



How to Conduct an Interview with Empathy

Prepare for the Interview

To make the most out of your interviews, you should sufficiently prepare your team before each one. You should have a plan for your interview to make it run more smoothly and ensure you cover all the important areas in one sitting.

Use These Steps to Help You Prepare and Plan for an Interview:

- 01: Brainstorm** the questions you want to ask in the interview with your team. Remember to build on one another's ideas to maximize the range of potential questions—some ideation techniques may come in handy here.
- 02:** After the brainstorm session, **group the potential questions** into areas or themes. After you have identified all the themes your questions belong to, try to figure out how best to order them to ensure a smooth flow of conversation during the interview. Are there themes that will probe the users slightly more? Put these questions towards the middle of the interview. Additionally, if one theme builds on another, make sure they follow one another.
- 03:** The last step requires you to **polish and refine your questions**. Remove repeated or similar questions, and consolidate or separate questions where necessary. Most importantly, make sure your questions allow you to tap into the emotions of your interviewee.

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Conduct the Interview

Here Are Some Tips You Can Use to Conduct Your User Interviews with Empathy:

- **Ask why, even if you think you know the answer.** Don't assume you know what users think or feel—sometimes, their answer might surprise you.
- **Ask for anecdotes.** When you ask users about their experiences, try to tease out stories of what they did in the recent past, rather than generic experiences they've had. For example, ask them about the last time they used a recipe app, instead of about their experience with recipe apps in general.
- **Observe body language**—aspects of body language often tell us more than what our users are willing to share vocally!
- **Don't lead the question.** When you ask a question, frame it as neutrally as possible. Rather than "Do you think it's very troublesome to find recipes?", try "What do you think of the process of finding recipes?" instead. This will also help you ask open-ended rather than closed-ended questions.
- **Have an interview partner.** It's impossible for you to take notes while you listen to what your interviewee has to say. If you can't find a partner, use an audio recording app while you carry out the interview so you can truly focus on the way you ask and follow up questions.

Here are some prompts you can use in interviews:

- "Please tell me about a time when..."
- "Please tell me about the last time you did x."
- "Please tell me more about y."
- "You mentioned x. Please tell me more about that."
- "Please describe to me how..."
- "What are your feelings about x?"
- "How do you feel about y?"
- "You mentioned that you did x. Please tell me why you chose to do x instead of y."

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