

10 tips to organise a great User Research

1 Explain the value of User Research before starting.

Before recruiting anyone, you need to explain the value of User Research to your team and to your clients as you want the maximum of people onboarded on this potentially time-consuming phase of Design.

2 Candidates for User Research are everywhere if you know what to look for.

Your research participants must represent your target end-users or, even better, be actual end-users. Candidates are everywhere if you know what to look for. To do so, you need to define your screening criteria. Bad screening criteria lead to irrelevant insights. Pick few demographics criteria like age and location and focus on solution-related criteria like the field experience, is she already using a similar product or is he living or working in the context of your solution.

3 Use a screening criterion as an axis from 0 to 10 and rank users.

See a screening criterion as an axis from 0 to 10. Your primary users will be the “Mainstreams”, ranked 5, and the “Extremes”, ranked 0 or 10. Start interviewing them and you’ll discover who are the missing or complementary users you’ll interview next. The total number of users to interview can vary between 4 to 20 depending on your project type.

4 First, recruit your participants among your key internal stakeholders.

Be careful to target the right level of stakeholders. You want practical and actionable insights. They will provide an understanding of the context and help you identify the strategical criteria you don’t want to miss. And it’s always a good idea to involve key people in the early process of design to have them on board.

5 Then, simply ask your client to provide you with a first pool of users to work with.

You will need his help to be eventually introduced to them. Sometimes, they are not your real end-users but you can use them as “hooks” to identify and get very easy access to your actual end-users while grabbing insights on their overall context.

6 You can also hire specialists in recruitment from agencies who usually have a panel of users they can easily target for you and make available for you.

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7 If your project allows it, you can go for guerrilla recruiting: just go in public places and ask people passing by.

When time is running out, it's the base way to go, even though you will obviously have trouble screening your interviewees.

9 Think out of the box to include non-obvious characteristics in your criteria.

Think out of the box to include non-obvious characteristics in your criteria. For instance, include people with disabilities is a good way to check the accessibility of your solution.

8 Avoid bias.

avoid you, your colleague or your sister as research participants. If possible, avoid incentivized participants. Avoid interviewing different types of target users at once.

10 Track your pool of users.

Track your pool of users in an always up-to-date file like an Excel sheet as they could become eventual candidates for user testing later. Provide your candidates with flexible 1h time slots and make your interview requests as trustworthy as possible