8 STEPS TO CREATING A GREAT STORYBOARD

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IF YOU HAVEN’T ALREADY DEVELOPED A STORYBOARD DIAGRAM – BRAINSTORM ON ONE HERE BEFORE BEGINNING

http://www.fastcodesign.com/1672917/the-8-steps-to-creating-a-great-storyboard?partner=newsletter
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NOW DECIDE WHICH PART TO FOCUS ON FIRST.

CHOOSE PART OF THE PROBLEM

YOU’LL DO ONE CYCLE FOR EACH PART OF THE PROBLEM.
5 MINUTES

TAKE NOTES

THE WHITEBOARDS AND WALLS ARE PROBABLY COVERED IN DIAGRAMS AND NOTES.

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO RELOAD THAT STUFF INTO YOUR BRAIN.

EVERYONE TAKES A PIECE OF PAPER AND JOTS DOWN ANYTHING THEY THINK IS USEFUL.
5-10 MINUTES

MIND MAP

NOW YOU'RE GOING TO ADD ALL THE OTHER IDEAS THAT ARE IN YOUR HEAD, MIX THEM WITH THE NOTES YOU JUST TOOK, AND LOOSELY ORGANIZE THEM ON PAPER. THE MIND MAP IS GOING TO BE YOUR “CHEAT SHEET” YOU CAN USE WHEN YOU'RE SKETCHING UI IDEAS.

IF YOU'RE NOT FAMILIAR WITH MIND MAPPING ALREADY, I OFTEN DESCRIBE IT AS WRITING DOWN EVERYTHING IN YOUR HEAD WITH NO SPECIFIC FORMATTING; OR QUIET INDIVIDUAL BRAINSTORMING. YOU CAN WRITE WORDS AND CONNECT THEM OR NOT, YOU CAN DRAW PICTURES OR NOT--YOU BASICALLY CAN’T DO IT WRONG. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT EVERYONE IS GETTING EVERY SOLUTION, OLD AND NEW, OUT OF THEIR HEAD AND ONTO PAPER AT VERY LOW FIDELITY.
5 MINUTES

CRAZY EIGHTS

EVERYBODY FOLDS A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER IN HALF FOUR TIMES, THEN UNFOLDS IT, SO THEY GET EIGHT PANELS.

DRAW EIGHT SKETCHES, ONE IN EACH PANEL. THAT’S ABOUT 40 SECONDS PER SKETCH, WHICH IS CRAZY…but it’s a great way to crank out variations of ideas quickly. For best results, do two rounds of crazy eights.
STORYBOARD

THE GOAL IS TO TAKE THE IDEAS WE’VE GENERATED SO FAR AND SKETCH AN ACTUAL STORYBOARD SHOWING HOW A USER WOULD MOVE THROUGH THE STORY.

START WITH A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER, AND PUT THREE STICKY NOTES ON IT.

EACH STICKY NOTE IS ONE FRAME IN THE STORYBOARD. IT’S KIND OF LIKE A COMIC BOOK THAT YOU’RE GOING TO FILL IN. LOOK BACK AT YOUR MIND MAP AND YOUR CRAZY EIGHTS AND FIND THE BEST IDEAS. REMEMBER TWO IMPORTANT STORYBOARD RULES:

MAKE IT STAND ALONE – NO EXPLANATION
GIVE IT A NAME – SOMETHING CATCHY

WHEN YOU FINISH THE STORYBOARDS, HANG THEM ON THE WALL WITH SOME STICKY STUFF.
5-10 MINUTES

SILENT CRITIQUE

Give everybody a bunch of dot stickers. Then look at the different storyboards and put a sticker on every idea or part of an idea you like.

There are no limits to how many stickers you can use. By the end, you've got a kind of heat map, and some ideas are already standing out.
3-MINUTE CRITIQUES

NEXT, GET GROUP FEEDBACK AT THE STORYBOARDS. FIRST, PEOPLE TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY LIKED, THEN WE ASK THE PERSON WHO DREW IT IF WE MISSED ANYTHING IMPORTANT.
5 MINUTES

SUPER VOTE

ONCE WE’VE LOOKED AT ALL THE IDEAS, EVERYBODY GETS ONE OR TWO “SPECIAL” STICKERS (WHICH CAN BE THE SAME DOT STICKERS FROM BEFORE WITH A PEN MARK ON THEM). THESE ARE “SUPER VOTES” FOR THE IDEAS YOU THINK ARE THE VERY BEST.
Instead of defaulting to GROUPTHINK, make sure you have the buy-in of the higher-ups ... or you might regret it later.
So you’ve got tough decisions to make:

**WHICH SOLUTIONS** will you pursue and which will you put **ON ICE**?
THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS HARD, and this is one place where working as a group can become a liability.

To combat this effect, the facilitator often has to DRAW OUT THE DECISION-MAKER to give their honest, true opinion. In the sprint, people are out of their comfort zones, and even CEOs can begin to behave in non-standard ways.

Give a “SUPER VOTE” to the deciders during design critiques. And most of the time…you just have to BE BLUNT.

As facilitator, let everyone know that you need more ASSERTIVE PARTICIPATION from the deciders. Additionally, you should have the words “make the call, Sally” on the tip of your tongue throughout the day.

"IF YOU AREN'T CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT BRINGING THE DECIDER IN NOW, YOU'LL HAVE A PROBLEM LATER."
SEARCH FOR CONFLICTS:

1. Comb through storyboards - **LOOK FOR CONFLICTS** (where there are two or more different approaches to solving the same problem.)

2. Every time you find one, **WRITE IT DOWN**. You can put the topic and solutions on sticky notes, like the ones above.

3. In business-as-usual design, designers often end up picking one approach and going straight to high resolution. Look at **HOW ELSE IT COULD BE DONE**.
You have two basic options for what kind of user study you’re going to run at the end of your sprint. You can prototype several different approaches and test them against one another (the “battle royale”) or you can go with a single prototype (the “best shot”).

**BEST SHOT**

The advantage of the “best shot” approach is that you can put a lot more work into that one prototype, or just get it done faster. If you’re testing only one solution, the user study is less complex, and it gives you more time to see what the users say about your competitors’ products.

**BATTLE ROYALE**

The “battle royale” works well for newer spaces where there really aren’t many conventions, and you need to figure which one is going to work best for the user. The disadvantage is that it takes more time, and your testers may run out of patience.

So how do you know which to pick? Start with a gut check: If everyone is excited about one option, you may be ready for a “best shot.” But if it feels more like you’re sitting there and scratching your heads about what to do next—or else you want to throttle each other because those fools just won’t agree with you—well, you may need a “battle royale.”
TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

1. LIST UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS. Some of those assumptions might be about the users, some about the business, some about technology, and maybe even some about messaging.

2. I can tell you that last assumption above is false right now, but for most others, you’re going to need some kind of research. Guess what? You can TEST A BUNCH OF THEM by showing a prototype to users.

3. Try to come up with a way to test all your assumptions, either in the user study or in some other parallel task that can start right away. If you can’t test every assumption now, KEEP A LIST FOR NEXT TIME.
Now we’re going to make a storyboard that shows exactly how the user will step through your prototype, click by click. This is the last group activity before prototyping, in Day 1.

**DRAW A BIG GRID** on the whiteboard.

**DRAW A COMIC BOOK** that tells the story start to finish.

Hopefully the story will flow easily from there, following the outline you previously laid out.
As you storyboard, the facilitator has lots of small decisions to make. **WORK HARD HERE TO NOT LET PEOPLE BE TOO NICE.**

You don’t want design by committee. If there’s a good argument going, don’t try to find middle ground or make people agree. Help the team place a bet on one of the opposing solutions and keep the other in your back pocket if it fails.
For the full article, please visit the FastCompany Design site: