GENERATING MANY IDEAS

10 PLUS 10

A very fast visual ideation method which combines breadth and depth of ideas.

Duration	**Preparation:** up to 5 minutes **Activity:** 20–40 minutes
Physical requirements	Paper (A4 or letter size is best) and pens for all participants, work area with tables
Energy level	Medium to high, depending on the time limit you choose
Facilitators	1 or more
Participants	Teams of 3–7 people
Expected output	Around 20 sketched concepts per team

The 10 plus 10 exercise[01] is a great way to get started with a design challenge. Based on a common starting point, group members work individually to quickly sketch several ideas each, making around 10 ideas per group. They share the ideas within the group and choose one sketch as the starting point for the next round. After the second round, there are about 20 sketches per team on the table – a wide range of options from the first round, and a deeper drill from the second. All 20 are useful.

This method helps teams to quickly generate a broad variety of concepts, but also get some depth in understanding how a specific design challenge can be tackled. The visual approach helps them get specific.

01 Buxton, B., Greenberg, S., Carpendale, S., & Marquardt, N. (2012). *Sketching User Experiences: The Workbook*. Morgan Kaufmann.

Step-by-step guide

1 Look at your starting point for ideation and consider if and how you will bring previous knowledge into the room (for example, as a research wall or as key insights).

2 Invite the right people to work beside your core team for the exercise (this might include people who know the background, people with no preconceptions, experts, representatives of the implementation team, people who will deliver the service, users, management, etc.).

3 After you have given the group a design challenge (e.g., a "How might we …?" question) and warmed up, divide the group into table-sized teams of 3–7 people.

4 Ask them to sketch different concepts that address the design challenge. They should draw rough pictures, which may have a few words of explanation. Tell them not to discuss the ideas, but to work individually and silently, drawing one sketch at a time on one piece of paper and then laying each one in the center of the table so others can look at it. Each team should generate 10 or more sketches in total.

5 Give the group about 15 person-minutes for the task (a 4-person team might get 4 minutes, while a 3-person team would get 5 minutes). Keep the time very short, so they are forced to produce simple, rough sketches. Give more time for more complex challenges, but keep it short enough to surprise the participants and make them hurry.

6 When the time is up, tell the participants to quickly share their own sketches with their tablemates. The whole immediate team (not the whole room) needs to understand what each of the 10 sketches represents.

7 Ask each team to quickly choose one of their sketches which seems interesting, and lay it in the middle of the table. The other sketches should be temporarily put to one side.

8 Repeat the first round with the chosen sketch as the starting point, making 10 variations of this. If the group need help understanding "variations," you might mention changing the channel, the scale, the actors, the purpose, the timing, the technology, the material, the direction, the location … or the SCAMPER list of "Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Magnify, Put to other use, Eliminate, and Rearrange."[02]

9 Ask the participants to again share their new sketches with their immediate team members.

10 They can now also bring back the sketches from the first round which were laid aside. With the results of two rounds – one broad, and one deep – they now have about 20 explicit ideas to take into idea selection.

02 Eberle, B. (1996). *Scamper: Games for Imagination Development.* Prufrock Press, Inc.

Method notes

→ Some participants hate to draw. Remind them that only the person drawing needs to understand the sketches, that they are just memory aids. You might also start with a sketching warm-up (such as drawing your neighbor in one minute without looking at the paper) which shows that very bad sketches are usually quite adequate. Point out that drawings are especially useful as they suggest context and channel, and usually carry more information than a few words can.

→ Encourage participants to draw real things, not metaphors. For example, if they suggest a sales competition, they should draw salespeople actually comparing sales results or draw a screenshot of the online leaderboard – not a victory podium or a gold medal.

→ Some ideas are hard to draw. This method works very well for physical or digital interfaces and situations, but less well for abstract concepts.

→ Some ideas may occur more than once, but that is interesting in itself. Is it because they are obvious, or because they are especially interesting? ◄

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Ⓐ 10 plus 10 sketching produces a wide range of concrete ideas rapidly. Go for quantity.