

Five day design sprint

[Business](#), [Company](#)



A Design Sprint is a five days process that uses design thinking philosophy to solve design challenges. Design Sprint was created by Google Ventures and essentially uses agile user experience methodology and product design techniques to answer on key business questions through design, prototyping and validating solution with real users at the end of the process. Design Sprint is built for projects that require a lot of time and money, helping teams to focus on risks and challenges by increasing collaboration. With Sprint you can solve problems very fast and get fresh approach for your project.

How to choose your ideal team

Initially you need a Decider – a person who understands the problems and has authority to make decisions. On the other hand, a Facilitator is responsible for managing time, conversations and the whole Sprint process. Ideal number of team participants in a Design Sprint is 5 to 7 people. Having more people involved in a sprint is slower and less efficient. Your ideal Design Sprint team consist of engineers, designers, product managers, marketing specialists – in general, people familiar with the project, with their own specific skill set.

Team member profile

Decider – makes decisions, in most cases this person is CEO or founder. Can appoint one or two delegates. Finance expert in most cases is a business development manager or CFO. Marketing expert is a person who knows the strategic marketing plan and business objectives to shape company's message and branding. Customer expert can be a researcher or customer support specialist, works with customers to solve their problems. Technical

or logistics expert best understands technical details and how and when something can be built and delivered. Design expert designs products, but can even be a product manager in a Design Sprint.

Design Sprint combines Design Thinking philosophy

Understand – first phase of design thinking process. It is mainly used for discussing different aspects of the business problem with experts. The main goal is to understand user needs, technology and product. It is a very important step for the team as this approach ensures asking the right questions. Methods used for understanding the challenge are “ How Might We”, Lightning Talks (people share their experience) and user interviews.

Define phase comes right after. Usually you want to define initial strategy for project solution. Best way to approach this is to create personas based on research to define user journey map. In diverge phase all participants should explore possible ideas and solutions of defined problem. Most teams use “ Crazy 8s” technique where every member sketches 8 ideas in 8 minutes. In decide phase all participants vote and discuss ideas using dot stickers. Every team member gets to vote, Decider gets four dot stickers because his opinion is more valuable than other members who get only two dot stickers to vote.

Prototype allows you to test the chosen solution without investing a lot of time and money. You can predict success or failure of the solution. The prototype you need to build has to be realistic in order to achieve authentic user experience. Test only the steps you need to validate. Validate prototype

with different users to test your idea, this stage requires technology expert to review complexity of prototype.

Five day Design Sprint

Before starting a Design Sprint you need to insure people's full attention and time, laptops and mobile phones are closed until they are need.

Monday

You need to define a long term goal in discussion with team experts and create a plan for the sprint. Each team member shares their knowledge and defines the target for the sprint. After defining the long term goal, you need to build a map of the challenge and discuss problems with the experts. Every team member needs to write their own notes and the best way to organize notes is to use a " How Might We" method. Every member gets his own sticky notes pad and thick black marker, in the top left corner you can put letters " HMW" and when you hear something interesting write a question about it. Organize all HMW notes on a whiteboard and make labels for each group. In order to decide which questions are most promising use dot voting to prioritize notes.

Tuesday

On Tuesday you can focus on the solution and review ideas. Divide tasks between team members so each member can sketch a part of reviewed business goal and defined challenges from Monday. Every team member should make his own list of products or services and present in 3 minutes what he likes, what is good about it or inspiring.

Divide challenges from HMW to sketch assignments as it is easier to transform ideas to solutions. Sketching phase is divided in four steps: first every team member gets 20 minutes for his own research on given challenge. Second step takes another 20 minutes to write rough ideas and additional 3 minutes to review. In third step every member sketches his best idea in 8 variations in 8 minutes (Crazy 8s). Last step takes 30 minutes to draw a final solution sketch. It has to be detailed and easy to understand.

Wednesdays

On Wednesday you should have solution sketches from Tuesday. You have to look at, review and critique every solution and decide which ones have the best chance of achieving long term goal defined on Monday.

To avoid long discussion evaluate, critique all solutions at once. The winning sketch will be transformed into a storyboard. Storyboard should contain no more than fifteen panels creating a story of all best ideas. Finished prototype should be tested in less than 15 minutes.

Thursday

Use your storyboard created on Wednesday and turn it into a final prototype, so you can validate it with users. Prototype must appear realistic, not too low and not too high quality. You want your customers to react honestly and naturally. It is very important to select the right tools for your prototype and divide team members into roles of Makers, Stitcher, Writer, Asset Collector and Interviewer. Makers create individual components of prototype and Stitchers collect components from Makers and are responsible for prototype's consistency and copy. Writer's task is to make all content appear

real and meaningful. Person in charge of images, icons and elements is the Asset Collector. Interviewer should prepare an interview script for Friday and check finished prototype. You should test your prototype before Friday, fix mistakes and revisit goals and sprint challenges.

Friday

By Friday you have chosen the most promising solution and created a realistic prototype. Now it's time to test your prototype with real users. Watch and learn how users react to your prototype. To find a pattern in user behaviour you can interview no more than five people. If you lack interview experience, try to follow a five step act interview. Before interview starts you should prepare a Non disclosure agreement and inform your user that interview will be recorded.

Users should feel comfortable with friendly welcome and small talk, general questions will give you insights about user's habits, interests and activities. While conducting user interview keep in mind there are no wrong answers and user is doing you a favor by testing your prototype. To successfully test your prototype it is important to ask realistic and meaningful tasks. After the interview, debrief your user to find out how was the overall experience of using your product.

Using Design Sprints can get you results fast and cheap. It could save you and your team months of design and development. More importantly, it could save you from taking the wrong path – building things that don't align well with the business goals of your client.

While working with clients, generating ideas in regular UX workshops is not always easy. Depending on who you work with, it can get time-consuming and often without satisfying results. Sometimes people involved in the process could not agree on given solutions. Implementing Design Sprint methodology offers every team member to present valuable ideas, vote and decide on best solutions for the product, and finally, test and validate with real users.