

Thanks for downloading the UX Sisters Design Studio Timeline. Planning and running a design studio can be intimidating, but we've got your back. This timeline takes you through the two weeks before your planned design studio to make sure you have everything you need to run a successful workshop.

But first, if you think you need a refresher on design studio basics, check out [our blog post here](#). It goes over the why and how of running a design studio.

Now, let's jump in and start planning!



TWO WEEKS AHEAD OF TIME

1. Determine the problem you're going to solve

This seems obvious, but it's important to nail down what you're solving with a design studio. Spend time defining the problems in the current solution, who will be using it, and why.

- Go over the background research on the problem with the main stakeholder(s). Why are we designing this new feature? For who? What job do those users need this feature to fulfill? What are the constraints of the problem? What has already been done? If you think you don't have data, just remember that background research can consist of usability test results, support case data, questions that come up in the sales process, previous design iterations, etc. There is always data out there!
- Create a 5-minute presentation with the stakeholder answering these questions. Be prepared to present it at the beginning of the design studio & share with participants during it so they can use it as a reference.

2. Invite co-workers

Starting at least two weeks in advance will give you time to block off 5 hours on the schedules of ~10 diverse co-workers. This can be a challenging task, so be sure to start as early as possible. Invite people who are familiar with the problem but have different

perspectives. A recommended size I've found works well is 10 people, although you could certainly do more or fewer. The people invited should have different roles throughout the company. Here's a great example mix:

- Product manager (1-2)
- Designer (1-2)
- Developer (1-3)
- Support rep (2)
- Account manager
- Sales rep
- Marketer
- Unbiased moderator(s) who don't take part in the sketching and help move the exercise along (hello you!)

If you're having problems finding participants, I've recruited people by asking around to find out who is passionate about the problem and then emailing that person. People outside of the product team are usually delighted to be able to take part in a design exercise.

- Send participants an invite blocking off that time on their calendar.

3. Book a room

It should be big enough for at least 12 people, have a table and chairs, have two clean walls for hanging up sketches, and (if you're lucky) have a projector. I know room space can be challenging, so it's best to start early with this.

- Book a big room with clean wall space

ONE WEEK AHEAD OF TIME

1. Gather your supplies

Here's my toolkit:

- 15 Sharpies (fine width, black or dark colors)
- 15 pens
- A package of dot stickies
- 50-100 Post-Its in two colors (if running a KJ Exercise)
- 50-100 sheets of copy paper
- Phone with camera and timer (to document what's been done & keep time)
- Mood music
- A room big enough for 12 people
- 5 hours of booked time
- Catered lunch
- Coffee and snacks

2. Send your reminder email

Don't let your participants forget the fun they're about to have.

- Set expectations by sending an email giving participants a run-down of the process.

3. Check in with your stakeholders

This can take a back seat to other priorities they have so keep checking in.

- Make sure your stakeholders have created the presentation outlining the problem.

ONE DAY AHEAD OF TIME

1. Solidify room bookings, lunch order and supplies

You want to make sure you have all the basics down so you don't have to scramble the day of.

- Make lunch order
- Grab snacks

2. Decide who is going to be on each time

Try to make this as diverse as possible.

- Put one person with each job role on each team.

DAY OF

1. Email participants one last time

- Get them excited about participating, remind them where to go and what time.

2. Arrive to the room one hour early to set up

- Set up paper, Sharpies, pens, stickers and Post-Its at each participant's chair.

- Ensure you have an easy way to share the presentation of the problem, whether on a laptop or a projector.
- Check on the lunch order to make sure it's arriving at the appropriate time.
- Set out granola bars, fruit, coffee and plates/napkins.
- Turn on some fun music to make everyone feel at ease.

3. Greet participants as they arrive and get going

You should be all set, so sit back and wait for your participants to arrive.

- Greet them, guide them to their places, and get them talking to each other as everyone arrives.
- Once everyone is there, kick it off! You got this.
- High five yourself

For the rest of the process, re-read [our blog post here](#).