

# DESIGN THINKING EXERCISE GUIDE

Hey there 🙌

Welcome to the Design Thinking Introduction Workshop-AJ&Smart Style!

Our Design Thinking workshop was designed to give people an introduction to the Design Thinking process.

Typically, you wouldn't try go through all 5 phases in one day. Sometimes the process can go on for a week, a month or even a year. It really depends on what you're working on or what you're creating with a team.

This document provides you with a comprehensive overview of our workshop, guiding you through the fundamental concepts and practices of Design Thinking.

Additionally, you'll discover our Exercise Guide—a detailed, step-by-step manual for each exercise conducted during the workshop. Whether you're a novice or seasoned practitioner, this guide offers invaluable insights and practical tools to enhance your Design Thinking journey.

Let's dive in and unleash your creativity!

# General Overview of Design Thinking Introduction Workshop

The typical flow of exercises for a design thinking introduction workshop includes several key activities that guide participants through the fundamental principles of design thinking.

Here's a step-by-step flow:

## 1. Welcome and Introduction (10-15 minutes):

- Start with a warm welcome and introduce the workshop facilitators.
- Briefly explain the agenda and objectives for the session.
- Icebreaker activity to get participants comfortable and engaged. We run 'My First Job'. This is explained in the exercise guide.

## 2. Understanding Design Thinking (15-20 minutes):

- Demystify the concept of 'creativity' and explain the importance of creative confidence in the design thinking process.
- Provide an overview of what design thinking is and its importance in problem-solving and innovation.
- Share real-world examples of successful design thinking projects.

## 3. Empathise Phase (20-30 minutes):

- Introduce the "Empathise" phase and its significance in understanding user needs.
- Conduct an empathy-building exercise, such as "Interview a Partner" or "User Persona Creation." \*\*\*In our case, we presented a predefined User Persona of a lady called Cathy.
- Encourage participants to share insights from the exercise.
- Next, engage in an exercise called 'Empathy Mapping' to further your knowledge and understanding of the user.

#### **4. Define Phase (15-20 minutes):**

- Explain the "Define" phase, where problem statements are crafted.
- Lead a group discussion to identify a specific problem or challenge based on the empathy exercise.
- With your participants, craft a 'Point of View' statement and reframe it into a solvable question using the 'How Might We' exercise. \*More on this in the exercise guide!

#### **5. Ideate Phase (30-40 minutes):**

- Describe the "Ideate" phase, emphasising the importance of generating diverse ideas.
- Facilitate a brainstorming session using techniques like "Brainstorming" or "Crazy 8s."
- Collect and share ideas on sticky notes or whiteboards.

#### **6. Prototype Phase (20-30 minutes):**

- Introduce the "Prototype" phase and its role in turning ideas into tangible solutions.
- Encourage participants to create a simple prototype of one of the ideas using readily available materials.
- Share and discuss the prototypes within small groups.

#### **7. Test Phase (20-30 minutes):**

- Explain the "Test" phase for getting feedback and iterating on prototypes.
- Conduct a user testing exercise, where participants receive and provide feedback on each other's prototypes.
- Emphasise the importance of iteration and improvement.

## **8. Wrap-Up and Debrief (10-15 minutes):**

- Summarise the key takeaways and principles of design thinking.
- Invite participants to share their thoughts, insights, and any challenges they encountered during the workshop.
- Provide additional resources and next steps for participants interested in further exploration.

## **9. Q&A and Closing (5-10 minutes):**

- Open the floor for questions and address any queries or concerns.
- Express gratitude to the participants for their engagement and participation.
- Share contact information for follow-up questions or continued collaboration.

# Exercise Guide for Design Thinking Introduction Workshop

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## 1. My First Job-Icebreaker

The "My First Job" icebreaker is a simple and engaging activity designed to warm up a group and foster a sense of connection among participants, typically before starting a workshop, meeting, or any collaborative session. The general idea of the activity revolves around participants sharing stories or experiences from their first job.

### Materials Needed:

- Sharpies
- Post-its

### Duration:

- 10 minutes

### Steps:

1. **Introduction:** Explain the icebreaker's aim to warm up and connect participants by sharing first job stories.
2. **Demonstration:** Use a sharpie to write your name, first job, and a lesson on a post-it; share it with the group.
3. **Participant Sharing:** Participants write their story on a post-it and share it with the group.
4. **Group Discussion:** Facilitate a brief discussion on themes from the stories shared.

### Phase 1: Empathise

When you feel what the other person is feeling and can mirror their expression, opinions and their hopes.

Why is this important in the Design Thinking process?

To discover people's explicit and implicit needs so that you can meet them through your design solutions.

## 2. User Persona

A user persona in design thinking is like creating a character for a story. It's a made-up person who represents the real people who will use or buy a product or service.

We give this person a name, age, job, and even hobbies. We also think about what problems they might have and what they want. This helps us understand what real people need, so we can design things that are super helpful and can solve their problems. User personas make sure we don't guess but really know who we're designing for!

You can also create predefined user personas to use as a starting point for your design projects. These predefined personas are often based on common characteristics, needs, and behaviours of specific groups of users. They can serve as templates that can be customised to fit the context of your project. Using predefined personas can save time and help you begin your design process with a better understanding of your potential users.

Example Persona from our workshop 📌

**Name:** Cathy

**Age:** 67

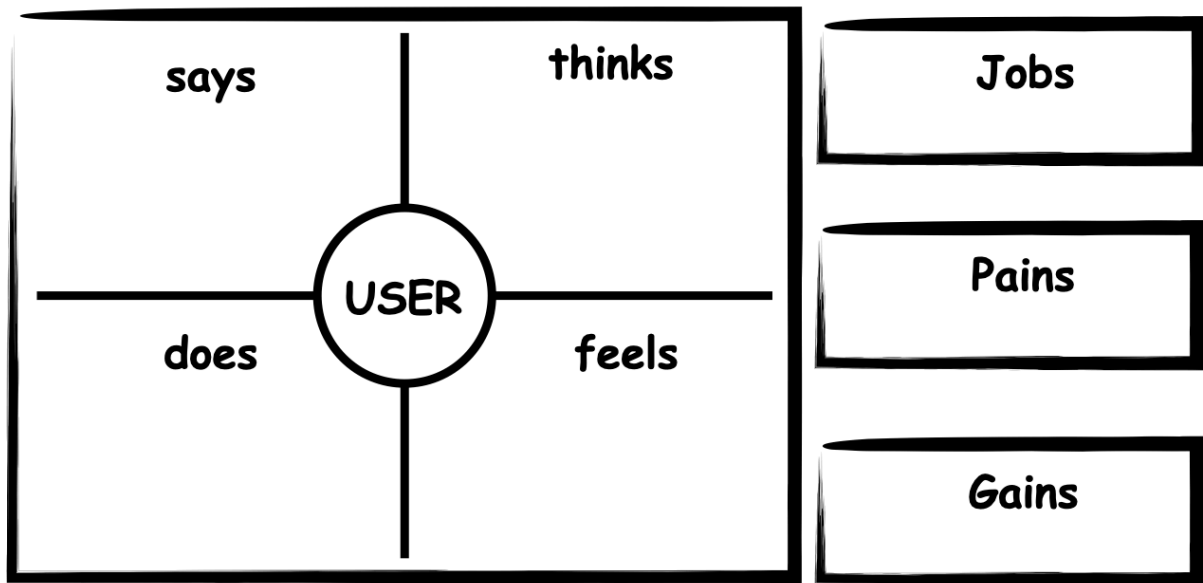
**Pains:** Has Arthritis in hands

**Hobbies:** Knitting, cooking

**Needs:** Ways to get through day without pain



### 3. Empathy Map



The Empathy Maps exercise is an activity used in the design thinking process to help teams gain a deep understanding of their target users or customers. It encourages participants to put themselves in the users' shoes and explore their thoughts, feelings, needs, and motivations.

The Empathy Maps exercise is a crucial step in the design thinking process, specifically in the "Empathise" phase. It helps teams:

- **Build Empathy:** Understand the users' perspectives, emotions, and challenges to create solutions that really address their needs.
- **Define User Personas:** Create detailed user personas based on real insights to guide the design process.

## Materials Needed:

- Large whiteboard or paper
- Sticky notes
- Markers
- Sharpies

## Prepare Materials:

You'll need a large whiteboard, sticky notes, markers, and an Empathy Map template. The template typically consists of four quadrants: "Say," "Think," "Do," and "Feel."

## Duration:

- 30 minutes

## Steps:

1. **Select Your Target User:** Choose a specific user or customer segment you want to empathise with. This could be an existing customer group or a hypothetical user.
2. **Start with a User Persona:** If you have a user persona, share it with the team. If not, brainstorm and create a basic user profile to work from.
3. Fill Out the Empathy Map Quadrants:
  - **Say:** What does the user say out loud? Their quotes, statements, or typical phrases.
  - **Think:** What is going on in the user's mind? Their thoughts, worries, goals, and desires.
  - **Do:** What actions does the user take? Their behaviours, routines, and interactions.
  - **Feel:** What emotions does the user experience? Their fears, frustrations, joys, and aspirations.
  - **Jobs:** What kind of jobs is the user doing?

- **Pains:** What pains is the user experiencing? Their fears, frustrations and obstacles.
  - **Gains:** What does the user stand to gain, if there is a tool that helps them solve their challenge (e.g. pin up documents to a board).
4. **Brainstorm and Collaborate:** Encourage participants to brainstorm together and share their insights on sticky notes, placing them in the appropriate quadrant.
  5. **Discuss and Synthesise:** As a group, discuss the insights and look for patterns and connections among the notes. This helps create a more holistic understanding of the user.

## Phase 2: Define

Defining the problem using a unique, concise reframing of the problem that is grounded in the user needs and insights.

Why is this important in the Design Thinking process?

To expose new opportunities by looking at things differently; guide innovation efforts; make sure we've identified something worth working on.

## 4. Point of View Statement

The POV statement helps you understand the problem that you want to solve. You draw insights from the empathy map about what the user needs.

\* For the purpose of this workshop, we gave the participants the POV to save time.

POV: User needs an easy to use tool to help with some delicate tasks. In particular, the user is looking for something that will help her pick up pins which she can then use to pin documents onto a board.

### Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pens

### Duration:

- 20 minutes

### Steps:

1. **Understanding POV:** Introduce the concept of a POV statement.
2. **Formulation:** Participants write their own POV statements based on a user's needs and problems.
3. **Sharing:** Share and discuss POV statements for clarity and insight.

Let me give you an example in the context of this workshop:

Example 2: Imagine you see a lady with arthritis in her hands. She's trying to pick up a tiny pin and put it on a board, but it's really tricky for her.

The Point of View statement would be like a little note to remind you about the problem. It might say something like, "The lady needs help picking up and pinning the tiny pin because of her sore hands."

So, it tells you who needs help (the lady), what the problem is (sore hands and picking up a tiny pin), and why it's important (so she can do it without any trouble).

With this note, you know exactly what you're trying to solve, and it helps you come up with ideas to make it easier for her, like finding tools or techniques to help her pick up and pin the tiny pin. That's what a Point of View statement does in Design Thinking – it helps you understand the problem you want to help with!

## 5. How Might We

The "How Might We" exercise is a brainstorming technique used in the Design Thinking process to turn challenges or problems into opportunities for creative solutions.

Transform a problem or in this case, point of view statement, into a solvable question.

For example: How Might We create a tool that will help Cathy complete delicate tasks (like pinning documents to a board) in a pain free way?

### **Materials Needed:**

- Sticky Notes or Index Cards
- Pens

### **Duration:**

- Variable, typically 20-30 minutes.

### **Here's how it works:**

1. Start with a Point of View statement: "The lady with arthritis needs assistance in handling small pins and pinning documents to a board due to her hand discomfort and limited dexterity."
2. Rephrase it as a "How Might We" question: "How might we provide effective assistance to the lady with arthritis, enabling her to handle small pins and pin documents to a board comfortably and easily?"

With this Point of View statement, you've already identified the user, their needs, and the challenge. Now, the "How Might We" question can guide the brainstorming process to explore various ways to address her specific needs and make the task more manageable.

By framing the problem this way, we open the door to brainstorming and exploring various ways to make this task more accessible and manageable for her. It encourages creative thinking to find innovative solutions, such as specialised tools designed to aid individuals with arthritis in handling small objects and pinning documents effectively.

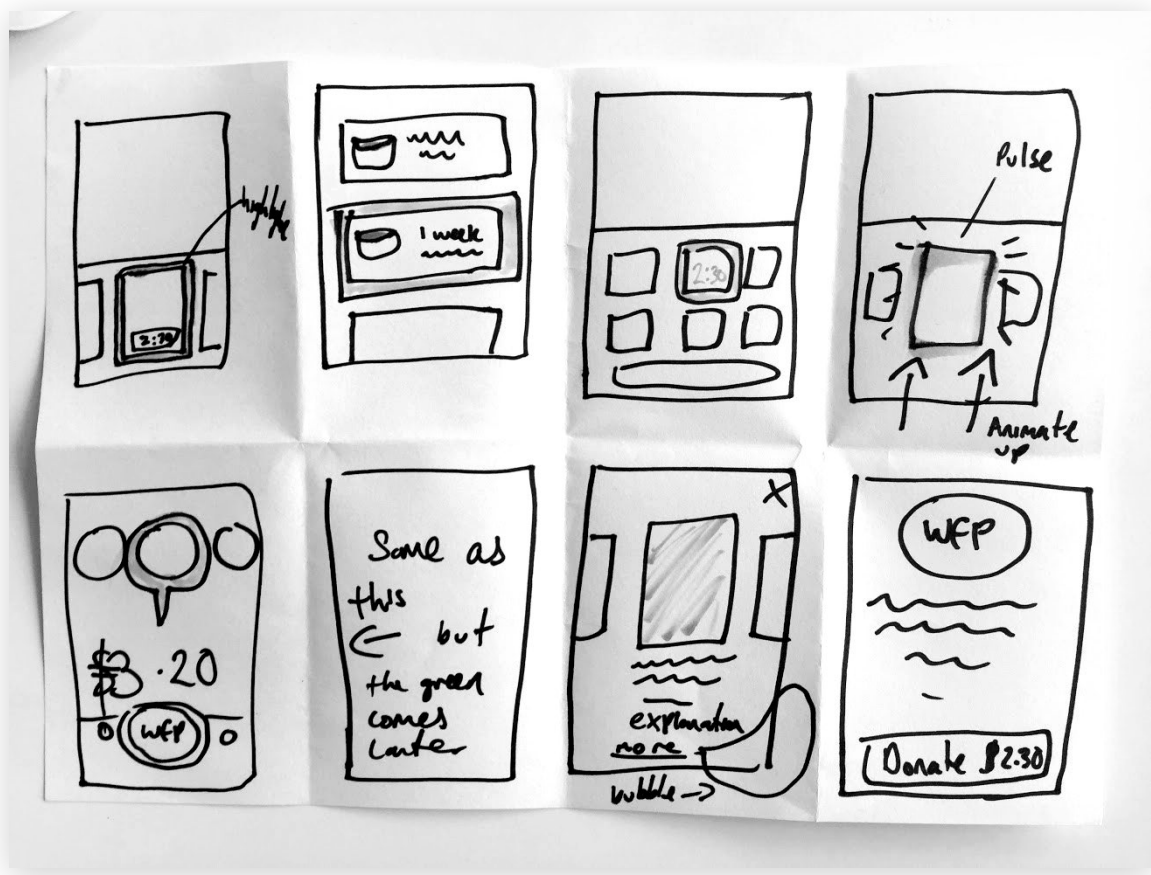
### **Phase 3: Ideate**

Here is where you generate many possible solutions to a problem!

Why is this important in the Design Thinking process?

To generate maximum innovation potential in a short amount of time; incorporate different perspectives, build excitement.

## 6. Crazy 8's



"Crazy 8's" is a fast-paced and creative brainstorming exercise often used in the Design Thinking process to generate a multitude of ideas quickly. It encourages participants to think creatively and overcome potential mental blocks. It's a valuable tool in the ideation phase of the Design Thinking process.

### Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Sharpies

### Duration:

- 8 minutes (1 minute per idea)



## Steps:

1. **Preparation:** Provide each participant with a blank sheet of paper and a pen.
2. **Fold the Paper:** Instruct participants to fold their sheet of paper into eight equal sections. Each section will be used for a different idea.
3. **Set a Clear Challenge:** Start by presenting a specific problem or challenge to the participants. Using our example, 'Generate as many ideas as possible to assist the lady with arthritis in easily picking up and pinning small documents to a board comfortably and effectively'.
4. **Time Limit:** Explain that participants will have exactly 8 minutes for this exercise. 1 minute per frame. It's essential to keep it fast-paced to encourage quick, creative thinking.
5. **Generate Ideas:** During the 8-minutes, participants should sketch or write down one idea per section. Encourage them to think outside the box and not worry about perfection. These ideas can be rough sketches, keywords, or even short phrases.
6. **Together, alone:** Participants work silently during this phase, focusing on generating as many ideas as they can within the time limit.
7. **Share Ideas:** After the 8 minutes are up, give each participant a brief opportunity to share one or two of their most promising ideas with the group. Keep these discussions brief to maintain the exercise's fast pace.

## Phase 4: Prototype

Turn your concept into something concrete, tangible – something you can test.

Why is this important in the Design Thinking process?

To gain empathy; to explore; to test; to inspire. To test your hypotheses, to get you closer to your final solution.

## 7. Building the Prototype

This is where participants get to build the product/tool or service for their user.

### Materials Needed:

- Sharpies
- Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Cellotape
- Blue tac
- Pipe cleaners
- String
- \*Basically any arts and craft materials will work.

### Duration:

- 20/30 minutes

### Steps:

1. Build a the tool using the materials provided.
2. Test it with people in your group.

## **Phase 5: Test**

Explain the "Test" phase for getting feedback and iterating on prototypes.

Conduct a user testing exercise, where participants receive and provide feedback on each other's prototypes.

Why is this important in the Design Thinking process?

To understand how users understand and use the concept. It is a way of continuing to gain empathy for your users and evaluate your solution.

## 8. Test Prototype

Test what you built!

### Materials:

- This depends on what you're prototype is. For this workshop, we had an oven glove, pins and a styrofoam board to test the product.

### Duration:

- 20/30 minutes

### Steps:

1. Explain the "Test" phase is for getting feedback and iterating on prototypes.
2. One person from a different group must test the product/tool/service. For example, in our workshop, one person from each group tested picking up the pin using an oven glove and pin the pin the the board.
3. **Capture Questions:** Get the person testing the tool to ask questions about it.
4. **Capture ideas:** Write people's feedback down on post-its so they can improve the product.
5. Emphasise the importance of iteration and improvement.

## 9. Key Highlights

We always like to end a workshop on a strong note here at AJ&Smart and we feel ending with a key highlights discussion is always successful.

### **Materials:**

- Large whiteboard or space to place highlights
- Sticky notes
- Sharpies


### **Duration:**

- 15/20 minutes

### **Steps:**

1. Ask participants to write down all their key highlights, key learnings or key moments from the session.
2. Ask participants to pick one highlight and share it with the whole group.
3. Ask participants to place the highlight on the board which has a designated space for highlights.

## 10. End Strong

We ended our workshop by surprising our participants with goodie bags 

You can end your workshop in whatever way you like. A group picture is another nice way to celebrate the end of a workshop or simply a celebratory drink (alcoholic or non-alcoholic-your choice). Just make sure your participants feel like they have reached a milestone.

And that's it!

I hope this was helpful and that you run this workshop in the future. If you do, please let us know in the comments section of the YouTube video. We would love to hear how it went.

If you want to dive even deeper into Design Thinking check out our articles on this topic in our blog at <https://www.workshopper.com/category/design-thinking>

If you have any further questions about this process, reach out to us at [support@ajsmart.com](mailto:support@ajsmart.com)

With love,

The AJ&Smart Team 