

Design Planning Worksheet: Defining the Problem

Your design is most effective if you base each step on research. Too often our assumptions can lead us in the wrong direction and get in the way of achieving the stated goal.

1. What is the general topic of concern?
2. What is the specific problem you wish to address?
3. What is your desired outcome?
4. Make a list of reasons that this problem exists (this is most effective if developed through research as opposed to using opinions or assumptions).
5. Based on the list of reasons above, list things that need to change to reach your desired outcome. Next, rank the items by urgency or by timeline of what needs to happen first. These items are usually a good place to start.
6. Who will you need to reach to make the changes listed above? Describe this "audience" so you can target them more effectively. (Do they share a physical or virtual locale? An age range? Access to specific resources? Are they already leaning towards your message? Etc.)
7. Why haven't these individuals already acted to solve this problem?
8. What type of content, information, or message might help move your audience towards the desired outcome?
9. What type of approach, delivery, or tone might connect with your audience?
10. How and where should you deliver your message to reach this audience?
11. How can you test your ideas (and later your design) to judge if your approach has been effective?