Circular strategies workshop
Objectives of this workshop

- Redesign an everyday product by reflecting on the needs it serves and using the circular strategy cards to brainstorm new solutions that have a positive impact.
- Zoom in on user needs and out to the system level.
- Capture the essence of the circular design approach and learn how you can apply this workshop in your own context and work.
- Be creative and have fun.
Overview

Understand
the user
the system

Define
the design challenge
your intention

Release
Build your narrative
Design to release

Make
Ideate
Design & prototype

An iterative process. Always in beta.
Understand
Understand the user

Importance of this step

Empathise with users. Go beyond biases and own assumptions.

Gain deep insights and understand what the user *really* needs.

Example

What needs does a car address?
And a chair?
Understand
functional and emotional needs
Choose a product to redesign
Pick

a user in your team

The user should be an actual user of the product. While you typically would interview many users in a project, we will focus our design process today on this specific user.
Interview the user. Take notes on post its as you listen. Get as many insights as possible.

- Tell us about the last time you used/bought/ate ____.
- Can you show us / walk us through your routine?
- What is important when it comes to ____?
- What are the best/worst parts?
- Can you tell us why that is important? Why? Why? Why?

Tools: “Explore” template
Understand
the user

2 minutes left
Understand the system

Importance of this step

Map your system to identify patterns, feedback loops and intervention points.

Future proof your design by doing research across the system and stakeholders.

Example

Define
Define

Importance of this step

Frame a clear brief of the design challenge after the UNDERSTAND phase

Clarify intentions for the design process: on a user and systems level

Channel the creative energy during the IDEATION phase
Define your design challenge

Tips

Reflect on your insights

What is your design challenge?

Take a post it. Fill in the statement

Tools: Post-it

This yellow thing is a post-it

[User] needs ___ because ___ [compelling insight]
Circular Economy Principles

- Design out waste & pollution
- Keep products & materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems
Pick

a circular economy advocate

The advocate reminds the group of the 3 circular economy principles throughout the design process.

- Design out waste & pollution
- Keep products & materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems
Define your intention

How does my design make a positive contribution?

How does my design fit within the broader system?

Is my design fit for the circular economy? How does it affect material flows? What happens “next” & after use with my design?
Define your design challenge

2 minutes left
Make: Ideate
Ideate

Importance of this step

Divergent thinking. Find innovative new ideas by combining different inspirations, provocations and strategies

Use the circular economy principles and strategies to support the creative process
**Product as a Service**

Offers that focus on leasing access to a solution instead of selling ownership of a product. Services can reduce upfront costs for users, create higher customer retention, and incentivize investment in new, resource-efficient technologies.

**Product Life Extension**

Extending the lifecycle of products to ensure they remain economically useful through remanufacturing, repairing, separating, or smart material choices.

**Closed loop / Take back**

Providing a service to collect old or used products and recovering the value in the material by recycling or reusing them to make new products.

**Modularity**

A design that divides a product into separate parts that can then be independently upgraded or replaced.

**Embedding intelligence**

Building technology into materials or products to enable user data and generate valuable insights to improve the customer experience.

**Smart material choices**

Considering a product's end of life treatment in the choice of materials and inputs, i.e., durable, biodegradable, recycled, or recyclable materials.
Before we start

Here some principles that foster the creative process.

1. Defer judgement
2. Encourage wild ideas
3. Build on the ideas of others
4. Stay focused on the topic
5. One conversation at a time
6. Be visual
7. Go for quantity

Source: ideou.com/pages/brainstorming
Ideate

Tips

Get familiar with the **strategy cards**. How can you use them to address your design challenge?

Take 2 minutes to come up with your **own ideas on post its**

Then convene as a group and try different **card combinations**

Keep the **principles of a circular economy** in mind

Tools: **“Ideate” template, 6 strategy cards**
Ideate

2 minutes left
Pick one idea

Importance of this step

Convergent thinking. Reflect back on the design challenge: Which of the ideas (or a combination of them) best addresses the design challenge?

Which idea addresses the user needs AND is fit for the circular economy?

Time for the “circular economy advocate” and the “user” to contribute.
Coffee break
Make: Design & Prototype
Design & prototype

Importance of this step

Build to learn: Make ideas tangible to learn and communicate.

Sacrificial concepts: give people something to react to.

Prototyping: Test ideas. Get feedback from your user early.

Iterate. Iterate. Iterate.
Design & prototype

**Tips**

**Illustrate your idea.** Bring your idea to life

Use extra paper to build a *3D model* with tape, colours, scissors etc.

**Fill in the template** and refine your idea

**Tools:** “Design & prototype” template, paper, scissors, tape
Design & prototype

2 minutes left
Release

Importance of this step

“Always in beta”. Release is the start of the next iteration. Embed feedback loops.

Build a compelling narrative. How does your design create opportunities for different stakeholders?

Design is never done. Allow for evolution in your design over time (modularity, modifications etc) and along the value chain.
Release

Tips

Prepare to share with the other groups

Unleash your creativity. Role playing. Storytelling.

Use your prototype

Tools: Your prototype
Share your idea
Reflections & feedback
INFINITY

Refillable, customisable, sustainable mascara applied to the lashes with your fingertip. This design is Patent Pending.

https://issuu.com/philippabridges/docs/portfolio_pippa_bridges
WE ARE CIRCULAR

100% RECYCLED
All of our products are made from post-consumer waste (trash).

100% RECYCLABLE
Made with single materials, we'll even buy our products back from you.

100% NON-TOXIC
No glues, resins, paints or added chemicals.

https://www.pentatonic.com/en_uk/
Redesigning delivery models

Brian Bauer
Sustainability Manager at Algramo

https://newplasticseconomy.org/projects/innovation-prize
Redesigning take-away products

Tom Chan
Co-founder of TrioCup

https://newplasticseconomy.org/projects/innovation-prize
Redesigning product-service systems

Safia Qureshi

Founder and CEO of CupClub

https://newplasticseconomy.org/projects/innovation-prize
Innovating materials: Sachets

Rodrigo Gonzalez
Co-founder and CEO of Delta

https://newplasticseconomy.org/projects/innovation-prize
Innovating materials: Sachets

David Christian
Co-founder of Evoware

https://newplasticseconomy.org/projects/innovation-prize
Next steps
Run a workshop with your team

Workshops

Circular Strategies
Are there different or better ways to meet user needs by applying circular strategies?

Circular Ventures
In a circular economy, the most interesting opportunities may lie between organisations.
Join #CircularDesigners on Instagram
Join the community: tiny.cc/circulardesigners

Circular Design Guide

Start a new conversation in this group

Marc Barto • 2nd
Creative Economy Programme Lead at British Council

Interesting opportunity for designers based in London: Join us for a workshop on circular design at the Design Museum

Circular Strategies workshop

12,056 members

Invite members

About this group
This group is about design & the circular economy. It’s run jointly by IDEO and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Share your learnings, questions & success stories here.

We would like to thank players of People’s Show more

Group rules
Welcome to the Circular Design Guide group, a network of people who see design differently and are co-creating the circular economy based on the Circular Design Guide > www.circulardesignguide.com
Thank you!
Facilitator guide

Tips and additional resources
Before the workshop

Give introduction to the circular economy

Give an introduction to circular design

Select items to redesign
Timings: 2 hour workshop

10 min - Welcome, objectives and overview
15 min - Understand
10 min - Define
15 min - Ideate

---- Coffee break ----

20 min - Design and prototype
10 min - Release: Why it matters; prepare sharing
10 min - Share
10 min - Reflections, feedback and examples
5 min - Next steps and wrap-up