A GUIDE TO
HOW MIGHT WE
TECHNIQUE

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About This Guide

The purpose of this tool is to discover design and innovation opportunities by turning challenges into How Might We (HMW) questions.

HMW technique utilizes research results from your target audience research, journey mapping and empathy mapping, interviews, etc. Customers' feedback can be turned into HMW questions too to troubleshoot problems and increase customer satisfaction.

The goal when using HMW technique is to spark creativity and imagination, without any implication of solution. And finally, the desired result is several HMW questions that can start a rich brainstorming session.

How to Use It

You can use the content in any way you want, as long as you credit all materials and concepts to Viima and other cited sources. So, feel free to **share this Toolkit with your co-workers,** or anyone else you'd like to engage in the process.

PLEASE NOTE: This guide is a starting point. Getting results will always take time and effort, so trust the process, be patient, put in the work, and the results will come.

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How Might We

HMW questions is a technique used to **define solvable problems** in design thinking or innovation cycles.

It turns declarative statements and uncertainties into questions that do not imply judgment or constrains, and do not hint at a solution. Instead, HMW questions provoke creative thinking and invite as many suggestions as possible.

HMW helps you define problems based on initial research or direct customer feedback. So, before you kick off a workshop or brainstorming sessions, make sure to have a solid knowledge base **on challenges, issues or problems** your organizations is facing.

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Before the HMW Session

Avoid Common Mistakes

Don’t ask questions that are too narrow and hint at one possible solution.

- *I.e. How Might We make a better website by making homepage’s visuals higher quality?*

Don’t ask questions that are too broad and do not focus on a particular challenge.

- *I.e. How Might We make a better website?*

Don’t bulk up few questions into one and make it difficult to point point a solution.

- *I.e. How Might We make a better, faster and more beautiful website?*

Consider the Following Steps

1. **Target audience research** (TA). People are at the core of the HMW technique. Research your customers (users). This step will help you identify your customer's (user's) needs and pain points. Keep in mind that the HMW technique is meant to help create the **best version** of your product or service, and here the best means **created for the target user**.

2. **Point of View** (POV) **statement**. POV is a method to reshape challenges into actionable steps. It is a combination of your **target audience**, their **needs**, and **insights** (reasons behind their needs) uncovered during the research phase. Interaction Design Foundation offers the following formula for a POV statement:

TA (*descriptive*)	NEEDS TO	NEED (*verb*)	BECAUSE	INSIGHT (*compelling*)

3. **Frame the challenge**. With insights into your target audience and their challenges, narrow down the problem that your team will focus on. Anything that your TA addressed as challenging is worth improving and looking at as a target for an HMW session.

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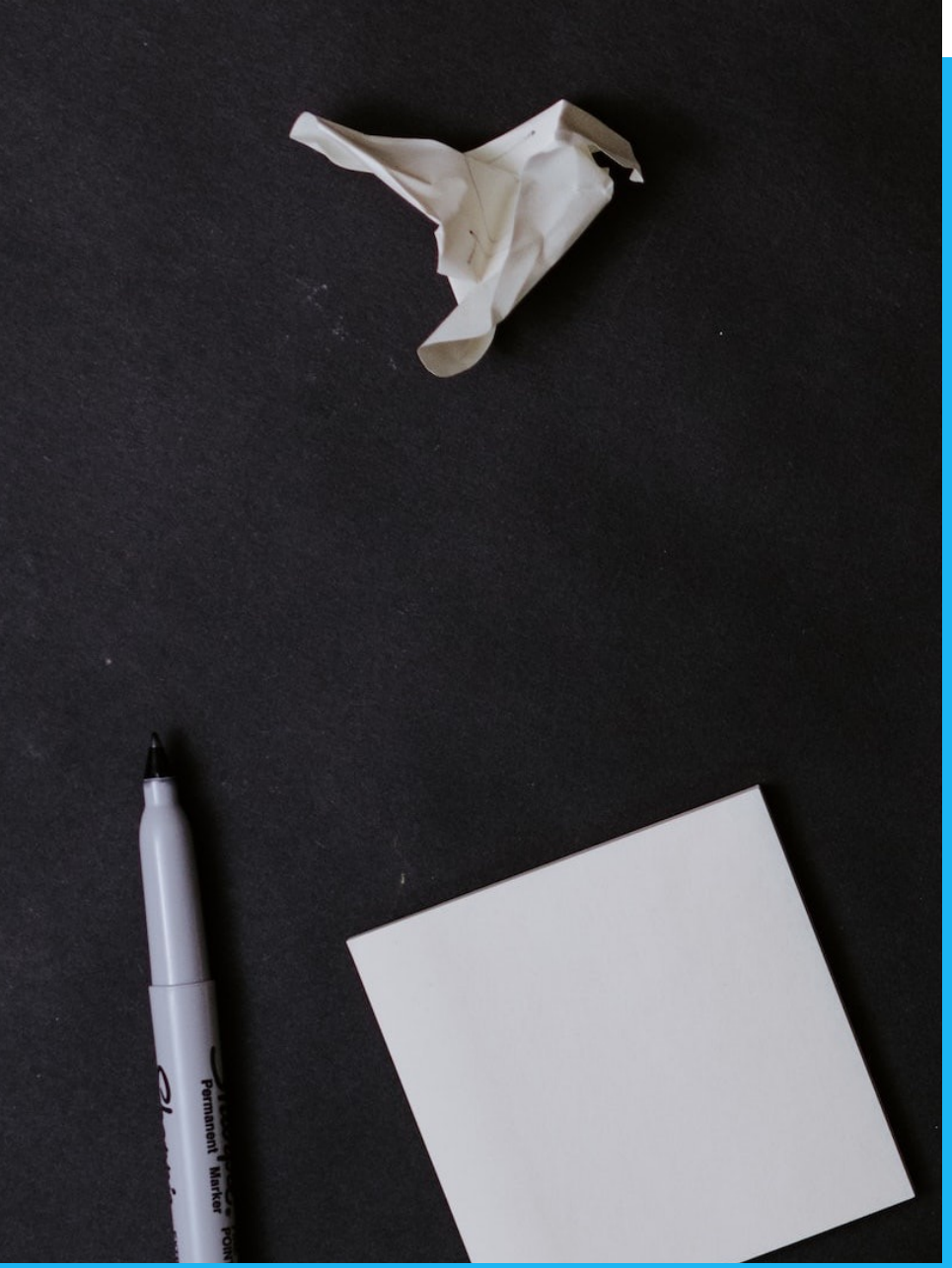

Preparation Will Help to Ask the Right Questions that Are:

- **Productive:** generates several possible approaches or solutions.
- **Accessible:** people that aren't experts in the area can offer a solution.
- **Not too broad:** offers some direction to start solving the problem.
- **Not too narrow:** does not limit ideas to a specific solution or approach.
- **Attainable:** hints at reachable goals and even possible successful outcomes.
- **Outcome-oriented:** helps explain what success would look like.
- **People-centered:** always consider the person to whom you are innovating.

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HMW Questions: Turn POV Challenges into Opportunities

Team/Name

1. Target Audience

Pet owner.

Tourist.

Innovation manager.

Person interested in sustainable produce.

Marketing professional.

Librarian.

...

2. Their Needs

Needs an access to the history of their pet's veterinary care information.

Needs access to public transportation tickets.

Needs a place that would help them with handling employee yearly feedback.

...

3. Insights

Pet owner loves their pet and want to be on time for their recommended check-up, but they cannot find the paper reference written by the vet during the last visit.

City visitors feel compelled to take taxis, which are very expensive, because they don't know how to buy public transportation ticker nor if the short-term tickets even exist.

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HMW Questions: Template

Team/Name

Recommended formula:

How Might We [*action*] [*do what*] **so that** [*TA*] [*insight*].

How Might We create [*action*] an easy method to collect and store information related to our treated animals [*do what*], **so that** pet owners [*TA*] could check the information without calling us and saving their/our time?

How Might We...

so that...

How Might We...

so that...

How Might We...

so that...

How Might We...

so that...

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so that...

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so that...

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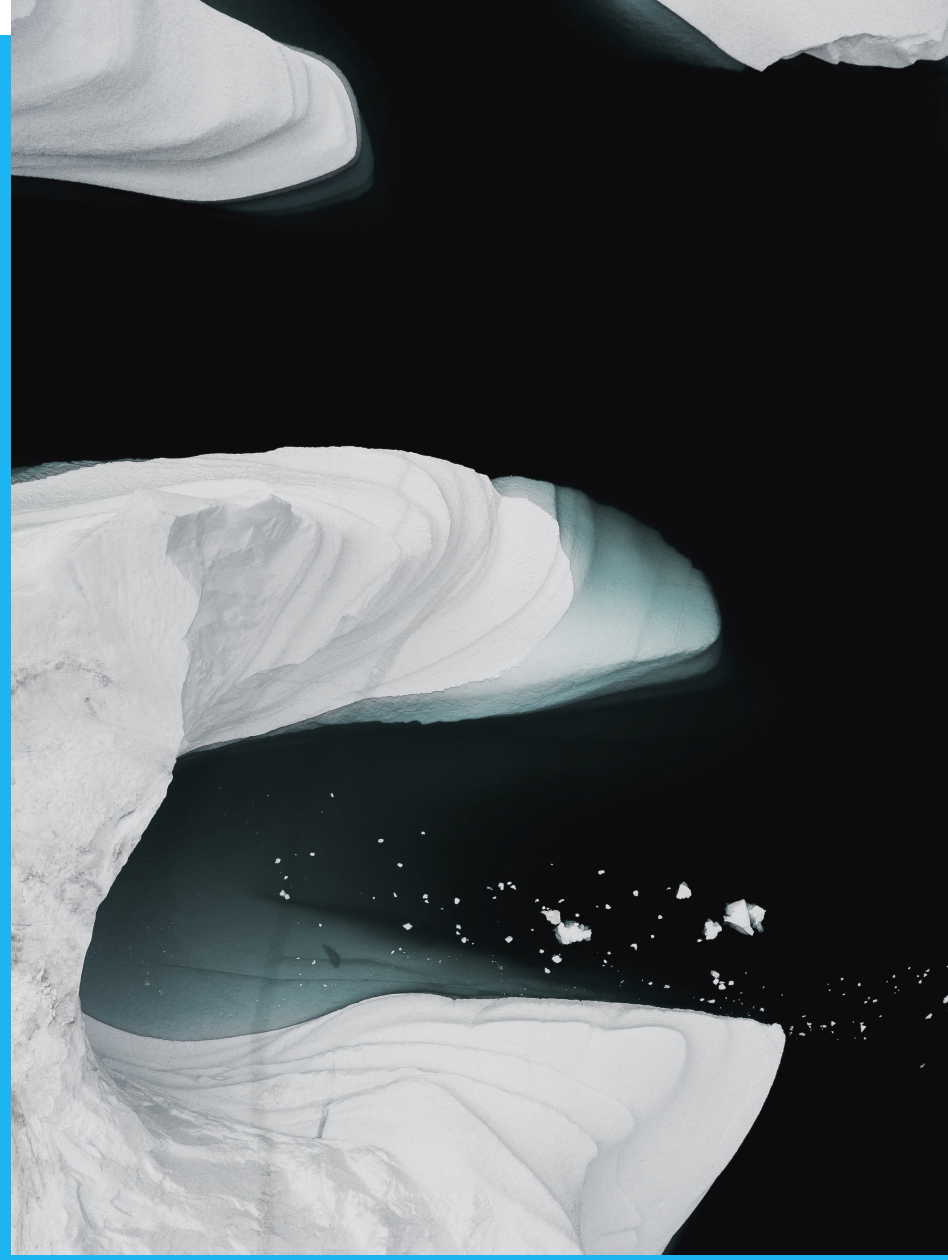
Know What to Do After

The purpose of the HMW session is to set the attainable goals and a clear direction for your design or innovation process.

- Go through all submissions, discuss them with people present, and ask them to vote on the most feasible (financially beneficial, easiest to implement, etc.), ideas.
- Select and prioritize a handful of HMWs your team will work on (two to five). These will be your core problems that you will tackle in the next steps of the process.
- Ideate and brainstorm creative and out-of-the-box solutions that are worthy to try out and move to prototyping (and then testing) steps.
- **Do not remove** unselected ideas!
- **Creative ideas do not have a date of expiration and you never know when something might become just the right solution for your future problems.**



About Viima

We’re on a mission to help organizations make more innovation happen.

Viima is the all-in-one innovation platform that helps you go from ideas to innovations, every step of the way.

If you’re looking for a tool that can help you **run and manage HMW workshop, ideation process or your innovation program with ease**, you can get started in as little as 5 minutes at viima.com.

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