

How to watch and learn about people

A primer on design research

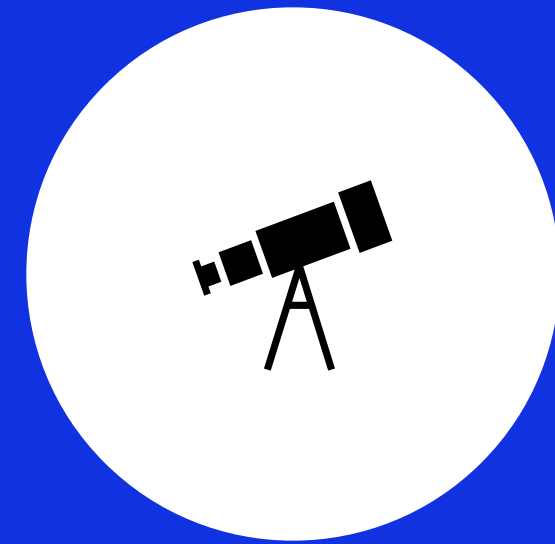
Design the right thing,
before designing the thing right

**A solution can only be as good
as the depth of understanding
of the problem**

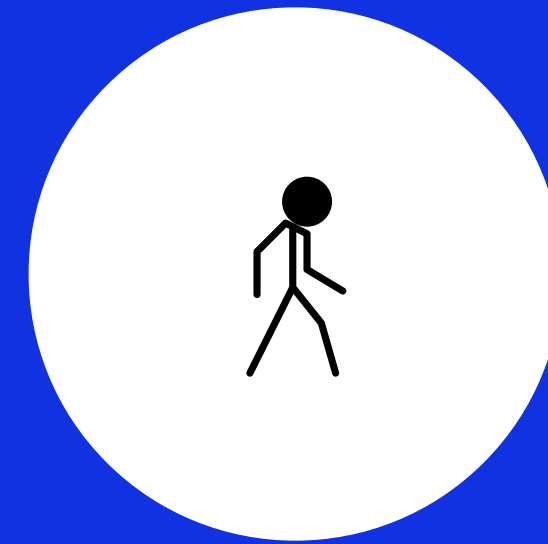
**Research enables us to gain
that understanding and to
empathize with others**



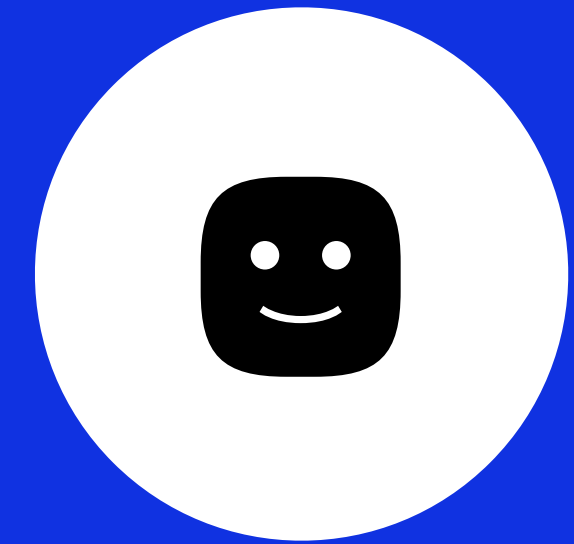
Desk



Observation



Experience it



Interviews

Formations

Transfers

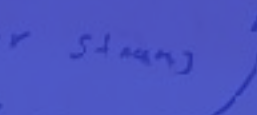
Fixtures

My Best
Players for
this match

Your weak
in these
areas... these
guys fill the
holes

Granular
info:
• Player
• Tactics
• This guy in the
past
• ~~Transfer~~

Where on
the pitch
I'm weak

Your strong
here 
(similar)

Suggestions:
• Tactics
• Training

my team
vs
their team
next match

Best offer
+
Best match
to your current
players

ON LIST
↓
~ 2-0 ~
= = =

Add
Championship
+
Cup indicators



Desk

Desk research

Primary domain

Analogous domains

Competitors



Primary domain

The immediate domain to what you're working on.

Analogous domains

Finding best in class / accessible experiences that are similar to what you're working on so you can learn from them.

Competitor

Find who is doing something similar to what you're working on.
Learn what worked / didn't work for them.

Document findings as you go

Collect links

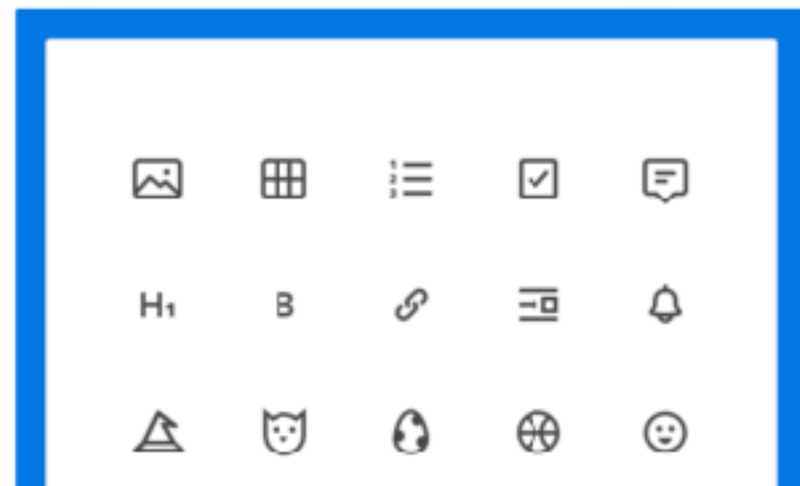
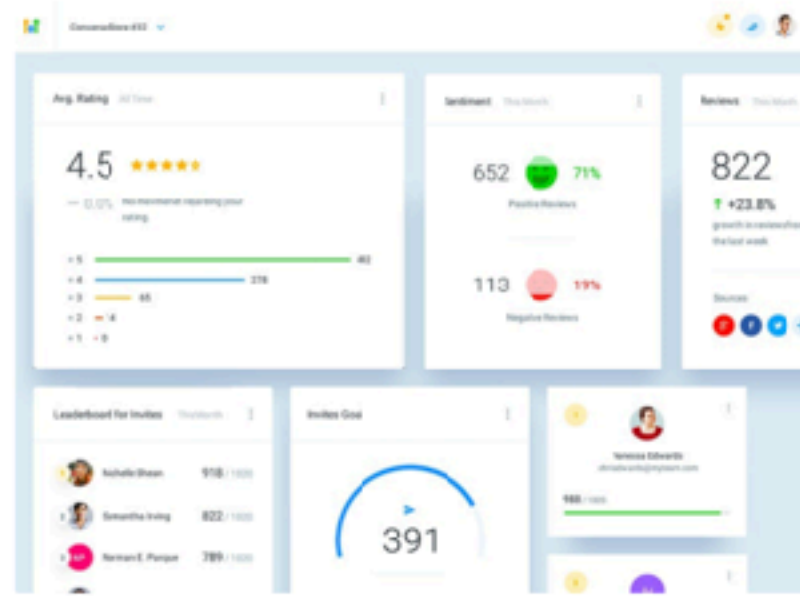
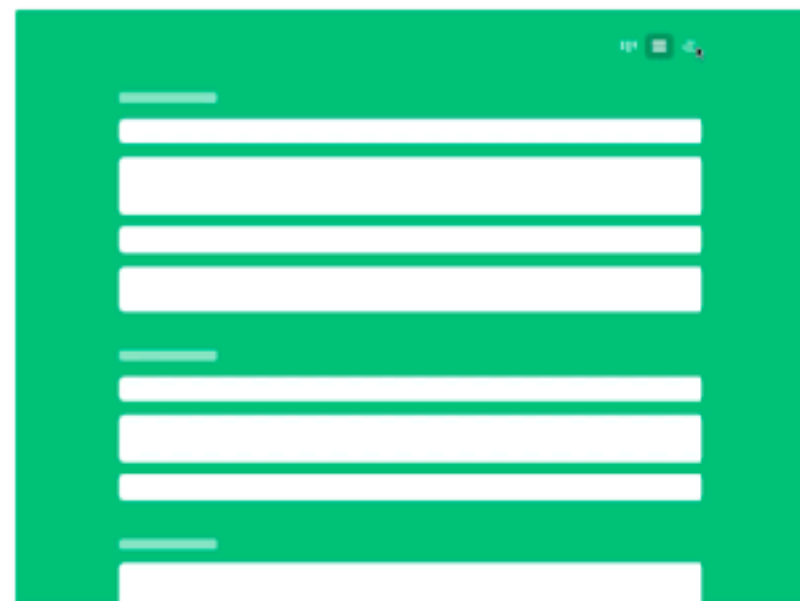
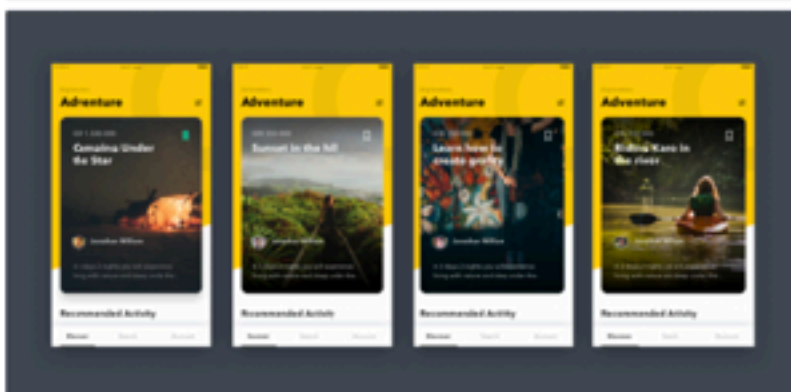
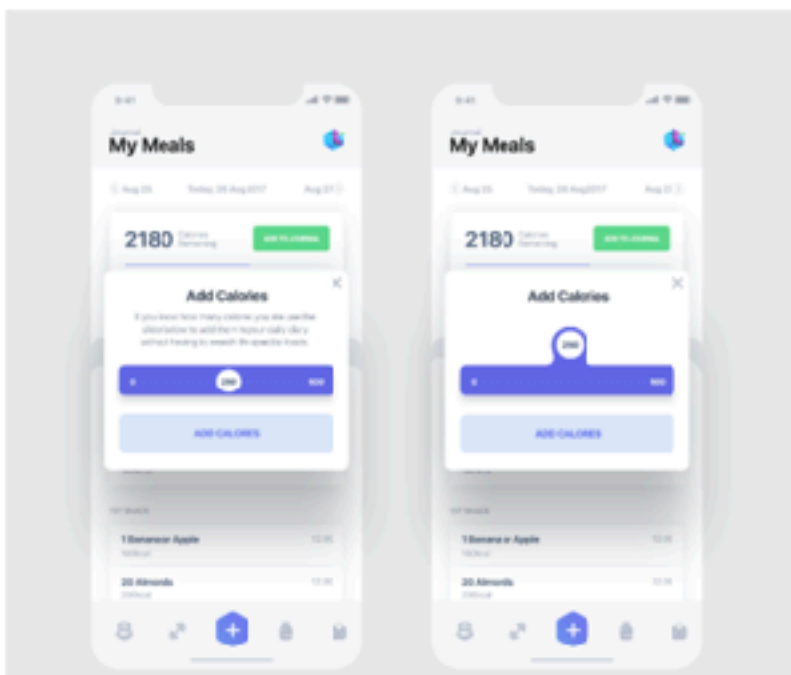
Take screenshots

Summarize findings

Make it easy for you to review later

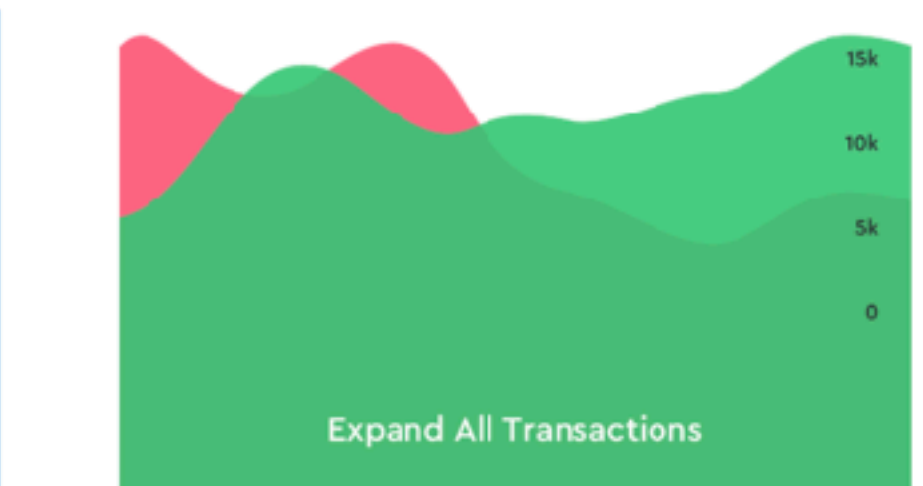


Inspiration



9:41
Your Home
Welcome home James. It's **Monday** and on todays agenda you have **3 new applications**

124 Harrington Street
\$29,281.30
Profit for July



Decision Trees

What makes up a Decision Tree:

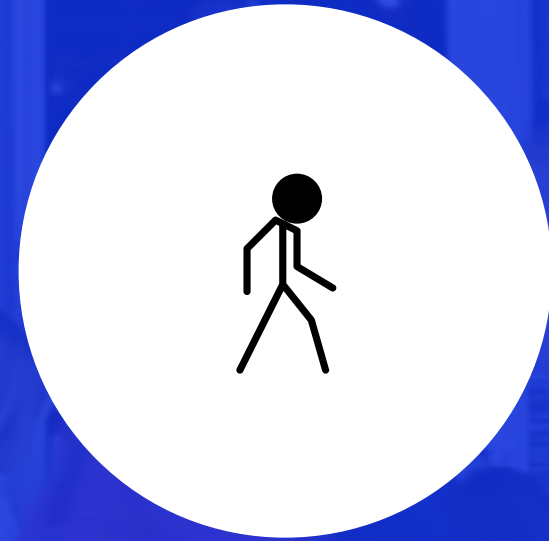
- Images
- Single UI components
- Parts of a webpage / UI
- Parts of a server system
- User types
- Code blocks
- Paragraphs / passages

What paths are in a Decision Tree:

- Straight
- Fork
- Decision fork



Observation



Experience it

“The starting point for most of our projects is observation in it’s natural setting.

We notice what people already do intuitively. That helps us make predictions about how people interpret this things we design.”

-Jane Fulton Suri, IDEO

Observation

Go to where your users go

See what they do

Keep your eyes open

First hand experience

Go to where your users go

Do what they do

Confront your assumptions

**Key things to look
for and document**

**Obstacles &
challenges**

Artifacts

Workflows

Workarounds

Goals

Environment

**Emotional
state**

Workarounds

People are already solving their problems somehow. These workarounds are so unconscious people don't realize that they do it.

A

E

I

O

U

Activities

What are people doing and what do they want to accomplish?

Environments

Where do all of the activities take place?

Interactions

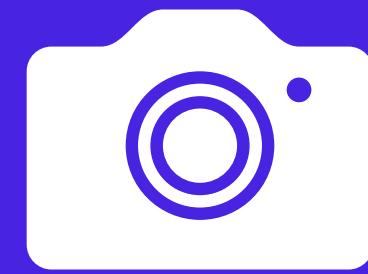
When do people interact with each other? with objects? why?

Objects

What objects are used? why? are they used correctly or out of context?

Users

Who all is involved?



***Always* be documenting**



Interviews

A person wearing a red t-shirt is holding several toothbrushes in their hand. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

Interviewing people

Creating interview guides

Recruiting

Talking with people

A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a red t-shirt, brushing their teeth in a bathroom. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The person's hands are visible, holding a white toothbrush. In the background, a white tiled wall and a white sink are partially visible. The text 'Interview Guides' is prominently displayed in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, a smaller white font contains the statistic: 'Over 50% of a success of a research interview happens before you ask the first question'.

Interview Guides

Over 50% of a success of a research interview
happens before you ask the first question

A person wearing a red t-shirt is shown from the chest up, holding a white toothbrush in their right hand. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

**Interviews are
structured conversations**

Make a guide not a script

**Here are three
questions that
seem good but
need to be avoided**

**“What do you
want?”**

Impossible questions

**“So you like this
right?”**

Leading questions

**“Would you use
this if...?”**

Hypothetical questions

We interview to learn about current behaviors not attitudes or opinions

1. What are they trying to do?
2. How do they currently do this?
3. How do they know it worked?
4. Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

Goals & Motivations

What are they trying to accomplish?

Do their goals ever change?

What tasks do they need to achieve their goals?

Behaviors

How do they currently accomplish their goals?

What are their workarounds?

Pain Points

What makes their experience bad or unsuccessful? How often?

What other services handle their pain points better?

Routines

What are some normal routines of theirs?

Interview framework

To learn about
behavior &
problems without
directly asking for
solutions



1. **Tell me about hardest and best parts?**
2. **When was the last time that happened?**
3. **Why was that hard / delightful?**
4. **How did you solve that problem?**
5. **Did you solve your problem? Why not?**

A photograph of two young men standing in a hallway with brick walls. The man on the left is wearing a yellow and black patterned jersey and holding a white sheet of paper. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with a yellow patterned vest over it. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Talking with people' is written in large white font across the center, and 'Good conversations aren't good interviews' is written in smaller white font below it.

Talking with people

Good conversations aren't good interviews

A photograph of two young men standing in a hallway with brick walls. The man on the left is wearing a yellow and black patterned vest over a white t-shirt and is holding a white clipboard. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with a yellow patterned vest over it. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

**How many people do I
need to interview?**

More than 3, fewer than 8
per person

If your team's bigger you can do more.

The image shows two young men standing in a hallway with brick walls. The man on the left is wearing a yellow and black patterned jersey and is holding a white sheet of paper. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt with a yellow patterned vest over it and has his arms crossed. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. Centered over the image is white text that reads: "Run sessions in pairs", "One Interviewer = question asker", and "One Observer = note taker".

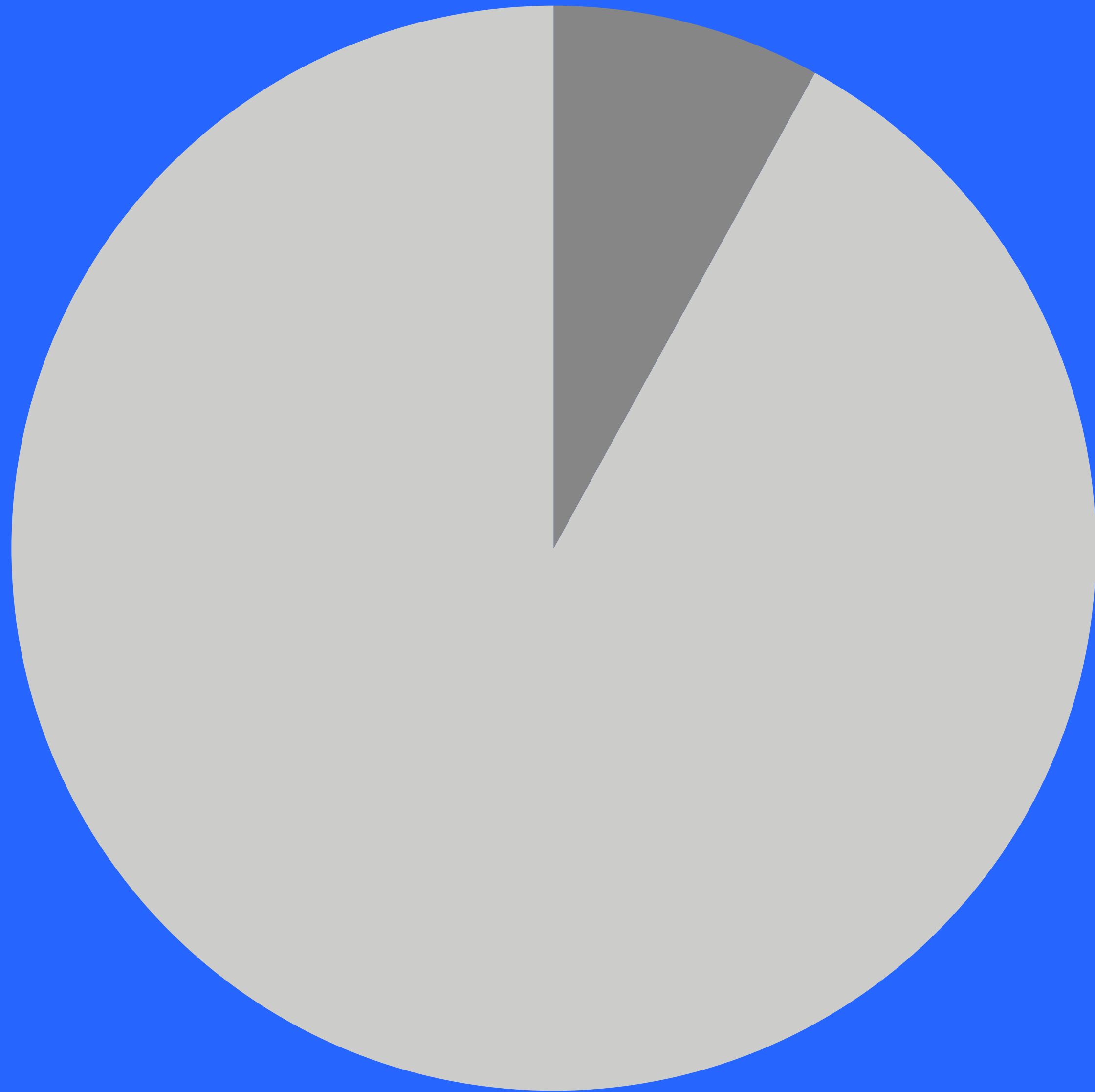
Run sessions in pairs

One Interviewer = question asker

One Observer = note taker



**Lets talk about how to
structure your time for
1 hour interviews**



Introductions: 5 minutes

Introduce yourself

Introduce the project

**Tell them why you're
interviewing people like them**

**Give them a chance to ask
any questions**



Get to know them: 5 minutes

**Ask about relevant questions to
your project:**

How long have they paid for cable?

What are their favorite shows?

What's a typical day like for you?



**Focused questions:
45 minutes**

**Ask specific questions about
needs, workarounds, and
behaviors**



Wrap Up: 5 minutes

**Do you have any questions
for us?**

Don't answer their questions

Don't agree or disagree

Don't finish their sentences

Make them fill silences

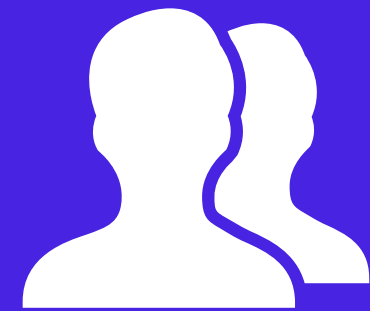
Don't paraphrase or put the answer in the question

Let people speak in paragraphs

Probe with clarifying questions



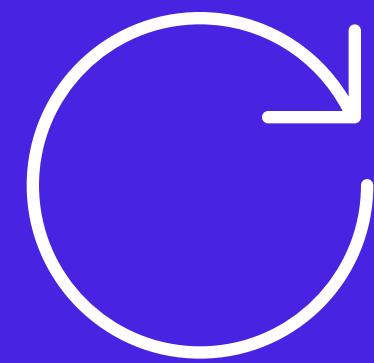
Pro tips



Interview pairs in pairs



**Wait 5 seconds before
asking another question**



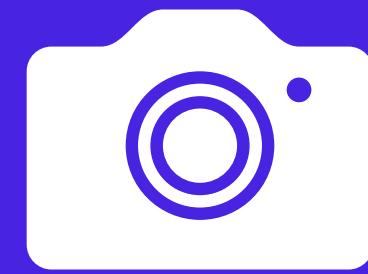
**Repeat back what they
say when they're stuck**



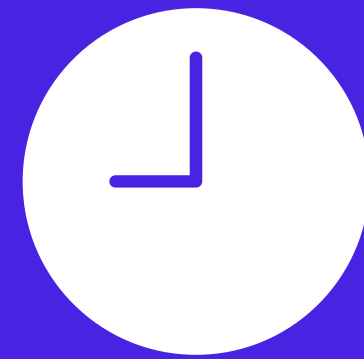
Bring gum



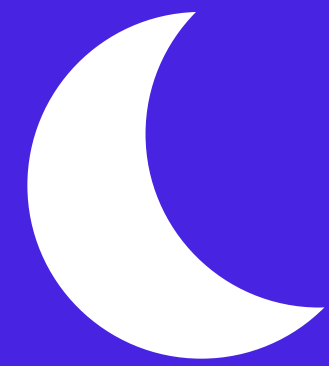
Offer a drink



***Always* be documenting**



**Wear a watch to
stay on schedule**



**Leave time to linger
after the interview**