Design Team Framing

Getting teams to agree about what people want

Two Challenges for Design teams

Cross-functional new product development teams face two major challenges:

- Finding out what people really want – framing the situation in a way that matches how users understand the world

- Getting to agreement about that framing

These two facets are intertwined in the specific research and sharing activities of a design team. We developed a framework to better understand a design team's path through the new product development process.

Data

To investigate team framing, data were collected through in-depth studies of over 60 graduate design teams at Berkeley and MIT as well as interviews with design professionals.

### The Design Path Framework
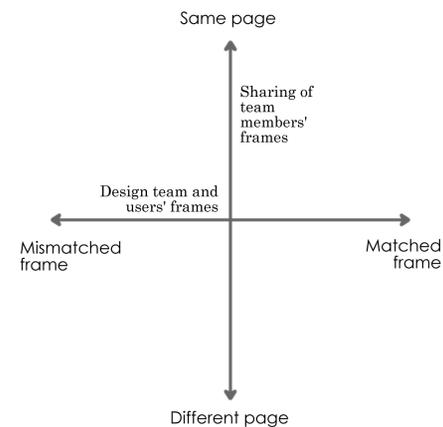
Design Team Paths

The horizontal axis is a measure of whether design teams are framing the situation from the users' perspective. The vertical axis is how much the team is in agreement with that framing.
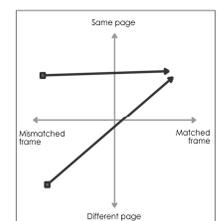
In our study three major paths were dominant: Backroads, Backtrack and Direct. Following the Design Principles for team framing helps teams move towards the top-right.
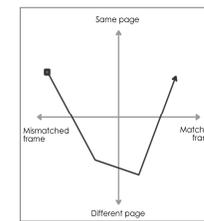
The Backroads design path
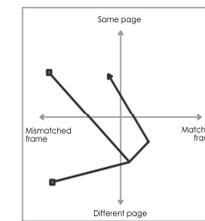
The Backtrack design path

The Direct design path

Design Principles for effective design team framing

Learn don't confirm

- Choose a team name not tied to the product
- You are not cooking for yourself
- Design for people not products

Make decisions on common bases

- Discuss direction early
- Manage knowledge gaps
- Take the time to discuss

Share richly

- Manage the data deluge with frameworks
- Use rich media
- Do research together

Drive innovation by real needs

- Drive development from research data
- Look for the story behind the product
- Test, test, test

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www.palojono.com/framing