

What 3 words would you like for users to describe your product? For some products, it's important that users find them easy and fun; for others, it's more important that they are comprehensive and powerful.

List all the possible design principles your team cares about individually, and select the best ideas as a team.

At the end of the sprint, you can ask users to describe the prototype in 3 words, and compare that list to your original intention.



## The first tweet

Imagine it's time to launch your product. What is the first announcing tweet you will send out?

Writing that can help the team focus their strategy in 140 characters... or less.



Launching tweet for a cooking app:

“Love cooking? Download MasterChef, a cooking app with over 1million recipes!”

# Diverge Methods

Sketch 8 ideas in 5 minutes

Sketch 1 idea in 5 minutes

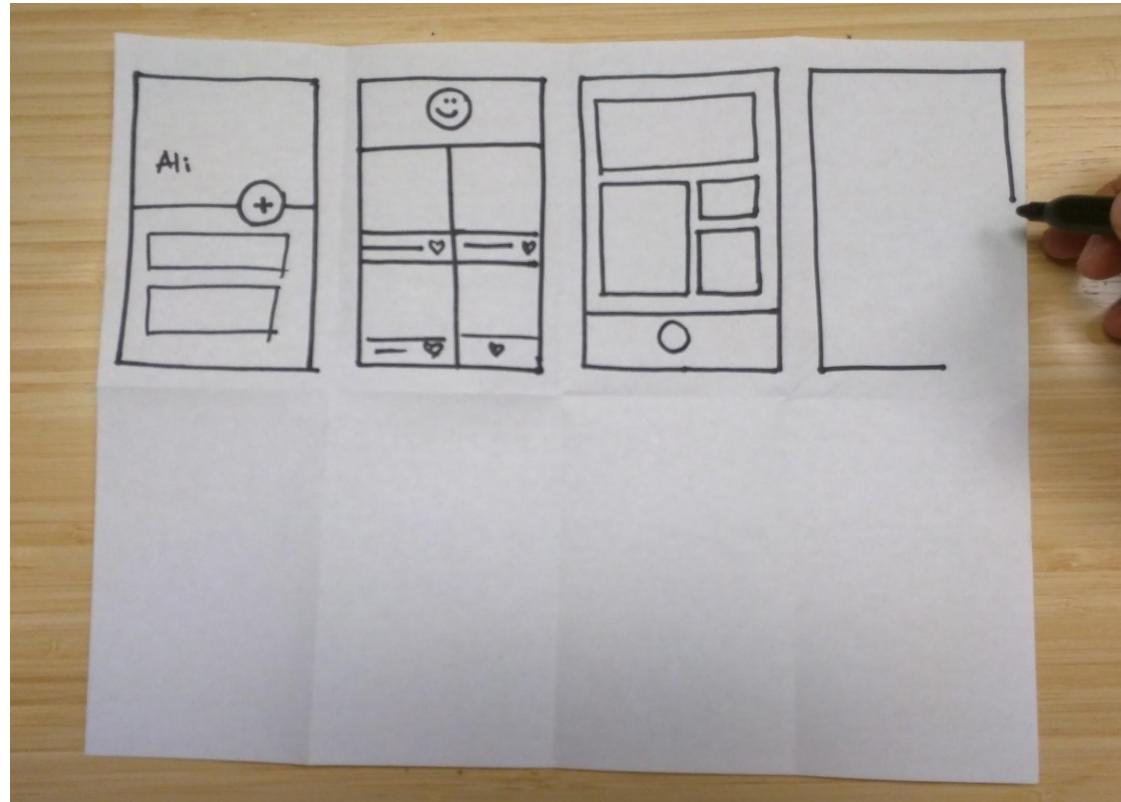
Sketch 1 storyboard in 5 min

# 8 ideas in 5 min

This is a great technique that originates from Gamestorming workshops. It invites the team to work individually, and sketch 8 ideas in 5 minutes. It's a great warm up exercise!

## 7 minute how-to

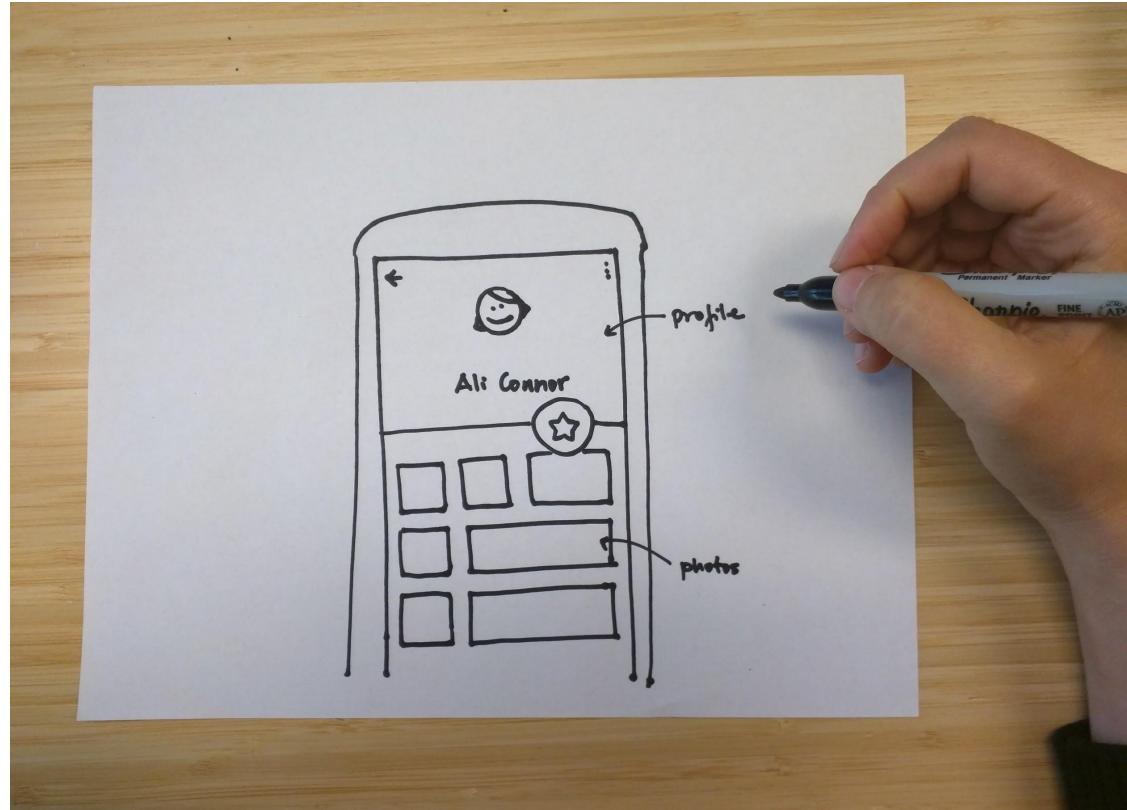
- 1 Give everyone a sheet of paper and ask them to fold it 3 times  
1 min
- 2 Ask the team to unfold the paper and notice the 8 grid rectangle created.
- 3 Ask them to sketch 8 ideas in 5 mins, one in each rectangle.  
/ 5 min



*8 ideas in 5 min: the team is starting to warm up.*

## 1 big idea in 5 min

Continue the previous exercise. Ask the team to work individually and sketch 1 big idea in 5 minutes

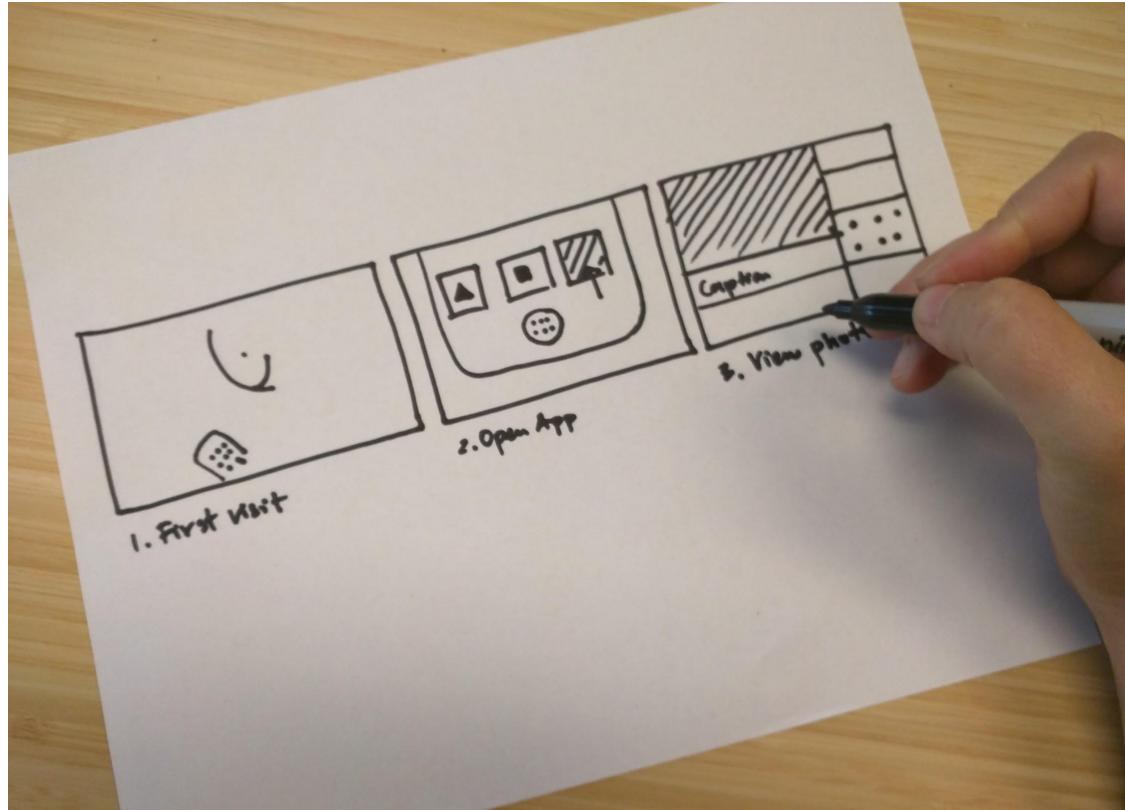


*1 ideas in 5 min: understanding the details better*

# 1 storyboard in 5 min

Sometimes, the ideas are too complex to express on 1 page. This is when your team need to think in terms of stories or flows.

Ask your team to sketch a storyboard of all the key steps the user much take. If your team is new to design, encourage them to think in terms of comic book strips :).



1 user storyboard in 5 min: understanding the steps

# Decide Methods

Zen voting

Team review

Thinking hats

## Zen voting

After the sketching, it's time to share the ideas on a whiteboard.

Encourage sprinters to do zen voting: reviewing the ideas and voting in silence.

This allows everyone to form their own opinions before they get biased by others.



Optional caption

## Team review & decision on what to prototype

At this point, the team can discuss the best ideas and decide which ones to prototype.

Often, it's necessary to do more sketching and exploring.



# Thinking hats

If your team is new or tends to be biased in their opinion, assign everyone a Thinking Hat. Each hat represents a different point of view that's valuable and that can enrich the final decision.

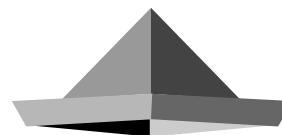
Encourage everyone to choose a perspective and discuss the decision from that point of view.



Idea Generator



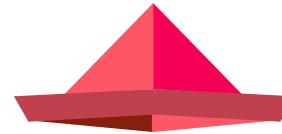
Optimist



Pessimist



Technical feasibility



User Advocate

# Prototype Methods

Mocks

Demos

Videos

Physical prototype

# Prototyping

A prototype is something that makes your ideas “real enough to feel,” so you can get feedback from users.

Teams tend to spend the most time in this stage. A prototype could be:

- Mock
- Demo
- Video
- Physical prototype



# Validate Methods

User test

Stakeholder feedback

Technical feasibility check

## User testing

As soon as the team is done prototyping, it's time to test. A simple user test can uncover valuable insights very quickly.

*What do users like and dislike in the prototype?*

*What would they like to improve?*

*Does the solution meet their needs overall?*



## Stakeholder validation

The key stakeholder of the projects often is the one who decides to fund or allocate resources to the ideas. This person may be the Director of the group or the CEO of the company.

Their review and approval is essential for the sprint to succeed.



## Technical feasibility validation

Do the design ideas match or exceed the technical capacity of the team? An engineering review can help the team scope the work appropriately, and discuss potential workarounds.

A quick check of technical feasibility and considerations



# Congrats!

Your sprint is done! Enjoy the wins and learnings.  
Well done!

This is also a good time to reflect and get feedback.  
What would you do differently next time?

*Enjoy the weekend :)*



# Thanks

To the Google Developers team for making this educational resource publicly available. Further, thanks to all teams at Google and beyond who are constantly improving their game and methods.

Design Sprint Methods

