

## SUBSCRIPTION BOX DESIGN PROJECT

The Subscription Box Design Project is a fast-paced project leading students through the design thinking process. Students pair up, show, and tell each other about their boxes, ideate, and make a new solution that is “useful and meaningful” to their partner. The project is broken down into specific steps with a worksheet packet that is easy for the facilitator to guide students through the process. Participants get the feel for a user-centered design approach, develop shared vocabulary, and get a quick taste of each design step. This project helps students see the value of engaging with real-people (customer) to help them ground their design decisions, the value of taking an iterative approach, while experiencing a bias towards action, as the project is fast paced with a limited amount of time.

### PREPARATION

- Print the Subscription Box Design Packet.
- Arrange your room to accommodate students sitting in pairs.

### INTRODUCTION

- The False Start – Do this before step 1. Tell students to “Design the IDEAL subscription box.” (The product can be easily changed to meet the needs of your students.)
  - This step is called the “false start,” but don’t tell the students it is a false start. You don’t want them to talk to their partner (customer) at this point, just dive right into developing a product for them. The intention is to contrast an abstract problem-centered approach to a human-centered design thinking approach, which they will experience during the rest of the project. Do not play music during this session to accentuate the difference. It is ok to let students feel a little rushed and some discomfort at this point. It is also natural at this point for some students to feel stuck and delay putting anything down on paper. This is a part of the lesson, so I would encourage you to stick to your timeline.
- When time is up (3 minutes), ask them the following questions and briefly discuss what happened during this session.
  - How did that round feel?
  - How could we improve the process? You might even get them to say that they need to talk to the user (customer) in order to meet their needs.
  - Did anyone attempt to get feedback from their partner (customer)?
- Explain that this round was a typical problem-solving approach, taking a given problem, working using your own opinions and experiences to guide you, and with a solution in mind to be designed. Now tell them they are going to try a different approach, a human-centered design thinking approach.
- If you have not covered the Design Thinking Process, this may be a good time to give them some background knowledge on the process, or you may choose to let them experience it first and discuss Design Thinking on the backend.
  - **Pro-tip:** Playing background music is a fantastic way to set the creative atmosphere and signal the starting time and ending time of each session.

<b>ACTIVITY TIME</b>	60+ Minutes
<b>FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES</b>	
Integrity	Knowledge
Opportunity	
<b>KEY CONCEPTS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Iterate</li> <li>• Prototype</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Subjective Value</li> <li>• Ideation</li> </ul>	
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscription Box Design Packet</li> <li>• Colored pencils or markers</li> <li>• Empowered Currency - Printed or Virtual</li> </ul>	

### ACTIVITY STEPS

1. Have students decide which partner is student A and which is student B. Have student “A” interview student “B” for 4 minutes.

- a. The goal is to acquire as much knowledge as possible about “B’s” subscription box wants, needs, requirements, product use(s), specifications, preferences etc. The most important part of designing for someone is to gain “empathy” for that person. Then have students switch roles and repeat the interview.
2. Have students repeat the process with student “A” getting 3 minutes to question student “B”. Give students a “pep talk” about digging deeper and really looking for ways to make the subscription box user experience “special” for the customer. (Yes, think outside the box.) Interviewers should try to dig for feelings and stories about the users’ experiences. Forget about the box, try to find out what makes your customer feel “fist pumping happy,” what is important to them.
3. Then have students switch roles and repeat the second interview in the packet. Encourage them to dig deeper and ask different than in the first interview time.
4. Both partners will take 3 minutes to summarize their findings by writing down how they perceive their customers “goals and wishes” and “insights” into their partners expectations. Does the designer see something about their partners (customers) experience that maybe they do not? Think about your partners physical and emotional needs.
5. Both partners will be given 3 minutes to write a point-of-view statement summarizing their customers need(s). Specifically, state: what is the meaningful challenge (problem) you are taking on and solving for your customer? It should feel like a problem(s) worth tackling, things that really make your customer so happy they will tell everyone.
6. Have students write their problem statement, then give students 5 minutes to sketch 5 different solutions to their problem, or 5 different ways to satisfy their customer with their subscription box design. Be sure to have students quickly label any key features or benefits illustrated by their sketches.
  - a. This step is about volume and ideas, not about evaluating the idea(s), that comes later. Encourage wild ideas in this step. You may want to remind them they are not just designing a subscription box; they are solving a problem and/or meeting the unique needs of their customer.
7. Now it is time for students to share their ideas with their partner. Partner “A” will share their ideas with Partner “B” for 5 minutes and seek feedback from “B”, then switch and partner “B” will get 5 minutes. Both partners should be sure to take notes on their partner’s likes/dislikes and build on their ideas, as well as look for new insights.
  - a. Be sure to tell students this step is not just about validating their ideas, but about listening to capture their partner’s feelings and reactions to their ideas. They should fight the urge to defend their ideas.
8. Students should now reflect on what they have learned both about their partner and their solutions. From this new understanding have students sketch a new idea in 3 minutes. (Students will typically moan about the 3 minutes, but this should be a quick rough draft, focused on their key ideas.
  - a. Tell them this solution may be a variation on previous ideas or may be something completely new. Although they do not have much time in this step, they will need to use their time wisely and include as much detail and color as possible.
9. Students will have 7 minutes to sketch their prototype. Remind them that they are trying to illustrate the subscription box in such a way as to pique the interest of their customer.
10. Ask students to share their solution and feedback. Give partner “A” 4 minutes to share their solution and gather feedback from “B”, the switch and “B” will be given 4 minutes. Remind students their prototype (sketch) is not “valuable,” but the feedback and new insights are. Design is always about the user! Students should be sure to record, “what worked,” “what could be improved,” “questions their partner has,” and “innovative ideas.”

## ACTIVITY DEBRIEF

### PRINCIPLES + MARKETS

- Who had a partner who created something you really liked? Why did you like it?
- Designers, how did talking to your partner inform your design? How did testing and getting feedback inform your design?
- Can we draw any connections between the design-thinking process and the Foundational Principles? Explain.
- Design Thinking is used in all fields (careers), everyone is a designer. Think about a career field that you may be interested in. What might design-thinking look like in the career field you are thinking about? Share.
- How might the lessons you learned when designing something as simple as a subscription box apply to designing solutions that address the problems your community faces? (Knowledge, Passion, Win-Win Focus)
- What local businesses might have used the design-thinking process to decide the products and/or services it offers? What makes you think that?

- Were you surprised by what your customer found as valuable? How would the box design have differed if you did not consider what your customer finds valuable but only what you find valuable? (Subjective Value)
- What were some of the incentives or motivations for your customer choosing/describing the box that you created for them? I.e., were they seeking a solution for a product, service, or idea they had?
- What questions did you ask your customer to learn more about their state of dissatisfaction that led you to your box/product design? How were you able to discover what your customer's ideal box would be? (Knowledge)
- How did your prototypes change?
- Excellent job creating some great subscription box designs. How could we protect your ideas/designs so we can take them to market? (Property rights; patent, trademark, copyright)

## MINDSET

- Given the ability to jump into the design process before having the knowledge to interview your customer, how did you overcome obstacles with each approach?
- What was the most challenging part of the process? Did the short time frame pose a barrier?
- How did your relationship with your customer empower or stifle your confidence in exercising ownership in your decision making to develop the ideal product box for them? How does an uncordial or distanced relationship with your customer impact your designs and decision-making?
- Did you experience a sense of unease as you started the project? What framework for decision-making did you utilize to complete the project?



To access SUBSCRIPTION BOX DESIGN PROJECT online:

- Tap [HERE](#) from any online device OR Scan this QR Code with your mobile device:

