

# Course of Digital Management Consulting

## ***Design Thinking. Introductory Concepts***

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### Design Thinking. Introductory Concepts

- Design Thinking. A General Overview
- Steps of Design Thinking Approach and Iteration
- Design Thinking as Divergent and Convergent Perspectives

Design Council UK - Framework for Innovation: Design Council's evolved Double Diamond  
<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/skills-learning/tools-frameworks/framework-for-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond/>

Michael Shanks. "An introduction to Design Thinking process guide"  
<https://web.stanford.edu/~mshanks/MichaelShanks/files/509554.pdf>

IDM-Altitude Design Process Video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfJVgJlpJs&t=434s>

## Design Thinking: an overview

Design Thinking is an iterative process in which we seek to understand the user, challenge assumptions, and redefine problems in an attempt to identify alternative strategies and solutions that might not be instantly apparent with our initial level of understanding.

Design Thinking provides a solution-based approach to solving problems. It is a way of thinking and working as well as a collection of hands-on methods.

Design Thinking revolves around a deep interest in developing an understanding of the people for whom we're designing the products or services. It helps us observe and develop empathy with the target user.

Design Thinking helps us in the process of questioning: questioning the problem, questioning the assumptions, and questioning the implications.

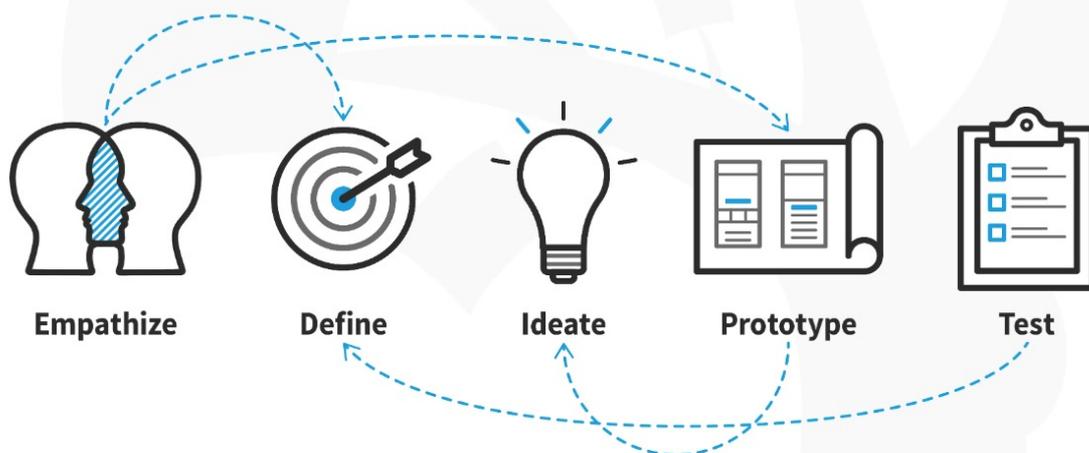
Design Thinking is extremely useful in tackling problems that are ill-defined or unknown, by re-framing the problem in human-centric ways, creating many ideas in brainstorming sessions, and adopting a hands-on approach in prototyping and testing.

Design Thinking involves ongoing experimentation: sketching, prototyping, testing, and trying out concepts and ideas.

Quotation from: **What is Design Thinking and Why Is It So Popular?**  
Interaction Design Foundation, 2019

## Design Thinking: an overview

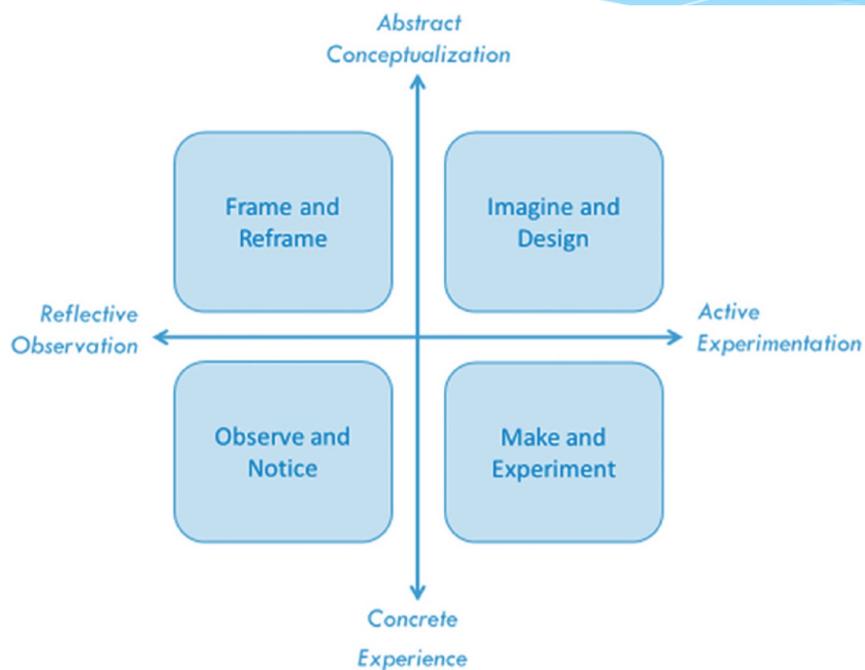
### Design Thinking: A 5-Stage Process



Interaction Design Foundation  
[interaction-design.org](http://interaction-design.org)

Check the videos at:  
<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking>

## Design Thinking: an overview

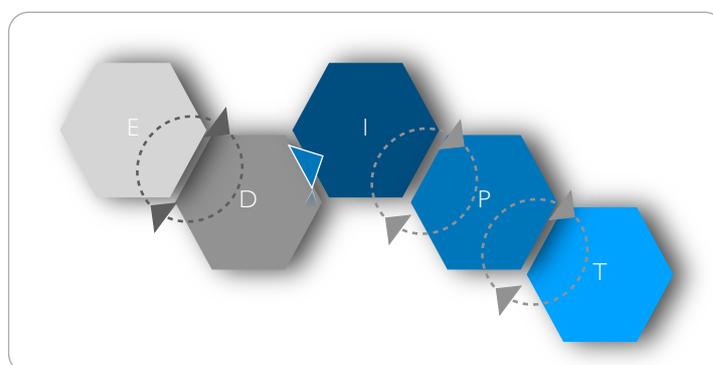


Source: Beckman, Frame and Reframe, 2020

## Design Thinking: an overview

Design thinking is a non-linear, iterative process which seeks to understand users, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions to prototype and test.

It is most useful for tackling problems that are ill-defined or unknown.



Empathize — to understand customers / users  
Define — to define clear project / business objectives  
Ideate — to explore ideas and solutions  
Prototype — to build and visualise ideas and solutions  
Test — to review and decide

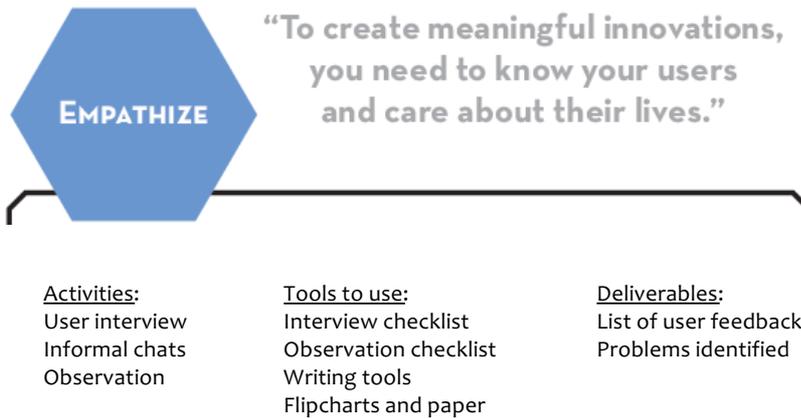
## Steps of Design Thinking Approach

### Empathize

During this phase, you will need to be immersed in learning about others (end users), and the problem that you are trying to solve.

You can talk to experts and other key stakeholders, or even conduct research and interviews.

The aim is develop the background knowledge, and use these insights as a springboard to address design challenges.



## Transition: Emphatize -> Define

Unpack: When you move from empathy work to drawing conclusions from that work, you need to process all the things you heard and saw in order to understand the big picture and grasp the takeaways of it all.

Unpacking is a chance to start that process – sharing what you found with fellow designers and capturing the important parts in a visual form.

Get all the information out of your head and onto a wall where you can start to make connections—post pictures of your user, post-its with quotes, maps of journeys or experiences—anything that captures impressions and information about your user.

This is the beginning of the synthesis process, which leads into a ‘Define’ mode.

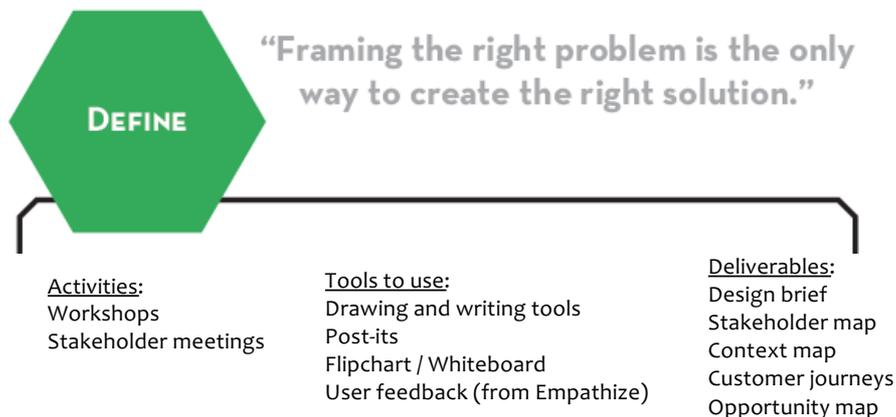
## Steps of Design Thinking Approach

Define is the convergent phase to make informed decisions from the insights gained from Empathize.

It is important to develop clarity by asking the right critical questions to the stakeholders or team members involved in the same project. It is also important to be curious and find out things. This step challenges the status quo

Based fully on the insights, you ask these questions:

- What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- Where are we heading?
- Who are we helping?
- What is the value proposition?
- What is our situation?
- How did this happen?



## Transition: Define -> Ideate

In the Define mode you determine the specific meaningful challenge to take on, and in the Ideate mode you focus on generating solutions to address that challenge.

A well-scoped and -articulated point-of-view will lead you into ideation in a very natural way. In fact, it is a great litmus test of your point-of-view to see if brainstorming topics fall out your POV.

A great transition step to take is to create a list of “How-Might-We . . .?” brainstorming topics that flow from your problem statement.

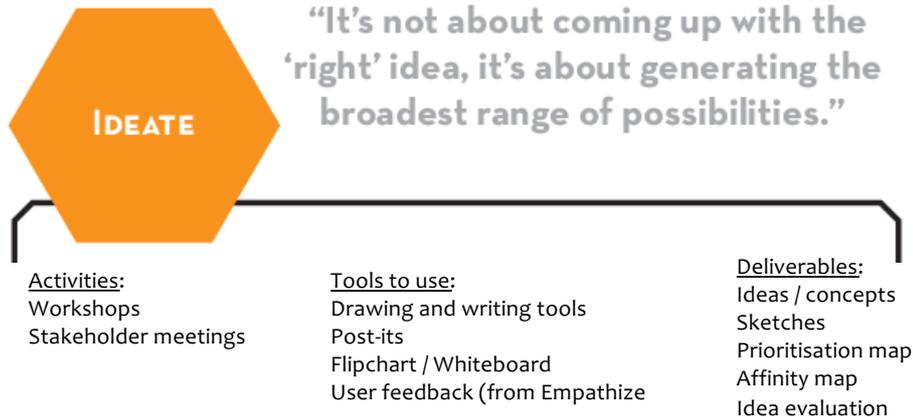
These brainstorming topics typically are subsets of the entire problem, focusing on different aspects of the challenge.

Then when you move into ideation you can select different topics, and try out a few to find the sweet spot of where the group can really churn out a large quantity of compelling ideas.

## Steps of Design Thinking Approach

### Ideate

This phase is the critical and most celebrated phase of the design thinking process. You will be challenged to think out of the box and to brainstorm a myriad of ideas. You will suspend all kinds of judgment to your ideas and solutions. No idea is too far-fetched and no one's ideas are rejected. Ideating is all about creativity and fun. Quantity is encouraged. Your team will generate a hundred ideas in a single session. You and your team will be encouraged to be dreamers of the impossible and visionaries of the future.



## Transition: Ideate -> Prototype

In order to avoid losing all of the innovation potential you have just generated through ideation, we recommend a process of considered selection, by which you bring multiple ideas forward into prototyping, thus maintaining your innovation potential.

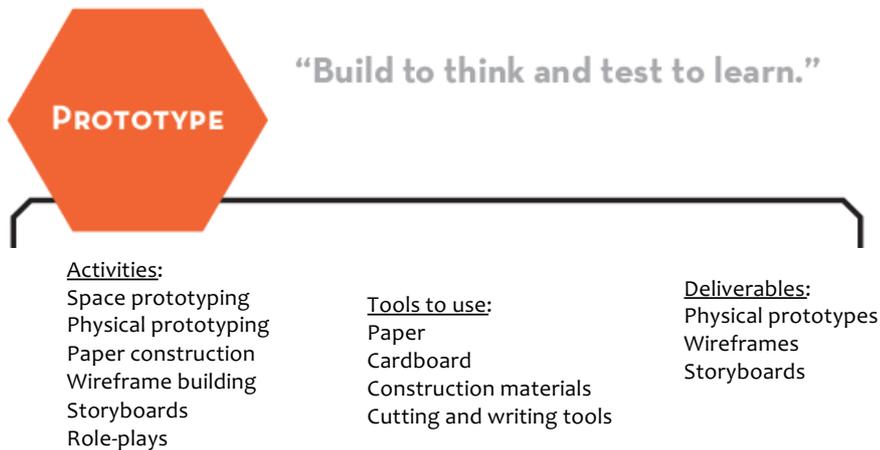
As a team, designate three voting criteria (such as “the most likely to delight,” “the rational choice,” “the most unexpected”) to use to vote on three different ideas that your team generated during brainstorming.

Carry the two or three ideas that receive the most votes forward into prototyping. In this way, you preserve innovation potential by carrying multiple ideas forward—a radically different approach than settling on the single idea that at least the majority of the team can agree upon.

## Steps of Design Thinking Approach

A prototype can be a paper model, storyboard, wireframe or a cardboard box - it allows you to quickly visualize and identify the best solution among several concepts. It is a way to convey an idea quickly. The fidelity of the prototype does not matter.

You are asked to learn to experiment and that it is better to fail early and often.



## Transition: Prototype -> Test

Prototype and Test are modes that you consider in tandem more than you transition between. What you are trying to test and how you are going to test that aspect are critically important to consider before you create a prototype. Examining these two modes in conjunction brings up the layers of testing a prototype.

Though prototyping and testing are sometimes entirely intertwined, it is often the case that planning and executing a successful testing scenario is a considerable additional step after creating a prototype.

Don't assume you can simply put a prototype in front of a user to test it; often the most informative results will be a product of careful thinking about how to test in a way that will let users give you the most natural and honest feedback.

## Steps of Design Thinking Approach

Testing is part of an iterative phase of the design thinking process that provides you with feedback, based on rigorous testing of the prototype.

The purpose of testing is to learn what works, and what doesn't and then iterate. This means going back to your prototype and modifying it, based on feedback from the users. Testing ensures that you come back to the essential core of design thinking - empathy of users and designing for their needs.

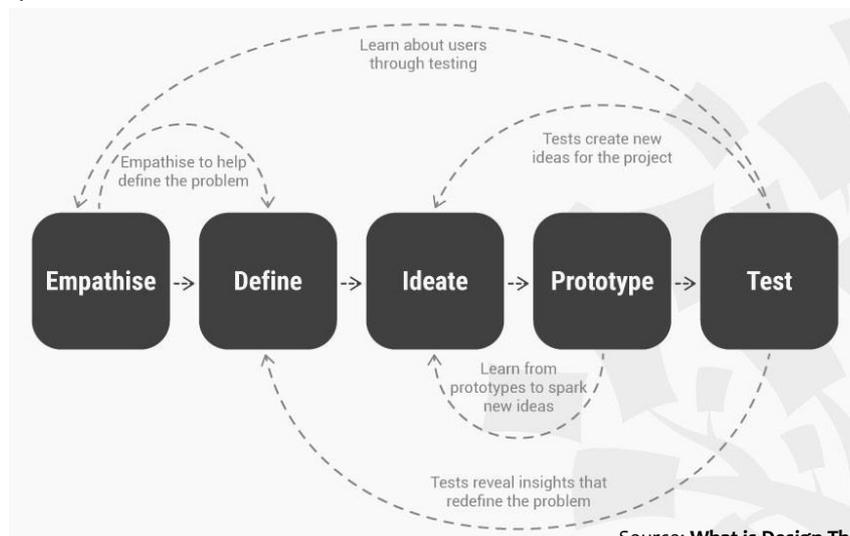


## Design Thinking as an iterative process

Iteration is a fundamental of good design.

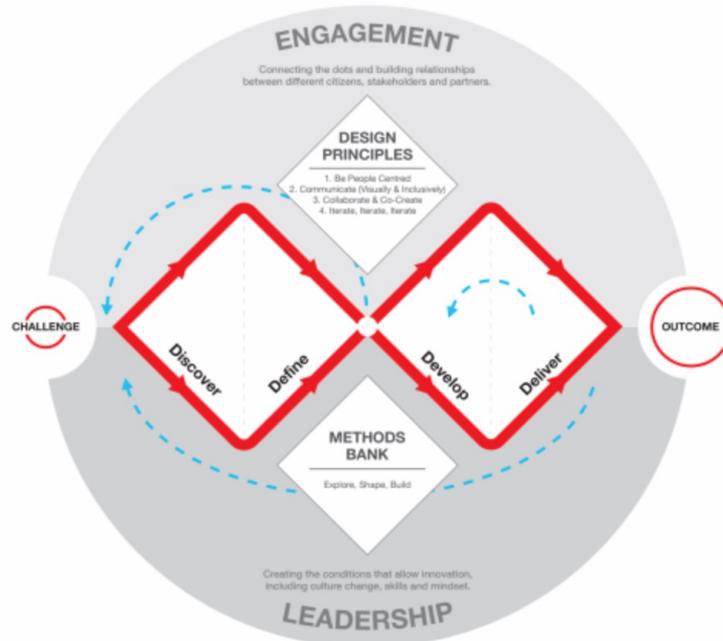
Iterate both by cycling through the process multiple times, and also by iterating within a step—for example by creating multiple prototypes or trying variations of a brainstorming topics with multiple groups.

Generally as you take multiple cycles through the design process your scope narrows and you move from working on the broad concept to the nuanced details, but the process still supports this development.



Source: **What is Design Thinking and Why Is It So Popular?**  
Interaction Design Foundation, 2019

## Design Thinking as an iterative process



Source: **Framework for innovation**  
Design Council, UK

<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/skills-learning/tools-frameworks/framework-for-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond/>

## Design Thinking as an iterative process

Double Diamond represents a process of exploring an issue more widely or deeply (divergent thinking) and then taking focused action (convergent thinking).

- **Discover.** The first diamond helps people understand, rather than simply assume, what the problem is. It involves speaking to and spending time with people who are affected by the issues.
- **Define.** The insight gathered from the discovery phase can help you to define the challenge in a different way.
- **Develop.** The second diamond encourages people to give different answers to the clearly defined problem, seeking inspiration from elsewhere and co-designing with a range of different people.
- **Deliver.** Delivery involves testing out different solutions at small-scale, rejecting those that will not work and improving the ones that will.

Its principles are:

- **Put people first.** Start with an understanding of the people using a service, their needs, strengths and aspirations.
- **Communicate visually and inclusively.** Help people gain a shared understanding of the problem and ideas.
- **Collaborate and co-create.** Work together and get inspired by what others are doing.
- **Iterate, iterate, iterate.** Do this to spot errors early, avoid risk and build confidence in your ideas.

Source: **Framework for innovation**  
Design Council, UK

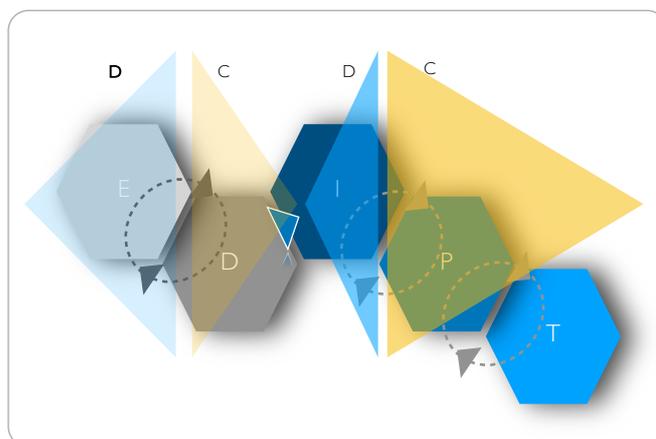
<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/skills-learning/tools-frameworks/framework-for-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond/>

## Design Thinker's personality profile

- **Empathy:** imagine the world from multiple perspectives (those of colleagues, clients, end users...), taking a «people first» approach to imagine solutions that are inherently desirable and meet explicit or latent needs.
- **Integrative Thinking:** rely not only on analytical processes but also exhibit the ability to see the all the salient – and sometimes contradictory – aspects of a confounding problem and create novel solutions.
- **Optimism:** assume that no matter how challenging the constraints of a given problem, at least one potential solution is better than the existing alternatives.
- **Experimentalism:** ask new questions and explore constraints in creative ways that proceed in entirely new directions.
- **Collaboration:** have a multidisciplinary attitude, work alongside other disciplines and even more gain significant experience in more than one discipline (marketer, anthropologist, industrial designer, architect or psychologist).

Tim Brown, Design Thinking | Hbr.org | June 2008 | Harvard Business Review

## Appendix – Tools for Design Thinking applications



Divergent: common ideation techniques

- Brainwriting
- Scamper
- ... What if?

Convergent: simple ways to converge

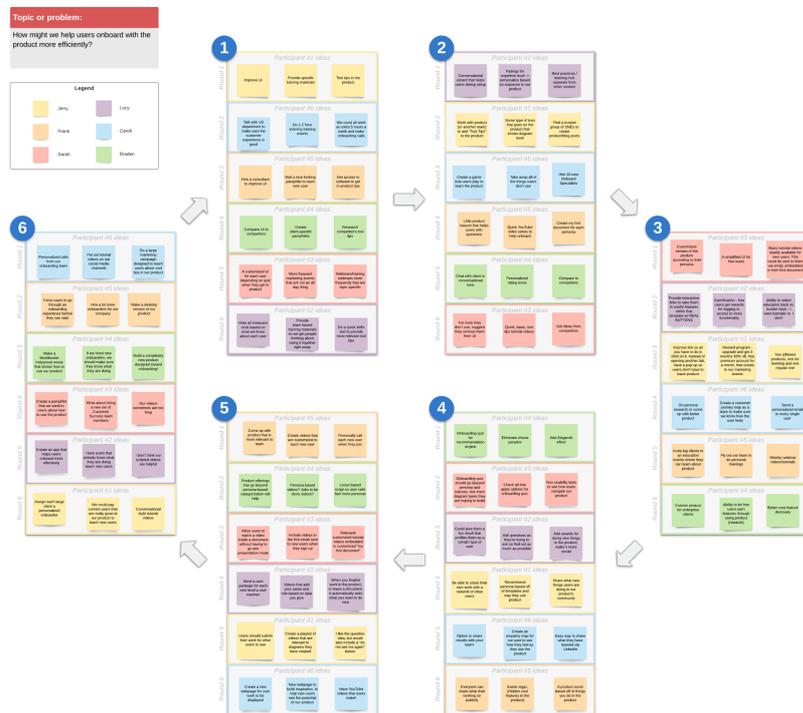
- Prioritisation map (MoSCoW)
- Affinity diagram
- ... Idea evaluation

## Divergent: ideation techniques

### Brainwriting 6-3-5

How does brainwriting work?

- 1 Explain to your team how Brainwriting works**  
Brainwriting only works if all participants understand the method and its rules. Explain the steps of the brainwriting process and emphasize the benefits of the technique to the team.
- 2 Explain the problem and define the objective**  
The second step of brainwriting is to explain the problem clearly and define the objective that you want to achieve. This is extremely important to help the team focus on ideas that help achieve the goals.
- 3 Pass out paper to all participants**  
Every participant gets a sheet of paper on which they can jot down their ideas. You can use normal paper or post-its, or even use digital tools.
- 4 Brainwriting begins**  
Brainwriting sessions usually have 5-6 rounds. Participants get around 3-5 minutes to write down their ideas in the first round, and a little less time in the following rounds. After the round ends, every participant passes the paper with their ideas to another person who will then add their own ideas in round 2. This process continues until round 5 or 6.
- 5 Assess and discuss**  
Collect all idea papers and sort similar ideas into groups. Assess and discuss the ideas until you find the right solution to your problem.

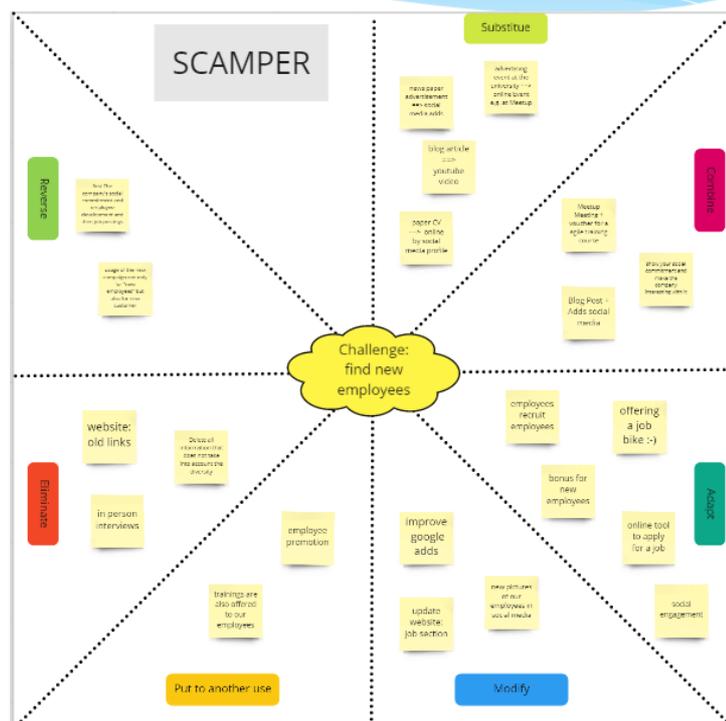


Source: InLoox <https://www.inloox.com/>

## Divergent: ideation techniques

### SCAMPER

- S Substitute**  
Replace a part of your product, service or process with another.
- C Combine**  
Combine ideas, processes or products into one more efficient output.
- A Adapt**  
Adapt an existing idea that might not have worked before to solve a problem.
- M Modify**  
Modify an aspect of your situation or problem, for example by magnifying or minimizing them and see whether it gives you a new insight or whether it adds any value.
- P Put to another use**  
Put current processes or products that were intended for a specific purpose to another use to solve problems.
- E Eliminate**  
Eliminate or simplify a process or idea to get to improve it, but also to identify its most important aspect.
- R Reverse**  
Reverse the orientation or direction of a process or product, do things the other way around, completely against its original purpose.



Source: InLoox <https://www.inloox.com/>



## Overview on tools to support ideation

→ **Pre-ideation:** Slicing the elephant and splitting the ideation challenge, ideas from journey mapping, ideas from system mapping, “How might we ...?” questions from insights and user stories

→ **Generating many ideas:** Brainstorming and brain-writing, 10 plus 10

→ **Adding depth and diversity:** Bodystorming, using cards and checklists, ideation based on analogies and association

→ **Understanding, clustering, and ranking options:** Octopus clustering, Benny Hill sorting (“Thirty-Five”), idea portfolio, decision matrix

→ **Reducing options:** Quick voting methods, physical commitment

Source: Service Design Doing

## Key questions to be checked in ideation

→ **Starting point/scope:** What is the starting point and scope of this phase of ideation? How deep or how broad do you want to go this time around? What is the wording of your ideation challenge?

→ **Immersion and inspiration:** How do you prepare the contributors and connect them to researched reality or the last round of prototyping? What materials do you show them? Which part of the material do you want them to experience? Do you prepare everyone, or keep some strategically ignorant?

→ **Split:** How do you split your ideation challenge into multiple manageable tracks?

→ **Contributors:** Who could meaningfully contribute to your current ideation challenge? Who should contribute during idea generation? Who should contribute during idea selection?

→ **Ideation loops:** How often do you need or expect to iterate between idea generation and idea selection in this phase of your project? How do the different idea generation and selection sessions feed into each other?

→ **Stopping criteria:** When should you stop ideating for now and move on (e.g., toward prototyping)? (Remember, many more ideas will come during prototyping.)

→ **Outputs:** How many selected ideas will you need this time around? What format do those ideas need to be in so they can be pushed forward?

Source: Service Design Doing