

CO-CREATIVE WORKSHOP

CO-CREATING JOURNEY MAPS

Using the know-how of a group of invited participants to create one or more journey maps or service blueprints.

Duration	<p>Preparation: 0.5–2 hours (depending on group size, complexity of journey map, and amount of data)</p> <p>Activity: 1–8 hours (depending on group size, amount of data, and journey map complexity)</p> <p>Follow-up: 0.5–8 hours (depending on complexity and intended fidelity of personas)</p>
Physical requirements	Paper, sticky notes, pens, masking tape, paper templates (optional), personas, research data as input and inspiration for participants
Energy level	Middle
Researchers/Facilitators	Minimum 1
Participants	3–12 people with good knowledge of the particular experience and chosen perspective (e.g., customers of a particular target group, employees of different departments)
Expected output	Drafts of journey maps (physical or digital), workshop photos, quotes of participants (audio or text), videos of workshop progress

In a co-creative journey mapping workshop, invite participants who have solid knowledge about the experience you are mapping. If you want to create a journey map about customer experiences, this might mean inviting customers (yes, real ones!) and/or frontline employees. Be careful if you conduct this type of workshop with participants who only have a superficial or abstract knowledge of the experiences you focus on. The results might look convincing, but often they are very biased. For example, if an IT team without prior qualitative research and without deep knowledge of the daily lives of customers conduct a co-creative workshop on the journey map of their online customer experience, the outcomes tend to represent their idealized process rather than the actual customer experience.⁰¹

⁰¹ See #TISDD 3.3, *Journey maps*, and #TISDD chapter 10, *Facilitating workshops*, for hands-on tips on facilitation and how to build a safe space.

Think about inviting workshop participants with either a shared perspective (such as customers of a particular target group) or from differing perspectives (such as customers of various target groups or customers and employees). Clearly communicate the scope of the journey map, such as a high-level journey map vs. a more detailed journey map focusing on one specific situation within a high-level journey map.

Step-by-step guide

1 Define main actor and journey scope

Select a main actor, such as a persona, whose shoes you want your workshop participants to walk in. Define the time frame (“scope”) of your story. Are you talking about an experience of 10 minutes, 2 hours, 5 days, or 10 years?



- A** Participants share their individual experiences or findings from their research during co-creative journey mapping.
- B** Visualizations help to understand the context of each step and enable participants to navigate quicker.
- C** Using large templates forces participants to stand up and gives them a common focus point.

2 Plan and prepare

Determine who you'll invite as workshop participants and prepare your invitations. Describe the aim of the workshop, set expectations for your workshop, and think of an incentive for participating in the workshop if appropriate. Prepare the room (or any other venue you choose for your workshop) and write a list so that you don't forget any essential material (templates, sticky notes, pens, personas, research data, etc.). Write a facilitation agenda and establish facilitation guidelines to create a safe space through warm-ups and so on.

3 Welcome and split into smaller groups

Start your workshop with a welcome, describing the workshop's aim and agenda, and facilitate a round of introductions. After a warm-up,

split the participants into subgroups of 3–5 people and give them clear instructions on what to do.

4 Identify stages and steps

Let the workshop participants start with the rough stages of a journey map, such as “inspiration, planning, booking, experience, sharing” for a holiday. Now fill up the stages with the persona's story. Sometimes it helps if you start “in the middle” with the most crucial steps and then ask yourself what happens before and what happens after these. Use simple sticky notes for this so you can easily add or discard steps and stages.

5 Iterate and refine

Refine the journey by going through it from end to end to check if you missed a step or if you need more/less detail in certain parts. You can

always break up a step into two or more steps or condense several steps to one. Depending on the project, it might make sense to find a consistent level of detail throughout the whole journey map or to highlight a specific part of the journey in more detail.

6 Add perspectives (optional)

Add more perspectives, such as a storyboard, an emotional journey, channels, involved stakeholders, a dramatic arc, backstage processes, “What if?” scenarios, etc.

7 Emotional journey exercise (optional)

Ask the subgroups to number the steps of their journey maps, and let a participant from one subgroup present their main actor and journey map step by step to either the entire group or a partner group. Each workshop

participant should write down on their own how they think the main actor feels at each step – for example, from –2 (very dissatisfied) to 0 (indifferent) to +2 (very satisfied). In a second step, let each participant mark their values on the emotional journey of the journey map. You'll see steps where the entire group agrees that it is a positive or negative experience, but you'll also discover steps with very diverse ratings. Use this as an input for discussion and try to find out if you need to clarify the main actor (persona), or the description of the step, or if there are other reasons why the group is not yet on the same page.

8 Discuss and merge

Give participants some time to reflect. Discuss similarities and differences between the journey

maps of the different subgroups. Let the group merge the different maps into one map (or several), but make notes on different opinions and insights – they might be useful for you later.

9 Follow-up

Go through your notes and check different positions taken by your workshop participants. Index the generated data and highlight important passages. Sometimes it is useful to schedule follow-up interviews or further workshops with some or all participants. If needed, process your journey map into a format that is easier to comprehend (physical or digital). Write a short workshop summary that includes your conflated key findings as well as the journey map and raw data you collected

during the workshop from your participants, such as quotes, photos, or videos.

Method notes

- Define the situational context of the experience you want to map in your workshop (weekdays vs. weekends, daytime vs. nighttime, summer vs. winter, rainy vs. sunny, etc.). This will help workshop participants to develop a shared frame of reference.
- Consider repeating the workshop with different participants, or a different situational context, or basing your journey map on different personas to identify patterns and understand particular distinctions between these. ◀