

“HOW MIGHT WE” QUESTIONS

HOW MIGHT WE...?

WHY create how might we questions

“How might we” (HMW) questions are short questions that launch brainstorms. HMWs fall out of your point-of-view statement or design principles as seeds for your ideation. Create a seed that is broad enough that there are a wide range of solutions but narrow enough that the team has some helpful boundaries. For example, between the too narrow “HMW create a cone to eat ice cream without dripping” and the too broad “HMW redesign dessert” might be the properly scoped “HMW redesign ice cream to be more portable.” It should be noted, the the proper scope of the seed will vary with the project and how much progress you have made in your project work.

HOW to generate how might we questions

Begin with your Point of View (POV) or problem statement. Break that larger challenge up into smaller actionable pieces. Look for aspects of the statement to complete the sentence, “How might we...” It is often helpful to brainstorm the HMW questions before the solutions brainstorm. For example, consider the following POV and resulting HMW statements.

Challenge: Redesign the ground experience at the local international airport

POV: Harried mother of three, rushing through the airport only to wait hours at the gate, needs to entertain her playful children because “annoying little brats” only irritate already frustrated fellow passengers.

Amp up the good: HMW use the kids’ energy to entertain fellow passenger?

Remove the bad: HMW separate the kids from fellow passengers?

Explore the opposite: HMW make the wait the most exciting part of the trip?

Question an assumption: HMW entirely remove the wait time at the airport?

Go after adjectives: HMW we make the rush refreshing instead of harrying?

ID unexpected resources: HMW leverage free time of fellow passengers to share the load?

Create an analogy from need or context: HMW make the airport like a spa? Like a playground?

Play POV against the challenge: HMW make the airport a place that kids want to go?

Change a status quo: HMW make playful, loud kids less annoying?

Break POV into pieces: HMW entertain kids? HMW slow a mom down? HMW mollify delayed passengers?