

# Needfinding

October 1, 2015

# who we are



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# brainstorm

A word cloud centered around productivity, featuring words like meetings, productivity, relationships, efficiency, and participation.

The word cloud includes the following words:

- productivity
- meetings
- relationships
- leaders
- efficiency
- introversion
- extroversion
- job scheduling
- contributions
- participation
- school
- classroom
- giving
- mentality
- psychology
- time
- sentiment
- office
- leaders
- collaboration
- health
- home
- introduction
- groupthink
- happiness
- staying
- task
- receiving
- speech
- tracking
- payments
- groups
- transportation
- procrastination
- education
- wellness
- management
- touch
- discussions
- breaks
- money
- physical
- finances
- maintaining

problem

**behavioral change** in the  
meeting space.

# students

- Dennis and Kevin: Two Stanford juniors.
- Jonny: Stanford senior.
- Melissa: Pomona sophomore.

# students



# professionals

- Jack: Designer at 1185 Design.
- Jane: Account manager at 1185 Design.
- Sarah: Business development strategist at Project Happiness.
- Bobo: VP of Engineering at Robinhood.
- Jerry: Technical manager at a large corporation.

# professionals



# methods

Can you tell me about the last meeting you had? How did you feel during that meeting? Did you talk much? What would you have done differently during that meeting? Can you walk me through how a meeting is organized? Tell me about a meeting you felt was productive. Tell me about a meeting you felt was unproductive. What do you think of meetings? Who runs the meetings? Who organizes the meetings? What is the main purpose of in-person meetings? What happens before and after meetings? What happens during meetings? How many people are generally in meetings? How long are meetings? What are people in meetings like? How do people interact with each other in meetings? What do you like about meetings? What do you dislike about meetings?

# methods

when/where: In their natural setting (at work, at school), right after a meeting, taking a break from work.

how: We approached working people at companies and at Philz, and we also interviewed students of various experiences and organizations.

why: Students experience meetings in a less structured setting where power is more evenly distributed. Professionals tend to have more varied meeting experiences (size, focus, goal, duration, etc.) and may have more biased opinions on what constitutes a good meeting.

“Meetings are necessary, but no one likes them.”

“Most of it could have been done over email.”

“I left that meeting wondering why it was relevant to me.”

“One hour is more than enough, but if I had it my way, most meetings would be 15 minutes.”

“I always have to schedule follow-up meetings because the first meeting didn’t take care of the specifics. It’s annoying.”

“People talk too much.”

# before the meeting

- People come to meetings without ideas
- Agendas aren't always crafted, which make it difficult for people to know if it's even relevant to them
- Organizers invite too many people
- Scheduling only takes into account the top-level people attending the meeting



# during the meeting

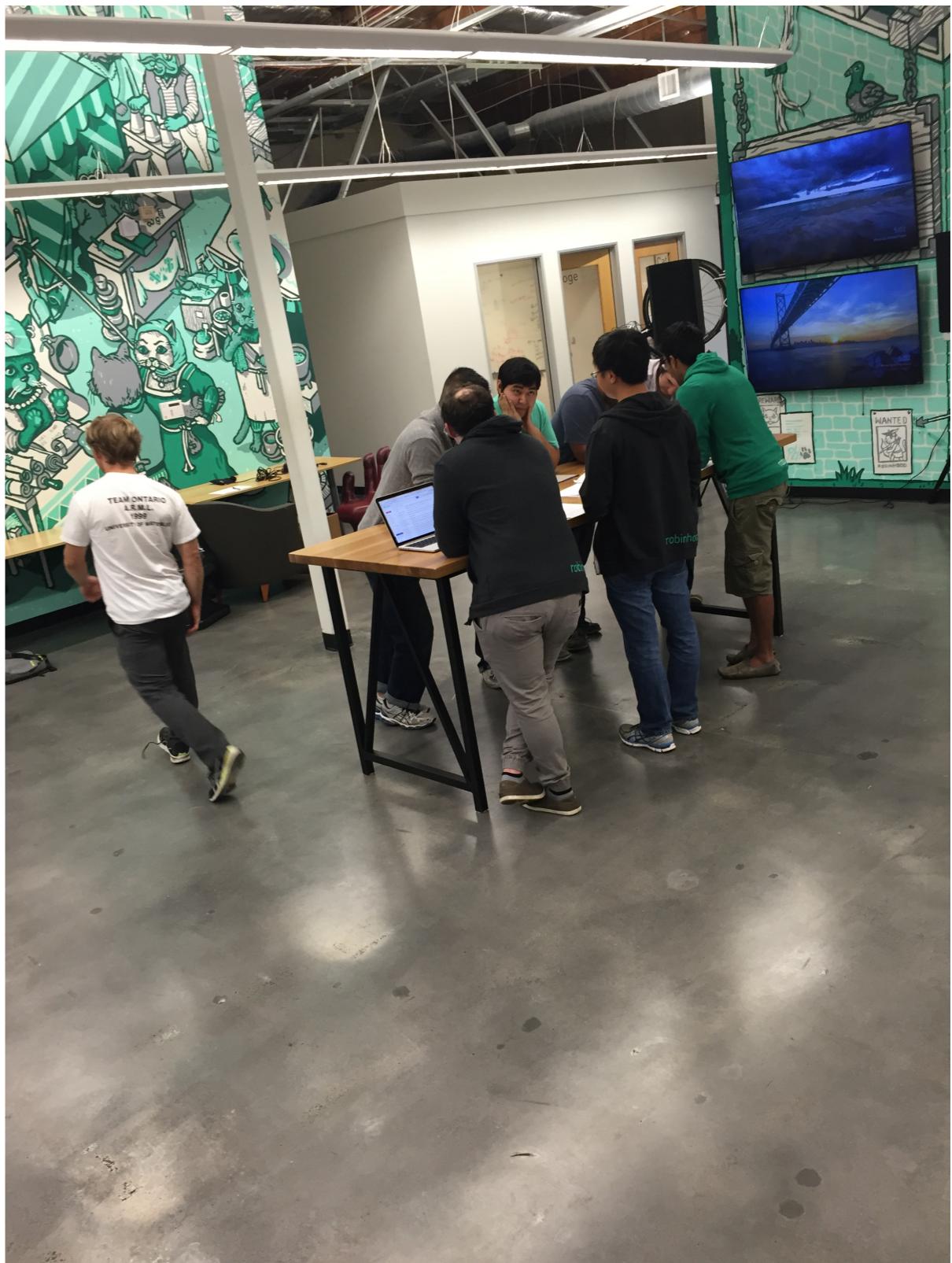
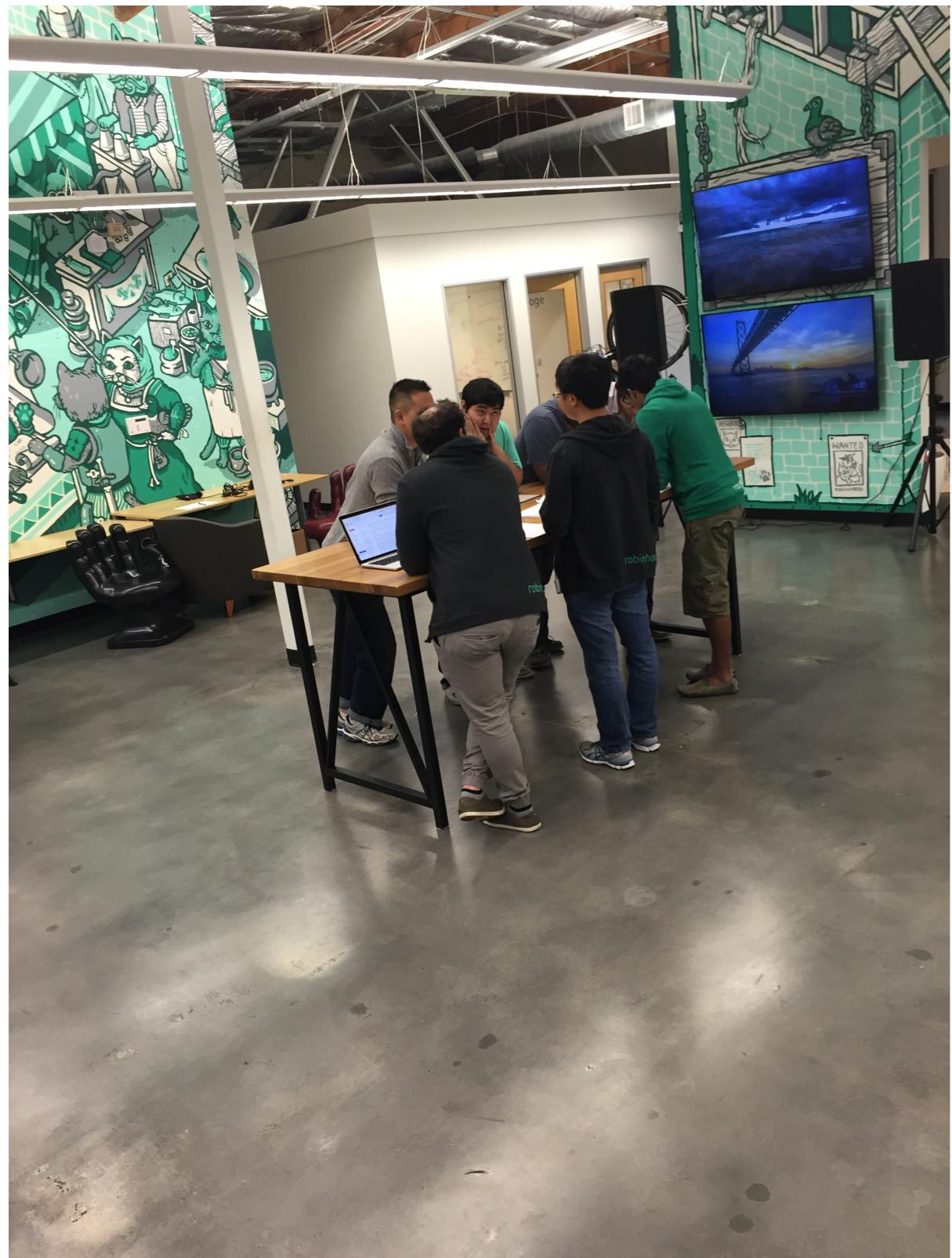
- Directly asking someone a question gets much more out of them
- Length is generally 30 min – 1 hour, although presentation-style meetings can go for 2 hours
- People easily get off-topic if there isn't a moderator and agenda
- People walk in and out of meetings because scheduling might not match up

# during the meeting

- Square tables, round tables
- Lines of chairs facing front of room with one presenter at a time
- Standing meetings
- Whiteboards, monitors, phones/laptops, remote meeting devices

# during the meeting

- The organizer or the highest level executive is usually viewed as the person who runs the meeting
- 3 kinds of people
  - Talks a lot, very repetitive
  - Doesn't talk much but usually says very important things, once the idea is said it isn't repeated
  - Careful, tries not to offend or say anything too unpopular



# after the meeting

- Follow up is sometimes necessary because timelines or action items weren't created during the meeting
- Even if action items were created, tasks aren't always delegated

# conclusions

- Smaller meetings are more efficient
- People quickly forget the details of a meeting
- Repeating something makes it more likely for someone else to agree with you
- People are afraid of being judged

# inferences

- People do the bare minimum to prepare
- Peer pressure to attend once invited
- Office politics influences talking, invitations, and organizing
- Relationships or roles are not explicit
- People don't feel personally responsible

# questions

- Does the position in the organization of the moderator influence the moderator's effectiveness?
- How does the environment – room and dress – influence meeting dynamics?
- Who gains the most from meetings?
- How does gender or class influence meeting dynamics, if at all?

# empathy map



say

“Some people just aren’t willing to talk unless spoken to.”

**“When there are too many people in a meeting or people who don’t need to be there, things move slowly and lack purpose.”**

“I’m worried people will think I’m slacking if I don’t go to the meeting.”

“There’s this one guy who really bothers me – he just agrees with the higher-ups and gets on their good sides.”

“Meetings should be collaborative, but they aren’t.”

**“People hold back because they don’t think their ideas are good enough.”**

**“In Japan, every meeting is just a formality. Everything is decided beforehand.”**

“The timing of meetings is terrible. Engineers are productive in 2 hour bursts. If you come in at 10 and you have a meeting at 11 and a lunch break at noon, your entire morning is essentially destroyed.”

**“Meetings are designed around Peggy’s schedule because she’s the busiest.”**

“I’d rather use email than have a meeting.”

do

## **Shifting uncomfortably when talking about boss speaking too much at meetings.**

Laughed when asked the purpose of meetings and said,  
“That’s a deep question.”

Had to think a bit before answering what the outcome of a meeting was.

Couldn’t always recall the purpose of a meeting.

## **“Not this again” look when being asked about solving meetings.**

Having a hard time describing when a meeting was successful.

Using their hands a lot to explain scheduling.

**Not having a hard time thinking of their most recent meeting, but not really remembering content or objectives.**

Inviting me to sit down in a meeting room to discuss meetings.

**Providing suggestions of apps or services they use to make meetings better without being asked.**

think

I wish I could leave this meeting.

### **What am I doing here?**

I want a chance to speak, but the opportunity hasn't arisen.

**I'm worried my pitches will reflect poorly on me, especially if the boss disagrees.**

**This is just how meetings are.**

Ok, the meeting just ended. Waste of time – doesn't influence what I do.

I don't know what to do after the meeting / there are no action items from this.

**I have to leave partway through the meeting again.**

I can't make the meeting. Will anyone even be taking notes?

Oh, there goes Jon taking us off on a tangent again.

feel

Frustrated

Annoyed

## **Uncomfortable**

Incapable

## **Bored**

Distracted

Restless

## **Judged**

Tired

Unimportant