

Powerful Question Design Guide

Step 1: Name the Purpose

What is the quest? What is the problem that needs solving, or the conversation that needs to happen? What do you need this question to do for you? Start by writing down the problem you are trying to solve.

Step 2: Design A Prototype Question

Now, reframe the purpose or problem as a design question:

- **W Construction.** What is the right “W” for this question (Why, How, What, Who, When, Where, or Which)? Remember the power of “How might we...?”
- **Scope.** Is my question narrow or broad? Specific or general? Find the right fit.
- **Constraints and Context.** How do I need to take into account the constraints and context of the problem and solution? What would make sense for this situation?

Step 3: Step Back and Reflect

- **Focus.** Is my question focussed on ultimate impact? Is it clear and concise? Is it jargony? Is it just enough, without any extra? Does it get to the heart of the matter? Is it to the point?
- **Diversity.** Does my question allow for a variety of voices and solutions? Can my target audience see themselves in the question? Who does it exclude? Who do I need it to exclude?
- **Assumptions.** What bias shows up? What assumptions have I built into the question? Do they help? Do I want them built in?
- **Genuine.** Is the question for real? Is it open and honest? Does it already have an answer?

Step 4: Refine It Until It Sings

Powerful Question Design Map

