Design Critique Cheat Sheet

👥 The Roles

- **Presenter** - describes the problems being solved or the ideas being explored and presents the designs
- **Facilitator** - creates the agenda, keeps the session on track, takes notes, and asks "what are the next steps?"
- **Audience** - understands the problem statement, asks questions about the problem statement and the design

💬 Providing Feedback

- Be tactful and respectful.
- Avoid use of personal pronouns.
- Keep feedback positive and actionable.
- First, tell the designer what you like about the design. Be descriptive. Explain why you like it and speak to specific examples from the design whenever possible.
- For items you think aren't working, explain why or offer suggestions for improvement.
- Ask exploratory, "why", questions about the design. This helps the designer express their reasoning.
- Questions should explore "what are we trying to accomplish with this design?"
- Avoid subjective feedback like "it needs to be cleaner" or "it needs to be more sexy". Feedback like this contains no guidance for the designer.
- Avoid group design and making design decisions during the session - but it's OK to explore what the team is trying to accomplish with the design.

🚫 SILENCE PHONES   **🚫 CLOSE LAPTOPS**

⚙️ The Process

- The facilitator gets things started, presents the agenda and sets the context - "So and so is the designer. Not you. Our job today is to help the designer."
- The presenter uses a format like this to talk about the design being presented:
  - I'm showing (early/mid/late) work
  - Around (the problem)
  - Because (why it's a problem)
  - We're looking for feedback around (specific focus)
  - We're not looking for feedback on (items on which not to focus)
- The facilitator writes on the board the type of feedback being sought.
- Does everyone understand the problem we're trying to solve and/or the ideas being explored? If everyone's on board, the session can proceed.
- The presenter explains the design.
- The team takes 5-10 minutes to view the design work, making notes - this lets the team experience and think about the design.
- The team discusses their notes and, for the appropriate items, creates tasks.
- The facilitator records these tasks on the board.
- As each task is added to the board, discussion moves on - don't dwell on items. This is not the time to make design decisions.
- Once all tasks are on the board the meeting can end.
- The facilitator records the tasks, and emails this list to the team.

🔖 Further Reading

- How to give and receive a good design critique
- 9 Rules For Running A Productive Design Critique
- Design Criticism and the Creative Process
- Four Things Working at Facebook Has Taught Me About Design Critique
- The Unwritten Rules of a Great Design Critique
- Moving from Critical Review to Critique