

Ideating Solutions

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From Problems to Solutions

- Now, you have a clear problem statement
 - Any hypotheses should be tested too



Arnold is a busy executive who needs an easy app experience to hire a dog walker because he's not technologically savvy



Andy is a night owl who needs a sleep motivator because he cannot turn off his computer to sleep on time

- It's time to ideate possible solutions

How?

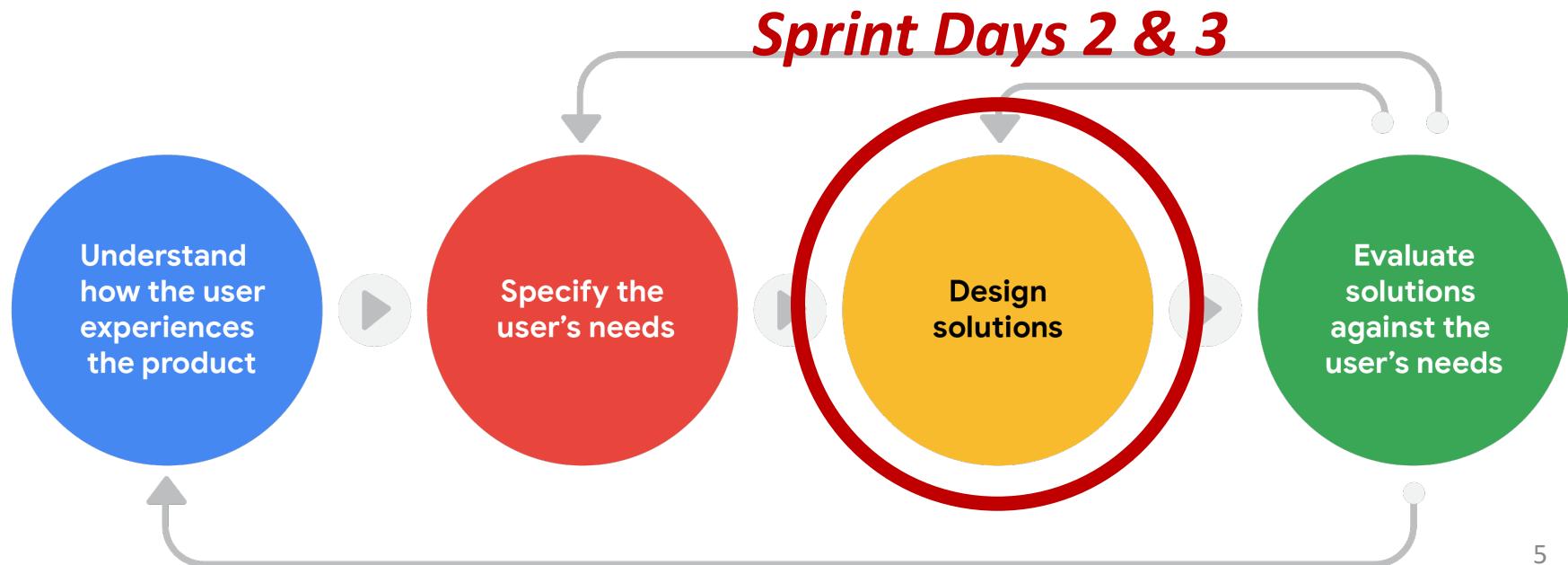
- To have *a lot of* (bad) ideas

Ideation

- The process of generating a ***broad set*** of solutions to a given problem ***with no attempt to judge or evaluate*** the solutions

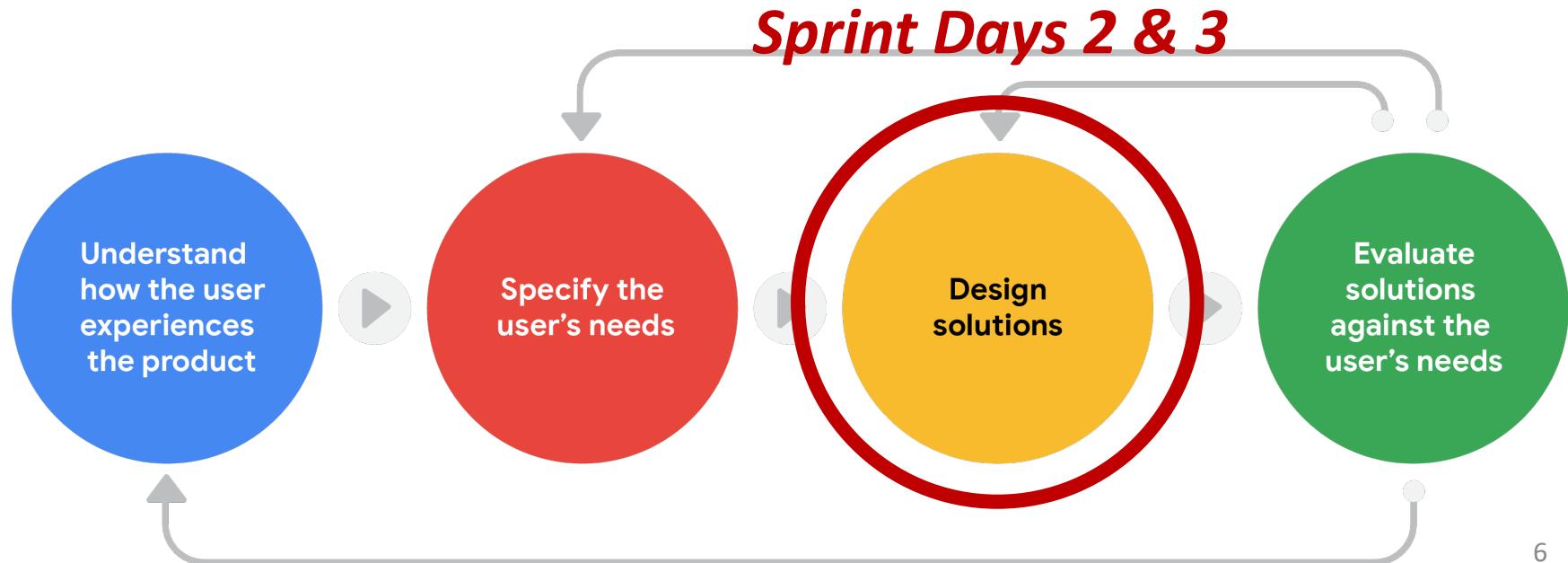
Outline: Ideating Solutions

- Brainstorming and the Crazy 8
- Competitive Audit and Unique Value Proposition
- Refining and deciding the best solutions



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Crazy 8

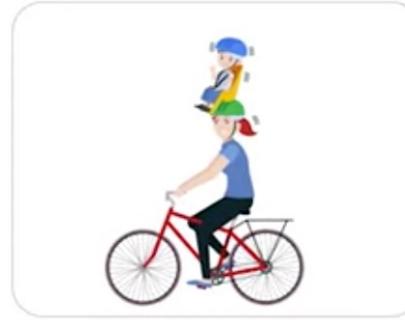


- A design ideation exercise that asks you to sketches 8 ideas in 8 minutes

Example (Parent-Kid Cycling)



Jane is a parent in New York, who needs a safe way to ride her bike with her two-year-old kid, Luca, because Luca is still learning how to ride his own bike



Best Practices for the Crazy 8

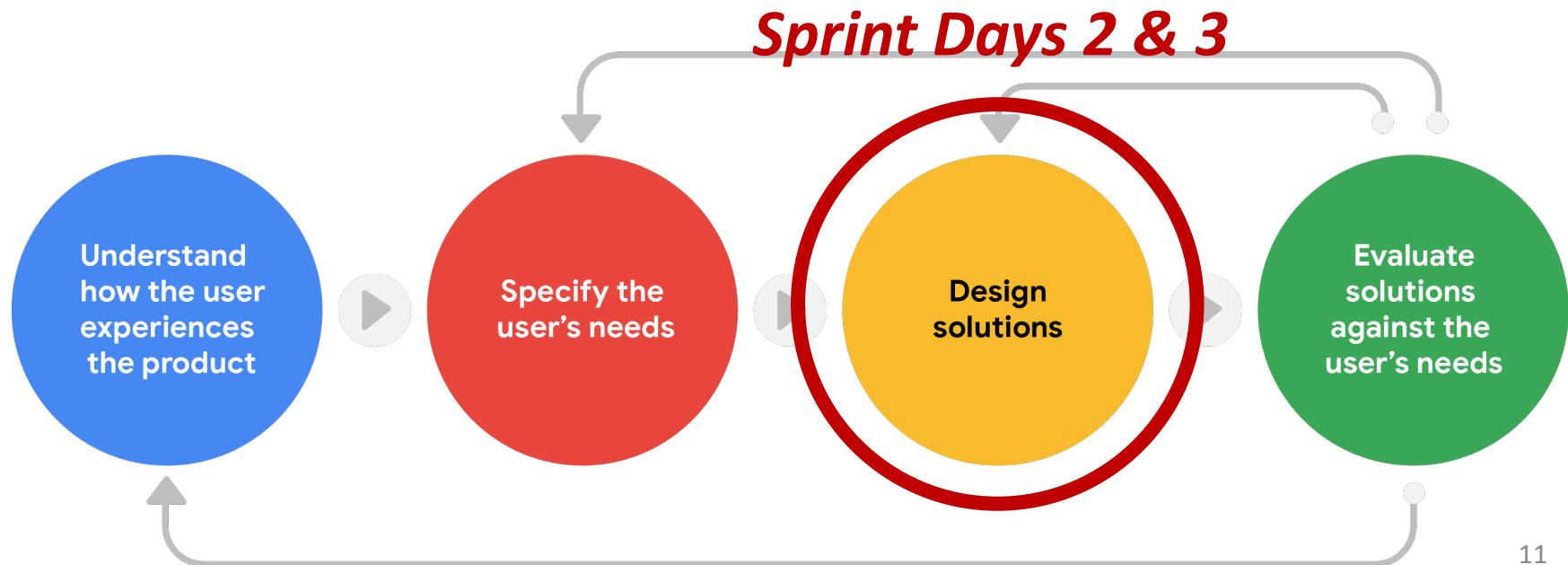
- Make sure your problem is well defined
- Sketch on real paper to ***move fast***
- ***Quantity*** over quality
- “Crazy” ideas are welcome
- Respect the timer
- Warm-up exercise helps
 - E.g., “draw your interpretations of love”
- ***Don’t judge*** (your and others’ sketches)
- Include a diverse group
- Ideate in a comfortable environment



For more ideation techniques,
[read this blog post](#)

Outline: Ideating Solutions

- Brainstorming and the Crazy 8
- Competitive Audit and Unique Value Proposition
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Competitive Audit

- An overview of your competitors' strengths and weaknesses

Value Proposition

- A simple statement that summarizes why a customer would choose a product/service over its competitors

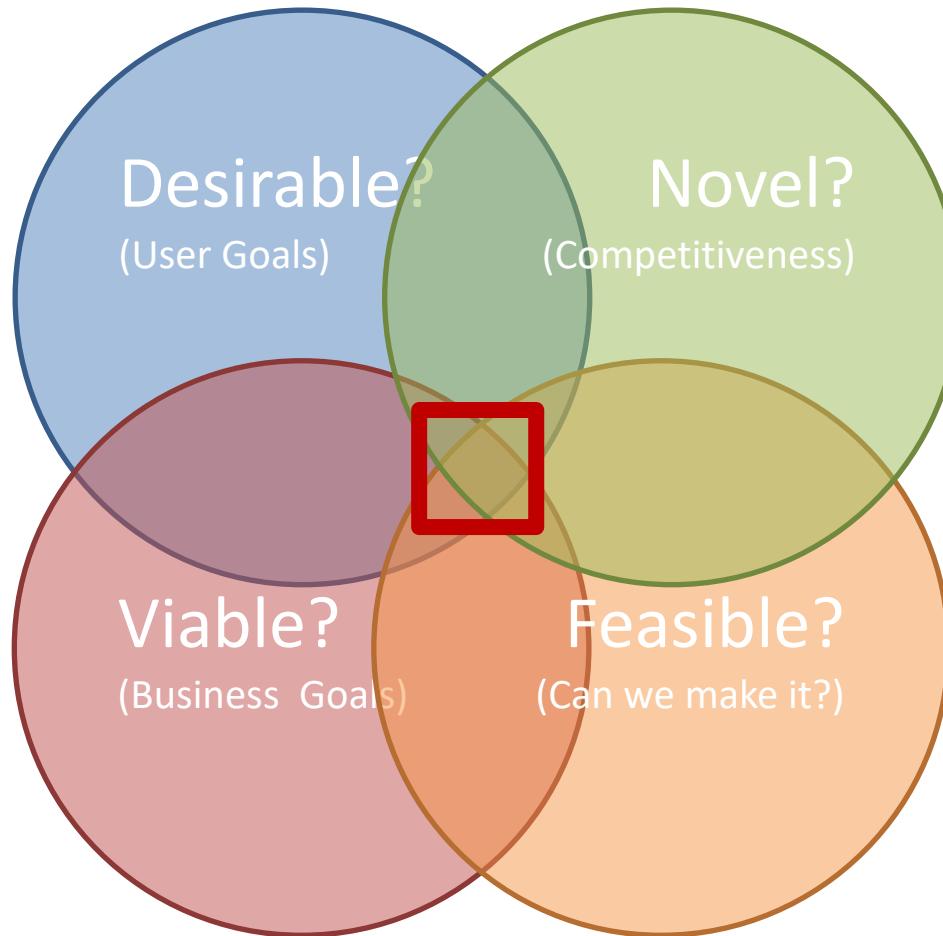
Your Competitor...



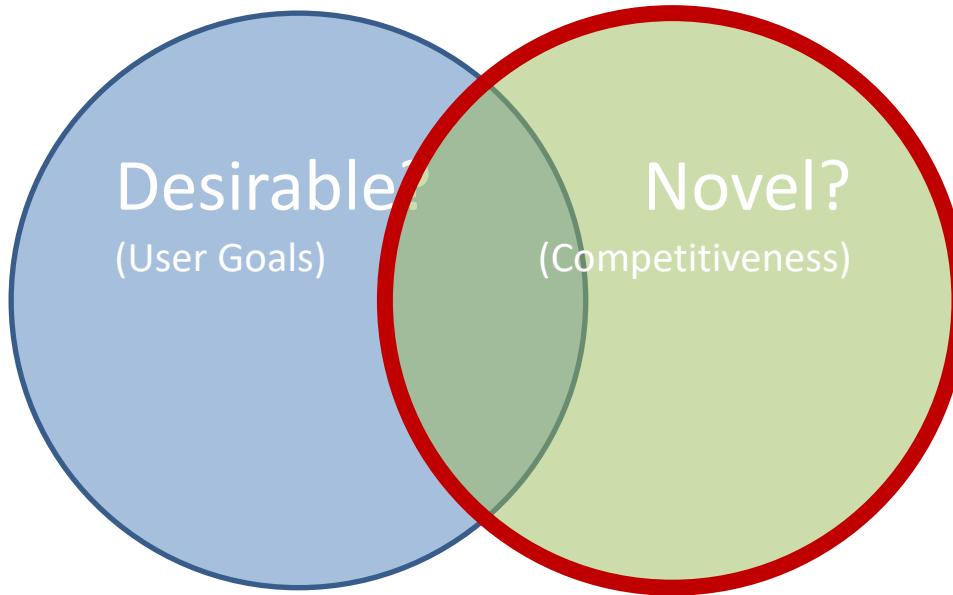
What did you see?

The collage consists of nine square images arranged in a grid. The top row shows a white sand beach with turquoise water, a lighthouse on a distant island, a woman applying makeup, and a close-up of a woman's face. The middle row shows a woman sitting on a beach, a person standing on a beach, a woman's profile, and a coconut split open with a blue straw. The bottom row shows a woman's hair being styled, a woman wearing glasses, and a woman holding a blue can.

What Are Good Ideas?

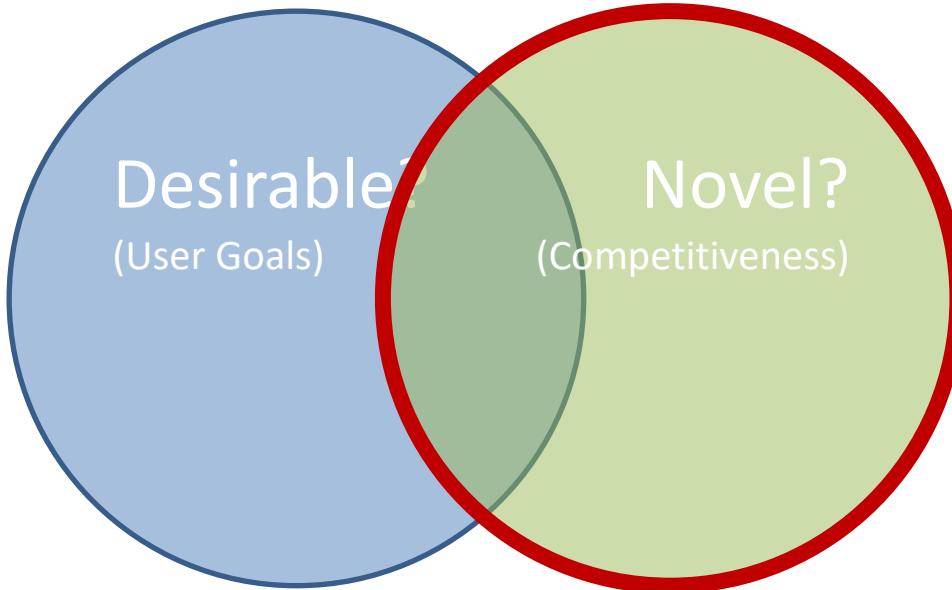


Why Novelty?



- People hate to change

How to Be Novel?



- Traditional marketing: brand personification + emotions
 - E.g., to be your friend, boyfriend, grandma...
- No! ***Products are objects*** to our brands, not a person
 - Products do not activate the medial part of the frontal lobe

Customers buy a product because of
its *expected instrumentality* to
achieve a certain *goal*

Consumer Goals

- Explicit goals
 - Category specific
 - E.g., moisturizing our skin, reliability of a car, removing stains...
- Implicit goals
 - More general
 - Operate on a psychological level
 - E.g. energizing, being sensible, fun, status...

What Did You See?



Anatomy of Implicit Goals

- Security
 - Care, trust, closeness, security, warmth...
- Enjoyment
 - Relaxation, light heartedness, openness, pleasure...
- Excitement
 - Vitality, fun, curiosity, creativity, change...
- Adventure
 - Freedom, courage, rebellion, discovery, risk...
- Autonomy
 - Pride, success, power, superiority, recognition...
- Discipline
 - Precision, order, logic, reason...



Benz vs. BMW vs. Volvo

| Signal | ↔ | Explicit goal | ↔ | Implicit goal |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|  Mercedes-Benz | Automatic braking system | ↔ | Shorter braking distance | ↔ Superiority |
|  | Automatic braking system | ↔ | Shorter braking distance | ↔ Driving pleasure |
|  | Automatic braking system | ↔ | Shorter braking distance | ↔ Security |

- Same auto breaking system
- How to differentiate if you are Benz?

Superiority



Competitive Audit Steps

1. Outline audit goals
2. Identify your direct & indirect competitors
3. Review the products that they offer
4. Understanding how they position themselves in the market
 - Their **value propositions**?
 - What explicit and implicit goals achieved?
5. Examining what they do well and what you could improve

Direct vs. Indirect Competitors

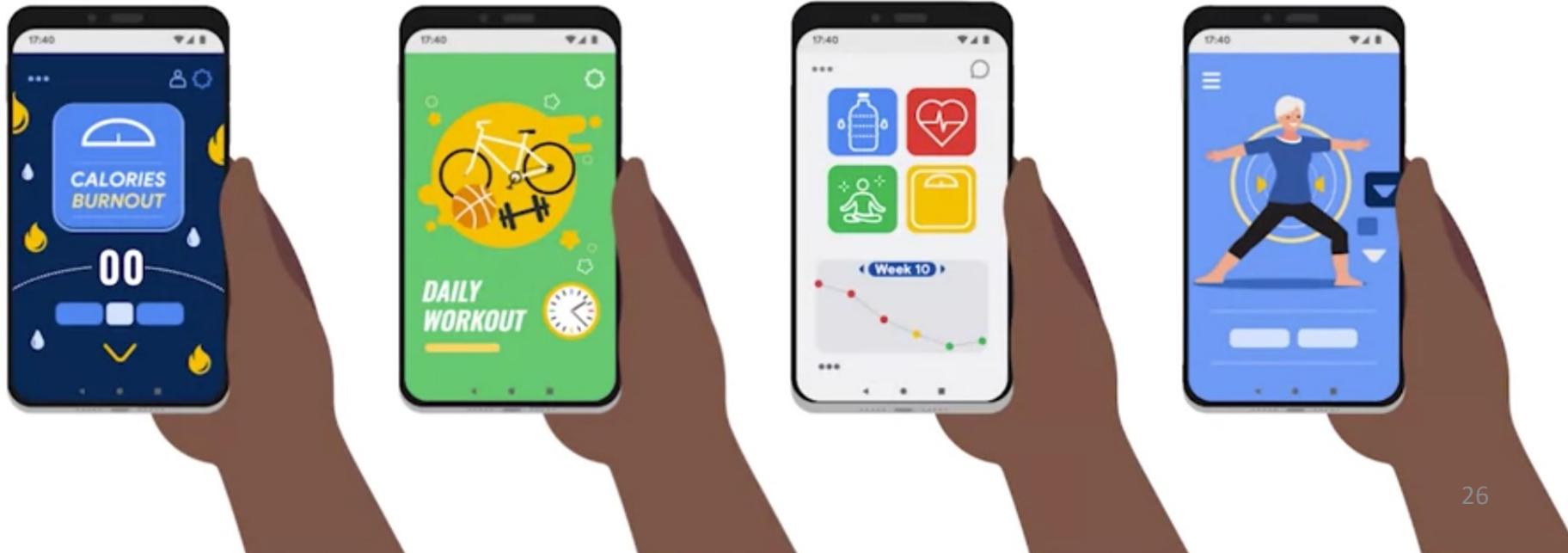
- Direct competitors
 - Have offerings (products, services, or features) similar to your product and focus on the same audience
- Indirect competitors
 - Have a similar set of offerings, but focus on a different audience
 - Or, have a different set of offerings and focus on the same audience

Example (Weight-loss App for 30's)

Indirect

- Health/wellness apps targeting 30's
- Weight-loss apps for 60's

Direct



Step 1: Outline Audit Goals

- Example (CoffeeHouse):

“To compare the purchasing experience of each competitor’s app as a new and returning user”

Step 2: List Competitors

| Competitive audit | | Goal: Compare the purchasing experience of each competitor's app as a new user and a returning user. | | | | |
|---------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|
| General information | | | | | | |
| | Competitor type (direct or indirect) | Location(s) | Product offering | Price (\$ - \$\$\$\$) | Website (URL) | Business size (small, medium, large) |
| JavaMate | Direct | Canberra, Australia | Variety of different quality coffees | \$\$ | www.javamate.coffee | Large |
| BeanTown | Indirect | Sundsvall, Sweden | Rotating selection of high-end coffee | \$\$\$\$ | www.freshbrewed.bean | Small |

Step 3: Determine Aspects to Compare

- General information
- UX
 - First impressions
 - Interaction
 - Visual design
 - Content

Step 4: Research (General Information)

| Competitive audit | Goal: Compare the purchasing experience of each competitor's app as a new user and a returning user. | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---|--|--|
| | General information | | | | | | | |
| | Competitor type (direct or indirect) | Location(s) | Product offering | Price (\$ - \$\$\$) | Website (URL) | Business size (small, medium, large) | Target audience | Unique value proposition |
| JavaMate | Direct | Canberra, Australia | Variety of different quality coffees | \$\$ | www.javamate.coffee | Large | Working adults | Offers a diverse variety of coffee |
| BeanTown | Indirect | Sundsvall, Sweden | Rotating selection of high-end coffee | \$\$\$\$ | www.freshbrewed.bean | Small | Higher-income clientele who work in the suburbs or from home | Offers a subscription mail-order service |

- Gathered from products, websites, marketing materials, and financial reports, etc.

Step 4: Research (First Impressions)

| First impressions | | UX (rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding) | | | | | | Content | |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Desktop website experience | Dedicated mobile app experience | Features | Accessibility | User flow | Navigation | Visual design | Tone | Descriptiveness | |
| Outstanding + Website is well-designed and easy to use + Elegant design with strong branding | Good + App is well-designed and easy to use + Smooth ordering process - Limited number of features | Needs work + One-click payment that remembers payment info - Lack of other useful features - No loyalty rewards program | Good + Audio option for menu available in English and Spanish - Offers 2 different languages | Good + Easy and useful order and payment processes + Straightforward user flow - Not memorable | Good + Basic navigation + Clear indication of clickable elements | Outstanding + Strong brand identity including colors, fonts, style, and imagery + Visual design communicates company ethos | Sophisticated and informative | Good + All key info is present - Too descriptive | |
| Okay + Modern minimalist design - Limited features available in desktop version | Good + Modern minimalist design + Design is clean and easy to use - Some features don't work as intended | Outstanding + One-click payment with fingerprint recognition + Ability to create user profile + Offers premium features for returning users + A "coffee map" that shows where each month's order comes from | Outstanding + Integrated with voice control software - Offers 23 different languages | Good + Fun and easy to use for account holders - Payment process without an account is repetitive and frustrating | Okay - Sorry unfamiliar navigation patterns | Good + Visual design communicates company ethos + Modern and trendy design - Visual design doesn't always support content intuitively | Engaging, concise, and informative | Needs work - Too brief at times - Missing information | |

Step 4: Research (Interaction)

| First impressions | | UX (rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding) | | | | | | Content | |
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Step 4: Research (Visual Design)

| First impressions | | UX (rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding) | | | | | | Content | |
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| Desktop website experience | Dedicated mobile app experience | Features | Accessibility | User flow | Navigation | Visual design | Tone | Descriptiveness | |
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Step 4: Research (Content)

| First impressions | | UX (rated: needs work, okay, good, or outstanding) | | | | | | Content | |
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| Desktop website experience | Dedicated mobile app experience | Features | Accessibility | User flow | Navigation | Visual design | Tone | Descriptiveness | |
| Outstanding + Website is well-designed and easy to use + Elegant design with strong branding | Good + App is well-designed and easy to use + Smooth ordering process - Limited number of features | Needs work + One-click payment that remembers payment info - Lack of other useful features - No loyalty rewards program | Good + Audio option for menu available in English and Spanish - Offers 2 different languages | Good + Easy and useful order and payment processes + Straightforward user flow - Not memorable | Good + Clear indication of clickable elements | Outstanding + Strong brand identity including colors, fonts, style, and imagery + Visual design communicates company ethos | Sophisticated and informative | Good + All key info is present - Too descriptive | |
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Step 5: Lightning Demos

- A structured “show and tell” group session to present competitive audit results to gather ideas and inspiration



Goals & Methods

Example Slides

Objective

Burger Garden says their clients have lost interest in their product.

We audited industry competitors to understand how the BG app compares.

Research Questions

Are they attracting the audience that they say they are speaking to?

How does their app look and feel? Does the design complement the product?

Will the user get confused as they navigate?

Procedure

We reviewed these aspects of each restaurant and their app or website design:

- Audience
- First Thoughts
- User Interaction
- Visual Design

Burger Garden

Location: Kansas City, Missouri

Cost: Burgers cost around \$10 each

Business size: Small

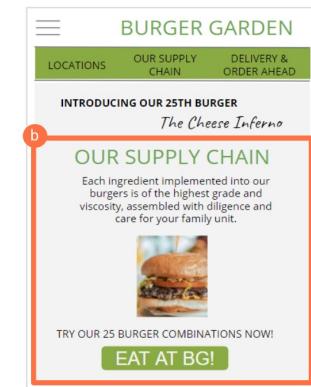
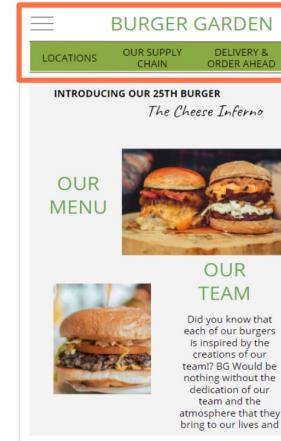
Audience: Millennials (ages 25 to 40)

Unique Value Proposition:

Large variety of burgers and toppings

Initial Findings:

- Clear branding (a)
- Content tone is inconsistent (b)



For more details,
read this [blog post](#)

Why Is Competitive Audit Important?

- Inform market status
 - How users solve their problems currently?
 - Product life cycle?
 - Marketing strategy (e.g., SEO/ASO keywords)?
 - Business model?
- Reveal opportunities for improvement
 - What's the gap between market and user needs?
 - Usability problems in existing products?
- Inspire new ideas
 - Something good to borrow from?
- Provide evidence for your hypotheses

Limitations

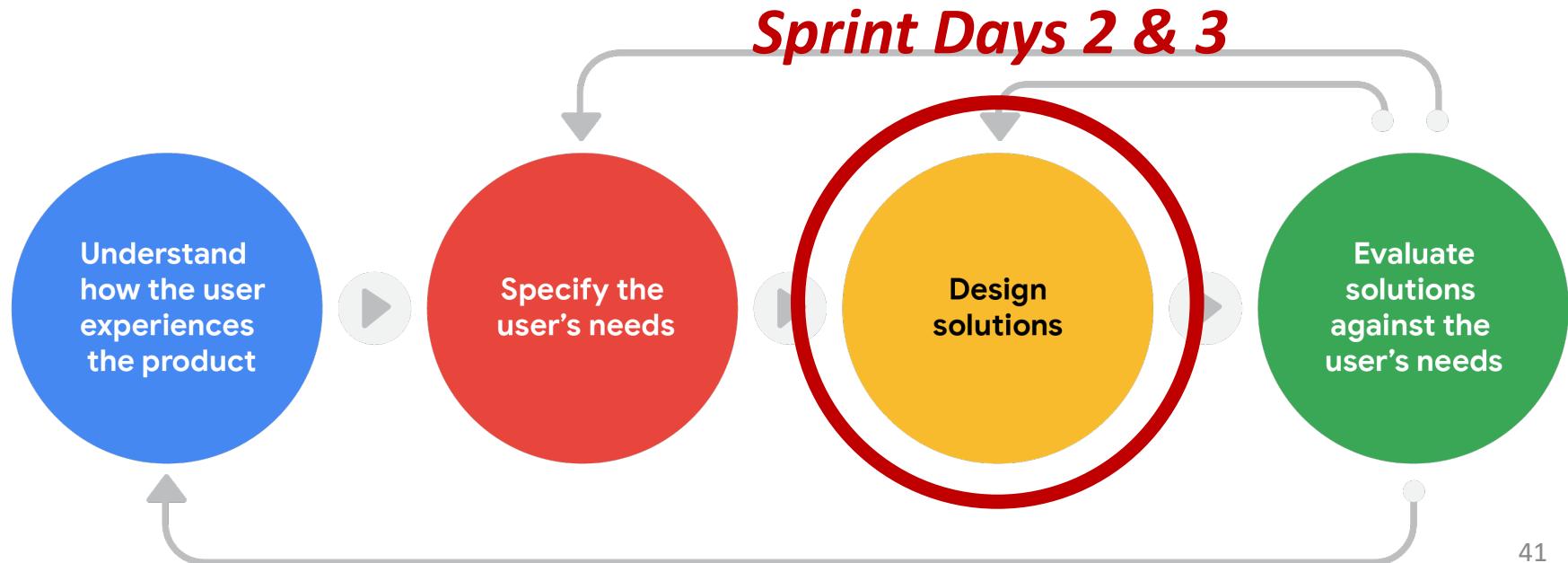
- Stifles creativity
 - Solution: brainstorm ***before and after*** competitive audit
- Depends on how well you interpret the findings
 - Ask 2 or more people to review the same product
 - Focus on users' goals
- Design that works well for a competitor might not work well for you
 - E.g., Are the “Share” or “Like” buttons necessary?

Second-Round Ideation

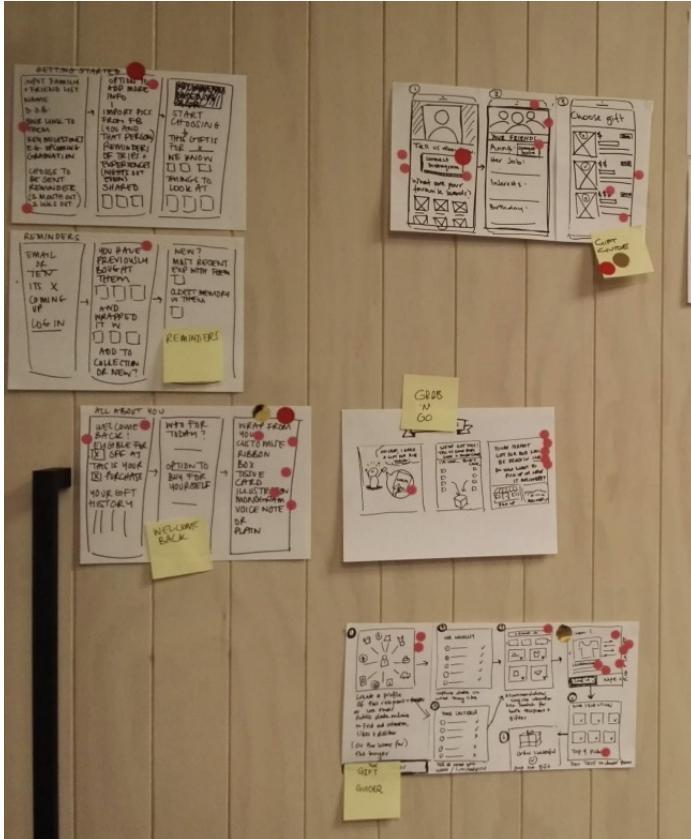
- What's your unique value proposition?
- Explicit goals?
- Implicit goals?

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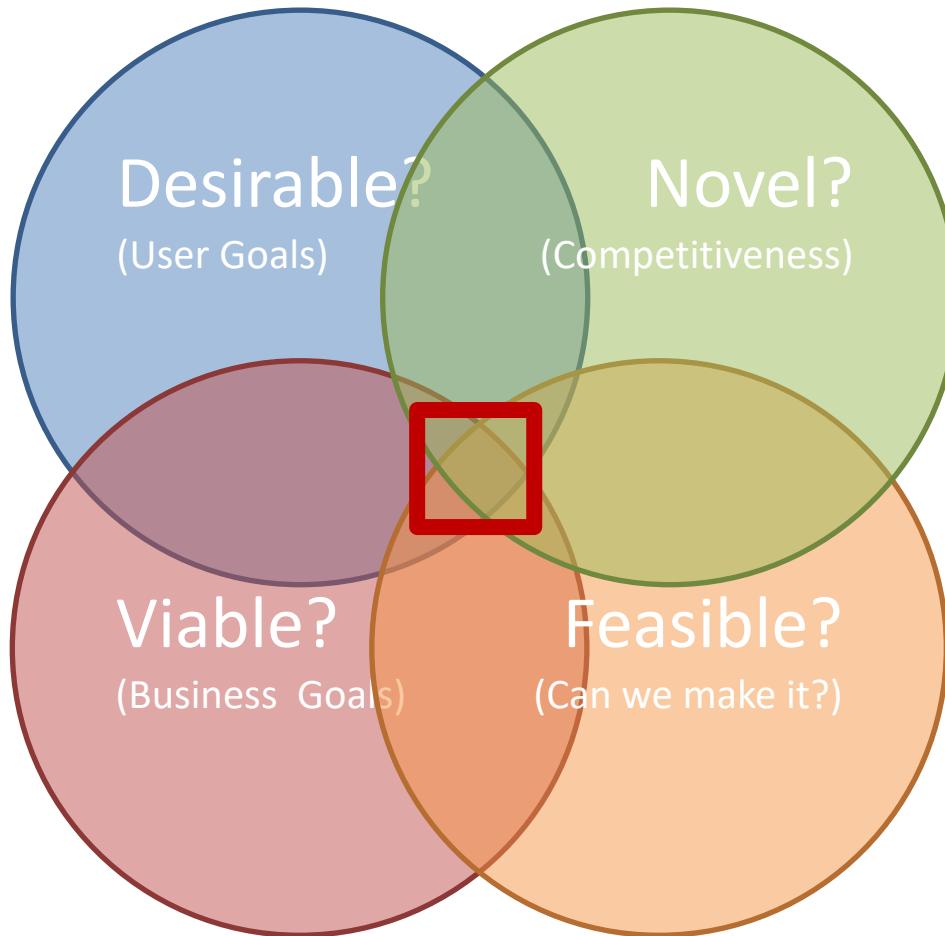


Process



1. Hang & present ***anonymous*** sketches
 - By the facilitator, who learn from everyone first
2. Vote the best ***parts***
 - No discussion allowed
3. Speed critique
 - By the facilitator and voters
 - Time limited
 - Sticky notes
4. Merge the best parts by re-sketching, and go to step 1 if necessary
5. Write goal statements for the final winners

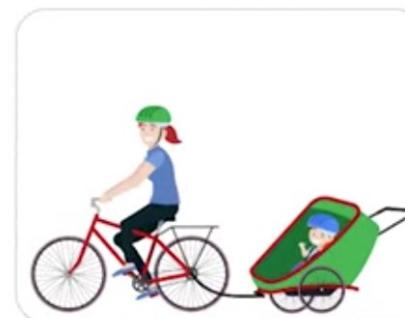
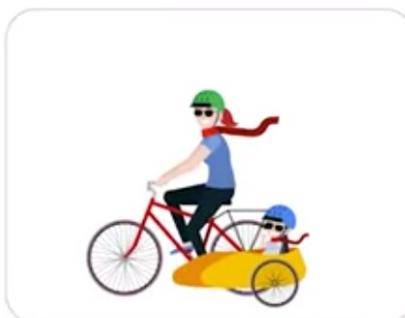
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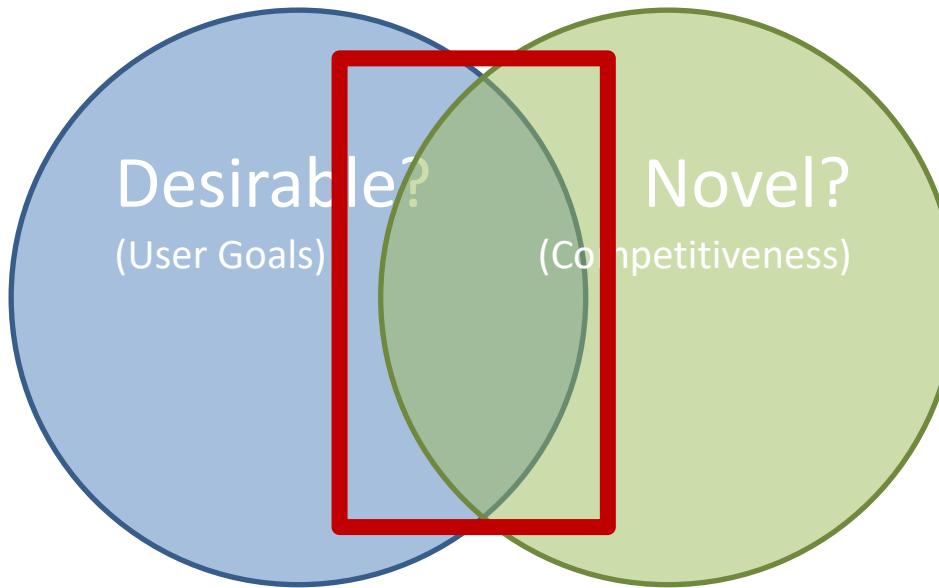
Example (Parent-Kid Cycling)



Jane is a parent in New York, who needs a safe way to ride her bike with her two-year-old kid, Luca, because Luca is still learning how to ride his own bike



Caution!

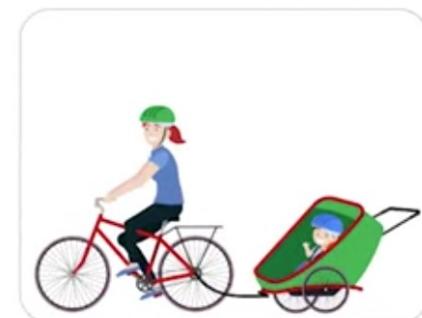
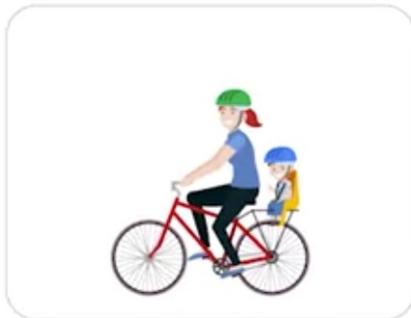


- Don't trade relevance (explicit goals) for differentiation (implicit goals)

Example (Parent-Kid Cycling)



Jane is a parent in New York, who needs a safe way to ride her bike with her two-year-old kid, Luca, because Luca is still learning how to ride his own bike



Goal Statement

- Few sentences that describe a product, its benefits for users, and its measurement to success

GOAL STATEMENT

Our _____ will let users _____
product (what) perform specific actions (what)

which will affect _____
describe who the action will affect (who)

by _____
describe how the action will positively affect users (why)

We will measure effectiveness by _____
describe how you will measure the impact

From problems to solutions

Examples (CoffeeHouse App)



Claire is a marketing intern, who needs a quick way to submit and monitor group orders for her colleagues because she wants to save time waiting in line

GOAL STATEMENT

Our CoffeeHouse app will let users place group orders in advance
product (what) perform specific actions (what)

which will affect users who have to make and pick up large orders
describe who the action will affect (who)

by letting users skip the in-store order line and saving them time.

Your unique value proposition

We will measure effectiveness by tracking orders of 5+ items placed through the app.
describe how you will measure the impact



Customer Expert
(Sales)



Business
(PM, Marketing)



Creator
(Designer, UX Eng)



Builder
(Developer, Eng)

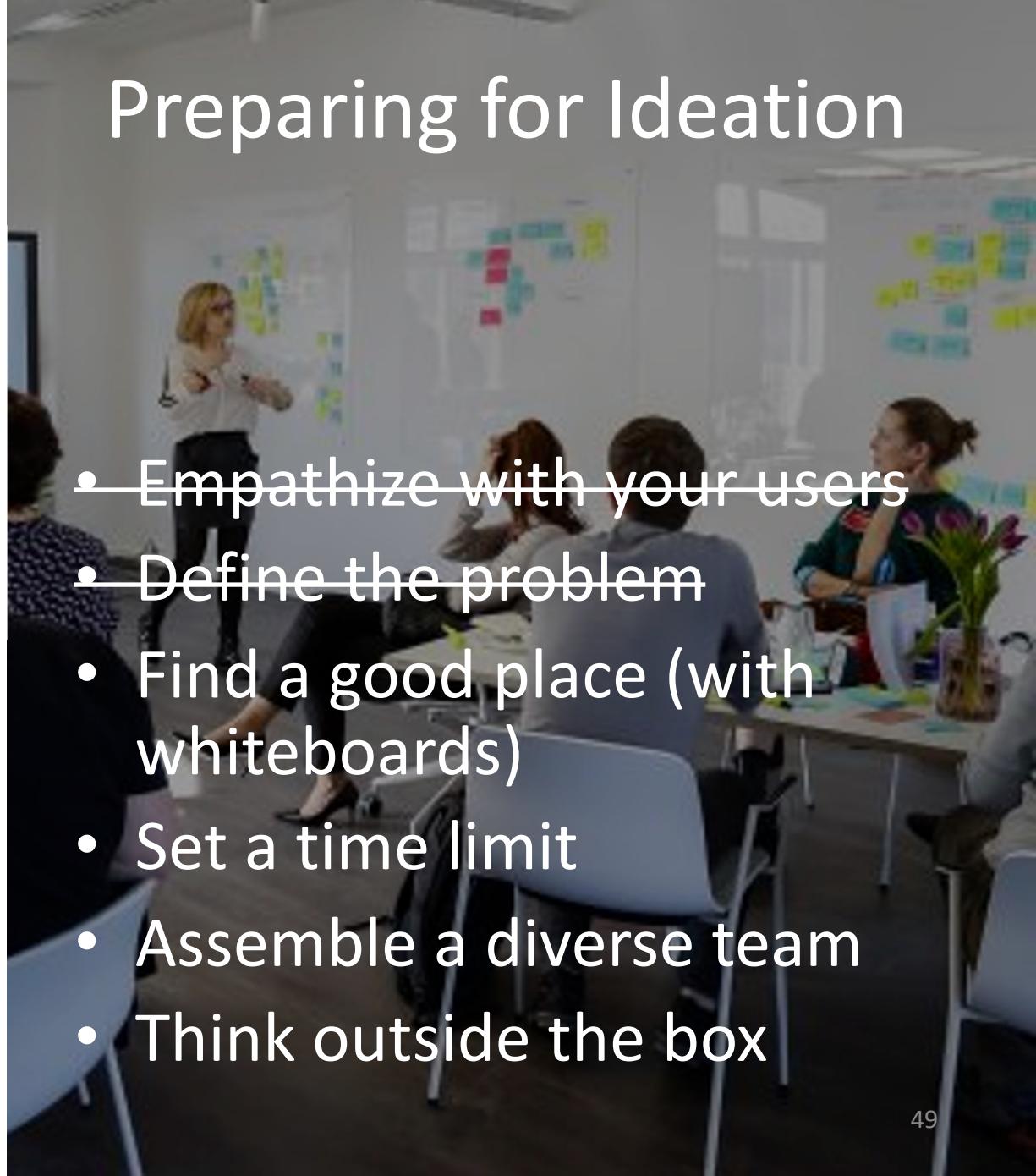


The Decider
(SVP, VP)



Facilitator

Preparing for Ideation



- Empathize with your users
- Define the problem
- Find a good place (with whiteboards)
- Set a time limit
- Assemble a diverse team
- Think outside the box

Bean Bag Bonus

Your Favorites

VIP Status

Secret Menu

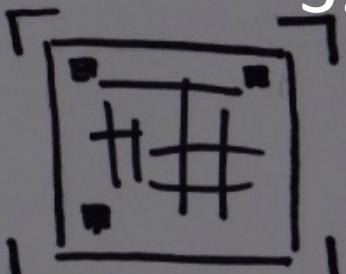
Design Sprint Day 2

1. Communicate problems & hypotheses

2. Brainstorm solutions

- Sketch the Crazy 8 under time limit

Skip the Line



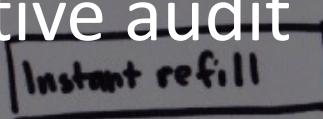
- No judgement

Easy order

3. Conduct competitive audit

- Lightning demos

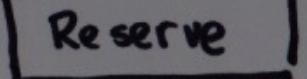
- Capture good ideas



...
Open tab

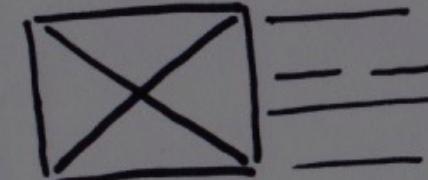
4. Brainstorm unique value propositions

- No judgement



Coffee Stories

Your grower: _____



Design Sprint Day 3

1. Present & vote candidate solutions
 - No discussion
2. Refine/merge parts & decide the best solutions
 - What's your unique value proposition?
3. Write goal statements & evaluation metrics
4. Storyboarding (coming next)