

Phase II: Defining the Problem

The define mode of the design process is all about bringing clarity and focus to the design space. It is your chance, and responsibility, as a design thinker to define the challenge you are taking on based on what you have learned about your user and about the context.

The define mode is critical to the design process because it results from your point-of-view (POV), which is the explicit expression of the problem you are striving to address. More importantly, your POV defines the RIGHT challenge(s) to address based on your new understanding of people and the problem space.

How to Define?

Consider what stood out to you when talking and observing people. What patterns have emerged when you look at the set? If you noticed something interesting, ask yourself (and your team) why that might be. In asking why someone had a certain behavior or feeling, you are making connections from that person to a larger context.

Phase III: Brainstorming Solutions

Ideate is the mode of the design process in which you concentrate on idea generation. Mentally, it represents a process of "going wide" in terms of concepts and outcomes. Ideation provides both the fuel and the source material for building prototypes and getting innovative solutions into the hands of your users.

Ideation is your chance to combine the understanding you have of the problem space, and the people you are designing for, with your imagination to generate solution concepts. Particularly early in a design project, ideation is about pushing for the widest possible range of ideas from which you can select, not simply finding a single, best solution.

How to Brainstorm?

You ideate by combining your conscious and unconscious mind and rational thoughts with imagination. For example, in brainstorming, you leverage the synergy of the group to reach new ideas by building on others' ideas. Adding constraints, surrounding yourself with related materials that can inspire you or the team, and embracing misunderstandings allow you to reach further than you could by simply thinking about a problem.

Phase IV: Prototyping Solutions

The prototype mode is the iterative generation of artifacts intended to answer questions that get you closer to your final solution. In the early stages of a project, that question may be broad