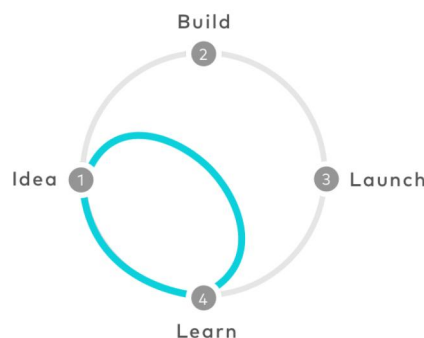# The Design Sprint

The sprint is a five-day process for answering critical business questions through design, prototyping, and testing ideas with customers. Developed at GV, it's a "greatest hits" of business strategy, innovation, behavior science, design thinking, and more—packaged into a battle-tested process that any team can use.

The sprint gives teams a shortcut to learning without building and launching.

Working together in a sprint, you can shortcut the endless-debate cycle and compress months of time into a single week. Instead of waiting to launch a minimal product to understand if an idea is any good, you'll get clear data from a realistic prototype. The sprint gives you a superpower: You can fast-forward into the future to see your finished product and customer reactions, before making any expensive commitments.

This page is a DIY guide for running your own sprint. On Monday, you'll map out the problem and pick an important place to focus. On Tuesday, you'll sketch competing solutions on paper. On Wednesday, you'll make difficult decisions and turn your ideas into a testable hypothesis. On Thursday,
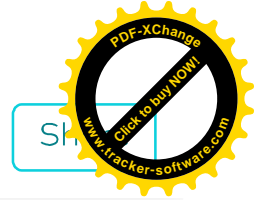
Sprints are versatile

At GV, we've run sprints with companies like Nest, Flatiron Health, and Medium—to help them enter new markets, design new products, develop new features for millions of users, define marketing strategies, and much more. Teams around the world have adopted sprints, and we're collecting their stories at SprintStories.com.
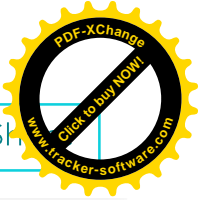
reach more customers.

Basic sprint resources

The book is a complete hour-by-hour guide to running your sprint. Below we've assembled a basic DIY guide, including daily checklists, videos, and other resources.

Set the Stage

Before the sprint begins, you'll need to have the right **challenge** and the right **team**. You'll also need **time and space** to conduct your sprint.
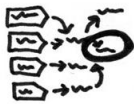
Set the Stage video with Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky   *YouTube*

Checklist for Set the Stage   *GV Library*

Your design team needs a war room; here's how to set one up   *Fast Company*

Shopping list for sprint supplies   *Kit.com*

The GV research sprint   *GV Library*

Monday

Monday's structured discussions create a path for the sprint week. In the morning, you'll **start at the end** and agree to a long-term goal. Next, you'll make a **map** of the challenge. In the afternoon, you'll **ask the experts** at your company to share what they know. Finally, you'll pick a **target**: an ambitious but manageable piece of the problem that you can solve in one week.

Monday video with Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky   *YouTube*

Checklist for Monday   *GV Library*

Tuesday

After a full day of understanding the problem and choosing a target for your sprint, on Tuesday, you get to focus on solutions. The day starts with inspiration: a review of existing ideas to **remix and improve**. Then, in the afternoon, each person will **sketch**, following a four-step process that emphasizes critical thinking over artistry. You'll also begin planning Friday's customer test by recruiting customers that fit your target profile.

Tuesday video with Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky   *YouTube*

Start recruiting customers for test GV
Library

Wednesday

By Wednesday morning, you and your team will have a stack of solutions. That's great, but it's also a problem. You can't prototype and test them all—you need one solid plan. In the morning, you'll critique each solution, and **decide** which ones have the best chance of achieving your long-term goal. Then, in the afternoon, you'll take the winning scenes from your sketches and weave them into a **storyboard**: a step-by-step plan for your prototype.

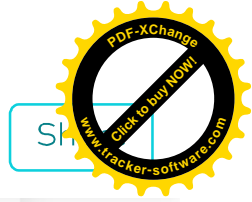Wednesday video with Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky   *YouTube*

Checklist for Wednesday   *GV Library*

Schedule customers and draft interview guide   *GV Library*

Thursday

On Wednesday, you and your team created a storyboard. On Thursday, you'll adopt a **"fake it"** philosophy to turn that storyboard into a **prototype**. A realistic façade is all you need to test with customers, and here's the best part: by

your prototype in just one day. On Thursday, you'll also make sure everything is ready for Friday's test by confirming the schedule, reviewing the prototype, and writing an interview script.

Thursday video with Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky   *YouTube*

Checklist for Thursday   *GV Library*

Finalize test schedule and complete interview guide   *GV Library*

Friday

Your sprint began with a big challenge, an excellent team—and not much else. By Friday, you've created promising solutions, chosen the best, and built a realistic prototype. That alone would make for an impressively productive week. But you'll take it one step further as you **interview** customers and **learn** by watching them react to your prototype. This test makes the entire sprint worthwhile: At the end of the day, you'll know how far you have to go, and you'll know just what to do next.

Friday video with Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky   *YouTube*

Checklist for Friday   *GV Library*
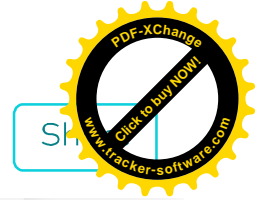
The Five-Act Interview with Michael Margolis   *YouTube*

The Sprint book

"Read this book and do what it says if you want to build better products faster." —Ev Williams, founder of Medium and Twitter

New York Times best seller *Sprint* takes you behind the scenes with some of America's most fascinating startups. You'll meet a robotics maker searching for the perfect robot personality, a coffee roaster expanding to new markets, a company organizing the world's cancer data, and Slack, the fastest-growing business app in history.
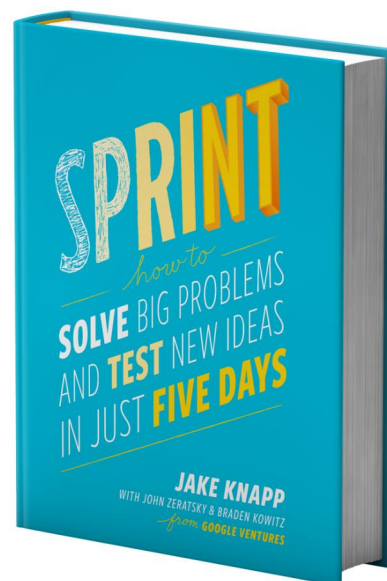
A practical guide to answering critical business questions, *Sprint* is a book for teams of any size, from small startups to Fortune 100s, from teachers to nonprofits. It's for anyone with a big opportunity, problem, or idea who needs to get answers now.

Buy on Amazon

Your sprint story

If you run a sprint, let us know! We're collecting stories from the sprint community at SprintStories.com. Tweet us at @GVDesignTeam, or help spread the word below.
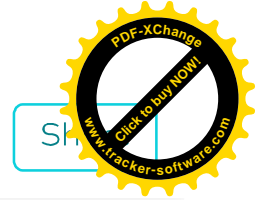
From GV

Former GV design partner Jake Knapp began running design sprints at Google in 2010. He worked with teams like Chrome, Google Search and Google X. In 2012, Jake brought sprints to GV, and the rest of the team chipped in their expertise to perfect the process.

Braden Kowitz added story-centered design, an unconventional approach that focuses on the customer journey instead of individual features or technologies. Michael Margolis took customer research—which can typically take weeks to plan and often delivers confusing results—and figured out a way to get crystal clear results in just one day. John Zeratsky helped us start at the end, and focus on measuring results with the key metrics from each business. And Daniel Burka brought firsthand expertise as an entrepreneur to ensure every step made sense in the real world.

Have a great sprint!

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook