

Human-centred Design Step 3: Prototyping

What to learn:

-How to practically develop a prototype for the business

A prototype is an experimental model of an idea. It helps you determine whether your idea is worth pursuing. It makes your idea real enough for your audience to experience it and give you feedback on what they like and what they don't like.

Determining what to prototype

In order to get clear feedback from your target market, you need to know which parts of your prototype you want to test. For example, if testing an online shop, you may want to know what steps are key to the shopping experience? Which categories should I have for the items that I sell?

Below are the steps to take:

1. Identify what are the important elements of your idea. For example, if it is a bag, the elements could be the comfort, style, necessary pockets etc.
 - Come up with as many questions as possible as you think of what elements need to be tested. Some possible questions for the bag idea could be: would extra cushions on the straps make it more comfortable? Are pen-holder pockets necessary?
2. Pick the questions that you would want to answer since you can't resolve them all.
3. You need to agree on what type of prototype would make it easy for you to answer the questions you might have. If testing how you would interact with a customer, you could plan a roleplay.
If testing a physical product like a bag, you could either make one out of paper.

Types of prototypes

There is always a desire to make things perfect. A prototype doesn't have to be complicated. The simpler it is, the faster you can go on with gathering feedback from your target audience to make changes.

- **Storyboard-**

If you remember comic books sharing a story in steps, then you already understand what a storyboard is. It basically helps you visualize your idea process from beginning to end. Don't panic. You don't have to be a great artist to create one.

How to create a storyboard

1. With your group members, decide on what it is you want to prototype. You could pick a certain aspect of your idea that you would like to test and not the whole of it. An example could be steps of how a potential customer would interact with you when they visit your clothing store.
2. You could take about 30-45 minutes sketching your ideas for the steps. You could capture key moments in the interaction e.g. how they are welcomed, how would the customer be able to view the clothes, fitting area etc. These moments make it easier to build a flow in terms of how you talk about the experience.
3. Remember to not get lost in making the images perfect. The idea is to keep things simple and easy to explain. This is where your drawing skills from nursery school come in handy.
4. Once completed, act out your storyboard for the team to get feedback.

- **Physical prototype**

If you want to sell a physical product, it makes sense to make a physical prototype. Here are the steps you can take to make one:

How to create a physical prototype

1. Select suitable material for your prototype that you can use. For example, you can build a prototype out of paper or cheap materials to get you started. The purpose here is to create something that you can get feedback on.
2. Present it to your target audience. Allow them to hold it, use it and ask questions about it.
3. Ask them questions on what they think and collect feedback from them.

NOTE: The type of prototype you have depends on your business idea. For example, if you would like to start selling second-hand clothes, you could buy a few items and try selling them for a week. This helps you understand what your customers want and gives you an idea of how the business would work. For example, You can get to understand how much effort it would take you to run the business, whether it's a viable business idea, how much it would cost you to run the business etc. The important thing is to test it out.

Additional Resources

1. Creating storyboards
<http://www.designkit.org/methods/35>
2. Check on tips for MVPs
[https://www.agilealliance.org/glossary/mvp/#q=~\(infinite~false~filters~\(tags~\(~'mvp\)\)~searchTerm~'~sort~false~sortDirection~'asc~page~1\)](https://www.agilealliance.org/glossary/mvp/#q=~(infinite~false~filters~(tags~(~'mvp))~searchTerm~'~sort~false~sortDirection~'asc~page~1))
3. Role Play-
<http://www.designkit.org/methods/36>