

DD+D: a theatre-based design consulting firm

DD+D leverages theatre techniques and acting methodology to help designers empathize with users and produce better results for their clients, as well as to communicate and collaborate around design solutions. Theatre is a fun, informative, and effective way to work out ideas, visualize concepts, and communicate solutions. It allows teams to empathize, by stepping into the shoes of users. It can reveal how people interact with services, products, and each other on a physical, emotional and intuitive level.

How can we help?

DD+D offers theatre-based workshops customized for each stage of the design process and tuned to the specific needs of designers, design teams and their clients.

1. Self

Supporting the exploration of the designer's beliefs

- Design empathy

2. Others

Helping to engage with and communicate design research.

- Personas

3. Discover

Supporting testing and evaluating of new ideas

- Bodystorming / Design Improv

4. Develop

Supporting testing of existing concepts and services

- Performance testing
- Making products considerate

[Find out more](#)

1. Self

Workshop: Design Empathy

The design process starts with the designer. The Design Empathy workshop helps designers acknowledge their biases and challenge their assumptions. Understanding these potential blocks will help you to connect with your customers, team members and stakeholders. Learn how actors, the world's greatest empathys, use acting methodology to understand Self before stepping into the shoes of Others.

"The workshop illuminated a critical part of the design process—the idea of empathy, inclusion, and connection. These concepts are crucial and complex and are often unarticulated. Today's session successfully got us thinking about connection and social dynamics in the way we work in our studio and in communities." Studio Leader, Design for America



2. Others

Workshop: Personas

Reconnect research to personas. We take two-dimensional representations of customers and bring them to life. Participants learn to use acting techniques to connect to the hidden needs, motivations, and goals of users. Make data memorable.

"I tend to be skeptical about 'exercises' like this, but I think it's a great way to get a team reconnected with personas they've been using over time. Also a great way to onboard new team members to existing personas. And for promoting adoption to other teams within an organization." Designer, UXMasterclass Conference



3. Discovery

Workshop: Bodystorming/ Design Improv

This session uses a method of problem identification and solving to translate ideas and opportunities into physical experiences explored through improvisation and role-play. Bodystorming uses a design brief, props and simple costumes to give a sense of place. The process is designed to uncover how relationships between people, locations, and things affect ideas in ways that brainstorming alone cannot. Rapid prototyping at its best!

"I was a participant in Bodystorming a few weeks ago, and I found it to be the 'best' medium for developing a 'design' concept within a very short period of time. It is an invaluable tool for educators as well as multi-level teams of 'any' discipline, to offer lessons in team building and collaboration. Without having any preconceived ideas of what we wanted to achieve, my team developed a conceptual design for an eye-care kiosk within '16 minutes' - while standing." Designer, Sears UX



4. Develop

Workshop: Performance Testing

This session is similar to a theatre rehearsal. Using an existing scenario this session tests how users interact with low and high fidelity products or services. Designers act out scenes based on user's problems identified during the research phase to step into the shoes of the user in the context of a particular touch point or day-in-the-life. Participants learn how to use their embodied insights to create rich contextual scenarios.

*"Forcing us to step into the simulation of our project showed some of inefficiencies in our designs."
Designer, Design for America*

Making Products Considerate

This workshop encourages designers to think differently about the products they design. Designers play the role of the product as they interact with users to understand what users want from an experience with a product. Participants explore creating products that are deferential, forthcoming, and perceptive. Learn to design good product behavior.

*"It gave the team time to consider situations that may come up. Usually these situations are considered after the fact= design rework. The session forces us to not just walk through the steps as product developers but instead think of products as people with their own expectations and emotions. "
Product designer, global quick service restaurant*

Who We Are:

DD+D Team Members, led by Byron Stewart, bring expertise in: UX, interaction, product, and service design, ergonomics, HCI, and business. Theatre, improv, storytelling, facilitating, directing, acting.



Byron Stewart Design Lead, DD+D

is an actor, director, consultant, facilitator, and presenter, and is owner of Dramatic Diversity/DD+D. For the past ten years, Dramatic Diversity has provided theatre-based corporate training and diversity & inclusion consultation to clients including BP/Amoco, Hewitt & Associates, Motorola, Northern Trust Bank, Brookfield Zoo, Ohio State University, and PepsiCo. Byron has also applied theatre-based techniques to the design field facilitating persona/scenario, performance testing, and design empathy workshops for Critical Mass, RTC, IIT's Institute of Design, DePaul University, Columbia College and for Northwestern University's Design for America Fellows. Byron has facilitated bodystorming sessions for Sears and Walgreens, and

is a local leader and presenter for Chicago's Interaction Design Association. Byron was service design consultant on the development and launch of a new diabetes class for University of Chicago and coordinator of the Chicago Service Jam. Articles on Byron's workshops have been featured in the UXmatters and Experience Matters online magazines. He received his BFA degree from Howard University.

Conferences:

Design Research Conference "Design Improv" workshop, IIT/Institute of Design, Chicago, IL. Oct. 2011

Service Design Network's Global Conf. "McDonald's + Service Experience + Jam' Palace Hotel, San Francisco, CA. Oct. 2011

UXMasterclass Conference, "Using Theatre Techniques to Write Effective Personas" Field Museum Chicago, IL. Sept. 2011.

DePaul University Continuing and Professional Education, with Millennia Consulting, "Bodystorming: Improv + Inclusion + Innovation" DePaul University, June, 2011

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