



Planning Your HR Hackathon

GUIDE

Introduction

An HR hackathon is an event where people with different backgrounds and skill sets collaborate on solving specifically stated problems.

Hackathons can be the source of great innovation and ideas. As with any initiative, hackathons can be a big waste of time and often don't lead to viable and tangible outcomes if not properly organized and run. However, if you are able to harness the creativity of the group during the hackathon, it could unlock new ideas and help you innovate.

In this resource, we'll walk you through the hackathon process. You'll also find templates for you to use to get the most out of your HR hackathon.

A hackathon can either be a closed, in-company event or an event with an audience. When considering an audience, don't just think about a live audience, but also consider a livestream, or a way to follow the event on social media.

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Principles of a Hackathon

Every HR hackathon has four guiding principles. As you begin planning your hackathon, bear these principles in mind.

1

A good hackathon has a very clear **purpose and objective**.

2

Hackathons are all about **collaboration**.

3

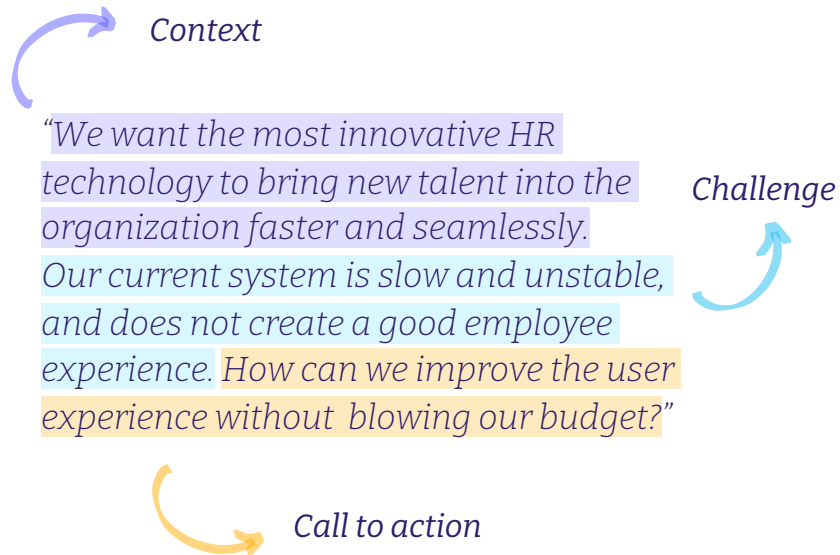
Hackathons are **time-bound** with a designated start and stop.

4

Hackathons have very strict **ground rules** of what is acceptable and what is not.

Setting Your Purpose and Objective

First, a good hackathon has a very clear purpose and objective. You need to be able to rally people around a significant and common problem that will have a clear impact if solved. Purpose statements for a hackathon need to inspire people to want to get together and participate in the challenge. However, it cannot be so vague that nobody knows what they are aiming to achieve. Here's an example:



Write about your context:

Write down your challenge:

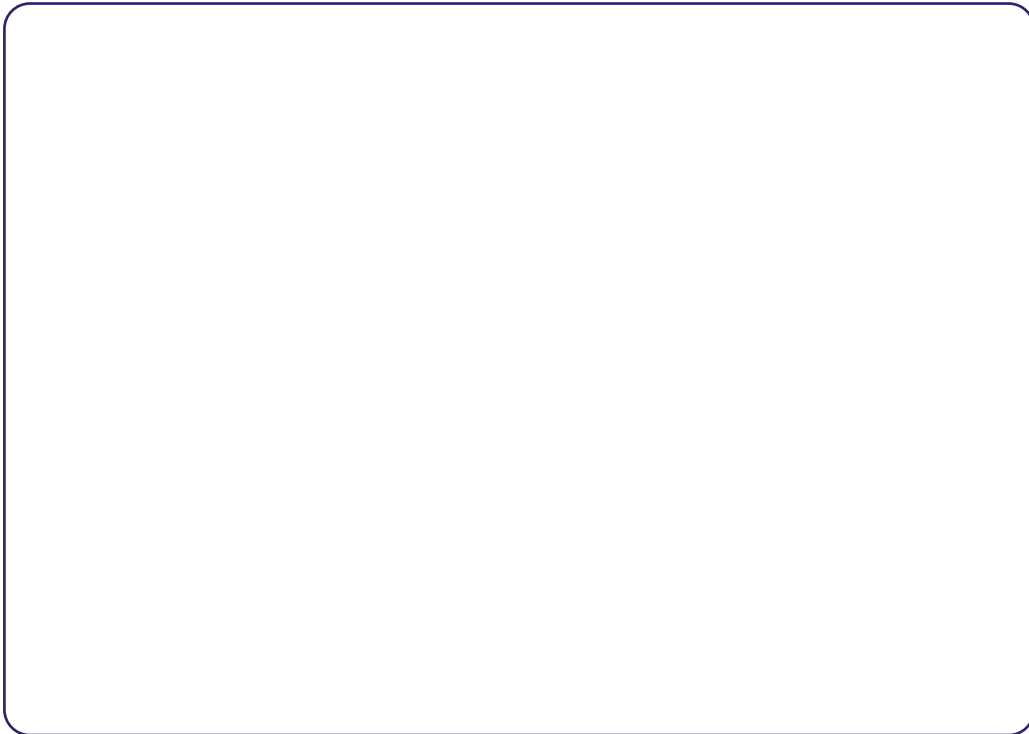
Write your call to action:

Before the Hackathon

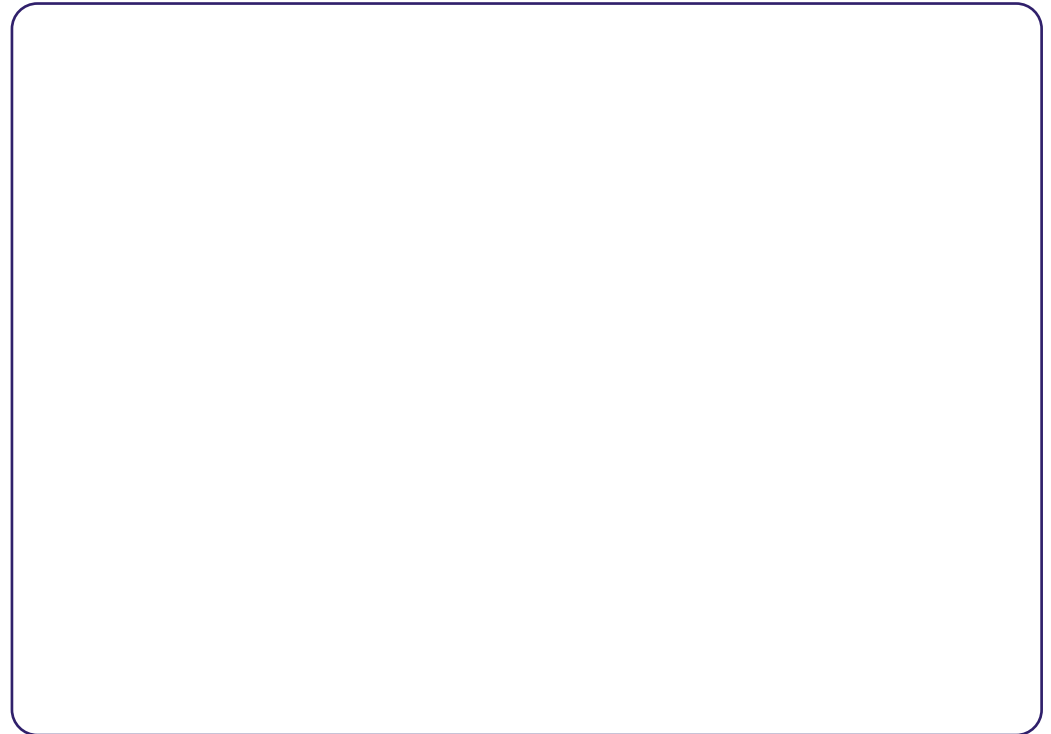
With your three Cs written out, it's time to prepare for your hackathon. Follow these five steps in preparation for your hackathon. There are spaces on each page for you to ideate.

1 Identify the purpose of the hackathon.

Is the problem meaningful enough to get a group of people to spend their time and energy on solving it?



Can anyone easily understand the challenge, even if they don't have an HR background?



2

Understand who should attend.

Which teams need to be in the room to help us solve the challenge?

Insert the name of each team in the box below.

3

Decide how you will run the hackathon.

ONLINE

FACE-TO-FACE

Choice:

Reason:

Choice:

Reason:

4

Finalize logistics.

ONLINE

Must-haves:

Possible set-backs:

FACE-TO-FACE

Must-haves:

Possible set-backs:

5

Invite your audience and get them excited.

Who is your audience, and how will you reach them?

Write the post you will use to invite your audience members here.

Important Roles

Insert the appropriate name(s) in each box. For “Participants in all teams”, add the name of the team as well.

Master of ceremonies (MC)

SME panel

Team leaders

Enablement support

Participants in all teams

Hackathon Structure

Now that you're prepared for your HR hackathon, it's time to plan for what will happen during the event.

Here's an example of how your hackathon could look.

1 State the **purpose** and **objective**.

2 Give **context** to the problem.

3 State the **ground rules**.

4 Introduce the individuals playing each **role**.

5 Help people understand **who is working on what**.

6 Run the hackathon **in rounds**.

Use data, facts, and stories from users.

If many individuals play one role, try to make them as visible as possible



Now you're ready!
It's time for the hackathon to begin.

Round One



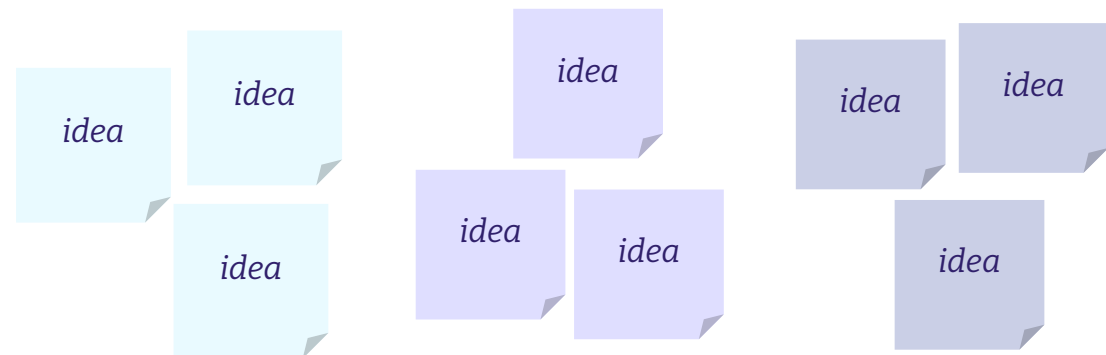
1. IDEATE

Teams **come up with ideas**, create rough sketches, and **choose three ideas** to present.



2. SHARE

The MC consolidates and **groups the ideas** of a similar nature. Each group **shares** in the plenary.

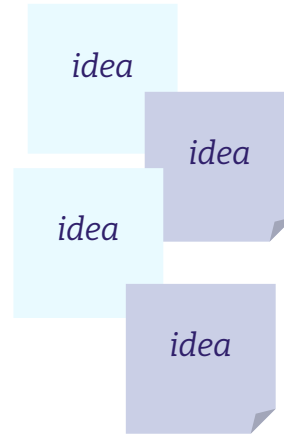




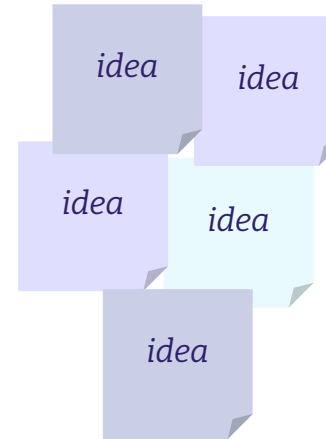
3. GROUP IDEAS

Solutions are **grouped into three categories** by the SME panel.

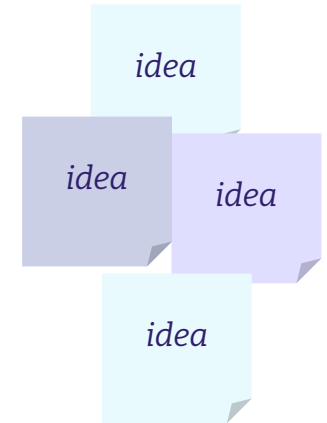
Explore further



Park this idea



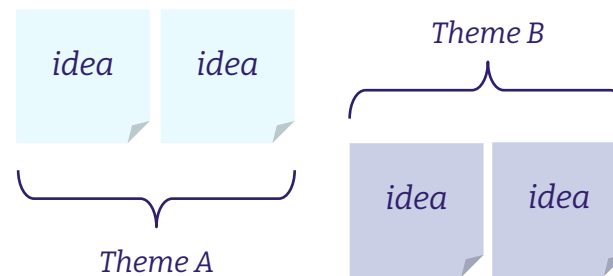
Discard



4. BREAK DOWN IDEAS

Group the “explore further” ideas into **themes**. Reconstitute the teams and **split the themes** among them.

Explore further



Round Two



1. DESIGN AND BUILD

Make sure that the **skills** you have in the room are now distributed to where they can be used best. Here is when actionable, realistic steps should be identified.



2. CHECK ON PROGRESS

Have team leaders report on progress and highlight challenges. Teams **demo ideas** and get feedback.



3. ROTATE SME SUPPORT BETWEEN GROUPS

The panel should give guidance, contribute ideas, and help team leaders move stumbling blocks out of the way.



4. SHOW ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It's important to show the group:

- **What** they have accomplished.
- **How** it will be used.
- What happens **after the session**.

Closing

After the hackathon, it is important to run a debrief with the core team. You'll consolidate the solutions that were built and identify the next steps for moving to implementation.

Once you have put these solutions into place, go back to the hackathon audience and share some success stories of the impact of the ideas.



Round One: Ideate // Template

Share this page with each team.

Use this space for your ideation. Fill the box below with your ideas.



Round One: Group Ideas // Template

Use the table to group the ideas thematically.

THEME 1	THEME 2	THEME 3

Use the table to sort the ideas.

Explore further

Park this idea

Discard

Explore further	Park this idea	Discard

Round One: Divide Themes and Tasks // Template

Use the table to divide the themes and tasks among the teams.

TEAM	THEME	TASK

Round Two: Ideate // Template

Share this page with each team.

Use this space to develop your ideas into workable steps.

Idea:

Idea:

How:

How:

Possible limitations:

Possible limitations: