



Product Design Blueprint

A simple and proven 7-step-process for building better products.

Superfounder.io Product Design Blueprint

This blueprint is a condensed and slightly customized version of the great book [“Solving Product Design Exercises” by Artiom Dashinsky](#).

It lays out 7 steps for designing great products and experiences for real problems. It may seem like a lot of work at first but actually, most of the exercises should just take a few minutes.

Here's how much time you should roughly spend on each of these steps if you do a 1-hour exercise to define a solution and criteria for measuring success.

(You can allocate more time on each of these as needed if you have the time, of course).

Step 1: [Why – Understand your goal](#) (3 min)

Step 2: [Who – Define the target audience](#) (5 min)

Step 3: [When and where – Understand customers needs](#) (5 min)

Step 4: [What – List ideas](#) (5 min)

Step 5: [Prioritize and choose an idea](#) (3 min)

Step 6: [Solve](#) (30 min)

Step 7: [Measure](#) (3 min)

1. Why – Understand your goal

The first step is to define in 1-2 sentences why you want to tackle this product at all. Think about and address the following points with your why statement:

- Why is this product or feature important
- What problems(s) are we trying to solve with it
- What's the impact it has on people and the world
- How do customers benefit from it?
- What's the business opportunity
- How does it feed into or extend our company mission (if it's an existing product)

2. Who – Define the target audience

Define who will be using the product. What are the different groups that have different motivations for using your product? You want to pick and focus on one first (the biggest, most important group).

Further define this focus audience by categorizing them by characteristics like:

- **Age**
(A product for a 5-year-old needs to be radically different from a product for 50+ years old)
- **Gender**
(81% of Pinterest users are women)
- **Location**
(Where, will the product be used? Office, living room etc? This can reveal interesting insights for things like Apple TV app or a focus on headphone use, etc.)
- **Occupation**
A real estate agent spends less time on a laptop or desktop computer than a software engineer but more time on their mobile phone.
- **Mobility**
How does your target audience move around, how do they travel? Some apps provide extra car modes (Eg Spotify)

Eg. Spotify's main user groups are most likely:

- Artists
- Listeners
- Business owners

Once you've decided who you're designing for, you can further hone in on sub characteristics:

- Runners
- Club Music lovers
- Podcast listeners
- Children (Educational features?)
- Millennials (Shared listening?)
- Babyboomers (More likely to live in the suburbs with longer commutes)

3. When and where – Understand customers needs

Make a list of the context and conditions to understand what their challenges are.

- Where are they physically?
- Is there a trigger event causing this need?
- How much time do they have?
- Are they on a certain app, website, or platform?
- What emotions do they experience, what frustrations do they have?

Make a list of the needs of your audience:

- What's the high-level motivation for solving the problem?
 - If our target audience would be freelancers, their high-level motivation would be something like "Being in control of their business"
- How could they achieve their goal?
 - To be in control of their business, the freelancer needs to:
 - Know how the business is doing financially
 - Manage their work
 - Know what they can do to move the business forward

User stories

If you have the time you can dive deeper into the specific tasks a user wants to achieve by defining user stories. Use the following syntax to define what users want to achieve and what their benefits are:

As a (Role) I want to (Goal/Desire) so that (Benefit).

Here's an example:

As a **Freelancer**, I want to **create beautiful proposals quickly** so that **I can win more clients**

4. What – List ideas

Now that we've defined the audience and the actual problems we are trying to solve, it's time to generate at least 3 ideas on what we could build to address and fulfill those needs. Keep an open mind and think about the following things:

- Type of product – Should it be a physical or digital product? Or can you make an existing physical product more smarter technology?
- Platform – where will it live. On a smartwatch, laptop, desktop, mobile, TV, or VR-headset?
- What's the type of interface – graphical, audio/voice, VR, AR

Here's an example of 3 different solutions for a WAZE product solving the same problem:

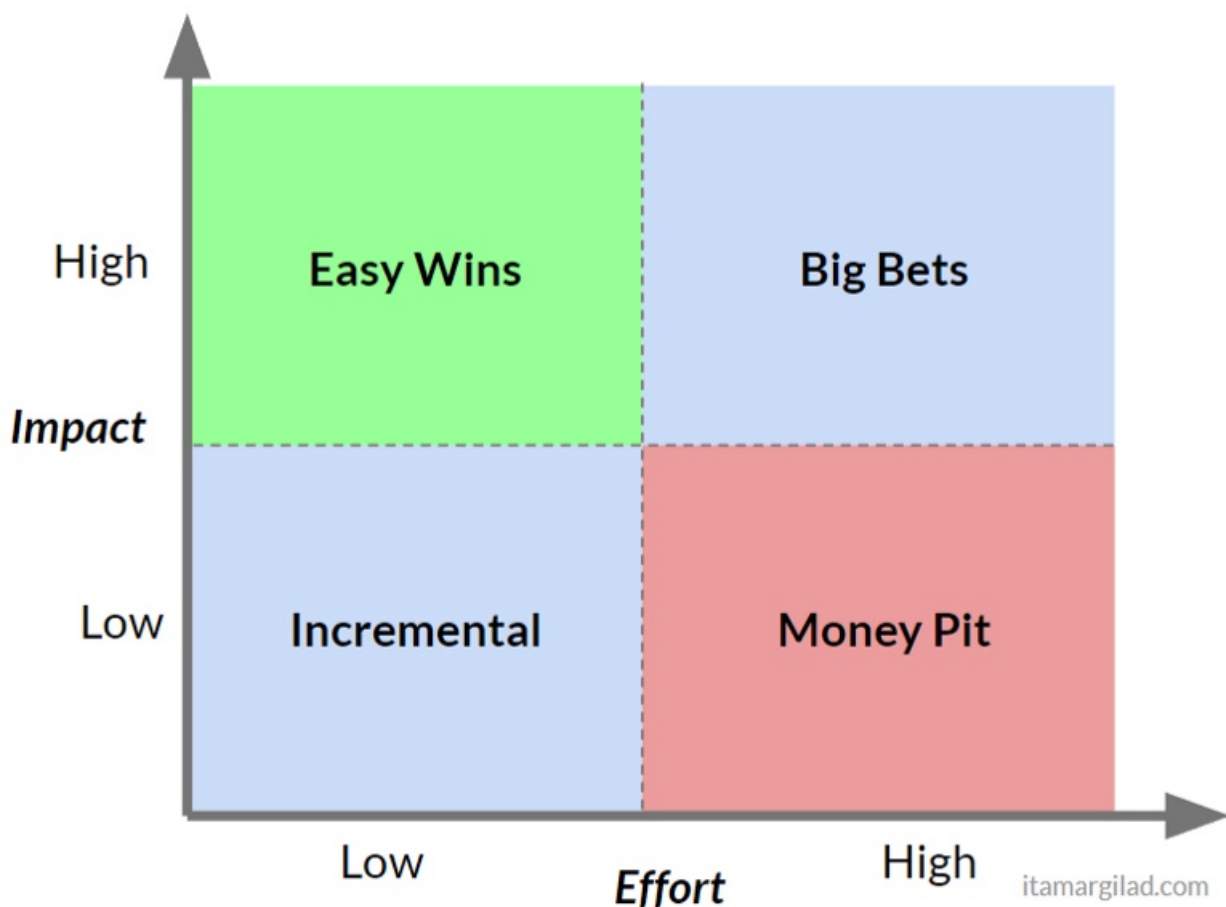
- **Build a physical product that is installed on the bike steering wheel** that guides the rider by indicating the next turn and showing how far the destination is. The product connects to the rider's phone and the WAZE app via Bluetooth and uses LED indicators to display instructions.
- **Adjust the current WAZE smartphone app** to include a biking navigation mode. The user could mount the device to the steering wheel or get instructions via speaker or headphones.
- **Build a smartwatch app that takes advantage of haptic feedback** and communicates with the user through visuals and tactile signals.

5. Prioritize and choose an idea

Once we've explored the different ideas we could build to solve the problem, it's time to pick and focus on one. But how do we do that? Every solution has its pros and cons. There is never a perfect solution. To evaluate and pick the best idea, consider the following points:

- Reach – how many customers can benefit from this solution
- Value for customers – how satisfying is the solution
- Potential revenue – how well does the solution meet the business goals of the company
- Implementation effort and complexity – how hard would it be to build the solution

To make this process more visual and a bit more intuitive, use an effort/impact matrix where you place each of the solutions. Optimally your best idea will sit on the green area.



6. Solve

Have you identified the best solution to focus on? Great. Now comes the fun part. We get to solve and design the actual product. Here are some of the tools and techniques we can use to produce deliverables (concepts) that explain our solutions in different fidelity levels.

You can mix and match these techniques depending on your time constraints. Optimally you would go through these from top to bottom and arrive at the high fidelity prototype last.

- User journeys and storyboarding
- A list of ideas
- Sketches of any kind
- Wireframe flows
- Interactive wireframe prototype
- High-fidelity designs
- Interactive high-fidelity prototype

How to create a storyboard

In this technique, you want to map out the customer's journey to get a sense of the interactions your product needs to support. Exploring these interactions will spark ideas for the interface.



Defining tasks

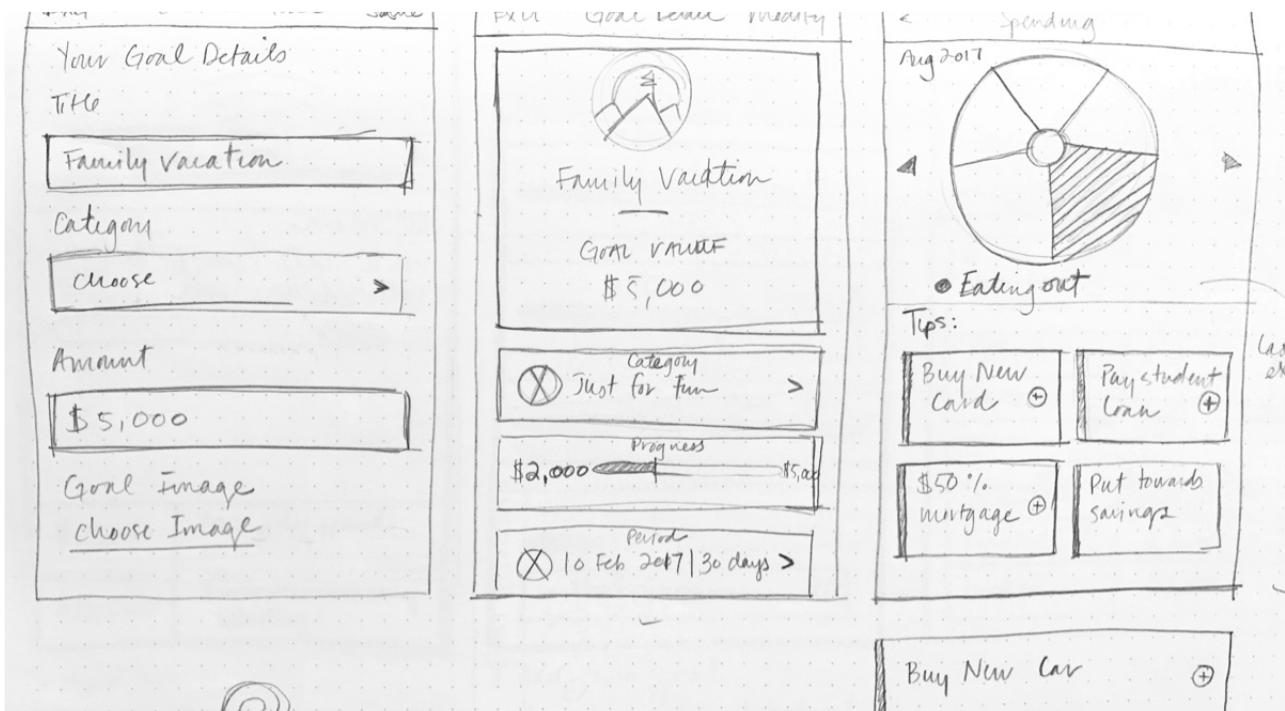
This is the quickest and most efficient way to define the interface. Just make a list of the tasks that the customer needs to be able to achieve his or her goals. In the WAZE example this could be:

- Enter a destination
- Change the destination
- Cancel the trip
- Understand the next action to stay on the right path
- Check if you're on the right path
- Understand when the destination has been reached

So, as you can see, this is a quick way to define the product flow and optimal for whiteboarding sessions especially when the time is limited.

Quick Sketching

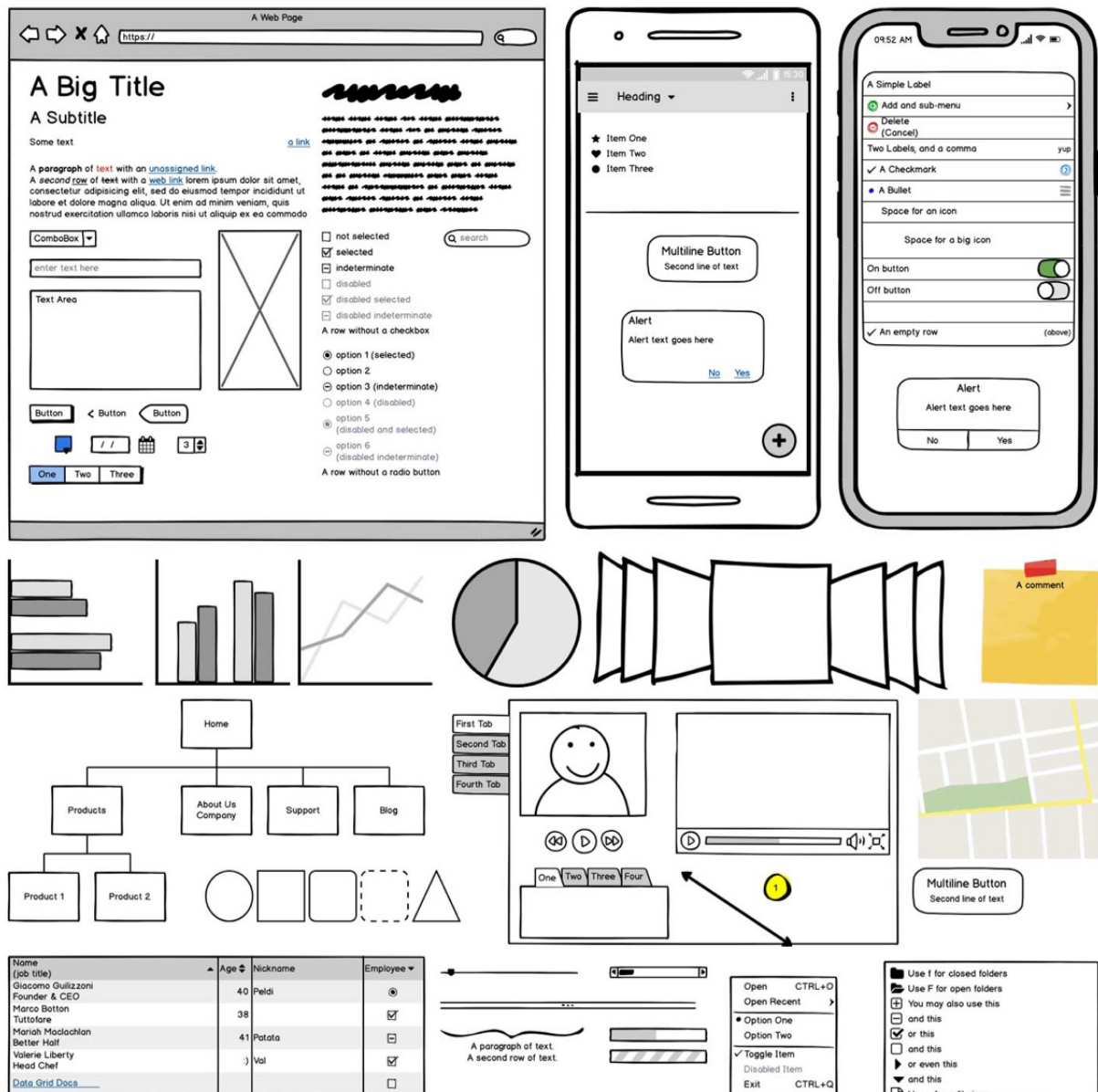
Just take a piece and Sketch out a possible solution for each task you're trying to address. No need to make it perfect, just make them as unique as possible. Keep going as long as you have ideas. The goal is to come up with more than just the first and most obvious solution and to get the juices flowing.



Wireframing

The cool thing about wireframes is, that you don't need to be a designer who knows how to create stunning visual designs. It lets you focus much more on the given job to be done and the interaction itself.

To this day, there is one tool for this job that I prefer at this stage: [Balsamiq Mockups](#). It's quite old (we've even used it on Wunderlist a decade ago) and it's not pretty. But it still does the job best in my opinion. Your wireframes will look and feel like a sketch, yet Balsamiq provides a ton of premade components and even allows you to link your sketches together for an interactive prototype.



7. Measure

If you build a solution, you need a way to measure its success. Else, what's the point?! So the last step is to define how we can measure the success of our design. The question we need to ask ourselves is: **How would we know if the solution was successful?**

Measuring success is usually done by defining the "Key Performance Indicators" (KPIs). These are the numbers we can measure to determine success.

Here are some example metrics you could use to measure the success:

- **Task success rate** – the percentage of correctly completed tasks by users
- **Task completion time** – the time it takes for the user to complete a task

- **Engagement** – how many actions users take while interacting with the product in a desirable way in a certain time frame (minute, hour, day, week, month, etc)
- **Retention** – how often people return to interact with the product in a desirable way
- **Revenue** – in what way does the product make money and how much does it make?
- **Conversion** – the percentage of users who take the desired action (Eg: Signup to become a registered user)
- **User acquisition cost** – how much does it cost to persuade a user to purchase a product or service
- **Net promoter score** – Customer satisfaction measured through the willingness to recommend the company's product to others
- **Product-Market Fit** – Measured by asking the users how disappointed they would be if they could no longer use the product (Sean Ellis' Test). The possible responses are:
 - Very disappointed
 - Somewhat disappointed
 - Not disappointed
 - I don't use it anymore

If 40% + of users say they would miss your product "Very much" it's a good indicator that you've reached product-market fit.

Conclusion

I hope this cheat sheet will help you to define and build your product more efficiently and in a structured way. Please keep in mind, that this is by no means a complete guide to building a product, but rather defining possible solutions and KPIs to measure against.

If you need help with designing your product or if you have feedback or questions, please visit <http://superfounder.io> or shoot me an email to hey@superfounder.io.

Yours,

Sebastian