

How Might We? (HMW)



What is “How Might We (HMW)”?

HMW is a method in design thinking for framing questions once a challenge/problem statement has been identified. It is intended to help create space for a variety of approaches to a particular challenge to be articulated by a group. In the design thinking process, we want to think expansively and avoid getting too focused on one solution too early.

How? Might? We?

“**How**” suggests that we do not yet have the answer. “How” helps us set aside prescriptive briefs. “How” helps us explore a variety of endeavors instead of merely executing on what we “think” the solution should be.

“**Might**” emphasizes that our responses may only be possible solutions, not the only solution. “Might” also allows for exploration of multiple possible solutions, not settling for the first that comes to mind. We may well get some things wrong, and that is okay.

“**We**” immediately brings in the element of a collaborative effort. “We” suggests that the idea for the solution lies in our collective teamwork.¹

¹ Content on this page repurposed with permission from Interaction Design Foundation, interaction-design.org.

Creating “How How Might We” Questions

Creating a good HMW question requires thinking about the problem/challenge statement from a number of perspectives. The goal here is to create a lot of different possible HMW questions so that you can choose the one that you think fits the challenge the best.

Step 1: Write your challenge statement.

Step 2: Reflect on your challenge statement.

What are some of the root causes of this challenge?

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What resources/assets do we have to utilize?

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What are the emotions related to this challenge?

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Step 3: Create How Might We (HMW) questions out of your challenge statement and the bullet points you created about your challenge above.

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Tips for Creating Good HMW Questions

- Take the time to experiment with many different framings of the same problem. Much of the value of this exercise is in trying on new ways of framing.
- Strive for a balance between breadth and specificity of a “How Might We” question.
- Make sure your “How Might We” statement reflects some aspect of how you understand the problem. Providing context for a starting point will help you generate many more ideas than a general and broad statement of the challenge.
- Always use more than a single “How Might We”!

Creating “How Might We” Questions

EXAMPLE

Creating a good HMW question requires thinking about the problem/challenge statement from a number of perspectives. The goal here is to create a lot of different possible HMW questions so that you can choose the one that you think fits the challenge the best.

Step 1: Write your challenge statement.

People in our congregations aren't comfortable talking about God.

Step 2: Reflect on your challenge statement.

What are some of the root causes of this challenge?

- People don't have lots of experience talking about God
- People are afraid to offend others with “God language”
- People don't want to say wrong things about God
- People don't think about God that much outside of “church”

What resources/assets do we have to utilize?

- We can use language found in Scripture
- Liturgy
- Stories of people talking about God in a normal way

What are the emotions related to this challenge?

- Fear and anxiety
- Uncertainty
- Pressure to get it right

Step 3: Create How Might We (HMW) questions out of your challenge statement and the bullet points you created about your challenge above.

How might we...help people talk about God?_____

How might we...help people get more comfortable talking about God?__

How might we...learn to talk about God ourselves?_____

How might we...listen to others talk about God?_____

How might we...create safe environments for people to talk about God?

How might we...help name the fears associated with “God talk”?_____

How might we...discuss with others why talking about God matters at all?