

Design & Test

DESIGN CRITIQUES

Meet professionals in the field around a design, a prototype or a product to get feedback. The goal is to identify different solutions with methodology through a fresh look.

PEOPLE
6 (MAX)

PREP. TIME
-

TIME
1 HOUR (MAX)

DIFFICULTY LEVEL
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USE THIS METHOD / TECHNIQUE TO
Get useful feedback about your design from your team.

THIS IS WHY YOU NEED IT
Improve your design with the eyes of other professionals.

MATERIALS

- Timer

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED

- UX Designer
- Product Owner
- Developer
- Stakeholder

VARIATIONS

- None

ORGANIZE THE SESSION WITH METHODOLOGY

FIX THE ROLES

1. The presenter is the primary designer who created the work.

- SHARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE CRITIQUE SESSION

“My goal for the critique session is to get feedback on the overall flow so I can make improvements before user testing on Friday.”

- SHARE DESIGN GOALS

“The primary goal of my new design is to encourage more users to save their payment information so they can easily donate more in the future.”

- PROVIDE CONTEXT

“The user will be coming to this page from either an email or a home page. 80% of users will be seeing this for the first time.”



2. The facilitator enables the presenter to have a successful critique by enforcing the guidelines below. If there aren't enough people to have a dedicated facilitator, the presenter can play the role of the facilitator after they present.

- FOCUS PEOPLE ON THE CRITIQUE AND DESIGN GOALS
“Let's remember now that Alice is looking for feedback on the overall flow before user testing, not detailed visual feedback right now.”
- SUGGEST MOVING NOT-RELEVANT DISCUSSIONS TO THE PARKING LOT
“That's great feedback on the navigation, but the presenter isn't looking for feedback on that right now so let's put that in the parking lot.”
- KEEP AN EYE ON TIME
- ENSURE EQUAL PARTICIPATION

3. The critiquers are 3–4 people (other designers, engineers, product managers) that provide feedback on the design to help the presenter achieve her design goal

- ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS
“What were you trying to achieve with the placement of this line of copy above the button?”
- TALK IN TERMS OF TRADEOFFS
“By adding in extra fields to save your information, it might be harder for users to make one-time donations.”

SOME BASIC RULES:

1. Every project must have at least 1 critique session a month
2. No more than 6 people per session, to keep things moving
3. Bring new people to each session, so we get a broad perspective
4. The project's primary designer should be present to run the review and hear feedback firsthand
5. 1 hour max!



HOW TO RUN THE DESIGN CRITIQUES ?

STEP 1: Offer Context

- Share the design with your team (preferable a clickable prototype)
- Write down the goals of the design and the critique
- Share the persona's and envision the context wherein the product will be used
- Share important information: timeline of the project, project goals, important constraints, 'content can't be changed'...

STEP 2: Review The Design

- Discover the design on your own (20 min)
- Critiquers take notes and keep them to themselves :
- We encourage to:
 - Always keep the project's goals in mind
 - Note what you like, as well as what you don't
 - Avoid subjective absolutes like, "This looks ugly"
 - Try not to speak for the target user, unless you are the target user
 - Prioritize their feedback, focusing on the largest issues first

STEP 3: Review Critique

- Foresee at least half of the session (30 min)
- We ask each reviewer to give 1 piece of feedback, and then each item is discussed as necessary
- Keep things moving—don't let a discussion drag on or let 1 person dominate the discussion
- If people disagree with an idea, write it down to vote later
- Remember that not all feedback is good, so plan to disregard many ideas

STEP 4: After The Design Review

- Take time to think about each piece of feedback and explore possible solutions.
- Don't commit to solutions in the review meeting
- Not all feedback needs to be addressed. The designer makes the call on what to keep and what to change, but they should listen closely and keep their minds open.
- Part of accomplishing a good Design Critique involves ditching your ego and remembering that you are not your designs.