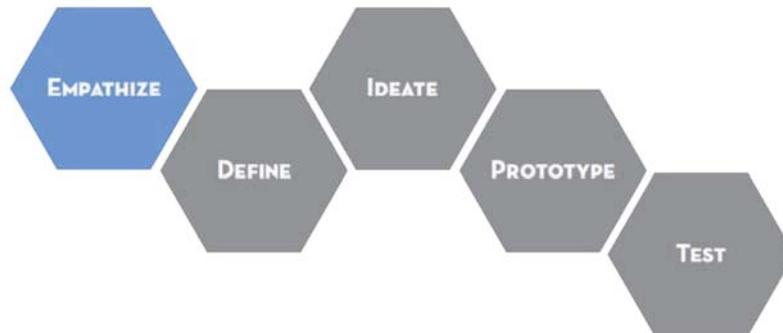


MODE

EMPATHIZE



WHAT is the empathize mode

Empathy is the foundation of a human-centered design process. To empathize, you:

- **Observe.** View users and their behavior in the context of their lives.
- **Engage.** Interact with and interview users through both scheduled and short ‘intercept’ encounters.
- **Immerse.** Experience what your user experiences.

WHY empathize

As a human-centered designer you need to understand the people for whom you are designing. The problems you are trying to solve are rarely your own—they are those of particular users; in order to design for your users, you must build empathy for who they are and what is important to them.

Watching what people do and how they interact with their environment gives you clues about what they think and feel. It helps you to learn about what they need. By watching people you can capture physical manifestations of their experiences, what they do and say. This will allow you to interpret intangible meaning of those experiences in order to uncover insights. These insights will lead you to the innovative solutions. The best solutions come out of the best insights into human behavior. But learning to recognize those insights is harder than you might think. Why? Because our minds automatically filter out a lot of information in ways we aren’t even aware of. We need to learn to see things “with a fresh set of eyes” – tools for empathy, along with a human-centered mindset, is what gives us those new eyes.

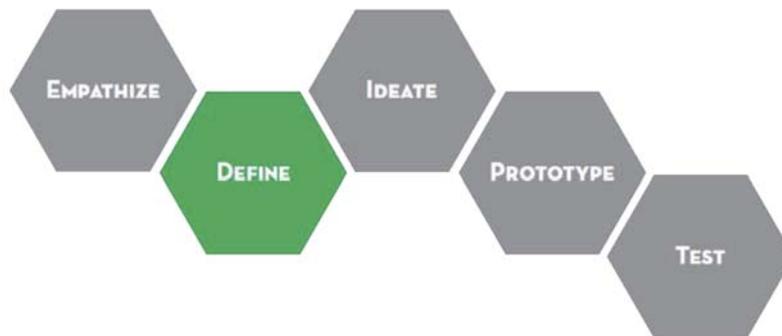
Engaging with people directly reveals a tremendous amount about the way they think and the values they hold. Sometimes these thoughts and values are not obvious to the people who hold them. A deep engagement can surprise both the designer and the designee by the unanticipated insights that are revealed. The stories that people tell and the things that people say they do—even if they are different from what they actually do—are strong indicators of their deeply held beliefs about the way the world is. Good designs are built on a solid understanding of these kinds of beliefs and values. Engage to:

- Uncover needs that people have which they may or may not be aware of
- Guide innovation efforts
- Identify the right users to design for
- Discover the emotions that guide behaviors

In addition to speaking with and observing your users, you need to have personal experience in the design space yourself. Find (or create if necessary) experiences to immerse yourself to better understand the situation that your users are in, and for which you are designing.

MODE

DEFINE



WHAT is the define mode

The define mode is when you unpack and synthesize your empathy findings into compelling needs and insights, and scope a specific and meaningful challenge. It is a mode of “focus” rather than “flaring.” Two goals of the define mode are to develop a deep understanding of your users and the design space and, based on that understanding, to come up with an actionable problem statement: **your point of view**. Your point of view should be a guiding statement that focuses on specific users, and insights and needs that you uncovered during the empathize mode.

More than simply defining the problem to work on, your point of view is your unique design vision that you crafted based on your discoveries during your empathy work. Understanding the meaningful challenge to address and the insights that you can leverage in your design work is fundamental to creating a successful solution.

WHY define

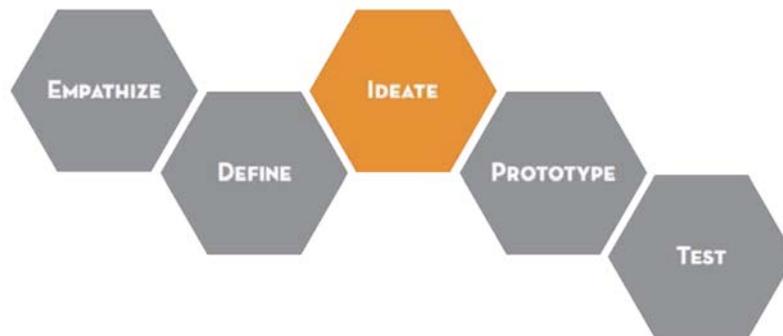
The define mode is critical to the design process because it explicitly expresses the problem you are striving to address through your efforts. Often, in order to be truly generative, you must first reframe the challenge based on new insights you have gained through your design work. This reframed problem statement can then be used as a solution-generating springboard.

As a test, a good point of view (POV) is one that:

- Provides focus and frames the problem
- Inspires your team
- Provides a reference for evaluating competing ideas
- Empowers team members to make decisions in response to the high-level goals of the team
- Fuels brainstorming by suggesting “how might we” statements
- Captures the hearts and minds of people you meet
- Saves you from the impossible task of developing solution concepts that are all things to all people
- You revisit and reformulate as you learn by doing
- Guides your innovation efforts

MODE

IDEATE



WHAT is the ideate mode

Ideate is the mode of your design process in which you aim to generate radical design alternatives. Mentally it represents a process of “going wide” in terms of concepts and outcomes—it is a mode of “flaring” rather than “focus.” The goal of ideation is to explore a wide solution space - both a large quantity of ideas and a diversity among those ideas. From this vast depository of ideas you can build prototypes to test with users.

WHY ideate

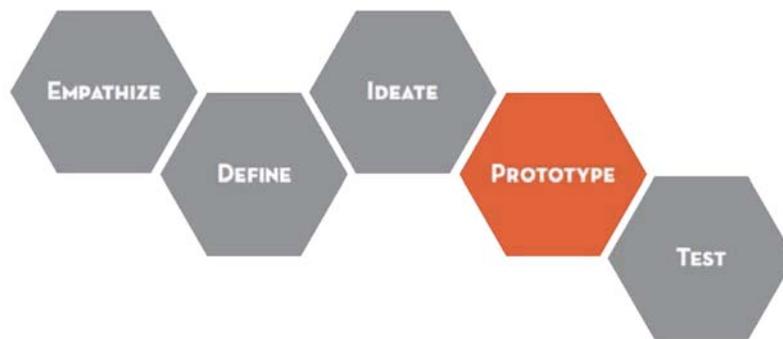
You ideate in order to transition from identifying problems into exploring solutions for your users. Various forms of ideation are leveraged to:

- Step beyond obvious solutions and thus increase the innovation potential of your solution set
- Harness the collective perspectives and strengths of your teams
- Uncover unexpected areas of exploration
- Create fluency (volume) and flexibility (variety) in your innovation options
- Get obvious solutions out of your heads, and drive your team beyond them

Regardless of what ideation method you use, the fundamental principle of ideation is to be cognizant of when you and your team are generating ideas and when you are evaluating ideas - typically keeping these two tasks separate, and only mixing the two intentionally.

MODE

PROTOTYPE



WHAT is the prototype mode

Prototyping is getting ideas and explorations out of your head and into the physical world. A prototype can be *anything* that takes a physical form – be it a wall of post-it notes, a role-playing activity, a space, an object, an interface, or even a storyboard. The resolution of your prototype should be commensurate with your progress in your project. In early explorations keep your prototypes rough and rapid to allow yourself to learn quickly and investigate a lot of different possibilities.

Prototypes are most successful when people (the design team, the user, and others) can experience and interact with them. What you learn from those interactions can help drive deeper empathy, as well as shape successful solutions.

WHY do we prototype

Traditionally prototyping is thought of as a way to test functionality. But prototyping is used for many reasons, including these (non-mutually-exclusive) categories:

- **Empathy gaining:** Prototyping is a tool to deepen your understanding of the design space and your user, even at a pre-solution phase of your project.
- **Exploration:** Build to think. Develop multiple solution options.
- **Testing:** Create prototypes (and develop the context) to test and refine solutions with users.
- **Inspiration:** Inspire others (teammates, clients, customers, investors) by showing your vision.

Many of the goals of prototyping are shared across all four of the above categories.

We prototype to:

Learn. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a prototype is worth a thousand pictures.

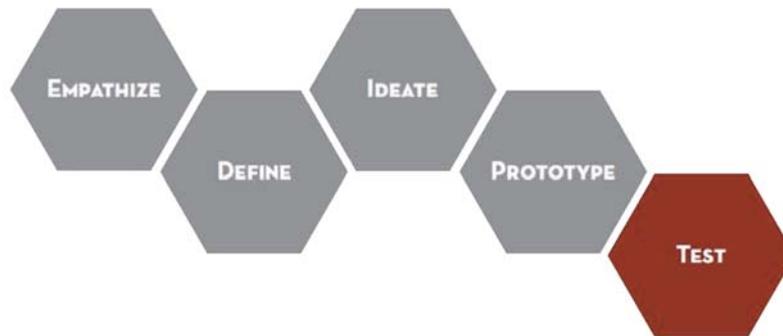
Solve disagreements. Prototyping is a powerful tool that can eliminate ambiguity, assist in ideation, and reduce miscommunication.

Start a conversation. A prototype can be a great way to have a different kind of conversation with users.

Fail quickly and cheaply. Creating quick and dirty prototypes allows you to test a number of ideas without investing a lot of time and money up front.

Manage the solution-building process. Identifying a variable to explore encourages you to break a large problem down into smaller, testable chunks.

MODE TEST



WHAT is the test mode

Testing is the chance to get feedback on your solutions, refine solutions to make them better, and continue to learn about your users. The test mode is an iterative mode in which you place your low-resolution artifacts in the appropriate context of the user's life. Prototype as if you know you're right, but test as if you know you're wrong.

WHY test

To refine your prototypes and solutions. Testing informs the next iterations of prototypes. Sometimes this means going back to the drawing board.

To learn more about your user. Testing is another opportunity to build empathy through observation and engagement—it often yields unexpected insights.

To test and refine your POV. Sometimes testing reveals that not only did you not get the solution right, but also that you have failed to frame the problem correctly.