Boot Camp Design Thinking Resources

Teams employed key elements of design thinking such as empathy building, prototyping, and testing during the DE TA Boot Camp experience. Below are linked resources to information and various exercises to expand your design thinking toolkit[i].

Comprehending the Challenge.

To begin **Comprehending the Challenge**, consider the following exercises to get things going.

- It's important to frame your design challenge. Properly identifying your design challenge sets the stage for how the design thinking process will help you build needed solutions.

Research for Empathy & Customer-focused Solutions.

To get inspired by the people you're serving, start by listening to people to get new ideas about how to design for them.

Some ways to start may include:

- Engaging stakeholders through interviews is a classic approach to gather the information you need to begin working.
    - ◇ You can get the conversation started by showcasing various ideas to stakeholders to spark reactions and insights.
    - ◇ The 5 Whys to uncover deep motivations and assumptions that underpin your stakeholder's thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- Engaging through observation is one alternative way to research for empathy. It helps uncover day-to-day activities that stakeholders may need help identifying, changing, or improving. This exercise is also useful if working with peers to build solutions in-house.
- Identifying extreme users – those who will interact with your potential solution on a day-to-day basis – and those who are part of your target audience but may have a touch-and-go experience with your potential solution. Designing a solution that works for all involved may benefit from talking to people on various levels of engagement with what your solution.

Synthesize & Ideate.

Synthesizing involves identifying patterns and surprising insights to inspire new opportunities for design while ideating involves brainstorming new ways to serve your customers.

Some ways to start the Synthesis process may include:

- Share your learnings with your team and put it to use by [downloading all of what you gathered](#) through empathy interviews.
- What were some empathy interview moments that were inspiring, uplifting, or constructively challenging? Don't forget to [share the stories](#) that inspired you.
- Some ways to [identify themes](#) may involve creating a list or having a fun post-it notes session with your team.

Ideating involves brainstorming new ways to serve your customers by reviewing research collected through empathy interviews and making sense of what's been synthesized.

Some ways to start the Ideation process may include:

- Lots of ideas have been collected, reviewed, and synthesized. Now's the opportunity to [bundle them](#) so that an opportunity to create robust solutions is brought to bear.
- [Create frameworks](#) to help you make sense of data you've collected and sharpen your pending strategy.
- Craft a ["How might we…"](#) statement to frame the challenge so that it guides you more clearly toward an innovative solution.
- [Determine what to prototype](#) to help jumpstart the next phase of the design thinking process.

Prototype and Test.

Prototyping involves trying out ideas your team has agreed to move forward with following Ideation. It also involves the iterative process of getting feedback from customers so that you can revise prototypes developed and continue collecting feedback for improvement.

- The fun part of the processes usually involves [building and running your prototyped solutions.](#) After the first version of your prototype or modeled solution, share it immediately with stakeholders to collect feedback. What was most useful? What could be added? What might be irrelevant in your prototype?
- If time is not on your side, consider [rapid prototyping](#) – developing a solution that hits the most critical points of your solution – and allowing your stakeholders to help you add more by giving you feedback.
- Vital to the development of your prototype – and, more importantly, the solution you seek to introduce – is the [integration of feedback and ability to iterate](#). Remember to involve your stakeholder's insight to ensure the solution remains relevant and useful to them.

Implement the Solution.

After putting your prototype to the test and collecting the feedback needed to help develop the final form of your solution comes the **implementation** phase. How might your team rollout the prototype live?

Some ways to start the Implementation process may include:

- ◆ Consider what your team may need to execute your solution.
  - ◇ How might you introduce your solution to stakeholders to get things started? Consider developing a pitch.
- ◆ Piloting your solution so that it undergoes a longer-term test before becoming fully live if you believe more work should be done.
- ◆ Develop a core team to ensure that your prototype has the structure it needs for reiteration and refinement when needed.
  - ◇ This team can regularly monitor and evaluate the impact your solution is making – or is not making – and keep iterating until your solution is ironclad.
  - ◇ Once your solution is ironclad, consider how your team might bring your solution to scale.

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[i] There are numerous free design thinking resources available online. This resource references several tools and tips from IDEO.org