



DESIGNER'S PRODUCTIVITY

Siyuan Ma / Archana Belani

26/11/2016



Hello!

We are Sam and Archana

We deconstructed your interview into an AEIOU (activities, environment, Interactions, Objects, Users) framework. Presented here are just **activities and touchpoints** (objects). At the end of the presented we have scanned pages of the individual interviewee frameworks.

Research plan

designer's productivity

what makes a designer productive ?

Frame your problem

1. Stakeholders

Design companies

2. Objectives

Identify ways for designers to become more productive

3. Project Overview

We will design a set of methods through which we can understand designers' productivity.

QUESTIONS

The questions were broken into 4 main divisions:

1. About you - general information including what motivates them, work experience, daily routine, etc.
2. Topic specific - how do they define creativity and productivity, how do they stay motivated, goals, etc.
3. Methods used - understanding how they will navigate through a project in general
4. Closing - how often they take breaks, etc.

To see details of the questions see Appendix.

Research plan methodology

Research

Contextual Inquiries

1. Contextual inquiries conducted of one designer with less than 1+ years of design experience and of another designer with 10+ years of design experience

Analysis

Interviews & Surveys

1. Respondent-based interviews
2. Purposeful sampling of 8 designers with minimum 1+ year design experience (2 numbers) to max 10+ years (6 numbers).
3. Formal email / will requests
4. Intrinsic - Explain to them that their support and idea could help us design/identify methods that could help designers to be productive.
5. Survey of 5 less experienced designers

AEIOU

1. Initial framework used was a journey map, however the framework failed to explain the nuances needed to generate meaningful insights.
2. The second successful attempt was the AEIOU.



1.

AEIOU FRAMEWORK

After interviewing 7 experienced designers we constructed an activity process. The key activities describes - **the perceived process of what makes a productive designer.**

AEIOU

activities & touch points (more experienced designers)

Activities	values & attitude	goals	process	routine → to-do → motivation	teamwork
Description	<i>Focussed priorities are internalised and experienced through actions, likes & dislikes.</i>	<i>Thinking about the big picture and asking more questions to further clarify the actual needs to be fulfilled.</i>	<i>Finding a system that works for you through trial and error, experimentation</i>	<i>A routine is not a set schedule but is a combination of fixed and flexible structures. It helps designers operate more sustainably and not burn out. It helps in keeping oneself motivated.</i>	<i>Teamwork is a necessity and is combination of social relationships and getting things done.</i>
Touchpoints	No clear method methods	Dairy, a specific notebook for noting and tracking goals	Excel sheet	<div>To-do list<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Post-it2. Notebooks3. Whiteboard4. Paper5. Google Keeps6. Teux Deux</div> <div>Motivation<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Various online websites and blogs2. Walks in nature, etc.3. Events - both design & non-design4. Networking and socializing5. Reading, exercising, etc.</div>	<div>Inspiring environments in and out of office</div> <div>Having a team building culture and rituals.</div>

AEIOU

activities>evidence>insight

Activities

values & attitude

goals

process

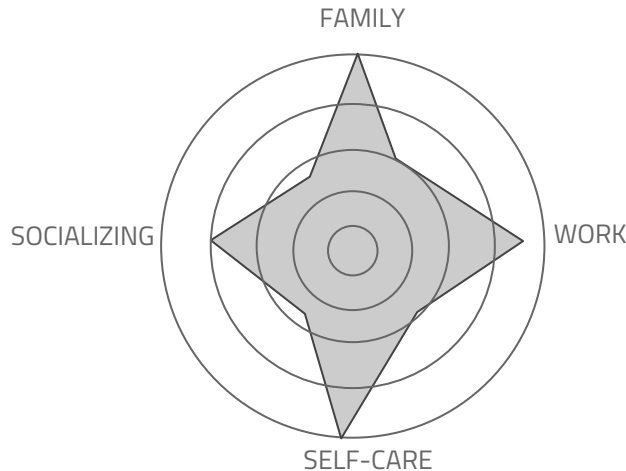
routine

→ to-do

→ motivation

teamwork

Evidence



"The experience I had in sports in competitive sports, is very helpful for my career. Here I learned how to fail and get back on track, to improve and learn from failure. It takes a lot of hard work and discipline. Also mostly what kind of values you find in your inner center. In terms of what you can put up with in your workplace, some boundaries, where to go, etc." His goal right now is to discover new areas of himself."

M, 40+ years,
Full-time Student,
15+ experience.

Design principle

Focussed priorities:

Productive designers have awareness of one's values. That is translated into having 3 to max 4 areas of focussed priorities, which is converted into their goals.

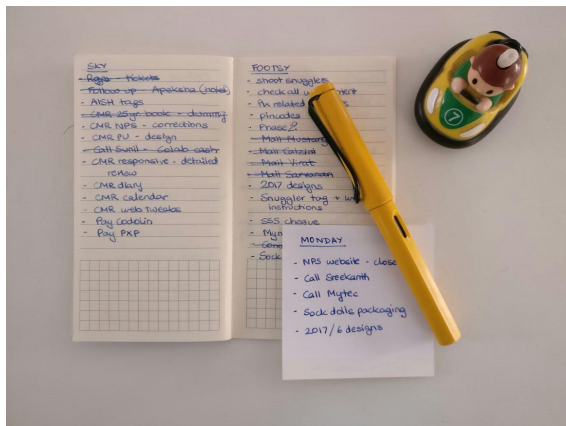
"Your values are the things that you believe are important in the way you live and work.." Mindtools.com

AEIOU

activities > evidence > insight

Activities values & attitude goals process routine → to-do → motivation teamwork

Evidence



"So I used to maintain to 2 separate to-do lists, or rather I maybe 10 separate to-do lists, but not I have realized that is easier to merge everything into one. So I have one list which would has everything. This is what I would call my master to-do lists. And then I put a post-It over that for everyday, so I on a Monday I will put a post-it over my master to-do list for all the things that are kind of screaming out at me. So I create a mini-to-do lists for everyday of the week like that."

S, 30+ years,
Full-time Entrepreneur,
12+ experience.

Design principle

Way of doing:

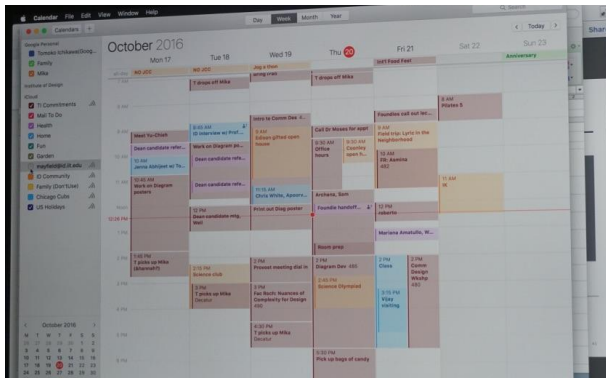
Productive designers create a visual dashboard of their goals, broken down into manageable tasks. They identify a unique way of doing things to achieve their end goal - like a master to-do list or follow company processes.

AEIOU

activities>evidence>insight

Activities values & attitude goals process routine → to-do → motivation teamwork

Evidence



"Routines - there is no like set schedule, so sort of having a set schedule, I think this is what I need to do for myself. As a way to, I mean it is not a routine, it won't get repeated. But routines are a way of having certainty, right. Since I don't have a routine, I find other ways to have certainty. Well this is not really planning. This is more about you know, something comes up I find the time, 'Oh! I have a slot here I'll put it here.' Rather than juggling time, this sort of becomes my boss, it tells me what time to go where (laughing) and there is certain amount of comfort in that and if I can stick to it that's okay and if I can't stick to it then delays happen and that makes me stressed out."

T, 40+ years,
Full-time Faculty,
20+ experience.

Design principle

Flexible routines:

Routines for productive designers are not set schedules but flexible structures which guide how they should use their time.

activities>evidence>insight

Activities

values & attitude

goals

process

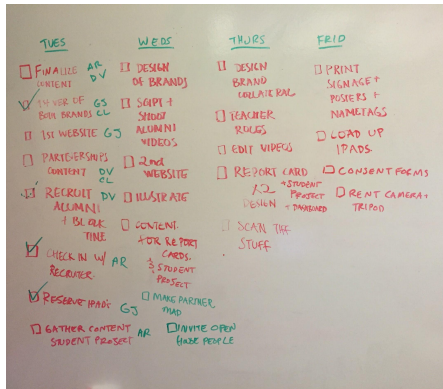
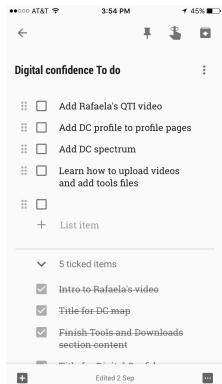
routine

to-do

motivation

teamwork

Evidence



"Some days are super structured and planned. I am the biggest fan of to-do lists. So I have many apps, physical post-its and whiteboard both for myself and my team. I think it is important to get it visible. I love to start the day with a stand-up with my team where we together make a group to-do or we have a shared digital to-do list. Keeping it clear who and what needs to get do. Some days are not structured. What will happen will happen. Because I am so familiar of the process, and one of the values is to embrace ambiguity and to trust the process.

D, 30+ years,
Full-time Employee,

Design principle

To-do:

To create a simple to-do list of the most important things to be done. A productive day for designers is completing a combination of priorities.

AEIOU

activities>evidence>insight

Activities

values & attitude

goals

process

routine



to-do



motivation

teamwork

Evidence

From a productivity standpoint, I like to get things done, cross them off my list. I am motivated to get things done by deadlines. I'm also motivated to try to get a lot done in my day, and I'm usually most satisfied when it's a mix of work and "life" things, like exercising, making music, cooking food, etc. I know that I'll sleep better at night if I get a lot done, and that my tomorrow will be better if I get a lot done today. That sort of thing. At a higher level, I'm motivated to produce high quality work because I always want to put in a strong effort and be proud of the work I put out into the world. And at an even higher level...I'd like to make a positive impact on the world (although "world" sounds too presumptuous. I'd like to have a positive impact on at least one aspect of people's lives in some community). That keeps me motivated to keep learning, practicing, thinking about what I might do after ID. Motivation is anything that keeps you going. It could be a great meal at the end of a hard day of work. It could be a grade. It could be building your reputation. It's important for me to find motivation every day. Whether it's just to make a big list of things to get done and cross each one off, or to know that I added value on a group project. Motivation builds energy and can help maintain focus; it separates you from someone who is just going through the motions.

Design principle

Motivation:

Productive designers are fueled by two kinds of motivation. One, is a long term reward based motivation. Two, a daily sustainability building motivation which prevents them from burning out.

AEIOU

activities > evidence > insight

Activities

values & attitude

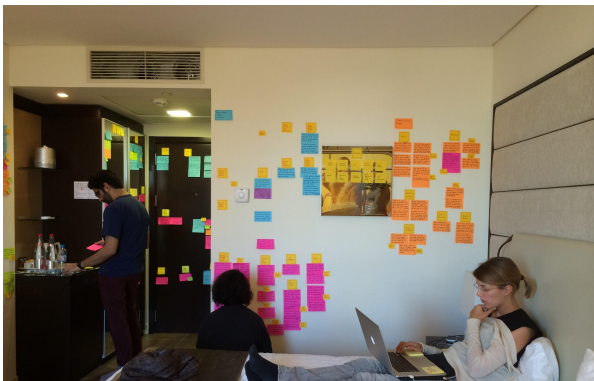
goals

process

routine → to-do → motivation

teamwork

Evidence



"I hate teamwork, I say that but it is not really true." It was interesting to observe his rule of engagement, where he won't attend a meeting if the team members did not complete their work.

A, 40+ years old,
Full-time student,
15+ years experience

"I always would default to teamwork because I always think I am not the smartest person in the room."

D, 30+ years old,
Full-time employee,
10+ years of experience

Design principle

Teamwork:

**To succeed as a team
productive designers set
ground rules, build
empathy towards and
have synchronised
values.**

AEIOU

activities (less experienced designers)

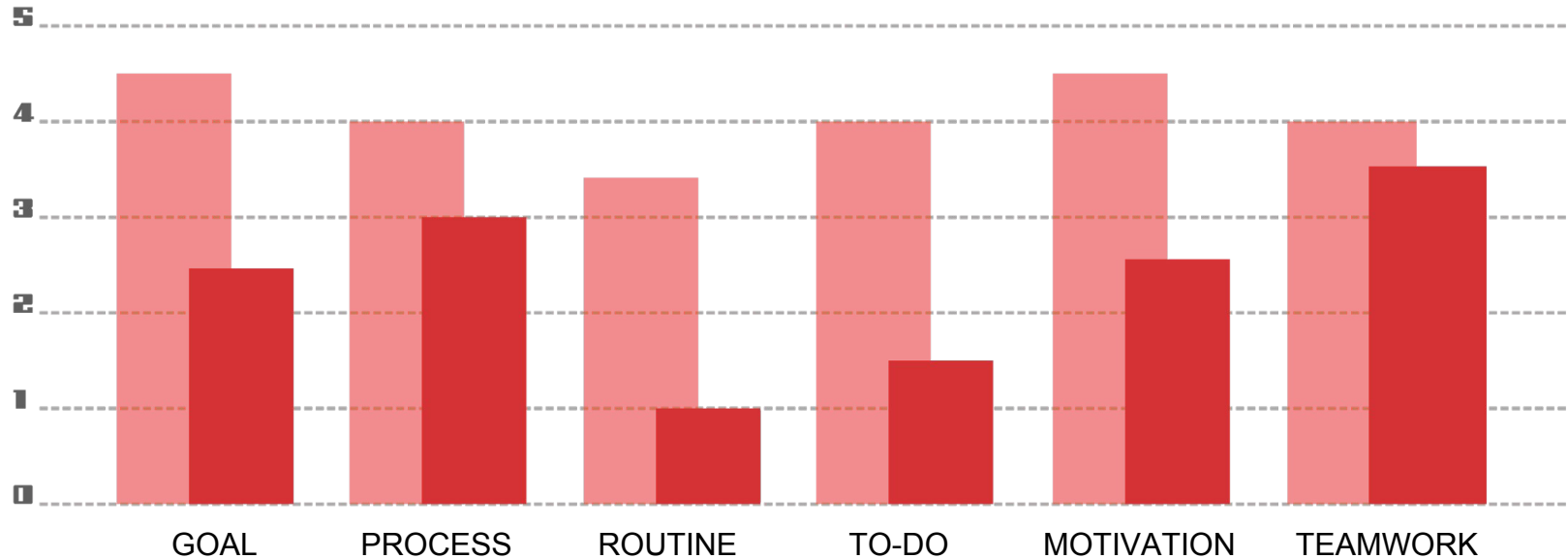
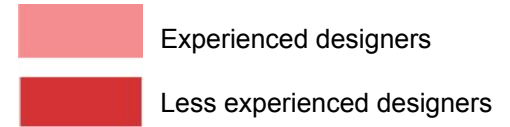
Activities	values & attitude	goals	process	routine → to-do → motivation	teamwork
Description	<i>Less experienced designers without experience lack self-awareness and self awareness</i>	<i>The goals are more like aspirations</i>	<i>The process is more concrete if provided by the company, and less visible if self-driven</i>	<i>A less experienced designer operates more on a day to day basis.</i>	<i>Less experienced designers are highly dependent on teams, and guidance.</i>
Touchpoints	No clear method methods	No clear method methods	No clear method methods, until provided by company	<div>To-do list<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Post-it2. Notebooks3. Whiteboard4. Paper5. Project management systems</div> <div>Motivation<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Various online websites and blogs2. Video games, movies, etc.3. Socializing with friends, etc.</div>	Having a team building culture and rituals.

AEIOU

activities (less experienced designers)

Activities	values & attitude	aspirations	process	routine to-do	motivation	teamwork
<i>Description</i>	<i>Less experienced designers without experience lack self-awareness and self awareness</i>	<i>The goals are more like aspirations</i>	<i>The process is more concrete if provided by the company, and less visible if self-driven</i>	<i>A less experienced designer operates more on a day to day basis.</i>		<i>Less experienced designers are highly dependent on teams, and guidance.</i>
B, (24 yrs full-time interaction designer)		"My priority is my career, and umm food."	"The company culture influenced me a lot, it is a huge difference from being a student." "I spend 80% time meet people and 20% time do my own work. "	"This is my workspace, I use stickers as a reminder to track my working progress.I plan 4-5 days schedule ahead, and try to fit my schedule with others."	"Listening to the music, playing video games and watching movie is my creativity sources." "Challenging job and creating new thing motivate me."	"It is better to work in a team when you need to generate idea or do other creative works."My productivity is highly rely on others, because I works in team usually."
S, (25 yrs, full-time student)		"I want to make money and have fun, and find a clear direction of my career."	"The study process in school really makes me more productive. It helps me manage my work in order, but I lose direction when the process become flexible."	"I don't manage time." "I create a to-do list by using google calendar, and often I could not follow it strictly. I accept invitation from others to fill my schedule."	"I chose to be a designer because I want to make cool stuff."	"I feel like I could learn a lot from my teammates, I like having conversation with others."

Performance



The performance of experienced designers and less experienced designers in the key activities.

Compare & contrast

Insights & findings

	EXPERIENCED DESIGNERS	LESS EXPERIENCED DESIGNERS
GOAL	1.High focus on 3 to 4 categories of their life. 2.Having goals helps them feel purposeful and motivated.	They have goals but lack a structure to execute them on a day to day bases.
PROCESS	Create their own methods to do things.	Follow the process provided by others to work, their own processes are not built well.
ROUTINE	1.Routines are flexible, and are inspired by the frameworks they have set for themselves. 2. Take time to manage their personal life.	Personal time is not managed well (lack of balance).
TO-DO	1.Monitor their to-do list on a regular bases. 2.They make a to-do list for their personal life also.	Take less time to monitor their to-do list, and their to-do list are depend on others.
MOTIVATION	Motivation helps to become more sustainable and not burn out, and stay inspired and creative.	Usually do not motivate themselves intentionally.
TEAMWORK	Ttake leadership position and set “ground rules” or boundaries in teamwork.	Could not track learning from teammates.

Other general **Insights & findings**

The most experienced designer created a “tool kit”, systemizing her methods, creating more efficiency in the way she does things.

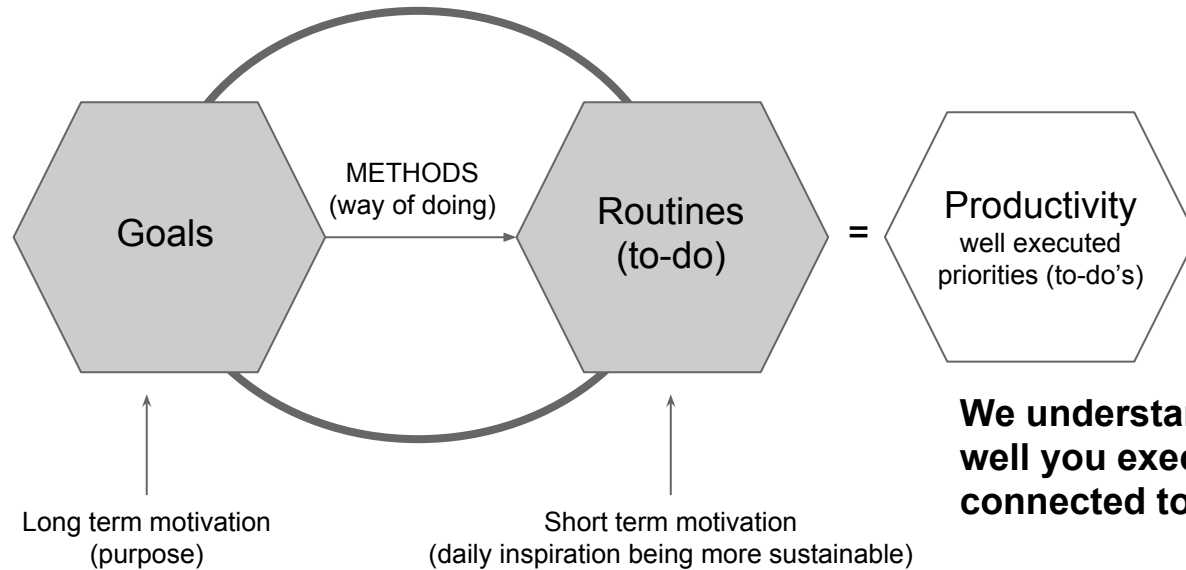
The more experienced designers handle much larger responsibilities and more things to do both on a personal and professional front.

Though many interviewee spoke about knowing themselves, they lack a specific system/method to track learning.

Nature of work determine the productivity process.

What is productivity?

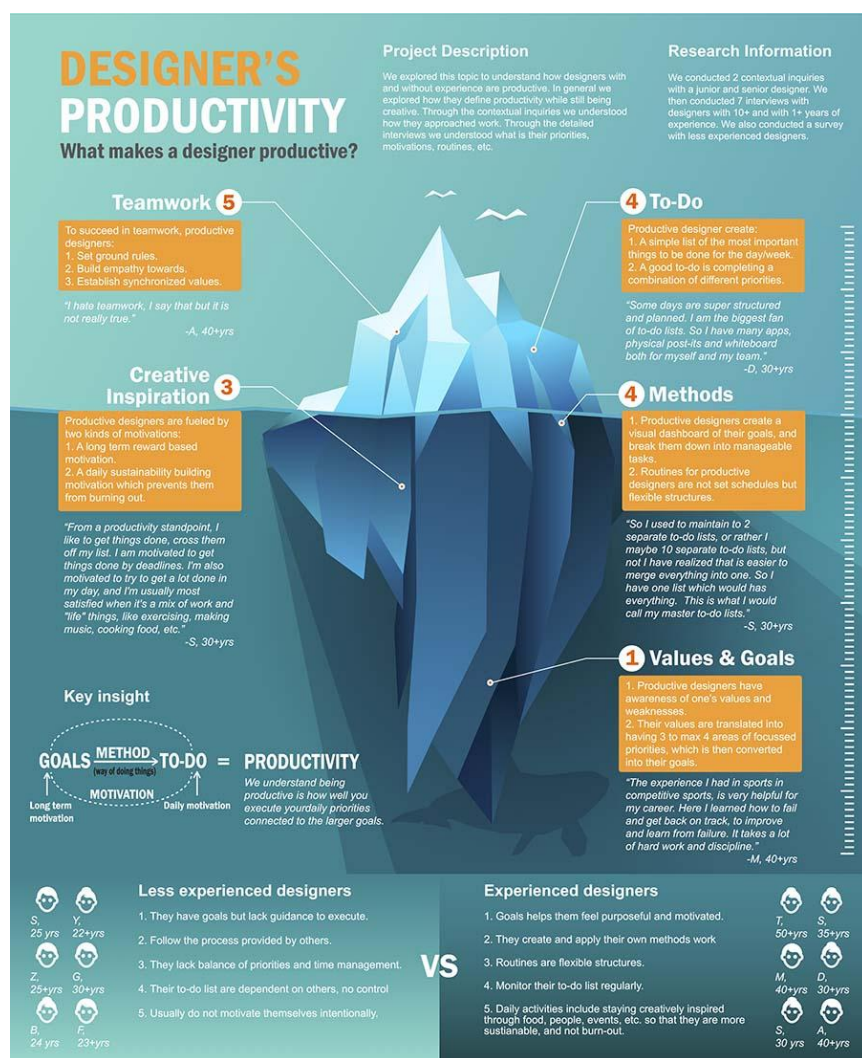
productivity theory



We understand being productive is how well you execute your daily priorities connected to the larger goals.

The process describes how we feel you become more productive as designers.

What makes a designer productive ?



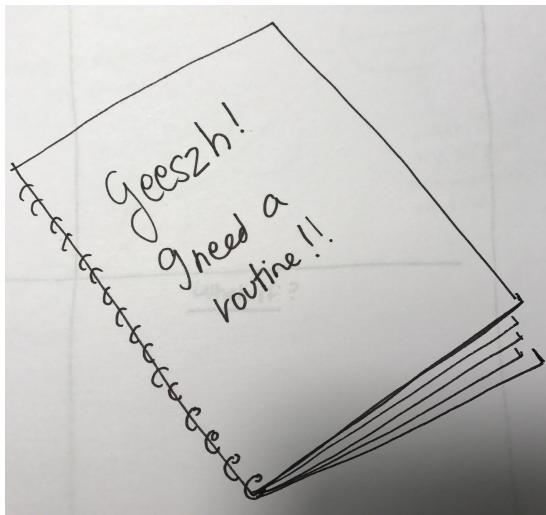
AEIOU

opportunities

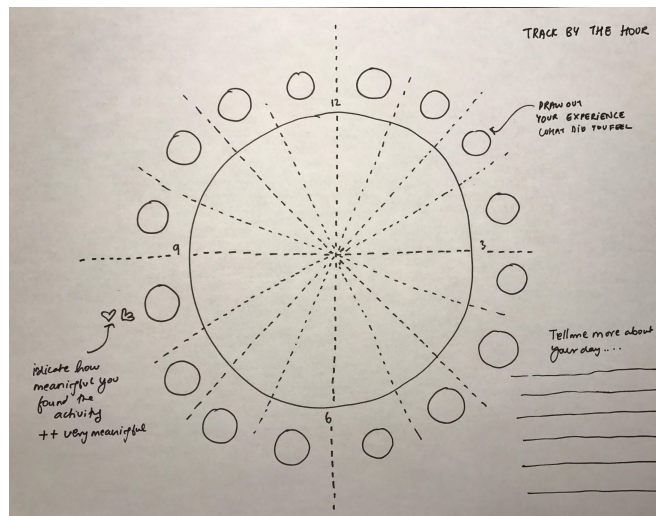
Activities	values & attitude	goals	process	routine → to-do → motivation	teamwork
Description	<i>Focussed priorities are internalised and experiences through actions</i>	<i>Thinking about the big picture and asking more questions to further clarify the actual needs to be fulfilled.</i>	<i>Finding a system that works for you through trial and error, experimentation</i>	<i>A routine is not a set schedule but is a combination of fixed and flexible structures. It helps designers operate more sustainably and not burn out. It helps in keeping oneself motivated.</i>	<i>Teamwork is a necessity and is combination of social relationships and getting things done.</i>
Opportunities	Thinking evolves through time and experience.	Market saturation with goal formation information.	A visible problem area especially for less experienced designers	<p>Related to process:</p> <p>Creating awareness - Prototyping experiences</p> <p>Adopting values such as - embracing ambiguity, etc.</p> <p>Tracking measurables - and failing forward</p>	Market saturation with goal formation information.

Geezh! I Need A Routine!

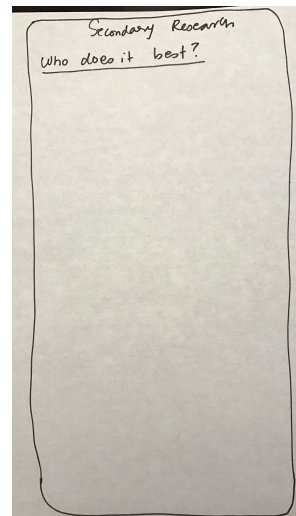
process opportunities



Journal probe



Probe activity engaging the designers to track time for a week minimum



Secondary research

Geezh! I Need A Routine!

process opportunities

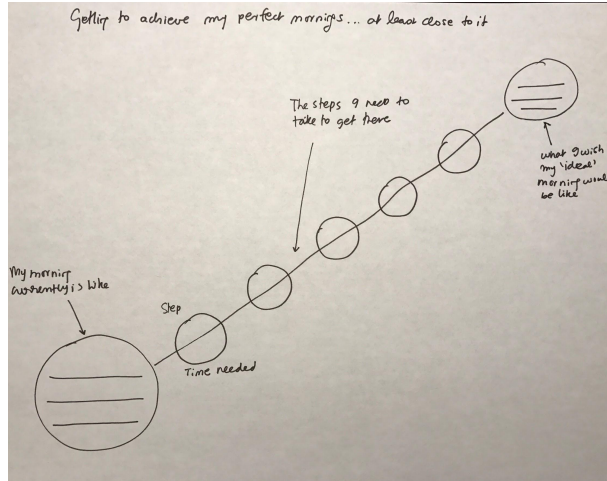
Describe your idealistic morning
What is it now

I like about it

I wish...

What if we...

Feedback capturing



Pathway creation

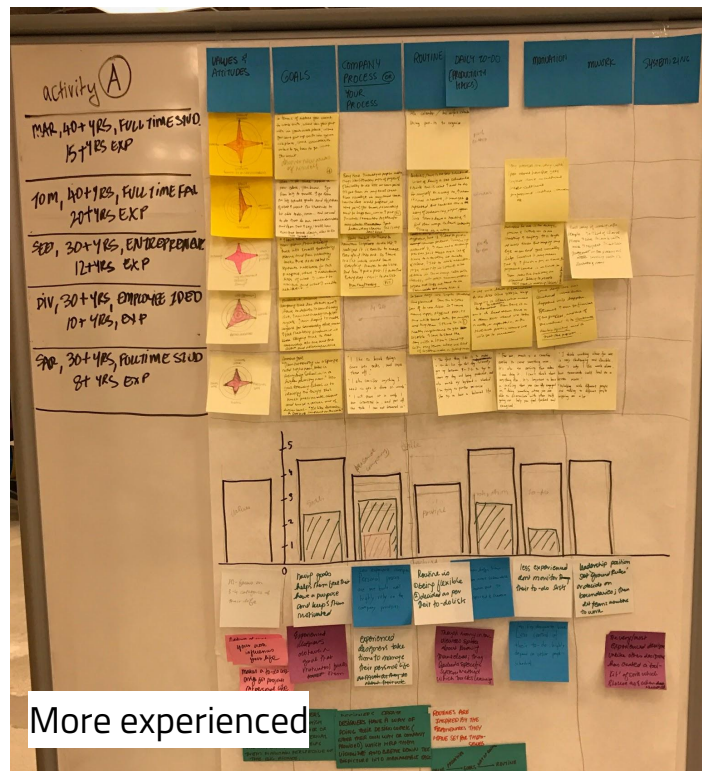
Prototyping Step 1 for the next 21 days...

Day 1
date: 26/11/2016

I like	I wish
Aha!	What if?

Prototyping and testing

The image shows a person's workspace with a large whiteboard and several sticky notes. The whiteboard features a complex diagram with a central flowchart and various labels. The flowchart includes boxes labeled 'Goal', 'Insight', 'Dependence', and 'OK', connected by arrows. To the left of the flowchart is a vertical axis with labels: 'very clear', 'highly focused', 'no goal', 'ambitious', 'very clear cut systems', and 'Insight'. Above the flowchart, there are several yellow sticky notes with text: 'YOUR PROJECTS', 'ASPIRATION', 'COMPANY PROCESS', 'WEEKLY TO DO', 'TEAM WORK', and 'MOTIVATION'. The person is partially visible on the left, wearing a blue shirt and a black cap.



Process

key reflections

I LIKE...

- The interviewees, all of them
- The process of the project - see evidence of our progress
- The insights we drew, the findings!
- Using the right framework, the journey map just didn't draw any insights, however the AEIOU created a lot
- The way the same topic was filtered through different lenses like CI, Interviews, journey maps, AEIOU, etc.
- I feel we really now know how to conduct interviews now - the equipment needed, notes, cues, etc.
- I had a very co-operative partner, willing to do extra work! Love!

WHAT IF...

- If we didn't consider ourselves as designers?
- What if we remained on our topic of stressful designers?
- We had interviewed less experienced designers?
- We had more time to generate further insights, to have time to write principles better, which could lead to more quality insights
- We had more brainstorming sessions with people who are experts, new to the project who brought in fresh perspectives?
- We had secondary research that support and build upon our findings?

I WISH...

- There was a better way to go through sound records
- Had more interviews with more hands-on designers vs. strategic designers
- Could do a better job in presentations - especially of complex ideas
- I didn't get so involved with the topic, personally I started questioning my own views on productivity, my experience, etc.

AHA...

- One hour presentation kill people
- A flexible routine is all I need
- I know myself better, especially after I interviewed my own self
- Archana is 43 years old????
- It boils down to know thyself - the more you are aware of yourself, better your progress and growth
- I feel the potential opportunities in many areas like - systemizing, applying your learnings, developing routines, etc.
- It is all about balance - like riding a bicycle..

Appendices

Secondary

Values & priorities - mindtools.com

Flow - <http://www.pursuit-of-happiness.org/history-of-happiness/mihaly-csikszentmihalyi/>

Maslow Hierarchy of Needs - <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

How to design a ritual - <https://medium.com/stanford-d-school/how-do-you-design-a-ritual-e4aeb3e17198#jhe770t6f>

Primary

Presentations - Probes / Contextual Inquiry / Interviews / AEIOU



Thanks!!

Any questions?

You can find me at abelani@id.iit.edu
sma24@id.iit.edu