A guide to product innovation with

GOOGLE DESIGN SPRINTS

tableXI

WHAT TABLE XI LEARNED FROM THE GOOGLE DESIGN SPRINT

Google Design Sprints are a highly collaborative process aimed at prototyping your ideas quickly and testing them with real users in just five days.

This innovative methodology for rapid product design is based on three key concepts:

#1 The biggest challenges require less time, not more.

> *Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion.*
> **-Parkinson's Law**

Magic moments tend to happen when we're up against true deadlines. Google Design Sprints create urgency by scheduling interviews with five representative customers at the end of the five days. By setting a tangible deadline, we can ensure everyone is oriented towards the same goal.

#2 Individuals produce better solutions than teams.

> *Groupthink refers to the mode of thinking that persons engage in when concurrence-seeking becomes so dominant in a cohesive ingroup that it tends to override realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action.*
> **-Irving L. Janis**

Groupthink limits individual creativity, uniqueness, and independent thinking by encouraging them to avoid raising controversial issues or alternative solutions. During the Google Design Sprint, we ensure the best idea wins by eliminating groupthink and providing individuals with the freedom to develop their own unique concepts to solve the problem.

#3 You can test anything in one week by building a realistic façade.

You don't have to build the real thing to get real reactions and valuable insights from users.

Building the real thing can take months of effort only to learn that your customers don't want it. However, low-fidelity prototypes can require users to fill in the gaps with their imagination and lead to inconclusive findings. By making a "Goldilocks" prototype that's just real enough, you can get the most useful insights from your customers in the shortest amount of time.

WHEN ARE GOOGLE DESIGN SPRINTS HELPFUL?

Participating in a Google Design Sprint requires dedicating a small team to the work for five days. Given the investment, it's right to ensure your business will get the maximum business value from the workshop.

In our experience, a Google Design Sprint is best used to solve big problems, such as:

» Defining new products or services

» Reimagining existing products or services

» Extending an existing experience to a new platform

» Injecting user experience design into a new product

» Improving user experience gaps (e.g., a high rate of cart abandonment)

ASSEMBLING THE PERFECT TEAM

To maximize the business value delivered from the Google Design Sprint, it's important to ensure the right people are in the room.

The most critical role in the workshop is the Decider. In order to move quickly and effectively, one person from your team will be named the decision-maker during the Design Sprint. They'll have plenty of support from everyone in the room, but when we discover multiple paths to choose between, we'll look to them to make the final call.

When determining the Decider, it's important to consider:

» Who has enough business context to consider all the appropriate points of view?
» Whose decision is the least likely to be reversed by other members of the organization?
» Who can be available for the first and third days of the Design Sprint? (They may elect a proxy decider for other days.)

Additional participants for the Sprint should include subject matter experts inside your organization. These experts may include department heads, technologists, user experience designers, customer service and support representatives, salespeople, marketers, writers, etc. However, to ensure conversations are as effective as possible, we recommend sending no more than five people. Table XI will also send 2-3 experts of our own to walk your team through the process.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A Google Design Sprint is broken up into five days, each of which is dedicated to a different activity, culminating in testing a prototype on users.

Day 1: Understand

We start by defining the business opportunity, selecting the target audience, and mapping the ideal user experience.

What We Do
- » Lightning talks
- » How might we
- » Create user journeys
- » Define success & goals

Day 2: Diverge & Converge

We'll guide your team through a set of hands-on sketching exercises designed to help bring the best ideas to light.

What We Do
- » Find some inspiration
- » Crazy 8s
- » Present to group
- » Make detailed sketches

Day 3: Decide

Time to get real. We'll focus on the ideas we feel will best solve the business problem so we can begin the prototyping process.

What We Do
- » Critique concepts
- » Pick one concept by dot voting
- » Storyboard

Day 4: Prototype

This intensive day is spent preparing for the user interviews by creating our realistic façade.

What We Do
- » Turn storyboard into reality
- » Create a realistic facade
- » Write interview script

Day 5: Test & Learn

Our ideas are finally tested in the real world by actual users.

What We Do
- » Interview customers and learn
- » Summarize findings

GOOGLE DESIGN SPRINT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Although most of the work is done during the five days of the Sprint, there are a few things your team will need to do beforehand.

- [ ] Discuss and identify the problem statement *(e.g. "Students don't receive enough guidance on how to develop the skills that will help them flourish in professional environments").*

- [ ] Recruit real or proxy customers for Friday's test *(e.g., schedule each participant for a one-hour interview in the following time slots: 9:30am, 10:45am, 12:30pm, 1:45pm, 3:00pm).*

- [ ] Identify the Decider. This person's attendance is required for the full first and third days.

- [ ] Recruit additional subject matter experts to participate in the workshop. We've found that workshops typically work best with 5-7 people total.

- [ ] Gather any existing materials that could be referenced during the workshop *(e.g., brand guidelines, research, analytics, images, fonts, copywriting).*

- [ ] Inform us of any dietary restrictions for workshop attendees. We have a company chef that prepares family-style meals for us at noon everyday.

- [ ] Clear your schedule and set-up out-of-office responses for your emails during the workshop. To get through it as efficiently and effectively as possible, we ask for participants to work laptop- and phone-free, except during breaks.

- [ ] Get plenty of rest – the workshop is an intensive process!

HOW TO GET STARTED

To learn more about the Google Design Sprint, here are a few additional resources.
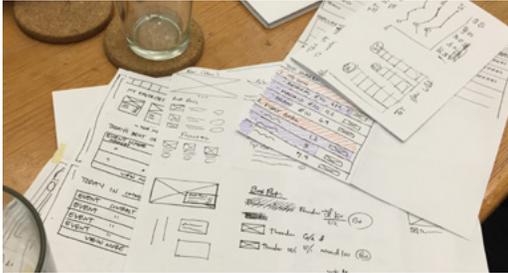
Read our article, *How we're adapting the Google Design Sprint to get testable prototypes in a week.*

Learn more

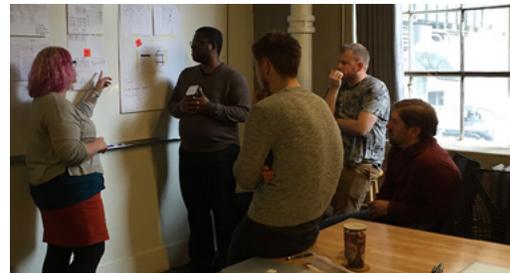Read Google's book, *Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas in Just Five Days.*

Buy the book

Learn more about Google's process

If you're in Chicago, attend one of our *Dinner & Workshop: Google Design Sprints* events.

Get your ticket

Listen to our podcast for tips on facilitating your own Google Design Sprint.

Learn more

READY TO SPRINT WITH US?

Interested in having us conduct a Google Design Sprint for your organization?

Please get in touch with us online or give us a call at (312) 450-6320.