Design Session Cheat Sheet

Whether you're ideating or critiquing, an effective design session includes remembering to do a lot of little things. Take one minute to review and fill out this cheat sheet to know you've got it covered. Happy designing!

Before the session

Be prepared.

- ☐ I know what I would like to get from this session
- ☐ I've invited 3–6 participants
- ☐ There's at least one non-designer in the mix, plus someone who is outside of the usual crew
- ☐ I've compiled research findings, competitive examples, or business opportunities to share
- ☐ Any resources I need (stickies, TVs, pens, etc.) are ready to go
- ☐ I've set aside enough time to reach my goal:

> 15 min *status updates*
> 30 min *design critique*
> ≥ 45 min *ideation*

During the session

Make the most of your time.

Set the stage.
The context-setting template on the flip side of this page can help.

Give participants solo time.
Alone time to sketch or organize thoughts ensures a diversity of ideas and reduces anchoring biases.

Stay focused.
Address visual design nits and other off-topic concerns outside the sesh.

Establish a culture of trust.
Good ideas take root when we embrace vulnerability and leave our egos at the door.

After the session

Don't leave ideas behind.

- ☐ I documented things that needed to be captured before leaving the room (taking photos, etc.)
- ☐ I've labeled any unlabeled sketches

After giving yourself a day or two:

- ☐ I've reflected on the discussion and have narrowed down my choices. Bring on the next round!

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Even if you're working with people who are on your team, reiterating project goals is beneficial and can help focus the group. Fill out this template to share at the start of a session. You don't have to recite it word-for-word, unless you want.

Welcome, everyone! I'm currently working on _____ .
PROJECT NAME

The goal of this project is _____ .
PROJECT GOAL

In other words, how might we _____ ?
HOW MIGHT WE...

We're constrained by: □ *time* □ *technical limits* □ *scope* □ *cost* □ *legal issues* □ *other:* _____ .

The stage of this project is: □ *early (defer judgement and reach for quantity)* □ *late (so please scope critique accordingly).*

In research, we've discovered _____

_____ .
USAGE BEHAVIORS, SURVEYS, QUALITATIVE FINDINGS, OR COMPETITIVE EXAMPLES

I'd like us to focus on _____ .
SPECIFIC WORRIES OR AREAS OF INTEREST

I'd consider this session to be successful if _____ .
SESSION GOAL

Are there any questions before we begin?