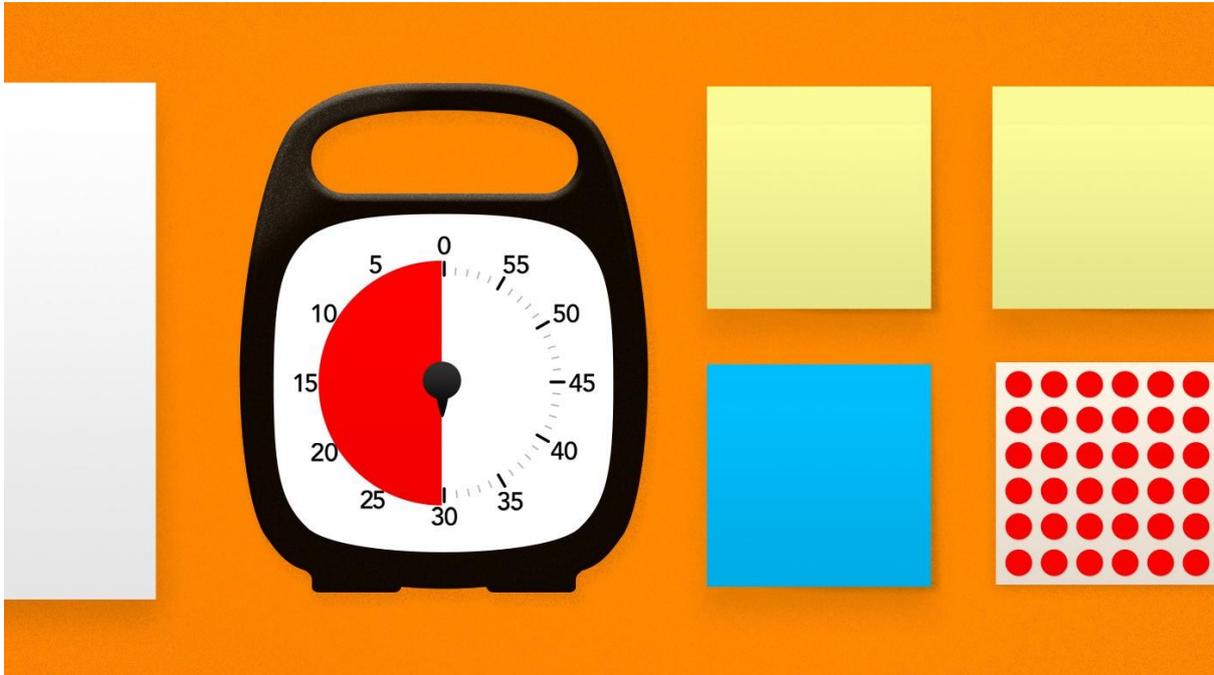


All You Need to Run a Design Sprint



So, it happened: You have been tasked with facilitating a [Design Sprint](#). Or maybe somebody asked you to prepare materials for a Design Sprint that is happening in your company. **This article will tell you exactly what materials you need, and how much of them.**

Why I am the right person to tell you all this

I have facilitated at least a hundred Design Sprints myself, and participated in even more. At [AJ&Smart](#), I am the Product Owner of our Design Sprint offering and responsible for ensuring we stick to one, consistent standard. I am also incredibly obsessive-compulsive and hate when things are badly prepared and materials are shitty or low-quality.

Regarding the amounts

I tried to be as specific as possible, but your mileage might vary depending on how many people participate. I am assuming a group of about 6–8 people. In my experience, it's better to have materials easily and abundantly available to all participants without having to worry about running out or having to ration them. As a facilitator, you'll have enough to deal with, so don't skimp on materials. Most of the stuff on the list is cheap, and if you don't end up using it, just save it for your next Sprint.

Another thing I should mention is that **trying to save money on cheaper sticky notes or pens is usually not worth it**. It's really annoying for facilitators and distracting for participants when generic sticky notes fall off the wall every 10 minutes. The original 3M Post-Its stay sticky for a

long time, which is why I am heavily biased in favor of them. It's possible there's other great brands, but the ones mentioned in this list we can vouch for.

The Basics

☐ Rectangular Post-It Notes, yellow

I genuinely love these things. The rectangular shape makes it easy to write out whole, legible sentences on them. During the Sprint, these come in handy for the Expert Interview, for the Long-Term Goal and Sprint Question and pretty much all the note-taking that happens during the workshop days. They have also replaced the cool, overpriced notebooks I used to buy (and ended up never using) all the time.

How many you need: Min. 2 pads per participant, doesn't hurt to have more. These will be used a lot!

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

☐ Square Post-It Notes, blue

These don't have to be blue, pink is also fine (or any other color that's not yellow and stands out). These are mainly for creating categories for the HMW voting, and also useful to create the matrix for the User Test Flow. **One important thing to watch out for regarding all sticky notes:** Don't get the ones that go into a dispenser! They are really annoying because you never know which side is up when you write.

How many you need: Not many! You, as facilitator, are going to be the only person needing these. 1 or 2 pads should be enough.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Rectangular Post-It Notes, contrast colors

If you are involved in the user testing, these will make your life a lot easier when you are trying to quickly make sense of the mass of feedback at the end of the test. For note-taking, pick one color for positive feedback and a contrasting color for negative feedback. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be just plain green and red packs available, but as long as the colors clearly contrast it doesn't matter.

How many you need: Just to be on the safe side, I'd recommend to have at least 3 matching pads for positives and 3 matching pads for negatives. You'll write a lot of granular feedback.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Small dot stickers, red

These will be used a lot for voting throughout all workshop days. For voting on HMWs, Long-Term Goals, Can We Questions, during the Art Gallery (you'll need lots there) and for the User Test Flow.

How many you need: Lots! I'd estimate at least 1 full sheet per participant. To be on the safe side, rather get too many than too few. Luckily, these are rather cheap.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Big dot stickers, red

These are for the Straw Poll and Decider votes and need to clearly stand out among the smaller dots. We usually draw little star shapes on the dots the decider gets and ask the other participants to write their initials on theirs.

How many you need: Not that many. Regular participants only get to use one dot, but the Decider will get at least 6. Just bring a full sheet, it should be more than enough suffice.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Sharpie Permanent Markers, Fine Point, black

These are great because they are thick enough that people can't get lost into details, but still allow to sketch and write very clearly. The only problem with these is the intense alcoholic stench. Also, it's annoying when they dry up. But they are still better than everything else we tried out.

How many you need: At least 1 per participant, but get some as reserve in case some dry up.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Masking tape

Great to tape concepts together, stick them to the wall, and then take them off without leaving traces and ripping the paper.

How many you need: 1 roll per 3 participants to prevent people fighting over it during concept sketching. If you don't care about that, just get 1 roll for the entire team and rip off a few pieces of tape.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Scissors

Having a scissor around is useful during the concept sketching and near the end of the workshop, during the Storyboarding exercise. Instead of redrawing things that already exist in a concept on the whiteboard, just cut up the concept and tape it to the board.

How many you need: 2–3 should be enough to prevent people fighting over them during concept sketching. If you don't care about that, just bring one.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Plain white printer paper

Your participants will need loads of this during the second half of the first workshop day when it's time to sketch a concept, and during the ramp-up exercises.

How much you need: Just bring a full ream of printing paper (~500 pages). You won't use the entire pack but it's good to have a reserve.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Clipboards

These are convenient because participants can move through the room and aren't tied to the table during note-taking and sketching. It also prevents Sharpies from bleeding through the paper on the table.

How many you need: One per participant.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Time Timer

We like Time Timers because they are sturdy, have a great visibility and don't tick, but cheaper alternatives are also fine. I would recommend not using a timer app on your phone, simply

because you'll have to fumble around with your phone (which is distracting) and nobody else can see how much time is left.

How many you need: Just one. Make sure it works, it's annoying if you bring one but the battery is dead.

Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Whiteboards

You'll need a lot of space for the Map, the Storyboard and for capturing User Test feedback. At the end of the Sprint, these will be covered. If you can't use the room the entire Sprint, it would be good if you can wheel them out. In a pinch, they can be replaced by lots and lots of magic paper (see below), but it's not optimal.

How many you need: Ideally, 2–3 big ones. As many as you can get.

Whiteboard markers, Eraser

To sketch the Map and the Storyboard, write down Long-Term Goal and Sprint Questions.

How many you need: One set.

Snacks and beverages, Catering

As snacks, nuts or trail mixes are a good choice, also sliced fruits. For drinks, water, coffee and tea. You should avoid sugary snacks and beverages like sodas, insulin spikes are no joke (you'll crash and get tired fast). For lunch, it's best to provide or organize catering in the Sprint room, and to avoid heavy meals (they'll make you feel tired). Salads and sandwiches are a good choice.

How much you need: 1 bowl of nuts and two bottles of water per 3–4 participants, regularly refilled.

Nice to Have

Square Post-It Notes, yellow

The old Design Thinking classic! I think you can actually get away with not bringing any of these, as long as you bring enough of the rectangular ones. I still like having them around. Although

they are not as versatile as their bigger cousins, there are times when it's actually useful to force participants to keep it succinct, for example during the User Test Flow exercise.

How many you need: If you decide to bring some, 1 pad per participant is enough.

Available on [Amazon.com](#)

Magic Paper

This stuff is truly magic and very useful to have around. It's whiteboard paper that sticks to surfaces due to static charge, can be moved around, folded up... We use this to capture the Long-Term Goal and Sprint Questions.

How much you need: 1 roll. You'll only use one or two sheets if you have whiteboards around, anyway.

Available on [Amazon.com](#)

Camera

Having a camera for documentation is great, especially if you can't use your room for the entire duration of the Sprint, or if you need to recap the Sprint when it's done. **A bulky DSLR isn't necessary.** In fact, a small, unobtrusive and easy to use point and shoot is the much better choice. Using the phone camera is also fine in a pinch, but it's better to avoid using your phone, it just sets a bad example. Don't be surprised if people start whipping out their own phones when you do it.

How many you need: One.

Bluetooth speaker

Being able to play some nice workshop tunes can really help to keep the energy up and avoid the awkwardness of a silent room during sketching. If you have a proper audio setup, great, otherwise just get a portable speaker (We use the UE Roll 2). If you need workshop music, use [this playlist](#).

How many you need: One.

I hope you find this list useful! If you want more infos about Design Sprints, how to use them in practice, when to use them or how to improve your facilitation, let me know in a comment, check out my other articles or follow the [AJ&Smart blog](#).

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