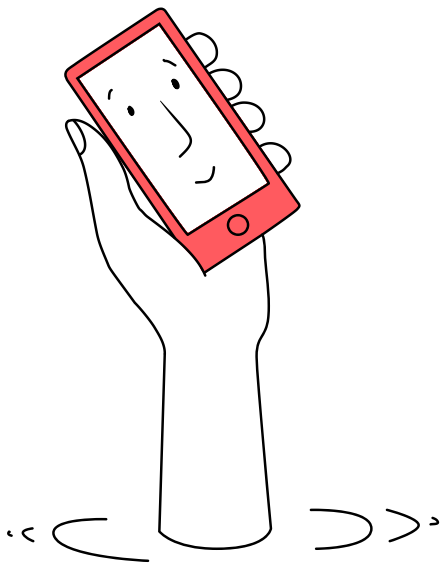# The Prototyping Bible

How real users can help you succeed

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Let's get you prototyping

A practical guide

I have told you about the importance of prototyping in my book, but I we wanted to provide you with some more practical tips and tricks, so you'll know how to go about. May the force be with you!

"If you don't experiment and fail to learn... you're just maximising your risk to fail big.

Alex Osterwalder

This guide will help you with the 4 prototyping steps:

What
do I want to learn?

How
can I learn?

How
can I make prototypes?

How
can I get the best feedback?

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Step 1: What to learn?

Looking for the answers you need to succeed

So you are here. You have an idea, a strategy, a plan, a concept that you based on human insights unlocked by the SUE | Influence Framework© you've used the SWAC Tool© to come up with ideas that will influence behaviour, and you've designed a chain using the 4C Flow Model©. Now it is time to prototype: Share your thoughts with people, get feedback, and refine your ideas.

Most people immediately think about what prototype to make. But that's not the first step in prototyping. The first step is to sit down - whether you are alone or working in a team - and think about what answers you're looking for to understand how your idea will work in real life.

An idea is never single-minded. You've learned about the flow of an intervention. You know that you have to catch, convert, confirm and continue. So, more than one question needs to be answered. Some examples: "How will people learn about your product?" "What will the first experience with your product be like?" "Do people understand how they can join?" "Do people understand what to do when seeing your product landing page?" "Are people willing to share your service?". "Are people willing to pay for your service?". As you can see, these are all questions related to different stages of the 4C Flow Model©.
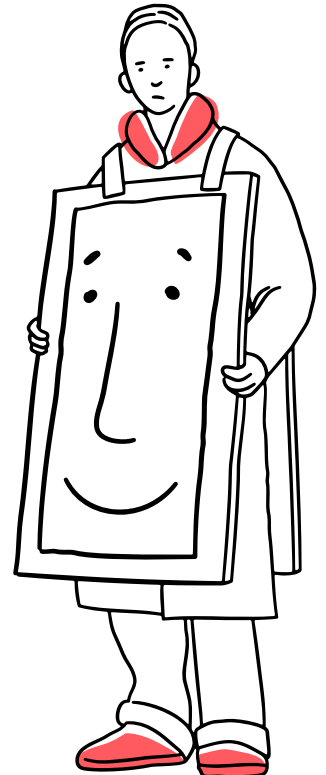
TIP: A pitfall of prototyping is making a prototype that is too big. Let's say you have an idea for a patient activity centre in a children's hospital. You could make a prototype that is a sketch drawing of the centre. You might learn more about what colours kids would like on the walls or which furniture they prefer. But it won't help you answer any specific questions. How will parents learn about the centre? How can a doctor sign up a patient? How do parents get feedback on how their child is experiencing the centre? How can they rate the centre? These all require different ideas and prototypes.

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Step 1: What to learn?

The step in which - we quote IDEO - you break-down your big idea into bite-sized pieces that can be easily made and tested.

Your action plan

Action 1

First, **use the 4C Flow Model© to identify the different bite-sized pieces of your strategy or idea.** An idea that has to change behaviour has a beginning (Catch), middle (Convert), follow-up (Confirm) and ending (Continue).

Action 2

Then visualise the experience - or user journey - based on the 4C Flow Model©. This can be done very roughly using post-its and simple stick drawings. It's just for you to get a sense of your target audience's experience when seeing your idea. Put every step of the journey on a separate piece of paper/post-it so you can rearrange it when needed.

Action 3

Each step in the user experience has questions that you need to answer to understand how your idea works in practice. Identify what you need to learn. And **come up with very specific questions** that will get you there.
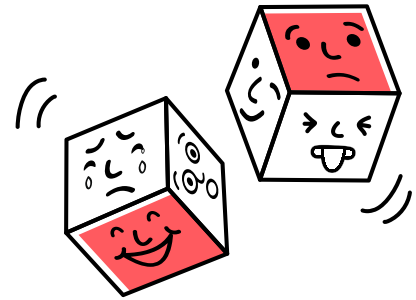
Materials needed

✔ Post-its to map out your user journey

✔ A couple of A3 papers to stick your post-its on

✔ Sharpies or permanent markers to write on the post-its

✔ Your Flow Model© to check the stages of your strategy/idea

✔ Tape to stick your A3 papers to the wall

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Step 2: How to learn?

Deciding what prototypes you need

The second step is short but essential. You cannot learn everything, so you have to decide what has priority. You can prototype almost anything, so you need to make a selection.

Your action plan

Action 1

First, **prioritise the questions.** Which answers do you really want and need?
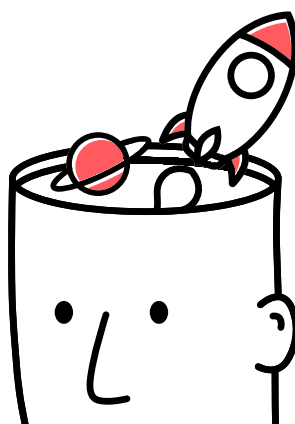
Action 2

Then **decide what kind of prototype** will help answer those questions.

Materials needed

✔ Sticky dots to select the questions you prefer using dotmocracy when in a team.

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TIP: There are roughly 7 different types of prototypes:

1 **Models**: a three-dimensional representation

2 **Mock-ups:** an arrangement of text and/or pictures

3 **Stories:** describing in words

4 **Storyboard:** mapping out a journey or process

5 **Advertisements:** a fake ad for the idea

6 **Role play:** acting out the experience

7 **Physical interventions:** making changes in a space

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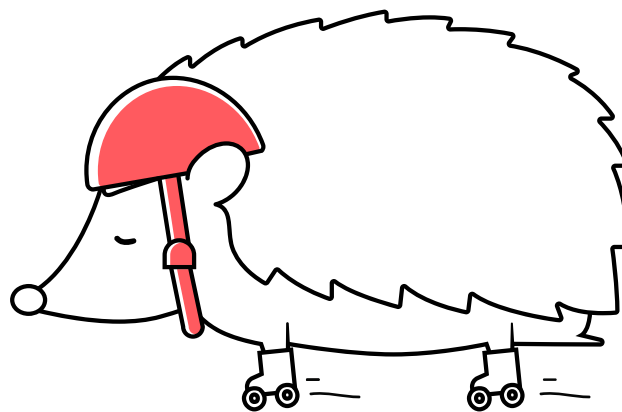
Step 3: How to make?

Getting your prototypes ready

Remember your primary goal of prototyping is getting feedback. It is meant to learn, so you can adapt quickly (or on time even). So, don't try to make perfect prototypes. And don't get scared of the thought of having to draw, write or build. You don't have to be an artist to prototype. Prototyping is fun. Prototyping is where you learn and take one step closer to success (and world domination).
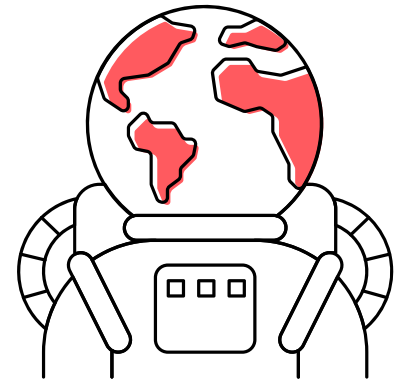
Your action plan

Action 1

Start by considering the setting. Decide where you want to share your idea. Is it in your offices or the 'war' room where you've been cracking your brain on the idea? Or do you want to see your prototype in action in the context where people will use it in real life? Knowing your context can be helpful before you start building. Some things can't be transported and have to be built on 'site'.
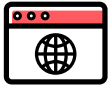
Action 2A

Assemble a prototyping kit: This is simply a box with materials you can use for physical or paper prototyping. This is a one time action. Once you have your equipment ready, you have to check supplies now and then. In the materials section, I give you some pointers on what to stick into your kit.

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Your action plan

Action 2B

Or **subscribe to a digital tool:** There are a few good, free to use digital sources in which you can quickly build digital prototypes. They are perfect for testing screens or web pages. I'll give you some tips in the materials section.

Action 3

And then, **start building.** The prototype doesn't need to be perfect, only realistic enough to convince your user. Don't put too much money into your prototype. Use things as Keynote or your friends or colleagues as actors. After all, your prototype could be rejected and end up in the square archive (also known as the bin). Well, the paper ones, hopefully not your friends. But you'll get my drift. It should be simple and focused on what you want to be tested.

Prototype Examples

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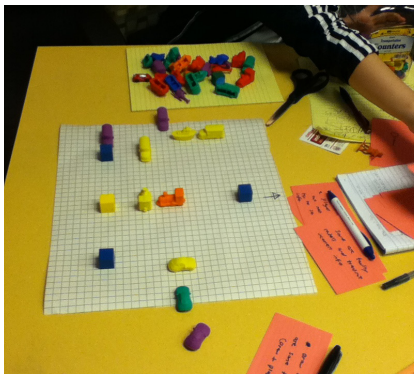
Step 3: Materials

Materials needed for a prototyping kit

✔ Scissors
✔ Tape
✔ Cardboard
✔ Whiteboard markers
✔ Post-its
✔ Play-Doh

✔ Felt tips in different colours
✔ Rope
✔ Glue
✔ Lego blocks
✔ Foam material
✔ Elastic bands

✔ Plain white paper (A4 & A3)
✔ Coloured paper
✔ Permanent markers black & red
✔ Ruler
✔ Push pins & paper clips
✔ Cardboard cutter

Your action plan

InVision: Our favourite digital prototyping tool. InVision's best feature is perhaps its management of project feedback. Clients and design teams can conveniently provide comments directly on the prototype. Price: Free.

Origami Studio: Origami was initially developed by Facebook to help their teams build and design products. Once it is installed, you can begin creating design concepts that simulate scrolling, taps, swipes and page links. Origami's documentation, tutorials and how-to videos make it easy to get started. Price: Free / MAC.

Proto.io: With Proto.io, ready-made templates for websites and apps enable you to get a quick start on a project. The entire app runs on the web so that you can run Proto.io on any platform. Proto.io has recently released plugins that enable you to incorporate Sketch and Photoshop designs through a simple drag-and-drop. Price: Free.

Easee: When you consider that this product is a passion project of Steven Fabre, Easee is one of the most impressive prototyping tools around. In his Medium post, Fabre says that the goal of Easee was to help designers build beautiful animations for the web without needing to write code. With Easee, you can drag and drop layers from Sketch and Photoshop and begin animating. Price: Basic Free (unlimited $10/month).

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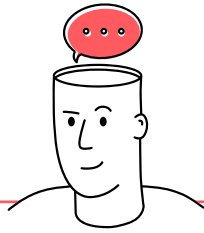
Step 4: Getting feedback

Get ready to learn

This is the most exciting part of the process: You'll get to learn what your user thinks of your idea and get input on making your plan better. You'll get to see what truly matters to people and what parts of your intervention need some improvement. You'll be amazed by what you'll learn.

The 'I didn't see that one coming' experience will also happen to you. And if that happens, stand still for a moment and think what would have happened if you didn't have that experience and just went along with your idea — blowing away your production and or media budget (or killing your reputation or self-esteem when failure hits you hard).

And to give you one more reason to L.O.V.E. prototyping. You get the user' responses. So, if you have to pitch your idea to your manager, investor, wife, or whomever. You're not pitching an idea you want, but an idea the user wants. And you have the quotes or footage to prove it. You'll also have plenty of user arguments for any doubts the person you're pitching for may have. You have tested the idea. To give you an example; We, for instance, heard so many times: Our target group prefers positive arguments. It's in our corporate values. You might answer: That's what we also thought, just like you. But the truth is: The value proposition that showcased a pain was preferred by 98% of the users — the one with gains just by 2%. You make a solid case. Do you see how it can work for you?

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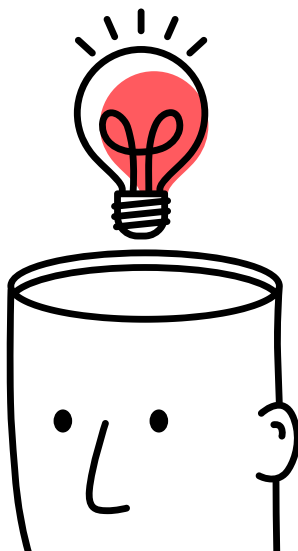
Your action plan

Action 1

Define **what kind of feedback you're looking for.** Do you want feedback on the first impression of an idea? Are you wondering what people think of the name? Make a list of your feedback goals to keep with you during the testing.

Action 2

Make **a script if you're doing qualitative research.** Use your skills learned in building block 2 Behaviour to make the most out of the testing. Reread the interview bible.

Action 3

Design openness, stay neutral and adapt on the fly. Explain to participants you are just here to learn, and it's all a work in progress. Don't defend or sell. Encourage participants to build on the idea. Add parts during the test or kill your darlings.

Action 4

When testing, **capture feedback.** We like to video or at least audiotape our tests. But make sure not too many people are in the test room. You can set up a webcam and let other people watch in the room next door.

Action 5

Next, **share and analyse your impressions.** What did the test person like the best? What got them enthusiastic? What would convince them of the idea? What needs improvement? What failed? What do you need to test more extensively?

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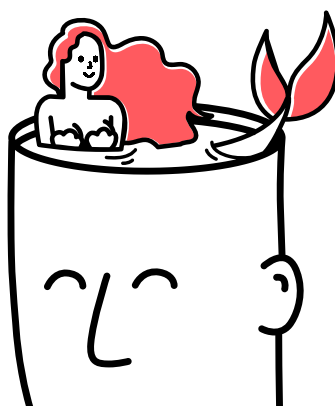
Materials needed

✓ Smart phone with a good camera or video camera or webcam

✓ Audio recorder

✓ Pen and paper

That's it: This is the end of the prototyping bible. Now it's up to you: Hunt for the feedback that will turn your ideas into success. Just one last tip: Make pictures of the entire prototyping process, from building to testing. It's a helpful reference but also excellent material for a pitch presentation. And a remarkable memory of a great time. I'll end with a quote from someone who has launched some successful products.

"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning.

Bill Gates
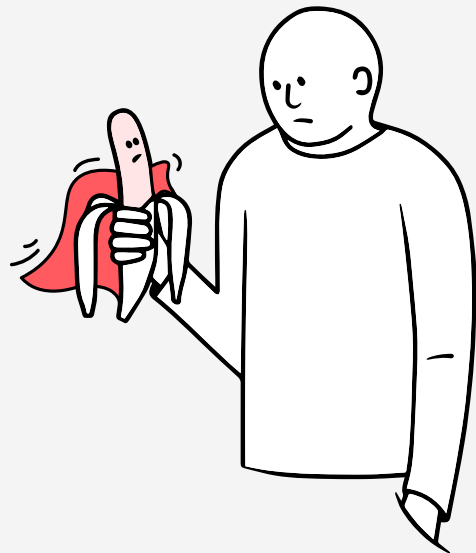
P.S. I thank the open-source resources of IDEO for inspiration and all the people who put the photos of their prototypes online or made lists of digital prototyping tools. I haven't got any credits, but I do have my sincere thank you's for all of you.

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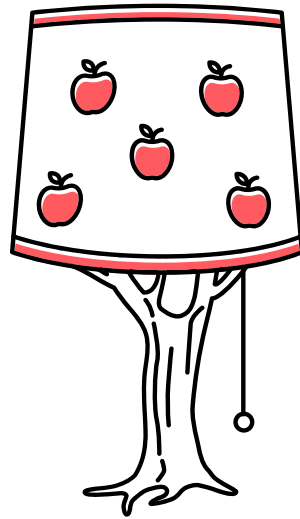
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Prototyping Bible

4 steps to prototyping success