
How Might We



Translate your insight statements into opportunities for design by reframing them as “How Might We” questions.

By Finding Themes (p. 80) and Creating Insight Statements (p. 81), you’ve identified problem areas that pose challenges to the people you’re designing for. Now, try reframing your insight statements as How Might We questions to turn those challenges into opportunities for design. We use the How Might We format because it suggests that a solution is possible and because they offer you the chance to answer them in a variety of ways. A properly framed How Might We doesn’t suggest a particular solution, but gives you the perfect frame for innovative thinking.

STEPS

TIME

60 minutes

DIFFICULTY

Moderate

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

Insight statements, pens,
Create How Might We Questions
worksheet p. 177

PARTICIPANTS

Design team

- 01** | Start by looking at the insight statements that you’ve created. Try rephrasing them as questions by adding “How might we” at the beginning. Use the worksheet on p. 177.
- 02** | The goal is to find opportunities for design, so if your insights suggest several How Might We questions that’s great.
- 03** | Now take a look at your How Might We question and ask yourself if it allows for a variety of solutions. If it doesn’t, broaden it. Your How Might We should generate a number of possible answers and will become a launchpad for your Brainstorms (p. 94).
- 04** | Finally, make sure that your How Might We’s aren’t too broad. It’s a tricky process but a good How Might We should give you both a narrow enough frame to let you know where to start your Brainstorm, but also enough breadth to give you room to explore wild ideas.

METHOD IN ACTION



How Might We

As you may recall from the example that accompanies Create Insight Statements (p. 81), IDEO.org partnered with Eram Scientific, an eToilet manufacturer in Southern India, to make their electronic toilet more intuitive, user-friendly, and safe.

Identifying key insights started the team down the path of finding opportunities for design. The next step was to reframe those insights as generative questions. Review the Create Insight Statements worksheet on p. 83 and then take a look at the How Might We questions (on the next page) that the team created from their insights.

Further thinking and eventually tangible design solutions emerged from many of these How Might We's. For instance, the team answered the first gender-focused question by coming up with a small L-shaped wall outside the door of the toilet. When prototyping this addition, the team heard from women who said that they loved having a place to retie their saris in private.

Another design that emerged from these particular How Might We's was increased visibility of the cleaning process. From the cleanliness-focused question, the team designed a system next to the entrance that would notify users not just when the eToilet was occupied but also when a cleaning session was in process. By allowing customers to visualize a cleaning between each use, they began to associate the toilet with a strong sense of cleanliness.

Create How Might We Questions

Turn Your Insights Into How Might We Questions

Insight:

Women want a private space in which to enter and exit the toilet.

How might we *create a private zone for women before they fully exit the toilet?*

Insight:

Without proper maintenance, toilets will become dirty very quickly.

How might we *design toilets to be easily serviced and maintained?*

Insight:

The people who live and work near a public toilet play a crucial role in directing users toward or away from it.

How might we *create an experience that will drive the surrounding community to encourage more use?*