

HW 8 | Project 2: Product Concepts

Submit as a team

Learning objectives addressed



Relevant course material

This assignment builds on lectures on creativity and on your cumulative experience from Project 1. When you present in studio, please make use of the insights from the lecture on communicating and critiquing design.

Context

In later parts of the semester, you will implement an *interactive prototype* of your product concept. That is, you will implement a mobile web app (probably) that looks and feels like the product you envision, but you will not need to have all the background technology figured out. You will be allowed to simulate any hard technical aspects of the product with canned responses or the [Wizard of Oz trick](#). But **the experience will have to feel real enough to enable authentic user testing**. We tell you this now so that you can make appropriate decisions about what is feasible for you to pursue as your final project.

0. Restate your project brief

Just to make sure we are all on the same page, please state your project brief. You can simply copy and paste from Hw 7 or you can revise based on anything that you have learned since then. If you made substantial changes, please point them out so that your TF is aware of how your ideas have evolved.

Submit: a potentially revised project brief (in the same format as in Hw 7)

1. Develop product concepts

Develop at least two product concepts that address the brief in fundamentally different ways.

Submit: for each product concept, provide the following:

1. Product name
2. A 1-2 paragraph description of the product concept. Clearly state what the product does and what benefit it provides to the users
3. Brief description of the population the concept targets. If there are multiple stakeholders, list them explicitly.

Note: do refer back to the lectures on creativity. In particular, recall that a good process for team ideation involves these steps:

1. *Establish common ground -- make sure that everyone understands the design objectives and any relevant constraints and design principles you want to stick to*
2. *Ideate individually (potentially making use of attribute listing)*
3. *Share multiple ideas with each other*
4. *Continue ideation process individually or together -- your choice at this point*

Hint: Take risks when you ideate. You won't know what the limits of "reasonable" are until you've crossed them. Push your concept toward the extremes until things clearly break. Then back off, but only a little.

2. Externalize

For each product concept, create an artifact that you can use to get informative feedback from your target users (next step). It is up to you what you choose to do. Storyboards are an option, so are paper prototypes, digital mockups (e.g., with Balsamiq, Invision, Sketch, Axure), video prototypes, etc.

Your goal is to get authentic and critical feedback from your future users on the value of your ideas. As before, you want to avoid conversations about hypotheticals, but instead you want your users to *experience* the product concepts as much as possible. Your choices will be about tools, the fidelity of your prototype as enabled by these tools, what level of fidelity is appropriate for the feedback you want to receive, and given your concept and your audience what method best communicates the intent and function of your design. You want to select a technique that is quick and effective.

Submit: for each product concept, submit a clear and complete record of the artifact you have produced.

3. Get feedback from users

Get feedback from your target population(s) to find out which of the two product concepts is more likely to take off. If multiple stakeholders are involved, make sure that you get feedback from all of them. How many people should you interact with? You decide. Ideally, each person you interact with will see both ideas before they provide feedback (remember: clients who see just one idea are more likely to give you false praise than clients who see multiple ideas).

Submit:

1. A description of strategy/strategies you used to solicit feedback (from whom? Where? What did you do together?)
2. For each product concept, provide a 1-2 paragraph summary of feedback. The summary should capture what people actually said or did (that's your evidence) plus your conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of each concept.

Note: *Listen to your clients' concerns. In project 1, many of you uncovered concerns related to privacy, cost, discoverability, etc. The goal of this exercise is to uncover all of the major concerns that might preclude people from wanting to engage with your product. Now is the time to discover major bugs/holes/incorrect assumptions behind your ideas. In the next section you can then make decisions about which of these you want to explicitly address, determine if solutions are available or need more work, or if you'd like to declare some of these concerns as out of scope for your project.*

4. Final product concept

Based on the feedback, develop your final product concept. You can simply pick one of your concepts and

revise, merge the two concepts, or devise something entirely new.

Submit for your final product concept:

1. Product name
2. A 1-2 paragraph description of the product concept. Clearly state what the product does and what benefit it provides to the users
3. Brief description of the population the concept targets. If there are multiple stakeholders, list them explicitly.
4. If you have materials that you'd like to share in studio to better explain your concept, attach them to your submission. This is helpful especially if your concept is hard to describe in words, but is not required. An sketch or two is fine, you do not need a full prototype.

In studio

Each team will share their design brief and their final product concept. Please refer back to the lecture on communicating and critiquing design. When you present your product concepts, show them from the user's point of view, highlight the important (rather than mundane) elements. When offering critique, your goal is to evaluate design choices against design objectives ("Given your design objective X, your design choice Y is/isn't effective because...").

Evaluation criteria & Grading rubric

Note: The grading is still based primarily on the process, but we have now expanded the grading scale such that we can recognize teams that use the process to generate particularly creative work. The grading is now asymptotic: very few teams will receive scores from the third column.

| Guiding questions | Adequacy | Proficiency | Mastery |
|--|--|---|---|
| Process-related criteria In order not to stifle your creativity, in most assignments the grading will focus on whether or not you made a good use of the design <i>process</i> . | | | |
| Project brief (step 0). Did you restate your project brief? (5 pts) | -- | Yes! | -- |
| Product concepts (step 1). Did you submit two clear and distinct product concept descriptions? Do they address your project brief? (20 pts) | Product concept descriptions exist, but it is hard to tell what the core idea behind each is, how they address the project brief, or both concepts are minor variants of the same idea (7 pts) | Clear and distinct product concept descriptions that appropriately address the project brief (15 pts) | Clear, distinct and particularly <i>creative</i> product concept descriptions that appropriately address the project brief |
| Externalizations (step 2). Have you externalized your product concepts in a way that allows users to experience the product and provide authentic critical feedback? (20 pts) | Externalizations exist but it is unclear how they could have been used to allow the user to experience the product. (7 pts) | Externalizations appropriately allow users to experience the product and provide authentic critical feedback (15 pts) | Externalizations are particularly compelling and creative in how they allow users to experience the product and provide authentic critical feedback |

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| Feedback Strategy (step 3). Have you submitted a description of strategy/strategies you used to solicit feedback? (10 pts) | Descriptions of strategies exist, but are incomplete or unclear (5 pts) | Clear and complete descriptions of strategies | -- |
| Summary of feedback (step 3). Did you provide a summary of feedback for each concept? Did you synthesize both your evidence and your conclusions? (15 pts) | Summary of feedback exists, but is incomplete. (5 pts) | Summary of feedback appropriately synthesizes both the evidence and the conclusions. (10 pts) | Summary of feedback appropriately synthesizes both the evidence and the conclusions. Diverse and non-superficial concerns related to the final concept were uncovered. These insights could not have been arrived at without going into the field. |
| Revisions (step 4). Did you submit a clear description of your revised product concept? Does the revised concept still address your project brief? (20 pts) | Product concept description exists, but it is hard to tell what the core idea behind it is or how it addresses the project brief (7 pts) | Clear product concept description that appropriately addresses the project brief (15 pts) | Clear product concept description that appropriately addresses the project brief. The revised product concept clearly benefited from user feedback and is a substantial improvement over the original concepts. |
| Presentation. Is your report clearly organized and succinct? Is the file size reasonable? (10 pts) | Reasonably organized document, but could be clearer and/or more succinct. (5 pts) | Clearly organized and succinct document. | -- |
| Exceptional work. (up to 10 extra pts) | A really compelling product that addresses a real need and that is likely to be adopted by a large fraction of the target market. | | |

Collaboration Policy

Do the work as a team. You can seek advice and feedback from others, but the actual work has to be performed by the team members