



NCMM 2022 Planning Grants

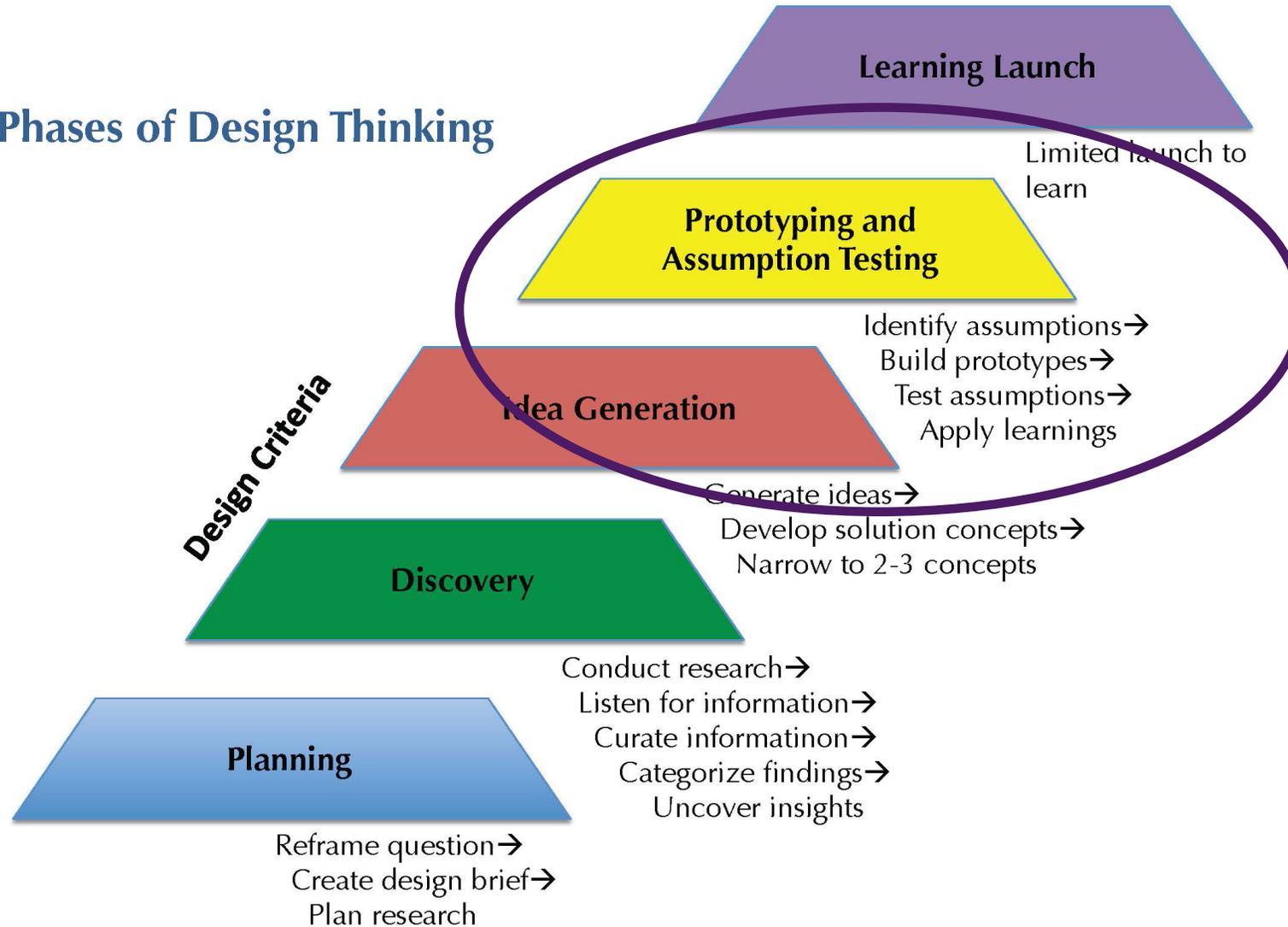
Introduction to Assumption
Testing and Co-Creation
Sessions

Today's Agenda

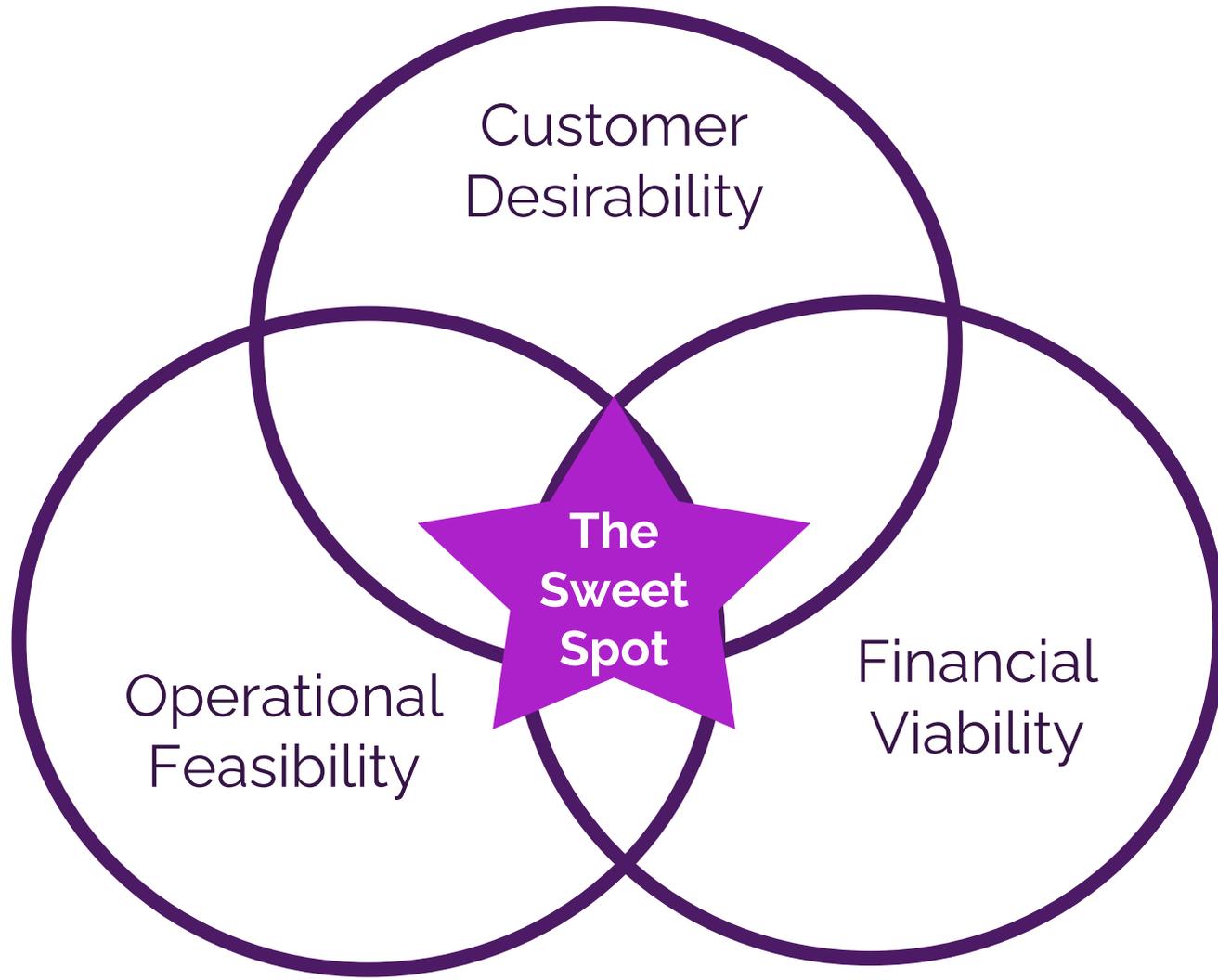
- Looking backward and forward
- Creating V2 of your concepts
- Surfacing and testing Assumptions
- Prototypes and Co-Creation
- The Pitch Session (April 26)

**Where we've been
and where we're
going**

Phases of Design Thinking







Road Map

- Feb 24 – Second version of all 3 concepts completed, answering “How it will work”
- Mar 15 – Visualizations of 3 concepts completed
- Mar 16 to Mar 31 – Concepts shared with end users, stakeholders
- Apr 7 – team chooses one concept
- April 26 – team pitch delivered

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- May 1 to Dec 31, 2023 – Learning Launch (Phase 2), the “proof of concept” phase before the Pilot

Creating Second Version of Your Concepts

Adding the Details

- Moving beyond the 30,000-foot look

Is your, awesome, BIG idea clearly articulated?

Does it answer the question: "How will this work?"



Sample: Transportation Flex Program

Version #1

We will create a new transportation service for newly hired employees and employees who do not have reliable transportation to work. The cost of the program is shared between public sector and employers.

Questions:

What does the transportation service look like?

Who will operate the transportation service?

How will you determine which employees are eligible?

Will employees have a co-pay for the service?

How much will employers pay?

What agency in the public sector will be in charge?

.... and on and on and on ...

Sample: Transportation Flex Program

Version #2

We will create a new transportation service for newly hired employees and employees who do not have reliable transportation to work. The service will be run through the county paratransit service, and be operated under contract by Neighbor Works Transportation Service. It will run on 3 scheduled routes in both the a.m. and p.m.

The employer and workforce agency will help to identify eligible riders. Employees above 200% of Federal Poverty Level will receive free rides for the first 3 months of employment. Employees lower than 200% of Federal Poverty Level will receive funding for 6 months of employment with participating employers.

The cost of the program is shared between public sector and employers. The employer has the ability to decide the amount of funds they will allocate to the program or what employees or shifts they choose to help, and is encouraged to continue contributing to the program on behalf of employees beyond the 3 or 6 month period.

Funds are accessible through the Transportation Flex Card which resembles a EBT or Food Assistance card, this card will allow for cash withdraw to pay for cash only transportation. It can be used on any mode of travel the employee chooses.

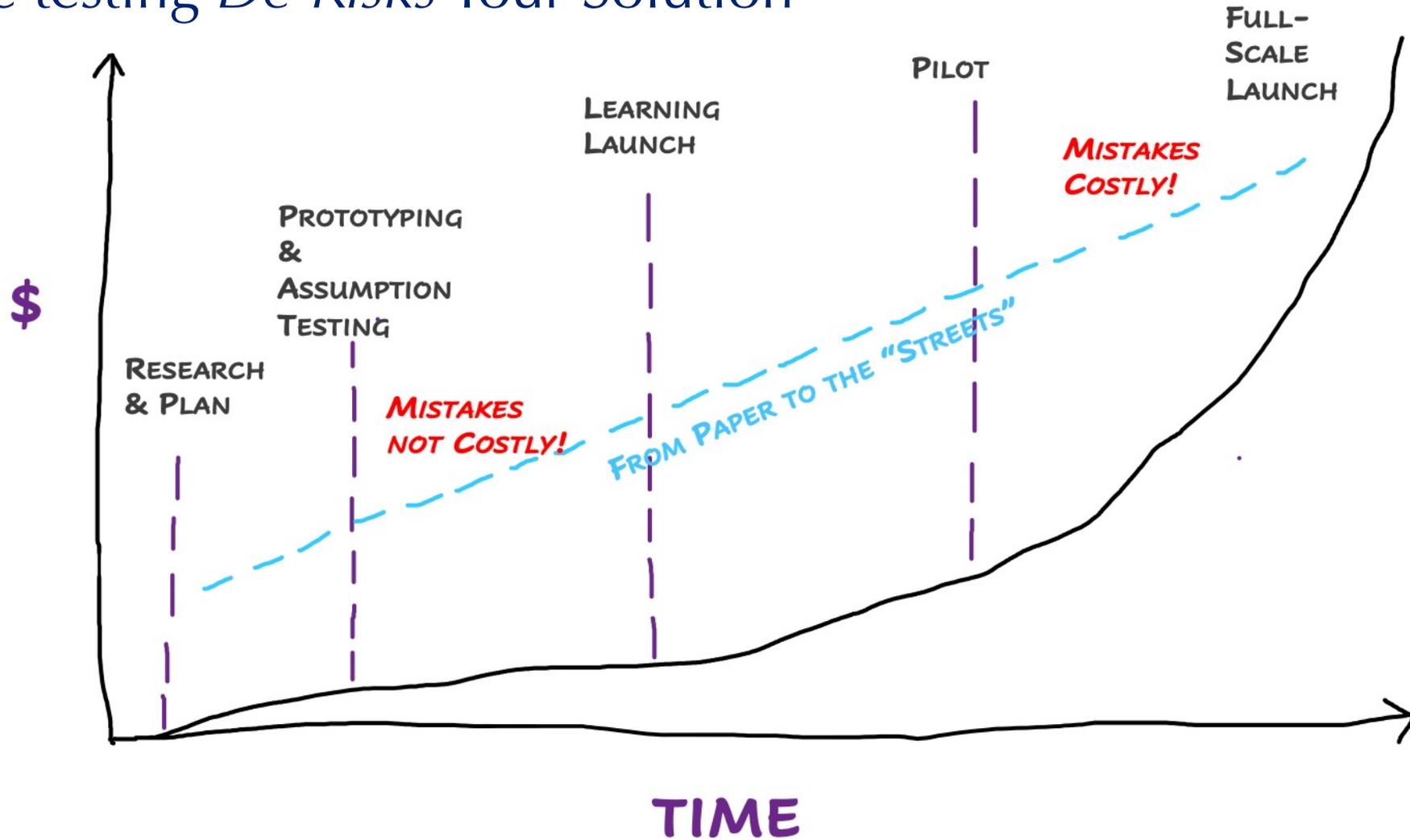
Assumption Testing

What do we mean by “Assumption Testing?”

Your solution concepts are full of **assumptions**. These are guesses on things like customer’s behavior, funding availability, or even how service will look once its up and running. We call these guesses **hypotheses**, just like in a science experiment. Now we need to test these **hypotheses** or **assumptions**.

Why test Assumptions?

Because testing *De-Risks* Your Solution



We test
assumptions in
three areas

Customer desirability

Will they want to use it?

Does it meet their needs?

Operational Feasibility

Can we make it work?

Do we have the (non-financial) resources to implement it?

Financial Viability

Can we envision how we will fund this over the long term?

Do we envision "they" (customers, funders) be willing to pay for it?

Each assumption will be a short sentence that states your belief about some aspect of your solution and what needs to happen to make it true.

For “X” feature of our solution to work, we are assuming “Y” is true.

Examples of Assumptions:

The Transportation Flex Program

- **Customer desirability:** For our program to work, we are assuming 1) employees will be willing to ride the service, 2) employers will be willing to support it, 3) it will lead to less turnover among employees
- **Operational feasibility:** For our program to work, we are assuming 1) we will be able to gather data on who needs to ride, 2) we will be able to contract with Neighbor Works for transportation services, 3) the county will be able to dedicate a staff person to help run the program
- **Financial viability:** For our program to work, we are assuming 1) employers will be willing to help fund it, 2) the county workforce agency will be willing to help fund it, 3) there are future grants that will help fund it in the long run

As you see, each hypothesis needs to be specific enough to test.

We only test “Make or Break” assumptions – those that are so integral to our solution that if they proved false, our entire solution would prove *unworkable*

We will send a worksheet to help you through this process.

Solution 1: (insert title)

Perspective	Assumptions	Testing Method	Testing Responsibility
	What are all the things you are assuming to be true about the solution? List them out below as affirmative statements from each perspective. Be sure to include somewhere in your statement a reference to your target audience (e.g., "Our target audience will. . . ." or "This service will allow our target audience to . . .")	Consider how you will test the top 5 make or break assumptions. This can be done through a thought experiment (i.e. research, analytics, reviews of past projects that replicate a specific aspect of your solution) or through an in-market experiment (sharing prototypes with customers and partners to allow feedback)	Who is going to be responsible for the test, and by when?
Customer Desirability			
Operational Feasibility			
Financial Viability			

Testing Assumptions

Two Ways to Test Assumptions

1. **Thought experiments** – Use logic, data, and research

Ex: Find other communities that have initiated a similar transportation flex service

Ex: Our initial talks with Neighbor Works indicates they have interest in contracting with us

Ex: Our county commissioners identify this as a real area of need and are supportive of our solution (past statements)



Two Ways to Test Assumptions

2. **In -person experiments** – Interact with customers, funders, stakeholders using **prototypes**



What do Prototypes look like?

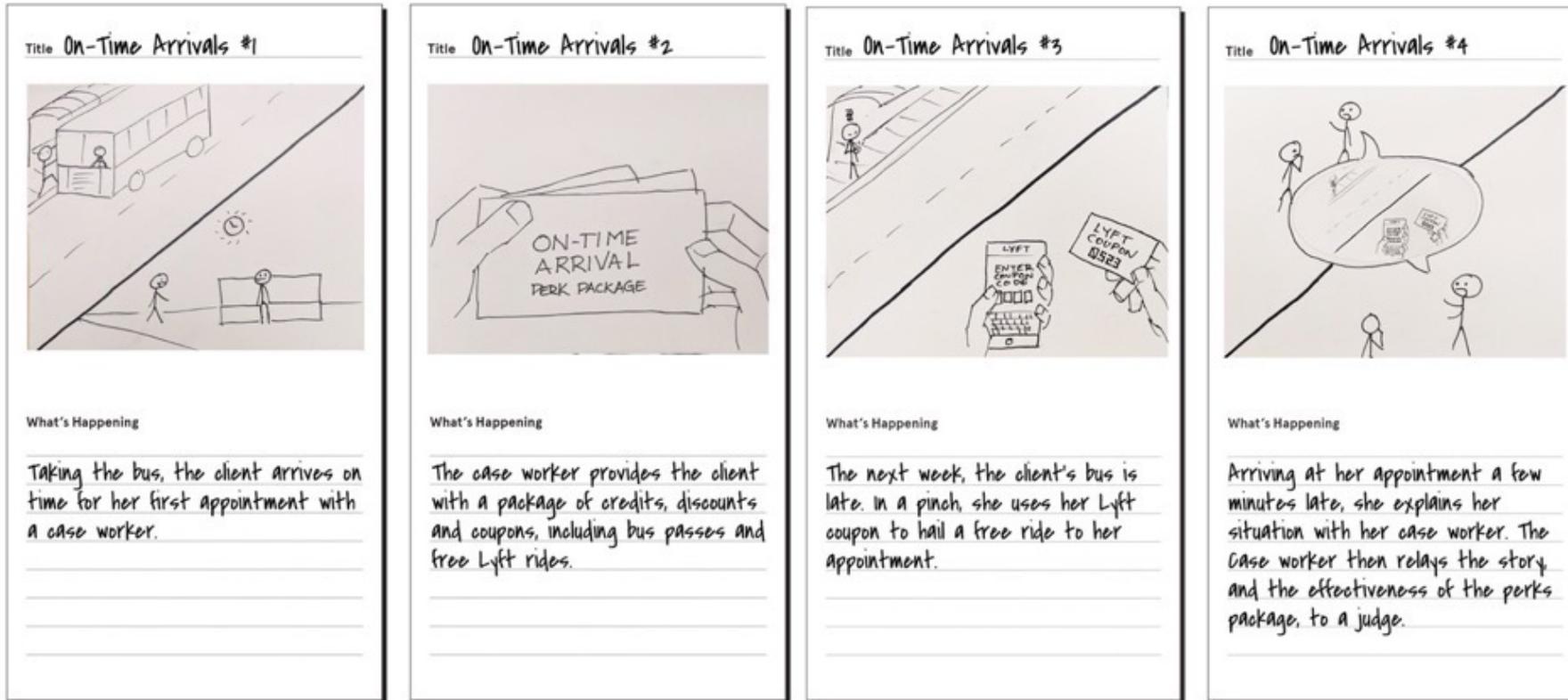
What is a Prototype?

- Simply, a visual representation of your solution concept.
- At this stage, our prototypes should be a rough draft. They should be easy to make, such as sketches or storyboards, or other “low-fidelity” prototypes (this is where you can use your grant \$)

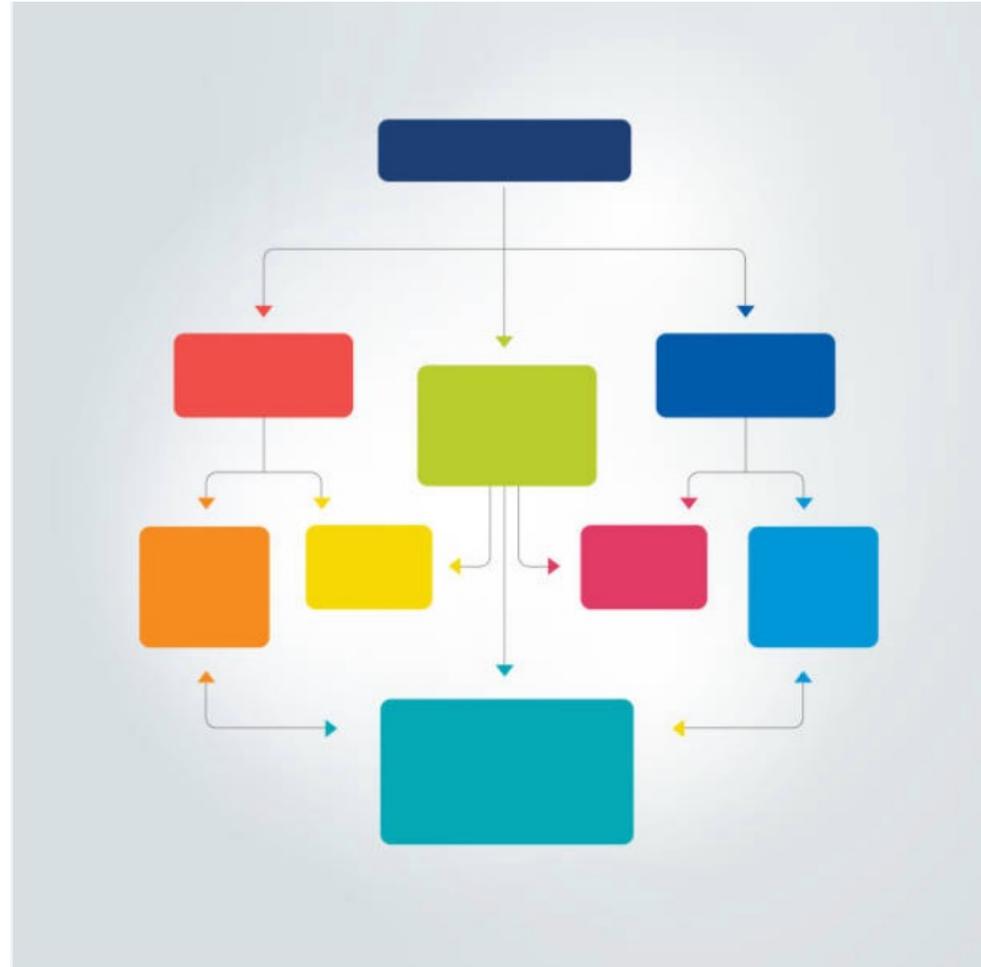
Sketches can help make ideas concrete.



Storyboards put the solution in context and help tell the whole story.



Flow charts can show how a customer moves through the various stages of a solution concept



Service blueprints roughly lay out the elements of a service, identifying all of the moving parts needed for a solution concept to function.



Co-Creation with Customers using Prototypes

Co-creation with “customers”

“We are designing for them, not ourselves”

- The customer has to be able to see themselves in the prototype to give you the best feedback
- Give them *s p a c e* to engage with the ideas and leave their additions and comments.
- Co-creation allows us to find what resonates with users

Furthermore, co-creation . . .

- Helps us ensure that we're choosing the best elements from each solution before our Learning Launch phase
- De-risks your project for future implementation
- Allows us to make changes before we've invested significant funds in developing our concept

Tips for co-creation Sessions

Choose the type of prototype that will best resonate with the audience for your testing

Individual?

Community leader

Funder?

Potential vendors?

Set the Context

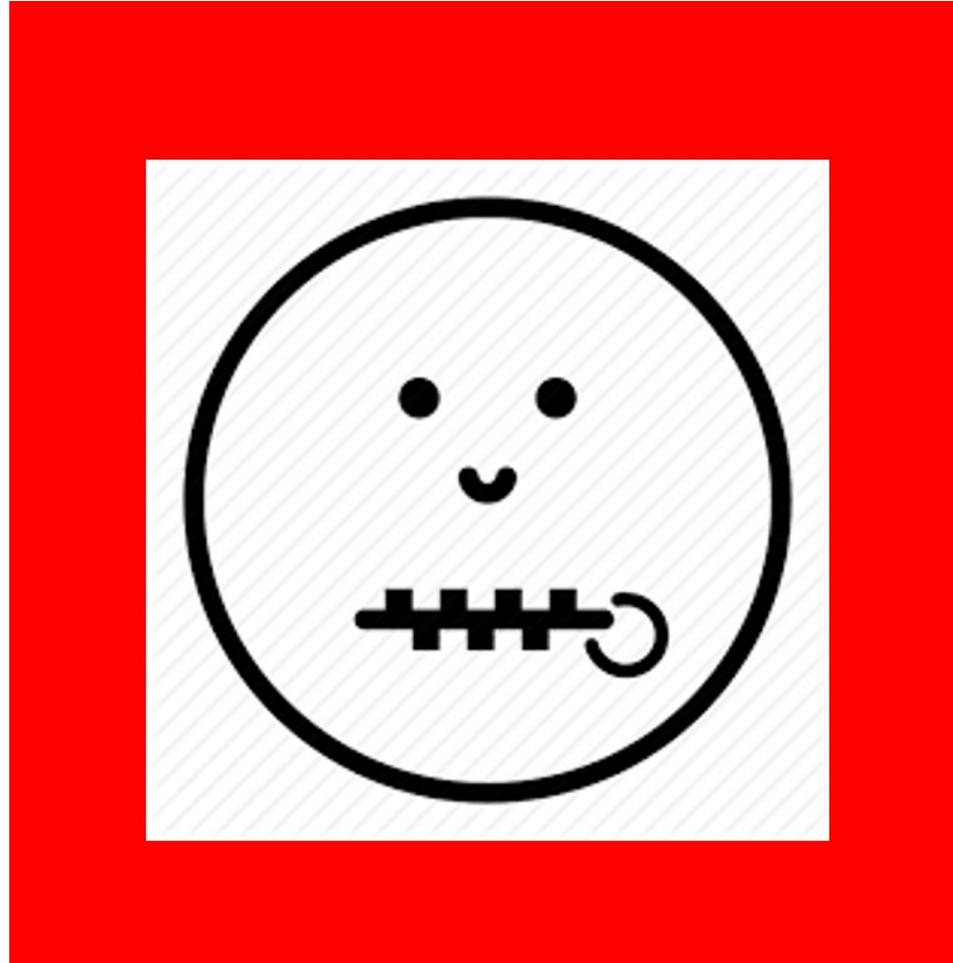
“Through our research, we have come to realize that _____ is an issue, so we came up with an idea to help solve that issue. What you see in front of you represents part/all of our idea. It is of course still a work in progress. We would love to get your feedback on what you see and how you interpret this. If you have any ideas to add to this, we'd love to hear them too!”



During the session

Show, **don't tell.**

Create a no-selling zone. You are testing the potential of your idea—not convincing them it is a good idea.



Your idea is not precious or even right – the feedback is.

Talk 20% of the time, listen 80% of the time.

After sharing your prototype . . .

Debrief your customer

“While you were doing X, what was going through your mind?”

“You seemed (add emotion – puzzled/amused/delighted) at one point. Can you tell me more about what you were thinking?”

“What would you change about this idea?”

After assumption testing is completed

- 1) Bring the results of the testing back to the team
- 2) As a team, decide which of the 3 solutions has the most potential based on what you learned during assumption testing
- 3) Tweak the chosen solution as needed
 - Strengthen certain components of the solution based on what you learned in your testing
 - Fold in parts of the other two solutions that were not chosen but still hold promise)
- 1) Create a fully detailed description of your chosen solution to use in your Pitch

Template for the Pitch

Slide 1: Name of team/community + name of project

Slide 2: The focus question

Slide 3: Insights related to the focus question

Slide 4+: Your concept

Slide 5+: Value your concept will provide when implemented

Slide 6: Proposed impact of your concept

Slide 7: Initial thoughts on how you might fund your concept

Slide 8: Concluding slide

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Your dedicated page:

nc4mm.org/challenge-2022

Look under Resource Pages for

- Templates for planning assumption testing
- Archived webinar + slides

Questions?

