



judging a design

- ☐ What problem does this solve, and for whom?
- ☐ Do they need it at all, or do they already have something that works?
- ☐ Can someone new tell what matters most and what to do next?
- ☐ Does it behave the way people expect, and can everyone use it?
- ☐ Are the words theirs?
- ☐ Does it work with how people think, and is it honest with them?
- ☐ How do we know? What have we tested, and what are we assuming?



before you test

- ☐ Write the chain: observation, problem statement, hypothesis
- ☐ Write the hypothesis as “If we ..., then ... because ...”
- ☐ Decide what result would change your mind
- ☐ Have the team write down their predictions



choosing your evidence

- ☐ Know which rung you're on: opinion, what people say, what they do with a prototype, what they do with the real thing
- ☐ Get as close to the real thing as you can afford
- ☐ Pick the cheapest test that could prove you wrong
- ☐ Run A/B tests on a live product with enough traffic
- ☐ Treat a survey score as a signal, then watch people to find the cause



running a usability test

- ☐ Recruit about five people per round, three or four per group if you have several
- ☐ Run a pilot with one person first
- ☐ Open with “I’m testing the screen, not you”
- ☐ Watch without guiding, and stay quiet when they get stuck
- ☐ Keep leading words out of your questions
- ☐ Watch the recordings as well as the pass rate



reading and sharing results

- ☐ Report small samples as counts (“5 of 10”), never percentages
- ☐ Say it plainly when a decision was wrong, and say “we”
- ☐ Reframe the question the evidence answers
- ☐ Say “we don’t know yet,” then say how you’ll find out



keeping pace

- ☐ Small changes go on judgment; features and major overhauls get validated
- ☐ Test in small, frequent rounds
- ☐ When the team is arguing, test it



before you start

- ☐ Work through the 5W Framework (Who, When, What, Why, How)
- ☐ Identify the real problem, not just the stated ask
- ☐ Understand your timeline and constraints
- ☐ Determine which activities will give you the most valuable insights



create your pdp

- ☐ Document the problem and objective
- ☐ Define KPIs and success metrics
- ☐ List activities and deliverables with t-shirt sizing
- ☐ Create a timeline working backwards from the deadline
- ☐ Identify who needs to be involved
- ☐ Share with stakeholders and get alignment
- ☐ Define what good output looks like before you delegate work



during execution

- ☐ Use your PDP as your weekly guide
- ☐ Communicate progress regularly (before meetings, after meetings, between meetings)
- ☐ Stay flexible and adjust when things change
- ☐ Document decisions and next steps in writing
- ☐ Run check-ins at the end of major activities



when things don't go as planned

- ☐ Identify your constraints (time, resources, knowledge, organizational)
- ☐ Determine what's most critical to keep vs. what can be cut or merged
- ☐ Do lean versions of important activities rather than skipping them entirely
- ☐ Communicate trade-offs clearly to stakeholders
- ☐ Take ownership and find creative solutions



fundamentals

- ☐ Every story needs conflict (problem), journey (process), and resolution (solution)
- ☐ Tailor your story to your audience's priorities



project storytelling (internal presentations)

- ☐ Use Problem → Solution for quick, clear updates
- ☐ Use Current State → Future State to show transformation
- ☐ Use Diverge, Then Converge to show your thinking and options
- ☐ Always explain the “why” behind your decisions
- ☐ Label estimates as estimates



case study storytelling (portfolio)

- ☐ Open with a short outcome summary, then follow the structure: Overview → Problem → Process → Solution → Impact
- ☐ Show the decisions and trade-offs you made
- ☐ Use numbers you can source and explain
- ☐ Show your role clearly (“I” not “we” for your contributions)
- ☐ Say who made what, and what you changed
- ☐ Be honest about challenges and what you learned
- ☐ Make it visually compelling and scannable



communication throughout projects

- ☐ Set clear expectations before meetings
- ☐ Document decisions after meetings
- ☐ Maintain visibility with regular updates
- ☐ Build your brand through consistent, clear communication



core beliefs

- ☐ You already have everything you need to be successful
- ☐ Your existence has purpose: use your unique gifts
- ☐ Success comes from belief + adaptability + work ethic



overcoming self-doubt

- ☐ Self-doubt often comes from uncertainty: focus on serving others
- ☐ Your value doesn't change based on someone else's inability to see it
- ☐ Knowledge comes with reps; understanding comes with time



mastering your craft

- ☐ Progression: Learning → Practice → Mastery → Teaching → Influencing
- ☐ Do the hard things until they become easy for you
- ☐ Hard work and setbacks lead to growth and strength
- ☐ Consistency over time creates extraordinary results



the tool was never the job

- ☐ Think of yourself as a handyman with a toolbox: choose tools based on the job
- ☐ Become tool-agnostic so you can adapt to any environment
- ☐ The tools will change, but the outcomes stay the same
- ☐ Learn new tools by building real projects, not just following tutorials



ownership mindset

- ☐ Take responsibility for outcomes, not just outputs
- ☐ Understand clouds (big picture) and dirt (execution details)
- ☐ Be proactive: solve problems before you're asked
- ☐ Give visibility to your work
- ☐ Own as much of the cycle as you choose, from research to shipped
- ☐ Own your mistakes and learn from them



the long game

- ☐ Everyone can win. It's not a zero-sum game
- ☐ Entry-level roles are competitive: show real work and the judgment behind it
- ☐ Explore briefly, then commit to a direction and build depth
- ☐ Build on fundamentals over time
- ☐ Give back and mentor others
- ☐ Keep showing up