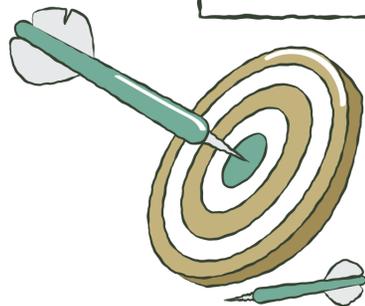


Design Thinking: Running Successful Hackathons

A Minimalist, Highly Detailed Whiteboard Snapshot

Avoid the "Innovation Theater" Trap

Pre-Hackathon



Strategy First

Align with long term goals. Ensure the event connects to the bigger picture, not just a one-off activity.



Facilitation

Secure a skilled facilitator. Focus on steering the process rather than dominating the conversation. Remember, the facilitator is the guide not the hero!



Flexible Agenda

Prepare an agenda but keep it flexible. Allow time to read the room and adapt to the team's energy.

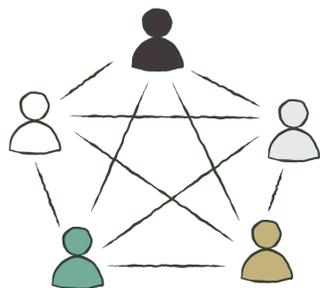


The Right People

Invite the right mix of roles. Empower the event with executive support and expert knowledge (Business & Technology).

Dunbar Number Theory Based on this theory, smaller groups lead to deeper communication, improved team dynamics and better outcomes.

During-Hackathon



Optimal Team Size

Limit groups to 4-6 people. This ensures diverse skills and fast decision making.

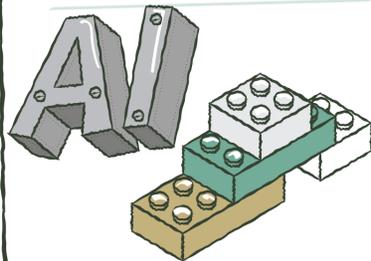
Apply Dunbar Number Theory



Less is More

Keep it focused. Do not try to fit too many objectives, tools, or activities into a single event. Design for impact!

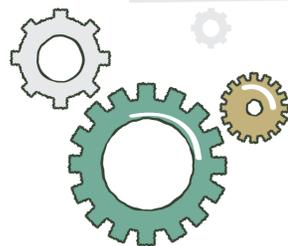
Cognitive Load Theory



Be intentional with sticky note colors. Design for results, not theater!

Intentional Tooling

Be intentional with your use of activities, games, and sticky notes. Ensure every activity or tool directly serves the hackathon's goal.



Action-Driven

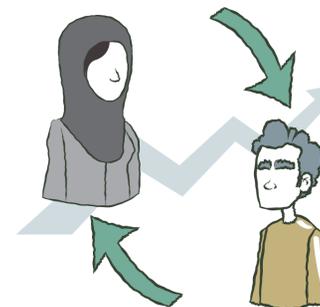
Make decisions during the session. Let the hackathon be defined by action, not just talk!

Post-Hackathon



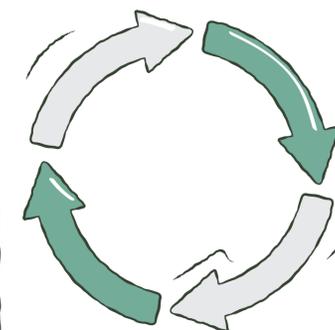
Document Outcomes

Record the key activities, decisions, and agreed next steps to ensure accountability and maintain momentum. The real work begins when the event ends.



Follow Up

Stay connected with your participants. Keep everyone informed and engaged shortly after the event concludes



Iterate

Gather feedback and act on it. Use every hackathon as a learning opportunity to ensure continuous improvement.

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) This framework states that our working memory has a limited capacity, which can be overloaded if too much information is presented at once. By managing cognitive load, hackathon organizers can create a more effective and enjoyable experience and enhance creativity, ultimately leading to better outcomes in terms of innovation and learning.

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