# Ideation & Prototyping Activities

## Team Time Round Two

### Overview
Table one features an overview of several different activities your team can use to go deeper with ideating solutions for your team’s Design Challenge. You might choose to do one or more of these activities – with several building off of each other. Some of the activities may also result in visual maps and charts that you might use as prototypes for your final presentation.

Table two features an overview of several options for sharing prototypes to provide inspiration for how to share your work during the final presentations.

Detailed instructions for each of the following activities are in your team packets.

### Table 1: Ideation games & activities

Note that the following activities are sorted from more simple to complex, from idea generation to sorting and sense-making. Many activities are well suited to build off of others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Suggested time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draw the problem</td>
<td>This activity can help you clarify the problem to make sure everyone is on the same page before ideating on solutions.</td>
<td>20-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 5 whys</td>
<td>This game helps you to move beyond the surface of a problem and discover the root cause, because problems are tackled more sustainably when they’re addressed at the source.</td>
<td>15-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five-fingered consensus</td>
<td>A simple process to help your team gauge the level of perceived consensus without spending an unnecessary amount of time talking about it.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object brainstorm</td>
<td>For those looking to be inspired by out-of-the box thinking, using objects can help to externalize the thought process. Because objects suggest stories about how they might be used, they make a great starting place for free association and exploration.</td>
<td>15-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart, hand, mind</td>
<td>The objective of this game is to examine an issue from another perspective, and find significance in the issue.</td>
<td>10-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorm</td>
<td>Identify key HMW questions that your team is now concerned about solving and do a simple brainstorm. You might sort the results using an affinity map and/or the “innovative and do-able grid”.</td>
<td>15-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundle ideas</td>
<td>This activity can help you move from several strong individual concepts through a game of mix and match, with the end goal of putting the best parts of several ideas together to create more complex concepts.</td>
<td>15-30 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy Map</td>
<td>Use the empathy map to get closer to understanding the problem from the point-of-view of those most directly affected by the problem (or end-user).</td>
<td>10-15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Thinking Hats</td>
<td>A CoreAlign fellow favorite - this activity helps you to think through solutions to your problem from a variety of perspectives.</td>
<td>20-40 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainwriting</td>
<td>Some of the best ideas are compilations from multiple contributors. Brainwriting is a simple way to generate ideas, share them, and subsequently build on them within a group.</td>
<td>30-45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 4Cs</td>
<td>A simple, quick game to help you gather and organize ideas using four key concepts – components, characteristics, characters, and challenges.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Brief description</td>
<td>Suggested time</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mission Impossible</strong></td>
<td>To truly create something innovative and do-able, we must challenge constraints. In this activity, your team will take a design, process, system, or idea related to your problem and change one foundational aspect to make it “impossible” in function or feasibility. This activity works well for thinking through assumptions and obstacles to reimagine solutions.</td>
<td>45-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectrum mapping</td>
<td>Designed to reveal the diversity of perspective and options around any given topic and to organize them into a meaningful spectrum.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a framework</td>
<td>This process involves developing a visual representation of a system, and is a great way to make sense of data. Use frameworks to highlight key relationships and develop your strategy.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey map</td>
<td>This activity allows you to identify and strategize for key moments in the product, experience, or service you’re designing.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Story</td>
<td>Use this imaginative game to think expansively around the solution of your problem, imagining a changed world after your solution has been implemented – and what the cover of a magazine says about it!</td>
<td>60-90 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Presentation of prototypes ideas**

The following table offers ideas for the presentation of your final prototypes for the design challenge show-and-tell and showcase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Suggested time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determine what to prototype</strong></td>
<td>A brainstorming activity to help your team decide what to prototype and how you want to present your ideas in the Design Challenge.</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>Act out the scenario, environment, and solution in character with a role play.</td>
<td>30-45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboard (visual story)</td>
<td>This game asks players to envision and describe an ideal future (or solution for any topic) in sequence using words and pictures.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a world (3D model)</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to create a three-dimensional model of a desired future state.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecha/Kucha (slide deck)</td>
<td>Design a radically visual slide deck using constraints and guidance of Pecha Kucha style of presentations – 20 slides; 20 seconds per slide.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Use video technology to share the story of your design challenge. You might fashion this as a documentary, or do role playing on video.</td>
<td>45-60 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Draw the Problem**

**OBJECT OF PLAY**

On any given day, we prioritize the problems that get our attention. Problems that are vague or misunderstood have a harder time passing our internal tests of what matters and, as a result, go unaddressed and unsolved. Often, meetings that address problem solving skip this critical step: defining the problem in a way that is not only clear but also compelling enough to make people care about solving it.

Running this short drawing exercise at the beginning of a meeting will help get the laptops closed and the participants engaged with their purpose.

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Works best with small groups of 6–10 participants

**DURATION OF PLAY**

20–30 minutes

**HOW TO PLAY**

Each participant should have a large index card or letter-sized piece of paper. After introducing the topic of the meeting, ask the participants to think about the problem they are here to solve. As they do so, ask them to write a list of items helping to explain the problem. For example, they may think about a “day in the life” of the problem or an item that represents the problem as a whole.

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The Problem: Distribution Channel is getting man-handled.

1. service population growing exponentially
2. so is their purchasing power
3. infrastructure changing shape
4. eco-friendly consumer demands
5. rise in micro-markets

(index card front)
After a few minutes of this thinking and reflection, ask the participants to flip over their paper and draw a picture of the problem, as they would explain it to a peer. They may draw a simple diagram or something more metaphorical; there are no prizes or punishments for good or bad artistry. The drawing should simply assist in explaining the problem.

When everyone is finished, have the participants post their drawings on the wall and explain them to each other. While the group shares, note any common elements. After the exercise, the group should reflect on the similarities and differences, and work toward a shared understanding of what the problem looks like to each other.

**STRATEGY**

This warm-up does not result in a problem definition that will satisfy an engineer; rather, it engages participants in defining the challenge in a simplified form. It is a first step in bringing a group together under a common purpose, elevating the problem above the noise to become something they care to solve.

*The Draw the Problem game is credited to James Macanufo.*
The 5 Whys

OBJECT OF PLAY

Many of the games in this book are about seeing the bigger picture or relating a problem to its context. The 5 Whys game mirrors that motive to move beyond the surface of a problem and discover the root cause, because problems are tackled more sustainably when they’re addressed at the source.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

5–10

HOW TO PLAY

1. Prior to the meeting, establish a problem your team needs to evaluate. Write the problem in an area visible to all the group members, and if you’d like, draw something that represents it.
2. Distribute sticky notes to each player and ask them to number five of them 1 through 5.
3. Ask the players to review the problem statement and ask themselves WHY it’s a problem. Then ask them to write their first response on sticky note 1.
4. Tell the players to ask themselves WHY the answer on sticky note 1 is true and write their next response on sticky note 2.
5. Again, tell the players to ask themselves WHY the answer on sticky note 2 is true and write the response on sticky note 3.
6. Repeat this process in numerical order until every numbered sticky note has a response written on it.
7. Below the problem statement, write the word “Why?” five times in a column and draw lines to create columns for each player’s set of notes. Ask the players to approach the wall and post their responses, starting with 1 at the top and ending with 5 on the bottom.
8. Review the “Why” columns with the group and note commonalities and differences. Allow for discussion.

![Diagram of the 5 Whys process](image)
Rewrite the problem statement on a sheet of flip-chart paper. Then give a volunteer five clean sticky notes to write on, and work with the group to build consensus on which of the five “Whys” in the columns offer the most meaningful insight into the problem. Ask the volunteer to rewrite the “Whys” — one per sticky note — as the group agrees on them. Once they’re all written, tape the five index cards into a final column under the problem statement. If you have time, move into a discussion around “what’s next.”

**CONSENSUS:**
Why our company is going in the wrong direction.

- Shoddy product
- Bad design
- Not tested enough
- No budget for tests
- Leadership undervalues testing

**STRATEGY**

This game is about reading more between the lines — about understanding the root cause of a problem so that people can get the greatest leverage out of solving it. When leading this game, encourage the players to be honest. This is the single most important strategy. If the players avoid the issues, the game doesn’t yield good information. And in a worst-case scenario, you could have people actually addressing the wrong problems. So, as the meeting leader, be aware of the dynamics between the players and foster open conversation around the difficult question of “why”.

Another important practice is to ask the players to write the first thing that comes to mind each time they ask “Why?”. If they jump immediately to the perceived root of the problem, they may miss the opportunity to see the stages, which are valuable to know for problem solving at different levels.

Finally, many problems require more or less interrogation to get to the root. Ask “Why?” until you feel the group is really getting somewhere. Five Whys is a healthy place to start, but don’t interpret it as a fixed number. Build longer WHY columns if necessary, and keep going until you get the players to meaningful insights.

*The 5 Whys game is based on a game by Sakichi Toyoda.*
**Five-Fingered Consensus**

**OBJECT OF PLAY**

Like Red/Green Cards (discussed later in this chapter), this is a technique for managing the feedback loop between a facilitator and a large group. When working in breakouts or as a large group, it may be necessary to periodically gauge the level of perceived consensus, without spending an unnecessary amount of time talking about it. A facilitator may ask for this quickly by using the “five-fingers check.”

**HOW TO PLAY**

The facilitator asks the group to rate their level of consensus on a topic from 0 to 5, with five fingers meaning “absolute, total agreement” and a fist meaning “completely different points of view.” This is particularly useful in managing breakout groups, where different topics may be discussed simultaneously. A group that holds up a variety of ones, twos, and threes may have more work to do.

**STRATEGY**

The “trick” in this technique is in gauging how far apart the individuals feel they are from consensus. A group that is wide apart in the view of its members — with some holding up five fingers and others holding up two — may need outside support and mediation of their discussion.

*Hand signals are a commonly found element of consensus-based decision making and dispute resolution. Related is the thumbs-up, thumbs-down, and thumbs-sideways technique.*

**Flip It**

**OBJECT OF PLAY**

Often, a change in a problem or situation comes simply from a change in our perspectives. Flip It! is a quick game designed to show players that perspectives are made, not born. We can choose to see the glass as either half full or half empty, but often when we perceive it as half full, we get better results. This game is at its best when players begin to see challenges as opportunities and to make doable suggestions around solving problems rather than just rehearsing them.

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

5–20

**DURATION OF PLAY**

30 minutes to 1 hour

**HOW TO PLAY**

1. Before the meeting, hang four to eight sheets of flip-chart paper on a wall (as shown in the following figure), and on any sheet in the top row, write the name of the game.
2. On the bottom-left sheet write the word “FEAR”. If you’d like, spend time drawing a representation of fear on the sheets beforehand or cut out an image from a magazine that embodies it. Tell the group that Flip It is about the future — of their department, their organization, their product/service, whatever topic you’ve agreed on beforehand.
3. Ask the players to quietly spend 5–10 minutes writing concerns, issues, and fears about the topic on sticky notes. Remind them to be honest about their fears because this game gives them an opportunity to reframe their fears. Collect and post the sticky notes on the FEAR sheets, which are all the sheets along the bottom row. Discuss the content with the group and ask for volunteers to elaborate on their contributions.
4. On the top-left sheet write the word "HOPE". Ask the players to survey the content in the FEAR row and try to “flip” the perspectives by reframing in terms of hope. Give them 10–15 minutes to generate sticky notes that respond to the fears.

5. With the group, collect and post the second set of sticky notes on the HOPE sheets along the top row.

6. Discuss the content with the group and ask for volunteers to elaborate on their contributions. Ask the players to dot vote next to the hopes they can take practical action on. With the group, observe the hopes that won the most votes.
Object Brainstorm

OBJECT OF PLAY

Objects play a special role in brainstorming. A tangible object helps externalize the thought process, just as sketching or role play does, but often in a more immediate and concrete way. Because objects suggest stories about how they might be used, they make a great starting point for free association and exploration.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Any

DURATION OF PLAY

30 minutes or more

HOW TO PLAY

Before you can play, you will need to hunt down a collection of objects. Nominate yourself as the curator of your collection. It’s worth considering what kind of investment you want to make. Although a trip to a second-hand store to find interesting (and cheap) items is a good start, if you are expecting to make a habit out of the exercise it may be worth the time and expense to look for items more broadly.

Although you will find your own criteria for your collection, one rule of thumb is to collect “things that do things.” Functional objects can offer more inspiration. Other things may make it into the collection based on their characteristics or personality, or simply because they are “fun.” Here are some types of objects to consider collecting:

- Kitchen gadgets
- Hand tools
- Instruction manuals
- Functional packaging and dispensers
- Containers and compartments
- Sports equipment
- Toys and games

A good collection will evolve over time, and a good curator will get others involved in contributing to the cache of items.

Object brainstorming starts with a question, such as “How will the next generation of [fill-in-the-blank] work?” This question may ask participants to reimagine an existing product or invent something new.

1. Direct the group to explore the objects and to take some time to play with them. The objects may inspire participants to think about how a new thing could function, or how it could look or feel. The long, hinged mouth of a stapler may suggest a new way to bend and fasten steel. A telescoping curtain rod might inspire thinking about a collapsible bicycle. Likewise, an object’s personality, such as a rugged toolbox, might suggest how a laptop might be designed. Most objects explain themselves, and the results can be very intuitive; participants are likely to stumble on fully formed ideas.

2. After a set amount of time, the participants share their ideas, document them, and decide on next steps. This may be as simple as voting on an idea to pursue in more detail, or it may mean moving into another brainstorming exercise.
STRATEGY

One choice to make before an object brainstorm is whether to use a set of items or a single item. This changes the depth of focus: a group presented with a set will branch into a wider path of ideas, whereas a group presented with one item is “forced” into a deeper study of the object and associations from it, along the lines of random inputs or forced analogy. Try to use a set of items for larger groups and more divergent brainstorming, and a single item for smaller groups and more focused inquiry.

*The source for the Object Brainstorm game is unknown.*
**Heart, Hand, Mind**

**OBJECT OF PLAY**
The object of this game is to examine an issue from another perspective, and find significance in the issue.

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**
1-10

**DURATION OF PLAY**
10 minutes to 1 hour

**HOW TO PLAY**
1. Look at an issue, product, or course of action using these three lenses:
   - Heart: What makes it emotionally engaging?
   - Hand: What makes it tangible and practical?
   - Mind: What makes it logical and sensible?
2. List the characteristics or features that appeal to each lens.
3. Score the categories from 1 to 10. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses.

![Diagram of New Training Program]

**STRATEGY**
Significant products, activities, and experiences appeal to a whole person; they “feed the heart, hand, and mind.” Use these three lenses as a means of finding, clarifying, or diagnosing the meaning of any endeavor.

*The Heart, Hand, Mind game was inspired by Swiss educational reformer Heinrich Pestalozzi.*
**Brainstorm instructions**

*Team Time Round Two*

**Process:** Brainstorm  
**Time:** 15 to 60 minutes.  
**Outcome:** Open up the process to generate a ton of ideas.

**Process overview**

Use brainstorms to open up your idea generation process and creativity to innovative solutions. Brainstorms work best when you hold a “yes...and” mindset – generating as many ideas as possible, withholding immediate judgement about which ideas are best. Brainstorms work best when the group remains open, positive, and optimistic. See the "Rules of Brainstorming“ below.

Begin by identifying key how might we (HMW) questions that your team is now concerned about solving. Following this step, you might sort the results using an affinity map and/or the “innovative and do-able grid,” or move onto one of the other ideation processes.

**Steps**

1. Give everyone stickies and sharpies.  
2. Review the Brainstorm Rules before you start.  
3. Pose the HMW question or prompt you want the group to respond to.  
4. Generate as many ideas as possible.  
5. Complete the process by choosing a process to cluster and sort the ideas.

**Rules of Brainstorming**

- Defer judgement – no blocking  
- Encourage wild ideas  
- Go for quantity  
- Build on the ideas of others  
- One conversation at a time  
- Be visual  
- Stay on topic  
- Headline!

*Modified from d.school bootcamp bootleg and IDEO Methods [http://www.designkit.org/methods](http://www.designkit.org/methods)
Bundle & cluster ideas instructions

Team Time Round Two

**Process:** Bundle and cluster ideas  
**Time:** 15 to 30 minutes.  
**Outcome:** Bundle together similar ideas to create more complex concepts.

**Process overview**  
This activity can help you move from several strong individual concepts through a game of mix and match, with the end goal of putting the best parts of several ideas together to create more complex concepts. Following a brainstorm, you may notice that many ideas start to resemble each other. Try combining them; keep the best parts of some, move those that don’t fit to a “parking lot” page, and consolidate your thinking into a few concepts you can apply to your Design Challenge.

**Steps**
1. Begin by moving around and clustering ideas from a brainstorm addressing your how might we question(s) (HMW) and forming them into more complex solutions.
2. Cluster similar ideas into groups. Talk about the best elements of those clusters and combine them with other clusters.
3. Now, start building groupings out of themes and patterns you’ve identified. Focus on translating what you’ve heard into practice, rather than just identifying similar ideas.
4. Once you’ve got a few idea groupings, ask yourself how the best elements of your thinking might live in a system. Now you’re moving from individual ideas to full-on solutions!

*Modified from IDEO Methods [http://www.designkit.org/methods](http://www.designkit.org/methods)*
**Empathy Map**

**OBJECT OF PLAY**

The object of this game is to quickly develop a customer or user profile.

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

3–10

**DURATION OF PLAY**

10–15 minutes

**HOW TO PLAY**

Personas help focus a group’s attention on the people involved in a project — often the customer or end user. Although creating an empathy map is not the rigorous, research-based process that is required for developing personas, it can quickly get a group to focus on the most important element: people.

In this exercise, you will be creating a study of a person with the group. Start by drawing a large circle that will accommodate writing inside. Add eyes and ears to make it into a large “head.”

1. Ask the group to give this person a name.
2. Label large areas around the head: “Thinking”, “Seeing”, “Hearing”, and “Feeling”.

3. Ask the group to describe — from this person’s point of view — what this person’s experience is, moving through the categories from seeing through feeling.
4. The goal of the exercise is to create a degree of empathy for the person with the group. The exercise shouldn’t take more than 15 minutes. Ask the group to synthesize: What does this person want? What forces are motivating this person? What can we do for this person?

**STRATEGY**

The group should feel comfortable “checking” each other by referring back to the empathy map. When this happens, it will sound like “What would so-and-so think?” It’s good to keep the empathy map up and visible during the course of the work to be used as this kind of focusing device.

*The Empathy Map game was developed by Scott Matthews of XPLANE.*
Six thinking hats instructions

Team Time Round Two

Process: Six thinking hats
Time: 30 to 60 minutes.
Outcome: Examine the problem or an idea for a solution from multiple perspectives.

Process overview

The guiding principle of Six Thinking Hats is that everyone is thinking in the same direction, from the same perspective, at the same time. As opposed to adversarial thinking, parallel thinking allows us to think about and work on things collectively and collaboratively: each individual looks at all sides of an issue.

Each is a different color and represents a different mode of thinking → if you change your hat, you change your thinking. The rules:

- Everyone wears the same color hat at the same time
- That hat dictates the mode in which all people must be thinking
- Set a time limit for each hat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blue hat: “Organize and Clarify”</th>
<th>Blue hat: “Organize and Clarify”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define &amp; clarify the problem</td>
<td>Organize ideas &amp; goals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What are the desired outcomes of this solution-seeking process?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate &amp; direct the thinking process:</td>
<td>“What is the most effective way to move forward?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grey hat: “Just the Facts”</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain neutrality &amp; objectivity</td>
<td>Expose data: “What are the known facts? What are the unknown facts?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for known or needed info: “What additional info is needed? What method should be used to obtain facts?”</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green hat: “Creative Ideas”</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on creativity &amp; lateral thinking</td>
<td>Generate unusual ideas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What alternative solutions are possible? How might we do things differently?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for new perspectives, go beyond the known: “What would be ‘outside-the-box’ in this case? What if...?”</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yellow hat: “Brightness &amp; Optimism”</th>
<th>Yellow hat: “Brightness &amp; Optimism”</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on the constructive, positive thinking</td>
<td>Be optimistic: “What is the best way to approach this issue?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess best-case scenarios:</td>
<td>“What are the positive outcomes and long-term benefits of each idea?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purple hat: “The Logical Negative”</th>
<th>Purple hat: “The Logical Negative”</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the risks, dangers, and worst-case scenarios:</td>
<td>Think critically: “What are the flaws of this recommendation? What are the odds of failure?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer critical judgment: “What is a major drawback to this way of thinking?”</td>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use intuition to evaluate situation &amp; possible outcomes:</td>
<td>Go with your gut: “What is my gut reaction? Do you believe we’re making the right choice?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and legitimize emotion as an important part of thinking: “How do you feel about the decision?” Share fears, likes, dislikes; discourage logic &amp; reasoning</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The 4Cs

OBJECT OF PLAY
Simple information-splicing games come in handy because, in an intentional way, they disrupt the standard ways we break down topics. The 4Cs game is a quick way to gather and organize information about any subject using four common key concepts.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS
5–20

DURATION OF PLAY
30 minutes to 1 hour

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before the meeting, decide on a topic you want the players to explore and draw a 2x2 matrix in a large white space in the meeting room.
2. Write the following categories in each box of the matrix: “Components”, “Characteristics”, “Characters”, and “Challenges”. Then, draw something that represents each category.
3. Tell the players that this game is about exploring and sharing what they know about the topic based on the 4Cs. Define the terms of each “C”:
   - **Components** are parts of the topic. For example, a component of a social commerce strategy might be responsive tweets. Components of a distribution channel might be 18-wheelers.
   - **Characteristics** are features of the topic. For example, speed of response is a characteristic of a social commerce strategy. A characteristic of an 18-wheeler might be an inefficient use of fuel.
   - **Challenges** are obstacles associated with the topic.
   - **Characters** are people associated with the topic.

   **NOTE**
   You don’t have to use four “Cs” to conduct this game. You can be creative with other letters that are company or team-specific. Use four “Ds” to create your matrix and name them “Discover”, “Design”, “Damage”, and “Deliver”. Just make sure the categories you create will give you a meaningful way to look at a topic of interest.

4. Divide the group into four teams of roughly equal size. (A group of 5–7 people can work as one team.) Give them access to sticky notes and markers.
5. Assign a different “C” to each team and tell them their goal is to collect information about that “C”, specific to the topic. Tell them they'll have three minutes to plan an information-gathering strategy, five minutes to collect the information, and three minutes to analyze and organize it. Also explain that they should collect information from as many people in the room as possible.
6. Announce the start of the planning period, and let the teams converse with one another. At the end of three minutes, call time.
7. Tell the players they can use their sticky notes and markers, then kick off the five-minute information-gathering stage and stay out of the way. This stage of the game involves a lot of interviewing and moving around the room. Tell the players when the five minutes are up.
8. Start the three-minute information-analysis stage. In this stage, the players should analyze their data, organize it in a meaningful way, and post the contents in the matrix on the wall.
9. Close the game by asking for volunteers to present their group’s findings. After each group presents, ask clarifying questions (Is there anything missing? Do these items mean the same thing?), and encourage the others to reflect on and add more information. You can also ask players if they want to share thoughts on their team’s information-gathering process — to discuss what worked and what could have worked better.

**STRATEGY**

The 4Cs is deliberately quick (and slightly chaotic) to avoid a situation in which people simply list information about what they know related to the topic. In this game, the players gathering information may already have a lot of detail about the topic, but they’ll inevitably learn something new through the process of interviewing others. Interviewing allows people who may not interact much the opportunity to do so. Because the time is short, they won’t dive into a substantive conversation; nevertheless, the chances are higher that someone will take away new content or a new perspective based on an interview.

Avoid shortchanging the closing activity, even though it may be tempting to give the group more time to gather and analyze their content (and some of them will request it). The last stage of the game is important to spend time on because it allows the group to reflect on the content together, as a sort of group mind. If the meeting is based on a familiar topic, there will likely be many players who think they have a corner on information around it, so it’s important to discuss the 4Cs as a whole group. It exposes more ground to more people and invites a discussion that can bring new life to old content.

*The 4Cs is based on the same-named activity written by Matthew Richter in the March 2004 publication of the Thiagi GameLetter.*
Spectrum Mapping

OBJECT OF PLAY

Spectrum mapping is designed to reveal the diversity of perspectives and options around any given topic and to organize them into a meaningful spectrum. This game gives players an opportunity to express their views without having to assert them vocally or even take ownership of them in front of the group. It’s valuable because it unearths information that plays a role in attitudes and behaviors that otherwise may not be visible.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

5–15

DURATION OF PLAY

30 minutes to 1 hour

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before the game begins, brainstorm topics around which you want insight from the group. Write each topic on a sticky note.
2. Introduce Spectrum Mapping by stating that the purpose of the game is to illuminate the team’s range of perspectives and to organize those perspectives into a continuum so that everyone gets a view of it.
3. Post the topic sticky notes in a column in the approximate middle of a space on the wall visible to the players. Ask everyone to silently generate a point-of-view preference option around that topic and write it on a sticky note. They are welcome to offer more than one.
4. Ask the players to come to the wall and post their sticky notes in a horizontal line on either side of the topic. Reassure them that the relationships between the sticky notes aren’t yet of interest. The visual may look like the following figure.
5. Once the sticky notes are posted, work with the group to sort them into a horizontal range of ideas. Sticky notes that express similar perspectives or options should go next to each other. Sticky notes that seem to be outliers should stand alone; they may sometimes end up defining the limits of the range.
6. Continue sorting until the group agrees that the sticky notes are in their appropriate places on the horizontal line.
7. Repeat this process if you have more topics to evaluate.
Once the spectrum for each topic has been laid along the horizon, ask for observations and insights on the lay of the land. Discuss the findings with the group and ask if any perspective or option has been excluded. If so, add it and re-sort as necessary.

**STRATEGY**

Not only does spectrum mapping reveal individual ideas around important topics, but it also tells you how many members of your group have certain types of views and where their endpoints lie. After spectrum mapping, the players are likely to discern a more holistic view of where they stand. In other words, spectrum mapping indicates whether the group tends to lean a certain way — perhaps it’s fiscally conservative, oriented toward growth, or reticent about change. Either way, as a team leader, it’s good to be aware of the group’s natural inclination and openly acknowledge it to enhance future team building, problem solving, and planning.

Assure the players that they’re free to write up honest perspectives and preferences around a topic even if those preferences may be considered outlandish by the other players. Tell them that outlier ideas still make it onto the continuum. This play is about mapping and displaying the spectrum, not evaluating ideas for validity, innovation, or popularity. This game has the effect of letting groups see if their behavior skews too far to one side or whether they’re taking a reasonable approach when a radical one may be better.

*The source for the Spectrum Mapping game is unknown.*
Create a framework instructions

Team Time Round Two

**Process:** Create a framework
**Time:** 30 to 60 minutes.
**Outcome:** Create a visual representation of a system to make sense of themes.

**Process overview**
This process involves developing a visual representation of a system, and is a great way to make sense of data. Use frameworks to highlight key relationships and develop your strategy. Creating Frameworks helps to synthesize learnings and find clarity in what might involve a complex system and help you unpack the context you’re working in.

**Steps**
1. As you discuss your ideas and lift up themes, listen for moments when the topic seems to fit into a larger system, or feels related to something else you heard or saw.
2. When patterns start to emerge, draw them. At first they can be simple frameworks like Venn diagrams or two-by-two matrixes. These simple diagrams can help you map a few forces at work at once.
3. As the systems you hear about become more complex, and you start to think about what you might design, your frameworks will also be more complex. Constructing a Journey map is one way you might track the process or experience of your chosen solutions.
4. Keep refining your frameworks as you move through this process. Keep in mind that they’re bound to change and evolve, and that’s great. Frameworks are meant to help you visualize your system, not to capture it perfectly the first time out.

*Modified from IDEO Methods [http://www.designkit.org/methods]
Journey map instructions

Team Time Round Two

**Process:** Journey map  
**Time:** 30 to 60 minutes.  
**Outcome:** Identify and strategize key moments in your solution.

**Process overview**
This activity allows you to identify and strategize for key moments in the scenario, experience, or service you’re designing. Consider how those you are designing for (your end users) first become aware of your solution, how they make a decision to try it, what their first interaction and engagement is like, how they might use it repeatedly, and how the solution might ultimately impact their life. As a person begins to benefit from your idea, how could they tell other people about it? A Journey Map should help you to visualize an end user’s experience from beginning to end.

**Steps**
1. Start with a seed idea of what your solution could be—maybe one that you sketched during a brainstorm and/or other ideation process.
2. Start by writing a simple 1-2 word headline of the core moment(s) of engagement for your user on a sticky. This doesn’t need to be a detailed representation—just a snapshot. An example might be: First exposure to the experience, service, etc.
3. Next, brainstorm and name any other key moments on separate stickies. The number of key touchpoints you identify may vary from concept to concept, but try to focus on no more than 3-5. Consider what might be most critical to the people you’re designing for.
4. Place the stickies in an order you think your user would likely experience them, and evolve your original Journey Map by adding, removing, reordering, and revising the key moments.
5. You can use this Journey Map as a starting point to inform the development of your team prototype.

*Modified from IDEO Methods [http://www.designkit.org/methods](http://www.designkit.org/methods)
Cover Story

OBJECT OF PLAY

Cover Story is a game about pure imagination. The purpose is to think expansively around an ideal future state for the organization; it’s an exercise in visioning. The object of the game is to suspend all disbelief and envision a future state that is so stellar that it landed your organization on the cover of a well-known magazine. The players must pretend as though this future has already taken place and has been reported by the mainstream media. This game is worth playing because it not only encourages people to “think big,” but also actually plants the seeds for a future that perhaps wasn’t possible before the game was played.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Any

DURATION OF PLAY

Depends on the number of players, but a maximum of 90 minutes

HOW TO PLAY

1. Before the meeting, draw out large-scale templates that include the categories shown on the following image. Your template doesn’t need to look exactly like this one; you can be creative with the central image and the layout. Just be sure to keep the categories intact. The number of templates you create depends on the size of the group. At the most, allow four to six people to work on one template together.

![Cover Story Template](image)

2. Explain the object of the game to the players and define each category on the template:
   - “Cover” tells the BIG story of their success.
   - “Headlines” convey the substance of the cover story.
   - “Sidebars” reveal interesting facets of the cover story.
“Quotes” can be from anyone as long as they’re related to the story.
“Brainstorm” is for documenting initial ideas for the cover story.
“Images” are for supporting the content with illustrations.

3. Break the players into groups of four to six and make sure there are markers and one template for each group. Tell the players that to populate the template they can either select a scribe or write and draw on it together.

4. Ask the players to imagine the best-case scenario for their company and to take that scenario one step further. Request that they spend five quiet minutes imagining their own stories before they work together to agree on one. Give the groups 30–45 minutes to generate this “story of the year” and represent it on their template.

5. Reconvene the breakout groups and ask for volunteers to present their visions first. Give each group 5–10 minutes to share what they imagined was written in the story and the supporting elements.

6. Note any common vision themes and areas of agreement. Ask for observations, insights, and concerns about the future state.

NOTE
Optional activity: Ask two players to role-play an interview based on the content from their “On the Cover” template, as though the magazine sent a reporter to interview an important character in the story.

STRATEGY
This game is about the wildest dream for the organization — that has already happened! So, when you set up this game as the meeting leader, speak about their “successes” with enthusiasm and in the past tense. Encourage the players to use the past tense in their brainstorming and story creation. And don’t let the group go into analysis mode. This game is not about logic, pragmatism, or parameters. Cover Story is an open-ended, creative-thinking exercise, so tell the players to be wary of any “reality checks” from other players. And as the small groups present their visions to the large group, note and discuss any common themes that arise. These themes — however fantastical — are telling, because commonalities reveal shared hopes and also plant seeds for real possibilities. If this play is part of a longer group process, post these visions around the room so that they serve as reference points for continued ideas and inspiration.

Determine what to prototype

Team Time Round Two

Process: Determine what to prototype
Time: 15 minutes
Outcome: Ideate and brainstorm what you want to prototype.

Process overview

Your idea will have lots of testable components, so be clear about what you need to learn and which components will give you the necessary answers. Prototyping isn’t about being precious. Make simple, scrappy prototypes to not only save time, but to focus testing on just the critical elements. The process of developing prototypes may also generate new ideas about the solution and/or help you to refine your ideas. At this stage you should have a lot of questions about how your idea should work. This is a great way to begin answering them.

Steps

1. With your team, write down the key elements of your idea. Think practically about what needs to be tested and write down your primary questions for each component.

2. Now pick a few questions to answer. Think through what kind of prototype makes the most sense to answer these questions. See the examples of prototyping options. You might consider holding a brainstorm now.

3. Remember that you want to be able to show and tell about your problem and solutions in a way that most creatively captures and demonstrates your idea. Review the judging criteria to assess whether your chosen prototype and presentation will allow others to assess your work based on the criteria.

4. Consider sharing your ideas with a coach or other participants to gather feedback on what they think of how you plan to present your design challenge.

5. Remember that your final presentation should be no longer than 3 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
<th>Suggested time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>Act out the scenario, environment, and solution in character with a role play.</td>
<td>30-45 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboard</td>
<td>This game asks players to envision and describe an ideal future (or solution for any topic) in sequence using words and pictures.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a world (3D model)</td>
<td>The purpose of this activity is to create a three-dimensional model of a desired future state.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecha/Kucha (slide deck)</td>
<td>Design a radically visual slide deck using constraints and guidance of Pecha Kucha style of presentations – 20 slides; 20 seconds per slide.</td>
<td>30-60 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>Use video technology to share the story of your design challenge. You might fashion this as a documentary, or do role playing on video.</td>
<td>45-60 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Modified from IDEO Methods [http://www.designkit.org/methods](http://www.designkit.org/methods)
Role play instructions
Team Time Round Two

Process: Role play
Time: 30-45 minutes
Outcome: Act out your prototype in a role play.

Process overview
A role play is a type of prototype that is not only pretty easy to develop, but can also help you quickly communicate your idea, experience, or product. You’d be smart to test out the role play on your design team first. You may learn a lot by trying on the roles of the people in your small skit with your team or for a coach before presenting to the group.

Steps
1. Decide which of your ideas you want to role play and assign the necessary roles to your team members.
2. Take about 15 minutes to determine the necessary roles, who will play them, and what it is that you’re looking to test.
3. Costumes and props can be highly effective tools in bringing your role play to life. Don’t spend ages on them, but consider making your prototype that much more realistic. You’d be surprised how far just a few details can go toward making a role play feel real.
4. The final skit should be no longer than 3-minutes.

*Modified from IDEO Methods http://www.designkit.org/methods
Storyboard

OBJECT OF PLAY

This game asks players to envision and describe an ideal future in sequence using words and pictures. Storyboarding as a technique is so versatile that it can be used to show any topic, not just an ideal future. But it is particularly powerful as a visioning exercise since it allows players to imagine and create possibilities. The players tell a story with a happy ending, planting tiny seeds for a different future. You can also use storyboarding to let employees describe their experience on a project, to show approaches to solving a problem, or to orient new employees on policies and procedures — its uses are limited only by the imagination.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

8–20

DURATION OF PLAY

45 minutes to 1.5 hours

HOW TO PLAY

Before the meeting, determine the topic around which the players will craft their “ideal” story. Once the meeting starts, divide the group into pairs or groups of three or four, depending on the size of the group. Provide markers, pads of flip-chart paper, and stands.

1. Tell the players that the purpose of this game is to tell the other players a feel-good story. The topic of the story is “The Ideal Future for [blank]” — for a team, a product, the company, whatever you decided beforehand. The players’ assignment is to visually describe the topic and narrate it to the group.

2. After the groups are established, give them 20–25 minutes to (1) agree on an ideal state, (2) determine what steps they would take to get there, and (3) draw each step as a sequence of large images or scenes, one per sheet of flip-chart paper.

3. Give the players a two-minute time warning, and once the time is up, bring them back together. Ask for volunteers to tell the story first.

4. After all the groups have presented, ask them what’s inspiring in what they heard. Summarize any recurring themes and ask for observations, insights, and “aha’s” about the stories.
STRATEGY

As the leader of this game, be sensitive to the fact that many of the meeting participants will freak when you tell them that large-scale drawing is involved. Reassure them that the story is the point of the exercise and that the images play a supporting role. They can use words as captions to clarify the images and they can also select the "artist" within their group so that not everyone has to put marker to paper. (But it's more fun for those who do.) Finally, remind them that they aren’t allotted sufficient time to create a da Vinci anyway, so stick figures work perfectly well.

For the presentation format, there are various options. Breakout groups can post each sheet of flip-chart paper in a row around the room and walk along the row as they tell the story. They can also leave the flip-chart pad intact and flip the pages over the stand as they narrate. They could choose to hang the sheets in rows and cover them, using one group member to act as a “Vanna White” and create a series of "whoa" moments. Tell them to have fun with it — they aren’t being graded on their stories (although you could make it a contest if it’s that kind of crowd). The process of creating and sharing the stories is what matters.

*Walt Disney is credited for this activity. His need to animate Steamboat Willie in 1928 led to the process of storyboarding — a story told in sequence on a wall covered with a special kind of board. He found it to be an effective way to track progress and improve a story.*
**Pecha Kucha/Ignite**

**OBJECT OF PLAY**

These fast, structured talks enable people to share ideas quickly and with a minimum of distraction. In addition, it puts the pressure on the person conveying the information to do so in a concise and compelling fashion.

**NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

Any size, from a small working group to an auditorium full of people.

**DURATION OF PLAY**

Can go anywhere from one to four hours. Total time varies widely based on the number of presenters.

**HOW TO PLAY**

Pecha Kucha is based on a simple idea: that by limiting the number of slides in a presentation, and limiting the amount of time a presenter can spend on each slide, presentations will convey information concisely and at a rapid pace. The rule of Pecha Kucha is 20 × 20: Presenters are allowed 20 slides, and they can spend 20 seconds per slide. Images are forwarded automatically — they are not under the control of the speaker. Another variation, Ignite, has a similarly structured pace.

By tradition, Pecha Kucha and Ignite nights are fun, informal evening events, but the concept will work just as well within any work group or team.

**STRATEGY**

The goal of these talks is to constrain presenters while keeping things fun. Often drinks and snacks are involved, and the right emcee can make a big difference in the quality of the experience. If you have a lot of people, spend some time on details, like picking a venue with good acoustic qualities and arranging for good sound and video equipment. Make sure not to give presenters control of their laptops!

_Pecha Kucha (_pronounced _peh-CHA kuh-CHA — Japanese for “chit chat”) _began as an event in Tokyo where designers could share their ideas. The Pecha Kucha presentation format was devised by Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham of Klein Dytham architecture. The first Pecha Kucha Night was held in Tokyo in their gallery, lounge, bar, club, and creative kitchen SuperDeluxe in February 2003. Since then, Pecha Kucha has inspired similar events with some minor variations, including Talk20 (short presentations of 20 slides each) and Ignite (short presentations of 20 slides each, 15 seconds per slide)._
Video instructions

Team Time Round Two

**Process:** Video
**Time:** 45-60 minutes
**Outcome:** Create a video to share the story of your design challenge.

**Process overview**

For those that are tech savvy, your team may create a video that tells the story of your design challenge. You might fashion this as a documentary, or do role playing on video. Use video to communicate the scenario, environment, and solution. You might also feature actors playing parts in character of your end-users and/or interview people in documentary style.

**Steps**

1. Decide what the story is that you want to capture on video. You might start with doing a Storyboard or Journey map to outline your story plan.

2. If including actors in the scene, sketch out the scenario and practice with some role playing. Take about 15 minutes to determine the necessary roles, who will play them, and what they will say and do.

3. Remember this is rapid prototyping – so make sure you come up with a production plan and schedule that is do-able within the amount of time you have to prepare.

4. The final video should be no longer than 3 minutes.