POINT OF CONVERGENCE

Design Criteria

Effort ●●●○○

Objective
To define the attributes and outputs an innovation needs to achieve to be seen as a viable solution to the problem.

Time needed
3–4 hours

Participants
Design team

How to use this tool

Design criteria are a set of agreed upon attributes and outputs that keep your team on a path as you move through the design process. The criteria you set forth at the beginning of the design process can be used as a check-in tool to make sure you are still on the right path. Design criteria should be specific, nuanced, and actionable. Use this process to set your design criteria.

1. **Brainstorm criteria.** Ask your team to think about the criteria that are valuable to the user. Write each criterion on a sticky note.

2. **Discuss as a group.** After the group has written down their suggestions for a particular category, discuss. Use this time to prioritize and decide which criteria should make the first cut. You'll likely notice a good amount of agreement, which is a great place to start.

3. **Check criteria.** Make sure your specific design criteria meet the basic criteria of being nuanced and actionable before they can be considered.

> **Bad Design Principle:** Make it simple.
>
> **Good Design Principle:** Make it simple at the expense of complex functionality.

4. **Go through each category.** Carry out the same process for each category on the template.

5. **Determine which criteria you want to move forward with.** Take a step back and discuss the criteria further. You should aim to have no more than 10 criteria overall.

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DESIGN CHALLENGE	*What are you trying to solve?*

1. **Meet as a team.** Start by asking your team to think about the criteria that are most desirable. They may include:
   - What lessons did we learn?
   - What ran counter to our hypotheses?
   - How do we want our users to feel?
   - How do we want our design to be perceived?

   If you're at a different point in your process, try asking:
   - If we were to onboard a new teammate tomorrow, what are the essentials they should know about our solution?
   - What things are unique to our users that can't be ignored when we design for them?

2. **Collect the criteria.** As you go around and share, you'll likely notice a good amount of agreement, which is a great place to start. But here's where you'll need to make sure your specific design criteria meet the criteria of being nuanced and actionable.
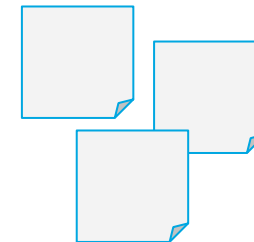
3. Group the sticky notes that are similar and place them in the relevant categories listed on the template.
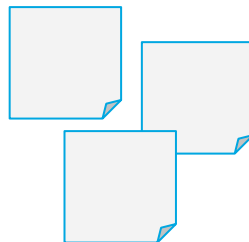
CRITERIA FOR THE USER
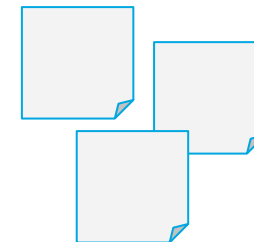*(e.g., must be understandable for someone with a limited literacy level)*
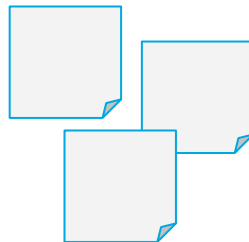
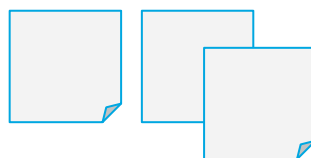**CRITERIA FOR THE USE CASE (the value a solution should deliver,** *e.g., service must be available 24 hours a day)*

CRITERIA FOR THE CONTEXT *(e.g., must be durable and withstand moist climates)*

CRITERIA FOR THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS *(e.g., must be lightweight and fit into tote bag)*

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DESIGN CRITERIA

Limit this to the most important criteria so it doesn't become too restrictive, ideally less than 10 in total.

These criteria are not set in stone; they can be changed and adapted as new information and learning comes to light. You will almost certainly need to develop more detailed specifications as you go through your innovation journey.

Citations

Humanitarian Innovation Fund. (2023). *Define Innovation Criteria.* Humanitarian Innovation Guide.
https://higuide.elrha.org/toolkits/recognition/challenge-brief/define-design-criteria/