

Critiquing Design - Cheat Sheet

We've found this process generally takes 45 minutes to 1 hour. It will definitely take longer the first time or two.

For questions, contact [Michael Verdi](#).

Presentation (10 min)

- Context: user problems, business goals, constraints, ethical or social implications, design values, stage of work?
- Presentation
- Link to experience the work (prototype, mockup, drawing, etc.)

Notes:

- Our collective purpose is to help the presenter make their best work. This isn't about fixing it for them or mandating a solution.
- Let's keep the conversation in the meeting. Don't use Slack to comment or ask questions. If you're having trouble being heard, ping the facilitator.

Step 1: Clarifying Questions

Audience members can ask the presenter for more context or for more details about how something works. The goal here is just to understand the presentation, not to begin the critique.

Step 2: What's Working

Audience members talk about the parts of the design or solution that work well. It's important to include in that the reason why and to steer clear of personal opinions (that's step 5) by connecting it to a user problem, business goal or design value.

If they occur to you later, you can continue to mention things that work after we've left this step.

Step 3: Presenter Asks Questions

The Presenter asks the questions they have about the work. In answering, the Audience should stay on topic with the question but may express opinions in direct response to a question by the Presenter.

Step 4: The Audience Asks Neutral Questions

The Audience now gets to ask neutral questions about the work. Questions are neutral when they do not have an opinion couched in them.

- Example: Instead of, "Why did you do it this way?" try "What solutions did you explore?"
- Can you say more about _____?
- What things did you eliminate?
- What was the runner up to this idea?

Step 5: Opinions

The Facilitator will ask if people have opinions to share. If have an opinion you would like to share say, "I have an opinion about _____. Would you like to hear it?" Let the presenter acknowledge and invite you to share before you say it.

For a group that has a working relationship and has built trust with each other, we include this step every time. If you are doing this with a wide group of stakeholders you may want to consider skipping this step and announcing that at the beginning.