

PHASE 2
DESIGN &
TEST

How Might We? Opportunity Spaces

Effort ●●●●●

Objective

To develop a set of “How Might We?” questions (HMWs) to use during ideation sessions.



Time needed

3–4 hours



Participants

Design and research team

How to use this tool

HMW questions are one-sentence statements that frame the the design challenge in an opportunistic and creative space, rather than as a problem. Use this template to create your HMW questions.

1. **Develop your point-of-view/problem statement.** This allows you to put the audience and their needs at the center. Use your research to identify needs or pain points.
2. **Brainstorm HMW statements.** Break the larger problem into smaller, actionable pieces. Write as many HMWs as you can.
3. **Decide which statement to move forward with.** Decide which HMWs you want to pursue. You can do this by voting with the group.

“How” suggests that we do not yet have the answer. It helps set aside prescriptive briefs and explore a something new, challenging what we “think” the solution should be.

“Might” emphasizes that our responses are only possible solutions, not the only solution. It allows exploration of multiple possible solutions.

“We” immediately brings in the element of a collaborative effort and suggests the idea for the solution lies in our collective teamwork.

PHASE 2: DESIGN & TEST

How Might We?

HMW Template

How might we _____
(action/what)

for _____
(intended audience)

in order to _____
(desired change)

?

HMW Checklist

Is your “How might we?” helpful? Ask yourself, does your HMW

...

Turn a challenge into an opportunity for design?

Suggest that a solution is possible?

Offer the chance to answer the question in a variety of ways?

NOT suggest or provide a solution?

Give a narrow enough frame for a strong starting point for an ideation session?

Have enough breadth to give room to explore wild ideas?

What makes a good “How Might We”?

- It’s not too similar, too broad, or too narrow.
- It’s clear enough to immediately generate some concrete ideas, but doesn’t suggest a particular solution in the question itself.
- You can immediately come up with three to five ideas when you hear the HMW. The question is typically framed in a positive light.

Inspirational or aspirational words help people think big. We don’t want to “improve” or “increase” or develop solutions that are “bigger,” “stronger,” “faster,” or “easier.” We want to *catalyze, revolutionize, or reimagine* them.

Citations

How Might We Statements: A Powerful Way to Turn Insights into Opportunities. (n.d.). Dscout. November, 2023 from <https://dscout.com/people-nerds/how-might-we-statements>

Define and Frame Your Design Challenge by Creating Your Point Of View and Ask “How Might We”. (2020). Interactive Design Foundation. November, 2022 from www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/define-and-frame-your-design-challenge-by-creating-your-point-of-view-and-ask-how-might-we