Digital Co-design:

how to build Trust with Users for better ideation

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Cons &
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Develop Rapport

1
● Be friendly.
Provide a welcoming and nonjudgmental atmosphere every time you interact with users. Show a sincere interest in them and their ideas. Even if it is a quick message, an email, or during a session.

2
● Consider users' mental states.
When discussing a sensitive topic, remember that emotions are high, and people are impacted in different ways. You cannot address each person in the same way, adjustments will need to be made according to circumstances and personalities.

3
● Engage on users' preferred platform.
Regardless of where the initial call to action took place, communicate with users through their preferred digital platform, whether that is social media, email, or mobile.

4
● Remember details and refer to them.
Make users feel heard and valued by remembering aspects of their life. This could be done simply. E.g. copy/past generic info in messages for efficiency. But personalise the greeting so each user feels you are writing to them personally.

5
● Be prepared as a facilitator.
Prepare the activities, provide users with preparatory information, guide the session, and respect the time. If users feel confident in your skills as a facilitator, they will trust that you can guide them into successful ideation and innovation.

6
● Remember & workaround consent.
Note which users didn't give consent for i.e. image recording. Work around it without drawing attention. Have cameras on for icebreaker but announce you will start recording afterwards. Users can see and meet each other first and work with cameras off while ideating.

Empower Users

1
● Let users feel knowledgeable.
Give users information about the topic early on so they can become confident in their understanding of it. The confidence gained will empower them during discussions with other participants.

2
● Prepare users.
Prepare users for the workshop in advance. Give them tips, tools, & an agenda with the purpose of the co-design session and the expected results. They will feel more confident in themselves and appreciate you for helping them achieve their goals.

3
● Extend the time of the event.
Interacting multiple times helps users feel more confident in themselves, the platform, and with everyone present. If they are unsure of their abilities to perform, that could lead them to hold back during the ideation process.

4
● Encourage a sense of community.
Introduce them to the other group members so they get to know each other better and create a sense of community. A casual pre-session where participants only get familiarized with their fellow group members could be useful.

5
● Create a safe space.
Create a friendly atmosphere without judgement. Reiterate rules of engagement at the beginning of a session to reaffirm that judging others or being rude will not be tolerated. This sense of security will give the participants the confidence they need to share openly.

6
● Protect users' data.
Striving for data privacy is key to empowering participants to share more openly.

Digital Platform

1

● **User Friendly.**

Not everyone is technically proficient. Be ready with alternative methods of performing tasks to avoid a potentially stressful situation. Make the platform easy to understand, to navigate, and provide help.

2

● **Onboard users.**

Take onboarding time into consideration. The more intricate the task, the more preparation time will be needed. Avoid too much informational text. Go over relevant features at the beginning of the session and/or activity.

3

● **Usability test with users.**

Expect at least one person in each workshop to experience issues with the platform. Some of these issues can be identified during usability testing, but others will appear during the live workshops. Be ready with alternatives.

4

● **Spark imagination.**

Provide participants with inspiration and examples of how they should respond to questions or activities. Find the right balance between an empty slate and sparking imagination without nudging users into your own opinions.

5

● **Separate work areas & sessions.**

If conducting more than one workshop, separate them into individual workspaces. If you are combining or adding onto workshops in multiple sessions, it is still less confusing for participants to have individual workspaces. You as the facilitator can combine the data after the workshops are finished.

6

● **More than one facilitator if possible.**

It is helpful to have one designated speaker and someone for technical support. Playing both roles can be done by one person but would be better to have two separate people with one focus.

Cons: disadvantages

Pros: Advantages

1

● Time consuming.

Spreadsheets and other documents can be used to remember every user, each interaction, which links were sent, which responses were given, notes to follow up with, information about their views and personalities, etc.

All of the documentation needs to be updated and maintained.

1

● Users are more engaged.

Users reach out and want to help you succeed. Users are willing to devote more time and energy to the project and participate in additional sessions.

2

● More open.

When users aren't scared of being judged, they are more open and willing to share. Openness in dialogue results in varying opinions and more ideas being shared. Gets underneath the surface and identifies true issues under the supposed problem.

3

● Pool of users for the future.

When users feel empowered and trust, they will be willing to engage again. You can even get users involved without promising to fix their problems. Working together to ideate on an issue that is important to them is enough of a reward to get people engaged.

4

● Overall satisfaction.

Results or solutions are better received when people feel represented because they played a role in the process. Users can innovate solutions they feel meet their needs.