Reframing Toolkit for Teams

This toolkit provides practical exercises to help design teams reframe problems, challenge assumptions, and uncover new opportunity spaces. Use these activities during the Define or Ideate phase of Design Thinking to deepen insights and foster innovation.

1. Reframing Ladder

Use the Reframing Ladder to explore alternate definitions of the problem by shifting perspectives up and down in abstraction.

Steps:
- Write the core problem statement.
- Ask: 'Why is this important?' (move upward)
- Ask: 'What is a way to do this?' (move downward)
- Generate at least 3 levels above and below.

2. Stakeholder Switching

Imagine the problem from different stakeholders' perspectives (e.g., user, competitor, service provider).

Steps:
- Identify 3–4 stakeholder roles.
- Ask: 'How might [this stakeholder] view the problem?'
- Record differences in priorities, barriers, and goals.

3. Assumption Busting

Identify and challenge hidden assumptions in your current understanding of the problem.

Steps:
- Brainstorm 10 assumptions about the challenge.
- Label each as 'True?', 'Sometimes?', or 'Untrue?'
- Select the most questionable assumptions and reframe the challenge without them.

4. Flip the Problem

Turn the problem upside-down to provoke alternative thinking.

Steps:
- Write the opposite of your problem (e.g., 'How do we lose customers?')
- Brainstorm answers.
- Flip those answers into new opportunity statements (e.g., 'To avoid losing customers, we should...')

5. What's the Real Problem?

This reflective exercise guides teams to question whether they're solving the correct problem.

Steps:

- Ask: 'What's the real challenge here?' (repeat 5 times)
- Revisit the original brief and rewrite the challenge statement if needed.

Usage Notes

- Use as warm-up or midway activity during workshops
- Print this toolkit or use alongside a virtual whiteboard
- Mix and match based on time and team needs