

SCRAPPY PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Project Management Dialogues with ATTITUDE!
This Month's Featured Noggin' Floggin':

Scrappy Design Thinking - Simple Rules, Practical Tools

In a recent article I rambled on about how design thinking's powerful combination of tools and techniques produces outcomes beyond the predictable. Here I'll share an approach that integrates key elements of design thinking with a Scrappy Project Management® style. Using this approach will generate new possibilities that you'd never discover using traditional problem-centric approaches.

Scrappy Design Thinking Overview. Both design thinking and Scrappy Project Management® share an obsession with “the customer”. And both start by “thinking from the future” rather than getting stuck in the current situation, hampered by self-limiting beliefs about what's possible. Rather than using the classic design thinking model of Empathize – Define – Ideate – Prototype – Test, let's use a cycle that's a bit easier to remember: Why? – Who? – What? – How?

- Rather than instinctively jumping to HOW to solve a “problem”, start with WHY - Why is this project important? Why work on this?
- Next explore WHO – who cares, who's impacted, who's involved, and who's judging the success of your project?
- Then move on to WHAT – what outcomes would go beyond “solving a problem” to surprise and delight your stakeholders?
- Then, and only then, design and prototype HOW to achieve these outcomes and delight these stakeholders.
- Go through the entire cycle again, expanding, revising, and refining your prototypes repeatedly, until you collapse in an exhausted heap, worn out, but with a self-satisfied smile on your barrier-shattering face. Hmmm . . . perhaps I overpromise. Let's see what happens.

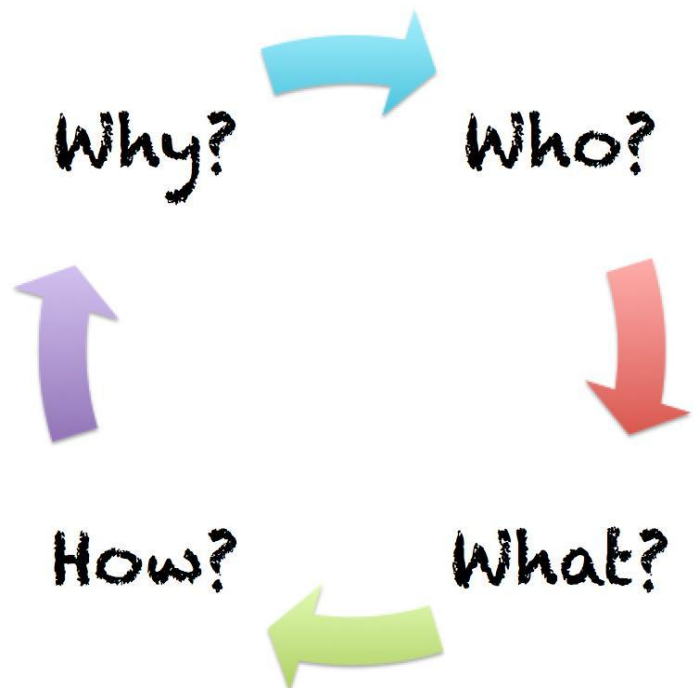


Image Ref: Kimberly Wiefling, Wiefling Consulting, Inc.

DISCLAIMER: In order to avoid misrepresenting my colleagues who are experts in this field, I want to emphasize that this is a simplified version of what I've learned from them. These are the tools that I've found most useful and applicable to scrappy projects. While you won't find all of the bells and whistles of sophisticated design thinking here, this will enable you to quickly get started actually DOING design thinking. I've personally found this approach extremely useful in helping teams to tackle “impossible” challenges, make rapid progress, and achieve unprecedented results that might otherwise have eluded us.

BIG WHY? Follow [Simon Sinek's advice](#) and start with *why*. Choose a challenge to focus on and ask, why bother working on this? Why does this matter? Clearly defining your purpose and the importance of your project will make it easier to recruit other passionate people to help you. This will also inspire you to persevere through the inevitable frustrations and setbacks that you will face when tackling BIG issues. Here's an easy-to-use tool that I've been using for years to assure that project teams are on a mission that matters.

ASK WHY LIKE A KID. Spend five minutes using the “Ask Why Five Times” approach. For example, if you choose a theme like “developing a new product for our target market” this exercise might go like this:

- Why do we need to develop a new product for this market?
 - To remain competitive with other products on the market.
- Why do we need to remain competitive?
 - So we can achieve next year's revenue targets.
- Why do we need to achieve next year's revenue targets?
 - So we can stay in business.
- Why do we need to stay in business?
 - So we can continue to provide our products to our customers.
- Why do we need to continue to provide our products?
 - Because our products dramatically improve the quality of life for our customers.



Image Ref:

<http://www.leanblog.org/2013/03/i-dont-always-ask-why-but-when-i-do/>

What started off as a relatively uninspiring need to get a product to market and make some money has been transformed into a purpose beyond profit. When teams apply this exercise to their project theme they often end up with “To improve life on Earth!” or something equally inspiring. If you can’t get to something meaningful in five rounds of this exercise then maybe you’re working on the wrong project.

BIG WHO? This is the most important part of the entire cycle, because if you don’t truly understand who your project intends to delight, it’s unlikely that you’ll delight them. Get ready to obsess about stakeholders, because we’ll spend the most time on this part of the cycle! Who will benefit from your work? Who will use your product or service? Guessing at the wants and needs of customers is a poor substitute for swimming in their fishbowl. Thought leaders like Steve Blank have advocated making customer focus the center of new product and service development. Steve insists that participants in his “[Lean Launch Pad](#)” classes interview dozens - or even hundreds - of customers. Creating products and services without considering important stakeholders – like customers for example - is a common problem in new product development. As many as 75% of new products fail to attract enough customers to be considered successful! It’s absolutely vital to explicitly integrate key stakeholders into your development process. This is the essence of the first phase of the design thinking process

STAKEHOLDER MAPS, INTERVIEWS & PERSONAS. So, how do we develop this deep understanding of the human aspects of our project, including the context in which our product, service, or solution will be used? Ideally you would integrate stakeholders directly into your development team, a perfectly viable approach that is often dismissed as too unwieldy. Five other practical tools to keep stakeholder needs top-of-mind, and that are tremendously powerful, are value chain analysis, stakeholder analysis maps, stakeholder interviews, user journeys, and personas. Let’s explore 3 of these below.

STAKEHOLDER MAPS. Doing a stakeholder analysis is fairly common in projects, and you can get a detailed template for this [here](#). I work mainly with teams of people from many different countries, and our only common language is



“[Globish](#)” combined with a whole lot of body language, so I prefer to use a more visual approach - a stakeholder map. Here’s a picture of a gigantic one that a team of a dozen people from four different countries created at a project kickoff that I facilitated. Working with a huge piece of paper and sticky notes like this enables “non-verbal negotiation” as team members co-create the map and draw the relationships among various stakeholders. Even when everyone shares the same language, this gargantuan technique assures that quieter people can comfortably participate and contribute.

INTERVIEWS. Interviewing real stakeholders, and doing so in the environment in which your product or service will be used, is essential to developing a deep understanding of their real situation, wants, and needs. The tool shown here is an *empathy map*, and is a useful guide to conducting and interpreting these interviews. Notice that you need to go beyond asking leading questions and observing explicit actions to exploring what people are thinking and feeling. This is what makes design thinking “empathetic” rather than merely “customer-centric”. Comparing empathy maps of the current situation with what you hope to create when your project is completed and wildly successful, provides a helpful stakeholder-centric gap analysis to work towards.

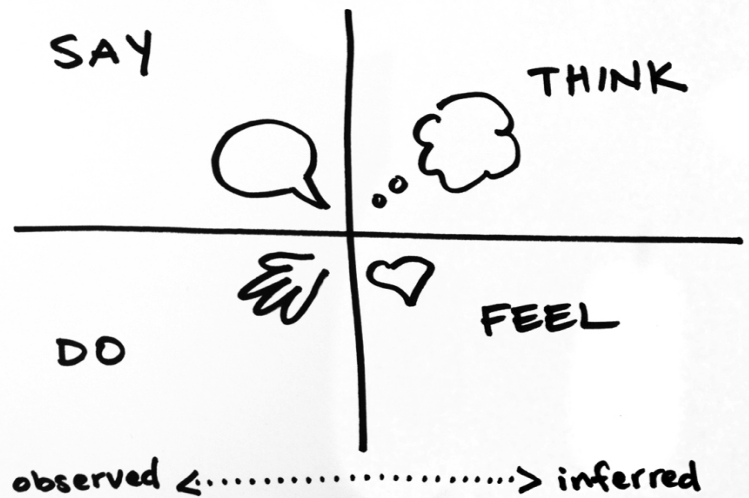


Image Ref: <http://mw2013.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/design-thinking/>

PERSONAS. Your pile of interview notes will be quickly forgotten, so capture the essence of each key stakeholder in one or more *personas* that can be remembered and referred to throughout the project. A persona is a fictional character that possesses the attributes of the stakeholder it represents. Those of you using Agile will recognize this as a tool used in that methodology as well, but actually personas are purported to have been first introduced to the design world by Alan Cooper, author of the amusingly titled book “The Inmates Are Running the Asylum”. Below is an example of a basic one.


 <p>Peter</p>	<p>Works as product manager for a mid-sized company.</p> <p>Is 35 years old, holds a marketing degree.</p> <p>Has got experience working as a product owner on software products with agile teams.</p> <p>Has had some Scrum training.</p>	<p>Has managed mature products successfully. Now faces the challenge of creating a brand-new product.</p> <p>Wants to leverage his agile knowledge but needs advice on creating innovative product using agile techniques.</p>
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Image Ref: <http://www.romanpichler.com/blog/persona-template-for-agile-product-management/>

Base personas on real stakeholders! Although people sometimes create them based purely on their imaginations, these are often highly exaggerated fictional characters, and not very useful in guiding teams to delighting real stakeholders. In order to be useful in the development process your personas must reflect the relevant characteristics of the groups of people for whom they are a proxy. And you may need more than one persona to represent diverse groups. The most useful ones are developed based on interviews and observations of real people representative of your stakeholder groups. Granted, sometimes you won’t be able to get hold of a representative from a particular group (if they’re infants, for example, or people who will be alive in the future), but usually you can dig up someone relevant to interview.

WALK IN THE CUSTOMER'S SHOES. A user experience map, also called a customer journey map, can help you visualize the current situation and the entire lifecycle of how a stakeholder would encounter and experience your product or service. Creating this kind of map together greatly increases team members' shared understanding of your project goals. Here is a picture of what such a map might look like during the exercise.

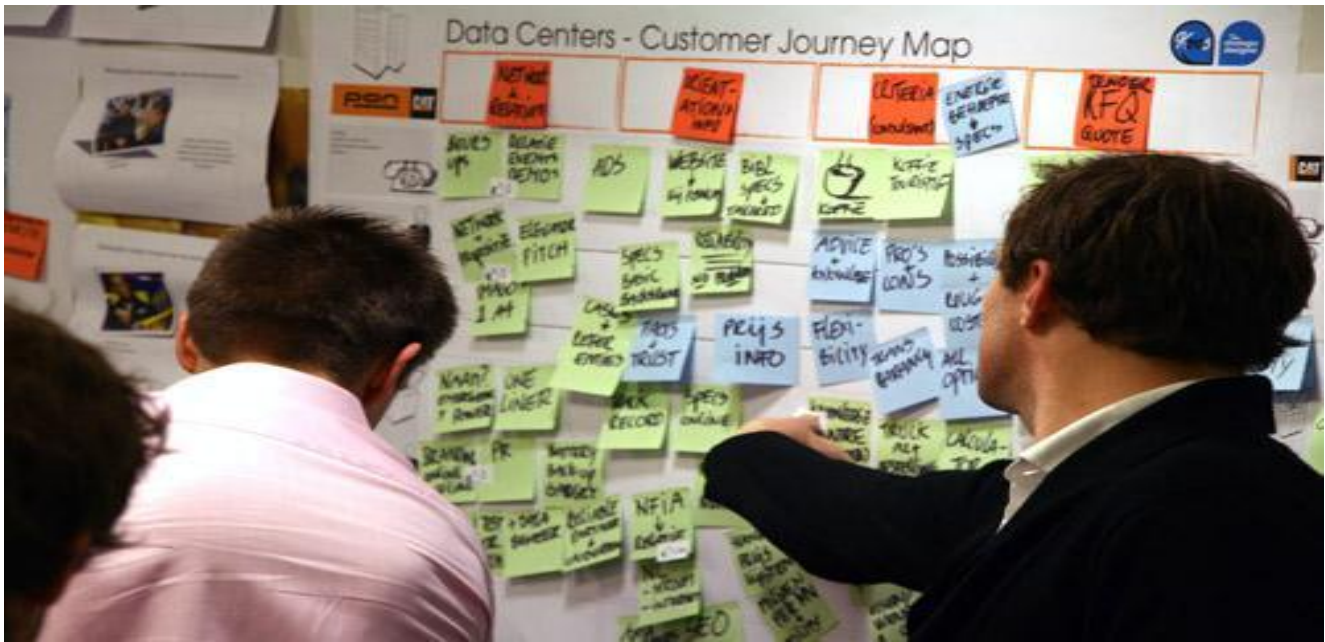


Image Ref: <http://www.burokoos.com/en/tools/customer-journey-mapping/>

These maps can run the gamut from simple to mind bogglingly complex. Here's an example of a perfectly useful map following the incredibly complex process of discovering and managing a complicated health condition.



Image Ref: <http://www.healthbusinessconsult.com/co-creation-in-health-care/>

The map below, in contrast, makes me wonder how I ever managed to purchase a cell phone!

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP

CELLPHONE PURCHASING EXPERIENCE

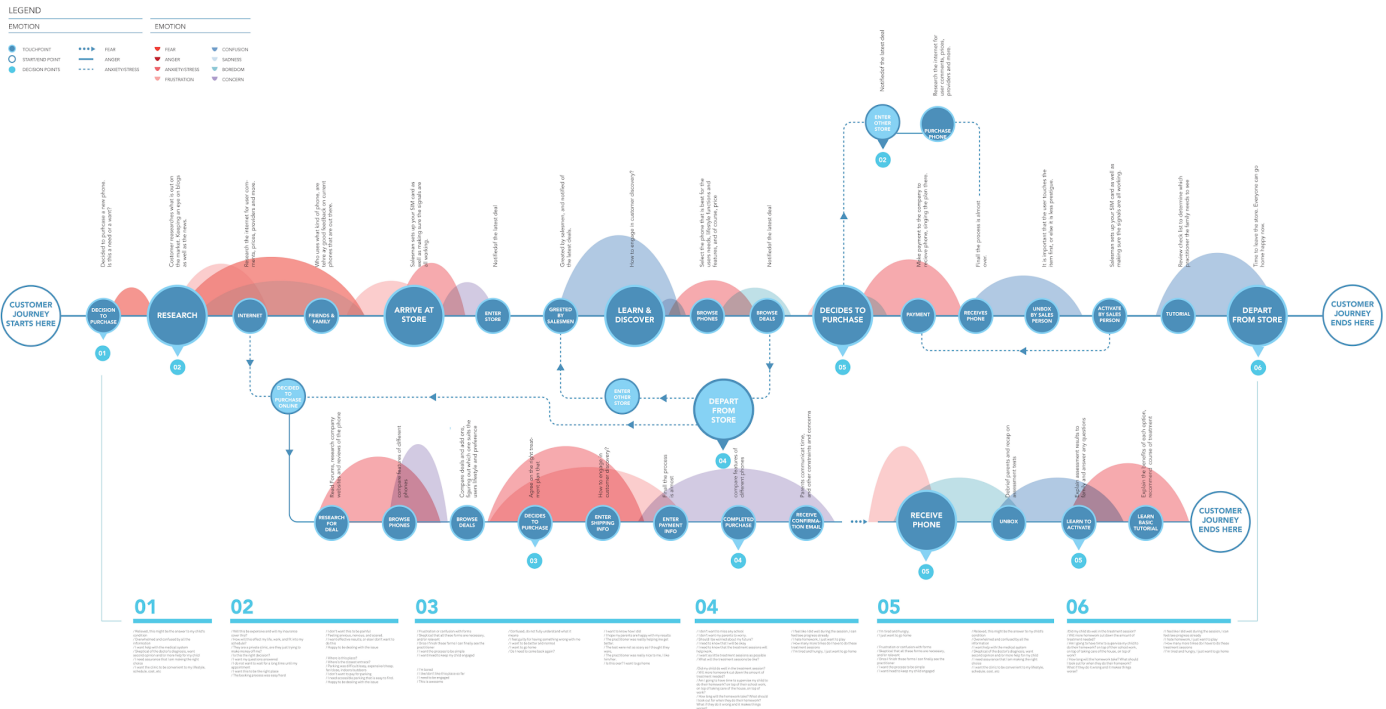


Image Ref: <http://www.miscmagazine.com/customer-journey-mapping/>

The purpose of these maps in Scruppy Design Thinking™ is to identify areas of opportunity for your product or service, and provide a customer-centered context within which to innovate. Be scrappy! You don't have to go into excruciating detail. Follow the scrappy credo of "Just enough detail. Not a drop more and not a drop less than necessary to optimize results."

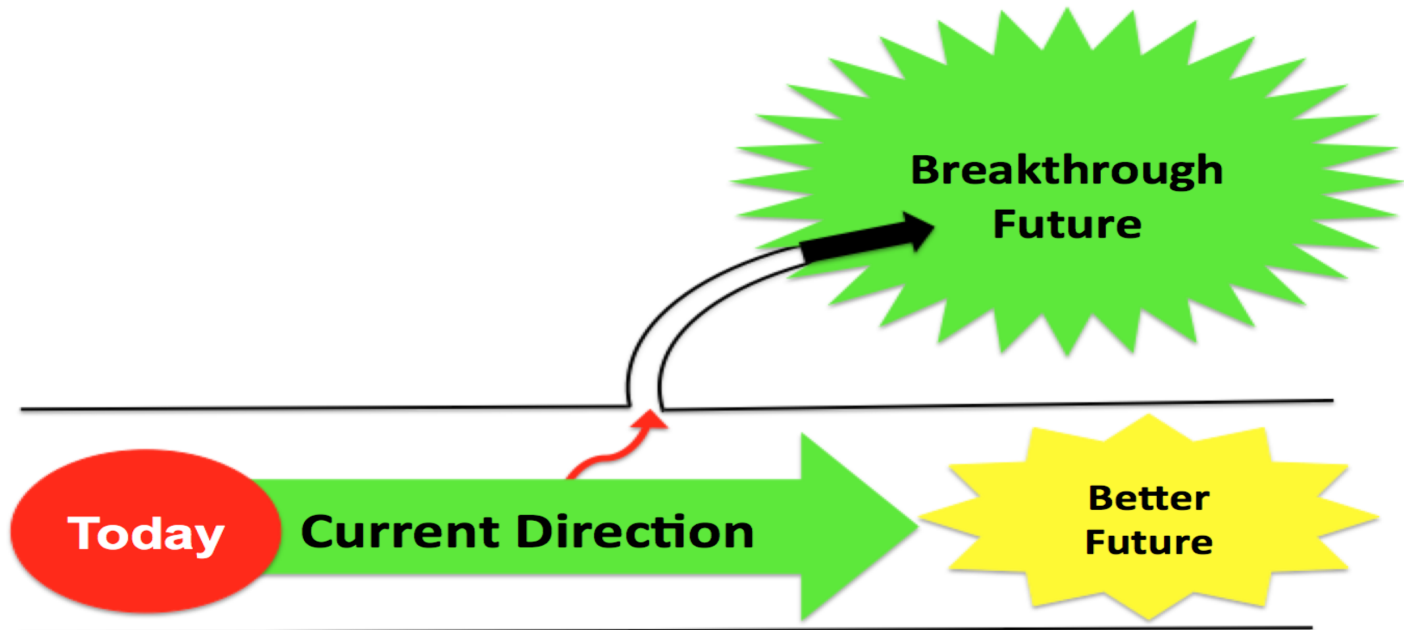
BIG WHAT? Making a customer journey map often leads to creative insights into what is required at various points in the journey. But just stating the problem to be solved isn't enough to inspire people to open their minds, break through barriers, and generate innovative solutions. This is a great time to craft what's called a *challenge statement*.

Writing a good challenge statement isn't rocket science. I like to start with Joel Barker's paradigm-shifting question: "What seems impossible today, but if it WERE possible, would transform X for the better?" Based on this, create a one-sentence statement that is the focus of the rest of your project. While creating your challenge statement, here are the most important things to keep in mind:

- It must be focused on the desired future.
- It must describe this future in a way that inspires and engages the team.
- It must NOT prescribe HOW to achieve the future state.

Armed with your passion-inducing challenge statement, it's time to create the fabulous future! But, before jumping into HOW you will achieve the future to which you aspire, you must spend time imagining it vividly. In the same way that the 5 WHYS enriched your team's understanding of their purpose, creating a "News Report from the Future", describing the world that will exist when your project is complete and wildly successful, adds an emotional intensity to what might otherwise be just a shallow project goal. You can also imagine that you are at the post-project celebration party, and all

of your most important stakeholders are there high-fiving you and gushing with praise about what in particular delighted them and transformed their work and their lives for the better. This activates creativity, and overcomes some of our human tendency to “Yes, but . . .” any idea to death. The diagram below shows why “thinking from the future” – what Edward De Bono calls *lateral thinking* – works better than trying to figure out how to *solve* a problem by *starting* with the problem.



Ref: De Bono’s “Lateral Thinking”.

As you can see, the tiny opening that leads to the “Breakthrough Future” would be easily missed as we rush hastily in the current direction. Starting in the future and working backward, however, we can easily see HOW to change direction in order to arrive at that breakthrough.

BIG HOW? As you might have guessed, it’s finally time to imagine ways to fulfill the Big Crazy Dream defined in your challenge statement. A more powerful way to ask *how* is to ask, “What might make this possible?” I like “brainwriting” better than brainstorming for idea generation because, again, non-native English speakers can usually write and read English better than they can talk and listen, and quieter people can contribute more, too.

BRAINWRITING. Have each person spend five minutes writing down their ideas – one idea per sticky note – and placing them inside a manilla folder. Every five minutes, rotate the folders to another person. The new folder owner then reads

Brainwriting



some of the ideas and contributes more ideas of their own. Research has proven that the best ideas come at the end of a brainstorm, so repeat this process for as many rounds as you like – and absolutely continue well beyond the point where people are convinced that they are completely out of ideas!

Using this method even a small team can easily generate dozens or even hundreds of ideas in less than 30 minutes. Afterward, have the team group the ideas into an affinity diagram and title each group. By the time your team finishes this exercise people will be eager to implement some of these ideas, but don’t do that yet!

Image Ref: Courtesy of Dr. Francine Gordon, <http://www.womennovation.com>

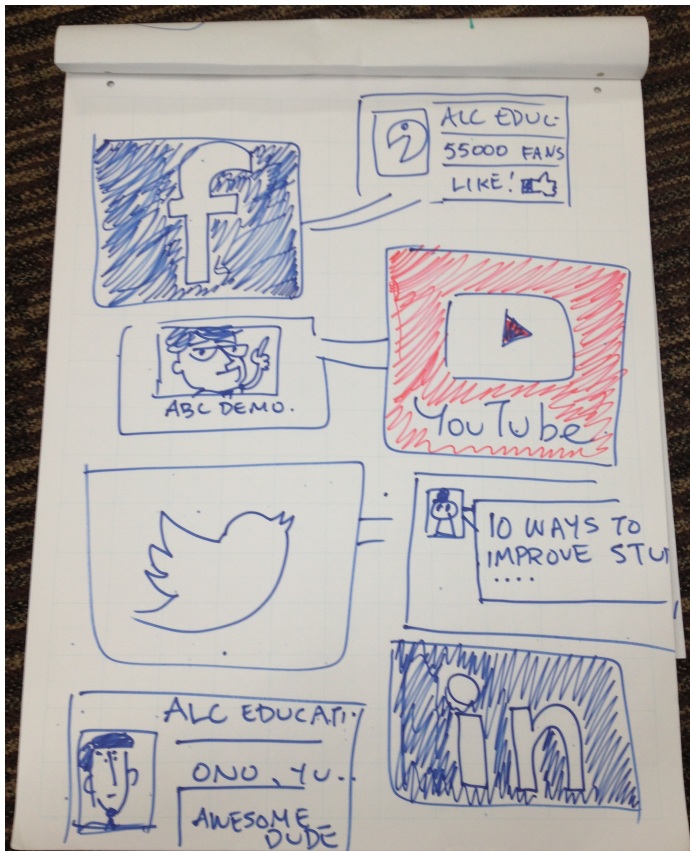
CROSS-POLLINATE. Go on an expedition to expand your thinking and enrich your ideas by getting out of the building. Equipped with a pad of sticky notes and pen, venture to art museums, convenience stores, parks, and automobile repair shops, to spark creativity and leverage ideas from completely different environments. Use your sticky notes to jot down ideas inspired by your experience, for use when you reconvene.

Here's a simple example of how cross-pollination sparks new ideas. At an art museum there was an exhibit that made sounds when people moved close to it. I noticed that people seemed to react to the abrupt louder sounds with a mixture of shock and delight. This inspired me to change the name of my workSHOPS to "WorkSHOCKS".

PROTOTYPE, DON'T PERFECT! Next, get to work creating models and simulations of some of your ideas. Think "quick, messy, good enough". Prototyping is an extremely valuable part of the innovation process! Studies of product development processes have found that it takes about 6 iterations of a design in order to get it working as desired and eliminate all problems, flaws or bugs.

NOTE: Some "purists" do NOT consider non-functional prototypes to be *true* prototypes because they believe that the purpose of a prototype is to test a user's interaction with the prototype. However other important purposes of prototyping include sparking increased ideation and attracting the support of other key stakeholders you need to your project, as well as sharing your vision so that you can bring your product or service into reality.

The purpose of a prototype is to create something that you can test with your stakeholders in order to get feedback, as well as spark more ideas and enroll other stakeholders whose support you need in your vision. Many low-fidelity prototypes can be created in under an hour! More about that [here](#).



Here are a few of my favorite rapid prototyping techniques:

- Build a nonfunctional prototype out of readily available materials. The marker-and-clip picture here is [a famous example that was used to prototype a surgical device](#).
- Simulate a computer, tablet, or phone screen using paper, as shown [here](#).
- Use images.google.com to build a PowerPoint storyboard vividly portraying your idea in a sequence of pictures.
- Roleplay how your product or service would work.
- Science fiction prototyping - yup, just imagine the technology has advanced to the stage where it's possible!
- Create a collage of what the future will be like when the product or service is fully implemented.
- Do a "News From the Future" report about the above.

Move fast and have fun with this! You're not demoing this prototype at a trade show (although you could). Your purpose is to enable you to test initial concepts before you've wasted a lot of resources doing the wrong things, get feedback, inspire more ideas, then pivot and iterate to the next prototype.

TEST. When we hear a word like "test" techno-people might start thinking about needing finished software or hardware that resembles the intended product. What I love about design thinking is that testing can occur before even a single line of code is written or any hardware is built. [UI designers have been doing this for years](#) by using paper versions of a UI to simulate the final product, and getting feedback from users before a lot of time and money have been spent coding.

Testing can be as simple as asking potential users questions like, What do you think this button does? Let people interact with your prototype while they talk aloud about their thought process. Don't wait for perfection, or even a functioning prototype! Get feedback early and often, and revise your project accordingly.

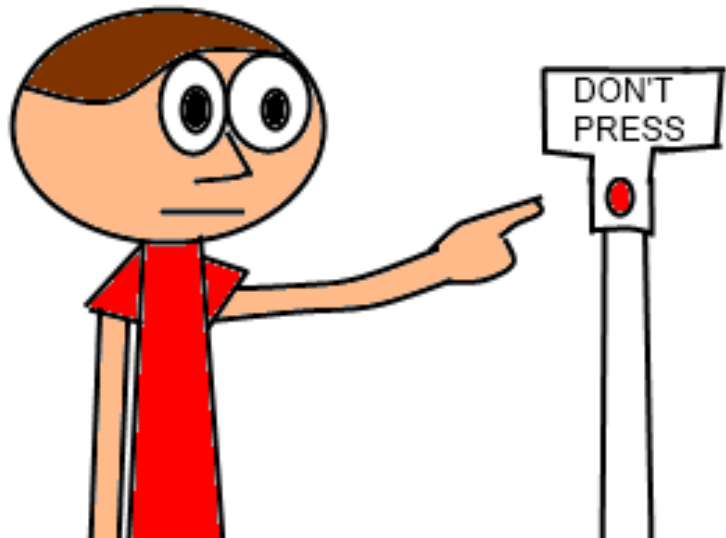


Image Ref: <http://ch2gamer.deviantart.com/art/DON-T-PRESS-THE-RED-BUTTON-253235485>

RINSE AND REPEAT! It's not uncommon for projects to go through this cycle many times before arriving at a finished product or service. (It typically takes about 6 iterations of a design to get all of the kinks worked out!) Using the WHY – WHO – WHAT – HOW cycle as a guide makes this powerful approach easy to remember and accessible to all project teams, even if you are not expert in design thinking.

"Design thinking helps us appreciate and make sense of the complex connections between people, places, objects, events, and ideas. This is the most powerful driver of innovation. It's what guides long-range strategic planning. It's what shapes business decisions that have to be based on future opportunities rather than past events." - Idris Mootee, [Design Thinking for Strategic Innovation](#): What They Can't Teach You at Business or Design School

If you want to experiment with design thinking in the real world, but don't have a project right now, visit [Open IDEO](#) and contribute your creativity to these world-changing open innovation challenges.

SECRET to SUCCESS. Want to be wildly successful at predictably and repeatedly achieving unprecedented breakthrough results? Think BIG. Start small. Move fast. Prototype, don't perfect. Make mistakes and fail forward in the direction of your big crazy dreams! - Kimberly

Kimberly Wiefling is the author of Scappy Project Management, published in Japanese, and the executive editor of the whole series of five "[Scappy Guides](#)." Her favorite is Scappy Women in Business, a collection of the stories of a dozen scrappy businesswomen. She works primarily with globalizing Japanese businesses, traveling extensively in the US, Europe and Asia.

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