

HACK DAY HOW-TO

All-company Hack Day has become a bi-annual tradition for the team at Choozle. Here's how to host your own.

What Is It?

Hack Day, which is based on Google's "[Design Sprint](#)" framework, is typically executed over five days. We've adapted the process to two days, and for our Experience Hack Day (more focused on customer and employee experiences rather than the product), we did it in one.

Hack Day is a way to fast forward into the future. By having diverse teams, you can unlock knowledge and creativity from all different parts of the business. There really isn't a problem that can't be solved during a Hack Day, so think big.

How It Works

Well, first, you'll need to get it approved by your boss.

Tell this to your boss when pitching the idea of hosting your own Hack Day:

Knowledge sharing is a vital ingredient for true innovation, especially as a team starts to scale. With the right people and process, a timeboxed Hack Day can accelerate knowledge sharing, accomplish a ton through deliberate focus, and plant the seeds for future growth.

We identified the following core elements to build the framework for our Hack Day: **Understand, Research, Diverge, Decide, Build, and Validate**. You'll need one or two days, all-team motivation & participation, and a lot of organization.

Setting Up Your Teams

Resources needed:

Facilitator: One person to oversee the entire process.

Team Captains: One captain per team will lead groups through exercises and decisions.

Presenters: One or two people per team will pitch and demo their hack to the entire company.

Judges: We typically invite our CEO, any other C-Suite members available, and one special guest to judge the competition.

At Choozle, we create a guide in Keynote that includes instructions, examples, and timers on each page to walk each team through the exercises and keep everyone on the same timeline.

Pitching Hack Day Ideas

Everyone on the team has an opportunity to pitch a Hack Day idea in 60 seconds. We encourage our pitchers to focus on:

1. Start with the problem, and for who.
2. Explain how big the opportunity is.
3. Describe a possible solution.

For example:

Idea: We should build an electric skateboard.

Pitch: Skateboarding for senior citizens uphill is tough and takes all the fun out of it. In fact, 75 percent of skateboarders over 65 get dehydrated while going uphill, so let's think about ways to quench their thirst. One possible solution might be to build a skateboard that stores power going downhill, to power the rider when they're going uphill.

Judging

We've built out a five-step process for judging each team's final pitch. *(And yes, we encourage you to have prizes for the winners!)*

Judging is based on:

- Team diversity
- Creativity
- Hack demo
- Company impact
- Ability to be launch as a standalone product *(leveraging a current product or service, but outside of the current interface)*

However, these are just suggestions. How you judge your Hack Day depends on your unique purpose, industry, team size, and more.

Good luck!