

4. Build Prototypes

HOW TO RUN A WORKSHOP TO BUILD PROTOTYPES



1) Choose team roles.

Everyone is a Designer, but you'll want to assign a **Design Lead**, who will keep the group on track, and a **Note Taker**, who will record group conversations.

Decide on these roles now.

2) Draw your idea.

Quickly sketch your idea. This is technically your the very first prototype. It will help your group agree on the basics of what the idea is. Get something on paper that you can then use as a blueprint to build out a more detailed prototype.

3) Identify what you want to learn.

What do you most want to learn about your idea? Have each person write down a few questions they want answered on sticky notes and cluster everyone's responses. Discuss and agree on the 2-3 things you most want to learn—this will be the focus of your prototype, but it doesn't mean you can't learn about other things as well.

4) Decide how you want to prototype your idea.

You need to know which parts of the idea you want to prototype and what form your prototype should take. What do you need to show people to learn the answer to your questions? Don't spend too long on this step—if you're feeling stuck, just try making something. Here are a few examples to get you thinking:

- For a service interaction, try a role play or skit.
- For a website, make each page with paper and pencil
- For a new space, draw up a floorplan
- For a process or experience, try a storyboard, comic strip, flowchart, or story

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5) Build the prototype(s).

Use any materials you have to hand, and work quickly with what you already have to make a prototype of your idea.

Protip: The purpose of a prototype is to demonstrate and test properties of your idea. If there are several important things you want to learn, you might want to build separate prototypes. It can be helpful to split into smaller groups, with each working on a different prototype.

6) Reflect

- a. What did you build? What materials did you use?
- b. Which aspect(s) of your prototype are you most pleased with? Which do you feel still need work?
- c. What did building help you learn about the problem you're working on?
- d. What advice would you give to someone who has never built a prototype before?