

The Gamestorming Cheat Sheet

The book <http://amzn.to/GamestormingBook>
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Games for a communicating core concepts

Games for finding the essence of an idea

Poster Session p.114 – Communicating ideas with images in a poster format

Draw the problem p.90 – Short drawing exercise to make clear what the “problem” is

Storyboard p.71 – Players use a storyboard format to tell a story about an experience, how to solve a problem, etc.

Cover Story p.87 – To think expansively around an ideal future state; exercise in visioning

Design the Box p.161 – Teams imagine the package for an idea in order to make decisions about important features & other aspects of their vision that are difficult to articulate

Elevator Pitch p.166 – Uses madlibs to come up with a short, compelling description of the problem you’re trying to solve

The Pitch p.192 – Players imagine that they’re entrepreneurs and need to sell their ideas to rich venture capitalists (VCs)

Games for envisioning the future

Make a World p.184 – Purpose is to make a 3D model of a desired future state

Poster Session p.114 – Communicate ideas with images in a poster format

Cover Story p.87 – To think expansively around an ideal future state; exercise in visioning

Mood Board p.186 – Create a poster or collage that captures the overall “feel” of an idea

Games for building consensus (among members of a team):

Draw the Problem p.90 – Short drawing exercise to make clear what the “problem” is

Elevator Pitch p.166 – Uses madlibs to come up with a short, compelling description of the problem you’re trying to solve

Fishbowl p.92 – Key listening exercise; inner circle discusses problem, outer circle listens

Show and Tell p.119 – To elicit stakeholders views, have them bring an object that that captures their perspective

Spectrum Mapping p.127 – Designed to reveal the diversity of perspectives and options around any given topic and to organize them into a meaningful spectrum

Bodystorming p.59 – Using improv or “play acting” to feel out what might work a problem

Visual Glossary p.225 – Group starts a meeting by defining their terms visually (everyone starts on the same page = works faster & more effectively later)

Post the Path – Will help develop a better understanding of a group’s current process to uncover areas of confusion or misunderstanding

Games for early kickoff meetings:

The 7Ps Framework p.54 – Used before a meeting to plan out an agenda, goals

Affinity Map p.56 – Group creates an “affinity diagram” to find categories within a cluster of ideas (to see which ideas are most common within a group, etc.)

Pre-Mortem p.117 – Be up front about risks

The 5 Whys p.141 – Helps discover the root cause of a problem

Elevator Pitch p.166 – Uses madlibs to come up with a short, compelling description of the problem you’re trying to solve

Storyboard p.71 – Players use a storyboard format to tell a story about an experience, how to solve a problem, etc.

Context Map p.84 – Shows the effect of context

Cover Story p.87 – To think expansively around an ideal future state; exercise in visioning

Draw the Problem p.90 – Short drawing exercise to make clear what the “problem” is

Poster Session p.114 – Communicate ideas with images in a poster format

Stakeholder Analysis p.124 – Identify stakeholders and how to engage them

Make a World p.184 – Purpose is to make a 3D model of a desired future state
Start, Stop, Continue p.249 – Used to spell out what aspects of an issue/product you want to discontinue, introduce, or continue (based on what’s going well)

Games for logo design (or developing a How-it-works Video):

Graphic Jam p.96 – Visualize abstract concepts, absorb complexity
Cover Story p.87 – To think expansively around an ideal future state; exercise in visioning
Elevator Pitch p.166 – Uses madlibs to come up with a short, compelling description of the problem you’re trying to solve
The Pitch p.192 – Players imagine that they’re entrepreneurs and need to sell their ideas to rich venture capitalists (VCs)
Mood Board p.186 – Create a poster or collage that captures the overall “feel” of an idea
Show Me Your Values p.121 – To understand people’s deep-seated impressions of something
Design the Box p.161 – Teams imagine the package for an idea in order to make decisions about important features & other aspects of their vision that are difficult to articulate
Heart, Hand, Mind p.179 – Goal is to examine an issue from another perspective, and find significance in an issue.
Product Pinocchio p.194 – Players personify a product to better identify what features will resonate with and be more valuable for the end user

Games for ideation

Games for generating lots of ideas:

Brainwriting p.82 – Includes everyone in evolving an idea (silent brainstorming, followed by collaborative building on ideas), all done in silence
6-8-5s – Fast way to get initial ideas down, and to iterate through many ideas
Post-Ups p.19, 69 – To generate a lot of ideas
3-12-3 Brainstorm p.78 – Good for generating & developing lots of ideas in only 1 hour

Heuristic Ideation Technique p.98 – Generate ideas by recombining possibilities

Image-ination p.103 – Get unstuck with new ideas

Object Brainstorm p.109 – Uses objects as a starting point for association, exploration, brainstorming

Games for developing a roadmap:

Who Do p.74 – Lists out who's involved in the project & what their priorities/next steps are

Graphic Gameplan p.38 – Quickly develop an executable action plan for a project

Build the Checklist p.151 – Team creates a checklist to order, rank, and prioritize tasks

RACI Matrix p.203 – Group creates a matrix/checklist of people who are Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed – to sort out who is doing what (on a team, etc.)

Games for after you already have a prototype:

Do, Redo, Undo p.164 – Asks a group to focus on the implications of dismantling or altering their idea (in order to “mistakeproof” their idea)

Mission Impossible p.107 – Take an existing design or idea and change one foundational aspect that makes it “impossible” in function or feasibility

The Blind Side p.149 – Helps to disclose and uncover information that might affect a group's success

Give & Take Matrix p.177 – Map out motivations & interactions among actors in a system

Product Pinocchio p.194 – Players personify a product to better identify what features will resonate with and be more valuable for the end user

Speedboat p.206 – Used to identify obstacles to your goal, things that may slow you down

The SQUID p.208 – Used to map out what's been done & what still needs to be done; stands for Sequential Question and Insight Diagram.

Staple Something to Yourself p.210 – Used to explore or clarify a process by following an object through its “day in the life”

SWOT Analysis p.212 – Used to gauge strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to our product or future

Games for a different perspective

Games for connecting with a user base:

Empathy Map p.65 – To develop a customer profile

Storyboard p.71 – To imagine and create possibilities using a storytelling format

Staple Something to Yourself p.210 – Used to explore or clarify a process by following an object through its “day in the life”

Games for identifying stakeholder values:

Stakeholder Analysis p.124 – Identify stakeholders and how to engage them

History Map p.100 – Helps to appreciate an organization’s culture

Campfire p.156 – Leverages our natural storytelling capabilities, giving people a format and a space for to share work stories

Games for seeing things from another perspective

Customer, Employee, Shareholder p.159 – Imagine many possible futures from different perspectives

Challenge Cards p.158 – Used to identify and think through potential challenges and pitfalls of a product

The Anti-Problem p.80 – For getting unstuck on hard problems: asks people to solve the problem completely opposite to their current problem

Bodystorming p.59 – Using improv or “play acting” to feel out what might work in the real world

Empathy Map p.65 – To develop a customer profile

Flip it! p.171 – Quick game to show people that perspectives are made, not born. Helps people see challenges as opportunities...

Give & Take Matrix p.177 – Used to map out motivations & interactions among actors in a system

Heart, Hand, Mind p.179 – Goal is to examine an issue from another perspective, and find significance in an issue.

Help Me Understand p.181 – Helps to uncover employees lingering questions or assumptions

Pain Gain Map p.190 – Used to develop an understanding of motivations & decisions

World Cafe p.228 – Improves large-group discussion by borrowing concepts from the informal café conversations: round tables, cross pollinating ideas, and pursuing questions that matter.

Pro/con games

Pain Gain Map p.190 – Used to develop an understanding of motivations & decisions

Challenge Cards p.158 – Used to identify and think through potential challenges and pitfalls of a product

Flip it! p.171 – Quick game to show people that perspectives are made, not born. Helps people see challenges as opportunities...

Plus / Delta p.246 – To generate constructive feedback by focusing on what what positive or repeatable about an activity, and what you would change about the activity

Games for thinking through problems or strategies

Challenge Cards p.158 – Used to identify and think through potential challenges and pitfalls of a product

The Anti-Problem p.80 – For getting unstuck on hard problems: asks people to solve the problem completely opposite to their current problem

Forced Analogy p.95 – Intentionally forces players to think about new concepts to break out of formal categories and help with problem solving & ideation

Mission Impossible p.107 – Take an existing design or idea and change one foundational aspect that makes it “impossible” in function or feasibility

The 4 Cs p.138 – Quick way to gather and organize information using 4 common key concepts (on a 2x2 matrix): Components, Characteristics, Characters, and Challenges

The 5 Whys p.141 – Helps discover the root cause of a problem

Atomize p.147 – Good for unpacking large, messy structures

The Blind Side p.149 – Helps to disclose and uncover information that might affect a group’s success

Do, Redo, Undo p.164 – Asks a group to focus on the implications of dismantling or altering their idea (in order to “mistakeproof” their idea)

Give & Take Matrix p.177 – Used to map out motivations & interactions among actors in a system

Business Model Canvas p.153 – Used to examine & rethink a company’s business model

SWOT Analysis p.212 – Used to gauge strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to our product or future

World Cafe p.228 – Improves large-group discussion by borrowing concepts from the informal “café” conversations: round tables, cross pollinating ideas, and pursuing questions that matter.

Plus / Delta p.246 – To generate constructive feedback by focusing on what what positive or repeatable about an activity, and what you would change about the activity

Post the Path – Will help develop a better understanding of a group’s current process to uncover areas of confusion or misunderstanding

Games for making a decision

Games for voting on choices

Dot Voting p.63 – To converge on ideas that resonate best with the group

Forced Ranking p.25, 67 – To agree on priorities (rank by impact and effort)

\$100 Test p.232 – Uses the concept of cash to help prioritize items in a list

20/20 Vision p.234 – To agree on priorities & how to rank initiatives

Impact & Effort Matrix p.241 – Possible actions are mapped out on a 2x2 grid based on: effort required to implement & potential impact of an idea

NUF Test p.244 – Group rates ideas on three criteria: to what degree are they New, Useful, and Feasible?

Games for finding patterns in data

Affinity Map p.56 – To discover patterns among similar categories

Card Sort – General-purpose categorization exercise

Atomize p.147 – Good for unpacking large, messy structures

Also

Start, Stop, Continue p.249 – Used to spell out what aspects of an issue/product you want to discontinue, introduce, or continue (based on what’s going well)

Other games

Games for managing meetings

Pie Chart Agenda p.112 – Quickly agree on an agenda, then use the agenda as a timekeeping artifact during a meeting

The 7Ps Framework p.54 – Used before a meeting to plan out an agenda, goals

Visual Agenda p.132 – A visual agenda create excitement, people talk about it, it implies the day might be interesting

The Button p.155 – Game where everyone speaks up before anyone speaks a second time

5-Fingered Consensus p.170 – Quickly gauges extent of the consensus of a group

Red / Green Cards p.205 – Red & green cards are used silently by audience to indicate approval or disapproval of issues being discussed in a meeting

Open Space p.188 – Method for hosting an event/meeting without a prepared agenda

Talking Chips p.217 – Uses “talking chips” as currency so group can make sure everyone has a chance to contribute to the conversation

The SQUID p.208 – Used to map out what’s been done & what still needs to be done; stands for Sequential Question and Insight Diagram.

Who / What / When Matrix p.250 – Focuses a “Next Steps” conversation at the end of a meeting on clearly defined actions that people commit to

Games for team bonding

Low-Tech Social Network p.105 – Great way to get to know each other; leave nice visual behind, too

History Map p.100 – Helps to appreciate an organization’s culture

Trading Cards p.130 – Good icebreaker; also creates memorable visuals for later in the meeting

Welcome to My World p.134 – To share our internal system map of reality

Campfire p.156 – Leverages our natural story-telling capabilities, giving people a format and a space for to share work stories

Mood Board p.182 – Create a poster or collage that captures the overall “feel” of an idea

Memory Wall p.242 – Build a visual wall that serves to appreciate & celebrate people on a team

Games for assessing company structure/leadership:

Forcefield Analysis p.174 – Helps people appreciate the forces both for and against change

Affinity Map p.56 – Group creates an “affinity diagram” to find categories within a cluster of ideas (to see which ideas are most common within a group, etc.)

The 5 Whys p.141 – Helps discover the root cause of a problem

Stakeholder Analysis p.124 – Identify stakeholders and how to engage them

Help Me Understand p.181 – Helps to uncover employees lingering questions or assumptions

Prune the Future p.247 – Uses a tree as a metaphor to show can the future of anything can be shaped, one leaf at a time (rather than hoping for immediate, broad sweeping change)

Games for thinking through business models

Business Model Canvas p.153 – Used to examine & rethink a company’s business model

Elevator Pitch p.166 – Uses madlibs to come up with a short, compelling description of the problem you’re trying to solve

The Pitch p.192 – Players imagine that they’re entrepreneurs and need to sell their ideas to rich venture capitalists (VCs)

Design the Box p.161 – Teams imagine the package for an idea in order to make decisions about important features & other aspects of their vision that are difficult to articulate

Plus/Delta p.246 – To generate constructive feedback by focusing on what what positive or repeatable about an activity, and what you would change about the activity

Games for understanding the feasibility of change

Forcefield Analysis p.174 – Helps people appreciate the forces both for and against change

Speedboat p.206 – Used to identify obstacles to your goal, things that may slow you down

Plus/Delta p.246 – To generate constructive feedback by focusing on what was positive or repeatable about an activity, and what you would change about the activity