User Flow Wireframing

Map user journeys at low fidelity before debating visual design. User flow wireframing exposes steps to achieve goals, revealing gaps and friction. Most UX problems are structural: wrong steps or unclear paths, not visual issues.

2 hours
Design
Beginner

H HOW TO RUN

1 Define User Goal — 15 min

(15 minutes): Pick a specific goal: complete purchase, set up account, file a ticket. "Use the app" is too broad. Define concrete start and end points. Write the goal clearly.

2 Map Screens — 45 min

(45 minutes): Sketch each screen (boxes and labels, no design). What's on the screen? What actions? Where to next? Keep it low-fidelity. Aim for 8-15 screens.

3 Draw Connections — 30 min

(30 minutes): Connect screens with arrows (user paths). Include the happy path, alternatives, errors, and back navigation. Every screen needs entry and exit points. Watch out for orphaned screens and spaghetti flows.

4 Identify Friction — 30 min

(30 minutes): Walk the flow as a user. Where would you get stuck? What's missing? Too many steps? Where would you give up? Mark these friction points.

KEY TIP

Teams often want to add visual design too early. Stop them. Boxes and labels only.

O OBJECTIVES

- Map user journeys from entry to completion
- Identify friction and missing steps
- Test flow logic before visual design
- Build shared understanding of user experience

M MATERIALS

- ☐ Whiteboard or large paper
- ☐ Sticky notes
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ User goal definition
- ☐ User behavior data (if redesigning)

P PARTICIPANTS

2 to 4 people

F FACILITATOR NOTES

REMEMBER

- Save visual design until the flow works. Map the happy path, errors, and edge cases.
- This reveals flow robustness. A good test: have someone unfamiliar walk through the flow.
- Where do they get confused? What do they expect? This reveals assumptions.
- A flow shows the path a user takes to accomplish a goal. A site map shows all screens. They are different.